



The Disciples of Christ

Eyewitnesses of his Majesty



Conference Workbook – BCYC 2022

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INTRODUCTION

February 2022

Dear young person,

Jesus had many disciples. His radical ministry and authoritative teaching attracted listeners and followers by the thousands in every region through which he passed. But Jesus selected just 12 individuals out of those multitudes to be his special disciples: “He ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3:14). This passage reveals that Jesus had two specific purposes in mind for these twelve disciples: 1) He wanted companionship, and 2) He wanted help with the work of the gospel.

The close relationships he built with his twelve disciples were a major source of strength for Jesus as he faced the constant pressures of persecution and temptation, while bearing the immense weight of his mission. During the last meal he ate with them in his mortal life, Jesus told them “Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations,” promising that their loyalty would be rewarded at his return (Luke 22:28-30). In addition to their emotional support, the disciples were constantly involved in his work. Jesus’ ministry only lasted 3.5 years, and he had much to do. The work was great, there were many adversaries, and he was in dire need of fellow-laborers. In sharing his ministry with them, Jesus was preparing the disciples for the great commission he would entrust to them: the proclamation of the Gospel to all the world.

Through it all, the disciples came to know the Lord of Life. They were eyewitnesses of his majesty (2 Pet. 1:16). The powerful witness of the things which they had seen and heard became the force that has carried the gospel into the hearts of men and women across the world and through the ages. Their experience was recorded so that we could believe with them and find the salvation of Yahweh. Their witness is our hope.

We pray that through this study you may come to know the Lord Jesus Christ better as you grow in your discipleship. God continues to choose out a people for His name to fill this earth with His glory. In response to the call, may we too rise up and follow our Lord.

If you would like any assistance with this workbook, feel free to reach out to us at any time – we would love to hear from you!

Your fellow Bible students, by grace,

Bro. Tim Bruce - Monroe, Washington (timandtabea@gmail.com)

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“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

1 John 1:1-3

THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPARATION

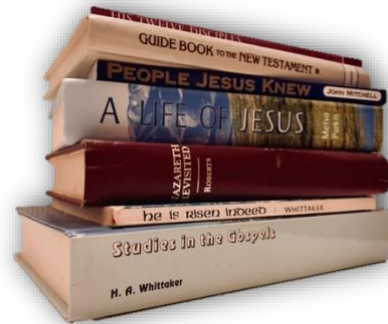
The discussion format at Youth Conference can be an extremely effective means of promoting the useful exchange of scriptural principles, and of encouraging one another in their application. This model depends for its success on all participants coming to Youth Conference prepared. **Completion of your workbook is essential to promote profitable discussion.**

Please ensure that the workbook in its entirety is completed in advance of the conference.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Print:

- *His Twelve Disciples* – Martin D. Southgate
- *People Jesus Knew* – John Mitchell
- *Handbook to the New Testament* – H.P. Mansfield
- *Story of the Bible* – H.P. Mansfield (Volumes 5-7)
- *A Life of Jesus* - Melva Purkis
- *Nazareth Revisited* – Robert Roberts
- *Studies in the Gospels* – H.A. Whittaker
- *He Is Risen Indeed* – H.A. Whittaker



Audio:

- “The Disciples of The Lord” series by Roger Lewis – available on www.christadelphianbibletalks.com
- “Discipleship for Disciples” series by Caleb Osborn on the *Magnify Him Together* Podcast (episodes #57-64). Available on standard podcast platforms or at <https://www.magnifyhimtogether.com/teen-podcast/>

Harmony of the Life of Christ (Appendix A)

To assist you in keeping a clear sense of the timing of the story, we have provided a harmonized timeline of Jesus’ ministry (Appendix A, available to download with this workbook at bcyouthconference.com). We encourage you to familiarize yourself with this timeline and refer to it if you feel you have lost the thread of the storyline. To provide a snapshot of where you are in Jesus’ ministry, we have included a very simple timeline at the beginning of each section that deals with a new event. Consider the example below:



The solid dots at the beginning and end of the timeline represent Jesus’ baptism and ascension, and the time in between is divided into 4 sections by the 4 Passovers that occurred during his ministry, indicated by the circles. The red marker will be placed to indicate roughly when the event being considered took place.

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

YOUR BIBLE: Unless otherwise indicated, questions and references are from the KJV, but it will be helpful to enhance your studies by comparing a few different translations, such as the ESV, RSV, NASB, Weymouth, or Rotherham’s.

MARGINAL REFERENCES: If your Bible has marginal references, these are great resources. The *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge* (easily accessible on Bible software programs like e-Sword or blueletterbible.com) provides even more references.

CONCORDANCE: *Strong's, Young's, and Englishman's.* Englishman's is particularly useful when you have a Strong's number (*from Strong's Concordance - this is the number that represents the Greek or Hebrew word*) and you want to find all the places that word/number occurs and the actual English word translated in every case. These functions are available in a user-friendly manner on most Bible software programs.

COMPUTER TOOL We strongly recommend choosing one of the following tools to enhance and streamline your study process:

- Web-based tools like blueletterbible.org (also available in an excellent mobile app), biblegateway.com, or biblestudytools.com
- Bible software like Logos (purchase) or e-Sword (free download for Windows).
- To help appreciate Biblical geography we recommend the Bible Mapper tool <http://www.biblemapper.com/>.

STUDY TIPS

Many have found the following three-step approach extremely helpful for Bible study:

STEP 1 – Find the Facts

STEP 2 – Establish the Principle

STEP 3 – Apply the Exhortation



Following this process ensures that we first do a thorough background study (*'finding the facts'*); that we then tie together these facts and from them develop spiritual principles (*'establishing the principle'*); and finally that we consider how these principles apply to and affect our lives (*'applying the exhortation'*).

PRAY

Make sure to begin your studies in prayer.

ASK QUESTIONS

Good Bible study is good Bible *reading*. Good Bible reading comes alive by asking good Bible *questions*. This workbook will guide you through a whole host of questions – but make sure you stay engaged in the study by constantly asking (and then trying to answer) questions of your *own*! Bring the fruits of your own questions with you to Youth Conference.

BALANCE OF PERSONAL AND GROUP STUDY Study groups are a good way to build motivation, find help working through tough sections, and to share your discoveries. They also are a fun and rewarding fellowship opportunity. It is still important, however, that we develop the habit and skill in *personal* Bible Study. Be sure you have some balance in this area of your Youth Conference preparations.

BIBLE MARKING Don't forget to Bible mark any neat points you discover. You're going to make some amazing discoveries – preserve them in your Bible margin!

ASK FOR HELP! If you're having trouble answering (or understanding) a question, mark it and come back later. If you still are unable to make any progress, confer with a friend or ask someone for help! Feel free to contact Bro. Tim or Bro. Caleb (using the e-mail addresses provided on the first page).

ANDREW

COMING TO CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Andrew's name means "manly" (Strong's #G046). Though he originated from the town of Bethsaida, Andrew ran a Capernaum-based fishing business with his brother Simon Peter, in a partnership with James and John ben Zebedee. Despite being the first named disciple to meet Jesus, he appears to have been content to take on a background role as more vocal disciples (including his own brother) became more prominent amongst the apostles. Andrew was originally a disciple of John the Baptist, and he embodied the mission of his former mentor in the way everything he did revolved around pointing as many people as possible towards the true Messiah.

At the beginning of each disciple's section, you will find a table designed to summarize your study by identifying the individual events recorded of that disciple's spiritual growth. The last question of each disciple's section will ask you to review your findings and record the key principles and lessons from each event in the table.

References	Event	Principles & Themes
John 1:35-42	Meeting Jesus	
Matt. 4:10-22; Mark 1:14-39	Calling at Galilee	
John 6:1-40; Matt. 14:1-21; Mark 6:7-44; Luke 9:1-12	Feeding of the 5,000	
John 12:12-33	Greeks Come to Jesus	
Mark 13:3	Olivet Prophecy	

DISCIPLE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Andrew is the first of the twelve disciples introduced in the gospel of John, and he is one of the first two disciples to interact with Jesus after the official beginning of his ministry. John 1:35 tells us that at the time of meeting Jesus, Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist, and chose to follow Jesus because John identified him as the Lamb of God. John the Baptist is referenced throughout the story of Andrew, so we'll begin by considering his ministry and message.

John The Baptist's Mission and Message

- 1) Read John 1:6-28. Summarize John the Baptist's mission and message:
- 2) In John 1:23, John the Baptist identifies himself as the voice in the wilderness foretold in Isaiah 40. Read Isa. 40:3-9. Who will see the Glory of THE LORD revealed (v.5)?

- 3) What does the voice cry (v.6-8)?
- 4) Luke 3:4-6 also applies Isaiah 40 to John the Baptist. Luke 3:3 says that John was preaching the baptism of repentance. How does repentance relate to what the voice of Isa. 40:6-8 was to cry?
- 5) Identify the 5 types of people John the Baptist preached to in Luke 3. What lesson can we learn from the fact that John showed no discrimination when calling people to repent?

The broad appeal of John's message appears to have made a lasting impression on Andrew. Later in Jesus' ministry, he will show a deeper understanding of the universal relevance of the Gospel than the other apostles.

The Disciples of John the Baptist

John the Baptist had a wide influence among the people of Jesus' day. Even after he died, the Jewish leaders refused to criticize him for fear of a negative response from "all" the people (Mark 11:30-33; Luke 20:6-8). But he also had a group of closer, more committed followers referred to throughout the gospels as his disciples. Several of them struggled to shift from following *John* to following *Jesus*.

- 6) Matt. 9:14-15, Mark 2:18-19, & Luke 5:33-35 record the first time John's disciples interact with Jesus. What is the question they pose and what is Jesus' answer?
- 7) In Matt. 11:2-6 and Luke 7:18-23, John sends his disciples to Jesus to ask whether he was "he that should come." What does Jesus tell them to report to John?
- 8) John 3:22-26 describe the transition period between the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus. Summarize John's response to his disciples when they report that Jesus was baptizing and "all men come to him."
- 9) Compare John's response with Jesus' answer to John's disciples in question 6. Who is the bridegroom and who is the bride/children of the bridechamber?

Transferring Allegiance

- 10) Back in John 1:35-37, did Andrew share the reluctance of John the Baptist's other disciples to transfer their loyalty to Jesus?
- 11) When John identifies Jesus as "the Lamb of God", Andrew and another disciple immediately follow Jesus. The text presents an unusual picture – two men following a lamb. Find the verse in Revelation 14 that describes a group of people who follow a lamb. How are these people described, and who do you think they represent?

12) How does Revelation 21:9 describe “the bride”?

13) In choosing to follow “The Lamb of God”, Andrew was effectively becoming part of the bride of Christ! Based on John 3:22-26, describe how John the Baptist would have felt when Andrew left to follow Jesus?

This attitude of John the Baptist appears to have been a major inspiration for Andrew. A selfless desire to bring people to Christ seems to characterize every instance where he appears in the Gospels.

MEETING JESUS

14) In John 1:38, when Jesus sees Andrew and the other disciple following him, he asks “what seek ye?” Find a few other occasions where Jesus asks people what they are seeking for. Why do you think he asks this question?

15) Andrew and the other disciple answer, “Rabbi, where dwellest thou?” Why do you think they wanted to know this?

16) Compare their attitude to Ruth 1:15-17. How is the story of Ruth like the calling of Andrew?

17) Jesus answers them, “Come and see.” Find at least 3 occasions where Jesus invites people to “come,” and comment on what you learn about Jesus and his call from those passages.

18) Andrew and the other disciples first follow Jesus based on what they hear (v.37) and then choose to stay with him based on what they see (v.39). Compare and contrast the event referred to in question 7 to the calling of Andrew.

19) What does Jesus say about the privileged position of the disciples in Luke 10:23-24?


20) Find at least two examples of Old Testament characters to which Jesus could have been referring in Luke 10:24. Identify their names and provide a passage that shows they desired to see and/or hear what the disciples got to experience (These would be excellent cross-references to mark in your Bible!).

People coming to Jesus with different motivations for seeking him and with different responses to what they see and hear is a recurring theme in Andrew's story.

- 21) How is Andrew identified in verse 40? Why do you think this is the way God chose to introduce him?
- 22) The first thing that Andrew does after he meets Jesus is to find his brother and bring him to Christ. What can we learn about Andrew's character based on these actions in John 1:40-42?
- 23) "We have found the Messiah!" Where else in the New Testament do people respond to meeting Jesus by bringing a similarly joyful message to others? Provide at least 3 examples (Hint: Look in the first 4 and last 2 chapters of John).
- 24) How does Andrew's first action on meeting Jesus foreshadow his future role as an apostle? (Consider Mark 3:14; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

Not only is Andrew the first of the twelve apostles to be named, he is also the first to begin to fulfill the mission for which Jesus was preparing them!

CALLING AT GALILEE

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- 25) Read Mark 1:14-20, where Andrew is called to be a disciple. What event immediately preceded this calling, and how would Andrew have been affected by that event?
 - 26) How would the message Jesus was teaching at the time he called Andrew (Mark 1:15) have resonated with him, especially in the context of the major event recorded in Mark 1:14? (See Matt. 3:1-2)
 - 27) In John 1, it was Andrew who chose to follow Jesus, and then Jesus invited him to "come and see". Here, however, Jesus initiates with the directive: "Come after me" (Matthew: "Follow me"). What do you think is significant about this contrast?
 - 28) In Mark 1:17, Jesus revealed a key purpose of the mission to which Andrew had been called: "I will make you fishers of men." Andrew appears to have a deep appreciation of this aspect of his role as a disciple. How has he already demonstrated a desire to "catch men" for Christ?

After Jesus called his new disciples, the next few days passed in a frenzy of activity. After both teaching and healing with amazing authority in the synagogue, Jesus went to the home of Peter and Andrew, where he healed Peter's mother-in-law. That evening, the whole city brought their sick and diseased to be healed. The next morning, Simon "and they that were with him" (Andrew, James, & John – v.29,16-20) went to tell Jesus that "all men" sought for him. Andrew's earliest experiences of being a disciple were characterized by people seeking to come to Jesus.

FEEDING OF 5,000

29) Read Matt. 14:1-13. What event immediately precedes the feeding of the 5,000? Who reported it to Jesus?

30) Read Mark 6:7-31. Andrew was not with Jesus when the news of this event reached Jesus. What was Andrew doing while he was away from Jesus (compare with Luke 9:2-6)?

31) How do you think the news of the event referred to in question 29 would have impacted Jesus and Andrew individually?

32) Based on the previous questions, why do you think Jesus wanted to take his disciples away into a 'desert' place alone for a while?

33) Despite Jesus' desire to be alone with his disciples, the multitudes flocked after him to listen and be healed (Luke 9:11). Read Luke 9:12-14 and Mark 6:35-37. Contrast the disciples' attitude towards the multitude with that of Jesus. What lesson or principle can you draw from Jesus' response to the disciples' suggestion?

34) In Mark 6:33, Jesus asked the disciples how many loaves they had, and told them to go find out. In John 6:8-9, Andrew is the one who finds a boy with five loaves and two fish. Look up Matt 14:18. What is Jesus' answer when Andrew tells Jesus about the loaves and fish, but asks "what are they among so many?"

35) After miraculously multiplying the food for thousands of people, Jesus could have easily made a portion appear in everyone's lap. Instead, he makes the disciples distribute it to the whole crowd (John 6:11). What do you think he was trying to teach the disciples by requiring them to manually pass out the bread and fish?

36) Why does Jesus tell the disciples to gather up all the fragments in John 6:12? How might this instruction build on the lesson Jesus was hoping his disciples would learn?

- 37) Carefully read what Jesus says in John 6:37-40. Explain how this is a commentary on the lessons he was teaching in the feeding of the 5,000.
- 38) Consider that it was Andrew who found and brought the boy with the five loaves and fishes to Jesus. Do you think he understood and was able to apply these principles? Why or why not?
- 39) How does the story of the feeding of the 5,000 confirm and/or add to the picture of what we have learned about Andrew so far?

GREEKS LOOK TO JESUS

The final time we see Andrew play an active role in the gospel accounts takes place in the last week of Jesus' life, right after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. While there is no direct reference to John the Baptist in this section, John 12 is full of allusions to his ministry and message which set the scene for this key chapter in Andrew's story.

- 40) Complete the table below by finding the verses in John 12 that correspond to the events and teaching of John the Baptist.

John the Baptist	Events & Principles	John 12
Matt. 3:5-7	The Pharisees are worried about the popularity of John/Jesus	
Matt. 3:13-17	A voice from heaven confirms God's pleasure with Jesus.	
Luke 3:6; John 3:26-30	More and more people will come to Jesus	
John 3:32	Most people won't accept Jesus' teaching	
John 3:33	Those who do receive Jesus believe God to be true	
John 3:34	Jesus speaks God's Word at His command	
John 3:36	Those who believe Jesus' words will receive everlasting life	

John 12:20 records that there were 'certain Greeks' who came to Jerusalem for Passover. These Greeks were likely proselytes - Gentiles who had converted to Judaism. The original word translated "Greek" can sometimes refer to ethnic Greeks but is often used more broadly in scripture to describe anyone who was not a Jew. The same word is translated as "gentiles" in John 7:35, during an interaction that sets the scene for what takes place in John 12.

- 41) Read John 7:30-37. The Jewish leaders were frustrated by the many people who were believing in Jesus. Why were they unable to arrest Jesus in John 7:30?
- 42) When Jesus told those who wanted to arrest him that soon he was going away somewhere they would not be able to find him (referring to his death and subsequent resurrection and ascension), what did the Jews think he meant?

43) What is the message Christ cries in the temple on the last day of the feast? How does it relate to Andrew's story?

John 12 describes an even more tense feast than that of John 7. In John 12, the people believe in Jesus and have welcomed him by throngs as their king. The Jewish leaders are even more exasperated with Jesus' popularity than they were in John 7. They had theorized in John 7 that Jesus might go preach to the Gentiles, but now Gentiles have come themselves to see Jesus! In John 7, Jesus' hour "was not yet come", but after the Greeks approach him, Jesus finally says that "the hour is come". Let's try to figure out why this meeting with these Gentiles such a significant turning point!(John 12:20-23)

44) The Greeks approach Philip to say, "We would see Jesus." Philip informs Andrew, and together they come to Christ. Read John 1:39 & 46. What might this request have reminded Philip and Andrew of?

45) It appears that Philip wanted to consult Andrew because he was unsure of whether it was appropriate to bring Gentiles to Jesus. Look up the following passages to help answer why these disciples may have been reluctant to bother Jesus with Gentiles.

a) Matt. 10:5-6

b) Matt. 15:24

c) Luke 9:51-54

d) Acts 10:28; 11:1-2

46) Despite their reservations about Gentiles coming to Christ, Andrew and Philip conclude that they *should* bring them to him. Read the following references from Andrew's earlier experiences to explain how he could have helped Philip decide to bring the Greeks to Christ.

a) Luke 3:5-6 (remember that Andrew was initially a disciple of John the Baptist)

b) John 1:41 (see question 22)

c) Mark 1:17 (see questions 28)

d) John 6:8-9, 35-37 (see questions 33-38)

- 47) Jesus' response to the news that Gentiles in Jerusalem want to see him is incredibly significant: "The hour is come, that the son of man should be glorified." What does Jesus say about "the hour" in the following passages?
- a) John 2:4
 - b) John 4:6
 - c) John 7:30
 - d) John 8:20
- 48) In John 12:24-33, Jesus proceeds to talk about his impending death. What was it about these Gentiles coming to see him that signaled that the time for his death had arrived?
- 49) Knowing what the Pharisees were saying in verse 19, and then hearing that Greeks had come to Jerusalem and were wanting to see him likely reminded Jesus of a prophecy that sheds light on why he says that the hour had come. Read Isa. 52:10 and explain why the incident with the Greeks may have reminded him of this prophecy.
- 50) The context of this prophecy is significant. Read the build-up to it in Isa. 52:1-9 describing the deliverance and restoration of Jerusalem. How many parallels can you find between this prophecy and the events surrounding the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem that occurs in John 12:12-19 (and its parallel accounts).
- 51) Look over what the prophecy says next in Isa. 52:13-53:12. Describe how the mood shifts and briefly summarize what this section is foretelling.
- 52) Consider the message of Isa. 53. To what is "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" referring in Isa. 52:10?
- 53) When Jesus hears that Gentiles want to see "Yah's Salvation" (the meaning of Jesus' name), he immediately shifts to talking about the necessity of suffering and death. Jesus does this because he can't accomplish true salvation for those who are coming to him unless he dies! Read John 12:24-28. Summarize what Jesus says and comment on what he is trying to get across to his listeners (bear in mind the previous questions about Isa. 52-53).

- 54) Read John 12:31-33. Jesus now explicitly outlines how he is going to fulfill Isa. 53 - he will die by being 'lifted up' on a cross. In being "lifted up", Jesus will draw all men unto him. Consider the three passages below and explain the significance of people being drawn to a dying Jesus lifted up on a cross.
- a) Num. 21:8-9
 - b) John 3:14-16
 - c) John 6:36-40
- 55) Jesus says that being lifted up will draw all men to him. Do you think Jesus is drawing a comparison/contrast back to what happened in v.19-21 & v.32? Explain.
- 56) How do the events and discourse of John 12 fill out our picture of Andrew? (Discuss the themes of seeing and coming to Jesus).



OLIVET PROPHECY

Even though Andrew was the first disciple to meet Christ, he rarely comes to any prominence in the group, seeming content in his role of bringing people to Christ. In fact, ever since he first introduced his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus, Andrew has taken the back seat. On many occasions, Peter, James, and John are given special privileges.

- 57) Mark 13:3 records the only time when Andrew gets to be part of that privileged group. What is the prophecy that Jesus tells them on this occasion all about?
- 58) Mark 13:10 says that before the destruction of the Jewish nation in AD 70, the gospel must be preached in all nations. Mark 16:15, Matt. 28:18-19, & Acts 1:8 record the detailed instructions Jesus gave Andrew and his brethren about this preaching mission. Based on what you have learned about Andrew, how do you think he would have responded to that mission?

The people wanted Christ to bring about the fulfillment of the first part of Isa. 52 - the redemption and deliverance of Jerusalem - and they wanted it right away. What they did not understand was that before national deliverance there had to be a far more important redemption from a far greater enemy: Sin. The saving work of the Messiah was firstly a moral one, and it could only be accomplished by his suffering and death as described in the suffering servant portion of the prophecy.

- 59) Think about your own influence on those around you, both inside and outside the truth. List some practical ways you could imitate Andrew's driving focus on bringing people to Christ.
- 60) Now that you have finished your study of Andrew, go back to the summary chart at the beginning of this section and fill it out with the most significant principles and lessons you've taken from his character. Don't forget to mark it and any other points you found interesting into your Bible!

PHILIP OF BETHSAIDA

THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Philip was a Galilean from the town of Bethsaida. Like Andrew, he is introduced in the first chapter of John's gospel, meeting Jesus within the first few days of his ministry. Philip shows up in the record in the same context as Andrew on two other occasions, but he had his own unique strengths and struggles. His story reveals how Jesus works with the weaknesses of those who have chosen to follow him.

References	Event	Principles & Themes
John 1:43-49	Calling	
John 6:1-40; Matt. 14:1-21; Mark 6:7-44; Luke 9:1-12	Feeding of the 5,000	
John 12:12-33	Greeks Come to Jesus	
John 14:1-31	Upper Room Discussion	

INTRODUCTORY THEMES

The Fullness of Christ

- 1) John 1:11 says that most of those to whom Jesus came did not receive him. What was given to those few who did receive him? Who were the people who received him?
- 2) Verse 16 says "of all [Jesus'] fullness have all we received." What is the "fullness" of Jesus that a disciple can receive? Start with looking in the context (hint: v.14), then do a search of the Greek word for "fullness" and list at least 5 times it is used of Christ. Using the verses you find, try to explain the "fullness of Jesus."

The principle of the "fullness" of Christ will be a recurring theme in our study of Philip.

The "Bethsaida Attitude"

In John 1:44, the first and only description of Philip is that he was "of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter." Luke 4:31-38, Mark 1:16-21-29, and Matt. 4:13-18 imply that Andrew and Peter lived in a house they owned in Capernaum. It seems likely that Peter and Andrew came from Bethsaida initially, but then moved to Capernaum, perhaps for business reasons. A consideration of what the gospels record about Bethsaida reveals a consistent problem that was characteristic of most of its residents: *They refused to believe and repent despite the many miracles done by Jesus in their midst.*

- 3) Read the following verses and briefly summarize what each passage tells us about this “Bethsaida attitude”.
- Matt. 11:20-24
 - Luke 9:10 (Mark 6:45) cp. John 6:26
 - Mark 8:11-26
 - Luke 10:13

Every time Bethsaida is mentioned (except for the two occasions it labels Philip), it is strongly associated with (or directly condemned for) a persistent refusal to believe & repent in the face of clear visible evidence. We suggest that Philip is identified as being “of Bethsaida” from the first time he is mentioned to highlight his own struggle with this same problem. Each time Philip occurs in the gospels, he has the choice to either conform to the attitude of his hometown or step out of that mold. As you progress through your study of Philip, watch how he grapples with the challenge to the growth of his faith in this area.

CALLING

- John 1:35-42 records how the first four disciples met Jesus. How is Philip’s first interaction with Jesus different than those of Andrew, John, Peter, and James? Comment on the significance of Jesus’ first words to him.
- What is the first thing that Philip does upon being invited to follow Jesus (v.45)? Who else responded in a similar way to his first meeting with Jesus?
- Read what Philip says in verses 45 & 46 to convince Nathanael that he has found the Messiah. Based on these verses, what made Philip so sure in his belief that Jesus was the one for whom they were waiting?
- Based on your previous answer, did Philip fall into the “Bethsaida attitude” discussed in question 3? Explain.

FEEDING OF 5,000

- Where does Luke 9:10 tell us the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 occurred? Why is this significant as we look at this event from Philip’s perspective?

9) Mark 6:35-37 records that when the disciples told Jesus to send away the multitude to buy food, Jesus answered, "They need not depart: give ye them to eat." John 6:5 records that Jesus specifically asked Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Why do you think he directs this particular question at Philip?

10) John 6:6 tells us that Jesus put this question to Philip "to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do." Look up the Greek word for "prove" and write down its definition.

Strong's #G3985

Definition:

11) This word is used in all three accounts of Jesus' wilderness temptations (Matt. 4:1,3; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2). Read through those accounts to identify parallels between the testing of Jesus and Philip. Write down as many connections as you can find.

12) Read Deut. 8:2-5. How is God's explanation of how he "proved" Israel similar to how and why Jesus proved Philip? (Note the connections to Jesus' temptations!)

13) If Jesus already knew about the lad with the five loaves and two fishes, and that he was going to multiply them to feed the thousands, why do you think he asked Philip to try to find a satisfactory solution?


14) In John 6:7, Philip answered Jesus, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." The best solution Philip can come up with is "not sufficient" for the magnitude of the problem. While Philip may have taken a careful inventory of their available resources to come up with this estimate, what crucial factor had he overlooked?

15) Numbers 11 records an event from the wilderness wanderings where Moses is placed in a situation that is remarkably similar to that of Jesus and Philip in John 6. Read the record of Num. 11:11-15, 21-23. List the similarities between the events of Num. 11 and John 6.

16) Describe what Moses had to learn in Numbers 11. Do you think God was 'proving' him?


- 17) How would Philip have been helped if he had thought about Moses' experience in Num. 11? (Compare Moses' words in Num. 11:22 with Philip's in John 6:7).
- 18) In contrast to Philip's solution, which was "not enough," what is said about Jesus' solution to the people's hunger in each of the following verses?
- a) John 6:11
 - b) John 6:12
 - c) John 6:13
- 19) Where in John 1 was this theme of being filled by Christ brought up? Is this miracle in John 6 an illustration of what those verses meant? Explain.
- 20) How do the events of John 6:17-21 contribute to the theme of Jesus' overwhelming ability to supply the disciples' needs?
- 21) In John 6:30-59, Jesus comments on the significance and symbolism of his feeding of the five thousand. What is the food with which he really wants to fill them? What does he mean by this, and what would be the result of eating this food?
- 22) John 6:15 records that after seeing the miracle, the people had concluded that Jesus was the prophet which should come into the world. Unfortunately, this faith was short-lived. Read the following verses and describe how they demonstrate the Bethsaida attitude we discussed in question 3. (Recall that the multitude was fed near Bethsaida – Luke 9:10)
- a) John 6:25-32
 - b) John 6:41-42
 - c) John 6:60-64
- 23) Do you think Philip was struggling to overcome the tendency towards unbelief that was so characteristic of his hometown? Explain. (Consider John 6:60-71 cp. John 1:45)

GREEKS COME TO JESUS

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- 25) John 12:9-11 describes the people thronging to see the risen Lazarus and believing on Jesus. Unlike the people of Bethsaida, these Jews *did* believe because of a mighty miracle; but how deep was their faith? Consider Acts 3:13-15.
- 26) In verse 13, the crowds of Jews at Jerusalem welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem as “The King of Israel.” This is the third time people call Jesus the king around events where Philip plays a role. Find the passages in John 1 and 6 where Jesus is called a king. Why do you think this theme comes up every time Philip is mentioned in John?
- 27) In verses 20-21, the Greeks that we already discussed in our Andrew section want to see Jesus. Do you think their desire to see Jesus was any different than the Jews who were only interested in seeing some spectacular miracle? Why or why not?
- 28) Read what the following verses say about Gentiles who come to see Jesus. Summarize what each passage adds to the picture of Gentile faith.
- a) Luke 2:30-32
 - b) Matt. 2:2
 - c) Matt. 8:9-12
 - d) Matt. 8:9-12; Matt. 15:22-28; Luke 19:2-4
 - e) Rom. 11:11-25
- 29) What is the overall picture of Gentiles coming to see Jesus in the New Testament? Is their faith usually genuine or shallow?
- 30) Why do you think these Greeks first approached *Philip* when they wanted to see Jesus?
- 31) Why do you think Philip came to *Andrew* before bringing the Jews to Christ?
- 32) Read verses 25-26. What does Jesus say is required of those who come to him?

- 33) Worldly wisdom would say this negative message is a terribly damaging public relations strategy. Why do you think he emphasized the high demands of discipleship when the multitudes were so enthusiastic about him?
- 34) Read John 12:37-43. Describe the attitude and faith of the people and their leaders after the events of the chapter concluded. How do these verses change or add to your answer to question 25?
- 35) Read verses 44-46. What does Jesus say about seeing and believing him?
- 36) John 12:21 is one of two occasions where the record tells us that Philip was from Bethsaida. Which groups of people demonstrated the “Bethsaida attitude” in this chapter? Explain.
- 37) Can you find anywhere in John 12 that describes the fullness and sufficiency of Christ?
- 38) What do you think Philip learned through the events of this chapter?

IN THE UPPER ROOM



John 14 is the record of part of the conversation between Jesus and his disciples in the upper room at the end of the last supper. Jesus had already washed their feet, given them the bread and wine, and warned that one of them would betray him.

- 39) In John 13:31, Jesus told his disciples, “Now is the son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” Where in John 12 did Jesus say something similar? Comment on the significance of this phrase occurring again.
- 40) In John 14:1, Jesus tells his disciples, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Why do you think he felt the need to ask the disciples to extend the faith they had in God to faith in him?
- 41) In John 13:33-14:3, Jesus speaks about going away somewhere they can’t follow, but promises that he will come again. Where do you think he is talking about going?
- 42) Thomas protests that they really didn’t know where Jesus was going or how to get there. Jesus first states that he is the way by which men can come to the Father, and then he says, “If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him” (John 14:7, ESV). Explain how or why Jesus could say that the disciples had seen and knew God?

- 43) However, Philip didn't think he had ever seen God, let alone say that he *knew* Him. Therefore, he petitions Jesus in verse 8, "shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Consider the following definition from Thayer's for the word "shew": "1) To show, to expose to the eyes, 2a) to give evidence or proof of a thing, 2b) to show by words or teach." For what do you believe Philip was asking?
- 44) The same Greek word for "shew" occurs in the three passages listed below. Explain what Jesus had "shown" people in each situation and what he expected them to do because of the evidence they saw.
- a) John 2:18-24
 - b) John 10:30-33
 - c) John 20:20
- 45) Read Jesus' response to Philip's request in verse 9. Explain why he is disappointed by Philip's question. What key doctrine was Philip struggling with?
- 46) In verse 10, Jesus explained that God had confirmed that he was dwelling in Jesus by giving him the power to perform miracles. In verse 11, he tells Philip that it was essential to believe that he was in the Father and the Father was in him. At the very least he should believe "for the very works' sake." Jesus made a nearly identical claim with the same evidence to the Jewish leaders in John 10:37-38. What does this comparison tell us about the state of Philip's understanding and faith at this point?
- 47) How much do you think he was struggling with the 'Bethsaida attitude' discussed in question 3?
- 48) Look back at Philip's request in verse 8. Thayer defines the Greek word for "sufficeth" as: "1) to be possessed of unfailing strength; 1a) to be strong, to suffice, to be enough; 1a1) to defend, ward off." Philip has already used this word once before in John 6:7. Compare both passages to explain the insufficiency of Philip and the sufficiency of Christ.
- 49) Go back and read Jesus' commentary in John 6:43-59. Do you think Jesus was hoping Philip would remember what he had learned after the last time he had underestimated the sufficiency of Christ? Explain.
- 50) Look up one more occurrence of this word in 2 Cor. 12:7-10. What does this passage tell us about the sufficiency of Christ, and how could this message have helped Philip?

51) Considering the last few questions, look back at John 1:16-18. Comment on how Philip was learning the significance of these verses.

John 14 is the last place in the New Testament where Philip's words are recorded. At the time, it appears that Philip's understanding and faith were not at a very high point. But it is important to see how the discussion Jesus had with Thomas and Philip in John 14 is concluded in chapter 16.

52) In John 14:8-9, Jesus was disappointed that Philip had asked him to show them the Father, but in John 16:25, he says that a time was coming when he would "shew you plainly of the Father." Why do you think Jesus says this now, what did he mean, and to what time was he referring? (You may find Luke 24:45 and 2 Cor. 3:12-18 helpful)

53) Read how the disciples answer Jesus in John 16:29-30. Does the 'statement of faith' in verse 30 indicate that Philip's faith and understanding have increased since his request in 14:8? Explain.

Jesus' response in John 16:31-32 to this declaration of his disciples' faith is curious. He has spent the past three chapters trying to get them to the point where they believed that he came from God and was the Father's perfect manifestation. But instead of *commending* their faith, he *questions* it, warning that very soon they would all forsake him. Nevertheless, he ends the discussion with an encouragement for them to "be of good cheer", because he had overcome the world.

54) John 17 records Jesus' final prayer for his disciples before his arrest, trials, and crucifixion. Read what he says about his disciples' faith and commitment to him in John 17:6-8. Contrast these words to his words in John 16:31-32. What does this tell us about how Jesus views the struggle of people like Philip to perfect their belief?

55) How does John 17:8 complement what you have learned about the sufficiency of Christ?

56) Now that you have finished your study of Philip, go back to the summary chart at the beginning of this section and fill it out with the most significant principles and lessons you've taken from his character. Don't forget to mark it and any other points you found interesting into your Bible!

NATHANAEL (BARTHOLOMEW)

REIGNING WITH CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Nathanael is the last of the six disciples who were first called after the baptism of Jesus. His name means “the gift of God”. In the lists of the disciples his name Nathanael is not used, but rather Bartholomew (Matt 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14). Bartholomew means “son of Tolmai”, so this would indicate Bartholomew was his family name, while Nathanael was his personal name.

References	Event	Principles & Themes
John 1:43-51	Calling	



CALLING

Specific details concerning Nathanael are only found in John 1:43-51. This is the account which records his calling as a disciple of Jesus and he is the sixth disciple to become one of the twelve.

- 1) After Philip was called by Jesus, he went to tell Nathanael. We’re told they knew about the promise of the coming Messiah from Moses. Where in Moses’ writings would we find this?
- 2) Philip chooses to identify the Messiah to Nathanael using his hometown and his father: “Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.” This may indicate that Philip and Nathanael had already known Jesus, or at least his family. What do you think it would have been like for these disciples to realize that the Messiah had been right under their noses, in plain sight, for decades? (Compare with John 1:26,33)
- 3) Nathanael gives a very interesting response to this news, asking “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”. Why is this his reaction when hearing this news? (Consider John 7:40-43,48-53)

The area of Galilee was generally considered to be despised in the eyes of the Jews. Historically it was there in the north in Israel where false worship was set up in Dan, corrupting the whole region. However, God would choose to have the Messiah come from this area.

- 4) What other examples can you find in scripture where God chooses people for His purpose from areas or situations that man would look down on?
- 5) What lessons can we learn when thinking about why God would work in this way? (Maybe consider 1 Cor. 1:26-31)

As Nathanael and Philip approach, Jesus says to Nathanael, “Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile!” This seems to be a very curious way to greet his new disciple. We’ll first consider what it means to have guile.

- 6) Look up the following occurrences of the Greek word *dolos* (guile). Write down the context in which it is used to help explain its meaning.
- a) Matt. 26:4
 - b) Acts 13:10
- 7) With which part of the body is “guile” associated and found in? (1 Thess. 2:3; 1 Pet. 3:10)
- 8) Who is the “father” of the lying and deceitful tongue? (Gen. 3:4; John 8:44)
- 9) When reading through this record concerning Nathanael, there are strong connections back to the original Israelite, Jacob. Read Gen. 27:18-29. In what ways did Jacob have guile?

Though Jacob valued the promises of his fathers more than Esau did, he used lies and deception to obtain them. After fleeing from Esau’s murderous intents, Jacob spends twenty years working for Laban his uncle. He is then told by God to return to the land of his fathers, which will mean confronting his brother Esau again.

- 10) Read Gen. 32:24-32. In this account Jacob is given the name “Israel” by the angel with whom he wrestled all night. Looking at the context, why was he desperately clinging to the angel asking for a blessing and how does this differ from his previous attempt to obtain a blessing from his father Isaac in Gen. 27?

After Jacob trusts in God and ends up having an amicable meeting with Esau in Gen. 33, God instructs him to go back to Bethel with all of his house. Along the way they stop in Shechem, a place of *decision*, and choose to bury all of their idols under the oak. Once they arrive at Bethel, Jacob builds an altar to Yahweh and it is at this time that God formally changes Jacob’s name to Israel (Gen. 35:1-21).

- 11) When considering the journey and conversion that Jacob had gone through, why would God choose to begin to call Jacob by the name “Israel” at this point in time?
- 12) Jacob’s own descendants, the nation of Israel, would share in Jacob’s struggles with guile in the time of Jeremiah. God had pronounced terrible judgment on His people for continually manifesting these characteristics of the serpent. Summarize the message from Jeremiah in Jer. 9:1-11.

The problem of speaking guile is inherent in our nature and has continued to be passed down through all of Adam’s descendants. Jesus was confronted by this characteristic in the rulers of Israel in his day. Nathanael would be present many times when Jesus would upbraid the Jews for their subtle words and lying tongues during his ministry. However, Jesus came to turn the hearts of Israel back to their fathers and to believe in the promises given to them. He came to redeem his brethren, the very people who would use lying words to put him to death.

- 13) Read the following passages and describe what will be found in the mouth of the redeemed nation of Israel in the kingdom?
- a) Isa. 59:3-5,13 cp. Isa. 59:21
 - b) Isa. 51:15-17
- 14) Look up the following passages and write down who it's talking about and whether or not they have guile.
- a) 1 Pet. 2:22; Isa. 53:7-9
 - b) Rev. 14:5
- 15) Guile is a fundamental problem that we face every day of our life. We must battle against it as followers of Christ if we hope to be changed like him to share in a nature free from that tendency. Write down some thoughts on the struggles you have in your own life with guile. What are the pitfalls of this behavior and how can we overcome these tendencies?

In John 1:48, Nathanael next asks how Jesus knows him. Jesus says he already saw Nathanael before Philip approached to tell him they found the Messiah.

- 16) How was Jesus able to see precisely what Nathanael was doing while not being present? What does this tell us about how important these twelve disciples are in God's plan and purpose?
- 17) What other examples can you think of where God uses his spirit and foreknowledge to call specific people for His purpose? Find at least two Old Testament and two New Testament examples.
- 18) God continues to call out a people for His name today, and intimately knows each one before they even know Him. Jesus, through the spirit, demonstrates this same ability. Reflect on what it means to you when considering how God and Jesus have specifically called you to be joined into God's plan and purpose.

19) Jesus specifically says that he saw Nathanael “under the fig tree”. Look at the following occurrences of this type of language in the Old Testament and summarize the key themes. What connections can you find to the kingdom age when Israel will have turned from practicing “guile”?

a) 1 Kings 4:1,7,20-25

b) Zech. 3:6-10

Nathanael was a student of the word of God, understanding the promise of the coming Messiah from Moses’ writings. Having initially questioned the evidence that Jesus was the Christ, he becomes fully persuaded when he realizes Jesus was able to see him under the fig tree miles away. It is in this moment that Nathanael becomes the first of the disciples to openly declare “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” He is second only to John the Baptist in making such a statement in scripture proclaiming Jesus was the son of God.

20) The phrase, “the King of Israel”, only occurs a total of four times in the New Testament. Look up the three other occurrences of this phrase below and comment on the context in which it is used.

a) Matt. 27:42; Mark 15:32

b) John 12:12-16 cp. John 12:27-36

Nathanael’s statement is echoed by Peter in Matt. 16:16 where he said, “thou art the Christ, the son of the living God”. Jesus would respond to Peter’s words by teaching them that the Son of Man must first suffer many things in Jerusalem and be killed and raised again the third day (Matt. 16:21). Nathanael, Peter, and all the disciples of Jesus would struggle to comprehend the fact that Jesus, “the King of Israel” would first be put to death before sitting on the throne of David. Little did Nathanael know that only a few short years later he would find himself hidden in the back of a crowd beholding Jesus dying on the cross with the superscription above him saying “This is the king of the Jews”. (Luke 23:38,49)

Nathanael was fully convinced Jesus was the Messiah when he realized Jesus had seen him without being present. Jesus responds to Nathanael by saying that he would witness far greater things than this. He says, “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” We will now examine what Jesus meant by these words.

21) Earlier we considered connections between Nathanael and the life of Jacob (Israel). What echo do we see in these words of Jesus to a key event in Jacob’s life? Write down the cross reference.

22) What is Jacob’s response upon seeing this vision in verses 17-18 of the chapter where this event is found?

Jacob's reaction to seeing the angels of God ascending and descending on the earth is to declare that place as Bethel, "the house of God". He saw heaven opened and the glory of Yahweh at the top of the ladder. The stone that was lying down as a pillow for sleeping was then set upright and he poured "oil upon the top of it" (anointed). When comparing this to Jesus' comments, there are strong allusions to his future work.

23) Fill out the chart below with the verses where the corresponding themes occur. Some columns might not be filled in for each reference.

Reference	King	Heaven/Gates Opened	Jacob/Israel	Multitude of Saints	Nations
Ezek. 1:1-5, 24-28					
Ezek. 40:1-5					
Ezek. 43:1-11					
Micah 4:1-8					
Rev. 4:1-11					
Rev. 21:10-11, 22-27					

24) What 'greater thing' is Jesus referring to and when will it occur? Who will be the "angels" ascending and descending upon the Son of Man at that time?

It's worth noting that Jesus says the angels will be ascending and descending upon the *Son of Man*. In the Old Testament, son of man is almost always son of "adam" in Hebrew. Nathanael had just called him the Son of God, but Jesus purposefully uses a different title in this context. This is the first of several times he makes this distinction. Two other notable occasions are found in Matt. 16:13-21, 27-28 and Matt. 26:63-64.

25) Psalm 8 is a key passage where we learn of the purpose and work associated with this title. Read this Psalm and summarize what it says about the Son of Man.

Read Hebrews 2:5-18 for a divine commentary on Psalm 8 relating the work of the Son of Man to the Lord Jesus Christ.

26) From this passage, explain why Jesus had to be made "a little lower than the angels". (Multiple reasons are given)

27) Who does it say is the "enemy/avenger" that Jesus would subdue and conquer? Where would this "battle" take place and how would he obtain victory?

28) Explain what becomes of all the "sons of Adam" who follow their captain, the Son of Man, into this battle.

Son of Man and Son of God

At his baptism, Jesus was anointed by God with the holy spirit and to all in attendance was declared as God's beloved son in whom he was well pleased. As the Son of God, he inherited the right to rule as king and the role of high priest for mankind that he might reconcile them to God from their inherent corruption "in Adam".

Though he was the Son of God, he was also "born of a woman" and inherited the nature passed down to all mankind since the transgression in the garden of Eden: a nature prone to sin and a mortal body that would return to the ground in death. It was necessary that Jesus first embrace the purpose and role of the Son of Man (adam) before he could rightly obtain his inheritance as the Son of God. He had to conquer sin within himself first and declare his Father's righteousness. He learned obedience through the things he suffered, even to the laying down of his own life.

The process of the crushing blow to the serpent/devil has begun and will be fully accomplished at the end of the thousand years when death itself will be cast in the "lake of fire" for destruction. His dominion and subjection over the flesh, and death itself, as the Son of Man has made it possible that an innumerable multitude of those "in Adam" will be changed to be called the "sons of God". With glorious bodies instead of corruptible ones, they will perfectly reveal the character of their Father throughout the whole earth.

The last time Nathanael is mentioned by name is in John 21:2 in reference to him being in the boat fishing with some of the other disciples. It is here we are told that Nathanael was from the city of Cana.

- 29) Use a concordance and look up the meaning of "Cana". How does this echo back to Ezekiel who recorded the measurements of the house of God in the age to come?
- 30) Now that you have finished your study of Nathanael, go back to the summary chart at the beginning of this section and fill it out with the most significant principles and lessons you've taken from his character. Don't forget to mark it and any other points you found interesting into your Bible!

MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN

REDEEMED BY CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Matthew is the Greek form of the Hebrew name “Mattithiah,” and it means “gift of Yahweh” (Thayer). His other name in the gospels is Levi, which means “joined”. The gospel writers only record one story about Matthew, but it carries profound implications for what the mission of Jesus was all about. Jesus’ decision to call Matthew to be an apostle heralded the triumph of grace over law and cemented once and for all the principle that salvation is the gift of God. Receiving this calling of grace, Matthew’s grateful response was to join himself forever to the Lord Jesus.

References	Event	Principles & Themes
Matt. 9:9; Mark 2:13-14; Luke 5:27-28	Calling	
Matt. 9:10-11; Mark 2:15-16; Luke 5:29-30	Feast with Publicans & Sinners	
Matt. 9:12-13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5: 31-32	Discussion with Pharisees	

CALLING

- 1) Read the three accounts of Matthew’s calling (Matt. 9:9; Mark 2:13-14; Luke 5:27-28). What was Matthew’s profession, and how is his job described?
- 2) When Matthew wrote his gospel account, years after the ministry of Jesus, how did he describe himself when he listed the twelve disciples (Matt. 10:3).

Matthew’s former occupation was a significant part of his identity and is crucial to the story of his discipleship. In the gospel records, publicans are frequently grouped together with another group of people, collectively called “sinners”.

- 3) Fill out the chart below to learn as much as you can about this group of people.

References	How Publicans Are Described	How “Sinners” Are Described
Luke 3:12		N/A
Matt. 5:46-47; Luke 6:32-34		
Matt. 9:10-11; Mark 2:15-16; Luke 5:29-30		

Matt. 10:3; Luke 5:27		N/A
Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:29-34		
Luke 7:35-50	N/A	
Matt. 18:17		N/A
Luke 15:1-2		
Luke 15:3-32		
Luke 18:10-13		N/A
Luke 19:1-10		N/A
Matt. 21:28-32	N/A	
John 9:16,24,25	N/A	

- 4) Write a brief summary profiling the group of people the gospels term “publicans”. Describe their social position, status, and reputation, as well as their moral & spiritual condition.
- 5) Write a brief summary profiling the group of people the gospels term “sinners”. Describe their social position, status, and reputation, as well as their moral & spiritual condition.
- 6) Compare and contrast the way the religious Jews saw and treated publicans and sinners to the way *Jesus* saw and treated them.

- 7) Contrast the way the publicans and sinners responded to the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus to the way the common people responded to the same message.

- 8) Do you think Matthew was the rare exception - an honest and faithful publican - or do you think he was like the other outcasts that came to Jesus, a gross sinner in need of repentance?

- 9) What was Matthew doing when Jesus first spoke to him?

- 10) Where was Matthew's tax booth located? (See Mark 2:1, 13-14)

- 11) The first time Matthew's hometown appears in the Bible is Matt. 4:13-17. What is the reason given in this section for Jesus choosing to dwell in this place?

- 12) Examine the details in the section of Isaiah quoted in Matt. 4:15-16. Explain how this prophecy might apply to the way Matthew's story is introduced in Matt. 9:9.

- 13) Jesus only spoke two words to Matthew, and yet he immediately responded. How much do you think Matthew already knew about Jesus when he received the call? (Consider Matt. 21:32, Luke 3:12, 7:29, and Acts 1:21-22).

- 14) What unique detail does Luke 5:28 record about how Matthew responded to Jesus' invitation? Find at least three passages that highlight this important principle of becoming a disciple.

- 15) Matthew left a very lucrative job and a permissive lifestyle that catered to the flesh. Describe the new lifestyle that he would adopt to become a disciple of Jesus. Provide the source passages you used for your answer.

- 16) Matthew's decision to follow Jesus completely changed his life. What does this tell you about the strength of his convictions about Jesus?
- 17) How has your life changed because of the invitation Jesus has extended to you? If Jesus walked by you at your job, or sitting in your class at school, how do you think you would respond?

THE FEAST WITH PUBLICANS & SINNERS

- 18) Luke 5:29 says that Levi (Matthew) made Jesus "a great feast in his own house." What might this response to being called by Jesus reveal about Matthew?
- 19) What other notable publican received Jesus into his house when he was converted? Find as many connections as possible between his story and Matthew's.
- 20) What consistent themes or principles are revealed in both stories?
- 21) Find an example in Jesus' teaching where the conversion of a sinner is celebrated with a joyful feast. Find as many connections as possible between the example you find and Matthew's story.
- 22) What does this say about how we should celebrate repentant sinners who choose to follow Jesus?
- 23) Matthew 9:10 says that "as Jesus sat at meat in [Matthew's] house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples." What further detail about these publicans and sinners is provided in Mark 2:15?
- 24) Despite their interest in Jesus & his message, why do you think these publicans and sinners only found the courage to join Jesus for a meal when he was eating in Matthew's house?

25) When the Pharisees saw this group of publicans and sinners sitting down to eat with Jesus, they were scandalized, and asked his disciples why Jesus would allow it (Matt. 9:11). Why do you think they approached the disciples instead of challenging Jesus himself?

Jesus responded to the Pharisees by saying, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick” (Matt. 9:12). Read through the story of Jesus healing ‘a man sick of the palsy’ which immediately preceded the calling of Matthew in the first eight verses of Matthew 9.

26) How was the setting of the palsied man’s healing similar and/or different to Matthew’s feast (see Mark 2:1-4)?

27) Why were the scribes angry with Jesus in the first story?

28) What key principle was Jesus establishing through the healing of the palsied man?

29) How does establishing this principle set up Jesus’ next actions: calling a publican and eating with sinners?

In Matthew 9:13, Jesus expands his answer to the critical Pharisees by telling them they had missed a crucial lesson from their own revered scriptures: “But go ye and learn what that meaneth, ‘I will have mercy, and not sacrifice’: For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” There are many passages in the Old Testament that discuss how God is more interested in the motivations of the heart than the sacrifices and rituals of the law, but Jesus chooses to quote from Hosea. To find out exactly what Jesus thought the Pharisees needed to learn from this passage, we will need to understand more about its context.

30) Read through Hosea 1-3 and briefly summarize the enacted parable God asked Hosea to perform in his family life.

31) How was the character and behaviour of Gomer, Hosea’s wife parallel to Israel’s?

32) How did Hosea’s character and actions symbolize God’s relationship with Israel?

33) How is this fundamental storyline of Hosea relevant to the incident at Matthew’s feast?

- 34) Read Hosea 6:6. Jesus only quoted half of this verse but told the Pharisees to “go and learn what that meaneth”. What was the half he didn’t quote?
- 35) If Jesus is saying that the Pharisees didn’t know what it meant to show mercy, what was the deeper implication based on the second half of the verse? (Compare other verses where Jesus makes the same point: John 8:19, Luke 11:52)

The story of Matthew’s calling and feast introduces some fundamental, radical truths about the gospel that Jesus preached and lived. Jesus’ approach to the publicans and sinners challenged many of the devout Jews’ preconceptions about whether past sins affect a person’s relationship with God, what kind of person is truly righteous before God, and how we should treat those with questionable pasts.

- 36) It’s very natural to feel that the sins of our past preclude us from having a full relationship with God, his son, and the ecclesia. Read the following passages considering how Jesus reached out to sinners like Matthew and his associates. How do these verses say God wants us to deal with our past mistakes? Does he want us to be defined by our worst sins? **1 Cor. 6:9-11; Rom. 6:17-18; Acts 26:17-18**
- 37) Not everyone who Jesus called had a background as notoriously questionable as Matthew and his associates. What do you think Jesus was hoping his other disciples would consider when he said that he hadn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners?
- 38) Read the following passages, then explain how we should see ourselves in comparison to others who appear to be ‘worse’ sinners than us. Rom. 5:6-8; Luke 18:9-14; 1 Tim. 1:15; Phil. 3:4-14

Jesus shocked his religious community by intentionally reaching out to the most morally corrupt people of his day to invite them to be his disciples. He sat down boldly to eat with sinners and did not hesitate to welcome publicans into his inner circle. He frequently came under criticism for associating himself with morally questionable people (Luke 15:1-2; Mark 2:15-17; Luke 19:7, Matt. 11:25-30; Luke 7:36-50, John 17:15).

- 39) What does Heb. 5:2 say about Jesus’ reasons and motivations for reaching out to the moral outcasts of society?

- 40) What does Jesus say about the source of defilement in Mark 7:15?
- 41) Based on what he tells the few remaining faithful members of the Sardis ecclesia in Rev. 3:1-4, does Jesus think that spending time with unfaithful or corrupt people will make you guilty by association?
- 42) Based on all the examples you considered at the beginning of this section, what was Jesus' goal in all his interactions with publicans and sinners? What, if any, expectations did he have of those who came to him?
- 43) Reflect on the principles you have uncovered from this section. What key lessons have you learned from Jesus' example and teaching in the story of Matthew that challenged your perspective on a) your own status before God, and b) the status of those whom you tend to stigmatize?
- 44) Choose one of the following two questions to study further and answer thoroughly in the space below:
- a) Explore the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19 and the Woman Who Was a Sinner in Luke 7. Compare both stories with the story of Matthew's feast to establish the consistent principles Jesus upholds in the way he interacts with publicans and sinners.
 - b) Explore the following question: "How do we adhere to God's instruction to practice separation from worldly influences while also following Jesus' example of showing mercy to those who are in the world or have lost their way?" Some passages to consider: Psa. 1:1; Heb. 7:26; 2 Cor. 6:17; 7:1; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; Isa. 65:5.
- 45) Now that you have finished your study of Matthew, go back to the summary chart at the beginning of this section and fill it out with the most significant principles and lessons you've taken from his character. Don't forget to mark it and any other points you found interesting into your Bible!

JAMES SON OF ALPHEAUS, THADDEUS, AND SIMON ZELOTES

OVERCOMING WITH CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

There are three disciples whom God chose to record in name only: James Son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, and Simon Zelotes. We will briefly cover the few details that we have concerning them.

James, son of Alphaeus, is also called “James the less” in Mark 15:40. It really implies “little” and some have suggested it was because he was short in stature, though we could never know for sure this side of the kingdom. We’re told that his mother, Mary, was at the foot of the cross with the other women at the death of Jesus (John 19:25 cp. Matt. 27:56). It says that she was the wife of “Cleophas”, and it’s suggested that James’ father, Alphaeus, had two names which was not uncommon at that time. This James was likely the brother of the apostle Matthew, who is referred to in Mark 2:14 as “Levi, the son of Alphaeus.”

Thaddeus’ name seems to mean “large hearted” or “courageous”. Brother H.P. Mansfield suggests “a man of heart”. In Matt. 10:3 we’re told he was also known as “Lebbaeus”. Reasoning through the lists of the twelve disciples, he was likely the same disciple referred to as “Judas, the brother of James” (Luke 6:16) and “Judas, not Iscariot” (John 14:22).

Simon Zelotes is also called “Simon the Canaanite” in Matt. 10:4. The Greek word for “Canaanite” does not mean he was a native of Canaan. It is actually derived from a Syriac word “Kanean” or “Kanemiah” which was a Jewish nationalist sect known as Zealots. Brother H.P. Mansfield wrote the following comments in his book *The Guidebook to the New Testament*:

“Members of this party were dedicated to the principle of an independent Jewish state, so that they looked upon foreign domination as hateful. Their zeal for their principles took extreme action at times, so that the party was often embroiled with the Roman authorities... Simon was, therefore, a lover of freedom, but recognized that Jesus could offer him freedom from the domination of sin and death, which was far greater than the national aspirations of his party. He joined the ranks of the Apostles, but still retained his title of Zealot. Now his zeal was channeled into service for Christ, and a warfare against the flesh. He who chafed at the yoke of Rome, willingly accepted that of Christ. This zealous follower of the Lord became an inspiration to his fellow-Zealots, and because of his zeal, a warming influence in the things of truth. In that, we can follow the example of Simon” (*Guidebook to the New Testament, pg. 51, H.P. Mansfield*).

- 1) When Jesus assembled his prototype ecclesia of the first disciples, he chose to put people from vastly different backgrounds and walks of life together to form one (ultimately) cohesive group. Contrast what you know about Simon Zelotes with what you have learned about Matthew the publican. What kind of friction and conflict might have arisen between and/or around them?
- 2) Why do you think Jesus chose to put people together who he knew would naturally clash? Support your answer with scripture.
- 3) Consider and discuss the implications for the interpersonal drama that you have experienced within your ecclesia.

WITNESSES TO CHRIST'S TEMPTATIONS

Though we have very little information concerning these three disciples, we cannot discount their importance in God's overall purpose and in their service to the Lord Jesus Christ. Like the other nine disciples, they were hand-picked by Jesus to be "one of the twelve". Consider the following:

- They were given the spirit and sent out with the others to heal diseases and preach Jesus as the Messiah.
- They will inherit three of the twelve thrones in God's kingdom to rule over the tribes of Israel.
- They witnessed the risen Lord and spread the news to all who would hear in the face of great persecution.
- They have been appointed as shepherds over Christ's flock and are part of the foundation upon which the house of God is built.
- They led the early ecclesias from their infancy and continue to lead us now as a mature body in Christ through their teaching and example which has been preserved in God's Word through the work of the holy spirit.
- For all of the great works of service written about Paul, he too was subject under them, and by no means would seek to compare or lift himself up to their rank (2 Cor. 10:12).

In the account of the last supper in Luke 22, Jesus responds to the disciples' argument over who would be the greatest by teaching them the necessity to first be a *servant*. Jesus had given them the perfect example of what that meant throughout his ministry. He concludes his teaching on the matter by telling them he has appointed a kingdom unto them, and they are to eat and drink at his table and rule on twelve thrones (Luke 22:29-30). Part of his reasoning for that is given in verse 28 where he says, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." We would now like to consider how the twelve disciples, including James, son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, and Simon Zelotes, fulfilled these words during Christ's ministry.

The Greek word for "temptations" is the masculine noun *peirasmos*. It is part of the same word family as the verb form *peirazo*. It is commonly used in the context of people being tempted in their flesh and can also be used to mean to prove or to test. Heb 2:18 and Heb 4:15 use these words to convey the importance that Jesus shared the same nature as all mankind and knows exactly what it is like to be tempted by the flesh.

Below you'll find a list of incidents in scripture where it specifically uses these Greek words saying he was being tempted while the disciples are present (continuing) with him.

- a) Matthew 16:1-12
 - b) Mark 10:2-12
 - c) Matthew 22:15-22
 - d) Matthew 22:34-40
 - e) John 8:2-11
- 4) Choose two of these incidents and write one or two paragraphs answering the following questions.
- Who was involved in the temptation?
 - How was this a temptation/test for Jesus and how did he respond to it?
 - What was the principle or lesson that Jesus taught?
 - How would this temptation and Jesus' response have impacted the disciples?
 - Were the disciples a support to Jesus in this temptation? If yes, explain how. If no, explain how they could/should have supported him through the temptation.

Paragraph Answers for Incident Choice #1

Paragraph Answers for Incident Choice #2

JAMES, SON OF ZEBEDEE

SUFFERING WITH CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

James is one of the first disciples called to follow Jesus and it could be his brother John who told him they had found the Messiah (John 1:40-41). His name is the equivalent of Jacob in Hebrew, meaning “supplanter”.

Being a son of Zebedee, it would appear he had a fairly privileged upbringing. Zebedee owned his own vessels and had hired servants (Mark 1:19-20). His family owned property not only in Galilee, but also apparently in Judea (John 19:27). As we will consider later with John, it seems the family had a high social standing, being on intimate terms with the high priest (John 18:16).

With his father and brother, James was a partner in a fishing business with Peter and Andrew before being called as a disciple of Christ (Luke 5:10). Alongside Peter and John, he would have the unique opportunity to witness the raising of Jairus’ daughter, the transfiguration, and Jesus’ suffering in the garden of Gethsemane.

There aren’t any writings through the spirit attributed to James, and the only time he is solely mentioned on his own is the account of his death.

References	Event	Principles & Themes
Matt. 20:20-28	Request for a Higher Seat	
Acts 12:1-11	Death at the Hands of Herod	
Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51-56	Sons of Thunder	

REQUEST FOR A HIGHER SEAT

In our first consideration of James, we’ll look at the incident regarding him, his brother John, and his mother found in Matthew 20:20-28.

1) What was requested from Jesus?

While the Matthew account says that their mother asked Jesus for the special seats, we’re told in the parallel account in Mark 10:35 that it was James and John requesting it. It would appear that all three came to Jesus to make this request together.

2) Why would they suddenly decide to make this request? (Hint: Look at the end of chapter 19)

3) Was there anything wrong with asking for them to sit on the right and left hand of Jesus in his kingdom? Explain your answer.

Jesus responds by telling them they don’t understand the full implications of their request. He then asks them if they are “able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”.

- 4) It's vital for us to understand what Jesus means by this question. He talks about a cup that he must drink several times in the garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26 and John 18. Read those accounts and use the context to answer what cup Jesus says he must drink.
- 5) Based on your answer to the previous question, how would the cup correspond to his "baptism"?
- 6) James and John both answer that they are willing to drink of that cup and be baptized with that baptism, though it seems neither disciple truly understood what that entailed. What does this tell us about them as disciples of Jesus?

Jesus tells them that they will indeed share in that cup and baptism, but that he cannot give the seats on his right and left in his kingdom. That decision resides solely with his Father.

- 7) This is a very interesting detail that Jesus gives us. What insight does this provide into the relationship between God and His son and their respective roles?
- 8) What does the fact that God has predetermined roles and responsibilities for all the disciples of Christ in the age to come mean to you?

Recall that earlier in Matthew 17 Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John separately aside up to a mountain to witness the transfiguration. When they came back down Jesus instructed the three to not tell anyone what they had seen until he was risen from the dead (Matt. 17:9). We now have two of those three privileged disciples asking for an elevated place among the other ten when they rule over Israel under Christ in his kingdom. We're told that the ten disciples were now "moved with indignation against" James and John when they heard this request.

- 9) Put yourself in the shoes of the ten disciples. How would you feel as a disciple of Christ when those given seemingly preferential treatment were asking for even more? Was their response justified?
- 10) This issue concerning who would be the greatest of the twelve would be the most commonly occurring dispute amongst the group. What aspect of the flesh was manifested by the disciples? Summarize Jesus' exhortation to them in Matt. 20:25-28.

Paul writes to the Corinthians that he would not dare to elevate himself to become one of the twelve, who 'outranked' him. The Corinthians had been lifting themselves up into places of authority for which they were not appointed and "comparing themselves among themselves". He blatantly states they "are not wise" (2 Cor. 10:12-15).

- 11) The pride of life is an inherent obstacle in our nature passed down from Adam. What are some practical ways to work through those feelings of indignation that arise when we go down a path of measuring ourselves against others?
- 12) What could James and John have done differently? What can we learn from this to avoid igniting such a conflict amongst our families, friends, or ecclesia?

DEATH AT THE HANDS OF HEROD

We will next consider the only event recorded in the life of James that specifically focuses on him alone: his death. Only eleven words are used to describe this occurrence, but there is much for us to learn from James who would be the first of the twelve disciples to die because of his belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Read Acts 12.

- 13) Acts 12:1 begins by saying “Now about that time”. Look at the context at the end of Acts 11 and explain what was happening at that time in the ecclesia?
- 14) The ecclesia was already going through great hardship, yet now they would have the threat of death at the hands of Herod. Sometimes in life it can feel like everything is going wrong and is piling on us all at once. What passages are helpful to consider when facing these times in our families and in the ecclesia?
- 15) When Herod decided to persecute the followers of Christ, he could have chosen any of them. Put yourself in Herod’s shoes. Why was James chosen by Herod to be killed out of all the disciples?
- 16) Considering James’ status among the disciples of Christ, God has recorded hardly anything about him. What possible connection could be made to James’ prior request for a higher seat in the kingdom and Jesus’ subsequent exhortation to the feuding disciples? (See your answer to question 10).
- 17) Prior to James’ death, the last words we have recorded from him are from when he and John say they are able to drink of the cup that Jesus would drink of. Look at your answer to question 4. How did James fulfill that vow here in Acts 12?
- 18) We’re told that he was killed around Passover with the sword at the hand of the Roman authorities to please the Jews. There are obviously loud echoes to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. How would the message in 1 Peter 2:21-23 be relevant to the death of James?

- 19) Earlier in Acts 5, James and the other apostles were put into prison by the Jewish leaders. How did they escape and what was their response to the persecution they endured at the end of Acts 5?
- 20) After James was killed in Acts 12, Peter is also taken prisoner, and Herod had plans to kill him as well. If you were a believer in Christ at that time, how would you feel when you see two of the most prominent apostles being persecuted for their beliefs?
- 21) What lessons can we learn from the response of the brothers and sisters in this time of great distress?

There are numerous examples in Acts where the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ are saved from prison and potential death by angels. We've looked at the incident in Acts 5 with all of the apostles. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas are similarly freed from prison. In Acts 12, Peter was miraculously freed from the bonds of death. We're told the brethren were praying for him and we can easily assume they had been praying for James when he was taken.

- 22) In light of those facts, Acts 12 poses a very profound question: With the angels in his charge, why would Jesus send them to help Peter, but not James? (Perhaps consider another occasion when a close friend of Jesus was allowed to die when Jesus could have saved him)
- 23) Though the brethren would have mourned the death of James, in what way would his example be a source of strength for all the followers of Christ, including us?

Like James, it is impossible for us to know in what ways God and the Lord Jesus Christ intimately work around us through the angels. The prayers of the brethren were heard, but it was not according to God's will that James would be saved from the hands of cruel men. A greater purpose was being accomplished in the first death of one of the twelve apostles.

In life we can encounter heart-wrenching situations where a loved one is on the verge of death, and we pray for God to deliver them. In some cases, the loved one comes through it and in others they might die. Similarly soul-crushing are our unanswered prayers for deliverance from any acute trials

- 24) How can our considerations of James and Peter in Acts 12 help us come to terms with tragic events like the loss of a loved one when we know it is within God's power to solve the problem, and that he hears our prayers?
- 25) What lessons can we learn from James' (and Peter's) readiness to submit to the Lord's will, not knowing the outcome?

26) James was willing to follow the example of his master and show himself as a suffering servant in his life and death. We may not literally be put to death like James, but how can we follow this same spirit today? (Perhaps look at 1 Pet. 4:1-7, 12-16 to help with your answer)

27) Though the angels did not save James in Acts 12, we do find them acting on his behalf in relation to Herod. How does Isa 51:7-8 relate to James and Herod in this chapter?

SONS OF THUNDER

In the list of the twelve disciples found in Mark 3, we find that a specific detail is given concerning James and John. We're told that Jesus had named them "Boanerges" which means "sons of thunder". Simon (Peter), James, and John are the only people who scripture records receiving a new name from Jesus during his ministry.

There is a particular incident involving James and John which is commonly viewed as being the explanation for why Jesus gave them this name. Read Luke 9:51-56.

After the transfiguration, Jesus begins teaching the disciples that he must be delivered into the hands of men and be killed (Luke 9:44). He then is determined to go to Jerusalem to fulfill the work of his Father that should be accomplished in himself. Along the way he intended to stay in a village of the Samaritans, but they did not receive him because he intended to go to Jerusalem.

28) How did James and John respond to this perceived insult to their Lord?

29) Using your margin or Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge (TSK), write down the cross reference of the incident involving Elijah to which they were referring. Why was the third captain with his fifty men sent from the "king of Samaria" spared from the fire from heaven?

In John 4, James and John had previously seen Jesus interact with a Samaritan woman in Shechem. In verse 27 we're told the disciples "marvelled that he talked with the woman" and were seemingly afraid to openly ask him why he was talking with her. This implies the disciples, likely including James and John, held their own biases against the Samaritans.

30) What was the response of the Samaritan woman and of the people of her city?

31) What does this teach us about potential biases and making blanket generalizations about people?

In their blind zealotry for defending their master, James and John had forgotten the conversion of the Samaritan woman and her city. Because of their wrath, the brothers now give in to a vindictive attitude toward this other city of Samaritans who rejected their master. In their anger they turned to the example of Elijah to justify their conclusion to destroy that city by fire. However, they also forgot that Elijah had two other incidents concerning “fire from heaven” which focused on conversion of people who had gone astray!

32) Read 1 Kings 18:30-39 regarding the contest on Mt. Carmel and comment on what the fire from heaven consumed, as well as the impact it had on the people.

The victory on Mt. Carmel was short-lived, as Elijah finds himself fleeing for his life shortly afterwards and ends up alone on Mt. Horeb. Though he encountered wind, earthquake, and fire from God (heavenly origin), Yahweh wanted Elijah to focus on *the still small voice* (1 Kings 19:9-18).

33) Read Romans 11:1-5 for divine commentary on this incident. Explain who needed to be converted and what lesson had to be learned.

James and John had been deceived by their own hearts in calling for fire from heaven to destroy the city of the Samaritans. Unaware of this deception working within their own flesh, they turned to scripture for an example to give an occasion for their flesh to justify Jesus in the eyes of the people.

34) Explain the dangers of turning to scripture to support a predetermined course of action or principle without taking into account the deceitfulness of our own hearts. How can we avoid the pitfall that James and John experienced?

Jesus told James and John that the Son of Man came not to *destroy* men’s lives but to *save* them. One could consider that statement and come away with the idea that destruction is not part of the work of the Son of Man. However, in each of the incidents we considered with Elijah and fire, we find that something *was* destroyed. Two thirds of the Samaritan soldiers were consumed with fire after, who had showed no humility before the man of God. The 400 prophets of Baal were slain by the people of Israel at the command of Elijah. Finally, Elijah’s proud heart had to be cast down in Mt. Horeb.

35) Though Jesus’ work as the Son of Man is to save men’s lives, this salvation is only achieved by simultaneously destroying something. Read the following passages, and in each one explain what God says must be destroyed and how that will provide salvation for Adam’s descendants.

a) Heb. 2:14-18

b) 1 Cor. 15:21-28,51-57

c) Rev. 20:14-21:8

While the incident we've looked at in Luke 9 is commonly believed to be the genesis of the "sons of thunder" name, it's worth considering another potential implication of that title. It would seem odd that Jesus chose this brief moment of rebuke and failing to forever label James and John with this new name.

36) Do a search on the Greek word for "thunder" used in Mark 3:17. Without exception, what is always associated with that word in every single occurrence in scripture, and in which book is it predominantly found?

37) Read Revelation 14:1-11 and summarize the message found in the "thunders" from heaven.

38) Who is represented in the multitude thundering from heaven, and how does this connect to the lesson of the still small voice that Elijah, James, and John had to learn?

Revelation 10 contains one of several visions of the Son of Man coming in glory in his kingdom that are found in the book of Revelation. In verse 4, it mentions seven thunders uttering their voices, but John is told not to write down what they say. There are some interesting connections to Psalm 29 where the voice of Yahweh is mentioned seven times and used in the context of thundering.

39) Read Psalm 29. Summarize what these seven voices are saying and consider how this might connect to the need for something to be destroyed or cast down so that men can be saved.

Though James was a very prominent disciple, we find very little record of any words he spoke. In fact, he is never recorded saying any words that are attributed to him alone. However, his death for the sake of the gospel at the hands of Herod would be proclaimed louder and further than any words he could say in his life. He publicly declared the sufferings of Christ as the Son of Man (*adam*), and that message has echoed throughout time to reach even our ears.

We will next consider the life of his brother John, who would be preserved to declare the glory of Christ. In the age to come, the voices of thunder from the innumerable host of the saints in the heavenly government will proclaim the gospel message of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow. By God's grace we have been invited to share in spreading the message of the "sons of thunder" to all nations of the earth, even those of "Samaria".

40) Now that you have finished your study of James, go back to the summary chart at the beginning of this section and fill it out with the most significant principles and lessons you've taken from his character. Don't forget to mark it and any other points you found interesting into your Bible!

JOHN, SON OF ZEBEDEE

ABIDING IN CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

John's name comes from the Hebrew equivalent Johanan, meaning "Yahweh has been gracious". He is presumed to be the younger brother of James, since James is typically mentioned first in scripture when they are recorded together.

He participated in the family fishing business with his father Zebedee and his brother before he was chosen as one of the twelve disciples. Therefore, he already had an established relationship with Andrew and Peter before leaving his occupation behind to become a fisher of men.

While his brother James was the first of the twelve disciples to die, it is commonly held that John was the last of the twelve to die.

References	Event	Principles & Themes
John 1:29-42	Calling	
John 13:21-26	In the Upper Room	
John 19:25-27	Caring for the Mother of Jesus	
John 20:1-10	At the Empty Tomb	
Rev 1; Rev 22:7-21	In the Isle of Patmos	



CALLING

Read [John 1:29-42](#). In our earlier considerations of Andrew, recall that there was another disciple of John the Baptist that was with Andrew when they were instructed to "Behold the Lamb of God". We can't know for sure, but it seems possible that the unnamed disciple could have been John, son of Zebedee. Consider the following points:

- In John 1:40-41, it says that Andrew "first findeth his own brother, Simon". Some have suggested that it implies the other disciple went to find his brother as well.
- Jesus instructs them to "come and see". This is a key theme throughout the book of Revelation. As the seals are opened, the same words are spoken to John to see and write down all of the visions that are sent to him. (Rev. 6:1,3,5,7). The majority of the book focuses on what John was invited to "come and see".
- In John 1:29,36, John the Baptist is twice recorded as saying "Behold the Lamb of God". This is also a key aspect of the visions that John will see in the book of Revelation later in his life. "Lamb" occurs 26 times in connection with Christ in Revelation and John would behold (see) and hear from that Lamb over and over again.

An interesting detail to consider is the request by the two disciples to see where Jesus dwelled.

1) Write down the meaning for the Greek word "dwellest" in John 1:38.

- 2) Fill out the chart below and document how many times this word occurs in the sections specified in the New Testament.

	Matt., Mark & Luke	Gospel of John	1, 2, 3 John & Revelation	All Other Books
Number of Occurrences				

- 3) What stands out when considering the frequency of the use of this word?

4) **BIBLE MARKING EXERCISE:** Go to John 14 & 15 and highlight the occurrences of this Greek word.

- 5) What are some key themes that come out of these two chapters in relation to the word "abide" in connection with Jesus?

6) **BIBLE MARKING EXERCISE:** Go to 1st John and highlight the occurrences of this Greek word.

- 7) What are some key themes that come out of 1st John in relation to the word "abide" in connection with Jesus?

At the end of the gospel of John we find this same Greek word directly applied to John himself by Jesus. Read John 21:18-24.

- 8) Peter had just been told how he would die for the sake of Christ at the end of his life. What was Peter's response?
- 9) We appear to have some insights into Peter's feelings in relation to John in this passage. What feelings do you think brought about this response?
- 10) It says that some misunderstood what Jesus meant when he said John would "tarry" (abide) till he comes. What was the misunderstanding?


The Lord Jesus Christ did not come by the time John died. However, John appears to have been one of, if not the last remaining apostle alive.

- 11) In what way would John have "tarried" until the coming of the Lord? (Perhaps consider what he lives to see in Rev. 4-5, 7, 14, 19)

We've seen how this theme of abiding with Christ is key to the life, work, and writings of John. Going back to John 1 and considering the origin of this theme, we see that Andrew and (potentially) John wanted to see where Jesus abode and chose to abide with him.

- 11) What lessons do you take away from the example of these two disciples when the Lamb of God is declared to them?
- 12) List two or three ways in which you can practically apply these principles about abiding with Christ in your life.

IN THE UPPER ROOM



About 24 hours before Jesus would die on the cross, he sat down to institute a new Passover meal with the twelve disciples. This was a very intimate setting in which Jesus would deliver final teachings to his beloved friends to prepare them for what was to come that very day, as well as beyond. It is on this pivotal evening that we find a unique detail concerning John which is only found in the gospel he himself recorded through the Spirit. Read John 13:21-30.

For the first time, Jesus openly reveals that one of the disciples would betray him. There was obvious confusion and concern among the disciples about who this could be. It's in this context that we are introduced to the concept of a particular disciple "whom Jesus loved" which is only found in the gospel of John.

- 14) The other occurrences of this unique identification are found in John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20. Looking at these references, who is this disciple "whom Jesus loved"?

The Greek word for "love" used in these passages (except for John 20:2) is *agapao*. This is part of the same word family as *agape*. Similar to what we found with the Greek word for "abide", *agapao* (and *agape*) is also pre-eminently found in the writings of the spirit through John, more than any other place in scripture. It occurs twenty-six times in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke combined. In the gospel of John, it occurs *thirty-seven* times. In the letters of John, it occurs thirty-two times and also four times in Revelation. Out of the one hundred and forty-two total occurrences of the word in the New Testament, it appears *seventy-three* times (over half of all occurrences) in John's writings through the spirit!

Agape compared to phileo

The gospel of John contains two passages which highlight the difference between *phileo* and *agape*. Jesus distinguishes between a friendly, brotherly love (*phileo*) and a love which is motivated by God's purpose and character (*agape*).

In John 11:3, we're told that the sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, come to Jesus saying Lazarus "whom thou lovest (*phileo*) is sick". It then says in verse 5 that "Jesus loved (*agape*) Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus". In kindness Jesus could have spoken the words to heal Lazarus immediately. However, Jesus would allow Lazarus to die so that he would glorify his Father and increase the faith of all those who would witness Lazarus being raised from the dead. This would demonstrate through Christ we have hope in the resurrection from the dead and that Christ would have dominion over death itself which has passed upon all of Adam's descendants.

In John 21:15-17, we see a similar instance where *phileo* and *agape* are juxtaposed with one another. Without going into too much detail, in this case Jesus asks Peter whether he loves (*agape*) him. Peter responds each time that he *phileo* loves him. Jesus responds each time telling Peter to feed his sheep/lambs. The surrounding context indicates that Jesus is teaching Peter, that if Peter truly loves (*agape*) him then he will lay down his life for Jesus' flock in the same way Jesus did, having God's purpose and character in mind.

15) Whom does it say Jesus loved in verse 1 of John 13? Did Jesus only love this one disciple?

John 13 shows that Jesus has *agape* for all of his disciples, John being one of them. In a sense, scripture seems to reveal John as a *representative* man. In John's life we see a demonstration of how *all* who are in Christ should respond to the love shown by God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John 13:24-25, it twice mentions that John was lying on Jesus' chest. At this time of betrayal where Judas would leave the presence of Jesus and join himself with those in darkness, we find John embracing the light of the world.

16) Consider the following passages and summarize how all disciples whom Jesus loves embrace the light revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

a) 1 John 1:5-10

b) 1 John 2:5-11

c) John 3:14-21

17) How can we practically apply these principles in our lives?

In John 13:24, we can deduce that Peter was further away from Jesus and John at the table. He had to call out to John to have him ask Jesus who it was that would betray him. We can also reason that Judas was positioned very close to Jesus as well, since Jesus could hand him the sop (v.26).

- 18) In verse 26, we find that Jesus answered John that the betrayer was the one to whom he would give the sop. Did everyone hear this interaction between Jesus and John? (Look at the surrounding context for clues)
- 19) What does Peter say he will do for Jesus in Luke 22:31-33? What does Peter do in John 18:10-11 when they come to arrest Jesus?

Peter had attempted to decapitate a servant of the high priest and take on an armed multitude to defend Jesus from death. Of all the disciples, he desperately wanted to know who among them would betray their Master.

- 20) Knowing this about Peter and his mindset on this occasion, does it appear that Peter ever found out that night that it was Judas who betrayed Jesus? Provide an explanation for your answer.
- 21) Considering how protective and defensive Peter was about Jesus, do you think this was the end of Peter's interactions with John regarding the betrayal? If you were Peter, what would you do as you left the upper room to go out to the Mount of Olives?

From what we can tell in the record only Jesus, John, and Judas were aware of who would betray Jesus that night. Put yourself in John's shoes and consider what he must do for his friend. Jesus had already openly told Peter that "Satan desired to have" him and prayed that his faith would not fail (Luke 22:31-32). It would appear imperative that Jesus and John keep this information from Peter for his own well being, so that God's plan and purpose in His son might be fulfilled.

In life we can encounter situations where a loved one believes they are zealously standing up for what is true and right in the sight of God. However, they have actually been deceived by their own heart, and their flesh has taken dominion over their words and actions.

- 22) List at least three other examples of this type of situation in scripture.
- 23) In what way did Jesus and John show Godly love (*agape*) to Peter in this situation? (Perhaps consider how Jesus healed the ear of Malchus when Peter was going down a fleshly path instead of the path of his Lord)
- 24) What verses can you find that would help guide your own mind and actions when working with someone in a situation like Peter's?

After Judas leaves the upper room, Jesus provides further teaching to his disciples. Read John 13:31-35.

25) How are we identified as one of those who belong to the innumerable multitude of disciples whom Jesus loves?

26) Consider the following passages and summarize the principles that are being taught regarding Godly love (*agape*).

a) 1 John 3:14-18

b) 1 John 4:7-12

c) 1 John 4:16-19

d) John 17:20-26

CARING FOR THE MOTHER OF JESUS

As Jesus was enduring his last moments on the cross, he has a brief but profound interaction with his mother and John. This is uniquely recorded for us in the gospel of John. Read John 19:25-27.

27) It's helpful to consider the parallel accounts to gain an understanding of who some of these women were where it is not immediately clear. Fill out the chart below by matching up the names given in the accounts in Matthew and Mark to complete the picture of who the four women were that were witnessing Jesus on the cross.

John 19:25	Matt 27:56	Mark 15:40
Mary, mother of Jesus		
Mary, mother of Jesus's sister		
Mary, wife of Clopas		
Mary Magdalene		

28) Looking at your completed table, how is Mary, the mother of Jesus, related to John? How are Jesus and John related?

Jesus told the disciples while they were in the upper room that they would all scatter from him that night (John 16:32). This came to pass in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested (Mark 14:50). We know that Peter followed Jesus from afar as he was interrogated, as well as another disciple who had access to the high priest's palace (John 18:15-18). It's been suggested this could have been John himself, since he is never referenced by name in this gospel, though we could never know for sure.

We do know that Peter went off and wept after denying Jesus three times. It is only in the gospel of John that we are told that just one of the twelve disciples, John, was present at the foot of the cross as Jesus was crucified.

- 29) What does this tell us about the character of John? What lesson or principle should we learn from this example considering we are also disciples whom Jesus loved? (Perhaps consider Romans 8:35-39)
- 30) Write down some practical situations that you have faced or may face in the future where this principle would need to be applied?

We read in John 19:26 that Jesus saw his mother, Mary, and John (whom he loved) standing together watching him on the cross. Upon looking at these two people in his last moments of agony on the cross, he feels compelled to cry out to his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!".

The context we have indicates Jesus is referring to John. However, it could just as easily be applied to Jesus, since Jesus's mother did not have the context that we are given that Jesus was looking at her and John. It seems highly likely she would have understood this to mean to look at her son, Jesus. We will now consider this from both perspectives.

In our first introduction to Mary in scripture, we find a young woman who is described as "blessed above all women", who ponders and meditates on the messages from Gabriel, and offers a prayer that echoes faithful women of old. However, her life would also be full of heartache and doubts concerning her firstborn son. We learn that her moral character would be questioned regarding the birth of Jesus since she had not yet finished her engagement to be married to Joseph. There was also an interesting prophecy given by Simeon in Luke 2:34-35 when Mary and Jesus were following the proper commandments concerning purification under the law after having a baby.

- 31) In Luke 2:34, Simeon says that Jesus will be a sign spoken against. What does he say concerning Mary?
- 32) Think about Mary, as a mother beholding her son being crucified and humiliated on the cross in John 19:26. If you put yourself in her shoes, what do you think she was feeling?
- 33) In what way could the prophecy given by Simeon after the birth of her son be applied to what Mary was witnessing in John 19?
- 34) Earlier in John 19:14, Pilate mockingly told the Jews "Behold your king!" before we later hear Jesus say "Woman, behold thy son!". Read Isa. 52:13-53:12 and provide a brief summary of what people would see when they would "Behold my servant", Jesus.
- 35) Isa 53:10 says it "pleased the Lord to bruise him". Jesus also calls his mother "woman" in John 19:26. Read Gen. 3:15 and write down any connections you can think of regarding these passages in Isaiah and John.

In Jesus' ministry we find a particular occasion where his mother and brethren come to him while he is speaking to a multitude within a house. Read Mark 3:31-35.

- 36) In verses 31 and 32, the same word is repeated twice to indicate where his mother and brethren were. Were they within or without the house?
- 37) Look at the next chapter in Mark 4:11-12 where Jesus afterwards gives the parable of the sower and explains why he speaks in parables. Do those that are "without/outside" understand the things concerning the mysteries of the kingdom of God?
- 38) In Mark 4:34 he says "Behold, my mother and my brethren" to all those around him within the house. How does he explain this statement in the following verse?
- 39) Consider the following passages and write down a brief summary of what's being taught concerning those who would become part of God's family. (Optional: Consider any connections to the sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow)
 - a) Romans 8:13-23,28-30
 - b) John 1:12-13
 - c) Galatians 3:26-4:7
 - d) Hebrews 12:1-11
- 40) What does this say about Jesus' blood relatives (including his mother) at this time? (Consider connections to Psalm 69:6-8)
- 41) What principle does this teach us regarding our relationships with blood relatives versus those who are part of the family of the Lord Jesus Christ?
- 42) What are some ways in which this would be practically applied in your life?

With these thoughts in mind, we turn back to John 19:26-27 to consider a few years later where Jesus is now declaring that his disciple John and his mother are part of a divine family. They are not connected merely as earthly relatives as aunt and nephew. When all others had fled from affiliation with Jesus, whether disciple or family, John and his mother Mary made the choice to be associated with Jesus as he performed the will of his Father and not his own.

- 43) In John 19:27, how did John respond to Jesus telling him to look at Mary as his mother?

It's interesting to note that Mary, Jesus' mother, is never mentioned by name throughout the gospel of John. She is exclusively recorded as the mother of Jesus, whereas the other three gospels mention her by name.

- 44) It would appear that Joseph had died sometime before, and that Jesus' mother had become a widow in need of care. Why wouldn't Jesus leave his mother in the care of his other brothers? (Perhaps consider John's influence on Jesus' family in the record of Acts 1:13-14)
- 45) In what ways can we apply the example of John in immediately caring for the needs of the mother of Jesus as a part of the divine family?

AT THE EMPTY TOMB

The next incident in John's life we would like to consider concerns John and Peter being told that Jesus was risen from the dead. Read John 20:1-10 where we have the only record of this occasion where the two disciples discover the empty tomb.

- 46) What is the message that Mary Magdalene gives to Peter and "the other disciple whom Jesus loved" (John)?

- 47) What does she think happened to Jesus?

Bro. Roberts in *Nazareth Revisited* gives a convincing harmony of the events of that morning from the records in the gospels. It seems that Mary Magdalene saw the empty tomb with the other women and then impulsively left immediately to tell the twelve disciples. It would appear she was not there with the other women when they were told by the two angels at the tomb that Jesus was risen.

- 48) We're told that Peter and John ran together to the tomb upon hearing this news. Who arrived first and what did he do when he arrived?

John outrunning Peter to the tomb is a very curious detail that God chose to include in this gospel. Common thought is that John was younger than Peter, and therefore was able to reach the tomb first. Whatever the case, God is seemingly highlighting a particular spirit being shown by John on this occasion.

- 49) Just three days earlier Jesus had washed the disciples' feet in the upper room to show the need to serve one another. What had the twelve disciples been arguing about during the meal in Luke 22, and what did he teach them?

In Luke 22:30, Jesus reminds them that they will be given an elevated position in his kingdom judging the twelve tribes of Israel. He had previously told them this before in Matt. 19:28, where, after telling a parable, he takes the twelve disciples aside as they go to Jerusalem and explains that he will suffer death at the hands of both Jew and Gentile and will rise again the third day (Matt. 20:17-19).

Immediately following this James, John, and their mother Salome come to Jesus to ask if the two brothers can sit on the right and left hand of Jesus in his kingdom (Matt. 20:20-21). They sought a seat that was even more privileged than the rest. Look at your answers to questions 9 and 10 in the James son of Zebedee section to recall the response of the ten and Jesus' teaching.

Going back to the upper room in Luke 22, we can see that this conflict among the disciples about who would be the greatest continued to agitate the twelve disciples. It's in this context that Peter is given a special message from Jesus to strengthen his brethren when he is converted, and John was very much aware of this message.

In Luke 22:33, Peter responded by saying he would never deny Jesus and would not only go to prison but die with him.

- 50) Write down how you think this would have impacted Peter as he raced to the grave for the first time in three days to look into the empty tomb?
- 51) In what way can we see John putting into practice the teaching of Jesus in arriving first at the tomb but going in last, deferring to Peter?
- 52) As disciples whom Jesus loves, how can we practically apply these principles in the race we run together in Christ? (Perhaps consider 1 Pet. 5:5-10)

The incident of Peter and John going to the empty tomb of Jesus was the small spark that would ignite the conversion of Peter that Jesus had foretold three days earlier. Peter had consistently rebelled at the idea that Jesus would die and be raised again. The angel would specifically mention Peter by name when telling the women to deliver the news about Jesus. This is the first time that we see Peter go towards the grave of Jesus and begin a process that would end in him embracing and proclaiming the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John had just as much zeal to go to the empty tomb as Peter. However, he seemingly learned from his previous aspirations to be exalted above the other disciples which ended in strife. Though he arrives first, he esteems his brother Peter as better than himself, and defers to his needs as a humble servant. In this act, John lovingly demonstrates the principles of the Lord that the last shall be first and the first shall be last.

Turning back to John 20:5-7, particular attention is given to the fact that the linen clothes in which Jesus was wrapped for his burial were seen by John and Peter. It even mentions that the "napkin that was about his head" was "wrapped together in a place by itself".

- 53) How could this evidence prove that the body of Jesus was not simply stolen away?

54) When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in John 11:43-44, we see that Lazarus was still bound hand and foot with grave clothes and had the napkin around his head. What significance might that have in comparison to Jesus coming forth no longer bound by those grave clothes?

It's interesting to note that it says in John 20:8 that when John goes in after Peter, that John "saw, and believed".

55) In what way can we be encouraged from John's response to seeing the evidence that Jesus was raised, but not seeing the risen Lord himself?

It then goes on to say in verse 9 that Peter and John did not know "the scripture that he must rise again from the dead". On the surface this seems to contradict the previous verse that John believed that Jesus was risen. However, verse 9 is simply stating that the disciples had not yet understood the scriptures that Christ was fulfilling by being raised from the dead.

56) Two disciples (not of the eleven) who were going to Emmaus unknowingly encountered the risen Lord and spoke with him concerning the report that Jesus was resurrected. What does it say Jesus taught them about in Luke 24:25-27,30-32?

Afterwards those two disciples go to tell the eleven that they had seen Jesus alive. It's at that moment Jesus suddenly appears in the room.

57) Read Luke 24:44-48. What did Jesus do with the disciples?

58) Why would it be important that they not only had an eyewitness account that he suffered and was raised the third day, but be able to expound that from the scripture?

59) What Old Testament scriptures would Jesus have shared with his disciples? Try to find at least two.

There is a unique Greek word that is repeated on the occasion of Jesus' resurrection that is worth considering. Peter (Luke 24:12), John (John 20:5), and Mary Magdalene (John 20:11) are all described as "stooping down" to look into the tomb and seeing it empty.

60) Look up the following Greek word in a concordance and write down it's meaning.

Strongs # G3879

Meaning:

- 61) This Greek word is only used in two other places in the scripture. Read James 1:25 to find one of these passages. How might looking into the “perfect law of liberty” and being a “doer of the work” be connected to looking into the empty tomb and seeing the grave clothes? (Hint: Rom. 6:9-13,16-18 might be helpful)
- 62) The last occurrence of this word is found in 1 Pet. 1:12. Read 1 Pet. 1:3-13 and write down as many connections you can find that link to the themes we’ve considered concerning Peter and John running to the empty tomb.

IN THE ISLE OF PATMOS

We will conclude our considerations of John, son of Zebedee by going to the last book of the Bible. You’ll recall we earlier considered that Jesus said that John would tarry (abide) until he would come. This pointed forward to the particular work that Jesus had predetermined for John which entailed recording the final words of God through the spirit.

Around 96 AD, we find John exiled on the isle of Patmos, seemingly the last of the twelve disciples remaining alive. He had seen and experienced much over the past sixty or so years of his life. Upon watching Jesus ascend into heaven, he became an integral part of the foundation upon which the house of God would be built in the first century. When preaching the gospel, he faced conflict and persecution by the Jews, yet he found acceptance and joy from the Gentiles as they were brought into the hope of Israel. John mourned as his brother James died at the hands of Herod. The corruption of the Truth had already taken root and was growing within the ecclesias, as the true followers of Christ sought to expose this apostasy for what it was. John had seen Jesus’ prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem come to pass at the hands of Romans under the divine direction of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Now as an old man at the end of his life, he would witness and record both terrible and glorious visions signifying how God’s ultimate purpose would be fulfilled through His son.

- 63) In Revelation 1:1, what “title” is ascribed to John and how does it connect to our previous considerations concerning “the last shall be first and the first shall be last”?
- 64) The book of Revelation is a letter written to the seven ecclesias in Asia, and we find the greeting in verses 4-6. We’re told that this was sent by John and was from the Lord Jesus Christ. What three things does it say Jesus did for “us”?

John hears a voice behind him in verse 10 and turns to see a vision of “one like unto the Son of man”. Read verses 13-17.

- 65) John was uniquely privileged to see a vision like this before on the mount where Jesus was transfigured. Read Matt. 16:27-17:9 and write down any similarities you find with what John experiences in Revelation 1.

This is a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of man coming in glory with an innumerable multitude of saints to establish the kingdom of God on earth. Only a select few in the Old and New Testament were privileged to witness this vision. John was preserved to record this vision for the final time in scripture. He saw this vision of glory not only in Revelation 1, but also in chapters 4-5, 7, 10, 14, 15, and 19. John would see this vision more than any person who ever lived, and we all benefit from the record of what he witnessed as an encouragement through the tumultuous ages leading up to that time. This would be the defining work for John as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of God ends in Revelation 22 with a focus on the anticipation of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to fulfill that vision of the Son of man in glory.

- 66) **BIBLE MARKING EXERCISE:** In Revelation 22, highlight or underline all the occasions of the word “come”.

The last words of John through the spirit focus on this theme. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus”. As disciples whom Jesus loves, we echo these same words as we seek to abide with our Lord in love as his servants by the grace of our Father in heaven.

- 67) Now that you have finished your study of John, go back to the summary chart at the beginning of this section and fill it out with the most significant principles and lessons you’ve taken from his character. Don’t forget to mark it and any other points you found interesting into your Bible!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

RESISTING CHRIST


INTRODUCTION

The name Judas is the Hebrew equivalent of “Judah”, meaning “Praise”. Iscariot in Hebrew seems to translate as “men of the city”. It’s interesting to consider that Cain was the first man to build a city. Judas, like Cain, feigned kindness to his brother while plotting his demise.

Judas is always mentioned last in the lists of the twelve disciples in the gospels. God’s record of Judas portrays a follower of Jesus who gradually becomes his enemy. It provides a grim warning to take heed lest we fall. In Judas, we see the danger of hypocrisy, the necessity of belief in God’s salvation, and the profound love that Jesus extends.

References	Event	Principles & Themes
Luke 6:13-16	Potential & Promise	
John 6:60-71	Seeds of Doubt	
John 12:1-9	Hypocrisy & Covetousness	
Matt. 26:14-16	Covenant with the Priests	
Matt. 26:20-25	Rejecting Light	
John 13:26-30	Choosing Darkness	
Matt. 26:46-50	Betrayal with a Kiss	
Matt. 27:3-10; Acts 1:15-26	Condemnation	

POTENTIAL & PROMISE

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- 1) Read the record of the calling of the twelve disciples in Luke 6:13-16. At this time, Jesus was surrounded by multitudes of disciples. Looking at the context, what kind of preparation and forethought did Jesus put into his decision?
 - 2) Why did Jesus need twelve disciples specifically? Think about the significance of the number twelve in scripture and consider Matt. 19:27-30.
 - 3) In addition to the important roles they had during and immediately following Christ’s ministry, what does this tell us about the long-term purpose for which Jesus was preparing these disciples?

- 4) In addition to the work Jesus has for us today, what are the greater future roles for which he is choosing us? (See Matt. 25:21-23, Rev. 1:5-6; 2:26-28)
- 5) From his first introduction in each gospel record, Judas is identified as the traitor, or the one “**which would betray him.**” Did Jesus know this about Judas when he chose him? (Hint: John 6:64, 70-71).
- 6) Read the prophecy about Judas’ betrayal in Psa. 55:12-14, 20-21. Knowing the detailed prophecies about the deep pain of Judas’ betrayal, in what way would choosing Judas have been a temptation for Jesus?
- 7) Knowing what Judas would do, how might Jesus have overcome the natural revulsion to building a relationship with him? Consider the exhortation he gives his disciples later in Luke 6:27-38?

While he is always identified as the one who would become the traitor, God also makes sure to emphasize that he was “**one of the twelve**” in every incident where Judas is mentioned by name.

- 8) In Mark 3:13-19, we have the parallel account of Jesus calling the twelve. What did Judas’ role as “one of the twelve” involve? (Hint: What could he do and what was his mission?)
- 9) What do Judas’ activities and role as a disciple suggest about his spiritual condition when he was chosen? Consider what it takes to perform miracles and the sacrifices required to follow Jesus. (See Matt. 17:19-20; Matt. 8:18-20)

At the beginning of his time as a disciple, Judas was in the Light. He had potential to be a huge asset to the work of Christ, but like all the disciples, he had underlying weaknesses and tendencies from which he would need to be converted.

Immediately after ordaining the disciples, Jesus conducts the sermon on the plain in Luke 6:17-49. There are strong allusions to Judas’ failings that led to his betrayal and downfall. You might find an exciting exercise to go through the chapter and find the connections.

SEEDS OF DOUBT

At the beginning of John 6, the people want to make Jesus king after he multiplied bread and fish for the five thousand. It appears the twelve disciples became caught up in this spirit, and Jesus had to send them out on the ship as he goes into the mountain to pray. This time period marks a turning point in Jesus’ ministry, from a focus on the kingdom of heaven to the importance of his impending death and resurrection. Many of his disciples turn away in unbelief, no longer convinced he is the type of Messiah they need. One year from now, Jesus will be betrayed and crucified.

- 10) **BIBLE MARKING EXERCISE:** Go through John 6 and highlight all the occurrences of the words “believe” and “believeth.” How many times do these words occur?

- 11) In verse 64, Jesus makes his first insinuation that there were some among them who “believe not”. Who was included in that group of those who “believed not”?
- 12) Consider the context of this event in the previous verses. What reasons might they have had for their weakening faith?
- 13) After most of his followers left him, Jesus turns to the twelve in verse 67, and asks a searching question: “Will ye also go away?” Why would he ask this of them?
- 14) Peter’s answer in verses 68-69 is a high point in his spiritual development. Read his answer, then look back through the verses about belief that you highlighted from question 10. What had Peter understood from these teachings of Jesus?
- 15) Peter’s conclusion that Jesus is the only source of eternal life is a crucial piece of understanding for anyone who recognizes the nature of their bondage to sin and death inherited from Adam. Look up the following verses to summarize what they teach concerning this principle.
 - a) Isa. 59:1-2,16-17
 - b) Acts 4:10-12
 - c) Heb. 2:14-18
- 16) While Peter’s faith at this moment is commendable, Jesus’ response in verse 70 reveals an unsettling truth that Peter had not considered. What was Peter’s false assumption?
- 17) How would Peter and the other disciples have reacted to hearing that of Jesus’ chosen twelve, one of them was “a devil (slanderer or false accuser)”?
- 18) What does this tell us about Judas’ spiritual state one year after being chosen to be one of the twelve?
- 19) Judas kept his growing doubts to himself. Eventually, his unbelief would come to fruition in the ultimate betrayal of Christ. How might Judas’ spiritual trajectory have changed if he had brought his doubts to light, and asked for help?

20) Everyone experiences the seeds of doubt at times. What are some practical ways we can work through obstacles to our belief before they take root?

HYPOCRISY & COVETOUSNESS

About one year after the seeds of unbelief begin to grow in Judas' heart, we get a glimpse into how his lack of faith in Jesus had affected his behaviour. The feast at the house of Martha, Mary, and the recently resurrected Lazarus occurred just six days before the Passover on which Jesus would be crucified. Judas' interaction with Mary and Jesus on this occasion becomes the catalyst for his decision to betray Jesus.

21) Read John 12:1-9. What shocking thing does Mary do, and what significance does Jesus see in it?

22) How does Judas respond to Mary's offering, and how is his attitude contrasted to Jesus' response?

23) Mary's offering is very similar to that of the reformed "woman which was a sinner" of Luke 7:36-50. List the similarities between these events.

24) Compare Judas' criticism of Mary to that of Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7.

In the connections between these two incidents, God reveals a recurring theme in Judas' story. Despite being one of the twelve, he had more in common with the *Pharisees* than with Jesus.

25) Read Luke 16:13-15. One of the key vices of the Pharisees was covetousness. How do we see this same characteristic in Judas regarding the "wasted" ointment in John 12?

26) The other key vice of the Pharisees was hypocrisy. Summarize how the following passages describes the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

a) Matt. 6:1-8, 16-18

b) Matt. 23:13-14, 25-28

In the Matthew 23 account, Jesus continually upbraids the Pharisees and scribes concerning their outward show of righteousness, yet being completely rotten on the inside. Jesus declares eight "woes" on these false leaders in Israel.

27) We earlier looked at the calling of Judas in Luke 6. Read the woes mentioned in verses 24-26 and comment on how these could be applied to Judas as the "Pharisee" amongst the twelve.

- 28) Contrast how Judas *appeared* to the other disciples and the general followers of Christ with the true motivations of his heart.
- 29) What was the true reason Judas pretended to care for the poor?
- 30) Judas' criticism of Mary was echoed by the other disciples in Matthew 26:8. Explain how Judas' fake showing of righteous indignation influenced the attitudes of the other disciples.
- 31) In Matthew 26:8, we're told that the ointment was described as being "wasted". This is Strong's #G684 which means *utter destruction, ruined, or perished*. What is the significance of how Jesus uses this same word in John 17:12?
- 32) Read the following passages that use this same word and comment on how they are relate to the story of Judas.
- a) Acts 8:20
 - b) 1 Tim. 6:5-19
 - c) Heb. 10:38-39

In our discipleship, it is much easier to create an appearance of righteousness than to effect internal change. Our flesh naturally seeks to be elevated in the eyes of those around us but is unwilling to part with its affections and lusts. There is a strong temptation to indulge in the works of darkness while maintaining the illusion of walking in light.

- 33) What do the following verses say about the works we think we do in secret?
- a) Psa. 139:11-12
 - b) Eccl. 12:13-14
 - c) Isa. 29:15
- 34) How can we break this cycle of deception that is inherent in our hearts?
- 35) Matthew 26:10-13 records Jesus' rebuke of the disciples who were criticizing Mary. How did Judas respond to this rebuke?

COVENANT WITH THE PRIESTS


Having heard Jesus talk openly about his impending burial, and stinging from Jesus' blunt rebuke, Judas begins to prepare for his ultimate departure from Jesus. Judas finally acts upon the unbelief that had begun a year earlier as he seeks to ally himself with the enemies of Jesus.

- 36) Read John 11:47-57. What might have made Judas believe the chief priests would value his assistance?
- 37) What motivated the chief priests to seek Jesus' downfall?
- 38) What did Judas have in common with the chief priests?
- 39) In Matt. 26:15, Judas approaches the priests and says, "What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" Judas was already gaining a steady income by pilfering from the common fund of the disciples. Why would he choose to end that income stream for a one-time lump sum?
- 40) What does his question in verse 15 reveal about Judas' purpose in betraying Jesus?
- 41) Look up the definition for the word "covenanted" in Matt. 26:15.
- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Strong's #G2476 | Definition: |
|-----------------|-------------|
- 42) In John 8, Jesus contends with the Jews about his divine fatherhood. They claimed Abraham was their father. In John 8:44, who does Jesus say their father is, and what are his characteristics?
- 43) Identify how #G2476 is used in John 8:44, and explain how this relates to Judas' **covenant** with the Jews?
- 44) Read 2 Cor. 6:14-16. What was Judas declaring about the state of his belief by joining himself to the enemies of Jesus?
- 45) What does 2 Cor. 6:17-18 tell us we must do if we want God to be our Father?
- 46) Identify situations in your life where you have chosen to stand with Jesus' enemies. What can we do to restore our allegiance to Christ in those areas?

- 47) The priests paid Judas 30 pieces of silver in exchange for his promise of discreetly delivering Jesus into their hands. Read Exo. 21:32. What was this price used for under the Law?
- 48) There are strong allusions to the occasion where Joseph was betrayed by his brethren. Bearing in mind that Judas is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Judah, read Gen. 37 and write down as many connections as you can find between the two betrayals.
- 49) Compare the way Joseph works to save his brethren with how Jesus worked to save those who betrayed and/or denied him.

In the next six days, Judas will look for the right opportunity to turn Jesus over into the hands of the Jews. The last week of Christ's life was packed with some of the most iconic events in his ministry. At the same time as the religious leaders were trying to lure Jesus into an ideological trap, Judas was looking for an opportunity to lead him into a literal trap.

REJECTING THE LIGHT



About one week after Judas met with the chief priests and Pharisees, Jesus desires to share an intimate meal with his disciples to institute a new Passover that will be a memorial of his sacrifice as the Lamb of God. This is the last event before Judas reveals his true colors.

- 50) In John 13, it says that the devil (v.2) and satan (v.27) entered into Judas as he attended the last supper with Jesus and the disciples. We know a supernatural devil who takes control of a human's mind does not exist. What do these expressions reveal about what was going on inside Judas' heart?
- 51) Why would the record use the word "devil" at the beginning of the supper and the word "satan" as Judas gets up to leave? Though the language seems similar, it appears to be pointing out a difference in Judas' motivations. Look up the meaning of these two words and give your best explanation as to why the different words are used at these two different moments.
- 52) Read through the accounts of Matt. 26:17-35 and John 13:1-30, looking for all the different ways Jesus tried to prick Judas' conscience. Provide the reference for and briefly describe each of Jesus' warnings.

- 53) What kind of effect did these repeated warnings have on Judas?
- 54) It's remarkable that Judas could hear so many increasingly pointed warnings and reproaches from Jesus without relenting his intention to betray him. Why do you think Judas was impervious to Jesus' attempts to shine a light into his heart?
- 55) What can you learn from Judas about your own response to Jesus' attempt to affect your conscience?
- 56) Jesus' repeated attempts to reach Judas reveal much about his commitment to saving even those who are actively rejecting him. Find at least three references that provide insight into how and why Jesus tried so hard to save Judas.
- 57) What does this reveal about Jesus' attitude toward you when you are going down a path that leads away from him?

In John 13:3-11, we have the account of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Peter rejects the idea that Jesus should wash his feet, and Jesus says if Peter's feet are not washed then he has no part with him. Peter then responds emphatically that if that is the case, then he would like to be fully washed from head to toe. Finally, Jesus responds saying that Peter is fully washed already and only needs his feet washed.

The word that Jesus uniquely uses for "washed" in verse 10 is *louō* (G3068). It implies to completely bathe or clean one's body. A different Greek word, *nīptō* (G3538) is used for the other occurrences of "wash" in this account. It is exclusively used in the context of washing a particular part of the body, like one's eyes, hands, or feet.

- 58) Why would Jesus make this distinction in this instance saying that Peter did not need to be fully bathed, but someone else did?
- 59) The Greek word *louō* (G3068) only occurs five other times in scripture. Find those occurrences and write down the connections to Judas' need to be fully washed from head to toe.
- 60) Consider that Jesus washed all of the disciples' feet, including Judas. Read Psalm 41:5-12 in light of this event. Describe Jesus' mindset as he washed the very heel that would rise up against him? How does this prophecy enhance your answer to question 57?
- 61) How do the themes in Psalm 41:5-12 connect to the promise of the seed of the woman in Gen. 3:15?

In Matt. 26:24, Jesus says concerning Judas that “it had been good for that man if he had not been born”. This is very strong language concerning one of his close followers. As Jesus had earlier declared eight woes against the Pharisees and scribes in Matt. 23, he now declares a woe in like manner to the hidden Pharisee within their midst who would betray him.

62) Read the following passages and summarize what it says about those who know the way of truth but turn away from it. What is their end?

a) Heb. 6:4-8

b) 2 Pet. 2:12-14,19-22

63) Jesus would have known the words of his Father found in Psalm 109 concerning what Judas would do and what his end would be. Read Psalm 109:1-20 and comment on what it says would happen to those who betray Jesus. How might this relate to what Jesus says in Matt. 26:24?

The gospel accounts record different responses from the disciples to the news that one of them would betray Jesus. When considered together, they reveal an interesting progression:

- Luke 22:23 “And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing”
- John 13:22 “Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.”
- Matt. 26:22 “And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, ““Lord is it I?””

64) Based on the verses above, describe the progression of the disciples’ reaction to Jesus’ warning. What does this teach you about how we should respond to the warnings we receive, both from scripture and our brothers and sisters?

65) Matt. 26:25 reveals that Judas also asked Jesus, “Master, is it I?”. Why do you think Judas was still keeping up the act of being a faithful disciple? Who did his hypocrisy deceive, and who was hurt by it?

1 Cor. 11 forever connects the story of Judas inexorably to the institution of the memorials during the last supper, by identifying the time Jesus gave the bread and wine as “the night in which he was betrayed” (1 Cor. 11:23).

66) What process does 1 Cor. 11:28 say you must follow to worthily participate in the bread and wine? Did Judas meaningfully engage in this process? Did the other 11?

67) Read 1 Cor. 11:27-29. What does it say about the consequences of failing to engage in this process before partaking of the bread and wine?

68) What does the sobering example of Judas teach us about our approach to the memorials of bread and wine?

Judas had perfected the art of hypocrisy so well that even the process of self-examination had become part of his act. His resistance to all of Jesus' attempts to shine a light into his inner heart cemented a very important principle: *Hypocrisy is the great enemy of self-examination.*

69) Read 1 Cor. 11:31-32 and Psa. 139:11-12, 23-24. What can be done to address this problem?

70) Read Luke 22:14-21. Jesus greatly desired to eat the Passover with his disciples. It was important to him that he provide them with the memorials of the bread and wine. What do you think Jesus intended for Judas to understand from the bread and the wine that symbolized his body and blood? (Consider Jesus' discussion of consuming his flesh and blood back in John 6, the first time Jesus indicated there was something wrong with Judas' faith).

CHOOSING DARKNESS

Despite the ominous warning of betrayal hanging heavily in the atmosphere of the upper room, Judas remained safely unsuspected, thanks to his fake self-examination. Peter tried to identify the betrayer, inducing John to ask Jesus to whom he was referring. When Jesus responded by extending the sop, Judas finally decides the time has come to complete his betrayal. He leaves the light of the world in the upper room and departs into the night.

71) Look up the word for "sop" in John 13:26 and write down its definition.

Strong's #G5596

Definition:

72) While Strong's #G5596 is only used in John 13, there is a closely related word (#G5595) whose only occurrences are strongly connected to the story of Judas. #G5595 is translated "feed" in the following passages. Look them up and comment on how the message in each is relevant to the relationship between Jesus and Judas.

a) Rom. 12:20

b) 1 Cor. 13:3

73) As Judas took the sop, he made his final decision. The opportunity to deliver him to the chief priests had arrived. Jesus knew what was in his heart, and said to him (v.27), "That thou doest, do quickly." What did Jesus mean by this enigmatic statement, and why did he say it?

74) Read about the other disciples' reaction to this exchange in v.28-29. How did the other disciples interpret Jesus' words and Judas' departure?

75) What do their assumptions say about the effectiveness of Judas' hypocrisy?

- 76) Discuss the irony of their assumptions about Judas' motivations. Consider the events of the feast in Bethany.
- 77) John poignantly describes Judas' departure from the assembly of the disciples in v.30: He "went immediately out, and it was night." What do you think the record is signifying with this language?
- 78) Contemplate Jesus' discussion of how men respond to light in John 3:19-21. What do these words of Jesus reveal about Judas' motivations?
- 79) What could Judas have taken from these verses to help him restore his relationship with Jesus?

The context of John 3 is doubly relevant because it introduces Nicodemus, a man with an eerily similar, but opposite character arc to that of Judas. When Judas went out into the night (John 13:30), Jesus lost a disciple to the side of the Pharisees. But before 24 hours had elapsed, Jesus would gain a disciple from the ranks of the Pharisees who would step into the light by embracing the crucified Messiah (John 19:39).

- 80) Compare and contrast the story of Nicodemus with that of Judas in the gospel of John. Write down as many similarities and differences as you can find between the two.
- 81) Judas repeatedly resisted and ultimately rejected the light of Jesus' words. What does Heb. 4:12-16 say about all of this?
- 82) What does Heb. 4 tell us is the best way to respond when we feel Jesus probing the secret depths of our hearts?

BETRAYAL WITH A KISS

Read Matt. 26:46-50. It took Judas some time to go to the chief priests and muster their band of soldiers to apprehend his master. In the meantime, Jesus and the eleven disciples concluded their time in the upper room after further discussion and exhortation. After singing an hymn, Jesus continued his teaching as they made their way to the garden of Gethsemane, concluding with his iconic prayer for his disciples recorded in John 17. Upon reaching the garden he told eight of the disciples to wait while he called Peter, James, and John to go further to watch and pray with him in his intense mental crisis. As Jesus' pivotal battle of wills came to its resolution, Judas and his band of soldiers were making their way up the slopes of the Mount of Olives toward Jesus. The hour of betrayal had come.

- 83) Read John 18:2. Why did Judas choose this location and time to betray the Lord?

- 84) How might this have intensified Jesus' pain at Judas' betrayal, considering how Judas took advantage of his intimate knowledge of Jesus' spiritual habits?
- 85) In what ways does Jesus' encounter with Judas in the garden echo Eve's encounter with the serpent in Genesis 3?
- 86) Matt. 26:48 reveals that Judas had prepared a signal to identify Jesus in the gloomy darkness of the garden: a kiss. Why do you think he was continuing to keep up the ruse of being a disciple right up to the end? For whom was this deceitful show of affection really?
- 87) Jesus responds with a final appeal to the traitor: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" The Greek word translated "friend" in Matt. 26:50 is not commonly found in the New Testament. Look up the following instances where Jesus uses this same Greek word, and comment on their relevance to this interaction.
- a) Matt. 20:13
 - b) Matt. 22:12
- 88) Read Prov. 27:5-6 and explain how this proverb might be fulfilled in his interactions between Jesus and Judas throughout this evening?
- 89) How could the principles of this proverb (as illustrated between Jesus and Judas) be practically applied in your interactions with your "friends"?

Having identified Jesus, Judas retreated to the ranks of the chief priests' men. In John 18:5, John records with shock that Judas "stood with them." The word "stood" is the same Greek word translated "covenant" in Matthew 26:15 (discussed earlier in questions 41-43).

- 90) Review your answer to question 43. What is the significance of this word being used again of Judas at this pivotal moment?

THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION IN CHRIST

Like Peter (and likely John – John 18:15-16) who followed behind Jesus and his captors, Judas also watched the events of that night unfold. But while they observed furtively from a distance, Judas had a front row seat, no longer needing to hide his loyalties. After a wearisome night of false accusations at sham trials, Jesus was finally bound and taken to the Roman governor to secure his execution. The final chapter of Judas' sad story takes place in the early light of that morning.

91) Matt. 27:3 records, “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself.” Look through the last part of Jesus’ trial in the previous chapter to find the verse that identifies the moment at which Judas “repented himself.”

92) Which other disciple confronted their sin against Christ at the same time?

Judas’ “repentance” begs a crucial question: Why did it not lead to his restoration as a disciple of Christ? We all betray Christ far too frequently in our own lives. It’s imperative that we understand what went wrong with Judas’ repentance so that we do not travel down the same path to destruction.

93) Look up the definition for the word “repented” in verse 3.

Strong’s #G3338

Definition:

94) This word is used twice in Jesus’ parable of the two sons in Matt. 21:28-32. Read the parable and surrounding discussion, and describe how it relates to the story of Judas?

95) Why do you think Judas felt regret at this point? How deep did his regret run?

96) How does Judas act upon this feeling, and what was he seeking to accomplish through these actions?

97) This type of response is typical of humans confronted with their sins. Compare Judas’ attempt to atone for his sin to that of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3.

98) Why was Adam & Eve’s solution insufficient?

99) What did God provide instead of Adam and Eve’s covering, and why was it better?

100) How does this connect to the Pharisees’ approach to dealing with sin?

101) What does Judas’ confession to the high priests in verse 4 reveal about the nature of his “repentance”?

- 102) Consider the phrase Judas used to describe his crime: “innocent blood.” Look up the following passages and discuss how they relate to Judas’ situation?
- a) Prov. 1:8-19
 - b) Jer. 22:13-17
- 103) Considering the purpose of the priesthood, what is the irony in the chief priests’ response to Judas’ confession of sin?
- 104) What was missing in Judas’ confession? (Hint: think about to whom his confession was addressed)?
- 105) When Judas saw that his attempts to undo his betrayal were futile, he “cast down the pieces of silver in the temple”. Describe the change in Judas’ mentality regarding mammon/riches when he is finally confronted by the reality of his betrayal (Luke 9:25).
- 106) From time to time, we each experience moments where, like Judas, we come face-to-face with the full weight of the sins we have tried to ignore for so long. What can we learn from Judas’ newfound clarity about the true worth of the objects of his lust?
- 107) Turned away by the priests, Judas saw no path to redemption. He fell to the only recourse he thought was available: “he departed, and went, and hanged himself.” Based on the context and what you have learned so far about what motivated Judas, why do you think he chose this path of self-destruction?

In Matthew 27:7, we’re told that the money was used to purchase a potter’s field and that strangers (likely the poor) were buried there. It seems very plausible that this land was in the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) where garbage was disposed and burned outside the southwest walls of Jerusalem. Acts 1 recounts the eleven disciples discussing Judas’ end and saying they need to choose another disciple to be one of the twelve and take his office. We’re told that “falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.”

- 108) The details provided concerning Judas’ death seem to have been echoed earlier in scripture in Jeremiah 19. There are at least eight connections to the demise of Judas. Find at least five of them.

Judas was not the only disciple who sinned grievously against Christ that night. We’re told in John 18:18, that at the time of his threefold denial Peter “stood with” the servants and officers who arrested Jesus. Recall that we examined the use of this same Greek word in John 18:5 as Judas “stood with” those same men when they arrested Jesus in Gethsemane. In denying Jesus, Peter had found himself associated with Judas and the enemies of Christ.

- 109) Compare and contrast how each of these disciples responded when they realized their guilt.
- 110) What factor(s) in their responses produced such drastically different outcomes? (Matt. 26:69-27:10 cp. 2 Cor. 7:10)
- 111) What words of Jesus should Judas have recalled that might have changed the path he chose that night?
- 112) Judas recognized that he had betrayed “innocent blood” (Matt. 27:4). Read the following passages to identify & explain the principles represented in the blood of Jesus.
- a) Col. 1:12-14
 - b) 1 Pet. 1:18-21
 - c) 1 John 1:5-10
- 113) Was it possible at this late stage for Judas to be forgiven? If so, what would he need to do?
- 114) Judas killed himself because he did not see a viable path to redemption. Read the parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14-30. Why did the unfaithful servant waste the talent he was given?
- 115) What might the servant’s perception of his master’s character suggest about Judas’ perception of Jesus?
- 116) Read the opening of Jesus’ prayer for his disciples from earlier the same night in John 17:1-3. What does Jesus say he wants for his disciples, and what is required for them to receive it?
- 117) John 3:14-17 reveals the key characteristic of God that motivated Jesus’ mission. Examine these verses, and explain what they say about God’s intention with Jesus’ death?
- 118) Judas saw that his betrayal had led to Jesus being condemned to death. He killed himself because he believed that he (Judas) was already condemned, with no way to absolve his guilt. What crucial factor does John 3:16-18 say determines the difference between salvation and condemnation?

119) Explain how the presence or status of this factor In Judas' heart affected his final choices. (Heb. 10:38-39)

Romans 8:1 gives the amazing assurance that, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus". Like Paul, Judas had reached the point where he recognized his wretchedness and that he was doomed to death (Rom. 7:24). While Judas only believed in his own condemnation, Paul found the deliverance he sought in the one place Judas refused to look: the Lord Jesus Christ.

120) Throughout life we may encounter situations where we feel our sin is greater than we can bear. The shame we feel for the severe gravity and pervasive extent of our sins can be so insurmountable that we feel God could never forgive us. How would the principles we've just considered help us to overcome these feelings of guilt, depression, and hopelessness?

121) Now that you have finished your study of Judas, go back to the summary chart at the beginning of this section and fill it out with the most significant principles and lessons you've taken from his character. Don't forget to mark it and any other points you found interesting into your Bible!

THOMAS

DOUBTING CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Thomas is most widely known as someone who struggled with his faith. Thousands of years after he lived and died, the phrase “doubting Thomas” is still commonly used to describe someone who is skeptical or pessimistic. The basis for this reputation comes from how Thomas responded to reports of Jesus’ resurrection. This struggle to believe in the resurrection is the main crisis that defines his character as it is recorded in the gospel of John. While by far the most details about Thomas are recorded in the story of Jesus’ resurrection, he also plays a small role in two earlier stories. These events show the experiences and characteristics that built up to his biggest crisis, but also paint a loving picture of how Jesus worked to strengthen him for the trial of his faith.

Reference	Event	Principles & Themes
John 11:1-45	Raising Lazarus	
John 14:1-31	The Upper Room	
John 20:19-25; Luke 24:33-43	The Sheep Scattered	
John 20:26-31	Meeting Jesus	

Jesus’ resurrection was the most momentous event in history. It is the lynchpin of the gospel – everything hangs on this one event. The resurrection of Christ is crucial for three key reasons:

- **It is a doctrinal necessity:** 1 Cor. 15:17, Rom. 5:10, 1 Pet. 1:3
- **It is the foundation of our faith:** Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 15:3-11
- **It is a force for moral change:** Phil. 3:8-10, Rom. 6:4, Col. 3:1

Despite (or perhaps because of) its immense significance, believing in the resurrection of Jesus has been a struggle for many people over the ages. In Acts 26:8, Paul challenged King Agrippa, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible (*literally “unbelievable”*) with you, that God should raise the dead?”. Paul emphasized that if we can believe in the resurrection of Christ, we can believe in the entirety of the gospel. If Jesus is raised, all God’s promises are guaranteed. The story of Thomas’ transformation from doubter to believer is recorded as a remarkable witness to the reality of the risen Lord.

If you struggle to believe in the veracity of the Bible or the reliability of God’s promises; if you have ever experienced the agony of tossing between faith and cynicism, then this account was written for you. The witness of Thomas persuades us that we are not alone, and that in the end, Jesus **will** dispel our darkest doubts and deepest fears.

1) We are given no background information about Thomas except that he had a second name, “Didymus” (John 11:16). Look up and write down the definition of both his names.

Thomas: Strong’s #G2381

Meaning:


Didymus: Strong’s #G1324

Meaning:

- 2) Write down any initial ideas you have about the significance of Thomas' names.
- 3) Some take this to mean that Thomas must have literally been someone's twin, which is possible. However, the more likely significance is that this name was given to him because it described his personality, or the way he tended to think: he was often torn between two minds. What does James 1:2-8 say about a double-minded man?

Keep these verses from James in the back of your mind as we follow the story of Thomas and start to understand his struggles.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

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- 4) The first time Thomas speaks in the gospel record occurs in John 11, the story of the raising of Lazarus. When in the ministry of Jesus does this story unfold? (See John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55)
 - 5) When Jesus hears that his friend Lazarus was sick, he waited for two days before saying in verse 7, "let us go into Judea again." Why were his disciples reluctant to go?
 - 6) Was the reasoning for their fear rational? (Consider John 7:1; 8:59; 10:31,37-38; 11:45-55)
 - 7) When Jesus told them the reason for his journey, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep," his disciples are relieved. If he was sleeping, then he would recover on his own and they wouldn't need to go to Jerusalem. Jesus must plainly tell them what he meant: "Lazarus is dead." He then explains the reason he had chosen to delay his journey to go see Lazarus. What was that reason?
 - 8) It's at this point that Thomas opens his mouth for the first time in the gospel record. He says to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." What does this phrase tell us about:
 - a) Thomas' relationship with the other disciples
 - b) His loyalty & commitment to Jesus
 - c) His expectation of what awaited in Judea
 - d) How he handled fear

There is much to commend in Thomas' words, but they also reveal a consistent attitude that appears in each of Thomas' stories. Thomas seems to be a pessimist. Every time he speaks in the Bible, he is focused on the negative aspect of his situation. In this case, he doesn't just acknowledge the risk of going with Jesus to Judea, he has already assumed the worst possible outcome: death for everyone involved. Thomas' pessimism stands in stark contrast to Jesus' perspective on the whole situation.

9) Describe the positive outcomes on which Jesus is focused in each of the following verses.

- a) John 11:4
- b) John 11:9
- c) John 11:11
- d) John 11:15
- e) John 11:23
- f) John 11:26


Jesus sees their trip to Judea producing life for Lazarus, belief for his disciples, and glory for God. Thomas saw only death.

10) In verse 15, Jesus said that he was glad that he wasn't there to heal Lazarus, because he intended to use the resulting situation to build the faith of his disciples. Read through the rest of the story and try to identify all the places where Jesus is intentionally challenging, drawing out, and building up the faith of the characters involved.

11) The story of the raising of Lazarus has many parallels to Jesus' resurrection. Find as many similarities between the two events as you can.

12) Knowing Thomas' character as he did, and knowing how poorly he would cope with his master's death and resurrection, what do you think Jesus was hoping Thomas would learn from the events of John 11?

THE LAST SUPPER



The next time Thomas speaks in the gospels (John 14:5) is at the upper room where Jesus had just shared his last supper with his disciples. In John 14:5, he interjects a question into a discussion Jesus was having with Peter and the other disciples.

- 13) Read John 13:36-14:5. What has Jesus been discussing that bothered Thomas?
- 14) Recall that in John 11, Thomas was prepared to march into the jaws of death to follow Jesus wherever he went. What light does this shed on the objection Thomas raises in John 14:5?
- 15) There are two elements to Thomas' objection in verse 5: where is Jesus going, and how could he get there? Look up the provided references from earlier in Jesus' ministry to find the answer to each.
 - a) Where was Jesus going to?
 - John 7:33
 - John 13:1,3
 - b) What is the way to go there?
 - Matt. 11:27
 - John 1:18
- 16) Jesus doesn't answer Thomas's first objection until verse 28, where he reiterates that he is going to the Father. Instead, he focuses his answer on his second question, "how can we know the way [to the Father]?". Read verses 6-7, and explain what Jesus tells Thomas about the way for them to follow where he was going.
- 17) Jesus opened John 14 saying, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." He is trying to get the disciples to extend the same faith and confidence they had in God to be applied to him. Jesus spends much of the chapter trying to impress on them the unique oneness of his relationship with God. Describe how he makes this point in the following verses.
 - a) v.8-14
 - b) v.20-21
 - c) v.24,31
- 18) In this section, Thomas is pessimistically focused on what he does **not** know. Fixation on the gaps in our understanding can easily undermine our faith. Find at least three Biblical examples of people whose lack of understanding challenge their faith. (make sure you provide supporting references)

19) Jesus' response to Thomas' questions revolves around getting him to focus on what he **does** know. This is an excellent strategy for when the floor falls out from under your faith. There will be times in your life that you have unanswered questions, uncertainties, and doubts that plague you. Take some time now to think of and write down five confidence-inspiring things that you know and/or have experienced that could bolster your faith in a future time of crisis.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

20) What do you think Jesus was intending for Thomas to learn from their discussion in John 14 as he prepared him for the trial of his coming suffering and death?

Despite three full chapters of instruction and encouragement in the upper room (John 14-16), Jesus still knew that the events of the next few days would shake his disciples' faith to the core.

21) Read John 17:31-33. How does Jesus predict they would react to his arrest?

22) What was Jesus' purpose in what he had said to them over the past few hours?

23) Jesus' parting words were "be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Why do you think Jesus used the past tense to describe his victory? What does this tell you about how he viewed the suffering that would begin that night?

24) Contrast this attitude toward impending trial to the pessimism of Thomas. What should he (and we) learn from Jesus' words about the way we should face our trials?

THE SMITTEN SHEPHERD & SCATTERED SHEEP

We don't see Thomas appear in the record again until John 20, three days later. To understand his experience of those days, we will follow what the record does say about how the disciples, as a group, dealt with those tumultuous days.

25) Read John 18:1-13. Describe what Thomas might have been thinking and feeling as those events unfolded in front of him.

- 26) Read Matt. 26:56. How did the resolve Thomas had expressed earlier (John 11:16; Mark 14:31) hold up when he was finally confronted with Jesus' arrest?

We know that Peter made his way back to follow Jesus to the house of the high priest to watch the trial, and John appears late the next afternoon at the cross with the women who witnessed his final moments, but how the other disciples spent the next 48 hours is not very clear. Luke 23:49, combined with Acts 1:21-22, seem to indicate that at some point the disciples did trickle back to Golgotha to see the end, but stayed carefully hidden in the relative safety of the crowd of onlookers.

The apostles' lapse of loyalty in their master's hour of greatest need is silently attested to in their conspicuous absence throughout the next 24 hours. When Jesus experienced his greatest temptation in Gethsemane, it was an angel, not a disciple, who strengthened him. Jesus' strongest advocate during the series of sham trials was a degenerate Roman politician, and the only one who eased the burden of his cross on his way to Golgotha was a stranger forced into service by the Romans. At his crucifixion, it was the oft-ignored "women that followed" who boldly shared his reproach by breaking with the crowd to approach the cross, and the only disciples who cared for his corpse were freshly-converted Pharisees.

- 27) After Jesus died, the disciples laid low, trying to avoid being rounded up as part of the condemned Nazarene movement. John 20:19 reveals that they were keeping the doors tightly closed "for fear of the Jews." Was this fear justified? Consider John 18:19, 25-26; 19:12, and Matt. 27:62-66 to assess what kind of danger the disciples faced.
- 28) Considering how much it meant to Thomas to be able to be with Christ, and how distressed he was at the mere idea of Jesus going away somewhere he couldn't follow, how do you think he was coping with the brutal reality of Jesus' death?
- 29) Put yourself in the position of the disciples during the time when Jesus was in the grave. Describe the thoughts, emotions, and questions that would be plaguing you? (See Luke 24:19-21)

RESURRECTION DAY

On the Sabbath, the priestly enemies of Jesus were uneasy, nervously remembering that Jesus had said he would rise again the third day. They went to Pilate, getting permission to set an armed guard at the tomb to prevent the disciples from coming to steal his body (Matt. 27:62-66). But the disciples were in no shape to pull off such a heist. They were still in mourning, scattered across Jerusalem in their various lodgings, trying not to attract any attention (John 16:32). The scene was set for the most crucial day in human history: the resurrection to immortality of the Son of God.

30) Read carefully through the following timeline of events from the day Jesus was raised. Circle or highlight every time the eleven disciples were told that Jesus was alive.

Resurrection Day Timeline

Morning

- a) While it is still dark, 4+ women (Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, Salome, Joanna +) go to the tomb with the spices they had prepared (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1,10; John 20:1)
- b) Before they arrive at the tomb, an angel rolls away the stone with a great earthquake and sits on it. The guards are afraid and become as dead men (Matt. 28:2-4)
- c) The women arrive at the garden as the sun rises and see the stone rolled away from the tomb (Mark 16:2-4; Luke 24:2)
- d) At this sight, Mary Magdalene jumps to the conclusion that Jesus' body has been stolen, and immediately runs to inform Peter and John who run to the garden (John 20:1-2)
- e) Meanwhile, the other 3+ women approach and enter the tomb, perplexed to find it empty (Luke 24:3-4)
- f) Two angels appear in the tomb. They ask why the women seek the living among the dead, state that Jesus is risen, remind them that he foretold this, and tell them to bring word to the disciples (Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-8; Matt. 28:5-7)
- g) The women depart hastily to report the message to the scattered disciples, telling no one on the way (Matt. 28:8; Mark 16:8; John 16:32)
- h) John and Peter arrive at the tomb, followed by Mary Magdalene. They see the linen clothes lying separated from the headcloth. John believes and both return to Jerusalem (John 20:4-10)
- i) Mary lingers at the tomb, weeping. She enters and meets the angels, then exits and meets Jesus. He tells her to bring message to his brethren (John 20:11-17)
- j) Mary departs for Jerusalem to tell the disciples (Mark 16:9-11; Luke 24:10-11; John 20:18)
- k) While the other women are still en route to finding the disciples, Jesus appears to them. They worship him, and he tells them to carry on with the message the angels gave them for the disciples (Matt. 28:9-11)
- l) Mary and the other women begin (separately) to tell the groups of disciples (who don't believe) around the city, possibly meeting up at some point (Mark 16:10-11; Luke 24:9-11; John 20:18)
- m) When Peter hears the fresh report of seeing angels and Jesus, he returns to the tomb and sees nothing but the linen clothes, and departs, wondering (Luke 24:12)

Afternoon/Evening

- n) Around mid-afternoon Cleopas and another disciple walk to Emmaus. Jesus joins them and proves from scripture that he had to suffer and be raised. At Emmaus, they constrain him to come into their house, and they recognize him as he breaks bread. Jesus disappears, and they return to Jerusalem (Luke 24:13-33)
- o) While they are still walking towards Jerusalem, Jesus appears to Peter by himself, who then returns to tell the disciples (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5)
- p) Cleopas and companion find the eleven apostles and others gathered together, who assert that Jesus is risen based on Peter's report. Cleopas and companion recount their meeting with Jesus, and the apparently conflicting accounts shake the conviction of the disciples (Luke 24:34-35; Mark 16:13)
- q) Overcome by doubt and despair, Thomas leaves the group to grieve in peace (John 20:24)
- r) Shortly after, Jesus appears to the remaining disciples behind locked doors. He comforts their fears and convinces them of the reality of his bodily resurrection. He opens their understanding of the scripture (Luke 24:36-49, John 20:20-23)
- s) After his appearance, the disciples find Thomas and tell him they have seen Jesus, but he refuses to believe without handling the physical evidence of Jesus' pierced body (John 20:25)

- 31) How many separate groups of witnesses reported Jesus' resurrection to the disciples? List them below.
- 32) How did the disciples respond to the reports of Jesus' resurrection? Consider Mark 16:9-11; Luke 24:9-11, 22-24; Mark 16:12-13.
- 33) When at last Jesus appeared to the various groups of disciples, describe the various responses they give?
- a) Mary Magdalene – John 20:14-18
 - b) The Women - Matt. 28:7-10
 - c) The disciples in Jerusalem - Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-20
 - d) Disciples in Galilee - Matt. 28:16-17; John 21:4,7,12-14

Though he had already appeared to Mary, the other women, the two disciples in Emmaus, and to Peter individually, Jesus doesn't appear to the whole group of disciples together until the evening of his resurrection day. Hearing rumors and mixed messages through the grapevine about angels, meetings with Jesus, miraculous appearances and disappearances, the scattered disciples gradually made their way to a clandestine gathering in an upper room. Perhaps it was the same one in which they had eaten the last supper.

The first time the risen Jesus met with his disciples in a large group is recorded in Luke 24:36-49 and John 20:19-23. Someone was missing from that joyful reunion: Thomas. When the other disciples realized he was missing, they sought him out to share the good news. However, he refused to believe that Jesus was alive (John 20:24-25). Tragically, Thomas only missed Jesus by a matter of minutes. Consider the following questions.

- 34) When the two disciples returned with news of how Jesus had journeyed and broken bread with them in Emmaus, how many apostles did they meet in Jerusalem? (Luke 24:33)
- 35) Compare Luke 24:34-35 with John 20:19-24 to identify when Thomas must have departed from the group of disciples.

- 36) Why do you think Thomas might have chosen to leave the group of disciples at this time? Consider the following facts:
- Thomas' extreme aversion to being separated from Jesus.
 - Thomas' history of pessimism: anticipating the worst outcomes & focusing on what he doesn't know.
 - The strange events of the day: The confusing and conflicting accounts of the women early in the morning, followed by over 10 hours of tense waiting with no sign of Jesus appearing to anyone else. Peter's report of meeting Jesus, followed by and conflicting with the improbable account of the two disciples from Emmaus.
- 37) In verse 24, John uses the phrase "one of the twelve" to describe Thomas when he was not with the disciples at Jesus' appearing. Who is the only other disciple to be described with this phrase in the gospels?
- 38) What is the significance of using the same phrase to describe Thomas in this context? (Hint: compare Thomas' actions with those of the other disciples at the end of John 13)
- 39) In John 11:16, Thomas had been a uniting and encouraging voice for his brethren, but now he chose to isolate himself from them in his grief and doubt. What did Thomas miss out on by being absent from the gathering of the disciples?
- 40) Isolation is a common strategy humans use to cope with anguish, fear, and doubt. It is an especially tempting retreat for those who already tend to struggle with pessimism, anxiety, and depression. Think about a time you chose isolation as a coping mechanism. Discuss the pros and cons of this approach to dealing with difficult circumstances.
- 41) When the disciples find Thomas and tell him the good news, that they had "seen the Lord," Thomas again chose not to believe the collective witness of his brethren. What conditions does he demand be met so that he can believe? Why do you think he fixates on these specific tangible proofs?
- 42) Find examples of other Bible characters who impose conditions on their belief. Is asking for additional evidence good or bad for faith?

The Greek word for “will not” in verse 25 is “**οὐ μή**.” It is number G3364 in Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, which tells us that **οὐ μή** is a compound of two negative words: “That is, G3756 and G3361; a double negative strengthening the denial; not at all.”

- 43) Jesus uses **οὐ μή** many times throughout the gospels, but it is only used by other people a handful of times. Read the following passages in their contexts to find a common theme when others use this double negative word.
- Matt. 16:22 “this shall **not** be unto thee”
 - Matt. 26:35 (Mark 14:31) “yet will **not** I deny thee”
 - John 11:56 “he will **not** come to the feast?”
 - John 13:8 “Thou shalt **never** wash my feet”
 - John 20:25 “I will **not** believe”
- 44) What do each of these human uses of the double negative Greek word have in common?
- 45) Even the way Thomas phrases his conditions reveals his typically pessimistic attitude: ‘Unless conditions a, b, & c are met, no, I will never believe.’ He could have phrased it positively: “IF conditions a, b, & c are met, then I will gladly believe’. Do you think his reluctance reveals an inability to believe or an unwillingness to believe? Explain.
- 46) Verse 20 indicates that Jesus allowed eight days to elapse before finally revealing himself to Thomas. What would Thomas’ mental and spiritual state have been during that time? Compare James 1:2-8, bearing in mind the meanings of Thomas’ names and the conflicting minds that we have seen him display so far.
- 47) Jesus would have been very aware of the anguish of Thomas during that week, as he tossed between hope and fear, and as his faith waivered, flickered, and almost went out. Why do you think Jesus waited so long to relieve Thomas of his misery of doubt? Was he unfeeling or lacking in compassion for him? What does this say about the way Jesus works with us today? Include a comparison with how Jesus dealt with Mary and Martha in John 11 around the sickness and death of Lazarus in your answer.
- 48) John records that after eight days of absence, “his disciples were inside again” (John 20:26, ESV), implying that the following events took place in a similar, if not the same setting, as the previous gathering of the disciples. Compare the gathering in verse 26 with the gathering in verse 19. List as many similarities between the two events as you can find.

49) The crucial difference in this second gathering is carefully emphasized: “and Thomas was with them.” After days of isolation, Thomas finally decided to rejoin his brethren, despite his doubts. It is at this gathering that Thomas finally meets the risen Lord. Had Jesus appeared to the group of disciples in the eight days since his resurrection day? (Compare John 21:14 with John 20:19, 26).

50) Jesus didn’t show himself to Thomas until he had joined the assembly of disciples. Look up Matt. 18:20 and Rev. 2:1. What do these passages have to say about where Jesus is to be found?

Hebrews 10:23 instructs us to “hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering”, something that Thomas was struggling to do during his time of isolated doubts and depression. However, in the next few verses the writer to the Hebrews provides the very best advice for someone who is struggling to fend off doubts and unbelief.

51) What should someone in Thomas’ shoes do to stir up his/her faith?

52) What do these verses say about the benefits of this strategy?

53) What practical steps could you take to follow this advice, both for yourself and for others in your circle who are struggling with their faith?

When he appeared to Thomas, Jesus quoted back to him the very conditions that he had demanded eight days earlier: “Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.” All the depression and disbelief expressed by Thomas in verse 25 was based on his assumption that Jesus was irrevocably separated from him by the grave. Yet Jesus’ very first words to him proved that even in his darkest moments, Jesus was intimately familiar with Thomas’ ordeal of doubt.

54) What does this tell you about the times when you feel separated from Jesus and/or God?

55) Do you think Thomas took Jesus up on these offers to physically handle his resurrected body?

56) At the end of verse 26, Jesus says “Be not faithless, but believing.” Provide the definitions for both words below.

“faithless”: Strong’s #G571

Meaning:

“believing”: Strong’s #G4103

Meaning:

Whenever the word for “faithless” appears in the New Testament, it always refers to those who are outside the ecclesia. However, there are two exceptions when Jesus applies it to his disciples. One is with Thomas’ meeting with the risen Lord in John 20. The other occurs in the healing of the son with seizures recorded in Mark 7:17-27, Matt. 17:14-21, and Luke 9:37-42.

- 57) Why does Jesus refer to his disciples as part of a “faithless generation” on these occasions (Hint: see Matt. 17:19-20)
- 58) The father in this story also demonstrates a lack of faith. In Mark 9:22, he says to Jesus “if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.” What does Jesus answer in verse 23, and what does his response highlight about where the limitations of God’s ability to save come from?
- 59) Compare the father’s impassioned confession and plea in verse 24 to Thomas’ spiritual state before Jesus appeared to him.
- 60) What do these two stories tell us about how Jesus works with people who struggle with their faith?

Up till this point, Thomas has refused to believe that Jesus is alive, claiming that whatever, or whomever his brethren had seen was not the real Jesus. But confronted with the face, the presence, the voice, and the scars of Jesus, his last doubts evaporate.

- 61) What convictions about Jesus did Thomas’ enigmatic response, “My Lord and My God” express?
- 62) Think back to the last exchange Jesus had had with Thomas, in the upper room the night before he died. What was the overarching message Jesus was trying to get his disciples to believe? (Refer to question 17)
- 63) What had been the last words Jesus had spoken directly to Thomas before his death (John 14:6-7)?
- 64) What meaning does this context give to Thomas’ expression of faith when he met Jesus in John 20:28? Explain the significance of this phrase.
- 65) Jesus answered Thomas in verse 29, “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.” Do you think this was a rebuke? Why or why not?

- 66) Generations after Thomas fell asleep in Christ, disciples today fall into the category of those who have not seen, and yet believe. How does Christ's blessing comfort you in your struggles with faith?
- 67) Read 1 Pet. 1:6-9. How Does Peter's exhortation build on Jesus' benediction of John 20:29 to discuss the trial, the exercise, and the result of faith?
- 68) Find at least two other passages that emphasize the relationship between faith and sight.

Mark 16:14 records that at some point after his resurrection, Jesus upbraided his disciples for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because none of them believed the witnesses of his life (compare Luke 24:35). It is in the very next verse that Jesus gives the apostles his great commission to preach the gospel to all creation.

- 69) What does verse 16 say people will receive based on their response to the apostles' teaching?
- 70) Compare and contrast how Jesus dealt with the response of the apostles to the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection to what he expected from those to whom the apostles would preach.
- 71) Jesus upbraids his disciples for unbelief, then says that those who don't believe will be condemned! Contrast this to how Jesus worked with Thomas' unbelief, and with what James 1:5-6 says about how God works with us in our weakness. How would you resolve this apparent dilemma?
- 72) Thomas' eight days without evidence of Jesus' presence, followed by the second appearing of Jesus holds powerful parallels to our probation awaiting the return of our Lord. Write down as many similarities as you can between his experience and ours.

John 21:1-2 records that it was “after these things” that Jesus shewed himself again for the third time to a group of disciples this time on the shores of Galilee.

73) Look up Matt. 26:32; 28:7 (Mark 16:7), and Matt. 28:16. Jesus appears to have intended to meet with the disciples in Galilee immediately after his resurrection, but the record of John 20-21 indicates that their rendezvous with Jesus didn’t occur until more than a week later. Why do you think the disciples delayed so long before journeying north? (Hint: consider that John 21:2 specifically mentions Thomas as part of the group who met Jesus in Galilee)

74) **OPTIONAL BIBLE MARKING EXERCISE:** There are many parallels between the conversion of Thomas at Jesus’ first advent and that of national Israel culminating at his second advent. Review the chart below and mark it or a version of it into your Bible in John 20.

Thomas	Israel
Focused on the negative/problems <u>John 11:16; 14:5; 20:25</u>	Could only see the obstacles <u>Num. 13:28,31,33</u>
Struggled with faith <u>John 20:25-29</u>	Struggled with Faith <u>Deut. 32:20; Luke 7:9; Heb. 3:19</u>
Heard witness of Jesus’ resurrection, but would not believe <u>John 20:24-25</u>	Wouldn’t believe that Jesus was raised <u>Acts 4:2; Matt. 27:63-64; 28:13-15; Luke 16:31</u>
“Except I see.... I will not believe” <u>John 20:25</u>	“Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe” <u>John 4:48; 1 Cor. 1:22</u>
Is not with the disciples when Jesus appears the first time. Back with them and believes when he appears again <u>John 20:24; 21:2</u>	Israel was broken off because of unbelief in Jesus. Will be grafted back in when he appears again. <u>Rom. 11:20,23-26</u>
Only convinced after seeing Jesus’ wounds <u>John 20:27</u>	Finally realize that Jesus is the Messiah when they see his wounds <u>Zech. 12:10; 13:6</u>
Says “My Lord and my God” when he sees Jesus’ wounds <u>John 20:28</u>	“They shall look on ME whom they have pierced, and mourn for HIM.” <u>Zech. 12:10</u>
Once converted, became a powerful witness <u>Acts 4:33; Mark 15:16</u>	The whole world will want to learn of the God of Jacob <u>Zech. 8:23; Isa. 2:3; 55:5</u>

THE WITNESS OF THOMAS

The last time Thomas is mentioned is in Acts chapter 1:13, in the list of the disciples who had just witnessed the ascension of Jesus, and who would form the nucleus of the Jerusalem ecclesia. Read the record of the ascension in Acts 1:9-11.

- 75) Jesus had finally departed to be with his father and wouldn't come back for 2,000 years. Describe how difficult Jesus' ongoing absence would have been for Thomas, considering what you know about his previous struggle with separation from Jesus.
- 76) The record of the ascension emphasizes visual sight. List all the words that have to do with seeing in those three verses.
- 77) Compare the promise of the angels in Acts 1:11 to Jesus' exhortation to Thomas in John 20:29. Discuss how this new era in Thomas' life would be a test to see if he had learned the lessons Jesus had worked so hard to teach him.
- 78) The book of Acts is the story of how the apostles witnessed to the world about the resurrection of Jesus (Acts. 1:3,22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 10:39-41; 13:31). Describe how Thomas' unique experience with the resurrected Lord could be a powerful witness in convincing people of the reality of the risen Lord.
- 79) The visible, physical evidence of Jesus' wounds became a convincing witness of Jesus' resurrection for many people (see John 20:20,30-31; Luke 24:39-43). What was it about the wounds of Jesus that made them such an important piece of evidence for the disciples to see and handle?
- 80) Read 1 John 1:1-4. How does John (writing on behalf of all the apostles) describe the reality and intimacy of their relationship with Jesus? Why do you think he uses that specific language?

Consider the last words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 28:18-20. He tells them that he has been given all authority in heaven and earth, and once again delivers their commission to preach the gospel to all nations, converting more and more disciples to follow him. The gospel is still converting disciples for Jesus, and his final promise has echoed down through the ages to comfort our hearts with true assurance and strong consolation: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

81) How would this promise have strengthened Thomas as he strove to live by faith in the absence of Jesus’ physical presence?

82) Reflect on what this promise means for your faith, and how it could transform the way you think, feel, and live.

83) Now that you have finished your study of Thomas, go back to the summary chart at the beginning of this section and fill it out with the most significant principles and lessons you’ve taken from his character. Don’t forget to mark it and any other points you found interesting into your Bible!