

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The Deity of Christ and the Trinity

Introduction

- Author: John, the disciple whom Jesus loved (13:23; 20:2)
- Purpose: “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (20:30-31)
- The term “believe” encompasses various levels of faith, from initial conversion to sanctification
- Date: Likely AD 80-85, before his letters in early 90s

Comparison with the Synoptic Gospels

Differences

- John omits many of Jesus' words
- John omits or barely mentions major themes in the Synoptics, like the Kingdom of God
- John includes much material not mentioned in the Synoptics, like chapters 1-5 and I AM statements
- John focuses on Jesus' ministry in the southern region (Judea and Samaria)

Similarities

- Parallel narratives include John the Baptist and feeding of 5,000 and Jesus walking on water
- All four gospels depict Jesus as the unique Son of God
- Many sayings are at least partially parallel (4:35, 44; 5:29; 10:14-15; 12:39-40)

General Outline

- 1—Introductory poem
 - 2-12—Jesus performing signs that stirred controversy
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- 13-17—Jesus' final night and words to his disciples
 - 18-20—Jesus' arrest, trial, death, and resurrection
 - 21—Epilogue—the disciples' continued mission in the world

Jn 1—Introductory Poem

- **1:1-18**—This opening verse, “In the beginning...,” is an allusion to the creation account of Gen 1, when God created everything with his word. The Word was with God and the Word was God
- **1:14**—This divine word became human in Jesus Christ
- **1:19-51**—John the Baptist met Jesus and led others to meet him and they became his disciples
- In their encounters with Christ, seven titles are listed: Lamb of God, Son of God, Rabbi, Son of Man, Messiah, King of Israel, and Jesus of Nazareth

Jn 2-12—Pattern in the Stories

- Jesus performs a sign (miracle) or makes a bold claim
- People and Jewish leaders misunderstand him and stir up controversy
- People are left to decide for themselves the identity of Jesus

Ten Signs of John's Gospel

SIGN	VERSES
Changing water into wine	2:1-11
Jesus clearing the temple	2:12-23
Nicodemus the Rabbi	3:1-21
Healing an official's son	4:43-54
Healing a paralyzed man on the Sabbath	5:1-15
Feeding the 5,000 on the Passover	6:1-59
Feast of Tabernacles	7-10
Feast of Dedication	10:22-42
Raising of Lazarus from the dead	11:1-44
Jesus' resurrection	20:1-31

The Identity of the Word

- Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
- John writes, “the Word was with God” —God’s own fellow “and the Word was God” —God’s own self (v. 1)
- This Word existed “In the beginning” —that is, from the very beginning before which there is no further beginning
- The Word is the Creator of all things. John says, “Through him all things were made” (v. 3)

The Identity of the Word

- John often uses similar Gk verbs to show contrast of themes — γινωμαι (to become) and ειμι (to be)
- In Jn 8:24, 57-58: Jesus says “Before Abraham was (γινωμαι), I am (ειμι)
- In Jn 1:1, John uses ειμι each time
- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”

The Alleged Crime 5:1-15

- The Sabbath is a weekly festival, observed in homes and synagogues as a time of devotion—no work is to be done
- 5—this site is probably the twin pools near the present-day St Anne’s church
- 6—Jesus initiates the healing—“Do you want to get well?”
- 7—it was considered a healing sanctuary back then and the first one in when the angel stirs the water would be healed
- 8-9—Jesus commanded him to walk and he was healed instantly. The issue at hand is that it took place during the Sabbath

The Alleged Crime 5:1-15

- 10—a self-pointed enforcer exposes the man’s alleged crime (Mishnah, *Shabbath*, 7:2)
- 11-13—the enforcer asks for the identity of the culprit for violating the Sabbath, but Jesus has slipped away
- 14—later Jesus met the man at the temple and commanded him to “stop sinning.” Was Jesus making a link between sin and physical illness?
- 15—the man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who performed the healing on the Sabbath

The Prosecution 5:16-18

- 16—the first charge is that Jesus has a habit of doing “these things” on the Sabbath. The term “persecute” refers legal prosecution
- 17—the second charge is inferred from Jesus’ response—does God have to keep the Sabbath or is he above the law? Jesus describes his work as under the same divine prerogatives as when God “works” on the Sabbath. He is making a divine claim for himself
- 18—the opponents wanted to kill Jesus for blasphemy, because Jesus made himself equal with God
- Was Jesus claiming to be *another* or a *competing* God? Here, the doctrine of the Trinity is further developed

Functional Subordination 5:19-23

- 19—Jesus claims functional subordination to the Father. The Father-Son relationship is not reciprocal. Scripture never says that the Father does only what he sees the Son doing. Though they have distinct roles, they do not work independently— “Whatever the Father does the Son also does”
- 20—the Father loves the Son and reveals everything to him (cf. 13:35)
- 21—Life-giving is the work of God: “Just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it”
- 22—the Father delegates or entrusts the work of judgment to the Son

Discipleship Pointers

- The identity of Jesus—do you know him?
- The Gospel—the cross and the resurrection
- The Church—continuing the mission of Christ on earth