

I John (*Introduction*)

**John is perhaps the YOUNGEST of Jesus' apostles.
He referred to himself as “*The disciple whom Jesus loved*”**

John 13:23

Now there was leaning on **Jesus'** bosom one of his disciples, **whom Jesus loved**.

John 19:26

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and **the disciple** standing by, **whom he loved**, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

John 20:2

Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other **disciple, whom Jesus loved**, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

John 21:7

Therefore that **disciple whom Jesus loved** saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

John 21:20

Then Peter, turning about, seeth **the disciple whom Jesus loved** following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

John wrote five (5) books of the Bible:

The Gospel of John

I, II, & III John

The Revelation

Rumor concerning John circulated through 1st century church

John 21:18-24 “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

John is believed to be the last apostle to die. He is believed to be the only apostle to die a natural death as opposed to a martyr's death.

Jesus had told John to take care of Mary, His mother (John 19:26). We believe he did just that. They may have lived in Jerusalem for a time, but tradition tells us that they moved to an area just a few miles outside of Ephesus. Today there is a building called “The church of Mary” located in this area.

John is believed to have become an elder for the church at Ephesus. If he did, we must assume that he was married though there is no reference to his wife. He refers to himself as “*the elder*” in II & III John, but some have suggested he was referring to himself simply as “*the old man*”. He could have written Revelation, his Gospel, and his letters in the 90’s. The interpretation of Revelation is based heavily on which date one believes it was written. We know that John was exiled to the island of Patmos when he wrote Revelation (Revelation 1:9). If John wrote the Revelation in the 90’s, he would probably in his 80’s. Jesus told John in Revelation 10:11 “*And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*” This certainly suggests that God was not through with John. Some believe that Revelation could have been written before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. If this is true John seems to have “adopted” Ephesus and the other churches in Asia Minor after the death of Paul.

If the letter was written before 70 AD, Paul and Peter had died only a few years before. They both had written letters warning against impending persecution and false teaching in and around this same region. John was very much aware of these problems and issues.

John was particularly opposed to the false doctrine known as “Gnosticism”. The Greek word for “Gnostic” is *ginōskō*. It means “To Know” or “knowledge gained through deep personal spiritual experiences”.

The basic teachings of the Gnosticism is the dualism between spirit and matter. Spirit (High God) was considered good, while matter was inherently evil. Since matter (flesh) is evil, we can’t help the sinful lives that we live. People, therefore, can openly live in sin yet claim “spiritual goodness” and salvation.

There was also an overemphasis on the importance of secret knowledge (passwords or secret codes which allow a soul to pass through the angelic spheres up to the high god) necessary for salvation.

Some Gnostics even said that they have come to the “*knowledge*” that Jesus was not really the Christ although he was “good” and “spiritual”.

To those Gnostics that believed Jesus was “Good”, “Sinless”, and “High God”, he couldn’t have been “matter” or “flesh”. They taught Jesus only *appeared* to come in the flesh. John KNEW Jesus was flesh! He had lived with Him for several years! I John is a general letter (not addressed to anyone specific) to be circulated throughout the church to refute this false doctrine. In doing so, John is inspired to teach some of the deepest spiritual truths found in Christianity. One of the greatest truth in Christianity is love among the believers. John spends a considerable amount of time teaching how important love is.