

Gospel of John - Introduction

THE BACKGROUND OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Authorship of John - the Apostle John

Date & Place of Writing - uniform thought is that it is written at Ephesus around AD 80-90

Purpose of John - John 20:31

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 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.

Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

Synoptic Gospels - Matthew Mark Luke

Synoptic = taking a common view; they follow the same general outline of Christ's life and are similar in content, structure, & perspective.

Mark - 62 AD

Luke - 62 AD

Matthew - 70AD

Matthew - to his fellow Jews saying "Jesus is King fulfilling OT prophecies"

Mark - to the Romans saying "Jesus is the suffering servant"

Luke - gentile writer; through a physician's eyes; to the Greeks

John - writing to Jews and non-Jews; "Jesus is actually God"; huge EV push in John

Two main things to keep in mind about John & the Synoptics:

-the Gospel of John is different, but not inferior to the other Gospels

-the Gospel of John does not contradict any other books of the New Testament

All four gospels picture Him as the Savior who came to "save His people from their sins", die a sacrificial death on the cross, and raise from the dead.

Synoptics wrote about the events; John writes about meaning and interpretation of the events

i.e. Feeding of the 5000 - only in John is Jesus' sermon recorded (bread of life)
John and the Synoptics were designed by the Holy Spirit to supplement each other.

For example:

- At His trial (Mark 14:58) and while He was on the cross (Mark 15:29), Jesus' enemies accused Him of having claimed that He would destroy the temple. The Synoptics do not record the basis for that false allegation, but John does (2:19)
- The Synoptics do not explain why the Jews had to bring Jesus before Pilate; John explains that the Romans had withheld from them the right of capital punishment (18:31).
- The Synoptics place Peter in the high priest's courtyard (Matt. 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54–55); John explains how he gained access (John 18:15–16).
- The call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John (Matt. 4:18–22) becomes more understandable in light of John 1:35–42, which reveals that they had already spent time with Jesus.
- The Synoptics record that immediately after the feeding of the five thousand Jesus sent the crowds away (Matt. 14:22; Mark 6:45); John reveals why He did that: They intended to try to make Him king (John 6:15).
- From John's gospel it is evident that when the Sanhedrin met on Wednesday of Passion Week to plot Jesus' arrest (Mark 14:1–2) they were merely implementing a decision made earlier, after the raising of Lazarus (John 11:47–53).
- The synoptics focus on the signs and sayings of Christ; John emphasizes the identity of Christ.

John includes a large amount of material (more than 90 percent of the book) not found in the Synoptics:

- prologue describing Christ's pre-existence (1:1-18)
- Jesus' early ministry (2-3)
- Jesus' first miracle (2:1-11)
- dialogue with Nicodemus (3:1-21)
- the Samaritan woman (4)
- healing of a lame man (5:1-15)
- Bread of Life discourse (6)
- Jesus's claim to be living water (7:37-38)
- Jesus taking the name of God for Himself (8)
- healing of a blind man (9)
- Jesus presenting Himself as the Good Shepherd (10)

- the resurrection of Lazarus (11)
- washing of the disciple's feet (13)
- the Upper Room Discourse (13-16)
- Jesus's High Priestly Prayer (17)
- miraculous catch of fish (21)
- Jesus' recommissioning of Peter (21)

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE APOSTLE JOHN

-We sometimes think of John as a thirty year old John following a thirty year old Jesus; but most likely it is believed that John is a teenager around 15 years old; more teenager than grown up

-John was arguably Jesus' favorite disciple; 1000s - press in and get the 72 - press in and get the 12 - press in and get 3 - press in and get John

-John and James were called the Sons of Thunder; they are really loud and boisterous; could be kind of extreme; by the time John dies he is called "the apostle of love"; want to learn about Jesus from this Son of Thunder turned apostle of love

-John is commonly known as the "apostle of love" - stressing Christians' love for Christ, Christ's love for the church, and the love for one another that is supposed to be the hallmark of true believers; the theme of love flows through his writings

-Love was a quality *learned* from Christ, not something that came naturally to him

-Three years with Jesus began to transform a self-centered fanatic into a mature man of balance. Three years with Jesus moved this Son of Thunder toward becoming an apostle of love. At the very points where he was most imbalanced, Christ gave him equilibrium.

*He learned the balance of love and truth (Luke 9:51-56 vs)
(Zeal for the truth must be balanced by love for people; truth without love has no decency- its just brutality. Love without truth has no character; it is just hypocrisy)

*He learned the balance of ambition and humility

(John alone records in detail Jesus' washing the disciples' feet)

*John is loving because he is so in love with Jesus

*the key is TRANSFORMATION

Themes in John

- light vs darkness
- Kingdom of God vs kingdom of the devil
- life against death
- fruit against fruitlessness
- obedience vs disobedience
- love against hatred

Jesus' seven "I AM" statements:

- I am the bread of life (6:35)
- I am the light of the world (8:12)
- I am the door (10:9)
- I am the good shepherd (10:11)
- I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
- I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)
- I am the true vine (15:1)

Two others:

- before Abraham was, I AM (8:58)
- I AM He (18:5-6)

The Seven Signs (Miracles) in John

1. Changing water into wine: John 2: 1-11
2. Healing the Nobleman's Son: John 4: 43-54
3. Healing the Man at the Pool of Bethesda: John 5: 1-15
4. Feeding the Five Thousand: John 6: 1-15
5. Walking on the Water: John 6: 16-21
6. Healing the Man Born Blind: John 9: 1-12
7. Raising Lazarus from the Dead: John 11: 1-46