



# John

## Summary

The Gospel of John is the fourth of four books in the Bible that record the life of Jesus. It stands apart from the other Gospels because John describes events and activities not found in the others. John's purpose in doing so is to make clear to the reader that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is God in human form. He chose to live among us to show us the way to eternal life with Him. That way required Him to sacrifice Himself for our sins, to die in our place, and to conquer death through His resurrection. As the author wrote in John 3:16, *For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.* This Gospel begins with the incarnation of Jesus, *the Word became flesh* (John 1:14) and His presentation as the Son of God by John the Baptist. John then records seven miracles performed by Jesus and seven "I am" statements made by Jesus. As opposition to Jesus grows, John describes the responses of belief and disbelief. As Jesus approaches His last days, He concentrates on preparing His disciples on what is to come. The Gospel concludes with His trial, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection.

## Author

The Gospel of John was written by John, the son of Zebedee. John was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. He, along with his brother, James, and Peter, formed Jesus' inner circle. These three disciples were especially close to Jesus. Many times throughout this Gospel, John refers to himself as the *disciple whom Jesus loved* (John 13:23). John also wrote the books of 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation.

## Date

The most probable date for the Gospel of John is between A.D. 85 and A.D. 90. It is universally accepted that John was the last of the four Gospels to be written.

## Primary Characters

Jesus (John 1-21)

John the Baptist (John 1)

Mary, the mother of Jesus (John 2, 19)

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (John 11-12)

The Disciples (John 1-21)

Pilate (John 18-19)

Mary Magdalene (John 19-20)

## Historical Moments

The Incarnation of the Son of God (John 1)

John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus (John 1)

Jesus Is Baptized (John 1)

Jesus's First Miracle of Changing Water into Wine (John 1)

Nicodemus Visits Jesus and He Is Told He Must Be Born Again (John 3)

Jesus Speaks to a Samaritan Woman at a Well (John 4)

Opposition to Jesus Grows; Jesus Continues to Teach and Perform Miracles (John 5-12)

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (John 12)

Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples (John 13-14)

Jesus and His Disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 15-17)

Jesus' Arrest and Trial (John 18-19)

Jesus' Crucifixion and Death (John 19)

Jesus Is Resurrected (John 20-21)

## Major Theological Themes

**Jesus Is the Word Made Flesh** - The Gospel of John opens with, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.* (John 1:1-2). Later in the same chapter, John writes, *the Word became flesh* (John 1:14). God loves us so much that He took on human form, so that we could believe in Him.

**Eternal Life Is Ours through Jesus Christ** - In John 14:6, Jesus says, *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* This is an exclusive claim of Christ's power and ability to restore the relationship with the Father that has been broken by sin.

**The "I Am" Statements** - The Gospel of John records seven "I am" statements made by Jesus: the bread of life (John 6:35); the light of the world (John 8:12); the gate for the sheep (John 10:7); the good shepherd (John 10:11); the resurrection and the life (John 11:25); the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6); and, the true vine (John 15:1).

**The Work of the Holy Spirit** - We cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless we are born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). The Spirit gives life (John 6:63). The Spirit is given to believers to be our Counselor (John 14:26).

## Lessons Learned from John

**Jesus Is the Son of God** - He existed with the Father from the beginning. He left heaven, walked among us, and showed us how to live. But He also made it clear through His miracles and His words that we need a Savior.

**John Presents Us with a Choice** - He paints a clear picture of who Jesus is and what He has done for us. His Gospel records how people responded to Jesus. Many acknowledged Him as the Son of God but others rejected Him. We have that same choice. We can either confess that Jesus is God in the flesh and accept His death on the cross as the perfect atonement for our sins or we reject Him. There are no other alternatives.