

Walking Through the Word

Jesus, Paul and the Church (Week 21)

Story: **A View from the Inside** [E: Jesus Makes Five New Friends, The Wedding at Cana, Jesus Keeps the Passover, Nicodemus Comes to Jesus, The Woman at the Well, Jesus Heals the Nobleman's Son (373-384); The Cripple at the Pool of Bethesda (390-392); Jesus Attends the Feast in Jerusalem, A Sinful Woman is Brought to Jesus, Questioned by His Enemies, Jesus Heals a Blind Man (430-437); Lazarus is Raised from the Dead (442-445); Jesus Rides Into Jerusalem as King (461-463); Jesus' Last Hours in the Temple (468-470); The Last Supper with the Twelve, Two Disciples Fail Their Lord, The Darkest Day in All the World, The Watchers at the Tomb, Jesus Rises from the Dead (472-484); Doubting Thomas (486-488)]

Location: **John 1:1-21:25**

Bios & definitions

prologue: John uniquely opens his gospel with a theological treatise (1:1-18) – a compelling explanation that Jesus was God made flesh, and that without this knowledge, one would not fully understand the purpose and person of Jesus Christ

Author: all agree that the apostle John, a son of a fisherman named Zebedee and mother Salome (see Mt 27:56, Mark 15:40-41) and brother of James (together known as “the sons of Thunder”), is the author of this Gospel; while not mentioned by name in the work (which is natural if he authored it), he refers to himself often as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (see 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20, 24), and it is clear he had a strong opinion of himself by his request for preferment in the Kingdom (see Mark 10:35-45, though note that Matt 20:20-28 says it was Salome who made the request); it is believed that John wrote this Gospel sometime between AD 85-90, after the destruction of the Temple (in AD 70) and before his exile; he likely wrote it while ministering in Ephesus, where it is believed he served the church for many years following Paul's ministry (see Rev 1:9-11)

NOTE: This authorship is attested by Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, in his work *Against Heresies*, who heard Polycarp (an early church father who had contact with John) and testified that “John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, had himself published a Gospel during his residence in Ephesus in Asia” and Eusebius (early church historian) concurs John's authorship of the Gospel that bears his name¹

As to the conclusion of his life, “[I]n the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96) he was banished to ‘the isle that is called Patmos’ (a small rocky and then almost uninhabited island in the Aegean Sea), ‘for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ’” ([Rev. 1:9](#)). Irenaeus and Eusebius say that this took place about the end of Domitian's reign. ... His return from exile took place during the brief but tolerant reign of Nerva; he died at Ephesus in the reign of Trajan [EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.23], at an age above ninety...”²

purpose: fortunately, John spells out his purpose within his text; “*Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name*” (20:30-31); the emphasis of John's Gospel is to compel the reader/listener to “believe” – this verb, *pisteuo* in the Greek, appears 98 times within his work; whether John was writing to Gentile unbelievers, or new believers who were needing encouragement (i.e. “may believe” could also read “may *continue to believe*”) is questionable, but his explanation of Jewish words and customs as well as his simple, plain use of the Greek present a strong argument in favor of a Greek audience; however, John also had concern for those new to the faith (see NOTE)

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NOTE: “But John also wrote to Christians, to help strengthen their faith. John was the last surviving apostle and one of the few still living who had seen Jesus in the flesh. It would be easy for young believers—removed from Christ’s life, death, and resurrection by a generation and surrounded by a hostile government and unbelieving neighbors—to have doubts and second thoughts about their faith. Remember, this is the late eighties, after the terrible persecutions by Nero (AD 54–68) and the total destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70). The church had flourished under persecution, but believers needed reassurance of the truth of Christianity. John, the venerable eyewitness to all that Jesus had done and faithful follower of his Lord, would give that assurance through his personal account of the gospel story.”³

Points to Remember: John is unique to the Gospels, as it is not one of the synoptics (93 percent of his material is original in comparison to the synoptics); some believe that John wrote to “supplement” the other Gospels, but as stated above, his motivation was more evangelistic (see 20:30-31);

- 1) John does not include the following: the genealogy, birth, baptism, temptation, calling of disciples, parables, transfiguration, Last Supper, suffering in Gethsemane or ascension to the Father
- 2) John uses key words in his prologue which will appear throughout his Gospel: the Word (*logos*), life, believe, true, world, Son, Father, glory, grace and truth
- 3) John records seven miracles (six unique to his Gospel) to reveal Jesus’ divine/human nature in what scholars call the “Book of Signs” (2:1-12:50); they are:
 - a. turning water to wine (2:1-11)
 - b. healing the nobleman’s son (4:46-54)
 - c. healing the cripple at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-9)
 - d. feeding the 5,000 (6:1-14)
 - e. walking on water (6:15-21)
 - f. restoring sight to a man blind from birth (9:1-41)
 - g. raising Lazarus from the grave (11:1-44)

NOTE: There are two other SIGNIFICANT miracles recorded in John, both also pointing to the deity of Christ: the Resurrection (John 20:1-18) and the miraculous catch of fish (21:1-14)
- 4) John records several “I Am” statements of Jesus, reinforcing the revelation of Jesus’ true identity as Son of God, many in conjunction with some “special signs” John records; these statements are:
 - a. I am the Bread of Life (6:35)
 - b. I am the Light of the World (8:12; 9:5)
 - c. I am the gate (10:7)/door (10:9)
 - d. I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14)
 - e. I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
 - f. I am the way and the truth and the life (14:6)
 - g. I am the true vine (15:1)/vine (15:9)
- 5) John puts an unique emphasis on Jesus’ observation of Jewish feasts and his ministry in Jerusalem
- 6) John introduces the “Holy Spirit” in the “Upper Room Discourse” (chpts 13-17), one He describes as “another Helper”; the Greek for another is *allos*, whose definition literally means “another of the same kind”

Nicodemus – a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews who came secretly to Jesus at night (John 3:1-21); may have come at night because he feared being discovered as a sympathizer and follower of Jesus; assisted in Jesus’ burial

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Sadducees – a Jewish group representing the wealthy class; they remained primarily in the temple and oversaw the administration of Temple; believed only in the five books of Moses; were politically and worldly minded and exerted incredible influence; rejected belief in the resurrection

Sanhedrin – also referred to as “the whole Council” (see John 11:47, also Mk 14:55), this was the high court of the Jews made up of the chief priests, elders and scribes; the total number of members was 71 (including the high priest functioning as the presiding officer), included both Pharisees and Sadducees

NOTE: reminder from last week that **Pharisees** are a strict group of religious Jews who advocated minute obedience to the Jewish law and traditions; highly respected in the community but hated Jesus; in addition, while they were the primary opponents of Jesus in the Gospels, they lacked the political power necessary to bring about Jesus’ crucifixion without the presence of the entire Council (Sanhedrin)

Praetorium – the palace of the Roman governor, Pilate; where Jesus was brought following his examination by Annas (father-in-law to Caiaphas) and Caiaphas, a Sadducee, the high priest of the Jews from AD 18-36; the Jews bringing Jesus to Pilate’s home refused to enter the palace, as it would make them ceremonially unclean to eat during the Passover feast

Pilate – the Roman governor in charge of Judea (region where Jerusalem was located) from AD 26-36; unpopular with the Jews because he raided the Temple treasury for funds to build an aqueduct; found Jesus innocent when the “King of the Jews” was brought before him, because he knew that the religious leaders hated Jesus but could not order his death; Pilate did not find sufficient evidence to charge Jesus, but was caught in a political struggle between the Jewish nation and Roman authority

Joseph of Arimathea – a wealthy man and disciple of Jesus; also a member of the Sanhedrin not agreeing to Jesus’ judgment; took possession of Jesus’ body following the crucifixion and, with the help of Nicodemus, took Jesus to a tomb that he owned (Mt 27:60)

The “Love” Discussion – in John 21:15-17, Jesus questions Peter three times about his love for his Lord; the first two times Jesus asks “Do you *agape* me?” and Peter answers “I *phileo* you” – *agape* (unconditional) vs *phileo* (brotherly); the final time, Jesus asks “Do you *phileo* me?” and Peter answers affirmatively in the same

¹ Source: [Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty](#)

² Source: [Jamieson Fausset Brown’s Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments](#)

³ Source: [Life Application New Testament Commentary](#)