

John

INTRODUCTION: The book of John was written by the Apostle John, who authored five books of the Bible--the Gospel of John, I John, II John, III John and Revelation. He was one of the three in the inner circle of our Lord. Where along with Peter and James, were present at the transfiguration. He was called "the disciple that Jesus loved." Though some skeptics have doubted his authorship of the book of John, he, no doubt, is the author.

THEME: "Jesus Is the Son of God." (Teacher, review with the class the purposes of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John--Matthew showing Him as King, Mark showing Him as a servant, Luke showing Him as a man, and John showing Him as God. Explain once again that each believed the other three. In other words, Matthew believed that He was more than the King, that He was also servant, man and God. Mark believed He was more than a servant, that He was also King, man and God. Luke believed He was more than a man, that He was also a servant, King and God. John believed that He was more than God, that He was also King, servant and man.)

(Teacher, review the genealogies. Matthew, in an effort to prove that He is the King of the Jews, goes back to Abraham, the father of the Jews. Mark, in an effort to prove that He is a servant, has no genealogy at all, for who cares about the genealogy of a servant? Luke, in an effort to prove that He is man, goes back to Adam, the first man. John, in an effort to prove that Jesus is God, goes back to the beginning. See John 1:1. It is important that the class understand the complete picture of the four Gospels. All four agree with each other, but Matthew, who was a public servant, shows mainly that Jesus is the King. Mark, who was a servant, shows Jesus as a servant. Luke, who was a physician, is more interested in His physical nature and shows Him as a man. John, who was the closest to Jesus, shows Him as God. Each man was peculiarly fitted for the writing of his own particular book.)

1. THE SIMPLICITY OF DEPTH.

There is no doubt about it--the deepest of the four books is the Gospel of John, and yet, it is so interesting how simple the words are. For example, take the first four verses of the Gospel of John and read them carefully. Notice that this, the most theological book of the four Gospels, in the first four verses has 51 one-syllable words, one two-syllable word, and two three-syllable words. In other words, of the first 54 words in this book, 51 have only one syllable. Pick up any book in the world and read the first 54 words, and nothing can compare with the simplicity of this, the deepest of them all.

2. THE KEY VERSE IS JOHN 20:31.

In this verse we find the purpose of the writing of the Gospel--"that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." However, he does not stop there. Notice, . . . and that believing ye might have life through his name. This should be the purpose of every church, of every Christian, of every preacher, of every school, of every endeavor for the Lord, that we might prove and teach that Jesus is the Son of God and that life is through believing in His name. (Teacher, here is a good place to stress the plan of salvation. Read John 3:14-16. Tell the story of the serpents in the wilderness which were biting the people unto death. Explain that God told Moses to lift up a pole on which he was to put a brazen serpent and tell the people that if they would look to that serpent, they would live. Then remind the class that Jesus likened Calvary to this pole, for if we look to Jesus and believe on Him as our Substitute and Saviour, we can be saved. This is the purpose of the entire Gospel of John. (Stress the plan of salvation here.)

3. THE SUMMARY VERSE OF THE BOOK IS JOHN 1:14.

Some believe this is the greatest verse in all the Bible, for here we have the entire story of the incarnation. Notice in verse 14 the word, "Word." This refers to Jesus, of course, as it is capitalized. The words, "was made," mean "became." In other words, God "became" flesh. He was not flesh; He "became" flesh.

Now notice the word "dwelt." This word means "tabernacled." In other words, God took upon Himself a body. It was like a tent or a tabernacle. It was a temporary dwelling place. Here He "tabernacled" or "tented" among us for 33 years.

Then notice the words, "the only begotten of the Father." Here is the virgin birth.

Now notice the words, "full of grace and truth." There is His perfect, sinless life. Each of us has some grace and some truth, but no one is full of grace and truth. Our Lord was God Incarnate, the Perfect Son of God, full of grace and truth.

This verse more adequately summarizes the entire Gospel of John than any other.. Some have described it as a little, miniature Gospel of John in one verse.

4. THE KEY WORDS ARE "BELIEVE" AND "LIFE."

The word "believe" in the Greek means "to roll upon," "to cast oneself upon," "to rely upon." It means "to trust completely," like one sits on a chair, gets into an airplane, or gets into a car. He trusts it completely; he commits his life to it. For one to believe with his head that Jesus is the Christ is not what the word "believe" means. It means to believe to the extent that one completely trusts himself to the keeping of another. It is like depositing money in a bank or trusting a pilot to take us to a destination. It does not imply that we have to work to get to Heaven; it implies that we must trust completely to get to Heaven.

CONCLUSION: There are several things that John had in mind when he wrote this Gospel. One was to show that Jesus is the Son of God. Another was to show how a person could be saved. (Teacher, if John had this in mind, then we must be very careful to explain the deity of Christ and the way of salvation to our class members, or we have failed to relay John's message properly to the people.)