



# The Sword & The Plow

Newsletter of the Bimillennial Preterist Association

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## A Call to Conservatism

*Preterists Need to Avoid Unlearned Questions*

By

*Kurt M. Simmons*

A new error surfaced recently in Preterist circles, which argues that Lazarus, not John, was the “beloved disciple” who leaned upon Jesus’ breast and penned the fourth gospel. The source of this novel idea is a short book by J. Phillips, entitled “*The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved.*”<sup>1</sup> I do not know if the author is a Preterist, but he *has* found followers within the leadership of the Preterist movement. We certainly do not want to attack anyone. However, there can be no question that the book is *frivolous* and utterly without merit. A search on the internet under the prompt “author of the fourth gospel” shows that there are four or five sites advocating this doctrine, about the same number as those advocating Mary Magdalene as the secret authoress. In our view, one is about as worthy of credibility as the other, which hovers somewhere near zero.

Over the course of two thousand years, the best minds and most able scholars – men of household name like Eusebuis, Jerome, and Augustine, Erasmus, and Calvin, among countless lesser known others, have searched the scriptures to

identify the author of the fourth gospel. The verdict of these learned experts has been all but unanimous in favor the John, the son of Zebedee. Now, after two thousand years, comes a man with little learning, no scholarship, no evidence, and a poorly written and reasoned book arguing that Lazarus was the “secret” author. And who listens to him? Members of the Preterist community! For shame! At exactly the point where the utmost caution and circumspection ought to have been displayed, where there ought to have been required the most exacting evidence and scholarship before embracing so novel and unprecedented a doctrine, there has been haste and recklessness; where the senses should have been trained and alert to the *enormous improbability* that Lazarus was the secret of author of the fourth gospel, and has only now been discovered after two thousand years, there was naiveté and wild-eyed abandon. And all of Preterism must suffer because of it.

In the early 1800’s, German higher critics attacked the authenticity and historicity of virtually every book of the Bible, impugning the authorship of the Pentateuch, Isaiah, the gospels, the pastoral epistles, and Revelation. The Pentateuch they claimed was written by a “Jehovahist” and an “Eloihimist” whose separate works were later edited and combined in one.

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<sup>1</sup> **The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved**  
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Isaiah was written by two men, not the prophet whose name the book bears. Paul did not write the pastoral epistles; John did not write Revelation, and so forth. Regarding the fourth gospel, the attacks proceeded along various lines, some putting the fourth gospel beyond John's ability to write by late-dating, and others by objections to its historicity and doctrine. German higher critics were some of the best scholars from world class universities; their scholarship made their skepticism formidable; the affects of their assault upon the citadel of faith are seen even to this day. Whole churches have gone over to liberalism because of a diminished authority of the Bible as God's inerrant and verbally inspired word. Countless souls have been lost to the lies of higher criticism. However, the critics' attacks were not unanswered. The best and most able scholars Christianity could produced rose to the occasion and answered the objections, routing the enemy and driving them from the field. John's authorship of the fourth gospel in particular has been completely vindicated against the specious theories of the critics.

However, *authorship of the fourth gospel is NOT the real issue*. The real issue is the penchant of some for novel and sensational teachings, an obsession for issues that boarder on the fringe. Trafficking in issues on the fringe is courting trouble. Those who make a steady diet of dealing in the novel and sensational, are like those that build with wood, hay, and stubble – in the day and hour of need, their faith will fail them! Christianity is not about sensational issues, but about CHANGED LIVES and the SALVATION OF THE SOUL. The substance of our faith is the CROSS and the power of God's word to convict of sin and elevate men above their fallen nature. It is the power to redeem man from sin and to reclaim ruined lives. It is about how to raise our families so that our sons grow up to be men of God and our daughters grow up chaste and pure; it is about well ordered lives and happy and harmonious homes; about a culture whose values are brought into conformity to Christ, and whose government is compelled to acknowledge the superior claim of God to man's allegiance and obedience. It is about gratitude toward God for sparing us when we were worthy of death, and daily heaping his benefits upon us. It is *not* about speculative questions and issues of idle curiosity of the sort represented by Mr. Philip's book.

If it is to retain respectability before its critics Preterism needs a *healthy dose of conservatism*. Who cannot imagine Ken Gentry and Keith Matheson sitting patiently by, cataloging the frivolous material that gains currency among Preterists, lying in wait to use it against us when we are most vulnerable to assault? Imagine being in a debate only to have your opponent bring before the audience the laundry list of Preterist gaffs that have circulated over the years. How much credibility would we retain before an audience when it is informed of some Preterist beliefs? An inventory of dubious Preterist beliefs includes:

- **“Heaven now”** – the notion that Christians are already in heaven now.
- **“Immortal bodies now”** - the idea that we already possess our immortal bodies.
- **“Covenantal Adam”** – the idle notion Adam and Eve were not the first created living-beings, but were only the first humans with whom God was in covenant.
- **“Covenantal creation”** – the theory that the Genesis account isn't about the material creation of the planet earth but is only symbolic of God's creation of covenant Israel.
- **Regional flood** - the idea that the historical narratives of Genesis must be reinterpreted through a “covenantal” paradigm, assuming the use of apocalyptic language, making the flood merely local and covenantal, not universal.
- **Old Earth Creationism** – the idea that the creation account of Genesis is but an allegory or metaphoric account, and must be interpreted “covenantally” in reference to Old Testament Israel. This view also urges that the six days of creation are merely symbolic or that a gap must be read into the text, and that the earth is billions of years old.
- **Antinomianism** – the teaching that with abolition of the law of Moses, no law exists today that condemns men or Christians before God.
- **Universalism/Comprehensive Grace** – Mankind lives in a new world because the law has been done away; all men will be saved.

- **Anti-sacramentalism** – It is unnecessary to keep the ordinances or sacraments of the church; the Lord’s Supper and baptism belonged to the time of types and shadows, but were done away at the eschaton.

These are just some of the spurious ideas floating about Preterist circles today. Some of them are silly but harmless, others very destructive and even dangerous. Jesus said “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mk. 16:16) Peter said, “Baptism doth also now save us.” (I Pet. 3:21) Any fair treatment of these passages must place a pretty high importance upon the ordinance/sacrament of baptism. For someone to teach these commandments are not necessary to obey is serious stuff. Inasmuch as they are little more than accommodations with evolution, I feel old earth creationism and the covenantal Adam ideas are dangerous as well. The Lazarus issue is sillier that it is serious, but because it strikes at the confidence men place in scripture it can only be injurious. Indeed, no error is to our advantage, certainly not one that impugns the apostolic authorship of the gospels.

Please do not misunderstand me. I do not have any sacred cows, and feel the search for truth is always commendable. But, when our search constantly involves us with issues upon the fringe, something is wrong. Paul told Timothy “But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.” (II Tim. 2:23) Virtually every item on the list probably qualifies as an “unlearned question.” Would someone truly learned in the scripture say that Adam was not the first man, or that the six days of creation actually spanned billions of years, that we are in heaven now, or that John was not the author of the fourth gospel? I rather doubt it.

We want to encourage Preterists everywhere to exercise the utmost caution and restraint in embracing anything new or that smacks of what is novel or sensational. Truth is very old and for the most part very obvious. An occasional pearl, like Preterism, has been lost along the way where it patiently waited to be rediscovered. But this is the exception, not the rule. For the most part, plain old vanilla is the order of the day when it comes to the important stuff of truth and Christianity. Do not let an unhealthy penchant for collateral issues be what defines your faith. God bless you as you study his word.

## Who Wrote the Fourth Gospel?

*Kurt Simmons*

In this article we want to briefly examine the evidence demonstrating that John, the son of Zebedee, is correctly identified as the author of the gospel traditionally bearing his name.

### Competent Evidence

As we enter into a discussion about the author of the fourth gospel, it must first be decided what evidence should be admitted in the case. There are two kinds of evidence: direct and circumstantial. Direct evidence typically consists in the testimony of witnesses bearing directly upon the issue at hand; testimony by a certain man that he witnessed Matthew pen his gospel, or heard him claim its authorship would be direct evidence. Circumstantial or indirect evidence is evidence that proves a fact by means of *inference*. For example, evidence that a writing began circulation at a time and place where a particular man lived, and contained facts which he alone knew would be circumstantial evidence, allowing us to infer he was its author. In the present case, we have both direct and indirect evidence: Direct evidence in the form of 1) tradition handed down from apostolic times testifying that John is the author of the fourth gospel, and indirect evidence consisting in the circumstance of 2) identity of language and doctrine between the gospel, epistles, and Revelation, and the 3) testimony of experts pronouncing their opinion the authors are the same.

In judging the authorship of the fourth gospel, it is important to realize that virtually none of the gospels are subscribed by their authors. Unlike the epistles of Paul, the gospels attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John do not recite the author’s name. Like the books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, and other historical accounts of scripture, the authors were content to remain anonymous. The voice of tradition ascribes the first five books of the Bible to Moses, and, in the absence of positive evidence to the contrary, there is no reason we should doubt or reject it. The same is true of the gospels; their authors did not subscribe their names. Hence, we must receive the testimony of tradition into evidence,

and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it must be accepted. This is particularly true of the gospels of Matthew and Mark. Unlike the gospels of Luke and John, Matthew and Mark left us *no other writings* against which we may compare and judge the identity of their authors. If it were not for the voice of tradition, these gospels would remain completely anonymous and our ability to trust the truth of their testimony would be considerably weakened. It is the ascription of these documents to the apostles and those who accompanied them and were eyewitnesses of the things that they report that invests them with authenticity. Although we should like to have more upon which to base our decision, in the case of these gospels the testimony of tradition is *all we possess*. However, most of us are completely comfortable with this evidence, and never feel compelled to question it. Given the unanimous voice of Christendom from the earliest times pronouncing in favor of the traditional authors, there is no reason for us to conclude against Matthew or Mark.

The case of Luke is slightly different. The book of Acts was penned by the same author as the third gospel. Both were written to “Theophilus” from an unnamed source (although doubtless known to Theophilus himself). Although Acts does not tell us who its author was, use of the first person plural indicates he was a companion of Paul’s in his journey to Rome to stand trial before Nero Caesar. (Acts 27:2-27; 28:10-16) This information, coupled with Paul’s own testimony to Timothy before his second trial that “Luke only is with me” (II Tim. 4:11) is circumstantial evidence that Luke is author of both books. Moreover, we have the voice of tradition confirming this conclusion. Thus, we have both direct and circumstantial evidence to assist us. We do not question the accuracy of this evidence, nor doubt the correctness of the conclusion in the case of Luke. We have even less reason to doubt the authorship of John.

### Testimony of the Manuscripts and Codices

New Advent, an on-line Encyclopedia, states:

The ancient manuscripts and translations of the Gospel constitute the first group of evidence. In the titles, tables of contents, signatures, which are usually added to the text of the separate Gospels, John is in every case and without the

faintest indication of doubt named as the author of this Gospel. The earliest of the extant manuscripts, it is true, do not date back beyond the middle of the fourth century, but the perfect unanimity of all the codices proves to every critic that the prototypes of these manuscripts, at a much earlier date, must have contained the same indications of authorship. Similar is the testimony of the Gospel translations, of which the Syria, Coptic, and Old Latin extend back in their earliest forms to the second century.<sup>2</sup>

### Testimony from the Patristic Writers

The church fathers whose writings have come down to us had no personal knowledge who penned the gospels. Like us, they were dependant upon the voice of tradition received in a continuous stream from the time of the apostles. Even though they have no personal knowledge of the facts they relate, their testimony is perfectly competent. Indeed, all of history is dependant upon just this sort of thing, and without it historians would be at a total loss to convey to us information about the past. Historians almost never are eye-witnesses of the things they report, but depend upon secondary sources for the information they report. Hence, the testimony of the early church fathers cannot be dismissed or discounted. Again, it is all we possess for many Old Testament books and the gospels of Matthew and Mark, and I think I speak for the overwhelming majority when I say that we have perfect confidence in its correctness. In addition to the testimony from tradition, we also have the *opinion testimony* based upon the early fathers’ expert knowledge of the scriptures. Opinion testimony from recognized experts is another source of competent evidence and is perfectly admissible on the issue of authorship. Thus prefaced, let us survey the patristic writers to learn what we may regarding the author of the fourth gospel.

**Irenaeus** (A.D. 140-202) – Irenaeus was Bishop of Lyon, in Gaul (France), and is the first and greatest authority for the authenticity of John’s gospel. Irenaeus quotes over one hundred times from the gospel of John, and states “*John, the Lord’s disciple, he that leaned on his bosom, published the gospel at Ephesus during his abode in Asia.*”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08438a.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III, I, 1.

**Theophilus** (A.D. 115-181) – Bishop of Antioch before A.D. 170, Theophilus quotes John’s gospel, saying, “*And hence the holy writings teach us, and all of the spirit-bearing men, one of whom, John, says, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,’ showing that at first God was alone, and the Word in Him.*”<sup>4</sup>

**Muratorian Fragment** – This fragment provides a canon of the scripture by the early church and is dated to about A.D. 170. This fragment places the fourth gospel among the canonical books, and attributes authorship to John (lines 9-34). “*Of the fourth gospel [the author] was John, one of the disciples.*”

The same fragment assigns authorship of I, II, and III John to the apostle, and calls the first an “appendix” to the gospel. “*What wonder is it, then, that John so constantly should bring it forth, even in his Epistles, and mentioning details, should say as from himself alone, ‘What we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, these things have we written to you’? For so he professes that he was not only an eye-witness, but also a hearer, and, moreover, a writer in order of all the wonderful things of our Lord.*”

**Tertullian** (A.D. 145-220) – Tertullian expressly declares John to be one of the authors of the gospel: “*We lay it down as our first position, that the evangelical Testament has apostles for its authors, to whom was assigned by the lord Himself this office of publishing the gospel...Of the apostles, therefore, John and Matthew first instill faith into us; whilst of apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it afterwards.*”

**Clement of Alexandria** (A.D. 153-217) – Eusebius preserves an important quote for us from Clement, which assigns one of the gospels to John: “*And again in the same books Clement has inserted a tradition of the primitive elders with regard to the order of the gospels, as follows. He said that those gospels were first written which include the genealogies, but that the gospel according to Mark came into being in this manner: When Peter had publicly preached the word at Rome, and by the Spirit had proclaimed the gospel, that those present, who were many, exhorted Mark, as one who had*

*followed him for a long time and remembered what had been spoken, to make a record of what was said; and that he did this, and distributed the gospel among those that asked him. And that when the matter came to Peter’s knowledge he neither strongly forbade it nor urged it forward. But that John, last of all, conscious that the outward facts had been set forth in the gospels, was urged on by his disciples, and, divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual gospel. This is Clement’s account.*”<sup>5</sup>

**Eusebius** – Eusebius of Caesarea (A.D. 260-340) is one of our earliest and most reliable witnesses; he was also a Preterist. In his *Ecclesiastical Histories*, Eusebius sets out the books received as canonical by the early church. At the time of his writing (circa A.D. 324), issues involving the authorship of Hebrews and Revelation, among others, still remained unsettled for some. However, there was unanimous agreement that John was the author of the fourth gospel:

“Of those who had been with the Lord only Matthew and **John** have left us their recollections...John, it is said, used all the time a message which was not written down, and at last took to writing for the following cause. The three gospels which had been written down before were distributed to all including himself; it is said that he welcomed them and testified to their truth but said that there was only lacking to the narrative the account of what was done by Christ at first and at the beginning of the preaching. The story is surely true...**Of the writing of John in addition to the gospel the first of his epistles** has been accepted without controversy by ancients and moderns alike but the **other two** are disputed, and as to the **Revelation** there have been many advocates of either opinion up to the present.”<sup>6</sup>

Here is direct testimony of the authorship of John’s gospel, and its unanimous reception among the early church as authentic and canonical. The first epistle was also unanimously received, though there are those that questioned the author of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John and Revelation. Happily, these have all been long been resolved and John is now universally owned as the author of all the works that traditionally bear his name.

<sup>4</sup> Theophilus, *To Autolytus*, II, xxii.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Eccl. History* VI, xiv; Loeb ed.

<sup>6</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, xxiv; Loeb ed.

These are by not means all the quotes that could be marshaled; the testimony might be continued in indefinitely beyond the Anti-Nicene father, to the post-Nicene father, unto the reformation and beyond. Neither do these men uncritically embrace the traditions they received, but judged for themselves the evidence of scripture, and all pronounced in favor of John.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Author was Intimate Companion of Jesus during his Ministry**

The writer of the fourth gospel provides details from his personal companionship with Jesus during his ministry. Whereas the synoptic gospels begin their narrative *after* John was put in prison and appear to cover only the last year of the Lord's ministry, the fourth gospel takes up its narrative from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and specifically mentions three Passovers. (Jno. 2:12, 23; 6:3, 11:55) It is probable that the unnamed disciple that was with Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, who was at the first a follower of the Baptist, was also the author of the gospel. (Jno. 1:35-42) The author provides details of Jesus' overthrowing the tables of the money changers in the temple at the beginning of his ministry (Jno. 2:13-22), whereas the synoptic gospels relate a similar incident at its very end. (Matt. 21:12-17) He appears to be present and may have witnessed the conversation with Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria. He is one of the disciples present in the ship when Jesus came walking upon the water. (Jno. 6:15-21) He is closely connected with Simon Peter and is present at the Last Supper, leaning upon the Lord's breast. (Jno. 13:21-25) It is he that Simon Peter persuades to ask who it was that would betray the Lord. He is known to the high priest, or to his house, and gains admittance for himself and Peter to Jesus' trial (18:15-18); he is present at the foot of the cross where he is made the guardian of the Lord's mother, and is witness when water and blood issue from the Lord's riven side. (Jno. 18:15; 19:26, 34, 35) Again, we find him with Peter after the Lord's resurrection where he out runs Peter and is first to the tomb. (Jno. 20:1-10) He is present with the disciples, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, when the Lord appeared in their midst. (Jno. 20:19, 20) He is among those that received for a second time the promise of the Holy Ghost. (Jno. 20:22)

He is present with Peter fishing, when the Lord appeared to them again after his resurrection, and it is he that recognizes from the miracle of the fishes that the mysterious man upon the shore is the Lord. (Jno. 21:1-7) Finally, Jesus tells Peter that, although he will glorify the Lord in martyrdom upon a cross, the author will live unto Christ's return. (Jno. 21:22, 23)

All of these facts are consistent with the authorship of an apostle. None of Jesus' other disciples (the seventy, for example) would have been witness to so many events of Jesus' life and ministry except one of the apostles, who accompanied with him always, and shared the most intimate details of his life. But if the larger picture is consistent with apostolic authorship, the minute details point to John. James and John were partners with Andrew and Peter as fisherman upon the sea of Galilee. (Lk. 5:10) John was therefore with Peter in the ship when Jesus first performed the miracle of the fish (Lk. 5:4-10), and was present with Peter when the Lord performed the same miracle a second time, and by this sign thus recognized that the mysterious figure upon the shore was none other than the Lord. It was John who was sent with Peter to prepare the place for the last supper. (Lk. 22:8) After the Lord's ascension it is Peter and John who come to the fore as leaders of the twelve. Peter and John are together at the healing of the lame man (Acts 3:1); they stand trial together before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:19), and travel to Samaria together to communicate the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. (Acts 8:14) Given the repeated appearance throughout the gospels and Acts of Peter and John together, the inference is natural that it was John who lay upon the Lord's breast at the Last Supper and gained admittance for Peter into the palace of the high priest. It is believed by many that John was Jesus' kinsman on his mother's side. Matthew states that there was present at the cross with Jesus' mother, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children." (Matt. 27:36) However, the fourth gospel adds "there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." (Jno. 19:25) Mary the wife of Cleophas evidently is the mother of James and Joses, and the Virgin's sister the mother of James and John, Zebedee's children. We learn her name from Mark's account, which puts Solome in place of the mother of Zebedee's children. (Mk. 15:40)

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<sup>7</sup> The most exhaustive defense of John's authorship has been in response to skeptics among the German higher critics, a survey of which is beyond the scope of this work.

From this it is inferred that James and John were cousins to Jesus (like John the Baptist who was also a relative of Christ). This fact would help account for Jesus committing the care of Mary to John at the cross, for it is natural that she be taken into the home of her sister before that of one to whom she bore no relation. It may also say something about the special relationship between Jesus and the “disciple he loved.” In none of this is there a reasonable inference to suppose anyone else is referred to. If John is not the anonymous disciple of the fourth gospel, then he is omitted all together, for he is nowhere referred to name. This fact alone implies that John is the author, for it is inconceivable that the second most prominent member of twelve after Peter should otherwise go unmentioned and be omitted from the account.

### **The Author was Present at the Transfiguration**

From the synoptic gospels we learn that only Peter, James, and John were present at the Lord’s transfiguration. The author of the fourth gospel seems to indicate he was witness to that event when he states “we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” (Jno. 1:14) When compared with Peter’s statement in his second epistle, this is seen to almost certainly refer to the transfiguration, and thus becomes evidence that John is author.

#### **Gospel of John**

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and **we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father,**) full of grace and truth.” Jno. 1:14

#### **II Epistle of Peter**

“**We...were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory,** when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is **my beloved Son,** in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, **when we were with him in the holy mount.**” II Pet. 1:16-18

### **The Promise of the Holy Ghost was Given only to the Twelve Present at the Last Supper, of Which the Author was One**

The author of the fourth gospel was present at the Last Supper, when Christ promised to send the Holy Ghost, who would lead them into all truth. So far as may be shown from scripture, *only the twelve* were with Jesus at the supper. This is very clear from the gospel accounts.

“*Now when even was come, he sat down with **the twelve.**”* (Matt. 26:20) Luke says, “*And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the **twelve apostles** with him.*” (Lk. 22:14) After Jesus’ resurrection, the promise was renewed to the disciples when Jesus appeared to them, the doors being closed for fear of the Jews. (Jno. 20:19 ) Again, there is no basis to conclude anyone other than the apostles were present or were given this promise. Before his ascension, the promise was made a third time. Luke records that Jesus gave commandment to the *apostles* to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promised Holy Ghost. (Acts 1:2) After Jesus’ ascension, two angels appeared, saying, “Ye men of Galilee.” (Acts 1:11) This proves that *only the twelve* were present at Jesus’ ascension and were commanded to wait in Jerusalem to receive the Holy Ghost. Two verses later, the same group is enumerated by name, and Matthias is added to their number to fill up the vacancy left by Judas. Next comes the day of Pentecost and the promised Holy Ghost was given to the twelve. No one else received the gift at that time, only the twelve. The account is very clear: “Peter standing up *with the eleven*” (Acts 2:14) explained to the wondering crowd the meaning of miracle they witnessed. This gift was communicated to others *only* by the laying on of hands. We thus read of Peter and John traveling to Samaria to impart the Holy Ghost to believers there; baptism in Jesus’ name was not enough, nor could Philip who carried the gospel message there communicate the Holy Ghost himself; only the apostles had power to communicate the gift by laying on of hands. Simon the magician, seeing this, offered money that he might do the same, but was rebuked by Peter for his wicked presumption. (Acts 8:19, 20) Paul, the apostle born out of due time, received the like gift and we later witness him doing the same. (Acts 19:6) The presence of the author at the Last Supper where the promise of the Holy Ghost was made, its repetition to the same group after Christ’s resurrection, and, its repetition a third time to the little band of Galileans at his ascension, is conclusive evidence that the author of the fourth gospel was one of the apostles, for the promise was given only to them. To conclude that the “beloved disciple” leaning upon Jesus breast at the Last Supper was other than one of the twelve is to presume upon the silence of the scriptures and expand the promise of the Holy Ghost beyond the apostles of the Lord.

**The Author of the Fourth Gospel used  
Identical Language and Teaching as the  
Author of the Epistles of John and Revelation**

This is, perhaps, the most persuasive evidence of all. Where a writing uses unique language, grammar, and concepts, appearance of similar indicia elsewhere is indirect evidence that the authors are the same. Here the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of an identity of authors. H.R. Reynolds states "Surely the endeavour to separate the authorship of the First Epistle from that of the Fourth Gospel breaks down at every point."<sup>8</sup> Moses Stuart, in his commentary on the Apocalypse, lists dozens and dozens of instances where there is a virtual identity of language and grammar between the gospel and Revelation, which are unique to those books. The personal appellation of Jesus as "The Word of God" are unique to the gospel, the first epistle, and Revelation; reference to Jesus as the "Lamb of God" occur only here; the theme of "keeping the word" so unique to the gospel and epistle occurs also in Revelation, and stands as one of the most remarkable coincidences of all. Another remarkable instance is the subscription passages in which the author of the gospel says of his testimony "we know his testimony is true" (Jno. 21:24; cf. 19:35), which identical phrase occurs also in III Jno. 12 and the like terminology in Revelation. Stuart comments regarding these "One can hardly refrain from the feeling, that the same hand must have penned both passages. And this the more, because out of John's works, there is scarcely any usage of this peculiar and appropriate kind to be found."<sup>9</sup> "Overcoming" is a theme common to all, as also is use of the word "tabernacle" and the idea of the Godhead "tabernacling" among men. (Jno. 1:14; 7:15; 12:12; 13:6; Rev. 21:3) Stuart adds to these instances of doctrinal sameness that are unique to these books.<sup>10</sup> A smattering is provided below, to which we add some of our own as well as instances where I, II, and III John agree with the gospel and Revelation. We feel the result is all but conclusive in favor of an identity of authorship between them, such that the one cannot be disclaimed to John without also disclaiming the others.

<sup>8</sup> H.R. Reynolds, *Commentary on John* (Pulpit Commentary, Hendrickson), p. lxiv.

<sup>9</sup> Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse* (1845), Vol. I, p. 406.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. I, pp. 405-422.

LETTERS FROM  
AROUND

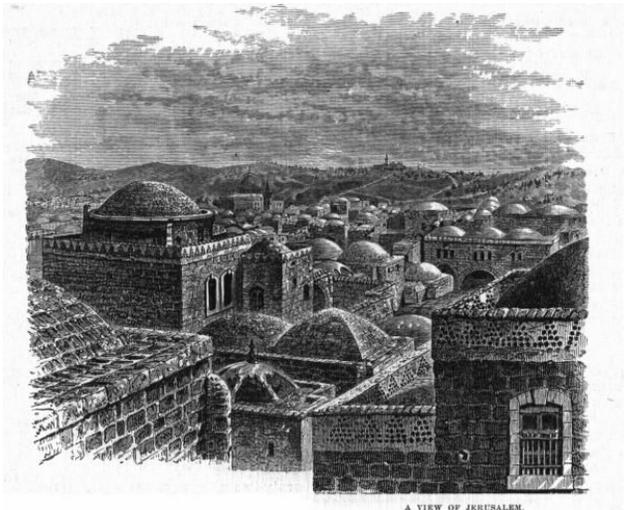
**Kurt,**  
***Couldn't put your Universalism article  
down! - infinitely edifying - thank you!  
It's like I've just had a theological B12  
booster shot. May HWHY reward you  
superabundantly exceedingly.***

***All the best,  
Alan***

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***Trash!***  
***A complete misrepresentation of King.  
Take me off your list.***

***Rich***



## Keepers of the Word

(Occurs generally only in John)

Gospel of John	1 <sup>st</sup> Epistle of John	Revelation of John
If a man <b>keep my saying</b> Jno. 8:51	And hereby do we know that we know him, if we <b>keep his commandments</b> I Jno. 2:3	Blessed is he... <b>that keep those things which are written</b> therein Rev. 1:3
But <b>I know him and keep his saying</b> Jno. 8:55	He that saith, <b>I know him, and keepeth not his commandments</b> is a liar I Jno. 2:4	And he that overcometh and <b>keepeth my works</b> unto the end Rev. 2:26
<b>If ye love me, keep my commandments</b> Jno. 14:15	Whoso <b>keepeth his word,</b> in him verily is <b>the love of God perfected</b> I Jno. 2:5	The remnant of her seed, which <b>keep the commandments</b> of God Rev. 12:17
<b>If a man love me, he will keep my words</b> Jno. 14:23	He <b>that keepeth his commandments</b> dwelleth in him I Jno. 3:24	Here are they <b>that keep the commandments</b> of God Rev. 14:12
He that hath <b>my commandments</b> and <b>keepeth them</b> , he is that <b>loveth me</b> Jno. 14:21	And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because <b>we keep his commandments</b> I Jno. 3:22	Blessed is he that <b>keepeth the sayings of the prophecy</b> of this book Rev. 22:7
He that <b>loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings</b> Jno. 14:24	By this we know that we love the children of God when we, <b>love God, and keep his commandments</b> I Jno. 5:2	I am thy fellow servant...and of them <b>which keep the sayings of this book</b> Rev. 22:9
If he <b>keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love</b> Jno. 15:10		
If they have <b>kept my saying, they will keep yours also</b> Jno. 15:20		
	<b>For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments</b> I Jno. 5:3	

## Subscription Passages

Gospel of John	1 <sup>st</sup> Epistle of John	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Epistles of John	Revelation
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Author:</b> “The Disciple Jesus Loved”</p> <p>This is the disciple which <b>testifieth these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true</b> Jno. 21:24</p> <p><b>And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true;</b> and he knoweth that he saith true, <b>that ye might believe</b> Jno. 19:35</p> <p><b>The same came for a witness,</b> to bear witness of the <b>Light</b> Jno. 1:7</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Author:</b> Anonymous</p> <p><b>That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship</b> with us I Jno. 1:3</p> <p>For the <b>life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness</b> I Jno. 1:2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Author:</b> “The Elder”</p> <p>Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and <b>we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true</b> III Jno. 12</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Author:</b> “John”</p> <p><b>John who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ</b> Rev. 1:2, 3</p> <p><b>These sayings are faithful and true...And I John saw these things, and heard them</b> Rev. 22:6, 8</p> <p><b>Write the things which thou hast seen</b> Rev. 1:19</p>

## Divinity Passages

Gospel of John	1 <sup>st</sup> Epistle of John	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Epistles of John	Revelation
<p>In the <b>beginning</b> Jno. 1:1</p> <p>Was the <b>Word</b> Jno. 1:1</p> <p>And the <b>Word was God</b> Jno. 1:1</p> <p>The same was in the <b>beginning with God</b> Jno. 1:2</p> <p><b>All things were made by him;</b> and without him was not any thing made that was made Jno. 1:3</p>	<p>That which was from the <b>beginning</b> I Jno. 1:1</p> <p>Of the <b>Word</b> of life I Jno. 1:1</p> <p>This is the <b>true God</b> and eternal life I Jno. 5:20</p> <p>Which was <b>with the Father</b> I Jno. 1:2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>John</b></p> <p>Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and <b>we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true</b> III Jno. 12</p>	<p><b>I am Alpha and Omega,</b> the first and the last Rev. 1:11</p> <p>And his <b>name is called the Word of God</b> Rev. 19:13</p> <p><b>I am... the Lord... the Almighty</b> Rev. 1:8</p> <p><b>I am...the beginning and the ending</b> Rev. 1:8</p> <p>These things saith the Amen...<b>the beginning of the creation of God</b> Rev. 3:14</p>

## Life & Sanctification Passages

Gospel of John	1 <sup>st</sup> Epistle of John	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Epistles of John	Revelation
In him was <b>life</b> ; and the life was the <b>light</b> of men Jno. 1:4	For the <b>life</b> was manifested I Jno. 1:2		
And the <b>light</b> shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not Jno. 1:5 I am the <b>light</b> of the world Jno. 8:12	God is <b>light</b> , and in him is no darkness at all. I Jno. 1:5		And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the <b>Lamb is the light</b> thereof Rev. 21:23
He was the <b>true Light</b> , which lighteth every man that cometh into the world Jno. 1:9		For the <b>truth's sake</b> , which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever II Jno. 2	These things saith the Amen, the <b>faithful and true witness</b> Rev. 3:14
He that followeth me shall not <b>walk in darkness</b> , but shall have the <b>light of life</b> Jno. 8:12	If we <b>walk in the light</b> , as he is in the light... the <b>blood of Jesus</b> Christ his Son <b>cleanseth us from all sin</b> I Jno. 1:7	I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children <b>walking in truth</b> II Jno 4; cf. III Jno. 4	They shall <b>walk with me in white</b> : for they are worthy Rev. 3:4
But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out <b>blood and water</b> Jno. 19:34	This is he that came by <b>water and blood</b> , even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by <b>water and blood</b> . I Jno. 5:6		These are they which...have <b>washed their robes</b> , and made them white in the <b>blood of the Lamb</b> Rev. 7:14
They shall look on him whom they pierced ( <i>exekentesan</i> ) Jno. 19:37			Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him ( <i>exekentesan</i> ) Rev. 1:7
Every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will <b>raise him up at the last day</b> Jno. 6:40	And this is the promise that he hath <b>promised us, even eternal life</b> I Jno. 2:25		I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and <b>have the keys of hell and of death</b> Rev. 1:18
Behold, the <b>Lamb of God</b> , which taketh away the <b>sin of the world</b> Jno. 1:29			And I beheld, and, lo...a <b>Lamb as it had been slain</b> ...for thou wast slain, and hast <b>redeemed us to God by thy blood</b> Rev. 5:6, 9

## Lazarus was NOT the author the Fourth Gospel

By

Ed Stevens

It doesn't take seminary-level hermeneutics to determine the authorship of the Fourth Gospel! Thank goodness the early church fathers didn't base their belief in Johannine authorship on the kind of "fantastic" (i.e., hard to believe) reasoning that proponents of the Lazarus theory have provided. Anyone with a good set of cross-references can easily find the Biblical proof that John (the son of Zebedee and brother of James) wrote the fourth gospel. Here it is. Check it out for yourself:

1. The person who wrote the fourth gospel identifies himself in John 21:24 as being the disciple whom Peter and Jesus had just referred to in the context. And we know that John was present on that occasion since John 21:2 mentions "the sons of Zebedee" being there with Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, and two others of the eleven remaining disciples. A majority of the eleven disciples (seven of them) were present on that occasion. There is no mention of anyone else being present except these seven of Jesus original twelve disciples. Notice the words **boldfaced** and put in **ALL CAPS** below (in John 21:20 and 21:24):

**John 21:20** Peter, turning around, \*saw **THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED** following them; **THE ONE WHO ALSO HAD LEANED BACK ON HIS BOSOM AT THE SUPPER** and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"

**John 21:21** So Peter seeing him \*said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?"

**John 21:22** Jesus \*said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me!"

**John 21:23** Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but *only*, "If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you?"

**John 21:24** **THIS IS THE DISCIPLE** who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true. [NAS95]

Notice that John 21:20 ("the one who also had

leaned back on his bosom at the supper") is obviously referring back to what had already been said earlier in the book (John 13:21-25):

**John 13:21** When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."

**John 13:22** The disciples *began* looking at one another, at a loss *to know* of which one He was speaking.

**John 13:23** There was **RECLINING ON JESUS' BOSOM** one of His disciples, **WHOM JESUS LOVED**.

**John 13:24** So Simon Peter \*gestured to him, and \*said to him, "Tell *us* who it is of whom He is speaking."

**John 13:25** He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, \*said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

By comparing the other gospel accounts of the Last Supper with this one in the fourth gospel we can easily determine who this person was:

**Luke 22:8** And Jesus sent **PETER** and **JOHN**, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat it."

**Luke 22:9** They said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare it?"

**Luke 22:10** And He said to them, "When you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house that he enters.

**Luke 22:11** "And you shall say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"'"

**Luke 22:12** "And he will show you a large, furnished upper room; prepare it there."

**Luke 22:13** And they left and found *everything* just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

**Luke 22:14** When the hour had come, He reclined *at the table*, and **THE APOSTLES** with Him.

Who were these "apostles" that were in the upper room with Jesus and who "reclined at the table" at the Last Supper with Him? Was Lazarus one of them? Did Lazarus get to "recline at the table" with Jesus, or was it only the twelve? Was Lazarus ever classified as an "apostle" or as one of the "twelve"?

**Matt. 26:20** Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining *at the table* with the **TWELVE**

disciples.

**Mark 14:17** When it was evening He \*came with the **TWELVE** .

**Luke 6:13** And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose **TWELVE** of them, whom He also named as **APOSTLES**:

**Luke 9:1-10** And He called the **TWELVE** together, and ... When the **APOSTLES** returned...

**Luke 22:14** ¶ When the hour had come, He reclined *at the table*, and the **APOSTLES** with Him.

**Luke 24:10** Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the *mother* of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the **APOSTLES**.

There is no indication that anyone else was in the upper room with Jesus at the Last Supper other than the twelve apostles, which obviously did not include Lazarus. We know that John was there, since he was one of the twelve, and it was he along with Peter who prepared the Passover meal in the upper room. There is no mention in any of the four gospels of anyone besides the twelve apostles being in the upper room with Jesus, and especially no mention of anyone else being allowed to “recline at the table” with Jesus, except the twelve. So whoever it was who “reclined at the table” with Jesus and leaned back on his breast to ask him about the betrayer, had to be one of the twelve apostles, since it was only the twelve who were invited to recline with Him at His Passover table there in the upper room. This was the same twelve who Jesus says (right there at the Last Supper) would recline at table with Him in His Kingdom and sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes:

**Luke 22:30** that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the **twelve** tribes of Israel.

Lazarus was never given that privilege of reclining at table with Christ at the Last Supper, nor promised a throne at Christ’s side in the Kingdom. It was only the **TWELVE APOSTLES** who were allowed that privilege. So this effectively demonstrates that the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (who wrote the fourth gospel) had to be none other than the apostle John himself (the son of Zebedee and brother of James the son of Zebedee). Lazarus was not reclining at table with Jesus, so he could not have been the one to lean back on Jesus’ breast and ask about His betrayer.

As additional support for the Johannine authorship for the fourth gospel, think about what the author of the fourth gospel says here (John 19:25-27 and 20:1-4):

**John 19:25** ... But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

**John 19:26** When Jesus then saw His mother, and **THE DISCIPLE WHOM HE LOVED** standing nearby, He \*said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”

**John 19:27** Then He \*said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” From that hour **THE DISCIPLE** took her into his own *household*.

There is early and strong testimony “at the mouth of two or more reliable witnesses” that John the son of Zebedee WAS “**THAT DISCIPLE**” who took Mary into his own household after Jesus died on the Cross. There is not a shred of evidence (much less “at the mouth of two or three reliable witnesses”) that Lazarus was that disciple who took Mary into his home. But that is what we would have to believe, IF in fact Lazarus was the person referred to by the phrase “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

**John 20:1** Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene \*came early to the tomb, while it \*was still dark, and \*saw the stone *already* taken away from the tomb.

**John 20:2** So she \*ran and \*came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple **WHOM JESUS LOVED** , and \*said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”

**John 20:3** So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb.

**John 20:4** The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first;

**John 20:5** and stooping and looking in, he \*saw the linen wrappings lying *there*; but he did not go in.

**John 20:6** And so Simon Peter also \*came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he \*saw the linen wrappings lying *there*,

**John 20:7** and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.

**John 20:8** So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed.

Who was this “**other disciple whom Jesus loved**” who ran faster and came to the tomb first before Peter? There is an early and strong tradition that it was Apostle John, and there is NO early or significant support for the idea that it was Lazarus. Lazarus would not have had to run to the tomb to see if the One who raised him had been raised from the dead. He would have believed their report without having to run to the tomb. But John the apostle would have been skeptical just like Peter.

There is no evidence that Lazarus was even staying at that same place where the twelve had gathered after the crucifixion and where the women delivered their report. Nor is there any indication in the context of any of the post-resurrection appearances that Lazarus was staying in the same location with Peter and the other ten apostles. But we know John was together with Peter during this time from the other gospel accounts of the crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances, since it mentions that the other apostles were there.

I appreciate also the comments of Louis Berkhof about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel in his New Testament Introduction:

*The author was the apostle John.* He often makes mention in his Gospel of a disciple whom he never names, but to whom he constantly refers as “the (an) other disciple,” or as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” Cf. 13:23; 18:15; 19:26; 20:2, 3, 4, 8; 21:7. At the close of his Gospel he says of him: “This is the disciple which testifieth these things; and we know that his testimony is true,” **21:24**. Who was this disciple? The evangelist names only seven of the disciples of the Lord, the five that are not named being John and his brother James, Matthew, Simon the Canaanite and James the son of Alpheus. Now it is evident from 1:35-41 that said disciple was one of the first ones called by the Lord, and these according to Mark 1:16-19 were Peter, Andrew, John and James. The first two are explicitly named in John 1:41-43, so that the one whose name is suppressed must have been either John or James. But we cannot think of James as the author of this Gospel, since he died a martyrs death as early as A. D. 44. Therefore John must have been the writer. [Berkhof, NT Intro, John, “Authorship”]

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