Study Plan

1 ~~Is the Bible Trustworthy?~~
2 ~~Did God Really Create the World?~~
3 ~~If God is good, why does suffering exist?~~
4 ~~Why is evil so widespread and powerful?~~
5 ~~Why is Israel so important?~~
6 ~~Who is God?~~
7 ~~What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments?~~
8 ~~What does it mean to "take a step of faith"?~~
9 ~~How do the Old and New Testaments fit together?~~
10 ~~Why did Jesus perform miracles?~~
11 What did Jesus really say?
12 Is death the end (or the beginning)?

Who is Jesus?

What did He say?

God speaks…

Last Time : The Power of Jesus

- Power to heal
- Power over nature
- Power over demons
- Power to rebuild a body
- Power to create
- Power over death
- Power to forgive sin
- **The Power of God**

"Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." **John 20:30-31**

We only looked at a sampling of the miracles of Jesus, but it should quickly become obvious that Jesus is not just a man – He is God in the flesh (Immanuel). Especially when we see the power to forgive sin!

And as I mentioned the last time, Jesus didn't just do miracles to impress His audience – He did them to prove that His words were true.

But is it true…?

- Jesus had powerful enemies
  - Bad news – they didn't listen to Him
  - Good news – they tried to prove He was a fake, but were not able to do it
  - This "test" helps us know that Jesus' miracles are true
- Why did He do these things? What was His important message?
- We need to see His works *AND* hear His words…

Children and adults enjoy make-believe stories. These are interesting and fun to read, but when we talk about eternity, we **need** to have the **truth**, not make-believe. Something to remember about these stories: Jesus had very powerful enemies, people who tried very hard to discredit his mighty works. If Jesus was a fake, they would have quickly found out and told the world. But as you read the Bible (and other writings of those days), you will never find proof that His works were fraudulent.

Amazing works were necessary because He would also make some amazing claims! What were some of the things that Jesus claimed to be true about Himself?

Who is Jesus?

"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

"The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" John 1:29

"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.'" John 6:35

- He is the light of the World
- He is the Lamb of God
- He is the bread from heaven
- Our response: **Believe and Follow**

Remembering some of the stories from the Old Testament, you will begin to see some very interesting connections developing – it slowly becomes clear how the entire Bible fits together.

At the beginning of creation, God spoke "Let there be light." And when Jesus began preaching, He claimed that He was the light.

Every year, the Jews would remember their Exodus from Egypt by celebrating the Passover – a time where they would kill a lamb and paint its blood on their doorposts to deliver them from death, covering their sins. And when Jesus begins His ministry, John the Baptist points to Him and says that He is THE lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (not just covers them).

	And when the people of Israel were starving in the wilderness, God sent them bread every day, "manna." And when the people ask Jesus to do the same thing, He boldly says that He is the bread from heaven. As He claims these truths about Himself, He also tells us what to do with them: believe and follow Him.
I am the Door and the Good Shepherd "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters." Psalm 23:1,2 • The Lord is my Shepherd "So Jesus again said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep…I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.'" John 10:7-9 • Jesus is the door for the sheep "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." John 10:11,14,15 • Jesus is the good shepherd who dies for His sheep • Our response: **Enter through Him**	The Old Testament often talked about the Lord God being the shepherd of His people (e.g. Psalm 23). An amazing fact of the New Testament is Jesus' claim to be THE good shepherd – the same one spoken of in the Old Testament. Since the Old Testament talks about God being the good shepherd and Jesus says that He is the good shepherd, He is obviously claiming to be God. (Remember – the OT often referred to the spiritual and political leaders of Israel as wicked shepherds that did not take care of the people: Jeremiah10:21; 23:11-2; Ezekiel 34:2-4) In those days, a shepherd would build a "sheepfold," – a circular wall by stacking stones, leaving an entrance open for the sheep to enter and exit. During the night, the shepherd slept in the opening where the sheep to protect his sheep from thieves or predators that would try to enter and harm the sheep. Basically, the shepherd was the door to the sheepfold and anyone or anything entering had to go through Him. Jesus also makes a very serious claim about His own self-sacrifice, stating that someday, He would die for His sheep.
I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (太初有道，道与 神同在，道就是 神。) John 1:1 • "The Word" (**道**) was in the beginning, was with God, and was God "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14 • God became a man (Jesus) "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" (耶稣对他说：“我就是道路、真理、生命，如果不是藉着我，没有人能到父那里去。”) John 14:6 • Jesus is the Way (**道路**), the Truth, and the Life • Jesus is the only way to the Father "If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." John 14:7 • If you know Jesus, you know the Father • Our response: **Know Him**	In John 1:1, we read about "the Word" (Gk. Logos). By using the definite article and capitalizing, it means much more than just a spoken word – it describes the powerful Word of God (e.g. pre-incarnate Anointed One). The Chinese translation (道 dào) carries the broader meaning of "the Way," the ultimate, nameless, and formless origin of the universe. 太初 有 道，道 与 神 同在，道 就是 神。 John 1:1 Tàichū yǒu dào, dào yǔ shén tóng zài, dào jiùshì shén. In verse 14, we see that "the Word" became a human being and lived among us – Immanuel – "God with us," just as prophesied in Isaiah. Later, In John 14, as Jesus speaks to His apostles on the night before He was crucified, He made some very bold claims: - He doesn't just show us the Way to God, He is the Way - He doesn't just speak the truth, He is the Truth - He doesn't just give life, He is the Life John 14:6 耶稣 对 他 说：Yēsū duì tā shuō: “我 就是 道路、真理、 生命， 如果 不是 藉着 我，没有 人 能 到 父 那里 去。 “Wǒ jiùshì dàolù, zhēnlǐ, shēngmìng, rúguǒ bùshì jízhe wǒ, méiyǒu rén néng dào fù nàlǐ qù. I am the* way truth life if not thru me no person can go father where to *就 (precisely) 是 (am) And in verse 7, He makes a very bold claim: if you know Jesus, you know God the Father!

I am the Resurrection, Life, Vine, and Source of Living Water

"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:1,5

"Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.'" John 7:37,38

- Jesus will conquer death and bring eternal life
- Jesus is the Vine and the Father is the gardener: the only way to live a fruitful life
- Jesus is the source of living water – satisfying thirsty souls
- Our response: **Believe and Remain**

If you remember the story of Lazarus' resurrection last week, just before Jesus brought him back to life, He spoke these words to his sister Mary: "I am the resurrection and the life."

And since Jesus is the source of life, He is the vine to which His followers connect to draw nourishment and produce good fruit.

During the annual Jewish feast of booths, Jesus stood up and with a loud voice, called anyone who was thirsty (spiritually) to come to Him. From Him and through us, His living word can flow freely to others.

I Am

"God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." Exodus 3:14

"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" John 8:56-58

"I and the Father are one." John 10:30

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to Him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I Am He," Jesus said. When Jesus said, "I Am He," they drew back and fell to the ground. John 18:4-6

- The name of God: I Am
- Before Abraham was born, Jesus existed as "I Am."
- Jesus is one with the Father
- "I Am" – All fall to the ground
- Correct Response: **Worship**

When Moses first met with God in the wilderness, he asked God His name. God gave him this very important name: "I AM," expressing His eternal self-existence. In Hebrew, the consonants for this name are YHWH, which we pronounce as "Yahweh." This name was considered too sacred by the Jewish leaders to be spoken.

But when Jesus spoke about Himself, He actually said it, shocking the Jews. And for Him to say that He was alive before Abraham was born in 8:58, He was clearly calling Himself God.

After a long debate with the Jewish leaders in John 10, Jesus makes it perfectly clear that He and the Father are One. They understood what He was saying, because they immediately took up stones in the following verses (31-33) to kill Him for claiming to be God.

On the night of His betrayal, the large group of soldiers come to the Garden of Gethsemane seeking Jesus. His power over them was clear when He said, "I Am" and they all fell to the ground. They did not take Him by force – He gave Himself up to them.

Their **wrong response** was to reject his claim of Deity and to collapse under His power. But the **correct response** in the presence of God should be to willingly fall down in worship.

Who is Jesus?

- He is the Light of the World
- He is the Lamb of God
- He is the Bread of life
- He is the Good Shepherd
- He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life
- He is the Resurrection and the Life
- He is the Vine
- He is the Source of Living Water
- He is "**I Am**"

So, in just these few verses, we can see that Jesus made very bold claims about His identity. That is why His miracles were so important. If anyone else claimed to be God, we would assume that they were either crazy or a liar. But when you combine Jesus' words and works, you are only left with one logical possibility: He was who He claimed to be.

The Amazing Love of God

- The God of the Bible is **not** a "gentle grandfather"
- "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished;" Exodus 34:6,7

Why is this so important?

When people make up their own mental image of God, we usually fall very short of the reality. We want God to be like a "gentle grandfather" who gives us whatever we want and turns his head when we disobey. We bring god down to our level so that we can do whatever pleases us.

But the true God of the Bible is not like this. His grace and mercy was greater than we can ever imagine, but He is also perfectly just and cannot leave our guilt unpunished. He cannot turn His head away from our sin (and our sin is very great).

The Amazing Love of God • The God of the Bible is **not** a "gentle grandfather" • **Exodus 34:6,7** – God is **loving** and **forgiving**, but He is **just** and must punish sin "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16	With that in mind, look at John 3:16, one of the most famous verses in the Bible. Think about God's holiness and justice and think about the words in the verse: "so loved," "He gave," "whoever believes," and "not perish."
The Amazing Love of God • The God of the Bible is **not** a "gentle grandfather" • **Exodus 34:6,7** – God is **loving** and **forgiving**, but He is **just** and must punish sin • To understand **God's amazing love** (**John 3:16**), we must see **His holiness and justice** • Just like God called out to Adam in the garden, **He sent Jesus to die for us** and bring us back to Himself • Believe. Not just to know the facts, but **understand** our serious sin problem **and trust** in His sacrifice for us.	Until you understand the perfect holiness and justice of God, you will never understand the amazing love of God. Remember when God "came down" and called out to Adam in the garden? Even though God knew Adam had sinned and deserved to die, He mercifully came down and offered him the opportunity to repent and come back to Him. But there was still a price for Adam's sin. Throughout this lesson, you heard Jesus tell people to "believe." In the Bible, this doesn't just mean to know something – it means to understand the depth of our need and place our trust in God's solution.
Our great problems – His great solution • Remember: sin causes death and breaking the law requires punishment. Our two problems are so great that **God became a man** to solve them. "They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise." **Mark 10:32-34**	Never forget that we all have two great problems – too big for any human religion to solve. Only God can solve these problems, so it is absolutely essential that we understand what He has done and how we must respond. And as I mentioned earlier, no one had the power to take Jesus and kill Him. He knew the plan and submitted to the Father's will, even though He knew the unimaginable suffering that lay ahead…
Our great problems – His great solution • Remember: sin causes death and breaking the law requires punishment. Our two problems are so great that **God became a man** to solve them. • **Mark 10:32-34** – Jesus didn't just come to be the king of a small Jewish nation. He came for a much more important purpose, one with a very high price.	While the Jewish leaders and His apostles were expecting a Messiah that would conquer the Romans and restore a glorious kingdom to Israel, Jesus came for a much bigger purpose – to save the world. But He knew that the price He paid would be very, very high…