

Straight Talk

About Jesus

The Gospel of John in the New Testament presents a concise and powerful portrait of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son and Word of God, the Reason and Explanation for all things.



Rembrandt: *Jesus and His Disciples*, 1634

Discover Jesus, perhaps for the first time, as you contemplate one of the oldest records of His life, death, and resurrection in the Gospel of John.

A Fellowship of Ailbe *Straight Talk* Study

Straight Talk: About Jesus
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Introducing the Gospel of John

The New Testament contains four different accounts of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. These first four books of the New Testament are called *gospels*, because they relate the “good news” (*gospel*) of Jesus.

The Gospel of John was written by John the apostle, a close friend and associate of Jesus, during His time on earth, and one of the most important leaders in the first generation of Christians. Thousands of early copies and fragments of John’s gospel exist from the early days, beginning very shortly after John’s death. His gospel was read, cherished, and widely distributed among the first Christians, since they recognized his gospel to be an accurate account of the life and teaching of Jesus.

John wrote his gospel to explain the primary teachings and works of Jesus, by which He honored God and fulfilled His purpose of bringing salvation and new life to people. It’s important to keep in mind that John was an eyewitness of Jesus’ life and teaching, and that he devoted the entirety of his adult life to teaching others about Jesus and His work.

Jesus was able to do this, to bring salvation to the world and glory to God, because of Who He is and what He did. In his brief account of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, John focuses on each of these important points. We invite you to consider each of them briefly.

In the two sections that follow, you’ll find excerpts from John’s gospel summarizing his teaching about the Jesus. This is by no means a complete compendium. Our purpose is only to highlight major themes that recur consistently throughout the gospel of John, as well as the rest of the Bible. We hope you’ll read and reflect on these excerpts, and perhaps even begin reading the gospel of John itself. Following these excerpts, we’ll provide a few questions for you to consider as you reflect on the straight talk of Scripture about Jesus.

Who Jesus Is

The best way to get to know anyone is to listen as he describes himself, or to chat with others who know him. The Gospel of John is an excellent source for first-hand information about Jesus – what He said about Himself, how others understood Him, and how many regarded Him.

The Gospel of John reports that Jesus is the Word and Son of God, and God Himself.

Here is what John the apostle, one of Jesus’ closest friends, said about Him:

John 1.1-5, 14, 16-18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was

made. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth..¹⁶And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

The following passages are Jesus' own words:

John 3.16, 17

¹⁶"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

John 6.38-40

Jesus speaking: ³⁸"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Jesus' enemies clearly understood what He claimed about Himself, as we see here:

John 10.31-33

³¹Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. ³²Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" ³³The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."

So also did His disciples:

John 20.26-28

²⁶And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" ²⁷Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

John's Gospel also portrays Jesus as Messiah, or Christ, and Savior of the World.

John the Baptist:

John 1.29

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Jesus:

John 4.25, 26

²⁵The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."

Certain men of Samaria:

John 4.42

Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Jesus:

John 11.24-27

²⁴Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Jesus:

John 14.6-11

⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." ⁸Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."

What Jesus Accomplished

The importance of Who Jesus is becomes clear as we reflect on what He accomplished by His life, death, and resurrection, and the implications of that for all who believe in Him.

John 3.14-17

(Jesus speaking): “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

John 5.24

(Jesus speaking): “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

John 6.40

(Jesus speaking): “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 8.12

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

John 8.32

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

John 10.11. 17, 18

(Jesus speaking): “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep...Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. ¹⁸No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

John 12.44-50

Then Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. ⁴⁵And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. ⁴⁶I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. ⁴⁷And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. ⁴⁹For I have not spoken on My own *authority*; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and

what I should speak. ⁵⁰And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

Some Questions for Reflection

1. Have you ever honestly and carefully considered that Jesus might be the Person He claimed to be?
2. Jesus did many good works which demonstrated the love God has for people. He appointed His followers to imitate Him in doing many good works. Do you think learning more about the good works of Jesus might be a good idea?
3. Jesus said we must believe in Him for the forgiveness of our sins and follow Him into the fullness of life and joy. Why don't more people do this today?
4. What is the greatest obstacle keeping you from believing in and following Jesus?
5. Would you be interested in going through a more careful reading of the Gospel of John with a friend?