

IN THE  
BEGINNING  
WAS THE...

# WORD

A STUDY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## LESSON 8 – The Word is...THE FULFILLMENT OF JEWISH FESTIVALS/INSTITUTIONS

### FACILITATOR'S Note

**MAIN POINT THIS WEEK:** Jesus fulfills the Jewish festivals and institutions found in the Law (even the temple itself)(1:29, 36; 2:14-22, esp. v. 21; 4:23-24; 8:12; 9:5; 19:14).

The following lesson is designed to introduce class participants to the fact that Jesus brought to fulfillment the Jewish law including its festivals and institutions. A thorough study of this subject would necessarily be lengthy and deep, covering much Scripture outside of the Gospel of John, so this lesson only scratches the surface. Even so, spend today helping your class participants get a glimpse of this truth.

Remember, this semester we hope to provide material that will provide knowledge (HEAD); then ask questions that will bring us understanding (HEART); and then motivate participants to go and live the Word in the world and demonstrate Godly wisdom (HANDS). Help them with that today.

HEAD  ➡ HEART  ➡ HANDS 

As always, we would encourage you to begin preparing for each lesson by digging into the Word and specifically the text for each of the weeks. **This week the texts are: 1:29, 36; 2:14-22, esp. v. 21; 4:23-24; 8:12; 9:5; 19:14.** As you move through the Word, jot down any thoughts that come to you and particular passages that stand out and speak to you. We assure you that these will come into play as you facilitate this discussion. It is then that you should approach this lesson plan and use it (and others) only as a guide for the weeks to come. Your group is different than all the rest and so your lessons should be adapted accordingly.

## PRAYER



Begin your time with a prayer asking God for the guidance of His Holy Spirit as you and your class seek to encounter Him through His Holy Word.

## FOCUS

- Understand that Jesus, as Messiah and Son of God, brought about the fulfillment of the Jewish law, with its festivals and practices.
- Understand that Jesus, as the Lamb of God, offered the final perfect sacrifice to God that procures our forgiveness, through faith in Him, of all the sin that we have committed and will commit.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS (OPTIONAL)

- What are some of our “festivals” (i.e. Holidays) that are supposed to have an emphasis on Christ?
- Do they have that emphasis? Why or why not?
- Why have we moved away from the original emphasis of some of our holidays? Can we redeem those emphases?
- Today we will look at how the Jewish Festivals/Institutions find their purpose and fulfillment in Christ.

## KNOWLEDGE HEAD

### From the Gospel of John

- 1:29,36
  - Key Points
    - These verses occur within John 1:29-52 which recounts the baptism of Jesus, at which John the Baptist recognized and testified that Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, and the calling of Jesus’ first disciples.

- The term “Lamb of God” is special; it was not used in the ancient world but came into being as part of Christian vocabulary. It is not found elsewhere in the NT though Jesus is called “The Lamb” in Revelation.
- There is clear symbolism between the sacrifice of Jesus, the “Lamb of God”, and that of the “Passover Lamb” used in the Passover meal (as seen in Exodus 12:1-7; 12-13; 43, 46).
  - (12:1-7) The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, <sup>2</sup>“This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. <sup>3</sup>Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. <sup>4</sup>If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. <sup>5</sup>The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. <sup>6</sup>Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. <sup>7</sup>Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.
  - (12:12-13) “On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. <sup>13</sup>The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.
  - (12:43, 46) The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “These are the regulations for the Passover meal: ... <sup>46</sup>“It must be eaten inside the house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones.
  - It should be noted in the verses above that the Passover victim could be a sheep or a goat, i.e., it was not necessarily a lamb, and the term “Passover Lamb” was not used by the Jews.
- There is also clear identification of the “Lamb of God” with Isaiah 53:7 – “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”
  - Contemporary Application
    - At the Passover event, only those people who were inside their home and had applied the blood of the lamb/goat to the top and sides of their home’s door were spared. How can we help people today understand that Jesus’ death does not save them unless they have applied His blood to the door of their heart?
- **2:14-22, esp. v. 21**
  - Key Points
    - These verses occur within John’s account of Jesus entering and clearing out the Temple in Jerusalem, just prior to the Passover.

- He was angry and indignant that the Temple area had become a place of commerce.
- His actions angered the Jews who demanded He provide some kind of sign to prove His authority to behave in such a startling way.
  - His actions were consistent with his role as Messiah and fulfilled Psalm 69:9 which His disciples later remembered.
  - The fact that the Jews demanded a sign for His authority to act in this way, rather than the rightness of His actions, implies that they recognized His actions were in a way “messianic,” especially given His charge: “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!”
  - The sign He offered them: “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”
- His Jewish audience who thought He was speaking of the physical Temple misunderstood his statement/sign.
  - Herod had commenced rebuilding/improving the Temple several years earlier, probably to win favor with the Jews who disliked Him intensely, and the work continued for more than 46 years, and was still ongoing after Herod’s death.
  - It is easy to see how they misunderstood Him.
- John says in v. 21 that the Temple Jesus was speaking of was His body.
  - The raising of the Temple within three days is a clear reference to His resurrection.
  - John tells us in v. 22 that once Jesus was resurrected, the disciples remembered what He said in v. 19, finally understood and believed the Scripture.
    - “The Scripture” is most likely not a reference to a single passage but rather to all of Scripture (i.e., the OT).
    - Their understanding came later, as Jesus indicated would occur in John 14:26: *But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*
- The physical Temple can be thought of as symbolic of the real Temple, which was Jesus, God in the flesh.
  - The Physical Temple was:
    - *The dwelling-place of God on earth (1 Kings 8:10-21)*
    - *The sole place of sacrificial worship (Deut 12:1-14)*
    - *A microcosm of heaven*
      - *The Temple was constructed with features that represented Heaven itself, especially the Most Holy Place, in which no one was allowed, except the priest, once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:1-34).*
  - All these characteristics can be said to have been manifested in Jesus.
    - Discuss how this is so...

- Contemporary Application
  - In what way is a Christian's physical body like the Temple of God?
- **4:23-24**
  - Key Points
    - These verses appear within the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar.
    - In their encounter, Jesus says things to her that prove that He is no ordinary person, and in particular, is aware of her sin – something which makes her uncomfortable and to which she responds by changing the subject. She instead asks a question about whether the proper place to worship God is in Jerusalem, as the Jews insist, or on the mountain near Sychar where the Samaritans worship.
    - Verses 23 and 24 provide Jesus' answer to her question: Real worship is that which is done in the Spirit and in truth; the location is irrelevant.
      - True worshipers are those who worship in Spirit and in truth.
      - These are the kind of worshipers that the Father seeks.
    - In verse 23, Jesus tells her the time is coming and has now come when the location for worship will not matter, only the manner by which it is carried out, namely, in Spirit and in truth.
      - That time had now come because He, the Messiah and Son of God, was here to fulfill the Law and usher in the new age of worship and service to God by His Spirit.
  - Contemporary Application
    - If the location of worship is not crucial to true worship, can you just skip meeting together with a congregation regularly, and worship God in truth/Spirit regularly by yourself? Discuss.
    - What does it mean to worship in truth? In Spirit?
    - How do you know if you are doing this?
- **8:12**
  - Key Points
    - John tells us in v. 12: When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
    - The timing of this event is not clear.
    - If it occurred during or near the Feast of Tabernacles (FOT), it would have had special significance.
      - The Jews held special ceremonies with lights during the FOT.
      - Brilliant candelabra were lit only at the beginning of the FOT and at the end of the FOT, none were lit.
      - If Jesus' claim to be the Light were uttered near the beginning or during the FOT, the symbolism would have been apparent, and if uttered near the end of the FOT, would have stood out even more impressively
    - The claim to be the "light of the world" may have reminded the Jews of the round-the-clock fire they were to keep on the altar:

- (Lev 6:8-13) The Lord said to Moses: <sup>9</sup> "Give Aaron and his sons this command: 'These are the regulations for the burnt offering: The burnt offering is to remain on the altar hearth throughout the night, till morning, and the fire must be kept burning on the altar. <sup>10</sup> The priest shall then put on his linen clothes, with linen undergarments next to his body, and shall remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has consumed on the altar and place them beside the altar. <sup>11</sup> Then he is to take off these clothes and put on others, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean. <sup>12</sup> The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. <sup>13</sup> The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.

- **9:5**

- Key Points

- This verse occurs within the story of Jesus' healing of a man who was blind from birth: "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."
    - Jesus makes the same statement here in v. 5 as discussed above in 8:12, though His statement here has a sense of urgency.
      - "While I am in the world ..." alludes to the fact that He would not always be with them (in the flesh).
      - In the prior verses, vv. 1-4, He makes it clear that God has prepared works for us to do and the opportunity to perform them will not always be present so we must act .
        - (9:4) "As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."
        - In this case, the man was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

- Contemporary Application

- Jesus is no longer in the world, so how does He show Himself to be the light of the world to people today? Discuss.

- **19:14**

- Key Points

- This passage is part of John's recounting of Pilate's final sentence that Jesus be crucified.
    - Though Pilate could find no legitimate reason per Roman law to condemn Jesus to death, he still handed Jesus over for crucifixion, and as John indicates in vv. 14-16, the final sentence occurred on the Day of Preparation.
    - The Day of Preparation of the Passover was the day that the Israelites were to slaughter their Passover sacrifice (lamb or goat) at twilight, and prepare and eat the Passover meal.
      - Slaughter occurred on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (Ex 12:6).

- The lamb/goat to be slaughtered was selected on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nissan (Exodus 12:3), which in the case of Jesus, was likely Palm Sunday (i.e., the day of the Triumphal entry).
- In this passage, we see Jesus being handed over for the slaughter, in fulfillment of His role as our Passover Lamb.
- Contemporary Application
  - Pilate sentenced Jesus to death at the urging of the Jewish crowd who demanded Jesus be crucified. So, Pilate and the Jews certainly had a direct hand in Jesus death. Are you also as responsible for His death? Discuss.

## UNDERSTANDING HEART

- John makes the point in his gospel that Jesus is the Passover Lamb of God. Why is the message important to us today?

## WISDOM HANDS

- Think of someone in your circle of friends/family that needs a personal relationship with Jesus. What can you do to help them believe/know that Jesus is their Passover Lamb, that He really has paid the price for all their sins?
- Start praying for them, each day, that God will use others and you to help them come to know that through Jesus, they are forgiven of every sin they have committed or ever will commit.

## PRAYER




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End your time together with a prayer. Thank Him for sending His once and for all Passover Lamb to save us all.

# CLASS OUTLINE

*"...but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* (John 20:31) The Gospel of John was written so that those who read its message may believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, THE CHRIST. The following outline holds the major themes expounded on in the Gospel of John in order that its readers may believe in Jesus and have eternal life. (Adapted from the "Key Themes" outline in the ESV Study Bible):

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (January 4)
2. THE WORD IS...  
**GOD (January 11)**
  - a. Jesus is GOD
  - b. 1:1–2, 18; 5:17–18; 8:58–59; 10:30–33; 20:28
3. THE WORD IS...  
**BEFORE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD (January 18)**
  - a. Jesus existed before the creation of all there is.
  - b. 1:1–2; 8:58; 17:5, 24
4. THE WORD IS...  
**OMNISCIENT (ALL KNOWING) (January 25)**
  - a. Jesus has supernatural knowledge that only God can possess.
  - b. 1:48; 2:4, 19, 23–25; 3:14; 4:17–18; 6:51, 70; 8:28; 9:3; 10:15, 17–18; 11:4, 14; 12:24, 32; 13:10–11, 38; 21:18–19
5. THE WORD IS...  
**THE MESSIAH AND SON OF GOD (February 1)**
  - a. Jesus is the promised Messiah and Son of God prophesied in Old Testament.
  - b. 1:36, 41, 49; 3:18; 4:25, 29; 5:25; 7:26, 27, 31, 41, 42; 9:22; 10:24, 36; 11:4, 27; 12:34; 19:7; 20:30–31
6. THE WORD IS...  
**THE "I AM" (February 8)**
  - a. Jesus is the "I AM" from the Old Testament. He is Yahweh/Jehovah.
  - b. 4:26; 6:20, 35, 48, 51; 8:12, 18, 24, 28, 58; 9:5; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; 15:1; 18:5–6 (cf. Ex. 3:14–15; Isa. 41:4; 43:10–13, 25; 45:18; 51:12; 52:6)
7. THE WORD IS...  
**THE SON WHO WAS SENT BY AND REFLECTS THE FATHER (February 15)**
  - a. Jesus was sent by God and reflects the very essence of the Father.
  - b. 3:17, 35–36; 5:19–26; 6:40; 8:35–36; 14:13; 17:1
8. THE WORD IS...  
**THE FULFILLMENT OF JEWISH FESTIVALS/INSTITUTIONS (February 22)**
  - a. Jesus fulfills the Jewish festivals and institutions found in the Law (even the temple itself).
  - b. 1:29, 36; 2:14–22, esp. v. 21; 4:23–24; 8:12; 9:5; 19:14
9. THE WORD IS...  
**THE GIVER OF ETERNAL LIFE (March 1)**
  - a. Jesus gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.
  - b. 1:4; 3:15–16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 26, 39–40; 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47–48, 51, 53–54, 68; 8:12; 10:10, 25, 28; 11:25; 12:25, 50; 14:6; 17:2–3; 20:31

10. THE WORD IS...

**A MIRACLE WORKER (March 8)**

- a. Jesus performs signs and wonders that demonstrate that He is the promised Messiah.
- b. 2:1–11, 13–22; 4:46–54; 5:1–15; 6:1–15; 9:1–41; 11:1–44

11. THE WORD IS...

**TESTIFIED BY OTHERS TO BE THE MESSIAH (March 15)**

- a. Witnesses testify that Jesus is the Messiah.
- b. 1:7–8, 15, 19, 32, 34; 3:11, 32–33; 4:39; 5:31–39; 8:14, 18; 10:25; 15:26–27; 18:37; 19:35; 21:24

12. THE WORD IS...

**UNIFIED WITH FATHER AND SPIRIT IN THEIR WORK OF REVELATION AND REDEMPTION (March 22)**

- a. Father, Son, and Spirit are united in their work.
- b. 14:17–18, 23, 26; 15:26; 20:21–22

13. THE WORD IS...

**THE BASIS OF SALVATION (March 29)**

- a. It is by Jesus' death that God brings His people salvation.
  - i. 1:29; 3:14–15; 6:51–58; 10:15; 11:50–52; 12:24; 15:13
- b. God is sovereign in salvation.
  - i. 3:21; 5:21; 6:37–45, 64–65; 10:16, 26–30; 15:16; 17:2, 6, 9

14. BELIEVERS MUST...

**CONFESS AND BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH (April 12)**

- a. Salvation is obtained by believing in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God.
  - i. 1:12; 3:15, 16; 5:24; 6:29, 35; 8:24; 11:25–27, 42; 12:44; 17:8, 21; 20:31
- b. The benefits of salvation can be experienced here and now (in this evil age), but will be fully known when He returns.
  - i. 3:18, 36; 4:23; 5:24; 6:39–40; 10:10, 26–29; 11:25–26

15. BELIEVERS MUST...

**CONTINUE JESUS' WORK AND MISSION (April 19)**

- a. Believers are called upon to continue the work of the Savior in order that all men may know and be saved.
- b. 4:38; 15:16; 17:18; 20:21–22

16. CONCLUSION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (April 26)