

GOD, ARE YOU THERE?

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Do You Care?
Do You
Know About Me?



KAY ARTHUR

GOD
ARE YOU
THERE?

KAY ARTHUR

 Precept™
SOUTH AFRICA

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Tel.: +27 (0)21 531 1836

www.precept.org.za

support@precept.org.za



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 **Precept™**
SOUTH AFRICA

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FINDING THE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

“God, what are You like?”

“Who are You?”

“Do You even exist?”

“Do You care about me?”

“God, do You even know about me?”

Have thoughts like these ever crossed your mind? Have you ever wondered who God is and what He is like? Or if He even exists?

If you have, don't dismiss these thoughts lightly. They are important. Just the fact that you have these thoughts means something. It means that God is drawing you to Himself—that He wants you to know the truth about Him.

How do I know that? Because I know God. And I want you to have an opportunity to know Him, too, and to find God's answers to your questions.

To find His answers to these questions, there is only one place to go. If you want to find the truth about God and what He says, you need to read the Bible.

HOW CAN I KNOW FOR SURE THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD?

People can tell you that God exists and that He knows about you and cares about you, but how do you know whether what you are hearing is true? Maybe it's just something they think is true, or maybe they simply “feel” it is true.

But what if their thoughts or their feelings are twisted or even wrong? After all, they are human beings, and all human beings don't think and feel the same way. Sometimes they are right, and sometimes they are wrong.

If human beings can be wrong, where can you go to find the truth about God—and be absolutely sure it is true? Only one place. In the one book that claims to be, and has been proven to be, the Word of God. The Bible.

CAN GOD GIVE PURPOSE AND MEANING TO YOUR LIFE?

What if God can give purpose and meaning to your life even if you or someone else messed it up? What if He can show you how to live—no matter what your situation or circumstances? And what if He has promised to love and care for you and give you the wonderful gift of eternal life so that you can know for certain that the very moment you die you will find yourself in His presence to live with Him forever as His dear child?

Surely you would want to know how you can have that kind of relationship with God—a God who cares that much about you, whoever you are, wherever you are. Wouldn't you?

Well, my friend, that is what this book is all about. It's designed to help you know and understand the Bible so that you can see for yourself what it says about God, what it says about you, and what it says about becoming part of God's family.

WHO WROTE THE BIBLE?

The Bible is a book that claims to be different from every other book that has ever existed. It's different because it is the very Word of God, inspired by God. *Inspired* means that men wrote down exactly what God wanted them to write. The word *inspired* actually means "God-breathed."

In fact, let me quote what the Bible says about itself:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate [complete], equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

In this verse God is telling us that the Bible came from Him and that it teaches us what to believe and how to live. (*Righteousness* means living the way God says we are to live.) The Bible also shows us where we are wrong (that is what *reproof* means). But it doesn't just leave us there!

The Bible tells us how to take what is wrong and make it right. What is wrong can be corrected, the Bible says, if we will listen to God and obey what He says! Isn't that encouraging? Plus, the Bible tells us how to live so that we can know how to handle every situation of life.

You know, just before Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sins of mankind, He prayed for everyone who would ever believe in Him. And in that prayer He asked that God would "sanctify" every believer. *Sanctify* means "to set apart," so Jesus was asking that every believer would be set apart by God for God.

Then Jesus told us how God would set us apart. He said, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (John 17:17). Jesus said that God's Word is truth. Thus, when you know truth (the Bible) and live by what it says, you will be different from the rest of the world. Obeying God's truth sets you apart for God!

Therefore, my friend, you need to know what the Bible is and what it says. And to understand what it says, you need to know how to read it and study it for yourself. This book will help you learn how to do that.

You are going to be so excited about what you learn, but you have to remember that it is going to take some discipline on your part. Discipline is never easy, but in this case it is worth it, for it is a matter of life—life on the best level.

Now, on to the next logical question...

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible, which claims to be the Word of God, is a book made up of 66 separate books. These 66 books were written by more than 40 men over a period of about 1400 to 1800 years. God inspired these men to write these books in a way that tells us exactly what He wants us to know and believe.

The Bible has two major parts. The first part is called the Old Testament, and the second part is called the New Testament.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament tells us how God created the world, how He created mankind, and how the first man and woman disobeyed Him. Eve chose to listen to Satan rather than God and ate of the forbidden fruit. Eve gave the fruit to Adam, who disobeyed God and ate of it also. As a result of this disobedience, mankind got into terrible trouble (God calls it *sin*). But because of His great love, God made a way for us to be restored—to once more be His friend and have a personal relationship with Him. The Old Testament tells us what He did to make that possible.

Most of the Old Testament centers around the history of the nation of Israel because that is the nation God chose to work through in a special way. Israel still exists today because of the promises God made to this nation way back then.

The Old Testament was originally written in two languages: Hebrew and Aramaic.* Most of it was written in Hebrew, the language spoken by the Jews, the people and nation especially chosen by God.

The Old Testament, which has 39 books, was written and completed almost 400 years before Jesus Christ was born. It was the only part of the Bible that existed until after Jesus died and arose from the dead. It

* Aramaic was a Semitic language closely related to Hebrew.

was the Bible that Jesus knew and used while He was on earth because, of course, at that time the New Testament had not yet been written.

Although the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, it was later translated into Koine Greek. This language developed among the Greeks and was the language of Jesus' time. *Koine* means "common," and Koine Greek was the common language used in the world at that time (and until about A.D. 700). This translation, which was completed by about 100 B.C. (before Christ), was called the Septuagint. It was an important work because it allowed many more people to read and understand the Word of God in their language.

The New Testament

The New Testament was written after Jesus Christ died, arose from the dead, and then ascended into heaven. It was written originally in Koine Greek and is made up of 27 books.

The first four books of the New Testament are called the Gospels: the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel of Luke, and the Gospel of John.

The word *gospel* means "good news." And the good news is that Jesus Christ loved you so much that He died to pay for your sins so that you could become part of God's family. Another important part of the good news is that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, never to die again. When you truly believe what the Bible says about Jesus Christ and decide to follow Him, to let Him be your Master, something miraculous happens. Your decision to walk with Jesus gives you a new life! It is an opportunity to start life over again as a new person, for God says that when you have this "new life" you become a "new creature." Because Jesus Christ lives in you through the Holy Spirit, He gives you the power to be different and to know that you will be raised from the dead to live with Him forever.

The Gospels tell us all about Jesus' life, His ministry, His death, and His resurrection. In fact, you and I are going to study one of

the Gospels—the Gospel of John—in this book so that you can understand this good news for yourself and decide how you are going to live in the light of it.

Most of the rest of the New Testament is made up of letters, sometimes referred to as epistles, written to individuals or groups of believers in the early church. The epistles are filled with information about what we are to believe and how we are to live as children of God. You will discover this as you read and study them.

HOW WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN AND PRESERVED FOR US?

As we mentioned earlier, the writers of the Bible, inspired by God, wrote down exactly what He wanted them to write. That original writing is called an *autograph*. Men called *scribes* then made copies of the autographs on scrolls of parchment (dried animal skins) or papyrus (a paperlike material made from the inner bark of a reed plant).

Although we don't have any of the original autographs, we have many handwritten copies of the originals. In fact, there are more copies of the original autographs of the Scriptures than of any other ancient writings that men accept as being authentic (real) and worthy of study.

Jewish scribes went through a special procedure to make sure nothing was left out, copied wrong, or added. If one error was found, the whole scroll was thrown away!

Why were they so careful? Because they were dealing with God's Word, and it was not to be changed or altered in any way. Our all-powerful, all-wise God carefully guarded His Word so that not one word would be altered by man. Jesus Himself assured us of this when He said;

Truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law [Old Testament] until all is accomplished (Matthew 5:18).

Although the Bible is made up of 66 books written over 1400 to 1800 years, it fits together as one message with no contradictions in it. Why? Because it is God's Word.

WHY WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN?

The Bible was written so that anyone who wants to know who God is and how they are to live in a way that pleases Him can read it and find out.

God wants to bring us into a personal relationship with Himself. He wants to be a Father to us. In order to have that relationship, God has to talk to us. He has to explain who He is and how we can be brought into a close, wonderful relationship with Him. He also wants us to understand the blessings of living a life of obedience to His Word and the consequences of disobeying Him. He wants us to know the truth about life and what is going to happen in the future.

The Bible tells us everything we need to know about life. That, my friend, is why you need to study it for yourself.

HOW IS THE BIBLE ORGANIZED?

The Bible is divided into two parts: The Old Testament comes first and is followed by the New Testament. At the front of each Bible you will find an index, which tells you the names of the 66 books of the Old and the New Testaments. It will also give you the page number where each book begins.

When you open a Bible, you will see that each book is divided into chapters, and each chapter is divided into verses. When the books of the Bible were first written, there were no chapter or verse divisions. These divisions were made many centuries later so that the Bible would be easier to read and study.

Having books divided into chapters and verses is also very helpful when you want to look for something specific. For example, when someone wants to tell you where to look in the Bible for a certain verse, he will record the name of the book, the chapter number, and

the verse number. Thus, John 3:16 is a reference to the Gospel of John, the third chapter, the sixteenth verse. If you are to read more than one verse, it might look like this: John 3:16-36. In this instance, you are to read all the verses in chapter 3 from 16 through 36.

If someone is writing and quotes from the Bible, he or she will follow the quote with what we call its “address”—that is, the book, chapter, and verse where you will find it. So it will look like this:

God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16).

HOW CAN YOU FIND OUT WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS?

To find out what the Bible says, you need to read it yourself in a way that will help you discover

- what it says
- what it means
- how you are to apply it to your life

Certain study skills will help you do this, and the best way to learn these skills is to do them! And that’s what we’re going to do together in the weeks ahead.

The study method we will use is called the *inductive* method. This is the very best way to study the Bible because it takes you directly to the Bible itself. It’s a way to discover truth for yourself.

The inductive method doesn’t tell you what the Bible means or what you should believe. Instead, it helps you understand and know the Bible by showing you how to see (observe) what it says for yourself. And after you see what it says, you can come to an understanding of what the author means.

As you study the Bible inductively, you should also read it devotionally. By devotionally I mean with a heart that wants to know God intimately and hear what God is saying to you. He speaks to us

personally through His Word. Therefore, as you read, as you study, you also want to know God intimately and make sure that you take time to listen to what He is saying to you, to pause and say to God, “How do I live in the light of this?”

The Bible is a timeless book! Yes, it was written to others and about others, but God tells us that it was also written for us—to give us hope and to tell us how to live. It’s for all people of all times, no matter what country or tribe they are from, no matter what their color, race, nationality, sex, age, or financial income.

When God speaks to “man,” He is speaking to mankind—to women and men. In Jesus Christ, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

In other words, God does not respect one race above another, one social status or caste above another, one sex above another. When we come to Jesus Christ, we are all the same. That is what God says. That is what God means. And that is the way it will be, because God is God.

Now, since the purpose of this book is to help you see for yourself what God says about Himself, about you, and about the relationship He wants to have with you, you and I are going to study the Gospel of John,* one of the books of the Bible. It is the fourth book of the New Testament.

When you finish this study, my friend, you will know for yourself what God says. Then you can decide whether you will believe Him or not.

HOW ARE WE GOING TO STUDY THE GOSPEL OF JOHN?

We are going to study the Gospel of John one chapter at a time, and as we do, I will show you how to observe the Bible text in a way that will help you see for yourself what each chapter is teaching. I am not going to tell you what to believe. I will simply show you how to discover for yourself what God is saying. (That is why the chapters

* This book is often referred to simply as John.

of *God, Are You There?* are titled according to the skill of Bible study you'll learn, rather than according to the subject of John—because we want you to discover the truths of each chapter for yourself.)

I'm asking you to commit to do seven weeks of this thirteen—week study. Once you get started, however, you will be amazed at how quickly the time passes and at how much you learn each week. And then if you continue, and I pray you do, you can finish the other six weeks of study. If you will do this study and believe what God says, your life will never be the same.

I will give you an assignment for five days of each week. If you cannot do your assignment every day, do the study at your own pace. Just remember that the Bible is truth, and if you want to know truth, you need to discipline yourself to study it. Also remember that there is one who does not want you to know truth. He is mentioned in John 8:44. Don't let him keep you from truth—finish your study!

You may find it very helpful to do this study with another person or in a small group and discuss it together. As you discuss what you have seen, however, always refer back to the chapter and verse you are studying. That way you can make sure your answers and insights are coming from the Bible rather than from what you or others think. At the end of this book, you will find a leader's guide that will help you week by week as you discuss what you learn and see how to apply it to your life.

Finally, you need to realize that you will not understand everything you read. You will understand what God wants you to understand. He will teach you a little bit, and when you understand that, He will teach you a little bit more. The more you continue to study His Word, the more you will see and understand. I have been a Christian for more than 40 years, and there is still much I have to learn. But how exciting that is! I can keep on learning more about my beloved Father and precious Lord and Savior until I see them face-to-face! I love it!

HOW DO YOU BEGIN YOUR STUDY?

Begin with Prayer

Prayer is simply talking with God. And because the Bible is God's book, you need to go to Him and ask Him to help you understand His book.

Just tell Him you want to see truth for yourself and that you would like Him to help you understand what He is saying.

Look for the Purpose of the Book

Every book in the Bible was written for a reason. So one of the first things you need to do when you read a book of the Bible is find the author's purpose for writing that book; or to put it another way, why God included this book in His Bible. If the author does not specifically tell you his purpose, then as you read look for what or who the author writes about most. This will help you discover the purpose of the book.

Sometimes you need to read a book through several times to see the author's purpose for writing. With the short books of the Bible that is not difficult, but with the longer books it can take some time.

However, finding the purpose is vital because the writer's purpose determines the way he lays out the material in the book, and it determines what he covers in his writing.

For example, the author's purpose or reason for writing the Gospel of John is given in John 20:30-31. The Gospel of John is printed in the back of this book beginning on page 151. Look for these verses and read them carefully. Then write out below why John wrote this Gospel:

Remember, everything John wrote in this Gospel was to help him accomplish this purpose. As you read each chapter, watch what he shares about Jesus Christ in order to achieve his purpose: to prove to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that you might believe in Him and thus have eternal life.

As you study each chapter, I will share some inductive study skills with you. Then, as you practice these skills, you will learn how you can study other books of the Bible inductively. And that is exciting, for you are not only going to learn the Gospel of John—you also are going to learn how to study the rest of the Bible! If you are a student, it will help you in your other studies too.

THE REVEALING “5 W’S AND AN H” OF BIBLE STUDY

— DAY ONE —

1. At the end of this book you will find all of the Gospel of John printed out in a form called *Observation Worksheets*. This is the Bible text printed with space left beside it so you can make notes. This space is called the *margin*.

When you study the Bible inductively, you *observe* the passage you are studying. To observe something is to look at it very closely to see everything there is to see.

When you observe something carefully you see

- a. what the whole thing looks like
- b. what the different parts of it are like
- c. how the parts relate to one another

A good way to observe a chapter of the Bible is to ask the *5 W’s and an H*: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW.

For instance, when you read a chapter in John you should ask questions like these:

- i. WHO is this chapter about or WHAT is this chapter about?

It may be about a person—that’s WHO.

OR

It may be about an event or some special subject—that’s WHAT.

- ii. WHAT do I learn from this chapter about the person, event, or subject?
- iii. WHEN is this happening, or WHEN *will* it happen?
- iv. WHERE is this taking place, or WHERE *will* it take place?
- v. WHY was this said? WHY was this mentioned? WHY did this person do this? WHY did this happen? WHY will this happen?
- vi. How was it done? How did it happen? Or, How *will* it happen?

You may not find answers to each of the 5 W's and an H in every text you study because they are not always there. When you observe the Word of God, you only need to see what God says. You do not need to read things into what He says—nor should you. If He wants you to know something, He will make it plain to you. He wants you to know truth and understand it.

He will tell you everything you need to know. You don't need to add anything to God's Word. As you carefully observe what He says, you will see truth and you will come to know Him as He really is.

You observe the text to discover what it says—that is *observation*.

In the process of observation, you'll discover what it means—that is *interpretation*.

Then, once you know what God says and what He means, you live in the light of it—that is *application*.

2. Turn to the Observation Worksheet for John 1 on page 151 of the appendix. (The appendix is the section at the back of the book, following Week 13, which contains extra materials you will need to do your study.)

Read through chapter 1 one time to see what it is about. (Remember to pray before you begin, asking God to help you.) When you finish, go to number 3.

3. What two people does this chapter talk about the most? Who are the main characters besides God? List them below.

a.


b.

That is enough for today. Tomorrow we’ll start marking key words. You will be excited about what you learn. By the way, I’m so proud of you for making the effort to see truth for yourself. You will never regret it. God is going to open a whole new world to you, and you are going to be so grateful to Him.

— D A Y T W O —

When you read a chapter of the Bible, you will find that certain important words are repeated a number of times. These are what we call *key words*. Like a key, they unlock the meaning of the Bible text.


You should mark each key word in a distinctive way so that you can spot it easily. Once you decide how to mark a key word, mark it in the same way each time it appears. You can use a color (which is best), a symbol, or a combination of the two to mark a key word.

For instance, I always color the word *believe* blue. I color the word *life* blue too, but I also use a symbol with this word—I put a box around it in green to distinguish it from *believe*. When I mark the word *devil* I just use a symbol—I use a pitchfork! 

It will be helpful to list the key words which appear throughout the book you are studying on a piece of paper or a 3 x 5 card so you can use this as a bookmark. Then mark each word on the bookmark as you plan to mark it in the Gospel of John. You can use your bookmark as you go from chapter to chapter each week to remind you of how you are marking your words. I will tell you as we work through each week which words to add to your list, and even though they are on your bookmark I will remind you to continue to mark them as we go. (You

won't always want to add every key word you mark because some key words are only in a particular chapter and you won't mark them after you finish your work in that chapter.)

1. Today you are going to read through John 1:1-18. As you read, you need to mark every occurrence of the key word *Word*. If you have colored pencils, you might color *Word* yellow each time it appears. If you do not have colored pencils, draw a diagram of an open book over it:

In the beginning was the  and...

2. Now read through John 1:1-18 again. This time you need to look for pronouns that refer to the key word. A **pronoun** is a word that takes the place of a noun. (Pronouns are words like *I, me, my, he, she, it, we, us, they, theirs*, and so on.) In John 1:1-18, these will be words such as *He, His, Him* which are used in the place of *Word* but refer to it. Color or mark these the same way you colored or marked the key word. Make sure the pronouns you mark refer to *Word* and not to someone else. I'll give you a clue! When you read the Bible text on your Observation Worksheet, you will begin to notice that all pronouns that refer to God the Father, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit will begin with a capital letter.

3. Now that you have marked every occurrence of this key word in John 1:1-18 and every occurrence of the pronouns that refer to it, you need to mark any synonyms that refer to *Word*.

A **synonym** is a word that has the same meaning as another word or a word that refers to the same person, place, or thing. For instance, the words *God, Father, and Almighty* are all synonyms because they refer to the same person.

4. Now, let's do it. Watch for and mark the synonym(s) used in John 1:1-18 which refer to the *Word: life, light, and only begotten from the Father*.

Are you worried, my friend, that you are not getting the right answers? Don’t worry! You are going to see truth for yourself. You are off to such a good start, and I am so proud of you. Remember, those who succeed are those who determine to keep on keeping on until they learn. I always tell my students, “Hangeth, thou, in there!”

By the way, the first week’s lesson is a little long, but it’s because chapter 1 is so long! Don’t give up, though, because each week gets easier. Also, as you work through the weeks, you gain understanding and that makes it easier! Press on! Don’t quit!

— D A Y T H R E E —

1. After you mark the key words, make a list of what you observed from marking these words. (I’ll show you how to do this a little bit later—so keep reading.) You can make your list in the margin of your Observation Worksheet. Or you can make a list on a piece of paper first and then copy it in the margin of your worksheet when you are happy with it.

Your assignment for today is to make a list of what you learn about the key word *Word*. So look at each place where you have marked *Word* or its pronouns and synonyms in John 1:1-18 and list what you learn from observing the text.

Do not put down anything that you have heard, think, feel, or believe—just put down what John 1:1-18 teaches you about the *Word*. (I am going to give you lots of room to make your list. You won’t need all this space for your observations now, but you will need the space for an assignment you will do on Day Five.)

Now, let me get you started by showing you how to do the list. Note that I have put the verse number where I found what I saw as I listed it. I will give you the first two things that we see about the *Word* in this chapter:

The Word...

v. 1. was in the beginning.


v. 1. was with God.

v. _____.

v. _____.

— DAY FOUR —

1. In John 1:1-18 you read about someone besides Jesus Christ, the Word of God. Read John 1:6. What is this man's name? Write it out.

2. Read through John 1:1-18 and mark every reference to this man. Pick a color or a symbol. If you don't have colored pencils, you might want to use this symbol:  John. (The marking is to show water—he is John the Baptist!)

3. Now, make a list of what you learned from marking each reference to this man. (Once again I am going to give you more space than you need at this point. You will use the space later.)

— DAY FIVE —

1. Today you need to read through the rest of chapter 1. Read verses 19-51 and mark every reference to Jesus Christ in the same way you marked every reference to the Word. Don’t forget to mark pronouns and synonyms. For instance, in John 1:29 you discover who the Word is—what His name is. Mark it like you marked *Word*. In John 1:29 Jesus is called the *Lamb of God*, therefore mark *Lamb of God* in the same way you marked *Word*. In verse 30 He is called a *Man*, so mark it like you marked *Word*.

2. Read through the same verses again and mark every reference to John, including any pronouns and synonyms. Use the color or symbol you used for him yesterday. (By the way, the John who is mentioned in verses 19-51 is not the same John who wrote this Gospel. Remember, in verses 19-51 this is John the Baptist.)

3. Now, faithful student, go back to the list you began on Day Three under number 1 (page 22) and add all that you learn from marking each reference to Jesus Christ in verses 19-51.

4. If you aren’t too tired, write down all you learn about John on the list you began on Day Four, under number 3 (page 24).

5. Now, remembering John’s purpose for writing this Gospel (John 20:30-31), look at your list about Jesus and at your list about John the Baptist and put a check mark by any truth that helps John accomplish his purpose in writing this book. Isn’t it exciting to see from the very first chapter how much John tells us about Jesus Christ! In the remainder of his Gospel, John is going to show us these truths over and over, so watch for them.

6. In the appendix on page 221 you will find a chart called JOHN AT A GLANCE. This is a chart on which you can record the main theme of each chapter of the Gospel of John. The main theme is the most important subject or event covered in a chapter. It is the subject, the topic, that is talked about the most.

Taking time to figure out the theme and write it out helps you remember what that chapter is about. When you record the theme on the JOHN AT A GLANCE chart, you have an easy, handy way to find those truths or events without having to read through the book again if you want to refer to it. You have a summary of the events and truths of John at a glance!

Recording each chapter's theme also helps you see how the chapters relate to one another and to the author's reason for writing.

Record the theme of chapter 1 beside number 1 on the first line on the JOHN AT A GLANCE chart.

7. At this point, let's take a few minutes and see if you can apply anything you have observed to your life. To help you do this, let me give you some questions to think about carefully. It would be good to write out your answers; but if you are not comfortable doing that, just answer the questions in your heart.

John says that Jesus Christ is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

When a person sins, he (meaning either he or she) runs his own life. He doesn't let Jesus be his Lord and Master, which means he does what he wants to do instead of what God tells him to do. He believes what he wants to believe even though it does not agree with what God says in His Word, the Bible. He doesn't believe Jesus is God, or if he does, he still won't honor Jesus as God and obey Him. When a person sins, he breaks or disobeys God's commandments.

a. Are you a sinner?

b. According to John 1:29, what will Jesus do with your sins?

- c. According to John 1:12, how does a person become a child of God?

- d. According to John 1:11, will everyone receive Jesus Christ?

This last answer is important to remember. As we continue our study, you are going to learn much about the people who refuse to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and do not receive Him as their God and Savior. You will learn what will happen to them and how they will feel about you and respond to you if you believe in Jesus Christ. You will see what you are to do because of this and how you are to respond to them if you are a child of God.

8. Finally, here is one last question asked in two parts:

- a. What is the most interesting or exciting thing you have learned about Jesus Christ from your study this week?

- b. What disturbs you the most about what you saw? Or what is the biggest question you have?

You have just completed your first week of study, and it was a long one! I'm proud of you! My heart rejoices over your diligence! God will use what you are doing "to set you apart" in a very special way if you simply believe what He says and live like it. This is true "personhood"—being what God designed you to be.

Now until we meet again in two days, think about all you have learned from God's book, the Bible. "Live like Jesus," is what God says about His Son.

APPENDIXES

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

C H A P T E R I

- 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2 He was in the beginning with God.
- 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.
- 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.
- 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
- 6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.
- 7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him.
- 8 He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light.
- 9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.
- 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.
- 11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.
- 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,
- 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

- 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- 15 John testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’”
- 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.
- 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.
- 18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.
- 19 This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”
- 20 And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”
- 21 They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”
- 22 Then they said to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”
- 23 He said, “I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”
- 24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.
- 25 They asked him, and said to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”
- 26 John answered them saying, “I baptize in water, *but* among you stands One whom you do not know.
- 27 “*It is* He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”

- 28 These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.
- 29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
- 30 “This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’
- 31 “I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.”
- 32 John testified saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.
- 33 “I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’
- 34 “I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”
- 35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,
- 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”
- 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.
- 38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?”
- 39 He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.
- 40 One of the two who heard John *speak* and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.
- 41 He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means Christ).

- 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).
- 43 The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.”
- 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.
- 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”
- 46 Nathanael said to him, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”
- 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”
- 48 Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”
- 49 Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.”
- 50 Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”
- 51 And He said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

Theme of John: _____

SEGMENT DIVISIONS

	PORTRAYALS OF JESUS CHRIST	SIGNS AND MIRACLES	MINISTRY	CHAPTER THEMES
			TO ISRAEL	1
				2
				3
				4
				5
				6
				7
				8
				9
				10
				11
			TO DISCIPLES	12
				13
				14
				15
				16
				17
			TO ALL MANKIND	18
				19
				20
			TO DISCIPLES	21

Author:

Date:



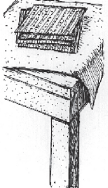





Purpose:

*Key Words:
(including synonyms)*

THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

1st Month (Nisan)
Festival of Passover (*Pesach*)







3rd Month (Sivan)
Festival of Pentecost (*Shavuot*)

<p>Slaves in Egypt</p> 	<p>Passover</p> 	<p>Unleavened Bread</p> 	<p>First fruits</p> 	<p>Pentecost or Feast of Weeks</p> 
<p>Whoever commits sin is the slave to sin</p>	<p>Kill lamb & put blood on doorpost <i>Exodus 12:6, 7</i></p>	<p>Purging of all leaven <i>(symbol of sin)</i></p>	<p>Wave offering of sheaf <i>(promise of harvest to come)</i></p>	<p>Wave offering of two loaves of leavened bread</p>
	<p>1st month, 14th day <i>Leviticus 23:5</i></p>	<p>1st month, 15th day for 7 days <i>Leviticus 23:6-8 (1st and 7th days are Sabbaths)</i></p>	<p>Day after Sabbath <i>Leviticus 23:9-14 (It is a Sabbath)</i></p>	<p>50 days after first fruits <i>Leviticus 23:15-21 (It is a Sabbath)</i></p>
	<p>Christ our Passover has been sacrificed</p> 	<p>Clean out old leaven ... just as you are in fact unleavened</p>	<p>Christ has been raised ... the first fruits</p> 	<p>Going away so that Comforter can come</p>  <p><i>Mount of Olives</i></p>
<p><i>John 8:34</i></p>	<p><i>1 Corinthians 5:7</i></p>	<p><i>1 Corinthians 5:7, 8</i></p>	<p><i>1 Corinthians 15:20-23</i></p>	<p><i>John 16:7</i> <i>Acts 1:9-12</i></p>
				<p><i>Acts 2:1-47</i> <i>1 Corinthians 12:13</i> <i>Ephesians 2:11-22</i></p>

MONTHS:

Nisan—March, April ■ Sivan—May, June ■ Tishri—September, October

7th Month (Tishri)
Festival of Tabernacles (*Succoth*)

	<p>Feast of Trumpets</p> 	<p>Day of Atonement</p> 	<p>Feast of Booths or Tabernacles</p> 	
	<p>Trumpet blown — a holy convocation</p>	<p>Atonement shall be made to cleanse you <i>Leviticus 16:30</i></p>	<p>Harvest celebration memorial of tabernacles in wilderness</p>	
<p>Interlude Between Festivals</p>	<p>7th month, 1st day <i>Leviticus 23:23-25</i> <i>(It is a Sabbath)</i></p>	<p>7th month, 10th day <i>Leviticus 23:26-32</i> <i>(It is a Sabbath)</i></p>	<p>7th month, 15th day, for 7 days; 8th day, Holy Convocation <i>Leviticus 23:33-44</i> <i>(The 1st and 8th days are Sabbaths)</i></p>	
	<p>Regathering of Israel in preparation for final day of atonement <i>Jeremiah 32:37-41</i></p> 	<p>Israel will repent and look to Messiah in one day <i>Zechariah 3:9-10;</i> <i>Zechariah 12:10;</i> <i>Zechariah 13:1;</i> <i>Zechariah 14:9</i></p> 	<p>Families of the earth will come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Booths <i>Zechariah 14:16-19</i></p> 	<p>New heaven and new earth</p> <p>God tabernacles with men</p> <p><i>Revelation 21:1-3</i></p>
	<p><i>Ezekiel 36:24</i></p>	<p><i>Ezekiel 36:25-27</i> <i>Hebrews 9, 10</i> <i>Romans 11:25-29</i></p>	<p><i>Ezekiel 36:28</i></p>	

Coming of Christ

Israel had two harvests each year—spring and autumn



LEADER'S GUIDE

THE TWO WAYS TO DO THIS STUDY

The first way you can do this study with others is do the assignments together with the class. You go through the book doing one assignment at a time and then discussing what the student or students learned. The pace you keep depends on the amount of time you have; therefore you ignore “weeks” and “days” and do whatever you can. The one caution is not to drag it out so long that you lose your students.

If someone is new to Bible study or is not a believer in Jesus Christ, this is a life-changing way to mentor them and encourage them along the way. You could have no higher calling than to introduce another person to the very words of God so they can know you can “discover truth for yourself.”

Because we live in a time when people are so busy and overworked that they don't feel they have time to study on their own, this way of conducting the study enables you to meet them where they are and introduce them to the immeasurable benefit of studying God's Word for their spiritual health and well-being.

If you do the study this way, it will be important for you as the leader to do the week's study in advance so you are prepared to direct the students and help them in their quest for truth. You will find discussion questions in the next segment, which are simply there to help you should you need it.

(By the way, this book has been used to teach English to many precious people all around the world.)

The second way you can use this book is to have the students do the assignments on their own and then come together for discussion. If you do this, it is still good to do the first two lessons (or portions of the lessons) together with them to make sure they understand what they are doing.

Preparing to Lead the Class

Each week you will be given suggestions as to how you may want to review the material your class members studied individually that week. For instance, after they complete the lesson for Week 1, the group would then meet to discuss the material.* Please know the proposed leader questions are suggestions only!

As you prepare for each class session you should come before the Father in prayer and ask Him to help you. You can trust that He will show you what to add to the suggestions or what to subtract from them. He may even redirect you as you wait before Him for His leading. He alone knows the need of each group member, and in His faithfulness He will show you how to take what has been studied and move through it so that He can apply it in the most effective way. Trust Him, dear leader.

Know, too, that this book has been translated into a host of languages and used in groups with people from a variety of backgrounds representing numerous cultures. You will need to seek the Father in light of the background and culture of the group in which you are using the materials.

During the first lessons of this study, you may want to take the homework questions one by one and see how the students answered them and whether or not they have any questions. Remember to encourage, encourage, encourage! And if their answers are wrong, show them how to find the right answers.

Begin Each Session with Prayer

I would urge you to begin each session with prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to meet with you and to use what is shared to encourage, challenge, and refine everyone's lives. Ask Him, in the presence of

* Teaching audio material that can be used after the discussion time to reinforce and enhance the study are available from Precept South Africa, contact us at: support@precept.org.za or www.precept.org.za.

the group, to create an atmosphere of loving acceptance, where each person is free to share what he or she has learned.

Create a Relaxed Atmosphere Where All Can Share

As you lead and as people share, be sure that you don't embarrass anyone who doesn't give what you consider a "right answer." Create a relaxed atmosphere. Tell them that all of you are learning and that sometimes we learn best when we give a wrong answer. We then learn the correct answer and won't forget it!

If you are hard on the group members, you will discourage discussion. But if you encourage and create an atmosphere in which people know that you accept them as they are, they will be eager to discuss what they are seeing and learning. You'll create an air of excitement.

Know, too, that some people in the class may have other questions that you do not plan to cover. If you do not have time to deal with the questions or you feel they don't understand enough of God's Word for you to provide an answer, make note of their questions. Tell them that you want to wait to answer these questions until the class sees what God's Word says as they continue their study.

Helpful Tools for Your Time Together

It is helpful if you can obtain a white marker board so that you can record some of the insights that are shared. It is helpful to have a record of what is shared in front of the class so they can *see* as well as hear what is being learned. Seeing the insights listed on a board will help cement God's truth in the minds and hearts of the group.

For Your First Meeting Together

Typically, your discussion time with the students will follow a week of study in which they have seen God's truth for themselves. However, during your *first* meeting you should go through the introductory material. Please read "Discussion of the Material That Precedes Week 1" and

know that you are beginning an awesome adventure, for you will see God work in wondrous ways!

You Are Prayed For and Appreciated

Know that I have prayed for you, and you can trust our God to work in and through you as you make yourself available to Him!

DISCUSSION OF THE MATERIAL
THAT PRECEDES WEEK 1

Since the class has not yet begun their weekly studies, use the first meeting to walk through the material with the group.

Begin by telling the class that your study will be a process where truth is built upon truth. Let them know that as they study God's Word with diligence, they will discover what He wants to teach them individually *and* that they will be enriched by hearing others share what He has shown them.

Begin with prayer, Beloved. This is God's book, and you will want to acknowledge your dependence upon Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to meet with you as a class each week as you spend time in His Word. Pray that each person will see how the truth of God's Word applies to him or her personally.

Have the group read the section that leads up to Week 1. If there are people in your class who are slow readers or slow learners, encourage them to stay with the study even though they may struggle. Let them know that when they complete this course, they will have developed study skills that can help them excel in other kinds of study.

Suggest to the class members that they underline or highlight important points as they read. Underlining makes it easier to go back and review key facts or truths. For instance, under the heading **WHAT IS THE BIBLE?** they might want to highlight or underline

“The Bible...is a book made up of 66 separate books” and “the first part is called the Old Testament and the second part is called the New Testament.” Encourage the students to underline the most important facts.

After the class finishes reading, discuss what they learned about the Bible and why it is important to study it. During this discussion, be sure to stress the importance of knowing about the God of the Bible and what the Bible says. *At this point, really encourage your students! Your excitement and passion to know truth by knowing God’s Word will be contagious. Share what God can and will do for them if they will persevere to the end of the study. Remember, the words of God are spirit and life. Explain that when they study the Bible, they are studying a book like no other book in the world. It is a book that changes lives as well as the course of history.*

Next, discuss the purpose of the Gospel of John. Have someone read John 20:30-31 and, if a board is available, write the passage so everyone in the class can see it. Then under John 20:30-31, list the main points of these verses.

Ask the questions listed below and put the answers on the board. (At this point I will supply you with the answers for these questions so we can be sure to begin on track together. I will not provide answers, however, in the remainder of the leader section.) Instruct your students to go to the Bible text for their answers. This will show them that the Bible gives us the answers we need and that we don’t have to come up with answers of our own. The Bible tells us everything we need to know; we simply need to carefully observe (see) what it says.

I. Why was the Gospel of John written?

a. so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God

Discuss with your group that the word *Christ* is another way of saying “Messiah.” The Messiah was the One who God promised to

send to His people to save them from their sins and to eventually rule as King over all the earth. He would be God's one and only Son and would be just like the Father. Therefore, to say that Jesus is the Son of God is to say that Jesus *is* God. Your students should watch for any verses which show that Jesus is God and that Jesus is the same as God the Father in His character and His power.

- b. that believing you may have life in His [Jesus'] name

Those who confess the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord have life in Jesus' name. In other words, when they truly believe in Jesus, He gives them His life. As your group continues this study, tell them to watch carefully what the Gospel of John says about those who truly believe.

You will want to mention that in biblical times, names were very important. They often described the person—what he was, or what he was called to do. To speak or to act in another person's name would be to speak and act according to what that person's name meant or the authority it carried. For instance, when a police officer pounds on someone's door, he will say, "Open up in the name of the law." The police officer is standing there as a representative of the law.

2. What does the Gospel of John record so that people may believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ?

- a. signs that Jesus performed in the presence of His disciples

3. Why did John tell us that Jesus' signs were performed in the presence of His disciples? Does it make any difference that they saw these signs? What difference would it make? (As your group thinks about this, try to apply it to them. For example, if you are talking to people who have been tried by our courts of justice, ask them how important eyewitnesses are and why.)

4. Now that you know John's purpose for writing, what should you watch for as you read and study the Gospel of John?

- a. things which show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God
- b. various signs Jesus did, WHERE He did them, WHAT they were, WHAT happened, and WHO saw them
- c. How the various people who saw these signs reacted to them and WHY

5. When you finish this discussion, you may want to start your students on Week 1's homework. Helping them begin the homework will make it easier and will be an encouragement to them.

If you have the class begin the homework, plan to review with them Day One and Day Two. Ask them to work through Day One and discuss what they saw. Then do Day Two. After they read and mark every reference to *the Word* as well as the pronouns and synonyms, read John 1:1-18 aloud. Tell them to shout "Word" each time you come to a reference to the *Word* they marked (or colored). This way, they can see what they should have marked.

6. When you finish, suggest that the group talk to God in prayer. Tell them to share with God what is on their hearts, what they need, what they want to learn, and why. Try to have conversational prayer in which everyone in the group is free to be silent or to pray without feeling uncomfortable.

Tell your class you will do the study up to Week 7, and if any of them want to finish the last six weeks, you'll continue. Ask each person to commit to being faithful to study for at least seven weeks and to hold one another accountable.

Encourage your class to complete next week's lesson, Week 1 (unless, of course, you do the work together). Tell them to do as much as they can and not to worry if they don't understand it all or can't get it all done. Tell them not to be afraid of wrong answers because you all

are learning together. Share with them that they will meet obstacles. (Satan doesn't want them to know God's Word, as it is the Christian's means of defeating him.) Encourage them to press on no matter what—the reward they will receive is invaluable!

Beloved, pray for your class. Prayer and the Word are the two things which make the greatest difference in people's lives. As a leader, you have the opportunity to deposit both in their lives!

WEEK 1

1. Begin in prayer, asking God to be with each member of the class and help him or her understand what His Word says.

2. Read John chapter 1 aloud. Tell the class that as you read, you want them to shout "Word, or Jesus" every time you come to a word they marked that refers to *the Word* (the Word is identified as Jesus in verse 17) and to shout "John" every time you mention a reference to John the Baptist. This process will help the students be certain they marked the right words along with each word's synonyms and pronouns.

3. Have the class tell you everything they learned about Jesus from John 1. Ask them which verse or verses gave them the information. Record on the board each insight that is shared.

4. When you finish, write John 20:30-31 on the board. Ask the students what they saw in John 1 that was written in order to help John fulfill his purpose for writing his Gospel. List on the board what is shared, and put a checkmark next to each item that shows that Jesus is the Christ or the Son of God.

5. Ask your students if any signs are recorded in John 1. (Although the answer is no, have them see where in chapter 1 John lets his readers know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that He is beginning to accomplish His purpose.)

ABOUT PRECEPT

PRECEPT was raised up by God for the sole purpose of establishing people in God's Word to produce reverence for Him. It serves as an arm of the church without respect to denomination. God has enabled Precept to reach across denominational lines without compromising the truths of His inerrant Word. We believe every word of the Bible was inspired and given to man as all that is necessary for him to become mature and thoroughly equipped for every good work of life. This ministry does not seek to impose its doctrines on others, but rather to direct people to the Master Himself, who leads and guides by His Spirit into all truth through a systematic study of His Word. The ministry produces a variety of Bible studies and holds conferences and intensive Training Workshops designed to establish attendees in the Word through Inductive Bible Study.

Jack Arthur and his wife, Kay, founded Precept in 1970. Kay and the ministry staff of writers produce *Precept Upon Precept* studies, *In & Out* studies, *Lord* series studies, the *New Inductive Study Series* studies, *40-Minute* studies, and *Discover 4 Yourself Inductive Bible Studies for Kids*. From years of diligent study and teaching experience, Kay and the staff have developed these unique, inductive courses that are now used in nearly 185 countries and 70 languages.

Contact Precept South Africa for more information about inductive Bible studies in your area.

Precept South Africa

+27 (021) 531-1836

support@precept.org.za | www.precept.org.za



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