

# John among the gospels

Exploring the Gospel of John

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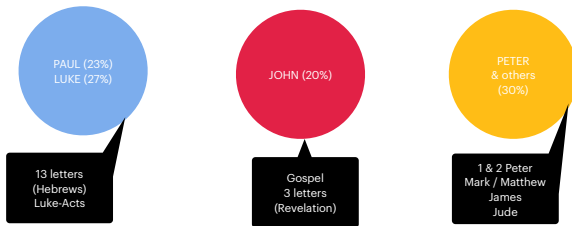
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## The gospel according to Saint John

Major 'voices' in New Testament



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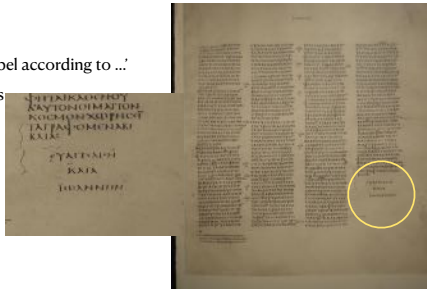
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## The Gospel according to John

John among the gospels

- There is only 'one gospel'
- Each NT Gospel is 'the gospel according to ...'
- ❖ Matthew 18,345 words
- ❖ Mark 11,304 words
- ❖ Luke 19,482 words
- ❖ John 15,635 words



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## The Gospel according to John

Overview

- Prologue 1:1-18
- John the Baptist & call of the disciples 1:(6-8) 19-51
- Cana-Jerusalem-Samaria-Cana 2 - 4
- Jerusalem 5
- Galilee (by the lake) 6
- Jerusalem (Sukkoth) then retire to Samaria 7 - 10

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## The Gospel according to John

Overview

- Jerusalem (Lazarus) 11
- Jerusalem (Holy Week) 12
- Jerusalem (Last Supper) 13
- Jerusalem (Farewell Discourse) 14 - 17
- Jerusalem (Passion) 18 - 19
- Jerusalem (Easter appearances) 20
- Galilee lakeside (Epilogue) 21

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## The Synoptic story line

A very different framework

Narrative Segment	Matthew	Mark	Luke
1 Jesus' background	1:1-4:11	1:1-13	1:1-4:13
2 Jesus teaches in Galilee	4:12-9:17	1:14-3:19	4:14-7:10
2a Jesus' Sermon	5:1-7:27		6:20-48
3 Jesus' prophetic mission	9:18-12:50	3:19-5:5	7:11-50
4 Jesus uses parables	12:46-13:52	3:31-4:34	8:1-21
5 Who is Jesus?	13:53-18:25	4:35-9:50	8:22-9:50
6 Jesus journeys to Judea	19:1-20:34	10:1-52	9:51-19:27
7 Jesus at Jerusalem	21:1-25:46	11:1-13:37	19:28-21:38
8 Jesus' final days	26:1-27:66	14:1-15:47	22:1-25:50
9 Resurrection reports	28:1-20	16:1-8 (9-20)	24:1-53

Source: Markon Smith, Synoptic Gospels Primer <https://www.markon.com.au/synoptic-gospels-primer/>

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## The Gospel according to John

Major narrative divergences

- No infancy traditions
- Call of disciples at baptism site (not in Galilee)
- Cana is major Galilean ministry location (not Capernaum, Bethsaida, etc)
- Temple incident at beginning of Jesus' ministry
- Raising of Lazarus
- Fewer miracles and they are understood as 'signs' not 'deeds of power'
- No exorcisms at all
- Last Supper features footwashing not bread and cup
- After Easter commissioning of disciples for ministry

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## The Gospel according to John

Lengthy discourses

- Nicodemus 3
- Samaritan woman at the well 4
- Authority of the Son of God 5
- Bread from heaven 6
- Light of the world 8
- The good shepherd 10
- Farewell Discourse 14 - 17

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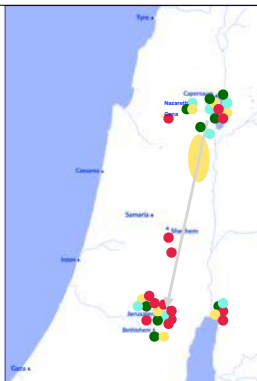


### Synoptic Gospels

Bethlehem birth  
Nazareth  
Baptism by John  
Call of disciples  
Galilee ministry  
Journey to Jerusalem  
Holy Week, Trial & Death  
Easter appearances

### Gospel of John

Baptism by John (1)  
Call of disciples (2)  
Cana (2 & 4)  
Temple incident (2)  
Nicodemus (3)  
Woman at well in Samaria (4)  
Healing at pool of Bethesda (5)  
Bread from heaven (lakeside) (6)  
Festival of Booths (7-10)  
Retreat to Ephraim (10)  
Lazarus (11)  
Holy Week, Trial & Death (12-19)  
Easter appearances (20)  
Epilogue (lakeside) (21)



### Mapping Jesus

Gospel footprints



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## The Gospel according to John

Compared with the Synoptic Tradition

- |                    | Synoptic Gospels           | Gospel of John                    |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • <b>Location</b>  | Galilee prior to Holy Week | Jerusalem and the south dominates |
| • <b>Towns</b>     | Capernaum, Nazareth, Jer   | Jerusalem, Cana, lakeside         |
| • <b>Religion</b>  | Sabbath, synagogues        | Festivals in the temple           |
| • <b>Opponents</b> | Scribes, Pharisees, Herod  | "the Jews" & (less so) Pharisees  |
| • <b>Passover</b>  | only 1                     | 3 mentioned                       |
| • <b>Duration</b>  | 12-18 months (?)           | 2-3 years (?)                     |

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## The Gospel according to John

Compared with the Synoptic Tradition

	Synoptic Gospels	Gospel of John
• <b>Origins</b>	Infancy narratives	<i>Logos hymn</i>
• <b>Birthplace</b>	Bethlehem	<i>Galilee (not Bethlehem)</i>
• <b>Baptism</b>	Described	<i>Assumed</i>
• <b>Crisis</b>	Temptations	<i>Gethsemane prayer</i>
• <b>Identity</b>	like Moses/Elijah	<i>divine revealer of truth</i>
• <b>Audience</b>	poor & powerless	<i>those in darkness &amp; sin (ignorance)</i>

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## The Gospel according to John

Compared with the Synoptic Tradition

	Synoptic Gospels	Gospel of John
• <b>Title</b>	son of Man	<i>Son of God, the Son, Son of the Father</i>
• <b>Speech</b>	parables & aphorisms	<i>complex long discourses</i>
• <b>Topic</b>	look, the kingdom's here	<i>Jesus, the Son</i>
• <b>Glorified</b>	Transfiguration	<i>Crucifixion ('the hour')</i>
• <b>Last Supper</b>	Bread & wine	<i>Foot washing (cf. ch 6 Bread of Heaven)</i>
• <b>Trial</b>	silent Jesus	<i>discussion with Pilate</i>

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## The Gospel according to John

Compared with the Synoptic Tradition

	Synoptic Gospels	Gospel of John
• <b>Message</b>	kingdom of God	<i>knowledge, belief, eternal life</i>
• <b>Healing miracles</b>	deeds of power ( <i>dynamis</i> )	<i>signs (semeia)</i>
• <b>Exorcisms</b>	common	<i>not one example</i>
• <b>Know this</b>	judgment, Eschaton	<i>believe in me, receive the Spirit</i>
• <b>Death</b>	crucified with 2 others	<i>crucified alone</i>
• <b>At the cross</b>	women watching	<i>Mary &amp; Beloved Disciple</i>
• <b>Easter</b>	Peter, the Eleven	<i>Magdalene, Thomas</i>
• <b>Spirit</b>	Galilee / Pentecost	<i>Easter night</i>

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## The Gospel according to John

Compared with the Synoptic Tradition

	Synoptic Gospels	Gospel of John
• <b>Disciples</b>	Peter, James & John	Andrew, Phillip, Nathanel, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Lazarus, the Beloved Disciple, Thomas, Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene

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## The Gospel according to John

Formation of a distinctive Jesus story

Raymond E. Brown suggested the following process:

- Early traditional collections about Jesus, including a collection of miracles ('signs') and a passion narrative (Mark?)
- Developed into typical Johannine patterns through preaching and teaching over an extended period of time (*and within the particular context of exclusion from Jewish life*)
- Arranged into a consecutive document by one leader in that community
- Some secondary expansion, perhaps by same person?
- Final redaction by a disciple of the author adds the Temple incident in ch 2, the Eucharistic words in ch 6 and the Lazarus material in chs 11–12.

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## The Gospel according to John

### Overview

The Gospel of John provides us with a distinctive:

- *Story about Jesus* (don't mortgage truth to historicity)
- *Language about Jesus* (devotional Christology)
- *Understanding of Jesus* (emphasis on divinity of Jesus)
- *Context* (painful separation from the synagogues)
- *Historical insight* (early Christianity rather than historical Jesus)

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## The Gospel according to John

### Why John?

First ending:

*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 20:30–31 NRSV)

Second ending:

*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.*

(John 21:24–25 NRSV)

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