

Wednesday, March 19, 2025 | *Deep Dive: The Gospel According to John* | John 20:30-31

Vs. 30-31 – John makes *three* crucial points in these verses.

First and foremost, John's account is not a comprehensive record of all Jesus did. The Apostle acknowledges that the Lord performed “many other signs...in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.” This is not a sign of indifference, as if John were a negligent writer. On the contrary, John's editorial role demonstrates his skill. Great writers convey more with less. As Irish poet William Allingham once said, “Writing is learning to say nothing more clearly each day.” John said what was necessary and nothing more. His writings are designed to achieve a specific goal; they are not exhaustive (cf. 12:37). Undoubtedly, more events took place in Jesus' life, but in service to the book's objective, the Beloved Apostle omitted those things.

Consequently, John's admission that he intentionally omitted some things encourages readers to explore the other accounts of Jesus' life. The writings of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are filled with material that John didn't include. As is sometimes claimed, this is not to say that John's Jesus is unlike the one portrayed in the other accounts. The "signs" John has told us about are not outliers but a sampling of a larger body of work. Though a reader might get a more robust portrait of the Son of God by reading the other gospels, the Jesus John presents an accurate representation. Nevertheless, considering the whole of the gospel tradition, John's account is a relatively small cross-section of Jesus' life. Thus, saying that Jesus did "many other signs" is John's way of encouraging his readers to discover what those things are.

John's second point in this closing is to convey the *rationale* for his account, giving a fitting end to the narrative proper. Like Luke 1:1-4, vs. 30-31 is what we call the purpose statement of the whole book. We need not wonder what this document was trying to accomplish. The Beloved Apostle tells us explicitly that, though he could've relayed more, the things he's penned "are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ." In other words, his focus was *theological* and not *biographical*. More than anything else, the Beloved Apostle wanted to convince his readers that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Notice the emphasis on Jesus being the Messiah and not vice versa. Most everyone knew the Lord's identity. John wanted to ensure that the one everyone knew was also "the Christ, the Son of God."

Admittedly, the aorist subjunctive, "ye might believe," implies John's audience had yet to believe.¹ If so, the whole document is geared toward proselytism. And given its emphasis on miracles, it is clear that John was concerned with evangelizing his Jewish friends (cf. 2:18; 6:30;

¹ Keener (2003), 2:1215.

4:48; Mat. 16:1; 1 Cor. 1:22). While this is true, such an observation shouldn't be stressed to such an extent that believers are excluded.² After all, nothing in the Greek separates verses 30-31 from what followed, in which a disciple, Thomas, struggled with his faith.³ While unbelievers need to hear the gospel, believers *must* immerse themselves in Jesus' life story. As the great reformer, Martin Luther said,

“The highest of all God’s commands is this, that we ever hold up before our eyes the image of his dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He must daily be to our hearts the perfect mirror, in which we behold how much God loves us and how well, in his infinite goodness, as a faithful God, he has grandly cared for us in that he gave his dear Son for us. Do not let this mirror and throne of grace be torn away from before your eyes.”⁴

Therefore, the Apostle's primary intention in writing this book was to foster faith among Christians and non-Christians alike.⁵ It is as much for the converted as the unconverted. The former will find in John's account a wellspring to *refresh* the soul wearied by the world, while the latter may find waters that *revive* their very soul.

The final message John wants to convey in these verses is 'that believing ye might have life through his name.' The verb 'ye might have ' is in the present tense. This means that the life offered in John's account is not a future promise; it is a present reality. Through the blessed name of Jesus, who is the Messiah and God's Son, believers are already alive in Him. Though salvation has implications for the end, properly understood, it dramatically impacts our present, giving us whatever we need.

² Carson (1991), p. 662.

³ Klink (2016), p. 881.

⁴ Tappert, Theodore G., *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, (Vancouver, BC; Regent College Publishing, 1960), p. 116.

⁵ Köstenberger (2008), p. 582.

VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Deep Dive: The Gospel of John | Week 98 | John 20:30-31

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

In today's passage, we'll be given the purpose statement of John's account. As we'll see, the Apostle's primary concern in writing this book was cultivating faith for Christians and non-Christians alike. It is as much for the converted as the unconverted. The former will find in John's account a wellspring to *refresh* the soul wearied by the world, while the latter may find waters that *revive* their very soul.

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