



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

# BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

JOHN

Week 1

# *Before You Begin Your Journey...*

The Apostle John, who wrote his Gospel after the fall of Jerusalem, had witnessed many changes in the church. Now that Christianity was no longer centered in an exclusively Hebrew culture, how did John understand the Old Testament? How did John understand and explain Jesus, his good friend who died on a cross some fifty years earlier? How did he explain that Jesus was fully divine while at the same time fully human?

Imagine the white-haired apostle John preparing to write. Once a fisherman as a robust youth, later called to be a fisher of men by Jesus of Nazareth. Once a disciple of Moses, later a disciple of John the Baptist, finally a disciple of Jesus—one of twelve young men bewildered by miracles, healings and the quieting of fierce storms. John thought about Paul, who had brought unsettling changes, but who had led the way in bringing the gospel of salvation to the gentiles. A tear came to John's eye as he thought of his friends, martyred by enemies of Jesus. An era was drawing to a close. For John, the time was right to address the issues facing Christians in crisis.

Like the other Gospels, John's Gospel is centered on Christ. But it is unique in that very little is repeated from the other three (Synoptic Gospels). John's particular readership faced continuing problems from Judaizers who were disciples of Moses, and from Gnostics with their distorted views of Christ.

John continues the saga—the journey from Moses to Jesus, from the old covenant to the new covenant—from law to God's amazing grace.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Albrecht". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Greg Albrecht  
President, Plain Truth Ministries

# How to Use the CWR Bible Survey...

**1**—Read and study at your own pace. This is a devotional. It is designed to help you consider and ponder the great truths of God's written revelation. It is designed to help you worship and come to know God. If you get behind, you can always catch up.

**2**—We suggest you set aside a special time for the *CWR Bible Survey* every day. We recommend allowing 30-45 minutes, but even if you can only spare 15 minutes, try to make it part of your regular schedule.

**3**—You will need a good Bible. This might be an excellent time for you to consider purchasing a new Bible. Plain Truth Ministries recommends the *New King James Study Bible* published by Thomas Nelson and the *New International Version Study Bible* published by Zondervan.

**4**—Always read the assigned passage of the daily lesson in your Bible first. Each daily lesson builds upon the portion of the Bible being covered that day. You may want to begin by praying about what God has in store for you as you read, and then look at the questions and background information.

**5**—Consider the format of each daily lesson. Almost every daily lesson will include:

- **Opening Up to the Word** —a section designed to help you open your mind to the teaching God has inspired.

- **Digging Into the Word**—this section will encourage you to get your nose into the Bible and think deeply about what it says.

- **Living Out the Word**—here you will be challenged to consider the practical implications for your life. How does this passage help you live?

- **Window On the Word**—will offer key insights to help you more clearly understand the daily Bible passage.

**6**—After you finish the daily lesson, take some quiet time. You may simply think, look out the window, take a walk, or even get down on your knees. But use this time to let this daily lesson sink in. Ask God to show you what he wants you to understand from your reading and study.

**7**—Consider the *CWR Bible Survey* for small groups in which you may be involved. Tell your friends about it. If you are involved in a small group that meets for prayer and Bible study, introduce your group to it. Many are seeking an easy-to-read guide to help them understand the Bible and to help them know God. the *CWR Bible Survey* can do that!

**8**—Remember that while we may refer to the Bible as the word of God—the Eternal Word of God is noneother than Jesus, who inspired the Scriptures to be written by human instruments. Words on paper may tell us about him—but it is not the words that we worship—it is Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word.

**•Abbreviations Used in the *CWR Bible Survey*—**

Genesis	Ge	Nahum	Na
Exodus	Ex	Habakkuk	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	Zephaniah	Zep
Numbers	Nu	Haggai	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zechariah	Zec
Joshua	Jos	Malachi	Mal
Judges	Jdg	Matthew	Mt
Ruth	Ru	Mark	Mk
1 Samuel	1Sa	Luke	Lk
2 Samuel	2Sa	John	Jn
1 Kings	1Ki	Acts	Ac
2 Kings	2Ki	Romans	Ro
1 Chronicles	1Ch	1 Corinthians	1Co
2 Chronicles	2Ch	2 Corinthians	2Co
Ezra	Ezr	Galatians	Gal
Nehemiah	Ne	Ephesians	Eph
Esther	Est	Philippians	Php
Job	Job	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Timothy	1Ti
Song of Songs	SS	2 Timothy	2Ti
Isaiah	Isa	Titus	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	Philemon	Phm
Lamentations	La	Hebrews	Heb
Ezekiel	Eze	James	Jas
Daniel	Da	1 Peter	1Pe
Hosea	Hos	2 Peter	2Pe
Joel	Joel	1 John	1Jn
Amos	Am	2 John	2Jn
Obadiah	Ob	3 John	3Jn
Jonah	Jnh	Jude	Jude
Micah	Mic	Revelation	Rev

# JOHN

## The Gospel of Love

Copyright © 2014 by Plain Truth Ministries Worldwide

All rights reserved. Written permission must be secured from the publisher to use or reproduce any part of this book, except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles.

Unless noted otherwise, scriptures are quoted from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Printed in the United States of America.

# *Introduction to John*

**Authorship:** This book was written from an eyewitness account by John, the son of Zebedee, one of the original disciples of Jesus.

**Date:** The Gospel of John was the last to be written of the four Gospels in the canon of the New Testament. Various dates have been suggested, ranging from as early as A.D. 70 to as late as A.D. 96, immediately after the death of the Roman emperor Domitian and John's return to Ephesus.

**Setting and purpose:** John wrote his Gospel "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:31).

Although Matthew and Luke duplicate most of Mark and another 200 verses of each other, John contains mostly new material not included in the Synoptics (the first three Gospels that "see" Jesus' life and teaching in a similar way). In fact, in John less than ten percent of the material is directly parallel to the content of the Synoptics.

John is known as "the theologian" because his descriptions of God and Jesus give us a fuller understanding of the nature of God. Since his Gospel was written after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, he reflects the development of Christian concerns with monotheism (belief in one God). God had revealed himself to Israel as one Lord God (Dt. 6:4). At issue in the late first century were the questions of how Jesus could be God and still be human, and how the Holy Spirit could also be God.

In John's Gospel we are presented with the unity, or oneness, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and their relationships within the one Godhead. Although the trinitarian doctrine was not fully developed until the church was forced to combat some later heresies, the basis for the doctrine is imbedded in Scripture, especially in John. God the Father and God the Son are one (1:1; 10:30).

As to the unique nature of Jesus, John showed that he is both fully God and fully human. John countered those who claimed

Jesus was only human, for before anything was created, he was the *Logos* (1:1), the Life (1:4) and the Light (1:4). He is the Creator of all things (1:3). He is the great “I Am” of the Old Testament (Ex 3:14), and therefore fully God. Jesus claims to be God in his declaration to be the “I Am” (see also 4:26; 6:35; 8:12, 24, 28; 58; 11:25; 13:19; 18:6).

To counter the Gnostic idea (one of the heresies that proved to be a major problem for the early church) that Jesus was not fully human, John declared that Jesus became flesh and lived on earth (1:14). Rather than detail the birth of Jesus, as Matthew and Luke had done, John used the story of Jesus’ adult activities to demonstrate his humanity. Therefore John the Baptist could say that Jesus came before him and after him, even though John the Baptist was born six months before Jesus.

**About the author:** John, the brother of James, followed his father Zebedee as a fisherman by trade. Jesus selected him as a disciple to make him a “fisher of men” (Mk 1:17-20). Many scholars believe that John was “the beloved disciple” of Jesus (Jn 13:23; 21:7). James and John were called “Sons of Thunder” (Mk 3:17), probably because of the overzealousness they displayed when Jesus was not properly shown respect by the Samaritans.

Calling to John from the cross, Jesus entrusted him with the care of his mother Mary (Jn 19:26, 27). John supported Peter in the early preaching of the gospel after the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost (Ac 2:1; 3:1, 11; 4:1-4, 13, 19, 31). The apostle Paul first met John in Jerusalem, and later Paul called him one of the “pillars” of the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:9).

John later moved to Ephesus, where he led the churches in Asia Minor as an elder (2 Jn 1). Empire-wide persecution struck Christians during the rule of the evil Roman Emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96), and John was exiled to the nearby island of Patmos, where the vision of the book of Revelation came to him (Rev 1:9). After the Emperor’s death, John returned to his ministry in Ephesus.

John died at almost 100 years of age of natural causes. According to tradition, he was the only one of the original 12 disciples not to die as a martyr. His natural death may be inferred from Jesus’ statements in John 21:20-24.

### **Reading outline**

#### **I. WITNESS TO THE WORD, THE LORD OF LIFE, 1:1-51**

A. The Prologue: The *Logos*, or Word, Is Fully God and Fully Human in Jesus, 1:1-18

B. John the Baptist and his Disciples Witness to Jesus, 1:19-51

**II. THE CREATION IS TRANSFORMED BY JESUS,  
THE MESSIAH OF THE NEW CREATION, 2-6**

- A. The New Work Through Water and the Spirit, 2-3
- B. The New Worship Through Spirit and Truth, 4
- C. The New Work of the Father and Son, 5
- D. The New Worship of the Bread of Life, 6

**III. THE COVENANT IS TRANSFORMED BY JESUS,  
THE DOOR OF THE NEW COVENANT, 7-11**

- A. The Living Water is in Jesus and the Spirit, 7
- B. The Light and Truth is in Jesus, 8-9
- C. The Life Eternal is in the Shepherd, Jesus, 10
- D. The Life-Giver is Jesus, 11

**IV. THE TRIUMPH OF JESUS AND THE NEW CREATION  
IN HIM, 12-21**

- A. The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, 12
- B. The Triumphal Entry into Communion: The Lord's Supper,  
13-17
- C. The Triumphal Entry into Heaven: The Lord's Passion,  
18-21
- D. The Triumphal Entry into Love: The Lord's Mission, 21



# “The Word Became Flesh...”

DAY 1

John 1:1-18

How would you start a book about Jesus Christ? (a) with Jesus' baptism, (b) with Jesus' birth, (c) with the birth of John the Baptist, (d) with a time long, long ago, in a place far, far away...

1. Who was in the beginning, outside of time and space as we know it (vs. 1-5)?
2. How did God prepare people for his coming to earth (vs. 6-8)?
3. Who is the light (vs. 9-13)? What blessing comes to those who see the light and believe in him?
4. What did John the Baptist's riddle mean (v. 15)?
5. How does John contrast the Old Testament time of Moses with the coming of Jesus (vs. 16-17)?
6. Compare John's conclusion of the prologue in verse 18 with verse 1.

1. While many use the phrase “word of God” to mean the Bible, who is the the eternal Word of God according to this passage?
2. How can you live in the grace and truth of Jesus, instead of depending on your keeping of religious laws, rules and regulations to make you righteous (v. 17)? See Exodus 20-23 for the core of the Law of Moses. Consider Acts 13:38-39.
3. Consider that fact that God used Moses to bring the old covenant, but when he gave us the new covenant he delivered it personally (v. 17). What does that say about law versus grace?

*John's prologue sets the foundation for his Gospel. Jesus is the central figure, first mentioned by his human name in verse 17. God created all things, and “when the time had fully come” (Gal 4:4) came to us in the person of Jesus to save us from our sins (Mt 1:21). Jesus is life and light (vs. 4-5, 7-9). His glory is full of grace and truth (vs. 14, 16-17).*

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**LIVING**  
out the Word

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

## DAY 2

# A Word From Our Sponsor...

---

John 1:19-51

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Today ads appear on TV, radio, billboards, on the Internet and in print. How did people advertise in Jesus' time? Did Jesus advertise his coming? How?

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. What things do you suppose John the Baptist had to give up to be the messenger who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus (vs. 19-23)?
2. Why did John baptize (vs. 24-28)? By whose authority?
3. What story did John the Baptist tell regarding Jesus (vs. 29-34)? How is the Holy Spirit introduced into his account?
4. Trace the story of the followers of John as they become the disciples of Jesus (vs. 35-51). What were they seeking? What did they find?
5. How did Moses point toward Jesus (vs. 17, 45; see Dt 18:15-18)?
6. How is belief in Jesus portrayed throughout the story of the calling of the disciples?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Apart from God, do you feel that you are unworthy to do even a menial task for Jesus (v. 27)? How has he made you worthy?
2. Why do you follow Jesus? Because he is the Prophet? The Messiah? The Lamb of God? The Son of God? The King of Israel? The One who rescued you? Your personal friend?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

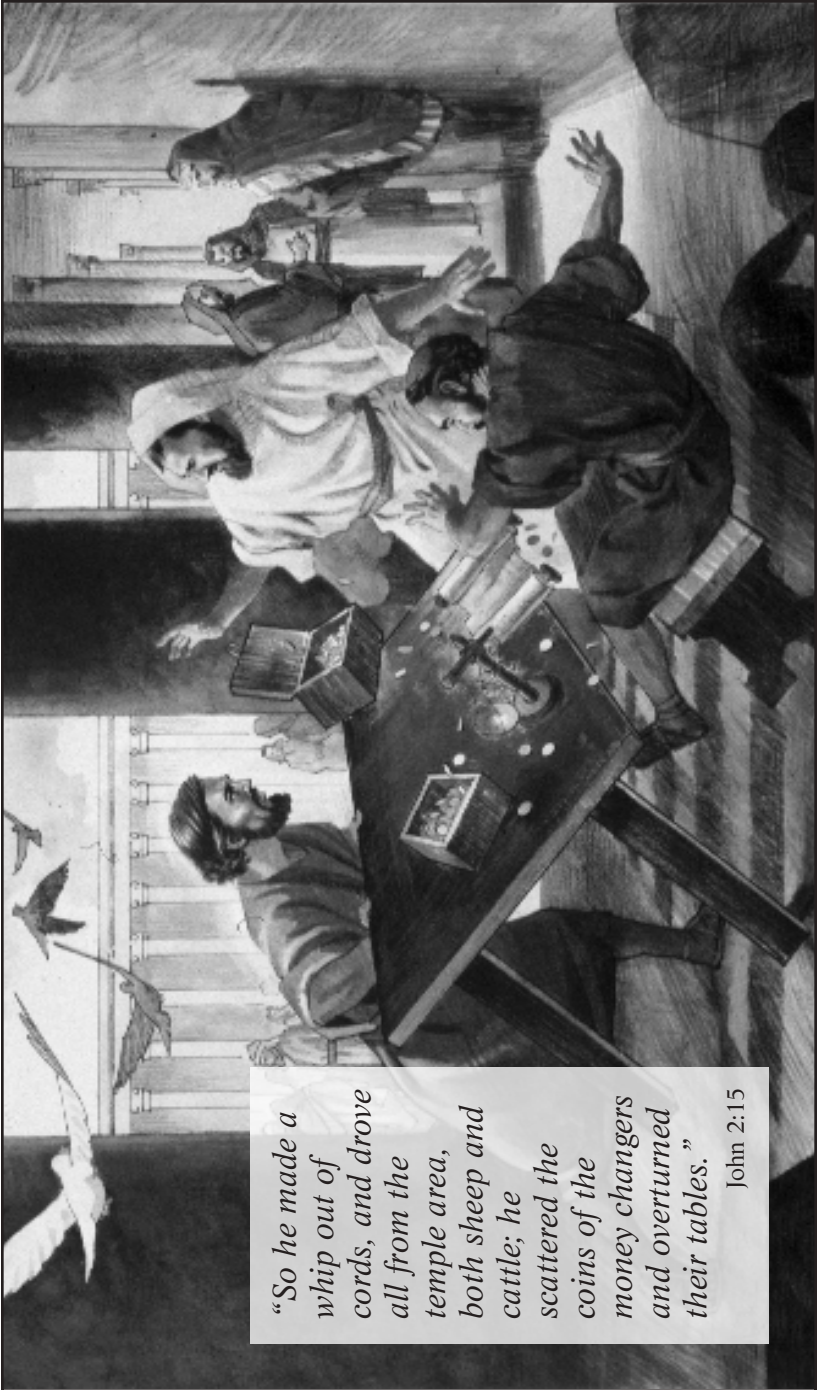
*The names of Jesus are further developed after John's prologue. He is the Christ, the anointed of God (v. 41). He is the Lamb of God who saves the world (vs. 29, 36). He is the Son of God (vs. 34, 49) and the King of Israel (v. 49). The third person of the Godhead is then introduced, the Holy Spirit (vs. 32-33). The three divine Persons are presented in verses 32-34 as "the Holy Spirit," "the Son" and "of God."*



## THE ROLES OF JESUS

*Jesus' many titles in the book of John represent his central place in Christianity. Consider these titles in chapter one:*

The Word (or revelation)	1:1, 14
God	1:1
Life	1:4
The Light	1:4-9
Jesus Christ (Savior, Anointed One)	1:17
The Son	1:18 (KJV)
The One and Only (or "only begotten")	1:14, 18
The Lamb of God	1:29, 36
The Son of God	1:34, 49
Rabbi (teacher)	1:38, 49
Messiah (Anointed One; Christ)	1:41
The King of Israel	1:49
The Son of Man	1:51



*“So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.”*

*John 2:15*

# Celebrate the New Work

DAY 3

John 2:1-25

Recall your favorite wedding. What factors helped to create the air of celebration? (a) music, (b) flowers, (c) attitudes, (d) refreshment, (e) a Christ-centered commitment.

**1.** Why do you think John used a wedding scene as the first story to establish Jesus' ministry (vs. 1-12)?

**2.** What miracle took place? Is there any abuse of alcohol apparent in this passage?

**3.** Wine was often used in biblical celebrations. What does the fruit of the vine symbolize in our celebration of life in Christ (see Mt 26:27-29)?

**4.** Consider Jesus' second recorded act in his public ministry (Jn 2:13-25). Was this part of his Father's work?

**5.** Did the Jews misunderstand the words of Jesus (v. 20)? How is this message central to John's Gospel?

**1.** In what ways do you think institutional Christianity has become a "market" (the NRSV says "house of merchandise")?

**2.** How do you suppose Jesus feels about greed and commercialization by people using his name?

**3.** Jesus is, of course, central to Christian faith—but is he central to you?

***The miracle in Cana** sets the stage for the ministry of Jesus. In the OT, weddings were reminiscent of the union of God and Israel. In the NT, they remind one of the union of Jesus the groom with the church, the bride (Eph 5:25-32; Rev 19:7).*

***Seven miracles** are found in the Gospel of John: (1) changing water into wine—2:1-12; (2) healing the son of the nobleman—4:46-54; (3) healing a paralytic—5:1-15; (4) feeding 5,000 people—6:1-14; (5) walking on water—6:16-21; (6) healing a blind man—9:1-41; and (7) raising Lazarus from the dead—11:38-44.*

## OPENING

up to the Word

## DIGGING

into the Word

## LIVING

out the Word

## WINDOW

on the Word

## DAY 4

# Celebrate the New Birth

---

John 3:1-21

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

“It’s a boy!” or—“It’s a girl!” A new birth brings new joy, hopes and dreams to a family.

1. Briefly outline the interaction between Nicodemus and Jesus (vs. 1-21). Who did Nicodemus believe Jesus to be? (*Rabbi* simply meant “teacher.”)
2. What did Nicodemus misunderstand (vs. 3-4)? What metaphor did Jesus use to explain the new birth (vs. 5-8)?
3. How was Jesus uniquely qualified to explain the concept of being born again—from above (vs. 10-15)?
4. How did the serpent of Moses point to the crucifixion of Jesus (Nu 21:4-9)?
5. In John 3:16-21, how did Jesus contrast salvation and condemnation? How is one saved? Condemned? Notice how Jesus contrasted light and darkness.

**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Have you been transformed through Jesus living his resurrected life in you? How has that spiritual rebirth changed your life?
2. How does God the Holy Spirit lead you in your daily life?
3. What profound meaning do you find in the cross of Christ? Is your daily walk with God centered and grounded on Jesus and his finished work on the cross?
4. Meditate on John 3:16. Thank God for his love!

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jewish sect known as the Pharisees, secretly came to Jesus by night to learn from him. Because of that, Nicodemus represents those “secret believers” who are hesitant to be openly identified with Jesus.*

## THE NATURE OF SALVATION

*Jesus' teachings about his role parallel his message about eternal life:*

3:15	Whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life.
4:13, 14	Jesus brings the living water of eternal life.
5:39-40	The (O.T.) Scriptures point to Jesus for eternal life.
6:40, 47, 54	The Father wills that all who believe in the Son may have eternal life.
10:27-28	I give my sheep eternal life.
12:50	God's command leads to eternal life.
17:2-3	Eternal life is knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent.

## THE WAY TO SALVATION

*God the Father draws us into an intimate relationship, God the Son grants life through grace and truth and God the Holy Spirit leads us into truth.*

1:4	In Jesus is life and light.
1:12	As many as receive him and believe in him, Jesus gave the right to become children of God.
1:14	Jesus is full of grace and truth.
1:17	Whereas by Moses came the law, by Jesus came grace and truth.
3:5	One must be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God.
3:16	God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son...
5:39-40	The Scriptures point to Jesus for eternal life.
6:44	God the Father draws us.
14:6	Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
16:13	The Holy Spirit leads into truth.

## DAY 5

# Listening to the Bridegroom

---

John 3:22-36

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Weddings are a time of joy and love, rejoicing and commitment. How many wedding metaphors regarding our Christian lives can you find in this passage?

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** If you have a red-letter Bible, you can easily see that no direct quotes are attributed to Jesus in this section. What did John the Baptist say about Jesus (vs. 22-30)? How was Jesus greater than the Baptist?

**2.** What debate threatened the assertions and evidence offered by John the Baptist (vs. 25-26)? How was jealousy avoided (vs. 27-36)?

**3.** Compare the comments by John the Baptist about the relationship of the Father, the Son and the Spirit (vs. 31-36) with the apostle John's prologue about the nature of God and Jesus (Jn 1:1-18). How does John 3:16 summarize this?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

**1.** While some debate how the physical details of baptism should be done (immersion or sprinkling), perhaps a deeper meaning concerns our being immersed in Jesus.

**2.** Have you ever been jealous? Can you allow Jesus to help you release those feelings?

**3.** Like John the Baptist, has Christ living his life within you enabled you to advance other people, even if it means taking a back seat yourself?

**4.** How do you, as part of the bride of Christ, listen to the voice of the bridegroom (vs. 29, 36)?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

***Weddings** provide analogies about relationships between God, Jesus and individuals. The bridegroom is Jesus; the father of the groom is God; the bride is collectively the visible and invisible body of Christ (the church); the friend, or best man, in this context was John the Baptist.*



John 4:1-26

What best quenches your thirst? (a) sports drinks, (b) energy drinks, (c) iced lattes (d) milk, (e) a cold beer, (f) soft drinks, (g) ice tea, (h) ice water.

1. In this interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (vs. 1-26), what surprised the woman about Jesus' request?
2. What is the underlying meaning in this story about water (vs. 7-14)? How does water live, and how does it give life?
3. How did the woman come to identify Jesus as a prophet (vs. 16-19)? Do you think she understood his divinity?
4. The woman introduced a burning issue between Jews and Samaritans. How did Jesus resolve the fact that Samaritans worship at Mount Gerazim and the Jews at Jerusalem (vs. 20-24)? What important change would later dissolve the difference between Jew and gentile (Eph 2:11-18)?
5. Who is Jesus (Jn 4:26)? Consider the "I Am" of Exodus 3:14 (see Jn 6:35; 8:12, 58; 11:25).

1. Can you provide refreshing water to others in Jesus' name? See Matthew 25:34-46.
2. Consider the Wellspring of living water. Does Jesus live this life within you?
3. How can you worship God in spirit and truth (Jn 4:24)?

**Samaria** was located between Judah and Galilee. In that society, Samaritans and Jews hated each other. The Samaritans were gentiles, although intermarriage with Jews through the centuries linked these people more to the Jewish world than many cared to consider. Another important factor in John 4 is Jesus' direct communication and respect for a **woman**, an unusual approach in that patriarchal society (v. 27).

### OPENING

up to the Word

### DIGGING

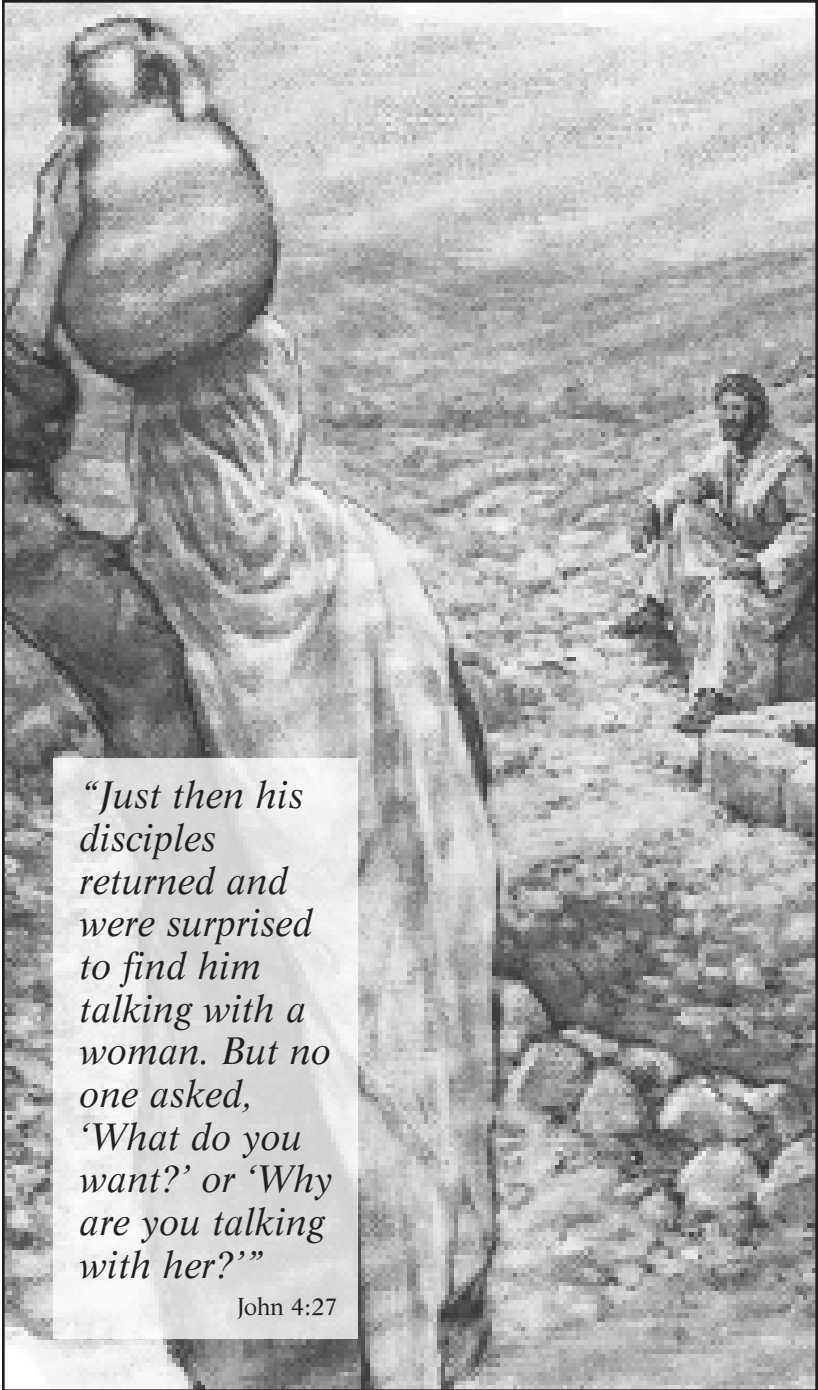
into the Word

### LIVING

out the Word

### WINDOW

on the Word



*“Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, ‘What do you want?’ or ‘Why are you talking with her?’”*

John 4:27

# The New Harvest

DAY 7

John 4:27-54

What's your favorite food? Vegetables right out of the garden? Steak off the grill? Something sweet? How do they get to your table?

1. The story continues the interaction between Jesus and the Samaritans from the first half of the chapter. Do the disciples stumble in their understanding?
2. What meaning lies in Jesus' use of the metaphor of food (vs. 31-38)? How is the harvest defined? Who are the laborers?
3. What did this episode accomplish (vs. 39-42)? Who received Jesus?
4. The second miracle recorded by John occurred again in Cana (vs. 46-54). How was belief central to this official (who was probably an officer in Herod's court)?
5. Can looking for signs and wonders hinder one's faith? Was this miracle a sign?

1. Consider praying for a spiritual harvest for those whom Christ-less religion has alienated from God.
2. What steps have you taken to reach out to others who may feel like they don't belong?
3. Do you seek visible signs from God—or is living by faith sufficient for you? Is the fact that Jesus lives his resurrected life in you all the sign you need?

**Consider the scene before us.** *The disciples had returned from getting food to satisfy their hunger. The woman left Jesus to spread the good news to her neighbors. When Jesus calls his disciples to lift up their eyes to see the white of the harvest (v. 35), they may have seen the Samaritans coming to meet Jesus (v. 40).*

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**LIVING**  
out the Word

**WINDOW**  
on the Word