











d) Other apparent historical discrepancies appear – e.g. seems to imply that Christ was born in Nazareth (7:52); suggestion that Xians were excommunicated from their synagogues during Jesus’ lifetime (9:22)

e) John’s style of writing differs significantly from the Synoptics – very different vocabulary; extended discourses rather than pithy sayings and parables; the words and sayings of Jesus have obviously been reworked in such a way that it is hard to tell the difference between John and Jesus – that is, the language and style is thoroughly Johannine throughout and very different from the Synoptics.

**Multi-pronged response:**

(1) Even in modern scholarship, most do not take such a harsh view of John’s historical accuracy.

(2) There are indeed many similarities between John and the Synoptics.

(3) It is helpful to recall some points I made yesterday concerning the very nature of the Gospels:

(a) The Gospels are portraiture not photographs or a video documentary.

(b) The Gospels are like stained-glass windows.

(4) We can also recall some important thoughts from the first lecture concerning the nature of ancient history writing:

(a) We must recognize the itinerant nature of Jesus’ ministry.

**The Method**

1. Isolate the Literary Unit
2. Identify the Setting and Characters
3. Isolate the Different Scenes
4. Analyze the Narrative:
  - (i) Identify the (Rising) Conflict
  - (ii) Identify the Climax
  - (iii) Identify the Resolution
  - (iv) Identify the Following Action/Interpretation
5. Think about the Context
  - (i) immediate literary context
  - (ii) whole Gospel context (narrative flow and structure; intra- and intertextuality)
  - (iii) redemptive-historical context
6. Write a Brief Summary Paragraph
 

This summary paragraph should get at the main thrust of the story’s point(s), understood in context, and addressing what this teaches us about God, our Fallen Condition and the Redemptive Solutions God is offering.

**The Payoff of Narrative Analysis**

Disclaimer: Limitations of This Model When Applied to the Gospels

Real Life Example: Luke 7:1-10

**CONCLUSION**

**A few notes:**

1. Usually setting and characters are established at the beginning of a story. Sometimes they will need to be supplied by the surrounding context.
  2. It is often very helpful to break up a story up into Scenes. Scenes generally involve a change in characters or setting or the introduction of a new character or element. Sometimes it is helpful to think in terms of scenes like different camera shots in a movie or TV show. However, with dialogue this can be misleading if we break the scenes too minutely each time someone speaks.
  3. The Rising Conflict does not have to mean that two people are fighting physically or verbally, but it is the tension or problem that is being created in a story. If there is no tension or problem then there is not plot!
  4. The Climax as we're using it here is not necessarily what you may immediately think of as the 'literary climax' of a story. We're using Climax here to refer to Climax of Tension, the place in the story where you are holding your breath to see what will happen, where you are most on the edge of your seat, where the outcome could go either way.
- The Resolution then, is the solving of the problem or tension that has been rising and has climaxed at the climax. The Resolution is where you can let out your breath and sit back in your chair. You can see on our diagram that these two together – the Climax and the Resolution – are found at the top of the story.

(b) We must recognize the differences between ancient and modern historiography, particularly the difference between chronological time and narrative time/sequence.

(5) We can observe that there are indeed many ways in which John and the Synoptics 'interlock' rather than contradict each other, both historically and theologically.

(6) Some thoughts on how John relates to the Gospel of Mark.

(7) The historical style of John.

**C. Style**

- + Highly literarily structured –
  - 7 'I Am' sayings
  - series of signs
  - 'the hour' theme – early in the book there are references to the fact that Jesus' hour has not yet come (2:4; 7:30; 8:20). We also encounter statements that 'the hour is coming' (4:21; 5:28). Later in the book we are reminded that Jesus hour has come (12:23; 17:1).
  - Literary and symbolic use of number patterns:
- + Threes – three Passovers and three other feasts that Jesus attended; J the B witnesses three times to Christ's messiahship; Jesus is condemned three times; He speaks three times from the cross; Peter's threefold denial and threefold restoration.

+ Sevens – central part of the narrative is structured around seven great miracles or ‘signs’ that Jesus performed; 7 I Am statements; sevenfold witness to Christ (by the Father, of the Son, of Christ’s works, of Scripture, of J the B, of the disciples, and of the Spirit).

+ Dualistic Language

+ Double meaning of language and Misunderstanding

## D. Structure

### **4 Basic Parts**

(1) Prologue (1:1-18) – describing the pre-existent Word and his incarnation

(2) Jesus’ work in the world (1:19-12:50)

(3) Jesus’ return to the Father (13:1-20:31)

(4) Epilogue (21:1-25)

### **Two-fold Structure**

(1) Chapters 1-12 – Focus on Jesus’ Identity

(2) Chapters 13-21 – The Road to Glory

## E. Themes & Theology

(1) God the Father

(2) Jesus the Son

There are many ways in which the Sonship of Jesus is depicted and stands out in the Fourth Gospel:

- He is the Logos who existed from the beginning in close relationship with God.

- He is the agent of creation and the light of all people

- He was incarnate in the person of Jesus and He revealed the Father’s glory

(3) The Style and Form of Gospel Stories

(4) The Purpose of Gospel Stories

### **Practical Method ~ Narrative Model**

Luke 7:1-10

After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. 2 Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. 3 When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, 5 for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue." 6 And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. 7 Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. 8 For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 9 When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." 10 And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

## The Gospels as Stories: A Practical Model for Reading the Gospel of John

### Introduction

### The Gospels as Stories

#### (1) Different Discourses of Truth

#### (2) The Technique of Story

"Art addresses us in the fullness of our being --simultaneously speaking to our intellect, emotions, intuition, imagination, memory and physical senses. There are some truths about life that can be expressed only as stories or songs or images." [Dana Gioia, Commencement Address at Stanford University, June 17, 2007]

- Our Gospels are like the rest of biblical narratives in that the intermingle three ingredients:
  - 1) the historical impulse to record facts
  - 2) the theological and didactic impulse to teach religious truth
  - 3) the literary impulse to recreate experiences in our imaginations

[Ryken, Words of Life, 29]

- He is the one sent from above
- He is the divine 'I Am'
- He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One
- He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
- He is the one upon whom the Spirit rested and who baptizes in the HS
- He is the King of Israel/King of the Jews (cf. inter alia Pilate's inscription)
- He is One with the Father
- He is the pre-existent one, having existed before the patriarch Abraham
- He is human

#### (3) The Holy Spirit

- emphasis is placed on Jesus as the One on whom the Spirit is given and remains 'without measure' (1:32; 3:34)
- Jesus' death and exaltation is stated to be the necessary precursor to the bestowal of the Spirit upon the disciples (7:39)
- Jesus teaches that only those who are born from above by the Spirit are able to see and enter the KOG (3:3,5)
- the Spirit is living water who well up into eternal life in those who believe
- Jesus speaks of a time when people will worship in/by S/spirit and truth
- the Spirit is the Paraclete or Counselor/Comforter who will come after Jesus' departure, the 'Spirit of Truth' who will teach the disciples, guide them into all truth, and remind them of all that Jesus taught, who will bear witness to Jesus, and who will convict the world as guilty in respect to sin and righteousness.

#### (4) Eternal Life

- John obviously speaks much of 'eternal life'
- this is the stated purpose of the book – 20:31
- 'eternal life' for John is the opposite of perishing or being destroyed

- it is also understood as salvation – from sin and judgment and slavery
- it is also understood positively as thirst-quenching water, resurrection from the dead, abiding with/in God, and probably most importantly, intimately ‘knowing’ God
  
- The seven ‘I Am’ sayings in John also relate closely to the idea of ‘eternal life’.
  - the bread of life (6:35)
  - the light of the world (8:12)
  - the door (10:9)
  - the good shepherd (10:11)
  - the resurrection and the life (11:25)
  - the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)
  - the true vine (15:1)

#### (5) Signs and Witnesses

There are seven (!) signs Jesus gives, each signposts of his divinity:

- water to wine (ch.2)
- healing of the nobleman’s son (ch.4)
- healing of the lame man (ch.5)
- feeding of the 5000 (ch.6)
- walking on water (ch.6)
- healing of the man born blind (ch.9)
- raising of Lazarus (ch.11)

There are also seven witnesses to Jesus at various times: J the B; other humans incl the Samaritan woman, disciples; Jesus himself; Jesus’ works; God the Father; the Scriptures; the Holy Spirit.

#### (6) Love & Obedience

- important related themes
- the Father loves the Son, which is called forth by the Son’s obedience to the Son (15:10; 10:17)

- the Father loves the disciples, who love and obey his Son (14:21-23)
- the Father loves the world (3:16)
- Jesus loves his disciples (14:21; 15:12), shown ultimately in laying down his life (15:13)
- the disciples show their love for Jesus by obeying his commands (14:15), partic. his command that they love one another (13:34-35)

#### (7) OT Allusions

- not as frequently explicit as Matthew, but still very rich in allusions; part of the reason the rich OT background to John seems so illusionary (compared to ‘fulfillment quotations’ of Matt) is because the whole of the Gospel is in John’s style and voice – i.e., the whole thing, including Jesus’ words, is thoroughly stamped with John’s style and verbiage and way of speaking and conceiving of things.
- continually Jesus is shown to replace OT figures and institutions – “He is the new Temple, the one of whom Moses wrote, the true bread from heaven, the true Son, the genuine vine, the tabernacle, the serpent in the wilderness, the passover.” (Carson, 98) In this all there is a hermeneutic or way of reading the OT at work.