

Life in Jesus the Messiah

John 1-4



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Study 1: The Word became flesh	Page 4
Study 2: The Lamb of God	Page 7
Study 3: Glory revealed	Page 11
Study 4: Entering the Kingdom of God	Page 14
Study 5: He must become greater; I must become less	Page 17
Study 6: True worshipers	Page 20

John 1-4 Studies

Life in Jesus the Messiah

The apostle John articulates the purpose of his writing close to the end of his gospel-book:

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:30-31)

Since this is John's purpose, we will keep asking, throughout these studies, what we learn about Jesus' character, purpose, the life that he gives, and what is involved in our belief in him.

Study 1

John 1:1-18 The Word became flesh

Introduction

Share with one another one thing you've designed, or made, or put together.

Context

Read Genesis 1:1-2:3, which is the backdrop of John's gospel. Briefly summarise some of its big themes.

Read John 1:1-18

Observation

1. The idea of the 'word' is a way of indicating a person's expression, and it represents that person (ie. what a person says comes from who that person is). What do we learn about the Word (origin, nature, activity, impact, identity, etc)?

2. How did the world (ie. mankind) respond to Jesus?

3. What does God do for those who receives Jesus now?

4. What role was given to John the baptiser (a different person to the writer of this book)?

Meaning

5. How does Genesis 1:1-2:3 fit together with John 1:1-18 when it comes to creation?

6. What do you learn about Jesus?

7. What does it mean to be children of God?

8. What does it mean for the world to be in darkness?

Application

9. In what way does your understanding and appreciation of Jesus need to change as a result of reading this passage?

10. Which aspects of Jesus are difficult to believe?

11. Where are you at with receiving Jesus yourself?

Prayer

- Offer prayers of praise to God for who Jesus is, and what God accomplished through him.

Notes:

- v17 'For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ'. God shared much truth with, and showed much unmerited favour (grace) to his people through the giving of his law in the Old Testament. Now, he shows them through Jesus, which surpasses what he has shown in the past.
- A map of biblical locations can be found at the back of this booklet.

Study 2

John 1:19-51 The Lamb of God

Introduction

How might your friends respond if you were to tell them what you believe about Jesus?

Context

Recap what you discovered about Jesus' character and role from the previous study

Read John 1:19-51

Observation

1. What (more) do we learn about John the baptiser and his role, and who he is not?
2. How do the following references help with understanding John the baptiser:

Malachi 4:5

Deuteronomy 18:15-18

Isaiah 40:3

3. How did the following people respond to Jesus, and what do they say about him?

Person	Response to Jesus	What is said about Jesus
John the baptiser (See Isaiah 53:4-12)		
Andrew		
Philip		
Nathanael		

4. What do we learn about John's and Jesus' baptism?

Meaning

5. Why was it necessary for Jesus to take away the sin of the world?

6. How will Jesus take away sin? (Isaiah 53:4-12)

7. What does it mean that sin is taken away?

Application

8. What are appropriate ways to respond to Jesus as the one who takes away our sin?

9. What are appropriate ways to respond to Jesus as God's anointed king?

Prayer

- Confess your sins before God
- Thank God for the forgiveness he gives through Jesus

Notes

- The title *Messiah* has the same meaning as *Christ*, and means *God's anointed king*. The title *Son of God* also has the same meaning and is distinct from *God the Son*.
- Baptism involved washing a person with water, and pointed to a greater significance/reality.
- The first five books of the Bible (Genesis-Deuteronomy) were written by Moses, and is referred to as *the Law*. So, when reference is made to the Law, it can mean the commandments of God, or the body of Moses' writing, or both.
- Sin refers to a rejection of God, or ignoring of him, which results in thoughts, words and actions which displease him.
- The title *Son of Man* is a way of emphasising the humanness of a person. However, a noteworthy Son of Man was able to approach God and was given supreme authority (Daniel 7:13-14).

Study 3

John 2:1-25 Glory revealed

Introduction

If you were to take a photograph of yourself doing your favourite activity, what would be in the picture? (Instead of verbally describing this, an alternative is to each make a drawing)

Context

Recap what you discovered about Jesus' character and role from the previous studies.

Read John 2:1-12

Observation

1. How would you describe Jesus' interactions with his mother?
2. What details stand out about the wine?
3. Describe the purpose of Jesus' actions

Meaning

4. What does the quality of Jesus' wine imply about what Jesus has come to do?

5. Jesus introduces the idea of his *hour*. According to John 12:23-33, what is he referring to?

Read John 2:13-25

Observation

6. God's temple is a place where his people could speak to God, hear from him, and sacrifice to him for forgiveness. People could purchase livestock for sacrifice there. Why was Jesus so upset at what he saw in the temple courts?

7. What did Jesus predict would happen to himself?

8. How did Jesus' disciples, and other people present, respond to Jesus' words?

9. What was Jesus' estimation of the people?

Meaning

10. What is the significance of Jesus calling himself God's temple?

11. How do these two events act as a sign which reveals Jesus' glory?

Application

12. What kinds of signs would people today require before believing in Jesus?

13. How convincing are Jesus' first signs to you, and why?

Prayer

- Pray that God will help us appreciate Jesus' glory more and more

Notes

- In v17, a reference is made to Psalm 69:9 to show that Jesus himself was insulted, along with his Father, by the activities in the temple.
- The Passover festival was when Israelites would gather in Jerusalem to celebrate God's rescue of his people during the time of the Exodus (Exodus 11-12)

Study 4

John 3:1-21 Entering the Kingdom of God

Introduction

If you were given a VIP pass to any place, anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Context

Recap what you discovered about Jesus' character and role from the previous studies

Read John 3:1-21

Observation

1. What are we told about Nicodemus?
2. Describe how someone enters the kingdom of God
3. How is the Spirit involved with entering the kingdom of God?
4. How does Jesus describe the people's response to Jesus and his words (vv19-21)?

5. In the table below, list down the results of believing in Jesus, or not believing in Jesus.

Result of believing in Jesus	Result of not believing in Jesus

Meaning

6. What do we learn about God, Jesus and the Spirit and their actions?

7. How do the actions of God exhibit his love for the world?

8. What place do our achievements have when it comes to receiving eternal life?

9. What does it mean to believe in Jesus?

Application

10. What are the objections you have heard to believing in Jesus?

11. What would you say to the person who remains undecided about believing in Jesus?

12. What impact should the reality of God's kingdom have on our priorities today?

Prayer

- Give thanks to God for how he has loved the world.
- Pray for those of the world who do not believe in Jesus yet. Name two of your own friends you can pray for.

Notes

- Pharisees are Jews who strictly observed God's law, along with additional rules they created, which tended to result in self pride.
- The Jewish ruling council is the group which decided what was lawful and unlawful with regards to Jewish law.
- In v5, being born of 'water and Spirit' is a reference to Ezekiel 36:25-27. There, God uses the idea of water for cleansing, and explains that he will give his Spirit so that his people will obey him.
- In v14, reference is made of Moses lifting up a snake. This occurred after God rescued his people from Egypt (the Exodus), and whilst they were making their way to the land he promised them. See Numbers 21:4-9 for the background.

Study 5

John 3:22-36 He must become greater; I must become less

Introduction

What was the nicest thing you've ever heard/seen done at a wedding?

Context

Recap what you discovered about Jesus' character and role from the previous studies.

Read John 3:22-36

Observation

1. How did John's disciples react to seeing Jesus baptising people?

2. John contrasts Jesus with himself. Fill in the table below with descriptions John gives of himself and Jesus

John	Jesus

3. What is the right response to Jesus, and its results?

4. What is the wrong response to Jesus, and its consequences?

Meaning

5. Why was it important that John's disciples received Jesus, and his baptism, rightly? (cf. 1:26-34)

6. How significant is it that 'The one who comes from heaven ... testifies to what he has seen and heard?'

7. What is the significance of the Spirit's role?

8. Why is it that God's wrath (ie. anger) is awaiting all who reject the Son?

Application

9. In what ways can we become less so that Jesus is greater?

10. How can you be a good witness to the world about Jesus?

Prayer

- Give thanks for all the ways Jesus is great
- Pray for opportunities to be a witness of Jesus

Study 6

John 4:1-42 True worshipers

Introduction

What's an occasion when you experienced a 'clash of cultures'?

Context

Recap what you discovered about Jesus' character and role from the previous studies

Read John 4:1-26

Observation

1. From the Samaritan woman's point of view, why was Jesus' interactions with her problematic?
2. What is Jesus offering the woman?
3. How does Jesus display knowledge that's out of the ordinary?
4. Describe the differences between Samaritans and the Jews with regard to worship

5. What kind of worship does the Father seek?

6. Read 4:27-42, and briefly discuss the impact the woman had on others

Meaning

7. How will drinking Jesus' living water mean not being thirsty again?

8. What does it mean that salvation is from the Jews?

9. How does God being spirit impact the way he is to be worshipped? (See also 1:12-14; 3:5-8)

Application

10. What does the world 'thirst' after today?

11. Which of these are enticing to us?

12. How can we keep drinking from Jesus' living water?

Prayer

- Give thanks to God for the satisfaction Jesus brings
- Pray that God would help you worship truly

Notes

- Samaritans are a people with ancestry from both Jews and non-Jews, and in particular, they claimed to be descended from Jacob (the father of the Israelites). They worshipped God on Mount Gerizim instead of Jerusalem. There was some rivalry between them and the Jews.

PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF JESUS

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