

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 21ST – 22ND, 2023 // BOOK OF JOHN

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN WHO WAS JOHN?

John was one of the 12 apostles of Jesus and lived from around 6–100 A.D.

- John was probably the youngest apostle and was the only one to die of natural causes at around 93–94 years old.
- John wrote Revelation, 1, 2, and 3 John, and his account of the life, ministry, and identity of Jesus in the Gospel of John.
- John was the brother of James, and together they were called by Jesus “Boanerges,” which means “sons of thunder.” As John grew and matured, he became a “pillar” in the church at Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9), ministered with Peter (Acts 3; 4; 8), and became known as the “apostle of love” in the early church.
- John fled from the region near Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and settled in Ephesus as an elder in the Ephesian church.
- In 90–95 A.D., John was exiled to the Island of Patmos by Emperor Domitian, where he wrote the book of Revelation.
- He returned to Ephesus in 96 A.D., where he lived and ministered the remainder of his life until his death around 100 A.D.

HOW AND WHEN WAS JOHN WRITTEN?

The Gospel of John was probably the last of the four written (85–90 A.D.), so it was written in view of what the previous three had already said.

- This is one reason why John's account of the life of Jesus is in many ways different from Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
- The first three Gospels focus more on what Jesus taught and did; John focuses more on who Jesus is.

WHO WAS JOHN'S AUDIENCE?

Many scholars believe Matthew's gospel was written to the Jews, Mark's to the Romans, Luke's to the Greeks, and John's...

- To everyone. The key verse for understanding John's Gospel is found at the end of the book: “...these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31).

HISTORICAL SETTING OF JOHN

Church tradition states this John's gospel was written in 85–90 A.D. before John was exiled to the Island of Patmos.

- There's a bit of a debate as to where John was when he wrote this Gospel: Patmos (if he wrote while exiled, 95 A.D.), Galilee (where he lived before 70 A.D.), or Ephesus (between 70–95 A.D.). The first generation of eyewitnesses to the life of Christ was dying out.

False teachers were already present.

- John writes an eyewitness account of the things he saw, heard, and experienced as a follower of Jesus.
- His eyewitness accounts are interspersed with “sermonettes” and teachings: most likely the result of decades of preaching and teaching this material as a pastor/elder.

WHAT IS JOHN ABOUT?

John shows us who Jesus is by highlighting seven signs (miracles) of Jesus (six of these are not mentioned in the first three Gospels).

- John also does this by giving us Jesus' own words about Himself, expressed in seven “I Am” statements.
- John also provides us with the testimony of seven credible witnesses and events to show us who Jesus is.

The first three Gospels center on Jesus' ministry in Galilee, but John's focuses on Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem.

- Matthew emphasizes Jesus coming from Abraham through David to show He is Messiah; Mark shows Jesus coming from Nazareth to show Him as a servant; Luke shows Jesus coming from Adam to show Him as the perfect man.

John shows Jesus came from Heaven to prove that Jesus is God.

- So much of John's writing is centered around this idea: Jesus is the God of the Old Testament in human flesh, yet so many misunderstood His identity, work, and teaching.
- Almost every time Jesus reveals Himself in John, He is misunderstood.

A MISUNDERSTOOD MESSIAH.

Who is Jesus?

- Jesus the teacher. Jesus the advisor. Jesus the butler. Jesus the liar/lunatic/mythological hero.
- Jesus is God. If we truly believe this claim, the only response that makes sense is to fully surrender our lives to His will.

THE WORD (JOHN 1:1-5)

WHAT ARE WORDS?

Words reveal to others our hearts and minds, and Jesus is referred to by John as “the Word”: the revelation of the heart and mind of God to us (vs. 1).

- The Greek word is “logos”: the “Ultimate Reason,” the power that puts sense into the world, making it orderly instead of chaotic.
- Jesus is that power! He is God.

Jesus is the eternal Word, who existed in the beginning, not because He had a beginning, but because He is eternal (vs. 1–2).

- The Word was with God, and the Word was God: “The Word” is fully God but does not fully encompass all that God is.
- God the Father is a distinct Person from the Word (the Son), yet they are equally God. Together with God the Holy Spirit: one God, three Persons.

Jesus (“the Word”) participated in creation (vs. 3).

- In Jesus was life, and that life was the “light of men” (vs. 4).
- The “Word” is the source of all life—not only biological life but the very principle of existence in a physical and spiritual sense (zōē).
- Only through Jesus can we have real life and know the truth about reality, human existence, God, and eternity (“light”).

In Jesus, God's person, power, heart, and mind were communicated powerfully to us as human beings in our state of brokenness and spiritual darkness (vs. 5a).

- Yet, our darkness did not “overcome” this light (vs. 5b).
- To “katalambano” (overcome) is to take hold of, capture, grasp, to perceive, to comprehend, or to make something one's own.

Jesus—fully God, completely eternal, present at creation, and the very source of all life and truth came to this broken, present darkness but humanity did not grasp, take hold of, or comprehend Jesus when He came.

- John shows us the vastness of Jesus' identity, and with that comes the question... Have I “overcome” this truth and made it my own? Do I know Him for who He really is?

A WITNESS (JOHN 1:6-13)

John, the writer of this book, is the first witness to Jesus' identity, and now he will introduce a second witness: another man named John (vs. 6).

- This other John was sent from God as a witness to testify about the light so that all might believe (vs. 7).
- This man John was not the light himself; he simply came to testify about the light (vs. 8).

“JOHN” IS NONE OTHER THAN JOHN THE BAPTIZER.

John the Baptizer was Jesus' cousin (Luke 1:36), and he was a prophet who paved the way for the coming of Jesus as the Messiah (Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3).

- The central theme of John the Baptizer's ministry was “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matt. 3:2), and he would baptize those who received his message.

John's entire ministry was simply to “testify about the light” (Jesus).

- He wasn't the main attraction; he was there to point others to the main attraction!
- The true light (Jesus) who gives light to everyone was coming into the world, and John's job was simply to proclaim that truth to as many people who would listen (vs. 9).

God came to the world He created, and to the people He made in His own image and likeness, and yet they didn't recognize Him (vs. 10).

- God came to His own people (the Jews)—those who had received a revelation through the law, the covenants, the temple, and signs/wonders—and yet they did not receive Him (vs. 11).
- But there are those who did receive Him (vs. 12).

How did they receive God the Son (Jesus) into their lives? By believing in His name.

- To truly “believe” in Jesus is to “receive” Him in our lives as Savior, God, and King; it carries with it the idea of entering into an embrace.
- Those who have done this have been given the right to be called “Children of God.”
- Now they have access to God as a Father in an intimate, personal manner!

How do we get a dad?

- We're born into a family.

How do we get born?

- Not by human effort or by achievement.
- Just as natural birth happens via the perfect plan and will of God, so spiritual birth happens by the perfect power, plan, and will of God.
- How does it happen? By believing in and receiving Jesus!

THE WORD BECAME FLESH (JOHN 1:14-18)

“THE WORD BECAME FLESH...” (VS. 14A)

Don't miss the beauty and wonder of this verse.

- The One who was from the beginning, through whom God created everything, became a human being of flesh and blood.
- The idea of God becoming flesh and “dwelling” among us is connected with the Tabernacle of the Old Testament. God, in His glory, came to be with us.

“...WE OBSERVED HIS GLORY...” (VS. 14B)

John testified to the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ as an eyewitness, just as John the Baptizer was an eyewitness.

- The glory of Jesus wasn't just a display of His power through signs/wonders: it was glory that was full of grace and truth through His presence, ministry, and teaching.

“...JOHN TESTIFIED CONCERNING THIS...” (VS. 15)

John the Baptizer knew some very important truths about the identity of Jesus:

1. Jesus was the “one coming after” him: the promised Messiah John paved the way for.
2. Jesus ranked ahead of him: Jesus was greater than any prophet because He's God.
3. Jesus was eternal and preexistent before He came to earth because He's God.

“...WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED GRACE UPON GRACE” (VS. 16)

A good working definition of grace is “When the one from whom I have a right to expect nothing gives me everything.”

- From the fullness of all that Jesus is, we have received grace upon grace—an inexhaustible supply of God's unmerited favor.
- God the Word, Jesus, brought a different order than the one instituted by Moses. “...no one has ever seen God...the Son, who is himself God...has revealed Him” (vs. 18)
- The perfect declaration of the unseen God is Jesus.
- Jesus—through His life, ministry, teaching, and character—reveals to us the Father.
- What is God like? We can know and see what was formerly invisible through Jesus.

EMBRACED BY TRUTH.

- To truly “believe” in Jesus is to “receive” Him in our lives as Savior, God, and King; it carries with it the idea of entering into an embrace (vs. 12).
- To “embrace” the truth of Jesus means we must first let go of falsehood.
- To “embrace” the truth of Jesus means we must refuse to see other things as our savior, gods, and king.

EMBRACED BY GRACE.

- To “believe” and “receive” Jesus into our lives means that we recognize something greater than the law of Moses has come.
- Our approval from God and eternal life doesn't come from keeping the rules; it comes from our embrace of Jesus.
- Our new birth into God's family is not a matter of achievement or human effort, but of God's grace.