

Outline of John

It is our hope that this overview and outline of John will assist you as you study God's holy Word. May you discover His character in the pages of Scripture.

Of the four gospels, John is unique. John contains no parables, no exorcism of demons, lepers are not healed, there is no list of the twelve disciples, there is no accounting of the institution of Communion, and there is no discussion of the end times. There is no birth narrative and no account of the temptation of Christ or the transfiguration. In contrast, only John gives us the accounts of the wedding at Cana and the first temple cleansing, the encounter with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, the man at the pool of Bethesda and the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem, the woman taken in adultery and the blind man, the raising of Lazarus, the discourse of the Last Supper, the power of Christ during His arrest and trial, and His charge to Peter.

The only portions of the book that parallel any of the other three gospels are 1:19-34 concerning the ministry of John the Baptist and his witness of Christ, 6:1-21 concerning the feeding of the 5,000 and the walking on the water; 12:12-19 concerning the triumphal entry; 13:21-38 concerning the Last Supper; 18:1-20:25 concerning the trial, death, and resurrection of Christ. The following passages, representing approximately 80% of the book, are unique to John:

- 1:1-18
- 1:35-5:47
- 6:22-12:11
- 12:20-13:20
- 14:1-17:26
- 20:26-21:25

There is a reason for this. John wrote his gospel after the other three gospels had been written (EH,bk.5.ch.8). Eusebius records the following:

But after Mark and Luke had already published their gospels, they say, that John, who during all this time was proclaiming the gospel without writing, at length proceeded to write it on the following occasion. The three gospels previously written, having been distributed among all, and also handed to him, they say that he admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth; but that there was only wanting in the narrative the account of the things done by Christ, among the first of his deeds, and at the commencement of the gospel. And this was the truth. For it is evident that the other three evangelists only wrote the deeds of our Lord for one year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and intimated this in the very beginning of their history. . . . For these reasons the apostle John, it is said, being entreated to undertake it, wrote the account of the time not recorded by the former evangelists, and the deeds done by our Savior, which they have

passed by, (for these were the events that occurred before the imprisonment of John,) and this very fact is intimated by him, when he says, “this beginning of miracles Jesus made;” and then proceeds to make mention of the Baptists, in the midst of our Lord’s deeds, as John was at that time “baptizing at AEnon near Salim.” He plainly also shows this in the words; “John was not yet cast into prison.” The apostle, therefore, in his gospel, gives the deeds of Jesus before the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three evangelists mention the circumstances after that event.

EH,bk.3.ch.24.

John’s gospel then includes material concerning the beginning of the ministry of Christ (Jn. 1:43-5:47) and material concerning the end of Christ’s ministry (Jn. 7:1-21:25). Only John 6 contains any material concerning the middle of Christ’s ministry, and it is given to show the rapid shift in public popularity, from wanting to make Jesus king (6:15) to losing even His disciples (6:66).

Besides including much original material, John is written for a specific purpose. John 20:31 states that these things were written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life in His name. This is the gospel of belief. The word “believe” occurs some 100 times in this book. In all of the rest of the New Testament, it is found only some 150 more times. Acts has 39 occurrences of this word and the rest of the books have less. Two out of every five occurrences of the word is found in this one book. It is found in every chapter except 15, 18, and 21. The book is about belief, beginning with belief based upon the testimony of others to belief based upon the reality of experiencing the risen Christ.

Corresponding with this thrust of the book is the simplicity of doctrine contained therein. John presents things in black and white. Thus, if belief is the thrust, then who is it that is called to believe? It is the world. Christ came to take away the sins of the world. God so loved the world. The word “world” is found some 78 times in this book, approaching half of the times it is used in the entire New Testament (108 times in the rest of the New Testament). 1 John has the next most occurrences of this word, mentioned some 23 times.

If the world is to believe, then what type of belief is it? It is a belief based upon knowledge. Two words for “know” are found in John: “oida” (84 times) and “ginosko” (56 times). Both words are found more in John than any other book. Some 17 times the word “sign” is found, again more than in any other book. The signs are given that we might believe.

- 2:11 beginning of signs
- 2:23 saw the signs he did
- 3:2 prompted Nicodemus to come
- 4:54 second sign
- 6:14 see the sign
- 7:31 will the Messiah do more signs than these?
- 9:16 How can a sinner do such signs?
- 10:41 John did no sign
- 11:47 Jesus did many signs
- 12:18 the sign of raising Lazarus
- 12:37 although He had done so many signs, they did not believe

- 20:30 these are recorded that you might believe.

Another important concept in the book is the Fatherhood of God. Some 106 times God is referred to as “Father.”

There is much contrast set forth in the book of John. The word “life” is found some 36 times in John and the word “death” eight times. The word “light” occurs 23 times and the words “dark” or “darkness” nine times. The word “flesh” occurs 13 times and the word “spirit” 24 times. The word “love” occurs 58 times and the word “hate” 12 times. Always, the emphasis is on the positive, not the negative. 15 times Jesus is referenced as “King.”

John, the author, was quite the character, even in his old age. Polycarp relates for us that John once went to a public bath at Ephesus and saw Cerinthus, a heretic, in the bath. Polycarp records that John ran out without bathing, stating: “Let us flee lest the bath should fall in, as long as Cerinthus, that enemy of the truth is within.” (EH,bk4,ch14)

Date:

68-69 or 90 A.D.? Some suggest that because in John 5:2 John states that “there is” a pool, that John wrote this book before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., but after the garden of Gethsemane was destroyed (see John 18:1) by the Roman siege. Others believe that John wrote the gospel long afterwards, towards the end of his life.

I. The Introduction 1:1-18

- A. His Identity 1:1-5 (God)
- B. His Purpose 1:6-13 (to be Light)
- C. His Presence 1:14-18 (we saw)

II. The Establishment of Belief 1:19-4:54

- A. The Witness of John the Baptist 1:19-34 (A statement from a prophet—“this is the Son of God”)
- B. The Witness of the disciples 1:35-51 (“We have found the Messiah.” “You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel.”)
- C. The first miracle (Water to Wine) 2:1-12 (Demonstrates His power over matter—“and his disciples believed in Him)
- D. Cleansing of the Temple 2:13-25 (Demonstrates His authority; led to increased belief after His resurrection)
- E. Nicodemus 3:1-21 (Demonstrates His wisdom—teaching the teacher; those who believe will have eternal life)
- F. The Second Witness of John the Baptist 3:22-36 (Demonstrates His Pre-eminence—“He is the bridegroom, the One sent from God who speaks the words of God.”)
- G. The Samaritan Woman 4:1-42 (Demonstrates His knowledge – the Samaritans believe. “We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”)
- H. Healing the nobleman’s son 4:43-54 (Demonstrates His power over illness – “And he himself believed and his whole household”)

III. The Trial of Belief 5:1-10:42

- A. When confronted with pre-conceived beliefs—rightness of doing good on the Sabbath (The man with the 38 year infirmity) 5:1-47 (Jews sought to kill Him for healing on the Sabbath and for saying God was His Father, making Himself equal with God)—but hold to the objective truth 5:31-47
 - 1. John the Baptist 5:31-35

2. His works 5:36
 3. The Father 5:37-38
 4. The Scriptures 5:39-47
- B. When confronted by offensive concepts (The bread from heaven) 6:1-71 (even some of His disciples left Him)–but where else can we go 6:68
 - C. When confronted with our own familiarity 7:1-52 (we know where this man is from)–but hear Him out and know what He did 7:51
 - D. When confronted with our own righteous standards 8:1-59 (adultery is wrong, self-witness is no good, we have Abraham and God as our fathers)–but He spoke the Father’s words 8:18, 28
 - E. When confronted with our own ignorance 9:1-41 (the blind man did not know)- but look at what He did for you 9:25
 - F. When confronted with His claims 10:1-40 (the good shepherd)–but these are not the words of a demon 10:21

IV. The Confirmation of Belief 11:1-12:50

- A. Power over Death 11:1-45 (Loose him, and let him go)
- B. By Prophecy of High Priest 11:45-57
- C. His Anointing for Death 12:1-8
- D. His triumphal Entry 12:9-19
- E. His prediction of death 12:20-50

V. The Life of Faith 13:1-17:26

- A. By Service and Love 13:1-38
- B. By Hope and the Indwelling Trinity 14
- C. By Abiding and Knowing Reality 15-16:4
- D. By the Holy Spirit and Rejoicing 16:5-33
- E. By Prayer and Unity 17

VI. The Crises of Faith 18-19

- A. The Betrayal (and power) 18:1-11 (18:6)
- B. The Denial 18:12-27
- C. The Trial (and authority) 18:28-19:16 (19:11)
- D. The Crucifixion (and surrender) 19:17-37 (19:30)
- E. The Burial 19:38-42

VII. The Victory of Faith 20-21

- A. The Visible Proof of the Triumph–the absent body 20:1-10 (“he saw and believed”)
- B. The Visible Proof of the Triumph–His person 20:11-29
 1. With Mary Magdalene 20:11-18

2. With the disciples 20:19-23
 3. With Thomas 20:24-29
- C. The Visible Proof of the Triumph—these signs 20:30-31
 - D. The Visible Proof of the Triumph—His provision 21:1-14
 - E. Follow Me 21:15-25
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Key Idea: The One who hears and believes has everlasting life.

Key Passage: 5:24

Key Lesson: Jesus is believable.