

Who Wrote the Fourth Gospel?

[John 21:24](#)



The title of the fourth Gospel in my Bible is: “The Gospel According to John.” So when I read in chapter 21 that the writer of this Gospel was “*the disciple whom Jesus loved,*” I automatically assumed that the disciple whom Jesus loved was the Apostle John. And so do we all. But was he? Let me say at the beginning here that I am not questioning inspiration. I believe that the Bible is the inspired word of the Living God. What I am questioning is which human author did God use.



According to church tradition, John wrote the fourth Gospel. There were various church fathers in the second century that thought the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee, was the author. There was an increasing urgency about this conclusion for the mainstream church after the middle of the second century, because the fourth Gospel seems to have been a favorite amongst the Gnostics, and therefore, apostolic authorship was deemed important if this Gospel was to be rescued from the heterodox.

[Irenaeus](#) in around A.D. 180 stressed that this Gospel was written in Ephesus by one of the Twelve—John (I hope to prove to you from the Scripture that John did not write this). But this was not the conclusion of earlier witnesses—Papias of Hierapolis ascribes this Gospel to one elder John, whom he distinguishes from another John and it is only the former that he claims to have had personal contact with. [Eusebius](#) in referring to the Preface to Papias’ five volume work stresses that Papias only had contact with an elder John and one Aristion, not with John of Zebedee (Hist. Eccl. 3.39-3-7).



So tradition says that the John wrote the fourth Gospel, although there is some difference of opinion as to which John, and most people believe that without question. After all, the title in our Bible says that John wrote it. What I want you to see here is that tradition can rob us of the precious truth of Scripture if we are not careful. Let me again give you the quote from J. I. Packer. This quote is worth our repeating over and over:

We do not start our Christian lives by working out our faith for ourselves; it is mediated to us by Christian tradition, in the form of sermons, books and established patterns of church life and fellowship. We read our Bibles in the light of what we have learned from these sources; we approach Scripture with minds already formed by the mass of accepted opinions and viewpoints with which we have come into contact, in both the Church and the world. . . . It is easy to be unaware that it has happened; it is hard even to begin to realize how profoundly tradition in this sense has molded us. But we are forbidden to become enslaved to human tradition, either secular or Christian, whether it be "catholic" tradition, or "critical" tradition, or "ecumenical" tradition. We may never assume the complete rightness of our own established ways of thought and practice and excuse ourselves the duty of testing and reforming them by Scriptures. (Fundamentalism and the Word of God, by J.I. Packer. [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958.] pp. 69-70)

Believer, we must test everything we believe by the text. The beliefs you hold must come from the text. There is often a difference between what people say the Bible says and what it *actually* says. The Bereans are praised for checking out Paul's teaching, so how much more should we test what we are taught. Even if everybody thinks that something is true, that does not make it true! Do you agree with that? Remember there was a time when all the educated people believed that the earth was flat, and anyone would be ridiculed if they questioned the accepted truth.

Prior to 1543 it was a commonly accepted truth that the earth was the center of the universe. Then [Nicolaus Copernicus](#) enunciated an astronomical principle which revolutionized the study of science. Copernicus discovered that this earth was not the center of the universe, nor did the sun revolve around the earth. This single discovery completely reversed the order of scientific thinking.



We must be open to allowing the Biblical text to shatter our false ideas. And this morning that means shattering our false idea that the Apostle John wrote the fourth Gospel. Which, until recently, I'm sure was a tradition we all held to.

If you don't know who wrote a letter, it's hard to understand what is being talked about. About a month ago, I received a thank-you note in the mail. I opened it and read it, but it was unsigned. Without an author, I had trouble understanding what was being said. I think that is true of the fourth Gospel; if you think John wrote it, you will have trouble understanding why some things are said, and some are left unsaid. Its author was not a Galilean, but a Judean. This is what makes it so different from the rest of the Gospels.

Let's forget tradition for a moment and look at the Scripture, and see if we can determine who wrote the fourth Gospel. This is really not difficult, because we are told who wrote this Gospel in the book itself:

Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" (John 21:20 NASB)

Here the writer mentions "***the disciple whom Jesus loved,***" and then states that this is the disciple that wrote this letter:

This is the disciple who bears witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true. (John 21:24 NASB)

The antecedent of "this" is "***the disciple whom Jesus loved***" in verse 20. So we know who wrote this Gospel; it was "***the disciple whom Jesus loved.***" Now all we have to do is to figure out who that was. Does the Bible say anywhere that John was the "***disciple whom Jesus loved***"? NO, it does not! Does the Bible explicitly name anyone who was "loved" by Jesus? Yes. There is only one man named in the Bible that is said to be loved by Jesus:

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² And it was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. (John 11:1-2 NASB)

Here, for the first time, we are introduced to Lazarus. Now notice carefully what we are told about him:

***The sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."** (John 11:3 NASB)*

Lazarus' sisters refer to him as a man whom Jesus loved. That tells us something very important about Lazarus. But that is his sisters' opinion. Even more revealing is what the Spirit tells us through the inspired text:

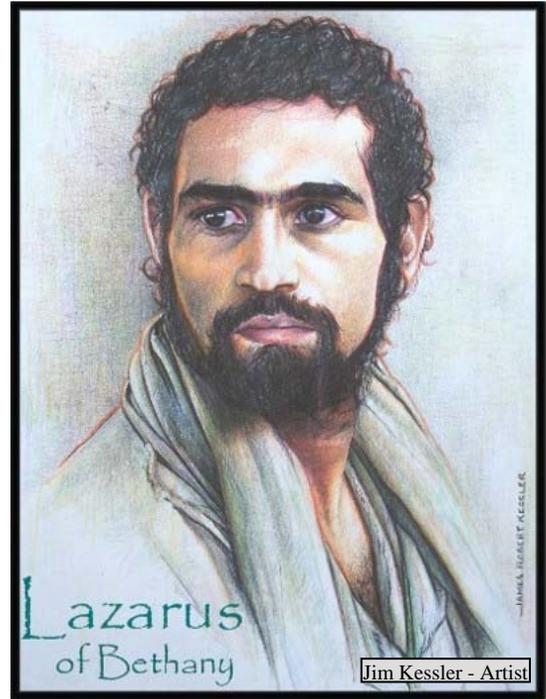
Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. (John 11:5 NASB)

Please notice carefully what this says, ***"Jesus loved...Lazarus."*** So Lazarus' sisters said Jesus loved him, the text says Jesus loved Lazarus, and notice:

***This He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep."** (John 11:11 NASB)*

Here Jesus says that Lazarus is his friend. And notice what else Jesus said about His friends:

"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13 NASB)



Laying down your life would imply love. So when Jesus said that Lazarus was His friend, He was saying that He loved Lazarus. And that is not all; even the Jews said that Jesus loved Lazarus:

***And so the Jews were saying, "Behold how He loved him!"** (John 11:36 NASB)*

It seems to me that the Spirit of God is going to great lengths in John 11 to make it known that Jesus loved Lazarus. Lazarus is the **only** man named in the Bible that is specifically identified as being "loved" by Jesus. Before Pentecost, only fifteen verses mention Jesus' love. Three of these references Jesus' love for Lazarus and five others refer to "the disciple whom Jesus loved". The Bible has only seven more verses prior to Pentecost that overtly mention Jesus' love: [Mark 10:21](#), [Jn. 13:1](#)(2x), [13:34](#), [14:21](#), [15:9](#) & [15:12](#). Not one of these verses names anyone and only Mark 10:21 refers to a single individual.

Because of this love, it should be obvious that Jesus and Lazarus have known each other for a while and must have spent some time together, but the first we hear of Lazarus is in [John 11](#). That is the first time we hear of him by name anyway. I think we see Lazarus very early in this Gospel. I believe that he was a disciple of John the Baptist:

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. (John 1:35- 37 NASB)

Here we have two of John's disciples leaving him to follow Jesus. Who are these two?

One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. (John 1:40 NASB)

Here we see that one of the disciples was Andrew. The other one is never named. This would be consistent with the author's practice of not naming himself! It seems safe to assume that when the Writer makes any reference to another, unnamed disciple, he has in mind this one particular disciple whom Jesus loved. It is hard to believe that the writer has a number of different disciples that he is committed to keeping anonymous.

Let's go back to John 11 where we see Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead:

And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."⁴⁴ He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." (John 11:43-44 NASB)

So we see that Lazarus, Jesus' friend, the one He loved, He raised from the dead. This is an incredible miracle, especially for Lazarus. They were good friends before Jesus raised him from the dead. What do you think their friendship was like now? Do you think that this resurrection had a profound life changing effect on Lazarus? I sure do.

Being raised from the dead made Lazarus quite a celebrity; everybody wanted to see him:

The great multitude therefore of the Jews learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. (John 12:9 NASB)

This large crowd is not gathering just because of Jesus, they wanted to see Lazarus.

But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus to death also; 11 because on account of him many of the Jews were going away, and were believing in Jesus. (John 12:10-11 NASB)

Lazarus was causing such a stir that the Jewish leadership wanted him dead. From here the text goes into the Triumphal Entry. And we learn something interesting here; the crowd was there because of Lazarus:

And so the multitude who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, were bearing Him witness.¹⁸ For this cause also the multitude went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign. (John 12:17-18 NASB)

Lazarus had become a big celebrity and everyone was talking about him and wanted to see him. Some even wanted to kill him. I think that it is for this reason that the author of the fourth Gospel wanted to remain anonymous. He calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved" and the "other disciple."

Now I want you to notice something that I think is very significant. John 12 is the last time we hear of Lazarus. After chapter 12 this celebrity disappears from Scripture. This good friend of Jesus, this man whom Jesus loved and raised from the dead, suddenly disappears. Notice where we see him last:

Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.² So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. (John 12:1-2 NASB)

The last time we see Lazarus named, he is reclining at a table with Jesus. Then he disappears from the pages of Scripture. What is really interesting is right after Lazarus' name disappears, someone else appears that we have never heard of before:

There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. (John 13:23 NASB)

The last time we see Lazarus, he is reclining at a table with Jesus, and the first time we see the *“disciple whom Jesus loved,”* he is reclining at a table with Jesus. The only man named in the Bible as being "loved" by Jesus abruptly vanishes from this Gospel, and then the only disciple singled out as being "loved" by Jesus abruptly appears in this same Gospel. It is my contention that this *“disciple whom Jesus loved”* is Lazarus. This seems so clear from the text, but we miss this because the title of this Gospel is “The Gospel According to John,” so we assume that John is the disciple whom Jesus loved. But the inspired text tells us, *“Jesus loved Lazarus.”*

Now some will argue, as my daughter did, that only the 12 were at the Last Supper, and Lazarus was not one of the 12. Where did the idea come from that only Jesus and the twelve were at the Last Supper? Most likely from DaVinci and his paintings and not the Scripture. The Scriptures never tell us that Jesus and “the twelve” were alone at that last Passover. As a matter of fact, they were probably very rarely alone. Acts 1 tells about the time when the eleven remaining Apostles named a replacement for Judas. They began by selecting two men. But notice what is said about the group from which these two came:

“It is therefore necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—22 beginning with the baptism of John, until the day that He was taken up from us-- one of these should become a witness with us of His resurrection.” (Acts 1:21-22 NASB)

This text teaches us that Jesus had many loyal disciples that accompanied Him throughout His time here on earth. Is it hard to believe that some of them would have been at the Last Supper? Something Jesus says also indicated the presence of others at the Last Supper. Jesus tells them that one of them will betray Him, and when they ask who, He replies:

And He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who dips with Me in the bowl.” (Mark 14:20 NASB)

“The twelve” is a specific designation to refer to the twelve Apostles:

And when day came, He called His disciples to Him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: (Luke 6:13 NASB)

The term “disciple” is a broad term that refers to any follower of Jesus. If Jesus and *“the twelve”* were the only ones at that last Passover, then why would Jesus need to say *“one of the twelve”*? If *“the twelve”* were the only ones present, wouldn't Jesus have said, “One of you”?

We learn from the text that the *“disciple whom Jesus loved”* was not one of the twelve. The next text in the fourth Gospel that mentions this *“other disciple”* is:

So the Roman cohort and the commander, and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him,¹³ and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.¹⁴ Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people. (John 18:12-14 NASB)

This is referring to the trial of Jesus.

And Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest,¹⁶ but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought in Peter. (John 18:15-16 NASB)

This *“other disciple”* was *known* to the High Priest, and he was the one who got Peter in. If you read John 20, you will see that the *“other disciple”* is *“the disciple whom Jesus loved”*:

And so she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." (John 20:2 NASB)

Now if we compare John 18 to Acts 4, I think we will see that this *"other disciple"* could not be John. [Acts 4:1-23](#) tells us what happened to Peter and John following the healing of a crippled man. Peter and John were seized and brought before the *"rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas..."* in order to be questioned about this miracle.

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13 NASB)

Notice here what these Jewish leaders recognized: It was in that moment that they suddenly understood that these men had been with Jesus. The principal thing that we need to get out of this passage is that it was at that point that the high priest and the other rulers became acquainted with Peter and John for first time. But our text in [John 18](#) tells us that the *"other disciple"* was known by the High Priest. This teaches us that the high priest did not know John or Peter before this incident. So the *"other disciple"* could not have been John.

As the commercials on TV would say, "But wait, there's more!" We see in John 20 that this *"other disciple"* was the first to believe after the resurrection:

So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb entered then also, and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. (John 20:8-9 NASB)

This happened early on the first day of the week; *"the other disciple...saw and believed,"* but later that day notice what Luke tells us:

And they arose that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, (Luke 24:33 NASB)

The "they" here is referring to the two disciples who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus. They join the gathering with the "eleven" and others and Jesus shows up. Now notice what the text tells us about them:

And while they still could not believe it for joy and were marveling, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" (Luke 24:41 NASB)

The "eleven", this is the "twelve" minus Judas, did not believe, but the *"other disciple"* had believed that morning. The "other disciple" was clearly not one of the twelve.

At Jesus' trial there are only two disciples there with Him, Peter and the *"other disciple."* Peter denies that he even knows Him. Then we go to the cross, and none of the "twelve" are there. They were all afraid. But notice who was there:

Therefore the soldiers did these things. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own household. (John 19:25-27 NASB)

The Synoptics say all *the twelve* deserted Jesus once he was taken away for execution, even Peter, and record only women being at the cross. There is no contradiction here if the disciple whom Jesus loved is Lazarus rather than one of the Twelve.

The only man that we know of who was at the cross as Jesus died was ***“the disciple whom He loved.”*** Why? What gave Lazarus this boldness? Think about it. Why would Lazarus be afraid to die? He had already died and been raised from death. He had no fear of death; he was loved by Him who is the Resurrection and the Life.

Jesus loved Lazarus, and He made him responsible to take care of His mother. The historical figure of Lazarus is more important than we may have previously imagined due to his role in the life of Jesus and Jesus’ mother. Jesus must have trusted him implicitly to hand over his mother to him when he died.

After hearing from the women that the tomb was empty, Peter runs to the tomb. The parallel texts in the Synoptics make it sound like Peter is alone:

But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at that which had happened. (Luke 24:12 NASB)

Luke makes it sound like Peter was alone. But we learn from the fourth Gospel that Peter was not alone, he was with ***“another disciple”***:

And so she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” (John 20:2 NASB)

Now notice what happened when they got to the tomb:

And the two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first; 5 and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. (John 20:5 NASB)

Why does the ***“other disciple”*** stop at the sight of the ***“the linen wrappings”***? This sight would have affected, and could easily have overwhelmed, Lazarus. He understood the significance of these items, because he had experienced the wearing of ***“linen clothes.”*** He would never forget the time that he wore “linen”—the material that was used to wrap dead bodies! Notice what else is specifically mentioned:

Simon Peter therefore also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he beheld the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ and the face-cloth, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. (John 20:6-7 NASB)

The Greek word used for “face-cloth” here is [*soudarion*](#). Lazarus is familiar with this face cloth, he had worn one:

He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth [*soudarion*]. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.” (John 11:44 NASB)

It’s not an accident that the author took the time to mention this seemingly trivial detail of the “face-cloth” with regard to Lazarus also. Lazarus had worn this cloth on his own face, and the sight of it at Jesus’ tomb caused him to believe.

After the resurrection morning, the next mention of ***“the disciple whom Jesus loved”*** occurs in John 21:2-8.

There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and

the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples. ³ *Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will also come with you." They went out, and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.* (John 21:2-3 NASB)

Two of those who were present are not named—which is consistent with the author’s practice of not naming himself! He refers to himself in verse 7.

That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." And so when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea. (John 21:7 NASB)

Since “the disciple whom Jesus loved” was present, look at the author’s list in [John 21:2](#). We see that “*the sons of Zebedee*” are named, one of which was John, and we know that the unnamed “*disciple whom Jesus loved*” is present at the same time! (John 21:7) This is strong evidence that the author was not the Apostle John.

At the end of the fourth Gospel, Jesus is talking to Peter and tells him what kind of death he would experience. In response to this:

Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 Peter therefore seeing him said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?" (John 21:20-21 NASB)

Jesus tells Peter how he is going to die, and Peter’s response is, “*Lord, what about this man [Lazarus]?*” As soon as the topic became death, who did Peter’s mind turn to? Lazarus!

Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!" (John 21:22 NASB)

This is a Preteristic verse. Jesus is saying, “*If I want him [Lazarus] to live until I come, what is that to you?*” Would Jesus say this if His coming was thousands of years away?

This saying therefore went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?" (John 21:23 NASB)

Something about this “*other disciple*” caused some or all of the disciples that were present at this event to jump to their erroneous conclusion—that Jesus’ words, “*If I want him to remain until I come*” meant: “*That disciple should not die*” ([Jn. 21:23](#)).

The rumor, “*That disciple should not die,*” did not spring from a misunderstanding about *what* Jesus said. This error happened because of **whom** Jesus was speaking *about*!

I’m sure that Peter and the rest of these disciples knew that this individual was Lazarus (who had already died and been brought back from the dead). In this case, a reason for one or more of those disciples jumping to the conclusion that they did, suddenly becomes evident. Since Jesus had already raised his friend Lazarus from the dead, those who knew that Lazarus was the subject of Jesus’ words in [John 21:22-23](#) had mistakenly interpreted Jesus’ words to mean that Lazarus would be “exempted” from having to undergo a second physical death.

I think that you would agree that the raising of Lazarus from the dead was a profound event in the life of Jesus. Yet this remarkable miracle is missing from three of the four Gospels. The first three Gospels don't offer even a hint that this miracle occurred, and they never mention that Jesus had a friend named Lazarus that he loved.

Now consider that Matthew was probably an eyewitness to the raising of Lazarus. This was surely a powerful and unforgettable experience, yet Matthew left this out when he wrote his Gospel. Lazarus was big news! So why is it that the other Gospels fail to mention any of this?

Strangely enough, it turns out that there is another prominent figure in the life of Jesus who is also nowhere to be found in the first three Gospels. The person is *“the disciple whom Jesus loved.”* Is this simply a coincidence?

How did the fourth Gospel ever come to be attributed to John? Well, let me take a shot at this. Lazarus is the Greek rendering of the name *Eleazar*. *“In a letter that Clement wrote to Theodore, he stated that there was more testimony attached to Mark than was presently available. Within this original Gospel was a discussion of the young man John Eleazar (Eleazar being the Hebrew of the Greek Lazarus), who after Yahshua raised him from the tomb, went to the Garden of Gethsemane clothed in a fine white linen garment over his naked body”* (Willis Barnstone, *The Other Bible, The Secret Gospel of Mark*, p.342). I know this is just history, I know that it is not inspired, but it is interesting. It means Lazarus, who Jesus raised from the dead, was also known as John Eleazar. So John did write the fourth Gospel but not the Apostle John, but John Lazarus.

Eleazar is a name found *only* in priestly lineages. I believe that Lazarus was a priest. As a "priest," he would be able to enter into the *Beth Din*, while Peter, who was a laymen, was required to remain "outside."

Let me give you several reasons why I believe that Lazarus was a Jewish priest. These are also reasons why the Apostle John, a Galilean, could not have written John.

1. He knows the name of the high priest's servant—*Malchus* ([John 18:10](#)). All the Gospels record Peter cutting off the High Priest's servant's ear, but only Lazarus records his name.
2. Only the Fourth Gospel records the name of the High Priest *Annas*. He knew the high priest by name.
3. He was familiar with the family relationships of the high priest. Only in the Fourth Gospel do we learn that Annas was father-in-law to *Caiaphas*.
4. Lazarus is known to the palace household. Peter has to wait outside, but Lazarus is let right in. He could have only entered if he were also a priest.
5. He was acquainted with the relationships of palace staff ([John 18:26](#)). Only the Fourth Gospel tells us that one of those who questioned Peter's association with Jesus was a relative of Malchus.
6. He was aware of the motives of the priests. Only the writer of the Fourth Gospel explains why the priests would not enter Pilate's Judgment Hall.

It is my opinion, based upon these facts, that Lazarus was a priest, and that is why he could enter the court of the high Priest, and that is why he could get Peter in. This Lazarus was known as *John Eleazar*. It was this John that wrote the fourth Gospel.

A man named John, not the son of Zebedee, could very well have edited this book. Although the Beloved Disciple is claimed as the **Source** of the book, that does not necessarily mean that he is its actual **writer**. Most scholars are in agreement that John 21 makes clear that while the Beloved Disciple is said to have written down some Gospel traditions, he is no longer alive when at least the end of this chapter was written:

This is the disciple who bears witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true. (John 21:24 NASB)

The *“we know his witness is true”* is a dead give away that someone other than the *“Disciple whom Jesus loved”* put this Gospel into its final form and added this appendix.

My position at the present time is that Lazarus also wrote the Epistles, and Revelation which explains their similarities with the Gospel. They also were edited by John the elder.

Hopefully this study will be a wake-up call for all of us to be Bereans. It is our responsibility to search the Scriptures and not to rely on what others have said. We have to stop relying on the “scholars” and do our own homework. The “scholars” tend to rely on the work of other “scholars” that went before them. What happens if successive generations tended to rely on the work of those who have preceded them? And what happens if an error gets introduced into this sequence early on? If an error went unchallenged long enough, it would eventually become accepted as truth and correcting this error would become more difficult as time went on. “Historical acceptance” would become a rationale for assuming that this idea must be true.

Let me close today with the words of J. I. Packer that I quoted earlier in this message: *“We may never assume the complete rightness of our own established ways of thought and practice and excuse ourselves the duty of testing and reforming them by Scriptures.” In other words, “Be a Berean!”*

Special thanks to the following individuals for their assistance in helping me in my quest to determine *“Who Wrote the Fourth Gospel”*. These men, who have diligently scoured the Word, are to be commended along with artist, Jim Kessler, who allowed us to use his rendition of Lazarus.

1. Jim Phillips – *The Disciple Jesus Loved* – www.theDiscipleWhomJesusLoved.com
2. Vernard Eller – *The Beloved Disciple* - www.hccentral.com/eller8/index.html
3. Jim Kessler - Artist of *“Lazarus of Bethany”* - www.inchristvictorious.com

This message was preached by [David B. Curtis](#) on November 30, 2008. Media #440.



Berean Bible Church provides this material free of charge for the edification of the Body of Christ. You can help further this work by your prayer and by sending a contribution to:

[Berean Bible Church](#)
2000 Centerville Turnpike
Chesapeake, VA 23322