The Deity of Christ
John 1:1-2

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Word is eternal.

2. The Word is a distinct person.

3. The Word is fully God.

Practical Application

1. Don't be fooled by the Jehovah Witness interpretation of John 1:1.

Questions

1. Who was the author of the gospel of John? When was it written? From where was it written? What other books of the Bible did this author write?

2. Three other gospels were already written. Why, then, was John written?

3. Why does the author refer to Christ as "the Word"?

4. Review the three doctrinal points.

5. What is the Jehovah Witness interpretation of John 1:1?

Answers

1. John, the Apostle, the "disciple whom Jesus loved." Circa 85-90 AD, from Ephesus. John also wrote 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation.

2. Each gospel emphasizes a different aspect of the person and work of Christ. John's theme is Christ as the Son of God, whose genealogy goes back to eternity.

3. The Greek word for "Word," is Logos. This would communicate both to Jews and Greeks. The Lord Jesus was the visible expression of God, and He revealed God to us – Who He is and what He is like.4.

4. a) The Word is eternal: the pre-existence of the Word is taught here. The Word did not begin at Bethlehem
b) The Word is a distinct person: God is a Trinity of three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is one in essence or substance
c) The Word is fully God: "*In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Colossians 2:9* 5.

5. Their translation reads that Jesus was "a" god, because they believe that Jesus is not fully God. They say that there is no article used in the Greek language except when the phrase should be translated as "God." But this is not true. For example, there is no article before "*There was a man sent from God…" (John 1:6).* Colossians 2:9 is a strong argument against this erroneous translation.

Discuss / Consider

1. Assume that you are approached by a Jehovah Witness who says that Jesus is a god, but not fully God. Prepare your answer, and rehearse it with a friend. If you are in a Bible study, share your answer with the group.

2. Review the theme of each of the four gospels.

Challenge

1. Are you fully convinced that the Word is eternal, a distinct person, and fully God? Could you give a clear statement on each of these descriptions of the Word?

Further Truths about Jesus Christ, The Word
John 1:3-5

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Christ created everything.

2. Christ is the only source of light and life.

3. The light of Christ is more powerful than darkness.

Practical Application

1. We don't have to be afraid of the dark.

Questions

1. The Lord Jesus Christ created everything. Support this doctrinal point with Scripture.

2. The Lord Jesus Christ created everything. What is "everything"?

3. How did the Lord Jesus Christ create everything?

4. Christ is the only source of light and life. What does this mean?

5. How is the light of Christ more powerful than darkness?

Answers

1. *"All things were made through Him (Christ), and without Him nothing was made that was made." John 1:3* See also Hebrews 1:1-2 and Colossians 1:16.

2. "Everything" includes all celestial bodies and earthly bodies. It includes sub-atomic particles, plants, fish, people, and everything in the universe.

3. As God the Son, He was the agent of creation. He did it by His Word. See Psalm 33:6, 9.

4. He is the source of both physical and spiritual life. The only way, however, that a person can have understanding and guidance in life is to have spiritual life. The only way that a person can understand the ways of God and His guidance and direction is to have spiritual life.

5. Most people do not comprehend the Light, but the darkness could not overcome the Light of Christ. The world's rejection of Christ did not keep the Light from shining. Many have tried to put it out, preferring darkness, but just as a candle lights the deepest darkness, so the Light of Christ enlightens men.

Discuss / Consider

1. Would you be able to state clearly the purpose of John's gospel? See John 20:31.

2. Consider Christ as Life and Light. What does this mean to you personally? How can a person have both spiritual light and life? By receiving Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

Challenge

1. Believers have no reason to be afraid of the dark, for the Lord is more powerful than any darkness. Are there times when you are afraid of the darkness of this world? Does your light shine in your immediate sphere? See Matthew 5:16.

The Ministry of John the Baptist
John 1:6-9

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The goal of witnessing is evangelism.

2. Christ is God's standard of perfection for everyone.

Practical Application

1. You don't have to do miracles or have a lot of charisma to be a good witness.

Questions

1. Who was John the Baptist? What was his ministry?

2. Was John's baptism the same as Christian baptism?

3. Contrast John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus.

4. What are the sub-themes of John's gospel?

5. What is God's standard of perfection for everyone?

6. Does a believer have to do miracles or have a lot of charisma to be a good witness?

Answers

1. He was a forerunner, a herald of the Messiah. His mission was predicted more than 400 years before in Malachi 3:1. His ministry was to baptize people who were preparing themselves for the coming of the Messiah.

2. No. John's was a baptism unto repentance. The Jewish people were saying by this baptism, "I repent of my personal sins," "I repent of my part in the nation's sins," "I am prepared for the coming Messiah," and "I am ready for the Messiah to set up His kingdom."

3. John was a man, Jesus was God; John came into being, Jesus always was in existence; John was a witness to the Light, Jesus was the Light.

4. Life and Light

5. Jesus Christ is God's standard of perfection. When Jesus came as the Light, He exposed our imperfections, showing that all fall short of the glory of God.

6. No. John did no miracles, nor did he have charisma. Yet Jesus called him a great prophet. He was humble, and that's what a believer should be to be an effective witness for Christ.

Discuss / Consider

1. If people respond to the Life and Light of Christ, they will have divine and new life. How does this impact your life? What is your responsibility to those within your sphere?

2. Are you a good citizen? Are you a good neighbor? Is that enough? What does it take to bring someone to the point of decision for Christ?

Challenge

1. Think through your response to someone who is basing his salvation on the fact that he goes to church, lives a good life, and does what he can for others.

The Reception and Rejection of the Light
John 1:10-13

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Mankind has rejected both general revelation and special revelation.

2. Life in the family of God does not come naturally.

Practical Application

1. Have you really become a Christian?

Questions

1. Discuss the three ways the word, “world,” is used in the New Testament.

2. What is God’s general revelation to mankind? How has mankind responded to this revelation?

3. What is God’s special revelation to mankind? How has mankind responded to this revelation?

4. Does life in the family of God come naturally? Explain. How does it come?

5. If you stood outside the gates of heaven, how would you answer the Lord’s question to you, “Why should I let you into My heaven”?

Answers

1. a) In reference to the created world, the material universe (Acts 17:24 and John 1:10)
b) in reference to the world of people (John 3:16 and the end of John 1:10, where sometimes both the material world and people are in view)
c) in reference to the evil and Satanic system that is opposed to God (1 John 2:15; John 15:18-19; John 16:11; and John 17:16).

2. General revelation is the way God has revealed Himself through nature, through providence and in the moral conscience of people. Mankind has rejected God's general revelation.

3. God's special revelation is Christ and the Bible. Mankind has rejected God's special revelation.

4. No. To the Jews, it did not come by being born a Jew, a descendant of Abraham. For non-Jews, it is not by being born into a Christian home or having Christian parents. Nor is it by the will of the flesh (human effort, sacrifices or good works). It is not by the will of man (the prophets and priests could only point the way). Life comes when Christ is received and the truth about Him is believed. Then God gives a person the right to enter His family. It is a gift from God. See John 1:12.

5. If you try to enter by your own merit, even having done works in His name, but you are without Him as your Savior, you could not enter heaven. It is by receiving Christ as your personal Savior that you are welcomed into heaven.

Discuss / Consider

1. Explain to someone the differences in the word, "world," as used in the New Testament.

2. Be able to explain the difference between God's general and special revelations to mankind. Back your explanation with Scripture.

Challenge

1. Could you explain to an unbeliever what it means to become a child of God? Role play with a Christian friend, taking turns being a Christian and an unbeliever, using your Bible.

A Clear Statement of the Incarnation
John 1:14-18

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The incarnation was not a subtraction, but an addition.

2. God's grace is not at the expense of truth.

3. No human being has ever seen God in His essence.

Practical Application

1. We should never have a stale testimony.

Questions

1. What is Gnosticism? How does it impact this gospel?

2. Explain, "The incarnation was not a subtraction, but an addition."

3. How was God's glory seen in the Old Testament? How is it seen now?

4. Define "grace.' How is grace defined by its acrostic? What is the first mention of grace in the New Testament?

5. What is the Age of Grace?

6. Does grace come at the expense of truth? Explain.

7. Has anyone ever seen God? What about Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah?

Answers

1. When John wrote this gospel, circa 85 A.D., the seeds of Gnosticism, an early Christian heresy had already been planted. This heresy says that Jesus is not fully God, that matter is inherently evil and an inherently good and pure God wouldn't allow Himself to become flesh and take on matter. It taught that Jesus was only a man, and that the divine Spirit came on Him at baptism and left at His death. John clearly refutes this heresy.

2. Jesus Christ took on flesh without in any way ceasing to be the Eternal Word. No attribute of Deity was sacrificed when God took on flesh. The Eternal Son of God was 100% God and 100% man.

3. In the Old Testament, God's glory was focused in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. Now the glory of God is focused in the person of Jesus Christ.

4. God's unmerited favor toward men. God's riches at Christ's expense. John 1:14, followed by John 1:17.

5. The present church age.

6. No. The Lord Jesus is full of grace and truth; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. God did not lower His standards (John 1:17).

7. No human being has ever seen God in His essence. The men listed saw visible manifestations of God in visions or theophanies (God taking on the appearance of man). In Christ we see God because He is God.

Discuss / Consider

1. Using Scripture, defend the statement, "Christ is fully God."

2. List some of the attributes of Christ (God). How have you come to know these attributes in His dealings with you?

Challenge

1. What does God's grace mean to you personally? How have you shared this with others?

The Ministry of John the Baptist
John 1:19-28

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Jesus was the predicted Messiah, but not the expected popular Messiah.

2. John the Baptist was not Elijah, but he could have been Elijah.

Practical Application

1. Let's be humble road builders like John the Baptist.

Questions

1. What is the focus of the main body of the gospel of John?

2. Why did the Jews send a delegation from Jerusalem to Bethabara? Who was part of this delegation?

3. What were some of the questions the delegation asked? How were they answered?

4. Why did some of the Jews believe that John was a prophet, or even the promised Messiah?

5. Has Elijah come? Is he yet to come?

6. What were John the Baptist's most significant credentials in the eyes of God?

Answers

1. The public ministry of Jesus, beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist.

2. To find out who John the Baptist was. They were concerned because he was attracting a large following, and they were jealous. They wanted to know the source of his authority to baptize. The delegation included priests and Levites.

3. They asked who he was, where he came from, and where he got his authority to baptize. They wanted to know if it was possible that he was the prophet, Elijah, or even the promised Messiah. They were answered with great humility on the part of John the Baptist. He told them that he was not Elijah or the promised Messiah, but just a voice in the wilderness.

4. The Jews knew the Old Testament prophecies. God said that He would raise up a prophet from among them (Deuteronomy 18:18). The Pharisees wanted to know if John was that prophet. In Malachi 4:5, there is a prediction that Elijah would precede the coming of the Messiah. Thus the Jews wanted to know if John was Elijah.

5. Elijah has come in the sense of the transfiguration (Matthew 17:3), and he was to come to restore all things before the Son of Man would come (Matthew 17:10). So, in a sense, Elijah came as John. However, he is yet to come. If the Jews had received their King and His kingdom, then John the Baptist would have fulfilled the Elijah prophecy of Malachi 4. But they rejected the King and His kingdom, therefore the physical kingdom of Christ was not set up then. It is postponed and will be set up when He returns. There will be an Elijah-type figure that will precede the return of the Lord. It might be Elijah himself, or it might be one of the two witnesses of Revelation 11.

6. He was humble and faithful to God's appointment of him as forerunner of Christ.

Discuss / Consider

1. What are your credentials in preparing the way of the Lord? Do you have humility and faithfulness?

2. Review the Elijah question. What is your understanding of this?

Challenge

1. What are your significant credentials in the eyes of the Lord? Are they different from your credentials in the eyes of man? List some of each.

"The Lamb of God"
John 1:29-34

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The primary thought in the title, "Lamb of God," is sacrifice.

2. The work of Christ on the cross was not only for sins, but for sin.

3. The baptism of the Holy Spirit took place at Pentecost.

Practical Application

1. Let's remember to emphasize the Person and Work of Christ, as John the Baptist did.

Questions

1. Did the event in John 1:29 occur at Jesus' baptism?

2. John said, *"I did not know Him"* (verse 33). Is this true?

3. Was the Holy Spirit, seen by John as descending from heaven, a symbol or a real dove?

4. What is the primary thought in the title, "Lamb of God"?

5. Was the work of Christ on the cross for sins or for sin?

6. What does it mean, *"This is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit"?*

7. How did John emphasize the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ? How did he emphasize His Work?

Answers

1. No, it took place some weeks later. See John 1:35, “the next day;” John 1:43, “the following day;” and John 2:12, “after this.” In the other gospels we learn that after Jesus was baptized, He went immediately into the Judean wilderness for forty days. He did not go immediately into Galilee or perform the miracle of changing the water into wine right after His baptism. The reference to the Lord's baptism (John 1:32-33) is a reflection by John, looking back to the time when the Lord was baptized.

2. They were cousins, but John grew up in the wilderness and perhaps only knew about Jesus. This comment, however, likely means that John did not know Jesus was the Messiah. It wasn’t until Jesus was baptized that John realized this, as God revealed to John who the Messiah would be, and it was confirmed by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus and the Voice from heaven.

3. Today, the dove is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, but this was more than a symbol. In the parallel passage, Luke 3:22, we read that the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Jesus, and a Voice came from heaven.

4. Sacrifice. John was probably thinking of Old Testament sacrifices. See Exodus 12 and Isaiah 53. Lambs were being brought to the temple as sacrificial offerings.

5. Both. Jesus died on the cross for all the sins that have been or will be committed, but He also died for the whole problem of sin. We commit sins because we are sinners by nature and sin dwells within us. He died for this, as well as for our acts of sin. See Romans 8:22 concerning the sin problem and the material universe.

6. This refers to the event at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the church. Until then, the Holy Spirit did not indwell believers. See Acts 2:1-4.

7. John said, *“I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”* This was the Person of Christ. The Work of Christ was to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Discuss / Consider

1. Contemplate the work of Christ on the cross. Think about His dying for you, not only for your sins, but for sin.

2. Who is the Holy Spirit? How does He impact your life?

Challenge

1. How are you emphasizing the Person of Christ? How are you emphasizing the work of Christ? Think about this each day.

Disciples Begin to Follow Jesus
John 1:35-42

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Jesus was God's Lamb.

2. Jesus is and must be more than just a friend.

Practical Application

1. Are we willing to lose, if the overall result is gain?

2. Have we brought all of our unsaved relatives to Christ?

Questions

1. Three times in these verses, we read, *"…which is translated."* Which verses, and what are the translations?

2. Why is this phrase used here?

3. Review John's purpose in writing this gospel.

4. In John 1:39, what is the tenth hour?

5. Who were the two disciples of John 1:37?

6. "Jesus was God's Lamb." Does his mean that the Lamb is God, or that the Lamb belongs to God?

7. What is the significance of Bethlehem and Jerusalem concerning lambs?

Answers

1. John 1:38 – Rabbi to Teacher; John 1:41 – Messiah to Christ; and John 1:42 – Cephas to Stone.

2. It shows that John was writing to a wide audience, not just Jewish people. The name, "Cephas," is the Aramaic equivalent of Petros in Greek, which means Peter, or a rock, or a stone. Although John wrote his gospel in Greek, he was thinking of a much wider audience than just Greek-speaking Jews of the first century.

3. *"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." John 20:31* This includes us.

4. According to the Jewish reckoning of time, it was about 4:00 P.M.

5. Andrew and probably John, the author of this gospel.

6. Likely, that the Lamb belongs to God. As in the Old Testament, when Abel brought a lamb to the place of sacrifice, it was Abel's lamb; so it was with Abraham's lamb, or the family's lamb when sacrificed at the Passover.

7. Many of the lambs that were brought to Jerusalem for sacrifice were born and raised in nearby Bethlehem. When Jews would come from around the Roman Empire, they didn't bring their lambs from far-off places, but would buy the lambs born in Bethlehem. There was a special Lamb born in Bethlehem about 2,000 years ago. His Name was Jesus. He was a perfect Lamb. He was God's Lamb, and when the fullness of time came, God brought His Lamb to the place of sacrifice in Jerusalem.

Discuss / Consider

1. Stepping aside for the sake of others did not bother John or Andrew. Have you ever stepped aside for another for the glory of Christ? If so, did you do it willingly and readily? Did you see how Christ was glorified?

2. Have you brought your unsaved relatives to Christ? Pray about it and think of ways you could witness to them, then do it.

Challenge

1. Jesus is and must be more than a friend. Surely He is your friend, but what more to you is He?

Two More Disciples are Called
John 1:43-51

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Jesus had the attribute of omnipresence.

2. Jesus is the bridge between heaven and earth.

Practical Application

1. When in doubt, check it out.

Questions

1. In this passage, who were the disciples that Jesus called?

2. What is the significance of being from Bethsaida?

3. “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” What does this mean?

4. List the three big “O” attributes of the Lord.

5. Consider doctrinal point #2, “Jesus is the bridge between heaven and earth.” Cite an example of this in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

Answers

1. Philip and Nathanael

2. Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Bethsaida was a town on the north end of Galilee, not far from where the Jordan River enters the Sea of Galilee. It was one of the three cities of the Galilee area condemned by our Lord for rejecting Him after seeing so many miracles.

3. Most likely, Nathanael was referring to the reputation of Nazareth. Perhaps it was because there was a Roman military garrison there.

4. Omnipotence (all powerful), omniscience (all knowing) and omnipresence (everywhere at the same time). Jesus, as fully God, possessed all of these attributes. However, at times Jesus voluntarily gave up the use of some of His attributes, as pre-determined in the counsels of the Godhead. For example, the material body of Jesus was only in one place at one time, but the eternal Son of God retained this attribute when He became incarnate.

5. In Genesis 28:10-17, God was working as a bridge in Jacob's life, as shown in his dream. In the present lesson, the Lord tells Nathanael that he will see the angels of God descending upon man from heaven. In 1 Timothy 2:5, we see Jesus as the one mediator between God and man.

Discuss / Consider

1. What does Jesus, as the one mediator between heaven and earth, between God and you, mean to you personally? Is Jesus your bridge to heaven?

2. How have you realized the "O" attributes of the Lord in your life?

Challenge

1. Review the way the lives were changed in the disciples who followed Jesus. How did the call of Jesus to follow Him affect your life?

Our Lord's First Miracle
John 2:1-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God puts His stamp of approval on marriage and weddings.

2. Judaism could never produce the joy of Christianity.

Practical Application

1. Invite Jesus to your wedding.

2. Come as you are.

Questions

1. Was the Lord's reply to His mother a harsh word? (John 2:4)

2. What were the stone waterpots used for, other than for holding the wine at the wedding? Their capacity?

3. Was the "wine" really wine, or was it just grape juice?

4. It was reported that as a child, Jesus did some miracles, like forming clay pigeons that flew. Discuss.

5. How does God place His stamp of approval on marriage and weddings?

6. Why did Jesus choose to do this miracle by using ceremonial waterpots of the Jews?

Answers

1. No. The Lord's point was that He was subject to the will of His Divine Heavenly Father, not the will and schedule of His human earthly mother.

2. They were used for ritualistic ceremonial washings. They held twenty to thirty gallons per waterpot.

3. Scripture states that it was wine (see John 2:10). Wine is used as a symbol of joy in the Scriptures. There is nothing intrinsically evil about wine, but the problem arises because of what people do with it. The Bible is clear that we are not to be drunk with wine, or hinder or stumble another by the wrong use of Christian liberty.

4. Scripture states, *"This was the beginning of signs (miracles) Jesus did..."* If this was the first miracle, childhood miracles are apocryphal.

5. The Lord Jesus attended the celebration of a marriage. Marriage in Scripture is before God, the state and the civil authorities, accompanied by a public declaration before God and man. A wedding is a celebration of this public declaration that this man and this woman are man and wife.

6. Because of the teaching associated with the miracle. In this miracle, the waterpots represented Judaism, the Old Testament law, and what it had become with all of its additions and traditions that the Jews had added to it. Without the miracle, the waterpots could produce no wine, the symbol of joy. They were powerless, and so was Judaism, to produce joy. Joy could only come through a new change in the coming of Christianity and the miracle of the new birth in Christ. New wine Christianity is not Old Testament Judaism, but it is its fulfillment. That is why the water was changed into wine as it was drawn from the waterpots. True joy is available only in Christ.

Discuss / Consider

1. What is your understanding of the significance of this miracle, including the joy of Christianity? Do you have this joy? Does it show in your life?

2. Read Ephesians 5:25. Of what is marriage a reflection? Was Jesus the center of your wedding, or will He be? Is your home Christ-centered?

Challenge

1. *"Whatever He says to you, do it."*

The Lord's First Cleansing of the Temple
John 2:12-25

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There is a place for righteous anger.

2. There is a difference between belief and commitment.

Practical Application

1. Don't make God's house a place of merchandise.

2. Have you cleansed God's temple?

Questions

1. Why did Jesus go up to Jerusalem for the Passover?

2. What did Jesus find that displeased Him when He arrived at the temple? What did He do about this situation?

3. When the Jews asked for a sign, how did the Lord Jesus answer them? To what was He referring?

4. Is there a place for righteous anger?

5. Discuss the difference between belief and commitment.

6. Is it possible today that God's house can become a house of merchandise?

Answers

1. In accordance with the Mosaic Law, all Jewish males were to go up to Jerusalem three times a year to celebrate certain Old Testament feasts, and the Passover was one of them.

2. Jesus found that the temple courts had been changed into a place of commercialization. Animals for sacrifice were being sold and money was being exchanged in the temple. The attitude of the sellers was not one of worship, but to make money. Jesus cleansed the temple by driving out the animals and the people making gain. His righteous anger was predicted in the Old Testament. See Psalm 69:9.

3. See John 2:19. He was referring to His body, but the Jews thought that He meant the temple.

4. Yes, as in this case, when the temple of the Lord was desecrated. However, note Ephesians 4:26.

5. In John 2:23-25 we read, *"…many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus…knew what was in man."* There is a difference between intellectual profession of faith and heart commitment.

6. Yes, because "religion" can be big money, and that's why some people are in it. It's even possible for dedicated Christians to fall prey to some get-rich-quick schemes that do not honor the name of Christ.

Discuss / Consider

1. Consider the difference between belief and commitment. Do you know someone who believes, but is not committed to Christ?

2. Have you cleansed God's temple? See 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19.

Challenge

1. Have you ever become righteously angry? What did you do with this anger?

A Dialogue Between the Lord and Nicodemus
John 3:1-8

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

2. Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Practical Application

1. Let's be like Nicodemus and not like Demas.

Questions

1. How did Nicodemus differ from most of the Pharisees?

2. Did Nicodemus ever become a true believer?

3. Jesus told Nicodemus, *"unless one is born again, he can't see the kingdom of God."* What did He mean?

4. Why did Jesus use the illustration of the wind?

5. What did the Lord mean by being born of water and the Spirit?

6. "Be like Nicodemus and not like Demas." What does this mean?

Answers

1. He was refreshingly different. Most of the Pharisees were legalistic and self-righteous, and they rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Nicodemus came to Christ with an open mind, listening to what He had to say. He addressed Him with respect and realized that the wonderful works Jesus did had to come from God.

2. Yes. At the end of the gospel of John, we see that he helped Joseph of Arimathea take down the body of Jesus and bury Him (John 19:39-42). Prior to that, as a member of the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus defended the Lord when they tried to bring charges against Him (John 7:50-51).

3. He referred to a spiritual birth, a birth brought about by the Holy Spirit.

4. Because you can't see the wind, but you know it's windy by the sound and the effect. So it is with the spiritual birth. Also, the wind is not controlled by human power, but by the sovereign power of God, and so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

5. In context, it seems to refer to physical or natural birth, and the Lord is drawing a distinction between the natural realm and the spiritual realm.

6. Demas was a fellow-worker with the apostle Paul, but he quit. He left the ministry and he stopped serving the Lord (see 2 Timothy 4:10). He loved this present world. What a contrast to Nicodemus, who came to Jesus to seek answers. He became a believer, he defended the Lord in the Sanhedrin, and he boldly came forward to give the Lord a proper burial. Demas started out strong, but he did not finish strong.

Discuss / Consider

1. Can you explain the difference between the physical and the spiritual birth? Could you lead someone to Christ?

2. Are you a bold believer, like Nicodemus? Or, could there be some of a Demas in you, loving this world more than Christ?

Challenge

1. Where do you turn first when you have questions? Do you take them to Jesus?

The Dialogue Between the Lord and Nicodemus Continues
John 3:9-15

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Son of Man descended from heaven.

2. The Son of Man was lifted up from earth.

Practical Application

1. Have you looked at Jesus lifted up?

Questions

1. How do you know that Nicodemus was a sincere seeker?

2. Shouldn't Nicodemus have known about the spiritual birth?

3. Was Jesus speaking only to Nicodemus about spiritual things?

4. What was the Lord's favorite designation of Himself?

5. How is John 3:14-15 related to Numbers 21:5-9?

Answers

1. Nicodemus didn't understand what Jesus meant when He said, *"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"* so he asked the Lord how this could be – what the spiritual birth was, and how it took place.

2. He should have known, for he was not only a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, but he was a Rabbi, a teacher in Israel. The Old Testament Scriptures, which Nicodemus knew, certainly indicated that when the Messiah came, the Spirit of God would do a work in the hearts of the people. See Ezekiel 36:26.

3. No. He was speaking to the rulers of the nation as well. The "you" in John 3:11-12 is plural in the Greek language.

4. The Son of Man

5. As Moses lifted up the bronze serpent for healing, so must the Lord Jesus be lifted up in order to save a dying person. It was an illustration of the sacrificial death of Christ. When Jesus was lifted up, He was not only the Lamb of God, but He was our sin-bearer. When Jesus died on the cross, He was taking on Himself the curse of sin. See 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Discuss / Consider

1. How often do you look at Jesus lifted up as your sin-bearer? Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:21.

2. How well do you understand spiritual things? Think back to a time before you became a Christian. Remember, it's only by the Holy Spirit that one can understand things of the Spirit. Human reasoning just doesn't cut it.

Challenge

1. Are you a sincere seeker? Nicodemus took his questions directly to the Lord. Do you take your questions to Him? Do you seek answers from Scripture?

A Clear Presentation of the Gospel
John 3:16-21

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The benefits of Christ's death are sufficient for all people, but only effective for some people.

2. The judgment of God is upon those in darkness who deliberately turn away from the light.

Practical Application

1. Are you moving toward the light, or away from it?

Questions

1. How is the word, "world," (John 3:16, 17, 19) used in the New Testament?

2. What is meant by "only begotten," as used of Christ?

3. Does the word, "perish," mean annihilation?

4. Explain doctrinal point #1.

5. Upon whom is the judgment of God?

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Answers

1. a) as the material universe that God created (see Acts 17:24), b) as the evil satanic system of attitudes and values that are contrary to God and His word (1 John 2:15-16), and c) as the world of mankind, or the people.

2. It does not mean that Christ had a beginning, as it sounds like in English. The Greek phrase is only one word, regarding the uniqueness of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son.

3. No, it means ruin. Unbelievers do not cease to exist when they die, but they are lost forever.

4. The work of Christ on the cross was universal in scope, and the benefits are unlimited. Blanket payment for sin has been made. But the benefits are effective only for those who believe.

5. Upon those in darkness who deliberately turn away from the light. Notice in Romans 1:18 that unbelievers not only turn away from the light, but they suppress the truth.

Discuss / Consider

1. Why doesn't God just save everyone, even those who turn away from Him?

2. Have you ever preferred staying in darkness as opposed to stepping into the light? Are you fearful of giving up something, or of stepping into the unknown?

Challenge

1. Are you moving toward the light, or away from it? This is a practical application for both believers and unbelievers. If you are involved in some sinful activity, you are moving away from the light so that your sin can stay hidden. If this is the case, confess your sin, and start moving toward the light.

Further Testimony from John the Baptist
John 3:22-36

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. People who don't believe the words of Jesus, don't believe in the God of the Bible.

2. The wrath of God abides on the unbeliever.

Practical Application

1. What do you have that you did not receive? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

2. Do you know the secret of joy?

Questions

1. What are "these things" of John 3:22?

2. What are the two ministries of baptism going on here?

3. What was the dispute about between John's disciples and the other Jews?

4. How did John give testimony to the supremacy of Christ?

5. Is it possible to believe in the God of the Bible while not believing the words of Christ?

Answers

1. Primarily the Lord's conversation with Nicodemus

2. John was baptizing a baptism of repentance, preparing the people for the coming kingdom of God. Meanwhile, the Lord and His disciples were involved in a ministry of baptism similar to John's, a repentance preparing the people for the kingdom of God.

3. Purification

4. "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30)

5. No. See John 3:33-34.

Discuss / Consider

1. When does everlasting life begin? When does the wrath of God abide on the unbeliever?

2. Review practical application #2. Do you know the secret of real joy? Does it show in your life?

Challenge

1. Are you fully persuaded of the truth of John 3:30? How does this show in your life?

Our Lord's Conversation with a Samaritan Woman
John 4:1-23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God does not sell bottled water.

Practical Application

1. Let's practice relationship evangelism.

Questions

1. At the time of Christ, how was the land of Israel divided?

2. By whom was the land of Samaria populated? Why wouldn't the Jews have dealings with the Samaritans?

3. What was the Samaritan religion?

4. Where is Mount Gerizem located?

5. Why did the Lord leave Judea? Where was He going? Why did He travel through Samaria?

6. Give a brief history of Jacob's well.

Answers

1. Into three main regions – Galilee, Judea and Samaria

2. By a group of people who were not fully Jewish. The Jews considered the Samaritans as half-breeds, unclean and outside of Judaism. The Samaritans began their existence when the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, and the capital of Samaria fell in about 722 B.C. The Assyrians deported a number of these Israelis, but then repopulated the land with captives from other nations. These captives brought with them their foreign gods (see 2 Kings 17). As a result of the intermarriages, the Samaritan race was born, and the Samaritan religion was started.

3. It was a mixture of Old Testament and certain elements from these foreign religions. They set up their own priesthood and their own place of worship on Mt. Gerizem.

4. Close to Jacob's well, referred to by the woman in John 4:20.

5. He left to avoid friction with The Pharisees, and He traveled to Galilee. Normally, Jews would not travel through Samaria, but in John 4:4, we see that the Lord Jesus needed to go through Samaria. He knew that He had a pre-planned meeting with the Samaritan woman.

6. Jacob had purchased this well where Jesus and the Samaritan woman met, and he had given it to Joseph, his son, years before this time. Jacob's well still exists today. In John 4:11, the woman speaks of it as a deep well. When archaeologists excavated this well in 1935, it was found to be 138' deep.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review the dos and don'ts of relationship evangelism.

2. Are you practicing relationship evangelism?

Challenge

1. What does it mean, "God does not sell bottled water"? Are you drinking from the living water?

The Results of Our Lord's Conversation with the Samaritan Woman
John 4:24-42

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Worship of God must be in spirit and in truth.

2. Service to God may be sowing or reaping.

Practical Application

1. Use your personal testimony to witness.

Questions

1. What are Mount Gerizem and Mount Ebal known as?

2. To which mountain did the Samaritan woman refer (John 4:20)?

3. Why did the woman come to the well at noon?

4. What kind of worshippers is God seeking?

5. What is true worship? What is true worship not like?

6. What is the characteristic of true worship?

7. What does it mean to worship in truth?

Answers

1. Mount Gerizem is known as the mount of blessing, for the blessings of God were read from its slopes. Mount Ebal is known as the mount of cursing, for the curses of the law were read from it. See Joshua 8:31- 34 and Deuteronomy 11:29; 27:12-13.

2. Mount Gerizem

3. To avoid contact with other women because of her lifestyle (but she was on schedule according to the Lord's timetable).

4. Those who worship in spirit and in truth

5. It is from the heart and the mind and in the spirit. It is not in outward forms and ceremonies; it is not dependent on rites and rituals.

6. It is Christ-centered.

7. It involves scripturally intelligent worship.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review this story, determining who the reapers were, who comprised the field white unto harvest, and who the sower was. Are you a sower or a reaper? Are you content in whichever role God has assigned to you?

2. Recall how the Samaritan woman witnessed: she believed, then gave her personal testimony, then invited people to come to Christ. Is this your story?

Challenge

1. At times, do you find yourself depending on rituals rather than on the spirit in your worship? Remember who God seeks to worship Him. How do you worship in spirit and in truth?

The Healing of the Nobleman's Son
John 4:43-54

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God designs dilemmas of faith to cause Christian growth.

2. God can heal from a distance.

Practical Application

1. Do you need signs and wonders?

2. Maybe your sickness will bring others to Christ.

Questions

1. Is the Lord's statement in John 4:44 contradictory?

2. Who was the nobleman of John 4:46?

3. If this was the second miracle in Galilee, what was the first miracle?

4. Why does God design dilemmas of faith?

5. What was the dilemma of faith for the royal official? How was it resolved?

Answers

1. It would seem that our Lord was received with praise, rather than as a prophet without honor. However, John is referring to what was about to happen. He would be rejected by the Galileans.

2. He was either a Jew or a Gentile, probably the former, employed by Herod Antipas, the ruler over the region of Galilee.

3. The changing of the water into wine at the wedding

4. To cause Christian growth

5. If he left, he must leave the Lord and go in complete faith, based on the word of the Lord. If he stayed and insisted that the Lord come, the son might die in the meantime. He believed the word of the Lord and responded with a strong faith.

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you ever felt that you were a prophet without honor in your own country? If so, how did this affect your ministry?

2. Have you known the healing power of the Lord? Have you known someone who was not healed, but his/her sickness brought others to Christ?

Challenge

1. Have you been caught in a dilemma of faith? Be specific. How did you respond?

A Paralyzed Man in Healed at the Pool of Bethesda
John 5:1-9

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The healing of the paralyzed man fulfilled the prophecies concerning the Messiah.

2. The healing of the paralyzed man pictures the salvation of mankind.

Practical Application

1. ***"Do you want to be made well?" John 5:6***

2. ***"Pick up your bed and walk." John 5:8***

Questions

1. What was this about the stirring of the waters by an angel?

2. This is the third of Jesus' miracles. What were the first two?

3. Why did John choose to write about the miracles of the Lord Jesus?

4. How is this miracle in line with Messianic prophecy?

5. How does the healing of the paralyzed man picture the salvation of mankind?

Answers

1. The people believed that the first one into the water after the stirring of the waters would be healed. There is some question about this, for in the earliest copies of John's gospel, the fourth verse is missing.

2. The changing of the water to wine and the healing of the nobleman's son

3. To prove to readers that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God

4. See Isaiah 35:5-6.

5. The man is unable to help himself; he can't walk; he has no strength; his friends can't help. All hope is gone. Without Christ, man is paralyzed by sin; he cannot save himself; friends cannot help him. There is no hope apart from Christ. In grace, the Lord came to the man. In the same way, the Lord Jesus comes to us, and by His sovereign grace, we are healed. The healing was immediate and complete, and so is salvation.

Discuss / Consider

1. Consider the people today who say "No" to the Lord's offer of healing (salvation). How could you help them understand their need and exercise faith in the Lord's offer?

2. How are you showing the joy of the freedom that you have from the penalty and power of sin?

Challenge

1. Are you guilty at times of lying on your bed of self-pity, doubt or lack of faith? Remember that you have the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to deal with your problems.

The Jews' Reaction to the Healing of the Paralyzed Man
John 5:10-18

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There is something worse than physical problems.

2. God's work of preservation does not stop on the Sabbath.

Practical Application

1. Don't forget to follow up new believers.

2. Do you live by man-made rules or God-made rules?

Questions

1. How did the Jewish leaders respond to this miracle of healing? Why did they respond as they did?

2. How did the healed paralytic respond to the Jewish leaders?

3. How did the Lord answer the leaders?

4. Explain what Jesus meant, *"You have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."*

5. Discuss the difference between God's work of creation and God's work of preservation.

Answers

1. They found fault because it was done on a Sabbath Day. Their man-made Sabbath laws had been broken, and they found fault both with the Lord and the man who was healed. God's law said that the Sabbath was set aside for rest and worship of God, and one was not to work on the Sabbath like he did the rest of the week. But the Jews misinterpreted God's law and added to it their own laws and traditions, so they said that healing and carrying one's bedroll was work.

2. He said, in effect, that if Jesus had the power to heal him, He ought to be obeyed.

3. See John 5:17. God's work of preservation does not stop on the Sabbath. His law did not prohibit acts of mercy or necessity.

4. What could be worse than 38 years of infirmity? It would have been worse for the man if he had been healed physically, then lived a life of sin and never became a true believer. An eternal destiny in hell is far worse than physical problems.

5. God's work of creation came to an end when He rested on the seventh day of creation week. We know from Hebrews 4 that the rest was not broken, but God's work of preservation continues to operate. See Colossians 1:17. God's work of creation was complete, and He rested. But His work of preservation and redemption are other aspects of God's work, and these continue.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you confused about God's laws and man-made laws? If so, check them out by referring to the Bible. Be careful to avoid the mistakes made by the Pharisees.

2. *"You have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." John 5:14* Have you sensed the healing power of the Lord? Are you honoring Him with your life?

The Lord Jesus Elaborates on His Claim to be God
John 5:19-23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Jesus claimed the attributes of God for Himself.

2. Jesus claimed the activities of God for Himself.

Practical Application

1. Do you worship a pagan God?

Questions

1. Who was the “them” of John 5:19, to whom Jesus was talking?

2. Of what were the Jews accusing the Lord Jesus?

3. Define “attributes.”

4. List three attributes.

5. Is Jesus’ claim to omnipotence validated elsewhere in the New Testament?

6. What are the divine activities of God that Jesus claimed for Himself?

Answers

1. The Jews who were finding fault with Jesus

2. Of healing on the Sabbath, and of His claim to be God

3. Qualities of character that are inherent to God

4. God is omniscient (all-knowing), omnipotent (all-powerful), and omnipresent (present everywhere at once).

5. See Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 1:3.

6. The giving of life and the final judging of all mankind. See John 5:21-22.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do a Bible search on other attributes of God. Note how they are manifested in the life of Jesus.

2. If you say that you worship God but not Jesus, then you are not worshipping the God of the Bible. If you don't give the Lord Jesus Christ the same status as God Almighty, then you don't worship the Almighty God. Give this some serious thought.

Challenge

1. Do you worship a pagan god? Pagan gods are gods of our own choosing or making that take the place of the true God. Cull out your false gods or idols – anything that comes between you and the living God.

The Resurrection of Life and the Resurrection of Judgment
John 5:24-29

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The good news is that there is a resurrection of life.

2. The bad news is that there is a resurrection of condemnation.

Practical Application

1. Remember that you were born dead.

2. Remember that you will exist forever.

Questions

1. How do each of the four gospels present Christ?

2. What is the great theme of the gospel of John?

3. What is the good news?

4. What is the bad news?

5. How can one be sure of a resurrection of life?

6. What is important about the use of the tenses in John 5:24?

Answers

1. Matthew presents Christ as King, the Jewish Messiah; in Mark, He is the perfect servant; in Luke, the Son of Man; in John, the Son of God.

2. Presenting the full deity of Christ. Everything in the gospel points to this great truth – the seven sign miracles, the dialogues and conversations of our Lord, and the "I Am" statements all emphasize and enhance the great truth that Jesus is God.

3. That there is a resurrection of life. *"All who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life." John 5:28-29* The resurrection of life is the resurrection of the saved, and those who participate in this resurrection have eternal life in the presence of the Lord.

4. That the damned are resurrected to stand before the judgment of the great white throne. *"All who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." John 5:28-29* This is called the second death, where anyone not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire.

5. The "good" of John 5:29 is to believe the word of God and trust Christ as Savior.

6. The use of the present tense means that the believer has already entered into eternal life, having passed from death into life.

Discuss / Consider

1. Remember that no one is born a Christian, regardless of home, or church, or nation. One must be born of the Spirit. Read Ephesians 2:1. Make sure of your own salvation, and witness to those around you. It's a matter of life or death – eternal life or eternal damnation.

2. Remember that you will exist forever. Every single soul that ever lived will participate in one of these two resurrections. It is an awesome thought, to exist forever, either in heaven or in hell. Let this impress your heart and mind concerning the salvation of loved ones.

Challenge

1. Consider how you would respond to someone who says, "There is no literal hell. A loving God would not relegate anyone to eternal damnation."

Witnesses Who Acknowledge Our Lord's Claim to Be God
John 5:30-47

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The deity of Christ was confirmed by more than two witnesses.

2. The Word (Christ) cannot be separated from the word (the Scriptures).

Practical Application

1. Whose approval do we really want?

Questions

1. Why did the Jews seek to kill Jesus?

2. Why did the Lord Jesus present several witnesses?

3. How many and which witnesses did the Lord Jesus present?

4. What is meant that the Word cannot be separated from the word?

Answers

1. Because He broke “their” Sabbath rules and because He claimed deity.

2. He presented several witnesses who supported His claim to be God, because according to Old Testament law, for a matter to be established, it required two witnesses. See John 5:31 and Deuteronomy 19:15.

3. He presented five witnesses:
a) God the Father (see John 5:32, 37 and Matthew 3:16-17)
b) John the Baptist (see John 5:33, 35 and John 1:7)
c) the miracles (see John 5:36)
d) the Old Testament Scriptures with their many messianic prophecies (see John 5:39)
e) Moses (see John 5:46-47, Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 and Luke 24:27)

4. “The Word (Christ) cannot be separated from the word (the Scriptures)” means that if you really accept Scripture, you will accept Christ and if you really accept Christ, you will accept Scripture. They are inseparable.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you persuaded that the Word cannot be separated from the word? Try explaining this clearly to someone after thinking it through.

2. Whose things will do you seek? Your own or God’s?

Challenge

1. Whose approval do you really want? Are you more concerned about what man thinks of you or what God thinks of you?

The Feeding of the 5,000
John 6:1-14

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The miracles of Christ were pre-designed.

2. Christians have a responsibility to meet social needs.

3. There should be a balance between generosity and economy.

Practical Application

1. Give what you have to the Lord.

2. Do what you can for the Lord.

Questions

1. In which of the gospels is the feeding of the 5,000 recorded?

2. Was the number exactly 5,000?

3. Where did this miracle take place?

4. Why did John mention the Passover?

5. Why did the Lord ask Philip where they should buy bread?

6. How much was a denarius?

7. Were the miracles of Christ pre-designed or done on the spur of the moment?

Answers

1. All four – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

2. No, it was more, for that was only the men, and then there would be women and children as well.

3. Somewhere near the northeast end of Galilee, what is known today as the Golan Heights.

4. To explain why there were large crowds in the area

5. Because Philip was from the nearby town of Bethsaida, and would know where supplies could be purchased.

6. A working man's daily wage, so the amount needed for the crowd would equal two-thirds of a year's salary.

7. They were pre-designed, and they were designed to teach.

Discuss / Consider

1. How are you meeting the social needs of your community? How are you meeting the spiritual needs of your community?

2. Are you giving what you have to the Lord? Consider how the Lord multiplied what was given to Him by a little boy.

Challenge

1. Explain, "There should be a balance between generosity and economy." How are you practicing this in your life?

Jesus Walks on the Sea of Galilee
John 6:15-21

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord's comforting presence is not always immediate.

2. The Lord's comforting presence is not always obvious.

Practical Application

1. How well do you handle popularity?

2. How well do you handle adversity?

Questions

1. Why did John select seven miracles, and what are they called?

2. Why did Jesus leave when He perceived that the people were about to make Him their king?

3. Explain, "The Lord's comforting presence is not always immediate." Illustrate from this portion of Scripture.

4. What is the spiritual picture in this miracle?

5. Is the Lord's comforting presence always obvious?

6. What is the spiritual picture here?

Answers

1. To show that Jesus could be none other than the Son of God. They are called sign miracles because they point clearly to the deity of Christ.

2. Jesus withdrew to be alone with His Father, and He knew the people had a different kind of king in mind.

3. The Lord promises that He will be with us through all the experiences of life. He may delay so that we will go through some troubled waters for various reasons (to strengthen our faith, to lean harder on Him, to see His hand at work, so that we may one day comfort others in like situations). In this passage, the disciples were on a troubled sea, and they were straining against the oars. The Lord's eye was upon them, but they did not realize it.

4. Jesus is in heaven (on the mountain), making intercession on our behalf. Refer to Hebrews 7:25. Meanwhile, as believers, we are on the troubled sea of life.

5. No. When the Lord came walking on the water to the disciples, they did not realize it was the Lord, and they were afraid. According to the Matthew and Mark accounts, they thought He was a ghost.

6. The Lord was there, but the disciples were afraid because they did not recognize Him. This can happen to us, as well.

Discuss / Consider

1. When you have been in a difficult situation, did you feel as if the Lord had forsaken you? Or did you realize that the Lord was using the situation to show you an open door?

2. How well do you handle popularity? Have you been in a position of leadership where people look up to you? Be sure to follow the Lord's example when you are in a popular or prosperous position. Get alone with Him to get your values and priorities straight.

Challenge

1. Are you on a troubled sea right now? Do you believe that the Lord knows and cares and is watching? Do you believe that He can and will come into your troubled situation and bring peace and calm? Are you acting like you believe? How well do you handle adversity?

The Bread of Life Discourse, Part 1
John 6:22-29

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Man shall not live by bread alone.

2. Only one work is necessary for salvation.

Practical Application

1. Do we thank the Lord for our daily bread?

2. Do we seek the Lord for the wrong reasons?

Questions

1. After the two miracles recorded in this chapter, the Lord began to talk with the people. What did He say?

2. Why did the people stay overnight?

3. How did the Lord Jesus answer their question, *"Rabbi, when did You come here?"*

4. *"Man shall not live by bread alone."* Where are these words found in the Bible?

5. Is the Lord saying that we should not be concerned about getting bread?

6. Do we need to work for salvation?

Answers

1. Jesus informed the Jews that He was the true bread from heaven. He stated emphatically that He was the bread of life.

2. Because they were convinced that Jesus was still in the area, and they probably were hoping to see more miracles.

3. See John 6:26-27.

4. Implied in John 6:27; stated in Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4.

5. No. In fact, 2 Thessalonians 3:10 says that if one doesn't work, he shouldn't eat. But He is talking about priorities. How much desire do we have for the food that endures to everlasting life?

6. No, salvation is a free gift. See Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5. The "work" necessary for salvation is faith in Christ, and the word "work" here is used in the sense of "act," the act of faith or believing.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you thank the Lord for your daily bread? In public as well as in private? Have you counted your blessings recently? Do you count them daily?

2. What are your priorities concerning bread? Are you more concerned about material things or the food that endures to everlasting life? How much time do you spend on each type of bread?

Challenge

1. Analyze your average prayer. What percentage of it is worship and praise, and what percentage is for requests? Analyze further – what requests are for your wants and pleasures?

The Bread of Life Discourse, Part 2
John 6:30-40

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The world says, "Seeing is believing." God says, "Believing is seeing."

2. Eternal security of the soul is part of God's salvation package.

3. Resurrection of the body is part of God's salvation package.

Practical Application

1. You can come close and still not be saved.

Questions

1. What did the Jews want before they would believe?

2. Which verses in this passage support the doctrine of eternal security?

3. If you truly accept Christ as your personal Savior, can you lose your salvation?

4. When does everlasting life begin?

5. What does "it" refer to in John 6:39?

6. What is the most important thing for the believer in his resurrected body?

Answers

1. A sign

2. John 6:37, 39, 40

3. No. Refer to the verses in the above answer.

4. When a person accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Savior

5. The sum total of believers. No believer will miss out on the resurrection day.

6. Sinlessness

Discuss / Consider

1. Review the practical application in this lesson. Do you know someone who believes in God and in the miracles of the Bible, and goes to church, but has not truly accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior? Refer to John 6:36 to see how this can happen. How could you help such a person? See John 6:35 and John 6:40.

2. Discuss doctrinal point #1. Refer to Luke 16:19-31 and John 11:40.

Challenge

1. Has your hunger been satisfied? Has your thirst been satisfied? Are you hungry still? Are you thirsty still? Relate your answer to John 6:35. Look up John 4:14 and other Scriptures that speak of spiritual hunger and thirst.

The Bread of Life Discourse, Part 3
John 6:41-51

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God draws a person to Christ on the basis of His sovereignty.

2. God draws a person to Christ by means of Scripture.

3. God draws a person to Christ for the purpose of salvation.

Practical Application

1. Have you partaken of the bread of life?

Questions

1. The bread of life discourse was given in association with what event?

2. Why did the Jews murmur?

3. How did the Jews dispute Jesus' claim to be God?

4. God draws a person to Christ in three ways. What are they?

5. How does God use Scripture in saving people?

6. Does John 6:51 mean the Lord's Supper?

Answers

1. The feeding of the 5,000

2. Because Jesus said that He had come down from heaven.

3. By saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?” They knew Jesus was claiming deity, so they were making Him out to be just a man with earthly parents.

4. God draws a person to Christ a) on the basis of His sovereignty, b) by the means of Scripture, and c) for the purpose of salvation.

5. See John 6:45, Isaiah 54:13, Romans 10:17, and 2 Timothy 3:15-16.

6. No. Jesus is talking about salvation. To eat the bread of life means to receive Christ as Savior.

Discuss / Consider

1. How do you reconcile God’s sovereignty and man’s free choice concerning salvation?

2. How many sign miracles are in the gospel of John? Can you name them and locate those studied thus far?

Challenge

1. Locate and memorize the “I am” statements in the gospel of John.

The Bread of Life Discourse was Offensive to the Jews
John 6:52-59

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. To partake of Christ's body and blood is the key to salvation.

2. To partake of Christ's body and blood is the key to sanctification.

Practical Application

1. Expect to be misunderstood by unbelievers.

Questions

1. Why were the Jews quarreling?

2. How did the Lord answer their argument?

3. Why did Christ use this imagery that was offensive to the Jews?

4. Does partaking of the Lord's Supper give you eternal life?

5. Define, "sanctification."

6. How does one become sanctified?

7. Who can live forever?

Answers

1. They were arguing over the meaning of the Lord's statement in John 6:51. They wondered how Jesus could give them flesh to eat.

2. By amplifying His statement (John 6:53). He was saying that if they didn't eat of His flesh and drink of His blood, they had no life.

3. To convey the kind of believing that He meant. When one eats or drinks something it becomes a part of him, and he must do it himself. No one can do it for another. This is the key to salvation.

4. No. The Lord's Supper is for those who already believe.

5. To be set aside for God's holy use.

6. By feeding continually on Christ by reading and meditating on His word.

7. Those who eat this bread (John 6:58)

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you partaken of Christ's body and blood? Are you saved? Are you sanctified?

2. Have you ever been misunderstood by unbelievers? If so, have you been scared off or do you keep on sharing the gospel?

Challenge

1. Are you spending quality time in reading the Scriptures, meditating on them, and asking the Lord to direct your life daily?

The Final Section of the Bread of Life Discourse
John 6:60-71

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Not every disciple is a true believer.

2. Not every doctrine is easy to handle.

Practical Application

1. Will you turn away because of difficult doctrine?

2. Let's follow the logic of Peter.

Questions

1. Were Jesus' disciples of John 6:60-66 the twelve disciples?

2. Why did many disciples turn away?

3. When the Lord spoke about eating His body and drinking His blood, was He referring to the Lord's Supper?

4. What was the good news in this situation?

5. Are all disciples true believers?

6. What is the mark of a true disciple?

7. Are all doctrines easy to handle?

Answers

1. No. They were among those from Galilee who followed Him and saw His miracles.

2. Because some had expected Jesus to become their political leader, and they realized this wasn't happening. Some were offended by His teaching, "Eat My body, drink My blood."

3. No. This discourse took place a year before the Lord's Supper was instituted.

4. Although many turned away from the Lord, there were some who stayed.

5. No. Note that many of His disciples left Him.

6. Perseverance. See John 8:30-31.

7. No. Many said that this was a hard saying (John 6:60). The same is true today. For example, the doctrine of election and the foreknowledge of God is difficult to comprehend. You are destined, yet you are responsible for your destiny.

Discuss / Consider

1. Read John 6:68. Are you following Peter's logic? Even if you wanted to turn away because of difficult teaching, where would you go?

2. Consider a few doctrines that are difficult to understand. Discuss them.

Challenge

1. The mark of a true disciple is perseverance. Do you carry this mark on you?

A Discussion Between the Lord and His Earthly Brothers
John 7:1-13

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God has a plan for the believer's life

2. Common sense is part of God's plan for the believer's life

Practical Application

1. When you witness, you will be accused of deceiving people

2. Family ties will not save you.

Questions

1. What were the "things" of John 7:1?

2. Which event was held by the Jews in the fall of the year? What did it commemorate?

3. Who were the Lord's earthly brothers? Did He also have sisters?

4. For whom does God have a life plan?

5. Is God's plan in line with the world's way of thinking? Discuss.

6. Should you throw common sense to the wind when following God's plan for your life?

Answers

1. The two miracles and the bread of life discourse

2. The Feast of Tabernacles. How God led them through the wilderness and into the Promised Land.

3. James, Joses, Judas and Simon. Yes. See Mark 6:3.

4. For believers. See John 7:6-8, where the Lord was saying that there was a pre-programmed plan for His life, but not for theirs because they were not in tune with God's plan for their lives.

5. No. As in the case of Jesus, the natural way would have been for Jesus to go up to Jerusalem and enter as a king.

6. No. Follow the example of the Lord Jesus. He did not put Himself in a dangerous situation when his brothers argued that He should. Our missionaries keep this in mind when in hostile situations.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you believe that God has a plan for your life? If so, how can you discern it on a daily basis? See Proverbs 3:5-6.

2. Are you ready to accept God's plan, even though you will be hated by the world? (See 1 John 3:13 and John 15:18-19.

Challenge

1. Are you ready to be hated by the world?

The Lord Teaches During the Feast of the Tabernacles
John 7:14-18

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Obedience is a key to correct doctrine

2. Humility is a key to integrity

Practical Application

1. Speak for God whenever you have an audience.

2. Let's watch out for the god of education.

Questions

1. How long before His death did the Lord teach at the Feast of the Tabernacles?

2. When were Jewish males to go up to Jerusalem?

3. Where were the Jews from who were celebrating the Feast of the Tabernacles?

4. What was the composition of the crowd to whom Jesus spoke?

5. What is the key to correct doctrine?

6. What is the key to integrity? What is integrity?

Answers

1. About six months

2. Three times a year to celebrate certain feasts. See Deuteronomy 16:16.

3. From all over the Roman Empire, and even as far east as Babylon

4. Many would have heard about Jesus, and some would have heard Him preach and would have seen His miracles. There were the religious leaders who had been looking for Jesus and had rejected Him. It was a crowd of mixed people and of mixed opinions.

5. Obedience. See John 7:17.

6. Humility. Integrity is moral soundness, honesty, moral uprightness.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you want to interpret scripture correctly? What, then, must you do?

2. Do you want to be known for your integrity? What, then, must you do?

Challenge

1. Beware of falling into the thinking of those who follow the god of education. At the same time, have you thanked God for the education that He has provided for you? Are you using it for Him?

The Lord Teaches in the Temple Area
John 7:19-29

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Righteous judgment sees beneath surface appearances.

2. God is not known by those who refuse to hear Jesus.

Practical Application

1. Let's not judge superficially.

Questions

1. Why did the Lord begin to talk to the religious leaders about the law of Moses?

2. How, specifically, did the religious leaders go against the law?

3. Give an example from this passage concerning, "Righteous judgment sees beneath surface appearances."

4. Cite a verse from this passage that says, in effect, "God is not known by those who refuse to hear Jesus."

Answers

1. Because the people were so proud of the law, and always appealing to it, but the Lord tells them that they are not keeping the law (John 7:22-23).

2. See John 7:22. Also, they were seeking to kill Jesus, which was a transgression of the law, *"Thou shalt not kill."*

3. The Jewish leaders found fault with Jesus because He healed a man on the Sabbath, yet they circumcised on the Sabbath.

4. John 7:28

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you ever judge according to appearance without seeing what is beneath the surface? Discuss how you can change this in your life.

2. Are you fully persuaded that Jesus is God? How would you defend this to an unbeliever?

The Jewish Religious Leaders Attempt to Arrest Jesus
John 7:30-36

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Logic should lead an unbeliever to the threshold of faith

2. There is a point of no return

Practical Application

1. We are immortal until our mission on earth is accomplished.

Questions

1. Who were the chief priests of John 7:32?

2. Were the ones seeking to take Jesus the Roman soldiers?

3. What was meant by the “Dispersion” in John 7:35?

4. How predictive was the question (John 7:35) by the Jewish leaders?

5. How should logic lead unbelievers to the threshold of faith?

6. Can logic save a person?

7. What was John’s purpose in writing this gospel?

8. Is there a point of no return? If so, what is that point?

Answers

1. Those of the Sadducee Party, from the wealthy and powerful families of Jerusalem

2. No, they were the temple guards who were to keep law and order in the temple area during the Feast of the Tabernacles.

3. The Dispersion was the scattered Jews all over the Greek-speaking world. It began when the Jews went into captivity in Babylon, and some went down into Egypt at that time. The Dispersion continued when the Jews came back and it continues today. Today there are Jews all over the world because of the Dispersion.

4. It was very predictive, for the gospel would go out to the Gentiles because of the rejection of Christ by His own people, the Jews.

5. By believing in the words and works of the Lord Jesus Christ they logically come to the point of faith. The Lord pronounced judgment on the people who had heard His words and had seen His miracles, but did not believe.

6. No, but it can bring him to the threshold of faith.

7. See John 20:30-31.

8. Yes. See John 7:33-34 and John 8:21, the fulfillment. The point of no return is found in John 8:24.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you know someone who has failed to use logic and reason when it comes to believing? For example, is it logical to think that this universe just created itself, or fell into place?

2. Discuss the practical application of this lesson, “We are immortal until our mission on earth is accomplished?” What does it mean to you? Do you know your mission on earth? Are you walking with God and seeking to serve Him?

Challenge

1. Has logic led you to the threshold of faith? Have you stepped over that threshold?

Jesus Teaches about the Holy Spirit
John 7:37-39

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost.

2. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer.

3. The Holy Spirit brings continuous blessing.

Practical Application

1. Have you done the one thing you need to do to become a Christian?

2. Let's look for situations to practice situation evangelism.

Questions

1. How long was the Feast of Tabernacles? What did the priests do daily during this feast? Why did they do this?

2. What happened on the day after the Feast ended? Why?

3. How did Jesus use the action of the priests as a springboard for teaching?

4. When was the Holy Spirit given?

5. Who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit?

6. Is everyone filled by the Holy Spirit?

7. How does the Holy Spirit bring continuous blessing?

8. What is relationship evangelism? What is situation evangelism?

Answers

1. Seven days. They would go down to the pool of Siloam in Jerusalem and fill a golden pitcher with water, then they would bring it up to the temple area and pour it out by the altar of burnt offering. This reminded them of the way God miraculously provided water for them in the wilderness.

2. They no longer brought the water, for it represented a new beginning, when Israel came into the Promised Land and God no longer had to provide water in the wilderness. On the eighth day they looked forward to the future blessing when the Messiah would come.

3. Jesus used the illustration of water, even as He did with the Samaritan woman at the well. Now He spoke, *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." John 7:37-38*

4. At Pentecost. See John 16:7 and Acts 2:1-2.

5. The church (the body of Christ) and every individual believer

6. No, not if he is not walking after the Spirit.

7. In connection with the new divine life that a believer has in Christ, the Spirit can bring continuous blessing. Being submissive to the Holy Spirit in every area of the believer's life brings continuous blessing (see Ephesians 5:8-10).

8. Relationship evangelism is where you build a relationship with a person and earn the right to be heard and share Christ with him. Situation evangelism is where you take advantage of the situation you are in to witness for Christ.

Discuss / Consider

1. If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the rivers of living water overflow. Do you know the abundant blessing that is available because of the Holy Spirit? Do you ever quench the Spirit?

2. Discuss situation evangelism. Give an example of a time you tried it.

Challenge

1. Have you done the one thing you must do to become a Christian? This is found in John 7:37.

Reactions to the Lord's Teaching
John 7:40-53

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The claims of Christ divide people.

2. Religious prejudice is blind.

Practical Application

1. What kind of report does the unbeliever give about us?

Questions

1. Who is meant by "the Prophet" in John 7:40?

2. Do the claims of Christ unite or divide people?

3. What did people fail to do concerning the credentials of Christ?

4. Did Jesus come to give peace?

5. The ecumenical movement is a good thing. Right?

6. What is meant by the doctrinal point, "Religious prejudice is blind?"

Answers

1. The one referred to in Deuteronomy 18:15,18 – the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. They divide people. Three times in the gospel of John, we read about divisions in the people because of Christ. See John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19.

3. They failed to check them out concerning Jesus' birthplace and lineage.

4. No. See Luke 12:51-53.

5. Wrong. It is unbiblical because it waters down the claims of Christ. Unity is at the expense of truth.

6. People who will not believe are blind against evidence and reason. For example, the religious leaders said, "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?" They were implying that none had, but Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea believed, and so did other rulers (John 12:42). Also, they said that no prophet had come from Galilee, but Jonah was a prophet from Galilee. In other words, they had their presuppositions, and they would not be persuaded, even by evidence and reason.

Discuss / Consider

1. The temple guards reported to the chief priests and Pharisees, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" These unbelievers could not find a single flaw in the character or teachings of Jesus. How about you? Is your character and speech such that unbelievers must acknowledge that you are different? That you have been with Jesus? Do you have spiritual insight? Do you care? Do you really mean and act upon what you say? What kind of a report do unbelievers have concerning you?

2. What kind of a report do fellow believers have about you? Is this a different issue that with unbelievers?

Challenge

1. Have you ever put on blinders to evidence and reason?

The Woman Caught in Adultery
John 8:1-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God knows how to bring conviction to self-righteous people.

2. God does not condone sin, but He forgives sin.

Practical Application

1. Let's not hide behind bigger sinners.

2. Let's be characterized by a forgiving spirit.

Questions

1. Why is this section of scripture somewhat controversial?

2. What did the Lord write on the ground?

3. How did the Lord bring conviction to the Pharisees in this passage?

4. How did the Pharisees try to trap the Lord here?

5. Does God condone sin?

Answers

1. Not because of the Lord's forgiveness of the woman, but because it is not included in some of the earliest manuscripts of the gospel of John.

2. We don't know.

3. In a couple of ways. According to the law (Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22), there was to be no double standard, yet the man was let go. The Lord said to them, *"He who is without sin" John 8:7*, and they must have realized their own sin in this instance, because none accused her.

4. If He had said to stone her, according to the law, He would have lost His reputation for being compassionate, and they would have brought Him before the Roman authorities, saying that He was trying to take power into His own hands. But if He had said not to stone her, they would have accused Him of not upholding the Mosaic law.

5. No, but He forgives sin. See John 8.11.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you condone or excuse sin, either in yourself or someone else?

2. Have you ever felt convicted of sin, after trying to justify it?

Challenge

1. Are you characterized by a forgiving spirit?

Jesus, Light of the World
John 8:12-20

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Jesus is the Light of the world.

2. The judgment of Christ is the judgment of God.

Practical Application

1. Is Jesus the Light of your world?

Questions

1. List the courts of the temple, in order of the greatest distance from the Holy of Holies.

2. In which court was the Lord teaching?

3. How did the Lord use situation evangelism here?

4. What did the Lord mean when He said, “I am the light of the world”?

5. Is the judgment of Christ the same as the judgment of God?

6. How did the Pharisees try to undermine the statements of Christ?

7. What are the options in believing the claims of Christ?

Answers

1. The Court of the Gentiles, the Court of the Women, the Court of Israel, the Priests' Court.

2. In the Court of the Women.

3. It was in this court that there were candles and lamps, so it was in this context that He said, *"I am the light of the world" John 8:12.*

4. He meant that,
a) the world is in darkness, full of evil and sin and ignorance
b) as the light of the world, He revealed that everyone falls short of God's standard of righteousness
c) He is the light of life, the One to follow, as the pillar of light guided the people in the wilderness, so the Lord will guide those who turn to Him
d) He is the light of the world
e) "I AM" is a claim to deity. It was a claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God.

5. Yes. See John 8.16.

6. They tried to dispute Him with a legal technicality, saying that He needed two witnesses to back up His claim. And they tried to undermine His authority by asking, *"Where is Your Father?" John 8:19*

7. Either to believe Him or to say that He lied.

Discuss / Consider

1. Is Jesus the light of your world? Do you walk in darkness or in the light?

2. If you sense a lack of purpose, you are heading in the wrong direction. Turn to the light.

Challenge

1. Do you have the joy of the Lord?

"If You Do Not Believe that I Am He, You will die in Your Sins"
John 8:21-30

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There is no second chance for salvation.

2. There is no second way of salvation.

Practical Application

1. Don't miss your window of opportunity.

2. Don't unload everything at once on the unbeliever.

Questions

1. How many "I Am" predicate statements are in the gospel of John? Give examples.

2. How many "I Am" statements without predicates are there in the gospel of John? Give examples.

3. To what was the Lord Jesus referring when He said, *"When you lift up the Son of Man..."*?

4. To what was the Lord Jesus referring when He said, *"then you will know that I am He"*?

5. Is there a second chance for salvation after death?

6. Many roads lead to heaven. Right?

Answers

1. There are seven. The predicates are bread, light, door, Good Shepherd, etc.

2. There are seven. Three of them are in chapter eight, verses 24, 28, and 58.

3. He was referring to the cross, His resurrection and His ascension.

4. Evidence at His death, including the earthquake, the three hours of darkness, the tearing of the veil in the temple from top to bottom, and the Roman centurion's statement

5. No. As Jesus said, *"You will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come" John 8.21,* and *"if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" John 8:24*.

6. Wrong. Jesus alone is the way of salvation.

7. The "window of opportunity" comes from space terminology, meaning there is a window for launching because of just right conditions. Miss the window and the opportunity is lost.

Discuss / Consider

1. When did you seize your "window of opportunity" for salvation? Do you know some who have missed the "window of opportunity?"

2. Do you know people who say there are many roads that lead to God and to heaven? What is your rebuttal?

Challenge

1. The Lord could have presented His hearers with more truth, but He was sensitive to the direction and timing of His Father. Follow His example when you are witnessing.

The Lord Refutes Jews Who Claim to be Children of Abraham
John 8:31-47

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Perseverance is the sign of a believer.

2. Practicing sin is the sign of an unbeliever.

3. The truth will make a sinner free.

4. Sincerity will not make a sinner free.

Practical Application

1. Who is your father?

Questions

1. In John 8:31-32, 34-35 and 44 was the Lord Jesus addressing believers or unbelievers?

2. What is the sign of a believer? Back your answer with scripture.

3. What is the sign of an unbeliever?

4. Will the truth make you free? Will Christ make you free? Will sincerity make you free?

5. What did the Jews fail to consider when they said, “We have never been in bondage to anyone”?

Answers

1. John 8:31-32 – believers; John 8:34-35,44 – unbelievers

2. Perseverance. See John 8:31. Abiding means consistency in reading and obeying His word. Abiding and perseverance are signs of a believer.

3. Committing sin habitually. Continually sinning means that you are a slave to sin, and not a son (John 8:34-35). A son is in the family; a slave is not.

4. Yes (John 8:32). Yes (verse 36). No (verse 33).
5. They failed to consider their bondage in Egypt, the Babylonian captivity, and the present Roman occupation. However, the greater bondage was that they were slaves to sin (John 8:44, 47).

Discuss / Consider

1. How would you make someone understand that there are only two possibilities, that either God or Satan is that person's father?

2. How would you explain the bondage of sin to someone? And then how would you present them with an opportunity to be free from this bondage?

3. If someone was convinced that sincerity would get him into heaven, how would you help him to understand that Jesus is the only way?

Challenge

1. Religious sincerity cannot make someone a believer. There are many people who are sincere in their spiritual quests, but they could be sincerely mistaken! It is only by belief in the saving power of Jesus Christ that you can be saved.

The Lord Claims that He is Fully God
John 8:48-59

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord Jesus is incredibly gracious

2. The Lord Jesus claimed full deity.

Practical Application

1. Getting glory for ourselves is not our responsibility.

2. Getting to know Him is our responsibility.

Questions

1. How did the Pharisees attack Jesus?

2. How did the Pharisees accuse Jesus?

3. What did these accusations mean?

4. How did the Lord handle these accusations?

5. Did the Jews try to stone Jesus for some minor theological charge?

6. What could John 8:51 have meant to the accusers?

7. Did the Lord say that Abraham had seen Him?

8. When did Jesus reveal Himself by the divine title used of God alone in the Old Testament?

Answers

1. First with words, then physically with stones

2. They accused Him of being a Samaritan and of having a demon.

3. To be called a Samaritan by the Jews was the same as being called a heretic, and to be accused of having a demon was like being considered insane.

4. He denied the slanderous charges, stated the truth, and then moved on.

5. No. They would have stoned Him for blasphemy, His claim to be God.

6. It could have meant their salvation. If they had believed the words of the Lord Jesus, they would not be condemned.

7. No. Rather, Abraham said that he rejoiced to see "His day." Note the Messianic promise in Genesis 12:3 and the indication that Abraham had seen the promise afar off (Hebrews 11:13).

8. When He said, *"Before Abraham was, I AM" John 8:58*. This was the way God revealed Himself to Moses in that burning bush experience (Exodus 3:13-14).

Discuss / Consider

1. Does it ever bother you when another believer gets honor above you? How should you handle this? See 1 Peter 5:6 and Proverbs 27:2.

Challenge

1. As a believer, how well do you know God? Remember that obedience is a key to knowing Him.

The Lord Heals a Man Who was Blind from Birth
John 9:1-12

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Bad things do happen to good people.

2. Man is spiritually blind from birth.

3. Salvation requires a Naaman-like faith.

Practical Application

1. Let's make hay while the sun shines.

2. Our neighbors should see a difference in us.

Questions

1. How could a man be born blind because of his parents' sin?

2. Why did the Lord choose to heal the blind man by mixing spit with clay?

3. Do bad things happen to "good" people?

4. Why is "good" in quotation marks?

5. What is the spiritual picture in the healing of the blind man?

6. What does it mean, "Salvation requires a Naaman-like faith"?

Answers

1. This idea came from a misinterpretation of an Old Testament law whereby the iniquity of the fathers would be visited upon the children into the next generations. See Exodus 20.5; 34.7. What God meant was that sin has a trickle-down or rippling-out effect.

2. From early Jewish writings, the spit of a Rabbi was highly esteemed. The Lord used this to heal the deaf and dumb man (Mark 7), and the blind man of Bethsaida (Mark 8). Furthermore, the touch of the Lord Jesus was important with this handicapped man, for many avoid touching a handicapped person.

3. Yes, sometimes God allows bad things to happen. He is not the source of bad things, for there is evil in this world. God can take those bad things and overrule, using them in His plans for an individual's life.

4. Because no one is good. See Romans 3.

5. It is a spiritual picture of salvation. We are born in sin and we are blind spiritually until we experience the new birth. See 1 Peter 2.9.

6. When Naaman was told by Elisha to dip into the Jordan River seven times to cure his leprosy, he refused. Then he went in faith and was cured. This blind man had to go in faith to the pool by himself.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you avoid touching someone with a disability? Discuss what that touch might mean to that person.

2. The Lord said that He must work for darkness was coming. He meant that His earthly ministry would end and He would return to His Father. In the meantime, He was effectively and efficiently doing the works ordained by God. We all have limited time here on earth. How are you taking advantage of the time and opportunities that the Lord is giving you?

Challenge

1. When bad things happen to you, do you blame outside sources, or people, or even God? Think on Romans 8:28.

The Reaction of the Pharisees to the Healing of the Blind Man
John 9:13-23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. People are divided when confronted with the miracles of Christ.

2. Religious threats carry enormous power.

Practical Application

1. You don't have to understand the mechanics of your salvation to be saved.

2. Let's not measure spirituality by man-made standards.

Questions

1. Why did John select certain sign miracles to write about in this gospel?

2. How did the Pharisees react when the healed blind man was brought to them?

3. Why are people divided when confronted with the miracles of Christ?

4. What does it mean that religious threats carry enormous power?

5. Must you understand the mechanics of salvation to be saved?

Answers

1. There were many other sign miracles that he could have written about, but *"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."* See John 20:30-31.

2. They found fault with Jesus for breaking the Sabbath (their man-made Sabbath laws) and some denied the miracle and wanted more proof.

3. Because the miracles focus attention on Jesus' claim to be God, and people must make a decision to believe or reject Jesus' claims.

4. When the Pharisees asked the parents to explain how their son was cured, they deferred the question back to him, lest they be excommunicated. The same is true today. For an Orthodox Jew or a Muslim to become a Christian means to be cut off from family and friends.

5. No, not any more than you must understand all about electricity to turn on a light. You need to know that all are sinners in need of a Savior, and by faith receive Him. Note the answer of the blind man in John 9:25, *"One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."*

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you ever been pressured by others to downplay your Christian beliefs? Did you stand firm? Or did you lapse into silence?

2. Are you persuaded that Jesus is deity, fully God? This is the most important decision you have to make, and it is for eternity.

Challenge

1. The Pharisees measured spirituality by their man-made standards. Make sure that you avoid this trap.

The Pharisees Reject the Testimony of the Healed Blind Man
John 9:24-34

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. No amount of evidence will convince the hardened skeptic.

2. The religious establishment rejects the testimony of born again believers.

Practical Application

1. Don't be surprised if the religious world hates you.

Questions

1. How did the Pharisees try to discredit and belittle the healed blind man?

2. Although the Pharisees saw this miracle, they wouldn't believe. Why?

3. The religious establishment of that day rejected the man's testimony. What about today?

4. Why does the religious world hate the truth?

5. Can you expect to be hated by the world, including the religious world?

Answers

1. They told him to tell the truth (give God the glory). They questioned him concerning how he was healed and who healed him, they questioned his parents, they asked if he didn't know that Jesus was a sinner, they looked for a way to explain away the miracle, they reviled him, and finally they cast him out of the synagogue.

2. They were hardened skeptics. Their minds were made up regardless of the evidences and the testimony of the man.

3. The same is true today. The religious establishment (many main-line churches and even some seminaries) rejects the testimony of born-again believers.

4. Because the world doesn't want the true gospel presented. People would rather believe that man is basically good and can save himself.

5. Yes. They rejected the man's testimony (John 9:28), trying to make themselves look right. They rejected Jesus Himself and crucified Him. See 1 John 3:13 and John 15:18.

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you had the experience of being hated by the world because of your testimony for Christ? Or by the religious world because of your testimony for Christ? Did it surprise you? Read John 15:18 and 1 John 3:13. You are in good company!

2. The healed blind man was put on the spot even by his parents, but he stood firm in his testimony. Have your relatives and friends failed to support your stand for Christ? Did you stand firm?

Challenge

1. What does it mean to you that your eyes have been opened?

Faith of the Healed Man; Spiritual Blindness of the Pharisees
John 9:35-41

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God continues His work in every believer's life.

2. The end result of correct theology should be worship.

3. Everyone was blind or will be blind.

Practical Application

1. The Lord will find you when you're hurting.

Questions

1. Where did the healing take place, and what was the Lord's teaching connected with this miracle?

2. What was the reaction of the Pharisees?

3. At what point did the Lord find the man?

4. Cite a New Testament verse that confirms God's continuing work in the life of the believer.

5. How was this truth portrayed in this passage?

6. What should be the end result of correct theology?

7. Explain John 9:39.

Answers

1. In Jerusalem. To confirm the deity of Christ.

2. They did everything they could to discredit the Lord, and they reviled the blind man, even casting him out of the synagogue.

3. After he had been cast out by the Pharisees

4. *Philippians 1:6, "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."*

5. The Lord not only healed the blind man, but He continued to work with him, teaching him more truth.

6. Worship. As the man knew more of God, he worshiped (John 9:38).

7. Those who do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God will be judged because they are trusting in their own sight. Those who acknowledge their spiritual blindness and come to Christ will see (be saved).

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you understand the impact of John 9:39, both for believers and the unsaved? Does this motivate you to share the gospel?

2. The Lord found the man when he was hurting. Have you experienced His touch when you were hurting? How has the Lord ministered to you?

Challenge

1. How are you letting the Lord continue His work in your life?

The Lord Is Both the Shepherd and the Door for the Sheep
John 10:1-10

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Christ is the Shepherd of the sheep.

2. Christ is the Door of the sheep.

Practical Application

1. Have you heard the True Shepherd's voice?

2. Have you found the True Shepherd's pasture?

Questions

1. What is the connection between Chapter 9 and Chapter 10?

2. Discuss the role of a first century shepherd.

3. What's represented by: a) true shepherd, b) the sheepfold, c) the door, d) the doorkeeper, & e) the true sheep?

4. In this figurative discourse, what was the purpose of the true shepherd?

5. How is Christ the door of the sheep?

Answers

1. The Pharisees fell into the category of the false shepherds, thieves and robbers, who led the people astray.

2. A sheepfold was a walled enclosure made of stones. Several flocks of sheep were kept in the sheepfold, and when a legitimate shepherd came to get his flock, the doorkeeper or watchman of the fold would let the shepherd pass into the fold. The shepherd would call the sheep, and the sheep, who knew his voice, would come to him, and he would lead his flock out to pasture. When they were away from the sheepfold, the shepherd would stay out all night with his flock, finding some kind of shelter in the pasture area, and he himself would act as the door, so that no wild animal could get by him.

3.
a) Christ
b) the nation of Israel under the Law
c) the right way for the Messiah, the true shepherd to come in line with Old Testament prophecies
d) John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the Messiah and opened the door when the true shepherd arrived
e) the disciples and other true believers in the nation Israel

4. For Christ (the true shepherd) to lead His sheep (true believers) out of the sheepfold (out of Judaism and the Mosaic law).

5. Christ alone is the door in the pasture area, the door to food for the soul. He is the door to spiritual life and to the abundant life. He is the only door. See Matthew 7:13-14.

Discuss / Consider

1. Within this generation, can you identify some sheep who listened to the wrong voice, the voice of a false shepherd, and were led to their destruction? There are some who are following false shepherds now. How would you try to make them see that they are in danger, and not following the true shepherd?

2. What do you need to do to find soul food?

Challenge

1. Have you heard the true Shepherd's voice? Jesus Christ is the true Shepherd and His voice is always in perfect line with Scripture. If you say, "the Lord told me this" or "the Lord told me that" and this message contradicts Scripture, you need to confirm that you are only listening to the true Shepherd's voice.

"I Am the Good Shepherd"
John 10:11-18

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

2. The Good Shepherd knows His sheep.

3. The Good Shepherd leads only one flock of sheep.

Practical Application

1. Are you a shepherd or a hireling?

Questions

1. List the seven "I Am" predicate claims in the gospel of John (with chapter references).

2. How does the good shepherd differ from the hireling?

3. In this illustration of our good shepherd, who is the wolf, and what is his strategy?

4. Who are the sheep not of the shepherd's fold?

5. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. What does this really mean?

Answers

1. I am the bread (John 6); the light of the world (John 8 and 9); the door (John 10); the good shepherd (John 10); the resurrection and the life (John 11); the way, the truth, and the life (John 14); and the vine (John 15).

2. The good shepherd leads his flock miles away from the home fold to find good pasture. He is with them day and night, protecting them from dangers from the terrain, the weather and wild animals. He is ready to lay down his life for his sheep. The hireling is hired to care for the sheep, but he doesn't really care, and when danger comes, he deserts the sheep.

3. The wolf is Satan or satanic agents, and his strategy is to ensnare and scatter the sheep in any way that he can.

4. They are the Gentile believers that the Lord is anticipating. Notice the good shepherd's ultimate purpose – that there will be one flock (the Church, Jew and Gentile made one). See Ephesians 2:13-14.

5. It means that the Lord Jesus, as the good shepherd, voluntarily laid down His life at the cross. He gave His life for us (John 10:17-18).

Discuss / Consider

1. Take time this week to meditate on the good shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. Spend time thinking about this voluntary work of the Lord Jesus on your behalf.

2. Are you a shepherd or a hireling? As believers, we have a responsibility to help pastor the good shepherd's flock. How are you doing? What are you doing to care for the sheep?

Challenge

1. Take time this week to meditate on John 10:17-18, and the impact that it has on your life for eternity.

Further Divisions Among the Jews Because of Jesus Christ
John 10:19-21

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. If Jesus was not more than a good man, He was a bad man or a madman.

Practical Application

1. Let's lose our logic advantage.

Questions

1. 3rd Division: Can you identify these passages and tell why there is a division?

2. Explain the liar, lunatic, or Lord argument.

3. What is the evidence to refute the liar argument?

4. What is the evidence to refute the lunatic argument?

5. What is the evidence to back up the Lord's claim to deity?

6. For which of these things did the Jews pick up stones to stone Jesus?

Answers

1. John 7:40-43, because of the person of Christ; John 9:16, because of the works (miracles) of Christ; and John 10:19, because of the words of Christ.

2. If Jesus claimed to be God, but He wasn't God, He can't be a good man or a great human leader. If He claimed to be God and knew that claim was false, then He was a liar. If, on the other hand, He claimed to be God and didn't know it was a false claim, then He was beside Himself, insane, deluded, a lunatic. The record is clear that Jesus is not a liar, nor is He deluded. A person has only three options at that point – he believes that Jesus is Lord, or a liar, or a lunatic. The logical conclusion is that Jesus is Lord.

3. The record of Jesus of Nazareth shows Him to be anything but a liar.

4. The record of Jesus is anything but one who is deluded or demon-possessed. Insane people are not balanced or concerned for others.
5. The evidence is overwhelming that Jesus made the claim to deity. Not only biblical evidence, but extra-biblical evidence as well. The gospel of John is full of statements claiming Jesus' deity: John 14:8-11; John 8:56-59; John 10:30-33.

6. For blasphemy, for claiming that He was God.

Discuss / Consider

1. How well would you do in the liar, lunatic or Lord argument? Do you know scripture well enough to show that Jesus is who He claimed to be?

2. How well could you use the logic argument with unbelievers?

A Strong Argument for the Eternal Security of the Believer
John 10:22-30

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Those who are not sheep do not believe, because they are not sheep.

2. The eternal security of sheep lies in the strength of the Shepherd and not in the weakness of the sheep.

3. The Father and the Son are distinct persons of the one true God.

Practical Application

1. Do you have the Good Hands life insurance policy?

Questions

1. When and where did the Feast of Dedication take place?

2. When was the Feast of the Tabernacles?

3. What did the Feast of Dedication celebrate?

4. Why was Jesus on Solomon's porch?

5. What did Jesus tell the unbelieving Jews in John 10:26?

6. Of what else is this verse an indication?

7. Where does the security of the sheep lie?

8. What does Jesus mean, *"I and My Father are one" John 10:30*?

9. Are there three Gods, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit?

Answers

1. In Jerusalem in the winter

2. In the fall of the year, so the Feast of Dedication was about two months later.

3. The cleansing of the temple, which took place in the Second Century B.C., in the time of the Macabees. It is also known as the Feast of Lights, or Hanukkah. This, by the way, is the only place in the Bible where this feast is mentioned.

4. This part of Herod's Temple was where people gathered to listen to religious discussions.

5. Jesus said that He had told them plainly that He was the Christ, but that they wouldn't believe Him because they were not of His fold.

6. Of the sovereignty of God calling a person to salvation. The Bible also teaches that a person is responsible to come to God for salvation.

7. In the strength of the shepherd, not in the weakness of the sheep. Once you are Christ's sheep, you are in His flock forever. Note John 10:27-29. No person can take you out of His hands.

8. He means that He and the Father were one in mind, in purpose, in action and in power. Jesus was claiming one in essence and nature with God.

9. No. There are three distinct persons of the one true God. God is one in essence, but three in persons.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you fully persuaded of the doctrine of eternal security? Review the verses, John 10:28-29; Colossians 3:3; and Romans 8:38-39. Could you discuss this doctrine convincingly with a doubting believer?

Challenge

1. This passage shows the sovereignty of God in calling a person to salvation. We're saved because God chose us. The Bible also teaches that a person is responsible to come to God for salvation. God sovereignly chooses us, but at the same time we have the responsibility to choose God. Although these truths may be difficult to harmonize in our finite comprehension, they are not contradictory! Are you willing to hold these two truths in tension?

Once Again, The Jews Attempt to Stone Jesus
John 10:31-42

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord Jesus believed in the inerrancy of Scripture.

2. The Lord Jesus used common sense and avoided danger.

Practical Application

1. There's more than one Biblical answer you can give the religious critic.

Questions

1. How does the Lord defuse the crowd in this situation?

2. Which verse in this section shows that the Lord Jesus believed in the inerrancy of Scripture?

3. Is the Bible historically and scientifically accurate?

4. Did the Lord Jesus throw common sense to the wind when the Jews sought to kill Him?

Answers

1. He uses a fine point, a technicality of the law to defuse the crowd by quoting Psalm 82:6 (John 10:34-36). In context, human judges are referred to and called gods. If human judges are called gods, then certainly to refer to Himself as the Son of God was not blasphemy.

2. John 10:35. Our Lord's high view of Scripture included the doctrine of the inerrancy.

3. While the purpose of the Bible is not to teach history or science, it will not be in error in these fields.

4. No, He escaped and went away from danger. He knew that this was not His time for the cross.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you fully persuaded that the Bible is not in error? This is a very important doctrine. Because the Bible is the word of God, it does not lie. There are no errors in the Bible because it was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

2. The answer that Jesus gave in John 10:34-36 defused a volatile situation. Sometimes an unexpected answer to critics can change the tenor of a situation. Review some of the suggestions in the Practical Application of this lesson. Be careful, however, that you have a right attitude.

Challenge

1. At some time in your life you may find that the Lord has allowed you to be in a dangerous situation for His sake – in fact He may even call you to be a martyr for the sake of the gospel! But a point drawn from this passage is that you shouldn't try to get yourself killed! We should use our common sense and avoid danger when we can.

The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead
John 11:1-16

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The death of a believer is on schedule.

2. The death of a believer is like sleep.

Practical Application

1. Have you run a heavenly credit check lately?

Questions

1. Why were the disciples reluctant to go to Bethany?

2. For what is Thomas remembered? For what else should he be remembered?

3. Was Lazarus' death premature and untimely?

4. What was the purpose of Lazarus' death at this time?

5. In the New Testament, who died in the presence of Jesus?

6. Is God glad when a believer dies?

7. Explain, "The death of a believer is like sleep."

Answers

1. See John 10:31 and John 8:59. The Jews were ready to stone Jesus.

2. For his doubting (John 20:24-29). For his courage (John 11:16).

3. No. It was on schedule in the Lord's timetable.

4. To glorify God and His Son

5. No one

6. See Psalm 116:15

7. Sleep is never used in the death of an unbeliever, but for the believer, death is temporary, awaiting the resurrection of the body. Sleep involves the body, not the soul. See Acts 7:60; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; Luke 23.43; 2 Corinthians 5:6; and Philippians 1:21.

Discuss / Consider

1. If you are able, discuss the death of someone you knew which seemed "premature," "untimely," or accidental. How might your view of this person's death change when thinking of it in light of this Talk?

2. Many people today are extremely afraid of death and will go to great means to avoid it as long as possible. As believers in the Lord Jesus should our view of death be different? Why or why not? Is yours?

Challenge

1. In verse 2, Mary is referred to as "that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair." She had a great "heavenly credit rating"! Evaluate your participation in this study, your spiritual service, your worship. What shape would you be in if you ran a heavenly credit check?

The Lord Comforts Mary and Martha
John 11:17-37

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Believers react differently when a loved one dies.

2. There are different ways to comfort believers at the time of death.

Practical Application

1. Don't let your "if onlys" move you away from God.

Questions

1. When Jesus arrived in Bethany, how long had Lazarus been dead?

2. Explain the meaning of the two "weepings" in John 1:.31-33.

3. Were there other times when the Lord wept?

4. Who had the power of death before the Lord's death and resurrection?

5. Should all believers react the same to the death of a loved one?

6. How did Lazarus' sisters react to his death?

7. How did Jesus comfort Mary and Martha?

Answers

1. For four days, including the messenger's travel, the two days of Jesus' delay, and the day it took for Jesus to travel to Bethany.

2. The Jews who mourned with Mary and Martha gave a loud expression of grief. The Lord groaned quietly in His spirit, being deeply moved and troubled.

3. Yes. He wept over Jerusalem and He wept in the Garden of Gethsemane.

4. Satan. See Hebrews 2:14.

5. No. We know that from experience that people react differently, and this is taught in the Bible. It is not wrong to weep, for God made us emotional people.

6. Both Mary and Martha said, *"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" John 11:21, 32*. Their reactions, however, were quite different. Mary stayed in the house, weeping with the mourners. Martha went out to meet the Lord on the road, and we don't read of her weeping. Mary fell at the Lord's feet, overcome with grief. Martha, on the other hand, had a profound theological discussion with the Lord. Mary and Martha both loved Lazarus, and the Lord didn't rebuke either one.

7. The Lord comforted Mary by saying nothing, but by weeping with her. He comforted Martha by answering her questions about the resurrection.

Discuss / Consider

When you have grieved in the loss of a loved one, how were you comforted? Have you had the opportunity to comfort someone who has lost a loved one? How can you apply some of the principles from this lesson the next time an opportunity arises?

Challenge

1. At the time of a loved one's death, the "if onlys" will invariably arise. They will move you away from God or toward God. Be prepared for the "if onlys," and don't let them move you away from God.

The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead
John 11:38-44

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Answered prayer is evidence of the truth.

2. There is a difference between a resurrection from the dead and a raising from the dead.

3. The Lord's authority over death proved His deity.

Practical Application

1. It is our privilege to remove stones.

2. It is our privilege to remove grave clothes.

Questions

1. Why did the Lord delay in going to Bethany?

2. How did the Lord show the people that the raising of Lazarus was a definite answer to prayer?

3. What is the difference between a resurrection from the dead and a raising from the dead?

4. What does the raising of Lazarus picture?

5. How did the Lord's authority over death prove His deity?

6. What is the difference between the Lord raising someone back to life and others who raised people?

Answers

1. So there would be no question about Lazarus being dead.

2. By His prayer: *"Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, 'Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me'" John 11:41-42*.

3. Lazarus was not resurrected, but raised. A raising is when a person is brought back to mortal life. A person who is raised from the dead, dies again. A person who is resurrected from the dead has a new body, an immortal body, a glorified body. Our Lord was resurrected from the dead.

4. It is a picture of resurrection that will take place when the Lord returns. All who are in the grave will hear His voice and come forth. See John 5:28-29. However, concerning the resurrection of the damned, unbelievers will have some kind of body in which they will live forever in hell.

5. At the command of Christ, Lazarus comes back to life. Incidentally, it has been pointed out that if the Lord hadn't been specific, calling Lazarus by name, all the dead would have come out of the grave.

6. The Lord raised people at His own command. Elijah, in raising the widow of Zaraphath's son; Elisha, in raising the Shunamite woman's son; and Peter, in raising Dorcas, all prayed and got an answer to their prayers.

Discuss / Consider

1. Jesus could have removed the stone as part of the miracle, but He asked the people to do it. Have you removed any stones lately that would help someone believe?

2. Jesus could have removed the graveclothes, but He asked the people to do it. Have you removed any graveclothes lately that would help a new believer move on in his spiritual life?

Challenge

1. Jesus waited four days after Lazarus' death to raise him. This delay was surely distressing to Mary and Martha and perhaps even seemed cruel. But it was all a part of the Lord's sovereign plan. Is there a situation in your life that is not working on your time schedule? Consider whether the Lord will get more glory out of this delay.

The Reaction to the Raising of Lazarus from the Dead
John 11:45-57

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The person of Christ and the work of Christ divide people.

2. The death of Christ was substitutionary.

Practical Application

1. Don't make decisions like Caiaphas!

2. Don't throw away your common sense!

Questions

1. Discuss the composition of the council (John 11:47).

2. Did the Jews believe the miracles of Jesus?

3. What is the irony in John 11:.47-48?

4. What does it take to convince a person that Jesus was who He said He was?

5. Caiaphas, the high priest, said that it was expedient for one man to die for the people, and not the whole nation to perish. How was this a true prophecy?

Answers

1. The council was the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jews, the high court of that time. It consisted of 71 members, including the high priest, who was the presiding member.

2. Yes. In early Jewish literature, you can read about the miracles of Jesus, but they attribute them to a different source.

3. The very thing the Jews feared if they followed Christ came upon them. In 70 A.D., the Roman armies under Titus destroyed the temple and removed the nation.

4. It is a matter of the will. When the claims and deeds of Christ are presented, people either accept or reject, on the basis of the will. “A person convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.”

5. The substitutionary atonement was not just for those who would believe out of Israel, but for believers around the world. From Caiaphas’ point of view, Christ’s death was pure political expediency, but God overruled his statement, and it became a prophecy of the substitutionary nature of the death of Christ.

Discuss / Consider

Don’t make decisions like Caiaphas. He didn’t weigh the evidence to see what was true. He based his decision on what was expedient, what was best politically, and what was best for his own career. Pray through every decision, and make sure that it is God’s will.

Challenge

1. Don’t throw away your common sense. Follow the model of the Lord Jesus.

The Lord is Anointed by Mary of Bethany
John 12:1-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The human heart responds to the obvious work of the Lord in various ways:
a) in worship, service and communion (the response of the believer)

b) the selfish response of an unbeliever

c) in the response of curiosity

d) in the response of hate

Practical Application

1. When was the last time you gave a year's wages to the Lord?

Questions

1. In Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9, parallel accounts, what other details do we learn about the supper celebration of John 12:2?

2. What was usual about the anointing? What was unusual about the anointing?

3. In what ways does the human heart respond to the obvious work of the Lord?

4. From this portion of Scripture, how did specific people respond to the work of the Lord?

Answers

1. This supper was held in the home of Simon the leper (probably one of the healed lepers, and likely a close relative of Martha and the others). It was during this supper that Mary took some very costly oil and anointed the Lord's feet and head.

2. Usually, olive oil was used in anointing, and it was not an unusual custom in that dry and dusty climate. This was a very costly oil, worth a lifetime of savings. It was unusual that Mary used her hair to wipe Jesus' feet. Normally, a woman in that day did not unbraid her hair in public.

3. There is the response of
- worship, service and communion
- continued hardening of the heart of unbelief
- curiosity
- hate

4.
- Mary, Martha and Lazarus responded in worship, service, and communion
- Judas responded selfishly as an unbeliever
- Others responded out of curiosity, and were more interested in seeing a miracle than in hearing the teaching of the Lord Himself
- Some wanted to put Jesus to death. The work of the Lord was so obvious that they wanted to destroy Him and His works.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review the various heart responses to the work of the Lord. Have you seen current examples of this?

2. What is your heart response to the work of the Lord? Is it consistent?

Challenge

1. Mary's act of worship involved giving a year's wages. True worship involves sacrifice. What do your acts of worship cost you? Is your house filled with fragrance because of your outpouring love for the Lord?

The Lord's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem
John 12:12-19

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The triumphal entry was a fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy.

2. The triumphal entry was a foretaste of the New Testament program.

Practical Application

1. Let's get on with the program.

Questions

1. Is the Bible in chronological order?

2. When do we celebrate the triumphal entry today?

3. What do palm branches signify?

4. What were the people hoping for?

5. From which Old Testament source were the people quoting, "Hosanna"? The triumphal entry was a fulfillment of what Old Testament prophecy?

6. Who is the daughter of Zion?

Answers

1. Not always. Sometimes God, by the Holy Spirit, places Scripture in a topical order, so that we might better understand what God is saying to us through His word.

2. Palm Sunday

3. They are symbols of victory.

4. They were hoping for a political Messiah, one who would lead them out from under the Roman rule.

5. Psalm 118:25-26, a Messianic psalm sung by worshipers coming up to Jerusalem at Passover time. “Hosanna” means “save” and the people were hoping for a political Messiah who would lead them out from under the Roman rule. Zechariah 9:9, which was written 500 years before the coming of Christ, was fulfilled exactly as predicted.

6. This was a figurative expression for the Jewish people.

Discuss / Consider

1. Old Testament prophecy is proof that God’s plan for the ages is being fulfilled. How can you use Old Testament prophecy in your witness?

2. The crowds of Jesus’ day misinterpreted Scripture. They were hoping for a military hero, a political Messiah who would lead them out from under the Roman rule. Can you recognize groups today who turn away from Christ when He fails to promote their cause?

Challenge

1. How can you be sure that you are fully in tune with the Lord’s program? Guard against promoting your own agenda over God’s plans by knowing what the Bible says, and by obeying the word.

The Lord Predicts His Coming Death and Resurrection
John 12:20-26

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. For Christ, death was the way to life.

2. For the Christian, death to self is the way to life.

Practical Application

1. If you had three wishes, what would your first wish be?

2. Let's not lead the Lord in our Christian service.

Questions

1. Who were the Greeks who came up to Jerusalem to worship at the Passover?

2. Why did Jesus answer as He did when the disciples brought the Greeks' request to see Him?

3. Explain the meaning of John 12:24.

4. Explain the meaning of John 12:25.

5. List other verses in the New Testament that support the theme of John 12:24-25.

Answers

1. Gentile proselytes or converts to Judaism. They realized that the gods of the Greek and Roman religions were not the true God. They were like Cornelius in Acts 10.

2. The "hour" refers to the Lord's death and resurrection. Up to this point this hour had not arrived. See John 7:8 and John 8:20. But now the hour had come, and it was through this hour, the Lord's death and resurrection, that the door would be opened for the gospel to go out to the whole world, including these Gentiles.

3. The Lord uses a natural illustration of how a seed must die when it is planted if life is to go on, and if there is to be any fruit. He applies this principle to Himself. He had to die in order for us to receive eternal life. We are the fruit. He had to die because death is the penalty for sin, and we are sinners. Christ was the only person who never sinned, and He gave His life as a sacrifice. Because He died, we can have life. As the seed carries life when it passes through death for the new growth, so the life of Christ has been passed on to believers (as the fruit). Believers possess divine life, eternal life, the life of Christ!

4. When a person becomes a Christian, he has eternal life and is on the way to heaven. But what about the physical life? If a life of selfish desire and self-pleasure is lived, then the reward of life in heaven will be lost. But if a person hates his life, loving Christ more, he will keep it, and there will be reward in heaven.

5. Romans 12:1 and Galatians 6:14.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you try, even unconsciously, to lead the Lord in Christian service, or are you letting Him lead you? Recall specific instances in your life that illustrate your leading or His leading.

2. Refer to John 12:25. See Q-A #4. Do you love your life or do you hate your life in this world? See also Philippians 1:20-21.

Challenge

1. If you had three wishes, what would you wish? Would you be like the Greeks, "We wish to see Jesus?" Do you long to see Him? Do you want to know Him better? Do you desire a closer fellowship with Him? Are you looking forward to seeing Him in heaven?

The Father Commends His Son; the Lord Predicts His Death
John 12:27-34

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The cross is the basis of God's judgment of this world.

2. The cross is the basis of God's victory over Satan.

3. The cross is the basis of God's salvation of sinners.

Practical Application

1. Do we recognize God's voice when we hear it?

Questions

1. Was the Lord troubled because He was afraid to die?

2. How was this prayer similar to the Lord's prayer in Gethsemane?

3. When was the voice of the Father heard during the Lord Jesus' ministry?

4. Explain, "The cross is the basis of God's judgment of this world."

5. Is Satan's defeat a sure thing? What is his final destiny?

6. Jesus said, *"If I am lifted up, I will draw all people to Myself" John 12:32.* Does this mean that everyone who hears the gospel will be saved?

Answers

1. No. He was troubled at the prospect of going to the cross, of being the sin-bearer, separated from the Father. The Lord Jesus experienced the wrath of God against sin as He suffered and died on the cross for us.

2. There was sorrow, but at the same time Jesus desired to do God's will. See John 12:27-28; Matthew 26:38-39; Mark 14:32-36; and Luke 22:41-44.

3. At His baptism (Matthew 3:17); at His transfiguration (Matthew 17:5); and when He prayed aloud before the crowds in Jerusalem after His triumphal entry (John 12:28).

4. The world system and the world of people who have rejected Christ are now under the judgment of God. In crucifying Christ, the world would condemn itself.

5. Yes. See Genesis 3:15 and Hebrews 2:14-15. The cross is the basis of God's victory over Satan. Satan's final destiny is the lake of fire, hell. See Revelation 20:10.

6. No, that would contradict other Scriptures. It means that because of the work of Christ on the cross, the gospel will go out to all people, to all tribes and nations. Many will reject Christ, but there will be people saved from all kingdoms and tribes on the earth.

Discuss / Consider

1. Ponder the cross as the basis of God's judgment of this world. Evil is rampant in this world, but it will be judged in God's time. In the meantime, unbelievers, who are part of this world system, are under the judgment of God, and it is only a matter of time until this sentence is carried out. What are you doing about these unbelievers?

2. Ponder the cross as the basis of God's victory over Satan. Are you putting on the whole armor of God that you may stand against Satan?

3. Ponder the cross as the basis of God's salvation to sinners. How does this affect you personally? Are you living life in Christ? The abundant life He promised to believers?

Challenge

1. When God's voice was heard from heaven, some gave it a naturalistic explanation, saying it was thunder. Do you recognize God's voice when He speaks? Are you listening for His voice?

The Lord Urges People to Come to the Light
John 12:35-43

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Acceptance of the light brings more light.

2. Rejection of the light brings further darkness.

Practical Application

1. There is a time for us to hide.

2. There is a time for us not to hide.

Questions

1. Refer to John 12:36-37. Who is the "them" to whom the Lord was speaking?

2. Many welcomed the Lord into Jerusalem at the beginning of the week. Were all the people believers?

3. Name 2 Sanhedrin members who went from being secret believers to open followers of the Lord Jesus Christ?

4. Read Isaiah 6. Who was it that John saw as Isaiah's vision of God?

5. Light is one of the themes of the gospel of John. Is this actual physical light?

6. What is the result if you believe in the light? What happens if you reject the light?

Answers

1. The crowds in the temple area during Passover time. Many were pilgrims who had come from Galilee and had seen Jesus' miracles there, and some had seen Lazarus raised from the dead at nearby Bethany.

2. No. Most of the people did not believe in Him. See John 12:37. Jesus was not the political Messiah they were looking for. Even concerning those who believed in Him, there was a question of whether it was true faith or not. See John 12:42.

3. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. See John 19:38-40 and Luke 23:50-51.

4. He saw the vision as that of Jesus Christ. John knew that the Christ of the New Testament was the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

5. No. John is referring to moral light (goodness, righteousness, and truth), and it is centered in Christ, the light of the world.

6. You will receive more light. As Christians, you will become more Christ-like. Acceptance of light brings more light. Rejection brings further darkness and you lose direction.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you love the praise of men more than the praise of God? Give this serious consideration as to how you live your life and respond to various situations and people.

2. Have you seen in your life that you have more light as you accept the light that is given to you? Are you close to the Lord each day?

Challenge

1. If you sense a lack of purpose in your life, spend more time with the Lord in His word so the darkness will not overcome you. Is your "hiding time" (your quiet time with the Lord) a sacred time for you?

The Conclusion of Our Lord's Public Ministry
John 12:44-50

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. To believe in Jesus is to believe in God.

2. To see Jesus is to see God.

3. To reject the words of Jesus is to reject God.

Practical Application

1. Our decision now counts forever.

Questions

1. What is distinct about this section?

2. Does this passage contradict John 1:18?

3. How do you harmonize John 12:47 and 12:48, concerning judging and not judging the world?

4. Is it really true that our decision to accept or reject Christ is for all eternity? Why wouldn't a loving God give us a second chance?

Answers

1. It is the conclusion and a summary of the Lord's public ministry, and it consists entirely of the words of Jesus.

2. No one has seen God, but He is seen in Jesus in essence and in moral character. See John 1:14 and Colossians 1:15, 19.

3. The purpose of Jesus coming into this world was not to judge, but to save. The result of His coming will be judgment upon those who refuse salvation. See John 3:17-18.

4. Yes. The Lord Jesus said that the way a person responds to His word now determines his status forever. John 12:48. A loving God has given us the opportunity to receive His Son, and in receiving Him have eternal life. No second chance is needed, nor would it be received if the first is refused. God's love was great enough to give His Son.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review this portion of Scripture carefully and meditatively. Do you believe in Jesus? Then you believe in God. Do you see God in Jesus?

2. Consider carefully the doctrine of eternal life. What would it mean to exist in hell forever? What would it mean to be with Jesus in heaven forever?

Challenge

1. The way a person responds to the words of Christ determines his status forever. What an awesome thought! Doesn't this prompt you to witness to the unsaved?

The Lord Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet
John 13:1-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The foot washing event pictures our cleansing from sin.

2. The foot washing event pictures the path of Christ.

Practical Application

1. Would you wash the feet of Judas?

Questions

1. In which chapters does John record the upper room discourses?

2. In which of the gospels is the Lord's Supper recorded? In which of the gospels is foot washing recorded?

3. Why was foot washing done?

4. What is the difference between the two words, "wash," used in John 13:10?

5. What does foot washing picture spiritually? Why is there reference to two washings?

6. How does foot washing picture the path of Christ?

Answers

1. John 13-17

2. The Lord's supper is in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The foot washing is recorded only by John.

3. People wore sandals and the roads were dusty, so it was common courtesy for a host to make his guests more comfortable by washing their feet.

4. The first word is best translated "bathe," and refers to washing the whole body; the second word refers to washing only part of the body, like the feet.

5. Foot washing pictures cleansing from sin. Believers need the bath of salvation (Titus 3:5) and the daily cleansing from defiling sin (1 John 1:9). See also Psalm 139:23-24.

6. There is a vivid portrayal of the self-humiliation of Christ as He left heaven's glory to go to His death on the cross for us, and finally through His glorification return to His place with the Father.

Discuss / Consider

1. When were you washed (saved)? When do you wash your daily defiling sins? How close is your communion and fellowship with the Lord Jesus?

2. Have you ever been betrayed by a fellow believer? What was your response and attitude toward him? Would you wash the feet of this "Judas?" In other words, how great is your love for the brethren?

Challenge

1. Read Philippians 2:5-8. Do you have the attitude of Christ?

Follow the Lord's Example and Wash One Another's Feet
John 13:12-17

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Washing one another's feet is not an ordinance for the Church.

2. Washing one another's feet is not an option for the Christian.

Practical Application

1. Let's not wash one another's feet with scalding hot water or freezing cold water.

Questions

1. Why did Jesus ask His disciples if they knew what He had done when He washed their feet?

2. Is foot washing an ordinance of the church? Explain.

3. What is the deeper meaning of foot washing?

4. Is "foot washing" an option for the Christian?

5. What temperature should the water be as we wash one another's feet?

Answers

1. His question showed that there was a deeper meaning to the foot washing. Otherwise, it would have been a simple answer because foot washing was a common custom.

2. No. The early church did not practice it as an ordinance, and the only other mention of it in Scripture showed that it was simply a gesture of hospitality (1 Timothy 5:10). And the Lord's explanation indicates that it is not an ordinance, but rather that His disciples are to humbly serve one another in love.

3. To serve one another in love and humility

4. No. We have a responsibility and a privilege to wash one another's feet. That is, to apply the word of God to our brothers and sisters in love. See Ephesians 5:25-26 and Psalm 119:9.

5. Neither scalding or freezing cold. We must use the right temperature for each situation. That is, a word from the Lord given in comfort or exhortation in love, as needed.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you have a tendency to read Scripture, taking it only on the surface? Or do you seek deeper truths and deeper meanings?

2. How are you washing the feet of fellow believers? Do you know someone who is in need of counseling (your counseling)? Do you know someone who is using Scripture too liberally, too carelessly? How would you counsel this person? Be sure the water is the right temperature.

Challenge

1. Do you find it difficult to humble yourself to wash another's feet? Read Philippians 2:5-8 again, as well as John 13:4-17.

The Lord Predicts that One of His Disciples Will Betray Him
John 13:18-30

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The betrayal by Judas was a fulfillment of Scripture.

2. There is a difference between satanic possession and satanic influence.

Practical Application

1. There is only night if you turn from the light.

2. Don't refuse your last chance for salvation.

Questions

1. How could John lean on Jesus' bosom while eating?

2. If Judas' betrayal of Jesus was a fulfillment of Scripture, why would Judas be responsible for his actions?

3. What is the relationship between Ahithophel and Judas?

4. Is there a difference between satanic possession and satanic influence? Discuss this in terms of Judas.

5. Is satanic possession the same as demonic possession?

6. Judas went out into the night. What does this mean?

7. Was Judas given an opportunity by Jesus to turn around?

Answers

1. In the first century people reclined on sofas while they sat around a low table. In this case, John's couch would have been arranged so that his head was near the chest area of Jesus' couch.

2. Judas deliberately committed his own transgression. He was responsible for his actions.

3. Ahithophel was a picture of Judas. Read 2 Samuel 16 and 17.

4. Yes. Satan entered Judas (John 13:27). Up to this point, Judas was influenced by Satan, but not possessed by him.

5. No. Today there is considerable satanic influence and some demonic possession. Satan is not omnipresent, and therefore cannot possess multiple people at one time.

6. He not only went out into the night, after sundown, but it was night for the soul of Judas. At this point he was hardened and blinded.

7. Yes. When the Lord gave Judas the morsel of bread, it was a gesture of kindness and honor extended to a friend, whom He loved. He had washed his feet, and now gave him one last chance to reverse his course of action. But the point of no return had been reached.
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Discuss / Consider

1. Recall how the heart of Judas was hardened, and there came a point of no return. Do you know someone who is turning away from the light? What are the signs? Pray, then work with this person, that he/she might turn to the light before it is too late. God is not willing that any should perish.

Challenge

1. Remind yourself continually that there is only night when you turn from the light. Are there times when you feel that your own heart seems to harden to the teachings of the Bible? Seek out the source for this hardening, and turn from the night to the light.

The Lord Gives His Disciples a New Commandment
John 13:31-38

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God was glorified in the cross of Christ.

2. The mark of a Christian is love.

Practical Application

1. Let's love those fellow believers that we don't naturally like.

2. Let's realize the deceitfulness of our own hearts.

Questions

1. When did the Lord speak only to the true disciples in this portion of Scripture?

2. What is the prophecy of John 13:36?

3. What was the time of the cock crow?

4. How was God glorified in the cross of Christ? Seemingly, this would have been a victory for Satan.

5. What is the mark of a disciple?

6. What did the pagan Romans of the first century say about the early Christians?

Answers

1. After Judas left the upper room. The tension was gone, and the Lord spoke to His disciples more intimately.

2. Of Peter's death as a martyr.

3. It was the third of four Roman night watches, from midnight until 3:00 A.M., so called because it ended with the first streaks of dawn in the sky, and the crowing of the cock.

4. When Jesus was crucified, every righteous claim of God against sin was settled, and the holiness of God's nature was upheld. God's love was seen in the greatest degree at the cross. The judgment of God against the sin of the world was taken by Christ because He loved us. As the Son of God, Christ's sacrifice was of infinite value. The cross, in actuality, was a defeat for Satan and a victory for God.

5. His love. See John 13:34-35.

6. "See how they love one another."

Discuss / Consider

1. How can you love a fellow believer that you don't naturally like? (Only by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit). Do you let the Holy Spirit direct your actions at such times?

2. Review the definition of agape love: the voluntary denial of self in the interests of others. Are you loving with agape love?

Challenge

1. Review Peter's good intentions, then his actions. Have you made promises to the Lord that were left behind? See Jeremiah 17:9. Have you heard the rooster crow?

Heaven, and the Promise of the Lord's Return
John 14:1-3

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Heaven is a place where it doesn't get any better than this.

Practical Application

1. Think about heaven when you are discouraged.

Questions

1. *"Let not your heart be troubled."* Why does the Lord say this to His disciples at this point in time?

2. In which verses is there a description of heaven and the promise of the Lord's return?

3. Which portions of Scripture refer to the return of Christ for the church? What is this commonly called?

4. What event is referred to in other passages in the Gospels and in the OT concerning Christ's return?

5. Why is heaven the best place possible?

6. What should you think about when you are discouraged?

Answers

1. Because they were bewildered and discouraged. Jesus had told them that He would be crucified, and He revealed that one of them would betray Him. He told them that He was going to leave them, and that Peter would deny Him. It's no wonder that they were bewildered and discouraged.

2. John 14:2-3

3. The Epistles, specifically 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. The Rapture.

4. The Lord's return to earth to set up His Kingdom.

5. It is a place called home and it is eternal; it is a place prepared just for us; and it is a place where the Lord Jesus is and wants us to be with Him.

6. Heaven.

Discuss / Consider

1. Is your heart troubled? Are you ever discouraged? Prayerfully read John 14:1.

2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Does this make your heart rejoice? It should.

Challenge

1. Read Titus 2:11-14. Is your lifestyle affected as your anticipate the return of Christ for His church?

Jesus Christ is God, and He is the Only Way of Salvation
John 14:4-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There is only one way of salvation.

2. There is only one God.

Practical Application

1. Don't be afraid to ask the Lord your questions.

Questions

1. Why did the Lord rebuke His disciples?

2. Why was the Lord grieved at Philip's request to show him the Father?

3. Many roads lead to heaven. Right? Support your answer.

4. How is Christianity more than a religion?

5. In John 14:9, was Jesus claiming to be the Father?

6. On what three areas of proof did Jesus base His claim to deity?

Answers

1. For their immature faith concerning who He was.

2. Because He had continually made known to the disciples that He and the Father were one, and that if One was seen, so was the other.

3. Wrong. There is only one road, one way, and that is the lord Jesus. See John 14:6. See also Acts 4:12 and 1 Timothy 2:5.

4. It is a relationship. Faith must be centered and focused in the person of Christ.

5. No, because the Father and the Son are distinct persons. There is one God in essence, but three distinct persons of the Godhead.

6. His character, His words, and His works. See John 14:10-11.

Discuss / Consider

1. Both Thomas and Philip came to the Lord with questions. Thomas was confused and Philip just wanted a glimpse of God. The Lord graciously and with characteristic patience gave them answers that would help them to grow in their faith. Do you believe that He can do the same for you? Give a personal illustration of when your faith has grown.

Challenge

1. Both Thomas and Philip came to Jesus with “an attitude.” Thomas could be characterized as a skeptic, and Philip as a realist. Are there times when you come to Jesus with an attitude? Christ will do for you as He did for them. He will help you to grow in your faith.

Several Promises, Including the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
John 14:12-24

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Every Christian is guaranteed great ministry and effective prayer.

2. Every Christian is guaranteed great comfort and effective counsel.

Practical Application

1. We can experience heaven on earth.

Questions

1. *"I will not leave you orphans, but I will come to you."* What did Jesus mean by this statement?

2. Is the Judas of John 14:22 the same Judas who betrayed Jesus?

3. How is every Christian guaranteed a great ministry?

4. How is every Christian guaranteed effective prayer?

5. How is every Christian guaranteed great comfort?

6. How is every Christian guaranteed effective counsel?

Answers

1. He had two events in mind – His resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

2. No. He is probably the disciple called Lebbaes (Thaddaeus). See Matthew 10:3 and Mark 3:18.

3. See John 14:12, which means the gospel will be spread throughout the world. Whereas, while the Lord was here, His ministry was localized.

4. By praying in accordance with His will. Then the Lord's name is glorified, and believers' prayers are answered.

5. This promise refers to the Holy Spirit, who dwells with the believer and is in the believer. He comes alongside to give whatever help is needed.

6. See John 14:16-17. The Holy Spirit comes alongside to give whatever counsel is needed.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you become discouraged when your prayers do not seem to be answered? Do you want a blank check to ask whatever you desire, or do you pray in line with the will of God? Also, remember that the prerequisite for experiencing heaven on earth is obedience to the will of God.

2. How can you do greater works than Jesus did?

Challenge

1. Do you think of the Holy Spirit as a real and living person? Recognize Him in your life as a distinct person of the Godhead, the One who indwells you.

Our Lord's Promise of Peace and Teaching on the Holy Spirit
John 14:25-31

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There's no better teaching for the believer than the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

2. There's no better peace for the believer than the peace of God.

3. There's no better proof for the believer than the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Practical Application

1. How selfish is our love?

Questions

1. *"'I am going away'… If you loved Me, you would rejoice."* Why weren't the disciples rejoicing?

2. *"My Father is greater than I."* Does this mean that Jesus is less than the Father?

3. Who is the ruler of this world?

4. Satan tried to thwart the mission of Christ, but he had no hold on Him. Why?

5. What proof is there that the Holy Spirit taught the disciples?

6. What is the best possible teaching for believers?

7. What is the best peace for the believer? Does this peace mean exemption from conflict and trial?

Answers

1. Their love was short-sighted and selfish. If they had fully appreciated the Lord's work of redemption and His return to the Father, it would mean that they knew the work for their salvation was complete, and the Lord would no longer be subject to the cruelty and indignity of man.

2. No. It means that in His role of Redeemer, the Lord Jesus submitted His will to the will of the Father. They are equal in essence, but Jesus subordinated His will to the Father in His earthly ministry.

3. Satan

4. Because Christ was sinless, and the work on the cross was accomplished. The victory was won.

5. In the rest of the New Testament, we see specific help was given to the disciples by the Holy Spirit in remembering "all things."

6. The teaching of the Holy Spirit.

7. The peace of God. No. It promises calmness and confidence in God, so we can go through conflict or trial without anxiety or fear.

Discuss / Consider

1. How much do you rely on the teaching of the Holy Spirit? When you become frustrated in not knowing or remembering the word, look at John 14:26.

2. Do you lack peace? Where are you seeking peace? See John 14:27 and Isaiah 26:3.

Challenge

1. When disappointments come and there is a tendency to say, "Lord, where are You?" remember Romans 8:28. Anticipate the Lord's good.

The Vine and the Branches
John 15:1-6

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Dead wood is removed.

2. Live wood is pruned.

Practical Application

1. Have you discovered the key for much fruit?

Questions

1. Review the seven “I ams” in John’s gospel.

2. Why is the true vine significant?

3. Why does dead wood have to be removed? What is the spiritual application?

4. Why is live wood pruned? Why are Christians pruned?

5. What does it mean to abide in Christ?

Answers

1. - *"I am the bread"* (John 6)
- *"I am the light"* (John 8 and John 9)
- *"I am the door"* (John 10) *"*
- *"I am the good shepherd"* (John 10)
- *"I am the resurrection and the life"* (John 11)
- *"I am the way, the truth and the life"* (John 14)
- *"I am the vine"* (John 15)

2. Throughout the Old Testament, the nation Israel was likened to a vine, but they were fruitless and a degenerate plant. The nation of Israel had turned out to be a false vine, but the Lord Himself is the true vine.

3. It is unproductive, and it harbors insects and disease, causing rottenness to spread. False professors of Christ are also removed. Judas was an example of dead wood.

4. To bear more fruit. The secret of a harvest is pruning so the life of the vine can move into the fruit. Christians are pruned so they may bear more fruit. God's primary way of pruning is through His word.

5. It means to be walking with the Lord, to be obeying the Lord, being fully dependent on the Lord.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you abiding in Christ? What does this mean on a daily basis?

2. Are you submitting to the Lord's pruning process? Can you recall specific instances when you were pruned by the Lord? What were the results?

Challenge

1. Do you tend to do things in your own strength? At times, do you feel that your efforts are in vain? *"Without Me you can do nothing."*

The Relation of Believers to Christ
John 15:7-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Much fruit brings glory to the Father.

2. Much fruit is proof of discipleship.

Practical Application

1. Right now you can say that it doesn't get any better than this.

Questions

1. What is the purpose of a vine?

2. What is the fruit that brings glory to the Father?

3. What is the connection between fruit bearing and prayer?

4. What does it mean, "Much fruit is proof of discipleship"?

5. What is the difference between a disciple and a follower of Christ?

Answers

1. To bear fruit

2. The fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23) and the fruit of the believers' labor in Christian service.

3. See John 15:6-7. Answered prayer is a form of fruit bearing. It is a means of God's will being carried out (this assumes that the prayers are in the will of God).

4. Obedience is crucial to abiding in Christ, and thus discipleship and fruit bearing become a reality in the life of a disciple.

5. The true disciple is more than just a follower, because he is obeying the word of the Lord. He bears fruit because he obeys Christ. A follower, on the other hand, may be serving the Lord, but disobeying whatever portions of the word that he chooses.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you a disciple or a follower of Jesus Christ?

2. Is the fruit of the Spirit seen in you? How are you manifesting the fruit of your labor?

Challenge

1. Are you abiding in Jesus' love? Is your joy full?

Love One Another
John 15:12-17

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord's command to believers is very emphatic.

2. The Lord's call for believers is very endearing.

3. The Lord's choice of believers if very encouraging.

Practical Application

1. Don't pray for what is not promised.

2. Do know 1 John 3:16.

Questions

1. Why did Jesus emphasize that He had chosen His disciples, rather than the other way around?

2. Do Christians have an option to respond to John 15:12, 17?

3. To what extent should we follow John 15:12, 17?

4. How is the Lord's call for believers endearing?

5. How is the Lord's choice of believers encouraging?

6. What is the fruit of sanctification? What is the fruit of service?

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Answers

1. In the Judaism of the first century, normally the disciple chose the Rabbi or teacher that he wanted to learn from and be attached to.

2. No. The command to love one another is very emphatic. See also John 13:34.

3. We should love to the point of dying for one another.

4. He calls them friends, rather than servants. Friends share secrets, but masters do not share their plans with slaves. We are given insight into the very counsels of God. See Ephesians 1:9.

5. God made the first move. It is encouraging that the Lord chooses us to bear fruit, and He gave the promise that the fruit is preserved forever.

6. Sanctification – the fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23). Service – the fruit of evangelism, winning souls.

Discuss / Consider

1. Jesus said, *"whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."* Does this give us a blank check to ask whatever we want and to expect the answer we want? What does it mean to ask in the name of the Lord Jesus?

2. *"I call you friends."* Do a Bible search on Old Testament characters that are called friends by God.

Challenge

1. The Lord chose you. John 15:16. How does this encourage you? What does it mean as far as your life is concerned?

The World's Opposition
John 15:18-27

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The world hates Christ, and therefore it hates Christians.

2. The world hates Christ, and therefore it hates God.

Practical Application

1. Be concerned if the world loves you.

2. Remember that you can't have one without the other.

Questions

1. How many times is the word "world" used in John 15:18-19? What does it mean in this context?

2. What is "the world" characterized by?

3. What is the greatest sin?

4. Why does the world hate Christians?

5. Some say that they do not believe that Christ is who He claims to be, but that they love God. Is this possible?

Answers

1. It is used six times in these verses. It is not the material world that God created, but it is the world system that opposes God and His word. It is the satanic system of values and attitudes that is contrary to the biblical system of values and attitudes.

2. By the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (1 John 2:15-17)

3. To reject the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

4. Because it hates Christ. See John 15:18 and 1 John 3:13. Christians are transformed and transferred out of this world system. They are no longer part of the world when they are identified with Christ.

5. No. It is impossible to love God and reject Christ, because they go together. The world system that opposes Christ hates God. See John 15:23.

Discuss / Consider

1. How openly do you identify with Christ? Have you felt the hatred of the world? If so, how?

2. If you have not felt the hatred of the world, you should be concerned. Read 2 Timothy 3:12 to see why you should be concerned.

Challenge

1. The Holy Spirit testifies through the word and through believers. Are you an open channel through which the Spirit can work? Are you taking advantage of opportunities to share Christ? Are you building relationships so that you can share Christ? How well do you know Scripture? How well can you defend the faith?

The Coming Ministry of the Holy Spirit
John 16:1-15

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment.

2. The Holy Spirit guides the believer into truth.

Practical Application

1. Let's thank the Lord for hiding certain facts from us.

2. Let's thank the Lord for revealing certain facts to us.

Questions

1. What is meant by "these things" in John 16:1?

2. When did persecution of the Christians take place?

3. Why do people persecute Christians?

4. Why was it advantageous for the Lord Jesus to leave?

5. What did Jesus say that the Holy Spirit would do when He came?

6. How did the Holy Spirit guide the apostles into truth? How does He guide believers today?

Answers

1. The things spoken of at the end of Chapter 15, specifically the persecution and hate they would experience from the world.

2. It was taking place by the time John wrote this gospel in about 85 A.D. The Jewish Christians were ostracized from the synagogue. Paul, before he was converted, was on his way to Damascus to kill Christians (see Acts 26:9-11). The Roman persecutions had begun in A.D. 64 when Nero blamed the Christians for the fire in Rome. These words can be applied today as well. There are myriad persecutions of Christians going on throughout the world today.

3. Because they do not know God.

4. So the Holy Spirit would come. If the Lord were here on this earth, even in His resurrected or glorified body, He would be localized in one place at a time. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer wherever He is.

5. *"He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8*

6. He guided the writers of the Scriptures, in inspiration. This promise is for believers today as the Holy Spirit illuminates the Scriptures.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you fully realize the promise that the Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth?

2. Are you thankful that the Lord has hidden certain facts from you?

3. Are you trusting the Lord for His help and strength when you need it? See Hebrews 4:16.

Challenge

1. Are you thankful for the facts that the Lord has revealed to you? List some of these facts, particularly in light of persecutions, sufferings, and man-made disasters.

I Must Go, but You Will See Me Again
John 16:16-22

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The world's happiness is only temporary.

2. The believer's sorrow is only temporary.

Practical Application

1. Don't be upset if you feel confused.

Questions

1. Look up John 7:33-34; 12:35-36; 13:33; 14:19; and 16:16. What is the common phrase here, and what does it refer to?

2. Today the world rejoices because they believe that the Bible and God's moral standards have been eliminated. Is this true, that God's moral standards have been eliminated?

3. Contrast the sorrow of believers now with Revelation 21:4.

4. Why were the disciples confused?

Answers

1. *"A little while."* It refers to the time when the Lord would go to the cross, die, be resurrected, and return to His Father.

2. No. The world is rejoicing in its freedom from moral standards and restrictions, but this happiness is only temporary. God's moral standards have not been eliminated, and judgment is coming for those who ignore them.

3. The believer's sorrow is temporary, but joy will return for eternity.

4. It was difficult for them to understand what the Lord was telling them.

Discuss / Consider

1. When you go through difficult times, turn to the word of God. Remember that sorrow is but for a little while, and that joy will be forever. How would you comfort someone who is going through deep sorrow right now?

2. Do you despair because of world conditions? Then believe that God is in control, and that He has already won the victory. It is only a matter of time. In the meantime, trust Him.

Challenge

1. Are there times when you feel confused about the word of God? Is the Lord's word, "Trust Me," sufficient at such times?

Disciples Can Approach the Father Directly in Prayer
John 16:23-33

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Believers have the assurance of direct access to the Father.

2. Believers have the assurance of definite answers from the Father.

Practical Application

1. Do you have the joy of answered prayer?

2. Do you know the peace of reading Scripture?

Questions

1. What are the "things" of John 16:25?

2. When would Jesus speak plainly about the Father?

3. *"You will be scattered."* When did this come true?

4. When was the "in that day" of John 16:26?

5. Does John 16:26 contradict Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25?

6. How do believers have assurance of answered prayer?

Answers

1. The Lord was referring to His teachings in general, and His use of parables and proverbs.

2. In the forty days between the Lord's resurrection and His ascension, He taught the disciples more directly.

3. All the disciples forsook Him and fled. See Mark 14:50, a fulfillment of Zechariah's messianic prophecy (Zechariah 13:7).

4. It is now, and has been since Christ's ascension (John 16:28).
5. No. These verses all tell us that we can pray directly to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6. By praying in line with what the Lord would approve.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you know the joy of answered prayer? Give examples.

2. Do you know the peace of reading Scripture? Give examples.

Challenge

1. Is your soul restless? Are you uptight about something? Are you being persecuted? Read the word of the Savior. There is a peace that He alone can bring to the restless, troubled soul. The peace of Christ passes all understanding.

The First Section of the Lord's High Priestly Prayer
John 17:1-10

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God the Father was glorified in the finished work of Christ.

2. God the Son was glorified in the ongoing lives of the apostles.

3. God the Father and God the Son are now glorified together in heaven.

Practical Application

1. Did you ever think of yourself as one of God's personal possessions?

Questions

1. Why is this portion of Scripture known as the Lord's high priestly prayer?

2. Outline this prayer.

3. "Jesus said, 'My hour has not yet come.'" To what "hour" was He referring? What was the Lord's desire for this hour concerning His Father?

4. What does the finished work include?

5. How was God the Father glorified by the Son's work on the cross?

6. How was the Lord Jesus glorified in the lives of the apostles?

7. How are the Father and the Son now glorified together in heaven?

Answers

1. Because most of it is intercessory prayer on behalf of His own. Incidentally, it is the longest recorded prayer of Christ.

2. - Prayer concerning Himself (John 17:1-5)
- Prayer concerning the apostles (John 17:6-19)
- Prayer concerning future believers (John 17:20-26)

3. The time when He would go to the cross. Jesus' desire – that the Father would be glorified.

4. Both the Lord's public ministry and His sacrifice on the cross

5. All that the Father had given the Son to do was accomplished.

6. By the disciples' salvation. See John 16:2, 6, 9.

7. The Son has now resumed the glory He had in heaven before the world was made. That glory is enhanced because God's plan of redemption for mankind has been accomplished.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you think of yourself as one of God's personal possessions? Review John 17:9-10. What does this mean?

2. Think of what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross on your behalf. What does this mean to you? How does it show in your life?

Challenge

1. When you think of the lack of understanding of the disciples, does it remind you of yourself? Yet He is glorified in them, and in us.

The Lord's High Priestly Prayer, Continued
John 17:11-26

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord's prayer is for the protection of His own.

2. The Lord's prayer is for the sanctification of His own.

3. The Lord's prayer is for the unity of His own.

4. The Lord's prayer is for the joy of His own.

Practical Application

1. Are we walking "in" but not "of" the razor's edge?

Questions

1. Why did the Lord pray this prayer out loud?

2. What kind of prayer was this?

3. What does Hebrews 7:25 say to us today?

4. What kind of petitions are made in this prayer?

5. "Keep them from evil." What does this mean?

6. What does "sanctify" mean? How is a believer sanctified? Did the Lord need to be sanctified?

7. Does unity mean uniformity? Why is unity so important?

Answers

1. So the disciples would hear and be encouraged and have the Lord's joy fulfilled in themselves

2. An intercessory prayer on behalf of others

3. Christ always lives to make intercession for us.

4. Petitions for spiritual blessings, not earthly honors or material blessings

5. That believers would be kept, preserved, and protected from the evil world system and the one behind the world system (Satan).

6. Sanctify means to be set apart for holy use. A believer is sanctified by the truth embodied in the word of God. No, Jesus was referring to His going to the cross, voluntarily setting Himself apart for the holy work of becoming the sacrifice for sin. (This was accomplished so it would be possible for us to be sanctified.)

7. No. All the believers around the world are one, which took place at Pentecost. It is our job to recognize and keep this unity. See Ephesians 4:3. Unity is important that the world might believe that the Father sent the Son, and that believers are one in the Father and the Son.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you encouraged by the Lord's prayers on your behalf? Do you realize that He is praying continually for you? How does this affect you?

2. Do you use this prayer as a pattern when you pray for others? Try it.

Challenge

1. Are you walking the razor's edge – "in" the world, but not "of" the world? How do you keep this balance in your life?

The Arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
John 18:1-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord Jesus voluntarily gave up His life for sinners.

2. The Lord Jesus resolutely took up the cup for sinners.

Practical Application

1. Let's think of others during times of personal crisis.

2. Let's not cut off ears that need to hear.

Questions

1. Where did Jesus and His disciples go from the upper room? Was this a new destination for them?

2. The detachment of troops refers to a Roman cohort. How many men would there be in a cohort?

3. Why were the Roman soldiers startled at the Lord's voluntary surrender?

4. Was the Lord taken by surprise? Could Jesus have escaped?

5. "Shall I not drink the cup?" What did this mean?

6. What was this cup?

Answers

1. Across the Brook Kidron, east of Jerusalem, to the Garden of Gethsemane, on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. No, Jesus and His disciples often met in the Garden of Gethsemane. During His last week, Jesus' nights were spent camped out in this area. See Luke 21:37.

2. Anywhere from 300 to 600 men.

3. They probably expected some kind of guerilla warfare. Or His answer, "I am," may have had a supernatural effect on them.

4. Jesus was not surprised. He knew in detail all that would take place. Jesus could have prayed to the Father and He would have provided Him with more than twelve legions of angels. Instead, Jesus voluntarily stepped forward and surrendered.

5. The Lord was determined, purposed, and resolved to take up the cup that the Father had given Him.

6. It included His coming suffering and death. It was the cup of judgment, the cup of God's wrath against sin.

Discuss / Consider

1. Spend some time, mediating on the cup that the Lord accepted.

2. Let's not cut off ears that need to hear. How many ears has the Lord had to heal because they were cut off before they heard the gospel? How often in your religious zeal, like Peter, do you speak and act in haste?

Challenge

1. With Calvary in view, the Lord asked the soldiers to let the others go free. In times of personal crisis, do you think about the welfare of others?

Our Lord's Pre-trial Hearings and Peter's Denials
John 18:12-27

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Spiritual leaders are not necessarily spiritual.

2. There is a difference between a backslider and an apostate.

Practical Application

1. Are we warming ourselves at the fire of this world?

Questions

1. What were the six stages to the Lord's trial?

2. Are spiritual leaders necessarily spiritual? Give examples from this text.

3. Can this happen today?

4. What can we learn from this unspiritual spirituality?

5. What is the difference between a backslider and an apostate? Give examples of both from Scripture.

Answers

1. Stages 1-3 made up His religious trial:
   the preliminary investigation before Annas
   the pre-trial hearing before Caiaphas
   the official religious trial before the Sanhedrin

   Stages 4-6 made up His civil trial:
   a hearing before Pilate
   a hearing before Herod Antipas
   a second hearing before Pilate

2. Unfortunately, no. Annas and Caiaphus, as high priests, were looked on as spiritual leaders. They were in charge of the temple of the Lord. But they were not spiritual men; they were self-serving and lead many people astray.

3. Yes, as evidenced by men such as Jim Jones and David Karesh. Or by the Jim Bakers and Jimmy Swaggarts. And others.

4. To beware of those who could stumble you Also, if you are in a position of leadership, to avoid stumbling others.

5. A backslider is one who lapses in faith, but does not reject the faith. An apostate is one who rejects the faith that he once embraced. Peter was a backslider, who was later restored. Judas was an apostate. He was a follower, but never a true believer.

Discuss / Consider

1. Would someone think of you as a spiritual person? Think of the responsibility – that you would in no way stumble someone.

2. Have you had your moments of backsliding? Recall the Lord's gracious longsuffering to Peter, and his restoration. Recall the Lord's gracious longsuffering to you.

Challenge

1. Peter was a picture of a believer warming himself at this world's fire, participating and finding fellowship with a world that rejects Christ. Are you warming your hands at the fires of the world, with those who treat Christ with contempt? What do you do when someone tells an off-color joke, or uses the Lord's name in vain? Remember the rooster.

Our Lord's Civil Trial Before Pilate
John 18:28-40

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord's death by crucifixion was predetermined.

2. Although Christ's kingdom is not of this world, Christ will have an earthly kingdom.

3. The bottom line is, "What is true?"

Practical Application

1. Do we make decisions like Pilate?

Questions

1. Why was a civil trial of Jesus held?

2. What does it mean that the Lord's death by crucifixion was predetermined?

3. Because the Lord's death was predetermined, does this excuse the Jews who had Him put to death?

4. Is Christ's kingdom of this world?

5. What was Pilate really asking when he said, *"What is truth?"*

Answers

1. Because the Jews could not carry out the death penalty, and the Jews wanted Jesus dead.

2. "That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled" (John 18:31-32). The Jews would have executed Jesus by stoning Him for blasphemy, but Scripture said that He was to die by crucifixion (see John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32). Other Scriptures tell us that this was predetermined in eternity past. See Psalm 22:16 and Acts 2:22-23.

3. No. It in no way excuses the evil they committed. They bear full responsibility for their wickedness.

4. Yes and no. Christ's kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36), which means that it was spiritual in nature, and would not threaten Rome's power. Yes, because one day Christ will have an earthly kingdom. See Revelation 21-22.

5. He may have meant it philosophically, or sarcastically, or perhaps he was interested in knowing what truth really was. In any case, for Pilate the bottom line was power and prestige for himself, not what was true.

Discuss / Consider

1. Pilate concluded that he found no fault in Christ, but he released Barabbas, a convicted thief, a convicted insurrectionist, and a murderer. Why did he make a decision like that? Because it was self-serving, better for his career and his popularity. Justice didn't matter as much to Pilate as his status. You would not be that extreme, but in lesser matters, do you tend to think first of your career, status, or popularity, perhaps manipulating truth for your own agenda?

2. Do you bestow honor on Christ by your life and actions?

Challenge

1. Review question/answer #4. Be able to explain the kingdoms of Christ.

The Lord's Trial Continues
John 19:1-16

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Pilate did not realize the profound truth of his statement, "Behold the Man!"

2. Pilate did not realize the profound truth of his statement, "Behold your King!"

Practical Application

1. Don't play politics with the truth.

Questions

1. How was Roman flogging done?

2. How were Jewish beatings done?

3. Our Lord wore a crown of thorns that we might wear a _____ __ _____.

4. How many times did Pilate declare Christ as innocent?

5. When the Jews saw that they could not get the Lord crucified for being a threat to Rome, what did they do?

6. Pilate wanted to release Jesus, but he didn't. Why?

7. Did Pilate realize the truth of his statements, *"Behold the man!"* & *"Behold your king!"*

Answers

1. It was carried out with leather strips with pieces of metal or bones imbedded in the ends of the thongs. Men were known to have died after being scourged.

2. Jewish beatings were limited to 39 stripes.

3. crown of glory

4. Twice

5. They reverted to the religious charge of blasphemy, according to Jewish law.

6. He was afraid of his position from Rome and his popularity with the Jews.

7. No. But Jesus was the perfect Man. No. But Jesus was not only the King of the Jews, but the King of kings, King of the Universe.

Discuss / Consider

1. If you had been part of the crowd when Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus, what do you think you might have said?

2. Pilate played politics with the truth. Have you ever been guilty of playing politics with the truth? Of putting your agenda before Christ?

Challenge

1. Pilate failed to realize the truth of his statements. Do you realize these truths?

The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ
John 19:17-27

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. It is significant that the gruesome details of the crucifixion are not mentioned.

2. It is significant that Roman soldiers fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 22.

3. It is significant that Jesus did not address Mary as "mother."

Practical Application

1. We have a responsibility to care for our aging parents.

Questions

1. What is the difference between Golgotha and Calvary?

2. Why was an inscription written on a cross? In what languages was it written?

3. Who were the four women standing near the cross?

4. Why didn't John mention the gruesome details of the crucifixion?

5. Which prophetic Scripture was fulfilled when the soldiers cast lots for Jesus' garment?

6. Why can't skeptics refute such prophecies?

Answers

1. Golgotha is the Hebrew word for the place of the crucifixion. Calvary is the Latin translation. It is also known as the "Place of the Skull."

2. To indicate the crime for which the person was being crucified. In Hebrew, the native language of the Jewish people; in Latin, the official language of Rome; and in Greek, the common written communication at that time.

3. Mary, the mother of Jesus; Mary's sister (probably Salome); Mary, the wife of Cleopas; and Mary Magdalene (the woman healed of demonic possession).

4. Because the focus of John's gospel is not on the physical pain, but on the purpose of the crucifixion – the wrath of God against sin when He died as our substitute.

5. Psalm 22:18

6. Because they prove the supernatural character of the Bible. This prophecy was written by King David about 1,000 years before the time of the crucifixion.

Discuss / Consider

1. We are told that folks in their middle adult years are in the "sandwich" age. This means that they have concerns about caring for their children and their parents. Is this true of yourself or in the lives of folks you know?

2. Which is your emphasis – the physical pain Jesus suffered on the cross, or the spiritual victory He gained?

Challenge

1. Jesus was concerned about the care of His mother. How concerned are you about the care of your parents? How do you show concern and love?

The Crucifixion and Death of the Lord Jesus
John 19:28-37

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. False doctrine is refuted by the "It is finished" of John 19:30.

2. False doctrine is refuted by the blood and water of John 19:34.

Practical Application

1. Let's take a balanced approach to the spiritualization of Scripture.

Questions

1. What is the *"after this"* of John 19:28?

2. Of which of the Psalms is Jesus' cry, *"I thirst,"* a fulfillment?

3. Why didn't the Jews want the bodies of those crucified to be left on the crosses overnight?

4. Why did the Romans break the legs of those crucified?

5. Why didn't the Roman soldiers break Jesus' legs?

6. How is false doctrine refuted by *"It is finished"*?

7. How is false doctrine refuted by the blood and the water?

Answers

1. The three hours of darkness, when Jesus was suffering under the wrath of God for the payment of our sins.

2. Psalm 22:15 and Psalm 69:21

3. It would defile the land according to the law. (Deuteronomy 21:22-23)

4. It would hasten death, because the crucified one could not lift himself up to breathe, and therefore he would suffocate.

5. He was already dead. Unknown to them, this was a fulfillment of Exodus 12:46. Instead, they pierced His side with a spear, as foretold in Zechariah 12:10, which will be fulfilled in the day when the Jews will look on their Messiah whom they have pierced.

6. It was a cry of victory when the Lord Jesus voluntarily gave up His spirit. “It is finished,” means to pay a debt in full. The Lord Jesus Christ had finished the work of paying the penalty for sin.

7. It proved that Christ was fully human and that He really died, which refuted the heresy of Docetism, which purported that Christ did not become flesh and blood, but only appeared as a man.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you take a balanced view of the spiritualization of Scripture? What is a balanced view of Scripture?

2. Have you taken a good look recently at what Jesus did for you on the cross?

Challenge

1. What does *“It is finished”* really mean to you?

The Burial of the Lord's Body
John 19:38-42

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God counts secret belief for salvation.

2. God insured an honorable burial for His Son.

Practical Application

1. Remember that difficult circumstances will reveal your true character.

Questions

1. In which of the gospels is Joseph of Arimathea mentioned? What do we learn about him?

2. In which of the gospels is Nicodemus mentioned?

3. Why did Nicodemus bring such a large amount of myrrh and aloe for Jesus' burial?

4. Why were Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus secret believers?

5. Were they the only secret believers among the Jewish religious leaders?

6. Are secret believers saved?

7. How did God insure an honorable burial for His Son?

Answers

1. In all four gospels. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, he was a wealthy man, and at first he was a secret believer.

2. Only in John's gospel.

3. Large amounts were used in royal burials, and large amounts of spices would have prevented our Lord's severely injured body from undergoing decay. It was a fulfillment of prophecy. See Psalm 16:10.

4. For fear of the Jews, both for physical safety and the fear of being ostracized from the religious community because of their association with Jesus.

5. No. See John 12:42-43.

6. God counts secret belief for salvation.

7. Once the work of redemption was complete, not a single defiled hand touched the body of our Lord. He was handled with loving care and buried as a king.

Discuss / Consider

Secret believers love the praise of men rather than the praise of God. Sometimes, secret believers are afraid to show their faith because of fear of losing their job, or of being mocked by co-workers, or of being ridiculed by classmates, friends, and family. Have you ever found yourself in this position? Looking back, how would (should) you have responded?

Challenge

1. Remember that difficult circumstances will reveal your true character. This is what happened to Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. They could not sit idly by when such injustice was taking place. If you find yourself in such a circumstance, be thankful… and stand and be counted for Christ.

Mary Magdalene Discovers the Empty Tomb
John 20:1-10

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The resurrection of Christ is the best explanation of the evidence.

2. The resurrection of Christ is predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Practical Application

1. When in doubt, check it out.

Questions

1. What happened when Mary Magdalene came to the tomb?

2. What did she do then?

3. Describe the first century tomb, like the one in which Jesus was laid.

4. How is the resurrection of Christ the best explanation of the evidence?

5. In which Old Testament Scriptures is the resurrection of Christ predicted?

Answers

1. She discovered that the stone had been taken away.

2. She ran and told Peter and John that the tomb was empty.

3. Tombs then contained chambers cut out of solid rock, with shelves or niches cut into the rock walls, where the bodies would be laid out. A rich man's tomb, like this one, would have had two chambers – an inner chamber with the shelves, and an outer chamber, called the weeping chamber. A large circular stone would seal the entrance.

4. If you disprove the resurrection of Christ, you have taken away the basis of the Christian faith. Although unbelievers will try to do this, there is too much evidence and there were too many witnesses to prove that Christ was raised from the dead.

5. Acts 13:33 refers to Psalm 2:7, and Acts 13:35 refers to Psalm 16:10.

Discuss / Consider

1. How do you think you would have responded, as a first century disciple, if you had gone to the tomb with Mary Magdalene?

2. What does the resurrection of Jesus Christ mean in your life?

Challenge

1. When in doubt, check it out. Look at the evidence when you have a question.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene
John 20:11-18

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The resurrection of Christ involves new relationships.

2. The resurrection of Christ involves new responsibilities.

Practical Application

1. Your sorrow can be turned to joy.

Questions

1. What did Mary see when she looked into the tomb?

2. What did Mary see when she turned around?

3. Was Mary aware that the Lord had been resurrected?

4. When did Mary recognize the Lord?

5. What did the Lord mean when He told Mary not to cling to Him?

6. How was Jesus' relationship different with the disciples after the resurrection?

7. Why did Jesus, say, *"My Father and your Father, My God and your God"*?

Answers

1. Two angels sitting on the niche in the rock wall of the tomb, where the body of the Lord had been laid.

2. The Lord, but she did not know it was the Lord.

3. No, she thought that "the gardener" (the Lord) had been asked to take away His body, perhaps by request from Joseph of Arimathea.

4. When the Lord called her by name.

5. The idea was that of a new relationship now, one that was different from the Lord's life here on earth.

6. In John 15, Jesus referred to them as friends. Now He refers to them as brethren.

7. To show that even with the new relationship, there is still a distinction with the Father. Jesus' unique relationship is that He is God's Son.

Discuss / Consider

1. Check out Hebrews 2:11-12 along with John 20:17 to assure you of your new relationship with Christ.

2. What are a believer's responsibilities because of the resurrection? How are you handling your post-resurrection responsibilities?

Challenge

1. Mary's sorrow was turned to joy when Jesus called her by name. The Lord calls you by name. Does this make a profound difference in your life? It should.

The Lord's Post-Resurrection Appearance to His Disciples
John 20:19-23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Because of the resurrection of Christ, believers have a peace which cannot fail.

2. Because of the resurrection of Christ, believers have a mission which cannot fail.

Practical Application

1. Aren't you glad that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever?

Questions

1. Why were the disciples meeting behind closed doors after the crucifixion?

2. How did Jesus come to the disciples at this time?

3. What is the greatest factor of a resurrected body for us?

4. In John 20:20, why did Jesus show His disciples His hands and His side?

5. What was Jesus' first word to His disciples?

6. What is the mission which cannot fail? Why can't it fail?

Answers

1. They were afraid of the Jewish authorities because of their association with Jesus.

2. He "appeared." This is a capability of a resurrected body, unlimited by gravity or walls or other limitations of this time-space universe.

3. The resurrected body is not limited by sin.

4. To prove that it was really Him, the same Jesus who had died on the cross.

5. *"Peace"*

6. The mission of the believer to go and tell others about the risen, living Christ. See John 20:21. It cannot fail because of Jesus' words. See John 20:23. Another reason that the mission cannot fail is that believers have the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you have peace with God? This peace is available to everyone because Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world. See Colossians 1:20.

2. Do you have the peace of God? This peace is available to every believer. It is the peace of mind to the restless soul. Note that the disciples' fear disappeared when Jesus appeared.

Challenge

1. See Hebrews 13:8. Aren't you glad that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever? As the Lord Jesus was with His disciples, so is He with us – patient, encouraging, and strengthening.

Thomas Had His Doubts Removed
John 20:24-31

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Because of the resurrection of Christ, there is evidence for those who have doubts.

2. Because of the resurrection of Christ, there is blessing for those who have faith.

Practical Application

1. Let's follow the biblical pattern for having our doubts removed.

Questions

1. What was Thomas' response when he heard that Jesus had come to them?

2. Why will the Lord retain the scars of the crucifixion?

3. Which verses state the purpose of John's gospel? What was his purpose?

4. Is there sufficient evidence of the resurrection of Christ for those who have doubts?

5. According to Paul, if Jesus was not resurrected, what would that say about the Christian faith?

6. Did Jesus command believers to worship on Sunday?

Answers

1. It was that of a typical skeptic, wanting to see material evidence for himself.

2. To remind us forever as we worship that He bore the marks of death for our sin.

3. John 20:30-31. *"…that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."*

4. Definitely, both in Scripture and in extra-biblical writings.

5. We would be pitiable. See 1 Corinthians 15:19.

6. No. But because of the resurrection, even the Christian Jews never argued about the significance of this day.

Discuss / Consider

1. John 20:28 is not only a statement of worship, but a proclamation of the deity of Christ. The Lord blesses those who haven't seen and yet have believed. Are you aware of this special blessing to you from the Lord? Can you, with Thomas, say, *"My Lord and my God"*?

2. Are you following the biblical pattern for removing doubts about the faith? This involves seeking the Lord's mind on all matters and worshipping with the Lord's people.

Challenge

1. How secure are you in God's peace? Do you take your anxieties to Him and leave them there, trusting Him to work out whatever is best for you?

The Great Catch of Fish
John 21:1-14

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord knows the location of the fish.

2. The Lord has different ways of catching fish.

Practical Application

1. Let's accept the Lord's invitation to come and eat breakfast with Him.

2. Let's discuss matters over coffee.

Questions

1. Where was the setting for this great catch of fish?

2. Why did the disciples go there from Jerusalem?

3. Why did the disciples return to fishing?

4. Why did Peter jump into the water when he knew the Lord was on shore?

5. How did the Lord know where the fish were?

6. What is the spiritual picture here?

Answers

1. The Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias.

2. They were directed there by the message of the angel. See Matthew 28:7.

3. It had been their livelihood and they had normal responsibilities. It would have been the natural thing for them to do.

4. For one thing, it was true to his impulsive nature. But more importantly, he wanted to see His Lord and set things right after having so recently denied Him.

5. He was and is God. He is the Lord. He knows everything. He is the one who created the fish and put them in their element.

6. This is what it means to become fishers of men. Success is winning souls demands that we follow the Lord's instructions, because He knows the location of the fish and how to catch them.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you fishing all night and catching nothing? Are you fishing at all? Review the Lord's instructions, both on how to fish and where to fish. Pray for holy boldness to fish, and then pray that He will direct you to the fish.

2. Let's accept the Lord's invitation to come and eat breakfast with Him. He wants to commune with us, to serve us and to strengthen us. What better way than to have breakfast with the Lord. How satisfying and nourishing is your Quiet Time?

3. Let's discuss matters over coffee. After the Lord had fed Peter, he brought up spiritual matters, Peter was restored during this seashore breakfast. Have you shared like this with brothers and sisters in Christ? Have you counseled someone during a meal?

Challenge

1. Contrast the fire of coals where Peter warmed himself in John 18:18 and John 21:9. Apply this to your life.

The Restoration of Peter to Fellowship with the Lord
John 21:15-25

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The good shepherd restores the sheep.

2. The good shepherd feeds His sheep.

Practical Application

1. Don't keep looking around at other believers.

2. Make sure you quote the word correctly.

Questions

1. What did the Lord mean by asking Peter if he loved Him more than these?

2. Which verses predict Peter's death? How would he die?

3. According to this Scripture, what two things does the good shepherd do?

4. What are the two Greek meanings of the word, "love" in John 21:15-17?

5. Did the Lord restore Peter in front of the other disciples?

Answers

1. “These” probably meant did Peter love Him more than the other disciples? Peter had said that he would lay down his life for His sake (John 13:37).

2. John 21:18-19. Peter would be martyred, and there is reliable tradition that he was crucified upside down.

3. The good shepherd restores his sheep and he feeds his sheep.

4. “Agape” means self-sacrificing love, a love of the will. “Phileo” means affection. The Lord used agape love in John 21:15-16, but phileo in John 21:17. Peter responded with phileo in John 21:15-16.

5. No, they were at a distance. Jesus spoke to Peter, one on one.

Discuss / Consider

1. The Lord worked with Peter to restore him, one on one. Do you find this to be your most effective method in working with others? Recall times when the Lord dealt with you one on one.

2. The Lord told Peter to feed His flock. How are you being fed? How are you feeding others?

Challenge

1. Avoid comparing yourself with others. The Lord said to Peter, *“What is that to you? You follow me.”* Good advice. When we look at others and compare ourselves to them, we tend to become discouraged, jealous, disheartened. This does not honor the Lord. Each of us has enough to do to keep busy in His service.