

The Uniqueness of John's Gospel

John's purpose in writing is seen at the very end of his book.

The account of Thomas is given. Thomas insisted *that he needed to physically see the resurrected Jesus* before he would believe. When he eventually touched Jesus' wounds, Thomas finally believes what the other disciples have been telling him all along, declaring, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). *"Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'"* (John 20:29). The Gospel of John was written for people who couldn't touch Jesus' wounds or witness miracles for themselves. For this reason, John is a book written much after the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

John arranges his book like an "apology" or "defense" that Jesus is the living Logos (Word of God).

There are seven miracles: Changing water into wine at Cana in John 2:1-11; Healing the royal official's son in Capernaum in John 4:46-54; Healing the paralytic at Bethesda in John 5:1-15; Feeding the 5000 in John 6:5-14; Jesus walking on water in John 6:16-24; Healing the man blind from birth in John 9:1-7; The raising of Lazarus in John 11:1-45. In John's Gospel, the miracles of Jesus are depicted as signs (2:11; 4:54; 6:2, 14; 12:18) that are intended to lead people to believe (20:30). In the other Gospels, "signs" are associated with false prophets, and Jesus refuses to work them (e.g., Matt. 12:38-39; 16:1-4; 24:24).

John arranges his book with seven conversations between Christ and others so "you may believe."

The seven conversations are between Christ and Nicodemus (3:1-21); the Samaritan woman (4:1-42); the Jewish Crowd (6:22-71); the Jewish authorities and the Jewish crowd (7:14-52); the Jewish authorities (8:12-59); the Jewish authorities (9:1-41); the Jewish crowd (10:22-42).

Misunderstanding is a common motif in John's Gospel:

Examples: "this temple" (2:19-22); "born again" (3:3-5); "living water" (4:10-15); "sleep" (11:11-14). See also John 4:31-34; 6:32-52; 7:33-36; 8:21-53.

John's Gospel identifies Jesus' opponents as "the Jews."

This term "Jew" is not widely used in the other Gospels (only in Matt. 27:18 and Mark 7:3). John references people who believe in Jesus being expelled from the synagogue (9:22; 12:42; 16:2).

John's Gospel emphasizes love for one another as the single new commandment of Jesus.

This is to be the distinctive mark of his followers (13:34-35). Jesus does not reinterpret the law in detail as He does in the other Gospels (e.g., Matt. 5:17-6:18), but gives the Royal Law.

John's Gospel presents Jesus' crucifixion as His exaltation.

Three passages refer to Jesus being "lifted up" (3:14; 8:28; 12:32-34). These references parallel the three "passion predictions" (Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; Mark 8:31-32; 9:31; Luke 9:22; 18:31).