



Discovering Jesus in the New Testament

Small Group Lessons

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Discovering Jesus in the New Testament
Small Group Lesson #1, The Baptism & Temptation of Jesus

OPENING PRAYER

Opening Questions: Why even talk about baptism? Isn't it just a symbol and therefore not really important? Or could it be that symbols really are important? Can you think of something symbolic that's really important to you in either a good or a bad way?

"²¹Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, ²²and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:21–22, ESV)

The Baptism of Jesus:

1) Jesus went _____ to be baptized.

"¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.

2) John demurred, seeing that _____ and didn't need to be baptized.

¹⁴John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

3) Jesus agreed but said it was _____ to do.

¹⁵But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

Why?

- **To be the perfect _____ of what a disciple does.**

"¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

*¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18–20, ESV)*

*"⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by **taking the form of a servant**, being born in the likeness of men." (Philippians 2:5–7, ESV)*

A Profound Revelation of God's Nature:

1) God reveals Himself publicly as _____.

¹⁶And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13–17, ESV)

- **The Father – speaking His _____ with His Son.**

¹⁰And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1:10–11, ESV)

- **The Son – acting as a _____ & our _____:**

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. (Mark 1:9, ESV)

- **The Holy Spirit – symbolically promising to be with Him _____.**

³²And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it **remained on him**.

³³I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.’” (John 1:29–34, ESV)

2) What was hinted at in the Old Testament is _____ at the beginning of Jesus ministry.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion ... over all the earth...” (Genesis 1:27, ESV)

INTO THE BATTLE:

1) The Spirit guided Jesus into the wilderness to face his, and our, _____.

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴But he answered, “It is written, “‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”” (Matthew 4:1–4, ESV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) Jesus was baptized because it was the right thing to do. But *why* was it right? He was sinless and pure so why did he bother with it?

2) Why is baptism a part of becoming a Christian anyway? What real difference does it make?

3) How confusing do you find the doctrine of the Trinity to be? Can you state it in one simple sentence? Give it a try!

4) God reveals his Triune nature very clearly here. Why do this at Jesus’ baptism? What, if anything, do the actions of the members of the Trinity tell us about their role in our lives?

5) Why did the Spirit “guide” (Mark says, “drove” same word used to describe drive out demons!) Jesus into temptation? Are we supposed to avoid that?

6) What is the significance of Jesus dealing with Satan *before* His ministry begins, and then again at the end during the Last Supper?

7) Are the temptations Jesus faced (his bodily drives – hunger etc. – presuming upon God and finally taking a painless short to “fulfill” his mission on earth) anything like the temptations that we face today?

SHARE PRAYER NEEDS THEN CLOSE IN PRAYER

**Discovering Jesus in the New Testament
Small Group Lesson #2, The Sermon on the Mount**

OPENING PRAYER

Opening Questions: When you think about the Sermon on the Mount what comes to mind first? If you were challenged to sum up the Sermon on the Mount in five words or less, what would you say?

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT:

1) The key truth of this sermon as a follower Jesus I *must and will be* _____ from those around me.

8*Do not be like them...* (Matthew 6:8a, ESV)

7*And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do...* (Matthew 6:7a, ESV)

16*And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites...* (Matthew 6:16a, ESV)

Jesus Exemplified This:

16*And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"* (Mark 2:16, ESV)

1*Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, ²"Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat."* (Matthew 15:1–2, ESV)

27*Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?"* (John 4:27, ESV)

2) Jesus calls & commands me to be different in _____ of my life.

The Beatitudes (My Character) (5:3-12)
How I Influence Others (5:13-16)
Follow Jesus NOT Tradition (5:17-48)

How I Pray & Fast (6:1-18)
My Greatest Ambition (6:19-34)
My Relationships (7:1-20)
My Commitment to Christ (7:21-27)

3) This starts with what I _____ most.

3*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matthew 5:3–6, ESV)*

As always Jesus uses very strong language here:

- **Poor in Spirit – poor = _____**
- **Mourn = _____**
- **Hunger, Thirst = _____**

4) It extends to how I _____

“⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:44–48, ESV)

5) Then it applies to my relationship with _____.

“²⁴No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” (Matthew 6:24, ESV)

“²¹Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21, ESV)

6) The end result of following Jesus is have a life that will not _____ or _____.

*“²⁴Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on **the rock**. ²⁵And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.”* (Matthew 7:24–25, ESV)

*“²⁶And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and **great was the fall of it.**”* (Matthew 7:26–27, ESV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Some theologians teach that this sermon isn't meant for us, but only for those who live during the Millennium. Agree or disagree and why?**
- 2) Jesus urges and teaches throughout this sermon for us to be different. What's the problem with that? Do people really want to be different? Does culture reward or punish those who dare to be different? How do you feel personally about *you being different*?**
- 3) What do I value most in life? What character traits of mine need changing to come into line with what Jesus said in this sermon?**
- 4) Several times in this sermon Jesus says, “You have heard it said...but I say...” What does that tell us about Jesus' authority? Where did he get the right to reject ancient traditions? Do I have that same right today?**
- 5) The dictionary defines “enemy” as, “one that is antagonistic to another...something harmful or deadly.” Given that definition how is it possible to love an enemy? Does that mean I have to let my enemy destroy me?**
- 6) The wise build their lives on the Rock of Jesus. In practical terms, how do I do that? What will happen when the storms of life hit me if I fail to do this?**

SHARE PRAYER NEEDS THEN CLOSE IN PRAYER

Discovering Jesus in the New Testament

Small Group Lesson Three: Resurrection of Lazarus

Open with Prayer

Opening Questions

1. Think about a time that you lost a loved one, what was your initial reaction?
2. What is your normal reaction towards God when you go through a difficult season?

Lesson Video and Fill-in-the-Blanks

- **They focus on Jesus' _____ and his _____**
So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." John 11:2
- **Jesus takes the _____ and turns it to the _____**
"This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." John 11:4
- **All that He does is in _____ timing, not _____ timing**
So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. John 11:6
- **Judea was a _____ place for Jesus and His followers**
The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. John 10:31, 39
- **Jesus was ready to _____ meet the needs of His people**
"Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and you are going there again?" John 11:8
- **Sleep is a metaphor for _____**
"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." John 11:11
- **Martha was extremely _____ and _____ in her statement to Jesus**
"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." John 11:21
- **Jesus isn't afraid of my _____**
- **Jesus is the _____ and the _____**
"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26
- **Jesus is able to _____ with me**
He was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. Jesus wept. John 11:32b, 35
- **Jesus is indeed the _____**

That they may believe you sent me. John 11:42b

Discussion Questions

1. The Gospel of John is the only gospel that records the death and resurrection of Lazarus. Why do you think that is and how does it tie in with what you know about the Gospel of John?
2. The disciples were hesitant for Jesus to return to Bethany, do you believe this was a justified fear? How did Jesus' response differ from the disciples?
3. Jesus was "deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled." What does this reveal about God? How is this of comfort to Christians?
4. We see a new "I Am" statement from Jesus. What is this "I Am" statement and how has it affected your life? Have you made a confession of this statement?
5. What was Martha's response to Jesus' delay in arriving to Bethany? Do you have a difficult time being honest with God? Why or why not?
6. What is a cultural belief that you have had challenged as a result of your walk with Jesus?

Close in Prayer – be sure to share personal needs and pray for each other during the week!

Suggested Prayer Topics:

- For those who are mourning the loss of a loved one
- For non-believers to see and proclaim that Jesus is the resurrection and the life
- For believers to be honest with God about the 'big' feelings

Discovering Jesus in the New Testament
Small Group Lesson #4, The Trials of Jesus

OPENING PRAYER

Opening Questions: Do you think most people in the United States today receive fair trials from our justice system? Should this be a concern for Christians living in the US today?

THE TRIALS OF CHRIST:

1) They treated Jesus like a political _____:

The Five “Trials” of Christ:

1) Annas 2) Caiaphas & the Sanhedrin 3) Pilate 4) Herod 5) Pilate

2) The Jewish Leaders broke their own laws in this political _____.

Here’s a list of the laws or traditions they violated in order to condemn Jesus: (1) No trial was to be held during feast time. (2) Each member of the court was to vote individually to convict or acquit, but Jesus was convicted by acclamation. (3) If the death penalty was given, a night must pass before the sentence was carried out; however, only a few hours passed before Jesus was placed on the Cross. (4) The Jews had no authority to execute anyone. (5) No trial was to be held at night, but this trial was held before dawn. (6) The accused was to be given counsel or representation, but Jesus had none. (7) The accused was not to be asked self-incriminating questions, but Jesus was asked if He was the Christ.

3) Jesus was both _____ & in complete _____ of himself throughout these farcical trials.

“¹⁹The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered him, ‘I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.’ ²²When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, ‘Is that how you answer the high priest?’ ²³Jesus answered him, ‘If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?’”

⁶¹and said, ‘This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” ⁶²And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” ⁶³But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Matthew 26:61-64)

- He was the perfect _____ of what he told us to be.

“¹¹And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 13:11, ESV)

“³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (Matthew 5:38–39, ESV)

4) Jesus' peace brought out the _____ that lies within the human heart.

⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death." ⁶⁷Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, ⁶⁸saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?" (Matthew 26:57–68, ESV)

¹Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. ²And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. ³They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands." (John 19:1–3, ESV)

5) Jesus used this as an opportunity to _____ & _____ the truth.

*³⁶Jesus answered, "**My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.**" ³⁷Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and **for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.**" ³⁸Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him." (John 18:36–38, ESV)*

- **Jesus clearly says His Kingdom is _____ from all others.**
- **The members of his Kingdom _____ from worldly kingdoms.**
- **His entire Ministry and purpose was all about bringing the _____ to the world.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) Since God wanted Jesus to die on the cross anyway, does that excuse the behavior of the Jews during these trials?

2) How do you think the Jewish leaders justified to themselves, the wholesale breaking of their own laws? (John 11:49-50)

3) Reading the trial accounts does it seem to you that Jesus is only one there who's calm and in control of Himself? Does it seem as if He's the one in control even though he's the victim?

4) Jesus turns the other cheek both literally and symbolically during his trials. How does watching him to this effect affect you? Does it make doing the same thing seem more possible? Is it an encouragement?

5) Jesus seemed to bring out the worst in his enemies throughout this trial. Why? Why would his calmness and self-control seemingly enrage those around him? Just how evil is the human heart?

6) Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world." What does that mean today? How does it apply to us? If Jesus' disciples had "done the right thing" and protested the horrible injustices being done to him, would they have been right? Or would they have been fighting against God's will in this situation?

CLOSING PRAYER

Discovering Jesus in the New Testament

Small Group Lesson Five: His Death on the Cross

Open with Prayer

Opening Question

1. What would be the worst way to die? Why?

Lesson Video and Fill-in-the-Blanks

- **Jesus _____ accepted the painful death on the cross.**

*Excruciatu*s – out of the cross; excruciating

They offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.
Matthew 27:34

Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more. Proverbs 31:6-7

- **Jesus stood in the _____ of sinful humanity.**

Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. Matthew 27:38

- **The Romans tried to use truth to _____ Jesus.**

And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Matthew 27:29b

And the inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” Mark 15:26

- **Jesus modeled _____ living even in His last moments.**

And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34

- **Jesus cried out to God in _____.**

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Matthew 27: 46

- **Jesus’ death has _____ consequences.**

And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in the way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God.” Mark 16:37-39

How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Hebrews 9:14

Discussion Questions

1. How do you imagine that Simon of Cyrene felt carrying Jesus' cross?
2. What was the claim that was written above Jesus' head on the cross? How did the religious leaders mean for it be understood? How do you understand it?
3. Read Luke 23:34. What does Jesus' response teach us? How does His response call you to change your life?
4. Compare and contrast Jesus' temptation in the desert with the temptation while He hung on the cross. What sticks out to you?
5. Read Matthew 27: 46. How does hearing Jesus' prayer and cry help you feel comforted in your own struggles.

Close in Prayer – be sure to share personal needs and pray for each other during the week!

Suggested Prayer Topics

- Thank God for sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sins
- For God to motivate and spur us on in sharing the good news
- For those who doubt that Jesus is the Messiah

Discovering Jesus in the New Testament

Small Group Lesson Six: Christ's Resurrection

Open with Prayer

Opening Questions

1. What is your earliest memory of understanding the resurrection?
2. If you could have witnessed any of Jesus' miracles, which one would you choose?

Lesson Video and Fill-in-the-Blanks

Jesus' Resurrection...

- Was a _____ event

Dr. Gary Habermas – execution; empty tomb; eyewitness; early testimony

- Provides Christians a _____ of life

Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. Hebrews 9:15

- Started a _____ movement.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:16-20

- Shows how He uses _____ people

When the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. Mark 16:1

Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other woman with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. Luke 24:10-11

Discussion Questions

1. Why did the chief priests want the tomb secured and guarded? Why would Matthew emphasize this in his Gospel?
2. What are some of the objections you have heard in response to Christ's resurrection?

3. The women left the tomb with fear and great joy (Matthew 28:8) to go tell the disciples. What emotions would you have felt as you realized that Jesus wasn't at the tomb?
4. Jesus drove seven demons out of Mary Magdalene. What could be the significance behind Mary being one of the first people that Jesus appeared to?
5. Why did so many people have trouble recognizing Jesus after His resurrection? Do you think that you would have recognized and trusted Jesus right away?
6. Think of one person that you need to share the hope of the resurrection with. Share that name with the group. Commit to praying for that person and for the opportunity to share to present itself.

Close in Prayer – be sure to share personal needs and pray for each other during the week!

Suggested Prayer Topics

- Thank God for keeping His promises and raising His Son on the third day
- For those who don't believe in the resurrection
- For Christians around the world to find hope and joy in the story of the resurrection