

THE BIG READ (4)

Jesus in John

A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:45-47)

2. The New Testament begins with the four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

These four books tell the story of Jesus’ earthly life.

Whilst they all focus on different aspects of Jesus’ life and ministry, each account has the same basic themes about the identity, mission, and message of Jesus.

Together they paint a beautiful portrait of who Jesus is.

3. John’s Gospel was the last Gospel to be written – some time between 80 and 90AD.

“This Gospel has often been compared to a pool in which a child may wade, and yet an elephant may swim.” (Leon Morris)

4. There are a number of noticeable differences between John’s Gospel and the other three synoptic gospels.

There are differences in content – no mention of Jesus’ baptism and transfiguration but he includes the miracles of water into wine and the raising of Lazarus.

There are differences in chronology – Jesus cleanses the temple near the beginning of John but at the end of the synoptic gospels.

There are differences in location – the majority of John’s Gospel takes place in Jerusalem.

There are differences in style – there are long teaching discourses instead of punchy parables.

There are differences in emphasis – Jesus’ divinity is obvious right from the start (see John 1:1).

B. John the Man

1. A Fisherman.

John was a fisherman and he worked in his father Zebedee’s fishing business on the Sea of Galilee.

“When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.” (Mark 1:19-20)

A hint of John’s fishing background is seen in his account of the feeding of the 5000 – he uses a different word for fish from the other three Gospel writers.

1. The structure of John's Gospel is straightforward.

Chapter 1:1-18 – Prologue.

Chapters 1:19-12:50 – Jesus' public ministry or Jesus displays God's glory to the world.

Chapters 13:1-20:31 – Jesus' private ministry or Jesus displays God's glory to His disciples.

Chapter 21:1-25 – Epilogue.

2. The purpose of John's Gospel is straightforward.

"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:30-31)

John wants his readers to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

John wants his readers to believe because of the evidence of the miraculous signs.

John wants his readers to believe and by doing so have life in Jesus' name.

D. Jesus in John

1. The question John's Gospel answers is not who is Jesus, but who is the Christ, the Son of God.

Matthew shows Jesus to be the son of David, the true Israel, and offspring of Abraham.

Mark shows Jesus to be both the Son of Man and the Suffering Servant.

Luke shows that Jesus is the Saviour of the World.

John shows that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

2. Jesus is the Christ.

John is clear that Jesus is the one who fulfils the Old Testament promise of a coming Messiah.

a) He highlights the interest of the people in Jesus' identity as the Christ.

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

"The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ)." (John 1:41)

"The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he." (John 4:25-26)

"At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ?" (John 7:25-26)

"Others said, "He is the Christ." Still others asked, "How can the Christ come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" Thus the people were divided because of Jesus." (John 7:41-43)

b) He records seven signs (John 2:1-11, 4:46-54, 5:1-15, 6:1-14, 6:15-21, 9:1-41, 11:1-45), which demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ.

Moses' signs showed him to be God's deliverer, so do the signs of Jesus.

"Then the LORD said, "If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second. But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground." (Exodus 4:8-9)

Moses performed the signs and people believed in him, so did Jesus.

"Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, and they believed." (Exodus 4:29-31)

"This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him." (John 2:11)

Moses performed the signs and people refused to believe, as did Jesus.

"But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said." (Exodus 8:15)

"Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided." (John 9:16)

Jesus' signs were signs of hope rather than judgment.

c) He emphasises Jesus' participation in the Jewish festivals in Jerusalem

All the feasts celebrate aspects of the rescue of the Israelites from Egypt.

"But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near." (John 7:2)

"It was just before the Passover Feast." (John 13:1)

3. Jesus is the Son of God.

John is clear that Jesus is the Son of God, not in the sense that He is created by the Father, but that He is God Himself.

a) He highlights the interest of the people in Jesus' identity as the Son of God.

"I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." (John 1:34)

"Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." (John 1:49)

b) John records seven 'I AM' sayings of Jesus (John 6:35, 8:12, 10:7, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1).

"This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:14)

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds." (John 8:58-59)

c) Jesus claims to be equal to God.

"I and the Father are one." (John 10:30)

"Then Jesus cried out, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me." (John 12:44-45)

"Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." (John 14:9-10)

d) Jesus is rejected by the Jews as their Messiah because He claimed to be God.

"He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him." (John 1:11)

"We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God." (John 10:33)

e) Jesus is worshipped as God.

"Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)

4. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God will have eternal life.

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12)

"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:14-17)

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." (John 3:36)

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." (John 17:3)

"To believe is to... see Jesus for who he says he is, and rely on him." (Mark Dever)

To believe is to love and obey Jesus.

"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." (John 14:21)

E. Conclusion

1. John knew that only two of the Israelites who witnessed the signs in Egypt actually entered the Promised Land.

"Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun." (Numbers 14:30)

2. John wants to make sure his readers enter the Promised Land of heaven so he writes his book full of signs to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that they [we] believe and keep on believing in Him to the very end.

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31)

3. Do you believe?