

Lesson 30

JOHN

THE MAN

Like the other three gospels, John's Gospel doesn't name the author. Nevertheless, this is one of five New Testament books of which the apostle John is the author. In addition to the Gospel of John, he wrote the three short epistles that bear his name (1, 2, and 3 John) and the book of _____[a].

Before John was called to follow Jesus, he was a _____[b]. His brother, _____[c], was also called to be one of the twelve apostles of Jesus. Together Jesus' called James and John "sons of _____[d]." That nickname gives us some insight into John's personality—he was zealous, passionate, and ambitious.

John was part of Jesus' " _____[e]" along with Peter and James. In other words, he was one of Jesus' closest and most trusted friends. In fact, he was "the _____[f] whom Jesus _____[g]" (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). As Jesus' best friend he got to witness Jesus' transfiguration and conversation with Moses and Elijah (Matt 17:1-2), he accompanied Jesus into the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of His betrayal (Mark 14:32-33), he got to witness the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (Mark 5:37), he sat right next to Jesus at the Last Supper (13:23), and Jesus chose him from the cross to be the one who took care of His mom (19:25-27).

After the church was born on the Day of Pentecost, John, along with James and Peter, was a " _____[h]" of the church in Jerusalem (Gal 2:9). Ultimately, he was exiled to the island of _____[i] by the Romans where he received the visions that would become the book of Revelation. He was the last surviving apostle. He probably wrote his gospel as an old man between 80AD and 95AD. His gospel was the last of the four gospels written.

THE UNIQUENESS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

Among the gospels, John is unique. The first three—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are known as the _____[j] (from a Greek word which means "to see together") because their content is so similar. The Gospel of John, however, is very different from the other three. While all four contain a mixture of stories and discourses from Jesus' ministry,

John's Gospel, unlike the Synoptics, contains no narrative _____ [k], no end-of-time discourses, no accounts of Jesus casting out _____ [l] or healing lepers, no list of the twelve _____ [m], and no account of the institution of the Lord's _____ [n]. Also, John doesn't record Jesus' birth, His baptism, His transfiguration, His temptation, His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, or His ascension.

But it's not just what John leaves out of his gospel that distinguishes it from the Synoptics. It's also what he includes. More than _____ [o] of the material in John's Gospel isn't found in the Synoptics. Here is a sampling: (1) a description of Jesus' pre-existence and incarnation (1:1-18); (2) Jesus' early ministry in Judea and Samaria (chaps 2-3); (3) Jesus' first miracle (2:1-11); (4) Jesus' conversation with _____ [p] (3:1-21); (5) Jesus' conversation with a _____ [q] woman (4:5-42); (6) Jesus' healing of a lame man at Jerusalem (5:1-15); (7) Jesus' healing of a blind man at Jerusalem (9:1-41); Jesus' "Bread of Life discourse" (6:22-71); (8) Jesus' claim to be living water (7:37-38); (9) Jesus presenting Himself as the Good _____ [r] (10:1-39); (10) Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-46); (11) Jesus washing His disciples' feet (13:1-15); (12) the "Upper Room discourse" (chaps 13-16); (13) Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer" (chap 17); (14) the miraculous catch of fish (21:1-6); (14) and Jesus' recommissioning of Peter and prediction of his martyrdom (21:15-19).

As many have pointed out, we have to keep two things in mind when we talk about the differences between John and the Synoptics. First, those differences are not _____ [s]. Nothing in John contradicts anything in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; and vice versa. Second, the differences must not be _____ [t]. All four gospels picture Jesus as the Son of Man and the Son of God. They all picture Him as Israel's Messiah and Savior who came to save people from their sins by dying a sacrificial death on the cross, and then rising from the dead.

The Gospel of John and the Synoptics were designed by the Holy Spirit to _____ [u] each other. That is, they _____ [v] or explain each other. For example:

- At Jesus' trial (Mark 14:58) and while He was on the cross (Mark 15:29), His enemies accused Him of having claimed that He would destroy the _____ [w]. The Synoptics don't record the basis for that false allegation, but John does (2:19).
- The Synoptics don't explain why the Jews had to bring Jesus before Pilate; but John explains that under Roman law they didn't have the right of _____ [x] punishment (18:31).
- The Synoptics place Peter in the high priest's courtyard (Matt 26:58); but only John explains how he gained access (18:15-16).

- The Synoptics record that immediately after the feeding of the five thousand Jesus sent the crowds away (Matt 14:22; Mark 6:45); but only John records why He did it—it was because they intended to try to make Him _____[y] (John 6:15).
- From John’s Gospel it’s evident that when the Sanhedrin met on Wednesday of the crucifixion week to plot Jesus’ arrest (Mark 14:1-2), they were merely implementing a decision they had made earlier, after the raising of _____[z] (11:47-53).

Not only does John’s information make passages in the Synoptics more understandable, but the opposite is also true. For instance:

- John declares that Jesus is eternally pre-existent (1:1), but the Synoptics (Matthew and Luke) explain how He came to have a human _____[aa] (2:12).
- John simply mentions that John the Baptist had been thrown into _____[bb] (3:24), but the Synoptics explain and describe his imprisonment (Matt 14:3-4).

OTHER DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

In addition to the differences between John and then Synoptics mentioned above, there are some other characteristics of John’s Gospel that distinguish it from the other gospels.

- John’s style of writing is very _____[cc]. It is written in some of the simplest Greek in the New Testament. It uses many common words, many monosyllabic words, and relatively short sentences. Because it’s so “reader-friendly,” Greek students are usually introduced to John in their first experience of reading from the Greek New Testament.
- John puts greater emphasis on the _____[dd] side of Jesus’ ministry. That is, John doesn’t usually portray Jesus as delivering discourses to large crowds. Instead, John relates several one-on-one encounters which reveal that Jesus had a very active _____[ee] ministry. Among these one-on-one encounters are Nicodemus (3:1-21) and the Samaritan woman (4:1-42).
- John reveals Jesus’ identity and mission with _____[ff] “I am” sayings: (1) I am the bread of life (6:35, 48); (2) I am the light of the world (8:12; see 9:5); (3) I am the door of the sheep fold (10:7; see 10:9); (4) I am the good shepherd (10:11; 14); (5) I am the resurrection and the life (11:25); (6) I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6); and (7) I am the true vine (15:1; see 15:5).
- Throughout Jesus’ public ministry, John depicts Jesus’ work as revolving around seven _____[gg] (or “_____ [hh]” as

John prefers to call them) which He performed (five of these miracles are only found in John's Gospel: (1) water to wine (2:1-11); (2) healing the nobleman's son (4:46-54); (3) healing the lame man by the pool of Bethesda (5:1-16); (4) walking on water (6:16-21); (5) feeding the five thousand (6:16-21); (6) healing the man born blind at the Pool of Siloam (9:1-12); (7) and raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44). With the exception of the first two, these signs function as a prelude to a sermon Jesus gives.

- John's Gospel has more to say about the _____ [ii] than any of the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus said He would be the one who would baptize "in the Holy Spirit" (1:33). He also talks about the necessity of being "born of _____ [jj] and Spirit" (3:5). And He also promises that He will give the Spirit to all who believe in Him after He is _____ [kk] (7:37-39). The fullest teaching of Jesus concerning the Spirit's work is found in His "Farewell Discourse" (chaps 14-17). There Jesus refers to the Spirit as a "Helper" (14:16-17) who would teach His apostles all things, bring to their remembrance all that He had taught them (14:26), and guide them into all _____ [ll] (16:13).

JOHN'S PURPOSE

John is the only one of the gospel writers that has a precise statement of his _____ [mm]: "But these things have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (20:21). This indicates that John's primary objective was two-fold: (1) _____ [nn] ("that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"), and (2) _____ [oo] ("and that believing you may have life in His name). In keeping with his evangelistic purpose, John used the verb "to _____ [pp]" nearly one hundred times (more than twice as much as the Synoptics).

This doesn't mean that John was only writing to unbelievers. John probably wrote his gospel to equip _____ [qq] to share the message that Jesus is the Christ to the _____ [rr] living among them. Also, the fact that John's purpose was apologetic and evangelistic doesn't mean that it has no relevance to us today. John's emphasis in chapters 1 through 12 seems to mainly be about encouraging people to _____ [ss] to _____ [tt]. Chapters 13 through 21, on the other hand, seems to mainly be about encouraging people to _____ [uu] the _____ [vv]. So, John's Gospel has two primary thrusts: evangelize and edify. He wants people to _____ [ww] to Christ, and he wants people to _____ [xx] in Christ.

LESSONS FROM JOHN

- Jesus is _____[yy], so He demands our total _____[zz].
- If we love Jesus, we will keep His _____[aaa].
- _____[bbb] discipleship is no discipleship.
- God's _____[ccc] to our prayers doesn't mean that He is _____[ddd].
- We serve a God who is _____[eee] with our _____[fff].
- No matter how bad it gets, keep telling the _____[ggg] and keep _____[hhh] Jesus.
- Warning: you can stop _____[iii] and lose your _____[jjj]

KEY PASSAGES FROM JOHN

- John 1:1, 14
- John 3:3-5
- John 3:16
- John 4:13-14
- John 5:24-29
- John 6:66-68
- John 7:37-39
- John 11:25
- John 14:1-6
- John 20:30-31

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY

[a] Revelation	[ss] come
[b] fisherman	[tt] faith
[c] James	[uu] keep
[d] thunder	[vv] faith
[e] inner circle	[ww] come
[f] disciple	[xx] remain
[g] loved	[yy] God
[h] pillar	[zz] allegiance
[i] Patmos	[aaa] commandments
[j] Synoptics	[bbb] Superficial
[k] parables	[ccc] silence
[l] demons	[ddd] indifferent
[m] apostles	[eee] touched
[n] Supper	[fff] pain
[o] 90%	[ggg] truth
[p] Nicodemus	[hhh] following
[q] Samaritan	[iii] believing
[r] Shepherd	[jjj] salvation
[s] contradictions	
[t] exaggerated	
[u] supplement	
[v] reinforce	
[w] temple	
[x] capital	
[y] king	
[z] Lazarus	
[aa] family	
[bb] prison	
[cc] simple	
[dd] personal	
[ee] private	
[ff] seven	
[gg] miracles	
[hh] signs	
[ii] Holy Spirit	
[jj] water	
[kk] glorified	
[ll] truth	
[mm] purpose	
[nn] apologetic	
[oo] evangelistic	
[pp] believe	
[qq] believers	
[rr] unbelievers	