

I. Introduction

A. The Four Gospels

1. The New Testament begins with four accounts of the **life** of Jesus Christ. These accounts are commonly known as the four Gospels. The term “the Gospels” is not to be confused with the word gospel, which refers specifically to the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again.
2. Although each of the Gospel authors reported on the same life of Christ, each of them emphasized different events and doctrines particular to the **interest** of their different audiences.
 - a. The author of the Gospel of Matthew wrote to a **Jewish** audience.
 - b. The author of the Gospel of Mark wrote to a **Roman** audience.
 - c. The author of the Gospel of Luke wrote to a **Greek** audience.
 - d. The author of the Gospel of John directed his account of Christ’s life to the entire **world**. John wanted everyone to understand who Jesus is and believe in Him as Savior.

B. The Gospel of John

1. The author of the Gospel of John was one of Jesus’ disciples named **John**. John was part of the inner circle of disciples that also included James, Peter, and sometimes Andrew.
2. After Christ’s ascension, John, along with James the brother of the Lord and Peter, became the **pillars** of the church in Jerusalem.
3. Characteristics of John’s Gospel
 - a. While the other Gospel authors focused on Jesus’ Galilean ministry, John concentrated on Jesus’ **Judean** ministry.
 - b. John’s Gospel is mostly **evangelistic** in nature.
 - c. John wrote his account toward the **end** of his life, after many years of meditation on the events. Therefore, his Gospel is the most selective, topical, and theological.
 - d. John captured profound theological concepts using a simple **style** and vocabulary.
 - e. John presented the Messiah as the eternal Son of **God**.

II. John 1:1-51 – Introducing Christ

A. John 1:1-18 – The pre-existent state of Jesus Christ

1. John 1:1 – *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* . In this verse, John called Jesus Christ the **Word**.
 - a. As God, Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity. Before becoming a human, Christ existed eternally with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. At creation, in the beginning of the world, Christ had already been alive from all **eternity**. Genesis 1:1-2
 - b. Being God, Jesus Christ was not created. He had no beginning and will never **end**. Jesus Christ chose to become a human in time. He was born into this world as a normal human child, yet without a sin nature. He came to redeem sinful humankind back to God.
 - c. Why did John call Jesus the Word?
 - 1) A written-out word can reveal or describe things both seen or unseen. In a similar manner, Christ came to **reveal** God to the world. John 1:18 says, “ *No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him .*”
 - 2) In Exodus 33:20, when Moses asked to see God’s glory, God told Moses, “ *You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!*” This limitation shows why God chose to send Christ as a visible and fully human person. Jesus Christ came to **reveal** the Father to us. Matthew 11:27; John 6:46, 14:7
2. John 1:2 – *He was in the beginning with God*. Since Jesus Christ is God, He is also **eternal**. From before the beginning, He was eternally co-existent with the Father and the Spirit.
3. John 1:3 – *All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being* . Creation had a start date, but the Word, Jesus Christ, did not. He has simply **always** existed, and this verse adds that it was through Jesus Christ that God brought everything into existence. John 1:10, 1 Corinthians 8:6

The Gospel of John

- a. Nothing was **created** without Jesus Christ's active involvement. Colossians 1:16 says, "*For in Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him.*" Hebrews 11:3
- b. Hebrews 1:2 adds emphasis to this by stating that God "*in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, **through** whom also He made the world.*"
4. John 1:4a – *In Him was life...* Jesus Christ gave **life** to all that exists. Contrary to notions postulated by modern education, John declared Christ to be the energizer of every living thing. John 5:26, 11:25, 14:6, 20:31; 1 John 1:1-2, 5:11
5. John 1:4b – *...and the life was the Light of men.* Christ, the possessor of life, shines **light** on every person to offer salvation and give deliverance from the darkness of sin, slavery and death. In John 12:46 Jesus said, "*I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in Me should remain in darkness.*" John 9:5
6. John 1:5 – *The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.* By means of both His perfect life and the truth He taught, Christ shone into the darkness. The knowledge of God always shines, but sadly men love the darkness and **suppress** the light of the truth. Romans 1:18-21
7. John 1:6 – *There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.* This **man** sent by God was none other than John the Baptist. John the Baptist was the forerunner to the Messiah's ministry. The prophets Isaiah and Malachi both predicted John the Baptist's eventual emergence.
 - a. Malachi 3:1 – "*Behold, I am going to send My **messenger**, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,*" says the LORD of hosts." Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 1:76, 7:27
 - b. As is discernable from John 1:35-40, John, the author of this book, was originally a **disciple** of John the Baptist. At first John and Andrew followed John the Baptist, but when they heard him declare that Jesus was the Lamb of God, they immediately left him and started following Jesus.
8. John 1:7-8 – *He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him.* He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. John the Baptist's primary purpose was to point others to the **light**, namely Jesus Christ.
 - a. Acts 19:4 – *Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus."* John preached powerfully. He wanted people to **trust** in Jesus Christ.
 - b. In Acts 13:24-25 Stephen said that before Jesus came "*John had proclaimed...a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not He. But behold, one is **coming** after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'*"
9. John 1:9 – *There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.* In a dark world of lies and confusing messages, Jesus Christ, the one and only true light, is the sole source of **truth**. Thankfully, the light of understanding He offers is freely available to all people. There is therefore no reason to suffer ignorance. Colossians 2:1-3
10. John 1:10 – *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.* Incredibly, the awesome creator of the universe was recognized by a **small** handful of His creatures, even though He had painstakingly sacrificed for their redemption. Isaiah 53:3, John 17:25
11. John 1:11 – *He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.* Jesus, the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, came first to His own people the **Jews**, but the Jews did not trust in Him. Unthinkably, they rejected Him. Psalm 22:6-7, John 16:3
12. John 1:12 – *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.* Generally, as was true of Israel, most people in the world reject Jesus. Even so, by faith, **some** do receive Him.
 - a. All who believe in Christ are immediately called **children** of God. This is because they are given a new birth into the family of God by means of the Holy Spirit. John 3:5, 16; James 1:18; 1 John 3:1
 - b. Additionally, all who believe in the name of Jesus Christ and are born again and are instantly **adopted** as sons and daughters of God. Galatians 3:26, Ephesians 1:13-14
13. John 1:13 – *Who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.* God gives everyone who believes in Christ a new **birth**. This spiritual birth occurs at the moment of faith in Christ. 1 Peter 1:23 says, "*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*"

The Gospel of John

14. John 1:14 – *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth* . John used the term **flesh** to emphasize Jesus’ humanity. Philippians 2:5-8
- John emphasized the historical reality of God becoming **man**. This truth has historically been called the Hypostatic Union. 1 John 4:2, 2 John 1:7
 - As this verse indicates, Jesus is the most **unique** person in the universe because He is undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever. Let’s consider this truth more fully. 1 John 2:22-23
 - A short doctrine of the hypostatic **union**: Jesus Christ as the God-Man.
 - The hypostatic union is the theological **term** that describes the uniting of undiminished deity with true humanity in the one person of Christ, without mixing or diluting the two and without any loss of the distinctiveness of each identity.
 - Jesus Christ is not 50% God and 50% human; Jesus Christ is **both** 100% God and 100% human. John described the hypostatic union when he stated that “*the Word became flesh*” (John 1:14).
 - As God, Christ had no beginning; yet as man, he became, or took on, **flesh**.
 - Christ will eternally be both God and man at the **same** time. 1 Timothy 3:16
 - Understanding this truth is essential. Most **cults** today see Christ as a demigod or a son, or child, of God. They view Christ as primarily human with some divine characteristics. They do not see Him as God the Son, or God in human flesh. They do not teach that Christ is both fully God and fully man.
 - In the beginning of the Church Age, there was a false belief (Docetism) that Christ did not actually have a human **body**; it was only an apparition. John 1:14, 1 John 4:2, 2 John 1:7
 - Any time either Christ’s deity or His humanity is diminished or mixed, our understanding of Christ will be corrupted. This kind of corruption has a devastating **effect** on our lives personally and globally on the church. Titus 2:13
 - In order to be an appropriate **substitute** for mankind, Christ had to be a perfect man. 1 Timothy 2:5
 - Christ had to be fully God, because only God could provide **salvation**. Psalm 3:8, Isaiah 43:10-12, Revelation 7:10
15. John 1:15 – *John testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’”* John the Baptist continually gave **witness** to Jesus. John spoke of the fact that even though Christ came after him birth wise, He lived eternally before him. John humbly recognized Christ’s supremacy.
16. John 1:16 – *For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.* Christ’s provision both for our justification as well as for our sanctification is exceedingly **abundant**. Because of the fullness of Christ’s grace, we receive blessings upon blessings, without any merit on our part. Ephesians 1:23, Colossians 1:19
17. John 1:17 – *For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ* . Through Moses’ ministry, God gave the Law to Israel, which according to Scripture is a ministry of condemnation. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, brought us **grace** and truth. Grace and truth find their fullest expression in the person and work of Christ. 2 Corinthians 3:6-11
18. John 1:18a – *No one has seen God at any time...* Not one person in all of human history has ever **seen** the countenance of God the Father. According to Exodus 33:20, to gaze upon God would bring immediate death. Exodus 33:23, John 6:46, 1 Timothy 6:16
19. John 1:18b – *... the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.* Jesus Christ revealed the full **essence** of God the Father. To know Jesus Christ in person was truly to know the Father. Christ’s goal was to unfailingly reveal Him to the world.
- Christ displayed God the Father’s **nature**. John 14:9 says, “*Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*”
 - Christ revealed God the Father’s **power**. In John 3:2 we read, “*This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’”*”
 - Christ continually showed God the Father’s **wisdom**. John 7:46 confirms this saying, “*Never has anyone spoken like this man!*”
 - Christ reflected God the Father’s **glory**. John 1:14 states, “*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*”



The Gospel of John

- e. Christ displayed God the Father's **life**, which is eternal life. 1 John 1:2 says, "*And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us.*"
- f. Christ exemplified God the Father's **love** to humanity when He died for us. 1 John 3:16 says, "*We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us.*"

The Gospel of John © Copyright 2020, DM2 International