

The Gospel of John – The Miracles in John

New Testament Survey – Lesson 12 (Part 3)

We begin this week with two stories, one tragic, the other funny. First, the tragic.

Over the last year, some close friends of our family spoke to me about a fellow they were worried about.

“He has lost a certain joyful spirit,” they would tell me. “He doesn’t have the joy of life we used to see.”

I saw the young man and did not really see that much difference. There may have been a slight drop off in his energy level, I thought, but nothing huge.

Time went by before I had some more direct interaction with the fellow. By then, the dryness others had seen had become readily apparent. The young man was still an exceptional, kind, and loving person, but it was as if the vibrant life he used to exhibit had shriveled to a barren desert. There were signs of life, but ones you had to look hard to see. In my conversations with the man, I found out he had lost his faith in Christ. The timing coincided with the changes people were seeing in his life. Very tragic.

The second story involves a young woman who was in my first semester Hebrew class some 35 years ago (yikes, where did those years go?). I do not remember her name, so I will call her Stephanie. Stephanie was not the most attentive one in the class. In fact, she paid very little attention both to the material and to attendance. In the class, the teacher had instructed us in our reading that when we came across the name of God in Hebrew (written יהוה in Hebrew which corresponds to the English letters YHWH¹), we were not allowed to pronounce it. We were required to both substitute and say “Adonai,” which means “Lord,” or “*ha-Shem*,” which means “the Name.” The name of God was never to be pronounced in my class. I should add that my Hebrew teacher that semester was reared an Orthodox Jew.

One day, Stephanie had decided to come to class, and she was assigned a portion of the Joseph narrative to read aloud in Hebrew. She had trouble pronouncing most every word, a reflection of her minimal involvement in the class. At one point in the narrative, she came to a passage that had the Name of God. Not knowing, or not remembering, our professor’s very clear instructions, Stephanie started trying to pronounce the word, speaking the name of God. Professor Klein went apoplectic trying to stop her.

¹ Or YHWH.

“Please,” he said as she struggled to pronounce the Name, “stop!”

“No,” she replied, “I can get it!”

“No!” he shouted, “No, No, No!”

She was insistent, “I can get it, its just taking me a second to sound it out!”

The truth is, she did not get it – neither the name, nor the reason she was not supposed to say it!

These two stories focus on the last two words we examine as we put together the final touches on our examination of why John recorded the miracles he did, and why he put together the Gospel.

JOHN’S PURPOSE STATEMENT

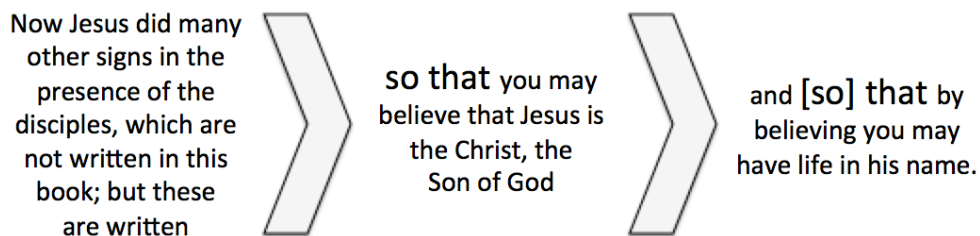
We are in the middle of examining John’s purpose statement in John 20:30-31.

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

In this passage we have noted a chain of words that are particularly significant to John:

Signs Believe Christ Son of God Life Name

This week we continue considering “life” and “name.” We do it placing into the context of the verse, these two words. They are part of a chain of “purpose” clauses or “so that” clauses in the Greek. Knowing this allows us to see easily the three sections of John’s train of thought:



We have here two important reasons for John's writings. First, as noted in our previous lessons on this verse, to aid and encourage those who believe in Jesus, affirming that Jesus is the Messiah and the unique Son of God. John then adds the importance of this trust and belief in the final clause that "by believing (or "trusting") people have "life" in his "name." Both of these words carry great significance in the Bible at large, but especially in the writings of John.

We need to pause and study these two in greater detail because their ancient usage is different from that commonly found in our language today.

Life

"Life" is an important word in John. Simply looking at his frequent usage of it indicates as much. In Matthew the Greek word "life" (*zoe* – ζωή) appears seven times. Mark uses "life" four times. In the longest Gospel, Luke, the word occurs five times. John, on the other hand, uses *zoe*/life ("life") thirty-six times! More than twice the other three gospels put together!

What is it about "life" that John emphasizes so? Our understanding is helped by looking at what the Greek word *zoe*/life meant. Following that, we focus on John's usage of *zoe*/life throughout his gospel. Then we are finally in a position to understand more fully his meaning in his purpose statement.

1. The Meaning of Zoe/Life

A. Greek Usage.

Not surprisingly, over the many centuries of Greek usage, *zoe*/life has taken on a variety of subtle nuances to its meaning. It is beyond this paper to address each. We will limit our focus to general overarching usages and meanings, looking first at ancient Greek usage, then focusing on the Old Testament usage (from the "Septuagint" or Greek translation of the Old Testament), and then within the New Testament and John.

Kittel's dictionary explains ancient Greek's thought of *zoe*/life was not as much a thing or state of being, but more the vitality that makes one alive.

Life is understood, not as a thing, but as vitality, as the nature or manner which characterises (*sic.*) all living creatures as such.²

² Kittel, Gerhard, *The Theological Dictionary of The New Testament*, (Eerdmans 1964), Vol. II, at 832. This resource is a staple for its thorough analysis of key Biblical Greek words. It is difficult to use without a measure of dexterity in Greek and Hebrew, but for those interested, it is available

The idea behind life is not simply some force of existence. Greek *zoe*/life has the “character of individuality.” It is a “definite self-understanding and experience.”³

B. Hebrew Usage.

If we examine “life” in the Old Testament, we at first consider the Hebrew word for “life,” which was translated by the ancients into Greek as *zoe*/life. The Hebrew word, as any fan of *Fiddler on the Roof* knows, is *chayyim*.⁴ Unlike most Greek usage, at its core the Hebrew simply means physical or organic life. It began for man when God fashioned him from dirt and breathed “life” into him. Life originated from God, and was put into man’s body making man a living [or “life”] creature.

The Hebrew twist comes in the value placed on life and overtones about its source and longevity. For the Hebrews, “life” was the ultimate goal and in a sense the supreme good. Proverbs 3:16 lauds wisdom as the source of “long life,” “riches and honor.” In the passage, however, we note that “long life” is in wisdom’s right hand (first position), while “riches and honor” take secondary position in wisdom’s left hand. Similarly, Satan argued before God that man would give all he has for his life” (Job 2:4). While we cannot accord Satan as right in his assessment, the text still indicates the high value that the Hebrews placed on life.

Long life was of great importance, which highlights those Old Testament passages that promised such long life. In Deuteronomy, long life was frequently equated to obedience to the Lord. A sample referenced by Paul (Eph. 6:3) is found in Deuteronomy 5:16,

Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long.

Similarly as early as Genesis 6:3 we see God limiting the span of man’s life because of his sin. Perhaps the most clear example of the linkage between long life and obedience is found in Deuteronomy 30:15-20.

See, I have set before you today *life* and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his

at a nearby theological library where the executive director can assist in the Greek and Hebrew as needed!

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ The Hebrew prefix sounding “*la-*” means “to.” Hence the song in *Fiddler on the Roof*, “To life, to life *la-chayyim*.”

commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall *live*.... But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not *live* long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you *life* and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose *life*, that you and your offspring may *live*, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him.

It is in this sense that man truly does not live simply by food, but by an obedience to God and his word.

Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD (Deut. 8:3, quoted by Jesus in Matt. 4:4).

By the time of the prophet Ezekiel, “life” is tied even more directly to the longevity of life. Wicked people die prematurely unless they turn from iniquity while righteous people who turn to iniquity similarly die early (Ezek. 3:18-21). The same principle is echoed over and over in the book:

If a man is righteous and does what is just and right... and keeps my rules by acting faithfully—he is righteous; he shall surely *live*, declares the Lord GOD. If [a man is unrighteous]; shall he then *live*? He shall not *live*... He shall surely die; his blood shall be upon himself (Ezek. 18:5-14).

Inherent in the Old Testament prophets is the recognition that trusting in God, and believing in his word leads to an obedience that gives long life. In Amos it is a part of seeking God:

Seek me and *live*... Seek the LORD and live... Seek good and not evil, that you may *live*; and so the LORD, the God of Hosts, will be with you (Am. 5:4, 6, 14).

Habakkuk similarly contrasted the arrogant unrighteous with the righteous who “*live by faith*” (Hab. 2:4).

2. John’s Use of Zoe/Life

Not surprisingly, John uses *zoe*/life with both the Hebrew concept tying life to God and with the Greek idea of vitality. The Greeks recognized *zoe*/life as more than being alive. It was a force or vitality. We can find echoes of this in John 10:10 where Jesus contrasted his purposes with those of evil.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

This passage comes at the end of Jesus using a metaphor of a sheep and shepherd. The good shepherd both lays down his life for his sheep and also serves as the gate for the sheep to enter into the pastures. It is in this sense that we read of having *zoe*/life “abundantly” or “to the full.” Carson explains the thrust of this metaphor,

Within the metaphorical world, *life...to the full* suggests fat, contented, flourishing sheep, not terrorized by brigands; outside the narrative world, it means that the life Jesus’ true disciples enjoy is not to be construed as more time to fill (merely ‘everlasting’ life), but life at its scarcely imagined best, life to be lived.⁵

John’s usage of *zoe*/life goes beyond the Greek idea, however. John is replete with a Hebrew understanding.

As Genesis sourced life with God that was then given to man, so John places life with Jesus, present and active in the Genesis creation:

All things were made through him [Jesus, the Word], and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was *zoe*/life, and the *zoe*/life was the light of men (Jn. 1:3-4).

Man’s life is derivative; it is given by God. Not so with God, the Father or Son. Life is present in each, to be dispensed further.

For as the Father has life in himself, so has he granted the Son also to have life in himself (Jn. 5:36).

Of course, man already has a degree of life, even though it is fleeting. Yet Jesus has the ability to give a life that passes beyond the end of death. Jesus can impart an eternal and unending life.

Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you (Jn. 6:27).

John quoted Jesus plainly saying as much in John 10:28,

I gave them eternal life, and they will never perish.

⁵ Carson, D. A., *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel of John*, (Eerdmans 1991), at 385.

Jesus is “he who comes down from heaven and gives life” (Jn. 6:33).

If we key in on the Hebrew idea of obedience to God producing a long life on earth, we can readily discern in John something more. John does not leave life as something that ends at death. For John, in Christ there is an unending life that is eternal. This eternal life is not Torah based; it is relationship based. Each passage on eternal life links the life back to believing in Jesus. The legal covenant actually bore witness to Jesus, the source of eternal life:

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life (Jn. 5:39-40).

This *eternal* life does not come from simply following God’s commandments. It comes from trusting or believing in his Son. This is a life given by Jesus, by the Father (Jn. 12:50), or by the Spirit (Jn. 6:63), depending upon which John passage is read, for the three are clearly one in his Gospel. But regardless of who grants the life, it is linked to belief in and relationship to Jesus. Consider the following:

- **John 3:36** – “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”
- **John 5:24** – “whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”
- **John 6:40** – “For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”
- **John 6:47, 48** – “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.”
- **John 11:25** -- “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.”
- **John 14:6** – “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

So we see in John, that believing in Jesus brings about a life that is not just many days on earth, but an eternal life. The life is not paltry or dry, but is full of vitality and abundance. It is a life that everyone should want – a life based on relationship with Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. A fulfilled life is not automatic. It is experienced through an ongoing vitality in our relationship with God.

This brings us to the last carefully chosen “John word” in the purpose statement: “name.” John said that, “by believing you may have life *in his name*.” It is important for us to understand what John meant!

Name

In ancient times, there was general worldwide belief, certainly valid in the Mediterranean world, that names were more than identifiers. Unlike today, where a name is generally a set of words that are labels for people or things, the ancient name was identified as something special, denoting something beyond a mere label. There were similarities between the usage and significance of names between the Hebrew culture reflected in the Old Testament and the other Mediterranean cultures. There were also some dramatic differences. We start this analysis with the ancient Greek significance of a name.

1. Greek Usage of “Name/Onoma”

In the ancient Greek world, names carried a power or control. For example, in Homer’s *Odyssey* we read of the gods guarding their names lest they cede some measure of control over their own lives. The Greek word for “name” is *onoma* (ὄνομα). We use the word in our “onomatopoeia,” which is made from the Greek word for “name” (*onoma*) and the Greek for “make” (*poieo*). Onomatopoeia is a name for an item made by its own sound (like the “chirp” of a bird).

While the centuries of ancient Greek usage of name/*onoma* varied widely, scholars have generally adduced at least four ways the word was routinely used that are worth noting for this lesson.⁶ We need to see that this list is not a list of how a person’s name was used, but rather is a list of how the word “name/*onoma*” was used. To avoid the confusion, we will add an example to each.

1. Of course name/*onoma* was a label given to a man. In this sense we use it today too, *e.g.*, “Each parent gives his or her child a name.”
2. Name/*onoma* was also used in the sense of one’s reputation. We still use the word a bit that way today when we speak of someone having a “good name” or a bad one!
3. Sometimes the Greeks used the word “name/*onoma*” as the actual word for a person. In other words, instead of calling a person by his or her name, the word “name” was substituted. We do not use this much, but we can consider the sense of “He carried his name into battle.”

⁶ Most of the information on the Greek in this section is gathered from Kittel’s article on “ὄνομα” or from the citations given in the article, vol. V, at 242ff.

4. In administrative documents “name/*onoma*” was part of the legal title. Here we might read “the public name” as part of a title.

If we concentrate only on the Greek considerations of the names of gods, we find again a wide range of ideas. Some Greeks sought to discover the names of the gods to better establish a right to encounter and use the gods. Some philosophers proposed that man could never really know the true names of the gods, but even the names as assigned by men held some measure of power over the gods. We read of some Greeks who heaped up many names on a god to try and get it just right so that there would some leverage or power over the deity. By the first century, in Hermetic Greek writings from Egypt, we read the idea that some gods were too lofty to have a name. This idea also was likely present and perhaps behind the Athenians’ altar to the unknown god that Paul used in conversing about YHWH God (Acts. 17:16-34).

2. Hebrew Usage of “Name/Onoma”

Like the Greeks, the Hebrews used the word “name/*onoma*” in a variety of ways. Because the Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew, we are looking at the Hebrew word for name, rather than the Greek word. We should note, though, that the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint, also used the Greek name/*onoma* for more than the Hebrew word “name.”

The Hebrew word for “name” is *shem* (שם). We can readily demonstrate its meaning in a number of ways.

1. Like the Greeks, “name” was an external label or mark that distinguished one person from another.
2. Also like the Greeks, “name” stood for one’s standing or reputation. In this sense Proverbs 22:1 affirms, “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches.”
3. Similarly, “name” stood for one’s character. We read a good example of this in Exodus 34:14, “you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”
4. “Name” also stood for the idea that someone had a measure of fame or esteem. The Israelites were told in Deuteronomy 26:19 that God would “set you in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations.” The word the ESV translates as “fame” is really just the word “name.”

5. “Name” was also used to refer to a memory or commemoration of someone. After the golden calf episode, God told Moses he would “destroy them [the people] and blot out their name from under heaven.”

With these different ideas behind the word “name,” it is not surprising that we have some marvelous uses of the word that we can easily fail to grasp (or even misunderstand) because it differs so greatly with our English use of “name” in everyday 21st century life.

For example, we read over and over in the Old Testament that people are to “praise the name” or “bless the name” of the LORD (Ps. 96:2; 100:4; 103:1, *etc.*) This does not refer to some measure of worship for the audible sound of YHWH. It refers to worshipping the character, actions, and traits of YHWH. It is a worship of who he is and what he has done. It is not some magical incantation or even appreciation of his name as a label.

A second notable usage of the “name” in the Hebrew mindset concerns relationships. In Hebrew, the right to give someone a name established a measure of dominion over the named. This is in part the significance of Adam naming the animals (Gen 2:19). This is also the idea behind naming a conquered city (2 Sam. 12:28). Isaiah 4:1 speaks of seven women who wish to be called by a man’s name in order to have his protection. This is also conveyed in the comments about God naming the stars (Ps. 147:4) and Israel (Is. 43:1).

The Hebrew language had prepositions that often amounted to simply adding a letter or two to the noun at issue. The addition of the preposition often created a significant change to the meaning and thrust of the noun. We see that in the Hebrew word for “name.” There is a Hebrew structure where the letter “b” is added to the word “name.” When that is done the word is *b’shem* (בשם). This literally means, “in the name of,” but it carries the impact of “on behalf of.”⁷ This is especially significant in our reading of John as noted below.

As we move to consider “name” as associated with God, we see a stark difference between the religion of Israel and that of its neighbors, including the Greeks on the other side of the Mediterranean! While the other ancient gods sought to protect their names from discovery, lest other gods or people gain a measure of dominance or control, the God of Israel proudly pronounced his name. He wanted to be known. There was never a question that anyone established any measure of control over YHWH by knowing his name. Furthermore, YHWH guarded his name with a requirement it be treated holy and not be taken in vain (Ex. 20:7). Yet, God

⁷ Shachter, Haim, *The New Universal Hebrew English Dictionary*, (Yavneh 1984), vol. 2, at 765.

did not hide his name. He readily revealed it. In Exodus 20:24 God said, “I cause my name to be remembered.”

Another difference in the Hebrew God and his name was the way he put his “name” on earth, whereas God resided in heaven. So we read in Deuteronomy 12:11 that the tabernacle and later temple was,

the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell there.

With God, like with men, the Hebrew word “name” stood also for his reputation. There are many passages like Ezekiel 20:9 where we read,

But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made myself known to them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt.

There are also many places where “name” is used as a substitute or alternative for YHWH. A longtime favorite passage of mine has been Psalm 9:10,

Those who know your name, put their trust in you.

This passage wraps up so many of the usages of “name.” Here we see the word used as a substitute for “YHWH.” We also see it denoting God’s reputation. Certainly anyone who intimately knows and has experienced God in his actions would trust him!

3. John’s Use of Name/Onoma

John’s meaning of “name” clearly included many of the concepts we have considered above. Consider the passages below:

- **John 1:12** – “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” Here we see “name” as meaning his actions, reputation and personage—Jesus as redeemer and savior.
- **John 2:23** – “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.” Here we see that people believed his fame, his reputation, and maybe even his role as Savior, although that is not clear!
- **John 3:18** – “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the

name of the only Son of God.” Here we see the idea of “name” meaning the actions and memory associated with the deeds of Jesus.

There is a set of passages relating the name of Jesus to the name of God. Knowing the name of God as YHWH from the Old Testament, and also knowing that God’s name represented his presence on earth gives each of these passages special meaning, especially as they reflect on Jesus as God’s representative on earth:

- **John 10:25** – “The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me.”
- **John 12:13** – “So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!’”
- **John 7:6, 11-12, 26** – “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word... And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me... I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

But as we focus on John 20:31, we have something particular we must note. Scholars generally recognize that John is primarily writing a Hebraism in his purpose statement. By that, scholars mean that the Greek phrase John used was not ordinary in Greek writing. We are not here looking simply at the word “name,” but at the whole phrase translated “in his name.” It was really seen as a translation of the Hebrew expression *b’shem* (set out above). The Greek phrase John wrote (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι),

...is unusual in classical Greek; it is an attempt to render *b’shem* literally and exactly... It is to be regarded as real translation Greek, corresponding more to Semitic linguistic sense.⁸

That means that we have John saying that, “believing you may have life in his name,” in the sense that the “name” of Jesus is the instrument or basis of our salvation. We might translate it as “believing you may have life *on behalf of Jesus*.” Jesus, who he is, and what he has done, is the basis for our life. This

⁸ Kittel, Vol. V, at 262.

gives meaning to the other uses of this phrase in John as well. Consider each of the following:

- **John 5:43** – “I have come *in my Father’s name* [lit. “in the name of my Father”], and you do not receive me. If another comes *in his own name* [lit. “in the name of himself”], you will receive him.” We could translate the phrase to ferret out its meaning as, “I have come on my Father’s behalf, and you do not receive me. If another person comes on his own behalf, you will receive him!”
- **John 10:25** – “Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do *in my Father’s name* [lit. “in the name of my Father”] bear witness about me.” Jesus was doing his works on the Father’s behalf! That should certainly bear witness about him!
- **John 14:13** – “Whatever you ask *in my name* [lit. “in the name of mine”], this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything *in my name* [lit. “in the name of mine”], I will do it.” Here we read the phrase twice. Jesus is saying that whatever we ask on his behalf, he will do.
- **John 14:26** – “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send *in my name* [lit. “in the name of mine”], he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” God send the Holy Spirit on behalf of Christ! He is here because of who Christ is and what Christ has done. He works to work the works of Christ.
- **John 17:11** – “And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them *in your name* [lit. “in the name of yours”], which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them *in your name* [lit. “in the name of yours”], which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” Here Jesus is explaining in prayer that God gave the disciples into Jesus care for Jesus to keep and guard on God’s behalf. Jesus was finishing his task, and was reassigning to God the care of the disciples.

As we unlock the words, we have a marvelous expanded window into John’s purposes. We finish our look next lesson examining the miracles John selected for this purpose.

CONCLUSION

We have in John 20:31, John setting out his purpose for choosing his miracles, but also his purpose in writing his gospel. John has done so to encourage and aid people in their faith walk. John wrote so people would understand and grow in conviction that Jesus was not only a holy man. He was Israel's anointed Messiah. He was also the unique Son of God, unlike any other ever born. Through our beliefs, we are enriched with an eternal life based on who he is and what he has done. This life is not a dry desert existence; it is an abundant and vibrant life that gives joy and enthusiasm for each day.

The young man whose belief in Jesus as God's Son and a giver of eternal life may not realize the loss of deep contented joy in life, but it is evident to those who know him best. Certainly there are people who do not know God that are joyful, but not the deep-seated joy that comes from an intimate relationship with the Savior of the world, with God's promised Messiah, with the giver of life, with the crucified and risen Savior, so loaded with love that he would sacrifice beyond understanding to restore what was lost.

That joy is found only in Jesus.

POINTS FOR HOME

1. *"Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do"* (Jn. 14:13).

The name of Jesus is powerful. Not because there is magic in pronouncing the word "Jesus." Jesus was really a common name in New Testament times. The power in the name of Jesus comes only with an understanding that "name" means more than the label. It is Jesus who has the power. The power was shown in his victory over the fallen world as he demonstrated with miracles. It was also shown by the Father through Jesus' resurrection and victory over death. This is the "name" in which we pray and the name by which we are saved. Not the magic word "Jesus," but the active Son of God, Jesus!

2. *"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly"* (Jn. 10:10).

I was required to memorize this passage when I was 15 in preparation for a church mission trip. I learned it then, but it took me years before I began to better understand it. There is a life in Jesus that does not contain the stresses and worries of normal life. It is not a dead-end or meaningless existence when life is lived in relationship with Jesus. Trusting in him allows a peace that passes understanding, a joy that is indescribable. If we are not experiencing that in our walk with the Lord, we need to spend a little more time in the Gospel of John! He wrote it to prevent this!

3. *“Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do”* (Jn. 14:13).

When you pray, do you pray on your own? I ask my prayers to God “in the name of Jesus.” When I do that, in Biblical terms, I am asking God to hear the prayer “on behalf of Jesus.” That means both that I am seeking what Jesus wants (hopefully) and that as I am, God will grant the prayer on Jesus’ behalf. That makes this prayer a simple one to ask: “Lord, please let my prayers reflect the desires of Christ! In Jesus name, Amen!”

WANT MORE?

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (Jn. 20:30-31).

Next week is Passover Sunday, so we have two weeks to prepare for our final lesson on the miracles of John. It is our chance to take what we have learned from these two verses and apply them to the miracles. Finally, we get to address, why it is that John chose those seven miracles as the signs to accomplish his purposes set out here. Prayerfully read through and make a few notes about your assessments. Then come back in two weeks and see how many we have in common!