

Why we disciple believers in the Gospel of John

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One of the most enriching studies we've conducted in our disciple-making is a survey of the claims of Christ in the Gospel of John. We've identified 85 claims concerning our Savior. Beholding such a comprehensive 'portrait' of our Lord is transformative. For, as we meditate on His claims, we are setting before the eyes of faith the content of what we confess concerning the Person of the Son of God, and His ability to save our eternal souls. The blessed result of meditating upon the claims of Christ is the further development of trust, worship, obedience, love, and delight. Would not the reader agree that these blessings are essential to the spiritual growth of our disciples?

The primary purpose that John wrote his gospel is evangelistic: "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn 20:30-31). Genuine faith desires to understand, so as to trust even more. That is an important theme in John's gospel. For, it was written that you might believe, and continue to believe. Thus, not only is this book to win new converts, it is also to fortify and establish the believer's faith.

This gospel contains contrasting themes: *life versus death, love versus hate, light versus darkness*. Closely connected with these themes of antithesis are three non-negotiables: **1)** Christ is the Word, Messiah, Son of God. **2)** He brings the gift of salvation to mankind. **3)** One either accepts or rejects the offer of salvation through Him. Thus, Christ's 85 claims constitute a comprehensive 'crossroads' by setting forth the responses of faith or unbelief. Thus, as our disciples study the claims of Christ, they are sharpening their evangelistic skills. For, the Christian may well say to his unsaved friend, "Have you considered what it is that you are disbelieving?" For, by your unbelief you are saying, "I reject all 85 of the claims of Christ even though they are documented in the twenty-one

chapters of the Gospel of John!” “I urge you to abandon your doubt and flee to Christ who alone can save you.”

Our disciples are fed by this book of ‘spiritual treasure’ and its vast riches, deposited by the Holy Spirit. For, in this gospel we see how God marvelously, sovereignly, and precisely accomplishes His redemptive plan. Every word He spoke and action He undertook (culminating in His passion) were divinely directed and secured by His submission to His Father’s will. In His suffering, Jesus is not an unfortunate victim of man’s malice, He is the ‘good shepherd’ who lays down His life for His sheep. He is the Word of God, the eternal Logos, and the One who reveals the Father because He shares the Father’s deity. He is the One who made the universe, and now He provides life-giving spiritual water and bread.

One subscriber to our monthly article from GFL writes: Thanks so much for the ministry of Gospel for Life. Your articles are a mighty encouragement to us! How powerful to have this detailed analysis of Christ’s claims in the book of John. Receiving your article was timed so beautifully with the distribution of John’s Gospel throughout our neighborhood in an our church’s evangelistic outreach!

It has been said that the epistle of First John teaches the humanity of Christ assuming you understand His deity, and the Gospel of John teaches the deity of Christ assuming you accept His humanity. John’s gospel proclaims the Lord Jesus Christ as the answer to the devastating reality of sin, especially by emphasizing our total dependence upon God for salvation. God’s will in the gospel, and the power of His Spirit is the divine answer to human inability.