

# GOSPEL OF JOHN

## Encounter Jesus – The Son of the Living God

### *Spiritually Blind!*

To be spiritually blind is not to see Jesus for who He really is, and not to see Jesus means not seeing God. **2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV)**<sup>6</sup> *For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* Currently, our world is constantly concerned over the dangers of the Covid-19 virus. An even more dangerous condition is the spiritual blindness experienced by those who do not believe in God, Jesus Christ, and His Word. **Matthew 10:28 (ESV)**<sup>28</sup> *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.* Those who reject Christ are lost.

Today’s lesson begins with a group of Jews who are spiritually blind. In fact, Jesus has just told them that their father is the devil.

These so-called men of God have been challenging Jesus ever since He proclaimed to be the Light of the World. Today’s study begins with another of Jesus’ *truly truly* statements where Jesus once again tells them how to avoid spiritual blindness that leads to eternal death.

**Read John 8:51 (ESV)**<sup>51</sup> *Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”*

This verse once again uses the Aramaic word which has survived into Hebrew, Greek, and even English: *amēn*. Used at the end of a statement, this word is a declaration of truth or of a hope that what has just been said will be fulfilled. Used at the beginning of a statement, it implies that what follows is absolute, original, first-hand truth. When Jesus says "*Amēn, amēn,*" translated as "truly, truly," He is introducing a crucial fact. In this case, *if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.* If any of them would change their minds and take to heart Jesus’ words, they could still receive the gift of eternal life, and ‘never see death’. That was the heart’s desire of Jesus for those who loved Him and for those who hated Him – that they would accept the eternal life He was about to bring.

Jesus did not mean those who believed would not experience physical death, for obviously all but the last generation will die physically. **Hebrews 9:27 (ESV)**<sup>27</sup> *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,* Rather, Jesus was referring to eternal spiritual life, which people experience now through belief in Jesus that will not be interrupted by physical death.

**Read John 8:52-53 (ESV)**<sup>52</sup> *The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’”<sup>53</sup> Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?”*

The Jews continued with their previous theme and brought up the demon accusation again! They thought they had caught Jesus in His own words. They took Jesus to mean that none who keep His word would experience

physical death. They knew that even Abraham and the prophets had died. Their question concerning Abraham reminds us of the Samaritan woman asking *Are you greater than our father Jacob?* The answer to both questions is YES! Jesus is greater than Abraham and Jacob. All of the prophets had died and they wanted to know who Jesus thought He was. Jesus knew He is the Son of God. I suppose in their finite minds they assumed that if they killed Him they would prove that Jesus was wrong and they were right. Wow! The joke would be on them when Jesus conquered death and stood again resurrected from the dead.

**Read John 8:54-56 (ESV)** <sup>54</sup> *Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.'* <sup>55</sup> *But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word.* <sup>56</sup> *Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."*

Jesus has already explained that the words and works He does are under the commands of God His Father (**John 8:26**). The word glory as related to God in the Old Testament give us inspiration as to the greatness and splendor of God. In the New Testament, the word translated glory means dignity, honor, praise and worship. Putting the two thoughts together, glorifying God means to acknowledge His greatness and give Him honor by praising and worshiping Him, primarily because He, and He alone, deserves to be praised, honored and worshiped.

Jesus knows God personally while these critics are liars who do not have a clue about God or His Truth. Any thought that Jesus was timid or weak are forgotten when we actually read the Gospels. No matter the danger Jesus would refute the irreligious Jews until the end. These leaders were set on squelching the work of Jesus not that much different from people who are opposed to the Light Jesus still brings today. **John 3:19 (ESV)** <sup>19</sup> *And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.*

We may wonder how Abraham saw the day of Jesus, that is, His life and ministry on earth? We read of Abraham in **Hebrews 11:10 (ESV)** <sup>10</sup> *For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.* Abraham saw Jesus' day, the same way he saw the future city: by faith. God did not give Abraham some special vision of our Lord's life and ministry. However, Abraham had spiritual perception for these future events. Wiersbe makes several points about how Abraham would have foreseen the day of the Messiah. He saw the 'day' of the Messiah's birth in the miraculous birth of his own son, Isaac. He had a very personal experience of God's sacrifice at Calvary when he offered his son, Isaac, on the altar to God. In his relationship with the priest Melchizedek, Abraham experienced the heavenly priesthood of the Lord. Abraham was a man who lived by faith.

**Read John 8:57-59 (ESV)** <sup>57</sup> *So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"* <sup>58</sup> *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."* <sup>59</sup> *So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.*

Always taking Jesus literally, they argued: *You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?* And those words brought out another *truly truly* statement.

Jesus answers with what some refer to as the hidden *I AM* statement, since it's not typically counted with His other *I AM* statements. However, this may be the most direct of all of Jesus' uses of this phrase. The meaning is certainly not lost on His critics. When Jesus claims the title of *I AM*, everyone listening knows exactly what He means: that He is God. You will come across so-called 'intellectual folks' today who will point out that Jesus never actually claimed to be God. Well, this verse says Jesus is God to me and when you consider the reaction of the religious leaders to His words, it said it to them as well.

Here we once again see the example of God's Son being divinely protected because His hour had not yet come. Look at what happened: *So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.* Jesus has called the Jews liars and children of the devil and on top of that, He has claimed to be God. They were furious. They considered Him to be blaspheming so they determined to stone Him. Jesus disappearing might not have been a miraculous occurrence but instead God working through ordinary means – in this case a crowd of people. To me this is evidence of how God still divinely protects His children today. Occasionally, we may notice – possibly when we miss being involved in a car wreck by just a few seconds or a storm suddenly lifts over our area. However, there are most likely many times when He protects us and we barely notice. *Psalm 121:8 (ESV)* <sup>8</sup> *The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.* Give God the glory for His protection even in the ordinary!

Keep in mind that Jesus' miracles were His 'credentials' to prove that He is indeed the Messiah. He had just proclaimed, *I Am the Light of the World* and He is about to illustrate that truth through a miracle He will perform on a blind man.

### **The world is spiritually blind from birth.**

**Read John 9:1-5 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.* <sup>2</sup> *And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"* <sup>3</sup> *Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.* <sup>4</sup> *We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.* <sup>5</sup> *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."*

As they passed by the blind man, the disciples were questioning Jesus about why the man was blind. Personal sin does have consequences - there's no doubt about that - and parental sin can cause the effect of suffering in children. We see that all the time in the lives of drug-addicted parents, child abusers, etc. However, we also need to understand that if God immediately removed suffering every time we asked, we would be following Him for comfort and convenience, not out of love and devotion.

Obviously, this blind man was known to the community and it was common knowledge that he had been born blind and not blinded from an accident or disease. Even after having experienced how Jesus had the power to physically heal, the disciples' first thought was not to bring the man to Jesus. They just wanted to know if the man's blindness was a result of sin – either his parents or his own – not that it was any of their business. We might call it karma today suggesting that a person's suffering means they are getting what they deserve. The Jews generally believed those who do right will be rewarded; those who do wrong will be punished. They

believed personal disasters were evidence of sin while prosperity was a sign of God's approval. The Old Testament writing of Job had already revealed it is not.

We can't fault their thinking, since our thinking is much the same today. When suffering comes, it is so easy and so normal to think, 'Why me?' 'Why this, Lord?' At those moments, it is good to remember the explanation of Jesus that suffering comes so *that the works of God might be displayed in him*.

**Don't focus on the causes of suffering.  
Focus on the cure for suffering.**

**Read John 9:6-7 (ESV)** <sup>6</sup> *Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud* <sup>7</sup> *and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.*

The place that Jesus sent the man was the source of the water that was used in the Feast of Tabernacles' ritual where Jesus had proclaimed that He was the Living Water. The word "Siloam" means sent. The blind man was sent to the Pool of Siloam by the One who Himself was sent by God. **John 3:17 (ESV)** <sup>17</sup> *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.* A vital element to the healing of the blind man was his obedience to what Jesus told him to do. *So he went and washed and came back seeing.*

By human standards, it seemed almost a "silly thing" – a little bit of spit combined with a little bit of dirt and a trip to wash in a pool. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:27 (ESV)** <sup>27</sup> *But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.*

This is not the only blind man who Jesus healed. When comparing the healing of this blind man to the healing of blind Bartimaeus, we learn that Jesus did not always use the same method. **Mark 10:51-52 (ESV)** <sup>51</sup> *And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight."* <sup>52</sup> *And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.* Bartimaeus was healed immediately in **Mark** – yet the man in **John** had to wait a little while. But, the end result was the same – they both could now see Jesus with their physical eyes. Just imagine what might have happened, if the blind man had refused to do as Jesus commanded.

There is a story of a mining explosion in West Virginia. The explosion plunged the trapped men into total darkness. When the rescue team managed to get a light through to them, one of the young men finally said, "Well, why don't they turn on the light?" They all looked at him in amazement, and then they realized that the explosion had blinded him. In the darkness, he did not know that he was blind. The light revealed to him and to them that he was blind. We live in a world filled with spiritually blind people who do not even realize they are walking in darkness. Child of the King, please do what the Lord has called you to do that is share the Light of the World – share Jesus with them!