The Gospel of John

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Recent Criticism of John

- John is more strenuously questioned by liberals than are the Synoptics.
- Many who are not liberal are influenced:
  - General public
  - Muslims
  - New-Agers
  - Conservatives in liberal denominations
Objections to John

- Differences in content vs Synoptics
- Explicit indications of Jesus' deity
- Alleged Hellenistic features in John
- Gospel's claim to be from closest disciple
Differences in Content

- Unique Material
  - 92% of John not found elsewhere

- Detailed Chronology
  - Jesus' ministry in John clearly 3+ years

- Different Themes
  - Not in John:
    - Kingdom, demons, repentance, prayer
  - New in John:
    - Truth, life, world, abiding, witness
  - Shared:
    - Father, Son of Man, faith, love, sending
Explicit on Jesus' Deity

- Clearer in John, but implied in Synoptics
  - Speech, forgiving sin, raising dead, commanding weather
- Jesus' own statements more cryptic than those of narrator
Hellenisms in John

- **Logos** - λόγος
  - Greek philosophical background
  - But also in Philo
  - And Aramaic equivalent in Targums
- Other words with philosophical or pagan dualistic meanings
  - Light/dark, truth/error
  - These found in Dead Sea Scrolls
From Closest Apostle?

This is only (canonical) Gospel to make such a claim directly.

But common in later, heretical Gospels:
- Gospel of Peter
- Gospel of Thomas
- Gospel of Barnabas
Resulting Attitudes toward John

- Bultmann
  - Contains 3+ sources, 2 editors
  - Completed AD 80-120

- Brown
  - By Johannine school, completed c AD 100

- Hengel
  - By John the Elder, completed c AD 110
Attestation and Authorship

- **Internal Evidence**
  - Indirect
  - Direct

- **External Evidence**
  - Allusions
  - Statements
Westcott's Arguments

- Religious knowledge → Jew
- Geographic knowledge → Palestinian
- Standpoint of the narrative → eyewitness, apostle, one of inner 3
Direct Internal Evidence

- John 1:14 "we beheld" → author was beholder, eyewitness
- John 1:6,15,19, etc. Calls John the Baptist just "John"
- John 21:24-25 "this is the disciple... who wrote these things"
External Evidence

- 1 Clement (c 95) does not mention Ignatius to Philadelphians (c 115)
- Pseudo-Barnabas (c 135)
- Justin Martyr (c 150)
- Tatian, *Diatessaron* (c 170)
- Muratorian Canon (c 170)
- Irenaeus (c 170)
"For even though certain persons desired to deceive me after the flesh, yet the spirit is not deceived, being from God; for 'it knoweth whence it cometh and where it goeth,' [John 3:8] and it searcheth out the hidden things."
Pseudo-Barnabas, sect. 11

In the midst of a somewhat allegorical exegesis of several OT passages, quotes John 6:51:

"And whosoever shall eat of these shall live forever."
Justin Martyr

- Mentions the "memoirs of the apostles, called Gospels"
- Cites John 3:5 in *Apology* 61:
  "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"
- In *Dialogue* 91, explains serpent as Jesus does in John 3:14.

Abstracts of Powerpoint Talks
- NewmanLib.HRI.org
John the Man

- Background
- Jesus' Disciple in Palestine
- Jesus' Disciple Elsewhere
John's Background

- Family
  - Zebedee, Salome, James
- Fishermen
- Connection with Jerusalem?
  - Known to high priest
  - Have a home there?
- Disciple of John the Baptist?
Jesus' Disciple in Palestine

- Involved in many incidents in Gospels
  - One of "inner three"
  - Present at transfiguration, cross
  - Races Peter to tomb
- Recedes into background in Acts
- Important figure in church of Jerusalem
  - Called "pillar" in Gal 2:9
Jesus' Disciple outside Palestine

- Presumably left before AD 70
- Settled in Ephesus
- Exiled to Patmos about 95
- Lived very long life, dying about AD 100 or shortly thereafter.
**Date of John's Gospel**

**Variety of Datings**
- Narrower range now than earlier
- Liberals – early 2\textsuperscript{nd} century
- Conservatives – end 1\textsuperscript{st} century
- Early dating – before AD 70
**Date of John's Gospel**

- Not after Ignatius (107-115)
- John already old (John 21)
  - After death of Peter (c 68)
  - No textual support to put ch 21 later
- Most conservatives put in 90s
- A few (even liberals) put earlier
Purpose of Gospel

- Stated by author John 20:30-31
  - That readers believe in Jesus
  - That they have eternal life
- Supplement other Gospels?
- Refute Jewish opposition?
- Teaching about life in church?
- Refute Gnosticism?
Characteristics & Techniques

- Distinctive Vocabulary
- Explanatory Notes
- Misunderstandings
- Irony
- Double Meaning
- Inverted Parallelism (Chiasm)
- Variation
Characteristics & Techniques

- OT Allusions
- Symbolism
- Dualism
- Hyperbole
- Inclusion (Inclusio)
- Repetition
- Apparent Contradiction
John's Theology (IH Marshall)

- John as Revelation
- Signs & Witnesses
- Person of Jesus
- Work of Jesus
- The New Life
- The People of God
- Eschatology
John as Revelation

- To reveal Jesus' glory as Son of God
  - Shared w/ Father before incarnation
  - Demonstrated by signs
  - Supreme glory in passion

- To reveal truth
  - Jesus brings truth
  - Is true bread for souls of men
Signs and Witnesses

- Jesus' miracles as signs
- Jesus' word-signs
- Jesus' glory attested by witnesses
  - Jesus
  - John Baptist
  - Disciples
  - Scriptures
  - Father
Person of Jesus in John

- Word
- Messiah
- Son of Man
- Son of God
- God
Work of Jesus in John

- Life
- Light
- Way
- Good Shepherd
The New Life in John

- Savior
- New Birth
- Faith
- Knowledge
- Love
- Abide, in
The People of God in John

- "Church" does not appear
- Flock
- Vine
- Love/unity
- Sending
Eschatology in John

- Continuing life of the church
- Spirit as replacement for Jesus
- "Already" eschatology
- "Not yet" eschatology
The End

... but the beginning of a lifetime of study of the Gospel of John