

INTRODUCTION TO 43RD BIBLEBOOK

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (A.D. 70-98)

A. The writer of the Gospel of John	1
B. The writer of John 21	2
C. The date and place of writing the Gospel of John	3
D. The theme and division of the Gospel of John	4
E. The characteristics of the Gospel of John	5
F. The purpose and theme of the Gospel of John	6

A. THE WRITER OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

1. The writer was a Palestinian Jew.

The writer is acquainted with the topography of Palestine. He knows that one Bethany is on the other side of the Jordan (1:28), while the other Bethany is only two miles from Jerusalem (11:28). He knows places like Cana, Capernaum, and Bethsaida in Galilee, Aenon near Salim (3:23), the village Ephraim (11: 54) and Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, he knows the Pool of Bethesda near the Sheep Gate (5:2) and the Pool of Siloam (9:7). He knows the Kidron valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives (18:1). He knows that Jesus was crucified at the place called Golgotha, which means ‘the skull’ (19:17). He knows that the temple took 46 years to reconstruct (2:20), that a part of the temple was called ‘Solomon’s Colonnade’ (10:23), that people were selling animals in the temple courts (2:14) and that Jesus was teaching in the temple close to the place where the offerings were put (8:2,20).

The writer knows the political conditions in Palestine during that time. For example, he knows that the Jews do not associate with the Samaritans (4:9) and that many Jews were living among the Gentile nations (11:35). He knows that Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year, and that Annas was really the most influential figure in the Sanhedrin (18:13). He also knows that the Jewish Sanhedrin had no political power to condemn someone to death and that the Roman governor had to make such a decision (18:28). He knows that every year at the Passover it was the custom of the Roman governor to release a Jewish prisoner (18:39).

The writer is thoroughly acquainted with the Old Testament in both the Hebrew and Greek languages, because he uses both in his quotations.

The writer refers to Jewish and Samaritan religious beliefs, like salvation is from the Jews (4:22) and the Messiah is coming from David’s family and from Bethlehem (7:42). He knows that the Samaritans worship on Mount Gerizim and not in Jerusalem (4:20).

The writer knows the Jewish religious Festivals. He knows the Day of Preparation (19:31), the Passover Festival, the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2) and the Feast of Dedication (10:22). He knows that people from everywhere went up to Jerusalem a few days before the Passover for their “ceremonial cleansing” (11:55; 18:28).

The writer introduces and explains the Jewish customs in a natural way. For example, it was a Jewish marriage custom to first offer the choice wine to the guests and later the cheap wine (2:10). It was the Jewish burial custom to wrap the dead person with strips of linen with smelling spices in between, to tie a cloth around his face, and then to lay him in a cave or tomb and to place a large stone in front of it (11:38,44; 19:40).

2. The writer was an eye-witness.

The writer saw the works of Jesus with his own eyes. He remembers when the events occurred, and many times he even records the exact hour. Because he writes towards the end of the first century to Gentiles, he most probably used the Roman method of time calculation. The Romans started to count the time from midnight or from noon. For example, he remembers that he met Jesus for the first time on the day after he was baptised at about the tenth hour (1:35,39), that is, about 10 A.M. and remained with him for the rest of the day. This left enough time to find Peter and introduce him to Jesus. He remembers that Jesus sat down at the well in Samaria at about the sixth hour, that is 6 P.M. and that Jesus stayed two days with the Samaritans (4:6,40). He remembers that Jesus was sentenced to death on the Day of Preparation of the Passover Week at about the sixth hour, that is 6 A.M. He remembers the exact words Jesus spoke to Simon when he gave him the name ‘Peter’ (1:42), the exact words Jesus spoke to the other disciples when he called them, and the exact words of the many sermons Jesus preached. The Gospel of John leaves the impression that the writer not only heard the very words of Jesus, but might have *kept notes of what Jesus said*. The writer is acquainted with the high priest and knows the name of his servant whose right ear was cut off by Peter (18:15,10). At the crucifixion, he himself saw blood and water issuing out from the pierced side of Jesus (19:33-35).

3. The writer was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus.

The writer has intimate knowledge of the actions, words and feelings of the disciples of Jesus. For example, he says that the disciples were *surprised* to find Jesus talking to a woman (4:27), but they were *terrified* when they saw Jesus walking on the water (6:19).

The twelve disciples *stayed* with Jesus when all the other disciples turned back and no longer followed him (6:66-71). They *stared* at one another in silence when Jesus predicted that one of them would betray him (13:22). The fact that he is closely associated with Peter and partook of the Passover meal proves that he was one of the Twelve disciples.

4. The writer was the apostle John.

The writer never calls himself by name, but calls himself “the disciple whom Jesus loved”. He is the disciple who leaned back against Jesus at the Last Supper (13:23). And he writes as a disciple of Jesus who testifies to what he has seen and heard (21:20-24).

From John 1:35-40 we learn that the writer was one of the four earliest disciples of Jesus: Andrew and John, Peter and James¹. The writer was thus one of “the sons of Zebedee”. According to Acts 12, James was killed by Herod and according to John 21:18-19, Peter had already been martyred. The only possible disciple who could have written this Gospel is the apostle John!

John was the son of Zebedee. Matthew 27:56, Mark 16:1 and John 19:25 say that his mother was possibly called Salome and she was probably a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. If this is correct, then Jesus and John were cousins.

Before he became a disciple of Jesus, he was a follower of John the Baptist. According to John 1:35, he met Jesus on the day after the baptism of Jesus. He continued to work on the fishing boat of his father for about another year before Jesus called him to be a regular or fulltime disciple. Then he left his job as a fisherman to become “a fisher of men”².

John and his brother James appear to have been men with pent-up emotions and flying tempers, because they were called “sons of thunder”³. For example, in Luke 9:49-54, John not only interfered with another person’s ministry, but also liked to see judgement quickly executed. When a Samaritan village refused to give Jesus and his disciples lodging, the fiery anger of John and James flashed forth the words, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?”

John was very often in the company of Peter, both in the Four Gospels as well as in the book of Acts. After the resurrection of Jesus, he was regarded as one of the three “pillars of the church” together with Peter and James, the brother of Jesus⁴. When the Jews revolted against Rome in A.D. 66, John and all Christians probably left Jerusalem and John went to live in Ephesus.

5. The testimony of the early church fathers.

All the church fathers of the ancient Christian Church write that the apostle John was the writer of the Gospel of John.

Eusebius in A.D. 300 wrote that the Gospel according to the apostle John “is read in all the churches under heaven” and that “John relates what Christ did *before* the Baptist had been thrown into prison, while the other three evangelists narrate events *after* the imprisonment of the Baptist”.

Clement of Alexandria in A.D. 190 wrote that while the other Gospels made the external facts plain, “John, urged by his friends and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel”.

Irenaeus in A.D. 170 wrote that his teacher Polycarp was a disciple of the apostle John and had known other eye-witnesses of the Lord Jesus. Polycarp said that they reported all things in agreement with the Scriptures. Irenaeus said that John, the disciple of the Lord, wrote the Gospel of John while he was living in Ephesus in Asia.

Theophilus in A.D. 170 called the Gospel of John “a holy writing” composed by John who was “a man inspired” by the Holy Spirit.

B. THE WRITER OF JOHN CHAPTER 21.

There is uncertainty about who wrote John chapter 21. Although there will never be absolute certainty about this matter, it is possible that John dictated chapter 21 to another writer and this writer recorded whatever John dictated. Or it is possible that another person, inspired by the Holy Spirit and with full approval of the apostle John, added chapter 21 to the Gospel. The following are the reasons for this uncertainty:

1. The conclusion of the Gospel seems to be in chapter 20 and not in 21.

In John 20:30-31, the apostle John writes, “Jesus did many other miraculous 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 Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” This leaves the impression that the Gospel of John ends here. Therefore John or somebody else added chapter 21.

¹ Mark 1:16-20

² Matthew 4:19

³ Mark 3:17

⁴ Galatians 2:9; Acts 15:6

2. The recorder of chapter 21 describes the author of the Fourth Gospel.

The apostle John never mentions himself or the members of his immediate family by name in John chapters 1 to 20. He only refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23). However, whoever wrote chapter 21, refers to “the sons of Zebedee” (21:2), the father of James and John and describes John in length in John 21:20. He describes him as the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the Last Supper and as the one who had asked, “Lord, who is going to betray you?” This lengthy description stands in rather sharp contrast to the veiled manner in which the apostle John refers to himself in the first 20 chapters.

3. The writer of chapter 21 adds the testimony of a group of people and a personal remark.

In John 21:24, he writes in the name of others and says, “This is the disciple who testifies to these things and wrote them down. *We* know that his testimony is true.” Thus, another leader in the church at Ephesus, probably a disciple of John, wrote and added chapter 21 under the complete inspiration of the Holy Spirit and with the full approval of the apostle John. He and all the elders in the church of Ephesus, where John lived and worked, testified that this is the Gospel according to John and that everything written in it is the absolute truth. Finally, the writer of chapter 21 says in verse 25 that the apostle John knew of more words Jesus spoke and of more works Jesus had performed, but that the apostles had written down only what the Holy Spirit had commanded them to record.

4. The purpose of John chapter 21.

The purpose is the following: It emphasises that Peter had been fully re-instated by Jesus after his denial of Jesus. It stresses again the fact that whatever happens to Peter and John and our lives, has been ordained by the sovereign, wise and loving God. It gives the elders of the church at Ephesus an opportunity to present an official and united testimony with respect to the reliability of the things recorded in the Fourth Gospel. And finally, *to explain to the readers of the Bible that everything God wanted people to know about Jesus has been recorded in the Bible. No more and also no less!*

Thus, we conclude that after the apostle John under the guidance of the Holy Spirit had written chapters 1 to 20, another leader at Ephesus, also under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with the approval of the apostle John, wrote chapter 21. He added a beautiful story, which he had often heard from his friend, the apostle John. This was the prediction of Jesus about the end of the life of Peter and the end of the life of John. He distinctly refers to “the disciple whom Jesus loved” as the author and records the united testimony of others with respect to the reliability of the things written in the Gospel of John.

C. THE DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

1. The place of writing the Gospel of John.

According to the church father Irenaeus, who lived in A.D. 170, the Gospel of John was written while John lived in *Ephesus*, an important city, which lies in modern Turkey.

2. The date of writing the Gospel of John.

It was written before A.D. 98.

In A.D. 170, Tatianus used all Four Gospels to write a harmony of the Gospels. About A.D. 140, Justin Martyr quoted John 3:3-5 from this harmony.

Two fragments of the Gospel of John, chapter 18, verses 31-33 and 37-38, have been found in Egypt. They belonged to a papyrus codex of the Gospel of John, which circulated around A.D. 130 in that general region. Thus, if copies of the Gospel of John were already circulating in Middle Egypt in the early part of the second century, the original must have been written much earlier. Because the distance between Ephesus, where it was written, and Middle Egypt is very long, the Gospel of John was probably written in the latter half of the first century.

The writings of Ignatius, who was martyred in A.D. 110, shows clearly that he has read the Gospel of John. The church father Irenaeus, who lived in A.D. 170, wrote, “The church in Ephesus was founded by Paul, and John remained among them permanently until the times of the Roman Emperor Trajan”. Trajan reigned from A.D. 98-117. Thus the Gospel of John was written before A.D. 98.

It was written after A.D. 70.

The apostle John does not repeat what the three other Gospels narrate and he takes for granted that people know the other three Gospels. His purpose was to write especially about those things that were not yet recorded in the other three Gospels; about things that caused people to believe that Jesus is the Messiah; and about the fact that Jesus Christ is completely divine. Thus the Gospel of John must have been written *after* the other three Gospels were written, thus, after A.D. 63.

In John 21:18-19 Jesus said to Peter, “When you are old you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. This seems to imply that the apostle Peter had already died. Because Paul nowhere mentions the work of the apostle John in Asia Minor, it seems that the apostle Paul had also died. Thus the Gospel of John was certainly written after A.D. 67. In the Gospel of John, the Jews have become the confirmed enemies of the Christian Church.

Also the fall of Jerusalem is no longer mentioned, probably because several years had elapsed since it occurred. Thus the Gospel of John was probably written some years after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Therefore we conclude that the Gospel of John was written between A.D. 70 and A.D. 98.

The church father Clement of Alexandria, who lived in A.D. 190, wrote that even after his return from Patmos, the apostle John carried on a very active ministry as chief administrator of the churches located in the Ephesus district. We do not know whether the Gospel of John was written before or after his banishment to Patmos and we also do not know whether it was written before or after the book of Revelation.

D. THE THEME AND DIVISION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

Theme. **"Jesus Christ is the Messiah and the Son of God."**

The Gospel of John may be divided into two parts, the public and the private ministry of Jesus. These two parts may also be divided into seven sections:

1. The public ministry of Jesus. John 1-12.

It may be subdivided into three sections as follows:

John 1-6. Before the Feast of Tabernacles.

- John 1:1 – 2:12. The Inauguration of Jesus Christ. Four months from December A.D. 26 to April A.D. 27.
Jesus Christ, who is called the Word, reveals himself in ever widening circles and is also rejected. John 1:1-14 describes the glory of Jesus Christ in the beginning, at the creation, after the fall and at the incarnation. John 1:15 to 2:12 describes Jesus Christ, revealing himself to John the Baptist and to his early disciples.
- John 2:13 – 4:42. The Early Judean Ministry of Jesus. Eight months from April to December A.D. 27.
It describes Jesus Christ revealing himself to the crowds at Jerusalem including Nicodemus and to the Samaritans.
- John 4:43 – 6:71. "The Great Galilean Ministry of Jesus". Sixteen months from December A.D. 27 to April A.D. 29.
John 4:43-54 describes Jesus Christ revealing himself to the Galileans. John 5 describes Jesus Christ, rejected in Judea after the miracle at Bethesda. John 6 describes Jesus Christ, rejected in Galilee, after feeding the five thousand.

John 7-10. From the Feast of Tabernacles to the Feast of Dedication.

- John 7:1-9 The Retirement Ministry of Jesus. Six months from April to October A.D. 29.
It describes the Word, Jesus Christ going around in Galilee, but finally going secretly to Judea.
- John 7:10 – 10:39. The Later Judean Ministry of Jesus. Two months from October to December A.D. 29.
Jesus Christ makes his tender appeal to sinners.
John chapter 7:1-9 describes his appeal to the crowds in the temple, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (7:37-38).
John chapter 8:1-59 describes his appeal, first to the woman caught in adultery, "Go now and leave your life of sin" (8:1-11). Then also to the crowds, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (8:12).
John chapter 9:1-41 describes his appeal to the man born blind, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "You have now seen him; in fact he is the one speaking to you" (9:35,37)
John chapter 10:1-39 describes his appeal to the Pharisees and disciples, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (10:11,27).

John 10:40 to 12:50. After the Feast of Dedication.

Jesus Christ reveals himself clearly as the Messiah by two mighty miracles.

- John 10:40 to 11:57 The Perea Ministry of Jesus. The four months from December A.D. 29 to April A.D. 30.
He makes a journey to Bethany close to Jerusalem to raise Lazarus from the dead. After that a meeting of the Jewish leaders in the Sanhedrin plotted to kill him.
- John 12:1-50 describes the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

2. The private ministry of Jesus Christ. John 13-21.

This takes place during *the last seven weeks* of Jesus on earth.

It may be subdivided into four sections as follows:

John 13. The Last Supper.

Jesus gives a new commandment to love one another and illustrates it by washing the feet of his disciples.

John 14-17. The discourses and prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper.

- John 14. Jesus comforts his disciples - He promises the continuous presence of the Holy Spirit and greater works the disciples will do.
- John 15. Jesus exhorts his disciples - He exhorts them to continually remain in him, to let his word continually remain in them, to pray, to bear much fruit, to love one another, to obey his commandments and to bear witness to the world.

- John 16. Jesus makes promises to his disciples - He promises not to leave them alone, but to send the Holy Spirit and he promises that they will see him again after his resurrection.
- John 17. Jesus prays - He prays for himself (17:1-5), his disciples (17:6-19) and for the church in the world (17:20-26).

John 18-19. The suffering of Jesus.

- John 18. Jesus is arrested, tried before Annas, denied once by Peter, tried before Caiaphas, denied twice more by Peter, and tried before Pilate.
- John 19. Jesus is persecuted by the Roman soldiers, rejected to be crucified by the Jews, crucified at “the place of the skull”, called “Golgotha”, and after his death, buried by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in a new garden tomb.

John 20-21. The resurrection and appearances of Jesus.

- John 20. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene, to his disciples without Thomas and a week later to his disciples including Thomas. In John 20:30-31, the writer states the purpose of the Gospel.
- John 21. Jesus appears to seven of his disciples at the Sea of Galilee and reinstates Peter. Then the writer concludes the Gospel with a united testimony of a group of people with respect to the reliability of the things recorded in the Gospel of John.

E. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

1. The Gospel of John mainly describes the words and works of Jesus in Judea.

On the one hand, John describes very little about Jesus’ ministry in Galilee and almost nothing of his Retirement ministry. On the other hand, he describes very much about his ministry in Jerusalem and its surroundings. Certain events and discourses in “the Early Judean Ministry” and in “the Later Judean Ministry” receive a great deal of attention.

2. The Gospel of John indicates places and time more specifically than the other three Gospels.

He records the four “Passover festivals” during the ministry of Jesus: in April A.D. 27 in John 2:13,23, in April A.D. 28 probably in John 5:1, in April A.D. 29 in John 6:4 and in April A.D. 30 in John 12:1, 13:1, 19:14.

He also records “the feast of Tabernacles” which took place in October A.D. 28 and “the Feast of Dedication” in December A.D. 28. On the basis of this characteristic we can determine the length of Jesus’ ministry on earth.

3. The Gospel of John omits very much material found in the other three Gospels.

It is clear that John takes it for granted that his readers know the other three Gospels, which mainly record “the Great Galilean Ministry”, “the Retirement Ministry” and “the Perea Ministry” of Jesus. However, the Gospel of John follows the same general framework of the story as it is found in the other three Gospels. The material, which the apostle John chooses, is in harmony with his purpose.

4. The Gospel of John is dominated by the teaching of Jesus in the form of discourses (speeches, sermons).

In the other three Gospels, the teaching of Jesus is often in the form of parables. This is because he was often addressing the religious leaders of Israel. However, in the Gospel of John there are no parables, but instead elaborate discourses. This is because the purpose of John is to show that Jesus very clearly taught that he is the Messiah and that he is the Son of God to both the religious leaders as well as his disciples. Very much of the Gospel of John dwells on the events and discourses of Jesus during the one day before he was crucified (chapters 13-19).

5. The main topic in the Gospel of John is not the kingdom of God, but the King himself.

Jesus Christ is the Messiah and he is divine. In the Gospel of John we find seven times the words “I am”. Jesus clearly reveals who he is: “I am the bread of life” (6:35), “I am the light of the world” (8:12), “I am the gate for the sheep” (10:7), “I am the good shepherd” (10:11), “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25), “I am the way, the truth and the life” (14:6) and “I am the true vine” (15:1). However, there is no conflict between the Gospel of John and the other three Gospels. In the Gospel of John, Jesus clearly teaches that a person must be born again if he wants to enter the kingdom of God (3:5) and in the other Gospels he also clearly teaches that he is the Messiah and divine.

6. The Gospel of John teaches very much about the coming Holy Spirit.

Jesus promises that when he returns to his heavenly Father, he would not leave his disciples alone, but send them his Spirit. The Holy Spirit will be “the Advocate or Representative”, not of the disciples, but first of all of Jesus. He will represent Jesus with the disciples and be with them forever (14:16). He will remind the disciples, not of his own words, but of the words of Jesus (14:26). He will testify, not about himself, but about Jesus (15:26). He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin, because they do not believe in Jesus (16:8). He will not speak his own words, but will only speak the words he hears from Jesus (16:13). He will not glorify himself or draw attention to himself, but he will glorify Jesus and cause people to glorify Jesus (16:14)! Therefore, Christians should not expect separate and subjective revelations from the Holy Spirit, but expect that the Holy Spirit will remind them powerfully of the words of Jesus and guide them into all the truth which Jesus revealed to them. Therefore also, Christians should not pray directly to the Holy Spirit,

but, as the Bible clearly teaches, they should pray to God the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

7. The Gospel of John has much in common with the book of Revelation.

Although the style of the Gospel of John differs from that of Revelation, the two books have much in common. Both speak of “the water of life for the thirsty”⁵ and “the manna” for the hungry⁶. Both speak of “the authority Jesus received from the Father”⁷. Both speak of Christ as “the Word of God”⁸, “the light of the world”⁹ and “the Bridegroom”¹⁰. Both speak of Christ as “the Lamb of God”¹¹ and that he “redeemed us with his blood”¹². And both speak of the Church as “the bride” of Jesus¹³.

Both the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation may be divided into two parts of three sections and four sections respectively. See the seven sections of the Gospel of John above. The seven sections of the book of Revelation are as follows: Revelation 1-3 describes the Christ-indwelt Church in the world. Revelation 4-7 describes the Church suffering trial and persecution. Revelation 8-11 describes the church avenged, protected and victorious. Revelation 12-14 describes Christ opposed by the Dragon and his helpers. Revelation 15-16 describes God’s final wrath on the impenitent. Revelation 17-19 describes the fall of Babylon and the Beast. And Revelation 20-22 describes the doom of the Dragon and the victory of Christ and his Church.

8. The Gospel of John uses many characteristic words and contrasts.

The characteristic contrasts are: darkness and light, flesh and spirit, earthly and heavenly, death and life, to hate and to love, to lament and to rejoice, to be troubled and to trust, to become blind and to see. And some characteristic words are: the Father, the Son, the Word, and the Jews. Other characteristic words are: eternal, glory, judgement, sign, sin, truth, the world, to believe, to give, to know, to love, to see, and to witness.

F. THE PURPOSE AND THEME OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

1. The main purpose is faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and as the Son of God.

The apostle John clearly states his purpose in John 20:30-31. His purpose is that his readers may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah and that he is divine, and that by believing they may have life through Jesus as the Mediator between God and man.

The very distinct accounts in the Gospel of John are the following:

In chapter 1, Jesus is revealed as God who became man. Jesus is the visible revelation of the invisible God to man.

In chapter 2, at the wedding at Cana, Jesus reveals his glory to his immediate disciples.

In chapter 3, to Nicodemus, he reveals that he is the one-and-only Son of God, through whom God gives eternal life to those who believe.

In chapter 4, to the Samaritan woman, he reveals himself as the long expected Messiah.

In chapter 5, to the Pharisees, he reveals that God is his Father and he makes himself equal with God (5:17-18).

In chapter 6, to the crowds in Galilee, Jesus reveals that the will of God and the work God requires of people that they believe in him and thus receive eternal life (6:28-29,40).

In chapter 7, to the crowds at Jerusalem, he reveals that he only can quench the spiritual thirst of every person (7:37-39).

In chapter 8, to the religious leaders of Israel, Jesus reveals that he only can set people free from sin and death. He says that he is without sin and that whoever does not believe in him, will indeed die in their sins (8:46,24).

In chapter 9, to the man who was healed of his blindness, Jesus reveals himself as ‘the Son of Man’ of whom the prophet Daniel spoke and whom he worshipped (9:38).

In chapter 10, to the Jews, Jesus reveals that he and God the Father are one (10:30).

In chapter 11, to his disciples and to the Jews, he reveals his glory by raising Lazarus from the dead (11:40).

In chapter 12, to the crowd, Jesus reveals himself as the King who would draw all the people in the world to himself (12:13,32).

In chapter 13, God the Father put all things under the power of Jesus (13:3) and Jesus teaches clearly that whoever accepts him, accepts God the Father who sent him (13:20).

⁵ John 7:37; Revelation 22:17

⁶ John 6:49-51; Revelation 2:17

⁷ John 10:18; Revelation 2:27

⁸ John 1:1; Revelation 19:13

⁹ John 8:12; Revelation 22:5

¹⁰ John 3:29; Revelation 19:7

¹¹ John 1:29; Revelation 5:6

¹² John Jn 6:35-56; Revelation 5:9

¹³ John 3:29; Revelation 21:9

In chapter 14, Jesus reveals that he is the only Way to God the Father and that he is the visible revelation of the invisible God (14:6,9).

In chapter 15, Jesus reveals that whoever hates him, also hates God the Father (15:23).

In chapter 16, he reveals that he came from God the Father and that he will return to God the Father (16:28).

In chapter 17, he reveals that God the Father has given him authority over all people on earth and that everything that belongs to God the Father also belongs to him (17:2,10).

In chapter 18, Jesus reveals clearly that his kingdom is not from this earth (18:36).

In chapter 19, he reveals that he is the Son of God (19:7).

In chapter 20, he is addressed as “Lord and God” without objecting (20:28).

Thus, we conclude that the main purpose and theme of the Gospel of John is that his readers may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah and that he is the Son of God. If people believe in Jesus Christ they will have the new and eternal life, which only Jesus Christ can give,

2. The supplements to the other three Gospels only serves this purpose.

John presupposes that his readers have read the other three Gospels. For example, in John 3:24, he says, “This was before John was put in prison”. But he does not describe the story of John’s imprisonment as in Mark 6. In John 11:2 he describes Mary as the one who anointed the feet of Jesus. This is not described in John, but in Mark 14 and again later in John 12. In John 18:13, he refers to the fact that Jesus was *first* tried in front of Annas, before he was tried before Caiaphas, as described in the other three Gospels. Nevertheless, all the new material, especially about the words and works of Jesus in Judea, serves to encourage people to continue to believe in Jesus as being the Messiah and the Son of God.

3. The emphasis on Jesus Christ as the Son of God is to combat the false teachings of Cerinthus.

The apostle John lived much longer than all the other apostles. John wrote his Gospel between A.D. 70-98. At that time there was a false teacher called Cerinthus. They both lived in Ephesus in modern Turkey. He taught that Jesus was only a ordinary human being, the son of Joseph and Mary by natural generation. He taught that Jesus was only a more just and wise person than other people.

Finally he taught that “the Christ” only descended on Jesus in the form of a dove at his baptism and then left him again on the night before he was crucified. He teaches that Jesus Christ was not crucified.

The apostle John calls Cerinthus and his followers ‘antichrists’ in his letters. The apostle John stresses the fact that Jesus Christ came by water (baptism) and by blood (the crucifixion)¹⁴; that Jesus Christ is divine and existed forever with God the Father; that he actually assumed the human nature at his incarnation and that he never laid it aside again. Jesus Christ has now a divine and a human nature forever!

¹⁴ 1 John 5:6