

Gospel of John: Chapters 1–3

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SLIDE 1

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SLIDE 2

Introduction to the Gospel of John

- **Authorship & Date**
 - Written by the Apostle John — the ‘beloved disciple’ — c. A.D. 85–95
 - An eyewitness account written as theology, not biography
- **Stated Purpose**
 - “These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:31)
- **Stands Apart from the Synoptics**
 - Matthew, Mark, and Luke focus on narrative chronology; John focuses on identity and belief
 - Key vocabulary: life, light, love, truth, Word, believe — each repeated with deepening meaning
 - Structured around the Book of Signs (Ch. 1–12) and the Book of Glory (Ch. 13–21)

SLIDE 3 — John 1:1–18

The Prologue: The Word Became Flesh

- **The Word (Logos) Is God**
 - “In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God” (v. 1) — pre-existence, relational distinction, and full deity
 - Logos bridges Jewish theology (creative Word of God) and Greek philosophy (ordering principle of the cosmos)
- **The Word as Creator & Life-Giver**
 - “All things were made through him” (v. 3) — the Creator entered his own creation
 - “In him was life, and the life was the light of men” (vv. 4–5) — the darkness has not overcome it
- **The Incarnation**
 - “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (v. 14) — *eskenosen*: God pitched his tent among humanity
 - Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ; the Law came through Moses (v. 17)
 - Jesus alone has seen the Father and makes Him known (v. 18)

SLIDE 4 — John 1:19–34

John the Baptist’s Testimony

- **A Model of Humility**
 - Triple denial: ‘I am not the Christ, not Elijah, not the Prophet’ — self-identification as merely ‘a voice’ (vv. 19–23)
 - “He who comes after me... the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie” (v. 27)
 - Even a disciple would not untie a teacher’s sandals — John places himself infinitely below Jesus
- **The Lamb of God**
 - “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (v. 29) — one of the richest declarations in the NT
 - Drawing on: Passover Lamb (Ex. 12), Suffering Servant (Isa. 53:7), daily Temple sacrifices
- **The Spirit Descends**

- The Spirit descends like a dove and remains on Jesus — the permanent anointing of the Messiah (v. 32)
- “This is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” — surpassing all water baptism (vv. 33–34)

SLIDE 5 — John 1:35–51

The First Disciples

- **Jesus’ First Question: ‘What Are You Seeking?’**
 - Probes the deepest intention of the heart — are we seeking Jesus himself, or only what he provides? (v. 38)
 - “Come and see” — the invitation of discipleship; personal discovery over theological argument (v. 39)
- **The Pattern of Witness**
 - Andrew immediately finds Peter: ‘We have found the Messiah’ — confident declaration after one afternoon (vv. 40–41)
 - Philip tells Nathanael: ‘We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote’ — Jesus fulfills the whole canon (v. 45)
 - Philip’s answer to skepticism: ‘Come and see’ (v. 46) — same invitation as Jesus gave
- **Jesus Sees and Renames**
 - Jesus looks at Simon and renames him Peter (Rock) — seeing not only who he is but who he will become (v. 42)
 - “You will see greater things than these” — true discipleship opens into ever-expanding revelation (v. 50)

SLIDE 6 — John 2:1–12

The Wedding at Cana: The First Sign

- **Mary’s Word of Faith**
 - “Do whatever he tells you” (v. 5) — Mary’s final recorded words in John; the perfect posture of discipleship
 - “My hour has not yet come” — from the very start Jesus is oriented toward the cross (v. 4)
- **The Sign and Its Meaning**
 - Six stone jars of Jewish purification water → 150–180 gallons of fine wine: ritual law gives way to grace
 - “The good wine until last” (v. 10) — Jesus always brings something better; the new covenant surpasses the old
 - The disciples ‘believed in him’ — the sign’s purpose is faith, not spectacle (v. 11)

SLIDE 7 — John 2:13–25

The Cleansing of the Temple

- **Holy Anger**
 - The Court of the Gentiles — the only place non-Jews could worship — had become an exploitative market
 - “My Father’s house” — Jesus claims unique Sonship; righteous anger against corrupted worship (v. 16)
 - “Zeal for your house will consume me” (Psalm 69:9) — total, self-costly devotion to the Father (v. 17)
- **The New Temple**
 - “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” — a riddle pointing to his death and resurrection (v. 19)
 - naos (inner sanctuary) = Jesus’ body; he is the new place where God’s presence fully dwells (v. 21)
 - The disciples only understood this after the resurrection — honest, retrospective eyewitness testimony (v. 22)
- **Knowing What Is in Man**
 - Many believed based on signs, but Jesus ‘did not entrust himself to them’ — he knows the human heart (vv. 23–25)

SLIDE 8 — John 3:1–21

Jesus and Nicodemus: Born Again

- **Who Was Nicodemus?**
 - A Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin (the supreme Jewish council) — the most religious man imaginable
 - Comes ‘by night’ — symbolic of spiritual darkness; correct conclusion about evidence, wrong response to it
- **You Must Be Born Again (from Above)**
 - anōthen = both ‘again’ and ‘from above’ — new birth is a new beginning AND a divine origin (v. 3)
 - Born of water and Spirit (Ezek. 36:25–27) — spiritual rebirth is impossible for man; it is God’s act (v. 5)
 - The wind analogy: the Spirit’s work is real and observable, but beyond human control or comprehension (vv. 7–8)
- **The Gospel in Miniature**
 - “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him... have eternal life” (v. 16)
 - Universal offer (‘whoever’); singular condition (‘believes’); the light has come — rejection is a choice (vv. 19–20)

SLIDE 9 — John 3:22–36

The Final Testimony of John the Baptist

- **Everything Is Given from Heaven**
 - “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven” (v. 27) — no rivalry, no competition
 - John’s influence was not his to guard; it was God’s to give and withdraw as he pleased
- **Friend of the Bridegroom**
 - John is the best man at the wedding — his joy is complete when he hears the Bridegroom’s voice (v. 29)
 - “He must increase, but I must decrease” (v. 30) — the most selfless statement in the NT; joy, not reluctance
- **The Authority of the Son**
 - “He who comes from above is above all” — Jesus speaks what he has seen in the Father’s presence (vv. 31–32)
 - “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand” (v. 35) — universal authority flows from love
 - “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life” — present tense; eternal life is a now possession (v. 36)

SLIDE 10

Key Themes Established in John 1–3

- **The Identity of Jesus**
 - Pre-existent divine Word, fully God, agent of creation, revealer of the Father
- **The Mission of Witness**
 - John, Andrew, Philip — all point away from themselves toward Jesus
- **The New Birth**
 - Entry into the Kingdom requires a Spirit-initiated rebirth; human effort cannot achieve it
- **Light and Darkness**
 - Those who come to the light receive life; those who refuse it remain under judgment
- **Signs Point Beyond Themselves**
 - Cana and the Temple are windows into Jesus’ identity and the new covenant he inaugurates
- **He Must Increase**
 - “He must increase, but I must decrease” — the posture of every true disciple and teacher

Key Theme: Each passage in John 1–3 builds toward a single question — ‘Who is Jesus?’ The answer, repeated in multiple registers: he is the divine Word, the Lamb of God, the Son of Man, the Bridegroom. The only appropriate response is the one modeled by John the Baptist: ‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’