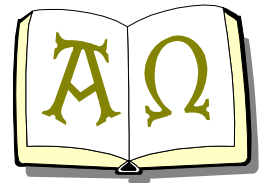


# The Gospel of John



A weekly Bible Study

Wednesdays at 7:00pm

**starting**

September 4th, 1996

at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

<b>Featuring:</b>	<b>Bring:</b>
<b>Christian Fellowship</b>	<b>A Bible</b>
<b>Sharing and Prayer</b>	<b>A longing for God's presence</b>
<b>Worship accompanied by a Guitar</b>	<b>Curiosity and Questions</b>
<b>Child Care</b>	<b>Your true self</b>
<b>The Word of God</b>	

The Gospel of John is the report of an eyewitness of the life of Jesus, one most familiar with him (He was called the “*beloved disciple*”), who was with Jesus in the important events.

He wrote down his experiences only when he was old and wise, and when his friends would not stop bugging him about getting it down on papyrus. This is a mature report of one who has thought for almost all of his life about the events surrounding Jesus’ life.



## Come and see!



(The response of Jesus to the inquiry of his first disciples in John 1:39)

Taught by Christoph Lameter (Master of Divinity, Master of Science, Reverend)

**John who?**

- Three Johns in the New Testament
- Son of Marias and Zebedaeus, had a brother

<b>John the Baptist</b>	Baptizes Jesus
<b>John the Disciple</b>	Author of the Gospel, 3 Letter and Revelation
<b>John Mark</b>	Author of a Gospel sometimes referred to as Mark, as John or as John Mark

<i>Views rejected by the Church (Heresies):</i>	
1)	Christ is not fully human. Christ is God who seemed to be like a human, (Docetism)
2)	Christ is partially human, partially God (Nestorianism)
3)	Christ is the Father God come to earth. (Sabellianism, Modalism)
4)	Christ is a superhuman but not God, not eternal (Arianism)

James (not the writer of the letter!) also a disciple.

- A disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:40)
- Belonged to inner circle of the Twelve (Peter, Andrew, James, John) joining Jesus in important events (Mt 17:1; Mk 14:33)
- Overzealous: Jesus calls the sons of Zebedee “Sons of Thunder” (Mk 3:17). They try to call fire from heaven (Lk 9:54) and attempt to gain superior positions in God’s kingdom (Mt 20:20, Mk 10:35-).
- Very well liked by Jesus, called the beloved disciple (Joh 13:23). Trusted with care for Jesus mother after Jesus’ death (John 29:26).
- Longest surviving disciple of Jesus (up to the 100 AD) almost 70 years after Jesus death. Wrote Revelation in his late years when put into prison on an island. Later referred to as the “Elder” in 1,2,3 John.

**The Gospel**    **The Book**

- ⇒ One of the earliest archeological proven books: Fragments dated 125 AD. Referred to by old writers in the church as early as 110 AD. Written after the other three gospels were in heavy circulation around 60-80 AD. Probably written in Ephesus (Turkey) according to Bishop Irenaeus.
- ⇒ Long sections with sayings of Jesus.
- ⇒ 92% information not found in the other 3 Gospels. The Knowledge of the other 3 Gospels is assumed!
- ⇒ Language / thought similarities with Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls) texts (Light and Darkness)
- ⇒ Detailed knowledge of Jewish Customs and Geography
- ⇒ Author nowhere mentioned except veiled as “the beloved disciple”.
- ⇒ Covers 3 years in contrast to only 1 year in the other Gospels.
- ⇒ Heavily criticized and denied accuracy in 19th and 20th century until archeology proved the Gospel to be more accurate geographically and language wise than the other Gospels.

**The Text**

**1. Jesus the Word (Chapter 1:1-5)**

The Trinity = 3. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are of the same essential nature and are one God.  
 Reference to creation (Gen 1:1). Jesus was there when the world was created.  
 Jesus = communication of God to man.  
 Jesus = God.  
 Jesus = Light = illumination = Life = Power to live = Holy Spirit.  
 Darkness = Death = Sin = Loss = Helplessness  
 Darkness contrasts with Light. Darkness cannot resist Light. Light will always shine especially in the darkness.

**2. The witness of John the Baptist (6-13)**

John as a witness to pave the way (Mal 3:1).  
 Jesus the source of true light (= true life). But rejection V10 by the very world he had made. They did not “know” him meaning they did not want to have encounters with Jesus, and they did not accept him.  
 No rejection for not “knowing” but for not accepting Christ.  
 Those who believe are Children of God, not adults(!), not in charge.  
 The motivation and source of power is from God and not something else.

Blood = Genealogical Line, Birthright Will of the Flesh = Desires of the body. Will of man = Human Powers and plans
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## John 1:14-51

## A Voice + First Disciples

### The Word comes(1:14-18)

- A. Jesus the Word of God. God spoke to the prophets and the prophets said: “So said the Lord”. Jesus simply spoke of his own (Mt 5:21-).
- B. The word became real and “we” experienced it. (Who is we?) “We” today should also experience it.
- C. “The only begotten” = Meaning is to emphasize the only son of God .
- D. V15 Contrast “comes after” vs “was before”. Thinking in paradoxes.
- E. V16 Experience of the blessing of God through Jesus.
- F. The law and Jesus both are God’s attempt to bless our lives. The law was abused but Jesus revealed what the truth was since he knew the Father.

### The Voice (1:19-34)

- 1. Elijah was taken up in the sky and was believed to come back one day (2 Kings 2:9-;Mal 4:5+6,Isa 40:3-5). Elijah has already come (Mark 9:11-13)
- 2. The Prophet was promised by Moses (Deut 18:15-).
- 3. John (the Baptist): No Elijah but cites Isa (cf. Maleachi)
- 4. Jewish Baptism for repentance. First only required of Gentiles on admission to Synagogue. Humbling experience to Jews who thought they had made it with God.
- 5. V29 Encounter with John the Baptist. Jesus acknowledged by the Baptist.
- 6. Baptize with the spirit => Old Testament anointment of the Spirit. Presence of God within us but also the symbolism of fire, holiness and cleaning. Spirit giving is bound up with repentance!

### First Disciples (1:35-51)

- A. Two disciples switch over from John the Baptist to follow Jesus (Andrew and disciple X).
- B. Rabbi = acknowledgment of disciple towards teacher. Desire to be with Jesus.
- C. Teaching not by abstractions/concepts and laws but by example.
- D. 10th hour: Hours are counted from sunrise (4pm).
- E. Andrew got his brother Simon (later called Peter = Rock) involved. (If X = John then John probably brought his brother James to Jesus.)
- F. Philip became a disciple and got Nathanael.
- G. Fig tree = symbol for Israel / Symbol for the study of scripture(?)
- H. V51 Great events promised in the disciples walk with Jesus (see also 14:12 etc)

## The Wedding at Cana (2:1-12)

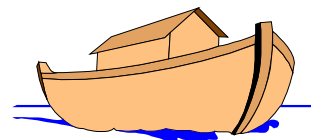
- 1 The Third day : Fulfillment of the promise to Nathanael in the last verse.  
Hebrew understanding: Common thoughts about three days = The Time when God delivers the people. When events turn around.
- 4 *His time* has not come = More signs would mean trouble at this point.  
*My hour* = reference to Jesus death and glorification but at the same time looking forward to the end that the miracles of Jesus will lead to.  
Jesus is not determined by his mothers wishes (rejects intrusion) but by the Father.
- 10 The *best* wine was kept till the end. Jesus is the best wine (instructions or spiritual life) (connects with the image of water) coming after the first fruits of the prophets in the Old Testaments. (Mt 9:17 New Wineskins)  
A sign of the perfection of the miracle.  
*New Wine* = Coming of something spiritually new. A New Covenant?  
A Contrast between the wine and purificatory water of the Jews.  
Looking ahead: Jesus will provide wine for all (His blood, true life) in his death on the cross. And we remember that death on the cross in the *Lord's supper* by drinking his wine/blood.
- 11 Glory even through this first minor "sign". Faith of the disciples increases.  
*Sign* = demonstrates truth of God's word, authenticates God's communication (Ex 3:12) or the Prophet himself (Ex 4:1-9). There is a different word used elsewhere for miracle.  
John has seven signs listed throughout the Gospel that authenticate Jesus and his ministry. Superiority of the new against the old covenant.
- 12 Disciples and Jesus family. Things were done together as a community (James the brother of Jesus later wrote one letter)

## The Cleaning of the Temple (2:13-25)

- 14 *Temple* refers here to the Temple Complex not Temple itself.  
Oxen, Sheep, doves were animals used for sacrifices in the temple.  
*Money changers*: Just certain Tyrian money (not Roman Money with blasphemous images of Caesars) was allowed to be given to the temple. But the common currency was Roman Money by Roman decree.
- 18 Demand for prophetic authentication according to common custom.
- 19-20 Parabolic saying (and a riddle) of Jesus that was not understood until much later in all its implications.  
These parabolic sayings are extremely frequent in John and it took his disciples and the early church centuries to understand somewhat what Jesus meant.  
Irony: The Jewish course of action will end in the destruction of the temple around 70 AD.  
But it will also end with the destruction of Jesus.  
Temple can be used symbolically for the body (see Paul's use of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16) also at Qumran.
- 23 Belief of the masses because of miracles. Enthusiasm without commitment is not trusted by Jesus.  
Faith is a commitment and not only an emotional fashion.

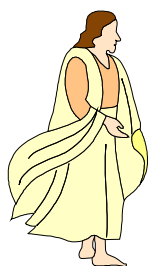
- ⇒ Worship is not commercial. Business should not be the focus of faith as it was in the Temple.  
⇒ Central Theme of misunderstanding in John. People continually seem to misunderstand each other.

Christoph Lameter, September 18, 1996 Temple City



## Other Historic reference to Water/Spirit

<b>The Renewal of Israel in Ezekiel 36:25-</b>	Cleaning with water is used as a symbol for cleaning from Sin. Followed by giving of Holy Spirit which changes the hearts and leads to doing the will of God.
<b>Dead Sea Scroll: Manual of Discipline 1QS II+III</b>	Requirements for entering the fellowship of the Qumran Sect (around 100 BC): Rejected people shall not "cleansed by water" and thus their sins are not forgiven. They shall not receive instruction. A connection between Water and Spirit is evident. The cleaning is not through Water but through the Spirit.
<b>Dead Sea Scroll: Thanksgiving Hymn 1QH XI</b>	Song of Thanksgiving (First century BC). Renewal of the Spirit hoped for. Eternal life through the resurrection of the body! "Spirit of holiness". The Holy Ones => Saints.



### Nicodemus:

7:50-	Defends Jesus risking scorn of fellow council members
19:39-	Provides for Jesus Burial
Josephus	The name is mentioned as referring to a high ranking Jewish family.
Judaism	Here can he also be seen as a representative for Judaism.

Nicodemus should know the things Jesus talks about in his position of authority and power.

### Born Again:



The Greek word here can mean both "born again" or "born from above" (from heaven). The "born from above" fits better with the context what Jesus is speaking the other meaning "born again" is the mistaken notion of Nicodemus. It might be more accurate to see it referring to a new creation (cf . 2 Cor 5:17) than a rebirth. 1 Peter 1:23 also uses the words "born again" using the same Greek word but qualifying it the way that it cannot mean "from above".

### Probably meaning of some terms in the first Century AD:

Wind = Spirit	In Hebrew both are expressed with the same word (Ruach). See also Genesis 1:2 where the "Spirit of God" is hovering over the waters.
Water	Repentance cleansing from Evil. Was used in the Hebrew culture as a means of both external and internal cleaning (also codified partially in Leviticus f.e. chapter 14).
Spirit	Empowerment by God. Hope in the future. Resurrection. Ez 37:1-14
Night	A desire for uninterrupted Conversation? Fear? Darkness of Nicodemus?

V3 Different way of Reasoning (Worldview, Paradigm) in the Kingdom of God. Seeing and entering are connected. That is one reason why faith is an intellectual problem for nonbelievers.  
 V13+14 Prophetic talk regarding Jesus' future. Comparison to Serpent which gave healing in the wilderness (Num 21:9).  
 V19 Love of darkness in the world. Light among the believers (means include of course not keeping things hidden but be true to what one thinks etc.).

## Feeding of the 5000

V2	Followers because of the signs he did
V13	More leftover than what was distributed. Encouragement to share. 12 basket full = Reference to Apostels or Israels Tribes.
V14-V15	Wrong expectations. The crowd is trying to force its wishes on Jesus and he escapes. (Anti-democratic?). Remember Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on a donkey which is the symbol of peace to avoid that issue.
V16	Disciples leave the crowd (danger of becoming involved in a revolution)
V19	Jesus on the Water. Power over nature. Evidence of him being God. Water was seen as the chaos that threatens order (cf. Gen 1)

## Secrecy / Hidden Meanings

Mark 4:21-23	All hidden things are to be revealed. There is nothing secret
Lk 8:16-18	Who has will be given = Who has God to whom will be given
Lk 12:1-3	Inevitable secrets must be known (A prophecy!)
Matt 10:26-28	Jesus' commandment to keep nothing secret
John 3	Unability to understand without the Spirit of God
2 Cor 3:14-16	Veil issue with the Israelites
Ro 9:32; 11:6-10	Law issue with Israelites. Eyes that do not see

## Soul , Spirit and Body

2 Cor 5:1-11	body = a reference to the existence in this world with a this wordly body in constrast to the spiritual body.
1 Cor 15:35-	Description of the raising of the dead in Pauls view. No sleeping but changing. Time lines interrupted and fused?
Ezekiel 37	Classic Old Testament passage on Resurrection
Rev 20:11-15	The judgement before the white Throne
Rev 21	The New Earth. Fountain of water given freely = eternal life.
Luke 16:20-	Lazarus in Heaven + the rich man in Hell.