

**FAITHFUL SHEEP MINISTRIES****4 AUDIO TALKS -  
"ENCOUNTERS IN JOHN"**

(Home printing of these pages is recommended)

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## A. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this series of devotional Talks, delivered by the Rev. Oliver Bayley of **Faithful Sheep Ministries**. At **Faithful Sheep Ministries** our purpose is to build more effective Christian disciples in this age of challenge and confusion. The more "faithful sheep" we can help to bring into being, the better for us all, and the greater the glory for Almighty God.

Here are some practical details:

a) **These devotional Talks are best heard** when you can be quiet before the Lord, either by yourself, or with members of your family or house group. If possible, read the particular passage yourself in full in your own Bible before listening to the Talk (the relevant chapter(s) are shown in the heading of each Audio Talk). Having your own Bible available as you listen, perhaps with a notebook and pencil, can be helpful. You can always pause the Talk, or rewind it, as it plays through.

Above all, please regard these Talks as being **restful, devotional and refreshing**. They are **not** trying to give you yet more work, and they are **not** trying to squeeze every last drop of theological meaning out of every single phrase in the Bible passage! They **are** trying to help you become a more faithful sheep in the flock of the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

b) **In these Talks we use the King James Version / Authorised Version (KJV / AV)**, for good reason -

- The KJV is still the standard version for many Christians around the world, and for those of us who use different versions today, getting hold of a KJV is easily done.
- The immensely valuable exhaustive Concordances, such as Strong and Young, plus many other useful Bible study books, are based on the KJV.
- The KJV is based on the Textus Receptus (TR), regarded by many as still the most reliable Hebrew and Greek text. TR has the great advantage of pre-dating the more liberal biblical texts that were developed in the nineteenth century (notably the Westcott and Hort text on which many modern translations are based, including the NIV).
- The KJV has stood the test of time - over 400 years of time in fact. We are in an age of new versions of the Bible being published every year, but few of them stay on the scene for long. Yet we still have the KJV, neglected but unbowed. The KJV remains in "a league of its own" in terms of authority, "feel", reverence, beauty and ease of memorising. It is very hard not to treat God's Word with respect and reverence when using the KJV.

We realise that the KJV may not be the version our readers and listeners

normally use for themselves these days. No matter - the KJV is worth discovering, or re-discovering. We suggest you have your own Bible version open before you, but with a KJV nearby.

c) The book "**The Restored Vision**", by Arthur Ware, is referred to in a couple of the Talks. This book details the various calendars at work beneath the pages of Scripture, which the author and his colleagues believe the Holy Spirit revealed to them over many years of careful study. The findings are remarkable. "**The Restored Vision**" is normally available on Amazon, and is well worth a close look.

d) **About the Study Questions:** It is best that you respond to the Lord and His Word in your own way and time, so in one sense, the less you make use of these supportive questions, the better! Try to see them like stabilisers on a child's bike - very helpful to start with, but designed to be left behind quite soon.

Keeping that broad aim in view, we offer three levels of questions to help you reflect and respond to the Bible passages and accompanying Audio Talks, either by yourself or with members of your House Group:

**Level 1:** Some specific questions concerning the particular passage. These are primarily for those who are younger in the Faith, or for when those who are older in the Faith are feeling in need of something definite to get them started!

**Level 2:** A set of standard questions and suggestions, designed to be applicable to any of the Bible passages and Talks.

**Level 3:** A few seeds are scattered. We give little guided input at this level, but rather produce a few "seeds" for you to explore in your own way as you wish. This level is primarily to promote your serious independent Bible study, using cross-references and a full Concordance such as Strong or Young, with an awareness of the Hebrew and Greek words on which the English words used in translation are based.

Do not shy away from this Level 3, thinking it will be beyond you! - it probably won't be. Getting to know your way around a thorough Concordance may take some time and concentration, but you will find you honestly do not need any knowledge of Hebrew or Greek, and the rewards will be immense.

The key thing is for you to be open to what the Holy Spirit really wants to say to you, through this passage and Talk, at this time. Achieve that openness, and listen for long enough to receive what the Holy Spirit is saying, and you will grow fast! Your life will change shape. Your priorities will be re-aligned. Your saltiness and light-spreading will become more marked. People will notice. And all will be for the greater glory of God.

## **B. THE STUDY QUESTIONS, FOR YOUR PRAYERFUL REFLECTION AND RESPONSE**

### **LEVEL 2 - THE STANDARD QUESTIONS**

**These can be applied to any Bible passage or Audio Talk**, but they will not all be relevant each time. Their purpose is to get you started on your own journey of reflection and prayer. When they have done that, don't hesitate to leave them behind.

- 1) What truths have struck you especially about this passage or Talk – and in what ways have you been struck?
- 2) As a result, what questions arise for you? What do you find yourself wanting to say to the Lord? –
- 3) – and what do you feel He is wanting to say to you?
- 4) Maybe other parts of Scripture come to mind for you prayerfully to follow up if you wish .... perhaps people, events, situations? Perhaps promises, instructions, teachings, examples?
- 5) How is this passage or Talk, and your reflections upon it, adding to your understanding of God and His ways? – and perhaps of yourself, and others too?
- 6) Take time to ponder, chew, explore, pray, as the Holy Spirit does His quiet work in your life through this passage or Talk. Talk to the Lord, tell Him, ask Him, thank Him. And be quiet too! – just be, listen, receive.
- 7) You will find in the days to come that your mind may keep returning to the passage and Talk – that is all to the good. Keep your channels ever-open to the Lord, and give the Holy Spirit the welcome, the time and the space which He seeks. For He has further precious things to share with you from this passage and Talk, and He is likely to go at His own pace in showing you.
- 8) Practise allowing the Lord's insights and truths to make a difference in your daily discipleship - your thoughts, your words, your deeds, your body language. Perhaps you are being prompted into some definite practical responses to make as a result of all this?

**AUDIO TALK 1 - (approximately 25 minutes)  
from John Chapter 3 - "A MAN OF THE PHARISEES"**

**Level 1 - Some Specific Questions**

- 1) What was Nicodemus getting right, and where was he falling short?
- 2) Imagine that Nicodemus has come to you! He is intrigued and puzzled by this man Jesus, and is asking you to explain who Jesus is and what is going on:
  - a) What will you say to him? Put together the content of your reply.
  - b) How does your reply differ from the approach which the Lord Himself took with Nicodemus? Why the differences?
- 3) Ponder 3.16-19:
  - a) What is being offered?
  - b) What are the benefits for any who believe?
  - c) What is the situation for those who do not believe?
  - d) Who comes into your mind at this time, as being in need of your prayers over these matters? Let the Lord lead you ....
  - e) What is your own fresh response to the Lord, in the light of His words and the truths He tells us?
- 4) What is your own experience of having been "born again"? When did this happen, and over how long a period of time did this process take? Who were the human instruments given a part in the process by the Lord? What difference does - or could - your fresh realisation that you are "born again" make in your life? If this question worries you, talk it through humbly and honestly with the Lord. Let Him reply. Be open to the blessings He has for you. Go and seek the help of one or two Christians you respect. Jesus assures us - "I am come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10.10) - and He means it.

**Level 2 – Some Standard Questions – (shown on page 4)**

**Level 3 – Some Scattered Seeds ....**

You will find your Bible's cross-references, and a full Concordance that is based on the Bible translation you have, are helpful as you tackle these seeds:

- a) v 3 ....born again / he cannot see the kingdom of God ....
- b) v 5 .... born of water and the Spirit / he cannot *enter*....
- c) vv 11-12 The singles and plurals (shown most clearly in an AV-based Bible)
- d) v 14 (i) The similarities and differences between "the serpent/snake in the wilderness" and the cross of Calvary. (ii) The occurrences and significance of "serpent/snake" itself within the Scriptures.
- e) vv 16-19 perish / everlasting life / condemned / saved / believe.

**AUDIO TALK 2 - (approximately 20 minutes)  
from John Chapter 5 - "THE POOL OF BETHESDA"**

**Level 1 - Some Specific Questions**

- 1) What features particularly strike you over this incident?
- 2) Consider the hopes, fears and concerns, *throughout this story*, of:  
The crippled man / The other sick people by the Pool / The Jewish authorities / the Lord.
- 3) The authorities were so upset because the healing took place on the sabbath vv 9, 10, 16:
  - a) How do you think they would have reacted if it had occurred on any other day?
  - b) Why did Jesus frequently break the Sabbath? What does He want us to understand from this?

**Level 2 – Some Standard Questions – (shown on page 4)**

**Level 3 – Some Scattered Seeds ....**

You will find your Bible's cross-references, and a full Concordance that is based on the Bible translation you have, are helpful as you tackle these seeds:

- a) v 6 Jesus takes the initiative. Explore the "opening gambits" involved in His many other healings throughout the Gospels. Who does the asking? What are they asking for? What is the range of Jesus' responses, and why?
- b) v 8 .... Rise up ....
- c) v 14 The link between sin and sickness, both in this passage and elsewhere
- d) The old difficult question: why are some healed, and others are not? ....
- e) Seeds concerning "the sabbath": (i) Under the Old Covenant, what was the sabbath, and what was it for? (ii) In the days of Jesus' earthly ministry, what had the sabbath actually become in practice? (iii) What does Jesus want us to understand, under the New Covenant, from His frequent "breaking" of the sabbath? (iv) Are all Old Covenant Laws "bendy" these days? How do we decide which ones are, and which ones are not? - and on what grounds do we decide?

**AUDIO TALK 3 - (approximately 23 minutes)  
from John Chapter 8 - "A WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY"**

**Level 1 - Some Specific Questions**

- 1) If she had been given a chance to speak, what possible lines of defence might the woman have adopted in a bid to escape punishment? Do any of these impress?
- 2) Time and time again in the Gospels, the Lord instantly appreciates the "nub of the question". What therefore is His agenda with (i) the accusers, and (ii) with the woman herself?
- 3) Which individuals, or groups of people, do we find it natural and easy to accuse of wrongdoing these days? How does the Lord regard our attitudes?
- 4) What is the "nub of the question" as far as the Lord is concerned in your own situation at the moment? What one truth is He wanting you to get hold of at this stage in your Christian life?

**Level 2 – Some Standard Questions – (shown on page 4)**

**Level 3 – Some Scattered Seeds ....**

You will find your Bible's cross-references, and a full Concordance that is based on the Bible translation you have, are helpful as you tackle these seeds:

- a) v 6 (i) Why does He stoop? (ii) The famous debate – what did Jesus write on the ground? We cannot ask Him just yet, but what suggestions do you have?
- b) v 9 The significance of "one by one, beginning at the eldest" ...
- c) v 11 Is Jesus "soft on sin"? Consider other incidents within the Gospels involving Jesus and blatantly sinful people.
- d) v 5 (i) What exactly therefore is Jesus' answer to their question? (ii) What is His relationship to the Law of Moses, as revealed by His words and deeds, both here and elsewhere within the Gospels?

**AUDIO TALK 4 - (approximately 22 minutes)  
from John Chapter 11 - "THE RAISING OF LAZARUS"**

**Level 1 - Some Specific Questions**

- 1) Ponder the thoughts and feelings of the two sisters, from the time Lazarus becomes sick, through till the words "Untie him and let him go" . What parallels do you have perhaps in your own experience, of a similar "roller-coaster" journey, when at times you have felt the Lord is just not bothered?
- 2) vv 21 and 32 If it was you who was greeted by the words "If only" by each of the sisters, how would you have reacted, and why? How by contrast does Jesus react, and why?
- 3) v 35 Why did Jesus weep? Surely there was no need?
- 4) v 46 What on earth was on the minds of those who scurried off to the Pharisees? Just what was it that led all of Jesus' opponents to refuse the evidence before their eyes, and to seek to get rid of Him?

**Level 2 – Some Standard Questions – (shown on page 4)**

**Level 3 – Some Scattered Seeds ....**

You will find your Bible's cross-references, and a full Concordance that is based on the Bible translation you have, are helpful as you tackle these seeds:

- a) v 4 This sickness is not unto death ....
- b) vv 9-10 What is Jesus meaning here, in this context of His resolve to return into Judea and possible trouble?
- c) v 11 Our friend Lazarus sleepeth .... What the Holy Spirit tells us about death: under the Old Covenant; in the Gospels before Jesus' death and resurrection; and afterwards; in the Epistles. (Beware: this seed is a major project!)

## **FAITHFUL SHEEP MINISTRIES**

### **4 AUDIO TALKS - "ENCOUNTERS IN JOHN"**

**WITH STUDY QUESTIONS FOR YOUR  
PRAYERFUL REFLECTION AND RESPONSE**

**We hope these Audio Talks and Questions have  
been a blessing for you.**

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**[info@fsmins.org](mailto:info@fsmins.org)**