

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Chapters 7 to 12

A series of  
9 Bible Studies

**by**

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# **THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

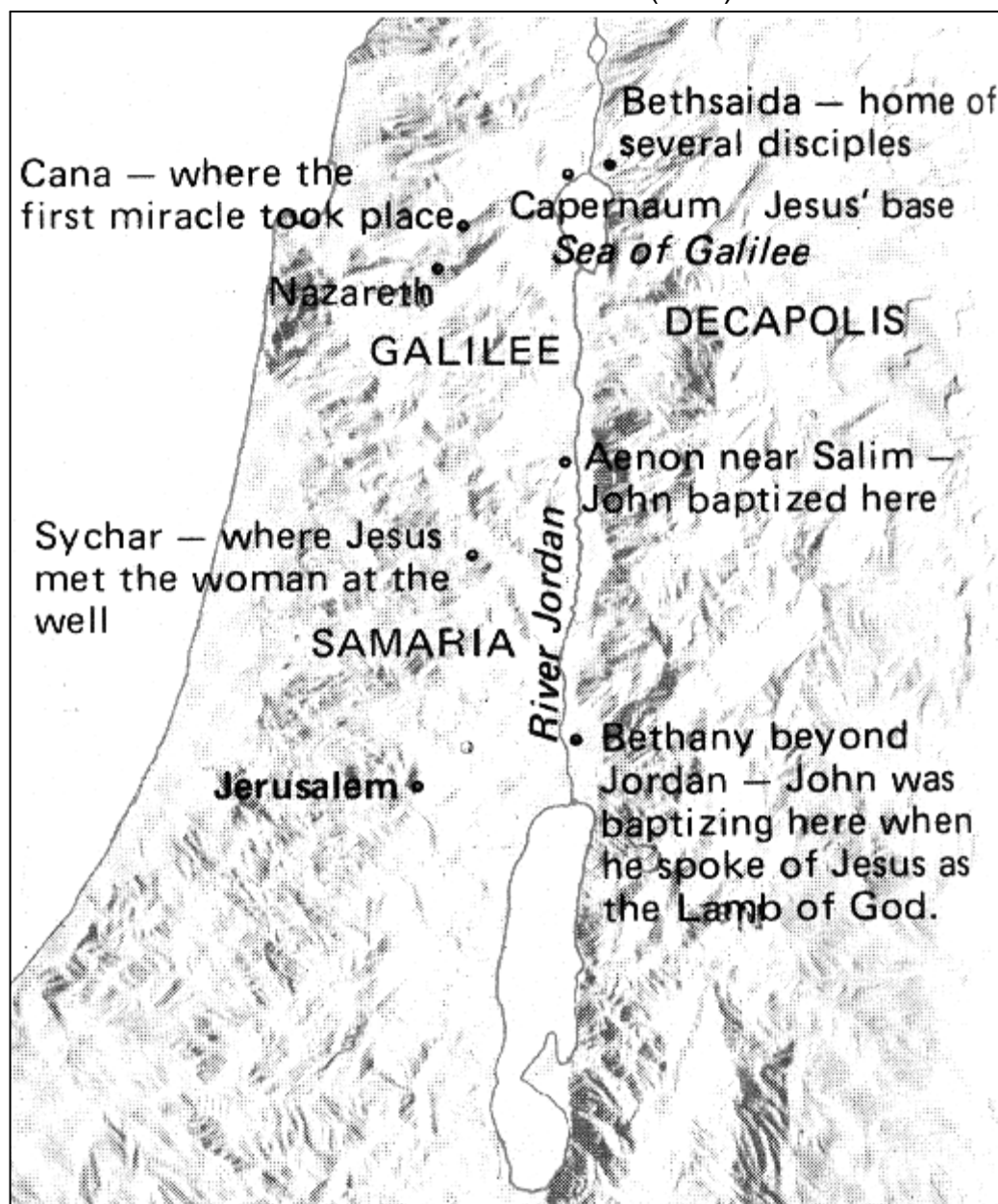
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*In him was life  
and that life  
was the light of men  
(John 1:4)*

## MAP - PLACES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

John's story begins as John the Baptist ministers near **Bethany beyond the Jordan** (1:28ff). Jesus also begins his ministry there, talking to some of the men who would later become his 12 disciples. Jesus' ministry in **Galilee** began with a visit to a wedding in **Cana** (2:1ff). Then he went to **Capernaum**, which became his new home (2:12). He journeyed to **Jerusalem** for the special feasts (2:13) and there met with Nicodemus, a religious leader (3:1ff). When he left Judea, he travelled through **Samaria** and ministered to the Samaritans (4:1ff).



Jesus did miracles in **Galilee** (4:46ff) and in **Judea and Jerusalem** (5:1ff). We follow him as he fed 5,000 near **Bethsaida-Julias** beside the Sea of Galilee (6:1ff), walked on the water to his frightened disciples (6:16ff), preached through **Galilee** (7:1), returned to **Jerusalem** (7:2ff), preached beyond the Jordan in **Perea** (10:40), raised Lazarus from the dead in **Bethany** (11:1ff), and finally entered **Jerusalem** for

the last time to celebrate the Passover with his disciples and give to them key teachings about what was to come and how they should act. His last hours before his crucifixion were spent in the city (13:1ff), in the Garden of Gethsemane (18:1ff), and finally in various buildings in Jerusalem during his trial (18:12ff). He would be crucified, but he would rise again as he had promised.

# INTRODUCTION

*He's an old man, this one who sits on the stool and leans against the wall. Eyes closed and face soft, were it not for his hand stroking his beard. you'd think he was asleep.*

*Some in the room assume he is. He does this often during worship. As the people sing, his eyes will close and his chin will fall until it rests on his chest, and there he will remain motionless. Silent.*

*Those who know him well know better. They know he is not resting. He is travelling. Atop the music he journeys back, back, back until he is young again. There on the seashore with James and the apostles. There on the trail with the disciples and the women. There in the temple with Caiaphas and the accusers.*

*It's been sixty years, but John sees him still. The decades took John's strength, but they didn't take his memory. The years dulled his sight, but they didn't dull his vision. The seasons may have wrinkled his face, but they didn't soften his love.*

*He had been with God. God had been with him. How could he forget?*

*The wine that moments before had been water — John could still taste it. The boy's lunch that fed a crowd — John could still remember it.*

*And the voice. Oh, the voice. His voice. John could still hear it. As he spoke to the woman at the well. The conversation with Nicodemus. His words as he came to them walking on the water.*

*John could hear him. John could see him. Scenes branded on his heart. Words seared in his soul. John would never forget. How could he? He had been there.*

*He opens his eyes and blinks. The singing has stopped. The teaching has begun. John looks at the listeners and listens to the teacher. If only he could have been there, he thinks. But he wasn't. Most weren't. Most weren't even born. And most who were there are dead. Peter is. So is James. They are all gone, even Paul the apostle. Only John remains.*

*He looks again at the church. Small but earnest. They lean forward to hear the teacher. John listens to him. What a task. Speaking of one he never saw. Explaining words he never heard. John is there if the teacher needs him. But what will happen when John is gone? What will the teacher do then? When John's voice is silenced and his tongue is stilled? How will they know? If only they could have been there. Suddenly in his heart he knows what to do.*

*Later, under the light of a sunlit shaft, the old fisherman unfolds the scroll and begins to write the story ...*

***In the beginning was the Word ...***

*(adapted from Max Lucado, Life Lessons — Book of John, 1996)*

## **Study 1**

# ***The Right Time & Right Judgement*** ***(John 7:1-24)***

### **Warm-Up**

1. *What do the members of your family think about God?*

### **Bible Study**

***(Read John 7:1-24)***

1. *Chapter 7 occurs at the time of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles (v2). There were three great feasts for first century Jews, the Passover, the Feast of Harvest and the Feast of Tabernacles but the greatest of these was the Feast of Tabernacles. What was it about and why was it so important? (Refer to Lev. 23:33-43, Deut. 16:13-15)*
2. *“The right time for me has not yet come” v6,8. What does Jesus mean when he talks about the right time? What does it tell us about Jesus? (Refer to John 2:1-4, 8:19-21, 12:23, 13:1)*
3. *At the feast Jesus was the hot topic of conversation. Record the various conclusions that people had come to about him:*  
  
*v12*  
*v12*  
*v15*  
*v20*  
*v31*  
*v40*  
*v41*
4. *How are Jesus’ words in v7 demonstrated in v11-24?*

5. What does Jesus claim about himself and his teaching in this passage?

6. The miracle that Jesus is most likely referring to in v21 is the healing of the paralyzed man (Read 5:1-13). The law **required a** baby to be circumcised on the eighth day. It also required that no work be done on the Sabbath. Circumcision was regarded as work, so this posed a problem. However the Jews were in agreement that the need of the little child to be included amongst God's covenant people by use of this rite overrode the requirements of the Sabbath. In v21-24 how did Jesus use this argument to explain his actions?

### **Discussion**

1. No one in the crowd was prepared to speak up for Jesus because they were scared of the Jews (v13). In what situations do you find it hard to speak about Jesus? What makes it difficult?

2. How should this passage inform our evangelism?

3. Can you think of some examples of when we can be guilty of judging **others** by 'mere appearances' and **of having** failed to make a correct judgment?

## **Study 2**

# **The Living Water** (John 7:25-53)

### **Warm-Up**

1. *Begin your time together by reading the following verses to worship God in prayer. Psalm 33:6-11, 89:5-8, 91:1-4, 25:1-5, 147:1-6,*

### **Bible Study**

**(Read John 7:25-52 )**

1. (i) *Where did Jesus say he was from? (v27-29) Where did he say he was going to? (v33-36) What do these verses tell us about Jesus relationship with God the Father?*  
  
(ii) *Compare Jesus' words to the Jews in v36 with his words to his disciples in 14:3. Why the difference?*
2. *Christ (Greek) or Messiah (Hebrew) literally means "anointed one". It was a title reserved for the truly anointed king who would one day come, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, to speak & act for God. What expectations did the people have of the Christ? (You may also want to refer to Luke 24:21, Mark 14:61-64, John 4:25 in your answer)*
3. *The Feast of the Tabernacles was associated with the ingathering of the harvest. It commemorated the provision of God for his people in the wilderness. During the festival the people gave thanks for the rainfall that nourished the harvest, but also looked forward to that coming day when God's Spirit would be poured out at the coming of the Kingdom of God.*

*(i) How does this background help us to understand the significance of Jesus' words in v37?*

*(ii) What did Jesus mean when he spoke about "living water" in v38-39?*

*4. We first encounter Nicodemus in John 3:1-15. What do we learn about Nicodemus from v50-52 and also John 19:38-42?*

### **Discussion**

- 1. Can you think of any examples where 'religion' gets in the way of a relationship with Jesus Christ?*
- 2. When have you experienced opposition for giving a simple word of testimony like the guards in v46? **How did it make you feel?***
- 3. In what ways is the Holy Spirit active in the life of a believer? What is He doing in your life at the moment?*

### **Study 3**

## **Forgiveness** **“Go and sin no more . . .”** (John 8:1-11)

### **Warm-Up**

1. *Can you recall an incident when you were caught for doing something wrong? How did you feel? How did others treat you?*  
Or
2. *Use your imagination to write down what this woman might have written in her diary at the end of the day described in this passage.*

### **Bible Study**                      **(Read John 8:1-11) (Also see Note on p 11)**

1. *“In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” (v5-6) In what way were the Pharisees using this question as a trap to accuse Jesus?*
2. *Read Deuteronomy 22:23-24 & Leviticus 20:10. How have the religious leaders misquoted the Law?*
3. *What was Jesus’ response to those trying to trap him?*
4. *What relevance does the Old Testament Law have for us today? (You may want to refer to the following passages Matt. 5:17-20, 22:37-40, 23:23-24, John 1:17, Romans 3:20, 7:6 & 8:3)*

5. *What does Jesus' teach about adultery in Matthew 5:27-28?*
6. *What was Jesus really saying by these words "If any one of you is without sin . . ."?*
7. *Who was the one person that could have condemned this woman? What did it cost Jesus to make this statement?*

### ***Discussion***

1. *What can we learn from Jesus' attitude in this story?*
2. *What has God taught you in your life about forgiving and being forgiven?*
3. *Jesus brings love & grace to this woman while also challenging her about her sin. How do you go about finding that balance as you respond to people who have fallen into some kind of sin?*

## **Note on John 8:1-11**

*The earliest manuscripts of John's gospel do not include this story of the adulterous woman. It does not appear in any Greek manuscripts until the 5<sup>th</sup> Century. The evidence against John having included this particular story in his gospel is conclusive. First, many scholars point out that the vocabulary used in this passage does not match the rest of John. Second, although the setting is plausible (other similar confrontations occurred between Jewish leaders and Jesus occurred in Jerusalem, the insertion of the story at this point in John (after 7:52 and before 8:12) disrupts the narrative flow.*

*However, even though the passage was not written by John, it still may be regarded as a true story. It is very unlikely that a later scribe would have made up a story, given the strict views of the church on sexual immorality. The actions and words of Jesus are consistent with what we know of him from the rest of the gospels. There is no new or unusual information in the passage that adds evidence against its inclusion. The encounter appears as an added snapshot of Jesus in John's collection, though we can tell that someone else probably took the picture. The event deserves at least consideration in teaching & preaching as an act that Jesus did at some point in his ministry, for it illustrates Jesus' compassion for sinful people (which includes us all) and his willingness to forgive any sinner ; but the story should not be given the same authority as Scripture.*

*B.B. Barton, John - Life Application Bible Commentary p166*

## **Study 4    *Hope - Finding Light In The Darkness***

Jesus – “I Am The Light Of The World”

*(John 8:12-30)*

### **Warm-Up**

1. *What is something that you have learnt or been challenged by from the past three studies? How has it made a difference in your life?*

### **Bible Study                      (Read John 8:12-30)**

1. *What do the following verses tell us about Jesus identity? “I am . . .*

*v12*

*v16*

*v18*

*v23*

*v24,28*

*v58*

2. *Jesus’ great statement “I am the light of the world” v12 is the second of seven condensed parables describing Jesus. Look them up and write them down.*

6:35

8:12

10:7

10:11

11:25

14:6

15:1

3. *The Feast is once again in the background of this chapter. During the feast huge lamps were lit in commemoration of the pillar of fire that led the Israelites in their wilderness journey (Read Numbers 9:15-23). Because we no longer depend on fire for light it **is** easy for us to miss this connection.*

*(i) Given this context, what do you think Jesus meant when he calls himself “The light of the world” in v12? (Also refer to John 1:9 & 3:19-21)*

(ii) *Why was this claim so confronting to the Jews? (Exodus 3:13-15 & Isaiah 42:6, 49:6 & 51:4)*

4. *The Jewish Law says that two witnesses are needed for a valid testimony in a capital offence, as their charge of blasphemy was. (Deuteronomy 19:15). How does Jesus answer the challenge of the Pharisees in v13? (Also refer to 5:31-40)*
5. *What does Jesus mean in v15 when he says “I pass judgment on no one”? (Also refer to 3:17-18 & 5:26-27)*
6. *What is Jesus talking about in v28? How will this help them to know that Jesus is the Christ? (Also refer to 3:14-15)*

## **Discussion**

1. *How is Jesus a light in your life?*
2. *Verse 24 is a strong reminder of the fate of those who do not believe in Jesus. Who are you praying for at the moment? What opportunities has God given you to talk to others about Jesus?*

## **Study 5**

# **Freedom**

***“. . . the Truth Will Set You Free”***  
**(JOHN 8:31-59)**

### **Warm-Up**

1. *How much do you know about your ancestors? Which of your ancestors do you greatly admire? Why?*

### **Bible Study**                      **(Read John 8:31-59)**

1. *How does v31 affect the way we read the rest of this chapter?*
2. *What do you think Jesus means by the word “truth” in verse 32? How will this set them free from sin?*
3. *What are the marks of true discipleship mentioned in this passage?*
4. *In what ways do the actions of these Jews show that they ‘belong to their father, the devil’v44?*

5. *What claims does Jesus make about himself in this passage?*

6. *What does Jesus mean by saying that ‘if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death’ v51?*

### **Discussion**

1. *“Our freedom is not the freedom to do what we want, but the freedom from being controlled by our fallen hearts to do as God wants” (John Stott) What does it mean for us to be free as Christians? What does it not mean?*

2. *Jesus can free us from our sin. What at the moment is hindering you from becoming the person God wants you to be?*

3. *What would you say to the person who thinks Christianity will take away from their freedom to enjoy life and do their own thing?*

## **Study 6**

# **Open Your Eyes!**

*(John 9:1-41)*

### **WARM-UP**

1. *"I was blind but now I see" Write a prayer thanking God for what he has done in your life. (You might like to include this prayer in your group's prayer time)*

### **Bible Study**

***(Read John 9:1-12)***

1. *There are no recorded incidents of the blind being given their sight in the Old Testament (v32). There are more accounts of the giving of sight to the blind in Jesus' ministry than of any other form of healing. Look up the following references (Isaiah 29:18, 35:5, 42:6-7, Psalm 146:8). What is Jesus revealing about himself as he opens the eyes of the blind?*
2. *What is the mistake Jesus disciples make in v1? What conclusions can you draw about sin & suffering?*
3. *Does Jesus answer in v3 mean that we should always be able to see 'the work of God being displayed' in our suffering?*

***(Read John 9:13-41)***

4. *Who are the blind ones in this story? Contrast the attitude of the Pharisees with that of the blind man.*

Pharisees

Blind man

5. *What can we learn from the testimony of the man who was healed (v8-11, 15, 17, 24-34, 35-38)*
  
6. *In this chapter we learn that the coming of Jesus, 'The Light Of The World' (v5) has a twofold effect (v39). What is it? (Refer also to John 3:19-21)*

### **Discussion**

1. *How do you respond to the person who thinks all sickness is the result of sin or lack of faith?*
  
2. *If someone asked you, what difference does being a christian make to your life, what would you say?*
  
3. *How has God been opening your eyes to see him more clearly? The apostle Peter tells us "to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). How can we help each other to do this?*

## **Study 7**

# ***I Am The Good Shepherd***

*(John 10:1-42)*

### **Warm-Up**

1. The 'good shepherd' provides for his sheep. Write down at least one example of God providing for you and answering your prayers in the past week.

### **Bible Study**

***(Read John 10:1-21)***

1. Verse 6 tells us that Jesus' hearers did not understand his parable. Who are they? (Hint: look at 10:21) How does this chapter connect to Chapter 9?
2. If Jesus is the 'good shepherd' then who are the bad shepherds? Read Ezekiel 34:1-24. How does this chapter help us to understand what Jesus is claiming?
3. What does Jesus mean when he says "I am the gate" (v7,9) ?
4. Describe the relationship between the 'good shepherd' and his sheep?

5. *What do we learn about Jesus death from v11-18?*

6. *What does Jesus mean by other sheep in v16?*

***(Read John 10 v22-42)***

7. (i) *How do these verses show that the Jews are not the true sheep of God?*

(ii) *What reassurance is there for those, like the blind man, who are his genuine sheep?*

***Discussion***

1. Verse 4 “ . . . his sheep will follow him because they know his voice”.  
*How & when do you listen to God’s voice (v3,5,16,27)?*

2. *The sheep follow the good shepherd. In what particular ways is God calling you to follow him at the moment?*

3. *What specifically has encouraged or challenged you from this chapter?*

## **Study 8**

# ***I Am The Resurrection & The Life*** ***(John 11:1-57)***

### **Warm-Up**

1. *What funeral has been the hardest/most joyful for you to attend?*

### **Bible Study**

***(Read John 11:1-16)***

1. *Jesus gives two reasons for the sign that is about to follow. What are they? (Refer to v4 & v15)*
2. *Why do you think that Jesus delayed two days before setting out to see Lazarus? (Hint : John 11:39)*
3. *What does Jesus' answer in v9-10 mean? How does it answer the disciples question in v8?*

***(Read John 11:17-57)***

4. *What does this passage reveal about the humanity of Jesus? What comfort can we draw from this?*
5. *What is Jesus' claim about himself & his promise in v25-26? (Refer to John 8:51, 10:17-18 & 10:27-28)*

6. *Do you think that Mary or Martha believed that Jesus could raise Lazarus? Why?*

7. *Caiaphas statement in v50 is simply a politically motivated remark about the best way to deal with Jesus, but as John points out in v51-52 his words were prophetic. In what sense are his words prophetic?*

### **Discussion**

1. *Can you think of an example of when God's timing has been different **from** yours?*
2. *"Despite the massive propaganda to the contrary, our Lord's purpose for us is not to make us happy but to make us holy". John Stott. What was God teaching Mary & Martha through their suffering? What has God taught you through your hard times & suffering?*
2. *What encouragement is there from this passage for the person who is grieving? How can we best comfort someone in their grief? What other Scriptures might you share with someone who is experiencing grief?*

## **Study 9**

# ***The Hour Has Come!***

*(John 12:1-50)*

### **Warm-Up**

1. *What are some examples of ways in which you have seen other Christians showing their love for Jesus?*

### **Bible Study**

***(Read John 12:1-11)***

1. *How did Mary express her devotion to Jesus?*
2. *What does Jesus response in v7 reveal about the significance of this incident?*

***(Read John 12:12-50)***

3. *What is the importance of v23,27-8? (Refer to John 7:6,8,30,8:20)*
4. *What excited the crowd? V9 & 17 What type of king did they understand Jesus to be? (v13) (Refer to Psalm 118:25-26, 118:10-11)*

5. *Look up Zechariah 9:9-13. What do these verses coupled with the events of the cross tell us about God's rescuing king?*
6. *Given the crowd that was listening to Jesus what do you think he meant when he said in v32 that he would 'draw all men to himself'?*

### **Discussion**

1. *Mary is mentioned three times in the gospels and always in association with Jesus' feet. (Luke 10:39, John 11:32 & 12:3). What can we learn from Mary's relationship with Jesus?*
2. *It is easy to see that the crowd had a wrong concept of Jesus' kingship – but is ours better? What difference does/should it make to our lives if we call Jesus King? How does/should it affect the way we see the world?*
3. *What do v25-6 teach us about being a disciple of Christ? What implications does this have for the way that you are living at the moment?*

# **BIBLE STUDY LEADER'S NOTES**

## **BACKGROUND TO JOHN'S GOSPEL**

*(taken primarily from Life Application Bible Commentary  
& Glen Davies Yr2 Lecture Notes)*

### **JOHN'S GOSPEL**

*Purpose John 20:30-31*

*Prologue 1:1-18*

*Jesus Ministry*

*Passover occurred March/April.*

*The 1<sup>st</sup> Passover Feast (2:13)*

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Passover Feast (6:4)*

*The 3<sup>rd</sup> Passover Feast (13:1)*

*In chapters 7-12 we are looking at the last year of Jesus ministry.*

*Last year punctuated by two other feasts.*

*Feast of Tabernacles (Sept/Oct) (7:2)*

- *ingathering of the August harvest. A week of celebration and joy. Most popular. The people would come into Jerusalem and camp in booths or tabernacles made from branches. Remind the people that they had lived in tents during the wilderness. How God had protected their ancestors, guiding them with the cloud by day and fire by night, providing manna, on one occasion water from the rock (Ex17:1-7). Gave thanks for rainfall but also looked forward to that coming day when God's spirit would be poured out at the coming of the Kingdom of God. 1st day Zech 14:8 was read "On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem" Priest poured water on a rock from a golden pitcher. While the water flowed the people shouted Is 12:3 "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation"*
- *(7:37)(READ)*
- *Another symbolic act lighting of big torches reminding the people of the fire that had guided them. God's presence, protection and guidance.*
- *(8:12) . . (8:20)This is where the torches/lamps burned*

*Feast of Dedication (Dec.) (10:21) . . . 167B.C the Syrian emperor had desecrated the temple by setting up an altar to Zeus. Judas Maccabaeus led a successful revolt against the Syrians and the temple was*

*reconsecrated with a week long festival. Also involved the use of lights and celebrated the restoration of freedom.*

## ***Recurring Themes in John 7-12***

- *The Identity Of Jesus: He is the Son who has come from the Father, the water of life, the great 'I AM', the light of the world, the good shepherd, the resurrection & the life. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. The King has come!*
- *The Rejection Of The Son By His People: The Jews can't accept his equality with the Father. They try to seize him. He asserts that they hate him, because they are of the world. They are simply unable to 'see' because they refuse to admit their own sin and their need of his intervention. They are shown to be utterly blind and under judgement – selfish shepherds out for selfish gain.*
- *The Offer Of Life: Throughout this section Jesus continues to hold out his offer of life to all those who will accept it. The miracle of spiritual sight worked by the Son for his people who respond by listening to his words and accepting the Father's works.*