

The Gospel of John

Introduction

I. THE STATISTICS

- A. 21 Chapters, 879 Verses, 19,099 Words
- B. 43rd Book in the Bible, 4th Book in the New Testament
- C. Other Statistics
 - 1. One other book with 21 chapters: Judges
 - 2. Averages about 42 verses per chapter
 - 3. Fifteenth largest book in the Bible as to number of verses

II. THE HUMAN AUTHOR

- A. Established in the Book of John
 - 1. Never named in the Gospel of John
 - 2. The disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast (John 21:20-24)
 - 3. The disciple whom Jesus loved; often called the beloved disciple
 - a. At the Lord's Supper (John 13:23-26)
 - b. At the cross (John 19:26-27)
 - c. At the tomb (John 20:1-8)
 - d. On the fishing boat (John 21:3-7)
- B. His Life
 - 1. His name, John, corresponds to the OT name, Jonah, and means *a dove*.
 - 2. His parents were Zebedee and Salome (Luke 5:10; cp. Matthew 27:56 with Mark 15:40).
 - 3. He was brother to James (Mark 1:19) who died as a martyr early (Acts 12:1-2).
 - 4. He was a fisherman (Mark 1:19).
 - 5. Jesus named James and John "Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17).
 - 6. He had been a disciple of John the Baptist (Acts 1:21-23).
 - 7. He was one of the inner circle of three (with James and Peter).
 - a. As a witness of the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:37)
 - b. As a witness of the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9)
 - c. As an inquirer of the things to come (Mark 13:3-4)
 - d. As a witness to the agonies of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-34)

- C. His Writings in the New Testament – compared to other human authors
1. Paul – 100 chapters (38.5%) –this includes the 13 chapters of Hebrews
 2. Luke – 52 chapters (20.0%) –Luke, Acts
 3. John – 50 chapters (19.2%) –John, 1John, 2John, 3John, Revelation
 4. Matthew – 28 chapters (10.8%)
 5. Mark – 16 chapters (6.2%)
 6. Peter – 8 chapters (3.1%) –1Peter, 2Peter
 7. James – 5 chapters (1.9%)
 8. Jude – 1 chapter (0.4%)

III. THE PLACE OF THE BOOK

A. In Relation to the Four Gospels

1. The significance of four gospels
 - a. Four is the number of the earth.
 - (1) The four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11:12)
 - (2) The beasts of the earth that “go on all four” (Leviticus 11:27)
 - (3) The four winds of the earth (Revelation 7:1)
 - (4) Four quarters of the earth (Revelation 20:8)
 - (5) The four gospels tell of the **earthly** ministry of Christ.
 - b. As to the **deity** and **humanity** of Christ in relation to His **person** and **work**
 - (1) Matthew presents Jesus Christ as King of the Jews; this is His work as God.
 - (2) Mark presents Jesus Christ as Servant of man; this is His work as man.
 - (3) Luke presents Jesus Christ as the Son of man; this is His person as man.
 - (4) John presents Jesus Christ as the Son of God; this is His person as God.
 - c. As to Old Testament prophecy concerning the Branch
 - (1) Matthew is portrayed by the Branch which is the King (Jeremiah 23:5-6; Jeremiah 33:15-16).
 - (2) Mark is portrayed by the Branch that is God’s Servant (Zechariah 3:8).
 - (3) Luke is portrayed by the Branch who is the Man (Zechariah 6:12-13).
 - (4) John is portrayed by the Branch of the Lord (Isaiah 4:2).
 - d. In comparison to the four beasts of Revelation 4:7
 - (1) The first beast like a lion, the king of the beasts – Matthew
 - (2) The second beast like a calf – Mark
 - (3) The third beast like a man – Luke
 - (4) The fourth beast like a flying eagle, the most majestic of the birds - John

2. A comparison with the other gospels
 - a. As to number of chapters
 - (1) Matthew – 28 chapters; 4 (earthly view) times 7 (heavenly work)
 - (2) Mark – 16 chapters; 4 (earthly view) times 4 (earthly work)
 - (3) Luke – 24 chapters; 4 (earthly view) times 6 (humanity)
 - (4) John – 21 chapters; 3 (divine view) times 7 (heavenly work)
 - b. As to where the gospel begins with the life of Christ
 - (1) Matthew begins with Abraham and David (Matthew 1:1).
 - (2) Mark begins from His baptism (Mark 1:9).
 - (3) Luke begins from Adam (Luke 3:38).
 - (4) John begins from the beginning (John 1:1).
 - c. As to main audience (this is a general statement only)
 - (1) Matthew – the Jews
 - (2) Mark – the Gentiles
 - (3) Luke – the Saved
 - (4) John – the Lost
 - d. As to miracles
 - (1) Matthew records 20 of which 4 are exclusive to Matthew.
 - (2) Mark records 18 of which 2 are exclusive.
 - (3) Luke records 19 of which 6 are exclusive.
 - (4) John records 8 of which 6 are exclusive.
 - (5) Notes:
 - a) Only the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 is found in all four gospels.
 - b) John has the fewest number of miracles but the greatest percentage of exclusive miracles (6 out of 8).
 - e. As to parables
 - (1) Matthew records 27 of which 15 are exclusive.
 - (2) Mark records 10 of which 2 are exclusive.
 - (3) Luke records 28 of which 19 are exclusive.
 - (4) John records 2; both are exclusive.
 - (5) Note: John does not commonly use parables as a teaching tool.
 - f. Words and phrases more common in John than the other gospels
 - (1) Believe with various forms – 99 times (10 for Matthew, 17 for Mark, 11 for Luke)
 - (2) Love with various forms – 57 times (13 for Matthew, 7 for Mark, 15 for Luke)
 - (3) Life – 44 times (15 for Matthew, 8 for Mark, 15 for Luke)
 - (4) Light – 24 times (14 for Matthew, 1 for Mark, 13 for Luke)
 - (5) Love (exact word only) – 22 times (11 for Matthew, 5 for Mark, 12 for Luke)
 - (6) Eternal or everlasting life – 13 times (2 each for Matthew, Mark, and Luke)
 - (7) Verily – 50 times (always used in sets of two in John)

B. In Relation to the Other Writings of John

1. John wrote of the Holy Ghost's provision for three categories of New Testament writings.
 - a. He will "bring all things to your remembrance" (John 14:26).
 - b. He will "teach you all things" (John 14:26) and will "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).
 - c. He will "shew you things to come" (John 16:13).
2. This corresponds to the three major categories of writing in the New Testament.
 - a. Things brought to remembrance are books of History (Matthew through Acts).
 - b. The teaching of all things and guidance into all truth are the books called the Epistles (Romans through Jude).
 - c. The things to come would refer to the New Testament book of Prophecy (Revelation).
3. Of the New Testament authors, only John wrote major books in all three categories:
 - a. History – the Gospel of John
 - b. Teaching – the Epistles of John
 - c. Prophecy – the Book of Revelation
4. These books follow a divine pattern in their chapter totals:
 - a. A total of 50 chapters (7 times 7 plus 1)
 - (1) The Gospel of John has 21 chapters (3 times 7).
 - (2) The Epistles of John have a total of 7 chapters (7).
 - (3) The Book of Revelation has 22 chapters (3 times 7 plus 1).
 - b. This pattern is found elsewhere in scripture:
 - (1) In the feast of weeks, also called Pentecost
 - a) Measured from the feast of firstfruits as seven sabbaths and the morrow after the seventh sabbath (Leviticus 23:15-16)
 - b) This is 7 times 7 plus 1.
 - c) The feast of weeks is a picture of the coming power of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost [Pentecost means fifty].
 - (2) In the year of Jubilee
 - a) Measured as seven sabbaths of years and the year after the seventh sabbath year (Leviticus 25:8-13)
 - b) This is 7 years times 7 plus 1.
 - c) The year of jubilee was a time of rest, celebration, and liberty; it is a picture of the coming rest when God will reign over all.
 - c. The fiftieth chapter written by John is Revelation 22.
 - (1) There is no more curse (Revelation 22:3).
 - (2) God's servants shall serve Him (Revelation 22:3).
 - (3) The Lord God is the light and there is no more need for the sun (Revelation 22:5).

IV. THE STATED PURPOSE

A. Keys to Analyzing a Book in the Bible

1. Explanation: The analysis of a book in the Bible gives an overall view of the purpose and direction of the book. It is not a destructive study, but an instructive one. It seeks to know God's purpose or theme for the book and to understand the approach He takes in the book. One of the best ways to analyze a book is to read it completely through several times. The Holy Spirit will begin to reveal the organization and direction of the book as you continue to read. Other helps involve looking for the following:
 2. First key: Statement of Purpose – Some books have a direct statement telling the purpose of the book and some do not. John has one of the clearest statements of purpose in the Bible in John 20:30-31.
 3. Second key: Natural Divisions – Most books of the Bible have some natural divisions of thought, though some are better defined than others. John has some easy places to divide and some not so easy.
 4. Third key: Key Word Distribution – Key word distribution refers to the use of key words and how they are used more commonly in some portions of the book than they are in other portions. John, as mentioned above, has some important key words. However, it is difficult to glean much from how these key words are distributed throughout the book.
 5. Fourth key: Key Shifts in the Text – Key shifts can refer to many things like a shift in the person of the pronoun, a shift in audience, location, key person, etc. John has some important key shifts that will help you understand what is meant by this.

B. John's Statement of Purpose

1. John 20:30-31 – “And many other **signs** truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have **life** through his name.”
2. Key words in this statement:
 - a. Signs
 - (1) Signs normally refer to miraculous events.
 - (2) John has eight miracles or signs.
 - a) The signs of John are especially chosen from many possible ones.
 - b) The signs of John have the special purpose of demonstrating that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 - b. Believe; the Gospel of John is written so that people might believe.
 - c. Life; John is written so that those who believe might have life.

C. The Signs in the Gospel of John

1. The changing of water into wine (John 2:1-11)
 - a. Revealing the power of Christ over quality (John 2:9-10)
 - b. Caused the disciples to believe on Christ (John 2:11)
 - c. Named the first miracle (John 2:11)
2. The healing of the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54)
 - a. Revealed the power of Christ over distance (John 4:46)
 - b. Caused the nobleman and his house to believe (John 4:53)
 - c. Named the second miracle (John 4:54)
3. The healing of the lame man (John 5:1-9)
 - a. Revealed the power of Christ over time; He did not have to wait for the stirring of the water (John 5:5).
 - b. Brought faith and forgiveness to the lame man (John 5:13-15)
4. The feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:1-14)
 - a. Revealed the power of Christ over quantity (John 6:9-13)
 - b. Caused the multitude to believe that He was "that prophet" (John 6:14)
5. The walking on the water (John 6:16-21)
 - a. Revealed the power of Christ over natural law (John 6:19-20)
 - b. Caused the disciples to believe in Him as the Son of God (Matthew 14:32-33; John 6:67-69)
6. The healing of the man born blind (John 9:1-12)
 - a. Revealed the power of Christ over darkness (John 9:1-7)
 - b. Caused the blind man to believe in Christ and to worship Him (John 9:35-38)
7. The raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-46)
 - a. Revealed the power of Christ over death (John 11:25-26, 38-44)
 - b. Caused many of the Jews to believe on Jesus (John 11:45; John 12:9-11, 17-19)
 - c. These seven miracles were performed during the regular earthly ministry of Christ. The eighth is recorded after the resurrection of Christ.
8. The draught of fishes (John 21:4-11)
 - a. Revealed the power of Christ in the work of His disciples (John 15:5)
 - b. Caused the disciples to know Jesus as Lord (John 21:12)

D. Key Shifts in the Gospel of John

1. The coming of His hour
 - a. Not yet come (John 2:4; John 7:30; John 8:20)
 - b. Now come (John 12:23, 27; John 13:1; John 16:32; John 17:1)
2. The identity of "his own"
 - a. In John 1:11, "his own" are the Jews who reject Jesus.
 - b. In John 13:1, "his own" are the disciples who believed in Jesus.

3. Growing rejection of Jesus and His message
 - a. First unorganized attempt to kill Him (John 5:16-18)
 - b. First major departure of His disciples (John 6:66)
 - c. First organized attempt to seize Him (John 7:30-32)
 - d. First organized attempt to kill Him (John 11:47-51, 57)
 - e. Final rejection of His miracles (John 12:37)

V. THE DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK

A. Discovery

1. Chapters 1-4
2. He reveals Himself
 - a. To the disciples of John (chapter 1)
 - b. To the Jews of Galilee (chapter 2)
 - c. To Nicodemus of the Pharisees (chapter 3)
 - d. To the woman of Samaria (chapter 4)

B. Division

1. Chapters 5-10
2. The key word division is found three times in John (John 7:43; John 9:16; John 10:19); all within this section of the book.
3. This is the time when opposition to Jesus develops and grows.

C. Denial

1. Chapters 11-12
2. Because of the resurrection of Lazarus, the Jewish council and high priest make specific plans to put Jesus to death; their rejection is final.

D. Devotion

1. Chapters 13-17
2. Jesus speaks to “his own” (John 13:1), not as simple servants, but as friends (John 15:15). Many look at this section of John as the holy of holies in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

E. Death

1. Chapters 18-19
2. Jesus is taken in judgment and is crucified.

F. Deliverance

1. Chapter 20
2. Jesus rises again from the dead in complete triumph.

G. Direction

1. Chapter 21
2. After His resurrection, Jesus gives encouragement and direction to His faithful disciples.