

JOHN

Author: John the Apostle Date: 85-90 AD

The Gospel of John was the fourth and final gospel to be written. While the others were written to tell the story of Jesus, (Matthew to the Jews, Mark to the Romans and Luke to the Gentiles), John was written for the whole world. In this Gospel we have the deepest spiritual and theological teachings of our Lord. Because certain heresies had already sprung up, the Apostle John found it necessary to set forth in his gospel the deity of Christ. While each Gospel presents Jesus as the Son of God, John carefully explains that by this description Jesus was "making Himself equal with God" (John 5:18). A number of times Jesus stated His deity in an unequivocal way (8:58; 9:35-37; 10:36; 14:9; 17:5). Other titles given to Jesus in this Gospel include "the Word" (1:1), "Lamb of God" (1:29), "Messiah" (1:41), "King of Israel" (1:49), "Savior of the world" (4:42). His deity is revealed through seven signs and seven "I AM" statements.

While the first three Gospels deal primarily with the events in Christ's life, John deals with the spiritual meanings of these events. He goes deeper and presents truths that are not emphasized in the other Gospels. For example, all four Gospels record the feeding of the 5,000, but only John gives the great sermon on the Bread of Life (John 6) that explains the meaning of the miracle. This is why John uses the word "sign" instead of "miracle," because a "sign" is a miracle that carries a message with it.

The author of this gospel is an obvious eyewitness of the events of Christ's life. John never names himself as the author though there is little if any dispute of his authorship. He refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (21:20). John was a Jew, the son of Zebedee and Salome and the younger brother of James. The family lived in Galilee and had a successful fishing business. John played a major role in the early Christian church in Jerusalem. Later he moved to Ephesus where he most likely wrote this book. Later still, John was exiled to the island of Patmos where he wrote the book of Revelation. He is traditionally considered to be the author of I, II, and III John as well.

Theme: That you might believe that Jesus is God.

Key verses: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life," (John 3:16). "But these are written so 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 20:31).

Outline

- I. The Incarnation of the Son of God (1:1-18)
- II. The Presentation of the Son of God (1:19 – 4:54)
- III. The Opposition to the Son of God (5:1 – 12:50)
- IV. The Instruction by the Son of God in the Upper Room (13:1 – 16:33)
- V. The High Priestly Prayer of the Son of God (17:1-26)
- VI. The Crucifixion and the Resurrection of the Son of God (18:1 – 21:25)

Overview

The Gospel of John speaks more clearly than any other of the deity of Christ. There can be no doubt: the Bible does teach that Jesus of Nazareth was fully God as well as truly man. This teaching does not rest solely on what we find in John's Gospel. There are many other passages that affirm Jesus' deity. Among the most powerful are: Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-13; Philippians 2:5-11.

Col 1:15-20 tells us that Jesus, who expresses the invisible God, was Himself the Creator of all things, and has priority over all.

Heb 1:1-13 tells us that Jesus is the "exact representation" of God's being, and sustains all things by His own powerful word. He is, as God, superior to all created beings, including the angels.

Phil 2:5-11 tells us that Jesus, though "in very nature God" voluntarily surrendered the prerogatives of Deity to become a true human being. Now that He has been resurrected He has been exalted again, and in the future every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

It is this Jesus, God from before the beginning, who John wants to show us in his Gospel. And from this Gospel John wants to teach us how to respond, from the heart, to Him as Savior and Lord.

Jesus' Seven "Signs" in the Gospel of John

1. Changing water into wine in Cana (2:1-11)
2. Healing an official's son in Capernaum (4:46-54)
3. Healing an invalid at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (5:1-18)
4. Feeding the 5,000 near the Sea of Galilee (6:5-14)
5. Walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee (6:16-21)
6. Healing a blind man in Jerusalem (9:1-7)
7. Raising dead Lazarus in Bethany (11:1-45)

Seven "I AM" Statements

John's Gospel emphasizes Christ's deity to a greater extent than the others. John began not with Jesus' birth, but with a statement of Christ's preexistence as God. John also reported a number of occasions on which Jesus declared Himself to be the "I AM" (John 4:26; 8:28,58; 13:19; 18:5-6,8).

The seven are:

1. I am the Bread of Life. 6:35
2. I am the Light of the World. 8:12
3. I am the Door/Gate for the sheep. 10:7
4. I am the Good Shepherd. 10:11,14
5. I am the Resurrection and the Life. 11:25
6. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. 14:6
7. I am the True Vine. 15:1

Each of these symbols, not only continues to affirm the full deity of Jesus, but tells us what it means for us that Jesus, the Son of God, chose to become man and live among us. **Jesus is our bread**, who sustains us daily. **Jesus is our light**, cutting through the shadows and illusions that darken this sin-cursed world. **Jesus is the gate**, the one door through whom we can go and find safety. **Jesus is the Good Shepherd**, who cares so much for the sheep that He was willing to give His life for us. **Jesus is the resurrection and life**; His power is so great that He is able to bring life even to our mortal bodies, and one day will raise us to total renewal. **Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life**; no one can approach the Father except through Him. **Jesus is the Vine**, and as we remain in fellowship with Jesus His life flows into us as branches,

enabling us to bear spiritual fruit. Only because Jesus truly is God can we derive so much from personal relationship with Him.

This "I am" phrase is rooted in events reported in Exodus 3:14. Moses had been told by God to return to Egypt and rescue God's people from the Egyptians, to lead them to freedom and the Promised Land. Moses hesitated, and among the questions he asked was, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?'" (Ex 3:13) It was then that God announced His name, telling Moses to say, "**I AM** has sent you," and going on to tell Moses that "this is My name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation" (v. 15).

