

**John**  
**A Theological Argument**

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## Book Outline

1. The Prologue (1:1-18)
  - a. The Logos in eternity and time (1:1-5)
  - b. The witness of John the Baptist (1:6-8)
  - c. The coming of the Light (1:9-13)
  - d. The Incarnation and revelation (1:14-18)
2. Presentation of Jesus (1:19-12:50)
  - a. Jesus' early ministry (1:19-4:54)
  - b. Jesus' controversy in Jerusalem (chap. 5)
  - c. Jesus' revelation in Galilee (6:1-7:9)
  - d. Jesus' return to Jerusalem and the resumption of hostility (7:10-10:42)
  - e. The great sign at Bethany (11:1-44)
  - f. The plot to kill Jesus (11:45-57)
  - g. The conclusion of Jesus' public ministry (12:1-36)
  - h. Jewish national unbelief (12:37-50)
3. Preparation of the Disciples (chaps. 13-17)
  - a. The Last Supper (13:1-30)
  - b. Jesus' coming departure (13:31-38)
  - c. Jesus, the Way to the Father (14:1-14)
  - d. Jesus' promise of the Counselor (14:15-31)
  - e. The Vine and the branches (15:1-10)
  - f. Jesus' friends (15:11-17)
  - g. The world's hatred (15:18-16:4)
  - h. The Spirit's work (16:5-15)
4. Prediction of Change (16:16-33)
  - a. Jesus' intercession (chap. 17)
5. Passion and Resurrection (chaps. 18-20)
  - a. The arrest of Jesus (18:1-11)
  - b. The religious trial and Peter's denials (18:12-27)
  - c. The civil trial (18:28-19:16)
  - d. The Crucifixion (19:17-30)
  - e. The burial (19:31-42)
  - f. The empty tomb (20:1-9)
  - g. Jesus' appearance to Mary (20:10-18)
  - h. Jesus' appearance to His disciples (20:19-23)
  - i. Jesus' appearance to Thomas (20:24-29)
6. Purpose of the book (20:30-31)
7. The Epilogue (chap. 21)
  - a. Jesus' appearance by the lake (21:1-14)
  - b. Jesus' reinstating of Peter (21:15-23)
  - c. The colophon (21:24-25)

## **Authorship**

The determination of authorship of a biblical writing is comprised of an analysis of internal which are clues found in the writing, and external evidence which are scholarly and theological corroborations. In the case of the book of John, the internal evidence may be widely accepted but the deductive process is lengthy and subjective. Though the internal evidence sports a logical approach to determination, one must also concede to the possibility inaccuracy.

When considering the external evidence supporting John as the author of the book, I am more convinced of its veracity because of testimony of those who had personal interactions with the disciple. The Bible Knowledge Commentary references this idea saying, “Polycarp (ca. A.D. 69-ca. A.D. 155) spoke of his contact with John. Irenaeus (ca. 130-ca. 200), the bishop of Lyons, heard Polycarp and testified that “John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, had himself published a Gospel during his residence in Ephesus in Asia.”<sup>1</sup> Firsthand testimony corroborated by other trusted sources of venerable character, bares more weight than the deductive internal evidence in my opinion.

Despite the internal and external evidence available regarding the authorship of the Gospel of John, the author of the book is technically anonymous because both sources of evidence are based of best estimation.

## **Dating**

The date of the writing of the book of John is supported by most scholars and theologians to have been written between A.D. 85 and 95, though as is common among theological minds, some Bible scholars stand in dissent in favor of a much later date. A key factor in determining

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<sup>1</sup> John F. Walvoord, and Roy B. Zuck. Bible Knowledge Commentary. (Cook Communications Ministries, 1983), see *External Evidence*.

the date of the book is that the early church fathers have reason to believe that John wrote this book when he was an old man, thus making the A.D. 85 and 95 date range the best opportunity for precision.<sup>2</sup>

### **Occasion**

John wrote his Gospel to win souls. The evangelistic nature of the book is clearly seen throughout the writing, and it has been used for that purpose since the days of the early church. John wants his readers to see the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ and to believe on Him for salvation and eternal life. The first chapter of the book is almost sermonic as John opens with a vivid illustration of who Jesus is and why He came to live an earthly life among us.

The occasion of the writing is the lost nature of humanity, our desperate need for reconciliation to God, and our blessed hope of eternal life once we believe. John's passion for this idea is felt throughout the Gospel book that he wants to impact the world for Christ.

### **Purpose Statement**

The Gospel of John was written to present Jesus Christ to the world as God in the flesh.

### **The Argument**

#### **The Prologue**

The opening of the book of John is a sermonic presentation of Jesus Christ to his readers; a herald of sorts, and a testimony to who Jesus is – God in the flesh. I believe John is compelled to begin in this fashion so as not to waste time on any preliminaries which might detract from the message. John wants his readers to know who Jesus is and he catapults that message forward to his readers because “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Corinthians 3:11)<sup>3</sup> This also explains the almost immediate invitation to given in chapter 1 verse 12, subtle as it may be, it is an invitation to believe none-the-less.

### Presentation of Jesus

In chapter 1 verse 19 through chapter 12, John takes a step back from his evangelistic frontal attack, to begin to tell the story of Jesus Christ's earthly ministry. John begins with the early ministry of Christ and progresses forward with stories that details the particulars of His time on earth comprised of teaching, hostilities, and miracles. John needs to paint the life picture of Christ to show that He was fully God and fully man at the same time.

### Preparation of the Disciples

It was not enough for John to prove that God came in the flesh, he also needed accentuate why He did it. John's Gospel shows us the living Christ whose purpose was to bring salvation to the world through His sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection. Though God could have accomplished this on His own, He instead chose disciples to carry out the ongoing mission of bringing the good news to the world. In chapters 13 through 17, John relates how Jesus prepared His disciple for the arduous journey they were to face being what was then known as followers of the Way.

### Prediction of Change

In his Gospel, John introduces us to Jesus Christ, the man who is God and who promises to change our lives forever. It is the idea of change that John writes about in chapters 16 and 17, and it is a comprehensive change that affects every aspect of our lives. The changes that John writes about are so impactful and monumental that Jesus prays to the Father on behalf of all who

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<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the King James Version (KJV).

will believe. John is sending the message that becoming a believer is so weighty a goal that God Himself saw need to pray for our victory in the entirety of chapter 17.

### Passion and Resurrection

John's Gospel tells the story of the sufferings, and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is a vivid and touching way. John wants his readers to feel the experiences of the Lamb of God as He is taking away the sin of the world in Chapters 18 through 20. From the crucifixion to the resurrection and forward to His appearing to His disciples, John wants his readers to not only know what happened, but to also feel it for themselves.

### Purpose of the Book

Finally, John comes full circle in chapter 20 to offer Jesus Christ once again to those who will come, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:30-31) The purpose of John's Gospel is clear and can be summarized in one passionate plea – come to Jesus!

### The Epilog

The Gospel of John closes with what can be called a happy ending. John finishes this Gospel with a picture of Jesus, triumphant having been raised from the dead with all power in His hands. John proceeds to show us how God wields His power; He does so by empowering His servants to continue His work and plan of salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is made evident as Jesus restores and commissions Peter to feed His flocks in chapter 21 verses 15 through 23.

### Summary

The book of John is an evangelistic, passionate, and powerful presentation of Jesus Christ, who offers the world salvation through belief in His name. John's mission in writing this book was to make sure his readers were informed, instructed, and inspired to the end that they might believe, and receive salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.



### **Bibliography**

Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck. *Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Dallas, TX: Cook Communications Ministries, 1983.