

# John's Gospel @ CF!

## Intro and John 1:1-2

### Sermon Notes – BK

As promised, we are **starting a NEW BOOK** today... this one will take a while...

It is **the Gospel of John!**

Like any book we study, we need to **take some time to look at the background and such...**

Maybe **this one especially**

#### Written by?...

**John the Apostle... is the author of this Gospel**

**Surprised? Not likely... BUT**

- **The challenge is he never self-identifies in this Gospel**
- ***“The one who Jesus loves”* – we will get more into this later**
- **Toward the end of the book, we have very clear clues the author is John and it has been traditionally held as John pretty much from the beginning.**

**Both “internal evidence” – in the Gospel itself**

**AND External evidence – from the earliest recorded writings including Polycarp (a disciple of John) point to John as being the author.**

**So... John is the author...**

#### **Who is John?**

- Son of Zebedee (Matt. 4:21)
- Brother of James (Matt. 10:2)
- Fisherman by trade with brother James till Jesus called them (Matt. 4:21)
- His mother was Salome. She was of those who went to Jesus' tomb early... the morning they learned Jesus had been raised. (Mk. 16:1)
- James and John were both nicknamed, “sons of thunder” by Jesus (Mk. 3:17)
- Part of the “inner three” of Jesus.

**The first three Gospels are often referred to as the *“Synoptic Gospels,”* meaning *“see-together”* are the first part of the story of Jesus.**

- **They were written before John**

The Gospels were **each written for all** of course, **but each had a specific audience in mind...**

- **Matthew – to the **Jews** – pointing to the authenticity of Jesus**
- **Mark – to the **Romans** – concise, to the point ministry of Jesus**
- **Luke – to the **Greek** – Jesus' humanness**

- **John** wrote his account from a bit of a different angle, it seems that this Gospel was not for any one audience in particular – **but for all people... it has a strong evangelistic thrust to Jews who have been dispersed after the temple was destroyed, giving them hope in who Jesus really was/is for all mankind**

The date of John writing ranges all over, but likely from 70AD - 90AD, most likely in the middle of that.

While we talk about individual “*Gospels*” there really is only ONE Gospel...

THIS is why it may be better to call the first four books, “The Gospel” OR... (as many theologians do) – the “*Four-Fold Gospel...*”

- They **ALL** tell of the story of Jesus
- They were all **addressing the story of Jesus for the audience they were writing to**
- They **do not contradict** one another, they **compliment**

Each of the first three Gospel accounts cover things John did not – - - BIG things...

What things are not in John’s Gospel?

- Jesus’ **birth**.
- Jesus’ **baptism**.
- Jesus’ **temptation** in the wilderness.
- Confrontations with **demons**.
- Jesus teaching in **parables**.
- The **Last Supper**.
- The **agony in Gethsemane**.
- The **Ascension**.

These were not there...

- **Not** because **John didn’t think them to be important**
- John **had a different kind** of narrative in mind...

John’s part of the Gospel is a great compliment to the other three that were in circulation in that day.

One commentator adds,

*“The first three Gospels center on Jesus’ ministry in Galilee. John centers his Gospel on what Jesus said and did in Jerusalem.”* (Guzik)

SO... why did John write this Gospel account?

It is interesting that it is not until the end of John’s Gospel that he tells you why he wrote it...

**John 20:31**

**“...these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name**

We will see, as we go through this Gospel that John spends a lot of time on purposeful inter-connected details while writing this Gospel –

- Many of the elements you see in chapter one are found in other places through this Gospel.
- John tells us of these certain **situations** that **make sense on their own**, but **have a whole lot going on under the surface.**
  - o These **portraits** are to build our faith... to get to the end of the story... **believing**
  - o **There is a strong evangelistic push in this.**

This last entry of the 4-fold Gospel is **by no means** a “**completing**” of the account of Jesus and His 3-year-long ministry here on earth.

**In fact, John tells us in the very last verse...**

**John 21:25**

***“Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written.”***

**Powerful, isn't it?**

**There are many amazing things about John's Gospel that make it unique as well... we will cover them as we go through this.**

**It has been said** about the Gospel of John, that it is, ***“Safe for a toddler to wade in, and deep enough for an elephant to swim...”***

**I like that!**

As I said earlier, John gives you **different glimpses into the heart of Jesus** as He encounters different situations.

Tim Mackie (Bible Project guy) – **calls them carefully crafted portraits of Jesus.**

- **He likens these “portraits” like a painting by Rembrandt – where there is the obvious picture, then you see all the layers as you look longer and study it more...**

John's goal is ***not as much to teach you ABOUT Jesus*** (things that He did) – that was already covered in the other accounts.

John's goal seems to be more to **getting to the heart of Jesus** and **who He is as Son of God.**

**The stories that John tells in his Gospel are intentionally symbolic.**

- **There is a literal meaning**
- **There is more** for those who choose to dig deeper

We see this very thing with the very first two verses... the **ONLY** verses we are going to cover this morning.

We will see that the rest of chapter 1 gives us a wonderful intro (in what *Mackie calls, "hint form"*) to just about everything else John writes in the next 20 chapters.

The more I am digging into this Gospel, the more I find.

I am looking forward to this more than ever!

Let's unpack the first couple of verses now, shall we?

**John 1:1-2**

***<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.***

John starts his Gospel...

- *Before* the genealogies of Matthew
- *Before* the birth story of Jesus

John goes back to the time-before-time.

The "*Beginning*"

This word does not imply there was a "start" to Jesus, or "the Word."

John goes back to Genesis 1... and what existed *before* creation...

John, calling Jesus, "the Word" says some powerful things about Him.

- The Word (Jesus) was God
- The Word (as a distinct personage, Jesus) was *with* God

The word, "Word" – *logos* in the Greek –

- Can mean a **spoken word**
- It includes and **emphasis of personality** in communication

**Psalm 33:6 says**

***"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth"***

One commentator put it -

**To the Hebrew "the word of God" was the self-assertion of the divine personality; to the Greek the formula denoted the rational mind that ruled the universe. John is asserting that the "Word" is the source of all that is visible and antedates the totality of the material world.**

Verse one is a powerful verse that reflects the Divine nature of Jesus.

THIS is *where other world religions get it wrong* about Jesus.

- Some say Jesus was *a good teacher*
- Some say Jesus was *a powerful prophet*
- Some say that *when Jesus was on earth, He only appeared to be a man, but was not fully human*

**This text tells us some DEFINITIVE things about Jesus –**

- He is and always has been WITH God
- He is and always has been... GOD.

There are some, like the *Jehovah Witnesses*, that have a Bible that add “a” in it to read, “*The Word was with God, and the Word was a god...*”

They deny the Trinity, so they have to re-write some things to make it fit their theology.

The **PROBLEM** with that is... IT IS **NOT accurate!**

**THAT IS NOT GOOD NEWS!**

The GOOD NEWS is that Jesus IS God and was ABLE to be what humanity needed so desperately...

Jesus is our QUALIFIED SAVIOR!!

Jesus – the ONLY One who can save us from our sin... “*For God so loved the world...*”

*The Word was with God (a distinct and separate being), and the Word was God...*

This is THE SAME GOD of all creation...

John is setting the stage to help his readers see that the Jesus they have read about and maybe some saw with their own eyes is a whole lot more than the eye can see.

John takes the time to unpack what this looks like in the next 20 chapters or so.

Specifically with all of the “portraits” we see-

- Jesus and John the Baptist
- Jesus and the calling of His disciples
- Jesus and the wedding at Cana, turning water into wine...
- Etc.

**John is masterful in how he writes about all of this.**

**John 1:1-2**

***<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.***

In case you were wondering... ***“...He was in the beginning with God.***

**John repeats this for clarity and for emphasis...**

**AS GOD was there in the beginning...  
Jesus (the Word) was there...**

**NEXT WEEK – we will talk about Jesus’ role in creation and why that is important for us today...**

**READ JOHN LOTS THIS WEEK!!**

**Read at least 9 chapters a day** and you will have **read the Gospel 3 times** by the time we meet next week!

**John brings us back to the beginning... and before the beginning...**

**Who was there? Jesus.**

**Who is there for us today when we call on Him? Jesus.**

- **He is qualified**
- **He is able**
- **He is willing**