

# UNVEILED

---

S T U D I E S   I N   T H E   B O O K   O F   J O H N



WEEK 1

---

**THE WORD** || 1:1-18

PAGE 6

---

WEEK 2

**THE LAMB** || 1:19-2:25

PAGE 8

---

WEEK 3

**THE LIGHT** || 3:1-36

PAGE 10

---

WEEK 4

**LIVING WATER** || 4:1-42

PAGE 12

---

WEEK 5

**THE SON** || 4:43-5:47

PAGE 14

---

WEEK 6

**BREAD OF LIFE** || 6:1-71

PAGE 16

# Unveiled

The author of this Gospel is generally agreed to be John the Apostle of Jesus – although he refers to himself in this Gospel as “the disciple that Jesus loved” (John 13:23-25, 19:26-27, 20:1-10, 21:1-25). It was most likely written between 80-85 AD, but there's a bit of debate about this.

John's gospel is written differently to the others (the synoptics – Matthew, Mark and Luke). Where the other Gospels focus on Jesus' ministry in Galilee, John's Gospel talks nearly entirely on Jesus' ministry in Judea. The book is primarily written to proselyte Jews--non-Israelites--who want to share in the religion of the Jewish people. The purpose of John's Gospel is stated by John (20:30-31). It's “written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

**“ In typical John-style, this is done through many common but cosmic concepts threaded throughout the book.**

In this series, we'll be showing how Jesus unveils God to us; how the God whom no one has ever seen has revealed himself, finally, in his Son.

There are many different ways that Jesus unveils his Messianic role, and the Father's character, to us, which we'll be working through week-by-week. In typical John-style, this is done through many common but cosmic concepts threaded throughout the book, such as water, bread, light and life.

This duality of common and cosmic can be seen through the first 12 chapters. You might notice a pattern in them: Jesus performs a sign, and/or speaks in a metaphorical way about a spiritual reality (his heavenly origin, his identity, the eternal life he offers), and his listeners misunderstand him by taking his words in a literal sense. But all the while, he is showing the world who he is: the Christ, the Son of God. This illustrates one of the book's opening verses: "the world was created through Him, yet the world did not recognize Him" (1:10).

John is concerned to demonstrate who Jesus is, to explain the salvation that he has come to give and to demonstrate that in him the eschatological age has dawned. Jesus is the fulfilment of the entire sweep of the Old Testament, “He is the new temple, the one of whom Moses wrote, the true bread from heaven, the true Son, the genuine vine, the tabernacle, the serpent in the wilderness, the passover” (Carson). Jesus has brought in the last times, the age of fulfilment – the Spirit has been given and eternal life is available now.

Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) is used in these studies.

Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville Tennessee. All rights reserved.

In the beginning  
was the  
WORD...

John 1

You would have  
asked him  
and he would have  
given you

Living Water

5  
Whatever the  
Father does  
that the  
son does  
LIKEWISE

6

BEHOLD the  
Lamb of God,  
who takes away  
the sin of the  
WORLD!

The  
light  
has come  
into the  
WORLD

TAM

the bread of

Life

7-12

COMING SOON

WEEK 1  
THE WORD

“

*In the  
beginning  
was the  
Word.*

## OLD TESTAMENT

**Genesis 1:1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light "day," and He called the darkness "night." Evening came and then morning: the first day.

**Exodus 25:8** "They are to make a sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them. 9 You must make it according to all that I show you—the pattern of the tabernacle as well as the pattern of all its furnishings."

**Exodus 33:18** Moses said, "Please, let me see Your glory." 19 He said, "I will cause all My goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim the name Yahweh before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." 20 But He answered, "You cannot see My face, for no one can see Me and live." 21 The Lord said, "Here is a place near Me. You are to stand on the rock, 22 and when My glory passes by, I will put you in the crevice of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will take My hand away, and you will see My back, but My face will not be seen."

## STUDY QUESTIONS

### **BIG IDEA:**

***Jesus is the Word, sent by God to dwell with us so that by him we may become children of God***

### **Read John 1:1-18**

How would you describe loneliness?

Have you ever felt abandoned by God?

Why do you think John chose "the Word" as his primary description of who Jesus is (1:1)?

From verses 1-5, what does John want the reader to know about Jesus?

From verses 4-9 John talks a lot about light and darkness. What do you think he means by this imagery?

John describes Jesus visiting his very own people and yet they do not recognise him (v.11). Why do you think that is?

What's the result of those who do recognise Jesus (v.12)?

How does verse 14 completely transform the way an Israelite might see and experience God? (see Exodus 33:18-23)

How does verse 14 completely transform the way you might see and experience God?

In verses 16-17, John describes Jesus as ushering in a "grace in place of grace already given." What do you think that means?

What impact does verse 18 have on you personally – knowing that Jesus makes the invisible God visible?

As you begin to understand this passage, how does it affect the way you experience loneliness?

As the new family of God, how can we best love and care for our brothers and sisters who are feeling lonely and isolated? What are some ways your Community Group can begin doing this for one another?



WEEK 2  
THE LAMB

“

*Here is the  
lamb of God,  
who takes  
away the sin  
of the world!*

## OLD TESTAMENT

**Isaiah 53:3** He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like someone people turned away from; He was despised, and we didn't value Him. 4 Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses, and He carried our pains; but we in turn regarded Him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on Him, and we are healed by His wounds. 6 We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished Him for the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, He did not open His mouth.

**Leviticus 16:15** "When he slaughters the male goat for the people's sin offering and brings its blood inside the veil, he must do the same with its blood as he did with the bull's blood: he is to sprinkle it against the mercy seat and in front of it. 16 He will purify the most holy place in this way for all their sins because of the Israelites' impurities and rebellious acts. He will do the same for the tent of meeting that remains among them, because it is surrounded by their impurities.

**Isaiah 11:2** The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him—a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

**BIG IDEA:** *The Lamb of God brings His Spirit and with it the best wine of perfect religion: removing our sins and purifying us from the inside out.*

Read Isaiah 53:3–7. How is the fulfillment of this prophecy hinted at in John's cry of 1:29?

**Read John 2:1-12**

Typically, a wedding is a celebration of two people coming together, but in the wedding of Cana nobody is named. Why do you think that is?

Turning water into wine is the first thing that John records Jesus doing—something that isn't in any of the other gospels—why include it here?

The chief servant's exclamation in verse 10 says something special about the quality of the wine itself. But John uses these words to hint toward something special about Jesus: what do you think it is?

Tim Keller has a helpful summary of what's happening at the wedding in Cana. We've included it here so you can reflect on these words.

*"When Jesus turned the water into wine at Cana he used great stone jars as the vessels for his miracle. The jars were used for the rites of ceremonial purification prescribed by Jewish law. The washings and the sprinklings were all ways in which the Jewish ceremonial system conveyed a crucial truth: that no one of us is what we should be. We all know shame and guilt, and that we must do something to cleanse ourselves of the dirt and stain of sin before going into God's presence. By putting his wine into such jars Jesus was saying, symbolically, that he came to bring the reality to which all the ceremonial rites pointed: final atonement and cleansing from sin." – Tim Keller, Prayer*

What was the result of Jesus' first miracle (v. 11)?

**Read John 2:13-25**

Why did Jesus react so strongly to the temple merchants? What do you think this cleansing represented (2:13-22)?

Throughout the Old Testament, the temple was the place where God dwelled with his people, ruled over them, and acted to rescue them. When Jesus announces his body as the new temple in verses 20-21, he is making a remarkable claim: the place where God now resides among His people, rules over His people, and acts to rescue His people is Jesus.

What confidence does this give you in approaching God?

If Jesus is the new temple, how do we enter into it?



WEEK 3  
THE LIGHT

“

*The light  
has come  
into the  
world.*

## OLD TESTAMENT

**Ezekiel 36:25** I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. **26** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. **27** I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances. **28** Then you will live in the land that I gave your fathers; you will be My people, and I will be your God.

**Numbers 21:6** The Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people, and they bit them so that many Israelites died. **7** The people then came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you. Intercede with the Lord so that He will take the snakes away from us." And Moses interceded for the people. **8** Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake image and mount it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover." **9** So Moses made a bronze snake and mounted it on a pole. Whenever someone was bitten, and he looked at the bronze snake, he recovered.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

**BIG IDEA:** *When we look to the Son of Man, lifted up, we are born again by His Spirit.*

**Read John 3:1-36**

Have you ever wished that you could relive your life with the wisdom you now have?

What could the significance be of Nicodemus, The Teacher of Israel, coming to Jesus by night (vv. 1–2)? Do you think this is linked with verses 19–21?

Read Ezekiel 36:25–27. How might that passage inform our understanding of the dialogue in verses 4–8?

The last Servant Song of Isaiah, which goes on to talk about the Suffering Servant, who was crushed to atone for our sin, starts with: "Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted" (Isaiah 52:13). What could this mean for Jesus' words in verses 14–15?

Verse 16 is the most famous summary of the gospel in the entire Bible. Why did God have to give his Son for us to have new birth as children of God?

How do verses 17–21 colour the message that verse 16 starts?

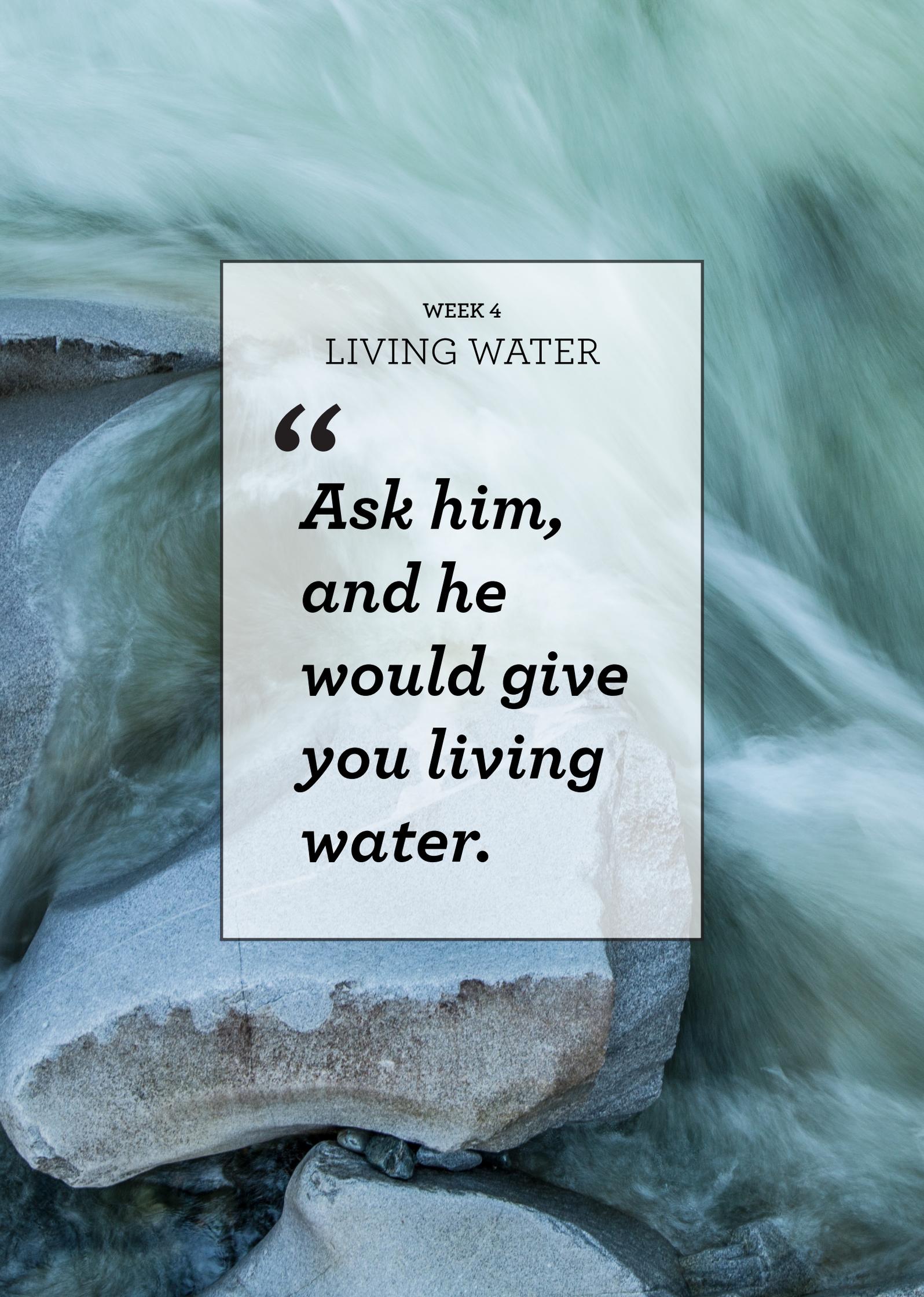
Verse 25 continues the theme of "purification" that has been so prominent in the Gospel so far. Where can you recall purification in the first two chapters of John's Gospel?

Who do you think the bride is in verse 29?

Verses 34–35 talk a lot about things being "given" between members of the Trinity. What role do the Father, Son and Spirit have in these verses?

What benefit do we receive in this exchange of love (v.36)?

What do you think of this new life?



WEEK 4

LIVING WATER

“

*Ask him,  
and he  
would give  
you living  
water.*

## OLD TESTAMENT

**Joshua 24:32** Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the parcel of land Jacob had purchased from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for 100 qesitahs. It was an inheritance for Joseph's descendants.

**2 Kings 17:24** Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim and settled them in place of the Israelites in the cities of Samaria. The settlers took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities.

**Jeremiah 2:13** My people have committed a double evil: They have abandoned Me, the fountain of living water, and dug cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that cannot hold water.

**Isaiah 12:2** Indeed, God is my salvation; I will trust Him and not be afraid, for Yah, the Lord, is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. 3 You will joyfully draw water from the springs of salvation.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

***BIG IDEA: The gospel breaks down all barriers, and satisfies us with new life.***

What are some of the most common reasons that people feel like “lesser people” in our culture?

***Read John 4:1-42***

Why would people have been shocked to see Jesus speaking to this woman?

In verse 7 Jesus asks the woman for water, and in verse 10 he says “if you knew who I was you would ask me for water.” Why?

Verses 13 and 14 reveal a little of the different layers Jesus is speaking on. What is the difference between the water in the well and “living water”? Between Jacob’s well and the well that Jesus is talking about?

Read verses 16–18. If Jesus knew this about her life, why did he raise it in this way?

What does it mean to worship “in Spirit and truth” (v. 23)?

What is the food Jesus is speaking about to his disciples? What does it look like (vv. 31–38)?

This chapter shows us how the Good News of Jesus has no barriers, and how it can reach all people. The gospel flows into our whole selves, and flows out into the world.

What’s one way you struggle against the voices of the world?

When you get opportunities to speak about Jesus or about church, are your answers full of joy? Why or why not?

WEEK 5

THE SON

“

*Whatever the  
Father does,  
the Son also  
does these  
things in the  
same way.*



## OLD TESTAMENT

## STUDY QUESTIONS

**Exodus 20:8** Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy: 9 You are to labor six days and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. You must not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the foreigner who is within your gates. 11 For the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days; then He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy.

**1 Samuel 2:6** The Lord brings death and gives life; He sends some to Sheol, and He raises others up.

**Daniel 7:13** I continued watching in the night visions, and I saw One like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before Him. 14 He was given authority to rule, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

**Daniel 12:2** Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, and some to shame and eternal contempt.

**BIG IDEA:** *Jesus is the Son of God, who shows us the fulfilment of the merciful plans of God, and if we believe in Him we receive eternal life.*

**Read 4:46–5:47**

If you follow John's geographical markers throughout chapters 1-5, you find that Jesus headed north from Jerusalem for only two people: the Samaritan woman he met at the well, and the official's son he meets in this passage (and, as a result, the people who believed because of them).

Why do you think these two people were so important to Jesus?

From 4:46–54, what is the relationship between signs and belief?

How does Jesus seem to feel about this?

What do you think about 5:14? How does it square with John 9:2–3?

What were the "things" Jesus was doing wrong, in the Pharisees' eyes (5:16)?

Contrary to 5:10, there is nothing in the Old Testament decreeing the carrying of a mat to be unlawful. Strict Jews had made their own law since then, forbidding one to carry an object "from one domain into another" (Mishnah, Shabbat 7.2). How does this effect the situation?

What do verses 17 and 18 say about Jesus's relationship to God?

From 5:19–29, what has the Father granted to the Son?

Read Daniel 7:13–14 and 12:2. What is the significance of these words being picked up in John 5:27–29?

From 5:39–47, what is Jesus saying about the role of the Old Testament?

What struggles do you have when it comes to understanding the Old Testament? How might Jesus' words change the way you read the Old Testament?

How do all these things shape your view of the character of God?



WEEK 6  
BREAD OF LIFE

“  
*I am the  
bread of  
life.*

## OLD TESTAMENT

**Deuteronomy 18:15** “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.”

**Psalm 107:28** Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress. 29 He stilled the storm to a murmur, and the waves of the sea were hushed. 30 They rejoiced when the waves grew quiet. Then He guided them to the harbor they longed for.

**Psalm 78:23** He gave a command to the clouds above and opened the doors of heaven. 24 He rained manna for them to eat; He gave them grain from heaven.

**Isaiah 54:5** Indeed, your husband is your Maker—His name is Yahweh of Hosts—and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; He is called the God of all the earth.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

**BIG IDEA: Jesus gives eternal life, but on his own terms; by belief in him, and not by our works, initiative, or understanding.**

**Read John 6:1–71**

This chapter shows us some of the ways that Jesus can offend and contradict people. He isn't just a good teacher who commends love and humility; he is the Christ, the saviour of the world, and the giver of eternal life.

What Messianic things is Jesus doing in 6:1–14?

Who did the people want Jesus to be in v. 15? What did that mean?

Read Psalm 107:29–30. How is this Psalm fulfilled in John 6:16–21?

Exodus 16:4 says: “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.’” There's a reason the Jews connect manna with works of the law in 6:28–31. And in verse 28 someone raises one of the most common misunderstandings of Jesus' mission.

What does Jesus' answer in verse 29 say about his role and the law?

What do verses 37–40 have to say about our belief? On days when you're struggling to hold on to faith, what hope do these verses give you?

What do verses 53–58 mean? How literal are they intended to be?

There are many ways that people dislike Jesus and his mission here. They want him to be a different Messiah (v. 15), they want to do more than believe in him to be right with God (v. 28), and they find it difficult to accept that no one can come to the Son unless it's granted by the Father (v. 66).

Do you struggle to accept any aspect of Jesus' mission? (see below)

What aspect of Jesus' life or mission do you struggle to accept?

On this, Tim Keller writes something really helpful about what it means to hear from a God who contradicts us.

*“For example, if a wife is not allowed to contradict her husband, they won't have an intimate relationship. Remember the (two!) movies *The Stepford Wives*? The husbands of Stepford, Connecticut, decide to have their wives turned into robots who never cross the wills of their husbands. A Stepford wife was wonderfully compliant and beautiful, but no one would describe such a marriage as intimate or personal. Now, what happens if you eliminate anything from the Bible that offends your sensibility and crosses your will? If you pick and choose what you want to believe and reject the rest, how will you ever have a God who can contradict you? You won't! You'll have a Stepford God! A God, essentially, of your own making, and not a God with whom you can have a relationship and genuine interaction. Only if your God can say things that outrage you and make you struggle (as in a real friendship or marriage!) will you know that you have gotten hold of a real God and not a figment of your imagination. So an authoritative Bible is not the enemy of a personal relationship with God. It is the precondition for it.”* Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*.

Do you agree or disagree? Discuss with your group.

---

# NOTES

---

# NOTES



VILLAGE CHURCH  
2016