

John 21:20-25 - The Author's Conclusion¹

Before the Lesson: Prepare AV equipment to show two videos: 8:46 and 8:32 minutes, respectively. <https://bibleproject.com/videos/john-1-12/> and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUfh_wOsauk .

Fellowship question: (Use *one* of these to break the ice, to begin some discussion, and to lead into the study):

- a. What is the last book you read completely?
- b. What is one word you would use to describe after watching a TV series' last episode?

Information

We come to the final lesson of our series from the Gospel of John!

(Author's note: When I began this series, I created an outline with 26 lessons, so it could be done over two, thirteen-week "semesters." However, that required that I skip over so many wonderful passages - and made it too easy to skip some difficult passages, too. So, I decided to cover every verse of John. This led me to write 45 lessons, including this one.)

It has been over a year since we began this series. And, finally, we reach the gospel writer's conclusion. He tells us why he wrote this book.

- Have a class member read John 20:30-31.

John focused on seven miracles, which he called "signs." He recorded these signs so that readers would believe in Jesus. How would you describe what it means to "believe in Jesus?"

"Naturally, when signs are present, two reactions are possible: acceptance, or rejection. The entire book is an attempt to swing the reader to the side of acceptance, as embodied in the word *believe*. The underlying Greek word, *pisteuo*, is used no less than ninety-eight times in the Gospel and is customarily translated *believe*, though in a few instances it is rendered *trust* or *commit*. Never does it mean a mere assent to a proposition. It usually means acknowledgement of some personal claim, or even a complete personal commitment to some ideal or person. John sought to lead his readers to a settled faith on the basis of actual signs which were historic episodes, and which connoted the spiritual reality behind them as well."²

¹ This lesson is copyrighted by Dr. Rick Jordan, Great Bible Teachers, Inc, 2025. More lessons may be found at greatbibleteachers.com.

² Merrill C. Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief: An Analytic Study of the Text* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1948), 32f.

John wrote so that we might have “life in his name.” What does that phrase mean to you? (Heaven; a daily walk with God; a more abundant life, etc.)

John’s Gospel “brings together the person of Jesus and the response of faith, this time emphasizing life with Jesus. That is life attending to his words and signs, breathing his Spirit, and actualizing the sort of unity in love, peace, and joy with the Father, and other people, and with the whole creation that has been opened up by the Farewell Discourses.”³

Paul gives us another description of life in Christ.

- Have a class member read Galatians 2:20.

So, in the spirit of abundance, John gives us not one but two conclusions! Let’s hear the second conclusion of this Gospel.

- Have a class member read John 21:20-25.

The Bible Project has two videos that give a great review of this Gospel. We will watch the first one, have some discussion, then watch the second one, and have more discussion.

- Show the first video (8:46 minutes): <https://bibleproject.com/videos/john-1-12/>

What did you remember/learn about the structure of John’s Gospel? (Prologue; 7-signs; 7 “I Am” statements; 4 stories about institutions; 4 stories around religious feasts; much of the book on the last week of Jesus’ life, etc.)

We’ve spent more than a year with this book as our text. What are the advantages of spending time in one book rather than skipping from book-to-book, week-to-week?

During the year, we also noticed themes that John threads throughout his gospel. “Abundance” was one theme. “Remaining” was another. “Come and see” is said often in John’s Gospel. There are also many parallels: darkness versus light, life versus death, faith versus faithlessness, etc. These are different from the themes of other gospel writers. This may be why people have a “favorite” gospel. Matthew emphasizes scriptural prophecies that are fulfilled in Jesus. Mark is short and fast, giving the Jesus-story a sense of urgency. Luke emphasizes Jesus’ inclusion of people whom the religious and political world excluded.

³ David F. Ford, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 415.

- Let's look at the second video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUfh_wOsauk (8;32 minutes).

How does the second part of John's Gospel inform your understanding of who Jesus is?

Why do you think John spent so much time and ink on the last week of Jesus' life?

Transformational Exercise

What story or truth in John's Gospel reminds you why you want to follow Jesus?

Were someone to ask you, "Why do you follow Jesus?" what story or truth from the Gospels could you tell them?

Close in a prayer something like this: *Jesus, our Lord and our God, we thank you for this Gospel. We thank you for your Beloved Disciple who collected these signs and sayings to encourage our discipleship. Use these words and stories to shape our souls, so we may be more like the one we say we follow, Jesus Christ. Amen.*