



YOUNG PEOPLE'S BIBLE CLASS

SPRING QUARTER

MARCH | APRIL | MAY 2023

FOR ADULTS AGES 18 THROUGH 25

Young People's Bible Class

SPRING QUARTER

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Jesus Pleases His Father

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THE QUARTER AHEAD

This quarter's lessons will focus on how Jesus perfectly pleased His heavenly Father by His works, His sacrifice, and His teachings. All of our lessons are taken from the four Gospels.

The opening three lessons form a unit that focuses on Jesus' works. All of the works Jesus did during His earthly life were done according to His heavenly Father's will and were therefore perfectly pleasing in His Father's sight.

Our first lesson is taken from Mark's account of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. John's baptism was with water as a symbol of the cleansing of repentance. But Jesus' baptism would be with the Holy Spirit Himself. In our second lesson, from Matthew 4, we will see how Jesus made use of the Word of God, the holy Scriptures, to resist the temptations of Satan. In the third lesson, from John 5, Jesus testifies to His oneness with His heavenly Father.

Lessons 4 through 7 focus on how Jesus' sacrifice perfectly satisfied His heavenly Father. Lesson 4 is taken from Matthew's account of Jesus' prayers and arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus struggled in great agony as He faced the prospect of taking the sins of the world upon Himself, but He nevertheless submitted to the will of His heavenly Father. Lesson 5 deals with Matthew's account of Jesus' crucifixion and death for our sins. Jesus suffered mocking and torturous agony of both body and spirit as He offered the perfect sacrifice for our sins to the Father. Lesson 6 is our Easter lesson, focusing on John's account of Jesus' resurrection and His post-resurrection appearanc-

es to His disciples. Lesson 7 examines Jesus post-resurrection appearance in Luke 24. Just before He was taken up to heaven, Jesus taught His disciples from the Scriptures concerning the fulfillment of prophecies about Himself.

Our third and final unit of study for this quarter focuses on the teachings of Jesus and how they are a perfect revelation of God's purpose for us as we trust Him by faith. All the lessons in this unit are taken from John's Gospel, covering four of Jesus' "I am" discourses and His high priestly prayer from chapter 17.

Lesson 8 presents Jesus as the Bread of Life; He alone is the source of spiritual nourishment that sustains our souls for an abundantly fruitful life of service. Lesson 9 presents Jesus as the Light of the World; He alone shines the light of God's truth for salvation to a world of lost sinners. Lesson 10 presents Jesus as the Good Shepherd; He alone guides and directs His people, for whom He sacrificed His very life. Lesson 11 presents Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life; He alone can raise the dead back to life and give them eternal life. Lesson 12 presents Jesus as the True Vine; He alone is the fulfillment of all that Israel was meant to be, and He alone gives His people power for abundant life. Lesson 13 presents us with Jesus' high priestly prayer for all His disciples, even down to you and me today!

May God bless you with abundant life through this quarter's lessons from His Word.

—John Lody.

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).

Jesus: The Glory of God Revealed

JOHN LODY

In His earth-shaking declaration in John 10:30, Jesus announced to the Jewish leaders, “I and my Father are one.” This assertion was not received in a positive light—the Jews picked up stones to stone Him to death for blasphemy. Nevertheless, Christ’s perfect reflection of God’s glory is amply substantiated by both messianic prophecy and miracles. As Paul told the Colossian believers, “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (2:9).

Of the four evangelists, it is John who most fully develops this idea of Jesus being the full and perfect revelation of God the Father’s glory to humankind. Specifically, John presents the basis for the validation of Christ’s revelation as reciprocal; that is, the Father bears witness to the Son so that the Son’s revelation of the Father is thereby validated (cf. 5:36-37). The Father did this in three ways: testimony directly from heaven, fulfilled prophecy, and miracles.

God the Father verbally testified to Jesus’ identity on two recorded occasions: at Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist, and at the Mount of Transfiguration. Matthew 3:16-17 tells us that immediately after Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened above Him and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove and landed on Him. This demonstration was accompanied by the voice of the Father from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (vs. 17). Mark 1:11 records it as, “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” while Luke 3:22 renders it as, “Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.”



In John’s Gospel, the testimony from heaven is presented as a personal revelation to John the Baptist alone (John 1:32-34), while in the other three Gospels it is characterized as a public testimony that could be heard by all who were present at the Jordan River on that occasion. There are various plausible explanations about why these slight variations exist, but the testimony remains the same—Jesus is the Son of God, the promised Messiah of Israel.

In Matthew 17, we find the record of Peter, James, and John’s experience on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus. This event is clearly intended as a New Testament parallel with Yahweh’s glorious manifestation of His presence on Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:16-25). Jesus’ appearance was transformed into one of glorious, blinding light (cf. Matt. 17:2), revealing His true nature as God the Son. Moses and

Elijah also suddenly appeared and conversed with Jesus, representing the Law and the Prophets respectively—the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Peter's misguided proposal to honor the occasion by erecting three shelters shows his misunderstanding of the event's true significance, but it also functions as a foil for God's rebuke and validation of Jesus' superiority over both Moses and Elijah. Note the arrival of the glory cloud as the signal of God's special presence (cf. Matt. 17:5; Ex. 13:21-22; Neh. 9:12, 19). From this manifestation of God's glory comes the voice of Yahweh Himself, testifying to Jesus's uniquely divine sonship, God's perfect satisfaction with Him, and the cautionary admonition to "hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5), to heed Jesus' testimony as superior to all others.

Another direct heavenly testimony to Jesus being God's Son that should not be overlooked are the heavenly signs surrounding Christ's crucifixion and death. These include the darkness that fell over the land from the sixth to the ninth hour (cf. Matt. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44), the rending of the temple veil as from top to bottom (cf. Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45), and the earthquakes, opening of graves, and rising of dead saints (cf. Matt. 27:51-53). These were definite signs of both God's indignation at His Son's death and of His confirmation of Jesus' divine sonship and the sufficiency of His sacrifice for the sins of the world (cf. Matt. 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47).

The Gospels are filled with inspired records of Jesus fulfilling messianic prophecy. Counting direct quotations of the Old Testament alone, there are 54 in Matthew, 27 in Mark, 24 in Luke, and 14 in John (wikipedia.org). And this does not even include the numerous indirect allusions to Old Testament prophecies throughout the Gospels. In

John 5:37-39, Jesus challenged the Jews to search the Scriptures about Him. The sheer weight of evidence from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise of Messiah is undeniable and overwhelming.

As with the record of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, the Gospels are filled with Jesus' miracles. These included healings, exorcisms, resurrections, and control over nature. All of Jesus' miracles were performed for the purpose of proving beyond any doubt that He is truly the Son of God. Moreover, the numerous miracles performed by His apostles likewise attest directly to this same truth. John's Gospel is structured around seven of Jesus' miracles, from His changing water into wine at Cana (2:1-11) to His raising of Lazarus from the dead (11:1-46). Miracles were especially important to the Jews as the litmus test of any prophet who claimed to be from God (cf. John 2:18; 6:30; I Cor. 1:22). In the area of miracles, the evidence is once again undeniable and overwhelming.

Jesus remains "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). He fulfilled the words of Isaiah: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together (40:5). He is indeed the full revelation of God's own glory in human form. But the glory of Yahweh that Jesus reveals to us is not the thunderings, lightnings, earthquakes, and trumpet blasts of Mount Sinai (cf. Ex. 19:16-18; Heb. 12:18-21), nor the inapproachable light of the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud (Ex. 13:21-22; Num. 14:14), nor even the glory of Isaiah's or Ezekiel's visions (cf. Isa 6:1-4; Ezek. 1:4-28). No, the glory of God that Jesus reveals is the glory spoken of by John: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

MARK 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

NOTES

Jesus' Baptism

Lesson Text: Mark 1:4-13

Related Scriptures: Matthew 3:1-17; Luke 3:15-22;
Matthew 17:1-7; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36

TIME: A.D. 26

PLACES: wilderness of Judea; Jordan River

GOLDEN TEXT—"There came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11).

Lesson Exposition

Our first three lessons this quarter focus on the works of Christ. Mark did not write anything about the birth or childhood of Jesus. He began his biography of Jesus at the inaugural event of Jesus' public ministry.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—Mark 1:4-6

John the Baptist and Jesus were related. Their mothers were related (Luke 1:36). John was a few months older than Jesus. We do not know how much contact they had had during the course of their lives.

John the Baptist's ministry was conducted in the wilderness or desert areas near the Jordan River. His mission was to prepare the hearts of the people to receive the Messiah. In order to do that, they had to repent of their sins. John preached to them about repentance and the forgiveness of sins. The spiritual cleansing that came through repentance and forgiveness was symbolized in the cleansing of baptism in water.

John was leading people to be ready for the spiritual leadership of the Messiah. People were responding to his message. They came from as far away

as the city of Jerusalem to hear John's message. The people had not heard anything like what John was proclaiming. They responded by confessing their sins and being baptized by John.

Why was there such a remarkable response to John's preaching? The people may have responded so positively to John because they had seen so much religious hypocrisy in their spiritual leaders. John was very different. He did not dress in fancy robes or eat sumptuous meals. He dressed and ate simply. It is very possible that John reminded them of what they had heard of one of Israel's greatest prophets, Elijah (II Kgs 1:8). The people listened to John because they found in him a genuineness that was missing in their spiritual leaders in Jerusalem.

THE MINISTRY OF THE MESSIAH—Mark 1:7-9

John the Baptist's message was not about himself. He proclaimed the coming of One who had powers and abilities far beyond his. That would soon be obvious in the miracles Jesus would perform. John also spoke of the moral and spiritual authority of the Messiah. John, as good as he was,