

## VV STUDY NOTES: 8<sup>th</sup> October 2022

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### Overview of Gospel of John in relationship to the Synoptic Gospels.

**Goal:** The goal of this study is to build a framework for studying the content of what John is writing, as opposed to an actual interpretation thereof. Hopefully it will provide a better understanding of the development of the church in those early years of the church's history. All scripture opens multiple perspectives from which they may be viewed. I make no apologies for presenting you with this personal perspective, but it by no means plumbs the depths of possibilities.

The first task then is to clearly identify the key differences between the Synoptics and John's Gospel, and then to ponder the question of authorship.

**This is a BIRD'S EYE VIEW of the Gospel.** I hope it will strengthen our ability to understand the details of the book in a way that helps us grasp the magnitude of the message.

### KEY FEATURES

#### 1. An incredible level of intensity in John's Gospel.

- **IN THE BEGINNING .... (Jn 1:1)**  
There could be no better way of grabbing attention than the use of this statement in relationship to Christ. It takes us back to the very foundation of the world.
- **BELIEVE**  
Llew started off our series on the study of the Gospels, and immediately drew our attention to this significant feature. Over 80 times John summons his readers to believe in JESUS.  
John 3:16 is the best known of these. This emphasis far outweighs the summons anywhere else in the NT.
- **Verily, verily (Amen, Amen: Verily, Truly)**  
**John 1:47; 1:51; 3:3; 3:5, 3:11, 5:19; 5:24; 5:25; 6:26; 6:47; 6:53; 8:34; 8:51; 8:58; 10:1; 10:7; 12:24; 13:16; 13:38; 14:12; 16:7; 16:20; 16:23; 17:19; 21:18**  
This double exclamation used 25 times is his way of continually telling us the immense importance of the message he is sharing. This occurs occasionally elsewhere, but this level is totally unique to John's Gospel.

#### 2. There are no parables.

- The OT and NT are packed with metaphorical language, but the type of parables used by Jesus are almost non-existent. Why then did Jesus employ that method of communicating truths about the kingdom, judgement, and deep spiritual truths such as those in the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son.  
## Can you think of any reasons why Jesus used them?

### 3. Most of John Gospel is noticeably absent in the Synoptic Gospels.

- The Analysis Chart provided there is rough assessment of the volume of Johns Gospel that does not appear in Matt, Mark & Luke. **It is at least 75%.**
- John anchors his presentation within a framework of events that the Synoptics provide The YELLOW highlight pick these out.
- The goal of the Gospel is to present Jesus in a way that the developing church desperately needed.
- I have tried to analyse the overall content to discover the real purpose of the Gospel.

### 4. The unique content of the Gospel of John.

#### A. METAPHORS of Jesus' ministry to the disciples and all believers.

1. **The Bread of Life (Jn 6:25-59)**
2. **The Good Shepherd and the Sheep (Jn 10:1-21)**
3. **The Vine and the Branches (Jn 15:1-17)**

These metaphors and the teachings surrounding them display a deep dependency that we as believers must have with Jesus our Lord.

In our studies to date the significance of RELATIONSHIP has been a recurring theme, and these teachings are intended to nail the principle of relationship (with God and Others) into our spiritual consciousness.

#### B. The Seven Signs

The significant selection of **Seven** signs must not be ignored, because it s another way of magnifying or intensifying the reality and importance of the miracles Jesus performed.

#### C. DEEPLY PERSONAL MINISTRY

Jesus displays remarkable sensitivity to the struggles of specific persons and devotes time for ministering to their needs.

1. **Jesus Teaches Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-21)**
2. **Jesus talks to the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:1-26)**
3. **Woman accused of adultery (Jn 8:2-11)**
4. **Jesus comforts the sisters of Lazarus (Jn 11:17-37)**
5. **Jesus reinstated Peter (Jn 21:15-25)**

Some of the individuals in the section below could have been added to this list, but I based the choice on the textual volume involved. The next section also reinforces Jesus' commitment to us all.

**D. Examples and Teaching for the Disciples**

This area highlighted in BLUE on the chart is very open to interpretation as mentioned above. This section displays a deep commitment to encouragement and support for the Disciples and All Believers.

- Jesus washing the feet of the disciples (Jn 13:1-17) teaches the need of having a servant mind set. **Is there any need to codify it into a commandment?**
- His prayers for the disciples and for all believers, underscores the fact that he is already extending his thinking till the end of time.
- He warns of the problems to come and the opposition all believers will face throughout time.
- Jesus was the ultimate realist!

**E. THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Synoptics really don't say a lot about the Holy Spirit in comparison with John's Gospel.

**John 14:15-31; John 16:1-15** provide a broad outline of how important the presence and teaching of the ADVOCATE (HOLY SPIRIT) will be for them as they navigate to challenges that lie ahead.

- He will be their TEACHER and remind them of what Jesus taught them.
- He will minister PEACE to their troubled hearts.
- He will guide you into all truth.
- Etc, Etc, Etc....

The Gospel of John displays Jesus as being totally committed Service to : GOD THE FATHER, and the SALVATION OF MANKIND, and CREATION.

The message of the Gospel is that Jesus (the Christ) is the CREATOR, SAVIOUR, and ULTIMATE PASTOR. Jesus reveals GOD THE FATHER, and the HOLY SPIRIT as his personal gift to keep us in the arms of his love and empower us to reflect that love to the world.

One of the most persistent attacks on the JUSTICE OF GOD, is that a loving God could not stand by and allow all the suffering that exists in the world. Most of that suffering is caused by mankind themselves. For God to stop it all he would have to commit himself to a process of premature judgement.

How many of us would rejoice at being prematurely judged for the hurt we inflict?

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Not in the Gospel of John) points us instead to Self-Examination as a healthier alternative to judging others. It points us to Loving others as an alternative to anger against others, including the forgiveness of our Enemies.

## AUTHORSHIP

***I believe that any discussion of authorship is secondary to the actual teaching of the Gospel.*** There is insufficient evidence for anyone to be dogmatic as to authorship. Having said that, the enormous difference might be better explained if we look at an alternative to JOHN (Son of Zebedee) as the author.

During the enlightenment era there was a concerted effort to rewrite the background history of the bible. Jesus as a prophet, and social revolutionary was in vogue, but the idea that he was the divine Son of God and that the Crucifixion and Resurrection were part of his Jesus' own beliefs were strenuously resisted. Every conceivable method was used to accomplish that task.

Changing the authorship was linked to moving the dates of writing into the late 1<sup>st</sup> century or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century. This was usually accompanied by challenges to the historicity of the books themselves. This was primarily focussed on Luke and John. Luke was considered to be a sloppy historian and totally unreliable, inventing facts to embellish a false narrative of the development of the Christian Church.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Sir William Ramsay, a renowned archaeologist set out to prove the above point. His actual research led him to the opposite conclusion, and he commented that Luke "should be placed among the greatest of historians" He later became a Christian.

Altogether 84 important facts recorded by Luke in the last 16 chapters of ACTS (the section dealing with the Roman world) and have been documented from historical and archaeological records as 100% accurate. Instead of believing that Luke was inventing facts to enhance a manipulated account of the history of the church, it became obvious that the only way Luke could have known what he reported was what he seen with his own eyes or had clearly validated information provided by others.

Mike Lewis kindly referred me to "The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple" by Richard Bauckham, who documents how the attempts to undermine John's Gospel have essentially come to naught among credible biblical scholars. **There are multiple other sources that affirm the above realities. Plenty of scope for further research.**

The question of the relationship between REVELATION and JOHN'S Gospel and when they were written is a minefield of alternative views.

- a. Was Revelation written before or after the Fall of Jerusalem?
- b. Were they both by the same author?
- c. Was the author John son of Zebedee one of the original Apostles, or was John the Beloved another John who was also a disciple?
- d. Was Revelation written before the Gospel of John?**

Last week Steve P took us through Jesus' predictions of the End Times in response to questions from the Disciples after his comments on the destruction of the Temple. It's not even discussed in the Gospel of John. Any suggestions as to why?

BAUCKHAM gives a persuasive argument in favour of the Ephesus Asiatic tradition that the author of Revelation and John was not John Son of Zebedee but another John who had been a disciple of Jesus and resident of Jerusalem and a **priest in the temple**.

The following are special characteristics of the book that must be accounted for.

- Ephesus is the only church known have asserted that the gospel was written there.
- The letter has distinct evidence of being written by a well-educated individual.
- The 12 who travelled with him were largely uneducated Galilean's. They were always visitors to Jerusalem and the temple.
- The letter displays a profound knowledge of the bible, the temple, and Jerusalem. A level of accuracy not reflected in the synoptics.
- If John Son of Zebedee had written it, it would most likely be more like the Synoptics.
- If the book was written by a disciple who lived in Jerusalem, it would explain why he was familiar with the local followers like Nicodemus and has such an intimate knowledge of the events around the raising of Lazarus. There is no reference to his normal disciple being with him when it happened. The reluctantly crossed back with him from over the Jordan but were very afraid and may well have let him go to Lazarus alone.

ONE DAY, we may all know the answers to all the questions.

**One thing is for sure:**

**WHAT WE KNOW WILL NOT SAVE US! WHO WE KNOW WILL!**

**That's the message of the Gospel!**