

A Study of the Gospel of John

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Showalter

Introduction to the Gospel of John

Introduction: Tonight, we are going to begin a study in the Gospel of John. As we get started as we always do, we are going to look at some background so that we can better understand what we are about to study. Let us begin with some questions.

1. Who is the writer?

We have come to believe that John the Apostle wrote this letter and that is correct but how do we know? We need to understand that as we read this letter, we are not told anywhere in the letter that John is the writer. So how can we determine that he is the writer?

John 21:20-24

²⁰ *Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?*

²¹ *Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?*

²² *Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*

²³ *Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?*

²⁴ *This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.*

In these verses we see that the writer was "the disciple whom Jesus loved" but that still does not tell us exactly who he is. But we can be sure it is not Peter.

John 13:21-25

²¹ *When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*

²² *Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.*

²³ *Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.*

²⁴ Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

²⁵ He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

These verses help us to know it is not Peter, but it was one of the twelve. Because of the closeness between Jesus and this unnamed disciple we can reach a conclusion that this disciple would have been one of the three who belonged to the inner circle.

Mark 5:37

³⁷ And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

This is the group that made up the inner circle and here we have our answer. We know it is not Peter because he asked the disciple whom Jesus loved to ask Jesus who would betray Him. We know it cannot be James because James was murdered by Herod.

Acts 12:1-2

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

² And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

This then leaves us to understand that John is the disciple whom Jesus loved, and he is the writer of the 4th Gospel.

2. What makes John's Gospel letter different from the other three Gospels?

The first three Gospels are called the "Synoptic Gospels" which means they "say the same thing" in other words the first three Gospels cover the same events from the life of Jesus. John's Gospel contains many things which are not in the other Gospels. Each Gospel writer presents Jesus in a specific way.

- ✓ **Matthew** - Matthew writes to the Jews to explain to them that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, He is the King of the Jews. He explains why the Kingdom was not established and he tells them when it will come.
- ✓ **Mark** - Mark writes to Gentiles and namely Romans. He did not give a genealogy of Jesus because that would have meant very little to the Gentiles. Mark presents Jesus as The Servant. The key verse is Mark 10:45.

Mark 10:45

⁴⁵ *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

- ✓ **Luke** – Luke presents Jesus Christ as the Son of Man, and his goal is to emphasize the humanity of our Lord. Luke writes to Gentiles to let them know that the Savior of the world is a compassionate Savior. Luke focuses upon individuals in his Gospel to make his point known. We find the story of Zaccheus, the story of the prodigal son, the story of the publican, and story of the good Samaritan, and one thankful ex-leper. The key verse in Luke's Gospel is Luke 19:10.

Luke 19:10

¹⁰ *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

- ✓ **John** – John writes to presents the deity of Jesus Christ meaning that Jesus is God. The purpose of his letter is found in John 20.

John 20:30-31

³⁰ *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:*

³¹ *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

That which John records is different than what the other writers recorded. There is a list of events that the other writers recorded but John did not.

- **Jesus' birth.**
- **Jesus' baptism.**
- **Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.**
- **Confrontations with demons.**
- **Jesus teaching in parables.**
- **The Last Supper.**
- **The agony in Gethsemane.**
- **The Ascension.**

It is interesting that John uses the word "miracle" 4 times and each time the word he uses could be translated "sign." There are 7 "signs" in the Gospel of John.

- Turning water to wine 2:2-11
- Healing the nobleman's son 4:46-54
- Healing the paralytic 5:1-18
- Feeding the five thousand 6:1-14
- Walking on water 6:15-21
- Healing the blind man 9:1-41
- Raising Lazarus from the dead 11:1-44

Why does John refer to these as signs and not miracles? Because signs point us to certain things. The signs that John records are meant to point people to see who Jesus is, that He is God in the flesh, that He is the Savior of the world.

Not only does John present 7 signs but he also lists 7 great "I am" statements. These are also to show the deity of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 3:13-14

¹³ And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

¹⁴ And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

God identified Himself as the Great I am, therefore when Jesus applies the "I am" statements to Himself it is a confirmation of His deity.

John 8:56-58

⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

⁵⁷ Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

⁵⁸ Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

1. John 6:35

³⁵ And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

The Son of God is sufficient to meet all of man's needs.

2. John 8:12

¹² Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world:** he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

The Son of God has the power to overcome the darkness of sin in our lives.

3. John 10:7-9

⁷ Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **I am the door** of the sheep.

⁸ All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

⁹ **I am the door:** by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

The Son of God by virtue of His sinless life and sacrificial death is literally the only way through which man can enter into eternal life.

4. John 10:11

¹¹ **I am the good shepherd:** the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

The Son of God is our Divine Shepherd whose unlimited resources meet all of our needs for guidance, care, and protection.

5. John 11:25-26

²⁵ Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life:** he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

²⁶ And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

The Son of God has the power over death and the grave.

6. John 14:6

⁶ Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life:** no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Only the Son can bring us into the presence of His Father, can expose the lies of Satan with the Truth, and can give us eternal life.

7. John 15:1, 5

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

⁵ *I am the vine*, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

The Son of God (by His Spirit) is the sole supernatural source that enables His followers to be spiritually fruitful.

Conclusion:

One more interesting point about John's Gospel is his use of the word "believe."

- Matthew - 7 times.
- Mark - 11 times
- Luke - 5 times
- John - 46 times