

The Gospel of John

Background

Author: “the disciple whom Jesus loved” Jn. 21:19-24 (also 13:23; 20:2; 21:7): John the Apostle

Date: The Rylands papyrus, discovered in Egypt in 1935, contains portions of John 18 that date to about 125 AD, meaning the book was actually written earlier. Some date it along with Revelation (same author) at about 85-95 AD. There is no mention of the destruction of the temple in 70 AD in either book, however. Also, the temple still stands in Jn. 5:2. That would date it pre-70 AD. Most if not all of the apostles have been martyred at this point, and only John remains, hence the mention of his being left behind in Jn. 21:23.

Audience: believers at the end of the Apostolic Age

Key Verse: 20:31 “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” NIV

Purpose: to prove by his miracles (Jn. 2:22; 10:24-39; 14:8-12; 15:24-25; Acts 1:22-23), and the fulfillment of prophecy (2:17; 5:39; 6:31, 45; 12:14; 15:25), that Jesus is the Messiah.

John lists a number of metaphorical descriptions of Christ:

- The word of God 1:1
- The Light of the World 1:7; 8:12; 9:5
- The Only Begotten Son of God 1:14, 34, 49; 10:36
- The Christ (Messiah) 1:17, 41; 4:25-26; 10:25
- The Lamb of God 1:29, 36
- The Son of Man 1:31, 3:13,14, etc.
- Rabbi 1:37, 49
- The Bridegroom 3:29
- The Prophet 1:24; 4:19 [Dt. 18:15]
- The Savior of the World 4:42
- The Healer 5:9; 9:1-6; 12:40 [the Great Physician]
- Giver of Life 5:21
- The Judge 5:27
- The Bread of Life 6:35
- The Resurrection and the Life 11:25
- The Way, the Truth, and the Life 14:6
- The One Who Testifies 7:7; 8:18
- The Father 14:9 [God incarnate – 1:14; 8:58; 12:45]
- The Gate for the Sheep 10:7
- The Good Shepherd 10:11
- The True Vine 15:1
- The King 1:49; 18:35-36 [see 1Sam. 12:12; Zech. 9:9]

The Nature of Miracles:

- miracles suspend the physical laws of nature
- miracles demonstrate God’s control over the physical realm as well as the spiritual
- miracles cannot and should not be explained away in our testimony
- if miracles were only psychological and emotional, then they would point to us, not to God
- the purpose of miracles is to attest to the identity of Jesus as the Christ (5.36)
- miracles were to instill faith in believers (2.11; 11.15), not to convince unbelievers (12.37)
- the blessing for both recipients and observers of miracles is increased knowledge of God (10.38)

The Necessity of Miracles:

- if Christ did not do these miracles, then he cannot physically resurrect my body
- if Christ cannot physically resurrect my body, then my promised resurrection must be spiritual
- if my resurrection is only spiritual, then the physical world must be an evil thing
- if the physical world is an evil thing, then God lied when he said his creation was “good”
- if these miracles can be dismissed, then so can Christ’s own resurrection
- if Christ wasn’t resurrected, then he was not the Promised One (Ps. 16:10)
- if Christ was not the Promised One, then my sins remain on me (1Cor. 15:17)
- if my sins remain on me, then there is no gospel, no good news, and no eternal life

The Gospel of John

An Outline

Chap 1 – Who is Jesus?

- (1-18) The testimony of God.
- (19-36) The testimony of John the Baptist
- (37-51) The testimony of the Apostles

Chap 2 – Jesus' Authority.

- (1-11) *The first sign*: the wedding at Cana
- (12-25) Jesus and the money-changers.

Chap 3 – Jesus' Purpose.

- (1-21) Nicodemus and the new birth.
- (22-36) John's affirmation.

Chap 4 – Jesus reveals himself

- (1-30) The woman at the well
- (31-42) The Samaritan town
- (43-54) *The second sign*: The Official's son

Chap 5 – Testimony of Jesus' identity

- (1-15) *The third sign*: healing at the pool of Bethesda
- (16-29) Lord of the Sabbath, Son of God, Giver of Life, Judge
- (30-47) Witnesses: John the Baptist, Works, Father, Scripture

Chap 6 – The Bread of Life

- (1-15) *The fourth sign*: Feeding the Five Thousand
- (16-21) *The fifth sign*: Walking on Water
- (22-40) Manna from Heaven
- (41-58) Christ's flesh and blood
- (59-71) Words of life

Chap 7 – Jesus rejected by his own

- (1-24) Teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles
- (25-53) "Is this the Christ?"

Chap 8 – Jesus is the righteous Judge

- (1-20) The adulterous woman – judging rightly
- (21-38) Above and below, freeman and slave
- (39-59) Two fathers, two destinies – "I am"

Chap 9 – Healing the Blind Man

- (1-41) *The sixth sign* – the man born blind is healed

Chap 10 – The Good Shepherd

- (1-21) The Good Shepherd
- (22-42) The Father and I are one.

Chap 11 – Jesus raises Lazarus

- (1-44) *The seventh sign* – Lazarus is raised from the dead
- (45-57) Priests and Pharisees plot against Jesus

Chap 12 – Anointing and Confirmation

- (1-11) Jesus is anointed
- (12-30) Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem
- (31-50) Now is the Judgment of this world

Chap 13 – The Last Supper

- (1-17) Washing the disciples' feet
- (18-30) Jesus sends his betrayer out
- (31-38) A New Commandment

Chap 14 – The Coming of the Holy Spirit

- (1-14) Show us the Father
- (15-31) The Comforter/Helper is coming

Chap 15 – Abide in the Vine

- (1-11) Abide in Christ
- (12-27) Love and Hate

Chap 16 – Preparing for Jesus' departure

- (1-15) He will leave, but the Helper will come
- (16-33) Speaking plainly about the future

Chap 17 – Jesus' Prayer

- (1-26) For himself, his disciples, and those to come

Chap 18 – Jesus' arrest and trial

- (1-14) Jesus' betrayal and arrest
- (15-27) Peter's denial
- (28-40) Jesus' trial

Chap 19 – Jesus' Crucifixion

- (1-16) Jesus is sentenced
- (17-30) Jesus is crucified
- (31-42) Jesus is buried

Chap 20 – Jesus' Resurrection

- (1-18) The empty tomb
- (19-31) Jesus appears to the disciples

Chap 21 – Reinstating Peter by the shore

- (1-14) Breakfast by the sea
- (15-25) Feed my sheep