

THE BIG READ (4)

John

A. Introduction

1. The New Testament begins with four books which tell the story of Jesus' earthly life and together paint a beautiful portrait of who Jesus is.

Matthew presents Jesus as the One God had promised who fulfils the roles of Prophet, Priest and King.

Mark presents Jesus as the Christ who saves and who suffers.

Luke present Jesus as the Saviour who has come and who is for the world.

The final of these four books is John's Gospel which was written by the apostle John.

"This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true." (John 21:24)

This was the last of the Gospels to be written, some time between 80 and 90AD.

2. John's Gospel is unique in that it is the only Gospel that was written after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in AD70.

After the destruction of the Temple, a question on the minds of every Jew, was how they could draw near and meet with God.

John wrote His Gospel to give them the good news that they no longer needed the Temple to meet with God because Jesus is everything that the Temple was and made possible.

He wants His readers to believe that the Christ, the Son of God is Jesus – that He is God and the way to God.

"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)

3. John presents the story of Jesus' life in two main sections along with a Prologue and Epilogue.

Chapter 1:1-18: Prologue.

Chapters 1:19-12:50: Jesus' signs prove that He is God.

Chapters 13:1-20:31: Jesus' passion prove that He is the way to God.

Chapter 21:1-25: Epilogue.

B. Things to look for

1. All the things that happen in 7's.

7 times we are told who Jesus is at the start of the book (John 1:19-51).

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

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

"Turning round, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" (John 1:38)

"The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus." (John 1:41-42)

"Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (John 1:45)

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

"He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (John 1:51)

7 times Jesus tells us who He is.

"Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35)

"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

"Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep." (John 10:7)

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (John 10:11)

"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." (John 11:25)

"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." (John 15:1-2)

7 times Jesus shows us who He is.

Water into Wine (John 2:1-11)

Healing a sick boy (John 4:43-54).

Healing a paralysed man (John 5:1-15).

Feeding the 5,000 (John 6:1-15).

Walking on water (John 6:16-21)

Healing a blind man (John 9:1-12).

Raising Lazarus (John 11:1-44).

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

The number 7 speaks of completeness, so we can say that John gives enough evidence in His Gospel for us to believe this to be true.

2. All the references to the Temple.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling [tabernacled] among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

"When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. To those who

sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." (John 2:13-17)

"Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he has said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken." (John 2:19-22)

"Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks." (John 4:21-23)

"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to Father except through me." (John 14:6)

John wants his readers to believe that because Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God – that He is God and the way to God – they no longer need to go to the Temple to draw near to God, instead they draw near to God by drawing near to Jesus.

C. Who is Jesus?

1. 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.

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

"Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it." (John 1:3-5)

"No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." (John 1:18)

"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 – see Exodus 3:14)

"Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" "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 10:31-33)

"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)

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

2. Jesus is the Christ.

John is clear that Jesus is the only way to God because only He can bring salvation.

"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)

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

"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. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (John 3:16-18)

"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)

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live." (John 5:24-25)

"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:38-40)

"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to Father except through me." (John 14:6)

D. How then shall we live?

1. We are to believe in Jesus.

That Jesus is God and the way to God.

"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)

"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." (John 14:21)

"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching." (John 14:23)

2. We are to keep on believing in Jesus.

"From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him." "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:66)