

**The
Gospel
of
John**

**Fourth
Baptist
Church
ABF**

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The Gospel of John

Lesson 1

I. Authorship

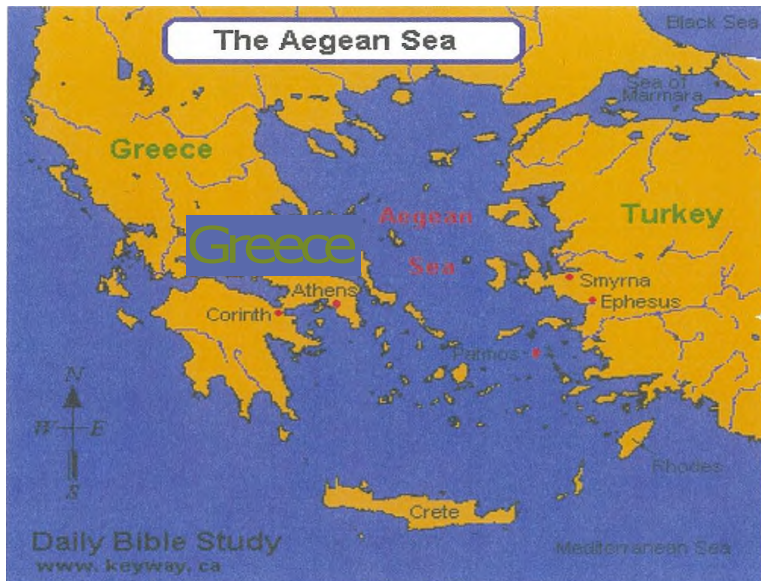
The author is generally accepted to be John the apostle, a fisherman, the younger brother of James & son of Zebedee whom Jesus named, along with his brother, 'sons of thunder.' His mother's name was Salome, maybe sister to Mary, Jesus' mother. He is termed the beloved disciple & is portrayed as having the most intimate relationship of all Jesus' disciples (he is the one reclining on Jesus' breast at the last supper). He is also the author of 1,2,3 John & the book of Revelation. Tradition tells us that he is the only apostle who died a natural death (in Ephesus) & that he did experience but was unharmed by being boiled in oil by the Romans. He was also exiled to the island of Patmos where he wrote Revelation. He later returned to Ephesus from exile & died there.

II. Date

The date, most likely, is around 85-90AD.

III. Place of Writing

He apparently had a long-term ministry in the city of Ephesus later in the first century & apparently wrote this Gospel from that locale. See the attached map where you can see the location of both Ephesus & Patmos.



IV. The Purpose for Writing

"While some have held that the purpose of the gospel was to combat Docetism or to oppose those who retained their loyalty to John the Baptist, it is clear from the Evangelist's own words that his purpose in writing was that his readers would 'believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, & that by believing (they might) have life in his name' (20:31). That other purposes may have been served is not denied, but to inform the author against his own testimony as to why he wrote what he did displays an unusual degree of arrogance. Robert H. Mounce, 'John,' in the Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition, p.361"

John 20:30,31

(20:30) Therefore many other signs - John is the only Gospel writer who uses the word 'sign' which means - 'to signify, indicate, make known' - Morris, & here it refers to the miracles of Jesus. A sign is that which points to something else, in John's case God. John holds accountable those who saw the signs yet refused to believe, see John 12:37. The reason for the signs is found in his purpose for writing which is thoroughly evangelistic, 'so that you may believe.' **Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples,** - A very strong case can be made that the signs John is referring to are the three illustrations of His resurrection appearances in this very chapter: to Mary Magdalene & then Mary to the Disciples (Jn.20:10-18); to the Disciples with Thomas Absent (Jr 1.20:19-25) & to the Disciples with Thomas Present (J/1.20:26-29).

"These 'many other signs. . . in the presence of his disciples' appear to refer to the resurrection manifestations rather than to the signs (or miracles) performed in His lifetime. For all other signs recorded in John's Gospel (except that in 6:19) were done in the presence of other people as well, so 'in the presence of His disciples' suggests those signs done in the privacy of His disciples only, namely His post-resurrection signs. The 'many things which Jesus did' in 21:25 refer to His acts throughout His lifetime on earth. J. Heading, 'John,' in What the Bible Teaches, p.334"

Which are not written in this book; - John's purpose in writing can be seen once gain in the selectivity of the signs he chose. He chose only those that pointed to Christ's resurrection which is the essence of the Gospel today. In other words one cannot be saved unless one believes that Christ has been raised from the dead (Acts; 1Cor.15:12-17). For this reason we publish the Gospel of John & hand it out as an evangelistic tool because that was John's purpose. 'Those that were recorded advance the goal of bringing people to faith in Christ in order that they might receive eternal life (v.31). Mounce, p.652'

(20:31) but these have been written - Morris states that the tense of the verb used here indicates that what has been written also stands written in the sense of a permanent witness or testimony to the truth. This also implies that no such sign of this nature is being performed today once the book was written. Faith now comes by hearing & hearing by the Word of God (Rom.10:17). **SO that** - Here is the purpose of the writing of John's Gospel. **you may believe** - Here is the one & only requirement for salvation, to believe. The Greek word is best expressed by the concept of a trust from the heart, 'with the heart man believes resulting in righteousness (a right standing with God).' The Bible asks & answers this very question in Acts 16:25-34,

"But about midnight Paul & Silas were praying & singing hymns of praise to God, & the prisoners were listening to them; & suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; & immediately all the doors were opened & everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer awoke & saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword & was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!' And he called for lights & rushed in, & trembling with fear he fell down before Paul & Silas, & after he brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'

They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, & you will be saved, you & your household. ' And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. **And he took them that very hour of the night & washed their wounds, & immediately was baptized, he & all his household. And he brought them into his house & set food before them, & rejoiced greatly, having believed In God with his whole household.**

Two things are to be believed: **that Jesus is the Christ**, - That means that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One of Israel. This immediately introduces Him as both God & man (Is.7:14; 9:6,7) & ties what John says to the content of the Gospel as expressed by the apostle Paul in **1Cor.15:1-8**.

"Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, & that He was buried, & that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, & that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; & last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also."

the Son of God; - This phrase expressly links him to a relationship with God that establishes Him as deity, the Jews understood Him to be claiming deity.

"'I & the Father are one.' The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, 'I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?' The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; & because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.' Jesus answered them, 'Has it not been written in your Law, I said, you are gods? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (& the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified & sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God?' If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know & understand that the Father is in Me, & I in the Father.' Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, & He eluded their grasp. John 10:31-39"

In this same chapter the apostle Thomas acknowledges Him as, 'My Lord & My God' & Jesus did not rebuke him (see Ryrie footnote) nor did He refuse worship when His deity was acknowledged, see Matt.14:28-33 & John 5:10-18. The Gospel of John presents Christ as deity, whereas the Gospel of Matthew sees Him as the King of the Millennial Kingdom, Mark as Servant & Luke the Son of Man or Christ in His humanity (see Rev.4:7 where each living creature before the throne reflects these very same emphases of Christ in the Gospels).

"When our Lord called Himself 'Son of Man,' He was stressing His humanity. When He called Himself 'Son of God,' He was emphasizing His deity. He wasn't saying that He was less than God or a product or prodigy of God. He was claiming to be God Himself!

It was a message His Jewish audience couldn't miss. The Gospel of John makes this clear: 'Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God' (John 5:18). Robert J. Morgan, 'He Shall Be Called: 150 Names of Jesus & What They mean To You,' p.76"

& that believing you may have life in His name - The result of trusting in His name, which stands for His person & work, is eternal life, as it is written: 'the gift of God is eternal life,' & again 'He who believes in the Son has eternal life.'

"Many believe that when John wrote these two verses he had reference to all the four Gospels, or to the whole Gospel through John. And that may be true. It is true that in these four Gospels there is not a record of all that Jesus did. But may I suggest that John here is specifically referring to this one chapter? The Lord had appeared to Mary, to the apostles, to Thomas, & there are many other signs which He did to prove the certainty of His resurrection. But, says John, 'I have chosen just these three instances (of Mary Magdalene, of the apostles, & of Thomas) to prove to you that the resurrection of our Lord is God's testimony to the world (& to you personally) that this Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God. By believing in Him, you will have everlasting life. I am writing these things that you might believe, & in believing you might have life in His name.'

This Gospel starts by declaring that 'in Him was life' (1:4). And all the way through we have the revelation that Christ is life. Now the book closes with the evidence of the resurrection. 'I have picked these things out for you to see that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. By believing you can have life through His name.' John G. Mitchell, 'An Everlasting Love' A Devotional Study of the gospel of John,' p.400"

A. What is the Gospel?

- A. It's 'Good news,' the context tells you what good news is in view.
- B. In the church age the good news is the Gospel of God's grace.
- C. It involves a **Person: Christ** died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1Cor.15:1-3). The identification of Him as **the Christ** automatically states that He is both deity & man for the Messiah was predicted to be the God-man (Is.7:14; 9:6-7; Matt.1:23).
- D. It **involves** His work: The death, burial, resurrection & eyewitness accounts of the God-man (1Cor.15:1-8). This is very narrow information, it does not involve everything Christ did or said but is confined to the above content.
- E. If the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (& it is, nom.1:16) then we need to know exactly what that Gospel is, always being cautious not to embellish it or take away from it, it is just right as it is (just like Goldilocks' porridge).

B. What Must I Do to be Saved?

A. The central passage is **Eph.2:8,9** which is irrefutable in the Greek text. Salvation is by grace alone through the instrument of faith alone in the Person & work of Christ (the Gospel) alone.

B. It is by grace but is also a free gift (Rom.3:24; Eph.2:8,9). If one's view of salvation violates the gracious character of salvation or adds human merit or effort as to intrude in on its nature as a gift then it is fundamentally flawed & should be condemned as a false Gospel (Gal.1:6-10).

C. The whole Bible teaches that salvation is by grace through faith, it is only the content of what one must believe that changes through the centuries depending upon God's revelation for that dispensation (see Matt.16:13-16 as an example).

D. See also the consistency of this teaching regardless of the where in the Bible it is found: Genesis 15:1-6; **John** 20:30,31; **Acts** 16:31; **Romans** 1:16; 3:24; 4:1-25; 10:9-17; **Ephesians** 2:8-10 & **Revelation** 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:26; 3:5; 3:12; 3:21 with **1 John** 5:4,5.

E. Key **words**: Believe in, faith, trust in, rely upon, depend upon, rest in, to entrust to, to commit one's eternal destiny to, to have confident expectation toward God concerning the Person & work of His Son. In essence it is a 'transfer of trust' from whoever or whatever one has been trusting in to the Person & work of Christ in the Gospel alone.

F. There are **three stages to saving faith**:

Stage 1) Having the right facts i.e. the correct Gospel content (Notitia).

Stage 2) Acknowledging that the facts about the Gospel are true. Most Americans, particularly Roman Catholics, are stuck right here & are still unsaved (**Aaron**), Assensus.

Stage 3) A Trust in the Person & work of Christ alone as ascribed above. It is an event & not a process although there is a process leading up to it called 'initial sanctification' (1Pet.1:1,2; 2Thess.2:13,14). Only when the transfer of trust stage is reached does salvation occur (**Fiducia**).

G. The Relationship of Faith, Repentance & Conversion

1) **Faith** is the most comprehensive, umbrella term & that is why it is used primarily in the epistles (Eph.2:8,9) & it is child-like in it's nature.

2) **Repentance** is the word that means a change of mind (Heb.12:15-17), it is not sorrow for sin, it is not a turning from sins, **it is that change of mind as we are believing** on Christ to the saving of our souls. We change our minds about sin, the Savior & whatever has been keeping us from trusting in the Person & work of Christ alone. Note the presence of the Gospel of John, can you lead a person to Christ from John alone (John 20:30,31)? How you answer that question reveals a lot about your understanding of saving faith. Note that John does not use the word repentance even once yet his stated purpose is *that believing you may have life in His name.* Therefore we must conclude that repentance (a change of mind) & believing or faith are interchangeable terms. There is only one way of salvation & that is by grace alone, through faith alone (which involves a fundamental change of mind), in the Person & work of Christ alone.

3) **Conversion** is the word that means to turn. Conversion is a **turning to God in faith** (Acts 15:19; 1Thess.1:9)

All three terms are referring to the one 'act' of faith in Christ, so simple a child can do it.

'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ & you will be saved!'

APPLICATION:

Say that you are having lunch with your unsaved friend & they ask you what is it that they must do or believe in order to be saved? May I recommend the following approach:

1. Explain who Christ is & that He claimed for Himself complete humanity while at the same time acknowledging that He is also claimed to be the second Person of the Tri-unity, the God-man. Our culture has become ignorant of Biblical facts & do not know who Christ really is nor the claims that He made for Himself.
2. Explain why He came: 'to save his people from their sins' & that includes you. He accomplished this by dying for your sins on the cross, His real death being demonstrated by His burial & by rising from the dead demonstrating that all your sins are gone, His real resurrection being confirmed by the eye-witness accounts.
3. Explain how to personally receive the benefit. It is a child-like trust that He died & rose again for you as if you were the only person on the earth needing salvation. Everybody is already trusting their eternal destiny to someone or something, salvation is the transfer of that trust to Christ alone & what He has done for us.
4. Would you like to trust in Him now, should we talk to Him in prayer & thank Him for saving you?