



## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN COURSE NOTES

### LECTURE 1 - INTRODUCTION – PROLOGUE 1:1-18

### NOTES

#### AUTHORSHIP

- The early church father, Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp (who was himself a disciple of the apostle John) testifies on the authority of Polycarp that the apostle John was the writer of the fourth Gospel.
- Subsequent to Irenaeus, all the church fathers assume the apostle John to be the author (e.g., Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, etc.).
- The author claims to be an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry (1:14; cf., 19:35; 21:24,25), and exhibits an accurate understanding of Jewish customs. John was also identified as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (21:2; cf., 21:7), and this reference to him is further linked to 21:24 where John is identified as the "disciple who wrote these things."

#### DATE

- Ca. A.D. 85-100
- The Gospel had to have been written after the life of Christ (A.D. 33) and before the earliest known papyrus fragment, p<sup>52</sup> (ca. A.D. 125).
- According to Irenaeus, John lived in Ephesus into the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98-117). Combined with the use of John's Gospel by Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 110), John likely wrote before A.D. 110.

#### PLACE OF COMPOSITION

- Irenaeus wrote that John composed His "while residing at Ephesus in Asia."
- It is interesting that one of John's other writings, Revelation, has him addressing 7 churches in Asia, the first being Ephesus (Rev 2:1-7; 1:9-11).

## PURPOSE

- The purpose of John's Gospel is explicitly stated in 20:30-31:

<sup>30</sup> Jesus' disciples saw him do many other miraculous signs besides the ones recorded in this book.

<sup>31</sup> But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life.

- The primary purpose is evangelistic - to bring people to faith in Jesus
- John uses "believe" some 98 times compared with Matthew (11), Mark (15), and Luke (9).

## BASIC LITERARY STRUCTURE OF BOOK

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. Prologue  | 1:1-18     |
| 2. John's witness to Jesus and the first disciples | 1:19-51    |
| 3. The "Book of Signs"                             | 2:1-12:50  |
| 4. The "Book of Glory"                             | 13:1-20:31 |
| 5. Epilogue  | 21:1-25    |

## JOHN 1:1-18 - THE PROLOGUE

It introduces the key themes that are presented throughout the book.

- The pre-existence of the Word (1:1-2; see also 17:5)
- God/Word and Father/Son as distinctive but, at the same time, one (1:1; see also 17:21-22)
- Jesus as God (1:1, 18; see also 20:28)
- Life (1:4; see also 3:16; 5:21-39; 6:40; etc.)
- Light (1:4; 1:9; see also 8:12; 9:5)
- The struggle between light and darkness (1:5; see also 3:19-21)
- The power of the light over darkness (1:5; see also 12:35)
- The relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist (1:6-8; 1:15; see also 1:19-34)
- Rejection (1:11; see also 4:44)
- The miracle of our being able to see God's glory (1:14; see also 12:41)
- Jesus as the only Son of God (1:18; see also 3:16)

- “In the beginning” mimics the creation account of Genesis 1:1.
- “Word.” Its roots can be found in both Greek philosophy and Jewish wisdom literature.
- “Life” – used some 36 times in John.
- “Light” – a prominent metaphor for Christ and the Gospel – used 23 times in John.
- “Darkness” – one of John’s main contrastive terms – over and against “life” and “light.” It serves as a metaphor for the state of mankind who fail to welcome the light.
- “John” – the name John always applies to John the Baptist in this Gospel.
- “Believe” – the verb is used some 98 times in John.
- “Dwelling / seen His glory” – (tent/tabernacle) a reference to the Tent of Meeting where God’s glory was manifested (Ex 40:34-35).
- “Grace and truth” Hebrew background – see Psalm 26:3, often translated as “unfailing love and faithfulness.”
- Opinion differs on the function of the prologue. Some see it as the opening introduction of the Gospel, while others treat it as a hymn or a type of overture to Christ.
- Jesus’ divine origins are introduced in the prologue.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

## LECTURE 2 – JOHN 1:19-3

### JOHN 1:19-28 – JOHN THE BAPTIST DENIES BEING THE CHRIST

- “The Jews” – John uses the phrase some 70 times. John uses the term in three different ways. Generally used negatively for the religious leaders but occurs also in a favorable sense and in a neutral sense.
- “Elijah” – the Jews believed him to return to announce the end of time.
- “The Prophet” – a reference to Deuteronomy 18:15, 18.
- “The Christ.” – means “the Anointed One.”

### John 1:29-34 – Jesus declared the Lamb of God

- “Lamb of God” – found only here and in verse 36. A general reference to sacrifice – with allusions to the Passover lamb (see Isa 53:7; Jer 11:19).
- “Will baptize with the Holy Spirit” – its fulfillment seen on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
- “Son of God” as defined in John’s prologue (see 1:14; 18). Introduced as a title by John the Baptist and confirmed by Nathanael in 1:49. This title is later used as a form of mockery (John 19:7; see also Matt 27:40)

### JOHN 1:35-42 – JESUS’ FIRST DISCIPLES

- “Two of his disciples” – i.e. John the Baptist. One was Andrew (vs. 40), the other is not mentioned but is regarded to be the apostle John who wrote the Gospel.
- “Tenth hour” – 4:00 pm.
- “Cephas / Peter” – Both Cephas (Aramaic) and Peter (Greek) mean rock.

### JOHN 1:43-51 – THE CALLING OF PHILIP AND NATHANAEL

- “Bethsaida” – on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee.

- “Nazareth” – was actually an obscure town west of the Sea of Galilee. It is never mentioned in the Old Testament. To be called a “Nazarene” in Jesus’ day was a synonym for “despised” (Psalm 22:6; Isaiah 53:3).
- “Fig tree” – a tree that because of its shade was used for prayer and study on hot days.
- “Heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending” – a reference to Jacobs dream (Gen 28:12). Denotes Jesus as the bridge between heaven and earth and the only mediator between God and men.
- “Son of Man” – Jesus’ favourite self-designation. Used 83 times in the Gospels – 12 of those by John. A Messianic title (Dan 7:13). Used only by Jesus in the Gospels but is found in Acts 7:56, (Stephen), and in Rev 1:13, (the Apostle John).

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 2:1-11 – JESUS CHANGES WATER TO WINE

- “Wedding” – a feast that was known to last up to a week. It was a serious offense to fail in the area of hospitality, so a wedding was a time for a family to display their best. They were socially obligated to provide a feast based on cultural standards so “when the wine ran out”, it was a significant social embarrassment for the family.
- “My time has not yet come” – an expression found throughout the Gospel (7:6, 8, 30; 8:20), and is contrasted with Jesus’ statement that “the hour has come” when he entered into his final days before the cross and resurrection (12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1).

- “Signs”- John refers to the miracles of Jesus a “signs” which revealed His glory and demonstrated the significance of His actions.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

JOHN 2:12-25 – JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE.

- “Passover” – Annual Jewish feast remembering Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. This is the first of three Passovers that John records (6:4; 11:55).
- “Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days” – Jews thought Jesus was talking about the literal Temple, but John confirms that he was not in vs. 21. Jesus was mocked using this charge in Matt 27:40; Mark 29.
- “Forty-six years” – The Temple was finally completed in 64 A.D (it was begun in 20 B.C.). Therefore, the work had been going on for 46 years so it must have been 26 A.D. when this event was recorded. The Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

JOHN 3:1-21 – JESUS AND NICODEMUS

- “Born again” – Greek may also mean “born from above.”

- “Kingdom of God” – a common phrase in the Synoptic Gospels but only used twice in John, both in this passage (3:3, 5).
- “Born of water and Spirit” – various renderings of this: 1. Means the same as “born of the Spirit,” 2. Water denotes purification, 3. Water refers to baptism.
- “Eternal life” – In John’s Gospel it means the abundant life of Jesus living in fellowship with God that is realized in the present and continues for all time (see 17:3).
- “Condemned” – Greek can also be rendered “judge” but based on context – set against the idea of salvation – condemned fits best.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 3:22-36 – JOHN THE BAPTIST’S TESTIMONY CONCERNING JESUS

- “Baptized” – According to 4:2 only the disciples actually baptized.
- “The Bridegroom” – The most important man at a wedding. Today’s culture centers on the bride at a wedding, in ancient times it was the bridegroom. John applies here an imagery of being the best man to Jesus.
- “The one who comes from above” – also implied in 3:13 (cf. 1 Cor. 15:47). Contrasted with “the one who is from the earth.”

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

### LECTURE 3 – JOHN 4-5

#### JOHN 4:1-42 – JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

- “Samaria” – Jews avoided this region by crossing the Jordan and traveling on the east side.
- “Sychar” – a small village near Shechem. The same area where Jacob bought land (Gen 33:18-19), and apparently later gave it to Joseph (Gen 48:21-22).
- “Jacob’s well” – mentioned nowhere else but here.
- “Sixth hour” – approximately noon.
- “Gift” – only time that John uses this Greek word in his Gospel. Denotes God’s gift of grace through Christ.
- “Five husbands” – Jews held that a woman might be divorced, twice – at most three times. This woman’s life had therefore been excessively immoral, and she was presently living with another man.
- “This mountain” – refers to Mt. Gerizim, the sacred mountain of the Samaritans. Abraham and Jacob had built altars close to it. Samaritan Scriptures held that Gerizim, not Mount Ebal, was the mountain where Moses commanded the altar to be built (Deut 27:4-6).
- “God is spirit... worship in spirit and in truth” – probably the most definitive statement in the New Testament for defining worship. True worship must be in keeping with God’s nature and His revelation.

- “Messiah... I... am He” – Jesus’ first “I Am” statements (there is no “He” in the Greek, but is implied, therefore it is included in the English translation). The only time before His trial that Jesus specifically points to Himself as the awaited Messiah.
- “The Saviour of the world” – used only here in NT and in 1 John 4:14. Synonymous to other phrases in John, i.e. “light of the world,” “life as the light of men.”

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 4:43-54 – JESUS HEALS THE OFFICIAL’S SON

- “Royal official” – an officer in Herod’s service.
- “Miraculous signs and wonders” – only time it is used in John, but a phrase used in Acts for the ministry of the disciples.

#### JOHN 5:1-15 – HEALING AT THE POOL

- “A feast of the Jews” – Not known what specific feast this relates to. Only one in John not to be named, likely due to the fact that it serves only as an historical marker. The other times feast are specifically mentioned is due to the fact that Jesus does something in context with that particular feast.
- “Bethesda” – also known as Bethzatha, Bethsaida. Dead Sea scrolls point to Bethesda being correct. In Hebrew means “House of grace.” Archeologists have discovered pools in this area corresponding to the description here in John. The

Crusaders later built a church on the site, St Anne's Church, to commemorate the healing miracle that took place here.

- “When the water is stirred” – an apparent superstition at the time concerning the pool.
- “The law forbids you to carry your mat” – Not the Law of Moses but their interpretation of it forbid anyone to carry loads of any kind on a Sabbath.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 5:16-30 – LIFE IN JESUS

- “Persecuted” – nothing is mentioned as to what this persecution entailed.
- “I tell you the truth” – “Amen, amen” in the original Greek. A common formula in John's Gospel. Jesus used it to confirm its importance and trustworthiness. (John. 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24f; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; 12:24; 13:16, 20f, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18)
- “Entrusted all judgment to the Son” – a statement of heresy to the Jewish leaders. They held that the Father was the only judge of the world.
- “By myself I can do nothing” – illustrates Jesus' dependency on the Father, thereby making His judgment fair.

#### JOHN 5:31-47 – THE TESTIMONIES ABOUT JESUS

The section highlights the testimonies of

- John the Baptist (v. 33)
- The works of Jesus (vs. 36)

- God the Father (vs. 37)
  - The Scriptures (vs. 39)
  - Moses (vs. 47)
- “You diligently study” – a reference to the exacting detail in which the religious leaders study the Scriptures. A striking contrast in light of their ignorance of who Jesus was.
  - “Your accuser is Moses” – The Jews prided themselves on their attachment to Moses, yet the testimony of Moses speaks in favour of Jesus, while at the same time accuses the Jews of their disbelief.
  - “He wrote about me” – Jesus applies the entire corpus of Mosaic writings to himself. Further, the entire OT points to Christ.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### LECTURE 4 – JOHN 6-7

##### JOHN 6:1-15 – JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE-THOUSAND

- The only miracle common to all four Gospels. In John it sets the stage for Jesus’ “Bread of Life” discourse.
- “Barely loaves” – cheap form of bread, a staple among the poor.
- “About five-thousand” – the number of men; woman and children would not have been included (Mt 14:21).

#### JOHN 6:16-24 – JESUS WALKS ON WATER

- “Three or three and a half miles” – likely denotes that they were in the middle of the lake (see Mark 6:47).
- “It is I; don’t be afraid” – an implied form of the “I Am” statement. Actual Greek is “I Am, don’t fear.” Yet, to give it the proper sense in English it is translated, “It is I.”

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 6:25-71 – JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE

- “Eternal life” – Not only a future eschatological event, but in John’s Gospel it is also a present fulfillment of faith in Jesus.
- “Bread” – The common Greek word for food. Note the contrasts between “manna – bread”. The Jews expected that when the Messiah came, he would renew the sending of manna.
- “Work of God” – as a metaphor for faith. It is the indispensable “work” that God calls for – that which leads to eternal life.
- “I am the bread of life” – The first of the seven self-descriptive “I Am” statements made by Jesus.
- “I have come down from heaven” – Repeated six times in this context (33, 38, 41, 50, 51, 58).
- “The last day” – An expression only found in John in the NT.
- “My flesh, which I will give” – A look forward to Calvary.

- “Hard” – Meaning hard to accept, not hard to understand.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 7:1-24 – JESUS AND THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

- Here John stresses the strong opposition against Jesus – even threats to his life (7:1, 13, 19, 25, 30, 32, 44; 8:37, 40, 59).
- “Feast of Tabernacles” – Jewish feast celebrating God’s goodness to the people during the desert wanderings and the completion of the harvest. Its name comes from the leafy shelters in which the people lived during the seven days of the feast.
- Two ceremonies that were part of Tabernacles' celebration during Jesus' time are especially important in the context of John 7 and 8. The first involved water and the second involved light. Therefore, understanding some of the cultural background helps us to better understand Jesus’ usage of “water” and “light”.
- “Halfway through the Feast” – When the crowds would be at their maximum so the teaching would reach the most people.
- “One miracle” – Likely a reference to the healing of the lame man at the pool (5:1-9).

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 7:25-52 – JESUS THE CHRIST AND THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWISH LEADERS

- The passage shows the expectations and false assumptions concerning the Messiah. Some thought the Messiah would come from Bethlehem, while others believed that the OT did not reveal the Messiah's origin. (vs. 42; cf. Matt 2:4-6).
- "A prophet does not come out of Galilee" – An angry response from the Pharisees and misinformed too. Jonah came from this region.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

### LECTURE 5 – JOHN 8-9

#### JOHN 7:53-8:11 – JESUS AND THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

- Earliest manuscripts do not have this passage. Of the few that do, some place it elsewhere, for example, after Luke 21:38.

- “Mount of Olives” – East of Jerusalem rising to about 2,700 ft., some 200 ft. higher than Mt. Zion.
- “Woman” – Not a harsh response, but acceptable in terms of the culture. See other usage in 19:26.

#### JOHN 8:12-30 – THE VALIDITY OF JESUS’ TESTIMONY

- “Light” – Next “I Am” statement. An expansion of the light motif introduced in the prologue. Parallels John’s “God is Light” of 1 John 1:5. Links the statement to “believe” in verse 24 and to “lifted up” in verse 28 (see 6:35; Exodus 3:14). It also serves as a metaphor for eternal life.
- “World” – One of John’s contrasts, i.e., “the world above from the world below.” One of the ways that John demonstrates the divine pre-existence of Jesus. Used some 78 times in John’s Gospel (Jn. 1:9f, 29; 3:16f, 19; 4:42; 6:14, 33, 51; 7:4, 7; 8:12, 23, 26; 9:5, 39; 10:36; 11:9, 27; 12:19, 25, 31, 46f; 13:1; 14:17, 19, 22, 27, 30f; 15:18f; 16:8, 11, 20f, 28, 33; 17:5f, 9, 11, 13ff, 18, 21, 23ff; 18:20, 36f; 21:25).

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 8:31-41 – CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM

- “Believed” – The following words appear to demonstrate that their faith was not real (see vs. 33, 37). Others view this as Jesus addressing believers first but then the audience shifts in verse 33.
- “Truth” – Closely connected with Jesus (vs. 36) – truth that leads to salvation.

- “Never been slaves to anyone” – a startling statement and clearly a lie in light of Israel’s history and its present condition.
- “Free” – freedom from sin, not ignorance (vs. 36).
- “Illegitimate” – Likely a form of slander aimed at Jesus.

#### JOHN 8:42-47 – CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL

- “Father” – A term used beyond simple genealogy. Jesus discounts any notion of a universal fatherhood of God. Underlying this is the concept of obedience. Our actions demonstrate to whom we claim as our father. This can also be seen in the words of Jesus in verse 47 that links “hearing” to obedience.
- “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?” – A demonstration of Jesus’ sinlessness and clear conscience. The religious leaders were adept at keeping the precepts of the Law to the letter. They would have loved to exploit even the tiniest sin against Jesus. This would have been a bold challenge and is instructive to see that the Jews never answer the question.

#### JOHN 8:48-59 – THE CLAIMS OF JESUS ABOUT HIMSELF

- “Samaritan... demon possessed” – packed with cultural innuendo. (Other charges of being demon possessed appear in 7:20; and 10:20). The Jews despised the Samaritans because they were a mixed race. Perhaps in the context of the discussion of being descendants of Abraham the Jews were trying to accuse Jesus of an impure bloodline. Perhaps by calling Jesus a Samaritan is to accuse him of being heretical or of being insane.
- “My word” – The entire scope of Jesus’ message.
- “Greater than Abraham” – Reintroduces the “Father” argument from previous verses. Underlying this section is the “faith” of Abraham who looked forward and “saw” the Messianic day arrive versus the spiritual blindness of the Jews.

- “I Am” – Probably the most pronounced of the “I Am” statements in terms of a clear declaration of His eternity and oneness with the Father (a direct reference to Exodus 3:14).
- “Stone him” – Clearly seen as blasphemy by the Jews with stoning being the penalty (Lev 24:16).

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 9:1-12 – JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

- Giving sight to the blind was something predicted of the Messiah; therefore, this story has at its core, the fulfillment of Messianic expectations (see Isaiah 29:18; 35:5; 42:7; cf. Luke 4:18-19).
- “Who sinned...” – Another incident where the teaching of the rabbis affected the understanding of sin. They held that even babies could sin in the womb and that others suffered due to the sins of their parents. Jesus’ answer contradicts those beliefs as they pertain to this particular case.
- “I am the light of the world” – The blind man serves as an opportunity for Jesus to demonstrate the scope of His mission: to bring physical light to a blind man just as He brings spiritual light to the world.
- “Spit... ground” – Some commentators argue that “spit” was believed to have medicinal quality and that this is actually a folk remedy. But in some respects, this mimics the creation story in that this is a creative healing not a restorative one. Jesus “created” sight from nothing, because this man never had sight to begin with.

- “Siloam” – Rock-cut pool that served as part of the water system developed by King Hezekiah (Neh 3:15; Isa 8:6).

#### JOHN 9:13-34 – THE PHARISEES INVESTIGATE THE HEALING

- Verses 16-17 demonstrate the underlying dilemma that Jesus created for the Pharisees. Jesus was challenging long held conventions that were proving problematic for them.
- There is a progression in the story. The blind man progresses from thinking that Jesus was just a man (vs. 11), to a prophet (vs. 17), to someone having disciples (vs. 27), to someone who was from God (vs. 33), and lastly, someone to be worshipped (38).
- “He is of age...” – Passage demonstrates the parents fear at getting involved.
- “Put out of the Synagogue... Threw him out” – Commentators are divided if this was a form of excommunication though not clearly known how it was practiced in NT times. The Synagogue was the center of Jewish life and to be cut off from it had serious religious, social, and possibly financial consequences.

#### JOHN 9:35-41 – SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

- The crux of the chapter. Jesus does not impose belief or unbelief on either the blind man or the authorities. Neither does Jesus rob the Pharisees of their sight, but their blindness is due to their refusal to see.
- The principle of judgment runs throughout John’s Gospel and here is raised again. This particular healing serves to demonstrate those who were really blind as opposed to who thought they were spiritually okay.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

## LECTURE 6 – JOHN 10-11

### JOHN 10:1-21 – THE SHEPHERD AND HIS FLOCK

- “I tell you the truth” – Begins with formulaic “Amen, Amen” in the Greek.
- This passage has its roots deeply in the OT. God himself was called the shepherd of Israel (Psalm 23:1; 80:1; Isaiah 40:10-11; Ezekiel 34:11-16).
- “Sheep pen” – A pen open to the sky with only one entrance.
- “His voice... His own sheep” – An acknowledgment that the sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd and respond only to him. Likewise, the shepherd only calls out to those sheep that belong to him.
- “All who ever came before me” – Denotes “false shepherds.” Primarily the Pharisees and chief priests.
- “The gate” – The one way to salvation.
- Contrast of the “shepherd” and the “thief.” One is purely motivated toward the interests of the sheep; the other is purely motivated by the interest in himself.
- “I am the Good Shepherd... I lay down my life” - Central crux of passage with significant theological importance.
- Verse 16 is a glimpse into the global scope of the church.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

JOHN 10:22-42 – THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS

- “Feast of Dedication” – Commemorates the dedication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus (Dec 165 B.C.), after it was polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes. The festival is better known today as Hanukkah (Festival of Lights – and celebrated near our Christmas).
- “Solomon’s Colonnade” – A roofed structure that was thought to date back to the time of Solomon – but this was an erroneous fact (see also Acts 3:11; 5:12).
- The unbelief of the Jews here follows the Shepherd and His Sheep passage (10:1-21) and serves as an illustration of those who are not “His sheep” due to their unbelief.
- “Never perish” – A statement centered on the power of the shepherd, which is the basis for our security.
- “I and the Father are one” – One is neutral in the Greek demonstrating Jesus’ oneness in essence and nature with the Father.
- “Great miracles” – Could also be translated as “good works” by the Greek.
- “And the Scripture cannot be broken” – Jesus affirms the reliability and authority of the OT and uses it here as a polemic against the very people who claim to follow it.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

## JOHN 11:1-16 – THE DEATH OF LAZARUS

- This is the final miracle in the section often considered as “The Book of Signs”. The raising of Lazarus serves as that which ultimately leads to His own death and resurrection. The underlying theme of the “Son’s glorification” is woven throughout the story (see 11:4).
- “Lazarus” – Mentioned only here in John 11-12 (not to be confused with Lazarus in the parable of Luke 16:19-31). Lazarus means “God is my help / God has helped”.
- “Bethany” – Located on the southeastern slopes of the Mount of Olives about 3 kms. east of Jerusalem. During Jesus’ final week He spent at least one night here (Matt 21:17) and is also near the site of His Ascension (Luke 24:50).
- “The one you love” – Characterizes their relationship demonstrating that it must have been very close.
- “Fallen asleep” – A common euphemism for death.

## JOHN 11:17-37 – JESUS COMFORTS MARY AND MARTHA

- “Four days” – A common belief among the Jews was that the soul remained near a body for three days after death. Because it had been four days for Lazarus, any hope that the soul could be reunited with the body would have been lost. By all accounts, at least in the minds of the people, Lazarus was irrevocably dead.
- “I am the resurrection and the life” – More than just a statement of what Jesus is able to give, but in some way, these are identified with Him. Some commentators see this “I Am” statement as the high point or culmination of all seven. John returns to this theme in the Book of Revelation when he writes of Jesus, “I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades” (see Rev 1:17-18). Verses 25-26 also echo the truth of John 3:16.
- “The Teacher” – Rabbis were not allowed to teach women, so this is a significant declaration by Martha and differentiates Jesus as the one who came to bring the light of life to everyone.

JOHN 11:38-44 – JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

- “Cave... stone” – Parallels Jesus’ own death and resurrection.
- “Father....” – Jesus’ prayer does not include a request that Lazarus be raised but is first and foremost a prayer of thankfulness. The prayer serves as a public witness to the crowd so that they might believe too.

JOHN 11:45-57 – THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

- “Chief Priests... Pharisees... Sanhedrin” – Up until now the Pharisees have been the primary opponents of Jesus. Here all groups have been brought together to discuss what to do about Jesus.
- “Caiaphas” – High priest (c. A.D. 18-36), who was the son-in-law of Annas.
- Verses 49-53 serve as one of the most ironic passages in all of Scripture. The words of Caiaphas are certainly prophetic, yet for all his concern to execute one man for the good of the nation, Israel still perished in A.D. 70.
- “Ephraim” – City also known as Ophrah. It was 15 miles north of Jerusalem.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

## LECTURE 7 – JOHN 12-13

### JOHN 12:1-11 – JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

- This passage almost serves as a type of prologue to the Passion Week, giving dark clues as to what is to follow for Jesus.
- “Six days before the Passover” – Serves as an introduction to the last six days of Jesus.
- “Pure nard” – Expensive fragrant oil. It was usually poured on the head, not the feet. Further, it was unusual for Mary to use her hair to wipe Jesus feet considering that a respectable woman did not undo her hair in public.
- “Judas Iscariot... thief” – The one passage where we learn of Judas’ dishonesty.
- Verse 10 demonstrates the complicity of the Jewish leaders. They had earlier spoken of killing one man for the good of the nation and how easily it was to move beyond the original intent to now including Lazarus in their plans.

### JOHN 12:12-19 – THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

- “Palm branches” – Used in victory celebrations.
- “Hosanna” – A Hebrew expression literally meaning, “Give salvation now!” It became an exclamation of praise. Similar to our use of “Hallelujah!”

### JOHN 12:20-36 – JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

- “Greeks” – A short introduction to build within the story a context showing that more than Jews were present at the Feast. It fulfills what the Pharisees said to each other; that they could do nothing, and that the world had gone after Him (see verse 19).
- “Troubled” – John’s equivalent to the agony in Gethsemane described in the Synoptic Gospels.

- “Son of Man” – The only place in the Gospels where this phrase is found on the lips other than Jesus’, even though they were quoting Him.

#### JOHN 12:37-50 – THE JEWS CONTINUE IN THEIR UNBELIEF

- Verses 37-43 demonstrate the tension between those who refuse to believe and those who did. Of those who did believe, fear of excommunication kept them in secrecy.
- “Believe in me” – John ends this section of the book (Book of Signs) with the appeal to belief. Verses 44-50 serve as a fitting conclusion to the public ministry of Jesus because they succinctly summarize His mission.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 13:1-17 – JESUS WASHES THE FEET OF THE DISCIPLES

- John 13 begins the section often characterized as the “Book of Glory” or the “Exaltation of Jesus” (Chapters 13-20).
- Striking that this section begins with one of the most humbling services that Jesus performs, apart from the cross.
- Unusual that though John presents us with the longest account of the upper room (13:1-17:26), he says nothing of the institution of the Lord’s Supper.
- “Began to wash his disciples’ feet” – A menial task normally performed by a servant. This was done during the meal, not before, to emphasize the lesson in humility.

- “Teacher... Lord” – An instructor would normally accept the title, “Teacher,” but “Lord” demonstrates one occupying a supreme place. Thomas will make a similar declaration in 20:28 though much more profound when he responds to the risen Christ with, “My Lord and my God!”
- Verses 13-16 serve as one of the strongest passages for service in the Christian body as well as the leadership within it.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 13:18-30 – JESUS PREDICTS HIS BETRAYAL

- “Shares my bread” – Eating together was an act of close fellowship.
- “Troubled” - The third instance of this word in three chapters. Jesus was troubled concerning the death of Lazarus (11:33), He was troubled in predicting His own death (12:27), and here in verse 21 as He predicts Judas’ betrayal. Jesus will use it again to comfort His disciples in 14:1 before His death, and again in 14:27.
- “The disciple whom Jesus loved” – Commonly accepted to be the apostle John (cf. 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20).
- “Judas Iscariot, Son of Simon” – Interesting that Jesus uses Judas’ full name.
- “Night” – Considering all the emphasis by John on “light”, this seems more than just a note of time, but a depiction of Judas’ soul and the setting of the stage for the battle between light and darkness.

## JOHN 13:31-38 – JESUS PREDICTS PETER’S DENIAL

- “My children” – A term of endearment.
- “A new command” – New in the sense that it will be framed within a new community marked by their faith in Jesus. This command will be further reinforced later as Jesus prays for the unity of all believers. That unity, based on their bond of love, will demonstrate to the world that Jesus was who He claimed to be, and that the same love can be experienced by placing faith (i.e. belief) in Him (17:20-26). It also can be seen as an initiation of/or inauguration of the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34). The focus being on loving action, not loving feeling.
- “Where are you going?” – From the mouth of Peter, demonstrating the disciples concerns over Jesus’ words of departure. Thomas re-asks a form of the question again in 14:5.
- “I will lay down my life” – Peter uses words similar to what Jesus used in the Good Shepherd passage (10:11).
- “You will deny me three times” – Peter’s denial is recorded in all four Gospels (Matt 26:33-35; Mk 14:29-31; Luke 22:31-34).

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

## LECTURE 8 – JOHN 14-15

### JOHN 14:1-14 – JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES

- “Do not... be troubled” – Jesus acknowledges the disciples fear without endorsing it. Again, repeated in verse 27, but is coupled with the admonition of “Do not be afraid”.

- “Trust” – Jesus antidote for “trouble”. Actual Greek word used here is the same root word for “believe”. Commentators debate over the nuance of the passage because it can be either indicative or imperative in the Greek. Carson makes the most plausible case for the phrase to be rendered, “Trust in God; trust also in me” (Carson pg. 488).
- “My Father’s house” – Implication of Heaven or relationship?
- “Many rooms” (Also rendered as “dwelling-places”). Implies to the permanence of our relationship and the privilege of living with the Father in His house as fully-adopted sons with all of its rights and privileges. This word is only used one other time in the NT in John 14:23, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our *home* with him.
- “I will come back” – A reference to the second coming.
- “I am the Way, the Truth, the Life” – Seen by many as the most succinct summary of John’s Gospel apart from 3:16. The statement likely means that Jesus is The Way to the Father, in that He is The Truth *and* The Life”. There are numerous ways of expanding on this passage considering that these three concepts comprise the bulk of the book.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

JOHN 14:15-31 – JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT

- “If you love me... the Father will give you” – The first of many passages concerning the Holy Spirit (14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15).

- “Counselor” – Greek Parakletos – verbal adjective of *parakaleo*, to “call alongside, to encourage, to exhort (In modern Greek it can take on the force of “to plead”). In secular Greek it can take the form of “legal assistant, advocate, witness, or even representative. John is the only one to use this term in regard to The Holy Spirit (see Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1). Other translations have used Helper or Comforter.
- “The Spirit of truth” – That which characterizes the essence and actions of the Spirit.
- Verse 21 highlights the connection between love and obedience (see also vs. 15). The two cannot be separated. Further, the love of the Father cannot be separated by that of the Son. They are linked again in verse 23.
- “Peace... Peace I give to you” – Common Hebrew greeting but here denotes the core of the salvation message. Absolute peace with God which is real and present.
- “Prince of this world... has no hold on me”- Satan had no hold on Jesus due to His sinlessness.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 15:1-17 – THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

- “I am the true vine” – The vine is a common symbol in the OT for Israel. Typically carries a negative reference (see Isaiah 5:7; Jer 2:21; Ezek 15:6; 19:10, 12). Here it is cast in a positive sense as Jesus being the “true vine”. This is also the last of the “I Am” statements made by Jesus.
- “Cuts off” – A reference to judgment.

- “Prunes” – To prune is to produce fruitfulness. Good fruit often serves as a metaphor for a godly life (Matt 3:8; 7:16-20; Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9; Phil 1:11). In the Greek, *prunes*, can also be translated as *cleans*.
- “My words remain in you” – Relates back to the assurance of verse 3. Jesus as the “Living Word” has cleansing power when we believe and obey. The usage of this terminology harkens back to the prologue where Jesus was introduced as “The Word”.
- “Remain” – Typically “abide”. Various forms of this word are used throughout the Gospel and are used to describe an important relationship or spiritual condition (cf. 1:32; 5:38; 12:46; 14:2; 14:23).
- “To my Father’s glory” – The glorification of the Father seen through the work of the Son. Thereby, Jesus is glorified when those called by His Name bear fruit.
- “Obey...as I have obeyed” – Again the topic of obedience within the context of love. Throughout John’s Gospel there is the recurring theme which highlights the obedience of Jesus to the Father’s will. In these passages that anticipate Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection, and subsequent ascension, He is admonishing His disciples to be obedient in the same way that Jesus was to the Father.
- “Joy” – A byproduct of love and obedience.
- Verse 17 repeats “the New Commandment to love one another” found in 13:34.

#### JOHN 15:18-16:4 – THE WORLD HATES THE DISCIPLES

- “World” – Refers to the human system that opposes God and His purposes. John uses this word throughout his Gospel and was introduced in the Prologue (1:9, cf. 3:16).
- “Hate” – Jesus makes clear how the “world, who love darkness” will respond to those who have entered into the light. It will not be mere indifference, or minor agitation, but hatred that will be the reaction of the “world”. Persecution will be a natural byproduct of faith in Christ due to the fact that our citizenship has changed. (cf. Luke 6:22: Blessed are

you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man).

- “Hated both Me and My Father” – To reject Jesus is to reject God.
- “Put you out of the Synagogue” – What was witnessed earlier of the blind man in chapter 9 will also be a reality for the disciples.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

## LECTURE 9 – JOHN 16-17

JOHN 16:5-16 – THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- “Unless I go away” – Jesus’ saving work on the cross was necessary before sending the Spirit.
- “He will convict the world” – Primarily of sin. Sin in John is a theological category, not a moral one. The sin of the world is unbelief in Jesus.

JOHN 16:17-33 – THE DISCIPLES GRIEF WILL TURN TO JOY

- “Weep (and mourn)” – Loud wailing. The same verb used in 11:33.
- “I will see you again” – A reference to the resurrection.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 17:1-5 – JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF

- Otherwise known as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer (1-26). Called such due to Jesus preparing to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world and for His interceding on behalf of the disciples.
- It has been compared to Moses' final address (Deut 31:30), which concluded with Moses blessing Israel (Deut 33). Both prayers portray a positive tone.
- "Granted" – The principle of giving is stressed in this chapter.
- "Glorify me... with the glory I had with You" – Jesus asks the Father to return Him to His previous position of glory. An exchange of humiliation for glorification.

#### JOHN 17:6-19 – JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

- Three things are stated about the disciples in 17:8. First, they accepted Jesus' teaching. Secondly, they affirmed the divinity of Jesus; and lastly, they believed.
- "Holy Father" – Found only here in the NT.
- "I protected them" – Divine protection is adequate to any need. Jesus kept the disciples from harm as He prepared them for their mission.
- "Sanctify" – Means to set apart for sacred use.

## JOHN 17:20-26 – JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

- “Those who will believe in me” – All future believers are included in this prayer. Jesus was confident that the Gospel would spread through the work of the disciples.
- “Righteous Father” – Found only here in NT, parallels “Holy Father” of 17:11.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

## LECTURE 10 – JOHN 18-19

### JOHN 18:1-14 – JESUS ARRESTED

- “Crossed the Kidron Valley” – East of Jerusalem.
- “I am He” – Greek actually is “I Am”. There is a threefold repetition of the “I Am” statement in verses 5, 6, and 8.
- “The cup” – Normally signifies suffering (Ps 75:8; Ezek 23:31-34) and the wrath of God (Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15; Rev 14:10; 16:19).
- “Annas” – deposed from the high priesthood by the Romans in A.D. 15, but still held considerable power. In Jewish law a person could not be sentenced on the day of the trial.
- “Caiaphas” – John’s focus seems to be in reminding the readers that a fair trial was unlikely to be expected from a man who previously had said that it would benefit the nation if Jesus was put to death.

#### JOHN 18:15-18 – PETER’S FIRST DENIAL

- “Another disciple” – Most commentators affirm this to be John.
- “The girl at the door” – All four Gospels confirm that Peter’s first confrontation came from a slave girl, the most unimportant person imaginable.

#### JOHN 18:19-24 – THE HIGH PRIEST QUESTIONS JESUS

- “Questioned” – Not a legal interrogation, due to the fact that no witnesses were called in order to establish guilt. An accused was not required to prove their innocence.
- “I spoke openly... nothing in secret” – Witnesses against Jesus should have been easy considering He did not act or teach subversively.
- “Struck” – Likely a slap based on the Greek word. This act was another illegality.

#### JOHN 18:25-27 – PETER’S SECOND AND THIRD DENIALS

- In verse 25, we once again hear “I am not” from the lips of Peter.
- “A rooster began to crow” – A fulfillment of the prophecy in 13:38.

#### JOHN 18:28-40 – JESUS BEFORE PILATE

- “Roman Governor” – John focuses more on the Roman phase of the trial. Possible that John was inside the Governor’s official residence (The Praetorium) for the trial.
- “Pilate” – The Roman Governor who showed himself to be tolerant of Jewish ways.
- “Are you the King of the Jews” – All four Gospels are identical in relating Pilate’s first words to Jesus.
- “To testify to the truth” – Two key components of this Gospel (cf. 1:7). Jesus confirms His reason for coming.

- “What is truth?” – Packed with significance in light of the importance of “truth” in the Gospel. In the context of the trial though, teaching the truth, which Jesus claimed to do, was not a criminal offence.
- “Barabbas” – A rebel and a murderer (Luke 23:19). In Arabic it means, “Son of Abba / Son of the Father”. Pure irony in light of Jesus being the true “Son of the Father”.

#### JOHN 19:1-16 – JESUS SENTENCED TO BE CRUCIFIED

- “Purple” – A colour used for royalty.
- “I find no basis” – Pilate’s third pronouncement of Jesus’ innocence (18:38; 19:4; cf. Luke 23:4, 14, 22).
- “He must die” – The penalty for blasphemy based on Leviticus 24:16.
- “Judges seat... stone pavement” – This is a different name for the same place that the text relates as Gabbatha, meaning, “the hill of the house”.
- “Day of Preparation... about the sixth hour” – Using John’s timeline Jesus appeared before Pilate at 6:00 am and the crucifixion would have been at 9:00 am.
- “We have no king but Caesar” – Very chilling words when one considers their import of who they were rejecting (vs. 15).

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

### JOHN 19:17-27 – THE CRUCIFIXION

- “Carrying His own cross” – A condemned man was required to carry a beam to the place of execution.
- “They crucified Him” – Though the Gospel writers commit a significant amount of space to Jesus’ last week, they do not dwell on the physical sufferings of Jesus.
- “Undergarment” – Type of shirt that reaches from the neck to the knees or ankles. Because it was seamless it was too valuable to cut up.
- “Mary Magdalene” – She appears in all four Gospels in relation to the crucifixion and resurrection. Only Luke mentions her beforehand (see Luke 8:2-3).

### JOHN 19:28-37 – THE DEATH OF JESUS

- “I am thirsty” – Likely a reference to Psalm 69:21.
- “Wine vinegar” – Equivalent to cheap wine, the drink of poor people.
- “It is finished” – The completion of what Jesus came to do.
- “Pierced Jesus’ side” – Likely to check and see whether or not Jesus was dead; may have also been simply an act of brutality (see vs. 37; Isa 53:5; Zec 12:10)
- “Blood and water” – Resulting from spear piercing the pericardium (the sac that surrounds the heart) and the heart itself.

### JOHN 19:38-42 – THE BURIAL OF JESUS

- “Joseph of Arimathea” – A rich disciple (Matt 27:57) who was also a member of the Sanhedrin. Luke 23:50-51 shows him disagreeing with Jesus’ condemnation.
- “Nicodemus” – Only John tells us that Nicodemus joined Joseph in the burial.
- “Seventy-five pounds” – A very large amount, typical of royal burials (2 Ch 16:14).

- “A new tomb” – This was Joseph’s own tomb (Matt 27:60).

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

## LECTURE 11 – JOHN 20-21

### JOHN 20:1-9 – THE EMPTY TOMB

- “To Simon Peter” – Despite his denials, Peter was still the leading figure among the disciples.
- “Folded up” – Not in disarray but orderly. Not something that would have resulted had it been a grave robbery.
- “He saw and believed” – Probably that Jesus was resurrected.

### JOHN 20:10-18 – JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE

- “She did not realize it was Jesus” – A number of times the resurrected Jesus is not recognized (21:4; Matt 28:17; Luke 24: 4, 23).
- “Do not hold onto me... returned to the Father” – Jesus appears to confirm that the ascension is some time off, therefore Mary need not cling to him because she will see him again.

#### JOHN 20:19-23 – JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES

- “Receive the Holy Spirit” – Anticipating Pentecost some 50 days later. Coupled with this comes the evangelistic formula comprising of the forgiveness of sins.

#### JOHN 20:24-31 – JESUS APPEARS TO THOMAS

- “Peace” – A recurring theme throughout the latter part of John’s Gospel (see 14:27; 20:19, 21).
- “My Lord and my God” – The ultimate confession of faith. The statement confirms the divine nature of Jesus and His right to Lordship.
- “Blessed are those...” – A beatitude for all those who come to faith from here on.
- “That you may believe” – Verse 30-31 are essentially the purpose statement for John writing His Gospel. John’s motives were purely evangelistic.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

#### JOHN 21:1-14 – JESUS AND THE MIRACULOUS CATCH OF FISH

- Commentators are generally divided on whether or not chapter 21 is an epilogue added later. Carson, in his commentary gives a thorough summary of the arguments (pgs. 665-668).
- “That night” – Favoured by fishermen.

- Peter appears prominent throughout this story, likely in anticipation of what is to come.
- People have tried to find some meaning in this unusual number of 153 fish caught.
- Two exegetical points to note:
  - 1) Jesus calls out to the disciples with the Greek for ‘children’ (παιδιά)(21:5). The apostle John seems to adopt this term of endearment in his later writings, though he predominantly uses the synonym teknia (τεκνία). (See 1 John 2:1,12; 2:14, 18, 28; 3:1-2, 7, 10, 18; 4:4; 5:2, 21; 2 John 1, 4, 13; 3 John 4; Rev 2:23; 12:5)
  - 2) John describes the fire Jesus made as a ‘charcoal’ one. This is the same description given in John 18:18 of the fire that Peter used to warm himself in the midst of his first denial of Jesus.

#### JOHN 21:15-25 – JESUS REINSTATES PETER

- “Love” – Two different words for love are used but seem to be more for stylistic reasons. John interchanges them throughout his Gospel. Others argue for nuances between the two, but the main thrust of the interaction is in answering the question whether or not Peter loves Jesus.
- Twice Jesus uses the word ‘feed’ (βόσκει), and once he uses ‘tend/to shepherd’ (ποιμαίνει). Twice he uses ‘sheep’ (πρόβατά), and once he uses ‘lambs’ (ἀρνία).
- “Stretch out your hands... the kind of death” – The early church understood this as a prophecy of Peter’s crucifixion.
- “Follow me” – The most concise statement of discipleship.
- “Until I return” – A clear declaration of the second coming.
- “Disciple who testifies” – John has stressed the importance of testimony throughout and here we learn that John is the beloved disciple who was the witness behind the account.
- Verse 25 validates that John has been selective and that our historical knowledge is partial at best. With that said, we do have everything that we need to know.

*Relationship to Old Testament:*

*Contemporary Application:*

**LECTURE 12 – IMPLICATIONS OF JOHN FOR TODAY**

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The course notes have been gleaned from The NIV Study Bible, D.A. Carson Pillar Commentary, Kostenberger's Encountering John, Pate's The Writings of John and my own personal observations.