

Men's Sunday School Class Introduction and Outline for the Gospel of John

Introduction

1 - Who was John?

- Brother of James One of possibly three sets of brothers (Peter and Andrew, James and John, Matthew and James the less (sons of Alphaeus).

- Son of Zebedee – He was the younger of two sons of Zebedee who was a successful (net) fisherman on the Sea of Galilee – the Sea of Gennesareth (13 miles long and 8 miles wide). He had his own boats and hired servants who worked in the fishery.

- He was a fisherman, and coworker with Simon Peter the fisherman and his brother Andrew. (John 21:1-3) tells us that Jesus called at least six fishermen. They included Peter, Andrew, James, John, Thomas and Nathaniel (Bartholomew).

- He was the son of Salome (Mark 15:40 and Matthew 27:56) who contributed financially to Jesus' ministry (Matthew 27:55-56). Salome may have been the sister of Mary mother of Jesus (John 19:25). If this is true, John would have been the cousin of Jesus.

- He was the ambitious son of an ambitious mother.

20Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. 21"What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." (Matthew 20:20-21)

- John Lived in Galilee, perhaps in Capernium or Bethsaida, two of the fishing villages on the shore of Sea of Galilee.

- He was a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35-40) along with Andrew, the brother of Peter.

- With Peter and his brother, James, he was one of the three closest to Jesus. Matt. 17:1, Mark 5:37, 13:3, 14:33.

- He was a man of fiery temperament.

Jesus named James and John "Boanerges", "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 13:7).
"Call down fire from heaven on the Samaritan village of poor hospitality?" (Luke 9:54)
"Prevent person calling out demons, who is not one of us?" (Luke 9:49)
Stated Ready to face death for Jesus. (Matthew 20)

- He was a Jew and a Palestinian - a Galilean.

- He was an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus. He writes as one who was there:

Ch 2:6 6 stones water pots

Ch 6:9 Barley loaves

Ch 6:19 men rowed between 3 & 4 miles

Ch 12:3 He remembers that the scent of the perfume "Filled the house" in Bethany

Ch 19:23 Four Roman soldiers gambled over the cloak

Ch 19:39 he knows the exact weight of myrrh & aloes used to prepare Jesus' body

- He was a Disciple and then Apostle of Jesus
- He was among the earliest disciples "called to follow Jesus".
- He walked the roads of Galilee, Judea and Samaria with Jesus. He slept close to him, ate with him, watched him, talked with him, listened to him, observed him, touched him, and loved him.
- In the lists of the Twelve, John always appears among the first four, and appears to have been one of the inner circle of three, as it appears from the story of Jairus daughter (Mark 5:37), the Transfiguration (Mat 17:1) and the agony of Gethsemane (Mat 26:37).
- He and Peter were sent into Jerusalem (Luke 22:8) to make the preparations for the Last Supper.
- He was most likely "The beloved disciple", the one who leaned on Jesus' breast during the Last Supper.
- From the context of John 18:5, he was likely the second disciple with Peter in the courtyard of the Palace of the High Priest during the Trial of Jesus.
- He alone remained faithful at the foot of the cross with Mary and the "pious women".
- He accepted the last legacy of Jesus – the care of his mother, Mary. John 19:25-27.
- He was the first to believe in Christ's Resurrection at the Tomb. John 20:2-10
- He first recognized the Lord at the Sea of Tiberius. John 21:7
- He was, according to Acts 1:18, one of the small group who waited in Jerusalem after Christ's Ascension.
- After the resurrection, a leader in the Jerusalem church. Acts 1:13, 3:1-11, 4:13-21, 8:14, Gal 2:9.
- He appears in the company of Peter: when the two went up to the Temple to pray and healed there the lame man (Acts 3:1). He was thrown into prison with Peter (Acts 4:3) when they were sent to Samaria to investigate the progress of the Gospel there and bestow on newly baptized the Spirit by the 'laying on of hands' (Acts 8:14).
- He is mentioned by Paul in the New Testament epistle to the Galatians; 2:9, where Paul states that when he visited Jerusalem, John together with Cephas (Peter) were reputed to be pillars of the mother Church.
- He was an overseer of the churches in the region surrounding Ephesus during the last decades of his life.
- He was banished to the Island of Patmos toward the end of his life. It was there that he received the revelation, recorded on the Book of Revelation (circa AD 94-96).
- According to tradition, John died in Ephesus about the year 104 A.D. over 100 years old. – Scholars think he was the only Apostle not to die a martyr and the last Apostle to die.

- His evangelical symbol is the Eagle, apparently because of the 'high flying' introductory ideas of his Gospel and because of the sky-dwelling visions' of his Revelation.

2 - Who wrote the Gospel of John?

- Like the other three Gospels, the Gospel of John does not name its author.
- John is never mentioned in the Gospel. Typical of something he might have written.
- The Gospel does mention "The disciple whom Jesus Loved".
- The Gospel does mention "The Witness, who saw these things."

3 - The Gospel of John was written where? According to church tradition it was written in Ephesus.

4 – The Gospel of John was written when?

- The Gospel does not say.
- Perhaps AD 80-90
- Peter died in AD 67-68 giving rumor that John would live to see second coming time to develop. If the fall of Jerusalem occurred in AD 70, enough time would have passed to no longer be an issue with readers of John's Gospel.
- The P52 Gospel fragment found in a remote Egypt site in early 1900s contained a few verses of John 18 and it dated from about AD 130. It would have taken more than 30 - 40 +- years for that writing to have circulated that far from Ephesus.

5 - Why was the Gospel Written?

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
(John 20: 30-31 – 30)

- It was written to be a Gospel of Apologetics (for unbelievers):
 - 1 – Jesus is the Christ
 - 2 – Jesus is the Son of God
- It was written to be a Gospel of Evangelism (for unbelievers):
 - 3 – If you will believe, you will have life in his name

6 - What does John Accomplish in his Gospel?

John presents Jesus as the eternal Word, the Messiah and the Son of God who, through his death and resurrection brings the gift of salvation to mankind. People respond by either accepting or rejecting to salvation that comes only through believing in him.

7 - Comparison of John to the other (Synoptic) Gospels

Synoptic – to see together

From Harmony of the Gospels

The synoptic (from Greek meaning to see together) Gospels (Matthew, Mark & Luke) follow a mixture of narrative history and a discourse of Jesus. John has only a very small bit of narrative, but much more discourse than Matthew, Mark or Luke

The Gospel of John has:

- No narrative parables
- No eschatological discourses
- No accounts of Jesus exorcising demons
- No accounts of Jesus healing lepers
- No list of the twelve apostles
- No formal institution of the Lord's Supper.
- No narrative of Jesus' birth
- No narrative of Jesus' Baptism
- No narrative of Jesus' transfiguration
- No narrative of Jesus' agony in Gethsemane
- No narrative of Jesus' Ascension

More than 90% of John's Gospel is material not found in the Synoptic Gospels

- Prologue describing Christ's pre-existence and incarnation (1:1-18)
- Jesus' early ministry in Judea and Samaria (Ch 2-3)
- His first miracle (2:1-11)
- His dialogue with Nicodemus (3:1-21)
- His encounter with a Samaritan Woman (4:5-42)
- His healing of a lame man (5:1-15)
- His Healing of a blind man (9:1-41)
- His bread of life discourse (6:22-71)
- His claim to be the living water (7:37-38)
- His taking for himself the name of God (8:24)
- His discourse presenting himself as the Good Shepherd (10:1-39)
- The resurrection of Lazarus (11:1-46)
- The washing of the disciples' feet (13:1-15)
- The Upper Room discourse (Ch 13-16)
- Jesus' High and Priestly Prayer (Ch 17)
- The miraculous catch of fish (21:1-6)
- Jesus' recommissioning of Peter and prediction of his martyrdom (21:15-19)
- More teaching about the Holy Spirit than in any of the Synoptic Gospels.

There are differences in John's Gospel and the synoptic gospels, but nothing in John contradicts the synoptic gospels, or vice versa.

All four present Jesus as

- Son of Man
- Israel's Messiah (Mark 2:10, John 1:51),
- Son of God
- God in Human Flesh (Mark 1:1 John 1:34)
- The savior who came to "Save His people from their sins" (Mat 1:21 John 3:16)
- One who died a sacrificial death on the cross and rose from the dead.

The four gospels make up an interlocking tradition. They supplement and complete each other.

8 - Interesting:

In Mark 14:58 and Mark 15:29 Jesus' enemies accuse him of having claimed he would destroy the Temple, but do not record the basis for that accusation. See John 2:19 for the basis of the accusation.

The Synoptic Gospels do not explain why the Jews had to bring Jesus before Pilate. John explains that the Romans had withheld from them the right of Capital Punishment (John 18:31)

The Synoptic Gospels place Peter in the High Priest's courtyard Mat 25:58, Mark 14:54 Luke 22:54-55). John explains how he gained access John 18:15-16)

The call of Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John (Mat 4:18-22) becomes more understandable in light of John 1:35-42, which reveals that they had already spent time with Jesus.

The synoptic Gospels record that immediately after feeding the 5,000 that Jesus sent the crowds away (Mat 14:22, Mark 6:45). John reveals why He did that. They intended to try to make him King (John 6:15).

From John's Gospel, it is evident that when the Sanhedrin met on the Wednesday of Passion Week to plot Jesus' arrest (Mark 14:1-2) they were merely implementing a decision made earlier after the raising of Lazarus (John 11:47-53)

In John 1:40 Andrew is introduced as Simon Peter's brother, although Simon Peter has not yet been introduced. John surely believed everyone would already know Peter.

In John 3:24 John tells the reader that "John [the Baptist] had not yet been thrown into prison", assuming they knew he would eventually be. Yet John's Gospel never mentions John the Baptist's imprisonment. It is only recorded in the Synoptic Gospels (Mat 4:12, 14:3, Mark 6:17, Luke 4:24).

John notes that "Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country" (John 4:44) but that statement is not recorded in his Gospel. It is in the Synoptics (Mat 13:57, Mark 3:14-19, Luke 6:13-16)

John 6:67, 70-71 refers to the twelve apostles, yet he does not record who they are. The record of who Jesus actually selected as Apostles is provided by the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:14-19, Luke 6:13-16)

From the way they are introduced, (John 11:1) John evidently expects his readers to know who the sisters Martha and Mary are, although he had not previously referred to them. They are, however, mentioned in Luke's Gospel (10:38-42). In that same connection, John notes that Mary was the one who anointed the Lord's feet (11:2). He would not tell the story until chapter 12, but assumed his readers would know the story from the Synoptic Gospel accounts (Mat 26:6-13. Mark 14:3-9).

9 – Outlines for the Gospel

By John McArthur:

Incarnation of the Son of God 1:1-18
Presentation of the Son of God 1:19 – 4:54
Opposition to the Son of God 5:1 – 12:50
Preparation of the Disciples by the Son of God 13:1 – 17:26
Execution of the Son of God 18:1 – 19:37
Resurrection of the Son of God 19:38 – 21:23
Conclusion 21:24-25

By American Standard Bible:

Prologue
Book of Signs
Book of Glory
Conclusion

In the New International Version Commentary Outline:

Prologue 1:1-18
Christ's ministry in the world 1:19 -12:50
Christ's ministry to His own 13:1 – 17:26
The sufferings and the glory 18:1 – 20:31
Epilogue 21:1-25