



# Intermediate Bible Teacher

**WINTER QUARTER**

**December 2020, January, February 2021**



**For Teachers of Teens Ages 12 Through 14**

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# WRITER'S FORECAST

The theme of this quarter's study corresponds nicely with the purpose of your class—preparing people to become disciples of Jesus Christ. A disciple is both a learner and a follower of Jesus, and the students of your age group are not too young to be challenged to think in terms of knowing and following Jesus.

We begin by looking at the testimony of John the Baptist regarding Jesus, and John the author will offer his own brief testimony as well.

Lesson 2 focuses on how the very first of Jesus' disciples met Him. It becomes a lesson in evangelism.

In lesson 3 we have a lesson for Christmas but not from the usual texts. John deals with Christ's first advent differently from the traditional accounts in Matthew and Luke.

Lesson 4 takes us back to the process of calling the early disciples and consider Philip and Nathanael's call to come to Jesus.

Lesson 5 begins our second unit, which is devoted to signs pointing to the truth that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God. Each lesson helps us get to know Jesus better, and they begin with a miracle performed at a marriage in Cana.

In lesson 6 the miracle, or sign, John writes about is Jesus walking on water, something only His disciples saw. The lesson also emphasizes the steadfast way Jesus remained on the path He needed to be on to accomplish His Father's purpose.

Lesson 7 focuses on Jesus' claim to

be the Bread of Life. It occurs the day following the feeding of the five thousand, which serves as the backdrop for His opaque comment. The people expecting another feast receive reproof instead.

Lesson 8 is more of a continuation of the previous lesson as Jesus' reproof included what is called a "hard saying." It shows that those who listened to Jesus needed to be serious in wanting to understand what He had to say. His audience was too focused on food and missed the point Jesus was making.

Lesson 9 finds us dealing with one of Jesus' "I am" statements, specifically, "I am the Light of the World." This was given in the wake of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem when, in all likelihood, the lighted candlestick was extinguished, prompting the claim.

In lesson 10 we study an argument the opponents of Jesus had with Him, which led to His open proclamation to be God. It was not welcomed, to say the least.

Lesson 11 is the first of three on Jesus responding to the death of Lazarus. This one deals with His delay in going to Lazarus's side.

Lesson 12 finds Jesus meeting with Lazarus's sisters and in the process declaring Himself the Resurrection and the Life.

Our final lesson finds Jesus displaying His divine glory by raising Lazarus from the dead, which becomes a preview of what He will do for all believers who die.

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**PLEASE NOTE:** Fundamental, sound doctrine is the objective of The Incorporated Trustees of the Gospel Worker Society, Union Gospel Press Division. The writers are prayerfully selected for their Bible knowledge and yieldedness to the Spirit of Truth, each writing in his own style as enlightened by the Holy Spirit. At best we know in part only. "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

# LIGHT VERSUS DARKNESS

Long before Christ, Isaiah prophesied that the people who walked in darkness would see a great light (Isa. 9:2), and Matthew recorded the fulfillment (Matt. 4:15-16). Later, when John wrote his Gospel, he made light versus darkness a prominent theme.

In the first few verses of the book, we see light has come into a dark world in the Person of Jesus, and the sharp contrast, even the conflict, between light and darkness is evident throughout. In a summary verse in the preface of the book, John writes that “light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (1:5). Those living in the darkness of sin not only did not understand Jesus when He came, but they also did not overpower Him either despite what they thought Golgotha would accomplish.

As we think about discipleship throughout this quarter, we also want to think about Jesus, and subsequently His disciples, as being light in a dark world.

Jesus taught His disciples two great truths on the subjects of discipleship and light. First, He proclaimed that He is “the light of the world” (8:12). It was a claim to deity in that the announcement was made near the close of the Feast of Tabernacles when the symbolic menorah, lit during the feast as a reminder of God’s presence with the wilderness generation, was put out. As God was the Light leading Israel through the wilderness then, Jesus was saying He is the Light that God provided to lead people through the dark spiritual wilderness of the world today.

Second, He spoke about a transfer of light from Himself to His disciples. While on earth He was the Light (9:5),



but in His absence, His disciples were to be lights in the world, and they were to let their light “so shine before men, that they may see [their] good works, and glorify [their] Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:14-16). God’s people are to be, in this and every age, the shining city on a hill that cannot be hidden.

Some have used the analogy of the moon and the sun to explain this. The moon has no light of its own but simply reflects the light from the sun, and so it is with Christians in that we simply reflect Christ’s light. There actually is more to it than that. Born-again believers have the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11; Eph. 1:13; 4:30) who, if we are not grieving or quenching the Spirit, will shine through us.

What is happening is that Jesus, who is light come to a dark world, began to choose those dwelling in darkness to be quickened and given light that shines amid the world’s darkness. Toward the close of His earthly mission, Jesus told His disciples He would be with them for only a while and that they should walk in His light while it was there. He added, “While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:36).

An illustration may help us in understanding what Jesus was doing when He came. Think of a lightbulb covered with dirt, not connected to any power source. That bulb has potential but can do nothing by itself. It is dead at best. Then you pick up that bulb, thoroughly clean the dirt from it, and attach it to a power source; all of a sudden it has light to shine for others to see.

That is what has happened to all who know the Lord. Jesus has come to the dirty and dead of this world and given them a good cleansing while putting His power—the Holy Spirit—into them. The challenge for them now is not to hinder the power within and to keep themselves unspotted by the world (Jas. 1:27).

The Apostle Paul picked up on the theme of Christians being light in the world when he wrote his epistle to the Ephesian church. There he wrote, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. . . . And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:8, 11).

When Jesus spoke to Andrew and Andrew spoke to Peter (lesson 2), followed by others who began to hear about Him and then walk with Him, it was the beginning of the real Age of Enlightenment. It has become a phenomenon that has lasted two thousand years. Occasionally the collective light has dimmed, through no fault of the source, but there also have been times of revival when the light has shined brilliantly as well.

The light has penetrated nearly every area on earth, though there are places where there is concerted effort to diminish and even extinguish it.

So in this quarter of study, we are encouraged to do our best to keep our own light shining as it ought and not hinder it in any way. Also, we will

be encouraged to teach others what discipleship is all about. A Christian is not called to sell “fire insurance” so sinners can avoid hell but to shine the light in such a way that others will be attracted to Christ and be His disciples too (cf. Matt. 28:19-20).

There is so much more to discipleship than simply coming to Christ. That is only the beginning—the first step, if you will. Christ has so much more to offer those who believe in Him in addition to salvation. There is the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:1-2), the enjoying of the new and abundant life (John 10:10), having peace with God (Rom. 5:1), a citizenship in heaven (Phil. 3:20-21), and the privilege of serving the King of kings here and spending eternity in His presence.

You, as a teacher of young people, have the wonderful privilege of helping them see the advantages of committing themselves to Christ not only for salvation but also for the fullness of life in Him as well. You likely interact with some who already know the Lord, and you may have others who need to reach that point in their young lives. As you prepare for those few minutes with them each week, know that you are in a combat zone where the prince of darkness will try to undo what you are doing as you teach God’s Word.

You should be a light for Christ among your students through word, deed, and example. Take time to pray with your students and address any concerns they may have, as this age can be a difficult time for many young people. You may never know the positive influence you had on a young mind until many years later.

Also know that you do not go into combat alone. You have Christ’s call on your life, the Holy Spirit within, and the prayers of those who write and publish your lessons.

## SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

**JOHN 1:15** John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

**16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.**

17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

**18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.**

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

**20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.**

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

**22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?**

23 He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

**24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.**

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

**26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;**

27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

**28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.**

### NOTES

# The Testimony of John

Lesson Text: John 1:15-28

Related Scriptures: Isaiah 40:3-5; John 3:22-30; 5:31-40;  
Malachi 3:1; Matthew 11:7-14

TIME: A.D. 26

PLACE: east of Jordan River

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**GOLDEN TEXT**—“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18).

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## *Lesson and Its Truth*

Our study this quarter of the preparation of Jesus’ disciples as recorded in the Gospel of John begins with John, the beloved disciple of Jesus and author of the book, commenting on the coming of Jesus into the world and the testimony about Him from another man named John. This other man was the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth who became known as “the Baptist” due to his baptizing role in preparing people for the coming of the promised Anointed One, the Christ.

John began his epistle with the fact that the Word, being both with God and God Himself, created all things and came to earth to bring light to a world darkened by sin. Prior to Jesus’ coming, God raised up a man to prepare the way, and that man was John. His part in the preparation of people was twofold: to call his hearers to repentance and to baptize those who repented. His message and actions did, as we shall see, create a stir among the populace and especially among the religious elite of the day. The Apostle John, led by the Holy Spirit, wrote about the baptizer because of

the major role he played in introducing Christ to the Jewish nation. He did this by recording John’s testimony of Jesus, then adding his own comment, followed by a detailed conversation between the baptizer and several religious officials of the day.

### **THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—John 1:15**

The first recorded words of John in this Gospel were uttered following the baptism of Jesus for the benefit of all who could hear him. His intention was to draw attention away from himself and toward Jesus. John had been preaching and baptizing for a while, and he was gaining a reputation among the people; but he did not want to be the focus of anyone, especially after the arrival and baptism of Jesus (cf. 3:30), which marked the entry point of ministry for Jesus.

The witness of John recorded here speaks to both the temporal and eternal aspect of Christ. Though Jesus was born into this world six months after John was born and would make His first appearance in ministry after