



**A look at John's Gospel**

- Jesus is the Incarnate Word (λόγος)- *kalam*
- Reflective gospel - Interpretive gospel
- Gospel of belief – 'Whoever believes will have eternal life.' (John 3:16)
- **'Life' =34 times (only 13 times in others)**
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- Gospel of God-Man – The I AM
- This gospel has no parables
- Calls miracles 'signs' – 7 signs - Ayah

<b><i>Synoptic Gospels</i></b>	<b><i>John's Gospel</i></b>
Emphasize the kingdom inheritance	Emphasizes eternal life inheritance
Descriptive of historical events	Reflective of the significance of various events
Relates many of the short sayings of Jesus	Gives more of the long discourses of Jesus
Emphasis upon the Kingdom of Heaven / Kingdom of God	Emphasis upon eternal life
Emphasis on future prophecy	Very little about future prophecy

**John, the apostle?**

- John, a fisherman, was one of Zebedee's sons, the brother of James. (Mark 4:21,22)
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- Also the author of 1,2, and 3 John, as well as Revelation.
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- Lived to an advanced age; was probably the last apostle to die.

**When was the Gospel of John written?**

- Fragmentary evidence points to the late first century

**Chapter 1 – Who is Jesus?**

**Introducing Jesus**

- Jesus Christ is referred to as the Word (1:1-4).

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- Jesus, the Source of all creation
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- Jesus is referred to as the Light and Life (1:4-9). *An-Nur, wal-hayat*
- Belief in Jesus enables us to become Sons of God (1:12)
- Grace available through Jesus (1:17) -*Fadhl* – (*wa rahma*)

### **The testimony of John the Baptist**

- The hierarchy wanted to know who John was, but John wanted them to know who Jesus was (1:25-28)
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- John the Baptist introduced him as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world – why? (1:29-31; Compare with Ex 29:38-42; Isaiah 53:7) – *Fidya azim*.

### **Jesus the Recruiter – A great example**

- From Andrew to Peter; Philip to Nathaniel (the *Shahada*/witness process)
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- Never despise the day of small things
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- Doubts, yes, but check it out – Nathaniel did.

### **Conclusion:**

Jesus is the Word and God (John 1:1); Son of God (John 1:18; 34,49); The Light (1:7); Lamb (John 1:29, 36); Rabbi (John 1:38); Messiah (1:41); Son of Joseph (1:45); The King of Israel (1:49); Son of Man (1:51). (*al-insaan – al-kamil*).

## **Questions**

- How did John describe Jesus and why?
- How do we become God’s children?
- What was it that persuaded Andrew to find Simon Peter and bring him to Jesus?
- What was it that made Nathaniel confess ‘Teacher, you are the son of God – the King of Israel’?

## Is the Gospel of John another proof of upgraded theology?

After releasing our teaching video, a Muslim seeker reached out with an insightful comment. Below, you'll find his query along with our detailed response.

**Question:** When was the Gospel of John really written? Doesn't the late writing prove that Jesus' position was elevated to the level of divinity, as God and being God? While the other gospels seem to stress 'kingdom', this gospel stresses eternal life, another proof of upgraded theology.

### Response:

In history, something can be documented later while still being believed earlier. For instance, Islamic hadith were compiled generations after the time of Muhammad, yet Muslims maintain that they preserve earlier teachings. Similarly, Christians assert that the Gospel of John does not introduce new concepts but rather provides a deeper understanding of beliefs that already existed. What is particularly interesting is that even before the Gospel of John was written, there were very early Christian writings – predating the Gospels – that already described Jesus in remarkable ways with divine attributes.

Christians do not believe that Jesus replaced or competed with God. Instead, we believe that God revealed Himself through His Word. The Gospel of John begins with this concept, emphasizing a Jewish understanding of God's Word acting in history rather than relying on Greek mythology.

### 1. When was the Gospel of John written?

Scholarly consensus (across believing and critical scholars):

- c. AD 80–95
- Often associated with Ephesus and the later life of the apostle John

Why scholars date it later:

- Advanced reflection, not late invention
- Awareness of synagogue–church separation (cf. John 9:22)
- Developed literary structure
- Important distinction: John writes later, but about beliefs already held much earlier.

### 2. Does “late writing” mean Jesus was *upgraded* to divine status?

No – High Christology existed *before* John. Long before John was written, we already find Jesus spoken of in divine terms. For example, these quotes from writings (AD 50s):

- Philippians 2:6-11 - Jesus exists “in the form of God” and receives worship.
- 1 Corinthians 8:6 Paul places Jesus *within* the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4).
- Colossians 1:15-20. Christ as creator and sustainer of all things

These texts predate John by decades. So, John does not invent Jesus’ divinity – he articulates what the earliest Christians already believed.

### 3. “Kingdom” vs “Eternal Life” – contradiction or complement or upgrade?

“The Synoptics preach the Kingdom; John preaches eternal life.”

Biblical clarification:

Synoptic Gospels	Gospel of John
Kingdom of God	Eternal Life
Public proclamation	Personal encounter
Parables	Discourses
What God's reign looks like	What God's life is

There are two lenses on the same reality. Jesus Himself unites both:

- Luke 17:21 - *"The kingdom of God is among you."*
- John 17:3 - *"This is eternal life: to know You..."*

While Kingdom = God's reign, Eternal life = participation in God's life. There is no upgrade – but a deeper explanation.

#### 4. Early manuscript evidence destroys the "late theology" argument

Papyrus 52 (P52). Dated c. AD 125–150; Only 30–50 years after the original writing found in Egypt, far from Ephesus. This shows:

- John's Gospel circulated early
- No time for theological evolution or legendary inflation
- No earlier "non-divine" version existed

#### 5. Early Christians already read John as apostolic

Early witnesses *before Islam* accepted John without controversy:

- Ignatius of Antioch (AD 110): calls Jesus *"our God."*
- Irenaeus (AD 180): explicitly attributes John to the apostle
- Justin Martyr: worships Christ as divine

This belief predates councils, creeds, and Constantine.

#### Conclusion:

So, Christians did not slowly elevate Jesus to God. The earliest followers already worshiped Him. John did not *invent* divinity; he *explained* it. The Synoptics show what Jesus did. John shows who Jesus is.

#### Bottom line

- John is later in date but not in belief
- High Christology existed before John
- Kingdom and eternal life are not competing ideas
- Manuscripts confirm early, stable transmission
- Jesus' divinity is rooted in the earliest Christianity, not invented later

John does not introduce a new understanding of Jesus; instead, he clarifies what the earliest Christians already believed through more profound reflection, not through new concepts. Christians hold that God remains hidden in His essence but reveals Himself throughout history. What John explains is not a different god, but God's self-revelation.