

A fuller description of the layout of *John illuminated*

The Gospel's overall structure is in 10 major parts:

1 Prologue opening with Creation; 2 Preface; 3-7 Jewish festivals and Bridge; 8 the ultimate festival; 9 New Creation; and 10 Epilogue

Double-page spreads form smaller units within the parts

John contains 7 Jesus' *I am* statements with predicates, 7 stand alone (*I am* being a title for God); 7 signs to his identity as God's Son; 6 feasts and a dawn barbecue. Seven is symbol of *complete* in ancient Hebrew thinking.

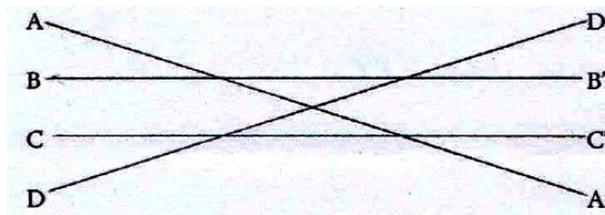
It is replete with Jesus' *Truly, truly* statements, and metaphors of light and dark also embodied in day and night references, life and death, grasping and not grasping who Jesus is. Themes raised in the Prologue are explored in the remainder of the book.

Cover

Illustration *The wider context: view from the Mundi Mundi lookout after the rains*

The Prologue 2-3

(1:1-18) laid out to highlight its wordplay and symmetry.



Where A = the eternal God, Father and Son/Word; B = the Son's light and glory, which *we* have grasped but *the darkness* has not; C = John the baptiser's witness; and D = the world which did not know or receive him contrasted with the ones who did.

Its wordplays are shown in the lining up of repeated words by indenting them:

<i>Word</i> with/was God	Children of God
<i>Light</i>	<i>Glory</i>
John's witness	John's witness
<i>Light</i>	<i>Grace</i>
People of the world	Jesus Christ at the Father's side

The background wash *The dawn of Creation and the River of Life* is a subtle suggestion of the dawn light of Creation and the eternal perspective, and the river arcs to show the chiasm from dry earth colour of unbelief to the blue waters of blessing.

The Preface 4-5

The River border continues to link pages 4-15

Page 5: The first 3 days of the testimony of John, first witness in Jesus' defence in the trial motif woven throughout the Gospel, concluding with disciples following Jesus (1:19-34).

Page 6: Illustration *Lamb in a thicket: sheep and lambs grazing near a creekbed on the Silvertown road, and red-tailed black cockatoo* alluding to John's testimony to 'the Lamb of God' (vv29, 36), the Spirit descending, and foreshadowing the crucifixion, illustrated by another lamb on page 59.

References to 'days' here and overleaf highlight John's allusion to the 7 days of Creation to its recreation foreshadowed in Jesus' first sign in the next spread.

- 6-7 Introduction to Jesus (1:38–2:22) in 4 episodes in 2 pairs, one on each page:
1. Jesus' question *What are you seeking?* on the 4th day – the question asked of all who encounter him
 2. Nathaniel's encounter with Jesus on the 5th day. Jesus is the new ladder connecting heaven and the world
 3. The wedding at Cana on the 8th day (a new week): Jesus' first sign transforming the waters of ritual cleansing as a metaphor standing alongside...
 4. The cleansing of the Temple, that both concludes this unit and prepares the first Passover in the next section. The Temple – the meeting place of God with humanity – is cleansed of its false worship to be replaced by Jesus

Illustration *Suggesting the Darling River and Menindee Lakes: brimming vessels* alludes to the ritual water jars.

The first Passover

- I 8-9 Opening of the discussion with Nicodemus, a ruler of 'the Jews' who comes by night and does not grasp what Jesus is saying (2:23–3:8).
- Illustration *the Spirit moves: eucalyptus branches overhanging water, driven by the wind*, alluding to vv7-8
- 10-11 In the context of Passover, Jesus' role as the saving, life-giving Son given by God to the world is discussed with Nicodemus, and reflected by John the baptiser (3:9-36).
- II 12-13 Opening of Jesus' midday encounter with the Samaritan woman, who does understand, at Joseph's well (4:1-14).
- Illustration *Underground creek surfaces in the Brachina Gorge, Flinders Ranges: living water welling up to eternal life* – muddy and unimpressive but nonetheless lifesaving, like most of our Christian lives
- 14-15 Stories of two believers in 3 episodes (4:15-54), highlighting true worship and noting the first *I am*.
- Illustrations *Seedlings in the Brachina Gorge* and *Established trees in the Darling* – from tiny beginnings comes maturity
- This Passover moves in stages from the formal by spiritless Temple worship of the previous section (p7); to Nicodemus having the truth but not understanding; the woman outside formal Jewish 'truth' but with the right spirit; to the believing/trusting

official who embodies both spirit and truth, whose son Jesus heals in his second sign at Cana, bookending the 2 signs.

An unnamed Sabbath

- 16-17 Healing of the paralytic at Bethesda pool, Jesus' 3rd sign, the writer leaving equivocal the man's response (5:1-15).
Illustration *Moving water: ripples on the dam at Copi Hollow*, designed to pair with that on p31
- 18-19 Confrontation between 'the Jews' and Jesus, who says 'I am' the 2nd time (5:16–6:3). It is the second episode set out according to the courtroom motif, 'the Jews' persecuting/prosecuting Jesus as in a formal trial opening, continuing with Jesus' opening defence and calling of witnesses; and concluding with Jesus' consequent withdrawal. Note this pattern of Jesus' strategic journeys throughout.

The Second Passover

- 20-21 The 4th sign: Jesus provides food in the wilderness and calms the sea, reassuring the disciples 'I am' (6:4-21). It is reminiscent of the Exodus, which the Festival commemorates.
Illustration *Provision in the desert: the other side of Umberumberka Reservoir, and the bush food 'bush tomato' (ruby saltbush)* alluding to manna on the other side of the Sea
- 22-23 Discussion arising from the sign, with my emphases on the blessings on offer. The first *I am* with predicate – *the bread of life* – appears. The debate is positive on p22, but conflicted on p23: grumbling (as the Israelites did in the Exodus wilderness); desertion by many; a remnant remain faithful (6:22–7:1)

The Feast of Booths

- I 24-25 (7:2-36), omitting the content of Jesus' teaching and highlighting the division of responses to him.
- II 26-27 Jesus' double declaration (offering living water and the 2nd *I am* with predicate – *the light of the world* – in the midst of the controversy at the Great Day of the Feast, which was celebrated with lights and water (7:37–8:12, omitting 7:53–8:15 that is included at the end of the manuscript).
Illustration: *Light and water: sunset at Copi Hollow*
- III 28-29 Confrontation between 'the Jews' and Jesus, styled as another trial episode, Jesus three times stating *I am* (8:13-59). The increasingly acrid debate on p29 begins with Jesus' words of liberation (Stibbe 1994:130) highlighted to show his good intentions foiled and blessing plummet to cursing.

- IV 30-31 The 5th sign: healing of the man born blind (9:1-7), whose spiritual sight increases in stages – foil to the 1st poolside healing.
Illustration *the pool Sent to heal: reflected light, Copi Hollow billabong*
- V 32-33 Discussion arising from the sign (9:8–10:21), presented firstly on p32 according to the courtroom motif, ‘the Jews’ cross-examining the blind man’s witness. Page 33 sets out Jesus and ‘the Jews’ debate of his bold claims to be *the door of the sheep* and *the good shepherd* in the 3rd and 4th *I am* statements with predicate.
Illustration *In the Father’s care: emu and his chicks, Flinders Ranges* alluding to Jesus – and the Lord – is my shepherd. (Father emus rather than mothers raise their young).
The Feast ends as it began – in division.

The Feast of Dedication

- 34-35 More ‘legal’ confrontation between ‘the Jews’ and Jesus, p43 concluding with ‘the Jews’ seeking to take the law into their own hands. Page 35 prepares the way for the next sign in the context of this life-threatening opposition (10:22–11:16).
Illustration *On stony ground: dry creekbed Mundi Mundi Plains* alludes to the stones collected to assault Jesus, and the stony ground of unbelief in Jesus’ parable of the 4 soils that appears in the other 3 Gospels. *Rocky hillside, Living Desert* suggests Jesus’ escape to the desert beyond the Jordan, where the Gospel opened.

- Bridge** 36-37 In 3 scenes, the 6th sign is narrated, of Lazarus raised and unbound, including the 5th *I am* – *the resurrection and the life* (11:17-44).
Illustration *Out of the dark: Mutawintji cave, Fairy martin and wilga*; and specimen drawings *Unbinding: flora releasing seeds, including curly mallee, hakea, water bush, quandong, flowering gum, cassia and hakea* anticipating the last and greatest sign of Jesus’ own resurrection. The illustration both parallels and contrasts with that on p61.
- 38-39 Responses to the sign in the lead-up to the climactic Passover in 4 episodes: ‘the Jews’ decision to reject him and the writer’s ironic insight into it; the Passover foreshadowed; Mary’s anointing of Jesus’ body for burial; and Jesus’ royal entry into Jerusalem and the Greeks seeking him, who is ‘the light to the nations’ as Isaiah foretold (11:45–12:24).
- 40-41 A pause in the narrative: Jesus and the author reflect on his coming (12:25-50)

The Day of Preparation of the third Passover

Since the Hebrews calculated the day beginning at sunset, I include the evening before the crucifixion in this ritual day.

A. Jesus prepares his disciples chapters 13-17 (called the Last Supper Discourses) pp42-53

Note the use of *you* (the eleven) and *whoever* (all believers)

This is a concentric unit, centring on Jesus' metaphor of abiding in 15:1-11 (p48) and command to love as he has loved in 15:12-14 (p50), and embedded with terms of the Holy Spirit's gifts of love, joy, peace and presence.

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| I | 42-43 | The foot-washing as an acted metaphor of self-sacrificing love (13:1-15).

Illustration <i>a basin of water: Mutawintji rockpool</i> |
| II | 44-45 | Jesus' 7 th I am; Judas' desertion into the night, and his betrayal (p44), and Peter's denial (p45) foreshadowed (13:16-38) – without visual embellishment |
| III | 46-47 | Comfort (14:1-31) in 4 units bookended by 'Let not your hearts be troubled', and containing the 6 th I am – <i>the way, the truth and the life</i> ; and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Illustration <i>Comfort in many places: Menindee inhabitants</i> alluding to the many abiding places in the Father's home, set in the visual metaphor of the waters of blessing that Jesus offers. |
| IV | 48-49 | Abiding (15:1-11).

Illustration <i>Abiding in abundance: Menindee landscape</i> , broadening the vista of the previous illustration, and reflecting Jesus' underlying metaphor of abiding, rather than the surface image in the 7 th I am of <i>vine and branches</i> |
| V | 50-51 | Comfort and command in 4 units, promising the continued presence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (15:12–16:33).

Illustration <i>Another Paraclete: Red-tailed black cockatoo</i> |
| VI | 52-53 | Jesus prays (17:1-26), each of its 4 columns setting out a section of the prayer.
Illustration <i>Life through abiding: river redgums with wet feet</i> |

B. Jesus dies as the lamb for the slaughter on the Day of Preparation for the Passover chapters 18-19 pp54-59

This is in a symmetrical pattern of gardens and trials

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| VII | 54-55 | In the darkness, confrontation and betrayal in a garden, and denial (18:1-27).

Small illustration <i>On barren ground: Mungo landscape</i> referencing the garden, and the bleakest point in Jesus' experience. |
| VIII | 56-57 | The writer styles his report as the climax and resolution of his courtroom drama ' <i>the Jews' v Jesus</i> , with the Roman Governor Pilate as the designated judge, in the early morning light. Jesus is vindicated ('I find no fault in him' x3), yet sentenced to death and executed (in 3 languages as 'King of the Jews') (18:28-22) – a Passover lamb without blemish |
| IX | 58-59 | Jesus is killed at the same time as lambs were being slaughtered for the feast, and buried in a garden (19:23-42). He had called this his <i>lifting up</i> (or <i>glory</i>) in 3:15 (p10) and 12:32 (p40) that he undertakes willingly, with the Father's authority to lay down his life and pick it up again (10:18 p33) – a triumph and not a defeat.

Illustration <i>In a garden, lifted up: lamb on a dam wall out of Broken Hill</i> , matching the illustration on p5 to the testimony of John to 'the lamb of God', here upright and |

magisterial on a dam that hints to hidden water, as the text hints in the piercing of Jesus' side

Specimen drawings *Colours of blood and glory: feathers of the red-tailed black cockatoo, Sturt desert pea, emu bush, quandong, native hibiscus, bardenbergia and saltbush* suggest Eden restored; the feather suggesting Jesus' spirit returning to the Father

(Note the omission of Passover itself, Jesus in Sabbath rest in the tomb)

From the first day of the new Creation

- I 60-61 First day of the week: resurrection dawn (20:1-18) in 2 episodes juxtaposing the reports of the 2 disciples closest to Jesus with Mary's encounter with him.
- Illustration *New Creation dawn in the garden: Mutawintji cave and red-rumped parrots* matching yet eclipsing Lazarus' rising in chapter 11 (p37).
- Specimen drawings *Colours of royalty and light: mistletoe, wattles, cassias, native apricot, emu bush, rock sida and quandong*
- II 62-63 First evenings of the first two weeks in 2 episodes and author's comment: the blessings of believing in the resurrection (20:19-31) – the purpose of the Gospel.
- Illustrations *In the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens, Mildura: mulga parrots, and ancient mallee nicknamed 'the Wow tree' (Mallee store water in their lignotuberous roots, and this one is estimated at 2,500 years old)*

Epilogue

- I 64-65 Back in Galilee some time later, a 3rd revelation of the resurrected Jesus to the disciples (21:1-14)
- Illustration *Fierly dawn: Copi Hollow*, suggesting both the light of dawn on the lake, and the colours of a charcoal fire, the pair to the one beside which Peter denied Christ (18:18 p55)
- II 66-67 (21:15-25) Illustration *Blue sky and Red-capped robin, Flinders Ranges*, a symbol of believers in matching colours to the Spirit's red and black cockatoo on p50, against an eternal sky

A floating story

- 68-69 The woman caught in adultery (8:1-11) – too good and authentic a story to omit completely, but the experts and I have no idea where it belongs