

# Creative Living Bible Study

## Quest for Fulfillment

*Studies from the Book of John*

A Creative Living International Publication

**QUEST FOR FULFILLMENT: STUDIES  
FROM THE BOOK OF JOHN**

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Printed in the United States of America

1-932395-13-X

***Quest for Fulfillment***  
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# ***PART 1***

## ***PUBLIC MINISTRY***

### **LESSON 1**

#### **LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD**

##### **Prologue (John 1:1-18)**

The author of the Gospel<sup>1</sup> of John is the apostle John<sup>2</sup> who was among the original Twelve disciples of Jesus Christ. Historians date his writing around A.D. 85. This would have made John about 85 years old when he penned his gospel, having experienced some 60 years of faith in Jesus Christ. In his 20's as a close disciple of Jesus, John had personally witnessed Christ perform countless miracles (John 20:30, 21:25) such as feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, walking on water, calming storms, and healing the leprous, crippled and demon possessed. He saw Jesus restore sight to the blind and bring Lazarus and a widow's son back from the dead. John saw heaven opened, Elijah and Moses bearing witness to the glorified Christ and heard the voice of God declaring "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!" (Mark 9:2-8.)

John was there when Jesus agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane, was crucified on a cross, and most incredible of all, as Jesus walked and talked with him and many others during a forty-day period after His resurrection from the dead.

But this was only the beginning. After this, John witnessed the miraculous coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) to indwell and empower believers to witness for Christ in the face of hostility. He saw God enable the early

believers to perform miracles as the church grew and spread the Good News about Christ. John witnessed the incredible conversion of a formerly ruthless persecutor of the church, Saul of Tarsus (Paul), whom the Lord used to spread the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire. Last but not least, John lived through the persecution and martyrdom of countless believers and all the apostles except himself. He was now full of years and, more than ever, full of faith.

Tradition states that John wrote his gospel at the request of Christian friends, and agreed to do so only after the church had fasted and prayed for three days.<sup>2</sup> After all he had seen and heard, what did the aged apostle have to say? John began his book with a prologue which summarized the contents of the book and his absolute and to-be-expected conviction: God became man and revealed Himself through Jesus of Nazareth. From the banks of the Jordan to the resurrection appearances, Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God, became flesh, John declared, so that men and women could believe in Him and live.

Let's look closely at John's profound opening statements.

### **Read John 1:1-18.**

1. a. Rather than beginning his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus, John referenced the creation account in Genesis 1. What point did John make with such a beginning (1:1-3)?

b. How did the writer of Colossians reiterate this point (Colossians 1:16-17)?

2. What positive word pictures did John give to describe Jesus Christ (1:4,9)?

3. a. What tragedy did John introduce in this passage (1:10-11)?

b. What wonderful possibility did John declare (1:12-13)?

4. What personal testimony about Christ did the apostle give (1:14)?

5. John described Jesus as the incarnate Word of God (1:1-2,14). With this title, he referred to Christ as both the *reason* and force behind all creation as well as the expression of God to mankind. How are these concepts reiterated by the author of Hebrews (Hebrews 1:1-3)?

**Reference:** Note 3, *The Word*, page 8.

6. John the Baptist, a contemporary prophet in Israel, also declared the deity of Jesus Christ. What was John the Baptist's role (1:6-8,15)?

**Reference:** *John the Baptist*, Note 4 page 8.

7. The Apostle John was probably about 25 years old when he became Jesus' disciple, which would have placed him in his 80's when he wrote his gospel. With 60 years as a believer behind him, what did the apostle testify to be the experience of one who receives Christ (1:16-18)?

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **The Need for Light**

John begins his Gospel by addressing the need for light. Small children, and even adults, instinctively fear the darkness. It is a place of possible danger which gives a profound sense of being out of control.

Life can hold spiritual and emotional darkness for us all. We are a people who universally benefit from *light* in our lives. We not only need physical light to give us direction, understanding, and security, but we also need spiritual light to have these needs met.

Biblically, the word "light" is often synonymous with good and truth while "darkness" represents evil and falsehood. As in the physical realm, light is opposite darkness, but darkness is not equal to light in strength. A wonderful biblical truth is that spiritual light, or good and truth, ultimately cannot be overcome by darkness (John 1:5). Thus, the light of God John speaks of promises not only to meet our needs for direction, understanding, and security, but also to enable us to overcome evil and fill our lives with truth.

Here lie some very important keys to fulfillment. As we begin our study, let's look at what the Bible has to say about our need for light.

1. a. What are the contrasts between light and darkness in the physical realm?

b. How do these contrasts relate to spiritual and emotional darkness?

2. What circumstances in life make us feel like we are in the dark?

3. a. What do the following verses reveal about the light God gives spiritually and emotionally?

Psalm 27:1

Isaiah 42:16

Isaiah 60:20

b. What is mentioned about our part in receiving God's light?

Matthew 7:7-8

Proverbs 3:5-6

4. How does the Bible describe the darkness that comes from life without God's light?

Deuteronomy 28:29

Proverbs 4:19

5. What causes of spiritual darkness are suggested in the following?

Romans 1:21-22

Ephesians 4:18

6. As John states in his prologue, what does the apostle Paul declare about the source of the light we need?

II Corinthians 4:6

7. a. The prophets referred to Jesus Christ as "Immanuel," which means "God is with us" (Matthew 1:23). What spiritual light was God able to give through His Son coming to earth?

b. What do the following passages tell us about God which add to our understanding of Jesus Christ as Immanuel, the light of the world?

2 Samuel 22:31

Philippians 2:5-8

Hebrews 4:14-15

8. What did Jesus promise to the one who believes in Him?

John 8:12

## **Summary**

9. a. When or how have you experienced spiritual and/or emotional darkness in your life?

b. What have you found life to be like without the illumination of God?

10. a. Are there present areas of your life in which you need the direction, understanding or security that God promises when we seek Him?

b. Take a moment to acknowledge your need and His faithfulness to meet it.

11. John declares that receiving Jesus Christ brings us out of darkness into light. Have you ever trusted Jesus Christ to do this for you? If not, and you would like to, the following is a suggested prayer: *Heavenly Father, I need the light that comes through receiving your Son, Jesus Christ. I now invite Him to come into my life and illuminate my understanding of Your truth. Amen.*

## LESSON 1 NOTES

1 *Gospel* is a literal translation from the Greek *euaggelion* and means "good news." In the New Testament the term is applied to the revelation of God's plan for reconciling man to Himself by forgiving his sin and by transforming his character. The Gospel is the story of God's gift of salvation through the person and work of Christ which the church has been commissioned to proclaim (Mark 16:15; Acts 20:24; Ephesians 1:13). The impact of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ compelled His disciples to present His message to the public. *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, page 318.

**2** *Authorship of John.* Like many biblical authors, John, who refers to himself only as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (cf. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7), does not mention his name in the book. This fact would be hard to explain had John not been the author; any other writer would have mentioned this important disciple by name. The author's thorough understanding of Jewish life, geography of the region and eyewitness accounts support John's authorship. Tradition and early writers such as Irenaeus and Tertullian also attribute the book to the apostle. John's father was Zebedee (21:2), his mother Salome, who was also a close follower of Jesus (cf. Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; 16:1). Some believe Salome was the sister of Jesus' mother Mary (cf. Mark 15:40; John 19:25). Perhaps the closeness between Jesus and John was born in early years as cousins. John's older brother was the apostle James, who later became the first apostolic martyr (Acts 12:2). They were fishermen by trade, on the Sea of Galilee. After the death of Christ, John became a leader in the Jerusalem church (Galatians 2:9), and later wrote the Gospel near Ephesus where he spent the last years of his life. In all, John wrote five New Testament books: three epistles (I, II and III John), the Gospel of John, and Revelation (penned in exile on the Isle of Patmos).

*Tradition states that John wrote his gospel at the request of Christian friends, and agreed to do so only after the church had fasted and prayed for three days. The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, page 438.*

**3** *The Word.* The term "Word" is the outstanding title given Jesus in the prologue. It is the best possible translation of the Greek *logos*, which is best defined by the word "reason." To the Greek, *logos* represented the origin and power behind order in the universe. To the Jew, *logos* referred to the mighty word of God which spoke the universe into existence.

**4** *John the Baptist* was a very important personality in Israel. (See Commentary, Lesson 2.) John was rugged, living in the wilderness area beyond the Jordan. He preached repentance and baptism symbolic of the washing away of sins in preparation for the soon-coming Messiah. Jew and Gentile alike who embraced John's message were baptized with water. John's teaching and baptism angered Jewish religious leaders who felt prepared to meet the Messiah just because they were Abraham's descendants and God's chosen people; only Gentile proselytes of the Jewish faith had received water baptism before. Even so, multitudes flocked to the Jordan to hear John and be baptized by him.

The gospels emphasize that John's sole mission was to be the God-appointed messenger to announce the arrival of Christ. John recognized and introduced Jesus as the Messiah when Jesus was baptized. Later, the prophet was imprisoned and put to death by Herod.

# LESSON 2

## THE FIRST DISCIPLES

### John 1:19-51

While biblical accounts do not reflect the fact, John the Baptist was a very powerful personality in Israel and stirred up enormous interest in Palestine through his preaching. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote more about John the Baptist than Jesus Christ.

The reason John was so powerful was that he was widely believed to be a prophet. Israel's history involved *prophets* through whom the people heard the very words of God. The Jewish people took great pride in their prophets, but in the four hundred years since Malachi, there had been no prophet in Israel. God had been silent. Then came John the Baptist who was rugged, living in the desert on locusts and wild honey. He uncompromisingly preached repentance from sin in order to prepare for the soon-to-come promised Messiah.

The Jews had looked forward to a Messiah who would deliver them from Roman oppression and make them *the* world power.<sup>1</sup> But John the Baptist announced that the Messiah would soon come to judge the hearts of individuals and that being a descendant of Abraham alone was not enough to make one righteous before God. John preached that Jew and Gentile alike should repent of sin and be baptized in preparation to meet the Christ. Multitudes flocked to the Jordan River to hear John and be baptized by him.

Because of his teachings on repentance and baptism, however, many Jewish leaders rejected the prophet. They were offended that John was baptizing God's chosen people alongside Gentiles (the Jews had previously baptized

only Gentile proselytes of the Jewish faith). The Jews also believed that simply being a physical descendant of Abraham made one righteous before God. The religious leaders were insulted that John was instructing them to repent of sin and be baptized to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. But John's popularity and the public's opinion that he was a prophet forced his critics to remain silent. Instead, they began to devise subtle plans to undermine his ministry.

So it was that as John was busy baptizing people in the Jordan, the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem sent a deputation to openly question his ministry credentials (John 1:19-28). They asked him if he was the Old Testament prophet Elijah who never saw death (Malachi 4:5) or The Prophet foretold by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15. If not these, would he claim to be the Messiah? What they were really asking was, "Where do you get the right to preach repentance and baptize Jews?"

John handled his adversaries wisely, denying that he was any of the Old Testament prophets yet to come. Instead he declared, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, that God sent him to "prepare the way for the Lord" (Isaiah 40:3). As much as the religious leaders tried to focus on him, John consistently turned the focus on the coming Christ.

The very next day after this confrontation, Jesus came to be baptized by John in the Jordan. While John, being a cousin of Jesus (cf. Luke 1:13-17,30-31,36), may have known Him before, at this point in time John recognized Jesus as the Messiah. God had previously revealed to John how he would recognize the Christ. When He came, John would see the Holy Spirit descend and rest upon Him. So it was that when he baptized Jesus, John clearly saw the Spirit descending in the form of a dove and remaining on Jesus.

Immediately, John declared Jesus superior to himself in importance and ministry and encouraged his own disciples to follow Him. The Baptist boldly introduced Jesus as "the Lamb of God<sup>2</sup> who takes away the world's sin" (1:29), as "He who will baptize with the Holy Spirit" (1:33),<sup>3</sup> and as "the Son of God" (1:34).

Therefore, Jesus began His public ministry with the entire ministry and *powerful* endorsement of John the Baptist behind Him. There, in the region of Bethany-beyond-the-Jordan where John baptized, Jesus began to collect His first disciples. John the Baptist, who had baptized all of these men, sent John and Andrew to Jesus. Andrew brought his brother Simon, whom Jesus

named Peter. Jesus called Philip who then brought Nathanael. Nathanael was skeptical, until Jesus revealed knowledge only God would have known about Nathanael's character and life. Nathanael was amazed, but Jesus promised them all that they would see more incredible revelations of God through their time with the "Son of Man."<sup>4</sup>

### **Read John 1:19-28.**

1. When the Jewish leaders came to question John the Baptist at Bethany-beyond-the-Jordan, what did he claim about himself (1:19-23)?

**Reference:** *The Christ*, Note 1, page 17.

2. When questioned further by the Pharisees, to whom did John turn his focus (1:26-27)?

### **Read John 1:29-34.**

3. a. John the Baptist was Jesus' first disciple. After baptizing Jesus (see Matthew 3:13-17), how did John introduce Jesus to the people (1:29-31)?

**Reference:** Note 2, *Lamb of God*, page 18.

b. How did God reveal to John that Jesus was the Messiah (1:32-33; see also Matthew 3:13-17).

**Reference:** Note 3, *baptize with the Holy Spirit*, page 18.

c. What was John's declaration as he fulfilled his mission of introducing the Christ (1:34)?

**Read John 1:35-42.**

4. a. Of what did Andrew become convinced during his visit with Jesus (1:35-41)?

b. What did Andrew's new conviction and excitement motivate him to do (1:42)?

5. How did Jesus receive Simon (1:42)?

**Note:** *Cephas* (Aramaic) and *Peter* (Greek) mean *rock*. "In the Gospels, Peter was anything but a rock; he was impulsive and unstable. In Acts, he was a pillar of the early church. Jesus named him not for what he was but for what, by God's grace, he would become." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1595.

**Read John 1:43-51.**

6. What was different about Philip's calling (1:43)?

7. a. When Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus, how did Jesus dispel Nathanael's questions (1:44-49)?

**Note:** In verse 47, Jesus, who could see Nathanael's heart, was not saying he was perfect, rather that he was honest and genuine in his faith. Nathanael obviously knew Jesus was not in physical range to see him under the fig tree (1:48). Christ's statement evidenced the omniscience and omnipresence of God and led Nathanael to boldly declare Jesus the Son of God (1:49).

b. What did Jesus promise (1:50-51)?

**Reference:** Note 5, *heaven open*, and Note 4, *Son of Man*, page 18.

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Discovering Our Uniqueness**

While the lives of the disciples were not necessarily easy, they were no doubt full and meaningful as a result of their faith. John the Baptist, John the apostle, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael and Peter were distinct individuals to Jesus. He had special purposes for each of them, and He dealt with them as unique persons.

In a fast-paced world, we can easily feel lost in the crowd, like just a number in the masses. The media exposes us to people who are exceptionally gifted, wealthy, beautiful, intelligent, or just more "together." The predictable result is that we feel ordinary and insignificant.

But the Bible says, and Jesus demonstrates in His interactions with each of His disciples, that we are uniquely significant to God. He created us and knows our potential much better than we. As with Peter, He knows our personalities and what He can make of them. He does not focus on our limitations, rather factors them into the perfect equation of a special plan for your life and mine . . . if we will allow Him to work in our lives.

As we continue our study on the *Quest for Fulfillment*, let's look at the biblical foundation for building a deep and lasting sense of worth: our uniqueness to Jesus.

1. What in our society encourages low self-esteem? What are some false values by which people determine their self worth?

2. How can low self-esteem affect:  
our relationship with God?

our relationships with other people?

our daily tasks?

3. Jesus responded to each of His disciples as distinct individuals whom He had created for special purposes. The Bible states that Jesus Christ created us and knows us individually (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16). What do the following verses say about:

a. your uniqueness and worth to the Lord?

Psalm 139:13-18

John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16

Luke 12:6-7

b. His plans for you?

Jeremiah 29:11

5. Knowing we are loved by the Creator of the universe can radically build our self esteem. What do the following verses say about God's love?

Jeremiah 31:3

Romans 8:38-39

6. Seeing God's perspective on our lives can change the focus of our achievement. What do the following verses infer about worthwhile ambitions?

I Samuel 16:7

Proverbs 31:30

**Note:** *fear* means *reverent trust*.

Micah 6:8

7. We can be paralyzed by a fear of failure or sense of inadequacy, which prevents us from reaching our potential or trying new things. What does God promise if we put our trust in Him?

Philippians 4:13

II Corinthians 12:9

8. The early disciples embraced John the Baptist's message of repentance and forgiveness for sin. This freed them to respond to the Lord and follow His great plans for them.

a. We must be free from guilt if we are to have a healthy sense of self-esteem. What does the Lord continually invite us to do with sin?

I John 1:9

b. On what basis are we forgiven by God?

Matthew 26:28 (Hebrews 9:22)

Ephesians 1:7

**Reference:** Note 2, *Lamb of God*, page 18.

9. It was the individual response of each disciple to Jesus that allowed Him to begin working to help each one realize his potential. What were their choices in responding to Jesus?

## Summary

10. a. What have you learned in this lesson about your uniqueness to Jesus?

b. How do you view the area(s) in which you have been struggling with self-esteem after studying this lesson?

11. Is there any area of your life where you have been carrying guilt? You might want to take a piece of paper and list the sin(s) you want to confess and leave behind. Write I John 1:9 over the paper and destroy it as a symbol of receiving God's forgiveness through the cross of Christ. This exercise can have a tremendously cleansing effect.

12. What do you choose as your personal response to Jesus and His desire to lead and direct your life?

Take a moment to talk to God about these things. Know that He loves you, wants you to love yourself, and, despite your weaknesses, has special plans for your life.

## LESSON 2 NOTES

**1** *The Christ* (1:20). *Christ* (Greek) or *Messiah* (Hebrew) means "anointed one." Authors ascribed this title to Jesus thousands of times in the New Testament. The Jewish people believed Old Testament prophecy that pointed to a King and Savior anointed by God to deliver them from their enemies. This Messiah was referred to as the *Son of David* because He was to come from the line of David (I Chronicles 17:11-15). He was referred to as the *Son of Man* (Daniel 7:13-14), and He would be a *suffering servant* (Isaiah 53), a reality many Jews preferred to overlook.

**2** *Lamb of God* (1:29,36) refers to sacrifice, specifically the sacrifice that would atone for the sin of the world prophesied in Isaiah 53:3-8 and clarified further by Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9:11-22 and Hebrews 10:8-14. Man since the beginning (cf. Genesis 3) had been under the death penalty for sin. Jesus came to take that death penalty on Himself, allowing men and women to be freely forgiven by God if they choose to believe. The Lamb of God came to lay down His innocent life for sinful man.

**3** *baptize with the Holy Spirit* (1:33). John the Baptist's baptism was a temporary preparatory water baptism for repentance and symbolized forgiveness and the washing away of sins (Luke 3:3). "Jesus, by contrast, would baptize with the Holy Spirit. He would send the Holy Spirit upon all believers, empowering them to live and to teach the message of salvation. This outpouring of the Spirit came after Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven (see 20:22; Acts 2)." *Life Application Bible NIV*, page 1872.

See also Note 2, *Holy Spirit*, page 33.

**4** *Son of Man* (1:51) was the title Jesus used most for Himself. When the Jews heard the word "Messiah", they instantly thought of the Old Testament prophecy of a victorious earthly king who would establish Israel as *the* world power. (See also Note 5, *Scripture Prophecy Concerning Messiah*, page 50-51.)

Knowing that He must suffer and die for sin with this earthly visit, Jesus avoided being openly discovered and called the Messiah lest he be stormed by the masses and enthroned as an earthly king (cf. John 6:15). Instead, Jesus referred to Himself as the *Son of Man*, a title used in the Messianic prophecy of *Daniel 7:13*. There, the prophet reveals a vision of the Son of Man being entrusted by God with authority, glory, everlasting dominion and an indestructible kingdom. When Jesus used this term as a title for Himself, He referred to Himself as the Messiah and as deity in such a way as to control and teach His audience.

**5** *heaven open...angels of God ascending and descending* (1:51). "This is a reference to Jacob's dream recorded in Genesis 28:12. As the unique God-man, Jesus would be the ladder between heaven and earth. Jesus is *not* saying that this would be a physical experience (that they would see the ladder with their eyes) like the transfiguration (cf. Mark 9:2-8), but that they would have spiritual insight into Jesus' true nature and purpose for coming." *Life Application Bible NIV*, page 1872.

# LESSON 3

## AT A WEDDING & IN THE TEMPLE

### John 2

After a few days of travel from Bethany to Galilee, Jesus and his disciples attended a wedding in Cana to which His mother was also invited. In biblical times, a wedding was a week-long celebration attended by everyone in the village. At this particular event, however, a very embarrassing situation arose for the bridegroom. Before the party was over, the wine ran out. Jesus' mother came to Him with this problem.

Jesus' response to Mary is difficult to understand: "Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come" (2:4). Perhaps she failed to realize that her son had now begun his Messianic ministry, and from now on their relationship would be different. Perhaps He was saying to her that His power was to be used for the purpose of drawing people to God's grace. Nevertheless, the second part of His statement, "My time (or hour) has not yet come," no doubt referred to the revelation of His glory that would come through His death and resurrection (cf. John 12:27, 13:1, 17:1).

Still Mary turned to the servants and told them to do whatever Jesus told them. They followed His instructions carefully, and Jesus turned 120 to 180 gallons of water into fine wine. This first incredible miracle strengthened his disciples' conviction that Jesus was truly the Messiah.

After a brief time in Capernaum, where Jesus later headquartered his ministry in Galilee, He and His family and disciples went to celebrate the Passover<sup>1</sup> in Jerusalem. This was the greatest of the Jewish annual feasts, and dealers took advantage of the situation by doing business in the Temple.

Some provided foreign currency exchange while others sold animals for purification rites, both for an exorbitant profit. When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, He went straight to the Temple and proceeded to break up the greedy business dealings there. He made a whip of cords and moved through the Temple, overturning the tables of the moneychangers and driving out the merchants. He commanded they stop profaning "My Father's house" with their greedy trade.

This was no small event. As to be expected, the Jews demanded what authority Jesus had to do such things. To understand His answer, we must first understand that the Temple was the center of Jewish religion, representing the presence of God among them. Over time various temple practices had become corrupted and for many the Temple no longer reminded them of God's presence. So in answer to their challenge that Jesus prove His authority to clear the Temple, Jesus referred to *Himself* as the Temple (2:19,21). He was the actual living presence of God in their midst, a presence which some would be unable to see because greed and ritual had replaced their earnest desire for God.

Jesus went on to refer to His forthcoming death ("destroy this Temple") and resurrection ("and in three days I will raise it up."). Later the disciples would understand that Jesus spoke of the sacrifice of Himself that would end the need for Temple sacrifices. But at this time everyone thought He was speaking literally about the massive Temple structure, and they were shocked.

Even so, in the days ahead many began to believe in Jesus because of His miracles<sup>2</sup> of healing and deliverance He performed among them. Jesus could read their hearts like an open book and could see how much loyalty and understanding the people truly possessed. The faith of most would waver because it was conditioned upon what He did for them. Jesus would only give the understanding of His Person and purpose to those He knew were unquestionably faithful and allegiant.

### **Read John 2:1-10.**

1. What problem arose at the wedding, and what did Mary do about it (2:1-5)?

**Reference:** Commentary paragraph 2, page 19 re: *Jesus' response to Mary*.

2. a. How did Jesus take care of the problem (2:6-10)?

b. What happened as a result of this miracle (2:11)?

3. Jesus referred to the "hour" of His death at the very beginning of His ministry (2:4). The miracles He performed would set off the chain reactions that would lead to His death. What did Jesus know about the timing of His redemptive mission that is apparent from these verses (7:6, 8:20, 12:23,27, 17:1)?

### **Read John 2:12-25.**

4. a. What situation brought about strong words and action from the Lord (2:13-16)?

**Reference:** Note 2b, *This extortion*, page 187.

b. To what did His disciples later attribute Jesus' actions (2:17)?

**Note:** The quotation is the Old Testament Messianic prophecy of Psalm 69:9.

5. a. How did Jesus respond to the Jews' demand for credentials (2:18-20)?

**Reference:** Commentary paragraph 2, page 20, re: *this Temple* (2:19).

b. What did the disciples later understand about the Lord's statement (2:21-22)?

6. a. Why did many people begin to believe in Jesus (2:23)?

**Reference:** Note 1, *Miracles of Jesus*, page 75.

b. What did Jesus know about these believers (2:24-25)?

**Reference:** Commentary last paragraph, page 20.

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **The Transformation We Seek**

Most people experience times when they feel the need for big changes. Some attack the problems by attempting to alter their circumstances or modify their environment. Others try to change the people around them rather than themselves--*always* a disappointing endeavor--while others embark on serious self-improvement programs. They make specific resolutions, but are soon exhausted and confused by lack of success. Professional counseling may bring light to many subjects but may also create confusion with new revelation of human complexities.

In our commitment to change, we often start off with high expectations and determination but end up in despair when, in spite of our great efforts, the problems persist.

But our situation is not at all hopeless in the eyes of God. The Bible states that not only does the Lord see our potential, as discussed in Lesson 2, but He is prepared to walk us through the transformation process step by step.

A beautiful word picture which illustrates the power of Christ to change us is in the story of the wedding at Cana where He turned *water into wine*. The promise of the Scriptures is that Christ can transform a life from the inside out. The good news of the New Testament is that in trusting Christ *and* continually yielding to His leadership and power, we are changed into the

fulfilled individuals He created us to be. Not instantly, but steadily and in increments we can handle, the Lord brings about the transformation we seek. Let's look at what the Scriptures say about these biblical truths.

1. a. What are the personal difficulties that lead people to crave change?

b. What does this desire for change lead people to do?

c. What are the results of our own efforts to realize the transformation we need?

2. How is the transformation Christ promises described? What does God promise?

II Corinthians 5:17

Isaiah 43:18-19

3. The Bible states that transformation comes from Christ *living His life in and through us*. His Spirit promises to lead and empower us to respond differently. What do the following verses say about this?

Ezekiel 36:26-27

Ephesians 3:16-17a

Colossians 1:27b

4. The analogy of Jesus turning "water into wine" in our lives could be stated as allowing Him to transform our negative experience into a positive and healthy one. As we choose to yield to Christ moment by moment, with what does He replace:

lack of direction? Psalm 32:8

insecurity? Isaiah 33:6

fear? Isaiah 41:10

lack of joy? Psalm 16:11

unrest? Matthew 11:28-30

lack of purpose? Matthew 5:14,16; Psalm 138:8

self-centeredness? Philippians 2:3-4

anxiety/worry? Philippians 4:6-7

negative disposition/lack of self-control? Galatians 5:22-23

## Summary

5. a. To be transformed by Christ, He must first indwell our lives. What is His invitation and promise to you in Revelation 3:20?

b. Is this the desire of your heart?

6. a. To continue to be transformed by Christ requires yielding to Him in each area of our lives. Are there any specific areas of your life which you want to yield to Him now for His transformation?

b. Referring back to Question #4, what does the Lord promise as you present your need to Him?

## LESSON 3 NOTES

**1** *Passover*, or the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, was the first and most important sacred festival in Judaism. It lasted a week with Passover on the first day and the Feast of Unleavened Bread the rest of the week. The celebration commemorated the deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 12:1-13) and the establishment of Israel as a nation redeemed by God.

**2 Reference:** Note 1, *Miracles of Jesus*, page 75.

# LESSON 4

## NICODEMUS AND THE NEW BIRTH

### JOHN 3

Shortly after Jesus had driven greedy businessmen from the Temple, a prominent religious leader named Nicodemus came by night to question Jesus. Nicodemus was a Pharisee<sup>1</sup> and a member of the powerful seventy-member Jewish council called the Sanhedrin. Later this man would be one of the few religious leaders to stand up for Jesus (7:50-52) and even assist with Jesus' burial (19:39-40).

At their first meeting, Nicodemus stated he was drawn to Jesus because of His character and miracles. He knew Jesus was from God (3:2), but he could not reconcile his religious understanding with the Person of Jesus. In forthrightness, he had come to see Jesus in an attempt to clear up his confusion.

In the conversation that resulted, Jesus addressed two needs in Nicodemus' life. The first was his need for a spiritual birth brought about by the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> Fulfillment of this need was dependent on the second need, which was faith in God's way of entrance into His Kingdom--through belief in His Son. (Nicodemus believed being a descendant of Abraham assured him righteous standing before God.) As He talked with this honest and seeking religious leader, Jesus guaranteed Nicodemus that He had come from heaven and His witness about heavenly eternal truth was absolutely sure. The Son of Man,<sup>3</sup> Jesus promised, would be lifted up (a reference to the crucifixion), and only those who believed in Him would receive eternal life.

Many interpreters believe that Jesus' words to Nicodemus stop after 3:15, and the author adds his reflections. Whether the words are spoken by Jesus or John, they are God's word and speak of the incredible love of God. His infinite love compelled the Father to send the best He had to give--His only Son--not to condemn the world, but to draw it to Himself for eternal salvation and life. John proclaims that God sent His Son so that those who believe His testimony would be acquitted, not judged.

The crisis is that while God's light streams into the world through His Son, many uninterested in pleasing God will prefer to flee from that light. They will hide in the darkness of denial, illusion and ungodly practices. But all who love truth<sup>4</sup> will respond to God's light and welcome His Son.

After this, Jesus moved his ministry into the Judean countryside where apparently His disciples were baptizing under His authority (3:22, 4:2).<sup>5</sup> Some of John the Baptist's disciples were distressed when they heard this. They were also concerned that more and more people were flocking to Jesus rather than to John. When they approached John about this, his reply was gracious and humble. He stated that Jesus' ministry was God-given as his own had been and restated that *his* God-given task was to herald the Messiah. Using the example of a bridegroom and friend, John showed how the friend is there to aid the bridegroom and rejoice when all goes well with the wedding. John was satisfied to have introduced Jesus to the faithful in Israel and see them begin to follow Him. "He must increase, but I must decrease," were the Baptist's last recorded words in this Gospel.

Now the author reflects further on John the Baptist's testimony. Anointed as this prophet and forerunner of Jesus was, he was 'from the earth' and so limited. Jesus, on the other hand, came from heaven and was able to tell of what He had actually seen and heard in heaven. He was sent by God, spoke God's words and had the power of God's Spirit without measure. The apostle once again declares his complete conviction: eternal life depends on faith in the Son, who the Father sent from above.

### **Read John 3:1-15.**

1. Who was Nicodemus and what was his understanding about Jesus (3:1-2)?

**Reference:** Note 1, *Pharisees*, page 33, and Note 1, *Miracles of Jesus*, page 75.

2. What did Jesus tell this religious leader about the kingdom of God (3:3-5)?

3. What did Jesus reveal about the work of the Holy Spirit in spiritual birth (3:6-8)?

**Reference:** Note 2, *Holy Spirit*, page 33.

4. As a religious teacher in Israel, Nicodemus should have understood the power of God to give spiritual life (cf. Ezekiel 36:26-27). To what did Jesus attribute Nicodemus' ignorance (3:11-12)?

5. What three specifics did Jesus declare about Himself to Nicodemus (3:13-15)?

**Reference:** Note 6, *snake lifted up*, page 34, and Note 4, *Son of Man*, page 18.

### **Read John 3:16-21.**

6. What was God's purpose in sending His Son (3:16-18)?

7. What basic problem is described in 3:19-20?

8. What would Nicodemus' response to Jesus reveal about him according to John 3:21?

**Reference:** Note 4, *all who love truth*, page 33.

**Read John 3:22-36.**

9. What was John the Baptist's general response to the concerns of his disciples (3:27-30)?

10. Most theologians believe 3:31-36 to be the statements of the author rather than John the Baptist. How would you summarize the convictions stated here?

**Note:** "When we speak of God's wrath [3:36] we are, of course, using a human term to describe a characteristic of God. It is hard to understand how a man can be angry and exercise wrath without vindictiveness and even hatred entering in. This is not so with God. Wrath is the reverse side of love. It is a way of describing a loving God's hatred of sin and evil and disobedience and all that spoils the lives of those He loves . . . The wrath of God teaches us that God does not stand by and condone sin and injustice and evil in the world." Gordon Bridger, *The Man Outside*, page 40.

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Free From the Inside Out**

Nicodemus not only had witnessed the teachings and miracles of Jesus, but he had seen firsthand Christ's integrity. There was an obviously patient and compassionate love for people which motivated Jesus as He ministered to rich and poor alike. Furthermore, Jesus seemed to at once see the spiritual realm on earth *and* in heaven. And Jesus spoke of God as a loving Father with whom He had a personal relationship and with whom He was at peace.

Nicodemus had observed many religious leaders over the years, but this One was quietly powerful and unique. The devout Pharisee was drawn irresistibly to seek counsel from Jesus, and Jesus met him at his point of need.

Spiritual wholeness, Jesus explained to Nicodemus, would never come from earthbound religious ritual and works. Rather, the Holy Spirit transforms a person, producing spiritual *new life* from the inside out. Nicodemus had only to *believe* in Jesus--to put his trust in Him--and the Spirit would give him spiritual birth, entrance into God's kingdom and eternal life.

The good news Jesus gave Nicodemus is for all of us: We need not strive to please God. God can produce the wholeness of Christ in our lives if we simply trust Christ and take Him at His word. While our nature is to "do it by ourselves," God knows the impossibility of the task. We need His power--the strength and wisdom and transformation of His Spirit--from the inside out.

Let's look more closely at the wonderful news which Jesus gave Nicodemus.

1. What do most people think of when they contemplate pleasing God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. When people determine to try to please God in these ways, what is the result?

3. Jesus told Nicodemus that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual life which begins with simple faith or *belief* in Christ. The word "believe" (the Greek word *pioteuo*) means to "be persuaded of and hence, to place confidence in, to trust, . . .reliance upon, not mere credence."<sup>7</sup>

a. In light of this definition, how would you summarize what John 3:14-18 teaches about the relationship with Jesus that leads to spiritual transformation?

b. In John 15, Jesus used the analogy of a vine abiding in a branch to illustrate how faith in Christ enables us to live the Christian life. What does Jesus say about attempting to live the Christian life apart from Him (John 15:5)?

4. How did Jesus describe the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

John 14:16-17

John 14:26

5. What qualities are manifested in our lives when the Spirit lives in us and is given control?

Galatians 5:22-23

6. What assistance does the Holy Spirit give as we seek to trust and rely on God?

Romans 8:26

7. Each of us begins to believe in Christ at a point in time and with a willful decision. This decision frees the Holy Spirit to give spiritual birth and power from within to live the Christian life.

After initial faith, trusting Christ with each daily need is a choice which allows the Holy Spirit to continue to transform the believer. How is this choice described in the following?

Proverbs 3:5-6

Galatians 5:25

## **Summary**

8. As a Pharisee, Nicodemus had trusted in his own efforts (following religious rules and regulations) to please God. Jesus wanted to free Nicodemus and transform him through simple faith. What does Ephesians 2:8-9 reveal about trying to please God in our own strength?

9. In order for the Holy Spirit to continue to transform you into the person God created you to be, what must you do?

## LESSON 4 NOTES

**1** *Pharisees.* The name *Pharisee* means "separated ones." The Pharisees of Jesus' day were a legalistic and separatist group who strictly, but often hypocritically, kept the law of Moses and the unwritten "tradition of the elders." They numbered about 6,000 in Palestine, about one percent of the population. Pharisees, although nowhere appointed by God, were respected by the people as the "unofficial religious leaders." They were teachers in the synagogues, religious examples in the eyes of the people and self-appointed guardians of the Old Testament law and its proper observance. Their "interpretation" of the laws, handed down as traditions for generations, were regarded by them to be as authoritative as the Scripture itself.

**2** *Holy Spirit.* God has made Himself known in the Bible as a Trinity; three divine persons with the same essence as God. The Holy Spirit, known as the Third Person of the Trinity, indwells every person who personally receives Christ (John 1:12, 14:16-17). The Scriptures reveal the Holy Spirit not as an "it," but rather as a "He," a distinct personality. In John 3, Jesus tells Nicodemus that the Holy Spirit is the member of the Trinity who brings about regeneration or spiritual birth in the believer. While the Holy Spirit cannot be seen, we can see the evidence of His work (3:8).

The Scriptures further tell us that when we ask God (Luke 11:13) to "fill" us with His Spirit (Ephesians 5:18b), He responds by supernaturally instructing and empowering us to live the Christian life (Ephesians 3:16-20; Ezekiel 36:26-27). Sometimes the Bible refers to this as "Christ in you," as in Colossians 1:27b.

**3 Reference:** Note 4, *Son of Man*, page 18.

**4** *all who love truth come into the light* (3:21). "No explicit mention is made here of those who have never had the opportunity of believing in Christ, those on whom the light in its fullness has never shone. But John's words probably unfold the principle of their judgment too. As the eternal Word came to men and women before becoming incarnate in Christ, so it is with the light of God. If men and women are judged by their response to the light, they are judged by their response to such light as is available to them. All true light is in some degree an effulgence from him who is the light of the world. Those who accept the partial light that is available to them will gladly accept the perfect light when it shines on them. Those who refuse the light, in whatever fashion it shines on them, pronounce sentence on themselves." F. F. Bruce, page 92.

**5** *Jesus' disciples baptizing* (3:22, 4:2). These are the only verses of the Gospels that ascribe baptism to Jesus' earthly ministry. His disciples, not Jesus, baptized under his authority. Apparently this water baptism was like

that of John the Baptist and symbolized repentance from and washing away of sins. It was not the beginning of the baptism with the Holy Spirit by Jesus (John 1:33) that would first come on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

**6** *snake lifted up*. In 3:14, Jesus explained how the event in Numbers 21:8-9 was a foreshadowing of salvation through Jesus. The Israelites had disobeyed God and were judged by a plague of snakes. All would die from snakebite except those who obeyed God's command to look upon an elevated bronze snake and believed in the healing promise of God. Similarly, Jesus was saying, He would be lifted up (on the cross), and all who believed in Him would be spared from the penalty for their sin.

**7** *Vines Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, page 116.

# LESSON 5

## JESUS IN SAMARIA

### John 4

The Pharisees had learned that the popularity of Jesus was becoming greater than that of even John the Baptist. With this, Jesus determined to leave Judea and return to Galilee. By leaving, He would avoid the competition the Pharisees seemed to be trying to cultivate between Him and the Baptist, and He would curtail the growing opposition of Judean religious leaders.

The direct route back to Galilee was through Samaria, where Jesus and His disciples stopped around noon at Sychar. The disciples went to buy food while Jesus rested by Jacob's well. Then Jesus defied etiquette when he asked a Samaritan woman for a drink. No orthodox Jewish man would drink from a Samaritan<sup>1</sup> cup or initiate conversation with a woman in such a setting.

Regardless, Jesus proceeded to have a long talk with this woman. He told her about the gift of living water that He would give to anyone who asked. This water would forever quench thirst and would be like a well springing up into eternal life. "Sir, give me this water," was her natural response.

But Jesus asked her first to go and get her husband. She answered that she had no husband, and the Lord agreed, telling her she had had five and now lived with a man who was not her husband.

Perceiving Jesus to be a prophet, the Samaritan woman quickly changed the subject. She brought up the smoldering spiritual issue between Jews and Samaritans regarding where to worship. Most important to God, Jesus told

her, was not where one worshiped, but who and how one worshiped. He explained to her that *the Father* (a new concept of God to anyone of that day) "is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." Then Jesus told her that the Samaritans *did not* have the pure knowledge of God preserved by the Jews<sup>2</sup> and that the Messiah who would bring salvation would be a Jew.

"When the Messiah comes, He will tell us everything," she boldly stated. To this, Jesus replied, "I who speak to you am He."

Imagine the power with which this statement must have struck this woman, especially from One who knew "everything she ever did." She left her water jar and hurried into the city to tell others about this man who claimed to be the Christ.

The disciples had returned, and Jesus talked with them about the fulfillment that comes from simply doing the task God gives you. He explained the concept of sowing and reaping in God's "harvest field." "Look at the fields," He said, "they are ripe for harvest."

Meanwhile, the woman returned with many Samaritans who came to see Jesus because of her testimony. Obviously, these people were comfortable with Jesus, even though He was a Jew, and invited him to stay longer in Sychar. Many believed, and their conviction after being with Jesus was: "This man really is the Savior of the world" (4:42).

Upon returning to Galilee, Jesus began His second year of public ministry there. He received a warm reception because of the miracles they had seen Him do in Jerusalem. But He knew that "a prophet has no honor in his own country."

Upon arrival in Cana, a royal official--a Gentile in Herod's service-- came from Capernaum asking Jesus to heal his son who was at home critically ill. Jesus saw genuine faith in the heart of this man and healed the boy without even going to him. Jesus declared, "Your son lives," and the official took Jesus at His word and set out for home. While he was still traveling, his servants met him to announce that at one o'clock the day before the fever had left his son. That was the very hour Jesus had announced the child would live. As a result, the official and his entire household believed.

**Read John 4:1-15.**

1. a. Imagine and describe the situation as Jesus met the woman at the well (4:3-6).

**Note:** *Sixth hour* is noon.

b. Why was the woman so surprised that Jesus spoke to her (7-9)?

**Reference:** Note 1, *Samaritans*, page 42.

2. How did Jesus arouse the woman's curiosity about Him (4:10-12)?

3. What did Jesus claim He could give (4:13-14)?

**Read John 4:16-26.**

4. What did Jesus accomplish by revealing that He knew her personal life (4:16-18)?

5. a. What did Jesus teach the woman about worship (4:23-24)

**Reference:** Note 2, *You worship that which you do not know*, page 42.

b. Jesus spoke of God as a perfect heavenly *Father*. This was not a term used for God prior to Christ's coming. What image of God and relationship with Him did Jesus introduce?

6. When the woman brought up the coming Messiah, what did Jesus tell her (4:26)?

**Note:** This is the first recorded time that Jesus made a direct statement to be the Messiah. He normally referred to Himself as the "Son of Man." (See Note 4, *Son of Man*, page 18.

**Read John 4:27-42.**

7. What motivation energized Jesus which He wanted his disciples to experience (4:34-35)?

8. What resulted from the witness of the woman at the well (4:39-42)?

**Read John 4:43-54.**

9. a. How did the official demonstrate his faith in Jesus' words (4:46b-47,50)?

b. What was the result of the official's faith (4:50-53)?

**Note:** *Re: 4:54.* Jesus had done many miracles prior to this time (2:23; 3:2). John refers to this as the second miracle in Cana.

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Fully Known and Fully Loved**

The woman at the well was surprised when a Jew actually lowered Himself to converse with her, a Samaritan woman. How much more surprised she must have been when she realized He knew everything about her embarrassing past and present failures. Yet He talked to her respectfully and treated her as a person of worth, even to the point of confiding in her that He was the promised Messiah.

We all have a desire to be fully known and fully loved. We are all wounded and imperfect people. While the society around us encourages us to hide our imperfection in order to be accepted, Jesus welcomes us as we are and sees us as we can be. Let's examine more about this One who knows us better than we know ourselves and still loves us perfectly.

1. a. What feelings do we experience when our shortcomings are exposed?

b. What do we expect from those who see?

c. What happens when we are criticized or rejected because of our weaknesses?

2. What happens when our shortcomings are exposed but the one who sees them still loves us?

3. How does I Corinthians 13:4-8a describe the kind of love that builds and the love Christ showed the woman at the well?

4. a. Jesus told a parable about the love of God in the face of failure and imperfection. What does Luke 15:11-24 disclose about the heart of God?

b. What does the parable tell us about receiving that love?

5. What do the following state about God's knowledge of you?

Psalm 139:1-4,13-14,16

Hebrews 4:13

6. One of the titles given Christ in the Bible is *redeemer*. The word describes one who brings about the release of a captive by paying a ransom note *or* who purchases a slave in order to set him free.<sup>3</sup> How is Jesus described as our redeemer in the following?

Colossians 1:13-14

Titus 2:14

7. a. Put another way, the redemption of Christ "fixes broken things"-- our broken relationship with God, the broken pieces of our lives, difficult situations we face. He came to redeem broken people like the woman at the well. As a loving redeemer, what did Jesus picture for this woman's life as He spoke of living water "welling up" inside her?

b. In redeeming love, what does Jesus want us to experience today?

John 8:32

John 10:10b

Romans 8:28

Romans 15:13

Ephesians 3:19

8. How can we, as the Samaritans and the Gentile official of John 4:46-53, experience the redemptive love Christ offers, even as we are fully known by Him for our failures?

John 4:10b,13-14

Isaiah 55:1,6-7

## **Summary**

9. What have you observed in this lesson about Christ's awareness and understanding of your life and circumstances?

10. What have you observed about the love and acceptance of Christ from His interaction with the woman at the well?

11. What would you have Jesus redeem in your life?

## LESSON 5 NOTES

**1** *Samaritans.* The Jews had a strong prejudice against the Samaritans. These people were descendants of colonists whom the Assyrian kings had planted in Palestine after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. Because of their mixed blood (through intermarriage with Jews) and religion that combined pagan and Hebrew faith, the Jews regarded the Samaritans as worse than Gentiles. The feeling was mutual; the Samaritans reacted to Jewish rejection and encroachment on their land. (Galilee was at one time part of Samaria.) For this reason, Samaritans often refused lodging to Jews passing through, and Jews often traveled on the east side of the Jordan River to avoid Samaria.

**2** *You worship that which you do not know...(4:22).* The Jews had more completely preserved the Scriptures. Only the Pentateuch, or first five books of the Old Testament Scriptures, were contained in the Samaritan Bible. While they did worship God, the fact that they did not embrace much of the prophetic revelation limited their knowledge of God.

**3** *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, page 263.

# LESSON 6

## TRIP TO JERUSALEM

### John 5

After a time of ministry in Galilee, Jesus went to Jerusalem to attend one of the annual Jewish feasts. In Jerusalem, there was a Pool called Bethesda where blind, crippled and paralyzed invalids waited in hopes of miraculous healing. At the pool, Jesus came upon a man who had been lame for thirty-eight years. With the Lord's words, "Pick up your mat and walk," the man was able to get up and walk. As a crowd formed, Jesus slipped away without the man even knowing who had healed him.

Rather than rejoicing with the cured man who had been healed, the Jews<sup>1</sup> protested that the man carried his mat on the Sabbath. (The "tradition of the elders"<sup>2</sup> prohibited one from carrying any load on the Sabbath.) The man told them that the one who healed him commanded him to do this.

Later, Jesus recognized the man at the Temple and encouraged him, now that he was physically well, to turn from sin and be spiritually healed. Some believe that the words, "Stop sinning or something worse may happen," suggest that Jesus knew the man's lameness was the result of something he had done wrong. Nevertheless, Jesus' clear concern was for the man's soul.

After this, the man told the authorities that it was Jesus who healed him. Knowing Jesus was aware He had violated their Sabbath laws, the Jewish leaders launched a hostile campaign against Him. Their attacks did not cease until His crucifixion a year and a half later.

But Jesus took advantage of the conflict to teach His opponents about who He was, and none of what He shared pleased them. He claimed to be the Son of God who only worked in conjunction with His Father's wishes, received through firsthand communication. In this Father-Son relationship, Jesus claimed to have been given power and authority to give life, to judge man's sin and to be honored equally with the Father who sent Him. Jesus declared that those who believed the Father's words through the Son would be spared condemnation and receive eternal life. He told them that in the future, people would rise from death to life<sup>3</sup> because He was doing the Father's work.

These words only increased the Jewish leaders' determination to kill Jesus. Even so, Jesus continued to attempt to break through their denial of truth by giving evidence which supported His claims. The powerful prophet John the Baptist had testified that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God. The miracles of healing Jesus was performing could not be done apart from God and were God's authentication of His Son's claims. The Father himself bore witness<sup>4</sup> of Jesus at His baptism and throughout the Scriptures, and the Scriptures themselves gave specific information which would identify Him as the Messiah.<sup>5</sup>

Then Jesus, knowing their hearts, confronted the Jewish leaders about the pride which was blinding them to God and his truth. "I know you," He told them. "I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?" Furthermore, Jesus stated, even Moses, the supreme lawgiver to whom the Jewish leaders proudly attached themselves, had written prophecy<sup>6</sup> concerning the Messiah which would in the end condemn them.

### **Read John 5:1-18.**

1. What was the condition of the invalid Jesus healed? What seemed to motivate Jesus to help him (5:5-7)?

2. As the crowd gathered around the healed man, Jesus slipped away. On what did the Jews focus (5:10)?

**References:** Note 1, *The Jews*, page 50, and Note 2, 'tradition of the elders,' page 50.

3. What did the Jewish leaders set out to do and why (5:16-18)?

### **Read John 5:19-30.**

4. How did Jesus describe His relationship with the Father (5:19-20)?

5. What did Jesus claim the Father had given Him power and authority to do (5:21-22,27)?

**Reference:** Note 3, *death to life*, page 50.

6. What honor did Jesus claim (5:23)?

7. What did Jesus claim He would give the one who believes in Him (5:24-26)?

**Note:** Vs. 25 refers not only to the future resurrection of believers to possess imperishable bodies (I Corinthians 15:42-54) but also to the fact that Christ gives life now. The spiritually dead who hear him receive life from him. *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1604. **Reference:** Note 6, *Death for the believer*, p 120.

## **Read John 5:31-47.**

8. In His confrontation with the Jewish leadership, Jesus had clearly claimed to be equal with God (5:18), to be the source of life (5:26), to be able to give eternal life (5:26) and to judge sin (5:27).

Jesus did not support His claims to deity by His testimony alone. He pointed to the testimony of John the Baptist on His behalf (5:33) and the miracles (like the healing of the lame man) which God was enabling Him to perform (5:36). The voice of the Father<sup>4</sup> (5:37), the Scripture prophecy about the Messiah<sup>5</sup> (5:39) and the prophecy of Moses<sup>6</sup> (5:46) also validated Jesus' claims.

In spite of this evidence, the Jewish leaders would not believe. Why did Jesus say they did not have the heart to recognize him?

John 5:37-38

John 5:39-40

John 5:41-44

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Guarding Against Pride**

The Jewish leaders of the day held tremendous power over the people. Some of these leaders, no doubt, were faithful men, but most made a show of piety while using their spiritual leadership position to feed addictions to power, prestige, and pride.

The growing popularity of Jesus threatened the control that the religious leaders held over the people. Jesus cared only about God's approval. He lived simply, owned nothing and moved among the poor and common people as readily as the rich. The miracles He performed and His authoritative and equitable teaching drew the people to Him. They loved

Him. But the religious leaders became more and more infuriated by Jesus, who exposed their hypocrisy and claimed, as the Son of God, to be spiritually superior to them.

Had they not been ruled by greed and status, the Jewish leaders would have recognized the Christ sent to them by God. Had their love and knowledge of God not been destroyed by pride and conceit, they would have heard the voice of God as Jesus stood before them. Had they been motivated by God's approval rather than the praise of men which gave them power and control, they might have recognized and embraced their Savior.

There is a great warning here for us. We, too, can easily become controlled by maintaining a certain image or status which gives us a sense of being in control or better than others. The world around us or our own family heritage may support such practices, but God has no part in them. He knows that pride can completely negate the truly fulfilling experience of knowing and loving God and others.

Conceit and feelings of superiority *toward anyone* is a warning sign to step back and, with God's help, make different choices. Let's make some observations from the Scriptures on these important principles.

1. How would you define vanity or conceit?

2. a. Where do you see snobbery and conceit in the society around you?

b. How is snobbery used manipulatively? What do pride and conceit reveal about a person?

c. How do pride and conceit affect relationships in the family, workplace or community?

3. What results of conceit and pride does the Bible warn us about?

Proverbs 11:2

Proverbs 16:18

James 4:6b

4. a. The religious leaders demonstrated that pride can lead to hypocrisy in the professed believer. How did Jesus define hypocrisy?

Matthew 23:28

b. What principles in the following verses can help us to identify and avoid hypocrisy?

Psalms 36:2

Matthew 6:24

James 1:22,25

Romans 12:2

5. a. How did Jesus, fully God and fully human, avoid conceit?

Matthew 20:28

John 5:30,41

**Note:** "I'm not interested in crowd approval" (5:41). *The Message* translation.

b. How does the Bible instruct us to avoid conceit and selfishness in our relationships with others?

Leviticus 19:15

Philippians 2:4-8

Colossians 3:12,14

## Summary

6. a. Are there areas in which you struggle periodically with conceit or feelings of superiority over others, or when you are tempted to use money or position to gain control?

b. While God wants you to appreciate the abilities and gifts He has given you, what is the balance He knows will lead to true fulfillment?

7. How can conceit or vanity prevent you from experiencing a fulfilling relationship with God through Jesus Christ?

8. What warning about pride is most obvious to you from this lesson?

## LESSON 6 NOTES

**1** *The Jews* (5:10) is a term used by John 70 times in his Gospel. It generally means the city leaders and more often the Jewish leaders who were hostile toward Jesus.

**2** *The 'tradition of the elders'* distinguished thirty-nine categories of work which might not be undertaken on the Sabbath; the thirty-ninth of these involved carrying a load from one dwelling to another. By this standard the man's action in carrying his pallet home violated the Sabbath law. Jesus initially met serious conflict with the religious authorities because He infringed on the traditional interpretation of the Sabbath law (not the law of Moses, but their interpretation of it). Jesus met deadly hostility from his opponents when He declared to be Lord, i.e. to have sovereign authority, over the Sabbath (Mark 2:28).

See also Note 2, *he does not keep the Sabbath*, page 102.

**3** *death to life*. "Jesus' life-giving power can call a person out of the grave (11:43), everyone from their tombs (5:28-29), or anyone in spiritual death (5:24) to eternal life." Walvoord & Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, page 291.

**4** *Witness of God the Father* (5:37). The Father had given audible and visual testimony about His Son at His baptism (cf. Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:10; John 1:32-33), but as the incarnate Word of God (John 1:1-2,14), Jesus was also referring to Himself as the embodiment of all Scripture given by God through the prophets.

**5** *Scripture Prophecy Concerning Messiah fulfilled in Jesus*. The Old Testament Messianic prophecies described a Kingly Messiah and a Suffering Messiah. The Jews preferred to focus on the Kingly Messiah who would establish Israel as *the* world power (cf. Psalm 2:6-8; Isaiah 9:6-7; 42:1-4; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14). Jesus said that after the suffering of His incarnation, He would come again (cf. Matthew 26:64; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:11; Hebrews 9:28) and completely fulfill the Kingly Messianic prophecy. The major Messianic prophecies which were fulfilled in Jesus' first coming to earth are as follows:

**Major Prophecies Concerning the Messiah  
Fulfilled in Jesus**

<b>Description of Prophecy</b>	<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>Fulfillment</b>
<i>"Offspring of a Woman"</i>	<i>Gen. 3:15</i>	<i>Gal. 4:4</i>
<i>Descendant of Abraham</i>	<i>Gen. 18:18</i>	<i>Acts 3:25</i>
<i>Descendant of Isaac</i>	<i>Gen. 17:19</i>	<i>Mt. 1:2</i>
<i>Descendant of Jacob</i>	<i>Num. 24:17</i>	<i>Lk 3:34</i>
<i>Descendant from tribe of Judah</i>	<i>Gen. 49:10</i>	<i>Lk 3:33</i>
Descendant of David	Isa. 9:7	Mt. 1:1
Place of birth	Mic. 5:2	Mt. 2:1
Born of a virgin	Isa 7:14	Mt. 1:18
Ministry in Galilee	Isa 9:1-2,6	Mt. 4:12-16
<i>As a Prophet</i>	<i>Dt. 18:15</i>	<i>John 6:14</i>
His rejection by Jews	Isa. 53:3	John 1:11
Some of his characteristics	Is. 11:2	Lk. 2:52
His triumphal entry	Zec. 9:9	John 12:13-14
Betrayed for thirty silver pieces	Zec. 11:12	Mt. 26:15
Money returned for potter's field	Zec. 11:13	Mt. 27:6-7
Silent when accused	Is. 53:7	Mt. 26:62-63
Struck and spit on	Is. 50:6	Mk. 14:65
Suffered vicariously	Isa. 53:4-5	Mt. 8:16-17
Crucified with sinners	Isa 53:12	Mt. 27:38
Hands and feet pierced	Ps. 22:16	John 19:29
Mocked and insulted	Ps. 22:6-8	Mt. 27:39-40
His side to be pierced	Zec. 12:10	John 19:34
Soldiers cast lots for his clothes	Ps. 22:18	Mk. 15:24
Buried with the rich	Isa. 53:9	Mt. 27:57-60
Resurrection	Ps. 16:10	Mt. 28:9
Ascension	Ps. 68:18-20	Lk. 24:50-51

**Note:** Sometimes it is difficult to understand these prophecies from a non-Jewish mindset, but they were clear to the Jew.

**6.** *Moses wrote prophecy* which was recognized by the Jews to be about the Messiah. These included the Genesis, Numbers and Deuteronomy references above (in italics). His writings also included Exodus 12:21 and Leviticus 16:5 which pointed to the sacrifices foreshadowing the Lamb of God (cf. Note 2, *Lamb of God*, page 18), and Numbers 21:9, mentioned in John 3:14 (cf. Note 6, *snake lifted up*, p 34).

# LESSON 7

## JESUS PROVIDES FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE

### John 6:1-34

Around the end of Jesus' second year of ministry, He and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee and withdrew to a mountain northeast of the sea. Their respite did not last long, however, because so many knew of Jesus' miracles among the sick that thousands followed Him and His disciples. At mealtime, Jesus asked the Twelve how they thought they might feed the people. No doubt overwhelmed at the very idea of taking such responsibility, the disciples had no answers for Jesus.

Then a young boy offered five small barley loaves and two small fish to meet the need. Jesus instructed everyone to be seated on the grass (5,000 men plus women and children; cf. Matthew 14:21), then gave thanks to God for the food and proceeded to multiply the loaves and fish to feed *everyone* in the crowd! After everyone had eaten their fill, there were still twelve baskets of bread remaining.

The people were thrilled and decided to make Jesus their king. Knowing that the people were still more focused on what He could give them physically and materially than spiritually, Jesus withdrew to the mountains to be alone.

That evening, the disciples, without Jesus, headed back across the Sea of Galilee for Capernaum in a boat. A storm came up, making the sea very turbulent. But the disciples were even more terrified when they saw Jesus, whom they thought to be a ghost (cf. Mark 6:49), walking on the waves toward them! "It is I; don't be afraid," He said as He approached them. Jesus entered the boat, and they quickly reached their destination.

Meanwhile, the crowds continued to search and finally found Jesus in Capernaum. They wanted more of the miracles Jesus could give them. But Jesus sought to turn their focus away from the gifts and onto the Giver. The purpose of His miracles were to lead them to believe in the Son of God and bread of life. A relationship with Him, He promised, would sustain life eternally.

### **Read John 6:1-15.**

1. What were the interests of the people who followed Jesus (6:2,14-15)?

**Note:** *The Prophet* (6:14) is the one Moses foretold in Deuteronomy 18:15.

2. a. Why do you think Jesus asked His disciples how they could feed the crowd (6:5-9)?

b. What did the disciples have to do to feed the thousands of people (6:10-13)?

3. What was Jesus' response to the crowd (6:15)?

### **Read John 6:16-21.**

4. Within several hours, the disciples witnessed Jesus miraculously feeding thousands and then walking on the Sea of Galilee during a storm. What do you think these incidents taught the disciples about Jesus?

**Reference:** Note 4, *Son of Man*, page 18.

## **Read John 6:22-34.**

5. a. What was Jesus' assessment of the crowds' motives in searching Him out, and what did Jesus want the people to have (6:26-27)?

b. What two types of bread did Jesus compare (6:27,30-33)?

c. How did the crowd's response validate Jesus' statement regarding their motives (6:30,34)?

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Provisions for Body & Soul**

All of us face circumstances when the task seems too overwhelming or the need too great. There are wonderful implications for these times from the accounts of Jesus feeding the hungry thousands and later walking across the water to join his fearful disciples on the stormy sea. One clear implication is that God can do the impossible to meet our needs. When our human capacity and resources fall short, the problem is still not too difficult for God.

But there is a second very important principle to be learned from these stories. It is that God's priority is the need within our soul. This is seen in Christ's concern that the people focus on knowing and walking with Him rather than seeking Him simply as One to meet basic needs and alleviate temporal problems. Beyond meeting our physical needs, the great fulfillment Jesus offers is intimacy with God, the source of food for the soul and provision for the emotional needs of the heart.

As we continue our study of *Quest for Fulfillment*, let's take a closer look at what the Scriptures say about God's desire to meet *all* our needs.

1. The crowd was without means to feed themselves. The disciples were at risk on the stormy night sea. What types of overwhelming experiences do we face in our daily lives?

2. a. How did the disciples approach the problem of the hungry crowd in ways that mirror typical human responses to overwhelming situations?

b. What types of things do we often turn to before God for help?

3. a. What does the story of Jesus feeding of the five thousand illustrate about seemingly impossible situations?

b. Of what can we be assured in the face of seeming impossibilities?

Luke 1:37

Philippians 4:19

4. a. What did the little boy and his meager offering demonstrate about God's provision?

b. What does II Corinthians 12:9-10 suggest?

5. The feeding of the five thousand illustrated God's concern for our everyday needs. How do the following describe the Lord's ability and desire to provide for:

*Our practical needs?*

Psalm 23:1,5

Matthew 6:31-33

*Our need for protection?*

Psalm 91:14-15

Isaiah 46:4

6. What does God invite us to do with our need?

Psalm 62:8

Philippians 4:6-7

7. As long as people came to Jesus seeking only temporal things, Jesus knew their deepest needs would go unmet. What does the Bible say will satisfy our deepest needs?

Matthew 5:6

Ephesians 3:16-19

I Timothy 6:17-19

8. What did Jesus know the person would receive who desired to know Him and the truth He brought?

Psalm 37:4

Psalm 112:8a

Matthew 11:28-29

John 8:32 (Psalm 119:32)

## **Summary**

9. Are there any situations in your life right now where you have to say honestly, "This is impossible" or "I can't do it." What hope does the story of the feeding of the five thousand hold for you?

10. Are there any dangerous or fearful situations in your life today? What does the story of Jesus coming to the disciples on the stormy sea say to you?

11. In addition to these helps, what are the greater gifts that Jesus wants to give you as you choose to put Him first?

12. If you have known these truths for some time, what reminders are here for you?

# LESSON 8

## JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE

### John 6:35-71

Jesus had miraculously fed thousands of people on the plain near Bethsaida, and many of those wanted to make Him their king. Even though Jesus sought to evade these people, they finally found Him back in Capernaum.

Knowing they wanted Him as king only because of His ability to give them food and healing, Jesus explained that the food He wanted to give was far more valuable. Unlike the perishable manna which God rained down to feed the Israelites in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 16:4), the life-giving Bread which God now sent from heaven could give power over death. Jesus claimed to be this Bread of Life and declared that those who made Him king in their hearts would receive food that sustained unending life. The one who would unite with Him, or, figuratively speaking, who would "eat His flesh and drink His blood,"<sup>1</sup> would live forever.

While the Jewish hearers knew Jesus was not suggesting cannibalism, the word picture was thoroughly repulsive to them because of their laws (cf. Leviticus 17:10-11). For this reason, many of Jesus' disciples ceased to follow Him. He then turned to the Twelve and asked if they, too, would leave. Peter, their spokesperson, replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." To this Jesus replied that even one of the Twelve would betray Him.

**Read John 6:35-51.**

1. What did Jesus promise the person who receives Him as the Bread of Life (6:35)?
  
2. a. According to Jesus, how are we drawn to Him in faith (6:37, 44)?

**Reference:** Note 2, *All that the Father gives me*, page 66.

- b. List the promises of Jesus regarding those the Father draws to Him (6:37-40).

**Reference:** Note 3, *raise them up at the last day*, page 66.

3. a. What problem did the Galilean Jews have when Jesus claimed to have "come down from heaven" (6:42)?
  
- b. What did Jesus claim about anyone who "listens to the Father" and believes (6:45, 47)?

4. How did Jesus contrast the bread He offers with the manna God rained from heaven for the Israelites (6:48-51)?

*Manna*

*Bread of Life*

**Read John 6:52-59.**

5. What did Jesus proclaim one must do to receive eternal life (6:56-58)?

**Reference:** Note 1, *eats my flesh*, page 66.

**Read John 6:60-71.**

6. Jesus encouraged his disciples to accept His teaching as from the Spirit who gives life and not to be ruled by their human reaction. What happened (6:66)?

7. a. When Jesus asked the Twelve if they wanted to leave, too, what was Peter's response (6:67-69)?

b. What did Jesus reveal about the *slight* inaccuracy in Peter's statement (6:70-71)?

**References:** Note 4, *one of you is a devil*, and Note 5, *Satan, demons*, page 66.

c. What did this knowledge demonstrate about Jesus' character?

## BUILDING ON THE BASICS

### Satisfying the Hunger of the Heart

Pascal, the French physicist and philosopher said, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which only God can fill through His Son, Jesus Christ." He was describing a hunger in the heart of man that must be filled by the Bread of Life.

People attempt to feed this hunger with different things: relationships, accomplishments, new acquisitions, travel, even excessive work or play. Living with the illusion that the hunger inside will at last be satisfied by that *thing* we do not yet possess, we strive to secure *it*. If we are successful, we discover *it* doesn't fill the vacuum. The relationships take work; friends, spouses and children can often disappoint us. Material things take maintenance and wear out with time. New experiences become memories. The quest to fill the vacuum can lead to extreme disillusionment, even hopelessness. The hunger remains, coupled with the longing for something *permanently* fulfilling.

When Jesus announced that He was the Bread of Life, He was bringing wonderful news. He was claiming that knowing Him personally could satisfy the hungry heart. In calling Himself the Bread of Life, Jesus created a word picture which describes our *daily* need for interaction with Him in a loving and everlasting relationship. He offers Himself to us as daily "manna," to fill the need which God created in us for a secure relationship with our Creator and for permanence in that relationship.

St. Augustine of Hippo wrote centuries ago, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee." Let's look at how Jesus offers rest and eternal fulfillment to satisfy the hunger of the heart.

1. For what do our hearts yearn? How would you describe the hunger in the human heart?

2. a. In what ways do people try to satisfy this hunger?

b. What is the result of trying to satisfy the hunger in these ways? What do we ultimately discover?

3. H. G. Wells, the famous historian and philosopher said at the age of 61, "I have no peace. All life is at the end of its tether." Thoreau, the literary genius, said, "Most men live lives of quiet desperation."

How do people try to escape the emptiness and disillusionment they experience?

4. a. What did Jesus instruct us to do in our quest to fulfill the cravings inside?

John 6:27

b. What promise did He make in John 6:35?

5. What can a relationship with Jesus Christ give that fulfills deep human needs?

John 14:27;16:33

John 15:11

John 15:9

Romans 8:35,38-39

6.a. Jesus compared Himself to the manna God sent from heaven when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness. What was God's instruction to the Israelites about how often they were to gather the manna?

Exodus 16:4

b. What does this suggest about nurturing Christ's life in us?

c. How does the Lord's prayer reflect this?

Matthew 6:11

7. What is involved in being nourished by the Lord?

Psalms 105:1-5

Matthew 11:28-30

8. What are we promised as we seek to feed the hunger inside with the Bread of Life?

Matthew 5:6

Psalm 34:8

Psalm 16:11

## **Summary**

9. a. Have you or has someone you know been trying to fill the daily need for relationship with Christ with other things instead?

b. What has been the result?

10. What is the Lord's promise as you accept Him as the Bread of Life?

## LESSON 8 NOTES

**1** *eats my flesh* (6:56) "How can Jesus give us his flesh as bread to eat? To eat living bread means to accept Christ into our lives and become united with him. We are united with Christ in two ways: (1) by believing in his death (the sacrifice of his flesh) and resurrection and (2) by devoting ourselves to living as he requires, depending on his teaching for guidance and trusting in the Holy Spirit for power." *NIV Life Application Bible*, page 1888.

Clear in this analogy are: (1) the voluntary and vicarious death for sin Jesus would undergo (Isaiah 52:13-53:12), and (2) the oneness and union that feeds the soul of the one who receives Him.

**2** *All that the Father gives me* (6:37). "God's action (see v. 44; 10:29; 17:6; 18:9), not man's (v. 28), is primary in salvation, and Christ's mercy is unfailing (see vv. 31-40; 10:28; 17:9,12,15,19; 18:9)." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1607.

**3** *raise him up at the last day* (6:39). Jesus claimed that living forever with God begins by accepting Jesus Christ as Savior. At that time, new life begins (II Corinthians 5:17). While we still face physical death, the Scriptures say that we will be raised to unending life when Christ returns again (I Corinthians 15; I Thessalonians 4:13-17).

**4** *one of you is a devil* (6:70). Jesus knew from the beginning that in the end Judas would betray and oppose Him in the power of Satan (13:2,18-30).

**5** *Satan, demons*. In other gospels there are numerous incidents cited where Jesus delivered people from demons. While the whole idea of Satan and evil adversaries called demons is incredible to some, it is important to understand what the Bible has to say about them.

The Bible refers to Satan as an angelic being who led a heavenly revolt against God. Consequently, God cast him out of heaven with his rebelling host of angels (II Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:7-9). Under Satan's leadership, these angelic beings became known as demons, and are very organized in their schemes and attacks on human beings (Ephesians 6:12). Satan and his forces work to get people to worship Satan (Luke 4:7) and to prevent individuals from turning to God (Luke 4:8). Satan's defeat is promised in Genesis 3:15 and was completed at the cross of Christ (Colossians 2:15). He is still a force to be reckoned with until Christ returns to judge the earth (Matthew 16:27). James 4:7 instructs believers to resist the devil (or demonic forces) by continually willing God's leadership in their lives.

# LESSON 9

## AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

### JOHN 7

Jesus continued to preach and perform miracles in Galilee instead of Judea, where the religious leaders were seeking to kill Him. In the autumn, as the Feast of Tabernacles approached, his brothers urged Jesus to go to Jerusalem and make a public display of His miracles.<sup>1</sup> Although His brothers later became believers (cf. Acts 1:14), at this time Jesus had utterly disappointed them regarding their expectation of a kingly Messiah,<sup>2</sup> and they did not believe in Him. Jesus explained to them that it was not God's timing for Him to go and display His power. To do so would hasten His death.

But after His family left, Jesus went quietly to the celebration in Jerusalem, hiding from the mobs, because everyone wanted to see Him. Halfway through the Feast of Tabernacles, He began to teach in the Temple. Jewish leaders were astounded at His learning; even so, they questioned His authority to teach. Jesus answered as before. He declared his words to be utterly true and His teaching to be the message of God from whose presence He had come.

Knowing the hostility of some, Jesus rebuked their murderous intentions. Most of the crowd were unaware of plans to kill Jesus, and some accused Him of being demon-possessed in His accusations. The people remained perplexed over Christ's identity. However, they were intimidated about openly discussing the subject because the religious leaders had threatened to excommunicate those who believed in Jesus.

Because it was not yet time for His death, none of those seeking to kill Jesus were able to lay a hand on Him. Then Jesus began to teach that He would soon be going where they could not follow. The people, already confused over who Jesus was, were now even more confused about His destiny, as were the religious leaders.

On the last day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried out an invitation to follow Him. "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink," He said. "Whoever believes in Me," He promised, "streams of living water will flow from within him" (7:37-38).

The Temple police, who had been instructed to arrest Jesus, came back to the chief priests and Pharisees without having done so. They explained that they had never heard anyone speak like this man. The religious leaders were infuriated with the guards and cursed the crowd who continued to be drawn to Jesus.

Then Nicodemus, himself a Pharisee who had talked with Jesus earlier (John 3:1-15), rebuked the leaders for not judging Jesus through their own laws of fairness. But the leaders, now blinded by pride, became obsessed with killing Jesus. They were beyond reasoning fairly.

### **Read John 7:1-13.**

1. a. What confused Jesus' brothers? What did they suggest in their unbelief (7:1-5)?

**Reference:** Note 5, *Scripture Prophecy Concerning Messiah*, page 50-51.

b. How did Jesus respond to the pressure (7:6-10)?

2. Even before Jesus arrived, what was happening in Jerusalem (7:11-13)?

**Read John 7:14-24.**

3. What amazed the Jewish leaders (7:14-15)?

4. a. What did Jesus declare in response to the Jews' amazement at His learned teaching (7:16)?

b. What did Jesus say about one's discernment regarding His teaching (7:17)?

c. What principle of honor did Jesus declare (7:18)? What subtle comparison did He make?

5. a. What did Jesus openly reveal about the Jewish leaders (7:19)?

b. What did Jesus urge the Pharisees to do (7:21-24)?

**Note:** In vs. 21, Jesus probably referred to the healing of the lame man on the Sabbath (5:1-9). He had performed many miracles, but mostly in Galilee. (Cf. Note 1, *Miracles of Jesus*, page 75.)

**Read John 7:25-32.**

6. a. What increased the frustration of the Jewish authorities (7:25-26, 30-31)?

b. What did the religious leaders determine to do (7:32)?

7. What did Jesus announce to the people that caused further confusion about who He was (7:33-36)?

8. What open invitation did Jesus give on the last day of the feast (7:37-39)?

**References:** Note 3, *baptize with the Holy Spirit*, page 18, and Note 2, *Holy Spirit*, page 33.

**Read John 7:40-52.**

9. a. What was the general response to the presence and teaching of Jesus (7:40-43)?

b. What prevailed in the midst of the confusion and hostility (7:44-46)?

10. Describe the response of the religious leaders to the people, the guards, and Nicodemus, one of their own (7:47-52)?

**Note:** *a prophet does not come out of Galilee (7:52)*. The Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) and from the line of David (Isaiah 9:7), both of which were true of Jesus. These normally meticulous religious leaders were not seeking, but rather covering over truth at this point. See also Isaiah 9:1-3, 6.

## BUILDING ON THE BASICS

### Understanding Perfect Timing

Throughout the Gospel of John and particularly in John 7, there are many references made to the *timing* of God. Jesus expressed sensitivity to God's timing regarding when to go to Jerusalem and what to do there. Again and again, the Jewish leaders were unable to lay hands on Jesus because it was not *time* for His death. Even so, Jesus told them that the *time* was coming soon when they would no longer be able to see and hear and touch Him. He would soon go back to the Father. And He spoke of the time to come when the Spirit would indwell every believer.<sup>3</sup>

In a broader sense, it was not *time* for the Messiah to reign, but it was now time for Him to die for the sin of the world. It was not *time* to reveal the power of God, but time to demonstrate the sacrificial love and humility of God. It was not time to glorify Israel but time to draw the faithful in Israel to their Savior.

While Jesus continually submitted to God's perfect timing, He also experienced the difficulty of submission to God's plan. Although He never gave in to the temptation, He experienced the desire that we are born with to be in control of our circumstances. We want what *we* want when *we* want it, and can become very frustrated when we cannot get life to work that way.

Jesus knows from experience this human struggle, but because He understood that God's plan and timing are perfect, He found peace and even joy (Hebrews 12:2) on the difficult road of His earthly mission. He was motivated to persevere in spite of the hideous criticism and death He faced. He found present joy in His ministry to receptive people (John 15:11) and experienced deep love for His disciples (John 15:9).

If we do not cultivate trust in God's timing, worry and bewilderment can rob us of the good in the present moment that will never come again. Like the crowd who did not appreciate the privilege of actually being in the presence of the Son of God, we miss the blessings and the wholeness God desires to produce in us through the difficulties. But if we seek His plans and timing for our individual lives, the Bible promises peace and fulfillment.

Jesus moved perfectly and fearlessly with the timing of God, and so can we. Let's observe how understanding and embracing God's timing is essential in our quest for fulfillment.

1. What is stated about God's timing in the following verses?

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Ecclesiastes 8:5b-6

2. What must we realize about God's ways as we seek God's timing?

Psalms 18:30,32

Psalms 25:10

Isaiah 55:8-9

Jeremiah 29:11

Romans 8:28

Romans 8:32

3. How did Jesus know His Father's timing?

Luke 5:16; 6:12

4. What must we do in order to sense and rest in God's perfect timing? What do the following suggest?

Psalm 46:10a

Psalm 130:5 (Psalm 27:14)

5. Discerning God's timing requires wisdom. Where can we find wisdom?

Colossians 2:2c-3

Proverbs 2:6 (James 1:5)

6. In Isaiah 9:6, Christ is described as a Wonderful Counselor. What does He promise as you seek His wisdom to discern God's perfect way and timing?

Psalm 23:1-3

Isaiah 45:2-3

## Summary

7. a. Is there an area of your life which you want to submit to God's timing?

b. According to the Bible, what will result from submitting to God's plan and timing in this area?

8. a. What is your part in experiencing God's timing in your situation?

b. What decision described in Psalm 31:14-15a will give you peace?

## LESSON 9 NOTES

**1 MIRACLES OF JESUS.** John clearly stated that Jesus did many miracles not recorded in his gospel (20:30; 21:25). He chose only eight of Jesus' miracles to reveal His divinity and validate His claims to be sent from God to give life. The following are a list of the miracles of Jesus recorded in the gospels. (\*Healed on the Sabbath.)

*Water changed to wine*, Jn 2:9.

*Nobleman's son cured*, Jn 4:46.

*Catch of fishes*, Lk 5:6.

*\*Demoniac in the synagogue delivered*, Mk 1:26; Lk 4:35.

*\*Peter's mother-in-law healed*, Mat 8:14; Mk 1:31; Lk 4:38.

*Cleansing the leper*, Mat 8:3; Mk 1:41; Lk 5:13.

*Paralytic*, Mat 9:2; Mk 2:3; Lk 5:18.

*\*Invalid healed*, Jn 5:5.

*\*Shriveled hand healed*, Mat 12:10; Mk 3:1; Lk 6:6.

*Centurion's servant healed*, Mat 8:5; Lk 7:2.

*Raising the widow's son from death*, Lk 7:11.

*Demoniac delivered*, Mat 12:22; Lk 11:14.

*Tempest stilled*, Mat 8:26; Mk 4:39; Lk 8:24.

*Demoniacs of Gadara*, Mat 8:28; Mk 5:1; Lk 8:26.

*Raising of Jairus' daughter*, Mat 9:18; Mk 5:42; Lk 8:41.

*Bleeding woman healed*, Mat 9:20; Mk 5:25; Lk 8:43.

*Blind men*, Mat 9:27. *Demoniac*, Mat 9:32.

*Feeding five thousand*, Mat 14:15; Mk 6:41; Lk 9:12; Jn 6:5.

*Walking on the sea*, Mat 14:25; Mk 6:49; Jn 6:19.

*Daughter of Canaanite or Syrophoenician*, Mat 15:22; Mk 7:25.

*Feeding the four thousand*, Mat 15:32; Mk 8:8.

*Deaf and dumb healed*, Mk 7:33.

*Blind man*, Mk 8:23. *Malchus healed*, Lk 22:51.

*Afflicted child*, Mat 17:14; Mk 9:26; Lk 9:37.

*Tribute money*, Mat 17:24.

*Ten lepers*, Lk 17:12.

*\*Blind man*, Jn 9:1.

*Lazarus raised*, Jn 11.

*\*Heals woman with the spirit of infirmity*, Lk 13:11.

*\*Man with dropsy*, Lk 14:2. *Cursing the fig tree*, Mat 21:19.

*Blind men*, Mat 20:30; Mk 10:46.

*Second catch of fishes*, Jn 21:6.

*His resurrection*, Luke 24:6; Jn 10:18.

*Resurrection appearances*, Mk 16:9; Mt 28:9,17; Lk 24:15,36,50;  
Jn 20:19,26; 21:1; Ac 9:5; I Co 15:5-8.

**2 Reference:** Note 5, *Scripture Prophecy Concerning Messiah*, p. 50.

**3 Reference:** Note 3, *baptize with the Holy Spirit*, page 18.

# LESSON 10

## CHRIST CONFIRMS HIS TEACHING

### John 8:1-30

After the feast was over, the people returned to their homes, but Jesus spent the night on the Mount of Olives. He arrived at the Temple at dawn to teach the people that crowded around to hear Him. In an attempt to get a charge against Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman to Him who had been caught in adultery and asked Him to pronounce a judgment on her case. The law of Moses stated that such a person must be put to death (Leviticus 20:10), but Roman law reserved rights to all capital punishment. If Jesus pardoned her, He could be accused of encouraging people to commit adultery and break the laws of Moses. If He condemned her, however, He would be undermining Roman authority.

Jesus answered, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." His answer did not pardon the woman's sin nor negate the laws of Moses, but rather turned the focus onto the harsh, judgmental ways of the Jewish leaders. In response to His statement, the leaders left one by one, starting with the oldest. The woman was left with Jesus, who said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin" (8:11). The religious leaders tried to use the woman's situation to put Jesus on trial, but He used the trial to free the woman and attempt to open the eyes of those persecuting Him.

As He continued to teach in the Temple, Jesus made the second of seven "I am" statements recorded in the Gospel of John.<sup>1</sup> "I am the light of the

world," He said. "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (8:12).

In Jewish thought, "light" was another word associated with a claim to be God or Messiah. (Cf. Psalm 27:1; Job 29:3; Micah 7:8; Isaiah 60:19.) The Jewish leaders insisted that Jesus' word about Himself was not enough. His claims must be supported by more than one witness. In the past, Jesus supported His claims by the miracles<sup>2</sup> God enabled Him to do and by Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah.<sup>3</sup> But this time, Jesus used only the witness of the Father who sent Him. Jesus simply stated that they would hear and receive the Father's witness about Him if they knew the Father. Jesus went on to say that those who did not believe in Him would die in their sins, having missed the way to God.

The religious leaders' animosity continued to grow. In the midst of the hostility, however, many who heard Jesus put their faith in Him.

### **Read John 8:1-11.**

1. What do you observe about Jesus from John 7:53-8:2?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How did the Pharisees use the woman's situation? What was their attitude toward her (8:3-6)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What sin in her life and in theirs did Jesus acknowledge (8:7-11)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What do you observe about the mercy of Jesus in this story? What did His mercy make possible for the woman?

**Read John 8:12-19.**

5. What promise did Jesus make to the one who believes in Him (8:12)?

**Reference:** Note 1, *"I am" statements of Jesus*, page 84.

6. What did Jesus claim to know about Himself that the religious leaders did not know (8:14)?

7. How did Jesus contrast the judgments of the Pharisees with His own ability to judge (8:15-16)?

**Note:** "The judgment of the Pharisees was limited and worldly. In the sense they meant, Jesus made it clear that He did not judge at all. In the proper sense, of course, He did judge (v. 26)." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1612.

8. a. What claim did Jesus make that continued to fuel the hostility of His opposition (8:19)?

b. How did Jesus state this claim in John 14:9-10?

**Read John 8:21-30.**

9. a. What did Jesus promise those who opposed Him (8:21,23-24)?

**Reference:** Note 4, *die in their sins*, page 84.

b. What did Jesus promise those who believe in Him (John 11:25-26; 14:2-3)?

10. With tenderness and calmness, Jesus spoke to those who would crucify Him. What did Jesus tell the Jews about His identity (8:28)?

**Note:** Jesus referred to His coming crucifixion and resurrection when He spoke of being *lifted up*.

**References:** Note 4, *Son of Man*, page 18.

11. What assurance did Jesus have as He lived to please the Father that we can also have (8:29)?

12. a. In spite of the hostility from religious leaders, what happened (8:30)?

b. Optional Question: What do you think caused people to believe in Jesus?

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **The Importance of Compassion**

As Jesus' responded to the woman caught in adultery, He modeled a character quality essential to fulfillment: compassion.

Maintaining a heart of compassion instead of falling into patterns of judgment and insensitivity requires unselfishness. In the end, however, this choice leads to tremendous blessing. The person who lives only for himself and does not cultivate a heart of compassion will ultimately find life empty, unfulfilling and purposeless. It is essential that we foster compassion in our quest for fulfillment.

While it comes naturally for most to show compassion on the helpless, it is much more difficult to extend mercy to the wrongdoer and nearly impossible to show compassion to those who declare themselves our enemies. In this regard, it is important to notice that from a heart of compassion, Jesus responded differently to different people. He was merciful to the woman caught in adultery, but firm and unyielding with the hypocritical religious leaders. With the woman, He knew mercy and acceptance could change her life. But with the Pharisees, Jesus knew that exposing their hypocrisy and repeating the truth about Himself was the only possible way to break through their denial. Jesus refused to choose the natural defensive responses of retaliation or compromising the truth, but rather continued to take the only path He could to make repentance available to them.

A life of compassion requires that we continually seek the best for other individuals. With this goal in mind, we respond to each situation to the best of our ability. Wisdom, or skill at living, is knowing what form compassion should take with a given person in a given situation.

God wants to give us the wisdom and compassion we need in our quest for fulfillment. In this lesson, we will observe the biblical guidelines related to a life of compassion.

1. a. What attitudes did the religious leaders demonstrate toward the woman? How are these typical responses toward wrong doers?

b. How did Jesus respond to her? What did He desire for her?

2. a. Because of pride and blindness to their own sin, the Pharisees viewed the woman as inferior and worthless. What warning is here for us?

b. What enables us to have a merciful approach toward people?

Philippians 2:5-8

3. How does God promise to produce this kind of unselfishness in us?

Romans 5:5

**Reference:** Note 2, *Holy Spirit*, page 33.

4. a. How did Paul describe the love that the Holy Spirit produces in the humble, willing heart?

I Corinthians 13:4-8a

b. About what did Paul warn in I Corinthians 13:1-3?

5. a. How did Jesus respond differently to the Pharisees than to the woman?

b. Why should caring responses differ in different situations?

c. What does God desire to give us as we seek to respond wisely?

James 1:5

Proverbs 15:4a,23

Proverbs 16:21

6. While He was very firm with them, what attitude toward His enemies did Jesus demonstrate as He hung on the cross?

Luke 23:33-34

II Peter 3:9

7. While extending compassion, Jesus never compromised truth. What must we always do in order to truly help people?

Ephesians 4:15

Job 23:11

8. Maintaining a compassionate heart toward people can require sacrifice and sometimes emotional or physical discomfort. What do the Scriptures promise to the one who sacrificially gives to the needs of others?

Proverbs 11:25

Proverbs 28:27

Luke 6:38

9. As in His Son, what does God want people to see in His children?

Colossians 3:12-14

## **Summary**

10. Is there an individual or group you are struggling to show compassion toward? What do you see in Jesus' example and in the principles we have studied in this lesson that are helpful to you?

11. a. Why is maintaining a compassion for people essential in your personal quest for fulfillment?

b. What can hinder your maintaining a compassionate heart?

12. What is your prayer for this area of your life?

## LESSON 10 NOTES

**1** *"I am" statements of Jesus.* The Gospel of John records seven "I am" statements:

- 6:35           The Bread of Life.
- 8:12; 9:5      The Light of the World.
- 10:7,9         The Gate to God.
- 10:11,14      The Good Shepherd.
- 11:25         The Resurrection and the Life.
- 14:6           The Way, the Truth and the Life.
- 15:1,5         The Vine.

**2 Reference:** Note 1, *Miracles of Jesus*, page 75.

**3 Reference:** Note 5, *Scripture Prophecy Concerning Messiah fulfilled in Jesus*, page 50.

**4** *die in your sins* (8:24; 8:21). "The singular 'sin' [referred to in 8:21 and made plural in 8:24] is that of rejecting the One who offers salvation (cf. 16:9). They would 'die' because they continued living in the realm of sin, remaining under its power. Physical death would be their prelude to eternal separation from God. If they would reject Jesus as the revelation of God, they would miss their only hope for salvation." Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, New Testament, page 304.

# LESSON 11

## MORE PUBLIC DEBATE

### JOHN 8:31-59

Still teaching in the Temple, Jesus instructed those who had professed belief in Him to hold to His teachings. "Then you will know the truth," He promised, "and the truth will set you free" (8:32).

With this statement, pride welled up within the Jews.<sup>1</sup> Obviously disregarding their oppressive political bondage to Rome, the Jewish leaders declared that as descendants of Abraham, they were in bondage to no man. But Jesus explained that He was referring to the human bondage to sin that dominates and controls people. As the Son, He claimed the power to set a person free from sin and give him an increased knowledge of godly truth. "Then you will know the truth," He said, "and the truth will set you free" (8:32).

While Jesus agreed that the Jews were related to Abraham as they claimed, He begged the point that a person akin to Abraham *spiritually* would not be seeking to kill Him, an innocent man. Not only this, but Jesus said that one as obedient to God as Abraham would also recognize Jesus as sent from God the Father.

Angered by these words, the Jews retaliated with a slur most likely aimed at Jesus' virgin birth: "We are not illegitimate children. The only Father we have is God Himself" (8:41).

"If God were your Father," Jesus replied, "you would love me, for I came from God...He sent me" (8:42). Then Jesus stated that their intent to kill

Him, one guilty of no crime, proved that they were not inspired by God, but by Satan,<sup>2</sup> the father of lies and a murderer.

Desperate to undermine Jesus' logic and authority, the Jewish leaders called Jesus a demon-possessed Samaritan.<sup>3</sup> After denying these unfounded accusations, Jesus claimed He sought no honor for Himself. But He warned His enemies that they would answer to the Father for dishonoring the Son whom He had sent. Boldly, Jesus went on to make an unquestionable claim to eternal power. "I tell you the truth," He said, "if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death" (8:51).

Again His enemies accused Jesus of being possessed by a demon, since His claim would make Him eternal and greater than Abraham and the prophets.

"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day;"<sup>4</sup> Jesus stated. "He saw it and was glad" (8:56). Protesting that Jesus, not even 50 years old, should claim to have seen Abraham, they received an even more shocking statement:

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" Jesus thus identified Himself with the Old Testament name of God, "I Am" (Exodus 3:14),<sup>5</sup> thus making an undeniable claim to be God.

Immediately, the Jewish leaders picked up stones to stone Jesus for blasphemy, but Jesus slipped away from the Temple area untouched.

### **Read John 8:31-41.**

1. a. What did Jesus say He required of His disciples (8:31), and what do you think this means in reality?

b. What reward did He promise (8:32)?

2. a. When the Jews claimed to be slaves to no one, how did Jesus explain the bondage to which He referred (8:34)?

b. What did Jesus explain about the freedom He could give from this bondage (8:35-36; see also John 1:12)?

3. Upon what did the Jews base their security and righteousness before God (8:33,39)?

**Reference:** Note 1, *The Jews*, page 93.

4. While Jesus agreed on their blood kinship to Abraham, how did He disprove their claim to be righteous like Abraham (8:37,39-40,56)? What inconsistencies did Jesus point out in their behavior?

**Reference:** Note 4, *Abraham rejoiced to see my day*, page 93.

### **Read John 8:42-47.**

5. How did Jesus respond to the Jewish leaders' claims to God as their Father (8:42)?

6. Because they intended to kill Jesus, with whom did Jesus ally the Jewish leaders and why (8:44)?

**Reference:** Note 5, *Satan, demons*, page 66.

7. How did Jesus explain the unbelief of the Jewish leaders (8:47)?

8. What did the Jewish leaders call Jesus in their angry attempt to undermine His teaching (8:48)?

**Reference:** Note 3, *Samaritan*, page 93.

9. a. What points did Jesus make in response (8:49-50)?

b. What promise (8:51)?

10. a. What did the Jews realize Jesus was saying about Himself as He promised to give eternal life (8:52-53)?

b. Briefly list the points Jesus made in response to the question, "Who do you think you are?" (8:54-58).

**Reference:** Note 5, *before Abraham was born, I am*, page 93.

c. What proved that the Jews understood Jesus' claim to be God (8:59)?

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Standing on the Side of Truth I**

Lies and deceit are at the foundational levels of injustice, selfish ambition and hatred in our world. Because Jesus experienced firsthand the dishonesty and deceit of our world, we can know He understands the suffering we experience here. He knows our struggle with the lies that cause innocent people to suffer. He also understands our human struggle to be completely honest and the courage it takes not to compromise truth or become complacent in our stand against untruth. And He knows the confusion over right and wrong we have apart from His help.

With this full understanding, Jesus promises to free us from the power of deceit and lies. By revealing more and more truth to the teachable heart, He promises to impart wisdom and courage to stand fearlessly and sensitively on the side of truth as He did. Jesus promises that holding to the truth He teaches not only allows one to be a part of God's eternal family, but also to experience freedom from the deceitfulness of sin in our own hearts and in the world around us.

There is freedom and fulfillment in knowing and standing for truth. Let's survey the wonderful biblical principles regarding truth and the place standing on the side of truth must take in our *Quest for Fulfillment*.

1. a. Where do you see dishonesty in the world around you?

b. What does dishonesty cause?

2. a. What motivates people to lie? What does the lie promise in the short run?

b. What happens when we lie? How does dishonesty actually rob us of the fulfillment we seek?

3. What does the Bible warn about lies in the following verses?

Proverbs 12:22

I Peter 3:10,12

4. What clear commands regarding lies do these Scriptures give?

Leviticus 19:11

Zechariah 8:16

5. Greed is often a motivating factor for dishonesty. Such was the case with many of the religious leaders who opposed Jesus. What do the following verses warn about lying and material gain?

Proverbs 21:6

I Timothy 6:10

6. a. Why does the Bible say we are unable to discern truth accurately without God's help?

Jeremiah 17:9

Proverbs 14:12

b. How does the Bible describe the fleshly or sinful nature in every human being?

Romans 8:7

7. In John 8:34-36, Jesus speaks of His ability to set us free from bondage to our selfish nature. What makes this possible according to the following?

Ezekiel 36:26-27

**Reference:** Note 2, *Holy Spirit*, page 33.

8. In our search for truth, what are we assured about the principles found in God's word, the Bible?

Psalms 19:7-10

9. What does the Bible say about Jesus and the truth?

John 1:14b

John 14:6

John 18:37

10. a. What did Jesus reveal about the origin of lies in John 8:44b?

**Reference:** Note 5, *Satan, demons*, page 66.

b. How does God assure us of protection from this enemy (Ephesians 6:14,17)?

8. Regardless of what it costs us, what does Jesus promise in the way of fulfillment when we side with the truth?

John 8:32,36

## **Summary**

9. What part does truth play in your quest for fulfillment? What have you found when you failed to be honest?

10. According to the Bible, what part must faith in Jesus Christ play in discerning honesty and freedom from our own deceitfulness?

11. At whatever cost, what does God command you to do in your pursuit of fulfillment?

Proverbs 23:23

## LESSON 11 NOTES

**1** *The Jews* (8:48) refers to the Jewish leaders who were hostile to Jesus. John used this term 70 times in his gospel, sometimes in a favorable sense (e.g. 4:22), sometimes in a neutral sense (e.g. 2:6), but most often to speak of Jesus' enemies. *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1594.

**2 Reference:** Note 5 *Satan, demons*, page 66.

**3** *Samaritan* (8:48). The Samaritans were seen as a type of half-breed, not Pharisee stock, and their religious practices mixed Jewish and pagan rituals (See Note 1, *Samaritans*, page 42). When the Jewish leaders accused Jesus of being a Samaritan, they were either accusing Him of unorthodoxy in His teachings or were referring to his birth.

**4** *Abraham rejoiced to see my day* (8:56). For his faithfulness, God promised Abraham that his offspring would produce a nation that would bless the entire world. In His statement about Abraham's joy, Jesus was probably speaking about Abraham's general joy in the fulfillment of God's purposes through the incarnate Christ, who would bless all nations of the earth. (Genesis 18:18). By faith, Abraham saw the day of Christ from afar and was glad. *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1614.

**5** *before Abraham was born, I am!* (8:58). When Jesus declared "I am" rather than "I was," He used the holy name by which God defined Himself in the Old Testament, *I Am* (Exodus 3:14). Through this identification, Jesus claimed eternal existence through oneness with God the Father. With this statement, Jesus explained His ability to give unending life to true believers (8:51) and His acquaintance with Abraham (8:56-57). See also Note 1, "*I am*" *statements of Jesus*, page 84.

Jesus' statement in John 8:58 was a powerful and emphatic declaration of deity. For this reason, the Jews immediately picked up rocks to stone Jesus for blasphemy, a capital offense in Old Testament Judaism.

*Note: Building on the Basics  
is slightly longer in this lesson.*

## LESSON 12

### HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

#### John 9

It was the Sabbath, possibly the day after Jesus fled the angry religious leaders at the Temple (8:59). Walking along with the disciples, He saw a beggar man who had been born blind. The Jewish rabbis espoused the belief that people suffered disabilities because of their sin or the sin of their parents.<sup>1</sup> But Jesus explained to the disciples that the blind man's condition had nothing to do with sin, but that God would use his condition to reveal His work in the man's life. With this, Jesus placed mud on the blind man's eyes and instructed him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. There the blind man discovered he could see.

Quite a stir resulted as people began to realize what had happened. However, the commotion was not a celebration but rather a debate over the incident and who Jesus was. The people took the man to the Pharisees, who became focused on the fact that Jesus broke their Sabbath laws when He healed the man.<sup>2</sup> They repeatedly interrogated the man, and at one point his parents, about his prior blindness and how he was healed. Finally, the Pharisees became divided among themselves about whether Jesus was from God or was a sinner, so they asked the healed man who *he* thought Jesus was. The man, amazed that they should wonder, stated what was obvious to him: Jesus had to be from God because God would not enable a sinful man to do such a miracle of healing.

Enraged with both the man's answer and his obvious faith in Jesus, the religious leaders threw the man out of the meeting place, claiming he was

"steeped in sin at birth" and not worthy to lecture them. Jesus heard of his expulsion, found the man, and gently revealed to him that He was the Messiah. The man immediately believed and worshiped Jesus.

Later turning to the Pharisees, Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind" (9:39). The Pharisees had demonstrated by their response to Jesus' miracles<sup>3</sup> that while they claimed to have spiritual insight they refused to accept truth if it did not fit into their agenda. In so doing, they left themselves condemned.

But the story of the blind man remains a dramatic and vivid illustration in the physical realm of Jesus' power to bring those who are willing out of spiritual blindness to see the truth of who He is.

### **Read John 9:1-13.**

1. a. What philosophy about hardship did Jesus refute in His response to the disciples' question about the blind man (9:1-3)?

**Reference:** Note 1, *who sinned . . .?* page 102.

b. Optional Question: What principle did Jesus give to His disciples that can be applied by believers today (9:4-5)?

2. a. How do you think the healed man must have felt as he saw vivid colors and images for the first time?

b. How did people who knew him respond (9:8-13)?

### **Read John 9:14-34.**

3. How did the Pharisees respond to the blind man's healing (9:14-17)?
  
4. What caused the blind man's parents to be cautious as they answered the Pharisees questions (9:18-23)?
  
5. a. What was the blind man's ringing statement when the Pharisees summoned him a second time (9:24-25)?  
  
b. The former blind man preached a mini-sermon in answer to the Pharisees' unreasonable behavior. What points did he make (9:30-33)?

### **Read John 9:35-41.**

6. When He found the healed man, whom did Jesus reveal Himself to be? How did the man respond (9:35-38)?

**Reference:** Note 4, *Son of Man*, page 18.

7. a. In his warning to the Pharisees, how did Jesus promise to deal with the spiritually open and the self-righteous (9:39)?  
  
b. Because of their spiritual knowledge but refusal to see truth, of what would the religious leaders remain guilty (9:41)?

**Note:** "The Pharisees were shocked (9:40) that Jesus thought they were spiritually blind. Jesus countered by saying that it was only blindness (stubbornness and stupidity) that could excuse their behavior. To those who remained open and

recognized how sin had truly blinded them from knowing the truth, He gave spiritual understanding and insight. But He rejected those who had become complacent, self-satisfied, and blind." NIV *Life Application Bible*, page 1897. See also Note 1, *Pharisees*, page 33.

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Standing on the Side of Truth II**

Jesus had gloriously healed the blind man's life-long disability and forever freed him from begging to become a responsible citizen. Yet the people around the healed man did not rejoice with him, but rather became focused on how to overpower Jesus. The man who should have enjoyed celebration found himself in a meat grinder of religious politics.

When our eyes are initially opened to see spiritual truth and understand who Jesus is, the natural response is to be overjoyed as we begin to trust Him. But when others ask us about our faith, our truthful answers may provoke a response similar to that of the healed man in John 9. Rather than encouragement and celebration, we may be met with discouragement and even disdain from those who want to hang onto their own views and agendas.

There are two very important messages from this story that we will look at now. One is the importance of being wide open to the truth and refusing to become stuck in a teaching that does not fit reality. The second is the importance of expecting, and knowing biblical principles about dealing with, persecution for faith in Christ.

As we continue to study the importance of standing on the side of truth in our *Quest for Fulfillment*, let's observe some of the Scriptures that relate to these very important issues.

#### ***A. Maintaining a Teachable Attitude.***

1. a. What was the concern of the religious leaders, the man or their own agenda?

b. What does this teach us about rejection from some who would discourage our faith?

2. a. What kept the religious leaders from seeing the truth?

b. What can destroy our ability to comprehend truth?

Luke 8:11-14

**Reference:** Note 5, *Satan*, page 66.

c. How did Jesus describe the teachable heart in Luke 8:15?

3. a. What do the following verses reveal about the importance of maintaining a teachable attitude?

Proverbs 2:1-8

b. What can happen if we do not maintain a teachable attitude toward God?

Romans 1:21

4. How does the Bible instruct us to grow in spiritual understanding?

James 1:21-22

Proverbs 1:5

5. New spiritual understanding must be consistent with God's word, the Bible. What does Psalm 119:160 say about this?

***B. Facing Persecution for Faith.***

6. What do the Scriptures warn believers in Christ about?

John 15:20

2 Timothy 3:12

7. What are the promised rewards of persecution for faith?

Matthew 5:10-12

Romans 5:3-5

8. a. What does I Corinthians 2:14 remind us about those without Christ?

b. *Optional:* How does Ephesians 4:17-19 describe the state of some who resist God?

c. What must we remember about ourselves in order to *respond* rather than *react* in judgment of those who persecute us?

Titus 3:3-5

9. How does the Bible instruct us to respond to the attacks of others on our faith?

I Corinthians 15:58

I Peter 2:21-23

10. a. In Matthew 5:14, Jesus refers to believers as "the light of the world." How can we best witness for Christ in the world around us?

II Timothy 2:24-26

I Peter 3:15-16\*

b. What should be the mark of the Christian according to I John 4:7?

**\*Helpful books on answering commonly asked questions about Christianity:**

Peter Kreeft, Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, InterVarsity Press.

Kenneth Boa, Larry Moody, *I'm Glad You Asked*, Victor Books.

Josh McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter*, Here's Life Publishers.

Paul Little, *Know Why You Believe*, InterVarsity Press.

John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity*, Here's Life Publishers.

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*.

11. When we ask the Holy Spirit to fill our lives (Ephesians 5:18b), how does He help us to face persecution for our faith?

Luke 12:11-12

**Reference:** Note 2, *Holy Spirit*, page 33.

## **Summary**

12. Is there anything in your life that is keeping you from growing in spiritual truth?

13. What must you be cautious about as you hear new spiritual truth?

14. a. When have you faced resistance to your faith? What subtle pressures in the world around you have tempted you to be silent or complacent about who Christ is and what He has done in your life?

b. What has this study encouraged you to do?

## LESSON 12 NOTES

**1** *who sinned . . .?* (9:2). "The rabbis had developed the principle that 'There is no death without sin, and there is no suffering without iniquity.' They were even capable of thinking that a child could sin in the womb or that its soul might have sinned in a preexistent state. They also held that terrible punishments came on certain people because of the sin of their parents." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1614.

"But Christ used the man's suffering to teach about faith and to glorify God. We live in a fallen world where good behavior is not always rewarded and bad behavior not always punished. Therefore, innocent people sometimes suffer. If God took suffering away whenever we asked we would follow him for comfort and convenience, not out of love and devotion. Regardless of the reasons for our suffering, Jesus has the power to help us deal with it. When you suffer from a disease, tragedy, or disability, try not to ask, 'Why did this happen to me?' or 'What did I do wrong?' Instead, ask God to give you strength for the trial and a clearer perspective on what is happening." *NIV Life Application Bible*, page 1895.

**2** *he does not keep the Sabbath* (9:16). When Jesus worked the clay and then healed the man born blind, he had twice violated the Sabbath which allowed neither work nor healing to be performed. Above all else the Pharisees stressed the observance of the Sabbath. "On no other subject is Rabbinical teaching more painfully minute and more manifestly incongruous to its professed object. For if we rightly apprehend what underlay the complicated and intolerably burdensome laws and rules..., it was to secure, negatively, absolute rest from all labor, and, positively, to make the Sabbath a delight." The terrible exaggerated views of the rabbis, and their endless, burdensome rules about the Sabbath are an area far too lengthy for this study. In fact, the Babylon Talmud contained 24 chapters on Sabbath rules, and one rabbi is said to have spent 2 1/2 years just studying the law put forth in one single chapter." A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Appendix XVII, page 777.

**3 Reference:** Note 1, *Miracles of Jesus*, page 75.

# LESSON 13

## JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

### John 10

When Jesus healed a man born blind, much turmoil resulted with the Jewish leaders (chapter 9). At last, the healed man was cast out of the synagogue for his testimony about Jesus. But Jesus sought this man out, established His relationship with him, and used the occasion to tell him and the crowd some things about Himself as the Good Shepherd.

Unlike the religious leaders who claimed to be God's shepherds but did not even care for the blind man, Jesus presented Himself as the Good Shepherd. His sheep, the faithful in Israel, would hear and follow Him without fear. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus described Himself as the door, or way, into the fold for the sheep. All who entered through Him would be saved and have abundant life. Unlike the thieves, robbers, hirelings and wolves who would scatter and kill the flock, Jesus stated that He had come to give His own life for the sheep. He also spoke of other sheep (non-Jews) who would hear His voice and become part of His flock. Jesus further declared that the Father, in love, had given Him the right to give His life for the sake of the sheep and then take His life back again.

Hearing Jesus' words, the Jews were divided in their reactions. Some said Jesus had a demon, but others argued that a demon possessed man could not heal the blind or formulate such teachings.

During the eight-day Feast of the Dedication, Jesus was walking in the Temple when the Jews challenged Him to openly declare Himself the Messiah. Jesus answered that He had already done so, and though His miracles and integrity proved His words, they would not believe because

they were not His sheep. Jesus went on to say that His sheep would hear and recognize His voice and follow Him. They would be eternally secure in the hands of Jesus and the Father. Then Jesus made the clearest of His claims to deity: "I and the Father are One" (10:30). When the Jews picked up stones to stone Jesus for blasphemy (claiming to be God), Jesus implored them to open their eyes to the evidence for His claim. They could point to no sinful words or actions in His life, and His miraculous deeds of mercy reflected the character of God, the Father, in Him. Unmoved by His words, Jesus' enemies attempted to seize Him, but he eluded their grasp.

After this, Jesus crossed the Jordan to Perea and went to the area of John the Baptist's earlier ministry. Many people came to Jesus there and believed in Him.

### **Read John 10:1-21.**

1. a. Using allegory about sheep and their shepherd, how did Jesus contrast the religious leaders and Himself, the Good Shepherd, regarding God's flock (the faithful) in Israel (10:1-5)?

**Reference:** Note 3, *In ancient near Eastern shepherding*, page 111.

b. List the characteristics of the unfaithful leaders (shepherds) in Israel as described in Ezekiel 34:2-5,10?

**Reference:** Note 2, *shepherd of God's people*, page 111.

2. When the people did not understand His words, Jesus further described Himself as the gate for the sheep to enter the fold. What was Jesus saying He alone could offer (10:9; see also 14:6)?

**Note:** *All . . . before me* (10:8). Jesus was speaking here of the "false shepherds," like the Pharisees and the chief priests, who had existed throughout Jewish history, not the faithful Old Testament prophets.

3. How did Jesus contrast Himself and the enemies of the sheep (10:10)?

4. a. What further comparisons did Jesus draw between Himself and those who claimed to be shepherds in Israel (10:11-13)?

b. How did Jesus describe the relationship between Himself and His sheep (10:14-16)?

**Note:** *Not in this sheep pen* (10:16) refers to those Gentiles who would believe.

5. a. What did Jesus predict about His responsibility as the Good Shepherd (10:17-18)?

b. With these words, what opinions circulated among the Jewish leaders (10:19-21)?

**Read John 10:22-42.**

6. When the Jews challenged Jesus to openly declare Himself the Messiah, how did Jesus respond (10:25-26)?

7. a. List the characteristics of Jesus' sheep in John 10:27-29?

b. What claim did Jesus make in the context of this teaching which His opposition viewed as blasphemous (10:30)?

**Note:** *I and the Father are One* (10:30) is "the clearest statement of Jesus' divinity he ever made. Jesus and his Father are not the same person, but they are one in essence and nature. Thus, Jesus is not merely a good teacher -- he is God. His claim to be God was unmistakable. The religious leaders wanted to kill him because their laws said that anyone claiming to be God should die (Lev 24:16)." *Life Application Bible* (NIV), page 1898.

8. When the Jews picked up stones to execute Jesus for blasphemy, to what did He point that they might see truth (10:32)?

**Reference:** Note 9, *Miracles of Jesus*, page 75.

9. Jesus stated that if holy Scripture referred to leaders and judges as gods (Psalm 82:6), how much more should the sent-to-earth Son of God be called God (10:34-36). What did Jesus implore them to observe and why (10:37-38)?

10. What happened after Jesus eluded the grasp of His enemies in Jerusalem (10:39-42)?

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Overcoming Insecurity**

Throughout the Bible, God refers to Himself as a shepherd. People in biblical times were very familiar with the shepherding role, as sheep tending was very common. When Jesus began to describe Himself as the Good Shepherd who would lay down His life for His sheep, He was using beautiful and familiar imagery to promise protection, guidance and security for His followers.

Like sheep, who are very skittish animals, we must be secure to be at peace. No matter what our achievements or possessions, we cannot be content and satisfied unless we are free from anxiety and fear of present and future dangers.

In revealing Himself as the Good Shepherd, Jesus was promising to overcome anxiety and put fears to rest for those who trust in Him. Let's take a closer look at this refreshing and hopeful message in light of our personal quest for fulfillment.

1. a. How would you describe a good shepherd's role with his sheep?

b. How would you describe a good "shepherd" of people?

2. a. What is the result of good and poor shepherding?

b. Sheep are rather smelly and senseless animals. What qualities must a good shepherd possess to care for sheep?

3. List characteristics of the Lord's care for His sheep?

Isaiah 40:11

Ezekiel 34:12,14-16

**Note:** In judging between sheep, "sleek and strong" (vs. 16) refers to those who oppressed the weaker sheep of God's flock in Israel.

John 10:11

4. In Psalm 23, the word Yahweh is used to describe the Good Shepherd. This Hebrew name for God means *"the God of grace; the God who is dependable; the faithful One; the God who is constant and in whom there is no change; the One who can be counted on to keep all His promises."* Why would this kind of care add to one's fulfillment?

5. a. The shepherd of biblical times used a rod and staff, which were comforts for the sheep. The rod was a stout piece of wood that the shepherd used to fight off enemies of the sheep. The staff was a long, crooked stick that the shepherd laid across the sheep's back when it started to stray. What might these objects symbolize in our relationship with Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd?

b. What do the following verses illustrate about the Lord's protection as the Good Shepherd?

Exodus 14:14

Psalm 18:2

c. What do these verses teach about the Lord's guidance and discipline?

Psalm 25:9

Isaiah 30:21

Isaiah 48:17

6. a. What benefits of the Good Shepherd's care are described in Psalm 23?

b. What must the sheep do to benefit from the Good Shepherd's care?

Proverbs 3:5-6

## Summary

7. a. What areas of your life are causing you insecurity right now? Where do you feel the need for protection or guidance?

b. When Jesus described Himself as the Good Shepherd, what did He promise you if you will trust Him with your needs?

8. What can hinder you from experiencing the care and guidance Jesus offers?

9. What do you most desire in your relationship with the Good Shepherd?

## LESSON 13 NOTES

**1 Reference:** Note 1, *Miracles of Jesus*, page 75.

**2** *shepherds of God's people.* John 1:1-30 must be understood in light of the Old Testament (and ancient Near Eastern) idea of "shepherd," which symbolized a royal caretaker of God's people. God himself was called the "Shepherd of Israel" (Ps. 80:1; cf. Ps. 23:1; Isa. 40:10-11; Eze. 34:11-16), and he had given great responsibility to the leaders ("shepherds") of Israel, which they failed to respect. God denounced these false shepherds (see Isa. 56:9-12; Eze. 34) and promised to provide the true Shepherd, the Messiah, to care for the sheep (Eze. 34:23). *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1615.

**3** *In ancient near Eastern shepherding,* "the fold would be a stone enclosure, roughly square in shape, with an entrance on one side. This entrance was guarded by a doorkeeper or watchman whose business it was to admit authorized persons and keep out intruders. If any one were seen climbing into the fold on one of the other sides, it was safe to assume that he was an intruder, up to no good. To discourage such persons the top of the wall might be protected by briars. More flocks than one might be accommodated in the same enclosure; but all that was necessary was for the shepherd to stand at the entrance and call; his own sheep would recognize his voice and come to him. Not only so: the flock would be small enough for him to know each of his sheep individually and distinguish them by name. In the picture here drawn by Jesus it is the personal bond between the shepherd and his sheep that keeps them together as they follow his guidance; unlike the modern shepherd, the shepherd of Bible days did not have the assistance of a sheepdog." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 224.

# LESSON 14

## LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

### John 11

During Jesus' time of ministry across the Jordan in Perea, He received word that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was very sick. These beloved friends of Jesus lived in Bethany, less than two miles from Jerusalem.

Upon receiving word of Lazarus' condition, Jesus told his disciples that this sickness was for the purpose of glorifying God and His Son. However, Jesus did not go directly to Bethany, but rather stayed in Perea two more days. The disciples were no doubt relieved that Jesus did not return to Judea, where His enemies had recently attempted to stone Him.

Then Jesus announced that it was time to go to Bethany to awaken Lazarus out of sleep--that is, out of death. The disciples feared for Jesus' life, and protested that He should not go back to Judea. But Jesus said that He was glad to go because the event to come would greatly build their faith. Then Thomas rallied the disciples' courage with the words, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

Jesus arrived on the outskirts of Bethany four days after Lazarus had died. Martha met Him with words of faith: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." "Your brother will rise again," Jesus assured her. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will not die."<sup>1</sup>

Then Martha brought Mary to Jesus, and he wept with her as they and many Jewish mourners went to Lazarus' tomb. After having the stone removed that sealed the tomb, Jesus prayed aloud to His Father. He wanted those present to see God's affirmation of His Son in the miracle about to take place. After this, Jesus called into the tomb with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" Lazarus came out, bound in grave clothes, which Jesus instructed to be taken off of him. Lazarus was released, alive and well.

Many of the Jews who saw this miracle were amazed and put their faith in Jesus. Others went straight to the religious authorities to inform them of what Jesus had done. The Sanhedrin<sup>2</sup> held a special meeting at which Caiaphas, the high priest, declared that Jesus should die because His growing popularity threatened the Jewish nation's peace with Rome. From this point on, the Jewish leaders plotted to kill Jesus.

Jesus and His disciples withdrew from the public to the village of Ephraim northeast of Jerusalem on the edge of the wilderness. As crowds began to arrive in Jerusalem for cleansing rites before the Passover, everyone was looking for Jesus and discussing what might become of the conflict between this Galilean carpenter and the mighty Jewish religious and political authorities. The chief priests and Pharisees had classified Jesus as an outlaw, and anyone who knew of His whereabouts was instructed to inform the authorities so that they might arrest Him.

### **Read John 11:1-16.**

1. What was Jesus' immediate response when word reached Him about Lazarus (11:4-6)?
2. Why were the disciples shocked at Jesus' decision to go to Judea (11:8)?
3. Why did Jesus insist that they go (11:9-15)?

**Reference:** Note 3, *twelve hours of daylight*, page 120.

4. Thomas is usually remembered for his doubting. What devotion and courage did he show here (11:16)?

**Read John 11:17-37.**

5. Describe the situation as Jesus approached the home of Martha and Mary (11:17-19).

6. What positive things do you observe about Martha from this interaction with Jesus (11:20, 21-22, 27)?

7. What wonderful declarations did Jesus make in response to Martha's utter faith in Him (11:23, 25-26)?

**Reference:** Note 1, *I am . . . the life*, page 119.

8. How did Jesus respond to Mary, and what did His response demonstrate about Him (11:33, 35)?

**Read John 11:38-44**

9. What was the purpose of this event according to Jesus' prayer (11:42)?

10. a. What incredible event took place at Jesus' command (11:43-44)?

b. What authority and what relationship did Jesus reveal through this miracle?

**Read John 11:45-57.**

11. What happened as the result of this miracle of Jesus (11:45-53, 57)?

**References:** Note 2, *Sanhedrin*, and Note 4, *Caiaphas . . .*, page 120.

12. Even though Jesus withdrew from the public, what transpired in His absence (11:56)?

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **The Ultimate Fulfillment**

One of the most dreaded of human experiences is death. The greatest insecurity, the reality that brings us all back to our inability to ultimately control life, comes from being powerless over death. The natural human yearning is that we and those we love should never die.<sup>5</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:11 says this desire is God-given. "He [God] has also set eternity in the hearts of men."

We must embrace the message of hope in the power of Jesus Christ over death to fully experience peace in our quest for fulfillment. Thus, the words of Jesus in John 11:25, ". . . whoever lives and believes in me will never die" are some of the most beautiful and hopeful in the Bible. In the raising of Lazarus, Jesus assured His followers of both spiritual life in the present and eternal life in the hereafter.

Before he died, Edward the Confessor said: "Weep not, I shall not die; and as I leave the land of the dying I trust to see the blessings of the Lord in the land of the living." William Barclay wrote: "Through Jesus Christ we know that we are journeying, not to the sunset, but to the sunrise. In the most real sense we are not on our way to death, but on our way to life."

For the believer, Jesus promises to fulfill the yearning for everlasting life. He said with certainty that death is not the end, and God raised Him from the dead to prove His words were true. Let us take a closer look at Jesus' claim to destroy the power of death and give the believer the ultimate fulfillment: eternal life.

1. a. What are some of the feelings which emerge from our fear of death and dying?

b. What is the natural yearning of the human heart concerning death?

**Reference:** Note 5, *Regarding human yearning to live*, page 120.

2. According to the following verses, what has caused the reality of physical death?

Romans 3:23; 6:23

*Optional related passages:* Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6f; Leviticus 17:11,14; Hebrews 9:22.

3. How did God take the initiative to overcome this death penalty?

Romans 5:8

4. a. How are we transformed from death to life according to the following?

John 1:12-13; 3:3

b. Who has the authority to give life after death according to the following?

John 5:21; 6:40

5. Besides giving Jesus the ability to raise Lazarus and several others from the dead during His earthly ministry, how did God prove Jesus' words about eternal life?

I Corinthians 15:3-8a

**Important Reference:** *Know Why You Believe* booklet in the pocket of your notebook, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?" page 41.

6. What do the following verses reveal about the eternal life God promises through His Son?

I Corinthians 15:42-44, 54

Revelation 21:4

Revelation 22:5

7. How do the following describe the immediate experience of physical death for the believers?

Psalm 17:15

2 Corinthians 5:6, 8

Philippians 1:23

**Reference:** Note 6, *Death for the believer*, page 120.

8. As followers of Jesus Christ, we need not fear death. However, this does not keep us from experiencing grief in the losses associated with death. In this wonderful chapter of John, Jesus demonstrated the compassion of God--His hurting with us and for us--in the grieving process (11:33-35). What did you observe about the Lord's response to our grief in John 11 (see also Luke 7:12-13)?

9. How does the Lord view the death of a believer?

Psalm 116:15

## Summary

10. a. What stands out to you from this lesson about the life Jesus gives?

b. What part does this understanding play in your quest for fulfillment?

11. The Scriptures say that our part in receiving eternal life is to believe in Jesus, that is--take everything that Jesus said as absolutely true and begin to stake our lives upon it in perfect trust. Have you committed yourself to this end?

## LESSON 14 NOTES

**1** *I am . . . the life* (11:25). The term *life* is found 36 times in John. The life Jesus gives involves first being born into God's family through faith in His Son (1:4,12-13) and receiving as God's child His life within which is eternal (14:16-17,20,23). When Jesus claimed that those who believe in Him should not die (11:26), He was obviously not saying the believer would never die physically. Rather Jesus was declaring His ability to overcome spiritual death now and, after physical death, give the believer a new body and everlasting life (cf. I Corinthians 15:50-57, also vss. 35-44). Jesus' own resurrection from the dead would be the proof of these claims. Thus Jesus' words in the upper room: "because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19).

**2** *Sanhedrin*. The Sanhedrin was the supreme court of the Jews. It was comprised of priests, scribes and elders. The court had seventy-one members with the high priest as president. In the Sanhedrin there were both Pharisees and Sadducees. The *Pharisees* were a non-political party whose sole interest was in living according to Jewish law, and they did not care who governed them as long as this was possible. The *Sadducees* were a Jewish party that represented the wealthy aristocracy in Israel. Theologically unorthodox, they flatly rejected the strict adherence to Jewish law practiced by the Pharisees. Practically all the priests on the Sanhedrin were Sadducees, out to preserve their prestige and possessions. Convinced that Jesus' popularity would eventually lead to public disorder and knowing that Roman authorities would deal mercilessly with such, the Sadducees wanted to put an end to the Nazarene. The Sadducees obviously dominated the meeting of the Sanhedrin

which decided to kill Jesus (John 11:45-53). In 70 A.D., Rome finally tired of Jewish stubbornness and besieged Jerusalem, leaving the city in ruins and the Sadducees with neither wealth nor power.

**3** *twelve hours of daylight* (11:9-10). "Jesus spoke in a veiled way to illustrate that it would not be too dangerous to go to Bethany. In one sense He was speaking of walking (living) in physical light or darkness. In the spiritual realm when one lives by the will of God he is safe. Living in the realm of evil is dangerous. As long as He followed God's plan, no harm would come till the appointed time.

Applied to people then, they should have responded to Jesus while He was in the world as its Light (cf. 9:4. 'We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; the night is coming, when no one can work.'). Soon He would be gone and so would this unique opportunity." Walvoord & Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, page 313.

**4** *Caiaphas who was high priest . . . prophesied* (11:49-52). "His words were true in a way he could not imagine. Prophecy in Scripture is the impartation of divinely revealed truth. In reality Caiaphas's words meant that Jesus' death would be for the nation, not by way of removing political trouble [as Caiaphas meant], but by taking away the sins of those who believed in him." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1620.

**5** Regarding human yearning to live on forever, C. S. Lewis wrote: "Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death; I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others to do the same." *Mere Christianity*, page 120.

**6** *Death for the believer* is an immediate passing into the presence of Jesus Christ (cf. Luke 23:42-43; 2 Corinthians 5:6,8; Philippians 1:23). At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:27-31; John 14:2-3; Acts 1:10-11), all those who have put faith in Him will receive a resurrection body like the resurrected body of Jesus (I Corinthians 15:42-44; I Thessalonians 4:14-17). Because of these truths, death is not final or horrible for the believer and is referred to in the Scriptures as "falling asleep in Christ" (I Corinthians 15:18; I Thessalonians 4:13). It is not clear biblically what believers who die before the Second Coming will experience while "asleep in Christ" accept that he/she will have a rich closeness with the Lord Jesus.

# LESSON 15

## THE CLOSE OF PUBLIC MINISTRY

### John 12

Six days before the Passover celebration in Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples returned to Bethany. There, a dinner was held in the home of Simon the Leper (Matthew 26:6) in Jesus' honor. Martha served at this dinner while her brother, Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, reclined at the table with Jesus.

During the dinner, Lazarus' sister Mary proceeded to anoint Jesus' feet with an expensive imported Indian perfume worth a years' wages. The fragrance filled the house. But Judas, who managed and often pilfered the money given toward Jesus' ministry, complained that the perfume should have been sold and the money given to the poor. Knowing that His death was imminent, Jesus defended Mary's act of devotion, declaring that she was preparing Him for His burial.

Meanwhile, many people had come to Simon's house when they heard that Jesus and Lazarus were there. Jesus had become such a controversial figure that He could not be so near Jerusalem without being noticed. It was now common knowledge that He had raised Lazarus from the dead, and many Jews were putting their faith in Him because of that miracle. As a result, the chief priests, who had already decided to kill Jesus, determined to kill Lazarus, too.

After spending Saturday (the Sabbath) in Bethany, Jesus made His final entry into Jerusalem on Sunday. He rode on a donkey colt, which was a sign of peace, and which also fulfilled the ancient Messianic prophecy of

Zechariah 9:9. Multitudes of wildly enthusiastic people crowded around Jesus. The crowd grew as people who had witnessed the miracle of Lazarus told others along the way. Also, thousands of Galileans who had seen the many miracles of Jesus had come for the Passover and joined the crowd. Earlier, they had wanted to make Jesus an earthly king, but He refused. Perhaps they thought that now as He entered "the city of the great King," Jesus would consent.

The excited crowd spread palm branches on the road before Jesus and cried, "Hosanna!" (an expression of praise which meant "Please save!" cf. Psalm 118:25). They hailed Jesus, calling Him the one "who comes in the name of the Lord!" and "the King of Israel!" He entered the city with throngs of shouting people all around Him.

Even before this, Jesus' popularity had been continually increasing. To avoid a riot, the Jewish leaders were looking for an underhanded way to arrest and kill Him. Even though most of the crowd did not truly believe in Jesus, the religious leaders grumbled among themselves, saying, "The whole world has gone after Him!"

After arriving in the city, some God-fearing Greeks who had come to worship during the Passover asked to speak with Jesus. He recognized these Gentiles' request as the sign that the time for His death had come. It was time for the waiting Gentile world to receive the message of God's salvation along with the Jews.

Jesus began to explain that His imminent death was actually His way to glory. He used the analogy of a kernel of wheat "dying" in the soil before it could produce a harvest. His death for others' sins in obedience to the Father (Isaiah 53:10,12) would bring about the opportunity for spiritual life for all. Jesus explained that one who "loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (12:25). In other words, one who lives for himself only will never know eternal fulfillment. On the other hand, Jesus promised, "My Father will honor the one who serves Me" (12:26).

As His distress deepened, Jesus reiterated that He had come for this hour of sacrifice and would not evade it. "Father, glorify your name!" He exclaimed, to which God responded from heaven in an audible voice, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again" (12:28).

Jesus explained that the time had come for the prince of this world to be overthrown. Jesus must be lifted up on the cross to draw all men to God. One last time, He encouraged the crowd around Him to respond to the light while they had the opportunity. Then He withdrew from the people to prepare for the days ahead.

In spite of His countless miracles, most people did not believe in Jesus. John noted that the prophet Isaiah had predicted this hardness of heart hundreds of years before. Even so, many did believe, even Jewish leaders, who remained silent about their faith because they feared rejection by their peers.

It was Tuesday, of what is now known as the Passion Week, when Jesus reached the end of His public ministry. He would spend the next two days privately ministering to His disciples before His death and resurrection. Many times He had repeated His message: "When a man believes in Me, he does not believe in Me only, but in the One who sent Me. When he looks at Me, he sees the One who sent Me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that His command leads to eternal life" (12:44-46,49-50a).

### **Read John 12:1-11.**

1. a. What incredible act of worship did Mary perform during Jesus' dinner at Bethany (12:3)?

b. How did Jesus respond to Judas' objections (12:7-8)?

2. a. What took place while Jesus was in Bethany (12:9)?

b. What did the chief priests decide to do and why (12:10-11)?

### Read John 12:12-19.

3. a. How was Jesus received as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey colt (12:12-13)?

b. For a king to ride into a city on a donkey colt was seen as an act of humility and peace in the ancient world. What did the disciples later also understand about this and the actions of the people (12:16)?

**Note:** Verse 13 quotes Psalm 118:25-26; verse 15 quotes Old Testament Messianic prophecy from Zechariah 9:9.

4. As people continued to spread the word that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, the crowd around Jesus grew enormously (12:17-18). How did the religious leaders who opposed Jesus respond (12:19)?

### Read John 12:20-36a

5. a. When the God-fearing Greek Gentiles came to see Jesus, He knew His hour of sacrifice was near. The waiting Gentile world, in addition to the Jews, would soon learn of salvation through the Christ. What principle did Jesus explain as He saw the time for His death drawing near (12:23-24)?

b. What spiritual principles did Jesus present in the context of the approaching sacrifice of His own life (12:25-26)?

**Note:** In 12:25, *the man who loves his life* refers to one who concentrates on himself--his successes, his desires and goals--rather than on giving his life to Christ and the needs of others. The *man who hates his life* is one whose devotion to God is

such that all other loves by comparison are hatred. His commitment to God has caused him to leave self-centeredness and self-concern behind as a life focus.

6. a. What choice was Jesus making as He discussed His death with the disciples (12:27-28; see also Matthew 26:38-39, 42, 53)?

b. What affirmation did God the Father give for the benefit of those present as He responded to Jesus' prayer, "Father, glorify your name" (12:28)?

c. What three things did Jesus say were about to happen through His death on a cross (12:31-33)?

**Note:** *judgment on this world* (12:31). "Jesus' death on the cross was a judgment on the world. Evil was atoned for. The world's goals, standards, and religions were shown to be folly." *prince of this world* (12:31). "The Cross was also the means of Satan's defeat (Rev. 12:10). The prince of this world (i.e., Satan; cf. John 14:30; 16:11), Jesus said, will be driven out. His power over people by sin and death was defeated and they can now be delivered out of his domain of spiritual darkness and slavery to sin (Col. 1:13-14; Heb. 2:14-15)." Walvoord & Zuck, page 318.

**Reference:** Note 5, *Satan*, page 66, and Note 6, *snake lifted up*, page 34.

7. The crowd understood Jesus was saying He must die, but did not understand how this fulfilled prophecy concerning the Messiah. How would you put Jesus' final response to the people in your own words (12:35-36)?

**References:** Note 1, *The Christ, Messiah*, page 17, and Note 5, *Scripture Prophecy Concerning Messiah*, page 50.

**Read John 12:37-43.**

8. a. What was amazing to the author (12:37)?

**Reference:** Note 1, *Miracles of Jesus*, page 75.

b. John quoted the ancient prophecy of Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 which was fulfilled in the people's response to Jesus Christ. What was God's judgment on their refusal to believe the revelation of His Son (12:38-42)?

**Note:** The phrase, *could not believe* (12:39) "does not mean that the people in question had no choice. They purposely rejected God and chose evil, and verse 40 explains that God in turn brought on them a judicial blinding of eyes and hardening of hearts. Yet many Jewish leaders did believe in Jesus as the Messiah (v. 42)." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1622.

9. What happened among the religious leaders (12:42-43)?

**Read John 12:44-50.**

10. List the points Jesus made in summarizing the truth of His mission (12:44-50)?

## BUILDING ON THE BASICS

### The Right Focus

Only days remained before Jesus would fulfill the purpose for which He had come: to die for the sin of the world so that those who believed in Him would receive forgiveness and eternal life. In the face of bitter hatred against Him and as the turmoil increased within His heart, He gently reminded Himself and told others that it was for this purpose that He had come: not to judge the world, but to save it (12:47).

In this context, He illustrated from nature a very important principle of fulfillment. "Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal" (12:24-25, *The Message* translation).

Jesus emphasized two elements of real fulfillment. One was wholehearted devotion to the Lord, like that of Mary when she spent what may have constituted a life's savings anointing Jesus' feet. The other was wholehearted abandonment, like that of the Son of God, to following God in serving the needs of others.

We will look briefly at each of these areas as we continue our study of *Quest for Fulfillment*.

1. What is the natural focus of human nature which was apparent in Jesus' enemies?
  
2. What is the result when one focuses his/her life entirely upon his/her own interests, goals and desires?
  
3. a. What hindered the religious leaders who believed in Jesus from helping others find the truth (12:42-43)?

b. What does God promise those who confess their faith in Christ regardless of what people think?

2 Timothy 1:7

4. a. On what did Jesus focus as He prepared to lay down His life?

b. What life purposes of Jesus are found in the following verses?

John 6:38-40

I Timothy 2:3-4

5. a. How did Jesus depict His heart for saving people in Luke 15:3-6?

b. What rewards would come from this focus?

Isaiah 53:11

Hebrews 12:2

6. What do the Scriptures promise those who devote themselves wholeheartedly to God?

Psalms 1:3

Psalms 16:11

Matthew 6:33 (31-32)

7. What do the Scriptures promise those who devote themselves and what they have to helping God meet the needs of others?

Proverbs 11:25

Isaiah 58:10-11

Malachi 3:10

Luke 6:38

2 Corinthians 9:6

## **Summary**

8. Of the primary characters in John 12--Jesus, Mary, the disciples, the crowds, the religious leaders--who ultimately experienced the most fulfillment and why?

9. a. What part does wholehearted devotion to God play in your personal quest for fulfillment?

b. What difference does caring for the needs of others make in your quest for fulfillment?

c. How was the life of Jesus an example to you of the right focus?

## ***PART II***

# ***PRIVATE MINISTRY TO THE DISCIPLES***

## **LESSON 16**

### **THE LAST SUPPER BEGINS**

#### **John 13**

Knowing the time for His death was upon Him, Jesus withdrew from the public to be with His disciples. On Thursday evening of the Passion Week, Jesus and His disciples gathered to celebrate the Passover meal<sup>1</sup> in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem. This event, later known as the Last Supper, began at twilight the evening before the crucifixion of Jesus, which took place at 9 a.m. the following morning. Within 24 hours, Jesus would be in the grave. In John 13-17, the apostle John recorded the most complete existent eyewitness account of what Jesus said and did during His last hours. Jesus used these last hours to show His absolute love and devotion to His disciples and to all who would believe in Him.

Jesus knew that Satan<sup>2</sup> had persuaded Judas Iscariot to betray Him. He also knew that God was in control and that the cross was the appointed way back to the glory He had always known with the Father. With this perspective, Jesus wrapped a towel around His waist, poured water in a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet. Certainly this was uncomfortable for the disciples, who viewed Jesus as their Teacher and Lord. Only a slave would normally perform such a task as washing feet.

Even so, they all remained silent except Peter. When Jesus came to him, the disciple refused to have his Master wash his feet. But Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." So Peter insisted that Jesus wash "not just my feet but my hands and head as well!" Using symbolism He knew Peter would not fully comprehend until later, Jesus explained to them that after a bath,<sup>3</sup> one need only have a foot washing in order to remain clean.

When Jesus arose from the task of foot washing, He taught the lessons that went with what He had just done. Other gospels record that at this dinner, a dispute broke out among the disciples about who was the greatest among them (cf. Luke 22:24-27). Jesus told them that the greatest would be the servant of all. He stated that if He, their Lord and Teacher, served them, service of others should be their focus as His followers. "I have set you an example," Jesus said, "that you should do as I have done for you. No servant is greater than his master. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." (13:15-17).

Then, as Jesus contemplated Judas' imminent betrayal, He became visibly and deeply troubled. He told the disciples that He was distressed because one of them who pretended devotion to Him would cruelly turn against Him. In curiosity, Peter motioned to John, who was reclining beside Jesus at the table, to ask Jesus which man would betray Him. Jesus quietly told John that the next person to whom He gave bread would be the one. That person was Judas. As Judas took the bread, Satan took full control of him.<sup>4</sup> Then Jesus commanded Judas, "What you are about to do, do quickly." With this, Jesus knowingly gave the directive that would lead to His death.<sup>5</sup> The disciples, including John, paid no attention as Judas went out into the night, thinking Jesus had instructed him to carry out some noble task.

Now alone with His beloved faithful disciples in the last hours before His death, Jesus began what have become known as the "Upper Room Discourses" (John 3:31-16:33). In these teachings, Jesus reflected upon what would be the crowning revelation of the glory of God: the sacrifice of His Son to provide salvation for mankind. Jesus' words, which would be fully comprehended by the disciples only after His resurrection, focused on two main topics: (1) His departure and subsequent reunion with them, and (2) the love relationship between Christ and His people.

Jesus told His disciples that in order to be glorified, He must go where they could not follow. With this, He gave the principal command for them to obey in His absence. "Love one another," Jesus said. "As I have loved you,

so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (13:34-35).

But Peter wanted to know where Jesus was going and why he could not follow. "I will lay down my life for you," Peter declared. "Will you really lay down your life for Me?" Jesus responded. "I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"

### **Read John 13:1-17.**

1. At this point, what did Jesus know (13:1a), and what was He about to do (13:1b)?

**Note:** The word "love" is used 31 times in John 13-17 as John recorded Jesus' last teachings and prayers before His death.

2. Of what was Jesus certain, even though He knew that Judas intended to betray Him (13:2-3)?

3. To what did Peter react (13:4-8a)?

4. How did Jesus respond to Peter (13:8b)?

**Reference:** Note 3, *bath*, page 139.

5. a. What godly principles did Jesus teach through the washing of the disciples' feet (13:12-17)?

b. What does Luke 22:24-27 add to this teaching?

### **Read John 13:18-30.**

6. Why did Jesus tell the disciples that one of them would betray Him (13:18-19)?

**Note:** In vs. 18, Jesus quoted the lament written by David in Psalm 41:9 after he was betrayed by a close and treasured associate.

7. What principles did Jesus teach the disciples regarding acceptance (13:20)?

8. a. What caused the disciples to begin to contemplate Jesus' words about a betrayal, and what was their general response (13:21-22)?

b. As the disciples stared at one another, with no idea of who the betrayer would be, what did Jesus specifically indicated to John?

**Note:** The disciples seemed to think the one who would betray Jesus would do so by mistake, perhaps by accidentally letting information out as to His where-about (cf. Mark 14:19). They would not fully comprehend until later that Jesus, knowing God's plan of redemption, purposely did not prevent Judas' action.

9. The disciples, including John, still remained oblivious to Judas' intentions. What was Jesus' directive and Judas' response (13:27,30)?

**References:** Note 4, *Satan*. . . , and Note 5, *Jesus gave the directive...* page 139. Also Note 5, *Satan, demons*, page 66.

## Read John 13:31-38.

10. a. What did Jesus begin to emphasize now that He was alone with the faithful disciples (13:31-33)?

**Note:** To *glorify* means to *reveal who He is*. Jesus also spoke here of the glorious salvation that would be provided through His death on the cross for sin.

**Reference:** Note 4, *Son of Man*, page 18.

b. What fundamental instructions did Jesus give the disciples to follow in His absence (13:34-35)?

11. a. Upon what did Peter insist (13:37)?

b. What did Jesus predict in response (13:38)?

## BUILDING ON THE BASICS

### More on Giving Living

As Jesus humbly knelt to wash the disciples' feet, His actions depicted the Son of God's incarnate condescension to meet the needs of mankind (cf. Philippians 2:4-8). While the disciples were bothered that their Lord should stoop to wash their feet, they were probably more bothered by the fact that Jesus' humble actions bore no resemblance to the powerful earthly king whom they expected the Messiah to be.

But all during His earthly ministry, Jesus mirrored the fact that God's representatives and the greatest of leaders must be humble servants. In carrying out His purpose of glorifying, or revealing, God's heart to mankind, Jesus' time was completely devoted to serving the needs of people. In offering Himself on the cross, only hours after the Last Supper, Jesus would humble Himself and suffer a terrible death to provide for man's greatest need: the opportunity for forgiveness and an authentic love relationship with his Creator. Even so, at the same time that this loving act would be cherished by many, it would be unappreciated by most.

There are many lessons to be learned here about the kind of "giving living" that produces lasting fulfillment. Last week in our Building on the Basics topic, "The Right Focus," we saw that the deepest fulfillment comes from commitment to God and to serving others. This week, we will probe further into this topic. In the context of Christ's humble service, we will make some observations about the right motivations and the obstacles we all face amidst the fulfillment of "giving living."

1. a. What are some unhealthy motivations from which people do good for others?

b. What are the results of serving with these motivations?

2. Some people believe that good works make them right before God. What do the following verses say about how we are made right with God?

Romans 3:22

Ephesians 2:8-9

3. What motivations for service did Jesus model on earth?

John 14:31

John 17:24,26

1 John 4:19

4. What does I Corinthians 13:1-3 reveal about the importance of having the right motives for serving God and people?

5. a. How does I Corinthians 13:4-8a describe the love of God which Jesus displayed and which God wants to inspire our good deeds?

b. Where does this love come from according to John 17:26b?

6. a. In reflecting God's character, Jesus even loved people who rejected his love, like Judas. He continually appealed even to those who rejected Him. When Jesus washed the feet of the one who would betray Him, what liability of serving did He model for us?

b. What principles regarding reaching out to people who are difficult to love or unresponsive are found in the following verses?

Romans 12:14,17-21

II Timothy 2:24-26

I Peter 4:16,19

**Note:** While we continue to reach out to difficult people, it is also important and Scriptural to set healthy boundaries for ourselves. A good book on this subject is *Boundaries* by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, Zondervan Publishers.

7. As Jesus washed Peter's feet, He displayed the loving patience required in serving others who have aggravating shortcomings. What do the following verses say about the constructive response to those who irritate us?

Colossians 3:12-14

James 4:11-12

8. Jesus did not just serve the socially acceptable or religious. He was known for His ministry among outcasts and "sinners." Summarize the important principles regarding serving others found in James 2:1-8?

9. a. What does Ephesians 2:10 say about the purposes God has for each of His children?

b. While Jesus was aware of *all* the tremendous needs in the world around Him, He fully accomplished His earthly mission in three years. What does the Lord promise as you seek His guidance in where and how to serve?

Psalm 32:8

II Corinthians 9:8

## Summary

10. a. What motivated Jesus to serve mankind as He did?

b. In contrast to selfish motivations for doing good, why do these motivations for service produce lasting fulfillment?

11. Are there people you find difficult to care for and help? What did Jesus' response to Judas, along with the other Scriptures in this lesson, show you about loving and serving such people?

12. What does Jesus promise as you seek to let Him love and serve people through you?

I Corinthians 15:58

## LESSON 16 NOTES

**1** *Passover meal.* (See also Note 1, *Passover*, page 25.) The Passover commemorated the great exodus of the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt almost 1,500 years earlier. At that time, each Israelite family put the blood of a lamb on their doorpost so that their family would be "passed over" when the angel of death took the firstborn of each Egyptian home. (See Exodus 12:1-14 for this story.) The blood of the lamb saved them from God's punishment dealt out to the Egyptians. Every year the Jews celebrated a Passover week, which would begin on the Jewish calendar 14th of Nisan between 2:30 and 5:30 p.m. At that time, a lamb was sacrificed for the sins of the people in the court of the priests. This ritual was done in order for God to "pass over," or forgive, their sins. A Passover meal would follow at twilight. The Passover meal Jesus took with His disciples fell on the Thursday of Passion Week. Jesus knew that He was about to be slain as the perfect and final "Passover lamb" (I Corinthians 5:7b). It seems that Jesus may have made secret arrangements prior to the Passover meal with His disciples so that Judas' betrayal could not interfere (Luke 22:7-13). The Lord was anxious to observe this feast with His men when He would institute the "New Covenant." In this covenant, the body and blood of Christ would provide forgiveness of sin for all who would believe in Jesus.

**2** **Reference:** Note 5, *Satan*, page 66.

**3** *bath* (John 13:10). According to many commentaries, the bath in Jesus' explanation may have symbolized initial spiritual cleansing through faith in Christ (cf. Titus 3:5). The foot washing might have symbolized continual cleansing through confession of sin (cf. I John 1:9). And the state of being clean may have symbolized being right with God.

**4** *Satan took full control of Judas.* A host personally giving bread to a guest was a gesture of honor toward that guest. Being seated on the immediate left of the host, which very likely was the place of Judas, was also an honor. One or both of these gestures toward Judas are believed by many to have been Jesus' final appeals to the darkened heart of Judas. But the appeals were rejected. At Jesus' dismissal, Judas made his final choice to say "yes" to Satan, granting him admission and control. Regardless of what Judas' reasons were for making such a choice, Satan obviously thought Jesus' death would destroy God's plan and mission through His Son. On the contrary, Jesus' death would fulfill God's plan of redemption for mankind. (See Note 2, *Lamb of God*, page 18, and Note 5, *Satan*, page 66.)

**5** *Jesus gave the directive that would lead to His death*, i.e. "What you are about to do, do quickly" (13:27). "Jesus' words once more indicate His control. He would die as He directed, not as His opponents determined." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1624.

# LESSON 17

## JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES

### John 14

Still in the Upper Room, Jesus began His final teachings to His disciples. They were troubled because Jesus had warned them that one of them would betray Him and that He was going where they could not follow. But Jesus told them to set their hearts at rest through faith in God and in Him. Jesus had never let them down, and He assured them that no matter how bad things appeared, He would not fail them.

Jesus explained that He was going to prepare a place for them in heaven and promised to come back to personally take them there to be with Him.<sup>1</sup> When Thomas asked the way to where the Lord was going, Jesus declared, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."<sup>2</sup> He was stating clearly that it is impossible to have access to God without faith in God incarnate, whom Jesus had always claimed to be. One could not truly know God without having faith in Jesus, the One in whom God the Father had represented Himself in human form.

Then Philip requested, "Lord, show us the Father." Jesus replied, "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. Believe Me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves." Jesus explained that He would now go to the Father, and, as the disciples continued His ministry, they would be doing even greater miracles<sup>3</sup> than He had done. Whatever they asked in His name,<sup>4</sup> He would do so that the Father might be glorified through them.

To further comfort and assure His disciples, Jesus told them that after going to the Father, He would send the Holy Spirit<sup>5</sup> to be their Helper and Teacher. The Holy Spirit would be *with* them as Jesus had been, and would abide *in* them to produce Christ's character and works through them.

Referring to His imminent death and resurrection, which the disciples at this point did not comprehend, Jesus declared that the world would not see Him again. However, He promised to return for the faithful,<sup>6</sup> who would be able to see Him with spiritual eyes and be a part of His resurrection life.

Then Jesus described the mark of a true disciple: "If anyone loves Me, he will obey my teaching." Jesus said that those who remained faithful to His teaching would be given special love from God. "My Father will love him," Jesus promised, "and we will come to him and make our home with him."

Judas (probably Thaddaeus; Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18), asked why Jesus would no longer be seen by the world, but only by believers. This did not fit in with their expectation that Jesus would become the Messianic king Scripture had prophesied (cf. Note 5, page 50). Jesus responded that revelation of God would come from within the one who responded to Jesus in love and faithful obedience.

Then He announced that the "ruler of this world," or Satan, was now being given control. But he would meet his downfall (cf. 12:31),<sup>7</sup> as Christ proved His great love for the Father through submission to the cross. Also, the faith of His disciples would be secured as they watched all of Jesus' predictions come to pass.

### **Read John 14:1-14.**

1. The disciples were troubled as they contemplated Jesus being betrayed by one of them and going where they could not follow. What did Jesus command them to do to find strength and hope in this time of confusion and disillusionment (14:1)?

2. What did Jesus promise about His Father's house in heaven (14:2-3)?

3. How did Jesus respond to Thomas' logical question about the way to heaven, where Jesus was going (14:5-6)?

**Reference:** Note 2, *No one comes to the Father except through Me,* page 148.

4. How did Jesus respond to Philip's request to see the Father (14:8-11)?

**Reference:** Note 1, *Miracles of Jesus,* page 75.

5. a. What did Jesus promise would result from faith in Him (14:12)?

**Reference:** Note 3, *greater things than these,* page 148.

b. What tremendous promise did Jesus make about prayer (14:13-14)?

Note 4, *whatever you ask in my name,* page 148.

### **Read John 14:15-31.**

6. How did Jesus describe the Holy Spirit, whom He promised to send to those who love and obey Him (14:16-17)?

**Note:** *Counselor* (Gr. Parakletos) denotes one who is called alongside as a helper or defender, a friend at court, an advocate, reliable in guidance and support, a comforter. Jesus had been this to the disciples on earth, and soon the Holy Spirit would take His place. Jesus would also continue this role in heaven (cf. 1 John 2:1b). **Reference:** Note 2, *Holy Spirit,* page 33.

7. What did Jesus promise would happen to the believer after His departure to go to the Father (14:18-20)?

**References:** Note 6, *I will come to you*, page 148, and Note 1, *I will come back*, page 147.

8. What did Jesus say would be true of the one who truly loves Him (14:15, 21)?

9. Judas (not Iscariot) and the other disciples wanted Jesus to reveal His power and glory as Messiah to the whole world. How did Jesus answer Judas' question about this (14:22-24)?

10. What more did Jesus teach about the Holy Spirit (14:25-26)?

11. What tremendous promise was Jesus able to make to us when we are fearful or confused (14:27)?

12. a. Why did Jesus take time to explain to the disciples what they were not yet able to fully comprehend (14:29)?

b. What did Jesus state about His battle with the "prince of this world" (14:30-31)?

**References:** Note 7, *meet his downfall*, page 148, and Note 5, *Satan*, page 66.

**Note:** *Come now; let us leave* (14:31b). It is generally believed that while Jesus here told the disciples to get ready to leave the Upper Room, they did not do so until 18:1. It is hard to imagine that the rest of the discourse could have been spoken in a public place or en route to the Garden of Gethsemane.

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Peace that Passes Understanding**

Jesus was only hours away from His crucifixion. The disciples whom He loved dearly were facing disappointment and loss which they did not understand. Why couldn't the Son of God, their Messiah, the One who calmed storms, fed thousands and raised people from the dead, just establish His kingdom on earth and put the disciples into places of leadership? Why did He have to leave them and die? There was no way Jesus could help them fully understand at this time. He probably grieved for His faithful followers as much as He grieved over the painful path He must take in the next hours.

Yet *Jesus had peace and offered peace* in the midst of the darkest hour of human history--when sinful man would crucify the gracious Son of God. At this time, Jesus knew and offered a peace that comes from within and can endure even the worst of difficulty, pain or sorrow. This peace, Jesus explained, comes from the assurance of a glorious eternal future, from the comfort and constant camaraderie of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and through the power of prayer.

Peace among men and nations is a major issue in our world today, as it has been in every generation of history. And personal peace is essential to experiencing fulfillment in life. In search of peace, many sought Jesus as a political king who would alleviate human suffering. Would this have brought peace to their world?

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you." Jesus said. "I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (14:27). Let's take a closer look at the peace Jesus offers--a peace that passes understanding.

1. a. How would you describe the peace the world gives?

b. Apart from Christ, how and where do people seek peace?

c. How is Jesus' peace different from the peace we find apart from Him?

2. a. How was Jesus related to peace in the following?

Isaiah 9:6b

Luke 2:10-14

b. In addition to John 14:27, what promise regarding peace did Jesus make in John 16:33?

3. In John 14:13-14, Jesus told the disciples they would find comfort and strength through prayer. What does Philippians 4:6-7 tell us about prayer and peace?

4. Jesus comforted His disciples through the promise of the Holy Spirit who would be sent at Pentecost to indwell them. What do the following verses tell us about the Spirit and the peace He gives?

Romans 8:15-16

Romans 8:26-27

5. Jesus promised to go and prepare a place for each believer in heaven.  
What is the ultimate peace Jesus offers?

Revelation 21:1-4

6. a. What price did Jesus pay for the peace He offers?

Isaiah 53:5

**Reference:** Note 2, *Lamb of God*, page 18.

b. We cannot have the peace *of* God until we have peace *with* God. How do we begin to receive the peace Jesus offers?

Romans 5:1

7. How is the peace of Christ pictured in the following?

Psalms 23:4

Isaiah 32:17-20

Isaiah 26:3

## Summary

8. What place does peace have in your quest for fulfillment?

9. What promises about peace does Jesus Christ make to you?

10. Is there an area(s) of your life where you would like to experience greater peace? How can you experience this peace?

## LESSON 17 NOTES

**1** *I will come back* (14:3). Jesus was referring to His second coming to earth. Before He was crucified (John 14:3; Matthew 24:30-31) and again after His resurrection (John 21:22), Jesus promised that He would return to earth. He taught that the time of this event, referred to as *the day of Christ*, or simply *the Day*, is known only by God (Mark 13:32). Jesus promised to return in person, with a body (Acts 1:11), and His coming will be visible and unmistakable, with great glory and majesty. When He comes, He will judge everyone (II Timothy 4:1) and usher in the glorious new world of righteousness and peace. Some believe there will be two returns of Christ, one in the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:17), the other after the great

tribulation (Revelation 7:14). Others see all the references in the Bible to Christ's return as aspects of one single event at the end of history. *The NIV Topical Study Bible*, page 1075. References: Amos 8:3,9,13;9:11; Micah 4:6; 5:9-15; II Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 19:11-16; Acts 1:9-11.

**2** *no one comes to the Father except through me* (14:6). "If this seems offensively exclusive, let it be borne in mind that the one who makes this claim is the incarnate Word, the revealer of the Father. If God has no avenue of communication with mankind apart from his Word (incarnate or otherwise), mankind has no avenue of approach to God apart from that same Word, who became flesh and dwelt among us in order to supply such an avenue of approach. Jesus' claim, understood in the light of the prologue of the Gospel, is inclusive, not exclusive. All truth is God's truth, as all life is God's life; but God's truth and God's life are incarnate in Jesus." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 298.

**3** *greater things than these* (14:12). "Jesus is not saying that His disciples would do more amazing miracles--after all, raising the dead is about as amazing as you can get. Rather, the disciples, working in the power of the Holy Spirit, would carry the gospel of God's kingdom out of Palestine and into the whole world." *Life Application Bible*, NIV, page 1911.

**4** *whatever you ask in my name* (14:13). Asking in the name of Jesus means to ask in accordance with God's will and character. "God will not grant requests contrary to His nature or His will, and we cannot use his name as a magic formula to fulfill our selfish desires. If we are sincerely following God and seeking to do His will, then our requests will be in line with what He wants, and He will grant them." *Life Application Bible*, NIV, page 1911. "Not simply prayer that mentions Jesus' name but...prayer aimed at carrying forward the work Jesus did--prayer that He Himself will answer (see also v. 14)." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1625.

**5 Reference:** Note 2, *Holy Spirit*, page 33.

**6** *I will come to you* (14:18). Jesus was speaking of His resurrection appearances, of His second coming (see note 1 above) and about the Holy Spirit of God, who would be sent to dwell within them.

**7** *meet his downfall*. Satan would meet his downfall, as Jesus said a few days earlier (John 12:31), but Satan did not know this. While he planned to overthrow Jesus, there was nothing in Jesus that Satan could lay hold of so as to gain an advantage over Him. Christ was sinless and victorious over evil. Jesus knew that when He died on the cross, He would not be the helpless victim to Satan, but rather He would be perfectly obeying the will of the Father. Jesus knew that the entire course of events would be overruled to God's end, salvation for the faithful and glory to God. In light of this, Jesus confidently pressed forward to do God's will. See also Note 2, *Lamb of God*, page 18.

# LESSON 18

## MORE TEACHING ON DISCIPLESHIP

### John 15

As Jesus continued His farewell discourses to the disciples, He used the analogy of a vineyard to show God's careful work in the life of each believer. In the analogy, God the Father is the gardener (owner and caretaker), Jesus is the vine, and each believer is a branch on the vine. The Father continually works to prune the vine of unfruitful branches and trim the fruitful branches so that they produce more and more fruit. The branches depend on the vine for nourishment and the ability to bear fruit. Without being nourished by the vine, the branches dry up and become worthless.

This illustration was simple for the disciples to understand. Every year in Palestine, the gardeners pruned their vineyards, cutting off dead lifeless wood and clipping the good branches to increase their yield. Jesus used this effective word picture to explain the Father's diligent attention to increasing the fruitfulness (i.e. the character and works of Christ) of each believer. Through abiding in Christ, the believer would draw the sustenance to *naturally* produce the "fruit" of a Christlike life. This fruitfulness would increase with time and the Father's care.

Jesus went on to explain His greatest desire for the disciples: that they live everyday in the presence of God's love. Jesus explained that He had experienced the love of His Father as He continually chose to do the Father's will. They, too, would abide in the amazing love of God through obedience to Jesus' one command: "Love each other as I have loved you." Those who obeyed this command, Jesus promised, would experience the friendship of

Jesus, would have the privilege of fruitful service for God, and would see the Father glorified as He faithfully answered their prayers.

But as they cultivated and enjoyed loving fellowship with other believers, Jesus warned about persecution that would come from those outside that fellowship. "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first," He said. "I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."<sup>1</sup> The world would look on the disciples as aliens because Jesus had chosen them to be His people. Jesus warned them that they would experience the same severe hostility He experienced from those who did not know the Father. But the faithful would recognize and appreciate their relationship to God.

Jesus declared that those who were hostile toward Him had no excuse for their sin, because with their own eyes they had witnessed Jesus' miracles<sup>2</sup> His godly teaching and holy lifestyle. The greatest judgment of all time would come to those cities and that generation which witnessed the very presence of the Son of God and still rejected Him (cf. Matthew 11:20-24).

In the face of the persecution they would encounter, the disciples were to testify about the Son of God, whose ministry they had witnessed firsthand. Jesus promised that the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom He would send, would also testify about Him. The Spirit would give them the words and courage to stand firm in their faith.

### **Read John 15:1-8.**

1. Who are the characters in Jesus' analogy, and who do they represent (15:1,5)?

2. a. What is the job and purpose of the gardener (15:2)?

b. Through this analogy, what was Jesus revealing about the Father in His relationship to each believer (15:2)?

**Reference:** Note 3, *pruning*, page 157.

3. a. What part does the vine play (15:3-5)?

b. What was Jesus teaching about His relationship to each believer?

**Note:** *You are already clean ...* (15:3; i.e. trimmed clean for fruit bearing as in 15:2). The disciple is "clean" who keeps Jesus' word (14:23) and in whom Jesus' word finds lodging (cf. 15:7). Also implied is that His word is used by the Father in the pruning process.

4. a. Although the branch has no life without the vine, it is given a very important role. What is it?

b. What is fruitfulness in light of the following verses?

John 14:12

Ephesians 5:9

5. What results of abiding in Christ did Jesus promise in John 15:7-8?

**Read John 15:9-17.**

6. a. What was Jesus' supreme desire for his disciples (15:9,11)?

b. What would make this possible (15:10,12,17)?

7. What did Jesus say about His relationship with those who obey Him (15:13-16)?

**Reference:** Note 4, *whatever you ask in my name*, page 148.

**Read John 15:18-27.**

8. a. What did Jesus tell His disciples about the animosity they would experience from the unbelieving world (15:18-21)?

**Reference:** Note 1, *the world hates you*, page 157.

b. What did Jesus say about the world's hatred of Him (15:22-25)?

9. Who would compel and enable the disciples to witness for Jesus Christ in spite of the persecution they would face (15:26-27; Acts 1:8)?

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Power to Live By**

As the disciples walked with Jesus, they saw a man whom they wanted to be like. He was kind, patient and compassionate, yet firm about the truth. He had access to the infinite wisdom of God and was able to at once see the spiritual world as well as the physical. He was a whole person, at peace with God and Himself and able to unselfishly serve the needs of others. His calm and fearless walk of faith in the face of deadly enemies was awesome to the disciples.

In our quest for fulfillment, we all yearn to be whole, at peace, and significant to the lives of others as Jesus was. We long to overcome the fears, self-doubts, anxiety, indecisiveness and selfishness that keep us from functioning as God created us to function. We yearn to experience the joy, or inner well of strength, Jesus had in the midst of heartache and hardship.

The wonderful news of John 15 is that Jesus does not ask us to live the Christian life in our own strength. He speaks of a relationship where He provides what is needed within to produce the fruits of His character that lead to wholeness and fulfillment. As we live in obedience to His Word, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-8;4:23;6:63;7:39) to indwell each believer (14:15-16,25). The Holy Spirit produces the very life of Christ in those who choose to yield to His leadership and draw spiritual life from the Word of God. The one who abides in Christ not only naturally bears the fruit of a Christlike life, but also experiences an effective prayer life and access to God with any request (15:7,16). He/she has a sense of the presence of God's love (15:9-10), the complete joy of Christ within (15:11), the sacrificial friendship and camaraderie of Jesus Christ (15:13-15), and the privilege of being His hand-picked co-worker (15:16).

The kindest words of Jesus from the Gospel of John are found in His teaching that we do not have to produce the Christian life--the wholeness of Christ--through our own efforts. By abiding in His Word and drawing on the life-giving Spirit, we are able to allow Jesus Christ to walk in our shoes and live His life through us.

Let's look at this power to live by which Jesus promised as we abide in Him.

1. a. What is the result of trying to follow godly principles and live the Christian life in our own strength?

b. How would you summarize the overall promise of John 15:1-8?

2. a. How does Jesus produce His life within us?

John 14:16-17 (Romans 8:11)

b. How does the "vine life" Jesus spoke about begin?

Ephesians 1:13-14 (John 3:3,5-6)

3. How is the work of the Spirit described in the these verses?

John 14:26

Philippians 2:13

4. a. What battle does Galatians 5:16-17,19-23 describe?

b. How is this battle won according to Galatians 5:16,24-25?

Ephesians 5:18b

c. If we desire to abide in Christ, how are we filled with the Holy Spirit?

Luke 11:13

**Reference:** Note 2, *Holy Spirit*, page 33.

5. What choices can we make in order to continue to abide in the vine?

Psalm 119:11,105 (Psalm 1:2-3)

Ephesians 4:22-24

Ephesians 4:30-32

I John 1:9

6. a. The more we choose to allow the Holy Spirit to produce the character of Christ within us, the more He will be reflected from our lives. What does II Corinthians 3:17-18 promise?

b. What qualities of Jesus Christ will people see manifested more consistently in us as we choose to abide in Christ?

Galatians 5:22-23

Ephesians 1:17-19a

II Timothy 1:7

## Summary

7. a. What does the analogy of the vine and branches show about your ability to live the Christian life apart from Jesus Christ?

b. What part does the Holy Spirit play in producing the life of Christ within you?

8. As the vine, Jesus promises to produce the fruits of His very nature through your life as you yield each area of your life to Him. Is there a situation that you have been trying to work out on your own? Perhaps this prayer would express the desire of your heart:

*Lord, I confess I have been handling this situation in my own strength. Please take control of this area now and fill me with your Spirit of love, wisdom and self-control. In Jesus' Name.*

9. a. What aspects of Christ's character do you especially want in your life?

b. Change is a process, but what does Jesus promise as you continually choose to abide in Him?

## LESSON 18 NOTES

**1** *the world hates you* (15:19). "As so often in the Johannine writings, 'the world' is the godless world, the world organized in opposition to God, and therefore opposed to His people. At the moment, Jesus Himself was the target for their opposition; in a few hours He would be the victim of their hostility. It was inevitable that His associates should incur the world's hatred as He Himself had done." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 313.

**2** Note 1, *Miracles of Jesus*, page 75.

**3** *Pruning*. "Jesus makes a distinction between two kinds of pruning: (1) separating and (2) cutting back branches. Fruitful branches are cut back to promote growth. In other words, God must sometimes discipline us to strengthen our character and faith. But branches that don't bear fruit are cut off at the trunk because not only are they worthless, but they often infect the rest of the tree. People who won't bear fruit for God or who try to block the efforts of God's followers will be cut off from His life-giving power." *Life Application Bible, NIV*, page 1913.

*cuts off* (15:2) refers to judgment (as in 15:6). *pruning* relates to increasing fruitfulness. In the New Testament, the figure of good fruit represents the product of a godly life (Mt 3:8; 7:16-20) or virtues of character (cf. Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9; Php 1:11). *thrown into the fire and burned* (15:6) is viewed by some to reflect God's judgment on unbelievers *and* those who fall away from faith in Christ. Others believe that in light of such passages as 6:39; 10:27-28, these branches probably do not represent true believers. They argue that genuine salvation is evidenced by a life of fruitfulness since a branch out of contact with Christ is lifeless (15:2,4).

*Note: Building on the Basics  
is longer in this lesson.*

## LESSON 19

### JESUS' FAREWELL

#### John 16

Still in the Upper Room with His disciples the night before His death, Jesus continued to prepare them for His departure. He had already warned them of persecution, but further explained that because of their faith, they would be expelled from the synagogue.<sup>1</sup> Some would even view killing Jesus' disciples as worship to God. Jesus gave such warnings so that these events would not surprise His followers, but instead would prove His knowledge of all things.

Understandably, Jesus' words about leaving them filled the disciples' hearts with sorrow. "But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away," Jesus said. "Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." Jesus promised that the Counselor,<sup>2</sup> the Holy Spirit, would replace Jesus' visible presence. The Spirit would be like Jesus had been to them and would equip them to face the persecution and new challenges ahead.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus also explained that the Holy Spirit would have a ministry like His to the unbelieving world. Jesus had been His disciples' defense in the world, but His presence and testimony had been an indictment on those who rejected the truth. Soon the Spirit would assume the place of Christ to the unbelieving world. He would expose sin, reveal God's standard of righteousness in Christ, and judge Satan, the "prince of this world," who stood behind those who opposed the One sent by God. The very presence of the Holy Spirit in the world would show that Jesus had won the battle against the evil one.

The Holy Spirit would also become the resident advocate and teacher of Jesus' disciples, continuing to unfold the truth about God and His Son to each succeeding generation of believers. The Gospel of John and all the New Testament Scriptures, inspired by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21) would exemplify fulfillment of this prophecy.

The disciples still did not understand what Jesus meant when He said, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." Knowing their frustration, Jesus used the analogy of the birth of a child to explain further. His imminent departure (His death) would bring tremendous pain, but His return (His resurrection) would produce in them an indescribable joy. After that, the Father would welcome their prayer requests in the name of His Son. "Until now you have not asked for anything in my name," Jesus said. "Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."<sup>4</sup>

Not only this, but soon His teachings would cease to be figurative and puzzling. The Holy Spirit would teach them in terms that they could easily understand. And they could be assured that as they prayed to the Father "in Jesus' name,"<sup>5</sup> God would not only answer but also be a Father *to them*. He would love and welcome them because they had loved and welcomed His Son.

In closing, Jesus reiterated what was still a painful and baffling proclamation to the disciples. "I came from the Father and entered the world," He said. "Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

Despite their confusion, the disciples still declared their faith. They believed Jesus was from God and knew all things. But Jesus knew that in the hours to come, as they were scattered and forced to abandon Him, they would not understand. In the midst of the trouble they would face, Jesus encouraged His faithful and dearly loved followers to find peace *in Him*. "In this world you will have trouble," He declared. "But take heart! I have overcome the world."

### **Read John 16:1-15.**

1. a. Why did Jesus warn the disciples about the persecution ahead (16:1,4a)?

b. Why would this persecution take place (16:3)?

2. What feelings did Jesus acknowledge in the disciples regarding His departure (16:5-6)?

3. Why did Jesus say His departure would benefit the disciples (16:7)?

**Note:** The Counselor could be translated: "Comforter, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengthened, Standby." *The Amplified Bible*.

4. What would the Holy Spirit do as He assumed the ministry of Jesus to the unbelieving world (16:8)?

**Reference:** Note 6, *Three important tasks*, page 168.

5. a. What would the Holy Spirit do for Jesus' disciples (16:12-13)?

b. To what end would the Holy Spirit's activity be directed (16:14-15)?

**Note:** *what is to come* (16:13) "probably means the whole Christian way or revelation (as presented and preserved in the apostolic writings) still future at the time Jesus spoke." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1628.

**Read John 16:16-33.**

6. a. How did the disciples react to Jesus' predictions (16:16-18)?
- b. What promise did Jesus make as He responded to their confusion (16:19-22)?
7. What did Jesus promise would bring *complete joy* to his disciples (16:23-27)?

**Reference:** Note 4, *Ask and you will receive*, page 168.

8. What clear statement did Jesus make as He drew His farewell discourses to a close (16:28)?
9. The disciples did not understand God's plan, but they believed that Jesus knew all things. What final prediction did Jesus make about the hours to come (16:32)?
10. a. Why had Jesus told the disciples what He did the night before His death (16:33a)?
- b. What was His final promise to His dearly loved followers (16:33b)?

## BUILDING ON THE BASICS

### The Fulfillment of Prayer

As Jesus prepared His disciples for the challenges that would face them after He left, He told them that they could not live for Him without drawing on His power. As they allowed the Holy Spirit to control their lives, they would experience God's presence and witness incredible miracles. In this context, Jesus emphasized that an effective prayer life would "complete their joy" (16:24). The one who believed in and welcomed the Son would be put in open communication with a loving heavenly Father, to whom he/she could speak with all honesty and without fear.

The joy of prayer to which Jesus referred is not only found in answers to prayer requests, but even more in the privilege of direct interaction with a loving heavenly Father. Communication with Him fulfills the heart's desire to worship as well as the need for "a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). This One who hears our every plea is all-wise, all-powerful and infinitely loving. He knows and accepts us completely and is available anywhere, anytime, and under any circumstances. In His presence we encounter His love and are transformed into His image (II Corinthians 3:18). In these facets of prayer are found the greatest treasures and keys to fulfillment.

Prayer is a natural instinct of man, and an effective prayer life is *essential* for fulfillment in life. In this lesson, we will be looking at biblical principles that instruct us in how to experience the joy of prayer.

1. a. Jesus said that we must welcome Him into our lives (John 16:26-27) and pray in His name to be heard by God. This is because to enter the presence of a holy God, we must be declared holy by God. How are we declared holy (righteous, cleansed from sin) by God?

Romans 3:22-25a

II Corinthians 5:21

b. In light of this, what did Jesus declare about gaining access to God?

John 14:6

**Note:** Forgiveness through Christ is not exclusive, but is available of all people in all nations (Matthew 28:19-20; I Timothy 2:4-6a).

2. Jesus instructed us to pray to the Father in the name of the Son. Who helps us pray?

Romans 8:26

Jude 20

**Note:** *in the Holy Spirit* means "according to the Spirit's promptings and with the power of the Spirit." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1921.

3. A simple acrostic has helped many to remember the different facets of prayer. It is:

**A**doration

**C**onfession

**T**hanksgiving

**S**upplication

**A**doration, or Praise.

God is honored when we begin prayer with praise. What are some of the things for which we can praise God?

Psalm 145:3-7

Psalm 145:8-9,13-19

**C**onfession of sin.

a. What do the following reveal about this important aspect of prayer?

Psalm 66:18

I John 1:9

b. As we ask God for forgiveness of sin, what did Jesus instruct us to do? Mark 11:25

**T**hanks giving.

What instructions about gratitude to God are found in these verses?

Psalm 100:4

Ephesians 5:20

**S** application, or prayer requests.

a. What kinds of things can we pray for ourselves?

Philippians 4:6

Matthew 6:11,13

James 1:5

Psalm 51:10

b. What kinds of things can we pray for others?

Ephesians 1:15-19a

Ephesians 3:16-19

James 5:14-16

b. Optional: What must we remember when God does not answer specific requests when or how we desire?

Romans 8:32

Psalm 25:10a

Psalm 27:14

Isaiah 55:8-9

Job 42:2-3

4. Prayer is essential to experiencing the fulfillment Jesus spoke about. Why should we go to Him in prayer?

I Peter 5:6-7

Philippians 4:7

Jeremiah 33:3

## Summary

5. What components of prayer are represented by the **A C T S** acrostic? Why are each of these facets of prayer important for fulfillment?

6. What principles regarding prayer from this lesson are most helpful to you?

7. Do you have a certain time of day when you read the Bible and pray? Have you ever kept a prayer list in order to see God's answers more clearly? These may be habits you would want to begin or renew in order to experience the fulfillment of prayer.

Tell God all that is in your heart, as one unloads one's heart, its pleasures and its pains, to a dear friend. Tell Him your troubles, that He may comfort you; tell Him your joys, that He may sober them; tell Him your longings, that He may purify them; tell Him your dislikes, that He may help you to conquer them; talk to Him about your temptations, that He may shield you from them; show Him the wounds of your heart, that He may heal them; lay bare your indifference to good, your depraved tastes for evil, your instability. Tell Him how self-love makes you unjust to others, how vanity tempts you to be insincere, how pride disguises you to yourself and to others.

If you thus pour out all your weaknesses, needs, troubles, there will be no lack of what to say. You will never exhaust the subject. It is continually being renewed. People who have no secrets from each other never want for subjects of conversation. They do not weigh their words, for there is nothing to be held back; neither do they seek for something to say. They talk out of the abundance of the heart, without consideration they say just what they think. Blessed are they who attain to such familiar, unreserved intercourse with God.

17th Century Archbishop Francois de la Mothe Fenelon

## LESSON 19 NOTES

**1** *expelled from synagogue.* "At the time when the Gospel was written these words had acquired a special relevance from the inclusion in the synagogue prayers of a curse on the Nazarenes [Christians], which was intended to ensure that the followers of Jesus could take no part in the service." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 317.

**2 Reference:** Counselor, Gr. *Parakletos*, See Note under Question # 6, page 142.

**3** *I will send Him [the Holy Spirit] to you* (16:7). This prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:1f).

**4** *Ask and you will receive.* In John 16:23-27, "Jesus is talking about a new relationship between the believer and God. Previously, people approached God through priests. After Jesus' resurrection, any believer could approach God directly. A new day has dawned and now all believers are priests, talking with God personally and directly (see Hebrews 10:19-23). We approach God, not because of our own merit, but because Jesus, our great high priest, has made us acceptable to God." *Life Application Bible*, NIV, page 1915.

**5 Reference:** *In Jesus' Name.* See Note 4, *whatever you ask in My name*, page 148 (Less. 14).

**6** *Three important tasks* of the Holy Spirit are (1) convicting the world of sin and calling it to repentance, (2) revealing the standard of God's righteousness to anyone who believes, because Christ would no longer be physically present on earth, and (3) demonstrating Christ's judgment over Satan." *Life Application Bible*, NIV, page 1914.

*Note: Building on the Basics  
is slightly longer in this lesson.*

## LESSON 20

### JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS OWN

#### John 17

Probably still in the Upper Room before leaving for the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus lifted His face to heaven and prayed before the disciples. In this prayer, known as His high-priestly prayer, Jesus first prayed for Himself, then for His disciples, and finally for all those who would believe as a result of the first disciples' witness.

"Father, the hour has come," He began. "Glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you." It was time for the cross, which Jesus had known all along would climax His earthly ministry. The dignity with which He would endure the cross, God's means of redemption for mankind,<sup>1</sup> would reveal both the character of Jesus Christ and the limitless love of God for man.

Above all, the cross would make eternal life possible for those who would become God's children. In His prayer, Jesus defined eternal life as an intimate relationship with God. "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (17:3). Jesus stated that the cross would complete the work the Father had for Him on earth, and was the obedient way for the Son to return to His Father's presence. There, Jesus would resume His eternal place of glory where all that belonged to His Father--dominion, wisdom and power--also belonged to Him (17:5,10).

After praying for Himself regarding the cross before Him, Jesus prayed for His disciples, whom He described as "those whom you gave me out of the

world" (17:6).<sup>2</sup> In response to the promptings of God's Spirit, Jesus' disciples had come to believe with certainty that Jesus had come from God and had spoken God's words. Jesus did not pray that God would take these men and women out of the world, for they would be His ambassadors in reaching the world (17:21,23; II Corinthians 5:18-20). He prayed instead that God would protect them from the evil one<sup>3</sup> and sanctify them (set them apart and produce His character in them) as they went about the task of witnessing for Him in a hostile world.<sup>4</sup> Jesus committed Himself to the sanctification of His disciples (17:19).

After this, Jesus prayed for all those who would believe in Him as a result of the first disciples' witness. With utter confidence in God's ability to reach the world through this small band of followers, Jesus looked forward to the millions who would be redeemed as a result of their faithful testimony. The essence of Jesus' prayer for all who would believe was for unity, or oneness.<sup>5</sup> This would come from oneness with God. "Just as you are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe..." (17:21). Jesus prayed that the love which united Him with His Father would fill His church and would demonstrate Christ's reality and God's redemptive love to the world.

Finally, Jesus prayed that those who believed in Him would be with Him forever, beholding and sharing His eternal glory. Even after His departure to heaven, Jesus promised that He would continue to reveal the Father to believers so that they would experience the Father's love and Christ's abiding presence.

### **Read John 17:1-5.**

1. a. To what did Jesus refer in John 17:1 when He said, "Father, the time has come" (cf. 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23,27; 13:1)?

**Reference:** Note 2, *Lamb of God*, page 18.

b. To what end did Jesus ask the Father to glorify the Son (17:1)?

**Note:** To *glorify* means to reveal and honor.

c. What would the cross reveal about the Father and the Son (Romans 5:8; 8:31-34)?

2. How did Jesus describe eternal life (17:3)?

3. a. What had Jesus purposed to do on earth (17:4)

b. What did He look forward to beyond the cross (17:5)?

### **Read John 17:6-19.**

4. What did Jesus say was true of those who responded to God's truth through Him (17:6,8)?

**Reference:** Note 2, *those whom you gave me*, page 177.

5. What did Jesus pray for the disciples as He left them to evangelize a hostile world (17:11-12,14-16)?

**Note:** Judas was the "one doomed to destruction," who was lost because he chose to betray Jesus (see Psalm 41:9). **References:** Note 3, *evil one*, Note 4, *the world*, page 177, Note 6, *by the power of your name*, page 177.

6. What would Jesus' words later produce in the disciples' lives (17:13)?

7. a. How would Jesus Christ's followers be sanctified (set apart for service and built in godly character) in the midst of their ministry to the world (17:17-18)?

b. To what task did Jesus also commit Himself (17:19)?

**Read John 17:20-26.**

8. a. Who did Jesus include in His prayers (17:20)?

b. What was Jesus' primary desire for all believers and why (17:21-23)?

**Reference:** Note 5, *unity*, or *oneness*, page 177.

9. a. What did Jesus will for all who would believe in Him (17:24)?

b. As He concluded His prayer, what did Jesus promise to do and why (17:26)?

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Bonds of Love**

The deepest need in our quest for fulfillment is identity, a place of belonging, among people who love us unconditionally. This is the need Jesus addressed in His high priestly prayer the night before His death. In this prayer, He revealed God's desire that we first and foremost experience bonds of love with Him and a place in His eternal family. This oneness with God and sanctification through His word produces unity and loving relationships with other believers. The love and unity among believers then bears witness to the unbelieving world of the reality of Christ, drawing many to the light of God's love (John 17:23).

But mighty forces are at work to destroy the bonds of love and unity which fulfill individual believers and build the body of Christ. Jesus prayed against these forces in His intercession for those who would believe. First He prayed for protection against the evil one (17:15), who is behind all destruction of faith and healthy relationships (Ephesians 6:11-12). Selfishness and pride can also destroy oneness among believers, so Jesus prayed that His people would be filled with the Father's love and would be unified by Jesus' indwelling presence.

The unity in God's family for which Jesus prayed can produce the purest bonds of love because it is sustained by the infinite love of God within individual believers. This love, unselfish and always with the best interest of others in mind, allows the believer to give and receive the sense of identity and unconditional love that fulfills human longing. As we continue our study of *Quest for Fulfillment*, let's take a look at the bonds of love God has designed to fulfill the children in His family.

1. Where is our identity, or place of belonging, as a believer in Christ?

John 1:12

Ephesians 2:19-22

I Timothy 3:15

2. a. The household of God is also referred to as the "body" of Christ on earth, of which Christ is the Head and believers are the various parts (cf. Ephesians 4:4-6,15-16; 5:30). Selfish choices can tear down the body and prevent fulfillment of needs. What destructive attitudes and actions must be avoided?

I Corinthians 3:3

Psalm 101:5 (James 3:14)

Proverbs 20:19

b. What other forces can destroy the oneness in the body of Christ for which Jesus prayed?

Matthew 7:1,3

Philippians 2:21

I Timothy 6:10

Titus 1:16

c. What effect does such behavior within the body of Christ produce in the non-believing world?

Romans 2:23-24 (II Peter 2:2)

d. What must we remember when we find ourselves in conflict with other believers?

Ephesians 6:12

3. a. *List* the attitudes and actions we can choose which will build the body of Christ and allow us to find fulfillment within it?

Romans 12:9-19

Colossians 3:16-17

Ephesians 4:1-3

Ephesians 4:15-16

b. What does the Spirit of God produce within which builds the body of Christ and allows us to find fulfillment within it?

I Corinthians 13:4-8a

Galatians 5:22-23

## Summary

4. In His prayer, Jesus prayed that we would experience love for all believers everywhere. What does this require?

5. What tendencies do you want to guard against as you seek to build the unity in Christ's body, the church?

6. What do you consider to be the greatest destructive forces in the church today? How can you work against these in your own life?

7. What fulfillment have you experienced within the body of Christ? What do you want to give to others?

8. a. What does Jesus Christ want to be the outstanding characteristic of the church on earth?

b. What will you experience as a result?

c. What does God want to happen through the church's united witness to the world?

## LESSON 20 NOTES

**1** *God's means of redemption.* See Note 2, *Lamb of God*, page 18.

**2** *those whom you gave me* (17:6,9,24). Most commentators agree that this does not speak of predestination. Barclay writes: "This does not mean that God destined some men to be disciples and some to refuse discipleship. Think of it this way. A parent dreams great dreams for his son; he works out a future for him, but the son can refuse that future and go his own way. If we love someone we are always dreaming of his future and planning for greatness; but the dream and the plan can be frustrated. God has His plan, His dream, His destiny for every man; and our tremendous responsibility is that we can accept or reject it. To be given to Jesus by God means that the Spirit of God moves our hearts to respond to the appeal of Jesus." William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, Volume 2, pages 212,213.

**3** *evil one* (17:15), or Satan. "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one who dominates it as a usurper (1 John 5:19; cf. 1 John 2:13f.; 3:12; 5:18); Jesus prays that they may be delivered from him, just as he had already taught them to pray for such deliverance (Matthew 6:13)." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 333.

"It is uplifting to feel that God is the sentinel who stands over our lives to guard us from the assaults of evil. The fact that we fall so often is due to the fact that we try to meet life in our own strength and forget to seek the help and to remember the presence of our protecting God." William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, Volume 2, page 216.

See also, Note 5, *Satan*, page 66.

**4** *the world* (17:9,14-17,18,21). John uses the word "world" for human society organizing itself without God. Jesus prayed that His disciples would be strengthened to go into the world to reveal God and win the world back to Him (17:21,23).

**5** *unity, or oneness* (17:21-23). "Jesus' great desire for his disciples was that they would become one. He wanted them unified as a powerful witness to the reality of God's love. Are you helping to unify the body of Christ, the church? You can pray for other Christians, avoid gossip, build others up, work together in humility, give your time and money, exalt Christ, and refuse to get sidetracked arguing over divisive matters." *Life Application Bible*, NIV, page 1917.

**6** *by the power of your name* (17:11). "The name of God in the Old Testament denotes not only His character (as in verse 17:6 above), but also His power; cf. Psalm 20:1; Psalm 54:1; Proverbs 18:10. By the Father's power, imparted to Jesus, Jesus Himself had guarded them as a treasure entrusted to Him by the Father." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 332.

# LESSON 21

## ARREST, TRIAL & CRUCIFIXION

### John 18-19

After Jesus' prayer of John 17, He and His disciples left the house where they had celebrated the Passover meal. They went outside the city to a place where they had often met in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Because it was familiar, Judas led the Roman troops and Jewish officials straight to Jesus for arrest. Carrying torches and weapons, they seemed to have expected a search for Jesus among the trees and caves. Instead, He stepped out before them and asked, "Who is it you want?" When they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth," He replied, "I am He." With this, the entire company drew back and fell to the ground.<sup>1</sup> Surely Judas, who was leading them, stood out to the shocked disciples.

Repeating that He was the one they sought, Jesus requested that they take Him and let the disciples go. But Peter took out his sword and attacked, cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus touched the man's ear and healed it (Luke 22:51) and instructed Peter to put away his sword. "Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" Jesus asked, bringing calm to the volatile situation.

Then the high priest's officers bound Jesus and took Him to Annas,<sup>2</sup> a former high priest and the father-in-law of the current high priest, Caiaphas. Annas questioned Jesus in an attempt to get evidence to convict Him of blasphemy. Jewish law required that witnesses produce evidence of a criminal's guilt, so Jesus asked why Annas did not question those who had heard Him speak instead. For this answer, one of the high priest officials

rebuked Jesus and struck Him in the face. Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, who had already determined that Jesus should die (18:14).

In the meantime, Peter and another disciple, perhaps John,<sup>3</sup> had followed Jesus. The other disciple was known and was admitted at the high priest's home, and he facilitated Peter's entry. There, Peter was first questioned about his association with Jesus by the maid-servant and door-keeper, then by men standing by the fire, and finally by one of the high priest's servants related to the man whose ear Peter cut off in the garden. With each inquiry, Peter emphatically denied knowing Jesus. Then the rooster crowed, completing the fulfillment of Peter's denial which Jesus had predicted (13:37-38).

During night proceedings with the Jewish council (cf. Luke 22:63-71), it was determined that Jesus should die for blasphemy. But before Roman authorities, the Jewish leaders would accuse Jesus of treason in order to obtain a death sentence. Under Roman rule, the Jews had no authority to carry out a death penalty, or they would have killed Jesus by stoning. John notes that Jesus had predicted His death would come by crucifixion (cf. 18:32; Matthew 20:18-19).

Completing their trial in the very early morning hours, the Jewish leaders took Jesus to the Roman governor, Pilate, at his palace. They did not even have a written indictment against Jesus when they approached Pilate, probably assuming Pilate would take them at their word. Because the case was so vaguely presented, Pilate did not initially assess that it was worth his time to hear (18:31). But when they charged Jesus with claiming to be king of the nation (cf. Luke 23:2-3), which suggested revolutionary intent, Pilate took Jesus aside to question Him.

"Are *you* the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked Him, his emphasis on "you" signifying that to Pilate the prisoner appeared anything but kingly. Jesus responded, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

Even though Jesus admitted to being a king, Pilate saw a man harmless in manner with no political agenda. He went back to the Jews and declared Jesus innocent, suggesting that he release Jesus under the yearly practice of releasing one prisoner at Passover. But the Jews responded by demanding the release of a criminal named Barabbas,<sup>4</sup> not Jesus.

To appease the Jews, Pilate had Jesus flogged,<sup>5</sup> after which the soldiers mocked Him, putting a crown of thorns and purple robe on Him and striking Him repeatedly in the face. After this brutal treatment, Pilate presented Jesus to the Jews and pronounced Him innocent. Immediately, the chief priests and their officials shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" They insisted that because Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God, Pilate should allow them to crucify Jesus for blasphemy according to their law.

With this new information, Pilate became superstitiously troubled with the thought of God being involved in the situation. He took Jesus into the palace and asked Him, "Where do you come from?" When Jesus did not answer, Pilate reminded Jesus that he had the power to free or crucify Him. Jesus responded, "You would have no power over Me if it were not given to you from above." He told Pilate that those who actually brought Him to the governor carried greater guilt.

Pilate, probably moved by fear of the inexplicable person before him as well as by a conviction of Jesus' innocence, renewed his effort to release Jesus. But the Jews kept shouting and accused Pilate of disloyalty to Caesar if he set Jesus free. Finally, Pilate sat down in the judgment seat to make a decision and asked, "Shall I crucify your king?" Desperate to see Jesus die, the chief priests answered with a shocking statement of blasphemy for a Jew: "We have no king but Caesar."

So Pilate relented to the death sentence, sending a sign to be placed on the cross that read in Aramaic, Latin and Greek: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. The chief priests protested, but Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

The soldiers led Jesus to Golgotha outside the city where He was crucified between two other men at 9 a.m. (Mark 15:25). Three hours later at noon, as the Passover sacrifices were being prepared in Jerusalem, the Lamb of God<sup>7</sup> still hung on the cross. Some bystanders, like the soldiers and religious leaders, jeered (cf. Matthew 27:41-44; Luke 23:35-37) while others, like His mother, aunt, a few other women, and the apostle John, stood by the cross filled with grief. Looking down upon them, Jesus asked His mother and John to care for each other, and Mary lived in John's home thereafter.

Between noon and 3 o'clock, there was darkness over the land (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44-45). Then, after four to six hours on the cross, Jesus knew that the time of His death had come. He asked for a drink



### **John 18:12-27.**

3. The Jewish leaders had to work through the night and see Pilate in the early morning hours in order to finish Jesus' trial and execution before the Passover Sabbath. What is so ironic about their zeal to remain *holy* with regard to Jewish law?

4. a. What did the arrestors first do with Jesus (18:12-13,19)?

**Reference:** Note 2, *Annas*, page 187.

b. Jewish law required that witnesses produce evidence to convict a criminal. In light of this, how did Jesus respond to Annas' questions and the official who struck Him in the face (18:20-23)?

c. What did Annas do with Jesus (18:24)?

5. While Peter had had the courage to defend Jesus in the garden and to follow Him after His arrest, what did he do upon entering the courtyard of the high priest (18:17-18,25-27; see also Mark 14:71-72)?

**Reference:** Note 3, *John followed*, page 187.

### **John 18:28-40.**

6. Why would the Jews not enter Pilate's palace (18:28)?

7. No doubt Pilate was incensed at being awakened so early in the morning to judge a case without even a written indictment. What caused Pilate to hear the case (18:29-33; Luke 23:20)?

8. After asking Pilate whether his question was from a Roman or a Jewish perspective, how did Jesus answer the governor's question (18:36-37)?

**Note:** *Is that your own idea . . . ?* (18:34). If Pilate's question (v. 33) was from Roman perspective, it meant, "Are you a rebel?" If the question had originated with the Jews, it meant, "Are you claiming to be the Messianic King?"

9. a. How did Pilate respond (18:38)?

b. When Pilate suggested He release Jesus under a Passover amnesty tradition, how did the Jews respond (18:39-40)?

**Reference:** Note 4, *Barabbas*, page 187.

### **John 19:1-16.**

10. a. How did Pilate try to appease the Jews (19:1-5)?

**Reference:** Note 5, *Flogging*, page 188.

b. What clash of opinion did Pilate have with the Jews (19:6)?

11. a. What caused Pilate to question Jesus again (19:7-9)?

b. What did Jesus declare in response to Pilate's reasoning (19:10-11)?

12. a. When Pilate tried to set Jesus free, how did the Jews coerce him to pronounce the death penalty (19:12-15a)?

**Reference:** Note 6, *the sixth hour*, page 188.

b. What amazing statement did the chief priests make in response to Pilate's final question, "Shall I crucify your king?" (19:15b).

### **John 19:17-27.**

13. How did God, through Pilate, accurately describe Jesus to all (19:19-22)?

14. How was the Old Testament prophecy of Psalm 22:18 fulfilled at the cross (19:23-24)?

15. As her eldest son, how did Jesus care for His mother from the cross (19:25-27)?

### **John 19:28-42.**

16. After several hours on the cross, how did Jesus end His work of redemption (19:28-30)?

17. a. Why did the Jews want the bodies taken from the crosses before dark (19:31)?

b. How did the soldiers ensure that Jesus was dead (19:32-34)?

**Note:** Blood and water would come from the spear piercing the pericardium (the sac that surrounds the heart) and the heart itself. *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1635.

c. What did the author pause to point out about Jesus death (19:35-37)?

**Note:** *The man who saw* it was either the author himself, which many believe, or someone he deemed completely reliable. *Scripture . . . fulfilled* (19:36-37). God overruled to fulfill the prophecy of Psalm 34:20 and Zechariah 12:10 in the death of Christ.

18. Who boldly asked Pilate for Jesus' body, and what did they do (19:38-42; Matthew 27:59-60)?

**Reference:** Note 8, *Joseph...and Nicodemus*, page 188.

## Summary

19. a. What do these chapters teach you about the nature of man?

b. What do they reveal about religious hypocrisy?

20. What do these chapters reveal about the character of God in the face of sinful man?

21. a. What do these verses reveal about the Cross and you?

John 3:16

Romans 5:8

Isaiah 53:3-12

b. What is your response to God's sacrifice for you?

## LESSON 21 NOTES

**1** *fell to the ground* (18:6). "They came to arrest a meek peasant and instead were met in the dim light by a majestic person." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1631.

"The men may have been startled by the boldness of Jesus' question, or by the words 'I am He,' a declaration of His divinity (Exodus 3:14). Or perhaps they were overcome by His obvious power and authority." *Life Application Bible*, page 1918.

"*I am he*" (Gk. *ego eimi*) (18:5,6) could be understood by the Jewish hearers as a declaration of power and divinity because it was equivalent to the God of Israel's self-identification "I am He" in Exodus 3:14. F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 341.

**2** *Annas* (18:13-24). a. Annas had been high priest from A.D. 6 to 15. Four of his sons had also held the high priesthood and Caiaphas was his son-in-law. The high priest position had been for a lifetime, but with the coming of Roman governors to Palestine, the high priest position had switched hands often, attained by political jockeying and close co-operation with the Roman governors. The family of Annas was immensely wealthy, and they had intrigued and bribed their way into office. Annas remained the power behind it all. It is believed, since the shops in the Temple where sacrificial birds and animals were sold was called The Bazaars of Annas, that the family wealth came from the extorting in the Temple which Jesus came against in John 2.

b. *This extortion* was undergirded by the fact that all victims offered as sacrifices had to be flawless. Temple inspectors would determine if they were, and sacrificial animals from outside the Temple were always found to be flawed. Rather than be embarrassed by rejection, people bought their sacrifices at the Temple, only there a pair of doves which cost 4p outside the Temple cost 75p. William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, page 226.

**3** *John followed*. John records that Peter "and another disciple" (18:15-16) followed Jesus to the courtyard. While it remains unsure as to whether this unknown disciple was John or a Jerusalem disciple, many believe it was John. This is because John does not ever mention his name in the gospel when speaking about himself (ex: 13:23). It also explains the detail with which John records the happenings in the high priest's courtyard.

**4** *Barabbas*. "Barabbas was a rebel against Rome and although he had committed murder, he was probably a hero among the Jews. The Jews hated being governed by Rome and paying taxes to the despised government. Barabbas, who had led a rebellion and failed, was released instead of Jesus,

the only One who could truly help Israel." *Life Application Bible*, page 1921.

**5** "Flogging could have killed Jesus. The usual procedure was to bare the upper half of the victim's body and tie his hands to a pillar before whipping him with a three pronged whip. The number of lashes was determined by the severity of the crime, up to 40 were permitted under Jewish law (Dt. 25:3). After being flogged, Jesus also endured other agonies recorded here and in the other Gospels (Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23)." *Life Application Bible*, page 1922.

Scourging before sentencing for guilt was illegal by Roman law, and Pilate had declared Jesus innocent (18:38).

**6** *the sixth hour* (19:14). In Jewish reckoning, Pilate's pronouncement recorded in John would have been about noon. However, other gospels record Jesus crucified at the third hour, or 9 a.m. Jewish reckoning. The only possible explanation for the discrepancy is that John was using Roman time, in which case the appearance before Pilate would have been at 6:00 a.m. and the crucifixion at 9:00 a.m. For other time references, see Mt 27:45-46; Mk 15:33-34; Lk 23:44. *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1634.

**7 Reference:** Note 2, *Lamb of God*, page 18.

**8** *Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus* "were secret followers of Jesus. They were afraid to make this allegiance known because of their positions in the Jewish community. Joseph was a leader and honored member of the Jewish council. Nicodemus, also a member of the council, had come to Jesus by night (3:1) and later tried to defend him before the other religious leaders (7:50-52). Yet they risked their reputations to provide for Jesus' burial." *Life Application Bible*, page 1925.

# LESSON 22

## THE RESURRECTION

### John 20

In her love for Jesus, Mary Magdalene could hardly wait to go to the tomb of her Lord after the Sabbath had ended. She was up before daybreak on the first day of the week. In the darkness, she made her way to the tomb. But to her horror, Mary found the tomb open and empty. She ran to tell Peter and John, who quickly returned to investigate. They found the tomb vacant with the grave clothes lying as if the body had moved through them. This was not the work of a grave robber. Jesus had to have risen, as He promised. But the disciples still did not understand the Scriptures that had prophesied the resurrection (cf. Psalm 16:10; Psalm 110:1,4; Isaiah 53:11; Luke 18:33).

After Peter and John had left, Mary came back and remained outside the tomb, crying. As she looked inside again, she saw two angels sitting where Jesus' body had been. They asked her why she was crying. In her grief, Mary responded, "They have taken my Lord away, and I don't know where they have put Him." Turning around, she saw someone standing there, although she did not recognize that person as Jesus until He said, "Mary." She cried out, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). "Don't cling to Me," He told her. "Instead, go and tell the disciples that you have seen Me and that soon I will go back to the Father." Mary ran to tell the disciples.

That evening, when the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jews Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst. "Peace be with you!" He said, and He showed them His wounded hands and side. "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you," Jesus told the disciples. Then

He gave them authority to proclaim forgiveness in His name to all who would believe.

But Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not among them when Jesus appeared. When the disciples told him about seeing the Lord, Thomas insisted he must see and feel the wounds in the Lord's hands and side before he would believe. Jesus granted his request eight days later when once again He appeared to the disciples. With this, Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!"

### **Read John 20:1-9.**

1. a. Describe the events and details of this Sunday morning which stand out to you?

**Note:** By Jewish reckoning, any part of a day constitutes a day. Jesus was put on the cross Friday morning, was laid in the tomb Friday afternoon, and rose from the dead Sunday morning. Jesus had prophesied that He would rise on the third day (Luke 18:33; Mark 8:31; Matthew 27:63).

b. How did John respond when he saw empty grave clothes (20:8)?

**Note:** *saw and believed* (20:8). It is assumed from the use of the word "believe" in His gospel that John was referring to belief in the resurrection (cf. 20:29).

c. Even though they most probably believed that Jesus had risen, what did they still not understand (20:9)?

**Note:** Old Testament prophecies regarding the resurrection include Psalm 16:10; 110:1,4; Isaiah 53:11; Hosea 6:2.

**Read John 20:10-18.**

2. What seemed to be Mary's state of mind at this point (20:10-14)?

**Note:** Note 1, *Mary of Magdala*, page 197.

3. What was her amazing experience (20:15-16)?

4. What did Jesus instruct her to do (20:17)?

**Reference:** Note 2, *I have not yet returned to My Father*, page 197.

**Read John 20:19-23.**

5. Describe the Jesus' meeting with the disciples later that day. How did the atmosphere change in their midst (20:19-20)?

6. What did Jesus commission the disciples to do, and how did He equip them for this task (20:21-23)?

**References:** Note 3, *breathed on them*, and Note 4, *If you forgive*, page 197.

**Read John 20:24-31.**

7. a. How did Jesus meet Thomas' need for evidence (20:24-27)?

b. What did Thomas's response (20:28) add to that of others who had seen their resurrected Lord (20:16,20)?

8. What blessing did Jesus declare in response to Thomas' faith (20:29)?

**References:** Note 5, *Because you have seen me*, page 198.

9. John declared that he had selected only a few of the many miraculous signs they had witnessed in the writing of his gospel. What was the apostle's purpose in selecting the miracles which he presented in his Gospel (20:31, considered the key verse in the book of John)?

**Reference:** Note 6, *The Resurrection Appearances of Jesus*, page 198, and Note 1, *The Miracles of Jesus*, page 75.

## BUILDING ON THE BASICS

### Absolute Assurance

The reality of the resurrection became certain as over a 40 day period, Jesus appeared in bodily form to more than 500 people--too many to support the hallucination theory of skeptics. After this, Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9), but later appeared to Stephen (Acts 7:55-60), then Paul (Acts 9:3-8;18:9-10;22:17-21;23:11), and again to the apostle John (Revelation 1:10-19).

It is hard to imagine the overwhelming feelings the disciples must have experienced as they encountered their resurrected Lord. It was enough to see Jesus turn water into wine, still storms on open seas, heal the sick, blind and lame, feed thousands with virtually nothing, cast out demons, walk on water, and raise the dead. But now His predictions of His own resurrection had come true; He stood before them in bodily form. Suddenly it became clear that Jesus was *far* more powerful than those who had ordered His death. He had *allowed* the cross to happen. What did this mean? Seeing the resurrected Lord was only the beginning of their spiritual journey, as it is of ours.

While their understanding would unfold with time, the resurrection of Jesus Christ immediately became the foundation of the early believers' faith. "If Christ has not been raised," Paul declared in his letter to the Corinthian believers, "our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (I Corinthians 15:14). Why? Because biblical Christianity is born and sustained through a personal relationship with the *living* Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, the early believers began their journey into the grace of God with their eyes fixed on their risen Savior. The resurrection meant everything to them as they proclaimed Jesus to the world as *the* way to receive God's forgiveness and everlasting fulfillment.

The resurrection remains the foundation for our faith today. The fulfillment Christ is able to give us is made possible because He is a living Savior and Lord. As we near the close of this study, we will reflect on the absolute assurance that this, the most outstanding truth of history, provides for our faith and fulfillment.

1. a. The resurrection of Jesus Christ proved His deity and validated all His promises. What are some of the claims Jesus made which relate to fulfillment? (*Verses in parenthesis are optional.*)

John 10:10b

John 4:14 (6:35;7:38;12:46) *regarding spiritual hunger and thirst:*

John 14:16-17 (16:13)

John 16:33 (14:27)

b. What does Matthew 28:20b add to this?

2. a. The resurrection proved that Jesus Christ reigns in God's kingdom. What does this reign include?

John 1:3-4

Colossians 1:15-17

b. What do the following promise in the future?

Philippians 2:10-11

c. *Optional:* What spiritual truth is declared in Acts 17:31 and John 5:22? What does the resurrection of Jesus Christ assure those who have received Him, according to Romans 4:25 and Romans 3:23-24?

3. a. The resurrection demonstrated Jesus' power over death, thereby giving us absolute assurance of the eternal life He promised. What promises about eternal life did Jesus make?

John 5:24

John 11:25-26

John 14:2-3

b. What phrase in II Timothy 1:10 clearly states what Christ accomplished on the cross for the believer?

4. a. What observations about Jesus' resurrection body in John 20:19-20 and Luke 24:39 help us understand what our resurrection bodies will be like?

b. What do the following verses tell us about the bodies we are promised in heaven?

I Corinthians 15:42-44

Philippians 3:21

Revelation 21:4

5. The resurrection of Jesus Christ also allows us to be "raised" from spiritual death (existence apart from God) to spiritual life (existence in God's loving presence). How do the following describe this biblical truth?

Romans 6:3-4

**Note:** *baptism* means *identification with*.

Romans 8:11 (Galatians 2:20)

## Summary

6. Why is biblical Christianity dependent on the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

**Reference:** Building on the Basics commentary, paragraph 3, page 193.

7. What does the resurrection of Jesus Christ mean to you in light of your quest for fulfillment?

8. Which of Jesus' promises, validated by His resurrection, are most meaningful to you?

9. When did the resurrection as a fact of history become real to you? Why is certainty about the resurrection essential to your witness for Christ?

**References:** *Know Why You Believe* booklet in the front pocket of your notebook. Also Note 7, *Six proofs for the resurrection*, page 199.

## LESSON 22 NOTES

**1** *Mary of Magdala* was the first to see Jesus after His resurrection.

Previously, He had cast seven demons out of Mary (Luke 8:2-3) She was among the women who attended the Lord and disciples during the Galilean ministry, providing for them out of their means (cf. Mark 15:41). Mark and Matthew agree that she witnessed the resurrection, and Luke implies so (cf. Luke 23:49,55; 24:10). John's gospel rules out confusing Mary of Magdala with Mary of Bethany, although they both were intensely devoted to Jesus.

**2** *I have not yet returned to my Father* (20:17). "The meaning appears to be that the ascension was still some time off. Mary would have opportunity to see Jesus again, so she need not cling to Him. Alternatively, Jesus may be reminding Mary that after His crucifixion she cannot have Him with her except through the Holy Spirit (see 16:5-16)." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1636.

**3** *breathed on them* (20:22). This action pointed back to the life which God breathed into man at creation (Genesis 2:7). Here the Lord Jesus breathed on the disciples that they should receive spiritual life through the Holy Spirit, who would indwell them at Pentecost after Jesus' glorification 50 days later (John 7:39; Acts 2).

**4** *If you forgive...(20:23)*. Jesus was not giving the apostles the right which only God has of forgiving sin (Mark 2:7). While some commentators believe Jesus was referring to church or apostolic authority, others believe He spoke of discernment given by the Holy Spirit. Others believe He was giving all believers authority to proclaim that God will forgive the sin of those who believe in Jesus Christ and subsequently not forgive the sin of those who refuse to believe in Him.

**5** *Because you have seen me (20:29)*. "Some people think they would believe in Jesus if they could see a definite sign or miracle. But Jesus says we are blessed if we can believe without seeing. We have all the proof we need in the words of the Bible and the testimony of believers. A physical appearance would not make Jesus any more real to us than He is now." *Life Application Bible*, page 1928.

**6** *The Resurrection Appearances of Jesus Christ* (Walvoord & Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary on the New Testament*, page 91).

#### **FORTY DAYS--from Resurrection to Ascension**

##### **SUNDAY MORNING**

1. An angel rolled away the stone from Jesus' tomb before sunrise (Matt. 28:2-4).
2. Women who followed Jesus visited Jesus' tomb and discovered Him missing (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1-4; Luke 24:1-3; John 20:1).
3. Mary Magdalene left to tell Peter and John (John 20:1-2).
4. The other women, remaining at the tomb, saw two angels who told them about the Resurrection (Matt. 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-8).
5. Peter and John visited Jesus' tomb (Luke 24:12; John 20:3-10).
6. Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb and Jesus appeared to her alone in the garden (Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18): *His first appearance*.
7. Jesus appeared to the other women (Mary, mother of James, Salome, and Joanna) (Matt. 28:8-10): *His second appearance*.
8. Those who guarded Jesus' tomb reported to the religious rulers how the angel rolled away the stone. They were then bribed (Matt. 28:11-15).
9. Jesus appeared to Peter (1 Cor. 15:5): *His third appearance*.

##### **SUNDAY AFTERNOON**

10. Jesus appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-32): *His fourth appearance*.

##### **SUNDAY EVENING**

11. The two disciples from Emmaus told others they saw Jesus (Luke 24:33-35).
12. Jesus appeared to 10 apostles, with Thomas absent, in the Upper Room (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25): *His fifth appearance*.

##### **THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY**

13. Jesus appeared to the 11 Apostles, including Thomas, and Thomas believed (John 20:26-28): *His sixth appearance*.

## THE FOLLOWING 32 DAYS

14. Jesus appeared to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee and performed a miracle of fish (John 21:1-14): *His seventh appearance.*

15. Jesus appeared to 500 (including the Eleven) at the mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18; 1 Cor. 15:6): *His eighth appearance.*

16. Jesus appeared to His half-brother James (1 Cor. 15:7): *His ninth appearance.*

17. At Jerusalem Jesus appeared again to His disciples (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-8): *His 10th appearance.*

18. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus ascended into heaven while the disciples watched (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12).

### 7 *Six proofs that Jesus actually rose from the dead.*

1. The resurrection was foretold by Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2. The resurrection is the only reasonable explanation for His empty tomb.

3. The resurrection is the only reasonable explanation for the appearances of Jesus Christ to His disciples.

4. The resurrection is the only reasonable explanation for the beginning of the Christian Church.

5. The resurrection is the only reasonable explanation for the transformation of the disciples.

6. The witness of the Apostle Paul, and the transformation of his life, can only be reasonably explained because of the resurrection. *Ten Basic Steps Toward Christian Maturity Teacher's Manual*, Here's Life Publishers, pages 58-64.

## LESSON 23

### "FEED MY SHEEP"

#### Epilogue (John 21)

In closing his book, John recounts the third appearance of Jesus to a group of His disciples. It was early one morning at the Sea of Galilee when seven of the disciples had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. Jesus, whom they did not recognize at first, stood on the shore and called out to them to cast their net on the right side of the boat for a catch. When the disciples followed His instructions, their net filled up with so many fish that they could not even pull it into the boat. John turned to Peter and said, "It is the Lord." Immediately, Peter jumped out of the boat and swam to shore. The rest followed in the boat, dragging the 153 large fish in a miraculously unbroken net. When they all reached the shore, Jesus had made a charcoal fire and cooked breakfast for them.

After they had finished eating, Jesus began an important conversation with Peter. As they walked together, Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love Me?" Repeatedly Peter answered, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love you." Each time Jesus responded, "Feed my sheep." Then Jesus warned Peter that his life of service would end in glorifying God through martyrdom. Even so, "Follow Me!" was Jesus' command to this faithful disciple. Then Peter looked back to see John following them and asked, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus replied that this was none of Peter's concern. "You must follow Me."

John closed his gospel with a vow that his account had been recorded with absolute honesty. "Jesus did many other things as well," the aged apostle added. "If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written."

### **Read John 21:1-14.**

1. a. Describe the scene with regard to time, location, setting, people present, and action (21:1-4).

b. What wonderful occurrences took place during Jesus' visit (21:5-6,11-14)?

2. What did John's words and Peter's response show about these two men (cf. 21:7)?

3. a. What four statements did Jesus make (21:5,6,10,12)?

b. What impresses you about Jesus here?

### **Read John 21:15-25.**

4. In their conversation after breakfast, what repeated question was Jesus getting Peter to seriously consider (21:15-17)?

**Note:** *more than these* (21:15) probably meant "Do you love Me more than these men love Me?" because Peter had claimed a loyalty above the others (cf. 13:37; Mt. 26:33; Mk 14:29).

5. How did Peter respond, and what did his responses demonstrate?
  
6. What did Jesus ask Peter to do out of his love for Him (21:15-17)?
  
7. a. What did Jesus forewarn Peter that following Him would mean for him (21:18-19a)?  
  
b. Even so, what was the Lord's final command to Peter (21:19b)?
  
8. How did Jesus discourage Peter from comparing his life to that of John (21:20-22)?
  
9. What rumor did John refute (21:20-23)?
  
10. Of what did John assure his reader (21:24)?
  
11. a. In final retrospect, what statements did John make about Jesus' life (21:25)?  
  
b. What did John hope for those who would read his gospel (20:31)?

## **BUILDING ON THE BASICS**

### **Ongoing Fulfillment**

John's record of Jesus' appearance by the Sea of Galilee captures how Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, remained committed and active in the lives of His disciples. His actions that day leave us with images of the gracious and caring aspects of God's nature which were embodied in His Son. Through the miraculous catch, Jesus displayed His bountiful providence in the face of human helplessness and inadequacy. As He cooked and served His disciples breakfast, Jesus demonstrated the kind of down-to-earth humility and joy in serving people's needs that characterize the heart of God. In choosing not to keep Peter's devotion for Himself, but to channel it into "feeding My sheep," Jesus showed God's desire to translate our love for Him into acts of caring for the needs of others.

The cross was not the end of Jesus Christ's love and service to us. "Because I live, you also will live" (14:19), He promised. So today, as then by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus lives and stands ready to lead, provide for and serve each one who loves Him. As we choose to follow Him, He promises to see to our ongoing fulfillment. We will close our study with a look at these important truths.

1. a. What did the tremendous catch in John 21 demonstrate about Jesus Christ in the midst of difficult or impossible situations?

b. What are we instructed to remember and do in the face of our human limitations and need?

Matthew 6:25, 33

I Peter 5:7

c. What is the Lord's promise in II Corinthians 9:8?

2. a. What can we observe about God's nature in Jesus' cooking for and serving breakfast to His disciples?

b. How does Philippians 2:6-8 describe Jesus Christ as a servant?

3. What aspects of the Lord's care are mentioned in the following?

Psalms 121:3, 7-8

Isaiah 41:10

Romans 8:31b-32

Philippians 4:19

4. a. Jesus revealed God's desire to serve and care for people's needs. In response to our love for Him, what does He ask us to do?

John 21:15b, 16b

b. What aspects of caring for others do these verses suggest?

Galatians 6:2

I Timothy 6:18

I Peter 4:8-11

5. a. As we care for people with Christ, what is our privilege?

II Corinthians 5:18-20

b. What does Jesus promise as we serve a needy world with Him?

Matthew 28:18, 20b

6. What is the natural motivation for faith and obedience to God through Christ?

I John 4:19 (Romans 5:8)

7. a. According to the 85-year old Apostle John, who had followed Christ for over 60 years, what can we expect from devotion to Him?

John 1:16

b. What did Jesus promise?

John 10:10b

## **Summary**

6. a. What have you learned that Jesus wants to do for you on an ongoing basis?

b. Of what are you reminded through the story of the miraculous catch in John 21? Does this apply to some area of your life today?

7. a. What simple aspects of your walk with the Lord did Jesus discuss with Peter in John 21:16, 19b?

b. What part do such decisions play in experiencing the fulfillment only Christ can give?

8. a. As you reflect upon your study of John, what have you learned about Jesus Christ and the nature of God?

b. What have you learned about fulfillment?

c. For what are you grateful to God?

**Final Note:** Perhaps through your study of *Quest for Fulfillment*, you have come to really understand for the first time who Jesus is, and that He not only wants you to know *who* He is but to have a personal relationship with Him. In Revelation 3:20, Jesus says, *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me."*

If you would like to open the door of your life to Jesus Christ right now, the following is a suggested prayer:

*"Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sin. I invite you to come into my life and make me the person you created me to be. Amen."*

If you sincerely pray this prayer, Jesus Christ will come into your life as He promised in Revelation 3:20, and He will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5b).

## MAJOR FOOTNOTES DIRECTORY

Lesson	Page	Note & Topic
1	7	1 Gospel.
	8	2 Authorship of John.
	8	<b>4 John the Baptist.</b>
2	17	<b>1 The Christ, Messiah.</b>
	18	2 <i>Lamb of God</i> (1:29,36).
	18	3 <i>baptize with the Holy Spirit</i> (1:33).
	18	<b>4 Son of Man.</b>
3	25	<b>1 Passover</b> (also Passover meal, p 139).
4	33	<b>1 Pharisees.</b>
	33	<b>2 Holy Spirit.</b>
5	42	1 Samaritans (Also Note 3, pg 93).
6	50	2 The 'tradition of the elders.'
	50	<b>5 Scripture Prophecy Concerning Messiah fulfilled in Jesus.</b>
8	66	<b>5 Satan, demons.</b>
9	75	<b>1 MIRACLES OF JESUS.</b>
10	84	<b>1 "I am" statements of Jesus.</b>
11	93	1 <i>The Jews</i> (8:48).
	93	5 <i>before Abraham was born, I am!</i> (8:58).
12	102	1 <i>who sinned . . . ?</i> (9:2).
	102	2 <i>He does not keep the Sabbath</i> (9:16).
14	119	1 <i>I am . . . the life</i> (11:25).
	119	<b>2 Sanhedrin.</b>
	120	<b>6 Death for the believer.</b>
16	139	<b>1 Passover meal</b> (see Passover, p. 25).
17	147	1 <i>I will come back</i> (14:3), the Second Coming.
	148	2 <i>no one comes...except through me</i> (14:6).
	148	4 <i>whatever you ask in my name</i> (14:13).
	148	<b>6 The Resurrection Appearances of Jesus.</b>
22	198	7 Six proofs Jesus actually rose from the dead.
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