

The Gospel of St. John

Overview and Chapters 1-4

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Outline (by week)

- Week 1 (1–28–07): Background: author, settings (maps), theme/purpose, date, main characters, book peculiarities (Word, light, truth, life, grace, signs), synoptic relation.
- Week 2 (2–04–07): John 1:1–4 – Deity of Christ and what that means for us.
- Week 3 (2–11–07): John 1:5–13 – John’s Witness: The True Light.
- Week 4 (2–18–07): John 1:14–18 – The Word Becomes Flesh.
- Week 5 (3–04–07): John 1:19–34 – A Voice in the Wilderness and The Lamb of God.
- Week 6 (3–11–07): John 1:35–51 – The First Disciples.

Outline (by week)

- Week 7 (3–18–07): John 2:1–11 – Water Turned to Wine.
- Week 8 (4–01–07): John 2:12–25 – Jesus Cleanses the Temple.
- Week 9 (4–08–07): John 3:1–16 – Nicodemus and the New Birth.
- Week 10 (4–15–07): John 3:16–36 – Good News. Bad News. Christ Above All.
- Week 11 (4–29–07): John 4:1–42 – The Samaritans Meet Messiah.
- Week 12 (5–06–07): John 4:43–54 – Encouraging our Faith: A Nobleman's Son Healed.

- What's a gospel?
 - One of four distinct gospels (*accounts*) of the gospel (*the good news of salvation in Jesus*).
- Why four gospels?
 - God's choice ("that's just the way it is"). Several places in scripture imply the need for two or three witnesses for judgment. (Deut 17:6); God gave us four. God seems to like four witnesses (Eze 1:5, 10:14, Rev 4:7)
- What's a synoptic gospel?
 - "syn" together, "optic" seeing: seeing together. Matthew, Mark, Luke are the synoptic gospels because they have much in common: arrangement, content, wording, focus. Sources and order of writing for the synoptic gospels is of great scholarly interest.
- The four gospels are our only reliable source about the life of the central figure of the human race.

- John's gospel is different (*not radically*) and is called "the unique gospel." All four gospels portray Jesus through the selected events of His life, climaxing at His death and resurrection.
- The three synoptic gospels present a more factual story. John's gospel is more of the *thinking, emotion, and meaning* underlying the facts.

Synoptics

covers ~ 1 year

actions, facts, word

pictures

~ 60 parables

teaching "kingdom of God"

John

covers ~ 3 years

little action, speculative

discourse

no parables

teaching *about* Jesus

Gospel of John... just the facts ma'am...

- **Author:** John the Apostle, “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” Some argue for John the elder (a disciple of John the apostle), but most agree on John the apostle. *more on John later*
- **Outline:** Prologue (revelation, rejection, reception) 1:1-18
Revelation: 1:19 - 6:71
Rejection: 7-12
Reception: 13-21
Epilogue: 21
- **When:** circa 85-95 AD. Most say around 85. Some believe 50-70 AD. Before the epistles of John.
- **Where:** Most likely, Ephesus.

- **Why:** John 20:31 “...but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” [*because of who He is*]
- Theme throughout is “the deity of Christ.”
- Primary intent was evangelistic - “so that you may believe”; although, if it were read “continue to believe” it could have been written for the strengthening of the believers.
- Book has been called
 - The Heart (or bosom) of Christ.
- One comment I like...
 - “I believe the writings of John have been blighted by more penitent tears and have won more hearts for the Redeemer than all the rest put together.” *Unk*

- Matthew writes for the Jews, and portrays Jesus as the Messiah so long awaited.
- Mark writes for the Romans, and portrays Jesus as the Servant who makes wonders.
- Luke writes for the Greeks, and portrays Jesus as the Son of man.
- John writes for everybody, and portrays Jesus as the Son of God.

- **Peculiarities:** very symbolic. Concepts:
 - life - used 36 times. More than any other book.
 - witness (noun and verb) - used 47 times. Only 4 times in synoptics combined.
 - believe - used 98 times.
 - world - used 78 times.
 - love, truth, light, darkness, bread, water, shepherd, door, “I am”, “signs” (significance rather than action - not “miracles”)
- John, with his unique portrayal, offers us a complementary view giving us a fuller revelation of our Lord and the things of God.

- **Oh the people we'll meet in John's gospel...**
(handout)
 - Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, Lawyers, Rabbis, Essenes, Zealots, Herodians, Priests, the High Priest, Samaritans, Sanhedrin, Followers of John the Baptist, Followers of the Way.
 - “To understand the New Testament properly, especially the life of Jesus as presented in the Gospels, we need to learn about the wide variety of different Jewish groups that existed in the first century.”
- **Oh the places we'll go in John's gospel...**
(handout)



Compare to handouts...

- **But what about John?**

- John son of Zebedee
 - John the Apostle
 - John the disciple Jesus loved
 - John the son of Thunder; *Boanerges* - sons of thunder
 - John the Disciple of John the Baptist
 - John the Apostle of Love.
- **Born:** ~ the time of Jesus; died ~ 98 AD.
 - **Father:** Zebedee (Matt 4:21).
 - **Mother:** Salome (Matt 27:56; Mark 15:40; Mark 16:1; Matt 20:20, John 19:25).
 - Mother may have been sister of Mary, Jesus' mother, making John a cousin of Jesus and John the Baptist.

- Younger brother of James the Apostle.
- Trade: Fisherman
- Along with Andrew, first 2 disciples of Jesus.
- Member of Jesus' most intimate inner circle: "Peter, James, John"
- Behind Luke and Paul, John wrote most in NT: John; 1,2,3 John, Rev.
- Subject of lots of tradition and stories throughout church history.

- Family seems to have been well off due to having a fishing business with hired hands (Mark 1:20). Zebedee could have been of some importance. John was known to the High Priest (John 18:15-16). Zebedee could have been a Levite. Salome may also have helped “finance” Jesus and Co. (Luke 8:3; Mark 15:40).
- Grew up and spent much of youth on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. Spent many years in Jerusalem after the crucifixion - never left Jerusalem and the care of Mary until she died. Then on to Ephesus as pastor. Exiled to the Island of Patmos where he lived in a cave. Later to return and end his earthly life in Ephesus (70-100 AD).
- Once nicknamed the “son of Thunder,” and later called “the apostle of love,” John’s life obviously has a story to be told...

- So, why study all these historical texts like John? Why is it important? What does it have to do with my life and struggles today? What are the applications of this information?
- Studying history...
 - is critical because there is nothing new under the sun and those that don't know their history are doomed to repeat it.
- Learning the hard way...
 - I once heard it said that unless someone learns something the hard way, it won't stick with them. Balderdash! Might as well throw away the entire Bible in that case. Learn the easiest way...

- John's life is typical...
 - of many of our Christian walks. We need to see and take comfort that our Sovereign God is fashioning us into the likeness of Christ.
- You can see a lot from 30,000 ft...
 - a good overview can help one see the “whys” of the stories.
- Facts and figures...
 - Knowledge. Knowledge is a key defense against our adversary, the Father of Lies, against ignorance, against wolves and false teachers: defend yourself, stand for the right armed with truth and knowledge and wisdom.