



Getting the Big Picture of the Bible: The Gospel of John

Pastor Michael Wallace
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The Ethiopian *Abba Garima III* is the earliest reliably dated gospel book which has survived with intact portraits of all four evangelists and decorated canon tables. It is dated by radiocarbon testing to AD 330-650, based on three samples. At left is one of the earliest visual representations of John the evangelist from *Abba Garima III*.

Outline of today's class

- Relationship with the Synoptics
- Outline
- Major Motifs
- I am statements
- Incipient Trinitarianism
- Raising of Lazarus



Authorship/ Audience for the Gospels

<u>Gospel</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Dating</u>
“Mark”	Jew living in Rome	Gentiles	65-75 CE, most likely between 68-73
“Matthew”	Jew living in Antioch	Jews	80-90 CE, give or take a decade
“Luke”	Gentile (likely not from Palestine)	Gentiles	85 CE, give or take five to ten years
“John”	Jew living in Ephesus (or Syria)	Unclear	80-110 CE, most likely btwn 100-110

Relationship with the Synoptics

“John is the fourth gospel because of its difference from the other three. While it is true that all four gospels are distinctive and tell the same story in different ways, the distance separating John from the others is considerable. Over again this text, Matthew, Mark, and Luke for a coherent group of ‘synoptic’ gospels. The fourfold gospel has a three-plus-one structure...” (Watson, 86)

“one of the reasons John seems so different is because *Matthew, Mark, and Luke are so similar* to each other... John is largely independent of the Synoptics...

Although clearly a hyperbole, John 21:25 nevertheless encapsulates an important truth: Jesus did so many things that, had four writers all written of him independently, their Gospels might all have produced books as different from each other as John is from the Synoptics.” (Blomberg, 178)



Relationship with the Synoptics

Material shared with the other Gospels

- Attention to the ministry of John the Baptist
- Jesus' public activity begins in Galilee
- Miracle stories
 - The feeding of the five thousand
 - Walking on the water
 - He gives sight to a blind man
 - He raises a dead person to life
 - He heals a paralytic
- Sabbath controversies with the Jews
- Jesus' friendship with Mary and Martha
- Numerous details surrounding the Passion



Relationship with the Synoptics

Much that is central to all three Synoptics is entirely absent in John:

- Jesus' baptism
- The calling of the Twelve
- The exorcisms
- The Transfiguration
- The parables
- The Institution of the Last Supper

(Blomberg, 177)



Relationship with the Synoptics

Material that is completely unique to John

- Prologue, emphasizing pre-existence of Christ (as *logos*)
- The Holy Spirit as *parakletos*, comforter
- First miracle of turning water in to wine
- Raising of Lazarus
- Jesus speaks in long speeches or has long conversations
 - Nicodemus
 - Samaritan woman at the well
- Washing the Disciples' feet
- The "High Priestly" Prayer
- Resurrection appearance to "doubting Thomas"



General Outline of John

1:1-18	Prologue
1:19-12:50	Part One: The Book of Signs: The Word reveals himself to the world and to his own, but they do not accept him.
13:1-20:31	Part Two: The Book of Glory: To those who accept him, the Word shows his glory by returning to the Father in death, resurrection, and ascension. Fully glorified, he communicates the Spirit of life.
21:1-15	Epilogue: Galilean resurrection appearances; second conclusion.

- **Introductory Testimony (1:1-51)**
 - Prologue (1:1-18)
 - The Testimony of John and the First Disciples (1:19-51)
- **The Testimony of Signs and Discourses (2:1—11:57)**
 - **Jesus and Jewish Institutions (2:1—4:54)**
 - Water into Wine—A New Joy (2:1-11)
 - Temple Cleansing—A New Temple (2:12-25)
 - Jesus, Nicodemus, and the Baptist—A New Birth (3:1-36)
 - Jesus, the Samaritan Woman, and the Official's Son—A New Universalism (4:1-54)
 - **Jesus and Jewish Festivals (5:1—10:42)**
 - Healing the Paralytic and Imitating the Father (5:1-47)
 - The True Passover: The Bread of Life (6:1-71)
 - The True Tabernacles: Living Water and Light of the World (7:1-9:41)
 - Good Shepherd and Oneness with the Father (10:1-42)
 - **Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life (11:1-57)**

- The Testimony of Death and Resurrection (12:1—20:31)
 - Actions in Preparation for Death (12:1-50)
 - Anointing in Bethany (12:1-11)
 - Entry into Jerusalem (12:12-50)
 - Teaching in Preparation for Death (13:1—17:26)
 - Servant Ministry vs. Betrayal (13:1-30)
 - Farewell Discourse (13:31-16:33)
 - High-Priestly Prayer (17:1-26)
 - Events Surrounding the Death Itself (18:1-20:31)
 - Arrest, Trials, and Crucifixion (18:1-19:42)
 - Resurrection (20:1-29)
 - Purpose of the Gospel (20:30-31)
 - Concluding Testimony (21:1-25)
 - The Reinstatement of the Disciples (21:1-23)
 - Epilogue (21:24-25)

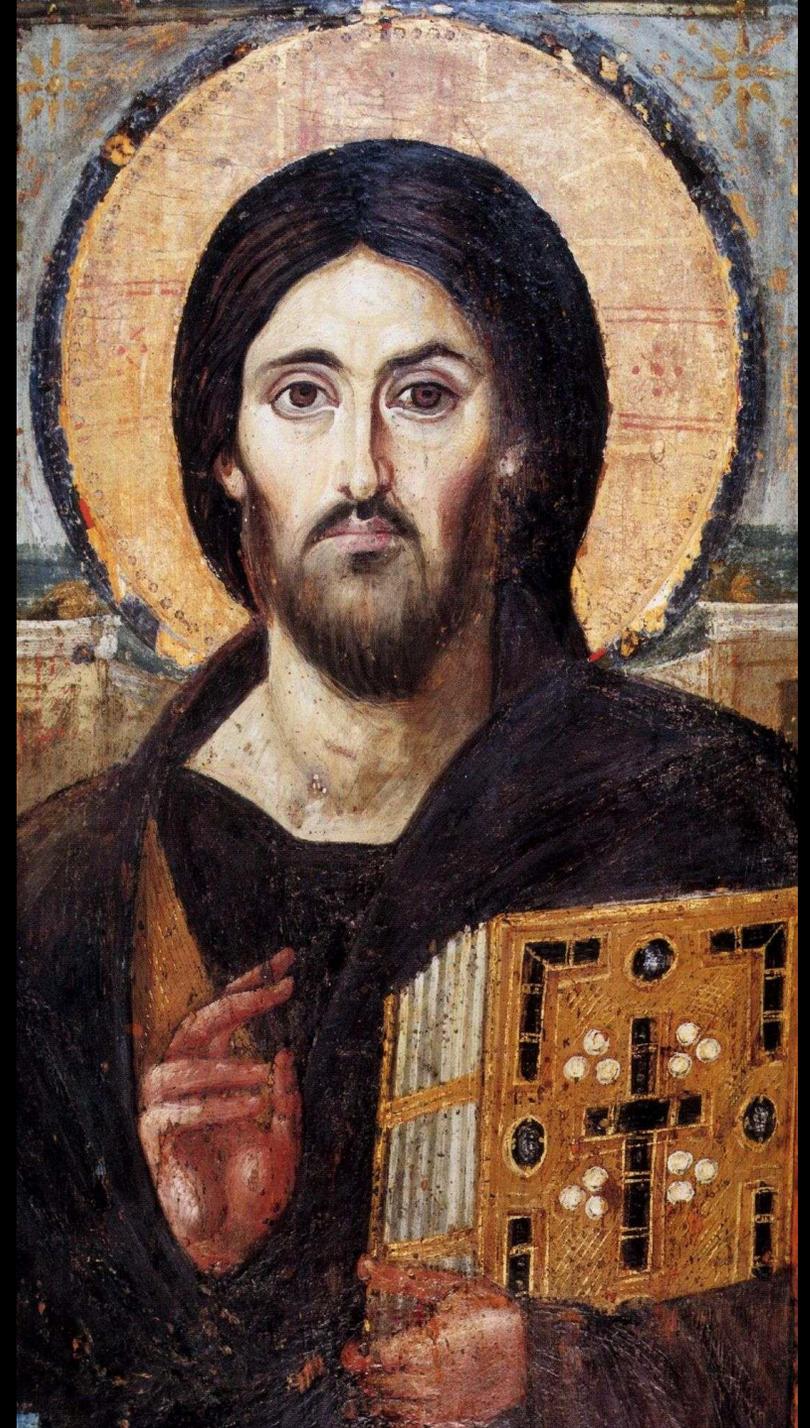
(Blomberg, 185-186)

Prologue of John

See John 1:1-18

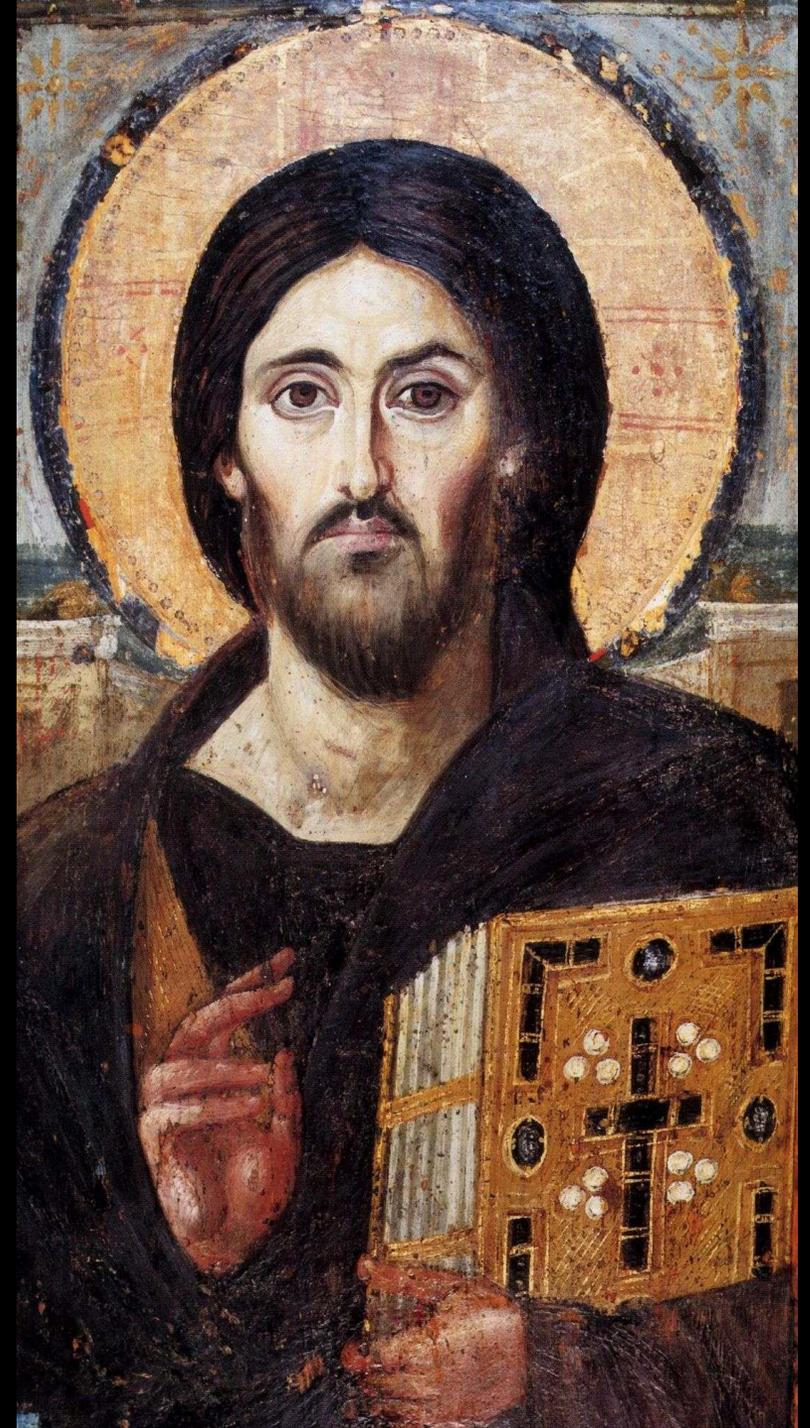
- Rather than starting with baptism or birth, John goes back to the beginning (even before it!)
- λόγος-Jesus is the Divine Word
- Pre-existent Christ (pre-incarnation or eternal incarnation)
- Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν

The oldest known icon of Christ Pantocrator – Saint Catherine's Monastery. The halo is a representation of the divine Logos of Christ, and the two different facial expressions on either side emphasize Christ's dual nature as both divine and human.



Word & Scripture the Gospel

- Jn 5:39—Jesus talking to “the Jews”
 - “You search the scriptures [γραφάς] because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf.
- Jn 6:68-69
 - Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life [ῥήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου]. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”
- Jn 8:31
 - Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word [λόγῳ], you are truly my disciples;



Jesus' "I am" statements

In the Greek, Jesus says "Εγώ εἰμι," which may remind listeners of what YHWH said back in LXX Exodus 3, "καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωυσῆν ἐγώ εἰμι"

"I am the bread of life" (6.35)

"I am the light of the world" (8.12)

"I am the gate" (10.7)

"I am the good shepherd" (10.11)

"I am the resurrection and the life" (11.25)

"I am the way and the truth and the life" (14.6)

"I am the vine" (15.5)

"before Abraham was, I am" (8.58) (not 'I was'!)

πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι ἐγώ εἰμι



Incipient Trinitarianism

[Jesus] insists that he is “in the Father” and “the Father is in” him (14:11); when he leaves, the Spirit will replace him as “another advocate” performing many of the identical roles he played (v. 16). Jesus’ high-priestly prayer speaks of the Father’s and Son’s reciprocal glorification (17:1-5). Yet, Father, Son, and Spirit are not entirely interchangeable in function or status. John 14:28 preserves a classic “subordinationist” strain, with Jesus’ declaration, “the Father is greater than I.”

(Blomberg, 189-190)



Ἡ ἙΓΓΕΡΣΙΣ ΤῸ ΛΑΖΑΡΟΥ



The raising
of Lazarus
John 11

Other important passages



Non-original passages

Gloss on healing at the pool (Jn 5:4)

Pericope de adultera (Jn 7:53—8:11)

Strong duality

Light/darkness, life/death, God/ devil, Israelite / Jews

Jews as “Children of the devil” (see 8:44)

Son of God—“most frequent Christological designation in John ... which portrays Jesus as God’s unique son” (JANT 176) –Contrast with usage in the synoptic gospels

Holy Spirit See 20:22-23

Possible first ending See 20:30-31

Takeaways from today

- The fourfold gospel has a three-plus-one structure
- John's account is very different from others
- More theologized
- Jesus' has lengthier conversations and speaks in loftier terms
- Jesus=YHWH
- Strong duality
- Jesus hypostatic union emphasized

Next: Conclusions on the Gospels, then two weeks on Revelation





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Gracias

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Merci

Thank you

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