

An Introduction to John's Gospel

1. Key "facts"

Date written: c. 80-85 AD?

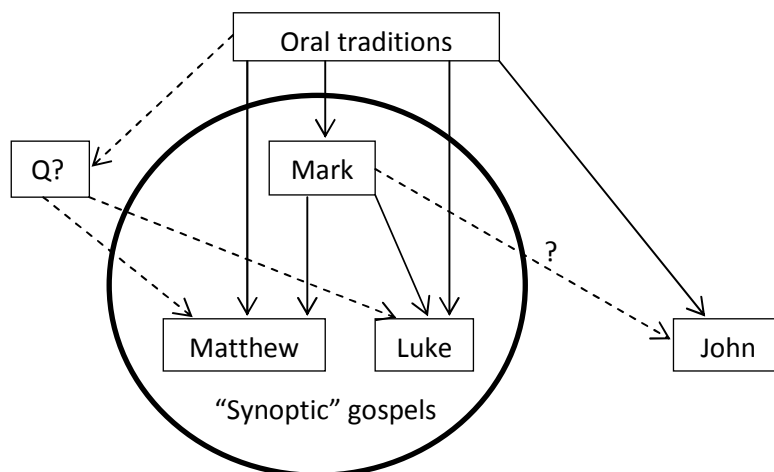
Author: The Beloved Disciple? (21:20, 24) = John, son of Zebedee?

Place written: Ephesus?

Purpose: '... these [miraculous signs] are written that you may believe [OR continue to believe] that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God [OR that the Christ, the Son of God, is Jesus], and that by believing you may have life in his name.' (20:31)

2. John and the other gospels

One plausible scenario



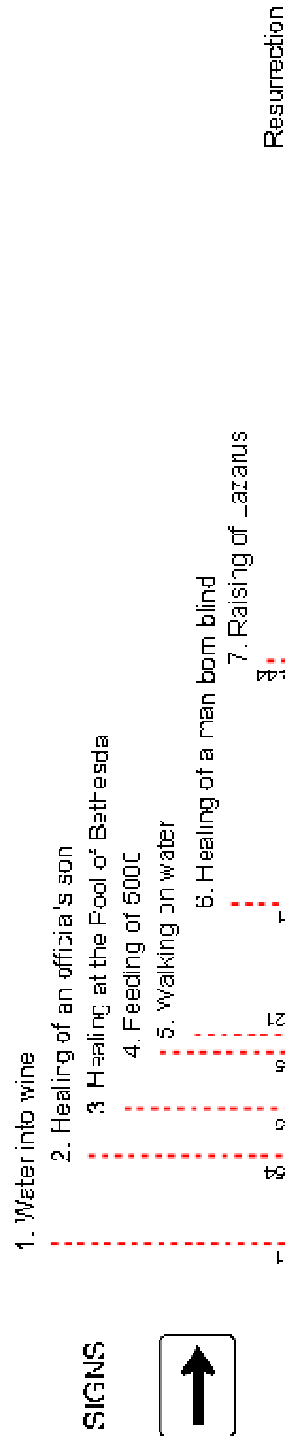
Synoptics

Narrative parables of the kingdom
 The kingdom
 The Lord's Supper
 Visit to Jerusalem only at end
 Transfiguration
 Exorcisms
 Jesus' baptism
 X
 X
 X

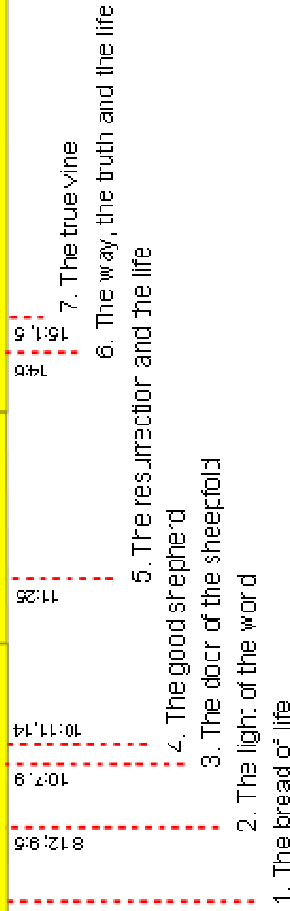
John


Extended discourses, often about Jesus' identity
 Eternal life
 Discourse on Jesus' body and blood; footwashing
 Visits to Jerusalem during ministry
 X
 X
 Assumed?
 Raising of Lazarus (and other miracles – 'signs')
 Nicodemus, Samaritan woman and others
 The Holy Spirit as Paraclete / Counsellor

JOHN AT A GLANCE



Prologue 1:1-18	The Book of Signs 1:19 - 10:42 Early ministry 1:19 - 4:54 Rising opposition 5:1 - 8:11 Radical confrontation 8:12 - 10:42	Bridge - The Raising of Lazarus 11 - 12	The Book of Glory 13 - 20 Upper Room discourse 13 - 17 The Passion 18 - 19 The Resurrection 20	Epilogue 21
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	ENCOUNTERS	John the Baptist First disciples Nicodemus Samaritan woman	Man at pool "The Jews" Man born blind	Mary and Martha Mary and Martha Man born blind	The disciples Peter and Paul	Mary Magdalene Thomas Peter and John
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Sources: Carson, P. A., *The Gospel According to John*, (IVP); Burridge, Richard A., *Four Gospels, One Jesus?*, (SPCK)

3. Key Themes

KEY WORDS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL



4. Stylistic features

- Uniform style between speech and narrative (making it difficult sometimes to know where one ends and the other begins, e.g. John 3:16)

- Repeated themes / vocabulary, especially opposites / dualisms
 - Life / death
 - From above / from below
 - Light / dark
 - Truth / lie
 - Sight / blindness

- Symbolism
 - Bread and wine = body and blood
 - Being born / born again
 - Water = Holy Spirit

- Irony / double meaning
 - 'You do not realise that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.' (Caiaphas at 11:50)
 - 'But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.' (Jesus at 12:33)

5. What do we get from John? (see especially D.A. Carson)

- 1) 'Stereoscopic vision'
 - Extra info (e.g. first disciples, early visits to Jerusalem, etc.)

- 2) Who Jesus is
 - N.B. Lamb of God, Word, I am – "high" Christology
 - His relationship with the Father – dependence, obedience, etc.

- 3) Nature of salvation – cross and resurrection
 - Death of shepherd for the sheep
 - Sacrifice of one man for the nation
 - Victory of the lamb of God
 - Etc.

4) Eschatology

- We can possess eternal life even now (“realised” eschatology)
- Jesus’ “hour”

5) Holy Spirit

- The paraclete / counsellor
- Spirit of truth
- Given by Jesus and the Father – together with (2) is basis for Trinitarian theology

6) Use of OT allusions

- Temple
- Vine
- Tabernacle
- Bronze snake
- Passover

7) Misunderstanding/irony

8) People of God – what it means to be the church (see esp. chs 13-17)

- Witness, suffering, prayer, love, unity, etc.

9) Sacraments

- baptism and Eucharist – water, bread, wine

10) Signs / election / faith

6. Further reading

For daily study:

- Burridge, Richard, *John: A Devotional Commentary for Study and Preaching (People's Bible Commentaries)*, (BRF) – Useful for personal study
- Wright, Tom, *John for Everyone, vols 1 and 2*, (SPCK)

Going a bit deeper:

- Kruse, Colin, *John (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)*, (IVP)
- Milne, Bruce, *The Message of John (The Bible Speaks Today series)*, (IVP)

And deeper still ... :

- Carson, D.A., *The Gospel According to John*, (IVP) – Weighty commentary

On the four gospels and how they complement each other:

- Burridge, Richard A., *Four Gospels One Jesus?*, (SPCK)

A brief intro to each book of the Bible:

- Fee, Gordon & Stuart, Douglas, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*, (Zondervan)

