

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

## Overview

**T**he Bible has one paramount message, pointing to one Person -- the all-God-yet-all-human, only Son of God, Jesus Christ. No other collection of books compares since it can only have come from one transcendent Author. As Paul writes,

*“There’s nothing like the written Word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another -- showing us Truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God’s way. Through the Word we’re put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.” (II Timothy 3:15-17)*

The late Ray Stedman wrote, “In this book God has incorporated all the truths we need to know about ourselves.” The Bible is written not only *for* but *about* you and me! It explains where we came from, why we’re like we are, and what incredible things God has in mind for us to become and do. And as Tom Shrader says, “*A timeless God doesn’t produce dated material.*”

Paul adds, “*(God) thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in on the plans He took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in Him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth. It’s in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, He had His eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose He is working out in everything and everyone.*” (Ephesians 1:9-12)

### DISCUSS:

The Person who created the universe, speaking a billion galaxies and giga-billions of stars into existence, literally knows who you and I are (and loves us anyway!), knows our names and has Plan A for our lives. And He took the wraps off that purpose in His “Manufacturer’s Handbook,” the Bible.

The late chaplain of the U.S. Senate, Dick Halverson, put it like this:

*“The fundamental problem in history is **alienation**. Jesus Christ is the essential solution in bringing **reconciliation**. ... You and I were made to be Christ’s, and we’re never ourselves until we’re Christ’s. We will never reach our potential until we belong to Christ.”*

In the NT's first four books, the Gospels, we see "God in the flesh" (Jesus Christ) as He walked, talked and performed miracles during His 33 years on earth. We see His power and pain, His life and death -- and His resurrection from the dead.

The NT was written A.D. 45-100. Its first four books, the Gospels, capture the birth, life, death and resurrection of God's only Son who swaps heaven for a Bethlehem stable.

### **About John**

The author is John, one of Christ's 12 disciples who followed Him along the dusty trails of Judea, Samaria and Galilee. John's dad was a well-off fisherman named Zebedee married to Salome, a devoted follower of Christ who, some believe, was a sister of Mary, Jesus' mom. John's brother James was also one of Jesus' special 12.

About age 25 when Jesus invited him to "follow Me," John went on to outlive the other disciples. Sometime between A.D. 80-100 John completed the NT with his writings. By this time Jesus' teachings had spread around the Mediterranean, Paul and Peter had been martyred and Jerusalem had been destroyed, just as the prophets predicted, in A.D. 70 by Roman troops under Titus.

In his book John refers to himself as "the disciple Jesus loved." He's the one we see leaning close to Jesus during the famous Last Supper scene. He stood at the foot of the cross on Golgotha as Jesus hung there dying. It was John whom Jesus asked from the cross to take care of His mother. Along with Peter and James, John was in Jesus' "inner circle," affording us a very intimate perspective.

The no-frills point John makes in this book is that Jesus is the Messiah that OT prophets foretold; He's the Son of God; and since no man can see God the Father, Jesus came to earth to show us what God is like. John says God wants to establish a personal friendship with all mankind. The only way to be sure of spending eternity with Him in heaven vis a vis in a place the Bible calls hell is by believing in His Son Jesus.

### **DISCUSS:**

In chapter 1 we see Christ described as "the Word," the One who spoke the universe into existence. **Let's read John 1:1-46.**

John calls to the stand credible witnesses who testify that this Nazarene carpenter is the Son of God. No mortal could do the miracles He did. The first of seven covered by John is in chapter 2 when Jesus attends a wedding reception where the host runs out of wine. No problem; Jesus simply turns some water into wine that would make a Parisian salivate. **Let's read 2:13-25.**

Arguably the Bible's best-known verse is coming up. The scene is late night as a moral, upright guy, one of the religious biggies, comes to Jesus on the QT. As a Pharisee,

Nicodemus was schooled to believe his heavenly bags were packed and his first-class seat had been confirmed. But Jesus has news for him. **Let's read 3:1-36.**

Next, the third of Jesus' miracles. A chap had been paralyzed 38 years, unable to get help. But then He hadn't yet met Jesus who simply says, "Stand up, pick up your sleeping mat, and walk!" Instantly he was healed! It was the Sabbath, and the religious mafia objected, saying, "You can't work on the Sabbath! It's illegal to carry that mat!" **Let's go to 5:16-47.**

The next miracle is a poignant demonstration of Jesus' desire to meet the deepest hunger of the human heart, i.e., to know God. Jesus, the self-described "Bread of Life," transforms an otherwise hopeless situation into a meal for thousands of His starving followers. **Let's read 6:22-48.**

Late in the last of his three years of active teaching, Jesus had many followers. Many thought their race and religion would assure them of a ticket to heaven. **Let's go to 8:31-59.**

Skipping now to the night before Jesus' death, He's just eaten the Last Supper with His disciples, including greedy Judas Iscariot who'd been slipped 30 pieces of silver to betray Him to the authorities. 600 Roman goons are sent to arrest the unarmed Prince of Peace. **Let's read ch. 20.**

#### **DISCUSS:**

**Ch. 20, verse 31 is why John wrote this entire book. Let's read it.** Let's check Jesus' statement to His friend Martha just before he would bring back to life her brother Lazarus, dead to these four days. **Jesus sums up what He's all about in 11:25-26.**

Put yourself in Martha's shoes when Jesus asked her, "Do you believe this?" In chapter 21, verse 22 are Jesus' last words in this book. His simple, two-word invitation still stands. "Follow me."

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www.HisDeal.org  
george@HisDeal.org  
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