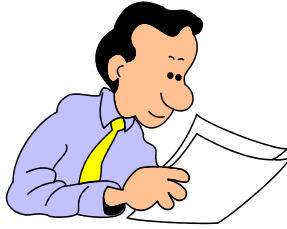


## AN INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN



### BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF JOHN

- A. While Luke focused more on the **humanity** of Jesus, John wrote his gospel to convince his readers that **Jesus is God**. John doesn't tell us that until the end of the book, but he tips his hand in chapter 20:

30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (NIV)

As John wrote, he very carefully selected events and encounters from Jesus' life that portray Jesus as God, the Lord of all. Jesus is always in control in John's gospel. Jesus' teaching, miracles, commanding presence in every situation conveyed one truth to John—Jesus is the eternal God who became fully human and lived here where we could see him.

- B. John did not begin his gospel with Jesus' birth or a list of Jesus' ancestors. God had no beginning. John began with a ringing declaration:

John 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. (NIV)

1. John's title for Jesus was "the Word." Jesus was the tangible expression of all that God is. Just as we explain our thoughts and feelings through words, the character and majesty of God were fully expressed in God's living Word, Jesus.
2. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. 1:14.
3. Jesus became human, but He never ceased to be God. That is the point John makes all the way through his book. If you want to see God, John says, look at Jesus. If you want to hear God, listen to Jesus.
4. In DeHoff's *Bible Handbook* there is a chart showing that the deity of Jesus may be found in every chapter of the book of John.

- C. John is the only one of the four gospels that is chronological throughout. It has a distinctive style. One commentator wrote: "I like the comparison of John's Gospel to a

pool in which a child may wade and an elephant can swim. It is both simple and profound.”

1. The book consists largely of discourses and conversations of Jesus.
2. While Matthew appeals more to the Jews, Mark to the Romans, and Luke to the Gentiles (Greeks in particular), John is more universal in his appeal. John wrote for the world at large.
3. John 3:16 which has been referred to by some as “the Bible in miniature,” and by others as “the golden text of the Bible,” portrays God’s love for the **world** in the giving of His only begotten Son.
4. John omits much of what the synoptic writers record, but he also includes much of what they omit.

### MEET THE AUTHOR

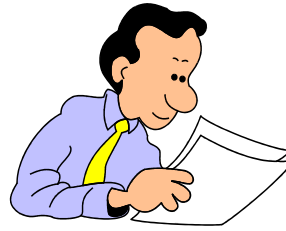
A. Conservative scholars attribute the fourth gospel to John the apostle, “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” Jno 20:2

1. John had plenty of opportunity to know and hear and talk with Jesus up close. He was one of Jesus’ closest companions. Jesus chose twelve men to be with Him and within that group of twelve, three men—Peter, James, and John—were often asked by Jesus to go with him for times of prayer or perhaps to gain special insight. Within the inner circle of three, one man, John was Jesus’ dearest friend. John never refers to himself by name in his gospel. He is just “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20).
2. John and his brother James were Galilean fishermen. In temperament, they were fiery and impetuous, (Mk 3:17, Cf. Lk 9:54). They were surnamed **Boanerges**, interpreted “sons of thunder.”
3. James and John were the sons of Zebedee. Their mother is probably to be identified with Salome. Some regard Salome as the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Jno 19:25); but this cannot be certain.
4. It was John who leaned on the bosom of Jesus at the last Supper. (Jno 13:23; 20:2)
5. While on the cross, Jesus placed His mother in the care of John. (Jno 19:26-27)
6. John appears three times in the book of Acts:
  - a) In the temple (3:1)
  - b) Before the council (4:13)
  - c) At Samaria (8:14)
7. John is also the author of four other New Testament books: First, Second, and Third John, and Revelation.

### DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

A. This was the last gospel to be written. The best evidence points to a date between A.D. 80 and 90 for its writing. The other three gospels (most likely) had been in circulation for several years.

1. Tradition says John spent his later years at Ephesus and was banished to Patmos under Domitian.
  2. John is said to have returned from exile ca. A.D. 96 and to have died at Ephesus during Trajan's reign (A.D. 98-117).
- B. The earliest fragment of a New Testament book in our possession is a scrap of papyrus with five verses from John 18.
1. Identified as P, it is in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, England.
  2. Dating from A.D. 125-150, it is evidence that this Gospel was being circulated shortly after its production.



### **AN ASTONISHING BOOK**

The gospel of John begins with a poem or song that presents Jesus' majesty and power. The first eighteen verses set the tone for the rest of the book.

In the first half of the gospel we are allowed to follow Jesus as he presents himself to the people of his day as the promised Messiah, God's Deliverer. John was particularly interested in certain miracles of Jesus and recorded seven of them. These miracles were not performed simply to alleviate human suffering or to meet human needs; John called them "signs." Like signs pointing to the right road, Jesus' miracles pointed to the truth of Jesus' claim to be the Son of God. Take a look:

1. Jesus changed water into wine (2:1-11).
2. Jesus healed a government official's son (4:43-54).
3. Jesus cured a sick man in Jerusalem (5:1-15).
4. Jesus fed five thousand people with a sack lunch (6:1-15).
5. Jesus walked on the surface of the water (6:16-21).
6. Jesus healed a man born blind (9:1-12).
7. Jesus raised his friend Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44).

These chapters also include some particularly powerful personal encounters with Jesus. Nicodemus, a Jewish leader, came to Jesus seeking more information about who Jesus was and about Jesus' miracles. Jesus responded by calling Nicodemus to be "born again" (3:1-21).

In chapter 4 Jesus really crossed some cultural lines. He talked with a woman (gender lines) who was a Samaritan (racial and religious lines) and who also was living in an immoral relationship with a man (moral lines). Jesus offered her "living water"—a life-changing relationship with Him (4:4-42).

Some religious leaders brought a woman to Jesus. The woman had been caught in the act of adultery (so where was the man?) They wanted Jesus to agree that she should be stoned to death as the law of Moses required. That's when Jesus spoke His famous line: "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone" (8:1-11).

Opposition to Jesus rose to a fever pitch in these chapters. His enemies began to plot to kill Him because "He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God" (5:18). This section ends with Jesus declaring that the time of His death and final victory had come.

In the hours before His arrest, Jesus gathered with His disciples in a banquet room built above the home of one of His followers. In this "upper room" Jesus tried to prepare His closest friends for the shock of His approaching death on the cross. In an act of humility, Jesus washed the feet of His own disciples (13:1-17). Then Jesus exposed the treachery of Judas Iscariot, the disciple who had already cut a deal to betray Him (13:18-30). After Judas left the room, Jesus had a long talk with the eleven disciples who remained. These chapters contain some of Jesus' most memorable and comforting words.

John 14:1-3 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." (NIV)

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (NIV)

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (NIV)

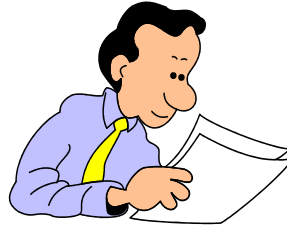
John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (NIV)

John 15:12-13 "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (NIV)

The section closes with Jesus' prayer to God the Father, asking Him to reveal Jesus' glory and to protect His followers (17:1-16).

The rest of the New Testament simply unpacks the deep truths that Jesus taught in these few hours with His friends.

In the closing chapters, John writes about Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection to life. But even in the story of Jesus' arrest and trial and crucifixion, even in what for most of us would have been the most degrading experiences, Jesus was in control. When the soldiers came to arrest Him, Jesus spoke just one phrase and they fell to the ground (18:4-6). When the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, pummeled Jesus with questions, Jesus said, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" (19:11). At the end of six hours on the cross, Jesus did not die as a powerless victim. He deliberately "gave up His spirit" (19:30). Three days later Jesus rose from the dead and presented Himself alive to His followers.



## **WHO IS THIS MAN, JESUS?**

John reveals more in his book about who Jesus is than any other book in the New Testament. The first eighteen verses alone contain more descriptions of Jesus than any other passage in the Bible of the same length. Jesus is presented as:

- The Word (the full expression of who God is)
- The One who in the beginning was face-to-face with God the Father
- The One who is Himself God
- The Creator of all things
- Light and Life to every human being
- The Rejected One and the Received One
- The Word who became fully human
- The One and only Son of the Father
- The One full of grace and truth
- The One who made God known to us

You never find Jesus asking His disciples if people liked His teaching or if they were impressed with His miracles. Jesus asked, “Who do people say I am?” He called people to put their trust in Him, a person, the God-man.

John never recovered from his encounter with Jesus. If you have never personally believed in Jesus, the evidence about Jesus is clear. Jesus is the eternal God who came to earth to die as a sacrifice on the cross. He gives life to all who receive Him. He is the way, the truth, and the life. His own testimony is that if you reject Him, you reject the only avenue of access to God. If you have trouble believing in Jesus, read the gospel of John. If you still have trouble, read it again and again.

If you already believe in Jesus, John’s gospel is designed to give you fresh insight into who Jesus is—and to encourage you to renewed confidence in Him as Savior and Lord and God. For John it came down to a struggle between light and darkness. Those who reject Jesus are choosing darkness. Those who receive Him become children of God.

## **THE CLAIMS OF JESUS IN JOHN**

Jesus made seven powerful claims about Himself in John’s gospel. They all begin with the words, “I am.”

- “I am the bread of life” (6:35, 48)
- “I am the light of the world” (8:12; 9:5)

- “I am the gate” (10:7, 9)
- “I am the good shepherd” (10:11, 14)
- “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25)
- “I am the way and the truth and the life” (14:6)
- “I am the true vine” (15:1)



## MAJOR THEMES IN THE BOOK OF JOHN

### A. John’s doctrine of the Word (Greek, *ho logos*) John 1:1-18

1. In the prologue to this Gospel, John chose a motif which would be meaningful to both Jew and Gentile.
2. To the Jew, God’s *logos* created (Gen 1:3), gave life (Sa 55:3), and accomplished the divine purpose in all things (Isa 55:11).
3. To the Greeks, the *logos* pervaded the universe and supplied order and harmony to its parts (e.g., Heraclitus) and served to direct mankind to ultimate realities (Plato).
4. John presents Jesus as the Divine *logos* that has come in the flesh.
  - a) To the Jew, this meant that Jesus was power, life, and the realization of the divine will.
  - b) To the Greek, it suggested the rational, powerful, and transcendent meaning which he could give to human life.
5. Therefore, the book commences with an affirmation of the deity of Jesus and implies a great deal about His mission among men.
6. The remainder of the Gospel develops what is inherent in these momentous opening verses of John.

### B. The miracles and signs of Jesus’ ministry.

1. A *miracle* is “an extraordinary work of God in the world which serves as a sign or attestation.”
2. Some New Testament terms of importance:
  - a) Miracle (*dunamis*): A mighty work or exhibition of power, Acts 19:11.
  - b) Wonder (*teras*): A marvel, something which makes an extraordinary impact on the senses, Acts 2:22.
  - c) Work (*ergon*): A deed corresponding to and making good one’s word, John 14:11.
  - d) Sign (*semeion*): A distinguishing mark or seal of genuineness, John 2:23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2, 14.
3. The purposes served by miracles in the biblical records:

- a) The miracles served generally to accredit a man as being from God. E.g., Moses before Pharaoh.
  - b) In Jesus' case, His miracles confirmed that He was from God (John 5:36; cf. 3:1-2), identified Him as the Messiah (John 7:31), secured the attention of the people, and showed His compassion for the plight of mankind.
4. It is impossible to remove the miracles from the life of Christ and have a meaningful account left.
- a) The rejection of miracles is basically a philosophical problem, i.e., uniformitarianism.
  - b) If one believes in the all-powerful God of the Bible, accepting miraculous deeds is not a problematic thing.
5. Some obvious contrasts between Christ's miracles and the alleged miracles to today's "faith healers."
- a) Christ was able to work miracles in the absence of faith. John 2:1-11; 9:1-12; cf. Mark 5:1-13.
  - b) His miracles were in great variety; controlling nature (Matt 8:23-27), multiplying food (Matt 14:13-21), raising the dead (John 11), etc.
  - c) Christ's miracles were done without any sort of grand display or use for selfish gain.

### C. The new birth. John 3:1-21.

1. This text speaks of being "born anew" of water and the Spirit.
  - a) The external rite associated with the new birth is baptism in water.
  - b) The actual power which brings about an individual's spiritual rebirth is the Holy Spirit's activity in regeneration.
2. The effectiveness of baptism is not in its administrator (I Cor 1:17) or in water (I Peter 3:21); its effectiveness lies in the divine power from above which works according to the divine promise.
3. At the point of baptism, one is brought to newness of life by the power of the Spirit of God. Titus 3:5; cf. Rom. 8:11.
4. It would be difficult (if not impossible) to conceive of a more expressive and beautiful representation of salvation.



## AN OUTLINE OF JOHN

## **I. JESUS THE SON OF GOD, 1:1 - 4:54**

### **A. The Son of God becomes flesh:**

1. The Word becomes flesh, 1:1-14
2. John's testimony, 1:15-34
3. The disciples' testimony, 1:35-51

### **B. The Son of God as Creator:**

1. Water into wine, 2:1-12
2. The Temple cleansed, 2:13-25

### **C. The Son of God as Savior:**

1. Nicodemus comes by night, 3:1-21
2. John confesses Jesus, 3:22-36

### **D. The Son of God as the Water of Life:**

1. The woman at Jacob's well, 4:1-30
2. With the disciples, 4:31-38
3. Jesus and the Samaritans, 4:39-45
4. Heals the nobleman's son, 4:46-54

## **II. THE SON OF GOD AND THE PEOPLE, 5:1 – 12:50**

### **A. As Judge:**

1. Healing the lame man, 5:1-18
2. Defends Himself, 5:19-47

### **B. As the Bread of Life:**

1. Feeding the 5,000, 6:1-14
2. Walking on the water, 6:15-21
3. Teaching on the bread of life, 6:22-59
4. Some disciples turn back, 6:60-71

### **C. As a divider:**

1. Unbelief of His brethren, 7:1-13
2. Division of the people, 7:14-36
3. Prediction of the Spirit, 7:37-39
4. Debate of the leaders, 7:40-53

### **D. As the Light of the world:**

1. Woman taken in adultery, 8:1-11
2. Teaching on the light of the world, 8:12-59

3. Man born blind healed, 9:1-41

E. As the Good Shepherd:

1. Teaching on the good shepherd, 10:1-18
2. Opposition to His teaching, 10:19-42

F. As the Resurrection and the Life:

1. Lazarus raised from the dead, 11:1-46
2. Attempt to kill the Son of God, 11:47-57

G. As the center of attraction:

1. At the Bethany supper, 12:1-11
2. At the Triumphal Entry to Jerusalem, 12:12-19
3. Then, rejected by the people, 12:37-50

### **III. THE SON OF GOD AND HIS DISCIPLES, 13:1 – 17:26**

A. As a servant:

1. The disciples' feet washed, 13:1-20
2. Judas leaves, 13:21-35
3. Peter's denial predicted, 13:36-38

B. As the Comforter:

1. The promise, 14:1-6
2. The explanation, 14:7-11
3. The prayer, 14:12-15
4. The Spirit, 14:16-26
5. The peace, 14:27-31

C. As the Vine:

1. The disciples and the Son of God, 15:1-17
2. The disciples and the world, 15:18 – 16:4
3. The disciples and the Spirit, 16:5-33

D. As the Intercessor:

1. The Son of God prays for glorification, 17:1-5
2. The Son of God prays for preservation, 17:6-16
3. The Son of God prays for sanctification, 17:17-19
4. The Son of God prays for unification, 17:20-21
5. The Son of God prays for habitation, 17:24-26

### **IV. THE SON OF GOD DIES FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD, 18:1 – 21:25**

A. As the sacrifice:

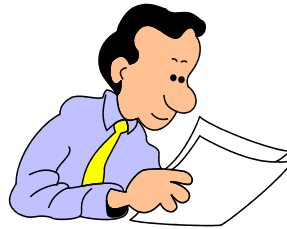
1. His arrest, 18:1-11
2. His religious trials, 18:12-27
3. His civil trials, 18:28 – 19:15
4. His crucifixion, 19:16-37
5. His burial, 19:38-42

B. As the victor:

1. Appearance to Mary, 20:1-18
2. Appearance to the ten, 20:24-31
3. Appearance to Thomas, 20:24-31

C. As the chief shepherd:

1. The catch of fish, 21:1-14
2. The challenge to Peter, 21:15-17
3. Prediction of destinies, 21:18-25



**SEVEN DIFFERENT PEOPLE GAVE PERSONAL TESTIMONY  
TO THE FACT THAT JESUS IS GOD**

**John the Baptist:** “I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God” 1:34.

**Nathanael** (a skeptic who became a follower): “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel” 1:49.

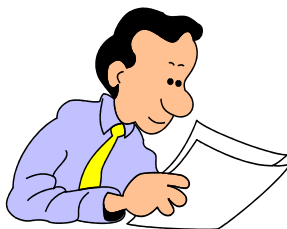
**Peter** (one of Jesus’ closest friends): “We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God” 6:69.

**Martha** (a follower of Jesus): “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world” 11:27.

**Thomas** (a follower of Jesus who doubted that Jesus had risen from the dead): “My Lord and my God” 20:28.

**John** (the author of the gospel): “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” 20:31.

**Jesus Himself:** “I am God’s Son” 10:36.



## **WALKING THE WALK**

- A. If someone came to your home and made the same “I am” claims that Jesus made in John’s gospel, what would you think of that person? Why do the same words sound so different coming from Jesus?
- B. How would you characterize your own spiritual life right now? Is it going well? Do you need a tune up? How will reading the gospel of John help you?
- C. If Jesus is “the bread of life,” how are you relying on Him for spiritual and emotional nourishment? If Jesus is “the good shepherd,” how are you resting in His care and guidance?