

# The Gospel of John

## Its Meaning and Application

### Required Text:

- Any good, recent commentary.

### Other Readings:

- Morris, Leon, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1969
- Morris, Leon, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Part of "The New International Commentary on the New Testament" series; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1971 and more recent
- Ridderbos, Herman N., *The Gospel of John, a Theological Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1997 (English Translation)
- Carson, D.A. and Moo, *Douglas, An Introduction to the New Testament*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2005

### Introductory Matters:

#### 1) Author

No where does the author identify himself by name

He uses the term, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" – 21:24 in context. cf: 13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20 and 20:2 (*phileo*)

From 21:2 the one whom Jesus loved must have been one of the sons of Zebedee or the other two disciples

No where in the gospel is John the apostle mentioned by name, yet Peter, James and John are the most prominent apostles in the Synoptics.

He was an eye witness – the minute details such as the numbers, time of day, names

#### 2) Purpose

20:31 (compare 21:24 & 25)

John's use of "believe / belief / trust"

#### 3) Relationship to the Synoptic Gospels - Similarities and differences

Miracles – What miracles are common to John and the Synoptics?

Missing from John: Lord's Supper, the Transfiguration, Story Parables, Kingdom of God/Heaven phase is rare compared to the Synoptics

"I am" statements

Vocabulary & syntax

Terms for miracle – Miracle / Powerful Miracle, Wonder, Works, Sign

Material covered –How does each gospel begin?

#### 4) Outline (adapted from Steve Baugh notes)

##### 1. 1:1–18 Prologue

*The First Book of Signs*: the Revelation of the Son to Israel

##### 2. 1:19–10:42 Jesus Reveals Himself to Israel in Word and Deed

- a. 1:19–51 Prelude to public ministry (a bridge passage)
  - i. 1:19–28 John the Baptist introduced in relation to Jesus
  - ii. 1:29–34 John the Baptist's witness to Jesus
  - iii. 1:35–51 Jesus gains first disciples
- b. 2:1–4:54 Jesus' early ministry: Jesus revealed as inaugurator of the eschatological order at the expense of the old
  - i. 2:1–11 First Sign at Cana: new and better wine which Jesus provides
  - ii. 2:12–22 Cleansing of temple—Jesus as better temple
  - iii. 2:23–25 Inadequate faith of many early followers (prelude to Nicodemus)
  - iv. 3:1–21 Jesus and Nicodemus—faith as supernatural product
  - v. 3:22–36 John the Baptist's witness to Jesus and his better baptism
  - vi. 4:1–42 Jesus and the Samaritans—living water displaces the old
  - vii. 4:43–54 Second sign at Cana: healing of the official's son
- c. 5:1–7:52 More Signs, Words & Works in Face of Rising Opposition
  - i. 5:1–15 Healing of paralytic at pool of Bethesda
  - ii. 5:16–30 The healing demonstrates Jesus' person as divine Son
  - iii. 5:31–47 Witnesses to Jesus as divine Son
  - iv. 6:1–15 Feeding of 5,000
  - v. 6:16–21 Walking on water
  - vi. 6:22–58 Bread of life discourse

- vii. 6:59–71 Many early followers hesitate; Jesus determines his followers
- viii. 7:1–13 Continuing hesitation even among Jesus’ family
- ix. 7:14–44 First round of exchange with Jewish authorities at Feast of Tabernacles
- x. 7:45–52 Organized opposition by Jewish authorities
- d. [7:53–8:11 Woman Caught in Adultery—not considered authentic by Carson et al.]
- e. 8:12–10:42 Climactic Signs to Israel in Word & Deed
  - i. 8:12–59 Second round of exchange with Jewish authorities at Feast of Tabernacles
  - ii. 9:1–41 Healing of man born blind
  - iii. 10:1–21 Jesus is Good Shepherd; reactions from Jewish authorities
  - iv. 10:22–39 Jesus’ claims at Feast of Dedication bring opposition
  - v. 10:40–42 Jesus retreats of where John was baptizing with growing number of disciples
- 3. 11:1–12:50 TRANSITION: Lazarus & the Resurrection
  - a. 11:1–44 Raising of Lazarus
  - b. 11:45–54 Decision of kill Jesus
  - c. 11:55–57 Setting in Jewish Passover
  - d. 12:1–11 Mary anoints Jesus
  - e. 12:12–19 Triumphal entry
  - f. 12:20–36a Arrival of Gentiles announces arrival of Jesus’ hour
  - g. 12:36b–50 Climax to the revelation of Jesus to Israel: Jesus’ offering and glorification foreshadowed
- 4. *The Second Book of Signs: Revelation of Jesus’ Death & Resurrection to the New Israel*
  - a. 13:1–20:31: Jesus’ Self-Disclosure regarding the cross and exaltation
  - b. 13:1–30 The Last Supper (foot washing—no account of the Lord’s Supper)
  - c. 13:1–17 Foot washing
  - d. 13:18–30 Example for disciples; announcement of betrayal
  - e. 13:31–14:31 Farewell Discourse Part I
  - f. 15:1–16:33 Farewell Discourse Part II
  - g. 17:1–26 High Priestly Prayer
  - h. 17:1–5 Jesus prays to be glorified
  - i. 17:6–19 Jesus prays for his disciples
  - j. 17:20–23 Jesus prays for those who would later believe
  - k. 17:24–26 Jesus prays for the unity of all his own
  - l. 18:1–19:42 The Trial and Passion of Jesus
  - m. 20:1–31 The resurrection of Jesus: the new creation

(Statement of the Gospel’s purpose: 20:30–31.)
- 5. 21:1–25 Epilogue
  - a. 21:1–23 Peter and the Beloved Disciple: models of the church in mission
  - b. 21:24–25 Final comments / Epilogue

## 1. 1:1–18 Prologue

The relationship of the prologue to the rest of the gospel

### 1: 1 – 5 – The Word

Compare to the themes of Genesis 1: 1 - 5

Three statements about the Word (v. 1)

What does the tense tell us?

What does the word order tell us?

Analyze the statements from Jewish and Roman perspectives

The purpose of v. 2

John reflects on the creation directly. Showing again who the Word is. Note the antithetical character of the language.

What is this life that v. 4 refers to? This is John's great theme. Where else does he mention this?

The life is light. Again a Johannine theme. Darkness does not over power / comprehend it.

1: 6 – 13 – John the Baptizer contrasted with the Word

John – a man with a mission.

List John's biographical descriptive terms

What is missing that we know from the other gospels?

An excursus – the anarthrous use of *theos* in the prologue

What is the argument based on this concerning the deity of the Word?

Examine this with the author's use of *theos* (1:1, 2, 6, 12, 13 & 18)

The Word – a man with a mission

List the Word's biographical descriptive terms

What does the author mean by "true light"? Contrast this to John the Baptizer. Is he a false light? Compare the author's use of "true" with "truth".

The Word was in the world, but the world did not know him. The author uses the term "know" in at least in three ways:

Unsaved people

(Both in / out of the covenant)

Jesus

Growing in knowledge

He came to his own things / people. What was their reaction?

The promise of v. 12 and the behind the scene actions of v. 13.

The results in v 12 are adoption and conversion. The action in v 13 is regeneration. According to these verses, which is prior?

The Word becomes flesh (the incarnation) – 1: 14 – 18

Notice the verb. For the first time this verb is predicated of the Word. Used of others earlier in the prologue

How is “flesh” used by John (1:13, 14; 8:15; 17:2 plus 6:51ff)?

He also dwelt (like a tent) with us. What is *the* tent in scripture? How is Jesus like that tent?

This language is the fulfillment of Is 7:14.

The observers’ insight – they beheld his glory. See Is 60:1 – 7. What OT themes do we see here and in the prologue?

How does the author develop the theme of the Word’s glory? Compare: 1:14; 2:11; 11:4, 40; 17:5 with 7:39; 12:16, 23ff, 13:31ff

What kind of glory? As of the only begotten of the father. Note that the author has just used the idea of being born / begotten by God in v. 13. How is the Word's generation different than ours?

Who is "full of grace and truth"?

v. 15 is a note about John the Baptizer. This is the content that was described in v. 6 and about which we will have more information in v. 19ff.

How is the Word before John when John was born before Jesus?

v. 16 we have received something out of His fullness. What do we receive?

The Law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Was there grace and truth in Moses' time? Is there law in our time? What contrast is the author making?

See 1:45f; 3:14; 6:32; 7:19ff for some of the author's references to Moses.

No one has seen God at any time. So how do we know what He is like? The only begotten (here's that word again) God has explained Him. What does this mean?

Could John have the events in Exodus 33:12 – 34:28 in mind when he wrote this paragraph? What themes are repeated?

## Structure of John's Prologue

(from Prof. S. M. Baugh)

A—1:1–2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God.

B—1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

C—1:4–5 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. [5] And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it.

D—1:6–8 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. [7] This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. [8] He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

E—1:9–10 That was the true Light, which gives light to all men coming into the world. [10] He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

F—1:11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

G—1:12a But as many as received Him,

**H—1:12b to them He gave the authority to become children of God,**

G'—1:12c to those who believe in His name,

F'—1:13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

E'—1:14 And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

D'—1:15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me'".

C'—1:16 Because of His fullness we have all received, grace for grace.

B'—1:17 Because the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.



A'—1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

2. 1:19–10:42 Jesus Reveals Himself to Israel in Word and Deed
  - a. 1:19–51 Prelude to public ministry (a bridge passage)

John the Baptizer is introduced. He is important. But he is not the Messiah. Notice the term for John's statements. They are his testimony. Same word as in v. 7 & 15

"the Jews" is a technical term in the gospel. Notice the parallel term in v. 24.

John confessed. The author repeats it. Why? Same term as in 1 John 1.

"I am not the Christ." What is the OT background for "Christ"?

"I am not Elijah." What is the OT background for Elijah? Malachi 4:7; Matthew 11:14; 17:10ff; Mark 9:11ff; Luke 1:17. See also Mark 1:6 & 2 Kings 1:8.

"I am not the Prophet." What is the OT background for a coming prophet? Deut 13:1 – 5; 18:15 – 22. See also John 4:25.

So who is he? Compare John 1:23 with Isaiah 40.

What is John's task? See Matthew 3:7ff; Mark 1:6ff; Malachi 4:7 in context and John 3:30 in context.