

JOHN

“But these things are written that you may believe that Jesus Christ, the son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.”

John 20:31

In the beginning was the logos, and the logos was with Jehovah, and the logos was Jehovah. This is how the Gospel of John commences. His Gospel was written to Greeks. They had little or no concept of a ‘Messiah’ or Old Testament, but did think there was an ultimate power holding the universe together a called Logos. In the Greek this “word” means a wisdom, reason, life giving function. Its worth noting that in the Hebrew language there are 10,000 words, while in the Greek there are 200,000! So John was being very specific when he revealed the Christ as the Word (Logos).

John does not set about to give a biography of Jesus and even shows little concern for chronological order. We notice in John that Jesus cleared the Temple at what seems to be the start of His ministry, while in the ‘synoptic’ Gospels, He did it at the end of His ministry. It was never John’s purpose to give an accurate account in order of Christ’s life. He states his purpose in John. 20:31 (see above) and when we see the context in verse 30, we are able to see the framework for it. ‘Many other signs . . .’, John has selected seven significant miracles and built this Gospel around and on them.

1. What were the seven miracles?

(i) 2:1-11 _____

(ii) 4:46-54 _____

(iii) 5:1-18 _____

(iv) 6:1-13 _____

(v) 6:16-21 _____

(vi) 9:1-7 _____

(vii) 11:1-44 _____

John’s Gospel is the simplest of the four, yet the most profound. His sentences are simple, not like the ones of Paul, but are filled with some of the Bible’s deepest truths. Here, Jesus is shown clearly to be Jehovah God in the flesh (1:14). The term ‘Son of God’ occurs frequently in his writings. This expression could only mean that Jesus was, as had been suspected, the eternal Son of God. The Old Testament directly refers to the Son of God at

least three times, and indirectly scores of times (Ps.2:7; Prov.30:4; Dan.3:25). John was proclaiming that Jesus was this Son, the Christ, the Word. As such, he leaves no other option than the words of Thomas:

“Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God”

John 20:28

AUTHORSHIP

The author of this Gospel is identified only as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). This has always been identified as John. Before he was a disciple of Jesus, he followed John the Baptist (1:19-51). The brother of John was James, of whom Jesus referred to both of them as the 'Sons of Thunder' (Mk 3:17). Their father's name was Zebedee and their mother's name was Salome. Both John and his mother were present at Christ's crucifixion (Mk 15:40; Jn 19:26). He was one of the twelve disciples whom Jesus chose, became part of the 'inner circle' (Peter, James, John) and was later called a 'pillar of the Church' (Gal.2:9). He came from the Galilean region as did all the other disciples except Judas. The early church fathers recognised John as being the author which would confirm the title 'the beloved disciple' as only Peter or James could have been this, but Peter is named separately, and James was martyred (Acts 12:1-3) too early to have written this Gospel.

1. THE WORD BECAME FLESH

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14

The major thrust of John's Gospel was to establish Christ's deity (that Jesus was God). Jesus is described here as being the only 'begotten' of the Father. This does not mean created, it means the type of relationship that the second Person of the Trinity has with the first Person. God the Father is an eternal Father.

2. What does 'eternal' mean?

Jesus the Christ has always been. He came to earth and took upon Himself the form of man. When He walked on the earth, He was totally God and also totally man. Some people really struggle to accept this, but John's Gospel is very plain in establishing it.

2. YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

“Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'”

John 3:3

Nicodemus, the Teacher of Israel (3:10), came to Jesus by night to discuss something with Him. Strangely enough before he had even asked his questions, Jesus had given him the answer! The affect that this encounter had on Nicodemus will never be fully known this side of Heaven. But it not only had a lasting effect on him (19:39), it possibly could have been the beginning of many pharisees forsaking their sect and converting to Christianity on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36-37; 15:5) under the influence of Nicodemus.

Jesus gave us some of the most powerful words of divine instruction any seeker of Truth will ever hear. Amazingly enough when we take a closer look at what He said we discover some further insights.

3. Sproul says “... *dead people cannot choose anything...*” What is it that makes a person able to be born-again? (vs.6)

Jesus made it clear that without the Holy Spirit breathing on a person (vs.8) they could never see what the Kingdom of God entailed, let alone get into it. Sproul says-

“Evangelicals today have unconverted sinners who are dead in trespasses and sin bringing themselves to life by 'choosing to be born again'. Christ made it clear that dead people cannot choose anything, that the flesh profits nothing and the a person must be born of the Spirit before he can even see the Kingdom of God, let alone enter it.”

3. WOMAN AT THE WELL

John 4:7-42

John was known as ‘the apostle of love’. He records two instances where Jesus ministered to ‘outcast’ women of ill repute by displaying incredible love and grace. What also makes this account interesting is that it took place in Samaria. The people of Samaria were despised by the Jews (note: Lk.10:30-37). So this person had two things seemingly against her.

4. What were they?

i) _____

ii) _____

If we examine this passage we can also find some valuable lessons for witnessing. Jesus was able to use things around Him to relate the Gospel (the well of water), He displayed a ‘prayed-up’ ability in talking with the woman (vs.16-19 tell her about her private life, Jesus exercised what we might call ‘the word of knowledge’), He was able to turn around the woman’s sidetracks (vs.20, she tried to divert the conversation away from herself) and finally He pointed her to the Christ (vs.26). May God help us to show the same grace and love toward those who might offend us as we try to share the Gospel with them.

4. I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:35, 48, 51

This saying of Christ’s was the beginning of His “I AM” statements. He repeated this particular one three times in this passage, and thus highlighted its significance. It was also the reason why many people turned away from following Him (vs. 66). Even today some are confused over what Jesus meant. Obviously He wasn’t talking about cannibalism, but about something that was spiritual. Importantly, we notice in John’s Gospel that Jesus is called the “Word” and the “Bread.”

5. How can we eat of this “Word” or “Bread” and actually be eating the *flesh* of Jesus?

6. Why is Jesus use of “I AM” about Himself so significant? (see John 8:58)

7. Jesus gave seven "I AM" statements in the Gospel of John. What were they?
- i) Jn.6:35 _____
 - ii) Jn.8:12 _____
 - iii) Jn.10:7 _____
 - iv) Jn.10:11 _____
 - v) Jn.11:25 _____
 - vi) Jn.14:6 _____
 - vii) Jn.15:1 _____

5. THE TRUTH MAKES FREE

“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”

John 8:32

8. What do you suppose *the truth* makes us free from?

The context of this ‘freedom’ is found in verse 34. In verse 36 we have the One who can set us free. Notice how deadly the Bible describes sin. It says we must be set free from it, saved from it, redeemed from it, have its power broken from over us, be cleansed from it and to flee even the temptation to sin.

6. I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE

“I and the Father are one.”

John 10:30

This statement by Jesus refers to His united equality with God the Father. He was not saying that He was the Father, as some believe, but that He was actually God. The Jews understood this immediately (vs.33) and sought to seize Him for it.

9. What did Jesus do when they tried to seize Him? (vs.39)

7. LAZARUS

John 11

John records this as the last of Christ's public miracles (excluding of course His own resurrection). There's many strikingly awesome things about this miracle that display Christ's power. Firstly, He knew beforehand what had and what was going to happen to Lazarus. Secondly, His human compassion mixed with the grief of their unbelief is seen in verse 35, and finally His command over all realms of the seen and unseen world. He had previously told His Disciples not to pray 'long' public prayers for pretence (Matt. 6:7).

10. How did He give an example of it here? (vs 41-42)

11. What did Jesus do shortly after this incident? (vs.54)

8. ANOTHER COMFORTER

"And I will pray the father and He will give you another helper and He may abide with you forever."

John 14:16

This passage gives us some valuable insights into the role of the Holy Spirit. When we combine this with the portion in John 16, we are able to see what some of the purposes of the Spirit are.

12. What are some of the titles ascribed to Him?

13. According to chapter 14, what is the Holy Spirit's role?

chapter 16?

9. MAKE THEM ONE

John 17

This passage is known as the High Priestly prayer, or more accurately- the Lord's prayer. It is a beautiful picture of our Lord's intercession for us. A glance through the book of Hebrews and we see that Jesus makes continual intercession for us in Heaven. This prayer is a dazzling display of the intimate relationship Jesus had with His Father. Verses 13-21 relate directly to us. We need this prayer of Jesus burned into our hearts.

14. What seems to be the main prayer emphasis for His Disciples?

10. MANY OTHER THINGS

“And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even they world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.”

John 21:25

The last verse of John's book makes an incredible claim.

15. What is it?

Amen.