



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

COMPASS MEN

MBS
FALL 2021

WEEKLY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

WEEK 1: John 1:1-18

1. Using a study bible or background commentary, list some of the key themes that we will encounter during our study of the book of John.

2. Read John 20:30-31. According to these verses, what is the purpose for John's writing this book? If John wrote this book for this purpose, what benefit might it have for those who are studying it as already saved?

3. Read John 1:1. What three truths about the Word are affirmed in this opening verse?

4. Who is the Word, and how do you know this from only reading John 1:1-18?

5. Read John 1:1 and then read this article from Logos.com:
<https://blog.logos.com/2-ways-jesus-is-the-word-of-god-revelation-and-logos/>
 - a. How does Hebrews 1:1-3 help us understand what John meant by referring to Jesus as the Word?

 - b. What are some observations from this article that you were able to glean to help in your understanding of what it means that Jesus is the Word of God?

6. John 1:1 poses major problems for cults like Mormonism, which ultimately led to Joseph Smith perverting the text in his “translation.” Read this article from CARM: <https://carm.org/mormonism/the-joseph-smith-translation-and-john-11/> Then, make some observations regarding how you might defend the orthodox reading of this verse when a Mormon attempts to convince you that it is wrong.

7. In John 1:1-5 what other evidence does John provide for the full deity of the Word?

8. Read John 1:6-8. Which John is this? How do you know from the context? What was his job?

9. Read John 1:9. The idea of Jesus as the “Light of the World” will be developed throughout John’s gospel. Upon your initial observations from this verse, what would you say it means that Jesus is the “true light, which gives light to everyone?”

10. Read John 1:10-13. These verses are about Jesus’ role in making people children of God. In these verses list the actions of man versus the actions of Jesus. Comparing these two lists, who is responsible for our salvation?

11. Read John 1:14. From this verse we get the concept of the “incarnation,” that is, that the Son of God took on flesh. Read Philippians 2:5-8. Though John describes it so poetically, describe what Jesus went through when “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” What did he experience for the first time?

12. Read John 1:14 and 1:18. What was John saying about the relationship of Jesus and the Father? What does it mean that Jesus has “made [God] known?”

13. As we begin this study of John, what do you hope to get out of your time? How are you expecting this book study to change your current relationship with God?

WEEK 2: John 1:19-51

1. Read John 1:19-21. What group do “the Jews” send to investigate the ministry of John the Baptist? They ask “Who are you?”, but they were really wanting an answer to a different question. What was it they were really after?

2. In verse 20, we get a glimpse of John’s humility that so often characterizes his person when he affirmed their skepticism by confessing that he was not the Christ. Then in verse 21, they ask about “Elijah” and “the Prophet,” and again, John denies that he is either.
 - a. Read Malachi 4:5. Why did this Jewish delegation want to know if John was Elijah?

 - b. Read Deuteronomy 18:15-18. Why did they want to know if John was “the Prophet?”

3. Consider the Biblical setting of the start of Jesus’ ministry what have things been like in Israel for the last 400 years, and how might that have played a factor in the curiosity concerning John and his ministry?

4. Read John 1:22-23. What passage does John quote in response to their question?

5. Note this explanation from the Expositor’s Bible Commentary: “John’s message is, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’ When an ancient dignitary was about to visit a province of his realm, the message would go out to prepare the way by removing all obstacles from the road and making it as smooth as possible.”¹
 - a. Read John 1:26-27, 29-31.

 - b. How did John serve to prepare the nation for the arrival of the Messiah?

¹ Mounce, Robert H. “John.” In *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Luke–Acts (Revised Edition)*, edited by Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland. Vol. 10. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007, 378.

6. Read John 1:25. Jewish baptism was a rite reserved for Gentile converts to wash away their impurities as they took their place among the covenant community of Israel. With this background in mind, why would these Jewish delegates be so fixated on the fact that John was carrying out a baptism ministry among the Israelites?

7. Read John 1:29 and Exodus 12. What are the parallels between Jesus and the Passover Lamb? Record as many as you are able to find.

8. Read John 1:31. According to John's own words here, what was his purpose? Read Luke 1:12-17. How did this prophetic message delivered to John's father come to pass in the John's ministry?

9. Read John 1:33 and 1 Corinthians 12:13. What is the baptism of the Spirit that John speaks of in this verse?

10. Read John 1:35-39. Describe what happens in these verses. How should we follow John's example here with the people the Lord has placed in our various spheres of influence?

11. Read John 1:40-49. Which disciples does Jesus call in this passage? What might have influenced their decision to follow Him considering the region is not that big and news travels fast?

12. Read John 1:50-51. It seems that Nathanael had been contemplating Genesis 28:12 and Jacob's dream of the ladder coming from heaven to earth with angels ascending and descending upon it. In verse 51, Jesus replaces that ladder with Himself. What do you believe He was getting at with this statement, and how does that relate to what we have already studied so far in John 1?

WEEK 3: John 2:1-11

1. What event recorded in Matthew 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4 is missing from John's account of the beginning of Jesus' ministry? Note that the baptism of Jesus is also not recorded in John's gospel. Based on this information, and the time markers in John 1:29, 35, 43, and 2:1, what should we assume about the timing of these missing events?
2. Read John 2:1. John begins "On the third day." What "third day" is John referring to here? You may need to consult a study Bible or commentary to help in answering this question, as it is not necessarily clear from the text itself.
3. Read John 2:2. Craig Keener helps us with a background on the weddings of Jesus' day: "Jewish marriages normally began with joyful wedding feasts, with music and dancing. The groom's family normally sponsored the banquet. Often the entire community would join in wedding processions just as in funeral processions. Ideally, weddings could last for seven days. Hosts invited as many people as possible, especially distinguished guests like prominent teachers. To refuse such an invitation could cause some offense, at least if one was of equal or lower status than the host. This host is presumably fairly well-to-do, given the servants and six pots (2:5-6). Many guests would come for only part of the time, however, making the requisite resources harder to predict."² With this background in mind, how does that help your understanding of the circumstances that produced the crisis point in the current passage?
4. Look up where Jesus uses the word "hour" in John. He uses it here for the first time in John 2:4. What do you think Jesus was talking about here, and what leads you to that conclusion? What are some other ways Jesus uses this word in this gospel?
5. Read John 2:5. Jesus has just issued a gentle rebuke to His mother. What is her response? How can we learn from this and emulate this response in our own process of sanctification? Why is this response so often so difficult?

² Craig S. Keener, *John*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, vol. 2A, Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 20.

6. Read John 2:6. John makes a point to tell us that these jars were used for “the Jewish rites of purification.” Jesus could have filled the cups in the hands of each of the guests. Jesus could have simply filled the serving pitchers so that they would never have run out. But instead He intentionally used these jars. What, if anything, do you believe Jesus was communicating in this?

7. Read John 2:11. What word did John use for the miracle that Jesus had just performed? What is the significance of that word in what it communicates over another word like “miracle?”

8. Read John 2:11. What was the purpose of this sign? What was the result of this sign? Who believed? What may be the significance of that particular definition of those who believed as a result of this sign?

9. Read John 2:11. In what way did Jesus display His glory through this sign? Be as specific as possible (i.e., Not just, “Only God can do that.”).

WEEK 4: John 2:12-25

1. Using a map in the back of your Bibles or from Logos, look up the region of Cana and the region of Capernaum in order to get a feel for where Jesus and His disciples were at this time.
2. Read John 2:13. What drew Jesus from Capernaum up to Jerusalem? Read Deuteronomy 16:1-2. Why did Jesus and His disciples go to Jerusalem for this event?
3. Read Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; and Luke 19:45-46. Compare and contrast these accounts of the cleansing of the Temple with the description by John in this passage.
4. Read John 2:14. What about the Passover and the presence of all the pilgrims would have made this especially and noticeably egregious to Jesus?
5. Read John 2:15-16. Describe some of the feelings that must have been experienced by those watching these events unfold.
6. Reread John 2:15-16. What specifically did Jesus condemn in these verses? What was it that drew His ire?

7. Read John 2:17. Where does this OT reference come from? Consult a commentary or study Bible on that passage to provide some context for what this statement meant then and how it relates to Jesus actions in John 2.

8. Read John 2:18-21. Put yourselves in the shoes of Jesus' original audience. We may shake our heads that they would assume He was talking of the literal temple, but what about the immediate context would have made this a logical assumption on their part?

9. Read John 2:23-25. Compare this to the results of His first sign back in 2:11. What was it that these people were lacking? What may have been drawing them to Jesus? How do people follow Jesus for the wrong reasons still today?

WEEK 5: John 3:1-21

1. Read John 3:1-2. What stands out to you about these verses, and why?
2. Why might Nicodemus have come to Jesus at night?
3. What drew Nicodemus to Jesus? Do you believe the interest of Nicodemus was genuine or not? What leads you to that conclusion?
4. Jesus wasn't a Rabbi the Jewish leaders recognized, so what might have led Nicodemus to address Him that way?
5. Read John 3:3-4. Consult the entry from blueletterbible.org on the word "again" at this link (<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G509&t=ESV>). What are the possible meanings of this word, and which one does it seem that Nicodemus defaults to? Which was Jesus implying?
6. Read Joh 3:5-8; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5. What did Jesus mean by being born of water and the Spirit?

WEEK 6: John 3:22-36

1. Read John 3:22. Using the maps in your Bible, a Bible commentary, or your Bible software, describe where Jesus and his disciples went that John calls the “Judean countryside.”
2. Using a study Bible or commentary, what sort of baptism is in view here in verse 22? Is it different from what John had been doing to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus? If so, how?
3. Read John 3:23. Using a commentary, map, or Bible software, locate where John and his disciples were baptizing.
4. Read John 3:25 in multiple translations. What are some other renderings of the word “discussion” that you find in these other translations?
5. Considering what you’ve learned about John’s baptism to this point, what may have led to this debate between his disciples and this Jew?

WEEK 7: John 4:1-26

1. Read John 4:1-3. What reason does our author give for Jesus' departure from Judea? Why do you think this led Him to depart?
2. Read John 4:4-5. Using your Bible maps or software, locate Sychar on a map. (If you look up the town of Askar on Google Maps you will find an approximation of the modern-day location of Sychar.)
3. Read John 4:6. John notes that it was about the "sixth hour." Consult a study Bible or commentary to determine what time that would be. If this were Luke we would expect such details. Based on this whole account in John 4, what might have led John to include this timing detail in his account?
4. Read John 4:7-9. Who were the Samaritans? Use a Bible dictionary/encyclopedia, Bible software, or a study Bible for help answering this question. How does this background help your understanding of the woman's response to Jesus' request for water?
5. Read Jeremiah 17:13 and Revelation 22:1, 17. Water has already featured in Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus, and it will emerge again later in Jesus' ministry. Based on these two passages and John 4:10, what does water here represent? Read John 4:11-15. Though Jesus was employing allegorical language, the woman missed his point by staying on the literal plane. Can you think of any other examples of people struggling to follow Jesus' teaching?
6. Read John 4:16-18. Jesus shifts tactics here by asking this woman to bring her husband back with her. What was he attempting to expose and why?

7. Read John 4:19-20. Like so many of us, this woman tries to change the subject when conviction presses in too close. What are some ways that you are prone to do the same thing?

8. Read John 4:21-24. What issue was Jesus addressing that had led to so much conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans? Summarize Jesus' answer to this problem in your own words.

9. What does it mean that the Father seeks for those who will worship Him in spirit and truth? What bearing should this instruction have on our churches today?

10. Read John 4:25-26. What does Jesus reveal to this Samaritan woman that He had not yet revealed to anyone else thus far in John's account? Why might He have kept that under wraps with the Jewish people but felt more freedom in acknowledging His true identity to the Samaritans?

11. Read John 4:27-30. John 4 is a great chapter for us to learn from Jesus the evangelist. What principles or techniques do you notice in this chapter that are helpful as we consider sharing the gospel with the lost we encounter at our own "wells?"

WEEK 8: John 4:31-42

1. Read John 4:31-33. What similarities do you see between the disciples and the Samaritan woman in these verses?
2. Read John 4:34. We read this verse with the benefit of the entire canon. How do you think the disciples would have understood this statement? Explain your reasoning.
3. Read John 4:35. Consulting a study Bible or commentary, based on the time reference of four months until the harvest, what time of year was this?
4. Read John 4:35-36. We often read these verses and think of the church's evangelistic mission. But what was the context into which Jesus was speaking these words? What was the harvest that He had in mind? How is it similar/different from the harvest of the church's mission?

5. Read John 4:37-38. The disciples are clearly the reapers in this analogy. Who is/are the sower(s), and what was sown?

6. Read John 4:39. Who else was a reaper, albeit an unexpected reaper?

7. Read John 4:40-42. This is the first detailed description of people other than the disciples believing in Jesus, and it is the Samaritans! Consider John's purpose in contrast to Matthew's (to reveal Jesus as King of the Jews). How did this arrangement of the material help to further John's goal in writing?

8. The Samaritan woman is such a good prototype of a Christian witness. After a life-changing encounter with Jesus she can't help but tell others about what happened. When is the last time you shared your testimony? Who has God placed in your life presently who needs to hear that testimony? When we don't share our testimony out of a fear of man, what are we revealing about our view of the gospel?

WEEK 9: John 4:43-54

1. This account bears some similarities to Jesus' healing of the centurion's son in the synoptic gospels. The similarities have led some to claim that John was dependent on one of the other gospels and just confused some details. How would you respond to such an argument?
2. Read John 4:43-45. At first glance it may appear that John was commending the Galileans in for their welcome of Jesus. But looking back at John 2:23-25 what might John have been implying instead?
3. Using a map of the region, locate both Cana and Capernaum. Describe their location and relative distance from one another.
4. Read John 4:47. In a day without television, news reporters, cell phones, or social media, what does it tell you about Jesus that this official heard that He had returned to the area and immediately came to Him for help?
5. Read John 4:48. What does this statement by Jesus imply about His reputation there in Galilee (see question 2 above)?

WEEK 10: John 5:1-29

1. Read John 5:1. From where Jesus had been, describe the journey Jesus would have undertaken to travel to Jerusalem. Why does John say he went “up” to Jerusalem if Jerusalem was south of Capernaum?
2. Read John 5:2-6. If Jesus knew this man had been an invalid for almost 40 years and that he was trying to get into the pool in hopes of being healed, why would he ask the question in verse 6, “Do you want to be healed?”?
3. How many other invalids must there have been in near that pool, and yet Jesus set his sights on this one. Why? Are there any contextual clues (vv. 5, 7) that might help us understand why it was this particular invalid that He chose?
4. Read Exodus 20:10; Nehemiah 13:19; Jeremiah 17:21. What was the issue at hand that led to the indignant response from the Jews in verse 10?
5. Read John 5:10-13. These Jews had missed the forest for the trees. What are some ways that we might fall prey to a similar mindset in the church today?

6. Read John 5:14. What would be worse than this man's former malady, and what does sin have to do with that?

7. Read John 5:16-18. What was the chief reason that the Jews wanted Jesus silenced and ultimately killed?

8. Read John 5:19-29. List all the way that Jesus reiterates and reenforces the idea that He and the Father are equal.

9. We take it for granted that Jesus and the Father are equal, and we tend to look down upon the Jews for their lack of faith. What Old Testament passages might have provided the basis for this response from the Jews?

10. When you get a knock on the door from two young men with white shirts and nametags that say "elder," how might this passage from John 5 help you in your conversation with them?

11. Why should this doctrine of the equality of the Father and the Son matter to us?

WEEK 11: John 5:30-47

1. Read John 5:30. Some point to this verse as Jesus admitting to an inferiority in his relationship to the Father. Look up the same verse in the NASB. How does the NASB provide helpful clarification to what Jesus was saying?
2. Read John 5:30. Jesus distinguishes his will from the will of the Father. How is it that Jesus could make such a distinction without creating a distinction in essence between He and the Father?
3. Read John 5:31 and Deuteronomy 19:15. Being fully God, we would assume that Jesus' sole testimony concerning himself *would* be sufficient. But what OT precept was Jesus referring to with this statement?
4. Read John 5:32. Based on the preceding context, who is this other one who bears witness about Jesus?
5. Read John 5:32-36. Jesus argues from the lesser (John) to the greater (His own works). What are some of the proofs that Jesus has already provided as witness that the Father had sent him?
6. Read John 5:37-38. What was Jesus clearly saying about the state of the religious leaders he was addressing?

7. Read John 5:39. What principle of interpreting the Bible was Jesus speaking to in this verse? Do you believe that the “they” in this verse should be understood as including every single chapter and verse? Why or why not?

8. Read John 5:42. “the love of God” could either be their love for God or God’s love for them? Which do you believe Jesus was speaking of here and why?

9. Read John 5:43-44. What does Jesus identify as a fundamental problem in the unbelief of his listeners? Why would this indictment be such a problem when it comes to the gospel?

10. Read John 5:45-47. What do these verses imply about the Old Testament and the law specifically?

11. In this passage, Jesus is providing example after example of witnesses to his identity as God’s Son. Yet, for so many of the religious leaders it would still fail to suffice. Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-6. What was the real reason for the unbelief of these Jews? Was it lack of evidence? What was it they really needed in order to believe?

12. Jesus was very direct and confrontational with this group of Jewish leaders. He did not pull punches regarding their lostness. What should we learn from this example when it comes to how we approach the lost in our lives? Was it loving for Jesus to rebuke them so sternly? Why or why not?

13. How does this passage help answer the person who responds to our evangelistic efforts by saying they just need more information even though they’ve been around the church and heard the gospel many times?