

Introduction to the Gospel of John

John 20:

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Pastor Gary Hollinger

Gospel which, at its simplest, means: “good news.” (Gr. *yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on*)

The glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom. After the death of Christ, the term comprises also the preaching of (concerning) Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to procure eternal salvation for the men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life and exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty to consummate the kingdom of God.

As the messianic rank of Jesus was proved by his words, his deeds, and his death, the narrative of His teachings, His deeds, His death and resurrection came to be called the gospel or glad tidings.

I. The Gospels describe the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

II. Conservative scholarship holds that the Gospel of John was written by the youngest apostle and the closest to Jesus.

A. External evidence is strong for the Apostle John.

B. Internal evidence precludes anyone but the Apostle John.

We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus... Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!” (Mark 9:2-4, 7)

The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. (John 19:35)

After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.”

His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, “Ask him which one he means.” (John 13:21-24)

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” (John 21:7)

Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”

Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. (John 21:20-24)

Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. (Mark 15:40-41a)

Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons. (Matthew 27:55-26)

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas (Alpheus), and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. (John 19:25-27)

C. John’s Gospel is intended for anyone who wants to know more about Jesus.

III. The place of origin is uncertain but best evidence indicates from Ephesus and intended initially for the churches of Asia Minor.

Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda... (John 5:2)

IV. Conservative scholars place the writing of John’s Gospel toward the end of John’s life between AD 85 and 90.

V. John wrote his gospel to help people see Christ in all his fullness so that believers would grow and unbelievers would find salvation.

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

Key Terms in John's Gospel:

Belief or believe (100x)

Father (118x)

World (78x)

Love (48x)

Witness, testify, etc. (47x)

Life (37x), eternal (17x)

Truth (28x)

Light (25x) (sometimes contrasted with darkness)

Sign(s) (18x)

The Jews (34x)

John's Gospel presents a series of powerful portraits or vignettes that display Jesus as the God-Man sent to be the Savior of the World.

Why did God decide to give us four Gospels?

To give a sufficiently full picture of Christ Jesus

To give one more than the required number of witnesses

To reward those who diligently seek the truth

A Brief Outline of John:

Prologue / First Witnesses	1
The Seven Signs	2-12
Jesus' Final Instructions	13-17
The Arrest, Trials and Crucifixion	18-19
The Resurrection and Appearances	20
Epilogue	21

Comparing the Synoptics and John:

Focus on Galilee	Focus on Judea
Numerous Parables	Few (or No) Parables
The Kingdom of God	1 use of Kingdom of God
Genealogies of Jesus	Eternality of Jesus
Few "I Am" statements	7 "I Am" Statements
No uses of "Truly, truly"	25 Uses of "Truly, truly"
Sixteen references to "the Jews"	71 references to "the Jews"

One Feast (Passover)

Multiple Feasts

The Seven “I Am’s”

“I am the bread of life” (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51)

“I am the light of the world” (John 8:12; 9:5)

“I am the door” (John 10:7, 9)

“I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11, 14)

“I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25)

“I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6)

“I am the true vine” (John 15:1, 5)

The Seven Signs of Deity:

Water Changed to Wine 2:1-12

Healing of an Official’s Son 4:43-54

Healing at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15

Feeding of the Five Thousand 6:1-15

Jesus Walks on the Stormy Sea 6:16-24

Healing of a Man Born Blind 9:1-41

Lazarus Raised from the Grave 11:17-44