CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
AUGUST142021

Scripture Story: John 7; John 8; John 9; John 10:1-30.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 49-52.

who is Jesus?



Photo by Akben Ho

flashlight

"God is light; and in the words, 'I am the light of the world,' Christ declared His oneness with God, and His relation to the whole human family. It was He who at the beginning had caused 'the light to shine out of darkness.' 2 Corinthians 4:6. He is the light of sun and moon and star. He was the spiritual light that in symbol and type and prophecy had shone upon Israel. . . . As the sunbeams penetrate to the remotest corners of the earth, so does the light of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon every soul" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 464).

keytext

"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' "

(John 8:12, NIV)

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what do you think?

What do you think is the reason Jesus' contemporaries had such a difficult time believing in Him as the Messiah?

_____ lack of evidence
_____ pride
_____ Jesus' choice of friends
_____ Jesus' background
_____ His incredible claims

It's easy to be critical of the religious people who challenged and rejected Jesus. But remember, today we have the historical reality of Jesus' life, sacrificial death, and resurrection, and the witness of the first disciples and the early church. Yet many people can't seem to believe that Jesus was/is God in the flesh. As you study the lesson, think about why this may be. What do *you* think of Jesus?

did you know?

Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and secular people all believe in Jesus. Whether it is that He is a prophet or religious leader in history among all the other prophets, or whether it's that He was a good man who set a good example, or even that He is one god among a myriad of gods, almost everyone believes something about Jesus. Our global community has absorbed Jesus into its culture. So, as it turns out, all these centuries after Jesus' life, things haven't changed so much when it comes to all the different opinions people have about Jesus. Who do *you* say Jesus is? What you believe about Jesus makes all the difference in the world!

INTO THE STORY

"When the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, Jesus' brothers said to him, 'Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.' For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

"Therefore Jesus told them, 'My time is not yet here.'. . .

"However, after his brothers had left for the festval, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus and asking, 'Where is he?' Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, 'He is a good man.' Others replied, 'No, he deceives the people.' But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.

"Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews were amazed and asked, 'How did this man get such learning without having been taught?' "

"At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, 'Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.'

"Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, 'Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.' . . .

"Many in the crowd believed in him. They said, 'When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?' "

"On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' "

"On hearing his words, some of the people said, 'Surely this man is the Prophet.'

"Others said, 'He is the Messiah.' Still others asked, 'How can the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?' Thus the people were divided because of Jesus."

(John 7:2-6, 10-15, 25-31, 37, 38, 40-43, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Read through John 7 through 10 and list some of the things people were saying about Jesus.

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What was the main reason the Jews had for doubting that Jesus was their Messiah? (John 7:27, 41-43, 52).

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List Jesus' answers to each of the questions raised about Him.

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John's Gospel stands out from the others because in it we can find the most about what Jesus says about Himself. How many of the "I am"s of Jesus you can find? List them below. If you make the extra time you can include John 6 and 11 also to see more of the "I am"s!

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Why did the religious leaders become enraged with Jesus and want to kill Him? (John 8:58; 10:33).

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punch lines

"On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them' " **(John 7:37, 38, NIV).**

"Jesus answered, 'My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own' " **(John 7:16, 17, NIV).**

" **'Very truly I tell you,'** Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!' " **(John 8:58, NIV).**

"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life' " **(John 8:12, NIV).**

"Therefore Jesus said again, 'Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep' " **(John 10:7, NIV).**

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" **(John 10:11, NIV).**

further insight

"Under a variety of representations [Jesus] warned His hearers of the calamity that would follow all who rejected the blessings He came to bring them. He had given them every possible proof that He came forth from God, and made every possible effort to bring them to repentance."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 453.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Mark 8:29.

In the *What Do You Think?* section you had the opportunity to consider what people in Jesus' day thought about Him and how that compares to today's global culture. Do you know anyone who isn't a Christian? Have you gotten an idea of what they think about Jesus? Do you have any Jewish friends, or Muslims, or Hindus, or Buddhists? Have you found that they all accept Jesus on some level? What truth can you share with them about Jesus that is unfamiliar to them?

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Sunday

Read John 8:48.

After reading the *Into the Story* section and answering the questions in the *Out of the Story* section, ask yourself this question: What systems were in place for Jewish people so that they should have been able to recognize Jesus as the Messiah?

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Monday

Read John 10:7.

Why were there so many differing opinions about Jesus—in His day and in ours? What are the barriers to having a clear view of Him?

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Tuesday

Read Revelation 21:22-24.

In this week's *Flashlight* Ellen White gives us deep insight into how meaningful Christ's claim about Himself was. Jesus was calling Himself light—the source of all light. Go back to chapter 51 of *The Desire of Ages*, page 464, and read the complete quote and the context around it. List all the events this claim would have brought to mind to His Jewish listeners. Then re-read today's Bible reading. Can you imagine that when Jesus said these words as He stood in the court of the Temple on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, He saw way beyond earth's history and knew how fully and thoroughly He could meet every need of the human soul and give us more than we could ever begin to fathom? Also, while you are in Revelation 21, take a look at verse 6!

Wednesday

Read Luke 7:23.

Read and think about this week's *Punch Lines*.

As you read through all the claims made by Jesus in this week's *Punch Lines*, what did you notice about Him that separates Him from all other religious gurus and prophets? Notice that Jesus doesn't brag about being educated by human teachers. He has it on direct authority from God. What kind of challenges did that claim cause for Him?

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Look at His other claims. Jesus didn't say He would point people to the light; He said, "I am the light!" He wasn't claiming to give us living water—He *is* the living water; He *is* the way; He *is* the gate by which we enter God's kingdom. He *is* the shepherd who leads us!

In making His claims about Himself, Jesus was using the name that God had taught Moses. The Hebrew word is *Yahweh*—it means I AM. When Moses asked God, "What should I tell the Israelites when they ask who sent me?" God said, "I AM WHO I AM . . . I AM has sent me to you" (Exodus 3:14, NIV). Jesus was claiming THE NAME! Imagine if you were in the crowd hearing Jesus say this. Can you get a better grasp of why the religious leaders wanted to stone Him? How might you react? How quick are we to defend our traditions? Don't you get unnerved when what you believe is challenged?

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Thursday

Read 2 Timothy 3:14, 15.

Read again the quote in *Further Insight*. What are some of the evidences in the Bible of Jesus' divinity? How should we believe on Jesus—by evidence or by faith or both? What would you say to someone who is struggling to accept Jesus as God and Savior?

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Friday

Read John 7:16, 17.

Unlike the other Gospel narratives, John's Gospel gives us a picture of Jesus in the context of Jewish tradition and religious ritual. In doing so, he gives us the deepest spiritual insights into how Jesus is the fulfillment of all the symbolisms God had given to the Jews to teach them of His plan of redemption and restoration.

Through His Word and in the Sabbath and annual feasts, even in each item of the Temple, God used objects, events, and ritual to teach how He would save His people. Showing Jesus in that backdrop of everyday life and religious activity, John gave to the Jewish mind the idea that all those symbols are complete in Jesus. He's the real thing! He's the long-awaited Messiah who would save not just the Jews but the Gentiles, too!

Which of the sayings and miracles of Jesus in this lesson stood out most to you? Why? What insights have you gained?

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this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 49-52.

A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* entitled *Humble Hero,* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.

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