

John 20:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

Analysis

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book—John explicitly acknowledges selectivity in his Gospel. The Greek σημεῖα (sēmeia, signs) refers not merely to miracles but to significant acts revealing Christ's identity and mission. John records seven major signs before the resurrection: water to wine (2:1-11), healing the official's son (4:46-54), healing the paralytic (5:1-15), feeding 5,000 (6:1-14), walking on water (6:16-21), healing the blind man (9:1-7), and raising Lazarus (11:1-44). Yet Jesus performed many more.

The phrase **"in the presence of his disciples"** (ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ/ enōpion tōn mathētōn autou) emphasizes eyewitness testimony. These weren't rumors or legends but events witnessed by credible observers who traveled with Jesus. The disciples saw, touched, heard—they were qualified witnesses (1 John 1:1-3). This grounds Christian faith in historical events, not mythology or subjective experience.

"Which are not written in this book"—John's Gospel is selective by design, not comprehensive biography. The writer chose specific signs for a specific purpose (stated in v. 31). This selectivity doesn't undermine reliability but demonstrates authorial intent. Ancient biographies weren't exhaustive chronicles but purposeful accounts highlighting character and significance. John selected signs that best demonstrate Jesus's identity as Messiah and Son of God.

This verse also guards against Gospel harmonization errors. Each Gospel writer selected material under divine inspiration for theological purposes. John complements but doesn't duplicate the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, Luke). The Spirit guided what to include—and what to omit. Scripture is sufficient without being exhaustive: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable" (2 Timothy 3:16).

Historical Context

By the time John wrote (c. 90-95 AD), the apostolic generation was dying. Eyewitnesses to Jesus's ministry, death, and resurrection were disappearing. False teachings threatened the church—Docetism denied Christ's real humanity; Gnosticism claimed secret knowledge beyond Scripture; some questioned Jesus's deity.

John writes with apostolic authority as the last surviving apostle and beloved disciple who reclined on Jesus's breast (13:23). He selects signs proving Jesus is both fully human (wept, hungered, died) and fully divine (turned water to wine, raised the dead, rose from the tomb). Each sign serves John's evangelistic purpose: producing faith in Christ as Messiah and Son of God.

The selective nature of Scripture was understood in Jewish tradition. Ecclesiastes 12:12 warns, "of making many books there is no end." What matters isn't exhaustive information but sufficient revelation for faith and life. Peter similarly notes not all of Jesus's words are recorded (Acts 1:1-3). Yet what IS written is enough—as verse 31 declares.

This principle counters both ancient Gnostic claims to secret gospels and modern quests for "lost" teachings of Jesus. The canonical Gospels provide all necessary revelation. Church fathers like Irenaeus (c. 180 AD) defended the four Gospels as sufficient and authoritative against proliferating apocryphal texts. John's acknowledgment of selectivity doesn't invite speculation about missing material but confidence in what God chose to preserve.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does John's selective approach to writing his Gospel teach us about the sufficiency of Scripture for faith and life?
2. How does the emphasis on eyewitness testimony ('in the presence of his disciples') ground Christian faith in historical events rather than mere religious ideas?
3. Why is it significant that Scripture is sufficient without being exhaustive—and how does this affect our approach to questions Scripture doesn't explicitly address?

Interlinear Text

Πολλὰ	μὲν	οὖν	καὶ	ἄλλα	σημεῖα	ἐποίησεν	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς
many	truly	G3767	And	other	signs	did	G3588	Jesus
G4183	G3303		G2532	G243	G4592	G4160		G2424
ἐνὼπιον	τῶν	μαθητῶν	αὐτοῦ	ἃ	οὐκ	ἔστιν		
in the presence	G3588	disciples	G846	which	not	are		
G1799		G3101		G3739	G3756	G2076		
γεγραμμένα	ἐν	τῷ	βιβλίῳ	τούτῳ·				
written	in	G3588	book	this				
G1125	G1722		G975	G5129				

Additional Cross-References

John 21:25 (References Jesus): And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

1 John 5:13 (Parallel theme): These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Romans 15:4 (Parallel theme): For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

1 Corinthians 10:11 (Parallel theme): Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

John 2:11 (References Jesus): This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.