

# The Gospel according to Saint John

## 1. Prologue (1:1-18)

Jesus is the eternal **Word** that **enlightens** and gives **life** (1:1-5)

the only **Son** who reveals (makes **known**/in whom we **see**) (the glory of) the Father (1:14,18).

His own ("the Jews"/some of humankind?) do not accept him

but all who **receive** him/**believe** in him are **born** children of **God** (1:1-13).

## 2. Introduction (1:19-51)

John the Baptist **testifies** that Jesus is **the One** on whom the **Spirit abides**, the **Lord**,  
**the Lamb** of God (who takes away the **sin** of **the world**), the **Son of God** (1:19-34 cf.1:6-8).

So the invitation goes out to would-be **disciples**: "Come and **see**" the one who is the **Messiah**,

the **King** of Israel, greater than **Moses** (cf. 1:17), in whom **heaven** is opened (both ways) (1:35-51).

## 3. Signs (Chs.2-4)

Jesus does "**signs**" that reveal his/God's **glory** (2:1-11,12-17; 4:46-54)/**heavenly things** (3:12-16,27,31)

bestowing new wine (2:10), the resurrection life (4:50-52; cf.2:21f)/**eternal life** (3:16,36; 4:14,36)

through new **birth** by **water** (cf.3:25, 4:10-14) and the **Spirit** (2:3-8, 3:34; 4:23-24)

and surpassing/supplanting the rites and rituals of the Jews (cf.2:6,13-16; 3:25).

This is the **work** he has been **sent** by God to do (4:34-38 cf.3:16f).

His **disciples** believe in him (2:11,22-23)/choose the **light** (3:18-21)

as (in part?) do the Jewish leader Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, and others (4:41,50-53).

## 4. Disputation (Chs.5-7)

"The Jews" **oppose** Jesus' claims to be doing God's **work** (5:16-18). To them he is law-breaker.

They **complain** when he says he is the "true **bread**" **from heaven** (6:41f,52).

**Astonished** (7:15,21) at his **teaching** (cf.7:12), they renounce him as "a **deceiver**" (7:12, cf.7:47).

Jesus defends his authority. He is the obedient **Son**, sent by the Father (7:16-18,28f) to bring God's (right)

**judgement/resurrection** life (5:19-30). In "**a little while**" he will ascend/return to the Father (7:33-36).

**John** the Baptist, his **works** and **Moses** in the scriptures **testify** to his "**truth**" (5:31-47).

He is the **living bread**, superseding the **manna** of old (6:25-35,41-50); eating his **flesh**

(and drinking his blood) bestows **eternal life** to believers, who **abide** in him (6:51-57).

He gives the living **water** of the **Spirit** to those who **drink** of him (7:37-39).

There is **division** of opinion among the disciples (6:59-71; 7:5) and the crowd (7:43 cf.7:12,41),

especially about Jesus' origins and messianic credentials (7:25-31,40-42).

The Jews seek to arrest (7:30,32,44) and **kill** Jesus (5:18,7:1) and **the world hates** him (7:7),

but his "**time**" (the hour of his death and final (open) self-revelation) has not yet come (7:6,8,30).

## 5. Division (Chs.8-10)

The division between those who "see" the **truth** (8:32)/are enlightened by Jesus, the "**light of the world**" (8:12, 9:5), the obedient **Son** of the Father (cf.8:26-29,42,55; 10:30,36-38),

and the Jewish leaders who are **blind** to his truth (cf. 9:39-41) is demonstrated in the case of the healing of the blind man (Ch.9).

The latter reject Jesus' testimony (8:13), accuse him of demon possession (8:48,52; 10:20)

and seek to kill him (8:37,59, 10:31). They will **die** as **slaves** (cf. 8:34) to their **sin** (8:21,24, cf. 9:41).

The former gain the "light of **life**" (8:12) and **freedom** (8:32,36).

Jesus is the true leader of Israel (10:1-16): the "**gate**"(way) (10:7,9) to abundant/eternal life (10:9f,28)

and the **good shepherd** (10:11) who will **lay down his life** for the sheep (10:11,14,17)

whom he **knows** and who know him (10:3-5,14,27).

## 6. The hour (Chs.11-13)

In the last of his "**signs**", Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, revealing his **glory** (11:4)

and declaring himself to be the **Resurrection and the Life** (11:25), life in whom transcends death.

The Sanhedrin's plan to put Jesus to death in order to save the nation declares the ironic truth (11:50).

Mary anoints Jesus in anticipation of his **death** and burial (12:7).

Jesus enters Jerusalem as **King**, but humble on an ass (12:13-16), to widespread acclaim (12:12,19),

even among the Greeks (12:20f). Yet, as prophesied by Isaiah (12:40), many **do not believe** (12:37).

Thus, **the hour** of Jesus' **passion** (cf.12:27; 13:1) - his **glory** (12:23,28; 13:31f) /exaltation - approaches

(12:23; cf.12:35; 13:33), a **death** that bears **fruit** (12:24) for the salvation of all (12:32).

Withdrawing from public view, Jesus demonstrates **love** (13:1) and fellowship (13:8) by washing his

disciples' feet (13:3-5). They are to follow his **example** (13:14f) and **love one another** (13:34f).

By contrast Judas, in Satanic (13:2,27) **darkness** (13:30), will **betray** Jesus (13:11,18,21-30)

and Peter will deny him (13:36-38).

## 7. Farewell (Chs.14-16)

Jesus bids a long farewell to his **troubled** disciples (14:1, cf.14:27-30, 16:6,20).

In "**a little while**" (16:16-19) he is "**going away**" (14:2,19), returning to **the Father** (14:28; 16:5,17,28) whom he has revealed through his **words and works** (14:9-11).

But he will "**come again**" (14:3,18,28; 16:22) - in the guise of the **Advocate** whom Jesus will send (14:16f,26; 15:26; 16:7). This is the indwelling (cf.14:23) **Spirit of Truth** who will **teach** (14:26; 16:13) and justify (16:8-10) the disciples.

They are to keep his **commandments of love** (14:15,21; 15:10,12) and, through faith in his **name** (14:14,15:7), they will have power to continue his work (14:12) and **testify** to him (15:27).

Jesus is the true **vine** (15:1-5), by abiding in whom his disciples will bear **fruit** (15:4f,16) and know **joy** (15:11, 16:22), despite the **hatred** of the world and **persecution** (15:18-21; cf.16:2).

## 8. Prayer (Ch.17)

On his way to **the Father** (17:1,11,13), Jesus prays that his **completed** work (17:4) may result in the sharing of (eternal) **glory** (17:1,5).

He has made God **known** (17:3,6) and granted **eternal life** (17:2) to "his own" who believe (17:6-8).

He prays for them (17:9ff) that, while remaining **in the world** (17:11 cf.17:18), they may know **protection** (17:11,15), **unity** (17:11), **joy** (17:13) and **sanctity** in the truth (17:17,19).

He also prays for future believers (17:20ff) that **all may be one** in the unity (17:21-23), **love** (17:23,26) and **glory** (17:24) of the Father and the Son, that the **world** may come to believe (17:21).

## 9. The Passion (Chs.18&19)

The arrest, "trial" and crucifixion of Jesus are described with rich irony.

Jesus is "**handed over**"/betrayed (18:2,6,35; 19:16), **denied** by Peter (18:15-18,25-27) and **condemned** by the religious leaders (19:6,15). Apparently the victim of **power** (cf. 18:3,22) and politics (19:8), he is abused (18:22; 19:1ff), falsely charged (cf.18:38; 19:4,6) and put to a cruel death (19:16-18).

And yet, it is his "**hour**" (cf.19:27). He is in control throughout (cf.18:4,6,11), for his is the true power (18:36; cf.19:11). Taking up *his own* cross (19:17), he dies willingly handing over his spirit to the Father (19:30). Thus he **finishes/completes** (19:28,30; cf.18:9) his work of salvation "for the people" (18:14) and fulfils (all) **the Scriptures** (cf.18:9; 19:24,28,36,37) and his own prophecy (18:32).

Having **taught openly** (cf.18:2), he is "tried" in secret (18:13ff). Though judged (19:13), he is the true **judge** (cf.18:23,37; 19:11). By rejecting his **truth** (18:38; 19:12), his accusers are shown to be the real apostates (cf.19:15).

While Jesus is **bound** (18:12,24), Barabbas - a thieving "son of the father" - is set free (18:40).

Mocked as **king of the Jews**, with crown of thorns and purple robe (19:2f), he is the true king (cf.18:36) of all the world (19:19-22).

He dies on the eve of **Passover** (18:28,39; 19:14,31,42) - when the lambs were sacrificed - the true Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (cf.1:29).

Through his death "**his own**" form a new community (19:25-27) and receive the life-giving **blood** and refreshing **water** of his Spirit (19:34). So shall all who **see and believe**, the author testifies (19:35).

## 10. Resurrection (Chs.20&21)

Mary comes early and discovers the empty tomb; it is a new day/a **new beginning** (20:1). Peter and the beloved disciple follow (20:3ff). The beloved arrives first and is first to "**see and believe**" (20:8).

A personal encounter draws Mary out of the **darkness** (cf. 20:1) and confusion of grief to the confession of the risen/ascending Jesus as **Master and Lord** (20:16,18). She passes on the good news (20:18).

That evening Jesus **shows** himself to the disciples locked in **fear** in "the house" (upper room?) (20:19ff).

He shares **peace** (20:19,21) and the **Spirit** (20:22), **sending** them to continue his work (20:21) of bestowing **forgiveness/judgement** (20:23). They **witness** to having seen the **Lord** (20:24).

A week later Thomas also **sees** Jesus (20:26). His **doubt** (20:25,27) is vanquished; he confesses Jesus as **Lord and God** (20:28).

The blessedness of those who **believe** without seeing (20:29) includes all who receive the **witness** of the gospel (20:31).

Jesus' third appearance is to Peter and others at the Galilee lakeside (21:1ff). A miracle of a great catch reveals the **Lord** to the Beloved (21:6-7). He feeds them with a meal of **bread** and fish (20:13).

Revoking his three-fold denial, Peter confirms his **love** for Jesus, who commissions him to "**feed**" and "**tend**" his **flock** (21:15-17), even to **lay down** his life, like the Good Shepherd (21:18-19; cf.10:11).

Peter is to **follow** to the end (21:22), while the Beloved disciple (whose appears recently to have died; 21:23) is revealed as the author of the **gospel**, whose testimony readers can accept as **true** (21:24).