

# FOLLOWING THE PATH OF JESUS

## A Harmony Of the Gospels

A Daily Devotional Study Guide - Book 1



## *“The Great Redeemer”*

**Study:** Luke 2:33-38

**Reading:** I Peter 2:1-25

**Memory:** Psalm 51:0

**W**hen I was traveling up to college after winter break, it was snowing pretty hard and I was driving a little too fast. I ended up spinning on the highway and going into the center median. I was stuck in the deep snow in the median with no chance of digging myself out. As I got out of the car and the reality of the situation was setting in, a man with a pickup truck pulled off to the side of the highway where I was. He offered to pull me out for free and within minutes I was back on the road again.

Today, we are going to see how Jesus was sent to be the Redeemer of Israel. Just as I was trapped in the snow with no way to help myself out, all of the world was trapped in sin with no way to deliver themselves. The only way out was through the redemption that Jesus provided.

### What Does the Bible Say?

Mary and Joseph were amazed that Simeon knew who Jesus was and marveled at the things he said about Jesus. While they were thinking about these things, Simeon turned to them and started to talk to Mary about what was going to happen to Jesus. He described how Jesus would lead to the rise and fall of many in the nation of Israel. This described how Jesus would not be liked by everyone in Israel, but would be hated by many. This rejection of Jesus would bring great sorrow in the heart of Mary as she would witness the horrendous treatment with which they treated her son. Though He was going to be the Savior and Light to all men, this salvation would come at a cost and we know that it cost Jesus His life. Peter described this later on in I Peter 2:6-8 as he described how Jesus was a stumbling block to those who did not believe, but that He was extremely precious to those who understood the plan of God (vs 33-35).

There was also a prophetess in the temple area who was around 84 years of age and had spent many of the last years of her life serving and worshiping in the temple area. She was so devout that she is described as not leaving the temple area, but staying there day and night, spending time in prayer and fasting. We are not given any further details about this, but

with the outer court of the temple being so large, it is pretty clear that there would have been living quarters on the temple grounds and for some reason she was allowed to live in them. The emphasis is not on the details, but her faithfulness to God and desire to see the redemption of Israel. When she saw Jesus in the temple area, she knew He was the One that God sent to redeem Israel and she began to give thanks to God for the child and excitedly told others she knew that their Redeemer had come. The picture of a redeemer was very clear in the Old Testament and pictured someone who was stuck in debt, had been an outcast, or was in great trouble (normally financial trouble) with no way out. They would be destined to either poverty, jail time, or servitude for their debt unless another would step in and redeem them from their debt. Normally, it was the responsibility of a relative to become a redeemer. Anna's prophecy pictured a nation trapped in sin and despair with no hope, waiting for a redeemer to pay the price for them so that they could be set free (vs 36-38).

### **How Does this Apply to Me?**

Do you get discouraged when you share Christ with others and they reject you? Does it upset you when people treat your God with disdain? Though it does hurt, God knew this would happen before Christ was born. Anna predicted that many would be offended by Jesus because they wouldn't want to believe, though many would also believe. When you share Christ with others, realize that He might be offensive to some, but this should not stop you from sharing Him with others.

Do you realize how great your redemption is? Understanding your hopeless situation without Christ will cause you to be thrilled as you think of His great deliverance. When you trust in Jesus as your Redeemer, you are not just adding Christ to your good life, but you are admitting you can never be good enough on your own. You need a Redeemer. This redemption didn't only relieve you of your sin debt, but also brought you into God's family and allowed you to become His child.

### **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Thank God for being your Redeemer.*
- \* *Ask God to help you live in full thankfulness for His redemption.*
- \* *Praise God because He made a way for you to be redeemed.*

Where had Joseph and Mary taken Jesus (vs 22)?

What happened while He was there (vs 23-32)?

How did Mary and Joseph respond to all that was said about Jesus (vs 33)?

Why do you think that Simeon directed the next words to Mary (vs 34)?

What did Simeon say Jesus would become (vs 34)?

How was Jesus going to lead to the fall of many in Israel (vs 34)?

How was Jesus going to lead to the rise of many in Israel (vs 34)?

What was going to happen to Jesus (vs 35)?

How would this hurt Mary (vs 35)?

What was the death of Jesus going to reveal (vs 35)?

What do you think the end of verse 35 meant?

How is Anna described (vs 36)?

*\*\*\*A prophetess was a woman who spoke the Word of God. Just as Simeon, she knew the Word of God and would have been waiting for the fulfillment of His Word with the coming of the Messiah.*

Why do you think Luke took time to describe Anna and her situation in life (vs 36)?

What did she do with her time (vs 37)?

How do you think this helped her have insight into who Jesus was?

What did she do when she realized Jesus was in the temple (vs 38)?

How did she respond when she saw Jesus (vs 38)? Why do you think she was so excited to spread the word?

# *“The Visit of the Magi”*

**Study:** Matthew 2:1-11

**Reading:** Daniel 9:1-26, Micah 5:1-15

**Memory:** Psalm 51:0

## What Does the Bible Say?

After the birth of Jesus there was a group of men who came to Jerusalem searching for the new born king. It is not completely clear who these men were, but the Greek word used to describe them is “magi” from which we get our modern word “magician.” These men were not kings, but were most likely astrologers who studied the stars. They came from the east, probably the region of Persia and the best possible explanation for them knowing about the king of the Jews is found from reading the book of Daniel. Most likely, when Daniel was in Persia, he greatly influenced the magi of that day. This information passed down and when Jesus was born, there appeared a unique star that was a clear mark that the king of the Jews had been born. We are not sure of the exact time line for these events, but most likely, the star appeared the day that Jesus was born, and shortly after that the travelers from the east set out to worship the king (vs 1-2).

This news greatly troubled Herod. Herod the Great was at a point in his life where he was fearful of everyone, thinking they would kill him and take his throne. He even had a few of his own children and wife killed because he feared that they were conspiring against him. This news not only troubled the king, but all of Jerusalem because they feared what might happen if Herod became angry or thought his subjects would turn against him (vs 3).

Herod immediately began researching what the magi had said by calling in the Jewish scribes and asking them to search the Old Testament prophecies for more information about this. They told Herod that it was predicted that a king would be born in the city of Bethlehem, according to the writings of the prophet Micah (vs 4-6).

Without letting too many people know, Herod called for the wise men and asked them when the star had appeared. He was attempting to know how old this child might be so he could know who he was looking for in his attempt to kill the new king. Once he found out that information, he told them to find the king and then report back to him on where the king was. Most likely, if Herod went looking for Jesus, very few people would tell

him since he was not well liked by the common Jew (vs 7-8).

After the magi left Herod, the star appeared again and led them to the place where Jesus was staying. How exactly this happened is unclear. From what the Scripture says, it appears that the star first appeared before the magi began to travel and then at some time it disappeared. This is why they went to Jerusalem and not immediately to Bethlehem. Miraculously, the star appeared again and the only explanation is that this was all part of God’s plan to fulfill prophecy. This star led them right to the house where Jesus was. Jesus was no longer a baby in the manger, but was a little child, probably between one and two years of age, though he could have been younger. Why Joseph and Mary stayed in Bethlehem is not clear, but perhaps Joseph found some work there and decided to stay for a while (vs 9-10).

When they saw Jesus, they knelt down and worshiped Him and offered Him great gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These items were all very valuable and costly items and would have enabled Mary and Joseph to have the money needed for the difficult travels ahead of them. They also revealed that Jesus was no ordinary boy because even gentiles from miles away knew that He was something special (vs 11).

## How Does this Apply to Me?

The visit of the magi to Jesus reveals a few wonderful things for you to learn from. First, it is another reminder that Jesus did not just come for the Jews, but came for all men. He was not just going to be the King of the Jews, but was going to be the King of the world. This can remind you how one day every knee will bow before Him and confess that He truly is God.

Another lesson is that God fulfills His Word and does it in marvelous fashion. It was predicted that the Messiah would come and even people hundreds of miles away knew about His coming. God has the ability to work in many miraculous and marvelous ways in your life today, just as He did around the birth of Christ. He orchestrated events that happened to bring the magi to Jesus. He can work out things in your life for your good.

One more lesson comes from the gifts that were given to Jesus. They did not give Him cheap gifts, but gave him gifts of great value. This reveals to us how when we give to God, we shouldn’t give him the left overs, but give Him what is very valuable to us. Both the Old and New Testaments describe how our offerings to God should be the first and best of what we have. It is interesting to note that these valuable items would have helped Joseph and Mary as they fled down to Egypt.

Who was king of the Jews when Jesus was born (vs 1)?

Who came to find Jesus (vs 1)?

Why do you think they were looking for the “King of the Jews” (vs 2)?

What was a clear sign to these men (vs 2)?

How do you think they knew about the birth of the King?

How did Herod react to the news (vs 3)?

Why do you think Herod’s trouble became trouble in all of Jerusalem (vs 3)?

What did Herod do to find out more information (vs 4)?

What did the priests and scribes reveal (vs 5)?

How did they know this (vs 5-6)?

What was clear about Old Testament prophecy (vs 6)?

What was the ruler going to do (vs 6)?

What did Herod want to know (vs 7)?

Why do you think he did this secretly?

Where did Herod send the wise men (vs 8)? What did he tell them to do? Why?

How were they able to find Jesus (vs 9)?

Why do you think they reacted with great joy (vs 10)?

What did they do when they saw Jesus (vs 11)?

Why do you think they gave Jesus such valuable treasures (vs 11)?

## “*Complete Control*”

**Study:** Matthew 2:12-23

**Reading:** I John 5:13-21, Job 1:1-22

**Memory:** Psalm 51:0

### What Does the Bible Say?

Though God did allow Herod to find out about Jesus, He wasn’t going to let Herod do any harm to His Son. Part of the way that God protected Jesus was by warning the magi not to go back and report to Herod. They listened to the warning in the dreams they received and headed home without telling Herod. It is interesting to note that God could have revealed this dream to all of the magi and not just one of them (vs 12).

God also protected Jesus by warning Joseph in a dream. He told Joseph that Herod was out to bring harm to Jesus and that he needed to take Jesus and Mary down to Egypt to avoid the wrath of Herod. God’s provision for this can be seen in the gifts that were provided by the wise men which would allow them to live in Egypt for a short while and pay for their stay. Joseph immediately responded to God by gathering his family up and leaving under the cover of darkness. Though it doesn’t explicitly say, it appears that this was the same night that Joseph had the dream. They traveled to Egypt and were to remain there until God told them it was safe to come back home. Where exactly they went in Egypt is not clear in Scripture, though church tradition lists multiple places where Jesus stayed while in Egypt. There are even remnants of a 1<sup>st</sup> century church that could have been built in one of the locations where Jesus stayed, though this can not be proven with any certainty. What we do know is that this was planned by God because it was predicted in Hosea 11:1. Once again we see the miraculous timing and working of God surrounding the birth of His Son (vs 13-15).

It didn’t take too long for Herod to realize that he had been tricked by the magi. This infuriated Herod and he gave an order that all of the baby boys who lived in Bethlehem and were under the age of two be put to death. The age of two gives us a little more understanding of the events surrounding the wise men, though there are still many questions. We know that it was less than two years since they had first seen the star that revealed that Jesus was born. Most likely, Herod over estimated the age of Jesus to make sure he killed Him. Also, we are not sure if the star appeared before,

after, or on the very day Jesus was born (vs 16-17).

Herod's choice to kill all the babies was not a surprise to God. He knew it was going to happen because He predicted through Jeremiah (31:15) that it would take place. This prophecy was first given to describe the awful events of the captivity by the Babylonians, but was also fulfilled in the great weeping of Bethlehem for their children. The reason Rachel was mentioned is because it was near Bethlehem where Rachel, the wife of Jacob and mother of Joseph and Benjamin, died. Her tomb was located around that region and it was a well known spot (vs 18).

Joseph kept his family down in Egypt until Herod the Great died. God then revealed to Joseph that he could move back up to Israel. We are not sure how long they were down there, but most likely he was there a year or two before God said it was safe to return. Joseph did not want to go back to Bethlehem because he was afraid of Herod's son, Archelaus. Since he thought about going to Bethlehem, this seems to indicate that either he was from there or had established residence there before traveling to Egypt. Instead of going to Bethlehem, he chose to take Jesus and Mary back to her hometown of Nazareth. When Herod the Great died, the kingdom was divided three different ways among three of his different sons. Herod Antipas ruled over the area around the Sea of Galilee and he must have been a much milder personality than Archelaus (vs 19-22).

Verse 23 is an interesting verse because Matthew describes the move to Nazareth as a fulfillment of prophecy, but nowhere in our prophetic books do we have a reference to Nazareth. It is highly possible that there were prophetic books that God did not preserve for us today, but many commentators think the reference to a Nazarene was a term to describe how Jesus would live in an insignificant place. The Old Testament did refer to the Messiah being a "branch" and the Hebrew word used is similar to that of a Nazarene. These are thoughts, but we don't have an exact answer for this (vs 23).

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

Do you realize God's great protecting power in your life? 1 John 5:18 says, "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him." Scripture gives multiple examples and multiple verses that tell you that as God's child you are under His protection and care, just as Jesus was. This means you don't have to worry or fear because God is in complete control.

How did God protect Jesus (vs 12)?

How else did God protect Jesus (vs 13)?

Why do you think God directed them to Egypt (vs 13-15)?

Why do you think it was urgent that they left right away (vs 14)?

How long were they in Egypt (vs 15)?

What did Herod do when He realized the wise men left without telling him where the child was?

*\*\*\*Bethlehem was only around 5 miles from Jerusalem so it would not take Herod long to know the magi had left.*

How were the actions of Herod a fulfillment of prophecy (vs 17-18)?

What did God do when Herod the Great died (vs 19-20)?

Where does it appear that Joseph wanted to go first (vs 21-22)?

What two factors led Joseph to go back to Nazareth (vs 22)?

- 1.
- 2.

Why do you think that Joseph was afraid of Herod's son who was reigning in Judea but not of Herod's son who was reigning over Nazareth?

*\*\*\*There could be several factors, but one was that Judea was much more of a hot bed of political rebellion among the Jews. Those who ruled over that region faced many more threats to their sovereignty than those who ruled over the region of Galilee.*

Why do you think they chose Nazareth?

How was God using all of these events to help fulfill His Word?

What can you learn about God from this passage?

# *“In Favor With God & Man”*

**Study:** Luke 2:39-52

**Reading:** Mark 6:1-6, Hebrews 4:14-16

**Memory:** Psalm 51:0

## What Does the Bible Say?

Luke skipped over the story about the wise men, while Matthew had skipped over the story about the shepherds. Luke just stated that Mary and Joseph moved back to Nazareth and that they had followed the Law and performed the ceremonial acts after the birth of Jesus. He then related how Jesus grew and was filled with wisdom. This wisdom revealed that God’s favor was upon Him and allowed Jesus to be well liked by many. Though He was perfect and did not sin even as a child, from the reaction of His brothers and those who knew Him growing up (Mark 6:3), Jesus was not that much different than an ordinary child. He didn’t walk around with a glow about Him, nor did He avoid work or learning a trade. He would have pretty much fit in with everyone else doing the daily tasks and playing, just like every other child (vs 39-40).

With that being said, there was some indication that He was different and we see that with the only event recorded about the young life of Jesus. Jesus went with Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast. He was 12 years of age, which was the common age for children to attend their first Passover celebration in Jerusalem. When the feast ended, Mary and Joseph headed back to Nazareth, but Jesus was not with them. Many of the children in those days matured a little faster than children today because of the chores and responsibilities that were placed on them. Jesus must have been told by his parents when they were leaving and they assumed he was part of the caravan that was headed back to Nazareth. Since all males were required to travel to Jerusalem for this feast, pretty much every family from Nazareth would have traveled at about the same time and it would have been very natural for them to travel together in a large group. They traveled for a whole day and didn’t see Jesus, but since Jesus never got into trouble, I am sure they thought very little about it. When they settled for the night they expected Jesus to find them and when He didn’t, they began to worry and traveled back to Jerusalem to find Him (vs 41-45).

Luke says they found Jesus after three days and this probably includes

the day they left, the day it took to get back to Jerusalem, and a day to find Jesus. When they found Him, He was in the temple sitting among the teachers and asking them questions. When the New Testament makes reference to the temple, it is often not referring to the actual temple itself, but the whole complex. The temple complex that Herod the Great built was massive and surrounded by corridors. Teachers would often sit in the shade of these corridors and talk about the Law and its application to their lives. The teachers were amazed that such a young boy could have such knowledge of the Scripture (vs 46-47).

Mary and Joseph were relieved to find Jesus, but a little upset that He did not go with them. Mary questioned Jesus about His choice not to travel when they did, and He simply responded by telling them that it should have been obvious where He would be. This was most likely His first time in Jerusalem and He wanted to spend much of the time in “His Father’s House.” From early on, Jesus was declaring that He was the Christ, and, though His parents knew He was special, neither they nor the religious leaders around them fully understood what He was talking about. Jesus traveled back to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph and as Mary pondered on what she has witnessed. Her panic was soon replaced with joy as she began to realize what had just been taking place and how Jesus truly was the Messiah. Jesus continued to grow in wisdom and understanding and was well liked by many (vs 48-52).

As a side note, when it says they traveled “down” from Jerusalem, it doesn’t mean they went south as we would travel “down south” today. Nazareth was actually “up north” but it is described as down because it is at a lower elevation. No matter what direction people were coming from, they were always traveling “up to” Jerusalem or “down from” it.

## How Does this Apply to Me?

Hebrews 4:15 says, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” This describes how Jesus understands what you are going through because He was human just like you. Even as a child, He was not that much different than you were. He lived a normal, ordinary life with no special treatment or miraculous powers to do what he wanted. He did chores, ate, slept and acted just like everyone else in those days and lived similar to the way that you live today, yet without sin. He did this so He could say He understands what you are going through and you can rejoice that He understands.

Why do you think Luke says that they performed everything according to the Law (vs 39)?

Where does Luke place Jesus next (vs 39)?

What happened to Jesus while He was in Nazareth (vs 40)?

How do you think it was clear that the favor of God was on Him (vs 40)?

What did Joseph and Mary do every year (vs 41)?

*\*\*\*It should be noted that Joseph and Mary were faithful to the Old Testament Scriptures in their actions. This did not make them better than others, but it can remind us how God often uses those who faithfully live in obedience to Him to accomplish the special tasks that He needs done.*

How old was Jesus when He went to Jerusalem (vs 12)?

*\*\*\*It is not clear if this was His first trip or not, but most likely it was.*

What did Jesus do when His family left for Nazareth (vs 43)?

How come his parents didn't notice He was gone (vs 44)?

What did they do when they couldn't find Jesus (vs 45)?

Where did they find Jesus (vs 46)?

How did the people respond to what Jesus was saying (vs 47)?

How did Mary respond when she found Jesus (vs 48)? What does this reveal about how ordinary Mary and Jesus were?

What did Jesus declare (vs 49)?

Why do you think they didn't understand what Jesus was saying (vs 50)?

What attitude did Jesus present towards His earthly parents (vs 51)?

What statement was given about Jesus (vs 52)?

## *“Preparing the Way”*

**Study:** Matthew 3:1-6, Mark 1:1-6, Luke 3:1-6

**Reading:** Malachi 3:1-5, Isaiah 40:1-5

**Memory:** Psalm 51:0



Judean Wilderness with Jericho and the Jordan River Valley

### **What Does the Bible Say?**

After the visit to the temple, nothing else is mentioned about the life of Jesus until He was around thirty years of age. The attention shifted from the childhood of Jesus to the ministry of John the Baptist. Though we are given some details, finding an exact date is difficult since Tiberius Caesar co-reigned for a period of time so we don't know exactly what the 15<sup>th</sup> year is referring to. We do know that this was somewhere in the mid to late 20's A.D. (Luke 3:1-2)

When the Angel appeared to Zacharias in the temple, he made it clear that his son John was to be the prophet that came before the Messiah. Matthew, Mark and Luke all explicitly state that John was the fulfillment of the prophecy given in Isaiah (40:3). This prophecy was also given in Malachi 3:1 and described how John would be a voice in the wilderness that would help prepare the hearts of the people for the Messiah to come.

This clearly indicated the great significance of the ministry of John the Baptist and how he would help turn the hearts of many towards God (Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:2-3, Luke 3:4-6).

This John is called John the Baptist because he emphasized the need for the people to be baptized. Baptism was not his main focus though because it was just an outward symbol of inward repentance. Being baptized was a symbol of cleansing and purity. Baptism had been practiced by the Jews dating back to their time in captivity so the idea of baptism was not new, but the emphasis that John placed on repentance was significant.

John spent much of his time in the Judean wilderness preaching and proclaiming the good news that the Messiah was coming. The Judean wilderness is not what you would picture as a wilderness in America. We often picture a large, dense forest that stretches for miles and miles, but the Judean wilderness was barren and dry. The wilderness was not always a deserted place because many travelers would pass through parts of it because the Jordan river went through some of this wilderness. It was at the Jordan river that John would baptize people after they chose to repent.

John dressed in a unique way by wearing clothes made of camel's skins and having a diet consisting of locust and wild honey. This is similar to the prophet Elijah (II Kings 1:8) and presented an idea contrary to the religious leaders of those days who focused on wealth and prosperity. John was not ministering for material gain, but had a much greater purpose. The difference between John and the spiritual leaders was very attractive to the people of Israel and many would make the trip from Jerusalem and other villages out to the wilderness to see John. From Jerusalem to the Jordan river was about 17 miles, which would be about a days walk. Many people who made this trip would come back and tell others what they had seen and heard which would cause more people to travel and hear what John had to say (Matthew 3:5-6, Mark 1:4-6).

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

Do you realize the importance of the Message of John the Baptist? His message was not baptism but was repentance. He wanted the people to see their sin, their need to turn from their sin and to have a desire to turn to God. This is one of the major themes of the Bible and certainly the theme of the New Testament. Understanding this should challenge you to live in a way that involves more than just outward religion. Being a follower of Christ involves humility and continual repentance as you submit to Him as your Lord.

## **Mark 1:1-6**

What did Mark declare about who Jesus was (vs 1)?

What do you think the “gospel” means in the context of verse 1?

What does Mark emphasize in the beginning of verse 2?

What did Mark declare about John being a messenger (vs 2)?

What was John crying in the wilderness (vs 3)?

Where did John proclaim his message (vs 4)?

What message was being proclaimed (vs 4)?

How popular was John becoming (vs 5)?

How was John dressed and what did he eat (vs 6)?

Why do you think he did this?

## **Matthew 3:1-6**

What was the main message that John preached (vs 2)?

What do you think the people needed to repent of?

What did Matthew say of John (vs 3)?

What were the people who came to John doing (vs 6)?

## **Luke 3:1-6**

What date did Luke give for the beginning of the ministry of John (vs 1)?

Why do you think that Luke listed all the rulers who were ruling during the time that John began his ministry?

*\*\*\*It should be remembered that Luke was writing to a Roman leader who would have been familiar with the Roman history of the area. This also was given to help give credibility that these were actual events.*

# “Grace upon Grace”

**Study:** John 1:6-18

**Reading:** II Corinthians 6:11-18, Hebrews 2:10-18

**Memory:** I John 4:7-8

Over the years I have visited several missionaries that were supported by the churches I pastored and sometimes I was able to bring members of the church with me. Almost every time I have brought member of the congregation, one of them made this comment—“missionaries are just ordinary people.” Those who visit missionaries realize they are not different, strange or even super spiritual. They are men and women who have the same struggles, thoughts, goals, hurts, visions and desires that we have.

Today, we are going to see that Jesus came in the flesh to be one of us. Just as visiting our missionaries helps church members gain an understanding of the life of a missionary, Jesus came in the flesh to give us a greater understanding of who God is. Jesus helped all men see that God was not just a God in the distance but a God who greatly cares for His own. A God who cared enough to become flesh so that we might have life.

## What Does the Bible Say?

The apostle John described how there was another man named John who had the great responsibility of declaring that Jesus Christ was the true light of the world. John the Baptist was not the light, but had come to declare that the light had come. His purpose was to help people believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah who would bring hope to the whole world (vs 6-9)

Jesus, who had helped make the world, had now come to be in the world, but most of the world did not recognize who Jesus was. He came to the Jews, God’s chosen people, but many of His own, including those who grew up with Him, did not realize that He was the Christ, and many rejected Him. Though many rejected, those who chose to receive Him were given the power to become the sons of God. Those who chose and are choosing today to believe on His name will find themselves as heirs of God, which means that they will have God on their side now and for all eternity. These sons are not physical sons, but spiritual sons who have been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit and made to be the children of

God (vs 10-13).

The Word of God became flesh. All that God had spoken and the promises He had given were much more than just talk, but they were now able to be seen in real life. The great glory of God and His glorious plan of salvation was now being made real so that people could see who God was and see His great power and glory in action. John the Baptist bore witness that Jesus was God in the flesh when he declared that Jesus would come after him physically, but spiritually He was before him (vs 14-15).

As a result of Jesus coming in the flesh, all those who believe in Him and trust in His name will find “grace upon grace.” This is a significant term that describes how God’s grace will never run out. He just keeps pouring out His grace upon your life and chooses to love you in spite of who you are or what you have done. Moses had come to give them the Law which revealed to them their sin, but Jesus had come to give grace which sets men free from their sin. Though no one has ever seen God, Jesus in the flesh gave the world an example of who God was and allowed them to see a portion of the wisdom, grace, mercy and love of the Creator (vs 16-18).

## How Does this Apply to Me?

It is very significant that Jesus is called the “Word.” God did not just talk about how He would help men or who He was, but He revealed Himself to us by living in a human body on this earth. The fact that God would humble himself to walk among us is often overlooked, but He did it to display Himself to the World. You have the ability to know what God is like by realizing what Jesus was like. Your responsibility is to receive Him and embrace Him. This is not just at the moment of salvation, but in everyday life. He came to bring you more than just eternity in Heaven. He came to bring you hope on this earth as He pours out His grace in your life. A simple definition of grace is “undeserved favor.” Though grace is so much more than this, the simple idea of God choosing to shower you with His grace should amaze you and thrill you.

## Suggestions for Prayer

- \* *Thank God for pouring out His grace upon your life.*
- \* *Ask God to help you understand more about His grace.*
- \* *Praise God because He has the power to make you His child.*

What did John state about the ministry of John the Baptist (vs 6)?

Why did John come (vs 7)?

What did John (the writer) make clear (vs 8)?

What was going to be coming into the world after John the Baptist (vs 9)?

What did John make clear about Jesus (vs 10)?

Who did Jesus come to first (vs 11)? How did they respond (vs 11)?

Should the Jews be looked down on for rejecting Jesus?

*\*\*\*Sadly, Jews over the centuries have been persecuted by the church and were blamed for killing Jesus. Though they had a part in it, Jesus gave his life willingly to save both Jews and gentiles.*

Who was given the privilege of becoming a child of God (vs 12)?

What does John make clear about who the children of God are (vs 13)?

What did the Word of God become (vs 14)? Why?

What did John the Baptist declare about Jesus (vs 15)?

What have those who believed in Jesus received (vs 16)?

What do you think this term means?

What distinction did John make between the Jews and those who truly believed in Jesus (vs 17)?

What did John say about a person seeing God (vs 18)?

How was God made known to men (vs 18)?

Why do you think John emphasizes this?

What can you learn about Jesus from this passage?

## MEMORY VERSES

*Psalms 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. 9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*