



An Interdisciplinary Inquiry into Dating the Fourth Gospel

Part II: Other Evidence

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In Part I of this inquiry,¹ we saw that although John 5:2's description of the Pool of Bethesda and the Sheep Gate does not provide grounds for thinking that the fourth gospel was published in the first century, evidence to this effect is provided by the papyrus known as P52.

Of course, when it comes to dating the fourth gospel, our evidence isn't limited to John 5:2 and P52. The fourth gospel mentions 'the disciple whom Jesus loved ... who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper' (John 21:20, see also 11:3, 11:36, 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7 and 21:20) and identifies him as 'the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down.' (John 21:24.) Whoever this disciple was, they are an eyewitness. Even if we take into account the existence of an editorial group working with this disciple's testimony to produce the fourth gospel, the overlap between 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' and his editors is a factor that on its own sets a *latest possible date* for the publication of the fourth gospel at about 180 AD. Indeed, the existence of a fourth gospel is mentioned in the Muratorian Fragment, dated c. 180–200, which affirms: 'The fourth book of the gospel is that of John, one of the disciples.'² However, this data is consistent with F.C. Baur's nineteenth century dating

of the fourth gospel from AD 160-170. Is there any evidence, in addition to P52, for dating the fourth gospel earlier than Baur allowed?

Quotations from and Allusions to the Fourth Gospel

Jo-Ann A. Brant observes that: 'Justin Martyr, writing in about AD 155, knew the dialogue with Nicodemus in John 3:1-5 (1 *Apol.* 61).'³ N.T. Wright and Michael F. Bird note that: 'Gnostic authors cited the [fourth] gospel, and alluded to it, perhaps as early as AD 135.'⁴ As F.F. Bruce writes:

Hippolytus states that the gnostic Basilides (c. AD 130) quoted John 1:9 (about the true light coming into the world) as a gloss on the creative word 'Let there be light' (Gen. 1:2); if he is right, then that is the earliest known explicit quotation from the gospel of John. *The Gospel of Truth* (c. AD 140), a gnostic work coming either from Valentinus or from one of his disciples, has several echoes of our Gospel if not direct quotations.⁵

Then again, Paul Barnett argues that 'Comparison with parallel passages in the early second century writer Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, shows that John was

not the very late author many believe him to be.⁶ On the contrary: ‘Since Ignatius wrote early in the second century, it follows that this gospel was written during the first century . . .’⁷ Likewise, Catholic theologians Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch note that: ‘Ignatius of Antioch seems to allude to the teaching of the Fourth Gospel in a collection of letters written about A.D. 107. This makes it probable that [the fourth gospel] was composed by at least A.D. 100.’⁸

It might be objected that a disciple of Jesus would have been in his nineties at the end of the first century, and that this is implausible. However, Keener points out that: ‘Typical disciples were in their teens, however, making eighties likelier than nineties. Moreover, we know of other ancient thinkers in their eighties and nineties with sharp memories and wit.’⁹ If we suppose that the beloved disciple was 18 when Jesus died in April of AD 33,¹⁰ he’d have become 83 in April of AD 98, soon after the Roman Emperor Trajan began his reign.¹¹ Testimony from the beloved disciple in AD 98 about Jesus’ crucifixion in AD 33 would be comparable to the testimony given by Mary Ellen Ford in 2018 about the day Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated at the hotel where she worked as a cook fifty years before in 1968.¹²

The Fourth Gospel According to Who?

Craig S. Keener explains that:

Classicists place heavy weight on external testimonies for authorship. External evidence (i.e., ancient writers starting in the generation immediately after this Gospel) attributes this Gospel to John the son of Zebedee. Indeed, early tradition is almost unanimous that the apostle ‘John’ wrote the Fourth Gospel.¹³

The title ‘According to John’ is attached to every manuscript of the fourth gospel that has a title attached, and these titled manuscripts date ‘at least from the end of the second century, if not earlier. It is found in manuscripts P66 and P75, which are usually dated around AD 200.’¹⁴ As Asa Barnett notes, ‘the Muratorian Fragment, dated c. 180–200 states: “The fourth book of the gospel is that of John, one of the disciples”.’¹⁵ Likewise, the early church fathers unanimously attribute the fourth gospel to the apostle John, one of the sons of Zebedee (see Mark 3:17 & 10:35, Luke 5:10 and John 21:2). As Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV comment, any alternative theory about the origins of the fourth gospel: ‘requires an explanation as to why this Gospel would have been wrongly associated with John the Apostle at such an early date and by people who claim to have known him personally (e.g., Polycarp).’¹⁶

Writing c. 180 AD, Irenaeus (a protégé of John’s disciple Polycarp, c. 69-156 AD¹⁷) stated that: ‘John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned back on his breast, published the Gospel while he was resident at Ephesus in Asia.’¹⁸ Irenaeus tracks this view back ‘to a group of Asian elders, probably including Papias of Hierapolis [c. AD 60 – 130¹⁹] and Polycarp of Smyrna [c. AD 69 – 156], who had conversed with John before his death after a long old age, probably during the reign of Trajan (AD 98-117).’²⁰ In the fourth century AD, Eusebius quoted Papias (via Irenaeus) as saying:

If, then, any one came, who had been a follower of the elders, I questioned him in regard to the words of the elders . . . what was said by Philip, or by Thomas or by James, or by John, or by Matthew or by any other of the disciples of the Lord, and what things Aristion

and the presbyter [or ‘elder’] John, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I did not think that what was to be gotten from the books would profit me as much as what came from the living and abiding voice.²¹

Some scholars think that Papias (writing c. 95-110 AD²²) distinguished between ‘John the disciple of the Lord’ and ‘John the presbyter/elder’, while others think these phrases have the same referent.²³ Several scholars who distinguish between these referents attribute the fourth gospel to John ‘the elder’ rather than John ‘the apostle’.²⁴ Either way, the gospel is rooted in the eyewitness testimony of a disciple. However, as Karen H. Jobes points out:

Papias mentions John twice, once as a ‘disciple of the Lord’ and again as an ‘elder’. But Eusebius overlooked the fact that even when Papias refers to Peter and James, he doesn’t at first call them ‘apostles’ but ‘elders,’ suggesting that the two titles were not mutually exclusive in Papias.²⁵

As Robert W. Yarborough elaborates:

It seems that Eusebius exploits a linguistic ambiguity that had arisen between the respective apostolic and Nicene eras: Papias reflecting first-century usage could use ‘elder’ to be inclusive of ‘apostle,’ as is occasionally the case in the NT (Acts 11:30; 21:18; 1 Pet. 5:1; possibly 2 John 1; 3 John 1). For Eusebius, however, it is feasible through selective quotation and tendentious exegesis to force on the word ‘elder’ the connotation of a *follower* of an apostle or some other Christian leader.²⁶

Moreover, Keener notes that: ‘while tradition sometimes blended figures with two names, more often writers distinguished them more clearly than does the earliest second-century tradition about John, and

sometimes they created two persons based on a single one.’²⁷

That the apostle John is in some sense the author of the fourth gospel would explain why it never mentions him by name although the synoptic gospels all present him as one of Jesus’ inner circle. Milne draws attention to how ‘the notably close association in this gospel of the “disciple whom Jesus loved” with Peter [echoes] the close association of John and Peter in Acts.’²⁸ Moreover, while the synoptic gospels are careful to distinguish between John ‘the Baptist’ and John ‘the Apostle’, the fourth gospel simply refers to the Baptist as ‘John’. As A. Rendle Short observes: ‘If there are two boys at school, J. Smith and T. Smith, other boys in writing will distinguish them by their initial, but when J. is writing, he will speak of the other simply as Smith.’²⁹ Hence I agree with Craig L. Blomberg that:

a good case can be made that the fourth Gospel was written by John, the ‘one Jesus loved’ (as he referred to himself throughout his book), brother of James and son of Zebedee, just as early church tradition suggests. That same tradition places John in and around Ephesus, ministering to the churches of Asia Minor, until his death as an elderly man at roughly the end of the first century. The author would thus have been an eyewitness of much of the material he recounted and in a position to provide accurate information.³⁰

Hahn and Mitch concur that: ‘The combined weight of textual and traditional evidence suggests that this disciple is the Apostle John, one of the sons of Zebedee (Mt 4:21).’³¹

The Fourth Gospel According to John, with Editorial Support from his Disciples

That said, John 21:20-24 appears to distinguish between the ‘beloved disciple’ as the eyewitness author and/or source for the bulk of the gospel’s testimony (see John 13:23, 18:16, 19:26, 20:2-8, 21:7 and 21:20), and the commenting voice of the gospel’s editor/s:

Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, ‘Lord, who is going to betray you?’) When Peter saw him, he asked, ‘Lord, what about him?’ Jesus answered, ‘If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.’ Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, ‘If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?’ *This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.* (my italics)

As Martin and Wright note:

An intriguing possibility, proposed by C. K. Barrett and developed by John Painter, is that the Beloved Disciple is John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, whose traditions and work were shaped into the Fourth Gospel by one of his disciples. This hypothesis accounts for the ancient traditions about authorship while also accounting for the evidence that the Gospel underwent some editing in its composition history.³²

John Drane theorizes:

It seems at least possible that the gospel was first written in Palestine, to demonstrate that ‘Jesus is the Christ’ (20:31), perhaps over against the views of sectarian Jews influenced by ideas like those of the Qumran community, and then when the same teaching was seen to be relevant to people elsewhere in the Roman empire, it was revised, with Jewish customs and expressions being explained, and the prologue and epilogue added. The advice to church leaders in chapter 21 suggests that the final form of the gospel might have been directed to a Christian congregation comprised of both Jews and Gentiles somewhere in the Hellenistic world, perhaps at Ephesus.³³

Blomberg argues that ‘the peculiar ending of chapter 21 is to be explained at least by John’s advancing age if not his actual, recent death’³⁴ and comments that ‘There may have been something of a gap between the draft of the Gospel . . . (which itself could have circulated locally in and around Ephesus) and its final redaction . . .’³⁵ Powell observes that ‘John is usually said to have been produced in the 90s, since that is when the final redaction is likely to have taken place, but the scholars who say this generally recognize that much of the material in John comes from an earlier time.’³⁶ According to historian John Dickson: ‘many scholars . . . detect an earlier source within the Gospel of John. They call it the Signs Source or SQ for short . . . SQ appears to have been a collection of seven miracle stories or signs highlighting Jesus’ status as Messiah.’³⁷ Bart Erhman reports that ‘scholars have long suspected that John had at his disposal an earlier written account of Jesus’ miracles (the so-called Signs Source), at least two accounts of Jesus’ long speeches (the Discourse Sources), and possibly

another passion source as well.³⁸ Geisler states that ‘John uses independent sources of his own that can be traced on linguistic grounds to between A.D. 30 and 66 . . .’³⁹

In line with the multi-stage composition hypothesis, we might suppose that ‘the beloved disciple’ built upon these sources in writing what we would now see as the literary ancestor of the fourth gospel, perhaps in the early 60’s AD (or even earlier than that). Indeed, maybe ‘the beloved disciple’ was himself the source behind some or all of these ‘sources’. The postulation of one source is, after all, simpler than the postulation of multiple sources. Then (whether before or after his death) associates of ‘the beloved disciple’ produced a ‘second edition’ of his gospel, or of his draft of, or notes for a gospel (this material may not have been circulated, at least not widely, if ‘the beloved disciple’ didn’t consider it to have been finished) in Ephesus some time after the Jewish War. J. Dongell speculates along these lines:

Could these associates of the Beloved Disciple (perhaps younger believers disciplined by him) have been responsible for collecting his writings, for merging them into a single, continuous narrative, and for identifying their mentor as ‘the disciple Jesus loved’ wherever he appeared in the narrative? Such a theory makes sense of a variety of factors: the claim that the Beloved Disciple ‘wrote [these things] down’ (21:24); the presence of the ‘we’ of verse 24; the possibility that the disciple died shortly before the publication of the Fourth Gospel (see . . . 21:20-23); and the application of a title of such honor (‘the disciple Jesus loved’) to one identified as the writer (21:24).⁴⁰

Of course, John’s associates needn’t have had so much to do as all that if they were

working with a draft, or even a first edition, of the fourth gospel. Moreover, the theory that the testimonial source behind the fourth gospel was already dead when it was published,⁴¹ is contradicted by Irenaeus’ statement that: ‘John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned back on his breast, published the Gospel while he was resident at Ephesus in Asia.’⁴² Of course, it is *possible* that Ignatius is mistakenly referring to material written by John that was later incorporated into the ‘Gospel according to John’ after the disciple’s death. However, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, the presumption of truth should be given to Irenaeus’ information.⁴³

Martin and Wright argue that:

John 21:22–23 refutes a mistaken belief, circulating among some Christians, that the Beloved Disciple would survive to see the Parousia, and the need to refute such a belief may have been occasioned by the fact that the Beloved Disciple had died by the time of the Gospel’s final editing.⁴⁴

However, the need to refute the mistaken belief that the Beloved Disciple would survive to see the Parousia may have simply been occasioned by the fact that John knew what Jesus had actually meant and wanted to set the record straight in light of a misinterpretation that took hold given his advanced age.⁴⁵ According to Irenaeus, John lived ‘till the times of Trajan’.⁴⁶

John’s Exile, and Dating the Fourth Gospel Within the Johannine Corpus

As D. Moody Smith observes:

From the end of the second century onward, the Fourth Gospel, joined later by the letters and Revelation,

gained wide, and ultimately universal, recognition as the work of John the Apostle, the disciple of the Lord.⁴⁷

With respect to Revelation, Leon Morris notes that:

The Gnostic *Apocryphon Johannis*, dated no later than c. A.D. 150, cites Revelation 1:19, in such a way as to indicate that the author was John the apostle. Support is found in Irenaeus, while the Muratorian Fragment twice speaks of the author as John, evidently meaning the apostle. Clement of Alexandria appears to support this view, as does Tertullian . . . There does not appear to be evidence of an early or well-grounded tradition which regards anyone other than the apostle as the author.⁴⁸

Martin and Wright note that:

there are some curious similarities between the Gospel and Revelation. For instance, these are the only two New Testament writings to call Jesus "the Lamb" (John 1:29; Rev 5:6) and "the Word of God" (John 1:1; Rev 19:13). These are also the only two New Testament writings to cite clearly the oracle in Zech 12:10.⁴⁹

According to Michael Wilcock, when it comes to dating the apocalypse: 'Some scholars . . . place the writing of the book at the end of Nero's reign (AD 54-68), or, less convincingly, in Vesputin's (AD 69-79). Most evidence, however, seems to favour a date in the latter part of the range of Domitian (AD 81-96).'⁵⁰ On this latter, majority dating, John would have written Revelation having been exiled to Patmos by the Domitian administration.⁵¹ This circumstance would explain the much discussed linguistic differences and similarities between Revelation and the fourth gospel. As Morris comments:

'Revelation was written in exile. The writer had no access to the tools of scholarship . . . it is possible that one and the same author had the help of an amanuensis in composing the Gospel, but not in Revelation.'⁵² According to Irenaeus, John's apocalyptic vision 'was seen not very long ago, almost in our own generation, at the close of the reign of Domitian'.⁵³ Hence M. Eugene Boring affirms that Revelation 'is best understood as a letter written in 96 by John.'⁵⁴ Revelation was presumably copied and spread out from Ephesus upon John's return from exile. Indeed, in his third century commentary on Revelation, Victorinus of Pettau claimed that the apocalypse had been written during Domitian's rule, but published under Nerva.⁵⁵ We might even conjecture that this circumstance encouraged the completion and publication of the fourth gospel.

According to *On the Apostles and Disciples*, which was originally attributed to the second-third century Christian theologian Hippolytus of Rome, but is today generally attributed to an anonymous author of the 4th century dubbed 'Pseudo-Hippolytus':

John, again, in Asia, was banished by Domitian the king to the isle of Patmos, in which also he wrote his Gospel and saw the apocalyptic vision; and in Trajan's time he fell asleep at Ephesus . . .⁵⁶

We probably shouldn't rely upon a single, anonymous and comparatively late source such as this for the claim that John wrote his gospel as well as his apocalypse whilst in exile, but it *may* reflect a tradition about the two documents appearing around about the same time.

Domitian was succeeded by Nerva, who was in turn succeeded by Trajan. Donald L. Wasson recounts that after

Nerva died a natural death in January 98 AD:

Trajan was quickly named emperor by the Roman Senate, the second of those who would become known as the Five Good Emperors . . . As an emperor who was concerned with both good government and the public welfare, he instituted an excellent domestic policy – providing for the children of the poor, restoring the dilapidated road system, as well as building new bridges, aqueducts, public baths, and a modern port at Ostia. Lastly, *he continued his predecessor's policy of undoing much of the harm done by Domitian by freeing prisoners and recalling exiles.*⁵⁷

Thus, at some time after the death of Domitian: 'John was released from Patmos, whereupon he returned to Ephesus, where he had been ministering before his exile. Then, several years later, around A.D. 100, John died.'⁵⁸ There is a clear window of opportunity, after his return from exile and before his death, for John to have 'published the Gospel while he was resident at Ephesus in Asia'⁵⁹ as Irenaeus reported. We might even speculate that it was John's exile that accounts for the 'gap between the draft of the Gospel . . . (which itself could have circulated locally in and around Ephesus) and its final redaction . . .'⁶⁰ hypothesized by some scholars (though it remains *possible* that the gospel according to John was published before his exile).

With respect to the Johannine Epistles, Karen H. Jobs argues that 'The relationship between the three letters and between them and the [fourth] gospel indicates that the same author likely wrote all three letters . . .'⁶¹ As Martin and Wright observe:

The Gospel of John is closest in theology and literary style to the three Letters of John. Like the Gospel, 1 John does not name its author, but 2 and 3 John claim to be written by "the Presbyter," or Elder. The Gospel and Letters of John are stylistically similar in their special theological vocabulary and pairs of opposites. The Letters were likely written after the Gospel, and they elaborate on topics found in the Gospel (e.g., the love command in 1 John 5:1–5).⁶²

Hence, as Yarborough concludes: 'it is not unreasonable to adopt the interpretative assumption that the John of the Gospel also stands behind the Johannine Epistles.'⁶³

According to Marianne Meye Thompson, the Johannine Epistles are typically 'assigned to the end of the first century, perhaps somewhere between the years A.D. 90 to 100 . . . If the Epistles were written after the [fourth] Gospel, as most scholars assume, then they must fall in the last decade or so of the last century.'⁶⁴ Our reconstruction can certainly accommodate time after the publication of John's Gospel for him to issue his three brief Epistles towards the end of the first century, and of his life.

In sum, it seems to me that the fourth gospel was most likely published *within John's lifetime, with his approval, either during the reign of Nerva (AD 96-98) or close to the start of Trajan's reign* (which commenced in AD 98, when John would have been in his early eighties). Indeed, we can plausibly date John's Apocalypse within the 90-96 AD time-frame, John's Gospel within the 96-98 AD time-frame, and John's Epistles c. 96-100 AD.

Conclusion

The fourth gospel is notoriously difficult to date. J. Ramsey Michaels simply dates the gospel to the second half of the first century (AD 50-100), whilst leaning toward a date after AD 70.⁶⁵ In my book *Getting at Jesus* (Wipf and Stock, 2019) I pegged the production of the fourth gospel to ‘c. AD 60-90’,⁶⁶ proposing that John had composed much of the gospel in the early 60s, and quoting a selection of scholars who placed the final publication of the gospel in the 80s or 90s. For example, Blomberg writes:

while it is true that the external evidence focuses primarily on John’s age and location of ministry rather than explicitly tying the authorship of his Gospel to the late date, the subsequent conviction of the church that became the ‘traditional’ position should probably be accepted, dating the Fourth Gospel either to the 80s or to the 90s.⁶⁷

In this two part inquiry – after considering a) the evidence provided by P52, b) the fourth gospel’s internal testimony to have been completed by people who knew the eyewitness ‘beloved disciple’ behind the bulk of its testimony, and c) the external testimony and evidence from Papias, Ignatius and Irenaeus – I retain the two-stage composition theory, allowing the literary origins of the gospel to stretch back to the 60s AD or even earlier, whilst tentatively concluding that the final form of John’s gospel was probably published in Ephesus c. 96-98 AD.

This dating of the fourth gospel is entirely mainstream. We’ve already seen that a wide variety of scholars see earlier sources behind/within the fourth gospel, and Porter reports that: ‘Virtually all scholars agree that John’s Gospel was the last written and that this would have occurred, at

the latest, around AD 90.’⁶⁸ Keener reckons that ‘most scholars maintain a date in the mid-90s’.⁶⁹ J. Dongell cautiously argues that:

Supposing John the son of Zebedee to be the author of the Gospel, and his disciples to have been its editors and publishers shortly after his death, it seems reasonable to suggest from A.D. 80 to 100 as the span within which the Gospel was published. The time of John’s own writing activity may have preceded his death by moments or decades. Such are the ambiguities involved in dating.⁷⁰

Indeed, Dongell thinks ‘it most probable that John, son of Zebedee, one of the twelve disciples, was the Beloved Disciple, that he wrote the bulk of the contents of the Fourth Gospel, and that his disciples edited and published his work sometime after his death.’⁷¹ However, it seems to me that the testimony of Ignatius should be given the benefit of the doubt, with the result that the publication of the fourth gospel should be dated *before the end of the apostle’s life*. Consequently, and allowing time for the Johannine Epistles to postdate the fourth gospel, I suggest that John’s Gospel was probably published in its extant form under the Emperor Nerva (AD 96-98). This (necessarily tentative) conclusion is only slightly more definite than that of N.T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, who say: ‘There is no strong evidence against the traditional date near the end of the century, either towards the end of Domitian’s reign (AD 81-96) or at the beginning of Trajan’s (AD 98-117).’⁷²

And while the fourth gospel’s accurate description of the Pool of Bethesda (and the Sheep Gate) *doesn’t* require a first century date for the testimony contained within the fourth gospel, it is one piece of evidence among many⁷³ that indicate the

reliability of the fourth gospel's eyewitness, first century testimony to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Notes

- ¹ See *Theofilos* vol 13 2021 issues 1-2. <https://theofilos.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Theofilos-vol-13-nr-1-2-2021-forum-6-final.pdf>
- ² Paul Barnett, *Is the New Testament History?* Sydney: Aquila, 2018 [Kindle Android version].
- ³ Jo-Ann A. Brant, *Paideia Commentaries On The New Testament: John*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011, 4.
- ⁴ N.T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, *The New Testament In Its World: An introduction To The History, Literature, And Theology Of The First Christians*. London/Grand Rapids, Michigan: SPCK/Zondervan Academic, 2019, 660.
- ⁵ F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1983, 7.
- ⁶ Paul Barnett, *Is the New Testament History?* Sydney: Aquila, 2018 [Kindle version, location 1120].
- ⁷ Paul Barnett, *Is the New Testament History?* Sydney: Aquila, 2018 [Kindle version, location 1120].
- ⁸ Scott Hahn & Curtis Mitch, *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The Gospel of John*.
- ⁹ C.S. Keener, *John (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary)*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2019 [Kindle version, 2019, location 4].
- ¹⁰ See: Colin Humphreys, *The Mystery of The Last Supper: Reconstructing the Final Days of Jesus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- ¹¹ See: Herbert W. Benario, 'Trajan (A.D. 98-117)' <http://www.roman-emperors.org/trajan.htm>.
- ¹² Caroline Gottlieb and Eun Kyung Kim, 'Eyewitness in iconic photo opens up about Martin Luther King Jr. assassination 50 years later' *Today* (April 3rd, 2018), www.today.com/news/eyewitness-martin-luther-king-jr-assassination-lorraine-motel-talks-50-t126354.
- ¹³ C.S. Keener, *John (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary)*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2019 [Kindle version, 2019, location 3].
- ¹⁴ N.T. Wright and Michael Bird, *The New Testament In Its World: An introduction To The History, Literature, And Theology Of The First Christians*. London/Grand Rapids, Michigan: SPCK/Zondervan Academic, 2019, 653.
- ¹⁵ Paul Barnett, *Is the New Testament History?* Sydney: Aquila, 2018 [Kindle version, location 899].
- ¹⁶ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture: The Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2015. Kindle edition, 17.
- ¹⁷ 'Polycarp: Aged bishop of Smyrna' *Christianity Today*, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/martyrs/polycarp.html>; 'St. Polycarp' *Catholic Encyclopedia*, <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12219b.htm>.
- ¹⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, quoted by Kostenberger in Howard, *The Holman Apologetics Commentary On The Bible*. Broadman & Holman, 2013, 500.
- ¹⁹ See: 'Papias of Hierapolis' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papias_of_Hierapolis.
- ²⁰ N.T. Wright and Michael Bird, *The New Testament In Its World: An introduction To The History, Literature, And Theology Of The First Christians*. London/Grand Rapids, Michigan: SPCK/Zondervan Academic, 2019, 654.
- ²¹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.1-7.
- ²² Robert Yarborough, 'The Date of Papias: A Reassessment', *JETS* 26/2 (June 1983), 181-191, www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/26/26-2/26-2-pp181-191_JETS.pdf.
- ²³ See: Michael J. Kruger, 'Did Papias Know the Apostle John?' (April 4th, 2016) <https://www.michaeljkruger.com/did-papias-know-the-apostle-john/>.
- ²⁴ See: N.T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, *The New Testament In Its World: An introduction To The History, Literature, And Theology Of The First Christians*. London/Grand Rapids, Michigan: SPCK/Zondervan Academic, 2019, 656-659.
- ²⁵ Karen H. Jobes, 'Who wrote 1, 2, & 3 John?' Zondervan Academic, October 2019, <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/who-wrote-1-2-3-john>.
- ²⁶ Robert W. Yarborough, *Baker Exegetical Commentary On The Bible: 1-3 John*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008, 15.
- ²⁷ Craig S. Keener, *John (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary)*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2019 [Kindle version, 2019, location 3].
- ²⁸ Bruce Milne, *The Message of John*. Leicester: IVP, 1993, 17.
- ²⁹ A. Rendle Short, *Why Believe?* IVE, 1964, 37.
- ³⁰ Craig L. Blomberg, 'Introduction to John's Gospel' in *CSB Apologetics Study Bible*. Nashville Tennessee: Holman, 2017, 1303.

- ³¹ Scott Hahn & Curtis Mitch, *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The Gospel of John*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2003.
- ³² Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture: The Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2015 [Kindle edition], 17.
- ³³ John Drane, *Introducing the New Testament*. Oxford: Lion, 1999, 217.
- ³⁴ Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues & Commentary*. Apollos, 2001, 44.
- ³⁵ Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues & Commentary*. Apollos, 2001, 44.
- ³⁶ Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009, 176.
- ³⁷ John Dickson, *Investigating Jesus: An Historian's Quest*. Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2010, 118.
- ³⁸ Bart Erhman, *Did Jesus Exist?* New York: HarperOne, 2013, 82.
- ³⁹ Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1988, 313.
- ⁴⁰ J. Dongell, *John: A Commentary for Bible Students* [Kindle Android version, 1997], Location 289.
- ⁴¹ I doubt that much significance can be attributed to the tense used when John 21:24 talks of 'the disciple who testifies to these things', rather than the disciple who 'testified' to these things.
- ⁴² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, quoted by Kostenberger in Howard, *The Holman Apologetics Commentary On The Bible*. Broadman & Holman, 2013, 500.
- ⁴³ J. Warner Wallace notes that: 'a set of early introductions to the Gospels, known as the Anti-Marcionite Prologues (penned as early as 150 AD), cites Papias as the source for the claim that "the Gospel of John was revealed and given to the churches by John while still in the body (emphasis mine)."'
- ⁴⁴ - 'John's Gospel may have been last, but it wasn't late' <https://coldcasechristianity.com/writings/johns-gospel-may-have-been-last-but-it-wasnt-late/>. However, little weight should be put on this. As Robert M. Grant observes that: 'A so-called "anti-Marcionite prologue" to the Gospel of John states that John dictated his gospel to Papias himself; but this highly garbled document is not likely to give us any trustworthy information about either Papias or John. Modern study of the prologue places it in the fourth century, or even later.' - Robert M. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament*. London: Collins, 1963. Helmut Koester argues that 'a date in the second half of the 4th century is likely for the Prologues for Mark and John'.
- ⁴⁵ - Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*. Trinity, 1990, 243.
- ⁴⁶ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture: The Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2015 [Kindle Android version], 17.
- ⁴⁷ As Albert Barnes comments: 'This mistake arose very naturally: 1. From the words of Jesus, which might be easily misunderstood to mean that he should not die; and 2. It was probably confirmed when it was seen that John survived all the other apostles, had escaped all the dangers of persecution, and was leading a peaceful life at Ephesus. This mistake John deemed it proper to correct before he died, and has thus left on record what Jesus said and what he meant.' - www.studydrive.org/commentaries/eng/bnb/john-21.html#verse-23.
- ⁴⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2:22:5.
- ⁴⁹ D. Moody Smith, *Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: First, Second, and Third John*. Louisville: John Knox, 1991, 16.
- ⁵⁰ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Revelation*, Revised Edition. Leicester: IVP, 1992, 27-28.
- ⁵¹ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture: The Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2015 [Kindle Android version], 22.
- ⁵² Michael Wilcock, *The Message Of Revelation*. Leicester: IVP, 2000, 22.
- ⁵³ Gordon Franz suggests that 'that John was exiled to Patmos because of its Artemis/Ephesus connections. The proconsul of Asia Minor wanted John out of Ephesus so he sent him to Patmos, also within his jurisdiction.', 'The King and I: Exiled To Patmos, Part 2', *Bible and Spade* (Fall 1999), <https://biblearchaeology.org/research/new-testament-era/3099-the-king-and-i-exiled-to-patmos-part-2>. See also: Brian Mark Rapske, 'Exiles, islands, and the identity and perspective of John in Revelation' in Stanley E. Porter ed. *Early Christianity in its Hellenistic context. Volume 1: Christian origins and Greco-Roman culture. Social and literary contexts for the New Testament* (Brill, 2013), 311-346.
- ⁵⁴ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Revelation*, Revised Edition. Leicester: IVP, 1992, 31 & 32.
- ⁵⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 30.
- ⁵⁶ M. Eugene Boring, *Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: Revelation*. Louisville, John Knox, 1989, 10. See also: Wayne Jackson, 'When Was the Book of Revelation Written?' *ChristianCourier.com* (2021), www.christiancourier.com/articles/1552-when-was-the-book-of-revelation-written.
- ⁵⁷ See Leszek Ja czuk, 'Dating the Book of Revelation in Light of Tradition' <https://rbl.ptt.net.pl/index.php/RBL/article/download/296/3714/7488>.
- ⁵⁸ <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0524.htm>.

- ⁵⁹ Donald L. Wasson, 'Trajan', *World History Encyclopedia*, www.worldhistory.org/trajan/, my italics.
- ⁶⁰ Bruce C. Barton et al, *Life Application Bible Commentary: Revelation*. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 2000, xiii.
- ⁶¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, quoted by Kostenberger in *The Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible, Book 1: The Gospels and Acts* by Michael Wilkins, Craig A. Evans, Darrell L. Bock, Andreas J. Kostenberger, Jeremy Royal Howard, 500.
- ⁶² John Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues & Commentary*. Apollos, 2001, 44.
- ⁶³ Karen H. Jobes, 'Who wrote 1, 2, & 3 John?' Zondervan Academic, October 2019, <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/who-wrote-1-2-3-john>.
- ⁶⁴ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture: The Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2015 [Kindle Android version], 22.
- ⁶⁵ Robert W. Yarborough, *Baker Exegetical Commentary On The Bible: 1-3 John*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008, 15.
- ⁶⁶ Marianne Meye Thompson, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: 1-3 John*. Downers Grove Illinois: IVP Academic, 1992, 20-21.
- ⁶⁷ J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010, 38.
- ⁶⁸ Peter S. Williams, *Getting at Jesus: A Comprehensive Critique of Neo-Atheist Nonsense About the Jesus of History*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2019, 207.
- ⁶⁹ Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues & Commentary*. Leicester: Apollos, 2001, 44.
- ⁷⁰ Stanley E. Porter, *How We Got The New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2013, 86.
- ⁷¹ Craig S. Keener, *John (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary)*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2019 [Kindle version, location 4].
- ⁷² J. Dongell, *John: A Commentary for Bible Students*. 1997 [Kindle version, location 215].
- ⁷³ J. Dongell, *John: A Commentary for Bible Students*. 1997 [Kindle version, location 303].
- ⁷⁴ N.T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, *The New Testament In Its World: An introduction To The History, Literature, And Theology Of The First Christians*. London/Grand Rapids, Michigan: SPCK/Zondervan Academic, 2019, 661.
- ⁷⁵ See: Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues & Commentary*. Leicester: Apollos, 2001; Lydia McGrew, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Gospel of John as Historical Reportage*. DeWard, 2021.

Recommended Resources

Peter S. Williams, *Getting at Jesus: A Comprehensive Critique of Neo-Atheist Nonsense about the Jesus of History* (Wipf and Stock, 2019).

General Resources on John's Gospel

YouTube Playlist: 'John's Gospel'
www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQhh3qcwVEWjZ96UEngK_Iojs-_hX-H9O.

Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues & Commentary* (Apollos, 2001).

Chad, '59 Confirmed or Historically Probable Facts in the Gospel of John'
<http://truthbomb.blogspot.com/2012/02/59-confirmed-or-historically-probable.html>.

David A. Croteau, 'An Analysis of the Arguments for the Dating of the Fourth Gospel', *Faculty Publications and Presentations*, Paper 118 (2003), <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/58821862.pdf>

Andreas J. Kostenberger and Stephen O. Stout, "'The Disciple Jesus Loved": Witness, Author, Apostle – A Response to Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*', *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 18.2 (2008) 209–231, www.ibr-bbr.org/files/bbr/bbr18b02_kostenberger.pdf.

Lydia McGrew, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Gospel of John as Historical Reportage* (DeWard, 2021).