

Signs and Discourses

Like the other gospel writers, John records what Jesus taught and what He did. His method of doing so, however, is unique. The synoptic writers (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) record several miracles, sermons, and parables from Jesus' life. John uses an interesting method of recording Jesus' actions and teachings. In the first eleven chapters, which cover Jesus' ministry up until the week before His crucifixion, John tells the story of Jesus by focusing on seven miracles he terms "signs," and seven major discourses. Some of the discourses were with individuals, while others were public sermons or discussions. Some of the signs are clearly linked to the preceding or following discourses, such as the feeding of the 5,000 and the later "Bread of Life" discourse. Most of these signs and discourses are unique to John's gospel. Also dispersed throughout the first 11 chapters are five of the seven "I am..." statements of Jesus. Using this method, John paints the wondrous picture of Jesus as the life and light of men. These are the themes which John introduces in his prologue (Jn. 1:1-18). (After reading through chapters 1-11, go back and read the first 18 verses of John's gospel to see the many connections that can be found!)



John clearly states at the conclusion of his gospel that he hasn't recorded everything Jesus said or did (Jn. 20:30), but that he did record enough to convince readers Jesus was the Son of God, so that believing we may have life in Jesus' name (Jn. 20:31). It is interesting that John chose seven signs, seven "I am..." statements, and seven discourses (in the first section at least) to tell the story of Jesus. Seven, after all, is a number that often depicts perfection, completeness, and divinity in the Bible. How fitting then, that in John's treatise on the Son of God, he does so with these groupings of seven! Seven miracles; seven discourses, and seven statements to help us know the Son of God!

Questions

- How does John describe "the Word" in his opening verses? What does this teach us?

- List the seven "signs" recorded in John 1-11:

- List or Describe the seven discourses recorded in John 1-11:

- John 7 records some of the things people thought about Jesus. Find and list the various misconceptions people held concerning Jesus: _____

- List the five "I am..." statements of Jesus that are found in John 1-11:

"That You May Grow Thereby..."

A weekly Bible reading plan



John 1-11

The Son of God: Life and Light

Overview

We come now to the fourth and final of the gospel accounts—the gospel according to John. John was a disciple and friend of Jesus; a firsthand witness to the things he records in his book. Most commentators agree that *"the disciple whom Jesus loved"* throughout the book is John himself. He was one of the so-called "inner circle" of Jesus' disciples, along with his brother James and Peter. If one were reading the gospels for the very first time, they would notice John's gospel is quite different than the first three. John begins differently and flows differently. He leaves out many stories found in the synoptic accounts, while recording many details unique to his writing. Why? Likely because John wrote his gospel much later than the others—sometime closer to the end of the first century. By that time false teachings had sprung up concerning Jesus. Thus, John pens the fourth and final testimony of Jesus, a letter written for all believers which emphasized the deity of Jesus from beginning to end. Matthew portrays Jesus as the Messiah; Mark portrays him as the perfect servant; Luke as the Son of Man; and John portrays the Lord as the Son of God. With John's gospel, the eyewitness testimony of Jesus that the Holy Spirit sought to have recorded for all generations was complete. How wondrous it is to read the gospels, and how great it is to read John's account concerning the Son of God!

Suggested Reading Schedule

Monday: John 1-3
 Tuesday: John 4-5
 Wednesday: John 6-7
 Thursday: John 8-9
 Friday: John 10-11



One of the most well-known verses in all the Bible is John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* This one verse teaches us great things about God's love. It teaches:

The Greatness of God's Love:

He gave His Son

The Reach of God's Love:

For the whole world

The Impartiality of God's Love:

Whoever

The Limitation of God's Love:

Whoever believes

The Benefit of God's Love:

Eternal life

Outline of John

John can be divided in two primary sections. Chapters 1-11 tell of Jesus' ministry by focusing on 7 "signs" or miracles, and several important discourses (either public or private). Chapters 12-21 record the events of the final week of Jesus' life, with a special emphasis on Jesus' farewell discourse with the disciples. Below is a general outline of the book:

- I. Introductory Testimony (1)
- II. The Testimony of Signs & Discourses (2-11)
- III. Testimony of Death & Resurrection (12-20)
- IV. Concluding Testimony (21)

*Adapted from *Jesus and the Gospels* by Craig Blomberg

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