

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 86
John 13-20

Key Concepts: The key concept in this book is that Jesus the Christ is the incarnation of God (the Word) who has come to earth to bring the fullness of life as only the Living God can give it.

Central Concepts: Before we leave the Gospel of John we need to spend a few minutes looking at John's use of the term, "the Jews." John uses the term "the Jews" to describe those who opposed Jesus and called for his death. Unfortunately John's treatment of the Jews has been used as the basis of anti-Semitism since Christianity became the major religion in the Roman Empire. In dealing with this term we need to remember three things: first that Jesus and all of the disciples were Jewish, second that John's community had been evicted from the synagogues because of their faith in Jesus and third that in John everything is black and white, either or, which means that those who opposed Jesus are described as being evil. The view of John is not held by the other gospels or by the Apostle Paul.

Brief Summary: This portion of John is called the Book of Glory because it records Jesus' last few days including his crucifixion and resurrection.

Foot Washing (13:1-13:30) – The second half of the book opens with an example of Jesus' teaching on humility and servanthood. He acts like a servant, washes the disciples' feet and commands them to do likewise.

Jesus' Final Discourse (13:31-17:26) – The gospel continues with a detailed description of Jesus' closing words to the disciples in the upper room. Jesus begins with a "new commandment" that they love one another. He continues to prepare them for his departure by telling them not to fear because he will return and bring them to himself. This includes the famous statement; I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. Jesus then tells them that they will not be alone but that he will send the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, to be with them. The disciples are reminded to abide in Jesus (he is the vine and they are to be the branches); to bear fruit by showing love for one another; and to prepare themselves for persecution. The disciples respond that they finally understand what Jesus is all about. The section concludes with the great pastoral prayer of Jesus where he prays for himself, the disciples and the coming church.

The Passion Narrative (18-19) – John's description of Jesus' arrest is very different from any of the other gospels. In it Jesus is in total control of the situation. The soldiers who come to take him fall to the ground when Jesus announces that he is the one they seek. Only with Jesus' permission can they arrest him. Peter tries to defend him by using a sword, but Jesus tells him to put it away. Jesus' arrest is followed by his being taken to the religious authorities as well as Peter's denial of Jesus. When Jesus is finally brought before Pilate it is "the Jews" who tell him to put Jesus to death. Pilate and Jesus have an extended conversation in which Pilate utters the famous line, "What is truth?" When Pilate wants to release him, "the Jews" insist on crucifixion. Jesus is crucified and his body is taken away by Joseph of Arimathea and anointed by Nicodemus (who becomes the model for Jewish conversion).

Resurrection (20-21) – John's account of the resurrection has two disciples coming to the empty tomb on the word of Mary Magdalene, Mary meeting Jesus in the garden, Jesus appearing to the disciples and giving the Holy Spirit (John's version of Pentecost), the story of doubting Thomas, Jesus appearing on the beach and eating with the disciples and finally a question and answer session with Peter which restores his relationship with Jesus.

1. Which of Jesus' "I am" statements do you like best and why?
2. How do you try and live out in our life Jesus' call to love and serve?
3. How do you reconcile the varying resurrection accounts?