

## **Theses and antitheses concerning the question of the “beloved disciple”**

The goal of this study is to analyse the expression which holds such mystery - “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13, 23; 19, 26; 20, 2; 21, 7. 20), in order to try to solve the question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. The beloved disciple, who is to identify in the so-called “Peter circle” both before and after Jesus’ Resurrection, could not have been other than the Apostle John. This hypothesis is also strengthened by the fact that nowhere in the Fourth Gospel is the Apostle John named, although he is mentioned twenty times in the Synoptic Gospels. Before Jesus’ Resurrection the Fourth Gospel identifies a disciple who is very close to the apostle Peter and which is known under the title “the disciple who Jesus loved” ( 13,23-24).

After the Resurrection the two Apostles ( John and Peter) are presented by the author of the Book of Acts as forming a select “inner circle” having a main role in the life of the primary Christians ( 3,1; 4,13; 8,14 ).

Peter and John are also presented together in the reference given by Paul when he mentions the “pillars” of the Jerusalem Church: James, Cephas and John (Gal. 2, 9).

All these references underline the fact that “the disciple who Jesus loved” might be John, son of Zebedee, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

Once identified the “beloved disciple” and taking also into account the references given by chapter 21 we might affirm that the author of the Fourth Gospel should be the Apostle John.