

Exploring the Way to Eternal Life with Tibetans

Studies in the Gospel of John

The companion volume to:

༄༅། དཔག་རྩ་མེད་པའི་ཆེ་བློན་པའི་
ལམ་བཟུགས་སོ།།

永生之路

Exploring the Way to Eternal Life with Tibetans

Studies in the Gospel of John

The companion volume to:

༄༅། དཔག་རྩ་མེད་པའི་ཆོ་བོའ་པའི་
ལམ་བཟུགས་སོ།།

永生之路

© CAF, 2007

Scripture Quotations taken from the
HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION.
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

How to Use this Book

This book and its companion Tibetan-language volume* will help you introduce your Tibetan friends to Jesus Christ, the Way to Eternal Life. These books are designed to be used for Bible study with Tibetans, for learning Tibetan language, or for teaching English.

The English translation of the Tibetan text has been prepared in an easy-to-read style. The chapters and paragraphs in the Tibetan and English texts have been numbered identically (e.g. chapter 2, paragraph 8 in the English text says the same thing as chapter 2, paragraph 8 in the Tibetan text) so you can use these books to study with others. Note that there may be occasional small variations in meaning between the Tibetan and English texts. This comes entirely from the need to keep the English text simple and easily readable.

May God bless you as you explore His Word with your Tibetan friends!

* ཨྱ། དཔག་རྩ་མེད་པའི་ཆོ་ཐོབ་པའི་ལམ་བཟུགས་སོ།།

永生之路

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Gospel of John	7
Section One: Stories of the Lord Jesus	11
Chapter One: The Wedding at Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-11)	11
Chapter Two: Nicodemus Meets the Lord Jesus (John 3:1-21)	15
Chapter Three: The Lord Jesus and the Woman at the Well (John 4:4-26)	23
Chapter Four: The Story of a Man Born Blind (John 9:1-7)	29
Chapter Five: The Lord Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead (John 11:1, 3, 4-7, 11b-13, 17, 20a-27, 34-35, 38-45)	33
Section Two: Teachings of the Lord Jesus	41
Chapter Six: The Lord Jesus Teaches About Eternal Life (John 5:24-30)	41
Chapter Seven: The Lord Jesus is the Bread of Life (John 6:35-40)	44

Chapter Eight:	
The Good Shepherd	
(John 10:7-16)	47
Chapter Nine:	
The Lord Jesus is the Way to the Father	
(John 14:5-13)	50
Chapter Ten:	
What Love Means	
(John 15:9-17)	53
Chapter Eleven:	
The Lord Jesus is the Word	
(John 1:1-5, 10-14)	55
Section Three: Maps	59
Tibet and Israel	59
Israel	60

Introduction to the Gospel of John

1. This book is written for those who want to meet the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World. The Lord Jesus is the way to peace, joy, and eternal life. Through faith in Him, we obtain a right relationship with God. Today, many millions of people around the world are followers of the Lord Jesus.
2. The teachings of the Lord Jesus came to China during the Tang dynasty. The first Christian church in Tibet was built in the wood elephant year of the tenth cycle (1625) in the Guge kingdom in Ngari Prefecture. A second church was opened in Lhasa in 1726. (The bell from this church can still be seen in the Jokhang today.) In modern times, churches have appeared in Amdo, Kham, and U-Tsang.
3. The Lord Jesus was born at the beginning of the first century, about the middle of the Han dynasty. He lived in a land called Israel¹. The people of Israel were called Jews. The Lord Jesus and all twelve of His disciples were Jews. One of the disciples was a man called John. The Apostle John was a special friend of the Lord Jesus. Sometime during the latter half of the first century, John wrote a book about the Lord Jesus' life and teachings. This book is called 'The Gospel of John', and it is the fourth book of the New Testament. John wrote this book so that people could believe in the Lord Jesus and have eternal life through Him². John's Gospel is a very good book to read if one wants to know what Christians believe. The book you have in your hands contains ten selec-

¹ See the map section.

² John 20:31

tions from the Gospel of John. Each selection has a commentary written by a modern author.

4. John's Gospel uses many figures of speech. For example, 'the Word', the 'Son of Man' and the 'Son of God' are titles or special names for the Lord Jesus. Metaphors such as 'new birth', 'living water', 'bread of life', and 'pasture' show us that the Lord Jesus is the source of eternal life with God. The Apostle John also speaks of the Lord Jesus as 'light' to show how He reveals the truth about God³. John uses the words 'darkness' and 'blindness' to speak of ignorance and unbelief. He speaks of God as 'the Father' and the Lord Jesus as 'the Son' to show that the Lord Jesus came from God and is like God.

5. Love is a very important theme in the Gospel of John. The Apostle John is also known as the 'Apostle of Love' because one of the main themes in his book is God's love for humanity. Perhaps the most famous verse in the book is the sixteenth verse of the third chapter, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The Apostle John wanted all people to have faith in the Lord Jesus as God's Son, so that they could have eternal life. He wrote this Gospel for all to read and understand.

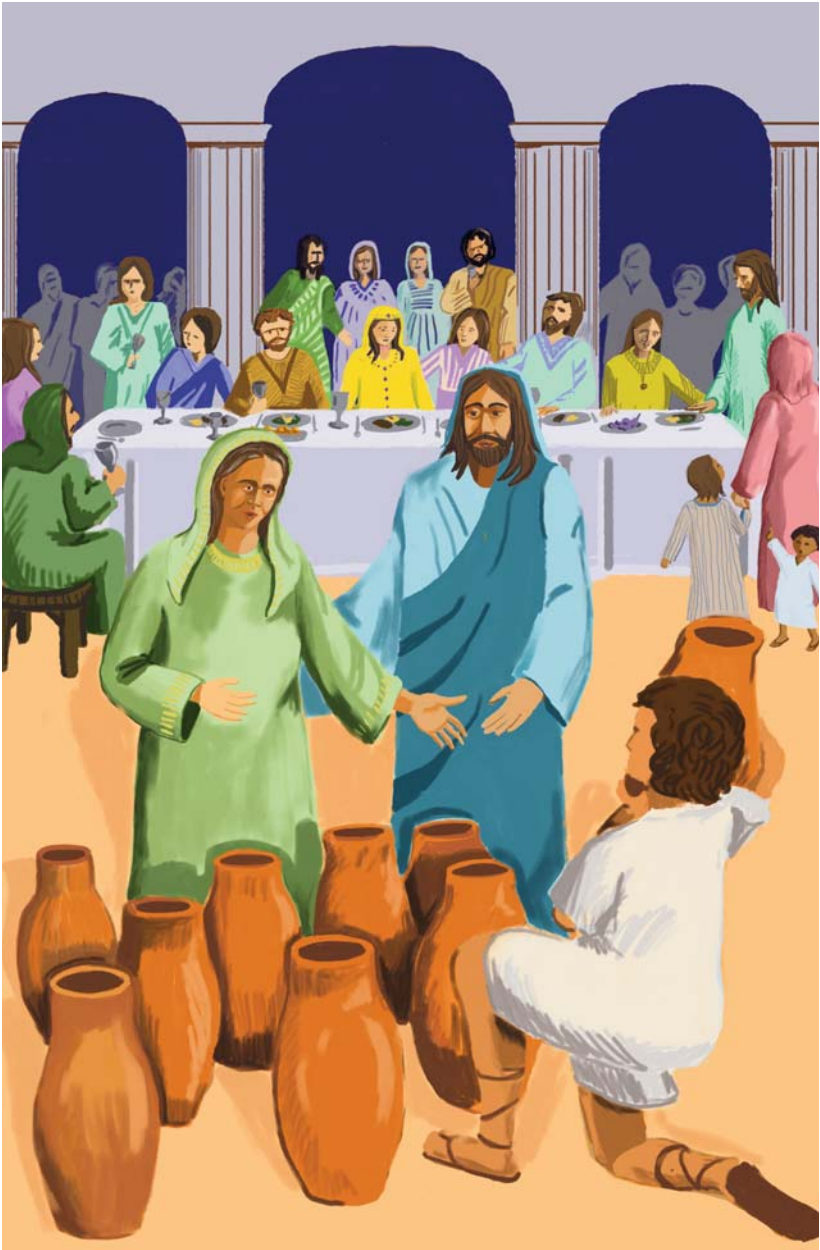
6. This book contains some of the best-known portions of the Gospel of John. Chapter and verse numbers are included so that you can find any of these stories in a complete Gospel of John or in a full Bible. To do so, first look for the book called John's Gospel, then find the chapter you want, then the verse.

³ John 1:4

For example, to find John 3:16, turn to the New Testament and find the Gospel of John, then turn to chapter 3, then look for verse 16. This method works for any verse in the Bible.

7. May God bless you as you read this book.

The Editors



Section One:

Stories of the Lord Jesus

Chapter One:

The Wedding at Cana in Galilee

(John 2:1-11)

1. Scripture Text On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, (2) and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. (3) When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." (4) "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied, "My time has not yet come." (5) His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." (6) Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. (7) Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

2. Explanation The Lord Jesus Christ grew up with His father Joseph and His mother Mary in a town called Nazareth in the northern part of the land of Israel. (1, 2) Near Nazareth was a town called Cana, where the Lord Jesus, His mother Mary, and His disciples were invited to a wedding feast. (3) The ancient Jews served wine instead of *chang* at weddings. A Jewish wedding feast usually lasted seven days, and there was supposed to be enough wine for all seven days. But at this feast, the wine ran out, bringing shame on the family. (4) When Mary told the Lord about this, He said, "Mother, why do you involve Me? My time has not yet come". He may have meant that once He began to do miraculous signs,

He had started on the road to His death on the cross. But before that, at this wedding feast, He was going to show a sign that He would give His own life for us. (5) His mother seemed to know that He was going to do something to help the family, so she told the servants to do as He said. (6) In ancient times the Jewish people had many purification rituals; for this reason there were in that place stone water jars. In the beginning of the world, God created water as a source of life for plants and animals. Later, God made springs in the desert to provide water for His people. For the Jews, water was an important symbol of life and of cleansing from sin. (7) The Lord Jesus told the servants to fill the jars with water, and they obeyed.

3. Scripture Text (8) Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” They did so, (9) and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside (10) and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.” (11) This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

4. Explanation (8) The servants drew out the water that the Lord Jesus had made into wine. (9, 10) The people of ancient Israel used wine as a food and as medicine. Like water, it too was a symbol of life. But its red color reminded people of blood, so wine later became a symbol of the death of the Lord Jesus. His death not only cleanses us from sin, it gives us eternal life. (11) When the disciples saw that the Lord Jesus had turned water into wine, they recognized that He had

performed a miraculous sign - a sign that the Lord Jesus is the source of eternal life with God. This is the reason that the disciples put their faith in Him.

5. Application In traditional Tibetan culture, wedding feasts went on for several days. When the bride arrived at her new home, the wedding party would begin. The bride and groom would sit on a rug; on a table before them were special foods made from wild sweet potato, rice, sugar, and butter, as well as tea and barley beer. Nearby was a box with token gifts of meat and butter, and baskets of grain arranged in rows and covered with silk or khatags. The family sat down in rows, and a friend sitting near the bride would help her when it was time to serve the food. Bridesmaids served beer and sang different kinds of songs⁴. Wedding feasts are times of joy in every culture.

When the disciples first began to follow the Lord Jesus, they might have thought that He would tell them to meditate or to pray or to fast by themselves. But instead, He brought them to a wedding feast, because the Lord Jesus does His work among *people*. Jesus did not remain in heaven with His Father, but in love He came down to our world. In ancient times He lived among the Jewish people. He taught them, healed their diseases, and told them about the way to eternal life. And He continues to do so among us today. He speaks to us when we read His word or when we pray. He commands us to go out into the world and to show His love to all people. When we do so, we too are doing God's work in this world.

⁴ See བོད་མིའི་ཡུལ་སྐོལ་སྐོལ་སྐོལ་གྱི་སྐོལ་༡༠༠ | p. 74.

6. To Study and Memorize Reading the Scriptures and thinking carefully about what they mean is very important for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason each chapter in this book ends with a single verse for study and meditation.

7. Memory Verse:

“The disciples put their faith in Him.”

(John 2:11)

8. Summary Table

Seven Signs and Miracles in the Gospel of John

1. The Lord Jesus Changed Water to Wine at Cana
(2.1-11)

2. The Lord Jesus Healed an Official's Son
(4.46-54)

3. The Lord Jesus Healed an Invalid at the Pool
(5.1-15)

4. The Lord Jesus Fed Five Thousand People
(6.1-15)

5. The Lord Jesus Walked on Water
(6.16-21)

6. The Lord Jesus Healed the Man Born Blind
(9.1-41)

7. The Lord Jesus Raised Lazarus from the Dead
(11.38-44)

Chapter Two:

Nicodemus Meets the Lord Jesus

(John 3:1-21)

1. Scripture Text (1) Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.

(2) He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.” (3) In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

(4) “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”

2. Explanation (1) The Pharisees were a religious party in ancient Israel. They were very concerned about obeying all of God’s laws. One of the Pharisees, a man named Nicodemus, was an important figure in the ruling council of the Jews.

(2) When Nicodemus saw the Lord Jesus’ miracles, he realized that the Lord Jesus was greater than a mere ‘Rabbi’, or Jewish religious teacher. So he went to see the Lord Jesus one evening in order to receive His teachings. (3) The Lord Jesus explained to Nicodemus that no one can come into God’s presence unless he has been ‘born again’. To be born again has nothing to do with reincarnation; it means that God changes a person inside so that his heart, mind, and life are made new. In this way he becomes a ‘child of God’⁵. To be a child of God means to think and act in ways that please God. The ‘Kingdom of God’ is God’s rule and authority in our lives.

⁵ John 1:12



(4) But Nicodemus still did not understand what the Lord Jesus had said.

3. Scripture Text (5) Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. (6) Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. (7) You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ (8) The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” (9) “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. (10) “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things?”

4. Explanation (5) The Lord Jesus explained that the new birth happens through ‘water’ and ‘the Spirit’. A person who is dirty washes in water to become clean. In the same way, sinful people can become clean in God’s sight by believing in the Lord Jesus, repenting of their sins, and receiving God’s washing (baptism). Those who are ‘born of water and the Spirit’ want to obey God and to do what pleases Him. (6) Just as children are born of human parents, so God’s children are born of the Holy Spirit. Just as human children want to please their parents, so God’s children want to please Him. (7) It is not surprising that the Lord Jesus said we must be born again, because He said that religious rituals and human effort cannot make us into God’s children. Only by believing in the Lord Jesus can we become God’s children. (8) As human life is a gift from our parents, so the new birth is a gift from God⁶. (9) Nicodemus still did not understand, (10) so the Lord Jesus gently rebuked him.

⁶ John 1:13

5. Scripture Text (11) “I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. (12) I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? (13) No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven - the Son of Man. (14) Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, (15) that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. (16) “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

6. Explanation The Lord Jesus gave Nicodemus two reasons to believe in Him. (11) First, the Lord Jesus came down from heaven (that is, the place of God) where He was with God from before the beginning of the world. The Lord Jesus knows God and speaks of what He knows. (12) Despite this teaching, Nicodemus and his party still did not believe. (13) Second, the Lord Jesus is the ‘Son of Man’. ‘Son of Man’ is a title or special name from the Old Testament⁷. The Son of Man is God’s appointed representative, who teaches and does miraculous signs with God’s authority. (14) Many centuries ago, the Jewish people lived as nomads in the desert. On one occasion God sent many poisonous snakes among them because the people had opposed Him. During this time, God commanded the prophet Moses to make an image of a snake. The snake was not a god and the people were not to worship its image, but the snake was a symbol of God’s forgiveness of sin⁸. Those who looked at it with faith in God were saved from death. (15) In the same way, those who

⁷ Daniel 7:13

⁸ Numbers 21:4-9

believe in the Lord Jesus (the Son of Man) receive forgiveness of their sins and eternal life with God. (16) God loves people so much that He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world. All who believe in Him will escape God's final punishment of evil, and they will live forever with Him.

7. Scripture Text (17) "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (18) Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (19) This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. (20) Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (21) But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

8. Explanation (17) On the last day of time, God will destroy all evil. Those without faith in the Lord Jesus will be separated from God and have to remain in hell forever. But God sent the Lord Jesus into the world in order to save people from punishment on the last day. (18) Those who believe in the Lord Jesus will not experience God's judgement. But those who love sin and have no faith in the Lord Jesus will be judged by God. (19) God's truth is like light, and sin is like darkness⁹. People who do what is wrong love the darkness. (20) Such people have been born in the ordinary human way, but they have not been born again. Since their minds have not been changed by God, they love darkness of sin and hate the

⁹ John 8:12

light of God's truth. (21) But those who are born of God welcome His truth; such people love the light and come into it so that their good works will be revealed.

9. Application In old Tibet there was a prince who had a wise minister. One day the prince commanded the old minister, "You must get me a horse which is not light brown, white, light grey, dark purple, tan, yellowish white, red, striped, or of any color at all. If this happens, I will give you the price of the horse plus any reward you wish. If this doesn't happen, there is no other punishment than death." The wise minister showed his wisdom and education in escaping from the prince's evil plan. A few days later, he went before the prince and said, "The horse you wanted is ready. You may get it on any day that is not a Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, or Saturday." So the prince was left speechless and defeated by the minister's clever plan.

10. The wise minister saved his life by using his wits, but in the end he died and is no more. Now Nicodemus was a wise official like the one in this story. When he heard the teachings of the Lord Jesus, he knew that he faced God's punishment for the bad things he had done. He understood that his own intelligence, education, wealth, etc. were of no value in God's sight for escaping from God's punishment of evil. So he saved his life by trusting in the Lord Jesus alone. Even though Nicodemus eventually died, he went to be with the Lord Jesus in heaven¹⁰. Anyone who wants to have eternal life with God can believe in the Lord Jesus, as explained below.

¹⁰ John 12:25

11. God is completely holy, but because of the bad things we have done, our relationship with Him has been ruined. When two people have a bad relationship, they need a trustworthy mediator or go-between. The mediator will talk with both parties and set the relationship right again. In the same way, the relationship between sinful man and holy God is not right; we also need a mediator. The mediator must not only know our human hearts, he must know God's heart as well. The Lord Jesus Christ was with God from before the beginning of the world, so He knows God. And the Lord Jesus became a human being and lived among us, so He knows people; He is the perfect mediator. If anyone believes only in the Lord Jesus, admits that he has done what is wrong, and repents, God will certainly forgive his sins. In this way people experience the new birth and receive eternal life.

12. The new birth is like a free gift. People who worship idols have to give them money and offerings, but what do they receive in return? The Lord Jesus made the perfect offering to God when He died on the cross. Those who believe in Him have only to admit that they are sinners and repent in order to receive eternal life. In this way, the Lord Jesus gives us eternal life as a free gift¹¹. Many Tibetan people are receiving the new birth by accepting God's free gift. With their families¹², they are becoming followers of the Lord Jesus. In this way they have escaped death, like the wise minister of ancient Tibet.

¹¹ Romans 6:23

¹² Acts 2:39

13. To Study and Memorize

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

(John 3:16)

14. Summary Table

In this selection, the Lord Jesus talks with Nicodemus about the results of faith.

Results of Believing in Jesus:	Results of Not Believing in Jesus:
Enter the Kingdom of God (3, 5)	Remain outside God’s Kingdom (3)
Be born again (7)	Human birth only (6)
Receive eternal life (15, 16)	Perish (16)
Be saved (17)	Be condemned (17)
Love the light (21)	Love the darkness (19)

Chapter Three:
**The Lord Jesus and the Woman
at the Well**
(John 4:4-26)

1. Scripture Text (4) Now he had to go through Samaria. (5) So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. (6) Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. (7) When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (8) (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) (9) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

2. Explanation (4) On the way from Israel's southern province of Judea to its northern province of Galilee, the Lord Jesus passed through the district of Samaria¹³. (5) Jacob and Joseph were ancestors of the Jewish and Samaritan people who had once lived in the area. (6) In Sychar, Jacob had dug this well which can still be seen today. (7, 8) When the disciples went to buy food, the Lord Jesus met a Samaritan woman who came to draw water from the well. (9) In the eighth century B.C., the Assyrian army invaded Samaria and took into exile many of the Jews who lived there¹⁴. The army put other nationalities in their place; by the time of the Lord Jesus most

¹³ See map section.

¹⁴ The Jews were exiled to Mesopotamia, which is now in Iraq.

Samaritans were of mixed race. For this reason the Jews and the Samaritans hated each other. Since a Jewish teacher would never speak with a woman alone, and since the Lord Jesus was Jewish and the woman was a Samaritan, she was very surprised that He spoke to her.

3. Scripture Text (10) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” (11) “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? (12) Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?” (13) Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, (14) but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

4. Explanation (10) Since Israel is a desert country, drinking water is very precious. But the Lord Jesus spoke to her of even more precious ‘living water’. This water is God’s gift and a symbol of eternal life. (11) Because the woman still did not understand the Lord Jesus, she thought He was speaking of ordinary water. (12) Seeing that He had no container, she asked where He intended to get this water. (13) Whoever drinks ordinary water will be thirsty again. (14) But the water that the Lord Jesus gives is eternal life. Those who receive it are satisfied forever.

5. Scripture Text (15) The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” (16) He told her, “Go, call your hus-



band and come back.” (17) “I have no husband,” she replied. (18) “The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.” (19) “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. (20) Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

6. Explanation (15) The Samaritan woman still did not understand the Lord Jesus, or even her own needs. (16) So the Lord Jesus showed her what she needed by sending her to call her husband. (17, 18) The Lord Jesus had supernatural knowledge. By asking her to call her husband, He reminded her that she was living a sinful life. Her real need was a right relationship with God. (19) Seeing that the Lord Jesus was a prophet, and ashamed because of her sin, she wanted to talk about something else, so she asked Him about the best place for worship.

7. Scripture Text (21) Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. (22) You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. (23) Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. (24) God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” (25) The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” (26) Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.”

8. Explanation (21) The Lord Jesus told her that true worship does not depend on whether the worshipper is in Samaria or in Jerusalem. Because true worship comes from the heart of the worshipper, it does not depend on where one is.

(22) The Samaritans had only part of the Old Testament and did not know the full truth about God. The Jews had the entire Old Testament. They knew the promises and commandments of God. They knew that God would one day send a Savior called the ‘Messiah’ (also called ‘Christ’) to the Jewish nation. For this reason He told her that ‘salvation is from the Jews’. Salvation means escape from God’s punishment of all evil, and being restored to a right relationship with Him. (23) Real worship does not come just from our bodies, but from our hearts and minds. It is giving praise, thanksgiving, and devotion from the depths of our hearts to a holy God. (24) Since God’s nature is spirit, those who worship Him must do so with their hearts and minds. (25) The woman knew that the Christ was to arise from among the Jews in order to save all races of people. (26) So the Lord Jesus said to her, “I am He.” She believed, and she told the people of Sychar about Him. (To read that story, see the fourth chapter of John’s Gospel, verses 27-42).

9. Application People need water, and water is also essential for growing our food. So water is a vital necessity for human life. In Nyingtri Prefecture there is over two meters of rainfall every year. There are many plants and animals there, and it is not difficult to grow food. In Lhasa there is not as much rainfall and the country is very dry. Farmers have to take water from the rivers to make their crops grow. Ngari is a desert because it gets only about 200 millimeters of rainfall each year. Where water is scarce in Tibet, life is also scarce; but where water is abundant, life is abundant. Like Tibet, the

Lord Jesus' homeland of Israel is a dry country and much of it is desert. This is why the Lord Jesus spoke about the gift of eternal life as 'living water'. It is like a spring (14) that gushes up to eternal life. Just like the woman at the well, anyone can receive God's gift of living water simply by asking the Lord Jesus for it in faith (10).

10. To Study and Memorize

"Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." (14)

Chapter Four:

The Story of a Man Born Blind

(John 9:1-7)

1. Scripture Text As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. (2) His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (3) “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. (4) As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. (5) While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” (6) Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. (7) “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

2. Explanation (1) In Israel’s capital city, Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus met a man who had been blind from birth. (2) His disciples wondered, “Is this man blind because his parents sinned, or because he sinned while he was in his mother’s womb?” So when they asked the Lord Jesus about it, (3) He explained that the man’s blindness was not because of his actions or because of his parents’ misdeeds, but so that God’s compassionate works might be shown in his life. (4) He pointed out that all of us must do God’s good works whenever we have the opportunity to do so. (5) He told the disciples that He was the ‘light of the world’. The Lord Jesus did not mean that He was like the sun or that He belonged to the world. He meant that He is like light because He shows the world who God is. When we believe in the Lord Jesus and obey His commandments, we become like light because we show others

who He is. (6, 7) The name ‘Siloam’ means ‘sent’; God sent the Lord Jesus into this world, and He is God’s ‘sent One’. For this reason He sent the blind man to the “Sent” pool. The blind man believed the Lord Jesus. Because the blind man believed the Lord Jesus, he went and washed in the pool, and came back seeing.

3. Application The Lord Jesus had compassion on the blind man and healed him. In the same way, when we see the suffering of others, we should not think, “This is because of that person’s evil deeds”. We should think, “This is so that God’s love will be revealed in his or her life”, and help that person. From the viewpoint of those who believe in the Lord Jesus, human suffering always has a purpose. This purpose is to reveal the works of God.

For example, when we ourselves suffer, we should pray with faith and ask the Lord Jesus to help us. In the book of Psalms God says,

“Call upon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you will honor me.”¹⁵

One of the prophets of ancient Israel said,

“In the day of my trouble I will call to you,
for you will answer me.”¹⁶

and,

¹⁵ See Psalms 50:15

¹⁶ See Psalms 86:7



“Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life”¹⁷

When others suffer, if we help them in love, this also reveals God’s works. In this way we will certainly see God’s glory revealed both in our lives and in the lives of others.

4. To Study and Memorize

“I am the light of the world.”

(John 9:5)

¹⁷ See Psalms 138:7

Chapter Five:
**The Lord Jesus
Raises Lazarus from the Dead**

(John 11.1, 3, 4-7, 11b-13, 17, 20a-27, 34-35, 38-45)

1. Scripture Text (1) Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (3) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” (4) When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” (5) Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. (6) Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. (7) Then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

2. Explanation (1) The name Lazarus is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Eleazar*, which means, ‘God helps’. Bethany is the modern town of El Azariyeh, which is about 3 kilometers east of Israel’s capital Jerusalem. Mary and Martha were friends of the Lord Jesus¹⁸. (3) The Lord Jesus loved His friend Lazarus; He loves all who believe in Him. (4) On hearing the report sent by Mary and Martha, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death.” In saying this, Jesus was not foretelling the future; He knew that what He was going to do would reveal God’s glory. When the Lord Jesus healed the man born blind, He said that the man’s blindness happened so that God’s good works might be revealed in his life¹⁹. In the same way, Lazarus’ sickness happened so that God’s good works would be seen by everyone. (5) Lazarus, Martha, and

¹⁸ See Luke 10:38-42.

¹⁹ See John. 9:3.

Mary were friends of the Lord Jesus. He was about to do for Lazarus what He will do on the last day for all who believe in Him. (6) Even though Jesus loved this family and wanted to be with them at the time of their brother's death, He stayed in the place where Martha and Mary's message had reached Him for two more days. By not going immediately, it would be clear that all human hope for Lazarus was at an end. The Lord Jesus Himself was their only hope. What He was going to do would increase the faith of His disciples, His friends, and the Jewish people²⁰. (7) Judea was the part of Israel where Lazarus lived. The Jewish officials had recently tried to stone the Lord Jesus in Judea, so it was still dangerous for Him to go back there²¹.

3. Scripture Text (11b) "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." (12) His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." (13) Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. (14) So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead".

4. Explanation (11b) When people fall asleep at night, they awaken in the morning. In the same way, when those who have faith in Jesus die, He raises them to eternal life. For those who have faith in the Lord Jesus, death is like sleep. For this reason the Lord Jesus used sleep as a figure of speech for death²². (12-13) Because they had little faith, the disciples did not understand that the Lord Jesus was speaking figuratively. Nicodemus and the woman at the well also did not understand

²⁰ See Luke 17:5.

²¹ See John. 10:31.

²² For example, see Mark. 5:39; 1 Corinthians 15:51; Ephesians 5:14.

the Lord Jesus when He spoke in this way. (14) His listeners have little faith, so the Lord Jesus must speak plainly.

5. Scripture Text (17) On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. (20a) When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him. (21) “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. (22) But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” (23) Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” (24) Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” (25) Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; (26) and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (27) “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”

6. Explanation (17) Martha and Mary sent messengers to the Lord Jesus just before their brother Lazarus had died. It took one day for the messengers to reach Jesus. He remained two days in the place where they met Him. And it took another day for His journey to Bethany, for a total of four days. (20a-21) Martha seemed disappointed that the Lord Jesus did not come sooner, but she still believed in Him. (22) Martha had a strong faith that nothing is impossible for God. (23) Jesus’ statement had two meanings: Lazarus will live again when all those who believe in Christ are raised from the dead on the last day, and Lazarus will live again this very day. (24) Martha understood the first meaning, but not the second. (25-26) All human life ends in physical death. But the Lord Jesus Christ gives life that never ends. We receive this life when we repent of our sins and believe in Him alone. When

our bodies die, the Lord Jesus raises us to eternal life. This is what Jesus meant by saying, “I tell you the truth, if a man keeps my word, he will never see death²³.” God makes this promise to all who believe in Him, and to their children²⁴. The Lord Jesus asked Martha if she had this kind of faith. (27) Martha showed that she did by saying three things about the Lord Jesus. First, He is the Christ, the Savior that God promised to the Jewish people. Second, He is the Son of God, that is, the One who perfectly does God’s will and reveals what God is like. Third, the Lord Jesus is the One who comes into the world from heaven. He knows God because He came from God and reveals God to everyone who has faith.

7. Scripture Text (34) “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. (35) Jesus wept. (38) Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. (39) “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” (40) Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”

8. Explanation (34) When the Lord Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus was already in the tomb. For this reason, the Lord Jesus asked where the body of Lazarus has been laid. (35) The Lord Jesus was moved with compassion at the death of His friend Lazarus and at the grief of His friends²⁵. (38) In ancient Israel, the dead were often buried in caves or in holes

²³ John 8:51

²⁴ Acts 2:39

²⁵ Jesus also wept over the unbelief of the people of Jerusalem, see Lk. 19:41. Lack of faith does not please God.

dug into the rock. People would put a large stone in front of the entrance to protect the body from animals or robbers.

(39) The climate in Israel is very hot, so Martha knew that there would be a bad smell from the body; Lazarus was really dead, he was not on a shamanic journey. Despite Martha's fears, Jesus commanded this stone to be taken away. (40) Just as the man born blind believed Jesus and saw the good works of God in his life, so Martha believed and saw the glory of God.

9. Scripture Text (41) So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. (42) I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." (43) When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" (44) The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." (45) Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.

10. Explanation (41-42) A major theme of the Gospel of John is that Jesus is sent by God the Father and does only what God commands²⁶. (43-44) In ancient Israel people would wrap dead bodies with strips of cloth; for this reason Jesus commanded them to unbind the body of Lazarus. (45) Not long before, the Jewish officials wanted to arrest and kill Jesus. Now even they had to admit that He had done a great sign²⁷.

²⁶ John 5:19

²⁷ John 10:47-48

11. Application In general, people who have friends are happy, and those without them are not. Real friends share their joys and sorrows with one another. If sickness or trouble strikes, our friends can help us. However, our friends cannot always be with us. For example, according to the Tibetan proverb, ‘One has to go alone (literally ‘without friends’) at the time of death’. But those who believe in the Lord Jesus have a Friend who will never leave them.

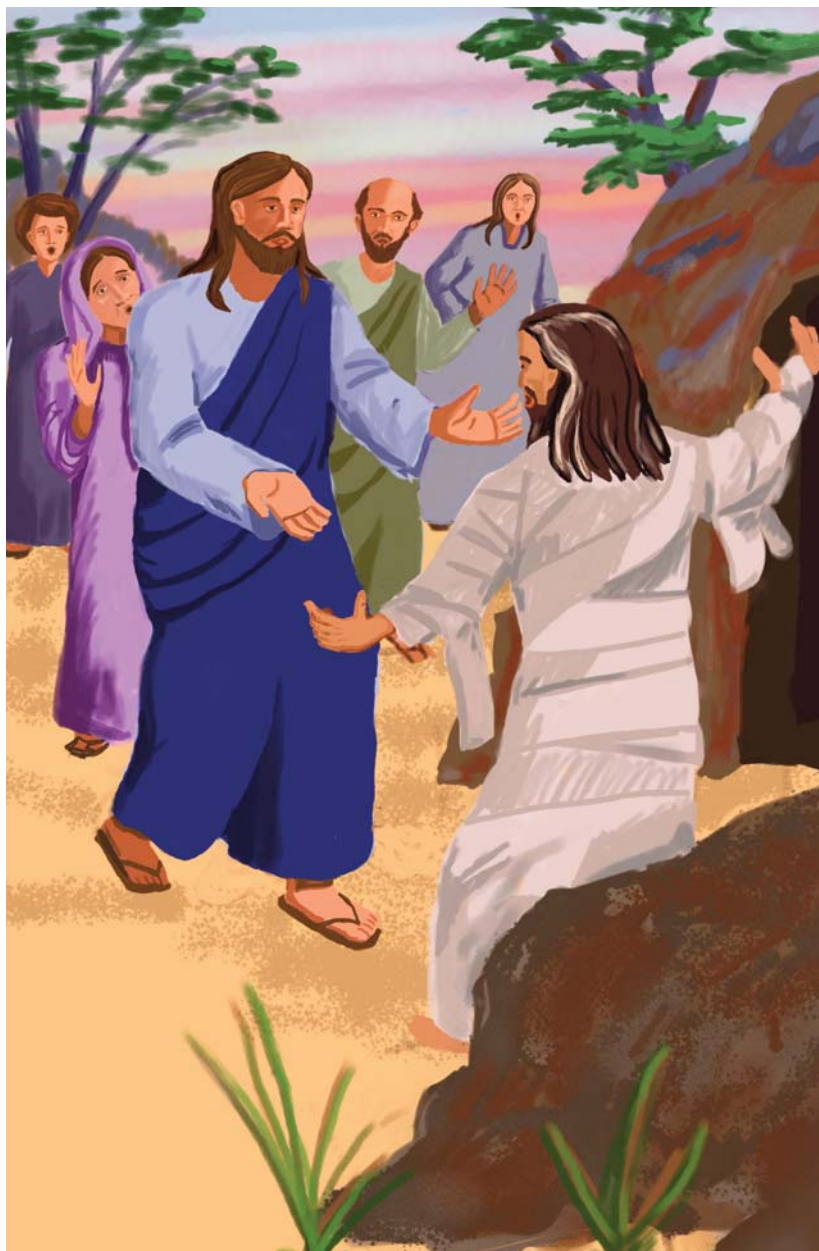
In this story, the Lord Jesus raised His dead friend Lazarus back to life²⁸. In doing this miraculous sign, Jesus showed that: a) God the Father had sent Him (v. 42), b) He is master over death, and has the authority to give us eternal life, and c) He Himself would later die and rise again from the dead in order to save everyone who believes in Him. As He said, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command²⁹.” If we repent of our sin, believe in Him only, and obey His commandments, then we too are friends of the Lord Jesus, just as Lazarus, Martha, and Mary were. If we are His friends, then it is for us that He has laid down His life, and when our bodies die, we will live eternally in fellowship with Him. At the time of death, believers in the Lord Jesus do not go alone - they go with Him.

12. To Study and Memorize

(25) Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; (26) and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

²⁸ The Lord Jesus raised others from the dead as well. See Mark 5:22-43, Luke 7:11-16, and 8:41-42.

²⁹ John 15:13-14



Section Two: Teachings of the Lord Jesus

Chapter Six: The Lord Jesus Teaches About Eternal Life

(John 5:24-30)

1. Scripture Text (24) “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. (25) I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. (26) For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. (27) And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. (28) Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice (29) and come out - those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. (30) By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.”

2. Explanation (24) Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ have eternal life now, in this life. (25) The word ‘dead’ can have two meanings. Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus were dead people who heard the voice of Jesus and lived³⁰. But Jesus also used the word ‘dead’ to mean those who pay no

³⁰ See John 11:44 and Mark 5:22-42.

attention to God³¹. If such people listen to Jesus and believe in Him, they will have eternal life. (26) Just as parents give human life to their children, so the Lord Jesus, who has boundless life within Himself, can give it to people like Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the man born blind, and Lazarus. (27) The Son of Man is a special name for the Lord Jesus³². God has given Him the authority to judge the actions of all people everywhere. (28) Everyone will stand before God in judgment at the last day. (29) Those who repent of their sins and have faith in the Lord Jesus will receive eternal life. Those who reject God will experience judgment and be eternally separated from God. (30) Since Jesus is the Son sent by God, He does nothing on His own. He does only what God tells Him.

3. Application Tibet has many famous rivers, such as the Yarlung Tsangpo, the Kyichu, and the Yangtze. Tibetan travelers must cross such rivers to reach their intended destination. For example, the traveler going from Lhasa to Tsetang must cross the Tsangpo River on the bridge at Takar, in Chushur County. In doing so, he leaves Lhasa Prefecture's Chushur County and enters Lhoka Prefecture's Gonggar County. In some places there are no bridges, and travelers must cross on boats or in yak skin coracles.

Just as travelers need a bridge or a boat to cross Tibet's rivers, so we need a way to cross from the land of death to the land of life. The Lord Jesus teaches us that faith is like a boat or bridge. We approach the bridge when we hear the Lord Jesus' words. This does not mean simply hearing what He has said or reading the Bible. It means carefully

³¹ See Matthew 8:22.

³² See commentary on John 3:13 concerning the Son of Man.

thinking about His teaching. When we do so, we realize with shame that our relationship with God is broken, because we have done wrong in His sight. We cross the bridge when we believe in God only, without worshiping other gods, and when we obey His commandments. If we do these things, the Lord Jesus will give us a right relationship with God. Then we have left the land of death, crossed the bridge of faith, and entered the land of eternal life.

4. To Study and Memorize

“Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

(John 5:24)

Chapter Seven:
The Lord Jesus is the Bread of Life
(John 6:35-40)

1. Scripture Text (35) Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. (36) But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. (37) All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. (38) For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. (39) And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. (40) For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

2. Explanation One day a crowd of over 5,000 people gathered in the countryside to hear the Lord Jesus teach. The crowd became hungry, but there was nothing for them to eat. The disciples told the Lord Jesus that a boy was there with five small loaves of bread and two small fish. The Lord Jesus took the bread and fish, and after giving thanks to God, He multiplied them in such a way that everyone had enough to eat. The following day, the crowd came to Him again. (35) The Lord Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life’. Just as bread nourishes our bodies, so the teachings of the Lord Jesus nourish our spirits. It is a source of life, like the ‘living water’ that the Lord Jesus mentioned to the woman at the well³³. The Lord Jesus said that anyone who believes in Him will never be

³³ See John 4:14.

hungry or thirsty again. This means that He gives us everything we need to live eternally with God. (36) Even though He invites all of us to come to Him to receive eternal life, some people do not believe. (37) But if we come to the Lord Jesus in repentance and faith, He will receive us and will by no means drive us out. (38) The Lord Jesus always does the will of God. (39) God wants everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus to have eternal life. He will raise these people to life on the last day of time, when the actions of all men are judged. (40) All who repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus will receive eternal life.

3. Application *Tsampa* is a nutritious staple food for Tibetan people. Not only is it good for health, it is easy to make, use, store, and carry. The most common kind, barley tsampa, is a flour made by washing dried barley and roasting it in a pan of hot sand, then grinding it. According to individual taste, it can be eaten dry, or mixed with oil, cheese, sugar, or butter. Mixed with tea it can be used to make dough balls called *bag*. Mixed with clarified butter, dried cheese, and sweet tea it makes what is known as *mar zan*. And there are many ways to use tsampa to make soups.

The people of ancient Israel had their own kind of barley bread. This bread was unleavened and made in the form of flat cakes that looked like the Muslim bread called *nan*. It was the main cereal-based item in their diet, and the everyday food of the common people. Like tsampa, bread was eaten mixed with butter or oil, and it was easy to make, easy to store, and easy to take on the road. For the ancient Jews, bread was a source of life. This is why the Lord Jesus said, “I am the bread of life”. Eating tsampa is good for our bodies. In the same way, repenting of our sin and believing in the Lord Jesus gives life to our spirits. The

one who eats the bread of life will never go hungry, and will live with God forever.

4. To Study and Memorize

“I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”
(John 6:35)

5. Summary Table

The ‘I am’ Statements of Jesus:

The Lord Jesus said, “I am the bread of life”. This is the first of seven “I am” statements in the Gospel of John. Each of the seven statements tells us something of what He is like.

‘I am’ Statement	Location in John’s Gospel
I am the bread of life.	6:35
I am the light of the world.	8:12 (and 9:5)
I am the gate for the sheep.	10:7 (and 10:9)
I am the good shepherd.	10:11 (and 10:14)
I am the resurrection and the life.	11:25
I am the way, the truth, and the life.	14:6
I am the (true) vine.	15:1 (and 15:5)

Chapter Eight:
The Good Shepherd
(John 10:7-16)

1. Scripture Text (7) Therefore Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. (8) All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. (9) I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. (10) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (11) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (12) The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. (13) The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. (14) I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - (15) just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”

2. Explanation In Tibet, where there are many nomads, shepherds are very important. After the Lord Jesus healed the blind man³⁴, He spoke about His work on earth as that of a shepherd. (7) During the time of the Lord Jesus in ancient Israel, sheep pens had only one gate. In the same way, the Lord Jesus is the one and only way into God’s Kingdom³⁵.

³⁴ See John 9:1-7.

³⁵ See John 14:6b, “No one comes to the Father except through me”.

(8) Those who “came before” the Lord Jesus are not the prophets, but false shepherds such as the Pharisees. Jesus’ sheep do not listen to them. Only the Lord Jesus is the way to heaven; anyone else who claims to be the way to heaven is really just a thief or robber who steals God’s glory. (9) Those who enter the sheep pen through the Lord Jesus will be saved, because He is the one way to receive eternal life. As the sheep need good pasture, so those who believe in Jesus need His word. (10) Thieves and robbers come to steal and kill and destroy God’s sheep, but the Lord Jesus is a good shepherd who saves and protects them, and gives them all that they need, even eternal life³⁶. (11) One of the Old Testament prophets spoke about God as our Shepherd:

The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters.³⁷

The Lord Jesus is the Shepherd who loves the sheep so much that He gives His own life for them. (12, 13) The Lord Jesus is not like the hired hand who runs away when the wolf comes. (14) As a good shepherd, the Lord Jesus knows each of His sheep by name; that is, He knows everything about them. (15) God the Father and the Lord Jesus know the sheep just as well as they know each other. (16) The Lord Jesus has sheep in more than one pen, but all of them are one flock with one Shepherd; for example, Tibetan Christians, Chinese Christians, Indian Christians, and Korean Christians are all like one flock with one Shepherd: the Lord Jesus.

³⁶ See John 5:24.

³⁷ See Psalms 23:1-2.

3. Application There is a story of a Tibetan shepherd named Pemba. One day Pemba shouted to the other shepherds, “There’s a wolf; come quickly!” The other shepherds came running with stones, sticks, swords, and guns. When they got there, they saw that there was really no wolf, and Pemba sat there laughing at them. Embarrassed because they had been deceived, they returned to their own flocks. After this had happened a few times, a wolf really did come to Pemba’s flock. Though he shouted urgently for help, the other shepherds thought he was just fooling them, as he had before. Since no one came to help, Pemba wasn’t able to stop the wolf, and it killed many of his sheep.

Pemba was a hired hand who did not care for the sheep, and so his sheep were lost. As Christians, our Shepherd is the Lord Jesus. He is the only way into God’s Kingdom, which is our ‘sheep pen’. When the Lord Jesus speaks of His sheep finding pasture, He means that He will give us whatever we need. Sheep need grass and water. The Lord Jesus offers his sheep ‘living water’ and the ‘bread of life’³⁸. He is the source of eternal life for His sheep. Though the Lord Jesus has sheep in more than one sheep³⁹ fold, believers are all one flock. Even though we come from many races, in Jesus we are all one⁴⁰.

4. To Study and Memorize

“I am the good shepherd”

(John 10:11, 14)

³⁸ John 6, 36

³⁹ John 1:4

⁴⁰ Gal. 3:28

Chapter Nine:
**The Lord Jesus is the Way
to the Father**
(John 14:5-13)

1. Scripture Text (5) Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” (6) Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (7) If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” (8) Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” (9) Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

2. Explanation (5) Before He died on the cross, the Lord Jesus talked with His disciples in order to comfort them. Two of them, Thomas and Philip, still did not understand the way to heaven. So they asked Him about this. (6) The Lord Jesus replied that He Himself is ‘the way, and the truth, and the life’. Jesus meant that we enter God’s Kingdom because of our relationship with Him; (7) the one who knows the Lord Jesus also knows God the Father. (8) When Philip did still not understand this, he asked the Lord Jesus to reveal the Father to them. (9) But Jesus replied, “The one who has seen me has seen the Father”. As the Scripture says in John chapter 1 verse 18, “No one has ever seen God, but the only Son who is in the bosom of God has made Him known to the whole world.” The one who sees the Lord Jesus sees God.

3. Scripture Text (10) “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. (11) Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. (12) I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. (13) And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.”

4. Explanation (10-11) The reason that the one who really knows the Lord Jesus knows God the Father as well, is that Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus. The Lord Jesus says only what God the Father tells Him to say. Just as the Father does His work through the Lord Jesus, so the Lord Jesus does His work through us. (12) The Lord Jesus promised that those who believe in Him will do as He does (13) for whatever we ask in His name, He does. And He can do more than we can ask or imagine⁴¹. If we are obedient and faithful, the Lord Jesus will grant what we ask in His name, and the whole world will come to know how wonderful God is. In this way, the Son brings glory to the Father.

5. Application There are pilgrims everywhere in Tibet. Some go to Lhasa, some go to Kailash, some go to Samye. When the pilgrims want to know the way to a holy place, they read traditional guidebooks called *nay yig*. A *nay yig* is an historical and route-finding guide to the famous places to be visited in a certain area. Modern versions even have maps and color pictures.

⁴¹ See Ephesians 3:20-21.

As Christians, we too are pilgrims. We are on our way from the kingdom of this world to the Kingdom of God. The Lord Jesus is our guide. He shows us the way to the good road and how to avoid the bad road. He helps us as we travel. But Jesus is more than just a guide to the good road. He Himself is the road to heaven. To travel on His road, we must repent of our sin and have faith in Him alone. In this journey the Bible is our guidebook, so we should read it every day. If we do these things, we will arrive at our destination in God's kingdom.

6. To Study and Memorize

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

(John 14:6)

Chapter Ten:
What Love Means
(John 15:9-17)

1. Scripture Text (9) “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. (10) If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. (11) I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (12) My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. (13) Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

2. Explanation As in the previous chapter, the Lord Jesus was speaking to His disciples. (9) He told them that He loved them in the same way that God the Father had loved Him; and that they must remain in His love. (10) This meant that even though Jesus was to die on the cross, the disciples must continue to believe in Him and obey His commandments. (11) The Lord Jesus wanted their joy to be full and complete. The joy that Jesus spoke of was a joy that comes from the Holy Spirit, so it would remain with the disciples even during trials and persecution. (12) The Lord Jesus commanded all those who believe in Him to love one another. (13) He Himself clearly showed the greatest love of all by laying down His life for us.

3. Scripture Text (14) You are my friends if you do what I command. (15) I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (16) You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit -

fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. (17) This is my command: Love each other.

4. Explanation (14-15) The Lord Jesus does not call us His slaves, but calls us His friends, because He has told us the things He has heard from the Father. (16) Just as a gardener plants trees that bear fruit, so the Lord Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit so that we will bear lasting fruit for Him. Such fruit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control⁴². (17) We make our faith perfect through the love which the Lord Jesus commands us to show to one another.

5. Application In Tibetan folklore the bird, rabbit, monkey and elephant are called the four harmonious brothers, because these four animals are one in their thoughts and behavior; they are like loving members of a single family. In the same way, the Lord Jesus commands us who believe in Him to show love to one another. Like a family, we meet together, we look after each other, and we love one another. This is the way that the Lord Jesus wants us to live together. When we do so, others see how wonderful God is, and they too will want to come to the Lord Jesus. The church will grow, and the Lord will be glorified in all of Tibet.

6. To Study and Memorize

“This is my command: Love each other.”

(John 15:17)

⁴² See Galatians 5:22.

Chapter Eleven:
The Lord Jesus is the Word
(John 1:1-5, 10-14)

1. Scripture Text (1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was with God in the beginning. (3) Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. (4) In him was life, and that life was the light of men. (5) The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

2. Explanation (1) The first sentence of the Gospel of John says, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”*. This is like the first sentence in the Bible, which says: *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”*⁴³

‘The beginning’ means the beginning of the world, when God made the universe. ‘The Word’ is a special name for the Lord Jesus. John wanted his readers to know that the Lord Jesus was God, and that He was with God from the very beginning of the world. ‘God’ means *Yaweh Kön Chog* who made the world. (2) John repeats the statement that the Lord Jesus was with God in the beginning. Unlike Tibetan authors, Bible writers often repeat statements that they think are very important; this was part of the literary style of the ancient Jews. (3) Through the Lord Jesus, God made everything that exists, including Tibet and its people. (4) The Lord Jesus is the source of eternal life. This life is like light because it shows the truth about God. (5) The Lord Jesus told the truth about God. Those who did not believe Him

⁴³ Genesis 1:1

could not understand it. They remained in darkness. But the darkness of evil and sin could not overcome the light of the truth about God.

3. Scripture Text (10) He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. (11) He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. (12) Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - (13) children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (14) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

4. Explanation (10) Even though the Lord Jesus made our world, the very people He created did not recognize Him. (11) The Lord Jesus was born as a Jew in the land of Israel, but His own countrymen did not receive or welcome Him. (12) To those who did believe in Him, He gave the right to become 'God's children'. God's children are the people of every race who believe in the Lord Jesus. They obey His commandments, and He gives them eternal life. (13) Only by God's mercy, and not by natural birth, are they 'born of God'⁴⁴. (14) Though the Lord Jesus was with God in heaven from the beginning, He came to live among us as a human being. He suffered with us in human form so that we might live eternally with God. This is why John speaks of the Lord Jesus as 'full of grace'. He taught us the truth about God, and so John says He was 'full of truth'. His life shows us how wonderful He is, which John expresses by saying, 'He revealed His glory'.

⁴⁴ See commentary on John chapter 3, verses 6-8.

5. Application When we look at the beautiful land of Tibet, we remember that God made the world through the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus made Tibet's snow mountains, its rivers and lakes, its plants and animals. He also made the people of Tibet. The Lord Jesus is like a great king who created a wonderful kingdom. Seeing the suffering of His subjects, He leaves His palace and comes to live among the common people. He eats their food and wears their clothes. He suffers for them and even sacrifices His own life in order to take away their sin. Those of His subjects who are poor, who are tired of sin, or who labor under heavy burdens may come to Him, and He will give them rest and eternal life with God.

6. To Study and Memorize

"In him was life, and that life was the light of men."

(John 1:4)

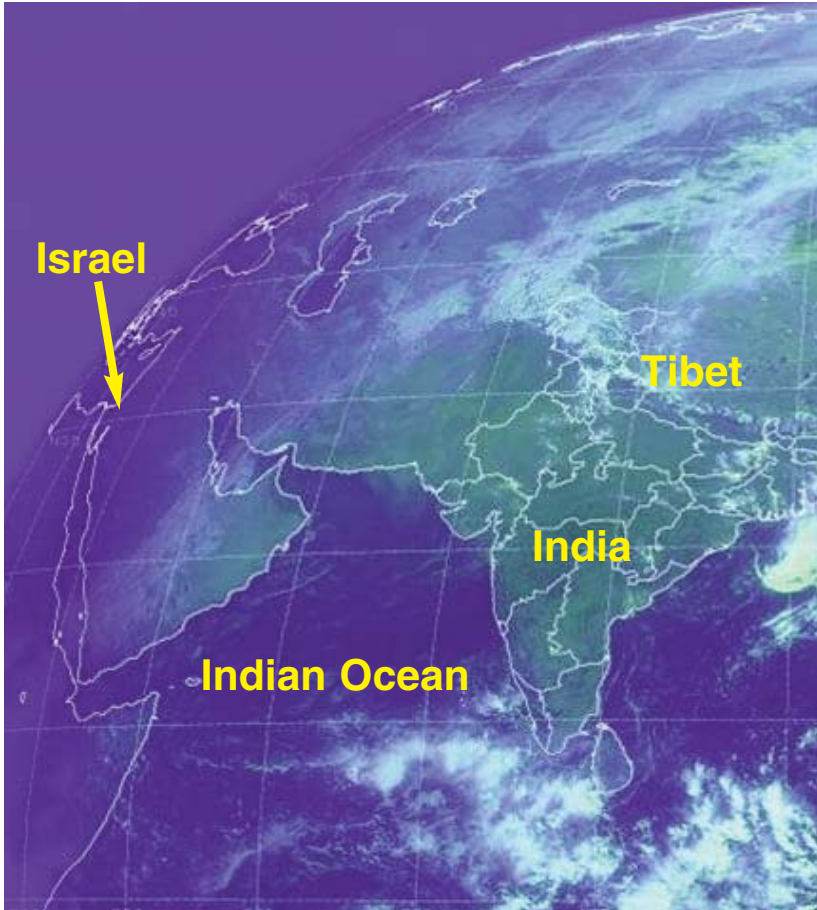
7. Summary Table

This text tells us seven things about the Lord Jesus.

Seven Characteristics of the Lord Jesus (from John 1)

1. The Lord Jesus is God.
2. The Lord Jesus was with God in the beginning of the world.
3. The Lord Jesus made everything.
4. The Lord Jesus has eternal life in Himself.
5. The Lord Jesus gives eternal life to us.
6. The Lord Jesus came into our world as a human being.
7. The Lord Jesus makes us to be God's children if we believe in Him.

Section Three: Maps



Tibet and Israel

3.1 This satellite photo shows Tibet and the land of Israel. At the bottom of the photo is India and the Indian Ocean. The distance between Tibet and Israel is about 5,000 kilometres.



Israel

3.2 This map shows the location of some of the stories in this book.

Other Books Available in this Bilingual Series:

How to Read Tibetan

Central Tibetan Edition

All-China Edition

Genesis Reader

The Story of Creation

Jesus Christ Has Power to Save Us

Exploring the Bible with Tibetans

