

John Outline

Introduction: When creating the magisterial illuminated manuscripts the early medieval attributed different symbols to each of the Gospels. The symbol for the Gospel of John was the eagle, symbolizing the lofty and spiritual nature of the book. This was a great choice, as the Gospel of John is indeed both lofty and a mystical, spiritual classic.

The modern church, obsessed with history, favor the so-called synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) almost to the entire exclusion of the Gospel of John. I would argue John is every bit as true as the synoptics; it's just that John's interest isn't merely in telling the historical story of Jesus as much as he is in inspiring deep, internal faith.

Whereas John in the synoptics speaks mainly in brief stories in the Gospel of John we see Jesus become more of a mystic philosopher teaching deep truths about his identification with God and how, through him, we have our true being in God as well. It is no accident that when everyone from Nicodemus to the disciples all attempt to hear Jesus at a literal level they entirely miss his deeper, metaphorical, poetic truths. The Gospel of John is an excellent reminder that both Jesus and Holy Scripture don't mean what they say, but rather they always mean what they mean.

Section One: Book of Signs

Chapter 1: Prologue; first disciples of Jesus

Chapter 2: Wedding at Cana; Jesus cleanses temple

Chapter 3: Nicodemus visits Jesus; Jesus and John the Baptist

Chapter 4: Woman at the well; healing of official's son

Chapter 5: Healing on the Sabbath; authority speech

Chapter 6: Feeding of five thousand; walking on water; bread from heaven as true flesh

Chapter 7: Brothers try to protect Jesus; festival of booths; attempted arrest

Chapter 8: Woman caught in adultery; Jesus light of the world; Jesus from above; Jesus and Abraham speech

Chapter 9: Healing of man born blind; man and Pharisees; man and Jesus

Chapter 10: Jesus the good shepherd; Jesus rejected

Chapter 11: Death of Lazarus; Mary and Martha; raising of Lazarus; plot to kill Jesus

Chapter 12: Mary anoints Jesus; plot to kill Lazarus; triumphal entry; summary of teaching

Section Two: Book of Glory

Chapter 13: Washing disciples' feet; foretelling betrayal; new commandment

Chapter 14: Jesus way to Father; promise of Holy Spirit

Chapter 15: Jesus true vine; the hatred of the world

Chapter 16: The work of the Spirit; sorry to joy; peace for disciples

Chapter 17: Jesus prays for disciples

Chapter 18: Betrayal and arrest of Jesus; trial

Chapter 19: Trial; crucifixion; burial

Chapter 20: Empty tomb; appearance to disciples; to Thomas; purpose of book

Section Three: Postlude

Chapter 21: Appearance in Galilee; instructions to Peter; the beloved disciple

Stories to know: Prologue (Chapter 1); Nicodemus (Chapter 3); Jesus as the way to the Father (Chapter 14)