

# Engaging Jehovah's Witnesses with the Gospel

By Matt Queen

## Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

### Assignment One

Read Psalm 32:1–2. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: According to these verses, what is something that only God can do and that results in blessing to those who receive it from Him?

### Assignment Two

Read Jeremiah 17:9–10. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: According to these verses, what two actions can only God perform in relation to someone's heart and mind?

### Assignment Three

Read Psalm 103:1–3. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: According to these verses, what are two benefits that only God has the power to bring and that must never be forgotten?

## Scripture to Memorize

*...the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...* Mark 2:10

## Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will be able to evangelize Jehovah's Witnesses with biblical evidence in order to convince them that Jesus is God.

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## It's in the Book

30 minutes

### Real-Life Scenario

On a Thursday afternoon you and your family are playing a board game at home. At the moment your husband is about to win, the game is interrupted by the doorbell. You open the door and see two women who identify themselves as Jehovah's Witnesses. The things they tell you and your family sound biblical and Christian, but you wonder if they really are. To satisfy your uncertainty, you ask them, "Who is Jesus?" They convey to you they do not believe Jesus exclusively is God. They then ask you, "Where in the Bible does Jesus ever claim to be God?" How would you respond?

Read Mark 2:1–12 out loud.

### Studying the Passage

**Verse 1. It was reported that He was at home.** Jesus, having taught in Capernaum's synagogue (Mark 1:21–22), having cast a demon out of a man (Mark 1:23–27), and having healed the crowds (Mark 1:29–34), left to do those same things throughout all of Galilee (Mark 1:39–45). He then returned to a home in Capernaum, probably the house of Simon Peter.

**Verse 2. Many were gathered together.** Upon hearing that Jesus had returned to Peter's house, crowds of people came there to see Him, to be healed by Him, and to hear Him speaking the Word to them.

**Verse 3. And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic.** Four men brought a man who was paralyzed so Jesus could heal him.

**Verse 4. Could not get near Him because of the crowd.** The enormous crowd that both filled and surrounded the house prevented them from getting the paralyzed man to Jesus. **They removed the roof above Him.** Houses located in Capernaum during the first century generally had a step or ladder system on the side of the house that gave access to the roof. House occupants needed access to the roof because many people would sleep on their roofs during the evenings because the humidity sometimes made it too hot for them to sleep inside. The breeze coming off the Sea of Galilee would provide some relief to the discomfoting heat during the night. The four men literally "unroofed the roof." They began to pull back the branches and wood that covered the roof in order to make an opening to Jesus. **When they had made an opening, they let down . . . the paralytic.** The language the Bible uses here indicates that the four men's digging through the thatch and other materials proved to be a strenuous task. They finally broke through the roof and made an opening large enough to let the paralyzed man into the presence of Jesus.

**Verse 5. Jesus saw their faith.** Whatever others must have thought about the hole in the roof, Jesus' attention was drawn to the faith of the four men and the paralyzed man. These four men and the paralytic's desperate act indicated a personally held belief in their hearts that Jesus alone had the authority to solve the paralyzed man's problem. **Son, your sins are forgiven.** Instead of saying, "You are healed" (which the four men and the paralyzed man undoubtedly expected), Jesus met the paralyzed man's greatest need in response to the faith the man had in who Jesus was.

**Verse 6. Scribes.** Because no photocopiers, scanners or printing presses existed at that time, scribes were employed to make copies of the Old Testament. Scribes were present in the crowd that day. If any group of people knew what was written in the Old Testament in that day, the scribes were those people. They spent day and night copying the Scriptures, line by line, from an existing scroll to a new scroll.

**Verse 7. Why does this man speak like that?** Upon hearing Jesus' claim to forgive the paralyzed man's sins, the Bible says they thought to themselves, *He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?* The scribes understood that the Old Testament taught only God had the authority to forgive sins. For example, the law instructed the people to offer a choice animal or grain to a priest, who on their behalf would offer it to God, who in turn would forgive their sins. Even to this day, God alone – not a priest or even a prophet – has the power to forgive people of their sins.

### **Assignment One Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment One** may now share an answer to the following question: According to Psalm 32:1-2, what is something that only God can do and that results in blessing to those who receive it from Him?

### **Discussion Questions**

What are some of the blessings you have received because God forgave your sins?

### **Studying the Passage**

**Verse 8. Jesus, perceiving . . . within themselves.** Have you ever thought you knew what someone else was thinking? No one except God knows with certainty what someone else is thinking or why someone does what he does. As the scribes reasoned within themselves about what they knew the Old Testament taught (e.g., that only God could forgive sins) and what they heard Jesus claim (e.g., that He forgave the paralyzed man of his sins), they concluded that he had committed blasphemy. Blasphemy occurs when someone says or does something to disrespect or disregard something holy and sacred.

The scribes understood that Jesus was claiming to be God by doing something only God could do. Jesus also demonstrated another quality only God has: knowing the thoughts of the mind and the intents of the heart.

### **Assignment Two Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Two** may now share answers to the following question: According to Jeremiah 17:9-10, what two actions can only God perform in relation to someone's heart and mind?

### **On Your Own**

In the space below, write a brief prayer to Jesus. Consider telling Him you want to be more honest with Him in your prayer life now that you've been reminded that He knows everything you are thinking and the reasons you do what you do.

### **Studying the Passage**

**Verse 9. Your sins are forgiven.** For God, forgiving sins is just as easy as healing paralysis. Because Jesus is God, He informed the scribes that He can do one just as easily as the other.

**Verse 10. the Son of Man has authority.** Jesus told the scribes that in order for them to be convinced that He had God's authority, He would heal the paralyzed man in addition to forgiving his sins. He commanded the paralytic man to stand up, take the stretcher-like bed upon which he was lying, and go home.

**Verse 12. rose . . . immediately picked up . . . went out before them all.** Upon His command, the paralytic man immediately obeyed Jesus. **We have never seen anything like this.** Everyone present was amazed at this third demonstration by Jesus of powerful authority belonging only to God.

### **Assignment Three Feedback:**

The person who completed **Assignment Three** may now share a report.

### **On Your Own**

Spend a few moments in silent prayer. Tell Jesus you want to share His love for Jehovah's Witnesses. Ask Him to supernaturally arrange for you to have a conversation with such a person. Invite the Holy Spirit to prepare you to share that Jesus is God, the one and only Son of God, reigning on the throne of heaven.

### **Heart and Hands**

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

**Since Last Week**

5 minutes

**Grace-Filled Accountability**

5 minutes

**Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service**

5 minutes

**Prayer**

7 minutes

## At Home: Nail It Down

Jesus claims and possesses the same authority as God (Mark 2:10) because He is God.

Three of the ways Jesus claimed and demonstrated He is God in Mark 2 was that He:

1. Forgave sins (Mark 2:5).
2. Knew the thoughts and intents of hearts and minds (Mark 2:8).
3. Healed the sick (Mark 2:11–12).

When witnessing to a Jehovah's Witness, keep in mind that they do not believe Jesus is God. They believe that Jesus is an incarnation of the archangel Michael. As you know, the Bible teaches Jesus is God in multiple places (i.e., John 1:1–5, 14; 8:56–59; 10:30–31; 20:26–29; Philippians 2:5–11; Colossians 1:13–23).

In addition to these passages, make sure you read Mark 2:1–12 with them. After reading, ask them a few questions.

1. Who is the only one who can forgive sins?
2. Who is the only one who can know what someone else is thinking?
3. Who is the only one who has the supernatural power to heal?

They should answer, "God," to all three questions. When they do, point out that:

1. Jesus claims to have authority that only belongs to God (Mark 2:10).
2. Jesus does the three things He has said only God can do (Mark 2:5, 8, 11–12).

Ask if they have been convinced by the Bible that Jesus is God. Understand they may try to show you a Bible translation that has been altered by design called the *New World Translation*. To verify whether the text is one of these false "Bibles," turn to John 1:1. If it says, ". . . and the Word was a god," then it is falsely translated. Insist on using your own Bible as you continue the conversation.

Generally, most Jehovah's Witnesses will tell you they need to study what you've shown them before they are convinced. However, if the Jehovah's Witness you're evangelizing seems to be convinced by the Bible and convicted by the Holy Spirit of the error of his beliefs, call them to:

1. repent of their sin.
2. believe that Jesus, God the Son, died on the cross for their sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead.
3. confess Jesus as their Lord (God) and Savior.

If they do repent, believe and confess, make sure to get them in touch with your pastor or one of your leaders so they can be baptized and taught obedience to the commands of Jesus.

### Follow up Question

*Is Jesus a man, an angel, or God in the flesh; and upon what biblical proof do you base your answer?*