

JOHN

John closes his book by revealing his purpose in writing Jesus' story: *These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

John begins his book by echoing words from the Bible's creation story—*In the beginning*—showing his readers that this is a story of a new creation. Just as the first creation was completed in seven days, John uses the number seven to structure his book. For the Jews the number seven represented completeness and wholeness, a finished work of God revealing his purpose for the world.

The story is told in two main parts. The first describes Jesus' public ministry and has seven sections. Each section closes with a report on how people respond to Jesus, either in faith or unbelief. The second part is devoted to the Passover weekend, when Jesus gave his life for the world.

John records seven instances in which Jesus revealed his identity by using the phrase *I am*, the name by which God had revealed himself earlier. Similarly, John records seven miraculous signs that Jesus performed. John's narrative mentions twice that the resurrection of Jesus took place on the *first day of the week*. In this way he confirms that the power of a new creation has broken into our world.

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 with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^a it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son,

who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") 16 Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and^b is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

John the Baptist Denies Being the Messiah

19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders^c in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

22 Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

^a 5 Or *understood* ^b 18 Some manuscripts *but the only Son, who* ^c 19 The Greek term traditionally translated *the Jews* (*hoi Ioudaioi*) refers here and elsewhere in John's Gospel to those Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus; also in 5:10, 15, 16; 7:1, 11, 13; 9:22; 18:14, 28, 36; 19:7, 12, 31, 38; 20:19.