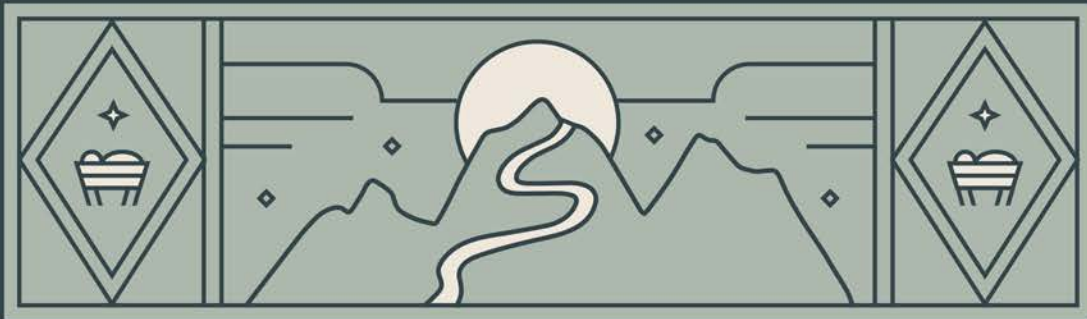


THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

John



SERIES 2 - CROSSING BOARDERS

A Period of Disruption

LESSON STUDY GUIDES || JOHN 2:13-4:54

Series 2 — Crossing Every Border

Lesson Study Guides

This guide works for both individual and group study. Each lesson is built around the same text as that Sunday's sermon and will be discussed in Bible class that morning. This is not a review of the sermon; no prior knowledge is necessary.

HOW TO USE THESE STUDY GUIDES

It is recommended that you complete the lesson before you arrive. Familiarity with the text before class makes for better conversation and a more rewarding experience for everyone in the room.

This guide is designed for one purpose: to get you into the text.

The **Questions from the Text** keep you anchored to what the passage says. These questions are based on the New King James Version and have clear answers that come straight from the text.

The **Thought-Provoking Questions** are meant to be sat with. There are no right or wrong answers in this section (generally speaking). Additionally, there is rarely a clean one-sentence answer.

The **Digging Deeper** studies invite you to trace words, places, people, and Old Testament background at whatever level of depth your time allows.

PRACTICAL STUDY TIPS

Set aside consistent time. Fifteen minutes a day is more sustainable than two hours on Saturday. You will get out of it what you put in. Begin with prayer and ask God to grant you wisdom as you search the Scriptures.

Approach the text with an open mind. Do not fall into the trap of making the Bible say what you want it to say. Approach it from the standpoint of trying to understand what God said.

Read slowly and repeatedly. Return to the same passage multiple times and you will notice things you previously missed. Pay attention to repeated words, key phrases, and Old Testament quotations.

Ask basic questions of the text. Who is speaking? Who is present? What is happening? Where does this take place? These simple questions (who, what, where, why) will carry you a long way before you ever open a commentary.

Look things up. When a word, person, place, or custom is unfamiliar, stop and study it. A Bible dictionary, a concordance, or online resource like blueletterbible.org will answer most questions.

Share what you learn. Study has a way of coming alive when you know you are going to tell someone about it. Whether in class, a small group, or a conversation at the dinner table, passing along what you have discovered is the natural end of good Bible study.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The Bible Project — thebibleproject.com — Free videos, posters, and reading plans for the Gospel of John. An excellent starting point for understanding the structure and themes of the book.

Blue Letter Bible — blueletterbible.org — Free word studies, original language tools, and cross-references. Particularly useful for tracing key words like *believe*, *life*, *light*, *sign*, and *glory* through John.

The ESV Study Bible — Thorough notes, maps, and book introductions. One of the most useful single-volume study tools available in print or digital form.

Lumo Project — Gospel of John — A filmed visual reading of the gospel in a first-century setting. Available on YouTube by searching "Lumo Project John."

BIBLE MARKING GUIDE

Marking your Bible is one of the most effective ways to slow down and engage with the text. The colors below are tied to the major themes running through John's gospel. Use them consistently as you read and over time the structure of John will begin to speak for itself.

RED: FOR STOP <i>Negative References</i>	Sin, darkness, unbelief, judgment, Satan, rejection, hatred, persecution
ORANGE: FOR CHANGE <i>Time References</i>	Hour, day, feast, Passover, "the next day," "my time has not yet come," before, after
GREEN: FOR GO <i>Positive References</i>	Believe, faith, follow, receive, obey, abide, eternal life, discipleship
BLUE: FOR DIVINITY <i>References to God</i>	God, Jesus, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Word, Messiah, Christ, I AM
PURPLE: FOR ROYALTY <i>God's Rule & Authority</i>	Kingdom, king, authority, glory, throne, sent, witness, reign
BROWN: FOR EARTHLY <i>People, Places & Things</i>	Disciples, Pharisees, crowds, Jerusalem, Galilee, Bethany, Cana, water, bread
PINK: FOR PASSION <i>Love & Relationship</i>	Love, loved, friend, prayer, compassion, family, shepherd, sheep, abide
BLACK: FOR WRITING <i>Notes & References</i>	Cross-references, observations, outlines, questions, applications
YELLOW: FOR KEY WORDS <i>Repeated Words</i>	Believe, life, light, truth, witness, glory, world, sent, Father, Son

KEY WORDS TO WATCH THROUGHOUT JOHN

Believe • Life • Light • Truth • Love • Glory • Witness • World • Father • Son • Sent

These words appear repeatedly throughout John.

KEY A FEW PRACTICAL TIPS

Use a fine-tipped highlighter or colored pencil. Markers can bleed through thin Bible pages.

Mark a word or two. Avoid highlighting entire verses with one color. Mark with purpose.

Black is for pencil only. Cross-references, questions, definitions, and outlines should be written with a pencil in the margins.

Some words can carry more than one color. "Eternal life" might be green (positive) and blue (connected to Jesus). Use your judgment.

Don't feel pressured to mark everything at once. Read the chapter multiple times, each time looking for something different.

Gospel of John Scripture Journal These are excellent ways to mark in your Bible. They have the text on one page and a blank page on the other side. The most popular is the ESV Scripture Journal.

Series—Crossing Every Border

LESSON 5

The Border of Religion

John 2:13–25 • July 5, 2026

QUESTIONS FROM THE TEXT

1. What did Jesus find in the temple when He arrived for the Passover? (2:14)
2. What did Jesus call the temple when He addressed those selling doves? (2:16)
3. What Scripture did the disciples remember after Jesus cleansed the temple? (2:17)
4. What sign did the Jewish leaders demand after Jesus' actions? (2:18)
5. When did the disciples come to understand what Jesus meant by "Destroy this temple"? (2:22)

THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

1. Jesus did not simply complain about corruption in the temple. He physically drove out the merchants and overturned the money-changers' tables. What does it mean that zeal for God's house consumed Him? Is there something that ought to consume us in the same way?
2. The Jewish leaders asked Jesus for a sign to justify His actions. Jesus responded by pointing ahead to His death and resurrection. Why do you think He answered a question about authority with a statement about His body rather than His credentials?
3. John tells us that the disciples only understood what Jesus meant after the resurrection (2:22). What does it look like to carry a teaching or an experience from Jesus that you do not fully understand yet, and then finding clarity in the future?

DIGGING DEEPER

Zeal for Your House

When Jesus drove the merchants from the temple, His disciples remembered a line from Psalm 69: “Zeal for Your house has consumed me” (Ps. 69:9). Study how the New Testament writers use this psalm in connection with Jesus.

Psalm 69:1–4, 7–9, 20–21 • John 2:17 • Romans 15:3 • Acts 1:20

Question: *Psalm 69 is the prayer of someone whose passion for God made him an outsider. How does that pattern help you understand what Jesus was doing in the temple and where it was headed?*

The Temple in Israel’s Story

The Jerusalem temple was not simply a religious building. It was the place where God’s presence dwelt among His people, where sacrifice was offered, and where Israel came to meet their God. Study what the temple meant in Israel’s history and what the prophets said about its abuse.

1 Kings 8:10–13, 27–30 • Isaiah 56:7 • Jeremiah 7:11 • Ezekiel 10:18–19 • John 2:16

Question: *Jesus quoted Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11 when He cleansed the temple. What had the house of God become, and what was it supposed to be? Is there a connection today?*

Destroy This Temple

Jesus’ answer to the demand for a sign was deliberately difficult: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (2:19). His hearers thought He was talking about the building. John explains He was speaking of His body. Study how Jesus as the true temple develops across the New Testament.

John 2:19–22 • Mark 14:58 • Hebrews 9:11–12 • Revelation 21:22

Question: *If Jesus is the true temple, what does that mean for where God’s presence is found now? How does that change what it means to “go to God”?*

He Knew What Was in Man

John closes this passage with a striking observation: Jesus did not entrust Himself to those who believed in Him because of signs, because He knew what was in man (2:24–25). Study how this theme connects with what follows in chapter 3.

John 2:23–25 • John 3:1–3 • Jeremiah 17:9–10 • 1 Samuel 16:7

Question: *What is the difference between a response to Jesus that is drawn by wonder at His power and a response that is drawn by genuine faith?*

Series—Crossing Every Border

LESSON 6

The Border of Understanding

John 3:1–21 • July 12, 2026

QUESTIONS FROM THE TEXT

1. How does John describe Nicodemus when he introduces him? (3:1)
2. What did Jesus say a person must do in order to see the kingdom of God? (3:3)
3. What two things did Jesus say a person must be born of in order to enter the kingdom? (3:5)
4. What Old Testament event did Jesus use to explain the lifting up of the Son of Man? (3:14)
5. What does Jesus say is the basis of condemnation for those who do not believe? (3:18)

THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

1. Nicodemus is a teacher of Israel, a Pharisee and a ruler. He has every credential that should put him close to God. But Jesus tells him he must start over, from birth. What does it say about the fact that even the best-informed people still need to be born again?
2. Jesus says the Spirit moves like the wind: you hear it, but you cannot control or predict it (3:8). In what ways have you seen God work in a person's life that you could not have anticipated or planned? What does that teach us about how conversion actually happens?
3. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. He was curious, respectful, and interested, but he came in the dark. Is there such a thing as being close to faith but not yet there? What does the journey from night toward light look like?

DIGGING DEEPER

Born Again — Born from Above

The Greek word Jesus used means both “again” and “from above.” Nicodemus heard the first meaning and was baffled. Jesus meant the second. This new birth is not a human decision or effort but a divine act from above. Study the background that Jesus expected a teacher of Israel to recognize.

Ezekiel 36:25–27 • Ezekiel 37:1–14 • Jeremiah 31:31–34 • John 1:12–13 • John 3:3–8

Question: *Ezekiel 36 and 37 promise a day when God will give His people a new heart and put His Spirit within them. Why should Nicodemus have recognized this and why might he have missed it?*

The Bronze Serpent

Jesus reached back to one of the strangest episodes in Israel’s wilderness history to explain the cross: the lifting up of a bronze serpent so that those who looked would live (Numbers 21). Study the original story and its connection to what Jesus said about the Son of Man being lifted up. Look and live.

Numbers 21:4–9 • 2 Kings 18:4 • John 3:14–15 • John 12:32–33

Question: *In Numbers 21, the people were dying from snakebites caused by their own rebellion, and the cure required nothing but looking. What does “looking” mean when Jesus used it?*

God So Loved the World

John 3:16 is a well-known verse in the Bible. The word translated “world” (kosmos) throughout John’s gospel is not a neutral term. It often refers to humanity in its rebellion and rejection of God. Study how John uses the word kosmos and what it means that God loved this world.

John 1:10–11 • John 3:16–19 • John 12:31 • 1 John 2:15–17 • Romans 5:8

Question: *Given how John uses the word “world” elsewhere, what does it mean that God loved the kosmos? What does that tell us about the nature of divine love that human love does not?*

Light and Darkness

Jesus says people love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (3:19). This is not primarily a statement about ignorance. It is a statement about preference. Study how the image of light and darkness works in John’s gospel and what it reveals about the nature of unbelief.

John 1:4–5 • John 3:19–21 • John 8:12 • John 12:35–36, 46 • 1 John 1:5–7

Question: *Jesus says those who do truth come to the light so that their works may be seen as “wrought in God” (3:21). What is the connection between honest self-examination and drawing closer to Christ rather than pulling away?*

Series—Crossing Every Border

LESSON 7

The Border of Pride

John 3:22–36 • July 19, 2026

QUESTIONS FROM THE TEXT

1. What dispute arose among John's disciples after Jesus began baptizing nearby? (3:25–26)
2. How did John the Baptist describe his relationship to Jesus? (3:29)
3. What is the summary statement John the Baptist made about his own role? (3:30)
4. How does John compare the One who comes from above with those from the earth? (3:31)
5. What does verse 36 say will rest on the one who does not obey the Son?

THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

1. John the Baptist's ministry was thriving. He had crowds, disciples, recognition. Then Jesus' numbers began to grow and John's began to shrink. His response was not bitterness but joy: "This joy of mine is fulfilled" (3:29). What does it take to genuinely rejoice in another person's increase when it comes at the cost of your own?
2. "He must increase, but I must decrease" (3:30) is one of the most quoted lines in the New Testament. But it is far easier to quote than to live. What in your own life competes with the increase of Christ? What decreasing does faith actually require of you?
3. John says that the one who does not obey the Son will not see life, and the wrath of God abides on him (3:36). Jesus had barely begun His ministry. The stakes here are enormous from the very first chapters. How do you hold together the generosity of John 3:16 and the gravity of John 3:36?

DIGGING DEEPER

The Friend of the Bridegroom

John the Baptist described himself as the friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him and rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice (3:29). Study how the image of the bridegroom for God and His people runs through both Testaments.

Isaiah 62:4–5 • Hosea 2:19–20 • Matthew 25:1–13 • John 3:28–29 • Revelation 19:7–9

Question: *If Jesus is the bridegroom, what does that tell us about the nature of the relationship God is seeking with His people? What does John's role as friend of the bridegroom say about faithful ministry?*

He Must Increase

John's statement in 3:30 is the culminating confession of his entire ministry. Study the pattern of leaders and servants who understood that their role was to point away from themselves.

Isaiah 40:3–5 • Malachi 3:1 • Luke 1:76–79 • John 1:6–8 • John 3:28–30

Question: *John says he is not the Christ but was sent before Him. How does a person hold influence, gifts, or a platform while genuinely making it about someone else? What does that look like today?*

From Above and From the Earth

John 3:31–36 describes a sharp contrast between the one who comes from above and those who are from the earth. This is the same contrast Jesus used with Nicodemus and will use again later in the gospel. Study how this above/below distinction functions as a theological category in John.

John 3:12–13, 31–33 • John 8:23 • John 17:14–16 • 1 Corinthians 15:47–49

Question: *What does it mean that the one who is from the earth speaks from the earth? Why does that make the testimony of the one from above irreplaceable?*

The Spirit Without Measure

Throughout the Old Testament, the Spirit came upon individuals for specific tasks and seasons. Here the claim is that upon Jesus the Spirit rests without limit (3:34). Study the Old Testament anticipation of this and what it means for Jesus' unique authority.

Isaiah 11:1–2 • Isaiah 61:1–2 • Ezekiel 36:27 • John 1:32–34 • John 3:34–35

Question: *The Spirit resting on Jesus without measure is a mark of His unique identity as Messiah. What is the connection between the fullness of the Spirit in Jesus and the gift of the Spirit to believers?*

Series—Crossing Every Border

LESSON 8

The Border of Race, Gender, and Shame

John 4:1–26 • July 26, 2026

QUESTIONS FROM THE TEXT

1. Why did Jesus leave Judea and return to Galilee at this point? (4:1–3)
2. What surprised the Samaritan woman about Jesus' request? (4:9)
3. How did Jesus describe the water He could give her? (4:13–14)
4. What did Jesus reveal about the woman's past? (4:17–18)
5. What did Jesus say about the nature of true worship? (4:23–24)

THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

1. Jesus crossed three borders at once in this conversation: Jewish/Samaritan, male/female, and righteous/ashamed. He did not mention any of them. He simply asked for water. What does this say about the way Jesus approaches people that others have written off?
2. The woman came to draw water at noon, when no one else would be there. She was hiding from her own community. Jesus did not lead with her sin, but He did not avoid it either. When and how Jesus addressed her personal history changed the conversation. What made it feel like liberation rather than condemnation?
3. Jesus told her, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (4:24). This was a direct answer to her evasion about which mountain was the right place to worship. What does it mean that true worship is no longer tied to a location or a ritual system? What does it require instead?

DIGGING DEEPER

Jews and Samaritans

The animosity between Jews and Samaritans ran deep and was centuries old. It had racial, religious, and political dimensions. When Assyria conquered the northern kingdom in 722 B.C., they resettled the land with foreign peoples who intermarried with Israelites who remained. The resulting population, the Samaritans, was viewed as ethnically and religiously compromised. Study the history behind John 4.

2 Kings 17:24–33 • Ezra 4:1–5 • Luke 10:30–37 • John 4:9 • Acts 8:4–8

Question: *The gospel moved through Samaria early and powerfully. What does Jesus' willingness to stop at this well, in this region, with this woman suggest about the reach of the new covenant?*

Living Water

When Jesus offered the woman “living water,” she understood it literally. But Jesus was drawing on a rich Old Testament image of God as the source of life. “Living water” in the Hebrew tradition also linked to purification required for ritual cleansing. Study the background of this image.

Jeremiah 2:13 • Jeremiah 17:13 • Ezekiel 47:1–9 • Zechariah 14:8 • John 7:37–39

Question: *God is described in the Old Testament as a fountain of living water. What does the contrast between Jacob's well and the living water Jesus offers tell us about what He came to give?*

A Woman at the Well

Three times in the Old Testament a significant meeting took place at a well. In each case a woman came to draw water, a man arrived, and a covenant relationship followed. John's original readers would have recognized this pattern.

Genesis 24:10–20 • Genesis 29:1–12 • Exodus 2:15–21 • John 4:6–26

Question: *What was significant about an encounter at a well? Who is the bridegroom in the story Jesus is telling through this encounter, and who is the bride He is pursuing?*

Worship in Spirit and in Truth

The woman tried to redirect Jesus with a religious debate: Jerusalem or Gerizim, which mountain is right? Jesus refused the debate and redefined the question entirely. Study what Jesus means by worship in spirit and in truth.

Deuteronomy 12:5–7 • Isaiah 66:1–2 • John 4:21–24 • Romans 12:1–2 • Philippians 3:3

Question: *What does genuine worship require, and what does it look like when the outer forms of worship have replaced the inner reality?*

Series—Crossing Every Border

LESSON 9

The Border of Who Belongs

John 4:27–54 • August 2, 2026

QUESTIONS FROM THE TEXT

1. How did the disciples react when they saw Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman? (4:27)
2. What did the woman say to the people of her town when she returned from the well? (4:28–29)
3. What did Jesus say was His food? (4:34)
4. How did Jesus describe the state of the harvest fields? (4:35)
5. What happened in the royal official's household after Jesus spoke the word of healing? (4:53)

THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

1. The Samaritan woman left her water jar at the well and ran into the city. She had come to draw water and ended up with something entirely different. She was away from her community and now she is calling them to come see a man who told her everything she had ever done. What changed in her? What is the connection between encountering Jesus and telling someone else?
2. Jesus told His disciples His food was to do the will of the Father and finish His work (4:34). The disciples had gone to buy food while Jesus was having the most significant theological conversation of the chapter. What does it look like to be so focused on the task in front of you that you miss what God is actually doing? How do we recognize the work the Father is currently doing?
3. The royal official made a long journey on behalf of his dying son, begged Jesus for help, and was told to go home because the boy would live. He left without a visible miracle, without Jesus coming with him, trusting only a word. John says he “believed the word” (4:50). What does that kind of faith look like, and what does it cost?

DIGGING DEEPER

The Harvest Is Ready

Jesus looked at the Samaritan people streaming toward the well and spoke of fields that are already white for harvest” (4:35). Study the harvest image in Scripture.

Isaiah 27:12 • Joel 3:13 • Matthew 9:37–38 • John 4:35–38 • Revelation 14:14–16

Question: *Jesus said that others have labored and they have entered into their labor (4:38). Who are the “others”, and what does it mean that the disciples were stepping into a harvest that someone else had prepared? What does that mean for how we think about evangelism and mission?*

Savior of the World

The Samaritans who came to Jesus at the well gave Him a title that was remarkable in the first century: “the Savior of the world” (4:42). Roman emperors used the title “savior” for themselves. Samaritans were not Jews. The world was not just Israel. Study the significance of this confession.

Isaiah 45:22 • Isaiah 49:6 • John 4:39–42 • 1 John 4:14 • Acts 13:47

Question: *What is the relationship between secondhand testimony and personal encounter? What does it mean to say, “We have heard for ourselves”?*

The Second Sign

John carefully identifies the healing of the royal official’s son as the second sign Jesus performed. Both signs happened in Cana. Both involved faith. Study the structure John is building across chapters 2–4.

John 2:11 • John 4:46–54 • John 20:30–31 • Isaiah 65:8

Question: *The official believed when Jesus gave a word. The disciples believed when they saw the first sign. The Samaritans believed when they heard Jesus speak. John is assembling a picture of how people come to faith. What patterns do you notice and which resonates most with your experience?*

Faith That Does Not Require Sight

The royal official traveled from Capernaum to Cana, a journey of roughly twenty miles, to find Jesus. Jesus spoke a word and sent him home. The man believed and walked away. He had no proof until the next day. Study how John uses this scene in the context of the tension between signs and faith.

John 4:48–53 • John 20:29 • Hebrews 11:1 • 2 Corinthians 5:7 • Romans 10:17

Question: *The official went home on the word alone. What distinguished his faith from the crowd around him, and what does that difference look like in a modern Christian?*

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Series Overview

Series 1 — Who Is This?

A PERIOD OF INTRODUCTION — John establishes who Jesus is before a single controversy begins. Word, Lamb, Messiah, Rabbi, Son of God, King of Israel. These titles and concepts surface in four lessons.

Series 2 — Crossing Every Border

A PERIOD OF DISRUPTION — Jesus moves through Jewish sacred spaces and shatters every expectation. The Temple, a Pharisee's roof, and an ancient Samaritan well. No boundaries exist when Jesus arrives.

Series 3 — Signs, Claims, and Controversy

A PERIOD OF CONFLICT — the I AM claims ignite opposition at every feast, and people begin to divide. Signs multiply. Arguments sharpen. By chapter 10, they are reaching for stones.

Series 4 — The Hour Has Come

A PERIOD OF DECISION — Lazarus walks out of a tomb, and the world must choose a side. The raising that should have ended all doubt becomes the trigger for the cross. Crazy responses happen.

Series 5 — The Upper Room

A PERIOD OF PREPARATION — Jesus spends his final hours forming the disciples for everything ahead. Feet washed. A new command given. The Spirit promised. A prayer offered for all who will believe.

Series 6 — It Is Finished

A PERIOD OF COMPLETION — the arrest, trials, crucifixion, and resurrection fulfill the gospel promise. One word from the cross. An empty tomb. A locked room. A pierced hand extended in invitation.

Series 7 — Do You Love Me?

A PERIOD OF RESTORATION — one conversation on a lakeshore closes every open wound the gospel left. Three questions answer three denials. A broken disciple is sent back into the mission.

