

The New Testament gospel of John

The gospel according to John is quite different from the other 3 synoptic gospels (Matthew. Mark and Luke) giving its own perspective on Jesus The author is considered to be the apostle John ,the younger brother of James, the fishermen sons of Zebedee and thought to have been a disciple of John the Baptist He was one of the 3 disciples especially close to Jesus present at all the key events in the gospels. In his gospel John's declared intention is that his readers are drawn to faith '*that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah , the son of God... ' Verse 31 chapter 20-J.B.*

In the prologue -1:1-18- Jesus is defined as the divine word ' in the beginning was the word ' with reference to the creation account in Genesis ; *the Word that became flesh and lived among us and we saw His glory ; the glory of the father's only son , full of grace and truth '1: 14* NRSV thus claiming his pre-existence before the world was created. In contrast, in the other synoptic gospels the Messianic identity of our Lord only appears gradually

Following in 1:19-12:50 are two sets of seven signs –the miracles that Jesus performed-and seven sayings the **I am** passages describing who our Lord was and what he had come to do. I think it important here in respect of the ' I Am' expressions of Jesus synonymous with the account in Exodus 3:14 of Moses asking God for his name with the reply I am who I am. This would point surely to the divinity of Jesus .

Tradition depicts him living to a great age being entrusted at the crucifixion with the care of Mary; later living at Ephesus and also the author of 3 New Testament Letters that bear his name and the book of Revelation

One of the most well- known and quoted passages in the New Testament is the passage in John's gospel 3 : 16 of Jesus in the dialogue with the Pharisee Nicodemus saying '*for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not die but may have eternal life...*' NRSV -

With Peter John became a leader of the early church in Jerusalem being still there 14 years later, when Paul was converted- see Acts of the Apostles -8: 1-31. There are longer conversations and theological discourses with the disciples than in the other 3 gospels with the washing of the disciples feet being unique to John detailed in chapter 13.

Above all the emphasis in John's gospel-as a commentary I have says – that Jesus is the way of life, the light to the world as proclaimed by Simeon in the Nunc Dimittis , a canticle at the BCP evensong as a light to lighten the Gentiles -Luke2:29 Also the gospel reading for the feast early this month 40 days after the birth of Christ of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple otherwise known as Candlemas ; a favourite festival of mine coming when the signs of spring are becoming slowly noticeable with increasing hours of daylight and the arrival of early flowers . It is a time more especially relevant now, I feel, with the tentative signs that the Covid-19 pandemic being defeated and to rejoice that the present pessimism/ darkness will give way to light

Happy Candlemas !

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