

IN THE
BEGINNING
WAS THE...
WORD
A STUDY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

LESSON 16 – CONCLUSION

FACILITATOR'S Note

The following lesson is designed to review with class participants the key points of all the lessons we've covered during our study of the Gospel of John. So much literature has been written over the centuries examining this book that it was not possible to conduct a comprehensive study in this one semester. Our study has therefore aimed to provide an overview by which the student can understand the overarching theme and purpose for which the Gospel of John was written, which the book itself declares: "but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31 ESV)."

Our study this semester had a two-fold purpose. First, we wanted each student to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Gospel so that they may come to know Christ Jesus more fully. And second, we wanted each student to be encouraged and better equipped to share this Gospel message with those around them.

Our goal this semester, then, was to provide material that would increase each participant's knowledge (a matter of the HEAD); then ask questions that would bring the participant understanding (the result of knowledge transitioning to the HEART); and then finally, motivate the participant to go and live the Word in the world and demonstrate Godly wisdom (the final transition from HEART to HANDS).

HEAD → HEART → HANDS

PRAYER

Begin your time with a prayer asking God for the guidance of His Holy Spirit as you and your class seek to encounter Him through His Holy Word.

FOCUS

- Review/summarize the lessons covered during our Gospel of John study.
- Understand that it is not only important to hear the Gospel message but to understand it, live it, and share it with others.

DISCUSSION STARTERS (OPTIONAL)

- During this study, what about this book has grabbed your attention the most?
- What have you learned through this study that you didn't know before?
- What was the most challenging part of this study?
- What have you learned from this study that you can take and teach those whom you are sharing your faith with?
- What does this book have to say to new believers? What about mature believers?
- What do you think are the most important lessons for the 21st century church?

KNOWLEDGE HEAD

Review of the Gospel of John

- AUTHOR & TITLE
 - The author is widely agreed to be the apostle John, hence the assigned title.
 - The Gospel account itself indicates the author was
 - An apostle (1:14; cf. 2:11; 19:35)
 - One of the 12 disciples that Jesus called "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20, 24)
 - John the son of Zebedee (Note the connection of "the disciple whom Jesus loved" with Peter in 13:23-24; 18:15-16; 20:2-9; 21:2-23; see also Luke 22:8; Acts 1:13; 3:1-4:37; 8:14-25; Gal 2:9)
 - An eyewitness who is recounting what they saw Jesus say and do; e.g. the recollection of the house at Bethany being filled with the fragrance of the broken perfume jar (12:3)

- DATE OF WRITING

- The dating of the Gospel of John is uncertain. Some believe it was written between a.d. 50 and 70, while others insist it was written between a.d.70 and 100; the evidence for the latter dating is strongest for the following reasons:
 - vv6:1 and 21:1 refer to the Sea of Tiberias, a name used for the Sea of Galilee which came about only toward the end of the 1st century.
 - v21:19 refers to Peter’s martyrdom which most likely occurred between a.d.64 and 66.
 - there are no references to the Sadducees (a Jewish religious party which ceased to be following the destruction of the Temple in a.d.70)
 - testimony of the early church, e.g. per Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 6.14.7, Clement of Alexandria states that “Last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain [in the other canonical Gospels] ... composed a spiritual gospel”

- WHY THIS GOSPEL IS DISTINCT FROM THE OTHER THREE

- John is different in structure than Matthew, Mark and Luke
 - Matthew, Mark and Luke follow the same basic outline: various beginnings, John the Baptist’s ministry, Jesus’ ministry in Galilee, Peter’s confession, the trip into Jerusalem, Jesus’ last week, His death, burial and resurrection
 - John begins with a deeply theological Prologue and ends with a narrative Epilogue, and between there are essentially two books
 - The Book of Signs (1:19 - ch 12) – includes stories from Jesus’ ministry that are not connected by chronology or geography but which emphasize Jesus’ words and works and the peoples’ responses to them as well as Jesus’ controversies with the Jewish religious leaders
 - The Book of Glory (John 13-20) – describes Jesus’ in-depth ministry to his disciples in the upper room as he prepared them for his departure, and then tells the story of his death and resurrection, bringing the drama to a climax with the account of his appearance to Thomas
- John is different in content
 - About 92% of the content in John’s Gospel is unique, e.g., he records 8 miracles of which 6 are found only in his gospel and not the other 3.
 - Other differences are summarized in the table below:

Things NOT in John	Things only in (unique to) John
Jesus’ birth and childhood	Cleansing of the temple early in Jesus’ ministry
Jesus’ temptation	Jesus’ ministry of baptism in Judea
Teaching in parables	Teaching Nicodemus about being “born again”
Demon exorcisms	The wedding in Cana
Healings of lepers	The Samaritan woman
Teachings of the Sermon on the Mount	The “I AM” sayings
Stories about tax collectors	Raising Lazarus from the dead
The Sadducees	Jesus washing the disciples’ feet
Peter’s confession	The Upper Room discourse

The transfiguration	The Paraclete (or advocate/helper – the Holy Spirit)
Jesus' prophetic discourse	Jesus' prayer for his disciples
Institution of the Lord's supper	Jesus' appearance to Mary in the garden
The agony in Gethsemane	Jesus' appearance on the lake and Peter's restoration

- John is different in vocabulary
 - Unlike Matthew, Mark and Luke, John does not focus on the “kingdom of God” nor does he record the parables of Jesus.
 - John utilizes an entirely different set of words/terms including light and darkness, life, truth, witness, abide, world, believe, Father and Son, Jesus' hour, glory and so forth.
- John includes no secrecy about Jesus' identity
 - Matthew, Mark and Luke all contain the Messianic Secret, i.e., focusing on Jesus' command to people not to tell others about Himself, and then citing Peter's confession, about halfway through their accounts, to announce that Jesus is the Messiah.
 - John, on the other hand, announces Jesus as the Messiah six times in the first chapter alone.
- John is not biographical, it is theological and philosophical
 - Matthew, Mark and Luke are chiefly written as biographical accounts of Jesus.
 - John focuses on the theological/philosophical argument for Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. Each event that John records demonstrates Jesus' deity and glory, and validates Jesus' claims to be the Son of God and one with the Father.

• **THEME**

- The primary theme of the Gospel of John is that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God and that eternal life comes to those who believe this. This is captured succinctly in v20:30-31: *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.*
- John's central theme is also declared in a popularly quoted verse: “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.”

• **PRINCIPAL THEMES**

- The principal themes in the Gospel of John, which were the focus of our lessons this semester, are summarized in the table below:

Jesus, the Word, is God	1:1-2,18; 5:17-18; 8:58-59; 10:30-33; 20:28
Jesus, the Word, existed before the creation of the world	1:1-2; 8:58; 17:5,24
Jesus, the Word, is omniscient	1:48; 2:4,19,23-25; 3:14; 4:17-18; 6:51,70; 8:28; 9:3; 10:15,17-18; 11:4,14; 12:24,32; 13:10-11,38; 21:18-19
Jesus, the Word, is the Messiah and the Son of God	1:36,41,49; 3:18; 4:25,29; 5:25; 7:26-27,31,41-42; 9:22; 10:24,36; 11:4,27; 12:34; 19:7; 20:30-31

Jesus, the Word, is the "I AM"	4:26; 6:20, 35, 48, 51; 8:12, 18, 24, 28, 58; 9:5; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; 15:1; 18:5-6 (cf. Ex. 3:14-15; Isa. 41:4; 43:10-13, 25; 45:18; 51:12; 52:6)
Jesus, the Word, is the Son who was sent by and reflects the Father	3:17, 35-36; 5:19-26; 6:40; 8:35-36; 14:13; 17:1
Jesus, the Word, is the fulfillment of Jewish festivals and institutions (including the temple)	1:29,36; 2:14-22, esp v21; 4:23-24; 8:12; 9:5; 19:14
Jesus, the Word, is the giver of eternal life	1:4; 3:15-16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 26, 39-40; 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47-48, 51, 53-54, 68; 8:12; 10:10, 25, 28; 11:25; 12:25, 50; 14:6; 17:2-3; 20:31
Jesus, the Word, is a miracle worker	2:1-11, 13-22; 4:46-54; 5:1-15; 6:1-15; 9:1-41; 11:1-44
Jesus, the Word, is testified by others to be the Messiah	1:7-8, 15, 19, 32, 34; 3:11, 32-33; 4:39; 5:31-39; 8:14, 18; 10:25; 15:26-27; 18:37; 19:35; 21:24
Jesus, the Word, is unified with the Father and Spirit in their work of revelation and redemption	14:17-18, 23, 26; 15:26; 20:21-22
Jesus, the Word, is the basis of salvation a. His death brings salvation b. God is sovereign in salvation	a. 1:29; 3:14-15; 6:51-58; 10:15; 11:50-52; 12:24; 15:13 b. 3:21; 5:21; 6:37-45, 64-65; 10:16, 26-30; 15:16; 17:2, 6, 9
Believers must confess and believe that Jesus is the Messiah a. Salvation is obtained by believing in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God b. The benefits of salvation can be experienced here and now (in this evil age) but will be fully known when He returns	a. 1:12; 3:15, 16; 5:24; 6:29, 35; 8:24; 11:25-27, 42; 12:44; 17:8, 21; 20:31 b. 3:18, 36; 4:23; 5:24; 6:39-40; 10:10, 26-29; 11:25-26
Believers must continue Jesus' work and mission	4:38; 15:16; 17:18; 20:21-22

UNDERSTANDING HEART

- What did you find most interesting/exciting about our study of John's Gospel?
- What did you dislike most about our study of John's Gospel?
- John's Gospel calls us to live transformed lives, in love and obedience to God, and to be united in those efforts. Do you feel that you have the passion that John did for his Lord and Savior? Why or why not? If not, what is holding you back?

WISDOM HANDS

- What can you do from this point forward to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
- With whom in your circle of family/friends do you feel you need to share the message of Jesus?

PRAYER

End your time together with a prayer. Thank Him for sending His Word into the world to dwell among us and save us. What a great God we serve!

CLASS OUTLINE

"...but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31) The Gospel of John was written so that those who read its message may believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, THE CHRIST. The following outline holds the major themes expounded on in the Gospel of John in order that its readers may believe in Jesus and have eternal life. (Adapted from the "Key Themes" outline in the ESV Study Bible):

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (January 4)

2. THE WORD IS...

GOD (January 11)

- a. Jesus is GOD
- b. 1:1–2, 18; 5:17–18; 8:58–59; 10:30–33; 20:28

3. THE WORD IS...

BEFORE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD (January 18)

- a. Jesus existed before the creation of all there is.
- b. 1:1–2; 8:58; 17:5, 24

4. THE WORD IS...

OMNISCIENT (ALL KNOWING) (January 25)

- a. Jesus has supernatural knowledge that only God can possess.
- b. 1:48; 2:4, 19, 23–25; 3:14; 4:17–18; 6:51, 70; 8:28; 9:3; 10:15, 17–18; 11:4, 14; 12:24, 32; 13:10–11, 38; 21:18–19

5. THE WORD IS...

THE MESSIAH AND SON OF GOD (February 1)

- a. Jesus is the promised Messiah and Son of God prophesied in Old Testament.
- b. 1:36, 41, 49; 3:18; 4:25, 29; 5:25; 7:26, 27, 31, 41, 42; 9:22; 10:24, 36; 11:4, 27; 12:34; 19:7; 20:30–31

6. THE WORD IS...

THE "I AM" (February 8)

- a. Jesus is the "I AM" from the Old Testament. He is Yahweh/Jehovah.
- b. 4:26; 6:20, 35, 48, 51; 8:12, 18, 24, 28, 58; 9:5; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; 15:1; 18:5–6 (cf. Ex. 3:14–15; Isa. 41:4; 43:10–13, 25; 45:18; 51:12; 52:6)

7. THE WORD IS...

THE SON WHO WAS SENT BY AND REFLECTS THE FATHER (February 15)

- a. Jesus was sent by God and reflects the very essence of the Father.

b. 3:17, 35–36; 5:19–26; 6:40; 8:35–36; 14:13; 17:1

8. THE WORD IS...

THE FULFILLMENT OF JEWISH FESTIVALS/INSTITUTIONS (February 22)

- a. Jesus fulfills the Jewish festivals and institutions found in the Law (even the temple itself).
- b. 1:29, 36; 2:14–22, esp. v. 21; 4:23–24; 8:12; 9:5; 19:14

9. THE WORD IS...

THE GIVER OF ETERNAL LIFE (March 1)

- a. Jesus gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.
- b. 1:4; 3:15–16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 26, 39–40; 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47–48, 51, 53–54, 68; 8:12; 10:10, 25, 28; 11:25; 12:25, 50; 14:6; 17:2–3; 20:31

10. THE WORD IS...

A MIRACLE WORKER (March 8)

- a. Jesus performs signs and wonders that demonstrate that He is the promised Messiah.
- b. 2:1–11, 13–22; 4:46–54; 5:1–15; 6:1–15; 9:1–41; 11:1–44

11. THE WORD IS...

TESTIFIED BY OTHERS TO BE THE MESSIAH (March 15)

- a. Witnesses testify that Jesus is the Messiah.
- b. 1:7–8, 15, 19, 32, 34; 3:11, 32–33; 4:39; 5:31–39; 8:14, 18; 10:25; 15:26–27; 18:37; 19:35; 21:24

12. THE WORD IS...

UNIFIED WITH FATHER AND SPIRIT IN THEIR WORK OF REVELATION AND REDEMPTION (March 22)

- a. Father, Son, and Spirit are united in their work.
- b. 14:17–18, 23, 26; 15:26; 20:21–22

13. THE WORD IS...

THE BASIS OF SALVATION (March 29)

- a. It is by Jesus' death that God brings His people salvation.
 - i. 1:29; 3:14–15; 6:51–58; 10:15; 11:50–52; 12:24; 15:13
- b. God is sovereign in salvation.
 - i. 3:21; 5:21; 6:37–45, 64–65; 10:16, 26–30; 15:16; 17:2, 6, 9

14. BELIEVERS MUST...

CONFESS AND BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH (April 12)

- a. Salvation is obtained by believing in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God.
 - i. 1:12; 3:15, 16; 5:24; 6:29, 35; 8:24; 11:25–27, 42; 12:44; 17:8, 21; 20:31
- b. The benefits of salvation can be experienced here and now (in this evil age), but will be fully known when He returns.
 - i. 3:18, 36; 4:23; 5:24; 6:39–40; 10:10, 26–29; 11:25–26

15. BELIEVERS MUST...

CONTINUE JESUS' WORK AND MISSION (April 19)

- a. Believers are called upon to continue the work of the Savior in order that all men may know and be saved.
- b. 4:38; 15:16; 17:18; 20:21–22

16. CONCLUSION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (April 26)