

- Last week we summarized our study of what we know as the “Synoptic Gospels” of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Remember that when we say “gospels” it is really a form of verbal shorthand for “Gospel accounts,” so it is more accurate to say that Matthew, Mark and Luke wrote Gospel accounts since there is only one Gospel. Gospel means “good news” and that one Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We call these books “synoptic” which is a word meaning “similar” – and they are in that they are all basically chronological. Because Luke also wrote the book of Acts of the Apostles, those two books together make him the author of more the content of the New Testament (27% of the Greek words) than Paul (23% of the Greek words).
- This week we are going to start a study of the Gospel account that John writes. The author of this Gospel account was the Apostle called John, not John the Baptist. His account of the Gospel is written non-chronologically and he says he writes with a focus on belief in Christ that “you may have life in His name.” (John 20:30-31) He would also write three more letters bearing his name (we call them I, II, and III John). The same apostle when He was aging and exiled on an island called Patmos would later write a book of prophesy we call Revelation, the last book in our Bible, which is short for The Revelation of John. These two books together make John the third leading author of New Testament material, accounting for 20% of the Greek words.
- John starts off the book by stating the Jesus (whom he calls the “Word”) was always with God and was God and was around during the creation of the world. He notes that Christ would later become a man and dwell among us. He calls Jesus the “light” of men, a metaphor John returns to. He also noted that there would be a prophet named John (referring to the person we know as John the Baptist, not himself) that would prepare the way for Christ. (John 1:1-17)
- John says that no one has ever seen God. (John 1:18) Some people will say this contradicts the fact that Moses talked with God face to face. (Exodus 33:11) Remember, though, when God was in His true glory, Moses could not see him or he would die (Exodus 33:19-23). John is obviously talking about seeing God in all His glory.
- John the Baptist is teaching and drawing crowds so the religious leader sent representatives to ask him if he was the Christ or the prophet Elijah. John said he was neither but was the “voice of one crying in the wilderness” that the prophet Isaiah had predicted. He said his baptism was only with water there was someone coming after him whose shoes he was not worthy to unlatch. (John 1:19-28) John was referring to Isaiah 40:3.
- John the Baptist finally sees Christ come to Him and recognizes him immediately. God had told him that when he sees the spirit of God descend like a dove upon a person, that would be the Christ who baptized the Holy Spirit, not just water. John says He say that happening. We know from other Gospel accounts this happened immediately after John baptized Christ. (John 1:29-34)

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- John then records Jesus calling together His first apostles. Among them was a person named Nathaniel who was brought to Jesus by a fellow named Philip who told him to come see the Christ they had found and he was from a town called Nazareth. Nathaniel is skeptical, even asking if anything good could come from Nazareth. He goes anyway and as he is approaching Christ compliments Him and tells him he saw him under a fig tree before Philip even called him. When Nathanael marvels at Christ's uncanny ability to have seen that, Christ tells Him he will see a lot more compelling things that that. (John 1:35-51)
- Jesus first miracle of turning water into wine at a wedding is recorded by John. His mother asks Him to do something since they are running out of wine, He tells her that He is not ready to perform miracles yet but she has faith in Him and He does turn water into wine. It is so good that the host complimented them for not serving the best wine first which most people traditionally did. (John 2:1-12)
- Christ goes into the temple and finds people doing business there, selling animals for sacrifice and such. He turns over their tables, scatters their money, drives them off, telling them not to make his Father's house a house of trade. His disciples remember what David wrote in Psalms 69:9 that zeal for His house will consume Him and insults to Him will fall on me. When asked why He was doing this Christ responds that the temple could be destroyed and he would raise it up again in three days. The Jews don't understand but John explains He was talking about the temple of His body and how it would spend three days in the grave. (John 2:13-22)
- Jesus was feasting with people in Passover and many were professing to believe in Him when they saw they signs. But Jesus did not need people to tell Him they were believing in Him or not, he was looking at the inside. (John 2:23-25) Remember, that people look at the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)
- A learned scholar and teacher named Nicodemus comes to see Christ. Christ tells Him he must be born again of water and the spirit. Nicodemus asks how a man can literally be born again, Christ tells him not to worry about it, that it is a heavenly thing, and that He will be lifted up from the earth the same way Moses lifted up a serpent in the wilderness. (John 3:1-15). Christ was referring to an incident in which Moses was told God to cure a plague of poisonous snake bites (which had by sent by God to punish the people for their sin) by lifting up the image of a snake. (Numbers 21:5-8)
- In a very famous passage (especially verse 16), Jesus explains that He is the way to God and eternal life and those who do not believe in Him will be condemned. (John 3:16-21).
- The Jews tell John the Baptist that Christ is starting to gain followers and he was starting to lose them. John the Baptist says that is the way it is supposed to be. (John 3:22-34).

1. What is the difference between "Gospel" and "Gospel Account"?
2. What does the word "synoptic" mean?
3. Why does John say he wrote his Gospel account?
4. What other books of the Bible did John write?
5. What island was he on when John wrote the last book in our Bible?
6. How long does John say Christ was around?

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7. What two words does John use to describe Christ?
8. Who is John referring to when he talks about a man named John?
9. What does John say this other John will do?
10. How do we reconcile the fact that John says no one has ever seen God and Moses used to speak with God face to face?
11. Who does John the Baptist deny that he is?
12. What prophesy does John say he is fulfilling by telling people to get ready for Christ?
13. The spirit of God descended like what animal on Christ?
14. What is the difference between John's baptism and Christ's?
15. Describe the events surrounding Christ's first encounter with Nathanael.
16. According to John's Gospel account, describe Jesus' first miracle.
17. What does Jesus do when He sees people conducting business in the temple?
18. What prophesy do Jesus' disciples remember during this incident?
19. What did Christ mean when He said He could raise the temple up in three days?
20. Where man looks at the outside of other men, what does God look at?
21. What does Christ tell Nicodemus?
22. Christ says He will be lifted up just like Moses lifted up a serpent. What is He talking about?
23. What does Christ say is the only way to God and eternal life? What are the consequences for rejecting this message?
24. What does John the Baptist say when confronted with the reality that Christ was gaining more followers?

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