

Gamma – Gospel of John

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Introduction to John:

The Gospel of John is basically one of the four gospels that are in the Bible. All the other ones are similar. There are four versions and the other ones are synoptic or like summaries and they are like the 'Lord of the Rings', fast moving with lot of episodes, but in John we not only have fast moving episodes, what we actually have only about seven miracles. We don't really have parables. Seven miracles and the purpose of those miracles is to show you who Jesus is and we are going to have in-depth discourses of Jesus sitting down and actually talking to disciples. It is the only gospel where you have in-depth teaching. All the rest like Mark, it goes one episode after the other and you got to guess in between what is happening. In John, he goes into in-depth to talk about the relationship between father and son, God and Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ and us.

It was written around AD 81-96 under a time when there was a great persecution by emperor Domitian and written in the city of Ephesus. It was written to two kinds of people, in particular, one are the Jews in dispersion all over Asia Minor and the other ones are the gentiles who are attracted to Judaism. So therefore when John writes, you got to be acutely aware he has got two kinds of audiences on which he actually has to address.

Who was the one who wrote it?

24 This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

Here we have a story about Jesus written by his best friend. So that for you have a very nice in-depth look at John.

The Purpose:

John 20:30-31 (ESV) Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

So when you are reading a book you need to know the purpose. The purpose is to show you that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God. So the focus is on the Messiah, unique Son of God and the Messianic Community Which He will bring.

The Prologue of John:

We start off reading the first 18 verses, it is called the prologue. Prologue is like an introduction and we have the prologue because it starts off with **Word was with God** and it ends of with **the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known**. The prologue is basically like if you enter hotel. When you enter a hotel you actually have many rooms and what it does is it introduces you to the bits of a hotel,

- the pre-existence of the Son-Logos. We will talk about it in John 17:5.
- the light coming into the world, we will talk about that in John 3:19, 12:46
- the only and only son, he talks about this in John 3:16
- in him was life, and John 5:26 talks about it

So therefore it introduces for you all the major themes in one compact 18 verses and then the rest of the book he will start to take all these themes and break it down for you. So therefore first 18 verses are absolutely packed.

1. JESUS IS THE WORD

First we will understand the world views. World views are how you look at the world. The way you look at the world could be ancient times and modern times. So if John is writing a gospel to the people at that time you got to understand their outlook, before you translate that into our outlook.

Ancient View:

Societal Aspirations: In those days you have got life and the people their face death, birth and in-between you got either happiness or you got suffering. Not much difference from our time today. How do they actually cope with suffering and how do they seek happiness? They do it through philosophy. Epicurus and the stoics were the two dominant philosophical aspirations of their time.

Epicurus was the one who basically said, in order to cope with the problem with birth, death, life, happiness, suffering, he says what you need to do is actually modify your expectation. Don't expect so much. If you don't expect so much in life, you won't suffer, you will not be very-very happy but you not be that bad. So therefore, you don't want to be very rich, you don't want to be a star, you don't want to be a president. If you eliminate all of these desires, you won't be disappointed. So that's what Epicurus does.

He said, don't worry about life beyond death. As you were never worried about the life before birth, so therefore you will get worried about life beyond death. That's what Epicurus thought.

Steve Jobs is an Epicurean. He writes, *"Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life," he said.*

"Because almost everything-all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure-these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart."

That's how he invented the iPad. You have nothing to lose, you do just whatever you need to do because you are already going to die. So he has modified his expectations.

The Stoics: The other way of coping with life is not only modifying what you feel to make you happy, when unhappiness come and suffering come, you modify your response to events. So here you actually have the contemporary equivalents of Buddhism and Taoism that looks and say, that all desire is evil so let's not have any desire, let's look for things which you can change rather than things that you cannot change. Things are beyond your control, other people what they think of you. Some of us just worry about other people things. Here things are beyond your control, actions and opinions of other people, reputation, health, wealth, you can't control so don't think about them. Only thing about things that are within your control, your opinion, your moral judgment, your beliefs, your desires and your goals. That's the stoics. For the stoics, the Greeks, God is in the fabric of society. The universe itself is God and the universal outpouring of its soul – Chrysippus.

It is very much like the Star Wars. It talks about the force. The force is with you. For you to be happy you need to know where the force is and if you adjust your life, close your eyes and adjust yourself to the flow of the force then you will be happy. So this is Greek philosophy. So they believe also that the soul is the part of the universe in us, the body is like animals. The problem with this kind of philosophy is that you live a very dull life. There is passivity to evil. You actually never have much hope, the absence of intense love, absence of solid eternal future.

Modern View:

The modern view is not very much different. We have a modern view; it is called a scientific view. 1960 somebody gave a bomb-sight to Mr. Wahlstrom and he fixed it together and put a motor there and it started moving. His friends all came and added a few cogwheels and after 10 years he had a huge machine. Then somebody asked him a question, what does this machine do? He said nothing. It doesn't do anything. It just goes around, it is nice to see but it doesn't produce milk, it doesn't predict the future, it doesn't do anything and the modern scientific view of life is what we can work out how the

universe works but we don't know why. That's the problem, it is called Wahlstrom's machine. The other modern world view is the New Age. *Come to my church, it's called nature.* We are all part of nature and when we die we will join nature again. The cycle of life.

John 1:1-4 (ESV) [In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.](#)

So here if you are writing, suddenly in the beginning was the Word. Now how does this word resonate with his people, gentiles, as well as Jews. If you look at the gentiles, they would think the word is logos. In Greek, logos is the organizing philosophical principle that binds the whole world together. So when you say logos, it is the rational of the universe. It is like the force. So in beginning was the force.

If you would talk to a Luke Skywalker fan, you wouldn't talk about Jesus first. You would say, in the beginning was the force. So John is very clever, he is using a word that the Greeks will understand. Now he also writes to the Jews and the Jews also understand what the word is. When God created the world, He said let there be light and there was light. The Word creates. So therefore he uses the Word and the Word is very common, the Torah is very common, it is power, it is light, it is life in the life of Jews. So therefore, the Jews will understand and, in the beginning was the word, the word was with God, is couched in Genesis language. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. There is a parallel which John wants us to look it. And God said let there be light. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God. These are lessons in grammar today, prepositions.

What do we learn?

It means that 'Word' was from the beginning. The 'Word' was with God. They are both different. This indicates a very close relationship.

18 [No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.](#)

It indicates a very close relationship. As God is a spirit so there is no physical bosom that means they must be the souls of God. God, the spirit of God and the spirit of Christ are so intermingled into one that they are literally one. A very-very close relationship, which John is trying to tell us.

Who is God?

3 All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

So he is the author, authority and deity, same thing as God says, let there be light, which means how did God create. Using his word and the word is Jesus Christ, nothing was made without him. This is wisdom personified. If you look in Proverbs chapter 8, it tells you what happen when the world was created. So wisdom personified is basically Jesus Christ and this is how he describes it.

Proverbs 8:27-31 (ESV) **27** When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, **28** when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, **29** when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, **30** then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, **31** rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man

So you have a situation where you have got a circle of love, where when God creates with his word next to him and when they are creating, it was a scene full of joy, delight and out of the joy, delight and love within the Godhead, they are having such a great time, such great fun, so full of love, out comes the man, children. Man is a product of God's joy. So the word of God tells us now there is a perfect relationship within the Godhead of joy, of love and then later on we read about glory. It is from this background that human beings are created.

The Heretics:

Four of the greatest figures in the world if you ask people; Marks, Buddha, Mohammad and Jesus. Only one of them claims to be God. None of them actually claimed to be God, only Jesus claims to be God. From this important doctrine we have problems in the third century. There is a priest called Arius, and he started to say, that there is only one God, Jesus is created not truly God. Sabellius also at the same time, a priest in Rome, was saying God is in three modes. Same like the three states of water. In fact, this is not correct. These are heresies that came up, in fact they can't accept that God, Holy Spirit and the Son are all God. No, these are inferiors' deities as it were. The first one is God and these are all created deities. But you can see *in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.*

Heb 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature

So in the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, they established that Jesus Christ is God, the same substance of God.

The Mormons got a different belief. *"As man now is, God once was...As God now is, man can become"*

Jehovah's Witnesses believe Jesus had a prehuman existence and in that state he was divine. Although not Almighty God, the Word, was/is a god. He exists as the very image and likeness of the only true God. However, upon his becoming human Jesus left off his heavenly nature. This means Jesus was totally human; he is not God when he became man. So that's not what the Bible tells us.

When you read the book of John later on when he starts talking in chapter 5 and chapter 17, he will tell you exactly this problem of trinity. We are not polytheist, we don't worship multiple Gods, but I just told you the word is God, and God the Father is God, they are different but we still worship the one God, how does that work out. When you go to chapter 5, when you go to chapter 17, he will help you work it out.

As far as Muslims are concerned, Christ 'was the only servant and apostle of the Lord'. Christ was "Word from God".

2. JESUS BRINGS NEW LIFE

John 1:4-5 (ESV) In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

So it is preexisting life, in him was life, the word has life and the life was the light of man. When he writes like this, it is very confusing. He is using light and this creation as a metaphor. Light is basically the beginning of life, without light there is no life. So what happens is that, he is using the metaphor of darkness and light, death and life, unbelief and revelation. One minute light is life, one minute light means revelation. One minute darkness means darkness, absence of light, one minute darkness means death, one minute darkness means unbelief. He is using his metaphors and is mixed inside that one sentence.

So he is telling you that through this light of Jesus Christ you get revelation and this revelation will give you eternal life and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. So when the light of Jesus Christ comes into the world even a world as dark as ours, it will never ever overcome the light, because darkness is the absence of light.

Prophetic Expectation:

John 1:6-8 (ESV) There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

John 1:9-11 (ESV) The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. **11** He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

His own people were the Jews. The Jews rejected him and John is telling you that he came to Israel and Israel rejected him,

John 1:12-13 (ESV) But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

We get this new birth by faith. It is a special new birth. So he is talking about coming to the people of Israel and he has taken a completely different tag. John is very famous for this idea of 'born again' and is so radicle kind of life that you are supposed to be born again. Here you actually have the Jews who love the word, they study the word but they don't have this idea that in order to be saved, you actually need to have a new life. They are thinking, it is the old life, I just got to make my life a little bit better by studying God's word a bit better and more and trapped into my forehead and remember all of the time and I might be saved, but they had hearts of stones. They were taken into captivity in 722 BC and again in 597 BC, because their hearts were made of stone, they didn't have new life.

David Slater went to the jungle, spent three days and nights with the monkeys and one day they grabbed his camera and took selfie and this selfie went viral all over the world and sold for lot of money. Then what happened was the people for the ethical treatment of animals sued David Slater and said, you cannot profit from the selfie, the profit should also go to the monkey because the monkey took his own picture. So this one went to the nine circuit court of appeals at the United States. The court verdict at the end was to give royalty to human. Monkeys are not countered as human life, lower level of life. There is a difference. So the monkey doesn't have that kind of right but the good story was at the end, David Slater made a deal with the people for ethical treatment of animals and they decided to share the profits; 75 to the human, 25 to the monkey.

The point is, you have different orders of life and the different orders of life are based on your response. If you go and kick an apple, it is not going to do anything. You kick a human being, most probably they will either forgive you or fight back. There are different responses but when you talking about, **he come to give you life**, we are talking about giving spiritual life, means giving you aware and responsive to God. A monkey can take a selfie but that monkey cannot worship. A monkey cannot respond.

Albert Einstein says, *"As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene.... ..No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life."*

If you are spiritually alive, when you read the Bible, when the words go in, they pulsate and they convey the personality of God and if at that response in you, it evokes that kind of response then you are spiritually alive. When you are troubled, when you got disease, when you are ill, when you lost your fortune and you are crying and you go in the room and you open up God's word and you read and it brings comfort and those words pulsate in your heart, you are spiritually alive. When this word comes in and it changes your behaviour, it changes your outlook, it changes your demeanor that means you have new life. So when Jesus comes, the light comes, it gives you new life.

CS Lewis said, "*The SON OF GOD became a Man.....so that Men may become the SONS OF GOD!*"

We have intimacy with the king, we can drop anytime we like on our knees and the king will be at our disposal to listen and

Romans 8:30 (ESV) And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

So we actually have a future. If we are spiritually alive we are children of God, we will have an eternal future, every single person. It doesn't matter of your race, your history, whether you are ethical person or not, all you have to do is to believe.

John 1:12-13 (ESV) But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

3. FAITH COMES THROUGH SEEING THE GLORY OF THE WORD OF GOD

James Irwin was an astronaut and he actually went up on the moon. On the moon was the first time in his life he prayed and he used these words.

"What is more important than man walking on the moon is that God should walk on earth."

He is actually right, that is the far more momentous issue.

John 1:14-17 (ESV) And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. **15** (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.") **16** For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. **17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ

The Word Became Flesh: Socrates and Plato were the two most famous philosophers of their time. Socrates said, "*Oh that someone would arise, man or god, to show us God.*" Plato

said, *"Unless a god man comes to us and reveals to us the Supreme Being, there is no help or hope."*

The Greek philosophers at least understood that you couldn't find God on your own. There are a lot of people taking time off to eat, pray and love and climb the highest mountains to look for God, you cannot find God. You will not find God. The philosophers understood the only way you can find God is when God finds you

And dwelt among us: The word dwelt is tabernacle, which is the same word as you get from this tabernacle. So God comes and lives among its people.

We have seen his glory: Glory is basically what we see as worthy. Glory is not unidimensional. We are attracted to glory. Moses asked God to show him his glory.

Exodus 33:22-23 (ESV) And while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. **23** Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen

The one who is of greatest beauty, glory, integrity and everything is God. So if you see God you are immediately attracted to him, but if go too close you burn up and die. We are so attracted to God but on the other hand it will burn us up. So if we really experience God's glory, it will change our lives and so the word comes in.

Exodus 33:18-19 (ESV) Moses said, "Please show me your glory." **19** And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

When God passed by it was not just the light that pass by, God's goodness was his glory. The glory of God is not the unshielded light that shines, it is like the two facets of human goodness. One is richness, beauty, strength and power. On the other hand, it is integrity, humility, love, sacrificial love. So that aspect is there, I will make my goodness pass before you. The glory of God is full of grace and truth. So his goodness that comes for us is grace is 'hesed', which is basically covenantal love and truth in Hebrew is actually faithfulness. So what is God's glory.

God's glory is when you look at Jesus Christ, you see the signs that shows his power, you see the death and exaltation that shows his goodness. So therefore the glory of the son, when they actually make wine out of all this water, the glory of the son is that you open up their eyes. So that they can have faith to believe. The glory of the son is when he hangs on the cross and you can see God's mercy, God's grace and God's faithfulness.

Jesus and God got separated on the cross, and the father punishes the son. The pain level there was huge (unimaginable). That is the glory of the son and when you see that glory it transforms your life. That's what it means.

Don Quixote: Don Quixote was a crazy Spanish gentleman. He was the one who thinks he is a knight and he is half blind. He goes and takes his lands and is attacking giants. Actually, they called wind mills and he is taking they are giants and they he meets a girl and the girl name is Aldonza Lorenzo. She is a prostitute which nobody wants, nobody likes and he is totally obsessed with her because he thinks she shall be my lady. All the giants I fight, all the trophies I win, it will be for her. Out of the blue he picks her up and she sings to him.

Born on a dung heap to die on a dung heap
Where strong n bad man use and forget
I am nothing leave me alone

She cannot cope with this guy loving her. She says

Blows and abuse I can take and give back again,
Tenderness I cannot bear
So please torture me now
With your "Sweet Dulcineas" no more!
I am no one! I'm nothing!
I'm only Aldonza the whore!

But Don Quixote keeps on and on and gradually at the end she changes. She looks at herself a little bit better. She is actually transformed because of his admiration and he treats her like a lady, so she becomes a lady. Don Quixote is mad, because he sees the world as an ideal. We see the world as it is. Anybody sees the world as ideal and works it ideal may be mad but we are actually Christians. We actually see the world as an ideal and then the world as it is and in between Jesus Christ has broken in.

The ideal here is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ brings the perfect life that breaks into normal rubbish life that we have and when we look at the beauty of Jesus Christ just like Don Quixote we are like Aldonza, we are nothing but born in the dung heap, will die in a dung heap and we are a whore and as his love pours upon us and we see the glory of that love, that glory will change us bit by bit and that's what John is. The Book of John is showing us the glory of Jesus Christ and I hope by studying these 20 chapters there will not be a single person here who will not be transformed by that glory.