

STUDY GUIDE FOR THE WEEK OF: June 8, 2008

ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD

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WEEK 10 OF THE SERIES

"By the Pool"

Scripture

^{NIV} **John 1:1-15** 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 {⁵ Or darkness, and the darkness has not overcome} it.

⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John.

⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.

⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. {⁹ Or This was the true light that gives light to every man who comes into the world}

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, {¹³ Greek of bloods} 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, {¹⁴ Or the Only Begotten} who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'"

Study Notes

In our passage for this week, Jesus encounters a man who has given up hope of his life being changed. We are told that the man had been an invalid for thirty-eight years and for a long time he had been lying next to the pool because of its healing powers. Chances are your bible has what we call a textual note at the bottom of the page concerning verse 4. This verse appears in less reliable manuscripts and was probably added by a scribe who wanted readers to know about the legend that surrounded the pool. It was believed that an angel would come and stir the waters from time to time and that the first person in the water after the stirring would be healed. Most likely, there was an underground spring that caused the stirring. This pool (and the five colonnades) was successfully excavated by archeologists in the 1960's and can be seen today.

Questions for Personal Reflection and Small Group Discussion

1. What makes this healing story somewhat unique? What does it say about Jesus that he approaches the man and asks him if he wants to be healed? What does this story tell us about grace?
2. Jesus asks the man a somewhat surprising question. What does this question tell you about Jesus and how he works in people's lives?
3. What does the man's response tell you about him? What words would you use to describe this man?
4. How would you paraphrase Jesus' reply, "Stand up, take your mat and walk."
5. What does the response of the religious leaders tell you about them and their religion?
6. C.S. Lewis once said that "*a familiar captivity is frequently more desirable than an unfamiliar freedom.*" What are some reasons we sometimes settle for familiar captivities instead of seeking freedom?
7. Are there any areas, relationships, or situations in your life in which you have settled for a familiar captivity? Do you still have hope in Christ's power to change and heal? What does this story tell us about the power of Christ to change or heal, and our responsibility, or part in that healing?