

42. Jesus in John – Part 1

October 26, 2017

Many Christians, as well as unbelievers wonder, “Why do we have 4 Gospels? Couldn’t God tell us about Jesus with 1 Gospel?” Let me put it in this way: To explain about what Jesus had done on earth more clearly we need to have 4 different perspectives. The ancient Christian writer Origen who lived in the second century gave the best answer in my opinion: “There are not 4 Gospels, but one 4-fold Gospel.”

- **The Gospel of Matthew**, writing to the Jews, was interested in establishing the regal rights of Jesus as King of the Jews. In doing so, he traced the genealogy of Jesus back to David and Abraham through His earthly father Joseph. He sets forth Christ as the Redeemer – King of Israel, the Messiah promised to the forefathers.
- **The Gospel of Mark**, writing to practical minded Romans, was interested in capturing those shots of Jesus that showed Him as a servant. Consequently, we don’t see a genealogy of Jesus, because servants didn’t have genealogies at that time. Yet, Mark had his eye on the activities of Jesus which would appeal to the Romans.
- **The Gospel of Luke**, writing to a Greek audience, was focused on Jesus’ humanity. So Luke traced Christ’s genealogy all the way back to Adam through His earthly mother Mary. Throughout his account, Luke pictured the Son of man as Kinsman-Redeemer of the whole human race.
- **The Gospel of John**, writing to a timeless, universal audience, John stressed the deity of Christ and His unique relationship with the Father.

A. THE AUTHOR AND THE TIMELINE

It is obvious that this Gospel was written by the beloved apostle John who often described himself “the disciple whom Jesus loved” around A.D. 90. Does it mean Jesus didn’t love the other disciples as much as He loved John? No, he was not comparing God’s love toward him with others. Simply saying that Jesus loved him and John was grateful.

John was the one of Jesus’ inner circle disciples with Peter and John’s own brother James. It is the same disciple who reclined at Jesus’ chest at the last supper. He was the one who was chosen to take care of Jesus’ mother Mary by Jesus at the foot of the Cross.

Obviously, John was a man of warm affection with the power of love that he learned from his Savior Jesus. In his Gospel, we can easily find the love between the Father and the Son of God and God’s love toward mankind.

B. THE THEME OF THE BOOK

The theme of this Book is located almost near the end.

John 20:31 But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life.

One word can sum up this Gospel of John – “Believe”. We have 66 Books, 1,189 chapters and 31,240 verses of truth in this Bible. But if people choose not to believe it, it does not benefit them one bit. However, just because they don’t believe the

truth, it doesn't mean that it does not exist. Oh yes, the truth exists whether people believe it or not.

Those who "believe in His name" become children of God in 1:12. After turning water to wine in Cana, Jesus' disciples "believed in Him" in 2:11. Jesus told Nicodemus that the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life in 3:15 and 16. Many Samaritans "believed in Him" after He spoke with the woman at the well in 4:39. So did the royal official and his whole household when his son was healed in 4:53, as well as the blind man healed by Jesus in 9:38.

Part of John's style in stressing belief is to contrast it with unbelief.

John 3:18 He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

If we choose to believe the truth of God, He will start to show us and make it known to us what we could not understand before with a carnal mind.

C. THE INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE BOOK OF JOHN

1) John was probably the last Gospel written, and written in view of what the previous three had already said.

This is one reason why John is so different from Matthew, Mark, and Luke which are known as 'Synoptic Gospels'. Synoptic means "see-together" and the first three Gospels present Jesus' life in pretty much the same format. The first three Gospels focus more on what Jesus taught and did, but John focuses more on who Jesus is.

2) There are significant events in the ministry of Jesus that Matthew, Mark and Luke include that John leaves out, including Jesus' birth, baptism, temptation in the wilderness, the agony in Gethsemane, the Ascension, demonic confrontations and parables.

And there are no parables in the Gospel of John.

3) The first 3 Gospels center on Jesus' ministry in Galilee. John centers his Gospel on what Jesus said and did in Jerusalem.

That is the reason the majority of the Gospel of John covers the incidents that happened within 30 days before Jesus' death and resurrection.

4) John shows us who Jesus is by highlighting 7 signs - a.k.a. miracles - of Jesus.

6 of these miracles are not mentioned in the first 3 Gospels. John alone tells us of the wedding feast at Cana; of the conversation with Nicodemus; of the woman at the well; of the raising of Lazarus from the dead; of Jesus washing the disciples' feet; of the teaching about the Holy Spirit as the divine Comforter and so on. It fills what other Gospels missed.

5) John shows us who Jesus is by allowing Jesus to speak for Himself in seven dramatic "I AM" statements.

The infamous "I AM" of Jesus as God revealed Himself to Moses by the name "I AM" (Jehovah). God is the self-existent One who was, who is and who is to come. So when Jesus used the name "I AM", He was definitely claiming to be God.

6) Out of all 4 Gospels, the Book of John is the most theological Book where the rest of the entire NT gets their roots.

7) According to many theologians, 92% of the material in John is found only in John – the highest percentage of unique material among the 4 Gospels.

D. IN THE BEGINNING

John 1:1 In the beginning

This opening should remind Genesis 1:1 to many Bible students. But are they the same beginning? For that question, you are thinking, "I think this is a trick question. I don't think I am going to answer that one." No, they are not the same beginning, not even remotely close. To understand this, we have to go to Genesis 1:1.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

This 'beginning' starts at the creation by God where time starts.

But the 'beginning' from John's Gospel goes far beyond that. It is the beginning that cannot be measured by our concept of time, because time had not been created by the Lord yet. It was when our eternal God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit alone existed, not even angels.

God is before time and after time since time itself is a part of God's creation. It is impossible to put God in our definition of time. God is not ruled by it in any form or shape.

E. WAS THE WORD

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word,

The word 'Word' in Greek is 'Logos', of course, we get our English word 'logo' from this word. What is so special about this?

The idea of the 'logos' has a deep and rich root in both Jewish and Greek thinking that we don't get in our English word.

When ancient Jewish rabbis referred to God, especially in His more personal aspects, in terms of His word, they often spoke of God Himself as "the word of God." We can find a good example of this from ancient Hebrew editions of Exodus 19:17.

Exodus 19:17a Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet the word of God. – The ancient Hebrew editions of the Old Testament

Exodus 19:17a Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God – NKJV

The Greek philosophers saw that logos was the power that set the world in perfect order and kept it going in perfect order. They saw the logos as the "Ultimate Reason" that controlled all things.

John meets both Jews and Greeks where they are, and explains Jesus in terms they already understood. That's being a great communicator.

F. THE WORD WAS WITH GOD

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,

Did you get that? It says, "the Word was with God". You don't say, "I was with me." You have to be at least two different persons to use the word "with", do you not? In other words, from the beginning when there was no one, no time existed with

the exception of God Himself, this "Word" was with God. This is such a brilliantly simple sentence to verify the second person of the Trinity of Christianity.

The preposition "with" in the phrase "*the Word was with God*" indicates both equality and distinction of identity along with the association. Within the context of the first portion of this first chapter of John, we all know that the Word is Jesus. That means that Jesus was with God the Father in equality and distinction of identity.

Then, skeptics would say, "How would John know about this? He was not born before time exists as you said?" The answer comes from 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

G. THE WORD WAS GOD

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

I tell ya what, guys, it doesn't get any better and clearer than this – "the Word was God." As I have mentioned many times before, all the cults deny the deity of Jesus Christ, but with this simple sentence the apostle John hushes them all.

Jehovah's Witness says that there is only one God and that is Jehovah. But they destroy their own doctrine when they come to this very verse. Jehovah's Witness bible, 'New World Translation' reads like this:

"In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was **a** god." – Jehovah's Witness' 'New World Translation
Their own translation is saying that there is more than one god. Which one is correct? Only one Jehovah or Jehovah plus a small god?

So is theirs a correct translation? The claim of the Watchtower that defends their translation of John 1:1 is that because before the second time "God" is used in the passage, no article appears. As you can see in your Bible, it is written, "God," not "the God".

In answer to this approach to Greek grammar and translation, we can only refer to the multitude of other times in the New Testament where "God" appears without 'the' article. If the Watchtower were honest and consistent, they would translate "God" as "god" every place it appears without 'the' article. But it seems that their Greek grammatical rule only applies when it suits the purpose of backing up their false doctrinal beliefs of the Watchtower.

In the main resource the Watchtower uses to establish their claim – The Kingdom Interlinear, the Watchtower quotes a well-known Greek authority, Dr Julius Robert Mantey to make him appear to agree with their translation. But Dr. Mantey's comment has been misquoted, he has even written to the Watchtower, and demanded that his name be removed from their book.

H. APPLICATIONS

1) If some choose not to believe the truth of God, it doesn't mean that it does not exist. It only means that they don't get the benefit of knowing the truth and they will be eternally lost.

2) We should not put God in our concept of time limit, because He is the One who created it and the Creator cannot be ruled by a creature.

3) John 1:1 is the genealogy of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. He is God and He has been coexisting with the God the Father from the eternal beginning.