

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF

John

The fourth Gospel, between Luke and Acts, is for many readers the best-loved of the Scriptures. It was written by John, the disciple Jesus loved (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20), though his name is not found in the book.

The unique Gospel, John was written after Matthew, Mark, and Luke but repeats few events or teachings in them. They emphasize Jesus' ministry in Galilee; John focuses on Jerusalem. They report many miracles and parables; John uses a few events to highlight the divine person of Jesus, His conflict with the religious leaders of His day, and His relation with His followers, especially around His death and resurrection.

Purpose of the book: "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (20:31).

Key words

- *Word* - the *logos* — the active reason, the self-expression, the personal communication, the revelation — that connects God and man (1:1, 14)
- *I Am* - a form of Yahweh, the Hebrew holy name for God (8:58)
- *believe* - verb form of *faith* (about 100 times)
- *Father and Son* - divine family imagery
- *life and death* - express the choice before every soul who knows of Christ (5:21-29)
- *truth and lie* - Jesus and God's Word are truth; Satan traffics in lies (8:32-47; 17:17)
- *light and darkness* - metaphors for truth and lie, righteousness and sin (1:4-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 12:35, 36, 46)
- *above and beneath* - Jesus is from above where no human has ever gone (3:13, 31; 8:23)

Supporting cast

- Who recognized the Lamb of God and said, "He must increase . . ." (1:19-36; 3:23-36)?
- Who accompanied Jesus to a wedding and stood at His cross (2:1ff; 19:25)?

- What two leading Jews privately befriended Jesus (3:1ff; 19:38ff)?
- Two unnamed women of lesser morals were graced by Jesus (4:1ff; 8:1ff).
- What doubting disciple came to see Jesus as God (20:24-29)?
- What quick-spoken disciple was slow-footed (6:68, 69; 20:2-4)?

Seven I AM's of Christ's person (8:58)

- I am the bread of life (6:35, 41, 48, 51).
- I am the light of the world (8:12).
- I am the door (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, the life (14:6).
- I am the vine (15:1, 5).

Eight signs of His identity (20:30; 21:25)

- turning water to wine (2:1-11)
- healing a nobleman's son (4:46-54)
- healing a cripple at the pool (5:1-18)
- feeding the 5,000 (6:1-15)
- walking on a stormy sea (6:16-21)
- healing a blind man (9:1-41)
- raising Lazarus (11:1-57)
- catching many fish (21:6-11)

Classic passages

- Prologue: In the beginning Jesus Christ was the *theos/logos* who made and illuminated all things, who became flesh to reveal the invisible God, and who brought grace, truth, and sonship to all who receive Him (1:1-18).
- New birth: Jesus tells Nicodemus that God's kingdom is entered only through a new spiritual beginning (3:1-12).
- Golden text: Jesus says that everlasting life is the gift of God through His Son, is received by faith, and is demonstrated by a turn to the light; unbelief is condemnation (3:16-21).
- Upper room discourse: The night before His death, Jesus comforts His disciples with love, joy, and peace; and He promises to dwell with them forever through the Holy Spirit (14—16).
- Lord's prayer: Jesus, the high priest, talks glory with His Father, intercedes for His disciples, and prays for all who will believe through their witness (17).
- Lord's passion: Jesus is betrayed, arrested in the garden, tried before Caiaphas and Pilate, denied by Peter, tormented and crucified by Roman soldiers, and laid in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea (18, 19).
- Appearances of life and light: The resurrected Christ shows Himself to Mary Magdalene, speaks peace and commission to His disciples, and restores doubting Thomas (20).
- Epilogue: Gently reminding him of the denials, Jesus asks Peter three times of his love and assigns him to feed His sheep (21:15-22).

John in a sentence: God loved the world and sent His only begotten Son — the eternal I AM-Word-Messiah — to reveal the Father, show the way, witness the truth, give His life, and take it again so that we might believe and live abundantly and eternally.