

THE LIFE OF CHRIST



**A Classroom Guide for High
School Teachers**

Les Bridgeman

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The Life of Christ: A Classroom Guide for High School Teachers

BibleBridge: Bible Study Lessons

Academic Bible Studies with a Devotional Emphasis for ages 14 and up

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Personal Introduction

In 2003, my wife, our ten-month-old baby and I set off for a distant island. Our destination was Singapore. I had accepted an offer to be the high school Bible teacher at International Community School. After three plane trips and almost twenty-four hours in the air, we arrived at 1 a.m. As we walked out of the airport with our huge suitcases in tow we were greeted by the thick humid air that would be our environment for the next six years. I never did adjust to that sticky feeling.

The first year was the hardest. On top of adjusting to a new country and having a baby to care for, we no longer had a car of our own. Since our apartment complex was located on the side of a hill, getting to a bus stop meant going down a flight of sixty-five steps. I know it's strange when you know the number of steps you're walking down, but my wife counted. Imagine trying to get somewhere with a baby in a stroller. It was a difficult year for her, but sadly I didn't know just how difficult it was, because I was too busy with my new career.

As far as I know, first-year teaching is hard for everyone, but I was going into it without formal teacher training and without a set curriculum. Maybe you missed the important part – I didn't have curriculum. Although my administrator had sent me Bible curriculum from his previous school, I didn't like it. In fact, I didn't like any curriculum I'd seen. What can I say? I'm picky. When a friend asked what teaching material I would use, I flippantly said I would write my own. Little did I know how much work I would have as a full-time teacher. My first couple weeks of lesson plans were pathetic at best: "Read and discuss Genesis 1," "Read and discuss Genesis 2." I'm not kidding. Come to think of it that entire year's lesson plans should never be seen again.

For the next four years I planned, wrote, and taught my curriculum. Sundays were my big lesson plan day. Sometimes I would start in the early afternoon and work until midnight or even later. After all, I had twenty to twenty-five lessons to write from scratch. My lesson planning would usually begin with a time of prayer. I needed help and I knew it. I would then read the relevant chapters in the Bible and choose the sections to be covered for each lesson. Selecting the Bible passage was quite a challenge in itself. I proceeded by writing out the main points from the selected passage only to be pestered by the following questions: "Okay, now what?" "What can I possibly do with this passage?" "How can I make it interesting?" I knew I couldn't give a sermon every day. As the night wore on, I found myself wrestling with one question, "How can I fill up this forty-five minute class period?" While I tried hard to finish, my lesson plans were usually incomplete. I would typically have two or three class periods each week where I needed to "wing it." I learned that "winging it" isn't always bad; spontaneity can give teachers and students a jolt of excitement in the middle of a mundane school day. But I also learned that it's better to come to class prepared and "wing it" out of choice rather than necessity.

I'm glad to say that plugging away for four more years worked wonders on my first-year lesson plans. While I initially wrote with only my classes in mind, the encouragement of administrators,

colleagues, and students motivated me to make my curriculum available to others. I hope this curriculum will be a useful tool in making your Bible classes more enjoyable and meaningful.

Introduction to Bible Teaching

First, let's get the bad news out of the way; Bible teachers have a difficult job. Here's a list of six pitfalls that have the potential to sink the Bible teacher.

1. **The high number of classes.** Full-time Bible teachers teach twenty to twenty-five classes per week. At that rate, a pastor would need to preach twice a week for forty years to equal the number of lessons taught in the classroom in five years. The amount of teaching required leaves little time for in-depth study and lesson preparation. A lack of study and learning usually leads to a lack of passion for the subject.
2. **The limitations of the academic setting.** First, many biblical topics are not easily taught in an academic environment – e.g. love, joy, peace, etc. These vital aspects of the Christian life can't be graded. The Bible doesn't only teach head knowledge, but relational or heart knowledge. Second, the teacher and student relationship tends to be one dimensional. Students sit and listen while the teacher speaks and then the students leave. Jesus' approach was different. While Jesus lectured, he also lived with his students on a daily basis. Third, the school setting makes it easy for both teachers and students to miss the point. The primary purpose of teaching the Bible is not for students to pass a test or get an A. The goal of biblical knowledge is biblical belief and action. The Bible shouldn't be viewed as just another textbook.
3. **Student misbehavior.** Responding appropriately to student misbehavior is one of the hardest aspects of teaching because it's full of judgment calls: Was I fair to call out this student and not that student? Was the discipline I gave fair? Did I have the right attitude? Do my administrators approve of this discipline method? There's enough here to make one's head spin, but suffice to say that appropriate discipline is essential. If we don't discipline well, we could be undermining what we're teaching.
4. **A lack of student interest** poses a major problem for any subject, but especially Bible class where students must be humble and receptive for it to make an impact. Sin is a major cause of disinterest because it directs our attention away from God's Word. However, sin is not the only factor. Poor teaching and the school setting may contribute to the problem in the following ways:
 - a. To turn students off to the Bible (or anything for that matter) here's the recipe: run class the same way every day (ideally lecturing for the entire period), don't listen to honest doubts and questions, ignore student suggestions, act superhuman by never showing

weakness in front of the class (e.g. ignorance, error, sorrow), discipline harshly, try not to interact with students outside of class, don't worry if the students are enjoying class, don't bother to rethink issues in light of new evidence, teach below or above their level, don't prepare for class, and stop reading. Basically the more we think about ourselves, the less students will care about our classes.

- b. Specifically in a Christian school environment, students who perceive hypocrisy in fellow students, teachers, or administrators may become jaded to the Bible and the Christian faith. It's important to keep in mind that the perception of hypocrisy may not be accurate.
- c. Because of the different levels of knowledge among the students, at times it will be necessary to teach material that some find repetitive and boring. Augustine noted, "A speaker who clarifies something that needs to be learnt is a blessing, but a speaker who labours things already learnt is a bore."¹ The degree to which you face this challenge depends on your school's admission policy.

5. The controversial issues in biblical interpretation. With a two-thousand-year history, we are the beneficiaries of a vast library of opinions and the library is growing daily. A good teacher understands different points of view, presents them fairly, and ideally is able to offer an educated opinion on the matter. A good teacher is also aware of where they are and doesn't spend too much time traveling down the rabbit trails of controversy. This is no small task.²

6. Hypocrisy in the heart of the teacher. This is an enormous pitfall and it appears frequently on our journey. Because it's all too easy to say one thing and do another, hypocrisy is a prevalent problem for people whose full-time job is speaking. James wrote, "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness" (3:1). I can't tell you how many times I've felt a disjunction between what I was teaching and what I was living. For example, why do I talk all day about prayer and not pray? Why do I talk *about* God, but not *to* God? This personal struggle isn't fun, but it is important. It keeps us honest and it keeps us focused on what's most important – being a disciple and not just talking about it.

¹ Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, in Oxford World's Classics, trans. R.P.H. Green (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 116.

² For a helpful introduction to controversial issues see Gregory A. Boyd and Paul R. Eddy, *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology*, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009). Including the appendix, the authors concisely explain thirty debatable topics within evangelicalism.

Clearing the Path

- 1. Understand and emphasize the purpose of the Bible.** The Bible highlights certain teachings more than others. For example, there are four Gospels, there's a greatest commandment (Mk. 12:29-31), and there are things of "first importance" (1 Cor. 15:3). Topics of secondary importance must be addressed, but shouldn't sidetrack us from placing the emphasis in the right place. Given the prominence of Christ and salvation in Scripture, the purpose of the Bible is concisely summarized in this way: to make us "wise for salvation through faith in Christ" (2 Tim. 3:15).³ Unfortunately, some people study the Scriptures and miss the point by refusing to come to Christ (Jn. 5:39-40). The Bible is like an outstretched finger pointing to Christ, a monitor displaying Christ, a vehicle transporting us to Christ. If the Bible's main purpose is to present Christ, the Bible teacher's main purpose should be the same. This doesn't mean Jesus has to be talked about in every minute of every class. It means the overall objective of the class is to emphasize Christ. Secondly, Scripture has a practical purpose which is to equip us for a life of good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Scripture motivates us to do good works and discourages us from doing evil works. As we take a step back and look at the two stated objectives we find ourselves at the greatest commandment: love God, (which involves loving his Son), and love people.⁴ These are the things that should be emphasized in Bible class. One word of caution: while we should desire students to believe in Christ we should never coerce them to do so. Coercion is un-Christian and foolish. We can introduce students to Christ, but we can't make them talk to him. We can faithfully teach the Bible, but we can't make anyone believe it.
- 2. Consider the whole person.** The Bible aims to affect our head, heart, and hands and Bible class should do the same. Bible teachers should not ignore the emotional and volitional dimensions at the expense of the intellectual dimension. Being a "doer of the word" is important and in many cases more important than getting the right answers on a test. Feelings are essential as well. Teachers should consider how students feel in class and how they feel about a particular topic. Bible class should be a place where students are comfortable enough to open up and let down their guard. "How students feel has everything to do with how they learn. . . . If we aim, for example, to make our lessons enjoyable, our students will learn better. So be sure to include in your plan a goal such as this: the students will enjoy this lesson."⁵

³ John Stott, *Understanding the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 14.

⁴ In *On Christian Teaching*, Augustine wrote, "anyone who thinks he has understood the divine scriptures or any part of them, but cannot by his understanding build up this double love of God and neighbor, has not yet succeeded in understanding them" (27). Also "the passage being read should be studied with careful consideration until its interpretation can be connected with the realm of love" (80).

⁵ John Van Dyk, *The Craft of Christian Teaching: A Classroom Journey*, (Sioux Center: Dordt Press, 2000), 67-8. This is a must read for Christian teachers.

3. **Use a variety of teaching strategies.** Class shouldn't always begin the same way and only rarely should students do the same thing for an entire period. While teachers shouldn't feel pressured to put on a variety show every period, they should have a well-stocked and frequently-used collection of activities at their disposal.⁶ (There's a list of icebreakers and activities below.) One of the most effective and flexible teaching strategies is also one of the simplest: ask a thoughtful question. The greatest teachers—Socrates, Confucius, Jesus—understood the importance of asking questions. There's no substitute for a good question.
4. **Implement grace in grading.** For example, don't be a stickler for a specific word in a memory verse if a student has captured the same idea with a different word. After all, there are a few dozen English versions. Give the students credit for being close enough. When giving a quiz or test, allow students to work with a Bible, notebook, or a friend, from time to time. Of course, don't take grace to an extreme, but consider incorporating it into your grading. After all, grace is at the heart of what we're teaching. Being a stickler in grading usually communicates a legalistic and grade-centered emphasis.
5. **Teach to their level.** This is not easy to define because every class is unique, but the point is that high school teachers shouldn't teach on the seminary or the Sunday school level. When we make things too hard or too easy for the students, we run the risk of losing their interest or even provoking their disdain. One of my former colleagues told me that she had to memorize about fifty verses for her high school Bible final exam. I asked her how she felt about it and she replied, "I hated it and I forgot all the verses anyway."
6. **Get to know the students and help them get to know each other.** The message of the Bible focuses on our relationship with God and with each other. Teachers can emphasize the relational aspect by cultivating a respectful, listening atmosphere, facilitating group activities, and celebrating the unique attributes of each student. Ideally teachers should enjoy the company of their students. Jesus is the supreme example; he ate with his students, walked with them, washed their feet, and died for them. We can start small by eating lunch with our students from time to time or just shooting the breeze in class. Surveys can also be an aid in getting to know the students. For sensitive information use an anonymous survey such as the belief continuum below. (Of course, survey results should always be taken with a grain of salt.)
7. **Change the classroom environment.** For example, have the students sit on the floor or move the desks away from the chairs for a period or two. "Over fifteen hundred years ago St.

⁶ Ibid., 153-4. Van Dyk proposes the following categories for teaching strategies: 1.) Direct teaching – lectures, demonstrations, videos, worksheets, etc.; 2.) Indirect teaching – story-telling, discovery learning, research projects, etc.; and 3.) Participatory teaching – brainstorming, cooperative learning, dramas, etc. Van Dyk also gives the pros and cons of each strategy (157-68).

Augustine insisted . . . that the learning environment in religious education should be physically 'comfortable' for the participants."⁷ To accomplish this in an academic setting is not easy, but it's something to be aware of and work toward. Maybe the Bible classroom could be painted a different color or perhaps there could be cushions on the floor where students could sit once in a while.

8. **Teach honestly.** While we shouldn't emphasize controversial or difficult teachings, we also shouldn't ignore them. Plan to address the difficult Bible issues in your lessons and if a student asks a difficult question don't brush it off. There's no way around the fact that there are difficult verses to interpret and there are complicated issues to consider. We're not doing students a service when we shield them from Bible difficulties or when we act like we have everything figured out. Honesty means saying "I don't know" and even "I'm sorry."
9. **Live honestly.** Be a genuine follower of Christ. Hypocrisy is a powerful corroding agent that eats away at our work. In five or ten years, the students will probably forget almost everything they heard in class but they won't forget their teachers. They will have caught certain things from our lives. They will remember if we were serious about our faith. Antidotes for hypocrisy include a disciplined habit of prayer and Bible reading, regular confession, and close godly friendships.

⁷ Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980), 226.

Assignment Ideas

I've divided these assignment ideas into three main categories: head, heart, and hands. While all three areas are intertwined, seeing them in separate lists may help us to intentionally target each area. The point is to help the students know it, feel it, and do it. If you don't like an assignment in a particular lesson, replace it with another one listed here. Make sure to add your own ideas to the list throughout the year.

Head: Content Work (Know it)

- **Reading** – There are a variety of ways to read a passage in class: silently, randomly call on people, popcorn reading where the reader finishes reading wherever they want and then calls on another student to read, dramatic reading, assigned character roles, etc.
- **Observations** – Help the students to see details in the passage. You can tell them what to look for such as repeated words and phrases or you can allow them to notice whatever interests them.
- **Student questions** – Have the students write out any questions they have about the passage and then discuss.
- **Partner discussion** – Place students with a partner to read and discuss the passage together.
- **Notes** – Have students take notes on the lecture and collect at the end of class. Students can record notes in a variety of ways such as dividing the paper into four sections to write down facts, new ideas, questions, and action steps.
- **Handouts** – Use the handouts included in the lessons or make your own.
- **Outline** – Hand out the passage without subheadings and have the students outline it.
- **Summarize** – Give guidelines such as a minimum number of sentences to be written.
- **Prior knowledge** – Find out what the students already know about the topic before you explore it together, then end class by reviewing how they've grown in their understanding of that topic.
- **Scripture memorization** – Give a passage to be memorized by the end of class. You can also have students memorize a chapter or passage as a whole class – i.e., memorize one or two verses each, then go around the class.
- **Surveys** – Poll students in class or send them out to collect data on a specific topic.
- **Crossword puzzle** – Make one for the students or have the students make one for each other as a review activity.
- **Research paper**
- **Debate** – Divide the class into two groups and assign positions to be argued for. After giving class time for the groups to prepare their arguments have representatives from each group debate. You can set up a row of chairs (max. four chairs) facing another row of chairs.

Heart: Creative Work (Feel it)

- **Skits** – There are many ways to incorporate drama into Bible class: act out the story using skits or mimes, create a talk show with characters from the story, present TV commercials promoting a theme from the text, and show a life situation illustrating a particular theme. If you want quality skits give plenty of class time for the students to prepare.
- **Journal entry** – Have the students write a journal entry for one of the characters in the story. You can specify whatever content you want such as “use the five senses.”
- **Drawing** – Distribute computer paper and then have students draw a particular Bible scene. The pictures can be posted around the room. A major project could be creating a Children’s Bible.
- **Doodle** – Students should draw whatever comes to mind as you’re lecturing. Then collect and share with the class.
- **Reflection** – Students summarize the passage in their own words, pose questions to the passage, and then explain how it connects to some area of their life.
- **Article** – Have students create a newspaper or magazine article from the assigned passage. The article should include a title, picture, summary, and interview.
- **Questions on Feelings** – Ask questions such as the following: How does this passage make you feel? What makes you feel happy, sad . . . ? What makes you sing? How does this or that make you feel? What does this make you think of?
- **Craft** – Bring Play-Doh, magazines, or other materials, and have students make something related to the lesson.
- **Music** – Students can write song lyrics and hum the melody. You can also begin class with a song or play music during class.
- **Pictionary** – Divide the class into two teams, then give a word or phrase to one student and have the student draw it on the board while their team guesses what it is.
- **Prayer** – Students can write a prayer incorporating the passage they’re reading. If you’re comfortable with it, students can pray for each other or you can begin class with prayer. You can also encourage students to develop the habit of private prayer. For example, challenge the class to pray at a set time Monday through Thursday for ten to fifteen minutes then discuss it on Friday. Students can also be challenged to try a voluntary technology fast (internet, mp3s, cameras, TVs, movies) for the sake of prayer.
- **Case-Study** – Give an example of a life situation then discuss appropriate responses.

Hands: Active Work (Do it)

- **Prior experience** – Begin class by asking the students how they currently practice the topic of the day. End class by addressing how students should live in response to the lesson.

- **Application day** – Have an informal class where you sit on the floor and ask the students what they learned and can put into practice from the Bible lessons.
- **Student lessons** – Put students in groups of three to four and have them prepare a lesson to be taught to the class, another class, or chapel.
- **Community service** – Seek to facilitate student service in the school community, local community, and global community.

Icebreakers

It's not wise to use an icebreaker every period, but it's probably safe to use an icebreaker two or three times a week. The lesson plans incorporate icebreakers in the first unit only to give you an idea of how to use them. Feel free to use as you see fit.

- **Random Lessons** – Allow students (one or two per class) to come to the front and individually share anything they want with the class. I recommend making this a requirement. I've had students share the layout of their neighborhood, how they make a sandwich, a story from their childhood, how to save the world from hunger, a book they recently read, a joke . . . You'll probably need to encourage students to think about sharing things they don't usually share. Also make sure to give a time limit (ideally about five minutes unless it's especially interesting). This is a great way to get to know the students.
- **Interview** – Act as if you're a talk show host and invite one student to the front and ask anything that comes to mind.
- **Ask a question** – Make up your own question or use a book of questions such as *The Conversation Piece: Creative Questions to Tickle the Mind*. You can also spur on creative thinking by asking lateral thinking questions such as "How is a book like a light bulb?" If you don't have a creative question handy ask what they've learned from a previous class or ask them about what they were discussing before class started.
- **Prayer** – Caution: taking prayer requests may take a long time.
- **Lectio divina** – Silent meditation and prayer based on a passage of Scripture. One person reads the passage slowly three times pausing between each reading while the others attempt to internalize the words and then turn their thoughts into a prayer.
- **Word associations/brainstorm** – Write a word on the board and have students write down words or phrases that they associate with it. You can also do, "things that make you sad, angry, bored, etc." This can be turned into a competition by awarding the student with the most associations. It's usually fun to read these to the class.
- **Graffiti** – Ask students to come to the board and draw something related to a particular theme. To alleviate the stress students should come to the board in groups and draw individually. The following groups can build upon what's been drawn or draw something different. This is also a good end of the semester activity.

- **Random Bible lesson** – Give students five to ten minutes to flip through the Bible and find something to share. Then call on them to come to the front and read a verse or passage and give a short explanation.
- **Q & A** – Have students write out questions about anything. Throughout the year pick out a question and then have the class to write individual responses to the questions. Review the answers and give your answer.
- **Progressive Story** – Give the first line of the story and then have each student add a line or two.
- **Play catch** – Bring a ball to class and randomly throw it to students. You can also have them get into a circle and you can get a couple balls going at the same time. This can be an icebreaker or a review activity if you ask questions to the person who caught the ball. If they miss the ball or answer incorrectly they're out of the circle.
- **Exercise** – You can include review questions while exercising.
- **Tell a joke or funny story** – You can tell one yourself or ask one of your class comedians to share one.
- **Play a quick game** – e.g., sword drill, 7-up, thumb wrestling, hang-man
- **High point and low point** – of the day, week, weekend, year . . .
- **Devotional reading** – Read a selection from a devotional of your choice.
- **True or False** – Write three true facts and one false fact about yourself then share with the class. Break the class up into groups and have them guess the false fact.
- **Show a video clip or an image**
- **Play or sing a song**

Review Activities

- **Catch and throw game** – Students stand in a circle and throw a ball to each other. A student throws a ball then asks a review question to the student who caught the ball. (Or the teacher can ask the questions.) The students have to catch the ball and answer the question correctly or they're out. Bad throws can be penalized.
- **Prepare quiz** – Have students write their own quizzes and then quiz each other in class.
- **Exit slips** – At the end of class, have students write down answers to questions related to the lesson and then collect.
- **Musical chairs** – The person who is left standing has to answer a question correctly to stay in the game.
- **Tic-Tac-Toe** – Divide the class into two teams, draw the tic-tac-toe board and then ask questions to each team.

- **Split-Second** – Place students in groups of four. Ask review questions and have students write the answers on small sheets of paper. The first student to write down the correct answer and place it in the middle earns four points, the second student three points . . .
- **Dog & bone** – Divide the class into groups of four, two chairs facing two chairs with an object in the middle. When a question is asked the first person to grab the object gets to answer the question.
- **Basketball/Trashball** – Divide the class into two teams. Ask a question to an individual student, a correct answer gives the student the chance to throw the ball into the trash can from two different distances for different point totals.
- **Share and Reflect Day** – This is more of a life-review activity. Allow students to get comfortable and then lead them in a time of spiritual or life reflection. For example ask, “What’s been happening in your lives? How have you been challenged spiritually? . . .” then have prayer. The end of the semester is usually a good time to share and reflect.⁸

⁸ For a more in-depth guide to high school Bible teaching see my *Guide for High School Bible Teachers* at biblebridge.gumroad.com/l/Nxrk.

Introduction to Curriculum

This book has been written for high school students in a Christian school setting. While this particular course has been used with eleventh graders, it can be utilized for any grade in high school. Daily lesson plans, handouts, quizzes and tests are included. A typical school year has about one hundred eighty days. There are about one hundred ninety lessons here, including tests and free periods (if you're happy with the test results, of course). This curriculum also incorporates free online resources. Unfortunately, the internet is always in a state of flux which means the resource links may need to be updated.

You will not find answer keys to the quizzes and tests, but the answers are in the notes and should be easily accessible. You will also not find clearly stated objectives for each lesson. It's best for you, the teacher, to read through the lesson and articulate the objective in your own words. You will make the final decision on what to emphasize, what to leave out, and what to add.

Abbreviations

This curriculum uses the following abbreviations:

- W** = work for student
- T** = note to teacher
- Q** = question to ask the class
- A** = answer
- HW** = homework
- IB** = icebreaker
- NT** = New Testament
- OT** = Old Testament
- = precedes a definition

Course Description

This course is an in-depth study of the Gospels of Mark and John along with a sampling of Matthew and Luke. In addition, the historical background of Jesus' life and the historical reliability of the Gospels will be explored. Throughout the course, students will reflect on what it means to have a relationship with the Jesus of the Gospels.

Primary Resources

- *The NIV Bible* and *The ESV Bible*
- *The Nativity Story*. DVD. Directed by Catherine Hardwicke. New Line Cinema, 2006.
- *The Visual Bible: The Gospel of John*. DVD. Directed by Philip Saville. The Visual Bible, 2003.

Disclaimer

All curriculum has its limitations. The writer doesn't know your students or you the teacher. These lessons have been written with a 45-minute class period in mind, but since every class and every teacher is different there's no way anyone can perfectly predict how long each lesson will take. While some lessons may take thirty minutes, other lessons may take fifty-five minutes. Be prepared to add to a lesson, begin the next lesson, eliminate sections of a lesson, or just give free time in class. Remember to add your own personal touch, whether that means skipping a few lessons, adding your own assignments, or changing the arrangement of a lesson. Finally, make sure to prepare for the week ahead by reading through the lessons in advance. Happy teaching!

Unit 1: The Authority of Christ (Mark 1:1–3:6)

Lesson 1: A Different Time

T: I recommend requiring students to bring a physical notebook and take handwritten notes throughout the year. I know things have changed dramatically with computers in the classroom and I appreciate being able to give digital assignments. However, it is extremely easy for students to be off task while the teacher is presenting content. Also, certain things don't make much sense on a computer, such as writing out a verse, which they would just copy and paste. This is only a recommendation. I have tried a variety of approaches and I am still trying to figure out what works best.

IB: We're going to begin with a word association game. Your job is to write down words or phrases that you associate with this word. The student with the most answers in two minutes wins.

T: Write the name *Jesus* on the board, then announce when two minutes is finished.

W: Count your answers.

T: Give a prize to the winner and read a few answers.

Jesus is our topic this year. Our primary sources for the life of Jesus are the Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – the first four books in the New Testament. Before we begin reading the Gospels, it's important for us to recognize the distance between Jesus' time period and ours. When we study the Gospels we're going back in time.

This huge gap of time doesn't mean we have nothing in common with people back then. In fact, we have most of the important things in common.

Q: What do we have in common with people back then?

A: Like people today, people then grew up in a family, ate, slept, dreamed, loved, argued, felt guilty, worried, hoped, got sick, and died.

While there are major similarities, there are also differences between our world and Jesus' world.

Q: How would you describe the world we live in today?

A: Hi-tech, fast paced, global village, well-traveled, rich and poor, materialistic

Many of the major changes in technology and civilization took place in the 1800's and early 1900's. This means that daily life was very similar for most people throughout human history. With the arrival of new technology, major distinctions between the changing seasons, night and day, work and leisure, started to become blurred.⁹

Working the Ground and Seasonal Change

Throughout human history most people worked the ground, but now due to modern day technology most of us are far removed from the soil. Because we're not outside working the ground, the changing of the seasons doesn't have much of an impact on our daily work.

Q: Which inventions decreased the impact of seasonal change?

A: Steamship, railway, factories, refrigerators

For example, people can now eat food even if it's out of season because it's shipped from another part of the world and kept fresh in refrigerators.

Night and Day

With the invention of artificial light the distinction between night and day became blurred. People could stay awake later and continue their daytime activities into the night.

Q: What time do you go to bed?

Transportation

All of our major transportation vehicles were invented less than two hundred years ago.

Q: How would your life be different without trains, cars, or airplanes?

If we exclude Jesus' trip to Egypt when he was a baby, the farthest he travelled from where he was born was about one hundred miles. That's less than a two-hour car ride for us.

⁹ Geoffrey Blainey, *A Very Short History of the World* (London: Penguin, 2004), 429-440.

Communication and Entertainment

The telegraph (predecessor to the telephone), radio, gramophone (record player) and television were all invented in the last two centuries. Prior to these inventions all communication was done in person or through mailed letters.

Work and Leisure

“The machine . . . transformed most jobs. Hours of work were shorter, holidays increased, and fewer jobs required the lifting of heavy weights.”¹⁰ This led to more leisure time which led to an increase in entertainment and sports.

In short, the inventions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries greatly changed the way people live.

Let’s quickly move into our time period.

Q: What late twentieth or early twenty-first century inventions could we add to the list?

W: Imagine going back to life before all of these inventions; life without mass farming equipment, artificial lights, refrigerators, cars, trains, airplanes, TVs, telephones, computers. Write a journal entry entitled “My life before 1800” describing what life was like back then. Include your feelings about your life. Ten lines minimum.

¹⁰ Ibid., 438.

Lesson 2: A Different Place

IB: Consider interviewing a student in front of the class once a week. (Use your judgment whether you want to make this voluntary or required.) Act as if you're on a talk-show. This should take about five minutes. Here are some suggested questions:

- What do you like to do after school?
- Do you have any brothers or sisters? If so, how well do you get along with them?
- Tell us of a time in your life when you were scared, surprised, worried, etc.
- Give us a piece of advice that your dad or mom gives you.
- What is your favorite movie, sport, food, etc.?

T: Ask for volunteers to share their journal entries from yesterday with the class, then collect.

We're still trying to appreciate the differences between our world and Jesus' world. Jesus was a Jew who lived two thousand years ago, spending most of his life in Israel which was under Roman rule.

Q: How many think Jesus should have been born earlier in world history? Why or why not?
How many think Jesus should have been born later in world history? Why or why not?

Here are some specific details of the world in which Jesus' world.

T: Distribute Handout 1.1 (pages 20-21 below).

Roman Rule

1. **Pax Romana** = Roman peace. After many successful conquests, the Roman Empire ceased their expansion efforts resulting in a time of relative peace. This peaceful period coincided with Jesus' lifetime. One of the regions Rome had conquered was Palestine or the land of Israel. While Jews were free to practice their religion, Rome placed a heavy tax burden on them. Since the Jews believed they had a divine right to the land, this tax was offensive to them. Jesus' enemies tried to trip him up by asking if they should pay this tax (Mk. 12:14).
2. **Good infrastructure** – the Romans built high-quality roads making travel much easier. This was no doubt a great help to many of the first Christians who traveled extensively and spread the gospel wherever they went.

3. **One major language** throughout the Roman Empire. _____ became the lingua franca through the conquests of Alexander the Great who lived from 356 to 323 B.C. The spread of Greek culture and language is called Hellenization and it assisted the early Christian movement. Every book in the New Testament was written in Greek.

List specific examples of Westernization in our world today.

4. **Slavery** – approximately 25 percent of the entire population of the Roman Empire was enslaved as a result of war and debt. Instructions to slaves and masters are found in the NT.
5. **Polytheistic** = the belief and worship of many gods. “The majority of first-century Greeks and Romans probably still gave lip service to the old mythology.”¹¹ In Acts 14, people referred to Barnabas and Paul as Zeus and Hermes. In Acts 19 a riot occurred at the temple of Artemis. In addition to Greek mythology, the Roman emperors were deified beginning with Julius Caesar in 27 B.C. This made the next emperor Augustus, a “son of a god.” The emperor Nero who began his rule in A.D. 54 was the first to enforce self-worship.¹²

Hebrew Heritage

1. **Father Abraham** – The story of the Hebrew people goes back to Abraham (c. 2000 B.C.). God promised to give Abraham descendants and land.
2. **The Exodus** – The Hebrews were enslaved in Egypt for four hundred years. God used Moses and the ten plagues to set his people free.
3. **The Ten Commandments** – God commanded Israel to live a certain way.
4. **Wandering and Entrance** – After wandering in the wilderness for forty years, Israel entered the land God promised to give them.
5. **Exile** – After living in the land for several hundred years, God drove Israel out for repeatedly disobeying him.
6. **Restoration** – After 70 years of exile in Babylon, God brought Israel back to the land (c. 500 B.C.).

¹¹ Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey* (Nashville: Broadman, 1997), 29.

¹² Ibid., 37.

7. **One God** – Jews are monotheistic. Monotheism = the belief and worship of only one God.

8. **Sacred Scriptures** – The first part of the Bible which Christians call the Old Testament was the only Bible Jesus and his followers knew.

Jesus was born as a Hebrew. He came first to the people who had a long history with God and who possessed the sacred writings. But at this time, the Jews were in direct contact with the Gentiles who ruled over them. So Jesus' world had strong elements of Hebrew and Roman influence. Paul said Jesus was born "when the fullness of time had come" (Gal. 4:4). In other words, Jesus entered the world at just the right time.

Let's focus now on our world and more specifically your own personal world.

HW: Write five sentences on each of the following categories in your world: family, religion, education, lifestyle, and your geographical location.

Jesus' World

Roman Rule

- **Pax Romana** = Roman _____. After many successful conquests, the Roman Empire ceased their expansion efforts resulting in a time of relative peace. This peaceful period coincided with Jesus' lifetime. One of the regions Rome had conquered was Palestine or the land of Israel. While Jews were free to practice their religion, Rome placed a heavy tax burden on them. Since the Jews believed they had a divine right to the land, this tax was very offensive to them. Jesus' enemies tried to trip him up by asking if they should pay this tax (Mk. 12:14).
- **Good infrastructure** – the Romans built high-quality _____ making travel much easier. This was no doubt a great help to many of the first Christians who traveled extensively and spread the gospel wherever they went.
- **One major language** throughout the Roman Empire. _____ became the lingua franca through the conquests of Alexander the Great who lived from 356 to 323 B.C. The spread of Greek culture and language is called _____ and it assisted the early Christian movement. Every book in the New Testament was written in Greek.

List specific examples of Westernization in our world.

- **Slavery** – approximately _____ percent of the entire population of the Roman Empire was enslaved as a result of war and debt. Instructions to slaves and masters are found in the NT.
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¹³ Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey* (Nashville: Broadman, 1997), 29.

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Hebrew Heritage

- **Father Abraham** – The story of the Hebrew people goes back to Abraham (c. 2000 B.C.). God promised to give Abraham descendants and land.
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- **Restoration** – After _____ years of exile in Babylon, God brought Israel back to the land (c. 500 B.C.).
- **One God** – Jews are monotheistic. Monotheism = the belief and worship of only one God.
- **Sacred Scriptures** – The first part of the Bible which Christians call the Old Testament was the only Bible Jesus and his followers knew.

Lesson 3: The Writing Process

T: Put students in groups of three or four to share their personal essays from yesterday.

W: On the back of your personal essay write down three facts about Roman rule and three facts about Jesus' Hebrew heritage from yesterday's class.

T: Review facts then collect essays. Use discretion in choosing which assignments to grade in detail and which to grade based on completion.

Q: If you were going to write a biography about one person you know and one person in history who would it be? Why?

Q: Why would people want to write about Jesus' life?

W: Handout 1.2

T: Here's some additional information and questions for Handout 1.2.

The Dating of the Gospels

Scholars use internal and external clues to help determine the date of the Gospels. An internal clue is a detail found in the content of the book. For example, Jesus' predicts the destruction of the temple (see Mk. 13:1-2; Lk. 21:5-6) but the actual event, which took place in A.D. 70, is not recorded in the Gospels. Because this was such an earth-shattering event for first-century Jews it's shocking that the Gospel writers didn't include it, especially when it would show that Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled. A reasonable conclusion is that the event was left unmentioned because the Gospels were written prior to A.D. 70. Of course, if you don't believe in prophecy then you would say Mark was written after A.D. 70 at which time Jesus' followers put the words of the prophecy into his mouth. So the date scholars attribute to Mark can be influenced by their belief or lack thereof in the supernatural.

An external clue would be the date of a manuscript. Currently, the oldest manuscript we have is Papyrus 52 or P⁵² containing only five verses – John 18:31-33, 37-38. Many scholars believe this fragment should be dated to around A.D. 125. If these scholars are right, the Gospel of John was written prior to A.D. 125. Since this manuscript was found in Egypt, it's assumed that the Gospel of John would've had to have been written several years before P⁵².

The Four Gospels

The Writers

Strictly speaking the four Gospels are anonymous because the writers don't identify themselves in their writings. However, we do have comments from ancient authors attributing these works to certain writers (see back). Some believe the Gospels are pseudonymous or written under a fictitious name. According to this view, the church used pseudonyms to increase the credibility of the Gospels. But why would the church have used Mark and Luke's name when they weren't even Jesus' disciples? There are other so-called Gospels which are widely acknowledged to be pseudonymous. These books bear the names of the important leaders of the early church such as the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, and the Gospel of Mary, but they were written long after the deaths of their purported authors. The early church rejected these works because of their false teachings. Christians around the world and throughout time have relied on Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John for their information about Jesus. The four Gospels are the earliest and best sources for the life of Jesus.

The Dating of the Gospels

Like the authorship, the Gospels don't include the dates they were written. By using internal and external clues, scholars try to figure out the date of their composition. Most scholars today believe the Gospels were written between thirty to seventy years after Jesus' death, but again we can't be certain. According to the majority view, Mark was written first and John was written last.

The Two Categories

The first three Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke are very similar. They are called the Synoptic Gospels. Synoptic = common point of view. Several of the stories in the Synoptic Gospels are nearly identical which makes them easy to compare. John tells the story of Jesus very differently from the first three.

The Decisions in Writing

The Gospels were written in Greek on scrolls. Unlike today where we can add another sheet of paper to increase our writing space, scrolls were limited in space so it was crucial for the writer to decide what to include in the writing. John acknowledges that he selected his stories carefully and excluded many things (Jn. 20:30-31; 21:25). Where did the writers get their information? According to tradition, Matthew and John were two of Jesus' disciples so they would've had first-hand experience, Mark traveled with Peter and learned the gospel from him, and Luke says he carefully investigated things (Lk. 1:1-4).

Listening to the Gospels

The culture of Jesus' day was an oral culture. People entertained each other by sitting around and telling stories. From what we know, silent reading wasn't commonly practiced. If you were reading, you read so other people could hear. This wasn't only a matter of preference but courtesy because literacy rates were low. Since the Gospels didn't originally include chapter or verse divisions they were probably read out loud in large portions.

Ancient Statements on the Authorship of the Gospels

Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.

-Irenaeus (c. A.D. 180)

The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke. Luke, the well-known physician, after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken with him as one zealous for the law, composed it in his own name, according to [the general] belief. Yet he himself had not seen the Lord in the flesh; and therefore, as he was able to ascertain events, so indeed he begins to tell the story from the birth of John. The fourth of the Gospels is that of John, [one] of the disciples.

-The Muratorian Canon (c. A.D. 170)

Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterward, as I said, he followed Peter, who adapted his teaching to the needs of his hearers, but with no intention of giving a connected account of the Lord's discourses, so that Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them. For he was careful of one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them falsely. These things are related by Papias concerning Mark. But concerning Matthew he writes as follows: "So then Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able."

-Papias (c. A.D. 130) quoted in Eusebius (c. A.D. 300)

Q: If you wrote a biography, what basic components of a person's life would you include?

Like people back then, there are a lot of people today who like to sit around and tell stories.

Q: Who likes to tell stories in your family?

Q: Does anyone have an especially interesting story that you've heard from one of your relatives that you'd like to share with the class?

W: Write out Mark 1:1 in your notes.

Definitions for Mark 1:1

- Gospel = good news. Of the four, Mark is the only one to call his book a gospel.
- Jesus = the Lord saves. The name Jesus was a popular name in the first century. Jesus is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew name Joshua.
- Christ = anointed one. The word Christ is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Messiah. The anointed one in the Old Testament was the person who was officially set apart for special service such as a king or priest. This official recognition was done by pouring oil on the person's head. A Christian = a follower of Christ.
- The Son of God = the one who shares the nature of God and has a father-son relationship with God. It doesn't mean that God gave birth or that God impregnated someone.

Notice the footnote in your Bible for Mark. 1:1. The authenticity of the phrase, "the Son of God" is questionable. No one has the original book of Mark. Instead we have hundreds of copies and not every Greek copy has the phrase "the Son of God." Why? Before the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, everything was copied by hand. Sometimes the copyists made accidental mistakes and sometimes they made corrections because they thought what they were copying was a mistake. In this instance, as in most of the uncertain texts, whether the phrase "the Son of God" is original or not doesn't matter much because ten verses later the same point is made when God calls Jesus his Son.

Lesson 4: John the Baptist (Mark 1:1-8)

T: Introduce students to lectio divina. The phrase lectio divina is Latin and it means sacred reading. It's an ancient approach to Bible reading that focuses on internalizing or inwardly digesting the text. Jeremiah said, "Your words were found, and I ate them" (Jer. 15:16). This activity should take about five minutes. Here are the steps:

- Someone reads the passage out loud and slowly three times, pausing between each reading. (You can also summarize a narrative in your own words, e.g. the disciples get into the boat, a violent storm arises, . . .)
- During the pauses silently meditate on the words. After the last reading, turn your thoughts into a silent prayer.

*Encourage students to put their heads down or close their eyes while doing this exercise.

**Whether or not you do this exercise may depend on the background of your students. If you have many from non-Christian families, consider making this more of an imaginary activity or less spiritual. But it's still important for all students to understand the ancient and meaningful way of approaching the text called lectio divina. If we spend all of our time analyzing and dissecting a passage but never actually internalize it, we won't get nourished. What good will your food do for you if you cut it up into nice little pieces but never chew and swallow it?

IB: Lectio divina – Mark 1:7-8

T: Give a pop quiz on Lessons 1-3. Look over the notes and ask five to ten questions. Grading is optional.

T: Write the word *confession* on the board and ask students to come to the board and write words or draw pictures which they associate with it.

W: Read Mark 1:1-8 and make a list of what you learn about John the Baptist.

- Isaiah prophesied about him (1:2-3)
- baptized people in the desert region (1:4)
- practiced a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (1:4). (John wasn't the first to baptize. By Jesus' day, baptism was a requirement for entrance into Judaism and cleansing with water was required for defiled Jews.)

- successful and popular (1:5). (Mark seems to be using hyperbole here by using the word “all.” It’s like saying “everyone was at the party.” Hyperbole = exaggeration for effect.)
- wore camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist (1:6; cf. 2 K. 1:8)
- ate locusts and wild honey (1:6)
- his message was about someone who was:
 - coming after him
 - more powerful than him
 - more worthy than him
 - going to baptize people with the Holy Spirit (1:7-8)

John prepared the way for Jesus by leading people to confess their sins and by directing people’s attention to Jesus.

Q: What things might the people have confessed? Why is it so hard to confess our sins?

W: Copy James 5:16 and 1 John 1:9 into your notes.

T: Share a confession story or ask for one or two from the students.¹⁵

While sin hardens a heart, confession softens it. Confession humbles us because it’s an acknowledgment that we haven’t lived like we should have. Confession should be a regular part of the Christian life.

Q: Write down things you have confessed to others. No one needs to see this and you can use abbreviations if you want.

Q: Without naming anyone, what things have people confessed to you?

Application Points from Mark 1:1-8

- Be humble and honest enough to confess your sins.
- Be humble and honest enough to see yourself as Jesus’ servant.

¹⁵ *On Apology* by Aaron Lazare is filled with examples of good and bad apologies. There’s a limited preview of the book available at www.books.google.com. I recommend using the apology on pgs. 2-3 in class.

Lesson 5: Life in their Clothes

Yesterday, we got a description of what John the Baptist wore. That kind of information is rare in the Bible, but it reminds us that we're learning about a very different culture from our own.

IB: What's your favorite place to shop for clothes? If you could only wear one outfit on a daily basis, what would it be? (Let's say the weather is springtime.)

The people in ancient Israel basically had one outfit—a robe. And their clothing lent itself to unique expressions, such as “girding up the loins.”

W: Read 1 Kings 18:46; Luke 12:35; and 1 Peter 1:13.

The literal translation in these verses is “girding up the loins.” When you tuck the bottom of your robe into your belt you're girding up your loins and showing that you're getting ready for action. Likewise, just as we roll up our sleeves to show that we're getting ready for work they would've done the same, except back then it was called “bearing your arm.”

W: Read Isaiah 52:10.

W: If students have their own computers give them 10-15 minutes to research anything that interests them about clothing or the history of clothing.

T: If students do not have their own computers, there are many good YouTube videos about clothing that you can show. I like one titled “Why I dress as a Regency gentleman . . .” because it challenges our common assumptions about style and what is appropriate to wear.

T: Announce that you will begin random lessons in the next class. (For further info. see the description of random lessons in the introduction.) Give students a few minutes to brainstorm things they may want to share. If you're going to make random lessons a requirement make sure individual students know when they will be sharing.

W: Read the first ten to twenty verses of each Gospel and summarize how each begins.

Lesson 6: Jesus' Baptism (Mark 1:9-11)

IB: Random lesson

T: Review the comparison of the beginning of each Gospel then collect.

A: Matt. – begins with a genealogy that starts with Abraham (c. two thousand years before Jesus)

Mark – starts with John the Baptist & Jesus (when he's about thirty years old)

Luke – begins with the birth of John the Baptist and the birth of Jesus

John – "In the beginning" (before creation)

Obviously, the differences in how the Gospels begin show that the writers had some level of creative freedom in how they told the story of Jesus' life.

W: Read Mark 1:9-11.

Q: What does Jesus' baptism show us about Jesus?

- His humility. During a time when people were confessing their sins, Jesus went out to John and stood in line with everyone else, even though he had nothing to repent of. Jesus identified himself with sinners at the start of his ministry (baptism) and at the end of his ministry (crucifixion).
- His divinity. God the Father announced that Jesus was his Son. The Son has the same nature as the Father.

W: Handout 1.3

T: Review Handout 1.3

Some people say the Bible contradicts itself and they support their charge by pointing to the voice at Jesus' baptism. Did the voice say "You are my Son" as in Mark or "This is my Son" as in Matthew?

Q: What do you think about the assessment of these critics?

T: A great resource for Bible teachers is www.biblegateway.com. It contains free access to multiple Bible translations, a Bible concordance, and audio Bibles.

The Baptism of Jesus

Matthew 3

13Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. 16As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (NIV)

Mark 1

9At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (NIV)

Luke 3

21When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (NIV)

John 1

32Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." (NIV)

1. Make a list of the unique features of each account.

2. What do you think about the differences?

Lesson 7: Jesus' Temptation (Mark 1:12-13)

W: Read Mark 1:9-13 and write a reflection on it. Your reflection should include:

- a summary of the passage in your own words,
- questions on the passage,
- an explanation of how it connects to some area of your life.

In this passage, God the Father loves his Son but he lets his Son go through a difficult time.

Q: Have your parents ever made you go through a difficult/painful experience? When? Why?

1:12 – The Spirit *sent/drove* Jesus out, Jesus *sent/drove* the demons out. The same Greek word is used.

Q: Why would this gentle dove drive Jesus into the desert to be tempted by Satan?

A: Perhaps the idea is that the Spirit is pushing Jesus into the desert to do battle with Satan at the beginning of his ministry. In other words, “if you’re going to have a successful ministry you need to face your enemy from the start.”

1:13 – the number forty is often connected to a time of testing (see Gen. 7:12; Ex. 34:28; Num. 14:33-34).

Q: What did Mark leave out in Mark 1:12-13?

A: Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark doesn’t tell us that Jesus was fasting, give details of the temptation, or even tell us the outcome of the temptation. Mark basically says, “Jesus went out to the desert to be tempted by Satan, wild animals and angels were there.” This is characteristic of Mark’s writing; he gets to the point quickly. He assumes we can figure out who won. For more information we have to read Matthew or Luke.

W: Read Matthew 4:1-11.

Matthew shows us that Jesus overcame temptation by quoting Scripture. While Satan also used Scripture, he misquoted and misapplied it.

Let’s review what we have seen in Mark. In just thirteen verses Mark has set the stage for the beginning of Jesus’ ministry and in so doing he’s made some immense claims about Jesus:

Q: Who is Jesus according to Mark 1:1-13?

- Jesus is the Lord who has a path prepared for him according to the prophecy (1:2-3).
- Jesus is the one who is more powerful than John (1:7).
- Jesus is the one who God acknowledged as his Son (1:11).
- Jesus is the one who is led by the Spirit (1:12).
- Jesus is the one who defeated Satan in the wilderness (1:13).

HW: Study for a quiz tomorrow on Mark 1:1-13. Make sure you know how to define the words we've covered such as, synoptic, gospel, Jesus, Messiah, monotheistic, lectio divina, Pax Romana. Also study your notes.

Lesson 8: The Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-20)

W: Quiz 1.1 (Mk. 1:1-13)

IB: Interview a student

T: Draw a simple map of Israel on the board or show one which includes Galilee, Samaria, Judea, Sea of Galilee, Jordan River, Dead Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Capernaum. Have students copy it into their notes.

T: Read Mark 1:14-20 then ask what Jesus' first words reveal about him.

- "The time is fulfilled" – He knows the divine timetable.
- "The kingdom of God is at hand" – He's focused on the rule of God.
- "Repent" – He knows that people are going the wrong way. The Son of God steps into our world and his first command to us is repent. Repent = turn around. We're all like cars driving in the wrong direction.
- "Believe in the gospel" – He commands people to believe something.
- "Follow me" – He knows where he's going and commands people to follow.
- "I will make you fishers of men" – His goal is for us to reach out to others.

W: Most organized groups, and especially companies, have a slogan. In groups of 3-4, write out examples of slogans.

T: Get feedback from the groups.

As we look at the life of Jesus, we'll see him talking about the same thing, almost as if it was his slogan. Jesus began his preaching talking about God's kingdom (Mk. 1:15), during his ministry he used parables to describe the kingdom (Mk. 4) and before he ascended to heaven he was still talking about God's kingdom (Acts 1:3).

Q: What does the "kingdom of God" mean? To help with that question, what do you think of when I say the kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

A: You probably think of a people ruled by the king of Saudi Arabia.

The kingdom of God = God's rule over his creation. Human beings have rejected God's rule and chosen to live for themselves. Jesus came to bring us back under God's rule, but we must turn or repent from our autonomy = self-rule. God rules both in heaven and in the hearts of his people.

HW: Read Mark 1:21-39 then create your own outline for this passage.

Name _____

1. Define gospel –
2. Which Old Testament prophet does Mark quote in this section?
3. John the Baptist did not think he was worthy to do what for Jesus?
4. “You are my _____, whom I _____; with you I am well _____”.
5. What does “girding your loins” mean? What does it signify?
6. T or F Mark says that Jesus was praying when the Spirit descended on him.
7. Define synoptic and list the Synoptic Gospels.
8. Abraham lived about _____ years before Jesus.
9. Define Christ –
10. The number _____ symbolizes a time of testing in the Bible.
11. T or F Scholars in Israel are able to study Mark’s original Gospel.

Lesson 9: A Day in the Life of Jesus (Mark 1:21-39)

IB: Ask for a couple volunteers to share a typical day in their life with the class.

We rarely get a glimpse of a day in Jesus' life, but this is one section that records about a 24-hour period in Jesus' life. It starts from the morning of the Sabbath day (our Saturday) until the following morning.

Outline of Mark 1:21-39

A. Jesus goes to the synagogue (1:21-28)

1. Taught
2. Drove out a demon

B. Jesus goes to Simon and Andrew's home (1:29-34)

1. Healed Simon's mother-in-law
2. Healed many and drove out many demons

C. Jesus goes to a solitary place to pray (1:35-38)

1. Simon and friends look for and find Jesus
2. Jesus announces his plan to preach in the other towns

D. Jesus travels throughout Galilee preaching and driving out demons (1:39)

1:32 – The phrase “after sunset” is significant because it means the Sabbath has ended and now people are free to travel and work. Imagine opening your front door and seeing a crowd of sick and demon-possessed people.

Q: What does this section emphasize about Jesus?

A: His authority. He teaches with authority and he drives out demons with authority.

Authority = the right to command action and belief.

Q: Have you ever encountered a person who you thought may be demon-possessed?

T: Split the class into two groups to debate the reality of demon-possession. Assign a position to each group then give about ten minutes to prepare and ten minutes to debate. There are a variety of

ways to run a class debate. For example, you can have each group choose four participants to be in the debate. Then you can set up four chairs to face the other four chairs.

C.S. Lewis wrote, “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.”¹⁶

W: With a partner, write a dialogue in which you interview Simon regarding what happened during this day in Mark 1:21-39.

¹⁶ C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: HarperCollins, 1942), ix.

Lesson 10: The Leper (Mark 1:40-45)

T: Give five to ten minutes to finish up the dialogues, and then ask for volunteers to present them to the class.

In order to appreciate this next story in Mark, you need to know Leviticus 13.

W: Read Leviticus 13:45-46 and list five things that a leper must do.

- Wear torn clothes
- Have unkempt hair
- Cover the lower part of his face
- Cry out “Unclean! Unclean”
- Live alone, outside the camp

T: You can have the class read more of Leviticus 13 if you want. It’s a graphic and gross chapter.

W: Read Mark 1:40-45.

Notice the emphasis on the words “clean” or “cleansing” which connect with Leviticus 13. If Leviticus 13 was still fully in effect, this leper had an isolated and lonely life.

This disease may have been leprosy as we know it, but not necessarily so. The footnote at the bottom of your Bible may say something like “infectious skin disease.” Leprosy does not eat away at the flesh; instead it destroys the sense of pain which leads to the deterioration of the limbs. For example, leaving your hand on a hot kettle too long will damage your hand.

Q: Have you ever felt lonely? Have you ever felt like an outcast? What if people stopped shaking your hand, giving you hugs, and patting you on the back? What if you could sense that people didn’t want to be near you and were trying not to touch you?

Q: How many of you are touchy-feely type people?

We take for granted human touch. The leper was probably shocked that Jesus touched him. This story shows us that we’re all unclean, we’re all outcasts but Jesus comes to us, touches us and makes us clean.

1:41 – While most of the Greek manuscripts say Jesus was moved with “compassion,” a few manuscripts say Jesus was moved with “anger.”

Q: Does the minority reading make sense to you? Why or why not?

Q: Read about Jesus’ anger in Mark (3:1-5; 10:13-14; 8:31-33; 9:17-24; 11:12-17) then answer this question: Do any of these references give insight as to why Jesus may have been angry in v. 41?

A: If Jesus did get angry here, it could be because the leper questioned his willingness to heal.

HW: Write a journal entry for the leper entitled “My life – before and after Jesus.”

Lesson 11: Review and Picture

T: Collect and read a couple of the journal entries to the class.

W: From memory draw the map of Israel given in Lesson 8.

T: Review Lessons 8-10 for the quiz tomorrow on Mark 1:14-45. Students should memorize Jesus' words in Mark 1:15 and 1:17 and be able to reproduce the labeled map of Israel.

W: Hand out a blank sheet of paper and have students draw a picture of anything in Mark 1. Pictures should be in color and labeled.

T: Students will have this period and the rest of the period after the quiz tomorrow to finish their picture. Post the artwork on your classroom walls.

HW: Study for the quiz tomorrow.

Lesson 12: Quiz and Picture

W: Quiz 1.2 (Mk. 1:14-45)

T: Have students correct their neighbor's quiz.

T: Collect quizzes and try to finish the grading during the same period so the quizzes can be returned by the end of the period.

W: Finish your picture of a scene from Mark 1.

T: Announce random lesson tomorrow.

Name _____

Define the following words/phrases

1. Authority –
2. Kingdom of God –
3. Repent –
4. Write out Jesus' words in 1:15 and 1:17.
5. Jesus commanded people to follow him. How can people do this even when they can't see him?
6. The people were amazed at Jesus' teaching because he taught with _____.
7. The leper told Jesus "If you are willing, you can make me _____."
8. Name Jesus' first four followers in Mark.
9. List four things lepers had to do according to Leviticus 13.
10. On the back draw the map of Israel given in class along with the ten labeled items.

Lesson 13: Opposition Begins (Mark 2:1-3:6)

IB: Random lesson

So far everything has been going well for Jesus. He successfully overcame temptation, healed the sick, and drove out a demon. But in Mark 2, Jesus begins to face opposition from religious leaders.

W: Handout 1.4

T: Review Handout 1.4

The Four Questions

1. Why does this fellow talk like that? *Teachers of the law thinking to themselves* (2:7)
2. Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'? *Pharisees ask disciples* (2:16)
3. How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not? *Some people ask Jesus* (2:18)
4. Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath? *Pharisees ask Jesus* (2:23)

Summary

Notice the progression from a thought in 2:7 to outright hatred and the desire to kill Jesus in 3:6. Everything was going well for Jesus in Mark 1. But things have quickly turned for the worse by Mark 3:6. Who is opposing Jesus? The religious authorities were Jesus' primary opponents. Why? Because he challenged their authority by his teaching and behavior. Jesus wasn't a conformist; he wasn't content to simply go along with the traditions of his day. This doesn't mean Jesus opposed everything. He kept the Jewish festivals and probably received a typical Jewish education. However, he definitely had a strong backbone and wasn't afraid to disagree with the authorities when necessary.

Problems with Jesus

- He forgave sins (2:7)
- He ate with tax collectors and sinners (2:16)
- His disciples didn't fast (2:18)
- His disciples broke the Sabbath (2:24) (Regarding eating heads of grain from someone else's field read Deut. 23:25.)
- He broke the Sabbath (3:2,6)

So far, Jesus' primary opposition comes from the Pharisees.

W: Read the following passages then write a summary about what each reveals about the Pharisees: Mark 2:16-3:6; 7:1-13; Matthew 23:1-36; Luke 7:36-50; 13:31; Acts 23:6-8.

T: For the next lesson be ready to show photos of Capernaum. You can find these on Google images.

Opposition Begins (Mark 2:1-3:6)

1. In Mark 2:1-24, there are four main questions asked of the disciples and Jesus. Write out the four questions along with the verse reference for each. Then identify who is asking and who is being asked.

2. Summarize Mark 3:1-6 and explain how opposition to Jesus increases in this section.

3. Make a list of the problems the authorities had with Jesus in Mark 2:1-3:6.

Lesson 14: Your Sins are Forgiven (Mark 2:1-12)

T: Collect essays on the Pharisees.

IB: Interview a student.

T: Hand out a blank sheet of paper and have students draw the floor plan of their home then share with others.

W: Read Mark 2:1-12.

2:1 – Notice the importance of Capernaum. It's become Jesus' "home" and base of ministry.

T: Show photos of Capernaum.

Q: Instead of going up to the roof and tearing it open, how else could these four men have responded to the obstacle of the crowd?

Q: What word best describes the four men who brought the paralytic to Jesus?

Q: How would you define forgive?

Forgive = to remove an offense so that it no longer affects the relationship. The removal process can be extremely painful.

During this time, most people believed that those who suffered deserved it. Imagine being paralyzed and knowing that others think of you as a huge sinner. Jesus first addresses his spiritual need by saying "your sins are forgiven" and then moves on to his physical need.

2:7 – We can only be forgiven by the one we've offended. The scribes realized that Jesus was taking God's place here.

2:10 – "Son of Man" is Jesus' favorite way of referring to himself in the Synoptic Gospels. It's a strange phrase that is rarely used elsewhere in the Bible. Many scholars think it's a reference to the heavenly figure of Daniel 7:13-14.

W: Write out Daniel 7:13-14 in your notes.

Don't forget the emphasis on Jesus' authority in Mark 1. Now we learn that his authority extends even to the forgiveness of sins.

2:17 – Jesus didn't come for perfect people. Don't ever feel like you're too bad for Jesus.

Lesson 15: Feasting and Fasting (Mark 2:13-22)

W: Lectio divina – Mark 2:5.

T: Review HW.

As we've learned, the Pharisees were one of the major religious groups in first-century Israel. The name Pharisee probably meant "separatists" or "separated ones."¹⁷ They were known for their scrupulous observance of both the written Law and the oral tradition. (The written law was the Hebrew Bible and the oral tradition was the official interpretation of the Law.) The Pharisees had rules for many areas of life including dining company (2:16). However, the Pharisees weren't alone in this; the entire culture put a premium on dining with the right people.

"In first-century Mediterranean cultures, people normally ate only with others belonging to the same social group. Meals therefore reflected one's social standing, and most people were concerned with the identity of those with whom they shared table fellowship."¹⁸ The Pharisees simply took things a step further. "Not wanting to risk incurring God's displeasure by eating untithed or improperly purified food, members of this movement avoided eating with non-Pharisees."¹⁹ This is why they were scandalized by Jesus' behavior of eating with tax-collectors and sinners.

2:15 – Tax-collectors were not well-liked because they were considered to be: 1.) thieves – often collecting more than was necessary, and 2.) traitors – collecting taxes for Rome.

The term "sinners" probably refers to "notorious sinners who deliberately violated the Law, and who were thus treated as religious and social outcasts."²⁰

Q: Do you know of any modern-day Pharisees?

W: In groups, come up with remedies for the Pharisee mentality and present them to the class.

Q: How many of you have fasted? How was that experience?

W: Read Mark 2:13-22.

¹⁷ Blomberg, 47.

¹⁸ Michael R. Cosby, *Portraits of Jesus: An Inductive Approach to the Gospels*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 21. An outstanding resource for teaching through the Gospels.

¹⁹ Ibid., 22.

²⁰ Morna Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark: Black's New Testament Commentaries* (London: A & C Black, 1991), 95.

T: On the board draw three large panels and entitle the first, “Jesus calls Levi”, the second, “Jesus eats at Levi’s”, the third, “Pharisees question disciples.”

W: Have students come to the board and draw pictures in the panels. Each student should draw only in one panel. Students who follow can add to what’s been drawn, but they can’t erase anything.

Disciple = student, learner, pupil

2:18 – The Pharisees regularly fasted on Monday and Thursday. However, the Law only required fasting during one day a year, the Day of Atonement, which was a day of national repentance. Fasting humbles us and enables us to focus on other things beside food.

Jesus is questioned in this section over the issue of his dinner company and why his disciples weren’t fasting. Jesus didn’t care about maintaining traditions if they interfered with more important things. People, even tax-collectors and sinners, need God’s love and forgiveness. Jesus broke with the tradition of his day to reach out to those who recognized their need.

T: The next class will touch on the Sabbath. For authoritative views on the Sabbath from ancient Jews go to www.virtualreligion.net then

→Into His Own

→Sacred Days & Seasons (154-168)

→Click on Sacred Days & Seasons at the top and read the excerpts.

*Although the quotes from the Mishna and Talmud come from after the time of Jesus, it is believed that they convey an oral tradition that stretches back centuries.

Lesson 16: Who's Right? (Mark 2:23-3:6)

IB: Have students share a clean joke with their neighbor. If they don't know any, they can look them up online.

W: Read Mark 2:23-3:6.

Notice that both of these stories take place on the Sabbath and the issue is whether or not Jesus and his disciples "worked" on this day of rest.

W: Read Exodus 31:12-17.

T: Read a few quotes on the Sabbath from www.virtualreligion.net.

Q: What is Jesus saying about himself and the Sabbath in 2:27-28?

A: Human life is more important than keeping the Sabbath. Since Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, he has the right to make the judgment on what violates the Sabbath.

The second story takes place in a synagogue. Jesus has already been to a synagogue in 1:21-27, where he drove out the demon.

Synagogue = a building dedicated to Jewish worship and study. Worship in synagogues didn't include sacrifices because sacrifice was restricted to the temple.

T: Show photos of synagogues online.

Mark 2:26 has a famous problem in it which you should be aware of. The story that Jesus refers to in v. 26 is found in 1 Samuel 21.

W: Read 1 Samuel 21:1-6.

Q: What's the problem?

A: Jesus says Abiathar was the priest but in Samuel we read that Ahimelech was the priest.

This problem had a profound impact on one New Testament scholar named Bart Ehrman. Ehrman says he was a born-again Christian in high school. He even went on to study the Bible at Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton College. But while pursuing his doctoral degree at Princeton, Ehrman

wrote a research paper on this problem in Mark. The paper, containing a detailed solution to this problem, was returned with a comment from his professor that said, “Maybe Mark was wrong.” That comment had a profound impact on Ehrman. He eventually concluded that Mark was wrong and then he started to see errors in other parts of the Bible.²¹ Ehrman is now a best-selling author who focuses on all the problems and errors in the Bible. He considers himself to be an agnostic.

W: In groups, discuss possible solutions to this discrepancy.

We’ll talk more about this difficulty tomorrow. We’ll begin with a quiz on Mark 2:1-3:6.

HW: Study for a quiz tomorrow on Mark 2:1-3:6. (This will be an open notebook quiz.)

T: For a scholarly online article on the problem in Mark 2:26 see “Mark 2:26 and the Problem of Abiathar” by Daniel Wallace.

²¹ Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 9.

Lesson 17: Quiz and Review

W: Quiz (Mk. 2:1-3:6) – open notebook

T: Have students exchange and correct each other's quiz.

Possible answers to the difficulty in Mark 2:26

- Mark's phrase "in the time of Abiathar the high priest" doesn't mean when Abiathar was the actual high priest, but it refers to the general time period when Abiathar lived. Abiathar served with his father Ahimelech as a priest (1 Sam. 22:20-23; 23:6).
- There is a difference between Mark and 1 Samuel but it shouldn't bother us because it wouldn't have bothered the ancient readers. Without recording machines, video cameras, printing machines or even quotation marks, the standards of accuracy weren't as high as they are today. The reason modern readers have a problem with this passage is because we have higher expectations of accuracy.
- 1 Samuel is wrong. It wasn't Ahimelech; it was Abiathar as Mark says.
- Mark (or Jesus) is wrong. It wasn't Abiathar; it was Ahimelech as Samuel says.

Q: If this is a mistake in Mark 2:26, what should we make of it? To rephrase the question, if this is an error, how big of an error is it?

Q: How does an error in a textbook (and there are errors in every textbook), affect your view of the textbook?

Q: For this particular difficulty, if Jesus referred to the son instead of the father and they were both working closely together as priests, how much does this difference matter?

Hopefully, this has taught you that calling something an error in the Bible is often a judgment call. An error according to modern standards doesn't equal an error according to ancient standards.

W: To review the section that will be covered on the test, scan through Mark 1:1-3:6 and look for the following items. Make sure to place the verse reference beside each item.

- Jesus' titles (5 items)

- Jesus' journeys – cities or regions (4 items)
- Jesus' emotions (5 items)
- Jesus' touch (2 items)

T: Give ten to fifteen minutes then review.

Jesus' titles

- Christ (1:1)
- The Son of God (1:1)
- My Son (1:11)
- The Holy One of God (1:24)
- Son of Man (2:10)

Jesus' journeys – cities or regions

- Nazareth (1:9)
- Capernaum (1:21)
- Throughout Galilee (1:39)
- Capernaum (2:1)

Jesus' emotions

- Spoke sternly (1:25)
- Moved with compassion (or anger) (1:41)
- Strong warning (1:43)
- Anger (3:5)
- Deeply distressed (3:5)

Jesus' touch

- Simon's mother-in-law (1:31)
- Leper (1:41)

T: Announce random lesson tomorrow. Also prepare a review game (see the list of review ideas in the introduction). Make sure to have a copy of the test on hand so you can mix in actual questions from the test with other questions.

Name _____

1. Define forgive –
2. Why were tax-collectors considered to be traitors?
3. Probably the most important reference in the OT for understanding the phrase “Son of Man” is the book of _____ chapter _____.
4. T or F In this section, there are two stories of Jesus showing his power in a synagogue.
5. What does the name Pharisee probably mean? _____
6. Define disciple –
7. T or F John did not have his own disciples.
8. List three things about Jesus and/or his disciples which irritate the Pharisees in this section.
9. Jesus said, “The Son of Man is _____ even of the Sabbath” (Mk. 2:28).
10. Define synagogue –
11. What is the prominent Bible difficulty in Mark 2? What do you honestly think about it?

Lesson 18: Review

IB: Random lesson

T: Return the quizzes if you haven't already.

W: Play a review game.

HW: Study for your test tomorrow. Most of it will come from your previous three quizzes.

T: Students vary greatly as to how long they need to complete a test. Since some students will complete the test in fifteen to twenty minutes consider doing the following:

- Extend the test by adding your own questions (however, be aware that some students may have trouble finishing in time).
- Encourage students to bring work from other classes.
- Encourage students to read the Bible (any part they want).
- Have educational magazines or interesting books in your room for students to read when they're finished.

*Make sure not to allow talking while others are taking the test.

T: If you're satisfied with the test results and if your administrator approves, give a free period after a test. You can hang-out with the students, play board games, watch a short video, etc. If you're not happy with the test results, use the free period to review.

Test 1

Free Period

Name _____

Define the following:

1. Gospel –
2. Kingdom of God –
3. Christ –
4. Authority –
5. Forgive –
6. Disciple –
7. Repent –

True or False

- _____ 8. Jesus' ate with tax-collectors in this section of Mark.
- _____ 9. Simon and John were brothers.
- _____ 10. The word Messiah means the same thing as the word Christ.
- _____ 11. According to Mark, Jesus was tempted by Satan and then baptized by John.
- _____ 12. The regulations about skin diseases are given in the book of Leviticus.
- _____ 13. The Sabbath begins on Saturday night.
- _____ 14. Jesus' first five followers come from three mothers.
- _____ 15. There is no mention of angels in Mark 2.
- _____ 16. When Jesus saw the paralytic's faith, he said, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

____ 17. Jesus was angry in Mark 3.

____ 18. This section of Mark ends with people plotting how to kill Jesus.

Fill in the Blank

19. So far, Jesus' ministry has focused on the northern region of Israel called _____.

20. The main theme of Jesus' message was the _____ of _____.

21. The Pharisees' main concern was to create a _____ around the Torah.

22. Tax collectors were considered to be _____ and _____.

23. Jesus' favorite title for himself was _____ of _____.

24. The number _____ indicates a time of testing in the Bible.

25. "The Son of Man is _____ even of the _____."

26. "The Son of Man has _____ on earth to _____ sins."

27. The voice from heaven said, "You are my _____, whom I _____"

28. The leper said, "If you are _____, you can make me _____."

29. John said, "After me will come one who is more _____ than I"

Short Answer

30. List four things that Jesus or his disciples do which challenge the religious authorities of his day.
What does this show you about Jesus?

31. What part of Mark 1:1-3:6 made a special impression on you? Why?

32. Draw the map of Israel given in class along with the ten labeled items.

Unit 2: The Teachings of Christ (Mark 3:7-7:37)

Lesson 1: The Chosen Twelve (Mark 3:7-19)

Q: Do you like your name? If you could change your name to anything what would it be?

T: If students are not responding to your questions, consider having them share with a neighbor.

W: Pair up with a neighbor and write a new name (nothing offensive) on the sticky note. Stick your new name on your shirt. Mingle with each other and learn the new names.

T: Make sure to explain that these new names are only to be used during this period.

W: Read Mark 3:7-19.

T: Show the areas in Mark 3:7-8 on a map.

Q: According to Mark 3:14-15, why were the Twelve appointed?

- that they might be with him
- that he might send them out to preach
- to have authority to drive out demons

Notice what comes first. Jesus wanted them to spend time with him before they went out and did things for him.

Apostle = sent one

Q: Why did Jesus choose twelve?

A: No one knows for sure but probably because of the twelve tribes. Notice how there is twelve plus one (Jesus). Jesus stands over the Twelve who represent the new Israel.

W: Make four lists of names in vertical columns from the following passages and then compare the lists: Mark 3:16-19; Matthew 10:2-4; Luke. 6:12-16; Acts 1:13.

- Peter is always first and Judas is always last.
- Mark gives more nicknames.
- Zealots – believed in the use of force to overthrow the Roman government.
- Matthew the only one to state, “the tax collector.”
- Luke’s account emphasizes prayer.
- The words “became a traitor” are only found in Luke.
- Two James’, two Simon’s, two Judas’ in Luke’s account.
- Thaddaeus must be Judas son of James.

The names of the Twelve are Simon, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Thaddaeus/Judas son of James, Judas Iscariot

The Twelve were not from one particular group. Jesus chose a wide variety of people to be his followers – fishermen, a tax-collector, a zealot.

W: Read Revelation 21:9-14. This shows the importance of the twelve.

W: Peter seems to be the leader or at least the spokesman of the Twelve. Your assignment is to write a 2-3 page paper on the life of Peter from the book of Mark. The paper should explain Peter’s character, personality, and relationship to Jesus.

T: Review the Bible Paper Guidelines and give due date.

Bible Paper Guidelines

- 1. Put your name at the left-hand corner of the first page.** No cover page please.
- 2. Center title above the first paragraph.**
- 3. The paper should be a minimum of two pages and a maximum of three pages in length. Make sure to double space, use Times New Roman twelve-point font and one-inch margins.** Ten points will be deducted for every half page missing.
- 4. The paper should have an introduction, body and conclusion.** Think of the first paragraph as the road map for the paper. Tell the reader where you are going and how you plan on getting there. Make sure to follow through with your stated goals in the body of the paper. You are taking the reader on a journey with you. Complete the journey with a concluding paragraph telling the reader where you have taken them and giving final thoughts from your research. Five points will be deducted for no introduction or conclusion. Three points will be deducted for not having a clear statement of goals in the introduction or not having a well stated conclusion.
- 5. Relevant references should be given** in the body of the paper to support your points. Show biblical support for what you are stating. You can place verse references at the end of a sentence like this (Mk.1:21). Notice the period goes after the parenthesis. You can also place the reference at the beginning of a sentence as follows. In Mark 1:21, Jesus taught in the synagogue. If you have multiple references they should be recorded in this way (Mk.1:24; Mt. 5:2; Lk.7:6). When quoting in a sentence, it should look like this, "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mk. 2:28).
- 6. In general, you should not have to use personal pronouns,** i.e. / think. I realize it is your opinion so you can just state it without prefacing it with a personal pronoun.
- 7. Do not use contractions in your writing.** Academic papers should be formally written.
- 8. Make sure someone proofreads your paper before you turn it in.** I will not proofread your papers, but someone should. Make sure the paper is checked for all spelling and typographical errors. One point will be deducted for every grammar/spelling/punctuation mistake, up to a limit of ten points.
- 9. Do not quote anything that is over four lines in length.** Try to keep your quotes brief since the paper is short.
- 10. The rest of the grading will be at the teacher's discretion.** Make sure you have data that supports your conclusions, make sure your paper is well written. I will not proofread your papers, but they should be proofread before you turn them in.

Rubric

Paper turned in on time in correct format (70).

Mechanics (10)

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Clarity

Organization (10)

- Introduction, Body, Conclusion
- Paragraphs unified
- Transitions

Content (10)

- Themes from intro. built upon in body and summarized in conclusion
- Persuasive
- Support – Scriptures used appropriately and accurately
- No new information in the conclusion

Lesson 2: Accusing Jesus (Mark 3:20-35)

T: I only included icebreakers in unit 1 so remember to add these to the following lessons if desired.

W: You've had several different kinds of assignments on Bible reading – reflection, questions, summary, outline, and drawings. Read Mark 3:20-35 and do what you want with it. You have fifteen minutes and you must use all of that time to work. Think of the possibilities; you can make your own craft, memorize a large portion of it, create a magazine article, etc.

T: Go around the room and see what the students have done with the passage. Pick out a few to share with the class.

Outline of 3:20-35

- I. Jesus' family goes to "take charge of him" (3:20-21)
- II. The scribes accuse Jesus of being possessed by Beelzebub (3:22)
- III. Jesus responds (3:23-29)
- IV. Jesus' family arrives (3:31-32)
- V. Jesus responds (3:33-35)

This passage shows us that people accused Jesus of being crazy and demon-possessed. To accuse = to blame or to find fault. We've all been accused of something.

1. Jesus' family accused him of being out of his mind (3:20-21). They were so worried about him that they went to "take charge of him" as if he was incapable of running his own life. The Greek word for "take charge" is the same one used in Mark 12:12 where it's translated "arrest." Jesus' family seems overprotective here.

Q: Can any of you relate with having parents who seem to be overprotective?

2. The teachers of the law accused Jesus of being possessed by Satan (3:22). Beelzebub = the prince of demons or Satan. Instead of all running wild, demons are being directed by a leader. While God is ultimately in control, he has granted Satan partial control over the realm of darkness and demons.

W: In groups, describe a family problem you've had (that you're comfortable sharing) and how it was or wasn't resolved.

In this passage we learn that:

- Jesus knows what it's like to be falsely accused and to have family problems.
- Speaking evil of God and his Spirit is a serious sin.
- God's mercy is immense but not infinite.
- Obeying God is what it means to be in Jesus' family.

Lesson 3: Blasphemy (Mark 3:28-29)

Blasphemy in General

Q: What does blaspheme mean?

Blaspheme = to speak evil of

Q: Why would you blaspheme someone?

Blaspheming God

W: Read Leviticus 24:15-16; Mark 2:7; 14:61-64.

God is seriously concerned for his own glory. He is the one true God and he deserves to be glorified by us. When we blaspheme him we are tearing him down, which is a serious offense.

Blaspheming the Holy Spirit

This is spoken of in three places and I warn you that although it sounds easy to understand it has caused a lot of controversy.

W: Read Mark 3:28-29, Matthew 12:30-32, and Luke 12:10 and compare.

3:28 – “I tell you the truth” is a translation of the word “amen.” Jesus used this word in a unique way, at the beginning of his statements rather than at the end. We use almost the exact same expression today, “I’m telling you the truth man I saw it.” When we say “amen” to something we’re saying we agree to it or “may it certainly be as you say.”

Interpretations of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

1. Speaking evil of the Spirit in Jesus’ day. To see Jesus perform miracles in person and then speak evil of the Spirit who was behind those miracles is unforgiveable.
2. Speaking evil of the Holy Spirit in any time period. People today who malign Jesus’ Spirit cannot be forgiven.
3. The general sin of unbelief. Everyone in hell will “never be forgiven” either.
4. A combination of any of the above.
5. Jesus is using hyperbole so we shouldn’t interpret his words literally.

T: Get feedback from the class by taking a poll of opinions on these interpretations.

Let's review. Jesus spoke these words in response to the religious teachers who were claiming that he was empowered by an evil spirit.

Q: Did Jesus say the teachers of the law were guilty of blaspheming the Holy Spirit? Did he say, "you did it, you just committed the unforgivable sin"?

A: No. The line of blaspheming the Holy Spirit isn't easy to cross because God is extremely patient. Apparently these teachers were on the edge of committing this act. Jesus' words seem to be a warning rather than a direct condemnation. The religious teachers were calling good evil, and calling the ultimate good, the Holy Spirit, an evil spirit. Imagine saying that Jesus was a sorcerer, that he performed his miracles by black magic. It's difficult to see how their hearts could have been any darker or harder. Think of how Jesus only went around doing good, healing people, and teaching them to love one another.

Q: Why would you speak evil of God or his Spirit in the first place?

A: Evil speech is just a symptom of something deeper, an evil heart. This is why some equate this unforgivable sin with the general sin of unbelief or rejection of God. This stern warning reminds us that God's mercy is immense, "all sins will be forgiven the children of man" (Mk. 3:28), but not infinite, "whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness" (Mk. 3:29). God runs out of patience at some point with human beings and that point is when we speak evil of his Holy Spirit. And again that rejection would have to come from a very hard heart. Most say if you're worried you've committed this sin, you haven't. Those who have wouldn't care because their hearts are too hard.

T: Announce random lesson tomorrow.

Lesson 4: Parables of the Kingdom (Mark 4:1-34)

So far, Mark has not given us much of Jesus' actual teaching. In chapter 4, we get a glimpse into how Jesus taught. Most of this chapter conveys the content of Jesus' teaching. If you have a red-letter Bible you will notice that most of the words are in red. Jesus was a very interesting teacher. He may have confused you with his teaching but he wouldn't bore you. Jesus taught in a way that people could relate to. He used parables.

Q: What's a parable?

Parable = a story which uses an analogy to make a point.

In this chapter, Jesus gives us four parables. Three of the four deal with seeds and growth. Remember that Jesus lived in an agricultural society where most people worked the ground.

Q: How many of you have gardens at home?

Q: What kind of experiences have you had on a farm?

W: Read Mark 4:1-20 and make a chart for each of the types of ground. Your headings at the top of the chart should be: Soils, Growth, Hindrances, and Results.²²

- Birds = Satan (vv. 4, 15)
- Sun = trouble or persecution (vv. 6, 17)
- Thorns = worries of this life, deceitfulness of wealth & desires for other things (v. 19)

Q: What different ways might people in the crowd have responded to what they heard?

- Give it their own meaning.
- Walk away confused and disappointed – i.e. listening to Jesus is a waste of time.
- Ask him what his words mean. Notice the others with the twelve who asked Jesus for an explanation (v.10).²³

Q: What hindrances to growth do you need to remove so that the seed of God's Word can flourish in your life?

²² Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 180. I've left out the second category in their chart and filled in the chart with my own answers.

²³ Cosby, 26.

W: Read Mark 4:26-32 and explain what you learn about God's kingdom.

- Mysterious growth (4:26-29). Notice the phrase, "he knows not how" (v.27). How amazing is it that a seed goes into the ground and becomes a giant tree? This is what God's kingdom is like.
- Massive growth from a tiny seed to a giant plant (4:30-32).²⁴ For example, Jesus' called twelve men to be his disciples and now there are two billion people who claim to be Christians. God's kingdom also grows dynamically on a personal level. For some, it begins with hearing a Bible story or meeting a Christian and then God's rule exponentially expands in the human heart.

²⁴ According to modern scientific standards, the mustard seed is not the smallest seed. However, it seems like the mustard seed was a common illustration for the infinitesimal in Jesus' day (see Lk. 17:6) which means Jesus was speaking proverbially and not scientifically.

Lesson 5: Working the Ground

HW: Write a modern-day parable for an elementary student. (At least 5-7 sentences.)

W: Share your parable with a neighbor.

T: Collect parables. You can give them to an elementary teacher or select a few students to share them in person with an elementary class.

By using agriculture as a parable, Jesus was doing what the prophets before him had done. The prophets all used what they knew and saw from everyday experience to make a spiritual point.

W: Read Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 4:3; Hosea 10:12.

W: Work on your Bible Paper on the life of Peter.

Lesson 6: Jesus Calms the Storm (Mark 4:35-41)

Q: Why would God care whether we live in fear or faith?

W: Read Mark 4:35-41.

W: In groups of four or five, prepare and present a skit showing Mark 4:35-41.

W: Have students read the passage once more on their own and then ask for volunteers to come to the front and share something that is helpful or interesting from this story.

The Big Ideas

- It was Jesus' idea (v.35). Just because Jesus tells us to do something doesn't mean we'll have smooth sailing.
- The disciples had a near death experience (v.38). What if your airplane pilot said he had to make an emergency landing? How would you feel? How should Christians feel in that situation? Why did the disciples wake Jesus? The disciples didn't go to Jesus for help; they went to tell him they were going to die.
- Jesus was sleeping. Are you a heavy or a light sleeper? Who has an interesting story about a heavy sleeper? Jesus was fully human and as a human he needed his sleep. Make sure you're getting your sleep.
- Jesus was in control. He didn't get stressed out. In v. 39, Jesus "rebuked" the wind. This is the same Greek verb used when Jesus rebukes demons (see 1:25; 3:12; 9:25).
- Fear is the opposite of faith. The most repeated command in the Bible is "do not fear." What are you afraid of?
- The disciples were terrified of Jesus (v.41). They didn't expect him to control the wind and the waves. Remember we can look back and see the whole story of Jesus' life, but they were in the process of getting to know Jesus and what he was capable of doing.

W: Write out Psalm 89:9.

HW: Study for a quiz tomorrow on Mark 3:7-4:41. Also, the papers on Peter are due tomorrow.

Lesson 7: Lord over Demons (Mk. 5:1-20)

W: Quiz 2.1 (Mk. 3:7-4:41)

W: When you finish the quiz read Mark 5:1-20.

Mark 5:1-20 is the longest exorcism story in the NT. Exorcize = to expel a demon.

The NT uses two expressions for demons acting upon or within humans:

- to have an unclean or evil spirit (Mk. 1:21; 9:17)
- *daimonizomai* which is translated “demon-possessed” (Mk. 5:15 ESV) or “oppressed by demons” (Mk. 1:32 ESV). However some suggest the best translation of *daimonizomai* is “demonized.”

Q: How should *daimonizomai* be translated? Why?

T: Read the following quote:

Many who are involved in deliverance ministry today object to the term *demon-possessed*, arguing that it should be replaced by the word *demonized* because ‘possessed’ suggests that the victim is completely under the control of the demon. The word *demonize* is itself unobjectionable, since it is so similar to the Greek word . . . but it is so imprecise that it lends itself to being applied to a wider range of afflictions than those experienced by the demoniacs in the New Testament. They suffered from a distinct condition, and the traditional terminology has the advantage of making this clear.²⁵

Q: Can demons inhabit inanimate objects such as idols?

In the Bible, demons are only seen inhabiting living creatures. This is the only story in the Bible where demons inhabit animals. If demons do in fact inhabit inanimate objects, their preference seems to be living things, specifically humans.

Q: Do you think there are such things as haunted houses?

²⁵ Sydney H.T. Page, *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 138. This is an excellent study on the topic. Page makes the point that demon-possession in the Bible is healed and never repented of (159).

5:1-5 – Imagine having this guy run through your neighborhood. Guys, if he came through our town we would probably join together and try to stop him from scaring our wives and children.

5:9 – It seems like demons are not limited by physical space. Many demons were living inside this man. A Roman legion was about six thousand men.

5:11-12 – This area was probably a Gentile region because observant Jews wouldn't raise pigs (see Lev. 11:7). Decapolis = ten cities.

5:15 – Notice how Jesus changed this man's life (see 5:3-5).

Q: Why did the people ask Jesus to leave in verse 17?

A: Perhaps because they saw Jesus as a "menace to their economy."²⁶

Q: Why did Jesus command this man to share what happened to him (5:19) when he told others to be quiet?

A: The people drove Jesus away but he left a witness of his power behind. Jesus doesn't give up on the Decapolis; he returns to it in Mark 7:31.

In many parts of the world, people sacrifice to the spirits out of fear. What we've seen so far in Mark is that evil spirits are terrified of Jesus. Christians have nothing to fear; demons are terrified of Christ who lives in us.

HW: Handout 2.1

²⁶ Cosby, 29.

Name _____

1. Name six apostles.
2. Give two observations about the list of apostles in Mark 3:16-19.
3. Name two things Jesus was accused of in Mark 3 and state who accused him of each.
4. Define blasphemy –
5. “Why are you so _____? Do you still have no _____?” (4:41)
6. Write out Mark 3:35.
7. List three things that obstruct the seed of God’s word from growing in our lives according to Mark 4.
8. To whom did Jesus explain the parables? _____
9. What are the last two parables in Mark 4 describing?
10. What did the disciples ask after Jesus stilled the storm?

Welcoming Jesus

Write out the following verses.

Luke 7:36 –

Luke 11:37 –

Luke 24:28-29 –

Mark 5:17-18 –

Mark 5:22-24 –

Revelation 3:20 –

What can you conclude from these verses?

Lesson 8: Lord over Disease and Death (Mark 5:21-43)

T: Review Handout 2.1 and check to make sure it's completed.

Conclusion: Jesus goes where he's wanted. He doesn't force himself on people. I love this about Jesus. If you want him to leave, he'll leave, even though he is the Lord of the universe. If you want him to hang-out with you, he will. Welcome Jesus into your life.

There are three stories of Jesus' power in Mark 5. Together, they show that Jesus is Lord over demons, disease, and death.

W: Read Mark 5:21-43.

5:23 – Think of the risk Jairus took, knowing he might miss his daughter's last few moments.

5:24 – Jairus must be relieved at this point. So far everything has gone according to plan.

5:24b-34 – We've all been in a crowd. How do you feel in a crowd? How do you feel when you're in a hurry? Can you feel Jairus' sense of urgency? We tend to forget about Jairus while becomes our attention is now turned to the woman. But Jairus is right there the whole time. Is he happy for the woman who's just been healed or is he frustrated?

5:35 – Now comes the news Jairus dreads. These words must have hit Jairus like a ton of bricks. Everything was going so well, and then the crowd, then the woman, now the messengers and it's over. All hope is gone. His daughter is dead.

5:36 – The reassuring voice of Jesus. The most repeated command in the Bible is "Do not fear." One voice says, "it's over" another says, "just believe." Which voice would you listen to? Jairus could have listened to the men and walked away in utter despair.

5:41 – Mark retained the original words of Jesus spoken in Aramaic and then translated them.

Both the woman and Jairus demonstrate their absolute need for Jesus. We can begin the Christian life like Jairus and the woman, with a deep sense of desperation and need for Jesus, but it can quickly diminish if we're not careful.

T: Hand out a blank sheet of paper to each student then have them create a newspaper article for any story in Mark 5. Include a summary, interview, picture, and title. Give them this class and the next class to work on it.

Lesson 9: Newspaper Article

W: Finish your newspaper article.

Lesson 10: A Journey of Faith (Mark 6:1-13)

W: In groups, write out a list of traveling tips for someone who is coming to America from a foreign country. Share in groups.

Q: If you were Jesus, and you wanted your followers to carry on your mission, what instructions would you give them before they went on a mission trip?

W: Read Mark 6:1-13 and write out Jesus' traveling instructions.

- Go out two by two (v.7) The OT required at least two witnesses to substantiate a matter (Dt. 17:6; 19:15).
- Drive out unclean spirits and heal (implied in vv.7 and 13)
- Preach (implied in vv.11-12)
- Commanded to take nothing for the journey except a staff (v.8). The Greek word for staff "may refer either to a walking stick or to a staff used by shepherds to tend their sheep. If Mark means for us to understand *rhaddon* as a shepherd's staff, why would Jesus give such an implement to fishermen and tax collectors?"²⁷
- Explicitly commanded not to take bread, a bag, or money (v.8)
- Must wear sandals (v.9)
- Cannot wear two tunics (v.9) – a tunic is a long undergarment
- Stay in the same house until they depart (v.10)
- Shake off the dust from their feet (v.11). This action signified the following:

Shaking the dust from the feet was a symbolic action normally performed by a Jew who had been abroad on his re-entry into Palestine: foreign dust must not contaminate Jewish soil . . . Such an action on the part of the disciples was clearly meant to indicate that the village or town which had rejected them was no longer to be regarded as part of the Jewish nation.²⁸

Q: What do you find especially strange about these instructions?

Q: Would you go on a trip if you were not allowed to bring money or food? Jesus is requiring his followers to go on a journey of trust.

W: Write out Hebrews 11:6 in your notes.

²⁷ Cosby, 30.

²⁸ Hooker, 157.

Q: Why is faith so important to God? Brainstorm as a class.

W: Read Mark 6:5-6 and Luke 7:9. These are the only two places where Jesus is said to be amazed and both are related to faith.

This recorded episode is another place where people have accused the Gospels of contradicting each other and therefore being untrustworthy.

W: Handout 2.2

Traveling Instructions (Mark 6:7-11)

Read each account carefully and underline the unique features in each version.

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. ⁹Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, ¹⁰no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. ¹¹And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. ¹²As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. (Mt. 10:5-14 ESV)

⁷And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— ⁹but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. ¹⁰And he said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. ¹¹And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." (Mk. 6:7-11 ESV)

¹And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, ²and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. ³And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. ⁴And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. ⁵And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." (Lk. 9:1-5 ESV)

List the major differences between these accounts.

Can you think of any ways to reconcile the differences?

Lesson 11: Review

T: Review Handout 2.2 with the class. Also introduce students to online resources for Bible difficulties.

1. For relatively brief responses to Bible difficulties go to www.carm.org then,

→Bible Difficulties on the left-hand side of the homepage

→Select the biblical book of interest

→Scroll down to the verse of interest

W: Read the answer for the difficulty in Mark 6:8 on www.carm.org.

Also, www.christian-thinktank.com gives fewer but more comprehensive responses than the previous site.

→Click on Keyword Search

→Enter your Scripture passage and see if it's addressed

→You can also go to Topic Index but you may have a difficult time finding your Scripture passage

W: Write out the following verses in your notes:

- Mark 3:35
- Mark 4:41
- Mark 5:19
- Revelation 3:20

W: Handout 2.3

T: Review Handout 2.3.

Review: Mark 3:7-6:13

Under each title list 3-4 facts and sketch a relevant image.

Lesson 1: The Chosen Twelve (3:7-19)

Lesson 2: Accusing Jesus (3:20-35)

Lesson 3: Blasphemy (3:28-29)

Lesson 4: Jesus' Parables (4:1-34)

Lesson 5: Jesus Calms the Storm (4:35-41)

Lesson 6: Lord over Demons (5:1-20)

Lesson 7: Lord over Disease and Death (5:21-43)

Lesson 8: A Journey of Faith (6:1-13)

Lesson 12: John Beheaded (Mark 6:14-29)

W: Read Mark 6:14-29 then allow students to come to the board and draw anything from the story.

Many have noted that John's death is a precursor to Jesus' death. Both are innocent and die at the hands of the wicked.

Q: What do you learn about Herod Antipas from this story?

Here are the facts about Herod Antipas as recorded by Mark.

- Referred to as a king (v.14)
- Married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife (v.17)
- Reprimanded by John for marrying Herodias (v.18)
- Arrested and imprisoned John for the sake of Herodias (v.17)
- Although Herodias wanted John executed, he feared and protected John (v.20)
- Knew that John was a righteous and holy man (v.20)
- Liked to listen to John but was confused by what he heard (v.20)
- Celebrated his birthday by having a banquet for the leaders of Galilee (v.21)
- Pleased by the dancing of Herodias' daughter (v.22)
- Promised to give Herodias' daughter whatever she wished (vv.22-23)
- Greatly regretted his promise, but kept his word (v.26)
- Had John beheaded (v.27)
- When he heard about Jesus' miraculous powers, he concluded that Jesus was John raised from the dead (v.16) (probably shows a guilty conscience)

Q: What can we apply to our lives from this story?

W: Handout 2.4

T: Show a map of Israel with the territories of Antipas, Philip, and Archelaus highlighted.

The Herods

The Herods were the Jewish rulers over Palestine during the New Testament era. They were appointed by Rome (Gentiles) and yet also had to show sympathy to the Jews. The two most prominent Herods in the New Testament are Herod the Great and Herod Antipas. (Herod was the family name.)

Herod the Great (37 B.C. – 4 B.C.)

- Ruled over all of Palestine
- Ordered the massacre of the male children two years and under in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16)
- Responsible for massive building projects – rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, aqueducts, Caesarea (named in honor of Caesar)
- Pursued an active policy of Hellenization
- Executed two of his sons and his favorite wife
- Left his kingdom to three of his surviving sons: Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip

Herod Antipas (4 B.C. – A.D. 39)

- Ruler over Galilee during Jesus' lifetime
- Acted like a good Jew – e.g. celebrated the Jewish festivals in Jerusalem
- Founded a new capital in A.D. 17 and called it Tiberias in honor of the Emperor Tiberius. The city was built on an old Jewish graveyard which didn't please loyal Jews.
- Married his half-brother Philip's wife (Mk. 6:17)
- Responsible for the death of John the Baptist (Mk. 6:27)
- At one point, it was reported that he wanted to kill Jesus (Lk. 13:31)
- Jesus called him a fox (Lk. 13:32)
- Was very glad to see Jesus because he wanted to see Jesus perform a sign (Lk. 23:8)
- Questioned Jesus (Lk. 23:9)
- Treated Jesus with contempt (Lk. 23:10)
- Didn't find any reason to condemn Jesus (Lk. 23:14-15)

Lesson 13: The Five Thousand (Mark 6:30-44)

W: Read Mark 6:30-44 then write a journal entry using the five senses for anyone in the story.

W: Share your journal entry with two classmates.

The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle Jesus performed during his public ministry that is recorded in all four Gospels (Mt. 14:13-21; Lk. 9:10-17; Jn. 6:1-15).

Q: What are the main themes in this story?

T: Write the responses on the board.

1. Jesus wants us to get our rest (6:31). If we work we should rest.

W: In your notebooks, write out Jesus' words in Mark 6:31 and Matthew 11:28.

Q: What gives you rest?

Jesus doesn't want us to live busy stressed-out lives. Jesus got his rest (Mk. 4:38) and so should we. In the OT, God commanded his people to have a day of rest. Rest is a serious issue with God.

Q: Do you know anyone who is a workaholic? What's the remedy for workaholics?

When we rest from our work, we're saying that everything doesn't revolve around what we do.

2. Sometimes our plans don't work out (6:31, 34). Jesus wanted to get his disciples away from the crowds, but the crowds learned of the plan and met them on the other side of the lake.

Q: How do you respond when your plans don't work out?

Who are the planners here? What do you plan on a daily basis?

What plans have you made that didn't work out?

Notice how Jesus reacted. He wasn't upset at the crowd; he had compassion on them (6:34).

3. Compassion should lead to action (6:34). Out of compassion for the crowd, Jesus taught and fed them.

Q: Who have you recently felt compassion for?

What did your compassion lead you to do?

Notice that Jesus doesn't only care about our spiritual life but our physical life as well. He wanted his disciples to get their rest and he made sure that the people were well fed.

4. Some of Jesus' commands are impossible to do without his help (6:37). "You give them something to eat" was an impossible command for the disciples. How could they possibly feed thousands of people?

5. Jesus can multiply our limited resources (6:41-42). Give the little you have to God and watch him multiply it.

This story has some striking similarities with Psalm 23.

- "The Lord is my shepherd" (Ps. 23:1)
The crowd was like sheep without a shepherd (Mk. 6:34)
- "He makes me lie down in green pastures" (Ps. 23:2)
He commanded all the people sit down on the green grass (Mk. 6:39)
- "You prepare a table before me" (Ps. 23:5)
"all ate and were satisfied (Mk. 6:42)

Jesus is the good shepherd of Psalm 23.

T: If possible, bring in enough Play-Doh for all students to use in the next class.

T: For tomorrow's class, go to YouTube and look for the MythBusters episode where they try to walk on water. You should be able to find it if you type in "MythBusters walk on water."

Lesson 14: Jesus Walks on Water (Mark 6:45-56)

T: Show the MythBusters video.

Q: Have you ever wanted to walk on water? Have you ever tried?

W: Read Mark 6:45-56.

Don't lose your child like amazement when you hear that Jesus walked on water.

6:48 – The night was divided into four watches:

- 1) evening (6 p.m. to 9 p.m.)
- 2) midnight (9 p.m. to 12 a.m.)
- 3) cockcrow (12 a.m. to 3 a.m.)
- 4) dawn (3 a.m. to 6 a.m.)

Q: Why was Jesus about to pass by them in verse 48?

A: No one knows for sure, but a good guess is that Jesus wanted to continue to show his power by walking passed them on the water.²⁹

6:49 – This story shows us that obedience can be difficult. Jesus told them to go to the other side, but the wind was against them. We often think that if we obey what Jesus tells us to do we won't have any problems. Mark is showing us that life can get very difficult obeying Jesus' commands. The disciples must have been exhausted, just trying to obey Jesus and this wasn't the first time obeying Jesus put them in the middle of a storm (see 4:35-41). However, unlike the previous storm, Jesus wasn't with them in the boat. They're by themselves on the lake, straining to row their boat in the wind, in the middle of the night, and now a ghost is coming toward them.

Q: How did they see Jesus in v. 49? Was the moonlight hitting him just right or was his body glowing?

6:50 – "It is I" is literally translated "I am." "I am" is the name God used for himself in Exodus.

W: Read Exodus 3:1-14.

²⁹ Cosby, 33.

6:51 – They should've been expecting the miraculous by now, but their hearts were hardened.

Q: How come they weren't impressed with the feeding of the five thousand? Were they too busy serving the crowd that they didn't stop to reflect on where it came from?

W: If you have Play-Doh, have students make a sculpture of a scene in Mark 6.

Lesson 15: Open Sharing on Mark 7

W: Read and summarize Mark 7. When you've finished come to the front and share something that challenges you from this chapter.

Lesson 16: Where's your Heart? (Mark 7:1-23)

In this section Jesus teaches that our hearts can be set on two things that could harm us: human traditions and evil.

Q: What are some of your family traditions? Think about daily life, holidays, special occasions . . . Share with your neighbor.

Q: Do you think any of your family traditions interfere with more important things?

W: Handout 2.5

T: Give the following definitions for the first item on the handout:

- Tradition – a pattern of behavior passed down from one generation to another. It literally means “what is handed on.”
- Hypocrite – actor, someone who puts on a mask to play a part
- Corban – a gift devoted to God
- Nullify – to make invalid or void

T: Give time to complete Handout 2.5 then review.

2. The word “tradition” is found six times in Mark 7:1-13 (vv. 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 13).

3. What is the primary problem with human traditions according to Jesus?

A: They have the power to nullify or invalidate God’s commands (v.13).

T: Draw a bank check on the board and then write VOID on it. Jesus is saying human traditions can be so powerful they can cancel out God’s commands.

5. In Mark 7:14-23, Jesus says the garbage is already in, you don’t have to put it there, and when it comes out, it makes us “unclean.”

6. Jesus’ List of Evil

1. Evil thoughts
2. Sexual immorality
3. Theft

4. Murder
5. Adultery
6. Greed
7. Malice – desire to cause pain, injury or distress to another
8. Deceit
9. Lewdness – sexually unchaste or licentious, obscene, vulgar
10. Envy
11. Slander
12. Arrogance
13. Folly – lack of good sense

7. Observations on the list

- It starts with thoughts. Our thoughts can be evil. There should be a little screening process in our brain that tells us when we're thinking something evil. Don't allow your brain to run wild. Say no to evil thoughts and confess evil thoughts to God. Thoughts lead to actions.
- Three refer to sexual sins – sexual immorality, adultery, and lewdness.
- We can divide the list into two categories:
 1. Actions – sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, lewdness, slander
 2. Attitudes/thoughts – evil thoughts, greed, malice, deceit, envy, arrogance, folly

Summary

We can get so caught up with keeping ourselves pure that all we focus on are the outward things that we need to avoid. Jesus reminds us that being clean is a matter of the heart. What's happening on the inside? There are two things that could be happening on the inside which can draw us away from God – setting our heart on human traditions and setting our heart on evil.

Heart Problems (Mark 7:1-23)

1. Define the following:
 - Tradition –
 - Hypocrite –
 - Corban –
 - Nullify –
2. The word “tradition” is used _____ times in Mark 7:1-13.
3. What is the primary problem with human traditions according to Jesus?
4. List a few Christian traditions. Do these traditions interfere with God’s commands?
5. What does the expression “garbage in, garbage out” mean? From Mark 7:14-23, do you think Jesus would support that statement?
6. Copy Jesus’ list of evil (13 items).
7. Make at least two observations on the list of evil.

Lesson 17: The Evil Inside

Q: What was first on Jesus' list of internal evil? What else was on his list?

Hopefully, by now you're learning that the real Jesus can be tough. He called the religious leaders' hypocrites and he exposed the evil in the human heart.

T: Write the word *evil* in the middle of the board.

Q: What words or concepts do you associate with the word evil?

Q: Do you ever think of yourself as being on the evil list?

Q: Have you ever felt like you were evil? When?

W: Read Matthew 7:11 and Ephesians 2:1-3 and explain what you learn about human nature.

W: Write out the following verses and memorize for tomorrow: Psalm 51:5; Proverbs 20:9; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10, 23; Romans 7:18.

David, Solomon, Jeremiah, Paul, and Jesus all taught that the human heart is evil. We're not battling to keep sin from finding a way in. Sin is already within us. We're fighting against the evil on the inside.

W: Copy this quote from a twentieth century Russian author,

"If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart."³⁰

T: Draw a line on the board and label one side good and the other side evil.

According to the Bible, we're all on the evil side. While some are more evil than others, we're all on the wrong side.

³⁰Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation: Vol. 1* (Boulder: Westview, 1998), 168.

If you think that people are generally good remember a few things:

1. **The fear of punishment restrains evil.** What if all police officers and security cameras were removed? How safe would we be? What if our government collapsed and our constitution was no longer in effect?
2. **Our comfortable lifestyles restrain evil.** How nice would people be if we lost electricity for a month? What if the grocery stores ran out of food? What if we could no longer buy gas for our cars?
3. **Our evil can only be seen clearly from God's point of view.** God sees our hearts, he knows our thoughts and it's his standard that we will be judged by, not our own.

Accept the bad news

The fact that we are evil is really bad news, but we have to accept it if we want the remedy for it. It's like a doctor telling you that you have cancer. It's really bad news, but the sooner you accept the truth, the faster you can receive a remedy.

A lifelong struggle

While Jesus offers us forgiveness for all of our sins, we still have to battle with sin that's on the inside (Rom. 7:17, 20). The internal battle between good and evil continues for as long as we live.

Rely on God's strength

God has given us everything we need to win the battle. It's normal to struggle with bad stuff inside. But in your battle remember to rely on the resources God has provided. Hide God's Word in your heart (Ps. 119:11) and rely on the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25).

W: Help each other learn the memory verses for the next class.

Lesson 18: Jesus Delivers and Heals (Mark 7:24-37)

W: Take out a blank sheet of paper and write out your memory verses.

Q: If you could be invisible for one hour anywhere in the world, where would it be?

T: Show a map of Israel and the territories that Jesus visited in this section: Tyre, Sidon, Sea of Galilee, Decapolis.

W: Read Mark 7:24-37.

The first story is a bit strange because Jesus seems to be rude (at least by our standards), but keep in mind:

1. This is the first time Jesus has gone outside the border of Israel in Mark and this is the first Gentile (non-Jew) that Jesus has encountered. In general, Gentiles worshiped false gods (Judg. 10:6) while Jews worshiped the one and only true God. The Jews were the one people group on earth that God had a special relationship with and this relationship began with Abraham.
2. Notice the word “first” in Mark 7:27. Jesus isn’t denying the woman’s request. He’s telling her to wait her turn. This is still unique to Mark since up to this point Jesus has only been granting requests. The Jews are first because of God’s relationship with them (Mt. 10:5-6; 15:24; Rom. 1:16). When God sent his Son to earth, he sent him first to the Jews, the people he had a special relationship with. This woman stands outside of that special relationship and therefore wasn’t Jesus’ priority at this time. Think of how absurd it would be to take the children’s food off the table and give it to the dogs. Your priorities would have to be messed up to do that.
3. Now because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, there’s no longer any difference between Jew and Gentile (Rom.3:10; 10:11-13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:14; Col. 3:11).

7:28 – Notice the woman’s persistence. Martin Luther said, “God’s ultimate yes is hidden in the preliminary no.”

Q: How else could the woman have responded to Jesus’ statement?

Q: What happened the last time Jesus visited the Decapolis (see Mk. 5:17-20)?

Q: If you suddenly went deaf what sounds would you miss the most?

7:33 – Jesus seems to be using sign-language. Remember the man couldn't hear.

W: Make your own crossword puzzle based on our lessons on Mark 3:7-7:37 (at least 20 items). You can make the boxes by hand or you can find a crossword puzzle maker online when you get home. For now, you can all work on creating the clues.

Lesson 19: Review (Mark 3:7-7:37)

W: Exchange crossword puzzles and work on them.

T: Look over lessons 1-18 and ask questions for a review game (see intro. for review ideas). Make sure students know which memory verses will be on the test (Rev. 3:20 and Mk. 7:6-8).

Test 2

Free Period

Name _____

Define the Following:

1. Legion –
2. Blaspheme –
3. Apostle –
4. Exorcize –
5. Tradition –
6. Hypocrite –

Fill in the Blank

7. “There is no one _____, not even _____” (Rom. 3:10).
8. “It is I” is literally translated as _____.
9. Jesus’ list of evil starts with our _____.
10. Jesus said, “_____ let the children eat all they want.”
11. “Watch out for the _____ of the Pharisees and that of Herod.”
12. Jeremiah said, “the _____ is deceitful above all things...”
13. Why are you so _____ ? Do you still have no _____ ?
14. “Even the _____ and the _____ obey him.”
15. Jesus is Lord of _____, _____ and _____ in Mk. 5.
16. Jesus’ list of evil includes _____ items.

17. The apostles went out and preached that people should _____.
18. "Whoever does _____ is my brother and sister and mother."
19. Jesus goes where he's _____.

True or False

- ____ 20. The sun represents Satan in the parable of the sower.
- ____ 21. According to Mark, Jesus had brothers and sisters.
- ____ 22. The teachers of the law committed the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.
- ____ 23. Peter is always placed first in the lists of apostles.
- ____ 24. According to Mark, God forgives every sin.
- ____ 25. Jesus was sentenced to death for blasphemy.
- ____ 26. Jesus spoke to the little girl in Arabic.
- ____ 27. Jesus was amazed twice in Mark.
- ____ 28. Jesus allowed his apostles to take a staff for their journey.
- ____ 29. Herod the Great was responsible for the death of John the Baptist.
- ____ 30. Herod Antipas thought John was Jesus raised from the dead.
- ____ 31. The feeding of the five thousand is recorded in all four Gospels.
- ____ 32. There are twelve items on Jesus' list of internal evil.
- ____ 33. David said, "Surely I was sinful at birth..."

Short Answer

34. Write out Revelation 3:20.

35. What is unique about Jesus' command to the man who was demon-possessed in Mark 5?

36. Write out Mark. 7:6-8 and explain how it challenges you.

Unit 3: The Humility of Christ (Mark 8:1–10:52)

Lessons 1 & 2: Student Lesson Preparation

Today you'll be divided into groups to work on your own Bible lessons.

Your lessons must have:

- Main points from the passage
- Relevant questions
- Activity – e.g. game, drawing, skit, craft, brainstorm, etc.
- Two illustrations – e.g. props, pictures, examples, stories, etc.
- Assigned roles
- Be fifteen to twenty minutes in length

You will be graded on:

1. **Content** – make sure you have read your passage well. Your teaching should come straight from the Bible and contain all of the elements mentioned above.
2. **Presentation** – your lesson should meet the time requirement and your speaking should be clear and organized.
3. **Preparation** – you will have to turn in your complete lesson plan with all the details on it after you've finished teaching. Practice to make sure your lesson stays within the time limit.

T: Divide the class into four groups and assign one of the following sections to each group:

(1) Mark 8:1-10 (2) Mark 8:11-21 (3) Mark 8:22-30 (4) Mark 8:31-38

T: Distribute Handout 3.1 and give about fifteen minutes for students to complete individually.

T: Allow students to prepare their group lessons for the remainder of the period and the following period.

Lesson Plan Worksheet

Scripture(s):

Observations – What do you see?

Interpretation – What do your observations mean?

Application – What should we do about it? Give practical advice to help others live out the main points of your lesson.

Questions: Ask your audience questions to help them think through the lesson.

Illustrations or examples: Explain your main points in other ways.

Activity: Get the class involved and participating.

Lesson 3: Student Lessons

T: Give everyone about five minutes for final preparations then have groups present their lessons.

T: Grade them using the rubric.

Lesson 4: Student Lessons

T: Have the remaining groups present their lessons.

HW: Handout 3.2

The feeding of the four thousand (8:1-10)

1. Compare and contrast Mark 8:1-10 with Mark 6:34-44.

Sign seekers (8:11-13)

The Pharisees' demand for a sign is found in all four Gospels (Mt. 16:1-4; Mk. 15:32; Jn. 7:17). In this instance, Jesus has just performed an amazing miracle and the Pharisees want a sign. It's as if they want a show, but Jesus doesn't use his power to put on a show. Rather than seeking notoriety for his miracles, he's been telling people to keep quiet about his miracles. He performs miracles out of compassion for people not to entertain people.

2. What's the problem with asking for signs?
3. What would've happened if Jesus used his power like an entertainer?

Jesus' warning (8:14-15)

8:15 – This is a very serious warning from Jesus. Notice how he begins, "Watch out, beware." Yeast or leaven is the substance that makes bread rise. It usually symbolizes sin in the Bible (Ex. 13:6-10; 1 Cor. 5:6-8; Gal. 5:9).

4. What is the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod? (Read Lk. 23:8-11 and Mt. 16:11-12)

Hard hearts (8:16-21)

After all Jesus has done, his own disciples still don't understand who he is or what he's capable of doing. They were in the perfect situation to trust the one who multiplied bread for thousands of people, but instead they were worried because they only had one loaf. The disciples had hard hearts (8:17; 6:52). As followers of Jesus we can have hard hearts and miss what God is saying and doing in our lives. The good news is that even though the disciples missed the point twice, Jesus didn't walk away from them. While Mark emphasizes the disciples' weaknesses and failures, he also emphasizes Jesus' incredible patience.

5. How can you cultivate a soft heart?

The healing of the blind man (8:23-26)

This is a strange healing. Rather than taking place instantaneously, it takes place in stages. Because this story takes place immediately before Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ and then is rebuked by Christ for his misunderstanding (8:27-33), many have interpreted it as a parable for the disciples. It's as if the disciples have had the first touch from Jesus, but their spiritual eyes need a second touch.

Peter's confession and Jesus' rebuke (8:27-33)

Peter's confession is the turning point of the Synoptic Gospels (Mt. 16:13-16; Lk. 9:18-20). After this confession is made, Jesus begins to talk more frequently about his impending suffering and death. The identity of Jesus is the most important theme in the Gospels. Christians have always agreed with Peter and confessed that Jesus is the Christ. However, as the story continues we see that Peter's A was quickly changed to an F. Peter completely misunderstood the meaning of his confession. He thought the Christ or the Messiah = a victorious king. But Jesus says the Christ = a suffering king.

Deny yourself (8:34-38)

List some practical ways you can deny yourself.

Lesson 5: Review Mark 1-8

T: Review Handout 3.2 with the additional information below.

Sign seekers (8:11-13)

The problem with asking for signs.

- The request for a sign is really a demand that Jesus prove himself. In essence, it's a recurrence of Satan's temptations in the wilderness. This "prove yourself" attitude shows that the request is coming from people who want to sit in judgment of Jesus. They're not coming to Jesus with humility but with pride. Jesus doesn't want followers who are merely sign-seekers; he wants followers with a genuine heart for him.
- If we start asking for signs when would we stop? For example, we could ask God to give us a dream, and then if he did we might ask him to audibly speak to us and then to send us a check in the mail . . . There's no limit to requesting signs. The Pharisees want to see in order to believe (Mk. 15:32) but we must believe in order to see (Heb. 11:1).

Jesus' warning (8:14-15)

When the Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign, Jesus sighed deeply, asked why . . . and then left. He clearly wasn't happy. Herod also expected Jesus to perform a sign (Lk. 23:8-11). The requests for a sign seem to show that the yeast is:

- A stubborn refusal to believe as in "we're not going to believe until we see."
 - An unwillingness to take Jesus seriously. They just wanted to enjoy a show.
-

We're now half-way through Mark. One thing we've noticed is that Jesus often tells people to be quiet. It's as if there's a secret and he doesn't want people to know what it is. This secrecy theme is especially strong in Mark 1-8.

W: Look back through Mark 1-8 and list the times Jesus commanded silence.

- The demon-possessed man who said "I know who you are—the Holy One of God" (1:25).
- In the evening with the needy people at the door, "he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him" (1:34; cf. 3:11-12).

- The healed leper, “See that you say nothing to anyone” (1:44)
- After he raised the little girl from the dead, “he strictly charged them that no one should know this” (5:43)
- After he healed the deaf and mute man “Jesus charged them to tell no one” (7:36).
- After Peter confessed Jesus was the Christ, “he strictly charged them to tell no one about him” (8:30).

Q: How would you categorize these examples?

- Demons
- People he healed
- The disciples after Peter’s confession

Q: Why would Jesus want these three audiences silenced?

- He wouldn’t want demons testifying about him because they’re demons.
- He would have a crowd-control problem if everyone started talking about his miracles (see Mk. 1:45; 2:1-2; 3:9-10, 20; 6:54-56; 8:1).
- He knew the disciples didn’t understand the meaning of “Christ.”

W: Study Handout 3.3 for a ten-item chapter content quiz in the next lesson.

Mark 1-8

Mark 1

- John the Baptist preaches and baptizes
- Jesus is baptized by John and then tempted by Satan
- Jesus begins preaching and calls his first disciples
- Jesus drives out an evil spirit in the synagogue
- Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law and many who had various diseases
- Jesus wakes up early to pray
- Jesus touches and heals the leper

Mark 2

- Jesus forgives the paralytic and then heals him
- Jesus calls Levi the tax collector
- Jesus is questioned about fasting and keeping the Sabbath

Mark 3

- Jesus heals the man with the withered hand in the synagogue
- Jesus chooses the twelve
- Jesus' family is concerned about him and they go to take charge of him
- The teachers of the law accuse Jesus of being possessed by Beelzebub

Mark 4

- Jesus speaks to the crowd in parables – the parable of the sower . . .
- Jesus calms the storm

Mark 5

- Jesus drives out many demons from 'Legion'
- Jesus heals the woman with the bleeding problem
- Jesus raises the twelve-year-old girl from the dead

Mark 6

- Jesus is rejected in his hometown
- Jesus sends out the twelve
- The story of John's beheading
- Jesus feeds the five thousand
- Jesus walks on water

Mark 7

- Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for being hypocrites
- Jesus teaches that evil is within us
- Jesus drives out the demon from the Gentile woman
- Jesus heals the deaf and mute man

Mark 8

- Jesus feeds the four thousand
- The Pharisees demand a sign
- Jesus warns of the 'yeast' of the Pharisees
- Jesus heals the blind man in two stages
- Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ
- Jesus predicts his own death
- Peter rebukes Jesus then Jesus rebukes Peter

Lesson 6: Quiz and Picture

W: Quiz 3.1 (Mk. 1-8). (This is a chapter content quiz so if you don't think this is important, you can choose not to record the scores or create another quiz.)

W: Draw a picture of anything in Mark 1-8 and include color and a title.

T: Go to Google images and print a copy of Raphael's painting of the transfiguration (or if you have a computer projector in class be prepared to show it).

Name _____

Write the chapter number in Mark where each item is found.

____ 1. Jesus heals the paralytic

____ 2. Jesus chooses the twelve

____ 3. John baptizes Jesus

____ 4. Jesus walks on water

____ 5. Jesus calms the storm

____ 6. John is beheaded

____ 7. Gentile woman

____ 8. Legion

____ 9. Jesus feeds the five thousand

____ 10. Jesus feeds the four thousand

Lesson 7: A Glimpse of Glory (Mark 9:1-32)

T: Show Raphael's painting of the transfiguration. The picture shows two scenes from Mark 9, the transfiguration of Jesus and the problem with the demon-possessed boy.

Transfigure = change in form/appearance

Q: If you could, what would you transfigure yourself into?

W: Read Mark 9:1-13.

9:1 – This is a very controversial verse in the Gospel of Mark.

Q: What did Jesus mean when he said, “see the kingdom of God after it has come with power”? Here are four options:

- His transfiguration
- His resurrection
- The gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2)
- The literal and full arrival of the kingdom of God

The most simple and straightforward interpretation seems to be the last option and yet that's the one which seems incorrect. If the last option is correct then Jesus told his disciples that the full arrival of God's kingdom would come within the lifetime of his listeners. Obviously, this would mean Jesus was wrong and his followers preserved and recorded his failed prediction. The last option has another weakness in that four chapters later Jesus says he doesn't know the day or the hour of the end (Mk. 13:32). As for options two and three, there's nothing in the text to support or contradict them. That leaves us with the first option, which is supported by its placement in the narrative. Jesus' transfiguration immediately follows this prediction in each of the Synoptic Gospels (Mt. 16:28-17:8; Lk. 9:27-36).

9:5 – Rabbi = my teacher

9:7 – Mark makes clear what God the Father thinks of Jesus (Mk. 9:7; 1:11). Jesus is not to be placed on the same level as Moses and Elijah. Jesus is the beloved Son of God.

W: Copy Deuteronomy 18:15 and 2 Peter 1:16-18 into your notes.

The transfiguration shows us a brief glimpse of the glory of Christ. John saw the glory of Christ after he ascended to heaven.

W: Read Revelation 1:9-18.

Q: How does this vision of Jesus' glory affect your view of him?

W: Read Mark 9:14-29.

Mountain top experiences are good but you can't stay there. You have to come down to the real world, where there's fighting and quarreling (9:14).

Q: Do you like listening to debates?

T: Ask for five or six volunteers to come to the front and re-create the debate between the teachers and the disciples.

Q: Why were the people overwhelmed or greatly amazed when they saw Jesus (9:15)?

A: The text doesn't say but perhaps they saw the after-effects from the transfiguration. Moses' face was so bright when he came down from the mountain after meeting with God that his face continued to glow (Ex. 34:29).

Q: If Jesus authorized the disciples to drive out demons (6:7) and they did so successfully (6:13) why couldn't they cast out this one?

A: "This kind can come out only by prayer" (9:29). Similar to humans, demons seem to have different levels of strength. The demon in this story was exceptionally strong. However, through prayer even the strong demons come out.

9:21-22 – Imagine the desperation of the father. How many times did he save his son from killing himself? How did this problem affect their relationships with others? Who would want to be friends with this family?

9:25 – Jesus commanded the demon to leave when he saw the crowd running to the scene. Remember what we've learned about Jesus? He's not trying to put on a performance. He doesn't want that kind of attention.

This is the second time we hear about a demon-possessed child in Mark. A mother approached Jesus on behalf of her demon-possessed daughter, now a father pleads with Jesus for his son.

W: Write an essay explaining a high point and a low point you've had spiritually or emotionally. Do not write anything you are uncomfortable sharing.

Lesson 8: Who's the Greatest? (Mark 9:33-41)

T: Ask for volunteers to share high and low points spiritually.

We'll come back to Jesus' predictions of his death in Mark 9:30-32 but for now let's move on to Jesus' teaching on serving.

W: Take five minutes and write down nice things people have done for you. Then go around the room and record an answer from five other students.

W: Read Mark 9:33-41.

9:33-34 – Notice when Jesus questioned them. He could have brought it up earlier, when they were actually arguing. I love how patient and wise Jesus is.

9:36-37 – We tend to only think that the younger students should be looking up to the older students, but Jesus used a child as his example of what we should be like. For certain things, we should be looking up to children.

9:37-41 – Notice the “in my name” emphasis in these verses. It's important to serve but it's equally important to serve for the right reason. Jesus is the ultimate motivation for us to serve which means we should serve in his name.

W: In groups, prepare a TV commercial promoting the idea of serving others.

Lesson 9: Cut It Off and Pluck It Out (Mark 9:42-50)

W: Present TV commercials.

W: Read Mark 9:42-50.

Q: Should we take Jesus' words to cut off our hand . . . literally? Why or why not?

A: No, because:

1. It doesn't make literal sense. It makes a body part independent from our brain, but we know that our brain and body are connected. How can your foot be causing you to sin? Furthermore, if you started cutting body parts when would you stop?
2. It's not emphasized in the NT. All the important teachings are found in multiple places in the NT. Getting rid of body parts is a big deal and if we were meant to take it literally, we would expect to find it repeated and explained further. This teaching is only found here and in Matthew 5.
3. Almost all Christians throughout church history have understood it as a figure of speech.
4. Interpreting it as a figure of speech makes the best overall sense of the Bible's teaching.

Q: If it's not to be interpreted literally then what does it mean?

A: Take serious action against sin and everything that's causing you to sin. Notice that Jesus places the causes to sin on us, not our neighbors. The evil we fight is not just outside of us, it's in us (Mk. 7:20-23). If *your* hand is causing *you* to sin, *your* foot...*your* eye. We have no right to cut off our neighbor's hand. We have to deal with our own sin.

Q: What does "salted with fire" mean (9:49)?

W: Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

If 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 is a parallel passage for Mark 9:49, then "salted with fire" means our work will be tested.

Salt was very important in the ancient world. Roman soldiers were given a *salarium* which was a certain amount of salt. Our word salary comes from the word *salarium*. Salt preserves, flavors and

symbolized peace in the OT – covenants of salt. “Have salt in yourselves” may be a reference to sharing salt which indicates eating together.

W: Handout 3.4

T: Go through the handout with students and have them look up several of the listed verses. (My book *Surprised by Hell* explains these two views along with a third view—universal reconciliation.)

Hell

For many Christians, hell is the hardest topic to talk about or even think about. But keep in mind a few things. First, God prepared “the eternal fire” for the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:41). Second, God desires to save people so much that he sent his Son to die for the world (Jn. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9). Third, God is the final and perfect judge, not us. It’s not our job to judge who goes to heaven and who goes to hell. Finally, there will be different levels of punishment and reward (Mt. 11:24; Lk. 12:48; Rev. 22:12). Paul says some will just barely escape the flames (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

Three Greek Words

There are three Greek words that have been translated as *hell* in English Bibles: *gehenna*, *hades*, and *tartarus*.

1. **Gehenna** – became the standard term for the place of future punishment in the NT. It means “valley of hinnom” in Greek (see 2 Ki. 23:10; 33:6; 2 Chr. 28:3). The “valley of hinnom” was:
 - a. a place of idolatry which included child sacrifice
 - b. demolished by King Josiah
 - c. turned into a garbage dump – constant fires, bad smell, worms
2. **Hades** – the name of the god of the underworld in Greek mythology and later used to refer to the underworld itself. The ancient Greeks thought of Hades as a place of torture with locked gates. It is translated as *grave* (NIV) in Acts 2:27, but most often it’s left untranslated (Rev. 1:18). While Hades isn’t the place of final punishment (Rev. 20:13-15), it is a place of punishment according to Luke 16:23.
3. **Tartarus** – the place of punishment for disobedient angels awaiting the final judgment (2 Pet. 2:4).

Two Views of Gehenna

I. **A place of eternal punishment** – the majority view throughout Christian history

- **Separation from God** (Mt. 7:23; 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:9). God allows the wicked to have what they wanted – life without him forever. C.S. Lewis said the doors to hell are locked from the inside.

- **Fire** (Mt. 3:10; 5:22; 13:42; 18:9; Mk. 9:43; Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8; Lk. 16:23-24)
- **Darkness** (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; 2 Pet 2:17; Jude 13). Since fire and darkness are incompatible, some think we should interpret them symbolically.
- **Weeping and gnashing of teeth** (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). This expression indicates both sorrow and anger.
- **Eternal** (Mt 18:8; 25:41; Heb. 6:2; Rev 14:10-11; 20:10)

II. Annihilation – the minority view with some well-respected Christian scholars supporting it.

The wicked will be annihilated which means they will be completely destroyed and cease to exist. This view interprets the words *destruction* and *perish* literally. The following verses have been used to support this view: Mt. 7:13; 10:28; Jn. 3:16; 17:12; Phil. 3:19; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2:10; 5:3; 1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Pet. 3:7.

Lesson 10: Let's Stay Together (Mark 10:1-12)

T: Give an open notes quiz on Mark 8-9 (next page). It is not necessary to grade it, but make sure to review it in class.

T: Divide class into groups, and then give them the following scenario: You are a Christian counselor and a married couple with two children comes to you and says they want to get a divorce because they don't love each other anymore.

W: How should you respond to this couple?

T: After they discuss it for ten minutes, get feedback from each of the groups. Then ask for three volunteers to come to the front and act out the roles of the counselor and the married couple. You might want to give others a chance to act this out as well.

Q: If you're comfortable sharing, how has divorce affected you personally?

Q: Since divorce is a real possibility for every marriage, what will you do in order to keep your marriage from ending in divorce?

T: List the ideas on the board. Hopefully, one of the answers is, "marry the right person" which leads you to the next question.

Q: What characteristics should you look for in a spouse?

W: Read Mark 10:1-12.

10:1 – Notice that a geographical transition has taken place. Jesus has spent most of his time in the northern part of Israel called Galilee, now he moves to Judea in the south.

Q: What does Jesus think about marriage and divorce?

10:11 – because God does not accept divorce as valid, any man who divorces his wife is not really divorced from her or vice versa.

Adultery = sex which breaks a marriage covenant

HW: In the next class we'll continue talking about marriage and then move on to the topic of children. Come to class with a half-page true story about something from your childhood that you're comfortable sharing.

Name _____

1. T or F Mark 8 begins with the feeding of the five thousand.
2. Explain the perfect life application scenario for the disciples in Mark 8.
3. The demon-possessed boy's father said "Help my _____!" (Mk. 9:24).
4. What two questions did Jesus ask in Mark 8:27-29? How did Peter respond?
5. Why did Peter rebuke Jesus?
6. Define transfigure –
7. In Mark 1-8, Jesus commanded silence in which three situations?
8. T or F Hades became the standard term for hell in NT times.
9. List four characteristics of hell which support the standard view as a place of punishment.

Lesson 11: Marriage and Children (Mark 10:13-16)

T: Get the class up and exercising for about five minutes. While they're exercising ask them what they remember from yesterday's class.

Let's get some background on the issue of marriage and divorce from the Old Testament.

W: Read Genesis 2:20-25; Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

Notice the word "indecent" or "indecenty" in Deuteronomy 24:1. There were two major interpretations of this word in Jesus' day promoted by two popular rabbis.

- Shammai – a sexual offence of some kind
- Hillel – anything displeasing about the wife, even overcooking the food.

When you hear the name Shammai think strict interpretation of indecenty. Both agreed that adultery was grounds for divorce. According to Deuteronomy 22:22, death is the punishment for adultery.

The certificate of divorce was important because it allowed the woman to legally move on with her life.

Scripture mentions two valid reasons for divorce:

1. Sexual immorality (Mt. 5:32)
2. Desertion – unbelieving spouse leaves a believing spouse (1 Cor. 7:15)

Of course, a controversial issue is whether or not these are the only two legitimate reasons for a Christian to get a divorce.

Q: What do you think? Is there anything you would add to the list?

Now let's move on to talk about children.

W: Take out your childhood stories and share them with two other people.

Q: How are children a good example for us?

A: Trusting, dependent, needy, honest

Q: Does anyone have any stories of a child's faith or honesty?

W: Read Mark 10:13-16 and act out in groups.

10:14 – Indignant = angry with a just cause. It's not a sin to be angry, but it's easy to sin when angry (Eph. 4:26). Therefore, we should be slow to anger (Jam. 1:19).

Lesson 12: Entering the Kingdom (Mark 10:17-34)

W: Read Mark 10:17-31 and write a reflection on anything in it (five sentence min.)

There's a common theme that's carried over from the end of Mark 9 and into Mark 10: entering the kingdom.

- cut off whatever is causing you to sin; it will keep you out of the kingdom (9:43-47)
- whoever doesn't receive the kingdom like a little child shall not enter it (10:15)
- how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom (10:23-24)

Q: From this list, what are the three things that can keep us out of God's kingdom?

A: Sensual sin (involves the body), pride, wealth

Q: What do you notice about the first two statements on entering the kingdom (9:47; 10:15)?

A: They seem like a paradox. Getting rid of anything that is causing us to sin is active and violent while receiving it like a child is passive and peaceful. Like a coin, truth often has two sides. We have to be both active and passive (in certain respects) to enter God's kingdom.

10:18 – This is not an easy verse to interpret. It seems like Jesus is saying, he's not good, at least not good like God is good. In so doing, Jesus seems to be distancing himself from God, which is odd because in the same book he closely associates himself or even identifies himself with God (Mk. 2:5-7; 6:50; 14:61-62) and God clearly identifies Jesus as his Son at his baptism (1:11) and transfiguration (9:7). The early Christians interpreted Jesus' words here as "Do you really know what you're saying when you call me good? Since only God is good, when you call me good, you're calling me God."

10:22 – Notice that Jesus doesn't run after the rich man. He gives him a hard command then he lets him go. Jesus can be very firm. This should give us a healthy respect for him.

10:24 – This is the first time Jesus calls his disciples "children" in Mark. This connects with the previous story of receiving the kingdom like a little child.

10:24, 26 – People in Jesus' day (like many today) believed the wealthy had God's approval. This is why the disciples were astonished at Jesus' words about the rich. The disciples thought, "If the

obedient and wealthy can't get in, how can poor fishermen like us get in?³¹ The idea that the wealthy had God's approval has some biblical support (see Proverbs 10:22), but it's not the whole picture. Those who please God often suffer like Joseph, Job, Jeremiah, Paul, and especially Jesus.

W: Read and summarize what the following verses teach about wealth: Ecclesiastes 5:10; Matthew 6:24; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; Revelation 3:14-22.

³¹ Cosby, 40-41.

Lesson 13: Serving and Believing (Mark 10:35-52)

W: Handout 3.5

T: Review answers below:

- They are all addressed to the Twelve.
- All three talk about Jesus' death and end with his resurrection.
- Jesus calls himself the Son of Man in all three.
- The disciples missed the point of all of them.
- They get increasingly more specific (only the last one mentions Jerusalem, the Gentiles, mocking, spitting and flogging).
- The first one is not Jesus' actual words but a summary of his words.

W: Come to the board and draw things you associate with greatness.

A: Money, power, status, ability

W: Read Mark 10:35-52.

Jesus is portrayed as the ideal servant in this section. He says he came to serve (10:45) and he shows it by asking twice, "What do you want me to do for you?" (10:36, 51)

10:38-39 – the cup symbolizes suffering (Mk.14:36; Is. 51:17). Both of these men drank the cup of suffering. James was killed with the sword (Acts 12:12) and tradition says John was dipped in a cauldron of hot oil but didn't die.

10:43-44 – Greatness = serving, which is something we learned in Mark 9.

God's values are the opposite of the world's values. While you may not be recognized as great in this world, God will recognize you in his kingdom. The way up is down in God's kingdom.

W: Read Luke 14:7-11 and Philippians 2:5-11.

10:46 – Bartimaeus means "son of honor." By calling Jesus, "Son of David" Bartimaeus was acknowledging Jesus' royal lineage.

10:50 – Bartimaeus’ cloak was probably one of his most valuable possessions. The casting aside of his cloak may suggest that he’s casting everything aside and trusting totally in Jesus.

The healing of Bartimaeus is Jesus’ last healing in the Gospel of Mark.

HW: Look back at the healings (including the exorcisms) in Mark 1-10 and list who demonstrated faith in these stories. If there’s no mention write NM.

Jesus' Predictions

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. (Mk 8:31–32)

They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it. (Mk 9:30–32)

Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise." (Mk 10:32–34)

Make a list of comparisons between the three predictions. How are they similar? How are they different?

Lesson 14: Healing in Mark

T: Review HW.

Healing and Faith in Mark

- Man with unclean spirit (1:21-26) – NM
- Peter's mother-in-law (1:29-31) – "they told him about her" (probably Simon and Andrew) (v.30)
- Many sick and demon-oppressed (1:32-34) – "they brought to him" (probably friends/family) (v.32)
- The leper (1:40-42) – the leper but with some doubt, "If you will, you can make me clean" (v.40)
- The paralytic (2:1-12) – the four friends, "when Jesus saw their faith" (v.5).
- The man with the withered hand (3:1-5) – NM, possibly the man with the withered hand
- The man with the legion of demons (5:1-20) – NM
- Jairus' daughter (5:23-24, 35-43) – Jairus (vv.22-23)
- The bleeding woman (5:25-34) – the woman, "daughter, your faith has made you well" (v.34)
- Many in Gennesaret (6:53-56) – both the friends and the sick (vv.55-56)
- The demon-possessed girl (7:24-30) – the girl's mother (v.28)
- The deaf and mute man (7:31-37) – "they brought to him" (probably friends/family) (v.32)
- The blind man (8:22-26) – "some people brought to him a blind man" (v.22)
- The demon possessed boy (9:14-29) – the father but falteringly (vv.22-24)
- Blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52) – Bartimaeus, "your faith has made you well" (v.52)

Q: What can we conclude from this data?

A: Faith is essential to receiving from Jesus. Jesus wasn't walking into hospitals and emptying them. In most of the healings, Jesus was responding to someone's faith.

As we move on in Mark 10, let's focus on verse 45: "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus' ultimate service is to ransom us.

Q: What is the meaning of redemption/ransom?

Redemption = to rescue from captivity by paying a price. To be redeemed is to be freed from slavery or to have your lost status restored.

There was a story in the news about two sixteen-year-olds who stole an iPod. After the theft, they called the owner and asked for a ransom of one hundred dollars in order for the iPod to be returned. They set up a secret location where the exchange was to take place, but the police discovered their plot and the thieves were charged for their crime. The iPod was returned safely to its owner. In this story, the iPod went into captivity to the thieves. The owner then needed to redeem the iPod by paying a ransom. Fortunately, the ransom or redemption wasn't necessary.

W: In groups of two, think of a creative way to present the concept of redemption to someone who has never heard of it.

Lesson 15: Redemption (Mark 10:45)

W: Present your illustrations of redemption in small groups.

W: Let's look at the following Scriptures together and see what we learn about redemption in the Bible: Ex. 6:5-6; Lev. 25:47-49; Deut. 15:15; Ps. 49:7-9; 130:7-8; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9.

The Bible teaches that we've gone into slavery to sin and we need to be redeemed or rescued. When Jesus died on the cross, the price was paid so that we could go free. Sin no longer has power over us.

W: Make a list of the disciples' failures in Mark 8:1-10:52. Include a verse reference with each item.

Lesson 16: Review

T: Review the disciples' failures with the class.

Disciples' failures

- question Jesus (8:4)
- misunderstand and fail to trust Jesus (8:16-21)
- Jesus rebuked Peter and even referred to him as Satan (8:33)
- didn't understand what rising from the dead meant (9:10)
- couldn't cast out the demon (9:18)
- argued about who was the greatest (9:34)
- tried to stop a man from driving out demons in Jesus' name (9:38-39)
- rebuked the people for bringing their children to Jesus (10:13-14)
- James and John ask for the greatest seats of honor (10:37)

Q: How would you categorize their failures?

- Slow to understand
- Proud
- Lack of faith

T: Divide class into groups and play silent charades. Give one set of four scenes to each group (next page) and give preparation time.

Rules:

1. The first team to get all of their scenes guessed correctly wins.
2. The scenes don't have to be guessed word for word, the teacher will determine if it's close enough.
3. There's a three-minute time limit for each group.
4. The audience has to do their best at guessing because they will be in the same position.
5. You can use the board to draw one of your scenes.
6. The two best teams will face off for the championship using the last two scenes on the next page.

HW: Study for a test on Mark 8:1-10:52. (Note to teacher: Consider making this an open Bible test.)

Scenes for Silent Charades

Herod promises the girl, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

John the Baptist is beheaded.

Jesus had compassion on the people because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus gives thanks for the five loaves and two fish.

Jesus walks on water.

The Pharisees ask Jesus why his disciples are eating with 'unclean' hands.

"You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

The evil human heart

The Greek woman said, "even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Jesus put his fingers in the deaf man's ears and spit and touched his tongue.

The Pharisees ask for a sign from heaven and Jesus sighs deeply and refuses to give one.

The blind man first saw people that looked like trees walking around.

Peter rebukes Jesus then Jesus rebukes Peter.

Jesus' clothes become dazzling white.

The disciples couldn't drive out the demon from the deaf and mute boy.

The disciples argue about who is the greatest.

Cut it off and pluck it out

"What God has joined together, let man not separate."

Jesus put his hands on the children and blessed them.

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

"Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees"

"Get behind me Satan!"

Name _____

Define the Following:

1. Rabbi –
2. Redeem –
3. Transfigure –

Fill in the Blank

4. “There is no one _____, not even _____” (Rom. 3:10).
5. The Pharisees _____ Jesus by asking him for a _____.
6. “It is I” is literally translated as _____.
7. Jesus’ list of evil starts with our _____.
8. Jesus said, “_____ let the children eat all they want.”
9. “Watch out for the _____ of the Pharisees and that of Herod.”
10. “Come with me by yourselves to a _____ place and get some _____.”
11. Jeremiah said, “the _____ is deceitful above all things...”
12. The boy’s father said, “I do _____; help me overcome my _____.”
13. God said, “This is my _____ whom I love. _____ to him.”
14. “Let the _____ _____ come to me, and do not hinder them.”
15. “If anyone wants to be _____, he must be the very _____”
16. “If anyone would _____ after me, he must _____ himself”
17. Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ in Mark chapter _____.

18. "What God has _____ together, let man not _____."
19. Gehenna literally means valley of _____.
20. The transfiguration show us a brief glimpse of the _____ of Christ.
21. In Mark 10, Jesus begins his ministry in the region of _____.
22. "The Son of Man did not come to be _____ but to _____."
23. "when they saw him _____ on the lake, they thought he was a _____."
24. Jesus called the disciples "children" in chapter _____.

True or False

- ____ 25. Herod Antipas thought John was Jesus raised from the dead.
- ____ 26. Herod the Great divided his kingdom among his three sons.
- ____ 27. The feeding of the five thousand is recorded in all four Gospels.
- ____ 28. There are twelve items on Jesus' list of internal evil.
- ____ 29. David said, "Surely I was sinful at birth"
- ____ 30. Jesus performed two exorcisms in Mark 8-10.
- ____ 31. Jesus' last healing in Mark was the healing of the blind man.
- ____ 32. Jesus predicted his death and resurrection three times in Mark 8-10.
- ____ 33. The disciples forgot how many leftovers there were after the miraculous feedings.
- ____ 34. Hillel taught that a man could divorce his wife for anything displeasing.
- ____ 35. The blind man at Bethsaida was named Bartimaeus.
- ____ 36. Peter and John wanted to sit at Jesus' right and left hand in glory.
- ____ 37. Gehenna was originally a garbage dump.

____ 38. Bartimaeus is the first person to call Jesus “Son of David” in Mark.

Chapter Content

____ 39. feeding of four thousand

____ 40. Jesus blessed the children

____ 41. transfiguration

____ 42. rich man

____ 42. “You are the Christ”

Short Answer

43. What three things did Jesus teach about entering God’s kingdom in Mark 9-10? What is paradoxical about these statements? How do these teachings affect you?

44. List three things the Bible teaches about redemption then write a short story that includes the theme of redemption.

45. List five examples of the disciples failing in this section. Include a chapter and verse reference for each.

Unit 4: The Death and Resurrection of Christ (Mark 11-16)

Lesson 1: The Last Week

Before we begin Mark 11, let's first look at the big picture of Mark's Gospel.

- Mark 1-10 covers Jesus' ministry with the exception of the last week (traditionally three years)
- Mark 11-16 covers about one week in Jesus' life.

If you count the words, about one-third of Mark's Gospel is devoted to the last days of Jesus' life.³² This means that Mark's narrative has been moving very quickly and he's now going to slow down significantly so we can catch the details of this last week. In fact, all the Gospel writers spend a large percentage of their Gospel reporting the events of the week leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. One writer called the Gospels, "passion narratives with extended introductions."³³ In other words, Mark 1-10 is just the introduction and the body of the work is the passion or suffering of Christ.

Mark 11 is climactic because for the first time in Mark's Gospel Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem. Observant Jews would have traveled to Jerusalem about three times a year for the festivals, but Mark has only included Jesus' last and final trip to Jerusalem.

Q: What was special about Jerusalem?

A: It was the capital of Israel and the home of the temple which was Israel's most holy place. The temple covered about 25 percent of the city of Jerusalem. The temple was the religious, political, and social center of Israel.

T: Find videos of the temple (digitally reconstructed) or videos of the present temple mount (check YouTube).

³² Paul Barnett, *Is the New Testament Reliable? 2nd Ed.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 86.

³³ Quoted in Cosby, 42.

Lesson 2: Jesus Enters Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-25)

Q: If you had special powers to destroy anything you wanted, what would you destroy?

Q: Did Jesus ever use his powers to ruin or destroy anything?

W: Read Mark 11:1-25.

11:12-21 – Notice the two destructive acts of Jesus in this section:

- The cursing of the fig tree
- Overturning the tables in the temple

T: Show a picture of a fig tree.

Since these are the only destructive things Jesus did in the Gospels and they are placed right next to each other, most interpreters see a connection between them. The fig tree represents Israel which has an outward show of health (religious activity) but no real spiritual fruit. This lack of fruit is seen most dramatically in the temple where the activities are focused on profit and not prayer. Both the cursing of the fig tree and the overturning of the tables are pictures of God's judgment on Israel and particularly on Jerusalem.

W: Write a journal entry for anyone in Mark 11:1-19. Include all five senses in your entry.

W: Share journal entries with two other students.

Lesson 3: Prayer Keys (Mark 11:22-25)

W: Take fifteen to twenty minutes and answer the following questions:

1. What comes to mind when you think about prayer?
2. How do you feel about your prayer life?
3. Have you ever received an answer to prayer? If so, list the answers you've received.
4. Have you ever prayed in faith for something but the prayer was unanswered? If so, how do you explain that with Mark 11:24?
5. Why do you pray?
6. Why should you pray?

T: Review by asking volunteers to share their answers with the class.

For Christians, prayer is about the most important activity a human being can engage in. But prayer is not something that comes naturally to most of us. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (Lk. 11:1). Prayer is something to be learned.

In our passage today, Jesus gives us two keys to effective prayer.

W: Read Mark 11:22-25 and copy verses 24-25 into your notes.

Q: According to this passage what are the keys to effective prayer?

A: Faith and a forgiving heart

Q: Why do you think these two keys are so important to prayer?

Q: Do you have any personal examples of how the lack of these keys has affected your prayer life?

W: Read and highlight Handout 4.1. (This is an article written by Peter Kreeft.)

Let's get very, very basic and very, very practical about prayer. The single most important piece of advice I know about prayer is also the simplest: *Just do it!*

How to do it is less important than just doing it. Less-than-perfect prayer is infinitely better than no prayer; more perfect prayer is only finitely better than less perfect prayer.

Nancy Reagan was criticized for her simple anti-drug slogan: "Just say no." But there was wisdom there: the wisdom that the heart of any successful program to stop anything must be the simple will to say no. ("Just say no" doesn't mean that nothing else was needed, but that without that simple decision nothing else would work. "Just say no" may not be *sufficient* but it is *necessary*.)

Similarly, no program, method, book, teacher, or technique will ever succeed in getting us to *start* doing anything unless there is first of all that simple, absolute choice to do it. "Just say yes."

The major obstacle in most of our lives to just saying yes to prayer, the most popular and powerful excuse we give for not praying, or not praying more, or not praying regularly, is that we have no time.

The only effective answer to that excuse, I find, is a kind of murder. You have to kill something, you have to say no to something else, in order to make time to pray. Of course, you will never *find* time to pray, you have to *make* time to pray. And that means unmaking something else. The only way to install the tenant of prayer in the apartment building of your life is to evict some other tenant from those premises that prayer will occupy. Few of us have any empty rooms available.

Deciding to do that is the first thing. And you probably won't decide to do it, only *wish* to do it, unless you see prayer for what it is: a matter of life or death, your lifeline to God, to life itself.

Is this exaggerated? Are there more important things? Love, for instance? We need love absolutely; but the love we need is *agape*, the love that only God has and is; so unless we go to God for it, we won't get it. And going to God for it means prayer. So *unless we pray, we will not love*.

Having got that clear and having made prayer your number one priority, having made a definite decision to do it, we must next rearrange our lives around it. Rearranging your time, preparing time to pray, is like preparing your house to paint. As everyone knows who has done any painting, preparation is three-quarters the work, three-quarters the hassle, and three-quarters the time. The actual painting is a breeze compared with the preparation. The same is true of prayer: the hardest step is preparing a place, a time, a sacred and inviolable part of each day for it. Prayer is like Thanksgiving dinner. It takes one hour to eat it and ten hours to prepare it. Prayer is like Christmas Day: it took a month of preparation, decoration, and shopping to arrange for that one day.

The first and most important piece of practical preparation is scheduling. You absolutely must schedule a regular time for prayer, whether you are a "scheduler" with other things in your life or not. "Catch as catch can" simply won't work for prayer; it will mean less and less prayer, or none at all. One quick minute in the morning to offer your day to God is better than nothing at all, of course, but it is as radically inadequate as one quick minute a day with your wife or husband. You simply must decide each day to free up your schedule so you can pray.

How long a time? That varies with individuals and situations, of course; but the very barest minimum should certainly be at least fifteen minutes. You can't really count on getting much deep stuff going on in less time than that. If fifteen minutes seems too much to you, that fact is powerful proof that you need to pray much more to get your head on straight.

After it becomes more habitual and easy, expand it, double it. And later, double it again. Aim at an hour each day, if you want radical results. (*Do you?* Or are you only playing?) What time of day is best? The most popular time—bedtime—is usually the worst possible time, for two reasons. First, it tends not to be prime time but garbage time, when you're the least alert and awake. Do you really want to put God in the worst apartment in your building? Should you offer him the sickest sheep in your flock?

Second, it won't work. If you wait until every other obligation is taken care of first before you pray, you simply won't pray. For life today is so cruelly complicated for most of us that "every other obligation" is *never* taken care of. Remember, you are going to have to kill other things in order to pray. No way out of that.

The most obvious and usually best time is early in the morning. If you can't delay the other things you do, you simply must get up that much earlier.

Should it be the very first thing? That depends. Some people are alert as soon as they get up; others need to shower and dress to wake up. The important thing is to give God the best time, and "just do it."

Place is almost as important as time. You should make one special place where you can be undisturbed. "Catch as catch can" won't work for place either.

What place? Some people are not very sensitive to environment and can even use a bathroom. Others naturally seek beauty: a porch, yard, garden, or walk. (I find praying while you take a walk a good combination of spiritual and physical exercise.)

You probably noticed I haven't said a word about techniques yet. That's because three-quarters is preparation, remember? But what about methods?

I can only speak from my own experience as a continuing beginner. The two most effective that I have found are very simple. One is praying Scripture, reading and praying at the same time, reading in God's presence, receiving the words from God's mouth. The second is spontaneous verbal prayer. I am not good at all at silent prayer, mental prayer, contemplative prayer; my thoughts hop around like fleas. Praying aloud (or singing) keeps me praying, at least. And I find it often naturally leads to silent prayer often, or "mental prayer," or contemplation.

Most advice on prayer focuses on higher levels: contemplative prayer. But I suspect many of my readers are prayer infants too and need to learn to walk before they can run. So these are some lessons from one man's prayer kindergarten. Let's "just do it" even if "it" is only crawling towards God.

Peter Kreeft

<http://www.peterkreeft.com/topics/lesson-one.htm>

Lesson 5: The Prayer Life of Jesus

Q: What do you remember about the previous lesson?

Q: Where is the best place for you to pray?

Q: What is the best time of the day for you to pray?

As Peter Kreeft said in the article, “just do it.”

Read the following verses and list what each teaches about Jesus’ habit of prayer: Mk. 1:35; 6:45-46; Lk. 3:21-22; 5:15-16; 6:12-13; 9:28-29; 11:1.

W: Write out Matthew 6:6 into your notes then write a five-sentence personal reflection on it.

Let’s briefly address two more practical items regarding prayer.

Q: Does our posture matter in prayer?

A: No, the Bible records people prostrating themselves, kneeling, bowing, and standing while praying.

Q: Does the Bible command us to close our eyes while praying?

A: No, the idea behind closing our eyes is to help us concentrate, but there’s no example or command of this practice in the Bible.

Daily prayer is a habit and as with any habit it takes discipline to maintain. At times, you’ll really enjoy praying and at other times it will seem really difficult. Don’t let your feelings stop you from praying, instead incorporate your feelings into your prayers. Be honest before God about how you’re feeling and as Paul said, “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). When your mind wanders off, remember you have an entire book filled with prayers (Psalms), the Lord’s Prayer (Mt. 6:9-13) and amazing Bible stories to reflect on. The whole Bible is a resource for you to incorporate into your prayers.

Lesson 5: Questioning Jesus (Mark 11:27-12:34)

W: Read Mark 11:27-12:34 and write out the questions asked of Jesus, who asked them, and briefly summarize Jesus' response.

T: Review the answers.

The Questions

- By what authority are you doing these things? (11:28)
- Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? (12:14)
- At the resurrection whose wife will she be? (12:23)
- Which is the most important commandment? (12:28)

The Questioners

- The chief priests, teachers of the law and the elders (11:28)
- The Pharisees and Herodians (12:14-15; cf. 3:6)
- The Sadducees (12:23)
- A teacher of the law (12:28)

Jesus' Responses

- Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? (11:29).
- Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's (12:17).
- You don't know the Scriptures or the power of God (12:24-27)
- Love the Lord and Love your neighbor (12:29-31)

Then all questions stop (12:34) and Jesus asks a question (12:35).

Q: Where is this questioning taking place?

A: In or near the temple (11:27; 12:35, 41; 13:1) which is where Jesus ruffled a few feathers in 11:15-19.

Q: What do "these things" refer to in 11:28?

A: The commotion Jesus caused in the temple in 11:15-19.

12:18 – We’ve already learned about the Pharisees but now Mark mentions another religious group, Sadducees. The Sadducees are rarely mentioned in the NT but here are a few things we know about them:

- They were wealthy and powerful priests.
- They only accepted the books of Moses (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible). This means that they rejected most of the Hebrew Bible as well as the oral traditions of the Pharisees.
- They didn’t believe in the resurrection of the dead or the existence of angels and demons.

Two Highlights from this Section

1. “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” (12:10). This is a quote from Psalm 118:22-23. Jesus is not surprised that he’s rejected and he knows it will lead to his ultimate victory. Jesus knows what rejection feels like. Isaiah 53:3 says, “He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”

What does a cornerstone do? It levels and supports all the other stones in the building. Jesus is saying that the stone the builders thought was good for nothing, good to be thrown away (remember they cried “crucify him” “away with him”) has now become the most important stone of all. The rejected Jesus is now Lord of all.

2. “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength . . . you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (12:29-31). Jesus is quoting one of the most important Hebrew Scriptures here.

W: Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is known as the Shema because it begins with the word “hear.” **Shema** = hear. Notice that the passage ends with a command to bind these words on the hand, between the eyes, and on the forehead. This command is literally obeyed by orthodox Jews.

Phylacteries = small leather boxes strapped to the forehead and arm with small pieces of paper containing the Shema rolled up and placed inside.

Mezuzahs = small rectangular boxes placed on doorposts with small pieces of paper containing the Shema rolled up and placed inside.

T: Find images online of phylacteries and mezuzahs.

Since the Jews already considered the Shema to be the most important command, Jesus wasn't saying anything new in Mark 12. But Jesus added Leviticus 19:18 to the Shema which says "love your neighbor." The word "neighbor" = the other person.

T: For tomorrow's class, set up an account with www.biblicaltraining.org.

Lesson 6: Loving God (Mark 12:29-31)

Q: What does it mean to love God? What does it mean to love anyone for that matter?

Today you'll be listening to a sermon and taking notes.

T: Hand out blank sheets of paper.

W: Take notes in the following way:

1. divide the sheet of paper into four sections,
2. label the sections: new info., images that come to mind, action steps, and miscellaneous,
3. as you're listening, fill in each of the boxes.

T: Create a free account at www.biblicaltraining.org then go to the following:

- Classes
- Foundations
- 52 Major Stores
- play #35 The Greatest Commandment

T: Get feedback on the sermon and then collect the papers.

W: Study for a quiz tomorrow on Mark 11-12.

Lesson 7: Quiz and Mark 13

W: Quiz 4.1 (Mk.11-12)

W: Handout 4.2

Name _____

1. The temple covered about _____% of the city of Jerusalem.
2. "The stone the builders _____ has become the _____."
3. List and elaborate on the two keys to effective prayer according to Jesus in Mark 11.
4. Summarize Jesus' only destructive miracle. What story is connected to it?
5. Write out the two most important commands given in Mark 12.
6. About one-_____ of Mark's Gospel is focused on the last week of Jesus' life.
7. T or F A mezuzah is worn on the forehead and arm.
8. T or F Sadducees did not believe in angels.
9. A _____ levels and supports the entire building.
10. Define Shema and state which book of the Bible it comes from.

Mark 13

1. Where are Jesus and the disciples? (Two answers)

2. What are the two questions Jesus is responding to in this chapter?

3. List the commands Jesus gives to his followers in verses 5-37.

4. According to Jesus, what should the disciples watch out for?

5. What should we expect to take place in the future?

6. List the things in Mark 13 that don't really fit our time period or place.

Lesson 8: Predicting the Future (Mark 13)

Q: What comes to mind when you think of the end of the world?

After losing her family and entire village in a tsunami, an Indonesian girl said, “it’s the end of the world for me.” The world as she knew it was gone. In Mark 13, the disciples ask when the temple would be destroyed. The temple was the center of the world for the Jews—the home of God on earth. Many Jews considered the temple to be indestructible which therefore made Jerusalem indestructible. About six hundred years earlier, Jeremiah warned against this attitude. He said if the people didn’t repent, God would destroy the temple (Jer. 7:1-29).

When we read about the future in the Bible we need to avoid two extremes. On the one hand, we shouldn’t speculate about things that aren’t clearly taught in the Bible because we’ll probably be wrong. Edgar Whisenant published a book claiming that the rapture or the return of Christ would happen in 1988. Incredibly, he gave 88 reasons why Jesus would return in 1988. When his prediction failed he revised the date to 1989, then 1993, and then 1994. Mark 13:32 says no one knows the day or the hour. On the other hand, we shouldn’t act completely ignorant about the future. The Bible teaches that Jesus will return, a final judgment will take place, and God will create a new heavens and a new earth.

T: Review Handout 4.2.

1. Location

- Leaving the temple (v.1)
- sitting on the Mt. of Olives (v.3)

2. Two questions

- When will these things happen? (What things are they talking about?) (v.4)
- What will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled? (v.4)

3. Commands

- Watch out that no one deceives you (v.5)
- Don’t be alarmed (v.7)
- Be on your guard (vv.9, 23, 33)
- Do not worry beforehand about what you will say (v.11)
- Let those in Judea flee to the mountains (v.14)
- Pray (v.18)
- Be on guard! Be alert! (v.33)

- Watch (vv.35, 37)

4. **Watch out and be on your guard**

- That no one deceives you (vv.5, 21-23)
- Persecution (v.9)
- Christ's return (vv.32-37)

5. **Expect**

- False christs (vv.6, 21-22)
- Wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines (vv.7-8)
- Persecution (v.9), family betrayal (v.12), hatred (v.13)
- Gospel preached to all nations (v.10)
- The abomination that causes desolation (v.14)

6. **A different time and place from our own**

- Flogged in the synagogues (v.9) – a typical punishment back then
- The abomination that causes desolation (v.14)
- Judea (v.14)
- Flee to the mountains (v.14)
- On the roof of the house (v.15)
- Field and cloak (v.16)
- Winter (v.18) – depending on where you live

Jesus spoke these words around A.D. 30. and his words are mostly focused on the near future when the temple would be destroyed. The temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, one generation (40 years) after Jesus spoke the words in Mark 13:30. Therefore, we should understand this chapter primarily in light of A.D. 70. However, this speech also contains things that are still to come (13:26-27). (For more information on Jesus' return see Matt. 24:36-39; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 5:1-6; 2 Thess. 1:5-10; 2:1-4; and 2 Pet. 3:1-13.) So to properly understand Mark 13, we need to look to the past and the future.

A.D. 30 -----→**A.D. 70**-----→our future

Application

1. Watch out for persecution but expect it
2. Don't be alarmed by world chaos
3. Watch out for false christs

13:24-25 – Some think the language here is hyperbolic (see Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:10, 3:15; Amos 8:9).

HW: Read and summarize two Wikipedia articles: “Siege of Jerusalem (70)” and “First Jewish-Roman War.”

T: Check out more video clips on Israel’s temple or the current temple mount to show in class.

Lesson 9: The Temple

T: Collect Wikipedia summaries.

W: Handout 4.3 (there's a teacher's copy)

T: For tomorrow's class print off a copy of Da Vinci's Last Supper Painting or be prepared to show it on the projector. Also be prepared to show the Mount of Olives (check Google images and www.bibleplaces.com.)

T: Consider showing more videos on Israel's temple.

Israel's Temple

953 B.C. – Built by _____.

_____ **B.C.** – Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar who took many Jews to Babylon in exile.

516 B.C. – Rebuilt under _____, _____, and the returning exiles (Hag. 1:14).

167 B.C. – Antiochus Epiphanes IV invaded Jerusalem and abolished the worship of Yahweh in the temple. He replaced the worship of Yahweh with the worship of Zeus and sacrificed pigs on the altar. This was in fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy about the "abomination that causes desolation" or "the idol that profanes" (Dan. 9:27).

164 B.C. – Under Judas Maccabeus the Jews defeated the foreign armies and rededicated the temple. This victory is still celebrated annually in the festival called _____.

_____ **B.C.** – _____ the Great began rebuilding and expanding the temple. Many Jews, however, weren't pleased because Herod wasn't a descendant of David and he worked for Rome. The work took several decades to complete.

A.D. 70 – The temple was destroyed by the _____ under the command of Titus. Some believe this was one of the worst defeats in world history. A huge percentage of Jerusalem's population was slaughtered while others fled to the mountains (Mk. 13:14). Like Jeremiah, Jesus predicted that the temple would be destroyed. Jesus also knew that the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed and he wept for it (Lk. 19:41-44).

Summarize Jeremiah 7:1-15 in your own words.

A.D. 70 – _____ – Israel was no longer a nation.

1948 – Present – Israel regains its land and becomes a recognized nation. Jews today still go to the Western wall of the temple called the _____ Wall in order to pray and ask God to allow them to rebuild the temple. Why can't it be rebuilt? Because the Dome of the Rock, one of the most important mosques, is currently located there.

Israel's Temple

953 B.C. – Built by Solomon

587 B.C. – Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar who took many Jews to Babylon in exile.

516 B.C. – Rebuilt under Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the returning exiles (Hag. 1:14).

167 B.C. – Antiochus Epiphanes IV (Seleucid ruler) invaded Jerusalem and abolished the worship of Yahweh in the temple. He replaced the worship of Yahweh with the worship of Zeus and sacrificed pigs on the altar. This was the immediate fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy about the "abomination that causes desolation" or "the idol that profanes" (Dan. 9:27).

164 B.C. – Under Judas Maccabeus the Jews defeated the foreign armies and rededicated the temple. This victory is still celebrated annually in the festival called Hanukkah.

20 B.C. – Herod the Great began rebuilding and expanding the temple. Many Jews, however, weren't pleased because Herod wasn't a descendant of David and he worked for Rome. The work took several decades to complete.

A.D. 70 – The temple was destroyed by the Romans under the command of Titus. Some believe this was one of the worst defeats in world history. A huge percentage of Jerusalem's population was slaughtered while others fled to the mountains (Mk. 13:14). Like Jeremiah, Jesus predicted that the temple would be destroyed. Jesus also knew that the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed and he wept for it (Lk. 19:41-44).

Put Jeremiah 7:1-15 into your own words.

A.D. 70 – 1948 – Israel was no longer a nation.

1948 – Present – Israel regains its land and becomes a recognized nation. Jews today still go to the Western wall of the temple called the Wailing Wall in order to pray and ask God to allow them to rebuild the temple. Why can't it be rebuilt? Because the Dome of the Rock, one of the most important mosques, is currently located there.

Lesson 10: Passover and Prayer (Mark 14:1-42)

T: Show Da Vinci's last supper painting to the class

While the painting isn't accurate in every detail, e.g. they were reclining not sitting at the table and they obviously wouldn't have all been on the same side of the table, the expression and emotion portrayed is brilliant. Jesus has just said, "One of you will betray me..." And you can see the despondency on their faces.

W: Read Mark 14:1-42 and then come to the front and share anything you think is important or interesting.

14:1 – As you learned from your reading, the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread is one of the three most important festivals in Judaism. It's celebrated in March/April which is the first month of the Jewish year. This festival is a reminder of the exodus and it's been observed annually for about three thousand, five hundred years.

14:3 – Nard is an ointment from the plants of the Himalayas. Alabaster is a type of stone. The woman didn't think about the cost. Imagine working for one year and giving away all of your earnings to one person. This was quite possibly the most valuable thing the woman owned. True worship can be very costly.

14:6-9 – Jesus accepts the woman's act of devotion. Her perfume wasn't wasted. Although others dishonored her, Jesus honored her for doing what "she could."

14:26 – Have you ever pictured Jesus singing? They ate the Passover in the city (14:13) and after the meal went out to the Mount of Olives.

T: Show pictures of the Mount of Olives from Google images or www.bibleplaces.com.

Q: Why is Mark 14:32-42 so important for us? What would your view of Jesus and his cross be like without it?

A: Without this passage some might say that the crucifixion wasn't hard for Jesus because he was the Son of God. This passage shows that Jesus suffered intense emotional, mental, and physical pain. Jesus was fully human. We need to remember this and not emphasize Christ's deity more than his humanity. The cross was a real cross for Jesus. Jesus experienced excruciating pain. The word excruciate comes from two Latin words which mean "out of the cross." When we say excruciating pain we're saying "out of the cross" pain.

14:36 – “The cup” symbolizes God’s judgment/wrath (Is. 51:17; Jer. 25:15). Jesus drank the cup of God’s wrath so now we don’t have to. We get God’s favor instead.

W: Write out Hebrews 5:7 and Hebrews 4:15.

Jesus entered fully into our weaknesses and therefore he can relate with us. This gives us all the more reason to pray when we are in distress.

Lesson 11: Arrest, Trial, and Denial (Mark 14:43-72)

W: Read Mark 14:43-72 and Luke 22:61-62 (notice the extra detail in Luke).

W: Write a ten-line journal entry for Peter after he denied Jesus. Include details from the reading.

W: Share journal entries.

Q: When have you thought you didn't need help doing something and then after trying you realized you did need help?

Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew Peter. Does anyone know you better than you know yourself? Don't say to yourself, "I would never do what they're doing." Are you sure you really know yourself?

Q: Why did Mark include the story of the young man in 14:51-52?

A: It shows the desperation of Jesus' followers to get out of there. Jesus' followers were not the most courageous. Some scholars think this is such an odd detail to include (none of the other Gospels have it) that the young man is probably Mark the author.

14:53 – "Mark describes a nocturnal trial before the Sanhedrin that is extremely illegal."³⁴ The Sanhedrin = the Jewish supreme court.

14:61-65 – Jesus was executed for blasphemy. Remember, Mark 3 and the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? The high priest believed that Jesus was ruining God's reputation by claiming to be the Son of God and therefore he deserved to die.

T: Get the movie *The Passion of the Christ* for class tomorrow. If you can't get a copy you may want to check to see if there are clips on YouTube. You'll only need to show the first fourteen minutes.

³⁴ Cosby, 49.

Lesson 11: Condemned and Crucified (Mark 15:1-32)

T: Show the first fourteen minutes of *The Passion of the Christ*. This movie is a rendering of John's account of the passion along with some creative expression.

Q: Who likes being in a crowd of people?

Q: Who has a story about being in a crowd that was out of control?

W: Handout 4.4

T: Review Handout 4.4.

Condemned and Crucified (Mark 15:1-32)

1. List what is said about the crowd in verses 1-15.

2. What three adjectives would you use to describe Pilate?

3. List all the people who insulted/mockered Jesus in verses 16-32. What did they do? What did they say?

4. What does verse 29 imply about the site of the crucifixion?

5. How many times is “king of the Jews/Israel” mentioned in Mark 15:1-32?

6. From Mark 15:1-32, who would you say is most responsible for Jesus’ death?

7. How would you feel and what would you do if you saw Jesus spit on, blindfolded, struck and mocked?

1. The crowd in verses 1-15

- Asked Pilate to do what he usually did for them (v.8)
- Stirred up by the chief priests (v.11)
- Cried out, “Crucify him.” (v.13)
- Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd (v.15)

In many ways, it looks like the crowd is in control here but the crowd has been riled up by the priests.

2. Describe Pilate

Perhaps weak, indecisive, hesitant, heartless, callous

3. The people who insulted/mockd Jesus in verses 16-32.

- The soldiers together with whole battalion (v.16) – clothed him in a purple cloak, put a crown of thorns on him, struck his head with a reed, spit on him, knelt down before him and said “Hail, King of the Jews!” (vv.17-18).
- Those who passed by while he was on the cross said “Aha, You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!” (vv.29-30) The chief priests and the scribes said, “Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe” (v. 32).
- Those who were crucified with him “heaped insults” on him (v.32)

4. The site of the crucifixion from v.29.

Notice the phrase, “Those who passed by.” “Crucifixions were generally held in public places, in order to provide the maximum possible deterrent, and v.29 suggests a site near a road.”³⁵

5. The title “king of the Jews/Israel” in vv. 1-32.

Mentioned six times (vv. 2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32)

6. Who is most responsible for Jesus’ death?

It seems like the priests who stirred up the crowd.

³⁵ Hooker, 372.

15:15 – Some died from the flogging because small pieces of bone and metal were often imbedded in the whip. Unlike the Jews, the Romans didn't have a limit to the number of lashes that could be given.

15:24 – Mark doesn't describe the actual crucifixion because it was the known practice of the time. In 1968, there was a major archaeological discovery. The bones of a young man named Yohanan were discovered. The bones were found in an ossuary (bone box) and date to the time of Jesus. These bones are especially important because a six-inch nail was still implanted in the ankle bone. This discovery was the first archaeological proof that crucifixion was practiced during Jesus' time period.

Q: What forms of public execution do we have today? How do they compare with crucifixion?

15:29 – This is the same accusation as in 14:58. Jesus did make a statement about the temple's destruction in 13:2 but he didn't claim to be the destroyer.

15:25 – The third hour is generally understood as 9:00 a.m.

W: Read John 19:14-16.

Q: Do you see any discrepancy between Mark 15:25 and John 19:14-16?

Here are four possible ways of understanding the difference between the two:

1. Mark and John are not referring to an exact hour but to a three-hour block of time. By saying the third hour, Mark could have meant anywhere from 9:00 a.m. to noon and by saying the sixth hour John could've meant anywhere from noon to 3:00 p.m. Notice also that John says, it was *about* the sixth hour. If this is correct, there is enough leeway for the difference not to be a contradiction.
2. Mark and John are using two different time systems. According to the Roman system, which John was using, the sixth hour was 6:00 a.m. Mark was using the Jewish system which viewed the third hour as 9:00 a.m. (The Roman system began at midnight while the Jewish system began at daybreak.) If this is correct, Pilate presented Jesus to the crowd at around 6:00 a.m. and Jesus was crucified at 9:00 a.m., thus there's no discrepancy.
3. There's a disagreement but it wouldn't have bothered anyone in the ancient world so it's not a big deal. After all, they're within three hours of each other. Without modern day watches, time keeping wasn't as precise as it is today.
4. One of them is wrong.

Lesson 12: The Death and Burial of Jesus (Mark 15:33-47)

W: Read Mark 15:33-47.

Notice the requests for Jesus to “come down”:

- Those who passed by (15:30)
- Chief priests and scribes (15:32)
- A man standing near the cross (15:36)

This seems to be a temptation that Jesus had to endure similar to when Satan tempted Jesus to prove himself in the wilderness. Let’s review the pain that Jesus endured.

Jesus’ pain

1. Emotional
 - Judas’ betrayal (14:43-46)
 - Peter’s denial (14:66-72)
 - Rejected by the crowd – “crucify him” (15:13-14)
 - Mocked by:
 - soldiers (15:16-20)
 - those who passed by (15:29-30)
 - chief priests and scribes (15:31-32)
 - those who were crucified with him (15:32)
 - Sentenced to die (15:15)
2. Physical
 - Spit on and beaten twice (14:65; 15:19)
 - Flogged (15:15)
 - Crown of thorns (15:17)
 - Crucified (15:24)
3. Spiritual
 - Felt forsaken by God (15:34)

Let’s move on to focus on the one thing Jesus said from the cross in Mark’s Gospel.

W: Read Mark 15:34 and make observations on Jesus' words. An observation is simply a detail that you notice.

Observations on Mark 15:34

- Mark thought it was important to record the actual original words
- Jesus asked why.
- Jesus felt forsaken.
- Jesus quoted Scripture on the cross (Ps. 22:1).
- Jesus' complaint was focused on the absence of God.

Q: What can we conclude from these observations?

A: It's not always a sin to ask God why. We should share our true feelings with God in prayer.

Q: What else did Jesus say from the cross?

In total, the Gospels record seven statements Jesus made from the cross.

HW: Write out Jesus' statements from the cross in Luke 23:34, 43, 46; John 19:26-27, 28, 30 and make observations on each of them.

Lesson 14: The Meaning of Jesus' Death

T: Review HW and then collect.

Mark has given us a lot of details surrounding the death of Jesus. Let's make sure we understand the big picture of what's happened.

Events surrounding Christ's death

- Anointed at Bethany (14:1-9) – Jesus predicts his death (v.8)
- Passover meal (14:12-31) – Jesus predicts betrayal, denial and death (vv.18, 24, 30)
- Betrayed by Judas (14:10-11, 43-45)
- Arrested by a crowd who came from the priests and scribes (14:46-52)
- Questioned by the Sanhedrin/high priest (14:53-64)
- Spit on and beaten by the guards of the high priest (14:65)
- Denied by Peter (14:66-72)
- Questioned by Pilate (15:1-15)
- Mocked and beaten by the soldiers (15:15-20)
- Crucified (15:24)
- Mocked while on the cross (15:29-32)
- Darkness (three hours) (15:33)
- Asked God why (15:34)
- Cried out and then died (15:37)

The death of Christ isn't only reported in the Bible, it's also interpreted. If we want to understand the meaning of this event we must go back more than a millennium from Jesus' time to an event that happened in Israel's history.

W: Read and summarize Exodus 12:1-32 then write out the following verses into your notes: Isaiah 53:4-7; John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelations 5:12.

W: Read Revelation 5:6-13.

Lesson 15: The Resurrection of Christ (Mark 16)

W: Read Mark 16:1-8.

16:1 – These women were taking a risk. They could be accused of trespassing and tampering with the body of Jesus so they went early in the morning.

Notice the prominence of the women (15:40-41, 47; 16:1). “It is part of the scandal of the gospel that the only ‘evidence’ for the resurrection is a message entrusted to a group of women. Even if they had delivered it, their words would have had no value, since Jewish law demanded the evidence of two male witnesses to establish anything!”³⁶ In this environment why would any follower of Jesus invent women as the first witnesses to the resurrection?

16:7 – Peter is singled out. Galilee is the place where Jesus’ ministry began and now he’s going to return there.

16:8 – This may be Mark’s original ending or his original ending may have been destroyed.

There are two major passages in the Gospels that are unlikely to be original and Mark 16:9-20 is one of them. (The other is John 7:53-8:11.) Neither of these passages are found in the earliest Greek manuscripts.

Q: If Mark ended his book at 16:8, why do you think he did?

1. To emphasize human failure in one last dramatic fashion. Previously when Jesus commanded people to be quiet, they went out and told others, now that they’re commanded to announce the good news, they say nothing to anyone. In addition, this is unique because it’s a failure of the women.

“Up to this point, the women in Mark’s story have done well: individual women have been commended for their faith and their actions (5.34; 7.29; 12.41-4; 14.3-9), and the women who followed Jesus from Galilee have alone stood by him at the end: they alone witnessed his death (15.40f) and burial (15.47). But at this point, even they fail.”³⁷

2. To leave us in a state of suspense just like the disciples were at this point.

³⁶ Hooker, 392-3.

³⁷ Ibid., 387.

3. He used up all of the space on his scroll or he ran out of time to write.

At any rate, it seems strange that Mark ended his book here. He shows that Jesus was raised from the dead, but gives no account of Jesus' appearances. If Mark 16:9-20 isn't original to Mark it shows that someone else wasn't too happy with the ending at Mark 16:8 and decided to improve on it.

W: Read Mark 16:9-20.

Q: If Mark didn't write it then why is it still in our Bibles?

A: Mostly tradition, however, it's important to note that this passage doesn't teach anything that is contrary to what we've already learned about Jesus and the disciples. First, the disciples show a lack of faith throughout the book of Mark and they do so here in 16:11, 12, and 14. This post-resurrection unbelief is even corroborated in Luke 24:37-39. Second, we know that Jesus rebuked his disciples throughout his ministry and he does so here (16:14). Third, Jesus commanded his disciples to go and preach after he was raised from the dead (Mt. 28:19-20) as he does in Mark 16:15. Finally, the resurrection appearance mentioned in Mark 16:12-13 seems to be a summary of Luke 24:13-35. So in short, this passage or the major thrust of it is confirmed in other places.

16:15 – Previously, people were commanded to be silent regarding Jesus' identity and his miracles. Now he commands the bold preaching of his word *everywhere*. Now that he has completed his mission, the whole world should know who he is and what he did. There's no more secret.

Q: Have you ever told anyone about Jesus? If so, how did it go?

HW: Review Mark by looking at two key themes: Jesus' identity and the disciples' failures. Write down eight examples for each along with the verse references.

Lesson 16: Review Mark 11-16

W: Read through Handout 4.5 and fill in the blanks.

The list on the back is meant to help you see Mark's full portrait of Jesus. Reading a chapter or a section helps us to go in-depth, but it also causes us to miss the full impact of the book. Mark is giving us a picture of Jesus and we only see the whole picture when we let the entire book impact us. The best way to let the whole book impact us is to read it in its entirety in one sitting.

W: Complete Handout 4.6 then review for the test on Mark 11-16.

Test 4

Free Period

Summary of Mark

Identity of Jesus

- Mark's confession, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1)
- Demons know who he is (1,3,5)
- Baptism – voice from heaven, "You are my Son . . ." (1)
- Calming of the storm – disciples ask, "who is this?" (4)
- People have different opinions about him (6, 8)
- Peter's confession (8)
- Transfiguration – voice from cloud, "This is my Son . . ." (9)
- Jesus calls himself, "the Son" (13)
- High priest asked, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" (14).
- Pilate asked, "Are you the king of the Jews?" (15)
- Centurion says, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (15)

'Son of God' in Mark

- human confession (1:1; 15:39) _____ and _____
- God's pronouncement (1:11; 9:7) at _____ and _____
- demonic confession (3:11; 5:7)
- Jesus' confession (14:61-62) before the _____.

Disciples' Failures

- Lacked faith during the storm (4:38)
- Didn't understand Jesus' parables (4:13; 7:18)
- Didn't understand Jesus' miracle of the loaves because of their hard hearts (6:52)
- Questioned Jesus about bread after he fed five thousand people (8:4)
- Worried about their lack of bread after Jesus fed thousands (8:14)
- Peter rebuked Jesus (8:32-33)
- Didn't understand what rising from the dead meant (9:10)
- Couldn't cast out the demon (9:18)
- Argued about who was the greatest (9:34)
- Tried to stop a man from driving out demons in Jesus' name (9:38)

- Rebuked the people for bringing their children to Jesus (10:13)
- Fell asleep when they should've been praying (14:37-41)
- Judas betrayed Jesus (14:43-45)
- Peter denied knowing Jesus (14:66-72)
- They all ran away (14:50-52)
- The women disobeyed the angel's command and said nothing to anyone (16:8)

Jesus in Mark

1. Heard a voice from heaven say "You are my Son..."
2. Sent into the desert by the Spirit
3. Resisted Satan's temptations
4. He announced the kingdom of God
5. Commanded people to repent and believe the good news
6. Called people to follow him
7. Taught with authority
8. Drove out demons
9. Healed the sick
10. Prayed in private places
11. Touched and healed a leper
12. Forgave sins
13. Ate with tax collectors and sinners
14. Expressed anger at human stubbornness
15. Taught about God's kingdom
16. Calmed storms
17. Raised the dead
18. Provided food for the hungry
19. Walked on water
20. Rebuked hypocrites
21. Gave sight to the blind
22. Predicted his own death and resurrection
23. Taught people to serve one another
24. Welcomed and blessed little children
25. Commanded love for God and love for neighbor
26. Warned his followers of future trouble
27. Prayed to his Father when he was in trouble
28. Arrested
29. Beaten
30. Crucified
31. Raised from the dead

What overall impression does this give you of Jesus?

Name _____

Fill in the Blank

1. "Go into all the _____ and preach the good _____ to all creation."
2. According to Jesus, both _____ and _____ are essential to prayer.
3. "The stone the builders _____ has become the _____."
4. The temple was destroyed in A.D. _____.
5. 'The cup' that Jesus asked God to remove symbolizes God's _____.
6. Jesus said, "_____ and _____ so that you will not fall into temptation."
7. The longest speech in Mark is found in chapter _____.
8. Isaiah chapter _____ predicts the suffering of the Christ.
9. The woman's perfume would have sold for more than a _____ wages.
10. Jesus was sentenced to death for _____.

True or False

- ____ 11. Jesus taught that all God's commands are of equal importance.
- ____ 12. Some Jews wear a small box containing the Shema on their forehead.
- ____ 13. Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.
- ____ 14. Jesus sang a hymn.
- ____ 15. Jesus' triumphal entry is found in all four gospels.
- ____ 16. Jesus confessed to the high priest that he was God's Son.

- ____ 17. Jesus' first trial was before Pilate.
- ____ 18. Passover was celebrated in the third month of the Jewish year.
- ____ 19. The location of Jesus' crucifixion was public.
- ____ 20. There is no archaeological evidence for crucifixions at the time of Jesus.

Chapter Content

- ____ 21. Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple
- ____ 22. Jesus arrested
- ____ 23. Fig tree cursed
- ____ 24. Jesus crucified
- ____ 25. Jesus raised

Short Answer

26. Explain why the story of Jesus suffering in the garden is important for our view of Christ.

27. Write out Jesus' only statement from the cross in Mark and make three observations about it.

28. List and briefly summarize the seven times where Mark shows Jesus is God's Son.

29. Write out the greatest commandment according to Jesus.

Lesson 18: Review for Final Exam

The final exam will be written from your four major tests.

T: Distribute selected questions from Tests 1-3 and see what students can answer without studying.

The final exam will be written from your four major tests.

HW: Study for the final exam.

Lesson 19: Review: Part 2

T: Go over the answers to Tests 1-3.

W: In groups prepare a talk show using any three people from the Gospel of Mark.

HW: Study for the final exam.

Lesson 20: Review: Part 3

W: Present your talk shows.

HW: Study for final exam.

Final Exam

T: If your administrator approves, get a copy of the movie *The Nativity Story* to show in class for the end of the first semester.

Name _____

Define the following:

1. Gospel –
2. Kingdom of God –
3. Christ –
4. Authority –
5. Forgive –
6. Disciple –
7. Apostle –
8. Exorcize –
9. Hypocrite –
10. Tradition –
11. Rabbi –
12. Redeem –

True or False

- _____ 13. Simon and John were brothers.
- _____ 14. Messiah means the same thing as Christ.
- _____ 15. According to Mark, Jesus was tempted by Satan and then baptized by John.
- _____ 16. The regulations about skin diseases are given in the book of Leviticus.

- ____ 17. The Sabbath begins on Saturday night.
- ____ 18. When Jesus saw the paralytic's faith, he said, "Son, your sins are forgiven."
- ____ 19. The sun represents Satan in the parable of the sower.
- ____ 20. According to Mark, Jesus had brothers and sisters.
- ____ 21. Peter is always placed first in the lists of apostles.
- ____ 22. Jesus was sentenced to death for blasphemy.
- ____ 23. Herod Antipas thought John was Jesus raised from the dead.
- ____ 24. Herod the Great divided his kingdom among his three sons.
- ____ 25. The feeding of the five thousand is recorded in all four Gospels.
- ____ 26. There are twelve items on Jesus' list of internal evil.
- ____ 27. Jesus predicted his death and resurrection three times in Mark 8-10.
- ____ 28. The disciples forgot how many leftovers there were after the feeding of the five thousand.
- ____ 29. Gehenna was originally a garbage dump.
- ____ 30. Jesus taught that all God's commands are of equal importance.
- ____ 31. Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.
- ____ 32. Jesus confessed to the high priest that he was God's Son.
- ____ 33. Jesus' first trial was before Pilate.
- ____ 34. Passover was celebrated in the third month of the Jewish year.
- ____ 35. The location of Jesus' crucifixion was public.

____ 36. According to Mark, Jesus' crucifixion began at the ninth hour.

Fill in the Blank

37. The main theme of Jesus' message was the _____ of _____.

38. Both John and Jesus preached that people should _____.

39. Tax collectors were considered to be _____ and _____.

40. Jesus' favorite title for himself was _____ of _____.

41. "The Son of Man has _____ on earth to _____ sins."

42. The voice from heaven said, "You are my _____, whom I _____..."

43. John said, "After me will come one who is more _____ than I"

44. Why are you so _____ ? Do you still have no _____ ?

45. "Even the _____ and the _____ obey him."

46. Jesus is Lord of _____, _____ and _____ in Mark 5.

47. Jesus told Jairus, "Don't be _____; just _____."

48. Jesus goes where he's _____.

49. Jesus' list of evil starts with our _____.

50. "Come with me by yourselves to a _____ place and get some _____."

51. The boy's father said, "I do _____; help me overcome my _____."

52. God said, "This is my _____ whom I love. _____ to him."

53. "Let the _____ _____ come to me, and do not hinder them."

54. "If anyone would _____ after me, he must _____ himself..."

55. "What God has _____ together, let man not _____."
56. Gehenna literally means valley of _____.
57. In Mark 10 Jesus begins his ministry in the region of _____.
58. The Son of Man did not come to be _____ but to _____.
59. According to Jesus, both _____ and _____ are essential to prayer.
60. "The stone the builders _____ has become the _____."
61. The temple was destroyed in A.D. _____.
62. Jesus said, "_____ and _____ so that you will not fall into temptation.
63. The longest speech in Mark is found in chapter _____.
64. Isaiah chapter _____ predicts the suffering of the Christ.
65. "Go into all the _____ and preach the good _____ to all creation."

Chapter Content

- _____ 66. Feeding of the five thousand
- _____ 67. transfiguration
- _____ 68. rich man
- _____ 69. Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple
- _____ 70. Jesus arrested
- _____ 71. Fig tree cursed
- _____ 72. Jesus' crucifixion

____ 73. Jesus' resurrection

Short Answer

74. Draw the map of Israel given in class along with the appropriate labels.

75. List six examples of the disciples failing in Mark.

76. From the handout, make a list of ten facts about Jesus in Mark.

77. List and briefly summarize the seven times where Mark shows Jesus is God's Son.

78. In three paragraphs explain how our study of Mark has affected your view of Jesus, following Jesus and the Bible.

Unit 5: The Birth of Jesus (Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2)

Lesson 1 & 2: The Nativity Story

T: Show *The Nativity Story* (forty minutes for each period).

Lesson 3: The Nativity Story

T: Show *The Nativity Story* (twenty minutes).

T: Discuss the film.

W: Read Mathew 1-2 and Luke 1-2, then list where the film was accurate or inaccurate with the Bible.

Lesson 4: Matthew and Luke

W: In groups, make two lists: one for the similarities and one for the differences between Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2.

Similarities

- The names of the parents are Mary and Joseph (Mt. 1:18; Lk. 1:27)
- Joseph was a descendant of King David (Mt. 1:1; Lk. 1:27; 2:4)
- An angel foretold Jesus' birth (Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:26-38)
- Mary was a virgin when she conceived (Mt. 1:18; Lk. 1:34-35)
- Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Mt. 2:1; Lk. 2:4-7)
- Herod the Great was king of Israel (Mt. 2:1; Lk. 1:5)
- The family settled in Nazareth (Mt. 2:23; Lk. 2:39)

Unique Features in Matthew

- The genealogy of Jesus (1:1-17) (Luke gives a genealogy in ch. 3.)
- An angel visits Joseph (1:18-25)
- Wise men from the east (2:1-12)
- The flight to Egypt (2:13-15)
- The slaughter of the male children (2:16-18)
- Highlights fulfilled prophecies (1:22-23; 2:5-6, 15, 17-18, 23)

Unique Features in Luke

- Elizabeth's miraculous conception (1:5-24)
- an angel visits Mary (1:26-38)
- John's birth (1:57-66)
- two songs of praise – Mary's (1:46-55) and Zechariah's (1:67-79)
- angels visit the shepherds (2:8-21)
- Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the temple (2:22-38)

Q: What can you conclude from the differences and similarities?

Skeptics look at the differences and say the stories can't be trusted. Believers notice that the stories agree in all the major areas. In addition, the differences show that these narratives were produced independently of each other.

T: Prepare to show YouTube clips in class tomorrow. Type in “Is Jesus the Jewish Messiah?” and watch the debate between Michael Brown and Rabbi Shmuley Boteach (two segments about twelve minutes total). Brown is a Jewish believer in Jesus. There’s another good debate between the two on YouTube and there may be other helpful Michael Brown clips. If you don’t have the technology in class, watch the debate and summarize it for the class tomorrow.

HW: Handout 5.1

Lesson 5: Christ in the Old Testament

T: Review Handout 5.1 with the class.

T: Show the YouTube debate between Brown and Boteach. Pause the debate at key points to make sure students are following how the argument is proceeding.

While it seems clear to Christians that Jesus is the Messiah, many Jews who read their Bible (the same as our Old Testament) don't agree. For example, while Christians believe Isaiah 53 refers to Jesus' sufferings, many Jews believe it refers to the sufferings of the Jewish nation.

As Christians we believe the fulfillment of prophecy is one of the things that set the Christian faith apart from every other belief system.

Messianic Prophecies

What do the following passages say about the Messiah?

1. Micah 5:2 –

2. Isaiah 9:6-7 –

3. Jeremiah 23:5 –

4. Zechariah 9:9 –

5. Psalm 41:9 –

6. Isaiah 50:6 –

7. Psalm 16:10 –

8. Isaiah 11:1-10

List the things that sound like Jesus in these two chapters.

Psalm 22

Isaiah 53

Lesson 6: Share and Reflect Day

Today, we're going to just sit around and talk about what's been going on in your lives, how the semester went, and how you've grown spiritually.

T: Allow the student to get comfortable, e.g. sit on the floor . . .

T: Allow volunteers to open up and share, but make sure to include everyone in the discussion.

---End of 1st Semester

Unit 6: Trusting the Gospels

Lesson 1: To Believe or not to Believe

There are two extremes in life. You can believe everything you hear or you can disbelieve everything you hear.

W: In groups prepare two skits:

1. the danger of believing everything you hear
2. the danger of disbelieving everything you hear

1. Disbelieve everything/everyone – the skeptical approach. It's impossible to live this way. To be human is to be dependent. Almost everything we know comes from others. How do you know your name? How do you know where you were born? Why do you believe George Washington was the first President of the U.S.? We are dependent on what others tell us about ourselves and the world. Likewise we're dependent on the testimony of others regarding Jesus' life. One of the major differences between Christians and non-Christians is that Christians trust the Gospel writers while non-Christians don't.

2. Believe everything – the gullible approach.

Q: How have you been duped by believing something that was false?

It's not wise to live on either the gullible or the skeptical side of the spectrum. Instead we need to be discerning. **Discern** = to distinguish between truth and error.

No one is completely skeptical and no one is completely gullible. We're all somewhere between these two extremes.

Q: Where would you place yourself on this spectrum?

Q: Who's the most skeptical person you know? Who's the most gullible person you know? (Don't answer out loud.)

Gullible people should be more cautious about believing what they hear. Sometimes experience is a good teacher for the gullible types. Skeptical people should consider the importance of trust to everyday life.

Q: In what ways do we demonstrate trust every day?

Now when it comes to the big issues like God and life after death we're all listening to someone. We have to be discerning about these issues because there are so many voices and we can't believe all of them. We should also be discerning because getting tricked in this area would be a major mistake.

But let's back up for a few minutes.

W: In groups discuss these questions:

1. Does what we believe matter? Why or why not?
2. Should people believe the truth? Why or why not?
3. Is it ever good to believe a lie?

T: Review group answers.

Lesson 2: Fiction or Non-Fiction?

W: Random lesson

Yesterday, we talked about the importance of distinguishing truth from error. This means that we have to determine whether someone or something is worthy of our trust. Specifically, are the Gospels trustworthy? Some have read the Gospels and concluded that they are works of fiction. In fact, there are some people who say Jesus never existed. Check out www.jesusneverexisted.com if you don't believe me. On the other hand, some read the Gospels, believe every word and surrender their lives to Jesus. It seems that the standard of judging truth and error varies greatly from person to person. So what we need to consider is, should the Gospels be placed in the fiction or non-fiction section of the library?

W: In groups, make two lists:

1. reasons for believing the Gospels
2. reasons for doubting the Gospels

T: Review answers.

Faith is not a matter of believing without reasons. You don't have to throw away your brain to be a Christian. In fact, Christians are commanded to use their intellect by loving God with their whole mind.

HW: Write an essay answering this question: Does it matter if Jesus was real? Why or why not?

Lesson 3: Reasons to Trust the Gospels: Part 1

Today, we'll look at reasons to trust the four Gospels. But first let's list common objections to trusting the Gospels.

- They contain stories that sound fictional such as healings and miracles.
- They have differences and some even believe they contradict each other.
- Some believe they've been changed so much that we no longer know what was originally written.
- There's no evidence that they are historically accurate.

Your responses to these criticisms will determine whether you trust or distrust the Gospels. Here are three reasons to trust the Gospels.

1. **The four writers basically say the same thing in different ways.** While each Gospel gives different details of the life of Jesus, they all essentially tell the same story. That story is focused on a first-century Jew named Jesus, who taught about God, gathered a group of disciples to himself, performed miracles, got into trouble with the religious authorities, was sentenced to death for blasphemy, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and three days later rose from the dead. All four Gospels agree on these facts. Any differences between the Gospels are minor and don't affect these major similarities. In fact, the differences help us to see that they haven't directly copied each other.
2. **Many of the details in the Gospels sound true.** First, the Gospels record embarrassing details about the disciples. The disciples are portrayed as a regular group of guys who usually mess up (Mt. 17:16-20; Mk. 4:40; 6:52; 8:32-33; 10:13-14; 14:37, 50, 66-72). These stories not only sound true to life, but it's difficult to explain why the Gospels contain such stories if they didn't really happen. Why would Christians make themselves and their leaders look so bad? Consider the apostle Peter who became one of the primary leaders of the early church. Why would any Christian invent the story of Peter denying Jesus three times? And why would Christians preserve this story in writing? Second, the Gospels record embarrassing details about Jesus. Jesus was accused of being out of his mind and demon-possessed (Mk. 3:21-22), unable to perform mighty works in his hometown (Mk. 6:5), ignorant of the end time (Mk. 13:32) and to top it all off, killed on a cross. Think of it, the hero of the story dying as a common criminal. Finally, Jesus' resurrection contains an embarrassing detail. At a time when the witness of females wasn't valid testimony, women were the first witnesses to Jesus' resurrection (Mt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-8; Lk. 24:1-11; Jn. 20:11-18). If you were fabricating stories to promote the Christian faith it's very unlikely that you would include these embarrassing details.

Second, the Gospels are full of incidental details that seem to come from eyewitnesses. For example, “green grass” (Mk. 6:39), “an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard” (Mk. 14:3), a young man running away naked (Mk. 14:51-52), “the father of Alexander and Rufus” (Mk. 15:21), and 153 large fish (Jn. 21:11). These details don’t carry any significant meaning in the narratives, but they sound like eyewitness information.

Third, the Gospel writers claim to be conveying accurate information (Mk. 1:1; Lk. 1:1-4; Jn. 19:35; 21:24). We can conclude: the Gospel writers say they’re telling the truth and they sound like they’re telling the truth.

- 3. The NT (of which the Gospels are a major part) is the best supported document of ancient history.** There are more than five thousand Greek copies of the NT or parts thereof and specifically more than two thousand copies of the Gospels. These copies are closer in time to the original writings than any other work of ancient history. This means that we can have confidence that what we hold in our hands is very close to what was originally written.³⁸

W: Look through Mark and make your own list of incidental details.

³⁸ I have written a blog post on this topic, which can be found at www.bible-bridge.com/eight-reasons-trust-four-gospels.

Lesson 4: Reasons to Trust the Gospels: Part 2

Make sure you can recount the three reasons to trust the Gospels from yesterday. The reasons to trust the Gospels are not meant to be taken in isolation from each other. Together they have a powerful impact. Here are three more reasons to trust the Gospels.

- 1. Archaeological discoveries support the historical accuracy of details in the Gospels.**
- 2. Ancient authors support the reliability of the Gospel record.**
- 3. The Jesus of the Gospels has transformed people for the better.** If reading the Gospels made people more deceitful or more selfish then we should be suspicious of them. But many people say that reading the Gospels has led them into a relationship with Jesus which has made them more hopeful, honest, generous, and kind people.

W: Read and complete Handout 6.1.

Archaeological Evidence

Archaeology = the study of the remains of ancient civilizations. Archaeology is limited because it can't reproduce events, only a limited number of remains have been discovered, and the remains have to be interpreted. But there's no disagreement that remains which correspond with details in the Gospels have been discovered. While the list of discoveries is constantly growing, here are a few items that have been found.

- **The Western Wall of Herod's Temple** – While the temple was destroyed by the Romans, a large part of the Western wall is still standing and dates from the time of Jesus.
- **The pool called Bethesda in Jerusalem** (Jn. 5:2) – a pool was discovered in the nineteenth century matching the description of the pool in John 5.
- **Pontius Pilate inscription**, discovered in Caesarea in 1961. The reconstructed inscription reads, "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea."
- **First-century synagogue in Capernaum** (Mk. 1:21) – discovered in 1968.
- **Remains of a first century crucifixion victim** – found in 1968 in an ossuary (bone box) with the name Yohanan on it. An iron nail with olive wood was embedded in the ankle bone. Yohanan's legs were crushed which corresponds with John 19:31-32.
- **Sea of Galilee boat** – discovered in 1986 at the bottom of the lake and dates to the time of Jesus.
- **Caiaphas' ossuary** (Jn. 18:14) – discovered in 1990 and dates to the time of Jesus. The words, "Joseph, son of Caiaphas" were inscribed on the side.
- **Nazareth home** – discovered in 2009 and dates to the time of Jesus.

While these discoveries may be impressive, remember that discoveries have to be interpreted. For example, archaeology can give us an ossuary with the name Caiaphas on the side, but it can't prove that this is the same Caiaphas who presided over Jesus' trial as recorded in the Gospels. It can show us that people traveled across the Sea of Galilee by boat in Jesus' time, but it can't show us that Jesus journeyed on one of these boats. With the limitations of archaeology understood, we can say that this field of research has been favorable to the Gospels.

Ancient Literary Evidence

Read the following quotes and on a separate sheet of paper make a list of what you learn about Jesus and the early Christians from each author.

Flavius Josephus (c. 37-100 AD) – Jewish Historian

“...so he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned...”

Pliny the Younger (c. 63-113 AD) – Provincial Governor

"Christians... asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so.

Suetonius (c. 69-140) – Roman Historian

"As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome."

Tacitus (c. AD 56-117) – Roman Historian

But not all the relief that could come from man, not all the bounties that the prince could bestow, nor all the atonements which could be presented to the gods, availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration, the fire of Rome. Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind.

Lucian (c 120-180 AD) – Writer

The Christians . . . worship a man to this day--the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. . . . [It] was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws.

Review of Ancient Literary Evidence

Josephus

- Jesus was called Christ
- Jesus' brother was named James

Pliny

- James was the brother of Jesus
- Christians met on a fixed day
- Sang to Christ as to a god
- Vowed to be upright citizens

Suetonias

- Jews believed in Jesus in Rome
- These Jews were expelled from Rome because they were causing some kind of trouble

Tacitus

- Nero falsely charged the Christians
- Christians were hated
- Christ is the founder
- Christ was put to death by Pontius Pilate
- Pilate was the procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius
- The Christian faith originated in Judea
- Christian faith broke out in the city of Rome

Lucian

- Christians worship a man who was crucified
- They believe that upon conversion they become brothers
- They deny the gods of Greece
- They worship the crucified sage and live after his laws

So we don't need the Bible to learn that:

- Jesus had a brother named James

- Jesus was handed over to Pilate by the Jewish leaders
- Jesus was killed by crucifixion
- Jesus' followers claimed to see him after he died
- Jesus' followers are called Christians
- Christians met on a certain day
- Christians worship Christ and sing to him
- Christians deny other gods
- Christians live upright lives
- Christians were hated
- the Christian faith started in Judea and spread to Rome

There's another quote from Josephus that some scholars claim is embellished by early Christians so I didn't include it just to be safe. But here it is:

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

If this quote is genuine we also learn that Jesus

- Performed wonderful works
- Jesus was a teacher/wise man/sage
- Many Jews and Gentiles believed in him
- Jewish leaders suggested to Pilate that he be condemned to the cross
- He appeared alive again on the third day
- His followers were named after him and called Christians

Lesson 5: The Resurrection: Part 1

W: Write a summary of the six reasons to trust the Gospels.

Summary

We have four ancient documents, called Gospels, which focus on life of Jesus. The internal evidence shows that the Gospels agree with each other on the major areas of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The accounts sound credible because they record embarrassing details of the first believers and Jesus. They also include incidental details that usually come from eyewitness testimony. In addition, the external evidence of archaeology and ancient authors has been favorable to the Gospels. Although we don't have the original documents, we do have thousands of ancient copies through which we're able to determine the original texts with a high degree of certainty. Finally, the Gospels have had and continue to have a positive impact on the lives of many people.

W: Write out 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians about twenty years after Jesus' death. In 1 Corinthians 15:3, Paul states that he's passing on something he received. This means that the message he's passing on was circulating before he wrote 1 Corinthians. The message at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 15 brings us very close to the earliest beliefs of Jesus' followers.

W: Make a list of observations on this passage.

According to Paul, what is of first importance is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, with the emphasis being placed on the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:4-8). This is what Christians should hold to. In trying to determine the credibility of the resurrection, there are two primary questions to consider:

1. Where did this unique belief come from?

As far as we know, the belief that a man could rise from the dead in the middle of human history to a higher state of existence was not held by anyone in the ancient world. Jews were expecting a general resurrection at the end of time (Jn. 11:24) and the Greeks looked forward to the destruction of the body and the immortality of the soul. There was no concept of the resurrection of the body in the middle of history.

2. How do we explain the subsequent events? There are a number of important events that followed Jesus' death such as:

- the empty tomb
- the alleged appearances of Jesus to the disciples
- first-century Jews worshipping a human being as divine
- Jewish followers of Jesus gathering for worship on Sunday
- the rapid spread and acceptance of the Christian message without the use of violence
- the conversion of Paul

Q: What makes the best sense of these events?

W: In groups, assess the pros and cons of the following alternate explanations:

- Hallucination – Jesus died. Jesus didn't rise. The apostles were deceived.
- Myth – Jesus died. Jesus didn't rise. The apostles were only creating a fictitious story.
- Conspiracy – Jesus died. Jesus didn't rise. The apostles were deceivers.
- Swoon – Jesus didn't die, but people thought he did.

T: Refutations of these theories can be found at www.peterkreeft.com then

→Featured Writing

→More Featured Writing

→Resurrection Evidence

W: Help each other memorize 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 for the quiz tomorrow.

T: Check out YouTube videos on the resurrection to show in class tomorrow. Here's a list of top Christian scholars who have worked on this topic:

- Tom Wright (a.k.a. N.T. Wright) – a good ten-minute video should be near the top of the list if you type in "Tom Wright resurrection"
- Gary Habermas
- Mike Licona (also has a website www.risenjesus.com)
- William Lane Craig – debated Bart Ehrman on Jesus' resurrection which should be on YouTube (about a two-hour debate)

HW: Memorize 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 in the NIV. You will have a fill-in-the blank quiz on those verses next class.

Lesson 6: The Resurrection: Part 2

T: Give about five minutes to review then give the quiz.

T: Show resurrection video(s).

Basically, here's what it boils down to: Christian scholars appeal to the lack of explanatory power with any explanation other than Jesus' resurrection. In other words, the other explanations don't make good sense of the evidence. As one scholar asked, "If the coming into existence of the Nazarenes . . . rips a great hole in history, a hole the size and shape of the Resurrection, what does the secular historian propose to stop it up with?"³⁹

On the other hand, non-Christian scholars point to the improbability of a resurrection. After all, what are the chances that someone rose from the dead? The resurrection is a miracle and miracles are by definition highly improbable events. But of course, many non-Christian scholars don't have a living and active God in their belief system which would dramatically increase the probability of a resurrection. So for Christians the best explanation of the evidence is the resurrection of Jesus and yet for non-Christians the resurrection is the least likely thing to have happened. We can now add one more reason to trust the Gospels.

There's good evidence for the greatest miracle, Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The subsequent events and the origin of this unique belief are best explained by Jesus' resurrection. If the greatest miracle of all took place, then lesser miracles such as multiplying bread and healing the sick are certainly possible.⁴⁰

T: The class will be divided into five groups for the next couple of periods. The following non-biblical Gospels will be assigned to each group. Find the texts online and print out enough copies for each group or if your students have computers in class just make sure they have the link.

- (1) the Gospel of Thomas (1-59)
- (2) the Gospel of Thomas (60-114)
- (3) the Gospel of Peter
- (4) the Gospel of Mary
- (5) the Infancy Gospel of Thomas

³⁹ Quoted in Barnett, 134.

⁴⁰ For a nice list of all of Jesus' miracles in the Gospels go to www.christian-thinktank.com then The Miracles of Jesus (in the middle of the page).

Name _____

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the _____ I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have _____ in vain.

³ For what I _____ I passed on to you as of _____ importance: that Christ _____ for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was _____, that he was _____ on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he _____ to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than _____ hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to _____ also, as to one abnormally born. (1 Cor. 15:3-8 NIV)

Lesson 7: The Other Gospels: Part 1

Q: What were the four reasons people have for distrusting the Gospels?

For some people there's a fifth obstacle to trusting the Gospels: the existence of other Gospels. There are more than twenty other ancient books that have been labeled Gospels. Some scholars place these books in the same category as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John because they also focus on Jesus' life or teachings.

Q: Should the non-biblical Gospels be valued as much as the biblical Gospels? Why or why not?

You're going to read them for yourselves and then I'll let you answer that question again.

T: Divide the class into five groups and distribute the assigned Gospel to each group.

W: Your group is responsible to read and summarize your portion and share any similarities or differences between it and the Gospel of Mark. If you have a longer passage you may assign sections to different group members. Your presentations will be a maximum of ten minutes and the presentations will be tomorrow.

T: Find the Gospel of Judas text online for the next class.

Lesson 8: The Other Gospels: Part 2

T: Allow groups five minutes to prepare.

W: Group presentations

W: Read and summarize the Gospel of Judas for class tomorrow.

Lesson 9: The Other Gospels: Part 3

T: Collect summaries of the Gospel of Judas.

Q: What is your impression of the non-biblical Gospels?

Q: Should the non-biblical Gospels be placed on the same level as the biblical Gospels? Here are a few reasons why Christian scholars don't think the non-biblical Gospels are as valuable as the biblical Gospels for our understanding of Jesus:

1. They cannot be dated to the first century like the biblical Gospels. Most scholars believe these Gospels were written during the second century at the earliest. This means that the four Gospels are still the earliest accounts we have of the life of Jesus.
2. Unlike the biblical Gospels, many of the non-biblical Gospels contain mostly sayings of Jesus detached from any historical setting. In other words, they lack the emphasis on real-world events.
3. Many of these Gospels have a badly damaged text so we're missing large parts of them. With the biblical Gospels we have hundreds of copies so we can establish the original text with a high degree of certainty.
4. The Jesus of these other Gospels says things which seem to contradict the Jesus of the four Gospels. For example, "every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven" (Gospel of Thomas, 114). In addition, the overall message of many of these Gospels is contrary to the message of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Many interpreters believe these Gospels contain a gnostic message. Gnosticism comes from a Greek word which means knowledge. In this context the word gnostic means secret or mystic knowledge. Gnosticism taught that the physical world is evil. ⁴¹

W: Study Lessons 1-9 for a quiz tomorrow.

⁴¹ For one version of Gnosticism see D. Jeffrey Bingham, *Pocket History of the Church* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 37-40.

Lesson 10: Comparing Jesus

W: Quiz 6.1

We've briefly looked at five obstacles to trusting the biblical Gospels:

1. They seem to contradict each other.
2. They contain stories that sound fictional such as healings and miracles.
3. They've been changed so much that we no longer know what was originally written.
4. They aren't supported by history or archaeology.
5. There are other Gospels.

Let's look at one more obstacle to trusting the Gospels and ultimately to trusting Jesus:

6. There are other great teachers besides Jesus.

We don't have time to compare Jesus with all of the great teachers of the world's religions so we'll limit our focus to three other world-famous teachers.

Q: Who do you think most people today compare Jesus with?

It's debatable but I think the top three are Confucius, Buddha, and Muhammad.

W: In groups, answer the following questions:

- What do you know about Confucius?
- What do you know about Buddha?
- What do you know about Muhammad?

W: In groups, make an outline of the main parts of Jesus' life that you would include in a summary.

Q: What's the problem with summarizing a person's life?

The following summaries are taken from a book called *The World's Religions* by Huston Smith. Smith is well-known as an authority on world religions. We'll devote one period to each teacher and the following period will begin with a quiz on the teacher that we've covered. Two qualifications are in order. First, Smith's chapter summaries have been condensed into a two-page summary so much has been omitted. Second, Smith notes that some of the stories about these teachers are probably legendary.

Name _____

1. Define discern –
2. List three reasons to believe the Gospels and three reasons to disbelieve the Gospels.
3. List five things we can learn from ancient authors about Jesus and his early followers.
4. List three alternative theories to Jesus' resurrection.
5. List three significant facts about 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.
6. List four reasons why conservative scholars don't trust the non-biblical Gospels as much as the biblical Gospels.

Lesson 11: The Life and Teachings of Confucius

W: Handout 6.2

T: Using the teacher's copy, read through Handout 6.2 with the class.

HW: Study your handout for a quiz on Confucius in the next class.

Confucius

Born in _____ in _____ B.C., Confucius had a _____ upbringing. His circumstances forced him into menial labor. "On reaching the age of _____, I bent my mind to learning." After a brief marriage and several minor governmental posts, he gained a following as a skilled _____. But his goal was _____ office because he believed that he could _____ society if given the chance. The problem of his day was social _____; states were at war with each other. Confucius believed society should return to the _____ which formerly held people together. However Confucius never _____ his goal of public office, because he preferred to keep his _____, rather than _____ with those in authority. When asked for advice from the ruler of his own state, he told him he should first learn to _____ himself before _____ others.

At the age of _____ Confucius sensed his divine mission. For the next _____ years he wandered from state to state giving advice to _____ on how to improve their governing, while hoping to get the chance to put his ideas into practice. He was criticized and _____. Confucius was only supported by a small group of _____. He returned to his own _____ and spent the last _____ years teaching and editing China's literary _____. He claimed to be a "_____ of the _____." Confucius died at the age of _____.

Confucius is recognized as one of the world's greatest _____. Like _____, he was "a one-man _____," well-versed in history, _____, government, _____, music, sports, etc. He was an informal teacher who preferred to _____ with his students rather than _____ them. He did this by asking _____ skillfully and directing students to relevant writings. He was always ready to _____ the cause of the common people. Students who couldn't afford to pay him, were _____ the same as any other student.

Confucius taught, "What you do not wish _____ to _____, do not do to _____." "There was nothing _____ - _____ about him. He loved to be with _____, to dine out, to join in the chorus of a good song..." "He presented himself to his _____ as their fellow _____, committed to the task of becoming fully human but _____ in how far he had gotten with that task." Confucius said, "There are four things in the Way of the profound person, none of which I have been able to do. To _____ my _____ as I would expect my son to serve me. To serve my _____ as I would expect my ministers to serve me. To serve my _____ brother as I would expect my younger brothers to serve me. To be the first to treat friends as I would expect them to treat me. These I have not been able to do."

After his death, Confucius' students elevated him to a status far beyond what he claimed for himself. One disciple said, "He is the _____, the _____, which there is no way of _____ over. The impossibility of equaling our Master is like the impossibility of reaching the _____ by scaling a _____." Confucius' writings became the primary training manual for _____ officials from _____ B.C. until _____ (with the exception of A.D. 200-600). Confucianism essentially became China's _____ religion in A.D. _____ and sacrifices were ordered for Confucius in all urban _____. A few centuries later, _____ were built throughout the empire as shrines to him. "Until this century, every Chinese school child for two thousand years raised his clasped hands each morning toward a table in the schoolroom that bore a plaque bearing Confucius' name."

Teachings

1. Jen –

2. Chun tzu –

3. Li –

4. Te –

5. Wen –

*Adapted from chapter 9 of *The World's Religions* by Houston Smith.

Confucius

Born in China in 551 B.C., Confucius had a modest upbringing. His circumstances forced him into menial labor. "On reaching the age of 15, I bent my mind to learning." After a brief marriage and several minor governmental posts, he gained a following as a skilled teacher. But his goal was public office because he believed that he could reorder society if given the chance. The problem of his day was social anarchy: states were at war with each other. Confucius believed society should return to the customs which formerly held people together. However Confucius never achieved his goal of public office, because he preferred to keep his integrity, rather than compromise with those in authority. When asked for advice from the ruler of his own state, he told him he should first learn to govern himself before governing others.

At the age of 50 Confucius sensed his divine mission. For the next 13 years he wandered from state to state giving advice to rulers on how to improve their governing, while hoping to get the chance to put his ideas into practice. He was criticized and rejected. Confucius was only supported by a small group of disciples. He returned to his own state and spent the last 5 years teaching and editing China's literary classics. He claimed to be a "lover of the ancients." Confucius died at the age of 72.

Confucius is recognized as one of the world's greatest teachers. Like Socrates, he was "a one-man university," well-versed in history, poetry, government, math, music, sports, etc. He was an informal teacher who preferred to converse with his students rather than lecture them. He did this by asking questions skillfully and directing students to relevant writings. He was always ready to defend the cause of the common people. Students who couldn't afford to pay him, were treated the same as any other student.

Confucius taught, "What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others." "There was nothing other-worldly about him. He loved to be with people, to dine out, to join in the chorus of a good song..." "He presented himself to his students as their fellow traveler, committed to the task of becoming fully human but modest in how far he had gotten with that task." Confucius said, "There are four things in the Way of the profound person, none of which I have been able to do. To serve my father as I would expect my son to serve me. To serve my ruler as I would expect my ministers to serve me. To serve my elder brother as I would expect my younger brothers to serve me. To be the first to treat friends as I would expect them to treat me. These I have not been able to do."

After his death, Confucius' students elevated him to a status far beyond what he claimed for himself. One disciple said, "He is the sun, the moon, which there is no way of climbing over. The impossibility of equaling our Master is like the impossibility of reaching the sky by scaling a ladder." Confucius' writings became the primary training manual for government officials from 130 B.C. until 1905 (with the exception of A.D. 200-600). Confucianism essentially became China's state religion in A.D. 59 and sacrifices were ordered for Confucius in all urban schools. A few centuries later, temples were built throughout the empire as shrines to him. "Until this century, every Chinese school child for two thousand years raised his

clasped hands each morning toward a table in the schoolroom that bore a plaque bearing Confucius' name."

Teachings

1. **Jen** – a "human-heartedness" that is expressed in "a feeling of humanity toward others and a respect for oneself." This virtue reaches out with good will toward all people.
2. **Chun tzu** – perhaps best translated as "the Mature Person." It is the virtue of the ideal host who is at ease anywhere and thus able to focus on others and put them at ease. It is a "What can I do for you?" attitude which remains constant even in the midst of success or adversity.
3. **Li** – propriety which means adhering to the appropriate way of doing things. According to Confucius, there are five constant relationships: parent and child, husband and wife, elder and younger sibling, elder and younger friend, ruler and subject. Each of these relationships should function in a certain way. Relating the right way leads to a set pattern for every act and thus becomes a rite.
4. **Te** – this is the power by which people are ruled, "the power of moral example." Honest leaders inspire trust. "Goodness becomes embodied in society neither through might nor through law, but through the impress of persons we admire."
5. **Wen** – "the arts of peace" in contrast with "the arts of war." Confucius taught that the state with the greatest culture wins even if they're defeated militarily. A culture should focus on the arts of peace.⁴²

⁴² Houston Smith, *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 154-93.

Lesson 12: The Life and Teachings of Buddha

W: Quiz 6.2 – Confucius

W: Handout 6.3

T: Using the teacher's copy, read through Handout 6.3 with the class.

HW: Study your handout for a quiz on Buddha tomorrow.

Name _____

1. Confucius was born in _____ B.C.
2. Confucius' goal was _____ office.
3. T or F Confucius never became a politician.
4. The problem of Confucius' day was social _____.
5. T or F Confucius talked about God and life after death.
6. Confucius is recognized as one of the world's greatest _____.
7. Confucius was a "lover of the _____."
8. T or F Confucianism became China's state religion in A.D. 59.
9. List and explain three of Confucius' five main teachings.

Buddha

Buddha means “the _____ One,” or the “_____ One.” Born around _____ B.C. in _____ his parents named him _____ Gautama. Because his father was a king (equivalent to feudal lord), Siddhartha had a _____ upbringing. At _____ he married a beautiful neighboring princess who bore him a son whom they named _____. Siddhartha had a great family, wealth, good looks, and a bright future ahead of him.

But he came to realize that life is _____ and _____ which caused him to long for more. He said, “Life is subject to age and death. Where is the realm of life in which there is neither age nor death?” After saying goodbye to his wife and son, he left in the middle of the night to follow the path of a _____-seeker at the age of _____. He mounted his great white horse and together with his gatekeeper headed for the forest. Upon reaching the forest, Siddhartha changed _____ with his gatekeeper. The gatekeeper then returned with the horse to break the news to his family.

For _____ years, he gave himself to his search for _____. But the search was not easy. He sighed, “How hard to live the life of the lonely forest-dweller...to rejoice in _____” He first sought out two _____ holy men who taught him about _____ yoga and Hindu _____. After learning all he could he moved on to join a group of _____. Asceticism is the harsh treatment of the body for a spiritual purpose. He reasoned that if his body was holding him back he would break its _____. He became the most disciplined ascetic in the group, performing such fasts as eating only _____ grains of rice a day. After _____ and having to be fed by his associates just to stay alive he realized the futility of _____. Through this experience he developed the principle of the _____ Way – a path between _____ and _____. According to the Middle Way we should give the body “what it needs to _____ optimally but no more.”

The final phase of his quest led him into deep _____ and rigorous _____ similar to what he had learned from the Hindu masters. One day, while meditating under a _____ Tree in northeast _____, he sensed that enlightenment was near. He vowed not to _____ until he attained it. The Evil One attempted to disrupt his _____. The first temptation came in the form of three voluptuous _____. Buddha remained unmoved. Second, he was assailed with “hurricanes, torrential rains, and showers of flaming rocks,” but these all “turned into _____ petals as they entered his field of _____.” Siddhartha’s meditation deepened until finally his _____ had arrived. The event was felt throughout the universe. All created things rejoiced and _____ bloomed on every tree. Buddha was in bliss and stayed where he was for _____ days.

Unable to rise on the 8th day, he remained lost in a state of bliss for _____ days. But the Evil One was waiting with one last temptation. This time he appealed to Buddha's reason: "How will anyone _____ the truth you have arrived at?" Why not just slip away at once into _____?" Buddha replied, "There will be some who will understand and the Evil One was _____ forever.

For almost the next _____ years Buddha preached his message throughout _____. In the process, "he founded an order of monks and challenged the deadness of _____ society" by rejecting the caste system. He kept a busy schedule of preaching, _____, training, _____ the monks, and answering questions from people who came to him from all over. His "combination of a _____ head and a _____ heart" made him "_____ to all." While he objectively _____ the problems presented to him, he also showed _____ and tenderness.

Although "there was constant _____ during his lifetime to turn him into a _____," he constantly _____ it. He insisted that he was _____ in every respect and did not hide his _____. Even into his latter years, he would still walk through the streets with a begging-bowl in hand. However he did believe that he had reached the highest level of _____. Around the year _____ B.C. Buddha contracted _____ after eating boar's flesh in the house of Cunda the smith. Realizing that Cunda might feel responsible, Buddha informed him that it was one of the greatest meals of his life. Then he died.

"One thing I teach," said the Buddha: "_____ and the end of suffering."

Four Noble Truths

The Eightfold Path

*Adapted from chapter 3 of *The World's Religions* by Houston Smith.

Buddha

Buddha means “the Enlightened One,” or the “Awakened One.” Born around 563 B.C. in Nepal his parents named him Siddhartha Gautama. Because his father was a king (equivalent to feudal lord), Siddhartha had a luxurious upbringing. At 16 he married a beautiful neighboring princess who bore him a son whom they named Rahula. Siddhartha had a great family, wealth, good looks, and a bright future ahead of him.

But he came to realize that life is painful and temporary which caused him to long for more. He said, “Life is subject to age and death. Where is the realm of life in which there is neither age nor death?” After saying goodbye to his wife and son, he left in the middle of the night to follow the path of a truth-seeker at the age of 29. He mounted his great white horse and together with his gatekeeper headed for the forest. Upon reaching the forest, Siddhartha changed clothes with his gatekeeper. The gatekeeper then returned with the horse to break the news to his family.

For 6 years, he gave himself to his search for enlightenment. But the search was not easy. He sighed, “How hard to live the life of the lonely forest-dweller...to rejoice in solitude” He first sought out two Hindu holy men who taught him about raja yoga and Hindu philosophy. After learning all he could he moved on to join a group of ascetics. Asceticism is the harsh treatment of the body for a spiritual purpose. He reasoned that if his body was holding him back he would break its power. He became the most disciplined ascetic in the group, performing such fasts as eating only six grains of rice a day. After fainting and having to be fed by his associates just to stay alive he realized the futility of asceticism. Through this experience he developed the principle of the Middle Way – a path between asceticism and indulgence. According to the Middle Way we should give the body “what it needs to function optimally but no more.”

The final phase of his quest led him into deep concentration and rigorous thought similar to what he had learned from the Hindu masters. One day, while meditating under a Bo Tree in northeast India, he sensed that enlightenment was near. He vowed not to move until he attained it. The Evil One attempted to disrupt his concentration. The first temptation came in the form of three voluptuous women. Buddha remained unmoved. Second, he was assailed with “hurricanes, torrential rains, and showers of flaming rocks,” but these all “turned into flower petals as they entered his field of concentration.” Siddhartha’s meditation deepened until finally his Great Awakening had arrived. The event was felt throughout the universe. All created things rejoiced and lotuses bloomed on every tree. Buddha was in bliss and stayed where he was for 7 days. Unable to rise on the 8th day, he remained lost in a state of bliss for 49 days. But the Evil One was waiting with one last temptation. This time he appealed to Buddha’s reason: “How will anyone understand the truth you have arrived at?” Why not just slip away at once into nirvana?” Buddha replied, “There will be some who will understand and the Evil One was banished forever.

For almost the next 50 years Buddha preached his message throughout India. In the process, “he founded an order of monks and challenged the deadness of brahmin society” by rejecting the caste

system. He kept a busy schedule of preaching, counseling, training, overseeing the monks, and answering questions from people who came to him from all over. His “combination of a cool head and a warm heart” made him “accessible to all.” While he objectively analyzed the problems presented to him, he also showed sympathy and tenderness.

Although “there was constant pressure during his lifetime to turn him into a god,” he constantly rejected it. He insisted that he was human in every respect and did not hide his weaknesses. Even into his latter years, he would still walk through the streets with a begging-bowl in hand. However he did believe that he had reached the highest level of understanding. Around the year 483 B.C. Buddha contracted dysentery after eating boar’s flesh in the house of Cunda the smith. Realizing that Cunda might feel responsible, Buddha informed him that it was one of the greatest meals of his life. Then he died.

“One thing I teach,” said the Buddha: “suffering and the end of suffering.”

Four Noble Truths

1. Life/All is dukkha. Dukkha refers to suffering and the dislocation that is at the heart of everything. Something has gone wrong and life is out of joint. While we may enjoy life, we only do so on a superficial level. Dukkha is at the core and root of existence.
2. Tanha is the cause of dukkha. Tanha can be translated as “selfish desire.”
3. Suffering can and must be extinguished by overcoming tanha.
4. The way to overcome suffering is through the eightfold path.

The Eightfold Path

1. Right views – We must make sure our views and beliefs are accurate. We must evaluate our views before they can be improved.
2. Right intent – our motives must be pure
3. Right speech – speak the truth and speak in love
4. Right conduct – for example, do not kill, steal, lie, cheat
5. Right livelihood – earn a living by occupations that promote life not destroy it
6. Right effort – exertion is required in order to reach the goal but we must be wise and exert ourselves for the long road ahead, “the slow and steady wins the race.”
7. Right mindfulness – ignorance is our major problem, specifically ignorance of our true nature
8. Right concentration – enables us to see things directly and clearly

The eightfold path leads to nirvana. Nirvana is literally translated as “extinction.” It’s the extinction of the finite self into boundless life. Nirvana is the highest destiny of the human spirit. If nirvana is not reached reincarnation occurs.⁴³

⁴³ Smith, 82-149.

Lesson 13: The Life and Teachings of Muhammad

W: Quiz 6.3

W: Handout 6.4

T: Have a map of Saudi Arabia on hand so you can show Muhammad's migration.

T: Using the teacher's copy read through Handout 6.4 with the class.

HW: Study your handout for a quiz on Muhammad tomorrow.

Name _____

1. What does the name Buddha mean?
2. Siddhartha Gautama had a _____ upbringing.
3. What are the two extremes that the Middle Way tries to avoid? What is your personal opinion of the Middle Way?
4. T or F The first group Gautama learned from were the ascetics.
5. T or F Buddha's message did not focus on God.
6. "One thing I teach," said the Buddha: "_____ and the end of _____."
7. Buddha preached his message throughout _____ for _____ years.
8. Write out Buddha's Four Noble Truths.
9. Define tanha –
10. Buddha had a combination of a _____ head and a _____ heart.

Muhammad

Muhammad was born into the leading tribe of Mecca in A.D. _____. According to the _____, Muhammad was a descendant of _____. (Ishmael and his mother went to the future site of _____ after being banished by his father, _____.) The name Muhammad means “highly _____.” Muhammad’s father died a few days after he was born and his mother died when he was six. He was raised by his uncle who put him to work taking care of the _____. Beloved by those who knew him, he was of “sweet and _____ disposition.”

During this time, life in the desert was based on _____ to the tribe; there was no obligation to those outside one’s tribe. Constant _____ and pillaging between the tribes created a lawless situation. The only order that existed was drunkenness, immorality, and _____. The religion of the time didn’t help. _____ polytheism taught that the desert was inhabited by _____ (demons), but the jinn “inspired neither exalted sentiments nor moral restraint.” Muhammad rejected the _____ and immorality around him.

Muhammad took up the _____ business and at the age of twenty-five he entered the service of a wealthy widow named _____. They married though Khadija was _____. Their marriage was a happy one and his wife believed in him when everyone else doubted. For the next _____ years, Muhammad was being prepared for his ministry. During this time he often visited a mountain on the outskirts of _____ to find solitude and pray to Allah. (While the _____ worshiped _____ they didn’t believe he was the only God. Muhammad, however, was a member of the _____ who worshiped Allah exclusively.) Throughout his time of preparation, Muhammad was becoming increasingly impressed with the greatness of _____.

Around the year _____, Muhammad received his commission. On this night, called “The Night of _____” the Book was opened to Muhammad while he was on the floor of the cave. An angel came to him and said “_____.” Muhammad objected saying, “I am not a proclaimer.” This happened three times. Coming home he told his wife that he became a _____ or “one _____-mad.” After hearing his full story, Khadija became his first _____ and said “You will be the _____ of this people.” For the next _____ years the command “Proclaim” along with the words to proclaim were given to Muhammad. These words are recorded in the _____. Muhammad did not work miracles because God sent him to preach. The only miracle he claimed was the _____ itself, seeing as he was illiterate.

There was a _____ reaction to his message because it threatened the popular _____ beliefs. Mecca had 360 shrines which were frequently visited, producing much revenue. Also Muhammad’s teachings demanded that people give up _____. Finally, his teachings challenged the _____ system based on _____ distinctions. His monotheistic message placed

everyone on the same level as creatures of the one and only God. The Meccan leaders ridiculed Muhammad, even to the point of covering him and his followers with _____ and filth as they were praying. They were stoned, _____ and thrown in _____. After ____ years of preaching Muhammad had less than ____ converts. But by the end of the decade several _____ families were followers.

Muhammad's persistence and success threatened the _____ nobility who were determined to get rid of him. But _____ miles to the north in _____, Muhammad's teachings were being accepted. Yathrib needed a strong leader because of their _____ rivalries and they called on Muhammad. After Yathrib promised to observe the teachings of Islam, Muhammad and his friend Abu Bakr fled from _____. The two arrived safely in Yathrib in the year _____. In Arabic, Muhammad's journey is called _____. The Muslim calendar begins with the year 622 because Muslims consider this journey to be the _____ in world history. The name Yathrib was changed to _____, which means "the city" in honor of the prophet who settled there.

For the next several years there was warfare between Mecca and Medina. In the second year of the Hijra the Medinese defeated a _____ army many times larger. But the following year the Medinese were defeated and Muhammad was _____. Two years later, the Meccans laid siege to _____ but failed. Finally, _____ years after Muhammad escaped from Mecca he returned as _____. The city surrendered to him and became Muslim. Upon entering the city, he went to the Ka'ba, (a cubical temple supposedly built by _____ and rededicated it to Allah.) He then returned to _____.

Although Muhammad was the ruler, he remained _____. "He lived in an ordinary clay house, milked his own goats, and was accessible day and night to the humblest in his community." Tradition says his administration was a perfect blend of _____ and _____. He was able to bring the five conflicting tribes (three of which were Jewish) of the city into a _____. In A.D. _____, Muhammad died "with virtually all of _____ under his control." Muslims believe that while there were true _____ before Muhammad, he was the _____ and final prophet called "The _____ of the Prophets."

The Five Pillars

Muhammad

Muhammad was born into the leading tribe of Mecca in A.D. 570. According to the Qur'an, Muhammad was a descendant of Ishmael. (Ishmael and his mother went to the future site of Mecca after being banished by his father, Abraham.) The name Muhammad means “highly praised.” Muhammad’s father died a few days after he was born and his mother died when he was six. He was raised by his uncle who put him to work taking care of the flocks. Beloved by those who knew him, he was of “sweet and gentle disposition.”

During this time, life in the desert was based on loyalty to the tribe; there was no obligation to those outside one’s tribe. Constant rivalry and pillaging between the tribes created a lawless situation. The only order that existed was drunkenness, immorality, and violence. The religion of the time didn’t help. Animistic polytheism taught that the desert was inhabited by jinn (demons), but the jinn “inspired neither exalted sentiments nor moral restraint.” Muhammad rejected the polytheism and immorality around him.

Muhammad took up the caravan business and at the age of twenty-five he entered the service of a wealthy widow named Khadija. They married though Khadija was forty. Their marriage was a happy one and his wife believed in him when everyone else doubted. For the next fifteen years, Muhammad was being prepared for his ministry. During this time he often visited a mountain on the outskirts of Mecca to find solitude and pray to Allah. (While the Meccans worshiped Allah they didn’t believe he was the only God. Muhammad, however, was a member of the hanifs who worshiped Allah exclusively.) Throughout his time of preparation, Muhammad was becoming increasingly impressed with the greatness of Allah.

Around the year 610, Muhammad received his commission. On this night, called “The Night of Power” the Book was opened to Muhammad while he was on the floor of the cave. An angel came to him and said “Proclaim.” Muhammad objected saying, “I am not a proclaimer.” This happened three times. Coming home he told his wife that he became a prophet or “one possessed-mad.” After hearing his full story, Khadija became his first convert, and said “You will be the Prophet of this people.” For the next twenty-three years the command “Proclaim” along with the words to proclaim were given to Muhammad. These words are recorded in the Qur'an. Muhammad did not work miracles because God sent him to preach. The only miracle he claimed was the Qur'an itself, seeing as he was illiterate.

There was a hostile reaction to his message because it threatened the popular polytheistic beliefs. Mecca had 360 shrines which were frequently visited, producing much revenue. Also Muhammad’s teachings demanded that people give up immorality. Finally, his teachings challenged the social system based on class distinctions. His monotheistic message placed everyone on the same level as creatures of the one and only God. The Meccan leaders ridiculed Muhammad, even to the point of covering him and his followers with dirt and filth as they were praying. They were stoned, beaten and thrown in prison. After three years of preaching Muhammad had less than forty converts. But by the end of the decade several hundred families were followers.

Muhammad's persistence and success threatened the Meccan nobility who were determined to get rid of him. But 280 miles to the north in Yathrib, Muhammad's teachings were being accepted. Yathrib needed a strong leader because of their internal rivalries and they called on Muhammad. After Yathrib promised to observe the teachings of Islam, Muhammad and his friend Abu Bakr fled from Mecca. The two safely arrived in Yathrib in the year 622. In Arabic, Muhammad's journey is called Hijra. The Muslim calendar begins with the year 622 because Muslims consider this journey to be the turning point in world history. The name Yathrib was changed to Medina, which means "the city" in honor of the prophet who settled there.

For the next several years there was warfare between Mecca and Medina. In the second year of the Hijra the Medinese defeated a Meccan army many times larger. But the following year the Medinese were defeated and Muhammad was wounded. Two years later, the Meccans laid siege to Medina but failed. Finally, eight years after Muhammad escaped from Mecca he returned as conqueror. The city surrendered to him and became Muslim. Upon entering the city, he went to the Ka'ba, (a cubical temple supposedly built by Abraham and rededicated it to Allah.) He then returned to Medina.

Although Muhammad was the ruler, he remained humble. "He lived in an ordinary clay house, milked his own goats, and was accessible day and night to the humblest in his community." Tradition says his administration was a perfect blend of justice and mercy. He was able to bring the five conflicting tribes (three of which were Jewish) of the city into a confederation. In A.D. 632, Muhammad died "with virtually all of Arabia under his control." Muslims believe that while there were true prophets before Muhammad, he was the greatest and final prophet called "The Seal of the Prophets."

The Five Pillars

1. The confession of faith called the shahadah. "There is no god but God and Muhammad is his Prophet." Every Muslim must recite this creed slowly and meaningfully at least once in their lifetime.
2. Ritual prayer five times a day directed toward Mecca. Here's the story behind the requirement of five times. One night during Ramadan, Muhammad was taken on a white horse with wings to Jerusalem and from there taken up through the seven heavens into the presence of Allah. Allah told him that Muslims should pray fifty times a day. On his way down he met Moses in the sixth heaven who was incredulous at the command and told Muhammad to negotiate because the people would never obey. Muhammad negotiated with Allah and got the number down to five.
3. Almsgiving – this is a legislated tax given to the poor, about 2.5 percent of one's income.
4. Fasting – during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar known as Ramadan, Muslims should refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, and sexual intercourse from sunrise to sunset.
5. Pilgrimage – all able-bodied and economically-able Muslims should journey to Mecca at least once in their lifetime.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Smith, 221-67.

Lesson 14: Review

W: Quiz 6.4

W: Write an essay explaining what you will take away with you from our study of Confucius, Buddha, and Muhammad. Make sure to address how they compare with each other.

W: Review Handout 6.5.

Name _____

1. Muhammad was born in A.D. _____ and died in A.D. _____.
2. During Muhammad's lifetime, life was based on loyalty to the _____.
3. Define polytheism –
4. What happened on "the Night of Power"?
5. Muhammad was a descendant of _____.
6. Explain what the hijra is and why it is so important to Muslims.
7. T or F Mecca initially accepted Muhammad's teaching.
8. T or F The Ka'ba is in Mecca.
9. The angel commanded Muhammad to _____.
10. List the Five Pillars of Islam.

Unit 7: A Sermon and a Parable (Matthew 5-7; Luke 15)

Lesson 1: The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)

Before we move on to John's Gospel let's look at two popular sections from Matthew and Luke. These sections are the Sermon on the Mount and the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

One man I know preached through the Sermon on the Mount for several weeks. He decided his last sermon would be a simple reading of the biblical text with no commentary. To his surprise, one man approached him after the service and told him it was his best sermon.

W: Read Matthew 5-7.

T: If you go to www.biblegateway.com you can listen to a professional read it.

- Read the Bible (left-hand side)
- Audio Bible
- Select the narration and Bible passage

W: Choose any section or verse in Matthew 5-7 and write a reflection including:

- a summary of the passage in your own words,
- questions on the passage,
- an explanation of how it connects to some area of your life.

W: In groups share your reflections.

T: Ask for volunteers to come to the front and share their reflections.

Lesson 2: Our Father (Matthew 5-7)

The Sermon on the Mount is probably Jesus' most famous teaching. It's had a powerful influence on world history because both Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. were deeply affected by it.

W: Scan over Matt. 5-7 and count how many times you see the word "Father."

A: 17 (NIV)

Q: What words or concepts do you associate with the word father?

T: Write the answers on the board.

W: Handout 7.1 – Use this sheet to interview a friend and record the answers.

_____ interviews _____

1. What do you call your father?
2. How old is your father?
3. What is your father's career?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is the best), rate your relationship with your dad.
5. Describe your father.
6. Do you have a conversation with your dad every day? If not, how often?
7. Share a typical conversation you've had with your dad.
8. How does calling God, 'Dad' sound to you? Why?
9. On the back use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast your earthly Father with your heavenly Father.

W: Read Matthew 6:26; 7:11 and 1 Jn. 3:1.

Hopefully, your dad reminds you of God in certain ways. Providing, protecting, guiding, and teaching are attributes of a good earthly dad. But earthly dads are sinful and imperfect. God is more loving, more caring, and more thoughtful than the best human father you know. Think of God as your Dad. He is the ultimate and perfect Dad.

W: Make a list of what we learn about our heavenly Father from Matthew 5-7.

The heavenly Father in Matthew 5-7

- In heaven (5:16)
- Good to both the evil and the good (5:45)
- Perfect (5:48)
- Gives rewards (6:1)
- Sees what is done in secret (6:4)
- Unseen (6:6)
- Knows what we need before we ask (6:8)
- Has a holy name, a kingdom, and a will that is always done in heaven (6:9-10)
- Forgives us when we forgive others (6:14-15)
- Feeds the birds (6:26)
- Gives good gifts to those who ask him (7:11)

HW: Make two lists from the Sermon on the Mount: Jesus' commands and Jesus' encouragement.

Lesson 3: Commands and Encouragement (Matt. 5-7)

T: Review HW.

Jesus' Commands

- rejoice and be glad when you are insulted and persecuted (5:11-12)
- let your light shine before men (5:16)
- do not think that Jesus came to abolish the law and the prophets (5:17)
- first go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift (5:24)
- settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court (5:25)
- if your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out . . . (5:29-30)
- do not swear at all (5:34)
- do not resist an evil person (5:39)
 - turn the other cheek
 - let the one who wants to sue you and take your tunic have your cloak as well
 - if someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles
- give to the one who asks of you and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow
- love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (5:44)
- be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (5:48)
- don't do your righteous acts to be seen by men (6:1)
 - do not announce your giving to the needy
 - do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing
 - when you pray, go into your room and close the door
 - when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans
 - when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face
- do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth (6:19)
- store up for yourselves treasures in heaven (6:20)
- do not worry about your life (6:25)
- seek first his kingdom and his righteousness (6:33)
- do not worry about tomorrow (6:34)
- do not judge (7:1)
- ask, seek, knock (7:7)
- do to others what you would have them do to you (7:12)
- enter through the narrow gate (7:13)
- watch out for false prophets (7:15)

W: Summarize the list of commands.

- believe
- be sincere
- be joyful
- be merciful
- be a peacemaker
- be focused on heaven
- be prayerful
- love everyone
- treat others as you want them to treat you
- watch out for false teaching

Encouragement

- blessed (5:3-12)
- kingdom of heaven (5:3-12)
- your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you (6:4, 6, 18)
- your Father knows what you need before you ask him (6:8)
- you are much more valuable than birds (6:26)
- your heavenly Father knows that you need food and clothing (6:32)
- ask and it will be give to you . . . (7:7-8)
- your Father in heaven will give good gifts to those who ask him (7:11)

Lesson 4: The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10)

W: Read Matthew 5:3-10 and memorize it.

T: Give students ten to fifteen minutes to work on memorizing this passage individually and then give them about ten minutes to help each other.

W: Write out Matthew 5:3-10.

T: You may want to give those who did poorly another chance to take the quiz.

T: For the next class make sure you have an account with www.biblicaltraining.org because you'll be playing another sermon from that site.

Lesson 5: The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10)

W: You're going to listen to a sermon and take notes in three separate categories:

1. new things I've learned
2. action I should take
3. images that come to mind

T: Play the sermon at www.biblicaltraining.org

- Classes
- Foundations
- 52 Major Stories
- 30. Beatitudes

T: Collect the notes and review a few with the class.

Lesson 6: The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

Yesterday you heard a sermon based on the Beatitudes. There's one more major part of the Sermon on the Mount that we'll focus on. It's known as the Lord's Prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13.

W: Read Matthew 6:9-13.

W: Today, you'll have the entire period to work on writing your own sermon based on Matthew 6:9-13. The sermon should be a minimum of one page and contain the following:

- an introduction
- a summary of your major points
- a conclusion
- definitions of at least two important words
- at least one illustration (this could be a prop, a story from your life, etc.)

If you would like to share your sermon, a few of you will have the opportunity to do so in the next class.

Lesson 7: Sermon Sharing

T: Ask for volunteers to come to the front and share their sermons. If no one volunteers you can:

1. Collect the sermons and read a few yourself.
2. Call on someone to come to the front and share.
3. Share your own sermon.
4. Play the Lord's Prayer from www.biblicaltraining.org

→Foundations

→52 Major Stories

→31. The Lord's Prayer

HW: Read Lk. 15:11-32 and write a reflection on it.

Lesson 8: The Prodigal Son: Part 1 (Luke 15:11-32)

There's one more part of the Synoptic Gospels that we'll look at. Luke has a number of interesting parables not found in the other Gospels, but perhaps his most popular is the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

T: Handout a blank sheet of paper to everyone.

W: Draw four equal size boxes on your paper. While you're listening to this sermon create cartoon scenes of this story. You'll have two classes to work on this.

T: I like the sermons by Tim Keller on the Prodigal Son, which you can find on YouTube. But there are many other options.

T: Show Rembrandt's picture of the Prodigal Son.

Lesson 9: The Prodigal Son: Part 2 (Luke 15:11-32)

T: Show Rembrandt's Prodigal Son.

T: Play the next sermon or just talk about the story while students draw.

W: Complete your cartoon scenes.

T: Get a copy of *The Visual Bible: The Gospel of John*. Directed by Philip Saville, 2003. This movie is a word-for-word version of the Good News Bible translation of the Gospel of John.

Unit 8: In the Beginning (John 1-4)

Lesson 1: The Gospel of John

From last semester, we learned that the word synoptic means “similar” or “common view.” The first three Gospels give us a very similar record of Jesus and his followers. While John agrees on the major aspects of Jesus’ life, he tells the story of Jesus differently. For example, John doesn’t include the transfiguration story, exorcisms, or Jesus being tempted by Satan, but he does include Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus washing the disciples’ feet, and Jesus’ farewell speech.

W: Read through Handout 8.1 and distribute the Paper Guidelines Handout.

W: With a partner skim through John and find references to your theme.

An easy way to find references to a particular topic is to do a keyword search. You can do this by using a concordance. Most Bibles have a brief concordance in the back but you’ll need a more extensive one. You can use a free concordance online by going to www.biblegateway.com then

→ enter the keyword in the search bar

→ select your Bible version

On the far right you will see how many times that word appears in each book of the Bible.

T: If you have access to a computer and projector show the biblegateway.com site while you’re describing it.

Distinct Themes in John's Gospel

From the list below, choose one distinct theme in John and write a paper comparing and contrasting the theme with the way it is presented in Mark's Gospel.

1. **Light and darkness** – Good and evil is sharply contrasted.
2. **Timing** – Jesus frequently talks about “the hour” translated as “time” in some versions.
3. **The Holy Spirit** – John teaches much more about the Spirit than the Synoptics.
4. **Focus on Jerusalem and the Feasts** – Only John gives us a clue as to how long Jesus' ministry lasted. Passover happens once a year and John mentions three Passovers (2:13; 6:4; 11:55). From this information we can safely conclude that Jesus' ministry lasted at least two years.
5. **Truth** – Jesus has several things to say about truth in John and he repeatedly prefaces his statements with the phrase “I tell you the truth.”
6. **Love** – both divine and human love are emphasized.
7. **Water** – both physical and spiritual water.
8. **Seven miracles called “signs”** with explanations. John carefully selected the miracles to include in his book.
9. **Jesus' direct claims** as opposed to secrecy in the Synoptic Gospels.
 - a. Jesus openly states who he is by using the phrase “I am”
 - b. Jesus calls God “my Father” 127x in John but only 4x in Mark⁴⁵
 - c. The Sent One – Jesus repeatedly refers to himself as the one who's been sent which shows his pre-human existence and divine mission.
10. **Jesus' farewell speech** to the disciples (including his prayer) found in John 13-17. Almost all of this material is unique to John.
11. **Believe/belief** – this word is used more than 100 times in John which is more than the Synoptic Gospels combined.
12. **The beloved disciple** – this disciple is mysterious because he's not referred to by name but simply as “the beloved” disciple or “the one Jesus loved.”

*Many of these distinct themes merge into each other. For example, in Jesus' farewell speech, love and the Holy Spirit are emphasized.

⁴⁵ I.H. Marshall, *New Testament Theology: One Gospel, Many Witnesses* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 515, n. 35.

Bible Paper Guidelines

- 1. Write your name at the top left-hand corner of the first page.** No cover page please.
- 2. Center title above the first paragraph.**
- 3. The paper should be a minimum of two pages and a maximum of three pages in length. Make sure to double space, use Times New Roman twelve-point font, and one-inch margins.** Ten points will be deducted for every half page missing.
- 4. The paper should have an introduction, body and conclusion.** Think of the first paragraph as the road map for the paper. Tell the reader where you are going and how you plan on getting there. Make sure to follow through with your stated goals in the body of the paper. You are taking the reader on a journey with you. Complete the journey with a concluding paragraph telling the reader where you have taken them and giving final thoughts from your research. Five points will be deducted for no introduction or conclusion. Three points will be deducted for not having a clear statement of goals in the introduction or not having a well stated conclusion.
- 5. Relevant references should be given** in the body of the paper to support your points. Show biblical support for what you are stating. You can place verse references at the end of a sentence like this (Mk.1:21). Notice the period goes after the parenthesis. You can also place the reference at the beginning of a sentence as follows. In Mark 1:21, Jesus taught in the synagogue. If you have multiple references they should be recorded in this way (Mk.1:24; Mt. 5:2; Lk.7:6). When quoting in a sentence it should look like this, "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mk. 2:28).
- 6. In general, you should not have to use personal pronouns,** i.e. / think. I realize it is your opinion so you can just state it without prefacing it with a personal pronoun.
- 7. Do not use contractions in your writing.** Academic papers should be formally written.
- 8. Make sure someone proofreads your paper before you turn it in.** I will not proofread your papers, but someone should. Make sure the paper is checked for all spelling and typographical errors. One point will be deducted for every grammar, spelling, or punctuation mistake, up to a limit of ten points.
- 9. Do not quote anything that is over four lines in length.** Try to keep your quotes brief since the paper is short.
- 10. The rest of the grading will be at the teacher's discretion.** Make sure you have data that supports your conclusions, make sure your paper is well written. I will not proofread your papers but they should be proofread before you turn them in.

Rubric

Paper turned in on time in correct format (70).

Mechanics (10)

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Clarity

Organization (10)

- Introduction, Body, Conclusion
- Paragraphs unified
- Transitions

Content (10)

- Themes from intro. built upon in body and summarized in conclusion
- Persuasive
- Support – Scriptures used appropriately and accurately
- No new information in conclusion

Lessons 2-5 – The Gospel of John Movie

W: While you're watching *The Gospel of John*, make sure to think about the theme of your paper.

T: Remind students when the paper is due.

Lesson 6: Outline and Purpose of John's Gospel

T: Collect the papers then distribute them randomly to the class.

W: Read the paper in front of you and write out feedback on the paper both good and bad. If a word is misspelled underline it, if a sentence doesn't make sense write a question mark. A corrected version of your paper is due next class.

W: Handout 8.2

Outline

Prologue – (1:1-18)

I. Book of Signs – (1:19-12:50)

II. Book of Glory – (13:1-20:31)

Epilogue – (21)

Signs

1. Turns water into wine (ch. 2)
2. Heals official's son (ch. 4)
3. Heals lame man (ch. 5)
4. Feeds five thousand (ch. 6)
5. Walks on water (ch. 6)
6. Heals man born blind (ch. 9)
7. Raises Lazarus from the dead (ch. 11)
8. Jesus' resurrection (ch. 20)

*Some don't include Jesus walking on water as one of the signs. John places a heavy emphasis on signs in the first half of the book. In the second half there's only one, but it's the greatest.

The Purpose Statement (Jn. 20:30-31)

John wrote so that people would believe Jesus is the Christ and have life in his name. This sounds like John was writing to persuade a non-Christian audience. However, some ancient manuscripts have “continue to believe,” which means John may have been writing to a Christian audience.

Gospel of John

Outline

Prologue – (1:1-18)

I. Book of _____ – (1:19-12:50)

II. Book of _____ – (13:1-20:31)

Epilogue – (21)

1. Write out the signs in John 2-11.

2. Make a few observations about these signs.

3. Write out the purpose statement of the book of John.

Lesson 7: The Prologue (John 1:1-18)

T: Collect Bible papers.

W: Handout 8.3

1. Prologue Outline

- God and the Word in the beginning and in creation (vv.1-3)
- Life and Light from the Word (vv.4-5)
- John Bears Witness to the Light (vv.6-8)
- The World's Response to the Light (vv.9-13)
- The Glory of the Father's Son (vv.14-18)

2. Keywords (key themes throughout the book)

Light, darkness, life, believe, Word, glory, world, made, came from the Father, God, witness

3. The Word

The word, *Word* comes from the Greek word logos. It was translated in a variety of ways: speech, reason, discourse, word, and message. The Greeks used logos to refer to Reason which permeated the universe. When we speak we're expressing and revealing ourselves. Jesus is the perfect expression of God, the pure Word that comes directly from God. Because of the variety of ways, the Greeks used the word logos and because it's so rarely used in the NT to refer to Jesus (only here and Rev. 19:13) its exact meaning is highly controversial. But here's a safe definition, "*Word* expresses Jesus' role as the means of divine communication with the world."⁴⁶

Q: Why would John use a word to refer to Jesus that hadn't been used before?

4. The Word in John 1:1-4, 14

- Divine (1:1)
- Personal (1:2)
- Creative (1:3)
- Possesses life (1:4)
- The light of men (1:4)

⁴⁶ Marshall, 516.

- Became a human being (1:14)
- Displays a unique glory (as of the only Son from the Father) (1:14)
- Full of grace and truth (1:14)

5. **Genesis 1 in John 1**

- “In the beginning” – John begins with the same three words as Genesis. In so doing, John takes the story of Christ to its deepest origins. John takes us back before creation.
- “Word” – Each day of creation begins with “And God said.” John asserts that there was someone there with God in the beginning.
- “Light” – “Let there be light”
- “Made/Creation” – the main activity of God in Genesis 1.

John's Prologue (John 1:1-18)

1. Write your own outline for the prologue.
2. List the key words in the prologue.
3. Why do you think John called Jesus “the Word”?
4. List everything you learn about “the Word” from John 1:1-3, 14.
5. List at least three things in John’s prologue that remind you of Genesis 1.

1:14 – The incarnation of the Word. Incarnation = in the flesh. Jesus was incarnated when he took on a human body. The full deity of the Word is stated in verse 1 and now the full humanity of the Word is stated. Jesus is 100 percent God and 100 percent human.

The phrase “made his dwelling among us” or “dwelt among us” could also be translated “tabernacled/pitched his tent among us.”

Q: How many of you have pitched a tent? What are you saying when you pitch a tent?

A: “I’m going to stay here for a while.”

In the OT, God commanded Israel to make a special tent for him and put it in the center of all of the other tents. This tent was called the tabernacle. The tabernacle showed Israel that God wanted to be with them (Ex. 25:8, 9; Ezek. 37:27). The incarnation reminds us of the tabernacle. Here are three similarities between the tabernacle and the incarnation:

1. God lowers himself so we can meet with him. He didn’t have to come down to our level. He could have stayed high above us.
2. God comes down to a specific place and person. If you wanted to meet with God, you had to go to the tabernacle and now you have to go to Jesus.
3. God wants to be with us. The tabernacle and the incarnation is a picture of our life with God forever (Rev 21:3). God doesn’t want to be separated from us. Maybe you can relate to God’s feeling. Have you ever felt badly about a relationship and wanted to fix it? Or have you ever missed being with someone? God hurts when we leave him. He made us to be with him. Jesus came down to fix our relationship with God.

1:18 – Notice Jesus’ unique relationship to God. No one can reveal God like the one who has seen God and been at the Father’s side. Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God to us.

Lesson 8: Before Time Began

Q: Have you ever thought about what was happening before time began?

What do you think was happening?

W: Write out the following verses word for word and then summarize them in your notes.

1. John 1:1; 17:24
2. Corinthians 2:7
3. Ephesians 1:4
4. 2 Timothy 1:9
5. Titus 1:2
6. 1 Peter 1:20
7. Matthew. 25:34

Summary

1. The Father was with the Son and the Father was loving the Son (Jn. 1:1; 17:24).
2. God destined a secret wisdom for our glory (1 Cor. 2:7).
3. God chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless (Eph. 1:4).
4. God gave us grace in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 1:9).
5. God promised us eternal life (Titus 1:2).
6. God chose Christ to be our sacrificial lamb (1 Pet. 1:20).
7. God prepared a kingdom for his sheep (Mt. 25:34).

In the beginning, the Father and the Son were together in a harmonious, loving relationship. But what were God and the Son doing way back then? God was making choices and these choices included his Son. God made the choice to create. He chose to create all things through his Son (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16). In choosing to create, God was making the choice to enlarge his family, specifically through the human beings who would be made in his image and likeness. Because of this close connection with God, God's family would have to be blameless and eternal.

However, God knew that the humans he made for his glory would turn their backs on him and live for their own glory. So God had to make another choice, a very costly choice. God chose his Son to be our sacrificial lamb in order to reconcile us to himself. This choice was made out of the sheer graciousness of God even before time began.

So before anything was made, God chose to make all things through Christ and he chose to redeem all things in Christ. Before time began, God made all of the necessary preparations to save sinful

human beings and bring them into his blameless and eternal family. Time doesn't affect God's plan of salvation because it was made long before time began.

HW: Review John 1:1-18 for the quiz next class. Memorize John 1:1, 1:14, 20:31.

Lesson 9: What Are You Looking For? (John 1:19-51)

W: Quiz 8.1

W: Read John 1:19-51.

Jesus' first words in John are, "What are you looking for?" or "What do you want?" This question cuts to the core of our heart. It shows us that Jesus wants people to follow him for the right reasons. Jesus isn't interested in having a large following of half-hearted people. Instead of replying, "we want to be famous/rich," or "we want to see your power" they simply asked where he was staying which implies that they wanted to be with him.

T: Go through the lyrics and play "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" by U2.

W: Write your own response to the question, "What are you looking for?" Include the social, spiritual, and physical aspects of life in your answer.

Name _____

1. Write out John 20:31.
2. "In the beginning was the _____ and the _____ was with _____" (Jn. 1:1).
3. Define logos –
4. T or F The only place Jesus is called "the Word" is in John 1.
5. Word expresses Jesus' role as the means of divine _____ with the world.
6. Write out the first sentence of John 1:14. From your class notes, what is a different way this sentence could be translated?
7. T or F John's Gospel includes one exorcism story.
8. Define incarnate –
9. List three things in John's prologue which remind us of Genesis 1.
10. Write out the four-point outline for the book of John.

Lesson 10: The First Followers (John 1:19-51)

T: Return quizzes

W: Handout 8.4 – use your Bibles to answer these questions.

T: Give students fifteen minutes to work on the handout, then review.

1. List all the titles/names given to Jesus in this section.

- The Lamb of God (1:29, 36). This is the only place this title is used to refer to Jesus. The lamb has power to take away the sins of the world (cf. Ex. 12:21-28).
- Rabbi (1:38)
- The Messiah (1:41)
- The one Moses wrote about (1:45)
- The Son of God (1:34, 49)
- The King of Israel (1:49)

2. What repeated phrase is used to mark time in John 1?

“The next day” (1:29, 35, 43)

3. How many followers does Jesus have at the end of John 1? Name them.

1. Andrew (1:40)
2. Simon (1:40)
3. Philip (1:43)
4. Nathanael (1:45)
5. Unnamed (1:37, 40)

4. How would you describe the first followers? Why?

- Seeking
- Excited – “We have found . . .” (1:41, 45)
- Believing
- Vulnerable before Jesus – you are Simon (v. 42) a true Israelite (v. 47-48)

5. Jesus knows his followers. Support this statement from John 1.

- Jesus told Simon that his name was Simon, son of John and gave him a new name apparently during their first encounter (1:42).
- Jesus knew Philip before they met (1:47-48).

6. Read Genesis 28:10-22. What verse in John 1 does this story in Genesis 28 go along with? What is the point of what Jesus said in this verse?

Jesus is the ladder of Jacob's dream (Jn. 1:51). He's the connection between heaven and earth providing a pathway for angelic activity. The Bible records the most angelic activity during the life of Jesus. Notice that Jesus refers to himself with that unusual title "Son of Man," which is his favorite way of referring to himself in the Synoptic Gospels.

7. What *similarities* are there between the story of Jesus and his first followers in John and Mark?

- The quote from Isaiah 40:3 is connected with John the Baptist (Mk. 1:3; Jn. 1:23).
- John baptized people (Mk. 1:4; Jn. 1:25-26).
- John announced that one would come whose sandals he would not be worthy to untie (Mk. 1:7; Jn. 1:27).
- The Spirit descended like a dove on Jesus (Mk. 1:10; Jn. 1:32).
- The brothers, Simon and Andrew were among Jesus' first followers (Mk. 1:16; Jn. 1:40-41).
- Jesus called people to follow him (Mk. 1:17; Jn. 1:43).

What *differences* are there between the story of Jesus and his first followers in John and Mark?

- Nathanael is only mentioned in John 1. Maybe he went by a different name or maybe he wasn't one of the chosen twelve.
- From the very beginning of John, Jesus' disciples confess who he is. They call him the "Messiah," "the one written about in the Law and Prophets," "the Son of God" and "the King of Israel" (Jn. 1:41, 45, 49). In Mark, the disciples don't confess Jesus is the Christ until chapter eight. (This is partly an issue of silence in Mark because he doesn't give us the disciples' initial statements about Jesus, but they obviously thought he was someone special because they left everything to follow him.)
- In Mark, Jesus takes the initiative and calls his first disciples (1:16-20). In John, the disciples take the initiative and find Jesus (1:35-39). (If John's account is chronologically prior to Mark then Mark's account makes better sense. For example, the fishermen in Mark 1 didn't leave

everything to follow a total stranger. They had prior experience and knowledge of Jesus which is why they readily became his followers.)

- In Mark (1:16-20), Jesus finds his followers, while in John the disciples find each other (1:40, 43, 45).
- John gives more insight into the disciples' thinking (Jn. 1:41, 45-46, 49) than Mark does.

John 1:19-51

1. List all the titles/names given to Jesus in this section.
2. What repeated phrase is used to mark time in John 1?
3. How many followers does Jesus have at the end of John 1? Name them.
4. How would you describe the first followers? Why?
5. Jesus knows his followers. Support this statement from John 1.
6. Read Genesis 28:10-22. What verse in John 1 does this story go along with? What is the point of what Jesus said in this verse?
7. What similarities and differences do you notice between how John and Mark tell the story of Jesus and his first followers?

Lesson 11: Wedding Wine and Temple Cleansing (Jn. 2:1-24)

Q: What is your favorite drink?

Q: How many of you have tasted wine?

Q: Is it a sin to drink wine?

W: Read Ephesians 5:18 and 1 Timothy 5:23.

Q: Who likes to go to weddings? What do you like about weddings?

W: Read John 2 and write at least five questions related to the content of this chapter.

W: Discuss your questions and possible answers with two other people.

2:3 – “running out of wine was considered to be a major social faux pas, since the host was responsible to provide the wedding guests with wine for seven days.”⁴⁷

2:4 – While the NIV has the word “dear” before “woman,” the Greek doesn’t. “In the social context of the time the address ‘woman’ was in itself certainly not hard or impolite (cf. Mt. 15:28; Lk. 13:12; Jn. 4:21; so also in other Greek writings). But as the address of a son to his mother it is not common and may seem distant and impersonal.”⁴⁸

While the NIV uses the word “time” in this verse, the literal translation is “hour.”

2:6 – ceremonial washing is mentioned in Lev. 17:15; 22:6; Mk. 7:3.

This miracle would have produced 120-180 gallons of high-quality wine, which would have been extravagant for a village celebration. While Jesus knew how to discipline himself, he wasn’t against people enjoying themselves and celebrating. In fact, some even called Jesus a glutton and a drunkard (Lk. 7:34). If Jesus was against human happiness he wouldn’t have gone to this wedding and he definitely wouldn’t have turned the water into wine.

Q: How does miracle affect your view of Jesus?

⁴⁷ Andreas J. Kostenberger, *John: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 93.

⁴⁸ Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 105.

Q: Jesus' other miracles were performed for those who seemed to be more desperate. Is this a good use of Jesus' power? Was it right for Jesus to perform this miracle when other people were probably starving?

2:13-22 – This story should sound familiar from our study of Mark.

Q: Is the clearing of the temple story told near the beginning or end of Mark?

A: It's told in Mark 11:15-19 close to the time of Jesus' execution.

Q: How do you explain the difference between Mark and John's placement of this story?

Possible explanations include:

- Strict chronological arrangement wasn't expected in the ancient world (or in the modern world in some cases). John (or Mark) placed this story in a different time from when it actually happened, but this would not have upset the ancient readers.
- Jesus cleared the temple twice; once at the beginning (Jn.) and once near the end (Mk.) of his ministry.
- The chronology of John is wrong.
- The chronology of Mark is wrong.

2:13 – While Jerusalem was geographically south from Cana, the Jews would still say they were going up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem was physically and spiritually elevated.

2:19 – This is the first of a number of shocking statements Jesus makes in John.

Q: Have you heard anything shocking lately?

Q: Why do people make shocking statements?

A: To get people's attention

The statement Jesus makes in 2:19 is shocking because Jesus speaks on a spiritual level, but his audience interprets his words on a physical level. The word temple is used in two different ways in 2:19-21. This type of misunderstanding happens on a regular basis in John.

Q: How does the clearing of the temple affect your view of Jesus?

HW: For homework read Handout 8.5 and do the following:

1. Highlight the repeated words and phrases. Use the same symbol for the same word. For example, if you see the word “red” three times, highlight it the same way each time it appears (you choose the symbol or color).
2. Write comments and questions in the margin.
3. Note any connections with John 1-2.

T: Be prepared to show John 3:1-21 on the board for tomorrow’s class.

John 3

¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus^[a] by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." ³Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again^[b] he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.^[c] ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You^[d] must be born again.' ⁸The wind^[e] blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

⁹Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you^[f] do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.^[g] ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^[h]

¹⁶"For God so loved the world,^[i] that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

²²After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. ²³John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized ²⁴(for John had not yet been put in prison).

²⁵Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. ²⁶And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him." ²⁷John answered, "A person cannot

receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' ²⁹The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. ³⁰He must increase, but I must decrease."^[1]

³¹He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. ³²He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. ³³Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. ³⁴For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. ³⁵The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. (ESV)

Footnotes:

- a. John 3:2 Greek *him*
- b. John 3:3 Or *from above*; the Greek is purposely ambiguous and can mean both *again* and *from above*; also verse 7
- c. John 3:6 The same Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit*
- d. John 3:7 The Greek for *you* is plural here
- e. John 3:8 The same Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit*
- f. John 3:11 The Greek for *you* is plural here; also four times in verse 12
- g. John 3:13 Some manuscripts add *who is in heaven*
- h. John 3:15 Some interpreters hold that the quotation ends at verse 15
- i. John 3:16 Or *For this is how God loved the world*
- j. John 3:30 Some interpreters hold that the quotation continues through verse 36

Lesson 12: Observations on John 3

T: Use a projector to display John 3.

T: Ask students to share the information from the homework assignment: repeated words and phrases, comments and questions, connections with John 1-2.

T: Feel free to incorporate any of the comments below as you go through John 3 with the class and make sure to add your own questions.

3:1 – “a man” probably connects with reference to “man” in 2:25.⁴⁹ Remember John didn’t include chapter or verse divisions in his book. If we connect 2:24-25 with 3:1 we get this impression: Jesus already has Nicodemus figured out and he’s not impressed by his credentials.

3:2 – Nicodemus has to be careful because he is one of the religious leaders so he comes to Jesus in secret. Nicodemus acknowledges three things about Jesus:

1. a teacher
2. come from God
3. performs miraculous signs

However this confession is not enough.

3:3 – “I tell you the truth” is literally translated “Amen I say to you” Jesus used the word *amen* in a unique way. Instead of ending a statement with the word *amen*, Jesus prefaced his statements with it. It should cause us to pay special attention to what Jesus is about to say.

Jesus doesn’t let Nicodemus finish but goes straight to the crux of the matter. Although Nicodemus is one of the greatest teachers in Israel, he needs a new birth. He must be “born from above” or “born again.” Think of how hard this would have been to hear if you were Nicodemus. You’ve spent your whole life studying and living morally and you’ve attained a great level of respect. Now Jesus says, “You must be born again.” You have to start over.

W: List what you learn about the new birth from John 3.

- It’s universally required (3:7) – The “you” is plural in Greek. Jesus doesn’t limit this comment to Nicodemus; it applies to everyone. “Born again” Christians are the only kind of Christians.

⁴⁹ Cosby, 168.

- It's necessary before one can see God's kingdom (3:3).
- It's described as being born of water and the Spirit (3:5). Only the Spirit can produce this new birth. No amount of human striving can produce it.
- It's mysterious (3:8) – like the origin and destination of the wind.

3:3, 5 – This is the only time the phrase “kingdom of God” is used in John. John focuses more on the person of Christ. John's equivalent phrase for the kingdom of God seems to be eternal life.

3:11 – “we speak of what we know” connects this with the “we know” in 3:2. Jesus is responding to Nicodemus' initial comment. The “we” could be Jesus and his disciples/John.

3:13 – Jesus comes from above and we must be born from above. Jesus is in the best position to tell us of heavenly things (v.12) because he came from heaven.

3:14 – This refers to the story in Numbers 21:4-9.

3:15 – It's difficult to know for sure where Jesus stops speaking in John 3. While some versions end Jesus' words in 3:15, others end his words in 3:21. The narrator's voice and Jesus' voice seem to merge.

3:17-18 – In John, Jesus is the sent one. God sent Jesus into the world. Jesus didn't come on his own initiative. He came to accomplish a mission given to him by his Father. That mission is to save the world.

3:19-21 – Now that light has come into the world there are two choices – enter the light or stay in darkness. People don't believe because they are stubborn and want to continue doing evil in the dark. Most crimes happen at night. One of the greatest tools of law enforcement is light. The light exposes what's happening in the dark.

3:22-36 – This shows us John's attitude toward Jesus. We can either point to ourselves or point to Jesus. John recognized his place as the friend of the bridegroom. Jesus is the bridegroom and he deserves to be the center of attention.

Two Key Ideas in John 3

1. The necessity of new birth

“born again”

“born from above”

“born of the Spirit”

Our first birth isn't good enough to get us into God's kingdom. We need a radical new beginning, a second birth. "You must be born again." This new birth happens through repentance and the Spirit. It enables us to see Jesus for who he really is and to put our faith in him as the only one who comes from above.

2. Believing in God's Son

Lesson 13: John 3:16

We come now to one of the most popular verses in the Bible. We're going to use a sentence diagram to help us analyze this verse. By separating prepositions, subjects and verbs, objects and conjunctions, sentence diagrams help us to see the main parts of a sentence.

T: Make sure everyone can identify the main parts of speech.

Example

Oliver ate
the cookie
while
Jason drank
the milk.

Notice the subjects and verbs are placed on the same line and then lined up under each other while the objects go on a separate line.

W: Diagram John 3:16 by lining up the following items on their own line and underneath each other: preposition, subject and verb, object, and conjunction. (There are different ways of doing this so your diagram does not need to look exactly like mine.)

John 3:16

For
God so loved
the world
that
he gave
his one and only Son
that
whoever believes in him
shall not perish
but
have
eternal life.

W: Make your own outline for John 3:16.

Jn. 3:16 Outline 1

- God's love
- God's Son
- human response

Jn. 3:16 Outline 2

- The extent of God's love
- The demonstration of God's love
- The goal of God's love

Our relationship with God should begin with God. He made us then he reached out to us by giving us his Son. God loved the world to the point of giving his only Son for us. The amount of our giving indicates the amount of our love. When you really love someone, giving comes naturally. God really loves us.

so – could be translated “in this way/manner.”

one and only (NIV) **only** (ESV) **only begotten** (NASB) – The Greek word is *monogenes* and it means “unique,” “the only one of its kind.” Abraham had more than one son but Hebrews 11:17 calls Isaac his *monogenes* his “only begotten.” The Greek word indicates the value of the child. There's no one else as close to the Father's heart as the Son. God gave the One who was most dear to him. Jesus is the Father's “one and only” who came from the Father.

The Greek phrase for **eternal life** literally means “life of the age.” This expression not only indicates duration but quality. “Life of the age” is a new kind of life, a much higher quality of life.

Q: What does **believe in him** mean?

- Mentally accept that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world.
- Personally trust in Jesus.
- Follow Jesus by a life of obedience.

Q: How many of you think living forever will be boring?

If so, you're thinking of life as you know it now. We don't just want to live forever in our present state; we need a new kind of life that will never end. Who wants to live forever in this present state?

Getting sick, feeling sad, smelling bad, not getting along with others . . . According to the Bible, heaven is the dwelling place of God and the people of God will be welcomed in to dwell with God. In heaven, God's people will worship God, love each other, eat and drink, and enjoy their new bodies and a beautiful environment.

Perishing – the alternative to experiencing “eternal life” is “perishing.” The concept of the wicked perishing is found throughout Scripture (Ps. 37:20; 92:9; Lk. 13:3, 5; Jn. 10:28; 1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 4:3; 2 Pet. 3:9).

Remember John wrote his Gospel because he wanted others to have life (20:31). This should motivate us as well. We should want to live and we should want others to live as well. To perish is to have no future.

Lesson 14: A Man Named Nicodemus

W: Read John 3:1-15; 7:50-52; 19:38-42 and pay attention to what you learn about Nicodemus.

W: In groups of two or three prepare three skits:

1. an interview with Nicodemus after John 3:1-15
2. an interview with Nicodemus after John 7:50-52
3. an interview with Nicodemus after John 19:38-42

You have the entire period to prepare these skits. The skits will be presented tomorrow.

Lesson 15: John 4:1-42 Observations

W: Present skits.

W: Handout 8.6

T: If they don't finish in class allow them to finish at home.

John 4:1-42

Read the passage below and:

1. Find the repeated words and phrases then highlight using unique symbols for each word or phrase.
2. Write comments and questions in the margin.
3. Note connections with John 1-3 in the margin.

¹Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John ²(although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), ³he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. ⁴And he had to pass through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.^[a]

⁷A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸(For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." ¹¹The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." ¹³Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.^[b] The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." ¹⁷The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." ¹⁹The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."

²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

²⁷Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" ²⁸So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" ³⁰They went out of the town and were coming to him.

³¹Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³²But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." ³³So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" ³⁴Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. ³⁵Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. ³⁶Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

³⁹Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his word. ⁴²They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world." (ESV)

Footnotes:

- a. John 4:6 That is, about noon
- b. John 4:14 Greek *forever*

Lesson 16: Crossing Borders (John 4:1-42)

W: Choose your top three observations and top three questions from John 4:1-42.

W: In groups, share your top three observations and questions.

T: Collect Handout 8.6.

Q: What “borders” have been difficult for you to cross?

Today we’ll look at Jesus’ second major encounter and dialogue with an individual in John. But in order for this dialogue to take place Jesus had to cross three borders:

1. Geographical – walked through Samaria
2. Social – talked with a woman
3. Ethnic – talked with a Samaritan

Strict Jews viewed Samaria as an unclean territory and traveled around it to avoid going through it. For the common Jewish attitude toward Samaritans read John 8:48 and Luke 9:51-53.

Q: With this background in mind, what would a Jewish audience think about Jesus’ Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37)?

Q: What made the Samaritans different from the Jews?

The Samaritans

- Mixed race – descendants of Assyrians (conquered Israel in 722 B.C.) and Israelites
- Only accepted the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible, with various changes)
- Worshiped on Mt. Gerazim instead of Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem

Q: What borders have been difficult for you to cross?

Women

Women had very few rights back then. Most were uneducated and therefore illiterate. This particular woman’s relational life was in shambles. This may explain why she went to the well at the hottest time of day. It seems that she is too ashamed to go when other women would be there. (The idea

that she was avoiding other women assumes this event didn't take place in winter, which may be assuming too much.)⁵⁰

4:1 – We have seen Jesus' special knowledge of people but notice that he still "learns" things. He is 100 percent God and 100 percent human.

4:15 – Jesus is misunderstood.

Q: Does the woman think that Jesus can really give her physical water that she can drink and never have to drink again? Can you imagine such water?

W: Put Jesus' words in 4:21-24 into your own words.

Perhaps, "Physical location doesn't affect genuine worship. God is not limited by space; he's spirit. What matters in worship is your sincerity and the integrity of your life. The Father is looking for people of truth to worship him."

4:26 – This is Jesus' first "I am" statement in John. Think of how incredible this statement is in light of the Gospel of Mark where Jesus was secretive about his identity.

4:29 – "him/he who sent me" – Jesus refers to God in this way more than twenty times in John.

4:36 – Sowing and harvesting shouldn't coincide but here the sower and reaper rejoice together (Lv. 26:5; Am.9:13).

4:42 – Notice how the understanding of Jesus increases throughout this chapter:

- "sir" (4:12-15)
- "prophet" (4:19)
- "Messiah/Christ" (4:25-29)
- "Savior of the world" (4:42)

⁵⁰ Kostenberger, 148, n.24.

Lesson 17: Nicodemus and the Woman (John 3 & 4)

W: Compare Jesus' conversational partners in John 3 & 4.

The Similarities

- One-on-one conversations
- Jesus is misunderstood
- Jesus goes straight to the heart
- Jesus refers to "spirit," "water," and "eternal life"

Q: What conclusions can we draw from these conversations?

First of all, John places almost entirely opposite people right next to each other in his narrative. He's showing us that Jesus is willing to converse with important people (Nicodemus) and nobodies (the Samaritan women). Second, Jesus knows us and he speaks directly to our hearts. He doesn't let us get away with avoiding what matters most. Third, Jesus doesn't speak in the same way to everyone. To Nicodemus who was highly respected and who had accomplished much, Jesus said, "you must be born again." To the woman who was desperate for water, Jesus offered "living water." Jesus is not like a broken record saying the same thing to everyone, e.x., "you must be born again" "you must be born again." He adapts his message to the needs of his audience.

Q: If you were sharing the gospel with a single mother with three children how would your message be different than if you were sharing the gospel to a teenager who's addicted to drugs? How about sharing with a successful businessman compared with sharing to a third grader?

T: Place students in groups to work on the previous questions and present to the class.

Lesson 18: The Second Sign (4:43-54)

Today we'll finish up John 4 and then begin reviewing.

Q: Do we see and then believe or do we believe and then see?

Most people want to see and then believe. But is that really believing? Do you remember what the mockers said at the cross? "Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe" (Mk. 15:32). In John 11:40, Jesus asked, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"

W: Read John 4:43-54.

4:48 – Jesus is saying, "If I did not perform miracles, you would have no interest in me,' you would not 'believe' in me. He is not at all interested in Jesus himself, only in something to be obtained through him . . . The faith he demands is therefore more than faith in his power to do miracles; it is faith in him as the gift of God come down from heaven."⁵¹

4:50 – The man was sent on his way by Jesus' word. The miracle was done in Jesus' way not the man's. The man had to believe before he saw.⁵²

4:54 – The first two signs in the Gospel of John take place in Cana. John mentions other signs, but he only chose to narrate these two (2:23; 3:2; 20:30).

Highlights from John 4

- Jesus crosses borders
- Jesus gives living water that quenches our deepest thirst
- Jesus knows us
- Jesus is misunderstood
- Worship is a matter of the heart

W: Create your own quiz by writing fifteen review questions (true or false, fill in the blank, short answer) on John 1-4. Include the answers on the back.

W: Exchange quizzes and complete.

⁵¹ Ridderbos, 175.

⁵² Ibid.

Lesson 19: Review

Jesus' knowledge of people in John 1-4

- “You are Simon, son of John” (1:42)
- “Here is a true Israelite . . . I saw you while you were still under the fig tree” (1:47-48)
- “for he knew all people . . . he himself knew what was in man”(2:24-25)
- “You have had five husbands” (4:18)

Jesus not only knows details about people like their marital history, he knows people. Jesus has us figured out because he sees what's within (Jn. 2:25; cf. Mk. 7:21-22).

Q: How does the fact that Jesus knows you affect your relationship with him?

Jesus is misunderstood in John 1-4

- By the Jews after Jesus said, “destroy this temple” (2:19-21)
- By Nicodemus after Jesus said, “You must be born again” (3:3-4)
- By the Samaritan women after Jesus talked about the water he gives (4:11-15)
- By the disciples after Jesus said, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about” (4:32-33)

We can conclude: Jesus understands us perfectly, but we constantly misunderstand him.

T: Review for the test in the next class and make sure they know the verses they will need to memorize: John 1:1, 14; 3:3, 16, 30; 4:24; 20:31.

HW: Study for the test on John 1-4.

Test

Free Period

Name _____

True or False

- ____ 1. Nicodemus was a Sadducee.
- ____ 2. Jesus gave Nathanael a new name.
- ____ 3. The Gospel of John does not record any exorcism stories.
- ____ 4. Cana is in Judea.
- ____ 5. John the Baptist called Jesus “the Lamb of God.”
- ____ 6. Nathanael found Philip and told him about Jesus.
- ____ 7. Nicodemus was an important teacher.
- ____ 8. Jesus’ hometown, Nazareth, was a disrespected place.
- ____ 9. Jesus said “follow me” in both Mark 1 and John 1.
- ____ 10. Samaritans were not full Jews.
- ____ 11. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that he was the Christ.
- ____ 12. Jacob’s dream of angels ascending and descending is recorded in the book of Genesis.
- ____ 13. The Bible says drinking alcohol is a sin.
- ____ 14. Jesus saw Andrew while he was under the fig tree.
- ____ 15. Nicodemus helped to bury Jesus.

Chapter Content

- ____ 16. “My time has not yet come”
- ____ 17. Nicodemus

____ 18. Jesus' second sign

____ 19. Jesus was tired

____ 20. "We have found the Messiah"

____ 21. "The Lamb of God"

Fill in the Blank

22. _____ is the Greek word for 'word'.

23. Both Genesis and John begin with the phrase "_____ the _____."

24. "The Word became _____ and made his _____ among us."

25. The Samaritans declared, "this man really is the _____ of the world."

26. The key word in John's gospel is _____.

27. John the Baptist said, "He must become _____; I must become _____."

28. "no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is _____."

29. "God is _____, and his worshipers must worship in _____ and truth."

30. Jesus referred to his Father as "him who _____ me."

31. According to John, Jesus cleared the temple during the Jewish festival called _____.

Short Answer

32. List three of John's distinctive themes.

33. Write out Jesus' first words in John and explain what it shows you about Jesus.

34. Write out John 20:31.

35. List three examples of Jesus knowing people and three examples of Jesus being misunderstood in Jn. 1-4.

36. Diagram John 3:16 as we did in class by separating 1.) prepositions, 2.) subjects and verbs, 3.) objects and 4.) conjunctions.

37. List five differences between Nicodemus and the woman at the well. What does John show us about Jesus by placing these two conversations right next to each other?

38. What part of John 1-4 did you especially like? Why?

Unit 9: Signs and Controversy (John 5-11)

Lesson 1: Jesus and the Invalid (John 5:1-15)

Q: If God put a quiz on your desk, what kinds of questions do you think would be on it?

W: Make a list of Jesus' questions in John 1:1-5:6.

- What do you want? (1:37)
- Why do you involve me? (2:4)
- Do you not understand these things? (3:10)
- How then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? (3:12)
- Will you give me a drink? (4:7)
- Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? (4:35)
- Do you want to get well? (5:6)

Q: What do you notice about these questions?

A: On the surface they are simple, but on a deeper level they are thought-provoking.

Q: What's the first question God asked in the Bible?

A: "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9)

Q: Why does God ask questions?

A: It seems like he asks questions to make us stop, think, and confess the truth.

W: Read John. 5:1-15.

5:3-6 – Out of all the sick people there, why did Jesus choose to heal this man? Perhaps because this was an especially difficult case. The man probably thought he was going to die in this condition.

5:6 – Notice Jesus "learned" here as well.

Q: Why did Jesus ask if he wanted to get well? What does this show you about Jesus? What does this show you about certain sick people?

This is one of the few times Jesus takes the initiative to heal someone. Most of the time the people come to him. But notice that Jesus asked the man if he wanted to get well prior to the healing. It's as if God wants to work together with us.

Q: Did the man answer Jesus' question in John 5:7?

Basically, the man says, "The only way for me to get well is to get into the water but there's no one around to help me in." His only hope of healing is getting into the water. Think of how this man's hope must have been crushed time and time again during the last thirty-eight years. It doesn't seem like the man answered Jesus' question directly. Jesus asked, "Do you want to be healed?" and the man answered, "I can't."

5:14-15 – There's a connection between personal sin and personal hardship as the story of Adam and Eve shows, but sin is not always the cause of hardship (see Job 1-2; Jn. 9:1-3). This is why we should be careful about making judgments on whether certain calamities or tragedies are punishments from God. Sin may lead to hardship, but not necessarily.

Lessons from John 5:1-15

- Think deeper about God's seemingly simple questions.
- Be impressed with the power of God's word.
- Some but not all personal suffering is a direct result of sin.

Lesson 2: Christ's Defense (John 5:16-47)

W: Share a time when you were falsely accused. How did you respond?

W: Read John 5:16-47.

W: Handout 9.1

1. Two reasons why they wanted to kill Jesus.

1. Breaking the Sabbath
2. Blasphemy (they understood what Jesus was saying was that he was of the same nature as the Father)

2. Put Jesus' answer in 5:19-23 into your own words.

"I'm only doing what the Father is doing. The Father loves me and he shows me everything he is doing. I'm imitating the Father. For example, the Father gives life and I give life. The Father has even given me authority to judge everyone so that I will receive the same honor as the Father."

- Same work as the Father
- Same power to give life as the Father
- Same right to judge as the Father
- Same honor as the Father

3. What do you learn about the judgment of the Son of Man in 5:22, 27, 30?

- The Father has entrusted the Son with all judgment
- The Father has given him this authority because he is the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13-14)
- The Son judges only as he hears and his judgment is just

4. Who are the four witnesses Jesus appeals to in 5:31-47?

- John (5:31-35)
- Jesus' work (5:36)
- The Father (5:37)
- The Scriptures (5:39, 45-47)

5. Summarize how Jesus defends himself

- Watch who you're judging
- I'm imitating the Father perfectly
- The Father loves me
- The Father has given me authority to judge you
- I'm not just speaking for myself, I have witnesses

The fourth item on the list is a shocking rejoinder. The fact that Jesus will be our final judge is taught in several places in the NT.

W: Write out the following verses: Acts 10:42, 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Sometimes we focus on one of Jesus' roles and forget about the others. The Bible teaches that Jesus' work encompasses the past, present, and future.

Past – Creator (Jn. 1:1-3) and Sacrificial Lamb (Jn. 1:29)

Present – Lord (Rom. 10:9) and High Priest (Heb. 4:14)

Future – Final Judge (Acts 10:42) and Ultimate Servant (Lk. 12:37)

However, while Jesus' roles may change, his character remains the same (Heb. 13:8).

HW: Write an essay explaining how it makes you feel to know that Jesus, the one who suffered and died, will be your final judge.

Offense and Defense (John 5:16-47)

1. List the two reasons why the Jews wanted to kill Jesus (5:18).
2. Put Jesus' response in 5:19-23 into your own words.
3. List everything you learn about the judgment of the Son of Man in 5:22, 27, 30.
4. Who are the four witnesses Jesus appeals to in 5:31-47?
5. Look over this whole section and summarize how Jesus defends himself.

Lesson 3: Summary of John 6-8

Sometimes we miss the big picture because we only read one chapter at a time. The biblical authors didn't include chapter or verse divisions in their work so when we follow these divisions we may be missing important connections that we're supposed to be making. Today, you'll read a larger section to try to help you make the connections.

W: Read John 6-8 then do the following:

1. summarize each chapter using bullet points
2. write down one or two things that made an impression on you in each chapter and explain why
3. make a list of connecting words or ideas between the chapters

T: After students finish, review and collect.

Lessons 4-5: Group Lesson Preparation

T: Divide the class into groups then assign one of the following chapters to each group:

1. John 6
2. John 7
3. John 8
4. John 9

T: Read Handout 9.2 with the class.

We'll be reviewing each chapter during the next day's class so there will be one day off between each group lesson.

T: Allow the students to prepare these lessons for the remainder of the period and the period following.

Group Lessons

The group lessons should have the following items:

- Summary of the chapter
- Observations of key words or ideas in the chapter
- Questions related to the content
- An activity to get the class involved
- A visual – an image, prop, demonstration, etc.
- A memory verse from the chapter
- Application points – explain how it should impact our lives
- 20-25 min.

You will be graded on three main areas:

1. **Content** – make sure you have read your passage well. Your teaching should come straight from the Bible and contain all of the elements mentioned above.
2. **Presentation** – your lesson should meet the time requirement and your speaking should be clear and organized.
3. **Preparation** – you will have to turn in your complete lesson plan after you have finished teaching. Practice to make sure your lesson falls within the time limit.

Lesson 6: Student Lesson (John 6)

T: Give the group five minutes to prepare.

W: Student lesson for John 6 group

T: Review the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson

Lesson 7: Student Lesson (John 7)

T: Give the group five minutes to prepare.

W: Student lesson for John 7 group

T: Review the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson

Lesson 8: Student Lesson (John 8)

T: Give the group five minutes to prepare.

W: Student lesson for John 8 group

T: Review the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson

Lesson 9: Student Lesson (John 9)

T: Give the group five minutes to prepare.

W: Student lesson for John 9 group

T: Review the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson

T: Bring bread for the next lesson

Lesson 10: The Bread of Life (John 6)

T: Distribute bread for the students to eat.

W: Handout 9.3

Q: Using your summary of Exodus 16, how is that chapter similar to John 6?

- **The manna in the desert** – Jesus refers back to the story in Ex. 16 when God provided “bread from heaven” for the Israelites who were wandering in the wilderness. The word *manna* = what is it?
- **Jesus claimed to be the “true bread from heaven,” and “the bread of life.”** Food sustains and nourishes us temporarily, but true food – Jesus’ body and blood – nourishes us eternally. The manna coming down from heaven was a picture or foreshadowing of Jesus coming down from heaven (6:49-51).
- **The people grumbled** (Ex. 16:2, 7-8 . . . Jn. 6:41, 43, 61)

Write the verse or verses in John 6 that support the main point in the blanks.

- Jesus cared for the crowds’ physical need and felt responsible to meet it 6:5
- Jesus knows what he’s going to do 6:6
- Jesus did not let the crowds deter him from his mission 6:15
- Jesus knows why we’re seeking him 6:26
- Jesus is the bread of life 6:35
- Jesus wasn’t concerned about having the “numbers” 6:66
- The Father draws people to the Son 6:44
- We must not grumble at Jesus’ words no matter how difficult they are 6:60-64

Application Points

- Trust Jesus. He knows what he’s going to do, but he’s looking for us to trust him.
- Seek Jesus for the right reasons. Jesus knows why we’re seeking him. It’s possible to seek Jesus selfishly.
- Be fully satisfied with Jesus. Jesus is the bread of life.
- Don’t grumble at Jesus’ words no matter how difficult they are to swallow. Grumbling is the opposite of believing and accepting Jesus’ words.

The theme of Jesus' knowledge of the human heart continues:

- knew the people intended to make him king by force (6:15)
- knew why people were looking for him (6:26)
- knew that there were some who didn't believe (6:64)
- knew that one was a devil (6:70)

6:5-6 – Another one of Jesus' seemingly simple questions. Jesus asked the question only to test Philip. What does this tell you about Jesus?

6:10 – Including the women and children this number could have reached twenty thousand.⁵³

6:34 – This is a very similar misunderstanding to the woman at the well who said, "Sir, give me this water" (4:15).

6:53 – Though they grumble, Jesus doesn't back down. Jesus says life only comes from eating his flesh and drinking his blood. Think back to the Israelites in the wilderness. If they didn't eat the manna that came down from heaven they would die. It was God's provision to keep them alive. Likewise, Jesus is the true manna and if we don't take him in we'll die. Remember when Jesus said, "This is my body . . . this is my blood" in Mark? John doesn't have those words but he seems to be making a similar point here.

6:61-62 – In other words, "Does this teaching offend you? Would it still offend you if you saw me ascend to where I was before or would you accept it then?"

⁵³ Kostenberger, 202.

The Bread of Life (John 6)

1. Read and summarize Exodus 16.

2. Write the verse or verses in John 6 that support the main point in the blanks.

- Jesus cared for the crowds' physical need and felt responsible to meet it _____
- Jesus knows what he's going to do _____
- Jesus did not let the crowds deter him from his mission _____
- Jesus knows why we're seeking him _____
- Jesus is the bread of life _____
- Jesus wasn't concerned about having the "numbers" _____
- The Father draws people to the Son _____
- We must not grumble at Jesus' words no matter how difficult they are _____

3. Write out two or three application points from John 6.

Lesson 11: Judging Jesus (John 7)

T: Show four pictures of individuals and have the class make judgments about each person.

Q: What are your judgments based on?

W: Write out John 7:24; 8:15; 1 Samuel 16:7.

In a book called *Blink*, the author talks about how we frequently make snap judgments. Within the first two seconds of meeting someone we've unconsciously formed several opinions about him or her. Obviously, these initial impressions are not always accurate.

Imagine if you were a car salesman and a farmer wearing dirty coveralls walked into your showroom. What would you think? Now imagine a teenager walking in and checking out the cars. The author talks about one car salesman who tries to treat every customer the same. In order to do so he must ignore his initial snap judgment based on appearance. The car salesman explained that the farmer in dirty coveralls became one of his best customers. And he learned that it would be no surprise if the teenager's parents returned later to purchase a car.⁵⁴

Q: If you were a jeweler and a big tough motorcycle guy came into your store, would you treat him the same as a young teenage girl?

W: List the judgments people made of Jesus in John 7.

- "He is a good man" (7:12)
- "No, he deceives the people" (7:12)
- "You are demon-possessed" (7:20; cf. 8:48, 52)
- "Surely this man is the prophet" (7:40)
- "He is the Christ" (7:41)

Q: What were their judgments based on?

- Jesus' origin (7:27-29, 41-42, 52; 8:14)
- Jesus' accusation that they were trying to kill him (7:20)
- Jesus' healing on the Sabbath (7:21-24)
- Jesus' miraculous signs (7:31)

⁵⁴ Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking* (London: Penguin, 2005), 91.

Jesus' life is in serious danger because the authorities judged him to be a deceiver or demon-possessed.

- wanting to take his life (7:1)
- trying to kill him (7:25)
- tried to seize him (7:30)
- guards sent to arrest him (7:32)
- wanted to seize him (7:44)
- they picked up stones to stone him (8:59)

Jesus' opponents misjudged him because their view of him was based on appearances and human standards (7:24; 8:15). The desire to kill Jesus was rooted in a misjudgment.

Lesson 12: Water and Light (John 7:53–8:59)

John 7:53-8:11 is the other section in the Gospels similar to the ending of Mark. It's a larger portion not found in the earliest Greek copies or manuscripts, with a different style and vocabulary than the rest of the book. In addition, this passage interrupts the flow of John's narrative. Consequently, many scholars today believe this passage is not an original part of John's Gospel. However, like the ending of Mark this story sounds like what we know about Jesus and his opponents from other places in the Gospels. It's possible that this is a true story that was passed down orally and then inserted into the text at a later date.

W: Read John 7:37-39 and 8:12.

Many think John 8:12 fits in well with John 7:37-52 which means John 7:53-8:11 interrupts the flow of the narrative. Here are a few of the connections between John 7:37-52 and John 8:12:

- The phrase "Again Jesus spoke to them" in 8:12 connects with Jesus' previous statement in 7:37-38.
- The setting for both statements is the temple (see 7:14; 8:20).
- In both statements, Jesus' makes a bold claim about himself.
- Jesus' bold claims can be connected with a particular ceremony that takes place during the Feast of Booths (or Tabernacles). In John 7:37-38, Jesus claimed to be the living water.

"During the Feast of Booths, the Jewish people held organized prayer for God to send rain upon the land so that their crops the next year would be abundant. Part of this process of interceding for rain involved a ceremony in which a priest dipped a pitcher full of water from the Gihon spring, which he took in a procession back to the altar in the temple, where he poured it out on the ground. On the last day of the feast this ceremony was especially elaborate, and Jesus gives his speech about living water on the final day."⁵⁵

In John 8:12, Jesus claimed to be the light of the world. This claim would've contrasted with the lighting of the candles in the Court of Women, the same place where the water ceremony occurred.⁵⁶

So in other words, the historical background helps us to see that Jesus is claiming the temple imagery for himself. This shouldn't surprise us since he has already called his body the temple in John 2:19. Now he says he's the water and the light (which people would have associated with the

⁵⁵ Cosby, 171.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 172.

temple ceremonies). Essentially, then, the people should stop looking to the temple and start looking to Jesus.

Let's continue with the rest of John 8.

Jesus and "the Jews" argue about fatherhood in John 8:37-58.

T: Ask for two volunteers to play the roles of Jesus and "the Jews." (Print off the following for the actors.)

- Jesus says, "I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father" (vv.37-38).
- "The Jews" answer "Abraham is our father" (v.39).
- Jesus says their actions don't match Abraham's so he can't be their father (vv.39-41).
- "The Jews" take it up a notch and respond, "God is our father" (v.41).
- Jesus responds, "If God were your Father, you would love me" (v.42) and "You are of your father the devil" (v.44).
- In like fashion, "the Jews" accuse Jesus of having a demon (v.48).
- Jesus says he doesn't have a demon but he is honoring his Father (v.49).
- "The Jews" persist with the accusation that Jesus has a demon (v.52) and then ask if he's greater than Abraham (v.53).
- Jesus says God is the one who glorifies him (v.54) and then he states, "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad" (v.56).
- "The Jews" ask how he could have seen Abraham since he's not even fifty years old (v.57).
- Jesus responds, "before Abraham was, I am" (v.58).
- "They picked up stones to throw at him" but Jesus escaped (v.59).

Both at the beginning (v.37) and end of this section (v.56) Jesus acknowledges that the Jews are descendants of Abraham. And yet he also challenges this fact based on their actions (vv.39-41). In other words, they are the physical but not spiritual descendants of Abraham.

Q: What do you learn about Satan from 8:44?

- the father of the Jews who want to kill Jesus
- desires to murder (Jesus)
- a murderer from the beginning
- didn't hold to the truth
- no truth in him

- native language is lies
- liar
- father of lies

Jesus' two main points about Satan are: he's a liar and he's a murderer.

How can Jesus' opponents be so self-deluded about their father? They really think God is their father, but Jesus tells them Satan is their father. They are aligning themselves with Satan in rejecting Jesus who is the truth and holding on to lies which come from Satan. They are Satan's children because they are aligning themselves with Satan's desire and that desire is to murder. Contrary to Satan who only speaks lies, Jesus only speaks the truth. Jesus even regularly begins his statements with the phrase "I tell you the truth." But it seems like Jesus' enemies can't understand the language of truth, only the language of lies (8:45).

8:22 – Have you noticed John's repeated use of the term "the Jews"? Some believe John is anti-Semitic because of all the negative things he says about the Jews.

Q: Do you think John is anti-Semitic?

Jesus and all of his followers were Jews. John isn't referring to all Jews when he says "the Jews" but only certain Jews who were opposed to Jesus. Some think our Bibles should have the phrase in quotation marks. John's use of the phrase "the Jews" probably shows that he "wrote for people living outside Judea . . . One normally does not use a designation such as "the Americans," for example, when writing from inside America to Americans."⁵⁷

8:24, 28, 58 – There are three "I am" declarations in John 8. The Greek only has "I am" in 8:24 and 8:28.

8:58 – This is an incredible statement coming from a man in his thirties.

T: Review for a quiz on John 5-8.

W: Study for the quiz in the next class. Your memory verses will be John 6:26, 7:24, 8:44.

⁵⁷ Cosby, 168.

Lesson 13: The Healing of the Blind Man (John 9)

W: Quiz 9.1 (John 5-8)

W: Handout 9.4

T: Review Handout 9.4.

9:2 – In regard to the story of Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:22), some speculated that a person could sin in the womb. Others believed the parents' sin could be passed down to the children.⁵⁸ Either way, the point is to explain the cause of birth defects without blaming God.

9:3 – Not all suffering is a direct result of sin, but some suffering is a consequence of sin (Jn. 5:14).

9:34 – the man paid the price for sharing his testimony. He was kicked out of the synagogue. The synagogue was the center of the community, where everyone came together for worship and education.

9:38 – Notice the man worshiped Jesus and only God is worthy of worship.

This story is a picture of us before Jesus touches our lives. We're blind without Jesus. We don't know where we're going and we don't know who Jesus is.

Main Points

- Admit that you're blind.
- Trust Jesus to open your eyes.
- Tell your story - your personal testimony is powerful.
- Stick to your testimony even when you're persecuted for it.
- Worship Jesus.

HW: Read John 10 and write a five-sentence reflection (a summary with personal application points) on anything in the chapter.

T: Find pictures depicting Jesus as a shepherd to show in class tomorrow (check Google images). I like to search for "ancient images of Jesus as shepherd."

⁵⁸ Kostenberger, 281, n. 13.

Name _____

1. Write out two questions that Jesus asked in John 5.
2. List the two reasons why the Jews wanted to kill Jesus in John 5.
3. List the four witnesses Jesus referred to in John 5.
4. Jesus said, "You are _____ for me . . . because you ate the loaves and had your _____" (6:26).
5. What did Jesus say about himself in John 6 that was so offensive?
6. List three different opinions people had about Jesus in John 7.
7. "Stop _____ by mere _____, and make a right judgment" (Jn. 7:24).
8. Write out John 8:44 and list two things it teaches about Satan.

Birth Defects (John 9)

1. How many references are there to “born blind” or “blind from birth” in this chapter? _____
2. How do you explain birth defects in light of a loving Creator?
3. How would you feel if your child was born blind?
4. If you had a blind child what would you miss the most with them as they matured?
5. Which verses in John 9 show how the disciples and the Pharisees explained birth defects?
6. How many times did the man tell his testimony (how he was healed) in this chapter? _____
7. Write out 9:25.
8. What is ironic about the end of the chapter?

Lesson 14: The Good Shepherd (John 10:1-30)

T: Show depictions of Jesus as a shepherd. This is one of the most beloved images of Jesus.

Q: What does this image show us of Jesus?

Q: What do you know about sheep?

A: Sheep are dumb, dirty and helpless. Think of how slow, weak and vulnerable sheep are.

Q: Who has ever had a pet sheep?

Sheep and goats were among the most important domestic animals in the biblical world. Animals (sheep, goats, cattle) were the most valuable assets people owned. Protecting your sheep would be like protecting your bank account.

W: Come to the board and draw a sheep. The best sheep wins.

W: Read John 10:1-30.

Q: As the gate and good shepherd, what does Jesus provide his sheep with?

- protection/security (10:9, 28-29)
- provision (10:9)
- ownership (10:12)
- care (10:13) It was common for the shepherd to name each individual sheep (10:3)
- intimacy (10:14)
- sacrificial love (10:11, 15)
- eternal life (10:28)

Q: According to this passage what do the sheep have to do?

- Listen to the shepherd's voice (10:3, 16, 27) not the stranger's (10:5,8)
- Follow him (10:4)

Q: Who does Jesus claim to be in John 10?

- "I am the gate for the sheep" (10:7)

- “I am the gate” (10:9)
- “I am the good shepherd” (10:11, 14)

So the good shepherd imagery started with Jesus applying it to himself in John 10. He sees himself as our shepherd and he sees us as his sheep.

W: Handout 9.5

The Good Shepherd

Write out the following verses.

Psalms 23:1 –

Psalms 100:3 –

Isaiah 40:11 –

Isaiah 53:6 –

Read Ezekiel 34:1-16

List the things the shepherds have done wrong.

List what the LORD is going to do about it.

What do the following verses say about sheep or shepherds?

John 21:15-17 –

Hebrews 13:20 –

1 Peter 2:25 –

Revelation 7:17 –

Lesson 15: The Good Shepherd (OT & NT)

T: Review Handout 9.5 with the class.

The bad shepherds

- Only feed themselves (vv.2-3)
- Have not strengthened the weak or brought back the strays (v.4)
- Ruled harshly (v.4)

The Lord's response

- Against the shepherds (v.10)
- Rescue his sheep (v.10, 12)
- Search for his sheep (v.11-12)
- Bring them into their own land (v.13)
- Feed them on the mountains of Israel, with good pasture (vv.13-14)
- Will be the shepherd of his sheep (v.15)
- Will make them lie down (v.15)

W: Read John 10:31-42.

10:31-33 – This is the second time they tried to stone Jesus (8:58-59). They believed it was their duty to kill him.

W: Write out Leviticus 24:16.

HW: Read and outline John 11:1-44.

Lesson 16: The Resurrection and the Life (John 11:1-44)

Q: How did you outline John 11:1-44?

Outline

1. The crisis and the call for help (vv.1-3)
2. Jesus delays (vv.4-6)
3. Jesus returns to Judea with the disciples (vv.7-16)
4. Jesus meets Martha (vv.17-27)
5. Jesus meets Mary and the Jews (vv.28-37)
6. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (vv.38-44)

W: In groups answer the following questions:

1. What questions do you have about this story?
 2. What do you learn about Jesus?
 3. How should this story affect how we live?
1. What questions do you have?
 - If you were Mary or Martha when would you expect Jesus to come?
 - Why didn't Jesus go to Mary?
 - What is Thomas talking about in verse 16?
2. What do you learn about Jesus?
 - He was especially close to Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.
 - He knew the purpose of Lazarus' sickness
 - He had his own timetable
 - He was deeply moved and wept
 - He is the resurrection and the life
 - He knew that God always hears him
3. How should this story affect how we live?
 - This is a great story for those who feel like God has disappointed them.

Q: How many of you have gotten frustrated with God? Why?

It's spiritually and emotionally healthy to be honest about your feelings. David vented his frustration to God in the Psalms.

Q: How do you feel when things don't happen when you expect them to happen?

We can apply the following things to our lives when we're in a difficult situation:

- Trust that God cares for us even when we don't understand his timing.
 - God doesn't get stressed out over our crises like we do.
 - God doesn't always do things when we expect but his timing is perfect.
 - It's never too late with Jesus. Jesus can reverse a hopeless situation.
- Be focused on God's glory. God's plan is to be glorified through our difficult and even hopeless situations.
- Remember that Jesus feels our pain.

11:5 – Some people were closer to Jesus than others. Just as we can't be best friends with everyone, neither could Jesus. Jesus had a special closeness with these three.

11:9-10 – Jesus is saying there's still some time left.

11:16 – Thomas believes Jesus is going to be killed in Judea.

11:21, 32 – Notice the sisters' disappointment and despair – "if you had been here my brother would not have died." In their minds, it's too late. They had seen Jesus heal on many occasions but now when their brother was in need, Jesus didn't come through for them.

11:33, 38 – The Greek word translated as "deeply moved," "has the connotation of snorting (in animals) . . . most insist that Jesus' emotions went beyond sorrow to actual indignation."⁵⁹

John has already said much about Jesus' authority to raise the dead (5:25, 28-29; 6:40, 44; 10:18). There are three stories of Jesus raising the dead in the Gospels (see Mk 5:35-43; Lk 7:11-17).

T: Ask for volunteers to play the following parts in a skit: narrator, Jesus, Lazarus, Mary, Martha, Thomas, and the Jews. Everyone else can assist with props and ideas. Appoint a director. (You can also divide the class into groups and have each group work on the same skit in their unique ways.)

⁵⁹ Kostenberger, 339.

Lesson 17: Rehearsal of John 11

T: Remind students of the main points from the previous lesson.

W: Prepare your skit. The skit should be about fifteen minutes long.

1. Make sure to get some toilet paper or something to wrap up Lazarus.
2. Use background music for the following scenes:

Scene 1 – Jesus and disciples walking to Judea

Scene 2 – Everyone weeping

Scene 3 – Lazarus coming out of the tomb

T: If possible, arrange for an elementary class to watch the performance tomorrow (after some more preparation time at the start of the period).

Lesson 18: Reenactment of John 11

T: Give about ten to fifteen minutes for rehearsal.

W: Present the skit.

T: Debrief with the class.

Lesson 19: John 5-11 Review: Part 1

Divide the class into four groups. Give each group a set of four items to be acted out in a mime. Give ten to fifteen minutes to prepare the mimes then time each group. The group which has all of their mimes guessed by the class the fastest wins.

Group 1

Jesus asked the invalid "Do you want to get well?"

Jesus feeds the 5,000

Jesus said "I am the gate"

Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick and stayed where he was for two days

Group 2

Jesus walks on water

"I am the bread of life"

Even his own brothers did not believe in him

The man who was blind worshipped Jesus

Group 3

Jesus heals the blind man

"I am the good shepherd"

The devil is a liar and murderer

"Lazarus, come out"

Group 4

Jesus wrote on the ground

Jesus calls God "my Father"

We have to eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood

Many of Jesus' disciples deserted him

W: Write out the events of John 5-11 in order (no references required).

List the opposition Jesus faced in John 5-11 (no references required).

List Jesus' "I am" statements in John 5-11 (references required).

John 5-11 events in order

- Jesus heals the invalid
- The invalid is questioned
- Jesus defends himself - the four witnesses
- Jesus feeds the five thousand
- Jesus withdrew from the crowd
- Jesus walks on water
- Jesus claims to be the bread of life
- Many of the disciples turned back
- Many people disagree about Jesus' identity at the Feast of Booths
- Jesus shows mercy to the woman caught in the act of adultery
- Jesus is accused of being demon-possessed
- Jesus and the Pharisees argue about the identity of their fathers
- Jesus heals the man born blind
- The blind man is questioned and thrown out of the synagogue
- Jesus claims to be the good shepherd and the gate
- The Jews attempt to stone Jesus
- Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead
- Many Jews put their faith in Jesus
- The Pharisees and chief priests plot to kill Jesus

Opposition to Jesus in John 5-11

- Tried to kill him in Jerusalem (5:18)
- The Jews grumble and argue sharply at his teachings (6:41-42, 52)
- Stays in Galilee because the Jews in Jerusalem are waiting to take his life (7:1)
- In Jerusalem he is accused of being demon-possessed (7:20; 8:48, 52; 10:20-21)
- They tried to seize him (7:30)
- Pharisees challenge him – "your testimony is not valid" (8:13)
- Picked up stones to stone him (8:59)
- Again they picked up stones to stone him (10:31)
- Pharisees plot to take his life (11:53)

“I am” statements

1. “I am the bread of life” (6:35, 48)
2. “I am the light of the world” (8:12; 9:5)
3. “I am” (8:58)
4. “I am the gate” (10:9)
5. “I am the good shepherd” (10:11)
6. “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25)

Lesson 20: John 5-11 Review: Part 2

W: Handout 9.6

Jesus' signs

1. Turns water into wine (ch. 2)
2. Heals the official's son (ch. 4)
3. Heals the lame man (ch. 5)
4. Feeds five thousand (ch. 6)
5. Walks on water (ch. 6)
6. Heals a man born blind (ch. 9)
7. Raises Lazarus from the dead (ch. 11)

Observations on the seven signs

- They're all different. John didn't want to repeat himself.
- Jesus walking on water was a private sign for the disciples.
- The signs seem to get increasingly more difficult: the official's son was sick, the lame man was in that condition for thirty-eight years, the blind man was born that way, and Lazarus was dead for four days.

Q: How would you categorize the list of signs?

A: Perhaps signs performed for individuals (2, 3, 6, 7) and signs performed for groups (1, 4)

T: Review with the class for the test.

Test 2

Free Period

Study Guide for Test 2 (John 5-11)

1. List the two reasons why the Jews tried to stone Jesus (5:18).
2. List the four witnesses (5:32-40).
3. What are the three ways bread is used in John 6?
4. Write out John 6:15. What does this show us about Jesus?
5. Write out and memorize John 6:35.
6. List the five main points of John 6 from your notes.
7. "The right _____ for me has not yet come" (7:6)
8. List the different opinions people had of Jesus in this chapter.
9. Write out and memorize John 7:24.
10. Why do most scholars think John 7:53-8:11 is not original to John's Gospel?
11. Write out John 8:44 then make four observations about these verses.
12. Write out and memorize John 9:25.
13. List three facts about sheep from your notes.
14. As the good shepherd what does Jesus provide his sheep with? (List three items).
15. What feast is mentioned in John 10? What does it celebrate?
16. What can we apply to our lives from John 11:1-44?

Festivals in John

1. Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread (2:13; 6:4; 11:55) – a reminder of Israel's escape from Egypt. It's celebrated in the first month of the Jewish year.

2. Feast of Tabernacles/Booths (7:2) – a week-long celebration in Jerusalem (Dt. 16) which occurred about six months after Passover. This festival commemorates Israel's journey through the wilderness (Lev. 23:33-43).

3. Feast of Dedication/Hanukkah (10:22) – a week-long celebration of the rededication of the temple in 164 BC. The temple needed to be rededicated because it had been desecrated by a pagan ruler who set up the worship of Zeus and sacrificed pigs on the altar.

Name _____

True or False

- _____ 1. Abraham lived about two thousand years before Jesus.
- _____ 2. Jesus asked the blind man if he wanted to get well before he healed him.
- _____ 3. The people wanted to make Jesus king after they saw him walk on water.
- _____ 4. Jesus went to the Feast of Tabernacles with his brothers.
- _____ 5. God said, "I am who I am" in Ezekiel 3.
- _____ 6. The blind man worshipped Jesus after Jesus healed him.
- _____ 7. The Feast of Tabernacles is a reminder of Israel's wandering in the wilderness.
- _____ 8. The story of the woman caught in adultery was probably in John's original Gospel.
- _____ 9. Jesus was accused of being a Samaritan in this section.
- _____ 10. Hanukkah was first celebrated about one hundred fifty years after Jesus was born.

Chapter Content

- _____ 11. The four witnesses
- _____ 12. "I am the bread of life"
- _____ 13. "I am the gate"
- _____ 14. Feast of Tabernacles
- _____ 15. Lazarus was raised from the dead
- _____ 16. "You belong to your father the devil"

Fill in the Blank

17. Ezekiel chapter _____ talks about the bad shepherds.
18. "Stop _____ by mere _____, and make a right judgment" (7:24).
19. Jesus asked _____ where they should buy bread for all the people to eat.
20. According to John 8:44, the devil is both a _____ and a _____.
21. _____ that God cares for you even when you don't understand his _____.
22. "The _____ of God is this to _____ in the one he has sent" (6:29).

Short Answer

23. List Jesus' six different "I am" statements.
24. Write out John 6:35 and explain what it means.

25. Read the verses below then write a five-sentence reflection for each of them.

“Jesus answered, ‘My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own’”
(Jn. 7:16-17).

“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (Jn. 8:31-32).

Unit 10: The Last Days (John 12-21)

Lesson 1: Honoring Jesus (John 12:1-19)

Q: If Jesus walked into your home how would you honor him?

This chapter highlights three ways that Jesus was honored.

1. Dinner
2. Anointing of his feet
3. Palm branches and shouts of praise

W: Read John 12:1-19.

12:31 – “the prince of this world” (14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4). Satan is powerful but Jesus is going to drive him out. All authority has been given to Jesus.

12:17 – Imagine telling this story.

W: Pass out blank paper and have students write a newspaper article recounting the raising of Lazarus. Include a title, summary, interview, and picture.

Lesson 2: Responding to Jesus (John 12:20-50)

T: Collect newspaper articles.

W: Read John 12:20-50 and list three responses to Jesus found here.

Responses to Jesus

- 1. Belief (12:11)**
- 2. Unbelief (12:37-41)** – John seems to indicate that unbelief is a punishment from God. They are clearly responsible for their unbelief in 12:37 and yet they could not believe as stated in 12:39 according to Isaiah 6:10.
- 3. Secret Belief (12:42-43)**
 - a. Feared persecution
 - b. Loved man's praise more than God's

12:23 – The theme of timing is prominent in John (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20; 12:23). Timing is also emphasized through the theme of light (day) and darkness (night) (9:4-5; 11:9-10; 12:35-36).

W: Read John 13:30.

The phrase “and it was night” in 13:30 means more than “it was dark outside.” It means the “day” that Jesus has been talking about has ended; the time of evil has begun.

Let's return to the idea of unbelief as punishment from God. John quotes from Isaiah so let's read that passage.

W: Read Isaiah 6:1-10. According to John 12:41, Isaiah saw Jesus about seven hundred years before Jesus came to earth.

W: Read Exodus 9:34-10:1 and Acts 2:23 then write an essay explaining how you understand the workings of human choice and God's control.

There's a mysterious connection between God's will and human will. In Exodus 9, God hardened Pharaoh's heart and yet Pharaoh hardened his own heart. In Acts 2:23, God planned the death of Jesus, but the people who killed Jesus were still guilty. This seems to be what we have in John 12. There's a mystery here that we can't fully understand. The church has debated the topic of divine

sovereignty (control) and human freedom (responsibility) for two thousand years. Christians are scattered across the spectrum with Calvinists emphasizing divine sovereignty and Arminians emphasizing human freedom.

Lesson 3: Serving Others (John 13)

John 13-17 forms a unit which focuses on Jesus and his disciples.

- Jesus' last act (Jn. 13)
- Jesus' farewell words (Jn. 14-16)
- Jesus' final prayer (Jn. 17)

W: Read John 13:1-3.

Q: What did Jesus know?

- The time had come for him to leave the world and go to the Father.
- The Father had given all things into his hands.
- He came from God and he's going to God.

Q: If you knew these things about yourself what would you do before you left your followers?

Most of us would probably show off by performing one last display of power. Or perhaps you would like your disciples to show their love for you, "Guys, I'm going to be leaving soon and I'm going to be put in charge of the world. Now is your final chance to show your love for me before I go."

Q: How would you feel if Jesus walked into this room and started washing your feet?

The task of washing someone's feet was reserved for the household servant. Jesus takes on the role of the servant. Why is the Lord of the universe washing dirty feet?

Q: What are some servant-like roles in our society? What would you think if Jesus took on the role of the custodian or maid?

W: Read John 13:3-38.

13:12-17 – Notice the words *do* and *done*. We have to *do* these things. You've only gotten this lesson if you serve others. Mark expressed the same point in a different way (Mk. 9:35; 10:43-45).

13:14 – While there are some churches that continue to practice foot washing today, many do not continue this practice.

Q: Should Christians still wash each other's feet? Why or why not?

The churches that don't practice foot washing view it as a cultural expression in Jesus' time. If this view is correct, we're excused from foot washing but not from serving each other.

W: In groups discuss how we can serve others in school, home, church, etc.

Q: Why is it so hard to serve others?

A: Pride, laziness . . . we're too wrapped up in ourselves to help others. Jesus was a true servant to the very end (Phil. 2:3-8). He served out of love. And he's still the same today (Heb. 13:8).

Q: What loving things can you do that you're not currently doing?

Remember, you're blessed if you do these things, but you're not working to earn your salvation. You're saved, but you may not be living up to your full potential as a Christian. Jesus' last act toward his disciples was one of service.

HW: The next class will have an open Bible quiz on John 14-16.

Lesson 4: Jesus' Farewell Speech (John 14-16)

Q: Do you find it harder to be the one who is left or the one who leaves?

Q: What is the most encouraging thing you could hear from someone close to you who's leaving you?

Imagine being one of the disciples at this time. You've been with Jesus for about three years, you've seen him do amazing things, you believe he's the Messiah, and now he says he's leaving.

W: Quiz – John 14-16 (The quiz is self-explanatory. Make sure to complete the back.)

Name _____

*Include a Scripture reference for each item that you list.

What encouraging things did Jesus say in John 14? (List at least five items)

What is the Holy Spirit going to do in John 14-16? (List at least seven items)

What did Jesus command in John 14-16? (List at least seven items)

On the back write a journal entry pretending as if you're one of Jesus' disciples. Reflect on Jesus' announced departure using all five senses. Your entry must be at least ten sentences in length.

Lesson 5: Jesus' Farewell Speech Reviewed

T: Review the quiz with the class.

Jesus' Encouraging Words in John 14

- There's plenty of space for you (v.2)
- I am going there to prepare a place for you (v.2)
- I will come back and take you to be with me (v.3) I'll see you again (16:22)
- I will do whatever you ask in my name – “ask with an appeal to me”⁶⁰ (vv.13-14)
- The Father will give you another Paraclete/Helper (v.16)
- I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you (v.18)
- Peace I leave with you (v.27)

Basically, Jesus is saying, “I’m leaving you but I’m not going to forget you.” He’s going there to make preparations for them so that they can be with him forever and then he’ll return for them. Until then, Jesus leaves them with peace and his Spirit who will be his replacement on earth.

John used a Greek word *parakletos* to refer to the Holy Spirit in this passage. This word has been notoriously difficult to translate in English. The following translations have been used: Counselor, Advocate, Encourager, Comforter, Companion, and Helper. One commentator says, “‘Paraclete’ – we may conclude – here has a specific meaning that can hardly be conveyed in one word . . . but of which the dominant idea is of someone who offers assistance in a situation in which help is needed.”⁶¹ Another commentator settles for the translation “helping presence.”⁶²

What is the Holy Spirit going to do? (14-16)

- be with them forever, live inside them (14:16-17)
- remind them of everything Jesus said (14:26)
- testify about Jesus (15:26)
- convict the world of guilt (16:8)
- guide them into all truth (16:13)
- speak only what he hears (16:13)
- tell them things to come (16:13)
- bring glory to Jesus by taking what belongs to Jesus and making it known to them (16:14)

⁶⁰ Ridderbos, 497.

⁶¹ Ibid., 503.

⁶² Kostenberger, 436, n. 70.

Jesus' Commands in John 14-16

- trust God, trust Jesus (14:1)
- love one another (13:34, 35; 15:12, 17)
- ask for whatever they want (14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26)
- remain in Jesus (15:4)
- remain in Jesus' love (15:9)
- keep in mind that the world hated me first (15:18)
- remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' (15:20)
- testify about Jesus (15:27)
- take heart (16:33)

Summary

- I'm not going to forget you (Jn. 14).
- Don't forget me or my teachings; stay connected to me (Jn. 15).
- The Holy Spirit is going to come to you and be my replacement (Jn. 16).

It's easy to forget about what a teacher or parent says when they leave. But Jesus repeatedly tells his disciples that although he's leaving them, they shouldn't let go of his words. In other words, he says, "I won't be here physically, but we do have a spiritual connection which can be broken if you forget about me and my teachings. If you truly love me, you will continue to obey me even though I'll be absent physically. But be encouraged, while I'll be absent physically, I'll be present spiritually and one day I'll return for you."

14:6 – This is one of the primary verses used to support the exclusivity of Christ. When there's an exclusive offer at a store, the offer is limited to that particular place. Likewise, the exclusivity of Christ means we can only receive salvation from him.

14:12 – This is a hard verse to understand. How can we do something greater than raise the dead? Many think "greater works" equals "more works" so that by working together Jesus' followers will be able to do more than Jesus did while he was on earth. Others think "greater works" relates to the time period in which Jesus' followers will conduct their mission. They will carry out their mission at a greater time in salvation history, i.e., when Jesus has completed his work on earth and gone to the Father.⁶³ The second option is supported by the last phrase in John 14:12.

⁶³ Kostenberger, 433.

15:1-8 – Notice the repeated words “fruit” and “remain” or “abide.” We should remain in Jesus in order to bear fruit. Think of a branch on the ground. Can that branch produce anything while it’s lying on the ground? Jesus is saying our lives will be like a dead branch if we fall away from him.

15:9-17 – Notice the emphasis on love in this section. Love is connected to obedience and joy (vv.10-11). Can you relate with this? When our relationships are good and everyone loves each other as they should, we have joy. But when we have a problem with someone our joy dissipates. Remember that Jesus came to give us abundant life and this means loving one another so that we can be full of joy.

The Pattern in 15:18-16:15

- Persecution is coming (15:18-25)
- The Holy Spirit is coming (15:26-27)
- Persecution is coming (16:2-4)
- The Holy Spirit is coming (16:7-15)

Lesson 6: The Trinity

W: On a half sheet of paper write down what you remember about Jesus' farewell speech.

Here's the speech in a nutshell: "I'm not going to forget about you. Don't forget about me or my teachings. You're going to face trials but be encouraged because I'm going to send you the Helper and I'm going to return for you."

We now come to one of the most difficult teachings of the Christian faith, the doctrine of the Trinity.

Q: What questions do you have about the Trinity?

The doctrine of the Trinity starts with a man who lived two thousand years ago in Israel and who acted and spoke like he was God. He not only spoke like he was God but he demonstrated supernatural power by healing the sick, raising the dead, and rising from the dead himself. Jesus' disciples were all Jews and as Jews they were raised with a strong belief in only one God. However, as they considered the life, teachings, and power of Jesus they became convinced that the man Jesus was also divine. This was the beginning of the doctrine of the Trinity.

W: Read Handout 10.1.

T: What can you conclude from this data?

What's the point? When we look at the life of Jesus it's clear that we shouldn't think of Jesus in isolation from the Father and the Spirit because we wouldn't know Jesus without the Father and the Spirit. Without the Father, we would have to eliminate the incarnation because it was the Father who sent Jesus to earth – "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son." Without the Spirit empowering Jesus for his mission, he wouldn't have accomplished all that he did. In fact, he wouldn't have even been born because he was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Throughout his life Jesus taught about the Father and the Spirit. If we are followers of Christ, we must accept his teachings. All three, Father, Son, and Spirit are essential for our faith and salvation.

W: Complete Handout 10.2.

The Trinity

Trinity = one God who eternally exists in three Persons. (Of course, the word “Person” does not mean exactly the same thing as human persons.) A key to understanding the doctrine of the Trinity is to focus on the life of Jesus as presented in the Gospels. In so doing, we can watch the relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit unfold in the narrative of Scripture.

Jesus and the Father

John begins his Gospel in this way: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn. 1:1). Since “the Word” refers to Jesus, John’s opening statement means that Jesus was with God and Jesus was God. How can that be? How can you be both with someone and be that someone at the same time? You can’t. John’s statement takes us into a mystery about God. John is saying that Jesus was with God the Father and that Jesus himself is God. In particular, we know from many other passages that Jesus is God the Son and he was with God the Father. According to Paul, before Jesus became a human he was “in very nature God” (Phil. 2:6). John continues by saying that through Jesus “all things were made” (Jn. 1:2). So Jesus was with God the Father before anything else existed, he was divine in nature, and God made all things through Jesus.

Out of love, God sent his Son into the world he created in order to save it. At birth the Son was given the name Jesus. Even at the age of 12, Jesus had a close relationship with God, calling him “my Father” (Lk. 2:49). When Jesus was about the age of 30, the Father announced his love for him at his baptism – “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased” (Lk. 3:22). Jesus demonstrated his love for his Father by perfectly obeying him (Jn. 14:31)—doing only what he saw his Father doing (Jn. 5:19) and speaking only what his Father told him to speak (Jn. 12:50). And Jesus’ perfect obedience found its greatest expression in his death on a cross (Phil. 2:8). In response, the Father vindicated his Son by raising him from the dead (Acts 2:32) and exalting him to the highest place (Phil. 2:9). Jesus is now seated at his Father’s right hand (Heb. 1:3; Col. 3:1). The Father has even entrusted final judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father (Jn. 5:22-23). And book of Revelation describes a worship scene where Jesus (or the Lamb) receives the same praise and honor as God the Father (5:13-14). After everything has been put under Christ’s feet, “Then the end will come, when the Son hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power” (1 Cor. 15:24).

Jesus and the Spirit

The Spirit is so intricately connected to Jesus that he is referred to as the “Spirit of Jesus” (Acts 16:7) and the “Spirit of Christ” (Rom. 8:9). Mary’s miraculous conception of the baby Jesus was the work of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18, 20). Three decades later, while John was baptizing Jesus, the Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove (Lk. 3:22), and remained on him (Jn. 1:33). Following his baptism, the Spirit sent

Jesus into the desert where he was tempted by Satan (Mk. 1:12-13). Returning from the desert in the power of the Spirit (Lk. 4:14), Jesus announced that the Spirit of the Lord had anointed him for his mission (Lk. 4:18-19) and by the Spirit he proceeded to drive out demons (Mt. 12:28). Before his crucifixion, Jesus taught his disciples in greater detail about the Spirit, explaining how the Spirit would be his replacement on earth by coming to aid his disciples in a variety of ways (Jn.14:16-17, 26; 16:13). Even during his suffering, the Spirit did not leave Jesus because it was through the eternal Spirit that Jesus offered himself to God (Heb. 9:14) then he died. But three days later Jesus was raised from the dead by the same Spirit (Rom. 1:4; 8:11). As promised, Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit from the Father on his disciples (Acts 2:33), giving his followers power to be his witnesses.

What can you conclude from this information?

The Holy Spirit

Christian theology teaches that the Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity. Throughout the Bible, the Spirit is referred to in divine and personal terms. Look up the following references and list the personal and divine characteristics or activities attributed to the Holy Spirit.

Psalms 104:30 –

Psalms 139:7 –

John 14:15-17 –

John 14:25-26 –

John 15:26 –

John 16:13-15 –

Acts 5:3-4 –

Acts 13:2 –

Acts 28:25 –

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 –

1 Corinthians 12:11 –

Ephesians 4:30 –

Hebrews 9:14 –

Lesson 7: Creeds and Unity

From studying the Scriptures, the early church came to the conclusion that Jesus is one *person* with two *natures*. This means that orthodox Christians affirm Jesus' full humanity and full divinity—one person with two natures. 100% God and 100% man. To deny either nature leads into heresy.

Heresy = false teaching. False views about Christ are known as Christological heresies.

Two heresies

1. **Arianism** which was promoted by Arius (c. A.D. 250-336) is the view that Jesus was a created being, albeit the greatest of God's creatures. This view of Jesus is held by Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons.
2. **Docetism** is the heresy on the other side of the spectrum. Docetism = the view that Jesus was purely divine and only appeared to be human.

The official beliefs of the church were crystallized in the form of creeds. The creeds act like a fence so that those inside and outside the church can clearly see the boundaries of Christian belief. Two of the most important creeds are the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian Creed which were both named after the cities where they were formulated.

W: Handout 10.3

The Creeds

The Nicene Creed (A.D. 325, revised in A.D. 381)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Chalcedonian Creed (A.D. 451)

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

What do you notice about these two creeds?

Lesson 8: An Overview of the Trinity

W: In groups answer these two questions:

1. Is Jesus inferior to God the Father?
2. If the Trinity is true, who should we pray to?

1. Is God the Son inferior to God the Father?

Christians make an important distinction between function and essence. Jesus has the same essence or nature as the Father, just as a human son has the same nature as his father. Both the human son and the human father are of the same value or worth. But in function the human son usually submits himself to his father. Likewise Jesus submits himself to his Father.

2. Who should we pray to?

Jesus taught us to pray to the Father but we are to offer up these prayers in Jesus' name (Mt. 6:9; Jn. 16:23). We come to God through Jesus and by the Spirit (Eph. 2:18). In the NT, prayer is usually addressed to God the Father (Mt. 6:9; Eph. 1:17; 3:14; Col. 1:3). Even thanksgiving is to be offered to God the Father through Jesus (Col. 3:17). However, Jesus is also thanked (1 Tim. 1:12) worshiped (Lk. 24:52), and petitioned (Acts 7:59; 2 Cor. 12:8). So in the NT the regular practice is to address the Father in prayer, but there is evidence of prayer to Jesus. Since the Father and Son are in each other (Jn. 14:11) and are regularly linked in Paul's letters (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Thess. 2:16) when one is addressed, the other is involved as well.

We don't have any examples or instructions of prayer to the Spirit in the NT. Some think prayer to the Spirit is implied in 2 Corinthians 13:14 which says, "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." What we do clearly see is the Spirit dwelling in believers (Rom. 8:9), speaking through believers (Acts 4:25; 28:25), speaking to believers (Acts 10:19; 1 Tim. 4:1), and helping believers in their weakness by praying for them (Rom. 8:26-27). This definitely shows a close connection between believers and the Spirit.

W: Handout 10.4. Read the references in bold.

T: I have also created a Prezi on the Trinity which you can find by here <https://prezi.com/y9jwfk0i7z9/the-doctrine-of-the-trinity/>.

The Trinity

Many think the doctrine of the trinity is the most complex of all Christian teachings. The word *trinity* is never used in the Bible; the teaching comes from examining the Bible as a whole. Trinity means _____ - *One God, existing in three 'Persons.'* According to this teaching, there is one God with distinctions in his being, specifically three distinctions, which we call 'Persons.'

Person is a very hard word to define. When referring to God we basically mean that the Father, Son, and Spirit each have the essential characteristics of a person such as speech, will, love, feelings, etc. While there are similarities between these 'Persons' and human persons there are also major differences. Like us, the Divine 'Persons' are _____ or distinguishable from each other, but unlike us they are _____. They are so closely connected that they are spoken of as being in each other; each 'Person' shares in the life of the other two. Because they are inseparable they are perfectly united in every way but because they are distinct each has a different _____. Ultimately, the Trinity is a _____, which reminds us that there are things about God that we cannot fully comprehend.

One God

Dt. 6:4-5; Is. 44:6; 46:9; 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2:5; **Jam. 2:19**

Three 'Persons'

Father – 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6

Son – Jn. 1:1; 20:28; 8:58 ; **Phil. 2:6**; Mk. 2:7; Heb. 1:3, 8; **Col. 2:9**; **2 Pet. 1:1**

Spirit – Jn. 14:26; 16:5-15; **Acts 5:3-4**; 13:2; Ps. 139:7; Heb. 9:14; **1 Cor. 12:11**; **Eph. 4:30**

*Notice that while all three are referred to as God, they are distinguished from each other.

Three in One

Lk. 3:21-22; 11:27; **Jn. 5:19**; 10:30; 14:26; **Gal. 4:6**; 1 Pet. 1:2; Jude 20-21

Write out the following verses: Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2.

Trinitarian Heresies

Heresy = false teaching. Here are two false teachings about the Trinity:

1. _____ – One God who changed into three different **modes** successively – Father, Son, and Spirit. In summary it means there's one God with three names.

2. _____ – the worship of three gods. Emphasizes the distinction of each, but excludes the unity of the three which makes them one.

"I cannot think of the One without being enlightened by the splendor of the Three; nor can I distinguish them without being carried back to the One." Gregory of Nazianzus (fourth century A.D.)

The Trinity

Many think the doctrine of the trinity is the most complex of all Christian teachings. The word “trinity” is never used in the Bible; the teaching comes from examining the teaching of the Bible as a whole. Trinity means tri-unity - *One God, existing in three ‘Persons.’* It is the doctrine which asserts that there is one God with distinctions in his being, specifically three distinctions, which we call ‘Persons.’

Person is a very hard word to define. When referring to God we basically mean that the Father, Son, and Spirit each have the essential characteristics of a person: speech, will, love, feelings, etc. While there are some similarities between these ‘Persons’ and human persons there are also major differences. Like us the Divine ‘Persons’ are distinct or distinguishable from each other, but unlike us they are inseparable. They are so closely connected that they are spoken of as being in each other; each ‘Person’ shares in the life of the other two. Because they are inseparable they are perfectly united in every way but because they are distinct each has a different role. Ultimately, the Trinity is a mystery, which reminds us that there are things about God that we cannot fully comprehend.

T: Ask for volunteers to read out loud the verses in bold and any other verses that you choose.

One God

Dt. 6:4-5; Is. 44:6; 46:9; 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2:5; **Jam. 2:19**

Three ‘Persons’

Father – 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6

Son – Jn. 1:1; 20:28; 8:58; **Phil. 2:6**; Mk. 2:7; Heb. 1:3, 8; **Col. 2:9**; **2 Pet. 1:1**

Spirit – Jn. 14:26; 16:5-15; **Acts 5:3-4**; 13:2; Ps. 139:7; Heb. 9:14; **1 Cor. 12:11**; **Eph. 4:30**

*Notice that while all three are referred to as God, they are distinguished from each other.

Three in One

Lk. 3:21-22; 11:27; **Jn. 5:19**; 10:30; 14:26; **Gal. 4:6**; 1 Pet. 1:2; Jude 20-21

Write out the following verses: Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14 and 1 Pet. 1:2.

Trinitarian Heresies

Heresy = false teaching. There are many false teachings about the Trinity. Two of the most popular are modalism and tritheism.

Modalism – One God who changed into three different **modes** successively – Father, Son and Spirit. In summary, it means there's one God with three names.

Tritheism – the worship of three gods. Emphasizes the distinction of each, but excludes the unity of the three which makes them one.

"I cannot think of the One without being enlightened by the splendor of the Three; nor can I distinguish them without being carried back to the One." Gregory of Nazianzus (fourth century A.D.)

Lesson 9: Analogies for the Trinity

W: Handout 10.5

T: Information below for Handout 10.5

- **Psychological** – This comes from Augustine who lived in the fourth century. He noticed that when we think about anything three things are always involved: memory, will, and understanding. For example, when you think of a blue car you're using memory to bring up the concept of blue and car which is already stored in your brain, you're using your will in deciding to think about this concept, and your comprehension is involved because you understand what a blue car is.
- **Social** – Society is made up of diverse people who are united. Think of a crowd in an athletic stadium all cheering for the same team. Like a perfect society, the Divine Persons are distinct from each other, but also in perfect harmony with each other.
- **Organic** – $H + H + O = \text{Water}$. You can't remove one of the elements and still have water. Likewise you can't remove one of the members of the Trinity and still have God.
- **Time** – We make three distinctions in time: past, present, and future but there's still a oneness to all of time.
- **Sun and sunlight** – Justin Martyr in the second century said just as sunlight is distinct but inseparable from the sun so is the Father and the Son.
- **Shamrock** – St. Patrick used the shamrock or the three-leaf clover to illustrate the trinity; three parts one stem.
- **Equilateral Triangle**
- $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$

Q: Can you think of any more analogies?

Analogies for the Trinity

An analogy is an illustration that uses a comparison with something similar. There is no perfect analogy for anything and this is especially true for the doctrine of the Trinity, because nothing on earth compares with God. While there is no perfect analogy for the Trinity, some have found the following analogies helpful.

Psychological –

Social –

Organic –

Time –

Sun and sunlight –

Shamrock –

Equilateral Triangle –

1x1x1 =1

Make a list of the practical implications of the doctrine of the Trinity. What difference does it make to believe and relate to a triune God?

Practical implications of the doctrine of the Trinity

1. God is relational and personal. God was never a single solitary being. God was always in a loving relationship. To think of one member of the Trinity in isolation from the others is to cut off the essential relationships that make God, God. The idea that God is relational and personal allows us to connect with God on a personal level.
2. God is the greatest example of unity in diversity which is the goal of human society and the dilemma philosophers have been trying to solve for thousands of years. God's nature shows us perfect harmony.
3. God is immanent and transcendent. Immanent = within the world; transcendent = above and beyond the world. The Trinity shows us that God is both within the world through his Spirit and above the world on his throne.
4. The Trinity is our source of salvation and eternal life. Only a Triune God could save us in every way. Perhaps we can say, we needed someone to pay the price for our sins (the Son), someone to help us through life (the Spirit), and someone to tell us how to live (the Father).
5. Prayer takes on a new dynamic. We have access to God through the sacrifice of his Son and we have the Spirit's help as we pray (Rom. 8:26).
6. God is mysterious. We can't fully comprehend God. Although God has revealed himself to us, he's still mysterious.

W: Review Handouts 10.1-10.5 and memorize Matthew 28:19 for a quiz tomorrow.

Lesson 10: Jesus' Prayer (John 17)

W: Quiz 10.1

John 17 is the longest recorded prayer in the NT and yet it can be read in less than four minutes.

W: Read Handout 10.6 and underline Jesus' requests then write a reflection on anything in this chapter.

Name _____

1. Define trinity –
2. Write out Matthew 28:19. How can this verse be used to support the doctrine of the trinity?
3. Like us, the divine “Persons” are _____ from each other but unlike us they are _____.
4. List three facts about Jesus from your handout that show he is divine.
5. Define modalism –
6. Define tritheism –
7. Define heresy –
8. Ultimately the Trinity is a _____.
9. T or F The word, *Trinity*, is used once in the Bible.
10. List two practical implications of the doctrine of the Trinity.

John 17

Read John 17 and underline Jesus' requests then write a reflection on anything in this chapter.

¹After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ²For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

⁶"I have revealed you^[a] to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. ¹³"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷Sanctify^[b] them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

²⁰"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵"Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." (NIV)

Notice the three-part outline of John 17:

1. Jesus prays for himself (17:1-5)
2. Jesus prays for the disciples (17:6-19)
3. Jesus prays for all future disciples (17:20-26)

Jesus' Requests

- Glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you (vv.1, 5)
- Protect them so that they may be one as we are one (v.11) and from the evil one (v.15)
- That all of them may be one (vv.11, 21) complete unity (v.23)
- Sanctify them by the truth (v.17)
- I want them to be with me (v.24)

Notice the emphasis on unity.

- That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you (v.21)
- I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one (v.22)
- May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me (v.23)

Q: Why is unity so important?

Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being united and 10 being divided, how would you rate Christians today?

Q: What things divide Jesus' followers?

Q: How can believers be more united?

Another repeated theme in this prayer is glory.

Glory

- "Glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you" (v.1)
- "Glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began" (v.5)
- "Glory has come to me through my disciples" (v.10)
- "I have given them the glory that you gave me" (v.22)
- "I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory the glory you have given me" (v.24)

Lesson 11: Condemned and Crucified (John 18-19)

W: Read John 18-19.

T: Ask for volunteers to play the following roles in John 18:12-19:16 (skipping Peter's denial):

- Jesus
- Annas
- Caiaphas
- Pilate
- The Jews
- Soldiers

T: Narrate as the students act out the scenes.

Scene 1

- The high priest questions Jesus about his teaching
- Jesus answers - "I have spoken openly . . . Ask those who heard me"
- Jesus is struck in the face

Scene 2

- Annas sends him to Caiaphas the high priest

Scene 3

- Jesus is led from Caiaphas to Pilate

Scene 4

- Pilate questions the Jews - "What charges are you bringing against this man?"
- Jews respond - "If he weren't a criminal we wouldn't have handed him over to you"

Scene 5

- Pilate takes Jesus aside
- Pilate questions Jesus - "Are you the king of the Jews?"

- Jesus responds - “My kingdom is not of this world”

Scene 6

- Pilate goes out to the Jews and says - “I find no basis for a charge against him.”
- Jews demand that Barabbas be released

Scene 7

- Pilate has Jesus flogged, soldiers mock him and put crown of thorns on him

Scene 8

- Pilate brings out Jesus wearing the purple robe and crown of thorns and says “here is the man”
- The chief priests and officials shouted “Crucify, Crucify”
- Pilate answered “you take him and crucify him. I find no basis for a charge against him.
- The Jews insisted

Scene 9

- Pilate went back inside and asked Jesus “Where do you come from?”
- Jesus doesn’t respond

Scene 10

- Pilate tried to set Jesus free but the Jews kept shouting, “Take him away! Crucify him!”
- Pilate hands him over to be crucified

Scene 11

- The soldiers take charge of Jesus and crucify him
-

18:4; 19:28 – The recurring theme of Jesus’ knowledge in John.

18:5, 6, 8 – “I am he” is only “I am” in Greek.

Q: How do you explain Jesus' action in John 18:23 with his teaching on turning the other cheek in Matthew 5:39?

Possible answers:

1. "Turn the other cheek" is hyperbolic
2. This was a special situation
3. Jesus didn't follow his own advice

18:28 – While the authorities are condemning Jesus to death they are trying to keep their religious duties.

W: List each time the words "king" and "kingdom" appear in 18:33-19:22.

- "Are you the King of the Jews?" (18:33)
- "My kingdom is not of this world" (18:36)
- "If my kingdom were of this world . . . But my kingdom is not from the world" (18:36)
- "So you are a king?" (18:37)
- "You say that I am a king" (18:37)
- "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" (18:39)
- "Hail, King of the Jews" (19:3)
- "Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar" (19:12)
- "Behold your King!" (19:14)
- "Shall I crucify your King?" (19:15)
- "We have no king but Caesar" (19:15)
- "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (19:19)
- "Do not write 'The King of the Jews' but rather 'This man said, I am the King of the Jews'" (19:21)

For the theme of kingship prior to this read John 1:49; 6:15; 12:13-15.

18:38; 19:4; 19:6 – Pilate repeatedly declares Jesus innocent stating, "I find no basis for a charge against him."

19:7 – All four Gospels agree that Jesus was sentenced to death by the religious authorities for the crime of blasphemy (Mt. 26:65; Mk. 14:63-64; Lk. 22:70-71).

HW: Read and summarize John 20-21 for the next class.

Lesson 12: The Resurrection (John 20-21)

In John, Jesus appears four times after his resurrection.

1. to Mary (20:11-18)
2. to his disciples without Thomas (20:19-23)
3. to his disciples with Thomas (20:24-29)
4. to seven disciples on the shore (21:1-22)

W: Who can say “My Lord and my God!” with the most emotion?

T: Give a prize to the winner.

Q: Why do you think Jesus was not easily recognized by his disciples?

20:16 – Mary knew Jesus’ voice (see Jn. 10:3-4).

20:21 – Throughout the Gospel, Jesus has been saying that the Father sent him. Now the apostles become the sent ones who carry on Jesus’ mission.

20:22 – breathed on them (Gen. 2:7; Ezek. 37:5), the Holy Spirit (see Jn. 7:39).

20:23 – This is the only reference to the forgiveness of sins in John. While the wording is strange it seems to correspond with Matthew 16:19. Now that the disciples have been infused Christ’s Spirit, they have received his authority to carry on his mission. It’s not that they go around and arbitrarily decide who should be forgiven; but their job is to spread the message and those who receive it will be forgiven while those who refuse it won’t be forgiven.

Q: Would you have acted like Peter and swum back to Jesus after denying him three times (21:7)? John is showing us that when we really mess up even to the point of denying Jesus, we should always swim back to Jesus. He’ll be waiting for us on the shore.

21:15-17 – The repetition shows how important this matter is to Jesus. Jesus is leaving but he still cares for his sheep. Peter’s love for Jesus should be expressed by taking care of Jesus’ sheep. In his letter, Peter acknowledged that there are many pastors or shepherds, but there’s only one Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

21:19 – Tradition says that Peter was crucified upside down because he did not think he was worthy to die in the same way his Lord died.

Lesson 13: Review John 12-21

Honoring Jesus (Jn. 12)

- Dinner for him
- Poured perfume on him
- Praised him as he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey
- The voice from heaven

The Foot washing (Jn. 13)

- Jesus predicts Judas' betrayal
- Jesus predicts Peter's denial

The Farewell Speech (Jn. 14-16)

- Encourages and reassures his disciples
- Commands his disciples
- The arrival of the Spirit is promised
- The Trinity (5 Handouts)

The Final Prayer (Jn. 17)

- Prays for himself, his disciples and all future disciples
- Five major requests

Condemned and Crucified (Jn. 18-19)

- Jesus' kingship
- Jesus' innocence

The Resurrection (Jn. 20-21)

- Four appearances recorded

W: Play a review game.

HW: Study for the test tomorrow. Memorize John 15:5 and 17:24.

Test 3

Free Period

Name _____

Define the Following:

1. Paraclete –
2. Trinity –
3. Tritheism –
4. Heresy –
5. Modalism –
6. Transcendence –
7. Docetism –
8. Arianism –

Fill in the Blank

9. Jesus said, “The _____ has come for the Son of Man to be _____.”
10. “As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was _____.”
11. “Now that you know these things, you will be _____ if you _____ them.”
12. “In this world, you will have _____. But take heart! I have _____ the world.”
13. Ultimately, the Trinity is a _____.
14. “As the Father has _____ me, I am _____ you.”
15. After Jesus’ resurrection, he said to the disciples, “_____ be with you.”
16. Like us the Divine ‘Persons’ are _____ from each other but unlike us they are _____.

17. Thomas said to Jesus, "My _____ and my _____."

True or False

____ 18. Jesus washed his disciples' feet just before the Feast of Tabernacles.

____ 19. Thomas was the disciple in charge of the money.

____ 20. Jesus first stood trial before Caiaphas.

____ 21. John records four of Jesus' appearances to his followers after his resurrection.

____ 22. In John 15, Jesus calls himself the gardener.

____ 23. In John's Gospel, Jesus first appeared to Mary after he rose from the dead.

____ 24. Jesus prayed for the whole world in John 17.

Chapter Content

____ 25. Jesus washes the disciples' feet

____ 26. The vine and the branches

____ 27. Jesus is arrested

____ 28. Jesus' final prayer

____ 29. Appears to Mary

Short Answer

30. List three encouraging things Jesus says to his disciples in John 14-16.

31. Write out John 15:5.

32. From our study of the Trinity, why should we not think of Jesus in isolation from the Father and the Spirit?

33. Write out John 17:24.

34. Retell the story of Jesus' appearance to Mary after his resurrection.

Lesson 15: Review Tests 1 & 2 on John

T: Handout Tests 1 & 2 on John.

W: Answer the questions on Tests 1 & 2 without using your notes.

T: Review answers.

T: If the differences between the resurrection accounts has come up, this may be a good time to address that issue. For a good article and chart on the topic go to the Google search bar and type in “Greenleaf’s harmony of the resurrection accounts.”⁶⁴

⁶⁴ I have also written on the different resurrection accounts here: <https://www.bible-bridge.com/easter-sunday-jesus-resurrection-in-the-gospels/>

Lesson 16: Review Tests 1-3 on John

T: Make sure the students have the correct answers for Tests 1, 2, & 3.

T: Play a review game.

T: Get a copy of *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis for the last few classes. There's a contemporary version by William Griffin or use a free version online.

Final Exam

Name _____

Define the following:

1. Paraclete –
2. Trinity –
3. Tritheism –
4. Heresy –
5. Arianism –
6. Immanence –
7. Modalism –

True or False

- ____ 8. Nicodemus was a Sadducee.
- ____ 9. The Gospel of John does not record any exorcism stories.
- ____ 10. Jesus' hometown, Nazareth, was a disrespected place.
- ____ 11. Jesus said "follow me" in both Mark 1 and John 1.
- ____ 12. Samaritans were not full Jews.
- ____ 13. The Bible says drinking alcohol is a sin.
- ____ 14. Nicodemus helped to bury Jesus.
- ____ 15. Abraham lived about two thousand years before Jesus.
- ____ 16. Jesus asked the blind man if he wanted to get well before he healed him.
- ____ 17. The people wanted to make Jesus king after they saw him walk on water.

- ____ 18. God said, "I am who I am" in Ezekiel 3.
- ____ 19. The blind man worshipped Jesus after Jesus healed him.
- ____ 20. The Feast of Tabernacles is a reminder of Israel's wandering in the wilderness.
- ____ 21. The story of the woman caught in adultery was probably in John's original book.
- ____ 22. Hanukkah was first celebrated about 150 years after Jesus was born.
- ____ 23. Jesus first stood trial before Caiaphas.
- ____ 24. John records four of Jesus' appearances to his followers after his resurrection.
- ____ 25. In John's Gospel Jesus first appeared to Mary after he was rose from the dead.

Fill in the Blank

26. _____ is the Greek word for 'word'.
27. Both Genesis and John begin with the phrase _____ the _____.
28. "The Word became _____ and made his _____ among us." (1:14)
29. The Samaritans declared, "this man really is the _____ of the world." (4:42)
30. The key word in John's gospel is _____.
31. John the Baptist said, "He must _____; I must _____." (3:30)
32. "You must be _____" (3:7).
33. "God is _____, and his worshipers must worship in _____ and truth" (4:24).
34. According to John 8:44, the devil is both a _____ and a _____.
35. "As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was _____" (13:30).
36. "Now that you know these things, you will be _____ if you _____ them" (13:17).

37. "In this world, you will have _____. But take heart! I have _____ the world" (16:33).

38. Ultimately, the trinity is a _____.

39. "As the Father has _____ me, I am _____ you" (20:21).

40. Like us the Divine 'Persons' are _____ from each other but unlike us they are _____.

41. Thomas addressed Jesus as "My _____ and my _____" (20:28).

Chapter Content

_____ 42. Lazarus raised from the dead

_____ 43. The vine and the branches

_____ 44. The woman at the well

_____ 45. "You must be born again"

_____ 46. "Your father is the devil"

Short Answer

47. List three distinct themes in John.

48. Write out John 20:31.

49. List three examples of Jesus knowing us and 3 examples of Jesus being misunderstood in John.

50. List five differences between Nicodemus and the woman at the well. What does John show us about Jesus by placing these two conversations right next to each other?

51. List Jesus' six different 'I am' statements in John.

52. List three encouraging things Jesus says to his disciples in John 14-16.

53. Write out John 15:5.

54. In two paragraphs explain how our study of John has affected your view of Jesus and the Gospels.

Lessons 17–18: The Imitation of Christ

One of the great literary works in Christian history is *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis. It was written in Latin in the 1400s. For the last five hundred years it's been one of the most popular Christian books. The work is a creative dialogue between the author and Jesus. For the next two days I'll read portions of this book and then you'll work on writing your own version of it in class.

T: Take five to ten minutes at the start of class and read selections from *The Imitation of Christ*.

T: After your selected reading share the following. God has given us the ability to imagine. Our imagination is a good thing and it's meant to be used for good purposes. In your writing make sure to stay faithful to the spirit of Jesus when you put words in his mouth. What do you think he would say today, to you? We've studied his life all year. You should know something about his character, his interests, and his plans. Stay faithful to what you've learned while expressing yourself creatively.

W: Write your own *Imitation*.

Lesson 19: Imitation Sharing

W: Share your *Imitation* or parts of it with two classmates.

T: Ask for volunteers to read from their *Imitation* to the class.

Lesson 20: Share and Reflect Day

W: Come to the board and graffiti the board with any creative drawings you want.

T: Attempt to interpret the drawings.

T: Allow the student to get comfortable, e.g. sit on the floor . . . Then have a time of sharing and reflection on the year.

---End of 2nd Semester

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