

I Am the Resurrection

Jesus is sovereign over all creation.

JOHN 11:32-46

MEMORY VERSE: JOHN 11:25

STUDY John 11:32-46, looking for indications of Jesus's deity and humanity. Use Explore the Text on pages 135-139 to gain insight into the way people responded to Jesus in this encounter. Reflect on how Jesus's humanity impacts our relationship to Him.

CREATE a teaching plan for your group using the ideas on pages 140-142. Focus on helping the group recognize the beauty of Jesus as both fully human and fully divine. Consider ways to incorporate the Music Idea (p. 142) into group time.

GATHER the following items:

- Extra *Personal Study Guides* (PSGs)
- A whiteboard or posterboard and markers
- Any materials needed for the options on page 142

Prepare to display:

- Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outline of John*)

Make copies of:

- Pack Item 9**
(*Handout: Jesus's Humanity and Deity*)
- Pack Item 10**
(*Handout: Seven Signs in John's Gospel*)
- Pack Item 11** (*Handout: Lazarus Has Died*)

CONSULT the weekly Explore the Bible adult podcast to gain insights on the go about this week's study on Ministry Grid, Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, Spotify, Google Podcasts, or at goExploreTheBible.com/adults-training.

REINFORCE the session by evaluating your group's response to death and suffering. Invite leaders within the group to identify ways your group can be prepared to serve and comfort other group members in their times of suffering and mourning.

KEY DOCTRINE

Salvation

Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. (See Proverbs 3:5-6; Romans 1:17.)

FIRST THOUGHTS

Some funerals are different than others. Services for deceased who were not believers seem to have a sense of finality. In contrast, while Christian families grieve, they know they will see their loved ones again. Faith in the resurrected Christ and His promise of eternal life comforts them. The funeral of a believer is not a final goodbye but a temporary farewell until they meet again, where sadness will melt into joy.

(In PSG, p. 118) **What is the most memorable funeral service you have ever attended? Explain.**

BIBLE SKILL

Compare similar events in Scripture.

Compare Jesus's reaction when He raised two other persons from the dead: Mark 5:21-43; Luke 7:11-17. Why was His response different in the case of Lazarus's death? Read Luke 19:41-44. In what ways was Jesus's lamentation over Jerusalem different from His weeping at the tomb of Lazarus?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

JOHN 11:1-57

Having received word that His friend, Lazarus, was sick, Jesus deliberately delayed going to him. In fact, He waited until Lazarus was dead so Lazarus's family and the people around Bethany could witness His power and glorify the Father. At first, Jesus's disciples tried to dissuade Him from going near Jerusalem at all since the Jews there wanted to kill Him. Thomas courageously urged his companions to go along, even if it meant dying with Jesus. Thomas would rather die with Jesus than live without Him.

Once in Bethany, Jesus was met by Lazarus's sisters. Martha came first, then called for Mary. Each sister expressed regret over Jesus's delay. They knew if He had been present, their brother would not have died. Jesus timed His delay, in part, to challenge them to greater faith. He spoke specifically to Martha twice—once to encourage her faith in Him as the resurrection and the life and, later, to remind her that she was going to see God's power.

As the final days before Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection arrived, events solidified the Jewish leaders' determination to destroy Jesus. One of the more powerful influences involved Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Raising a man who had been dead four days caused many in and around the capital to believe in Jesus. Consequently, the priests and leaders of the Sanhedrin determined to kill Lazarus as well.

During the Sanhedrin's conference about what to do, Caiaphas spoke up to defend their plans. He declared that it was more expedient for one man to die than for the entire nation to perish. Caiaphas was speaking in terms of political expedience and missed the irony of the religious leaders' conspiracy. More importantly, he did not comprehend that as High Priest, the Holy Spirit spoke a prophecy through him that defined the meaning

behind Jesus's death. Jesus would indeed die for others—not just for the nation of Israel but for the whole world.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

WEPT (JOHN 11:32-37)

Verse 32

Grief expresses the pain of loss in many ways. Some people are assertive, like Martha. She confronted Jesus as He approached *Bethany* and believed Lazarus's death could have been prevented if Jesus had come when He first heard Lazarus was ill. Nevertheless, she expressed faith that Jesus could ask the Father to do something about it (John 11:22).

Others grieve more quietly. While Martha took the initiative to meet Jesus, her sister, **Mary**, remained in their home. When Martha told Mary that Jesus was calling for her, Mary **came to where Jesus was**. She expressed her grief differently, but it was no less intense than what Martha felt.

When Mary got to Jesus, she **fell at His feet**. Modern cultures may have difficulty relating to this custom, but it demonstrated Mary's helpless grief as well as her loving submission. I witnessed a similar scene during the funeral of a friend's father in India, as local women fell at my friend's feet to acknowledge profound sorrow.

Mary's statement was similar in wording to Martha's, but it conveyed a different tone. Both sisters firmly believed that if Jesus had been present, their **brother wouldn't have died**. However, while Martha appeared more confrontational, Mary spoke with frank sadness. Use of the appellation **Lord** set the tone for her comment. The Greek term here could be translated as "Sir." However, Mary's relationship with Jesus and her faith in Him more accurately renders this word along the lines of "Master."

Verses 33-35

Our Savior feels our pain. As Jesus **saw her** (Mary) **crying**, He recognized the deep loss she felt. The text doesn't say if Martha cried, though it is reasonable to believe she did. Jesus also observed **the Jews who had come with her**. Likely, these were not professional mourners but friends who came to comfort Mary and Martha (John 11:19). The English term *crying* does not reflect the full intensity of wailing and unrestrained weeping.

Jesus was **deeply moved in his spirit and troubled**. The phrase *deeply moved* can also be translated "groaned" (KJV), while *troubled* translates a word meaning "to stir up." Both express strong emotions. Taken together, they reflect the intensity of Jesus's response. Some translations indicate Jesus experienced anger or indignation.

John's reference to Jesus experiencing these emotions *in His spirit* did not mean the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity. In this case, the word pointed to Christ's inner being. Also, a few scholars argue that Jesus reacted to the mourners rather than to Lazarus's death since He knew He

VERSE 32

³² As soon as Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and told him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died!"

VERSES 33-35

³³ When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled.

³⁴ "Where have you put him?" he asked. "Lord," they told him, "come and see." ³⁵ Jesus wept.

would raise His friend from the tomb. Other writers believe Jesus was grieved by the suffering that resulted from human sin at the fall.

Although in His divine omniscience Jesus knew what lay before Him, He nonetheless asked them, **“Where have you put him?”** One way to help distraught people gain control over their emotions is to raise a cognitive question or request some type of physical action. Jesus asked the question not of the comforters but the sisters. Together, Martha and Mary invited Him to **come and see**.

The shortest verse in the Bible (v. 35) is also the most poignant: **Jesus wept**. The term *wept* here differs from the wailing of the mourners described in verse 33. Jesus’s tears were the natural expression of a caring heart. Students of the Scriptures have debated why Jesus wept. One theory looks back to verse 33 and links Jesus’s tears with the deep emotion He felt as He encountered the grieving crowd. Another view focuses on the mourners’ lack of faith.

Some believe Jesus wept because He was about to call Lazarus back from Paradise, and His friend would have to die again in the future. Another possibility reminds us that Jesus was fully human as well as fully divine. Although He knew He would raise Lazarus, He experienced the normal grief response at the death of a dear friend.

Whatever the case, Jesus’s emotional display endears Him to us because He demonstrated His ability to identify with us in our pain—to weep with those who weep (Rom. 12:15). As the writer of Hebrews pointed out, He experienced everything we experience in this life, but He did it without sinning (Heb. 4:15). In the context of Hebrews, the writer was referring specifically to temptation, but it is not a stretch to include grief and other emotions as well.

Verses 36-37

VERSES 36-37

³⁶ So the Jews said,
“See how he loved him!”

³⁷ But some of them
said, “Couldn’t he who
opened the blind man’s
eyes also have kept this
man from dying?”

This last interpretation of Jesus’s tears could find support in the initial understanding of the Jews who stood with Mary and Martha. They said, **“See how he loved him!”** Other commentators argue that this understanding only applied to the Jews’ opinion and was not intended to represent John’s thought. Yet, they were right. Jesus did love Lazarus greatly, so it would make sense that He felt sadness at this loss.

In contrast, other observers on the scene raised different questions. They recalled how Jesus **opened the blind man’s eyes**. Obviously, Jesus possessed supernatural power to heal, so why could He not **have kept this man from dying?** Their issue was not one of ability but of care. If Jesus could have prevented Lazarus’ death, why didn’t He? Believers today sometimes struggle with that same question when they or their loved ones experience tragedy.

Jesus understands the hurts of humanity. He not only comprehends our pain, but He also goes further and does something about it. Sometimes He heals and restores those who are suffering; even when His purpose does not eliminate the source of pain, He grants individuals grace and strength in the midst of suffering. Through it all, His love and presence are constant and dependable.

(In PSG, p. 122) **How does Jesus's emotional response help us approach Him with our hurts and pains?**

BELIEVE (JOHN 11:38-40)

Verse 38

As Jesus **came to the tomb**, Mary and Martha must have wondered what Jesus would do. They had seen Him weep with them and knew He loved them and their brother. Onlookers may have whispered among themselves as they watched the scene. The previous verse notes their mixed feelings about Jesus's intention and abilities.

Meanwhile, Jesus was **deeply moved again**. This phrase used the identical wording as verse 33, except this time Jesus experienced this strong emotion in Himself as opposed to in His spirit. In terms of interpretation, though, the inference is the same. Jesus was wrestling with deep emotions, and He continued to express the exasperation that began when He encountered the mourners. The verb form connotes ongoing action. The mourners' presence, as well as Martha's continued skepticism, produced an emotional response as the Lord prepared to act.

Lazarus's *tomb* was like many burial sites of the day: **It was a cave**. Often, people dug a cave into the side of a hill or small mountain, creating space for one or more bodies. In front of the opening, **a stone was lying against it**. The term for *stone* differs from what we normally think of as a large round rock. This stone was shaped into a wheel-like instrument that could be rolled onto the face of the cave, closing the tomb.

Verses 39-40

Unlike the discussion between the women who approached Jesus's tomb on Easter, no question was asked about who would roll away the stone to access the tomb of Lazarus. Jesus simply said, **"Remove the stone."** His disciples and others in the crowd could handle the task. The issue for Martha, though, was more practical.

It may seem unnecessary to identify Martha as **the dead man's sister**, but John did so to emphasize her position in Lazarus's family. She may have been the older sister, and in other biblical scenes, she took a leading role in her household (Luke 10:38). True to her nature, Martha spoke up.

In her defense, Martha had good reason to raise concerns about the **stench** of bodily decay since Lazarus had been **dead four days**. Jewish burial practices did not include embalming but employed fragrant spices and ointments that were applied to the body. Some scholars suggest the family had not employed these preparations because of the illness that took Lazarus's life. Regardless, after four days, a corpse would have begun to stink. Already traumatized by Lazarus's death, Martha resisted the prospect of being assaulted by the smell of decomposition.

VERSE 38

³⁸ Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.

VERSES 39-40

³⁹ "Remove the stone," Jesus said. Martha, the dead man's sister, told him, "Lord, there is already a stench because he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"

Her reaction, however, contradicted her earlier expression of faith in Jesus as the Son of God (John 11:27). She believed Jesus could ask the Father to intervene in the situation, but when faced with the reality of Lazarus's tomb, Martha hesitated. Jesus gently reminded her that she **would see the glory of God**, as long as she **believed**.

The conditional statement beginning with **if** is tied to the intentional action of belief, which results in the blessing of witnessing God's glory. Before coming to Bethany, Jesus told His disciples that Lazarus's illness would reveal the glory of God and, in doing so, would also glorify the Son (John 11:4). The time had come for that glory to be revealed.

Martha's faith should have rested solely on Jesus's word: **Didn't I tell you**. Often, we only have the Word of God to carry us through the day, but that is enough. Martha was acting on human rationale rather than trusting the power of Jesus.

VERSES 41-42

⁴¹ So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you heard me. ⁴² I know that you always hear me, but because of the crowd standing here I said this, so that they may believe you sent me."

(In PSG, p. 123) **In what ways has God's Word helped you follow His will even when you didn't understand it?**

RETURNED (JOHN 11:41-46)

Verses 41-42

Unspoken acceptance quietly submits to authority and truth. While Martha did not verbally instruct the men to obey Jesus, she accepted His word and yielded her objection. The phrase **so they removed the stone** suggests their action was based on Jesus's command and Martha's assent.

Before the opened tomb, **Jesus raised his eyes** and prayed. We do not have to rationalize God the Son addressing His **Father**. In His humanity Jesus consistently submitted to the Father (John 6:38; Phil. 2:6-11). As the crowd watched, Jesus thanked the Father **that you heard me**. The tense of the verb *heard* indicates Jesus had already spoken to God about Lazarus, possibly during the days of delay before coming to Bethany. He was acting within the purpose for which He had been sent.

Most often, Jesus prayed privately. In this instance, He prayed aloud **because of the crowd standing here**. Jesus wanted the people to associate the raising of Lazarus with faith in Him as Messiah. His purpose was to motivate the people to **believe** the Father had sent Him. Some of these people had seen—or at least heard about—Jesus's miracles of healing. Seeing a man raised from the tomb was a different matter.

Verses 43-44

VERSES 43-44

⁴³ After he said this, he shouted with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out bound hand and foot with linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unwrap him and let him go."

Following His prayer, Jesus **shouted with a loud voice**. Some commentators believe Jesus raised His voice so the crowd could hear Him. Others say it was a shout of victory over death. In either case, with unmistakable authority, Jesus commanded, **"Lazarus, come out."** He did not go into the

tomb. He needed only to speak the word, and death surrendered to life. Jesus also addressed Lazarus specifically and personally.

Lazarus returned to life at the moment he heard Christ calling. Imagine the emotions of Mary and Martha as **the dead man came out**. In reality, Lazarus was no longer dead at all, but he was still **bound hand and foot** and his face was **wrapped in a cloth**. His body had been prepared for death in a manner typical to Jewish tradition. Neither embalmed nor laid in a casket, dead bodies were wrapped in **linen strips** that secured a large cloth around the body. The face was covered with a *cloth*. When Jesus was buried, His body was prepared similarly (John 20:5-7).

Lazarus obviously had difficulty moving, so Jesus commanded the amazed onlookers to **unwrap him and let him go**. Once released from the restraints, Lazarus would be free from the last vestige of death.

Verses 45-46

Therefore links what just happened with the result that followed. Because they witnessed Jesus's power, **many of the Jews . . . believed in him**. These people are identified by two qualities: they **came to Mary** and they **saw what he did**. These were Mary's friends who had come to comfort her. Because they chose to show kindness to their friend, they were on hand to witness Jesus's raising of Lazarus and subsequently believed in Him.

The contrasting conjunction **but** indicates not everyone present became believers. **Some of them**, that is some who saw Lazarus exit the tomb, **went to the Pharisees**. We are not told their motives for telling the Pharisees **what Jesus had done**. At best, they wanted the people who had threatened Jesus to know about His power to raise the dead. At worst, although acquainted with Mary and Martha, they were more concerned with maintaining favor with their religious leaders.

Subsequent verses emphasize the result of their actions as the Pharisees and others intensified their efforts to kill Jesus and even Lazarus, who was a living testimony to Jesus's power (John 12:10-11).

Believers can approach God knowing that He hears them. In his first epistle, John wrote how we have confidence that God hears us as we pray within His will (1 John 5:14). In Christ, we have become children of the Father. Like a loving parent, our heavenly Father loves to hear us talk to Him. Our prayers never go unheeded, which should motivate us to pray even more.

(In PSG, p. 124) **How do we know that God hears us when we pray?**

VERSES 45-46

⁴⁵ Therefore, many of the Jews who came to Mary and saw what he did believed in him.

⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

LEAD GROUP BIBLE STUDY

FOCUS ATTENTION

BEGIN: As the group arrives, call on some volunteers to think of a song they would like to have played at their funeral. Invite them to write the song name on the board or on a large sheet of paper.

DISCUSS: Once most of the group has arrived, direct attention to the board. Lead the group to discuss the different types of songs that people use at funerals. Note how some songs are focused on the future while others are focused on the past. Point out that some choose mournful songs, while others choose celebratory songs.

TRANSITION: *As Christians, we trust in an eternal future with God. While losing a loved one is painful, we do have reason to celebrate. In this session, we will see how Jesus responded when confronted with the death of His dear friend, Lazarus.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

INTRODUCE: Direct attention to **Pack Item 2** (Poster: Outline of John) and distribute copies of **Pack Item 10** (Handout: Seven Signs in John's Gospel) to anyone who does not have a copy. Use the outline to explain that today's session marks the halfway point in John. Guide the group to locate the raising of Lazarus on their handout and note the central point.

SUMMARIZE: Call on the group to read silently the content from Understand the Context on page 119 of the *Personal Study Guide* (PSG). Highlight how Jesus's miracle seemed to be the final straw for the Jewish religious leaders who were already looking to kill Him.

HIGHLIGHT: Distribute Copies of **Pack Item 9** (Handout: Jesus's Humanity and

Deity). Ask: **What have you seen the most in John's Gospel so far?** Discuss responses.

TRANSITION: *To this point, Jesus had done a lot to reveal His deity to others. But this miracle also demonstrates His humanity. As we examine John 11:32-46, pay attention for signs of Jesus's humanity and His deity.*

READ: Direct a volunteer to read aloud John 11:32-37. Encourage the rest of the group to listen for the emotions on display in these verses.

STUDY: Create an even number of teams and direct each team to examine the content for verses 32-37 (PSG, pp. 120-122). Instruct half the teams to discuss Mary's history with Jesus, while the other half discusses words and phrases like "crying," "deeply moved," "troubled," and "wept." After a few minutes, allow volunteers from each group to share what they learned about their topics.

ASK: How should we respond to people who are hurting? Should our response vary from person to person? (PSG, p. 120) Distribute copies of **Pack Item 11** (Handout: Lazarus Has Died). Encourage the group to read the section "The Impact of Lazarus's Death on Mary and Martha" and discuss how cultural circumstances may have made Lazarus's death even more painful for the sisters.

STUDY: Lead the group in completing the Bible Skill (PSG, p. 121). Direct the group in pairs to read and reflect on Mark 5:21-43; Luke 7:11-17; and Luke 19:41-44. Encourage the pairs to respond to the questions in the activity. After a few minutes, invite the pairs to share how Jesus's deity and humanity are both on display in these situations and how that compares to John 11:32-37.

ASK: *How does Jesus's emotional response help us approach Him with our hurts and pains?* (PSG, p. 122)

TRANSITION: *Jesus's grief was real, but so was His commitment to reveal God's glory. He was ready to demonstrate God's power and authority in an unmistakable way.*

READ: Invite a volunteer to read **John 11:38-40**, paying attention to how Martha responded to Jesus's command.

EXPLAIN: Prior to the session, secure a photo of a first-century Jewish tomb. During the group time, display the picture and use the information from verses 38-40 (PSG, p. 122) and the section entitled "First Century Burial Practices" from **Pack Item 11** to help the group better understand Lazarus's tomb.

CONSIDER: *Was Martha's reaction an act of disobedience?* Point out that Lazarus had been dead for four days, and Martha understood decomposition and death. Read and discuss the section "Dead Four Days" from **Pack Item 11** to give more context to the significance of Martha's objections. Ask: *How do our past experiences get in the way of demonstrating faith in Jesus?* (PSG, p. 123)

READ: Read aloud **John 11:41-46**, encouraging the group to look for proof of Jesus's divine authority.

ASK: *How is this similar to other miracles we have studied? How is it different?* Note Jesus's emphasis on God's glory (v. 40) and the people's belief (v. 42). Remind the group that John's goal was to reveal Jesus as the Messiah and to lead people toward faith in Him as Savior. Emphasize that this miracle was a precursor for His own death and resurrection.

EXAMINE: Call on the group to circle the commands Jesus made in verses 38-46.

Direct attention to the summary statement for this session: **Jesus is sovereign over all creation** (PSG, p. 118). Ask: *How do Jesus's actions here demonstrate His sovereignty over all creation?*

ASSERT: *Jesus's emotional response to Lazarus's death and His dependence on the Father highlighted His humanity. But His actions in verses 43-46 are undeniable evidence of His deity. Only God can give life to a corpse.*

COMPARE: *How did people respond to this miracle?* Highlight the different responses in verses 45-46. Point out that every person must choose what to do with Jesus, to either accept Him or reject Him. Guide the group to read silently the Key Doctrine on page 125 of the PSG. Emphasize the need for accepting Jesus by faith and surrendering to Him as Lord.

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

REVIEW: On a whiteboard or a large sheet of paper, write the following words: *Mourn, Obey, Pray*. Call attention to the application statements under Apply the Text. (PSG, p. 126) Lead the group in discussing ways Jesus's example guides us in each of the areas listed on the board.

RESPOND: Encourage the group to silently reflect on the second set of questions under Apply the Text (PSG, p. 126). Encourage them to honestly evaluate their level of obedience and to ask God to help them overcome the obstacles that hinder them from following Him fully.

PRAY: Close in prayer, praising Jesus as sovereign over all creation and thanking Him for the promise of eternal life.

OPTIONS

Use these options to supplement and enhance the group plans on the previous pages.

MUSIC

Play the song “Jesus Promised Me a Home Over There,” as performed by Jennifer Hudson. Invite the group to consider how this song recognizes pain and suffering while also embracing the hope held by believers for the future.

JOURNAL

Gather small notebooks and pens.

Distribute the notebooks and invite the group to create personal prayer journals. Call on them to list an answered prayer at the top of each of the first few pages. These can be recent or from the past and can include prayers for themselves or others. Then encourage them to write current prayer requests on the first page of their journals. Suggest that as God answers prayers they can continue the pattern of recording their answered prayers at the top of future pages and then listing prayer requests under these answered prayers.

NATURAL

Pre-enlist a volunteer to create a short presentation on something from the natural world that amazes them. (*Examples: a plant or animal, a system of the human body, an aspect of physics, or the solar system*) Encourage the group to consider some magnificent details that God put into the creation of this thing and how God sustains it. After the presentation, direct attention to the summary statement for this session: *Jesus is sovereign over all creation.* Ask: ***Where do you see Jesus’s sovereignty at work when you look at (the item presented)? What impact does that have on your own relationship with God?***

CASE STUDY

Prior to the group meeting, create a case study about two sisters who are mourning the death of a brother. Base one sister on Mary and one on Martha. Explain their different approaches to expressing and dealing with grief. Present this case study and ask: ***How should we respond to people who are hurting? Should our response vary from person to person?*** (PSG, p. 120) Encourage a few volunteers to share how people ministered to them during times of grief and what made those expressions so meaningful. Challenge the group to spend time praying and asking God for wisdom in ministering to those in grief.

REFLECTIVE

To close the session, allow space for individual prayer. Invite the group to spread out and encourage them to consider how they are experiencing grief and suffering at the moment. Urge them to follow Mary’s example and to bring that to the feet of Jesus, knowing that Jesus grieves with them.

REVIEW

Create some double-spaced copies of John 1:1-18 and gather pens.

Divide the group into small teams of three or four people and assign each team a portion of John 1:1-18. Direct the teams to review their PSG for instances in John 1-11 where Jesus exemplified the characteristics in their assigned portion of John 1. Invite teams to record those on their copy of John 1:1-18 and to share with the group.

LEADER PACK IDEAS

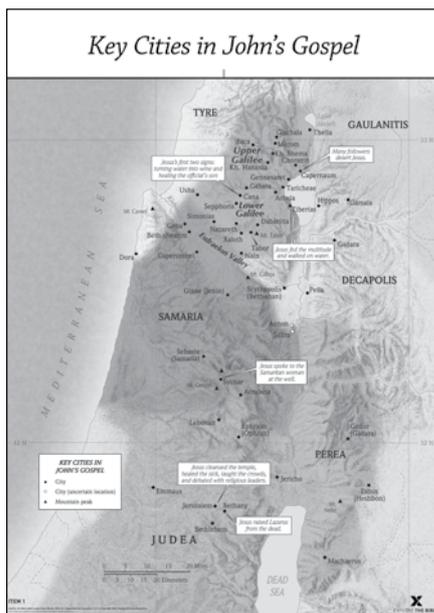
These items are available in the *Explore the Bible Leader Pack* (print and digital). Visit goExploreTheBible.com to purchase.

PACK ITEM 1

Map: Key Cities in John's Gospel

Sessions 1-13

Use the map on page 155 or locate a map in a Bible atlas that highlights Galilee, Samaria, and Judea as they existed during Jesus's earthly ministry. Identify places where Jesus ministered in the first eleven chapters of John's Gospel.

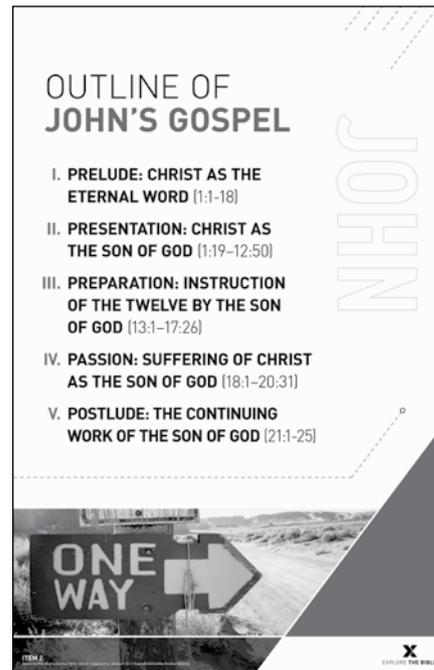


PACK ITEM 2

Poster: Outline of John's Gospel

Sessions 1-13

Refer to an outline of John's Gospel in the CSB Study Bible or on page 9 of the PSG.



PACK ITEM 3

Poster: Seven Signs in John's Gospel

Sessions 3, 7, 8, 11, 13

Make a poster using the following list:

- Changing water to wine (2:1-11)
- Healing the official's son (4:43-54)
- Healing the invalid in Bethesda (5:1-15)
- Feeding the five thousand (6:1-15, 25-69)
- Walking on water (6:16-21)
- Healing the man born blind (9:1-41)
- Raising Lazarus (11:1-44)

PACK ITEM 4

Poster: First-Century Jewish Factions

Sessions 7-13

Create a list of the following Jewish religious groups from the first century:

- Pharisees
- Sadducees
- Zealots
- Essenes

PACK ITEM 5

Key Verse: Luke 2:11

Session 4

Create a poster with Luke 2:11 for the Christmas lesson:

“Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”

PACK ITEM 6

Key Verse: John 3:16

Session 5

Create a poster with John 3:16:

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

PACK ITEM 7

Handout: John Time Line

Sessions 1-13

Locate a study Bible with a time line of the major people and events in the Gospel of John. Use it as a reference throughout your study of the book.

PACK ITEM 8

Handout: Memory Verses Bookmark

Sessions 1-13

Make a list of these suggested memory verses to distribute to your group

- John 1:14
- John 1:43b
- John 2:19
- Luke 2:11
- John 3:16
- John 4:14
- John 5:21
- John 6:33
- John 7:29
- John 8:12
- John 9:25
- John 10:14
- John 11:25

PACK ITEM 9

Handout: Jesus’s Humanity and Deity

Sessions 1-13

Use a Bible dictionary, handbook, concordance, or other resource to create a chart that lists verses reflecting Jesus’s humanity in one column and verses reflecting His deity in another column.

PACK ITEM 10

Handout: Seven Signs in John's Gospel

Sessions 3, 7, 8, 11, 13

Use a Bible dictionary, handbook, or other resource to create a chart that lists Jesus's seven miraculous signs from John's Gospel and describes how each revealed Jesus's power and His role as Messiah.

PACK ITEM 11

Handout: Lazarus Has Died

Session 13

Use a Bible dictionary, handbook, or other resource to create a handout that explains who Lazarus was, along with providing information about first-century Jewish death and burial practices.

PACK ITEM 13

Handout: John's Use of "Logos"

Session 1

Use a Bible dictionary, handbook, or other resource to create a handout that explains the meaning and significance of the Greek word "logos" in the opening verses of John's Gospel.

PACK ITEM 14

Handout: First-Century Jewish Factions

Sessions 7-13

Use a Bible dictionary, handbook, or other resource to create a handout that explains the backgrounds and basic beliefs of the first-century Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, and Essenes.

LAZARUS HAS DIED

The raising of Lazarus made the general and dramatic case to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. The story is told in the opening verses of the Gospel of John, the resurrection of Jesus. Despite Lazarus's familiarity to Christian teaching and preaching, very little is known about him. In fact, he does not appear to any Gospel except John's and, even in John, he only appears in chapters 11-12.¹

We do know that the name Lazarus was a Greek form of the Hebrew name Eleazar, which means "God helps."² Although for some readers, John's narrative, Lazarus was raised by Jesus (John 11:32-44) and an event related to 11:17. Mary and Martha appear only once outside of John in John 12:1-8, in both accounts. Martha is called the "sister of Lazarus" in John 11:21-27. In both accounts, Martha is called the "sister of Lazarus" and is the one who prepares the meal.

Lazarus, Mary, and Martha lived in Bethany, a town about a half-mile from Jerusalem. Bethany is the home of the two disciples, Peter, James, and John, who were with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. A contemporary Jewish tradition relating to the tomb in the town of Bethany (Lazarus's resurrection) could be helpful.³

THE IMPACT OF LAZARUS'S DEATH

ON MARY AND MARTHA

These things took place when Jesus and his disciples were about to go to Jerusalem. Jesus had said to them, "I am going to Jerusalem, and I will die there. After three days I will rise again. Then I will go to my Father's house and my Father's friends and my friends and my brothers and my sisters and all who know me will come to me there." (John 11:51-52)

Although some Christians see a connection with the "sister" and the "brother" of Lazarus, it is not clear from the text that Lazarus's death would have had an effect on them. In fact, the text indicates a personal relationship between Lazarus and his sisters. In the absence of a strong father, husband, or a brother, a woman could be her mother.⁴

There is other text that relates an interaction. Mary and Martha were to have property, money, and land, and would have been involved in the raising of Lazarus. It is likely that they were not only his sisters but also his mother and his brother's wife.

FIRST-CENTURY BURIAL PRACTICES

In Jewish burial practices, the deceased person's name was often, the words "buried," and the body washed and anointed with spices. The bones were then placed in a stone tomb.

1. The names of the people mentioned in the text are given in the text. 2. The names of the people mentioned in the text are given in the text. 3. The names of the people mentioned in the text are given in the text. 4. The names of the people mentioned in the text are given in the text.

ITEM 11
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Examples from *Explore the Bible Leader Pack*. The Pack is available for purchase at [goExploreTheBible.com](https://www.explorethebible.com).

PACK ITEM 12

Handout: Jews and Samaritans

Session 6

Use a Bible dictionary, handbook, or other resource to create a handout that explains who the Samaritans were and why they had such a tense relationship with first-century Jews.

Sabbath Laws of the First Century



Nehemiah ordered to guard the city gates, for the adherence of the Sabbath Rest (Nehemiah 13, 21). Wood engraving, published in 1886.

- By law, Jews could not sell anything to a non-Jew if what was sold would not reach its destination before the Sabbath began.
- Bread could not be put in the oven when darkness was falling on the Sabbath, as it would not be done before the Sabbath began.
- Untying a knot was forbidden if it required both hands.
- A man could not wear nail-studded wooden shoes on the Sabbath because this would be constituted as plowing on the Sabbath.
- A woman could walk around in her own courtyard with false hair, but she could not walk around on the streets with it.
- One could only drink a mouthful of milk on the Sabbath.
- One could drink only the amount of wine to equal the three-eighths of an egg's bulk.

- A schoolmaster could watch his students read, but he could not read.
- Rabbis disagreed whether or not a cripple person whose leg was cut off could go out with his wooden stump.
- Sons of kings could go out with bells on their clothing.
- A scorpion could be covered [or killed] on the Sabbath so it would not bite.
- Jews considered it unlawful to fill a dish with oil and a wick and put it close to a lamp so that one may have light.
- Beds were to be spread prior to the Sabbath for the Sabbath day, but not on the Sabbath for the night following the Sabbath.
- One could not hold enough ink to write two letters as this would constitute a “burden.”
- A person could not put an egg beside a boiling kettle on the Sabbath to cook it.
- Nor could anyone bury the egg in hot sand or in the dust on the road to cook it.
- If a man fell asleep while on a journey and night fell on the Sabbath, he could move in any direction only 2,000 cubits (about .56 mile). (Some adjustments were made to this according to different rabbis.)
- The restriction of 2,000 cubits distance one could go from his house was established for safety’s sake, “to keep one from transgression.” (Staying close to home would keep a man from getting into trouble.)
- If a man was on a journey and Sabbath darkness overtook him, he could establish a familiar tree on the road as his “Sabbath” by stating, “Let my Sabbath resting-place be at the root of this tree” and thus could walk a distance of 2,000 cubits from the root of the tree. The Sabbath limit could be extended farther toward his house up to a distance of 2,000 cubits more. Thus he could travel 4,000 cubits (about 1.1 mile) to his house after dark on the Sabbath.

The Mishnah

Where did these rules come from? *The Mishnah*, which is a recorded compilation of Jewish laws that previously had been passed down orally. Rabbis, deliberating with heated discussion, sought about 220 BC to set the boundaries of interpretation of that law. The result of their work was *the Mishnah*.

The Mishnah has six divisions, which are further divided into tractates. The “Shabbath” (“Sabbath”) is the first of twelve tractates in the second division. “Erubin,” the second of the tractates in the second division, was written to make the oral law related to the Sabbath more bearable by extending the boundaries. First-century Jews considered the study of the Talmud of first importance, the Mishnah second, and lastly Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament).

Jesus and the Sabbath

No wonder Jesus’s Sabbath Day ministry works conflicted with the Pharisees and their devotion to oral law. One Sabbath day Jesus and His disciples traveled through a grain field (Mark 2:23-24). The disciples, who were hungry, picked some heads of grain to eat. The Pharisees, who regarded the disciples’ behavior as work, were quick to point out that Jesus’s disciples had done something unlawful on the Sabbath.



Jesus responded in two ways. First, He pointed to an Old Testament example where human need took precedence over the law. David and his soldiers, in need of food, entered the tabernacle and ate the bread of the Presence (1 Sam. 21:1-6).

Second, Jesus gave a principle for all Sabbath observances: “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. So then, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27-28). Jesus believed God had instituted the Sabbath for the benefit of people, not for mere adherence to legalistic rules. The lordship of Jesus, not petty regulations, should determine how people observe the Sabbath.

Several times in the Gospel accounts Jesus defended the work He did on the Sabbath (see Mark 3:1-5; Luke 13:10-17;

John 5:1-18; 9:1-41). Jesus always placed human need above external observances of Sabbath laws. He emphasized the purposes and the spirit of Sabbath law instead of the external regulations of the oral law.

The article was adapted from the Spring 2006 issue of *Biblical Illustrator*.

“Witness” in John’s Writings

By Mark R. Dunn

Witness is an important biblical concept by which John emphasized the certainty of the good news of Christ. John wanted his readers to understand that his Gospel was reliable, so he focused attention on the witnesses affirming the truth of Jesus’s message.

When the New Testament era arrived, with Jesus appearing in human form, God the Father provided strategic, authoritative witnesses to affirm His message. Amazingly, as John showed, God excellently fulfilled His own criterion for authoritative witnesses. All four Gospels begin Jesus’s story with a confirming witness, John the Baptist. Nevertheless, John the apostle revealed the full spectrum of witnesses affirming the credibility of Jesus’s message.

In John 1

John’s prologue showcases several themes in his Gospel. Three times, variants of the Greek word for “witness” appear, emphasizing the authoritative testimony of John the

Baptist and introducing the idea that Jesus’s ministry advanced with the testimonials of strategically placed witnesses. John’s prologue climaxes with the Word taking on human flesh (John 1:14). The importance of an authoritative witness to Jesus’s earthly identity was so great that John immediately interrupted this high moment to reassert that John the Baptist testified regarding Jesus’s eternal status and divine authority.

Beyond the prologue of John’s Gospel, John the Baptist practically bore witness to Jesus’s authority. First, he testified regarding Jesus, and some of John’s disciples followed Jesus (1:19-39). Next, the disciples bore their own testimony and more disciples followed Jesus (1:40-51). Importantly, the affirmation of Jesus’s authority coincided with the onset of His ministry.

In the Remainder of John

The seven appearances of “witness” in John 1 are only a start. Nearly half of the New Testament occurrences of “witness” appear in John’s writings. More significantly, John’s use dominates the two most frequent words for “witness,” one being a noun and the other, a verb.¹



In all, “witness” has some forty more appearances in John’s Gospel. This dominance influenced two commentators to characterize the material from 1:19 through 11:54 as “Testimony,” rendering the major sections of John as: Prologue, Testimony, and Passion.²

According to John, Jesus’s ministry was characterized as contending for human belief. Therefore, Jesus’s witness-attested message perfectly positioned Him in His struggle to win people to Himself.

Two well-known features of John’s Gospel are the seven “I Am” statements and the seven signs. Similarly, John mentioned seven witnesses who affirm Jesus’s message. Those witnesses include the following:

1. John the Baptist
2. The collective body of signs
3. God the Father
4. The testimony of Scripture
5. Jesus’s testimony about Himself
6. The Holy Spirit’s witness.
7. The disciples’ witness

Being one of the disciples, John penned his testimony late in his Gospel.³

In John’s Other Works

Outside his Gospel, John continues to use “witness” in his other writings. First John contains twelve occurrences of the noun and verb form. John’s strongest statement regarding the heavenly testimony affirming Jesus comes in 1 John 5:9-11, which uses the word “witness” eight times. This passage states the Father testified regarding His Son and whoever receives Jesus has this testimony within him- or herself.

Second John contains no occurrences of the word, but the tiny epistle of 3 John includes five uses of “witness” and showcases an important point. In 3 John, communication is a testimony, and truth-

telling is a good testimony. Living by God’s truth is a testimony for which John had become known.

In the book of Revelation, “witness” appears nineteen times. Jesus is the faithful witness who testified regarding God’s word. Other witnesses testify: a named believer; Christian martyrs; and Moses and Elijah, who represent the testimony of Scripture (law and prophets). Throughout Revelation, evil forces fight against the testimony of God’s servants. Further, angels affirm the authenticity of the visions that reveal how God’s truth prevails.

In Believers

One hallmark of John’s writings is his persistent emphasis on the gospel’s integrity, as John concentrated his attention on witnesses verifying the gospel’s truth. The gospel stands strong today, communicating God’s truth and transforming lives. Believers can trust the gospel message because it was established by God’s authority and a range of well-placed witnesses.

1. The verb, *martureo*, *martyreo*, occurs 76 times in the New Testament and 47 times in John’s writings, including 33 times in his Gospel. The related noun, *martupia*, *martyria*, occurs 37 times in the New Testament and 30 times in Johannine writings, including 14 times in his Gospel.

2. J. N. Sanders and B. A. Mastin, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St John*, in *Black’s New Testament Commentaries* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), 1.

3. The seven witnesses of Jesus: (1) John the Baptist (John 1:7, 8, 15, 19, 32, 34; 3:26; 5:33); (2) the Signs (5:36; see also 10:37-38; 14:11); the Father (5:37; 8:18; 10:25; see also 14:10); (4) Scripture (5:39); (5) Jesus (3:11; 8:14, 17-18; 18:37); (6) The Holy Spirit (15:26); (7) Jesus’ disciples (v. 27)—including, John (19:35; 21:24).

Mark R. Dunn formerly served as teaching pastor at Duncanville’s First Baptist Church, Duncanville, Texas. He currently is president of Take Hope Ministries. This article was adapted from the Spring 2020 issue of *Biblical Illustrator*.

Why We Don't Share the Gospel

By Ken Braddy

When people find a great new restaurant, golf course, retail store, or ice cream shop, they will go to great lengths on social media to let others know about their discovery. Word-of-mouth advertising takes over and things can go viral. You've seen it happen, I know.

One of our primary responsibilities as Christians is to share the good news of Jesus with others. The Great Commission is clear: We are called to make disciples, and that process takes place when we introduce people to Jesus's redemptive work on their behalf.

Many believers don't step out in faith and share what they've discovered about Jesus for a number of reasons. As a group leader, you can help them share the Good News. Here are three reasons why people don't share their faith, and how to help them tell others about the most important message in the world:

1. People don't know a simple gospel presentation.

I remember the day when people used to attend 12-week seminars to learn a one-hour gospel presentation. Honestly, I doubt many people today will sit still that long, either to learn the presentation or to listen to it! That's why knowing a simple gospel presentation you can share "on the back of a napkin" is really important.

I prefer the one used by The Navigators, their "one-verse evangelism" presentation.¹ It's based on Romans 6:23 and can be written down and shared quickly and conversationally. As a person who has led Bible study groups, I've taught group members this one-verse method, and it is easy to learn and share with others. In fact, this one-verse method feels more like a conversation than a presentation. It's highly visual, too.

2. People don't know how to articulate their testimony.

The second thing that people don't know is how to give an "elevator speech" about their come-to-Jesus moment. If they haven't thought it out, they just don't know where

SHARE

to start. Thankfully, people can be taught to write out their Jesus story (their testimony) in three parts: their life before coming to Christ, the situation surrounding their salvation experience, and their life after receiving Jesus as their Savior.

Group leaders can help with this by giving group members time to write their stories out during a Bible study session, and then give them more time to practice sharing their testimony with another person in the group. This gives people a safe place to practice and hone their story. As their confidence rises, so will the chances that they will speak up when the moment arises with a non-believing person.

When your group has an evangelistic, gospel-centered study, that is a great time to do this with them. You can even include it as a learning exercise woven into your lesson plan.

3. People don't feel the urgency to share.

Just like Peter's critics (see 2 Peter 3) who thought that Jesus's return wasn't going to happen, believers can be lulled into thinking that Jesus's return isn't imminent. Peter reminded his opponents that the Lord counts time differently than humans do. He "delays" His return so that more people can hear and accept the gospel. Unbelievers at Christ's return will face a terrible day

of judgment, which should motivate us to share the gospel with them.

Second Peter 3 is a sobering chapter that encourages all believers to embrace the urgency of the hour and get busy sharing the gospel. It's a passage that group leaders can teach to help their group members see the seriousness and the urgency of helping others hear about Jesus.

1. <https://www.navigators.org/resource/one-verse-evangelism/>

Ken Braddy currently serves as Lifeway's Director of Sunday School. In addition to his work at Lifeway, Ken has more than two decades of experience as an education pastor, author, conference leader, and blogger. His most recent book, *Breakthrough: Creating a New Scorecard for Group Ministry Success* (B&H Publishing, 2002) is available for purchase at www.lifeway.com. This article is adapted from a blog post that originally appeared on kenbraddy.com, where you can learn more about Ken's ministry and read more about his thoughts on Bible Study leadership.

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COMING **NEXT QUARTER**

JOHN 12-21

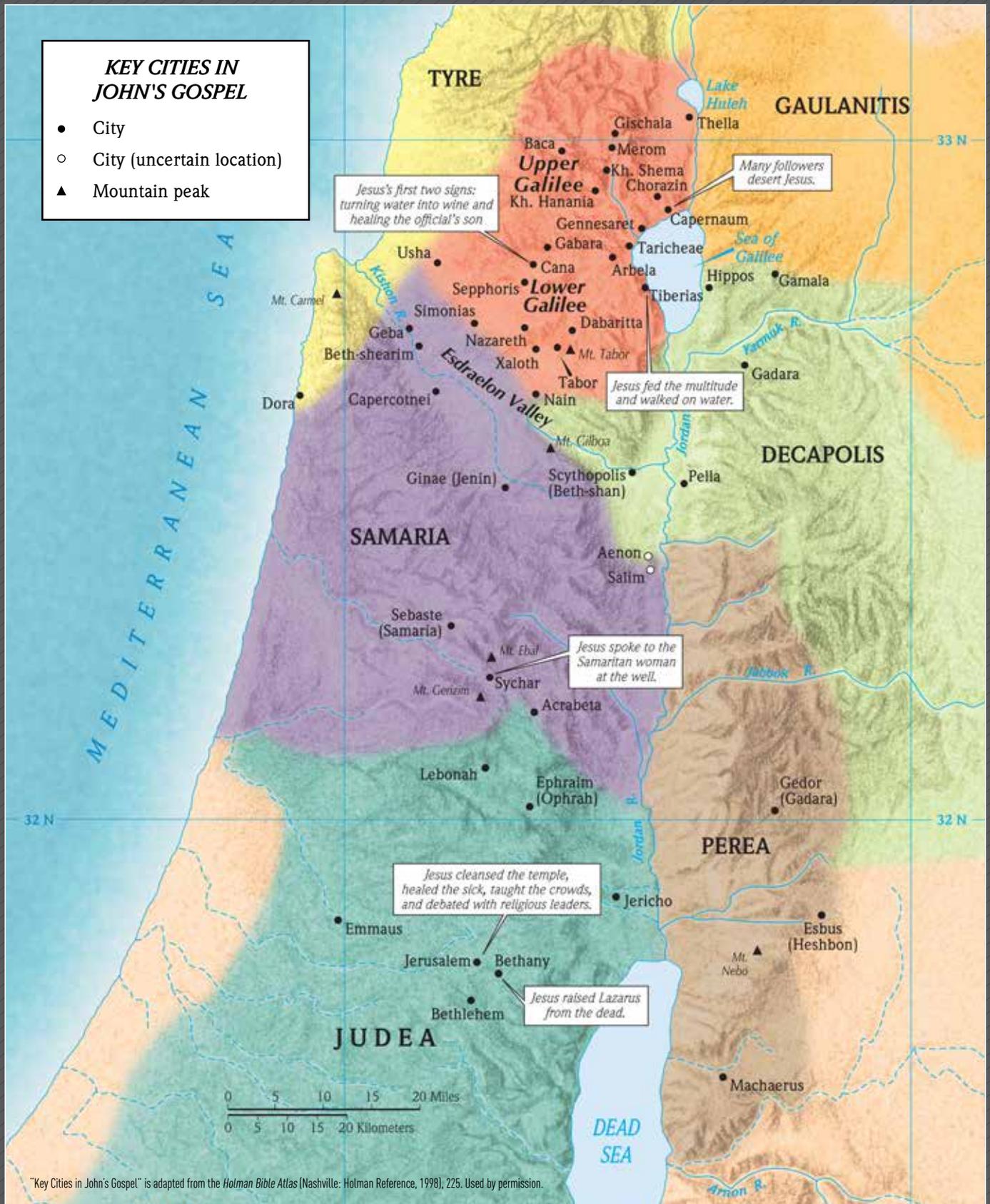
- Session 1* **Why Wasn't This Sold?** • John 12:1-11
- Session 2* **If It Dies** • John 12:20-33
- Session 3* **I Will Come Again** • John 13:31-14:6
- Session 4* **Peace I Leave** • John 14:16-29
- Session 5* **Remain in Me** • John 15:1-17
- Session 6* **I Have Seen** • John 20:1-18
- Session 7* **When the Spirit Comes** • John 15:26-27; 16:7-15
- Session 8* **I Pray** • John 17:13-26
- Session 9* **I Am He** • John 18:1-11
- Session 10* **I Find No Fault** • John 18:28-40
- Session 11* **It Is Finished** • John 19:17-30
- Session 12* **Reach out Your Hand** • John 20:19-29
- Session 13* **Do You Love Me?** • John 21:15-23

JOHN

Key Cities in John's Gospel

KEY CITIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak



"Key Cities in John's Gospel" is adapted from the *Holman Bible Atlas* (Nashville: Holman Reference, 1998), 225. Used by permission.

JOHN 1-11

The apostle John was open and honest about why he wrote his Gospel. He longed for people to recognize Jesus as God's Son and to find eternal life in His name. Every miraculous sign and every powerful sermon point to Christ's role as Messiah and emphasize His offer of abundant life. That's why, even today, readers continue to connect deeply with John's Gospel—and with the Savior his Gospel reveals.

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