

Reading John

The Big Picture

1	Prologue	11-12	Jesus's miracles and teaching convince Jewish leaders to kill him
2-4	Jesus transforms Jewish Symbols	13-17	Jesus' final meal and words with his disciples
	2 Jars for ritual purification	18-20	The Passion story and Resurrection
	2 The temple	21	Epilogue
	3 A rabbi		
	4 A sacred well		
5-10	Jesus transforms the Jewish feasts		
	5 Sabbath		
	6 Passover		
	7 Tabernacles		
	8 Hanukah		

Key Themes in John

1. The story of Jesus is the culmination of the story of all creation: Jesus is the creator God become human to bring salvation to Israel and all humanity
 - The prologue in 1:1-18 retells Genesis 1 by putting Jesus in the role of creator and claiming that he is bringing Israel's story to its climax.
 - Throughout the Gospel, Jesus takes the divine name ("I am" in Exodus 3:14) and uses it to describe himself seven times: 6:35; 8:12; 9:5; 10:7; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1
 - Jesus is the true revelation of God's own being, yet as the Son he is distinct from the Father and the Spirit: 1:1; 1:14; 6:44-46; 8:58; 10:30; 14:26; 17:11.
2. John focuses on stories where Jesus is at Jewish feasts, showing how he is the fulfillment of the expectation of the coming messiah (see John's statement of purpose in 20:30-31)
 - Passover: 2:13-4:54; 6:1-71 > Sabbath: 5:1-47
 - Tabernacles: 7:1-10:21 > Hanukah: 10:22-42
 - Passover again: 11:1-12:36
3. Jesus uses rich metaphors rooted in the Old Testament to describe what he came to do:
 - He is a sacrificial lamb (ch.1)
 - He is a good shepherd (ch.10)
 - He offers a new birth (ch.3)
 - He offers resurrection from the dead (ch.11)
 - He is the water of life (ch.4)
 - He is the way, the truth, and the life (ch.14)
 - He is the bread of life (ch. 6)
 - He is the vine that gives life (ch.15)
 - He brings light into darkness (ch.8)
4. **Key Words:** Jesus forces people to decide whether or not they will "believe/trust/have faith" that he has come to reveal truth and to save them: these words occur over 80 times in John.
5. Jesus wants his followers to be united with him through his Spirit (14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:13, 15), and to be drawn into the intimate relationship he shares with the Father (17:20-26). This happens as Jesus' followers "abide" in him (see ch. 15)
6. Jesus' death is not an accident, but something Jesus allows so that he can die for the sins of the world. The cross is actually Jesus' victory over the world:
 - Jesus speaks of his coming death as a moment of "glory" (see especially chs. 12-14)
 - Jesus lays down his life willingly (10:15-17; 19:10-11)
 - The 'lifting up' of Jesus onto the cross is his paradoxical exaltation (3:14; 8:28; 12:32)
7. Jesus' resurrection compels "belief" (20:8; Thomas in 20:24-31), and John is written to force the reader to make a decision to believe: 20:30-31.

