



Facilitating Transformational Bible Studies

“Recognizing the Receiving the Living Word”

John 1:-13

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Introduction

The first verses of John's Gospel describe God's creating.

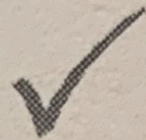
Like the previous study on the first few verses in Genesis, the opening verses in the Gospel of John talk about the beginning of God's creating. John presents the Word (*logos*) as God himself, and as revelation coming as light into the darkness. Receiving this Word revealed in Jesus is directly linked to growing authority as the believer grows towards becoming a son or daughter of God. Let's see how this works.

Read John 1:1-2



“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. He was in the beginning with God.”

Explanation



Here it says that God's Word (*logos*) was with God from the start. God's Word equals God and is called Word to stress that God is speaking.

Question 1



Do any of you feel the need to hear from God? Do you need wisdom for some decision you need to make, for direction for your life or for any big challenge you're facing?

Read John 1:3-5



"All things came into being through him, and apart from him nothing came into being that has come into being. In him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Study Guide

Notes

Suggestion

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Invite people to notice in verses 3-5 how the power of God's Word brings all things into being as life and light, which cannot be overcome by darkness.

Question 2

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What else is this Word associated with?

Life and light.

Question 3

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What does the Word do according to this verse?

The Word brings light for the people, which shines in the darkness. The darkness can't overcome this Word, life, light.

Suggestion

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It is easy to lose people's interest because of the theoretical sound of John 1:6-8. Rather than talking about John the Baptist, focus on how God is speaking and revealing himself in Jesus. To keep this focus, I suggest skipping ahead to John 1:9.

Read John 1:9



“There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every person.”

Question 4



According to this verse, *for whom* is this Word—the life and true light?

It says the word is for *every* person.

Question 5



Are people with criminal records excluded? Does it include violent offenders, prosecuting attorneys, political opponents?

Study Guide

Notes

Suggestion



Consider asking other questions to clarify who the Word is for that will draw out categories of people who might normally be excluded (such as people who condemn others, the rich and powerful, sex offenders, etc...

Help people notice that no one is excluded. Expect people to be attracted to this Word as desirable and good."

Question 6



Would such a Word be attractive to people you know?

Read John 1:10



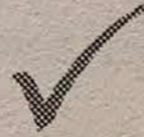
"He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not recognize him."

Read John 1:10



“He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not recognize him.”

Explanation



The fact that God’s Word was completely missed or rejected by Jesus’ own people relieves some people from self-condemnation.

Question 7



What does this verse tell us about the Word? How did the world respond to him.

He was in the world that he made—but the world didn’t recognize him.

Suggestion



Invite people to check out another verse that gives an interesting explanation about why people didn’t recognize the Word (identified later as Jesus).

Study Guide

Notes

Read 2 Corinthians 4:4



“The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Question 8



Do you see any signs that there might be a spiritual power (the god of this world) trying to keep you from recognizing God as being there for you or keeping you or others from knowing Jesus?

Invitation →

Consider how your faith that God is good and is for you may be under assault.

Question 9

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Has anyone felt assaulted by the god of this world? Does anyone need freedom from the blinding god of this world?

Invitation →

If people (and/or you yourself) desire freedom from the "god of this world," consider confessing your past and present agreement with darkness, renounce the god of this world, and ask Jesus to open your eyes.

Question 10

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Have you ever felt like you were not seen, noticed or recognized? Have you ever felt overlooked or invisible? What did that feel like?

Study Guide

Notes

Invitation →

Does anyone want to share about your experiences of feeling invisible, unrecognized, overlooked?

As the leader, you might consider sharing an example from your own life.

Read John 1:11



“He came to his own, and those who were his own did not receive him.”

Question 11



How did Jesus’ own people respond to him?

Explanation



Briefly explain how Jesus was rejected by the Jewish leaders, who turned the people against him, which led to his execution. This fulfills Scripture from Isaiah 53, which describes people’s rejection of the Lord’s Servant.

Read Isaiah 53:3

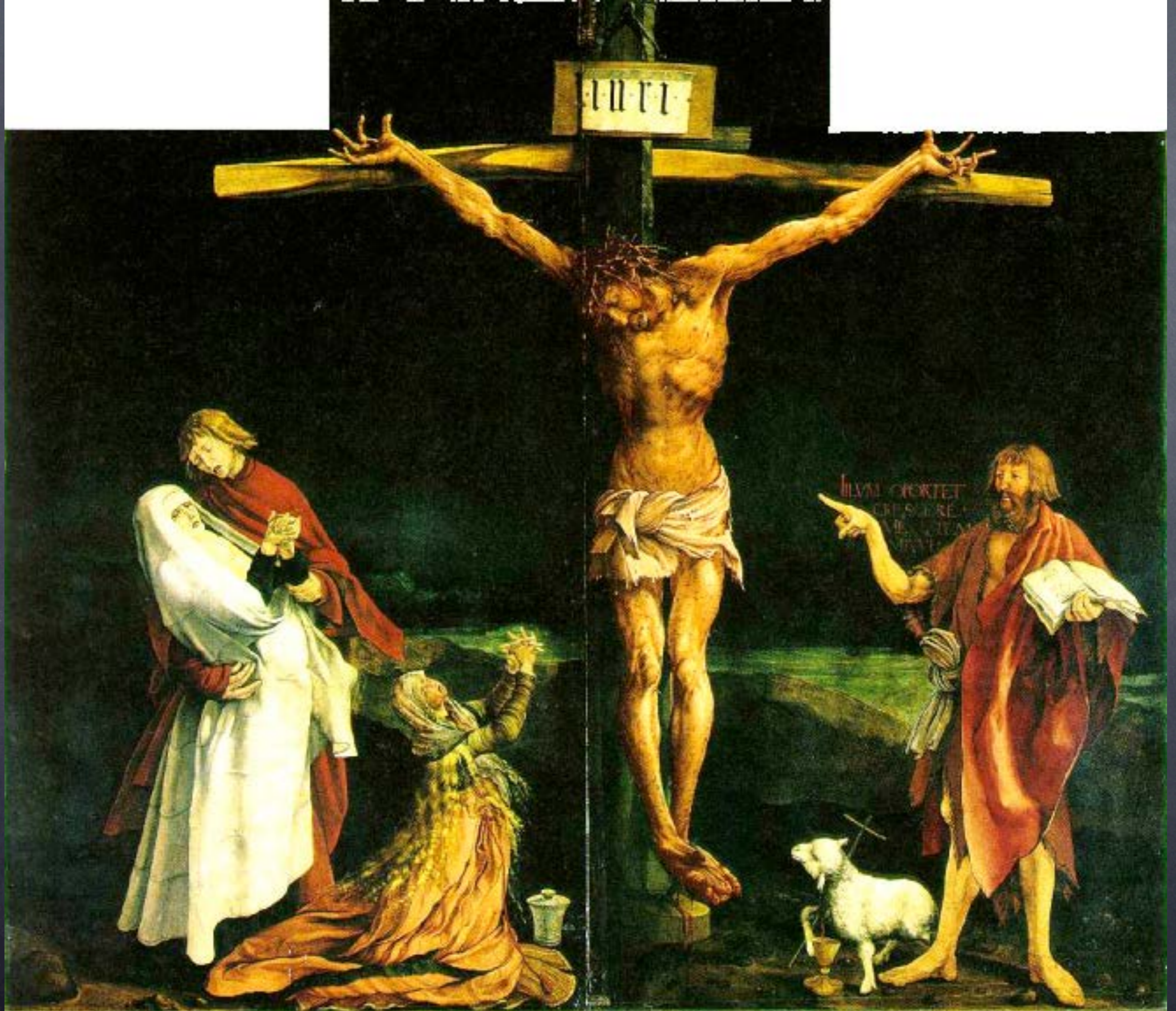


“He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face. He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”

Explanation



Isaiah presents the Servant of the Lord as a future Savior who accomplishes God's mission in the world, but also suffers (see Isaiah 42:1-7; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12).



Study Guide

Notes

Question 12



Have you ever been rejected by your own people—your family, friends, classmates in school, fellow gang members? What does it feel like to be rejected?

Invitation →

Does anyone want to share about your experiences of rejection?

Suggestion



As the leader, you might consider sharing an example from your own life. Consider saying something like: “Many of us know the pain of being ignored, invisible or rejected, but we don’t have to be like the world. The next verse shows us a different path.”

Explanation



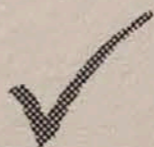
The word *exousia*, which is usually translated as “right” or “privilege,” means “authority.”

Read John 1:12



“But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name.”

Explanation



The translation of the phrase, “to them he gave the *right* to become children of God,” is not the best translation, because it sounds like we must earn or qualify this right—kind of like entrance into drug court, a driver’s license, or visitation rights to see children in foster care.

As we receive Jesus and believe in his name, God gives us authority to *become* his children, which begins a process of spiritual empowerment.

Study Guide

Notes

Suggestion



Note: Be careful to not be overly critical of Bible translations because this can create distrust of the rest of Scripture. Our Bibles were originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic (Old Testament) or Greek (New Testament and the Greek translation of the Old Testament—the Septuagint).

Question 13



Do you feel that you have enough authority as you are, based on what you've received from your parents and education, to deal with all your problems?

Suggestion



Consider offering comparisons, asking if people would have more authority as the son or daughter of Bill and Melinda Gates, a president or corporate executive.

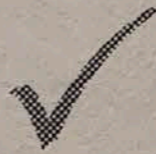
Also consider asking what gives people authority in this world.

Question 14



Would being a son or daughter of God give you more authority potentially than what you have now?

Explanation



As God's children, we are given authority to heal diseases and to cast out evil spirits. Consider reading Luke 9:1 and Matthew 10:1.

Let's look more closely at the contrast John's Gospel shows between spiritual authority and our human authority through birth.

Also consider asking what gives people authority in this world.

Study Guide

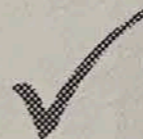
Notes

Read John 1:13



“Who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Explanation



Here we can see different kinds of birth: being born “of blood,” “of the will of the flesh,” of the will of man/woman,” and “of God.”

Question 15



Why do you think these different ways of talking about birth are mentioned here?

John’s Gospel is showing that there is nothing we receive from this world (DNA, parents, culture, heritage, race, class) that will give us as much authority as we are offered when we are born God.

Re-read John 1:12



“But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name.”

Explanation



When we receive and believe in the Word, we receive Jesus himself. (See John 1:14: “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.”)

Question 16



What does someone need to do to be born of God?

Receiving and believing in Jesus opens the way to being born of God (Jn 1:12-13).

Invitation →

Consider receiving Jesus and choosing to believe in him as the Word that enlightens everyone.

Study Guide

Notes

Question 17

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Is anyone feeling drawn towards Jesus enough to want to “receive” him—welcoming him into your life?”

Invitation →

If so, you can take a step of faith by telling Jesus of your desire to receive him and believe in him.

Further Invitation →

You can go a step further in the practice of your new authority by putting your hands on places on your body where you need healing or praying for someone in the group. Speak out healing in Jesus’ name.

Stepping into our authority

Eph. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

Eph 1:18-23 Key verses about Jesus' victory over the powers.

Eph. 2:4-8 But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ,

Scriptures regarding adoption

Rom. 8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

Rom. 8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Gal. 4:5 so that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Eph. 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

Good News can be discovered in the Scriptures through field-tested studies

- Hagar (Genesis 16)
- Jesus- good shepherd body guard (Ps 23 & Jn 10)
- Seeking after lost sheep until found (Luke 15)
- Call of tax collectors/sinners: Matt 9 and 1 Cor 1
- Recruited by Jesus (Matt 4;10; Lk 5; 9;10)
- Healing of man at Bethesda pool
- The cross: redemptive suffering
- Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5)