

THE AUTHOR JOHN HIMSELF

To enter on these studies in the Gospel of John is a great privilege. Let us begin with the author himself.

1. Everything points to John the apostle as the unnamed disciple who along with Andrew heard John the Baptist point out Jesus as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) and which two got to be the first to spend a day with Jesus (John 1:37-40). That unnamed one is the author of this fourth gospel account (John 21:20,24). Other times in the book he thus speaks of himself rather than by name (John 13:23; John 20:2). Early Christian writings attribute the book's authorship to John. Irenaeus (whose life spanned the century after the apostles) often mentioning Matt., Mark, and Luke wrote, "Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord who had also leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a gospel during his residence of Ephesus."

2. We know more about his immediate family than we do most of the other apostles' families. Zebedee was his father (Luke 5:10). It is generally thought the Salome of Mark 15:40 and Mark 16:1 was his mother. His brother James was the first apostle whose death is recorded (Acts 12:2).

3. With his father, brother James, and Peter and Andrew he was a commercial fisherman on the Sea of Galilee (compare Matt. 4:18-21 and Luke 5:7).

4. He, Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael were Jesus' first followers (John 1:35-50), were the "disciples" with Him at the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:1,2,11), were the "disciples" on Jesus' quick trip to Capernaum (John 2:12), were most likely the "disciples" with Jesus when He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:22), when He taught and baptized in Judea (John 3:22; John 4:1,2), and when He stopped at Jacob's well on His way back to Galilee (John 4:8).

5. Early Christian writings indicate he was the youngest of the apostles, and this is reflected in religious art where one disciple is noticeably younger than the others. This may explain why he outran Peter to Jesus' tomb, and why he was hesitant to enter the

tomb until Peter arrived and went in ahead of him (John 20:1-8). Early Christian writings have John dying around 100 A.D., which would be 73 years after he began following Jesus, so he would necessarily have been young during Jesus' ministry years.

6. At the cross Jesus committed His mother to his care (John 19:26,27).

7. Early Christian writings say John spent his last years at Ephesus. Today the ruins of ancient Ephesus feature the large ruins of what is referred to as the Basilica of St. John, a mammoth church building built by Emperor Justinian in the late 500s to honor the beloved John.

8. In John's old age he was exiled to the rocky prison island Patmos in the Aegean Sea just off the coast from Ephesus where he received the visions recorded in the book of Revelation (Rev. 1:9).

9. Lest we forget that John also was human, let us recall that along with his brother James he once proposed calling down fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village unwilling to allow Jesus and His apostles a place of overnight lodging (Luke 9:52-54), he forbade a private disciple of Jesus to cast out demons in Jesus' name (Luke 9:49), and he and James requested the chief seats in Christ's coming kingdom (Mark 10:35-37). Probably from one or more of the above events he and James were given the nickname "Boanerges", meaning "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17).

10. Other New Testament books written by John were I John, II John, III John, and Revelation. His writing five books makes him second only to Paul as the most voluminous writer of New Testament books!

QUESTIONS

1. What was John's personal introduction to Jesus?
2. Name John's known relatives.
3. What had been John's occupation?
4. What were some of the early events in the ministry of Jesus with which John was connected?
5. Where did John rank in age with the other apostles?

6. What unusual matter concerning John occurred at the crucifixion?
7. Where is it thought that John spent his final years?
8. To what island was John exiled?
9. Name at least two instances in which John acted out of order.
10. How voluminous a writer of New Testament books was John?

JOHN'S COVERAGE OF JESUS' LIFE

John's 21-chapter account of Jesus' life does not begin with His birth as do Matthew and Luke nor carry through to His ascension as do Mark and Luke. When John begins his coverage of Jesus' life, Jesus had recently been baptized and had suffered the temptations immediately following. John's account first picks up Jesus at Bethabara in Galilee where John the Baptist pointed Him out as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) that led to Jesus' first followers who later became apostles (John 1:28-51). John's account closes its coverage with the seaside breakfast following the resurrection (John 21:1-24).

The Gospel of John's mention of numerous Jewish feasts is fortunate for us, for it helps us know just how long Jesus' earthly ministry was. Let's look at them. Assuming the feast referred to in John 5:1 was a Passover, John mentions four Passovers (John 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; and 12:1) which lets us know that Jesus' ministry included the three full years between them plus the time required for the material in John 2:1-12 and the time required for the material in John 20:6-21:24. Thus we are able to say Jesus' ministry was between three and three and a half years in length. Without John's account we would not know this. His account also breaks Jesus' third year down when it mentions the Feast of Tabernacles in John 7:2 (which was six months after the preceding Passover) and also the Feast of Dedication in John 10:22 (which was three months before the next Passover).

Matthew, Mark, and Luke cover so many of the same events in Jesus' life that scholars call them the "Synoptic" accounts (which means "seen together"). They were all written before the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem which all three foretold (Matt. 24:1,2; Mark 13:1,2; and Luke 21:5,6). This accounts for the Synoptics using the Jewish method of time (the day beginning at sunset) while John, writing after Jerusalem's fall, employs the Roman method (like we use). Every time-notation in the Gospel of John is the same as our

time (John 1:39; 4:6; 20:1,19). Therefore, there is no contradiction between the Synoptics and John when Mark 15:25 says it was the "third hour" when they crucified Jesus (Jewish time) and John 19:14 says it was the "sixth hour" when Jesus was with Pilate before the crucifixion (Roman time).

Some Bibles in their study helps before the concordance contain a harmony of the life of Christ in which are listed the events of His life along with where the events are recorded. If you look at that harmony, you will see that John lists many events the other accounts don't and omits many events the others include. Why have three accounts covering so many of the same events? Early Christian literature says Matthew was written to convince the Jews about Jesus, Mark the Romans, and Luke the Greeks—the three groups of the enlightened world in Jesus' day, the three languages in which Pilate's inscription on Jesus' cross were written (John 19:19,20). John, writing some thirty or so years later, records many rich additions to the three earlier accounts for which we are deeply indebted.

Instead of charging the accounts with being contradictory, as critics of the Bible do, we see each of them recording various events not found in the others and yet from time to time touching here and there with the same events, making it possible to harmonize all four accounts. An example: John records numerous visits by Jesus to Jerusalem and time spent there in His early Judean ministry and in a later Judean ministry (which Matthew does not record), and yet when Matthew records Jesus' lamentation over Jerusalem's rejection of Him, Matt. 23:37 allows for numerous Jerusalem visits when it says, "O Jerusalem,...HOW OFT would I have gathered thy children together...but ye would not."

The following events are found only in the Gospel of John: turning the water to wine (John 2:1-11), the first cleansing of the temple (John 2:13-22), Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:1-15), at Jacob's well (John 4:5-42), healing the nobleman's son (John 4:43-53), healing the lame man at the pool (John 5:2-47), sermon on the bread of life (John 6:25-71), healing the man born blind (John 9:1-41), the Good Shepherd material (John 10:1-20), farewell material

(chapters 14,15,16), Jesus' great prayer (John 17:1-26), appearance to the apostles with Thomas present (John 20:24-29), and the seaside appearance in Galilee (John 21:1-23).

As you study through the book of John, it is obvious his account records more of the teachings and discussions of Jesus than narrated events of His life.

John, the author, was truly overwhelmed with what all Jesus did and said during His brief life, for he closes his account with these words: "There are many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

QUESTIONS

1. How many chapters are there in the book of John?
2. Where does John begin his coverage of Jesus' earthly life?
3. With what event does John close his account?
4. How does John help us know that Jesus' ministry was something over three years in length?
5. Does John use Jewish or Roman time in his account?
6. Name at least five events listed only in John.
7. How many volumes did John say could be written about all the things Jesus did while here on earth?

JOHN'S FAMOUS 18-VERSE INTRODUCTION (John 1:1-18)

1. "In the beginning" (verse 1). Three other Bible books have the word "beginning" in their opening verses (Gen. 1:1; Mark 1:1; I John 1:1).

2. "Was the Word" (verse 1). "Word" is used here like in I Thess. 2:13—not as a single, individual word but as a message. The Word that was made flesh "declared" God (John 1:18).

3. "The Word was with God" (verse 1). As the time drew near for Jesus to return to the Father, He prayed, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory WHICH I HAD WITH THEE before the world was" (John 17:5).

4. "The Word was God" (verse 1). He was a part of the Godhead as reflected in the plural "us" and "our" in Gen. 1:26; Isa. 6:8; and elsewhere. The Godhead's plural personages are neither named nor explained anywhere in the Old Testament. That awaited Jesus' words in Matt. 28:19. See also II Cor. 13:14 and Rev. 1:4,5. We note that all three were present at Jesus' baptism: while JESUS came up out of the water, the SPIRIT descended in the form of a dove, and the FATHER spoke from heaven (Matt. 3:16,17). Consider also all three in John 14:26.

5. "The same was in the beginning with God" (verse 2). I John 1:1 speaks of Him as "from the beginning", and Rev. 1:8 calls Him the "Alpha" (the beginning).

6. "All things were made by him" (verse 3). This fact is also affirmed in Col. 1:16 and Heb. 1:2. For the "Word" creating all things, notice the creative expression, "God said," as in Gen. 1:3 ("And God said, Let there be light: and there was light"), and before each creative act it says, "And God SAID" (Gen. 1:6,9,11,14,20,24,26), and the daily creation took place! In writing of creation Psa. 33:6-9 says, "By the WORD of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of heaven by the BREATH of his

mouth..He SPAKE, and it was done; he COMMANDED, and it stood fast.” Just as Jesus by SPEAKING immediately brought calm to the storm-tossed Sea of Galilee (Luke 8:24,25) and resurrected life to the dead Lazarus (John 11:43,44), so did God SPEAK the world into existence.

7. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (verse 4). All “life” in the creation (vegetable, animal, and human) is traceable to life in the Divine Word. The theory of Evolution greatly fails here, for that theory has no source of “life”. In the creation, when man’s body had been formed out of dust, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of LIFE, and he became a LIVING soul” (Gen. 2:7). And it is said of all who have lived since, “In him we LIVE, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). When the Word became flesh (verse 14), He was “the light of man”—man’s spiritual light (John 8:12). Verse 4 is a transition verse between the Word in creation and the Word as man’s spiritual light.

8. “The light shineth in darkness” (verse 5). In Scripture, “darkness” is often used figuratively for sin (“the unfruitful works of darkness,” Eph. 5:11) and for ignorance (“Having the understanding darkened...through the ignorance that is in them,” Eph. 4:18). Jesus came as “the light” into a world of darkness to give light to all who would follow Him (John 8:12). Preaching is to open people’s eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God (Acts 26:18). How we should praise Him for calling us out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Pet. 2:9)!

9. “The darkness comprehended it not” (verse 5). Words often have two or more meanings—like our word “file” (an office “file”, a finger nail “file”, etc.)—so with the Greek word translated “comprehended” in the King James. If “comprehended” is correct, people in general did not grasp (fully receive) Jesus (various passages, like John 1:10; Luke 23:34; etc.). Many translations, though, use “overcome” instead, noting the strong opposition to Jesus but affirming the opposition did not put out the light of Christ and Christianity. Whichever meaning was the divine intention, both are true.

10. "A man sent from God, whose name was John" (verse 6). His coming was foretold in the Old Testament (Isa. 40:3-5; Mal. 3:1; Mal. 4:5,6). His birth was by special divine arrangement (Luke 1:7,13). Professional tour guides in the Holy Land today say John got his idea of baptizing from having lived among the Essences in the Dead Sea Caves area. If so, John's baptism would have been "of men" (Matt. 21:25). However, Jesus affirmed it was "of God" (Luke 7:29,30).

11. "The same came...to bear witness of the Light" (verse 7). John foretold of One coming after him who was mightier than he (Mark 1:7). After seeing the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus and hearing God claim Him as His beloved Son at Jesus' baptism, John said, "I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:34).

12. "That all men through him might believe" (verse 7). When John baptized, he told those being baptized to "believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (Acts 19:4). Just as we who live today believe on Jesus through the word of His apostles (John 17:20), so people prior to His coming believed on Him through John the Baptist.

13. "He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (verse 8). John himself said the same thing: "I am not the Christ" (John 1:20).

14. "That was the true Light" (verse 9). Before Jesus came as the Messiah, there were false claimants to be the Messiah (John 10:8), and He predicted there would be more such after He left (Matt. 24:4,5). All such were false "lights"—Jesus was the "true Light"! Jesus is also the "true bread" (John 6:32,33), the "true vine" (John 15:1), and the "true witness" (Rev. 3:14). So true is Jesus that He is called "True" in Rev. 19:11.

15. "Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (verse 9). Just how does this divine Light light every man who comes into the world? It is difficult to be dogmatic here. All can walk in the light if they will (John 8:12) and thus be lightened by Christ, but all don't. When Christ came, light came into the world, but John 3:19,20 says men loved darkness rather than light, and because they

hated the light they did not come to the light. Potentially, then, Christ would enlighten every person who is born. Notice what follows in the next verse.

16. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (verse 10). The three statements in this verse state three important facts: (1) "He was in the world"—history declares that; (2) "The world was made by him"—this has already been discussed; (3) Now the sad fact: "The world knew him not."

17. "He came unto his own" (verse 11). In Greek "own" is neuter gender, referring to the universe He had created.

18. "And his own received him not" (verse 11). In Greek this "own" is masculine gender, indicating people. Nazareth rejected Him (Matt. 13:54-58), and the Jewish apostle Paul said Jesus' own people (Jews) killed Him—had Him killed (I Thess. 2:14,15).

19. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (vs. 12,13). Here is one of the many great statements in John. Jesus' rejection by His own people did not nullify others from receiving Him. Jesus knocks at the door of the human heart wanting to be let in (Rev. 3:20). Col. 2:6 also speaks of Christians' having "received Christ Jesus". Because people become willing to receive Jesus into their lives, He gives them the privilege of becoming children of God. What a privilege! We become God's children by a spiritual birth, several times referred to in I John (3:9; 5:1,4), very specifically in John 3:3-7, but also in Paul's writing (I Cor. 4:15), in James' (Jas. 1:18), and in Peter's (I Pet. 1:23). We are children of God not because we are born of a particular blood line like Jews trusting in their Abrahamic ancestry (Matt. 3:7-9 and John 8:32,33), not because our fleshly nature leads us to be Christians—it doesn't (Rom. 8:5,7), and not because humanity made it possible but because we have been born of God!

20. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (v. 14). Phil. 2:6,7 and Heb. 2:14 refer to Jesus' incarnation (being born into flesh). Though Jesus had

been gone sixty-five to seventy years when John wrote these words, he remembered Jesus' unique glory which he and others beheld, referring to Jesus as the "only begotten of the Father" and declaring He was full of grace and truth. Paul said by GRACE ye are saved (Eph. 2:8), and Jesus said the TRUTH shall make you free (John 8:32).

21. "John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me" (v. 15). John the Baptist had predicted the coming of Jesus (Matt. 3:11), and when Jesus came he pointed Him out (John 1:29,34). Jesus is greater than John in rank because He was before him in time.

22. "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (v. 16). Jesus' being full of grace and truth was not merely something to be beheld and admired but was something all Christians have received from Him! Isn't this wonderful? "Grace for grace" is usually taken to mean we receive "grace upon grace" through Christ.

23. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (v. 17). Here is an obvious reference to the two great covenants: the "old" by Moses, the "new" by Christ which covenant is greatly elaborated on in the book of Heb. but also in more limited coverage in Rom., II Cor., Gal., Phil., Col., etc.). The old covenant expressed God's will for His people (the "law"), but it provided no adequate sacrifice for the transgression of it. This verse does not mean Christ has no laws—He does (Matt. 28:20), but it is rejoicing in the mercy Christ brings! This is why Christ's message is called the "gospel" ("good news").

24. "No man hath seen God at any time" (v. 18). Moses who frequently heard God's voice wanted to see Him, but he was told that nobody could see God's face and live (Exo. 33:20). In writing to Timothy Paul said God dwells in light that no man can approach (I Tim. 6:16), a reason why no man has seen nor can see God while being in the flesh. In our glorified form we will get to see God (Rev. 20:3,4).

25. Since none of us has seen God, how do we know about Him? "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,

he hath declared him" (v. 18). Jesus as the "Word of God" has "declared" Him!

Following this momentous Introduction, in the very next verse John begins his narration of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist preceding it.

QUESTIONS

1. With what words does the Gospel of John open?
2. What is meant by Christ being called the "Word"?
3. In what way do the opening verses of John imply a Godhead?
4. What in Gen. 1:1 shows that all things were created by the Word?
5. Christ is also called a _____ that came into a dark world.
6. Why did God send John the Baptist?
7. Did many recognize that Jesus Christ had been the Creator?
8. What privilege did Jesus make possible for those who receive Him?
9. What does the word "incarnation" mean?
10. What two great characteristics does John say Jesus was full of?
11. Why is the gospel "good news"?
12. Since no one has seen God, how do we know about Him?

MIRACLES IN JOHN - Part I

Because the gospel of John is more devoted to discourses and discussions than the other accounts and not as much to narration as they, it does not tell us about as many miracles as the others. John mentions this fact in John 20:30 ("Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book"), but he went on to state that those he did record are sufficient to show who Jesus was ("But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," John 20:31), and that that faith might point us to life through Him ("and that believing ye might have life through his name," John 20:31).

Let us notice the miracles John did record in two studies.

TURNING WATER TO WINE (John 2:1-11)

This was the first of Jesus' many miracles, and it was performed in Cana near Nazareth soon after He returned home after His baptism, temptations, and being introduced by John the Baptist at Bethabara where He secured His first known disciples (Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael) all of whom later became apostles.

The occasion was a wedding feast which His mother Mary was attending (that of a friend or a relative) and to which Jesus and His handful of disciples were also invited since they were in the area.

Let us look at Mary first since she involved herself in a circumstance that arose. She knew the story behind the births of Elizabeth's son John and her son Jesus. She knew her son was to be the Messiah. She knew He was thirty (the age of Jewish majority), that He was leaving home to embark on His ministry, that He had just been baptized by John, and that He already had some disciples with Him. With this knowledge her motherly desires for Him were running high when the wedding beverage gave out. Her thought must have been, "Wouldn't this be a great time and place for Him to perform a miracle in the presence of loved ones and friends?" While

Jesus was going to, He knew He was to manifest Himself at the promptings of “the One who sent Him” rather than at the promptings of a human being (even His mother).

The servants who did what He said could see what had happened to the water with which they had filled the stone water jars, but they let the one in charge of the feast find out for himself about this second supply of beverage. He could not believe such good tasting beverage had not been served earlier.

Because the word in our translations is “wine”, some conclude it is all right to drink alcoholic beverages. Some others oppose Jesus’ making an alcoholic beverage.

The Greek word translated “wine” is “oinos”, whether it is fresh grape juice as in Matt. 9:17 or fermented causing drunkenness as in Eph. 5:18 so that in each instance of the word the meaning must be determined by the setting as to which it is. Several considerations incline your writer to think it was fresh grape juice.

If “wine” here meant fermented drink, the guests had already consumed all on hand, and when Jesus provided a vast quantity of the best tasting drink for them, what would happen to some of them as a result of Jesus’ miracle? Drunkenness! Note the quantity that He provided. A firkin is nine gallons. Each waterpot held two or three firkins (18 to 27 gallons). Six waterpots would, therefore, have held 108 to 162 gallons!

Again, if this were fermented resulting in some people’s drunkenness, Jesus would have cast the stumbling block before them, violating what the Bible elsewhere teaches about stumbling blocks (Rom. 14:21).

HEALING A NOBLEMAN’S SON **(Read John 4:46-54)**

Jesus was at Cana, where He had performed His first miracle. When the nobleman came to Him, He performed this miracle. Cana was in the hills of Galilee and was an estimated twelve miles from Capernaum where the nobleman lived.

We wonder if the man had heard of Jesus' first miracle or of His miracles at the Passover in Jerusalem (John 2:23). Because of some informational source he sought Jesus' miraculous help with reference to his very sick son. The nobleman evidently did not hesitate to go back to Capernaum without Jesus when He told him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." At the very moment Jesus so spoke, the boy was healed. Hurrying to break the good news to the nobleman his servants met him before he could get home. "When did he begin to get better?" the father wanted to know. The boy didn't begin to get better—the fever immediately left him at the seventh hour. The father's conclusion was correct: that was the very time Jesus spoke the healing word in Cana. The nobleman and his whole house believed! That was the divine purpose of Jesus' miracles. His miracles are called "signs"—signs of who Jesus was.

HEALING THE MAN AT THE POOL

(Read John 5:1-47)

While Jesus was attending a feast of the Jews in Jerusalem, He stopped by the Pool of Bethesda where many invalids lay. They were there supposedly to experience a healing by being first to get down into the pool after some agitation of the water took place. Among them was an invalid of thirty-eight years with nobody to help him get into the water. Jesus bypassed the pool superstition by telling him to take up his pallet and walk, which he did. Because this was a sabbath healing, it touched off heated controversy with some of the Jews. That controversy is discussed in another study in this booklet.

FEEDING THE 5,000

(Read John 6:5-13)

Even though thirty-two years of Jesus' life were past, this is the first event in His life recorded by all four gospel writers!

Jesus knew He was about to perform one of His greatest miracles, but His apostles didn't. Just to test Philip He asked him where they could obtain bread to feed such a multitude. Philip

thought only in terms of purchasing bread, telling what a large amount of money it would take so that each one could have only a little. From Mark's account we learn that Jesus sent them among the crowd to see what food was on hand. Andrew was the only one to find any food at all, a boy's lunch of five loaves (buns) and two small fish, which he recognized not to be much in view of such a crowd.

But Jesus proceeded to feed the multitude from them by having the people sit down and to sit in numbered groups. Knowing that this vast group would tell others about this miracle, He wanted them to sit down so as to be able to see His multiplication of the loaves and the fish. By numbering the people present the report of how many ate would be similarly reported by all. He gave thanks for the meal and proceeded to hand the food to the apostles who distributed it to the seated crowd. When everybody had eaten his fill, Jesus ordered all the uneaten broken pieces to be gathered up so there would be no waste. What a lesson in frugality by the One who could have made even more bread and fish! The leftovers amounted to twelve basketfuls. Yes, scoffers would say, "What a story!" while believers in Jesus say, "What a miracle!"

With Jesus' having preached the kingdom of God was at hand and now with such a miracle, this great crowd that looked upon Him as that Prophet Moses predicted would come (Deut. 18:15-18) and were ready to crown Him king. But knowing they would consider Him a political king for the Jews, He stopped it before it got started by sending the apostles away in a boat and the people away by foot.

WALKING ON THE WATER **(Read John 6:16-21)**

This event immediately followed the feeding of the 5,000.

The apostles obeyed Jesus' orders to get into a boat and return to the west side of the Sea of Galilee. The lake was about six miles wide. As they rowed in the dark of the night's early hours, a sudden storm not only whipped up big waves, but the wind was blowing against them so that terror possessed them.

Jesus, who had spent many hours in prayer, began crossing the lake on the surface of the water. It was the fourth watch of the night (between 3:00 and 6:00 A.M.), and the disciples still had not made it to the west side. Maybe by lightning or maybe by the early streaks of dawn they looked out upon the water to see what they took to be a spirit (a ghost). This but added to their fears, and they cried out. When Jesus said, "Be of good cheer, it is I; Be not afraid," Matthew's account said Peter asked permission to leave the boat and walk on the water to Jesus. As we know, Peter was a man of immediate words and action, often being the first of the apostles to speak or act and sometimes the only one (as here). Cite instances of this fact.

The Lord enabled him to walk on the water's surface just as He had done. But Peter's faith was not going to go untested. Matthew's account says, "When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid: and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" By a flash of lightning or by dawn's early light Peter could see the rough water or likely a big wave threatening to swallow him. Faith gave way to fear, and as he began sinking he cried out for help. He was close enough that Jesus could reach out a hand and pull him to safety. We have a song based on this: "I was sinking deep in sin Far from the peaceful shore; Very deeply stained within Sinking to rise no more; But the Master of the sea Heard my despairing cry; From the waters lifted me Now safe am I."

As soon as Jesus got into the boat, the storm immediately stopped, and they were immediately to shore. So there were three miracles in this event: walking on the water, stopping the storm, and immediately being at shore. This is the second time Jesus miraculously calmed a Sea of Galilee storm (see Matt. 8:23-27).

Both times that Jesus calmed storms, the apostles were amazed at what He had done. Being personally involved in what looked like disastrous storms for them meant they were not merely spectators to the miracles but involved participants in the actual events.

QUESTIONS

1. Does the book of John record as many of Jesus' miracles as the other accounts?
2. What was John's stated purpose in writing?
3. What was Jesus' first miracle?
4. Who were some of those present on that occasion?
5. How did Jesus perform the miracle of healing the nobleman's son?
6. How long had the lame man at the pool been an invalid?
7. What about that healing that caused a furor?
8. From how many loaves and how many fish did Jesus feed the 5,000?
9. How many basketfuls of broken pieces were taken up afterwards?
10. What made rowing so hard for the apostles as they tried to cross the lake?
11. What did they think they were seeing when they first spotted Jesus walking on the water?
12. How well did Peter do in walking on the water?
13. Why were the apostles so amazed about the stilling of the storm?