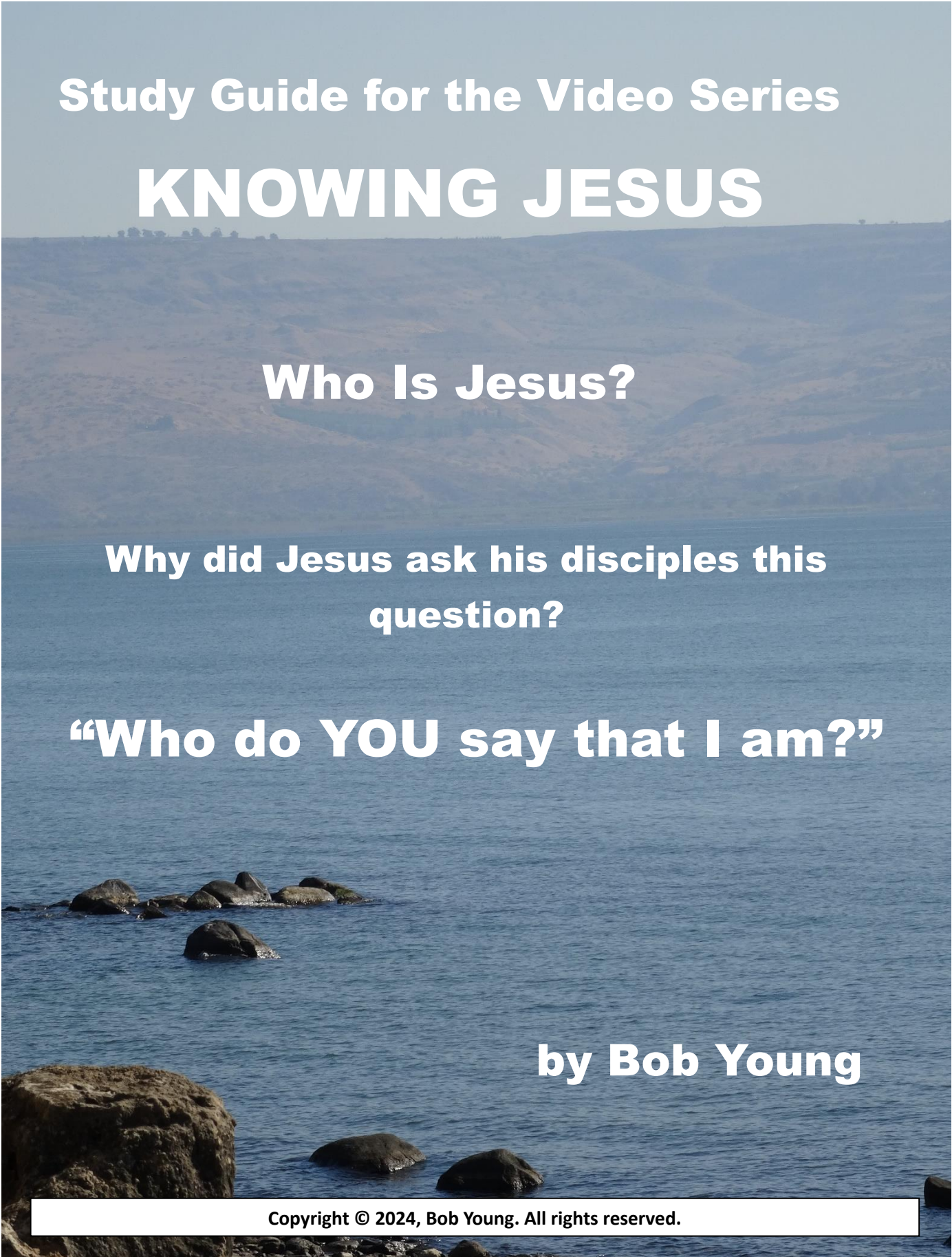




Study Guide for the Video Series

KNOWING JESUS

Who Is Jesus?

**Why did Jesus ask his disciples this
question?**

“Who do YOU say that I am?”

by Bob Young

Introduction

How to Use the Video Series and Study Guide

For individual study, the best approach is to watch first the video without consulting the study guide. (You may do this with or without using your Bible, as you prefer.) Then watch the video again, using the questions to guide your study and to think about personal applications.

In a local church setting, the videos lend themselves to a variety of options.

In the assembly, the video may be used in conjunction with the sermon, or in place of the sermon with a few words of introduction and conclusion. Some churches distribute the study guide questions in advance. Other churches use the questions for small group discussions during the week.

In a class setting, the video can be watched in class with discussion of the questions to follow. Using this option, the video series lasts ten weeks. Alternatively, the class can watch the video one week and discuss the video the following week. The study will then last twenty weeks.

In a small group setting, the same options exist as in the class setting.

The video series serves well as a study leading up to Easter, beginning with the birth of Christ and concluding ten weeks later with the resurrection. If the videos are accompanied by a sermon or class focused on the Bible texts presented in the video, the series could extend to twenty weeks, beginning in December and concluding at Easter. This is an excellent way to help people hear the story of Jesus afresh.

The pre-release video and introductory video can be used as desired to build interest in the series, or they can be viewed to introduce the study series.

Church leaders, class teachers, and small group leaders may inquire about the Leaders Guide, designed to help those who lead the video discussions as well as those who want to develop lessons that correspond to the videos.

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A Lifelong Pursuit of Knowing Jesus

Pre-Release Video

In this video, you meet your hosts for the study series as they share their journey toward Jesus.

Questions for consideration as you view this video, or for group discussion after viewing

- Have your past studies and readings of the gospels focused more on the what, the why, or the who?
- As you think about who Jesus says he is, why does getting the answer right matter?
- How would you describe what Jesus says about who he is?
- What value can you see in seeking to integrate the four Gospels into a single “story of Jesus?”

Bob Young, D. Min., has spent his life seeking to know, understand, and share the gospel of Jesus. Bob brings 50 plus years of church ministry to this project, complemented by a dozen years in the academic arena, primarily as a Bible professor. More recently, he has devoted his retirement years to mission work in Latin America.

Larry Bowles is a retired firefighter who now ministers to Muslim refugees. The question of Jesus’ identity is of supreme importance in his ministry and mission work.

“Who do YOU say that I am?”

Introductory Video

In this video, you begin to hear the hearts of your hosts as they share their journey toward Jesus.

Questions for consideration as you view the video, or for group discussion after viewing

- How would you respond to the question, who do you say Jesus is? What is the importance of this question?
- What is the essence of Jesus – what he did, what he does, what he will do?
- What is a selective biography? What is the difference between studying the stories about Jesus and the story?
- Have your past studies focused on stories about Jesus or understanding the person of Jesus?
- Talk about information transfer and transformation.
- What is the purpose of the gospel accounts?
- On a scale of 1-10, how ready are you to experience a change of heart?
- Discuss the goals of the series: grasp the uniqueness of Jesus, understand what it means to follow Jesus, understand teachings and application, understand Jesus’ purpose and mission, live transformed lives.
- What is the difference between following Jesus and asking Jesus to follow us?

Lesson One: God Comes Among Us

This video covers Old Testament backgrounds and the birth and childhood of Jesus.

Mark 1:1, John 1, Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2

Questions for consideration as you view the video, or for group discussion after viewing

- What does it mean that the gospel is the fulfillment of all that had been written about Jesus?
- How would you respond to the claim that “Jesus is God in the flesh?”
- How could that claim change your life?
- How often have you been involved in Bible studies that lost sight of or failed to focus on who Jesus is? On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the church’s focus on Jesus’ identity?
- What parts of the Nativity story call attention to Jesus’ divine nature?
- What does it mean that the gospels are two-level documents? That is, how do they read both vertically and horizontally?
- Why do people struggle to see and hear?
- Compare the ways the four gospel writers begin their gospels.
- Why are Old Testament foundations and prophecies important for understanding the story of Jesus?
- Why is the birth of John the Baptist essential for understanding the coming of Jesus?
- How do the first chapters of the Gospels show that God is at work in Jesus’ coming?
- Discuss the kingdom themes that occur in today’s Bible texts.
- What is the difference between “God doing miracles through man” and “God doing miracles in flesh?”

God comes among us; God is at work!

Lesson Two: The Heart of the Gospel

This video covers the beginning of Jesus' ministry until the choosing of the Twelve. Jesus bursts on the scene in first century Judaism as a renewal of hope and the fulfillment of God's promise.

Matthew 3-4, Mark 1-3, John 1-5, Luke 3-6

Questions for consideration as you view the video, or for group discussion after viewing

- Why is knowing who Jesus is so important to faithful discipleship?
- How would you describe your understanding of Jesus' identity before beginning this study?
- Spend some time studying or discussing the timeline of the gospels. What is your reaction to the idea that the gospel is the story of Jesus' death and resurrection?
- Keep in mind and discuss briefly the importance of understanding the "who, what, when, where, and why."
- Why is it important that John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus before Jesus' baptism?
- Jesus breaks on the scene with a fresh breath of hope! Why the kingdom theme important in the introduction to the gospels?
- What purposes are suggested for the baptism and temptation of Jesus?
- Why did some of the Jews struggle to recognize Jesus?
- What is the importance that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all present at the baptism of Jesus?
- Jesus is revealed, his fame spreads rapidly, the people were astonished. How much time is there between the beginning of Jesus' ministry and the choosing of the Twelve?
- Analyze and talk about the three kinds of stories: identity stories, follower stories, and conflict stories.
- List as many descriptions as you can of Jesus' identity from the first two lessons?
- Why did Jesus begin his ministry among the Jews?
- Study and discuss some of conflict stories in this first part of Jesus' ministry.
- What do today's texts have to do with Jesus' identity?

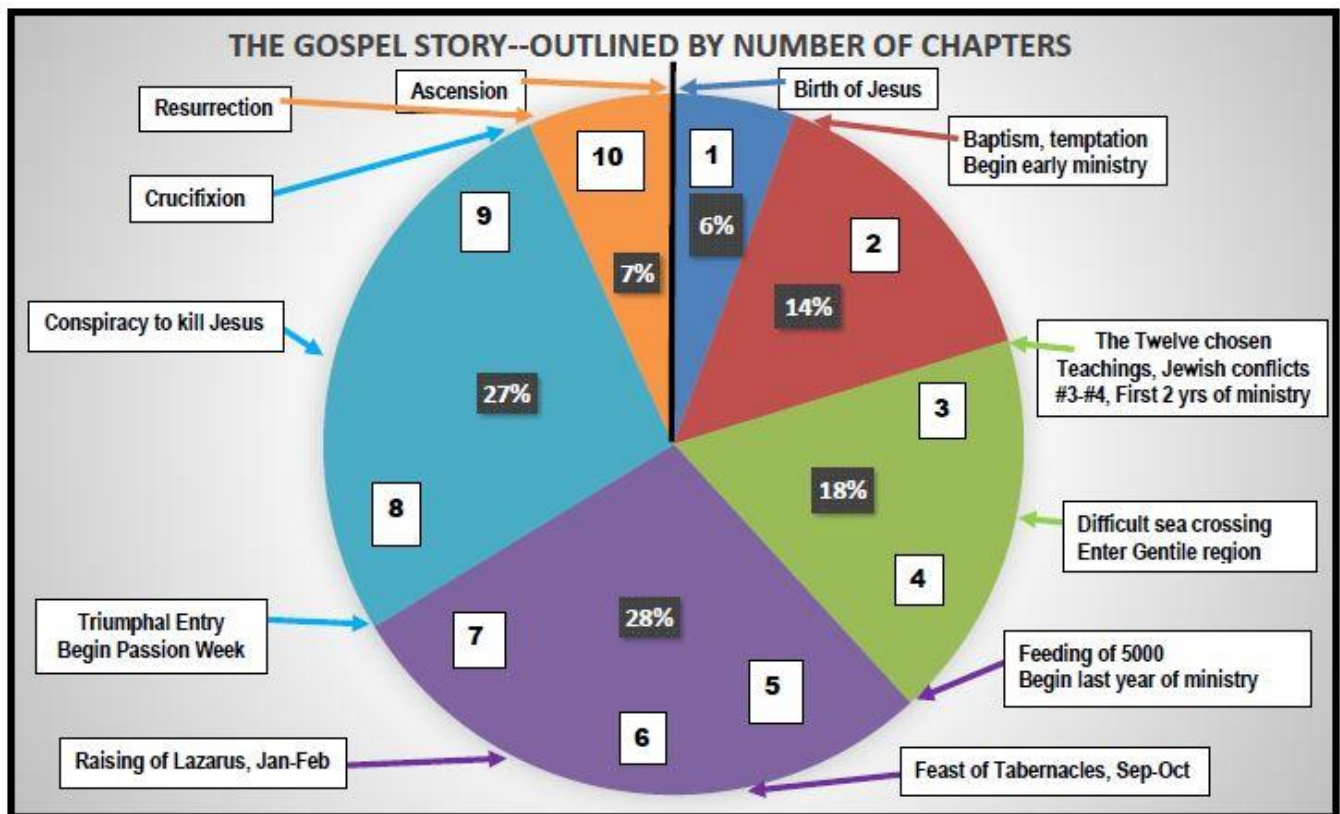
Lesson Three: “Who is this?”

This video tells the story of Jesus’ ministry from the choosing of the Twelve to the fearful sea crossing.

Matthew 4-8, Mark 3-4, Luke 6-8

Questions for consideration as you view the video, or for group discussion after viewing

- How do Old Testament Messianic prophecies help us understand Jesus’ identity?
- At this point in your spiritual journey, who do you say that Jesus is? Consider and pray about your response, or the responses of the group.
- What is your reaction to the idea that almost two-thirds of the gospels are devoted to the last year of Jesus’ life, including his death and resurrection? (see chart below)
- In a time of renewed Jewish hope, why do Jesus’ teachings (Sermon on the Mount and his parables) lead to so many confrontations with the Jewish leaders?
- What are some of the ways we lose sight of the purpose of Christ in our studies of the gospels?
- How were Jesus’ teachings different? (Sermon on the Mount, John’s disciples, Simon the Pharisee)
- Why is the sea crossing important? How is the sea crossing an identity story?



Lesson Four: Who Can Be a Follower?

This video looks beyond the question, “Who Can be a follower?” The more important question is, “Who will be a follower?” This video concludes the first two years of Jesus’ ministry, culminating with the feeding of the 5000.

Matthew 8-14, Mark 5-7, Luke 8-9, John 6

Questions for consideration as you view the video, or for group discussion after viewing

- How much have you considered context (storyline and plot) in your past studies of the stories about Jesus?
- How do you react to the fact that the first two years of Jesus’ ministry are told in barely over one-sixth of the gospel chapters? (see chart in Lesson Three)
- Is it possible to be a follower of Jesus if you do not know who Jesus is? Why or why not?
- What is the significance of Jesus entering Gentile territory and encountering a demon-possessed man?
- Why did unbelief persist as Jesus performed multiple miracles? In what way do miracles show Jesus’ authority?
- Why does focusing on the law cause people to miss the person of Jesus?
- How did God demonstrate his identity in today’s Bible readings? How does God demonstrate his identity today?
- How do you explain the continuing struggle of his disciples to understand Jesus’ identity? How do you explain that Jesus sent out those who were struggling with faith? How could that truth provide encouragement for you today?
- In what way is the feeding of the 5000 a climax to Jesus’ first two years of ministry?
- What is the relationship between fear and faith?
- Why did Jesus reject the desire of the people to make him a king?
- In your own life, how can you apply Jesus’ observation that they were following for the loaves and fishes? What is your motivation for following Jesus? Is Jesus enough for you?

Lesson Five: Who Can See?

This video covers the first half of the last year of Jesus' earthly ministry, from the Passover in our March-April to the Feast of Tabernacles in our September-October.

Matthew 15-18, Mark 7-9, Luke 9, John 6-8

Questions for consideration as you view the video, or for group discussion after viewing

- Describe the shift that occurs in the last year of Jesus' ministry.
- What is the importance of the Jewish festivals for organizing the last year of Jesus' ministry?
- In what sense is it true that the blind people in the stories in this section, and those who can see physically do not see?
- Describe the importance of the "bread of life" teachings in John 6. In what sense is Jesus the bread of life?
- Why did people quit following Jesus?
- How obvious has it been to you in the past that Jesus turns to the Gentiles during the last year of his ministry? Why do the Gentiles become more and more accepting of Jesus?
- In his confession of Jesus and the encounter that follows: What does Peter see? What does Peter not see?
- In the reading of John 7-8, which groups can see and which groups cannot see?
- What evidences could you point to that suggest that many Christians today do not see clearly?

Lesson Six: The Kingdom of Reversals

This video continues the study of the last year of Jesus' earthly ministry, highlighting his journey to Jerusalem where he will be crucified and raised, even as he predicts.

Matthew 19, Mark 10, Luke 9-17, John 9-11

Questions for consideration as you view the video, or for group discussion after viewing

- If Jesus desires true believers, would he include you? Why or why not?
- How hard would it be to follow Jesus if we faced intense opposition?
- Why does the "journey of Jesus to Jerusalem" for his crucifixion take most of a year?
- What does it mean that many of Jesus' teachings in this section are reversal stories? Give some examples of this type of teaching.
- Why did Jesus want to solicit a response at this stage in his ministry?
- How is the blind man account in John 9 a reversal story?
- Why does Jesus plainly reveal his identity to the blind man in John 9?
- What parallel lessons can you identify by comparing the three blind stories from the last year of Jesus' ministry? (Mark 8—the second touch, John 9—Feast of Dedication, Mark 10--Bartimaeus)
- Why is Jesus now clearly asserting his Deity?
- Why is it apparent that the Jewish leaders clearly understood Jesus' identity?
- What does it mean that the Bible reads us as opposed to us reading the Bible?
- Bringing Jesus' teachings to a focal point: how hard is it to count the cost? (Luke 14)
- What does it mean to deny self and take up a cross? How much would you give up to follow Jesus?
- Reread John 11 and the story of the raising of Lazarus. How does this story bring the ministry of Jesus to a climax?
- Consider or discuss the importance of a "public, undeniable" miracle. How did the raising of Lazarus force people to take sides?
- How would you now respond to the question, who do YOU say Jesus is?

Lesson Seven: The Kingdom of Shattered Expectations

This study concludes the last year of Jesus' ministry, just before the Triumphal Entry.

Matthew 19-20, Mark 10, Luke 18-19, John 11

Questions for consideration as you view the video, or for group discussion after viewing

- Consider or discuss how easy it is to get lost in the “what” and the “why” and to miss completely the “who.”
- As the Jesus story comes into focus, those who had hoped for a military Messiah lose hope, and those who were hopeless now find hope. What does this statement say to you personally about the process of faith development?
- How would you describe the tone of the teachings of Jesus in the last year of his ministry?
- What is the purpose of the contrast between the Samaritans and the Jews in this section?
- In what sense is the kingdom now “among us?” What subject did Jesus talk about the most during his ministry?
- Based on the video discussion, what is the purpose of the story of the rich young ruler? Can the rich young ruler see, or not?
- What does Peter teach us about motivation, “What will we get?”
- What does the request of James and John say to us today? In what sense is this story climactic?
- What parts of the Zacchaeus story serve capstone lessons to show clearly who Jesus is?
- Respond to the idea that “Zacchaeus wanted to see.”
- Consider or discuss how the teachings, the parables, the miracles have changed throughout the ministry of Jesus.

Lesson Eight: The King Has Arrived

This video covers the first part of the Passion Week, from the Triumphal Entry until the Last Supper.

Matthew 21-26, Mark 11-14, Luke 19-22, John 12

Questions for consideration as you view the video, or for group discussion after viewing

- How would you respond to the question, “What if Jesus is who he says he is?”
- Why do the gospel writers spend over one-fourth of their time in the last week of Jesus’ life before his death on the cross?
- How are you progressing toward the goal? [So that you may believe, so you may know Jesus, who Jesus is as Messiah, so you can have life]
- As you listen to this study, consider what parts of the story are most impressive to you. The Triumphal Entry, Jesus’ teachings and encounters, the plot to kill Jesus. Be prepared to discuss your answer.
- Why was the raising of Lazarus so powerful? Why did the Jewish leaders want to kill both Lazarus and Jesus?
- Listen for the Old Testament prophecies that are being fulfilled in the life of Jesus during the last week before his resurrection?
- Why were the disciples so slow to see the truth about Jesus and the kingdom?
- Why did many Jews not recognize Jesus as king while others did? Why did the Gentiles want to see Jesus?
- What is the difference between “religion” and “faith?”
- What lessons might Jesus be teaching with the withered fig tree?
- How do the three parables (two sons, landowner and tenants, wedding feast) and the three test questions (paying taxes, marriage and resurrection, Great Command) advance the conflict with the Jewish leaders?
- What conflicts do you see between Messianic prophecy and the Jewish religious system of the first century?
- What evidence is there in this study that Jesus is accomplishing the reason for his coming?

Lesson Nine: The King Is Killed

This video covers the second part of the Passion Week, from the Last Supper to the crucifixion.

Matthew 26 -27, Mark 14-15, Luke 22-23, John 13-19

Questions for consideration as you view the video, or for group discussion after viewing

- Think about or discuss the observation, “The real story is the story of the death and resurrection, with an extended introduction.” What do the gospels seek to say about Jesus?
- How is the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus designed to build faith?
- What would you want to say if you knew you were speaking your last words to a group of people you love?
- What causes a religious system to reach the point of denying the covenant that gave it birth?
- What dangers exist in separating the king from the kingdom?
- Has your past thinking about believing and knowing Jesus focused more on individual relationship or being part of a group of believers? What are the dangers and advantages of each approach?
- According to John 14-16, what is the function and message of the Holy Spirit to be when he comes?
- What does it mean to you to know Jesus?
- What descriptions of Jesus are most meaningful to you? Why?
- What was the message of the early church? Why was that message powerful?
- How do the events of the final week make certain that Jesus is the Son of God?
- How powerful are the accounts of the centurion and Joseph of Arimathea for you?

Lesson Ten: The King Is Risen!

This video covers the 40 days from the Resurrection to the Ascension. In Acts 1, Luke describes this time as forty days of speaking about the kingdom of God.

Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 23-24, John 20-21

Questions for consideration as you view the video, or for group discussion after viewing

- How is “the rest of the story” the capstone of the Jesus story?
- Which post-resurrection appearances of Jesus are most impressive for you? Why?
- Why are the Old Testament Messianic prophecies so powerful as evidence that declares that Jesus is the Son of God?
- Does knowing who Jesus is motivate you to share the Good News? Why or why not?
- Why and how are those who believe without seeing blessed?
- Does knowing Jesus motivate you to want to be with Jesus, as it did with Peter?
- Why is John, as an eyewitness, such a powerful account of the life of Jesus? What is the goal of telling the story of Jesus, as John describes it?
- Consider or discuss the idea that the resurrection is the best attested event in human history.
- If Jesus sent out those who doubted, what does that say to you about Jesus’ desire that we share the gospel today? How much comfort do you find in the idea that we do not go forth in our own strength?
- What does it mean to you to live by faith?
- Study or discuss the details of the outline of Jesus’ life, helping you know Jesus.

