

Adult
Sabbath School
Bible Study Guide
Oct | Nov | Dec 2024

Themes in the
GOSPEL OF JOHN



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Justice



Contents

The Book of John

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|--|------------|
| 1. Jesus' First Miracles—September 28–October 4 | 4 |
| 2. Proof That Jesus Is God—October 5–11 | 12 |
| 3. Introduction to the Book of John—October 12–18 | 20 |
| 4. Witnesses for the Savior—October 19–25 | 28 |
| 5. The Samaritans Are Witnesses for Jesus—October 26–November 1 | 36 |
| 6. More Stories About Jesus—November 2–8 | 44 |
| 7. God Blesses People Who Believe—November 9–15 | 52 |
| 8. Old Testament Promises—November 16–22 | 60 |
| 9. Jesus Gives Us Life—November 23–29 | 68 |
| 10. The Way, the Truth, and the Life—November 30–December 6 | 76 |
| 11. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit—December 7–13 | 84 |
| 12. The Shame of the Cross Is Jesus' Hour of Glory—December 14–20 | 92 |
| 13. Knowing Jesus and His Teachings—December 21–27 | 100 |

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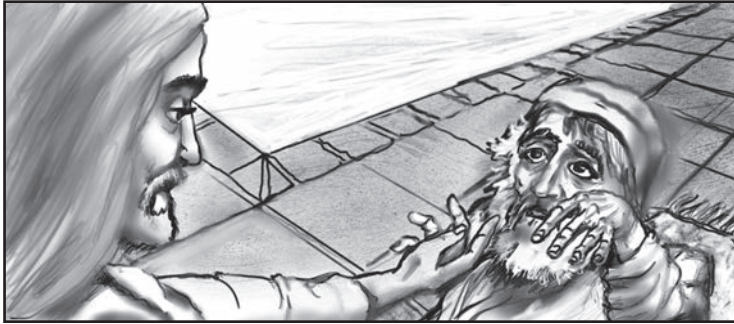
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Introduction



Important Topics in the Book of John

A beautiful Persian rug hung for sale in a shop in Tehran, Iran. On the rug someone had woven a beautiful picture of a forest in Switzerland, with mountains, a waterfall, a lake, and a blue sky filled with clouds.

Anyone who visited that shop could spend time inspecting how carefully the rug was woven. They could look closely at the fabric and the types of colors used to dye the rug.

Or the person could try to learn more about the carpet's beauty: the snow on the mountains and the deep green forest. The colors of the carpet combined with one another to make a beautiful work of art.

This quarter we will be studying another work of art: the Book of John, as we read it in God's Word, the Bible.

If we want to understand what God wants to say to us, we must study the Bible carefully. We must look at each verse, the chapters, the different parts of a book of the Bible, and the message of the Bible itself. The whole Bible came from the Holy Spirit. He showed men what to write. So, we need to study each verse of the Bible as part of the whole book to know what God wants to tell us.

This quarter, we will try to understand the message of the Book of John. John's book is one of the four Gospel stories in the New Testament about the life of Jesus. The four Gospels are the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. John is different from the other three Gospel stories. What makes John's Gospel so different? We read about personal conversations between Jesus and other people. These conversations include talks with Nathanael, Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda, the man born blind, Lazarus and his sisters, Pilate, Peter, and Thomas. Many of these stories appear only in the Book of John.

The Book of John is the Word of God to us. God gives John this word to give to us. The whole Bible came to us from God, not just from human minds or thinking. John was God's willing servant. The Holy Spirit gave many important ideas and topics to John to give to us. These topics include: Jesus the Word, light, bread, water, the Holy Spirit,

being joined as one, miracles, stories, and special messages.

When we study the Bible, we often look at the meaning of a word or a few verses. We check the meaning of the word in a Bible dictionary. We examine the sentences. We look at what was happening in history when the writer wrote the verses. We can study the Bible almost the same way the people do who come to buy a beautiful Persian carpet in the rug shop. We can check the rug, its knots, the dyes, and the back of the rug. All these parts are important.

But we must not miss the big picture when we look at the small parts of a verse from the Bible. The Persian carpet is so beautiful that we can look at the mountains on it and feel we are in Switzerland. In the same way, the Book of John can make us feel that we are with Jesus during His time on earth. When we know Jesus, we have everlasting life. The small parts of the Book of John have an important job. They help us see and understand the big picture or important topic in the Book of John. That big picture is Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

The Book of John can make us feel that we are with Jesus during His time on earth.

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Jesus' First Miracles



SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 28

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 2:1–11; John 4:46–54; John 5:1–9; John 5:10–16; John 5:16–18; John 5:19–47.

MEMORY VERSE: “Jesus did many other powerful works [miracles] in front of His followers. They [the miracles] are not written in this book. But these [the miracles in the Book of John] are written so you may believe that Jesus is the Christ [the Savior], the Son of God. When you put your trust in Him, you will have life that lasts [continues] forever through [because of] His name” (John 20:30, 31, NLV).



John says he included stories that will help us believe that Jesus “is the Christ [the Savior], the Son of God.”

WHY DID JOHN WRITE HIS BOOK about Jesus? Did John want to write mostly about Jesus' miracles? Or His teachings?

The Holy Spirit helps John explain why he wrote his book. Sure, people could write much more about Jesus' life than John wrote (John 21:25). But John says he included stories that will help us believe that Jesus “is the Christ [the Savior], the Son of God. When you put your trust in Him, you will have life that lasts [continues] forever through [because of] His name” (John 20:30, 31, NLV).

This week, we will read about some of Jesus' first miracles. These miracles include the story about how Jesus turned water to wine at a wedding. We'll also read about how Jesus healed someone's very sick son and healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem.

These miracles show us that Jesus is the Savior. In all these stories, we see examples of people who show faith in Jesus. Their examples invite us to believe in Him, too.

THE WEDDING AT CANA (John 2:1–11)

What special miracle did Jesus do at Cana? How did this miracle help His followers believe in Him? Read John 2:1–11 for the answers.

In John 2, Jesus does His first miracle or sign. Jesus changed water into wine. This miracle helped Jesus' followers decide to follow Him. The miracle was a very powerful sign that showed the followers that Jesus came from God. (For sure, the followers were not ready to understand at that time that Jesus **was** God.)

The miracle helped Jesus' followers to remember Moses, too. Moses was the leader of the Israelites in the desert. God used Moses to bring Israel out from Egypt with many "signs and wonders" (Deuteronomy 6:22, KJV; compare with Deuteronomy 26:8). (We can say that Moses was the same as a "savior" to Israel.) So, the miracle helped the Jews remember the time when God ended Israel's slavery in Egypt. (Later, God promised Moses that He would send a special messenger to His people in the future. This messenger would lead the same way as Moses. God told Israel to obey this special messenger. This messenger was Jesus.)

When Moses led Israel from Egypt, God punished Egypt with Ten Troubles. God changed the waters of the Nile River into blood with Trouble #1. The Nile was important to the Egyptians. The Egyptians worshiped the Nile the same as a god. At Cana, Jesus also does a miracle with water. But Jesus turns water into wine, not blood.

The water came from six water pots. This water was used to wash things clean. The Jewish religious laws said that some things must be washed to be holy. These laws showed how God saved people from sin. So, the miracle that Jesus did at Cana helped the Jews to think about the Bible truth of being saved. When John wrote about how Jesus changed the water into wine, he did two things. (1) John helped his readers remember how God helped Israel escape Egypt. And (2) John helped his readers to understand that Jesus was their Savior.

What did the master of the feast think about the water that Jesus changed into grape juice? The master of the feast was surprised. The juice tasted wonderful. The master of the feast didn't know that Jesus did a miracle. The master thought that the people in charge of the wedding saved the best juice for the end.



Jesus changed water into wine.

JESUS' SECOND MIRACLE (John 4:46–54)

Jesus did miracles all during His work on earth. These miracles helped people believe in Him. John wrote about these miracles so that people would believe in Jesus, too.

Read about Jesus' second miracle in John 4:46–54. Why does John connect the second miracle with the first miracle that Jesus did at the wedding feast?



When the man got home the next day, he found that the fever left his son at the same time that Jesus made His promise.

John wants his readers to understand that Jesus' miracles will help them know who Jesus is. So, John connects Jesus' second miracle with His first. Then, John adds, "That was the second miracle that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee" (John 4:54, ICB).

When we first read about the miracle, we may think that Jesus' answer to the leader is mean. But the leader refused to believe in Jesus until Jesus healed his son. Jesus understood what was in this man's heart. The spiritual sickness in this man's heart was worse than the sickness that made the man's son ill. Jesus' words touched the man's heart. The man understood that his own spiritual sickness could cost his son his life.

We must understand that miracles do not prove that Jesus is the Savior. Other people did miracles in the past. Some of these people were real messengers from God. What's more, false messengers can do miracles, too. Miracles show us that something more powerful than humans is doing work. The miracles don't mean that God is the One doing them. (Satan can do "miracles," right?)

The leader asked Jesus to show him mercy and to heal his son. Jesus' answer gave the man hope. Jesus said, "Go. Your son will live" (John 4:50, ERV). The words written as "will live" show us something that will happen in the future. But in the Greek language, the words "will live" really show an action that is happening right now. So, these words "will live" tell us that Jesus is so sure about His promise that John can talk about it as if it is already happening. When the man got home the next day, he found that the fever left his son at the same time that Jesus made His promise.

This story is a powerful reason to believe in Jesus!

Many people may do miracles today and say they are from God. But how do we know when a miracle is from God?

THE MIRACLE AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA (John 5:1–9)

The next miracle that John writes about happens at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1–9). People believed that an angel caused the water in the pool to move. When that happened, people thought that the first sick person to enter the water would get better. Many people hoped to feel better. These people sat next to the pool, waiting to get into the water. Jesus went to Jerusalem. When he passed the pool, He saw the crowd waiting there.

Picture in your mind all these people waiting for water to heal them. For sure, some of these people were very sick.

Read the story about the paralyzed man in John 5:1–9. Anyone next to the pool wanted to get well. So, why did Jesus ask the paralyzed man if he wanted to be healed (John 5:6)?

The man's answer helps us understand that he wants to walk again. The problem is that he looks for healing in the wrong place. The God who made man's legs stands right in front of him.

"Jesus doesn't ask this suffering man to show faith in Him. Jesus gives him a command: " 'Stand up! Pick up your mat [bedroll] and walk.' " [John 5:8, ERV]. With faith, the man believes Jesus' words. Health comes into the man's lame legs. The man doesn't doubt Jesus' words. He chooses to obey Jesus' command. All the man's muscles start to move. The man jumps to his feet. The man understands that he can walk now. . . . Jesus didn't give this man any promise that He would help him. The man didn't stop to doubt and lose his one chance of being healed. The man believed Jesus' word and acted on it. When he did, God gave the man strength to stand." —Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 202, 203, adapted.

Later, Jesus met this man in the temple. Jesus said to the man, " 'See, you are well now. But stop sinning or something worse may happen to you!' " (John 5:14, ERV). Can sin cause sickness? If yes, explain your answer. At the same time, why must we understand that sin doesn't cause all the sickness in our life?



Jesus gives him a command: " 'Stand up! Pick up your mat [bedroll] and walk.' " [John 5:8, ERV].

HARD HEARTS (John 5:10–16)

Miracles, signs, and wonders do not always come from God. But when miracles are from God, we make a terrible mistake if we reject them.

Read the story about the miracle that Jesus does in John 5:10–16. What lessons can we learn from Jewish leaders and their hard hearts?



Jesus wanted to help the Jewish leaders to understand the Bible truths that were more important than their man-made rules.

Jesus went to the temple. There, He found the man that He healed. After Jesus talked with him, the man told the Jewish leaders right away that Jesus healed him. We may think that this news would cause the leaders to praise God. But “the Jewish leaders made trouble for Jesus because he did this [miracle] on the Sabbath day” (John 5:16, WE). So, the leaders made plans to kill Jesus.

The Jewish leaders allowed the sick to be healed on the Sabbath only in an emergency. The man had been paralyzed for 38 years. So, his healing was not an emergency. Also, why did Jesus command the man to pick up his sleeping mat on the Sabbath? The Jewish leaders believed that God would not tell someone to break Jewish man-made religious rules. If God really sent Jesus, then why did Jesus tell this man to carry a mat home on the Sabbath? Why did Jesus do these things? Jesus wanted to help the Jewish leaders to understand the Bible truths that were more important than their man-made rules. These strict rules hid the truth about God.

Read John 9:1–16; Mark 3:22, 23; Matthew 12:9–14. What do these other stories teach us about how hard people can become in their hearts?

How can these spiritual leaders fail to understand that Jesus is their Savior? The answer is that they had hard hearts. They also held on to the false belief that the Savior would make them free from the Romans. They loved power, and they refused to allow God to control their lives. All these things caused them to reject the Bible truth that Jesus was the Savior.

What was Jesus’ warning? Read John 5:38–42 for the answer. What can we learn from Jesus’ words? What could be in us that blinds us to the Bible truth that we most need to know and live?

JESUS SAYS GOD IS HIS FATHER (John 5:16–18)

The miracle that Jesus did at the Pool of Bethesda gave John a wonderful chance to explain who Jesus is. John writes about the miracle in nine verses. Then John uses about 40 more verses (John 5:19–47) to write about Jesus.

Why did the Jewish leaders attack Jesus for doing a miracle on the Sabbath? Read John 5:16–18 for the answer.

John 5:18 may seem strange or upsetting to us. Why? Because this verse seems to say that Jesus broke the Sabbath. But if we look closely at John 5:16–18, we see that Jesus says His “work” on the Sabbath honors His relationship with His Father. God doesn’t stop working just because it is the Sabbath. He continues to keep everything alive and running in heaven and on earth. In the same way, Jesus, as God, worked on the Sabbath. The Jewish leaders attacked Jesus because they said He broke the Sabbath and because He said God was His Father. If God was Jesus’ Father, then Jesus said He was the same as God.

Read Jesus’ words to the Jewish leaders in John 5:19–47. What did Jesus say to help the leaders understand who He truly was? How did the miracle that Jesus did show this Bible truth?

Jesus explains His actions in three parts. First, Jesus explains His close relationship with the Father (John 5:19–30). Jesus says that He and His Father act together in perfect agreement. So, Jesus has the same power that God the Father has to judge and wake up the dead (John 5:25–30).

Second, Jesus names four “witnesses” who can support the things He says about Himself: (1) John the Baptist (John 5:31–35); (2) Jesus’ own miracles (John 5:36); (3) God the Father (John 5:37, 38); and (4) the Bible (John 5:39). Each of these “witnesses” announces or shows who Jesus is.

Finally, in John 5:40–47, Jesus shows the Jewish leaders their sins. Jesus compares His work with their selfish actions. Jesus says that the law of Moses will judge the Jewish leaders (John 5:45–47). The leaders’ hope for the future comes from Moses’ promises. Sad to say, they do not understand the words that Moses wrote.



God doesn’t stop working just because it is the Sabbath. He continues to keep everything alive and running in heaven and on earth.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:“We must have the same faith that the paralyzed man had. Then God will heal us. Sin cuts us off from God. Our spirits are paralyzed. We can’t live a holy life any more than that paralyzed man could walk. . . . All who are sad and fighting against sin should look up. The Savior bends over the ones He bought with His blood. The Savior says to them with pity that can’t be put into words, ‘Do you want to be healed?’ Jesus commands you to stand up in health and peace. Don’t wait to feel you are made whole. Believe His word. Then God will keep His promises. Give Jesus your heart. Choose to serve Him. When you act on His word, He will give you strength. Do you have an evil habit? Are you a slave to a habit that makes you the same as a prisoner in both mind and body? Jesus can save you. He wants to make you free. Jesus will give life to the spirit that is dead because of sin. Ephesians 2:1. Jesus will make free the person who is a slave to weakness and misfortune. Jesus will break the chains of sin.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 203, adapted.

“Jesus rejected the announcement that He sinned when He said He was God. Jesus said that He was the Son of God. Jesus and God were in perfect agreement: Jesus was One with God in His heart, One with Him in decisions, and One with Him in plans.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 208, adapted.



Jesus will make free the person who is a slave to weakness and misfortune.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Jesus healed people because they believed His message. The Jewish leaders showed that their hearts were filled with doubt. Why are asking honest questions and feeling doubt not the same thing? Why is it important that we know how these two things are different?
- ② Why is knowing the truth not enough to save us? What does save us, and how?
- ③ Look carefully at John 5:47. Today, many people reject that the Flood happened. They don't believe that God made the skies and the earth in six days. How are these people doing what Jesus warned against in John 5:47?

A SCARY MOMENT IN A CAMP CABIN

The eight Alaskan girls got ready for bed on their first night at Camp Polaris. Camp Polaris is a Seventh-day Adventist summer camp in the south of Alaska. The girls felt something strange and evil in the red wooden cabin. The two camp supervisors also felt that something strange and evil was in the cabin.

One camp supervisor was named Rachel. Rachel felt that evil angels were all around them. Rachel was 21. She was tired, but she couldn't sleep. Rachel thought about the eight teenage girls in her cabin. In the past, adults hurt some of the girls. Then some of the girls hurt their own bodies. Other girls used drugs. One girl's uncle was a witch doctor.

Rachel got up and put wood on the fire in a black stove. In August, the Alaskan summer nights were chilly. Rachel started to sing about Jesus. Rachel was a shy person. So, she didn't like anyone to hear her sing. But the song came from her heart. As Rachel sang, she walked to each bunkbed and prayed with each girl. Finally, the girls fell asleep.

After that night, Rachel sang every night and prayed with the girls. During this time, Rachel asked a girl if she wanted Rachel to pray for anything special for her. The girl said, "Yes, I want to pray to feel safe and protected."

Rachel asked, "Safe from what?"

The girl said that someone grabbed her neck the night before. The girl fought hard to breathe. Then a bright light appeared. The person who grabbed her neck let go of her. In the bright light, the girl saw an angel. The angel told her, "Don't be afraid." Peace filled the girl. She fell asleep. She didn't tell anyone about what happened until she talked with Rachel.

After Rachel prayed with the girl, the girl wanted to know more about Jesus. The girl didn't talk much because she was shy and quiet. But a "seed" for God was planted in the girl's heart.

Rachel was happy when the girl came back to camp to become a camp supervisor a few years later.

Rachel Carle now teaches at an Adventist school in Sitka, Alaska. Rachel continues to volunteer at Camp Polaris.

Rachel says, "My time at Camp Polaris showed me that many people in the United States don't know Jesus. My time working at this camp helped me to decide to become a teacher in Alaska."

Thank you for your 13th Sabbath Offering in 2015 that helped repair and add more buildings to Camp Polaris. Part of this quarter's 13th Sabbath Offering will help open an important center at the Adventist church in Bethel, Alaska. The Bethel church sends local kids to Camp Polaris every year.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



The angel told the girl,
"Don't be afraid."



Rachel Carle

Proof That Jesus Is God



SABBATH—OCTOBER 5

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 6:1–14; John 6:14, 15, 26–36; John 9:1–16; John 9:17–34; John 11:38–44.

MEMORY VERSE: “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the One Who raises [wakes people up from] the dead and gives them life. Anyone who puts his trust in Me will live again, even if he dies. Anyone who lives and has put his trust in Me will never die. Do you believe this [Bible truth]?’ ” (John 11:25, 26, NLV).



**Jesus made everything
(John 1:1–3).**

THE BIBLE tells us that Jesus is the everlasting Son of God. Jesus and the Father are both God. No one made Jesus. He didn't get His life from anyone else. Jesus made everything (John 1:1–3). Jesus always was alive. So, there was never a time when Jesus didn't live. When Jesus came to this earth, He became a human. But He never stopped being God. At special times, Jesus said certain things or did miracles that showed He was God.

This Bible truth about Jesus is important to John. John talks about some of Jesus' miracles or words to help us understand that Jesus is God. Jesus also showed that His words were truth when He did mighty miracles.

This week, we will study three of Jesus' biggest miracles. These miracles show that Jesus is God. In each story, some people don't believe the miracle. Other people don't understand the miracle's meaning. Some people stopped following Jesus because of the miracle. Other people saw the miracles and wanted to kill Jesus. But some people believed that Jesus was the Savior that God promised.

JESUS FEEDS MORE THAN 5,000 PEOPLE (John 6:1–14)

In John 6:10, John tells us that Jesus fed more than 5,000 people near the time of the Passover. The Passover was a special celebration when the Jews remembered how God saved them from slavery in Egypt. The Passover lamb was killed instead of the firstborn son from each Jewish family. This death showed the future death of Jesus for our sins. Jesus was punished for our sins on the cross. Jesus is our Passover lamb. Jesus died instead of us (1 Corinthians 5:7).

“Jesus accepted the guilt for our sins. Then the Father hid His face from Jesus. When the Father hid His face, Jesus died from a broken heart. His life was crushed out. Jesus offered Himself for our sins to save us.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 540, adapted.

Read the story in John 6:1–14. What miracle does Jesus do in this story? In what ways do these verses show us that Jesus and Moses behave alike? Also, why should this miracle help the Jews in Jesus’ day remember the time when God fed the Israelites in the desert after He made them free from slavery in Egypt?

In John 6:1–14, we see many things in this story about Jesus that help us remember Moses during the time of the Exodus. The Exodus was the time when God helped Israel escape from slavery in Egypt. The time of the Passover (John 6:4) celebrates Israel’s Exodus from Egypt. During Passover, Jesus behaved the same as Moses did during the Exodus. (1) Jesus goes up on a mountain (John 6:3). (Moses also went up Sinai.) (2) Jesus tests Philip (John 6:5, 6). (The Israelites were tested in the desert.) (3) Jesus feeds more than 5,000 people with five loaves of bread. (This miracle helps the Jews remember the miracle with the manna in the desert.) Jesus’ followers collect the leftover food (John 6:12). (In the same way, the Israelites collected the manna in the desert.) Jesus’ followers collect 12 baskets of leftovers, the same number as the 12 family groups of Israel. The Jewish people say that Jesus is the special messenger (John 6:14) that Moses promised would come (Deuteronomy 18:15). All these things help the Jews understand that Jesus is the new Moses. Jesus came to make His people free.

John shows Jesus doing miracles that have special meaning for the Jews. Jesus’ miracles show His people who He is. His miracles show the people that He is God.



All these things help the Jews understand that Jesus is the new Moses.

JESUS IS THE ONE WHO SPEAKS FOR GOD (John 6:14, 15, 26–36)

Read about the miracle in John 6:14, 15, 26–36. What did the people think about this miracle? How did Jesus use this miracle to try to teach the people about who He was?



When Jesus fed 5,000 men, He showed that He was the same as the Bread that gives life.

The Jews expected a Savior to come to earth and save them from the Kingdom of Rome. Two hard things a general must do in war is feed his troops and care for the soldiers who were hurt or dead. Jesus did many miracles that showed He could feed an army and take care of anyone who was hurt or dead.

But Jesus didn't come to feed an army or take care of hurt or dead soldiers. When Jesus fed 5,000 men, He showed that He was the same as the Bread that gives life. The miracle showed that God Himself came down from heaven. Jesus said, "I am the bread that gives life. He who comes to me will never be hungry" (John 6:35, ICB).

Do you see how this announcement about the bread starts with the words "I am"? This announcement is the first of seven announcements Jesus says about Himself in the Book of John that start with the words "I am." Each of the seven "I am" announcements connects with a special word picture that shows us who Jesus is. Let's look more closely at the list of seven "I am" announcements. (1) Jesus says, "I am the bread that gives life" (John 6:35, ICB). (2) Jesus announces, "I am the light of the world [all the people on earth]" (John 8:12, ICB). (3) Jesus also says, "I am the gate" (John 10:7, 9, ERV) or "the door" (ICB). (4) Jesus says, "I am the 'Good Shepherd'" (John 10:11, 14, NLV). (5) Jesus says, "I am the One Who raises [wakes up] the dead and gives them life" (John 11:25, NLV). (6) Jesus says, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6, NLV). (7) Finally, Jesus says, "I am the true [real] Vine" (John 15:1, NLV). Each of these seven word pictures helps us understand an important Bible truth about Jesus. Also, the "I am" word pictures help us remember Exodus 3. In Exodus 3, God shows Himself to Moses as the Mighty One, who is the I AM (compare with John 8:58). Jesus is the I AM.

Sad to say, the people in Jesus' day didn't understand this important Bible truth. The people looked for a Savior who would give them blessings and riches in this life. They didn't want the Bible truth that leads to everlasting life. So, we must be careful. Or we, too, can "fall" into this same "trap."

JESUS HEALS A BLIND MAN: PART 1 (John 9:1–16)

Read about the blind man in John 9:1–16. What did Jesus' followers think caused this man to be blind? What did Jesus say to correct the false beliefs of His followers?

Jesus' followers believed that a person got sick because he sinned. If someone was born blind, then his parents must have sinned. Many Old Testament stories helped Jesus' followers think that every time someone got sick, it was his fault (compare with Exodus 20:5; 2 Kings 5:15–27; 2 Kings 15:5; 2 Chronicles 26:16–21). But the story about Job should have helped Jesus' followers to remember that people with faith suffer, too.

Jesus doesn't say there is no connection between sin and suffering. But Jesus says that sometimes a person's suffering doesn't come from anything he did wrong. Sometimes a person suffers because God wants to use that experience to help save other people and honor His Name. The story about the blind man helps us remember the story in Genesis when God made the skies and the earth. In Genesis 2:7, God makes the first man from the dirt. In the same way, Jesus uses clay to heal the blind man's eyes.

In the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, miracle stories have the same parts: (1) The writer tells us about the problem that needs to be fixed or healed. (2) The person who needs healing comes to Jesus. (3) Jesus heals the sick person. And (4) the sick person praises God for the healing. Often, other people who see the healing praise God, too.

In the story in John 9, John gives us all four parts of the miracle. Then John gives us something more: the miracle's meaning. The meaning becomes the most important part of the story. The healed man and the spiritual leaders have a long conversation about what his healing means.

John doesn't tell his readers until chapter 9, verse 14, that Jesus healed the blind man on the Sabbath. So, the Jewish leaders blame Jesus. The leaders say Jesus breaks the Sabbath. The Jewish leaders believe that Jesus wasn't from God because He didn't keep the Sabbath holy. But other people thought that no sinner could do the miracles that Jesus did. The man who was blind sees who Jesus really is. But the leaders do not want to "see" or understand because they cannot accept that Jesus is God.



The story about the blind man helps us remember the story in Genesis when God made the skies and the earth.

JESUS HEALS A BLIND MAN: PART 2 (John 9:17–34)

Read the rest of the story about the blind man in John 9:17–34. What questions did the Jewish leaders ask the blind man after Jesus healed him? How did the man answer?

John 9:17–34 is the only part of John’s story where the people talk about Jesus, but He is not in the story. John’s story starts when Jesus’ followers ask about the blind man. The followers want to know if the man’s sin or his parents’ sin caused his suffering (John 9:2). In the same way, sin is the topic of conversation in this part of the story, too. The Jewish leaders think Jesus is a sinner because He healed on the Sabbath (John 9:16, 24). The Jewish leaders lie about the healed man. The leaders tell him, “ ‘You have been a bad man ever since you were born!’ ” (John 9:34, WE).

Do you see how everything in the story reverses? The man who was blind now starts to “see” more and more. He sees with his eyes and understands things with his mind that the Jewish leaders refuse to see or believe about Jesus. The Jewish leaders become less and less able to “see” the Bible truth about Jesus (John 9:16). So, they can’t understand where He came from (John 9:29).

John uses this story to tell us who Jesus is. John tells us that Jesus is “ ‘the Light of the world [all people]’ ” (John 9:5, NLV; compare with John 8:12). Jesus is a mystery, too. This story tries to answer some questions about this mystery. Who is Jesus? Where did He come from? What work did He plan to do on earth (John 9:12, 29; compare with John 1:14)? John also talks about Moses in this chapter (John 9:28, 29; compare with John 5:45, 46 and John 6:32). Finally, John talks about how the crowd feels about Jesus. Some people love sin more than Bible truth. Other people accept Jesus in faith (John 9:16–18, 35–41; compare with John 1:9–16; John 3:16–21; John 6:60–71).

The Jewish leaders’ hearts are too hard to understand Jesus. They should have been the first ones to accept Jesus as the Savior. But they reject all the powerful proof God sends them. They cannot learn the truth. Or maybe, they really don’t want to learn it. This story is a powerful warning about how our hearts can trick us into believing a lie.

What important rule do we read about in 1 Corinthians 1:26–29? How can this rule help us today?



John tells us that Jesus is “the Light of the world [all people]” (John 9:5, NLV).

LAZARUS WAKES UP FROM THE DEAD (John 11:38–44)

John 11 is filled with sad news. Lazarus, who is Jesus' dear friend, is very sick (John 11:3, 19, 31, 33). Lazarus's sisters are sad because Jesus let Lazarus die (John 11:21, 32). The story also is sad because Jesus cries (John 11:35).

Jesus waited two days before starting His journey to Lazarus (John 11:6). Jesus said something that surprised His followers. He said that He was glad that He didn't go to Lazarus sooner (John 11:14, 15). Did Jesus care about Lazarus? Of course, He cares! But Jesus knows that waiting will give Him a chance to show God's power. Jesus wanted to honor His Father's Name.

When Jesus arrived at Lazarus' house, Lazarus was dead for four days (John 11:17–27). After four days, Lazarus's body was already rotting. Martha tells Jesus when He arrives, " 'But, Lord, it has been four days since Lazarus died. There will be a bad smell' " (John 11:39, ERV). For sure, Jesus' delay helped make the miracle of waking up Lazarus from the dead more powerful and amazing. Jesus was going to wake up a rotting dead body. What more proof did the Jews need that Jesus was God Himself?!

As God, Jesus was the One who made life. So, Jesus already had power over death. Jesus used the miracle of waking Lazarus up from the dead to teach the Jews an important Bible truth about Himself: " 'I am the one who will raise [wake] people up and give them life. The person who believes in me will live, even though he has died' " (John 11:25, WE).

What did Jesus do to support His words in John 11:25, 26? Read John 11:38–44 for the answer.

Jesus showed that He was the Light for all people (John 8:12; John 9:5) when He helped the blind man see (John 9:7). In the same way, when Jesus wakes up Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43, 44), He shows that He is the Resurrection (He has the power to wake up people from the dead) and the Life (John 11:25). This miracle, more than any other miracle, shows everyone that Jesus is the God who gives us life. This miracle supports John's idea that Jesus is the Son of God. When we believe in Him, He will give us everlasting life (John 20:30, 31). Sad to say, the end of this story shows us something strange (John 11:45–54). Jesus shows He can wake the dead. So, how can the Jewish leaders think that they can stop Jesus if they kill Him?!



Jesus used the miracle of waking Lazarus up from the dead to teach the Jews an important Bible truth about Himself: " 'I am the one who will raise [wake] people up and give them life.' "

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Crisis in Galilee,” pages 383–394; “‘Lazarus, Come Forth,’” pages 524–536; and “Priestly Plottings,” pages 537–542, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“The life of Jesus will give life to everyone on earth. This life is in Jesus’ words. With His words, Jesus healed disease and commanded demons to come out of people. With His words, Jesus commanded the sea to be quiet. With His words, Jesus woke up the dead. The people saw that Jesus spoke with power. He spoke the word of God in the same way that God used the special messengers in the Old Testament to talk to His people. The whole Bible shows us Jesus. The Savior wanted His followers to put their faith in the Bible. When Jesus left them and went back to heaven, His followers needed to trust in the Bible. They must live as Jesus lived. ‘Their lives depend on what God says.’ Matthew 4:4 [ERV].

“Food supports our bodies. In the same way, the Bible supports our spiritual lives. Every person must get life for himself from the Bible. We must eat for ourselves to get strength from our food. In the same way, we must read the Bible for ourselves. We must not accept what someone else tells us the Bible says. Each person must carefully study the Bible. We must ask God to send us the Holy Spirit to help us understand what it says.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 390, adapted.



“Every person must get life for himself from the Bible.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① This week we looked at how Jesus fed more than 5,000 people. Jesus also healed a man born blind. Then Jesus woke up Lazarus from the dead. In each story, Jesus gave powerful proof that He was God. But these miracles, as wonderful as they were, caused the Jews to argue with each other. Some people believed in Jesus. Other people doubted Him. Why do you think that some people reject God, even when there is powerful proof to accept Him?
- ② The stories this week show us that Jesus is the Son of God. Why is this Bible truth so important to our faith and belief in Jesus as the Savior?

NEW LIFE IN COLOMBIA

Pablo never heard of Seventh-day Adventists. Pablo was a leader of the Sikuani people who lived in Colombia. Pablo was far away from his home when he was invited to worship God on the Sabbath.

Someone told Pablo, "This Saturday we will have a meeting."

Pablo went to the morning meeting and saw that the people there studied the Bible. Cristian Camilo, a 25-year-old Bible worker, led the meeting. Pablo went back for the afternoon meeting, where many people asked questions about the Bible. Pablo was surprised that Cristian answered every question from the Bible.

When Pablo got a chance, he asked Cristian his own question. Pablo asked, "What do I need to do to become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?"

Cristian said, "We can start Bible studies."

Cristian gave Pablo a set of 20 Bible lessons in the Sikuani language. Pablo was pleased and asked for lessons for the rest of his family.

Cristian gave Pablo a Bible and promised to travel to his community with lessons for his family.

As a Bible worker, Cristian was responsible for a big area in Colombia. Three months passed before Cristian visited Pablo. Cristian traveled with two Sikuani Adventists because he couldn't find Pablo's community without their help.

Pablo welcomed Cristian and announced that he finished studying the 20 Bible lessons. Pablo said he also gave Bible studies to his family and the rest of the community. 15 people were ready to be baptized.

Cristian arrived on a Friday. He spent the rest of the day answering questions about the Bible and deciding if people were ready to get baptized. When sundown came, Cristian led the evening worship program.

On Sabbath, Cristian led the community in worship. After the program, a man said, "There's a lake nearby." Another person said, "We want to be baptized right now!" That Sabbath, five people were baptized, including Pablo, his mother, Pablo's two brothers, and one of his sisters-in-law.

Today, Pablo continues giving Bible studies to his people.

Cristian said, "There are many people, the same as Pablo, who are waiting for someone to tell them about Jesus."

Thank you for your prayers for Bible workers in Colombia and elsewhere who are trying to share the Good News about Jesus with people who don't know Him. Learn about Adventist Mission's work to share the Good News at bit.ly/GMPioneers.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Cristian gave Pablo a set of 20 Bible lessons in the Sikuani language.



Cristian Camilo

Introduction to the Book of John



SABBATH—OCTOBER 12

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 1:1–5; John 1:1–3, 14; John 1:9–13; John 3:16–21; John 17:1–5.

MEMORY VERSE: “In the beginning, the Word [Jesus] was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1, NlrV).



These Bible truths help us readers to understand things about Jesus that the people in the story didn't understand at the time.

IN LESSON 1, we started our study with the end of the Book of John. The end of the Book of John explains why John wrote His book. This week's lesson goes back to the first chapter in the Book of John. In the first words or paragraphs of their books or letters, New Testament writers often tell us about the topics they will talk about. In the first chapter in his book, John also tells us what he is going to talk about. John's topics include Bible truths about Jesus. These truths talk about a time before God made the skies and the earth.

These Bible truths help us readers to understand things about Jesus that the people in the story didn't understand at the time. We can see important topics that John likes to talk about as he tells his story about Jesus.

This week's lesson will start with the introduction to the Book of John (John 1:1–18). The introduction will give us a list of the most important topics that John will talk about in his book. Later this week, we will look at these topics again in other parts of John's Gospel.

JESUS WAS THERE FROM THE BEGINNING (John 1:1–5)

John starts his book about the story of Jesus' life with this amazing thought: "In the beginning, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1, NIV). This beautiful verse contains a very deep and powerful idea about Jesus. As humans, we can hardly understand what this wonderful idea means, but we must try.

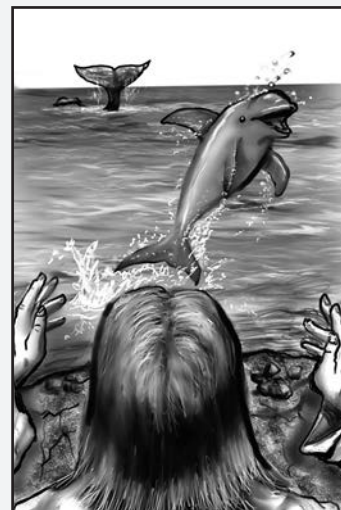
The first thing that John does in this verse is give us a hint about the time when God made the skies and the earth. John starts his book with the same words that Genesis begins with: "In the beginning" (read Genesis 1:1; John 1:1). We learn that the Word, Jesus, was already alive before God made anything. So, John tells us that Jesus has always been there with God the Father from the beginning.

Next, John tells us that "the Word was with God." In John 1:18, John says, "No one has ever seen God. But his only Son is very near to his Father's heart" (WE). This verse shows us that Jesus and the Father are very close.

Then John says, "The Word was God" (John 1:1, WE). How can Jesus, who is the Word, be **with** God and, at the same time, **be** God? We can learn the answer to our question when we understand something important about the Greek language. The Greek language doesn't have a word for "a" or "an." But the Greek language does have a word that means "the." When John writes "the" before a word, he shows us that he is talking about a certain person or thing and not just any person or thing. In John 1:1, John writes the word "the" in the Greek language before "Word." So, the word "the" tells us to pay careful attention to the special person John talks about.

In the verse "the Word was with God," John writes the word "the" before the word "God" in the Greek language. John wants us to know he is talking about a certain Person, God the Father. But when John writes "and the Word was God" in the Greek language, John doesn't write the word "the" before the word "God." That's because John is now talking about Jesus. Jesus is not God the Father. At the same time, Jesus is God's Son, the Second Person of the Godhead. The Godhead includes all three members of the Three-in-One God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

In John 1:3, 4, John tells us that Jesus is the One who made all things.



In John 1:3, 4, John tells us that Jesus is the One who made all things.

THE WORD, JESUS, BECAME A MAN (John 1:1–3, 14)

Read John 1:1–3, 14. What do these verses tell us that Jesus did? Why is this Bible truth so important?

John doesn't start his book about the life of Jesus with the name of Jesus. John also doesn't start with the topic about Jesus' work as the Savior. John starts his book with the word "logos," which means "the Word." In John's day, Greek thinkers used the word "logos" to talk about the science of thinking and all of its important rules.

The Greek thinker Plato taught that life happened in two places. One place is heaven, where everything is perfect and nothing changes. The second place is here on earth, where everything always changes and nothing is perfect. Some thinkers in Bible times said that the "logos" was a place halfway between the perfect things in heaven and the real things here on earth.

John uses the word "logos" in a completely different way than Plato. John says that the truth, or the "logos," is not some spiritual idea that is difficult to understand. Also, the "logos" is not some place halfway between heaven and earth. For John, the "logos" is a real person: Jesus Christ. Jesus became a person and lived among us (John 1:14).

John also believed the "logos" is the Word of God, or the Bible. More important, God communicates with us. He shows Himself to people in the most amazing way: Jesus became a man and lived with us (John 1:14). In John's book about the life of Jesus, the "logos" shows us the everlasting God, who enters time and space. This same God speaks, acts, and communicates with humans in a personal way. The word "logos" shows us that the everlasting God became a human, one of us.

In John 1:14, John says that the "logos" or "the Word became a man and lived among us" (John 1:14, ERV). The Greek word written as "lived" means "to set up a tent." John used this Greek word to help us remember Exodus 25:8. In this verse, God told the Israelites to make a place of worship, which was the same as a tent. Then God could come live with His people. In the same way, Jesus, who was God, lived in a human body. He hid His glory in human flesh so that people could come meet with Him when He was on this earth.

The God who made us became one of us and lived with us. Wow! What does this tell us about God's love for us?



In John's book about the life of Jesus, the "logos" shows us the everlasting God, who enters time and space.

OBEYING OR NOT OBEYING THE BIBLE (John 1:9–13)

Read John 1:9–13. In these verses, what does John say about how people think and feel about Jesus?

John 1:1–18 introduces John’s story about Jesus’ life. John 1:1–18 talks about Jesus. We read these verses to learn how people at the time thought and felt about Jesus. John also names Jesus “the true Light” (John 1:9, ICB). John used “light” because Jesus’ words shine into the hearts and minds of every person on the earth. Jesus is the same as a light that helps us understand the Bible. As C. S. Lewis wrote, “I believe in Christianity in the same way that I believe the sun rises: because I see the sun rise, its light helps me to see everything else.”—“Is Theology Poetry?” (n. p.: Samizdat University Press, 2014), page 15, originally presented 1944, adapted.

Also, look at what John 1:9 is really saying. Light comes to everyone. But not everyone welcomes the light. As we will see in tomorrow’s study, one of the most important ideas in John’s book is how people accept or reject Jesus. That idea starts right here in John chapter 1. The sad truth is that the Savior came to His own people, the Jews. But many didn’t accept Him as the Savior.

In Romans 9–11, Paul talks about the same thing: many Jews rejected Jesus. But Paul doesn’t end with sad news. Paul says that many Jews, along with non-Jews, will accept Jesus as their Savior. Paul warns the non-Jews not to brag about accepting Jesus, as if they are better than the Jews. Paul says, “It is not natural for a wild branch to be part of a good tree. But you non-Jews are like [the same as] a branch cut from a wild olive tree. And you were joined to a good olive tree. But those Jews are like a branch that grew from the good tree. So surely [for sure] they can be joined to their own tree again” (Romans 11:24, ICB).

In much the same way, John says that all the people who accept Jesus as their Savior will become the children of God. We become God’s children when we believe in Him. (Read John 1:12, 13.)

This idea connects John’s introduction about Jesus with the end of his book. In John 20:31, we learn why John wrote his book: “so you will believe that Jesus is the Savior, the Son of God, and that when you believe, you will have everlasting life in His name.”



**John says that
all the people who accept
Jesus as their Savior
will become
the children of God.**

IMPORTANT IDEAS IN THE BOOK OF JOHN: Part 1 (John 3:16–21)

Read John 3:16–21; John 9:35–41; and John 12:36–46. How do these verses show us the same idea of accepting/rejecting Jesus that we saw in the introduction to John’s book about Jesus’ life?

In John’s book, there are two groups of people: (1) people who believe in Jesus and accept Him as the Savior, and (2) people who choose not to believe in Him.

The followers of Jesus belong to the first group. So does Nicodemus (who is slow to believe), the woman at the well, and the man who is born blind. In the second group are the Pharisees, a group of religious leaders, and the high priests, who are the top religious leaders for the Jews. This group also includes one of Jesus’ followers, Judas, and the people who saw Jesus do the miracle that fed more than 5,000 people.

John doesn’t use the word “faith” or “belief” (from the Greek word “pistis”) anywhere in his book on Jesus’ life. But John uses the word “believe” (from the Greek word “pisteuo”) 98 times! John uses this word in the New Testament 241 times. So, we can see that the word “believe” is a very important idea in John’s book. Why does John use the action word “believe” and not the word for “faith” or “belief”? Maybe John wants us to understand that being a Christian is something we do. We show we are Christians in how we live and not just in what we believe. As we know, the devil believes in Jesus, too (read James 2:19).

In the Book of John, the two groups of people are different in the way they think about Jesus. People who believe in Jesus come to Him and do not run away from Him. They accept His words, even when He scolds or warns them. Jesus is the same as the Light that shines on them. These people believe and become children of God.

People who don’t accept Jesus come to Him to fight with Him. They love the dark, or lies, and not the light, or Bible truth. This group thinks that Jesus’ sayings are hard to accept. They see Jesus breaking old rules and not doing what they expect. They judge Jesus. They don’t allow His teachings to judge them. We see this behavior again and again in the Jewish spiritual leaders. The spiritual leaders did not want to accept Jesus as the Savior.



**Being a Christian
is something we do.**

IMPORTANT IDEAS IN THE BOOK OF JOHN: Part 2 (John 17:1–5)

Read John 17:1–5. What did Jesus mean when He said, “ ‘Father, the time has come. Give glory [honor] to your Son so that the Son can give glory to you’ ” (John 17:1, ERV)?

In the beginning of the Book of John, John introduces Jesus as God’s Son who made everything. “He made all things. Nothing was made without Him making it” (John 1:3, NLV). John also talks about Jesus’ glory: “The Word became a human being [person]. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It [His glory] is the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father. And the Word [Jesus] was full of grace [mercy and forgiveness] and truth” (John 1:14, NIV). In the Greek language, the word “glory” means “bright,” “fame,” and “honor.” John uses the word “glory” to talk about how people gave honor to Jesus and how Jesus got honor from God.

In the Book of John, John connects the idea of giving Jesus glory or honor with the topic of His “time.” His time means the time of His death (compare with John 2:4; John 7:30; John 8:20; John 12:23–27; John 13:1; John 16:32; and John 17:1). So, the Cross is Jesus’ time of glory or honor.

We may think this idea is strange. How can the Cross be a time of Jesus’ honor or glory? The cross was the most awful way to die in Roman times. God on a cross shows us how heaven’s story becomes connected with our story.

As a man, Jesus died a terrible death. He suffered. He was nailed to a cross as a criminal. Before He died, Jesus cried out, “ ‘My God, My God, why have you left Me alone?’ ” (Matthew 27:46, NLV). We see this human, dark side of the Cross in the Books of Matthew and Mark (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34).

But the Cross also has another side: a side of glory. We see this glory in the books of Luke and John (Luke 23:32–47; John 19:25–30). We see the Cross as the place where God saves sinners and gives them mercy. Also, Jesus, the Son of God, gives Himself to the Father.

How strange, right? God’s best glory is shown in His worst shame.

Think about what it means that God needed to die on the cross to save us from sin. What does this idea tell us about how bad sin really is?



**God’s best glory is shown
in His worst shame.**

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “ ‘God With Us,’ ” in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 19–26.

“Jesus said, ‘And I am going to be lifted up from the earth. When I am, I will bring all people to myself.’ John 12:32 [NIrV]. Jesus must be shown to the sinner as the Savior who dies for the sins of everyone. When we look at Jesus, the Lamb of God, on the cross, we start to understand God’s plan to save us. God’s love leads us to confess our sins and to stop sinning. When Jesus died for sinners, He showed a love that we can’t begin to understand. As the sinner looks at this love, it touches his heart. His mind fills with Bible truth. He feels sad about his sins. . . . Any time people start to improve their lives, Jesus makes that happen. We don’t understand how this happens. But we wish to improve our lives, and we make changes for the better. Jesus invites us to look at His cross. When we sinners look at the Cross, we look at the Person we killed with our sins. That is the time when we feel the guilt from breaking God’s law.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pages 26, 27, adapted.



“God’s love leads us to confess our sins and to stop sinning.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① In John 1, why would John talk about Jesus as the Person who made everything? Why is this topic important to everything we believe as a church? Why is it so important for us to have a correct understanding about how life started? What does the Bible teach us about this topic?
- ② Jesus was fully God and fully human. Why is the Bible truth that Jesus is fully God an important part of our beliefs as Seventh-day Adventists? What would happen to our beliefs if we thought that Jesus was only human and was not God? Also, what happens to the cross if the everlasting God didn’t die on it? What if only a man died on it? What do we lose as Christians if Jesus is not the everlasting God?

A SABBATH “SEED”

An American Indian man walked to the place where volunteers constructed a building. The volunteers put log walls on the foundation of the All Nations Center in the town of Wapato, Washington, USA.

The man said to the volunteers, “What are you guys building here?” Then the man asked, “Are you building another church? You guys don’t even know what day of the week to keep.”

The man in charge was named Jeff Weijohn. Jeff started a conversation with the man. The man never heard of Seventh-day Adventists before. So, the man thought the new church would be open for worship on Sunday. But the man believed that we should worship God on Saturday.

Jeff was surprised when he heard this information. Jeff never heard of a group of American Indians who had a history of keeping the Sabbath. Jeff talked with a history professor to learn more about this group of American Indians. The history professor explained that one or two groups of American Indians who lived on the Yakama Indian Reservation believed that the seventh day was God’s holy day. In the past, God planted a “seed” of Bible truth for the Sabbath in the hearts of these American Indians. So, they worshiped God on the seventh day.

Jeff and his wife, Terri, were excited when they heard this information. They wanted to share the Good News with more American Indians. So, in 1990, Jeff and Terri started a special program to work with the American Indians.

Jeff and Terri got help from a 13th Sabbath Offering to start their work. In 2001, they opened the All Nations Center. This center can be used for many things. People can come to the center to worship on Sabbath mornings. The center has a food area where meals are served. Each year, 300 to 400 people come to enjoy a special Mother’s Day meal. The center has a game area for playing sports. The center also offers day camps, Vacation Bible Schools, and after-school teaching.

Jeff said, “One reason we built this center was because the community didn’t have a place to meet.”

American Indians can also rent the center. One American Indian leader chose to rent the center for health meetings. He chose the center and not a casino. A casino is a place where people gamble. The leader said that gambling was destroying his people. Jeff said, “The leader wanted nothing to do with the casino.” The center is a big success. Now the SDA Church in other countries (including Canada) is opening their own centers for Indians.

Thanks for your 13th Sabbath Offerings in the past. Pray that God uses your offering to continue to change lives.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



God planted a “seed” of Bible truth for the Sabbath in the hearts of these American Indians.



Terri and Jeff Weijohn

Witnesses for the Savior



SABBATH—OCTOBER 19

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 1:19–23; John 1:29–37; John 1:35–39; John 1:43–46; John 3:1–21.

MEMORY VERSE: “Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth. Unless [except when] you are born again, you cannot be in God’s kingdom’ ” (John 3:3, ICB).



Both the Bible and God the Father show that Jesus is the Savior.

JESUS gave people powerful proof from the Bible to support the things He said about Himself. One of the things Jesus said about Himself was, “I tell you the truth. The person who believes in me will live for ever” (John 6:47, WE).

But there’s more. Jesus turned water into wine. He fed thousands of people with a few loaves of bread. Jesus healed a Jewish leader’s son. Jesus healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda. Jesus gave sight to one who was born blind. Jesus woke up Lazarus from the dead. John writes about the stories of many people who were witnesses for Jesus. Their stories tell us who Jesus is. These witnesses include Jews, non-Jews, rich and poor, men and women, leaders, people who had an education and people who didn’t.

John also talks about how God Himself is a witness for Jesus. So is the Bible. Both the Bible and God the Father show that Jesus is the Savior.

This week, we will start with John the Baptist’s story about Jesus. Then we will look at the stories about Jesus from Andrew and Simon Peter, Philip and Nathanael, and a surprise witness, the Jewish leader named Nicodemus. Of course, we will look at one of the most powerful human witnesses of all for Jesus: the writer of the Book of John himself.

**JOHN THE BAPTIST: A WITNESS FOR JESUS
(John 1:19–23)**

As we saw last week, the Book of John starts with Jesus Christ, who is God's Word or living truth. John tells us that Jesus was alive before He made the skies and earth. Some Jews in Jesus' time expected two Saviors to come, one Savior who was a spiritual leader and one who was a king. John teaches that John the Baptist didn't announce himself to be one of these Saviors. John the Baptist was a witness for the real Savior.

Read John 1:19–23. How did John the Baptist explain his work for God?

The Jewish spiritual leaders sent people to ask John the Baptist who he was. People expected the Savior to come. So, they needed John the Baptist to announce if he was the Savior. John was not the Light. God sent John to be a witness for the Light. Also, God sent John to get people ready for the coming Savior (John 1:6–8). So, John answered the people plainly: " 'I am not the Christ [Savior]' " (John 1:20, ICB).

Also, John baptized with water. But Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit (John 1:26, 33). John said, " 'I am not good enough to get down and help Him take off His shoes' " (John 1:27, NLV). Jesus was more important than John because He was God (John 1:30). Jesus was the Son of God. John was only His messenger (John 1:34).

Read Isaiah 40:1–5 and John 1:23. What do these verses help us to understand about John's special work?

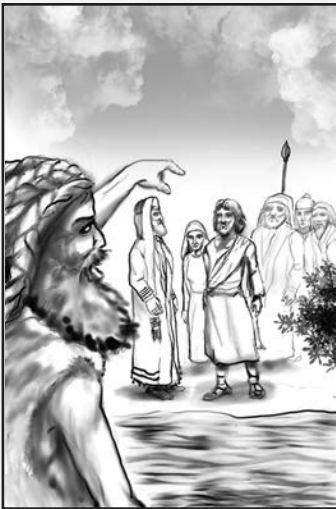
In Bible times, roads were filled with stones. These roads also had holes. Kings sent their servants to make the road smooth. The servants went first on the road to fill in the holes and remove the stones. Then the road was ready for the king to travel on. In the same way, God sent John the Baptist first to get the hearts of the people ready for Jesus to arrive.

In what way should we as Seventh-day Adventists prepare people for our King in the same way that John the Baptist did for Jesus?

Kings sent their servants to make the road smooth.

THE LAMB OF GOD (John 1:29–37)

The Jews looked for a Savior who would make them free from Rome. John wrote his book about Jesus to help the people know the truth about the Savior. John wanted people to see that Jesus kept all God's promises in the Bible about the coming King. The Savior was not a leader with a throne on this earth. The Savior came to keep all the Old Testament promises about Himself. One of these promises said that the Savior would give Himself as an offering for everyone on earth. The Savior would also make new the relationship between God and His people.



“When Jesus was baptized, John announced that Jesus was the Lamb of God.”

Read John 1:29–37. In these verses, what announcement does John make about Jesus? What word picture does John use to talk about Jesus? Why is this word picture so important? How does it help us understand who Jesus is and His work?

John the Baptist announces that Jesus is God's Lamb. This announcement supports the reason why John the Beloved wrote his book about Jesus' life. John wanted to help people understand who the Savior really was and the work He came to do. Jesus came to be the offering for the sins of the human family. The offerings in the Old Testament showed what Jesus would do. Jesus would keep God's promise to save sinners. God first made this promise about the Savior in Genesis 3:15.

“When Jesus was baptized, John announced that Jesus was the Lamb of God. John's announcement helped people to understand the Savior's work in a new way. The Holy Spirit helped John remember the words that Isaiah wrote: ‘He was led away like a lamb to be killed.’ Isaiah 53:7 [NirV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 136, adapted.

Read Mark 10:45; Romans 5:6; and 1 Peter 2:24. How do these verses help us understand the work that Jesus came to do as the Lamb of God?

For sure, John the Baptist didn't understand everything about the Savior or the work He came to do. But John understood that Jesus was the promised Savior. Also, John understood that Jesus came to keep God's promises.

Jesus is the Lamb of God. How does this word picture help you understand the price God paid to save us?

THE TWO FOLLOWERS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (John 1:35–39)

The two followers of John the Baptist stood with him when Jesus came near. John announced, “‘Look! The Lamb of God!’” (John 1:36, NIV). The two followers listened to John’s message about Jesus. Jesus came to keep all the Old Testament promises about the coming Savior. The two followers left John the Baptist to follow Jesus. The two followers understood that Jesus was more important than John the Baptist. The followers also understood that Jesus was the promised Savior that John preached about.

Read about John the Baptist’s two followers in John 1:35–39. What did these two followers do after hearing John preach about Jesus?

The followers wanted to be with Jesus. So, they stayed with Him for the day. Who knows what amazing experiences they had, or the wonderful things Jesus taught them!

They must have had a powerful experience. Before long, the two followers wanted to tell other people about Jesus. One of the two followers was Andrew. Right away, Andrew found his brother, Simon, and said, “‘We have found the Messiah [Savior]!’ (Messiah means the Christ, the messenger of [from] God.)” (John 1:41, WE). Then Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Right away, Jesus showed that He knew Simon. “Jesus looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon, the son of John. Your name will be Cephas.’ (Cephas means Peter, a rock or stone.)” (John 1:42, WE). Jesus understood Peter. Jesus’ special knowledge about people is an important topic in the Book of John that we see again and again (read John 2:24, 25).

“What if John and Andrew were the same as the Jewish leaders? Then John and Andrew couldn’t be Jesus’ followers. They would never sit at Jesus’ feet and learn from Him. They would come to Jesus to judge His words and attack Him. . . . But John and Andrew didn’t do those things. The Holy Spirit spoke to their hearts through the preaching of John the Baptist. John and Andrew answered the Holy Spirit’s invitation to follow Jesus. Now John and Andrew knew Jesus was a Teacher from heaven. . . . Jesus helped them to understand Old Testament teachings in a new way.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 139, adapted.

The Book of John helps us to understand who Jesus is so that we may share this Good News with everyone.



Right away, Andrew went and found his brother, Simon, and said, “‘We have found the Messiah [Savior]!’ ”

PHILIP AND NATHANAEL (John 1:43–46)

Read John 1:43–46. What did Philip’s message show about his faith in Jesus?

Philip was from Bethsaida. So were Andrew and Peter. Philip found his friend Nathanael and told him about Jesus. John the Baptist named Jesus the Lamb of God. Andrew told Peter that he found the Savior. But Philip said that Jesus was the Person that Moses and God’s special messengers wrote about. Philip also adds the name, “Jesus of Nazareth.” When Philip says Jesus is from Nazareth, Nathanael gives Philip a sharp answer.

Nathanael’s answer shows us that he had bad feelings in his heart against the town of Nazareth. For sure, no king would come from this town! Our bad feelings about something easily can close our minds. Nathanael could not understand Jesus at this time. How does Philip answer? He doesn’t try to argue with Nathanael. Philip invites Nathanael to, “‘come and see’ ” (John 1:46, ERV). So, Nathanael went and saw.



With the Holy Spirit’s help, Jesus saw Nathanael while he prayed and searched for truth under that tree.

Read John 1:47–51. How does Jesus convince Nathanael about who He is? How does Nathanael answer?

Nathanael’s answer to Philip’s invitation is missing between verses 46 and 47. We do know that Nathanael got up and went to see Jesus. Nathanael’s friendship with Philip was more important than his feelings about people from Nazareth. Nathanael met Jesus, and his life changed in that moment..

Jesus says nice words about Nathanael. Jesus says that Nathanael is an Israelite you can trust (John 1:47). Nathanael isn’t false. He doesn’t try to fool or trick people. Jesus’ nice words about Nathanael are different from Nathanael’s words about Jesus (John 1:46). Nathanael answers Jesus with surprise because he never met Jesus before. So, how could Jesus know who he was?

Then Jesus says that He saw Nathanael under a fig tree. This small announcement convinces Nathanael. With the Holy Spirit’s help, Jesus saw Nathanael while he prayed and searched for truth under that tree (read Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 140, 141). Nathanael confesses that Jesus is a Teacher, the Son of God, and the King of Israel.

NICODEMUS (John 3:1–21)

Read the story about Nicodemus in John 3:1–21. How does this story show us who Jesus is?

Nicodemus was a respected teacher in Israel and a wealthy member of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the name of the religious government for the Jews. Nicodemus' story about Jesus is an important part of John's book for several reasons. Nicodemus says that Jesus is a "Rabbi" or teacher. Nicodemus also believes that the signs that Jesus did are proof that Jesus came from heaven. So, before Nicodemus really understood what he was doing, he gave proof to support the idea that Jesus was the Savior.

Nicodemus believed the signs were proof that God sent Jesus. But Nicodemus didn't believe that the signs were proof that Jesus also kept all God's promises about the Savior in the Old Testament. So, Nicodemus came to Jesus with some doubt. He didn't, at this time, believe Jesus was the real Savior.

What did Jesus say to Nicodemus to show that He saw everything in his heart? Read John 3:3–21 for the answer.

Jesus knows what is in the heart of every person. The Jews believe that the non-Jews needed to be saved. But many Jews didn't understand that they, too, needed saving. They needed new hearts. No one is born saved.

The Jews had a wonderful history that went back to Abraham. They had many spiritual blessings (read Romans 3:1, 2). But that was not enough. Jesus told Nicodemus that, as a teacher and leader in Israel, he must be born again!

Then Jesus showed Nicodemus how little he really knew about being saved. "Jesus said, 'Are you a teacher among the Jews and do not know these things?' " (John 3:10, NLV). For sure, Jesus' words surprised Nicodemus.

Nicodemus had questions about Jesus at that time. But later, Nicodemus took Jesus' side with the true followers of Jesus (read John 19:39).

What does it mean to be born again? Why did Jesus make being born again an important part of being a Christian?



Jesus told Nicodemus that as a teacher and leader in Israel, he must be born again!

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Nicodemus,” pages 167–177, in *The Desire of Ages*.

Nicodemus “searched the Old Testament in a new way. He did not look for information to help him argue his ideas or win a fight. Nicodemus read the Bible to get spiritual life. He allowed the Holy Spirit to lead him. Then he started to understand the kingdom of heaven. . . .

“Our faith helps us to accept God’s mercy. But faith is not our Savior. Faith earns us nothing. Faith helps us grab hold of Jesus and accept His offering for our sin. . . . Jesus also helps us to feel sorry for breaking God’s law. Forgiveness is Jesus’ gift to us, too.

How are we saved? Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. In the same way, Jesus was lifted up on the cross. Everyone that the snake lied to and bit may look and live. That’s why John the Baptist said, “ ‘Look! The Lamb of God! He takes away the sins of the world!’ ” John 1:29 [ERV]. Spiritual truth, the same as light, shines from the cross. This light shows us God’s love. God’s love brings us to Himself. If we accept this love, God will lead us to Jesus. Jesus will help us say we are sorry for our sins. Jesus will help us to change our behavior. These sins hurt Jesus on the cross. Then the Holy Spirit will give us new life. We will start to control our thoughts and wishes and obey Jesus. The Holy Spirit makes our hearts and minds new, the same as Jesus. The Spirit helps us to be the same as Jesus is in our hearts and minds. The Spirit also writes God’s law in our minds and hearts. Then we can say with Jesus, ‘My God, I want to do what you want. Your teachings are in my heart.’ Psalm 40:8 [ICB].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 175, 176, adapted.



**Everyone that
the snake lied to and bit
may look and live.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① John the Baptist came to get people ready for Jesus. What is the human idea of success? Do you think John was a success in the way that humans view and understand success? What is your idea of “success” in spiritual things?
- ② Later, John the Baptist shared some real doubts that he had about Jesus (Matthew 11:2, 3; Luke 7:19). What caused John’s questions? What can we learn from his questions about how to stay strong in our faith?

A POWERFUL PRAYER IN UZBEKISTAN

An ambulance rushed 36-year-old Nigora to the hospital in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Nigora could hardly talk. She had no feeling in her arms. She had trouble swallowing. The doctor didn't know what was wrong with her.

Nigora got worse over the next month in the hospital. She couldn't sleep for more than 15 minutes a day. X-rays showed that something was wrong with her brain.

Then a second doctor said Nigora was going to die. The doctor gave her no hope.

Nigora didn't believe in Jesus. But Nigora had Seventh-day Adventist neighbors who believed in the Lord. The neighbors visited Nigora in the hospital. They asked her for permission to invite their church pastor to come and pray with her. Nigora said, "No, no! I'm not well. I look terrible. Tell your pastor to come when I feel better."

But Nigora's neighbors said, "Let the pastor come and pray for you."

Nigora didn't want to let the pastor visit her. But finally she agreed to let him come. A day later, the pastor and his wife came to Nigora's bed. The pastor read Psalm 23. He put oil on the front part of Nigora's face, between her eyes. Then the pastor prayed, "Lord, give health to our sister. Give her healing so she can be well." Nigora didn't feel any different after the prayer.

The next day, the pastor and his wife came back. Again, he read from the Bible. The pastor put oil on her and prayed. Again, Nigora didn't feel any different. But that night, she slept for several hours.

The third day, the pastor and his wife came back. Again, the pastor read from the Bible. He put oil on Nigora and prayed. Again, Nigora didn't feel any different. But that night, she slept the whole night. After that, she slept well every night.

The pastor and his wife continued to visit. Slowly, Nigora's speech improved. Her arms and legs started to work again. Hospital X-rays showed that her brain was normal. The doctor was surprised.

The doctor said, "How is it possible for you to get better so fast?"

Four months after the pastor started to pray, Nigora could drive her car and went back to work.

Before Nigora got sick, she didn't believe in God. But now she praises him for healing her. She says, "God worked a miracle to heal me."

Nigora is glad she has neighbors who care about her. She says, "I'm grateful to God that He gave me these nice friends. They are the same as my family."

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



The pastor put oil on Nigora and prayed.



Nigora

The Samaritans Are Witnesses for Jesus



SABBATH—OCTOBER 26

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 4:1–4; John 4:7–15; Ezekiel 36:25–27; John 4:16–24; John 4:27–29.

MEMORY VERSE: “The people said to the woman, ‘First we believed in Jesus because of what you told us. But now we believe because we heard him ourselves. We know now that he really is the one who will save the world’ ” (John 4:42, ERV).



In 722 B.C., the Assyrians took Jews away from the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The Assyrians made the Jews their prisoners.

WHO WERE THE SAMARITANS? In 722 B.C., the Assyrians took Jews away from the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The Assyrians made the Jews prisoners. The Assyrians forced the Israelites to live in different parts of their kingdom. The Assyrians also took prisoners from other countries to live in the Northern Kingdom. These people became known as the Samaritans. The Samaritans followed the Jewish religion but added some of their own beliefs. Those beliefs became mixed up.

The Jews and Samaritans did not have a good relationship. The Samaritans worked against the Jews when the Jews built their temple again after they came back to Jerusalem from Babylon to build their temple again. The Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. But John Hyrcanus, a Jewish leader, destroyed this temple in 128 B.C.

The Jews and Samaritans continued to have a bad relationship when Jesus started to preach and teach. The Jews avoided Samaria as much as possible. Yes, the Jews and Samaritans bought and sold from each other. But that was all they did. The Jews and Samaritans did not help each other. During this time, Jesus meets with the woman at the well in the city of Sychar, a city in Samaria.

THE CITY OF SYCHAR (John 4:1–4)

**What problem caused Jesus to travel through Samaria?
Read John 4:1–4 for the answer.**

The Pharisees, or Jewish spiritual leaders, learned that Jesus' followers were baptizing more people than the followers of John the Baptist. Some of John's followers got upset. John's followers cared what people thought about their master (compare with John 3:26–30). John said that Jesus must become more important while he, John, must become less important (John 3:30). Jesus wanted to avoid any problems between His followers and John's at this time. So, Jesus left Judea to go to Galilee. To save time, Jesus traveled through Samaria to get to Galilee. There were other ways to get to Galilee without going through Samaria. But these routes took longer. Most Jews would take the long way. They would go east through Perea and travel around Samaria. But Jesus wanted to preach in Samaria.

Read the story in John 4:5–9. How did Jesus use what happened in this story to start a conversation with the woman at the well?

Jacob's well was near Shechem. Sychar, where the woman was from, was about a mile away (1.5 kilometers). Jesus sat next to the well while His followers went into the city to buy food. Jesus didn't have any way to get the cool water from the well. When the woman came to get water, Jesus asked her for a drink.

When we read John 3, we were surprised when Nicodemus, a Jewish leader and teacher, lowers himself to come to Jesus. Nicodemus comes at night so that no one will see him. In John 4, the woman comes during the hottest part of the day when the sun shines brightest. Why did the woman do that? Maybe the woman wanted to avoid contact with other women. Most women came to the well at the beginning or the end of the day, when it was cooler. Why else would this woman go so far away from home to get water in the middle of the day when it was hot? Whatever the reason for her being there, her meeting with Jesus changed her life for the better.



When the woman came to get water, Jesus asked her for a drink.

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL (John 4:7–15)

Read about the meeting in John 4:7–15. How does Jesus use this meeting to share Bible truth with this woman?

“The hatred between Jews and Samaritans stopped the woman from offering help to Jesus. But the Savior was searching for a way to touch this woman’s heart. God’s love filled His heart and gave Him wisdom. Jesus asked her for a favor. If Jesus offered to help the woman, she may have rejected His offer. But when we show people we trust them, our trust in them helps them to trust in us.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 184, adapted.

Jesus knew what was in Nicodemus’s heart. In the same way, He knows what is in the heart of the woman. The woman is surprised that Jesus asks her for a favor. Jesus is a Jew, and she is a Samaritan. Remember, Jews and Samaritans did not help each other. Jesus answered, “ ‘You don’t know what God can give you. And you don’t know who I am, the one who asked you for a drink. If you knew, you would have asked me, and I would have given you living water’ ” (John 4:10, ERV).

The woman’s answer is much the same as Nicodemus’s answer. “Nicodemus asked, ‘How is all this [being born again] possible?’ ” (John 3:9, ERV). The woman said to Him, “ ‘Sir, the well is deep. You have nothing to get water with. Where will You get the living water?’ ” (John 4:11, NLV). In these two stories, Jesus gives Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman the important spiritual truths they needed to hear and understand. Jesus tells the Jewish teacher and the Samaritan woman the same thing: they need a new heart.

What does the Old Testament say about living water? Read Jeremiah 2:13 and Zechariah 14:8 for the answer.

We need water to live. We can’t live without water. So, water is a powerful symbol of everlasting life, too. That’s why Jesus says, “ ‘Whoever drinks the water that I will give him will never be thirsty. The water that I will give him will become in him a well of life that lasts [continues] forever’ ” (John 4:14, NLV).

Read John 7:37, 38. What is Jesus telling us in these verses? How do we experience what He promises?



Water is a powerful symbol of everlasting life.

“ ‘SIR, GIVE ME THIS WATER’ ” (John 4:15, 16, ERV)

“ ‘Then I will put clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will make you clean from all your unclean ways and from all your false gods. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I will take away your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My Laws and be careful to do what I tell you’ ” (Ezekiel 36:25–27, NLV).

Read Ezekiel 36:25–27. How do these verses show the important spiritual truths that Jesus wanted to teach Nicodemus and the woman at the well?

In both stories, Jesus wanted to help these people understand spiritual truths. Jesus uses examples from nature to touch their hearts.

Nicodemus and the woman at the well don't understand what Jesus means at first. How, asked Nicodemus, can a man be born again? How can he go back inside his mother's belly? Nicodemus thought Jesus was talking about the body. But Jesus was talking about being born again in a spiritual way. The woman also thought Jesus was talking about real water when Jesus was talking about spiritual water.

Look at the woman's answer to Jesus' offer of living water. “The woman said to Jesus, ‘Sir, give me this water. Then I will never be thirsty again and won't have to come back here to get more water’ ” (John 4:15, ERV). The woman felt that the water Jesus offered would end her need to walk to the well. Then other people wouldn't see her. Look at how fast the conversation moves from Jesus' asking for a drink to the woman's asking Him for one?

Read John 4:16. How did Jesus answer the woman?

Jesus changes the topic of conversation. He asks the woman to go get her husband. Why does Jesus change the topic so fast? The woman's behavior showed Jesus that she avoided the spiritual truth He wanted to give her. Jesus read her heart. The woman must confess her sin before she can be healed. “Before the woman could accept the gift Jesus wanted to give her, she must understand her sin and her need for a Savior.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 187, adapted.



“I will take away your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

JESUS TELLS THE WOMAN WHO HE IS (John 4:16–24)

Read John 4:16–24. What does Jesus do to show this woman that He knew her biggest secrets? How does the woman answer?

The truth about herself is too difficult for the woman to accept right away. The woman understands that Jesus is a special messenger from God. At the same time, she avoids the truth again. She asks Jesus a question about the disagreement between Jews and Samaritans. These two groups argued about the correct place to worship.

In answer, Jesus says that the Samaritans didn't know what they worshiped. Their worship was a mix of the Jewish religion and the worship of false gods. The Jews worshiped the God who shows Himself to His people.

Worship of the true God isn't connected with a place. So, the topic about a place of worship isn't important to the conversation. God is spirit. People who worship Him must do so in spirit and in truth. The woman accepts this truth from Jesus and is ready for more.



Jesus is interested in any lonely person who feels separated and alone.

How does Jesus show the woman who He really is? Read John 4:25, 26 for the answer.

There are four books in the New Testament about Jesus' life on earth. Jesus tells the woman that He is the Savior. This story is special because it is the only time in the four books before Jesus is arrested that He tells someone He is the Savior. Jesus does not make the announcement to a large crowd. He makes the announcement to an unnamed Samaritan woman. Jesus and the woman are alone at Jacob's well. Jesus is interested in any lonely person who feels separated and alone.

The Samaritan woman is a foreigner. She is living in sin. Jesus tells this woman who He is. Jesus tells her that He knows her biggest secrets. He also gives her a reason to believe in Him, too.

What are some of the behaviors that cause us to hide from each other? How does the Good News about Jesus help us to stop hiding from others? What does this story tell us?

THE STORY ABOUT THE SAMARITANS (John 4:27–29)

What surprising thing does the woman do? Read John 4:27–29 for the answer.

Jesus' followers break up His conversation with the Samaritan woman. The followers are surprised to see that Jesus is talking with a woman. But they don't ask Him about her. They try to get Him to eat.

At the same time, the woman forgets all about her water pot and leaves it at the well. She runs back to the city to tell other people her experience with Jesus.

What happens after Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman? What does this story teach us about how we can share the Good News about Jesus with other people? Read John 4:30–42 for the answers.

In the middle of the story about the Samaritan woman, Jesus tells His followers a picture story about picking crops. Why does John write the story in this way? John wants us to see how Jesus understood what was happening. Jesus wanted to share the Good News with the woman more than He wanted to eat. His job on earth was to save people from sin. Jesus used this experience at the well to teach His followers an important lesson about sharing the Good News with all people, including people who aren't the same as we are.

There are many wonderful parts in the Book of John. For sure, John 4:39–42 is one of them. Many of the Samaritans believed Jesus was the Savior because of the story the woman told them about Jesus. "She said, 'He told me everything I ever did' " (John 4:39, NLV).

The Samaritans asked Jesus to stay with them. Then many more people believed because of what Jesus said to them. "The people said to the woman, 'First we believed in Jesus because of what you told us. But now we believe because we heard him ourselves. We know now that he really is the one who will save the world [sinners]' " (John 4:42, ERV).

What does this story tell us about how powerful one person's story about Jesus can be? How powerful is your story for Jesus? What has He done in your life?

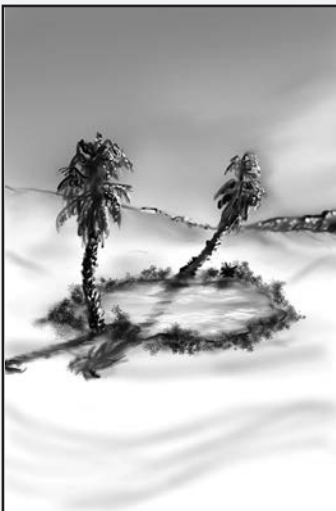


The woman runs back to the city to tell other people her experience with Jesus.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “At Jacob’s Well,” pages 183–195, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“As soon as the Samaritan woman found the Savior, she brought other people to Him. She was a better worker for Jesus than His own followers. The followers saw nothing in Samaria to show that it was a place filled with people that needed their help. They thought only about their important work in the future. The followers didn’t see that right around them were people who needed saving. The followers didn’t like the Samaritan woman. But Jesus used this woman to touch the hearts of a whole city. Because of this woman, the city came to hear the Savior. This woman carried the truth to her people right away.

“This woman is a symbol for how faith in Jesus works. Every true follower of Jesus is born into God’s kingdom as a worker for God. When we drink the living water, we become the same as a spring of water. Jesus gives to us so that we will give His blessings to other people. Jesus’ mercy in our hearts is the same as water coming up out of the desert. This water flows out of the earth to give life to everyone. Then those people who are ready to die and need the water of life will be ready to drink it.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 195, adapted.



Jesus’ mercy in our hearts
is the same as water
coming up out
of the desert.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What are some of the actions, beliefs, dislikes, hatreds, and behaviors, good or bad, that are not accepted in your community? Be very honest. How can these forbidden things get in the way of your sharing Jesus with other people?
- ② The Samaritans welcomed Jesus so warmly and invited Him to stay in their city, while some of His own people didn’t welcome Him. Why do you think that is so?
- ③ Imagine in your mind that you are the Samaritan woman. A total stranger comes and tells you that He knows all your secrets. How can Jesus know things that nobody told Him? No wonder the woman felt amazed! What does her story teach us about how the Lord knows everything about us, including the secrets we don’t want anyone to know? What does this story say to us about the way God loves sinners?

A BOOK IN THE MAIL

Rob Schetky was a retired U.S. Navy officer. He tried to read the Bible his whole life. But he had a hard time understanding what he read.

At one time, Rob didn't believe in a personal God. Now Rob wanted to know God's plan for his life. He got upset when people didn't go to church and did everyday things on Sunday. Rob asked, "Why are you playing golf on Sunday?" But inside Rob wondered, "Where in the Bible did God change the Sabbath?"

Rob stopped going to church on Sunday. He looked for a new church in Fairbanks, Alaska, USA. Then a book arrived in his mailbox at the post office. The book was named *The Great Controversy*. Rob thought, "That's an interesting name. I wonder what it means?"

Rob left the post office. He passed a stack of *The Great Controversy* books on a counter that other people didn't want. Someone mailed the book out to everyone who had a mailbox at the post office.

At home, Rob started to read the book. He got excited as he read how man, not God, changed the day of worship from the Sabbath to Sunday. Rob thought, "Wow! Someone is telling the real history of the church."

Rob contacted a friend. Rob said, "I've found a book about the history of Christianity. The book is named *The Great Controversy*." Later, the friend called Rob back. "You've got to stop reading that book. It's from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They're a crazy religious group! Stay away from them!"

Rob was surprised. He didn't notice the name of the book's author, Ellen White, or know that she was one of the people who started the Adventist Church. He said, "No, they're not crazy. They believe in the Bible."

After the conversation, Rob wondered if Adventists worshiped in Fairbanks. He found a church only 10 minutes away from his home. On Sabbath, Rob grabbed his Bible and *The Great Controversy* and went to church. The first person to greet Rob at church was a Sabbath School teacher named Helen. She was surprised when she learned that Rob came to church because of *The Great Controversy*. In the past, Helen complained that the small size of the words in the book made it hard to read. So, why should the church bother to give a copy of the book to anyone? But after a month, Rob already read more than half the book. Then he came to church to learn more Bible truth.

Today, seven years later, Rob is 70 and a church leader. He continues to read the Bible and Ellen G. White's writings daily. He says, "When I found the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I found a home, and I found Bible truth."

INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Rob got excited as he read how man, not God, changed the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday.



Rob Schetky

More Stories About Jesus



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 2

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 3:25–36; John 1:32–36; John 6:51–71; John 5:36–38; John 7:37–53.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘And I am going to be lifted up from the earth. When I am, I will bring all people to myself’ ” (John 12:32, NIV).

JESUS said some things about Himself that surprised people. Jesus talked about who He was, about who sent Him, and about where He came from. Jesus also did miracles and signs to show who He was. John writes, “Many of the people believed in Jesus. They said, ‘When the Christ comes, will he do more miracles than this man has done?’ ” (John 7:31, ICB).

Jesus’ actions were proof that He meant what He said.

As Jesus’ story continues, the people could not agree if He was the Savior. When Jesus heals the man at the pool of Bethesda, some of the Jewish leaders get angry. After Jesus feeds more than 5,000 people, the Jews argue about Him in Capernaum. When they finish arguing, large crowds of Jewish people reject Jesus. Later, Jesus wakes up Lazarus from the dead. Some people believe in Jesus because of this miracle. But other people feel hatred for Jesus. This hatred will cause them to put Jesus on trial and punish Him with death on the cross.

This week, we will look at the stories of some of the people who were witnesses for Jesus. In each story, we can see parts of who Jesus really is. Together, these stories help us to see Jesus, the Savior, more clearly.



When Jesus heals the man at the pool of Bethesda, some of the Jewish leaders get angry.

**JOHN THE BAPTIST COMPARES HIMSELF TO JESUS
(John 3:25–36)**

Lesson 4 explained how John the Baptist’s announcement about Jesus brought the first followers to Jesus. These followers included Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael. John the Baptist appears a few more times in the Book of John.

**How does John the Baptist compare himself to Jesus?
Read John 3:25–36 for the answer.**

John the Baptist’s followers argued with someone about laws for keeping clean. They may have been arguing about baptism (compare with Mark 1:4, 5). John’s followers asked John to help answer their question about Jesus. “Then they came to John and said, ‘Teacher, remember the man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River? He is the one you were telling everyone about. He is also baptizing people, and many are going to him’ ” (John 3:26, ERV). We can easily see from this verse that John’s followers are jealous of Jesus.

John the Baptist doesn’t feel jealous. He knows the work that God gave him to do. John tells his followers to remember that he never said he was the Savior. God sent John to help people accept the Savior and to get their hearts ready for Him. John is only His witness (John 1:6–8).

Then John uses the word picture of a wedding to explain his work. John says that he is the friend of the bridegroom, and Jesus is the bridegroom. God’s people are the bride (compare with Hosea 2:16–23; Isaiah 62:1–5). Then John says something that shows he has no pride in his heart. With these words, we understand that John is an amazing person. He says, “ ‘He [Jesus] must become more important. I must become less important’ ” (John 3:30, NLV).

John 3:31–36 continues to compare John with Jesus. These verses show that the Savior is more important than John. John’s message helps people to accept Jesus and His everlasting life. God is “very angry” with the people who refuse to accept Jesus (John 3:36, WE). That’s what the verse says. God loves the earth and sends His Son to save the people on this earth (John 3:16, 17). But if people refuse to accept God’s gift of mercy, God will let them pay the penalty for their own sins. The penalty is everlasting death. Jesus pays the penalty only for the people who accept Him.



John says that he is the friend of the bridegroom, and Jesus is the bridegroom.

A NEW UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE SAVIOR (John 1:32–36)

As a people, the Jews waited for the Savior for a long time. What does John the Baptist say about Jesus that surprised the people and that they didn't expect to hear? Read John 1:32–36 for the answer.



The name the “Lamb of God” connected Jesus to His future death as an offering for sin.

The Jews expected the coming Savior to make them free from Roman control. The Kingdom of Rome controlled the Jews for a long time. The Jews believed that the coming Savior would end Rome's control. Then Israel can become an important and powerful country again. But then John the Baptist named Jesus “the Lamb of God” (John 1:36, ERV). This name connected Jesus to His future death as an offering for sin. Most people misunderstood John's words about Jesus. They didn't really know what John the Baptist was talking about at all.

So, John, Jesus' follower, wrote this book about Jesus' life. John wanted to help people have a correct understanding of Jesus. Then they would know that Jesus was the Savior. Jesus did everything the Bible said the Savior would do. Jesus wasn't coming as a king or an army leader. Jesus came to offer Himself for the sins of everyone. When Jesus finishes His work, then God's kingdom will come (read Daniel 7:18).

“When Jesus was baptized, John the Baptist announced that Jesus was the Lamb of God. John's words helped people understand the Savior's work in a new way. The Holy Spirit helped John the Baptist remember Isaiah's words, ‘He was led away like a lamb to be killed.’ Isaiah 53:7 [NIRV].” —Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 136, adapted.

John the Baptist said that when he first met Jesus, “‘I did not know who he was’ ” (John 1:31, ERV). So, then, how did John know that Jesus was the Savior? The answer is that God told John: “‘God said to me, “The Holy Spirit will come down and stay on Him. He is the One Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” I saw this happen. I am now saying that Jesus is the Son of God’ ” (John 1:33, 34, NLV). So, in other words, God showed John that Jesus was the Savior.

“But Christ is God's power and wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:24, ERV). God helps us to know that Jesus is the Savior. We see this idea often in the Book of John. Only God saves us when we give our hearts to Jesus in faith and obey Him.

ACCEPTING OR REJECTING JESUS (John 6:51–71)

Lesson 2 talked about the time Jesus fed more than 5,000 people (John 6). But the lesson didn't talk about the final part of the story, which we will look at here.

What did Jesus say that people had trouble accepting? Read John 6:51–71 for the answer.

After Jesus worked a miracle to feed more than 5,000 people, they were ready to make Jesus king (John 6:1–15). Later, at the Jewish church in Capernaum, Jesus explained the spiritual meaning of the miracle to the people. Jesus said, “ ‘I am the bread that gives life’ ” (John 6:35, ERV). Jesus explains that this bread is a word picture for His body. Jesus will give His body as an offering for sin so that the people of this earth can have everlasting life (John 6:51).

Jesus' saying helped the people understand that Jesus wasn't going to be their king. But the people refused to accept what Jesus told them. Many of His followers left Him at this time (John 6:66).

Their leaving must have hurt Jesus. Everyone wants to be liked. When Jesus sees so many people leave Him, He asks His Twelve followers if they want to leave Him, too.

At this time, Peter makes an amazing announcement about who Jesus is and what He has to give. “Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, who else can we go to? You have words that give life that lasts forever. We believe and know You are the Christ [the Savior]. You are the Son of the Living God’ ” (John 6:68, 69, NLV).

Jesus' followers had been with Him for about two years. They traveled with Him. They saw Him do miracles. They heard His sermons. The followers knew from experience that there was no one else the same as Jesus. The followers believed that Jesus was the Savior, even if they didn't understand what He came to do. Only when Jesus died and woke up from the dead did the followers start to understand why Jesus came to earth.

What does this story in John 6:51–71 teach us about how big groups of people are often wrong about things? Why must we remember this important idea when we share with other people those parts of our faith that many people, and even some Christians, do not like?



Jesus explains that this bread is a word picture for His body.

GOD THE FATHER SAYS WHO JESUS IS (John 5:36–38)

The Book of John starts with the topic about the Word (“logos” in the Greek language), who is Jesus. John tells us that the Word is with God the Father (John 1:1). Then the Word comes to live in a human body on earth. At that time, the Holy Spirit says who Jesus is. The Spirit rests on Jesus at His baptism (John 1:32–34). Later, God the Father also tells us who Jesus is during Jesus’ work on earth.

Read John 5:36–38. What does Jesus say in these verses about God the Father?

Jesus connects God the Father to the works and miracles He did on this earth. Jesus says that the Father sent Him. The Father also is a witness about who Jesus is and what He came to do.

What does God the Father say about Jesus? Read Matthew 3:17; Matthew 17:5; Mark 1:11; and Luke 3:22 (also read 2 Peter 1:17, 18).



The Spirit rests on Jesus at His baptism (John 1:32–34).

During Jesus’ baptism, God the Father and the Holy Spirit join Jesus at this important time. Jesus’ work on earth is about to start. The Father says that Jesus is His beloved Son. God is very pleased with Him. Later, God makes another announcement at an important time during Jesus’ work on earth. We can read about this time in John 12.

In chapter 12, John tells us that at this time Jesus is almost done with His work on earth. The Jewish leaders couldn’t stop Jesus in His work (read John 12:19). So, now more than ever, the Jewish leaders want to kill Jesus. The crowds love Jesus. More and more people heard the stories of the witnesses who saw Jesus wake up Lazarus from the dead (John 12:17, 18). So, more people started to follow Jesus. The Greeks who came to Jerusalem for the feast also wanted to meet Jesus.

The Father again speaks to Jesus from heaven. God the Father answers Jesus’ words in John 12:28. Jesus says, “‘Father, honor Your name!’ Then a voice from heaven came, saying, ‘I have already honored My name. I will honor it again!’ ” (NLV).

As we saw already, Jesus will be honored on the cross. So, the Father’s announcement in John 12:28 is talking about Jesus’ offering as the Lamb of God for our sins.

THE CROWD ANNOUNCES WHO JESUS IS (John 7:37–53)

“The last day of the feast came. It was the most important day. On that day Jesus stood up and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. If a person believes in me, rivers of living water will flow out from his heart. This is what the Scripture [the Bible] says’ ” (John 7:37, 38, ICB).

Many times John writes the announcements that Jesus makes about Himself. Jesus says who He was and what He came to do. The verses from John 7:37, 38 are another example of an announcement Jesus makes about Himself. Jesus promises to do wonderful things for people who believe in Him. This promise is amazing.

When Jesus talked to the Jews at the feast, how did many people in the crowd answer Him? Read John 7:37–53 for the answer.

Some people in the crowd said that Jesus was the Special Messenger that Moses said would come (read Deuteronomy 18:15–19). Other people thought that Jesus was the Savior. But this belief caused some Jews to argue about where the Savior would come from. They said that the Savior wouldn’t come from Galilee. They also said that the Savior must be born from David’s line. So, the Savior had to be born in Bethlehem. All these things were true about Jesus (compare with Matthew 1–2). But many people didn’t know these things!

The soldiers who came to arrest Jesus were also surprised at the things He said. The Jewish religious leaders answered the soldiers with another question. “ ‘You don’t see any of the leaders or any of us Pharisees believing in him, do you?’ ” (John 7:48, ERV). Then the Book of John tells us that Nicodemus tries to protect Jesus from the evil plans of the Jewish leaders. Nicodemus says, “ ‘Our law does not judge a man without hearing him. We cannot judge him until we know what he has done’ ” (John 7:51, ICB). Did Nicodemus accept Jesus as the Savior? The verse we just read isn’t proof that Nicodemus did. But between this story and what Nicodemus did after Jesus died (read John 19:39, 40), the Bible gives us proof that Nicodemus did come to believe in Him. So, the answer to the Pharisees’ question was, “Yes,” one of the spiritual leaders did believe Jesus!



“ ‘If a person believes in me, rivers of living water will flow out from his heart.’ ”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Crisis in Galilee,” pages 383–394; “In the Outer Court,” pages 621–626, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“ ‘Lord, who else can we go to?’ [John 6:68, NLV]. The Jewish teachers were the same as slaves to wrong ideas about God. The Pharisees and Sadducees were two groups of spiritual leaders. They were always fighting with each other. If people did not want to follow Jesus, the only other teachers were the Pharisees or Sadducees. These men wanted the honor that belonged only to God. These men loved empty worship. When Jesus’ followers accepted Him, they found more peace and joy than they knew before in their old lives. How could they go back to the teachers who scolded and attacked the Friend of sinners? Jesus’ followers waited for the Savior to come for a long time. They couldn’t turn away from Him to the teachers who wanted to kill Him. These same spiritual leaders attacked the followers for accepting Jesus.

“ ‘Lord, who else can we go to?’ The followers couldn’t reject Jesus’ precious teachings or His lessons about love and mercy for lies and a life of sin. Many people rejected Jesus. These same people saw the wonderful works and miracles that Jesus did. But Peter announced the faith of Jesus’ followers: ‘You are the Savior.’ The followers were filled with fear and pain at the thought of losing Jesus. Jesus was the same as a ship’s anchor. If the followers rejected Jesus, they felt they would be the same as a ship with no anchor that was drifting on a dark and stormy sea.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 393, adapted.



“If the followers rejected Jesus, they felt they would be the same as a ship with no anchor that was drifting on a dark and stormy sea.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Some people accepted Jesus as the Savior, while other people rejected Him. Both groups saw the same proof for Jesus as Savior. Why did some people accept the proof while other people rejected it?
- ② Jesus died for our sins. How do we know this important Bible truth? Did science teach us? Why must the Bible have the final say in everything we believe?

“WE DIDN’T SEND ANYONE”

For four years, Donaldo Velasquez visited a Colombian prison every Friday morning to preach about Jesus. But one Friday, Donaldo couldn’t go. Donaldo worked as a carpenter. One of his customers needed his help. Donaldo also badly needed the money.

Only four Seventh-day Adventists had permission to visit the prison in Acacias. They were Donaldo, Ranses, Pedro, and the pastor. Donaldo called them on the phone for help. Ranses said, “No, I’m too busy.” Pedro also said he couldn’t go. The pastor apologized, saying he was out of town.

Donaldo cried and prayed. When his wife, Jesusita, asked Donaldo what was wrong, he said that he didn’t want to miss the meeting with the prisoners. But he needed to work. Jesusita said, “Go, do your job. God will provide for the prisoners.”

The next time Donaldo visited the prison, 38 inmates came to hear him preach. Pedro went to the prison with Donaldo.

One prisoner asked, “Where is the man who came to preach to us the last time?”

Donaldo answered, “We didn’t send anyone.”

Another prisoner said, “Yes, you did. A man preached to us.”

Donaldo said, “No, we didn’t send anyone.” He thought that maybe the man who preached was from a different church.

The prisoners said, “No, no. We know everyone who is allowed to visit us. This man never visited us before. He wasn’t from a different church.”

Donaldo asked about the man’s sermon. The prisoners said the man talked about the seventh-day Sabbath.

The prisoners told Donaldo that the man was tall and wore nice clothes, including a white shirt. The prisoners said the man knew the Bible so well that they thought he must be a teacher.

Pedro touched Donaldo’s arm. Pedro said, “An angel must have come and preached to them.”

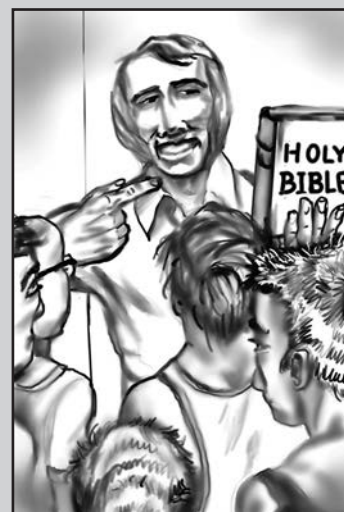
Donaldo wasn’t convinced. He went to the prison guard. The guard was a friend of Donaldo’s. The guard checked the computer records of visitors to the prison. Then the guard shook his head. He said, “No one visited the prison that day.”

Donaldo was amazed. He said, “Now I know the Lord sent an angel to teach the Bible that day.”

Donaldo went back to the prisoners. He told them they saw an angel for sure. Six years later, almost all 38 prisoners gave their hearts to Jesus and were baptized. Donaldo said he will always remember that day. He says, “Yes, the story is amazing. But I believe God sent His angel that day.” Thank you for your 13th Sabbath Offering that helped God’s work in Colombia last quarter.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Donaldo believes that God sent His angel that day.



Donaldo Velasquez

God Blesses People Who Believe



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 9

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 8:56; Genesis 18:16–18; John 12:1–3; John 19:4-22; John 20:19–31; Matthew 24:2.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘God will bless people who believe though [even if; while] they have not seen me’ ” (John 20:29, WE).



Their stories tell us something important about Jesus.

IN THE BOOK OF JOHN, we read about many people who met Jesus. These people have different beliefs and experiences. Their stories tell us something important about Jesus.

Let's look at what these people say about the Lord. John the Baptist: “ ‘Look, the Lamb of God!’ ” (John 1:36, ERV). Philip: “ ‘We have found the man that Moses wrote about in the law’ ” (John 1:45, ERV). Nathanael: “ ‘Teacher, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel’ ” (John 1:49, ERV). The Samaritan woman: “ ‘Can this be the Christ [the Savior]?’ ” (John 4:29, NLV). The Samaritans: “ ‘Now we believe because we heard him ourselves. We know now that he really is the one who will save the world [sinners]’ ” (John 4:42, ERV). Peter: “ ‘Lord, where would we go? You have the words that give eternal [everlasting] life’ ” (John 6:68, ERV). Martha: “ ‘Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Christ [the Savior], the Son of God. You are the One who was coming to the world [to sinners]’ ” (John 11:27, ICB). A blind man: “ ‘I was blind, and now I can see’ ” (John 9:25, ERV). Pontius Pilate to the Jews: “ ‘See, your King!’ ” and “ ‘I do not find Him guilty’ ” (John 19:14, 6, NLV). Thomas: “ ‘My Lord and my God!’ ” (John 20:28, ERV). Who were these people? Why did they say these things about Jesus?

ABRAHAM SHOWS HIS FAITH IN JESUS (John 8:56)

Jesus wasn't afraid to tell people about Himself. He also shared what other people said about Him long ago in the past. Abraham was one of the people who talked about the Savior.

Why did John include Abraham's story about the Savior in his book? Read Genesis 12:3; Genesis 18:16–18; Genesis 26:4; Matthew 1:1; and Acts 3:25 for the answer.

“ ‘The Scriptures [the Old Testament] told what would happen in the future. These writings said that God would make the non-Jewish people right [accepted; clean] through [because of] their faith. God told this Good News to Abraham before it happened.’ Galatians 3:8 [ERV]. Abraham showed faith in the coming Savior. Jesus told the Jews, ‘Your father Abraham was very happy that he would see the day when I came. He saw that day and was happy.’ John 8:56 [ERV]. God gave Abraham a male sheep to offer as a substitute for Isaac. This sheep was a symbol of Jesus, the Son of God. Humans sinned and broke God's law. Their punishment was death. The Father looked at His Son and said to sinners, ‘Live. I have found a substitute who will die for your sins.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 154, adapted.

Abraham was the father of the Jewish people. God gave Abraham the promise that everyone on earth would be blessed in the future because of him. This future blessing was the Savior. The Savior was born from Abraham's future children.

Abraham also was the father of everyone who accepts God in faith (Hebrews 11:8, 17–19). Abraham was willing to give his son Isaac as an offering to God (Genesis 22). This action showed Abraham's faith. Abraham's offering also helps us understand God's plan to save sinners.

Jesus said to the Jews, “ ‘Your father Abraham was very happy that he would see the day when I came’ ” (John 8:56, ERV). The leaders answered, “ ‘What? How can you say you have seen Abraham? You are not even [so much as] 50 years old!’ ” (John 8:57, ERV).

Jesus' answer is amazing. He says, “ ‘For sure, I tell you, before Abraham was born, I was and am and always will be!’ ” (John 8:58, NLV). Jesus uses words that help us remember what God said to Moses at the burning bush. When Jesus says these words, the leaders understand that Jesus is saying He is God. So, the leaders pick up stones to throw at Jesus (John 8:59).



“God gave Abraham a male sheep to offer as a substitute for Isaac.”

MARY SHOWS HER FAITH IN JESUS (John 12:1–3)

Six days before Passover, Jesus visits Mary, Martha, and their brother Lazarus. Passover was the time when God saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. A little while before, Jesus woke Lazarus up from the dead. Jesus also healed Simon, their neighbor, from a terrible skin disease. Simon invited people to honor Jesus at a feast. Simon was thankful that Jesus healed him. Martha served at the feast. Lazarus sat at the table with the guests (John 12:1–8).

What does Mary do at the feast? What does her behavior show us about her? Also, how do her actions show us who Jesus really is? Read John 12:1–3 for the answers.



Jesus knows what is in people's hearts.

The perfume was very expensive. It was worth about a year's pay for the everyday worker at that time. Mary may have brought this perfume to show Jesus that she was thankful to Him for forgiving her sins. Jesus also woke her brother up from the dead. Mary planned to use the perfume someday to pour on Jesus' body after He died and was laid in the grave. But then Mary heard that Jesus was going to become King. She wanted to be the first one to pour oil on Him and bring Him honor.

Mary didn't want anyone to notice what she was doing. But John tells us, "And the sweet smell from the perfume filled the whole house" (John 12:3, ERV). Judas scolded Mary. Judas said that the perfume should have been sold and the money given to the poor. But Jesus said, " 'Leave her alone. She has kept this oil for the time when they will bury me. You will have poor people with you always. But you will not always have me with you' " (John 12:7, 8, WE).

Jesus knows what is in people's hearts. We see this important idea in the Book of John again and again (John 2:24, 25; John 6:70, 71; John 13:11; John 16:19). Jesus knows what is in Judas's heart at Simon's feast. John makes sure to tell us that Judas was selfish and a thief (John 12:6).

Jesus knew what was in Mary's heart and in Judas's heart. Jesus knows what's in your heart, too. What should this important truth teach us about our need for Jesus to change our hearts and fill us with His holy life?

PILATE ANNOUNCES WHO JESUS IS (John 19:4–22)

John tells us how the Jewish leaders try, again and again, to arrest Jesus, put Him on trial, and kill Him. The leaders failed many times. Jesus says, His time to die had not come (John 2:4; John 7:6, 8, 30; John 12:7, 23, 27; John 13:1; John 17:1).

In chapter 19, the time comes for Jesus to die. Soldiers arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The soldiers take Jesus to Annas, then Caiaphas, the top Jewish spiritual leader. Then the soldiers take Jesus to Pilate two times.

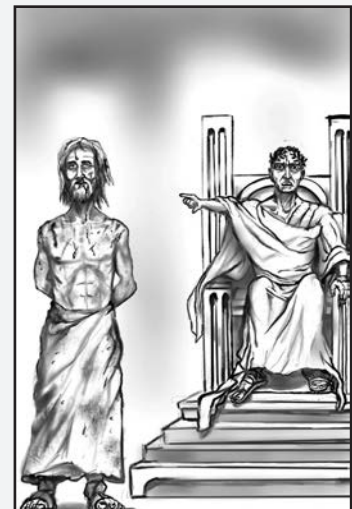
As we saw already, John writes about many people who announce that Jesus is the Savior. Now John writes about one more person who announces who Jesus is. Pilate puts Jesus on trial. Pilate's announcement about Jesus is important because Pilate is a Roman, a governor, and a judge. Most people who tell us about Jesus were Jews or people who were not rich and powerful.

What does Pilate say about Jesus? What important idea in the Book of John does Pilate's announcement show us? Read John 18:38 and John 19:4–22 for the answers.

The soldiers bring Jesus to Pilate early on Friday morning (John 18:28). Pilate's plan was to send the prisoner quickly to die. But Pilate is surprised when He meets Jesus. Jesus is so filled with peace. The governor then carefully asks Jesus questions. Pilate listens to Jesus' answers. Jesus says, " 'You say that I am a king. The reason that I was born was that I should tell what is true [Bible truth]. That is why I came into the world [to the people on earth]. Everyone who likes what is true listens to what I say' " (John 18:37, WE).

In the end, the governor sends Jesus to die on the cross. But before Pilate sends Jesus to the cross, he announces three times that Jesus is innocent (John 18:38; John 19:4, 6). Above the cross, Pilate put a sign with these words: "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS" (read John 19:19, ERV). This sign is part of Pilate's announcement about who Jesus is. But Pilate sent Jesus to die on the cross anyway.

The Truth Himself, Jesus, stood in front of Pilate. But Pilate let the mob bully him into making the wrong decision. Pilate is a sad example of what happens when we pay no attention to what our hearts and minds tell us is correct!



Pilate's announcement about Jesus is important because Pilate is a Roman, a governor, and a judge.

THOMAS SHARES HIS FAITH IN JESUS (John 20:19–31)

Read the story about Thomas in John 20:19–31. What can we learn about faith and doubt from Thomas’s story? What big mistake did Thomas make?



**Jesus says,
“‘God will bless people
who believe
though [even if; while]
they have not seen me’ ”
(John 20:29, WE).**

Jesus showed Himself to His followers after He woke up from the dead. Jesus’ followers were afraid. So, they hid together in a room and shut the door. Thomas wasn’t with the other followers. Later, Thomas heard the news from the other followers that Jesus woke up from the dead. But Thomas was sad. The news didn’t match his idea about God’s kingdom. Maybe Thomas wondered why Jesus showed Himself to His other followers when Thomas wasn’t there.

Thomas said, “ ‘I will not believe it until I see the nail marks in his hands. And I will not believe until I put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side’ ” (John 20:25, ICB).

Do you see how Thomas refuses to believe until Jesus gives him enough proof first? We see many people who behave this way in the Book of John. Nicodemus argued with Jesus, saying, “ ‘But if a man is already old, how can he be born again?’ ” (John 3:4, ICB). The woman at the well asked Jesus, “ ‘Sir, where will you get that living water? The well is very deep, and you have nothing to get water with’ ” (John 4:11, ERV). After Jesus fed the crowd with the bread and fish, they asked Him, “ ‘What miracle will you do? If we can see a miracle, then we will believe you. What will you do?’ ” (John 6:30, ICB).

Many people will not believe until they see proof first. But the Book of John warns us against doubting. After Jesus woke up from the dead, He asks Thomas to come, see, and touch His body. Then Jesus says, “ ‘God will bless people who believe though [even if; while] they have not seen me’ ” (John 20:29, WE).

“God doesn’t ask us to believe without giving us proof for our faith. The proof God gives us is in His life, His love, and the Bible. These things give us many good reasons to believe. But God doesn’t remove all reasons for doubt. So, we must trust the proof that God gives us. We must not ask God to prove Himself to us before we have faith in Him.”
—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 105, adapted.

What if someone asked you, “Why do you believe in Jesus?” What would you say?

OUR STORY ABOUT JESUS (Matthew 24:2)

Imagine in your mind that you were there with Jesus and saw Him do His miracles. We'd believe in Jesus after seeing these signs and wonders, right? We'd like to think so. In some ways, we have more reasons to believe in Jesus than the people did who saw in person the miracles He did.

What are those reasons?

What are some of the happenings and knowledge that we, as Christians, have today that the people who lived at the time of Jesus didn't have? How do these things help us believe in Jesus? Read Matthew 24:2; Matthew 24:14; and Matthew 24:6–8 to answer the questions.

Yes, we have the powerful story about Jesus' life in the Book of John. We also can look back at history and see how the things that Jesus and other Bible writers promised came true. Jesus said that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed (Matthew 24:2). Jesus promised that His followers would share the Good News everywhere on earth (Matthew 24:14). We also can see the terrible falling away and separation that Paul said would happen in the church (2 Thessalonians 2:3). We can see that this earth continues to be an evil place, just as Jesus said (Matthew 24:6–8). All during the life and work of Jesus, His group of followers was small. People attacked and hurt them because of their faith. So, Jesus' followers should have disappeared from history a long time ago. How could these Christians know, as we do, that all the things the Bible promised would happen? Those things did happen. Our faith is itself a part of the promise that Jesus made when He said His followers would share the Good News everywhere on earth.

Today, 2,000 years later, we can tell people about Jesus. We can share what He did for us in the past and what He does for us now. People can tell us why they believe in Jesus, too. Their reasons may help us. But we must learn about Jesus for ourselves. We learn about Jesus when we read the Bible. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand its wisdom and accept Jesus as our Savior.

Each one of us can have a story to tell about Jesus. But first we must have a relationship with God. Our story may not be as amazing as seeing the dead wake up. Maybe we never saw someone, who was born blind, see for the first time. But if we know Jesus, as a Friend, we can tell other people about Him.



Each one of us can have a story to tell about Jesus.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Test of Faith,” pages 145–155, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*; “In Pilate’s Judgment Hall,” pages 723–740, in *The Desire of Ages*.

Thomas “knelt down at the feet of Jesus. ‘Thomas said to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” ’ [John 20:28, ERV]. . . .

“Jesus accepted Thomas’s faith. At the same time, in a soft and loving way, Jesus also scolded Thomas about his doubts. ‘Jesus said to him, “You yourself have seen me. Is that why you now believe? God will bless people who believe though they have not seen me.” ’ [John 20:29, WE]. Thomas’ faith would please Jesus more if Thomas was willing to believe what the other followers told him about Jesus. If we now followed Thomas’ example, no one would believe and be saved. Everyone who accepts Jesus must accept Him because of the stories that other people share about Him.

“Many people doubt. They excuse their doubt because they say that if they had the proof that Thomas had, they would believe. These people don’t understand that they already have that proof. They also have so much more. Many people wait, the same as Thomas, for God to remove all cause for doubt. But if they wait, they will never have faith. After a while, they will not believe. People who look on the dark side of things and complain don’t understand what they are doing. They are ‘planting’ seeds of doubt. They must collect the terrible crop of doubt that grew from these seeds. Then they will have no power to hope and believe in a time when they need faith and trust the most.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 807, 808, adapted.



Everyone who accepts Jesus must accept Him because of the stories that other people share about Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How were Abraham and Thomas different in their faith? What can we learn from their stories?
- ② Ask for volunteers in class to share their faith about Jesus. Our stories about Jesus may be different. But how do our stories about Jesus show us the same Bible truths about Him?
- ③ Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?” How does the Book of John help us answer this question?
- ④ Look at Daniel 2 and 7. How do these chapters give us more reasons to believe in Jesus?

FROM PIN TRADER TO CAMPER

Jacob Pierce's family loved to trade pins. They were excited to find new pins at the big Pathfinder meeting in the United States. At the meeting, Jacob's mom saw a man with an Alaska pin. Mother knew Jacob loved Alaskan wildlife and nature. So, Mother tried to convince the man to trade her the pin.

The man said, "I can't trade. This pin is special and only for pastors in Alaska."

Mother asked, "What do you do in Alaska?"

The man introduced himself as Tobin Dodge. Tobin was in charge of Alaska Camps. Alaska Camps is a summer camping program of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for children ages 8 to 17.

Mother asked, "Could my son work there?"

Tobin said, "Yes, we train people to become camp supervisors when they are 16. We give them jobs when they're 18."

Jacob was excited about spending the summer in Alaska. He joined the camp as a helper. Jacob worked there for three years.

Jacob said that working at camp can be hard at times. One year, Jacob enjoyed spending time with an American Indian boy at Camp Polaris. Jacob and the boy both loved nature. They climbed Jackknife Mountain, which is near the camp. But the boy refused to behave. He also used bad words. Jacob thought the boy was more interested in false ideas than in learning about Bible truth. The boy blamed a rainy day on another boy who killed a spider. The Alaskan boy told Jacob, "If you kill a spider, rain starts falling."

Jacob felt upset with the boy at times. But at the end of camp, the boy hugged Jacob and walked to his dad. When Jacob saw the two of them together, he started to understand the boy's behavior. Jacob could see that the boy's father was not a good parent.

Jacob, who is 20, said, "Most of the kids who come to Camp Polaris don't have Christian parents or know anything about Christianity. So, when they come here, many of them learn about Jesus for the first time."

Many of the kids who come to Camp Polaris have different problems from children at other summer camps in the Alaska Conference. The kids who come to Camp Polaris are almost all Alaskan Indians. These kids must fight against false beliefs, alcohol and drugs, and pain and suffering from their past lives.

Jacob says, "Being here is worth it. God really needs volunteers here." Part of your 13th Sabbath Offering will help open a new center at the Adventist church in Bethel, Alaska. The Bethel church sends local children to Camp Polaris every year.

INSIDE
Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**The boy blamed
the rainy day
on another boy
who killed a spider.**



Jacob Pierce

Old Testament Promises



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 16

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 5:17, 20, 36–38; John 5:39, 40, 46, 47; Isaiah 40:3; Psalm 118:26; John 8:12–30.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘But I have a proof about myself that is greater [more powerful] than anything John said. The things I do are my proof. These [things] are what my Father gave me to do. They show that the Father sent me’ ” (John 5:36, ERV).

AGAIN AND AGAIN, John wrote about all the things that Jesus said and did to show He was the Savior. The Savior came to the people of Israel. He came as one of them, a Jew. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The Bible promised He would be born there, hundreds of years before He came to this earth as a baby.

John tells us some surprising news about Jesus: “He, the Word [Jesus], was in the world [living among people on the earth]. Yes, he even [also] made the world [the skies and the earth]. And yet [but] the world [the people on the earth] did not know him” (John 1:10, WE).

How did the people on this earth not know Jesus? Many people didn't know Jesus. They should have known Jesus. They saw everything Jesus did and said. These people had no excuse because the Old Testament already taught them who Jesus was.

This week, we will look at more ways John showed that Jesus was the Savior. Also, we will look at why some people continued to reject Jesus. God gave these people many powerful reasons to believe in Jesus. But they refused.

What can we learn from their mistakes?



Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The Bible promised He would be born there, hundreds of years before He came to this earth as a baby.

MIRACLES, WORKS, AND WONDERS (John 5:17, 20, 36–38)

John wrote about the miracles that Jesus did.

Of course, we can't always trust miracles, powerful works, and wonders. Sometimes false prophets, or special messengers, also did miracles. But Jesus' miracles in the Book of John showed that Jesus was the Savior. Those miracles also showed that Jesus came from God the Father Himself.

Read John 5:17, 20, 36–38. How do these verses explain the relationship between Jesus and God the Father? How do the miracles in these verses show us the relationship between Jesus and God the Father, too?

Jesus used the signs to show that He and His Father worked closely together. The two were one. Jesus' miracles and works showed that “ ‘the Father is in me and I am in the Father’ ” (John 10:38, ERV; also read John 14:10, 11).

Jesus came to do His Father's work. Then people would understand who God was when they saw Jesus' miracles. These wonderful acts also showed people that Jesus was from the Father.

As we already learned, some people chose not to believe the powerful miracles and the wonderful stories that people told about Jesus.

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus, “ ‘How long will you make us wonder about you? If you are the Messiah [Savior], then tell us clearly [plainly].’ Jesus answered, ‘I told you already, but you did not believe. I do miracles in my Father's name. These miracles show who I am’ ” (John 10:24, 25, ERV).

If Jesus said He was the Savior, the Jewish leaders would attack Him. The leaders were looking for any excuse they could use to kill Jesus. Jesus knew what they were trying to do. So, He did not tell them He was the Savior. He talked about the miracles He already did. If Jesus said, “I am the Savior,” the religious leaders could accuse Him of lying. But the leaders can't say that the miracles, works, and wonders are lies. These signs are powerful proof that show who Jesus was and where He came from.

How can we protect ourselves from having hard hearts? How do we avoid doing what the Jewish leaders did?



Jesus came to do His Father's work.

WHAT DOES THE OLD TESTAMENT SAY ABOUT JESUS? (John 5:39, 40, 46, 47)

As we saw yesterday, John talked about the miracles that Jesus did and the stories that people told about Jesus. These things show that Jesus is the Savior. John also used verses from the Old Testament to show that Jesus was the Promised One from God. These Old Testament verses showed the future work that Jesus would do when He came to earth. The Old Testament is important to the Book of John and to the whole New Testament. The Old Testament shows who Jesus was, where He came from, what He did, and what He will do.

Read the following verses: John 5:39, 40, 46, 47. What do these verses show us about how Jesus thought and felt about the Bible? What power did Jesus believe the Bible has in our lives?

Again and again, Jesus shows that the Old Testament talks about Him. Jesus uses things that happened from the Old Testament to explain who He is and what He will do. Let's look at an example in John 3:14. In this verse, Jesus uses a quote from Numbers 21:5–9 to explain to Nicodemus that He came to die on the cross: “ ‘Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. It is the same with the Son of Man. He must be lifted up too’ ” (John 3:14, ERV). Jesus does three things with the quote from Numbers 21:5–9. First, Jesus talks about the story in a way that shows that He believes it is real. Second, Jesus uses the story to show who He is and what He must do. Third, Jesus gives us the meaning of the story in the Book of Numbers.

Jesus isn't the only one who uses the Old Testament to show us who He is. Other people in the New Testament use the Old Testament, too. Early on in the Book of John, we read the words of Philip, who says, “ ‘We have found the man that Moses wrote about in the law. The prophets [special messengers] wrote about him too’ ” (John 1:45, ERV).

Read the following verses: John 13:18; John 17:12; John 19:24, 28, 36. What do these verses teach us about how Jesus and John thought about the Bible? What does this answer tell us about how important the Bible is for our faith, too?



The Old Testament shows who Jesus was, where He came from, what He did, and what He will do.

**OLD TESTAMENT PROMISES ABOUT JESUS: PART 1
(Isaiah 40:3)**

Jesus had a conversation with the Jewish spiritual leaders. In this conversation, Jesus told the Jewish leaders who He was. Jesus also showed them why the Bible was very important to their faith. We may not think Jesus needed to do that because the Jewish leaders already believed in the Bible. But Jesus also wanted to show them who He was. Yes, the hearts of the leaders were very hard. They fought to avoid believing Jesus in their hearts. But Jesus didn't stop trying to save them.

John uses many quotes and ideas from the Old Testament to show that Jesus is the Savior whom God promised to send.

Read the pairs of Bible verses below. How does the New Testament use the Old Testament to show us who Jesus is?

John 1:23; Isaiah 40:3 _____

John 2:16, 17; Psalm 69:9 _____

John 7:38; Jeremiah 2:13 _____

John 19:36; Numbers 9:12 _____

John, Peter, Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and all the New Testament writers show, again and again, how Jesus' life, death, waking up from the dead, and going back to heaven are promises that the Old Testament made about Jesus. Jesus did all these things, just as the Bible said He would do.

Jesus always told His followers to study the Bible. The Bible showed the work Jesus came to do. When did the followers finally understand that the Bible showed them Jesus? The followers finally understood after Jesus died, woke up from the dead, and appeared to them. "His disciples later remembered what he had said. That was after he had been raised [woke up] from the dead. Then they believed the Scripture [Bible]. They also believed the words that Jesus had spoken" (John 2:22, NIV; also read John 20:9).



Jesus always told His followers to study the Bible. The Bible showed the work Jesus came to do.

OLD TESTAMENT PROMISES ABOUT JESUS: PART 2 (Psalm 118:26)



These same promises help us believe in Jesus, too, and accept His offering for our sins.

Jesus said to the Jewish leaders: “ ‘You carefully study the Scriptures [Old Testament writings] because you think that they give you eternal [everlasting] life. Those [writings] are the same Scriptures that tell about me!’ ” (John 5:39, ICB).

Some Bible thinkers counted the number of Old Testament promises that Jesus kept. While the thinkers may disagree on the exact number of promises there are, they agree that Jesus kept hundreds of Old Testament promises.

These Bible promises are powerful proof about who the Savior was. The Old Testament told when Jesus would arrive, live, and die. Again and again, John uses these Old Testament promises to help readers understand why they should believe in Jesus and accept His mercy and forgiveness. These same promises help us believe in Jesus, too, and accept His offering for our sins.

What do each of the following verses from the Book of John show us about Jesus as the One who kept all the Old Testament promises God made about the Savior?

John 12:13; Psalm 118:26 _____

John 12:14, 15; Zechariah 9:9 _____

John 13:18; Psalm 41:9 _____

John 19:37; Zechariah 12:10; Zechariah 13:6 _____

Is your faith strong? If someone asked you why you believe that Jesus is the Savior, how would you answer? How would you explain your faith, and why would you use that as proof?

FROM BELOW (John 8:12–30)

In our study so far, we've seen that John shows how Jesus is the promised Savior. Jesus is the hope that the Jewish people waited so long for.

But many of the Jewish spiritual leaders were Jesus' biggest enemies.

Why did they hate Jesus so much?

Read John 8:12–30. What is happening in these verses? Which verses in John 8:12–30 help best to explain why many of the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus?

Jesus says that the Jewish leaders do not know Him or God the Father (John 8:19). The Jewish leaders should have known both the Father and Jesus. But the leaders believed lies. The leaders refused to give up their false beliefs and wrong ideas. Jesus stood right in front of them. Jesus said and did many powerful things to show the leaders who the Father was. But the leaders rejected Jesus anyway.

Jesus also says to the leaders, “ ‘You people are from here below’ ” (John 8:23, ICB). In other words, Jesus was saying that the leaders were not holy. They pretended to serve God. Paul's words about false Christians can be said about the Jewish religious leaders: “They will do things to make it look as if they are Christians. But they will not receive the power that is for a Christian’ ” (2 Timothy 3:5, NLV). The Jewish leaders looked religious on the outside. But they had no faith in their hearts.

This problem was not new. Isaiah wrote about the Jews in his time: “ ‘These people say they love me. They show honor to me with words. But their hearts are far from me. The honor they show me is nothing but human rules they have memorized [know in their hearts]’ ” (Isaiah 29:13, ICB). Hundreds of years later, Jesus says much the same thing about the Jewish leaders: “ ‘Their worship of Me is worth nothing. They teach what men say must be done’ ” (Mark 7:7, NLV). The teachings of the Jewish leaders were man-made (John 8:23). Jesus and His teachings came from heaven (John 8:23). Worse, the leaders led other people to accept their false teachings. The good news is that many Jews believed in Jesus because of the conversation between Jesus and the leaders in John 8:12–30. Yes, there was bad leadership. But some of the Jewish people saw Jesus for who He really was.



The Jewish leaders looked religious on the outside.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “ ‘Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled,’ ” pages 662–680, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“God gave Bible truth to the Hebrew people. This Bible truth was the same as golden treasure. Jesus taught the Jews how He planned to save people from sin. Jesus used symbols to help the Jewish people understand these important truths. But when Jesus came to this earth, the Jews didn’t understand that Jesus was the Savior. The people had Bible truth. But man-made rules replaced Bible truth. Human ideas hid the truth about Jesus from them. People didn’t understand the meaning of the Bible truth God gave them. The Jews had wonderful knowledge that was the same as a room filled with treasure. The door to this treasure room was open. But the Jews didn’t know it was open.

“God doesn’t hide His truth from people. People hide Bible truth from their minds when they choose to do the wrong things. Jesus gave the Jewish people more than enough proof that He was the Savior. But His teachings asked them to change their lives. The Jews knew that if they accepted Jesus, they must give up their false ideas and selfish behavior. Then they could accept everlasting Bible truth. So, the Jews refused to accept the proof that God gave to show that Jesus was the Savior. The Jews pretended to believe the Old Testament. But they refused to accept what the Bible said about Jesus’ love and His holy life. The Jews were afraid of being convinced about the truth. Then they would need to change and give up their wrong ideas. Jesus was the same as a treasure among the Jews. He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But the Jews rejected the best gift Heaven gave this earth.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 105, adapted.



“The Jews had wonderful knowledge that was the same as a room filled with treasure.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How do the Old Testament promises about Jesus’ life make our faith strong?
- ② What things stopped the Jewish spiritual leaders from believing in Jesus? How are these things a problem in our day, too?
- ③ Why must we reject anything that makes us doubt the Bible?

GOD'S HELP IS ALWAYS ON TIME

Zurab was a Christian, but he was not very close to God in his heart. Zurab lived in the country of Georgia, which used to be part of the Soviet Union. Zurab had a Bible at home. But he only picked up the Bible to wipe off the dust from it.

Then Zurab started to wonder about being a Christian. He asked himself, "If I'm a Christian, why don't I read the Bible?" He wished to read the Bible very much.

Zurab picked up the Bible and read it from start to finish. Zurab learned for the first time about the seventh-day Sabbath. Surprised, he looked online for more information. Zurab watched about 100 YouTube sermons and liked a preacher who explained the Bible very clearly. The preacher said he was a Seventh-day Adventist. The church had millions of members who kept the seventh-day Sabbath.

But Zurab didn't want to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Many people in the country of Georgia believe that Adventists have strange religious beliefs. Zurab searched online for another church that worshiped on the seventh day and followed Bible truth. But Zurab didn't find another church that did these things.

So, on a Sabbath morning, Zurab went to an Adventist church in Georgia's capital, Tbilisi. Zurab stood outside. He wanted to go in, and at the same time, he felt afraid. Then the door opened, and someone invited him inside.

The church members gave Zurab a warm welcome. Someone asked him, "Is this your first visit to an Adventist church?"

Zurab said, "Yes, this is my first time."

Someone else said, "Wonderful! Come to our meetings, too."

The Bible meetings started that evening. Zurab went to church in the morning and to the Bible meetings in the evening. After that, he came every evening for the next two weeks. Then Zurab got baptized.

Today, a year later, 36-year-old Zurab has a new relationship with God. He reads the Bible daily and shares Bible truth with his family. His family also goes to church with him on Sabbaths. Zurab is amazed at how everything happened. First, he wished to read the Bible. Next, he learned about the Sabbath and found the online preacher. Then he went to the Adventist church on the same day as its first Bible meeting. Zurab didn't go to church because of a special invitation or because he saw an ad for the meetings. But church members made him feel welcome and at home the first time he visited. Part of a 13th Sabbath Offering this year went to a health center in Georgia. Pray that God will bring people to the center, as He brought Zurab to church. Watch a short video about Zurab at bit.ly/Zurab-Georgia.

INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY

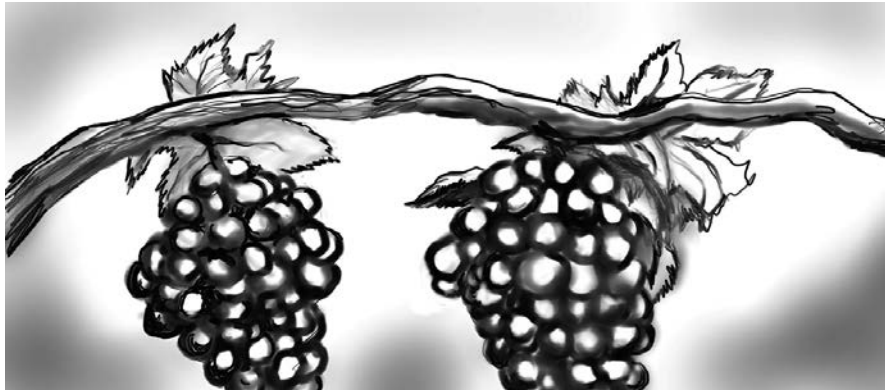


The church members gave Zurab a warm welcome.



Zurab

Jesus Gives Us Life



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 23

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 1:29; John 6:61–68; John 1:12, 13; Numbers 13:23–33; John 3:18, 36.

MEMORY VERSE: “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. The only way to the Father is through [because of] me’ ” (John 14:6, ERV).



The “I AM” appeared to Moses in the burning bush and said, “‘I AM WHO I AM.’ ”

IN THE BOOK OF JOHN, people often asked Jesus who He was. Jesus used the words “I AM” in His answer. These words showed that Jesus was God. The “I AM” appeared to Moses in the burning bush and said, “ ‘I AM WHO I AM’ ” (Exodus 3:14, ICB). Later, this same God “became human flesh [a man] and lived among us. We saw His shining-greatness [glory]. This greatness is given only to a much-loved Son from His Father. He [the Son] was full of loving-favor [mercy and forgiveness] and truth” (John 1:14, NLV).

The “I AM” topic is an important idea in the Book of John. This week’s memory verse shows this important idea: ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. The only way to the Father is through [because of] me’ ” (John 14:6, ERV). The “I AM” is the Light of this earth. He is the Bread of Life. He is the Gate or the Door for the sheep. He is the Good Shepherd and the True Vine.

This week, we continue to study more of the powerful proof John gives us to show that Jesus is God. Sad to say, many people didn’t accept Jesus as the Savior. We want to avoid making this same mistake ourselves. Also, we want to help other people who are in danger of making this same mistake, too.

IN HIM WAS LIFE (John 1:29)

In John 1:1, John says that Jesus is God the Son. In John 1:4, John also tells us that “life began [started] by [with] Him. His Life was the Light for men” (NLV). The “life” that John is talking about is the life that comes only from God. Jesus has life in Himself. So, He can give up His life as a man and get it back again (John 10:17). Because life starts with Jesus, He can give life to anyone He wants (John 5:21; compare with John 14:19).

The word “life” comes from the word “zoē” in the Greek language. John uses the word “zoē” 36 times in the Book of John. In John 1:4, 5, John tells us that all life started with Jesus. In these same verses, John also uses the word “zoē” to mean God’s plan to save people from sin. In the rest of the Book of John, John uses the word “zoē” to talk about God’s promise of everlasting life (read John 3:15, 16, 36; John 4:14, 36; John 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; John 10:27, 28). So, the Person who gave life to every living thing on planet Earth is the same Person who saves us and gives us everlasting life.

Why did Jesus come to this earth? Read John 1:29; John 3:16; John 6:40; John 10:10; and John 12:27 for the answer.

“Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. It is the same with the Son of Man. He must be lifted up too. Then everyone who believes in him can have eternal [everlasting] life” (John 3:14, 15, ERV).

The brass snake was a substitute for the Israelites in the desert who were dying from snake bites. In the same way, we are dying from sin. Jesus is our substitute. He hung on the cross for us. He accepted the penalty that was ours so that we may get the life that is His.

Jesus does not want us to die. Jesus wants us to enjoy life in every possible way (John 10:10). That is why Jesus helps the ones who accept Him “to become children of God. They became God’s children, but not in the way babies are usually [almost always] born. It [becoming God’s children] was not [did not happen] because of any human desire [wish] or plan. They [the ones who accepted Jesus] were born from God himself” (John 1:12, 13, ERV).

Jesus came to show the Father to us (John 1:18). When we see Jesus’ love, we also see who the Father is.



The brass snake was a substitute for the Israelites in the desert who were dying from snake bites.

THE WORDS OF EVERLASTING LIFE (John 6:61–68)

When Jesus asked His followers if they would leave Him, what did Peter say? What do Peter's words mean? Read John 6:61–68 for the answers.



In the same way,
when Jesus wakes us up
from the dead,
we will wake up
in a new body.

Peter's words about "everlasting life" are written in the Book of John. Peter's words help us understand this important topic. John talks about everlasting life in John 6:27, 40, 47, 54, and 68. In John 6:35, Jesus says that He is the Bread of Life. So, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection or waking up from the dead are the reasons He can give us the gift of everlasting life.

John uses the words "everlasting life" or words that have this meaning at least 17 times in the Book of John. These words don't mean "living as a ghost with no body" or "becoming part of a spirit that doesn't die." The words "everlasting life" mean God's life-giving power. This power saves us and gives us new life now and everlasting life when Jesus comes back. Jesus had a body when He lived on this earth. In the same way, when Jesus wakes us up from the dead, we will wake up in a new body. Then Jesus will give back to us the life we lost in Eden.

How do we get everlasting life? Read John 3:15, 16; John 5:24; John 6:40, 47; John 8:31; John 12:46; and John 20:31 for the answer.

We believe with faith because of God's mercy that Jesus came to live and die for us. God gives us this faith as a gift. But we must decide to give ourselves to Jesus. We must feel sorry about sinning and accept Jesus' blood. With His blood, Jesus forgives and makes us clean from sin.

When Jesus asked Peter if he, too, was going to leave, Peter said, " 'Lord, who can we go to? You have the words of eternal [everlasting] life' " (John 6:68, NIV). Peter's words show us what God's saving plan is all about and how we can get everlasting life. We don't get it from studying history or science. All these things are human ideas. We get everlasting life from Jesus. Jesus has everlasting life in Himself. He offers it to everyone who will accept it.

How should the promise of everlasting life in the future change the way we live now?

BORN AGAIN (John 1:12, 13)

How do we become Christians? Read John 1:12, 13 for the answer.

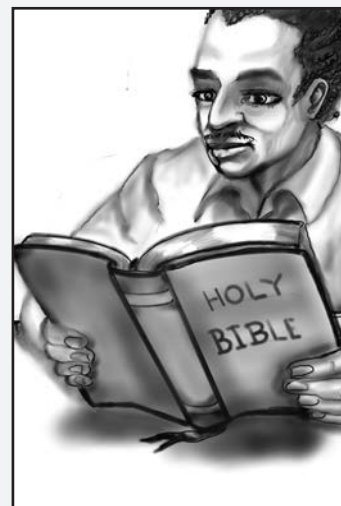
John wrote his book to help us believe in Jesus and accept His gift of everlasting life (John 20:31). In John 1:12, 13, we read about how God saves us. His saving plan has two parts: (1) We accept Jesus or believe in Him. (2) Jesus helps us to become God's children. John 1:13 explains the second part of God's plan with a word picture. We become God's children when we become born again. So, as we see, God has a part in our becoming Christians, and we have a part, too. We must act in faith. When we believe, we accept Jesus. We must be willing to accept Bible truth. God makes our hearts new.

Faith is a gift from God. We get faith when we hear and obey Bible truth (Romans 10:17). "Do we want to have a real, living faith in Jesus? Then we must know Him as He is shown to us in the Bible."—Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 433, adapted. "The Holy Spirit works on the human mind and helps fill us with faith in God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 7, page 940, adapted.

When people believe and accept Jesus as their Savior, they get everlasting life. John also says that we must accept or believe the words that Jesus said (John 5:24, 38, 47). The Holy Spirit helps us believe (John 16:7, 8; compare with Romans 8:16).

Read Romans 8:16. What important rule about being saved in Jesus do we read about in this verse?

Real Bible faith comes from the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts. "Faith is an important blessing. Faith is understanding. Faith is also hearing and obeying Bible truth."—Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places*, page 104, adapted. Human thinking says that we must first find a reason for our faith, and then we can believe. But the Bible says that faith **is** the reason. Faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 1:17–24; 1 Corinthians 2:1–6). We start with faith. From there, we grow in understanding and in God's gift of mercy.



We get faith when we hear and obey Bible truth (Romans 10:17).

REJECTING THE ONE WHO GIVES US LIFE (Numbers 13:23–33)



They said the land of Canaan was filled with giants, cities with big walls around them, weapons, and armies.

The Book of John shares some very sad stories. “The Light shone where it was dark and the darkness did not stop the Light from shining. . . . He, the Word [Jesus], was in the world [on the earth among people]. Yes, he even [also] made the world [the skies and the earth]. And yet [at the same time] the world [the people] did not know him. He came into the world [the earth] that was his own, but his own people did not receive [accept] him” (John 1:5, 10, 11, WE). Many of the Jews rejected Jesus, the “I AM.”

No wonder Paul later warns, “So don’t throw away your bold [brave] faith” (Hebrews 10:35, NIV). As we saw already, people rejected Jesus because they didn’t accept His message.

“The modern way of thinking starts with doubt. People doubt everything to understand what is truth. They accept those things that they can’t doubt. Some people study and try to understand the Bible in the same way. They measure the truth about the Bible with knowledge from science and history. This way of Bible study starts with doubt in Bible truth. Jesus asked, ‘When the Son of Man comes, will he find people on earth who have faith?’ (Luke 18:8).”
—E. Edward Zinke and Roland Hegstad, *The Certainty of the Second Coming* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), page 96, adapted.

Read about the spies in Numbers 13:23–33. The spies brought back two different reports about the Promised Land. What made the reports different?

At Kadesh Barnea, the Israelites sinned because they doubted God’s command. God asked them to go take the land of Canaan. Moses sent 12 spies to Canaan to spy out the land. The spies came back with two different reports. Most of the spies gave a bad report. They said the land of Canaan was filled with giants, cities with big walls around them, weapons, and armies. This group of spies also remembered that they were slaves in the land of Egypt. So, they didn’t have much experience fighting war. Ten spies voted against taking the land of Canaan. Two spies voted yes. These two had faith in the power of God’s command.

How do we avoid making the same mistake the ten spies made?

THE ONES WHO ARE ALREADY JUDGED (John 3:18, 36)

“People who believe in God’s Son are not judged guilty. But people who do not believe are already judged, because they have not believed in God’s only Son. . . . Everyone who does evil hates the light. They [people who do evil] will not come to the light, because the light will show all the bad things they have done. But anyone who follows the true way comes to the light. Then the light will show that whatever they have done was done through [because of] God” (John 3:18–21, ERV; compare with John 1:10).

Why does God judge people? Read John 3:18, 36; John 5:24, 38; John 8:24; and John 12:47 for the answer.

Jesus is the Light of this earth. When we refuse to accept the Light, or Bible truth, we are in danger of doubting the Bible and sinning. When we reject Jesus, we turn from the light and accept the dark.

Eve doubted God’s command. She thought that a God of love wouldn’t destroy the people and animals that He made. Eve trusted the snake. Eve saw that the snake ate the forbidden fruit and now could speak! Eve wondered if the snake was right. She thought, “Maybe if I eat the fruit, I will be the same as God!” The snake tricked Eve. She chose to reject God’s command. Her husband made the same choice.

Read Matthew 4:1–4. What important rules does Jesus use in the desert to fight against Satan’s tricks?

Jesus could have made the same wrong choice that Adam and Eve made. The people who lived before the Flood also made this same wrong choice. The Israelites at Kadesh Barnea made this wrong choice, too. Jesus could have asked why a loving God left His Son in the desert for 40 days and nights with no food or protection. Jesus also could give the devil proof that He was God. Jesus could turn the stones into bread! But Jesus didn’t. Jesus answered Satan with verses from the Bible. Jesus did not need to make excuses for His choices, as most people do when they make a wrong decision. That’s because Jesus always chose to do the right thing.



When we reject Jesus, we turn from the light and accept the dark.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Ellen G. White, “‘God With Us,’” pages 19–26; “Controversy,” pages 601–609, in *The Desire of Ages*.



But Jesus “was wounded [punished] for the wrong things we did.”

“When Jesus became a man, He showed that He was completely different from Satan. But Jesus didn’t stop there. ‘And when he was a man, he was humble [without pride]. He was even [also] willing to die, yes, to die on a cross.’ Philippians 2:8 [WE]. When the high priest, or top spiritual leader, served in the temple in Old Testament times, he removed his beautiful clothes. He put on the same clothes that the other priests wore. In the same way, Jesus became a servant. Jesus gave Himself as an offering for sin. Jesus was both the priest and the offering. But Jesus ‘was wounded [punished] for the wrong things we did. He was crushed for the evil things we did. The punishment, which made us well, was given to him. And we are healed because of his wounds [cuts].’ Isaiah 53:5 [ICB].

“God gave Jesus our punishment, and gave us the love that belonged to Jesus. Jesus wasn’t guilty of doing any sin. But God punished Jesus for our sins, so that God could accept us because of Jesus’ holy life. We did nothing to earn God’s mercy. Jesus suffered the death meant for us. Jesus did that so that we could get the life that belonged to Him. ‘We are healed because of his wounds [cuts].’”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 25, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Jesus gave so much to save us. How can you help other people to understand this wonderful Bible truth and come to Him in faith?
- ② Do you trust the Bible to help you make good decisions? Or do you trust your own thinking and ideas? How are these two ways of making decisions different from each other?
- ③ What reasons do we have for our faith? How do special messages about time in the Bible help our faith? Or how do the amazing things in nature help make our faith strong? How are these things proof that God is real and lives?
- ④ If someone asked you why you believe in Jesus, how would you answer?

“PLEASE STAY”

At 8:00 P.M., an old married couple knocked on the door of the preacher’s house next to the Seventh-day Adventist church in Savoonga, Alaska. The summer sun shone bright in the sky. At that time of year, the sun didn’t set until 2:30 A.M.

The old married couple were in their mid-80s. The husband’s name was Eugene and his wife’s name was Marie. They didn’t wait for me to open the door. I was staying at the preacher’s house to collect stories for *Adventist Mission* magazine.

Marie asked me, “Are you a pastor?”

I shook my head no. Marie’s eyes filled with tears. She said, “Please stay. We need someone to keep the church open and to teach us.”

The church had closed several times since it was built in 1972. Pastors preached and lived there for a while. But for 20 years, the church had very few members left. Then, in 2010, the church opened again when two retired nurses arrived from North Carolina. The nurses were named Bill and Elouise Hawkes. They came to Alaska as Bible workers. Bill died in 2016, but Elouise stayed. Shortly after I came to visit, Elouise left because she was sick.

Marie missed Elouise very much. Marie told me how Elouise invited villagers to her home for meals and made packs of food for many of the Alaskan Indians. Marie said, “We need Elouise.”

I never met Elouise. She was very helpful when I emailed her about my trip. My respect grew for her as I heard about her love for the villagers.

My conversation with Marie ended at 9:00 P.M. Marie looked at me again and said, “Please stay. We need someone to teach us about God.”

Marie’s words helped me to imagine in my mind how Jesus felt during His work on earth. “He saw the crowds of people and felt sorry for them because they were worried and helpless. They were like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36, ICB). I didn’t want to leave. I wanted to help these precious people in Savoonga and the other 200 Indian communities in Alaska. Only 11 of those communities have an Adventist church.

Jesus said to His followers, “ ‘There is much grain [crop] ready to gather [collect]. But the workmen are few. Pray then to the Lord Who is the Owner of the grain fields that He will send workmen to gather His grain’ ” (Matthew 9:37, 38, NLV).

Pray for Savoonga. Pray for Alaska. Thank you for your 13th Sabbath Offering this quarter that will help open a center to share God’s love with Indians in Bethel, Alaska.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY

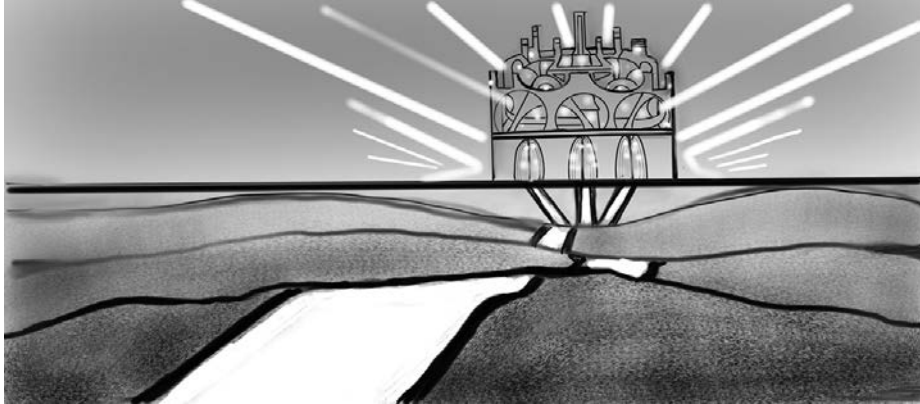


Elouise made packs of food for many of the Alaskan Indians.



Elouise Hawkes

The Way, the Truth, and the Life



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 30

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 13:1–20; John 14:1–3; John 14:5, 6; John 1:14, 17; John 5:38–40.

MEMORY VERSE: “No one has ever seen God. But his only Son is very near to his Father’s heart. He has told us plainly about God” (John 1:18, WE).



**Jesus is the Door
or the Gate (John 10:7, 9).**

THE BOOK OF JOHN is divided into four parts: (1) The Beginning (John 1:1–18), (2) the Book About Miracles (John 1:19–12:50), (3) the Book About Glory (John 13:1–20:31), and (4) the End (John 21:1–25). So far, we have studied the Beginning and the Book About Miracles. These two parts of the Book of John tell us about Jesus’ miracles, conversations, and teachings. These things show us Jesus. Now our lesson will look at the third part of John: the Book About Glory.

As we saw already, Jesus compares Himself to seven different things that help explain who He is. These seven word pictures start with the words “I AM.” (1) Jesus says, “‘I AM the Bread of Life’ ” (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51). (2) Jesus is also the Light of this earth (John 8:12, John 9:5). (3) Jesus is the Door or the Gate (John 10:7, 9). (4) Jesus is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14). (5) Jesus is the One who wakes up the dead (John 11:25). (6) Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). (7) Finally, Jesus is the Real Vine (John 15:1, 5).

This week, we will start our study with Jesus’ Goodbye Sermon. This sermon starts with Jesus washing His followers’ feet. Then we will look at the “I AM” word picture in John 14.

JESUS' POWERFUL EXAMPLE (John 13:1–20)

We can read Jesus' Goodbye Sermon in John 13–17. In this sermon, Jesus teaches His followers what to expect and do in the future. Jesus helps His followers feel better about His leaving them. Jesus promises to send them a Helper (the Holy Spirit; John 14–16). Jesus also tells His followers that they will feel sad in the future because hard times are coming (John 15; 16). Then Jesus encourages His followers to stay strong in the faith (John 15).

Read the story in John 13:1–20. What happens in this story? Why is this story so important? What lessons did Jesus wish to teach His followers?

In Jesus' day, people went barefoot or wore sandals. Sandals were open shoes that didn't cover the toes or all of the feet. So, the feet got dirty. Slaves or servants washed the feet of guests who came to someone's house for a meal. But no servant was with Jesus and His followers on the night that Jesus ate His last meal with His followers before He got arrested.

To everyone's surprise, Jesus got up from the supper and washed the feet of all of His followers. John 13:4, 5 tells us everything that Jesus did. John tells us everything Jesus did because John wants us to understand that Jesus is doing something very special. Jesus is God. Now God is acting the same as a servant! Jesus empties His heart of all pride and kneels to wash the feet of His own followers and servants!

Peter's words and behavior in John 13:8–11 show us how much Jesus' followers misunderstood His actions. How could Jesus, the Savior, their Master, lower Himself to do this dirty work? Peter refused to let Jesus wash his feet. Jesus told Peter that if he refused to cooperate, then Peter had no part with Jesus. So, Peter asked for more because he wanted to stay close to Jesus.

When Jesus lowers Himself to wash His followers' feet, He shows us who He is. In John 13:13, Jesus says He is the Teacher and the Lord. These names show us that Jesus has much power and control. But Jesus teaches that power and control must be used to serve other people, not to make yourself more powerful. Today, the Seventh-day Adventist Church follows Jesus' example with footwashing. Members wash each other's feet to get ready for the Lord's Supper.



Jesus empties His heart of all pride and kneels to wash the feet of His own followers and servants!

I WILL COME AGAIN (John 14:1–3)

Read what Jesus says in John 14:1–3. Why did Jesus say these words? What promises does Jesus make?



Jesus is going to heaven to get rooms ready for His followers in His Father's house.

At the end of John 13, Jesus says that He is going away (John 13:33). This information causes Peter to ask Jesus where He is going (John 13:36). The followers don't understand that Jesus is talking about His dying on the cross, His waking up from the dead, and His going back to heaven. Peter says that he is ready to die for Jesus (John 13:37). But Jesus warns Peter that he will soon pretend that he doesn't know who Jesus is.

Then Jesus tells His followers not to fill their hearts with worry or fear (John 14:1). When people are worried or afraid, they often become confused. So, Jesus knows that His words may cause His followers to feel afraid or confused about the future.

Jesus doesn't want His followers to feel afraid. So Jesus tells them something to help them feel better. Jesus talks about His Father's house. In this house, there are many rooms. (Do you see these rooms are not mansions or big houses? These rooms are the same as rooms in an inn or a hotel.) Jesus is going to heaven to get rooms ready for His followers in His Father's house. Jesus is looking past the Cross to the time in the future when the sin problem will be solved forever (read Daniel 7:27).

Jesus says, "After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you with me, so that you can be where I am" (John 14:3, ERV). This promise talks about the Second Coming.

Why can we trust this promise? To answer the question, we must look at two different ways we can translate this promise. The words "I will come" in John 14:3 show us what Jesus will do in the future. In the Greek language, these words were written as "I am coming," which shows us what Jesus is doing right now. So, John shows us a powerful Bible truth. Jesus talks about His Second Coming as if it is already happening right now! That's why we can trust Jesus when He says He **will come back**.

For sure, we can trust Jesus who made this promise.

What does the Cross teach us about why we can trust in Jesus' promise about the Second Coming?

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE (John 14:5, 6)

What question did Thomas ask Jesus about where He was going? How did Jesus answer? Read John 14:5, 6 for the answers.

Thomas asks what we may think is a smart question. If you don't know where someone is going, how can you know the way to follow that person? But Jesus shows that this question comes from a heart filled with doubt and not faith or wisdom. Jesus answers by saying that He Himself is the way. The way to what? Jesus is the way to the Father. In John 1:1–18, John helps us see the connection between Jesus and God the Father.

John 1:18 says that Jesus shows us the Father. The words “to show” come from the Greek word “exēgeomai,” which means “to explain” or “to make the meaning of an idea plain or clear.” Jesus explains the Father to sinners. So, Jesus is the Way to the Father. Without Jesus, we can't understand the Father.

Philip asked to see the Father. No sinner can see the Father and live (compare with Exodus 33:17–34:9; John 1:18). Jesus scolds Philip's misunderstanding and tells him that if you see Jesus, that is the same thing as seeing the Father. Without Jesus, the road to God grows dark and is no longer sure or clear. Jesus is the light that shows us the way to God.

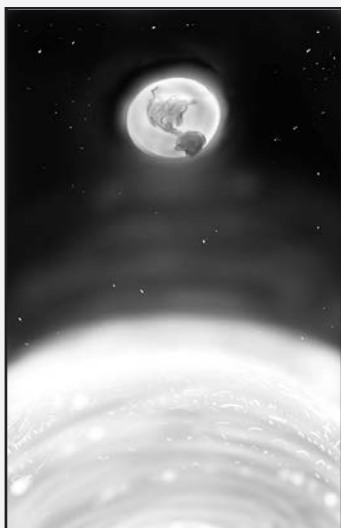
Jesus connects three words together: way, truth, and life. The word “way” is used in John 1:23 and in John 14:6. In John 1:23, John, Jesus' beloved follower, uses “way” to talk about how John the Baptist gets the way ready for Jesus. John also uses the words “truth” and “life.” These words are also important topics in the Book of John. Our study on Wednesday and Thursday will look at the idea of “truth.” The study of “truth” as a topic is very important today. That's because people everywhere doubt what the Bible says about “truth.”



Without Jesus, the road to God grows dark and is no longer sure or clear.

I AM THE TRUTH (John 1:14, 17)

Read John 1:14, 17; John 8:32; John 14:6; and John 15:26. How does John connect the idea of Truth to Jesus?



The truth, Jesus, can be compared to the sun that lights up the whole earth (John 8:12).

Again and again in the Book of John, we see that truth is connected to Jesus, to His Father, and to the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the light. Jesus is not the dark (John 1:1–14; John 3:19–21). The devil is a liar and a sinner (John 8:44–46). In the Book of John, truth is more than information and correct numbers. Truth is also about obeying God and doing what He asks us to do.

“Many people want to know the living God. These people want God in their lives. Man-made ideas and writings can’t fill the human heart. Human sayings and inventions have no worth. People must read the Bible. In the Bible people will hear God talk to them. These people may have heard only human ideas. But when they read the Bible, they will hear the voice of God. The Lord can make the spirit new and give us everlasting life.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 40, adapted.

Think about what it means for Jesus to be the Truth. Jesus is the “logos” or the Word who was with God from the beginning. Jesus made all things (John 1:1–4). Jesus was there with the Father from the beginning. Jesus and the Father are in perfect agreement with each other. Jesus is also the “I AM.” Jesus is not under anyone else’s control. Everything lives or is here because Jesus made everything. “Everything was made through [with] him and for him. The Son was there before anything was made. And all things continue because of him” (Colossians 1:16, 17, ERV).

Jesus is more than someone who says the truth. Jesus **is** the Truth. Truth isn’t just an idea or a human invention. Truth is a Person! That Person is Jesus.

The truth, Jesus, can be compared to the sun that lights up the whole earth (John 8:12). C. S. Lewis says, “I believe in Christianity in the same way that I believe that the sun rises. I saw the sun rise. Then the sun helps me to see everything else.”—“Is Theology Poetry?” (n. p.: Samizdat University Press, 2014), page 15, first presented in 1944. Jesus, the Truth, helps us to understand life and everything around us.

THE BIBLE AND THE TRUTH (John 5:38–40)

The Book of John tells us about Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life. The Old and New Testaments have an important part in teaching us Bible truth. The Bible teaches us about who Jesus is and what He came to do.

Read John 5:38–40. What is Jesus saying about the Bible in these verses?

Jesus and His followers used the Bible again and again to show that He was the Savior. Jesus said, “ ‘If you really believed Moses, you would believe me because Moses wrote about me. But you don’t believe what Moses wrote. So how can you believe what I say?’ ” (John 5:46, 47, ICB).

Read Luke 24:27. Why is it important that Jesus used the Bible to show why His work for God was important?

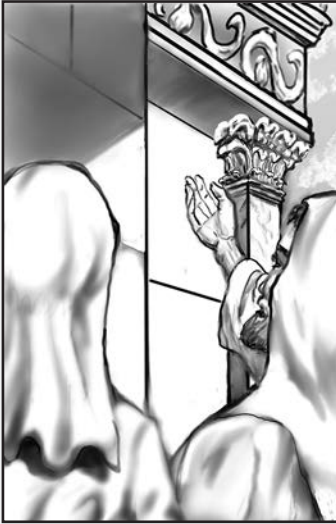
In the Book of Matthew, Jesus says a verse from Exodus and tells the Jewish leaders, “ ‘Surely [for sure] you have read what God said to you about people rising [waking up] from death [the dead]’ ” (Matthew 22:31, ERV). In the same way, Zacharias talked about the things that God “promised through [told to] his holy prophets [special messengers] long ago” (Luke 1:70, ERV). Peter preached a sermon on the Day of Pentecost. Pentecost was the time when God poured the Holy Spirit on the church after Jesus went back to heaven. In his sermon, Peter said, “ ‘Brothers and sisters, in the Scriptures [the Bible] the Holy Spirit said through [to] David that something must happen. He [the Spirit] was talking about Judas, one of our own group. Judas served together with us. The Spirit said that Judas would lead men to arrest Jesus’ ” (Acts 1:16, 17, ERV).

The Bible is not a schoolbook about science. The Bible doesn’t explain how to split the smallest part of a human brain cell or how to operate on the human body. But the Bible gives us something more important than man-made knowledge. The Bible helps us understand who we are and why we are here. The Bible is the same as light. This light helps us to see. Without this light, we cannot understand God, who He is, where we came from, why we are here, what life means, and what will happen in the future.

What are some Bible truths that science can’t teach?



The Bible is the same as light.



“Jesus pointed to the sun and said, ‘I am the Light of [for] the world [all the people on the earth]’ [John 8:12, NLV].”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “‘The Light of Life,’” pages 463–475, in *The Desire of Ages*; E. Edward Zinke, “The Authority of the Bible and the Certainty of the Second Coming,” pages 23–36, in *The Certainty of the Second Coming*.

Jesus said, “‘I am the Light of the world [for all people on the earth]’ ” (John 8:12, NLV). When Jesus said these words, He “was in the part of the temple that was connected with a special Jewish feast named the Feast of Tabernacles. In the middle of this part of the temple, two big lampstands stood. After the evening offering, all the lamps were lit. The light from the lamps shined on the city of Jerusalem. The lamps helped the Jews remember the time when God led His people in a tall cloud of light across the desert. The lamp light helped the people to think about the coming of the promised Savior. At evening when the lamps were lit, the people in temple were filled with joy. . . .

“When the lamps from the temple filled Jerusalem with light, the Jews talked about their hope in the coming Savior. The people hoped the Savior would come soon to fill Israel with His light. Jesus understood that the lamps also taught another important Bible truth: Jesus is the same as the lamps in the temple. Jesus gives us all spiritual light or truth. This Bible truth fills with light the hearts and minds of people on this dark earth. The lamps in the temple were a good word picture. But the sun was a better one. Jesus’ own hand put the sun in the skies.

“The time was morning. The sun was above the Mount of Olives. The sun’s rays fell on the marble palaces and lit up the golden temple walls. Jesus pointed to the sun and said, ‘I am the Light of [for] the world [all the people on the earth]’ [John 8:12, NLV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 463, 464, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What important truths can we never learn from science? For example, the Cross? Or the Second Coming? Why must God show these Bible truths to us?
- ② Lucifer was a perfect angel. He knew so much about God and who He was. But Lucifer fought against God. What does Lucifer’s fall teach us about free choice? We also have this same free choice. Why must we choose to give our lives to God every moment?

GIFT TO A COLOMBIAN WOMAN

A woman drove her car into a parking garage in Bogota, Colombia. The parking garage belonged to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The woman asked the parking garage worker if his church was Christian.

The worker's name was Ruben Campos. Ruben was 52 years old. He told the woman, "Yes, we are Christian."

The woman asked, "Which religion are you?"

Ruben answered, "We're Seventh-day Adventists. Can we help you?"

The woman said, "Someone told me that Adventists don't like to help other people."

Ruben was surprised. He told the woman, "Let us help you. We're ready to serve."

The woman asked if she could park her car in the church parking garage. Her apartment was nearby, but it didn't have any parking. The woman didn't feel safe leaving her car on the street at night.

Ruben said, "Yes, you can park here."

The woman asked, "How much does it cost?"

Ruben said, "It won't cost you anything. It will be our gift."

The woman was very happy. "Thank you!"

That night, the woman left her car in the parking garage. She came back to park in the garage the next night. On the third night, the woman asked Ruben for a Bible.

Then Ruben and the woman started to study the Bible. Ruben brought the woman a chair. He sat in his small office as they studied. After a month, the woman said she wanted to introduce Ruben to her husband. The woman called her husband from her cellphone. She told her husband, "I've been studying the Bible, and I want to be baptized."

The woman's husband was a top officer in the Colombian army. The army sent the officer to work in a foreign country. The officer told Ruben that he also wanted Bible studies. The officer said, "We can start when I get back to Colombia."

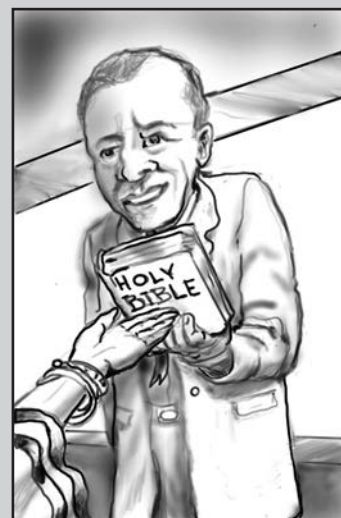
Ruben was very happy when the woman got baptized in a Seventh-day Adventist church in Bogota. Now Ruben waits for her husband to come back to the country for Bible studies.

Jesus also served other people. Jesus said, " 'Do as I did: The Son of Man did not come for people to serve him. He came to serve others and to give his life to save many people' " (Matthew 20:28, ERV). Ruben wants to follow Jesus' example.

Ruben says, "We can change many lives if we serve Jesus. Someone may come to you soon. You must be ready to serve at any time." Thank you for your 13th Sabbath Offering that helped two Bible programs in Colombia last quarter.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



The woman asked Ruben for a Bible.



Ruben Campos

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit



SABBATH—DECEMBER 7

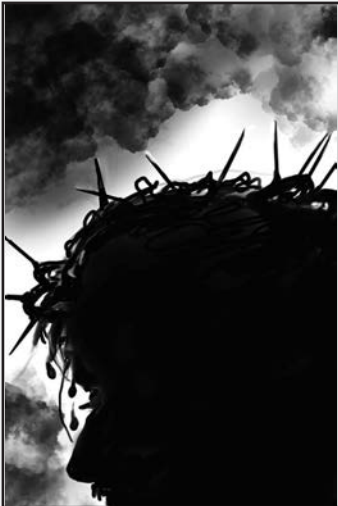
READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 3:16, 17; Genesis 3:7–9; John 7:16; John 1:10–13; John 17:1–26.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘The Helper is the Holy Spirit. The Father will send Him in My place [as my Substitute]. He [the Holy Spirit] will teach you everything and help you remember everything I have told you’ ” (John 14:26, NLV).

THE BOOK OF JOHN shows us many important ideas. John talks about the miracles that Jesus does to show us that Jesus is the promised Savior. John also shares what other people say about Jesus to show us who Jesus is. Jesus uses the seven “I AM” announcements to show us that He is God.

Another important idea in the Book of John is the Godhead. The Godhead is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. John talks about all three members of the Godhead in John 1 (John 1:1–4, 14, 18, 32–34). For hundreds of years, people have tried to understand the Godhead. But because we can't fully understand it, many people reject this Bible truth. This thinking is wrong. We shouldn't reject something because we can't fully understand it.

John says that if you want to understand God, you must look at Jesus and what the Bible teaches us about God. Then you will better understand relationships between the three members of the Godhead, between members of the Godhead and humans, and among ourselves. This week's lesson looks at what the Book of John teaches us about the Godhead in Jesus' Goodbye Sermon (John 13–17).



John says that if you want to understand God, you must look at Jesus and what the Bible teaches us about God.

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN (John 3:16, 17)

The Book of John begins with how life started. The Bible starts with this same story. “In the beginning God created [made] the sky and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, ICB). Or: In the beginning, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit made the sky and earth. Together, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are named the Godhead. The Godhead made everything. They made all the planets in outer space and all the people who live on them. On our planet, God made humans. God made humans for a special reason: God wanted us to live in love and peace with Him and with each other.

Sad to say, Lucifer brought sin to this planet. Sin breaks our relationship with God. So, Jesus became a human to help us understand God and to save us from sin.

While Jesus lived on this earth, He obeyed His Father and lived fully under His control. Jesus said, “ ‘My Father and I are one!’ ” (John 10:30, NLV). Jesus also said, “ ‘The Father is in me and I am in the Father’ ” (John 10:38, ERV), and “ ‘If I am not doing my Father’s work, then do not believe me’ ” (John 10:37, WE).

What things did the Father do? Read the following verses to answer the question.

John 3:16, 17; John 6:57: _____

John 5:22, 30 _____

John 6:32; John 14:10, 24 _____

John 6:45 _____

John 15:16; John 16:23 _____

What do these verses show us about the relationship between Jesus and the Father? The Father gave His best gift to save us from sin. What does this Bible truth teach us about His love for us?



**In the beginning,
the Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit made the sky
and earth.**

JESUS AND THE FATHER (Genesis 3:7–9)

As we saw already, the Godhead is the Three-in-One God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Godhead made us for a special reason. God made us for a personal relationship with Him (Genesis 1:26, 27). But sin broke that relationship. We can see in the Garden of Eden story exactly how sin broke our relationship with God.

Read the story in Genesis 3:7–9. How does this story show the problem that sin caused? What does it mean that God searched for Adam and Eve, and that they did not search for Him?

The Godhead offered to heal all humans from sin. God offered this gift to every person. But not everyone would accept God's offer.

To heal the relationship between God and humans, one Member of the Godhead became human. So, Jesus, God's Word, was born in a human body. Jesus lived among us and showed us God's glory (John 1:14–18). Jesus showed us God's love and His mercy. Jesus came to announce God's glory so that our broken relationship with God can be healed and made new. Everyone who accepts with faith all that Jesus offers can have a new relationship with God the Father.



To heal the relationship between God and humans, one Member of the Godhead became human.

Read these verses: John 1:1, 2; John 5:16–18; John 6:69; John 10:10, 30; John 20:28.

“Jesus has life in Himself that does not come from anyone else. Jesus didn't borrow or get life from another person.” —Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 530, adapted. Jesus, the Son, “gave up everything” that belonged to Him in heaven and became a Man (Philippians 2:7, ERV). “Jesus is God. This Bible truth gives Christians hope that Jesus can give them everlasting life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 530, adapted.

Humans didn't know God (John 17:25). So, He sent His only Son (John 9:4; John 16:5) to help people know who He, the Father, is.

Someone who didn't believe in God wrote: “We humans have no hope that help will come from another place to save us from ourselves.” What does the Bible teach that shows us that this man is very wrong?

KNOWING THE SON IS THE SAME AS KNOWING THE FATHER (JOHN 7:16)

All through the Book of John, John tells us how Jesus, the Son, does things that show us the Father. Jesus shows us God's relationship with the human family. John 1:18 tells us that Jesus shows us who the Father is. The word "shows" comes from the word "exēgeomai" in the Greek language. "Exēgeomai" means "to explain." Again and again, Jesus shows or explains who God is. The word "Father" is "patēr" in the Greek language. "Father" is written 136 times in the Book of John, and 18 times in John's three letters. That adds up to more than 1/3 of the times it is used in the New Testament! Jesus' Goodbye Sermon is a top chapter in the Bible where Jesus shows us the Father the most.

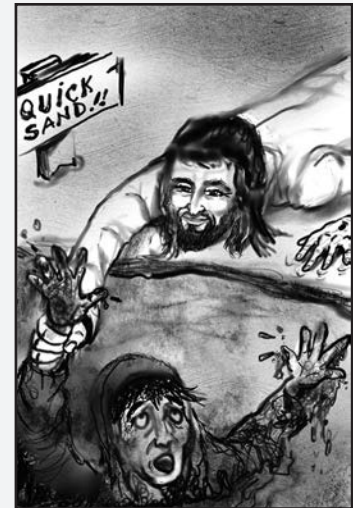
When Jesus lived on this earth, He was an example or exact copy of the Father. Jesus came to this earth to live out, in a human body, the Father's plan. Jesus said that He wished to please His Father in everything and not Himself (John 5:30). This announcement shows us that Jesus gave His whole life to God.

Jesus also said that God sent Him to finish His work. God's work was saving sinners. The Father saw and accepted the work that Jesus did (John 5:36–38).

Jesus announced that the Father sent Him to be the only one who can help humans come to God (John 6:40, 44). The Father wants people to accept everlasting life. This life comes from Jesus, who promises to wake us up from the dead at the Second Coming.

What do the following verses teach us about Jesus and the Father's relationship? John 7:16; John 8:38; John 14:10, 23; John 15:1, 9, 10; John 16:27, 28; John 17:3.

Jesus says some surprising things about His relationship with the Father. Jesus announces that all His teachings are the Father's teachings. Everything that He says comes from the Father. Jesus also says that if we believe in Him, that is the same as believing in the Father. All of Jesus' words and miracles come from the Father. Jesus and the Father are joined together in their love for humans. Together, they work to save sinners. All of these things that Jesus says show that He and His father are very close in their hearts and minds.



Jesus and the Father are joined together in their love for humans. Together, they work to save sinners.

THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 1:10–13)

The Holy Spirit doesn't appear as much in the Book of John as the Father and the Son do. But the Holy Spirit's help is very important to the success of Jesus' work.

Read John 1:10–13. What do these verses teach us about how important the Holy Spirit is in God's work of changing our hearts and saving us?

In John 1, we can see that the Holy Spirit's work is very important in God's plan to save sinners. John tells us that everyone who believed in Jesus became God's children. "They became God's children, but not in the way babies are usually [almost always] born. It [becoming God's children] was not because of any human desire [wish] or plan. They [God's children] were born from God himself" (John 1:13, ERV). This change comes from the work of the Holy Spirit.

What do John 3:5–8; John 6:63; John 14:26; John 15:26; and John 16:7–11 teach us about the Holy Spirit's work?

"Jesus explained to His followers about the Holy Spirit's work. Jesus wanted to fill the hearts of His followers with the same joy and hope that filled His own heart. Jesus was happy because of the help He gave to His church. The Holy Spirit was the most important gift that Jesus could ask His Father to give to His people. The Spirit gave God's people new life. Without this gift, Jesus' death on the cross wouldn't save anyone. The power of evil grew worse and worse. People chose to serve evil and Satan. They became his slaves. People could win the fight against sin with the help of the Holy Spirit. God poured His Spirit fully on His church."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 671, adapted.

We get a blessing when we accept the Holy Spirit. The Spirit tells us that God is true (John 3:33). The Spirit shows us our sins. The Spirit tells us how to be holy and tells us when we are wrong (John 16:8–11). If we want to know what is right, true, and good, we must give our lives to God and obey His Word. Then the Spirit will help us. He will convince us we must change our lives. He will give us the power to stop sinning.



The Holy Spirit was the most important gift that Jesus could ask His Father to give to His people.

JESUS' PRAYER (John 17:1–26)

John 17 is often named Jesus' high-priestly prayer. A high priest was the top spiritual leader in Jesus' day. Jesus' prayer comes at the end of His Goodbye Sermon. Jesus came to this earth to save humans and to change their lives. Jesus wants to help humans have a relationship with God again. Jesus did the miracles that God told Him to do. With words and actions, Jesus showed God to the people.

Soon Jesus would leave this earth. He wanted His followers to know how much He loved them. Jesus also wanted them to understand the close relationship between Himself, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus wanted to help people to enjoy the same personal relationship with God the Father and the Holy Spirit that He had.

Read John 17:1–26. What words does Jesus say that show how much He wants to have a close, loving relationship with His Father and with His followers?

Many people think that John 17 says that the only things that are important are love and peace. For sure, God's plan includes healing our relationship with Him and with all people. But if we read John 17 more carefully, we see a more powerful connection between love and truth.

Jesus prayed, " 'And this [teaching] is eternal [everlasting] life: that people can know you, the only true [real] God, and that they can know Jesus Christ, the one you sent' " (John 17:3, ERV). Jesus also added, " 'You gave me some men from the world [the people on this earth]. I have shown them what you are like [who you are]. . . . I gave these men the teachings that you gave me. They accepted those teachings. They know that I truly [really] came from you' " (John 17:6, 8, ICB). Finally, Jesus prayed, " 'Use the truth [Bible teachings] to make them holy. Your word [the Bible] is truth' " (John 17:17, Nlrv).

Jesus came to show us the Father. Many people believed false ideas about God. In the Book of John, Jesus showed us God's teachings and actions. If Bible truth isn't important, why did Jesus spend so much time preaching it and obeying God?

Jesus' life was often hard. In the end, the Jewish leaders rejected Him. Judas, Jesus' follower, sold Him for money. The people He came to save nailed Him to a cross.



The people He came to save nailed Him to a cross.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “ ‘Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled,’ ” pages 662–680, in *The Desire of Ages*; “Additional Note on [John] Chapter 1,” pages 911–919, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 5.

Jesus’ enemies judged Him with their own human rules and ideas. That’s why Jesus told them, “You judge me the way people judge other people” (John 8:15, ERV). These men are not under the control of the Holy Spirit. They judge Jesus without the Spirit’s help (read John 3:3–7). The leaders saw Jesus as a man. They didn’t believe He was God in a man’s body or God’s words living in a human body (John 1:14).

“The Holy Spirit is our Helper. He is also named ‘the Spirit of Truth.’ The Holy Spirit’s work includes showing us Bible truth and helping us to live it. First, the Holy Spirit lives in the heart as the Spirit of truth. When He lives in our hearts, we feel hope and peace. That’s because Bible truth helps us feel peace and hope. We can’t feel real peace or hope when we believe lies. When we accept false ideas and beliefs, Satan gets control over our minds. Satan tricks us into accepting false ideas. When we do, our thoughts, feelings, and behavior become evil. The Holy Spirit talks to our minds through the Bible. The Holy Spirit shows Bible truth to our hearts. The Holy Spirit also shows us false beliefs and ideas and helps us to reject these things. The Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts as we read the Bible. The Spirit helps us to give our lives fully to Jesus. In this way, Jesus works through the Holy Spirit to bring His people fully under His control.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 671, adapted.



“The Spirit helps us to give our lives fully to Jesus.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What does it mean to really know God (John 17:3) and not just information about Him? If someone asked you, “Do you know God?” what would you say? How does Jesus fit in with your answer?
- ② What does Jesus mean when He prays to the Father and says, “ ‘Your teaching is truth’ ” (John 17:17, ERV)?
- ③ Read more of Jesus’ prayer in John 17:15. How do our choices change God’s answers to our prayers?

A DREAM IN DALLAS

Samuel told the Bible worker on the phone that he wasn't interested in Bible studies. The Bible worker was a member of the Dallas First Seventh-day Adventist Church in the state of Texas in the United States of America. The Bible worker said, "But you wrote that you were interested on a card we sent you."

Samuel said, "Well, I'm not interested."

A week later, another Bible worker called Samuel.

Samuel said, "I'm not interested."

The next week, the Bible worker called again.

Samuel asked, "How much will Bible studies cost?"

The Bible worker said, "Nothing."

At the first Bible study, Samuel said he and his wife were looking for a church. Their son invited them to his church. But the sermon about the seventh-day Sabbath and how it was changed upset them. Samuel said, "I'll never visit another Seventh-day Adventist church again."

The Bible worker prayed in his heart for help and continued the Bible study.

After several weeks, the Bible worker invited Samuel to meetings at the Dallas First Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Bible worker wondered if Samuel would accept the invitation. Samuel agreed to go.

At the first meeting, Samuel looked with interest around the church. The building was very beautiful. It also was different from most churches. The inside room where people worshiped was round. The ceiling was round, too. The church benches or seats curved around the platform at the front of the church. Samuel searched for the Bible worker and told him, "I need to talk to you!" The Bible worker was getting ready for the meeting that night. He asked Samuel to wait until the meeting was over. Samuel agreed and sat down. He listened to the preacher's sermon about Daniel 2. After the sermon, Samuel found the Bible worker. He said, "I want to be baptized!" The Bible worker was surprised. He said, "What?!"

Samuel explained that he had a dream 18 years earlier. "In the dream, Jesus led me to a church. Jesus said, 'This is My church.' When I walked into the church this evening, I saw that I finally found the church in my dream. I want to be baptized."

The Bible worker took Samuel to the preacher, Slavik Ostapenko, who also was surprised when he heard about the dream. What made the story so powerful was that the church burned down 13 years ago, and a new church was built. Samuel saw the new church in his dream five years before it was built! The preacher said, "Everything is possible when we cooperate with God in His work."

INSIDE
Story
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



"Jesus said, 'This is My church.'"



Slavik Ostapenko

The Shame of the Cross Is Jesus' Hour of Glory



SABBATH—DECEMBER 14

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 18:33–38; John 18:38–19:5; John 19:25–27; John 20:1–7; John 20:11–13.

MEMORY VERSE: “Pilate said, ‘So you are a king.’ Jesus answered, ‘You are right to say that I am a king. I was born for this [reason]: to tell people about the truth. That is why I came into the world [to this earth]. And everyone who belongs to the truth listens to me’ ” (John 18:37, ERV).

JESUS DIES AND WAKES UP FROM THE DEAD. These two happenings are the most important part of the Book of John. John 1–10 talks about things that happen in Jesus' life for 3½ years. But John 11–20 talks about things in Jesus' life that happen in one to two weeks.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John talk about Jesus' death in different ways. Their stories about Jesus' death agree. But the writers talk about Jesus' death in ways that show the important themes in their books. Matthew and Mark talk about Old Testament promises about Jesus. Luke shows us how the cross saves us. Luke also tells the story about how Jesus saves the thief on the cross.

John shows how the cross honors Jesus and gives Him glory and praise. We may ask, how can Jesus' ugly death on the cross also be a time of glory and praise? The cross was the most awful way for the Romans to kill someone, right? Yes, Jesus died in shame. At the same time, He is honored as our Savior.



John shows how the cross honors Jesus and gives Him glory and praise.

WHAT IS TRUTH? (John 18:33–38)

In John 18:28–32, we read a few short verses about Jesus' trial. This part is short because John is more interested in telling us what happens next between Jesus and Pilate, the governor.

Read the story about Pilate and Jesus in John 18:33–38. What did Pilate and Jesus talk about?

The governor asks Jesus if he is the king of the Jews (John 18:33). This question is the first time in the Book of John that Jesus is named a king. Jesus asks Pilate if he is asking this question because he believes Jesus really is a king. Or is Pilate asking because other people are saying Jesus is a king? Jesus is really asking Pilate if he understands who He is. The reader already knows that Jesus is the King. Will the governor understand that, too?

Pilate answers Jesus' question with his own questions: "Pilate said, 'Do you think I am a Jew? Your own people and religious leaders have handed You over to me. What have You done?' " (John 18:35, NLV). Do you see how Pilate doesn't answer Jesus' question? Pilate's words show his decision not to accept the truth about Jesus.

Jesus answers that His kingdom isn't on this earth (John 18:36). Pilate then understands that Jesus is announcing that He is a king (John 18:37). Jesus then explains why He was born. Jesus came to this earth to announce Bible truth. Every person who accepts the truth will hear and obey Jesus' teachings (John 18:37).

Pilate then asks Jesus, " 'What is truth?' " (John 18:38, ERV). But Pilate doesn't wait for the answer. He goes outside to try to save Jesus from the crowd.

Truth is an important topic in the Book of John. Jesus is the everlasting Word (John 1:1–5). So, Jesus is the Light and the Truth (John 1:14). Mercy and truth come to us from Jesus (John 1:17). John the Baptist preached the truth about Jesus (John 5:33). Jesus announced that His Father is "true" (John 7:28). Jesus heard the truth from His Father (John 8:40). Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6, ERV). God's Word, the Bible, is "truth" (John 17:17, NLV). Pilate missed his chance to know the truth. Why? Pilate disliked the Jews. He made bad decisions in the past. He also felt pressured to do what the Jewish leaders wanted.



The governor asks Jesus if he is the king of the Jews (John 18:33).

SEE? HERE IS THE MAN! (John 18:38–19:5)

How did Pilate try to get the people to ask him to release Jesus? Read John 18:38–19:5 for the answer.



The Roman governor, and not the Jews, dresses Jesus in royal clothes and shows Him to the people as a King.

Pilate didn't wait for Jesus to answer his question about the truth. Pilate went out to convince the people to ask him to make Jesus free. But when Pilate didn't let Jesus go free, he lost control of the trial. The Jewish leaders saw Pilate's mistake. They understood that they could use the crowd to control Pilate.

During the Passover, the governor often let a prisoner go free. Passover is a feast that celebrates the time when God made the Israelites free from slavery in Egypt. Pilate asks the people if they want him to let Jesus go. Pilate is surprised when the people ask him to release an evil man named Barabbas, and not Jesus, who is innocent.

At this time, the Roman soldiers make fun of Jesus. The soldiers put a crown of thorns on His head. They put purple clothes on Him. They name Him a king. Roman soldiers did these things when they wanted to honor the King of Rome. But the soldiers do these things to shame Jesus.

Pilate believes Jesus is innocent. Pilate wants to release Jesus. So, Pilate asks for the people's help. Pilate brings Jesus out to them. Jesus wears a crown of thorns and purple clothes. Pilate asks the people to look at Jesus: " 'See! This is the Man!' " (John 19:5, NLV). These words help us remember John the Baptist's words about Jesus: " 'See! The Lamb of God Who takes away [removes] the sin of the world [the people on the earth]!' " (John 1:29, NLV). The Roman governor, and not the Jews, dresses Jesus in royal clothes and shows Him to the people as a King.

In John 19:6–16, the crowd shouts for Jesus' death because He says He is the Son of God. When Pilate hears this reason, he becomes very afraid. Then Pilate tries harder to save Jesus and release Him. But the Jewish leaders say that if Pilate releases Jesus, he will not honor the Roman King. Pilate is loyal to the Roman King. But people will doubt his loyalty if he releases someone who says he also is a king in the Roman kingdom. The Jewish leaders say that the King of Rome is their only king. The Jewish leaders hated the Romans. But they hated Jesus more. The Jews hated Jesus more than they loved their country. So, the Jews were willing to serve the hated Romans to use them to get rid of Jesus.

IT IS FINISHED (John 19:25–27)

As John 19:17–22 shows, Pilate wrote a sign and put it on the cross. The sign was written in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages. The sign said, “ ‘JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS’ ” (John 19:19, ICB). The Jewish leaders wanted Pilate to change what he wrote. Pilate refused. The sign stayed on the cross. The sign preached the truth about Jesus: the King of kings is nailed to the cross. He is on the cross of shame the same as a king sits on a throne of glory because His death will save sinners. But first, Jesus, their King, the King of the Jews, must hang on the cross, the same as a criminal.

“God caused Pilate to write the sign and put it on the cross above the head of Jesus. God used this sign to cause people to think about what they saw and study the Bible.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 745, adapted.

Read the story in John 19:25–27. What did Jesus say to His mother and John?

John, the beloved follower, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, stood with a few others in front of Jesus’ cross. Many years before, Simeon told Mary about this future experience when she and Joseph brought Baby Jesus to the temple for a blessing (compare with Luke 2:34, 35). Now as Jesus dies on the cross, He speaks to His mother and John. “Jesus saw his mother. He also saw the follower he loved very much standing there. He said to his mother, ‘Dear woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the follower, ‘Here is your mother.’ So after that, this follower took Jesus’ mother to live in his home” (John 19:26, 27, ERV).

Read Jesus’ final words in John 19:28–30. Jesus says, “ ‘It is finished’ ” (verse 30). What is Jesus talking about?

The word written as “finished” comes from the Greek word “teleō.” This word means “to finish” or “to complete.” This word tells us that everything the Bible promised about Jesus was happening and coming true.

When Jesus says, “ ‘It is finished’ ” (John 19:30, ERV), He is completing or finishing the work that the Father gave Him to do.



The sign said,
“ ‘JESUS OF NAZARETH,
THE KING OF THE JEWS.’ ”

THE EMPTY GRAVE (John 20:1–7)

Read John 20:1–7. What do these verses show us? Why is this Bible truth so important to us, as Christians?

Jesus died late on a Friday afternoon and woke up from the dead early on Sunday. The Sabbath was near when Jesus was buried (John 19:42). So, Jesus' followers buried Him in a hurry and didn't finish doing everything that needed to be done. Jesus' followers loved Him. But they didn't want to break the Sabbath. So, they kept the Sabbath day and didn't go back to Jesus' grave (compare with Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56). After the Sabbath, some women brought some perfume to the grave on Sunday morning. The women were surprised when they saw the stone was rolled away and the grave was empty.

Mary Magdalene was a woman who came early to the grave. She ran to tell Peter and John what she saw. The two men ran to the grave. John ran past Peter and arrived first. John stooped down and looked inside the grave. He saw the cloths that the followers wrapped Jesus in. But John didn't go inside the grave.

Peter went inside. He saw the cloths lying there. He also saw the face cloth that the followers put on Jesus' head. But the face cloth wasn't lying with the rest of the grave cloths. The face cloth was folded up and separated from the rest of the grave cloths.

What did the folded up face cloth mean? What was so special about the way that it was lying separate from the other grave cloths? Read John 20:8–10 for the answers.

After Peter entered the grave, John entered, too. John 20:8 says that John went in, saw, and believed. Why did John believe that Jesus woke up from the dead when he saw the grave cloths lying there and the face cloth folded up and lying separate? To answer this question, we must think about why the grave was empty. Did grave robbers steal Jesus' body? This explanation doesn't work for three reasons. (1) Matthew tells us that soldiers guarded the grave (Matthew 27:62–66). So, no one could easily steal Jesus' body. (2) Grave robbers steal treasures, not rotting bodies. (3) Grave robbers are in a hurry. They don't fold grave clothes. No wonder, then, that when John saw the face cloth folded, he believed that Jesus woke up from the dead.



After the Sabbath, some women brought some perfume to the grave on Sunday morning.

JESUS AND MARY (John 20:11–13)

Read the story in John 20:11–13. What happened in these verses that shows why Mary Magdalene didn't understand what Jesus' empty grave meant?

In John 20:2, Mary tells Peter and John about the empty grave. Peter and John run to the grave. After Peter and John inspect the grave, they leave. But Mary comes back to the grave. She cries and stays. For sure, Mary must have cried a lot during the last few days. Now, she finds the Savior's grave empty. Mary stooped down and looked inside.

To Mary's surprise, two angels were in the grave. They sat where Jesus' body used to be. "The angels asked Mary, 'Woman, why are you crying?'" (John 20:13, ERV). Mary's heart is hurting. She is very sad. She tells the angels that people have removed the body of her Lord. She doesn't know where they put Him.

What changed everything for Mary? Read John 20:14–18 for the answer.

Tears filled Mary's eyes. She turned and saw someone standing behind her. The Stranger asks, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" (John 20:15, ERV). Mary thinks she is talking with the gardener. So, she asks him to help her find Jesus' body.

The Stranger says one word, "Mary" (John 20:16, ERV). This one word changes Mary's life and the future of all Christians. When Mary hears her name, she understands that Jesus woke up from the dead and is talking to her! Mary must have felt so happy! Jesus tells her not to hold on to Him, for He must go to heaven. Jesus gives Mary a job. She must go tell His followers that Jesus is "going back to my Father and your Father. I am going back to my God and your God" (John 20:17, ERV). Mary did the work Jesus gave her to do. She told the followers that she saw the Lord. Mary also told them the rest of the things that Jesus shared with her (John 20:18).

Read what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:12–20. As Paul says, what good is our Christian faith if Jesus didn't wake up from the dead?



**The Stranger asks,
"Woman, why are you
crying?"**



As the winner, Jesus celebrated in heaven.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “ ‘It Is Finished,’ ” pages 758–764; “ ‘The Lord Is Risen,’ ” pages 779–787; and “ ‘Why Weepest Thou?’ ” pages 788–794, in *The Desire of Ages*. See also, Clifford Goldstein, *Risen: Finding Hope in the Empty Tomb* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2020).

“Pilate wished to release Jesus. But he saw that he couldn’t do this and keep his own honor. Pilate didn’t want to lose his power or control as governor. So, he permitted Jesus, who was innocent, to die. How many do the same thing that Pilate did when they want to escape loss or suffering? Duty tells us what we should do. But our selfish hearts tell us to do the wrong thing. When we start to do wrong things, we become a “slave” to evil. Then we can easily become guilty of all types of terrible crimes.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 738, adapted.

“Jesus didn’t give up His life until He did the work He came to do. With His final breath, Jesus cried out, ‘It is finished.’ John 19:30 [ERV]. Jesus won the war. As the winner, Jesus celebrated in heaven. The angels were filled with joy. Satan lost the fight. He [Satan] also knew he lost his kingdom on this earth.

“The angels and the people on other planets understood the meaning of Jesus’ cry, ‘It is finished.’ Jesus also said these words for them, and for us. Jesus’ words meant that His work to save humans was now completed. The angels and the people on other planets share with us in Jesus’ win.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 758, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What decisions can you make to avoid making the mistake that Pilate made?
- ② Why did Jesus need to die for us? Why did He need to be our Substitute? Why did Jesus need to die to save us? What Bible verses support your answer?
- ③ What happenings in history give powerful proof that Jesus woke up from the dead?
- ④ Read 1 Corinthians 15:12–20. How do these verses show that the dead sleep until the Second Coming?

KINGSTON FEELS HOPE

Joy Anderson, a Bible worker, invited several people to the Seventh-day Adventist church in Bethel, Alaska. Joy wanted them to share their life stories. Part of the 13th Sabbath Offering for fourth quarter 2024 will go to repair the church and add a new center to it for Bible workers.

No one showed up at the church for the meeting. Joy brought some food on the way to the church from her office, where she works as a lawyer. Joy thought food would encourage people to come to the meeting. Joy helps lead the church with another Bible worker.

A little later, Kingston walked in. Kingston was surprised to see that he was the only person who came to the meeting. Kingston helped himself to some of the food, sat down, and talked about why he worshiped at the Seventh-day Adventist church in Bethel, Alaska.

Kingston is 59 years old. He works as a janitor. For years Kingston tried to stop drinking alcohol and taking drugs. At that time, Kingston lived in Hooper Bay. Hooper Bay is a town in an area named the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. 1,400 people live in Hooper Bay, a town that is a 90-minute plane trip from Bethel. Kingston said, "I wanted to get away from the bad life I was living. I told myself, 'If I don't learn from my mistakes, people will think I am stupid.'"

Then Kingston moved to Bethel, Alaska. In the past, many other people left their small towns in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta area and moved to Bethel. Bethel is the biggest community in western Alaska. 85% of the people who live in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta are Alaskan Indians. Most of the Indians are from Yup'ik, Cup'ik, and Athabascan tribes or family groups.

After Kingston came to Bethel, he met Steve. Steve was also from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Steve was an Adventist, too. He invited Kingston to the Bethel church. Kingston said, "Steve asked me if I was sad or having trouble. I wanted to know where Steve worshiped, so I started coming to the Bethel church."

Kingston felt strong when he spent time with other church members who also won the fight against drugs and alcohol. Kingston said, "These church members helped me to stay away from those things. The church helps me stay strong." Kingston says that he is happy, but he continues to look for answers. "God is the Good Man up above. He sees everything. Somehow, He helps us find the answers we need."

Pray for Kingston, who goes to church almost every Sabbath. Pray for him to choose to be baptized. Thank you for your 13th Sabbath Offering that will support Bethel church's work this quarter.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



For years Kingston tried to stop drinking alcohol and taking drugs.



Joy Anderson

Knowing Jesus and His Teachings



SABBATH—DECEMBER 21

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 21:1–19; John 21:20–22; John 1:4–10; John 4:46–54; John 12:32.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘You carefully study the Scriptures [the Holy Writings from the Old Testament] because you think that they give you eternal [everlasting] life. Those [Holy Writings] are the same Scriptures that tell about me!’ ” (John 5:39, ICB).



The Book of John ends in the same way that the Book of Mark ends: with a meeting between Jesus and His followers in Galilee.

THE BOOK OF JOHN ends in the same way that the Book of Mark ends: with a meeting between Jesus and His followers in Galilee. This final lesson is about that meeting. We also will talk about how we know Jesus and the Bible. This idea is an important topic in the Book of John.

Jesus' followers were with Him for more than three years. Again and again, Jesus told His followers what would happen to Him. But the followers weren't really ready for Jesus to die or wake up from the dead.

Why weren't the followers ready? They didn't trust what Jesus said to them.

Today, we can be in danger of doing the same thing that the followers did. We may read the Bible, but we may think or feel that we don't really need to obey it. We may not accept its spiritual truths as the light from heaven that should guide our behavior. Sad to say, too many Christians think and feel this way.

In our last week in John, we will look at some ideas that will help us know Jesus better. When we know Jesus better, we will want to live in Him and obey His teachings.

MEETING IN GALILEE (John 21:1–19)

Read John 21:1–19. What important truths do these verses show us? What do these Bible truths teach us about God’s mercy? Why do we need to empty our hearts of all pride?

John 20 ends with the reason that John wrote the Book of John. We may think John should end his book there, right? But John wrote one more chapter. Chapter 21 begins with some of the followers who are back in Galilee. Peter suggests that the followers should spend the night fishing on the lake. But they catch no fish that night.

In the morning, a Stranger stands on the beach. The Stranger tells the followers to throw their nets off the right side of the boat. The followers do as the Stranger tells them to do. Then the followers catch so many fish that they can’t pull the net back into the boat! This same miracle happened at the start of their work with Jesus (read Luke 5:1–11). When this miracle happens, John right away knows that the Stranger is Jesus. John tells Peter, who jumps in the water and swims to the shore.

In John 21, Jesus asks Peter three questions. All three questions are about Peter’s love for his Master. Before Jesus died on the cross, Peter swore that he would die for Jesus (John 13:37). Then Jesus told Peter that he would reject Jesus three times (John 13:38). But at this meeting in Galilee, Peter doesn’t make himself the most important part of the conversation with Jesus. Peter makes Jesus the most important part. Peter says, “ ‘Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you!’ ” (John 21:17, ERV).

When Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him, Jesus uses the word “agapaō,” which means “to love” in the Greek language. Peter always answers with a different Greek word for “to love.” This word is “phileō,” which means “to love” but as a friend. So, some people say that John writes “phileō” to show that Peter didn’t learn how to love as God loves.

But this idea is not correct. Peter answers the way he does because his heart is empty of all pride. We also see that Jesus accepts Peter’s answer because the Lord gives him back his work to do for God. When we work for God, our hearts must be empty of all pride. Then we will look to Jesus and not to ourselves for strength, wisdom, and help to do His work.



The Stranger tells the followers to throw their nets off the right side of the boat.

KEEP YOUR EYES ON JESUS (John 21:20–22)

Read about the conversation between Jesus and Peter in John 21:20–22. What question did Peter ask Jesus? What did Jesus say to Peter? How did Jesus' answer help Peter?

Jesus gave Peter back his work and told him, “ ‘Follow me’ ” (John 21:19). Peter follows Jesus in his heart and down the beach. Then Peter turns and sees John following Jesus, too. So, Peter asks Jesus about John: “ ‘Lord, what will happen to him?’ ” (John 21:21, NIV).

When Jesus gave Peter back his work, the Lord also told Peter how he would die (John 21:18). Peter wanted to know about John's death, too. Jesus tells Peter not to worry about another follower. Peter needed to think about following Jesus.

Read John 21:23–25. How did Christians during New Testament times misunderstand Jesus' words in these verses? How did John correct their misunderstanding?



People will disappoint you and may hurt you, too. But Jesus will never let us down.

People misunderstand what Jesus meant when He said, “ ‘Maybe I want him to live until I come. That should not matter to you. You follow me!’ ” (John 21:22, ERV). People thought that Jesus was saying that He would come back before John died. As time passed and John grew old, people got worried about what would happen if Jesus didn't come back before John died. (Of course, that is what happened. John died.) John explains this misunderstanding. He says that Jesus was not making a promise about the future. Jesus was saying that He had the power to make happen whatever He wanted to make happen because He was God.

Let us keep our attention on Jesus, not on other people. This idea is very powerful. Jesus is our Savior and no one else. People will disappoint you and may hurt you, too. But Jesus will never let us down.

Our studies for Tuesday through Thursday will talk about the idea of understanding the Bible. When we understand the Bible, we will know Jesus better and know how to follow Him. Jesus is our Master and our Guide.

How often do other people disappoint you or hurt you? What lessons did you learn from those experiences?

LIGHT AND DARK (John 1:4–10)

Read John 1:4–10; John 3:19–21; John 5:35; John 8:12; John 9:5; John 11:9, 10; and John 12:35. What two different things are these verses talking about? Why is the answer so important to our understanding Bible truth?

Life on this earth is filled with sin. That is why John says this earth is a dark place. People don't want to know Bible truth. On our own, we can't understand God or know who He is.

“People on their own can't know or understand God. ‘That knowledge is higher than the heavens and deeper than the place of death [the grave]. So what can you do? How can you learn it all?’ Job 11:8 [ERV]. When God adopts us as His children, He shows us who He is. ‘No eye has seen the things God has made ready for those who love him. No ear has heard about them. No person's heart has ever thought of them.’ [1 Corinthians 2:9, WE]. ‘God has shown these things to us through [with] his Spirit.’ [1 Corinthians 2:10, NIV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 412, adapted.

Jesus “told us plainly about God” (John 1:18, WE). The words written as “told us” come from the Greek word “exēgeomai.” In the Greek language, “exēgeomai” means “to explain.” John shows us that Jesus is the messenger from heaven. Jesus explains what it means to know God. Jesus is the only Person who can help us to know God.

How does Jesus talk about the Jewish spiritual leaders and their faith? Read John 8:42–44 for the answer.

When people don't follow Bible truth, they follow their own ideas. But real Christians must accept that Jesus is the Truth and the Light. We must follow Him in our understanding of the Bible. Satan “is a liar” (John 8:44, ERV). If we aren't careful, we will be in danger of doing the same thing the Jewish leaders did. So, we must obey God. We must give ourselves to Jesus in faith. Or we may read the Bible and say that it means what we want it to mean. This mistake is easier to make than we think.



When people don't follow Bible truth, they follow their own ideas.

TRUE AND FALSE TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD
(John 4:46–54)

Read the story in John 4:46–54. Why did the leader in this story come to Jesus? What caused this man's problem?

This man came to Jesus for help. But before the man came, he decided to believe in Jesus only if Jesus healed his child. So, we can say that this man's ideas about God came from human doubts and fears. Human ideas about God are limited. So, human ideas should not become the reason for our beliefs about the Bible and its teachings.

When we believe what the Bible teaches, we put God and the Bible first (John 4:48; John 6:14, 15; 2 Timothy 3:16). We must accept the Bible with faith. Then the Bible will explain its teachings to us. The Bible helps us understand the Bible. Human ideas must not control our understanding of the Bible. The Bible must control our thinking and what we, as humans, believe and accept as truth.

If we believe Jesus and His teachings, then we will believe the Bible and its teachings (John 5:46, 47). “If you continue to accept and obey my teaching, you are really my followers” (John 8:31, ERV). If we doubt the Bible, Jesus' teachings can't live in us (John 5:38). “But there is a judge for all those who refuse to believe in me and do not accept what I say. The message I have spoken will judge them on the last day. That is because what I taught was not from myself. The Father who sent me told me what to say and what to teach” (John 12:48, 49, ERV).

What does it mean to “hear” God's Word, the Bible? When we hear God's Word, we obey Him. So, hearing is more than just knowing information. Hearing means that we do the things that God asks us to do. “People who really want to do what God wants will know that my teaching comes from God. They will know that this teaching is not my own” (John 7:17, ERV).

When we obey God and do the things He asks us to do, we show that we love God. “Jesus said, ‘The one who loves Me will obey My teaching. My Father will love him. We will come to him and live with him’” (John 14:23, NLV).

How does our obedience to God show our love for Him?



The Bible helps us understand the Bible.

LIVING IN JESUS (John 12:32)

Read Jesus' announcement in John 12:32. In what ways does this announcement show the control and power that Jesus has in heaven and on earth?

As we already saw, the Book of John shows us Jesus. But we must be willing to know God and obey Him. In the Book of John, people who meet Jesus must decide. They must decide to accept Bible truth. Or they will choose to reject it. Many people met Jesus and made choices about His teachings: Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the royal leader, the man at the Pool of Bethesda, the 5,000 men who ate the bread and the fish, Jesus' brothers, the Jewish spiritual leaders, the man born blind, Mary and Martha, and Pilate.

Man-made Bible teachings start with human ideas to decide what is Bible truth about God. Man-made teachings about the Bible led people away from God in the past and will continue to do so in the future (read Revelation 14:1–12). In the end times, people will put human wisdom above God's wisdom. Then they will try to force false worship on everyone on earth.

What is the secret to spiritual growth and health? Read John 15:1–11 for the answer.

The secret to success is for us to stay connected to Jesus. Jesus is God's Word, the Bible, in Person. Jesus is the Bread of Life, the Light for all people, the Door for God's sheep, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection or waking up from the dead, and the Life. Jesus is also the Way to God, the Truth, and the True or Real Vine.

As we saw already, our Three-in-One God is named the Godhead. The Godhead includes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Godhead and Their Word, the Bible, will lead us to Them. "God talks to us in His Word. We will hear many voices talking to us. But Jesus warned us to be careful of the ones who say, Here is the Savior. Or there is the Savior. How will we know if someone teaches Bible truth? We must compare everything they say with the Bible."—Ellen G. White, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 3, 1888, adapted. Then we must give up any idea that the Bible shows us is false or wrong.



Jesus is the Resurrection or waking up from the dead, and the Life.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “The angels of God are always traveling from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth. Jesus did many miracles. He healed the sick and suffering. God worked with angels to do the miracles that Jesus did on this earth. In the same way, God gives us every blessing because of Jesus. The angels bring these blessings to us. When Jesus became a man, He joined Himself to sinners. Because Jesus is God, He can go to God’s throne for us. And so, Jesus is the way for people to communicate with God, and the way for God to communicate with people.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 143, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Think about all the different stories in the Book of John. Which story shows you God’s love the most? Share with the class why you think that story is so powerful.
- ② How should someone search for Bible truth?
- ③ Why is it so hard to let the Bible, and not self, decide what is truth? Will our human thinking always get in the way of how we understand and explain the Bible? Why must we understand this weakness in ourselves? Why is it important to empty our hearts of all pride when we study the Bible?
- ④ The history of Western Christianity is filled with terrible stories about what happens when people use the Bible truth to support false ideas or to control other people. What are some of these examples that you can think of from history? What lesson can we learn from them today?
- ⑤ Explain the Book of John in your own words. What is the book’s most important message for us today?



“The angels of God are always traveling from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth.”

SUCCESS IN A VILLAGE IN ALASKA

Pilot Jim Kincaid made his living flying from village to village in the state of Alaska in the United States of America. The villages were far away from the big cities. Taking off and landing was the easy part for Jim. Jim thought it was more difficult to find Alaskan Indians who wanted to hear and accept the Good News about Jesus.

Jim thought he was in trouble when he landed his small plane at a village about 150 miles north of the city of Fairbanks. Jim was flying Bible book sellers from village to village to sell Bibles and other Christian books. As Jim parked his plane, many people from the village drove out to meet him. Then they parked their trucks in a circle around his plane. The villagers did not welcome Jim.

One villager said to Jim, “Who are you?”

Another villager said, “What are you doing here?”

In that instant, Jim remembered a name of someone who lived in the village. The man from the village went to one or two meetings that Jim held in Fairbanks sometime earlier. Jim said to the villagers, “Is Robert Frank in town?”

When Jim said Robert Frank’s name, the people stopped looking angry. Then they became nice and helpful.

One villager asked Jim, “Oh, you know Robert Frank?”

Another villager told Jim, “We will take you to see him!”

The villagers took Jim to Robert.

Robert was eating when Jim arrived. Robert didn’t know who Jim was right away. Jim helped Robert remember how and why they knew each other. Then Robert remembered, and he was very nice to Jim. Robert offered Jim some food. Then the villagers welcomed Jim and the Bible book sellers into their village. Jim and the Bible book sellers had success because Jim remembered someone’s name.

Jesus also knows people’s names. Jesus said that He, the Good Shepherd, “ ‘calls his own sheep, using their names, and he leads them out’ ” (John 10:3, ERV).

Jesus knows our names. As His followers, shouldn’t we also follow His example and learn the names of people we are working with Him to save?

Jim said, “When you know someone in a village or his name, that information can help the whole village accept and trust you. That’s how it is in any village or community. If you remember someone’s name, you can win the hearts of the people.”

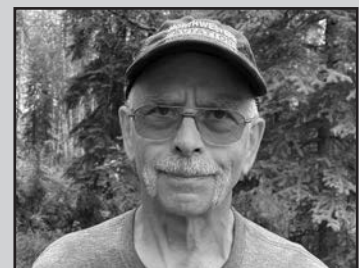
Part of this 13th Sabbath Offering will help to open a new center for Alaskan Indians in Bethel, Alaska. Thank you for planning to give a big offering this Sabbath.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



“What are you doing here?”



Jim Kincaid