

This evening we come to the fourth Gospel account. The Holy Spirit guided His servants to pen four biographical accounts of Jesus' life and ministry.

Discuss: Why four accounts?

To do: Let's get into the book of John by doing a three minute research...

Group #1: Survey the book of John. What are the differences that stand out as you compare this gospel with the synoptic gospels?

Group #2: Jesus is the "I AM." Find as many of Jesus' "I AM" statements as you can. Write down the references.

Group #3: A key word for John is "believe" (and the noun "faith"). Scan the book, and see how many times you find the word (or cognate words). Be thinking about this question: What does John mean by "believe"? How does his use of the term differ from the way we often use it?

- **Who wrote the book?**

--John

Who was John? The youngest of Jesus' twelve apostles; the author of 1, 2, 3, John, and Revelation.

Note: See 21:24-25

Q: Though John doesn't name himself as the author, how does he refer to himself in v 24?

See also: 21:20 "the disciple whom Jesus loved"

Q: Who is the "we" in verse 24?

Q: Did John give us a comprehensive biography of the life of Jesus, acc. to v 25?

Q: Acc. to v 25, why would that not be possible?

[Group #1 share findings]

Discuss: Survey the book of John. What are the differences that stand out as you compare this gospel with the synoptic gospels?

--over 90% of the content of John's gospel is found exclusively in this book

--of his 8 recorded miracles, only two are found in the other gospels

--Though Jesus' preaching was full of parables, John does not record *one* (the Good Shepherd story in ch 10 should be regarded as an allegory or an extended metaphor rather than a parable, acc. to Gromacki, p. 135).

Note: Early writers such as Irenaeus and Tertullian say that John wrote this gospel.

- **When was the book written?**

Two views have been suggested:

--A.D. 85 or later (traditional view)

--50's, no later than 70

Note: The earliest scrap of the NT is a papyrus fragment located in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, England, called P<sup>52</sup>. It contains 5 verses of John (18:31-33, 37-38), and is dated about A.D. 125-35.

- **Why was the book written?**

John tells us his purpose in 20:30-31.

Q: What does John say Jesus did while on the earth, acc. to v 30? Miraculous signs

Q: Did John record everything Jesus did? No.

Q: Why did John write this gospel, acc. to v 31? So we would believe in Christ...

1. *The gospel of John is evangelistic.*

It shows us how we can have eternal life.

2. *The gospel of John is apologetic.*

It's written to give a defense of Jesus' deity.

Note: Many feel that John was writing to appeal to Greek thinking, Gentile readers.

- **What is the outline of the book?**

John seems to center much of his narrative around Jesus' various visits to Jerusalem to observe the Jewish feasts (Gromacki, 136):

1. First Passover (2:23)
2. Unnamed feast (5:1)
3. Feast of Tabernacles (7:2)
4. Feast of Dedication (10:22)
5. Last Passover (13:1)

(taken from R. Gromacki, pp. 136-7)

- I. Christ and Individuals (chs. 1-4)
- II. Christ and the Multitudes (chs. 5-12)
- III. Christ and the Disciples (chs. 13-17)
- IV. Christ and His Passion (chs. 18-19)

- **What is the message of the book in one sentence?**

The gospel of John helps us to believe that Jesus is the Christ so that we can have eternal life.

- **What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?**

1. *John gives us the clearest presentation of the deity of Jesus Christ.*

John presents Jesus as the eternal "I AM."

[Have Group #2 share their findings -- Jesus is the "I AM." Find as many of Jesus' "I AM" statements as you can. Write down the references.]

- a. I am the bread of life (6:35).
- b. I am the light of the world (8:12; 9:5).
- c. I am the door (10:7).
- d. I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14).
- e. I am the resurrection and the life (11:25).
- f. I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6).
- g. I am the true vine (15:1).

Q: What is the significance of these claims by Jesus?

Suppose I said, "I have a million dollars in my billfold." What conclusions would you draw about me? You would question my character, my integrity for making such outlandish claims, wouldn't you?

But if Bill Gates, owner of Microsoft, made the same claim, what would you think? Sounds reasonable. What made the difference? He has a track record of evidence that makes it reasonable to assume if he said he had \$1 million

in his pocket, he probably does!

No man would ever make the claim to be God unless he were a liar or insane or... telling the truth! Jesus did not make His claim without giving ample evidence to its validity...

2. *John presents a series of miracles especially designed to cause us to believe in Jesus as the Lord of the universe.*

Focus on 20:30 again, "Jesus did many *miraculous signs* in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But *these* are written [these miraculous signs] so that you may believe..."

John records eight sign-miracles:

- a. Turning water into wine (ch 2)
- b. Healing the nobleman's son (ch 4)
- c. Healing the impotent man (ch 5)
- d. Feeding the five thousand (6:1-14)
- e. Walking on the water (6:15-21)
- f. Healing the blind man (ch 9)
- g. Raising Lazarus from the dead (ch 11)
- h. Providing the catch of fish (ch 21)

Discuss: How important to biblical Christianity is a proper understanding of the deity of Christ? Of his humanity? Can you believe in one without the other?

3. *John writes to us to challenge us to "believe" in Jesus.*

[Have Group #3 share their findings -- A key word for John is "believe" (and the noun "faith"). Scan the book, and see how many times you find the word (or cognate words). Be thinking about this question: What does John mean by "believe"? How does his use of the term differ from the way we often use it?]

Discuss: How would you respond to someone who said, "Hey, I did what John 3:16 says. I believed in Jesus when I was a child, but it never made a difference in my life. Am I missing something?" Use the gospel of John to respond.

Discuss: What would be a practical way to use the gospel of John to help a person like this (or anyone else who isn't sure they have a relationship with God)? One suggestion--to do a weekly Bible study, a chapter a week. Here are some sample questions:

### Sample Questions for an Evangelistic Bible Study in John:

Chapter One:

What is the proper response to Jesus, according to verses 10-12?

Chapter Two:

Describe Jesus' relationship with His mother. See verse 4.

What was the significance of Jesus' first miracle? See verse 11.

Why was Jesus so upset in verse 16?

How do we know Jesus' death was no accident, according to verse 19?

What does verse 22 reveal about the authority of Jesus' words?

Chapter Three:

What kind of man was Nicodemus? See verse 1.

What did Jesus say must happen to us? See verse 3.

Can religion save a person according to verse 7?

Why do people reject Jesus? See verse 19 & 20.

Chapter Four:

Why did Jesus "have to" go through Samaria?

What was unusual about Jesus' request in verse 7?

Why does Jesus use figurative language in verses 13-14?

Why did Jesus change the subject in verse 16?

Why did the woman change the subject in verse 19?

Did Jesus teach tolerance and pluralism? See verse 22.

What most impressed the woman about Jesus? See verse 29.