

That You May Continue to Believe...



AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Introduction to John Selected Passages

There are on occasion in our lives moments of such sharp beauty and clarity that they are forever etched in our minds as the standard by which we judge all other moments. I remember, once as a boy, quail hunting with my dad and my grandfather. It was late one winter afternoon on my grandfather's farm and the three of us were together. My grandfather and I were dawdling behind but my dad was up in front of us with the dogs when they came to a sharp point along a grown over fencerow that ran along one side of my grandfather's farm. The dogs and my dad were facing due west into a sunset that was as big and orange red and as spectacular as any I had ever seen. Because the fencerow was on the crest of a small hill my dad was not only in front of us but he was also above us so that he and the dogs and the fencerow made silhouettes against the beauty of the Texas sunset. My grandfather and I simply stopped in our tracks and stared at just how beautiful the moment actually was when all of a sudden the covey of quail exploded out of the fencerow flying in all directions. My dad raised his gun and at that very moment my mind snapped a picture. That picture is still in my mind now almost forty years later exactly as it was then. Whenever, I think of my dad or someone mentions hunting that picture inevitably works it way forward

in my memory to claim its rightful place of preeminence. It is one of the standards by which my mind judges all other such moments.

Of course, there are a few other moments that for me were so sublimely beautiful that make up the 7 or 8 most important snapshots I have in my mental photo album. Most involve my beloved wife. Some are intensely personal. Others are less so. There was, for example, the look on her face when she lay in a hospital bed with our baby daughter in her arms, the look on her face when she saw her first grandchild.

The other moments involve my kids. They involve things like homeruns, cartwheels and baked beans. They involve simple things like monster masks or reading books together. They involve things like getting ready for weddings or having babies. There is, however, one snapshot in my mental photo album that is different than all the rest. It is different because it doesn't involve my beloved wife, children or even my mom or dad. Instead, it involves the Bible and in particular the Gospel of John.

Larry Danner and I were in our first year of seminary. In fact, we were in the first week of the first semester of our first year in seminary. We were taking the first semester of New Testament Greek at Dallas Theological Seminary and the young seminary professor¹ we had was trying to keep us encouraged as we struggled to learn the difference between a ϕ and a π , between ζ and a η . The way he did that was to do devotions from the New Testament explaining how understanding Greek would give us more insight into the text and thus increase our understanding of the beauty of the text.

For example, he explained that that passage in Luke 23, where Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them**" looked a little different in Greek than in English because in Greek the phrase "**Jesus said**" was in the imperfect tense which means that the stress was on the continual or durative aspect of Jesus' pleading.

^{BGT} **Luke 23:34**...ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἔλεγεν· πάτερ, ἄφες αὐτοῖς, οὐ γὰρ οἴδασιν τί ποιοῦσιν.

^{ESV} **Luke 23:34**...Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**"

In other words, it wasn't just the fact that Jesus said "**Father, forgive them**". Instead the emphasis was that Jesus kept on saying, "**Father forgive them...Father, forgive them...Father, forgive them...Father, forgive them...**"

You can see, I think, how that might change the way the passage reaches out and grabs you by the heart.

Anyway, this young professor then began to lead us through the Gospel of John explaining the text as the text is written. Now, I had been raised in a fundamentalist tradition where the Bible was venerated as the word of God. It was held to be the actual, inspired, infallible Word of God and yet it was almost never seriously studied, taught or applied. Instead, it usually provided a springboard from which the preacher or teacher leapt to wax eloquent on whatever struck his fancy at the moment. It never occurred to me or as far as I know to any of the preachers or teachers that I heard that the various books of the Bible had been written with a purpose in mind and that finding out that purpose and then trying to follow it might actually make the Bible come alive. It

had never occurred to me that the study of the Bible was anything more than the accumulation of factoids and that the Bible could be studied in a way that made sense of the individual books and of the whole.

But there I was sitting with Larry Danner listening night after night to the careful exposition of the text when somewhere near the end of chapter one of the Gospel of John, somewhere near the point where Nathaniel turned to Jesus and said, **"Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel"** that it occurred to me that it was all true. Now I would have told you before that it was true, I would have even argued and fought over the fact that it was true. But as I sat and listened to the text being opened, the Holy Spirit took the Word of God and applied it truth concerning the Son of God to my heart in such a way that the reality of the those truths flashed forth in my mind as if they were new and direct revelation from God. It was not unlike what happens to a first time father when his expectant wife finally goes into the hospital. He knows intellectually she is going to have a baby. He knows intellectually that he is going to have a whole new level of responsibility. But when he holds that little baby in his arms the first time and looks at how helpless it is and how tiny, he comes to an existential realization that all he thought was going to be true is true and even more it's **really** true. That's what happened to me and it completely undid me.

I turned to say something profound to Larry and he looked at me and his eyes glistened with tears and I realized he felt it too. He was smitten with the reality of the beauty of God in Christ and the beauty of God in His revelation of Christ and the extraordinary way the Holy Spirit could take really simple words written on paper and drive the reality of the Beauty of Jesus into two of the meanest and most ignorant hearts that ever were.

Now what is funny about that is that God has used the gospel of John many times to accomplish the same thing. It is extraordinary to me how deep the affection for this particular gospel really is.

Listen to what Origin says...

We may therefore make bold to say that the Gospels are the first fruits of all the Scriptures, but that of the Gospels...John is the first fruits.²

Now, listen to what Augustine says...

In the four Gospels, or rather in the four books of the one Gospel, Saint John the apostle, not undeservedly in respect of his spiritual understanding compared to the eagle, has elevated his preaching higher and far more sublimely than the other three;³

Now, listen to what Luther says...

From all this you can now judge all the books and decide which are the best. John's Gospel and St. Paul's Epistles, especially that to the Romans, and St. Peter's first Epistle are the true kernel and marrow of all the books. They ought rightly be the first books and it would be advisable for every Christian to read them first and most, and by daily reading, make them as familiar as his daily bread...John's Gospel is the one, tender, true chief Gospel, far, far to be preferred to the other three and placed high above them.⁴

James Montgomery Boice quotes Luther as saying...

This is the unique, tender, genuine chief Gospel...should a tyrant succeed in destroying the Holy Scriptures and only a single copy of the Epistle to the Romans and the Gospel according to John escape him, Christianity would be saved...⁵

Finally, listen to Calvin...

Yet there is also this difference between them, that the other three are more copious in their narrative of the life and death of Christ, but John dwells more largely on the doctrine by which the office of Christ, together with the power of his death and resurrection, is unfolded. They do not, indeed, omit to mention that Christ came to bring salvation to the world...but the doctrine, which points out to us the power and benefit of the coming of Christ, is far more clearly exhibited by *John* than by the rest...the three former exhibit his body...but John exhibits his soul. On this account, I am accustomed to say that this Gospel is a key to open the door for understanding the rest...⁶

Now my doctrine of Scripture will not allow me to speak like Luther did. In fact, cowardice would not allow me to speak like Luther did even if I wanted to. I believe that all of Scripture is equally inspired, equally infallible, equally profitable. But I do have affection for this book. And it is an affection that keeps me going when things are rough. It sustains me when I am discouraged. I feel about this book the same way that John Knox did when he lay on his bed dying. McCrie writes of Knox...

A little after, he said, **“Now, for the last time, I commend my soul, spirit, and body,”** touching three of his fingers, **“into thy hand, O Lord.”** About five o’clock he said to his wife, **“Go read where I cast my first anchor”**; upon which she read the seventeenth chapter of John’s Gospel...⁷

You see the Gospel of John has been sustaining people countless Christians for centuries. I think there is a reason it is able to do that. I think it can do that because that is the very purpose for which it was written. But we’ll talk more about that in a moment or two.

This morning we are beginning a six-month long study on the Gospel of John. Now all I intended to do this morning was to just generally introduce the book but what I have done instead is to ramble on and on about the beauty of the book and why so many, including myself, hold the book so dear. Let me talk in the time I have remaining about when John was written, who wrote it and finally why they wrote it. Then in whatever time I have remaining I want to talk about some of the remarkable features of the book, its structure and how we'll go about dividing it up for study.

The Date the Gospel Was Written

Now it might seem strange to start talking about when John's Gospel was written prior to talking about who wrote it but there is one sense in which you almost have to do that to answer the criticisms leveled against the idea that the Apostle John was actually the author of the book. You see for the past one hundred and fifty years or so the one way to disqualify yourself as a biblical scholar was to argue something definite like the authorship of John.

But there are some hints within the book itself; those kinds of hints are called internal evidence. Let me show you one such hint. It's found in John 21. You will probably already know the story well. Jesus had already risen from the dead and appeared to His disciples. This story is where Jesus asks Peter three times whether or not he loves Him. He does that no doubt because Peter had denied Him three times. Anyway, look at what the text says starting in verse 17.

^{ESV} **John 21:17**...He said to him the third time, "**Simon, son of John, do you love me?**" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "**Do you love me?**" and he said to him, "**Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.**" Jesus said to him, "**Feed my sheep.**" ¹⁸ **Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were**

young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹ (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "**Follow me.**"

Now the text says that Jesus told Peter what he told him because he wanted him to understand by what kind of death he was to die. The allusion to having his hands stretched out and to being dressed by someone else has always been understood as an allusion to the martyrdom of Peter by crucifixion⁸. Now let me ask you a question, when did that happen?

If you were to look it up in almost any Bible dictionary or encyclopedia it would tell you something like this...

We know that Peter died as a martyr in Rome, perhaps under Nero in A.D. 64.⁹

Now here's a question, would this have been written prior to Peter's death? I would say no. In fact, I would say that it was not written till after the death of the "Beloved Disciple" or at least near the time of his death. Of course, it is possible that this incident was written before Peter's death but I think it was written after. I can't imagine what it would have been like knowing this document was going around publicly prophesying your death while you were still alive. Besides, Jesus made it clear in his charge to Peter that such issues are not for others to worry about. They were intensely personal. If I am right about that it establishes an earliest possible date for when the book was written.

Now as far as establishing the latest possible date for the authorship of the book, is concerned, that is somewhat easier. Of course, it wasn't always that way. A

hundred and twenty-five years or so ago, I don't think you could have found any credible scholar who would have thought that the Gospel of John was written before A.D. 200. Instead they would have argued that that it was too sophisticated in its design to have been written in the first century. They would have argued that the philosophical concepts in the book were too Gnostic, too complex, and too difficult for a first century Semitic writer.

Then about forty years ago a student at John Rylands University Library in Manchester England was going through some scraps of papyri¹⁰ found during an excavation in Egypt in the 1920's. The student knew, of course, that the document was quite old and then he realized what it contained. It contained a portion of John 18.

The piece of papyrus, which was only about 2.5 inches by 3.5 inches, had portions of John 18 written on both the front and the back. On the front it had verses 31-33; on the back it had verses 37-38. Paleographers placed the script used somewhere between A.D. 100 and A.D. 200. Radio carbon dating placed it between A.D. 110-125. Now think about what that meant. It meant that every theory that said that the Gospel of John was written late was wrong. It meant that the earliest piece of papyrus that we have was from what was always considered to be the last book written.

Here's the other thing. If this piece of papyrus found its way down to Egypt 400 miles from Jerusalem, how long did it take to get there? Of course, some thought this might be an actual piece of the original book of John but scholars don't think so. In fact, they figure that it might have taken 40-50 years to make the long trip down to Egypt. Of course if that were true then the book of John could not have

been written any later than A.D. 80-85. That means that this little piece of papyrus would have probably been based on a document written no more than fifty years after the resurrection. Think of that.

There is one other thing that modern scholars take into consideration in light of the existence of the piece of papyri called p52. They marvel that the Gospel of John contains no reference to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70¹¹. In fact, if anything it seems like it was written before the fall of Jerusalem. In particular John 5:2 seems like it was written while the pool at Bethesda still existed.

^{ESV} **John 5:2**...Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.

Now the thing we know is that that pool was destroyed in the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Now it may be what is called an historical present but it probably means exactly what it says¹².

Now in case all of that seems to complex let me sum it up. It seems like the Apostle Peter was already dead when it was written. So that means it written sometime after A.D. 64-5. The existence of a very early manuscript means that it could not have been written after A.D. 80-85 and the exclusion of any mention of the Fall of Jerusalem, which to a first century Jew would have been the equivalent of a nuclear 9/11 probably, means it written before A.D. 70. The conclusion then is a very distinct period of time, that is sometime between A.D. 65-70.

Who Wrote the Gospel of John

Now let's talk for a few minutes about who wrote the Gospel of John. One of the most interesting things about all of the gospels, John included, is that they nowhere in them state who wrote them¹³. Some of the books like Luke/Acts take it for granted that the reader knows the identity of the writer.

The Gospel of John is a little different. The writer makes it a point to not give his name. He refers to himself in the most cryptic manner. Let's start by looking at evidence within the text itself. Let's look at John 21:7.

^{ESV} **John 21:7**...That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "**It is the Lord!**" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.

Now I think you can see the point I am trying to make. The disciple that Jesus loved was following Peter and Jesus and he is also the one who wrote everything down. But who is he? Is he mentioned elsewhere. Let's look at some other passages.

^{ESV} **John 20:2**...So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "**They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.**"

And...

^{ESV} **John 19:26**...When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "**Woman, behold, your son!**"

And finally...

^{ESV} **John 13:23**...One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Jesus,

Now let's see what we know thus far. We know he was: (1) the disciple Jesus loved. (2) that he was often teamed with Peter. (3) that he took Mary to be his own mother (4) that he was seemingly at all of the big events.

Of course, some modern scholars have speculated that Lazarus, the one Jesus raised from the dead, wrote the Gospel of John. Can you think of why they might think that? There are three verses that cause scholars to try to associate Lazarus with the disciple whom Jesus loved.

^{ESV} **John 11:3**...So the sisters sent to him, saying, "**Lord, he whom you love is ill.**"

^{ESV} **John 11:5**... Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

^{ESV} **John 11:36**...So the Jews said, "**See how he loved him!**"

Some scholars have suggested that the disciple Jesus loved might have been Andrew. Why would they think that, do you think?

^{ESV} **John 1:40**...One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

Of course, early on the church proposed that John's Gospel was actually written by Apostle John, one of the twelve disciples, the brother of James. Now, when the earliest copies of the books of the New Testament were made the name of the authors were not included. But one very early copy of the Gospel of John, p66, has his name at the top.

Beyond that he was given credit almost universally through the writings of Papias, Polycarp and Irenaeus, Clement and Eusebius. Listen to what Irenaeus, who wrote around A.D. 180, wrote:

Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.¹⁴

Now as far as I am concerned that does it. Still there are a lot of scholars that want to argue that the book was written by John's students or that oral accounts from John were taken and reworked by some subsequent editor. I don't see the damage that would be done by just accepting what those that lived shortly after John had to say. At any rate, I think Westcott was right when he determined that¹⁵:

(1) The Author was a Jew

He quotes occasionally from the Hebrew text (cf. 12:40; 13:18; 19:37); he was acquainted with the Jewish feasts such as the Passover (2:13; 6:4; 11:55), Tabernacles (7:37), and Dedication/Hanukkah (10:22); and with Jewish customs such as water pots (ch. 2) and burial customs (11:38-44).

(2) The Author was a Jew in Palestine

He knows that Jacob's well is deep (4:11); he states that there is a descent from Canaan to Capernaum; and he distinguishes between Bethany and Bethany beyond the Jordan; in short, he knows the landscape.

(3) The Author was an Eyewitness of what he wrote

He stated that he had beheld Christ's glory (1:14) using a verb θεάομαι which in NT Greek always bears the meaning of physical examination.

(4) The Author was an Apostle

He seemed to have intimate knowledge of what happened among the disciples— cf. 2:11; 4:27; 6:19, etc.

(5) The Author was the Apostle John

I think it is telling that he never calls John the Baptist the Baptist. He just calls him John.

Hence my conclusion, John was written around A.D. 65-70 by the Apostle John.

The Purpose of the Gospel of John

Finally, regarding the purpose, the author states it in 20:31:

^{ESV} **John 20:31**...but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Now the question is really whether the text is saying, "These things are written that you might start to believe" or "**These things are written that you might**

continue to believe.”¹⁶ Obviously if it is **“start to believe”** the book is intended to be completely evangelistic. If it is **“continue to believe”** the book would have as its focus some aspect of encouragement in the face of difficulty.¹⁷ Now I don’t think there can be much of an argument that the book can accomplish both things. Still the question is which makes the most sense of the text?

Obviously, you can tell by the title of this series I think the idea is **“that you may continue to believe.”** Let me explain why? In the decades after the resurrection, the pressure on the followers of Jesus became more and more intense. There was wide scale persecution and harassment of Christians. In A.D. 85, synagogue leaders even began to force synagogue attendees to recite what became known as the *birkat ha-minum*. It was a test benediction or blessing to ferret out Christians. Part of it went like this.

For apostates let there be no hope, and the dominion of arrogance do thou speedily root out in our days; and **let the Nazarenes** and heretics perish as in a moment, let them be blotted out of the book of the living and let them not be written with the righteous. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant.¹⁸

Now, you don’t have to be a technical scholar to see the point that such a benediction would have been gravely offensive to anyone following Jesus. While this particular benediction did not happen until A.D. 85, I think you can see in John’s gospel the same kind of exclusionary thing already occurring even in the days of Jesus. For example:

^{ESV} **John 7:13**...Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.

^{ESV} **John 9:22...**(His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the **synagogue**.)

^{ESV} **John 9:34...**They answered him, "**You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?**" **And they cast him out.**

^{ESV} **John 9:35...**Jesus heard **that they had cast him out**, and having found him he said, "**Do you believe in the Son of Man?**"

^{ESV} **John 12:42...** (Joh 12:42 ESV) ⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, **so that they would not be put out of the synagogue;**

^{ESV} **John 16:2...****They will put you out of the synagogues.** Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

^{ESV} **John 20:19...**On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked **where the disciples were for fear of the Jews**, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "**Peace be with you.**"

Now why that continued repetition? What I'm going to suggest in our study is that the Gospel of John Jews were being tempted in the face of intense pressure, to forsake their Christian profession and return to the synagogue. John addressed his gospel to those who were wrestling with that temptation in order to encourage them to stay true to their profession of faith in Christ. In other words, John wanted his readers, and every generation of Christians thereafter, to know that when faced with the temptation to turn away from Jesus, the only hope was to be found in the response of Peter which John recorded: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."¹⁹ (John 6:68).

So the question I think can be asked this way. Are you ever discouraged? Does the pressure of the Christian life and the life of faith ever weigh heavy on you? Do you ever feel so burdened down that you don't really know if you can go on? If that describes you in the least the Gospel of John is the book for you. It takes the beauty of Jesus words and works and arranges them in such a way that the Spirit of God can apply them to great comfort and consolation in our souls.

But having said that let me give just one example.

^{ESV} John 14:1..."Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

No doubt many of you have claimed that promise for your very own. You have taken the words of Jesus and cast your anchor upon them in the same way that John Knox did. The thing I want you to see is the immediately preceding context. Look back at the last few verse of John 13.

^{ESV} John 13:37...Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." ³⁸ Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

It is after that pronouncement that Jesus says:

^{ESV} John 14:1..."Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for

you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Do you get the point Jesus is making? Even when we fail, we are to trust in Him. He is ever faithful, ever gracious, ever consoling. It is only when we look to Him that we will find endurance to continue to believe.

¹ That young professor was Mr. Jack Deere, who was later excused from Dallas Theological Seminary. He was terminated because of his association with the Vineyard Movement and because of his contention that God continued to give revelation today. His turn to charismatic theology and his subsequent move into heterodoxy never diminished my affection for him or for the role that God used in making the reality of the Scripture's witness and authority real to me.

² Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Book 1, Chapter 6, 300 (Taken from Volume 9 of Ante-Nicene Fathers published by Hendrickson Publishers rpt. Origen's commentary on John was trans. by Alan Menzies D.D.)

³ Aurelius Augustine, *The Gospel of John*, (Ages CDRom) Tractate 36.8.1.

⁴ Martin Luther, *Works of Martin Luther with Introductions and Notes*, Volume 6. Preface to the New Testament taken from the 1522 Edition from, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press), 443-4

⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers, 1985), 17.

⁶ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on John*. Taken from the Ages Calvin CDRom, 14.

⁷ Thomas McCrie, *Life of John Knox*. Taken from the Reformation History CDRom, 227-8.

⁸ Clement, *1st Epistle to the Corinthians* Ch.5 "Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labors and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience."

C.f. Eusebius, 2.25.2... Thus publicly announcing himself as the first among God's chief enemies, he was led on to the slaughter of the apostles. It is, therefore, recorded that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified under Nero. (Taken from p. 129, Volume 1 of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers published by Hendrickson Publishers rpt. Eusebius was trans. by Arthur Cushman McGiffert PhD.)

⁹ Paul J Achtemeier, ed. *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), 778.

¹⁰ Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 3-4. The manufacture of papyrus was a flourishing business in Egypt, for the papyrus plant grew plentifully in the shallow waters of the Nile at the delta (cf. Job viii. 11, 'Can papyrus grow where there is no marsh?'). About 12 or 15 feet in height, the stem of the plant, which was triangular in cross-section and as thick as a man's wrist, was cut into sections about a foot long. Each section was split open lengthwise and the pith cut into thin strips. A layer of these was placed on a flat surface, all the fibers running in the same direction, and on top another layer was laid, with the fibers running at right angles to the lower layer. The two layers were then pressed together until they formed one fabric—a fabric which, though now so brittle that it can sometimes be crumbled into powder, once had a strength nearly equal to that of good paper.

¹¹ Leon. Morris, *The Gospel According to John (Rev.)* (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 28-9.

¹² Daniel B. Wallace, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Argument, Outline*, (Taken from the <http://www.bible.org> article), 8.

¹³ D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 68.

¹⁴ Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* 3.1 (SAGE Digital Library)

¹⁵ B.F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1954), v-xxv. I discovered the importance of Westcott's commentary through Professor Dan Wallace. I am especially grateful for his introduction to the Gospel of John available at <http://www.bible.org> article.

¹⁶ Morris, 34. He writes in a footnote, "There is a textual problem as to whether the present or the aorist subjunctive of the verb pistuew should be read. On the whole it seems that the present is somewhat more probable. Some authors argue from this that the meaning is "that you may continue to believe," and they deduce that John wrote primarily to Christians to strengthen their faith."

¹⁷ Peter F. Ellis, *The Genius of John*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1984), 5-6. Ellis writes, "In conclusion, we may be reasonably sure that John wrote his Gospel for weak Christians both in his own community and in the synagogue. His purpose was to call to a definitive decision for Christ those Christian Jews (crypto-Christians) who were straddling the fence between Jesus and the synagogue (1) because they feared excommunication from the synagogue...(As a personal note, I have to say how much I am indebted to Ellis. His simple commentary has had a profound impact on how I view the Gospel of John. Naturally, it is no longer in print.)"

See also: Wallace, 10.

¹⁸ George R., Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 36: John*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher) 1998.

¹⁹ Larry W. Danner, *Introduction of the Gospel of John* taught at APC. (Naturally, it would be impossible for me to even think about the Gospel of John without thinking of my beloved brother Larry. He has been both an inspiration and a cheerleader in getting me to study the gospel with diligence. I am grateful to him every single day.)