

connect 360

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Come and See

ENCOUNTERING JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

A STUDY OF JOHN

Dianne Swaim
Ronny Marriott
Trevor Brown



Dallas, Texas

Writers for This Study Guide

Diane Swaim wrote lessons one through five. Diane Swaim holds a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She served as single adult minister in Mississippi and Arkansas and was a speaker for many single-adult events across the nation. She has spent the last 25 years as a hospice chaplain. Recently, following the death of her husband Gordon, she and her son have moved from North Little Rock, Arkansas, to Tyler, Texas, to be near her daughter. She has joined South Spring Baptist Church in Tyler.

Ronny Marriott wrote lessons six through ten. Dr. Marriott is the senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Richardson, Texas. He holds the Doctor of Ministry degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the former pastor of First Baptist Church in Burleson, Texas; First Baptist Church in Corpus Christi, Texas; and First Baptist Church in Temple, Texas. Ronny, who is married to Robin, has written several studies for Connect 360.

Trevor Brown wrote lessons eleven through thirteen plus the Christmas lesson. Dr. Brown is the associate pastor of the First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas. He is a graduate of Howard Payne University with a Bachelor of Cross-Cultural Studies and Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary, from which he holds a Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry. He and his wife, Hannah, are parents of four children. He is also adjunct faculty in Baylor's Doctor of Ministry program.

Introducing

Come and See

Encountering Jesus in the Gospel of John

A Study of John

What happens when people truly encounter Jesus? Again and again, the Gospel of John brings us face-to-face with people whose lives are interrupted by Jesus. A curious Pharisee comes to Him at night. A Samaritan woman meets Him beside a well. A desperate father asks Him to save his son. A man born blind receives his sight. Grieving sisters encounter Him at the tomb of their brother. Friends, skeptics, religious leaders, crowds, and disciples all meet Jesus—and each encounter raises the same essential question: **Who is this Jesus, and how will we respond to Him?**

John invited us to enter these stories and make that discovery for ourselves.

From its opening words, John announced that Jesus is no ordinary teacher or religious leader. He is the eternal Word who was with God and who is God, the One through whom all things were

made, who has now become flesh and lived among us. Throughout the Gospel, John unveiled Jesus' identity through signs, conversations, "I am" sayings, conflict, testimony, and ultimately the Cross and Resurrection. Each scene reveals something more about who Jesus is and invites a response of faith.

John told us plainly why he wrote: "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31, ESV). For John, believing is more than knowing information about Jesus. It means seeing who He truly is, entrusting ourselves to Him, following Him, abiding in Him, and receiving the life that only He can give.

That makes John's Gospel remarkably timely. We live in a world filled with competing claims about truth, identity, meaning, and life. The Gospel of John speaks directly into those questions. What is true? Who is God? What does it mean to have life? Can light overcome darkness? And, above all, who is Jesus?

John's answer is not merely an idea. His answer is a person.

Jesus is the Word made flesh, the Lamb of God, the Giver of living water, the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, the Way and the Truth and the Life, and the risen Lord. Yet John did not simply ask us to learn these titles. He invited us to encounter the Jesus to whom they point.

The invitation first given to curious disciples near the beginning of the Gospel therefore becomes an invitation to every reader: "**Come and see**" (John 1:39).

As you journey through this study, come and see Jesus through the eyes of those who first encountered Him. Listen to His words. Watch His signs. Wrestle with His claims. Stand at

the cross. Look into the empty tomb. And allow John's testimony to confront you with the question that ultimately matters most: **Who is Jesus, and how will encountering Him change the way you live?**

Suggested Resources for Further Study

The following resources represent a range of approaches to the Gospel of John, from accessible studies for personal reading and Bible study to resources for teaching, preaching, and advanced exegetical study. The list emphasizes contemporary works while also including several enduring commentaries that remain especially valuable for understanding the Fourth Gospel.

Accessible Commentaries¹

These resources are particularly helpful for personal Bible study, small-group leaders, Sunday school teachers, and readers seeking clear and engaging guidance through John.

N. T. Wright, *John for Everyone*, Parts 1 and 2. Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.

Colin G. Kruse, *John*. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*. Revised edition. IVP Academic, 2017.

F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition and Notes*. Eerdmans, 1983.

D. Moody Smith, *John*. *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries*. Abingdon Press, 1999.

Commentaries for Teaching, Preaching, and Application

These resources combine careful interpretation with theological reflection and are especially useful for pastors, teachers, and Bible study leaders seeking to move from understanding the text to teaching and applying it.

Gary M. Burge, *John. NIV Application Commentary*. Zondervan, 2000.

Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. Eerdmans, 2012.

Karen H. Jobes, *John Through Old Testament Eyes: A Background and Application Commentary*. Kregel Academic, 2021.

David F. Ford, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*. Baker Academic, 2021.

D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Eerdmans, 1990.

Advanced Exegetical Commentaries

These resources are especially helpful for pastors, seminary students, teachers, and others seeking more detailed engagement with the historical, literary, theological, and exegetical dimensions of John's Gospel.

Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. 2 vols. Hendrickson, 2003.

J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John. New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Eerdmans, 2010.

Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary. New Testament Library*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.

Edward W. Klink III, *John. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Zondervan Academic, 2016.

Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John. New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Eerdmans, 1971.

Bible Background and Reference

Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. 2nd ed. IVP Academic, 2014. An especially useful resource for understanding the historical, cultural, social, and religious world of the New Testament and for adding helpful background to the study and teaching of individual passages.

NOTE

¹ The inclusion of a resource does not imply agreement by the writer or GC2 Press with all of its interpretations or conclusions.

Come and See

Encountering Jesus in the Gospel of John

A Study of John

<i>How to Make the Best Use of This Issue</i>	3
<i>Writers for This Study Guide</i>	6
<i>Introducing Come and See</i>	7

DATE OF STUDY

LESSON 1	_____	<i>Come and See: The Lamb of God</i>	14
		JOHN 1:19–34	
LESSON 2	_____	<i>Come and See: What We’ve Found</i>	24
		JOHN 1:35–51	
LESSON 3	_____	<i>Come and See: Why He Must Increase</i>	35
		JOHN 3:22–35	
LESSON 4	_____	<i>Come and See: The One Who Knows Me</i>	46
		JOHN 4:25–30, 39–42	
LESSON 5	_____	<i>Come and See: The Son Who Gives Life</i>	57
		JOHN 5:16–30	

LESSON 6	<i>Come and See: The Witnesses of God</i>	68
	JOHN 5:31–47	
LESSON 7	<i>Come and See: The Bread That Satisfies</i>	78
	JOHN 6:22–40	
<i>Ministry Promotions</i>		90
LESSON 8	<i>Come and See: Who He Really Is</i>	94
	JOHN 7:25–52	
LESSON 9	<i>Come and See: The Light of Life</i>	106
	JOHN 8:12–30	
LESSON 10	<i>Come and See: The Eternal I Am</i>	118
	JOHN 8:48–59	
LESSON 11	<i>Come and See: The One Who Opens Eyes</i>	132
	JOHN 9:1–17	
LESSON 12	<i>Come and See: The Shepherd and the Father Are One</i>	146
	JOHN 10:22–42	
LESSON 13	<i>Come and See: The Worthy King</i>	158
	JOHN 12:1–11	
CHRISTMAS	<i>Come and See: The Word Made Flesh</i>	171
	JOHN 1:1–14	
<i>Prayer for This Study</i>		182
<i>Our Next New Study</i>		185
<i>How to Order More Bible Study Materials</i>		187

lesson

Come and See: The Lamb of God

MAIN IDEA

John the Baptist bore witness that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

How does recognizing Jesus as the Lamb of God reshape my understanding of sin and salvation?

STUDY AIM

To understand that John's mission was to identify Jesus publicly as the promised Messiah and sacrificial Savior

QUICK READ

When questioned by religious leaders, John denied being the Messiah and directed attention to Jesus. His ministry prepared hearts for the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and brings redemption.

Introduction

John the Baptist was an enigma, a mystery. From his miraculous birth to elderly parents, to his vow not to take wine or other fermented drink, to his life in the wilderness eating locusts and honey, he was different. Even more important, he was filled with the Holy Spirit before his birth (Luke 1:14–15). Luke devoted a whole chapter to John the Baptist, and he was mentioned in all four Gospels.

When John was born, there was much celebrating throughout the hill country of Judea. They asked, “‘What then is this child going to be?’ For the Lord’s hand was with him” (Luke 1:66b). His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave a beautiful prophecy for his son’s life. Then Luke 1:80 simply states, “And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.” And he began the ministry God had called him to, baptizing with water for the repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

From the above paragraphs, you can see John had his own share of fame, and he had his own followers. But he was loyal to the One who called him to lay all that aside and introduce the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Those surrounding him would know the significance of naming Jesus “the Lamb of God.” Today, we are more likely to name Jesus “Savior.” They are the same.

John 1:19–34

¹⁹ Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he

was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No."

²² Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

²⁴ Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

²⁶ "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

³² Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³ And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."

A Voice in the Wilderness (1:19–23)

The Jewish leaders (Sadducees, Pharisees, Levites, and priests) were well learned in the Old Testament Scriptures. Their background included prophecies of a coming Messiah. When word got around Jerusalem that there was a weird-looking man standing in the Jordan River, calling for sinners to repent and be baptized, of course, it raised their curiosity.

They sent what today would probably be a committee to question John. Actually, John never really answered them with his name. He spent the first part of their conversation telling them who he was not. Of utmost importance, he wanted them to know he was not the Messiah. He went on to deny being Elijah and “the Prophet.” They insisted, “Tell us who you are!” Maybe John had just been teasing them along a little bit with who he was not, but now he took a serious tone and answered, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord’” (John 1:23b).

These words must have caused chills to run down the backs of these Jewish leaders. They knew them well. The prophet Isaiah had uttered these words as comfort to the Israelites after their long season of disobedience. Yet Malachi gave the same message using different wording as a warning (Malachi 3:1–2). And now John was telling them both the voice and the Messiah had arrived.

John made certain these Jews knew he was only the voice. He was telling it as he had heard it from God. John would say later he did not recognize Jesus and did not personally know Him (John

1:31, 33). Scripture does not tell us of the childhood years of either John or Jesus.

John's upbringing is all speculation based on the information given in Scripture. He certainly didn't just appear as a grown man wearing camel's hair clothes and eating locusts and honey. John may have meant he honestly had not ever even met Jesus. Perhaps more likely, John the Baptist may have meant he had not known Jesus as the Christ until His baptism. In fact, Jesus had not revealed Himself until the point of baptism. No one recognized Him as Christ.

We Need an Answer (1:24–28)

We can probably imagine the Pharisees' and Jewish leaders' frustration. They knew who John said he was not, but they still did not know who he was. Was he a fraud? Could he be a proselytizing member of another religion? They certainly did not understand why he was baptizing. Authority was important to the Pharisees, and they wanted to know where John came from. Further, they needed answers to take back to those who had sent them (1:22b).

The other three Gospel writers spoke about Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22). From these Gospels we learn that John's baptisms signified repentance from sin. However, in the book of John, we hear only of John's purpose for baptizing Jesus: to name and present Jesus as the Lamb of God and the Christ.

John continued his humble answers. He came to be the witness, the voice. Just as he denied being the Messiah, Elijah, and the Prophet, he played down his work in three ways. He said he

was a voice, but not the Word; he baptized with water rather than the Holy Spirit; and John said he was not worthy to untie the Messiah's sandals.¹ Later, in discussions with some of his own disciples, John claimed, "He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:30). Oswald Sanders wrote, "That leader is most successful who attaches the affection of his followers more to Christ than to himself."² This was John the Baptist. It should also be all of us.

Lamb of God

John the Baptist was the first person in the Bible to use the phrase "Lamb of God" in reference to Jesus (John 1:29, 36). John was not only pointing out Jesus as the Christ, but he also declared Jesus' mission and identity at the start of His ministry.

This phrase has much Jewish symbolism. Lambs were central to worship, sacrifice, and forgiveness. Exodus 12 offers the most thorough explanation and description of the original Passover. When John referred to Jesus as "the Lamb," he was saying Jesus would be the ultimate and final sacrifice.

Jesus' death would take place during the Passover feast. This would show 1) Jesus would bring deliverance from spiritual slavery; and 2) His blood would be seen as protective and life-giving. If those Temple sacrifices involved lambs offered for sin, Jesus would complete their mean-

ing: 1) He was perfect, without sin; 2) He was willing and chose to offer Himself; and 3) He would complete and finalize the animal sacrifices; no more sacrifices would be needed.

Behold! The Lamb of God! (1:29–34)

In a sense, John the Baptist reintroduced Jesus to the world. The first introduction was to the shepherds watching their sheep by night, followed by a host of angels announcing to the world, “peace to those on whom his favor rest.” (Luke 2:14b). In Scripture, we only heard of Jesus twice when he was growing up. Jews did not believe He was the Messiah. In fact, they really did not know who He was, as illustrated by His time in the Temple with the Jewish Rabbis (Luke 2:41–46). After that encounter, the Scriptures went quiet.

Approximately 18 years later, Jesus reappeared. This time, He came walking down by the banks of the Jordan River. There were no angels singing in the heavens. He appeared to be an ordinary man coming for a baptism. His baptism. But this was John’s moment, the mission for which he had come.

“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). This was also Jesus’ moment, the mission for which He had come. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

John could have identified with Simeon, the man who held baby Jesus in the Temple: “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation” (Luke 2:29–30). Simeon and John shared the same passion, to see Jesus. Sadly, John would not die a peaceful death, but his heart was at peace. He had seen God’s salvation. He was prepared for death.

God’s Chosen One (1:34)

John’s testimony closed with these words, “I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One” (John 1:34). John was loyal to the one who told him to baptize with water. He never claimed to be anyone greater or more powerful than himself. He denied all suggestions that he was the Messiah, Elijah, or the prophet. John was no doubt God’s chosen one to be the voice calling in the wilderness, a herald of the coming of Jesus, the Chosen One.

Case Study

Suppose you will be attending a conference with some members of your church. One of the members is a speaker at the event and you have been asked in advance to make the introduction. This person is worthy and theologically sound enough to give the speech, but he has hurt you deeply in the past and you have not worked through the forgiveness process. How would you prepare your heart to accept being the voice of commendation and praise for this speaker?

Implications and Actions

John had to first recognize Jesus as the Messiah (Christ) before he could be the voice who announced Him to be the Lamb of God. We also first have to know Christ and accept Him as Savior before we can tell His story.

When we do this, the world is open to us to be the voice who speaks the truth of the Gospel. He may call us to missions, but He may also send us to a next-door neighbor or co-worker as a missionary. We will never be The Voice, but we will always be a voice to announce Jesus.

Questions

1. John said later he did not recognize Jesus and did not personally know him. Two possibilities were offered because the Scripture does not say why, and scholars often disagree. Why do you think John may not have recognized Jesus when He came for His baptism?
2. Does humility come easy for you? Could you say, “Let me decrease so _____ may increase”? What about your relationship with Jesus? Can you make that statement today about you and Jesus?

3. When Jesus was baptized, why do you think John introduced him as the Lamb of God or Servant or simply Son of God? Has seeing Jesus as a Lamb to be slaughtered, changed your understanding of sin and salvation?

4. Do you feel your voice and your testimony always point to Jesus? Does your very lifestyle point to Jesus? Do your choices point to Jesus? Reflect on these questions.

ENDNOTES

¹ Herschel Hobbs, *The Life and Times of Jesus* (Zondervan Corporation, 1966).

² J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, rev. ed. (Moody Press, 1980), 230.