

The Authentic Christian and What We Know— December 2 & 3, 2017
Follow-up Bible Studies

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Day One: Matthew 3:13-17

- Set the scene of this text (13). What did John try to do (14)? What did Jesus say (15)? What did John ultimately do (15)? What do you think Jesus meant by “fulfill all righteousness”? In your mind’s eye, focus on John during this exchange: what facial expressions and body language do you observe?
- Describe what happened just after Jesus was baptized (16-17). Instead of water, wind or fire, why do you think the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove on this occasion?
- What did the “voice from heaven” say (17)? As with the way the Holy Spirit revealed himself, Father God chose these specific words for this moment. What do you make of this? Overall, what do the waters of baptism communicate about Jesus as Messiah?

Day Two: Matthew 11:28-30

- Whom is Jesus addressing (28)? What does he tell them to do (28)? What happens when the weary and burdened come to him (28)? In exchange for one’s burdens and the burdens of the world, what does Jesus want to give (29)? Why is this a worthwhile exchange (29)? What does Jesus claim is easy and light (30)?
- Why do you think Jesus uses a yoke, a farming symbol, to explain his role as burden-bearer? What sort of symbolism do you think would be more relevant today? Using 1 John 5:3-4, how would you describe to a friend outside the church what it means to trade the world’s yoke for Jesus’?
- Which aspects of the world and its prescriptions for living burden you? Lift this up to the Lord. What freedom does he want to bring? Pray for others who feel loaded down. How does God want to use you to draw them toward Jesus and his yoke?

Day Three: Matthew 27:32-56

- Who carried Jesus’ cross (32)? Describe the circumstances of his crucifixion (33-37). The sign, though mocking, tells the truth about Jesus. What other truths are communicated here?
- Who else was crucified (38)? Who joined the soldiers in taunting Jesus (39, 41, 44)? In what ways (39-40, 42-44)? Jesus was attacked from all sides. Do you think anyone, even a single person in the crowd, understood the truth about Jesus? Why or why not?
- Describe the final moments leading up to Jesus’ death (45-49). This chaotic and confusing scene centered around Jesus’ agony is a lot to take in. What are you thinking and feeling? How does Matthew describe the moment of Jesus’ death (50)?
- What was the immediate aftermath (51-53)? What assurance do these powerful events testify to your heart about Jesus being the Christ? How did the centurion and others respond (54)? Meanwhile, what were Jesus’ women friends up to (55-56)?

Day Four: Luke 1:1-4

- What does Luke say about the records of Jesus’ life that preceded his own account (1-2)? What do you make of the phrases “things that have been fulfilled among us” and “the first eyewitnesses and servants of the word”? They’re a bit vague, but also captivating. Also, the “first eyewitnesses” being the source material for the gospels gives them much credibility. Ask God to further testify to your heart that the Bible is trustworthy and worth reading.

- Why did Luke decide to write his own account (3)? Why do you think it was important to him that it be “orderly”? Imagine Luke writing this account specifically for “most excellent” you to read. How would you read the gospels differently if they were addressed to you? What does Luke want to make sure the reader knows (4)? How does the Bible help you to “know the certainty of the things you have been taught”? Thank God for this.

Day Five: John 3:1-15

- Set the scene of this text (1-2). What did Nicodemus say to Jesus, and why do you think he came to him at night (2)? How did Jesus respond to Nicodemus’ statement (3)? What is he attempting to convey regarding Nicodemus’ assumptions about Jesus?
- How does Nicodemus react to Jesus’ “born again” comment (4)? Describe what it means to be *spiritually* born again (5-8). How do Jesus’ words here relate to 1 John 5:1?
- Spiritual rebirth is not of your own doing. Does a self-improvement quest you’re currently undertaking need suspended so Jesus can bring new life? Ask God to speak to you about this possibility now. What is he revealing, and how do you think you should respond?
- Nicodemus needed more information; what did Jesus provide (10-15)? How would you sum up Jesus’ words here? Consider whether you accept all of Jesus’ testimony, even the aspects that have yet to pass. Do you *know* that you have eternal life? Ask God to speak a new word of assurance to you now.