

Read This First

Most consumers these days can't be bothered with the reading of instruction manuals for products. As a result, the product makers usually include a smaller manual or a one page leaflet with the heading "Read This First." The logic is, if you can't read the manual then at least read the important parts. It could save your life. The Gospel of John is much like that "Read This First" document. It is the only book in the Bible that clearly defines its purpose. It was written to show us how to gain eternal life ([John 20:31](#)).

Throughout the book of John, evidence is presented for Jesus' divine authority. According to the Gospel of John, believing that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world is the beginning of eternal life ([John 3:14-17](#)). What's more important than that? John's Gospel is as good as the "Read This First" document for one's life.

The Importance of the Gospel of John:

John presents a strong argument for the deity of Jesus. Presenting Jesus as the Word, that is, God ([John 1:1](#)) who became a man ([John 1:14](#)). John records and describes the miracles of Jesus that can only be attributed to God Himself. Thus, the Gospel of John is important, not just because it shows the pathway to eternal life, but because it also shows us who God is.

So, how do we know who God is? The Gospel of John records when Jesus equates Himself with the Old Testament "I AM" (Yahweh). It can't be more clear than this: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM." ([John 8:58](#)). Jesus showed us He was God and who God was through His seven "I AM" claims:

- "I am the bread of life" ([John 6:35, 48](#)).
- "I am the light of the world" ([John 8:12](#)).
- "I am the door" ([John 10:7, 9](#)).
- "I am the good shepherd" ([John 10:11, 14](#)).
- "I am the resurrection, and the life" ([John 11:25](#)).
- "I am the way, the truth, and the life" ([John 14:6](#)).
- "I am the true vine" ([John 15:1](#)).

In addition to the seven "I AM" claims. John also records seven miracles of Jesus. These miracles are called "signs" because they point to the divine nature of Jesus. These seven "signs" clearly show that Jesus was not a mere man. They show that Jesus is God. That He possesses power over nature. The testimonies of John the Baptist ([John 1:32-34](#)), Nathanael ([John 1:49](#)), the blind man ([John 9:35-38](#)), Martha ([John 11:27](#)), and Thomas ([11:28](#))—not to mention Jesus' own words ([John 5:19-26](#)) clearly indicate the deity of Jesus.

The seven “signs” miracles:

- Changing water into wine ([John 2:1-11](#)).
- Healing a man's son ([John 4:46-54](#)).
- Healing a lame man ([John 5:1-9](#)).
- Multiplying bread and fish ([John 6:1-14](#)).
- Walking on water ([John 6:15-21](#)).
- Healing a blind man ([John 9:1-7](#)).
- Raising Lazarus ([John 11:38-44](#)).

The number seven

The number seven is an important number throughout the Bible, but it really stands out in the Gospel of John. From Jesus' “I AM” claims to the “signs” recorded. It's not so much that there are groups of “seven” things listed in John, but more importantly what those “seven” things are. We have Jesus claiming to be the Son of Man, the Son of God, God Himself. Combine that with the seven “signs” and the importance of the number seven, in the Gospel of John, becomes more clear.

In biblical terms, *seven* is the number of *spiritual perfection*. There are numerous groups of seven listed throughout the Bible; seven seals, seven trumpets, seven parables in Matthew, seven promises to the churches, Jesus said seven things on the cross, and so on. These are all great things. But to me, the seven “I AM” and seven “signs” are more equated to *spiritual perfection*. This is where the significance of *seven* stands out above all others.

[Group Questions]

Do you believe Jesus is God?

Why do you think the Gospel of John is important?

Share your thoughts on the above information.

What are your thoughts on the significance of the number “seven” in John?

Jesus the man

Jesus was fully man. The Gospel of John shows us this. His body grew weary ([John 4:6](#)). His soul was troubled ([John 12:27; 13:21](#)), and He groaned in His spirit ([John 11:33](#)). Jesus was also Israel's Messiah. Andrew tells his brother, “We have found the Messiah.” ([John 1:41](#)). Even Nathanael figured out that Jesus was the Son of God and the King of Israel ([John 1:49](#)). The Samaritan woman also told who Jesus was ([John 4:25, 26, 29](#)). Jesus, the Messiah, was and is the Savior of the world ([John 4:42; 11:27; 12:13](#)).

In the Gospel of John, we are urged to trust (to believe) in Jesus for our eternal life. That trust is built upon our belief that (1) the Father is in Christ, and Christ is in the Father ([John 10:38; 14:10, 11](#)); (2) Christ came from God ([John 16:17, 30](#)), and God sent Him ([John 11:42; 17:8, 21; also 6:29](#)); and (3) He is the Son of God ([John 6:69; 11:27; 20:31](#)). The most important message of the Bible, the “Read This First” part, is: Believe in and follow Jesus, for He is the path to our eternal life.

Closing:

I think it can be said, based on what we've discussed, that the Gospel of John is one of the most important books in the Bible. I would like to suggest that it might be *the most important* book. In the book of John, we not only discover who Jesus is, who God is, but we also find the pathway to eternal life. **“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”** (John 14:6). Again, what could be more important than that?

[Group Questions]

Do you believe Jesus was also a man?

Do you think Jesus is the path to eternal life? Is He the only path?

Share your thoughts on this section.