OUTLINE OF JOHN

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Based in Part on an Outline by
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I. Prologue (1:1–18): an early Johannine Christ hymn on the career of the Word adapted as a second edition introduction establishing the main themes of the Gospel

A. Word in Eternity (1:1–13)

1. Christ as Logos (Powerful Word)
2. Characteristics: eternal, personal, divine, agent of creation, source of life and light

B. Word in Time (1:14–18)

1. Christ as Revealer, Redeemer
2. Characteristics: entered time, human, dwelt among us revealing grace, truth, glory

II. Book of Signs (1:19–12:50): Jesus as Revealer: in his earthly ministry, Jesus, the Word-made-flesh, reveals God's glory through miracles that function as "signs" communicating God's truth to those who will believe, but eventually he is rejected by his own. These miracles ask and answer basic questions about the salvation Jesus brings. Often, episodes that follow the signs are meant as narrative elaborations of the meaning of the sign.

A. Sign #1: Cana—Water to Wine

1. Focus: "my hour is not yet come" (2:5): Jesus' "glory" not in his miracles but in his death
2. Question: What has the Word-made-flesh come to accomplish?
3. Answer: To fulfill the old, but transcend its spiritual reality by his death.
4. Elaborations: Temple cleansing, Nicodemus, Samaritan Woman (locus of spiritual reality Jesus brings is brand new, so not found in Jewish ritual, religion, or race)

B. Sign #2: Cana—Nobleman's Son

1. Focus: "your son will live" (4:50): Prologue theme, Jesus as source of life
2. Question: Can the Word-made-flesh now absent still bring life?
3. Answer: Absolutely.
4. Note: The two Cana miracles are the only two miracles explicitly identified as "signs." Other "signs" must be inferred hereafter.

C. Sign #3: Bethesda—Man Lame 38 Years

1. Focus: "making himself equal to God" (5:18): Jesus claims equality with God
2. Question: What is the source of authority of the Word-made-flesh over life?
3. Answer: His eternal relationship to God the Father as Son.

D. *Sign #4: Galilee—Multiplication of Loaves*
   1. Focus: "the prophet who is to come" (6:14): Jesus feeds the hungry as a sign of life and OT fulfillment, but common expectations of a prophet/king obscure the deeper truth
   2. Question: What is the source of the life the Word-made-flesh brings?
   3. Answer: Jesus himself.

E. *Sign #5: Galilee—Storm at Sea*
   1. Focus: "immediately the boat reached the land" (6:21): real miracle = Jesus' saving presence
   2. Question: Is this life secure against all life's circumstances?
   3. Answer: Yes. Jesus himself personally secures this life he gives.
   4. Elaborations: Passover Discourse, Taber-nacles Discourse (crowd's rejection of truth of bread miracle; time still has not yet come, but great I AM sayings, truth that sets free)

F. *Sign #6: Siloam—Man Born Blind*
   1. Focus: "would be put out of the synagogue" (9:22): issue of messiah updated for new situation
   2. Question: Is this life secure eternally?
   3. Answer: Yes. This life is not only for time but forever.
   4. Elaborations: Good Shepherd Discourse, Feast of Dedication Discourse (shepherd spares no cost for sheep's protection; equality of Jesus and God for believers translates as "never perish")

G. *Sign #7: Bethany—Raising of Lazarus*
   1. Focus: "already been in the tomb four days" (11:17): emphasis on time element; all agreed body already in corruption = not your normal resuscitation!
   2. Question: is one ever so corrupt to be beyond Christ's redemptive power?
   3. Answer: No.
   4. Elaborations: Anointing by Mary, Royal Entry, Coming of Greeks (Lazarus episode: seals Jesus' fate with Jewish leaders, misfires on political-messiah crowds, tempts Jesus away from cross by Gentiles' response)

H. *Conclusion*
   1. Voice From Heaven (12:28)
      a. *Request:* "Father, glorify your name": theme of glory; transitions to second part of Gospel
      b. *Summary:* "I have glorified it" = the signs Jesus has given
      c. *Prospect:* "I will glorify it again" = Jesus' coming death and resurrection
   2. Light of the World (12:29–50)
      a. *Typology:* "must be lifted up?" (12:34): only faith sees Jesus' death as eternal life
      b. *Inclusio* 1: "light" (12:35): back to Prologue theme of light
      c. *Inclusio* 2: "I speak just as the Father has told me" (12:50): back to Prologue theme of Jesus' revelation as God's Word

3. Question: How could one with such power over death himself die?
4. Answer: He voluntarily gave his life and thereby empowered those who believe to have life in his name.

III. Book of Glory (13:1–20:31): Jesus as Redeemer: the "hour" in which Jesus is "glorified" arrives as he dies on the cross to redeem the world and then return to his Father

A. *Footwashing—An Acted Parable*
   1. Focus 1: "You do not know what I am doing": a deeper meaning than physical rinsing
   2. Focus 2: "You are clean, though not all of you": a reference to Judas reveals the deeper spiritual meaning of an acted parable; Jesus' death will cleanse a life, but only for those who respond with faith

B. *Preparing For His Death*
   1. Discourses: Jesus teaches the disciples about (1) a place to abide; (2) a Counselor to teach; (3) a fellowship to know
   2. Prayer: Jesus prays for (1) unity of Father and Son, Son and followers, believers and believers, and (2) sanctification of a consecrated life based on this unity

C. *Jesus' Death as the "Height" of His "Glory"*
   1. Note 1: We have chronology problem with Synoptics.
   2. Note 2: "blood and water" = real death; some say baptism is inferred by John
   3. Note 3: Jesus dies a voluntary death, which ties back to the "good shepherd" saying.

D. *Empty Tomb: The Greatest "Sign"!*
   1. Significance: Pointer to the reality of resurrection and Jesus' earlier words to Martha, "I am the resurrection."
   2. Elaborations
      a. *Appearance to Mary:* Elaborates the empty tomb as needing divine illumination to grasp its truth; "touch me not" = sign of new, yet deeper relationship = new word for present believers.
      b. *Appearance to disciples:* Elaborates empty tomb as commissioning service for the church as Jesus gives authority for their mission of witnessing to the Word-made-flesh and the eternal life he brings and then empowers through the infusion of the inbreathed Spirit.

E. *Appearance to Thomas*
   1. Focus: "blessed are those who have not seen yet believe": Addresses all future believers; Spirit knowledge of Jesus is deeper than that in the flesh, because knowing Jesus in the flesh was no guarantee of any profound relationship—his own mother misunderstood him, his brothers misunderstood him, the crowds misunderstood him, the Sanhedrin condemned him, the disciples deserted him, and Peter denied him. So get real about what it was like "in the days of his flesh."

2. Purpose Statement: "that you may believe" ambiguity of aorist tense surfaces John's multi-level nuances to "believe": (1) disposition to believe, (2) entrusting oneself to, and (3) growing in one's level of trust

IV. **Epilogue (21:1–25):**

A. *Developments:* Historical developments in Johannine communities in interaction with Petrine communities, as well as the recent death of the Beloved Disciple, call for rehearsing another post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to "update" the ending of the Gospel.

B. *Response*

1. Legitimation: The epilogue affirms the Apostle Peter and legitimates his leading role in Petrine churches, even if not the central leading figure in the Johannine churches. Peter's martyrdom as a known fact is acknowledged incidentally in the process.
2. Correction: The epilogue clarifies the relationship of the two ministries of Peter and the Beloved Disciple in connection with a saying of Jesus. Apparently, a saying of Jesus directed at Peter and John was commonly misunderstood among Johannine churches as predicting that the Beloved Disciple would not die before Jesus returned. The recent death of the Beloved Disciple without triggering the expected return of Jesus had thrown some Johannine communities into confusion.
3. Certification: The epilogue validates this edition of the Gospel as an authentic witness to the lifelong work of the Beloved Disciple and the communities he nurtured.