**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO**

**JOHN**

**INTRODUCTION**

**AUTHOR**: John, the Apostle, the son of Zebedee ( Mark 3:17).

**His Family**

**James and John**: these two men were brothers. They were the sons of Zebedee, a prosperous fisherman who was a man of high social position. Apparently he was well acquainted with the High Priest and his household, probably providing fish for the palace. Their **mother was Salome**, who is thought by many to be the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. James and John were men of ***stormy tempers***, so much so that Jesus called them the ***sons of thunder***. Their tempers are seen when they ask Jesus to destroy a Samaritan village with fire for rejecting Him (Luke 9:54).

The two brothers were also gripped by ***worldly ambition***. They wanted the highest offices in the coming kingdom of Jesus ([Matthew 20:20-21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+20%3A20-21)). However, Jesus dramatically changed the two men. Jesus changed their stormy temper into a burning zeal and ambition for God. They became two of the greatest witnesses for God ever known. James became the first of the twelve to be martyred; and John was the longest living disciple, becoming one of the greatest literary giants of all time.

**John’s Death**: From Ephesus he was ordered to be sent to Rome, where it is affirmed he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. He escaped by miracle, without injury. Domitian after wards banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. Nerva, the successor of Domitian, recalled him. He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death. John probably returned to Ephesus during Nerva's reign and then died there during the reign of Trajan, around a.d. 100.

**Jerome's Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians**. "When he tarried at Ephesus to extreme old age, and could only with difficulty be carried to the church in the arms of his disciples, and was unable to give utterance to many words, he used to say no more at their several meetings than this, **'Little children, love one another**.' At length the disciples and fathers who were there, tired with hearing always the same words, said, 'Master, why do you always say this?' **'It is the Lord's command, 'was his worthy reply,' and if this alone be done, it is enough'** "

**Facts about John**

**1**.  John was one of the very first disciples of Jesus ([John 1:35](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+1%3A35), [39](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+1%3A39)).

**2**.  John and James were either partners with their father or worked for their father in a large fishing business ([Luke 5:10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+5%3A10)).

**3**.  John and James left all to follow Christ ([Matthew 4:21-22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+4%3A21-22)).

**4.**  John was one of three apostles who comprised the inner circle of disciples, a group that was with Christ on very special occasions. The other two apostles were Peter and James. (Cp. the Transfiguration, [Matthew 17:1f](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+17%3A1); Gethsemane, [Matthew 26:36f](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+26%3A36). Cp. [Mark 5:37-43](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mk+5%3A37-43).)

**5**.  John is called the "beloved disciple" because he seems to have been especially close to Christ and because he stresses love so much in his writings. He was a close companion of Peter (cp. [Luke 5:10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+5%3A10); [John 19:26](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+19%3A26); [John 21:20](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+21%3A20), [23](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+21%3A23); [Acts 4:13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+4%3A13)).

**6**.  John was the disciple to whom Jesus committed the care of his mother ([John 19:26-27](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+19%3A26-27)).

**7.**  John is said by Paul to be one of the three "pillars" of the church ([Galatians 2:9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Gal+2%3A9)).

**DATE**: Uncertain. Probably A.D. 80-95.

 early church fathers say that John's Gospel was the last Gospel written

**TO WHOM WRITTEN**: John writes to the lost (John 3:16), the unbelieving (John 20:31), the new believers (John 1:50-51; John 15:11; John 16:33), the philosopher (John 1:1), and the theologian (John 1:12-14).

**PURPOSE**:

**John 20:30-31**   
30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.   
31 **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.

Underline in the gospel of John the words, **believe – trust - faith**

**secondary purpose**. The Gospel refutes almost any false teaching that might arise in any generation.

**1**.  To those who deny Christ's deity John argues: He is the Son of God, the very Word of God Himself (John 1:1-5; John 7:1f; etc.)

**2**.  To those who deny Jesus' humanity, John argues: He is the Word become flesh, the very flesh which must be experienced (John 1:14f; John 6:31f; etc.)

**3**.  To those who continue to look for a human messiah and an earthly utopia, John argues: He is the Messiah, the Savior of the world, the very One who had been promised by God from the beginning of time (John 1:1-51, etc.)

**SPECIAL FEATURES**:

**1.  John is *The Gospel of Simplicity***. John used the simplest language and the most pure Greek possible. The Gospel serves as a first reader for many Greek students.

**2.  John is *The Gospel of Revelation***. The stress and compulsion of John is to show that Jesus Christ is the very revelation of God Himself.

**3.  John is *The Gospel of the Messiah***. John shows time and again that the Old Testament prophecies find their fulfillment in Jesus. However, there is a unique point in this that differs somewhat from the Synoptic Gospels. John shows that the salvation brought by Jesus is the very climax of Jewish religion. Jesus Himself is the fulfillment of the blessings promised Israel, the substance and truth, the symbolic meaning of the great Jewish festivals.

Jesus claims the Messianic right to secure disciples (John 1:35-51); to cleanse the temple (John 2:13-22); to associate and converse with Samaritans (John 4:1f; esp. John 4:25-26); to work on the Sabbath, overriding the religious prohibitions (John 5:1-47, esp. John 5:17f; John 7:1-53); to feed the people even as Moses, and to claim that He Himself is the very Bread of Life (John 6:1-14; John 6:22-71, esp. John 6:31f); to forgive sins (John 8:1-11); and many, many other claims. He dramatically pictures His Messianic claim with the triumphal entry (John 12:12f).

**4.  John is *The Gospel of Redemption***. This redemption is centered in the cross and death of Jesus Christ. He is "the (sacrificial) Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). His death is the hour toward which His whole life is moving (John 2:4; John 7:7-8, 30; John 12:23; John 17:1). He compares His death to a grain of wheat that must fall into the ground before it bears fruit (John 12:24). He is to lay down His life for His sheep (John 10:11). He draws all men to Himself—but it is only by being lifted up on the cross (John 12:32-33). He is to sacrifice Himself that others might be set apart unto God (John 17:19).

**5.  John is *The Gospel of Jesus' Humanity***. John shows Jesus weary and thirsty (John 4:6-8, 31); spitting on the ground (John 9:6); weeping at the death of a dear friend, Lazarus (John 11:35); troubled because He is to die (John 12:27); disgusted with His betrayer (John 13:21); burning with thirst while dying (John 19:28); and having normal blood and water flowing through His body (John 19:34). John stresses this point by proclaiming that Jesus is the Son of Man (John 1:51; John 5:27; John 6:53; John 12:23; John 13:31).

**6.  John is *The Gospel of the Word***. John shows Jesus to be the very Word of God. By this he means that Jesus is everything God ever wanted to say to man. God has done more than speak what He wanted to say; God has pictured what He wanted to say in the very life of Jesus. Jesus is the expression, the thought, the idea, the picture of what God wanted to say to man. The Word of God has become flesh. (See note—§John 1:1.)

**7.  John is *The Gospel of 'I Am***,' of God Himself, of Yahweh, Jehovah. The words "I Am" are extremely important to Jewish history. It is the great name of God revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:13-15). And John shows Jesus revealing Himself as the "I Am"

* I Am the Messiah ([John 4:26](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+4%3A26)).
* I Am (It is I); be not afraid ([John 6:20](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+6%3A20)).
* I Am the Bread of Life ([John 6:35](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+6%3A35)).
* I Am from Above ([John 8:23](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+8%3A23)).
* I Am the Light of the World ([John 8:12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+8%3A12); [John 9:5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+9%3A5); [John 12:46](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+12%3A46)).
* I Am before Abraham was, I am (eternal) ([John 8:58](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+8%3A58)).
* I Am the Door ([John 10:7](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+10%3A7)).
* I Am the Good Shepherd ([John 10:14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+10%3A14)).
* I Am the Son of God ([John 10:36](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+10%3A36)).
* I Am the Resurrection and Life ([John 11:25](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+11%3A25)).
* I Am the Lord and Master ([John 13:13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+13%3A13)).
* I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life ([John 14:6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+14%3A6)).
* I Am the True Vine ([John 15:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+15%3A1)).

**8.  John is *The Gospel of Signs***. John chose eight "signs" (miracles) that illustrate and prove Jesus' true identity as God's Son. These chosen signs (seven miracles plus the Resurrection) display Christ's glory and reveal his true nature.

**1. Jesus turns water into wine at the wedding at Cana**. 2:1-11

**2. Jesus heals the royal official's son**. [4:46-54](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+4%3A46-54)

**3. Jesus heals the invalid by the pool at Bethesda**. [5:1-15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+5%3A1-15)

**4. Jesus feeds the five thousand.** [6:5-14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+6%3A5-14)

**5. Jesus walks on water**. [6:16-21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+6%3A16-21)

**6. Jesus heals a man blind from birth**. [9:1-41](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+9%3A1-41)

**7. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.** [11:1-44](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+11%3A1-44)

**8. The greatest sign of all, of course, is His Resurrection**. [20:1-29](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+20%3A1-29)

**9.  John is *The Gospel of the Holy Spirit***. John gives the fullest teaching of Jesus on the Holy Spirit among the Gospel writers ([John 14:16](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+14%3A16), [26](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+14%3A26); [John 15:26](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+15%3A26); [John 16:7-8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+16%3A7-8), [13-15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+16%3A13-15)).