

06b
Gospel of John
Introduction (part 2)

John's omissions:

- ↘ Parables
- ↘ Exorcisms
- ↘ Discourses (like Matthew and Luke esp.)

Some 'historical' problems?

- ↘ 1:21 – John the Baptist insisting he is not Elijah
- ↘ 20:22 – bestowal of the Spirit
- ↘ 2:14-22 – cleansing of the Temple
- ↘ Length of Jesus' ministry?
- ↘ Chronology of the Passion

A multi-pronged response:

1. Even in modern (even liberal) scholarship, most do not take such a harsh view of John's historical accuracy
2. There are indeed many *similarities* between John and the Synoptics
3. Note the very nature of the Gospels:
 - The Gospels are portraiture not photographs or a video documentary
 - The Gospels are like stained-glass windows
4. Note the nature of ancient history writing:
 - We must recognize the itinerant nature of Jesus' ministry
 - We must recognize the differences between ancient and modern historiography, particularly the difference between chronological time and narrative time/sequence
 - We can observe that there are indeed many ways in which John and the Synoptics 'interlock' rather than contradict each other, both historically and theologically
5. Note the historical style of John (see Distinctives and Patterns, below)

*Method of Narrative Analysis*¹

1. Isolate the Literary Unit
2. Identify the Setting and Characters
3. Isolate the Different Scenes
4. Analyze the Narrative:
 - (i) Identify the (Rising) Conflict
 - (ii) Identify the Climax
 - (iii) Identify the Resolution
 - (iv) Identify the Following Action/Interpretation
5. Think about the Context
 - (i) immediate literary context
 - (ii) whole Gospel context (narrative flow and structure; intra- and intertextuality)

¹ Developed by (among others) Dr. Jonathan Pennington, Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

(iii) redemptive-historical context

6. Write a Brief Summary Paragraph

This summary paragraph should get at the main thrust of the story's point(s), understood in context, and addressing what this teaches us about God, our fallen condition and the Redemptive solutions God is offering.

Well-recognized distinctives of John:

- ↘ Selection of material: many things absent; many things unique (water into wine; resurrection of Lazarus; frequent visits to Jerusalem, etc.)
- ↘ Theological: only Gospel to explicitly affirm Jesus' divinity and to consistently reflect a 'high Christology' throughout the whole Gospel; as opposed to plot development and the disciples' growing understanding seen in the others
- ↘ Chronology: different than the Synoptics?
- ↘ Style of writing: differs significantly from Synoptics
 - Different vocabulary; extended discourses rather than pithy sayings and parables; the words and sayings of Jesus have been reformatted so that it is hard to tell the difference between Jesus' words and John's comments – thoroughly Johannine

Patterns:

- ↘ *Threes*
 - Three Passovers and three other feasts that Jesus attended
 - John the Baptist witnesses three times to Jesus' Messiahship
 - Jesus is condemned three times (trials)
 - He speaks three times from the cross
 - Peter's three-fold denial, and three-fold restoration
- ↘ *Sevens:*
 - Central part of the narrative structured around seven great miracles (signs) Jesus performed
 - Seven 'I AM' statements
 - Seven statements by others
 - Seven-fold witness to Christ
 1. By the Father
 2. Of the Son
 3. Of Christ's works
 4. Of Scripture
 5. Of John the Baptist
 6. Of the Disciples
 7. Of the Spirit
- ↘ Dualistic language
 - Double meaning of language and misunderstandings (and contrasts)

The Gospels as Story

The technique of story

"Art addresses us in the fullness of our being – simultaneously speaking to our intellect, emotions, intuition, imagination, memory and physical sense. There are some truths about life that can be expressed only as stories or songs or images."²

The Gospels are like the rest of biblical narratives in that they intermingle three ingredients:³

1. The historical impulse to record facts
2. The theological and didactic impulse to teach religious or theological truth
3. The literary impulse to recreate experiences in our imaginations

Gospel of John

Theme

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God

Christological themes

- ↘ He is the one sent from above
- ↘ He is the divine 'I AM'
- ↘ He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One
- ↘ He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
- ↘ He is the one upon whom the Spirit rested and who baptizes in the HS
- ↘ He is the King of Israel/King of the Jews
- ↘ He is One with the Father
- ↘ He is the pre-existent one, having existed before the patriarch Abraham
- ↘ He is human

The Spirit

- ↘ Emphasis is placed on Jesus as the One on whom the Spirit is given and remains 'without measure' (1:32; 3:34)
- ↘ Jesus' death and exaltation is stated to be the necessary precursor to the bestowal of the Spirit upon the disciples (7:39)
- ↘ Jesus teaches that only those who are born from above by the Spirit are able to see and enter the Kingdom of God (3:3,5)
- ↘ The Spirit is living water who well up into eternal life in those who believe
- ↘ Jesus speaks of a time when people will worship in/by S/spirit and truth
- ↘ The Spirit is the Paraclete or Counselor/Comforter who will come after Jesus' departure, the 'Spirit of Truth' who will teach the disciples, guide them into all truth, and remind them of all that Jesus taught, who will bear witness to Jesus, and who will convict the world as guilty in respect to sin and righteousness and the judgment to come (chs. 14-16)

² Dana Giola, Commencement Address at Stanford University, June 17, 2007.

³ Leland Ryken, *Words of Life: A Literary Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987), 29.

Eternal Life

- ↘ John obviously speaks much of 'eternal life'
- ↘ It is the stated purpose of the book – 20:31
- ↘ 'Eternal life' for John is the opposite of perishing or being destroyed
- ↘ It is also understood as salvation – from sin and judgment and slavery
- ↘ It is also understood positively as thirst-quenching water, resurrection from the dead, abiding with/in God, and probably most importantly, intimately 'knowing' God
- ↘ The seven 'I Am' sayings in John also relate closely to the idea of 'eternal life'
- ↘ We can see it is analogous/corresponding to the 'Kingdom of God' in the Synoptics

Love & Obedience

- ↘ The Father loves the Son, which is called forth by the Son's obedience to the Son (15:10; 10:17)
- ↘ The Father loves the disciples, who love and obey his Son (14:21-23)
- ↘ The Father loves the world (3:16ff)
- ↘ Jesus loves His disciples (14:21; 15:12), shown ultimately in laying down His life (15:13)
- ↘ The disciples show their love for Jesus by obeying His commands (14:15), esp. His command that they love one another (13:34-35)⁴

OT Allusions

- ↘ Not as frequently explicit as Matthew, but still very rich in allusions; part of the reason the rich OT background to John seems so illusionary (compared to 'fulfillment quotations' of Matthew) is because the whole of the Gospel is in John's style and voice
 - i.e., the whole thing, including Jesus' words, is thoroughly stamped with John's style and verbage and way of speaking and his conception of things
- ↘ Continually Jesus is shown to replace OT figures and institutions
 - "He is the new Temple, the one of whom Moses wrote, the true bread from heaven, the true Son, the genuine vine, the tabernacle, the serpent in the wilderness, the passover."⁵ We see there is a hermeneutic or way of reading the OT at work.

'I AM' Statements

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. I AM the Bread of life | (6:35) |
| 2. I AM the Light of the world | (8:12) |
| 3. I AM the Door | (10:9) |
| 4. I AM the Good Shepherd | (10:11) |
| 5. I AM the Resurrection and the Life | (11:25) |
| 6. I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life | (14:6) |
| 7. I AM the True Vine | (15:1) |

⁴ "So anyone who thinks that he has understood the divine scriptures or any part of them, but cannot by his understanding build up this double love of God and neighbor, has not yet succeeded in understanding them." (Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*)

⁵ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 98.

Signs⁶

1. He turned the water into wine (2:1-11)
2. He healed the nobleman's son (4:43-54)
3. He healed the disabled man at Bethesda pool (5:1-15)
4. He fed the 5,000 (6:1-14)
5. He walked on water (6:15-21)
6. He healed the man born blind (9:1-12)
7. He raised Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44)

(5) miracles unique to John's recording

(2) found in the Synoptics: Feeding of 5,000 and Walking on the Sea of Galilee

His greatest sign? His Resurrection (ch. 20; first foretold 2:18-19)

Structure & Outline

Two-fold Structure:

- (1-12) Jesus' identity
- (13-21) The road to Glory

Outline

A common approach:⁷

- I. Prologue (1:1-18)
- II. The Book of Signs (1:19—12:50)
- III. The Book of Glory (13:1—20:31)
- IV. Epilogue (21:1-25)

Our outline for this course:

- I. Introduction of the Son of God (1:1-51)**
- II. Revelation of the Son to God to the World (2:1-12:50)** *(Book of Signs)*
- III. Revelation of the Son of God for the Disciples (13:1-17:26)** *(Book of*
- IV. Passion and Proof of the Son of God for the World (18:1-20:31)** *Glory)*
- V. Epilogue Concerning the Son of God (21:1-25)**

⁶ Also did the epilogue sign of the miraculous catch of fish (21:1-14), and others (2:23; 6:2).

⁷ Mark L. Strauss, "John: The Gospel of the Son Who Reveals the Father," *Four Portraits, One Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 298.