

“That You Might Believe”

(A Short Survey of the Gospel of John)

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The Gospel of John is a marvelous work. Many scholars and teachers of the Word have devoted much of their lives in studying this book which portray the glories of the eternal and incarnate Son of God.

“The Gospel according to John is the most amazing book that was ever written. ‘Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.’ This may well be the attitude of anyone who steps upon the threshold of the study of this book: for its testimony is true, the faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God has received glorious confirmation” (William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of The Gospel According to John*, 3).

Purpose Statement: “*But 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” (John 20:31).*

General & Introductory Observations

1. Though the theme is very profound, John’s language is simple. It is charming in its simplicity and challenging in its depth.
2. The most translated book of the Bible.
3. A unique Gospel, Very evangelistic. The first book of the Bible we encourage non-Christians to read. A persuasive argument for the deity of Christ.
4. The purpose of the book is clearly and succinctly stated (20:31). This clearly identified purpose sets the Gospel of John apart from the other Gospels. It is not so much a life of Jesus as it is a powerful presentation of His deity. Written from Ephesus between A. D. 85-95.
5. Over 90% of the material in John’s Gospel is unique to John, not to be found in the other three Gospels.
6. It is the Gospel of Jesus’ deity. Early church father clement of Alexandria called John “the spiritual Gospel” because of its deep insight into Jesus’ identity as the Son of God. It is also considered to be the most theological and philosophical of the Gospels, as it begins in eternity past (1:1). While the synoptic Gospels are a ***presentation*** of Jesus, John’s Gospel is an ***interpretation***. The other three are ***historical*** and ***factual***, John is also ***doctrinal***. The Synoptic writers take a ***biographical*** and ***chronological*** approach to Jesus’ life. John’s Gospel follows a more ***thematic, theological*** track.

7. Jesus is God in human flesh, God Himself visiting planet earth. John provides no genealogy, illustrating the fact that deity has no beginning. No childhood details, bypasses Jesus' temptation, transfiguration, ascension, institution of the Lord's Supper, no parables, no account of the agony in Gethsemane, perhaps to emphasize Jesus' transcendent nature as God. The man we know as Jesus is none other than God on earth – BELIEVE HIM. The Upper Room Discourse (13-16), Jesus high priestly prayer (17), Jesus as the "Lamb of God, "only begotten of the Father, the great "I am" statements are found only in John's Gospel.

- Matthew – "Behold your King" (worship Him).
- Mark - "Behold your servant" (follow Him).
- Luke – "Behold the Man, the sinless and perfect one" (emulate Him).
- John – "Behold your God" (believe in Him).

8. John recorded personal interviews and detailed conversations Jesus held with individuals – Nicodemus (3), the Samaritan Woman (4), Martha (11), Mary Magdalene (20), Peter (21). These interviews provide valuable insights into personal evangelism and counseling.

9. John refrains from directly referring to himself by name in his Gospel, but there are allusions to himself in **13:23; 18:15-16; 19:26-27; 20:1-10; 21:7, 20-24**. He refers to the "**sons of Zebedee**" in **21:2**. He modestly spoke of "**the disciple whom Jesus loved**" five times in the pages of his Gospel (**13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20**). It seems that he waited till the very end of the Gospel to finally reveal that he was that disciple (**21:24**). He does not specifically refer to the inner three (Peter, James, and John). But in this Gospel he describes certain critical events from the perspective of the inner three, and also as an eyewitness to the events he describes.

10. Apostle John might have been one of the disciples of John the Baptist (1:35-40). It is interesting that John's Gospel quickly turns our attention to "John the Baptist" (1:6-8, 19-42), who is never called by this title in the Gospel of John: he is always referred to simply as "John." This may be because the apostle John knew him so well, as his former disciple. Apostle John was one of the first disciples of Jesus (Matt.4:18-22). He is also the author of 5 NT books.

11. John challenges us to **Believe** in Jesus, not merely His teaching, or example, but to believe in **Him**, to place our absolute trust in Him as God, Savior and Lord. The uniqueness of the person of Christ is the focus of John. The Greek word *pisteuo* "**believe**" (to trust, to rely upon, to commit, to entrust) appears 98 times in the Gospel of John (always as a verb, never as a noun). Other key words include "world" (78), "Love" (47), "Word" (45), witness (47), light (22), Darkness (9), "Abide" (13), Glory (40), Verily, Verily KJV/ "Amen, Amen" (21), "Judge/judgment (30), Truth/true (49), life (47). **Jesus is the authentic way to life**, both in heaven and here on earth; the eternal life and the abundant life. There is LIFE in His name – eternal life that will sustain us forever, and abundant life (10:10) for today that will refresh us and renew us in the struggles of life in a fallen and sin-cursed world.

12. One of the major theological thrusts of John is the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God (especially in relation to salvation) – 1:12-13; 6:37, 39, 44; 10:27-30; 15:16.

13. The doctrine of Trinity is clearer in this Gospel than in any other Gospel. Jesus often spoke of God the Father, of Himself as God, and of the Holy Spirit of God. The Father “sending the Son” into the world, and the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit are unique to John’s Gospel. The Trinity is everywhere you turn in John’s Gospel.

14. The ego-centric, unique claims of Christ - **7 Great “I am” statements:**

- **I Am** the bread of life (6:35)
- **I Am** the light of the world (8:12)
- **I Am** the door of the sheep (10:7,9)
- **I Am** the good shepherd (10:11,14)
- **I Am** the resurrection and the life (11:25)
- **I AM** the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)
- **I AM** the true vine (15:1, 5)

15. The seven “signs” attests to our Lord’s deity (John uses the word “signs” for the miracles of Christ 17 times and “works” 18 times). The “signs” point us to something beyond the wonder, amazement, and the miraculous, to Jesus Himself, God at work; each focusing on a dimension of deity.

- Turning water into wine in Cana (2:1-11)
- Healing the son of a royal official in Capernaum (4:46-54)
- Healing an invalid at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (5:1-18)
- Feeding the 5,000 near the Sea of Galilee (6:5-14)
- Walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee (6:16-21)
- Healing a blind man in Jerusalem (9:1-7)
- Raising dead Lazarus in Bethany (11:1-45)

16. 14 discourses are recorded by John. The signs are followed by discourses related to the sign events. Discourses to the world (1-12) and discourses to the disciples (13-16). The long farewell discourse to the disciples known as the Upper Room Discourse is unique to John and it contains so much profound theology.

17. 7 Witnesses to the deity of Christ:

- John the Baptist – “This is the Son of God” (1:34)
- Nathaniel – “You are the Son of God” (1:49)
- Peter – “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (6:69)
- Marth – “You are the Christ, the Son of God” ((11:27)
- Thomas – “My Lord and my God!” (20:28)
- John, the apostle/author – “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (20:31)
- Jesus – “I am the Son of God” (10:36; 4:26; 8:58)

18. Four-fold Witness to the Son of God in John 5:

- John the Baptist (5:33)
- The works of Jesus (5:36)
- The Father Himself (5:37)
- The Scriptures (5:39)

Why Jesus Came: His Mission

“I have come.....”

1. “In My Father’s name” (5:43).
2. “Not to do MY own will, but the will of Him who sent Me” (6:38).
3. “For Judgment I have come into this world.....” (9:39).
4. “That they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (10:10).
5. “As light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness” (12:46).
6. “That I should bear witness to the truth” (18:37)

Jesus further explained His purpose in the other Gospels:

7. To callsinners to repentance” (Matt.9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32)
8. “To set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law” (Matt.10:35).
9. “That I may preach.....for this purpose I have come forth” (Mark 1:38).
10. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).
11. “For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt.20:28; Mark 10:45).

Jesus August Claims of Equality With God (5:18)

1. Equal in working (5:19)
2. Equal in knowing (5:20)
3. Equal in resurrecting (5:28-29)
4. Equal in Judging (5:22, 27)
5. Equal in honor (5:23)
6. Equal in regenerating/bestowing eternal life (5:24, 25)
7. Equal in self-existence (5:26)

Three Major Themes Connecting The Events of The Book

1. *Revelation* (1:18)
2. Rejection (1:11)
3. Reception (1:12)

Outline of the Gospel of John

Two-fold Division:

1. Jesus' Ministry to the World (1-12) – Book of Signs
2. Jesus' Ministry His Disciples – to His Own (13-21) – Book of Glory

Outline

1. Prologue (1:1-18) – Incarnation of the eternal Son of God
2. Presentation of the Word (1:19-4:54) – to the world
3. Authentication of the Word (5:1 -12:50) – Through signs & claims
4. Confirmation of the Word (13:1 – 17:26) – Through His special ministry to “His own.”
5. Vindication of the Word (18:1 -21:25) – Through death and resurrection.

Reflection

1. What you think of Christ?
2. “That you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” Have you believed in Him and have received eternal life, the abundant life? Have you received Him or rejected Him?
3. “Of His fullness we have all received grace upon grace.” Let us keep on receiving and let us keep on trusting and serving Him. His parting words at the end of John’s Gospel have given us **three serious responsibilities**. **First, “Do you love Me?”** (21:15, 16, 17); **Second, “Feed My lambs..... Tend my sheep”** (21:15, 16); **Third, “Follow Me”** (21: 19, 22). Yes, these are three essentials – a deep love for Him, a sense of His mission and commission, and a devoted following of Him as a faithful disciple. *Jesus is not looking for fans, He is looking for followers.* Are you a mere fan of Jesus or a follower?