

# Study notes for the message on 29th Nov 2020

## Advent 1 - God's Name

### Scripture: 1st John 1 verses 1 to 10

To understand the epistles of John, we should understand the background. John the Apostle was a disciple of Jesus. He saw first-hand what Jesus did and who he was.

Remember, John was brother to James and son to Zebedee. They were fishermen, and Zebedee was wealthy enough to employ hired men. His gospel then, perhaps, reflects an education as he thinks through the theology of what he saw and heard.

Frequently, scripture mentions Peter, James and John going ahead with Jesus and they formed a close personal bond (**can you remember and find occasions when they were singled out?**) The same three were with Jesus in his last moments of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus needed close friends, and John, at least, implies he was closest.

When Jesus was crucified, only one disciple remained at the cross, and that was John.

When the church was established, on the day of Pentecost, John and Peter proclaimed that Jesus rose from the dead and able to forgive sins. For this, they were imprisoned - the first of a lifetime of difficulties. Yet, John stayed in Jerusalem and witnessed to his faith for several years.

After Acts 8, John is not mentioned again, apart from once by Paul (**Can you find this mention?**)

From then, we rely on extra-scriptural evidence for what happened to John. Most scholars agree that John travelled from Jerusalem to be pastor of what became a powerful church in the city of Ephesus. (**find Ephesus on a map of bible times**). Paul established the church, and Peter visited, yet the records all centre around John's influence.

There has been disagreement over the authorship of the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John and of Revelation. All are said to be written by John, yet differences in language make scholars say there may be three different authors. That said, scholars agree that all three come from Ephesus and the influence behind them all comes from John the Apostle. (**Do we need to worry about slight language differences?**)

In Ephesus, John ministered until old age. All the early church historians, writing soon after John, mention his ministry in Ephesus.

### The Epistles

John wrote three letters from Ephesus. He writes to protect younger believers who are his 'beloved little children.' The time is urgent because there are false teachers active in the fellowship and false prophets and deceivers attempting to lead the believers away from the path of truth. He writes forcefully, pointing out the errors of those teachers who deny that Jesus is the Son of God who came in flesh to save humankind. He speaks against false prophets, deceivers, 'anti-Christ's' and incorrect teaching.

**1. Read 1st John 1 verses 1 to 10**

**2. What assertions does John make here that speak against the false teaching mentioned above?**

**3. Compare this prologue with the prologue in John's Gospel (John 1 verses 1 to 8). Can you see similar themes?**

**4. Of the four gospels, only John traces Jesus back to before his birth, before history, to give him godly significance. How does this reading develop those themes?**