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# Who is this Jesus?

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A journaling study through the gospel of John

by Kay Daigle

*Who is this Jesus?*  
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## The Truth about Jesus

Many people today are clueless about who Jesus is. They have never heard of him, ignored the first-person accounts of his life, or perhaps only know his name as a curse. Amazingly, many in the church are also confused about who he is, likely because the church has become biblically illiterate.

It reminds me of my speeding ticket years ago, which I still believe was unjust. Determining to contest it, I decided to go to court. As I heard the cases before mine, I grasped what it meant that the woman at the front was the judge. She had the power to fine me or dismiss the ticket. She took no excuses from those protesting their tickets. I knew I was in trouble and wisely chose to pay for another round of driver's education instead. Knowing the truth of who she was and the power she wielded was essential to a good response.

In the same way, we cannot respond correctly to Jesus when we don't know who he really is. Just like those who met him in the first century, we must wrestle with his teachings and consider the eyewitness accounts of his actions to know the true Jesus.

C.S. Lewis asserts that Jesus didn't leave people with many options about who he is. He is either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord (*Mere Christianity*).

I suggest that you meet with a group, if possible, to consider the answer to the question, *Who is this Jesus?* Honestly share your struggles, doubts, and understanding with one another as you investigate John's amazing story of Jesus.

Each lesson is accompanied by a free short video story of a woman's journey with Jesus at <https://vimeo.com/album/4507580>.

Kay Daigle  
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# What to know about this study guide

## **Simple doesn't equate to shallow**

This study demands your involvement. Although the layout is simple, how deeply you go depends on you. As you spend time talking to God and journaling your thoughts, he may lead you to other cross-references, but he will certainly give you insights into the stories. Don't stop with initial surface answers, but ask God to clarify the story and speak to you from it. The time you spend in the story with God gives him space to speak. Listen well, journal your thoughts, share them with your small group, and glean from others' insights.

## **Each week has 3 parts**

If you like doing a little study at a time, the study is set up in 3 parts, but feel free to do it any way that works best for you. If you prefer daily time in the Word, consider spending 2 days on each part, journaling about the optional starred section on the second day. You may be amazed at what you see in multiple times through the story. If you prefer to do the week's study in one sitting, you may want to read all the passages first and then journal at the end. Of course, it's great to be in God's Word each day, but you may have other ways of doing that. Stick to what works for your schedule.

## **Additional reading and background information**



***A star identifies optional verses or suggested study for those with time and interest. The additional reading may help you wrestle with the deeper meaning of John's gospel and the nature of Jesus.***

Jesus lived in the first century A.D. in the land now called Israel, then ruled by the Roman Empire at the peak of its mighty power. Because the culture and the language of the Jews and Romans is important to understand parts of the story, this study includes background or language information when it is pertinent to our understanding. Feel free to do additional background study.

## **Bible verses**

The verses that begin each week's lesson are great choices for memorization. They may help you at some point discuss who Jesus is with a seeker.

## **What you need**

- A quiet place, if possible!
- A Bible that you can understand. If you don't have one, ask your group leader for suggestions or email us at [info@beyondordinarywomen.org](mailto:info@beyondordinarywomen.org). Modern versions are available as downloads, through Bible apps, or in print at any bookstore. (We are using [netbible.org](http://netbible.org) which is a free online Bible translation with study helps.)
- A notebook, laptop, or tablet to use as a journal which can be taken to your group meetings. If you prefer paper attached to the lesson, add a blank piece of paper or notebook paper after each lesson. (See Journaling 101 in the Appendix.)
- The commitment to listen to God and write out what you hear after reading and rereading
- Someone, or even better a group of women, to discuss this with you and provide support, encouragement, and spiritual challenge
- This link to BOW's free short 5-8 minute videos of women sharing their stories of how knowing Jesus intersected with their lives. Watch the video numbered to match the corresponding lesson at <https://vimeo.com/album/4507580>

## **Best practices for your group get-togethers (See Appendix & [Videos](#))**

Plan a regular place, time, and leader.

The leader should—

- watch the free, short video [Tips for Leading a Journaling](#) study
- start on time, not waiting for late arrivals
- move the group along, being sensitive to God's Spirit
- encourage everyone to share without forcing it
- be a great encourager
- avoid dominating the conversation
- keep the focus on the women, not herself and her own stories
- provide time for the group to think and share from their journals
- contact absent group members to encourage them
- email the group weekly to remind them of their meeting, provide the weekly video link, and share her excitement

As a group

- come prepared and on time with your study, journal, and Bible
- share freely and honestly
- encourage one another
- don't interrupt the speaker
- love one another
- don't try to fix the other members of your group or their problems by giving advice
- pray for one another and entrust each other and your problems to God
- be honest and vulnerable, but wise in how much detail you share personally
- stay in touch with each other between meetings for support and encouragement

### ***If your group meets within a larger group in a church setting***

- Look for a woman who is gifted in teaching God's Word to teach a short time after the small group discussion. Watch the short, free video [Why Use Live Teachers, not Video?](https://vimeo.com/209323216) at <https://vimeo.com/209323216>. (For help in preparing to teach, contact [info@beyondordinarywomen.org](mailto:info@beyondordinarywomen.org).)
- Because the discussion isn't about the teacher's comments but focuses on the members' personal study, the discussion should precede the teaching time.
- The teacher may spend 15- 25 minutes adding to the background of the lesson, beginning and ending within the allotted time frame. The majority of the time should be invested in small groups.
- The teacher's role is to clarify and extend what the group has studied, not to retell the stories they have discussed.
- Each week the leader should send the group link to our 5-8 minute video highlighting a woman's story. The women watch them individually online. The collection is found at <https://vimeo.com/album/4507580>.





## Week One: Meeting Jesus

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God. The Word was with God in the beginning. All things were created by him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. And the light shines on in the darkness, but the darkness has not mastered it.

John 1:1-4

*Introductions can be awkward or exciting, but they are often routine. My husband, being much more extroverted than I am, knows a lot of people. As a result, we often run into someone he knows whose name escapes him, which makes introducing me tricky. Sometimes he ignores me, almost acting as if I'm not right there, but more often he tells his acquaintance my name without giving me his friend's name. Thankfully, most of them come to his aid by putting out their hands and introducing themselves.*

*The best introductions are to people whom I have only heard of. Finally! I get to put a face with a name. I may even have an opportunity to get to know her beyond her reputation—find out who she really is.*

*The gospel of John begins with introductions to Jesus. As you will see, he is described as someone they expect—the long-awaited Jewish Messiah promised in Old Testament times. Meeting Jesus forces people to face who and what he really is. What will they do with this man? Who is he? Will they—and ultimately we—follow or reject him? Note that when John uses the term “the Jews” (NET), he usually refers to those hostile to Jesus, including both leaders and ordinary Jewish people, rather than all Jews.*

### Part One

*Throughout this gospel, metaphors using the physical point to spiritual realities about Jesus. As you journal, consider what they add to your understanding of Jesus's true identity.*

**Read John's introduction to Jesus in John 1:1-18.**

Background on the term Word in John 1:1 from Dr. Tom Constable:

Obviously the word "Word" (Gr. *logos*; Aram. *memra*, used to describe God in the Targums), to which John referred, was a title for God. The Targums are Aramaic translations of the Old Testament. Later in this verse he identified the Word as God. John evidently chose this title because it communicates the fact that the Word was not only God but also the expression of God. A spoken or written word expresses what is in the mind of its speaker or writer. Likewise Jesus, the Word (v. 14), was not only God, but He was the expression of God to humankind. Jesus' life and ministry expressed to humankind what God wanted us to know (cf. Heb. 1:1-2) The word "word" had this metaphorical meaning in Jewish and Greek literature when John wrote his Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

"To the Hebrew 'the word of God' was the self-assertion of the divine personality; to the Greek the formula denoted the rational mind that ruled the universe. . . . Both backgrounds are important for understanding this title as John used it in 1;1,14."<sup>2</sup>

Before you journal, read A.W. Tozer's words:

. . . So we wonder: How could the Infinite ever become finite? And: How could the Limitless One deliberately impose limitations upon Himself? . . .

I like what John Wesley said concerning this mysterious act of God in stooping down to tabernacle with us: "We should be sure to distinguish the act from the method by which the act is performed. Do not reject a fact because we do not know how it was done," Wesley advised.

With the saints of all ages, we do well just to throw up our hands and confess: "Oh Lord. Thou knowest!"<sup>3</sup>



Journal about these other verses with themes that connect with John's introduction: Hebrews 1:1-4; 1 John 1:1-3.

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<sup>1</sup> Constable's notes on John 1:1. <https://lumina.bible.org/bible/John+1>

<sup>2</sup> Merrill C. Tenney, *The Gospel of John*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1997) 28.

<sup>3</sup> A.W. Tozer, *Mornings with Tozer*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers), January 9.

### **Respond to the story by journaling:**

- What does John's introduction, and in particular his word pictures, reveal about Jesus?
- What insights from this passage do you have about how people respond to Jesus?
- What is God saying to you as you meditate on these amazing scriptures?

## **Part Two**

*Scholars place the beginning of this story sometime between the years 28-30 A.D. As you read about John the Baptist introducing various people to Jesus, read it as if you were also a first century Jew meeting Jesus for the first time.*

### **Read John 1:19-51.**



John the Baptist introduces Jesus as the Lamb of God, which would have brought the Passover lamb to the minds of his Jewish audience. Read and journal about what that picture suggests: Exodus 11:4-9; 12:3-13; 1 Cor. 5:7.

### **Respond to the story by journaling:**

- What does John's testimony reveal about Jesus and his purposes in vv. 19-36?
- What do you learn about Jesus from his interactions with John's disciples?
- What is God saying to you through this story?

## **Part Three**

*As you read the stories that John told of what he saw and heard traveling and living beside Jesus during his three-year ministry, picture yourself with them. If you are already familiar with these stories, ask God to help you meditate on what it would have been like to actually see the miracles and hear Jesus's teaching for the first time.*

**Read John 2, particularly noting the word "sign(s)." We will consider more closely the significance of a sign in Week 3.**



Noting repeated words is a good way to discover the themes of the Bible. Mark them when you find them. Go back through John 1 & 2 marking life, light, witness, and sign(s) in different colors or with special markings. Then write down your insights. Somehow note each sign John points out as you go through the entire book.

**Respond to the story by journaling:**

- What insights do you have about Jesus from his first miracle or "sign" and from his actions in the temple?
- What do you learn about people in these stories (and maybe yourself) from their responses to Jesus in this chapter?
- What is God saying to you today?

***PRAYER:** Use John 1:1-5, 9-13 as a basis for a prayer of praise to Jesus.*

**Watch [Who is this Jesus? Week 1](https://vimeo.com/album/4507580) that accompanies this lesson at <https://vimeo.com/album/4507580>**