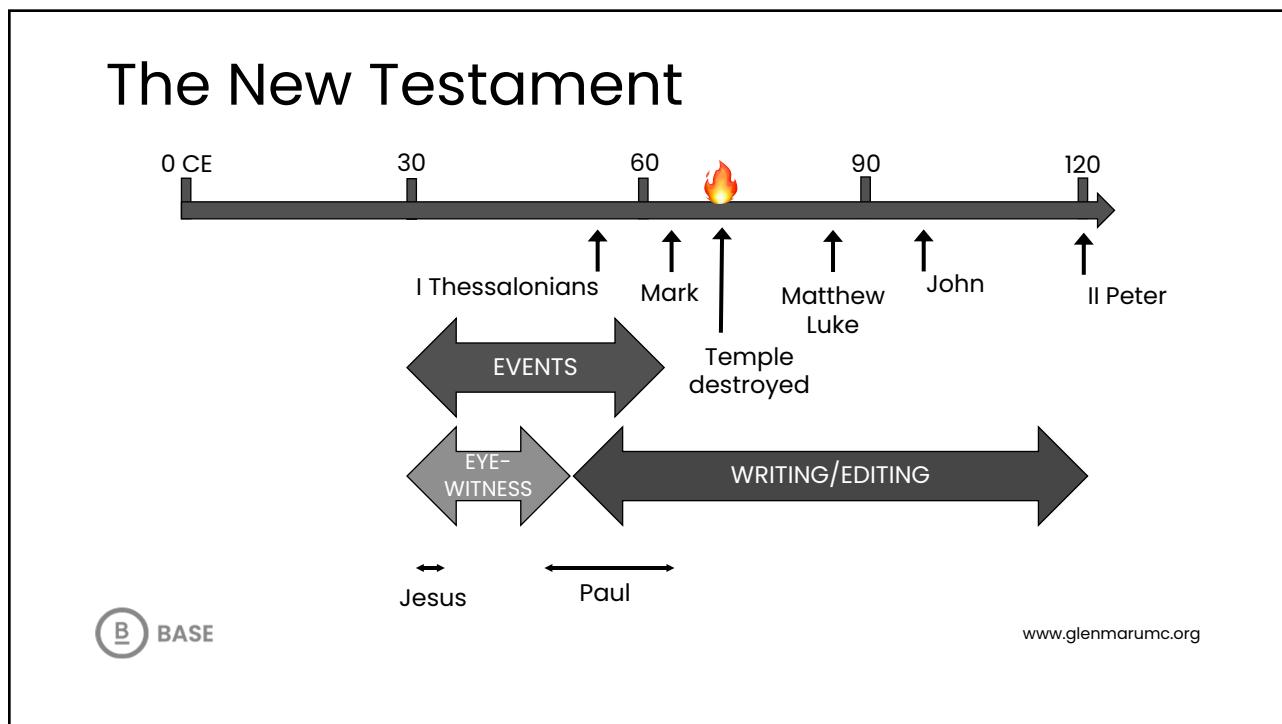




1



2

Context of the Gospel of John

- Concerns in the late 1st Century/early 2nd Century:
 - Christians being excluded from synagogues
 - Increasing Roman persecution of Christians
 - Growing heresies within Christianity (e.g. Gnostics, Marcion)
- Notorious *past* events
 - 64 CE – fire in Rome and purge of many Christians by Nero
 - 70 CE – Rome destroys the Temple in Jerusalem
- Diversity of views of who Jesus was/is
 - Jesus was only human
 - Jesus was only divine
 - And everything in between



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3

The Jewish Situation

~~Sadducees~~
 Conservative, attached to the Temple
 Believed there was no resurrection

Essenes

Lived apart
 Dead Sea Scrolls

Pharisees

Not connected to the Temple; lived with the people

Believed in the resurrection



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4

Johannine Community

- Proposed 1st Century Christian community, closely aligned with Judaism
- Conflict with Jews in synagogues
- Possible source of the Gospel of John and 1, 2, 3 John
- Most likely multiple authors/editors from this community contributed to these works
- Emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit



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5

The “Jews” in John

- The term “the Jews” occurs about 70 times in John
- Given John’s context, the term likely refers to Jewish leaders who were expelling Jewish Christians from synagogues
- Most scholars would not suggest identifying the term with ordinary Jews



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6

The Beginning of John

The Word Became Flesh

1 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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4** in him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of all people. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. **9** The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.^[b]

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. **11** He came to what was his own,^[c] and his own people did not accept him. **12** But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,^[d] full of grace and truth. **15** (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") **16** From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.^[e] **17** The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who^[f] is close to the Father's heart,^[g] who has made him known.



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7

Logos

- Jesus *is* the Word of God
- Jesus (*logos*) is the means of creation (God spoke!)
- In Greek philosophy, *logos* is cosmic reason
- Strong echoes to Hebrew wisdom literature (Proverbs 8)

22 "The LORD created me at the beginning^[a] of his work,^[b]
the first of his acts of long ago.
23 Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth,
26 when he had not yet made earth and fields^[c]
or the world's first bits of soil.
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 worker,^[d]
and I was daily his^[e] delight,
playing before him always,
31 playing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

Proverbs 8:22-31

8

Primacy of Love

- Mark, Matthew, Luke all agree:
 - Love God with all your being and love your neighbor as yourself.
- John's demand is even greater:
 - "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

John 13:34

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:7-8



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9

"I am" Sayings

- "I am" = name of God, YHWH
- I am the bread of life (6:35)
- I am the light of the world (8:12)
- I am the gate (10:9)
- I am the good shepherd (10:11)
- I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
- I am the way and the truth and the life (14:6)
- I am the true vine (15:1)



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10

Signs and Symbols

- The acts of Jesus that the synoptics call "miracles" John calls "signs."
- Like everything important in John, these signs point to a deeper meaning
- John 9, man born blind

9 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. **2** His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" **3** Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. **4** We^[a] must work the works of him who sent me^[b] while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. **5** As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." **6** When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, **7** saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. **8** The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" **9** Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." **10** But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" **11** He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." **12** They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

11

Who is truly blind?

- First, the neighbors
- Now, the Pharisees ("Jews")
- Next, the man's parents

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. **14** Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.

15 Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight.

He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see."

16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. **17** So they said again to the blind man,

"What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight **19** and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" **20** His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, **21** but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself."

22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus^[c] to be the Messiah^[d] would be put out of the synagogue. **23** Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

12

The tension becomes absurd

- The formerly blind beggar vs. the most educated Pharisees!
- (You're permitted to laugh!)
- The end result is that the faithful are driven out of the synagogue

24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." **25** He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." **26** They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" **27** He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" **28** Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses." **29** We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." **30** The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. **31** We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. **32** Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. **33** If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." **34** They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

13

Finally, Jesus enters

35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" **[e]** **36** He answered, "And who is he, sir?" **[f]** Tell me, so that I may believe in him." **37** Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." **38** He said, "Lord," **[g]** I believe." And he worshiped him. **39** Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind." **40** Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" **41** Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

14

Jesus of the Gospels

A Prophet

- Jesus not only spoke the Word of God, Jesus *was* the Word of God
- Jesus confronted hypocrisy: those who preached the Law but did not practice it
- Jesus called for true self-examination
- Jesus called the people to repent, and turn back to God
- Jesus foretold the consequences of present actions



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15

Jesus of the Gospels

A Teacher, Preacher and Healer

- For Jesus, faith is active!
- Jesus taught the people about the Kingdom of God through parables, story, and example
- Jesus reinterpreted the Law, emphasizing the primacy of love
- Jesus broke down barriers of gender, culture, nationality and religion to show the wideness of God's grace
- Jesus revealed who God truly is



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16

Jesus of the Gospels

The Son of Man: the unexpected Messiah

- The “Son of Man” was thought to be the savior of Israel, as foreseen in Daniel 7
- Jesus' suffering and death was totally inconsistent with this image, and caused great confusion among his disciples
- Jesus is proclaimed as Messiah, but not the one anyone expected!



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