

John

I. Intro

John the Man

John is the 4th book of the NT and 4th among the Gospels.

John was one of the first Disciples of Christ and one of those who were called to be Apostles

- He was among the inner circle of disciples along with Peter and James.
- He was the brother of James, the son of Zebedee and affectionately called "The Son of thunder"
- This nick name was given because of his passion

John forsook all to follow Christ and became one of the leaders of the early church.

John served the church in Jerusalem for many years, and then moved to work in the church at Ephesus.

- An unsubstantiated story holds that John was taken to Rome during a persecution and thrown into boiling oil but emerged unhurt. He was then exiled to the island of Patmos.
- John outlived all of the disciples, dying of old age at Ephesus, perhaps about A.D. 98

John was the author of 5 NT books which include His Gospel, 1, 2, 3 John and Revelation.

John refers to himself affectionately as "*the disciple whom Jesus loved*"
* (13:23; 18:15, 16; 19:26, 27).

A. Authorship -

The gospel itself is anonymous, however throughout most of its history the Church has accepted without question that this Gospel was written by John

- **Irenaeus** says that he was "John the disciple of the Lord," the one "who leaned on his breast." It was he who "published the Gospel while living in Ephesus"

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- **Eusebius'** declared)—“John the disciple of the Lord who reclined on His breast and himself issued the Gospel at Ephesus in Asia”
- **Clement** of Alexandria (A.D. 153–217)—“John who was urged by his friends and divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel”

This was the belief of the early Christians and scholars and has only been questioned in the last 200 years when all that is in Scripture has been doubted. The doubts regarding authorship are unwarranted and all evidence supports that the 4th Gospel, written by the disciple whom Jesus loved was in fact the work of the aged apostle John

Internal evidence also suggests an eyewitness to the events wrote it.

B. Date

Clement of Alexandria indicated that John was the last of four Gospels to be written (see Eusebius, H.E. 6.14.7)

Irenaeus argued that the Gospel was published while John was living in Ephesus and that he lived there until the time of Trajan

Traditions from the second century onwards suggest that it was written by John the apostle at the end of a long life, and most scholars continue to date it somewhere between about a.d.85 and 100

C. Purpose

John wrote to believers and unbelievers alike.

1. His purpose was to give the church and the world a clear portrait of who Jesus is.

Matt and Luke begin with birth of Christ, Mark with His ministry life but John begins long before creation. His purpose is to reveal the deity of Christ.

John is more like a treatise than a biography for he is seeking to prove who Christ is and how salvation is received.

John presents the full deity of Jesus from the first verse of the first chapter and repeats this emphasis throughout the Gospel.

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The first three gospels focus more on what Jesus taught and did; **John** focuses more on who Jesus is.

- **John** shows us who Jesus is by highlighting seven signs (miracles) of Jesus. Six of these miracles are not mentioned in the first three gospels.
- John shows us who Jesus is by allowing Jesus to speak for Himself in seven dramatic I AM statements.
- John shows us who Jesus is by calling forth witnesses who will testify about the identity of Jesus. Four of these witnesses speak in the first chapter alone.

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF HIS WRITING IS PRESENTED IN JOHN 20:31

John 20:31

These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

One man put it this way

"There is one major theme that runs throughout John's Gospel: Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and if you commit yourself to Him, He will give you eternal life"

In other words John presents Christ to us so that we can make a decision to trust in Him for eternal life.

According to "EXPLORING THE NEW TESTAMENT" by Walter M. Dunnett PHD.

- John clearly states his purpose for writing this Gospel (20:30, 31), placing emphasis upon three important words: signs, believe, and life. A good understanding of these terms, together with their use in the Gospel, allows one to gain a working knowledge of the book's content.

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Signs -

The word "signs" is John's term for the miracles of Jesus, the signs are meant to show that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of God."

Believe -

Believe, appears at least ninety-eight times. It always occurs in the verb form, never the noun form (believe, never belief).

- John teaches the meaning of believing in Jesus with the use of illustration. The word is used to indicate the people's response to Jesus. If they believed on Him, they became His followers; if they did not believe, they became His opponents. **At any rate, once having met Him, they could not remain neutral.**

Along with the word believe, John employs a number of synonyms to make his meaning clear. Some of these are receive (1:12), drink (4:14), come (6:35), eat (6:51), and enter (10:9).

Life -

Life is a key theme in John's Gospel; it is used thirty-six times.

This term expresses the result of believing in Christ. To receive life is to become a child of God by being born into His family.

- The Lord Jesus said to the Pharisee, Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"

In writing the story of Christ, John sought to bring us face to face with this Jesus who by His words and His works confronts men and women with a great decision.

We are each faced with the decision, will you choose to become a follower of Jesus Christ and receive the free gift of eternal life? Or will you choose to reject Him and remain in your sins?

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2. John's purpose was also to clear up much confusion that had developed regarding who Jesus is.

Many false teachings and erroneous stories were being spread about Jesus. Some included

A good understanding of John's gospel will give us an accurate portrayal of Christ.

- I am reminded of the words of CS Lewis who suggested we have but 3 choices regarding Christ, he is either a liar, a lunatic or He is in fact Lord.

II. Revealing Christ

IN ORDER TO PROVE WHO CHRIST IS JOHN:

A. Introduces Christ

In this first chapter, John recorded seven names and titles of Jesus that identify Him as eternal God.

1. The Word - expression of God

The Bible is filled with many titles for Christ. Each one is designed to reveal something about His character and ministry. Some of the more well-known titles are: Shepherd, Lord, King, Cornerstone. The question remains why choose the word WORD as a title for Christ?

- Words are used to express invisible thoughts. Jesus is the expression of the invisible God. We cannot know God apart from Christ

He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

The word incarnate

Solomon asked -

But will God indeed dwell on the earth?" asked Solomon as he dedicated the temple (1 Kings 8:27).

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Heaven answered when Christ took on a sinless human nature and identified with us in every aspect of life from birth to death. “The Word” was not an abstract concept of philosophy, but a real Person who could be seen, touched, and heard. Christianity is Christ, and Christ is God.

2. The Light (John 1:4–13)

God understands better than we do the condition of the world. Just as in the days of Jonah when the wickedness of Nineveh rose up towards heaven, God sees the rising wickedness in every age. His response was to send His Son and to send John.

The darker the dark the brighter the light.

- We should not be astonished that sinner’s sin, we should not seek to simply stop sinners from sin that is moralism. We need to seek to convert sinners to saints.
- Jesus came to shine in the darkness that people might believe on him and be saved

John 1:5 reads, “And the light keeps on shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it or understood it.” The Greek verb can mean “to overcome” or “to grasp, to understand.”

3. The Son of God (John 1:15–28, 49)

John the Baptist is one of the most important persons in the New Testament. He is mentioned at least eighty-nine times. John had the special privilege of introducing Jesus to the nation of Israel. He also had the difficult task of preparing the nation to receive their Messiah. He called them to repent of their sins and to prove that repentance by being baptized and then living changed lives.

He is brought into the narrative in order to testify regarding Christ.

- He testifies that Jesus is the Son of God
- He is not alone in this testimony

At least nine times in John’s Gospel, Jesus is called “the Son of

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God" (John 1:34, 49; 3:18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 19:7; 20:31).

John the Baptist is one of six persons named in the Gospel of John who gave witness that Jesus is God. The others are Nathanael (John 1:49), Peter (John 6:69), the blind man who was healed (John 9:35–38), Martha (John 11:27), and Thomas (John 20:28). And the Lord Himself (John 5:25; 10:36),

4. Lamb of God (John 1:29–34)

The first mention of the lamb in the OT is found in Genesis 22, where Isaac asks Abraham OT "where is the Lamb" (gen 22:7).

- Abraham's response was that God would provide Himself a sacrifice

Chronologically, the first mention of the lamb in the NT is where John looks at Christ and declares, "Behold the lamb"

- Christ is the Sacrificial Lamb promised to provide atonement for sin.

WW points out -

The OT lambs were brought by men to men, but here is God's Lamb, given by God to men! Those lambs could not take away sin, but the Lamb of God can take away sin. Those lambs were for Israel alone, but this Lamb would shed His blood for the whole world!

5. The Messiah (John 1:35–42)

Synonymous for Messiah include; Christ, anointed one or even savior.

There was some confusion among the Jewish teachers as to what the Messiah would do.

Many today are confused as well.

* Being savior does not mean He came to fix your problems or make you a better you. JESUS came to convert you from death to life through faith in Christ and to convince you to leave all and follow Him

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6. King of Israel (John 1:43–49)

It is interesting to note the experience that led to the declaration that Jesus was king. A doubter turns follower and allows Christ to reign in his life

We must come to the place where Jesus is more than our friend, or even our deliverer. He must become the king of our life and our Lord.

7. The Son of Man (John 1:50–51)

“Son of man” was one of our Lord’s favorite titles for Himself; it is used eighty-three times in the Gospels and at least thirteen times in John. The title speaks of both the deity and humanity of Jesus.

B. Records 7 signs

John recorded seven wonderful signs (miracles) that openly declared the glory of God (John 2:11). They are:

- Changing water into wine in John 2:1-11
- Healing the royal official's son in Capernaum in John 4:46-54
- Healing the paralytic at Bethesda in John 5:1-18
- Feeding the 5000 in John 6:5-14
- Jesus' walk on water in John 6:16-24
- Healing the man born blind in John 9:1-7
- Raising of Lazarus in John 11:1-45

C. Declares 7 “I AM” Statements

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am” (8:58).

- 1) I am the bread of life (6:35, 41, 48, 51)
- 2) I am the light of the world (8:12)
- 3) I am the door of the sheepfold (10:7, 9)
- 4) I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14)
- 5) I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
- 6) I am the way, the truth and the life (14:6)
- 7) I am the true vine (15:1, 5)

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D. Personal Interviews

Finally John records personal interviews people had with Christ that reveal who He was

Each person who was brought into contact with Jesus was never the same again. Either they believe and follow Him, or they turn away in unbelief.

III. Outline

The first three gospels center on Jesus' ministry in Galilee while John centers his attention on what Jesus said and did in Jerusalem.

There is widespread scholarly agreement that John's gospel breaks into 5 parts:

- The prologue (1:1–18)
- Public ministry 1:19-12
- Private ministry 13 – 17
- Passion 18-20
- Epilogue 21

After His public ministry was concluded Jesus met privately with His disciples and told them of two important things that were soon to happen.

First, His departure was near. He was going away; they could not come with Him at this point. Eventually, however, He would return to receive them into the Father's house.

Second, the Holy Spirit would be sent to take His place. He would not leave the disciples alone. He would send "another Comforter," one "just like Himself"

IV. Why Study John

Bishop B. F. Westcott calculated that 92 percent of the material in John was unique

A study of John's Gospel will reveal things about the person and ministry of Christ that are not found in the Synoptic Gospels.