

Contents

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----|
| 1 | The Unique Purpose of John’s Gospel —December 27–January 2 ————— | 6 |
| 2 | Jesus Is the Best —January 3-9————— | 14 |
| 3 | Something Better —January 10-16 ————— | 22 |
| 4 | Grace Is All-Inclusive —January 17-23 ————— | 30 |
| 5 | The Struggle to Be Real —January 24-30 ————— | 38 |
| 6 | Putting the Past Behind You —January 31–February 6 ————— | 46 |
| 7 | The Sacred in the Common —February 7-13————— | 56 |
| 8 | The Good Shepherd —February 14-20 ————— | 64 |
| 9 | A Devoted Soul and an Impending Cross —February 21-27 ————— | 72 |
| 10 | True Greatness —February 28–March 5 ————— | 80 |
| 11 | The Spirit “Replaces” Jesus —March 6-12 ————— | 88 |
| 12 | Jesus Lays Down His Life for His Friends —March 13-19 ——— | 96 |
| 13 | The Power of the Resurrection —March 20-26 ————— | 104 |

Editorial Office 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904

Principal Contributor
John Paulien

Editor
Clifford R. Goldstein
email:goldsteinc@gc.adventist.org

Associate Editor
Lyndelle Brower Chiomenti

Publication Manager
Soraya Homayouni Parish

Editorial Assistant
Larie S. Gray

Pacific Press® Coordinator
Paul A. Hey

Art
Lars Justinen

Concept Design
Dever Design

The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is prepared by the Office of the Adult Bible Study Guide of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The guides are written under the direction of a worldwide Sabbath School Manuscript Evaluation Committee, whose members serve as consulting editors. The published guide reflects the input of the committee and thus does not solely or necessarily represent the intent of the author(s).

John: *The Beloved Gospel*

Inspiration has left us with four distinct versions of the life of Jesus, those found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, commonly known as the four Gospels.

We might think that one version of the gospel story would be enough, as long as it were inspired by God. But the Holy Spirit provided us with four versions, each with its own unique perspective on the life, ministry, teaching, and sacrifice of Christ. The greatness of Jesus is such that no single inspired writer fully could communicate it; hence, there's more than one account. As Ellen White so succinctly expresses it: The gospel story was given "through different writers, each having his own individuality, though going over the same history."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 21. One, simply, wasn't enough to do it justice.

By using different accounts, God meets a variety of readers where they are. Each Gospel writer "has an experience of his own, and this diversity broadens and deepens the knowledge that is brought out to meet the necessities of varied minds."—Page 22. In the past century, some literature has taken up the approach of recounting the same story from different perspectives, a move that was deemed new, innovative, and progressive at the time. How interesting that our Lord did the same thing nineteen centuries earlier.

In film and biography (such as the book *The Desire of Ages*, by Ellen G. White), many have sought to share a combined picture of the life of Jesus, based on all four Gospels. These efforts have been a great blessing. People of varied backgrounds and ways of thinking will gain a richer experience with Jesus as they interact with the variety of emphases provided for us in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Much is to be gained, however, by focusing on the unique perspectives of the individual Gospel writers. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, each writer put his own unique perspective on the life and teachings of Jesus. This quarter we look at John's.

John's often has been called "the beloved Gospel." Its author is repeatedly called "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (*John 13:23-25, 19:26, 20:2, 21:20-24*). His book, therefore, was written by one who was especially intimate with Jesus, in the same way that Jesus was

intimate with His Father (*compare John 1:18 with 13:23*). Out of this deeper understanding came a Gospel that probes the depths of Jesus' character and mission in a way that its other three counterparts do not.

Also, unlike Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Fourth Gospel seems uniquely designed to speak directly to a generation who had no access to anyone in physical contact with Jesus. Every generation since has faced this same problem, so John speaks directly to us in a way the other Gospels do not. His Gospel was designed, therefore, to answer what may be the most crucial question of contemporary Christian faith: How can I have a living relationship with Someone I cannot see, hear, or touch?

John's Gospel answers the question: How can I have a relationship with Someone I cannot see, hear, or touch?

The dual focus of this quarter's Bible Study Guide, therefore, is on the unique picture of Jesus provided in the beloved Gospel and on the steps that the Gospel provides toward a deeper and more genuine relationship with Jesus. John, with his own unique stamp on the Gospel, has provided a powerful source of encouragement, hope, and faith for the millions who have learned to love our Lord through what the inspired disciple has placed in it.

John Paulien, the author of this quarter's Bible Study Guide, is chair of the New Testament Studies department at Andrews University Seminary and a recognized expert in the writings of John. Thus, we are privileged to have his insights this quarter as we—who have never met Jesus in the flesh—study the account of someone who did and who shares his life-changing experience with us.

May it change our experience, as well.

Ad



Isn
cries
wi
con





Jew, Muslim, Christian, Sacred, Secular

Israel, sacred to three of the great world religions, cries out for knowledge of Christ. Up to 12 new churches will be planted in this multi-cultural society. Your contributions will help pioneers to work in unentered communities, prepare and translate literature, and rent meeting space.



MISSION

The
Thirteenth Sabbath Offering
on March 27
supports projects in the
Trans-European
Division.