

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

SEPTEMBER 3-9

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | JOHN 1-2

"Jesus Performs His First Miracle"

(John 2:1-3) And on the third day a marriage feast took place in Ca'na of Gal'i-lee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the marriage feast. ³ When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him: "They have no wine."

w15 6/15 4 ¶3

Christ—The Power of God

³ At a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, Jesus performed his first miracle. The number of guests may have been greater than expected. But whatever the case, the wine ran out. Among the guests was Mary, Jesus' mother. For years, she had no doubt pondered all the prophetic promises associated with her son, who she knew would be called "Son of the Most High." (Luke 1:30-32; 2:52) Did she believe that in him there were powers not yet revealed? What is evident is that at Cana, Mary and Jesus felt compassion for the newly married couple and wanted to save them embarrassment. Jesus knew that hospitality was a duty. So he miraculously turned some 100 gallons (380 L) of water into "fine wine." **(Read John 2:3, 6-11.)** Was Jesus obligated to perform this miracle? No. He simply cared about people and was imitating his heavenly Father by being generous.

(John 2:4-11) But Jesus said to her: "Woman, why is that of concern to me and to you? My hour has not yet come." ⁵ His mother said to those serving: "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶ Now there were six stone water jars sitting there as required by the purification rules of the Jews, each able to hold two or three liquid measures. ⁷ Jesus said to them:

"Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. ⁸ Then he said to them: "Now draw some out and take it to the director of the feast." So they took it. ⁹ When the director of the feast tasted the water that had now been turned into wine, not knowing where it came from (although the servants who had drawn out the water knew), the director of the feast called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him: "Everyone else puts out the fine wine first, and when people are intoxicated, the inferior. You have saved the fine wine until now." ¹¹ Jesus did this in Ca'na of Gal'i-lee as the beginning of his signs, and he made his glory manifest, and his disciples put their faith in him.

jy 41 ¶6

Performing His First Miracle

This is the first miracle that Jesus performs. When his new disciples see this miracle, their faith in him is strengthened. Afterward, Jesus, his mother, and his half brothers travel to the city of Capernaum on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(John 1:1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.

nwtsty study notes on Joh 1:1

the Word: Or "the Logos." Greek, *ho lo'gos*. Here used as a title, it is also used at Joh 1:14 and Re 19:13. John identified the one to whom this title belongs, namely, Jesus. This title was applied to Jesus during his prehuman existence as a spirit creature, during his ministry on earth as a perfect man, and after his exaltation to heaven. Jesus was God's Word of communication, or Spokesman, for conveying information and instructions to the Creator's other spirit

sons and to humans. So it is reasonable to think that prior to Jesus' coming to earth, Jehovah communicated with mankind through the Word, His angelic mouthpiece.—Ge 16:7-11; 22:11; 31:11; Ex 3:2-5; Jg 2:1-4; 6:11, 12; 13:3.

with: Lit., “toward.” In this context, the Greek preposition *pros* implies close proximity and fellowship. It also indicates separate persons, in this case, the Word and the only true God.

the Word was a god: Or “the Word was divine [or, “a godlike one].” This statement by John describes a quality or characteristic of “the Word” (Greek, *ho lo'gos*; see study note on **the Word** in this verse), that is, Jesus Christ. The Word's preeminent position as the first-born Son of God through whom God created all other things is a basis for describing him as “a god; a godlike one; divine; a divine being.” Many translators favor the rendering “the Word was God,” equating him with God Almighty. However, there are good reasons for saying that John did not mean that “the Word” was the same as Almighty God. First, the preceding clause and the following clause both clearly state that “the Word” was “*with* God.” Also, the Greek word *the-os'* occurs three times in verses 1 and 2. In the first and third occurrences, *the-os'* is preceded by the definite article in Greek; in the second occurrence, there is no article. Many scholars agree that the absence of the definite article before the second *the-os'* is significant. When the article is used in this context, *the-os'* refers to God Almighty. On the other hand, the absence of the article in this grammatical construction makes *the-os'* qualitative in meaning and describes a characteristic of “the Word.” Therefore, a number of Bible translations in English, French, and German render the text in a way similar to the *New World Translation*, conveying the idea that “the Word” was “a god; divine; a divine being; of divine kind; godlike.” Supporting this view, ancient translations of John's Gospel into the

Sahidic and the Bohairic dialects of the Coptic language, probably produced in the third and fourth centuries C.E., handle the first occurrence of *the-os'* at Joh 1:1 differently from the second occurrence. These renderings highlight a *quality* of “the Word,” that his nature was like that of God, but they do not equate him with his Father, the almighty God. In harmony with this verse, Col 2:9 describes Christ as having “all the fullness of the divine quality.” And according to 2Pe 1:4, even Christ's joint heirs would “become sharers in divine nature.” Additionally, in the *Septuagint* translation, the Greek word *the-os'* is the usual equivalent of the Hebrew words rendered “God,” *'el* and *'elo-him'*, which are thought to convey the basic meaning “Mighty One; Strong One.” These Hebrew words are used with reference to the almighty God, other gods, and humans. (See study note on Joh 10:34.) Calling the Word “a god,” or “a mighty one,” would be in line with the prophecy at Isa 9:6, foretelling that the Messiah would be called “Mighty God” (not “Almighty God”) and that he would be the “Eternal Father” of all those privileged to live as his subjects. The zeal of his own Father, “Jehovah of armies,” would accomplish this.—Isa 9:7.

(John 1:29) The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and he said: “See, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

nwtsty study note on Joh 1:29

the Lamb of God: After Jesus got baptized and returned from being tempted by the Devil, John the Baptist introduced him as “the Lamb of God.” This expression occurs only here and at Joh 1:36. (See App. A7.) Comparing Jesus to a lamb is fitting. Throughout the Bible, sheep were offered in recognition of sin and to gain approach to God. This foreshadowed the sacrifice that Jesus would make when he surrendered his perfect human life in behalf of mankind. The expression “the Lamb of God” could reflect a number of passages in the inspired Scriptures.

In view of John the Baptist's familiarity with the Hebrew Scriptures, his words may have alluded to one or more of the following: the male sheep that Abraham offered up instead of his own son Isaac (Ge 22:13), the Passover lamb that was slaughtered in Egypt for the deliverance of the enslaved Israelites (Ex 12:1-13), or the male lamb that was offered up on God's altar in Jerusalem each morning and evening (Ex 29:38-42). John may also have had in mind Isaiah's prophecy, where the one whom Jehovah calls "my servant" is said to be "brought like a sheep to the slaughter." (Isa 52:13; 53:5, 7, 11) When the apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, he referred to Jesus as "our Passover lamb." (1Co 5:7) The apostle Peter spoke of Christ's "precious blood, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb." (1Pe 1:19) And more than 25 times in the book of Revelation, the glorified Jesus is spoken of figuratively as "the Lamb."—Some examples are: Re 5:8; 6:1; 7:9; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7; 21:9; 22:1.

Bible Reading

(John 1:1-18) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god. ² This one was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence. What has come into existence ⁴ by means of him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light is shining in the darkness, but the darkness has not overpowered it. ⁶ There came a man who was sent as a representative of God; his name was John. ⁷ This man came as a witness, in order to bear witness about the light, so that people of all sorts might believe through him. ⁸ He was not that light, but he was meant to bear witness about that light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every sort of man was about to come into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the

world came into existence through him, but the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own home, but his own people did not accept him. ¹² However, to all who did receive him, he gave authority to become God's children, because they were exercising faith in his name. ¹³ And they were born, not from blood or from a fleshly will or from man's will, but from God. ¹⁴ So the Word became flesh and resided among us, and we had a view of his glory, a glory such as belongs to an only-begotten son from a father; and he was full of divine favor and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, yes, he cried out: "This was the one of whom I said, 'The one coming behind me has advanced in front of me, for he existed before me.'") ¹⁶ For we all received from his fullness, even undeserved kindness upon undeserved kindness. ¹⁷ Because the Law was given through Moses, the undeserved kindness and the truth came to be through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No man has seen God at any time; the only-begotten god who is at the Father's side is the one who has explained Him.

SEPTEMBER 10-16

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | JOHN 3-4

"Jesus Witnesses to a Samaritan Woman"

(John 4:6, 7) In fact, Jacob's well was there. Now Jesus, tired out as he was from the journey, was sitting at the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ A woman of Sa-mar'i-a came to draw water. Jesus said to her: "Give me a drink."

nwtsty study note on Joh 4:6

tired out as he was: This is the only place in the Scriptures where Jesus is said to be "tired out." It was about 12:00 noon, and that morning Jesus had likely made **the journey** from the Jordan Valley in Judea to Sychar in Samaria, a

steep ascent of 900 m (3,000 ft) or more.—Joh 4:3-5; see App. A7.

(John 4:21-24) Jesus said to her: “Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, because salvation begins with the Jews. ²³ Nevertheless, the hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for indeed, the Father is looking for ones like these to worship him. ²⁴ God is a Spirit, and those worshipping him must worship with spirit and truth.”

(John 4:39-41) Many of the Sa-mar'i-tans from that city put faith in him because of the word of the woman who bore witness, saying: “He told me all the things I did.” ⁴⁰ So when the Sa-mar'i-tans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹ As a result, many more believed because of what he said,

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(John 3:29) Whoever has the bride is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom, when he stands and hears him, has a great deal of joy on account of the voice of the bridegroom. So my joy has been made complete.

nwtsty study note on Joh 3:29

the friend of the bridegroom: In Bible times, a close acquaintance of the bridegroom acted as his legal representative and played a key role in making arrangements for the marriage. He was viewed as the one who brought the bride and bridegroom together. On the wedding day, the bridal procession would arrive at either the house of the bridegroom or that of his father, where the marriage feast would be held. During this feast, the friend of the bridegroom would

be happy when he heard **the voice of the bridegroom** as he talked with his bride, since the friend would feel that he had successfully done his duty. John the Baptist likened himself to “the friend of the bridegroom.” In this case, Jesus was the bridegroom and the disciples as a class made up his symbolic bride. Preparing the way for the Messiah, John the Baptist introduced the first members of “the bride” to Jesus Christ. (Joh 1:29, 35; 2Co 11:2; Eph 5:22-27; Re 21:2, 9) “The friend of the bridegroom” accomplished his objective by making successful introductions; he was then no longer a principal figure. Likewise, John said of himself in relation to Jesus: “That one must keep on increasing, but I must keep on decreasing.”—Joh 3:30.

(John 4:10) In answer Jesus said to her: “If you had known of the free gift of God and who it is who says to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

nwtsty study note on Joh 4:10

living water: This Greek expression is used in a literal sense to refer to flowing water, spring water, or freshwater from a well supplied by springs. This is in contrast with stagnant water from a cistern. At Le 14:5, the Hebrew expression for “running water” is literally “living water.” At Jer 2:13 and 17:13, Jehovah is described as “the source [or, “spring”] of living water,” that is, life-giving symbolic water. When speaking with the Samaritan woman, Jesus used the term “living water” figuratively, but it appears that she initially took his words literally.—Joh 4:11; see study note on Joh 4:14.

Bible Reading

(John 4:1-15) When the Lord became aware that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John— ² although Jesus himself did no baptizing but his disciples did— ³ he left Ju-de'a

and departed again for Gal'i-lee. ⁴ But it was necessary for him to go through Sa-mar'i-a. ⁵ So he came to a city of Sa-mar'i-a called Sy'char, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ In fact, Jacob's well was there. Now Jesus, tired out as he was from the journey, was sitting at the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ A woman of Sa-mar'i-a came to draw water. Jesus said to her: "Give me a drink." ⁸ (For his disciples had gone off into the city to buy food.) ⁹ So the Sa-mar'-i-tan woman said to him: "How is it that you, despite being a Jew, ask me for a drink even though I am a Sa-mar'i-tan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Sa-mar'i-tans.) ¹⁰ In answer Jesus said to her: "If you had known of the free gift of God and who it is who says to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ She said to him: "Sir, you do not even have a bucket for drawing water, and the well is deep. From what source, then, do you have this living water?" ¹² You are not greater than our forefather Jacob, who gave us the well and who together with his sons and his cattle drank out of it, are you?" ¹³ In answer Jesus said to her: "Everyone drinking from this water will get thirsty again. ¹⁴ Whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty at all, but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water bubbling up to impart everlasting life." ¹⁵ The woman said to him: "Sir, give me this water, so that I may neither thirst nor keep coming over to this place to draw water."

SEPTEMBER 17-23

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | JOHN 5-6

"Follow Jesus With the Right Motive"

(John 6:9-11) "Here is a little boy who has five barley loaves and two small fish. But

what are these among so many?" ¹⁰ Jesus said: "Have the men sit down." As there was a lot of grass in that place, the men sat down there, about 5,000 in number. ¹¹ Jesus took the bread, and after giving thanks, he distributed it to those who were sitting there; he did likewise with the small fish, and they had as much as they wanted.

nwtsty study note on Joh 6:10

the men sat down there, about 5,000 in number: Only Matthew's account adds "as well as women and young children" when reporting this miracle. (Mt 14:21) It is possible that the total number of those miraculously fed was well over 15,000.

(John 6:14) When the people saw the sign he performed, they began to say: "This really is the Prophet who was to come into the world."

(John 6:24) So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they boarded their boats and came to Ca-per'na-um to look for Jesus.

nwtsty study note on Joh 6:14

the Prophet: Many Jews in the first century C.E. expected that the prophet like Moses, mentioned at De 18:15, 18, would be the Messiah. In this context, the expression **come into the world** seems to refer to the expected appearance of the Messiah. Only John recorded the events mentioned in this verse.

(John 6:25-27) When they found him across the sea, they said to him: "Rabbi, when did you get here?" ²⁶ Jesus answered them: "Most truly I say to you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate from the loaves and were satisfied. ²⁷ Work, not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for everlasting life, which the Son of man will give you; for on this one

the Father, God himself, has put his seal of approval.”

(John 6:54) Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I will resurrect him on the last day;

(John 6:60) When they heard this, many of his disciples said: “This speech is shocking; who can listen to it?”

(John 6:66-69) Because of this, many of his disciples went off to the things behind and would no longer walk with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the Twelve: “You do not want to go also, do you?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him: “Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life. ⁶⁹ We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

nwtsty study notes on Joh 6:27, 54

food that perishes . . . food that remains for everlasting life: Jesus understood that some people were associating with him and his disciples solely for material advantage. While physical food sustains people day by day, “food” from God’s Word will make it possible for humans to stay alive forever. Jesus urges the crowd to **work . . . for** “the food that remains for everlasting life,” that is, to put forth effort to satisfy their spiritual need and to exercise faith in what they learn.—Mt 4:4; 5:3; Joh 6:28-39.

feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood: The context indicates that those who feed and drink do so in a figurative sense by exercising faith in Jesus Christ. (Joh 6:35, 40) Jesus made this statement in 32 C.E., so he was not discussing the Lord’s Evening Meal, which he would institute a year later. He made this declaration just prior to “the Passover, the festival of the Jews” (Joh 6:4), so his listeners would likely have been reminded of the impending festival and the significance of the lamb’s blood in saving lives on the night that Israel left Egypt (Ex 12:24-27). Jesus was emphasizing that his blood would

likewise play an essential role in making it possible for his disciples to gain **everlasting life**.

w05 9/1 21 ¶13-14

We Shall Walk in the Name of Jehovah Our God

¹³ Nevertheless, the crowds determinedly followed Jesus and found him, as John says, “across the sea.” Why did they follow him after he avoided their efforts to make him a king? Many betrayed a fleshly viewpoint, speaking pointedly of the material provisions that Jehovah had made in the wilderness in Moses’ day. The implication was that Jesus should continue to make material provisions for them. Jesus, perceiving their wrong motives, began to teach them spiritual truths that could help adjust their thinking. (John 6:17, 24, 25, 30, 31, 35-40) In response, some murmured against him, especially when he spoke this illustration: “Most truly I say to you, Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves. He that feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I shall resurrect him at the last day.”—John 6:53, 54.

¹⁴ Jesus’ illustrations often moved people to show whether they truly desired to walk with God. This one was no exception. It provoked strong reactions. We read: “Many of his disciples, when they heard this, said: ‘This speech is shocking; who can listen to it?’” Jesus went on to explain that they should look for the spiritual meaning of his words. He said: “It is the spirit that is life-giving; the flesh is of no use at all. The sayings that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” Still, many would not listen, and the account reports: “Owing to this many of his disciples went off to the things behind and would no longer walk with him.”—John 6:60, 63, 66.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(John 6:44) No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him, and I will resurrect him on the last day.

nwtsty study note on Joh 6:44

draws him: Although the Greek verb for “draw” is used in reference to hauling in a net of fish (Joh 21:6, 11), it does not suggest that God drags people against their will. This verb can also mean “to attract,” and Jesus’ statement may allude to Jer 31:3, where Jehovah said to his ancient people: “I have drawn you to me with loyal love.” (The *Septuagint* uses the same Greek verb here.) Joh 12:32 shows that in a similar way, Jesus draws men of all sorts to himself. The Scriptures show that Jehovah has given humans free will. Everyone has a choice when it comes to serving Him. (De 30:19, 20) God gently draws to himself those who have a heart that is rightly disposed. (Ps 11:5; Pr 21:2; Ac 13:48) Jehovah does so through the Bible’s message and through his holy spirit. The prophecy from Isa 54:13, quoted in Joh 6:45, applies to those who are drawn by the Father.—Compare Joh 6:65.

(John 6:64) But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray him.

nwtsty study notes on Joh 6:64

Jesus knew . . . the one who would betray him: Jesus was referring to Judas Iscariot. Jesus spent the entire night in prayer to his Father before selecting the 12 apostles. (Lu 6:12-16) So at first, Judas was faithful to God. However, Jesus knew from Hebrew Scripture prophecies that he would be betrayed by a close associate. (Ps 41:9; 109:8; Joh 13:18, 19) When Judas started to go bad, Jesus, who could read hearts and thoughts, detected this change. (Mt 9:4) By use of his foreknowledge, God knew that a trusted companion of Jesus would turn traitor. But it is inconsistent with God’s qualities and past dealings to think that Judas had to be the one who would fail, as if his failure were predestined.

from the beginning: This expression does not refer to Judas’ birth or to his being selected as an apostle, which happened after Jesus had prayed the entire night. (Lu 6:12-16) Rather, it refers to the start of Judas’ acting treacherously, which Jesus immediately discerned. (Joh 2:24, 25; Re 1:1; 2:23; see study notes on Joh 6:70; 13:11.) This also shows that Judas’ actions were premeditated and planned, not the result of a sudden change of heart. The meaning of the term “beginning” (Greek, *ar-khe’*) in the Christian Greek Scriptures is relative, depending on the context. For example, at 2Pe 3:4, “beginning” refers to the start of creation. But in most instances, it is used in a more limited sense. For instance, Peter said that the holy spirit fell on the Gentiles “just as it did also on us in the beginning.” (Ac 11:15) Peter was not referring to the time of his birth or to the time when he was called to be an apostle. Rather, he was referring to the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., that is, “the beginning” of the outpouring of holy spirit for a specific purpose. (Ac 2:1-4) Other examples of how the context affects the meaning of the term “beginning” can be found at Lu 1:2; Joh 15:27; and 1Jo 2:7.

Bible Reading

(John 6:41-59) Then the Jews began to murmur about him because he had said: “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴² And they began saying: “Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” ⁴³ In response Jesus said to them: “Stop murmuring among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him, and I will resurrect him on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by Jehovah.’ Everyone who has listened to the Father and has learned comes to me. ⁴⁶ Not that any man has seen the Father, except the one who is from God; this one has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Most truly I say to you, whoever believes has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ “I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your

forefathers ate the manna in the wilderness and yet they died.⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that anyone may eat of it and not die.⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever; and for a fact, the bread that I will give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world.”⁵² Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”⁵³ So Jesus said to them: “Most truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves.⁵⁴ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I will resurrect him on the last day;⁵⁵ for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink.⁵⁶ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in union with me, and I in union with him.⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will live because of me.⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven. It is not as when your forefathers ate and yet died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”⁵⁹ He said these things as he was teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum.

SEPTEMBER 24-30

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | JOHN 7-8

“Jesus Glorified His Father”

(John 7:15-18) And the Jews were astonished, saying: “How does this man have such a knowledge of the Scriptures when he has not studied at the schools?”¹⁶ Jesus, in turn, answered them and said: “What I teach is not mine, but belongs to him who sent me.¹⁷ If anyone desires to do His will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or I speak of my own originality.¹⁸ Whoever speaks of his own originality is seeking his own glory; but whoever seeks the glory of the one who sent him, this one is true and there is no unrighteousness in him.

cf 100-101 ¶5-6

“It Is Written”

⁵ Jesus wanted people to know where his message came from. He said: “What I teach is not mine, but belongs to him that sent me.” (John 7:16) On another occasion, he said: “I do nothing of my own initiative; but just as the Father taught me I speak these things.” (John 8:28) Further, he said: “The things I say to you men I do not speak of my own originality; but the Father who remains in union with me is doing his works.” (John 14:10) One way that Jesus proved the truth of such comments was by quoting God’s written Word again and again.

⁶ A close study of Jesus’ recorded words reveals that he quoted directly from or referred indirectly to over half of the books of the Hebrew Scripture canon. At first, that may not sound impressive. You may wonder why, in three and a half years of public teaching and preaching, he did not quote from *all* the inspired books available. In truth, though, he may well have done so. Remember, only a fraction of Jesus’ words and deeds are recorded. (John 21:25) In fact, you could probably read aloud all of Jesus’ recorded words in just a few hours. Now, imagine talking about God and his Kingdom for just a few hours and managing to work in references to over half of the books of the Hebrew Scriptures! Furthermore, in most cases Jesus did not have written scrolls at hand. When he delivered his famous Sermon on the Mount, he included dozens of direct and indirect references to the Hebrew Scriptures—all from memory!

(John 7:28, 29) Then as he was teaching in the temple, Jesus called out: “You know me and you know where I am from. And I have not come of my own initiative, but the One who sent me is real, and you do not know him.²⁹ I know him, because I am a representative from him, and that One sent me.”

(John 8:29) And the One who sent me is with me; he did not abandon me to myself, because I always do the things pleasing to him.”

w11 3/15 11 ¶19

Receive God’s Spirit, Not the World’s

¹⁹ *Obey Jehovah completely.* Jesus always did the things pleasing to his Father. On at least one occasion, Jesus’ inclination on how to deal with a situation was different from what his Father wanted. Yet, with confidence he said to his Father: “Let, not my will, but yours take place.” (Luke 22:42) Ask yourself, ‘Do I obey God even when doing so is not easy?’ Obedience to God is essential for life. We owe him implicit obedience as our Maker, the Source and Sustainer of our life. (Ps. 95:6, 7) There is no substitute for obedience. We cannot gain God’s favor without it.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(John 7:8-10) You go up to the festival; I am not yet going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come.” ⁹ So after he told them these things, he remained in Gal’i-lee. ¹⁰ But when his brothers had gone up to the festival, then he also went up, not openly but in secret.

w07 2/1 6 ¶4

Why Be Truthful?

What example did Jesus Christ set in this regard? On one occasion, Jesus was conversing with some unbelievers who showed interest in his travel plans. “Pass on over from here and go into Judea,” they advised him. What was Jesus’ reply? “You go up to the festival [in Jerusalem]; I am not yet going up to this festival, because my due time has not yet fully come.” Shortly thereafter, Jesus *did* travel to Jerusalem for the festival. Why did he answer that way? They were not entitled to know the exact details of his whereabouts. So while Jesus did not utter an untruth, he gave them an incomplete answer in

order to limit the possible harm they could do to him or to his followers. This was not a lie, for the apostle Peter wrote about Christ: “He committed no sin, nor was deception found in his mouth.”—John 7:1-13; 1 Peter 2:22.

(John 8:58) Jesus said to them: “Most truly I say to you, before Abraham came into existence, I have been.”

nwtsty study note on Joh 8:58

I have been: The opposing Jews wanted to stone Jesus for claiming that he had “seen Abraham,” although, as they said, Jesus was “not yet 50 years old.” (Joh 8:57) Jesus’ response was to tell them about his prehuman existence as a mighty spirit creature in heaven before Abraham was born. Some claim that this verse identifies Jesus with God. They argue that the Greek expression used here, *e-go’ ei-mi’* (rendered “I am” in some Bibles), is an allusion to the *Septuagint* rendering of Ex 3:14 and that both verses should be rendered the same way. (See study note on Joh 4:26.) In this context, however, the action expressed by the Greek verb *ei-mi’* started “before Abraham came into existence” and was still in progress. It is therefore properly translated “I have been” rather than “I am,” and a number of ancient and modern translations use wording similar to “I have been.” In fact, at Joh 14:9, the same form of the Greek verb *ei-mi’* is used to render Jesus’ words: “Even after *I have been* with you men for such a long time, Philip, have you not come to know me?” Most translations use a similar wording, showing that depending on context there is no valid grammatical objection to rendering *ei-mi’* as “have been.” (Other examples of rendering a present tense Greek verb using a present perfect tense verb are found at Lu 2:48; 13:7; 15:29; Joh 1:9; 5:6; 15:27; Ac 15:21; 2Co 12:19; 1Jo 3:8.) Also, Jesus’ reasoning recorded at Joh 8:54, 55 shows that he was not trying to portray himself as being the same person as his Father.

Bible Reading

(John 8:31-47) Then Jesus went on to say to the Jews who had believed him: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." ³³ They replied to him: "We are Abraham's offspring and never have been slaves to anyone. How is it you say, 'You will become free'?" ³⁴ Jesus answered them: "Most truly I say to you, every doer of sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵ Moreover, the slave does not remain in the household forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be truly free. ³⁷ I know that you are Abraham's offspring. But you are seeking to kill me, because my word makes no progress among you. ³⁸ I speak the things I have seen while with my Father, but you do the things you have heard from your father." ³⁹ In answer they said to him: "Our father is Abraham." Jesus said to them: "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works of Abraham. ⁴⁰ But now you are seeking to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. ⁴¹ You are doing the works of your father." They said to him: "We were not born from immorality; we have one Father, God." ⁴² Jesus said to them: "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I have not come of my own initiative, but that One sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I am saying? Because you cannot listen to my word. ⁴⁴ You are from your father the Devil, and you wish to do the desires of your father. That one was a murderer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie. ⁴⁵ Because I, on the other hand, tell you the truth, you do

not believe me. ⁴⁶ Who of you convicts me of sin? If I speak truth, why is it that you do not believe me? ⁴⁷ The one who is from God listens to the sayings of God. This is why you do not listen, because you are not from God."