

THE JESUS YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW

Seeing Jesus in John's Gospel

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Lesson 1: Introduction to the Gospel of John

A. CHALLENGE QUESTION

Why do many unsaved people get annoyed when Christians bring up the subject of Jesus?

B. WHY STUDY THE GOSPEL OF JOHN?

The Gospel of John is not simply a biography of Jesus—it is a **carefully crafted invitation to faith**. John assumes his readers may know facts about Jesus, but he challenges them to make a personal decision about who Jesus truly is.

John does not ask, “*What do you think of Jesus?*”

He asks, “*Do you believe—and if so, what kind of belief do you have?*”

This study will:

- Strengthen your confidence in Jesus’ identity as God
- Clarify what it means to truly “believe”
- Give you, as a born-again believer, a settled peace about your future
- Reveal how your eternal life as a believer in Jesus Christ has already begun

C. BACKGROUND OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Authorship

John was one of Jesus’ twelve disciples and part of His inner circle, along with Peter and James. He witnessed key moments in Jesus’ ministry, including the Transfiguration, the Last Supper, the crucifixion, and the resurrection.

John refers to himself as “*the disciple whom Jesus loved*,” not out of pride, but out of humility and amazement at Christ’s grace. Later in life, John became a respected church leader and spiritual elder.

Date Written

John likely wrote his Gospel between AD 85–95, several decades after Jesus' resurrection. This makes John's Gospel a reflective, mature account, written after the early church had grown and false teachings had begun to emerge.

The Recipients

John wrote to a mixed audience:

- Jews wrestling with messianic expectations
- Gentiles who were unfamiliar the coming of the Messiah
- Christians confused by false teachings
- Seekers trying to understand Jesus' claims

Why John Wrote this Gospel

John wrote this Gospel to clear up confusion about who Jesus is. The Greeks (Gentiles) never heard of him, and the Jews were confused about his Messiahship.

- Problem: John addresses the problem: confusion and misunderstandings of who Jesus is.
- Presentation: John presents the truth about who Jesus is.
- Proofs: John proves who Jesus is through eight amazing miracles.

D. FOUR MAIN PARTS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1	The Prologue: Jesus, the Eternal Word	John 1:1–18
2	Jesus' Public Ministry: Signs and Responses	John 1:19–12:50
3	Jesus' Private Ministry to His Disciples	John 13:1–17:26
4	Jesus' Death and Resurrection	John 18:1–21:25

E. PASSAGES THAT MIGHT BE CONFUSING

As we study John, several passages often raise questions:

- John 1:1 — Is Jesus fully human or fully God?
- John 3:5 — What does “born of water and the Spirit” mean?
- John 6:53–56 — What does “*eating Jesus' flesh and drinking His blood*” mean?

- John 14:6 — Is Jesus the only way to God?
- John 20:22 —What is the connection between Jesus and the Holy Spirit?

F. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do many unsaved people get annoyed when Christians bring up the subject of Jesus?
2. Why do some people fall into the trap of thinking they must earn salvation instead of accepting it by faith in Jesus Christ?
3. Many Christians today struggle with sharing their faith in Jesus with unbelievers. What might be some reasons for this and how can this be overcome?

G. SUMMARY & APPLICATION

The Gospel of John invites readers to move beyond familiarity with Jesus to genuine faith in Him. Written so that we may believe, John challenges assumptions, exposes shallow faith, and presents Jesus as the eternal Son of God who offers life—right now—to all who trust Him.

As we begin this study, each of us must answer the same question John places before his readers: *Who is Jesus to you—and what will you do with that truth?*

H. WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

- D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Pillar New Testament Commentary)
- Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (NICNT)
- Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John* (2 vols.)

Recommended Study Bibles

- ESV Study Bible – Introduction to John
- NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible – Gospel of John overview
- Life Application Study Bible – Purpose and themes of John