

JOHN - A STUDY GUIDE

THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
 - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. What picture of God would you have if you had only the Gospel of John? Why is John's Gospel so different from the others? Why did the other Gospel writers leave out some of the amazing stories in John? When and why did John write this Gospel? (John 20:30,31) Why did he wait so long? What was happening in the Christian church at the time that may have led to his writing? (1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7)
2. Matthew and Luke talk about Jesus' human heritage, but Mark does not discuss the issue. What does John say about where Jesus came from? (John 1:1-3)
3. After working with the descendants of Abraham for almost 2000 years, at long last, God had a people who did not worship idols, they were Sabbathkeepers, tithe-payers, health-reformers, and Bible students—they were "adventists" waiting for the coming of the Messiah. But when He came to His "home," His "family" did not receive Him. (John 1:11) Could this happen again? Could it happen to us? What do you suppose this said to the universe? If God knew in advance that this would happen, what was He waiting for? Was there anything unique about coming at that particular time that would make it the "fullness of time"? (Galatians 4:4)
4. What was it about Jesus that so upset the Pharisees and Sadducees? Weren't they obeying the "blueprint"? Has any group ever obeyed God's laws more carefully? Is it possible to spend your whole life striving to obey God and hate Him when He appears? How could this happen to them? Could it happen to us?
5. What about Jesus' words to His mother at the marriage in Cana? (John 2:4; compare Luke 2:49 and John 19:26) Is this the way a young man should talk to His mother? Why do you suppose Mary asked Jesus about this problem? What do you think she expected Him to do? Do you think Jesus would produce fermented wine or unfermented wine? Why? (See Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-6)
6. Probably the best known verse in the Bible is John 3:16. Does this sound like the God of Sinai? Is the God of Sinai the Father while the God of John 3:16 is the Son?
7. What is the basis for God's final judgment? (John 3:17, 18; 5:22; 12:47, 48) Who or what actually does the judging? Is it that we have a condemning God, and are grateful for the kind, interceding Son? How does Revelation 22:11 fit with your understanding of the judgment?
8. Why do you suppose the Samaritans believed on Jesus, (John 4:39-42) and so many of the Jews who saw much greater things did not?
9. What does the story of the healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda/Bethsaida/Bethzatha on the Sabbath say to us about God? (John 5:1-15) What is implied by John 5:4? Is John 5:4 inspired? (See note in *NIV*, *RSV*, *TLB*, and *NEB*) Why were those people there? What kind of healings were taking place? Do you think God would send an angel to heal only the winner of the race to get into the pool?
10. What do you think of God's treatment of the woman caught in adultery? (John 8:1-11) If she was caught "in the very act," (John 8:4) why didn't they bring the man as required in the law? (See Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22-24) Were they really trying to carry out the law? Or, were they just trying to trap Jesus? Do we have anything to fear from a God who would treat sinners the way Jesus treated the woman and especially the way He treated those who brought her? Shouldn't Jesus have exposed them? What does this imply about how God feels toward

His sinful children? What does this imply about the judgment? Wouldn't this suggest that if God finally has to declare sinners incurable/unsavable, it must really be true? Does this sound like the God we read about in the Old Testament?

11. Right after being so considerate to all the sinners in the adultery case in John 8:1-11, why did Jesus find it necessary to say to the religious leaders, "You are of your father, the Devil"? (John 8:44)
12. What is implied by John 8:32, "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"?
13. Why did Jesus wait four days to raise Lazarus? What is implied about death by Jesus' statements about Lazarus? (John 11:11-14) Was everyone thrilled to see that miracle?
14. How did Jesus treat Judas even on the last night of his life when he had already agreed to betray Jesus? Why didn't Jesus expose him as a thief and tell the others what his plans were? (John 13:18-30; compare John 12:4-6)
15. When the disciples finally realized who Jesus was, (Matthew 16:13-16; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-20) why didn't they ask Him about all their questions from the Old Testament? Did they really believe that Jesus was just like His Father? (John 10:30; 12:45; 14:8,9) Do we have answers to all our questions about the Old Testament? Did the disciples bring up the questions? Did they ask, "Why did You drown all but eight in the flood?" How about, "An eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth"? (Exodus 21:23-25; Leviticus 24:19-22; Deuteronomy 19:21; Matthew 5:38-42) Why did You say, "Kill the women and babies" after being victorious on the battlefield? (Deuteronomy 20:16) And why did You order the stoning of Achan? (Joshua 7) Why did you say that illegitimate children should be banished from the camp for ten generations? (Deuteronomy 23:2) We love the way You treated the woman taken in adultery, but why did You send she-bears to tear those irreverent youths who mocked Elisha? (2 Kings 2:23-25) And why did You kill Uzzah when he tried to keep the ark from falling? (2 Samuel 6:7) Why did You turn Lot's wife into a pillar of salt? (Genesis 19:26) And why did You scare everyone at Mount Sinai? (Exodus 19,20)
16. What is implied in John 15:15 about the relationship that God wants with us? Is it reasonable for us to think that we could be "friends" of an omnipotent, sovereign God? What is the difference between the "servants" He talks about and the "friends"?
17. What should we do with John 16:25-27? Could this really be true? After all the verses about intercession and all the work of the priests in the Old Testament, what could Jesus be saying about His role as a mediator or intercessor? Could Jesus be truthful in saying, "I need make no promise to plead to the Father for you, for the Father himself loves you"? (*Phillips*) How does this fit with 1 John 1:9 and Romans 8:34? How should we deal with this verse where Jesus speaks "plainly about the Father" in light of all the others that appear to contradict it? Could this final statement in the life of Jesus be part of the "testimony of Jesus"? (Revelation 12:17; 14:12) In light of these verses, what do you think Jesus is actually doing in the judgment?
18. In what sense could just "knowing God" be life eternal? (John 17:3)
19. Why did Jesus say to Mary after the resurrection, "Don't touch Me"? (John 20:17) If Mary had "touched" Him, would it have been impossible for Jesus to ascend to heaven, thus, spoiling the plan of salvation?
20. Why would Jesus create fish for the disciples to eat at His last breakfast with them? (John 21:9) Since He created it Himself, why didn't He give them something really healthful?

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