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## The Gospel According to

# John

## INTRODUCTION

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When reading an ancient document, it helps to have some basic information about it: Who wrote it? When and where was it written? Who was the intended reader? Why was it written? Knowing the type of writing used also aids appreciation. Is the text poetry or an instruction manual? Is it a satirical essay or an editorial? The answer to such questions also provides key tools for scholars in interpreting the ancient biblical texts. The Vatican II document on biblical interpretation, *Dei Verbum*, explains:

The interpreter must investigate what meaning the sacred writer intended to express and actually expressed in particular circumstances by using contemporary literary forms in accordance with the situation of his own time and culture. (*Dei Verbum* 11)

These guiding principles are particularly important when approaching the Gospel of John. This Gospel obviously differs from the three Synoptic Gospels. Though John contains fewer miracles than the Synoptics, those included in John are dramatic. In addition, these miracles are named “signs” in John, which emphasizes that these events are meant to lead to a deeper perception of Jesus’ identity and mission. Jesus speaks long discourses to bring out the underlying meaning of these signs. Where the Synoptics describe a single journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, in John’s Gospel Jesus travels back and forth between Galilee and Jerusalem several times. There are no narratives of his birth or scene of his baptism; instead, this Gospel introduces Jesus with a richly evocative Prologue (Jn 1:1-18) that clearly situates Jesus’ origins in God from the beginning. The Fourth Gospel is remarkably Jewish in its details about Jesus’ attendance at major Jewish festivals, and yet, the Jews are presented as distinctly “other” to Jesus and the disciples, suggesting the emergence of a new community centered on Jesus,

not the synagogue. Understanding something of the historical and religious context for this Gospel will assist understanding the text.

## Outline of John

- I. Prologue (1:1-18)
- II. The book of Signs (1:19–12:50)
- III. The Book of Glory (13:1–20:31)
- IV. Epilogue: The Resurrection Appearance in Galilee (21:1-25)

## Date and Location

Scholars today date this Gospel as the last written, sometime in the late nineties CE. While this is the date of the final editing, there are indications, explored here, that this Gospel has gone through a long process of compiling the memories of Jesus, selecting and arranging them, and presenting them in a form to emphasize Jesus’ identity and mission. The Gospel has its roots in the Galilean and Judean life of Jesus, but its final place of editing is likely to have been in the wider Greco-Roman world, such as Alexandria, Antioch, or Ephesus.

## Authorship

Twice in the Gospel we read of eyewitness testimony – “An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true” (Jn 19:35; cf. 21:24). These affirmations of truth are linked with an anonymous character in the text known only as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23; 19:25-27; 20:3-10). Opinions vary about the identity of this Beloved Disciple. In the second

century, Irenaeus, the Bishop of Lyon (ca. 180-200), attributed the Gospel to John, the disciple of the Lord who leaned on his breast (13:23; *Against Heresies* 3.1.1). “John” was then identified with John, the son of Zebedee, who in the Synoptics is one of Jesus’ earliest disciples (Mk 1:19) and his close companion (Mk 9:2; 14:33). Many scholars today question Irenaeus’s interpretation. In the second century, questions were asked about which Gospels could be considered authentic; linking the Gospel to one of the original disciples may have been Irenaeus’s strategy to bolster its authenticity. While some still identify John with the son of Zebedee, many scholars today consider him the unidentified eyewitness whose testimony and teaching are the basis for the Gospel’s particular theological vision. Most commentaries will offer further details on this unresolved question.

The author’s actual name, however, seems less important than the affirmations that the Gospel is based on the eyewitness testimony of a disciple who was with Jesus from the beginning, possibly the unnamed disciple of John the Baptist who first follows Jesus (Jn 1:35-39). This disciple, whom most scholars consider male, was possibly the leader and teacher of a group of believers, passing on and shaping memories about Jesus to meet the particular needs and circumstances of this community.

## Unity of the Text

Some strange breaks in the narrative, such as Jesus’ command “Get up, let us go” (Jn 14:31), followed by three further chapters of discourse (chs. 15-17), suggest that this Gospel has gone through editorial stages before reaching its final form. In ch. 21, Peter asks about the destiny of the Beloved Disciple. Jesus replies, “What if I want him to remain until I come? What concern is it of yours?” To this the narrator adds that Jesus had not said that the Beloved Disciple would not die (21:23). The heightened importance of Peter, the apparent “ending” in 20:30-31, followed by a further ending in 21:24-25, along with a change in the vocabulary and writing style, have led scholars to consider that ch. 21 was an early addition to the original text by a final editor; the question

about the fate of the Beloved Disciple suggests the chapter was added following his death. This editorial work must have been early since we know of no manuscript tradition that lacks ch. 21. Such disjunctions in the text have led some to postulate that the Gospel had multiple authors, but the majority of scholars consider chs. 1–20 a literary unity based on writing style, vocabulary, and theological consistency.

## The Johannine Community

The fact that Jesus’ first disciples are directed to him by John the Baptist (Jn 1:29, 35-36) and that John later affirms the superiority of Jesus (3:28-30), leads scholars to believe that this community includes former disciples of John the Baptist. Chapter 4, with its narrative about the Samaritan woman and Jesus being welcomed by the Samaritan village (4:40), suggests that there are also Samaritans in the community, along with many Jews and Gentiles. The destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple by Rome in 70 CE was a critical event for both Jews and Jesus’ followers. Within Judaism, it brought an end to Temple worship, sacrifice, and the priesthood. Judaism from this time looked to the law and the teaching of the rabbis to maintain its religious identity. The followers of Jesus gradually established a religious identity focused on Jesus and moving apart from Judaism. Both groups, Jews and Christians, also needed to find somewhere to live within the Roman Empire with all its civic responsibilities and imperial cultic practices.<sup>1</sup>

John’s Gospel highly values the practice of Judaism, its worship, Scriptures, and festivals, and yet there is marked conflict between Jesus, as well as his disciples, with the Jewish leadership, presented in the Gospel primarily as the Pharisees. The Gospel thus has continuity with the rich heritage of Israel, while at the same time the sharp polemic and negative treatment of characters called “the Jews” suggest that this community had its origins in Judaism but is now seeking to distance itself from the

1. See Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008) for a discussion of the social setting of the Johannine community.

Torah-centered synagogue, as it affirms faith in Jesus and “life in his name” (Jn 20:31)

An intriguing and much debated feature of this Gospel is the use of the term “the Jews.” This is curious, given that, within the Gospel narrative, all the characters are Jews, with the exception of Pilate, possibly the royal official (Jn 4:46), and the Greeks (12:20). (The Samaritans are a special case and their situation will be discussed later.) Most frequently the term “the Jews” is used to refer to the Jewish authorities associated with Jerusalem (cf. 1:19; 2:13-22; 9:22; 11:45-53; 18:28-19:22) who are opponents of Jesus and his disciples (20:19). Many today consider that this term is part of the rhetorical strategy of the Gospel written for a community seeking its own religious identity over against emerging Rabbinic Judaism.

## Outline of the Gospel

John’s Gospel can be divided into two major sections: chs. 1:19–12:50, the “Book of Signs,” which concerns Jesus’ miracles (called “signs,” e.g., Jn 2:11; 4:54), and chs. 13:1–20:31, the “Book of Glory,” which focuses on Jesus’ return to the Father (called his “glorification,” e.g., 13:31; 14:13; 17:1, 5, 24). These two major sections are introduced by a Prologue (1:1-18) and concluded with an Epilogue (21:1-25).<sup>2</sup>

Within the Book of Signs, smaller subdivisions are suggested by the text. Chapter 1 presents a sequence of “days” (designated by the repeated phrase, “the next day”; Jn 1:29,35,43) beginning with the ministry of John (1:19-34) and concluding with Jesus’ promise to his disciples that they would see “greater things” (1:50-51). Chapter 2 begins in “Cana in Galilee” (2:1) and the changing of the water into wine is called “the beginning of his signs” (2:11). At the end of ch. 4 the narrative returns to “Cana in Galilee” (4:46) and the cure of the royal official’s son is called “the second sign.” These repetitions suggest that chs. 2, 3, and 4 are a literary unit, which Raymond Brown and others call “From Cana to Cana.”

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2. This outline follows that of Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., Anchor Bible 29-29a (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1966, 1970).

The next six chapters deal with issues linked to specific Jewish feasts: the Sabbath (ch. 5), Passover (ch. 6), Tabernacles (7:1–10:21), and Dedication (10:22-42).

Chapters 11 and 12 focus on the person of Lazarus, his death and resurrection (Jn 11:1-44), and its consequences for Jesus (11:45-53; 12:10, 17-19). The death and raising of Lazarus provide a transition from the account of Jesus’ public ministry to an account of his own death and Resurrection.

John begins the Book of Glory with Jesus’ final meal (Jn 13:2), and proceeds to Jesus’ instruction to his disciples about the meaning of his departure (chs. 13–16), his prayer to his Father for his disciples (ch. 17), his death (chs. 18–19), and his Resurrection (ch. 20). As noted above, many scholars today consider that the Gospel, at least in its earlier form, concluded with a brief statement of its purpose (20:30-31). Chapter 21 appears to be an early editor’s addition to the original text, an Epilogue, which then has its own conclusion (21:24-25).

## Reading the Text

John’s Gospel frequently leaves clues to guide the audience, not unlike an old style detective mystery where the crime occurs in the first chapter and the rest of the book involves a detective looking for clues. The reader is expected to notice the clues, so that in the final chapter, the reader and the detective have both worked out the perpetrator of the crime. Since this Gospel was written for an audience living somewhere in the eastern part of the Roman Empire toward the end of the first century, an audience familiar with the traditions and Scriptures of Israel, today’s readers will need a contemporary guide to detect and understand these clues. Frequently the Gospel depends on the reader knowing an Old Testament text, either explicitly quoted (e.g., Jn 2:17; 6:31), or just alluded to (e.g., 1:51; cf. Gn 28:12). Often the reader is expected to know Jewish customs (e.g., foot washing) or the rituals and symbols associated with Jewish festivals. Without this knowledge, the modern reader can miss the point of a Johannine episode.

Take for example, the first miracle at Cana (Jn 2:1-12). At first glance, it appears to be a

simple miracle story – Jesus provides abundant wine at a wedding – but a closer reading reveals far more. The steward of the feast called the bridegroom to congratulate him on the provision of such abundant good wine toward the end of the feast (2:9-10). This indicates that, at a Jewish wedding ceremony, the bridegroom had the task of providing the wine. But, in this case, it was Jesus who provided the wine and so the evangelist is giving a clue, or a sign, that Jesus is the bridegroom at this feast. Within the Old Testament, the image of a bridegroom and bride was frequently used to speak of the loving relationship between God and Israel (Jer 2:2; Hos 2:19-24) and a feast was a symbol of the covenant (Ex 24:9-11; Is 25:6-9).

This miracle begins with the words “on the third day” (Jn 2:1) and concludes with the statement that this was the first sign when Jesus “revealed his glory” (2:11). These phrases, “the third day,” “revealed his glory,” echo the language found in the account of Israel’s arrival at Mount Sinai and entrance into the solemn covenant with God. At Sinai the people were told to prepare for the third day (Ex 19:11 [twice], 15, 16), for on the third day God would descend upon the mountain in glory. The evangelist presumes that his audience is familiar with this important Old Testament text and so will understand the allusion, not unlike today when a line from a movie will immediately evoke the entire film. The first miracle at Cana, when read within this Exodus context, opens up a richer understanding of the narrative. Jesus is being presented as the covenanting God of Israel, the loving bridegroom providing abundant wine for the wedding feast. Since wine miracles were also associated with the Greek god Dionysus, presenting Jesus as the bridegroom and source of abundant wine would appeal to both Jewish and Greek traditions. This example demonstrates the depth of meaning in a Johannine passage, and the value of a good commentary to help the reader uncover that depth.

### **“Cana to Cana”**

One approach to interpreting this section is to focus on the way the characters in the text respond to Jesus. In chs. 2 and 3 the characters are Jews, while in ch. 4 the narrative moves

outside Judaism to the Samaritans (Jn 4:1-42) and the Gentile official (4:46-54). Within the world of Judaism, the first significant character is the mother of Jesus. In spite of Jesus’ retort, his mother directs the servants, “Do whatever he tells you” (2:5). She trusts Jesus’ words and her trust leads to the bountiful supply of wine. She displays authentic faith in Jesus, at least in terms of this Gospel. With the mother of Jesus as a model, the reader then meets other characters and is implicitly invited to evaluate their faith response to Jesus: the Jews in the Temple (2:13-22), Nicodemus (2:23–3:10), and John the Baptist (3:25-30). The Jews are portrayed as completely rejecting Jesus’ words (2:20); they display no faith in him. Nicodemus comes to Jesus (3:2), but fails to comprehend his words (3:4, 9) and so remains in a state of partial faith. He will appear again, however (7:50-52), and eventually he displays perfect faith in anointing the body of Jesus for burial (19:39-42). Following the first encounter with Nicodemus, John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the “bridegroom” (3:29), and adds, “He must increase; I must decrease” (3:30). These words indicate that John has perfect faith.

Moving beyond the world of Judaism (Jn 4:1-42), note the gradual shift in the attitude of the Samaritan woman toward Jesus. At first she is dismissive of him (4:9) and shows no faith. But then she addresses him as “sir” and requests water from him (4:11, 15). At this stage, she is showing partial faith. Then she considers him a prophet (4:19), and finally, the Messiah/Christ (4:25). Showing full faith, she leaves Jesus to bring other villagers to him, and they also come to acknowledge Jesus as “the savior of the world” (4:42).

Chapter 4 concludes with Jesus back in Cana, where a “royal official,” probably a Gentile, also shows complete faith when he trusts Jesus’ word that his son will live (Jn 4:50). Like the mother of Jesus, this official is at first rebuffed by Jesus (4:48), but he too persists and his faith is rewarded. This Gentile official and the mother of Jesus serve as models of perfect Johannine faith. Between these two characters, the reader is introduced to others, both within and beyond Judaism, who display various faith responses to Jesus: full faith, partial faith, and no faith. The evangelist has crafted

his narrative in this way to invite the reader—whether Jew, Samaritan, or Gentile – into a similar journey of faith.

## The Feasts of the Jews

Across chs. 5 to 10, the reader follows Jesus through the Jewish liturgical cycle as he participates in significant Jewish festivals (Jn 6:4; 7:2; 10:22). This cycle of Jewish festivals is introduced in Jn 5 with the weekly festival of the Sabbath (5:9). The Jewish liturgical calendar begins with the spring festival of Passover and in Jn 6:4 we read, “The Jewish feast of Passover was near.” A similar phrase is used in Jn 7:2 to introduce the fall (autumn) festival of Tabernacles. The religious context of this festival continues through chs. 7:1-10:21. The winter festival of Dedication is then announced at 10:22.

Why might the evangelist have shaped his narrative in this manner? The answer may lie in the historical situation of John’s community. In the final decades of the first century, following the destruction of Jerusalem, Jewish leaders set about establishing a Jewish identity without the Temple. The Jewish members of the Johannine community had the painful choice of remaining within the Jewish synagogue or publicly joining the followers of Jesus, and, according to this Gospel, being expelled from the synagogue (Jn 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). Faced with this possibility, how could Jewish believers in Jesus retain and honor their heritage while professing faith in Jesus? Was this even possible? These chapters on the Jewish festivals express the pastoral sensitivity of the evangelist and his theological artistry as he presents Jesus as the one who brings the traditions and festivals of Judaism to their fulfillment.

On the Sabbath, Jesus heals a man and commands him to sin no more (Jn 5:14). For these actions, Jesus is condemned by the Jewish leaders for working on the Sabbath (5:16). Jesus defends his actions in the light of Jewish Sabbath concessions, which recognize that God does not cease from work entirely on the Sabbath either (5:17). The God who continues to work on the Sabbath through giving life to the newborn and judgment to the deceased

is now present in Jesus, who has been given authority to give life (5:26) and to judge (5:22).

In ch. 6 the Passover provides the context in this Gospel for the great feeding miracle (Jn 6:1-14), which is followed by a long discourse to bring out the meaning of this feast (6:25-59). The Exodus generation of Jews was fed in the wilderness by the manna, the bread from heaven (6:31). Behind the language of this discourse lies the gift of manna and the way the nourishment of the manna was identified in the first century with the nourishment of God’s word and wisdom (Wis 16:20-26). The Gospel presents Jesus as the true bread that has come down from heaven (Jn 6:32, 38, 50).

In describing the festival of Tabernacles, the Mishnah (compiled around 200 CE) describes two of the rituals for the feast; one involved a water ceremony every morning (*m. Sukk.* 4.9) and then in the evening a celebration under large lights in the Temple courtyard (*m. Sukk.* 5.3). In this context, Jesus claims to be a source of living water (Jn 7:37-39) and the “light of the world” (8:12).

Then in the festival of Dedication, which commemorates the reconsecration of the Temple at the time of the Maccabees (164 BCE), Jesus identifies himself as the one sent and “consecrated” by his Father (Jn 10:36). Within the cycle of Jewish festivals, Jesus appropriates to himself the deeper meaning of the feasts and their great symbols: bread, light, water, the Temple. In this way, the evangelist reassures his community that in making a choice for Jesus they lose nothing of their Jewish heritage but in fact can now celebrate all that this heritage has promised in its fulfillment.

## Jesus’ Farewell Discourse

Following the raising of Lazarus in ch. 11, Jesus’ public ministry concludes with the Jewish leaders’ ominous decision to put him to death (Jn 11:53). According to the Gospel, the leaders make this decision fearing the power of Rome (11:47-53), for they are entirely dependent on Roman good will to hold their elite positions. From ch. 13, Jesus gathers with “his own” (13:1). In chs. 5 and 6, the pattern of the narrative is a miracle followed by a discourse, which explores the theological meaning of the

miracle. As Jesus approaches his “hour,” which is both the crucifixion and Resurrection, the pattern reverses and the long discourse across chs. 13-17 provide the theological interpretation of the meaning of Jesus’ death and Resurrection before the event.

The “hour” begins in ch. 13 with the act of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet, then interpreting this action first as the only way disciples can have any part in him (Jn 13:9), then as a model or blueprint for their own behavior (13:15), and finally as an expression of love (13:34). In that society, foot washing was a common ritual of hospitality and welcome. Through this ritual, Jesus invites and welcomes disciples to participate in his coming “hour” and what it will mean for them.

Chapter 14 continues to unpack the particular Johannine understanding of Jesus’ death. Earlier Jesus said, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up” (Jn 2:19). The narrator then explained that Jesus spoke of the temple of his body (2:21). In some way, Jesus’ death will be the destroying of one temple (his body) and the raising of another. When Jesus speaks of “My father’s house” and its many dwellings in 14:2, we need to recall that he named the Temple, “my Father’s house” (2:16).

In the Old Testament, the expression “my father’s house” always refers to the people who make up the household and never to a building (e.g., Gn 24:38; 28:21; 46:31). In many modern translations the idiom “my father’s house” is simply translated as “family” (e.g., Jos 2:13). The phrase conveys this double meaning in Jn 14:2—my Father’s house(hold) and also Temple. The play on the phrase “my Father’s house(hold)” continues as Jesus speaks of “many dwelling places,” using a noun related to the verb *menō* (to dwell). The verb and the related noun are then repeated four times in ch. 14 to speak of the Father *dwelling* in Jesus (14:10), of the Spirit *dwelling* in believers (14:17), of the Father and Jesus *dwelling* in the believer (14:23), and of Jesus *dwelling* with the believer (14:25). In English translation it is easy to miss the “many dwelling places” Jesus speaks about in this chapter: the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus, dwelling in and with believers. As Jesus prepares to leave his disciples and return to the Father (13:1), he offers them the

consolation (see 14:1, 18, 27) of the abiding presence of God, Father, Jesus, and Spirit, in and with the community.

In the Old Testament the great symbol of God’s dwelling in Israel was the Temple, and so ch. 14 is introduced with the phrase Jesus used to speak of the Jerusalem Temple, namely, “my Father’s house” (Jn 2:16; 14:2). We see in this chapter a reinterpretation of Israel’s Temple traditions to speak of the future Christian community as the dwelling place of God. Somehow Jesus’ departure to the Father, through his death, will bring about the indwelling of God in the community. Taking all this into consideration, Jn 14:2 is best understood as a statement about the Father’s house(hold). At the end of ch. 14, Jesus says to the disciples, “Get up, let us go” (14:31). At the start of ch. 18, we find these words lead directly into Jesus’ crossing the Kidron valley into the garden where he will be arrested. Scholars think that chs. 13 and 14 were the earliest form of Jesus’ final discourse, and these chapters led directly into the passion. The evangelist then revised this earliest discourse by adding further words of explanation (chs. 15 to 17), and perhaps even these chapters underwent further editorial additions.

## The “Hour”

Three unique features of the Johannine passion narrative convey the particular Johannine theology of the cross: the creation symbolism, the meaning of the title on the cross (Jn 19:19), and the significance of the presence of Jesus’ mother and the Beloved Disciple at the foot of the cross (19:25-27).

The Johannine passion uses a number of allusions to the Genesis creation account (Gn 2–3). Only John has Jesus arrested and buried in a garden (Jn 18:1; 19:41). John emphasizes that the cross is placed in the middle (Jn 19:18), just as the tree of life was situated in the middle of the garden in Genesis (Gn 2:9). At the foot of the cross stand a man and a woman, who is only named “woman” and “mother,” the names given to Eve (Gn 2:23; 3:20). While the Synoptics portray the crucifixion drawing on Jewish atonement day symbolism (e.g., the tearing of the Temple

veil, Mk 15:38), John draws on creation and Temple imagery to present his theology of the cross.

In this Gospel, the sign above Jesus' head is called a *titlon* (Jn 19:19), "title," although the NABRNT translates it as "inscription." It is different from the sign in the Synoptic Gospels where it is literally called an "inscription" (Mk 15:26; Lk 23:38), or a "charge" (Mt 27:37). Only John's Gospel has the words, "*Jesus the Nazorean*, the King of the Jews." The phrase, "Jesus the Nazorean" occurs three times in the passion, twice in the garden when Jesus is arrested (Jn 18:5, 7), and as the title on the cross (19:19). First-century Jews would understand the scriptural allusions behind the use of this title, "the Nazorean." First, it alludes to the words of Isaiah, "a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud (or "branch"; *netzer*) shall blossom" (Is 11:1). The word "branch" in Hebrew is formed from the same consonants (nzt) as the word "Nazorean." It is as if Jesus dies under the title "the Branch." Second, this is the symbolic title used by the prophet Zechariah to name the one who will build the new Temple in the final age. Zechariah states, "There is a man (literally "Behold the man") whose name is Branch ... and he will build the temple of the LORD" (Zec 6:12). This verse from Zechariah is also hinted at in the words Pilate uses to announce Jesus to the crowd, "Behold the man" (Jn 19:5). Using these prophetic texts from Isaiah and Zechariah, readily familiar to first-century Jews, the Johannine title could be rephrased: Jesus the Branch, the Temple-builder.

In John's Gospel, Jesus speaks to his mother from the cross saying, "Woman, behold, your son" (Jn 19:26). He then says to the Beloved Disciple, "Behold, your mother" (19:27). These words establish a new relationship between the Beloved Disciple and the mother of Jesus. They are now mother and son. In changing their relationship, Jesus has also changed the relationship of the disciple to himself. If they

are now both "sons" of the one mother, then the Beloved Disciple is now a brother of Jesus. And if the disciple is now a brother of Jesus, it follows that the disciple is also drawn into Jesus' relationship as son of the Father. To use inclusive language, this scene portrays the divine filiation of all disciples, albeit a disciple's filiation is of a different nature than that of Jesus with the Father. In the death of Jesus, disciples become brothers and sisters of Jesus and children of God. Jesus confirms this in his first appearance to Mary Magdalene: "Go to my brothers [and sisters] and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father'" (20:17).

Following this change of relationship, the reader is told, "the disciple took her into his home," literally, "to his own" (*eis ta idia*; Jn 19:27). This phrase was used in the Prologue: "He came to what was his own (*eis ta idia*), but his own people did not accept him; but to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name" (1:11-12). Here at the Cross, these words of the Prologue are realized, as the Beloved Disciple, representative of all disciples, becomes brother to Jesus and child of God. The disciple is now drawn into the Father's house(hold). In this way, Jesus raises up a new Temple in "the hour" – the Temple of his Father's house(hold). On the cross, the Temple of his body is destroyed; from the cross, Jesus raises up a new Temple, the Father's house(hold) in the community of disciples.

## Conclusion

The Gospel of John is rich in its use of Jewish rituals, Scripture, and symbols. This can present problems for modern readers who are unaware of these allusions. If one is to appreciate the deep theological and spiritual gifts offered by this Gospel, one needs guidance to know its historical background and socio-religious context.

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