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Bible Lesson 18 (BTJ)

1. Introduction

This lesson begins with the story of John's ministry to the Jews. He preached a message of repentance and he baptized people who agreed with his message that they needed to repent. John's preaching was the means for preparing the Jews for the Deliverer's ministry among them.

When Jesus came to John, John identified him as the Lamb of God. This is a significant point because it identified Jesus with the Old Testament sacrificial system. When Jesus came to John, he requested to be baptized by John. John did baptize Jesus, but it was not because Jesus was a sinner. Jesus wanted to give an active approval of John's message that people needed to repent. John wanted people to think differently about God, themselves, and the way they lived.

This lesson also teaches how Satan, the enemy of God, tried to get Jesus to sin and thereby ruin God's purpose for him as the Deliverer. Jesus was God in the flesh and his body experienced hunger and thirst as we do. He did not need Satan's suggestion or permission to do anything to alleviate his physical needs. He was God in the flesh and holy. Jesus' victory over Satan demonstrates his perfection, holiness, and obedience to God and his purpose for sending him to be our Deliverer.

This lesson teaches some of the early days of the Ministry of Christ. During these days he selected disciples whom he wanted to train for future ministry. He made himself known to the Jews as he taught the people in their synagogues. His teaching was refreshingly clear to those present and they contrasted what he had to say with the empty words of the Jewish religious leaders.

Jesus performed many miracles and expelled evil spirits from demon-possessed people. His love and care for people was visible. All who witnessed what he said and did knew that he was an extraordinary person. Jesus wanted the people to not only identify that he was unique, but to also believe in him. He wanted them to know that he was the promised Deliverer. He wanted them to know that he was the one promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus wanted people to know that he was their Deliverer. He wanted them to believe in him and be saved from their guilt and the penalty of their sins.

1. Review

Setting: Teacher went to Allen's house and they discussed the last lesson.

Allen: You taught us about God's faithfulness in sending the Deliverer to Joseph and Mary. This is good

news that we have been waiting to hear.

Teacher: God is faithful and true. Every promise he makes will be fulfilled when it is the right time.

Allen: I liked the story of Mary, how she was willing to be the mother of Jesus the Deliverer. Did people talk about her being pregnant before she was married? If an unmarried girl is pregnant in our village, people say unkind things about her.

Teacher: The Bible doesn't say what others said or thought about Mary. It does say that Joseph was going to break their engagement before he knew why she was pregnant. Once he knew the truth about Mary, he married her because she had not committed a sin.

Allen: Mary and Joseph must have been very happy when Jesus was born. We were very excited when you taught us that story because God had finally sent the Deliverer to save people from their sins. Mary, who gave birth to Jesus, did she also need to have her sins forgiven or was she sinless?

Teacher: Let me ask you a question. Was Mary a descendant of Adam or not? Since she was a descendant of Adam, did she too have a sinful nature? Did she need the Deliverer to save her from her sins?

Allen: Your questions make it clear. Mary was just like us. She too needed to be saved from the guilt and penalty of her sins.

Teacher: Why was Herod so angry when the wise men told him that a King of the Jews had been born?

Allen: I think Herod was controlled by Satan. That is why he tried to kill the young child, Jesus. Satan fights against God all the time but he cannot stop God from doing anything. God is sovereign and able to work in history according to his plan.

Teacher: God warned the wise men not to tell Herod where they found the young child, Jesus. God knows everything and sees everything. He knew exactly how to care for young Jesus so that no harm would happen to him.

Allen: I think Herod was foolish and very evil. He tried to kill Jesus because he feared Jesus would displace him as the ruler over Judea. He was fighting against God.

Teacher: Do you remember anyone else who arrogantly fought against God?

Allen: The story of Pharaoh comes to mind. He fought against God and suffered greatly for his sinful actions. I fully understand that we must submit to God and believe in him. I believe all the Bible stories you have taught us.

Teacher: I am very glad that you believe the Bible's message.

Teacher: I have another question for you. When the angel told Joseph to flee to Egypt with Mary and Jesus, what did he do?

Allen: Joseph obeyed the angel and they went and lived in Egypt where Herod could not find them.

Teacher: Why did God protect Jesus from evil King Herod?

Allen: God sent him to be our Deliverer. That is why God protected Jesus. Later after King Herod died, God instructed Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to return to the land of Israel. They moved to the town of Nazareth and lived in peace.

Teacher: When Jesus was twelve years old he sat in the temple and talked to the Jewish religious leaders about the meaning of Scripture. How did such a young boy know the meaning of Scripture?

Allen: Jesus was God in a human body. That is why he could clearly explain the meaning of Scripture to the religious leaders. At that time they did not truly know who this Jesus was. They did not know that he was God in a human body.

Teacher: It is time to go to the meeting. I have a new lesson to teach you.

2. **John Preached to the Jews**

Many of the Israelites, for many years, did not obey God's commands and serve him. They followed their own ways and thinking. Some of the Jews acted like they were believing in God, however, they did not trust him. They believed in their ways and culture that had developed over the years. Others worshiped idols and followed other pagan ways.

By the time John, the son of Zachariah and Elizabeth, was born, many of the Israelites lived wickedly. When they went to the temple to offer sacrifices and worship God, they were not truly worshiping God. They wanted others to see them as good people. They would do good deeds to other people so that whoever saw them would praise them for their deeds. God was no longer the focus of their worship. They thought more about themselves and their good works than about God and his goodness to them.

What was wrong with these Jews' thinking? What had happened that God's chosen people were so wicked? The Jews thought they were good because they were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They thought they were not as sinful as other people. They excused their sinful behavior of trying to be right with God by their own ways. They needed to admit that all of their sins were against God. They needed to admit that they were sinners without a way to save themselves. They needed God's

mercy and grace shown to them. Otherwise they would die in their sinful state. Unfortunately, most of the Jews thought their ancestry was enough to clear them of their guilt for having sinned against God.

God saw the spiritually destitute condition of the Jews. They were blind to their own spiritual needs. They did not recognize their sinfulness and their need to be saved from their sins. What would God do to draw their attention to their wickedness? What would God do to make them realize that they were not in a right relationship with him?

God sent John, the son of Zachariah and Elizabeth, to preach to the Jews about their spiritual neediness and need for God. John began to preach to the Jews. He said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” John meant that the Jews should change their thinking about themselves. He wanted them to quit thinking about how good they were. He wanted them to know that they were not better than other people. The purpose of John’s preaching was to cause the Jews to change their thinking about God and themselves. They needed to quit justifying themselves and thinking that they were innately good because they descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They needed to believe God, admit that they needed God to save them, and quit sinning against God.

Let’s think about the way you plant your gardens. What do you do before you plant your garden. First you prepare the soil. Why do you first prepare the soil? You know that if the soil is not prepared, the crops you plant will not grow well and weeds will overtake them. If the ground is not ready for planting, good seeds will go to waste. Little fruit will be borne. In the same way, John was sent by God to prepare the way for the coming Deliverer. His message was to cause the Jews to think about their destitute spiritual condition. His message was to awaken them to the fact that they needed to turn from their own ways and believe in God’s ways.

John was not a rich man. He did not wear fancy clothes or eat the best foods. He was a very common man who wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. John kept preaching to the Jews and many of them believed his message. They were convicted of their sinfulness. They admitted that they were sinful and needed God’s mercy, grace and they needed God to forgive their sins. These Jews who received John’s message believed in God’s promise about the coming Deliverer. They wanted to be forgiven of their sins.

The Jews who believed John’s message were baptized by him in the Jordan River. Why did John baptize them. When John baptized them, they were submerged in the Jordan River to publicly show they agreed with John’s message. They no longer trusted in themselves; their faith and trust was in God. They publicly admitted that they were helpless sinners and needed God’s mercy and grace in order to be forgiven of their sins.

Let's talk about baptism: Did baptism save those whom John had baptized? Were their sins washed away by the water of the Jordan River when they were submerged? The act of baptism does not save people from sin's penalty. The penalty for sin is death. Being baptized by John was the way the Jews showed their agreement with John's message. They believed his message and truly desired God to save them from the penalty of their sins. Now they were spiritually prepared to receive the coming Deliverer's message and ministry to them. As for the water used to baptize people, it cannot cleanse anyone from their sins. It is merely water.

The Scribes and Pharisees heard John's preaching. They understood his message. Do you think they welcomed his message? Did they repent from their ways and only believe in God and his way? Did they agree with John that they were sinners in need of God's mercy, grace and forgiveness of sins?

Listen to this: The Scribes and Pharisees were proud people who thought, "We are descendants of Abraham. That makes us right with God. We do not need to repent, we are already good." The Scribes and Pharisees were deceived by their high and lofty view of themselves. They needed to admit that they were sinners and needed God's mercy and grace shown to them. Otherwise they would die in their sins and go to the awful never-ending fire of punishment. God wanted the Scribes and Pharisees to turn away from their proud self-righteousness and believe in him.

One day, Jesus came to the Jordan River where John was baptizing people. Jesus asked John to baptize him. John did not want to baptize Jesus because he knew that Jesus was greater than he. Jesus insisted that John baptize him because he wanted everyone to know that he fully agreed with John's message. John, though he was a great prophet, submitted to Jesus' request and baptized him. When Jesus came out of the water, God's Holy Spirit came upon him and empowered him for his work. The Holy Spirit guided and directed Jesus for all of his ministry.

Let's talk about Jesus's baptism: Did Jesus need to be baptized? Did he need to turn away from wrong thinking like the other Jews? No, Jesus did not need to be baptized. Jesus was perfect in every way. He had never sinned. Jesus wanted to be baptized in order to publicly demonstrate his agreement with John's message to the Jews. Jesus wanted all of the Jews whether of great or little importance to repent of their sins and believe in God alone.

3. John Identified Jesus

The following day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is coming after me but he is much greater than I am. He existed long before me." John recognized that Jesus, the promised Messiah, was greater than he. John was not jealous that Jesus was greater than he. No, he knew that God was fulfilling his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through Jesus, the promised Deliverer.

Let's think about this: Why did John call Jesus the Lamb of God? Jesus was not an animal was he? Of course not. Jesus was the promised descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that the Jews had anticipated for many years.

The way God wanted the Israelites to show that they truly believed in him was to sacrifice an animal; sheep, goats, or cattle, as an offering to him. The sinner who desired God's mercy and grace would bring an animal to the priest in the temple. The sinner placed his hand upon the animal's head signifying that he admitted that he deserved to die for his sins. The animal, which had committed no sin, was sacrificed. It died. Its death was in the place of the death of the person who deserved to die. The person who sacrificed the animal lived even though he deserved to die whereas the animal which had not sinned against God died. Substitution was God's way of making it possible for a sinner to be forgiven of his sins. That means instead of the guilty sinner dying for his sins, an animal was sacrificed according to God's prescription in his place to pay for his sins. Sacrificing the substitute pointed forward to a greater sacrifice which would someday be offered to God for the salvation of mankind.

John called Jesus the Lamb of God because he knew that Jesus came to save people from their sins. The shed blood and death of the animals sacrificed to God covered the sins of the people who offered them to God. It covered their sins because they trusted God to save them. But, the blood of animals cannot fully pay for sins. The full payment would be through the Deliverer. That is why John called Jesus the Lamb of God.

4. **Jesus Tempted by Satan**

After Jesus was baptized by John, the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the wilderness to be tested by the devil, Satan. Satan, the enemy of God, had successfully tempted and deceived Eve and Adam to disobey God's command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan hates God so he decided to tempt Jesus, the Son of God, to sin against God. Satan hates God and he hated Jesus too. His goal was to tempt Jesus and induce him to obey him and disobey God. Satan got Adam and Eve to obey him and he desperately wanted Jesus to obey him and sin against God. Do you think Satan could succeed with his wicked plan? Could he get Jesus to rebel against God and obey him?

Listen very carefully to this story: Satan devised a wicked scheme with the hopes of deceiving the Deliverer. Scheming Satan wanted to get Jesus, the Deliverer to sin against God. He carefully waited until the opportune time to tempt Jesus to sin. He desperately wanted to rule over Jesus and defeat God's plan for Jesus, the Deliverer.

Jesus had been fasting in the wilderness forty days and nights when Satan tried to lure him to sin with his wicked scheme. After fasting for forty days and nights, Jesus became very hungry. Crafty Satan came

to him with his first temptation and said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” Satan hoped Jesus would listen to his faulty and tricky temptation.

Jesus heard Satan’s temptation. Did Jesus have the power to turn stones into bread? Yes, he did. But, he was not even attracted to Satan’s trick. Instead, Jesus replied, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’” Jesus did not need to prove anything. He was God’s Son and would not even consider Satan’s temptation. Jesus was sent by God for a specific purpose, to be the Deliverer for all people. He did not come to listen to Satan or to turn stones into bread.

Jesus’ answer teaches us that knowing the Word of God is more important than filling our stomachs with food. It is more important to be here in this meeting and to learn about God than to be eating more food. Even though food is important for keeping us alive, food does not last forever. The Word of God lasts forever. It teaches us about God and how we can be reconciled to God by having our sins forgiven. The most important thing you can do is to believe and obey the Word of God.

Satan was not pleased that Jesus refused to obey him. Jesus had defeated his clever scheme. So Satan tried to trick Jesus into obeying him another way. Satan took Jesus to the highest point in the temple and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! The Scriptures say, ‘He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’”

This time Satan was very, very clever when he tempted Jesus to sin. When he urged him to jump from the high point of the temple, he quoted some Scripture to urge Jesus to obey him. By quoting Scripture, Satan wanted his temptation to appear to be truth. He wanted Jesus to think that obeying him would be according to what is written in Scripture. If he could successfully distract Jesus, then Jesus would sin against God.

Again, Jesus was not attracted to Satan’s deception. Right away he said to Satan, “It is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Jesus stood firm on the Word of God and rejected Satan’s sly, deceptive temptation. There was no way that he would follow it or succumb to the trickery and lies of Satan. Jesus came for a specific purpose and he could not be side-tracked by Satan’s temptations. After all, he was God in a human body.

Satan, the enemy of God, saw that he was unsuccessful. Jesus was not attracted to his clever temptation. Jesus would not obey him and sin against God. Did Satan give up? Now, he tempted him again because he wanted Jesus to sin against God. This time Satan took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their riches and glory. Then he said, “Fall down and worship me and I will give you all of these things.” “Surely,” Satan thought, “this temptation is so powerful that Jesus cannot resist it.” Satan desperately wanted Jesus to sin.

But Jesus was not attracted to Satan’s clever temptation. Jesus said to Satan, “You get out of here, Satan! It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” Jesus commanded

Satan to leave and he left. Satan could not stay there in his presence because the authoritative command of Jesus, the Deliverer, overpowered him and compelled him to leave at once.

Satan, powerful and deceptive as he was, was no match for the holiness and the awesome power of Jesus. He had to leave the presence of Jesus immediately. He could do nothing other than to obey Jesus whom he wanted to trick into obeying him. Then God's faithful angels came and began to minister to Jesus. God saw everything that had happened to Jesus and sent his angels to minister to Jesus at that time. Jesus, the promised Deliverer and Son of God, did not waver one bit. Not one of Satan's temptations attracted him in the least bit. Jesus was God in a human body and he could not be lured by any trick of Satan!

Jesus defeated Satan by not obeying the temptations. He was God in a human body whom Satan wanted to destroy. Satan successfully tempted and deceived Eve and Adam to choose to obey his crafty lies. In the same way, Satan hoped to get Jesus to obey him. If Jesus would have obeyed Satan, then all hopes for people to be forgiven of their sins would be destroyed. But Jesus was not deceived. He was God in a human body and could not deny himself. He could not be attracted to follow the wicked temptations of Satan. Jesus truly stood true to the reason and purpose for his coming. He came to be the Deliverer and make it possible for people to have their sins forgiven. Jesus won over Satan because he is God!

5. Jesus Began His Ministry

John had preached to the Jews that they needed to turn from their sinful ways and believe in God. He told them that they needed to follow God's instructions and worship him. Some of the Jews listened to John's message and turned away from their wicked living. The Scribes and Pharisees, however, did not submit to John's message. They believed that they were good enough for God. They believed that God looked favorably upon them because they were descendants of Abraham. John's preaching exposed the Jews' wrong thinking and helped to get the people ready for Jesus' ministry.

After Jesus had victory over Satan, he began his ministry to the Israelites. Jesus, the Deliverer, began to proclaim good news to everyone saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. You must repent and believe in the gospel."

Notice the message which Jesus preached was like John's. Jesus kept exhorting people to turn from their wickedness and to believe in God. He wanted them to admit that they were sinners who deserved death for their sins. He wanted them to believe the good news that he came to tell them. He wanted them to be reconciled to God and forgiven of their sins. He did not want them to die in their sins and go to the place of the never-ending fire of punishment.

Let's think about some stories you already know. Abel was a man who believed in God. He trusted God

and was accepted by God. Abel's brother Cain was not accepted by God because he did not believe in God. Noah and his family were saved from destruction by the flood because they believed in God. Everyone else outside of the ark perished in the flood waters because they did not believe in God. They just followed their own ways. Caleb and Joshua believed in God and were allowed to enter the land of Canaan. The other ten spies also saw the goodness of the land of Canaan but they did not trust God to help them possess it. These ten unbelieving spies died in the wilderness. On the other hand, Caleb and Joshua entered the promised land of Canaan and lived in it.

Think about it. There are two ways for you to respond to God. You can believe and trust in God or you can reject God like Cain and Pharaoh did. God wants all of you to choose to believe in him and to submit to him. He wants you to believe in the Deliverer and to trust him. He wants to see you saved from the guilt and penalty of your sins. No one here is able to save himself, only God can provide a way of salvation.

One day, as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw some men who were casting their net in the sea. "Follow Me," said Jesus. "I will make you become fishers of men." Right away two brothers, Simon and Andrew, began to follow Jesus. A bit later, Jesus saw James and John mending their nets in a boat. He called them to follow him and they too left what they were doing and followed him.

Why did Jesus call these men to follow him? Jesus wanted them follow him as he went about and interacted with people. He wanted them to learn many truths from him and to be equipped to teach others about God. If these men followed him and submitted to his teaching and training, they would be able to teach others so they too would become true believers in God.

The men who Jesus called to follow him are called disciples. That means they were special persons who learned truth and principles useful for helping others believe in God. Jesus wanted the disciples to be equipped for the work of being fishers of men. That means he wanted them to know how to work among spiritually needy people to lead to them to believe in God and in himself.

6. Jesus Taught in the Synagogue

On the Sabbath day, the last day of the week, the Jews gathered in a building called the synagogue to listen to the reading of God's Word. Synagogues were in many towns throughout the land which made it convenient for them to go to a synagogue on the Sabbath Day. The custom was for the religious teachers to read from the writings of Moses and the prophets to the people in the synagogue. The one reading the scroll of the writings stood as he read the Scriptures. After the reading was finished, he sat down to explain and discuss what it meant.

Whenever the Jews observed the important feasts that God had instructed Moses about, they went to the temple in Jerusalem to observe them.

One Sabbath day Jesus went to the synagogue in Capernaum. He entered the synagogue and began to teach all who were there. As they listened to Jesus' teaching, they were amazed because he taught them as one having authority. "This man really knows what he is teaching us", they thought. Why did they think these thoughts as Jesus taught them? It was because Jesus' teaching was according to the Scripture. He did not teach them with empty, meaningless teachings like the scribes did. He knew what the Scriptures meant and explained the meanings for them. As for the scribes, they did not truly follow God. They mixed their own interpretations of the Scriptures with Scripture and taught it to the people as though it was truth.

While Jesus was clearly teaching on the meaning of the Scriptures in the synagogue, a man with an evil spirit, who was in the synagogue, began shouting. "Jesus of Nazareth, what do you and I have to do with each other? Did you come to destroy us? I know who You are. You are the Holy One of God!"

Right away Jesus rebuked the evil spirit and said, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" The evil spirit heard Jesus' rebuke and caused the man to convulse. Then he shouted and came out of the man. Right away the man was normal just like other people. He was no longer possessed by an evil spirit. Everyone in the synagogue was amazed and filled with wonder. "Who is this man?" they thought. "He taught us with authority, he commands the evil spirits and they obey him; who is he?" The news about what happened in the synagogue spread very fast throughout the region of Galilee and soon many people heard about Jesus.

Let's talk about Jesus' power over evil spirits. Jesus had power over the evil spirits because he is God. He created all the angels including Lucifer. When Lucifer and the angels who followed him rebelled against God, they became evil and the enemy of God. When Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, the evil spirit in the man knew who Jesus was. At one time he was a perfect angel but he sinned against God by following Lucifer's rebellion. From the time of Lucifer's rebellion to this present time, Satan and all the fallen angels or demons have fought against God. They hate God and want to usurp his sovereign position. However, they know that God cannot be overthrown because no power is equal to or greater than he. They are fighting against God in vain.

7. Jesus Healed Many Sick People

After Jesus cast out the evil spirit from the man in the synagogue in Galilee, he left the synagogue with two of his disciples, James and John. Earlier Jesus had chosen them to be his followers. The three of them went to Simon and Andrew's home. They were also Jesus' disciples. At Simon's home, his mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. Right away they told Jesus about her sickness and fever. So Jesus went to her bedside, took her by the hand, and helped her sit up. Then the fever left her. Just like that, the fever was gone because he had healed her. Now that she was healed, she was well again and she prepared a meal for them.

During the evening many sick and demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus for healing. Others gathered around to watch because they had never seen anyone who had power like his over illnesses and demon-possessed people. Jesus was so caring and kind to people and he helped them with their ailments. He healed many people who were sick with various diseases, and he cast out many demons. How was it possible for Jesus to do all of these things? Jesus could do all of these miracles because he is God.

Jesus cared for the people and was merciful to them. He exercised his divine power and healed many of the Jews who were sick. He exercised his power to cast out evil spirits because he loved the people. He was not obligated to them in any way. He loved people and wanted people to believe in him. Everyone who saw his miracles knew that he was a special kind of person. However, at this time in his ministry, people were just beginning to know him. They did not fully understand that he was the promised Deliverer.

Jesus had compassion for the needy people around him. He loved them and deeply cared for them. The people he healed or set free from the control of evil spirits knew that he cared for them. As you listen to this story, do you think Jesus cares for you? Jesus still cares for people. He loved you and cares for you. He wants all people to believe in him so that they can be set free from the power, guilt and penalty of sin. Satan and sin still control the lives of many people. It is important to believe God and to believe in Jesus. He is the one God promised to send to be our Deliverer.

Jesus continued to minister to the Jews. He taught them and healed many sick persons. One day, a man with leprosy came to Jesus and knelt in front him. He begged Jesus to heal him and to make him clean again. Leprosy was a dreaded contagious disease that was incurable. No medicine could cure it. The Jews who had leprosy had to stay away from everyone else in a separate place outside of the town. They could not be around other people nor could they eat with them. It was a horrible, dreaded, incurable disease. Do you think Jesus had the power to heal the leper?

Jesus heard the leprous man's plea for help and he had much compassion for him. Jesus love him even though everyone else avoided him. He touched the leprous man and said, "Be healed!" Right away the leprosy was gone! The leprous man was completely healed. Through the power of his spoken word, Jesus healed the man and caused the leprosy to be gone. The man's body was restored to normal health in a few seconds time. There was no trace of leprosy on his body! What had happened? Jesus' power healed him of an incurable disease. He was healed completely and now had normal, healthy skin. This miracle teaches us about the awesome power of God through Jesus and the great compassion he had for people. Truly, Jesus was an extraordinary person in every way.

Listen to this: Jesus, the Deliverer, still has compassion for people and is able to help people. He wants everyone to believe in him. He wants people to believe that he alone is the true Deliverer. There is no other Deliverer who can help us with our sin problem. Just as the man with leprosy could not heal himself, so too sinners cannot save themselves from sin's penalty. Just as the leper needed Jesus to heal

him, so too do sinners need Jesus to save them from sin's penalty. There is no other Deliverer who can save people from the guilt and penalty of their sins.

God wants everyone to believe in Jesus, the true Deliverer. It is important to have faith in God and Jesus. Think about this: Suppose the leper would have walked up to Jesus and said, "I've heard about your greatness but I don't believe in you. You can't heal me." Would Jesus have healed that man? No, he would not have healed him because of his unbelief.

Let's think about these questions: Do you think God will save people from their sins if they do not believe in him? Do you think Jesus, the Deliverer will save people if they do not believe in him?

It is important to believe God and to trust Jesus, the true Deliverer. If people do not believe God, if they do not believe Jesus, then they will die in their sins and go to the place of the never-ending fire of punishment. God wants you to have faith in him so that you can be saved from your sins. Please come to the meetings and learn more about God and Jesus, the Deliverer.

8. **After the Meeting**

Setting: After the meeting was over, the villagers were alive with excitement. None had ever heard of a person so special as Jesus. They continued to talk about Jesus after Teacher had gone home.

Raymond: We are learning some incredible things about the Deliverer. We must believe all that we hear because he is very special. None of our leaders or forefathers have ever been able to do what he did among the Jews.

Greg: God sent John with a message of repentance for the Jews to prepare them to receive Jesus as the true Deliverer. This tells me God had a true concern and love for his chosen people. He wanted them to believe in the Deliverer.

Raymond: John announced that Jesus is the lamb of God. Think about what that means! I think I know but I'm still trying to fully understand it. Lambs and animals were sacrificed on the altar by the tabernacle and at the temple. They sacrificed them because they admitted that they were sinners and deserved death. Now we are hearing about the Lamb of God and we must not miss what that means. We need to keep listening about the work of Jesus, the Deliverer.

Greg: Did you hear how Satan hates Jesus? He tempted him to sin because he hates God, Jesus, and people. That means he hates us. He is our real enemy. We must not follow his evil temptations because he only wants harm to come to us.

Raymond: When Satan tempted Jesus with all the world's wealth, I was nervous. If Jesus had been like

all of us here, we would have bowed down to Satan and worshiped him just to get money, power and things. Jesus did not listen to Satan's enticing talk. He remained true to his heavenly father, God.

Greg: That's right. Jesus wasn't attracted to all of those earthly things because he is God. He is holy and free from sin. He created everything so why would he want to serve Satan for things he already ultimately owns?

Raymond: You are right. Satan's temptations were no attraction to Jesus. He is God and he remained faithful to his true Father. He could not sin against himself because he is holy, he is God.

Greg: When Jesus began to teach in the synagogues, the Jews could tell that he was speaking the truth. He knew the Scriptures and the meaning of the Scriptures. His words were not empty words like those of the Scribes and teachers.

Raymond: Jesus knew how to explain the Scriptures because he is God and the Scriptures are from him and about him. When we hear the Bible stories, we are convicted that we are hearing truth. We know the Bible stories are true. They have so much meaning for us.

Greg: Jesus truly was a great person as he lived among the Jews. Who among us has ever known someone who by spoken commands had power over evil spirits? Our healers cannot do that. Their power is not real. Jesus had power over the evil spirits and Satan. He still has power over them.

Raymond: I think Satan is angry that Teacher is teaching us about Jesus who is infinitely greater than he. As for me, I believe all that we are being taught about Jesus, our Deliverer. I know that our old ways cannot save us. I believe that Jesus, our true Deliverer, will make it possible for us to be saved from the penalty of our sins.

Greg: Jesus loved the Jews and had a great compassion for them. Does he not also love us? Yes, he does and I am so happy to learn about him. I believe he will save me from the penalty of all my sins. That is what I am anticipating.

9. **Review of the Lesson's Themes**

God is faithful: He continued to work in history so that the Jews would be prepared by John's preaching for the ministry of Christ.

God communicates with man: God had John preach to the Jews that they needed to repent, to change their thinking about him and themselves, and believe in God and turn from wickedness and evil ways.

John's message to the Jews that they needed to repent was clear and understood by them. He also warned of the dangers of refusing to repent.

Through John's testimony, God made it plain that Jesus Christ is God. And, he clearly identified that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God and the promised Deliverer.

Man can only come to God in God's way: This point is evident from the content of John's preaching. Also, that faith is required. People must believe in God for salvation.

God is holy: Jesus obeyed God instead of listening to Satan's temptations. Being God in the flesh, he was **not attracted** to doing a sinful deed by obeying Satan. Make it plain that in history Jesus was not vacillating in his mind about how he should respond to Satan's temptation.

God expects obedience: Just as Jesus obeyed God perfectly, so too God expects perfect obedience from people. It is required of people to believe and obey God, therefore, also to believe in and obey Jesus Christ's teachings. It is not optional.

Jesus, God in a human body, loved and cared for people: The ministry of Jesus among the Israelites demonstrates his compassion for people. Many were healed, others were delivered from demonic possession and control. Ultimately, he was concerned about their spiritual well-being.

God is sovereign, supreme and all-powerful: Jesus' power over the demons clearly shows that he, God in a human body, is the supreme power. No power or authority is greater than his.

10. Practice Telling the Bible Stories

At the end of this lesson, practice telling the story you have just heard to each other. Everyone needs to practice teaching Bible lessons by telling the stories. Does the meaning of the stories grip your heart? Tell the stories with excitement! Tell them in a culturally appropriate way that exudes your belief and confidence in them.

Practice telling the stories of this lesson in pairs. One pair should teach one of the stories in the lesson following this lesson's Table of Contents for divisions in the lessons.

The Table of Contents at the beginning of the lesson lists the stories for each lesson. Some of the stories or sections of a story are short so they should be combined with another section to make the exercise of practicing to teach by using stories a profitable exercise.

When you are teaching a lesson by telling the story, use culturally appropriate questions and illustrations to keep the story interesting and to make the people think about the lesson's meanings. Be prepared to engage the audience with questions which are crafted to bring out how well they understand the meaning of the story. Emphasize the important points when telling the stories.

Use visual aids or objects used in the lesson when you teach a story. Show the pictures at the right time in the story. When illustrations are used, be sure to bring them to a right and logical conclusion. If you do not make the right conclusions through telling the story, people will likely guess what it means and they could easily come to a wrong conclusion.

After you have practiced telling stories to each other, talk about ways to improve your story-telling ability. Be open to critique and be kind to each other as you work together to help each other become master story-tellers. The goal of teaching God's Word via telling Bible stories is not to merely impress your peers; it is the salvation of spiritually lost people.

As you tell the stories ascertain how well you present the stories and the themes. Does your teaching tend to highlight man or does it rightfully focus on God working in history? Do you tell the story so that God is highlighted? Or is man, in a subtle way, the main actor in the story? You need to make sure that the role of God in these stories is the main focus.

11. Teaching Tips for Teachers

Lesson Points #3-4:

The story of John's ministry is significant. Make sure that you emphasize that the purpose of John's

message was to cause people to think differently about God, themselves, and how they lived.

Lesson Points #5:

In this section of the lesson, Satan came to Jesus and tempted him to sin. Emphasize that Jesus was not in the least bit attracted to sin against God. Jesus is holy. In history, when he was living on this earth, he was holy and today remains holy. Emphasize that Jesus, God in the flesh, experienced real hunger but he was not moved one bit to obey Satan's command. Emphasize that in history Jesus, who was God in the flesh, did not lust for anything that Satan offered him. Jesus stood firmly with God and truth. Point out that Satan had to go, to leave Jesus, when Jesus commanded him to do so. Stress that Satan is no match for the authority and power of Jesus.

Lesson Points #6-8:

The stories about Jesus' ministry in these sections clearly show that he was not just another human being. There was something unique about him.

Jesus love and compassion for people showed clearly that he was unique. The Jewish religious leaders at that time were proud, lofty, and looked down upon ordinary people. In contrast, Jesus interacted with common people and people who had physical needs and ailments. He healed many people of their sicknesses using his supernatural power and authority over the natural world.

Jesus proved that he was divine by exercising authority over the demons. To everyone who witnessed demons being exorcized, it was evident that he was a person with supernatural power and authority. Jesus used his supernatural power and authority over the demons to prove to people that he was the supreme power and authority. He wanted people to know that the miracles he performed proved that he was God. Why? Because he wanted them to believe in him so that they would be saved from the guilt and penalty of their sin.

12. To the Honorable Teacher

If any part of this lesson is misunderstood, go over that part again. Play that part of the lesson again. Summarize that part briefly for the students then play that part a second time. Then ask questions to ascertain whether or not this part of the lesson is now understood correctly.

Be prepared to use proper illustrations to clarify a given lesson point. Sometimes it is helpful to use a picture and talk about what is portrayed in the picture as you teach.

Stress to the students that the important themes of this lesson must be understood before proceeding to the next lesson.

Simple drama can be useful to make a point clearer in the people's minds. Before using drama, be sure that it is culturally appropriate to do so. If people are not accustomed to understanding simple drama, it may be best to not use it.