

The Gospel of John

Psalm 2 1 John 5:6-12 John 20:30-31; 21:24-25

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The Gospel of John may have been the last book of the Bible written.

Tradition says that the Apostle John outlived all the other Apostles. *St. Paul and St. Peter were martyred nearly 40 years earlier!* John is the final Apostle, the “Elder” of the churches in Asia Minor¹.

In the late 1st century, perhaps 95 or 96AD, John was caught up in Christian persecution and banished to the island of Patmos by Emperor Domitian. While in exile, John was given a vision and wrote the *Book of Revelation*. Soon afterwards, Emperor Domitian was assassinated and the new Emperor Nerva ceased the persecutions and John returned to the Ephesus area.

But on his return, he learned that false teachers had infiltrated the churches in his absence. Their false doctrine threatened the People of God. So John defends the churches and encouraged the people by writing the *Books of 1,2,3 John*².

The apostle John was now very old, and knowing that his time was short, he writes the *Gospel of John*. The Gospel of John is the last inspired writing of Holy Scripture; it is the last inspired gift that the Holy Spirit gives to the Christian Church. The last Apostle writes the last book of Holy Scripture for the last days of earth history.

The last book of the Bible was written, *as a summary of all the books of Holy Scripture*, to teach us that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing in His Name you will have eternal life*³.

¹ Asia Minor is the name of modern day Turkey where much of Saint Paul's missionary activities took place in the Book of Acts. The key city of this area is Ephesus.

² If John was exiled by [Emperor] Domitian to the island of Patmos in A.D. 95, returned from exile to Ephesus under [Emperor] Nerva after Domitian's death on September 18, AD 96, and lived to see the first days of Nerva's successor, [Emperor] Trajan, who's reign began in January, AD 98, then all five of John's writings may have been composed and delivered in as few as two years. 1-3 John . Bruce G. Schuchard, Concordia Commentary Series, p.55, footnote 350
The order of John's Books: Revelation *While in exile on the island of Patmos*; 1,2,3 John *All 3 sent together*; Gospel of John *Oral tradition written down*

³ Isn't John 20:31 the perfect summary of not only the Gospel of John, but of all Scripture – from Genesis to Revelation?

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may **have life** in His Name. John 20:30-31

The major theme of the Gospel of John is to teach you that Jesus is the very Son of God⁴, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the **I AM** in flesh and on earth.

† John teaches us that Jesus is the Creator of the heavens and the earth; and the Creator is now *Incarnate* --> **IN FLESH** -- to be our Savior. (John 1:1-3, 10)

† Jesus is the *Word of God*: who as God reveals God, and speaks as God. (John 1:1,14)

† Jesus is the **I AM** of the Old Testament; He is the eternal, all-powerful God who loves and saves His People. Jesus teaches us what **I AM** means using descriptive phrases which are full of meaning, such as:

1. I **AM** the Bread of Life
2. I **AM** the Light of the world
3. I **AM** the Gate of the Sheep
4. I **AM** the Good Shepherd
5. I **AM** the Resurrection and the Life
6. I **AM** the Way, the Truth, and the Life
7. I **AM** the Vine

† Jesus works **7 miracles**, showing His divine power over nature, sickness, disease, and even death itself. The miracles of Jesus show His **omnipotent power** and His **boundless mercy**. The miracles of Jesus are “*signs*” that prove to us that Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior of the world. Let these miracles be *signs* for you as well – showing you that Jesus is the Son of God and your Savior!

† Several times in the Gospel of John, Jesus predicted events ahead of time; showing His **Divine Omniscience**. It was no mistake that He ended up dying on a cross --> that was His intention and God's plan all along. He *proleptically* (= ahead of time – see John 2:22) taught that in many ways.

⁴ It is important to remember that the title “Son of God” is a designation of the full and complete Deity of Jesus. It in no way signifies a secondary role to Jesus; rather it is a divine title from the Old Testament that even the Jewish leaders in the Gospels recognized. In fact, they accused Jesus of blasphemy for using this title --> He was “making himself equal with God” they said (John 5). The “Son of God” refers to Jesus’ unique relationship with God the Father; Jesus is the “*Only Begotten Son*” of the Father; it describes their one-of-a-kind relationship. It in no way indicates that Jesus is inferior to the Father. In theology, the distinction of the Son as *Begotten* is called the *opera ad intra* of the Holy Trinity: the internal working and relationship of the Triune Godhead. (In a similar way, the Holy Spirit *proceeds* from the Father and the Son. John 15:26).

† Jesus the Son of God has been given *authority and power* by God the Father to execute the **final judgment**, to give **eternal life**, and to **raise the dead**.

The Gospel of John clearly teaches that **Jesus is the divine Son of God** who came into this world you save it and give it eternal life. Jesus, the Son of God, is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies. He is the *Christ*, the long awaited Messiah of the Old Testament. Today, believe the witness of the gospel of John: that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing in His Name you will have eternal life!*

Another major theme in the Gospel of John is the centrality of the cross. In the Gospel of John, Jesus told us in many and various ways that He will suffer and die for the sins of the world. His teaching always draws our attention to the cross. You may remember some of these:

- ⇒ Jesus, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, is *re-creating the world* so that we will not die in Adam's sin but live in Christ's righteousness and obedience!
- ⇒ Jesus is the "*Lamb of God*" who will take away the sin of the world when He dies on the cross!
- ⇒ Jesus said that "*His Hour*" will come when He dies on the cross for all people!
- ⇒ Just as Moses lifted up *the snake on a pole* in the wilderness, so too Jesus will be lifted up on a cross so that everyone who looks to Him will live and not die!
- ⇒ Jesus is "*Living Water*" so that everyone who believes in Him will live forever!
- ⇒ Jesus is the *Good Shepherd* who will lay down His life and die for the sheep!
- ⇒ Jesus has been given the authority and the power to *give eternal life and judge the world* because of His death and resurrection!
- ⇒ Jesus is the *Bread from Heaven* that is given at the cross so that whoever eats of Him will live forever!
- ⇒ Jesus gives His *Flesh and Blood* for the life of the world when He died on the cross.
- ⇒ Jesus is *the King of the Jews* who dies on a cross so that all nations can live with Him forever in His Heavenly Kingdom!

Jesus told us in *many and various ways* that He will suffer and die for the sins of the world.

**His teaching always
draws our attention to the cross!**

John writes his gospel so that you will know and understand what Jesus has done for you. Jesus is the Christ, the promised Savior of the Old Testament. Everything in the Gospel of John, everything Jesus teaches, (*just like all the other books of the Bible*), focuses our attention on Jesus and His death and resurrection that rescues us from sin, guilt, and death! The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is the focus of the Gospel of John.

Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, your sins are paid for; they are removed from you; and you are forgiven. You have peace with God, and are given the Holy Spirit. You are *born again* with water and the Spirit: Jesus feed you His *flesh and blood* in Holy Communion to give you eternal life; you have new, *spiritual life* to live right now, and you have the sure and certain hope of *resurrected life* on the Last Day. Like a branch is to the vine, your life comes from Christ; you *abide in Christ* and He in you. John writes his gospel *so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His Name.*

The major themes of the Gospel of John remind us of the rhythm and flow of our own Christian faith and life. As we live as God's holy people, we are always being reminded that Jesus is the Son of God who gave His life on a cross for us.

The Christian faith and life
is always keeping Christ and His cross
in front of you;
it is always living in the forgiveness
that Jesus so freely gives.

Jesus is the Son of God, the great **I AM** of the Old Testament, who gave His life on a cross for you. That's the heart and the core of everything in the Christian faith; the content of the gospel of John, and it's the focus of everything in our lives.

The Gospel of John is the last book of the Bible to be written. The Gospel of John is the last book of the Bible, written by the last apostle, for these last days. The Gospel of John shows the fulfillment of the Old Testament and captures the essence of the New Testament! Everything in Holy Scripture points to Jesus; the divine Son of God, the Christ, whose death and resurrection brings you eternal life! Or as John puts it,

*These things are written
(not just the Gospel of John, but all of Holy Scripture)
these things are written ... so that you may believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
and that by believing
you may have life in His Name.*

John 20:3-31