

Summer Series: Books of the Bible

Gospel of John

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We are continuing the series on Books of the Bible and today we're up to John. Here is what we've done so far in the previous five summers:

2019: Genesis - Esther

2020: Job - Joel Poetry and Wisdom and Prophetic books

2021: Amos - Naham Minor prophets

2022: Habakkuk - Luke We finished the OT and 3 Gospels in the NT.

2023: John - Colossians

(Next summer) 2024: I Thes - Revelation

Let's jump into John.

First, a bit about the author. John was one of the 12 disciples of Jesus. Of course, Jesus had many more people following him but 12 who followed him more closely. Then there are three who were very close to Jesus and John was one of them. John also wrote three letters in the Bible (I John, II John, and III John) and the book of Revelation, which we will cover next year.

Purpose: The purpose of this Gospel is found directly in the text in at the end of John:

John 20:30-31

30 Jesus performed many other 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 Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

Today, I want to ask you to think about **two questions:**

Who is Jesus?

- Historical figure, a good teacher with nice things to say, a guy that was killed by the Romans. Who is he to you? Have you learned some things from him?

Who are you?

- I am Mark, Layne's husband, a father, a pastor, an introvert, a musician, sinful and broken. I struggle with anxiety.

- What about you? Are you an addict? What do you struggle with?

Outline of the book:

Chapter 1: *Poetry and disciples.*

Jesus is the Word of God, the light of the world. He is God. Jesus is the savior of everyone who believes. This is how John starts his book and he will lay out reasons for this.

Chapters 2-10: *Stories and conversations built around major events:* A wedding, Passover, sabbath, feasts. Out of these events, there are conversations, such as in John 3 with Nicodemus (John 3:16) which illustrates a major theme of eternal life and life: Who gives life? There is another conversation with the Samaritan woman and conversations (arguments) with the Pharisees. *Testimony* is a big word in this section.

John 11-12: *Critical Mass:* The culmination of the stories from the previous section is in John 11 with the story of the raising of Lazarus. Jesus goes to Mary and Martha's house, Lazarus's sisters, after he dies. There are many mourners and Mary runs to the tomb and Jesus raises Lazarus. This was very public: many people from Jerusalem witnessed this event who talked about what happened. Towards the end of the chapter, the chief priests are together and say the following:

John 11:47-53

47“What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many signs. **48** If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.”

49 Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all! **50** You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”

51 He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, **52** and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. **53** So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

This is a turning point in the story: many people follow Jesus and yet the Jews fear losing their independence and the people will rise up against the Romans; Jesus needs to be stopped. John uses this to transition to the last week of Jesus's life. In John 12, he is anointed by Mary and rides in on a donkey with people saying “Hosanna, Glory to God in the Highest.”

John 13-17: *The Meal and the garden* (but actually a whole bunch of teaching). Jesus washes the feet of the his disciples and teaches them and then He prays for those who WILL

believe...which is us! This is SO COOL! After they eat the last meal, they go to the garden and Jesus prays.

John 18-19: *Arrest and Crucifixion*

John 18: 4-5

4 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?” **5** “Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.

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

This is one of my favorite scenes in John: The power of Jesus saying “I AM” is how God identifies himself to Moses.. Jesus is arrested. taken to the chief priests, questioned, and is handed over to the Roman authority, Pilot. Pilot questions him and questions why he should kill him and they insist he must die. So he proposes a trade for them and proposes he release another prisoner but the people insist on Jesus.

John 19:14-15

“Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews.

15 But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” “Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered.

This is the echo from I Samuel when the Israelites as Samuel, Israel’s prophet, for a king. Samuel tells them God is their king. When Samuel asks God, God says they are not rejecting Samuel as their leader but are rejecting God as their king. In John when the Pharisees are given this opportunity, they do not say God is their king. Instead, they say Caesar is their King. So Jesus is beaten, crucified, and dies. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea take his body and put him in a tomb.

John 20-21 *The Resurrected Jesus.* Mary finds the tomb is empty and runs to tell the disciples. John and Peter take off running and John gets there first (“I won the race!” another of my favorite lines from this book!). But Jesus isn’t there. Jesus appears to Mary in the garden and then to his disciples excluding Thomas . Then Jesus appears to Thomas also:

John 20:26-29

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” **27** Then he

said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are **those who have not seen and yet have believed.**”

Notice that vs. 29 refers to us!

This is the whole book of John! But let’s go back to the original questions:

Jesus makes several statements about who he is in the book of John. God’s names in the OT are many: God provides, God hears, Gods sees, etc. Jesus actually makes **seven statements where Jesus says I AM and claims his Identity.**

The first four are found in arguments with the Pharisees:

1. I am the Bread of Life.

John 6: 31–32

31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’^[g]”

32 Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. **33** For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

34 “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

35 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. **36** But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.

2. I am the light of the world

3. I am the door for the sheep.

4. I am the good shepherd

John 10:14 “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

I am the good shepherd. If you follow me, you know my voice: he is declaring if they aren't listening to him, they aren't listening to God. But he also says he is coming for other sheep as well who will hear his voice: ***This is us!***

To comfort Martha, he says

5. I am the Resurrection and the Life. He asks Martha if she believes this. She says that she believes he is the Messiah who has come into the world.

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

Finally, Jesus is talking with disciples during the final meal and tells them he is going away and that they know the way so they can be with him. Thomas asks how they can know this way and Jesus answers him. **John 14:6** "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

6. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To follow Jesus is to know the way and the life.

7. I am the true Vine. You cannot bear fruit unless you remain in him.

Jesus calls our name, sustains us, ***he is life!***

Who are you?

One final detail about John that I haven't mentioned yet: John never refers to himself by his name. Instead, he says he is **the Disciple whom Jesus Loved:**

John is not declaring himself more special: he just understands love:

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.,

I John 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

John 19-25-27 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman,^[a] here is your son," 27 and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

The above verses show that John had watched the suffering that Jesus endured: He watched Jesus lay down his life. John says this is his identity. John knows he is loved by Jesus and he claims this identity in his Gospel as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

These two questions are important to wrestle with!

Who is Jesus? Is he a guy who lived 2000 years, maybe the God of your parents...or is he who he says he is? If you follow him, will you really have life?

Who are you? Is my primary identity as a husband or father or son or pastor? Is my primary identity a follower of various sports teams? Someone who likes to play Legend of Zelda? Or is it that I am a child of God, the disciples that Jesus loved? Because of the witness of his disciples, I can read about Jesus on the cross and say that ***I am the one*** he laid down his life for.