

A Study in the Gospel of St John. Part 2

Cousin John

Jesus Christ and the Apostle John as cousins is not obvious (people who have studied the Bible their entire lives have overlooked it, which is understandable because of how the proof is in pieces - I only discovered it myself a few years ago, in one of those eureka! moments), but the proof is there nevertheless, in two parts, each of which themselves are in two parts. Add them together and it becomes very clear.

First, standing among the women near the cross with Jesus' mother Mary was Salome (as identified by the apostle Mark in his Gospel account), who was Mary's sister (as the apostle John himself states in his Gospel account, as it turns out, about his own mother - Mark's Gospel account refers to her by name, John's Gospel account refers to her by her relationship to Mary), and therefore Salome was Jesus' aunt:

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." (John 19:25 KJV)

"There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome" (Mark 15:40 KJV)

From the first part above we know that Salome was Mary's sister. Now, second, Salome is then also identified the wife of Zebedee, as John is identified as the son of Zebedee. The picture is then complete. Salome is identified as Mary's sister and John's mother - John was therefore Jesus' cousin.

"And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father" (Matthew 4:21 KJV)

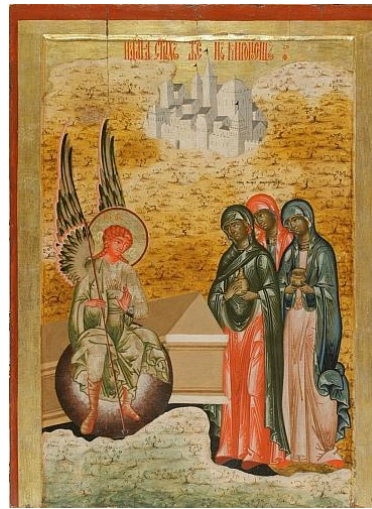
"Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children [i.e. Salome, as identified in the first part, above]" (Matthew 27:56 KJV)

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Salome went to the Tomb

When the Sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they could go and anoint him. And very early in the morning on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb, just as the sun was rising. (Mark 16:1-2)



Eastern Orthodox icon of the two Marys and Salome at the Tomb of Jesus (Kizhi, 18th century)

The cousins' commission

Jesus' cousins John both had major responsibilities given to them.

John the Baptist, was given a commission to prepare the way for Jesus' ministry.

John the Apostle, from the position as "the one who Jesus loved", he was given his commission at the cross.

He went on to become an important church leader, and to write five books of the New Testament.

The I Am Sayings

Here are seven statements that Jesus made about himself.

"I am the Living Bread"

So Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. Nobody comes to me unless he is drawn to me by the Father who sent me, and I will raise him up when the last day comes.

In the prophets it is written - 'And they shall all be taught by God,' and this means that everybody who has heard the Father's voice and learned from him will come to me. Not that anyone has ever seen the Father except the one who comes from God - he has seen the Father.

I assure you that the man who trusts in him has eternal life already. I myself am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate manna in the desert, and they died. This is bread that comes down from Heaven, so that a man may eat it and not die.

I myself am the living bread which came down from Heaven, and if anyone eats this bread he will live for ever. The bread which I will give is my body and I shall give it for the life of the world."

(John 6:43-51)

"I am the Light of the World"

*Later, Jesus spoke to the people again and said, "I am the light of the world. The man who follows me will never walk in the dark but will live his life in the light."
(John 8:12)*



"I am the Door"

Jesus gave them this illustration but they did not grasp the point of what he was saying to them. So Jesus said to them once more,

"I do assure you that I myself am the door for the sheep. All who have gone before me are like thieves and rogues, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If a man goes in through me, he will be safe and sound; he can come in and out and find his food.

The thief comes with the sole intention of stealing and killing and destroying, but I came to bring them life, and far more life than before. (John 10:6-10)

"I am the Good Shepherd"

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd will give his life for the sake of his sheep. But the hired man, who is not the shepherd, and does not own the sheep, will see the wolf coming, desert the sheep and run away.

And the wolf will attack the flock and send them flying. The hired man runs away because he is only a hired man and has no interest in the sheep.

I am the good shepherd, and I know those that are mine and my sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I am giving my life for the sake of the sheep.

(John 10:11-15)

"I am the Resurrection and the Life"

"Your brother will rise again," Jesus replied to her. "I know," said Martha, "that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

"I myself am the resurrection and the life," Jesus told her. "The man who believes in me will live even though he dies, and anyone who is alive and believes in me will never die at all. Can you believe that?"

"Yes, Lord," replied Martha. "I do believe that you are Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into the world."

(John 11:23-37)

"I am the True Vine"

"I am the real vine, my Father is the vine-dresser. He removes any of my branches which are not bearing fruit and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit to increase its yield.

Now, you have already been pruned by my words. You must go on growing in me and I will grow in you. For just as the branch cannot bear any fruit unless it shares the life of the vine, so you can produce nothing unless you go on growing in me.

I am the vine itself, you are the branches. It is the man who shares my life and whose life I share who proves fruitful. For the plain fact is that apart from me you can do nothing at all.

The man who does not share my life is like a branch that is broken off and withers away. He becomes just like the dry sticks that men pick up and use for the firewood.

But if you live your life in me, and my words live in your hearts, you can ask for whatever you like and it will come true for you. This is how my Father will be glorified - in your becoming fruitful and being my disciples.

(John 15:1-8)



What is your name?

Compare the I-am sayings with what God says of himself in Exodus.

Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' "This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.

(Exodus 3:13-15)

An act of love as the end approaches

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, the village of Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead. They gave a supper for him there, and Martha waited on the party while Lazarus took his place at table with Jesus. Then Mary took a whole pound of very expensive perfume and anointed Jesus' feet and then wiped them with her hair. The entire house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot (the man who was going to betray Jesus), burst out, "Why on earth wasn't this perfume sold? It's worth thirty pounds, which could have been given to the poor!"

He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was dishonest, and when he was in charge of the purse used to help himself to the contents.

But Jesus replied to this outburst, "Let her alone, let her keep this for the day of my burial. You have the poor with you always - you will not always have me!"

The large crowd of Jews discovered that he was there and came to the scene - not only because of Jesus but to catch sight of Lazarus, the man whom he had raised from the dead. Then the chief priests planned to kill Lazarus as well, because he was the reason for many of the Jews' going away and putting their faith in Jesus.
(John 12:1-11)

Jesus teaches his disciples humility

Before the festival of the Passover began, Jesus realised that the time had come for him to leave this world and return to the Father. He had loved those who were his own in this world and he loved them to the end.

By supper-time, the devil had already put the thought of betraying Jesus in the mind of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son. Jesus, with the full knowledge that the Father had put everything into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from the supper-table, took off his outer clothes, picked up a towel and fastened it round his waist.

Then he poured water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel around his waist.

So he came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

"You do not realise now what I am doing," replied Jesus, "but later on you will understand."

Then Peter said to him, "You must never wash my feet!" "Unless you let me wash you, Peter," replied Jesus, "you cannot share my lot."

"Then," returned Simon Peter, "please - not just my feet but my hands and my face as well!"

"The man who has bathed," returned Jesus, "only needs to wash his feet to be clean all over. And you are clean - though not all of you."

(For Jesus knew his betrayer and that is why he said, "though not all of you".)

When Jesus had washed their feet and put on his clothes, he sat down and spoke to them, "Do you realise what I have just done to you? You call me 'teacher' and 'Lord' and you are quite right, for I am your teacher and your Lord. But if I, your teacher and Lord, have washed your feet, you must be ready to wash one another's feet. I have given you this as an example so that you may do as I have done. Believe me, the servant is not greater than his master and the messenger is not greater than the man who sent him. Once you have realised these things, you will find your happiness in doing them.

(John 13:1-17)

The disciples are puzzled: Jesus explains

"In a little while you will not see me any longer, and again, in a little while you will see me."

At this some of his disciples remarked to each other, "What is this that he tells us now, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again, in a little while you will see me' and 'for I am going away to the Father'?"

What is the 'little while' that he talks about?" they were saying. "We simply do not know what he means!"

Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him what he meant, so he said to them, "Are you trying to find out from each other what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will not see me, and again, in a little while you will see me'?"

I tell you truly that you are going to be both sad and sorry while the world is glad. Yes, you will be deeply distressed, but your pain will turn into joy.

When a woman gives birth to a child, she certainly knows pain when her time comes. Yet as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers her agony for joy that a man has been born into the world.

Now you are going through pain, but I shall see you again and your hearts will thrill with joy - the joy that no one can take away from you - and on that day you will not ask me any questions.

"I assure you that whatever you ask the Father he will give you in my name. Up to now you have asked nothing in my name; ask now, and you will receive, that your joy may be overflowing."

(John 16:16-24)



Christ washing the feet of the disciples.

Vincenzo Civerchio.
1544