



2020 → Year of Transformation

# John

**John:** (information borrowed from the ESV study Bible)

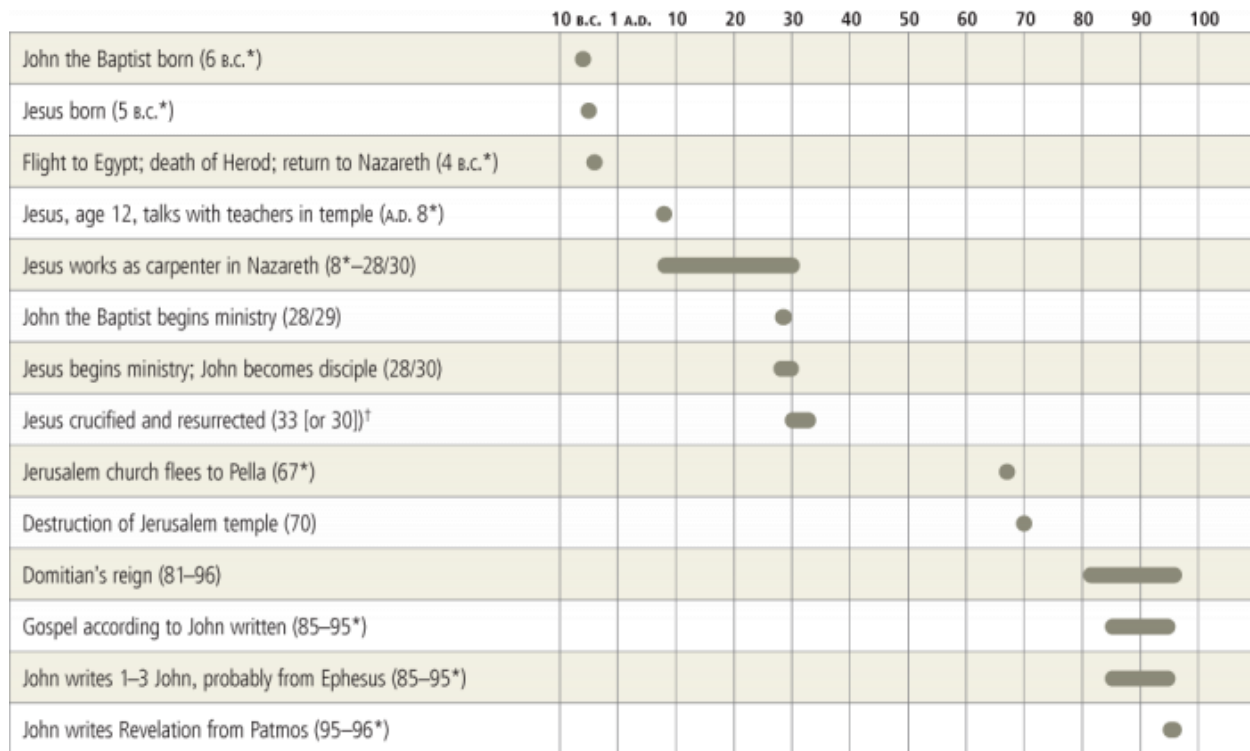
## Author and Title

The title says that the Gospel was written by John, and other evidence identifies this John as the son of Zebedee. The internal evidence indicates that the author was (1) an apostle (1:14; cf. 2:11; 19:35), (2) one of the 12 disciples (“the disciple whom Jesus loved”; 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:20; cf. 21:24–25), and, still more specifically, (3) John the son of Zebedee (note the association of “the disciple whom Jesus loved” with Peter in 13:23–24; 18:15–16; 20:2–9; 21:2–23; cf. Luke 22:8; Acts 1:13; 3:1–4:37; 8:14–25; Gal. 2:9). The external evidence from the church fathers supports this identification (e.g., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.1.2).

## Theme

The theme of John’s Gospel is that Jesus is the promised Messiah and Son of God. By believing in Jesus, people can have eternal life (cf. 20:30–31).

## Timeline



\* denotes approximate date; / signifies either/or; † see *The Date of Jesus' Crucifixion*, pp. 1809–1810

## Purpose, Occasion, and Background

The Gospel of John was written by the apostle John, the son of Zebedee, a Palestinian Jew and a member of Jesus' inner apostolic circle during his earthly ministry. John's original audience consisted of both Jews and Gentiles living in the larger Greco-Roman world in Ephesus and beyond toward the close of the first century A.D. He frequently explains Jewish customs and Palestinian geography and translates Aramaic terms into Greek (see note on 1:38), thus showing awareness of non-Jewish readers. He also presents Jesus as the Word become flesh against the backdrop of Greek thought that included Stoicism and early Gnosticism. But John also shows awareness of Jewish readers as he demonstrates Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah, the fulfillment of many OT themes, and the Son of God who was sent by God the Father to reveal the only true God and to provide redemption for humanity.

The purpose statement in 20:30–31 makes it appear that John wrote with an evangelistic intent. However, his depth of teaching shows that he wanted readers not only to come to initial saving faith in Jesus but also to grow into a rich, well-informed faith. John's central contention is that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah and Son of God, and that by believing in him people may have eternal life. To this end, he marshals the evidence of several selected messianic signs performed by Jesus and of a series of witnesses to Jesus—including the Scriptures, John the Baptist, Jesus himself, God the Father, Jesus' works, the Spirit, and John himself. It is also likely that John sought to present Jesus as the new temple and center of worship for God's people, a concept that would be especially forceful if the date of

composition (as seems likely) was subsequent to A.D. 70 (the time of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple).

## History of Salvation Summary

Jesus comes as God in the flesh (1:14), the revealer of the Father (14:9), and the messianic King (1:41, 49; 4:25; 6:15). He fulfills the OT and its symbols, especially its promises of everlasting salvation. The ultimate fulfillment comes with his crucifixion and resurrection. (For an explanation of the “History of Salvation,” see the Overview of the Bible.)

## Key Themes

1. Jesus is God.	1:1-2, 18; 5:17-18; 8:58-59; 10:30-33; 20:28
2. Jesus existed before the creation of the world.	1:1-2; 8:58; 17:5, 24
3. Jesus has supernatural knowledge.	1:48; 2:4, 19, 23-25; 3:14; 4:17-18; 6:51, 70; 8:28; 9:3; 10:15, 17-18; 11:4, 14; 12:24, 32; 13:10-11, 38; 21:18-19
4. Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God.	1:36, 41, 49; 3:18; 4:25, 29; 5:25; 7:26, 27, 31, 41, 42; 9:22; 10:24, 36; 11:4, 27; 12:34; 19:7; 20:30-31
5. Jesus is the “I am.”	4:26; 6:20, 35, 48, 51; 8:12, 18, 24, 28, 58; 9:5; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; 15:1; 18:5-6 (cf. Ex. 3:14-15; Isa. 41:4; 43:10-13, 25; 45:18; 51:12; 52:6)
6. Jesus, the sent Son, reflects the sender.	3:17, 35-36; 5:19-26; 6:40; 8:35-36; 14:13; 17:1
7. Jesus is the fulfillment of Jewish festivals and institutions (including the temple).	1:29, 36; 2:14-22, esp. v. 21; 4:23-24; 8:12; 9:5; 19:14
8. Jesus is the giver of eternal life.	1:4; 3:15-16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 26, 39-40; 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47-48, 51, 53-54, 68; 8:12; 10:10, 25, 28; 11:25; 12:25, 50; 14:6; 17:2-3; 20:31
9. The signs of Jesus show that he is the Messiah (cf. also Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God, above).	2:1-11, 13-22; 4:46-54; 5:1-15; 6:1-15; 9:1-41; 11:1-44
10. The witnesses to Jesus testify that he is the Messiah.	1:7-8, 15, 19, 32, 34; 3:11, 32-33; 4:39; 5:31-39; 8:14, 18; 10:25; 15:26-27; 18:37; 19:35; 21:24
11. Father, Son, and Spirit are united in their work of revelation and redemption.	14:17-18, 23, 26; 15:26; 20:21-22

12. Jesus' death is the basis of salvation.	1:29; 3:14-15; 6:51-58; 10:15; 11:50-52; 12:24; 15:13
13. God is sovereign in salvation.	3:21; 5:21; 6:37-45, 64-65; 10:16, 26-30; 15:16; 17:2, 6, 9
14. Salvation is obtained through believing in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God.	1:12; 3:15, 16; 5:24; 6:29, 35; 8:24; 11:25-27, 42; 12:44; 17:8, 21; 20:31
15. Believers can experience the benefits of salvation already in the here and now, during this present evil age.	3:18, 36; 4:23; 5:24; 6:39-40; 10:10, 26-29; 11:25-26
16. Believers are called to continue Jesus' mission (cf. also Jesus as the sent Son, above).	4:38; 15:16; 17:18; 20:21-22

### **The Setting of Luke**

The events of the Gospel of John take place in Palestine, incorporated into the Roman Empire in 63 B.C. Appointed by the Romans as king over the Jews in 37 B.C., Herod the Great ruled until his death in 4 B.C. The Romans divided his kingdom among his descendants. The predominantly Gentile region of the Decapolis, or "Ten Cities," was a loose confederation of semiautonomous cities administered by the Roman legate of Syria.



## Outline

- I. Prologue: The Incarnate Word (1:1–18)
- II. The Signs of the Messiah (1:19–12:50)
  - A. John the Baptist's witness and the first week of Jesus' ministry (1:19–2:11)
  - B. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to Gentiles (2:12–4:54)
  - C. Mounting Jewish opposition, additional signs (5:1–10:42)

- D. The final Passover: the ultimate sign and the aftermath (11:1–12:19)
- E. The approaching Gentiles and the Messiah’s rejection by the Jews (12:20–50)
- III. The Farewell Discourse and the Passion Narrative (13:1–20:31)
  - A. The cleansing and instruction of the new messianic community and Jesus’ final prayer (13:1–17:26)
  - B. Jesus’ arrest, trials, death, and burial (18:1–19:42)
  - C. Jesus’ resurrection, appearances, and sending of his disciples (20:1–29)
  - D. Purpose statement: Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God (20:30–31)
- IV. Epilogue: The Roles of Peter and of the Disciple Whom Jesus Loved (21:1–25)

## **FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

**BIBLE STUDY FOCUS** – “Hope for Today & Joy for Tomorrow”

**MAIN TEXT:** John 1:1-18

### **Instructions for Small Group Time:**

Option 1: Send the main text to small group members so they can read it ahead of time.

Option 2: Read the text together when you meet

Basic Bible Study Practices:

1. As people read the text, ask them to pay attention to key words
2. As people read the text have them highlight key words, people, and places
3. As people read the text have them pay attention to repetition of key terms, ideas, and people
4. If people are given the opportunity to read the text ahead of small group time, have them read it at least twice so they become familiar with its contents.

### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Read John 1:1-18
2. What are some specific questions that stick out to you about this passage? Take a few minutes and discuss them as a group.
3. How does John 1:1-3 relate to the Creation narrative found in Genesis 1?
4. Why does John refer to Jesus as “the Word”? What is the significance of a Christ follower understanding Jesus as “the Word” (or in the Greek context: “Logos”)?
5. How does John’s introduction of Jesus as fully God and fully human help us understand the **Incarnation**?
6. John’s Gospel account bypasses the birth story of Christ, which is covered in the other Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). What do you think that John was seeking to highlight by starting this way?
7. In Verses 4-9, John talks about Jesus being the “light of men” yet not being received by some whom He revealed Himself to. Read 1 John 1:5-10, 1 John 3:1-3, 1 John 5:10-13. Spend some time reflecting and discussing what it means to “receive Christ” and to have continuous fellowship with Him.

## Extra Resources

The Bible Project – The Gospel According to John: <https://youtu.be/G-2e9mMf7E8> -Part 1 & [https://youtu.be/RUfh\\_wOsauk](https://youtu.be/RUfh_wOsauk) -Part 2

John McArthur sermon “The Word became Flesh”: <https://youtu.be/yUb6vLZcMNo>

John Piper, Desiring God- John 1:14 study: <https://youtu.be/9eTiMHYcrCU> -Part 1 & <https://youtu.be/NwyWkXh1ux0> -Part 2

### **Social Media Sharables:**

