

Note

John – Part 1 of 1

Summary

John - Part 1 of 12

John touches on how Jesus reveals Himself to be the son of God through His miracles, which culminates with the resurrection of Lazarus. Jesus shows Himself to be the source of light and life for all we believe. Both fully God and fully man, Jesus dwelt among us as the flesh of our eternal God to enable us to see God's glory, much like how the Lord inhabited the Tabernacle among the Israelites in Exodus.

Jesus' entire ministry was encapsulated in His act of washing His disciples' feet. This not only shows the importance of meeting the needs around us, but also building bridges of love to channel the gospel of love through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

John – Part 1 of 1

Today, we come to the gospel according to John.

We've finished the synoptic gospels or syn-optic. Syn means together, optic is eye. The first three tended to see Jesus in the same way. When you read the first three gospels, they sound very similar. They were all taken basically from the framework of Mark, which was the first gospel written. Matthew expanded on it to show Jesus as the King of the Jews. Luke expanded on it to show Jesus as the Saviour of the world.

Basically, the first three synoptic gospels describe what Jesus did. Mark described one miracle after another. When you are a new believer, you want to see action and Mark is the easiest to understand. Then Matthew and Luke not only showed what Jesus did, but also what Jesus did and said. It's like a little child, you ask a little child about his father, he'll say, papa did this for me, papa did that for me, he knows what he did. When he gets a little older, he knows what his papa did and said. Then, when he becomes a mature person, he will not only know what papa did, what papa said, but who papa is. This might sound strange to you but if you asked a little kid, who's your papa? He doesn't really know. Maybe his papa is the president of United States, but he doesn't even know that. As far as he's concerned, he's my Papa, he plays with me.

John is that book which tells us not only what Jesus did (not a lot of it), what Jesus said, but most important who Jesus really is. John is telling us Jesus is the Son of God.

Let's see the four gospels, Matthew, written first to the Jews, shows Jesus as King of the Jews. The King of the Jews is shown in Mark to be a servant, doing, doing all the time just like a servant. They don't talk a lot. Then He is shown in Luke to be the Saviour of the world, and finally in John, to be the Son of God. This is the hardest one to understand. We know what a King is. We know what a servant does. A Saviour, he saves you, we can understand that. But Jesus as Son of God? He looks like a carpenter's son, He looks ordinary. Is He really the Son of God? I know He can perform miracles, but is He really the Son of God? John is written last, to tell us who Jesus really is. That's why the books are put in that order.

Who is John the writer? He is possibly John the apostle, that's what most people believe. And he describes himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Five times, he says that though he doesn't give his name. He was the one that leaned on Jesus at the Last Supper. In other words, he was right by the side of Jesus. Let's just say he's Jesus best friend as far as we know. Peter was probably Jesus' "go-to" man, but John was his confidant, his best friend. Who really was John in life? He was a fisherman and yet he could write this book so well, which is unusual for a fisherman. But in John's Gospel in Chapter 18, verse 15, we also realize he's not just a fisherman, he was a friend of the high priest. A fisherman, the friend of a high priest? A fisherman's work is way up north, Sea of Galilee; Jerusalem is south. How did he become a friend of the high priest, who's in the south, when he's in the north? It's possible he was not only a fisherman, but he was kind of like a merchant selling fish and the people in Jerusalem got their fish from Galilee. He probably was the favourite fish trader, the guy the high priests bought fresh fish from. He knew the high priest so he was kind of like the educated fisherman. He could deal with both sides, the rough trade of fishing, skill of fishing and with a high priest who was like the highest of all in Israel. So he straddled the two worlds.

He was very old when he wrote this book, probably the last gospel written. And the goal is stated very clearly at the end of the book when he writes this - But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. So, we already know the goal of this gospel, that you may know that He is not just the miracle maker, not the rabbi, not the wonderful person, but He is the Son of God.

It is a very spiritual gospel. In other words, when you read this gospel, it's hard to understand. I'll be honest with you, I struggle sometimes with a lot a lot of passages here; you have to think a lot before you can sort of get an idea of what he's trying to say. It's not like Mark. A new believer with no background of Christianity can read Mark, and understand. But to really grasp this gospel, you struggle in your mind because it's hard to understand the incarnation of Jesus Christ-100%God and 100% man. Our brain on earth can never understand what is hundred percent God and hundred percent man which is mathematically an impossibility. 50% God, 50% man, I can handle that in my logical brain. But when you tell me Jesus is 100% God, 100%man, I cannot fully understand it. It's one of the mysteries of theology.

We struggle with several things in theology - no. 1, the Trinity, three in one, one in three. No. 2, the incarnation of Christ. No. 3, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. These are two parallel lines that seemingly can never meet, the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of men -two parallel lines both seem to be equally strong.

But I look at it like the longitudes in the globe. But on the globe, they all meet at the North Pole and the South Pole. That's the closest I can explain it. Some fine day at the North Pole and the South Pole of eternity, we'll see how these two lines of the sovereignty of God and responsibility of man meet.

It's a difficult book, and not a first book to study with a new believer.

Where was this book written? It was written basically, in the south. You remember the synoptic gospels were written of Jesus life, two and a half years, basically in the northern kingdom, in the Galilee area where Jesus was more welcome, where He could perform a lot of miracles. But when he went to the south, there was always resistance against Him because the leaders didn't like Him. They were envious of the following he had and he spoke against their hypocrisy. In the south, He couldn't do a lot, He was hemmed in, always having to argue with these leaders.

A lot of the book of John is about Jesus life, discussing things in the south. You say, Jesus spent so much time in the north, then why is he in the south? But you see, as a Jew, He had to go to the feast, which was in Jerusalem at least three times a year. At the feast, whenever He went there, He got into an argument with the leaders, not because He chose it, because they keep questioning Him. Who are you? What are you doing? Who do you say you are? And whenever He claimed to be the Son of God, there was a fierce argument. So a lot of the description here you read are of Him having arguments in the south with the Jewish leaders as opposed to the others where He basically was doing miracles and teaching the people in peace. But in John, He was arguing with the leaders, and having discourses. You will see a lot of that, and that is understandable because this book is about the deity of Christ, and when you bring up the deity of Christ, even today, people will ask you all kinds of questions. If Christ is really God, then how could He suffer? If Christ is really God, then why does He need to pray? If Christ is really God, why is He hungry and thirsty and weak? Even today, among believers, we struggle with this fact.

Why is this so? Why is it such a huge problem to us? Because we are all influenced by Greek teaching. The Greek influence and the New Testament is written in Greek. The Greek influence is very strong, and the

Greeks were basically logical people. The mind rules and they divided life into spiritual and physical, two very separate spheres which cannot meet. And so when it comes to Jesus is hundred percent God, hundred percent man, the Greek mind cannot grasp it. The way we think is a sermon must have three points, then a proper conclusion. That's how we think, $A + B = C$, very logical.

We like everything in point form, we like chapter and verse, everything should be numbered, but the human is holistic. Where does the mind end, the Spirit end, and the body begin? I don't know. You take a knife, how do you slice? I don't know. That's why medicine has all its limits. I'm trained as a doctor but I struggle when it comes to holistic medicine. When medicine of other cultures come in, we cannot understand it. It doesn't make sense. For example, Chinese medicine tends to be more holistic, helping the human. But we deal with the cell. Everything we study must go down to the cellular level, we divide it so fine that our study not only dissects the man into his arms, his legs, organs, but you must divide it into the cells. And anything outside of that, we cannot understand it because of our Greek trained mind.

That's why there are limits to Western medicine and as a doctor, I admit that a lot of things are holistic. As a GP, I would say 70% of patients get well after they see the doctor, before they take the medicine. You say, what are you trying to get at? My point is this, most of people's pains, aches and illnesses, are not physical, they are spiritual, they are mental but they manifest as physical. And so when they see a doctor whom they like and trust, and who tells them, "John, don't worry, it's okay, this is not a big deal. I assure you, this is not such and such, and he steps out from the consulting room, walks out the door and his pain is gone. His gassy stomach and his tightness in the chest is gone before he reaches the pharmacy to get the pill, and before he puts the pill into his stomach, he feels well. Why? Because all the human body is related.

But because we do not think that way we struggle.

And so men start dividing, who is Jesus? Is He really God? Okay, He's God but He came down looking like a man. So many people believe that their god came down in the form of appearance as a man. We call it a phantom or epiphany. Some say no, no, He's a man who is so good He's almost like god. He's so perfect He doesn't sin. He is just that model man. Some think Jesus is like that. Some, like the Jehovah's witnesses, think Jesus is a man who sort of became a God. The Jehovah's witness say, In the beginning was the word and the word was a God, not the word was God. They cannot grasp that Jesus is 100% God, 100% man, and I don't blame them because

that's what I struggle with too. Thankfully He is 100% God, that's why He can forgive our sins. Thankfully He is 100% man and He can die for our sins.

How does Jesus prove that He's the Son of God? 5 times he says - Believe. If you don't believe in me, believe in the works that I do. I can claim to be the Son of God but when you see my works -I raised Lazarus from the dead, a man lame for 38 years and he walks, a person born blind and he sees. You don't believe Me that I'm the Son of God, at least believe My works.

In the book of John, sevens are very much used by John. Sevens are what the Hebrews, the Jews considered the perfect number and 3 times he has the sevens. 7 times He is witnessed by others that He is the Son of God.

-John the Baptist chapter 1 verse 34

-Nathaniel, Chapter 1 verse 49,

-Peter, chapter 6 verse 69.

-Martha, chapter 11 verse 27.

-Thomas, Chapter 20 verse 28.

-John himself, chapter 20 verse 21.

-Jesus Himself, many times.

In Jewish law, if there are two or three credible witnesses, the case is settled. There were seven witnesses.

Then there were seven miracles. In the other gospels, there's a lot of miracles. In John, only seven miracles are mentioned - He turned water to wine at the wedding, He healed the noble man's son from afar, He healed the lame man, who had been lame for 38 years at the pool of Bethesda, He fed the 5000 men, He walked on water, He healed the blind man who was blind from birth. And lastly, raising Lazarus from the dead.

Sometimes people claim I was dead and then I woke up. I was in operating table, I was dead, then I woke up. As a doctor, that is quite amazing but not terribly amazing because sometimes your heart does stop for a while and it comes back. But not for 4 days and when your body rots, now that one is another story altogether. So the seven miracles end with the resurrection of Lazarus when Jesus purposely delayed going to where Lazarus was because He wanted the body to rot first. And then He raised him up from the dead. That was the climax of His seven miracles.

We have 7 witnesses,
7 miracles,

7 'I am' - I am the bread of life, I am the light, I am the door, I am the good shepherd, I am the resurrection, I am the way, the truth and the life, I am the true vine.

3 is a very special number and 7 is a special number. 3 is the number of God, 7 is the number of perfection.

You will realize the word "I am" to us is 2 English words. I am the bread of life. But for the Hebrew, "I am" is the name of God, His personal name. Remember El is the generic name of God, El is God. But when God wanted to introduce Himself to Moses, He gave a new name, a personal name. My personal name is "I am" or in Hebrew, Yahweh or sometimes anglicised as Jehovah, wrongly pronounced, it's Yahweh. Yahweh means "I am". "I am" simply means always, not I was, I am, I will be. As people, we have a past, present and future. Jesus is "I am" - always.

A zillion years ago I am God, a trillion years later, I am God. A zillion years before I am love, a trillion years later, I am love, same. I am means I don't change, always. So when He said, I am the bread of life, always the bread of life. Whenever He said, 'I am', He's claiming Yahweh, Yahweh, seven times. And He did this quite interestingly, He showed I am the bread of life when He fed the 5000, I am the resurrection when He raised Lazarus from the dead. You see, He uses those occasions to tell these things, to tell this "I am" seven times. I hope you see this as a kind of stamp that This is the Son of God.

Let's look at chapter 1 of John which is very interesting.

John chapter 1:1 In the beginning was the Word.

You see these first words of John are exactly the first words of Genesis. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In the beginning, when is the beginning? Trillion, zillion years ago, that's the beginning, was the Word. He was already there.

You remember Mark introduced Jesus at His baptism. Why? Servant, baptism starts in ministry, start to work, start serving. So Mark began Jesus' life at baptism.

Matthew traces Jesus' genealogy to Abraham. Why? King of the Jews, Abraham was the father of the Jews.

Luke traces Jesus' genealogy to Adam. Why? Because He's Saviour of the world and Adam is the father of all men.

John traces Jesus' beginning to the beginning. Why? He's God.

I hope you see these things and see the beauty of the Bible. It's not random, starting at a point they feel like starting.

In the beginning was the Word. What was Jesus' name before He came to this earth? Ever wondered that? His name was not always Jesus. Mary and Joseph were told, you will call Him Jesus because He will save His people from their sins, but before that His name was not Jesus. In heaven, nobody called Him Jesus. What was His name in heaven? I guess it's what it is, Logos, the Word in Greek-Logos. Now why is Jesus called the Word, what kind of name is that, in eternity? If I keep totally silent, you don't know what I'm thinking, what I want to do, etc until I say something. I'm a mystery to you until I express myself-who I am, what I want-in words.

God is in that sense a mystery to us, we cannot grasp God. He is without body, without form. But Jesus expresses this invisible God, this mysterious God. If I am a man and I don't say a word, I will always be a mystery to you. But the moment I speak, "I'm beginning to know him, now he's my friend, I understand him." Why? Because he talks to me. Jesus is called the Word of God, that's very important.

v1: In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God.

Two different people, two persons, they were with one another-fellowship. I hope you understand this. You cannot have fellowship alone. The god of other people, other so-called monotheistic religions, their god is one. Our God is three in one, a world of difference. Our God is love-makes sense. You have to love someone, otherwise you just love yourself. When we say God is love, we understand it, because He loves. The three persons in trinity loving each other, fellowshiping with one another. When we talk about fellowship with God, other religions don't quite get you. What are you talking about? You just worship God, He judges you. If you're good he leaves you alone, you're bad he hammers you. He's up there. Fellowship with God? What are you talking about, you arrogant Christians. God is love? Some religions have got 99 names of their god, but not one is love. How can you, if you're all alone, what do you do? Love yourself?

Then it says, and the Word was God in the first verse. "In the beginning" was the Word, so He's eternal. The Word was with God, so He's a personality. The second phrase and the Word was God, so He's deity. In one verse, we see His eternity, His personality and His deity.

Chapter 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

We see the Word, God became flesh-humanity, and when He became flesh, we see His glory. The word glory there is exactly the same word used to describe the Shekinah glory, the glory that came down on the tabernacle that they built in the wilderness, and dwelt among men. Jesus, the Logos became flesh and dwelt, tabernacled among us. And we saw His glory as the Israelites saw the glory of God come down in the wilderness on their tabernacle. Hope you're getting it now. We see His eternity in the beginning, His personality-He was with God, and we see His deity-He was God, and we see his humanity. All this, just in chapter 1. We can almost end there and say, I'm overwhelmed.

Chapter 2 to chapter 12 basically, tells us of His miracles, or shall we say signs, that Jesus did to support His claim. John is showing you He's God, and all these miracles support His claim. He's man 100%, He dwelt with us and all the events from chapter 2 to chapter 12 show He is what he claimed to be or is claimed to be in chapter 1. We see the word, 'believe', 'if you believe', 'don't believe me, believe the works that I did,' - 5 times.

Chapter 11 speak of the crowning miracle - the raising of Lazarus.

Then chapter 13 to 17 speaks of His last words to His disciples. I want you know, Chapter 13 to the end of this book (eight chapters) is the last hours of Jesus's life. Eight chapters focusing on the last hours of Jesus life, 40% of His last hours of His three year ministry. 13 to 17 is Him talking to His disciples beginning with washing of their feet at the Last Supper. That's the best model of saying who Jesus really is. You can talk and talk and say what you are, but what you do really teaches everybody what you are.

I always tell preachers, don't talk so much. You stand at the pulpit and preach and preach, people really don't know what you're saying, or people may know what you're telling them, but they have no idea how to apply it until they see, not what you say but what you do. Discipleship is life on life,

not word on head. Go and make disciples is about you seeing my life, how I treat my wife, how I treat my maid, how I treat my neighbour, how I treat the cleaner downstairs, how I treat my dog, how I treat the postman, how I treat the waitress. That's my life, how I share with someone, how I counsel someone. What did Jesus try to encapsulate in His entire 3 years ministry in one act? He washed feet. Many people think washing of the feet was just a act, it was more than an act.

You must remember the disciples, when they walked to that upper room, they walked. Let me repeat that, they didn't drive in an automobile or come in a grab taxi, they walked. Walking in those days entailed you walking in the dark, not on cemented roads but on paths usually. Animals shared the paths with people, and the roads were not nice and clean. They didn't wear shoes and socks like us, they wore sandals. And therefore, when they went to any house, their feet were always dirty by the time they arrived.

Normally when they arrived at a house, they would have the lowest maid or slave in that house to wash the feet of the guests. On that day when Jesus and his disciples went to have their Last Supper, they were borrowing a place and the host was not there, and neither was any helper there. He was led to have the place to use in the upper room. Nobody washed their feet when they went in, and nobody volunteered to do that. Who wants to be the lowest slave to wash feet? It's not in the culture of that time that anyone of decent rank will wash feet.

Secondly, when they sat to eat the Last Supper, they did it the Roman style, not the western style of eating. They didn't sit on the chair with their feet on the ground like how we normally sit at dinner. In fact, even up to now in the Eastern cultures, people sit on the floor, with their feet on the floor. But in the Roman style, they reclined at the table, their feet were up on the chair. You've seen movies, they lean and eat the grapes like Cleopatra. Their feet were dirty feet, unwashed. Jesus was going to give them His last sermon. And of course you cannot concentrate when you have maybe dung on your feet and mud on your feet, which is normal at the time. Your sandals didn't cover it and then your feet up on the chair and people's feet were very close to the one reclining next to him.

And so, Jesus washed feet not just for showing off, not just a model lesson but there was really a need at that time. And what was Jesus teaching them? What's our ministry? He was telling them, that was the best sermon of all. Our ministry as believers is very simple. Whenever we see a need, it's an

opportunity to help, to build bridges, bridges of love and care so that the gospel of love and care can cross. It's not going just giving tracks, slamming the gospel into someone's face. In fact, Jesus never did that. If you see His whole ministry throughout the three years of ministry, whenever He saw the hungry, He fed; He saw the lonely He touched; He saw the blind He gave sight; He saw the demon, oppressing or possessing, He cast out the demon. Whatever the need, He met the need.

Today, what's Christianity? It's talk. Mercy? Ah, social gospel. Really? Jesus saw the need that night, He took a basin and washed and He met the need, and in meeting that need, He could give a message. This is your life, disciples, there's a world of need. Why does God allow this world to be full of needs? If I had no need and you had no need, we won't meet each other.

You know why a human child is so helpless as opposed to a chicken? The moment it's born it can run. A fish, the moment that it hatches an egg, he swims away from his mom, he doesn't know who his mom is. Why does he need his mom? There's no fellowship between a mommy fish and a baby fish, there's no need. It's only when there's a need of care that bonds are built, and lessons can be taught. There's a world of need out there so that we can build bridges.

But today's Christianity, if ever there's mercy in the church, it's by and by. It's got to be a crisis, maybe a COVID-19 crisis, then we do something. The rest of the time, where our Bible studies where all our church meetings and we just do our thing or churchy thing. Jesus was giving this beautiful lesson at this table. Always remember, actions speak louder than words and that was the biggest lesson He gave them.

Then we come to the passion, and the resurrection. After He was resurrected, He said something very interesting in John chapter 20, verse 21. This is very personal to me because I heard this message many, many years ago when I was a very new believer, and I was very touched by this message.

Chapter 20:21

Jesus said to them again, (this is after He resurrected), "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

That message touched me and it's one of the verses that led me to want to serve Him.

v22

And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Very interesting. He said, receive the Holy Spirit but they didn't. Nothing happened. Why did He do this? Because this book flows into Acts. The book of Acts is the book of the Acts of the Holy Spirit. When the disciples at Pentecost were filled with the Holy Spirit, went out and changed the world. But He said this in preparation of Pentecost. You see how the books flow into, otherwise what is Pentecost, it's strange to them.

And then they needed the Holy Spirit because after that, He said, As the Father send me, I send you. You need the Holy Spirit to go out into the world as Jesus needed the Holy Spirit. Don't forget, everything Jesus did in His life on earth was not as God, was as man. That's why He never did His first miracle till he was 30 years old, when He turned the water into wine. You see, that was His first miracle. If Jesus is God from His birth, He could have done miracles as a baby, He could have done miracles as a toddler. No, He could only do miracles when He was filled with the Holy Spirit, when He was baptised and then He did His first miracle. Jesus was an evangelist from heaven as man, filled with the Holy Spirit as you and I. So as the Father has sent me, so send I you - the same way. Man, weak man like me, weary, thirsty, tired, filled with the Spirit, can do the work of God. And then it ends with an epilogue.

John 21 is an epilogue, actually it ends at chapter 20. Chapter 21 tells about Peter going fishing with the other disciples, catching no fish and then someone shouts, cast a net on the other side and they cast the other side. Then they had so many fish, 153 large fish, they couldn't pull the net in. What is this? You want to be my disciple and catch fish? You need my Holy Spirit and you need my leadership to tell you what to do. Then you will catch fish, be fishers of men.

I hope this book helps you to grow in maturity. Now you're ready to wash feet, see needs around, meet needs - spiritual needs, physical needs, mental needs, family needs - build bridges. And then with the bridges of love you build, bring the gospel of love in the power of the Spirit under the guidance of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the harvest and you will see amazing things. As the Father has sent me, Jesus said, so send I you.

May God bless you with this gospel of John.