

# HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

7 miraculous signs in  
Johns Gospel  
Leaders Guide

# Johns 7 signs

# Leaders guide

Copyright © Nigel Barge, 2010, 2011

*Email:* [info@hearingtheword.org.uk](mailto:info@hearingtheword.org.uk)

*Website:* <https://hearingtheword.org.uk>

The copyright of this booklet, and of the 'Hearing the Word' tool and study materials, rests with the author, Nigel Barge. Unless otherwise indicated, its contents are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International Licence](#) (CC BY-NC-ND). Please see the full legal terms there by clicking on 'License'. *Simplified version:* Under this licence, you may copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format on the condition that: you credit the author, do not use it for commercial purposes and do not distribute modified versions of the work. When re-using or sharing this work, ensure you make the licence terms clear to others by naming the licence and linking to the licence text. Please seek permission from the copyright holder for uses of this work that are not included in this licence or permitted under UK Copyright Law

## Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Phil and June Malloch, whose tireless editing, reviewing and pulling together of materials has enabled the 'Hearing the Word' resource to be shared with the wider church.

*Nigel Barge, January 2019*

## Scripture Quotations taken from

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc® The International Bible Society. Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Ltd. A member of the Hodder Headline Plc Group. All rights reserved  
"NIV" is a registered trademark of International Bible Society. UK trademark number 1448790

## Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, published by Inter Varsity Press  
The *New Bible Commentary* 21<sup>st</sup> century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP  
[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

# *Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading*



## **LOOK** – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
  - a) What questions does it raise -  
*Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?*
  - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
  - a) the surrounding text
  - b) the Book of the Bible
  - c) the whole Bible
  - d) the place in the Bible Story



## **LEARN** – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



## **LISTEN** – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



## **LIVE** – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God,  
(Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace\*
  - c) Jesus / his salvation\*\*
- 2) What should I do?

\* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

\*\* The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27)

## **The Signs in John's Gospel**

This booklet looks at the seven miraculous signs in the first twelve chapters of John's Gospel. Each event has been selected by John to demonstrate a specific aspect of the identity of Jesus as 'the Christ, the Son of God'. Each sign is followed by teaching that substantiates it.

As we read, we will be asking –

'What does this show us about WHO Jesus is  
and WHAT he did on our behalf?

# INTRODUCTION

A basic question that many ask is, “If there is a God – can I know Him and does He communicate with mankind?” The Christian response to this is, “yes - God has spoken in the words of the Bible.” The Bible is the supreme authority in all we think, say or do. Furthermore it is the principal means he has given us to discern what he is saying to us today. To ‘listen’ to him, John’s Gospel is a great place to start.

This booklet presupposes no background knowledge of the Bible. It is intended to encourage everyone to read the Bible carefully for themselves, expecting God to speak to them. It intends to place the reader in the position of the original hearers as far as background knowledge is concerned (geographical, historical, religious, social, etc.)

It provides pages

- a) Background information about the book and its author. 1-4,6
- b) Explanatory notes about contemporary customs and religious words whose meaning is not self evident in the text. p 8,12, 16 etc
- c) Some help in reading this particular type of Bible literature. p5
- d) A model for approaching the Bible to ‘Hear the Word of God’. p7
- e) How to share your reading of the Word of God with others. p37

## The Author

‘John’ and his older brother James were sons of Zebedee. They were fishermen and partners of Simon Peter and his brother Andrew (Luke 5:10). Three facts show John was close to Jesus:

- a. He was not only one of Jesus’ twelve disciples (Mark 3:17),
- b. but also part of the group of three, including his brother James and Peter, with whom Jesus shared most intimately – the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:37), the transfiguration (Mark 9:2) and Gethsemane (Mark 14:33).
- c. John never mentions himself by name, but always as ‘the one whom Jesus loved’, i.e. Jesus’ best friend (13:23; 21:7; 21:20)

He also wrote the three ‘Letters of John’ and the book of ‘Revelation’.

## The Date

It is thought John wrote his gospel around 90 AD.

## The relationship with the other Gospels.

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> account of the Gospel or ‘good news’ about Jesus. It differs from Matthew, Mark and Luke (known as the Synoptic gospels) which are similar to each other, with much material in common.

Jesus lived in Galilee for thirty years before entering on a three-year ministry which began in Galilee and ended in Jerusalem. The other Gospels include accounts of his birth, his early ministry in Galilee and his teaching as stories with a lesson – parables. John, however, concentrates on Jesus’ ministry in Jerusalem, devoting fully half his Gospel to the last week of His life.

‘The first three narrate the life and death of Jesus more fully, whereas John emphasises the doctrine in which Christ’s office and the power of his death and resurrection are explained.... [All four writers] had the object to show Christ; the first three exhibit his body, but John shows his soul.’ (John Calvin)

Often John deals with the same issues but comes at them from a different angle, eg

a) Ritual cleansing	(John 2: 1-11 - Mark 7: 1-22)
b) Communion	(John 6:48-59 - Mark 14:22-24)
c) Embracing His death	(John 11:33-50 - Mark 14:32-46)

## The style of John’s Gospel

### 1. Theological, not chronological

John’s timing of events varies in some cases from those in the other Gospels. The reason for this is that, rather than simply recounting facts and telling a story as a sequence of events, John chooses his order and arranges his Gospel to convey a message.

### 2. Concise, not verbose.

“Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written” (21:25)

He has ‘boiled down’ into his Gospel enough events to fill all the books in all the world. That is some précis! It means every single word counts!

## The structure of John's Gospel.

## 1. John 1:1-18      ‘The prologue’

This is the introduction to the Gospel in which John highlights themes that he will deal with later in the Gospel. These include

The Word of God (v1), Creation (3), Life (4), Light and darkness (4,5), Faith (10-13), The Glory of God (14), Law and grace (18).

## 2. John 2:1 – 11:57 7 signs and teachings

- a. Water to wine (2:1-11)
- b. Healing the official's son (4:43-54)
- c. Healing the lame man (5:1-18)
- d. Feeding the 5000 (6:1-15)
- e. Calming the storm (6:16-21)
- f. Healing the blind man (9:1-41)
- g. Raising Lazarus (11:1-43)

### 3. John 12:1 – 21:25 The passion of Jesus

This centres on the last week of his life, where Jesus fulfils his mission as the 'Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world' (1:29) thus bringing life (3:16). He does this in his death and resurrection which is his glorification (17:1)

## The Purpose of John's Gospel

“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:30,31)

This is not therefore meant to be simply a biography. John carefully selects events to convey a message. In the first instance it is written for those who do not believe. He hopes his readers will:

- a. HEAR the FACTS – the miraculous signs
- b. BELIEVE the MESSAGE – Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God
- c. RECEIVE the PROMISE - Life in His Name.

He lays out *facts* about Jesus because that is what people need as a basis for reaching a conclusion about who Jesus *is*. Modern sceptics allege that faith is ‘a leap into the dark’. John, on the contrary, sees faith as ‘a step into the light’! (John 1:8; 3:19-21; 8:12). “The only thing you are liable to get from leaping into the dark is a broken ankle!” (Dick Lucas)

## The Message of John's Gospel

In a nutshell: "... Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God..." (John 20:31)

### 1. 'Jesus'

Jesus means 'saviour'. He was given this name because he 'would save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21); or, as John puts it, he is 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World' (John 1:29).

### 2. 'Christ'

Christ or Messiah means 'the anointed one' (ie the King). The Jews awaited a Saviour and King. Jesus arrived in Jerusalem as such (Matthew 21:1-9). He admitted to Pilate he was King (18:37). He was crucified as the 'King of the Jews' for all the world to see. (19:19).

### 3. 'Son of God'

John presents Jesus as God, made flesh, the incarnate Word, who is God living amongst us (John 1:1,14). He emphasises this by saying he is

- a) The Creator of all things (1:3)
- b) The Source of Glory (1:14; 12:41; 17:5)
- c) The equal of God (5:18; 19:7)
- d) The 'I AM' (8:58)

## The Jews and John's Gospel

Jesus was a Jew; he was one of the 'Ioudaioi'; he was of the Tribe of Judah. In fact he was crucified as 'the King of the Jews' (19:19). John's Gospel describes how 'he came to that which was his own (the world he created, v10), but his own (people, the Jews) did not receive him" (1:11) Although most Jews rejected him, some did believe (8:31; 12:11). To them 'he gave the right to become children of God' (1:12)

Throughout the account it is 'the Jews' who are stubborn in their unbelief and who ultimately call for his execution. In doing this they insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be *the Son of God.*" (19:7)

John's intention, however, is not to blame and dismiss the Jews. On the contrary, it is to demonstrate to them that Jesus is *their* 'Christ'. Through themes and rituals of Judaism, Jesus is presented in person as the true Israel of God, fulfilling all God's promises and the hopes of his people.

At the heart of the Gospel is a discourse with the Jews (8:31-58). In this Jesus announces that he is greater than Abraham (53); he uses 'I AM' (58) the holy name for God, of himself; and he claims that only those who believe in Him are the genuine sons of Abraham (41,42).

So it is a Gospel first to the Jews; but it is also to the Gentiles (Romans 1:16). The love of God is thus demonstrated for the whole world. (3:16)

# Reading ‘Narrative’ in the Bible

Whatever we read, we adjust to its style, sometimes without noticing. We don’t approach a newspaper, a car manual, a cookery book, a poem, a scientific report and a Shakespeare play in the same way. We take into account the purpose for which it was written and the way in which the writer uses words. Since the Bible also has many styles – law, poetry, history, wisdom, prophecy, letters and visions – we need to allow for the style if we are to discern what God is saying.

John’s Gospel is mainly ‘Narrative’. To approach it correctly, keep in mind the following principles:

## 1) In general – it is *God’s story*

The whole Bible recounts the story of God’s dealings with humankind. After creation and ‘the fall’ in Genesis, the rest describes how he works out his unfolding plan to rescue humankind in Jesus. The Old Testament (OT) prepares for the coming and the death of Jesus. The New Testament (NT) describes the event and looks forwards to his return at the end of time. It is *all* about God. It follows therefore that:

- a) Every part relates to Him (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).  
So as we read, we should be asking – ‘what does this show about God? What is He doing?’

- b) Everything is relevant.

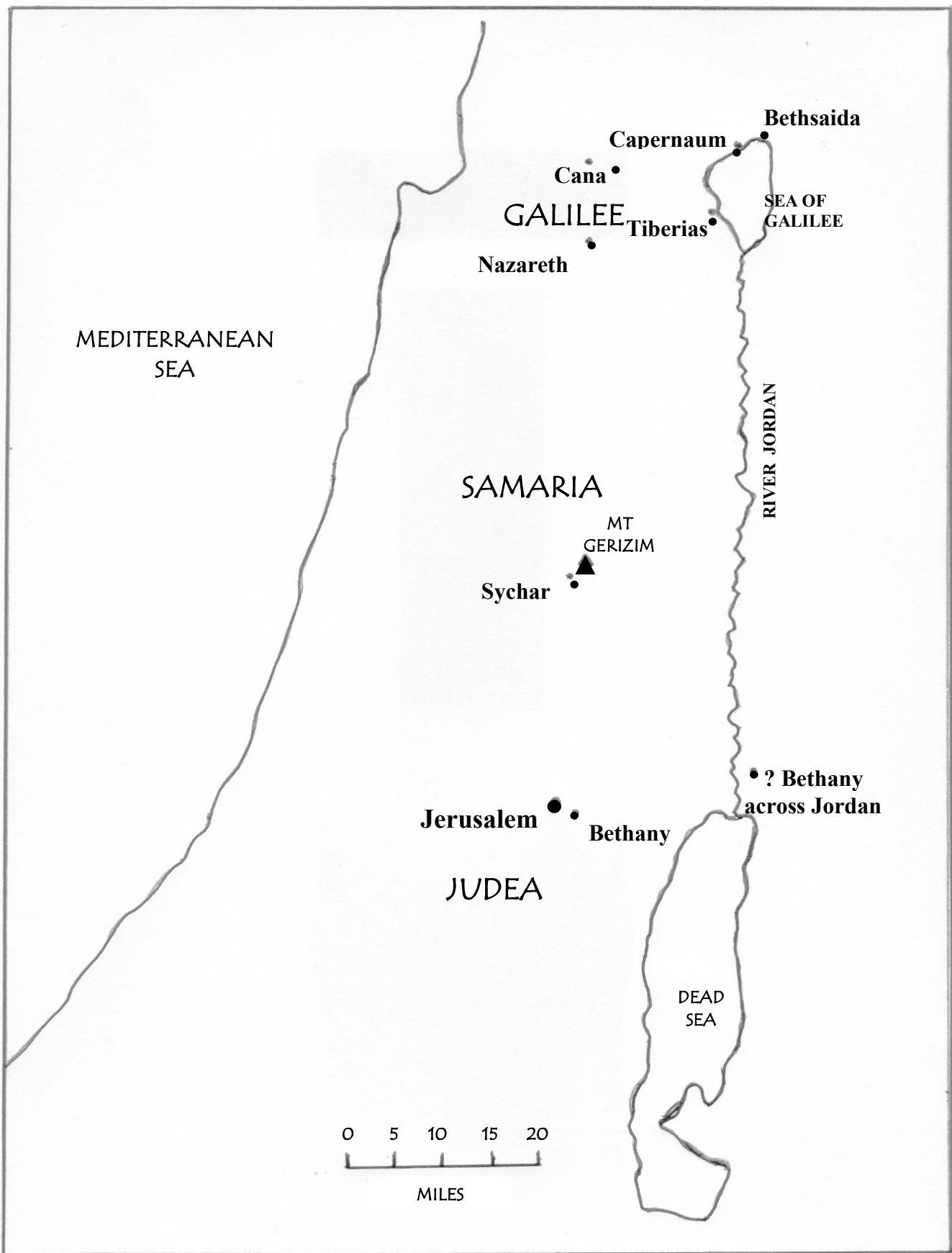
In a film every scene plays some part in the overall story. Often you are shown things in the early stages that make no sense until later. It’s the same in the Bible. So, as we read narrative we should be asking ‘what relevance has this part to the main story?’

## 2) In particular – ‘follow the camera angle’

A film director focuses our attention on particular shots to tell ‘his story’. In the same way the narrator is selective about what he tells us. He leaves out much general detail, only giving us what is relevant to what he is trying to convey.

As we read we should therefore be asking the question – why is he telling me this, and in this particular way?

This sketch map shows places relevant to John's Gospel, chapters 1-12



## Who can turn forgive sin?

### Background and Word List

This incident takes place at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, a few days after he has chosen his twelve 'disciples' (particular followers). Cana is about 10 miles north of Nazareth, his home town.

1	<i>Cana</i>	A village in the uplands west of the Sea of Galilee
	<i>Galilee</i>	Northern region around the Sea of Galilee, also called Sea of Tiberias and Lake Chinnareth. River Jordan flows in at north end and out at south. Famous for fishing trade
	<i>wedding</i>	Marriage feast usually took place at the groom's house. Many relatives and friends attended.
6	<i>6 jars</i>	One short of 7, the perfect number for Jews
	<i>ceremonial washing</i>	Jewish cleansing ritual see Mark 7:3-4,14-23
8	<i>master of the banquet</i>	A steward or family friend who supervised the feast; c.f. our Master of Ceremonies or Head Waiter
11	<i>sign</i>	Greek 'semeion': an act conveying a recognizable meaning
	<i>glory</i>	Greek 'doxa': worthiness, honour; in particular - the presence and character of God in Jesus.

### Bible Connections

1	<i>wedding as symbol of joy of God's reign</i>	Mark 2:18ff; Matt 22:1ff
	<i>Cana was the home of Nathaniel, one of the disciples</i>	1:49, 21:1
	<i>the Wedding of Jesus</i>	Revelation 19:7; Ephesians 5:31-32
2	<i>Jesus invited to dine</i>	Revelation 3:20
3	<i>compare widow of Zarephath's oil and flour</i>	1 Kings 17:12-16
	<i>Jesus' mother at end of his ministry</i>	John 19:25
4	<i>Jesus' time</i>	see John 7:6-8, 17:1 Matthew 26:18
5	<i>compare Pharaoh's instructions to his people</i>	Genesis 41:55
10	<i>wine and forgiveness</i>	Matthew 26:27
11	<i>miraculous signs</i>	see also 2:23
	<i>his glory</i>	see 1:14; Exodus 33:18-23
	<i>put their faith in him</i>	see Exodus 14:31

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *What is the significance of the third day?*  
*Where was Cana and what was its significance?*
- 2 *Why were the disciples invited too?*
- 3 *Why did Mary tell Jesus?*
- 4 *What was 'his time'?*
- 6 *What was the purpose of the ceremonial washing? And how did they manage ceremonial washing without the water afterwards?*
- 7 *Why did Jesus tell the servants to fill the jars with water?*
- 9 *Why was it important the master did not know where it had come from?*
- 10 *Why was it the best wine?*
- 11 *What was 'his glory'*  
*What did 'putting his faith in him' mean?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 4 *Why did Jesus say it was not his time, then go and do the miracle?*
- 5 *Why was it Mary's business? Why did she ignore Jesus' rebuff?*
- 7 *Why so much of the best wine 'to the brim' when they had already had enough to drink?*
- 11 *What is so important that John makes this the first sign?*

## 2) The Context

- a) surrounding passage
- 1 *Cana was the home of Nathaniel who had just acknowledged Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, the King of Israel (1:47; 21:2)*
- b) individual book
- 11 *The glory of Jesus (17:5)*
- c) whole Bible
- 10 *New wine means blessing (Deuteronomy 11:14; 33:28)*  
*Drinking Jesus' wine (Matthew 26:27,28)*  
*Jesus' blood cleanses from sin (1 John 1:9; Isaiah 1:18)*

d) Bible story

*God created man but he sinned and broke the relationship.*

*God gave the Law but he failed to keep it.*

*The promised King to deliver them was awaited.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

*I third day - see 1: 29, 35, 43. Also cf the resurrection?*

*Cana (10 miles from Nazareth), birthplace of Nathaniel who had just professed Jesus, 'Rabbi, Son of God, King of Israel' (1:49)*

*2 Jesus was a recognised Rabbi; his disciples had to be invited.*

*3 Mary knew of Jesus' destiny. (Luke 1:32)*

*(John refers to her not by name but as 'Jesus' mother').*

*She told Jesus because she acknowledged his authority.*

*4 His time was the crucifixion. (17:1)*

*6 Ceremonial washing pointed to cleansing from sin. They no longer needed to wash like that – Jesus had deemed it unnecessary.*

*7 So that they would know it was water and Jesus had changed it.*

*9 Master's judgment of the wine was impartial.*

*10 God always provides the best.*

*11 'His glory' was the crucifixion. (17:1-3)*

*'Putting faith in Him' meant not ceremonially washing but trusting His forgiveness and cleansing from sin.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*Jesus' mother has a role at start and end of His ministry. (19:25)*

*'Mother' emphasises truth revealed to Mary at birth. (Luke 1:32)*

*Jesus said it was not his time because that was the crucifixion. He carried on and performed the miracle as a sign that pointed to and revealed His time – He would bring cleansing from sin.*

*God's provision for the cleansing of our sin is over-abundant - more than sufficient for any sin.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Jesus at the start of His ministry, prompted by His mother who knew who He was, deliberately and extravagantly turns the water kept for ceremonial washing into wine. This reveals His person and purpose to His disciples who put their trust in Him.*

## **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Jesus fulfils man's need for forgiveness by replacing ceremonial cleansing with the gift of His life and blood, so revealing His glory.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

**v 6**

*Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding two to three metretes.*

3) How do you think it does this?

*The ceremonial water was turned into wine that satisfied the master of the feast. In the same way Jesus' blood satisfies God as just payment for all our sin.*

## **LIVE**

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

**6 God is generous – provides abundantly**

b) His grace

**6,10 God gives freely an abundance of the best**

c) Jesus / His salvation

**11 Jesus, God's Son, has glory / is divine.**

Now underline the application of the Main Point

2) What should I do?

**2 Expect Jesus to reveal His glory where he is invited.**

**5,8 Just do what Jesus tells you to do!**

**10 Note - Jesus deals with the big picture; he's not afraid of being misunderstood by providing wine for those already full.**

**11 Note - faith comes from 'seeing' the glory of God in Jesus.**

Now underline the application of the Main Point

## Who heals the sick?

### Background and Word List

Shortly after the miracle at Cana, Jesus and his disciples went south to Jerusalem for the Passover. While there, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing (John 2:23). On his way back north he stopped in Samaria. This was surprising, for Jews normally regarded Samaritans as renegade Jews and steered well clear of them. While there he met the woman at the well at Sychar (John 4:4-42). This ancient well had been used by Jacob, grandson of Abraham.

Now, after two days, he returns to Galilee, his home area.

44	<i>prophet has no honour in his own country</i>	An ancient proverb, cf our “familiarity breeds contempt”
45	<i>Passover feast</i>	Annual celebration commemorating the Jews’ deliverance from Egypt - see Exodus 12
46	<i>royal official</i>	at the court of Herod Antipas, the tetrach of Galilee who was an Idumean, a descendant of Esau, not of the people of Israel
	<i>Capernaum</i>	village on NW shore of the Sea of Galilee, about 15 miles from Cana as crow flies over hilly country
52	<i>seventh hour</i>	ie about 1pm. The day ran from dawn to dusk, roughly 6am to 6pm.
53	<i>household</i>	the term included family, and any dependants, servants or slaves.

### Bible Connections

- 50 *took Jesus at his word - see also Centurion and his servant* Matthew 8:5-13,  
Luke 7:1-10
- 53 *all his household believed - see also Cornelius Acts 11:14 and the Philippian  
jailer* Acts 16:31

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 43 *Why after 2 days?*
- 44 *When had Jesus pointed this out?*  
*Why is John reminding us here?*
- 45 *What had he done?*
- 46 *Why did he go back to Cana?*  
*Why 'certain' official? Was he known? How had he heard of Jesus?*  
*How far is Cana from Capernaum?*
- 48 *Was this a rebuke or a statement?*
- 51 *Did he 'know' his son was healed before he heard the news?*
- 52 *Why did he ask the time?*  
*Why did the answer include 'yesterday'?*
- 53 *What did he and his household believe. What did that mean for them?*  
*Why did John repeat the words 'your son will live'! (50,53)*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Jesus was honoured and welcomed in Galilee (45) though he had said 'a prophet has no honour in his own country'. (44)*

*The official's actions seemed to contradict what Jesus had just said. (48) - He didn't see and yet took Jesus at his word? (50)*

## 2) The Context

*Unlike Thomas, the official was blessed by 'not seeing yet believing' (John 20:31)*

*Home town: not many miracles because of lack of faith (Matt 13:58)*

# LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
- 43 *2 days with Samaritans who 'believed because of his words'. (40)*
- 44 *Jesus pointed this out - to explain their lack of faith. John reminding us here because the official was not an Israelite?*
- 45 *He'd cleared the Temple, taught & performed miracles. (2:13-23)*

46 He went back to Cana because of their faith. It was where his Father had been at work already. (5:19)

‘Certain’ means one particular official. As a servant of Herod, he was probably a non-Jew, who had heard second-hand reports of Jesus in Jerusalem.

Cana from Capernaum? = 15 miles as crow flies, over hills.

48 A statement

51 He knew because he had taken Jesus at His Word.

52 He asked the time to show his servants that Jesus had done this. If the official had left home at dawn the day before, the journey had taken up to 7 hours. So he could not have reached home that same day before nightfall, let alone exhaustion!

53 He believed that Jesus by his word had power over life and death.

He repeats the sentence to show that it was these exact words declared by Jesus that had brought about the miracle.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*They were glad to have a celebrity but did not personally want to put their faith in him.*

*The man took Jesus at his word (48) and his son got well, But it was only when he heard the timing and saw and understood the miraculous sign (that Jesus had brought it about by his word) that ‘he and all his household believed’ (53)*

3) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

*Despite enjoying Jesus’ celebrity, his fellow countrymen do not believe in him. In contrast, a non-Jew trusts in Jesus for the life of his son and believes his word pronouncing his recovery.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*The Word of Jesus saves and gives life.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage’s message?

*“Your son shall live.”*

**v 53**

3) How do you think it does this?

*The official believed that Jesus was able to heal his son, so he took him at his word. However it was only when he saw that he had healed him at a distance by the power of his Word that he believed in him – that he was the Christ, the Son of God (c.f. John 20:31)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

**50 God's Word is powerful and effective.**

*God accepts all who come to Him in faith.*

b) His grace

**50 No payment or work was required for healing – just faith.**

c) Jesus / His salvation

**50 Faith in the Word of Jesus brings life.**

Now underline the application of the Main Point

2) What should I do?

**47 Be prepared to struggle to put your requests before Jesus.**

**53 Expect of Jesus**

*Believe in Jesus, you and your household.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point

## Who is above the law?

### Background and word list

Some time later, Jesus is in Jerusalem for one of the Jewish feasts

2 *Sheep Gate* One of the gates in walls of Jerusalem

Aramaic Language spoken by Jesus

Bethesda an Aramaic name, may mean 'House of mercy'

5 colonnades Five rows of columns, supporting a roof. Same number as the books of the Law (also known as the Pentateuch i.e. the first 5 books of Bible)

4 *some manuscripts have:* 'and they waited for the moving of the waters. From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir the waters. The first one into the pool after each disturbance would be cured of whatever disease they had.'

7 *Water is stirred* a subterranean stream every now and then bubbled up and disturbed the waters of the pool

9 *Sabbath* seventh day, Jewish day of rest, Exodus 20:8

14 *Temple* Centre for worship in Jerusalem

### Bible Connections

8 *Get up and walk* - Compare with the paralytic man - Mark 2:1-12

10 *law forbids you to carry your mat* - The Jews had added 39 different classifications of 'work' to the original commandment, eg carrying a burden (based on an interpretation of Nehemiah 13:15-22; Jeremiah 17:21)

13 *the man had no idea who Jesus was* – Jesus was well known by now (see John 2:23) but was incognito when healing the man.

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Why was the feast not named?*
- 2 *Why specific about pool?*  
*What is significance of number of pillars?*
- 3 *Why 38 years?*
- 6 *Why did Jesus act only when he found out he'd lain a long time?*
- 7 *Why did he ask, 'D'you want to get well?' (Wasn't it obvious?)*
- 8 *Why did Jesus tell him to pick up his mat?*
- 9 *Why did he pick up his mat if it was against the Law?*
- 11 *What kind of excuse was this?*
- 13 *Why did he have no idea?*
- 14 *Why was he sinning?*  
*What could be worse than 38 years as an invalid?*
- 17 *What was the Father working at on the Sabbath?*
- 18 *How was calling God his Father making him equal with God?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Why did Jesus choose this one man at that place on that day (Sabbath and feast) and hide his identity initially from the man?*

*Why did Jesus slip away and then seek out the man?*

*Did Jesus really 'break' the Sabbath?*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible, surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story, might help you understand this passage?

- 1) Individual book
- 53 *Whoever believes in Jesus is not condemned. Whoever does not believe, stands condemned (3:18)*
- 54 *Two signs in Galilee (4:54) (Other signs in Jerusalem 2:23)*

- 2) Whole Bible

- 47 *Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will acknowledge before My Father in heaven. (Matthew 10:32)*

## LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
  - 1 *Irrelevant. Feast was mentioned to show Jerusalem was packed.*
  - 2 *If pool means mercy the man found mercy of Jesus there. Number of pillars refers to the Law (he was sitting 'under the Law').*
  - 3 *38 years is a life time: two generations. He will have been well known to residents and pilgrims.*
  - 6 *He picked him because he was helpless and very well known.*
  - 7 *Healing / Salvation needs to be received.*
  - 8 *By picking up his mat he would break the Sabbath i.e. an act of faith in response to Jesus' word, prior to his healing.*
  - 9 *Authority that commanded the healing, commanded obedience.*
  - 11 *It was a statement of belief – he has authority over sickness and the Law.*
  - 13 *Jesus must have been alone, without disciples. He healed him before he knew what was happening and then vanished. NB there weren't any pictures of Jesus in the press!*
  - 14 *Sinning was not believing in or confessing Jesus (that was his response to the warning. (15) Worse than 38 years as an invalid was to be eternally condemned. (3:17)*
  - 17 *Healing for a start!*
  - 18 *The Father is of the same substance as the Son.*

- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*This was deliberate for maximum impact. The feast - it was packed. The day – on the Sabbath. The man – invalid for 38 years and well known to all. Jesus was making a statement.*

*He slipped away as he did not want to reveal himself to the man yet. He wanted to separate the miracle from the profession*

*Yes – he was 'working' on the Sabbath (just like his father - v17) He gave permission to the man to break the Sabbath.*

- 3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Jesus deliberately healed a man and commanded him to break the Sabbath to demonstrate that he was the Son of God / God the Son. He did it incognito initially, to force the man to confess him openly, showing man's greatest need is to believe in and profess Jesus.*

## LISTEN

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Jesus as the Son of God has authority over the Law of the Sabbath.*

- 2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

**v17**

*Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I, too am working.*

- 3) How do you think it does this?

*Under the Law, only God may work on the Sabbath. Jesus is working on the Sabbath. Therefore, Jesus is God.*

## LIVE

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

- a) In general?

*5 God sovereignly chooses to save / heal.*

*5b He respects man's freewill.*

*8/9 His Word is creative / effective.*

*14 He will not forgive sin of unbelief / no profession.*

- b) His grace

*7 The man was / we are totally helpless, (unable to get into the pool) and nobody is willing or able to help us.*

*14 God spoke, healed, then revealed himself and he believed.*

- c) Jesus / His salvation

*15 Salvation comes through believing in and confessing Christ.*

*17/18 Jesus claimed he was 'equal' to God.*

**Now underline the application of the Main Point**

- 2) How did God want the people *then* to respond?

*7 Note -Minimal faith is required to receive a miracle.*

*8 Acknowledge Jesus' speaks with authority.*

*8/9 Believe Jesus' Word is effective.*

*13 Note - It is possible to be healed by Jesus yet not recognise him.*

*14 To receive life, man must confess the name of Jesus.*

17/18 Acknowledge Jesus as God.

18 *Blind religion hates and tries to get rid of Jesus.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point

## Who can feed the hungry?

### Background and Word List

From Capernaum to the East side of the Sea of Galilee was about 4 miles by boat. The crowds went round the north of the lake by land (River Jordan flows into sea at north; near the fords of the Jordan was the village of Bethsaida), a journey of about 9 miles.

3	<i>sat down</i>	Posture in which rabbis taught
4	<i>Passover</i>	The annual celebration when Jews remembered their deliverance from Egypt, led by Moses. It was one of the main festivals, which the people were commanded to celebrate in Jerusalem (Exodus 23:14-17; Deut 16:16)
5	<i>Philip</i>	One of the 12 disciples, from Bethsaida, as were Peter and Andrew (1:44)
9	<i>Barley loaves</i>	Small loaves of the cheapest bread, food of the poor
	<i>Small fish</i>	Dried or pickled sardine-like fish
10	<i>5,000 men</i>	Jewish method counted men only, so there would have been many women and children as well (Matthew 14:21)
	<i>sit down</i>	Different Greek word from v3. This one indicates reclining, ie the posture for eating.

### Bible Connections

3	<i>mountainside</i>	Jesus may have chosen this spot deliberately. People were expecting the Messiah to provide a marvellous feast for his people - see Isaiah 25:6-8
11	<i>Bread from heaven</i>	Numbers 11, Psalm 78:21-25 Man does not live by bread alone - Deuteronomy 8:3 Other miraculous provision: 2 Kings 4:1-7, 42-44
14	<i>Prophet</i>	The Jews were expecting someone to come, as Moses had promised them - see Deut 18:15,18; John 2:11, Matthew 11:3; 21:11
15	<i>King</i>	they did not understand his Kingship - see John 18:36

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *What is the far side of the lake?*  
*Why give the Sea of Galilee its other name?*
- 3 *Why did Jesus sit down?*
- 4 *What was the significance of Jesus mentioning Passover?*
- 6 *Why does he ask Philip, if he already knew?*
- 8 *Why a boy? And where are his parents?*
- 9 *What did Andrew expect to happen?*
- 10 *Why did he tell the crowd to sit down?*
- 11 *Why only distributed to those who were seated?*
- 12 *Why was there an overproduction of bread (not fish)?*  
*Why should there not be any wasted?*
- 13 *What was significance of 12 baskets?*
- 15 *Why did they want to make the prophet King?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Jesus was not at the Passover?*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible, surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story, might help you understand this passage?

- 4 *All male Israelites are told to attend the 3 major feasts in Jerusalem each yea.(Exodus 23:14-17; Deuteronomy 16:16.)*
- 9 *Man cannot live by bread alone(Luke 4:4)*  
*Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, 'Take eat; this is my body.'(Matt 26:26)*  
*I will rain down bread from heaven on you. (Exodus 16:4)*  
*I am the bread of life (John 6:48)*
- 14 *The Lord your God will raise up a prophet like me from among your own brothers. (Deuteronomy 18:15)*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 'far side' = sparsely populated area

Tiberius = Roman emperor – for non-Jewish readers too?

3 He sat down to teach (Rabbi sits to teach)

4 Jesus should have been at the Passover. He deliberately led the crowd away from it

6 He asked Philip as he was intending to teach

8 Boy alone very unusual at Passover (cf at Christmas)

9 Andrew expected little, but made the minimum response. His offering showed at least a little faith

10 They ate sitting – he was intimating a meal

11 Only given to 'believers' - those who were ready to eat?

12 Surplus bread for others not there.

None wasted because it was precious, more than just 'food'

13 A dozen baskets, like 12 Apostles, 12 tribes of Israel?

15 They were not interested in what he was saying, only the benefit he might bring them.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

Jesus was deliberately celebrating a 'rival' Passover. He, as the Prophet Moses foretold, led a large crowd out into the wilderness instead of Jerusalem and then fed them bread.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Jesus led a large crowd into the wilderness at the time of Passover. He fed them with bread, provided by a lone boy, till they were full.

The crowd were more interested in his power than His Word and wanted to force him to become King.

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Jesus is The Prophet whom Moses foretold, the Son of God, whose Word can give us life and satisfy our every need.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? **v 14**

*Surely this is the prophet who was to come into the world.*

3) How do you think it does this?

*Jesus is the Prophet, greater than Moses, who saves his people from slavery to death, feeds them living bread in the wilderness and leads them to the promised land (heaven).*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

*6 God teaches his children patiently*

*8 God responds to faith, even minimal faith like Andrew's*

*11 His creative power – made bread out of nothing.*

*13 God can make a little feed all his people (12 Baskets left over)*

b) His grace

*11 An abundance is given*

*No payment is required*

c) Jesus / His salvation

*4 His superiority to the Law – He was not at Jerusalem for Passover*

*14 Jesus is The Prophet.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point

2) How did God want the people ***then*** to respond?

*5 Follow Jesus, rather than trust in religious ritual*

*10 'Sit down' – get ready to receive from Him.*

*14 Read the sign. Believe he is The Prophet. Listen to /feed on His Word*

Now underline the application of the Main Point

## Who controls nature?

### Background information and Word List

Matthew tells us that Jesus sent the disciples on ahead of him by boat, while he himself went up the mountain again to pray. The Sea of Galilee is a land-locked lake 700 feet below sea-level, surrounded by mountains; that leaves it prone to atmospheric down-draughts and cross winds, provoking sudden and severe storms.

This same incident is also recorded in Matt 14:22-36 and Mark 6:45-56

On an earlier occasion, Jesus *calmed* a storm on this lake: - see Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25

16,25	<i>Capernaum</i>	village on NW shore of the Sea of Galilee
23	<i>Tiberias</i>	Town on the western shore of Sea of Galilee. Built about AD 20 by Herod Antipas and named after the emperor Tiberius. Many non-Israelites lived there.

### Bible Connections

19	<i>walking on the water</i>	see also Job 9:8
21	<i>c.f. calming storm</i>	see also Psalm 107:23-32, esp v 29
	<i>c.f. the parting of the Red Sea (Sea of Reeds)</i>	Exodus 14

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 16 *Why was Jesus not with them?*
- 17 *Why were they going to Capernaum?*
  - Why crossing at night?*
  - Jesus not yet joined them?*
  - Whose boat was it?*
- 18 *What is the significance of the weather?*
- 19 *Why were they rowing?*
  - What is the significance of the distance?*
  - Where was he approaching from?*
  - Why were they terrified?*
- 20 *Why should the words, 'It is I. Do not be afraid', put them at ease?*
- 21 *Where was the boat headed?*
  - Why should it reach shore immediately?*
- 22 *What did they conclude?*
- 23 *Who were they and why had they come from Tiberias?*
- 24 *How many boats?*
  - Why did they go to Capernaum in search?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*The disciples were calmed by 'it is I...'*

*The boats appeared from Tiberias?*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible, surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story, might help you understand this passage?

See *Background information and Bible Connections*

# LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

16 *He had withdrawn to a mountain by himself (15)*

17 *Capernaum - home of official whose son was healed*

*Crossing at night – fishermen used to it*

*They must have expected him to catch up in some way  
The boats they had come in (1)*

18 *They were wide awake, struggling against the elements*

19 *Rowing because the wind was against them*

*They were half way across (7 miles from Capernaum to opposite Tiberias)  
He was approaching from behind?  
Terrified by unknown and implication re laws of nature*

20 *“Do not be afraid” put them at ease because Jesus spoke with authority - fear responded to His Word.*

21 *Capernaum. Reaching shore immediately was part of the sign showing that Jesus was Lord of time and space.*

22 *They concluded that he had walked on the water?*

23 *They were non-Israelites looking for Jesus, ‘coincidentally’ arriving at site of feeding of 5,000.*

24 *There was a fleet of boats. It was needed to transport the crowd  
Went to Capernaum as they knew that disciples had gone there and assumed Jesus would turn up there too?*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*It is the same one and only Word who said ‘let light shine’, that gave the ‘light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ’ (2 Corinthians 4:6)  
The seekers from Tiberias must have been directed by God. Could not yet have heard news of feeding of 5,000. - Landed at site of miracle - did they receive some of the leftover bread? Crowd on foot. One boat.*

3) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

*After feeding 5000, Jesus again contrives a situation to demonstrate who He is. He sends them home across the Lake and then catches them up by walking across the water. When they saw who he was, they were at peace and invited him into the boats. The crowd pursued them across the lake in the boats of non-Israelites from Tiberias.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*It is as Jesus reveals Himself as Lord of Creation that troubled hearts are willing to receive Him.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? **v 20**

**"It is I ; do not be afraid."**

3) How do you think it does this?

*Because it shows the effect of Jesus' Word*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

**17** *God chose his timing for his purpose.*

b) His grace

**19/20** *He speaks to hearts that are terrified of Him.*

**21** *He awaits a response – invitation.*

c) Jesus / His salvation

**21** *Believe – receive – 'reach safety'.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point

2) What should I do?

**20** *Note - it is by his Word that Jesus reveals himself.*

**19/21** *Fear God and receive Him.*

**20/21** *Listen to the voice of Jesus and do not be afraid.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point

# Who makes the blind see?

## Background information and Word List

Jesus has been in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles and has been teaching in the Temple. As a result of his claims about himself the Jews pick up stones, ready to throw at him to kill him for claiming to be God; but he slips away from the Temple grounds

2	<i>Rabbi</i>	Title of honour, meaning ‘Teacher’
7	<i>Siloam</i>	Means ‘sent’: rainwater (or in this case spring water) was ‘sent’ by gravity through man-made channels that fed a ‘cistern’ (water storage tank) cut into the ground.
13	<i>Pharisees</i>	Teachers of the Jewish law
14	<i>Sabbath</i>	Saturday, Jewish day of rest
16	<i>this man</i>	Contemptuous phrase, “this fellow”
17	<i>Prophet</i>	One who tells God’s message
22	<i>Christ</i>	Messiah, anointed one
	<i>Synagogue</i>	Jewish place of worship
24	<i>give glory to God</i>	A solemn charge to tell the truth (Joshua 7:19)
	<i>sinner</i>	Someone who comes short of God’s standards. (In secular Greek the word is used for someone whose arrow falls short of a target, or who takes a wrong road)
28	<i>Moses</i>	God gave the Law to Moses
35	<i>Son of Man</i>	Title for the Messiah, which Jesus used when speaking about himself

## Bible Connections

2	<i>who sinned</i>	The teaching then current made a direct link between illness and wrong-doing	<i>see also</i> Luke 13:2
	<i>this man</i>		see Ezekiel 18:20
	<i>his parents</i>		see Exodus 20:5; Job 21:19
6	<i>spat</i>		see Mark 7:33
29	<i>by what authority, God or man?</i>		see Luke 20:1-8

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Why did 'Jesus see' but the 'disciples asked' ?*
- 3 *What is 'the work of God'?*
- 4 *When would the night be?*
- 5 *What about light when he leaves?*
- 6 *Why the ritual / why did he not heal him immediately?*
- 11 *Why 'the man they call Jesus'?*
- 12 *Why did he not know where Jesus was?*
- 13 *Who brought the man to the Pharisees, and why?*
- 16 *What did he do that was not keeping the Sabbath?*  
*What did they mean by 'a sinner'?*  
*On what were they divided?*
- 17 *What did he mean by his answer of 'a prophet'?*
- 18 *Why does it say the 'Jews' did not believe (weren't the Pharisees divided?).*  
*Why did they send for his parents? What did they contribute?*
- 24 *What was outcome of the 1st dialogue for man and Pharisees?*  
*Who was acknowledging 'Jesus was the Messiah'?*  
*Why was he thrown out of the synagogue not of the Temple?*
- 29 *What was the importance of knowing where he came from?*
- 34 *What did they mean 'steeped in sin at birth'?*
- 35 *Why was Jesus looking for him?*  
*What did Jesus conclude when he heard the man had been thrown out?*
- 39 *What sort of judgement?*
- 40 *Why did they respond to judgement by asking if they were blind too?*
- 41 *Why are 'blind' people not guilty of sin?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Jesus seems to say that the reason that the man had been born blind was so that Jesus could come along and heal him. What about all those he didn't heal?*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible, surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story, might help you understand this passage?

a) The book

4 *The life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness had not understood it. (1:4,5)*  
*rejecting the light leads to condemnation. (3:17-21)*  
*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have light. (8:12)*

16 *Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (Luke 6:5)*

17b *they were expecting The Prophet (6:14)*

22 *Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. (Luke 12:5)*

38 *The work of God is to believe in the one he sent (6:29)*

41 *The unforgivable sin – the sin against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29)*

b) The whole Bible

5 *You are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14)*

16 *Jesus from God or man? (Luke 20:1-8)*

41 *God...made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6)*

38 *Do not (worship) me! I am a fellow servant (Revelation 22:8-9)*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 *Jesus initiated this incident. The disciples responded.*

3 *The work of God is to believe in Jesus (6:29)*

4 *Night would be at the crucifixion/betrayal? (13:30)*

5 *Darkness till resurrection. Light spread after Pentecost?*

6 *'Paste' and 'to pool' were contrived by Jesus so he wouldn't know/see Jesus till he revealed himself (healed at touch of Jesus but apparent only at washing when paste removed?)*

11 *Jesus = lit. 'The Lord saves'. (Matt 1:21) The man they call 'saviour'*

12 *He didn't know because he was still blind when he left Jesus*

13 *His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging brought him to the Pharisees*  
*They did this to settle the argument (9)*

16 *Making the mud was breaking rules against work on Sabbath.*

A sinner' was someone who didn't keep the Law  
 They were divided on whether he was from God or not

17 'A prophet' is one who speaks for God, 'important, but only as the warm-up show'

18 Jews were from Judah. Some Pharisees were not(?) People were partisan in unbelief  
 Parents confirmed his identity and that he was blind at birth

22 Those who believed in him, acknowledged 'Jesus was Messiah'.  
 His parents confirmed the fact, but not the source, of healing.  
 His argument at this time was with Pharisees not priests.

24 The first dialogue (15) contained only facts. The Pharisees put him on oath (24) and he repeated facts (25). They still did not believe, so he went further, giving his deductions (27,30-33).

29 The importance was knowing whether he was 'from God or man'

34 Steeped in sin at birth = their deduction as he was born blind

35 Jesus looking for him because he had been thrown out?  
 He concluded the man must believe he was the Messiah (22)

39 Judgement follows from rejecting the light.

40 They understood that the real blindness was spiritual

41 People are judged according to the light/ revelation they have received, and their reaction to it.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*The disciples are talking of physical blindness; Jesus of spiritual.*

*The work of God is belief in Jesus (6:29). The blindness had not happened as a punishment of sin. However, in it lay an opportunity that would enable him to believe and bring him to confession of faith in Jesus (38)*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Jesus chose a blind man and healed him in such a way that he was unable to see who did it. The resulting controversy amongst his acquaintances, friends, family and the Pharisees was based on whether he had really been blind, and if so, was his healer from God. When Jesus reveals himself to the blind man, he responds in faith and worships him. Jesus concludes that those who claim spiritual sight, but do not 'see' him (recognise who he really is), will be judged as guilty before God.*

## LISTEN

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Those who see and believe the sign that Jesus is the Light of the world, worship him as the Messiah.*

- 2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

**v 38**

*"Lord. I believe", and he worshipped Him.*

- 3) How do you think it does this?

*If they had not seen the sign showing that Jesus was the Son of man, they would not have been guilty of unbelief. But now that they have seen and still don't believe, their guilt remains.*

## LIVE

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

- a) In general?

16 God is a 'sender' – people can be 'from God'.

38 Jesus is worthy of worship.

- b) His grace

6 Jesus put mud on the man's eyes before He had spoken to him.

*No 'payment' was needed to receive healing –just obedience after it.*

- c) Jesus / His salvation

39 Jesus judges the world – those who receive Him can see and those who reject Him are blind.

Now underline the application of the Main Point

- 2) What should I do?

2 Note -Adversity is not necessarily the consequence of wrong-doing.

9,16,18 Note -People look for excuses to deny the work of God. 'He only looks like him', 'He made mud on the Sabbath', or use delaying tactics.

34 Note - Stubborn unbelief just does not listen to facts or reason.

38 Acknowledge Jesus and worship Him.

16 Do not to allow their religion to get in the way of hearing God.

28 *Be a disciple of God/Jesus not of a man.*

41 *Acknowledge your spiritual blindness and Jesus' gift of sight.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point

## Sign 7

John 11:1-43

### Who raises the dead?

#### Background information and Word List

Jesus had been in Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication and again the Jews had tried to stone him. He escaped their grasp and went back across the Jordan to where John had been baptizing in the early days.

1	<i>Lazarus</i>	The name means 'God is my help'
	<i>Bethany</i>	Village about 2 miles from Jerusalem
16	<i>Thomas</i>	An <i>Aramaic</i> name meaning 'Twin'
	<i>Didymus</i>	<i>Greek</i> and also means 'Twin'
27	<i>Christ</i>	Messiah, the Anointed One

#### Bible Connections

2	<i>Mary ... hair</i>	John 12:1-8. The woman in Bethany in Matthew 26:6 and Mark 14:3 is not named but it is clearly the same occasion; whereas Luke 7:36-50 is a different, earlier incident, in Galilee.
11	<i>fallen asleep</i>	Jesus uses this phrase of Jairus' daughter Matthew 9:24 The church used it of believers who died: Acts 7:60; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 15:6; but <i>never</i> of Jesus; it is always, Christ <i>died</i> , usually adding ' <i>for our sins</i> '. 1 Thessalonians 4:14; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 3:18.
24	<i>resurrection at the last day</i>	see Daniel 12:2
35	<i>Jesus wept</i>	see also Luke 19:41 where he weeps over Jerusalem
44	<i>strips of linen and cloth</i>	contrast Jesus' grave-clothes - John 20:7

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 2 *Why refer to future incident with Mary/ (12:3)*
- 9 *What does Jesus mean by 'walking by day'?*
- 15 *.... that the disciples may believe - what?*
- 16 *What did Thomas mean?*
- 17 *4 days in tomb – when did he die? cf the message & Jesus (6)*
- 20 *Why did Martha go but Mary stay?*
- 22 *What did Martha expect or want Jesus to do?*
- 26 *What did Jesus mean by 'I am the resurrection?'  
How could Martha profess before the sign happened?*
- 28 *What is significance of Mary using same words as Martha?*
- 33 *What caused Jesus' emotion – why didn't he just get on with it and raise Lazarus?*
- 40 *What is 'the glory of God'?*
- 42 *What did the Father hear the Son saying?  
Why did Jesus explain the statement to the Father?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Why did Jesus wait an extra 2 days?*

*Why was he so troubled if he knew that Lazarus was just about to be raised from the dead?*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible, surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story, might help you understand this passage?

- 1 *Jesus had been in Jerusalem for the feast of dedication (or lights), where Jews had tried to stone him for blasphemy – 'a mere man claiming to be God'. 10:22-42*
- 16 *Thomas doubts, wanting verifiable facts 20:24ff*
- 45 *Strips of linen and cloth 20:6-7*
- 45ff *The Sanhedrin sentence Jesus to death in his absence because of the effect of many putting faith in him, after the raising of Lazarus. (Luke 10:38)*

## LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
- 2 *Referring to a future incident with Mary (12:3) suggests that his readers already know the story.*
- 9 *Walking by day suggests Jesus is doing the Father's will. The 'time' will be when it is night (13:30)*
- 15 *that the disciples may believe Jesus is the Christ, Son of God*
- 16 *Thomas expressed great love and loyalty but little faith?*
- 17 *Lazarus was already dead when Jesus heard.*
- 20 *Both believed their brother would not have died if Jesus had been there (21, 32). Martha still hoped in Jesus, Mary did not (compare 22,33)*
- 22 *Something good but not resurrection (39)?*
- 26 *Jesus meant he was the giver of life (God)*
- 27 *Martha professed faith before the sign happened because she was blessed (20:29)*
- 28 *Use of the same words highlights their next response?*
- 33 *He was moved by the pain he had put them through, with the extra two days, and by the anguish bereaved people feel.*
- 40 *'The glory of God' for Jesus was his crucifixion (17:1)*
- 42 *The Father heard the Son saying people would see his glory, that is, the crucifixion. He had committed himself to it. 'Thy will be done'*  
*Jesus explained the statement to the Father so that the disciples would overhear his commitment.*

- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*Jesus was in 'Bethany across R Jordan', a day's journey from 'Bethany, Jerusalem' (see map p 6). It took the messenger a day to reach Jesus, Jesus waited two days, then took a day to reach Lazarus' family = 4 days. Lazarus was 4 days in the tomb when Jesus arrived (17). Therefore Lazarus must have died just after the messenger left and been dead already when Jesus was told. The two days did not make a difference. However the delay was not a callous act, as seen by his emotion when confronted by the mourning.*

*Jesus was troubled at the tomb not only by sharing the mourners' pain, but also because of the personal implication of his decision to act. In doing this he was embracing the cross. His death would follow inevitably. It was his 'Gethsemane moment' in John's Gospel.*

3) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

*Jesus is told his friend, Lazarus, is seriously ill. He states that this will not end in death, and he tarries a further two days. He arrives when Lazarus has been dead for 4 days. He is met by Martha, with faith and expectation, as she knows he is the Christ the Son of God. Jesus is moved by the hopeless state of Mary and the mourners. Promising that they would see the Glory of God if they believed, Jesus brings back Lazarus to life and so seals his own death (53) and glorification.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Jesus is the Son of God, and the Messiah. He demonstrates this in the single act of giving life to a dead man and so committing Himself to His own death /glorification.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage’s message?

**v 27**

*“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”*

3) How do you think it does this?

*As the Christ, Jesus is consciously signing his own death warrant. He could have stopped Lazarus dying (21,32,37), but deliberately chose to let him die and then raise him. This was his ‘Gethsemane’ (38) in John’s Gospel. He knew that by raising Lazarus he would commit Himself to death – see (v 49-53)*

*As the Son of God he is the author and giver of life (1:3,4)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

3,5      *God loves people in particular.*

6      *God has ‘a time’.*

33      *God is emotional.*

43      *God’s Word brings life.*

b) His grace

43,44      *Lazarus was dead when raised to life – he could ‘do’ nothing.*

c) Jesus / His salvation.

27 *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world*

33 *Jesus is compassionate and sympathetic*

44b *Jesus commands freedom and life.*

**Now underline the application of the Main Point**

2) What should I do?

6 *Trust his wisdom / timing.*

16 *Note - Loyalty to God, though commendable, is not enough.*

21,22 *Lay humanly intractable situations before God.*

27 *Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*

38 *Commit to the will of God, like Jesus, whatever the cost.*

43 *Obey his word and be raised!*

**Now underline the application of the Main Point**

# Sharing the Word

## Use

**'Hearing the Word'** can be used alone, with another, or in a group.

## Preparation

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE. \*

Write down your own questions and answers.

(With good preparation and discipline in the time together, the study may be conducted in as little as 45 mins!)

## Format

- a. LOOK - Any questions? (If answer is known or not!) Relevant cross references in rest of the Bible?
- b. LEARN - Answers to questions?
- c. LISTEN - Key verse and Main Point?
- d. LIVE - What does it show about God /His grace/ Jesus? What should I do

**n.b.** Leave plenty of time for the LIVE section!

By also eating together and a time of prayer, you will have shared something of the life of the early church! (Acts 2:42-47)

## Remember!

As we gather round God's Word -

- a) Listen to the views of others.
- b) Make room for the novice. (They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'.)
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others, especially 'seekers', in your time together.

\* The **process** is explained and practiced in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**

<https://hearingtheword.org.uk>

## ***“I can read the Bible for myself!”***

To show that the Bible is accessible to all,  
the Rev Nigel Barge, former minister of Torrance Parish Church,  
has devised a tool called ‘Hearing the Word’.

The Manual explains the basic principles of Bible reading,  
teaches them by means of an interactive course,  
and practices them on a single passage, Mark 10:35-45,  
Participants follow in a Workbook: *Hearing the Word - Introduction*,  
which includes the next six passages in Mark,  
so they may follow on for themselves.

As the principles apply equally to all, the course will both  
instruct the novice and refresh the ‘hardened’ Bible student!