

- ***READ John 20:30,31*** Out of the four gospel accounts, it doesn't take long for the reader to recognize that one of these four isn't quite like the other. Matthew and Luke fit together well because they both begin with the birth of Jesus, but neither Mark nor John do such. Mark begins with a pretty clear declaration that this writing is concerning Jesus (**Mark 1:1**), but John doesn't even mention the name of Jesus until 29 verses into the book. The synoptics can be fit together well, but poor John's Gospel is just different and stands on its own.
- With this being the case, I believe it extremely important to take some time to recognize exactly what it is that John is seeking to do with his account of the Gospel. He isn't just telling the story of Jesus as Luke does with his Gospel. (**Luke 1:1-4**) Instead, John has a very specific purpose for the writing of his Gospel account, and I believe that is made very clear from the verses we read just a moment ago.
- So this evening, we are going to use our time of study to help prepare ourselves for our reading of the Gospel of John over the next couple of months. I hope that everyone has already made it through the first couple of chapters from this past week, we will consider some of the things that are said in those chapters as seek to familiarize ourselves with John's Gospel so that we can make the most of our efforts in our daily Bible reading for this year, and so we will come to know our Lord and Savior even more.

I. MAIN POINT: Jesus is God

A. John's purpose for the writing of this book is very evident early on in the book.

1. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* (**John 1:1**) BOOM. Right off the bat John lays down his purpose for the writing of his account of the Gospel story. This person, referred to as the Word, existed from even before the beginning and He was with God. His person seems like a pretty big deal already, but He is made to be even more important when John says that not only was this one with God, but He was God.
2. Not only is this person referred to as the Word, but it is also said that He took part in creation. (**John 1:2,3**) And beyond that, He is also referred to as the Light of men. Coincidentally, the first name mentioned in this Gospel is John, but not the actual author of the book. John the Baptist, the forerunner of this Word and Light, is said to have gone before Him in order to testify about the Light. (**John 1:6-9**)
3. John the Apostle then talks about how the Word and Light was not received by all men, but those who did receive Him were granted the right to become children of God. These were not naturally born children, but they were born of the will of God. (**John 1:10-13**)
4. Then finally, we get to **v.14** and it is as if the lightbulb finally goes off and we recognize that John must be talking about Jesus because it says that *"the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we say His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."* (**John 1:14**) John doesn't bury the lead at all when making sure that the reader quickly comes to understand that his focus of this writing is on the Word, the Light, Jesus God in the flesh. This was foremost on his mind, and he was quick to help the reader recognize the same thing.

B. The context of our opening text is focusing on this fact of Jesus being God

1. What we see in **John 20** is the well known account of Jesus appearing before the Apostles and Thomas having his doubts as to if Jesus truly had been risen. He wasn't with the rest when Jesus first appeared, and he was adamant that he wouldn't believe until he actually saw Jesus. He got his wish in **John 20:26-29**. Jesus returned and showed Thomas His wounds which produced the great proclamation of Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"
2. Jesus then says that those who do not have opportunity to see yet believe are truly blessed. We don't have opportunity to see Jesus, but this Gospel is to serve as the proof for such being true. This book is to serve as the testimony of the truth the Jesus is truly God in the flesh. (**John 20:30,31**)

3. This Gospel ends with the author making mention that there are many other things that could've been recorded in this book, but there would be so much to write that it just wouldn't be feasible. So what all could be recorded to further solidify that Jesus is in fact the Christ, the Son of the Living God? There are two key points that Jesus focuses on through his version of the Gospel story.

II. His signs confirm His deity.

- A. There are seven signs that are recorded in John that serve as proof for Jesus's deity.
 1. Jesus turns water to wine. **(2)**
 2. Jesus heals the nobleman's son. **(4)**
 3. Jesus heals the lame man. **(5)**
 4. Jesus feeds the multitudes. **(6)**
 5. Jesus walks on water. **(6)**
 6. Jesus heals the man who was born blind. **(9)**
 7. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. **(11)**
- B. These signs made it evident to many that Jesus was from God.
 1. These truly miraculous happens took place and were recorded so that those who saw these things take place, who heard about them taking place, and/or those who read of Jesus in this book might recognize just as Thomas did **(John 1:47-51)** and Nicodemus did **(John 3:1,2)** that this Man truly was from God.
 2. Now, that sadly doesn't mean that all would believe. It would've been nice for all those who saw Jesus's miraculous powers to always believe Him and seek to do his will, but even when He did that which was most impossible...to raise the dead back to life, people didn't always believe. **(John 11:46-53)**
 3. Regardless, of the person's response, Jesus's claims to deity remained the same. He was God in the flesh and he dwelt among men proving to them His Godship through the miraculous works which He performed, so much of which we will never know about in this life.

III. His own words confirm His deity.

- A. John focuses his Gospel on many of the conversations that Jesus had while on the earth.
 1. Jesus spends time speaking with Nicodemus concerning how one could come to see and be a part of the Kingdom of God. **(John 3:1-21)** He spoke as one with great authority even as He was talking to one who himself was a teacher of Israel.
 2. Jesus then goes on to have that long conversation with the woman at the well in **John 4:1-30** concerning the water He would give people that would give them eternal life.
 3. Jesus conversations with the Jews were often centered around His mission and His strong desire to be about the work His Father had sent Him to do. **(John 5:16-47)**
 4. His feeding of the thousands in **John 6** centered around His teachings concerning Him being the bread of Life who could give eternal life.
 5. All of these conversations and then some specific statements He made were used by Him to teach and convince the hearers as to who He really was.
- B. Jesus used everyday examples to show His deity and our need for Him.
 1. The seven "I Am" statements are some of the most well known aspects of John's Gospel and that is for good reason. These statements sent strong messages to the hearers and the readers as to who Jesus was truly. You'll notice that these things He says that He is are things that are of great importance. Jesus is these things, and we need Him to be these things for us.
 1. I am the Bread of Life. **(6:35)**
 2. I am the Light of the world. **(8:12)**
 3. I am the Gate. **(10:9)**
 4. I am the Good Shepherd. **(10:11)**
 5. I am the Resurrection & the Life. **(11:25,26)**
 6. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. **(14:6)**
 7. I am the Vine. **(15:5)**

IV. Our acknowledgement of His deity should move us to true belief.

A. All of this was written for this very purpose.

1. Go back to our first text in **John 20:30,31** and take special notice that John didn't just record what Jesus did for posterity's sake, but he did so so that those who saw, heard, and read might become convinced of who Jesus was and believe.
2. It is only through the belief in who Jesus is that any individual can come to lay hold of eternal life in His name. Notice what the focus was when Jesus talked about living water, the Bread of Life, and other statements specifically the "I Am" statements. He was doing so for the purpose of leading the people to belief in Him so that they might be saved eternally. Everything thing that Jesus did was very purposeful and that is something John really hits in his Gospel where the other Gospels might just give the facts of what happened without as much explanation.
3. So for us, since we are already believers in Jesus...we are wanting to use this opportunity to get to know Him on an even deeper level. We want to give effort to see things about Him that we might not have seen before. We want to come to have an even strong faith in Him because that's what our belief does is leads us to faith, but John doesn't stop at simply having faith in Jesus based upon what we saw and read concerning Him. This is where the rubber meets the road for us in growing in our knowledge of Jesus.

B. Knowing and believing the deity of Jesus should lead us to a stronger measure faith.

1. All throughout John, he is purposeful in not just saying that people believed and had faith in Jesus, but he got to what that lead these people to do. It wasn't just that they said that they believed or had faith, but they were willing to do things based upon that believe and faith.

1. obeying Jesus (**3:36**)

5. following Jesus (**12:26**)

2. knowing Jesus (**6:69**)

6. keeping Jesus's commandments

3. being Jesus's sheep (**10**)

(**14:15,21; 15:10**)

4. serving Jesus (**12:26**)

7. abiding in Jesus (**15:4,5**)

Our focus in reading should be to do the same types of things. Our better knowledge of Jesus should move us to be more committed to doing the same things. Our efforts in our daily Bible reading isn't just for the sake of reading and saying that we have done something, but it is for the specific purpose that we might grow in our faith and obedience to our Lord. Let's be sure to be diligent in our reading through the Gospel of John so that we might reap the great benefits that our Lord promises to those who give great effort to grow in their faiths.

PRAYER *Our loving Father, we thank you so much for the words that we have written within the Bible that lead us to believe in You and Your Son. While it might be just a small portion of what Your Son did on this earth, it still leads us to grow close to Him by knowing Him all the better. We ask Your richest blessings upon us over the coming months as we dedicate ourselves to the continual reading of John's Gospel account. May we come to better appreciate Your Son as God, and may we grow stronger in our dedication to serve you in all that we do. May our daily reading and meditation give us strength in this next week as we face the temptations of Satan. May You be glorified in our victories over him. In Jesus, who is God, we pray...amen.*