



LET'S BEGIN HERE

For many Christians, the gospel of John is a favorite book in the Scriptures. It is, in so many ways, an amazing book! Many believers cut their spiritual teeth on John and return to its pages time and time again to find reassurance, comfort in sorrow, and a place to refresh their skills in sharing their faith with those who've yet to believe.

John's gospel sits as the last in a set of four, each with its own specific aim and audience.

- Matthew wrote from the perspective of a Jew who converted to faith in Jesus. His aim was to present evidence to his Jewish audience that Jesus was their promised Messiah!
- Mark bore a practical mind and travelled as a young man with the famed apostle Paul before returning to his hometown. He wrote with an intense interest in the deeds of Jesus, highlighting the fact that Jesus came not to be served but to serve.
- Luke, a Gentile physician from Macedonia, wrote with an emphasis on the humanity of Jesus—that though fully God, He was also fully human and suffered untold physical suffering as part of accomplishing our salvation. He referred to Jesus as the Son of Man.
- But John wrote his gospel to put on display the wondrous power that Jesus possessed by featuring the miracles or “signs” He performed. John’s goal was to present an intricate and intimate portrait of Jesus as God’s Son with one impassioned aim: “that you may continue to believe” (John 20:31).

Quotable

*John is one of
the most priceless
and precious
treasures God
has ever
given us.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In this study, we'll put into practice the basics of Bible study methods, beginning with observation.



Observation: Taking a Closer Look

Observation answers the question, *What does it say?* As we observe the text, we look for words, names, places, events, repetitions, comparisons, and contrasts. The chart below shows the organization and key themes and features of John's gospel. Take a few minutes to study the chart, noting anything that stands out to you. Be patient and make notes on a separate sheet of paper to help organize your thoughts.

JOHN

	Deity “The Word was God.” (John 1:1)	God-Man “The Word became human.” (John 1:14) <i>Miraculous signs:</i> Turns water into wine (2) Heals official’s son (4)	Ministry <i>Miraculous signs:</i> Heals lame man at Bethesda (5) Feeds 5,000 (6) Walks on water (6) Heals blind man (9) Raises Lazarus (11)	Discourse <i>Private talks:</i> Servanthood (13) Heaven (14) Abiding (15) Promises (16) Prayer (17)	Trials and Death 	Empty Tomb <i>Private talks:</i> Appearances (20)	Assurance <i>Private talks:</i> Future (21)							
Stage	JOHN 1:1–13	JOHN 1:14–4:54	JOHN 5–12	JOHN 13–17	JOHN 18–19	JOHN 20	JOHN 21							
Audience	Public message		CHANGE		Private message									
Time	Three years			Several days										
Jesus’ Seven “I Am” Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35) • “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12) • “I am the gate.” (John 10:9) • “I am the good shepherd.” (John 10:11) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I am the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25) • “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6) • “I am the true grapevine.” (John 15:1) 										
Theme	Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ, the Son of God.													
Key Verse	John 20:31													
Christ in John	Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God—the Way, the Truth, and the Life—and He alone is the revelation of God and the salvation of people.													

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BEHOLDING CHRIST . . . THE SON OF GOD

“That You May Believe”

Survey of John

SEARCHING
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STUDY

What stood out to you about how John organized his gospel? Use the space below to write down additional observations from the chart.

In broad terms, John offers us a portrait of Jesus' life and ministry with one expressed aim: that those who encounter Him and His miracles would believe in Him as God's Son and their Savior. John states this purpose in writing in two passages near the end of his gospel.

The first passage is John 20:26–31. Take some time to carefully read this scene; then answer the following questions about what you observe.

What details of this scene stand out to you? Who is with Jesus in this scene? What key words does John use? (Hint: look for words he repeats.)

How many times does John use the word *believe* or a form of it in these six verses? Who is the dialogue between? Is there a miracle that occurs? If so, what is it?

The second passage is John 21:24–25. Take a moment to read those two verses and respond to the following questions.



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What words does John use in these two verses that indicate he's offering a summary statement of his gospel?

What words does John use to indicate that his gospel was written from the perspective of an eyewitness?

Now skim the book of John. Note where John uses language about “faith” and “believing” regarding Jesus’ miracles or other events. See how many instances you can find in just a few minutes. Write them down in the space below.



Helpful Tools

Bible study tools make digging into the text easy. A Bible dictionary, Bible atlas, and concordance are available for purchase at the Insight for Living Ministries [online store](#). For a complete list of recommendations, read Chuck Swindoll’s online article [“Basic Bible Study Tools.”](#)



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Using an atlas of Bible lands or by turning to the maps section in the back of your study Bible, locate a map titled “Ministry of Jesus.” Take a few minutes to orient yourself to the area in which Jesus ministered during the period about which John was writing. What names, cities, or regions do you recognize from John’s gospel?

Keep this map nearby as you study John so you can quickly locate the places John mentions.

John opens his gospel with an intriguing invitation to “the Word” (Jesus!) who was “with God” and who “was God” (John 1:1). In that introductory section, John offers us an outline of sorts to help guide us through the story of Jesus, God’s Son, who . . .

- Came from the Father (1:1–18)
- Came into the world (1:19–12:50)
- Would leave the world again (13:1–19:42)
- Would go back to the Father (20:1–21:25)

Jesus came with a message that invited only one appropriate response: *belief!* But what does it mean to believe? What did John intend his readers to do, having encountered the miracles and message of Jesus? Let’s take a closer look to understand what it all means.



Interpretation: Finding the Meaning

Now we’ll take the next step in Bible study: interpretation. Interpretation is digging for meaning. To do so, we’ll use an additional tool of Bible study: correlation—the process of comparing different passages of Scripture. Let’s look more closely at some passages within John’s gospel and in other places in the New Testament to help discover the meaning of John’s compelling words.



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What Is John’s Motive?

Learning the motive of the authors of Scripture helps us understand the meaning or intent of their words. Toward the end of John’s gospel, he adds that if everything Jesus did were written down, “the whole world could not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25)! So John had to be selective in what he included. Read each of the following passages in John and make a note or two on how each strengthened his argument to prove the deity of Jesus.

John 1:33–34

John 3:16

John 6:66–69

John 10:34–38

John 11:1–4



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Application: Bringing Home the Lessons

The final step of Bible study is application: *What does all this mean to me?* Begin answering this question by returning to our initial comments about John’s passionate aim, “that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name” (John 20:31).

For John, the fundamental issue was *faith*. His desire was that all who read his account would ultimately put their trust in Jesus as God’s Son—their promised Messiah. This would be a good time to look up the word *faith* in a Bible dictionary. Here you will discover that the word comes from a Greek word, *pistis*, which carries the idea of “belief or trust—especially in a higher power.”¹

Chuck Swindoll observes that by the end of John’s gospel a singular, powerful question emerges and awaits a response: *Who will believe the message?* The twofold answer to that question forms the foundation of two practical applications.

First, *anyone who is willing to acknowledge Jesus’ claims expresses that acknowledgment in faith*. After reading John’s account, the evidence becomes undeniable that Jesus Christ is no mere prophet or skilled teacher of the Scriptures. He is the one and only promised Messiah . . . the Son of God. He is God incarnate, who has come to set the world free from the penalty of sin.

Have you acknowledged that fact personally? You can do that by simply bowing in prayer and saying, “Lord Jesus, I believe that You are God’s Son and that You died on the cross for my sin. I receive Your gift of eternal life by faith, fully trusting in Your finished work.”

Second, *anyone who believes in Jesus as Messiah will commit himself or herself to Him without reservation*. Acknowledging Jesus as Savior and Lord demands an unswerving commitment to obey Him. *Will you commit yourself to Him without reservation today?* You can do that by simply praying, “Lord Jesus, I surrender the plans and purposes of my life, my entire will, to You. I make You Lord of my life.”



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for sending Jesus, Your only Son, to die on the cross for my sin and for raising Him from the dead. I entrust my life to You and to a life fully surrendered to Him. Use me for Your glory, Father, to be a witness to the world of what Jesus Christ has done for me. In His name I pray, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, rev. and updated ed., ed. R. K. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 396.



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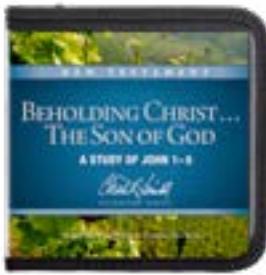
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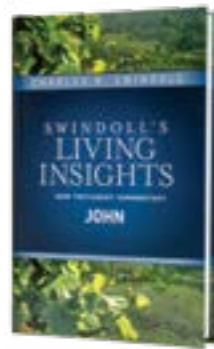
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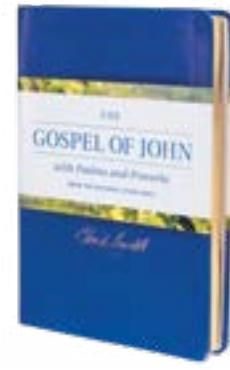
Tools for Digging Deeper



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The Son of God:
A Study of John 1–5**
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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Searching the Scriptures Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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