



# EQUIPPED!

Tools for Exploring the Bible

## DISCUSSION QUESTION ANSWER KEY

### Lesson 1

1. As you read through the New Testament, why should you be sure to consider the “plot context” of a story or the “logical” context of a passage? What can you do to avoid the mistake of taking Scripture out of context?

*If we take a scene or shorter passage in a book out of its context, we often miss the point of the author's story or moralize the characters in the story in a way we shouldn't. We can avoid this first by being aware of this tendency, and second by reading longer passages of Scripture or even whole books at a time.*

2. The lectures talked about the 4 Ds: the drama, the doctrine, the doxology, and the discipleship. How does the drama of Scripture lead us to understand the doctrines of God?

*The drama of Scripture is the big story told in the Bible, God's great acts from creation to the consummation of Christ's eternal kingdom. Doctrine is all the truths we learn about God and the world through that drama. The drama tells us what happened. The doctrine tells us why it happened.*

3. Are there any books of the New Testament you've read before that have confused or interested you? What are they? What are you looking forward to learning in this course?

*Student answers may vary. Encourage discussion about specific books of the New Testament they've read or heard before—things that interest them, confuse them, or things they want to know more about.*

## Lesson 2

1. What is a “testament”? When we talk about the books that are in the “New Testament,” what does this title tell us about these books?

*A testament is a covenant, an oath-bound relationship between God and people. When we say these 27 books are part of the New Testament, we are saying they are the covenant documents of the new covenant foretold in the Bible: a written record of the actions, miracles, words, and promises of Jesus and his apostles.*

2. Who are some of the apostles behind the books of the New Testament? What is an apostle?

*Men like Matthew, Peter, Paul, John, and James were apostles. It is these men and their scribes who are responsible for most of the books of the New Testament. An apostle is an official representative of Jesus—someone invested with the authority to speak for Jesus.*

3. Why is it important to have a readable, understandable translation of the New Testament? Do you think the translation you are using is readable?

*The story in Acts 2 of the apostles speaking in many languages shows us God wants the Gospel to be preached in a way that is understandable. Students should examine their Bibles to see if they find it easy enough to read and understand.*

## Lesson 3

1. Luke's prologue describes Luke's research process for his gospel narrative. What was that process?

*Luke reports that he has followed the reports of eyewitnesses closely for some time, and he's using those reports to write an orderly account of what happened.*

2. Why does Luke include the story of Jesus' message to his hometown synagogue where he does in his narrative?

*Luke situates this story at the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee to help us understand what his public ministry is about: bringing the gospel to the poor and those counted as outsiders.*

3. At the height of Jesus' fame in Galilee, Peter confesses that he believes Jesus is the Christ. But Jesus immediately follows this with a startling prediction. What is that prediction and why would it have been so startling?

*Jesus says he will suffer many things, be rejected by the elders and priests in Jerusalem, be killed, and on the third day be raised to life. He also says that those who follow him must be willing to lay down their lives for him. This was surprising because no one thought the Christ (Messiah) or his devoted followers would need to die before the coming of his glorious kingdom.*

4. One of the main themes of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is how he displays his divine authority. What sorts of stories does Luke tell in Luke 9-13 that demonstrate this?

*Jesus is pictured with divine authority to heal and cast out demons, as well as divine authority to teach. He casts out a demon that makes a man mute, curing the man of his affliction. Jesus sends out 72 disciples who are able to display Jesus' miraculous power in every village he was about to enter. Jesus authoritatively interprets the Law of Moses (teaching what it means to love your neighbor), teaches his disciples to pray, and prioritizes listening to his teachings above other culturally expected duties (commending Mary for listening to him rather than being preoccupied with preparations for their guests).*

## Lesson 4

1. One of the big themes Luke develops in Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is his criticism of the depravity of the Pharisees. In chapters 15 and 16, what parables does Jesus tell and how do they speak to this theme?

*Jesus tells 5 parables here. The parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son show how out of step the Pharisees are with the kingdom of God, which rejoices over one sinner who repents. They are unwilling to seek out the lost and celebrate their return to God. The parable of the shrewd manager shows how Pharisees are unwilling to use their wealth wisely and generously to benefit those who might enter the kingdom of God—they are not shrewd or faithful in using all they have been given by God. The parable of Lazarus and the rich man shows how unwilling the Pharisees are to listen to the warnings of the prophets about the snare of worldly wealth.*

2. Another big theme in the last half of Luke's gospel is eschatology: the study of last things. What does Jesus have to say about events leading up to the end, and what does he say will happen when he returns?

*Jesus says Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies; some of its people will be killed and some driven into exile. Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled. There will be earthquakes, famines, and pestilences. During all of this, Jesus' disciples will be hated by all people and persecuted, but they must endure and learn to earnestly pray. Then the Son of Man will return as quick and unexpected as a flash of lightning across the sky, and he will come in a cloud with great glory to the earth to vindicate his people.*

3. According to Luke, why does Jesus have to die on the cross?

*There are several ways to answer this question. First, he must die in Jerusalem because as a prophetic figure sent by God, he will necessarily clash with the religious leaders in Jerusalem, just as many prophets before him did. His rejection and death are signs of the wickedness and blindness of Jerusalem's leaders. Second, he must die because he is accomplishing what the Scriptures have foretold about the Messiah. Third, and primarily, his death on the cross ratifies God's new covenant, bringing about the forgiveness of sins.*

## Lesson 5

1. The early chapters of the book of Acts contrast the new temple of the community of Jesus' disciples with the old temple. Name the ways in which you see how the new temple of disciples and old temple are contrasted.

*First, Jesus' disciples are miraculously filled with the Holy Spirit, the very presence of God, which was what the Jerusalem temple was supposed to be—the house of God. Second, the Jerusalem temple is the location of many of the apostles' miracles and teachings, but this activity is happening against what the temple leaders desire and apart from the formal operations of the temple (all the priestly activities and sacrifices). Third, the generosity of the early church in caring for the poor is seen against the compulsory taxes levied by the temple.*

2. Consider the story of Peter speaking with Cornelius and name the ways God made it obvious to Peter that the Gentiles were to receive the gospel and be fully accepted as disciples of Jesus.

*There were several miraculous occurrences that convinced Peter:*

- *Cornelius' vision of an angel commanding him to call for Peter*
- *Peter's trance and three visions of the sheet descending from the sky*
- *The Spirit speaking to Peter, telling him to go with the men from Cornelius' household*
- *The Spirit being poured out on Cornelius' household*

3. Give examples from Acts 1–12 of the times the apostles or church in general was persecuted and how it led to the gospel spreading. Give examples of times when persecution ceased and how this led to the spread of the gospel.

*There are several examples of persecution:*

- *Peter and John are arrested, leading to the church praying for boldness to speak God's word (Acts 4).*
- *The apostles are arrested and miraculously released, after which they preach in the temple day after day (Acts 5).*
- *Stephen is stoned and the church is persecuted, leading to the disciples scattering, preaching the message wherever they went (Acts 8).*

*There are other examples of reprieve from persecution:*

- *When Saul (Paul) is converted, this brings the persecution to a halt, which encourages the church and allows them to grow in number (Acts 9).*
- *When King Herod Agrippa I dies, this ends the persecution against the apostles for a short time, allowing the word of God to continue and spread (Acts 12).*

## Lesson 6

1. During Paul's first missionary journey, each place he goes he starts by preaching to the Jews in that region, but each time he does this, he ends up encountering Jewish opposition as well. How does this end up leading to Paul preaching the gospel to more Gentiles?

*In Cyprus, a Jewish sorcerer opposes him, but when Paul miraculously blinds him, this leads to the conversion of the proconsul of the Roman Province. In Pisidian Antioch, Paul preaches in the synagogue, and many Jews want to hear more. By the next Sabbath, many Gentiles show up to hear the preaching as well, and the Jews are filled with jealousy because of this. In Iconium, Paul begins by preaching in the synagogue, but the Jews who refuse to believe drive them out of town; this leads to him preaching to the idol worshippers in Lystra and Derbe.*

2. What do some of the party of the Pharisees in the church think the Gentiles need to do to be saved? What evidence is brought forward at the Jerusalem Council to disprove them?

*The party of the Pharisees believe the Gentiles coming to faith in Jesus need to be circumcised—that is, convert to Judaism—in order to be saved. Evidence brought forward to disprove this included: (1) Peter's story about the Spirit being given to Cornelius, (2) Barnabas and Paul's stories of miracles being done through them among the Gentiles, and (3) James' quotation of the prophet Amos from the Old Testament, which speaks of Gentiles bearing the name of God.*

3. In the last half of the Book of Acts, the apostle Paul appears before different civil courts and rulers 9 times. Why does Luke include all of these court appearances? Of these, which event was your favorite to read about?

*Luke shares these stories to show that, while Paul has antagonists among the Jews and Gentiles, he is not guilty of any civil crime. The point is to show Christians are not law-breakers. Students should have read the accounts of Paul in front of the Roman Proconsul of Cyprus (Acts 13), the magistrates in the city of Philippi (Acts 16), the high court of the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17), the proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18), the town clerk of Ephesus (Acts 19), the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (Acts 23), two Roman governors in Caesarea (Acts 24-25), and the last king of the Herodian dynasty (Acts 26). Students should choose the story that stood out to them and be able to give a reason why they thought it was interesting.*

## Lesson 7

1. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, we see him more upset than we do in many of his other letters, and yet the cause of his alarm was not ethical—the Galatians weren't engaging in any obviously immoral behavior. The cause of his frustration was what the Galatians believed about the gospel. How does this offer us a model for the weight we give certain problems that can arise in the church?

*It can be easy in the church to become very upset by moral corruption—and it should be upsetting. But the most important thing for Paul was whether the church got the gospel right. We see Paul exercise enormous patience for churches who have serious moral failures or who have personal spats with him. But Paul could not tolerate ideas in the church that diluted or denied the gospel. Without the gospel there is no hope and no salvation.*

2. In the letter to the Galatians, Paul places a big contrast between the law of Moses and the gospel. According to this letter, why can't we be justified by the Mosaic covenant?

*Paul believed we should read the Mosaic covenant as part of the larger story being told in the Torah (the five books of Moses). That larger story shows how the Mosaic law was good but a totally futile system because of human sin. It promises blessing to those who obey it and curse to those who don't; but, no one obeys the Mosaic law, so it's impossible to be justified in God's sight by it.*

3. According to this letter, how can a Christian properly use the Torah?

*First, the story of the Torah enables us to understand the limits of the Mosaic covenant: a doing-leads-to-blessing system; it always ends in failure because of our sinfulness. All Scripture, the Torah included, exposes our sin and helplessness. Second, the story of the Torah shows us the way to be justified before God, which is the same way Abraham was justified—by faith. Third, the Torah points forward to Christ as the ultimate seed of Abraham, the one who would become a curse for us in his crucifixion. Fourth, the Torah reveals wisdom and ethics, showing us the eternal moral law of love the Spirit now empowers us to live out.*

## Lesson 8

1. Describe why idleness was a particular temptation in Thessalonian culture and what Paul writes in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians to combat this tendency.

*In Roman culture, there was the practice of patronage: a wealthy person would give clients food, gifts, or representation in court, and in return, the client did favors for the patron or were part of social rituals showing gratitude, and the patron had the public honor of having so many clients. This created a "leechy," welfare kind of relationship where the very act of showing gratitude for a gift given put social pressure on the patron to give more gifts to be viewed as a giving person, breeding idleness instead of self-sufficiency and true generosity. To combat this, Paul uses several motivators to bring about change. First, he inspires them to live properly before outsiders, living in a countercultural way that shows how the church is a loving, giving community. Second, he uses himself as an example--how he supported himself and lived off no one else's generosity. Third, he tells the church to put social pressure on those who are busybodies, warning them as brothers and keeping away from such church members so they feel ashamed of their behavior.*

2. Using just the text of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, list the events leading up to and including the time of Christ's return.

*The man of lawlessness will come and exalt himself against every god, taking a seat in the temple, displaying false signs and wonders. Then "the rebellion" will take place: people who are perishing and who refuse to love the truth will be strongly deluded by the lawless one and his satanic power. The Lord Jesus will descend from heaven in the air. The dead in Christ will rise and Christians who are still alive will be caught up with Jesus in the clouds. Jesus will descend and kill the lawless one with the breath of his mouth and bring him to nothing.*



## Lesson 9

1. Describe how Paul speaks about Jesus' crucifixion to help the Corinthians understand how their behavior is out of step with Christ.

*Paul preached Christ crucified (2:2), and Paul sees several ways this should change the Corinthians' thinking. (1) Jesus is our "Passover Lamb" (5:7), the one who, like the original Passover lambs in Egypt, was slain for our sake so we could be free from the guilt and grip of sin. This means we now must become an "unleavened" people. Just as the Jews celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread and left the immoral influence of Egypt behind, so we should rid ourselves of the leaven of malice and evil. We were not set free from sin to rule ourselves but to become God's people. (2) We were "bought with a price" (6:20; 7:23), bought by the blood of Christ out of the slave market of sin, so therefore our bodies belong to him. Use your body to honor God. (3) Crucifixion was a shameful method of torture and death, not at all in keeping with the values upheld in Corinthian culture—values of power or sophistication. Christ's undignified death looks foolish to the world, and yet it is the means God used to save us, so don't get wrapped up in the world's definitions of power and popularity. God doesn't play by those rules.*

2. A couple of times, Paul alludes to the church as the temple. What applications does he draw from this in the first 6 chapters of 1 Corinthians?

*The temple was God's dwelling place, a sacred place because of God's presence. If the church is the temple of God, this means the one who destroys God's temple with divisive behavior will be destroyed by God, because his temple is holy—set apart for God (3:16-17). In addition, each Christian's body is also a temple of the Holy Spirit (6:19-20), so therefore our bodies do not belong to us, but to God. We must honor God with our bodies.*

## Lesson 10

1. Summarize Paul's message to the "weak" of conscience who were offended at the notion of Christians eating meat sacrificed to idols.

*Paul calls those weak in conscience to learn there is no God but the one who created all things—our bodies, our stomachs, the meat in the marketplace, everything. The earth belongs to the Lord. There's nothing to these other so-called gods. Therefore meat sacrificed on a pagan altar is not spiritually "tainted." We are no worse off if we do not eat this meat, and no better off if we do.*

2. Summarize Paul's message to the "strong" of conscience who had no scruples about eating meat sacrificed to idols.

*While there might not be anything wrong with the meat sold in the marketplace, he urges those strong in conscience to not attend a pagan festival lest they participate with demons and indulge in idolatry. Furthermore, they should not be puffed up with pride because their conscience is free (unlike other Christians). Rather, they should model love to those weak in conscience. Paul modeled this sort of love for them, willingly setting aside his freedoms and "rights" in order to advance the gospel. Not everyone's conscience is re-educated at the same pace, and it's better to live with an apparent anomaly than to force someone to act against conscience. Therefore, if someone weak in conscience is with you and raises a concern, abstain from eating the meat.*

3. If a skeptic raised the following objections to Christianity, how could you use 1 Corinthians 15 to respond to them?

**a. It's doubtful Jesus ever even existed.**

*The letter of 1 Corinthians was written only about 20 years after Jesus died, written within the lifetimes of those who saw him.*

**b. It's doubtful Jesus' tomb was empty. Only the gospels mention it, and it's probably just a legend or fabrication.**

*The empty tomb is also mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15, and it was written only 20 years after Jesus died. Plus, the creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 is much older than the letter, going all the way back to the church in Jerusalem, written only a few years after Jesus' death. It would have been impossible to fabricate a story of the empty tomb in the city where Jesus' tomb was.*

**c. It's doubtful Jesus was seen alive after he died. Maybe people were just hallucinating, if they saw anything at all.**

*There are many witnesses of the resurrected Jesus mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:3: individuals (Peter, James, and Paul), and 3 groups (the 12 apostles, all the apostles, and 500 witnesses at once). Groups of people don't see hallucinations. Paul wrote this while many of those witnesses were still alive, and thus around to be questioned. Furthermore, at least one of those witnesses was hostile to Christianity when he saw Jesus: the apostle Paul.*

## Lesson 11

1. What are the major similarities and differences between the old covenant of Moses and the new covenant?

*Both covenants came with glory, but the Mosaic covenant's glory was temporary; the new covenant's glory is permanent. The Mosaic covenant kills—it is a ministry of death because it brought condemnation; the new covenant of the Spirit gives life, because it is a ministry of righteousness. The Mosaic covenant was written on tablets of stone—it was an external law demanding righteousness; the new covenant is written on the human heart—it brings about real transformation. The new covenant transforms by God shining into the human heart so they can see the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

2. What were Paul's critics boasting about in Corinth?

*They boasted they were Hebrews, true Israelites, ancestors of Abraham. They bragged they were true apostles, manifesting the signs of a true apostle, with many labors in the gospel as missionary pioneers. They boasted their speech was skilled and bold. They took money from the Corinthians for their preaching, putting on airs as if they were better than Paul who never financially burdened the Corinthians.*

3. Why does Paul “boast” about his weaknesses?

*Paul boasts about his weaknesses because his own weaknesses are an opportunity to be a visual aid of the gospel. His weaknesses not only reflect the weakness of Christ on the cross, they are opportunities for God to bring life and power to Paul's ministry where there is often affliction, despair, and persecution. When Paul is weak, Christ shows himself to be strong.*

## Lesson 12

1. In the first section of Romans, Paul lays out the problem of human sinfulness. How is a proper understanding of this problem proof that justification cannot be by works?

*Whether it's Jewish people who have God's written law, or Gentiles who know God's law in their consciences, no one is right in God's sight. Even those who have God's law cannot be justified by their works, because everyone fails. Both the Gentiles and Jews, historically, have proven to be unable to live up to the glory of God. Justification before God, therefore, must come some other way.*

2. How does Paul prove from the story of Abraham that justification is by faith?

*Paul uses the story of Abraham as a way of demonstrating justification by faith, quoting Genesis 15:6, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." Abraham was reckoned, credited, regarded as righteous by God by means of his belief. This happened before he did anything good or meritorious to show us salvation isn't something we earn for performing certain acts, but something that must be given as a gift of grace. This also happened before Abraham was circumcised to show justification is not just for the Jews but for the Gentiles as well.*

3. How does the resurrection of Jesus prove to us justification is by faith?

*Jesus was "delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (4:24-25). His resurrection proves his atoning death was accepted by the Father and everything needed for justification was accomplished. Jesus' death completely propitiated God's wrath against sin, therefore there is nothing left for us to do to placate God—indeed it shows there is nothing we ever could have done to atone for our sins. Justification is found only in resting in the all-sufficient work Christ has done.*

## Lesson 13

1. What would lead a reader to ask the question in Romans 6:1 “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?” What has Paul said in chapter 5 that might give someone that impression?

*Romans 5:20 says, “Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.” The grace of Christ engulfs all our sins. This grace is a “free gift” (5:15), leading to justification in God’s sight (5:9), total peace with God (5:1), reconciliation (5:11), the promise of salvation from his wrath to come (5:9), and the hope of a glorious eternal life (5:2,21). We’ve obtained access into this grace by faith (5:1-2), not by doing something meritorious. Some might think this removes any motivation to obey God. If we can do nothing to merit eternal life, and all sins are covered by God’s grace, what’s to prevent someone from seeing this as a license to sin?*

2. There are almost no imperatives in Romans 1-11. Why is this fact significant? The first of very few imperatives is in Romans 6:11, which states, “You also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” What does this mean?

*Paul spends the first 11 chapters focusing almost entirely on what God has done in Christ before he mentions what we are to do. We first need to be grounded in the truths of what Christ did before we jump too quickly to application. Romans 6:11 is a perfect example of this. It’s the first imperative of the letter, and yet it is still focused on the work of Christ. To “consider” yourself dead to sin means to reckon it to be true, to take stock of what this truth is. The only way we will have the will to obey is if we first take stock of the fact that we are already dead to sin and alive to God. Only in knowing who we are in Christ do we act like Christ.*

3. How does Paul address the “strong” and “weak” in Romans 14?

*To both, Paul says not to pass judgment on one another. To the weak, Paul says no food is truly unclean in itself (14:14,20), so do not pass judgment on the one who eats because God has welcomed him (14:3) and because he eats with gratitude to God (14:6). To the strong, Paul says no food is unclean, but to the one who thinks it unclean, then for him it is (14:14). Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin (14:23). So don’t despise the one who abstains (14:3). If a brother is grieved by what you eat, making them stumble, you aren’t walking in love (14:15,20). Don’t make the kingdom of God about food; it’s about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (14:17).*

## Lesson 14

1. In the inclusion of Paul's letter to the Philippians (1:1–26; 4:4–23), Paul writes about how to have joy, peace, and contentment amidst anxieties, especially persecution. How does Paul maintain joy?

*First, Paul knew the Lord was at hand, returning soon (4:5), so he knew where the larger story of history was going. Second, in the here and now, one of Paul's primary motives was to honor Christ, so even in chains he knew his imprisonment emboldened others to preach (1:14), and no matter how it ended, Christ would be honored in his continued ministry or in his martyrdom (1:19–20). Where some would only see their chains, Paul saw an unchained gospel. Third, he turned his anxieties into heartfelt and grateful prayer, believing God listens to his cries (4:6–7). Fourth, he focused on things that inspired his worship—all that is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy (4:8–9).*

2. From the letter to the Philippians, how do we know Paul believed Jesus is God?

*Paul writes that before appearing in the likeness of man, Jesus “was in the form of God” (2:6), meaning his essential, enduring nature is divine. Furthermore, Paul draws on language from Isaiah 45, one of the most fiercely monotheistic passages in the entire Old Testament and applies that text to Jesus (2:10–11; Isaiah 45:23).*

## Lesson 15

1. How does the section of rhythmic prose in Colossians 1:15–20 address the heresy the Colossians were facing? Think in terms of the specific false teachings being promoted: an emphasis on Jewish holy days and rituals, and an emphasis on visions and the worship of angels.

*The heresy had a strong Jewish element, placing an emphasis on ritual, holy days, and clean foods (2:16). But Paul writes, “all things were created through him and for him” (1:16); he is the creator of all things, clean and unclean. Paul also writes that Christ is the ultimate sacrifice: “through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (1:20). The substance of all those rituals in the Mosaic covenant was Christ; they were designed to point to Christ. The heresy also focused on the worship of angels and visions (2:18), stressing salvation was possible through a hierarchy of angels and secret knowledge. But Paul writes, “by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities” (1:16). Whatever spiritual forces existed were made by Christ and for Christ. Furthermore, “in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (1:19), and because of this we have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority (2:10). Since we’ve been made alive together with him, and since, in the glorified Christ, the entire divine essence—all God is—permanently dwells, we lack nothing. Christ is the only mediator we need.*

2. What’s the difference between the unhelpful asceticism mentioned in Colossians 2:20–23 and putting to death what is earthly mentioned in Colossians 3:5?

*Asceticism is about merely fighting to get rid of something we think is unholy, but mortifying sin is about fighting from a position of delight in who Christ is, what he accomplished, and our union with him. When we savor the things above (3:1)—Christ, the position we share with him, and our ultimate hope—it is from this position of delight we can finally put sin to death.*

## Lesson 16

1. In the opening poem of Ephesians (1:3-14), what does Paul say each divine person did? What did the Father do? What did the Son do? What did the Spirit do? Pay close attention to the verbs associated with each person.

*The Father chose us before the foundation of the world, predestined us for adoption, lavished grace upon us, and in the fullness of time made known the mystery of his will regarding Christ. The Son is the one in whom we have every spiritual blessing, and the one in whom all things in heaven and on earth will be united. The Son redeemed us through his blood. The Spirit seals us as a guarantee of our inheritance.*

2. Pick just one of the main application sections in chapters 4-6 and connect the ideas in that section to theological ideas Paul teaches in chapters 1-3. When you pick a section, look at Paul's internal logic—not just what he commands, but *why* he commands it. Then go back to the first 3 chapters to look for traces of those ideas.
  - **Walk in unity (4:1-16)** → Paul calls his readers to maintain the unity they already have in the Spirit in humility, gentleness, and love. This connects to his teaching that God has created one new humanity in place of the old Jew-Gentile divide. All are fellow citizens, members of the same household, one temple where the Spirit dwells (2:11-22).
  - **Walk not as the Gentiles (4:17-24)** → Paul calls his Gentile readers to no longer live like Gentiles—like those who are ignorant, hardhearted, and alienated from the life of God. This echoes what Paul said earlier: they used to be dead in trespasses and sins, but now they are alive together with Christ (2:1,5). Instead, they need to put on the new self, the new humanity Christ created in himself, in place of the old Jewish and Gentile identities (2:15).
  - **Walk in love (4:25-5:2)** → Paul calls his readers to speak the truth to each other, resolve differences, work hard, share with those in need, build each other up with their words, and be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving. Paul says this is walking in love, being an imitator of God as his children, and an imitator of Christ who gave himself up for us. This echoes what Paul wrote earlier about his readers being predestined for adoption (1:5) and thus members of the same household (2:19). God lavished them with grace through the redemption found in Christ's blood (1:7-8), and they were drawn near to God (2:13).
  - **Walk in light (5:3-14)** → Paul calls his readers to have no part in the unfruitful works of darkness: sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness. Instead, they should pursue that which is good, right, and true. These sins amount to idolatry, and because of these shameful things the wrath of God is coming. This echoes what he wrote earlier about their old lives: they once followed "the prince of the power of the air," living in "passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind." As a result, they were "children of wrath, like the rest of mankind" (2:1-4). But now they are "saints" (1:4,18; 2:19), set apart as God's holy people.



- **Walk in wisdom (5:15-6:9)** → Paul calls his readers to walk as wise, understanding the will of the Lord in every relationship of life: in the worshipping church community and in their households—wives, husbands, children, parents, slaves, and masters. This is all done out of reverence for Christ. This echoes what Paul wrote earlier, praying they would have a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ (1:17)—Christ who is our Lord (1:3), who redeemed us through his blood (1:7), who was raised from the dead to be seated far above all rule and authority (1:20-21). In reverence for him, we conduct ourselves in the church and in our families with an eye to him as our loving example and master.
- **Put on the armor of God (6:10-20)** → Paul calls his readers to put on the armor of God in order to stand against the rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. This echoes what he says about “the heavenly places” earlier in the letter, how Christ was seated in the heavenly places above every spiritual power (1:20-21), and how we occupy that same position with him (2:6; 3:10). The armor we put on is the armor of the Messiah, as many of the pieces of that armor are mentioned earlier: truth (1:13-14), the new righteous self (2:15; 4:24), the gospel of peace (1:13; 2:14-15), faith (2:8-9), salvation (1:13), the Spirit who inspires the prophets and apostles to communicate God’s words (1:13; 2:18,22; 3:5), and prayer (1:15-23; 3:14-21).

## Lesson 17

1. In both 1 Timothy and Titus, Paul singles out the training up of qualified elders as a high priority. According to both of these letters, what is the job of an elder, and why would that job be important in both Timothy and Titus' respective situations?

*Elders are to be overseers (1 Timothy 3:1; Titus 1:7), thus giving supervision and direction to the body of believers. They are to care for God's church (1 Timothy 3:5). They should be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2), able to give instruction in sound doctrine (Titus 1:9), and some are to even labor in preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17). This was important in Ephesus because false teachers were there, using God's law unlawfully, devoting themselves to Jewish myths and trivial matters, and the people needed to understand the Scriptures in the right manner (1:3-20; 3:14-4:16; 6:3-20). This was important in Crete because those of the circumcision party needed to be silenced and rebuked for contradicting sound doctrine (Titus 1:9-16).*

2. Read 1 Timothy 4:7-10 and Titus 2:11-14. According to Paul, should be our motivation for doing good works?

*In both passages, God is lifted up as the Savior of all people. This salvation is not just from the guilt of sin but from the presence and power of sin altogether. In both passages, our future hope in the age to come is a primary motivation for good works. We know the destiny of the world when our great God and Savior Jesus Christ appears, so in light of that, we know living self-indulgent, self-centered lives no longer appeals to us or makes sense. We want a foretaste of the new creation, so we throw ourselves into loving God and our neighbor.*

## Lesson 18

1. What was Paul's charge to Timothy in this last letter?

*Paul wanted Timothy to not be ashamed of the gospel (1:8) but instead follow in Paul's footsteps in his willingness to boldly preach the gospel (1:13; 2:8; 4:5), teach the Scriptures (2:15; 3:14-15; 4:2), and entrust it to other able teachers (2:2). It would mean suffering for the gospel (1:8; 2:3,24), just as Paul had (3:11). Timothy is also called to not be ashamed of Paul, the Lord's prisoner (1:8) by coming to Paul soon (4:9).*

2. Compare and contrast Paul's outlook in Philippians 1:19-26 and 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

*In Philippians, Paul was confident their prayers and the help of Christ's Spirit would turn out for his deliverance from his chains. In 2 Timothy, he believed the time of his death had come. In both letters, he desired to be with Christ.*

3. Second Timothy is a great reminder that Paul did not operate alone. He worked with many people in his long ministry. Paul asks Timothy to greet three old friends in Ephesus for him: Aquila, Priscilla, and the house of Onesiphorus. From Paul's letters and the book of Acts, what do we know about these three people (Acts 18:1-4, 18-28; Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 1:15-18; 4:19)?

*Priscilla and Aquila were married Jewish Christians from Italy, expelled by Emperor Claudius from Rome. They were tentmakers by trade, just like Paul, so they lived and worked with Paul while he was in Corinth on his second missionary journey. They likely lived together for the 18 months Paul ministered there. They eventually traveled with Paul to Ephesus at the end of his journey, and stayed there while Paul moved on. There they met and more thoroughly instructed Apollos, another Christian preacher. Later, Paul would return to Ephesus to minister, and while in Ephesus, a church met in Priscilla and Aquila's home. Paul would later say they "risked their necks" for his life. They were well known among the Gentile churches. Onesiphorus was from Ephesus and had rendered Paul and the church a great service there. He is contrasted with other Christians in Asia who had turned away from Paul; Onesiphorus actually went to Rome when Paul was in prison and sought him out—a dangerous thing to do during Nero's persecution of Christians.*

## Lesson 20

1. Jesus has many brushes with the unclean world in the Gospel of Mark. Name some of the ways in which Jesus makes the ceremonially unclean clean. How does this relate to what Peter learned in Acts 10:1-11:18?

*In the Gospel of Mark, he heals a hemorrhaging woman and a leper. He raises a girl from the dead. He casts an unclean demon out of a Canaanite girl in Tyre and Sidon. He enters the non-Jewish region of the Decapolis and miraculously feeds people. He declares all foods clean.*

*This relates to the story in Acts 10-11 because there Peter is reminded by Jesus that he has broken down the legal barriers that separated the clean from the unclean, the barriers that had kept Jews and Gentiles apart for centuries.*

2. Peter would later say, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). Using the first half of the Gospel of Mark, list the ways Mark demonstrates these things.

- *God anoints Jesus with the Holy Spirit at his baptism (1:9-11).*
- *God anoints Jesus with power as demonstrated in his many miracles, such as healing a woman with a fever (1:30-31), a leper (1:40-45), a paralytic (2:1-11), a man with a withered hand (3:1-6), a hemorrhaging woman (5:24-34), a deaf and mute man (7:31-37), a dead girl (5:35-43), as well as healing many masses of people (1:34; 3:10; 6:5; 6:53-56); he calmed a storm (4:35-41), walked on water (6:45-52), and fed thousands of people with just a little food (6:30-44; 8:1-10).*
- *Jesus healed those oppressed by the devil as evidenced by his many exorcisms, such as in the synagogue of Capernaum (1:21-28), in the Gerasenes (5:1-20), in Tyre and Sidon (7:24-30), as well as masses of people elsewhere (1:32-34; 3:11).*

## Lesson 21

1. Knowing how Peter is portrayed in the Gospel of Mark, and knowing he is the primary source for the Gospel's contents, what does this tell us about how Peter reflected back on his time with Jesus during his earthly ministry?

*The only good things we can say about Peter and the other disciples is that they follow Jesus from place to place to learn from him (1:16-20,36), leaving their livelihoods behind to be with Jesus (10:28), and he commissions them to be his apostles (1:13-19). In addition, Peter is given special privileges to see various miracles and hear special teachings from Jesus many other disciples do not get to see or hear (5:37; 9:2; 13:3).*

*Despite this, Peter and the other apostles consistently misunderstand Jesus. Mark portrays them as cowardly, spiritually blind, and hard-hearted. While Peter is the first disciple to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, his confession falls very short, because Peter rebukes Jesus for saying it is his mission to die in Jerusalem (8:27-33)—Peter's mind was set on the things of man, not of God. He falsely believes the time for Jesus' earthly glory is here to stay (9:5).*

*During the evening of his arrest, Peter boasts he is willing to die with Jesus, only to deny even knowing Jesus hours later (14:29-31, 66-72). He is even unable to stay awake and pray with Jesus at his most intense hour of sorrow (14:37-42).*

*Knowing this came from Peter's own preaching demonstrates his own repentance; he was able and willing to look back on his sins and misunderstandings and talk freely about them for the benefit of others.*

2. Why does Jesus say he must die in Mark 10:32-45?

*Jesus says he would give his life as a ransom for many (10:45). His life is the ransom price to be paid for the benefit of others. The surrounding context tells us how. Twice Jesus says he'll be "delivered" over, first to the Jewish authorities and then to the Gentiles (10:33). This is an allusion to several texts in the Old Testament where being handed over into the hands of the pagan nations was a sign of God's wrath (Leviticus 26:32-33, 38; Psalm 106:40-41). Jesus also refers to the "cup" he will drink, which is another allusion to God's wrath (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17; Jeremiah 25:15-16). His death was a substitute for others, taking God's wrath upon himself for our sins.*

## Lesson 22

1. In the Gospel of Mark, Peter was opposed to the idea of Jesus going to the cross to die. But in the letter of 1 Peter, he has come to understand powerful truths about Jesus' death. What are those truths?

*Jesus was like the sacrificial animals in the temple, without blemish or defect, redeeming us with his precious blood (1:18-19). The Spirit of Christ revealed to the prophets the predictions about the sufferings of Christ (1:10-11). For example, Peter alludes to a prophecy in Isaiah 53, saying Jesus bore the guilt and punishment for our sins in his body on the tree, thus bringing about our healing (2:24-25). He, the righteous one, died for the unrighteous, so that he might bring us to God (3:18).*

2. Throughout the letter, Peter alludes to the hope we have by believing in Christ. How does Peter describe that hope? What sort of future does Peter anticipate for believers?

*Our living hope is based on Jesus' resurrection from the dead (1:3). We have an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us (1:4). Our Father, who judges all impartially and justly (1:17; 2:23) is ready to judge the living and the dead (4:5), and the end of all things is at hand (4:7). At the revelation of Jesus Christ (1:7), his glory will be revealed (4:13), and grace will be brought to us (1:13) when we will finally and fully love life and see good days (3:10).*

## Lesson 23

1. Looking at both 2 Peter and Jude, what characteristics of the false brothers do both authors mention?
  - *They deny Jesus Christ as their sovereign Lord (2 Peter 2:1; Jude 1:4).*
  - *They reject authority (2 Peter 2:10; Jude 1:8).*
  - *They slander and speak abusively against angelic creatures (2 Peter 2:10; Jude 1:10).*
  - *They are like brute beasts, unreasoning animals (2 Peter 2:12; Jude 1:10).*
  - *They love profit (2 Peter 2:15; Jude 1:11).*
  - *They are like hidden reefs (blemishes) as they feast with the church (2 Peter 2:13; Jude 1:12).*
  - *They are like waterless clouds or springs (2 Peter 2:17; Jude 1:12).*
  - *They are lust-driven and boastful (2 Peter 2:18; Jude 1:16).*
  - *They are scoffers (2 Peter 3:3; Jude 1:18).*
2. Both Peter and Jude mention various ungodly characters and groups from the Old Testament as parallels to the false teachers in the church. What characters and groups do they mention?
  - *Cain (Jude 1:11)*
  - *Angels that sinned who were cast into darkness (2 Peter 2:4)*
  - *The antediluvian (pre-flood) world (2 Peter 2:5; Jude 1:6)*
  - *The wicked, sensual, and lawless people of Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:6-8; Jude 1:7)*
  - *The Israelites who left Egypt and died in the wilderness (Jude 1:5)*
  - *Korah (Jude 1:11)*
  - *The greedy and mad prophet Balaam (2 Peter 2:15; Jude 1:11)*
  - *False prophets (2 Peter 2:1)*

## Lesson 24

1. During the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Jesus promotes a righteousness that exceeds that of the religious leaders of the day. In Matthew 5:17-48, Jesus corrects 6 common misunderstandings of the Old Testament law. What were those misunderstandings?
  - *It is not merely murderers who are liable to judgment, but anyone who is angry with or insults his brother.*
  - *It is not merely adultery that is forbidden, but lusting after a woman as well.*
  - *Divorces should not be easily permitted.*
  - *In daily conversation, oaths should be avoided. Rather, we should be the kind of people who simply say yes or no—and can be trusted to mean what we say.*
  - *Individuals should not seek revenge, but be generous and loving to those who hurt them.*
  - *We should not merely love those who love us, but love even our enemies.*
2. Summarize in your own words Jesus' parable of the weeds and Jesus' interpretation of it (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43).

*A master sowed good seed in his field, but at night, an enemy sowed weeds in the same field. Both the grain and weeds grew up together, and as they matured, the differences between them became more apparent. The master instructed his servants not to pull up the weeds until harvest time, because the roots of the weeds and the roots of the grain were intertwined. At harvest, both were gathered and separated: the grain into the master's barn, the weeds bundled and thrown into the fire.*

*The kingdom of heaven is like this story. The field is the world. The good seed that sprouts into grain are the sons of the kingdom. The bad seed that sprouts into weeds are the sons of the devil who are offensive and perpetrate lawlessness. The time of final "harvest," or the close of the age, would not come right away during Jesus' ministry. There would be a time of waiting, after which the angels would go out, gathering the lawless to be thrown into the furnace and gathering the righteous into the kingdom of God. Jesus' movement would attract many into it, but in that movement are both true followers and lawless people—only at the end of the age will they be separated completely.*



## Lesson 25

1. Some of the big questions answered in Matthew 13:53–18:35 are “Who is Jesus?” and “What kind of Messiah is he?” Looking over this section, how does Matthew answer these questions, both through Jesus’ words and actions?

*Jesus claims to be a prophet (13:57), but more than this, the narrative shows several times Jesus is the Son of God. He is worshipped by his disciples and called the Son of God after he walks on water (14:33). Peter confesses Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God (16:16). During Jesus’ transfiguration, the Father speaks from heaven and calls Jesus his beloved Son (17:5).*

*However, Jesus is not a Messiah who meets their expectations. His blessings are not exclusively for Israel, as he overflows with compassion even to people outside Israel (15:21–28). Jesus makes it clear he’s not a Messiah who has come to upend the social order of the nation—he still provides for Peter’s taxes to the corrupt temple elite (17:24–26). Rather, he is a Messiah who has come to build a church, a new gathering of people, that will not be held back by the gates of hell (16:18–20), one in which he will be in the midst of (18:20), one in which we should find humble people who have compassion on and show forgiveness to one another (18:1–35). Jesus also clarifies that being the Messiah means he must go to Jerusalem to die and that all who follow in his steps must be willing to suffer the same way (16:21–28; 17:22–23).*

2. During Jesus’ “great commission” (Matthew 28:16–20), he commands his followers to bring his message to all the nations of the world. Despite being a book for a Jewish audience, how does Matthew’s Gospel prepare us for this global mission?
  - *Matthew mentions 4 women with Gentile associations in Jesus’ genealogy (Matthew 1:1–17). Gentiles are part of the story of Jesus’ family.*
  - *As a young child, Magi from the east come to visit Jesus, welcoming him as the King of the Jews, in contrast with Herod the Great (2:1–12).*
  - *The foreign nation of Egypt serves as the boyhood home of Jesus, showing how Gentiles were hospitable to him over and above his own nation (2:13–15).*

- *When beginning his public ministry, he moves his headquarters to Capernaum to minister to “Galilee of the Gentiles” (4:14–16).*
- *The multitudes that gather to hear the Sermon on the Mount are not just from the Jewish areas of Galilee but the Greek cities of the Decapolis (4:25–5:1).*
- *The only two people for whom Jesus performs healings that he says have “great faith” are a Roman centurion soldier and a Canaanite woman (8:5–13; 15:21–28).*
- *Jesus heals a demonized man in the region of the Gadarenes (8:28–34).*
- *In his discourse to his apostles about their mission to the villages of Israel, he alludes to their future mission to the Gentiles, saying, “Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles” (10:17–18).*
- *In his last discourse, Jesus says before the end comes, “this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations” (24:14), and when Jesus returns he will judge all the nations of the world (25:32).*
- *After coming to Jerusalem, Jesus hints that the nations of the world will hear his gospel when he comments about how Mary of Bethany will be honored: “wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her” (26:13).*
- *At the very end of Jesus’ life, it seems to be the Gentile observers who are more aware of Jesus’ identity than the Jews—people like the centurion at the foot of the cross (27:54), or Pontius Pilate’s wife (21:17–24).*



## Lesson 26

1. As you read through James' letter, according to the author, what is God's character like? What has God done and what has he promised to do? Most importantly, how does *not* understanding the author's vision of God lead to the various sins he writes about?

*God is the sovereign Lord of the universe; our plans only come to fruition if he wills it (4:15). God's character is also perfect, untemptable to evil (1:13), and unchanging (1:17). He is both the lawgiver and the only judge of the world (3:12; 4:12). He is also compassionate and merciful (5:11)—every good and perfect gift is from him (1:17).*

*God is jealous and has created our spirits to worship him alone (4:4-5). God can and should be approached in prayer; he gives wisdom generously to all who ask in faith (1:5-6). He draws near to us when we draw near to him (4:8). He hears the cries of the oppressed workers (5:4). He raises up and forgives the sick when they are prayed for (5:15).*

*In his mercy, he sent many prophets who spoke in his name (5:10), gave us his perfect royal law that we should love him and love our neighbor (1:25; 2:8,19), and sent Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory (2:1). He then made us born again by the word of the gospel (1:18) which he implanted in us (1:21), justifying us by faith (2:23), giving grace to the humble (4:6,10). He especially chose the poor of the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom (2:5). Someday soon, the Lord will return as the judge (5:7-9), give the crown of life to all who love him (1:12), and exalt the poor (1:9).*

*Not understanding or believing in this vision of God leads to sin:*

- *When we fail to believe in God's unchanging goodness, as evidenced by the gospel proclaimed to us, we become bitter and joyless in our trials, possibly even believing God is tempting us (1:2-4, 12-18).*
- *When we fail to believe God has chosen the poor of the world to be rich in faith, we mistreat and ignore the poor, hoarding wealth, disobeying God's royal law (1:9-11; 26-27; 2:1-26; 5:1-6).*
- *When we fail to believe in God's goodness and care for us, we resort to selfish ambition and jealousy, leading to poisonous words (3:1-18).*
- *When we fail to believe God alone is worthy of our worship, we worship other things and they become ruling desires. When others get in the way of those desires, it leads to anger and confrontation (4:1-11).*

- *When we fail to believe in God's sovereign control of the universe, we make plans to advance ourselves as if we are autonomous (4:13-17).*

2. James refers to several characters from the Old Testament as examples. Who are these characters and how does James use them?

- **Abraham** (2:21-24): *Abraham, the friend of God, was counted righteous by his faith, but when he offered his son Isaac to God on an altar, he was "justified," or demonstrated that his faith was living.*
- **Rahab** (2:25-26): *Rahab also was "justified," or demonstrated that her faith was alive, when she hid Israel's messengers and helped them escape.*
- **The Prophets** (5:10): *The prophets are examples of suffering and patience.*
- **Job** (5:11): *Job is an example of steadfastness, and his story is an example of the Lord's compassion and mercy.*
- **Elijah** (5:17-18): *Elijah is an example of righteous, fervent, persistent prayer when he prayed for a drought and then prayed for rain.*

## Lesson 27

According to the author of Hebrews, in what ways is Jesus similar to other high priests? In what ways is he dramatically superior?

*Like other priests, Jesus was called by God and was not self-appointed (5:4-5). Like all priests, he was chosen to act on our behalf to bring gifts and sacrifices to God (5:1). He made purification for sins (1:3), making propitiation for the sins of the people (2:17). Like other priests, Jesus also became like his brothers in every respect so he could help those who are tempted, knowing what it is like to suffer under temptation (2:17-18; 5:2).*

*But there are many differences between Jesus and other priests.*

- **His Superior Order:** Jesus does not belong to Aaron's order but to the order of Melchizedek (5:6,10), a superior priesthood that predates Aaron's (7:7).
- **His Superior Character:** Unlike the other priests, Jesus never had to offer sacrifices for his own sins because he never sinned (4:15; 5:3). He is holy, innocent, and unstained (7:26).
- **His Superior Location:** Aaron's priesthood only ever served in the earthly tabernacle, a mere copy of the heavenly one (8:5). Moreover, no one could enter the earthly Holy of Holies except the high priest, and then only once a year (9:7). Jesus, however, passed through the heavens (4:15; 7:26) into the true, perfect tent, not built by man (8:2; 9:11,24), where he is for all time.
- **His Superior Office:** In the Mosaic covenant, kings and priests were from different lines. But Jesus' priestly order is also kingly (7:1-2). He sits now at the right hand of the Majesty on high (1:3; 8:1; 10:12-13).
- **His Superior Promise:** Jesus' priestly status was conferred by an oath, but not so with Aaron—his priesthood was not promised eternal validity (7:20-21).
- **His Superior Duration:** All other high priests died and were replaced. But Jesus is a priest forever (7:3) because of his indestructible life (7:16,24). He always lives to make intercession for us (7:25).
- **His Superior Sacrifice:** Aaron's priests could only offer the blood of animals. These sacrifices could never take away the consciousness of sins (10:2-4), because they were continual and repeating (10:11). These sacrifices could make nothing perfect (7:19). Jesus' sacrifice was of himself—it was once and for all (7:27), thus securing eternal redemption (9:12) and purifying our consciences from dead works (9:14). There were no seats anywhere in the tabernacle, because a priest's work was never done. Jesus, however, is seated next to God because his sacrifice is complete (1:3).

## Lesson 28

1. Jesus returns to the temple over and over in John's Gospel, but more importantly, the beloved disciple laces his narrative with a clear message: Jesus is the new temple of God. What are the ways the first half of John's Gospel (chapters 1-10) show this?
  - *In the prologue, Jesus is said to be the Word of God that "tabernacles" among us, making visible God's glory (1:14), just as the Old Testament tabernacle was the place where God dwelt with his people.*
  - *After clearing out the temple in Jerusalem, Jesus referred to his own body as "this temple" (2:20), saying that if they destroyed his body, in three days he would raise it up—speaking of his resurrection from the grave.*
  - *On his return trip to Galilee, Jesus speaks of the arrival of a new era when worship centered in Jerusalem would no longer be the thing God seeks (4:21). Instead, Jesus offers a Samaritan woman, and then later the pilgrims in Jerusalem, "living water" (4:10, 14), that is, the Holy Spirit (7:37-39), an image borrowed from the prophets of the coming new temple flowing with water to bless the nations (Ezekiel 47:1-12; Joel 3:18; Zechariah 14:8).*
  - *Later on at the Jerusalem temple, Jesus declares himself to be "the light of the world," harkening back to the pillar of fire of God's presence over the tabernacle (8:12; 9:5).*
  - *During the Feast of Hanukkah, a day commemorating the rededication and consecration of the temple, Jesus speaks of himself as the one the Father "consecrated and sent into the world" (10:36).*
2. Throughout John's Gospel, he mentions various "signs" performed by Jesus. There are six specifically enumerated in chapters 1-12 (2:11; 4:54; [5:1-15]; 6:14,26,30; 7:21,31; 9:16; 11:47; 12:18). What are those 6 signs? Additionally, John 2:18 mentions another sign Jesus would later perform. What is this sign? How do all of these signs fulfill the purpose stated in John 20:30-31?

*The first 6 signs are:*

- *Changing the water into wine*
- *Healing the royal official's son*
- *Healing the paralytic at Bethsaida*
- *Feeding the 5000*
- *Healing the man born blind*
- *Raising Lazarus from the dead*

*The sign mentioned in John 2:18 is Jesus raising up the “temple” of his body after they destroy it: his coming death and resurrection. The clearing of the temple in Jerusalem was merely pointing to the coming day of Jesus’ resurrection and to Jesus’ authority over God’s house.*

*Together, these 7 signs fulfill the purpose of John 20:30-31 because they elicit faith in those who hear about them that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, with the authority and power to bring joy, life, and light to the world.*



## Lesson 29

1. In Jesus' farewell discourse, he mentions "love" many times. Summarize what Jesus says about love.

*The Father loved Jesus before the foundation of the world (15:9; 17:23,24). Jesus has loved the Father, and has shown it by the way he has kept the Father's precepts and commands, boldly going forward to lay down his life (14:31; 15:10). In light of this mutual love between Father and Son, Jesus' great desire is that believers will be with him and gaze forever at his glory, given to him by the Father who loves him (17:24), being with Jesus forever in the place he prepared for them (14:3).*

*But Jesus' actions during the Feast of Passover also show his great love for his own—the disciples. He had loved them from the beginning (15:9) and he loved them to the end (13:1). Moreover, the world will know that Jesus loved them as they show unity with one another (17:23).*

*Jesus wants his disciples to emulate the same sort of love. First, they are to love Jesus and show it by keeping his precepts and words (14:15,21,23)—believing them, obeying them, and guarding them. By doing this they will abide in the Father's love (15:10), Jesus will manifest himself to them (14:21), and the Father and Son will make their home in them (14:23). Second, Jesus gives them a new commandment: love one another as he had loved them (13:34; 15:12). In order for them to show this sort of love, Jesus made known the Father's name to them—he showed them who the Father really is (17:26).*

2. Summarize what we know about Simon Peter from John's Gospel.
  - *Simon is the son of John (1:42), brother of Andrew (1:40), from the city of Bethsaida (1:44).*
  - *Simon was introduced to Jesus by his brother (1:40). Upon meeting Simon, Jesus gave him the name "Cephas," or in Greek, Peter, meaning "rock" (1:42).*
  - *Becoming one of Jesus' disciples, he eventually became one of "the twelve" (6:67,70).*
  - *Peter unashamedly stuck with Jesus even after particularly difficult teachings because he believed Jesus was the Holy One of God who had the words of eternal life (6:68-69).*
  - *When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, Peter unabashedly refused to have his feet washed. Jesus instructed Peter that only those disciples who are washed by Jesus have a share with*

him—speaking metaphorically about being cleansed from sin. Peter immediately rushed to the literal interpretation of Jesus' words (13:6-11).

- When Jesus mentioned one of the disciples betraying him, Peter motioned to the Beloved Disciple, who was nearest to Jesus, to ask Jesus who he was talking about (13:24).
- At Jesus' arrest, Peter drew out a sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest (18:10-11).
- Peter brazenly claimed he would lay down his life for Jesus, but Jesus informed him that before the rooster crowed he would deny him three times (13:36-37). Later that evening, this happened just as Jesus predicted, in the courtyard of the high priest (18:15-18,25-27).
- The morning of the resurrection, Mary Magdalene informed Peter and the Beloved Disciple of the empty tomb. Both ran to the tomb to see for themselves and saw the burial wrappings (20:1-10).
- Later in Galilee, Peter went fishing with six other disciples, and Jesus appeared to them on the beach. He asked Peter if he really loved him, and when Peter replied that he did, Jesus told him to feed and care for his lambs. He also told Peter that someday he would be martyred for his faith (21:1-25).

## Lesson 30

1. The Beloved Disciple writes of the faith that was revealed “from the beginning” (1:1; 2:7,24; 3:11): that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who has come in the flesh to be the propitiation for our sins. According to 1 John 1:1-4 and 5:6-8, how does the author know for sure that this is true?

*The Beloved Disciple is clear that Jesus was “manifested” to himself and others (1:2; 3:5,8). They heard Jesus with their own ears (1:1,3,5), saw him with their own eyes (1:1,2,3), looked intently at him (1:1; 4:14), and touched him with their hands (1:1).*

*He also summons three witnesses to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God: the water, the blood, and the Spirit (5:6-8). The water possibly refers to Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River when the Father proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God and Jesus began his earthly ministry. The blood likely refers to Jesus’ death, foretold by the prophets, when his earthly ministry ended. The Spirit testified to who Jesus is all throughout Jesus’ ministry and beyond—from his conception, to his baptism, to his miracles, to the miracles of the apostles.*

2. The Beloved Disciple writes about the new commandment from Christ to show love (2:7-11; 3:10-18; 4:7-5:3). Summarize his statements about this: what does it mean to show love and why do we show it?

*The command Jesus gave us is to love one another (3:11; 4:7,21). Showing love is one of the primary tests that one truly knows God, because God is love (4:8). By showing love, it demonstrates that God’s love is made complete in us (4:12). We love others because God first loved us (4:19).*

*To claim to love God but hate your brother is evidence that one does not live in the light (2:9) but rather is a murderer, a liar, and a child of the devil (3:10,15; 4:20). Such a person does not have eternal life but remains in death (3:14-15).*

*The Father and the Son are the ultimate examples of what love is—the Father sent his one and only Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and Christ laid down his life for us (3:16; 4:9-10). This is the model of love: self-sacrifice. This means more than just speaking words of love; it means showing pity to those in need and sharing our resources with them (3:17-18). True love to a brother means obeying God’s commands in a spirit of love for Him—love is defined by carrying out the commands of God (5:2).*

## Lesson 31

1. Summarize what the Elder says about the concept of “antichrist” in both the epistles of 1 & 2 John. What does an antichrist believe and how are we to respond to them?

*While the final antichrist will come, the spirit of the antichrist is already in the world, and many antichrists have already come (1 John 2:18; 4:3). These are people who used to be part of the church but left (1 John 2:19) because they are from the world (1 John 4:5). They now deny Jesus is the Christ (1 John 2:22), deny he came in the flesh (1 John 4:2; 2 John 1:7), and do not listen to the apostles (1 John 4:6). These people are false prophets (1 John 4:2) and deceivers (2 John 1:7). They should not be greeted or welcomed into our homes lest we promote their wicked works (2 John 1:10-11).*

2. The epistles of 2 & 3 John highlight the importance of hospitality for itinerant missionaries. Name examples from the New Testament of hospitality in action.

*When Jesus sent his disciples on their first mission through Israel, they depended on the hospitality of others (Matthew 10:9-10). Similarly, when Jesus sent 72 other disciples out on a mission, they also depended on the hospitality of hosts (Luke 10:5-8). Jesus himself stayed in people’s homes as he traveled (Luke 19:6-7)*

*In the early Jerusalem church, teaching by the apostles was done from house to house (Acts 2:44-45). Mary’s home was used as a place of gathering (Acts 12:12). Later, as the apostles and other traveling Christians went throughout the empire, they often stayed with new converts, such as the home of Lydia and the jailer in Philippi (Acts 16:14-15, 29-34), the chief man Publius on Malta (Acts 28:7), Gaius in Corinth (Romans 16:23), Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:19), Nympha in Laodicea (Colossians 4:15), and Philemon in Colossae (Philemon 1:1-2).*

## Lesson 32

1. Each of the 7 churches in Revelation are given a promise of what awaits them if they remain faithful. What are these 7 promises? Collectively, what do all these promises mean?
  - *Jesus will grant them to eat from the tree of life in the paradise of God (2:7).*
  - *Jesus will give them the crown of life and they will not be hurt by the second death (2:10-11).*
  - *Jesus will give some of the hidden manna and a white stone with a new name written on it (2:17).*
  - *Jesus will give them authority over the nations, ruling them with a rod of iron, and give them the morning star (2:26-28).*
  - *Jesus will see to it that they are clothed with white garments and will never blot their names out of the book of life. Jesus will confess their names before the Father and his angels (3:5).*
  - *Jesus will make them a pillar in the temple of his God forever. He will also write on them the name of his God, the name of the new Jerusalem, and his own new name (3:12).*
  - *Jesus will grant them to sit with him on his throne (3:21).*

*These promises together point to the blessings of eternal life: fullness of never-ending life in our eternal home, delighting in God, marked as his own, and sharing in his kingly authority.*

2. Pick *one* of the 7 churches and note how Jesus describes himself to them. Why is that description fitting for that specific church?

***[Students need only discuss one of the examples from Revelation 2-3.]***

- *To the church in Ephesus, Jesus calls himself the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and who walks among the seven golden lampstands (2:1). Jesus is present among his churches to lead, to guide, and to protect, and he wants them to shine as lamps in a dark world, but this cannot happen if they don't return to the love for Christ they had at first (2:4-5).*
- *To the church by Smyrna, Jesus calls himself the First and the Last, who died and came to life (2:8). Jesus is using a name for God from Isaiah 44:6. This is important for the church in Smyrna because the Jews in the city claim to be worshipping the true God, but because they have rejected Jesus, they are nothing more than a synagogue of Satan (2:9). Jesus is the one who also conquered death by his resurrection from the grave, which is why he can promise the crown of life to those who are faithful (2:10).*

- *To the church in Pergamum, Jesus calls himself the one who has the sharp two-edged sword (2:12). Jesus is the one who truly holds the power of life and death, and this is important because he promises to make war against the heretical Nicolaitans unless the church repents (2:15-16).*
- *To the church in Thyatira, Jesus calls himself the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze (2:18). These images are borrowed from Daniel's descriptions of angels and God himself (Daniel 7:9; 10:6), communicating divine glory, firmness, and an all-penetrating gaze. This is important because Jesus is able to see into the minds and hearts of all, including even secret sins of Jezebel, whom they tolerate, and he has the power to judge all according to their works (2:20-23).*
- *To the church in Sardis, Jesus calls himself the one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars (3:1). Jesus is the one who has fullness of the Holy Spirit, sent forth from the Father, which is significant because even in this dying church, Jesus can revive them (3:1-2). He is also the one who holds his messengers in his right hand, the ones who proclaim his word (1:16), which is important because they need to remember how they themselves heard the gospel, keep it, and repent—proclaiming that word to others and obeying it (3:3).*
- *To the church in Philadelphia, Jesus calls himself the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one will open (3:7). Jesus is holy (supremely devoted to God and his glory) and true (totally trustworthy and faithful). This is important because the Christians in Philadelphia too must remain faithful in their allegiance to God (3:11). He also holds the key of David—hearkening back to Isaiah 22:22—which means Jesus is the steward of the royal house, the absolute and unchallenged authority. This is important because Jesus is about to open an opportunity for the church in Philadelphia, and they need to believe that no one will be able to shut it (2:8).*
- *To the church in Laodicea, Jesus calls himself the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation (3:14). As the Amen, the faithful and true witness, Jesus is saying he is firmly established, trustworthy, and always speaks the truth. This is important because the Laodiceans are blind to their condition, and Jesus wants them to know his diagnosis is correct (3:17). As the origin of God's creation, he is the one who worked alongside the Father to call creation into being, therefore he is certainly powerful enough to discipline them (3:19), and he has the authority to promise them a spot on his eternal throne (3:21).*

## Lesson 33

1. Both the 7th bowl (Revelation 16:17–21) and songs of Babylon (Revelation 18:1–19:8) give a chorus of voices, singing songs of judgement and lament over the fall of Babylon. Read these passages and summarize what this great city was like before and after it fell.

*Before her fall, she was called great (14:8; 16:19; 18:2,10,16,18,19,21), and mighty (18:10). She glorified herself and lived in wanton luxury (18:7), clothed in fine clothes (18:16). It was the sort of place you could always hear the sound of harps, musicians, flutes, trumpeters (18:22), and the sound of weddings (18:23). You could find craftsmen of all kinds and every sort of trade (18:22).*

*Merchants became rich from her commerce (18:3) and became the great ones of the earth (18:23) as they sold their cargo of all kinds—from luxury items to household staples, dry goods to livestock—and even human trafficking (18:11–14). Kings and sailors became rich because of her luxury (18:9,17–18).*

*But she was a place steeped in sin (18:5). With her sorcery she deceived the nations (18:23), and she ruined the earth with her fornication (19:2). Kings and nations were influenced by her immorality (18:3). In her pride she believed she would never see grief (18:7). She was also the place where countless prophets, saints, and God's servants died (18:24; 19:2).*

*Her fall came suddenly and quickly: death, grief, famine, and fire came to judge her (18:8,10,19). She was split into three parts as God sent lightning, thunder, an earthquake, and huge hailstones (16:19–21). When Babylon fell, all the cities of the nations fell (16:19), and every island and mountain fled (16:20). Kings, merchants, and sailors wept when they saw it (18:9,15,18) because her fall meant all economic trade came to a halt—and with that all her luxuries (18:11). She was violently cast down and is never to be heard from again (18:21), though the smoke of her raging fires goes up forever (19:3). After her fall, she became deserted, a haunt for demons and every manner of unclean and hated animal (18:2).*

2. One of the clear doctrines that emerges from the book of Revelation is God's sovereignty: his absolute governance and direction of historical events. Give examples from Revelation that demonstrate this idea.

*God is proclaimed as the Almighty (1:8; 19:6), the everlasting God (4:8), who is seated on the throne of the universe (4:2,9; 5:1,7,13; 6:16; 7:15; 21:5). He is the creator of all things*

*(4:11), and he knows exactly what must take place (1:1; 4:1; 22:6) to bring history to his climax in a new creation (21:5). From the opening of the first seal (6:1) to the pouring out of the last bowl (16:17), it is clear God is the one taking the initiative in all the events that transpire. Repeatedly we are told something “was given” the task to do something (6:2,4,8,11; 7:2; 8:2,3; 9:1,3,5; 11:1,2; 12:14; 13:15,7,14,15; 16:8), such as the activities of the four horsemen or the beast from the sea. Everything they do, even their evil acts, is done at the permission of God.*



## Lesson 34

After hearing about the four approaches to interpreting the book of Revelation, which one stands out to you as the one you want to learn more about because you think it sounds convincing?

*Answers will vary. The four approaches are historicism, futurism, preterism, and idealism.*

- *Historicism teaches the book of Revelation is a series of visions of successive empires and world powers from John's day to the second coming of Christ and beyond—a long sweeping view of history about how the nations are ransomed for God and how the evil powers of the world are removed so the saints can inherit the earth.*
- *Futurism teaches that everything from chapter 4 onward, except for a few flashbacks, foretells events at the very end of the age: all the prophecies are sequentially fulfilled in a condensed period of time that is still in the future from our perspective.*
- *Preterism teaches the fulfillments to most (or all) of the book is the immediate future from John's perspective (so they have been fulfilled in the past from our perspective), in the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, along with the persecution of Christians and the political turmoil of the Roman empire in that time period.*
- *Idealism teaches the book is a series of parallel visions that cover the whole scope of human history, each one ending in Christ's return. The book is not attempting to be prophetic of any specific world events, but each vision describes the entire time between the first and second comings of Christ, each vision from a different perspective.*