

## Weekly Bible Study group – October 28, 2009

*This week's reading assignment: John 6-11*  
Reflection by Bob Zurinsky ([bob@spu.edu](mailto:bob@spu.edu))

This week I've been impressed once again with just how important it is to read the whole story.

If we want to understand the message of the book of John, there's no way around it – we've got to read it all together, and resist that age-old temptation to pick and choose favorite verses. This week the group staff once again studied the text together. And what we're beginning to see is that all these chapters are connected, building, moving toward something. There is a main point we're supposed to discover.

Your challenge this week: Read the text! Out loud, if possible!

To catch us up, here's the basic plot so-far:

--- Jesus arrives on the scene and John the Baptist declares that he is the *moshiach* (a.k.a. Messiah/Christ) that the people have been waiting for. As we learned a few weeks ago, this is a name that is given to anointed leaders – God's chosen ones who are responsible for leading the people. At last, a new king has arrived to restore the glory of Israel!

--- Jesus agrees: Yes, I'm the one you've been waiting for. And to show that he has been chosen by God, he performs miracles that demonstrate his authority over all kinds of things – nature, disease, human hearts, etc. A king, a leader from God, has truly arrived.

--- But this week, in chapters 6-11, Jesus begins making *outrageous* claims. Some people were willing to accept that he was the anointed leader, but now he takes it a step further. **"I tell you the truth – before Abraham was, I AM."** In a single forbidden phrase, Jesus elevates himself to the position of God. And in the ultimate act of divinity, he raises a man named Lazarus from the dead. I am God, he says, and I hold the keys to not only this nation, but to time and death itself. Mind-blowing. The story is clearly reaching a climax. He's not only king, he's also *God*. What could Jesus possibly do or say *next*? Undoubtedly the people are now expecting him to overthrow the oppressive government of Palestine, if not Rome itself. The kingdom was coming!! All was about to be restored, as the prophets had predicted!

--- And next week...well, wait and see. It's a twist that none of his followers anticipated. And it's the point.