

The Gospel of John
Introduction to the New Testament
Class 8

I. Welcome back! Happy 2024!

II. Unique elements of John's gospel

- A. Fewer, longer snapshots; extended discourses.
- B. Emphasis on our individual response to Jesus more than on the whole of the Christian life (e.g., words connected to *faith* & *believing* used 71x in John, 61x in synoptics *combined*).
- C. Simplest Greek—but some of the deepest thinking (e.g., "In the beginning was the Word," 1:1).
- D. The "I am" statements → Memorize these!! Some of them:

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:14-15)

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, (John 11:25)

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

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)

- E. Growing sense that John's actually the most historically accurate

III. Who and When?

- A. Internal evidence that "the beloved disciple" is John
 - 1. Called the "beloved disciple" in several places in John:
 - "One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" (13:23);*
 - "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved" (19:26);*

"She ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved" (20:2);

"That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!'" (21:7);

"Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved" (21:20).

These places are significant. They are times when the disciples are present and we would expect them to be named accordingly. Yet, in places like 21:2 John's name is conspicuously absent. The thinking is that it's more likely John would not name himself than another author would fail to name him.

2. Others are ruled out like Nathanael because the author is there before Nathanael (cp. 1:40 and 1:45); James is martyred too early to be the author of the book (Acts 12:2); others like Peter are named at times when John himself speaks of "one whom Jesus loved."
 3. Revelation written in similar style and theological perspective. And it is explicitly written by "his servant John" (Rev 1:1).
 4. Therefore, the most reasonable conclusion is that the "Beloved Discipline" is the evangelist and the author and the apostle John.
- B. The early church agrees, and no other author ever put forward. E.g.,
1. Irenaeus knew Polycarp, who knew the apostle John and said, "John the disciple of the Lord, who leaned back on his breast, published the Gospel while he was resident at Ephesus in Asia" (cited in Carson, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 139).
 2. Eusebius the historian quotes Clement of Alexandria, a 2nd century saint, "But that John, last of all, conscious that the outward facts had been set forth in the Gospels, was urged on by his disciples, and divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel" (cited in Carson, 140).
- C. FYI, John is the longest living apostle, dying in Ephesus at the end of the 1st century, maybe even in the year A.D. 100. Thus, no older than 30 during Jesus' ministry.
- D. Date of the Writing
1. He wrote the gospel before 1-3 John, letters which seem to respond to errors in interpreting his gospel.
 2. Carson (*The Gospel According to John*, Pillar) allows that the gospel *could have been written anywhere from 55 to 95 A.D.*, but he argues for later date. Somewhere around A.D. 80 "more by way of default than anything else" (82). His reasons:

- a. Likely that he wrote later rather than earlier based on when he begins to be quoted by church authors;
 - b. Similarity of language between John and Ignatius pushes us toward the latter part of first-century;
 - c. Seems he wrote some time after destruction of the temple since there is no explicit reference to it;
 - d. Likely that 1 John is responding to issues raised potentially by his gospel and the different theological themes makes it likely they were not written close together, perhaps separated by a decade or so.
 - e. Thus, a date of 80-85 A.D. is reasonable (85).
- E. Place – D.A. Carson says that Ephesus is the most reasonable guess for the location: "What must be acknowledged is that no other location has the support of the church Fathers; rightly or wrongly, they point to Ephesus" (87).

IV. Why did John write his gospel?

He tells us!

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;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. (John 20:30-31)

V. Outline of John

A. (1:1-18) Prologue

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)

Exalted, developed Christology in John:

1:1-4, "The Word was God."

The "word" has to do with:

- Christ revealing and fulfilling the "word of God," the Old Testament.
- Christ's ministry of speaking "truth" (1:18).
- Christ being the incarnate communication of God.

- Christ being God, for our words and ourselves are inseparable. Our words are our thoughts communicated, our thoughts are words waiting to be expressed. Our words are a kind of bodily display of our soul. So is Christ the revelation of the Father.

1:14, "The Word became flesh."

B. (1:19-12:50) The Book of Signs

This Book of Signs contains 7 signs.

"While John's presentation of Jesus's deity is arguably the grandest thematic contribution he makes to the Gospel canon, his emphasis on Jesus's *signs* in support of his identity is a close second. These signs are: (1) changing water into wine (2:1–11); (2) clearing the temple (2:13–22); (3) healing an official's son (the second sign in Cana; 4:46–54); (4) healing an invalid (5:1–15); (5) feeding the five thousand (6:1–15); (6) opening the eyes of a man born blind (ch. 9); and (7) raising Lazarus from the dead (ch. 11)."²⁰ Word "sign" (*sēmeion*, σημεῖον) used 2:11, 18, 23; 3:2; 4:48, 54; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; AND THEN...20:30.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

"I AM" statements in these chapters:

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (8:12)

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." (8:58)

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. (10:14-15)

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." (11:25)

C. (13-20) The Book of Glory

Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane:

And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.....²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in

²⁰ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Gregory Goswell, *Biblical Theology: A Canonical, Thematic and Ethical Approach* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023), 463–464.

them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:5, 22–24)

(Preparation for this is in 12:23-28)

(13-17) Farewell Discourse

"I AM" statements:

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

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.... I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (15:1, 5)

(18-20) Passion and Resurrection

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (19:30)

D. (21) Epilogue

23 So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" 24 This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. 25 Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. (John 21:23-25)