

All in the Family

The Apostle John

Any time we study a book in the Bible, we must first study the author. God wrote every word of the Scriptures, but He allowed the writers to report events from their own perspective and with their own personality. God uniquely chose John to write these gospels because there was something about him that made him the best person to tell these stories. If not, then God would have chosen someone else and we would be reading the Book of Reuben or something.

Every time you hear a Scripture quoted, you should remind yourself of what you know about the author. When you hear a verse from Peter for example and he is talking about being forgiven, he is uniquely qualified to share because Jesus forgives even if you deny Him three times.

When you read Scriptures from Peter or John, you must remind yourself that Peter, James and John were the inner circle and saw Jesus do what others did not. When they write about the glory of God and how Jesus was God, pay attention because they were there when Jesus unveiled His Glory on the mount of transfiguration. They could never see Him as just a man again.

We first learn of John in the Scriptures as a disciple of John the Baptist. They watched Jesus get baptized and John the Baptist say Jesus was the Lamb of God.

When Jesus walked out of the Jordan River, they immediately left John the Baptist and followed Jesus and stayed with him for the night.

John 1:35–37 (ESV) 35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

Then the detail...

John 1:40–41 (ESV) 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ).

John mentioning himself by not mentioning himself.

It is assumed that Jesus, after that night, went directly into the wilderness to fast for 40 days to be tempted by the devil, while John and Andrew returned home to Galilee, to their fishing business, where they worked as partners with Andrew’s brother Peter, John’s brother James and his father Zebedee. After 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus went to the Sea Galilee, and called these four men to be his disciples.

John was a fisherman. He was involved in the family business, they were fishermen. His father was a man of some means who was named Zebedee.

Matthew 4:21–22 (ESV) 21 And 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, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

James and John joined two other fishermen Peter and Andrew as Jesus' early disciples. They all knew each other and likely worked together in the same business.

Luke 5:5–10 (ESV) 5 And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.” 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. 7 They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”

So when Jesus chose His first disciples, he chose people who already knew each other, who were fishermen, and who may have been related to Him....what? Did you know that many think James and John were Jesus' cousins? James and John were the offspring of Zebedee and Salome. Salome and Mary were quite close and may have been sisters.

Matthew 27:55–56 (ESV) 55 There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, 56 among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Look at how Matthew records the same moment...

Mark 15:40 (ESV) 40 There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.

Due to Salome’s presence at the crucifixion and at the tomb of Jesus three days later, it is probable that Zebedee’s family were close followers of Jesus throughout His ministry.

Mark 16:1–2 (ESV) 1 When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.

Anointing the dead with spices was typically reserved for closest families. So it is clear that these families if not related were very close. There is a connection between Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist, Salome the mother of James and John and Mary the mother of Jesus.

It makes sense to me that Mary's sister would have been at Mary's side supporting her during such a distressing time. If Salome is Mary's sister, then her husband, Zebedee would have been Jesus' uncle, and John and James, their sons, would be Jesus' cousins.

If so, Salome, Zebedee, James and John, certainly would have known during all the time they spent growing up with Jesus, that Jesus was the Anointed One sent by God. They would have heard Mary tell stories of her son Jesus being the Messiah. Jesus would have been their loving older cousin who played with and took care of them in their youth. They would have known how extraordinary he was. And they would have waited in anticipation when he would turn 30 yrs and begin his ministry.

When Jesus finally called James and John to follow Him, they would have had already anticipated this with a natural confidence and boldness about them, because of their relationship with Jesus. They had already been prepared for this day. And since Peter was Zebedee and John's business partner and friend, he would have known of this also and been prepared.

While we can't know for sure, it is clear from Scripture that Jesus' encounters with these men were not random stranger accounts. If Mary and Salome were actually sisters, these men were cousins of Jesus.

They had likely met Jesus before and watched Him grow up. They may have been aware of His special birth and perhaps even his new ministry. This could explain why they immediately left their nets and followed Jesus with the blessing of their father.

Also notice that Jesus' inner circle is included in this first small group. Peter, James and John were all fishermen and the first chosen. These three would see things the other disciples did not. While it is often portrayed that Jesus just randomly went up to some fishermen and said follow me, there was some prior relationship there. At a minimum, they were like family.

Fishermen

Why did Jesus choose fishermen? They were typically not well educated. They were relatively low of the social structure of Israel. They had no political influence, no valuable social connections, and not a lot of money. They don't seem to be the one God would choose to entrust the gospel message to in three years. There were some incredible Jewish scholars down in Jerusalem....one Jesus would call later....Saul of Tarsus...that we know as Paul.

After millennia of anticipation, Jesus the Messiah finally arrived, announced the kingdom, and preached the gospel. It does not get more epic than this. Yet out of nowhere, he went from cloud-splitting pronouncements to hanging out with a couple of blue collar fishermen nobody had ever heard of.

Shouldn't Jesus be having dinner with the governor? Shouldn't he be reclining with the high priest of the temple and explaining the kingdom to him? Shouldn't Jesus have called a meeting with the most prominent teachers of the law, mesmerizing them with how what they have been teaching is now fulfilled in him?

Instead, all of history has built to his coming, announcing the kingdom, and then hanging out with a couple of fishermen—almost as if he’s decided to construct his messianic kingdom with real life construction workers. They’re not masters of theology. They’re not politically powerful. They’re not cultural influencers.

But the choice of fishermen is no more random than the encounter with His family....7 of the 12 Disciples were fishermen...and Jesus told them that He would make them fishers of men. So if we study fishermen we may learn about what God seeks in a disciple. Any time you are given information about someone in the Bible, stop and pay attention to it. Every word, every detail in the Bible is important. So why did Jesus pick fishermen?

1. Fishermen know how to take orders.

When Jesus tells them to go to the other side of the boat and drop their nets they do so. When He tells them to follow Him they do so.

While there is a time for questioning and debating, fishermen know sometimes the difference between failure and success is the width of their boat and the time it takes to cross from one side of the boat to the other. They know when to simply take orders.

Often at sea their very lives depended upon taking orders and on each other. We can see that obeying orders is a key aspect of a Disciple of Christ.

2. Fishermen know how to work together and depend upon each other.

Manually pulling in a net full of fish is a hard task. Everyone on a boat works together to pull in the net. The crew works as a team to accomplish their goal. They do not let one person do all the work. Scripture calls Christ’s followers to act in the same manner. We are one body with many parts, and each part is to do his or her work to accomplish one common goal – introducing the lost world to the message of Christ.

3. Fishermen are dedicated. Fishing requires a great deal of patience and dedication.

Fishermen might go hours, perhaps days, without even a nibble. Giving up is not an option though. A fisherman’s dedication pushes the person to keep fishing.

Jesus knew what was ahead for his followers. He knew he needed followers who would not easily quit. The same is true today. Christians are called to pick up our cross and follow Christ daily. It is never promised life will be easy, but it is promised the Lord will care for us and Heaven will be worth the wait. As Christians, we must measure our dedication

4. Fishermen are courageous.

Fishing can require a person to travel into deep and treacherous waters. It was common in Jesus’ day for fishermen to be caught in fierce storms while on the open sea. It was their courage which pushed them to go back into the water after experiencing one of these storms. The Sea of Galilee was famous for putting sailors at the bottom of the sea. They have been many first century ship wrecks identified.

Much courage is required for the Christian. There are any number of circumstances that could cripple us with fear, but we must continue on the journey of life. This takes courage. Did you know the most repeated command in Scripture is “do not fear?” The Lord knew life would be rough and tough, so he gives us an encouraging command to have courage in the face of fear

5. Fishermen are skilled at using their equipment.

Good fishermen have a tackle box filled with various baits and lures. Each one assigned a specific task. Fishermen know each one’s job and how to properly use it. They are skilled at using their equipment. Like fishermen, Christians have some equipment at which we need to be skilled in using. • God’s Word – We have Scripture. It is our double-edged sword.

Jesus could have called anyone he wanted to be his first disciples, and he called 7 men who were fishermen. This was no accident. These men possessed characteristics Jesus desires for all of his followers to possess.

Jesus could have built his kingdom with the really good people in society—professional holy men such as Pharisees, for example. The problem, however, was that they didn’t believe in Jesus’ good news. They had their own good news. For these religious leaders who studied comprehensively, tithed meticulously, and prayed impressively, the real gospel was good news for good people. Jesus’ good news which was good news for everybody—especially sinners—didn’t feel as good as their good news.

Jesus could have spent most of his time with the rich and powerful—loaded, politically savvy insiders like the Sadducees. Yet they had their own good news. Their version of the gospel was good news for the rich and powerful. When Jesus came with good news for everybody—especially for the poor—the Sadducees thought, “We’ve got way better news than that.”

Jesus could have allied himself with the zealots. The zealots hated the Romans who had occupied their nation and understandably conspired to drive them out. God hadn’t promised the land to the Romans, after all. Jesus could have spent most of his time with zealots, yet they too had their own gospel. For them, it was good news for their country, their people. Jesus came with a good news for everybody—even the Romans.

When Jesus said, “Repent and place your faith in the gospel,” the people with all the righteousness responded, “We’ve got a better gospel than that.” The people with all the money and power said, “Perhaps, but we’ve got an even better gospel still.” The zealots sharpening their knives said, “We’ve got the best gospel of all.”

It was a kingdom for whosoever. It was for fishermen. It was for filthy rich tax collectors that nobody liked. It was for poor people who had trouble paying their bills. It was for untouchables like lepers. It was for outsiders and unlovables. It still is.

It’s significant that Jesus said, “Repent and believe the good news.” This assumes that there are false gospels we need to change our mind about so we can put our full trust and allegiance in Jesus’ good news. In 2025, you and I are going to have a lot of different gospels to choose from.

There’s the good news of my perfection. The gospel of my power and popularity. The gospel of my prosperity. The gospel of my people. Of my political party. In response to all these false gospels, Jesus invites you and me to repent and believe the good news:

Believing the gospel means seeing Jesus’ kingship as the best news ever. The first century church was disciplined in this by fishermen who had outshone everybody in their willingness to drop their nets and follow the King. The twenty-first century church needs to be disciplined by these fishermen again.

So Peter, Andrew, James and John were fishermen. Jesus did not choose 7 disciples who happened to be fishermen, He chose 7 disciples because they were fishermen.

So, the first thing we should know about John is that he was a fisher of fish who became a fisher of men. And he was either related to or very close to Jesus before he was chosen as a disciple. That will shape his writings in all 5 of the books God authored through him.

John as a younger man was emotionally volatile.

He and his brother James had short fuses and quick opinions. Some would say John had spunk, others were likely not so nice. We know that John was the youngest disciple and may have been as young as 17 when Jesus called him. He had a lot of maturing to do while he was growing up. Jesus gave James and John a fitting nickname.

Mark 3:17 (ESV) 17 James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges (bo-NER-ges), that is, Sons of Thunder);

In other words, Jesus knew the brothers’ nature when He first met them, and He chose “Boanerges” (bo-NER-ges) as a fitting nickname. In one vivid incident, we see that James and John possessed some truly thunder-like qualities. Jesus and His disciples were traveling through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem when they ran into trouble. Jesus attempted to find accommodations for the night in one place but was met with opposition from the villagers, simply because His destination was Jerusalem—a result of Jew-Samaritan prejudice.

Luke 9:54–56 (ESV) 54 And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 And they went on to another village.

James and John’s response to the Samaritans reveals a fervency, impetuosity, and anger that could properly be called “thunderous”—and we can be sure that there were other times when James and John lived up to their nickname.

As the church age began, James was the first apostle to be killed while John was the last to die, although of old age. John’s epistles, written late in his life, hint that he still possessed a fervency of spirit, especially in his denunciations of apostates and deceivers. John taps into that thunder in 1, 2 and 3 John. But the good news was for John as well. The longer He is with Jesus the more the love of Christ for others becomes manifest in him. In his early life, he was the son of thunder but later on

the good news transforms him into the Disciple of deep love...for Jesus, for the Scriptures, for his church, for the lost and for us. Jesus never leaves us the way He found us.

Like all of us John was transformed in the presence of Jesus He was humbled...choosing to never use his name in his letters He referred to himself as "the disciple Jesus loved" Not implying that he was better than the others- But rather recognizing that the only thing important about him or his life is that Jesus chose to love him. The only thing that gave any significance to his existence...is Jesus' love for him

Even though he was growing in love, he still had issues to overcome. At a time when the disciples should have been focused on the gospel message, John and James were trying to promote themselves.

Matthew 20:20–21 (ESV) 20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. 21 And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.”

These sons of thunder sent Mom to Jesus to try to gain a promotion. Launching a discussion with Jesus about the last being first.

I love that God reveals to us that these men, while doing great things for God, still made mistakes and struggled with their own sins. I love that because it gives me hope.

So John grew up literally with Jesus. Jesus was like an older brother to him. But despite his youth, John is the only disciple that saw it all. He was with Jesus when James and Peter were not. He never left Jesus' side.

John was an eyewitness to everything.

Jesus poured into Peter, James and John Jesus took these 3 with him... To the house of Jairus to raise his daughter from the dead He took them up on a mountain to see His Transfiguration Peter and John were sent ahead To prepare a place for the Passover Dinner At that Dinner...John was next to Jesus...a spot reserved for the youngest He was the one that seemed to have the trust of the others...even Peter Peter normally would say anything...and say it without thinking... But look at how he prompts John.

John 13:21–25 (ESV) 21 After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” 22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. 23 One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus’ side, 24 so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. 25 So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?”

At one of the darkest moments of his life... Jesus took these three deeper into the Garden of Gethsemane To pray with him... leaving the other 8 behind.

Mark 14:32–34 (ESV) 32 And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” 33 And he took with him Peter and James and John,

and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. 34 And he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.”

These encounters developed in these 3 men A deep love for Jesus. It is that deep love...that kept John from leaving Jesus

John helped Peter get into the courtyard at Caiaphas home.

John 18:15–17 (ESV) 15 Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, 16 but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in. 17 The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”

So Did another disciple....John of course, not referring to himself is referring to himself. We often speak of Peter as being with Jesus in that moment, but initially it is Jesus and John who go into the courtyard. But since John knew the High Priest, he asked the servant girl to let Peter join him.

Wait a minute.....how could a young fisherman from Galilee, be known by the high priest in Jerusalem?

So, if John’s mother, Salome, was Mary’s sister, that would make Mary and Salome cousins to Elizabeth (the mother of John the Baptist) and John the Baptist's Father was Zacharias a priest in Jerusalem.

Zacharias was the priest in Jerusalem who offered incense in the Holy of Holies before John the Baptist’s birth. Caiaphas was the high priest during this time so it is possible that John had visited his uncle Zacharias on occasion in his youth and been introduced to Caiaphas in the Temple where he worked. John would have been known by Caiaphas.

John joined Jesus' ministry at the beginning and would be there at the end in Revelation. He would also be the only disciple to be an eyewitness at the cross.

It is John who has not left Jesus' side. Jesus spoke to him from the cross.

John 19:26–27 (ESV) 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” 27 Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Now some have argued that John may have been as young as 14 when Jesus called him, but here we are three years later and Jesus is entrusting Mary to what would be a 17 year old. That would be very unlikely. Thus at this moment John is probably at least 20 and thus 17 or so when called to follow Jesus.

Entrusted by Jesus from the cross to care for Mary...Jesus' mother Jesus knew that a deep John's deep love for Him Would translate into a deep love to care for His mother.

During the years that John cared for Mary... Think about the stories that she told him About the angel announcing His birth That night in Bethlehem 33 years of stories not recorded in Scripture Jesus as a child...adolescent..teenager..young man Yes, God had positioned John like no other... To have an understanding of Jesus' life John had seen it all...He was an eyewitness...and would eventually be the last remaining

The Book of John

Background

The most likely date of writing is the period between a.d. 70 (the date of the destruction of the temple) and a.d. 100 (the end of John's lifetime), but there is not enough evidence to be much more precise

The most likely place of writing is Ephesus in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), which was one of the most important urban centers of the Roman Empire at the time

The theme of John's Gospel is that Jesus is the promised Messiah and Son of God. By believing in Jesus, people can have eternal life

John's original audience consisted of both Jews and Gentiles living in the larger Greco-Roman world in Ephesus and beyond toward the close of the first century a.d. He frequently explains Jewish customs and Palestinian geography and translates Aramaic terms into Greek , thus showing awareness of non-Jewish readers

He also presents Jesus as the Word become flesh against the backdrop of Greek thought that included Stoicism and early Gnosticism. But John also shows awareness of Jewish readers as he demonstrates Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah, the fulfillment of many OT themes, and the Son of God who was sent by God the Father to reveal the only true God and to provide redemption for humanity.

John 20:31 (ESV) 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John wrote with an evangelistic intent. However, his depth of teaching shows that he wanted readers not only to come to initial saving faith in Jesus but also to grow into a rich, well-informed faith. John's central contention is that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah and Son of God, and that by believing in him people may have eternal life

To this end, he marshals the evidence of several selected messianic signs performed by Jesus and of a series of witnesses to Jesus—including the Scriptures, John the Baptist, Jesus himself, God the Father, Jesus' works, the Spirit, and John himself.

Signs

1. Turning Water to Wine

This act is more than a miraculous provision; it signifies the inauguration of a new covenant. The transformation of water, used for Jewish purification rites, into wine, a symbol of joy

and celebration, points to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and the arrival of the Messianic age. This sign also underscores the abundance and quality of the new life that Jesus offers, contrasting the old order with the new, richer covenant he brings.

2. Healing the Royal Officials Son

highlights the power of faith in Jesus’ word. The official’s journey from Capernaum to Cana and his belief in Jesus’ promise without immediate evidence exemplify a faith that transcends physical sight. This sign emphasizes the importance of trusting in Jesus’ authority and the life-giving power of his word. It also serves as a reminder that faith often requires stepping out in trust, even when the outcome is not immediately visible, thus encouraging believers to rely on Jesus’ promises.

3. Healing Paralytic at Bethesda

The focus shifts to Jesus’ authority over the Sabbath and his power to restore life. The man, who had been ill for thirty-eight years, represents the helplessness of humanity under the weight of sin and the law. Jesus’ command to “Get up, pick up your mat and walk” not only heals the man physically but also signifies liberation from the old constraints of the law. This sign challenges the legalistic interpretations of the Sabbath and highlights Jesus as the source of true rest and healing.

4. Feeding the 5000

The feeding of the 5000 (John 6:1-14) is a profound demonstration of Jesus as the Bread of Life. This sign, occurring near the time of Passover, draws a parallel to God’s provision of manna in the wilderness. By multiplying the loaves and fishes, Jesus reveals his ability to meet the deepest needs of humanity. This act of provision points to the spiritual sustenance that Jesus offers, inviting believers to seek nourishment in him. The abundance of leftovers also signifies the overflowing grace and generosity of Jesus’ provision.

5. Walking on Water

Jesus walking on water (John 6:16-21) serves as a powerful testament to his mastery over the natural world. This sign occurs immediately after the feeding of the 5000, reinforcing Jesus’ divine authority. As the disciples struggle against the storm, Jesus’ approach on the water brings peace and calm, symbolizing his power to overcome chaos and fear. This sign reassures believers of Jesus’ presence and control in the midst of life’s tumultuous circumstances, encouraging them to trust in his sovereignty.

6. Healing the Man Born Blind

he healing of the man born blind (John 9:1-12) is a vivid illustration of spiritual enlightenment. This sign goes beyond physical healing to address the theme of spiritual sight and blindness. The man’s journey from darkness to light mirrors the transformative experience of coming to faith in Jesus. This sign also serves as a critique of the religious leaders’ spiritual blindness, contrasting their inability to recognize Jesus’ divine mission with the man’s newfound sight. It calls readers to examine their own openness to spiritual truth and revelation.

7. Raising Lazarus from the dead

The raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44) is the climactic sign in John’s Gospel, showcasing Jesus’ power over death. This sign prefigures Jesus’ own resurrection and underscores his identity as the Resurrection and the Life. By calling Lazarus out of the tomb, Jesus demonstrates his authority to grant eternal life, offering a foretaste of the ultimate victory over death. This sign not only strengthens the faith of those who witness it but also foreshadows the hope of resurrection for all believers, affirming the promise of eternal life through Jesus.

John’s Gospel meticulously crafts a narrative where signs serve as pivotal moments that reveal the true nature and mission of Jesus. These signs are not randomly chosen or merely spectacular events; they are carefully selected to convey profound theological insights. John’s intent is to lead readers into a deeper understanding of who Jesus is and what his coming signifies for humanity.

The signs are strategically placed within the narrative to build a crescendo of revelation. Each sign progressively unveils more about Jesus’ identity and his divine authority. This cumulative effect is designed to guide the reader from initial curiosity to a point of profound belief. John uses these signs as a narrative tool to draw a clear line from doubt to faith, illustrating the journey that each believer must undertake. The deliberate sequencing of these signs underscores their role in the unfolding revelation of Jesus as the Messiah.

John employs signs to challenge the existing religious paradigms and societal norms. By performing signs that often subvert expectations, Jesus reveals the limitations of traditional religious practices and highlights the need for a new understanding of God’s work in the world. These acts serve as a critique of the established religious order, pushing readers to reconsider their preconceived notions and embrace a more expansive vision of divine activity. John’s Gospel thus becomes a call to spiritual reformation, urging believers to move beyond ritualistic adherence to a dynamic, faith-filled relationship with Jesus.

In addition to their revelatory function, the signs in John’s Gospel also serve as a means of establishing a community of believers. The shared witnessing of these miraculous events creates a collective memory that binds the early Christian community together. This communal aspect is crucial for the formation of a cohesive identity among Jesus’ followers. By emphasizing the signs, John not only strengthens individual faith but also fosters a sense of belonging and shared purpose within the Christian community. This collective experience of the divine acts as a unifying force, solidifying the foundation of the early church.

Closing

So Jesus launched His public ministry and used His family to help Him. He needed people that He could trust and He chose 4 fishermen, not randomly, but probably His cousins. He trusted them and knew them very well. So John was a disciple of John the Baptist, a fisherman, a young man, initially like thunder but full of love by the time he writes this book.

He was a disciple of Christ, he saw Jairus's daughter raised from the dead, He saw Jesus transfigured in Glory, He saw Jesus at his darkest moment in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was

in the courtyard with Peter, He was at the cross with Mary, He was at the tomb, encountered the resurrected Christ several times, . He was the last disciple standing and wrote this book a decade or more after Matthew, Mark and Luke. He watched all of the other disciples be martyred for their faith. He saw the apostate attacks on the early church and He was given the vision of the Revelation. He has the perspective of time and hindsight. From Jesus's Baptism to his Resurrection, to the future revealed in Revelation, John was the only eyewitness to it all. That is who writes this book.....

He wrote the gospel so that all would know what John knew definitively. Jesus was God in the flesh and John can prove it. That is why he wrote the last gospel and why we begin its exploration next week. Let's pray.