

Faith Builder Series

THE THE GOSPEL GOSPEL OF JOHN



Life changing and impacting studies through the Gospel of John –
with the *soul* purpose of strengthening and building your faith and
trust in God!

John chapter 10

Ps Roger Spackman

Entire series of Bible Workshops freely available from

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I want to ask you a couple of questions as a way of introducing today's Bible Workshop – in regards to false teaching and false leaders –

...and to see how easy it *can be* for everyday people like you and me – to be led astray.

First – let's play a little game – to do with cats.

Let's say that we re-name a cat's tail to – say – a leg.

So if we call a cat's tail a leg, how many legs does a cat have?

It still only has four legs, no matter *what* you are told or taught!

Secondly, I relation to day's Bible workshop –

...does a false teacher or false prophet know they are false,

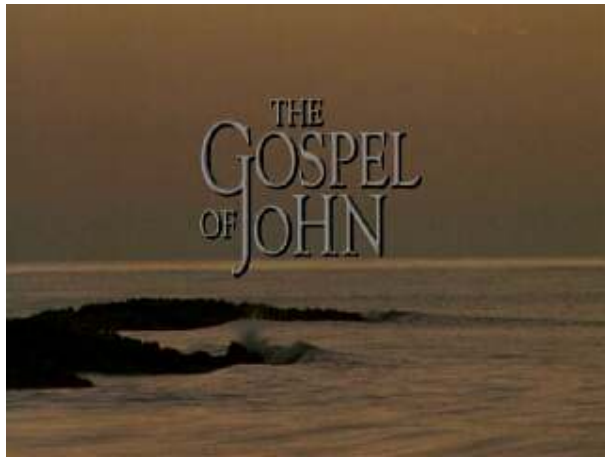
...or do they honestly believe they are real?

And - can a Christian believe something about the Bible – that while they believe it to be true – is actually false?

So – the final introduction question, In John 10:10 – the *thief* comes only to kill steal and destroy' – who is the *thief* that Jesus is talking about?

It is not talking about satan or the devil – it is talking about false teachers.

Slide # 1 - Video – Gospel of John 2:1-25.



Original Meaning
What it meant 2000 years ago!

One of the literary tools John is using – as he wrote this gospel – is to present Jesus at all of the major Jewish feast and celebrations,

...and having done so – to show how Jesus both fulfils and replaces them.

So far John has done this with the Sabbath, Passover and Feast of the Tabernacles.

In today's chapter – three months since chapter 9, Jesus is now at the Jewish feast called the Hanukkah.

The Hanukkah was the only festival to be instigated between the close of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament.

It is an *inter-testament* festival – and this is how it came about.

In 332bc – Alexander the Great – a *Greek King* - conquered much of the Middle-East.

Part of this conquest was the direct assimilation of any foreign religion into the Greek way of life and philosophy – including the Jews and Israel.

Within 150 years, roughly 180 years before Christ, Israel had unknowingly adopted numerous Greek cultural and religious beliefs.

So much so, that the Hebrew Bible had to be translated into the Greek language – because many Jews could no longer read or understand Hebrew!

The name of this Greek translation of the Old Testament is known as the Septuagint!

The Jews who tried to resist this influence were called the Hasidims –

...but they were a minority and were often persecuted by the rest of Israel who were more Greek than Jewish!

Even the Jewish priests were negatively influenced by this pagan Greek influence,

...with some priests even welcoming statues of Greek gods to stand in the temple,

...while Greek soldiers poured pig blood on the temple floor,

...burned the Scriptures and banned several Jewish rituals like circumcision and baptism.

In 165bc – a massive war broke out between the Jews and Greeks.

The leader of this rebellion was called???Judas Maccabeus!

In 160bc – Maccabeus captured the temple at Jerusalem and *rededicated* it to God.

And this is where the festival of Hanukkah comes from –

...because Hanukkah is the Hebrew word for *Dedication*.

It is also known in the NT as the Feast of Dedication. (John 10:22)

And this is the winter festival that Jesus was attending when He taught about false shepherds.

Originally the festival lasted eight days,

...remembering the eight days that the oil lamps and heaters burned while Judas Maccabeus stormed the temple –

...even though he only had enough oil for one night.

Hanukkah is therefore a time when Israel asks the hard questions of why the nation drifted away from God, and why the nation followed false shepherds.

As Jesus taught, He assumed that His audience would have a full mental picture of what He was describing,

...of a shepherd protecting and caring for his sheep.

At night time the shepherd would gather the sheep into a small pen made from waist-high rocks, with shard thorn needles on the top.

With only one small opening for the sheep to come in or out, the shepherd would lie across the doorway at night –

...so he could protect the flock with his own life.

In the Palestinian countryside, the shepherds would have intimate knowledge of his sheep.

Often the shepherd would *sing* to his sheep, and play a *flute* so that the sheep had a constant point of contact and reference as to where the shepherd was.

If the sheep could no longer hear the voice or music of the shepherd,

...they had this uncanny ability to return to the last spot where they slept or fed with the shepherd.

In contrast, a false shepherd does not stoop low to enter the sheep pen,

...but climbs over the walls –

...disregards the boundaries of real shepherds, and the sheep scatter.

And this was the example Jesus used to teach about God's love and leadership.

But – this story is *more* than a parable.

In John 10:6 – the Bible says that this story was a 'figure of speech'.

Now, unless we understand the culture and grammatical nuances' of the days of Jesus –

...we would have just missed a vital clue to the interpretation of this passage.

This was no ordinary parable,

...but was what was known as a 'dark saying' –

...something the Hebrew Greeks were fond of presenting to those they wanted to impress.

In the Middle East, both 2000 years ago and today,

...a proficient and craftful orator will know how to use the skill of deeper symbols and proverbs.

Of which this one is a fine example.

You see, in a landscape of safety and abundant food,

...the sheep are free to wander and sleep under whatever tree or cave they desire.

Only in the face of imminent danger – does the shepherd need to call his sheep into the fold.

Israel – culturally, spiritually and morally – were *not* living in freedom – but were at risk of imminent danger!

Remember, at this time Israel were celebrating the feast of Hunnakkah, which reminded them of the days of bondage under corrupt shepherds.

So – here was Israel looking back, and thanking God that now they live in freedom under good shepherds.

And Jesus says – things today are just the same as they were 160 years ago!

Now, can you see why the leaders and the people were so angry.

Self-defence is one of humanities natural defence mechanisms.

Rather than believe the truth, the Jews would prefer to remove the cause of the threat – and remove Jesus!

Slide #

Bridge over time
Timeless Truths
Universal Principles



One of the main themes – the universal principles we can learn from our chapter today –

- is the relationship between a leader and those who follow.

In fact, who can tell me the foundational explanation of what a leader is?

(One whom others follow.)

Historically, but specifically the recent history of the church – do you know the average length of time a pastor stays at an individual church?

18 months.

Why do you think it is easier to leave after this duration, rather than stay?

(People know you, the honeymoon period wears off, your strengths and weaknesses become evident.)

One thing is certain, the Bible says that ‘those who teach will be judged more harshly’.

Before I was a pastor, I thought this meant – judgement at the feet of Jesus when we enter eternity.

Now I know it just means, that people will treat us more *harshly* than they do others.

Why?

Because as leaders and teachers, we have *influence* and *power* over people’s lives –

...or at least to the degree a person will allow them to.

That’s just the very nature of leadership.

And leadership is built upon trust.

Sometimes those we follow might be false shepherds,

...and other times, they might just believe things *differently* than we do – and that doesn’t make them evil or necessarily wrong.

However, it is amazing to trace the topic of false teachers through the Bible –

...especially at the church of Ephesus where John wrote this gospel when he was pastor there.

Picture it with me.

Here is the disciple John, the one who had leaned on the breast of Jesus,

...the one who wrote this gospel that warns of false shepherds.

And not many years later –

...we read in the smaller book of 1st John –

...that false teachers and leaders had arisen even in this same church –

...who were causing division and disunity –

...causing a massive church split! (1 John 2 onwards.)

As painful and hurtful as it is –

...we must realise that even from the beginning there were conflicts and difficulties within the church.

In fact from what I have learnt through over 25 years of church leadership,

...is that the only way a leader can try to stop conflicts or rebellion – is to rule with an iron fist.

And having done so – have themselves become a false leader and harsh shepherd.

These are leaders who do not respect boundaries, who try to force change and obedience.

What history has also taught us,

...is that those who do such things are often not the ones who wear the title of official *leader* or *pastor*,

... but are often the result of an uprising and self-acclaimed leadership.

And I know it is not always the case with false-shepherds,

...but my personal conviction is that I would never follow a self-appointed leader,

Neither would I permanently sit under a Biblical teacher who has not completed in-depth tertiary theological study –

- just as I would never go to a doctor who was unqualified –

...and had learnt how to perform surgery by watching television or reading a few books.

I know this may sound harsh – but the study of church history would prove this to be a prudent attitude.

Slide #



Application to today!
What it means to you and
me – right now!

I had to laugh to myself during last week – especially when I came across verse 34 of our chapter from today.

It says this, ‘Is it not written in your law – that we are *all* gods?’

I bought a pressure cooker last week,

and as I was cooking dinner on it, and reflecting upon this Bible study,

...I looked at the label on the side of the pot.

And this is what it says; ‘Customer are like *God* to us!’

Well, I’m not too sure if this is the proper outworking of our Bible verse today!

But it sure was funny!

All joking aside, Debbie and I have felt the repercussions of today’s chapter – through out our married and Christian life.

As most of you know, as a teenager I worked at a local Baptist church as assistant to the pastor.

To cut a long story short, I was offered police protection if I were to testify in a court of law about the horrific things I witnessed from the hand of our senior pastor.

Debbie, whom I met at that church and married 9 months later – had only been a Christian for little over a year.

And her introduction of Christianity was aggression, deception, violence and manipulation –

...from the very person who was meant to be an example of love and compassion – the *senior* pastor.

And so – during the last 25 years of church leadership and ministry, I have called and been called a false teacher and anti-Christ.

Through all of this, I have come to realise that human leadership – both male and female – will eventually, or at some time – let us down and disappoint us.

The only Real Shepherd – is God.

But you know what.

I know pretty much *everyone's* story and *journey* here today.

And what I do know – that many, if not most of us – at some time, will also be *disappointed* with God.

Life today isn't much different from the Judean desert Jesus referred to in His teaching of a Shepherd and his sheep.

There are just as much danger, violence, and theft today - from those who would try to take advantage of us.

Sometimes life doesn't go the way we *want* or *need* it to, and we become *disappointed* with God.

Sometimes God doesn't come through when we cry out to Him,

...when a loved one dies,

...money is scarce,

...our children wander away,

...marriages end,

...or when hurt, confusion or anger threatens to overpower our lives.

So many *voices* today,

...voices telling us what we *deserve*,

...telling us what we *need* to be happy,

...what we need to *buy* in order to feel acceptable, loved or worthy.

And amidst this cacophony of voices and influences – there is One voice that we often fail to recognise.

It is the voice of the Shepherd,

...calling us home,

...calling us back to the place we last met with Him,

...calling us into a place of safety security and protection.

This week, today – will you listen, will you hear, and will you follow.

Let's pray.

Faith Builder Series



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| 3. | John 1:19-51 | Learning to love God |
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| 6. | John 4:1-54 | Eternally satisfied |
| 7. | John 5:1-47 | Ministry to the suffering |
| 8. | John 6:1-71 | Bread of heaven |
| 9. | John 7:1-52 | Standing up for Jesus |
| 10. | John 7:53 – 8:11 | Caught in the act! |
| 11. | John 8:12-59 | Caught in tradition |
| 12. | John 9:1-41 | Now I can see |
| 13. | John 10:1-42 | The Good Shepherd |
| 14. | John 11:1-57 | Come forth! |
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| 18. | John 15:1 – 16:4a | Staying connected |
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| 20. | John 17:1-26 | Inspirational prayer |
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| 23. | John 20:1-31 | Unless I can touch Him... |
| 24. | John 21:1-25 | Breakfast on the beach! |

Part One
The Book of
SIGNS

Part Two
The Book of
GLORY