

Day 198, John 1

by David Servant

John's Gospel provides a unique perspective on Jesus, highlighting His eternal existence, creative power, and sacrificial love.

Scripture: Malachi 4:5, Matthew 3:14, John 1:1-35, Acts 3:22

Topics: "Divinity Of Christ", "Gospel Of John"

Description

David Servant discusses the Gospel of John, believed to have been written between AD 90-100 by the apostle John, to supplement the accounts found in the other Gospels. John's purpose was to fill in the gaps and provide unique information not found in the other three Gospels. The Gospel emphasizes Jesus as the eternal Word of God, the Creator, and God Himself, warning against teachings that diminish His divinity. John the Baptist, fulfilling prophecies, recognized Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, emphasizing His sacrificial death for all. The narrative also highlights Andrew's spiritual hunger, leading him to introduce his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus, who transformed Simon into Peter, symbolizing a transformation in all believers.

Transcript

The other three Gospels were probably all in circulation by the time that the apostle John wrote his account. Most scholars suggest a date of sometime between AD 90-100. John would have been an elderly man by then, and Peter and Paul would have been in heaven for at least 20 years.

Ninety percent of the information found in John's Gospel can't be found in any of the other three, so it is thought that his purpose was to "fill in the gaps." Church father Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215) stated that John wrote to supplement the accounts found in the other Gospels. John was writing to a readership whom he assumed already had a fair knowledge of the Lord (1:16).

Clearly, "the Word" in 1:1 and 14 refers to Jesus, who certainly was a message, or word, from God to the world. But Jesus was much more than that. He existed eternally with God. He created everything. He was God (1:1-3). Beware of anyone who teaches that Jesus was anything less.

The priests and Levites from Jerusalem who visited John the Baptist wanted to know if he was the Christ, or Elijah or "the Prophet" (1:25). They were looking for one or all of those based on Old Testament promises.

Of course, "the Christ" was foretold throughout the Old Testament, and every Jew was expecting His appearance eventually. "The Prophet" whom they were also expecting was mentioned by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15: "The Lord your God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him." Jesus, of course, was that Prophet (Acts 3:22, 7:37). Concerning their anticipation of "Elijah" coming, God had promised in the last few verses of Malachi that He would send Elijah before the coming of the "great and terrible day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5). John the Baptist actually fulfilled that prophecy in part, although he apparently didn't realize it. All he knew was that he was fulfilling some verses in Isaiah, a voice crying in the wilderness, preparing the way for the ministry of the Lord Jesus (1:23).

Most importantly, John the Baptist knew that Jesus was "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29). Taken at face value, any reasonable person would interpret that phrase to mean that Jesus, God's sacrificial Lamb, made atonement for the sins of the whole world, and not just for a limited few (as Calvinists claim). In the book of Revelation, also written by the apostle John, Jesus is referred to as "the Lamb" 28 times, a continual reminder of His sacrificial death for our sins, foreshadowed by every other sacrificial lamb. His sacrifice for us deserves our sacrifice for Him.

It is interesting that John knew that he was Christ's forerunner, and he personally knew Jesus (who was his relative through their mothers), but he didn't know that Jesus was the Christ until he saw the Spirit descend upon Him at His baptism (1:33). Yet you may recall that when Jesus came to John to be baptized by him, John objected, saying, "'I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" (Matt. 3:14). John's objection was not based on the fact that he knew that Jesus was the Christ, but that he knew how holy Jesus was. Remember, Jesus never sinned. Everyone who knew Him knew He was perfect. On that basis, John the Baptist considered himself unworthy to baptize Jesus. As holy as he was, he knew Jesus was holier.

Before Andrew became a disciple of Jesus, he was a disciple of John the Baptist. This reveals Andrew's spiritual hunger, and it gives us some insight into why Jesus ultimately called him to be one of the twelve. Like anyone else who has ever truly believed in Christ, Andrew wanted to immediately introduce his family members to Him, and he started with his now-famous brother, Simon Peter. Over the course of the next three years, Simon, which means "reed," a tall grass with a hollow stalk, would become known as Peter, which means "rock." Jesus is changing you too!

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