

The preeminence of Jesus Christ and His gospel is the overall theme of the Gospel of John. And who would be better qualified to write this intensely personal and polemic book? John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, implying a close personal relationship between the two.¹

John 21:24 **This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. [25] And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.**

This Gospel is all about Jesus. The whole purpose for His incarnation was to bring salvation to mankind, introduce Himself to the world and to call disciples unto Himself for the spreading of the Gospel² after His ascension and to establish an intimate relationship with those who would respond to His call to salvation.³ This theme was introduced early on by John the Baptist when he said; **"...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."** John 1:29. That is the whole theme of the Gospel of John in a nutshell.

There are different ways to organize the gospel, but with the theme I am trying to develop in this survey this is the way I choose to do it:

- Introduction of Jesus Christ and initial ministry, chapters 1 - 5
- Popular ministry of Jesus Christ; division grows, 6 - 7.
- Concluding public ministry of Jesus Christ - opposition intensified, division between believers and unbelievers intensified, 8 - 12.
- Personal ministry and Consummation, 13 - 21.

Review: if I were to pick a keystone verse I would be torn between two:

[4] **In him was life; and the life was the light of men. [5] And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.** John 1.

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See my previous lessons on this.⁴ This verse states the whole plan of God to overcome the darkness that was introduced by Satan to snatch men from God's intended purpose of man having intimate relationship with Him and for man to bring glory to Him. It states succinctly the whole theme of the polemic nature of John Gospel. All that follows

¹ John 13:23; John 19:26; John 20:2; John 21:7; John 21:20.

² For this read: Matt. 28:18 - 20. Have class suggest additional passages.

³ For this read: Heb 2:13 - 15; John 15:13 - 15.

⁴ Available on the web: [The Logos, the Light of Life](#)

fleshes out what is contained in these verses.

My second choice would be:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
John 3:16.

This, of course, states the ultimate purpose of Jesus' incarnation - the purpose of His death on the cross. God's answer for the calamity of man's sinful condition. It also shows that man will escape this horrible calamity including an eternity in hell. It also declares God's love for man and infers that he wishes to not only save man from death but for man to enjoy a loving relationship with him.

Perhaps we could compromise and have a point / counterpoint set of verses for this series, for I feel that these two verses encapsulate the thrust of the Gospel of John. I feel that the very personal nature of John's presentation of Jesus Christ gives us all hope that we, too, can enjoy this same intimate relationship with our Lord. A wonderful prospect as we face the difficulties and uncertainties of our personal lives. By way of personal experience, **Jesus Christ has made the difference in my life.** Without Him, I would have carried around with me all the hurt, disappointments that came out of a divorced family. He has also provided me with a family (that I did not have as a child). A wonderful vocation. And most of all, a hope for the future that when He comes back that I will be with Him forever. This is the Gospel of John! No other Person can be so

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attractive to the sinner who is struggling with his personal issues. How true it is when David's only real desire was to behold the beauty of the Lord in his temple.⁵ This is what John offers in his good news, the Gospel, to the sinner.

Basic Outline of the "Consummation" of Jesus Christ.

With the exception of the first point, I'm going to rely on the book The Gospel of John Believe and Live, by Elmer Towns.⁶

- **"I will not leave you orphans"**⁷ - Dealing with the physical separation of the believer and the Father - chapter 14.
- **Christ the Vine** - The importance of intimate relationship with Jesus Christ - chapter 15.
- **Christ the Preeminent One** - the ministry of the Holy Spirit to aid in our relationship with Jesus Christ - more on the Father's role in our relationship -

⁵ "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple." Psalm 27:4.

⁶ Available at your local Christian Book store.

⁷ A very poignant and personal time of instruction - my outline point substitution.

chapter 16.

- **Christ the Intercessor** - an intimate look into the heart of Jesus Christ with regard to the Father and the believers of the Church age - Chapter 17.
- **Christ the Faithful one** - the arrest of Jesus Christ and His response to His accusers - chapter 18.
- **Christ the Lamb of God** - the abuse of Jesus Christ, His crucifixion - chapter 19.
- **Christ the Victorious One** - the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the post resurrection to his disciples - chapter 20.
- **Christ the Great Shepherd** - "feed my sheep" the great challenge to all disciples - chapter 21.

The Intense, Personal nature of John's Gospel.

I am struck with the contrast between John's Gospel and the synoptics. John does not follow the synoptic nature of the other three. But that's completely understandable. There are at least two reasons for this. First, John was the beloved disciple and as such had a different approach to tell. Second, John was disturbed by the rise of Gnosticism. Philo, a hellenized Jew was beginning to have a toe-hold in the religious world and in turn, the Christian world. Later on this heresy became even more interspersed in Christianity in the person of Cerinthus, another hellenized Jew who mixed Gnosticism with Christianity. Even Paul had to deal with this heresy in some of his epistles.⁸

Outline of John 14.

I am going to include an outline on chapter 14 in this lesson, because chapter 14 is the penult of the "fellowship" chapters of John chapters 15 - 17.⁹ Chapter 18 begins the narrative of the Consummation.

- **Jesus comforts his disciples, vs' 1 - 4.** The disciples' pop-messiah concept of Jesus Christ had been taken away from recent events and Jesus' teaching that He must die for the sins of the world. This meant that He was going to be taken away from them. They were all in emotional shock over this.
- **Jesus, the way to the Father, vs' 5 - 14.** Jesus continues to comfort them but giving them more information about their relationship with Him and the Father. This was important because up to now the emphasis was largely on their physical relationship with Jesus, himself.
- **The promise of the Holy Spirit - fellowship with the Father promised, "I will not leave you orphans", 15 - 31.** This section has special meaning to me personally. I will share it with you some time. The point here is that a personal relationship with the Godhead is emphasized in a powerful way.
- **Application: When we lose the sense of Christ's presence in our lives.** Chapter 14 can have a very personal application of this in our own lives when we feel apart from the Lord.

⁸ See Phil 2:5 - 11 where Paul specifically deals with the heresy that the Gnostics taught by revealing the whole nature of Christ.

⁹ Some of this outline was taken from the NIV® translation.

Transitional Thoughts Leading to Chapter 15.

Jesus has lost the ear of the crowds. He knows that His hour has come but He has compassion for His disciples in that they still do not understand what is about to happen¹⁰ even though He had already shared these things with them. Yet, in their ignorance, He has compassion for them and patiently reassures them that they will not be left as orphans, deserted, having to fend for themselves. Chapter 15 continues the theme of the intimacy that Jesus intends to have with all believers. It's important for us to understand this overall theme in order for us to understand some difficult passages found in this chapter.

Outline of chapter 15 as supplied by Towns:¹¹

1. Their Relationship with Christ: a Life of Union and Communion (15:1 - 11)
2. Their Relationship with One Another: a Life of Love and Service (15:12 - 17)
3. Their Relationship with the World: a Life of Enmity and Persecution (15:8 - 16:4)

Introductory thought on Chapter 15.

We are all familiar with the word-picture of the Vine that Jesus Christ uses in this chapter. Time is short, Jesus reaches into His genius with using word-pictures to give his disciples a most effective picture of the relationship He longs to have with them. He knows that they are in shock realizing that He is not going to be with them much longer. It would seem that the wonderful life they have been enjoying with this Man is about to come to an end. He speaks comfortingly in the language of the absolute - "I am." The disciples know by now that what He is about to say is of great importance. Call to mind some of the other "I am's": I am the Light - before Abraham was, I am (Jn. 8:58) - I am the door. When the guards were about to arrest Jesus responded to Jesus' question "who are you seeking" whereupon they answered "Jesus of Nazareth." When He said "*I am he*" they fell to the ground (John 18:6). These "I am's" were all used as a state of absolute reality: Ἐγώ εἰμι - (*Ego eimi*). We recognize, of course, ego as the first personal pronoun "I." The word *eimi* might take some study. Thayer devotes 6 pages to such a simple, yet profound word - 6 pages in small print. Simply, it is a verb that states absolute existence. It is used in the LXX to translate the answer of who God was to Moses: Ex 3:14 - "I AM (the existing One). Jehovah used "I AM" sometimes to conclude a prophesy - LXX used *eimi* to give eternal weight to the prophesy.¹² Other passages with this use in John are: "I am the Bread of life", ch 6, "I am the gate, I am the good Shepherd", ch 10, "I am the resurrection of life", ch 11, "I am the way, the truth, and the life", ch 14, and, of course, "I am the Vine", Ch 15.

¹⁰ [25] These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. [26] But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14.

¹¹ The Gospel of John BELIEVE AND LIVE, Elmer Townes. Available at your local bookstore.

¹² Eze 33:29 "Then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed."