

## Sunday Morning Message

February 6, 2022

*In the Beginning Was Jesus – Introduction to the Gospel of John*

*The Gospel According to John*

Text – John 1:1:1 – 5; 14

Congregational Reading – John 1:1 – 5; 14

### Introduction to John's Gospel

The presentation of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ while on the earth is given to us in the New Testament in four different accounts, written by four individual human writers who were all writing from their own unique perspectives, yet were all penning their individual works under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. The Bible was penned by human writers, but was inspired by God. The term, "*Confluent Inspiration*" means that the Scriptures are the product of a dual agency, the Holy Spirit and the human writer.

*"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* (2 Timothy 3:16 and 17)

Thus the Scriptures are divine, but they are also human. The literary styles of the individual writers are very apparent in their writing. God used each man's individual personality, character, background, and style while forming these books. These men were not robots, merely dictating something that God gave them. They were living, thinking, and feeling men; but God superimposed His perfection on each of these works so that every word that we have in them is the inspired Word of God. Yet, each work portrays the unique aspects of the personalities and passions of each writer.

The recording of the events surrounding the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, including His death, resurrection, and ascension were given by the inspiration of God through the writing of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Two of these men (Matthew and John) were apostles and were very close to the Lord while He walked the earth. The other two (Mark and Luke) were close to those who walked with Jesus. Whether they had actually witnessed these events or not is not important because the Holy Spirit of God gave them the exact words that were recorded in these gospel accounts.

After carefully examining the four gospel accounts, we discover that three of the books (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) are similar in many ways and are referred to as the *Synoptic Gospels*. Many of the same events are recorded in these books. While each of these gospel accounts is also unique in many ways, John's gospel stands farther apart when distinguished from the other three.

The first three gospels are called synoptic because they present the truth about Christ from similar points of view; John's Gospel is a supplementary gospel because it presents Christ from a totally different point of view. In the Synoptic Gospels we have the earthly, the outward, the Galilean, the public, the humanity; in the gospel of John we have the heavenly, the inward, the Judean, the private, the Deity.<sup>1</sup>

The Gospel of John is unique among the four Gospel accounts in that it stands apart from the synoptic writers in many ways. I call John's Gospel *the Special Gospel*. Not that John was more special than the other writers: they were all special in their own way; but John's special relationship with the Lord was as unique as his gospel account.

The synoptic gospels are primarily focused on Christ's ministry in Galilee, whereas John's gospel is mainly centered in Judaea. John seems to be more concerned with the words of Christ than he is with his works. John records no parables, but includes some lengthy discourses. John's gospel tells us of three distinct Passover feasts during the ministry of the Lord, which lets us know that his ministry spanned more than three years.

### Why Four Gospels (From VBC Notes)

- The four Gospels give us four views of Christ, written by different men at different times for different audiences and from different perspectives. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known as the Synoptic Gospels because they present Christ from a similar viewpoint, while John is known as the Autoptic Gospel because it has a different emphasis from the other three.

SYNOPTIC GOSPELS (Matthew, Mark, and Luke)	AUTOPTIC GOSPEL (John)
Public Ministry	Private Ministry
Galilean Ministry	Judean Ministry

<sup>1</sup> John Phillips. Exploring the New Testament Book by Book: An Expository Survey (Kindle Edition - Location 117)

Parables	No Parables
Human Side	Divine Side
Earthly Aspect	Heavenly Aspect
Synoptical	Supplementary
Official	Personal
Concentrate on Christ's Works	Concentrate on Christ's Words

Facts about John the Apostle:

- 1 More is known about John than any of the other gospel writers.
- 2 He was the son of Zebedee and Salome; and the brother of James. He was very likely a first cousin of the Lord. He was called "a son of thunder" by the Lord (Mark 3:17).
- 3 He was a fisherman from Bethsaida in Galilee.
- 4 He was the "Beloved Disciple". He was part of the inner circle (triumvirate), which also included James and Peter. He is the only disciple that was with him at the cross. He was the only disciple that knew he wouldn't betray Christ. He was entrusted with the care of Mary. He was the only disciple that was not martyred, but tradition states that he was boiled in oil by Emperor Domitian and survived, only to be banished to the prison island of Patmos.
- 5 The churches of Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Thyatira, were founded by him.<sup>2</sup>
- 6 He writes in terms of black and white with no tones of gray. As John saw it, everything is true or false, right or wrong, light or darkness, love or hate, life or death. Things are either good or bad. He assumes that his readers have arrived at the same high spiritual plateau on which he himself lived.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Foxe, pp. 13-14. Kindle Edition.

<sup>3</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), 1 Jn 1:1–5:21.

## 7 He presents Christ as God the Son (John 1:1)

According to the *Foxes Book of Martyrs*:

The beloved disciple, was brother to James the Great. The churches of Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Thyatira, were founded by him. From Ephesus he was ordered to be sent to Rome, where it is affirmed he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. He escaped by miracle, without injury. Domitian afterwards banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. Nerva, the successor of Domitian, recalled him. He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death.<sup>4</sup>

John's Gospel is the last of the four gospel accounts to be written, believed to have been penned somewhere in the late 80's of the first century. It was probably written before John's Epistles and The Boof of Revelation.

### Introduction

#### *"In the beginning"*

As we examine these introductory verses to John's Gospel, we immediately see that John is not interested in giving us the same earthly information regarding the birth and early life of the Lord Jesus. John starts out by going back much further than Jesus' birth as a human baby in the manger in Bethlehem. He goes all the way back to the beginning, not the beginning of his life, not the beginning of his ancestry, but the beginning of all things. Right out of the gate, John immediately presents Jesus as God.

Illustrate – The "I Am" statements in John's Gospel:

When God first appeared to Moses in the burning bush Moses asked Him His name:

*"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." (Exodus 3:14)*

The phrase "I am" when used in reference to God is known as the eternal present tense. God is never "I was" or "I will be," He is always "I am." God transcends time. He dwells outside of it. He also is immanent in that, as Christ, He lived within time. However, Jesus as the God man lives both in time and outside of time. He is the "I am."

---

<sup>4</sup> Foxe, John. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs (Optimized For Kindle)* (pp. 13-14). Kindle Edition.

I am the bread of life (6:35)

I am the light of the world (8:12)

I am the door (10:7, 9)

I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14)

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, 5)

*"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58)*

## **I. Jesus is The Word of God (vs. 1 – 2; 14)**

*"In the beginning was the Word (λόγος – logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. ... And the Word was made 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 1:1-2, 14)*

Jesus is called the Word of God. He not only wrote the Word – He is the Word.

*"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (1 John 5:7)*

*"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;" (Hebrews 1:1-2)*

A practical point that needs to be made here is the fact that God is intimately connected to His Word.

## **II. Jesus Does The Work of God**

### **A. Creation**

*"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:3)*

The phrase "in the beginning" immediately draws our minds back to the Creation:

*"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)*

*"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the*

*forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Colossians 1:13-18)*

*"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" (Hebrews 1:1-3)*

## **B. Salvation**

*"In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)*

Jesus is life. Physical life comes from Him as the Creator, but in Him also is eternal life, which He offers to all of those who will put their faith in Him.

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ... He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:16, 36)*

*"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14)*

*"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:12)*

*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24)*

*"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. ... And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and*

*believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (John 6:27, 40, 47)*

*"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John 10:27-28)*

### **C. Illumination**

*"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1:5)*

*"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19 KJV)*

*"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)*

*"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (John 9:5)*

In the *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus said:

*"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)*

### **Conclusion**

As we conclude this brief taste of John's Gospel, let's try to apply some of these introductory thoughts to our lives today.

To the lost:

We said that Jesus is Life, and offers eternal and everlasting life with Him in Heaven for all those who are willing to put their faith in Him. Have you trusted Christ for eternal Christ?

To the believer:

We said that Jesus is the light of the world, through Christ, we as believers are also the light of the world. Are you shining the light of Christ to the world around you?