

# *Mount Pisgah A.M.E Church*

Rev. Jay B. Broadnax, Pastor

**Bible Study, Wednesday, June 17, 2015**

**Survey of the Bible**

**Lesson 45: The Gospel According to John**

## **The Book of John**

The name "John" comes from the Greek name *Ioannes* which as a translation of the Hebrew name *Johanan*, which means "God (Yahweh) has been gracious." This is a fitting name for the author of a book whose message focuses on the "grace and truth" that came from God through Jesus Christ.

John's gospel is distinct from the other three gospels (which are collectively known as the "Synoptic Gospels," referring to the fact that they paint a picture of the life of Jesus from a similar point of view). Matthew, Mark and Luke are more biographical (describing Jesus' life and teachings), while John is more *theological*. This simply means that the descriptions of Jesus' activities, conversations and life events are organized to serve the greater goals of showing Jesus' deity (i.e., showing that Jesus is the Son of God), fostering faith in the reader, and leading the reader to the new life that Jesus makes possible. John's gospel is topical, not chronological (not in strict time order).

## **Author**

The heading of the book in the original Greek text reads "According to John," however there is dispute over the question of which John is meant. Traditional scholars have named the apostle John, who was one of Jesus' inner circle (Peter, James and John) in all four gospels. He is distinct from "John the Baptist," Jesus' forerunner since he was called by Jesus later on, however he was possibly a follower of John the Baptist. John was called with his brother James in Galilee. He and James are described as the "sons of Zebedee" (Mat. 5:21), and Jesus nicknamed them "Sons of Thunder." He is never named in the book, however he seems to be referring to himself when he speaks of "the disciple that Jesus loved." John's attention to detail (especially numbers, geography, and Jewish customs) suggest that the book is an eyewitness account from the perspective of a Jewish writer (also he does state in a couple of places that he is a witness of these events).

After Christ's departure, John became one of the pillars of the church of Jerusalem along with James and Peter. Some extra-biblical evidences suggests that he went to Ephesus, then was eventually exiled by the Romans to the isle of Patmos, where he received the "revelation" that he writes of in the final book of the Bible. The style of writing and emphasis on certain themes (such as love, and The Holy Spirit) suggest that this John also wrote the epistles of 1 John, 2, John, and 3 John.

## **The Times of John**

John is the newer than the synoptic gospels, the last of which is Luke. Some scholars have argued that John didn't write it because they believe it was written in the 2nd Century (100-200AD), after John would have had to die. However, archeological discoveries of copies of sections of John, dated early in the second century, suggest that the original manuscript would have had to have been written before 100 AD. Many scholars today date this epistle between 60 AD and 90 AD.

## **Overview**

The book of John is written to make a case for deity (Lordship) of Jesus Christ as "The Son of God", or "The Word Made Flesh." The intended result is that the reader would believe, and then be brought to spiritual life through the work and person of Jesus Christ. There are five basic sections, organized around seven "signs" and eight revelatory "I AM" statements. Those who see the signs for what they are and believe the statements about Jesus being who the signs reveal him to be, will be brought to life eternal. Those who persist in NOT seeing, or reject the signs for reasons of tradition or some self serving reason will not receive life. The signs are true and to be trusted regardless of what circumstances of life suggest.

## **Outline**

- I. The Incarnation of The Word (1:1-1:18)**
  - A. The Deity of Christ (1:1-1:2)
  - B. The Pre-Incarnate Work of Christ (1:3-1:5)
  - C. The Herald of Christ (1:6-1:8)
  - D. The Advent and Rejection of Christ (1:9-1:11)
  - E. The Opportunity of Faith in Christ (1:12-1:13)
  - F. The Son as The Incarnation of The Word (1:14-1:18)
- II. The Presentation of The Son of God (1:19-4:54)**
  - A. The Humility and Heralding of John the Baptist (1:19-1:34)
  - B. Presentation of Christ to The First Disciples (1:35-1:51)
  - C. The Presentation of The Son of God In Galilee (2:1-2:12)
    1. First Sign: Christ Changes Water to Wine (2:1-2:10)
    2. Disciples Believe (2:11-2:12)
  - D. The Presentation of The Son of God In Judea (2:13-3:36)
    1. Cleansing of The Temple (2:13-2:25)
    2. Nicodemus and The Way of Salvation (3:1-3:21)
    3. John The Baptist Points to Jesus (3:22-3:36)
  - E. The Presentation of The Son of God in Samaria (4:1-4:42)
  - F. Second Sign: The Nobleman's Son Healed (4:43-4:54)
- III. Rising Faith and Opposition to the Son of God (5:1-12:50)**
  - A. The Feast in Jerusalem (5:1-5:47)
    1. Third Sign: Jesus heals an Man (5:1-5:9)
    2. Jews Reject Christ (5:10-5:47)
  - B. Opposition During Passover In Galilee (6:1-6:71)
    1. Fourth Sign: Christ feeds 5000 (6:1-6:14)
    2. Fifth Sign: Christ Walks on Water (6:15-6:21)
    3. **I AM** The Bread of Life (6:22-6:71)
  - C. Opposition During the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem (7:1-10:21)
    1. Talk with Disciples and Transition to Jerusalem (7:1-7:13)
    2. Dialogue at the Feast and Unbelief of Jewish Leaders (7:14-7:52)
  - D. Intensified Revelation and Opposition after the Feast (7:53-10:21)
    1. Woman Caught in Adultery (7:53-8:11)
    2. **I AM** The Light of the World; **I AM** (8:12-8:59)
    3. Sixth Sign: Christ Heals the Blind Man (9:1-9:41)
    4. **I AM** the Good Shepherd; **I AM** the door (10:1-10:21)
  - E. Opposition at the Dedication Feast in Jerusalem (10:22-10:42)
  - F. Opposition at Bethany (11:1-12:11)
    1. Seventh Sign: Christ Raises Lazarus; **I AM** The Resurrection and The Life (11:1-11:44)

2. Assassination Plot versus Faithful Anointing (11:45-12:11)
- G. Opposition at Jerusalem (12:12-12:50)
- IV. Preparation of the Disciples by The Son of God (13:1-17:26)**
  - A. Preparation in The Upper Room (13:1-14:31)
    1. Washing of Feet (13:1-13:20)
    2. Betrayer Revealed (13:21-13:30)
    3. Christ's Mission and Destination; **I AM** the Way (13:31-14:31)
  - B. Spiritual Preparation (15:1-17:26)
    1. Relationship with Christ, Believers, The World; **I AM** the True Vine (15:1-15:25)
    2. The Holy Spirit (15:26-16:15)
    3. Comfort and Consolation (16:16-16:33)
    4. Christ Intercedes (17:1-17:26)
- V. The Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Son of God (18:1-21:25)**
  - A. The Rejection of Christ (18:1-19:16)
    1. Arrest (18:1-11)
    2. Trials (18:12-19:16)
  - B. The Crucifixion and Burial (19:17-19:42)
  - C. The Resurrection (20:1-20:10)
  - D. Post Resurrection Appearances as Proof of Deity (20:11-21:25)

### **Some Keys to understanding John**

- John presents the most powerful case in all the Bible for the deity of the incarnate son of God. The predominant theme of this gospel is the dual response of faith and unbelief to the person of Jesus Christ. John 1:11-12 summarizes the responses of accepting or rejecting the Son of God that are traced through the rest of the book.
- John makes the point that God's *personal appearance "in the flesh"* supersedes the law, not because he abolishes it, but because in His glory we find the perfect expression and application of it.
- The deity of Christ can be seen in the seven "I am" statements. Even saying the phrase "I AM" was blasphemy to existing Jewish leadership, and was punishable by death.
- The first verse contains the most important argument for identifying Jesus as both "The Son of God AND "God The Son," The Word WAS God. (The Greek text does not say "The Word was A god," like some groups teach)
- It is possible that the book was written AFTER the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. If so, this book would have provided significant comfort and a sense of empowerment to a fledgling community of Jewish believers under oppression by an overwhelmingly powerful government.
- Jesus' proof to Thomas of his humanity in John 20:27 by showing him his nail scarred hands provides an important link to the Epistles of John, in which the writer puts great emphasis on the fact that Jesus wasn't some kind of "super-human" or demigod or ghost, but rather a real person "in the flesh."

### **Some Lessons from John**

- John reminds us that Jesus was not just a REALLY special person, not just a PROPHET, not just a miracle worker that walked the earth years ago, but God who came down and lived as a human being. We can be comforted by the fact that Jesus experienced everything that we do: every challenge, struggle and pain; and yet overcame them for our sake.
- John reminds every "secret seeker" like Nicodemus that when all else is said and done, we must be BORN AGAIN. Born of the spirit AND born biologically. Without this, even with all of the respect we may have for Jesus, we are still lost.
- We must always remember that the miracles that Jesus performed, while wonderful by their own merit, were PURPOSEFUL. Every "sign" that Jesus gives us is not just beneficial in and of itself, but

is intended for the purpose of pointing us to the PERSON of God through Jesus Christ. We must not cling to God just for the goodies, but pursue a RELATIONSHIP with God. If we have a relationship with the person, then we have EVERYTHING.

- Like the legalists in John, we can become so tied to our traditions and "ways of doing church" on one hand, or preoccupied by our problems on the other, that we miss the "signs," the evidences of God begin at work in our midst, continually pointing us to the PERSON of God. Jesus is constantly reminding us that "I AM" is everything.
- Even as we work FOR God, we must never forget the priority that Jesus places on "staying connected," first to HIM as the true vine (the source of our strength), and to one another. We demonstrate that His Word is in us when we love one another.
- John also shows us that even when we blow it, as Peter did, there is still room for us in God's mission
- There is nothing better than knowing that Jesus had me on his mind when he was praying in Gethsemane. He prayed for every generation of believers from the days of the apostles, even through today. We must never forget that Jesus has prayed for us!