



The Strong Possibility That Lazar Wrote the Fourth Gospel

Aramaic Peshitta Analysis

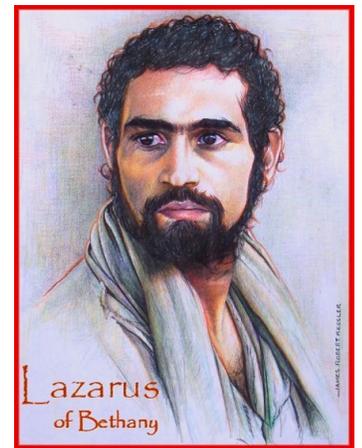
by Greg Glaser
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Introduction

Who wrote the fourth gospel? Christian tradition says it was the apostle John, who was a fisherman from Galilee. But if John was really the author, then why did he omit every event to which he is referred by name in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke)?¹ And why is the author named uniquely while in same boat with the “sons of Zebedee”?²

Questions like these have naturally prompted scholars to wonder ‘who else other than John’ is a candidate for authorship of the fourth gospel. And Lazarus has always been the number one ‘runner-up’.

The fourth gospel explicitly states (in John 21:20) that it was written by **ܠܘܘܘܫܘܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܘܠܝܘܬܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ** (“the disciple whom Yahshua



loved/befriended”),³ which is an interesting description because **ܠܘܘܝܐ** (“Lazar” aka “Lazarus”)⁴

¹ For example, the fourth gospel does not mention the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-9, Luke 9:28-36) or the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:22-43, Luke 8:41-56).

² In John 21:7, we read that “the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended” is in the boat with the “sons of Zebedee”. So it just seems unlikely that John would be called “the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended” in the very same scene that he was already identified “son of Zebedee”.

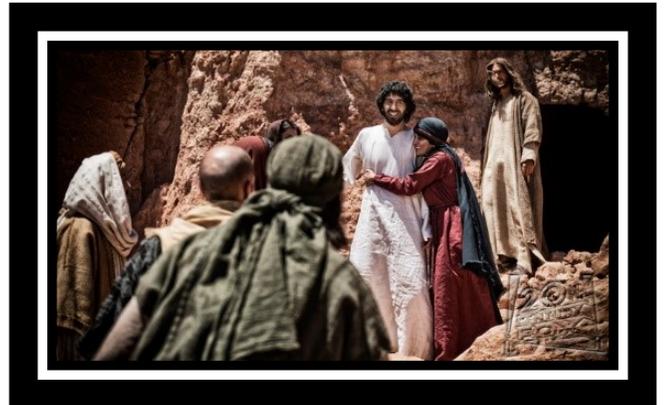
³ The Aramaic word **ܕܘܠܝܘܬܐ** means “befriend” or “love” (as one loves a friend). It is different than the Aramaic word **ܕܘܠܝܘܬܐ** meaning “love” in a more familial sense (as one loves a parent) or “love” in an intimate sense (as one loves a spouse). In any case, neither word **ܕܘܠܝܘܬܐ** or **ܕܘܠܝܘܬܐ** carries a sexual connotation *by itself* - rather, sexual connotations require additional context before any sexual connection can be made. In the case of Lazar there is no sexual context. Even the resting of Lazar upon the chest of Yahshua is a Hebraicism for ‘heirship’ in the family estate context. Indeed, note the ‘heirship’ meaning that connects Abraham’s servant Eleazar with Lazar. See e.g., [The Real Meaning of Lazarus and the Rich Man](#), by Ernest Martin.

⁴ Since his death and resurrection, Lazar has inspired countless theories and mysteries about his role and family history. Indeed, many modern scholars have articulated in detail that Lazar probably wrote the fourth gospel. Some examples:

is uniquely singled out as ‘loved/befriended by Yahshua’ three times in John 11. By contrast, the apostle John is not uniquely singled out with that description.

The problem though with claiming that Lazar was uniquely “loved/befriended” is that Yahshua clearly “loved/befriended” all of his disciples. See e.g. John 13:1 **ܠܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܕܥܡܗ ܕܗܘܢ ܕܢܗܘܢ ܕܢܗܘܢ ܕܢܗܘܢ** (“And he loved his own who were in this world, even until the end he loved them.”). So the term “beloved disciple” is not sufficient *by itself* to identify Lazar.

Fortunately, the fourth gospel gives another important clue (many scholars even find this clue downright obvious to show Lazar wrote the fourth gospel) – it explicitly states about its author that **ܕܡܢ ܕܢܗܘܢ ܕܢܗܘܢ ܕܢܗܘܢ ܕܢܗܘܢ ܕܢܗܘܢ** (“a rumor went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die.”) John 21:23.



That’s a very helpful clue because Lazar was unique among the disciples in this one regard – only Lazar had been raised from the dead – so it makes sense that such a rumor (not dying again) would naturally spread about him uniquely (that is, how many times will Lazar die on earth? Once, twice?). By contrast, there is no foundational background in the gospel that a rumor could begin that the *apostle John* would not die, or any other disciple other than Lazar.

And there’s more evidence too. This paper will cover the following seven key points that suggest the fourth gospel was in fact written by Lazar:

1. The Fourth Gospel explicitly identifies the author is “the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended”; and that Lazar is “loved/befriended” by Yahshua.

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- Jim Phillips, [The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved](#)
 - Edgar Jones, [The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel](#)
 - Vernard Eller, [The Beloved Disciple: His Name, His Story, His Thought](#)
 - Ben Witherington, [Was Lazarus the Beloved Disciple?](#)
 - John Anthony Dunne, [Lazarus & The Fourth Gospel: Did John Write John?](#)

Throughout this paper, I’ll be relying on these resources (especially the logical arguments of Jim Phillips). However, I work exclusively from the Aramaic Peshitta rather than the Greek text of the fourth gospel, so my analysis will be unique in this regard. Ultimately the Aramaic and Greek are in essential harmony, though the Aramaic does add several insights supporting Lazar authorship in unique ways.

2. The Banquet -- once the name Lazar exits the scene, curiously the title “the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended” appears on the scene
3. Special focus on Bethany, the hometown of Lazar
4. Temple connections
5. Lazar at the cross
6. Lazar in the boat
7. Lazar returns to a tomb, but hesitates to enter

Even the alleged ‘problem’ with the theory of Lazar authorship ultimately helps prove Lazar authorship. That ‘problem’ is simply a curious question – why is Lazar identified by name in the beginning of the gospel, but identified as ‘the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended’ later in the gospel? What major event happened to Lazar that would justify a name change? We cannot assume the obvious answer: his resurrection from the dead, because Lazar is still called Lazar in John 12:3 (after he had been resurrected). So, what happened between John 12:3 and John 13:23? The answer appears to be the foot washing where Lazar was made a new man of the “cloth” (כְּסוּתָא), the same word for “burial cloth” used in the fourth gospel to describe both Lazar’s own death (John 11:44) and the very moment (John 20:8) that Lazar first believed in Yahshua’s resurrection to life.

John 13:4-5

סוף הוּא נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶת הַמַּלְאָכִים וְיֵשֵׁב אֶת הַכִּסֵּא וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶת הַמַּלְאָכִים
וְיֵשֵׁב אֶת הַכִּסֵּא וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶת הַמַּלְאָכִים

(“He arose from the banquet and set down his garments, and took a cloth and girded his loins. And he poured water in a basin and began to wash the feet of his disciples. And he was washing with the cloth that girded his loins.”)

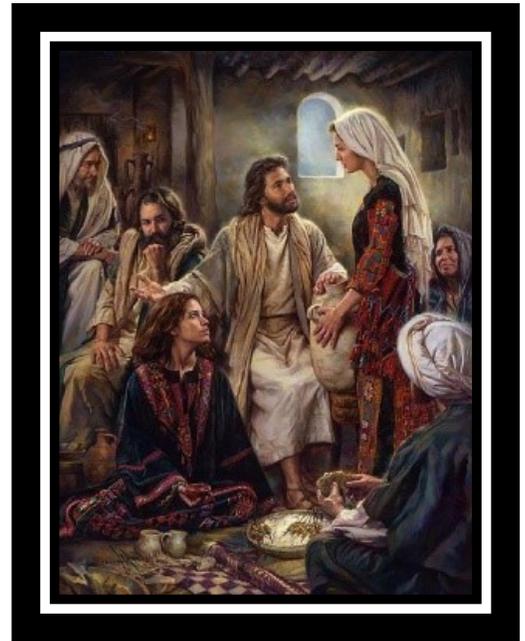
John 20:7-8

וְהַכְּסוּתָא הַלְוָה עַל רֹאשׁוֹ וְהָיָה כִּי יִכְרַח אֶת הַכְּסוּתָא וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶת הַמַּלְאָכִים
וְהָיָה כִּי יִכְרַח אֶת הַכְּסוּתָא וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶת הַמַּלְאָכִים

(“And the cloth that had been wrapped around his head ... was folded and set aside in a certain place. Then entered also the disciple who arrived first at the tomb. And he saw and believed.”)

The conclusion of this paper is that Lazar probably wrote the fourth gospel.⁵ And ultimately, the text alone allows debate, which is exactly the point – our calling as Christians is to enjoy the *process* of studying the gospel and asking thoughtful questions. I think the Father routinely invites us to understand Him better through logic & study.⁶ And when those methods bring us closer to Yahshua, they produce fruit.

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Key Points Supporting Lazar Authorship

1. **Logical Connection: The Fourth Gospel explicitly identifies the author is “the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended”; and that Lazar is “loved/befriended” by Yahshua.**

The fourth gospel explicitly states it was written by **לְתַלְמִידָא דְיֵהוּשֻׁעַ דְּאִהְיֵי חֵבֵר** (“the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended”), which is an interesting description because Lazar is uniquely described as ‘loved/befriended by Yahshua’ three times in John 11.

All of these passages refer to Lazar as “beloved” using the words **חֵבֵר** (“love/friend”) and **אֶהְבֵּי** (“love”):

- John 11:3-5 **וְיֵהוּשֻׁעַ דְּאִהְיֵי חֵבֵר ... אֶהְבֵּי מַרְתָּא וְיֵהוּשֻׁעַ דְּאִהְיֵי חֵבֵר** (“He whom you love/befriend is sick... And he, Yahshua, had loved Martha and Maryam and Lazar.”)
- John 11:11 **לֵאמֹר חֵבֵר לָאָזָר** (“Lazar, our friend sleeps.”)

⁵ With that said, there are still many assumptions and mysteries that inevitably surround the authorship deduction. For example, was Lazar a disciple of John the Baptist before he became a disciple of Yahshua? What if John the Baptist originally wrote John 1:1-5, and Lazar only transcribed his words faithfully to begin the fourth gospel? See the section Additional Commentary (below) for discussion of these questions.

⁶ Isaiah 1:18, “‘Come now, and let us reason together’, says Yahweh, ‘If your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. If they are red as crimson, as wool they shall be.’”

2. The Banquet -- once the name Lazar exits the scene, curiously the title “the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended” appears on the scene

The name Lazar is not mentioned explicitly after John 12:17. Curiously, this is also when we see the first reference to the title ‘the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended’ (John 13:23, “one of his disciples... he whom Yahshua loved/befriended”).⁷

Another interesting coincidence: in the last scene with “Lazar” in John 12:2, we see Lazar sitting with Yahshua at a banquet table; and then in the first scene naming “he whom Yahshua loved/befriended”, this disciple is leaning on Yahshua at a banquet table. John 13:23. This coincidence may be a clue that they are the same person: Lazar and the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended.

Incidentally, there is another deduction to be made here -- on the night of the last supper, Yahshua identifies the traitor as “one of the twelve”, which is why Simon Peter implores Lazar to ask Yahshua, ‘who is it?’. Naturally, Lazar would feel comfortable that the traitor was not himself because Lazar was not “one of the twelve”. By deduction, we may also assume that Peter would feel comfortable seeking an intermediary to ask ‘who is it?’, meaning an intermediary who is outside “one of the twelve”. Thus, it would make sense that Peter would ask Lazar (outside the 12) to ask ‘who is it?’ rather than John (inside the 12).

Note also the wordplay that Lazar is called **לַזָּרְיָהוּ** (“one of the guests”) in John 12:2; we read this same root word for “guest” (and essentially the same expression) in John 13:23 **לַזָּרְיָהוּ** (“one reclining”), to describe “he whom Yahshua loved/befriended”. The meaning of **לַזָּרְיָהוּ** here is that Lazar is “sustained” by Yahshua, even “bound” and “entangled/swaddled” (**לָדָוַן**) to him. **לַזָּרְיָהוּ** is also the fifteenth letter of the aleph bet, [a number connected to the priesthood](#). Numerically, **לַזָּרְיָהוּ** (“one from samek”) = 1/15 = .0666....

⁷ By analogy, if you read about “Yahshua” in one scene, and then in the next scene you read about “the Son of Man”, would you be confused? If you know that “Yahshua” and “the Son of Man” are the same person, it makes sense to find (1) they never appear as two different people in the same scene, and (2) the name and the title are utilized at different times because they match the context of events being described in different ways. This is the same with Lazar and ‘the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended’.

3. Special focus on Bethany, the hometown of Lazar

It is only in the fourth gospel that we read of **לָאזָר** (“Lazar”) from this village **בֵּיתַנְי** (“Bethany”).

The fourth gospel is unique in its special focus on Lazar’s hometown. 7.5% of the fourth gospel (65 verses total) take place in this little village of Bethany:

- John 1:19-27
- John 11:1-45
- John 12:1-11

No other gospel devotes even remotely as much attention to Bethany, the little town next to (in the bosom of) Jerusalem.



4. Temple Connections

The text of the fourth gospel is filled with clues that it was written by someone highly educated, and also personally connected to the temple service in Jerusalem. Here are a few examples to help illustrate this point:

- John 2:1-12, 11:55, and 18:28 describe purification procedures that were of unique importance as preparation for temple worship (especially during a feast).
- John 3:1-21, 7:50-51, and 19:39-42 describe detailed interactions with the high-ranking Pharisee Nicodemus.
- John 18:10-13 specifically identifies by name the high priest and the high priest’s servant

The apostle John was a fisherman from Galilee, far removed from the temple service in Jerusalem.⁸

⁸ Indeed, in Acts 4 we find some circumstantial evidence that the apostles John and Peter were *unknown* to the high priests until years after Yahshua’s death. Yet in John 18:15, the ‘other disciple’ is known to the high priest *before* the crucifixion. Another subtle point is that the temple doorkeeper asks Peter, **הֲאַתָּה אֶחָד מֵעֲבָדָיו** (“Are you also one of this man’s disciples?”) By deduction, this doorkeeper must have known this “other disciple” was a disciple of Yahshua. And yet, John’s association with Yahshua was perhaps not known to

By contrast, the gospel implies that Lazar was both well-known and connected. For example, the expensive ointment used by Lazar's sister Maryam in John 12 suggests that Lazar was from a wealthy family. And at the funeral of Lazar, we learn that *many* Judeans came to honor him, including Pharisees, so Lazar was probably well-connected. Indeed, Bethany adjoins Jerusalem directly, within easy walking distance of the temple. This is a key fact because, in contrast to the synoptic gospels, the bulk of the fourth gospel takes place in Jerusalem and its immediate vicinity.

In John 12:9-11 we also learn that many people came to see Lazar after he is raised from the dead, and that Lazar had a strong influence on the Judeans. This provides some circumstantial evidence that Lazar was someone important, well-recognized, and/or trustworthy in Jewish society.

In John 19:15, the 'other disciple' is personally connected to the temple so he is given immediate access to its courtyard. By contrast, the apostle Simon Peter is denied access to the courtyard until the 'other disciple' speaks to the gatekeeper to allow Simon Peter access. Putting all the evidence together, this 'other disciple' was probably Lazar.⁹

Many scholars have even suggested that the author of the gospel of John was most likely a priest, or from a priestly lineage.¹⁰

5. Lazar at the Cross

In Matthew 27:56 we read "the mother of Zebedee's children" was present during Yahshua's crucifixion, but curiously her son John is not explicitly mentioned as being present.

In the fourth gospel, we read that Yahshua was speaking to "the disciple whom he loved/befriended" **there at the cross** as Yahshua tells this disciple "behold, your mother" in reference to the disciple's responsibility to care for Yahshua's mother Maryam.

the high priest until Acts 4:13. If hypothetically the doorkeeper and the high priest had the same knowledge on this point, then it would be further evidence that John could not be the 'other disciple' in John 19.

⁹ There is also a 'character evidence' point here - Lazar had the courage to follow Yahshua into the temple area while Yahshua was a prisoner, even though all the other disciples fled (except Simon Peter). Perhaps the fact that Lazar had already been raised from the dead increased his courage as he risked his life on crucifixion day to support Yahshua.

¹⁰ Because Lazar was one of Yahshua's disciples, why is he still in good standing with the priests of Jerusalem such that they sing at his funeral and he has access to the temple gate? It would only make sense if Lazar was of the priestly lineage, or otherwise influential because of his family's money or connections.

If this disciple was John, then (1) why wasn't John named explicitly, or even tangentially, as the "son of Zebedee" like his mother was named "mother of the sons of Zebedee"?, and (2) why is John now given two mothers (his own mother, and now Maryam)?

By contrast, if the disciple here in John 19 is Lazar, it makes sense -- Lazar had no mother identified up to that point, and he was in a good position (physically he was just healed by Yahshua, and financially his family had resources) to care for Yahshua's mother Maryam.

6. Lazar in the Boat

In John 21:7, we read that "the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended" is in the boat with the "sons of Zebedee". It seems unlikely that John would be called "the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended" in the very same scene that he is called "son of Zebedee".¹¹

Accordingly, "the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended" is most likely someone other than John.

Fortunately, the evidence for Lazar is found only a handful of verses later in the chapter, **𐤀𐤌𐤁𐤏𐤁 𐤏𐤓 𐤏𐤓** ("a rumor went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die.") John 21:23.

That's a very helpful clue because Lazar was unique among the disciples in this one regard - only Lazar had been raised from the dead - so it makes sense that such a rumor (not dying again) could naturally spread about him (that is, how many times will Lazar die on earth? Once, twice?). By contrast, there is no foundational background in the gospel that a rumor would begin that the apostle John would not die.

One unanswered question is why would Lazar be fishing with the other disciples, like Simon Peter? For starters, Lazar was a 'wanted man' (per John 12:10, the Pharisees wanted him

¹¹ Some have argued that John was too humble to name himself for his gospel, but that doesn't seem to fit other passages (ie., Mark 10:37, where John asks for preferred status to sit closest to Yahshua in heaven). Additionally, the fourth gospel author refers to the "sons of Zebedee" by name on multiple occasions, which suggests that concealing John's name was not a factor here (i.e., how does one have humility in their first name but not their last name?).

killed), so it is logical that Lazar would no longer stay in his hometown near Jerusalem. Indeed, at Yahshua's crucifixion we read that 'the apostle whom Yahshua loved/befriended' (Lazar) was charged with caring for Yahshua's mother Mary, so Lazar would naturally stay with the assembly led by Simon Peter. By analogy, ewes always find comfort and safety in the presence of their flock.

7. Lazar returns to a tomb, but hesitates to enter

John 20:8 provides a key piece of evidence supporting Lazar authorship because the 'other disciple' came first to Yahshua's tomb, but hesitated to enter.

If the 'other disciple' is Lazar, then it makes sense -- Lazar would indeed hesitate before returning to a tomb. Lazar had previously been raised from the dead! Even the language is symbolic - suggestively referring to *Lazar* as the one who *died* first **ܠܗܘܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ** **ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ** ("Then entered also the disciple who came first to the tomb.")¹²

Indeed, John 20:8 also says this 'other disciple' believed in Yahshua after seeing the grave clothes.¹³ Obviously, the *grave* had a profound effect on this disciple - this fact makes sense applied to the resurrected Lazar, but it would completely lack foundation applied to the fisherman John.

There is also an important technical point here about the *timing* of belief for this 'other disciple', because it also evidences Lazar authorship. Mark 16:14 specifies that when Yahshua appeared to the eleven disciples (11 after Judas' betrayal) Yahshua admonished the eleven for their unbelief because



¹² Incidentally, once we know that **ܫܡܝܘܢ ܦܬܪܘܨ** ("Peter") was first to enter Yahshua's cave, it makes symbolic sense that the **ܫܝܘܢܐ** ("rock") was in front of Yahshua's tomb (John 20:1) and Lazar's tomb (John 11:39).

¹³ Imagine the personal horror of being bound in a grave, and the relief of being set free; and then later how you would feel seeing your Messiah's grave clothes put away neatly, a sign that Yahshua too is unbound and free of the grave. Incidentally, one example of a mismatch between Greek & Aramaic is Mark 14:51 - **ܩܘܒܘܬܐ** is cloth for washing feet, as in the same **ܩܘܒܘܬܐ** Yahshua used in John 13:4-5 to wash feet. The Aramaic retains the wordplay.

they did not accept the witness of the mourners (*e.g.*, Mary Magdalene) who saw the risen Yahshua first. Thus, the ‘other disciple’ (who believed in the rising even before Mary Magdalene) could not be John the apostle (who believed later than Mary Magdalene).

Conclusion

Lazar probably wrote the fourth gospel. The evidence is much stronger for Lazar authorship than John authorship. With that said, there remains ample room for speculation about Lazar – what was his family history? Where did he go after leaving Jerusalem? It’s exciting to wonder...

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Additional Commentary

As I highlighted originally, Lazar has been the subject of much speculation. So if the reader is interested, here is some additional commentary:

A. Initial Connection to John the Baptist

In John 1:35-40, one of the ‘disciples of John the Baptist’ goes unnamed – all we know from John 1:35-40 is that he left John the Baptist to go follow Yahshua. Many scholars have wondered if this disciple was Lazar? ¹⁴ If so, it would explain the relevance of mentioning that disciple in John 1:35, promptly after the reference to “Bethany”, and because of the many references that follow in regards to baptism and purification. ¹⁵ For example, the fourth gospel

¹⁴ In the next verse of John 1, Simon Peter is introduced. So here we would have another example of Lazar coming before Peter. The other examples were that Lazar arrived at the tomb before Peter, and Lazar believed in Yahshua’s rising before Peter.

¹⁵ In Acts 1:21-22, Simon Peter refers to “men who were among us during that whole time, in which Yahshua our Master went out among us, who went out from the baptism of John until the day that He [Yahshua] was taken up from our presence”. It’s unknown whether Simon Peter’s words include the person (Lazar?) who was present with Andrew that day.

includes the 'foot washing' event around the last supper, and the purification at the wedding, but the synoptic gospels omit these.

And when Yahshua's tears **התלשמו** ("his tears") come for Lazar, it is a wordplay with **התלשמו** ("baptism"); note also **עין** ("eye") and **בית ענאי** ("Bethany").

Another key wordplay for **בית ענאי** ("Bethany") is to translate it "house of delay", which is interesting as Lazar is the first to reach the cave in the race. But like the tortoise and hare, Lazar is fast but he sleeps; Peter is the first to go in.

Some scholars have suggested there was a rivalry between Lazar and Peter. If so, it may have somewhat embodied the great principle that "the first shall be last, and the last shall be first."¹⁶

B. John the Baptist Authorship

John 1:19, "And this is the witness of John..."

Scholars have considered the possibility that certain portions of the fourth gospel were written by John the Baptist, including for example John 1:1-5, because John 1:7 can be translated to suggest the possibility that 'the world believed in John the Baptist's hand.'

Indeed, in Matthew 11:2 we have an example of John the Baptist speaking through his disciples when he is unable to do so himself.

However, compare John 21:24, "This is the disciple who testified about all these, and also wrote them. And we know that his testimony is true." So it would seem that John the Baptist did not write John 1:1-5.

¹⁶ When Yahshua raises Lazar from the dead, all of the priests are focused on getting his death in order (tomb placement, wrapping him up, singing prayers). But Yahshua flips the paradigm to life as he says - **לחיה ואל**. Notice how the tav (end, death) is followed by the aleph (beginning, life). Quite a sign (**אמן**) indeed. The idea of birth (aleph) - death (tav) - birth (aleph) is built into the word sign - **אמן**.

If the John 1:7 reference is to the Baptist's hand (rather than Yahshua's hand), then does the Baptist's hand refer only to the fact that his hand baptized Yahshua? Perhaps, but the expression 'believing in the hand' of a witness can be associated with the written testimony of that witness. So this suggests at least the possibility that John the Baptist wrote *something* that is widely believed. And if that's true, then perhaps the answer is John 1:1-5, or perhaps even more of the gospel of John. In either of those cases, John 21:24 would not preclude the author from quoting the Baptist - each of the gospels makes use of citation and reference in various measure.

Lazar, as a disciple of John the Baptist, might naturally begin the gospel with words from his first teacher.

C. Water Symbolism

One could also speculate that in both chapters the beloved disciple, by contrast to Peter and John the Baptist who enthusiastically meet Yahshua in the water, remains afar: Lazar remains in Bethany in John 1, and the 'disciple whom Yashua loved/befriended' remains in the boat in John 21. This matches the message of the gospel: in John 1, Lazar remains at home, and in John 21 Yahshua says "If I desire that this [beloved disciple] should remain until I come, what is it to you [Peter]?" The boat represents this world, which is especially interesting when we consider the maritime connections of modern commerce and the Vatican (which attempts to claim the authority of Peter). Remember that Peter was the one who was confident enough to attempt to walk on the stormy waters to meet Yahshua in Matthew 14. And remember also John 6:21, "And they willed to receive him into the ship and in that moment the ship was at the land to which they were going."

Some other interesting wordplays here come from John 6:24 where the word **הֵלֵךְ** ("these") can technically point **backwards** to the ships from Tiberias identified in John 6:22-23, and also one word forward to **סֵפֶלָה** ("ship") to complete the reference backward. This usage closely resembles how the word **הֵלֵךְ** ("these") is used in John 1:28 with the noun immediately afterward (in John 1:28 the noun is **בֵּית כַּנְתָּוִי** ("Bethany"), and in John 6:24 the noun is **סֵפֶלָה** ("ship").

Students of the bible can find many curious references to ships in the fourth gospel - note here the phrase **אֵלֶּכֶם** (“also not”) appearing four words earlier than **אֶת־הַסֵּפֶלֶת** (“ship”) in the verse. Via wordplay, it may be that **בֵּית־חַנָּנָה** (“Bethany”) is symbolically like a ship inside the Jordan river, as **סֵפֶלֶת** is a Hebrew word for ship.

D. Lazar Parable

Regarding the parable about Lazar in Luke 16, here is a possible explanation:

Lazar was of the priestly lineage in Bethany, but he was not able to gain access to the most valuable knowledge (‘food’) guarded within the temple walls. Lazar pleaded with the high priest (‘rich man’) at the gate of the temple (door of the mansion), and Lazar was denied access repeatedly. As he waited time-and-again, Lazar preached to those hungry people outside (dogs) who approached him at the temple gates. Lazar preached the little knowledge he had to those outsiders, including lessons about his own weaknesses (wounds). The outsiders did not fully accept Lazar’s words, but only superficially accepted them (licked his wounds).

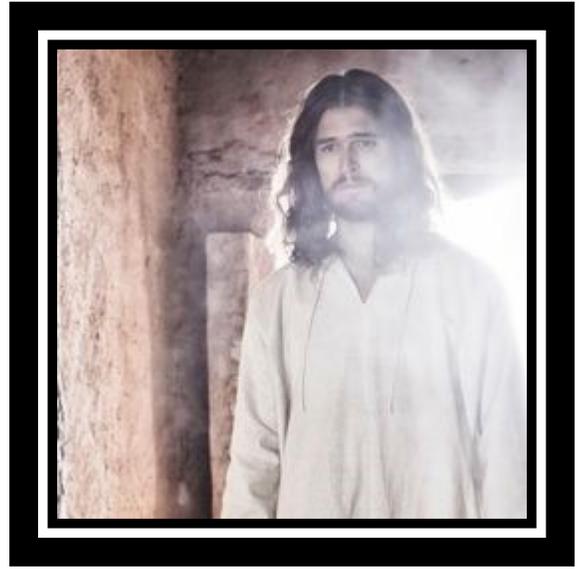
Lazar’s sisters who were also of the priestly lineage performed services to clean the temple (Yahshua), as Mary anointed Yahshua’s feet (altar of sacrifice), and as Martha and Mary served the disciples ([body of Yahshua](#)).

Lazar died, and after four days was resurrected into the Messiah’s chest (figuratively Abraham’s chest) – Lazar now experienced the fractal value (golden ratio) of being as close to the Messiah’s heart as possible; even leaning on the Messiah’s chest after the last supper. Now living in and toward the Messiah, Lazar enjoys pure knowledge (living bread) and pure life (living water) in a new world/age (Yahshua).

By contrast, the head priest (rich man) who previously denied Lazar remains outside of Yahshua (the temple), so the head priest does not have access to living water within the temple (Yahshua). The head priest is thirsty - he wishes not only for a drink of living water on his tongue (the tongue that condemned Yahshua to crucifixion), but also that Lazar the rejected priest would be resurrected and sent to his brothers (other priests in the temple). Lazar was resurrected from the dead by Yahshua, even going on to write the fourth gospel. And yet still, who among the temple priests is willing to hear Lazar if they will not even hear Moses?

E. The Other Disciple

The “disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended” is commonly called “other disciple”. See e.g., John 20:3. The word אחר (“other”) here is a wordplay for אני (“I am white” or ‘whiteness within me’), which is because he has been resurrected and cleaned by Yahshua.



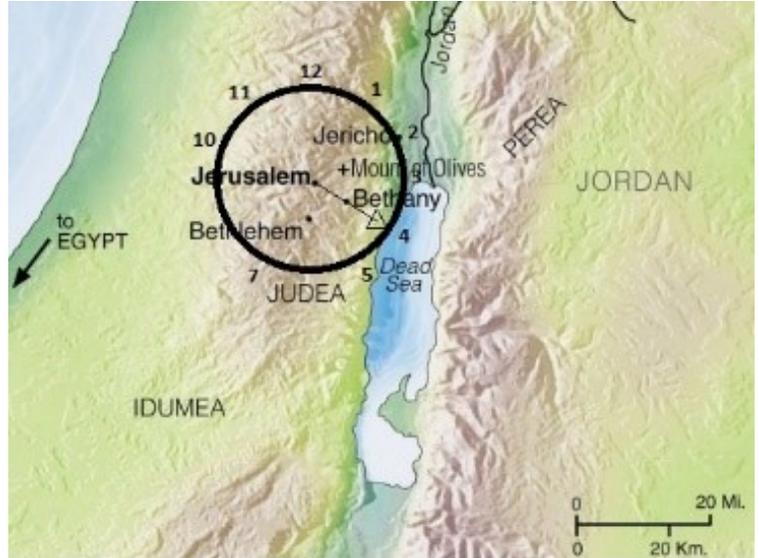
Once the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended was resurrected, perhaps that disciple understood the importance of living **inside** Yahshua (imagine fractals like dodecahedrons living inside one another), which may explain why the disciple whom Yahshua loved/befriended laid his head on Yahshua’s chest while at the dinner table – this posture would seem a bit awkward that the disciple was so physically close to Yahshua’s heart, but perhaps he knew upon resurrection that Yahshua’s heart was now the source of his own life. Interesting too that the beloved disciple wrote that Yahshua groans in his spirit in John 13:21.

F. Four O’Clock Arrow from Jerusalem to Bethany

In John 1:35-39, the disciples begin to follow Yahshua, and the text utilizes mysterious language -- two disciples of John the Baptist ask Yahshua **איהו אתה** (“where are you?”). In Aramaic, this is an idiomatic expression for “where are you staying” or “where do you live”. Yahshua then responds **בואו וראו** (“come and see”).

Then, after these disciples spend the day with Yahshua, the gospel text states **וכמו שעת העשירית** (“and it was like the tenth hour”).

This gospel text is so mysteriously interesting here, I think there *must* be a code somewhere. For example, consider what happens if the “tenth hour” reference in John 1:39 is interpreted as an arrow of direction.



On a traditional Hebrew clock (day begins at 6am) this would point *southeast* to 4:00, which is the direction from Jerusalem to Bethany. If John the Baptist’s disciples were from Bethany, the gospel text is suggesting that Yahshua’s dwelling was with them in Bethany, the Messiah being in them. So in this example, the Messiah is the living temple in Jerusalem, and he is pointing toward Bethany when he is with those disciples in Bethany.¹⁷

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¹⁷ One possibility is that Yahshua was directing the disciples to follow him to his family home approximately 60-miles north in Nazareth (the home of Mary and Joseph). However, on a modern clock this arrow would point *northwest* to 11:30 (or 5:30 using a Hebrew time schedule). Likewise, if you travel northwest from the Jordan River baptism site in John 1:28 (where these disciples asked Yahshua this question), it does not bring you to Nazareth (incidentally, a long journey from the Jordan river). In any case, other possible geographical deductions could spring from the routes of the next passages referring to [leaving] Galilee (1:43), to go to Bethsaida (1:44), and then from there on to Cana on the “third day” accompanied now by his mother Maryam (2:1).