

RECAP: Why did John write this Gospel?



Introduction to this section

In terms of the 'movement' that characterises this Gospel, it feels like we are stuck in neutral in these chapters. The main characters are not moving forward at all. There are a lot of what to me feel like very frustrating conversations with people who just do not seem to want to understand who Jesus is.

But I love the irony at the end (stay tuned)!

1. Making a right judgement (7:1 - 8:20)

To be able to follow along with the progression of these chapters, it is important to recognise that:

« *The dialogue does not readily appear to follow a logical development. Rather, the teaching and responses of Jesus continue to be suited to a first century Jewish interactive style of dialogue with many interruptions and responses.*
(P. 68)

There are three components to the way this first part of the dialogue is presented:

Jesus'
teaching

Voices of
criticism

Jesus'
response

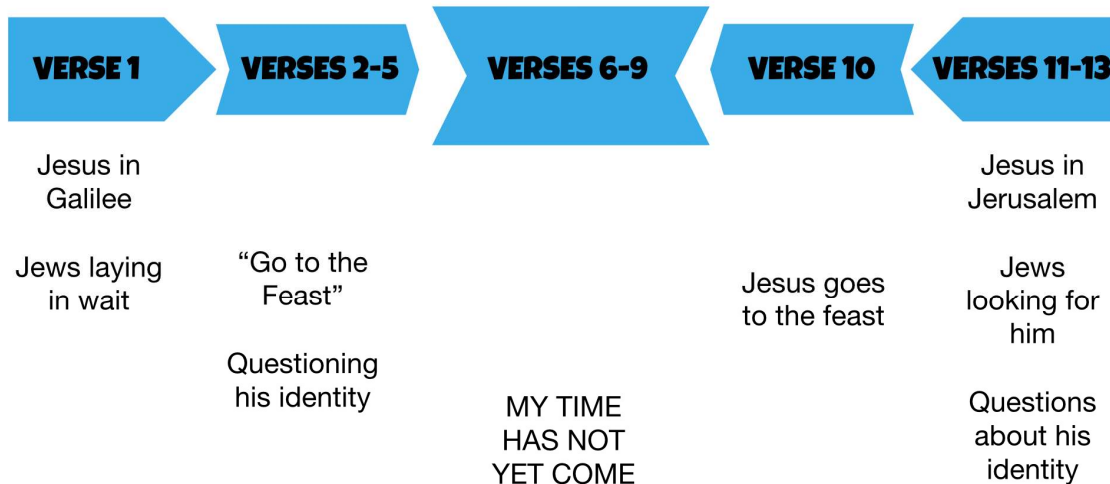
- Jesus teaches whoever is present.
- Voices are raised to criticise him, showing an inadequate human or earthly understanding.
- Jesus' response becomes part of his teaching, often with a challenge.

(7:1-13) Introduction to the dialogue

“My time has not yet come” is the basic theme for these first 13 introductory verses.

But it is set in the context of the question of Jesus’ identity.

And what becomes apparent is not just who Jesus is, but also the people are, and who the Jews are (and who they belong to).



What does Jesus’ going to Jerusalem set in motion?

(7:14-31) Is Jesus a true or false teacher?

The narrative in these verses is driven by questions we hear people asking and by Jesus’ responses.

Because we can, here is a table to summarise how the questions develop the narrative in this section.

verse	Question	verse	Jesus' response/challenge
15		16-19	
20		21-24	
25-27		28-29	
31		30	

Why do you think there is so much confusion over whether or not Jesus is the Messiah?

(7:32-52) 'Let him come to me and drink'

Jesus' teaching in 32-39 has two parts:

1. (32-36) Where he is basically saying that he is in control of his life and death, not the guards.
2. (37-39) Which are about him promising 'living water' through the Spirit to those who come to him and believe.

In the light of Isaiah 12:1-3 & Ezekiel 47:1-11, why is Jesus talking about water?

The voices we hear in verses 40-42 are confused, or as verse 43 observes:
Thus the people were divided because of Jesus.

How would you describe the scene in verses 45-52?

(8:12-20) 'I AM the light of the world'

Here we find the second 'I AM' statement in the book of John (see the summary graphic from the Appendix last week).

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

What significance does this statement contain, especially in the light of the purpose of the Gospel and the movement we see in the Gospel?

Short excursus (and spoilers)

Whilst we have the chance, it might be good to summarise in two more tables two more themes that emerge in this bigger section of the Gospel - namely the **direct confrontation** of Jesus, and the **names** that Jesus refers to himself by.

In each of the following passages, determine:

- (a) what specifically do they have a go at Jesus about,
- (b) what was Jesus 'response, and what point does he make
- (c) how does the confrontation end?

DIRECT CONFRONTATION

passage	accusation	response	conclusion
John 8:13-30			
John 8:31-59			
John 9:13-15, 24-41			
John 10:22-41			

John reports how Jesus describes himself in various ways. For each of the following passages, write down:

- (a) how Jesus describes himself
- (b) what significance there is in his description
- (c) the result of his words.

NAMES JESUS USES

passage	description	significance	result
John 8:12-13			
John 8:25-30			
John 8:58-59			
John 9:1-7			
John 9:35-41			
John 10:7-10			
John 10:11-21			
John 10:25-31			
John 10:36b-39			

2. Jesus confronts their disbelief (8:21-59)

The starting point, the main point, and the conclusion of the three sections of this second part of the dialogue (8:21-59) can be seen in the following way:

8:21 Jesus again speaks to **the Jews**
 ↓ (8:21-20) = The spiritual condition of the Jews
 ↓ they did not understand (v27)
 ↓

8:30-31 Jesus speaks to **those who believed**
 ↓ (8:30-47) = If the Son sets you free...
 ↓ who's your daddy? (v44)
 ↓

8:48 The **Jews accuse** Jesus of being demon possessed
 ↓ (8:48-59) = Jesus is God and Messiah
 ↓ I AM! (v58)

(8:21-29) The spiritual condition of 'the Jews'

What are some of the things that Jesus said that would have been quite cryptic for the Jews?

What reason does Jesus give for their failure to understand (v23)?

With what result (v24)?

*What is the only way out (for them and for **us**)?*

(8:30-47) If the Son sets you free...



What they [the Jews] fail to see in verses 30-47 is that, while as a nation they have enjoyed a special relationship with God, the universal sinfulness of humanity which alienates every human person from God means that all people need to be delivered from sin, not only the Gentile world around them, but also, even the Jews!
(p. 77)

Describe the logic or line of arguments that Jesus uses to make the above point.

(8:48-59) 'I am he'

How does Jesus answer their question, who do you think you are ?

3. That the blind may see (9:1-41)

We see another **sign** in chapter 9 (v7).

We see another **I AM** statement as well (v5).

The action in chapter 9 could be summarised in the following way:

1-5 Jesus and the disciples	the earthly blind
6-12 the blind man and his neighbours	
13-17 the blind man and the Pharisees	
18-23 the parents of the blind man refuse to make a decision	
24-34 the blind man and the Pharisees	
35-38 the blind man and Jesus	
39-41 Jesus and the Pharisees	the spiritually blind

*What is the obvious **irony** in chapter 9 (v39)?*

{Irony of course being a mocking discrepancy between appearance and reality or promise and fulfilment}

*Read again on pages 81-83 the way in which John majestically creates the narrative to show how those around the healed blind man continue to **stumble in darkness** whilst the once blind man comes further and further **into the light**.*

QUESTION OVER COFFEE

What light does the Prologue (1:1-18) shed on the dialogues and responses we have seen in chapters 7-9? In what ways have you experienced something similar when talking to people about Jesus?

