

# STUDY MATERIALS: The New Testament: The Gospel of St. John 1:1 - 4:29

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## Syllabus

### I) General Purpose:

To inculcate a thorough knowledge of the content and structure of John's Gospel and to familiarize the student with the diverse ways in which contemporary scholarship views the Gospel.

### II) Specific Objectives:

1. to help the student acquire a full understanding of the content and structure of John.
2. to heighten the student's skills in exegesis and in the application of the Gospel's message.

3. to expand that student's knowledge of the cultural milieu out of which this Gospel grew.

### **III) Methodology:**

This course will take a predominantly exegetical approach to the study of the Fourth Gospel. This will be done without prejudice to other aspects of Gospel study, viz., theology, questions of authorship, style etc.

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## **Course Outline**

### **I. THE PROLOGUE: John 1:1-18**

An introduction to the themes of the gospel and summary of the life and mission of the Incarnate Word.

### **II. PART ONE: THE BOOK OF SIGNS: John 1:19-12:50**

"The Light Shines in the Darkness" -- Faith and Unbelief: The Word reveals himself to the world and to his own, but they will not accept him.

#### **A. The New Creation, 1:19-2:11**

1. The Witness of John the Baptist, 1:19-34.
2. The Disciples of the Baptist become disciples of Jesus, 1:35-51.
3. The Witness of the Disciples: The First Sign, 2:1-11

#### **B. The New Life in Signs, 2:12-4:54**

The replacement of Old Testament institutions.

1. The New Temple: The Resurrected Christ, 2:12-25.
2. The New birth: Baptism, 3:1-36.
  - a. Nicodemus, 3:1-21.
  - b. The Baptism of John and Baptism of Christ, 3:22-26.

c. The Water of Life, 4:1-42.

d. The Second Sign, 4:43-54.

C. The Light and the Darkness, 5:1-10:42

The Replacement of Old Testament Feasts.

1. Jesus and the Sabbath: 5:1-47.

a. The Third Sign, 5:1-15

b. Jesus does the works of the Father, 5:16-47.

2. The Passover: Jesus is the Bread of Life, 6:1-71.

a. The Fourth Sign, 6:1-15.

b. The Fifth Sign, 6:16-21.

c. The Eucharistic Discourse, 6:22-71.

3. Tabernacles: Light and Life, 7:1-6:59.

4. Jesus, the Light of the World, 9:1-10:42.

a. The Sixth Sign, 9:1-34.

b. Sight and Blindness, 9:35-10:21.

c. The Dedication, Jesus is consecrated in place of the Temple, 10:22-42.

D. The Last Journey to Jerusalem, 11:1-12:50.

1. Death and Life: The Seventh Sign, 11:1-42.

2. Death Chosen Over Life, 11:43-47.

3. The Anointing, 12:1-11.

4. The Triumphal Entry, 12:12-19.

5. The Gentiles See Jesus, 12:20-36.

6. The Rejection of Life and Light, 12:37-50.

### **III. PART TWO: THE BOOK OF GLORY: John 13:1-20:31**

"Those Who Accept Him Become Sons of God." The Word shows his glory by returning to the Father in death, resurrection and ascension. Fully glorified, he communicates the Spirit of life.

#### A. Jesus instructs His Disciples, 13:1-17:26.

1. The Sign of Footwashing, 13:1-20.
2. The Betrayal: The Hour of Darkness, 13:21-30.
3. Discourse on Departure and Return in the Spirit, 13:31-14:31.
4. The True Vine and the Branches, 15:1-17.
5. The World's Hatred of the Light, 15:16-16:4a.
6. Departure and Return, 16:4b-33.
7. The High-Priestly Prayer, 17:1-26.

#### B. The Glorification of Christ, 16:1-20:31.

1. The Passion, 18:1-19:16.
  - a. The scene in the garden, 18:1-11.
  - b. The scene before Annas, 18:12-27.
  - c. The scene before Pilate, 18:28-40.
  - d. The scourging. "Behold the Man," 19:1-5.
  - e. Again before Pilate: The Son of God, 19:6-16.
2. The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus, 19:17-37.
  - a. Jesus reigns from the cross, 19:17-22.
  - b. Accompanying signs, 19:23-37.
3. The Burial of the Lord, 19:38-42.
4. The Resurrection and the Giving of the Spirit, 20:1-31.
  - a. Appearance to Mary Magdalen, 20:1-18.
  - b. Appearance to the disciples, 20:19-23.

- c. Appearance to the disciples and Thomas, 20:24-29.
- d. Conclusion: The meaning of these signs, 20:30-31.

#### **IV. EPILOGUE: APPEARANCES IN GALILEE: John 21:1-25.**

A series of resurrection appearances in Galilee of interest to the early church.

- A. Jesus with the Disciples by the Sea, 21:1-14.
- B. Peter's Commission, 21:15-19.
- C. The Beloved Disciple, 21:20-23.
- D. Final Testimony, 21:24-25.

NOTE: The above outline is a combination of two other outlines: one prepared by Bruce Vawter, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 63:38 and Raymond E. Brown, *The New Testament Reading Guide*, Volume 13, *The Gospel of St. John, the Johannine Epistles*, pp. 10-11.

In these lectures, many of the quotations come from the version of the Bible first published in 1923 by the University of Chicago Press, in which the Old Testament translations were done under general editor J.M. Powis Smith, and the New Testament and what Protestants call the Apocrypha were translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed. These quotations are identified as "Goodspeed Bible". Other quotations have generally been translated by Msgr. Turro.

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### **Assignments**

Each assignment consists of a specific reading and a three page (minimum) resumé of the assigned pages.

- 1) Introduction, Maloney,\* pp. 1-33.
- 2) The language, text and format of the Gospel, Brown,\* pp. cxxix - cxxxv.
- 3) The destination and purpose of the Fourth Gospel, Brown, pp. lxvii - lxxix.

- 4) The question of authorship, Schnackenburg,\* pp. 75 - 104.
- 5) Relation to the Synoptics, Schnackenburg, pp. 26 - 43.
- 6) The Prologue, Schnackenburg, pp. 221 - 282.
- 7) Jesus at Passover, Brown pp. 268 - 303.
- 8) The last discourse, Maloney, pp. 370 - 427.
- 9) The arrest and trial, Brodie\* pp. 519 - 532.
- 10) The glorification of Jesus, Brodie, 541 - 574.
- 11) Ego Eimi - "I am", Brown, pp. 533 - 538.
- 12) The notion of faith in the Fourth Gospel, Schnackenburg, pp. 558 - 575.
- 13) The "Son of Man" in the Fourth Gospel, Schnackenburg, pp. 529 - 542.
- 14) Crucial questions in Johannine Theology, Brown, pp. cv - cxxii.

N.B. A certain amount of overlap is foreseen and intended so as to make the student experience the distinctive approach each author adopts.

\* Bibliographical data follow:

Brodie, Thomas L. *The Gospel According to John*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John*. Vol. I. (Anchor Bible Series). Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966.

Mooney, Francis J. *The Gospel of John* (Sacra Pagina Series). Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998.

Schnackenburg, Rudolf, *The Gospel According to St. John*. Vol. I. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968.

## Notes on the Fourth Gospel

### The Structure of the Fourth Gospel

The Fourth Gospel is widely viewed as divided into two segments: the "Book of Signs" (chap 1-12) and the "Book of Glory" (chap 13-20). The first division treats of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus is seen performing a number of miracles and engaging his opponents, all the while moving from Galilee to Judea and back. In the Book of Glory Jesus is found discussing matters with his disciples (13-17) and subsequently undergoing the Passion (18-21). Throughout the breadth of the Gospel, Jesus' "hour" -- his death and resurrection -- looms large. From yet another angle of vision the Gospel has been seen as falling into two major divisions which are, first of all, Jesus' preparation for the "hour" and the second segment, viz., a depiction of the "hour" itself. There is a marked buildup: in chap. 1-11. On several occasions, it is asserted that Jesus' "hour" has not yet come (2:4, 7:30, 8:20). In 12:23 the imminence of the time of revelation is remarked. The presence of the "hour" is noted in 13:1 and 17:1.

Comparable to the forecast of the "hour" and its eventual dawning is the related concept of "glorification". At the outset (7:39; 12:16) glorification is viewed as future. In 13:31 and 17:5 it is asserted as present.

The Prologue -- a classic in its own right -- functions as a kind of overture. It picks up themes which later in the Gospel will be once again encountered and ultimately fleshed out. In the Prologue, the identity of Jesus is set out and his role in salvation is declared. Right from the start, the reader is made aware of the identity of Jesus and of his lofty mission.

### The "Gnostic" Cast of John's Gospel

It was fashionable at one point in time to doubt the Jewish background of John's Gospel. Certain characteristics of John's work were adduced in an effort to establish the Gnostic origin of some Johannine ideas. It must be acknowledged that there is an unquestionable likeness between John and some alien ways of thought. John surely was aware of the Hellenistic tone of the world in which he moved and within which his Gospel would be read and construed. That is almost certainly the only link between John and the Hellenistic milieu he lived and wrote in.

When in 1946 a complete Gnostic library was discovered in Chernoboskian in Upper Egypt it became possible to ascertain in what specific ways, if any, Gnosticism impacted on the Fourth Gospel. The considered judgment of most scholars, based on a careful study of the Chernoboskian finds, is that John's Gospel does not depend on Gnostic literature. In other words the presumed "Gnostic" coloration of John's Gospel is as authentically Jewish as any other Gospel. The Synoptics on the one hand and John on

the other accent different facets of the Judaism current at that time. John speaks in an authentically Jewish idiom of first century Palestine.

### **John's Gospel vis à vis the Synoptics**

Since Patristic times, John's Gospel has been viewed as filling in the gaps in the other Gospel accounts. There is something to be said for this estimate of things. John clearly presumes the Synoptic tradition. He assumes his readership will know the identity of the Twelve. He makes no effort to identify them. In recording the Baptist's witness he presumes his readers' awareness of John's baptism of Jesus. As to whether John used the written Synoptics, there is division among scholars. Some have drawn attention to the fact that John was obviously aware of Mark's Gospel and followed the order Mark used. At times he is found even using the same words Mark employed. There is however another school of thought that maintains that what John and Mark have in common derives from a common oral tradition. An attempt has been made to view the parallels between John and the other three Gospels as resulting from a harmonization of both but conclusive evidence of this has eluded scholars.

A comparison of John with the Synoptics reveals a raft of divergences. The numerous miracles reported by the Synoptics are counterbalanced by just seven miracles in John. John's strong accent on the discourses of Jesus and his doctrine contrasts with the Synoptic portrayal.

Clement of Alexandria has helpfully noted that whereas the Synoptics conveyed the corporeal aspects of Jesus, John sought to present Jesus' spiritual reality. Perhaps this is more aptly expressed by asserting that John sought to offer a more theological view of Jesus than the Synoptics aimed to present.

### **Some Characteristics of the Fourth Gospel**

Several of the expressions common to the Synoptics occur seldom if at all in John. Some examples follow: "tax collectors", "Kingdom of God", "demons". On the other hand one must take note of a distinctive Johannine terminology e.g, "life", "light", "darkness", "truth", "him who sent me", "amen, amen" and perhaps most notable is the "I am" formula (6:20.35,51; 8:24; 15:5).

One very notable difference between John and the Synoptics is that he recounts the ministry of Jesus as spanning across three Passover Feasts. The upshot of this is that in John the ministry of Jesus in Judea is seen to be more extensive than would appear from the Synoptic accounts.

In any comparison struck between John and the Synoptics it must be noted that several episodes that find a place in the Synoptic accounts are not referred to in John. Among those missing in John are: the temptation of Jesus, Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, the Transfiguration, and Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemani. The sequence of events in John viewed from the standpoint of the Synoptics can sometimes seem to be skewed. However, as can be gathered from the video lectures, John's



transpositions often have a transparent purpose behind them. A clear cut instance of this is found in John's placement of the cleansing of the Temple incident right following the account of the miracle at Cana and just before Nicodemus' visit. Quite probably this was done to show by this line-up varying responses to Jesus. Cana elicited from the witnesses a positive faith response -- "by it he manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him". This is followed in John by the account of the cleansing of the Temple which provoked a very negative reaction from the bystanders. The Nicodemus visit on the other hand appears to illustrate an in-between response to Christ: Nicodemus comes under the cover of darkness because at this point in time he is not prepared to publicly declare his commitment to Christ. Yet when all is said and done he DOES come. Such rearrangements of the time slots for the various incidents in the story of Jesus seem to show that there was "a method to John's madness."

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