

“Stay Focused!”

John 21:20-23

“Ever Ask God Any Of These Questions?”

Q’s

- 1) **“Why Can I Not Have An Easier Life With Less Problems & Trials?”**
- 2) **“Why Can I Not Have A More Secure & Larger Income?”**
- 3) **“Why Did I Have To Be Born In This Day & Age?”**
- 4) **“Why Do Other People Have It So Much Better Than I Do?”**

Verse 20: Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, & said, **“Lord, who is the one who betrays You?”**

Recall

When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, & testified, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me!”** Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke. Now there was leaning on Jesus’ breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. Then, leaning back on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, **“Lord, who is it?”** **John 13:21-25**

But Why Does Peter Ask The Question:

Q: “Lord, Who Is The One Who Betrays You?”

(Note He Wanted At The Last Supper To Make Sure It Was Not Him!)

Peter Is Really Asking:

Q: “Why Must I Pay With My Life As A Martyr Because Of My Betrayal Of You; Even Though I Know I Am Eternally Forgiven, & Right With You Now?”

Verse 21: Peter, seeing this disciple, said to Jesus, **“But Lord, what about this man?”**

Peter Is Really Asking:

Q: “Why Does Another, Like The Disciple Whom You Loved, Have A Different Call & Destiny?”

- 1) Peter Makes An Enquiry About Another - **“Disciple Whom Jesus Loved”**.
- 2) Peter Gets Involved In Another Person’s Relationship, Calling, & Fate, Which God Has Willed For Them Intentionally & Personally.

Lessons To Be Learned In My Walk With God

- 1) I Must Remember That I Am Instructed To Examine Only My Own Walk With The Lord!
- 2) I Must Remember That I Am Instructed To Work Out My Salvation & Faith, & Not To Inquire Or Get Involved In Someone Else’s Walk With The Lord!
- 3) I Must Remember The Lord’s Command To Peter & I, **“Come & Follow Me!”**

No Questions Asked, I Must Accept His Will For My Life & Obey His Leading At All Times!

The Apostle Paul Reminds Us

“But each one must examine his own work, & then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, & not in regard to another. For each one will bear his own load. The one who is taught the Word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” **Galatians 6:3-8**

Verse 22: Jesus said to him, **“If I will that he remains till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!”**

Notice

Peter Is Told Once Again To Worry About His Own Relationship With God, Not Someone Else’s!

The Command Of Our Lord Is Enjoined Again

“Simply Follow Me!”

Now Let Us Consider The Unusual Phrase:

“If I will that he remains till I come, what is that to you?”

Let Us Take A Look At This Verse & Its Relation To The Next Unusual Verse.

Verse 23: Then this saying went out among the brethren *‘that this disciple would not die.’* Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, “If I will that he remains till I come, what is that to you?”

Oral Tradition

“This Disciple” (“The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved”) Would Not Die!

Nobody, But Lazarus, Comes To My Mind In Light Of These Traditions Or Sayings!

Recall History

Lazarus Had Lived, Died, & Was Resurrected By Jesus,

Just About 10 Days Ago, Prior To This Encounter With Jesus!

It Would Only Make Sense That The Disciples Would Think In Light Of Jesus’ Comment,

“If I will that he remains till I come, what is that to you?”

It Would Also Make Sense In Light Of The Fact That The Early Church

Believed Jesus’ Second Coming Was Imminent In Those Days!

Let’s Now Take Look At The Evidence Surrounding This Mystery,

About The Fate Of The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved,

In This Final Chapter Of John’s Gospel!

Let Me Remind You Of The Roll Call Of The Seven Disciples

Who Encountered The Risen Lord For Breakfast That Morning Long Ago.

Recall

“After these things Jesus revealed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, & in this way He showed Himself to: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the Sons of Zebedee (James & John), & two other of His disciples were all together.”

John 21:1-2

Roll Call

1) Simon Peter, 2) Thomas Called The Twin, 3) Nathanael Of Cana In Galilee,

4) & 5) Sons Of Zebedee (James & John), 6) & 7) Two Other Disciples

Since Neither Of The *“Mystery Disciples”* Are Named; They Are Most Likely Not Among The Eleven Apostles; As Each Of The Others Are Named Above: Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, & The Sons Of Zebedee (James & John).

Mystery Disciple Functions Like A Pair Of Bookends

1st Chapter (After Prologue) & 21st Chapter Just Prior To Final Ending

There Exists A *“Mystery Disciple”* From The Beginning Of John’s Gospel, (*Who Is Most likely Not John The Apostle*) Who Accompanied Andrew, The Lord’s First Apostle, In The Beginning Of The Gospel. These Two Were The First Disciples Of John The Baptist, & Then Transferred Their Affections & Loyalty To Jesus After His Baptism.

The Whole Of John's Gospel Is An Outline With A Pair Of Bookends

Bookend #1: [Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, & he looked at Jesus as He walked, & said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him speak, & they followed Jesus ... One of the two who heard John speak & followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother ... John 1:35-37 & 40

Bookend #2: ... Peter, seeing this disciple, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remains till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!" Then this saying went out among the brethren 'that this disciple would not die.' Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remains till I come, what is that to you?"] John 21:21-23

Further Evidence

- 1) John & James, Are Not Directly Identified By Their First Names In In John's Gospel!
- 2) John & James Are Always Referred To As The Sons Of Zebedee Instead!
- 3) John & James Are Again Only Referred To As The Sons Of Zebedee, In This Story As Well!

Q: "Who Is The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved?"

A: He Is Always Associated With "The Other Disciple" Or "That Disciple".

He Is Always A "Mystery Disciple"

This Disciple Is Mentioned Only Seven Times, In The Entire New Testament!

All Seven Of Them Are Only Found In John's Gospel:

1:35-39, 11:36, 13:23, 18:15-16, 19:26-27, 20:2-4 & 20:8, 21:1, 21:7, & 21:20-23

According To Christian Tradition The Probable Candidate Is **John The Apostle!**

However, **Lazarus** Remains A Real Alternative Candidate!

I Personally Believe That It Is Very Possible That

The Gospel Is In Fact A Product Of A 3-Fold Disclosure!

My Thesis On The 3-Fold Disclosure Of The Gospel Of John

- 1) As The Father Disclosed His Love & Salvation To His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ;
- 2) So, Jesus Christ Disclosed His Father's Love & Salvation To His "Beloved Disciple" & "Another Disciple"
- 3) The "Beloved Disciple", Lazarus & The Apostle John, Co-Disclosed The 'Good News' To All Of Us, In This Gospel, Named After The Apostle John!
So That Leads Me To **Eight Specific Conclusions** That Were Purposefully Designed Into The Structural Outline & Writing Of The Gospel. With Its Prologue (The First 18 Verses) Being A Built In Outline For Every Chapter That Follows!
 - 1) I Believe John Co-Wrote The Entire Gospel With The Help Of Lazarus
 - 2) Lazarus Is Being Mentioned Wherever One Reads, "Another Disciple", "That Disciple", "The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved"
 - 3) Lazarus Wrote The Prologue To The Gospel 1:1-18 To Serve As An Internal Outline For The Entirety Of The Gospel
 - 4) We Encounter Lazarus In Chapter 1 & Chapters 11 – 21. Especially in Chapters 1, 11, & 18 – 21
 - 5) We Encounter John The Apostle In Chapters 2 – 21
 - 6) We Never Encounter John By Name, Other Than As A Son Of Zebedee!
 - 7) John Writes The First Conclusion To The Gospel 20:30-31
 - 8) Lazarus Writes The Final Conclusion To The Gospel 21:24-25

Q: "Who Is The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved?"

A: Conclusion

This Explanation Of *Lazarus* Clears Up The Unusual Wording Of The Strange Sayings Circulating In Those Days, Which Is Still Often Misunderstood Even Today:

"The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved" ...

... Who also had leaned on His breast at the supper!"

&

"If I will that he remains till I come, what is that to you?"

Then this saying went out among the brethren *'that this disciple would not die.'*

Q: "What Can I Take Away From Today?"

A1) I Must Keep My Focus On My Relationship With God First & Foremost!

A2) I Must Not Get Distracted With Anyone Else's Relationship With God!

Q: "What Can I Ask Of The Lord Today & Tomorrow?"

A1) Lord Help Me To Focus Only On How Much I Love You!

A2) Lord Help Me To Focus Only On Being Obedient To You!

A3) Lord Help Me To Focus Only On Loving & Serving Others In Your Name!