

## Item #100 (The Gospel of John, Apostle and Evangelist)

**The Liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church** treats the author of the Fourth Gospel as an Apostle, thus implicitly viewing him as preaching the humanity of Jesus. For an Apostle is one officially chosen by Jesus to witness to His Resurrection, which is possible only if a person has died, for death implies humanity. Is the title “Evangelist” then redundant for John when used in connection with “Apostle”? Not necessarily. For John’s primary interest in the Crucifixion of Jesus is not that He died (though he was well aware, as Apostle, that that took place) but that “He handed on His Spirit to His Mother”, making her the Mother of the Church. (The phrase “handing on the Spirit” is not used in Greek literature before the death of Jesus.) This explains why John uses the identification “he whom Jesus loves” when referring to himself in his Gospel, for he is the only one among the disciples to whom Jesus has given the official responsibility to recognize officially His full identity. (Peter does not take this well, which explains the final chapter of John’s Gospel, a fact that should help date John’s Gospel.)

Another factor that needs a -plausible interpretation is the meaning of the Greek word Ἰουδαῖος . The following is a quotation from Chapter 6, Item #1, above:

The word Ἰουδαῖος appears dozens of times in the Gospel of John. More than in the other three Gospels combined. In non-biblical usage the word can mean “Jew”, referring to the people at the time of Jesus who were the heirs of the blessing given to Abraham by God some eighteen centuries before, were living under the dictates of the Mosaic Law, and were also designated by a variety of geographical terms (e.g., “Galileans” for Jews living in Galilee). Or it can mean “Judaean”, referring to the persons living in the area in and around Jerusalem who were heirs to the promise given to Abraham (and therefore “Jews”) but also inhabitants of Judea. How does John, the author of the Fourth Gospel and the one charged by Jesus with making His divine identity known, handle these two public meanings? What follows is an attempt to give a plausible meaning of Ἰουδαῖος as John wished it to be understood in his Gospel. But first the following supposition to what follows:

**To Be Noted about the Catholic Reading of Scripture in the Liturgy:** “The message of the liturgy in proclaiming the passion narratives in full is to enable the assembly to see vividly of the love of Christ for each person, despite their sins, a love that even death could not vanquish. The crimes during the Passion of Christ cannot be attributed indiscriminately to all Jews at that time, nor to Jews today. The Jewish people should not be referred to as though rejected or cursed, as if this view followed from Scripture. The Church ever keeps in mind that Jesus, his mother Mary and the Apostles all were Jewish. As the Church has always held, Christ freely suffered his passion and death because of the sins of all that all might be saved.” —Bishops’ Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (Repeated from Item #1).

The present writer had written his account in Item #1 before writing this present attempt to come to terms with all the realities of John’s Gospel in the context of John the Apostle and began reading the Gospel. I was surprised by how often an author chose the word “Jew” to translate the word Ἰουδαῖος. For me it is clear that John deliberately uses the word Ἰουδαῖος in order to convey the fact that the person(s) in question are both Jew and Judaean. And he does this in order to be consistent with the responsibilities Jesus has laid upon him. For in reading the Fourth Gospel it has become clear to this writer that for John the Evangelist and Apostle, the majority of the Judaeans, that is Jews

## **Item #100 (The Gospel of John, Apostle and Evangelist)**

living in and around Jerusalem including the Jews controlling the Temple, were against Jesus the Galilean Jew. And this in turn explains why John took the Mother of Jesus eventually into exile into the region of Ephesus. **(James Swetnam, S.J. July 5, 2022)**