

# INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

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- ❖ The 4 Canonical Gospels (4 sessions)
- ❖ Acts & Pauline Epistles (5 sessions)
- ❖ Catholic Epistles, letters & Revelation (1 session)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Session covered

- ❖ Introduction to the 4 Canonical Gospels
- ❖ Proof of their Canonicity (Internal & External evidence)
- ❖ Wisdom behind the existence of 4 Gospels
- ❖ Meaning of the word Gospel and proper titles
- ❖ Purposes of each Gospel

2<sup>nd</sup> Session covered

- ❖ The Gospel according to St Matthew
- ❖ The Gospel according to St Mark

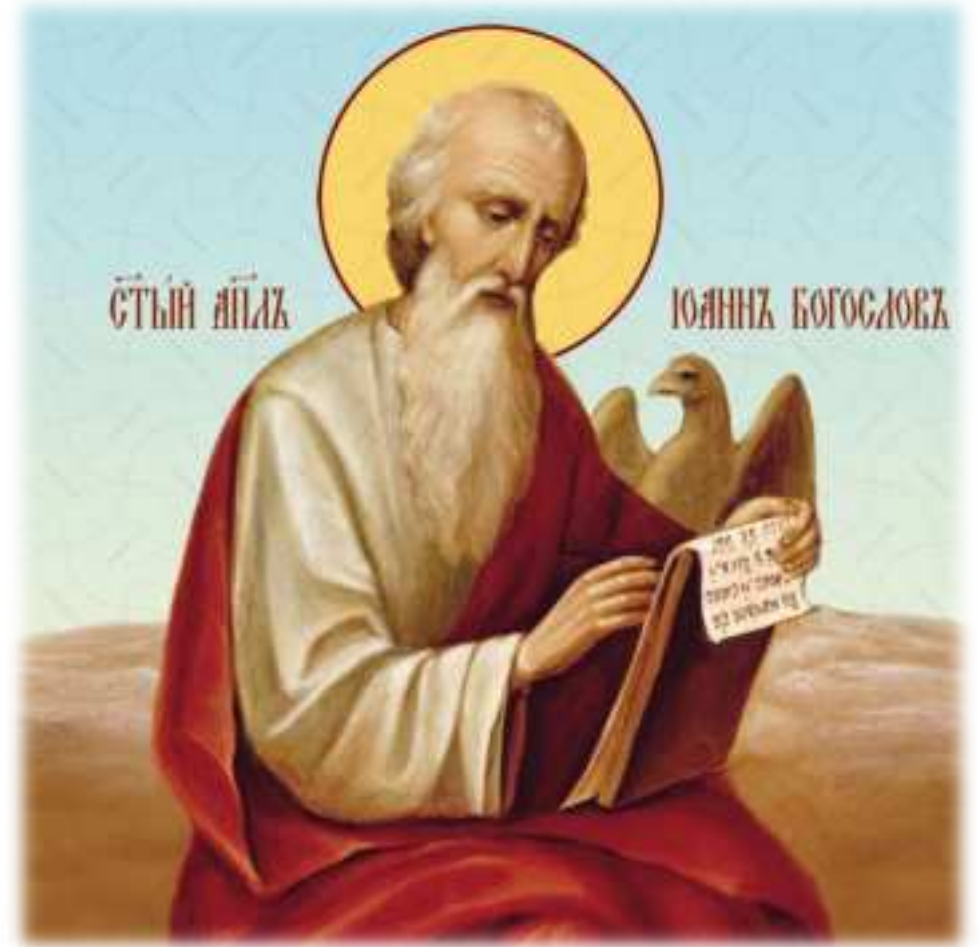
3<sup>rd</sup> Session covered

- ❖ The Gospel according to St Luke



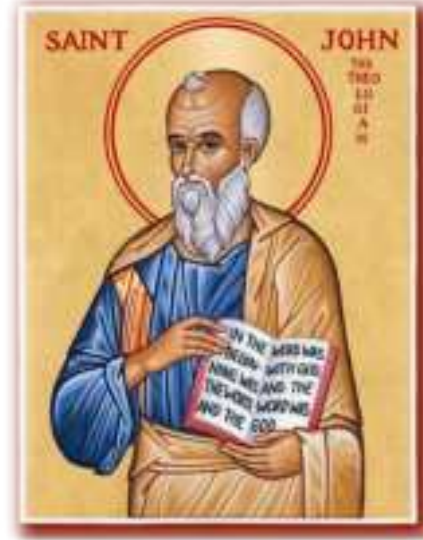
# Gospel According to St. John

1. About the Author.
2. Time of the writing.
3. Place of writing & who was addressed.
4. Main features of the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel.
5. Objectives of the gospel according to St John
6. Theological perspective of the Gospel.
7. Christ' portrayal in the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel.
8. Major content & special features of the 4th Gospel.



# The Gospel According To St. John

## 1-About the Author:



- ❖ Writer of the 4th Gospel – The meaning of his name “John” is “God is Gracious”.
- ❖ Son of Zebedee & the brother of St James the Greater who was martyred during the reign of Herod Agrippa I in 44 A.D.
- ❖ From **Bethsaida of Galilee**, St John & St James were **Partners** with Simon Peter (Luke 5:10)
- ❖ His father was a **rich fisherman** as he had hired servants (Mark 1:20).
- ❖ His **mother is Salome**; a pious woman and one of the women who followed & served Christ.  
She also **followed Jesus** to the cross and with the other women, prepared spices for His burial (Mark 15:40-41, 16:1), (Luke 18:3 23:55) and (Matthew 27:56).
- ❖ **Her request** from Jesus to grant her two sons to sit at His right & left in His kingdom shows that she had in her heart the hope of the Jews in Jesus the savior. From another perspective it shows how keen she was to guarantee both spiritual life and happiness to her sons.
- ❖ His brother **St James the Greater was older than him** as all the gospels used to mention James before John.



# 1-About the Author.....

## 1- Was St John related to Jesus?

*“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene” (John 19:25)*

It is mistakenly thought that this verse refers to 4 women standing by the cross.

1. St Mary His mother, 2. Her sister (claimed to be mother of James & John) Which in turn claim that John is Jesus' cousin 3. Wife of Clopas and 4. Mary Magdalene

The correct reading shows that the women were only three as “his mother's sister” is “the wife of Clopas” the mother of James Son of Alphaeus.

However, St John when writing the circumstances in which he met Jesus (Ch1), he never referred to any connection by blood.

Hence it is only jumping to the conclusions when any connection is assumed.



# 1-About the Author....

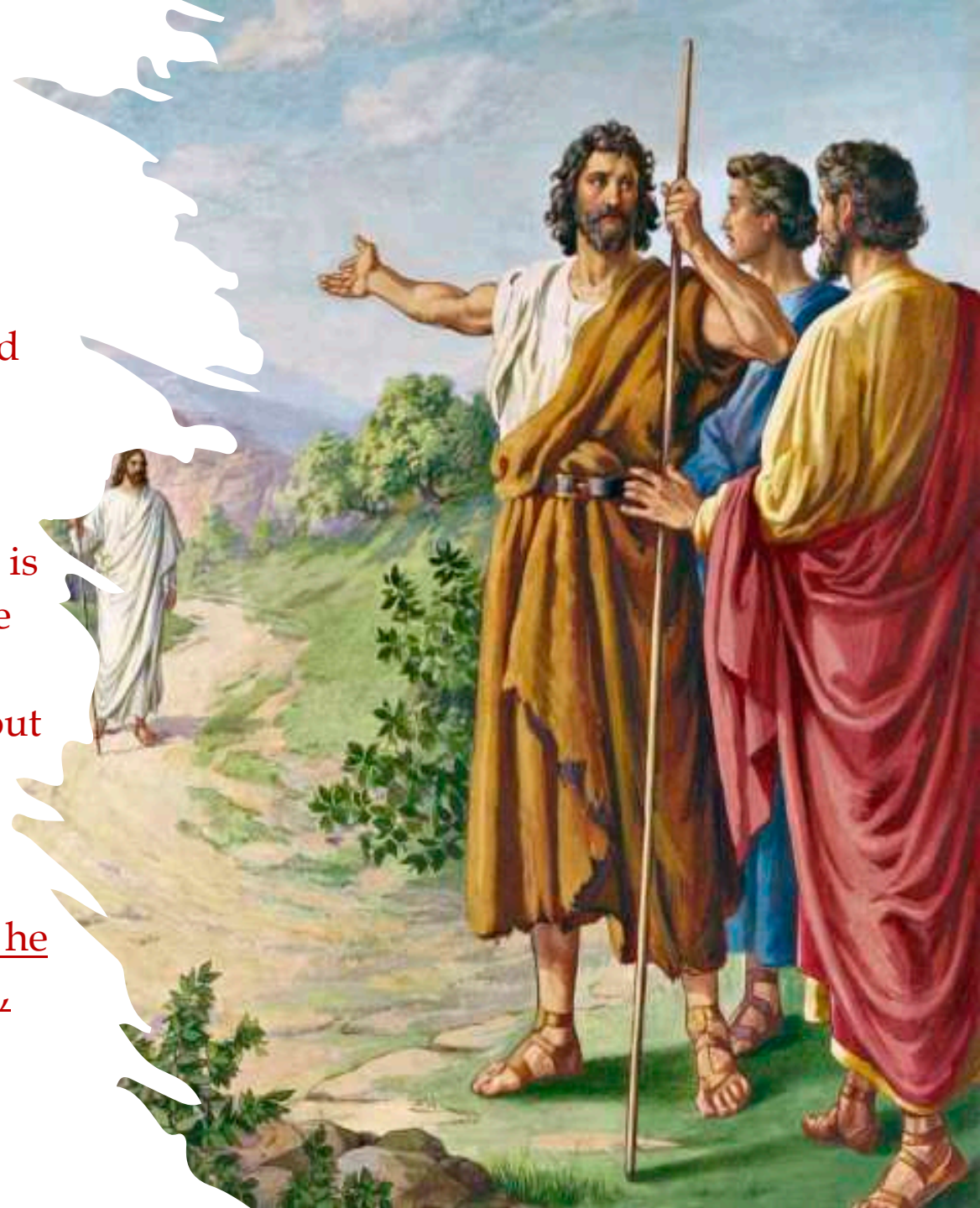
## 2-St. John's was one of the 1<sup>st</sup> disciples of Jesus

**It Seems - St John was a disciple of John the Baptist and followed him (John 1:35)**

“Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi”, which is to say, when translated, Teacher, “where are You staying?” He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day, now it was about the tenth hour. **One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.**

He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah”, which is translated, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas”

**So - John was one of the first disciples of Jesus Christ.**





## 1-About the Author....



Based on Saint Jerome writings,  
Saint John was 25 years old at  
that time.

## 2-St. John's call as portrayed by the other evangelists

“When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and went after Him”.  
(Mark 1:19-20)

“Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him” (Matthew 4:21, 22)

“For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.” So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him....” (Luke 5:10)

# 1-About the Author...

## 3- Saint John's life following being chosen

1. In the list of the 12, John always comes **among the close 4** (Mat 10:3), (Mark 3:14), (Luke 6:13) (Acts 1:13)
2. He was one of the 3 disciples Jesus chose to be His companions (**Peter, James & John**) **only they** witnessed:
  - I. Raising of Jairus' Daughter (Mark 5), (Luke 8)
  - II. The Transfiguration (Mat 17), (Mark 5) and (Luke 9)
  - III. In the garden of Gethsemane (Mat 26), (Mark 14)
3. He was one of the 4 disciples, **Peter, James, John & Andrew**, who privately asked Jesus about the signs of the times and the end of the age. (Mark 13:3, 4)
4. John and James were short-tempered - Jesus named them **Boanerges meaning "Sons of Thunder"** (Mark 3:17). We also read in:
  - ❖ (Mark 9) “Now John answered Him, saying, Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.”
  - ❖ (Luke 9) we read about a Samaritan village rejecting Christ, consequently James & John said “Lord, do You want us to **command fire to come down from heaven and consume them**, just as Elijah did? But He turned and rebuked them, and said, You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.”
  - ✓ This attitude disappeared later, and they became ready to face martyrdom for the sake of Christ and His Gospel.  
(Mark 10:39), (Mat 20:23)



# 1-About the Author.....

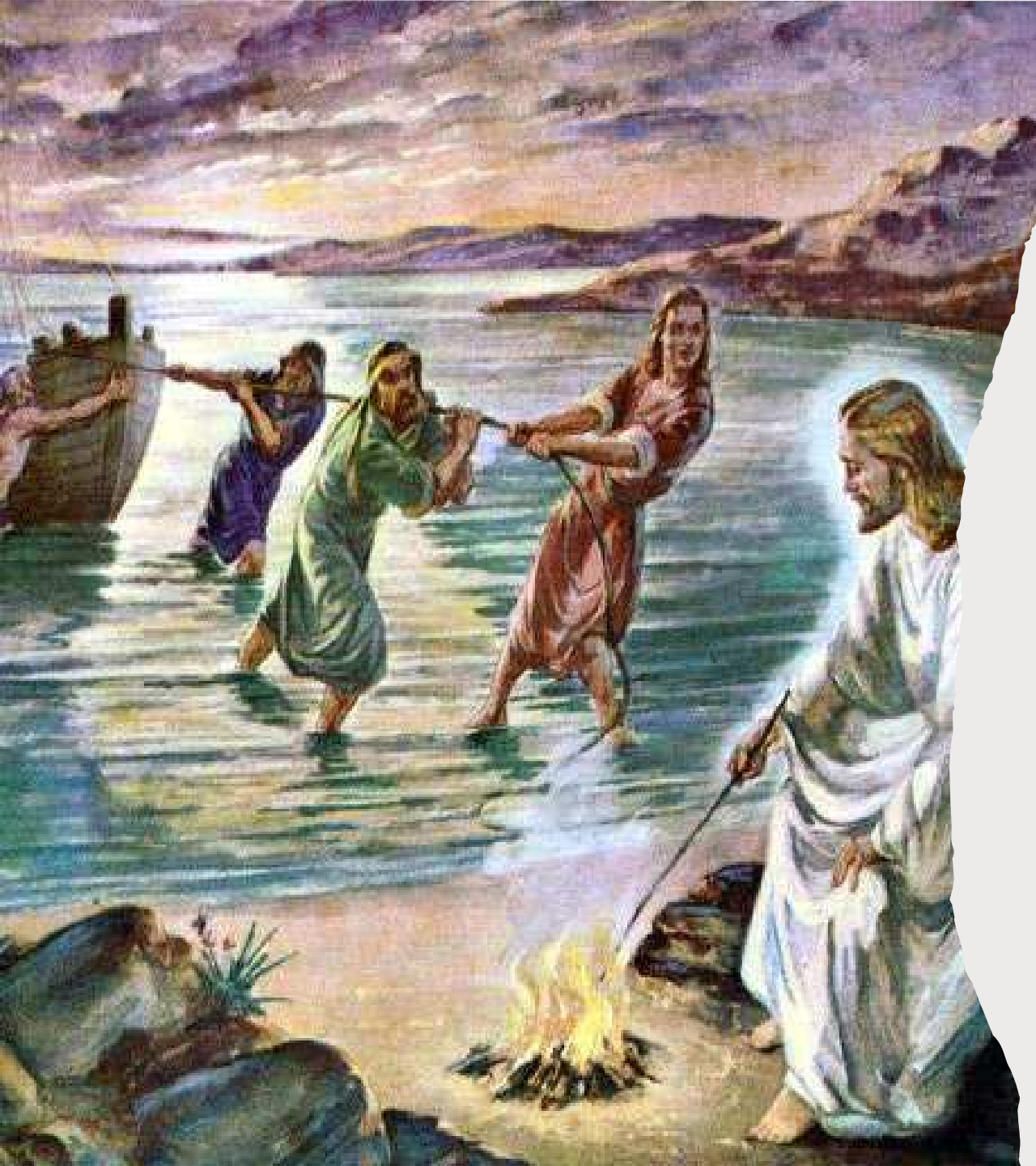
## 3- Saint John's life following being chosen

5. He was entrusted by the Lord to prepare the Passover with Peter (Luke 22-8).
6. John was at the table of the last supper (John 13), he was leaning on Jesus' chest and **asked Him about the one intending to betray Him** - a sign of how close he was to the Lord.
7. John remained faithful to his Master ... and **followed Him all the way to the cross**
8. On the night Jesus was arrested, John closely followed him to the house of the High Priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. Then he went out and spoke to the porter to let Peter in ( 18:15)
9. Being faithful to his Master, he deserved to be entrusted by Jesus to take care of His mother. (John 19)  
(Another sign of his closeness to Christ It is highly likely then that John had a house in Jerusalem).

### 10. John was **the first to believe in the resurrection**

On the day of resurrection, Peter and John ran to the empty tomb "**Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed**" (John 20:1-8)





## 1-About the Author....

### 3- Saint John's life following being chosen

11. John was one of the 7 disciples to whom Jesus appeared at the Sea of Tiberias. John was the first to recognize Him and said to Peter **"It is the Lord!"** after they caught multitude of fish when they could not the whole night. (John 21:1-7).

12. In the same chapter (last chapter) we read the conversation between Jesus & Peter regarding John.

This conversation was mistakenly interpreted that John will not die, when it was pointing out to John experiencing the Second Coming of Christ through the spirit of prophecy in the book of Revelation.

# 1-About the Author.....

## 4- Saint John's life after the Ascension



1. In Acts we see him appearing twice with Peter:
  - i. When they both went into the temple & healed the lame man and preached the name of Christ. After which they were arrested and imprisoned for a while, then released as the authorities feared the people's rage. (Acts 3, 4)
  - ii. As Samaria received the word of God due to Philip's preaching. The Church of Jerusalem sent them to pray for the Samaritans that they might receive the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:15).
2. After the martyrdom of St James his brother during the reign of Herod Agrippa I in 44AD (Acts 12:1) and until the Council of Jerusalem in 50AD; nothing is mentioned about St John, and it is unknown how he spend this period.
3. **St John attended the Council of Jerusalem in 50AD.** St Paul mentioned him being **one of the pillars** of the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 15:6) and (Gal 2:9) **“and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised”**.



# 1-About the Author....

## 4- The disciple whom Jesus loved

As the author of the 4<sup>th</sup> gospel **intentionally concealed his name**, only pointing to himself in his gospel by “**The other disciple**” or “**The disciple whom Jesus loved**”.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter it is pointed out that 2 disciples of John the Baptist knew Jesus through the testimony of their teacher. It mentions the name of only Andrew (Peter’s brother), while the other’s name is neglected.

“Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom **one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.**”. (John 13:20)

“... But Peter stood at the door outside. Then **the other disciple**, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in ...” (John 18)

By the cross “When Jesus therefore saw His mother, **and the disciple whom He loved** standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home” (John 19-26, 27)

“So they both ran together, and **the other disciple** outran Peter and came to the tomb first..... Then **the other disciple**, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed” (John 20:2-)

Given that the author never mention the name of this disciple, only referring to him as “The disciple whom Jesus loved” implicitly shows that this disciple was **well known to the entire Church**.

# 1-About the Author....

## 6- So how do we conclude that this disciple is John the son of Zebedee?



Logically “The disciple whom Jesus loved” is one of the closest disciples to Jesus. Four disciples were so close to Jesus (**Peter & Andrew – James & John**). The disciple whom Jesus loved” has to be one of those four disciples.

1- It can't be **Andrew**, as Andrew was mentioned by name in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of this gospel, and “**The other disciple**” was with him. Moreover, Andrew didn't join Jesus in a number of occasions in which only the other three joined Him.

2- It can't be **Peter** because he's mentioned together with “The other disciple” in many occasions (John 13, 18 & 21)

Then the author has to be one of the brothers **James or John** the sons of Zebedee. Given that James was martyred in 44AD (Acts 12) and the 4th gospel was written around the end of the first century, we conclude that James can't be its author.

**Sure enough the author of the 4th gospel is John the son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved.**

## 1-About the Author....

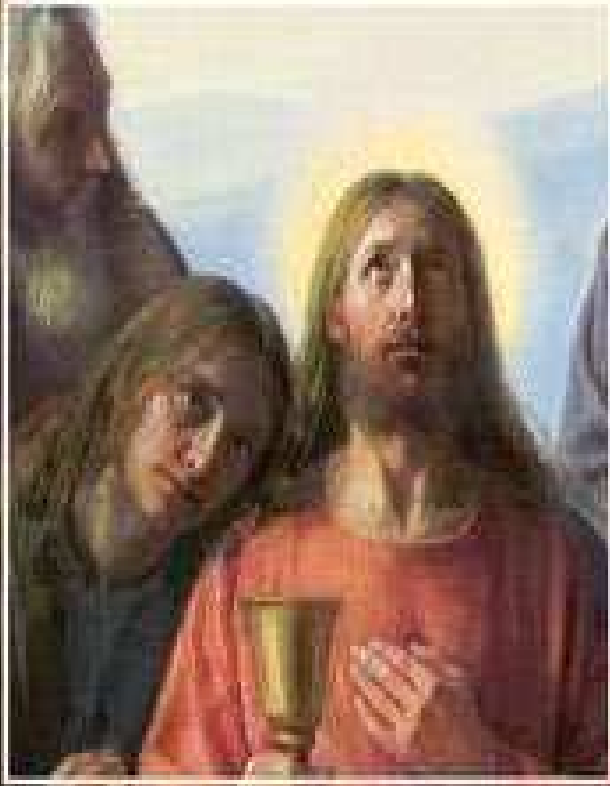
5- But how do we conclude that “The disciple whom Jesus loved” is the **author** of the fourth gospel?

In the last chapter (John 21) the author speaks about Jesus appearing to 7 of His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, when Jesus asked Peter to follow Him

“Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, .....Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what about this man?” Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me”.”

In the following verses the author explicitly states the identity of this disciple whom he concealed his name earlier, explaining the reason for doing this. (John 21:24) “**This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things ...**”

This shows clearly that “**The disciple whom Jesus loved**” is the author of the gospel.





# 1-About the Author....

## 7- The rest of his life:

John served closely with Peter, but when Peter left, he stayed in Jerusalem with St Mary until her departure then he started preaching in Asia Minor, mainly Ephesus. Accordingly, the 7 churches of Asia Minor enjoyed his love.

Emperor Domitian, exiled him to the island of Patmos. On this small, rocky, almost uninhabited island, St John received his Revelation of the last days.

When Emperor Nerva reigned in 96AD.; he released St John. He returned to Ephesus and **among his disciples was Polycarp, Papias, and Ignatius of Antioch.**

St Jerome wrote that John remained in Ephesus till his departure during the reign of Trojan (98-117 AD). And that he died peacefully in 98AD. He was the only disciple to live till the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.



## 2-The time of writing the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel

- ❖ The gospel of St. John is the last to be written among the 4 Gospels, it is believed St John wrote it during the last days of his life between **80 and 90 AD**. **This would be 30y after the other 3 books.**
- ❖ We know that it was definitely after 70AD (destruction of Jerusalem & the Temple). As St. John didn't refer to Jesus foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem - as mentioned by the other evangelists.
- ❖ Some opinions support that John pointed out on few occasions to the **destruction/changes** of Jerusalem: "... He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there **was** a garden" (18:1) and "Now in the place where He was crucified, there **was** a garden ..." (19:41)
- ❖ Some Church fathers (**like Irenaeus**) believe St John wrote the Gospel **after Revelation** – So after his return from exile in Patmos; making it the last book in the NT.
- ❖ St John Called himself WITNESS as he was the last living disciple who witnessed Christ – we see this title in many places as he was indeed an eye-witness



### 3- Place of writing & who was addressed by the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel

John wrote the gospel in the city of Ephesus where he spent the last days of his life.

It is addressed to all believers (mainly the Greek) - this is supported by a number of early Church fathers.

#### Internal evidences (from the gospel itself) that support the writing the gospel in Greek & in Ephesus:

**1) St John explained the Greek meaning of Hebrew words:**

in (John 1) "...They said to Him, "Rabbi" which is to say, when translated, Teacher, where are You staying?"

in (John 4:25) "The (Samaritan) woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah, who is called Christ, is coming"

**2) He also explained Jewish traditions** as in "Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches" also

"And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" which is translated Sent ..." (John 9:7)

**3) St. John cared to mention Jesus' encounters with Greeks (John 7:35) "Then the Jews said among themselves, Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?" and (John 12:20) "Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast." Why would he feel the need to mention this fact?**

**4) The 4<sup>th</sup> gospel used the Ancient Greek term "Logos" proving that the author wrote it in Asia Minor being wealthy of Phoenician & Greek philosophies during that time and that he addressed the Greek**



## 4- Main features of the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel:

- 1) **Focuses on the Divinity of Christ** – St John (The Theologian) started with the prologue (1: 1-18) that shows his theological depth, he gives a brief introduction about the divinity of Christ the Word:
  - ❖ **The eternal** being of Jesus Christ (In the beginning was the Word)
  - ❖ **The distinction** between the Son hypostasis and the Father hypostasis (and the Word was with God)
  - ❖ **The Unity** between the Father and the Son (and the Word was God)
  - ❖ **Christ the creator** (All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made)
  - ❖ **The exclusive Sonship** to the Father (And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father)
- 2) The rest of the gospel is considered **an explanation & fortification** of what he wrote in the prologue. Because a major objective of this gospel is to present the divinity of Christ.
  - ❖ Through witness for His divinity by John the Baptist.
  - ❖ The witness of all the prophets of the OT.
  - ❖ Through the miracles and powers of Jesus Christ.
  - ❖ Through the testimony of Christ Himself; in such a testimony, **Jesus revealed His divinity** and His relation to the Father and the world, Jesus pointed to the importance in believing in His testimony and its importance for finding the true life. “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted Him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given Him. Now this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. .... And now, Father, glorify Me in your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began. (17: 1-5) - for some say Christ Never said He is God!! well then you didn't read St John

#### 4- **Other main features of the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel.....**



- 3) St John's **uses simple words –any one can read it without interpretation-** Yet it attain very rich meanings and spirituality.
- 4) The other evangelists present Christ's biography in support of His teachings. St. John **presents His divinity supported by His teachings**
- 5) The other writers, focus on Christ's service **in Galilee**, but John focused on Christ's service throughout **the entire Judea**.
- 6) St John presented events & teachings that were absent from the other 3 Gospels. St John named the 3 Feasts of Passover that Christ attended (John 2, 5 & 6), and Him being crucified in the 4<sup>th</sup> **By tracking these feasts, we could reasonably calculate that Jesus' ministry lasted 3.5 years**
- 7) The other evangelists presented sermons & miracles of Christ without commentary. St. John presented explanations & details that **carried significant theological interpretations**. Because of his extensive commentary, we can easily give TITELS to each chapter in St John's Gospel. We cannot easily do so with the other 3 Books.
- 8) We can split into 2 main parts, Ch1-11 Miracles – Ch12-21 Passion/Cross. So 50% of St John's gospel is Holy weeks, that's why it is the most read during Holy Week – then again Bright Saturday.

#### 4- Other main features of the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel.....



##### 9) The most Gospel to refer to the Church's 7 sacraments

- A. **Baptism**: John 1 (Christ's Baptism) again in Ch 3 in the discussion with Nicodemus, then Ch 5 (Moving water of the Pool of Bethesda).
- B. **Mayroun**: The Gospel with most reference to the Holy Spirit – The church calls the 5 chapters from 13 to 17 (The Parakleet) – Because he extensively speak about the work of the Holy Spirit.
- C. **Repentance/confession**: Very evident in this Gospel, uniquely refers to the Samaritan woman; the woman caught in sin  
And in Ch20 breath of the Holy Spirit (If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.)
- D. **Eucharist**: John Ch6 is the Church's **MAIN reference** to this Sacrament.  
Christ's extremely strong stance in John 6 about His Body & Blood





## 5- Objectives of the gospel

### A- Educational & Theological objective:

St John stated his objective at the end **“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name”** (20:31),

He wanted to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, Eternal Word, God Himself. To attain this objective, he mentioned some of the Lord’s miracles and teachings.

But it was impossible to mention all the events, teachings, and miracles of Jesus Christ **“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book”** (20:30)

One of the Church Fathers dared to say: It is as if the Gospel has a body manifested in the books by Mark, Matthew & Luke whilst its spirit is in John’s Gospel

## 5- Objectives of the gospel...

### B- The defensive objective



Defense against heresies that spread by end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

Heresies related to the divinity/humanity of Jesus Christ, examples:

#### Docetism :

Closely related to Gnosticism = Both claimed that Jesus **only seemed** (Greek: *dokein* “to appear”) to have human body—that His **suffering, death, and physicality were illusions**. casting doubts on His humanity

#### Cerin-thia-nism (followers of Cerinthus):

Denied the divinity of Christ and misunderstood the manifestation, they claimed that Jesus was human; and that Christ is a superior spirit that descended on Jesus during baptism and departed Him at the cross.

#### Ebionism:

Which St Eusebius commented on saying: “**Their beliefs were so degraded towards Jesus Christ**”.

They believed Jesus was the Messiah, but not divine.

They thought of Him as a regular person who was only justified due to his virtue & following Jewish laws.

They denied His immaculate conception by St Mary.

They did not accept salvation by faith in Christ **but** by clinging to the Law (as Christ did).

St. John didn't overwhelm the readers by mentioning -or- rebuking these heresies that infected the Church. Rather, he took a positive approach by presenting the truth and assuring true believers of their faith.

**And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe (19:35)**

## 5- Objectives of the gospel...

### C- Complementary Objective - To complete & conclude the other 3 gospels

St. John didn't want to repeat what was narrated by the other Evangelists as he intended his gospel to be a message to people who knew Christ and His teachings to help them face wrong believes spread by heretics.

St. John had different objective from the other gospels which presented events as an external view of Christ, St. John had to present Jesus Christ in His divine glory proved in each event

#### We see such a complementary objective clearly

##### **1. St. John neglects to mention some of the events despite its importance**

- A. He mentions nothing about choosing the 12 disciples although on the sixth chapter he quotes Christ saying  
“Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (6:70)
- B. He assumes the readers know that John the Baptist was imprisoned, as he says  
“For John had not yet been thrown into prison” (3:24)
- C. He left out mentioning: The birth of Christ, His baptism, The temptation on the mount and All miracles mentioned by the other evangelists (except 7).
- D. John also just touched on the last supper, the passion in Gethsemane and the resurrection.



## 5- Objectives of the gospel...

### To prove such a complementary objective

#### 2. St. John mentioned (events and miracles) missing from the other 3 books

##### 1. Events such as:

- A. The Samaritan woman
- B. The meeting with Nicodemus

##### 2. Miracles such as

- A. Turning water into wine at the wedding of Cana Galilee
- B. Healing the paralytic man at the pool of Bethesda
- C. Healing of the man born blind.
- D. Raising Lazarus from the dead.
- E. Miraculous catch of fish (post-resurrection).

## 5- Objectives of the gospel....

### C- Complementary Objective - To complete & conclude the other 3 gospels

3. St. John when he repeated events mentioned by the other 3 Evangelists, he did so to either **Completed what was missing** in some events - OR - **To show the divine dimension** - Examples

A. He mentioned miracle of feeding the 5K as was mentioned by the four Evangelists - BUT

Whilst Matthew & Mark point out that Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. John told the miracle to **focus on the Eucharist**

**"And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (6:35) -- "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." (6:51)** That's when the Jews accused Him of blasphemy

The other evangelists when mentioning the Last Supper: (**He took Bread, gave thanks, blessed it and broke it**).

John did NOT mention it -Why - Because it was no News:

1- Because the others already did -And- 2-Because of what he already mentioned in Ch 6

B. Mentioning the event of the woman pouring the very costly fragrant oil on Jesus

- ❖ Matthew & Mark point out that woman approached Jesus and poured the fragrant oil **on His head**.
- ❖ But John (12:3) mentioned that the woman was Mary, Lazarus' sister, adding that she **anointed His feet** without mentioning that she poured the oil on His head

## 5- Objectives of the gospel...

4. St John kept the historical/biographical nature **but cared most about the divinity of Christ.**

So, while narrating the life of Christ he spent an exceptional effort to reveal its theological meaning

Whilst the other 3 books of the

- A. **The Sermon on the Mount** St John didn't mention it at all but referred to Jesus' words during the Last Supper highlighting the duties of each Christian, the favorable virtue of meekness & love.  
(John 13:1, 15, 34, 35), (14:15), (15:10, 12, 17).
- B. **Christ's baptism** : St John didn't mention it, but he focused on the theological meaning within when he quoted John the Baptist's testimony: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified **that this is the Son of God**" (John 1:32-34)



## 5- Objectives of the gospel.....

### C- Complementary Objective - To complete the other 3 gospels

This complementary objective of this gospel was recognized by *Eusebius of Cæsarea* who said:

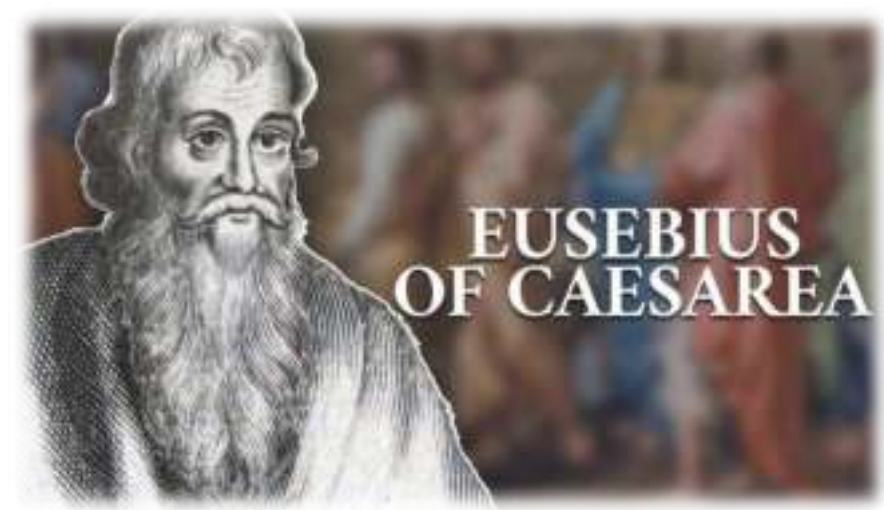
“After Matthew, Mark and Luke wrote their gospels, it is said that John who spent all his time preaching the gospel started to write for the following reason:

The three gospels reached everyone, including John who accepted them and testified their authenticity, but lacked the explanation of Christ's activities during His early service. As the other Evangelists recorded the actions of the Savior that took place a year after throwing John the Baptist in Jail; when John wrote his gospel, he described the period that was left out by the other Evangelists.

Mentioning the actions Jesus made before John the Baptist imprisonment, clarifying this by saying “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee” (John 2:11).

Also when he talked about John the Baptist while he was baptizing near Salim, he clarified that same matter by saying “For John had not yet been thrown into prison” (John 3:24).

As for the genealogy of Jesus Christ, it was normal that John does not mention it as **Matthew and Luke hadd already mentioned it**. On the other hand, John started with a powerful theological belief that was saved for him being the most able among the Evangelists through the help of the Spirit of God



[Eusebius III: XXIV, VII-XIII]



## 6- Theological perspective of the Gospel

- ❖ The gospel presents the salvation Christ gave humanity;
- ❖ It is focused on presenting Christ, the Son of God. Through the acts & teachings of Jesus Christ.

St. John proves:

**His eternity,**

**His mission to deliver mankind and**

**His return to His Heavenly Glory.**

In this we find Jesus address Himself in His teachings by saying

**'I ...' or 'I am ...'**



**I AM - One of the Keys of St John's Gospel**

*God Guides, We Obey*

## 6- Theological perspective of the Gospel.

When He was talking to the Samaritan woman, He said  
“**I who speak to you AM He** (the Messiah)” (4:26)

**The clause “I am”** presents an evidence for the divinity of Christ.

It is the same clause that was translated to “**Jehovah**” it is ‘**God’s name**’  
**declared by Moses** after appearing to him in the bush.



It is also being translated as ‘**I exist**’ as in His words “**I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM**” (8:58) and  
“**Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I AM He**” (13:19).

Hence “**I**” expresses the divine being (And God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM**” And He said, Thus you shall say to the children of Israel “**I AM - has sent me to you**”, this expression of ‘**being**’ bears within itself the immortality. In this expression, God identifies Himself as (the self-existent One) (the eternal), (The unique), (The uncreated) God. **God just is.** He is the ultimate truth, the beginning and end, the first cause.

The Jews understood that Christ was referring to Himself in this way.

They knew He was proclaiming His divinity.

They said He blasphemed (made Himself equal to God) and should be stoned.

In their accusations against Him in front of Pilates Pontius (who was going to free Him) they said

“**We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God**” (19:7).



## 6- Theological perspective of the Gospel

### "I am ..."

In this gospel, St. John presents Christ in many of His speeches starting by either **"I"** or **"I am"**.

These speeches show clearly the divinity of Christ, as we saw in the previous slide.

They also explain how Christ, **and only Christ**, is the one who can satisfy our mortal needs.

~~They also worked as an introduction to the full divine glory of Christ~~ **on the cross**.

I am		Verse	Satisfy our needs	On the cross
1	<b>The bread of life</b>	(6:35, 48)	He is our spiritual nutrition	Breaking the bread (Sacrifice)
2	<b>The light of the world</b>	(8:12)	He enlighten our darkness	Light against darkness (Good Vs Evil)
3	<b>The door of the sheep</b>	(10:7, 9)	He shelter our estrangement	The door through which life is found
4	<b>The good shepherd</b>	(10:11, 14)	He lead us & Sacrifice Himself for our sake	Puts Himself to death for the sheep
5	<b>The resurrection and the life</b>	(11:25)	In Him we defeat death and gain life	<b>"unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain"</b> (12:24)
6	<b>The way, the truth, and the life</b>	(14:6)	For salvation. He is our way for salvation	The way is trampled upon and stepped over
7	<b>The true vine</b>	(15:1, 5)	To Unite with Him	The vine is squeezed (Blood shed on the Cross)

## 6- Theological perspective of the Gospel...

4) **Faith & love** in this gospel are the foundation of life gained through salvation on the Cross.

### I. **Faith:**

Whilst the other gospels divided people into (Righteous and Sinners).

St. John sets the people in 2 categories (Believers and Unbelievers)

That way he was able to show that the unbelievers lost the condition needed for Eternal life because of their disbelief:

🕯 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (3:18).

🕯 “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (3:36)

🕯 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (5:24)

🕯 “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (6:40)

🕯 “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” (11:26)



## 6- Theological perspective of the Gospel...

- II. **Love:** 'Love' in this gospel has its special merit: It is **the new commandment**, the practical side to lead a life of faith in Christ. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (13:34-35).

Another asset for love is to be **the base** to keep Christ's word  
"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (14:23)  
and  
"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (15:14)



## 7- Christ' portrayal in the Gospel according to St. John

This gospel is the gospel of **DIVINITY & LOVE (Divine Love)**

### A- He is our loving friend:

From start to end in this gospel, we see clear correlation between God's heart and man's heart, as if Jesus was repeating what was written earlier **"I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself"** (Ex 19:4). This verse works perfectly to be the purpose of this gospel, showing that Jesus carried us on Godly wings and brought us to the Father

**"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me **before the foundation of the world**"** (17:24).

### This verse leads our minds to the prologue of St John 1:1-:

- **(In the beginning was the Word)** taking us to the Creation relating the making of all things.
- **(and the Word was God)** To the glorious declaration of the Son of God.
- **(All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made).**

Christ, the creator of all things and provider of all its needs, **presents Himself as friend to mankind**





## 7- Christ' portrayal in the Gospel according to St. John

### A- Christ our LOVING friend.....

**This is mirrored in meetings between Christ and several personalities, conversing with them as the honest loving friend:**

- His meetings with His **first** disciples (Ch. 1),
- Nicodemus (Ch. 3),
- The Samaritan woman (Ch. 4),
- The sick man at the pool of Bethesda (Ch. 5),
- The born blind (Ch. 9),
- Lazarus, Mary and Martha (Ch. 11),
- Thomas the doubtful (Ch. 20),
- Peter who denied Him to restore him saying  
**"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?"** Ch 21

Truly it is the gospel of divine love.  
All the above forms clear evidence for the true  
friendship of Jesus to our souls.



## 7- Christ' portrayal in the Gospel according to St. John...

### A- Our LOVING friend:



This kind relationship between Christ and mankind is clear in His last speech to His disciples. St John described it saying,

“having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” (13:1),

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (15:13-14).

He declared this in His last prayer, when He showed His will to gather His own from the world towards Him to become united with Him “Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are” (17:11)

**The love that Christ offers is truly complete, perfect & unlimited**



## 7- Christ' portrayal in the Gospel according to St. John...

### B- the relationship between Christ and His Church:

#### **The Bridegroom to the Bride**

“He who has the bride is the bridegroom” (3:29)

#### **The True Vine to the Branches**

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit..... Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. (15: 1-4)

#### **The Living water to the thirsty & the Bread of life to the hungry**

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”. (7:37-38)

“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (6:35)

## 8- Major content of the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel

### Ch. 1:

- ✠ The prologue: (1:1-18) concerning the incarnation of the Word
- ✠ (1:19-51): The testimony of John the Baptist for Christ, the first disciples meet Jesus (John, Simon Peter, Andrew, Philip and Nathaniel).

### Ch. 2:

- ✠ The wedding in Cana of Galilee (1-11)
- ✠ The first Passover after Jesus starts his service (12-25)

### Ch. 3:

- ✠ Jesus meets Nicodemus and discusses the second birth (1-21)
- ✠ John the Baptist's testimony for Christ (22-36)

### Ch. 4:

- ✠ Jesus meets the Samaritan woman (1-42)
- ✠ Jesus healing the nobleman's son (43-54)

### Ch. 5:

- ✠ The second Passover for Jesus to attend – The healing of a man at the pool of Bethesda – The discussions with the Jews following the miracle.

### Ch. 6:

- ✠ Feeding the five thousand next to the Sea of Tiberius near to the third Passover (1-15)
- ✠ Jesus walks on the water and the wind cease to blow (16-21)
- ✠ Jesus talks about the True, Heavenly Bread (The Eucharist) (22-71)



## 8- Major content of the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel

### Ch. 7:

- ✠ Jesus attends the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem and converse with the Jews
- ✠ Nicodemus defends Christ in front of the Sanhedrin (45-52)



### Ch. 8:

- ✠ Jesus sets free the adulteress (caught in the very act) (2-11)
- ✠ Jesus preaches to the Jews (the light, the true freedom, the seed of Abraham)

### Ch. 9:

- ✠ Jesus gives back the sight to the man born blind.

### Ch. 10:

- ✠ Jesus teaches about the Good Shepherd in the Feast of Dedication.

### Ch. 11:

- ✠ Jesus raises Lazarus from the Dead after four days.

### Ch. 12:

- ✠ Jesus in Bethany hosted by Lazarus, Mary, and Martha; and Mary anointing His feet with costly oil (1-11)
- ✠ Jesus enters Jerusalem (12-19)
- ✠ “Sir, we wish to see Jesus” – Jesus discusses his passion and resurrection (20-25)





## 8- Major content of the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel



### Ch. 13:

✠ Last supper, washing the feet, Jesus' prophecy about Judas & Peter

### Ch. 14-17:

✠ Jesus' last speeches to the disciples (chapters the Paraclete) – after the last supper and in the way to Gethsemane – His last prayers.



### Ch. 18:

✠ In the garden of Gethsemane – the arrest of Jesus and His trial.

### Ch. 19:

✠ The trial, Crucifixion, burial (Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus).

### Ch. 20:

✠ The glorious Resurrection, Jesus' appear (to Mary Magdalene, the disciples without Thomas – the disciples with Thomas).

### Ch. 21:

✠ Jesus' appearances to 7 disciples at the Sea of Tiberius, the miracle of catching multitude of fish – Restoring Peter



## 8- Special features of the Gospel:

8) Cared of particular numbers such as the numbers (3) and (7)

### I. Concerning the number (3)

- ❖ Mentions that Jesus visited Galilee 3 times, presenting the miracles in Galilee. (Wedding of Cana of Galilee, Ch 2), (Healing the nobleman's son, Ch 4) & (Feeding the multitudes & walking on water Ch 6).
- ❖ Records 3 appearances of Jesus after Resurrection - To:  
Mary Magdalene; The disciples without Thomas; The disciples with Thomas (Ch 20)
- ❖ Mentions going to Judea 3 times, and selecting 3 miracles by Christ there (The sick man at the pool of Bethesda Ch 5), (The born blind Ch 9) & (Catching of fish after the Resurrection Ch 21).
- ❖ Records 3 phrases said by Jesus on the cross:  
(Woman, behold your son! ... Behold your mother!), (I thirst!), and (It is finished!) (Ch. 19:26, 27, 28, 30).



## 8- Special features of the Gospel....

### II. Concerning the number (7)

St. John mentions **7 witnesses** for Jesus Christ

1. The Father witness for Him through His acts, (5:31-36), (8:17), (10-37) and (14:10)
2. The Law witness for Him, (12:38), (13:18), (15:25), (17:12), (18:9) and (19:24, 36)
3. John the Baptist, (1:7, 15, 19, etc.), (3:26-etc.) and (5:53-etc.).
4. The Samaritan woman, (Ch. 4)
5. The great multitude, (12:17)
6. The Holy Spirit, (15:26)
7. The disciples (15:27)

**St. John selected 7 miracles to present, and he mentions “the last day” 7 times.**