The Gospel of John: Evidences for Belief

Compiled by Gene Taylor
Preface

The Book of John is different from the other gospels in a number of ways. It not only provides wonderful insights into the life and ministry of Jesus with the stated purpose of generating belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:30-31) but also relates the reasons behind many of the activities of Jesus and His disciples.

In studying John’s Gospel, one can see the culmination of God’s eternal purpose in His only begotten Son. Jesus was not a reluctant participant in the plan of the Father, rather He willingly laid down His life as a sacrifice for sin. Studying this gospel allows the student to see the step-by-step process by which that purpose is accomplished.

Merrill C. Tenney’s commentary on John’s Gospel, *John: The Gospel of Belief* (Grand Rapids: Erdman’s, 1948), is a good companion to your study. His general outline of the book of John serves as the guide for this study.

May this study be of value to you. May you fully come to believe that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” And may you have “life in His name.”

Gene Taylor
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VIII. The Epilogue (21:1-25)

Lesson One: Introduction and Prologue

Text: John 1:1-18

I. Author: The Apostle John
   A. External evidence: Church Fathers (Irenaus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, and Hippolytus).
   B. Internal evidence.
      1. He must have been a Jew.
      2. He must have been a resident of Palestine.
      3. He clearly implies he was an eyewitness of many events in Christ’s earthly ministry.
      4. He apparently identified himself as the disciple “whom Jesus loved.”
      5. The style and vocabulary of the three epistles of John bear a striking resemblance to this book.
   C. The life of John (from Scripture).
      1. His name is mentioned almost twice as many times as those of the other three gospel writers.
      2. He was a son of Zebedee and Salome.
      3. His life as a disciple.
         a. He was first a disciple of John the Baptist, then of Jesus.
         b. He was the disciple “whom Jesus loved.”
         c. He was one of the “inner circle” which consisted of Peter, James and John.

II. The Book
   A. The time and place of writing.
      1. Time: Somewhere about 85 to 90 A.D.
      2. Place: Tradition says Ephesus.
   B. The purpose of the book.
      1. It was written to convince readers that Jesus was both divine and human.
      2. It was written to generate and reinforce belief on Jesus as the Christ in order to have the readers gain life. (John 20:30-31)
   C. Distinctive features of the book.
      1. It is the most selective of the gospels.
      2. It contains many great sermons and topical discourses.
      3. It places the most emphasis on the deity of Jesus through His own claims.
      4. It possesses a great simplicity of style.
      5. Much of its narrative is centered around Christ’s visits to Jerusalem to observe feasts.
   D. Structure of the book.
      1. The formal statement of the author in 20:30-31 speaks of its structure. “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”
         a. Three outstanding words are found in it: “signs,” “believe,” and “life.”
b. It attests to the content of the gospel.
   1) A selective gospel.
   2) An attested gospel.
   3) An apologetic gospel.
   4) An interpretive gospel.
   5) A definitive gospel.
   6) An effective gospel.

E. Divisions of the book.
   1. The divisions are divisions of action. (See the outline of the book by Merrill C. Tenney)
   2. The chronological divisions. Actual chronology begins at 1:19.
   3. Three geographical divisions.
      a. Unit one centers in Galilee around Capernaum and Cana.
      b. Unit two relates to Samaria.
      c. Unit three deals with Jerusalem and Judea.

III. The Prologue (1:1-18)
1. Who or what is referred to as “the Word?” Give evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. List all statements made about “the Word” in verses one through eighteen.

3. Why do you think this term is used to describe this person? Relate your explanation to the text.

4. Who is “John” who is referred to in the text? What was his mission or function? What was his testimony about Jesus?

5. Why is what is described in verses nine through eleven to be considered a great tragedy?

6. Explain how Jesus’ coming to the earth divided people into two camps.

7. What difference does it make whether one believes on Jesus Christ?

8. What is meant by the phrase “and the Word became flesh?” (v. 14)

9. What was the purpose, according to verses fourteen through eighteen, of the incarnation of Jesus?

10. Summarize what this text teaches about Jesus.
Lesson Two:
The Period of Consideration I - Early Disciples

Text: John 1:19 - 2:11

Introduction by John the Baptist (1:19-34)
1. Why were questions raised about whether John was:
   b. Elijah in light of Malachi 4:5-6?
   c. The prophet in light of Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and John 6:14 and 7:40?

2. How may John's denial that he was Elijah (v. 21) be explained consistently with Matthew 11:13-14; 17:10-13 and Luke 1:17?

3. Explain how and why John identified himself.

4. From these verses, list some testimonies that John gave concerning Jesus. (At least four or five items)

5. What is meant by the phrase “the Lamb of God?”

6. How did John recognize Jesus as the Messiah?

Disciples (1:35-51)
7. How did the disciples of John come to believe on Jesus?

8. Describe the testimony of the following men in relation to Jesus.
   a. Andrew.
   b. Philip.
   c. Nathaniel.

9. On what grounds were the disciples listed in the previous question able to reach their conclusions concerning Jesus?

10. What is the meaning of verse 51 as it alludes to Genesis 28:10-17?
The Sign at the Marriage Feast (2:1-11)

11. What was the miracle performed at the marriage feast in Cana?

12. What circumstances brought this miracle about?

13. What effect did this sign have on the disciples? Did they not “believe in Him” before?
Lesson Three: The Period of Consideration II - Interviews

Text: John 2:12 - 4:54

The Scourging of the Temple in Jerusalem (2:12-22)
1. What characteristic of Jesus is manifested by this incident? How is it manifested?

2. Why did the Jews seek a sign from Jesus? What was that sign? Do you think Jesus expected the Jews to understand the sign? If not, why did He use it? When was it finally understood?

The Interview with Nicodemus (2:23 - 3:21)
3. Who was Nicodemus? What caused him to come to the conclusion that Jesus was “a teacher come from God?”

4. According to this text, what is essential for one to enter into the kingdom of heaven?

5. What does it mean to be “born again?” Cite other scriptures which support your answer.

6. What does the comparison of the wind to those who are born of the Spirit mean in verse eight?

7. How is verse 16 to be interpreted in light of such passages in this book as 2:23-25; 8:31-34; and 12:42-43 which speak of believers who do not have eternal life?

8. Since verse 17 states that Jesus was not sent to judge the world, who and what is responsible for the judgment that comes upon the unbeliever?

The Testimony of John the Baptist while Jesus Was Baptizing in Judea and John at Aenon Near to Salim (3:22-36)
9. Describe the incident which provides the opportunity for John’s final testimony about Jesus.

10. Describe the connection between baptism and purification.

11. How did John describe his relationship between himself and the Christ?

12. What can be learned about John’s character from these verses?
The Interview with the Woman of Samaria (4:1-42)
13. List some details from this passage which show the humanity of Jesus.

14. What, in general, was the relationship between Jews and Samaritans?

15. List some reasons why this woman would seem to be one who would not be receptive to the word of God. What lesson(s) can we learn from this?

16. What principles of worship are set forth in this passage?

17. Briefly describe the exchange between Jesus and His disciples upon their return.

18. What did Jesus mean when He said the fields “are already white for harvest?”

19. What caused the Samaritan woman to believe?

20. What were the reasons for the faith of the other Samaritans? What conclusion did they reach about Jesus?

The Second Sign: The Healing of the Nobleman’s Son (4:43-54)
21. Why did Jesus go into Galilee?

22. How was He received by the people in Galilee? What explains His reception?

23. Describe the miracle related in these verses.

24. What were some consequences of this miracle especially in relation to the nobleman and his faith?
Lesson Four: The Period of Controversy

Text: John 5:1 - 6:71

The Man at the Pool (5:1-18)
1. Describe the problem of the infirm man and how Jesus solved it.

2. What details focus attention on the greatness of this miracle?

3. What two charges were made against Jesus?

4. Since Jesus claims to only be doing the work of the Father, if the Jews were going to charge Him with working on the Sabbath, who else did they have to charge? Why?

5. What was the implication of Jesus’ claim that God was “His Father?”

The Claims of Jesus (5:19-29)
6. Explain the relation between Jesus and the Father as it is set forth here.

7. What is meant when Jesus says He does nothing but “what He sees the Father do?” How did this statement apply to the miracle Jesus had just performed?

8. What are the works “greater than these?”

9. What is the implication of verse 23 especially when it is compared to Isaiah 42:8?

The Witnesses (5:30-47)
10. List the witnesses to whom Jesus appeals in this text.

11. What is meant by verse 31? Compare and contrast it to 8:12-20. How can both of these passages be true?

12. Why did the Jews, in spite of all the testimony, refuse to believe? How do their reasons for not believing compare to the reasons for unbelief today?

The Feeding of the 5,000 (6:1-15)
13. Summarize the miracle and what prompted it. What details show the greatness of the miracle?

14. Describe the reaction of the people to this miracle? How does verse 15, in particular, reflect the misguided ideas of the people?
The Walking on the Water (6:16-21)
15. Describe the miracles connected with the crossing of the sea.

The Discourse on the Bread of Life (6:22-71)
16. How does the teaching in this passage reflect the miracle of the previous day?

17. What is meant by the word “seal” in verse 27 in relation to Jesus’ relationship to the Father?

18. What did Jesus mean when He claimed to be “the bread of life.” What gives credibility to His claim?

19. Why did the Jews reject Jesus as “the bread of life?”

20. How does the Father draw a person to Christ? How is one “taught of God?”

21. What did Jesus mean when He said one must eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to have life?

22. What are the results of Jesus’ teaching in this text?
Lesson Five: The Period of Conflict I

Text: John 7:1 - 8:30

The Confusion of the Multitude (7:1-52)
1. What did the brothers of Jesus think He ought to do? What did they have nothing to fear from the world?

2. Explain how Jesus went up to the feast. Why did He go this way?

3. What different views were held about Jesus? Why were these views not voiced openly?

4. What did the Jews murmur about the teachings of Jesus? Why did they not accept His teachings?

5. Why were the Jews amazed at the boldness of Jesus? What conclusion(s) did they reach because of it?

6. What reason is given in this text for the fact that no one had arrested Jesus at this time? What does it mean?

7. What was the general reactions of the crowd to the teachings of Jesus in this passage? What different views were held concerning Him after this teaching?

8. How does the objection to Jesus as the Christ in verses 41 and 42 actually comprise an argument in favor of Jesus?

9. What explanation did the officers give as to why they did not arrest Jesus?

10. Who defended Jesus to the Pharisees at this time? What was that defense? How did the Pharisees respond to it?

The Woman Taken in Adultery (7:53 - 8:11)
(Many ancient manuscripts fail to include this section. Many scholars have therefore concluded that it is not a part of the original text.)

11. Why did the Pharisees bring this woman to Jesus?

12. What were some of the mistakes the Pharisees made in relation to this incident?

13. Why do you think Jesus responded the way He did to what the Pharisees were doing in regard to this woman?

14. Was Jesus condoning the sin of the woman? Explain your answer.
Two Discourses (8:12-59)

15. What claim does Jesus make about Himself at the beginning of this section? What was the Pharisees’ objection to it? How did Jesus answer their objection?

16. What did Jesus mean when He said He was going away? Why would the Jews not be able to go with Him?

17. What must one believe concerning Jesus in order to have life?

18. According to this text, what must one do in order to be a disciple of Jesus? What is “truth?”

19. Though the Jews were the physical descendants of Abraham, who did Jesus say was their real father? Why? What were their objections to this teaching?

20. In His discourse about Abraham, Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” What does this mean? What did the Jews understand it to mean?
Lesson Six: The Period of Conflict II

Text: John 9:1 - 11:53

The Healing of the Man Born Blind (9:1-41)
1. What misconception of the disciples is removed by Jesus?

2. What special significance does this miracle have in relation to the claims of Jesus? (cf. 8:12)

3. What testimonies are given of the miracle?

4. What two positions are taken by the Pharisees as a result of the blind man’s testimony?

5. What was the blind man’s view of Jesus at this point? On what evidence was it based?

6. What position did the Jews attempt to take in reference to the miracle?

7. Describe the testimony of the blind man’s parents. Why did they respond as they did?

8. What was the basis for calling Jesus a sinner?

9. What does Jesus now reveal to the blind man? Why? What was his response?

10. How does Jesus describe the Pharisees? Why?

The Discourse in Jerusalem and Its Effects (10:1-39)
11. Relate the parable of the Good Shepherd found in this text. Give an explanation of it.

12. What characteristics of the death of Jesus are brought out in this passage?

13. Who are the “other sheep” mentioned in this passage? Explain.

14. What reactions are there to the teachings of Jesus in regards to the Shepherd and His sheep?

15. What question do the Jews ask of Jesus while on Solomon’s porch? What is His response?

16. Who heard the voice of Jesus at this time? How did that affect His questioners?

17. Why did the Jews seek to stone Jesus? Seeing their actions, what did Jesus ask them? How did they respond?
18. In what way were the Jews “gods?” How did Jesus use this fact against them?

19. After escaping from the Jews, where did Jesus go? Who met Him there? What did they say to Him? Why?

20. What news did Jesus receive about Lazarus?

21. What was Jesus initial reaction to the news about Lazarus? What did His disciples think He meant by it?

22. Why did the disciples try to discourage Jesus from going to Bethany? Why did Jesus say He must go to Lazarus?

23. What manifestations of faith in Jesus are seen in this passage? Describe each.

24. Why do you think Jesus wept before the tomb of Lazarus?

25. What was the reaction of the people following the miracle at Lazarus’ tomb?
Lesson Seven: The Period of Crisis

Text: John 11:54 - 12:36a

The Retreat to Ephraim (11:54-57)
1. Why did Jesus retreat to near the wilderness at this time?

2. What command had been given concerning Jesus to all the Jews by the chief priests and the Pharisees?

The Return to and Dinner at Bethany (12:1-11)
3. Contrast the attitudes of Judas and Mary toward Jesus.

4. What was the special significance of Mary’s anointing of Jesus? What made it so especially appropriate at this time?

5. Why did the chief priests want to get rid of Lazarus? What significance is there to the word “also” in verse ten?

The Entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19)
6. Describe the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and the reaction of the people to it.

7. Contrast the events in this passage to the statement of chapter 6:15. In what ways were the reactions of Jesus different? Why?

8. What significance was there to Jesus riding on a donkey? (See Zechariah 9:9)

9. Explain the reaction of the leaders of the Jews in verse 19.

The Visit of the Greeks: The Last Public Discourse of Jesus (12:20-36a)
10. Who were the Greeks that were seeking Jesus? What is the significance of their interest in Jesus?

11. What is the significance of the statement of Jesus in verse 23?

12. Relate the significance of the death of Jesus that is brought out in this passage.

13. According to verse 34, what puzzled the crowd?

14. Summarize the meaning of the admonition given in verses 35 and 36.
Lesson Eight:  
The Period of Conference I - Transition

Text: John 12:36b - 13:30

A Retrospective Look by the Author (12:36b-43)  
1. What explanation does John give for Jewish unbelief?

2. What application do the passages John quotes from Isaiah have to the unbelief of the Jews?  (cf. Matthew 13:14-15)

3. Were those who believed among the rulers of the Jews saved? What application, if any, can be made of your answer today?

The Conclusion of the Public Ministry of Jesus (12:44-50)  
4. Since Jesus, in this passage, seems to summarize the reasons to believe in Him, what are those reasons?

5. Why do you think Jesus chose to end His public ministry with these words?

The Last Supper: Washing the Disciples' Feet (13:1-20)  
6. What was the significance of the foot washing to:
   a. Jesus?
   b. The disciples?
   c. Us today?

7. Why, according to verses 18 and 19, did Jesus give advance notice of the betrayal?

8. Contrasting verse 20 with verses 14-16, what two important, but contrasting, points are made about the one sent?

The Dismissal of the Traitor (13:21-30)  
9. Since Jesus knows what is going to happen:
   a. Who is in control, the traitor, the authorities or Jesus? Explain.
   b. Why make this announcement? Who would benefit by it? Explain.
10. Since Judas knew that Jesus was aware of his betrayal, what does this speak of his character?

11. Who was the disciple mentioned in verse 23 as the one “whom Jesus loved?” Explain your answer.
   (cf. John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20)

12. After the departure of Judas, who was left?
Lesson Nine:
The Period of Conferences II - The Conferences

Text: John 13:31 - 17:26

The Conference on Preparation (13:31 - 14:31)
1. For what does Jesus begin to prepare the disciples?

2. What is the new commandment? What is new about it?

3. What does Peter ask Jesus? What was Jesus’ response? What then did Peter boast? What is to be learned from Peter’s boast?

4. What did Jesus tell His disciples to reassure their troubled hearts? What made this reassurance necessary?

5. What question did Thomas ask? How did Jesus answer it?


7. Explain the relationship between Jesus and the Father as set forth in verse nine. What two expressions of the relationship between the Father and Son are set forth in verses ten and eleven?

8. What “greater works” are meant in verse 12?

9. Who is the “comforter?” What is promised concerning Him?

10. What would be the work of the Spirit?

11. Why was Jesus’ ascension to the Father cause for rejoicing rather than sorrow and fear? What are the implications of the ascension?

The Conference on Relationships (15:1-27)
12. How is Jesus the “true vine?”

13. Who are the “branches” Jesus refers to in verse five? Explain. What fruit is to be borne by these branches?

14. What prerequisites to fruit-bearing are set forth in this passage?
15. What is the greatest expression of love? Why?

16. Why was it so important for the disciples to love one another?

17. According to this text, what treatment could the disciples expect from the world? Why?

**The Conference on Revelation (16:1-33)**
18. According to Jesus in this text, what forms would persecution take? What is the reason behind such persecution? Why do you think Jesus told of these persecutions in advance?

19. How was it to the advantage of the disciples for Jesus to go away?

20. What three aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit are brought out in this passage?

21. Why, according to this passage, would the disciples weep and the world rejoice? Why would the sorrow of the disciples be turned to joy?

**The Conference with the Father (17:1-26)**
22. How was the Son to be glorified?

23. How were the apostles “not of the world?” What would keep them that way?

24. For whom does Jesus pray in verses 20-23?

25. Why is unity so important among the believers of Christ?

**A Final Retrospect (17:25-26)**
26. What final petition does Jesus make in His prayer?
Lesson Ten: The Period of Consummation

Text: John 18:1 - 20:31

The Betrayal (18:1-11)
1. How did Judas know where Jesus would be? Who accompanied Judas when he came to Jesus? Why was he there?

2. What are some things found in this text which show that Jesus was still in control of the situation?

The Trial Before Annas (18:12-27)
3. After His arrest, where was Jesus taken? Why?

4. Describe the actions of Peter during this period of time. What made his actions so significant?

The Interview with Pilate (18:28 - 19:16)
5. Why did the Jews not enter the Praetorium?

6. Why had the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate? What did they expect Pilate to do?

7. What are some of the consequences of the fact that Jesus’ kingdom “is not of this world?”

8. What conclusion did Pilate reach concerning Jesus? Why did he not release Him? What did he ultimately do with Jesus?

The Crucifixion (19:17-22)
9. In this text, what did John seem to see as the most important factor associated with the death of Jesus?

10. Why do you think Pilate was so insistent on keeping the title “The King of the Jews” attached to the cross?

The Burial (19:38-42)
11. What two men prepared the body of Jesus for burial? What do you know of them?

12. Why would the actions of these two men be considered as bold?

13. Where was the body of Jesus placed?
The Resurrection (20:1-31)
14. Describe the conditions found at the tomb where Jesus had been buried. What is the significance of this description?

15. What were the reactions of Mary to the empty tomb and to the subsequent conversation with Jesus?

16. How did His disciples react to the appearance of Jesus to them? What was the reaction of Thomas, who was not with the other disciples? How were his doubts erased?

17. Why did John write his gospel?
Lesson Eleven: The Epilogue

Text: John 21:1-23

The Manifestation of Jesus (21:1-8)
1. In this text:
   a. Where is the activity taking place?
   b. Who is present?
   c. What are they doing?
   d. Who appears to them?
   e. What did He ask of them?
   f. Did they recognize Him at first? How did they come to recognize Him?

The Invitation of Jesus (21:9-14)
2. What did Jesus invite them to do?
3. Why do you think that even though they had recognized Jesus they did not acknowledge Him to His face?

A New Motivation and Occupation (21:15-17)
4. What do you think Jesus was so intense in His questioning of Peter and his love?
5. What do you think is accomplished by entrusting the “sheep” to Peter?

The Final Expectation (21:18-23)
6. What is suggested in verses eighteen and nineteen with regard to the manner of Peter’s death?
7. What did Peter ask about “the disciple whom Jesus loved?” Who was that disciple? What was Jesus’ answer?
8. What “disciple” is referred to in verse 24? What is the purpose of such a statement?
9. What does verse 25 suggest as to the character and structure of the book of John?
Lesson Twelve: Review I

1. Give some internal evidence supporting John as the author of the fourth gospel.

2. What is the purpose of the book?

3. Analyze John 20:30-31 as to the intent of the author and structure of the book.

4. How is the book of John an “interpretive gospel?”

5. What purpose does the prologue (1:1-18) serve?

6. Contrast Jesus and John the Baptist as presented in the prologue.

7. What is significant about the sign Jesus performed at the wedding at Cana?

8. How do you reconcile the seemingly irrelevant response Jesus gives to Nicodemus? What does it mean to be born of water and the Spirit?

9. Contrast and compare Jesus’ discussion with Nicodemus and the one He had with the Samaritan woman at the well.

10. What distinction did Christ make in 4:24 between worship under the Old Law and the New Law?

11. In healing the nobleman’s son, what were the results? What were the results of Jesus’ healing of the lame man at the pool?

12. What witnesses did Christ give concerning the claims He makes about Himself in chapter five? What qualifies these as proper witnesses?


14. Since the feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle recorded by all four gospel writers, cite some reasons why you believe it to be so noteworthy.
15. How is the hypocritical attitude of the multitude manifested when in 6:30 they ask Jesus to perform a sign so that they can believe in Him?

16. Summarize Jesus as the “Bread of Life.”

17. What are the diverse reactions to Jesus and His appearance in chapter seven at the feast in Jerusalem?

18. How did the men who in chapter eight present to Jesus the woman taken in adultery violate the Old Law?

19. Comment on the statement made by the Jews in 8:33.

20. Compare, contrast, and reconcile 8:37 and 8:44.
Lesson Thirteen: Review II

1. Explain Jesus’ answer to His disciples given in 9:3 concerning the man born blind.

2. What is significant in the fact that the man was “born blind?”

3. What were the actions of the Pharisees following the healing of the man born blind? What lesson did Jesus teach them?

4. Describe Jesus as “the good shepherd.”

5. How does Jesus describe His sheep. Identify His sheep.

6. When Jesus heard Lazarus was sick, why did He wait two days to go to him? Explain Jesus’ statement found in 11:4—“This sickness is not unto death.”

7. Explain Thomas’ statement to his fellow-disciples that is found in 11:16.

8. Explain the actions of Jesus in 11:33, 35, and 38 when He “groaned in the spirit, and was troubled” and “wept” when He knew He would shortly bring Lazarus back to life.

9. Why were the chief priests and Pharisees afraid that if all men believed on Jesus that the Romans would take away their place and nation? (11:48)

10. Explain 12:23 and apply it to the rest of the book.

11. Why did Jesus wash His disciples’ feet? Why do we not practice feet washing as a religious rite?

12. In talking about love in chapter 14, how does Jesus indicate one shows true love for Him? How does this differ from the popular concept?

13. Describe Jesus as the “vine.”

14. Explain the role of the “Comforter” especially using 14:26 as the basis of your explanation.
15. Using Jesus’ prayer for His disciples in chapter 17 to describe scriptural unity and how it is achieved.

16. From chapter 18, list those things which demonstrate how determined the Jews were to do away with Jesus.

17. Describe Pilate’s responsibility as to the crucifixion of Jesus. Why do you think he was so uneasy about Jesus? What are some indications of his uneasiness? Why did he seemingly fear the Jews?

18. Discuss the involvement and/or lack of involvement of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in respect to Jesus.

19. What was the purpose of Jesus’ discourse to Peter in 21:15-17?
