

Gospel of John, Bible Study, Detailed Outline

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1. Introduction to the Gospel of John

a. Authorship and Date of Writing, John the Apostle, Approximately 60 AD

1. The Gospel of John is anonymous only in the sense that the Apostle John, younger son of Zebedee and fisherman by trade (Mark 1:19-20), does not give his name. However, there is sufficient evidence to prove that John wrote the Gospel which bears his name. The Apostle John did not feel worthy to include his name, instead calling himself the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23). The internal evidence points to the fact that the writer was an Israelite Jew, since it is clear in the text that he understood the customs and debates of the day. More than any other gospel writer, John records extended discourses and debates between Jesus and the Jewish authorities of the day. The writer claims to be an eyewitness to Jesus Christ in His ministry in general (John 1:1-14), to the Last Supper (John 13:23), to the crucifixion (John 19:26-35), the empty tomb (John 20:2-10), and the Resurrected Lord (John 21:2). We know from Mark’s Gospel that the only people present at the Last Supper were the twelve Apostles (Mark 14:17), and this proves apostolic authority for the Gospel of John, which is the primary test of canonicity. We believe that the Gospel of John was written before 70 AD because of two things. First, there is the fact that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple which occurred in that year is not mentioned. Second, particular parts of the temple area are mentioned as still existing intact when the Gospel of John was written (John 5:2-3). Having narrowed down the potential authors of the fourth gospel to the twelve, we can further narrow it down to three. Three of the twelve were present at the Transfiguration, when Jesus displayed His Glory for a moment of time during His earthly ministry up on the mountain: Peter, John, and James (Matthew 17:1-9). Most scholars (myself included) believe that the phrase “we beheld His Glory” (John 1:14) is a reference to that event. Peter could not have written the fourth gospel because the text mentions him as distinct from the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23-24). James was martyred by Herod Agrippa in the early 40’s (Acts 12:1-2). We only have one choice left: the Apostle John as the author of the gospel which bears his name. In looking at the First Letter of John and comparing it to the Gospel of John, we find similarities in style (John 1:1-14; 1 John 1:1-2), purpose (John 20:31; 1 John 5:13), theme (e.g. light/darkness: John 8:12; 1 John 1:5-7), the assertion that both were written by

eyewitnesses (also see John 1:1-14 and 1 John 1:1-2), and Greek language (that of the original autographs). All three letters that bear John's name, in fact, were cyclical letters sent from Ephesus to the churches in Asia Minor with apostolic authority. The fifth Johannine writing is Revelation, also written to the churches, from the Island of Patmos in exile, does explicitly state John's authorship. All of these things taken together leave no doubt in my mind as to the trustworthiness and apostolic authority upon which all five of these writings are based. John's life ended, following his exile at Patmos in 95 AD, with him dying a natural death in Ephesus, from where he had pastored the early church. (from this author's position paper, 2012)

2. Overview of the Text of the Gospel of John (Purpose of Writing and Prominent Doctrines)

a. Purpose of writing stated in John 20:31

b. Christ's Divinity

1. "The Word", the Memra, Messiah, the Agent of Creation and the Agent of Salvation, John 1:1-14, Cf. Isaiah 9:6; Genesis 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Psalm 33:6-9, 147:15-20; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:3-6; 1 Peter 1:23; Genesis 15:1,6; Romans 10:17; Psalm 106:24-26; Hebrews 1:1-3; John 3:16; 1 John 5:7-13; Revelation 19:13, for explanation see-
https://www.firmfoundationri.com/images/The_Word.pdf

2. The "I Am" statements, John 4:26, 6:35, 8:23, 8:58, 9:5, 10:7, 10:11, 10:36, 11:25, 13:13, 14:6, 15:1

3. The "Son of God", its OT basis, Psalm 2:7,12; Proverbs 30:4, John's testimony, 1:34, 1:49, 3:18, 5:25, 9:35, 10:36, 11:4, 11:27, 17:1, 20:31

c. God's Salvation Through Jesus Christ

1. Its Origin (Faith Alone in Christ Alone), 3:16-18, 4:10, 6:32-33, 10:9

2. Its Present Work in the Believer (Presence of God the Holy Spirit, Peace, Joy Apart from Circumstances, Agency of Scripture), 14:26-27, 15:11, 17:14-19

3. Its Permanence (Eternal Security), 3:16-3:18, 3:36, 5:24, 6:37-40, 10:27-30

3. John 1:1-5, The Eternal Word

a. 1:1, *ibid.* 2b1, “The Word”, Greek-“logos”, Aramaic-“Memra”, Hebrew-“Davar”, in the understanding of a devout Jewish fisherman, “Memra” as explained in the Targums gives us the meaning, Jesus “the Word” is the Christ, the Agent of Creation (1:1-3), the Agent of Salvation (3:3-6,16), the Visible Manifestation of God (1:14), and the Agent of Revelation (14:7-11), all of these concepts would be developed within the Gospel of John

b. 1:1-2, “in the beginning”, Cf. Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 John 1:1, giving us a total of four Bible books that begin with the Creator God

c. “the Word was with God, and the Word was God”, fully the same as God in essence of deity (Hebrews 1:3) but yet distinct from God the Father (evidence of at least two Persons in the Godhead, the triune God seen in Isaiah 42:1-9, Matthew 3:16-17, and 2 Corinthians 13:14)

d. 1:3 Christ the Agent of Creation, Cf. Colossians 1:16-17

e. 1:4, Christ the Life, and Christ the Light, again two principles which find their origin in the Hebraic concept of Memra, *ibid.* 3a, both become primary themes and motifs in John’s Gospel, as well as the rest of his inspired writings

i. “In Him was life”, Jesus, as God, possesses the attribute of Aseity, meaning that He is eternal, uncaused, and does not depend upon any other source for His existence (5:26, 10:10, 11:25, 14:6)

ii. “In Him...was the light of men”, the guiding hope and Author of purpose for our lives, the Holy example and Mighty God (1:9, 8:12, 12:35,46)

f. 1:5, the light which overcomes the darkness, illustrated—a bright light shining into a dark room brightens up the room, but a flashlight with a dead battery being turned on in a bright room does not make the room darker, spiritual light had come to conquer spiritual darkness as it was prophesied (Isaiah 60:1-2)

4. 1:6-8, The Witness of John the Baptist

a. 1:6, “John”, cousin of our Lord in His humanity, Cf. Luke 1:5-25,57-80

b. John the Baptist the forerunner prophesied of in Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1, 4:5-6, he would become not only a herald of King Jesus the Messiah in his preaching, but also in his life events (rejection by the Jewish leaders, and being put to death)

c. 1:7, the universal call after the manner of Isaiah 45:22-25, two more themes are introduced here by the Apostle John, “witness” and “believe”

d. 1:8, apply, we too are witnesses and light bearers, having no light in ourselves at all apart from Jesus Christ “that Light” (Cf. Isaiah 9:2, 42:6)

5. John 1:9-13, Jesus Christ the True Light

a. 1:9, “the true Light”, all other lights pale in contrast to Jesus, some attempt to promote counterfeit truth and light (Cf. 2 Corinthians 11:12-15)

b. “gives light to every man”, Cf. Matthew 5:45, sufficient revelation is offered “to every man”, and it is the choice of each individual whether or not to respond to the light that they are given, Cf. Romans 1:18-21

i. Psalm 90:8, the light of conviction of sin

ii. Psalm 119:105, the light of day by day guidance in God’s ways

iii. Psalm 119:130, the light of Scripture, the written Word of God

c. 1:10, *ibid.* 3ei., the Agent of Creation entered into the world He created in time, His Aseity reaffirmed and applied here

d. 1:11, “His own”, the Jewish people, His kinsmen regarding His humanity, the Kinsmen-Redeemer was rejected, Cf. Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 12:22-24

e. 1:12, the promise to believers, sufficient room at the cross for all who come, Cf. Galatians 3:26-29

f. “children of God”, spiritual adoption, Cf. Romans 8:14-15; 2 Corinthians 6:18

g. 1:13, the Doctrine of (Spiritual) Regeneration, Cf. John 3:3; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3,23; 1 John 2:29

6. 1:14-18, The Word Became Flesh

a. 1:14, the classic verse affirming the Deity and Humanity of Jesus Christ, “the Word” (Memra-Agent of Creation, Salvation, Revelation) “became flesh” (Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2) “and dwelt among us” (Matthew 4:15-16; Isaiah 9:1-2), “and we beheld His glory” (Matthew 17:1-2; Luke 24:50-52), “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” (John 14:9), “full of grace and truth” (in perfect possession of both attributes, having both to dispense according to His will)

b. 1:15, John the Baptist’s witness, to Jesus’ preeminence and eternity

c. 1:16, applied to the church, Cf, Ephesians 1:22-23

d. 1:17, the contrast between the Law of Moses and the Old Covenant and the Grace of Christ offered through the New Covenant, Cf. 2 Corinthians 3:7-8; Galatians 3:19-25; Hebrews 3:1-6, 8:7, 10:11-18

e. 1:18, the revelation of God the Father is through God the Son only, through His words, works, and Person, Cf. John 10:34-38, 14:7-11

7. John 1:19-34, The Testimony of John the Baptist

a. 1:19,24, a group of high ranking religious folks (Pharisees) are sent down from Jerusalem to interview John the Baptist

b. 1:20-21, John is “not the Christ, Elijah, (or) the Prophet”, the long awaited Jewish Messiah prophesied of in the OT, Elijah of Malachi 4:5 (although John was a type of Elijah who is to herald the Second Coming), or the Prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (generally identified as Messiah also, but the rabbis made various distinctions of function)

c. 1:22-23, John identifies himself as the one spoken of in Isaiah 40:3

d. 1:25, the authority of John the Baptist is questioned, and so too the authority of Jesus Christ Himself was questioned (Luke 20:1-2), is it any wonder that the authority of God’s Word is questioned when it is spoken by us (Cf. Matthew 28:18-20)

e. 1:26, John’s Baptism and the three levels of identification—the message of repentance in light of the Messiah’s coming, God the Holy Spirit, and Hellfire (Matthew 3:11-12), its similarities and differences vis-à-vis Christian baptism (Cf. Acts 2:37-38; Romans 6:3-5)

f. 1:27, humility and self-abasement, the most menial duty of the most menial servant (“bondservant”, Cf. Romans 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1)

g. 1:28, “Bethabara beyond the Jordan”, “house of the ford” on the east bank of the Jordan, some identify it with a certain Bethany, but if this is so, this cannot be Bethany near Jerusalem—the geography does not work

h. 1:29-31, John identifies Jesus of Nazareth as the Jewish Messiah

i. “Lamb of God”, Cf. Exodus 12:1-27; Romans 3:25; 1 Corinthians 5:7

ii. “takes away the sin of the world”, Cf. Leviticus 16:21-22; Hebrews 9:22, 10:18

iii. though Jesus was born after him, He pre-existed John the Baptist (similar point made in John’s Gospel in 8:56-58), teaches eternity and therefore the deity of Jesus Christ the God-Man

iv. prior to this point the identity of Jesus as the Messiah had not been revealed to John the Baptist

v. John’s purpose, to proclaim the Messianic hope and His imminent revelation to Israel, and the baptism of identification by repentance

- i. “The Lamb of God”, Special Study arising from John 1:29 & Exodus 12:1-27
 - i. Exodus 12:5, “without blemish”, Christ without sin, Cf. Hebrews 4:15; John 19:4
 - ii. Exodus 12:5, “male of the first year” male in its prime
 - iii. Exodus 12:5, no bone broken, Cf. 12:46; John 19:36; Psalm 34:19-20
 - iv. Exodus 12:6, shedding of blood, Hebrews 9:22 applied
 - v. Exodus 12:7, the blood must be applied individually, by a deliberate act
 - vi. Exodus 12:8, sacrifice must be eaten, Cf. John 6:53
 - vii. Exodus 12:12-13, propitiation by the blood, Cf. Romans 3:21-26
 - viii. Exodus 12:14, “memorial...ordinance”, Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
 - ix. Exodus 12:19, “no leaven”, Cf. 1 Corinthians 5:8
 - x. Exodus 12:27, “Lamb of God” presentation an occasion for worship
 - xi. Also from the Law, Deuteronomy 16:2-6, the Passover sacrifice must be presented in Jerusalem, Cf. Luke 13:33

- j. John 1:32-34, John furthers his witness
 - i. 1:32, “the Spirit descending from heaven”, the Third Person of the Trinity descending from His eternal abode
 - ii. “like a dove”, being spirit He appears in the likeness of a clean bird under the Law, “harmless” (Matthew 10:16)
 - iii. “remained upon Him”, please to be a witness as a Person involved in the divine work
 - iv. 1:33, John reiterates what he said in verse 31, and affirms the prophetic revelation that he had received as to the identity of Messiah, “the Son of God”
 - v. 1:34, John’s testimony as an eyewitness, Cf. Matthew 21:25-27, to accept John’s testimony meant to accept Jesus’ deity

8. John 1:35-51, The Calling of the First Five Disciples

- a. 1:35, “the next day”, the day after John’s initial identification of Jesus as the Messiah, “John stood with two of his disciples”, prior to becoming Jesus’ disciples, these had received John’s baptism of repentance and identified with the message of the coming King, agreeing to follow that One Whom John would identify as the Christ
- b. 1:36, John’s command to follow Jesus, “the Lamb of God”
- c. 1:37, “two disciples” here are John the son of Zebedee (anonymous here, as was his custom in writing the gospel) and Andrew
- d. 1:38, Jesus turns to the two, and they identify that they wish to follow Him as their Rabbi, even to the point of abiding with Him
- e. 1:39, Jesus welcomes them to come see where He is staying, “it was about the tenth hour” (10 am Roman time or 4 pm Jewish time), though the day laborer would have been working at this time, these were fishermen who would often work overnight in their trade, cast net fishing, Cf. Luke 5:1-5
- f. 1:40-42, Andrew identified by name as one of the two disciples, he brings his brother Peter to Christ [Peter (Greek) aka Simon (Hebrew) aka Cephas (Aramaic) would become the third disciple]
- g. 1:43, “the following day” is the timing, the calling of Philip by Jesus to a life of discipleship, the call is obeyed immediately-very likely he was also a disciple of John the Baptist and had gotten word that Jesus had been identified as the Messiah of Israel by John the Baptist
- h. 1:44, “Bethsaida”, the ‘house of the fisherman’, on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, adjacent to Capernaum, “the city of” (origin of) “Andrew and Peter”
- i. 1:45, Philip testifies of Jesus to his friend Nathanael, some believe they are brothers, but in John 21:2, we learn that Nathanael is from Cana and not Bethsaida so this is unlikely (they would have had to be half-brothers)
- j. 1:46, Nazareth a despised and insignificant city back in Jesus’ day, Nathaniel was prejudiced against its people, called Nazarenes (Matthew 2:23)
- k. 1:47-51, the interaction between Jesus and Nathanael results in salvation, “Israelite...no deceit” (Israel the new spiritual name given to Jacob the deceiver, Cf. Genesis 32:27-28), “under the fig tree” is where devout Jews would go to ponder the OT Scriptures, Jesus’ omniscience on display here since He knew of what Bible truth Nathanael was meditating on, in fact Jesus knew the very passage that Nathanael was meditating upon (compare John 1:51 with Genesis 28:12)

9. John Chapter One, Self-Test

- a. The Apostle John, who wrote the Gospel of John, does not identify himself by name in the Gospel, but identifies himself as the disciple “ _____ ” (John 13:23, fill in the blanks).
- b. John was an eyewitness to five pivotal events (noted in the introduction) in the life of Jesus Christ. Name them.
- c. What two lines of evidence lead us to the conclusion that the Gospel of John was probably written prior to 70 AD?
- d. “The Word” (John 1:1) is not informed by the “logos” of Greek philosophy, but rather by the “ _____ ” of Jewish theology.
- e. The Memra of Jewish Theology was the (fill in the blanks)
 1. Agent of _____
 2. Agent of _____
 3. Agent of _____
 4. Visible manifestation of ____ (associated with light)
- f. Four Bible books begin with the Creator God. List them.
- g. What is the classic verse (found in John 1) that affirms the Deity and Humanity of Jesus Christ?
- h. John affirms himself not to be the “Christ”, “Elijah” or the “Prophet.” What do these titles mean, and who fulfills each of the three of these and when?
- i. “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” affirms Jesus’ _____. Jesus is the fulfillment of the scapegoat and the Passover. Which chapters in the Old Testament do we find these two types of Messiah to come?
- j. Who were the first five disciples of Jesus Christ (recorded in John 1:35-51)?

10. John 2:1-12, Water into Wine, the First Miracle of Christ

a. 2:1-2, “On the third day”, of the journey, from “Bethabara beyond the Jordan” (Cf. 1:28), to “Cana of Galilee”, as opposed to ‘of Asher’ (Joshua 19:28), located north of Nazareth (site disputed), present for the wedding (approximately two hour ceremony) and the wedding feast (usually seven days of feasting and rejoicing) were Mary, Jesus, and His (five, Cf. 1:35-51) disciples, notice that Jesus was social in His humanity (Cf. Luke 2:52)

b. 2:3, Mary appeals to Jesus for help in this social crisis of hospitality, “wine” is literal wine made from fermented grapes, wine is a symbol of joy in the Bible (Psalm 104:15) and is allowable so long as it is drunk in moderation, drunkenness is the sin of excess (Ephesians 5:18) just as gluttony is the sin of excess of food, if in your case a drop of drink leads to drunkenness then you are to abstain altogether (Cf. Matthew 5:30)

c. 2:4, “Woman”, not pejorative but respectful, as ‘Ma’am’, or ‘Lady’, “My hour” is the Lord’s public revelation to Israel (Cf. John 17:1), Jesus still honors the mother of His humanity, but He is no longer under her parental authority

d. 2:5, “servants” is Greek: ‘diakonos’, used many times in the Bible, here in the general secular sense, in John 12:26 in the general Christian sense, of men and women in the Bible in the same way (Cf. Romans 16:1; Colossians 4:7), but the clear prescriptive passage for NT office restricting office (not service) to males only is 1 Timothy 3:11-12

e. 2:5, applications, good advice for us all, obedience to Christ without reservation, questioning, and to the very last detail, not waiting for a more convenient time begin to obey Him

f. 2:6, “six waterpots” at hand for ritual handwashing, total capacity of 120-150 gallons of water, for the large number of people present for the wedding feast

g. 2:7, Jesus is able to use whatever is available to accomplish His purposes, certain servants and waterpots readily available, we are to fill our waterpots of spiritual disciplines to the brim, and then wait expectantly for the blessing to come from Jesus

h. 2:8-10, only a select few were privy to this miracle (Mary, the five disciples, and the servants), the first plague of Moses was turning water into blood (Exodus 7:14-25) but the first miracle of Jesus was turning water into wine, thereby (by shadow and application) we see the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant

i. 2:10, Life Application Special Study: The Best Wine First, or The Best Wine Last, a summation of the five sermons by C.H. Spurgeon on this passage which bear upon this point to greater or lesser degree, but primarily “Satan’s Banquet”, 11/28/1858: <http://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs225.pdf>

1. friendship and then betrayal (Ahithophel and Judas)
2. vigor of youth to the infirmities of old age (the natural rule)
3. cup of pleasure (once satiated leads to dissatisfaction-lust), Proverbs 5:1-5
4. cup of self-righteousness (pride), Luke 18:9-14
5. cup of worldliness (the self-made man-pride tending towards covetousness), Luke 12:16-21
6. cup of secret sin (hidden life of sinful pleasure and/or addiction, always with the fear of discovery present, leads to more sin as in the matter of Uriah the Hittite’s wife, Numbers 32:23 applied, leads many to despair and suicide once the secret is revealed and reputation and relationships ruined)
7. Jesus offers the best wine last, beginning with poverty and affliction of soul, and then the greater wine of peace, joy, hope, and finally eternal life are brought out, Matthew 25:23

j. 2:11-12, the results of Jesus’ first miracle (sign), temporary abode in Galilee, Cf. 1:38, at Capernaum on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, the town which would become Jesus’ home base for ministry, note that Jesus’ (half) brothers were there with Him though unbelievers, Joseph presumably was deceased at this time and so Jesus was the eldest male of the family

11. John 2:13-17, Jesus Cleanses the Temple the First Time

- a. 2:13, “the Passover of the Jews”, our Lord, fulfilling the Law perfectly, went up to the city of Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 16:16), the first of 4 Passovers mentioned in John’s Gospel [5:1, 6:4, 11:55], Cf. (of John 5:1, which precedes Luke 6:1 in the harmony, chronologically) Luke 6:1 “second sabbath after the first”, lit: “second first sabbath”, Cf. Leviticus 23:4-8,15, the first sabbath after the 2nd Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (that is, the day after Passover), the second sabbath is the 1st of the 7 sabbaths counted towards the Feast of Weeks
- b. “and Jesus went up to Jerusalem”, one always goes up to Jerusalem, even (as in this case), one travels south

- c. John 2:14, Annas' system of Mafia-style activity in the outer court (Gentile Court) of the temple compound (Cf. John 18:13), the sellers of sacrificial animals required for the feast would sell their animals at highly inflated prices after fault was found with the animals by the priests in cahoots (Cf. Leviticus 22:17-20) brought in by the worshipers (3-6 million, by some estimates, would come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover), the money changers would exchange Roman money into shekels (Hebrew currency which did not have the image of Caesar on it) at a marvelous profit in order to receive the temple tax (Exodus 30:13-16)
- d. 2:15, "whip of cords" made from what was available on hand for the occasion (Cf. 2:6-7), righteous indignation and anger (Cf. Ephesians 4:26)
- e. 2:16, reverence for the house of the Lord, it is not to be "a house of merchandise", applied that wares ought not be sold, especially not for the profit of the covetous, Jesus speaks of His own divinity by saying "My Father's house"
- f. 2:17, quotes Psalm 69:9, a familiar Scripture to the disciples

12. John 2:18-25, The Sign of Jesus' Resurrection Predicted

- a. 2:18, Jesus' authority questioned, and divinity challenged (Cf. 2:16)
- b. 2:19-22, Jesus' first prediction of His death and subsequent resurrection, that the temple of His body would be destroyed by men and risen up again "in three days", facts that were not fully understood by the disciples until after "He had risen from the dead"
- c. "forty-six years to build this temple", built by Herod the Great, beginning in 20-19 BC, making it then perhaps 26-27 AD (uncertain), this temple was the successor to Solomon's Temple and Zerubbabel's Temple, it features prominently in the gospels, to this point the recorded events of Luke 2:46 and Matthew 4:5 had taken place here although Jesus had been here many times in His life prior (Deuteronomy 16:16), the temple was finished many years before but it was continually expanded year by year, until finally destroyed in 70 AD, the Islamic Dome of the Rock is on this site today, according to Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15 there is a temple standing in the Tribulation days, and this will give way to the Millennial Temple of Ezekiel 40-48 (Cf. Isaiah 2:1-4)
- d. 2:23-25, Jesus the Discerner of Hearts, Cf. 1 Samuel 13:14; Hebrews 4:12
- e. 2:24, "He knew all men"; Jeremiah 17:9, the unreliability, sinfulness, and transience of all men; Psalm 118:8-9, not to trust in human leaders too much but rather trust in the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20; Deuteronomy 33:27)

13. John Chapter 2, Self-Test

- a. Which seven people does the Bible specifically say were invited to the wedding at Cana?

- b. What did Jesus mean by saying, “My hour has not yet come”? When did His hour come, according to Jesus’ words later in the gospel?

- c. What item was there, how many of them, and what was their capacity, on hand to fill with water at the wedding feast?

- d. Jesus, in His first sign, offers the best wine last. Give some practical applications that arise from this.

- e. After the wedding in Cana, to what city in Galilee did Jesus initially go?

- f. How many Passovers do we find in the Gospel of John?

- g. Due to the irreverent behavior of the merchants and money changers, Jesus made a whip of what item that was readily at hand (Cf. Psalm 118:27)?

- h. What was Jesus’ first prophesy in His earthly ministry that He Himself would be murdered and subsequently rise from the dead?

- i. Herod’s temple was the third of five physical temples that were or will be located in Jerusalem. Name all five temples.

14. A Lesson from the Great Evangelist (John 3:1-21, NKJV)

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3:1: “There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.”

*Nicodemus was a religious man. Sometimes we will come across folks with much spiritual training, and sometimes we will come across folks with little spiritual training. But most folks have some spiritual background.

3:2: “This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

*Nicodemus “came to Jesus by night.” It may have been for fear of men, or it may have been because this was a more convenient time where these two men could talk privately without being swarmed or interrupted. Probably both. One on one is best for soul winning. Groups, peer pressure, distractions, and other dynamics can all sometimes make personal evangelism difficult.

3:3: “Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.””

*To be “born again” is to be regenerated (Titus 3:5). Life reformation is not enough, and in fact tends to spiritual pride (Luke 11:24-26). All true Christians are “born again”, and if the use of term causes others to label us ‘holy rollers’, so much the better, since we can explain the term. Before explaining, you may want to ask what the hearer thinks it means, and this will give an avenue for dialogue.

3:4-6: “Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.””

*To be “born of water” is a reference to physical birth (Proverbs 5:15-18; also consider the ‘water breaking’). “And the Spirit” is the second birth. The regenerated man or woman has two births and one death. The unsaved individual has one birth and two deaths (Revelation 20:11-15).

3:7-8: “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.””

*The 'invisible birth' is just as unseen as the wind, but just as real (Hebrews 11:1). To this point, Jesus the Great Evangelist has gently instructed in such a way to arouse curiosity, and now the question comes.

3:9: “Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?””

*This kind of question is open door. Take it! Avoid any secondary issues, and steer the conversation to the most needful truths of the gospel.

3:10: “Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?”

*Christ knew something about Nicodemus, his background and his status. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin, and most probably a head of a rabbinic school, as the term connotes with the definite article. Jesus could have obtained such knowledge by omniscience or by any other means. We can learn that we ought to take time to know the one to whom we are witnessing, by listening, and asking questions to understand their background.

3:11-12: “Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”

*Here the Triune God is witness. This is essential belief. Cf. 1 John 5:6-13.

3:13: “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.”

*Jesus instructs Nicodemus, based upon the level he is at. His knowledge of Scripture was extensive, even to the point of Messianic gospel applications from Deuteronomy 30:12-15 and Daniel 7:13-14.

3:14-15: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

*Here we have an illustration from Numbers 21:4-9. Jesus often would use illustrations familiar to His hearers in His teaching. More needful truths relating to the gospel are brought forth here, including crucifixion, resurrection (implied), and faith and belief upon certain facts. Jewish understandings of salvation common in that day are also spoken to here (Cf. Luke 13:23-24). Let us learn that it is always good to use Scripture illustrations, but we ourselves must know them if we are to be effective.

3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

*The gospel is clearly spelled out here. The Christian worker must commit this verse to memory. And if the Christian worker learns only one passage, let it be this passage at hand. We read of God’s desire (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). We read of God’s Son (Psalm 2:12; Proverbs 30:4). The doctrines of eternal security of the believer and heaven and hell are also found in this verse. We learn that we must believe, but believe what? The content for today is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. For Nicodemus, it was what was revealed to that time. The gospel is always by faith but the content of progressive revelation was more fully developed throughout the Bible. Romans 1:20 lays the responsibility for belief in faith in what has been revealed at the feet of every individual. Do not get sidetracked on what the Bushmen are doing. Stay with the gospel and with the individual. If there is such great concern over those folks, then let the person first be saved and then go on the mission field!

3:17-18: “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

*Salvation is through Christ alone. Learn John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. Apply Psalm 32:1-2 and Romans 8:1.

3:19-21: “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.””

*Here we find three reasons for rejection of the gospel by unbelievers. They are love of sin, shame of sin, and the abasement of pride which exposure of sin brings. Let us seek to bring truth and light to bear in our witnessing. Godly sorrow which produces repentance is a good thing (2 Corinthians 7:10). In fact, it is a necessary accompaniment of salvation. How can a man be saved if he is not conscious of his own sin and need of the Savior?

15. John 3:22-36, The Baptist Exalts the Christ

- a. 3:22, “after these things”, the sign at the wedding and the conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus’ Judean ministry begins with His disciples baptizing under the Lord’s authority (Cf. 4:1-2), identifying folks with Jesus as the Messiah of Israel
- b. 3:23, John had moved his ministry upriver from Bethabara (Cf. 1:28) because the depth of the river was more conducive to baptism by immersion, this implies the timing is now August or September, just prior to the rainy season in Israel, when the water level was at its lowest
- c. 3:24, Cf. Matthew 14:2-4 for the back story
- d. 3:25-26, dispute about purification, some manner of which being prescribed by the Law of Moses, and some of which being by tradition (Cf. Matthew 15:2), in the context of John’s baptism ceremonial formalism vs. repentance and faith
- e. 3:27-28, John the Baptist the forerunner of the King
- f. 3:29, “the bride” is the church (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 19:7), “the bridegroom” is Christ, “the friend of the bridegroom” is the company of Old Testament saints of which John the Baptist is greatest regarding his prophetic ministry (Matthew 11:11-13)
- g. 3:30, the attitude of every believer ought to be so, that Christ may be magnified and we ourselves pleased to decrease, apply to ministry and the continuity plans of the church (and secular work), pride of life and self-promotion are detrimental to the cause of Christ, Jesus is our martyr, we are not martyrs for Him unless we literally are such-none of us are that important
- h. 3:31, John the Baptist’s theology matches that of Christ (ibid. 3:13; Cf. Deuteronomy 30:12-15; Daniel 7:13-14)
- i. 3:32-34, Christ a witness, Christ rejected, “God does not give the Spirit by measure” applied to Jesus Christ (Isaiah 11:2; Revelation 1:4-5, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6), believers receive the Spirit without measure with regard to salvation but with measure regarding spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1-11)
- j. 3:35, the fullness of Christ and His authority and dominion
- k. 3:36, with 3:16, perhaps the clearest expressions of what one must do to be saved, here the “wrath of God” against sin is brought out most clearly, the salvation of men was John’s stated purpose in writing this Gospel (20:31) and the clear presentation of Christ the way of salvation cannot be stated enough, so it should be in the church (Romans 10:9-15; Matthew 28:18-20)

16. John Chapter 3, Self-Test

- a. What religious group was Nicodemus affiliated with?
- b. What body was Nicodemus a member of?
- c. Nicodemus was called “the teacher of Israel.” What does this imply about his position as a rabbi?
- d. According to some ancient Jewish sources, what was Nicodemus’ occupation?

- e. Which two verses are the capstone verses dealing with the doctrine of regeneration in the New Testament?

- f. Based on the context of John 3, what is the most likely understanding that Nicodemus had of the phrase “born of water?” Which verse(s) specifically?

- g. The Christian has ___ births and ___ death. The unbeliever has ___ birth and ___ deaths.
- h. Which Old Testament passage most clearly connects the Messiah with the title “Son of Man?”
- i. “Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness” in which chapter and book?

- j. Which two Old Testament verses or passages provide the basis for the “Son of God” as the divine Messiah?

- k. In the study, what three reasons are provided for the rejection of the gospel by unbelievers?

- l. In John 3:29, who are “the bridegroom”, “the bride”, and “the friend of the bridegroom”?

- m. List 3 passages that speak of Jesus Christ having the Spirit without measure.

17. John 4:1-6, Jesus Journeys North Through Samaria

- a. 4:1, Cf. 3:30, His hour was not yet (2:4)
- b. 4:2, Jesus Himself did not baptize, perhaps to avoid sectarianism (Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:12-15), but He oversaw His disciples, who baptized under His authority, His initial disciples were baptized by John the Baptist (1:35-37) and were therefore already identified with John's message of repentance and the Person of Messiah (Matthew 3:11), so too was Jesus in a still greater way...
- c. SPECIAL STUDY: Why was Jesus baptized by John? As identification-
 1. With deity, as a Member of the Triune God, John 1:33-34
 2. As the One who has the Seven Spirits of God, the Spirit without measure, John 3:34; Isaiah 11:2; Revelation 3:1
 3. With John's message of repentance, Matthew 3:2, 4:17
 4. "To fulfill all righteousness" required by the Law by His sinless life (Matthew 3:15), Cf. Matthew 5:17-20; Romans 10:4; Hebrews 4:15
 5. With sinners and point to the imputation of His righteousness to those who believe upon Him by His sacrifice, 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:14
- d. 4:3-4, traveling from Judea in the south of Israel to Galilee in the north of Israel, often times Jews would go around Samaria rather than travel through it because they despised the Samaritans (the feeling was mutual), but it was also true that Jews would not have been molested so much coming from Jerusalem than going to it
- e. SPECIAL STUDY: Samaria, a city and a region in central Israel, near Shechem in the tribal area of Ephraim (Joshua 20:7), its significance-
 1. Its origin, 1 Kings 16:23-24; 2 Kings 17:1-3,6,23-28, point 2 resulting-
 2. Its religion, paganism mixed with elements of Judaism retained, they only accepted the first 5 Books of Moses (as the Sadducees did) yet removed mention of Jerusalem and replaced it with Mount Gerizim (John 4:20), and looked for a Messiah (John 4:19,25)
 3. Its people, Samaritans (also called Cutheans, a pejorative term), considered half-breeds by the purely ethnic Jews, note the progression of Pentecost from Acts 2 to Acts 8 to Acts 10, in the parable (Luke 10:29-37) the man could not even speak of them by name, certain people (700-1,000) identify themselves today as ethnic Samaritans and dwell in that region but it is unclear how this can be proven genealogically

f. 4:5-6, “Sychar”, which is ancient Shechem, this was known as “Jacob’s well” in that day, inherited land reference noting the possession of a well (sons of Joseph were Ephraim and Manasseh), is from Genesis 49:22

g. 4:6, note the humanity of our Lord, here we find Him tired and weary, so He sits by the well, which is along the main road

h. “about the sixth hour”, John consistently uses Roman time and not Jewish time in his Gospel, so this would be 6 am if he is doing so here (18:28, 19:14), if using Jewish reckoning of time this would be noontime-and the context of the disciples shopping and the woman (a societal outcast, to a point, because of her lifestyle of sin) being there at an off-hour in midday lend support to that view, so we leave the timing as inconclusive

18. John 4:7-26, Jesus Reveals His Messiahship to the Samaritan Woman at the Well

a. 4:7-8, Jesus is alone at this moment (His disciples away), but still this is a public place, and He asks for a drink from this woman who is arrives there to draw water

b. 4:9, *ibid.* 17e3, this would have been shocking given the animosities

c. 4:10, Jesus Christ the Soul Winner begins His work, revealing Himself in stages to the woman, “the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8) is to drink of the “living water” from “the wells of salvation” (Cf. Isaiah 12:3; Revelation 22:17), and our Lord is ever ready to freely give to those who ask

d. 4:11-12, the woman fails to fully understand, but her curiosity is aroused, she does perceive that Jesus is making what may have seemed to her in the moment to be a hyperbolic or outlandish claim of superiority to the patriarchs

e. 4:13-14, the inward well of living water, those who drink of earthly water only will not be spiritually satisfied, but the water “springing up into everlasting life” fills us now with results that continue forever through eternity (Cf. Matthew 5:6)

f. 4:15, said as it seems, in an incredulous and/or shallow worldly manner

g. 4:16-18, exposure of sin, this woman (and every man, woman, and child) must come to the realization of ones sinful condition to come to Christ and receive everlasting life, her lifestyle is exposed as characteristic of the reprobate (Cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11), the exposure of sin shines light into the darkness of this woman’s life and deeds (John 3:19-21), she is living in sin by having relations with a man who is not hers by covenant, that she had had five marriage ceremonies and legal divorcements seems unlikely, more likely this was the woman’s pattern of living with men and having relations with them apart from the marriage covenant (1 Corinthians 6:15-16)

- h. John 4:19, spiritual perception, for Jesus knew things that could only be divinely revealed, especially in light of His not being a Samaritan of the community at Sychar
- i. 4:20, there are two interpretations here, the first being that this woman developed an urgent interest in clarifying a theological point, and the second which seems more likely given that Jesus has just made her exceedingly uncomfortable by exposing her lifestyle of sin (she was ashamed and was looking for a diversion from sin's conviction), "this mountain" (Gerizim, associated with Genesis 12:6-7), "Jerusalem" (built upon Mount Moriah from where the Lord will provide, according to Genesis 22:2,14)
- j. 4:21, "the hour is coming", in a short time (divine perspective of human life and of time—let us apply), when spiritual worship will be required, and the physical location will be of no consequence
- k. 4:22, "do not know...we know", that the Jewish system of worship is correct and the Samaritan system of worship is errant, "salvation is of the Jews", Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 18:15; Matthew 1:1-2; Romans 3:1-2, 9:4-5
- l. 4:23-24, imminence of the Kingdom of God due to His earthly presence (Matthew 4:17), "worship in spirit and truth", Cf. Psalm 51:6,17; Hebrews 10:22, "God is Spirit" (John 1:14,18), but the Son has revealed Him by coming in the flesh
- m. 4:25-26, the woman, as a believer knowledgeable of the Books of Moses, anticipated a personal revelation of the Messiah based on Deuteronomy 34:10, and the subsequent revelation by Him of all things, Jesus at this point reveals that this is His true identity to the woman, His deity also intimated here by the "I...am He" construction of His statement

19. John 4:27-38, The Fields White for Harvest

- a. 4:27, the disciples return, and are astonished that Jesus is conversing with a woman, especially a Samaritan woman, risking impropriety and malignment of His character-yet they have already ascertained that the Lord is willing to associate with sinners that some may be saved (Cf. Luke 5:29-30, 7:34-35)
- b. 4:28-30, at the excitement of meeting Christ, she forgets her errand at the well, leaving her waterpot, enters the city of Sychar, and witnesses to the men at the gate of Sychar (the leading men of the city), it was the conviction of her sin by the omniscient God that convinced her (not theological revelations), her testimony led many to saving faith in the Lord Jesus as we will see in vv.39-42

- c. John 4:31-33, the disciples, after their initial shock, offer Jesus to partake of some of the food they had bought (4:8), Jesus makes mention of His spiritual food (Deuteronomy 8:3; Job 23:12), but the disciples fail to understand that, just as the Samaritan woman had missed the point of the living water
- d. 4:34, Jesus' food was to do God's will and to do God's work (Cf. John 9:4)
- e. 4:35, "four months" (Only four months!) a short time, the brevity of our stay here on earth applied (Cf. Proverbs 27:1), "and then comes the harvest" (Revelation 14:14-20, eschatologically), "the fields white for harvest", a soul harvest—a spiritual harvest—is prepared and waiting for workers who will do God's will and work according to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)
- f. 4:36, spiritual laborers and their fruit (souls of men in heaven because of their work, the soul winner's crown, Cf. Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20), and the joy of heavenly fellowship (Hebrews 12:22-24)!
- g. 4:37-38, keep on doing spiritual sowing (Galatians 6:9), knowing that God's providential plan preceded your lifetime and (if He tarries) will continue when you are gone, Apply: your prayers are not in vain, and may be fulfilled now or after your decease, just as Christians continue in the work and reap what was sown by those who have gone before

20. John 4:39-42, The Savior of the World

- a. 4:39, Cf. 4:28-30, a religious awakening takes place in Sychar in Samaria, and it began with one woman who was a sinner saved by grace who responded to the truth when He was right before her, Can the same happen here?
- b. 4:40-41, eagerness for truth, these newly converted "Christians" could not get enough of Jesus, and now the Lord has an opportunity of personally witness in that place with great spiritual fruit
- c. 4:42, testimony of the Samaritans based upon personal conviction of sin, reception of grace, and acceptance of truth, it was not based only on the testimony of another but their newfound saving faith was individually received and appropriated, "the Christ, the Savior of the world" was the Messiah for Samaria also, and for all peoples

21. John 4:43-45, Jesus Welcomed in Galilee,

- a. 4:43, "after two days", during which Jesus and His disciples journeyed from Sychar in Samaria to Galilee
- b. 4:44, Cf. Matthew 13:57, 23:37, Jesus' rejection at Nazareth His hometown as well as Jerusalem the city of His people Israel
- c. 4:45, Cf. John 2:23, 20:30-31, 21:25

22. John 4:46-54, The Nobleman's Son Healed (Note: In Luke 7:2-10, we have the record of a similar healing wrought by Christ later in His earthly ministry, with similar faith response—the healing of the centurion's servant)

a. 4:46,54, this is the second of the seven signs recorded in the Gospel of John, and it took place beginning from "Cana of Galilee", the same place as the first sign was done (Cf. 2:1-12), the nobleman's son was sick at Capernaum (about 16 ½ miles west of Cana), no doubt this man had heard of Jesus' fame there, and was willing to make the arduous uphill journey—such was his faith

b. 4:47, seeking Christ, asking Him to "come down", from Cana (at a much higher elevation), a tough journey even downhill given the topography, the loving parent will spare no prayer or request for an infirm child, this one was "at the point of death"

c. 4:48, Cf. Hebrews 11:1; Matthew 12:38-40; 1 Corinthians 1:22-26, this "certain nobleman" was probably a Gentile royal official, although he lived among the Jews and was in circles that had apparently adopted more of a Jewish attitude than a Greek one (we see that in Luke 23:8 with Herod)

d. 4:49, the urgent prayer, the prayer repeated after faith tested, Cf, Matthew 7:7; Luke 18:1-8

e. 4:50, "your son lives", life spoken into existence, as it was in the beginning, the great faith response is "the man believed", and then he heads on his way, no more questions, and no doubts, apply to your salvation

f. 4:51-52, at the same time the nobleman leaves Cana, the servants left Capernaum to give him the good news, that the servant had been healed "at the seventh hour" (1 pm, if using Jewish time, alternately 7 am, or the 7th hour of the afternoon—7 pm), "yesterday", the previous day—which shows that the journey of 16 ½ miles—more than that with the road built into the topography, took about 2 days on foot,

g. 4:53, the nobleman's faith validated and rewarded, Hebrews 11:6, and as with the Samaritan woman, the encounter with Christ turned him into an evangelist, and many came to saving faith by his testimony

23. John Chapter 4, Self-Test

- a. How many people did Jesus Himself baptize?
- b. What is the origin of the Samaritan peoples? Where in the Bible do we find the basis for this?
- c. Who does the pejorative term “Cutheans” refer to?
- d. Sychar is commonly identified with or nearby which ancient city in the tribal area of Ephraim?
- e. When Jesus began His conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, where were the disciples and why did they go there?
- f. Fill in the blanks of the end of John 4:9: “For ____ have no dealings with _____.”
- g. What kind of water does Jesus offer?
- h. How many “husbands” did the Samaritan woman have?
- i. Where did the Jews worship, and where did the Samaritans worship? Explain how each people derived the location from the Torah.
- j. “Salvation is of the ____.” -John 4:22
- k. “God is _____, and those who worship Him must worship in _____ and _____” -John 4:24.
- l. Which attribute of God was active in the conversion of both Nathanael and the Samaritan woman?
- m. There were two evangelists at Sychar, one divine and one human. Who were they, and how does the answer relate to the evangelist and the written Word of God today?
- n. Fill in the blanks to get a summation of the second sign recorded in the Gospel of John. ‘A nobleman came from _____ to Jesus who was in _____. His ____ was sick, at the point of _____. On his way home, the _____ met his servants, and got the news that the healing had taken place at the _____ hour the previous day. He and his household _____.

24. John 5:1-15, A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda

a. 5:1, “a feast of the Jews”, in context of the chronological harmony of the gospels, this is the Passover feast (as it precedes Luke 6:1), the second of four Passover feasts recorded in our Lord’s earthly ministry

b. “Jesus went up to Jerusalem”, in obedience to the Law of Deuteronomy 16:16, one always goes “up to Jerusalem”

c. 5:2, “Now there is in Jerusalem”, the present tense indicates that this was still there at the time of John writing his gospel, indicating that it was written prior to 70 AD (ibid.1a), “by the Sheep Gate” that gate through which the sacrificial sheep would be brought, on the north side of the temple mount (Cf. Nehemiah 3:1-one of the ten gates rebuilt in his day; John 10:9-11 applied), Pool of Bethesda (house of mercy), with “five porches”, “According to an ancient tradition, Bethesda is also where Jesus’ maternal grandparents, Anne and Joachim, lived – and where his mother Mary was born. The Church of St Anne, built around 1140, stands nearby.” (seetheolyland.net/tag/sheep-gate)

d. 5:3-4, John explains the reason why those who were infirm would congregate on the porches “waiting for the moving of the water”, which was said to have healing power by the agency of an angel, probably a superstitious blend of paganism and Judaism brought about this belief, though it may be that God did truly bring about a healing there at a point or points in time

e. 5:5-6, “an infirmity thirty-eight years...lying there”, in a prolonged chronic ailment that rendered him paralyzed, Christ has compassion on the man and asks him if he wants to be made well, perhaps a leading question-but some people do not want to be made well and would rather wallow in pity, this particular healing confounds the so called ‘faith-healers’ who teach faith as a pre-requisite for healing, in this case we shall see the opposite of that

f. 5:7, this man’s faith was in the wrong things—the pool and the angel, it is interesting to note that it is implied that nobody had shown him help and compassion in 38 years! This pool healing thing had become every man for himself, the worldly way of things.

g. 5:8-9, the man in healed immediately and completely by the power of the Word of Christ, and is commanded to take up his bed and walk (similar to the healing of the paralytic recorded in Mark 2:11-12)

h. 5:10, this is a violation of b. Shabbat 6a:1 in the Jewish (man-made) Law “as the halakha there is just as it is in the case of one who transfers an object in the public domain. There, even though as long as he takes it and walks and does not place the object he is exempt, is it not the case that when he places it he is liable? Obviously, between the place where he lifted the object and the place where he placed the object, where there is liability, there lies an undefined area where, as long as he continues walking, he is exempt. Here too, it is no different, as in both cases an identical situation exists: If he places the object at the end of his path he is liable, despite the fact that the area in the middle is an exempt place.”