

I Am

Student's Guide

A Bible Study Series on the Claims of Jesus Christ

By Richard J. Mendola

A ministry material of International Students, Inc.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Lesson 1: I AM the Bread of Life.....	3
Lesson 2: I AM the Light of the World	7
Lesson 3: I AM the “I AM”	12
Lesson 4: I AM the Good Shepherd	17
Lesson 5: I AM the Resurrection and the Life.....	21
Lesson 6: I AM the Way and the Truth and the Life.....	26
Lesson 7: I AM the True Vine	30
Summary.....	36

I AM: A Bible Study Series on the Claims of Jesus Christ: Leader’s Guide

Copyright © 1986, 1992, 2004

by International Students, Inc.

P.O. Box C, Colorado Springs, CO 80901

Phone (719) 576-2700

Fax (719) 576-5363

Visit ISI on the Web at www.isionline.org

All Scripture quotations in this publication are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*.

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984

International Bible Society

Introduction

We're excited that you plan to explore this wonderful series. Through it you will learn more about the Bible, Christianity, and most of all, Jesus. To really know who Jesus is, you must study what is said about Him in the Bible, the primary source of information about Jesus.

This study will help you examine what Jesus said about Himself and the evidence for His claims, as outlined in the Bible. In each session you will study a portion of the Bible and answer some questions to help you better understand what you have read.

The lessons are based upon the Gospel of John in the Bible. In fact, it would be helpful to read the Gospel of John before you begin this series. It may be easier for you to read a Bible in your own language. But if you prefer to read in English or don't have a Bible in your own language, you may find the *New International Version* the easiest to use.

These studies are designed for you to use either in a Bible study group or individually with a Bible study leader. Before you meet for each study session, you may want to read the Bible passage and write out the answers to the questions in the space provided. You also may want to keep a separate notebook to take additional notes.

Again, we are thrilled that you are taking this opportunity to study the "I am" sayings of Jesus Christ. At the end of this study you will find a response card. Please use it to let us know your response to this series. We would also appreciate learning how we at International Students, Inc. may serve you in the future.

Introductory Exercises

1. Write seven statements about yourself, beginning each statement with the words: “I am ...” Besides each statement write some evidence that would prove to others that the statement is true (see example).

I AM ... a student—show my student identification card.

I AM ...

Underline the statement above that will help other people understand you the most. Then circle the statement that best describes who you think you are.

2. Think of a misunderstanding people have about your country. Have you tried to correct the misunderstanding? Were you successful? Why or why not?
3. What things can you correctly predict about your future?
4. Write down characteristics about yourself that you acquired from your parents. List as many as you can.

Lesson 1

I AM the Bread of Life

John 6:25-51

Background

The day before, Jesus fed a crowd of 5,000 people by multiplying five loaves of bread and two small fish. Afterward, 12 baskets of food were left. The people were astonished to see this miracle. They wanted to take Jesus by force and make Him king, but Jesus left the crowd instead. Later that night He went with His disciples to the other side of the lake, while the crowd searched for Him until they found Him.

Definition of Terms

Rabbi: (verse 25) “Wise teacher,” a highly respectful title for someone with great teaching ability.

Son of Man: (verse 27) A term Jesus used to refer to Himself as being sent from God for the purpose of dying for the human race.

The Father: (verse 27) A term that Jesus frequently used to refer to God the Father.

Manna: (verse 31) A bread-like substance given to the Hebrew people to sustain them during their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. When they were in the desert, manna came down from the sky like rain (Exodus 16:14).

Last Day: (verse 40) The day Jesus Christ will return to earth.

Flesh: (verse 51) The physical body and life.

Bible Passage: John 6:25-51

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

²⁶ Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs, but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

²⁸ Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

³⁰ So they asked him, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?” ³¹ Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

³² Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “from now on give us this bread.”

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷ All that the father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

⁴¹ At this the Jews began to grumble at him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴² They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

⁴³ “Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. ⁴⁴ “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him, comes to me.” ⁴⁶ No one has seen the father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.” ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. ⁵⁰ But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If a man eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

Observation Questions

1. According to Jesus, why was the crowd looking for Him?
2. What did Jesus say was the most important activity for those listening to do?
3. In whom did Jesus ask people to believe?

4. What did the crowd want Jesus to do before they would believe?
5. What did Jesus identify as His life's purpose?
6. What claim did Jesus make about Himself in relationship to God?
7. Contrast the "bread from heaven" and the "manna in the desert."
8. What phrases indicate that Jesus cares about all people?
9. How did the people respond to Jesus' claims?

Analysis and Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to eat the "bread of life"?
2. What is important about Jesus' repeated statement that He "came down from heaven"?
3. According to Jesus, what is the way to experience the fullness of life?
4. Contrast the crowd's question concerning "works" and Jesus' answer concerning "the work." What does this difference tell us about their different ideas on how to approach God?
5. What difference would it make if Jesus had only said He would give them the bread of life rather than "I am the bread of life"?

Summary Question

1. What does this passage say about God's ability and willingness to satisfy our spiritual hunger?

Reflection Questions

1. Have you seen Jesus' ability to keep you going in your own life? If so, in what way(s)?
2. Have Jesus' claims or statements ever caused you to grumble or be confused? Was your difficulty resolved? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. The people asked Jesus to show them a sign. What do you think Jesus could have done to convince people of His claims? To convince you?
4. Some people seek to know about Jesus Christ for reasons other than discovering "truth." This passage suggests at least one reason why people who do not have proper motives to seek God. Can you identify it? Can you think of other false reasons that motivate people to seek Jesus Christ?
5. Jesus had a clear sense of His mission on earth. Do you have a clear sense of your goal, purpose, and mission? Has God helped you understand what your goal, purpose, and mission are? If so, how?

For Further Study

Read the following verses. Describe the importance of bread in Jewish ceremonies. Tell how they relate to the "bread of life."

- Exodus 16:31-35
- Exodus 25:23-30
- Leviticus 2:4-9
- Leviticus 7:11-14

Lesson 2

I AM the Light of the World

John 8:12-30

Background

This conversation with the Pharisees happened during or just after one of the Jewish feasts: the Feast of the Tabernacles. During this festival the people carried lighted torches through the streets to celebrate God's giving of the harvest. Jesus referred to this ceremony to show who He is.

Definition of Terms

Pharisees: (verse 13) The Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day.

Valid: (verse 13) Convincing, supported by objected truth.

Law: (verse 17) The commandments God gave through Moses and the prophets.

Offerings: (verse 20) The sacrifice of something of value to pay the penalty for sin.

Sin: (verse 24) Rebellion against God and the laws He has given us in the Bible; turning away from God; not seeking a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Our natural state apart from God is sinful, due to our decision to disobey God (Romans 5:12).

Bible Passage: John 8:12-30

¹² 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."

¹³ The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."

¹⁴ Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I came from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. ¹⁶ But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the father who sent me. ¹⁷ In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. ¹⁸ I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the one who sent me—the Father."

¹⁹ Then they asked him, "Where is your father?"

“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”²⁰ He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.

²¹ Once more Jesus said to them, “I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.”

²² This made the Jews ask, “Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, ‘Where I go, you cannot come’?”

²³ But he continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.”

²⁵ “Who are you?” they asked.

“Just what I have been claiming all along,” Jesus replied. ²⁶ “I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.”

²⁷ They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know who I am and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. ²⁹ The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” ³⁰ Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him.

Observation Questions

1. Which statement did Jesus make that the Pharisees strongly disagreed with?
2. What promise did Jesus give to those who follow Him?
3. Was Jesus claiming to be the light for everyone or the light for just a certain group of people? What phrases support your answer?
4. Why were the Pharisees’ judgments about Jesus not valid?
5. What facts did Jesus give to show that His claims were valid?
6. Of whom were the Pharisees ignorant?

7. How is God's control of the events in Jesus' life shown in this passage?
8. Where did Jesus tell the Pharisees about their origin, where they are going, and how they can go where He is going?
9. What did Jesus indicate about His origin and where He is going?
10. How did the people listening respond to Jesus' words?

Analysis and Discussion Questions

1. How did the Pharisees' question in verse 19 reveal that they did not know who Jesus really was?
2. What can we learn about Jesus from this passage?
3. What are the functions of light? What characteristics would "the light of the world" or "the light of life" need to have? What types of things would "the light of the world" need to reveal?
4. What attitudes prevented the Pharisees from recognizing the truth of Jesus' words?
5. What is the relationship between light and life in the physical world? What is the relationship between spiritual light and life?
6. How can Jesus help us to see life as it really is?
7. The Pharisees were wrong about many spiritual things. What are some wrong ideas that the Pharisees had that some people today have?
8. What does it mean to "die in one's sins" (Vs. 21, 24)?

9. What example did Jesus set in verse 29?
10. Some things are very difficult to understand until after the event. Jesus said that many would not understand who He was (and is) until after His death. At what point did many people realize who Jesus was?

Summary Questions

1. According to Jesus, what is the way to know God?
2. If we believe that Jesus Christ is the “Light of the world,” how does this belief affect our origin, present state, and future?

Reflection Questions

1. Has Jesus ever shed “light” to show you something that changed the way you think or live your life? If so, explain.
2. Jesus knew where He was going. Do you know where you are going? If so, explain.
3. Jesus made the statement, “I always do what pleases Him,” in talking about God. Can you say the same thing about pleasing (a) yourself? (b) your parents? (c) God? Why or why not?
4. Although the Pharisees opposed Jesus and put pressure on Him, Jesus remained firm and held to His claims. How can you remain firm and stand against temptation?
5. If you were in the crowd listening to Jesus, what would you say was His main point?

For Further Study

What do each of the following verses say about light?

- Psalm 36:9
- Psalm 104:1, 2
- John 3:19-21
- 2 Corinthians 4:6
- Ephesians 5:13, 14
- 1 John 1:5-7

The prophet Isaiah told about the light that was to come. Read Isaiah 9:2-7 and Isaiah 60:1-6. How did Jesus fulfill these prophecies?

Lesson 3

I AM the “I AM”

John 8:31-59

Background

The discussion took place immediately after Jesus claimed to be the light of the world. Jesus continued to talk with some people who said they believed Him. The question of who Jesus was remained on the minds of those present, and Jesus wanted to further explain who He really was and what it meant to follow Him.

Definition of Terms

Disciple: (verse 31) A follower of, or believer in, a particular person.

Abraham: (verse 33) The father of the Jewish nation who lived almost 2,000 years before Christ.

The Son: (verse 36) Another name used for Jesus. A short title for the Son of God. This term means that Jesus is just like God the Father, not that He was God’s biological offspring.

Illegitimate: (verse 41) A child born out of wedlock.

The Devil: (verse 44) The evil spirit being through whom sin came to the world and spread to the human race; also called Satan (Genesis 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:9).

Samaritans: (verse 48) Descendants of Jewish people who intermarried with non-Jews of Palestine and surrounding areas. The Jews valued racial purity and, therefore, hated the Samaritans, who were not welcome in Jewish communities in Galilee and Judea.

Demon: (verse 48) A servant of the Devil filled with evil, hatred, and opposition to God; also called an evil spirit. Sometimes, a demon can “possess” a person, entering the person’s soul and controlling his or her thoughts and actions (Mark 5:1-17; Luke 9:37-43).

Glory: (verse 50, 54) A term meaning greatness, high position, or honor.

Glorify: (verse 54) To give honor, praise, or admiration to a person.

Bible Passage: John 8:31-59

³¹ To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

³³ They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendents and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?”

³⁴ Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has not permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know you are Abraham’s descendents. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. ³⁸ I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you do what you have heard from your father.”

³⁹ “Abraham is our father,” they answered.

“If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do the things Abraham did. ⁴⁰ As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. ⁴¹ You are doing the things your own father does.”

“We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.”

⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. ⁴³ Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! ⁴⁶ Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? ⁴⁷ He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

⁴⁸ The Jews answered him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?”

⁴⁹ “I am not possessed by a demon,” said Jesus, “but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. ⁵¹ I tell you the truth, if a man keeps my word, he will never see death.”

⁵² At this the Jews exclaimed, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died, and so did the prophets, yet you say that if a man keeps your word, he will never taste death. ⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?”

⁵⁴ Jesus replied, “If I glory myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.

⁵⁵ Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷ “You are not yet fifty years old,” the Jews said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!”

⁵⁸ “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” ⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Observation Questions

1. According to Jesus, what is a true disciple?
2. According to this passage, what is the result of following Jesus’ teachings?
3. How did the Jews respond to Jesus’ offer of freedom?
4. From where did Jesus’ teachings come?
5. What did Jesus say the Jews would be doing if God were their father?
6. Who did Jesus say was their real father?
7. What promise does Jesus make to those who keep and obey His words?
8. Jesus said if anyone kept His word, that person would never see (spiritual) death. Why did the Jews think this claim was unrealistic?
9. What bold statement did Jesus make about Himself in relation to Abraham?

Analysis and Discussion Questions

1. What would Jesus say about those who say they follow Him and yet continue to live sinful lives?
2. What does freedom mean today? How does Jesus' definition of freedom differ from this view?
3. How can one's position, privilege, national identity, or religious identity keep him or her from true freedom?
4. What does it mean to be a slave to sin?
5. "I am" is a term that God the Father used for Himself. How does God use this term in the following verses?

Exodus 3:13, 14

Isaiah 41:4

Isaiah 43:10

Isaiah 48:12

Isaiah 51:12

Now, what do the following verses say about Jesus?

John 1:1-4, 14

John 18:5

Hebrews 13:8

What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am"?

6. Did Jesus' listeners understand what Jesus was claiming about Himself? Relate your answer to the way they responded to Him.

7. Has Jesus been the only one in history to claim to be God? Are there people today who make this claim? Read Mark 13:5, 6 and discuss Jesus' statement about others who make this claim.

Summary Questions

1. Who did Jesus claim that He was?
2. What did Jesus offer His followers

Reflection Questions

1. Some people do not want to hear the Word of God because of what it could mean to their lives. What conflicts (if any) do you feel between Christianity and your cultural/religious beliefs?
2. Do you feel it is an advantage or a disadvantage not to have lived when Jesus was on the earth? Why? What is Jesus' relationship to us today?
3. Notice the change in the Jews' attitude from the beginning of this passage to the end. Many people who want to be casually identified with Jesus react with hostility at Jesus' claims and the demands of following Him. Why, in your opinion, does this happen?
4. If what a person believes or has been taught is contrary to the teachings of Jesus, that person may not seriously evaluate Jesus' teachings. Have you ever compared what you believe and have been taught against the teachings of Christ? What are your fears (if any) in doing this?

For Further Study

Jesus said, "If you were Abraham's children then you would do the things Abraham did" (verse 39). Read Romans 4:1-25 and Hebrews 11:8-19 and describe what Abraham did.

Lesson 4

I AM the Good Shepherd

John 10:1-21

Background

Jesus just gave sight to a blind man. This act of healing showed his desire to bring spiritual healing to people who are blind to God. However, the religious leaders of Jesus' day reacted negatively to His healing power. They opposed Jesus and tried to discourage others from following Jesus, partly by rejecting His healing of the blind man.

Definition of Terms

Sheep pen: (verse 1) A fenced area where sheep rested. It only had one entrance.

Shepherd: (verse 2) A person who tends and cares for sheep, a common job in Jesus' time. The people were very familiar with shepherds.

Know: (verse 14) To be acquainted with someone, not only intellectually but also on other levels, such as personal, emotional, and social. It is possible to know about someone without actually knowing the person.

Bible Passage: John 10:1-21

¹ "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ² The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through one will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

¹⁹ At these words the Jews were again divided. ²⁰ Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?”

²¹ But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

Observation Questions

1. What did Jesus call people who try to enter the place of rest by their own means rather than by the way He provides?
2. What do the people mentioned in Question 1 come to do?
3. What did Jesus come to do?
4. According to this passage, what does a shepherd do for his sheep?
5. How well does Jesus know His sheep?
6. How do the sheep enter the pasture Jesus described?
7. What are some of the privileges and blessings of finding the gate?
8. What did Jesus say He would do for His sheep?
9. How is the hired hand different from the shepherd?

Analysis and Discussion Questions

1. Who was Jesus really talking about when He used the following terms:
 - a. thief, robber, stranger
 - b. sheep
 - c. hired hand
2. In what ways are people like sheep?
3. What does it mean to “find pasture” (V. 9)?
4. What is the full life that Jesus offers?
5. What did Jesus mean by “taking up” His life (Vs. 17, 18)? What does Jesus’ ability to take up His life imply about Himself?
6. What does Jesus claim about Himself? Are these claims unique? Why or why not?
7. Does this passage show that Jesus came to save all people? Why or why not?

Summary Questions

1. How can you enter the gate?
2. What did Jesus see as His main mission on earth?
3. What are the results of following Jesus?

Reflection Questions

1. Jesus caused a definite reaction in the people who listened to Him. Some people respected His teachings. Others thought He was crazy. What do you think of Jesus' actions and teachings? Does Jesus' life reflect His teachings? Why or why not?
2. People in Jesus' day often missed the spiritual meanings behind His stories. Do you think people today are also unaware of the spiritual meanings in His teachings? If so, in what ways? If not, explain.
3. You might think it would be best for the sheep if their shepherd did not die. How did the death of the Good Shepherd (Jesus) bring life to His sheep?
4. Verse 12 says that the shepherd owns the sheep. In what ways does Jesus own us? What rights does that give Him?

For Further Study

God is often described in Scriptures as a shepherd. Read Psalm 23:1-6 and Isaiah 40:11. Write down the ways He cares for His sheep.

Lesson 5

I AM the Resurrection and the Life

John 11:17-45

Background

Some people told Jesus that His friend Lazarus was very sick. After remaining two days in the place where He first heard this news, Jesus traveled to where Lazarus was and found that his friend had already died.

Definition of Terms

Tomb: (verse 17) A burial place, larger and more complex than a simple grave, usually used by the wealthy or those of high position. Both natural caves and hollow spaces cut out of rock were used for tombs.

Lord: (verse 21) Another word for “master” or “ruler.”

Resurrection: (verse 24) The bringing back to physical life of someone who had died.

The resurrection at the last day: (verse 24) The time when Christ will come to earth again and gather His followers together; a time of great joy for Christians because they will receive new bodies and be with Christ in heaven forever (Daniel 12:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

Bible Passage: John 11:17-45

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

¹⁸ Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask. ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe in this?”

²⁷ “Yes, Lord” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”

²⁸ And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” ²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

³⁴ “Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, “Did I tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.

Observation Questions

1. How long had Lazarus been dead? Is it possible that during this time he was just in a trance or had experienced a fainting spell? Why or why not?
2. How did Martha react when Jesus came?
3. How did Jesus respond to Martha's faith in His power?
4. What did Martha think Jesus meant when He said that her brother would rise? What did Jesus mean?
5. What unique claim did Jesus make about Himself?
6. What did Martha think it meant to believe in Jesus?
7. How did Jesus respond to the suffering He saw in Mary and the other mourners?
8. How did Martha reveal her disbelief in Jesus' claim to be the resurrection and the life?
9. Why do you think Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead? Explain your answer.
10. How did Jesus' actions affect many of the Jews present?

Analysis and Discussion Questions

1. What titles did people use to address Jesus in this passage? Explain the meaning of each.

2. Did the people expect Lazarus to be resurrected? Explain.
3. How do we know Lazarus's resurrection actually happened?
4. In verse 25, Jesus talked about first being "the resurrection" and then "the life." Why is the order so important?
5. Besides being physically dead, in what other ways can a person be "dead"? Does Jesus have power over these types of "death" as well?

Summary Questions

1. What evidence did Jesus give in John 11:17-45 for His claim to be "the resurrection and the life"?
2. What kind of life does Jesus offer to each of us?
3. How do people receive the life that Jesus offers? Explain your answer.

Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever been angry at God for allowing something bad to happen that you felt He could have prevented? How do you feel about it today?
2. Mary and Martha's problem required a lot of faith in Jesus. How would your faith compare if you were placed in a similar situation?
3. When Jesus restored physical life to Lazarus, everyone noticed. When Jesus gives spiritual life to one who believes in Him, how do other people notice?
4. Based on what Jesus did in the passage, is there any reason not to trust in Him for a new life—a spiritual life filled with forgiveness, hope, joy, and peace? Explain your answer.

For Further Study

On the third day after Jesus died, He rose from the dead. Read the following verses to discover what they say about the resurrection:

- Luke 24:1-8
- Romans 1:4
- Romans 6:4-10
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Ephesians 1:18-23

Lesson 6

I AM the Way and the Truth and the Life

John 14:1-14

Background

Jesus' public ministry had ended. His earthly life was nearly over, and He was instructing His closest followers. He had just revealed to them that He would be betrayed by Judas and denied by Peter (two of His followers). Jesus had also told His disciples that He would be leaving them (returning to heaven) and that they could not immediately follow.

Definition of Terms

Hearts: (verse 1) A term used in this context to refer not to physical organs, but to people's innermost selves—their personalities, emotional and intellectual makeup, and so forth.

My Father's house: (verse 2) The place in heaven that God is preparing as a dwelling place for all Christians when they are resurrected at the last day (Revelation 21:1-4, 21-27).

Bible Passage: John 14:1-14

¹ “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus answered: “Don't you know me, Phillip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at

least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. ¹² I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it.”

Observation Questions

1. Why might Jesus’ disciples have been troubled?
2. What did Jesus say they should do to calm their disturbed hearts?
3. Which two followers of Jesus are mentioned in the passage?
4. What did Thomas want to know?
5. What was Phillip’s request?
6. How did Jesus’ answer to Phillip’s question compare to the one He gave Thomas?
7. Who did Jesus say was the only way to God?
8. In what ways did Jesus identify Himself with the Father?
9. Why did Jesus expect Philip and Thomas to believe in Him?
10. Which of Jesus’ promises to His disciples were to be fulfilled after He left?
11. According to this passage, what is faith?
12. What did Jesus say He would do if the disciples asked Him for anything in His name? Why would He do this?

Analysis and Discussion Questions

1. How does knowing God through Christ help us find direction, truth, and life?
2. If you knew that you had eternal life with Jesus in heaven, how would that affect the way you live our present life? Explain your answer.
3. What did Jesus mean when He said, “I am ... the truth”? How would the meaning be different if Jesus had said, “I will tell you the truth”? How does His claim to be truth differ from the truth of wise teachers?
4. Read John 1:3, 10:10, and 11:25, 26 and then describe what these verses have to say about Jesus’ ability to give life. Now, what did Jesus mean when he said, “I am ... the life”?
5. Read the following verses and write down the miracles Jesus performed. Next to each miracle, write the power that is demonstrated.
 - Matthew 8: 23-27
 - Mark 1:23-27
 - Luke 4:38-40
 - Luke 7:11-16
 - Luke 18:35-42
 - John 1:47-49
 - John 2:1-11

How did these miracles show that Jesus was one with the Father?

6. Why did Jesus direct people to Himself and not just to His teachings?
7. Why is it possible to know about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and not really “know” Him? Explain your answer.

Summary Questions

1. What statements did Jesus make in this passage that reveal He is more than just a righteous man?
2. What does this passage say are the results of faith in Jesus Christ?

Reflection Questions

1. Thomas was honest. He admitted that he still did not understand what Jesus said. What things are still unclear to you at this point in your study of this passage?
2. Can you say that you “know” God? If so, how do you know Him? If not, what do you plan to do?
3. Jesus said “I am ... the truth.” Why is it important for us to know ultimate, spiritual truth?
4. Would you be comforted if you knew Jesus was providing an eternal home for you and was coming back for you? Why or why not?

For Further Study

Contrast the two kinds of “ways” described in the following verses:

- Psalm 139:23, 24
- Proverbs 2:8-15
- Proverbs 16:2, 17, 25
- Matthew 7:13, 14

Lesson 7

I AM the True Vine

John 15:1-17

Background

Jesus continued to teach His closest followers, telling them He would soon be leaving them and going to heaven. He assured His followers of: (1) His return at a later time to take His followers with Him, and (2) the sending of His Spirit to be with them until He returned. He then began to discuss further the relationship between Himself and His followers.

Definition of Terms

Vine: (verse 1) A plant that grows by climbing along a vertical surface and sending out branches.

Servant: (verse 15) One who gives service to another person. The term usually refers to a domestic servant as a royal or wealthy household, but can also refer to one who has a humble attitude when relating to people.

Bible Passage: John 15:1-17

¹ “I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he trims clean so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. ⁸ This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for

everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.”

Observation Questions

1. What symbol did Jesus use in this passage to explain His relationship to His followers?
2. How does a branch become fruitful?
3. How can a person become fruitful?
4. How are Christ’s followers to glorify God?
5. How does a person “remain” in Christ?
6. Why did Christ tell His disciples to “remain” in Him?
7. Why did Jesus call His disciples “friends”?
8. What amount and kind of fruit did Christ want His followers to bear?
9. What promises did Jesus make to those who have a personal relationship with Him?

Analysis and Discussion Questions

1. Bearing fruit is the process by which new life is produced from the overflow of another life. How does this definition apply to bearing spiritual fruit through a relationship with God?
2. Why is it important for Christians to tell others that they are Jesus’ disciples?

3. How does Jesus' joy make our joy complete (V. 11)?

4. Answer the following questions about love using verses 12-17 as a guide.
 - a. How does the love described in this passage differ from the common view of love?

 - b. How can we develop this type of love?

 - c. How did Jesus demonstrate the sacrificial love described in verse 13?

5. Jesus talked first about our relationship with Him and then about our service for Him. Why is this order so important?

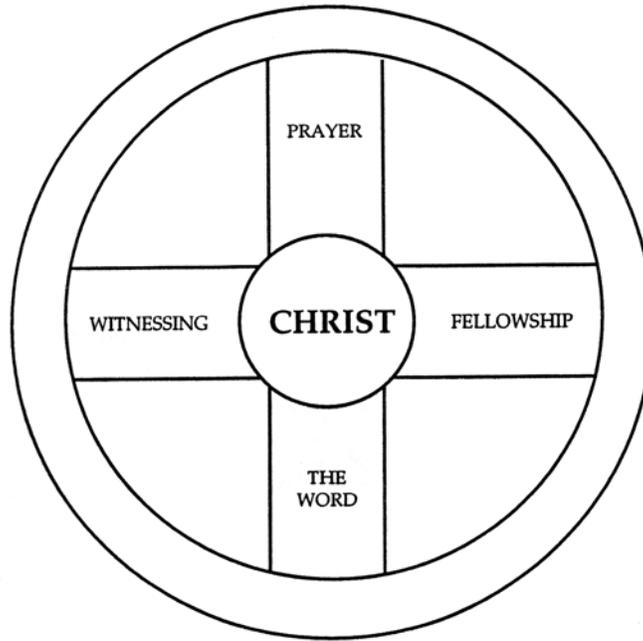
6. In this passage, which of His qualities does Jesus ask His followers to imitate?

7. Why does God choose to answer prayer?

Summary Questions

1. The diagram on the next page shows the Christ-centered life. Just as the driving force in a wheel comes from the hub (the center), so the power to live the Christian life comes from Jesus Christ at the center. The rim (outer edge) shows Christians obeying Christ. The Spokes show ways by which Christians grow in their faith.

The Obedient Christian in Action



The illustration used here is copyrighted by The Navigators. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Look up the following verses and write down what you think each part of the wheel means. Then, referring to John 15:1-12, find a verse that corresponds to each part.

Christ the Center (Galatians 2:20)

Obedience to Christ (John 14:21)

The Word (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

Prayer (Philippians 4:6, 7)

Fellowship (Hebrews 10:24, 25)

Witnessing (Matthew 28:18-20)

- Fill in the following chart, using John 15:1-17 as your source of information.

Results of Not Remaining in Christ	How to Remain in Christ	Results of Remaining in Christ
1.		
2.		
3.		

- Why is it important for a follower of Jesus Christ to love others? Explain your answer.

Reflection Questions

- Pretend you are one of the disciples listening to Jesus' teachings on the vine and the branches. How do you feel about Jesus right now?
- Jesus talked about trimming a branch so it can become fruitful. The trimming that God does in our lives can be a painful process. Is God trimming unfruitful branches from your life? If so, in what way(s)?
- This passage talks about bearing fruit. Would you want to "reproduce"—see the way your life is right now reproduced in another person? If not, why not?
- Do you see spiritual fruitfulness in your own life? If so, in what ways?
- Is it possible to bear spiritual fruit without God's help? Explain your answer.
- Read the nine qualities listed as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23. Which quality do you need most in your life right now? How could this quality be developed in your life?

For Further Study

In the Old Testament, the vine was used as a symbol for Israel. God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, placed them in a new land, and gave them numerous blessings. But the people rebelled against God. God punished them by allowing other nations to subdue them. Read the following verses and describe the use of the word “vine” in each passage.

- Psalm 80:8-16
- Isaiah 5:1-7
- Jeremiah 2:21
- Ezekiel 15:1-6
- Ezekiel 19:10-14
- Hosea 10:1, 2

In light of the Old Testament view of the vine, what is the significance of Jesus’ statement “I am the true vine”?

Summary

1. You began these studies by writing a description of yourself using seven “I am” statements. How do your statements compare with Jesus’ “I am” claims? What does this tell you about Jesus Christ?
2. The Pharisees often did not understand that Jesus was talking about spiritual things when He told stories. They thought He was talking about earthly things. Read 1 Corinthians 2:14 and discuss how a person can gain spiritual understanding.
3. When Jesus talked about going away, many of His listeners were confused (John 7:33-36; 13:33, 36). Do you now understand what He meant?
4. Jesus was very aware that He would soon die physically on the cross (John 8:28, 29; 10:17; Matthew 20:17-19). How did He know this?
5. Summarize what Jesus said about knowing the Father (John 1:18; 7:28, 29; 8:19; 14:9, 10).
6. Jesus repeatedly said that His mission was to save the whole world. How does this affect Christians today?
7. Since Jesus is the living “I AM,” is there a need for God to further reveal Himself? Why or why not?
8. Based on the passages we have studied in this series, list the major characteristics of a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

9. Based on what you have studied about Jesus, whom do you believe Jesus was?
Explain your answer.
10. Listed below are “I am” claims of Jesus and an action that supports each one. Discuss the relationship between each claim and the action.
- I am the Bread of Life: Feeding 5,000 people using a few loaves of fish (John 6:1-14).
 - I am the Light of the World: Giving sight to a blind man (John 9:1-12).
 - I am the “I AM”’: Creating the world (John 1:1-3).
 - I am the Good shepherd: Laying down His life for the people of the world (John 19:28-34).
 - I am the Resurrection and the Life: Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:38-43).
 - I am the Way and the Truth and the Life: Telling the Samaritan woman the details of her life (John 4:1-30).
11. What must a person do to become a follower of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19; John 1:12, 3:16; Romans 10:9-13)?
12. What are the results of becoming a follower of Jesus Christ? See the following verses:
- John 6:40
 - John 10:10
 - Romans 5:1
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - Galatians 5:22, 23
 - 1 Peter 3:14, 15

13. Do you wish to become a follower of Jesus Christ? If so, talk with your Bible study leader.

About International Students, Inc.

International Students, Inc. (ISI) is a Christian service organization. ISI works closely with foreign student advisors and other college and university officials to assist students in practical ways.

We offer “no-strings-attached” friendship to all international students and visiting scholars, regardless of race, nationality, or religious preference.

ISI staff members and volunteers are assisting international students and visiting scholars across the country, helping them adjust to and enjoy life in the United States.

As part of this assistance, we want also to share our faith in the Creator God, and help international students come to know God personally.

Your Response

- Please let us know your overall response to the *Jesus the Liberator* Bible study (e.g., I learned more about Jesus; I became a Christian; and so forth): _____

- I'd like to know about other Bible studies available from International Students, Inc. Please send me a resource list.

- Please pray for me. I'd like prayer for: _____

- Send me information on specific programs for international students and scholars offered by International Students, Inc.

- Other: _____

Name: _____

US Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (work): (____) _____ Home: (____) _____

Email: _____

Please send this form to:

International Students, Inc.

P.O. Box C

Colorado Springs, CO 80901

Or by fax to (719) 576-5363

Or look for ISI on the Web at www.isionline.org