

An Introduction to the Four Gospels



Lay Ministry Institute - Upper Susquehanna Synod
11 March 2017
Mark Vitalis Hoffman

The Gospel according to JOHN



After Mark,

John's Gospel is the one, fine, true, and chief gospel, and is far, far to be preferred over the other **two** and placed high above them.

Martin Luther

Gospels 1.205 - MGVHoffman

The Gospel according to John

- Who?
 - Beloved Disciple = John?
 - Relation to (John) the Elder of Johannine Letters
 - Relation to John of Revelation

The Gospel according to John

Who?

- Beloved Disciple = Author? Competitor to Peter?
 - **Literary device** (beloved disciple as reader)?
 - **Lazarus?** - 11.3,5,36: "Lord, he whom you love is ill."
 - **John of Zebedee?** - 13.23; 19.26; 20.2; 21.7,20: "One of his disciples -- the one whom Jesus loved -- was reclining next to him"
 - No explicit reference in the Gospel to John son of Zebedee (nor to James, but cf. 21.2: "sons of Zebedee")
 - Tradition of John and Mary (19.26)
 - **Thomas** (the Twin)?
- Possible relation to (John) "the Elder" of Johannine Letters (2 John 1.1; 3 John 1.1 – perhaps a late editor?)
- No relation to "John" of Revelation (Rev 1.1, 4, 9; 22.8)

The Gospel according to John

When?

Stages of composition

Early: 40-70CE - Jewish Xns within synagogue

Middle: 70-80CE – Jewish Xns and synagogue in tension

Late: 80-100CE – Jewish Xns over against synagogue

>> ~90CE

Oral, unorganized collection of Jesus' words and deeds

(Signs Gospel?)

Distinctive units shaped through decades of preaching/teaching

Units organized consecutively Redactions

Final editing:
Add chs 15-17, 21

The Gospel according to John

Where?

- Traditional: Ephesus
- Galilee? Syria? Alexandria?



The Gospel according to John

Why?

- Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe* that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name (20:30f)

*reading πιστεύσητε. But is this a fitting conclusion to the whole gospel or just the 'Book of Signs'?

The Gospel according to John

For whom? > The Johannine Community

- Founded by one of Jesus' disciples
- Predominantly (exclusively?) Jewish
- Members driven from their synagogues for belief in Jesus (9:22-28; 12:42; 16:2)
- Community's defense is strong, internal ethic: "love one another"
- "Outsiders" misunderstand Jesus (e.g., 2:19-22; 3:4; 4:11; 11:12; some believe)

The Gospel according to John

What about the Gentiles? (Are these all Jews?)

7.35f: The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?"

11.48-52: Caiaphas: "You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed."

He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but that he might gather (συναγάγει) into one the dispersed children of God.

12.20ff: Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." (but Jesus never meets with them)

John and the Synoptics

Material ONLY in John

- Prologue (1:1-18)
- Wedding at Cana (2:1-12)
- Dialogue with Nicodemus (2:23-3:21)
- Samaritan Woman at the Well (4:1-42)
- Healing of a Sick Man at Pool of Bethesda (5:1-18)
- Bread of Life Discourse (6:22-65)
- [Woman caught in Adultery (7:53-8:11)]
- Giving Sight to a Man Born Blind (9:1-41)
- Raising of Lazarus (11:1-44)

<http://catholic-resources.org/John/Synoptic-Differences.htm>

John and the Synoptics

Material ONLY in John

- Washing of the Disciples' Feet (13:1-20)
- Last Supper Discourses, including "Paraclete" & "Vine and Branches" The "Disciple Whom Jesus Loved"
- Great Prayer of Jesus (17:1-26)
- New Details at the Crucifixion (19:20-24, 26-28, 30-37, 39)
- Resurrection Appearance to Mary Magdalene alone
- Resurrection Appearance to Thomas (20:24-29)
- Resurrection Appearance at the Sea of Galilee

<http://catholic-resources.org/John/Synoptic-Differences.htm>

John and the Synoptics

Material different in John compared to Synoptics

Synoptics

Jesus' ministry lasts about one year

Only One Journey to Jerusalem

First Disciples Jesus calls directly are Simon & Andrew, James & John

Temple cleansing one week before Jesus' death

Jesus' ministry begins after John the Baptist's arrest

Anointing at Bethany by anonymous woman, and objection by anonymous people

John

Jesus' ministry spans three Passovers (2:13; 6:4; 11:55)

Multiple Journeys to Jerusalem

First Disciples are Andrew, an anonymous second one, Simon Peter, Philipp, Nathanael (1:35-51)

Temple cleansing at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (2:13ff)

Jesus' ministry overlaps with John (3:22-24)

Anointing at Bethany by Lazarus' sister Mary, and objection by Judas Iscariot

<http://catholic-resources.org/John/Synoptic-Differences.htm>

John and the Synoptics

Material different in John compared to Synoptics

Synoptics

Last Supper is the Passover Meal, and Jesus is crucified on the Day of Passover

Many miracles but few longer speeches

Opponents of Jesus include Sadducees, Herodians, etc.

Love your neighbors;
Love you enemies

Peter is the first and most prominent of the "apostles"

Future Eschatology (Imminent)

Main focus: "Kingdom of God"

John

Last Supper is before the Passover (13:1; 18:28), and Jesus dies on the Preparation Day before Passover

Only a few "signs" but several long monologues and dialogues

Jesus' opponents are usually called "the Jews" or "the world"

Love one another (focus within the community)

Martha of Bethany, Mary Magdalene, and the "Beloved Disciple" are more prominent as "disciples"

Realized Eschatology (Present)

Main focus: "Eternal Life"

<http://catholic-resources.org/John/Synoptic-Differences.htm>

John and the Synoptics

- ◉ 90% of John is NOT in Synoptic Gospels
- ◉ Jesus' long discourses focus on *who he is*
 - Synoptic Gospels focus on God's kingdom
 - 5:19-47; 6:25-70; 7:14-52; 8:12-59; 10:1-18, etc.
- ◉ Jesus is the messenger *and* the message
- ◉ Symbolism
 - I AM statements (water, bread, life, truth, vine, way, resurrection)
 - Dualism: light/dark; life/death; truth/lies

John and the Synoptics

Material different in John compared to Synoptics

Synoptics

Jesus' ministry lasts about one year

John

Jesus' ministry spans three Passovers (2:13; 6:4; 11:55)

<http://catholic-resources.org/John/Synoptic-Differences.htm>

John and the Synoptics

Material different in John compared to Synoptics

Synoptics

Last Supper is the Passover Meal, and Jesus is crucified on the Day of Passover

John

Last Supper is before the Passover (13:1; 18:28), and Jesus dies on the Preparation Day before Passover

<http://catholic-resources.org/John/Synoptic-Differences.htm>

Key Themes in John

- ◉ Incarnation (1:1-19; 6:41)
- ◉ Conflict (5:18; 6:60-71; 8:39-59)
- ◉ Testimony (1:19-28; 4:39; 5:31-47; 8:12-20)
- ◉ True Revelation (8:21-30)
- ◉ "Lifted up" and "glorified" (8:21; 12:27-36)
- ◉ Jesus reveals God because he is God
- ◉ Love one another (action, NOT feeling)
- ◉ The *Paraclete*/Spirit comforter (7:37-39)

Outline of John

- Introduction / Prologue: 1.1-18
- Book of Signs: 1.19-12.50
- Book of Glory: 13.1-20.31
- Conclusion: 20.30-31
- Epilogue: 21.1-25

<http://catholic-resources.org/John/Outlines-Gospel.htm>

The Gospel of John

- 1: Prologue; **Jordan**, John the Baptist; first disciples
- 1-2: **Galilee**; more disciples, wedding at Cana
- 2-3: 1st journey to **Jerusalem** / clears Temple; Nicodemus
- 3: in **Judea/Jordan**; John the Baptist
- 4: **Samaritan** woman at the well
- 4: **Galilee**, official's son healed
- 5: **Jerusalem**, heals a lame man; controversy w/ authorities
- 6-7: **Galilee** feeding of 5000, Bread of Life
- 7¹⁰-10³⁹: (secretly to) **Jerusalem** (until) teaching in the Temple; woman caught in adultery; more controversy; healing of blind man; Good Shepherd speech and controversy
- 10⁴⁰-11⁶: **Transjordan**
- 11⁷-12: **Bethany**, Lazarus, Mary anoints Jesus, 12¹² entry into **Jerusalem**
- 13-17: Last supper, foot washing, discourse, prayer
- 18-19: Betrayal, arrest, trials, crucifixion, death burial
- 20-21: Resurrection: tomb, Mary, Thomas, beach breakfast: **Galilee**

Note
geography

Geography in John

Baptism: Jordan, Batanea?
Galilee, Cana

Jerusalem (Temple, Nic.)
Samaritan/Sychar
Galilee (Cana, Capernaum)

Jerusalem (Bethesda)
Galilee (Bethsaida, Cap.)

Jerusalem (Siloam)
Transjordan

Bethany > Ephraim >
Bethany

Jerusalem entry > Last
Supper, Crucifixion,
Resurrection

Galilee

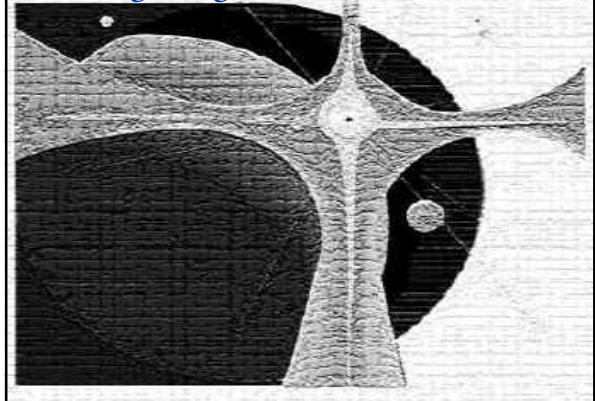


The Gospel of John

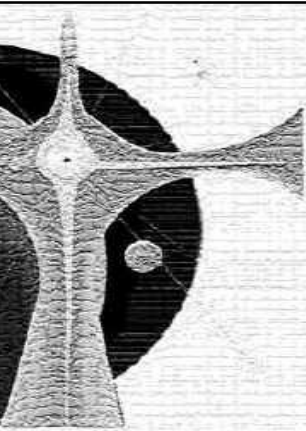
- 1: Prologue; Jordan, John the Baptist; first disciples
- 1-2: Galilee; more disciples, wedding at Cana
- 2-3: 1st journey to Jerusalem / clears Temple; **Nicodemus**
- 3: in Judea/Jordan; John the Baptist
- 4: **Samaritan woman at the well**
- 4: Galilee, official's son healed
- 5: Jerusalem, **heals a lame man; controversy w/ authorities**
- 6-7: Galilee feeding of 5000, **Bread of Life**
- 7¹⁰-10³⁹: (secretly to) Jerusalem (until) teaching in the Temple; woman caught in adultery; **more controversy; healing of blind man; Good Shepherd speech and controversy**
- 10⁴⁰-11⁶: Transjordan
- 11⁷-12: Bethany, Lazarus, Mary anoints Jesus, 12¹² entry into Jerusalem
- 13-17: **Last supper, foot washing, discourse, prayer**
- 18-19: Betrayal, arrest, trials, crucifixion, death burial
- 20-21: Resurrection: tomb, Mary, Thomas, breakfast on beach

Discourses

In the beginning was the Word...



...To all who
received him, who
believed in his name,
he gave power to
become children of
God.



The "Jews" in John

- Specifically and only to the "**Jewish leaders and authorities**," rather than to the people as a whole
- Only or mainly to the people living in the geographical territory of Judea, that is, "**the Judeans**"
- To all members (or some or any in general) of the ethnic/religious group of people still called "**Jews**" today

"Signs" in John

Mat (0.071%: 13 / 18346)	
Mar (0.062%: 7 / 11304)	
Luk (0.056%: 11 / 19482)	
Joh (0.109%: 17 / 15635)	
Act (0.070%: 13 / 18450)	

• σημεῖον

- 2:11, 18, 23; 3:2; 4:48, 54; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30
- Cana: "Jesus did this, the first of his signs..."
- Healing official's son: "Now this was the second sign that Jesus did..."
- 4:48 Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." (6.26)
- 20:30-31 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The Last Supper and Crucifixion in John

http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Jesus_Death.htm

For both Synoptics and John:

- Passover is on 15 Nisan
- On Thursday evening, Jesus had a last supper with his disciples and later was arrested
- On Friday, Jesus was tried and crucified and buried late that afternoon
- On Saturday: Sabbath rest
- On Sunday morning, women/disciples go to the tomb

The Last Supper and Crucifixion in John

<http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Jesus-Death.htm>

The difference between Synoptics and John

15 Nisan is on Friday

>>

Last Supper on Thursday eve is a Passover meal

Jesus crucified on Passover

15 Nisan is on Saturday

>>

Last supper on Thursday eve is not a Passover meal

Jesus crucified on the Day of Preparation when Passover lambs were slaughtered

According to astronomical calculations, the 15th of Nisan in the Jewish lunar calendar fell on a Thursday evening / Friday (Mt, Mk, Lk) in 27 CE, while it fell on a Friday evening / Saturday (John) in 30 and 33 CE.

It is finished.

Grunewald

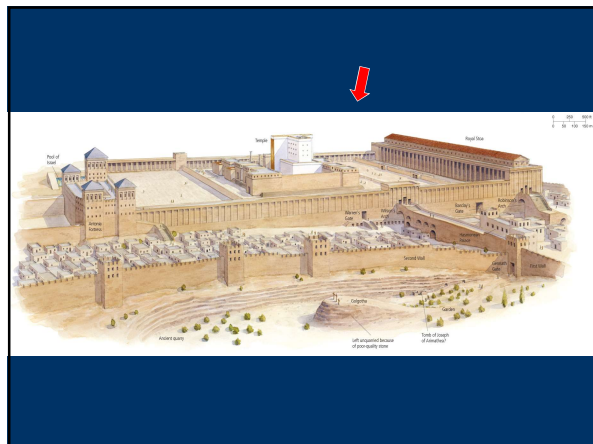
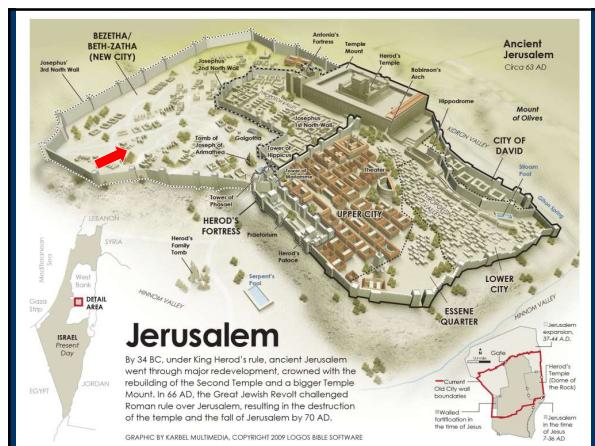
Woman, here is your son...

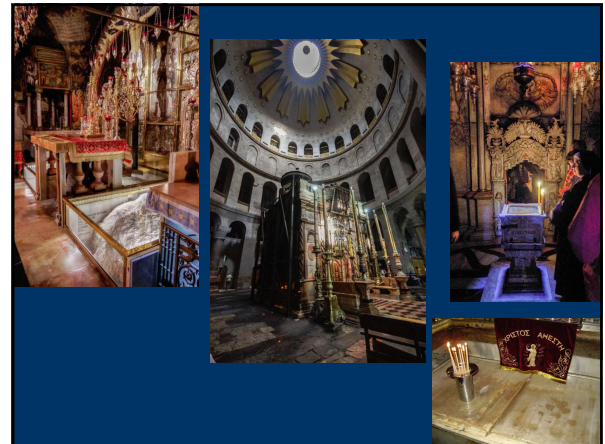
Here is your mother.

I am thirsty.

John 3:30

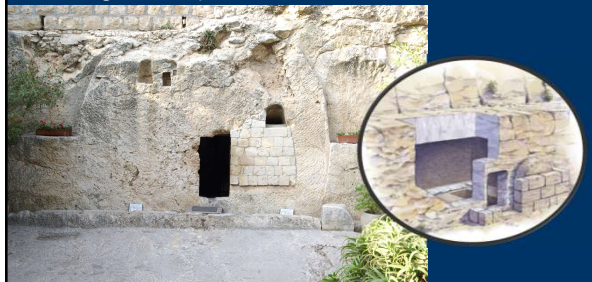
He must increase, but I must decrease.





John 20.1-10

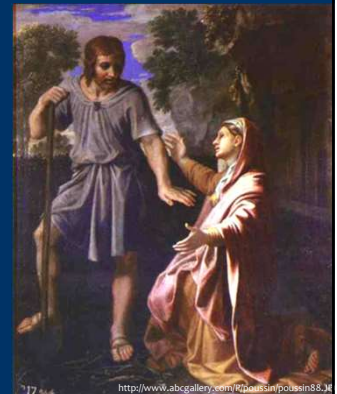
- Mary Magdalene goes to tomb; sees stone removed; runs and reports to Peter and the "other disciple"
- Peter and other run to tomb; other arrives first and looks in; Peter goes in: they see linen and cloth; return to their homes



Resurrection in John

Noli me tangere.

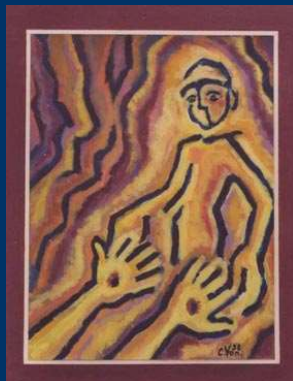
μή μου ἅπτου



'Doubting' Thomas

"My Lord and my God!"

"Have you believed because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."



<http://www.c-vonaesch.ch/learnzoste.jpg>

John 20.30-31

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

John as a Two-Level Story

1. Story located in time of Jesus
Things Jesus said and did and happened to him
2. Story located in Johannine community
The experiences of the Johannine community that parallel Jesus' experiences

The Gospel of John is a meditation on the life of Jesus that reflects the experiences of the Johannine community.

It is a community that understands themselves in faithful continuity with Jesus.

How do our experiences relate to those of Jesus and of the Johannine community?

Gospel Story in Mark and John

Mark

- Discourse level
 - How is story told?
 - What effect does it have on reader?

- Story level
 - Who, what, when, where of narrative

John

- Story located in Johannine community
 - How does what happened to Jesus apply to us (John's community)?

- Story located in time of Jesus
 - Subjectively remembered history

Jesus and John the Baptist

Jesus or John the Baptist?

Or, "Who's your leader?"

Mark 8:27-29

Jesus ... asked his disciples,

"Who do people say that I am?"

²⁸ And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

²⁹ He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

John 1:19-21

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

²⁰ He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No."

Jesus and John the Baptist

John 1:29-34

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel."

And John testified,

"I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

Jesus and John the Baptist

John 3:26-30

They came to John and said to him,

"Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him."

John answered,

"No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

Jesus and John the Baptist

John 4:1f

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, "Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John" -- although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized ...

John 10:41f

Many came to [Jesus], and they were saying, "John performed no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." And many believed in him there.

Jesus and John the Baptist

Acts 18:24-26 (mid-50s CE)

Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. ²⁵ He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately.

Jesus and John the Baptist

Acts 19:1-6

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples.

² He said to them,

"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?"

They replied,

"No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

³ Then he said, "Into what then were you baptized?"

They answered, "Into John's baptism."

⁴ Paul said,

"John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus."

⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

John as a Two-Level Story

1. Story located in time of Jesus

There was a relationship between John and Jesus that may have been somewhat competitive

2. Story located in Johannine community

There are disciples of John the Baptist who are somewhat in competition to the disciples of Jesus

John as a Two-Level Story

1. Story located in time of Jesus

2. Story located in Johannine community

Jesus and the "Jews" (Jewish authorities)

Jesus and the "Jews"

Jesus or Abraham? Or, "Who's your daddy?"

John 8:33-58

- 33: They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone."
 - 34-38: You don't behave like it...
- 39: "Abraham is our father."
 - "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did... You are indeed doing what ~your father~ does."
- 41: "We are not illegitimate children; we have one father, God himself."
 - 42ff: Not true; you neither love nor understand me; "You are from your father the devil..."
- 48: "You are a Samaritan and have a demon"
 - 58: Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am."

John as a Two-Level Story

1. Story located in time of Jesus

Did Jesus truly exemplify the Abrahamic tradition?

2. Story located in Johannine community

Does the Johannine community truly exemplify the Abrahamic tradition?

Jesus and the “Jews”

Jesus or Moses? Or, “*Who’s your boss?*”

- 1.17: The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
- 5.46: If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.
- 7.19: “Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?”
- 9.28f.: Then they reviled [the blind man], saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”

John as a Two-Level Story

1. Story located in time of Jesus
Jesus appeared to be contradicting the law of Moses
2. Story located in Johannine community
The Johannine community understand themselves to be faithful to the law of Moses... which means believing in Jesus

Jesus and the “Jews”

Expulsion = ἀποσυνάγωγος

- 9.22: His [blind man’s] parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be **put out of the synagogue**.
- 12.42: Nevertheless many, even of the authorities, believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they would be **put out of the synagogue**.
- 16.2: They will **put you out of the synagogues**. Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God.

Jesus and the “Jews”

Expulsion = ἀποσυνάγωγος

Birkat HaMinim > 12. FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF APOSTATES AND THE ENEMIES OF GOD:

- An ancient Palestinian version:
For the apostates let there be no hope. And let the arrogant government be speedily uprooted in our days. Let the *nozerim* (=Nazarenes/Xns) and the *minim* (=sectarians) be destroyed in a moment. And let them be blotted out of the Book of Life and not be inscribed together with the righteous. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant". (Schechter)
- The modern version: Let there be no hope for slanderers, and let all wickedness perish in an instant. May all your enemies quickly be cut down, and may you soon in our day uproot, crush, cast down and humble the dominion of arrogance. Blessed are you, O Lord, who smashes enemies and humbles the arrogant.

John as a Two-Level Story

1. Story located in time of Jesus
There was a contentious and hostile relationship between Jesus and the Jewish authorities
2. Story located in Johannine community
There is a contentious and hostile relationship between the Johannine community and the Jewish authorities

John as a Two-Level Story

1. Story located in time of Jesus
2. Story located in Johannine community

John 9 as an example of Johannine writing style

John 20.30-31

Now Jesus did many other signs
in the presence of his disciples,
which are not written in this book.

But these are written so that you may believe
that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that
through believing you may have life in his name.

Chapter 21: Breakfast on the Beach

21.24f. This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.