



## An Introduction to the Four Gospels

Mark Vitalis Hoffman  
 Assoc. Professor of Biblical Studies - LTSG  
 Upper Susquehanna Synod – ELCA  
 Lay Ministry Institute  
 March 8, 2008



<http://www.aga.gov/cgi-bin/jimgg/141351-0-0>

## The Gospel according to JOHN

“John’s Gospel is the one, fine, true, and chief gospel, and is far, far to be preferred over the other three and placed high above them.

*Martin Luther*

## 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

- When?
 

<p>Stages of composition</p> <p>Early: 40-70CE - Jewish Xns within synagogue</p> <p>Middle: 70-80CE - Xns and synagogue in tension</p> <p>Late: 80-100CE - Xns over against synagogue</p> <p>&gt;&gt; ~90CE</p>	<p>Oral, unorganized collection of Jesus’ words and deeds</p> <p>Distinctive units shaped through decades of preaching/teaching (Signs Gospel?)</p> <p>Units organized consecutively Redactions</p> <p>Final editing: Add chs 15-17, 21</p>
---	---

## The Gospel according to John

- Where?
  - Traditional: Ephesus
  - Galilee? Syria? Alexandria?

## 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"

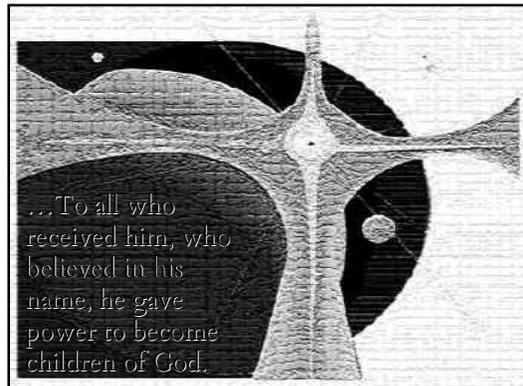
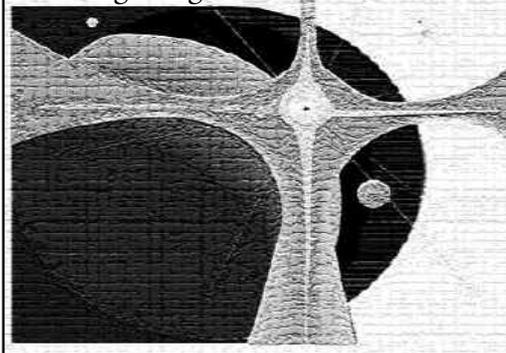
<http://catholic-resources.org/John/Synoptic-Differences.htm>

## 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>

In the beginning was the Word...



John 1.20-51  
Jesus and John the Baptist

Behold the Lamb of God  
who takes away  
the sin of the world!



[http://www.artic.edu/sic/collections/origg/14pc\\_dipn06.html](http://www.artic.edu/sic/collections/origg/14pc_dipn06.html)

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

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 20.24-29  
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/jean20site.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.



<http://www.c-vonaesch.ch/jean20site.jpg>