

Gospel of John

Survey/Introduction to NT
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John

- Apart from feeding of 5000, and passion narrative, nothing much is shared with the synoptic gospels
- No birth narrative
- No sermon on the mount
- No Lord's prayer
- No transfiguration
- No parables

John

- No Lord's Supper
- No demon exorcism
- No eschatological discourse
- No teaching on the Kingdom of God?

John

- John's high Christology (especially Jesus' human and divine natures) has shaped formulations of creeds in early church
- Massive assault by German scholars on John's trustworthiness in the wake of the Enlightenment
- Contradictions between John and Synoptic gospels – more of a "theological" reading than eyewitness/historical account? To be covered in later lectures

John

- Authorship under attack – who is this unnamed "the beloved disciple" (21:20, 24, see also 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20)?
 - The Apostle, son of Zebedee? John the Elder?
 - Doubts on the Apostle as author – the sons of Zebedee are named (21:2) but the "beloved disciple" is not named
 - See further: Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998)

John

- Dating also questionable
 - Ranges from AD65-135
 - Reference to John's mention of Peter's martyrdom (21:19) – the earliest possible date

John

- Dating also questionable
 - Discovery of P52 containing 18:31-32, 37-38, dated 135 – points to latest possible date
 - Most accept dating 80-90s, written from Ephesus



John

- Textual issues:
 - 1:18 – “one and only Son” or “One and Only, God”
 - 1:34 – “the son of God” or “the Chosen one of God” (now in TNIV and NIV 2011)
 - 5:3-4 – stirring of water – inauthentic?
 - The famous 7:53-8:11 – story of the adulterous woman – absent from pre-5th century MSS
 - 20:31 – evangelistic or apologetic function?

John

- Purpose
 - 20:30-31: so that you may believe: present of aorist subjunctive?
 - If present – you may continue to believe – hortatory function
 - If aorist – you may believe – evangelistic function

John 20:30-31

- Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe (may continue to believe?) that Jesus is the Messiah (Christ), the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John: Outline

- 1:1-18 – Prologue – The Word made flesh
- 1:19-12:50 – the Book of Signs, recording the 7 “signs”
- 13:1-20:31 – the Book of Glory/Exaltation, preparing the new Messianic community and the passion of Jesus
- 21:1-25: Epilogue

Uniqueness of John

- Seven “signs”
- Seven “I AM” sayings
- The newness in John
- The discourses – Upper Room Discourse

Seven Signs

Passage	Sign	Significance
2:1-11	Turning water into wine	Power over quality
4:43-54	The healing of the official's son	Power over distance/space
5:1-48	The healing of the man at the pool	Power over time
6:1-15	The feeding of the five thousand	Power over quantity
6:16-24	The walking on water	Power over nature
9:1-41	The healing of the man born blind	Power over misfortune
11:1-46	The raising of Lazarus	Power over death

Seven "I AM" Sayings

Passage	Statement	Christological Significance
6:35, 48, 51	I am the bread of life	Jesus can satisfy people's spiritual hunger
8:12; 9:5	I am the light of the world	Jesus as fulfillment of Feast of Tabernacles
10:7, 9	I am the door	Jesus exclusive way to salvation
10:11, 14	I am the good shepherd	Jesus as good shepherd laying down his life (substitutionary atonement?)
11:25	I am the resurrection and the life	Jesus is the final hope for resurrection
14:6	I am the way, the truth and the life	Jesus exclusive way to salvation – THE way, THE truth, THE life
15:1	I am the true vine	Jesus as true Israel

The Newness in John

- Chapter 1: The Introduction
 - 1:1-18 – The Prologue
 - the Word made flesh in Jesus
 - the Word "pitched his tent" among humanity
 - The glory of the Word (John 20:30-31)
 - 1:19-34 – The Witness of John the Baptist
 - Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the WORLD - The sacrificial lamb and the scapegoat conflated into one
 - He must increase, I must decrease
 - 1:31-51 – The Witness of the disciples

The Newness in John

- Chapters 2-4: The Cana cycle: Institutions of Judaism
 - First sign at Cana: New wine, new joy (2:1-11)
 - Ritual purification
 - "sign" points to Jesus → Revealed his glory (cf. prologue); disciples placed their faith in him (2:11)
 - New temple (2:12-25) – Jewish centre of religious, legal and political life
 - Cleansing of the temple
 - "sign" – the destruction of the temple and his resurrection (2:19)
 - The verdict: Some believed (2:23); some did not

The Newness in John

- Chapters 2-4: The Cana cycle: Institutions of Judaism
 - New birth (3:1-36) – Jewish leader, Sanhedrin
 - True religion → spiritual regeneration/born again
 - "no one could perform signs" (3:2)
 - 3:16-21 → cf. prologue
 - The verdict: your choice: accept or reject Jesus

The Newness in John

- Chapters 2-4: The Cana cycle: Institutions of Judaism
 - New universalism (4:1-42) – Samaritans
 - Note the stark contrast between Nicodemus and the unnamed Samaritan
 - Place of worship – Ch 2 – temple; here, Mt Gerizim
 - The notion of true worship – in spirit and truth
 - "Could this be the Messiah" (4:29)?
 - "the man really is the Saviour of the World" (4:42)
 - The mission of the Messiah (cf. prologue and 20:30-31) → in bringing something new, need to confront the old that is steeped in traditions; all related to how God is to be worshipped.

The Newness in John

- Chapters 2-4: The Cana cycle: Institutions of Judaism
 - Second sign at Cana: Healing the Official's son (4:43-54) – Gentile
 - "saviour of the World" in 4:42 now reaching to the gentile
 - 4:53 – he and his whole household believed
 - Cf. outline of Acts 1:8; Jews → gentiles; Romans 1:16-17

The Newness in John

- Chapters 2-4: The Cana cycle: Institutions of Judaism & the Newness Jesus brings
 - Ritual purification
 - The temple
 - A rabbi
 - A holy well
 - A new people

The Newness in John

- Chapters 5-10: The Festival cycle
 - Sabbath, Passover, Feast of Tabernacle, Dedication
 - Increased controversy

The Newness in John

- Chapters 5-10: The Festival cycle
 - 3rd sign (5:1-47): Healing of the Lame Man
 - 38 years
 - 5:4 – stirring of water – later scribal tradition
 - Controversy – the religious leaders missed the point of the sabbath
 - 5:18 – Lord of the Sabbath – claiming equality with God
 - 5:19-47 – longest discourse thus far in John

The Newness in John

- Chapters 5-10: The Festival cycle
 - 4th & 5th sign (6:1-71): Feeding the 5000; Walking on Water; Bread of Life discourse
 - Jewish passover
 - The eucharistic image of taking the bread, giving thanks and distributing to the people → anticipates the institution of the Lord's Supper
 - "new exodus" motif – Moses provided manna, Jesus provides bread of life
 - 6:14-15 – the crowd miss the true messianic significance of the sign

The Newness in John

- Chapters 5-10: The Festival cycle
 - 4th & 5th sign (6:1-71): Feeding the 5000; Walking on Water; Bread of Life discourse
 - "I AM" – theophany and self disclosure of Jesus,
 - 6:16-21 – Walking on water
 - "I AM" – theophany and self disclosure of Jesus,
 - 6:25-71 - Bread of Life discourse
 - Believe in Jesus – a choice!
 - The crowd request for a sign (6:30)
 - "I am the bread of life"
 - 6:48-51 – Eucharistic allusions
 - Many disciples deserted Jesus, one even to betray him – profound note of failure → deepening rejection of Messiah – cf. Prologue

The Newness in John

- Chapters 5-10: The Festival cycle
 - 7:1-52 → Festival of Tabernacles/Booths (staying in tents for a week)
 - Increasing unbelief & misunderstanding even among Jesus' own (7:5, 20, 25.)
 - Leading to attempts to arrest Jesus (7:30-32; 40-44)
 - Further unbelief – “A prophet does not come out of Galilee” (7:52)
 - (7:53-8:11 – later addition)

The Newness in John

- Chapters 5-10: The Festival cycle
 - 8:12-59 – Feast of Tabernacles
 - “I am the Light of the World” (8:12)
 - Cf prologue
 - Dispute over who Jesus is (8:21-59)

The Newness in John

- Chapters 5-10: The Festival cycle
 - 6th sign – healing of the man born blind (9:1-41)
 - Those who are blind can now see; those who can see are now blind
 - Controversy:
 - The disciples
 - The neighbours
 - The pharisees
 - The parents
 - “Who is the Son of Man....Lord I believe”
 - “Are we blind too?”

The Newness in John

- Chapters 5-10: The Festival cycle
 - Feast of Dedication (10:1-42) – rededication of the temple after the desecration by Antiochus Epihanes
 - I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14) vs the bad shepherds of the Pharisees (10:1)
 - Belief and unbelief
 - Attempts to arrest Jesus (10:39)

The Newness in John

- Chapters 11-12: The Climatic Sign
 - The 7th sign - The raising of Lazarus
 - Foreshadows Jesus' resurrection
 - I am the resurrection and the life
 - Increase in unbelief; plot to kill Jesus
 - Final events
 - Anointing of Jesus at Bethany
 - Triumphal Entry
 - Jesus' prediction of his passion
 - The rejection of the Messiah despite many signs (12:37-50)

The Newness in John

- Chapters 13-17: The Upper Room Discourse/Farewell Discourse
 - New messianic community

The Newness in John

- Chapters 18-20 : The Arrest and trial, death and resurrection
 - The passover lamb

The Newness in John

- Chapters 21: Restoration
 - Come, let us have breakfast with Jesus
 - Hope, restoration, sending

Theological Themes

- Jesus as the Word, the Lamb of God and the Son of God
 - 1:1; 1:14; 1:29, 36
- Jesus as both divine and human
 - Divine: 1:1; 8:58; 12:41; 17:5; 20:28
 - Human: 4:6-7; 11:33-35; 19:28
- Jesus sent by the Father
 - 3:17, 35-36; 5:19-26; 6:40; 8:35-36; 14:13; 17:1

Theological Themes

- Salvation for All Humanity
 - Salvation: 3:16-17; 6:57; 10:10; 14:6; 17:2
 - Jesus as Lamb of God – substitutionary role of sacrificial lamb – 1:29, 36.
 - Jesus death as sacrificial and vicarious in bread of life and good shepherd passages (6:51; 10:15-18)

Theological Themes

- The Sending of the Holy Spirit
 - Farewell discourse
 - Chs 14-16
 - Abiding presence in believers (14:17)
 - Teaching the disciples (16:7)
 - Guiding the disciples (16:13)
 - Declaring things to come (16:13)

Theological Themes

- Fulfillment of Typology Inherent in Jewish Feasts
 - Especially Chapters 5-10
 - Passover/Unleavened bread (6:4) → Jesus is the bread of life; Lamb of God
 - Tabernacles (7:2) → Jesus is the light of the world, as source of living waters flowing from believers, and made his dwelling among us (1:14; 7:38-39; 8:12; 9:5) – literally, Jesus pitched his tent!

Theological Themes

- Fulfillment of Typology Inherent in Jewish Feasts
 - Prediction that temple will be destroyed and rebuilt in 3 days (2:19-21)
 - Conversation with Samaritan woman – sacred space for worship