

BELIEVE+LIVE

CONVERSATIONS WITH JESUS

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 1-4



Series Introduction

The Gospel of John is a book that has a clear and definite purpose. It says in John 20:30-31:

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The purpose of John's gospel is that people would come to believe Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God and that in believing this they would have 'life'. Its hard to imagine a book with a grander or loftier purpose.

What this means is that the stories of Jesus and what he did are told with a continued emphasis on helping people to understand that Jesus is the Saviour of the world and God himself. Again and again, through different frameworks and narratives, we see John the Baptist, the gospel author John, and Jesus himself, proclaiming that Jesus is the long-awaited saviour of the Jewish people, and of the whole world. There is a clear repetition of this message through the book and the delight for us as God's people is to see all the different ways that Jesus is presented as saviour and Son of God.

These first four chapters are marked by the conversations that take place between John the Baptist, the Pharisees, Jesus, Jesus' Disciples, Mary (mother of Jesus), John's disciples, Nicodemus, and the woman at the well. Each of these interactions give us an insight into who Jesus is. There is a continual sense of Jesus being both clearly revealed as the Messiah, and at the same time, a repeated misunderstanding, or limited understanding, about who he is. As we work through these chapters, we'll see Jesus being given many different titles, but we'll see him introduce his favourite title for himself, 'Son of Man' which he'll use repeatedly through the book. Keep an eye out for other clear statements from Jesus and John the gospel author about who Jesus is.

The below is a tidy summary from the Gospel Coalition on the authorship and dating of the book.

AUTHOR

The title says that the Gospel was written by John, and other evidence identifies this John as the son of Zebedee. The internal evidence indicates that the author was (1) an apostle (John 1:14; cf. 2:11; 19:35), (2) one of the 12 disciples (“the disciple whom Jesus loved”; John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:20; cf. John 21:24–25), and, still more specifically, (3) John the son of Zebedee (note the association of “the disciple whom Jesus loved” with Peter in John 13:23–24; 18:15–16; 20:2–9; 21:2–23; cf. Luke 22:8; Acts 1:13; 3:1–4:37; 8:14–25; Gal. 2:9). The external evidence from the church fathers supports this identification (e.g., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.1.2).

DATE

The most likely date of writing is the period between A.D. 70 (the date of the destruction of the temple) and A.D. 100 (the end of John’s lifetime), but there is not enough evidence to be much more precise. A date subsequent to A.D. 70 is suggested, among other things, by the references in John 6:1 and John 21:1 to the Sea of Tiberias (a name widely used for the Sea of Galilee only toward the end of the 1st century), the reference in John 21:19 to Peter’s martyrdom (probably between A.D. 64 and 66), and the lack of reference to the Sadducees (who ceased to be a Jewish religious party after A.D. 70). The testimony of the early church also favors a date after A.D. 70. Thus Clement of Alexandria stated, “Last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain [in the other canonical Gospels] . . . composed a spiritual gospel” (cited in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.7).

www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/john/#author-date



ONE
**JESUS, WORD
OF GOD**



At Home

Read *John 1:1-18*

What did you find interesting?

Any questions & thoughts?

At Growth Group

Share *what you have learnt with the Group*

Big Idea *Jesus makes God known to us*

1. If Jesus is the Word of God (verse 14) how do verses 1-3 help us to understand that Jesus is much more than a carpenter from Nazareth?
2. Why do we think it is important for John the Baptist to be a witness to Jesus?
3. Why is one so glorious rejected by people who should know better?

4. What does “word become flesh” tell us about our Lord’s attitude to us?

5. Why do you think John talks about law and grace here in verse 17?

6. Re-read verse 18. Turn to the person next to you and talk through this verse. What does it mean? What does it mean for you and your life? What does it mean for us and our church?

What attitude or belief might change in your life after reading this passage?

What could you change in your life after understanding what this passage is saying to us?

Pray

TWO
**WAITING
FOR GOD**



At Home

Read *John 1:19-34*

What did you find interesting?

Any questions & thoughts?

At Growth Group

Share *what you have learnt with the Group*

Big Idea *Jesus -the one you were waiting for*

1. John the Baptist is not interested in talking about himself. Why do we think that is?
2. How do the Old Testament references help us to understand John and his ministry? What does this tell us about the Old Testament?

3. Re-read verses 29 and 36. Why does John the Baptist call Jesus the Lamb of God? And what does this mean for us in light of the cross of Christ?

4. Re-read verse 34. John clearly states that Jesus is God's chosen one. Some people accept and some people reject this message. Why? (See also John 1:10 and 11)

DIG DEEPER: What is the benefit for the people who were baptised by John the Baptist? Do we need that now?

What attitude or belief might change in your life after reading this passage?

What could you change in your life after understanding what this passage is saying to us?

Pray

THREE
**THE FULLNESS
OF JESUS**



At Home

Read *John 1:35-51*

What did you find interesting?

Any questions & thoughts?

At Growth Group

Share *what you have learnt with the Group*

Big Idea *In the coming of Jesus we see his fullness*

1. Throughout this passage we have seen several different titles or names used for Jesus. What do they tell us about Jesus? How does he respond to them?
2. Re-read verses 35-39. What is happening here? On what basis did they follow Jesus? How did he answer them?

3. Re-read verses 41-45. How can we be like Andrew and Phillip?

4. How does the Old Testament frame people's expectations about the coming of the Messiah? See John 1:19-24 as well.

5. What does Nathanael's view about Nazareth tell us about where Jesus is coming from?

6. Re-read verses 50 and 51. What are the greater things that Nathanael (and we) will see?

DIG DEEPER: What does Jesus mean by his statement in verse 51? See also Genesis 28:10-17.

What attitude or belief might change in your life after reading this passage?

What could you change in your life after understanding what this passage is saying to us?

Pray

FOUR

THE LIFE OF THE PARTY



At Home

Read *John 2:1-11*

What did you find interesting?

Any questions & thoughts?

At Growth Group

Share *what you have learnt with the Group*

Big Idea *Jesus is the life of the party*

1. Jesus never touches the cups, jars, or water
– the miracle occurs when the servants obey and fill the jars with water. What does this tell us about the power of Jesus?

2. What does the quality of the wine tell us about what Jesus wants to give to us?

3. What's the significance of Jesus working through the servants in this passage? How does this show us how he wants to work in this world? How does that make us feel?

4. Re-read the passage. What specific qualities of Jesus are revealed here?

5. What did the disciples believe about Jesus as the result of this miracle? Why?

6. Why do you think Jesus chose this to be his first sign?

DIG DEEPER: What are two things we learn about Jesus from his response to his mother? Does this teach us anything about our relationship with him?

What attitude or belief might change in your life after reading this passage?

What could you change in your life after understanding what this passage is saying to us?

Pray

FIVE
**THE NEW
TEMPLE**



At Home

Read *John 2:12-25*

What did you find interesting?

Any questions & thoughts?

At Growth Group

Share *what you have learnt with the Group*

Big Idea *Jesus is the new temple – who brings us into God's presence*

1. What does the temple tell us about Jesus and his ministry?
2. How does Jesus respond when he enters the temple? Is it right for us to respond in the same way? How should we be cautious with this?

3. Why is Jesus so concerned that they are dishonouring his Father's house? What is God's house today? What might it look like for us to dishonour God's house?

4. Re-read verses 18-23. Why do you think Jesus answers the way he does when the Jews ask him the question in verse 18?

What attitude or belief might change in your life after reading this passage?

What could you change in your life after understanding what this passage is saying to us?

Pray

SIX
REBIRTH



At Home

Read *John 3:1-21*

What did you find interesting?

Any questions & thoughts?

At Growth Group

Share *what you have learnt with the Group*

Big Idea *We must be born again by the Spirit*

1. What does Jesus mean when he uses the phrase “born again”? Also check out 1 Peter 1:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:17
2. Why do we think the Jesus uses the picture of “birth” to answer Nicodemus?
3. How does Jesus compare physical and spiritual birth? What is the outcome of each?

4. Re-read verses 14 and 15. This seems like an odd story to reference – why is it a good choice and what does it show us?
(See Numbers 21: 8 and 9)

5. It seems that John the, gospel's author, speaks in verses 16-21. How could we use verses 16-21 to help someone who is so ashamed of their sin that they don't want to think about Christianity? How does it help us?

What attitude or belief might change in your life after reading this passage?

What could you change in your life after understanding what this passage is saying to us?

Pray

SEVEN
MORE JESUS



At Home

Read *John 3:22-36*

What did you find interesting?

Any questions & thoughts?

At Growth Group

Share *what you have learnt with the Group*

Big Idea *We must become less, and Jesus must become greater.*

1. There was no competition between John and Jesus. Why do you think John's disciples saw a rivalry? What does that say about rivalries between Christians today?
2. Re-read verses 28 -30. How does John see his role and what are we to learn from this?

3. When we are tempted to be proud, how does John the Baptist's example here give us a model to behave differently?

See also John 1:19-27

4. It seems John, this gospel's author, is speaking again here. What truths do we see in verses 31 – 36? Knowing these truths, how do we live?

What attitude or belief might change in your life after reading this passage?

What could you change in your life after understanding what this passage is saying to us?

Pray

EIGHT
**UNLIKELY
INVITES**



At Home

Read *John 4:1-42*

What did you find interesting?

Any questions & thoughts?

At Growth Group

Share *what you have learnt with the Group*

Big Idea *Jesus saves and uses incredibly unlikely people.*

1. Think about the conversation between Jesus and the woman. What elements are helpful to us when we speak to a not-yet-believer? Can we copy this completely? How does the conversation turn to spiritual matters? How is Jesus as Lord introduced? How can we start conversations with not-yet-believers about their lives and God?

2. In what circumstances could we have such a conversation? Are there any current opportunities for you?

3. Jesus knows this woman and how she has been living. How does Jesus use his knowledge about the woman's life to direct her towards God? Can we do the same thing?

4. The woman is both evangelised herself and then spreads the message about Jesus. Do you have experience of that in your life? Share. Why do think the recently converted are so eager to tell people about Jesus? Can that zeal fade over time? How can we keep it? See verse 34

5. In verses 35-38, Jesus speaks to the disciples about the harvest. What does this teach us about evangelism and church life?

What attitude or belief might change in your life after reading this passage?

What could you change in your life after understanding what this passage is saying to us?

Pray

NINE

**LIVE, TEACH,
LOVE**



At Home

Read *John 4:43-54*

What did you find interesting?

Any questions & thoughts?

At Growth Group

Share *what you have learnt with the Group*

Big Idea *Live like Jesus, teach like Jesus, love like Jesus*

1. How can we overcome the bias against our witness among those who have known us all our lives? (See verse 44)

2. Is it a bad thing that a person might turn to Jesus out of desperation? What would you say if someone accused you of taking advantage of a hurting person because you told them about Jesus when they were desperate?

3. Is there a difference between the faith of the man in verse 50 and his faith in verse 53?

4. What convinced the man to believe Jesus' word? How does this help us as we seek to be witnesses for the gospel?

5. How important is it that we deal with people's felt needs?

What attitude or belief might change in your life after reading this passage?

What could you change in your life after understanding what this passage is saying to us?

Pray

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Believe + Live: Conversations With Jesus

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