

Women's Bible Study

A TWO-YEAR JOURNEY THROUGH
THE STORY OF GOD

Week 5 | Jesus is the Son of God and Source of Life | The Gospel of John

Whereas the prior gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—emphasized the presence of the Kingdom of God with the coming of Jesus, the Gospel of John emphasizes the *identity* of Jesus and His unique relationship with God the Father. Jesus is the eternal Son of God. Jesus is fully God and yet also has become fully human in order to bring salvation to those He loves. Salvation for humanity comes only by knowing the Father through the Son. Jesus is the perfect revelation of God the Father. Jesus says,

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6

Near the end of the Gospel of John, the author states his purpose in writing this account of Jesus’ life. John 20:30-31 says this: *“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these (these signs) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.”*

This book challenges you to consider what Jesus has done and taught, and to decide for yourself how you must respond. John proclaims that the Jesus is alive and real, and He can change your life forever. As you come to believe in Jesus, then you will be transformed; you will have eternal life through faith in His name.

1. Read John 1:1-18.

Jesus is God; Jesus reveals God

- a. Someone familiar with the Old Testament would be reminded of Genesis 1:1. What does Genesis 1:1 say?
- b. John refers to Jesus as “*the Word*.” What do you learn about Jesus’ relationship with God (1:1-3)?
- c. Notice that there is a word that appears seven times in verses 4-9. What is that word?
- d. *For deeper thought:* Read Psalm 36:7-9 along with John 1:4-5. How do you understand the metaphors of *life* and *light* as they refer to Jesus?
- e. What do you learn about Jesus’ nature from John 1:14 and John 1:18?

2. Read John 1:29-35

Jesus is the Lamb of God

- a. How does John the Baptist describe Jesus, and how does that apply to human sin? (1:29)
- b. What is John the Baptist’s conviction of who Jesus is (1:34), and why is he convinced? (1:32-34)
- c. *For those familiar with the Old Testament:* Why would the metaphor of a lamb have significance for Jews and help them understand Jesus’ mission to take away the sin of the world?

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A JOURNEY THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

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The Signs of Jesus - Miracles to motivate faith

The first half of John's Gospel, chapters 1:19-12:50, is often called the *Book of Signs*. It describes seven miraculous signs that Jesus performed. These miracles are not just displays of Jesus' power; these *sign miracles* have symbolic significance. They reveal who Jesus is and what He came to do. The ultimate purpose of these signs is not to solve a problem at hand; rather, the ultimate purpose is to motivate faith that results in transformed life—spiritual life through faith in Jesus.

Each *sign miracle* points symbolically to what God will accomplish on a spiritual level. For the purpose of this assignment, you don't need to read them all, but you may want to have this list as a reference. The five signs marked with an asterisk are recorded only in the book of John; they are not recorded in the other Gospels.

These are the *Seven Signs*:

- *Transforming water into wine (John 2:1-11)
- *Healing a royal official's son (John 4:46-54)
- *Healing a disabled man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-15)
- Feeding 5,000 (John 6:1-14)
- Walking on water (John 6:16-21)
- *Healing a man born blind (John 9:1-12)
- *Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-43)

The Teaching of Jesus - The Revelation of His Purpose

3. Read John 3:1-21 and 3:35-36

Jesus teaches about new birth and eternal life

- Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council, had a very positive impression of Jesus because of the miraculous signs Jesus was performing. But Jesus challenged him: a favorable impression of Jesus is not enough. What startling assertion did Jesus make in John 3:3?
- Nicodemus did not comprehend Jesus' meaning because he was thinking only of physical realities. What sort of new birth was Jesus referring to? **Read Ezekiel 36:25-27** along with John 3:5-6.
- The Old Testament promise given through Ezekiel is being fulfilled through Jesus. What does John 3:16 tell you about how we may receive this new birth and the provision of eternal life?
- What is God's purpose in sending Jesus into the world? (3:17)
- For personal private reflection:* Nicodemus came to Jesus with admiration for Jesus, but Jesus challenged him to embrace a fuller understanding of who He is. Jesus has come to be lifted up on the cross (3:14-15). Jesus has come to die for our sin, so that all who look to Him for salvation will have eternal life. Do you believe this? Pray today that God will reveal this truth to you.

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A JOURNEY THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

Women's Bible Study

A TWO-YEAR JOURNEY THROUGH
THE STORY OF GOD

Jesus teaches about Who He is and what He supplies

Another characteristic of the Gospel of John is a set of seven “*I am*” statements that Jesus uses to describe Himself. In each of these statements Jesus presents rich theological truth expressed in metaphorical terms.

These are the seven “*I am*” sayings:

- I am the Bread of Life (John 6:35, 48)
- I am the Light of the world (John 8:12, 9:5)
- I am the Gate for the sheep (John 10:7-11)
- I am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-15)
- I am the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:23-26)
- I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:1-6)
- I am the True Vine (John 15:5)

The Glory of Jesus (13:1-20:31)

Jesus completes His saving work

4. Read carefully John 13:1-19 and 13:33-35 *Jesus calls us to love one another*

- On the night of His betrayal, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples and instructed them to follow His example of humble service. What new commandment did Jesus give to them (and to us)? (13:34)
- As we live in obedience to this example, what will this demonstrate to the world? (13:35)

5. Read John 14:15-21 *Jesus promises the Holy Spirit*

- How does Jesus ensure that His followers will enjoy His presence forever? (14:16-17)
- How are we to demonstrate our love for Jesus in our daily lives (14:15, 21)?

In Isaiah 5:1-7 the prophet portrays God’s people Israel as a vineyard planted by God. Israel was planted by God for the purpose of bringing forth good fruit—justice and righteousness. But Israel failed to live in obedience to God; Israel failed to produce the good fruit of true righteousness.

6. Read John 15:1-8 and Galatians 5:22-23 *Jesus is the true vine*

- Let’s explore this metaphor of Jesus as the true vine—the true Israel—who would produce the good fruit that God desires.
 - Who is the gardener? (John 15:1 and Isaiah 5:7)

SEMESTER 04:

Transformed

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

Women's Bible Study

A TWO-YEAR JOURNEY THROUGH
THE STORY OF GOD

- ii. What is the fruit that the Gardener is looking for? (See Isaiah 5:7)
 - iii. Where on the vine will the fruit be produced? (John 15:2,5)
 - iv. Jesus exhorts His followers to remain (“*abide*”) in the Vine (in Him). According to this metaphor, how is our fruit-bearing affected when we are separated from the Vine? (John 15:5)
- b. What fruit do we produce as we draw spiritual nourishment from the Vine? (See Galatians 5:22-23)
- c. *Personal reflection:* How may we abide in Jesus? How may we remain close to Jesus as the Vine? Are there things you can do on a daily basis that will help you remain close to Jesus?

7. Read John 15:9-17 *Disciples have been appointed to bear fruit*

- a. What are we challenged to do as we remain in Jesus’ love? (15:9-10)
- b. What is Jesus’ plan and purpose for us? (15:16)
- c. *Personal reflection for discussion in your group:* Our 21st century American culture is individualistic to an extent that is unprecedented in history. How may we learn to think in a different way? How can we more self-giving and less self-serving? What resources do we have to help us in this?

8. Read John 17:20-26 *Jesus Prays for His followers*

In John chapter 17, Jesus prays for all present and future believers—that includes you and me.

- a. How does Jesus describe our union with Him and with one another? (17:21-23)
- b. What is Jesus’ desire for His followers? (17:24)
- c. How is Jesus molding and shaping our lives in an ongoing way? (17:26)
- d. *Personal reflection:* Jesus’ earthly life was totally focused on completing the work God gave Him to do (17:4). By contrast, our lives tend to reflect distraction and chaos rather than a central focus on God’s glory. How might you re-order aspects of your life so that the purposes of God will govern your daily life?

SEMESTER 04:

Transformed

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

Women's Bible Study

A TWO-YEAR JOURNEY THROUGH
THE STORY OF GOD

The Sacrifice of Jesus

When Jesus had finished this prayer of John 17 (the High-Priestly prayer), He went with His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane. There Jesus was betrayed by Judas, taken for immediate trial before the Jewish leaders, and sent to the Roman governor Pilate for execution. After being questioned by Pilate, Jesus was scourged, displayed to the crowd, and crucified.

9. Read John 19:17-37 *Jesus dies as the Lamb of God—His life sacrificed for our sin*

- a. What was Jesus' last proclamation from the cross? (19:30)
- b. Does anything strike you as unusual about this description of Jesus final moments? (19:30)

10. Read John 20:1-10, 19-22 *Jesus is risen! He is alive!*

- a. What evidence did Peter and John see that Jesus was risen? (20:3-7)
- b. That evening, a group of Jesus' followers (probably more than just the apostles) were gathered together.
 - i. How did the risen Jesus appear to them? (20:19-20)
 - ii. What did He do for them? (20:21-22)

How can we as sinful, self-centered people be embraced by a holy God? We must be made clean. Jesus' death paid the penalty for all our sin, so that, by our connection with Jesus through faith, we are *cleansed* of sin.

Titus 3:3-6 teaches this: "*At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.*"

Jesus is the Bread of Life who satisfies our spiritual hunger. Jesus is the Light of the World, who brings truth and reveals God to us. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who protects us, guides us, and provides everything we really need. Jesus is the only source of fullness of life.

- 11. *Personal reflection:*** Have you personally trusted in Jesus? Pray to Him now to come into your life, to *transform* you by His Spirit, and to make you His own.

***Jesus came to glorify the Father
by granting forgiveness and eternal life to those who trust in Him***

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