



# The Gospel According to John

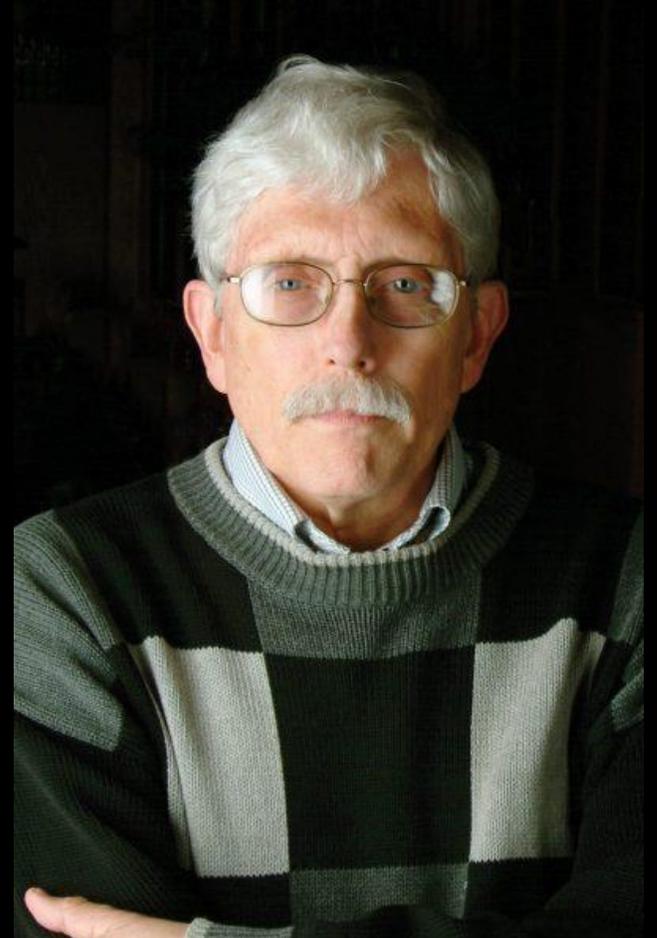
# The Gospel According to **John**

- Evidence we have from the early church indicates that the **Apostle John** is the author.
- He wrote this Gospel in **Ephesus** around **85 or 90AD**.
- This book acts as a fascinating add-on to the other three Gospels.
- It supports the Synoptics (**Matthew, Mark** and **Luke**) in a distinct way without imitating them.

# The Gospel According to John

*[John] is at one and the same time the easiest to understand and the most complex of all the Gospels ... because the author gives us the basic gospel as well as the process by which God brings every person ever born to a faith-decision.<sup>1</sup>*

*– Grant Osborne (1942 – 2018),  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*



# The Gospel According to John

- Week by week and chapter by chapter John will challenge us to believe.
- He reveals Christ as Messiah and Savior of the world, but also asks for our personal commitment.
- Time after time, we will have to decide what we are going to do with Jesus.
- It is a question with eternal consequences.

# John 3 Introduction

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- We see a clear example of our need to respond to Jesus in Christ's conversation with **Nicodemus**.
- This man is a Pharisee and a ruler who comes to Christ at night to have a secret, but sincere, conversation.
- We also take another look at John the Baptist, who sees himself as a sort of opening act for Jesus.

# John 3 Key Verse

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- **John 3:16** (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

# John 3 Outline

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1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15
2. God So Loved the World 3:16-21
3. He Must Increase 3:22-36

# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

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- 3:2 by night Nicodemus was a ruler.
- He probably came by night at least partly out of fear due to his social status.
- He would see himself as showing Jesus respect, but knew that his peers would not have liked that.

# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

- 3:3, 5, 11 Truly, truly = Literally, “Amen, Amen”
- This phrase is a mark of eyewitness realism in John.
- It appears 25X in this Gospel, but nowhere else in the entire Bible.
- Each and every time, Jesus uses it not to affirm something, as we might, but to speak with authority.

# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

- 3:3 You must be born again (or “born from above”)
- Jesus was not in the mood for small talk.
- He sets the tone of the conversation very quickly.
- The Greek includes a play on words, since it means either “born again” or “born from above.”
- Both make perfect sense.

# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

- 3:5-7 water and the spirit
- Jesus is drawing from Ezekiel 36 for the background of this terminology.

# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

- Ezekiel 36:24-27 (ESV)

<sup>24</sup> I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land.

<sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you ...

# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

- Ezekiel 36:24-27 (ESV)

... <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

<sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

- Peter uses similar terminology.
- 1 Peter 1:22-23 (ESV)

<sup>22</sup> Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, <sup>23</sup> since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

*To this day, people do not sufficiently recognize their need for regeneration; often they think what God expects from them is a good, moral life. But this neglect ...*

*– Andreas Köstenberger, Midwest Baptist Theological Seminary*



# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

*... will prove fatal if not remedied.  
For what applies to Nicodemus  
applies to every person: "You must  
be born again / from above." <sup>2</sup>*

*– Andreas Köstenberger, Midwest  
Baptist Theological Seminary*



# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

- 3:8 The wind blows where it wishes ... So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.
- Greek uses the same word for “spirit” and “wind,” so this is a play on words.
- We can see neither the wind nor the Spirit, but we know when they are at work by seeing what they do.

# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

- 3:14-15 the serpent in the wilderness
- Numbers 21:6-9 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. <sup>7</sup> And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. ...

# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

- 3:14-15 the serpent in the wilderness
- Numbers 21:6-9 (ESV)

... <sup>8</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” <sup>9</sup> So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

# 1. You Must Be Born Again    3:1-15

- The people of Israel had to look with faith upon the bronze serpent in order to be healed.
- In a similar way, we have to look to Christ on the cross to be healed of the deadly poison of our sin.

# “Lifted Up” Sayings in John

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## John 3:14-15 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

# “Lifted Up” Sayings in John

## John 8:28 (ESV)

So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.”

# “Lifted Up” Sayings in John

## John 12:32-33 (ESV)

<sup>32</sup> “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” <sup>33</sup> He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

# 1. You Must Be Born Again 3:1-15

- 3:15 First use of “eternal life” in John.
- He uses it 21x in this Gospel and his letters combined.
- That life is intimately connected with putting our faith and trust in him, his death and resurrection.
- We must be born again.

## 2. God So Loved the World 3:16-21

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- The previous section gave us the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus.
- This section gives us John's commentary that dialogue.

## 2. God So Loved the World 3:16-21

- How much did God love the people of this world?
- **John 3:16** (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

## 2. God So Loved the World 3:16-21

- 3:16 For the connection between this and our need to be born again, think back to John 1:12-13 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,  
<sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

## 2. God So Loved the World 3:16-21

- 3:17-18 Don't miss this deep, essential doctrine.
- We come to the table with God as people who are already guilty before him.
- Just think. Have you sinned? Then you are guilty.
- We need to believe and be born again in order to be transferred from a state of guilt to one of grace.

## 2. God So Loved the World 3:16-21

- **3:19-20** These verses explain why people turn against God and against his people.
- People love darkness. We represent light and stress them out by our very presence.
- **3:21** Yet when we turn to God, we are more than happy for the world to see what he is doing in us.

## 2. God So Loved the World 3:16-21

*Unbelievers are responsible for their evil deeds, but believers know that God gets the glory for their good ones.*<sup>3</sup>

*– Tony Evans,  
Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship*



# Nicodemus in The Gospel of John

# Nicodemus in The Gospel of John

- John 7:47-51 (ESV)

<sup>47</sup> The Pharisees answered them, “Have you also been deceived? <sup>48</sup> Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? <sup>49</sup> But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.” <sup>50</sup> Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, <sup>51</sup> “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?”

# Nicodemus in The Gospel of John

- John 19:38-40 (ESV)

<sup>38</sup> After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. ...

# Nicodemus in The Gospel of John

- John 19:38-40 (ESV)

... <sup>39</sup> Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. <sup>40</sup> So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

## 2. God So Loved the World 3:16-21

- God loves the people of this world.
- He loves the most committed atheist, the most bigoted racist and the most habitual sex offender.
- He loves people like you and me.

## 2. God So Loved the World 3:16-21

- God's love does not require us to love him first.
- In love, he takes the initiative and we respond to him.
- Once we respond, we need to learn to love the people of this world in the same way he does.
- We are all – or at least *can all* be – saved in the exact same way, by believing in Jesus Christ.

### 3. He Must Increase 3:22-36

### 3. He Must Increase 3:22-36

- **3:22-23** In **4:2** we are told that only Jesus' disciples actually did the baptizing.
- Christ was gaining more followers than John the Baptist, but John was perfectly fine with that.
- **3:24** This Gospel doesn't tell this story, but points us back to the Synoptics, to **Matthew, Mark** and **Luke**.

### 3. He Must Increase 3:22-36

- 3:28-29 John the Baptist saw himself as the best man at a wedding between Christ and his people.
- He can give the toast at the rehearsal dinner, make sure the rings are in place and so on.
- But the bridegroom, not the best man, always gets the bride in the end.

### 3. He Must Increase 3:22-36

- 3:30 John knew his place and was totally content with it. We should be like him in at least two ways:
  1. We should be content with who God has made us.
  2. As we grow in Christ there will be increasingly more of him and less of us.

### 3. He Must Increase 3:22-36

- Galatians 2:20 (ESV)

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

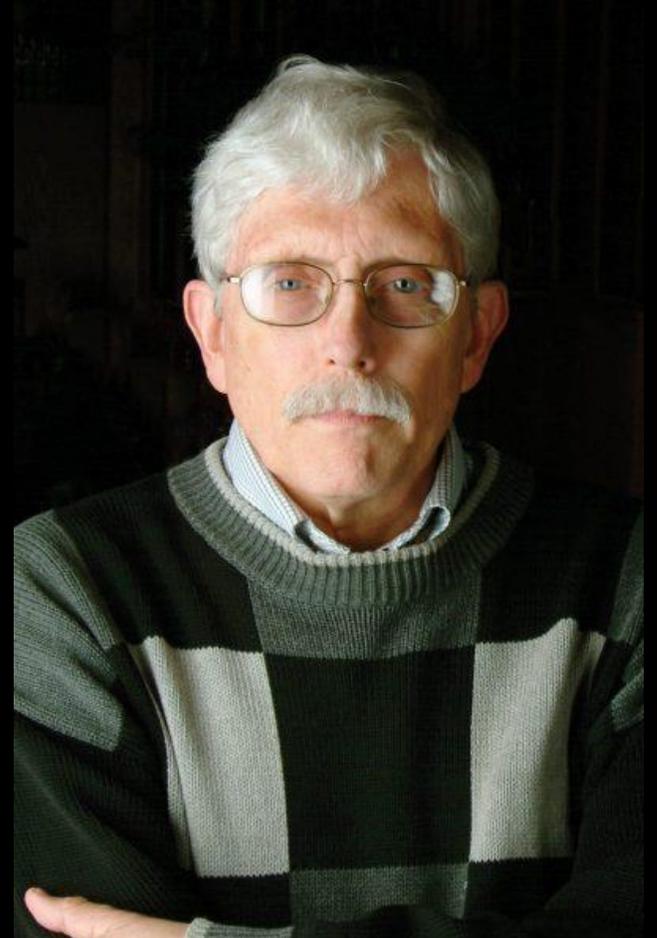
### 3. He Must Increase 3:22-36

- 3:31 Starting here we get the Apostle John's commentary on the ministry of John the Baptist.
- The Baptizer pointed people to Jesus Christ.
- Jesus came from heaven. He was sent by God from heaven to earth.

### 3. He Must Increase 3:22-36

*His [Christ's] witness centers on the most important facts ever made known to humankind, yet no one cares ... the very people of the world created by the God-man have refused to know or accept these truths ...*

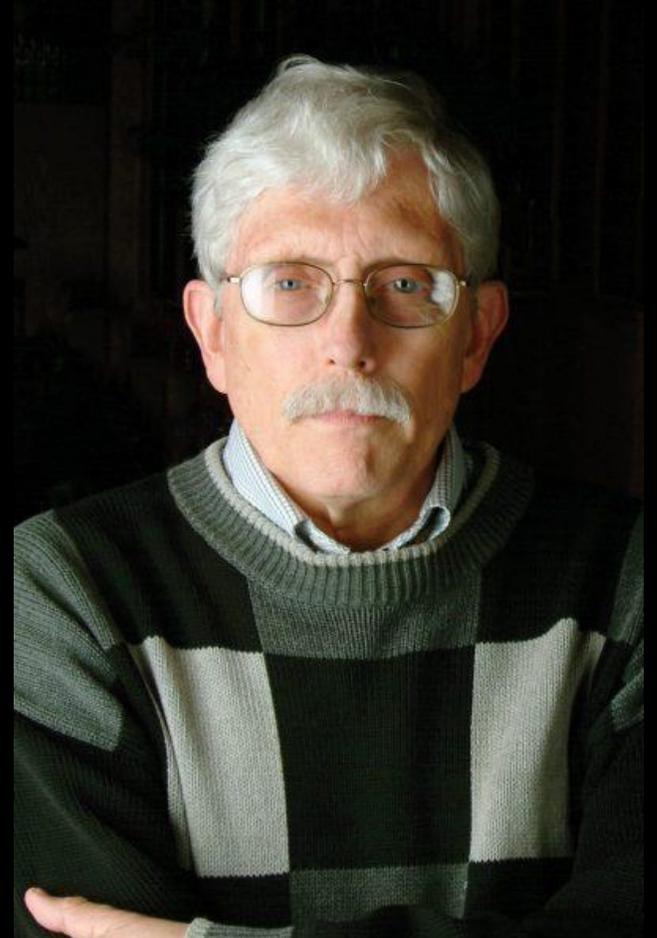
*– Grant Osborne (1942 – 2018),  
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### 3. He Must Increase 3:22-36

*... The single most important witness in all of history is greeted with unbelief. <sup>4</sup>*

*– Grant Osborne (1942 – 2018),  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*



## 3. He Must Increase 3:22-36

- 3:36 This final verse summarizes the message of this whole chapter.
- It highlights our need to respond to Christ.
- In the end, there will be two kinds of people, those who believe in the Son and those who reject him.

# John 3    What We Just Read

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# John 3 Key Verse

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- John 3:16 (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

# John 3    Key Points

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1. We must be born again. Conversion has a supernatural component – the new birth.
2. God loves the people of this world. We need to love them too so they can believe in the Son.
3. We should be content with who God has made us.
4. As we grow in Christ, there will be increasingly more of him and less of us.

# John 3    A Prayer

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- Dear Father in Heaven,
- We thank you for sending Jesus Christ, your Son, so that we might believe in him and receive eternal life.
- We do not want to be among those who would hear this message from Jesus and yet reject him all the same.
- We grasp the fact that our eternity depends upon our response to Jesus Christ.

## John 3    A Prayer

- We receive him and believe in him so that we might be born again – born from above – and be able enter your kingdom.
- We receive this free gift of eternal life, which we cannot earn or strive to achieve.
- It can only come from you. This is in fact why you sent your Son, so that we might believe in him.

## John 3    A Prayer

- Cleanse and renew us now by your Holy Spirit's power.
- Let Christ now increase as we each decrease.
- Let us be who you make us, nothing more, or less or other than who we now are in Christ.
- Amen

# John 3    References

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