

BOOK OF JOHN

1. This is NOT one of the 3 synoptic Gospels. The first 3 Gospels are synoptic and were written within the framework of Mark. All these 3 Gospels talk about what Jesus did. His actions were captured in the book of Mark. Matthew and Luke then added onto Mark, not just what Jesus did, but what He said (teachings, not just actions).
2. As one matures, he knows not only his dad's actions and sayings but also who he is! A child may not know his dad is a President etc. John tells us just enough actions and teachings but John's main purpose is to tell us that Jesus is the Son of God.
 - a) The book of Matthew portrays Jesus as King of Jews.
 - b) The book of Mark portrays Jesus as Servant, i.e. doing and doing.
 - c) The book of Luke portrays Jesus as the Saviour of the world.

But it is the hardest to explain that Jesus is the Son of God because people see Him as just a carpenter's son! And that is what John endeavoured to do.

Who is the author?

1. He was John, the Apostle.
2. He was also described as the disciple whom Jesus loved (5 times) and he was the one who leaned on Jesus. He was Jesus' best friend (confidante) versus Peter who was Jesus' action man.
3. John was a fisherman by profession yet he could write this Gospel so well. John 18:15 says that John was a friend of the High Priest. John could be a merchant selling fish to Jerusalem which means that he was an educated fisherman.
4. John was already old when he wrote this last Gospel. His goal of writing the book of John was as stated in last chapter, that "this book is written that we may know that Jesus is the Son of God".

Why is the Gospel of John more difficult to understand than the other Gospels?

1. Gospel of John is a spiritual Gospel. Therefore, it is hard to understand unlike the book of Mark which is full of actions and sayings that a kid can easily understand.
2. There is a need to grasp the incarnation of Christ (100% God and 100% man). This precept is hard to understand. It is a mystery in theology just like the precept of Trinity or the Sovereignty of God versus the freewill of man. All these three are hard to understand precepts. Take for example, the Sovereignty of God and the freewill of man are like longitudes which never seem to meet, until one day in eternity (at North Pole), only then perhaps, we may understand.

Where was it written?

1. The 3 synoptic Gospels were written in the Northern Kingdom area, in Galilee. Jesus was handicapped in the Southern Kingdom area because He was opposed by the Priest, Pharisees, etc.
2. John was written in the Southern part of Israel. Jesus had to go to the feasts at least 3 times a year. There were highly educated people who always question His claim as Son of God. Hence, John recorded a lot about their arguments. Therefore, there are more discourses than parables recorded in the book of John) e.g.

Believers struggle to understand why Jesus was thirsty, hungry, had to pray, etc. if He is God. Again, this is the Greek curse of separating spiritual and physical or logical thinking.

3. But human is holistic, we cannot separate the physical and spiritual aspects of a man, etc. For example, Chinese Medicine is holistic but Western medicine is cell-based! Medicine came from the Greeks, therefore, there are limits to Western medicine. 70% of patients get well after seeing a doctor, even before taking their medicine, because their illness is not only just physical, but also spiritual and mental. While an illness may manifest itself as physical symptoms, yet when a doctor assures him that he is alright, the patient already felt better.
4. So, when men cannot accept that Jesus is both 100% man and 100% God, they decide to divide Jesus:
 - a) Some believe in the epiphany of Christ (i.e. God came down in the form of “appearance” as a man! God disguised as man!)
 - b) Some think that Jesus is the model of a perfect man who does not sin.
 - c) Some (Jehovah witness) think Jesus was man who became God!
5. But Jesus has to be 100% God so that He can forgive our sins and He has to be 100% Man so that He can die for our sins!

How does John prove that Jesus is the Son of God?

1. 5 times in book of John, Jesus said, “Believe in Me, if not, in the works I do”. The works Jesus did include raising Lazarus from dead, healing the blind, etc. were Messianic miracles prophesized by Isaiah in Isaiah 35:5-6.
2. The number “7” is used very much by John.
3. 7 times in this book, 7 different witnesses said that Jesus is the Son of God:
 - a) John 1:34 - John the Baptist said it.
 - b) John 1:49 – Nathaniel said it.
 - c) John 6:69 – Peter said it.
 - d) John 11:27 – Mark said it.
 - e) John 20:28 – Thomas said it.
 - f) John 20:21 – John said it.
 - g) Jesus Himself said it many times.

In Jewish Law, you only need 2 or 3 credible witnesses!

4. There are only 7 miracles recorded in this Gospel (which is far fewer than the 18 miracles recorded in other Gospels):
 - i. He turned water to wine at the wedding.
 - ii. He healed the noble man’s son from afar.
 - iii. He healed the lame man (of 38 years) at the pool of Bethesda.
 - iv. He fed 5000 men.
 - v. He walked on water.
 - vi. He healed the blind man (who was blind from birth).
 - vii. He raised the dead Lazarus (who was already dead for 4 days). Jesus did this miracle of resurrecting Lazarus by purposely delaying His journey to reach the sick Lazarus. This was the climax of His 7 miracles in this book of John.
5. There are 7 “I AM” recorded in this Gospel. Jesus said, “I AM the.....”
 - i. bread of life (when Jesus fed the 5000, He claimed this)

- ii. light
- iii. door
- iv. good shepherd
- v. resurrection (when Jesus raised Lazarus)
- vi. way, the truth and the life
- vii. true vine

The phrase "I AM" in Hebrew is the name of God. "I AM" simply means "always".

- EL is God's generic name
- But "I AM" is the personal name of God. It is the same as Yahweh (or Jehovah) and God used this name when He introduced Himself to Moses.
- Unlike us, we have to use "I was, I am and I will be" depending on the time frames but God is and uses only "I AM", which means "always and never changes".
- Jesus claimed He is Yahweh. And Jesus used the occasions of miracles to tell them that He is Son of God.

What is the Structure/Summary of the Book of John?

Chapter 1

1. John 1:1 - This book starts with "In the beginning was the Word". The phrase "In the beginning" is also how the book of Genesis starts in Genesis 1:1. It brings us back to eternity when God created the heavens and the Earth.
 - a) John is establishing that Jesus was already there in the beginning. This is so unlike the rest of the 3 Gospels.
 - b) The book of Mark introduces Jesus at His baptism, after which He started His ministry to serve because Mark presented Jesus as Servant.
 - c) The book of Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus to Abraham to portray Jesus as the King of Jews and Abraham as the father of the Jews.
 - d) The book of Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus to Adam to emphasize that Jesus is the "Saviour of the World" and the genealogy was through Jesus' mother's side to show that He is 100% man.
 - e) But John traced Jesus right to creation of the world, the book of John starts with "in the beginning" to prove the deity of Christ, that He is God. It is not a random way of starting this book.
 - f) Jesus' name was given to Mary at the time when the angel announced it. But, in the beginning, Jesus' name is LOGOS which means WORD.
 - g) You need to hear the words of a person which reveal who he is. God is a mystery to us. He is without form. He is a Spirit. Jesus expresses this mysterious and invisible God by way of WORD. You will never know a person till he talks to you!
2. John 1:1 also says "And the Word was with God!"
 - a) This speaks of more than one person present at the beginning.
 - b) It speaks of fellowship! Trinity – three persons in One. God is Love, He must love someone! The Trinity love one another!

- c) Other religions do not talk about fellowship with God. To them, God is high up there and they never will claim that God is Love.
3. John 1:1 also says, “And the Word was God!” which means Jesus, who is the Word, is also deity.
4. John 1:14 says, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us!” This is the humanity of Christ. God came down and lived as Man in flesh and blood.
5. John 1:14 also says, “And we see His glory.” This is the shining glory as in the Tabernacle (the dwelling of God). And God dwelt amongst men! This emphasized that Jesus became flesh and “tabernacled” amongst us and we saw the Glory of God. Jesus is the Glory of God!

Chapters 2 to 12

1. Countless miracles and signs were recorded to support the claim that Jesus is God. It included all the Messianic miracles mentioned in Isaiah 35:5-6.
2. Jesus said “Believe the works I did” 5 times.
3. Chapter 12 records the crowning miracle in which Jesus raised the dead Lazarus.

Chapters 13 to 17

These chapters record Jesus’ last words to His disciples in His last hours on Earth and it constitutes 40% of the book of John. An important thing that Jesus did was the washing of feet at the Last Supper:

1. This act demonstrated who He is! And what He wants from us. He gave us an example to follow, so don’t just talk but watch what we do! Discipleship is a “Life on Life” ministry, not “Word on Head” e.g. How I treat the people around me reveals my life.
2. It is more than an act! The disciples’ feet were very dirty in sandals after a day’s walk on those dusty roads at that time. Usually, the lowest slave in the house would wash the feet of the guests. But in the Last Supper, they borrowed an upper room without a helper. None of the 12 disciples volunteered to wash the feet. In a Roman dinner, the people ate by reclining on the table and so their feet were up next to each other.
3. It is not an act for Jesus to show off servant-ship but a real need to teach His disciples to serve others. Our ministry is to serve any need we see! To build bridges of love and care! Not to shove tracts into people’s face. Jesus touched, healed, drove out demons, etc. Today’s Christianity is more about talking!
4. Jesus met a real need and in the process, He taught His disciples (who were not volunteering to wash each other’s feet at this Last Supper) by observing Him. This is what discipleship is about, you should meet the needs of the people around you and let your disciples observe your life.
5. Why are babies so helpless unlike fish or animal? When there are needs, bonds can be built between the mother and child.
6. Remember that action speaks louder than words! Just like your earthly father’s last words which are so important, so take heed what Jesus did in this act of washing His disciples’ feet.

Chapter 20 - Passion of Christ

1. John 20:21. After resurrection, Christ said, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you”. Then, in John 20:22, He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit”. He gave the 11 remaining apostles the Holy Spirit but nothing happened until Pentecost Day in Acts Chapter 2 when they were filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus did and said this in anticipation of Day of Pentecost and to prepare His disciples for it.
3. Jesus needed the Holy Spirit to do His works on Earth as Man, so His disciples also needed the Holy Spirit. He did not perform the first miracle of turning water to wine till He was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus was an evangelist sent from heaven and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 21 – Epilogue

1. Jesus ate breakfast with Peter after Jesus told them to cast their fishing net on the other side of the boat. Jesus was in His resurrected body already.
2. This act of casting the net to fish means that we all need Jesus’ leadership and Holy Spirit to be successful fishers of men.

So, watch out for the physical, spiritual, mental needs of the others around you. Build bridges of love and bring the Gospel of love to them in the power of the Holy Spirit and you will see amazing things.