



## Your challenge is to read through the Gospel of John

Although your challenge is to read through the Gospel of John, the intention is not that you should attempt to do this in the shortest time possible. In fact, the hope is that you will make your way through the Gospel of John carefully, taking time for reflection about the challenging questions and options that Jesus presented to those who would be his followers. To assist you in fulfilling this challenge the Gospel has been divided into short reading segments and some introductory notes are provided. Since these segments are of variable length and complexity, on some days you may read several of them or in some cases you may wish to spend more time on a single passage. Check off the readings as you complete them. Use the back of the sheet to list questions you would like to discuss. There will be a question box at the church into which you can place any questions that you have.

### A brief introduction to John's Gospel

John's Gospel is distinctive from the other three Gospels in both style and content. Approximately 90% of the material in John's Gospel does not appear in Matthew, Mark and Luke. John is less interested in providing an account of the daily events in Christ's ministry and instead focuses more on the content of Jesus teaching. John emphasizes Jesus' teaching about himself as the Son of God and of the response of the people, especially the Jews in Jerusalem, to what he had to say. From the other Gospels one might get the impression that Jesus was seldom in Jerusalem. In contrast John gives considerable attention to Jesus' various visits to Jerusalem throughout his ministry and his interaction with the Pharisees in the temple. This emphasis helps us to understand their intense involvement in the final events of his life.

**John's Gospel, chapter 1.** Unlike Matthew and Luke which begin with accounts of the birth of Jesus, John begins his gospel with a declaration concerning the divinity of Christ ("the Word"). From the very beginning John emphasizes the fact that the appearance of Jesus in the world is a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning a coming Messiah. John stresses the uniquely divine character of Jesus.

- 1:1-18            The Word became flesh
- 1:19-28        John the Baptist denies being the Christ
- 1:29-34        Jesus the Lamb of God
- 1:35-42        Jesus' first Disciples
- 1:43-51        Jesus calls Philip and Nathanael

### John's Gospel, chapter 2

None of the material in this chapter is included in the other gospels.

- 2:1-11            Jesus changes water into wine
- 2:12-25        Jesus clears the temple

**John's Gospel, chapter 3**

This chapter also includes unique material not recorded elsewhere. The account of Jesus meeting with Nicodemus, including the famous declaration in John 3:16, appear only in John. This chapter also includes an encounter that Jesus had with John the Baptist in which John attests to the uniqueness of Jesus as the Christ.

- 3:1-21 Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus
- 3:22-36 John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus

**John's Gospel, chapter 4**

When Jesus decides to leave the province of Judea and return to Galilee in the north, he opted to go through the region of Samaria. That led to a fascinating encounter with a Samaritan woman - the upshot of which was that a number of Samaritans around Sychar came to believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Back in Galilee, Jesus returned to the Town of Cana where he met a royal official whose son in Capernaum was sick. Without even going to Capernaum Jesus promised healing and his promise was fulfilled.

- 4:1-26 Jesus talks with a Samaritan woman
- 4:27-38 Jesus uses the situation to teach his disciples
- 4:39-42 Many Samaritans believe
- 4:43-54 Jesus arrives back in Galilee and heals the official's son at Cana

**John's Gospel, chapter 5**

John recounts another occasion when Jesus visited Jerusalem and healed an invalid by the pool of Bethesda. This had the consequence of bringing Jesus to the attention of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and the opposition to him begins to strengthen.

- 5:1-15 Jesus heals the invalid at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem
- 5:16-30 Jesus contends with the Jewish leaders and speaks about eternal life
- 5:31-47 Jesus tells the Jewish leaders about testimony as to who he is

**John's Gospel, chapter 6**

This is a long and complex chapter. The setting shifts back to Galilee. After the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus accuses the people of only being interested in material things and not the spiritual. He goes on to speak of himself as the bread of life. It is interesting that John notes (vs.4) that this all took place near Passover time and his teaching in vss.51-59 anticipates his words at his final Passover meal with his disciples. The chapter ends with the observation that his teaching did not find favour with everyone and the prediction that one of the Twelve would betray him.

- 6:1-15 Feeding of 5,000 (Aside from resurrection, only miracle recorded in all 4 gospels)
- 6:16-24 Jesus walks on water
- 6:25-59 Jesus the Bread of life (Long and complex)
- 6:60-71 Many disciples desert Jesus

**John's Gospel, chapter 7**

The Feast of Tabernacles was observed in September or October (in contrast with Passover which fell in March or April). Knowing that his appearance in Jerusalem would provoke a negative response from the Jewish leaders, Jesus went to Jerusalem in secret (because it was not yet the time for the final events of his life to take place). Though he went up to Jerusalem in secret, once there he appeared and taught openly in the temple courts. The miracle that Jesus refers to (vss. 21-24) appears to be a reference to the healing recorded in John 5:1-15 which had taken place in Jerusalem. The Pharisees and the Chief Priests opposed Jesus presence and attempted to have him arrested but the temple guard were so impressed by Jesus that they failed to carry out the order.

- 7:1-13            Jesus goes to Jerusalem in secret for the Feast of Tabernacles
- 7:14-24        Jesus defends his teaching in the temple courts
- 7:25-44        Jesus presents himself as the Christ and opposition intensifies
- 7:45-52        The reaction of the Jewish leaders and Nicodemus urges caution

**John's Gospel, chapter 8**

The beginning of this chapter, actually starting at verse 53 of chapter 7, through to the end of verse 11 of chapter 8 is quite unusual. It is the account of a woman accused of adultery. It is commonly acknowledged that this passage, which has long appeared in copies of John's Gospel, was not part of his original manuscript but was added at some point along the way by an editor. It is a popular and pleasing passage and often cited as a demonstration of Christ's compassion. Though the passage is of ancient origin and may actually have happened as recorded it was not part of John's original manuscript. The remainder of the events described take place in Jerusalem.

- 7:53- 8:11     The woman accused of adultery
- 8:12-30        Jesus describes himself as the light of the world and is challenged
- 8:31-41        Jesus address the claim of the Jews to be the children of Abraham
- 8:42-47        Jesus describes his accusers as children of the devil rather than children of God
- 8:48-59        Jesus is accused of being demon possessed and a Samaritan

**John's Gospel, chapter 9**

John continues to describe events that take place in Jerusalem. Jesus heals a man who has been blind from birth triggering yet another challenge by the Pharisees. As the chapter ends the opposition of the Pharisees continues.

- 9:1-12         Jesus heals the blind man
- 9:13-34        The Pharisees make inquiries about the healing
- 9:35-41        Jesus talks to the healed man and warns the Pharisees about spiritual blindness

**John's Gospel, chapter 10**

In this chapter Jesus identifies himself as the good shepherd and is met with continued scorn by the Jews. The narrative moves on to an event in the winter season at the Feast of Dedication that leads to an accusation of blasphemy. As the chapter ends we are told that Jesus left Jerusalem to spend time teaching in the area on the eastern side of the Jordan River where John the Baptist had begun his ministry.

- 10:1-21 Jesus presents himself as the Good Shepherd.  
10:22-42 The unbelief and opposition of the Jews causes Jesus to leave Jerusalem

### **John's Gospel, chapter 11**

In chapter 11 John recounts the events relating to the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus lives in Bethany which again brings Jesus back into close proximity to Jerusalem. The raising of Lazarus intensified the opposition of the Jewish leaders to Jesus and strengthened their resolve to take action against him.

- 11:1-16 Jesus is notified that Lazarus is ill but delays before leaving for Bethany  
11:17-37 Jesus comforts Mary and Martha  
11:38-44 Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead  
11:45-57 The Sanhedrin makes plans to execute Jesus and he leaves for Ephraim

### **John's Gospel, chapter 12**

The events recorded in this chapter begin six days before Passover when Jesus again returns to Bethany near Jerusalem.

- 12:1-11 Jesus is the guest of honour at a feast prepared by Lazarus  
12:12-19 Jesus enters Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd and murmurs of the Pharisees  
12:20-36 People seek out Jesus and he predicts his death  
12:37-50 John describes the turmoil among the Jews as Jesus reaffirms his authority

### **John's Gospel, chapter 13**

Jesus, knowing that his time was near, washed his disciples' feet and talked with them about humility and serving others. Jesus also predicts his betrayal and Peter's denial.

- 13:1-17 Washing the disciples' feet  
13:18-30 Jesus predicts and identifies his betrayer to John  
13:31-38 Jesus predicts Peter's denial

### **John's Gospel, chapters 14 through 16**

These three chapters are treated as a group because together they represent Jesus parting words to his disciples. Jesus emphasizes what the disciples must remember about the time that they have shared with him and the things that he has taught them and also makes promises to them concerning the provision that would be made for them in the future.

- 14:1-4 Jesus comforts his disciples  
14:5-14 Jesus presents himself as the way to the Father  
14:15-31 Jesus talks about the promise of the Holy Spirit
- 15:1-17 Jesus talks about the vine and the branches and the need to stay connected  
15:18-27 The Spirit's power is promised to overcome the world's opposition
- 16:1-4 Jesus emphasizes that the opposition will be strong  
16:5-16 The Spirit will guide them through the coming turmoil  
16:17-33 Their grief and trial will result in joy

**John's Gospel, chapter 17**

With his arrest anticipated that same evening Jesus prays for himself, for his disciples, and for all who will come to faith through their testimony.

- 17:1-5 Jesus prays for himself
- 17:6-19 His prayer for his Disciples
- 17:20-26 His prayer for all believers - present and future

**John's Gospel, chapter 18**

John's account of the arrest and trial of Jesus is brief but includes detail that only an eyewitness could provide. It focuses on the betrayal by Judas and the repeated denials by Peter.

- 18:1-11 The arrest of Jesus and the role of Judas
- 18:12-27 The trial of Jesus and Peter's denials
- 18:28-40 Jesus is taken to Pilate for sentencing.

**John's Gospel, chapter 19**

John's description of Pilate's role in Jesus execution underscores how unwilling Pilate was to pass the death sentence and how he was coerced into doing so by suggestions that not to sentence Jesus to death would raise questions about Pilate's own loyalty to Caesar.

- 19:11-16 Pilate passes sentence
- 19:17-27 The crucifixion is arranged
- 19:28-37 The death of Jesus is described
- 19:38-42 Jesus' body is removed for burial by Joseph and Nicodemus

**John's Gospel, chapter 20**

As with the crucifixion, John's description of the resurrection is brief. He does provide a description of Jesus appearing to all of the disciples and includes a confirmation for Thomas.

- 20:1-9 The discovery that the tomb was empty
- 20:10-18 Jesus appearance to Mary Magdalene
- 20:19-23 Jesus appears to disciples
- 20:24-31 Jesus appearance to Thomas

**John's Gospel, chapter 21**

John concludes his resurrection account with Jesus appearing to his disciples in Galilee. The Sea of Tiberias is another name for the Sea of Galilee. John also includes the account of the pardoning and restoration of Peter.

- 21:1-14 The risen Jesus meets with the disciples
- 21:15-25 Jesus pardons and restores Peter as a disciple.

