

John: For God So Loved

By Bev Kilts

As a child in Sunday School, we would be given a pocket-sized Gospel of John after having memorized specific verses throughout the church year. This little booklet continues today to be an important part in the teaching of those new to the Word. It's often given to new converts. Precious reading – **the Book of John.**

Traditionally it is thought the book was written by John, the apostle. All we are really told is that He was known as “the one Jesus loved”, John 21:20. Unlike the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, John starts his letter “in the beginning” and from there the reader is taken on a glorious journey. Richard Burrige describes it as “A book in which a child may paddle, but an elephant can swim deep.” Sure, there is much we won't understand, perhaps some we **never will, but must accept on faith. We must be careful not to parse each sentence to pieces and we must pray that God will give us understanding as He wills.** And don't be content with one reading. Be an elephant – **do some serious wallowing.**



John gives us a personal and powerful look at Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, creator, Savior. He is the Word, the Light, the Christ (Messiah), the Lamb of God, King of Israel, Son of Man. And why is John writing this letter? As with the other apostles the reason remains, “that you will believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing in him you will have life.” (John 20:30,31). So, let's go back to John 3:16 – **a verse taught to new Christians and seekers for generations. Even if you can't quote the passage, you have probably been made aware of the scripture refer-**

ence, “John 3:16.” People hold it up on signs at sporting events, churches place it on billboards, you see it on tee shirts. It is undoubtedly the most widely known scripture reference, and that has not been by accident. Many believe that John 3:16 is the most concise statement of the Christian faith, the gospel in a nutshell so to speak. Luther calls it the gospel in miniature – “For God so loved the world so much that He gave His only son so that anyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Acceptance of this gift brings us into a relationship with Him. He doesn't leave us to stumble through life on our own. He teaches us how to love; He teaches us what love is. He wants us to share that gift of life with those who have not heard this message of love. They need to meet Jesus and understand how much He loves them.. In Ephesians 3:17-19, Paul tells the Ephesian Christians he is praying for them to know how much they are loved. “I pray that you...may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love..”

The writings of the Gospels preserve the story of Jesus for generations - read them carefully, they're precious words.

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