

## Encountering Jesus in the Gospel of John. (September 13, 2020)

You're about to embark on a journey of discovery in one of the four historical narratives, or Gospels, about the life of Jesus Christ. The word "gospel" in the original Greek language meant "good news." The New Testament has four good news' books, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each Gospel paints a different picture of Jesus Christ. Why four books?

As adults, we assume a variety of life roles, often at the same time. These roles include being a husband or wife, mother or father, son or daughter, etc. We do not change in these roles but we may act differently or emphasize certain qualities in each one. The same is true of Jesus Christ. Each of the four historical narratives in the New Testament pictures a different role or aspect of His life and ministry.

In the Gospel of John, the writer paints a portrait of Jesus as the Son of God. The author is John, one of the twelve disciples, followers who had special access to Jesus and His teachings. As an intimate of Jesus, John was an eyewitness to the events, messages, and conversations from Jesus' public and private life. As a close follower and friend, John opens the door of Jesus' private life and ministry to the world.

The Gospel of John helps answer such questions as:

- Who is Jesus?
- What does it mean to follow Him?
- What is true belief?
- What is eternal life and how does one obtain it?

Keep the above questions in mind as you read and discuss John's writings.

The following time-tested discussion questions will yield new discoveries about each chapter of John. In your discussion, do not feel compelled to talk about each question. You can pick from the variety of questions to encourage discovery. Also, not every section of every chapter has a set of questions. This is designed to keep your discussions focused on the most important parts of John's account. Many of the chapters have a "Conversation Starter" to introduce the main subject of the chapter to the group. This question is optional.

- If you were God, how would you choose to communicate with man?
- How do you think we can know if God has communicated with us?

Read John 1:1-9.

John starts his gospel with a big idea, the “Word.” Our words reveal what is in our hearts and on our minds. So Jesus Christ is God’s “Word,” revealing His heart and mind to us. To connect with his Jewish audience, John’s Gospel parallels the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament. God’s words in Genesis shows a God in action, speaking creation into existence through His words (Genesis 1:3ff). To his Greek or Roman readers, the “Word” represents the unifying, divine principle behind all of creation. Whether his audience is Jewish or Greek, John wants his readers to know that God became a man in Jesus Christ, fully revealing the Father and His ways to us.

- What do verses 1-4 tell us about God’s communication to man?
- John says that the Word is light and life. What do you think he means by light and life?
- How do you think this light and life is different from other sources of light and life (other religious teachers, books, etc.)?
- John describes this light as the “true light” (verse 9). What would qualify one light as being true, implying that another light is false?
- How do you feel about only one light being true and others being false?
- What test would you ask of Jesus Christ to see if He is true?

Read John 1:10-13.

- What does John say about how one becomes a member of God’s family?
- How do you feel about John’s statement that there’s only one way to become a member of God’s family?
- Why do you think some people receive Him and some do not?
- How would you describe your current relationship to God’s family?

Read John 1:14-18.

- Jesus is described as being full of grace and truth in verse 17. What do you think these qualities mean?
- Why do you think it’s so significant that Jesus is full of grace and truth?
- How do you think people experience Him as grace and truth?
- If a person is a follower of Christ today, how do you think he or she would demonstrate grace and truth to others?
- John says that no one has ever seen God. What do you think about this statement? Would you agree or disagree?
- Why do you think God chose to make Himself known through Jesus?
- How do you feel about the author’s description of Jesus?

Read John 1:19-28.

John the Baptist makes his first appearance in John’s Gospel. From his birth, John the Baptist had a special role. He served as an evangelist for Jesus, the coming Messiah. John challenged people to admit their sins and return to God in preparation for the

Messiah's coming. Great crowds gathered to hear him preach and many were baptized, including Jesus (Matthew 3:13-16). Like most teachers or rabbis, John had followers or disciples.

- In verses 19-28, how does John the Baptist describe his identity and mission?
- Even though he has a sizable following, how does John the Baptist describe himself in verses 26-27?
- What do you think this statement reveals about his character and mission?

Read John 1:29-34.

- The "Lamb of God" refers to the Old Testament religious system where sheep and goats were sacrificed as substitute offerings for a person's sin or rebellion against God. Why do you think John the Baptist appealed to this cultural image?
- How do you feel about Jesus being called the Lamb of God?
- John the Baptist introduced people to Jesus in first century Palestine. How would a John the Baptist introduce people to Jesus today?

Read John 1:35-51.

- There are five people described in verses 35-51. What are the different reasons why they chose to follow Christ?
- Which of these individuals could you identify with? How do you identify with them?
- What are some reasons why a person would want to follow Jesus Christ today?