

We come this morning to the final two verses of John's gospel, and what might rightly be called a postscript. I originally intended to cover it last week briefly in closing, but after further thought, decided there were important and practical truths that warranted a final sermon.

I want to consider two things from John's postscript—His Identity and His Testimony—I first want to show you that by "the disciple" (v24) John does in fact refer to himself, and secondly, to examine the nature of his apostolic testimony (witness).

I mentioned several years ago in our first sermon, that John likely wrote his Gospel to combat several Christological errors. These errors denied either His deity or humanity. And so, John wrote this fourth Gospel, with an eye to Christ's deity. To personally bear witness to the truth, that Jesus of Nazareth was in fact the Word made flesh.

This is John's grand design throughout the Gospel, and it's fundamentally his specific design in these two final verses.

## I. The Identity of the Disciple

### II. The Testimony of the Disciple

#### I. His Identity

1. V24—"This is the disciple who testifies of these things and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true."
2. Here I am thinking of the phrase "this is the disciple"—who is meant by "this disciple"—well, the answer is in the previous verses.
3. V20—"Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His bread at the supper...v21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, 'But Lord, what about this man? V22 Jesus said to him, 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me. V23 Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?"
4. V24—"This is the disciple who testifies of these things"—that is, the same person Peter was concerned about, that Jesus loved, leaned on His breast, and asked the question, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" is the same person who wrote the book of John, and thus refers to himself in vv24-25.
5. In other words, the disciple referenced in v24 is none other than John, who referred to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."
6. Now, as most of you are aware, John refers to himself in this way at least 5 times throughout this fourth gospel.
7. In fact, John never refers to his own name throughout his gospel—he simply refers to himself as "the disciple Jesus loved."
8. Thus, the question I want to answer at this point is WHY? Why does he refer to himself in this way? Let me suggest two reasons.
9. (1) Humility—within John the disciple we find a wonderful example of Christian modesty, meekness, and humility.
10. While our Savior loved all His disciples, it's evident He had three favorites that were privileged above the others.
11. On several occasions He selected Peter, James, and John to accompany Him in more private and intimate settings.
12. There is little doubt that John was especially privileged and had a very close and affectionate relationship with Christ.
13. And yet, John never records any of these privileged encounters—he never mentions being a part of an inner circle.

14. In fact, as I have already said, John never even mentions His name—the only time the name John is used it refers to John the Baptist.
15. Furthermore, we know in addition to this fourth gospel, John wrote four other NT books, including the last one.
16. And yet for all that, he simple refers to himself as "that disciple whom Jesus loved"—as a sinner saved by grace.
17. (2) Amazement—I suggest this is the primary reason why John describes himself in the way he does—he never got over the fact that Jesus loved him.
18. Brethren, there's a true sense in which Christ loves all His people the same, but not all His people know it the same.
19. Many Christians struggle with a sense of assurance and knowing whether Christ really loves them personally.
20. But this was not the case with John—he may not have understood every theological point (as he would later after the Day of Pentecost).
21. He may have had lingering doubts and confusion about many things, but one thing was for certain—Christ loved him.
22. And thus, I suggest to you that John himself is the disciple mentioned in v24, and the author of this fourth gospel.

## II. His Testimony

1. John ends his gospel by referring to his testimony—"This is the disciple who testifies of these things and wrote these things."
2. The word rendered "testifies" literally means "to testify" or "bear witness"—it refers to the validation of facts.
3. It's a common word used throughout John's gospel—in fact, in some sense, it is the major theme of the entire book.
4. John the Baptist testifies of Christ; the Father testifies of Christ; the Holy Spirit comes to testify of Christ; the works (miracles) testified of Christ.
5. And thus, now John ends the book by testifying that everything recorded within it, actually and literally happened.
6. V24—"This is the disciple who testified (bears witness) of these things"—that is, the events recorded in the book.
7. And thus, I want to suggest three things about John's testimony, as found within these final two verses of the book.
8. (1) It's written, v24—"This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things"—that is, wrote them down in a book.
9. Now, there are two things very important within this statement—John witnessed certain things, and wrote them down.
10. What does John mean by "these things"—well, obviously he refers to the things that are written down in the book.
11. Perhaps we can summarize them into three categories—the miracles of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus, and the actions of Jesus.
12. The seven sign-miracles, our Savior's teaching both to the crowds and disciples, and His death, burial, and resurrection.
13. Thus, we learn two important lessons about the Scriptures, the written revelation of God—it's human and divine.
14. (a) Scripture is human—that is, it was written by men, with diverse personalities and experiences (Matthew, Mark, Luke, James, Peter, and Paul).
15. The human authors were not expected to check their humanity at the door—they retained their unique individuality.
16. Thus, John says—"This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things"—John wrote them.

17. In other words, the Holy Spirit specifically selected men to write down what they personally knew themselves.
18. (b) Scripture is divine—by this is meant, the Holy Spirit enabled the human author to record the events without error.
19. While John himself wrote the book, he wrote it under the direct assistance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.
20. How else would he have remembered everything that Christ said and did, especially things he did not personally witness?
21. For example, he starts his Gospel with the words---"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
22. He then goes on to assert that the Word created all things, and then entered creation, as the Word became flesh.
23. Well, obviously brethren, John was not present "in the beginning," was not present at creation, nor at Christ's incarnation.
24. How did John have knowledge of such things and how was he able to remember the events of Jesus' ministry that likely took place 30 or 40 years earlier?
25. Jn.14:26—"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."
26. If you remember back when we considered this verse, I suggested that it has a direct application to the Spirit's work of inspiration.
27. The Spirit would do two things—first, He would teach them all things—that is, enables them to write unspeakable things.
28. Secondly, He would bring to remembrance all that Christ said and did, with the intention of writing them down.
29. 2Pet.1:21—"For prophecy (scripture) never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke (wrote) as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."
30. (2) It's certain, v24—"and we know that his testimony is true"—this is without doubt the most controversial phrase found in our passage.
31. The question concerns the identity of the pronoun "we"—"and we know that his testimony is true"—who is the "we"?
32. Well, as you can imagine there have been several suggestions offered—let me simply suggest the two most likely.
33. (a) By "we" is meant John and the other disciples—"we (the other disciples and I) know that his testimony is true (referring to his testimony in the third person).
34. Jn.19:35—"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."
35. This returns to the humility of John, who only referred to himself in the third person—"he who has seen has testified."
36. (b) By "we" is meant the other elders at Ephesus, where John was an elder, or else it refers to the other disciples.
37. Thus, it's possible that someone else other than John, added this phrase at the end of 24, to bear witness of its truth.
38. Personally, if I had to choose, I prefer to the first option, largely because John often refers to himself in the third person.
39. Furthermore, this allows us to understand the "we" as referring to John and the other disciples who witnessed these things.
40. V24—"And we know that his testimony is true"—we know that it accords with the events that we too witnessed.
41. John's gospel is the truth—it is the truth of what happened—everything in it literally and historically occurred.
42. (3) It's selective, v25—"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen."

43. I trust it's obvious that John is speaking figuratively—he's overstating things to make a point—he's exaggerating.
44. If everything Jesus said and did were written down in books, the world itself would have plenty room to contain them.
45. But here is the principle point—our Savior did far more than what's written in John (and by inference), the other Gospels.
46. In other words—John was aided by the Holy Spirit to selectively record the events the Spirit knew were necessary.
47. Thus, I suggest there are two great truths taught in v25—(a) Christ did many great works in His earthly ministry.
48. (b) The Spirit enabled John to select only what was necessary, to serve as a sufficient testimony of that ministry.
49. Lesson 1—The written word of God is a revelation from the true God—there are two facts Christians must ever maintain—God is and He has spoken.
50. That is, there are two facts that Christians must start with—the existence of God and the inspiration of Holy Scripture.
51. These two are not up for debate—all men by nature know that God exists, and if He exists, then He has spoken.
52. This doesn't mean that it's unnecessary to use arguments and proofs that prove God exists and Scripture is inspired.
53. But it simply affirms—by nature man retains a knowledge of these facts which serve as an ally within the soul.
54. O you self-avowed atheists and sceptic! Deep down in the dark chambers of your heart, you know God exists!
55. And furthermore, despite all your arguments and opposition, you know that since this God exists He has spoken!
56. O dear people, what a gracious and loving gift are the Holy Scriptures! For they are God's revelation of His Son!
57. What a mercy from God that He had Moses write down the first five books, and then David, Solomon, and the rest of the prophets.
58. And then He inspired the Gospel writers, Paul, and the rest of the NT writers, to record and preserve a revelation of Himself in His beloved Son!
59. Lesson 2—The Christian religion is built upon reliable historical facts—the Scriptures were written by men who witnessed these events.
60. Here I need to remind you of the important distinction between apostolic testimony and our own personal testimony.
61. All of us as Christians have personal testimonies—I can testify of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, because I've experienced them.
62. I know that Christ lived, died, and rose again because I have experienced the power of these events in my own life.
63. And so, in sharing the truth with others, it's not wrong for me to share with them my own testimony of salvation.
64. To explain to them how God's grace changed a foolish, immoral, drug addict, into a sober-minded father of five.
65. But, this is not the same think as John is doing—he is not saying—believe these things because I have experienced them.
66. But what he is saying is this—you can believe these things because, I have personally witnessed them myself.
67. This is what's called apostolic witness—a qualification for being an apostle was that you personally saw these things.
68. You had to have seen the miracles, heard the teaching, and witnessed the crucifixion, burial, and bodily resurrection.

69. Brethren, it's for this reason (among others) there are no longer any apostles—because no one today qualifies.
70. Do you remember what happened before the Day of Pentecost, when the disciples sought to find a replacement for Judas?
71. Acts 1:21-22—"Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."
72. The man who would replace Judas must be an eye-witness—he had to have witnessed these things for himself.
73. O dear people, the Christian religion does not merely rest upon hearsay—it rests upon testimony of eye-witnesses.
74. 1Jn.1:1-4—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of Life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full."
75. Now, let me briefly apply this second lesson to the two groups of people present—to saints and then to sinners.
76. Jn.20:30-31—"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."
77. Now, if you recall when we expounded these verses, I suggest that the "you" in v31 included saints and sinners.
78. John wrote his fourth gospel to testify or bear witness to Christ and His work—"that you may believe (initially and increasingly)."
79. Jn.21:24—"This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things"—that you might believe.
80. Every miracle recorded happened—every word uttered is true—Christ did die, He was buried, and He rose again.
81. O my friends, surely, we understand what these mean! It means Christ is alive and He has defeated sin and death!
82. It means if you are trusting in Him, though you shall physically die, yet you shall live (both physically and eternally)!
83. And what does this say to you poor sinner? It's good news for you! The Word has become flesh, lived, died, and rose again!
84. Lesson 3—The Holy Scriptures are sufficient for faith and practice—though Scripture doesn't contain everything we can know it contains everything we need to know.
85. The church doesn't need any further revelation—God Himself by His Spirit, has deposited what we need in Scripture.
86. Brethren, the fact that Christ did many other things not recorded in Scripture, teaches us a very important point.
87. John says, He did so many things, that if they were all written down in books, even the world itself could not contain them!
88. This means, while what is recorded in the Bible is sufficient, it does not mean that the Bible exhausts the knowledge of God.
89. Dear friends, all eternity will be too short to exhaust the glory of God in Christ—it's impossible to exhaust God.
90. I suggest this is hinted at in v25—it's as if John is saying—the glory of Christ is great it exceeds our ability to grasp it.
91. Does every Christian truly and sufficiently know God in Christ? Yes! But no Christian knows God in Christ exhaustively!

92. O my dear friends—what a proper place for John to end his gospel account—though we behold His glory it's only in part.
93. What is heaven like? What is one of the most central events of heaven? What will Christians do in heaven for eternity?
94. Well, surely brethren, at the very heart of heaven is plunging the depths of the glory of God in the face of Christ!
95. For all eternity God's people will increasingly behold His glory, love, mercy, and grace in Jesus Christ our Lord!
96. Hymn—"Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made, were every blade of grass a quill and every man a scribe by trade, to write abroad the love of God would drain the ocean dry, nor could the scroll contain the whole though stretched from sky to sky."