JOHN

*Jesus is the son of God*

WRITTEN

90-95 AD

KEY VERSE

*"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

20:31

Last updated May 1, 2023

PURPOSE



To show that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God and that believing in him gives eternal life

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## INTRODUCTION

The fourth Gospel stands out from the other three in being more "philosophical". It was also written somewhat later, and it is common to date it to the 90s AD. By this time, there was a clearer distinction between Jews who believed in Jesus and Jews who did not, as the temple was destroyed in 70 AD. The Pharisees were now alone in being the religious leaders, and the Christians had probably been expelled from the synagogues because they believed in Jesus (9:22, 12:42, 16:2). Something also seems to have happened with the expression *"the Jews"*. Now all the opponents of Jesus are called "the Jews". In Johannes, it is only used for religion and not for nationality anymore.

John has been given the eagle as a symbol in church art because of the perspective in the Gospel of John - namely a kind of "from above and afterward" perspective (see 2:22, 3:24, 7:39, 12:16). He mentions in passing what happens later because the readers already know the story well. And the disciples understand more of the significance of what Jesus said and did in light of his death and resurrection.

He mentions the purpose of writing in 20:31: *"that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* Church history says that John met some Gnostic teachers who claimed that one was saved through knowledge and not by faith. Perhaps that is why John mentions the word *"faith"* around 100 times in the Gospel of John, to make it clear that everyone who believes in Jesus will be saved.

Johannes mentions 7 festivals, which can be used to create a structure for the book. He has also included 7 signs that Jesus did (of the many mentioned in 20:30) and 7 *"I am"* statements. The signs are "signs" precisely because they point toward and are symbols of what Jesus' death and resurrection (the hour) make possible for everyone.

The author never mentions his name and simply calls himself *"the disciple whom Jesus loved"* (21:20, 24). Since the apostle John is never mentioned by name and John the Baptist is simply called *"John"*, the tradition has always been that it is the apostle John who is the author.

### JOHN "THE EAGLE"

A perspective from above and afterward

*"After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken."* (2:22)

*"This was before John was put in prison."* (3:24)

*"By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."* (7:39)

*"At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him."* (12:16)

### DIFFERENCES COMPARED TO THE SYNOPTICS

* Only 8% have any kind of parallel in Matthew, Mark, or Luke.
* Jesus does not preach about *"the kingdom of God"* but about eternal life and resurrection.
* Jesus' baptism, temptation, and transfiguration are omitted.
* No exorcism, no institution of the Lord's Supper.
* Longer conversations and discussions
* Much more teaching about the Holy Spirit and that whoever believes has received the Spirit.

### OTHER THINGS THAT ARE EMPHASIZED

Where Jesus comes from, his divinity.

Jesus' unity with the Father: *"I and the Father are one."*

Water

That God takes up residence in the believer

That whoever believes already has eternal life (e.g., 3:18, 5:24), and that whoever does not believe is already condemned (3:18, 8:24).

* *"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son."* 3:18
* *"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."* 5:24
* *"I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins."* 8:24

That eternal life is given through the words of Jesus (5:24; 6:63, 68).

* *"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life."* 6:63
* *"Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."* 6: 68
* The central thing is to believe in Jesus (*"faith"* is mentioned almost 100 times) (3:16, 6:28-29)
* *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* 3:16
* *"Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."* 6:28-29

### AUTHOR

21:20, 24: *"The disciple whom Jesus loved... testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true."*

The apostle John is not mentioned by name, and John the baptist is therefore simply called *"John"*.

Church history supports the idea that the apostle John wrote it from Ephesus to the churches in Asia:

* Papias (ca. 70-163 AD, bishop in Asia)
* Polycarp (ca. 69-155 AD, disciple of John)
* Irenaeus (ca. 130-200 AD, disciple of Polycarp)
* Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215), Tertullian (ca. 160-240), Eusebius (ca. 264-340)
* No one questioned this, although some did with Revelations.

It is possible that *"we"* is someone else who writes with Johannes as the source. Anyway "the gospel according to John".

### "THE DISCIPLE THAT JESUS LOVED"

Mentioned 5 times. *"The other disciple"* or *"another disciple"* is mentioned 6 times, and these are linked together in 20:2.

Was most likely one of the 12, since he was present during the Last Supper (Matthew 26:20, Mark 14:17).

Peter, Andrews Philip, Thomas, and Judas are mentioned by name. In theory, the author could be any of the others.

Seated closest to Jesus during the Last Supper (13:23, 21:20), most likely Peter, James or John. Peter is mentioned by name, while James died early (Acts 12:1-2, 44 AD).

Probably a name was given to John by the circle behind *"we"* in 21:24.

### P52

The oldest NT manuscript contains John 18:31-33 + 18:37-38

Discovered in 1934. By then, the Gospel of John had been written off by many as being written too late to have any particular historical value (that is, in the latter part of the 100s).

Dated to 120-140 AD 🡪 was written in the 90s at the latest. The Church Fathers confirm this.

### THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL

*"Jesus performed many other 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 Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* (20:30-31)

1. For a non-believing Greek-speaking audience and for the edification of believers who faced opposition.

2. Possibly to supplement the Synoptics. *"But, last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel."* Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD), quoted in Eusebius' Eccl. 6.14.7

3. Possibly to go against the Gnostics. *"John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by proclaiming the gospel, to remove the heresy which Cerinthus had spread among the people [...] so that he could refute them and convince them that there is only one God, who created all things by his Word; and not, as they assert, that the Creator was one, but the Father and Lord another; and that the Son of the Creator was one, but that the Christ from above was another."* Irenaeus (130-200 AD), Against the Heretics 3.11.1

### THE HISTORICAL SITUATION

After 70 AD, the Pharisees became the religious leaders since the Sadducees were connected to the Temple. Only Pharisees are mentioned by John (4:1, 7:32, 9:13, 11:46, 12:19, 12:42).

The Jewish Christians had a curse directed at them in the synagogue liturgy around 85 AD: *"May the Nazarenes and the false teachers be suddenly destroyed and removed from the Book of Life."*

The readers may have been expelled from the synagogues because they believed that Jesus was the Messiah (9:22, 12:42, 16:2).

*"His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue."* 9:22

*"Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue;"* 12:42

*"They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God."* 16:2

Something seems to have happened with the expression *"the Jews"*. All of Jesus' opponents are called *"the Jews"*, which points to a later date than the Synoptics. In Johannes, it is only used for religion, not for nationality.

*"We"* and *"they"* throughout the Gospel, esp. 3:11, where *"I"* becomes *"we"*. We can get the feeling that it is a kind of defense for the Christians against the Jews, where the Judge, Jesus, ironically also is accused of not being the Messiah, with all the "witnesses" testifying about him.

*"Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony."* 3:11

### THEME: WITNESSES TO DEFEND JESUS

47x *"witnesses"*

**1. John the Baptist (Ch. 1, 3:22-30)**

*"There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe."* John 1:6-7

*"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."* 1:14

*"(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’") Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known."* 1:15-18

*"He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."* 1:27

*"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* 1:29

*"Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One."* 1:32-34

*"He must become greater; I must become less."* 3:30

**2. People (Nicodemus (3:11), the disciples (15:27), the Samaritan woman (4:39), the blind man (9:17), Martha (11:27), the author (19:35, 21:24))**

*"Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony."* 3:11

*"And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning."* 15:27

*"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."* 4:39

*"Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet."* 9:17

*"Yes, Lord," she [Martha] replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."* 11:27

*"The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe."* John 19:35

*"This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true."* John 21:24

**3. The works of Jesus (5:36, 10:25)**

*"I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me."* 5:36

*"Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me,"* 10:25

**4. The Father (5:37, 8:18)**

*"And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form,"* 5:37

*"I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."* 8:18

**5. The Scriptures (5:39)**

*"You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me,"*

**6. Jesus Himself (8:18)**

*"I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."* 8:18

**7. The Spirit (15:26)**

*"When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me."* 15:26

**Trial:**

* Isaiah 43-48: God's trial against Israel
* God, incarnated in Jesus, prosecutes (institutes legal proceedings against) the "world", incarnated in the "Jews".

Mostly in chapters 5-12, the big discussion between the "Jews" and Jesus.

The goal: Lead to faith in Jesus

*"What do you think of him?"* (9:17)

*"We know this man is a sinner."* (from 9:24) *"One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"* (9:25)

What would you say?

### 7 "I AM"

1. The Bread of Life (6:35)

2. The light of the world (9:5)

3. The gate (10:9)

4. The good shepherd (10:11)

5. The resurrection and life (11:25)

6. The way, the truth and the life (14:6)

7. The true wine (15:1)

### 7 SIGNS

(TO LEAD TO FAITH IN JESUS​​, 20:30-31)

1. Water to wine (2:1-11)

2. Official's son healed (4:46-54)

3. Lame man at the pond healed (5:1-9)

4. Fed the 5000 (6:1-14)

5. Walking on water (6:16-21)

6. Man born blind healed (9:1-7)

7. Lazarus raised from the dead (11:38-44)

### FESTIVALS

1. Wedding (2:1)

2. First Passover (2:13, 23)

3. Unknown holiday (5:1)

4. Second Passover (6:4)

5. The Feast of Tabernacles (7:2)

6. Temple dedication feast (10:22)

7. Third Easter (11:55)

### STRUCTURE

1:1-18 Prologue

**Part 1 (6 holidays)**

1:19- 11:57 7 signs

**Part 2 (7th holiday: 3rd Easter)**

Chapter 12 Jesus rides into Jerusalem

Chapters 13-17 Last words to the disciples

Chapters 18-20 Death and resurrection

Chapter 21 Epilogue

### THE WORD (LOGOS)

**For Greeks**

The universal thought or 'reason' behind everything that exists; the force that structured the universe.

Logos rules and controls everything.

Jesus: The power/thought that structured and governs the entire universe was personified in him.

**For Jews**

"In the beginning" 🡪 Genesis 1:1. The world was created by the word of God.

God speaks 🡪 God's word that came to the prophets

Wisdom (esp. Prov 8:22-31) 🡪 Takes the role of God but is different from God, identified with God's thought/reason in Greek-speaking Judaism

Jesus created the world. God speaks through him, and God's word is personified in him. To reject Jesus is to reject God and God's word.

## TOPICS THAT ARE INTRODUCED IN THE PROLOGUE

### v. 1: Jesus existed before he came as a man

*"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"* 8:58

*"And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."* 17:5

### vv. 1, 18: Jesus' unity with God

*"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"* 8:58

*"I and the Father are one."* 10:30

*"Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"* 20:28

### v. 4: Eternal life came with Jesus

*"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."* 5:26

*"For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."* 6:33

*"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* 10:10

*"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"* 11:25-26

*"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* 14:6

### vv. 4, 9: The light came with Jesus

*"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."* 3:19

*"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of* *life."* 8:12

*"I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."* 12:46

### vv. 5, 9, 14: The conflict between light and darkness

 3:19, 8:12, 12:46 (see last point)

*"Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going."* 12:35

### vv. 7, 12: Faith in Jesus

2:11, 3:16, 18, 36, 5:24, 6:69, 11:25, 14:1, 16:27, 17:21, 20: 25

*"What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him."* 2:11

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* 3:16

*"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son."* 3:18

*"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them."* 3:36

*"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."* 5:24

*"We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."* 6:69

*"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;"* 11:25

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."* 14:1

*"No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God."* 16:27

*"that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."* 17:21

*"So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."* 20:25

### vv. 10, 11: Rejection of Jesus

*"Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony."* 3:11

*"He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony."* 3:32

*"Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own* *country."* 4:44

*"After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him."* 7:1

*"At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds."* 8:59

*"Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him,"* 10:31

*"Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn — and I would heal them."* 12:37-40

*"There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day."* 12:48

*"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."* 15:18

### v. 14: Jesus' glory

*"Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him."* 12:41

*"And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."* 17:5

*"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one"* 17:22

*"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the* *creation of the world."* 17:24

### vv. 14, 17: God's grace and truth in Jesus

*"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."* 4:24

*"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* 8:32

*"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* 14:6

*"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."* 17:17

*"What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him."* 18:38

### v. 18: Jesus reveals God to us

3:34, 8:19, 38, 12:49-50, 14:6-11, 17:8

*"For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit."* 3:34

*"Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."* 8:19

*"I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father."* 8:38

*"For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."* 12:49-50

*"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves."* 14:6-11

*"For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me."* 17:8

**SYMBOLISM IN CHAPTER 2**

vv. 1-12

* *"six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing"* 🡪 a good wine
* washing in water 🡪 Jesus' blood will wash away our sin

vv. 13-22: Jesus "cleanses" the temple and says *"Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."*

* Same theme as in the previous section: The new covenant is coming
* 1.14: Jesus' body is the meeting place between heaven and earth (the new temple).
* The new temple will be raised again after 3 days.
* The readers know that the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70, but they also know that he was talking about himself.

## 3:1-21

vv. 3, 5 + 1:13: *"Born again"* = born of water and Spirit = born of God

Born again: Not a new natural birth, but "born from above"

*"born of water and Spirit"*:

Does he say that baptism is necessary to enter the kingdom of God?

* Could be understood that way by the first readers, but could Jesus expect that from Nicodemus? (v. 10)
* Breaks with "faith alone" in the rest of the Gospel and NT

### " BORN OF WATER AND SPIRIT ": PICTORIAL INTERPRETATION

Ezekiel 36:25-27: *"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."*

Isaiah 44:3: *"For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants."*

OT: Both water and spirit are symbols of God's renewing and cleansing action, and sometimes both are used together. (Also in 1 Cor 6:11 and 12:13)

*"And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."* 1 Cor 6:11

*"For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."* 1 Cor 12:13

This was something *"Israel’s teacher"* (3:10) should know.

An interpretation that goes back to the 200s.

**3:1-21**

3.11: *"We"* includes more people in addition to Jesus.

Jesus + the Father in 14:23; 17:11, 22, but there it is clear in the context. Is it not a bit strange to say that Jesus and the Father speak about what they have seen...?

Probably Jesus + the disciples, although they are not mentioned in the passage. The first Christians were included in *"we"* in 1:14, 16; 9:4; 21:24.

3:14-21 🡪 Numbers 21:1-9

*"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."* 3:14-15

lifted up 🡪 crucified

*"Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived."* 21:1-9

Judgment will come when Jesus returns, but all who do not believe are already judged (3:36).

*"God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’"*

Exodus 3:14 in Greek:

*"I am who I am"* is translated *"I am the being"* (*ego eimi ho on*)

*"I am has sent me"* = *"The being has sent me"* (*ho on* has sent me)

Not always divinely intended (e.g., John 9:9)

*"Some claimed that he was. Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' But he himself insisted, 'I am the man.'*" John 9:9

The *"I am"* statements (*"ego eimi"*) nevertheless place Jesus in a close and special relationship with God.

Deuteronomy 32:39 - *"See now that I myself am he! There is no god besides me."* (cf. Isa 41:4 and 43:10)

*"Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord—with the first of them and with the last—I am he."* Isa 41:4

*"You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me."* Isa 43:10

Most clearly in 8:58 and 18:5-6

*"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"* 8:58

*"I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground."* 18:5-6

## 6:2-6 "UNDESIGNED COINCIDENCES"

*"When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"* (6:5)

Why exactly Philip?

Luke 9:10: *"When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida,"*

Joh 1:44: *"Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida."*

*"It's easy to make up a lie, but you can't get others to buy into your lie."* Tim McGrew

Probably no conspiracy theory, but simply the truth.

## I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE (6:35)

Context: Passover (v. 4) (with unleavened bread), after the 5,000 are fed. Both the sign and the speech show that Jesus is the NT's manna (vv. 49-50).

*"Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die."* 6:49-50

Jesus completely satisfies the spiritual hunger.

Some react by pulling away (vv. 60, 66). Readers would probably think of communion from v. 53 since *"drink his blood"* suddenly appears. (John's alternative communion)

In 6:35-40, eating and drinking is a metaphor for believing in him. Communion is not necessary for salvation.

*"Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."* 6:35

*"For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."* 6:40

Against Gnostics: Emphasis on Jesus coming from heaven (his divinity), his body (his humanity), and that faith is enough.

1. Have you discovered something new about Jesus?

2. Have you discovered something new about the Gospel (of John)?

## 7:37-39

*"On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."* 7:37-39

The Feast of Tabernacles: People prayed for autumn rain, and the end-time rivers in Zechariah 14 were symbolized by a procession to the Pool of Siloam every day to collect water, which was then poured out as a thank offering.

*"On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem"* Zechariah 14:8

Zech 14 was read and interpreted together with Ezek 47. These two texts together said that water would flow from the temple and give life to the whole earth. The water fetching ceremony pointed towards this.

*"The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple…"* Ezek 47:1

*"I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river."* Ezek 47:7

*"…it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows… where the river flows everything will live."* Ezek 47:8-9

*"Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing."* Ezek 47:12

Jesus announces that he is the source of the Holy Spirit and the end-time rivers in Zech 14.

## 7:53 - 8:11

Omitted from all the earliest manuscripts, but probably still a true story. Found in various places in various manuscripts, mainly in John but also in Luke.

The Mount of Olives (v. 1) and *"sat down and taught"* (v. 2) are never mentioned otherwise in John but are mentioned in the Synoptics.

Scribes (v. 3) are also never mentioned elsewhere in John; he relates mostly to the Pharisees.

Unnatural transition to v. 12. Who are *"them"*, when there are none left?

*"At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*  John 8:9-12

*"When Jesus spoke again to the people"* seems to be used in John only for something that happens right after the previous one, in the same conversation.

In v. 20, he is at the temple chest, where there was probably not that much sand to write in....?

 *"He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put."* 8:20a

## 8:31-59: CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE JEWS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **JESUS** | **THE JEWS** |
| *"The truth will set you free"* | *"We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone."* |
| *"Everyone who sins is a slave to sin. I can set you free from it. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father."* | *"Abraham is our father"* |
| *"Then you would have done the works of Abraham. But you are instead trying to kill me, which Abraham would not do."* | *"The only Father we have is God himself."* |
| *"If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. You belong to your father, the devil, since you want to kill me. And he is the father of lies, therefore you do not believe me when I tell the truth."* | *"You are a Samaritan and demon-possessed"* |
| *"I am not obsessed, instead I honor my Father. Whoever obeys my word will never see death."* | *"You are demon-possessed! Even Abraham died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"* |
| *"My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."* | *You are not yet 50 years old and have seen Abraham?!* |
| *"Before Abraham was born, I am!"* | *"!$#!!@%#!!"* |

## I AM THE GATE / THE GOOD SHEPHERD (10:9, 11)

Audience: Pharisees ++

Background in OT: Ps 23:1, Ezek 34, Jer 23, Zech 9, 11

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing."* Ps 23:1

*"The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?"* Ezek 34:1-2

*"For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep."* Ezek 34:11-12a

*"Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!" declares the Lord."* Jer 23:1

*"Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey…The Lord their God will save his people on that day as a shepherd saves his flock."* Zech 9:11,16

*"The flock detested me, and I grew weary of them and said, "I will not be your shepherd. Let the dying die, and the perishing perish. Let those who are left eat one another’s flesh." Then I took my staff called Favor and broke it, revoking the covenant I had made with all the nations. It was revoked on that day, and so the oppressed of the flock who were watching me knew it was the word of the Lord."* Zech 11:8-11

The Pharisees = thieves, robbers, and foreigners. They are the new bad shepherds from Ezek 34. The contrast is Jesus, who walks through the gate and who himself is the gate and the Good Shepherd (Messiah, Ezek 34:23).

*"I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd."* Ezek 34:23

The readers' opponents, the Jews, are wrong. Their leaders are the bad shepherds from the OT.

When the Gnostics brought confusion and uncertainty, Jesus would show the way. They don’t need to worry because they know his voice.

The Gnostics are also thieves and robbers because they try to climb over the fence to salvation and don’t enter through faith in Jesus.

How have you experienced the voice of Jesus?

## "YOU ARE GODS" (10:34-36)

In Psalm 82:6, the people's leaders are called *"gods"* because they were seen as God's divine council on earth (82:1-2), but they were still mortal (82:7).

*"I said, ‘You are "gods"; you are all sons of the Most High.’ But you will die like mere mortals; you will fall like every other ruler."* Ps 82:6

From the smaller to the greater: If people could be called gods because they received God's Word, why do they have problems with him calling himself the Son of God?

v. 36: Jesus says that he is *"sanctified"*. This may have to do with the temple dedication festival (Hanukkah, v. 22) since it commemorated the sanctification of the temple after Antiochus' desecration in 167 BC. Jesus replaces the sanctified altar. The Jews celebrated their faithfulness to God during this holiday, and the irony is that they still try to stone Jesus, who says he is one with God.

The Law and the Old Testament cannot be invalidated. The law remains until the end of the world, and the Old Testament has eternal validity as God's word.

## HOW SHALL WE SURVIVE? (CHAPTERS 13-17)

1. Serve one another (13:3-17)

2. Love one another (13:34-35, 15:12-17)

3. Remain in Jesus (15:1-11)

4. Be prepared for opposition (15:18-25)

5. Preserve unity (17:20-23)

6. The Holy Spirit will be with you (14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15)

## BACKGROUND IN OT

*"You transplanted a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. Its branches reached as far as the Sea, its shoots as far as the River."* Psalm 80:8-11

Also Jer 2:21, Ezek 17:6-8, 19:10-14, Hos 10:1, and vineyard in Isa 5:1-7 and 27:2-6.

*"I had planted you like a choice vine of sound and reliable stock. How then did you turn against me into a corrupt, wild vine?"* Jer 2:21

*"It had been planted in good soil by abundant water so that it would produce branches, bear fruit and become a splendid vine.’"* Ezek 17:8

*"Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard planted by the water; it was fruitful and full of branches because of abundant water."* 19:10-14

*"Israel was a spreading vine; he brought forth fruit for himself. As his fruit increased, he built more altars; as his land prospered, he adorned his sacred stones."* Hos 10:1

*"Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? … The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in."* Isa 5:2-7

*"Sing about a fruitful vineyard: I, the Lord, watch over it; I water it continually. I guard it day and night so that no one may harm it. I am not angry. … In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit."* Isa 27:2-6

The "original" vine was Israel.

*"The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress."* Isaiah 5:7

Israel had not borne the fruit God expected. Jesus redefines Israel to be about a relationship with him. He is the true vine that bears the fruit God desires.

## "YOU ARE ALREADY CLEAN BECAUSE OF THE WORD I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU" 15:3

*"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."* 5:24

*"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you — they are full of the Spirit and life."* 6:63

*"Clean"* = Have heard Jesus' words and come to faith in him. Ready to bear fruit.

## THE ONLY COMMANDMENT: REMAIN IN ME!

v. 2: *"He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."*

v. 6a: *"If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers"*

*"abide in me"* = bear fruit

Fruit comes naturally. Don't focus on the fruit - focus on Jesus

Jesus is the only vine that bears the fruit God desires. Therefore, it is only by being *"in him"*, and letting his righteousness become ours that we have any possibility of bearing fruit.

## PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

### 1. What does it mean to "abide in Jesus"?

Believe in him, and his righteousness will be ours.

v. 7: Connected with his word remaining in us (5:38, 8:31). Because his word gives life (5:24, 6:63).

*"nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent."* John 5:38

*"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."* John 8:31

*"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."* John 5:24

*"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life."* John 6:63

### 2. How does Jesus live with us?

John 14:16-18: *"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."*

### 3. What kind of fruit does God want?

Only Jesus can bear the fruit God wants. When we believe in the gospel of Jesus and let his word live in us, and he lives in us by his Spirit, then we are part of the true vine and bear fruit.

## 4: BE PREPARED FOR OPPOSITION (15:18-25)

*"Laughter, ridicule, opposition and persecution are often the only rewards which Christ’s followers get from the world."* J. C. Ryle

## 6. THE ADVOCATE (14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15)

Gr. *"parakletos"* (Latin: *"ad vocatus")* can mean "summoned", helper, intercessor or advocate.

**The advocate's tasks:**

1. Teach them all things

2. Remind them of all that Jesus has told them

3. Testify about Jesus and glorify him

4. Convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment

5. Guide them to the whole truth

6. Speak what he hears

7. Tell them what's coming

## MORE "UNDESIGNED COINCIDENCES" (18, 29-38)

Luke 23:1-4: Why does Pilate take it so lightly that Jesus says he is a king?

John 18:29-38 fills in the gaps by giving more information about what the conversation between Jesus and Pilate was about.

When Pilate investigates further, this does not seem like a threat to Roman rule after all.

And John does not include the accusation of being a king; Jesus is only accused of being a criminal. Why would Pilate then ask if Jesus is a king?

The Gospels complement each other in detail because they tell the same true story.

*"This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written."* 21:24-25

## TIMELESS TRUTHS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1. Jesus is the bread that gives us life, and his word is spirit and life (ch. 6).

2. Jesus is everything: the bread of life, the light of the world that shines in the darkness and who is the salvation of the world, the gate to salvation, the one who is the way to our heavenly Father, the good shepherd who leads those who follow him, the one who makes it possible for us to rise again from the dead and have eternal life, the Truth in a world full of subjective truths, the eternal life itself - and all that he asks us to do is to abide in him.

3. *"Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."* 14:23

4. *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."* 10:27

5. The Holy Spirit is active in the world to convince people and to help us.