

GOSPEL of *Grace*
FELLOWSHIP

John – Part 1

Jesus Christ, the Son of God

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F – L – I – G – H – T

F – The author of the Gospel of John was an eyewitness to the events described in the book. Though the author did not name himself, ever since the time of the early church, it’s been traditionally believed it was John – the son of Zebedee, the brother of the apostle James, and the disciple whom Jesus loved (13:23).

Of the four Gospels, John’s has the latest date of composition, written sometime between AD 80 and 90.

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L – John is the most “spiritual” of all 4 Gospels. The book centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ; however, more than his *activity*, John concentrates on his *identity*. His emphasis, even more than what Jesus did, is who Jesus is. The book’s spiritual depth and focus on the incarnation of the God-man Jesus Christ sets it apart from the other Gospels.

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L – John doesn’t follow the synoptic pattern of describing Jesus’ ministry in Galilee and Judea. There is a strong final-week emphasis. One-third of the book deals with Jesus’ last 8 days, from Palm Sunday to the Resurrection. And, of course, John is where we find the most famous verse in the entire Bible, and the most often quoted, John 3:16.

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L – John’s overarching theme is found in the frequency of his most-used words: the name *Jesus* and the title *Christ* are found about 170 times, and the word *believe* appears about 100 times. John wanted us to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God (20:31).

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I – Revelation of Christ to the World (1-4)
Rejection of Christ by the World (5-12)
Revelation of Christ to His Disciples (13:1-16:24)
Reception of Christ by His Disciples (16:25-21:25)

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G – Most of John’s material is unique among the Gospels, especially the 7 statements Jesus made about himself, using the phrase “I am” to identify himself with God and as God. Unlike the other Gospel writers, John didn’t include any parables, but he did record 7 specific miracles that point to Jesus’ divinity – 5 of which are found only in his account.

The Seven “I Ams”

- “I am the bread of life” (6:35)
- “I am the light of the world” (8:12)
- “I am the door for the sheep” (10:7,9)
- “I am the good shepherd” (10:11,14)
- “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25)
- “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6)
- “I am the true vine” (15:1)

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G – Another unique aspect of John’s Gospel is his description of the preexistent Jesus (1:1-2). In relation to God, Jesus has always existed. John described him as the Word by which God spoke the universe into being (1:3) and as the light which illuminates everyone’s life, pointing them to the truth and love of God (1:4). The idea of “the Word” was something that first-century Jews and Gentiles were familiar with.

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G – The Jewish commentaries called the Targum contained a reference to God as *Memra*, which means “the Word.” This title referred to Jesus’ act of speaking the world into existence.

The Greeks, on the other hand, looked at the organization and order of the universe – predictable patterns of seasons and stars, day and night – and came up with a concept to account for it: *Logos*, or “the Word.”

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G – But for all the mystery and wonder present in his Gospel, John’s focus was simple. Throughout his book, he used the title *Jesus Christ* – *Christ* meaning “the Anointed One” or “Messiah” – and the word *believe*. His theme rings loud and clear, down to us today: Jesus is God, and here are all the reasons you should believe in him.

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H – John wrote his Gospel a few decades after the resurrection of Jesus, and after the dispersion of Jews and Christians under the persecution of Nero (AD 54-68) and the destruction of the Temple (AD 70). During the latter years of his life, John saw the Roman emperors Vespasian (AD 69-79), Titus (AD 79-81), and Domitian (AD 81-96) come to power.

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H – Some scholars speculate that John wrote during Domitian’s reign. John may have lived in Ephesus when he wrote his Gospel and epistles, but he was exiled to the island of Patmos around AD 95, where he wrote the book of Revelation. John died around AD 98 and was the last of Jesus’ 12 original disciples to die.

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T – **Jesus knows your heart.** Many people believed in Jesus because of the signs and miracles he performed – not because they were desperate to be healed but because they wanted a show. Jesus is omniscient (all-knowing), so he knows if you’re playing church or you’re truly committed to him.

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T – **Jesus helped the helpless.** The saying, “God helps those who help themselves” is not biblical. Not only is it not in the Scriptures, but it also goes against the work we see Jesus do over and over again in his earthly ministry. He helped the helpless and the hopeless, not those who helped themselves. No matter how much of your own strength you have to fall back on, it will eventually fail you, whereas God never will.

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T – **Jesus cleans the fish he catches.** He loves you as you are, but he also loves you too much to leave you that way. Jesus washing the disciples’ feet (13:1-20) paints a vivid picture of his ongoing work of sanctification in his people. He saved you – caught you and reeled you in – and he’ll continue to make you more like him, cleaning your feet, as it were, as you walk through a dirty world.

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