MOROGORO BIBLE COLLEGE

# John and the synoptic Gospels

## Differences between John and the synoptic Gospels

### *The style of Jesus’ teaching*

#### parables and brief sayings in Synoptics

#### longerdiscourses in John

#### ‘I am’ sayings in John, often linked to discourses, e.g. 8:12-59

### *the audience of Jesus’ teaching*

#### more private teaching to disciples in John, esp. John 13–16

### *the themes of Jesus’ teaching*

#### kingdom of God/heaven in Synoptics—in John only at 3:3, 5; 18:36

#### ‘dualisms’ (contrasting pairs) in Johne.g. light/darkness, love/hate, truth/lie, life/death, above/below, sight/blindness

#### the Johannine ‘signs’ John 2:11; 4:54; 20:30-31 (N.B. 2:23; 4:54) (full list on *Overview of John* handout)

##### often lead into discourses, e.g. John 9 leads into discourse in ch 10

### *the actions of Jesus*

#### found in the synoptic Gospels but not John

##### baptism of Jesus

##### temptation of Jesus

##### call of twelve

##### exorcisms

##### transfiguration

##### inauguration of Lord’s supper

#### found in John but not in the synoptic Gospels

##### Jesus turning water into wine 2:1-11

##### Jesus baptising in Judaea before working in Galilee 3:22; 4:1-2; 10:40

##### Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead chapter 11

##### The ‘I am’ sayings (see the list from *Overview of John*)

### *geographical focus of Jesus’ ministry*

#### northern in Synoptics (Galilee)

#### southern in John (Judæa and Samaria) 2:13; 5:1; 7:10—visits to Jerusalem

### *miracles in John alone*, e.g. 2:1-11; 11:1-44

### *onology—when events happen*

#### length of Jesus’ ministry: three Passovers—the synoptics only have one 2:13; 6:4; 11:55

#### cleansing of the temple—early or late in ministry of Jesus? John 2:14-22; Mark 11:15-17 and parallels

#### death of Jesus: when did Jesus die?

##### Mark 14:12; 15:25 implies day after Passover

##### John 19:14 implies as Passover lambs are killed

##### Probable explanation: when Jesus had the last supper with his disciples, he deliberately held a passover meal 24 hours in advance, because he knew he would not be alive

### *Christology*

#### Jesus in John

##### overt claims about himself

###### e.g. ‘I am’ sayings: 6:35; 8:12; 10:9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1 (see *Overview of John* handout)

##### as God 1:1, 18; 20:28

### *The disciples’ understanding of Jesus*

#### They slowly grow in understanding in the synoptics e.g. Mark 8:27-38

#### contrast John 1: Messiah (41), son of God (34, 49), son of man (51), lamb of God (29), king of Israel (49)

## How can we explain this?

### Older discussion was about whether John used Mark

#### general consensus in second half of 20th century that John had independent historical tradition about Jesus, driven by work of C. H. Dodd in English-speaking world

#### C. K. Barrett the dissenting voice, arguing that John uses Mark

### this discussion has now moved beyond older literary dependence discussions

#### Richard Bauckham argues that John in places presupposes what Mark says, e.g.

##### 3:24 presupposes John’s imprisonment, not yet described in FG; this period of Jesus’ ministry (1:19–4:43) goes between Mark 1:13 and 1:14

##### 11:2 describes Mary as the one who anointed Jesus; she is mentioned anonymously as doing this in Mark 14:3-9

## John and history

### locations mentioned in John

### 5:2-9 Bethzatha = Bethesda, found late 19th century

##### Present tense in 5:2 ‘Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.’ [George van Kooten]

### 3:23 Aenon near Salim

### 9:7 pool of Siloam

### many places named in John alone

##### Cana, Tiberias, Sychar, Joseph’s field, Jacob’s well, Mount Gerizim, Aenon near Salim, Bethany beyond the Jordan, the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, tomb of Lazarus, Ephraim, pool of Bethesda, pool of Siloam, Solomon’s portico, Wadi Kidron, Gabbatha

##### contrast Luke who is vague on detail when he does not knowe.g. Luke 9:51–19:14

### eyewitness testimony (Richard Bauckham)

#### named individuals who are the ultimate source of a story, e.g.

##### Nathanael 1:44-51—only here and John 21:2 in all four Gospels

##### Nicodemus 3:1-15; 7:50; 19:39—only here in all four Gospels

##### Andrew 6:8; cf. 1:40

##### Philip 6:5-7; 12:21-22; 14:8-9

#### These are *personal encounters with Jesus*, and look like examples of the source of the story being named to show this is eyewitness testimony