

The Gospel According to JOHN



The prologue of the Fourth Gospel (1.1–18), long recognized as the introduction to and summary of the Gospel’s main concerns and emphases, takes pains not only to acknowledge Jesus as a human being, but as a social being as well when it proclaims, “The Word became flesh and lived among us” (1.14). Any effort to understand the Fourth Gospel must take this central pronouncement as a major point of interpretive entry. For although it speaks in a mystical tone that is meant to convey the unique relationship to God and solitary grandeur of the person of Jesus, the Fourth Gospel treats with equal gravity the “fleshly” nature of Jesus as it critiques the social relations and structures of the world that Jesus confronts. Thus even as it presents Jesus as the incarnate Word of God, the Fourth Gospel is also the story of Jesus as flesh and blood. Indeed, a careful reading reveals its focus to be precisely the doings of the “flesh” in the “world” (1.10), that is, the activities of Jesus and the individual and collective responses to them.

In telling the story of Jesus the author symbolically uses a number of terms drawn from common experience—bread, water, light, life, word, shepherd, door, way—to make the significance of Jesus both clear and gripping. After the prologue (1.1–1.18), the Gospel presents the public ministry of Jesus as both the object of faith (1.19–4.54) and the object of persecution and unbelief (chs 5–12), depicts his ministry to the disciples in the upper room (chs 13–17), narrates his death and resurrection (chs 18–20), and concludes with an epilogue (ch 21). The following division is suggested by the Gospel itself: the prologue (1.1–18); the book of Jesus’ signs that he is the revelation of the Father (1.19–12.50); the book of Jesus’ glory as it is revealed through his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to those that accept him (13.1–20.31); the epilogue, which contains accounts of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances (21.1–25).

The major concerns of the Gospel are engendering faith in the person of Jesus (20.21) and discrediting the Temple-centered, hereditary religious authorities who present a collective obstacle to the acceptance of faith in Jesus (1.14; 9.22–23). Its attempts to engender faith in Jesus are seen in its presentation of him as the incarnate Word (1.1), the only begotten Son (3.16,18), the messiah (1.41), the Holy One of God (6.69), the King of Israel (1.49), its portrayal of him as totally in control in his life as well as in his death (18.12; 19.30), and its use as a term of self-description the Greek phrase “ego eimi” (“I am”) without a predicate, which is reminiscent of God’s self-reference in Ex 3.14; Isa 41.4; 43.10; 46.4. Its concern to discredit the religious authorities, whom it calls “the Jews,” is effectuated by portraying them as mercenary and uncaring shepherds (10.12–13), as haughty and condescending to the people (7.15,49; 9.34), as being more concerned with worldly acclaim than divine favor (12.43), and as betrayers of Jesus (11.53). In addition to its usage as cited above, in many instances its repeated use of “ego eimi” with a predicate contrasts Jesus with the religious authorities (“I am”) or portrays him as replacing some aspect of established first-century Judaism. Even further, it presents him as embodying basic elements of the natural world, such as light (8.12) and life itself (11.25). This replacement or embodying motif is employed in other instances, such as the depiction of Jesus as replacing the Tem-

JOHN 1.1–1.4

ple and the Passover (6.1–4), and serves to strengthen the Gospel’s emphasis on the incarnation.

Although its scathing portrayal of “the Jews” has opened it to charges of anti-Semitism, a careful reading of the Gospel reveals “the Jews” to be a class designation, not a religious or ethnic grouping; rather than denoting adherents to Judaism in general, the term primarily refers to the hereditary Temple religious authorities. The Gospel further acknowledges their influential status by including among “the Jews” those who have accepted the worldview and class interests of the hereditary religious authorities as their own. This larger group includes the Pharisees (1.19,24) and even the “crowd” of laypersons whose worth the religious authorities dismissed (7.49; cf. 6.22,41). Thus the rejection and persecution of Jesus by “the Jews” is seen to be not only the result of what he says and does, but because his healings, his pronouncements, and his earthly person lack the pedigree and imprimatur of the religious elite (7.15,48–49; cf. 9.34).

Several factors in the Fourth Gospel’s attention to detail in the story of the fleshly Jesus suggest that it incorporates a much earlier tradition. Current scholarly consensus dates the final editing of the Gospel in 80–90 CE. The bitter and combative tone with which the Gospel discredits “the Jews” and its angry demonizing of them, as in 8.44, for instance, indicates opposition to a dominant group with the power to determine who is to be accepted in the Jewish community by anathematizing and expelling from Judaism those who challenge the dominant group’s authority (9.22; 12.42). The powerful Temple hierarchy, in effect, ceased to exist in 70 CE with the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. Moreover, the portrayal of Jesus as replacing the Temple may suggest that the Temple still stands as the center of Judaism (5.2), even as it repeats longstanding critiques of the Temple that prophesy its destruction (2.19; 4.21). Once the Temple and its hierarchy were no longer in existence, this polemic was transferred to local opponents of Christian believers. The “Jews” are equated with “the world” (16.1–4). Finally, recent archaeological finds indicate that the Fourth Gospel contains accurate details about the Jerusalem Temple and its environs prior to 70 CE (e.g., 9.7; 10.22–23; 19.13). Together these factors suggest a possible alternate date for the earliest version of the Gospel material before 70 CE. Although the theological complexity and high christology, especially in chs 14–17, could indicate a longer period of theological gestation and symbolic development (and this is the view of most scholars), similarly developed views are found in such early New Testament writings as Paul’s letter to the Romans. Although some scholars deny any dependence of the Fourth Gospel upon the Synoptic Gospels, most scholars accept the Fourth Gospel’s dependence upon the Synoptics; at the least, they hold that its writer was aware of them.

Who wrote this Gospel? Tradition says it was the apostle John. Scholarly opinion has long held that it was composed by a disciple of John who recorded his preaching. The epilogue speaks of an anonymous, loyal Jerusalem disciple of Jesus, called “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (20.2; see 13.23; 19.26; 21.7,20), as the source of this unique understanding of Jesus.

1 In 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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him

1.1–18: The prologue signals the major concerns of the Gospel. **1–3:** The *Word* (Gk “logos”) of God is more than speech; it is God’s preeminent agent in the world, creating (Ps 33.6; Wis 9.1; Sir 43.26; cf. Gen 1.3, etc.), redeeming (Ps 107.19–20; Wis 18.15). The *Word* is eternally (*in the beginning*) and personally (*with* God) divine (*was* God). Jesus is this *Word* (v. 14). **3:** Using language derived from the depiction of Wisdom (Prov 8.27–30; Wis 9.9; Sir 24.9), Jesus is described as God’s sole mediator of creation (see Col 1.16–17; Heb 1.2). **4:** Cf. Wis 7.26. **5:** The “Word” shone in the primal darkness of

JOHN 1.5–1.25

was life,^a and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.^b

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own,^c and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,^d full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God.

It is God the only Son,^e who is close to the Father's heart,^f who has made him known.

¹⁹ This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah."^g ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out
in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of
the Lord,'"

as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴ Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then

a Or ³through him. And without him not one thing came into being that has come into being. ⁴In him was life *b* Or He was the true light that enlightens everyone coming into the world *c* Or to his own home *d* Or the Father's only Son *e* Other ancient authorities read *It is an only Son, God, or It is the only Son* *f* Gk *bosom* *g* Or *the Christ*

creation (Gen 1.2) and continues to shine (cf. Ps 18.28). **6–8:** Summary of John's role. John (the Baptist) was *sent* (commissioned by God; Isa 6.8; Jer 1.7; Mal 3.1) to be a witness to Jesus (vv. 19–34). **10:** The primary meaning of *world* in the Fourth Gospel is the fallible social systems and social relations created by humanity (see 12.31; 16.11), but it also denotes physical creation, including humanity. **11:** *His own people*, the Jews, who were uniquely God's own people (4.22; Ex 19.5; Rom 15.8). **12–13:** Membership in the household of God is determined not by hereditary claims of privileged status, such as those of the hereditary priesthood of Israel, but by God alone. In this context *will of man* (lit. "will of a man") could refer to religious officials. **14:** Jesus was fully human (*the Word became flesh*) and fully involved in human society (*and lived among us*). **15:** Jesus has both priority of status and priority in time, with regard to John (see vv. 2–3,30). **16:** His grace is inexhaustible (*grace upon grace*). **17:** God's earlier revelation of covenant faithfulness is brought to fulfillment in Jesus. **18:** Jesus' priority over Moses (Ex 34.18–20) is reinforced.

1.19–34: The testimony of John. **19:** *The Jews*, the Temple religious authorities; also used for those who supported them (see v. 24n.). **21:** *Elijah* (2 Kings 2.11) was expected to return to prepare the messiah's way (Mal 4.5). *The prophet* was likewise an expected messianic forerunner (6.14; 7.40; see Deut 18.15). **23:** As a *voice* John fulfills a prophetic role announcing the messiah's coming (Isa 40.3). **24:** *The Pharisees*, along with the high priest and the chief priests, comprised "the Jews," the religious authorities. These terms are used interchangeably (see v. 19; 7.32,45; 11.47,57; 18.3,12). The Pharisees were an influential Jewish sect committed to extending priestly standards of purity to all Jews. **25:** John was challenged because he lacked a status recognized by the religious authorities and engaged in a ritual not

JOHN 1.26–1.48

are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah,^a nor Elijah, nor the prophet?”²⁶ John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know,²⁷ the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.”²⁸ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’ ³¹I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.” ³²And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.”^b

³⁵ The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!”³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said

to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?”³⁹ He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁰One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed^c). ⁴²He brought Simon^d to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter^e).

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.” ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!” ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, “Where did you get to know me?” Jesus

a Or *the Christ* *b* Other ancient authorities read *is God’s chosen one* *c* Or *Christ* *d* Gk *him*
e From the word for *rock* in Aramaic (*kepha*) and Greek (*petra*), respectively

sanctioned by them. **27:** *Untie . . . sandal*, a slave’s task. John’s baptism is preparation for the appearance of the hidden messiah who is already in their midst. **28:** *Bethany across the Jordan*, precise location unknown. **29:** John identifies Jesus as the powerful Lamb who has come to change the sinful condition of society (see v. 10; Rev 5). The imagery of the Lamb is drawn from the Passover lamb (Ex 12; see Jn 19.36; 1 Cor 5.7) and from the depiction of the “servant” of the Lord in Isa 53.4–7. **30:** See v. 15n. **34:** *Son of God*, the expected messiah (v. 49; 11.27).

1.35–51: The testimony of Jesus’ first disciples. **37:** *They followed Jesus*, the first known disciples of Jesus, Andrew (v. 40) and possibly the beloved disciple (13.23; 19.26; 20.2; 21.7,20; see Introduction) or Philip (6.58; 12.21–22); cf. Mk 1.16–20. **42:** In Aramaic *Cephas* (Gk “Petros”) means “rock”; cf. Mt 15.18. **44:** *Bethsaida*, on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. **45:** *Moses . . . prophets*, the Hebrew Bible is understood as having predicted Jesus. **46:** *Nazareth*, located about 25 km (16 mi) west of the Sea of Galilee, was a small village in the first century CE, thought too insignificant to be the place of the messiah’s origin. **47–51:** *Nathanael* (Heb “God has given”) may be a collective character (see note *a* in v. 51) representing those in Israel who have *no deceit*, i.e., none of the qualities of Jacob before he became Israel (Gen 27.35; 32.28). Because of their openness to Jesus they will see him in the fullness of his role as mediator between heaven and earth; cf. Gen 28.12. **49:** For the understanding of the *King of*

JOHN 1.49–2.18

answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.” ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” ⁵⁰Jesus answered, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.” ⁵¹And he said to him, “Very truly, I tell you,^a you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” ⁴And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” ⁵His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” ⁶Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it. ⁹When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it

came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” ¹¹Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

¹² After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days.

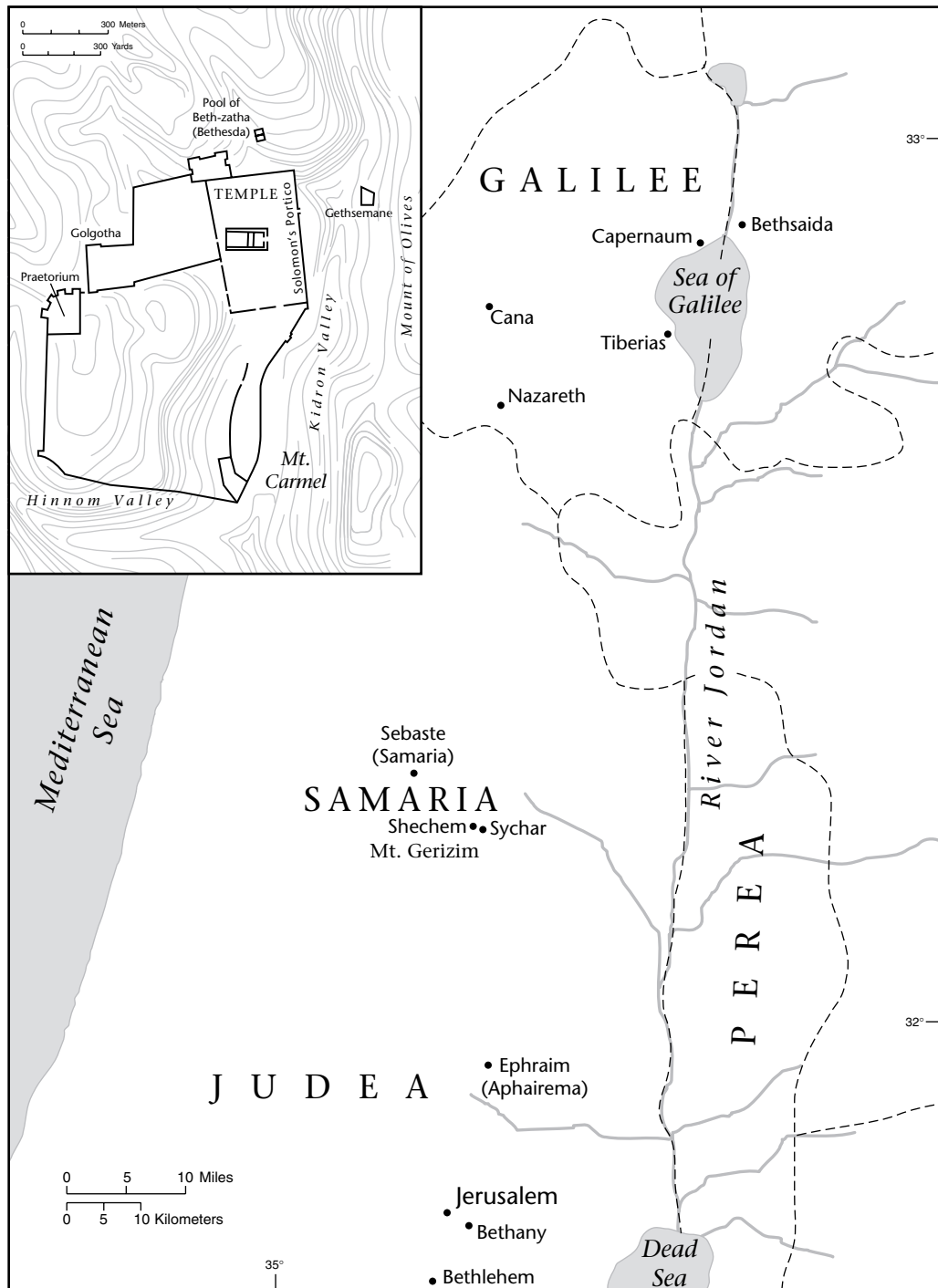
¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” ¹⁸The

^a Both instances of the Greek word for *you* in this verse are plural

Israel as “Son of God,” see 2 Sam 7.14; Ps 2.7; 89.26. **51:** *Son of Man*, a messenger from heaven (see Dan. 7.13) who makes God known (3.13) and is the final judge (5.27).

2.1–12: The wedding at Cana. **1:** *On the third day*, Nathanael (and those he represents; see 1.47–51n.) did not have to wait long for the promise of “greater things” (1.50) to be fulfilled. *Cana*, a small village about 15 km (9 mi) north of Nazareth. *The mother of Jesus* is never named in John. **4:** *Woman*, a term of respect and affection (cf. 4.21; 8.10; 19.26; 20.13,15). The *hour* of Jesus’ glory on the cross (see 12.23; 17.1) was not to be determined by his mother’s desires. **6:** *Rites of purification* were ceremonial; unlike clay or wooden vessels, stone vessels would not become ceremonially unclean by contact with an unclean object or person. **8:** *Steward*, headwaiter or master of ceremonies. **11:** Jesus’ miracles were not wonders to astound, but *signs* pointing to *his glory*, God’s presence in him (see 1.14). **12:** *Capernaum*, on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

2.13–25: The demonstration against corruption in the Temple (cf. Mt 21.17; Mk 11.15–19; Lk 19.45–48). **13:** *Passover* was celebrated in March–April. **14:** Animals were sold for sacrifice. Different currencies used by worshipers had to be changed to the official half-shekel of Tyre for the Temple tax (see Ex 30.11–16). Roman money was changed into Jewish money to pay the Temple tax. **15–16:** A public demonstration against the materialism that had become part of Temple worship services. Jesus’ indignation was not toward those engaged in worship, but those detracting from it. **17:** Ps 69.9 (see Zech 14.21; Mal 3.1). **18:** *The Jews*, the Temple religious authorities. *What sign . . . ?* is less a question than an assertion by the religious authorities that only they have authority to make religious pronouncements (9.34). **19:** *Destroy this temple . . .*, reflects a longstanding tradition of Temple critique (cf. 4.21;



The geography of the Gospel of John.

JOHN 2.19–3.18

Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?”¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”²⁰ The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?”²¹ But he was speaking of the temple of his body.²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

²³ When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing.²⁴ But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people²⁵ and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.

3 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews.² He came to Jesus^d by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.”³ Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.”^b
⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?”⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.^c ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to

you, ‘You^d must be born from above.’^e
⁸ The wind^c blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?”¹⁰ Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”

¹¹ “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you^f do not receive our testimony.¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.^g ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^h

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because

a Gk *him* *b* Or *born anew* *c* The same Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit* *d* The Greek word for *you* here is plural *e* Or *anew* *f* The Greek word for *you* here and in verse 12 is plural *g* Other ancient authorities add *who is in heaven* *h* Some interpreters hold that the quotation concludes with verse 15

² Sam 7.5–7; see Jer 7.1–15; 35.2–10; Ezek 10.18–19; Acts 7.48). **20:** *Forty-six years*, this was the Temple begun by Herod the Great in 20 BCE (it was finished by Herod Agrippa II in 64 CE). **21:** A double entendre; Jesus simultaneously critiqued the Temple and predicted his own death (see v. 19).

3.1–21: Jesus and the religious authorities. **1:** The Pharisees observed Jewish purity laws most carefully of all the religious groups. *A leader*, perhaps a member of the Sanhedrin (see 11.47n.). **5:** Birth into the new order is through *water* (baptism; 1.33; Eph 5.26) and *Spirit* (Ezek 36.25–27; Titus 3.5). **6:** Hereditary claims to spiritual standing are meaningless (see 1.12–13). **8–9:** *You do not know . . .*, see note *c* and Ezek 37.5–10. **10:** *Are you a teacher . . . yet you do not understand*, discredits the religious aristocracy that Nicodemus represents. **12:** *Earthly things*, such as the parable of the wind; *heavenly things*, supreme spiritual realities, such as Jesus as the revelation of God (1.14,18). **13–15:** Jesus *descended from heaven* to bring *eternal life* through being *lifted up* on the cross (Num 21.9). **16:** *World*, human society. *Only Son*, cf. Gen 22.2.

JOHN 3.19–4.10

they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”^a

²² After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. ²³John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there; and people kept coming and were being baptized ²⁴—John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison.

²⁵ Now a discussion about purification arose between John’s disciples and a Jew.^b ²⁶They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him.” ²⁷John answered, “No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah,^c but I have been sent ahead of him.’ ²⁹He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. ³⁰He must increase, but I must decrease.”^d

³¹ The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven is

above all. ³²He testifies to what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony. ³³Whoever has accepted his testimony has certified^e this, that God is true. ³⁴He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. ³⁵The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands. ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God’s wrath.

4 Now when Jesus^f learned that the Pharisees had heard, “Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John” ²—although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— ³he left Judea and started back to Galilee. ⁴But he had to go through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” ⁸(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)^g ¹⁰Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given

^a Some interpreters hold that the quotation concludes with verse 15 ^b Other ancient authorities read *the Jews*

^c Or *the Christ* ^d Some interpreters hold that the quotation continues through verse 36

^e Gk *set a seal to* ^f Other ancient authorities read *the Lord*

^g Other ancient authorities lack this sentence

3.22–36: Further testimony of John (cf. 1.19–34). **23:** The exact locations of Aenon and Salim are uncertain. **24:** See Mk 6.14–29. **25: Purification,** Jewish ceremonial washing. **27–29:** John was only the *friend of the bridegroom*, leading Israel, the bride, to Jesus, the bridegroom. He *rejoices* in their union (cf. Mk 2.19–20). **32–34: No one,** a generalization about Israel (see 1.11).

4.1–42: Jesus and the Samaritans. 1–3: Jesus departs to avoid the opposition of the *Pharisees*. **4: Samaria,** between Judea and Galilee, was inhabited by remnants of the northern tribes of ancient Israel who worshiped the Lord God and used the Pentateuch. Jews did not acknowledge the authenticity of the Samaritan observances; see v. 9. **5: Sychar,** near ancient Shechem; see Gen 33.19; 48.22; Josh 24.32. **10: Living water,** i.e., flowing water, as in a spring or river; see Jer 2.13; 17.13. **13: Everyone who drinks,**