

THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS

**A Bible Study of
the Gospel according
to John**

PARTICIPANT'S EDITION



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Why Study the Bible?

Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). The words of God are as essential to our soul as food is to our body. The Bible is the normative and primary way that God speaks to his people and so, if we wish to hear the words of God, we must be reading, studying, applying, and meditating on the Scriptures. It is essential for Christians to be reading the Bible if they wish to grow in their knowledge, love, worship and enjoyment of God.

Because many people, in our post-modern culture, are loathe to take anything on face value, studying the Bible in the form of a question and answer dialogue helps clarify truth conclusions and allows the individual to discover and uncover the truth for themselves.

We encourage you to study the Scriptures deeply in your private devotions and in a Bible study group.

Bible Study Methods

There are many different methods to read the Bible. This study series utilizes the ‘COMA Method’ (ref. 1), outlined on the next page, which we have found to be a very effective method to get the most out of every text. It’s useful to follow the COMA method consciously when we read the Bible because it encourages us to ask good questions of the passage and to understand it clearly and thoroughly. When we’re reading the Bible with someone else, it also very helpfully directs the conversation. You can work through the steps and come to conclusions, rather than bouncing through random thoughts or observations.

We encourage you to study the passage yourself using the COMA method before beginning the Bible study questions.

The COMA Method

1. Read the passage aloud

2. Ask some **C**ontext questions of the passage:
 - What sort of writing is this? (a letter, a poem, a narrative, etc)
 - Are there any clues about the circumstances under which it was written?
 - What has happened so far in this particular book of the Bible?

3. Ask some **O**bservation questions of the passage:
 - Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the passage?
 - What is the main point or points?
 - What surprises are there?
 - What are the key words? What words or ideas are repeated?

4. Ask some **M**eaning questions of the passage:
 - How does this passage relate to other parts of the book?
 - How does the passage relate to Jesus?
 - What does this teach us about God?
 - How could we sum up the meaning of this passage in our own words?

5. Ask some **A**pplication questions of the passage:
 - How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
 - Is there some attitude I need to change?
 - How does this passage call on me to change the way I live?

1

Go read:

John 1:1-18

Bible Study 1

C

Context

Handwriting lines for Context

O

Observation

Handwriting lines for Observation

M

Meaning

Handwriting lines for Meaning

A

Application

Handwriting lines for Application



Kicking Off

One day a lady was sitting in the waiting room for her first appointment with a new dentist, and she noticed that his name was the same as a boy she had a secret crush on in high school, 40 years previously. But when she saw him, he was grey, and wrinkly and she thought, 'He's way too old to have been my classmate.' After he examined her teeth, she asked him if he had attended Waseca high school. "Yes, I did'. 'When did you graduate?" she asked. "In 1959. Why do you ask?" "You were in my class!" she said excitedly. He looked at her closely and said, "What subject did you teach?"

Not recognising someone can be embarrassing.

Not recognising someone important can be really embarrassing.

An Irish couple are celebrating their anniversary in a fancy restaurant in Dublin. They look over and recognise Bono, the lead Singer of U2, having dinner with a friend. They were big fans so they talked about going over and saying hello and asking for photos. Bono went to the toilet so they decided to go ask his friend if Bono would be ok with a few photos and his friend said yes. Bono comes back and agrees. The couple stand next to Bono as his friend takes the photos. So they go and finish their meal while Bono and his friend leave. The couple go to pay, but the restaurateur says their meal has been paid for. They ask if Bono had paid for them and the restaurateur says, "No, his friend, Bruce Springsteen has paid for you."

Not recognising someone can be a big deal.

Not recognising someone important can be an even bigger deal.

Not recognising the most important one of all, God, is a really big deal.

2000 y ago God turned up to our world and introduced himself.

His name was Jesus Christ.

But most people didn't recognise him.

God was standing right in front of them but they didn't receive Him, because they didn't expect him to come the way He did. And today there are many people who don't receive Him, but instead reject Him.

Q: How would you recognise God? If God was standing right in front of you, what would make you be able to say, 'Aha, that's God'?



Digging Deeper

- Q: 'The Word' is a strange title for someone don't you think? Why is He described in this way?**
- Q: What do we learn about 'the Word'?**
- Q: How can the Word be God and with God at the same time (v1-2)?**
- Q: What is the Word's role in creation (v3)?**



Digging Deeper

Q: The Jehovah's Witnesses say that Jesus was a god, not actually God. Could this be correct? Why/Why not?

Q: Why did his own not receive/recognise him (v11)?

Q: Why was John so sure that he has seen God?

Q: What is the Word's 'glory' (v14)?

Q: '*Dwelt amongst us*' literally means '*he pitched his tent amongst us*'. What does this make you think of?

Q: What does 'grace in place of grace' mean in v16?



Reflecting Further

Q: Even though you and I have never seen God, how can we know what God is like?

2

Go read:

John 1:19-34

Bible Study 2

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: In his first 18 verses, John makes huge claims of who Jesus is. What were those claims?

See last study.

Now in the rest of the gospel, John gives the evidence for these claims.



Digging Deeper

Q: The Jews sent priests and Levites to ask John the Baptist who he was. Why do they ask if he is (i) 'the Christ'? (ii) 'Elijah'? (iii) 'the Prophet'?

Q: John said he was 'the voice'. What voice does he mean? (Hint: it doesn't mean he won 'The Voice' singing competition.)

Q: If John was not the Christ/Elijah/the prophet then why was he baptising?

**Q: John calls Jesus 'the lamb of God' in v29 and 36. Why is this?
(Look up Gen. 22; Ex. 12; Lev. 1; Is. 53)**



Reflecting Further

Q: What is the '*baptism of the Spirit*' John is speaking about (v33)?

3

Go read:

John 1:35-51

Bible Study 3

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: Who has the most followers on Instagram? On Twitter?

Q: Why do people follow others on social media?

Q: What does this kind of 'following' involve?

Q: If someone you didn't know walked up to you and said, 'Drop everything and come and follow me', what would you do? Why?



Digging Deeper

Q: Why do you think Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter (v42)?

Q: One of the key evangelistic principles of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) is, 'Be an Andrew'. What do you think this means?

Q: Why was Nathanael skeptical that the Messiah would come from Nazareth (v46)?

Q: What did Jesus mean that Nathanael *'truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit'* (v47)?

Nathanael calls Jesus *'the Son of God'*.

Q: What did he mean and how did he know (v49)?

Q: What are the greater things that Jesus says Nathanael will see? What does this mean (v50-51)?

Q: Why does Jesus refer to himself the '*Son of Man*' (v51)?



Reflecting Further

**Q: Jesus says to us, 'Follow me' (v43).
What does following Jesus involve?**

4

Go read:

John 2:1-12

Bible Study 4

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: What sorts of opinions do people have of Jesus?



Digging Deeper

Q: What is the social significance of the wedding celebration running out of wine?

Q: What does Jesus mean when he says *'My hour has not yet come'*?

Q: What is the significance of the ceremonial washing jars (v6)?

Q: Why did Jesus turn the water into wine? Is he telling us that we should drink more wine? Was it just a cool party trick?

Q: We are told this was the first of Jesus' signs. What is a sign? What do Jesus signs point to?



Digging Deeper

Q: We are told that through this sign Jesus' disciples saw his *'glory'*. What glory did they see?



Reflecting Further

A guy called Reg Mombasa is the artist for the Mambo clothing line. One of his paintings is called 'Pies and Beer Jesus', A parody of Jesus feeding the 5000.

VIEW THIS LINK:

<https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/99712579226660136/?autologin=true>

I reckon many Australians would warm to 'Pie and Beer' Jesus. Not just because he hands out free pies and beer - it's what they symbolise: a God who knows what's best for us and wants what's best for us and gives it to us. Imagine a god who knows what's best for you and wants to give you that and wants you to enjoy life? That's a God worth listening to. That's the God of the Bible, seen most clearly in Jesus.

Q: Jesus is much closer to the pies and beer Australian Jesus than to the Jesus a lot of institutional religion often shows us. Discuss.

5

Go read:

John 2:13-25

Bible Study 5

C

Context

Handwriting lines for Context

O

Observation

Handwriting lines for Observation

M

Meaning

Handwriting lines for Meaning

A

Application

Handwriting lines for Application



Kicking Off

Q: When Christianity first arose in the world it was not called a religion and the first Christians were called 'athiests'. Why do you think that was?



Digging Deeper

Q: What was the significance of the temple in the Jewish religion?

Q: What was the Jewish Passover (v13)?

Q: Jesus enters the temple and he's not happy with what he sees (v14-16). Why?

Q: Why does Jesus act the way he does?

Q: In this event Jesus is fulfilling a whole lot of Old Testament Scriptures. What are they and what is the significance of the event?



Digging Deeper

Q: Historians record that 18000 people were employed to build the temple and it took almost 50y to build. How is Jesus going to get an army of workmen and all the materials required and raise it in 3 days (v19)?

Q: What does Jesus mean that he will raise the temple in 3 days?

Q: Why would Jesus not entrust himself to the people who saw his signs and believed in him (v23-25)?



Reflecting Further

Q: What do the 2 events in chapter 2 share in common?

6

Go read:

John 3:1-15

Bible Study 6

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

A Christian woman named Jan was relaxing in a hotel spa when 2 teenagers got in. One of the teens started telling her friend about a Wicca gathering she was planning to go to (Wiccans believe in many gods and a mother goddess. Their religion includes the use of herbal magic and witchcraft.) Jan said to the teen, 'Wow, you really sound excited about this!' This was all the encouragement the teen needed and she launched into a 5 minute explanation of why she was so attracted to Wiccan pagan rituals. The bottom line was that she'd had a really traumatic time in high school and the Wiccans accepted her. She said, "I've gone through so much stuff just trying to make it through high school that I'll probably be in therapy for the rest of my life!" Jan said, "It sounds like It's hard for you to even imagine a future where you'd be free from all of the pain you've gone through". What came next completely floored Jan. With a film of tears starting to form in her eyes and with complete sincerity in her voice, the teenage girl said, "Sometimes I wish I could be born all over again. I'd really like to start over from scratch."

**Q: What do you think of the teenage girl's wish?
Is this possible? How?**



Digging Deeper

Q: Nicodemus who came to see Jesus was a Pharisee, a member of the Jewish ruling council (v1).
Who were the Pharisees and what did they believe?

Q: What is the significance of Nicodemus coming to see Jesus at night (v2)?



Digging Deeper

Q: Jesus says, "*I tell you the truth*" (v3). Why does he say this?

Q: What did Nicodemus understand Jesus meant when he said, '*You must be born again*' (v3,7)?

Q: What did Jesus mean?

Q: Is being born again something we do or something done to us? Discuss.

Q: Why does Jesus use the analogy of the wind to explain being 'born again'?



Digging Deeper

Q: Jesus says that Nicodemus should have understood this.
Why (v10)?

Q: What does it mean to be '*born of water and the spirit*' (v5)?

Q: What is Jesus implying when he says that.
¹³No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven— the Son of Man?

Q: What is the significance of Moses lifting the snake in the wilderness in relation to believing in Jesus?



Reflecting Further

Before he was a Christian, arguably the greatest English speaking preacher of all time Charles Spurgeon, was caught in a snowstorm when he was out walking one Sunday morning, and took refuge in a Methodist Chapel. The minister did not come that morning; he was snowed in. Instead one of the church members, a shoemaker, got up to preach a sermon that changed Spurgeon's life. The text that morning was,—“Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth” (Is. 45:22). The shoemaker said: “My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, ‘Look’. Now looking don’t take a deal of pains. It ain’t lifting your foot or your finger; it is just, ‘Look.’ A man needn’t go to College to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man needn’t be worth a thousand a year to be able to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look. Look unto Christ. Many of you are looking to yourselves, but it’s no use looking there. Jesus says:

‘Look unto Me; I am sweatin’ great drops of blood.

Look unto Me; I am hangin’ on the cross. Look unto Me; I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again.

Look unto Me; I ascend to Heaven.

Look unto Me; I am sittin’ at the Father’s right hand.

O poor sinner, look unto Me! look unto Me!’

Look to Jesus Christ. You have nothing else to do but to look and live.”



Reflecting Further

Spurgeon said, "I saw at once the way of salvation. Like when the bronze serpent was lifted up, the people only looked and were healed, so it was with me. When I heard that word, "Look!" what a charming word it seemed to me! There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun.

Oh, that somebody had told me this before, 'Trust Christ, and you shall be saved. ⁵"

**Q: Have you been born again? Have you looked to Christ?
Discuss.**

7

Go read:

John 3:16-36

Bible Study 7

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: What beliefs/ideas do people have about what happens after we die?



Digging Deeper

Q: How would you explain the gospel to someone who didn't know anything about Jesus?

Q: John 3:16 has been described as the gospel 'in a nutshell'. Why do you think this is?

Q: John uses the term the '*world*' often in his gospel.
What is he referring to?

Q: What does it mean to '*perish*' (v16)?

Q: What is eternal life (v16)?

Q: Why do people hate the light and love the darkness (v19-20)?

Q: Who are those who come into the light v21)?

Q: Why do those who reject Jesus not see life, but stand condemned (v18)?



Reflecting Further

Q: What do you think of the claim: '*Know Christ, Know Life. No Christ, No Life*' (v36)?

Q: Which do you think is more divisive in the above claim: the positive statement or the negative statement?

8

Go read:

John 4:1-42

Bible Study 8

C

Context

Handwriting lines for Context

O

Observation

Handwriting lines for Observation

M

Meaning

Handwriting lines for Meaning

A

Application

Handwriting lines for Application



Kicking Off

Q: People are often misled about their expectations of things in life, for example, that winning lotto will make you happy. When have your expectations turned out to be false expectations?



Digging Deeper

Q: Who were the Samaritans?

Q: Why did Jesus have to go through Samaria (v4)?

Q: What did the woman of Samaria misunderstand about the 'living water' that Jesus speaks of (v11)?

Q: In his gospel, John uses the character's misunderstandings and understandings to reveal to us the truth.

What do we learn about:

- i) The place of the temple in Christian worship?**
- ii) Who Jesus is?**
- iii) God's timetable for his Messiah to be revealed?**
- iv) The nature of belief?**



Digging Deeper

Q: What did Jesus mean when he said *'the hour is coming, and is now here when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth'* (v24)?

Q: What did the disciples misunderstand about the food that Jesus is to eat (v33)?

Q: What is the *'harvest'* Jesus speaks of (v35)?



Reflecting Further

Q: Do you worship God in '*spirit and in truth*'? What does that look like in your life?

Q: Do you have the living water that Jesus spoke of?

9

Go read:

John 4:43-5:30

Bible Study 9

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: What would the media response be to someone who could heal people today like Jesus did 2000y ago?



Digging Deeper

Q: Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own hometown (v44), however when he arrives in Galilee his hometown, he is welcomed. What do you make of this?

Q: Who are the '*true believers*' in Ch 4 and who are the '*false believers*'?

**Q: These miracles performed by Jesus are jaw-dropping.
What is the historical evidence they actually happened?**

Q: What were the sick hoping for by lying next to the pool (v3)?

Q: What does Jesus' miracle tell us (v5-9)?

Q: Why were the religious leaders so aghast that Jesus healed on the Sabbath (v9-10)?

Q: What is the significance of Jesus healing on the Sabbath?

Q: What is the '*something worse*' that Jesus refers to (v14)?

'Being holy is more important than being healthy.' Discuss.

Q: What does Jesus mean by, *'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working'* (v17)?

Q: In what ways was Jesus *'making himself equal with God'* (v18)?

Jesus is not claiming to be another God, but the Son of God, not polytheism but a unique Christian form of monotheism. Discuss.

The Father and the Son are equal but different. Discuss.

Q: Why does dishonouring the Son dishonour the Father (v23)?

Q: When can we experience resurrection life (v29)?



Digging Deeper

Q: What more have we learnt about Jesus' designation for himself, the '*Son of Man*' (v27)?



Reflecting Further

To those outside the Christian faith, the Trinity sounds absurd: How can God be 1 God but 3 persons? Peter Fitzsimmons an author and vocal atheist who likes to wear bandanas says Jesus Christ is, *“a cosmic Jewish zombie who is his own father”*. Another critic says *‘Christ is just as old as his father, and the father is just as young as his son. According to the celestial multiplication table, three time one is one. The addition is equally peculiar: if we add two to one we have but one. Each one equal to himself and to the other two. Nothing ever was, nothing ever can be more perfectly idiotic and absurd than the dogma of the Trinity’*.⁹ Muslims believe the Trinity means that God copulated with Mary to have a son, so the holy Trinity is Father, Mary and Jesus and they think it’s grotesque, and it is grotesque, but it’s not correct.

Q: What can you say to these critics from what you have learnt in this study?

10

Go read:

John 5:31-47

Bible Study 10

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Islam rests on the testimony of one person only – Muhammed. Muhammed claims that the verses of the Quran were revealed to him by God through the archangel Gabriel. No one else heard or saw the revelation and so his testimony cannot be corroborated.

Q: How valid is a singular testimony to the truth?



Digging Deeper

Q: Who bears witness that Jesus is who he says he is?

Q: Are these testimonies valid?

Q: How does the verifiability of Christianity compare to the other belief systems around the world?

The religions of the world are just artistic expressions of our spiritual hunches, but God has left a tangible photo of himself on the world stage which means the other religions of the world are merely creative guesses.

Discuss.

Q: Why, according to Jesus, can't the Jews that he is talking to, believe?



Reflecting Further

Q: Is anything stopping you from believing Jesus is who he says he is? Why/why not?

11

Go read:

John 6:1-21

Bible Study 11

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: If someone walked up to you at a party and said, '*I am the bread of life, feed on me and live*', how might you respond?

Q: What would you think of the person who said that to you?



Digging Deeper

Q: Why does Jesus perform miracles?

Q: What was it about Jesus that made him recognisable as the '*Prophet*' that was to come into the world (v14)?

Q: Why are we told the Jewish Passover was near (v4)?

Q: Why did the crowd want to make Jesus king by force (v15)?



Digging Deeper

Q: What is the significance of Jesus walking on the water?

Q: Would him flying over the water have had the same significance? (See also Matt. 14:22-33; Mark 6:47-51).



Reflecting Further

Q: Are the storms in your life too big for Jesus to deal with?
Discuss.

12

Go read:

John 6:22-71

Bible Study 12

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Immediately after World War II the allied armies gathered up many hungry, homeless children and placed them in large camps. There the children were abundantly fed and cared for. However, at night they did not sleep well. They seemed restless and afraid. Finally, a psychologist hit on a solution. After the children were put to bed, they each received a slice of bread to hold. If they wanted more to eat, more was provided, but this particular slice was not to be eaten—it was just to hold. The slice of bread produced marvelous results.

Q: Why do you think receiving a slice of bread to hold, was so effective?



Digging Deeper

Q: What were the different responses, amongst those in the crowd, to Jesus' feeding of the 5000?

Q: What did Jesus mean when he said, '*I am the bread of life*' (v35)?



Digging Deeper

Q: What does Jesus mean when he says, *'You have to eat my flesh, you have to drink my blood'*?

Q: Why were the Jews so shocked by this?

Q: Is he advocating cannibalism?

Q: How do you *'eat of Jesus'* or *'feed on Jesus'*?

Q: How do you do the *'work of God'* (v29)?

Q: Look up Deut 8:3. How does this verse relate to this chapter in John?

Q: How do we receive eternal life, and who is Jesus going to raise up?

Q: Unless God draws us, we cannot come to Jesus (v44) but it's our work to believe in him whom he has sent (v29). Don't these two statements contradict each other? Why/Why not?

Q: Why do you think '*many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him*' (v66)?



Digging Deeper

Q: *'The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing' (6:63).*
What does this mean?



Reflecting Further

'Jesus to your soul is like bread to a starving stomach'. Discuss.

13

Go read:

John 7:1-36

Bible Study 13

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: Have you ever judged anyone hastily and realised later that your judgement was wrong? What happened?



Digging Deeper

Q: According to Jesus, how do we know whether his teaching is from God (v17)?

Q: Whose glory does Jesus seek? Does this make his testimony more or less trustworthy (v18)?

Q: According to this passage, how do we judge Jesus with '*right judgement*' (v24)?

Q: In other words, what is the right way to judge Jesus?



Reflecting Further

Q: What judgements have you made about Jesus?

Q: How can you be confident that they are the right judgements?

14

Go read:

John 7:37-53

Bible Study 14

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: Some drinks quench your thirst momentarily, then leave you thirstier than you were before. Give examples. Why do they do this?

Some things in life quench your spiritual thirst momentarily, then leave you thirstier than you were before. Discuss.



Digging Deeper

Q: What is the significance of these events occurring at the Feast of Tabernacles (v2)?

Q: Why are the Jews looking for Jesus (v11)?

Q: What is the thirst that Jesus came to quench?

Q: How does Jesus quench this thirst?

Q: What is the result of believing in Jesus?



Digging Deeper

Q: Where does Jesus say true satisfaction comes from?



Reflecting Further

Consider this prayer of A.W. Tozer: "O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need for further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made thirsty still."¹⁸

Q: What do you think of this prayer?
Do you pray like this to God?

Q: Have you found true satisfaction? Discuss.

15

Go read:

John 8:1-11

Bible Study 15

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: Have you ever been caught red-handed doing something you shouldn't have been doing? What happened? How did it make you feel?



Digging Deeper

Q: The religious leaders should have tried this woman's case in private, but instead they drag the woman before the crowd and publically humiliate her. Why?

Q: We are told that the religious leaders were using the question as a trap (v6). Why do you think they did that?

Q: What is the significance of Jesus writing on the ground (v6,8)?



Digging Deeper

Q: Jesus replies with possibly the best one-liner in all of history (v7). Why did his reply silence them?

Jesus came not to condemn but to save. Discuss

Q: Jesus is confident the woman will leave her life of sin, why (v11)?

Q: Why did Jesus not condemn the woman even though she was guilty?



Reflecting Further

He who has been forgive little, loves little. He who has been forgiven much, loves much. Discuss.

Q: Do you frequently experience God's satisfying acceptance? Why?/why not?

Q: Do you experience the deep satisfying joy of knowing that you are deeply loved? That is what God offers. Discuss.

16

Go read:

John 8:12-30

Bible Study 16

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: What are the most outrageous claims you have heard people make?

Q: How can we know if people's claims about themselves are true?



Digging Deeper

Q: What are the claims Jesus makes about himself in this chapter and what are the claims he makes about us?

Q: In what sense is Jesus the *'light of world'*?

Q: Light and darkness are major themes in John's gospel. What does John mean by these themes?



Digging Deeper

Q: Why is Jesus' testimony valid?

Q: Why were Jesus' enemies not able to seize Jesus (v20)?

Q: Why does Jesus say that his enemies are '*from below*' (v23)?

Q: When will they know that Jesus is '*I Am (he)*' (v28)?



Reflecting Further

Q: Jesus says *'May ...the world ...believe that you have sent me'* (17:21). And we are told *"The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent"* (3:16; 6:29).

It appears faith is both a 'believing that' and a 'believing in'. What is the difference and why do we need both?

17

Go read:

John 8:31-59

Bible Study 17

C

Context

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Observation

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Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: Have you even been addicted to something? What was it? (include coffee in this discussion!!)

Q: Was it hard to break this addiction? Discuss.

Q: If you told your non-Christian family and friends that their father was really the Devil, how do you think they might respond?



Digging Deeper

Q: Jesus tells the Jews that they are not free, but enslaved (v32,34). Enslaved to what? What does this mean?

Q: Who are those that are truly Jesus disciples?

Q: What will set them free?

Q: Who does Jesus say their Father is? Why does he say this (v41-46)?

Q: What is Jesus claiming when he says, '*Before Abraham was born, I Am*' (V58)?

Q: Which claims of Jesus in this chapter have relevance for us today?



Reflecting Further

Q: Are you held captive by the power of temptation and sin? What can be done about them?

18

Go read:

John 9

Bible Study 18

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: Imagine what it would like to be blind.
How hard would life be?

Q: What would you miss most if you went blind?

Q: What are some things that blind people can't do?

Q: If you lost your sight but then had it restored through an operation, how would you feel? How would life change?



Digging Deeper

Q: What worldview does the disciples' question in v2 expose?

Q: How does Jesus answer?

Q: What do people mean when they use the term Karma?

Q: How is grace different from Karma?

Q: What is the significance of Jesus healing the man born blind?

Q: What is the significance of the mud and spit (v6)?

Q: What is the significance of the pool of Siloam (v7)?

Q: Why were the Jews divided? (v16)

Q: What does it mean to be '*put out of the synagogue*' (v22)?

Q: Who claims to be able to see?

Q: What can't they see?

Q: Why are the Pharisees guilty?

Q: The Pharisees were the leaders/shepherds of Israel. What would their report card look like if scored against God's measure of a shepherd? Read Ezekiel 34 to help you answer.

Q: Who does God promise to send to look after his people?



Digging Deeper

Q: What are the roles and responsibilities of a shepherd?

Q: God often refers to his people as 'sheep'. Why do you think that is?

Q: What kind of shepherd is God? (read Ps. 23 to help you answer).



Reflecting Further

Q: The Pharisees are so committed to their worldview they fail to see the truth of Jesus right in front of them. What worldviews do modern people have that blind them to the truth today?

19

Go read:

John 10

Bible Study 19

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

As we saw in Study 3, at the time of writing the person with the most followers on Instagram was Cristiano Ronaldo with 152m followers, and on Twitter it was Katy Perry with 107m followers.

Q: Do you think Cristiano Ronaldo and Katy Perry know all their followers by name? Why/why not?

Q: Do you think that they would lay down their life for their followers? Why/why not?

Q: How is Jesus' relationship with his followers different to the relationship between Cristiano Ronaldo and Katy Perry and their followers?



Digging Deeper

Q: What did Jesus mean when he said, 'I am the gate' (v7), and '*I am the Good Shepherd*' (v14)?

Q: How do the false shepherds and the hired hands differ from the '*good shepherd*'?

Q: How does knowing that Jesus is the '*good shepherd*' effect your relationship with God?

Q: How do the sheep know who to follow?

Q: When the Jews demanded that Jesus tell them if he was the Christ (v24), Jesus replies that he already had. When was this?

Q: Why don't the Jewish leaders believe what Jesus says (v26)?

In the 2nd half of this chapter are 2 startling claims. The first is '*I and the Father are one*' (v30) and the second is '*you are gods*' (v34).

Q: Why are these texts startling?

Q: In what way is Jesus one with his Father?

Q: How does Jesus defend the charge of blasphemy against him?

Q: What does it mean that '*Scripture cannot be set aside*' or '*broken*' (v35)?

Q: How are we to know that Jesus and the Father are one?



Reflecting Further

Q: Do you listen to the master's voice? What does this look like in your life?

Q: How does the truth that no-one can snatch you out the Father's hand and Jesus' hand, make you feel?

20

Go read:

John 11:1-44

Bible Study 20

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: The death of a loved one is a terribly painful experience.
Why does death make us feel like this?



Digging Deeper

Q: What does Jesus say is the reason for Lazarus falling ill (v4)?

Q: What does Jesus mean?

Q: Why, when Jesus heard that Lazarus was ill, did he remain where he was for a further 2 days (v6)?

Q: Jesus said, '*this illness does not lead to death*' (v4), but Lazarus dies. Was Jesus wrong?

Q: Jesus says to his disciples that it was good he was not there when Lazarus died so the disciples would believe (v15). Believe what?

Q: What is this resurrection on the last day that Martha speaks of (v24)?

Q: In what way is Jesus *'the resurrection and the life'* (v25)?

Q: Why do you think *'Jesus wept'* (v35)? After all, he knew he was going to raise Lazarus back to life soon anyway.

Q: What does the Bible say about why death is in our world? Look up Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12 -14; 6:23.

Q: What is the significance of Lazarus being dead '*4 days*' (v39)?

Q: Why did Jesus cry out in '*a loud voice*' (v43)?

Q: In what way do we see the glory of God and the glory of the Son in Lazarus' resurrection?



Reflecting Further

Q: Death forces us to question our own mortality. Are you ready for your own death?

Q: What hope can we draw from the resurrection of Jesus and from Jesus' words?



Reflecting Further

There was a young woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as she was getting her things 'in order,' she met with her pastor to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes. She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and what outfit she wanted to be buried in. Everything was in order and the Pastor was preparing to leave when the young woman turned to him and said: 'There's one more thing,' she said. 'What's that?' came the Pastor's reply. 'This is very important,' the young woman continued. 'I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.' The pastor stood looking at the young woman, not knowing quite what to say. The young woman explained. 'When we were growing up we were very poor but my grandmother used to save up her money and then once a year would take us out for dinner at a fancy restaurant. We would eat beautiful food. When the dishes of the main course were being cleared, she would lean over to me and say, 'Keep your fork. The best is yet to come.' And then they would bring out the desserts, like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder 'What's with the fork?' Then I want you to tell them: 'Keep your fork ..the best is yet to come.' The pastor's eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged the young woman good-bye. He knew this may well be the last time he would see her before her death.

But he also knew that she had a better grasp of what heaven would be like than many people twice her age. She KNEW that something better was coming.



Reflecting Further

At the funeral people were walking by the young woman's casket and they saw the fork placed in her right hand.. Over and over, the pastor heard the question, '*What's with the fork?*' And over and over he smiled. During his message, the pastor told the people of the conversation he had with the young woman shortly before she died. So the next time you reach down for your fork let it remind you, that the best is yet to come.²³

Q: What do you think of this story?

21

Go read: John 11:45-12:19

Bible Study 21

C

Context

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Observation

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Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

People often qualify their reasons not to believe the Bible by saying things like, *'If God would appear to me right now I would believe,'* and, *'If I was back there with Jesus and saw him I would believe. I can't believe unless I see for myself.'*

Q: What do you think about these statements?



Digging Deeper

Q: We have seen many times so far in John's gospel, that what is really critical about a sign is not its miraculous nature, but that it signifies something beyond itself. v47 says that there were signs the Jews failed to see. Can you identify those signs and work out what they signify?

Q: What is the significance of Mary anointing Jesus (12v3)?

Q: Why did the crowd recite Psalm 118 and wave palm branches as Jesus entered Jerusalem (12:12-13)?

Q: Why did Jesus choose to enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey (12:14-15)?



Digging Deeper

Q: Why was it not until after Jesus was glorified, that the disciples understood the significance of Jesus' entry (12:16)?

Q: What did the chief priests and Pharisees fear (11:48)?

Caiaphas' spoke more than he knew (11:50). Discuss.

Q: How does these chapters develop the disciples' understanding of the way in which Jesus is going to 'give life'?



Reflecting Further

Jesus could have come with a sword and saved a single nation for a few years, but instead he came to die on a cross so he could save the whole world for all eternity. Discuss.

22

Go read:

John 12:20-50

Bible Study 22

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Everyone has heard of the ship the Titanic right? The Titanic is Hollywood's most famous ship movie. I've never seen it though. Everytime I've gone to watch it I think to myself, 'I know the ending, they hit an ice-berg', and I watch something else. Probably the 2nd most famous ship movie is *The Poseidon Adventure*. The ocean liner S.S. Poseidon is caught in a huge storm and a massive 30m tsunami wave hits the ship and flips it over. The ship floats upside down, because of the air trapped inside. But for how long? How long until the boat fills with water and sinks to the bottom of the ocean? A group of passengers decide they are not going to wait to find out and attempt to escape. But their world has been turned upside down. Down is now up and up is down. The bottom of the ship is now the top of the ship and the top of the ship is now the bottom of the ship. They decide to climb up into the bottom of the ship where the air is. They go into the hull of the ship, by going up. When they get to the hull, rescuers hear them banging and cut them free.

Jesus' life and mission could be described as '*Down is the way up*'. Discuss.



Digging Deeper

Q: What is Jesus' response after hearing the Greeks were asking to see him (v20-23)?

Q: Why do you think he responds this way?

Q: What does Jesus mean, '*The hour has come*' (v23)?

Q: How did he know the hour had come?

Q: The crowd says, '*We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever*' (v34). Where do you think they got this understanding from?

Q: What evidence is there from this chapter that for Jesus '*down is the way up*'?



Digging Deeper

Jesus gives an illustration of a kernel of wheat (v24).

Q: How does this help us understand what Jesus came to do?

Q: How does this help us understand what the Christian life is to be like??

Jesus is the master of the church shrinkage movement.
Discuss.

Q: Why is it that the Jews did not believe in Jesus?



Reflecting Further

A man named James Calvert went out as a missionary to the cannibals of the Fiji Islands. The ship captain tried to turn him back saying, *"You'll lose your life and the lives of those with you if you go among such savages."* Calvert replied, *"We died before we came here."*

Q: What do you think of Calvert's reply?

23

Go read:

John 13

Bible Study 23

C

Context

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Observation

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Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: What are some of the most self-sacrificial things you have experienced people do for others?



Digging Deeper

Q: What did Jesus know in v3?

Q: How did Jesus respond to this knowledge?

Q: What do you think of this response?

Q: Why does Peter not allow Jesus to wash his feet (v8)?

Q: Why did Jesus wash his disciples' feet?

Q: Why if Jesus does not wash his disciples, will they have no part with him (v8)?



Digging Deeper

Q: Throughout ch 13 we read '*Jesus knew*'. Chase down these references. What is the significance of Jesus knowing these things?

Q: Did Judas choose to betray Jesus or was it Satan that had entered into him?

Q: Were these events determined or did the characters have freedom of choice?

Q: What is the significance of 'And it was night' (v30)?

Q: How will the world know who are Jesus' true disciples (v35)?

In John's gospel, God the Father has given the Son the role of judge over people. He has given the Holy Spirit the role of convicting people of their sins. He has given us the role of loving others and telling others about Him. Leave the judging and the convicting to Jesus and the Holy Spirit. You do the loving. Discuss.



Reflecting Further

Would people be able to know that you are a follower of Jesus by your actions? Discuss.

Q: Does Jesus' love for you compel you to show love to others?

Q: What actions of love could you show to your family, your church and your community, in response to Jesus' love for you?

24

Go read:

John 14:1-11

Bible Study 24

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Is it arrogant/intolerant of Christians to say that Christianity is the truth and all other religions are wrong? Discuss.



Digging Deeper

In Ch 12 Jesus concluded his public ministry. In ch 13-17 Jesus turns his attention to his disciples, and ch 14-17 are Jesus' final teaching to his disciples, often called the 'Upper room discourse' because they take place in an upstairs guest room (Lk. 22:7-13) in Jerusalem. Jesus knows what his disciples don't know. The following day he will be crucified. In ch 14-17 he prepares them for his departure.

Q: What does it mean that Jesus prepares a place for his disciples? (v3)

Q: What makes it possible for the disciples to go to be with Jesus?

Q: What is the way to where he is going? (v6)

Q: Why is this the only way?



Digging Deeper

Q: What are the different ways people respond to the claim that Jesus is the only way to God?

Q: How do we see the Father in Jesus (v9)?

Q: On what account are we to believe that Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus (v10-11)?

Q: What are the works of the Father? In what way are the words and works of Jesus the works of God (v10-11)?



Reflecting Further

Q: Why do you think 14:1-3 is a popular passage to be read at Christian funerals?

Q: How do you respond to Jesus' exclusive claims?

25

Go read:

John 14:12-14

Bible Study 25

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: Do you want to do something great in your life?

Q: What great thing do you wish you could do?

Q: Jesus said his disciples, including us, are going to do great things. What did he have in mind? Does he want us to cut watermelons on our stomachs or spin basketballs on a toothbrush?



Digging Deeper

Jesus says that whoever believes in him will do the works that he did, not only that, they will do greater works than him (v12).

Q: What does he mean by this?

Q: Is Jesus saying that we will do greater miracles than him?

Q: Does he mean greater in quality or quantity?

Q: How is this possible?



Digging Deeper

Q: What does Jesus promise if we pray *'in his name'*? (v13)

Q: What does it mean to pray 'in Jesus' name'?

Q: In what sense will Jesus do *'anything we ask'* when we pray in his name?

Q: Why will he do this?

Q: What does it mean if Jesus doesn't do what we ask?

Q: Is praying, 'Your will be done', a prayer that lacks real faith? Aren't Christians supposed to pray believing that God will do what we ask? Why/why not?



Reflecting Further

Q: Is it wrong to pray for things that you don't necessarily need but that you want, things that would make life more comfortable (bigger house, newer car, etc.)? Why/why not?

Q: Should Christians pray for God to do miracles? Why/why not?

26

Go read:

John 14:15-31

Bible Study 26

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: Many people say that they have had a 'spiritual experience' of some kind or another. What sorts of things do people mean when they talk like this?



Digging Deeper

Q: What does the Bible say is a true spiritual experience?

Q: What will those who love Jesus do?

Q: How does belief in Jesus differ from New Age spirituality?

Q: What will Jesus do for those who love him (v16-17)?

Q: In what way will the Father and the Son '*make their home*' with the disciples?

Q: Is it the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit that dwells in a believer?

Q: Why does Jesus speak of his departure in such a positive way?



Digging Deeper

Q: What is the '*peace*' that Jesus leaves with the disciples (v27)?

Q: Why does Jesus say that the Father will give them '*another*' Helper (v16)?

Q: In what way is he a Helper?

Q: In what way does the Holy Spirit '*teach you all things*' (v26)?



Reflecting Further

Q: What does the gospel according to John say about the relationships between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

27

Go read:

John 15

Bible Study 27

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: Humphrey Bogart's last words were 'I should have never switched from Scotch to Martinis.' What would you like your last words to be? Why?



Digging Deeper

Q: What does the illustration of the vine and its branches tell us about our relationship with Jesus?

Q: In previous chapters Jesus has said, '*I am the bread of life*', '*I am the light of the world*,' but in chapter 15 he says '*I am the true vine*', not just '*I am the vine*'. Why do you think this is?

Q: Who are those who the Father cuts off because they bear no fruit? (v2)

Q: Who are those who bear fruit and the Father prunes (v2)?



Digging Deeper

Q: Why are the disciples called '*clean*' (v3)?

Q: What does it mean to '*remain*' in Jesus (v4-7)?

Q: How do we remain in him?

Q: What is the result of remaining in Jesus' love? (v9-11)

Q: Why does Jesus call his disciples '*friends*' (v14)?

Q: What is the *'fruit'* that we are to bear (v5)?

Q: How will this show that we are Jesus' disciples?

Q: What is one of the key results of remaining in Jesus and obeying him (v11)?

Q: Is love a feeling?

Q: What is the greatest love (v13)?

Q: Why should we expect that the 'world' will hate us if we follow Jesus (v18-20)?

Q: How will Christ help us when we are persecuted?



Reflecting Further

Q: Have you experienced the world's hate for you as a follower of Jesus? In what ways? How did you cope?

Q: Jesus has now made 7 'I am' statements in the gospel of John. What are they?

28

Go read:

John 16

Bible Study 28

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: Where do people look for guidance in life?

God's guidance of us is more like a compass than a Sat. Nav.
Discuss.



Digging Deeper

Q: Why does Jesus give the disciples warning of the persecution and tribulation to come (v1-4; 33)?

Q: How can the disciples have both tribulation and peace?

Q: Should Christians today expect the same trouble?

Q: Why is it for the disciples' *'good'* that Jesus goes away (v7)?

Q: What will the Helper do when He comes?

Q: Why can't the disciples bear the things that Jesus has to say (v12)?

Q: Why will the world rejoice, but the disciples weep and mourn (v20)?

Q: How is the disciples' sorrow and joy like that of a woman giving birth (v21-22)?

Q: How will the dynamic of relating to God change for the disciples, when Jesus is no longer with them (v25-28)?



Reflecting Further

Q: People say things like, *'I felt the Spirit in church tonight'*, or, *'This church is a spirit-filled church'*. How would you know if the Holy Spirit is active and in your midst?

29

Go read:

John 17

Bible Study 29

C

Context

O

Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

Q: If you knew you were going to die tomorrow, what would you pray for today?



Digging Deeper

Q: Ch 17 is Jesus' final prayer with his disciples. What does he pray for?

Q: Why has the *'hour'* now come? (v1)

Q: Is Jesus' request for God to glorify him selfish? Why does Jesus ask to be glorified (v1)?

Q: How does the Father glorify the Son, and how does the Son glorify the Father?

Q: What is '*eternal life*' (v3)?

Q: What is the work that Jesus has accomplished/finished (v4)?

Q: What does Jesus say about the relationship between the Father, Son and the disciples in v6-11a?

Q: What is it that Jesus prays for the disciples in v11b-19?

Q: What does Jesus pray for those that will believe in him through the word of the disciples (20-26)?

Q: In what are believers to be united?

If God was not three-in-one but a singular God, fellowship would be foreign to him and he would have none to share with us, and we could not learn unity from him. Discuss.

If God was not three-in-one, but a singular God for all eternity, how could he be a God of love? He would only have had himself to love for all eternity, and so would be fundamentally inward looking, Discuss.

You and I are the inconceivably rich beneficiaries of God's salvation, but our salvation was not the centre of his plans. Rather, at the center was the love of the Father for the Son and the love of the Son for the Father. Discuss.



Reflecting Further

At the 2012 Olympics, the South African swimmer Chad le Clos won a gold medal in the 200m butterfly beating his childhood hero and the greatest ever Olympian Michael Phelps, by five hundredths of a second. But it was his father, Bert, who stole the show in a post-race interview when he could not contain his emotion. Speaking in Afirkaanglish he said about his son, *“Unbelievable, unbelievable, unbelievable. I’ve never been so happy in my life. Wow. Look at him. He’s beautiful. What a beautiful boy. He’s unbelievable.”* The interview was described as the media moment of the games.

Bert’s affection for his Son goes some way to reflecting God the Father’s love for his Son. Discuss.



Reflecting Further

Mitchell falls is a grand cascading waterfall in northern Western Australia. It flows down 4 tiers of mesmerising emerald water pools from which the waters tumble from one to the next.

Q: How is this an image of God's love?

30

Go read:

John 18:1-27

Bible Study 30

C

Context

Four horizontal lines for writing.

O

Observation

Four horizontal lines for writing.

M

Meaning

Four horizontal lines for writing.

A

Application

Four horizontal lines for writing.



Kicking Off

Q: When have others influenced you to do things you didn't want to do? Why did they have this influence over you?



Digging Deeper

Q: In ch 10 Jesus said that he lays down his life for the sheep '*of his own accord*'. What is the evidence in ch 18 for this?

Q: What evidence is there that Jesus is in control of all the events that are happening?

Q: Why did the detachment of soldiers fall down before Jesus (v6)?

Q: What is the '*cup*' Jesus speaks of (v11)?

Q: Why has the Father given it to Jesus to drink?

Q: Why do you think Peter betrayed Jesus 3 times (v17-27)?



Reflecting Further

Q: What are the implications for your life that God is control?

31

Go read:

John 18:28-19:16

Bible Study 31

C

Context

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Application



Kicking Off

Consider the following from Soren Kierkegaard, a philosopher in the 19th century:

'There is a view of life which holds that where the crowd is, the truth is also, that it is a need in truth itself, that it must have the crowd on its side. There is another view of life; which holds that wherever the crowd is, there is untruth...'[A] crowd in its very concept is the untruth, by reason of the fact that it renders the individual completely impenitent and irresponsible, or at least weakens his sense of responsibility by reducing it to a fraction...for to win a crowd is not so great a trick; one only needs some talent, a certain dose of untruth and a little acquaintance with the human passions'.³⁶

Q: What do you think Kierkegaard means by '*the crowd is untruth*' and how do we see this play out in the arrest and sentencing of Jesus?



Digging Deeper

Q: What crime was Jesus found guilty of?

Q: From a legal standpoint, how fair do you think Jesus' trial was?

Q: Who is in charge of Jesus' trial?

Q: How was the word that Jesus had spoken, fulfilled in 18v32?

Q: What do you think of the Jews reply in 19v15?

Q: What is the significance of the rooster crowing 3 times?

Q: Was Jesus the only one on trial? Who else was on trial and why?



Digging Deeper

Q: Does Pilate find Jesus innocent or guilty?

Q: Why did Pilate allow Jesus to be crucified?

Q: What do you think lies behind Pilate's famous statement, *'What is truth?'* (18:38)

Q: What has John's gospel told us truth is?

Q: What is the significance of Barabbas being released (v40)?

Q: In what sense are you and I like Barabbas?

Q: Why do the Jewish leaders stir up the crowd to demand Jesus be crucified?



Reflecting Further

Q: Are you on the side of truth? How do you know? What does this look like in your life?

32

Go read:

John 19:1-37

Bible Study 32

C

Context

O

Observation

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Meaning

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Application



Kicking Off

Q: What do you know of the practice of crucifixion?

Q: In what sense was this form of execution the height of pain and the depth of shame?



Digging Deeper

Q: Throughout John's gospel Jesus predicts his own death. Flick back and find these references and try to summarise what Jesus says is the reason that he has to die.

Q: What does Jesus' death mean? How should it be interpreted?

Q: Jesus says, '*It is finished*' (v30). What is finished?

Q: Which Old Testament Scriptures does Jesus fulfill in Ch 19?

Q: What is the significance of Jesus' fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures?

Q: Many argue that it is repugnant to think that Jesus, pathetically hanging on the cross, could be the God of the universe. How would you answer them?

Q: In ch 17 Jesus asked that the Father would glorify the Son. Where is the glory in being executed on a cross?



Reflecting Further

Q: What is your response to Jesus' death?

33

Go read:

John 19:38-20:23

Bible Study 33

C

Context

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Observation

M

Meaning

A

Application



Kicking Off

A man went on a holiday to the Holy Land with his his wife and mother-in-law. While they were there the mother-in-law passed away. The funeral director in the Holy Land told the son-in-law, "You can have your mother-n-law shipped home to Australia for \$10,000, or you can bury her here in the Holy Land for \$1000." The son-in-law thought about it and told the funeral director he would have her shipped home. The funeral director asked, "Why? Why would you spend \$10000 to ship your mother-in-law home, when you could spend only \$1000 to have her buried here?" The man said, "A man died in the Holy Land 2000 years ago, he was buried here and three days later he rose from the dead. I just can't take that chance with my mother-in-law."

Q: Unlike this man, not everyone believes that Jesus' resurrection actually happened. Skeptics give alternative explanations to the biblical accounts of why the tomb was empty and why the resurrection appearances of Jesus never happened. What are some these alternate explanations?



Digging Deeper

Q: What is the significance of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus burying Jesus' body (v38-42)?

Q: After his death, Jesus appeared to many people at different places and times. Look up the following references of the appearances of the risen Jesus: Matt 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21; Acts 1, 9; 1 Cor 15:1-11.

Q: How strong is this accumulated weight of eyewitness accounts, as evidence for the truth of Jesus' resurrection?

Q: Which Scriptures foretell that Jesus must rise from the dead (20:9)?

Q: Why was the stone rolled away at the tomb?

Q: What does Jesus mean when he says to his disciples '*receive the Holy Spirit*' (v22)? Didn't they receive the Holy Spirit later at Pentecost? Does this mean they received the Holy Spirit twice?

Q: In what sense do Jesus' disciples have the authority to forgive sins and withhold forgiveness (v23)?



Reflecting Further

Q: Can Islam and Judaism and Christianity all be true?

A Muslim who became a Christian was asked by some friends, 'Why have you become a Christian?' He answered, 'Well, it's like this. Suppose you were going down the road and suddenly the road forked in two directions, and you didn't know which way to go, and there at the fork in the road were two men, one dead and one alive - which one would you ask which way to go?'

Q: What do you think of this response?

34

Go read:

John 20:23-29

Bible Study 34

C

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Kicking Off

Mary Elizabeth Frye wrote a poem about death which is often recited at funerals:

Do not stand at my grave and weep,

I am not there; I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow,

I am the diamond glints on snow,

I am the sun on ripened grain,

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush,

I am the swift uplifting rush.

Of quiet birds in circling flight,

I am the soft star-shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry,

I am not there; I did not die.

Q: What do you think of this poem in light of Jesus' resurrection?



Digging Deeper

Q: Is believing in Jesus' resurrection just a leap of blind faith?

Q: What do you think of Jesus' answer: *'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'* (v29)?

An African impala can jump more than 3m high and 10m in length. But these amazing animals can be kept in an enclosure in a zoo with just a 1m wall. Yes, a 1m wall, your maths is not off. They can jump over 3m but a 1m wall can stop them.

Q: Do you know why?



Digging Deeper

Q: What does Jesus say when he greets the disciples (v19, 21, 26)?

Q: Why do you think he says this?

Q: Why does Jesus show Thomas his hands and feet and side (v27)?

Q: What is the implication of Jesus' resurrection body for a believers' body after death?

It's Sunday because on Friday it was finished. Discuss.

Q: If the doors were locked how did Jesus stand among his disciples (V26)?

Q: What is the significance of Thomas' profession '*My Lord and my God*' (v28)?

Q: Is it wrong for a believer to doubt?

Q: Is doubt different to unbelief?

Q: Why is it that we are ready to believe historical accounts outside the Bible but don't believe the Bible, even though it has the accounts of first-hand eye-witnesses?



Reflecting Further

Have you ever doubted your faith? Discuss.

Q: How might you answer someone who is dubious about Jesus' resurrection?

35

Go read:

John 20:30-21:25

Bible Study 35

C

Context

O

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Application



Kicking Off

Q: How should life after death change the way we live life before death?



Digging Deeper

Q: In what way is Jesus' resurrection a sign (v30)?

Q: Why did John write his account of Jesus' life (30-31)?

Q: What is the significance of Jesus rising on the third day?

Q: Why do you think Peter is asked essentially the same question 3 times by Jesus (v15-17)?

Q: What does Jesus predict about Peter's future? (v18-19)

Q: What hope does Jesus' resurrection hold for believers?



Reflecting Further

Materialism is the theory/ideology/belief that only physical matter exists and the spiritual world does not. This is championed by atheists such as Richard Dawkins.

Q: How does materialism deal with the resurrection?

