

Mickey McGrath,
St. John the Evangelist

Understanding the New Testament

John and 1 John

Hymn: O Word of God Incarnate

O Word of God incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth, unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky!

We praise Thee for the radiance
that from the hallowed page,
a lantern to our footsteps,
shines on from age to age.

Opening Prayer

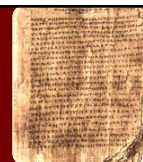
Day by day,
O dear Lord,
three things I pray:
to see thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
follow thee more nearly,
day by day. Amen.

~Richard of Chichester, 13th c. / *Godspell*, 20th c.



What is the Spiritual Purpose of a Gospel?

- Proclaim Jesus
- Subvert the status quo
- Form communities of missional disciples

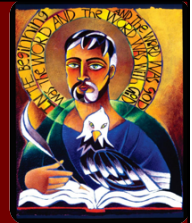


Four Gospels



- *Who is Jesus?*
- *What is discipleship?*
- **John (Fourth Gospel)**
 - incarnate, life-giving Son of God
 - abiding and being sent

John: Author, date, setting

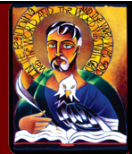


- The beloved disciple = John, son of Zebedee?
- "But these signs were written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

Composed ca. A.D. 95, perhaps in Ephesus



The Spiritual Gospel

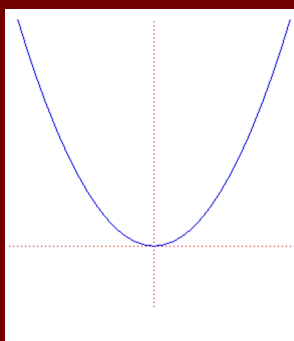


- After the other Evangelists had written down the “bodily things” (*ta sōmatika*), John, “encouraged by his pupils and irresistibly moved by the Spirit . . . wrote a spiritual Gospel” (*pneumatikon euaggelion*).
~Clement of Alexandria (ca. 155-220)
- “In the beginning...” (John 1:1//Genesis 1:1)

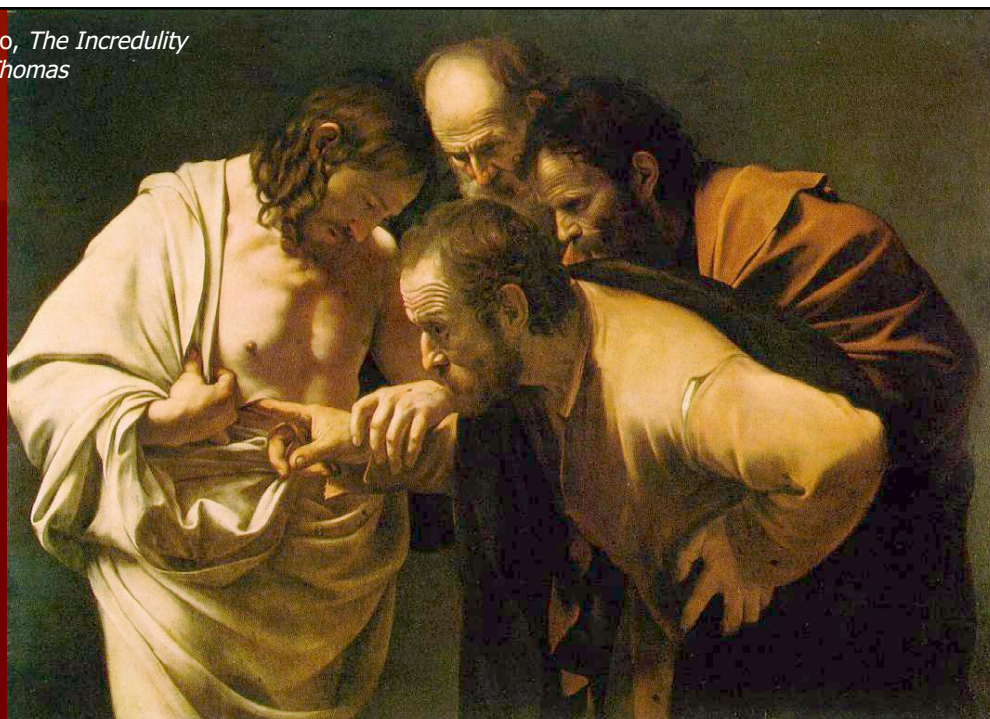
John: one image of the plot



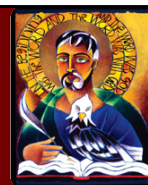
- The Son comes from the Father
 - From glory
 - Descent
- The Son returns to the Father
 - To glory (starting with the cross)
 - Ascent ("being lifted up")



Caravaggio, *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*

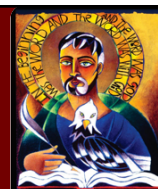


Some key Johannine themes



- Friendship and conversations
- Jesus' discourses on his own mission and identity
 - The "I am" sayings
- The seven "signs" confirming his identity: from water into wine (ch.2), to the raising of Lazarus (ch.11)
- The unity of the Son & the Father (and the disciples!)
 - Abiding and being sent
 - The Paraclete (Comforter, Advocate)

- Jesus fulfills and embodies Israel's Scriptures & feasts



- The temple (ch.2)
- Passover (chs. 2, 6, 12-19)
- Manna from heaven (ch.6)
- Sabbath (ch. 5, 9, 19)
- Booths/Tabernacles (chs. 7-10)
- Dedication/Hannukah (ch.10)

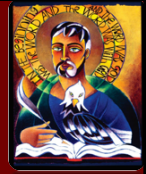
Relationship to Synoptics

1. Unaware; no direct dependence
2. Aware of one or more; seeks to replace/supplant
3. Aware of one or more; seeks to supplement

Small groups and Q&A

- **Questions about John? (cards)**
 - Who is Jesus in John?
 - What is discipleship in John?

Plot and turning-point



- Passage for discussion:
- John 13:1–20 “last supper” and footwashing
 1. Why does Peter object?
 2. Why does Jesus wash their feet?
 3. How might we apply that lesson to our contexts today?

The First Letter of John

- John son of Zebedee or John the Elder?
- A letter or a treatise?
- Themes:
 - Darkness and light; the devil and God; truth and error
 - Community in crisis:
 - False prophets and “anti-Christ” → denial of Christ’s bodily incarnation
 - Failure to love as God loved
 - “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16) → love others

Closing hymn: They'll Know We Are Christians

We are one in the Spirit
We are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit
We are one in the Lord
And we pray that all unity
May one day be restored

And they'll know we are
Christians
By our love by our love
Yes they'll know we are
Christians
By our love