

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We trust the reality that God is love (1 John 4:8). Love is other-centered, not self-seeking. The full representation of the love of God came in human flesh through the person of Jesus Christ, who created all things in the universe by the word of His mouth, lived a life of service to humanity and saved us from our sins, our rebellion, our own desire to live without Him. By His death and resurrection we have assurance of a future without pain, hurt and selfishness.

We also trust the ancient scriptures hold the evidence for the story of this passionate God, how He intended the world to be, what happened to get the world in the mess that it is in and if this mess is ever going to end.

Throughout these studies from the books of the bible we will see enough evidence that can give us assurance God loves us deeply, has won the hearts of most of the universe, except for this little planet, but His light is shining on the heart of humanity brighter and brighter each day. As restored followers of Christ, we will also show outwardly how to live a life of other-centered love, helping others in physical, material, emotional and spiritual need.

INTRO

Chapter 20 recounts the last glorious story at end of the book of John: the resurrection of Christ. All the New Testament epistles draw upon this event as the culmination of the victory over sin and death accomplished by Jesus Christ. Without the resurrection, everything that we heard from Jesus may as well be a fairy tale. That event is what holds the answer to whether or not we should place our trust in Christ, without it the Christian has no hope of future victory over death. (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

Chapter 21 is a discourse between Jesus and his disciples after His resurrection. Here, Christ works with Peter a change of heart, probably reversing the psychological damage caused by denying the Lord three times. Jesus asks Peter three times if He loves Him.

Finally John ends the book by saying that the world itself could not hold the amount of books that could be written describing the work of Christ on this earth, for there were so many other things that Jesus did which were not recorded (v. 25).

1) JESUS APPEARS TO MARY

John 20:1-18

Mary got so moved when she saw the empty tomb, that it seems she doesn't even realize she's talking to two angels (v. 12-13). She also doesn't realize that Jesus talks to her (v. 15), but when Jesus says her name, like He had done some many other times, she gets so overwhelmed that she grabs onto Him and doesn't let go. Jesus has to tell her, "Stop clinging to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father." (v. 17). Here we notice that Jesus tells Mary He wants to go up to His Father. Could it be that Jesus wants to know whether His death accomplished all that He had prophesied it would? Could it be that He wanted to know for certain how heaven had celebrated His victory? It's a very moving thing to think about.

Another interesting aspect to the story is that, despite the treatment of women at the time, John records that Mary was indeed first to the tomb and that she saw the empty tomb first, and saw the Lord first as well.

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2) JESUS, THE DISCIPLES AND THOMAS

John 20: 19-29

Jesus eventually manifests Himself to the disciples, He shows His wounds to them (v. 20). Thomas, however, is skeptical of Jesus appearance, because He wasn't there when Jesus came into the room. Eventually, Jesus appears again and Thomas is now there. He lets Thomas touch Him, graciously granting the doubting disciple his wish. Jesus didn't rebuke Him for doubting, but did say, in verse 29, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." This is a wonderful promise for all of us who have never seen Jesus.

The chapter ends with the wonderful words of John about many of the things Jesus said and did that were not recorded. However, the point of the whole book is found in verse 31. It is the main reason John wrote his gospel and it's intent is to do one thing, "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

3) JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES ON THE BEACH

John 21:1-14

Just before Jesus ascension, He performs another miracle for the disciples by telling them to cast their nets into the sea (v. 6). Once they realize that only one person (Jesus) could have done this, Peter dives into the ocean to meet Him (v. 8).

Jesus had already prepared some breakfast for them on the beach, the breakfast wasn't some holy heavenly food, but the common breakfast food of the day. The word used wasn't the common word for fish (oyon), but it was *prosfagion*, the word represented a side dish that is eaten with bread. Regardless, fish could be considered the side dish of that morning, and the point is that Christ gave them something they were absolutely accustomed to eating for breakfast, so that His conversation would not be hindered by what type of food He had served His disciples.

4) PETER'S LOVE

John 21:15-23

Jesus applied a really interesting method to restore Peter's faith and confidence. He asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Peter, just two days earlier had denied the Lord that same amount of time. Christ also used the word "agapao" for love. Peter would always respond, "Lord, you know that I "phileo" you". Many scholars believe that phileo represented a brotherly type of love, camaraderie, friendship. They also believe that agapao meant a self-sacrificial type of love. Other scholars believe there's no distinct differences between the greek terms. It's safe to assume, however, that because by Jesus asking Peter twice using the word "agapao", then switching to "phileo", made Peter sad (v. 17). He realized Christ had asked him about love three times (the same number of times he rejected Jesus), and by switching from "agapao" to "phileo" made Peter realize that he indeed did not have the same type of self-sacrificial love that Christ demonstrated to them on the cross.

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5) THE LAST WORDS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

John 21:24-25

John is specific to tell his readers that no books in the world would be able to contain all that Jesus had done and said during His three and a half years of ministry. We already have full assurance of the dimension and depth of Christ's message, His healing power, graciousness and love based on what John wrote. To imagine that it could be much deeper than that is incredibly good news.

FINAL THOUGHT

As we come to the end of this study on the book of John, it's important to realize the claim that John and Jesus both made throughout the book. Jesus Christ is none other than God Himself that came to this earth to show us what it means to live, love and serve others. God decided that it was more important to come and live among us so that we could have a perfect revelation of His character.

The main point of this book and of Jesus' ministry is to demonstrate that God is just equally as gracious, loving, selfless as He is. Those who have seen Christ, have seen God. There is absolutely no difference between them, what they feel about us, how they would treat any of us. To think of the graciousness He demonstrates to the woman caught in the act of adultery, to see how gracious Jesus was with His betrayer Judas makes us marvel at such infinite amount of love that Jesus has for us. Judas was not criticized by Christ, condemned, or marginalized. Christ didn't even fully reveal to His disciples Judas' intent when He left the upper room. Jesus preserved his reputation even knowing he would be the man that would take Him to His death.

Oh what love, what marvelous joy it is to realize that God Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, acts in such a way for the worse of sinners.

The work of Christ throughout the book of John may serve as a very strong foundation for the study of the rest of the bible. When we go through each Old Testament story that might paint God in a very contrasting light than that of Jesus, may our question always be, "why?" If Jesus testimony is true that He is all love, not a condemnatory deity, we must look to all those other Old Testament stories with Jesus glasses and try to reconcile the picture of God in the Old Testament with the book of John.

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