

Salvation in the Gospel of John

Keys for unlocking
the message today

Welcome

1. After Anselm
2. **Reading John 3:9-18**
3. Healing, service, love
4. Passover and new creation
5. Holy Spirit
6. And today?

Reading John 3:9-18

- John 3:9-18
- Stories behind the John 3
- Abraham
- Jacob
- Moses
- Isaiah: The Suffering Servant
- And so...

John 3:9-18

John 3:9 Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” **10** Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”

John 3:11 “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. **12** If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? **13** No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. **14** And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be

lifted up, **15** that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3:17 “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. **18** Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Stories behind the stories

- All the Gospel writers echo the Old Testament
- Citations and allusion
- Characters
- Events
- Given depth to the presentation of Jesus
- NB for John's Gospel: continuity within discontinuity

Stories behind the stories

1. Abraham
 2. Jacob
 3. Moses
 4. Isaiah: The Suffering Servant
- A review before an in-depth analysis

1. Abraham

- **Abraham** is named in John 8:33, 39-40, 52-53, 56-58
- **Abraham** is implied in the reference to the (attempted) sacrifice of Isaac in John 3:16
- **Why Abraham?**
- The “father” in faith
 - ➔ Underlying the discussion of Jesus’ identity in John 8
- The one who was willing to give his only son...
 - ➔ Genesis 22:1-19
 - ➔ Evoking the death of Jesus as the lamb of sacrifice

Gen 22:1 After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

2 He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.” **3** So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him.

4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. **5** Then

Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.” **6**

Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife.

So the two of them walked on together.

7 Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” **8** Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.

Gen 22:9 When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. **10** Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. **11** But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” **12** He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” **13** And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. **14** So Abraham called that place “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to

this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

Gen 22:15 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, **16** and said, “By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, **17** I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, **18** and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.” **19** So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham lived at Beer-sheba.

2. Jacob

- **Jacob/Israel** is very present in John 1-4
- He continued, “I tell all of you the solemn truth —you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” (**John 1:51**)
- No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven—the Son of Man. (**John 3:13**)
- **Jacob’s well** was there, so Jesus, since he was tired from the journey, sat right down beside the well. It was about noon. (**John 4:6**)
- Surely you’re not greater than **our ancestor Jacob**, are you? (**John 4:12**)

2. Jacob

- **Why Jacob?**

- ➔ The ancestor of all the Israelites

- **Jacob's ladder**

- ➔ Genesis 28:10-17
- ➔ Used to evoke the descent and ascent of the Son of Man

- **Jacob's well**

- ➔ Genesis 29:1-14
- ➔ Used to evoke the nuptial symbolism of John 2-4/19.

Gen 28:10 Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. **11** He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. **12** And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. **13** And the LORD stood beside him and said, “I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; **14** and your

offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. **15** Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” **16** Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!” **17** And he was afraid, and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

3. Moses

- Moses is named in chapters 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9.
- For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came about through Jesus Christ. (**John 1:17**)
- Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, (**John 3:14**)
- The one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have placed your hope. (**John 5:45**)
- Moses is implied in the 7 “I AM” sentences. E.g. “I AM the bread of life.” (**John 6:35**)

3. Moses

- Why Moses: The great giver of the Torah, the Law.
- The burning bush
 - ➔ Exodus 3:14 I AM who I AM
 - ➔ Evoking the deep identity of Jesus in God
- The gift of the manna
 - ➔ Exodus 16:4-36
 - ➔ Evoking Jesus as the true manna from God
- The healing in the desert
 - ➔ Numbers 21:5-9
 - ➔ Establishing the fundamental healing metaphor for salvation in Jesus

Num 21:5 The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” **6** Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. **7** The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. **8** And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” **9** So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.



4. The Suffering Servant

- The four Suffering Servant from Isaiah 40-55: Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12.
- In the minds of all the Gospel writers.
- Perhaps going back to Jesus himself (Mark 10:48).
- It is worth pausing on the Suffering Servant because of its special resonance in the Fourth Gospel, uniting the various aspects of salvation.

4. The Suffering Servant

- Why the Suffering Servant?
- Chosen one (John 1:34)
- To gather (John 11:51)
- Light to the nations (John 8:12: ; 9:5)
- Salvation (John 3:16)
- Lifted up (John 3:14-15)



4. The Suffering Servant

- In Second Isaiah (40-55), God's help to Israel is expressed in three ways: creation/redemption, the vindication of the **Servant** and the return to Zion.
- The "**servant**" is both the individual prophet and all of Israel.
- In context, the suffering of the **servant** was exemplary, for the benefit of the community (but not substitutionary)
- "For the benefit of" rather than "instead of".
- These mysterious poems proved to be an especially rich resource for early Christian reflection on the cross.

Isa 52:13 See, my servant shall prosper;
he shall be exalted and lifted up,
and shall be very high.

14... Just as there were many who were
astonished at him
—so marred was his appearance,
beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of mortals—

15 so he shall startle many nations;
kings shall shut their mouths because of
him;

for that which had not been told them they
shall see,
and that which they had not heard
they shall contemplate.

1 Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD
been revealed?

2 For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look
at him,
nothing in his appearance that we should
desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with
infirmity;

and as one from whom others hide their faces...
he was despised, and we held him of no
account.

Isa 53:4 Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us
whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
... like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

8 By a perversion of justice he was taken away.

Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.

9 They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Isa 53:10 Yet it was the will of the LORD
to crush him with pain.

When you make his life an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring, and shall
prolong his days;
through him the will of the LORD shall
prosper.

11 Out of his anguish he shall see light;
he shall find satisfaction through his
knowledge.

The righteous one, my servant, shall
make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will allot him a portion with
the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the
strong;
because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the
transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the
transgressors.

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And so...

- John 3:9-18
- Jesus in the light of the Old Testament
- Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Suffering Servant
- NB: **Love, healing and service**
- Also: testify, believe, love, eternal life
- Foundations laid for the teaching on salvation