The Beloved Disciple

Tony Mauck · John 13:21–25

INTRODUCTION

- What I want to talk to you about tonight is the identity of that disciple to whom Peter inquires to get the information that he sought about the one who would betray him.
- At this point in the Gospel of John, we are reaching the final hours of Jesus' life.

1 External Tradition Says John

- If you ask 99.9% of Christians, the answer that is readily given is that's John the Apostle.
- Other sources outside the Bible, old, ancient sources from the first, second, third, and fourth century, that we rely on to gain additional information.
- Because of Irenaeus information from Polycarp, external tradition corroborates John as the disciple whom Jesus loved.
- The later it goes on down the line, the least trustworthy it is.

2 The Internal Evidence: What the Scriptures Tell Us

John 20; John 21:2–7; John 21:23–24

- Only the Gospel of John mentions a disciple that Jesus loved, distinguishing him from other disciples.
- Over halfway in John's account, we have the very first reference to the disciple whom Jesus loved.
- At the foot of the cross, the only male that we know was there, was this beloved disciple.
- That disciple, therefore, whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord.
- This is the disciple who bears witness of these things and wrote these things, and we know that his witness is true.

3 Arguments for John

Mark 14

- Haven't you been told all your life that John wrote the Gospel of John? After all, it bears his name.
- We know that there were more than twelve at the supper.
- An argument is made for John on the basis of his closeness with Peter, and that's a legitimate argument.
- John emphasizes love in his first epistle, and also the idea of being an eyewitness, of seeing these things.

4 A Very Powerful Argument for Lazarus

John 11:3–5; John 11:35–36; John 12

- The centerpiece of the Gospel of John is the resurrection of Lazarus. It is only told in the Gospel of John.
- Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick.
- The first reference to the beloved disciple does not occur in the Gospel of John till after this.
- Lazarus would have been known to the high priest.
- Wouldn't it stand a reason if the disciple whom Jesus loved was Lazarus? He has already been raised from the dead.

5 Honest Examination of the Text Rather Than Tradition

- I am all about honest examination of the text rather than teaching something merely on the basis of tradition.
- I think the argument for Lazarus as the beloved disciple is plausible. Perhaps even probable in my mind.
- Sometimes tradition is stronger than our love for truth. And we need to be careful of that.
- I can't say with certainty that it was Lazarus, but I certainly find it fascinating when I study it.
- Wouldn't it make more sense to entrust the care of his mother to someone who lived nearby?

THE CHALLENGE

Are you and I disciples that are trustworthy? And are we going to walk out of this building more determined than ever to be a trustworthy servant of the Lord?

MY NOTES