

THE BIG READ – JOHN

He is the Messiah

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

He highlights the interest of the people in Jesus' identity as the Christ (1:29, 41; 4:25-26; 7:25-26, 41-43).

The seven signs John records Jesus doing not only point to His identity as the Son of God, but also as the Messiah. Moses' signs showed him to be God's deliverer, and so do the signs of Jesus.

He also emphasises Jesus' participation in the Jewish festivals in Jerusalem which celebrate aspects of the rescue of the Israelites from Egypt and pointed to the greater rescue they were waiting for (7:2; 13:1).

Jesus is the only way to God because only He can make it possible for people to draw near to God (1:12, 29; 3:16, 36; 5:24-25; 6:38-40; 14:6).

How then shall we live?

As we recognise that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, how should we respond?

Believe in Jesus

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

Keep on believing in Jesus

“From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him. So Jesus said to the Twelve, “You don't want to go away too, do you?” Simon Peter answered, “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:66-69)

Introduction

The New Testament begins with four books that 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 presents 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 was the last of the Gospels to be written, some time between 80 and 90AD.

There are a number of noticeable differences between John's Gospel and the other three synoptic Gospels.

Differences in content: no mention of Jesus' baptism and transfiguration, but he includes the miracles of turning water into wine and the raising of Lazarus.

Differences in chronology: Jesus cleanses the temple near the beginning of John, but at the end of the synoptic Gospels.

Differences in location: the majority of John's Gospel takes place in Jerusalem.

Differences in style: there are long teaching discourses instead of punchy parables.

Differences in emphasis: Jesus' divinity is obvious right from the start.

The author of John's Gospel

He was a fisherman. John was a fisherman and he worked in his father Zebedee's fishing business on the Sea of Galilee (see Mark 1:19-20).

He was an eyewitness. As one of Jesus' disciples, he was present for the events he wrote about (see Mark 9:2; 1 John 1:1-3). He was familiar with the layout of Jerusalem (see John 5:2; 19:13).

He was a close friend of Jesus. He was the unnamed disciple whom Jesus loved (see John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20).

He was a loving pastor. He wanted his readers to believe in Jesus and to continue believing in Jesus (see John 20:31).

The story of John's Gospel

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

Chapter 1:1-18: Prologue

John sets the scene for the rest of the book, introducing key themes such as Jesus' identity as God, the promise of life to those who believe in Him, and the rejection He will face.

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

John records 7 signs (or miracles) Jesus did which point to His identity as God. The majority of the 'I am' statements, when Jesus tells us who He is are found in this section.

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

John gives His account of the last week of Jesus' life in Jerusalem leading to His death and then resurrection which opens up the way to God.

Chapter 21:1-25: Epilogue

John concludes His book by listing some of Jesus' resurrection appearances.

The purpose of John's Gospel

John's Gospel is unique in that it is the only Gospel written after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in AD70. After the destruction of the Temple, a question on the mind 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 (see John 2:13-22; 4:21-23; 14:6).

He wants His readers to believe that the Messiah, the Son of God is Jesus. Jesus is God and the way to God (see John 20:30-31). They draw near to God by drawing near to Jesus.

Jesus in John

He 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 (1:1, 3-5, 18; 8:58-59; 10:31-33; 14:9-10; 20:28).

He highlights the interest of the people in Jesus' identity as the Son of God (1:34, 49).

In the seven 'I am' sayings, John records Jesus telling us who He is (6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1-2). In addition, there are the other claims Jesus makes to being equal to God (10:30; 12:44-45; 14:9-10).

John tells us that Jesus is rejected by the Jews as their Messiah because He claimed to be God (1:11; 10:33) but is worshipped as God by His followers (20:28).

Jesus is God. He is who the people went to the Temple to meet with.