

Chapter 23

Jesus' Ministry Begins

Day One – Lamb of God

Today's reading: Page 321 through break on page 326

This reading covers: Matthew 3-4; John 1-2

Summary:

John the Baptist reveals Jesus to the world. John the Baptist called Jesus “the Lamb of God” as a picture of the sacrificial system God had ordained so long ago. Jesus, the Lamb of God, would be sacrificed once and for all.

Consider this:

From the following list, choose one name for Jesus that speaks to you today. How do you need him to minister to you today? How has he shown himself to you in the past? Choose one and share your thoughts in your journal.

Names for Jesus:

Word, Living Water, Bread of Life, Shepherd, Savior, Prince of Peace, Light of the World, Lord, Alpha and Omega, Redeemer, Master, Friend, Messiah.

For further reading:

Use the concordance found in the back of many traditional Bibles, or go to biblegateway.com to find some verses where that name appears. Look up your chosen word or type it into the search bar on the Web page. Verses will appear that contain this name. Reading some of the verses will make this aspect of Christ's character more alive to you.

Prayer:

Jesus, thank you today that you are my _____. (fill in the blank with the name you have chosen) Reveal this aspect of who you are to me today and help me show you to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day Two – A New Birth

Today's reading: Break on page 326 through break on page 327

This reading covers: John 3

Summary: Jesus' radical message about being born again.

This portion of our reading contains one of the most frequently quoted Bible verses in all of scripture. If you are a sports fan, you have undoubtedly seen John 3:16 written on a placard in the bleachers of many contests.

Consider this:

Being born again is a personal experience. Look up John 3:16 and make it personal in your journal. It will look something like this: “For God so loved me that he gave his only son, that if I believe in him I shall not perish but have eternal life.”

For further reading: Matthew 16:24-26

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for your son. Thank you for getting personal with me, so that I might understand my need, and your great gift. Please give me the opportunity to share with someone how they can be born again. Help me to be bold with your message of salvation. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day Three – Among the People

Today’s reading: Break on page 327 through end of chapter

This reading covers: Matthew 4, 11; Mark 1-3; John 4

Summary: Reading Jesus’ story reminds us that ministry happens among the people.

Consider this:

Jesus’ power, compassion, and love are shown through his people. Some of what Jesus did is beyond our calling. But we can buy school supplies for underprivileged children, provide toiletries for the homeless, paint a room in a Habitat for Humanity home, make a casserole for a sick neighbor, trim the shrubs for an elderly friend, hold babies in the church nursery, listen to a middle school girl pour out her heart or move chairs in a worship center.

The power of a servant’s heart speaks his message of love for others. What can you do today, this weekend, to help someone else? Where do you serve? If you don’t serve, it is time to put feet to your heart. If God has made a difference in your life, then you need to go out and make a difference in another.

For further reading: Matthew 20:20-28; John 13:34-35; Philippians 4:9

Prayer:

Father, thank you for those who serve me. I pray that you would help me to be a servant to others. Make me aware of opportunities, and give me a boldness to step out in obedience to you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.