

Gospel of John, Bible Study, Detailed Outline

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1. Introduction to the Gospel of John

a. Authorship and Date of Writing, John the Apostle, Approximately 60 AD

1. The Gospel of John is anonymous only in the sense that the Apostle John, younger son of Zebedee and fisherman by trade (Mark 1:19-20), does not give his name. However, there is sufficient evidence to prove that John wrote the Gospel which bears his name. The Apostle John did not feel worthy to include his name, instead calling himself the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23). The internal evidence points to the fact that the writer was an Israelite Jew, since it is clear in the text that he understood the customs and debates of the day. More than any other gospel writer, John records extended discourses and debates between Jesus and the Jewish authorities of the day. The writer claims to be an eyewitness to Jesus Christ in His ministry in general (John 1:1-14), to the Last Supper (John 13:23), to the crucifixion (John 19:26-35), the empty tomb (John 20:2-10), and the Resurrected Lord (John 21:2). We know from Mark’s Gospel that the only people present at the Last Supper were the twelve Apostles (Mark 14:17), and this proves apostolic authority for the Gospel of John, which is the primary test of canonicity. We believe that the Gospel of John was written before 70 AD because of two things. First, there is the fact that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple which occurred in that year is not mentioned. Second, particular parts of the temple area are mentioned as still existing intact when the Gospel of John was written (John 5:2-3). Having narrowed down the potential authors of the fourth gospel to the twelve, we can further narrow it down to three. Three of the twelve were present at the Transfiguration, when Jesus displayed His Glory for a moment of time during His earthly ministry up on the mountain: Peter, John, and James (Matthew 17:1-9). Most scholars (myself included) believe that the phrase “we beheld His Glory” (John 1:14) is a reference to that event. Peter could not have written the fourth gospel because the text mentions him as distinct from the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23-24). James was martyred by Herod Agrippa in the early 40’s (Acts 12:1-2). We only have one choice left: the Apostle John as the author of the gospel which bears his name. In looking at the First Letter of John and comparing it to the Gospel of John, we find similarities in style (John 1:1-14; 1 John 1:1-2), purpose (John 20:31; 1 John 5:13), theme (e.g. light/darkness: John 8:12; 1 John 1:5-7), the assertion that both were written by

eyewitnesses (also see John 1:1-14 and 1 John 1:1-2), and Greek language (that of the original autographs). All three letters that bear John's name, in fact, were cyclical letters sent from Ephesus to the churches in Asia Minor with apostolic authority. The fifth Johannine writing is Revelation, also written to the churches, from the Island of Patmos in exile, does explicitly state John's authorship. All of these things taken together leave no doubt in my mind as to the trustworthiness and apostolic authority upon which all five of these writings are based. John's life ended, following his exile at Patmos in 95 AD, with him dying a natural death in Ephesus, from where he had pastored the early church. (from this author's position paper, 2012)

2. Overview of the Text of the Gospel of John (Purpose of Writing and Prominent Doctrines)

a. Purpose of writing stated in John 20:31

b. Christ's Divinity

1. "The Word", the Memra, Messiah, the Agent of Creation and the Agent of Salvation, John 1:1-14, Cf. Isaiah 9:6; Genesis 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Psalm 33:6-9, 147:15-20; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:3-6; 1 Peter 1:23; Genesis 15:1,6; Romans 10:17; Psalm 106:24-26; Hebrews 1:1-3; John 3:16; 1 John 5:7-13; Revelation 19:13, for explanation see-
https://www.firmfoundationri.com/images/The_Word.pdf

2. The "I Am" statements, John 4:26, 6:35, 8:23, 8:58, 9:5, 10:7, 10:11, 10:36, 11:25, 13:13, 14:6, 15:1

3. The "Son of God", its OT basis, Psalm 2:7,12; Proverbs 30:4, John's testimony, 1:34, 1:49, 3:18, 5:25, 9:35, 10:36, 11:4, 11:27, 17:1, 20:31

c. God's Salvation Through Jesus Christ

1. Its Origin (Faith Alone in Christ Alone), 3:16-18, 4:10, 6:32-33, 10:9

2. Its Present Work in the Believer (Presence of God the Holy Spirit, Peace, Joy Apart from Circumstances, Agency of Scripture), 14:26-27, 15:11, 17:14-19

3. Its Permanence (Eternal Security), 3:16-3:18, 3:36, 5:24, 6:37-40, 10:27-30

3. John 1:1-5, The Eternal Word

a. 1:1, *ibid.* 2b1, “The Word”, Greek-“logos”, Aramaic-“Memra”, Hebrew-“Davar”, in the understanding of a devout Jewish fisherman, “Memra” as explained in the Targums gives us the meaning, Jesus “the Word” is the Christ, the Agent of Creation (1:1-3), the Agent of Salvation (3:3-6,16), the Visible Manifestation of God (1:14), and the Agent of Revelation (14:7-11), all of these concepts would be developed within the Gospel of John

b. 1:1-2, “in the beginning”, Cf. Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 John 1:1, giving us a total of four Bible books that begin with the Creator God

c. “the Word was with God, and the Word was God”, fully the same as God in essence of deity (Hebrews 1:3) but yet distinct from God the Father (evidence of at least two Persons in the Godhead, the triune God seen in Isaiah 42:1-9, Matthew 3:16-17, and 2 Corinthians 13:14)

d. 1:3 Christ the Agent of Creation, Cf. Colossians 1:16-17

e. 1:4, Christ the Life, and Christ the Light, again two principles which find their origin in the Hebraic concept of Memra, *ibid.* 3a, both become primary themes and motifs in John’s Gospel, as well as the rest of his inspired writings

i. “In Him was life”, Jesus, as God, possesses the attribute of Aseity, meaning that He is eternal, uncaused, and does not depend upon any other source for His existence (5:26, 10:10, 11:25, 14:6)

ii. “In Him...was the light of men”, the guiding hope and Author of purpose for our lives, the Holy example and Mighty God (1:9, 8:12, 12:35,46)

f. 1:5, the light which overcomes the darkness, illustrated—a bright light shining into a dark room brightens up the room, but a flashlight with a dead battery being turned on in a bright room does not make the room darker, spiritual light had come to conquer spiritual darkness as it was prophesied (Isaiah 60:1-2)

4. 1:6-8, The Witness of John the Baptist

a. 1:6, “John”, cousin of our Lord in His humanity, Cf. Luke 1:5-25,57-80

b. John the Baptist the forerunner prophesied of in Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1, 4:5-6, he would become not only a herald of King Jesus the Messiah in his preaching, but also in his life events (rejection by the Jewish leaders, and being put to death)

c. 1:7, the universal call after the manner of Isaiah 45:22-25, two more themes are introduced here by the Apostle John, “witness” and “believe”

d. 1:8, apply, we too are witnesses and light bearers, having no light in ourselves at all apart from Jesus Christ “that Light” (Cf. Isaiah 9:2, 42:6)

5. John 1:9-13, Jesus Christ the True Light

a. 1:9, “the true Light”, all other lights pale in contrast to Jesus, some attempt to promote counterfeit truth and light (Cf. 2 Corinthians 11:12-15)

b. “gives light to every man”, Cf. Matthew 5:45, sufficient revelation is offered “to every man”, and it is the choice of each individual whether or not to respond to the light that they are given, Cf. Romans 1:18-21

i. Psalm 90:8, the light of conviction of sin

ii. Psalm 119:105, the light of day by day guidance in God’s ways

iii. Psalm 119:130, the light of Scripture, the written Word of God

c. 1:10, *ibid.* 3ei., the Agent of Creation entered into the world He created in time, His Aseity reaffirmed and applied here

d. 1:11, “His own”, the Jewish people, His kinsmen regarding His humanity, the Kinsmen-Redeemer was rejected, Cf. Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 12:22-24

e. 1:12, the promise to believers, sufficient room at the cross for all who come, Cf. Galatians 3:26-29

f. “children of God”, spiritual adoption, Cf. Romans 8:14-15; 2 Corinthians 6:18

g. 1:13, the Doctrine of (Spiritual) Regeneration, Cf. John 3:3; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3,23; 1 John 2:29

6. 1:14-18, The Word Became Flesh

a. 1:14, the classic verse affirming the Deity and Humanity of Jesus Christ, “the Word” (Memra-Agent of Creation, Salvation, Revelation) “became flesh” (Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2) “and dwelt among us” (Matthew 4:15-16; Isaiah 9:1-2), “and we beheld His glory” (Matthew 17:1-2; Luke 24:50-52), “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” (John 14:9), “full of grace and truth” (in perfect possession of both attributes, having both to dispense according to His will)

b. 1:15, John the Baptist’s witness, to Jesus’ preeminence and eternity

c. 1:16, applied to the church, Cf, Ephesians 1:22-23

d. 1:17, the contrast between the Law of Moses and the Old Covenant and the Grace of Christ offered through the New Covenant, Cf. 2 Corinthians 3:7-8; Galatians 3:19-25; Hebrews 3:1-6, 8:7, 10:11-18