

# *THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **JOHN LESSON 4 (Chapters 7-9)**

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.* Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8: 31-32). Welcome to our study of the gospel of John. In today’s lesson we will be looking at chapters 7 through 9 in order to see how Jesus is the truth that can make men free. The Book of John is about the deity of Christ. Jesus performed many signs, John said, so that we could learn to believe in Him as the Messiah, the Son of God (Jn. 20:30-31). The signs that Jesus did affirm Him as being God’s Son. Thus, the truth that He speaks is the only truth that can set us free from sin.

Like we do today, Jesus faced some family problems. All of us face family problems at times. In John 7:1-9, Jesus is having to deal with members of His own family who do not yet believe in Him as the Son of God. Those family members, it seems, were trying to boss Him around and encourage Him to do things. In Luke 14:26 we see that Jesus understood how important His role was. He said, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.” Jesus knew that He had to put the will of God before His earthly family. But notice the transition that Jesus’ brothers make. In John 7:5 we read, “Even His brothers did not believe in Him.” They did not believe He was the Son of God. They knew He had been raised with them. They had seen Him grow up. They did not believe Him to be God’s Son. At this point, Jesus’ brothers still were unbelievers. But somewhere along the line a transition occurs, because in Acts 1:14 we read that Mary and the brothers of Jesus are in an upper room, waiting for the Holy Spirit to come. James and Jude, brothers of Jesus, went on to write biblical epistles affirming their Christ and their desire to obey Him. Thus, Jesus’ brothers did make the transition from unbelievers to believers. No doubt they saw the signs that Jesus performed, and heard the “I am” statements that He made. As a result, they came to know Who Jesus was. They saw Him die on the cross, and the fact that He was raised from the dead was proof that He was indeed God’s Son.

One of the things that stands out in John 7 is that Jesus is seen as a “man of letters.” John 7:15 says, “The Jews marveled, saying, ‘How does this Man know letters, having never studied?’” That word “letters” refers to the Scriptures. Jesus knew the Scriptures, yet the Jews asked, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?” This tells us a lot about the knowledge of Jesus and how He impressed people—not for the purpose of impressing them, but to show them how to use the Scriptures correctly. In Luke 4 Jesus stood up in the temple and taught the scribes from their own Law. In Matthew 4, as Jesus was being tempted by Satan, He overcame each temptation by saying, “It is written...,” “It is written...,” “It is written....” Jesus knew the Scriptures, and put them into practice in His life. That is what made Him such a great preacher and person of God.

The same can be true of us. We need to be people of The Book. We need to be people who know the Scriptures. How can we know that you are right with God? How can you

know that you are approved before God? We find the answer in 2 Timothy 2:15—“Study to show yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” When we study and use God’s Word properly, that is how we can know we are approved by God. Acts 17:11 tells us to search the Scriptures daily to be sure that we are right with God. We need to heed the command of 1 Peter 3:15—“Be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” The truth cannot set us free if we do not study the truth, know the truth, and put it to use in our lives just as Jesus did. To do God’s will, we must know Christ’s teachings. In John 7:17 Jesus said, “If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.” We must know God’s will, and know that Christ’s teaching is from God, in order to do the will of God. Throughout the Bible, people who pleased God were those who knew His will. I love the example of Ezra, who “prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, to do it, and to teach its statutes and ordinances in all of Israel” (Ezra 7:10). Ezra was a man who got his heart right. He said, “I’m going to do what God says.” He found out what God had said, and then he did it. He also taught others to obey God as well. Noah, we are told, was “a preacher of righteousness” who preached about the coming Flood. He saved himself, his wife, his three sons, and their three wives. Moses, too, was a man of God. He knew the Scriptures. He taught God’s people, and lived according to the teaching of God. We, too, must be blessed by being obedient to the will of God’s Son.

However, it is evident from the statements that many people make (which are not really correct) that they are not familiar with Scripture. Let me give you an example. In Matthew 7:1 Jesus said, “Judge not, that you be not judged.” People take that verse and say, “Oh, it’s a sin to judge because Jesus said, ‘Judge not, that you be not judged.’” But they do not quote what the rest of the Bible says about that. They ignore the context, and do not put the rest of the Scriptures with that verse to see what God is saying. In John 7:24 Jesus commanded, “Judge with a righteous judgment.” How can Jesus say on the one hand, “Judge not, that you be not judged,” and then say on the other hand, “Judge with a righteous judgment”? We must learn to look at the context. In Matthew 7 Jesus was dealing with hypocrites—people who wanted to judge others for “small sins.” Of course, we understand that all sins can cost men their souls. In Matthew 7, Jesus spoke of someone who had a speck in his eye, yet the person trying to remove the speck had a plank or a two-by-four in his eye while wanting to condemn the other person. What is condemned in Matthew 7:1 is hypocritical judging. In John 7:24, it is righteous judging that is commanded. Jesus said, “Judge with a righteous judgment.” What is “righteous judgment”? Matthew 6:33 tells us, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” Psalm 119:172 says, “All of God’s commands are righteous.” Righteous judgment is judgment that is based on Scripture rather than on a hypocritical life such as is being addressed in Matthew 7:1. People who do not think clearly through the context and see what the rest of Scripture has to say, often make statements that actually end up condemning themselves. If someone commands, “Don’t judge!,” what have they just done? Have they not just made a judgment? For someone to say, “It is a sin to judge,” hasn’t that person just made a judgment? He absolutely has—by judging that it is a sin to judge, and by condemning people for judging, which is a sin that that person just committed. Do you see the problem? We need to understand that it is not judging that is condemned in Matthew 7:1. Rather, it is hypocritical judging—as if we have a two-by-four coming out of our own eyes, yet we say, “Oh, let me get that tiny splinter out of your eye.” We must make righteous judgment, but such judgment must be based on Scripture, and our judgment must be motivated by love (Eph. 4:15).

In John 7, Jesus also is identified the One Who gives “living water” to all who will come to Him. In John 7:37-39 Jesus says, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Jesus is the living water that will give people eternal life. In John 4 Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well, and said to her, “Give Me something to drink.” She asked, “How do you, a Jew, want me to give you something to drink?” Jesus said, “If you knew Who was asking you, you would say, ‘Give me living water.’” Jesus had that within His possession, and was able to give water that would provide eternal life. Are we talking here about a literal glass of water? No, we are talking about Jesus providing spiritual sustenance to those who will submit to His will. For those who will obey His teaching, He will provide everything that is needed to live the best life here and to get to Heaven. But what is “living water”? In John 7:39 Jesus identifies that it is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was going to come and provide living water. How was He going to do that? In John 16:13 we are told, “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.” When the Holy Spirit came, what did He do? He gave people the revealed will of God, which they then wrote down, and which today we have within the Bible. What is this “living water”? Is it still available for each and every one of us? You bet it is. It is the Word of God, which Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, stood up with the other eleven apostles and spoke in Acts 2:4, which is “able to make us born again by the word of God which lives and endures forever.” It is that which will stand the test of time. It is inspired of God. And it is what, according to 2 Peter 1:3, will give everything we need for “life and godliness.” We still can access the living water that was offered by Jesus—through His words and teachings that we have today.

John 7:46 is an important verse regarding Jesus as a master teacher and Gospel preacher. The scribes and Pharisees sent some soldiers to capture Jesus. So the soldiers go to Jesus. But when they get there, they do not take Him, but return to the men who sent them. When they were questioned about this, the officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” What happened? They went to take Jesus by force, but they heard Him teach and were so amazed at what He said according to the Scriptures that they forgot about their assignment and returned empty handed. They had never heard anyone speak like Jesus spoke. What was so unique about Jesus? He spoke with a motive of love because He wanted people to go to Heaven. People knew that He had their souls’ best interest at heart. Jesus spoke as “one having authority, not as the scribes” (Mt. 7:29). Jesus spoke clearly from the Scriptures. I love the words of Mark 12:37. Jesus has just finished quoting from the Old Law about David, and how He was to be the seed of David, how David had referred to Him as “Lord,” and so on. Then Jesus said, “And the common people heard Him gladly.” No man had ever spoken like Jesus. Luke 20:40 says of Jesus’ opponents that “they dared not question Him any more.” Why? It was because Jesus stood firm on the Word of God. He spoke with a motive of love, and taught with authority—as One Who was from God. This proved that He was the Son of God (deity walking among men).

In John 8 Jesus deals with the woman caught in adultery. The scribes and Pharisees came to test Jesus because they had caught the woman in adultery. No doubt, this act was condemned by the Law of Moses (Ex. 20:4). This was a sin, according to the Old Testament Scriptures, that was punishable by death (Lev. 20:10). The only problem was that, according to Leviticus and Deuteronomy, the man and the woman both had to be present. Here, then, we see an inconsistency in what the scribes and Pharisees are doing. Both sinners were not present. Therefore, the witnesses could not bring a proper claim against her. Jesus knew that, and therefore said to them, “He who is without sin, let him throw the

first stone.” What was he saying? He was saying “You have sinned by not bringing the man here, too. Some of you very likely are in sin. So, let him who is without sin throw the first stone.” Did Jesus understand that, according to the Old Law, this woman should have been stoned? Yes, He did. But He also understood that the people had considered everything God had said on this matter, and thus they had not acted correctly. Does this mean that Jesus was ignoring the woman’s sin? Absolutely not! Jesus said to her, “Go, and sin no more.” He knew she was in sin. God knows all things (Prov. 15:1; Heb. 4:13). Jesus was not condoning her sin. But He also knew the Law well enough to know that the woman’s accusers had not fulfilled the Law’s requirements, and that some of them were guilty of sin as well. This is one of the reasons that Jesus is seen in the Book of John as the light that has come into a world of darkness. The Pharisees had come with a motive of tricking or testing Jesus. They were not concerned about considering all that the Law had to say. So, Jesus stood up to them as a light in a world of darkness in order to expose their sins.

In John 8:12 Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” Psalm 119:105 teaches us that God’s Word is a “lamp to our feet, and a light to our path.” What does it mean when it says that Jesus is “the light of the world”? It means that Jesus is the glimmer of hope in a world of darkness and sin. What is the hope for people today? It is not worldly things because those things will all perish and cease to exist. The light of hope in the world of darkness is Jesus. The fact that Jesus is the light of the world means that He is a beacon of righteousness in a world of sin. He is the One to Whom we can look because He committed no sin, and because no guile or deceit was found in His mouth. Jesus is the picture of goodness in a world of evil and ungodliness. He is the example of how we ought to live. Truly, Christ is the light of the world, and salvation can be found by putting our trust in Him.

In John 8:24 Jesus said, “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” It is essential, if a person wants to be saved, that he believes in Jesus. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” In Acts 8, when Philip was teaching the Ethiopian eunuch, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Here is water. What hinders me?” Do you remember the condition that Philip set forth? He said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” So, yes, a person must believe that Jesus is the Son of God. But in Scripture, mental acceptance is not what belief is all about. Romans 1:5 and 16:26 teach us that it is the “obedience of faith” that is pleasing to God. Belief is obedient trust. It is not those who say “Lord, Lord” who please God, but those who do the will of the Father (Mt. 7:29).

Every Christian ought to have the mindset of John 8:29 when He said, “I always do those things that please My Father.” Wouldn’t it be great if we had the mindset that we always want to do the things that please the Father? Our mindset ought to be: What will make God happy in this situation? What does God want us to do, and what will make Him smile on our actions? That is why we are here. We are here to glorify God. In Isaiah 43:7 God said, “Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.” What is life all about? Let the wise sage Solomon tell us. In Ecclesiastes 12:13 Solomon said, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” That is what life is all about. “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). If we have the mindset that we always want to do the things that will please the Father, then John 8:31-32 won’t be hard. Jesus said, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Having the mindset of pleasing the Father means that we must always want to know the truth.

Regardless of what it is, and regardless of what it costs, we must always want to know the truth so we can be set free from sin. What is the most valuable commodity that any civilization or society could have? I dare to say that it would be the truth. The writer of Proverbs said, "But the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23). I can guarantee that whatever cost or price there might be to truth, obtaining it still is cheap. It is the truth that sets us free from sin (Jn. 8:32). It is the truth that gives us salvation (Jn. 14:6). "The law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus" (Jn. 1:17). The truth is in Christ (Eph. 4:21). The truth that sets us free, that gives us the best possible life (Jn. 10:10), and that gives us a home in Heaven, is the most valuable possession we could ever have. No matter what it costs, and no matter what tough decisions we have to make, truth is invaluable. We cannot put a price tag on truth. If we obey it, we can be set free from sin and have a home in Heaven with God.

In John 9 we see Jesus healing a man who was born blind. Everyone knew of this man. He had been born blind. But God used this situation to reveal Jesus to the world (vs. 3). One of the key things in this is that Jesus recognizes His purpose is now. One of the key words in the Bible is the word "now." "Now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). In John 9:4 Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work." People normally do not go out to work during the night because it is too dark, not a good environment, and unsafe at times. Daytime is the time to work. We must take advantage of what we have in the here and now because life is short. James 4:14 says, "What is your life? It is but a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." We can see people in the Bible who did not understand this. Felix said, "Go away for now. When I have a more convenient time, I will call for you" (Acts 24:25). What a sad statement. Felix did not understand the importance of "now." Agrippa was the same way. In Acts 26:28 he said, "Almost you persuade me to become a Christian." He did not take advantage of "now." We hope those men changed their minds, but we are not told that they did. We must understand the importance of doing "now" what God has told us to do—while we have the opportunity and time to do so. In John 9 when Jesus opened the blind man's eyes, it is used as a parallel. The man had been born blind, yet he was able to see spiritually. Yet some people who are born with their eyes open are blind spiritually. Jesus uses this to show that the Pharisees (the religious elite) thought that they had their eyes wide open, yet in reality they were spiritually blind. They could not see the truth, even though it stood right before them. That truth was that Jesus is the light of the world (Jn. 8:12). That truth was that God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light unto our path.

Now, look at the statement that the blind man made in John 9:31 when he said, "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him." Some people have said, "Well, the blind man really didn't know what he was saying." Didn't he? "We know that God does not hear sinners...." The religious elite—although they thought that they were right with God and were the picture of spiritual perfection—were not even heard by God. Why? It is because God does not hear the prayer of someone who is living in abject sin. How do we know that? Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear." In 1 Peter 3:7 we are told if a man does not deal rightly with his wife, God will not even heard his prayers." In Proverbs 28:9 we are told, "One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." God will not answer, but will reject, the prayer of those are not living in accordance with His will. This helps us see the importance of understanding God's will and living the right kind of life.

Today I want to ask you a question: Are you sure that God hears your prayers? There is a lot of power in prayer. Prayer has the power to move the hand that made the world (Jas. 5:16-18). Prayer provides powerful results. Are you sure that you are right with God? Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Are you sure that you know the truth? Let's talk just a moment about what God says a person must do to be saved. Have you obeyed God's plan of salvation? What do the Scriptures say that a person must do to be set free from sin? What is the truth on salvation?

A person must hear God's Word. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The only way to get faith is to hear the Word of God. It is essential that we have faith (Heb. 11:6). A person must hear God's Word and look to the correct authority. Then a person must believe in Jesus. Jesus said, "Unless you believe that I am He, you will surely die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24). But it does not stop at belief. A person also must repent. In Luke 13:3 Jesus said, "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Once a person repents, he then must be willing to confess the name of Jesus before men. Jesus said, "If you will not confess Me before men, then I will not confess you before the Father. But if you will confess Me before men, I will confess you before the Father" (Mt. 10:32-33). A person then must be baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins. In Acts 2:37 the Jews who had killed the Messiah cried out, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" Peter said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Jesus said, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:5). A person must be baptized in order to receive the forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16). So again I ask: Are you sure that you have obeyed the truth? Are you sure that you have been set free from sin? Truly, Jesus is the light of the world. We can walk in the truth and know that we are right with Him. But the only way to do that is to submit to the will of Jesus, Who is "King of kings and Lord of lords." He can make us free. The question is: Will we let Him make us free by the truth of His Word?

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST* is brought to you by loving, caring members of the church of Christ. The McLish Avenue church of Christ in Ardmore, Oklahoma, oversees this evangelistic effort. For a free CD or DVD of today's broadcast, please write to:

***THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST***

**607 McLish Ave.  
Ardmore, OK 73401**

You may call **580-223-3289**. Please visit us on the web at [www.thegospelofchrist.com](http://www.thegospelofchrist.com). We encourage you to attend the church of Christ, where "the Bible is loved and the Gospel is preached."

## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR JOHN LESSON 4 (CHAPTERS 7-9)

1. What does John 7:5 tell us about certain members of Christ's earthly family?
2. What does Acts 1:14 tell us about certain members of Christ's earthly family?
3. What does John 7:15 mean when it says that Jesus was "a man of letters"?
4. What does 2 Timothy 2:15 admonish Christians to do?
5. What does Acts 17:11 admonish Christians to do?
6. Explain how John 7:24 relates to Matthew 7:1.
7. In John 7:37-39 Jesus said, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." What was the "living water" of which He spoke?
8. According to 2 Peter 1:3, what does God's Word provide for us?
9. In John 7, the scribes and Pharisees sent soldiers to capture Jesus, but they returned empty handed. According to verse 46, what explanation did they offer for their failure?
10. In John 8 Jesus dealt with a woman who had been caught in sin. What was her sin?
11. How is Jesus described in John 8:12?
12. What statement did Jesus make in John 8:24 that applies just as much to people today as it did the day Christ first spoke it?
13. What statement did Jesus make in John 8:29 that Christians today should be able to make, too?
14. What, according to Ecclesiastes 12:13, is man's "whole duty"?
15. According to John 8:31, what trait will identify people as Christ's disciples?
16. What according to John 8:32, has the power to "make us free"?
17. According to John 14:6, who is Jesus?
18. In John 9, what miracle did Jesus perform?
19. What important point is found in John 9:31?
20. What important point is found in Psalm 66:18?
21. What does Proverbs 28:9 say about God's hearing a person's prayers?
22. According to the Scriptures, what must a person do to become a Christian?