

THO 4103
Johannine Literature

October 18, 2010

John 1-4: Overview

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John 1:1-18

- How do you visualize that which has never been seen?
 - Use of OT imagery
- The centrality of “John the witness”
 - NOT depicted according to OT imagery (as in Synoptics)
- The generation of “God’s children”
 - In contrast with “his own”
- The Word becomes flesh and brings “grace and truth” to be.

John 1:19-51

- 1:19-28: The interrogation of “John” by holy persons from the holy place in the Holy City
 - “water” / “spirit”
- 1:29-34: John’s disciples:
 - “Lamb of God” / “Son of God”
- 1:35-42: Two disciples:
 - “Christ”
- 1:43-51: Two disciples:
 - “King of Israel” / “Son of Man”

John 2:1-11

- Highly visual
 - Wedding (procreation)
 - Women and slaves and Jesus
 - A “miracle” without any agency
 - The slaves know; the host tastes
 - Conclusion?

John 2:12-25

- The holy place in the Holy City at a holy time
 - NB: Space-time coordinates
- Provocative and purposeful action on the part of Jesus
- Enigmatic OT citation: “zeal will consume...”
- Result?

John 3:1-22

- Discourse with Nicodemus
 - Statements by Nicodemus / non-answers by Jesus
 - “Water” / “Spirit”
 - Serpent in the wilderness → love of God
 - “love” associated with slavery
 - Serpent on the ensign → cross (sign of “love”)
 - The fate of the children of the light and the children of darkness (“night”)

John 3:23-36

- The waning of “John” / the waxing of “Jesus”
- Wedding parable (reminder of Jn 2)

John 4:1-42

- The encounter with the non-wedded half-bred woman
 - “Fortunately there are no children involved...”
- The conflict between Jews and Samaritans...

Some information on Samaritans

- Who are the Samaritans?
 - Jewish: “shomeronim” (2 Kings 17:29)
 - Samaritan: “shamerim”
- Samaritan theology
 - Two eras (creation to Exodus / Samson, Eli to present)
- Samaritan worship
 - True temple
- Samaritan eschatology:
 - The Samaritan Messiah = Taheb = “one who will come”
 - Inaugurator of the Second Kingdom
 - One like Moses (Deut 18:15): king, prophet, priest
 - The Taheb will die and be resurrected with all the faithful

John 4:43-54

- What is Jesus' homeland? (vss. 43-45)
 - NB vs. 47: "hearing that Jesus had departed Judaea and come to Galilee..."
- The enigmatic Jesus (vs. 48)
 - Cf. previous statements by Jesus
- The agency of the miracle?
 - Jesus' words: "Your child lives"? Ruler's faith?
 - Both are mentioned twice
- "Second sign"
 - "Second" in relation to what?

Your questions on John 1-4?

Overarching questions and tentative answers at this point (i.e., end of ch. 4)

- Who is “Jesus”?
 - *A sign par excellence?*
 - If so, a sign of what? Or of whom?
- What are “signs”?
 - Spatio-temporal things/events that point to....?
 - Signs may point to something that also points beyond itself:
 - The pointed to may also point to?
- Who are the primary interlocutors of Jesus, i.e., “the Jews”?
 - Possibly, a religious group, a genetic or racial clan, a regional component of the first or second, leaders of one of these three possible groupings.
 - Perhaps in light of ch. 4, those specifically associated with the Temple (“Holy Place”) of David
 - Certainly: those who have the signs but who don’t “get it”
- How is the Fourth Gospel intended to be read?
 - Dia-lectic-ally and Para-doxic-ally
 - Dialectically = read through the text
 - Paradoxically = what you see is usually not what matters (if you think it is, you will always misunderstand). You need to “see” truly to “get it” (a full transaction).

John 5-6

What are we looking for?

John 5

- Ostensibly, a miracle story and a defence
- In reality...

John 5: A trial

- The “crime” (5:1-9a)
- The initial investigation(5:9b-13)
- The arrest (5:14-15) – a “friend” turns Jesus in
- The trial
 - The accusation (5:16)
 - The defence
 - Statement by the accused (5:17, 19-30) – the Father is really on trial!
 - Result: enrages the court! (5.18)
 - Witnesses for the defence (5:31-32)
 - John: 5:33-35
 - Works: 5:36
 - Father: 5:37-38
 - Scriptures: 5:39
 - Concluding statement (5.40-47)
 - The judgment?
 - The accusers are guilty!! (Moses, their judge, has judged them!)

Significance of John 5

- A clear demonstration that the “passion” of Jesus in John is not limited to the end of Jesus’ life (unlike the Synoptics).
- The passion is already happening!
- In fact, it is something that has been taking place since the first appearance of the Word become flesh.
- In John the final trial of Jesus is the culmination of a trial that has been revealed as taking place since the incarnation of the Word

John 6

- Indicate what we need to know / focus on to understand this chapter
 - LIST

John 6

- The miracle of the feeding (6:1-15) – cf. Synoptics
- The walking on water (6:16-21) – cf. Synoptics
- The Bread of Life (6:22-65)

John 6:22-65 (cf. John 4)

- 22-24: Narrative reiteration of words & themes in 6:1-21
- 25-29: Statements by others to the “rabbi” / non-responses by Jesus to get them to ask right question (vs. 28) and hear the right answer (vs. 29)
- 30-34: Appeal for sign and to patriarchal tradition
 - NB the possible play on the petition of the “Lord’s Prayer”
- 35-40: Self-revelation (NB: key passage)
 - Vs 39: refrain found in 39, 40, 44, 54
- 41-51: “Jewish” mis-understanding / Jesus’ reiteration and escalation
- 52-59: “Jewish” mis-understanding / Jesus’ reiteration and escalation
 - vs. 59 – narrative indication
- 60-65: Disciples’ mis-understanding / Jesus’ explanation
- 66-71: Disciples’ mis-understanding / Jesus’ challenge / Peter’s “confession”
 - NB: The echo of Peter’s confession in Mk 1:24 and Lk 4:34: only other NT use!