

Revealed in Word and Deed: following Jesus through John's Gospel

John's Gospel is both remarkable and unique. It helps us to see exactly who Jesus Christ is and calls us into a deeper sense of purpose. Our faith is strengthened as we observe him more closely. This revelation is brought to a climax in his death and resurrection. As he writes his gospel, John gives us glimpses into the transforming power at work then and now. As we follow him, our lives are changed.

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**BIBLE
SOCIETY**

Live light

Scripture taken from The Holy Bible: TNIV

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
1	<p>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.</p> <p>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.</p> <p>In him was life, and that life was the light of all people.</p> <p>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.</p>	John 1:1-5	<p>The fourth gospel is a work of dramatic quality and poetic beauty, and nowhere is this more obvious than in the prologue to the gospel. We are taken back to the beginning of creation. The living Word, Jesus Christ, is there at the beginning. He is there even before the creative order came into being.</p> <p>John unfolds the mystery and wonder of God's love in the person of Jesus Christ. Charles Wesley wrote "Our God contracted to a span incomprehensively made man".</p> <p>Do we often fail to see the significance of our Lord's coming because we do not fully recognise that he was involved in creation?</p>	<p>Gracious God, whose creative work calls us to acknowledge your power, remind us of your ongoing creative work in Jesus Christ. Lord, draw near to us and fill us this day with your light ever-shining in the darkness. Amen.</p>
2	<p>There was a man sent from God whose name was John.</p> <p>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.</p> <p>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.</p>	John 1:6-8	<p>John has spoken of a light which has shone in the darkness but now reminds us of the ministry of John the Baptist. John's ministry was to testify to that light. We often have to minister in a world that seems filled with impenetrable darkness rather than glorious light, so John the Baptist can inspire us. He is one who has to wait patiently for the Lord's coming.</p> <p>God's light does not come on demand in an instant.</p> <p>Can we learn from John what it means to reflect God's light in the world?</p>	<p>Lord, we thank you for those who, in every age, have patiently pointed beyond themselves to your great love. Fill us with your Spirit that we may bear witness to the light today and every day. Amen.</p>

Revealed in Word and Deed (continued)

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3	<p>On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.</p> <p>When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."</p>	John 2:1-3	<p>In John, the public ministry of Jesus Christ begins and concludes with two contexts in which the mother of Jesus appears. In the first "sign" John's narrative is located after the call of the disciples in the previous chapter. John 2:10 can function on different levels but it quite clearly speaks of the gift of God which surpasses all that has gone before and will be pre-eminent for all time.</p> <p>Have we too often made the sparkling wine of new life a dull, even insipid water?</p>	Lord of newness, pour your new life into us and make us vibrant witnesses to your truth in our day. Make us ready to bring that to bear upon all of life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
4	<p>In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.</p> <p>So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.</p>	John 2:14-15	<p>Immediately following the first sign of changing water into wine we see Jesus clearing the temple courts. The journey from Cana to Jerusalem is recorded in John as including an unusual detour via Capernaum. It was here that Jesus spent much of his time and it was very likely his home. John reinforces the thought that family ties may need to be left behind in the cause of the gospel. Jesus' attack on the hypocrisy of the temple is recorded in all the gospels but only in John at the outset of his ministry.</p> <p>Let us connect in our minds the incidents at Cana and the Temple which both speak of the inadequacy of institutional religion.</p>	Lord Jesus Christ, who has spoken of new life, remind us of your strong message which confronts the emptiness and sham of so much that passes for religion. Grant us courage to declare your new life today. Amen.
5	<p>"Go" Jesus replied, "your son will live." The man took Jesus at his word and departed.</p> <p>While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living.</p> <p>When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him."</p>	John 4:50-52	<p>Jesus heals an official's son. This official has clearly heard of Jesus' reputation as One who brings healing and wholeness into people's lives. The story is literally one of life and death. Here is a person who is used to asking or even demanding that people come to him but the urgency of his needs, and those of his son, mean he goes to Jesus Christ. The instructions of the Lord are to "go" and in doing so his "son will live".</p> <p>Do we need to make greater connection between God's direction in our lives and our response which leads to healing?</p>	God of healing, help us to know that you will always call us to a place of wholeness. Make us willing to respond to your call and to bear witness to your saving power. Amen.

Revealed in Word and Deed (continued)

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6	<p>“Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”</p> <p>Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath...</p>	John 5:7-9	<p>Jesus is in Jerusalem for an unknown feast and finds a chronically paralysed man by a healing pool. Crowds gathered at this place and Jesus recognises the self-pity in one of those near the pool. With wry humour Jesus asks if he wanted to get well. Of course he does! The curative powers of the spring are incapable of achieving what the healing power of Jesus Christ can do. The command to take up his mat and walk would cause outrage among the Jewish authorities; for it was a Sabbath. We do not know the name of the man but his healing is recorded in scripture for all time.</p> <p>Do we need to be released from our own longstanding issues by the healing grace of the Lord?</p>	<p>Lord, speak your word of healing to us and send us on our way, willing to face whatever lies before us. Help us to identify what our real needs are and to be open to all that you can do for and in us. Amen.</p>
7	<p>From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.</p> <p>“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.</p> <p>Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”</p>	John 6:66-69	<p>In the final section of John 6 we meet a truth we rarely focus upon – that many disciples deserted Jesus. This of course refers to a larger group than the Twelve. It is important to recognise that this is in the context of Jesus’ teaching on the Lord’s Table. John connects the glory of communion with the feeding of the Galilean crowd. There are spiritual and life-giving truths to be found in this moment as we see those turn away from him. The insight of Jesus into human nature (vs 61 and 64) is penetrating.</p> <p>As Jesus asked the Twelve if they too would desire to leave him, it draws us all to consider this enquiry about ourselves.</p>	<p>Lord Jesus Christ, as you challenged the disciples, so speak to us and grant us through your Holy Spirit the resolve to follow you ever more closely, even in a setting when people are prone to desert you. Amen.</p>

Revealed in Word and Deed (continued)

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8	<p>At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.</p> <p>Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, “When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?”</p>	John 7:30-31	<p>One of the most difficult themes in the gospel is that of Jesus being rejected. Jesus has spoken to these people of Jerusalem and they respond by rejecting him and attempt to seize him (v 30). John opens up a striking comparison between those who sought to seize him and the many in the crowd who put their faith in him (v 31). A very pertinent theme in John’s gospel emerges in the words “his hour had not yet come” (v 30). This speaks of the suffering before and in the cross that will lie ahead. At that time, his great salvation work will be brought to completion.</p> <p>How can such diverse reactions occur in response to him at one and the same time? We must consider what our own response is to be.</p>	<p>Lord of our lives, whose truth has been declared to all the world in Christ, help us to discover and rediscover what it means to follow this Saviour who is radically addressing the heart of our human decision-making. Amen.</p>
9	<p>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.</p> <p>“Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied.</p> <p>Jesus wept.</p>	John 11:33-35	<p>Here is one of the most touching pieces in the gospels. Jesus certainly had a special relationship with this Bethany household. The home of Martha and Mary had earlier been the setting of an insightful passage on spiritual priorities (Luke 10:38-42). I find it deeply moving that “Jesus wept”. This is the precursor of what will be his life-giving ministry as he raises Lazarus from the dead. Jesus, however, needed to see where Lazarus was laid as if to confirm the situation or perhaps to give expression to his grief. Faced with Lazarus’ death and the sisters’ grief, Jesus reaches out to them with his compassion.</p> <p>Why is this passage so important in the gospel account in John? Is its position before the final journey to the cross helpful to our understanding?</p>	<p>Risen Lord, we thank you that you were so connected to this family and expressed deep emotion as you reached out to them with your healing touch. Raise us, we pray, when we find ourselves in the deep places of darkness and pain as we are restored to new life. Amen.</p>

Revealed in Word and Deed (continued)

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10	<p>Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.</p> <p>After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.</p>	John 13:3-5	<p>Nowhere is the servant ministry of Jesus more apparent than when Jesus takes the towel and basin. The initial reaction of the disciples to the foot washing is one of horror. It would only be later that they would begin to understand in part what he was saying. The whole of John 13 emphasises the intimacy with which Jesus relates to his disciples, even as they begin to face the already anticipated suffering which will lead to the cross.</p> <p>Is the message to us that we can only serve Jesus Christ when we have first been served by him?</p>	<p>Servant King, draw us by your love and make us ready and willing to receive your care within our own lives. Having done so, please then empower us by your Holy Spirit that we might serve the world around us. Amen.</p>
11	<p>"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.</p>	John 17:20-21	<p>This chapter gives us insight into the prayer life of Jesus. It has often been referred to as the high-priestly prayer of Jesus. We learn a great deal from observing Jesus at prayer. He addresses God as "Father" (v 1) "Holy Father" (v 11) and "Righteous Father" (v 25) and this reminds us clearly that all true prayer is dependent upon a rich understanding of, and relationship with, God. Jesus prays not only for the disciples around him, but also for those who will be recipients of their mission to the world – including ourselves.</p> <p>Isn't it wonderful that the great prayer of Jesus reaches down through history and across boundaries to include even ourselves?</p>	<p>Lord God, who has not only called us to be a people of prayer, but also demonstrated what this means, deepen our lives in such a way that through our witness the world might believe. Amen.</p>

Revealed in Word and Deed (continued)

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12	<p>Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."</p> <p>A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.</p> <p>When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.</p>	John 19:28-30	<p>In the preceding verses of John 19, it becomes clear that the death of Jesus is to be understood as fulfilling the sovereign will of God the Father. Words translated "completed", "fulfilled" and "finished" all come from the same Greek verb which is also used in the great prayer of Jesus (17:4). It is, for me, better translated 'accomplished'. The purpose of God in sending his Son is now accomplished. We hear Jesus cry from the cross "I am thirsty" which demonstrates his sheer humanity. Then we read of God's ultimate purpose being brought to completion as he gives up his spirit.</p> <p>What does the finished work of Christ have to say to us in our daily Christian walk?</p>	<p>Lord God, as we reflect upon the ministry of Jesus Christ, help us to understand how his death is not an isolated event but the climax of your eternal purposes. May we be empowered by your Spirit to live within the orbit of your completed work, day by day. Amen.</p>
13	<p>On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"</p> <p>After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.</p>	John 20:19-20	<p>Easter Day was a very long day. It began with the journey to the tomb while it was still dark and concluded with the disciples gathered together in fear, behind locked doors. The words of Jesus to them are of great assurance. "Peace be with you!" (v 19). His hands and side (v 20) remind them of all that has gone before. This is no mere gesture. In his farewell discourse, Jesus had given the disciples peace and charged them not to fear (14:27). The locked doors make it clear they are still fearful. Jesus the Risen Lord will now lead them into the fullness of his peace.</p> <p>The greeting of Peace is common throughout the world. How can we understand it in our relationships and fellowship?</p>	<p>Risen Lord, help us to receive your gift of peace and be filled with joy as we discover its power in our own lives. Lead us beyond locked doors into the world to serve and ever glorify you. Amen.</p>
14	<p>Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.</p> <p>But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.</p>	John 20:30-31	<p>These words in John's gospel serve as a summary of the gospel's purpose which is greater than the content of its pages. John 20 is far more than the end of the story. John modestly admits his record is incomplete and alludes to other accounts, perhaps the other gospels. The gospel writer's main purpose is to tell and show who Jesus was and is and, in doing so, invites all who read or hear to possess the gift of life through Christ.</p> <p>John's picture of Jesus Christ is distinctive. How can we, today, understand what it means to share his life?</p>	<p>Lord God, help us to see you as our Risen Lord and discover what this means, so that we might be better equipped to share your life with others. Amen.</p>