

## 5 Themes in John

1) Christology and the Cross: John's "high Christology"<sup>1</sup> depicts Jesus as divine, pre-existent, and identified with the one God. John clearly regards Jesus as divine, he just as clearly subordinates him to the one God. The portrayal of Jesus' death in John is unique among the four Gospels. It does not appear to rely on the kinds of atonement theology indicative of vicarious sacrifice but rather presents the death of Jesus as his glorification and return to the Father.



Symbol facing evangelist portrait at the start of the Gospel of St John; Egmond Gospels, Royal Library of the Netherlands

2) Date and context: Most scholars would identify 90-110ad as final form, although internal evidence shows a tradition of development. (The beloved disciple, this is the disciple who is bearing witness). Internal evidence demonstrates a conflict with the 'Jews', and a sound understanding of the Jewish faith and Torah. It seems that the Johannine community was probably a mixed community (Jew/ gentile) who held themselves separate from the rest of the Jewish community

### 3) Structure

- a. Prologue (1.1-1.18)
- b. "Book of Signs" / ministry (1.19-12.50)
- c. "Book of Glory" / Passion and Resurrection (13.1-20.29)
- d. Conclusion (20.30-20.31)
- e. Epilogue (Contested) John 21

<b>I am sayings</b>	<b>Signs<sup>2</sup></b>
Jn 6.35: I am the bread of life <sup>3</sup>	Jn 2.1-11: Water into wine <sup>a</sup>
Jn 8.12: I am the light of the world	Jn 2.-13-22/ Jn. 20 Cleansing the temple/ resurrection
Jn 10.17: I am the gate for the sheep	Jn 4.46-54: Healing the Royal Official's Son
Jn 10.11: I am the good shepherd	Jn 5.1-15: Healing the paralytic at Bethsaida <sup>b</sup>
Jn 11.25: I am the resurrection and the life	Jn 6.5-14/ Jn 6.15-24 Feeding the 5000/walking on water <sup>c</sup>
Jn 14.6: I am the way and the truth and the life	Jn 9.17: Healing the man born blind <sup>d</sup>
Jn 15.1: I am the true vine	Jn 11.1-45: Raising Lazarus
<sup>a</sup> The purified water is symbolic of the messianic age, the context (a wedding), a marker of the age	
<sup>b</sup> Healing on the sabbath	
<sup>c</sup> Near the Passover, echoes the feeding in the desert and crossing the sea on foot of exodus	
<sup>d</sup> Demonstrates Jesus capacity to forgive sin (God's prerogative)	

<sup>1</sup> Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: Gospel of John

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Signs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Signs)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_John#Christology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_John#Christology)

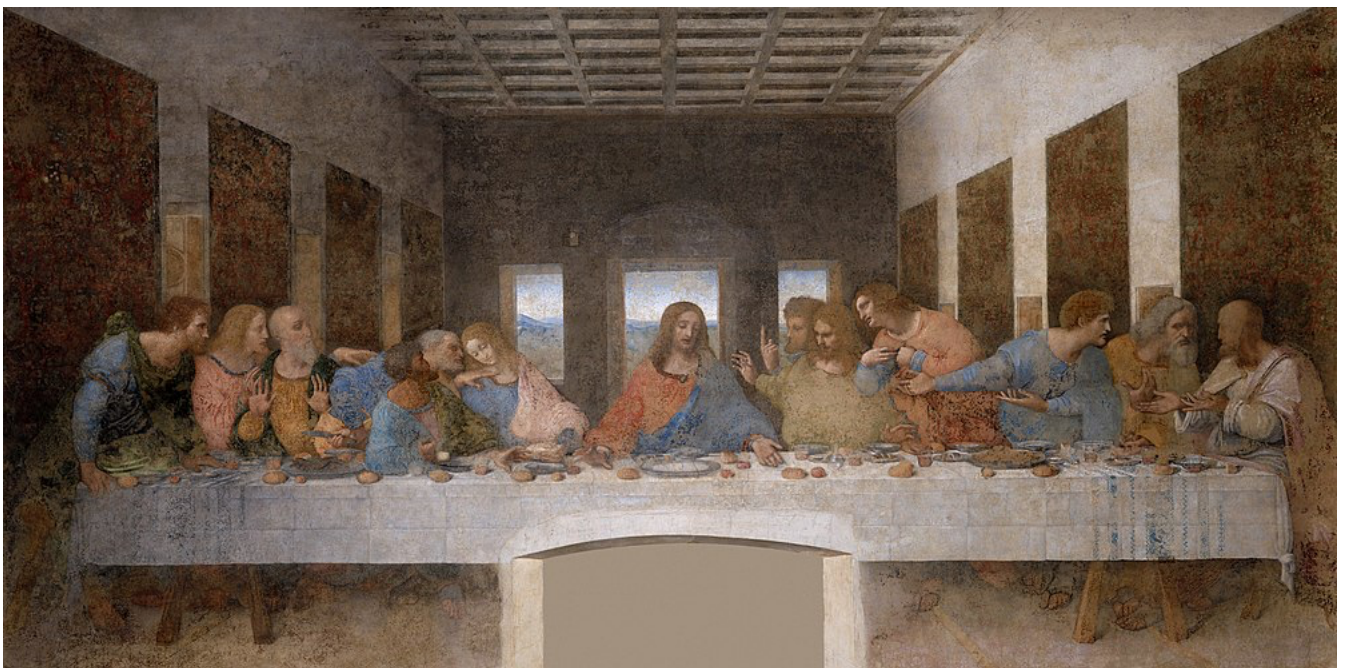
#### 4) Logos Hymn/ Creation echo/ The prologue/ Logo hymn

In the prologue, the gospel identifies Jesus as the Logos or Word. In Ancient Greek philosophy, the term logos meant the principle of cosmic reason. In this sense, it was similar to the Hebrew concept of Wisdom, God's companion and intimate helper in creation. The Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo merged these two themes when he described the Logos as God's creator of and mediator with the material world. Some argue the gospel adapted Philo's description of the Logos, applying it to Jesus, the incarnation of the Logos.

Another possibility is that the title Logos is based on the concept of the divine Word found in the Targums. In the Targums, the concept of the divine Word was used for God's interaction with the world (starting from creation) and especially with his people, e.g. Israel, was saved from Egypt by action of "the Word of the LORD," both Philo and the Targums envision the Word as being manifested between the cherubim and the Holy of Holies, etc.

#### 5) The beloved disciple: In Johns Gospel there 6 references to the disciple Jesus loved, and there are a number of guesses as to who it could be.

- a. John the Apostle: The closing words of John's Gospel state explicitly concerning the Beloved Disciple, "It is this disciple who testifies to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true."
- b. The Beloved Disciple has also been identified with Lazarus of Bethany, based on John 11:5: "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus", and John 11:3 "So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.'"
- c. Another school of thought has proposed that the Beloved Disciple in the Gospel of John really was originally Mary Magdalene. To make this claim and maintain consistency with scripture, the theory is suggested that Mary's separate existence in the two common scenes with the Beloved Disciple is due to later modifications<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last\\_Supper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Supper)