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The Pocket Testament League of Australia

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE ON JOHN'S GOSPEL

ADVANCED LESSON 1

The Gospel of John can become a valuable treasure to you if you read it carefully. Each time you read, pray to God, asking Him to help you understand what you read.

<u>INTRODUCTION</u> Prayerfully read and ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as you read each chapter.

<u>COMPARE</u> The references in other books of the Bible where possible, as these help to throw light on the text being studied.

<u>TITLE of BOOK</u> "The Gospel" means "The Good News". "According to John" refers to the disciple John who is mentioned in the other Gospels as the brother of James (Matthew 4:21). Probably this Gospel (the gospel of John) is the last of the four written. John also wrote three short letters (Epistles) found towards the end of the New Testament. John does not record all the parables of Jesus found in the other books, but sets out the Way of Life through FAITH in JESUS CHRIST, who is the expressed image of God and the "Word of God", ie God revealing Himself to man (Chapter 14:9-11).

THEME Most of the miracles recorded (sometimes referred to as 'signs'), have some bearing on this general theme of believing in Christ, and the reader is challenged to choose between "Life" and "Death, eg see Chapter 3:16, 17 & 36 and Chapter 10:10. John desires that everyone should see Jesus Christ as the Son of God and believe in Him. See Chapter 20:31. A more meditative person than the other writers, John frequently embodies deep teachings as a result of the incidents recorded (Chapter 3, 4 & 5) or uses Jesus' teachings about well-known objects to do so, eg Chapters 10 & 15.

FIRST NAME ONLY: _____

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Read Chapter 1:1-14

Where Matthew and Luke begin with reference to the family background, birth and early life on earth of our Lord, and Mark presents Him as a young adult commencing His work, John goes right back before time began to state the eternal existence and Sonship of Jesus Christ. See Ch 1:1-5 and Ch 8:58, where the expression "I AM" is one which signified eternal existence. See also Hebrews 1:3, which refers to the "glory of God expressed in Jesus Christ".

WORD OF GOD Ch 1:1-3 - compare Hebrews I:1-3 – Jesus is God's last word to the world! He "reflects the very nature of God". As we use words to express our thoughts & feelings, so God sent Jesus to reveal His mind to us! He came from before Creation, to bring re-creation and transformation to people suffering from the re-formation caused by sin. Compare 2 Cor 5:17 with these early verses.

<u>LIFE</u> Through Him, verse 4. Compare Ch 10:10 & 1John 5:11-12. The Creator of all life, is Himself life and His presence brings life.

<u>LIGHT</u> Verse 4 & 5 – The true light breaks up (dispels) darkness of sin and unbelief. Many did not accept Him, but for those who do, God has a promise.

Key verses to memorise: JOHN Chapter 1:11 & 12

QUESTIONS

1. What do we learn about the existence of Jesus Christ from V1-5?

2. What does Jesus do for all people?

14. When Christians pray, why should we "expect" God to answer? What part does faith play? Read James 1:6-8.

<u>POINTS TO PONDER:</u> How may I today, witness to those of other cultures? Am I as observant of their needs as was the Lord Jesus?

11. Compare how the believer and the non-believer are affected by God sending His Son into the world. (V16-21 and 31-36)

3. On what conditions may we become "sons" (children) of God?

POINT TO PONDER: Am I merely a "friend of the bridegroom" or a "bride of Christ"?

Read Chapter 4

<u>JESUS IS LIFE (V1-42)</u> V3-4: Jesus could have dodged Samaria, by going around another way. Warring factions of Jews and Samaritans dated their origins to Abraham & Jacob. The "well" itself was also ancient. Wells were essential in dry desert country and a small pitcher of water was soon exhausted.

V16-18: A sinful life was not a satisfying one! v10. God alone, in Christ, can give this satisfaction and life, because He is Life.

V23-24: True worship is knowing God through Jesus Christ. Samaritans, by tradition, had left the worship of God in the Temple and were therefore despised by the Jews, but Jesus shows that God loves and seeks them too v26. He can satisfy our longings for God, for He is God's "sent one" – Messiah.

V35-38: Local scene of harvest - not far-off fields! Compare 1Cor3:7-9 "God's fellow-workers".

V39: Many "believed" because of the witness of the woman, though formerly a sinful woman. Jesus delayed two days, during which time many more heard His word and believed, then resumed His broken journey.

THE "SECOND SIGN" or miracle Life through faith V49-54: A desperate father's need. A plea which proved faith. Jesus' willingness to answer his plea. Faith acting upon v50-51 brought results. Compare Romans 10:9-10. God grants our requests when we pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God, for the blessing of others and for the good of ourselves. Refer Philippians 4:5-7.

Key verses to memorise: JOHN Chapter 4:14 & 34

QUESTIONS

12. Why do you think the woman was so surprised when Jesus asked her to give Him a drink?

13. What did Jesus regard as His "meat" and "drink" while here on earth?

POINTS TO PONDER: Have I really received Him by faith and if so, what am I now? Are you being "transformed" into Jesus' likeness day by day? Romans 12:2

Read Chapter 1:15-51

The 'other' John, called John the Baptist – was, in human terms a cousin of Jesus Christ. Yet in v31, he says "I myself did not know Him", ie he did not at first recognise Him as the One who was to come, until God revealed Him to John. See Luke 1:36-40, & Mark 1:1-14. The "man sent from God" was a witness to Jesus. See Chapter 1:6-8.

<u>THE LAMB OF GOD</u> V 29 a reference to the lambs which used to be sacrificed for sin. (See OT record in Exodus 12, & other places, Hebrews 9:14 and 1 Peter 1:18-20). Jesus is the one and only PERFECT LAMB.

The compelling power of the Master, v 35-51. Note the various types of people called into His service. God makes no distinctions with regard to class or status. The message of the Gospel is to be made known through individuals – see v 41-45.

Key verses to memorise: JOHN Chapter 1:34-36

QUESTIONS

4. Why is Jesus referred to as the "Lamb of God"?

5. Find at least five different titles for Jesus in Chapter 1 and explain their meanings.

Title	Its meaning
1. e.g. Word	e.g. God talks to me through Jesus

Read Chapter 2

<u>THE FIRST "SIGN"</u> V1-11: Joining with His mother, family and disciples in a happy occasion, Jesus began to show the glory of God in transformation. Water kept for ceremonial washing or to use when travellers were received and entertained, is changed into "wine", the common drink of the day, thought to have been a diluted form of wine – see Ch 13:1-17, compare v6-8 of this chapter. Mary knew she had no power to help, but gave some good advice v5.

<u>"MY TIME"</u> V5: Jesus was always conscious of God's planning for Him. Compare Ch 4:21, 5:25, &:30, 8:20, 12:23 & 27 and 13:1. Jesus never rushed ahead of God, but bided His time. Jesus, by using everyday things, turned sorrow into rejoicing, shame into approval and always does the "best" v10.

<u>THE SECOND "ACTION"</u> V12-25: Again Jesus shows AUTHORITY. He cleanses the Temple by casting out those more intent on making money than on true worship. Right hearts are of more value than many offerings. Compare Isaiah 61:8, Mark 12:33 and Hebrews 10:6.

NOTE THE REACTIONS OF THE PEOPLE V17, 18 & 23: The "other Temple" - noting their complete disregard for God's ways, Jesus' thoughts leap ahead to the time when they will also reject Him! Unbelieving people still look for "signs" and will not believe. Even His followers did not really believe that He would rise again. See v22, also Ch 20:24-29. Compare Luke 24:11-40. Jesus was not deceived by those who made a show of "believing" v25.

Key verse to memorise: JOHN Chapter 2:22

QUESTIONS

6. What advice did Mary give the servants in V5?

(a) Are you willing to follow the same advice? (of doing what Jesus tells us)

(b) Why? _____

7. In what way did Christ show His love for His Father? Do His actions surprise you? Why? V16 & 17.

8. Will God accept us if our hearts are not sincere? Why?

Read Chapter 3

<u>NICODEMUS</u> V1-2: A religious leader, came stealthily not wishing to "commit" himself openly at first. He was timid.

V3: Jesus avoids discussion and comes to the point. Jesus points to his need v3, his failure to understand v4 & 9 and brings out the truth that this birth is a spiritual one. (Not in any sense the idea contained in the "reincarnation" theory).

V6-8: This new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit of God. It would seem that Nicodemus may have come to a deeper spiritual experience later - see Ch 7:50-51 where he rebukes his own ruling party, and Ch 19:39, where he performed a most necessary task after the other disciples had all fled. The timid is now courageous!

SERPENTS & SALVATION V14: Refers to the story recorded in Numbers 21, with which all the Jewish people were familiar. The Cross of Christ v14 is now the means of drawing all men to Him. Love is the basis of God's salvation v16. **So** great love – for the world: **So** great a gift – His only begotten Son: for **So** many – everyone who believes: for **So** great a purpose – eternal Life! Again the choice of life and death verses 14, 15, 16, 18 & 19.

V23: John the Baptist continues his work and rejoices as a "friend of the bridegroom" to see Jesus now becoming more prominent. The Church – true believers – referred to as the "bride of Christ" in 2 Cor11:2, awaits His coming, as John had done. Jesus later sent John reassurance that He had indeed come from God.

Key verses to memorise: JOHN Chapter 3:14-19 & 36

QUESTIONS

9. Nicodemus failed to understand the need of the spiritual "new birth". What importance does Christ put on the "new birth"?

10. What is the "new birth"?