

Bible Study notes and Questions on John's Gospel

Introduction: The possible dating of this gospel is most likely between 85 and 95 AD. It is believed, certainly by Irenaeus, one of the early church fathers that John wrote this gospel in Ephesus. His name is not mentioned once in the gospel but there are good reasons to believe John was the writer.

A number of important words appear in this gospel such as **Father, Son, Spirit, believe, witness, testify, world, love, life and light**. John proved beyond any doubt the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The proof is shown especially when our Lord uses the word "**I am**" to reveal who he is. In the Greek "**I am**" is **ego eimi** where both **ego** and **eimi** mean "**I am**", but **ego** emphasises "**I**" whilst **eimi** emphasises "**am**". Hence **ego eimi** shows the strongest possible way to express a personal being. **Ego eimi** is the Greek expression for the divine name "**I AM**". In English we could say "**I am, I am**" to stress who Jesus is.

Suggested way of attempting the bible studies

The intention of these bible study notes with questions was not to give a lengthy exposition and interpretation of this gospel, but to provoke everyone interested to read the scriptures and to attempt to think about the text. Time spent with others in a small group up to about ten to fifteen people who are willing to study the scriptures is of immense value where there is time to ask questions and give views on a particular text. Such bible studies should be interactive i.e. dialogue between everyone present.

It is advisable where possible to have someone leading the bible study who can facilitate in guiding the study possibly giving a short introduction up to fifteen minutes and adding questions to provoke discussion where necessary. If no one feels able to lead in the group that meets, it is suggested that you read together the portion of scripture to study. Then give a short time of about ten minutes before each person shares what the scriptures are really saying. Try to avoid just giving opinions but attempt to see what the Lord is revealing to you as a group during the bible study. Perhaps a bit of time should be allowed to give a concluding summary which helps to finish the study.

Starting the bible study with prayer and worship can be of benefit in leading to a stimulating time studying the scriptures together. An exhaustive concordance and any other relevant resources can be of value in contributing to the study.

Summary notes of John's Gospel with questions

Study One

1) 1:1-18: Prologue: Jesus Christ coming into the world as God manifested in the flesh.

2) 1:19-51: The beginning of Jesus' ministry as testified by John the Baptist, his forerunner and an introduction to some of the disciples of Jesus who were chosen to be closely with him.

Questions: 1) What is known of Jesus' pre-existence? See **1:1-14**.

2) What was the purpose of John the Baptist's ministry? See **1:6-8, 15-36**.

3) How do we know that some of the disciples had some understanding of who Jesus Christ is? See **1:41,45,49**.

4) Look carefully at **1:15-43**. Are these events the same as those in the synoptic gospels? See **Matthew 3:1-17; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-22**.

3) Chapters 2-11: The public ministry of Jesus Christ.

Study Two

3.1) 2:1-11: Water changed into wine at Cana in Galilee.

3.2) 2:12-25: The temple cleansed to be a house of prayer.

Questions: 1) What does Mary, Jesus' mother, understand of who Jesus is? See **2:5**.

- 2) What is significant about the miracle in Cana? See **2:1-11**.
- 3) Why was the temple abused? See **2:13-17**.
- 4) What was the purpose of the temple? See **2:13-17**.
- 5) Why did Jesus give a sign? See **2:18-22**.
- 6) Why did Jesus not commit himself to men? See **2:23-25**.

Study Three

3.3) 3:1-21: Nicodemus, a Pharisee, comes to speak to Jesus by night.

3.4) 3:22-4:3: Parallel ministry of baptism by the disciples of Jesus Christ with John the Baptist who prepares people to receive Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

Questions: 1) What do we know of Nicodemus? See **3:1**.

- 2) What did Jesus teach Nicodemus in **3:3-21**?
- 3) How can we understand heavenly things? See **3:12** and **1Corinthians 2:6-16**.
- 4) Why do men reject God? See **3:18-21**.
- 5) What did John the Baptist reveal about Jesus Christ? See **3:27-36**.

Study Four

3.5) 4:3-42: Jesus in Samaria where he meets the woman at the well.

3.6) 4:43-54: The nobleman's son healed.

Questions: 1) What is known about the Samaritan woman in **4:7-42**?

- 2) What did Jesus mean by the "living water"? Read **4:9-15**.
- 3) How did Jesus treat the Samaritan woman knowing her life style? See **4:16-26**.
- 4) What is Jesus teaching the disciples in **4:31-38**?
- 5) How did Jesus heal the nobleman's son? Read **4:47-54**.

Study Five

3.7) 5:1-47: Jesus in Jerusalem where he heals the impotent man on the Sabbath and speaks of the Father and the Son to the Jews.

Questions: 1) How could people be healed at the pool of Bethesda (means "House of mercy", "place of flowing water"). See **5:1-4**.

- 2) Why was the impotent man not healed in **5:5-7**?
- 3) How did the impotent man receive healing from Jesus? See **5:8-9**.
- 4) What was the reaction of the Jews to the healing of the impotent man? See **5:10-16**.
- 5) What did Jesus teach the Jews about the relationship between himself (the Son) and the Father? See **5:17-47**.
- 6) What does Jesus teach regarding the resurrection? See **5:24-29**.
- 7) How did Jesus expose the unbelief of the Jews? See **5:38-47**.

Study Six

3.8) 6:1-71: The feeding of the 5000 (**6:1-15**), followed by Jesus walking on the water (**6:16-24**), then at Capernaum where he speaks of being the bread of life (**6:25-71**).

Questions: 1) Read carefully **6:1-15**. Show how John's account of the feeding of the 5000 is different from those in the synoptic gospels. See **Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44 and Luke 9:10-17**.

- 2) What does the feeding of the 5000 reveal of who Jesus is? Read **6:1-15**.
- 3) What is significant about Jesus walking on the water? See **6:16-21** and read also **Matthew 14:22-34 and Mark 6:45-52**.
- 4) In 6:22-34 what were many of the people really following Jesus for?
- 5) What is Jesus teaching about in saying that he is the Bread of Life? See **6:32-58 and also Matthew 4:4; 6:11 and Luke 4:4**.
- 6) Why did so many disciples stop following Jesus after his teaching on the Bread of Life? See **6:59-66**.
- 7) What did the twelve disciples (except Judas Iscariot) believe regarding Jesus in **6:67-71**?
- 8) How does Jesus explain the way to eternal life? See **6:28-58**.
- 9) What will happen to men who receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour? Read again **6:28-58**.
- 10) What does Jesus mean by eating his flesh and drinking his blood? See **6:51-63**.

3.9) Chapters 7 and 8: Jesus in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles where he speaks further of the Father and the Son.

Study Seven

Questions for Chapter 7:

- 1) Why did Jesus delay going to Jerusalem to be there at the Feast of Tabernacles in **7:6-10**?
- 2) What did Jesus' family want him to do? See **7:3-9**.
- 3) What did many Jews believe was expected of the Christ? See **7:27,31,42**.
- 4) Show the evidence of unbelief amongst many of the Jews. See **7:20,27-30,32,41-52**.
- 5) What does Jesus teach us of spiritual life in **7:37-39**?
- 6) How can we know sound teaching? See **7:16-18**.
- 7) Why did the Pharisees and the chief priests fail in their attempt to arrest Jesus?
See **7:25-26,30,32,44-46**.
- 8) What did Nicodemus want the Jewish council to consider about Jesus? See **7:50-51**.

Study Eight

Questions for Chapter 8:

- 1) Why was the woman, caught in adultery, not stoned according to the laws of Moses?
See **8:3-11**.
- 2) How was Jesus tempted? See **8:6**.
- 3) How did Jesus resolve the situation? See **8:6-11**.
- 4) What do you think Jesus might have written on the ground? See **8:6-9**.
- 5) Show the unbelief of the Jews exposed by Jesus in **8:12-59**.
- 6) What does Jesus teach about those who believe in him? See **8:28-36,42,47,51**.

Study Nine

3:10) 9:1-41: The healing of the blind man and the response of the Pharisees.

Questions: 1) What can we learn from the way the blind man was healed?
See **9:1-7,10,17,21,26,30**.

- 2) What is the attitude of the blind man after Jesus had healed him? See **9:8-38**.
- 3) Describe the reaction of the Pharisees to this miracle. See **9:13-34**.
- 4) Is it true to say the blind man had more spiritual insight than the Pharisees? See **9:30-38**.
- 5) In what way did Jesus rebuke the Pharisees in **9:39-41**?

Study Ten

3.11) 10:1-21: The parable of the shepherd and the sheep.

3:12) 10:22-39: Jesus reasons with the Jews in Jerusalem during the winter feast of Dedication.

3:13) 10:40-42: Jesus' ministry beyond Jordan in Perea where many believe in Him.

Questions: 1) What does Jesus teach about the good shepherd? See **10:1-5,7-15**.

- 2) What is Jesus teaching about true believers in him from **10:1-18**?
- 3) What is known about sheep in this chapter? See **10:1-5,7-16,26-29**.
- 4) In this chapter why did many Jews reject Jesus? See **10:6,19-21,24-39**.
- 5) Show the relationship between Jesus and the Father. See **10:14-18,25-30,36-38**.
- 6) Consider carefully the relationship between the sheep and the shepherd.
See **10:4,7-11,14-16**. Read also **Psalm 23:1-6**.
- 7) What are we taught in **10:17-18**?

Study Eleven

3:14) 11:1-57: The Raising of Lazarus and the reaction of the Pharisees towards this miracle.

Questions 1) Why did Jesus delay two days from coming to Bethany? See **11:1-17**.

- 2) Consider carefully the reaction of the disciples towards Jesus going to Bethany. See **11:7-17**.
- 3) What do we know of Mary, Martha and Lazarus? See **11:1-45 and 12:1-11**.
- 4) How did the chief priests and the Pharisees react on hearing of the raising of Lazarus?
See **11:46-57**.
- 5) Do you think Caiaphas, the high priest, understood why Jesus had to die? See **11:49-52**.
- 6) How did Lazarus come out of the grave? See **11:44**.

4) Chapters 12 to 19: The events of the last week before Jesus' death.

Study Twelve

4.1) 12:1-11: Jesus' feet anointed at Bethany. **4.2) 12:12-19:** Jesus enters Jerusalem on a young donkey (colt). **4.3) 12:20-36:** Certain Greeks wish to see Jesus.

4.4) 12:37-50: Jewish unbelief continues where John cites Isaiah's prophecy of spiritual blindness to their Messiah.

Questions: 1) What is the significance of Mary anointing Jesus' feet with ointment and wiping them with her hair. See **12:1-11 and also Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9.**

2) What did the people believe about Jesus when they met him coming into Jerusalem? See **12:12-19 and also Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40.** Notice the greeting in **12:13; Matthew 21:9; Mark 11:10 and Luke 19:38.**

3) Why did Jesus come into Jerusalem sitting on a young donkey (colt)? See **12:14-15; Matthew 21:4-5; Mark 11:7; Luke 19:35.**

4) Why did the Greeks want to see Jesus? See **12:20-22.**

5) What do we understand about Jesus foretelling his death in **12:33-36?**

6) Show from **12:37-43** why many Jews did not believe in Jesus Christ? See **Isaiah 6:9-10; 53:1; Acts 28:25-29.**

7) What is the blessing of believing in Jesus Christ and the warning of rejecting him in **12:44:50?**

Study Thirteen

4.5) Chapters 12-16: Jesus' final discourses to his disciples after the Passover meal as shown in foot washing, the betrayal, love for one another, abiding in him, the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Questions for chapter 13: 1) Show the evidence in this chapter that Jesus had always done his Father's will. See **13:1,3,31,32 and also 2:4; 5:19; 6:18; 7:6-8; 17:1-5; Matthew 26:18; Mark 14:41,42; Luke 22:13-16.**

2) What do we know about Judas Iscariot? See **13:2,10-11,18-30.** See also **12:4-6; 18:1-5; Matthew 26:14-16,21-25,47-50; 27:3-5; Mark 14:18-21,41-45; Luke 22:21-23.**

3) How is Jesus teaching his disciples to have a servant's heart in **13:4-17?** See also **Matthew 20:20-28 and Mark 10:35-45.**

4) Why was Peter so shocked to think of Jesus washing his feet? See **13:6-9.**

5) What is significant about the sop? See **13:21-30.**

6) What is meant by the Son of man glorified? See **13:31-32.**

7) Why was Jesus giving a new commandment of love? See **13:33-35.**

8) What had Peter to learn in following Jesus? See **13:36-38.**

Study Fourteen

Questions for chapters 14-16: 1) Study the teaching Jesus gives on the Holy Spirit. See **14:16-17,26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15.**

2) What is known of the relationship between the Father and the Son in these three chapters? See **14:6-11,20; 15:9-10; 16:15-16,26-28,32.**

3) What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son? See **14:16,26; 15:26; 16:13-15.**

4) What are we taught of our relationship to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit? See **14:1-18,21-23,26-27; 15:4-5,10,14-16; 16:25-27.**

5) What does Jesus Christ teach about prayer? See **14:13-14; 15:7,16; 16:23-26.**

6) What does it mean to abide in Jesus Christ and how can we tell when we are "abiding in Christ"? Read and study carefully **15:1-17.**

7) How are believers in Jesus Christ to relate to one another? See **15:12-13,17.**

8) What does Jesus mean "a little while and you shall not see me: and again, a little while, and you shall not see me: because I go to the Father." Read **16:16-22.**

9) What does Jesus teach about the world's attitude towards his followers? See **15:18-25; 16:1-4,32-33.**

10) Show how the disciples reacted to Jesus' teaching in **chapters 14-16.** See **14:5-11; 16:6,16-24,29-33.**

Study Fifteen

4.6) 17:1-26: Jesus' prayer of intercession.

Questions for chapter 17: 1) Write down key words in this prayer of Jesus.

2) What does Jesus pray regarding himself? See **17:1-8**.

3) How did Jesus know it was time to go to the cross? See **17:1,4**.

4) Does Jesus pray for the world? See **17:9,23**.

5) Show how Jesus prays for his disciples. See **17:6-19**.

6) What is Jesus praying for regarding all believers in him? See **17:20-26**.

7) What do we understand by the world in Jesus' prayer?

Study carefully **17:5-6,9,11-16,18,21,23-25**.

Study Sixteen

4.7) 18:1-12: Jesus betrayed by Judas and arrested in a garden (Gethsemane)

4.8) 18:13-19:15: The trials of Jesus Christ before the high priest, Caiaphas and then before Pilate, the Roman governor. During this time Peter denies Jesus (**18:15-18,25-27**)

4.9) 19:16-42: The crucifixion and the burial of Jesus Christ.

Questions: 1) How did Jesus suffer through his trial and crucifixion?

See **18:4-14,22-24; 19:1-5,16-30**.

2) Is it true to say that the gospel is open to everyone to receive it in view of what the high priest asked Jesus of his teaching? See **19:19-21**.

3) What can we learn from Peter's denial of Jesus Christ three times? See **19:15-18,25-27**.

See also **13:36-38; Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:55-62**.

4) What were the charges brought against Jesus Christ? See **19:7,21**.

5) What do we know of Pilate's understanding of who Jesus is? See **18:28-40; 19:1-22**.

6) Why did the Jews use the Roman court to put Jesus Christ to death by crucifixion?

See **19:28-32**.

7) What do we understand by the kingdom that Jesus spoke of in **18:36**?

8) Who is Jesus referring to when he said "he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin"?

Is it true to say that all sons are not equal, but some more wicked than others?

9) Why was Pilate unable to release Jesus even though he wanted to do so? See **19:4-17**.

10) Explain the reason for the chief priests being so desperate to see Jesus crucified immediately. Read **19:6-17**.

11) Show how the trial and crucifixion fulfil prophecy in these chapters. See **18:32; 19:24,34-37**.

A bible with cross references will show the Old Testament scriptures foretelling these events.

12) Is it true that Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus had become believers in Jesus Christ in view of their involvement in his burial? See **19:38-42**. Read also **Matthew 27:57-61;**

Mark 15:42-47 and Luke 23:50-56.

5) The Resurrection of Jesus Christ: Chapters 20 and 21.**Study Seventeen**

5.1) 20:1-29: Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and to his disciples.

5.2) 20:30-31: The purpose of this book.

5.3) 21:1-14: Jesus appears to seven of his disciples in Galilee.

5.4) 21:15-23: Jesus speaks specifically to Peter to feed the flock of God.

5.5) 21: 24-25: Concluding Testimony of the writer.

Questions: 1) Show from these chapters that there is a clear bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. See **20:20,24-29; 21:12-13**.

2) Study carefully what is taught by Jesus when he speaks individually to (A) Mary Magdalene

20:11-18. (B) Thomas **20:24-29**. (C) Simon Peter **21:15-22**.

3) What is clearly different about what Jesus can do after his resurrection? See **19:19,26**.

4) What do you think has happened to the disciples when Jesus said to them "Receive the Holy Spirit" (**20:22**).

- 5) What is Jesus teaching regarding forgiving or retaining sins in **20:23**? You may find it helpful to read **Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:3-5,12,13 and 2 Corinthians 2:4-8**.
- 6) What is the purpose of the gospel of John in view of what is written in **20:30-31 and 21:24-25**.
- 7) What does **20:1-18** show of Mary Magdalene's devotion to Jesus Christ?
- 8) Show how Jesus reveals himself to seven of his disciples whilst they were fishing at the sea of Tiberias. Read **21:1-14**.
- 9) What should we know as believers in Jesus Christ from these two chapters? Read carefully **20:21,29,31; 21:19,22**.

Miscellaneous Questions

This section may not show questions suitable for a group bible study. The questions have been included to attempt to encourage individual study of the gospel of John.

- Q 1)** Show the evidence that John was the writer of this gospel. See **1:14; 13:2; 19:26,35; 20:2; 21:7,20,24 and 1John 1:1-3**.
- Q 2)** Show that John proves without any doubt the deity of Jesus Christ. See **1:1-5,14-18,29,33-34,36,41,45,49-51; 3:18; 5:25; 6:68-69; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4,27; 19:7; 20:31**.
- Q 3)** What are the key verses and words in John's gospel? With the help of a concordance, you may wish to write a list of the possible verse and themes. For example (A) Key verses could be **1:29; 3:16; 14:6** and others. (B) Key words such as love in **3:16; 13:34-35; 14:15; 15:12-13**.
- Q 4)** How does John's gospel differ from the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke?
- Q 5)** Study the miracles of Jesus in **2:1-12; 4:46-54; 5:1-17; 6:1-21; 9:1-41; 11:1-45; 21; 5-7**.
- A) How do they prove the divinity of Jesus? See **2:11; 3:2; 4:53; 6:14; 9:31-33; 11:40-45**.
- B) Can you see what kind of miracle each one shows?
- C) Why does John not include casting out of demons?
- Q 6)** Study the seven metaphors of "I am" s in John's gospel. It maybe helpful to write each one down to prove Jesus is worthy to be trusted. See **6:35; 8:12; 10:9,11,14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1**. You will find other scriptures in John's gospel which reveal Jesus Christ as "I am" such as **4:26; 6:48; 7:28-29; 8:58; 9:5; 13:19; 18:5-8**. What more do these scriptures tell us of who Jesus is?
- Q 7)** Show how John reveals the humanity of Jesus. See **4:6; 11:35; 19:5,34-37; 20:3-9,24-29**.
- Q 8)** What does John's gospel reveal of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Father? See **6:38; 10:17-18,30**.
- Q 9)** What is taught of the Holy Spirit in John's gospel? See **1:32-34; 3:3-8,34; 4:24; 6:63; 7:37-39; 14:16-17,26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; 20:22**.
- Q 10)** Study carefully the Jewish unbelief in the gospel of John. Make a list of verses such as **1:11; 12:37-41**.
- Q 11)** Show the characteristics of genuine believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Give examples of individuals in John's gospel.
- Q 12)** What does the gospel of John teach about things still to come? See **5:24-29; 14:1-3; 19:19-22**.

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