John

Who, When, Where

Written by Yohannes (John). Yohannes was one of Yeshua's closest disciples. And the disciple whom Yeshua loved. He was a fisherman with his brother James (Yaakov) and Yeshua nicknamed them "The Sons of Thunder". As far as we know John lived longer than all the other disciples and died as an old man on the island of Patmos around 100AD.
We think Yohannes wrote this later in his life. Possibly even 80 or 90AD.
We don't really know where Yohannes was when he wrote this. It was possibly while he was on Patmos, but it could have been earlier than that.
The gospel itself is set in and around Jerusalem.

Summary

John is quite different from the other gospels. It starts by telling us the Yeshua is "The Message", and that he existed with God before the creation of the world.
Yohannes tells us about the early days, when Yeshua was immersed, (by the other Yohannes). He focuses on several miracles and healings, and then gives us a lot more detail of the last days of Yeshua's ministry before his execution.
This gospel is more focused on Yeshua's spiritual side, rather than his earthly life as a man. Yeshua is the message of God. The way to God. The truth. The life. The light of mankind. The bread of life.

Before You Read

When were you born?
When did you die?
Kind of a weird question, but the Bible says we died with Yeshua when he was executed.
Kind of odd that you died 2000 years before you were born!
And Yeshua existed thousands of years before he was born! Yohannes tells us that he was with God in the beginning. Yeshua himself said that before Abraham was, he is!

Yohannes was one of the first disciples to follow Yeshua. Quite an adventure for a boy from a small fishing town in Galilee. By the time he wrote this gospel he had probably been a Christian for 40 or 50 years.
Can you imagine yourself as an old man/woman telling people about Yeshua?

Key Verses

John 1:1

The message was in the beginning. And the message was with God, and the message was God. He was in the beginning with God.

Yeshua is the message of God. He didn't just bring the message, he is the message.
How about you? Do you live out the message? Or do you just speak it?

Yeshua always existed. Before time. This is a powerful verse.

John 1:12

But to as many as did accept him, he gave them the authority to become children of God, to those who trusted in his name.

How do you become a child of God?
You accept Yeshua. This word is also used to mean "welcome". Like you welcome someone to your home.
Can you know if you're a Christian?
Have you accepted him?

John 3:3

Yeshua answered and said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless anyone is born from above they aren't able to see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus took this very literally. How can I enter my mother's womb a second time? What does it really mean?

John 3:16

For in this way God loved the world - he gave his only born son so that everyone who trusts in him won't be destroyed but may have everlasting life.

Many translations say "God so loved the world that…". Which is easily misinterpreted as "God loved the world so much that …" But the Greek word "so" means "in this way". Johannes is telling us how God showed his love for the world.
How amazing that he was willing to give up his son for us.

John 5:19

Then Yeshua answered and said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, the son isn't able to do anything of himself except what he sees the father do. For whatever he does, likewise the son also does those things.

Yeshua only did what he saw the father doing.
So often we have our own idea of what God's ministry is. We decide that we should do Sunday School, or youth ministry, or whatever… but we don't look around to see what God is already doing in our community.
Take a look. Ask him. Then, when you find out what God is doing around you… join in. And don't do anything else.

John 8:58

Yeshua said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

Before Abraham was, I am. Am, not was. This kind of messes with your head a bit, but Yeshua is saying that he exists outside of time. He exists before time was created. He exists right now at a time before Abraham was born.

John 10:11

I'm the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sake of the sheep.

So… what kind of shepherd are you?

John 13:35-36

I give you a new command, that you love one another. Just as I've loved you, so you should also love one another. In this everyone will perceive that you're disciples to me, if you have love for one another."

This is the only command Yeshua gave us in the New Testament. Many times we are reminded that we are not under the Law. We don't have to keep the old commandments. But we have to keep this one.
Loving someone is not the same as not hating someone. What are you actively doing to show your love to other Christians? What **can** you do?
If you read Yohannes' other letters you will see that he is big on "love". Yohannes was the only one of the original Twelve who lived to an old age. It is said that when he was older all he ever said to people was, "love one another".

John 14:5-6

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you're- going, so how can we know the way?" Yeshua said to him, "I'm the way - and the truth, and the life. Nobody comes to the father except through me.

Yeshua didn't just know the way. He didn't just show the way. He **is** the way. This is really profound. Nobody had been thinking like this before.

John 21:15-17

Then when they'd eaten, Yeshua said to Shimon Petros, "Shimon of Yonah, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes lord, you know that I'm fond of you." He said to him, "Graze my lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Shimon of Yonah, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes lord, you know that I'm fond of you." He said to him, "Shepherd my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Shimon of Yonah, are you fond of me?" Petros was saddened because the third time he'd said to him, "Are you fond of me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything. You perceive that I'm fond of you." Yeshua said to him, "Graze my sheep.

If you read carefully you will see that Yeshua changed his question. Twice he asked Petros "Do you love me?" Twice Petros answered, "I'm fond of you." That's not the same thing, and if you've been in a relationship, you know how that would hurt. But Petros was being honest, he had just denied Yeshua three times. How could he say that he loved him.
So Yeshua changed the question… "Are you fond of me?"
How about you? Do you love him? Or are you just fond of him?

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

What would your gospel have in it? If you could take any of the stories in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John… which ones would you include? Which ones would you leave out?
Would you have a theme?
Who would you write to?

What do you think about the spiritualness of Yohannes' gospel? Do you find it helpful to

think of Yeshua as the light, the way, …?
Do you find it confusing?

The other gospels make it clear that Yeshua was the Messiah that the Jews had been waiting for. How does Yohannes go beyond that to something bigger and better?

Early on in this book Yeshua encounters several different people and teaches them who he is. But each time he does it very differently. Compare his encounter with Nicodemus with the time he met the Samaritan woman. It was like he knew exactly what to say to each person.
How about you? Do you have a set speech that you try to make? Or do you listen to the person, get to know them, and show them the message in a way they will understand?

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