

Introduction to John's Gospel

The Gospel of John

Reasons for Belief

The disciple whom Jesus loved penned an account of the life of Jesus in a brief narrative form that is unique to the other gospel writers. While the account of Jesus' ministry is chronological it is by no means comprehensive in nature (John 21:25). The stated theme: *"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* (John 20:30, 31) explains clearly the purpose of the author.

The evidence is as compelling today as it was to those who witnessed the actions of Jesus. *"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete."* (1 John 1:1-4).

This study will examine the reasons the author thought sufficient to convince his readers that Jesus was truly the Son of God. Imagine yourself as the aged apostle of Jesus (possibly the only surviving member of the elite twelve) knowing that your days upon this earth are numbered. What legacy in words would you leave about the person who changed your life forever? As a reader of this account, John envisions the fantastic claims that are made and the incredulous reaction of posterity to those claims. Yet, the evidence presented is more than sufficient for those who are seeking the truth about Jesus.

Woven within this narrative is a unique description of Jesus Christ that only, *"the disciple whom Jesus loved"* (John 21:20) could write. The relationship of Jesus to his mother and family reveals a picture of Jesus as an obedient son and the object of sibling rivalry (John 2:4-5; 7:5). John saw Jesus as a leader that defied popular convention: the disciples were surprised to find him talking with a woman (John 4:27); there was no reason to respect the traditions of men when good could be done (John 2:13-17; 5:8-11). Jesus' teachings resonated in the ears of those who heard him like none other (John 7:37-46; 8:2); Jesus' insight on the source of tribulation was different from conventional wisdom (John 9:1-3; 11:4). Jesus established close and personal relationships with his disciples (John 11:3, 5; 13:23; 14:1-4; 20:2, 10-13; 21:7). The ultimate closeness is shown by the action of John at the thought of someone betraying the Lord, *"Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, Lord who is it?"* (John 13:25). This scene is precipitated by Jesus' humility in washing his disciples' feet (John 13:1-16).

Questions:

1. The author includes the details of seven miracles, performed by Jesus, that he deems sufficient to stimulate belief in Him as the Son of God. Describe the nature of a miraculous sign and why this would signify divinity? (John 20:30, 31)_____

2. How does the context of John 2:18-22 relate to the author's purpose in writing this book?

3. The author describes God in three characters, Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit. Below indicate which character of God is described in each text.

- a. John 1:2_____
- b. John 1:14_____
- c. John 1:17, 18_____
- d. John 1:32, 33_____
- e. John 3:2, 3_____
- f. John 3:5, 6_____
- g. John 3:16_____
- h. John 6:27_____
- i. John 6:68, 69_____
- j. John 8:47_____
- k. John 9:3, 4_____
- l. John 14:1_____
- m. John 14:16, 17, 26_____
- n. John 16:13-15_____
- o. John 20:17_____
- p. John 20:28_____

4. Jesus was not ambiguous in whom he claimed to be. Consider the following texts and explain who Jesus stated he was and why this was not blasphemy (John 10:33-38; 14:8-11).
