

WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

New Testament
Bible Survey

The Gospels – Part II: Luke & John

Last Week Review

- The gospels are focused on the death and resurrection of Christ
- We must be careful about applying modern ideas of “history” to ancient documents
- Mark is focused on revealing who Jesus is and pushing the reader to decide what to do about it
- Matthew presents Jesus as the living Torah, bringing about the reality of Jer. 33 through the cross

WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

What is a Gospel?



WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

The Gospel of Luke: A New Kingdom



Image from the *Book of Kells* depicting Luke's gospel as an ox because it opens with Zechariah's story of sacrifice at the temple



WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

Summation of Luke

- Key verse: Luke 4:19 - 21

  > “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor”…He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

- Summary:

  Luke’s gospel, the first volume of a single work (Luke-Acts), emphasizes the universal nature of Jesus’ work on the cross, opening a path for both Jews and Gentiles to a relationship with God and the breaking of the Kingdom of God into the world, reflected in a re-ordering of the social, political, and religious spheres to reflect God’s nature.

WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

Luke: Historian or Theologian?

- Luke-Acts is the longest work in the NT
- Written to a benefactor, Theophilus
- Clear about what he is writing:

"Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the world, I too decided after investigating everything carefully from the very first to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed." (Lk. 1:1-4)

- Luke calls his work a *diegesis* – the same word used by other historians of the day for work that is faithful to the events



WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

Luke's Kingdom of God: Universal & Social

- While other gospels do address the universal nature of salvation, Luke focuses on this as the message from the very beginning:
  - Luke 2:32 – Simeon praises revelation for all the nations
  - Luke 3 - Luke ties Jesus' line of descendants all the way back to Adam.
  - Luke 4 - this focus on taking the message of salvation to Gentiles gets Jesus thrown out of the synagogue and almost lynched by his friends and neighbors.
  - Luke 14 – banquet will go out to the hedgerows and byways beyond to bring in people, ostensibly non-Jews
  - Luke 24: 47 – "that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations"
- This motif is continued in Acts with Paul's ministry and the climax of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15
- The community of faith includes all ethnic groups.

WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

The Economy of the Kingdom of God

- What do these passages tell you about the Kingdom of God?
  - Group 1: Luke 6:17 - 26
  - Group 2: Luke 8:16 – 18
  - Group 3: Luke 13:22 – 30
  - Group 4: Luke 18:9 - 14



Luke's Kingdom of God: Universal & Social

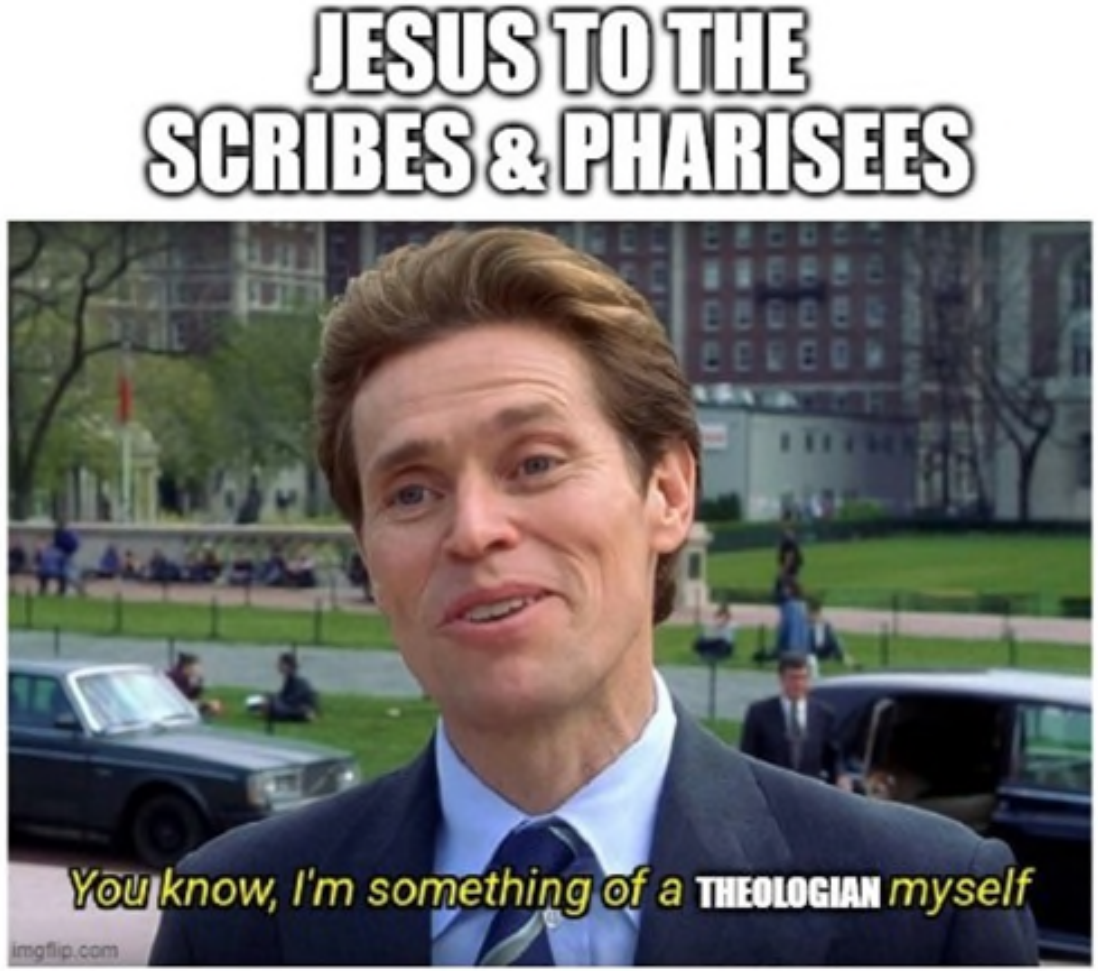
- This message of salvation is not just ethnic (Jew/Gentile) or personal (soul salvation) – it has a social dimension that restructures all of society with a "great reversal"
  - Mary: "He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty." (Lk. 1:52-53)
  - John the Baptist: "The person with two tunics should share with one who has none, and the one who has food should do the same…don't collect any more [taxes] than you are required to do…don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely – be content with your pay." (Lk. 3:11-14)
  - Parable of the Good Samaritan: old ethnic hatreds are overturned (Lk. 10:25ff)
  - "Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three." (Lk. 12:51)
  - "But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed." (Lk. 14:13)



WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

Luke's Kingdom of God: Universal & Social

- Jesus is enacting the Kingdom of God through healings, casting out demons, and other activities, ultimately doing so in the crucifixion and resurrection.
- For Luke, this is a counter-cultural event in which both the Jewish power structures of the Temple leadership and the Romans are overcome.
- The "good news" of Caesar Augustus is overcome by another Good News.
- Jesus' message about the Kingdom of God is ultimately fulfilled in the book of Acts.



Summary of Gospel of John

- Key Verse: John 12:23 – 29

  Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified...Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

- Summary:

  John, the Fourth gospel, uses highly theological imagery and narrative style to lay out Jesus’ identity as the divine Son of God, acting in concert with the Father to redeem the world through his sacrificial death. The reader is invited to engage Jesus’ message as transmitted by the “Beloved Disciple” and enter the community of faith.

WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

The First Book of the NT

- What was the first book of the New Testament you remember reading and what sticks out about it?

- Surprisingly, John almost didn't make it into the New Testament canon!
  - Quoted by heretics like Valentinius (2nd c. CE)
  - First commentary on John written by heretic
  - (Too?) high a view of Christ (doctrine of Christology)
  - Radically different from the other gospels in content



WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

The Last Gospel?

- Date –
  - Includes earliest oral traditions (also possibly Mark?)
  - Different sources than the Synoptics – only 8% shared
  - Can see sources in the "literary seams"
    - Existence of an editing process – John 21:24
  - Various schemes put together for the formation
  - Finished after the "Beloved Disciple's" (John?) death (early to mid-90s)
  - Some have challenged this date, moving it up into the 70s
  - Can't get much later than 90s due to existence of P52



Purpose for Writing

- Like the other gospels, John is a theological work laying out the historical ministry of Jesus.
- John gives us a unique perspective on Jesus' public life in several ways:
  - Only gospel that tells us Jesus went to Jerusalem 3 times during his public ministry (allows us to date how long Jesus' ministry was)
  - Has additional pericopaes only attested to in John
  - Has numbered signs, indicating that there was a previous organization given to Jesus' miracles



WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

Purpose for Writing

- Given in John 20:31:

  "But these are written so that you ***may continue to believe*** that Jesus is the Messiah…"

- *However*…there is a variant:

  "But these are written so that you will come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you will have life in his name."

- What is the difference between the two?
- How does that change the focus of the book?

The purpose is both evangelism and/or edification.



WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

Who is Jesus?

- The major theme of the gospel of John is the divinity of Jesus and his revelation of the Father.
- John's Christology is explicit from the verse beginning of the gospel – "the word was God" (1:1) as well as at the end – "My Lord and my God" (20:28).
  - Jesus is pre-existent, having been at the beginning of the universe (1:10)
  - Jesus comes from heaven to "tabernacle" with creation (1:14).
  - As the Son of the Father, the actions and words of Jesus are the same as those of God.
  - In the incarnate Word, we are confronted by God himself.



WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

Who is Jesus?

- Jesus is also presented as the ***shaliach*** of God's purpose on earth, the one unique given authority by God to accomplish his purposes.
- With this authority, Jesus can complete God's prerogatives on earth as one in complete harmony with God.
- Jesus acts knowing he and the Father are of one purpose and mind.
- Jesus carries out God's mission to mediate God's salvation to the world, manifested in the performed signs.



WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

Significant Features – The *Logos*

- Jesus is presented in John 1 as the "*logos*"
- What does this mean?
  - Personified Wisdom of Proverbs
  - Greek philosophical or gnostic background
  - Logos = idea of EXPLANATION or REASON
  - Concept deeply explored in Greek philosophy with writers such as Heraclitus
  - Philo, an Alexandrian Jew of the 1st century CE
    - Married both Hellenistic Judaism and Platonic thought
    - Logos is the mediator between the "ideal" world of God and the physical world of creation
  - Fits with the 17-19th c. theology bias which sought to remove any traces of Judaism from the NT
  - Fits with our modern scientific worldview: (Descartes – "I think therefore I am")

WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

Significant Features – The *Logos*

- Most scholars see *logos* through the lens of Judaism
  - Specifically ties *logos tou theo* (the word of God) with the Hebrew *dabar YHWH* (the word of YHWH).
    - *Dabar YHWH* is active
    - Points to something sure
    - Even personified in places
  - The word of YHWH accomplishes God's purposes on earth through his messengers.
  - John is using this same motif to explain the Incarnation.
  - Jesus as the *logos tou theo/dabar YHWH* is at work in the world to accomplish God's purposes.



Significant Features – The *Logos*

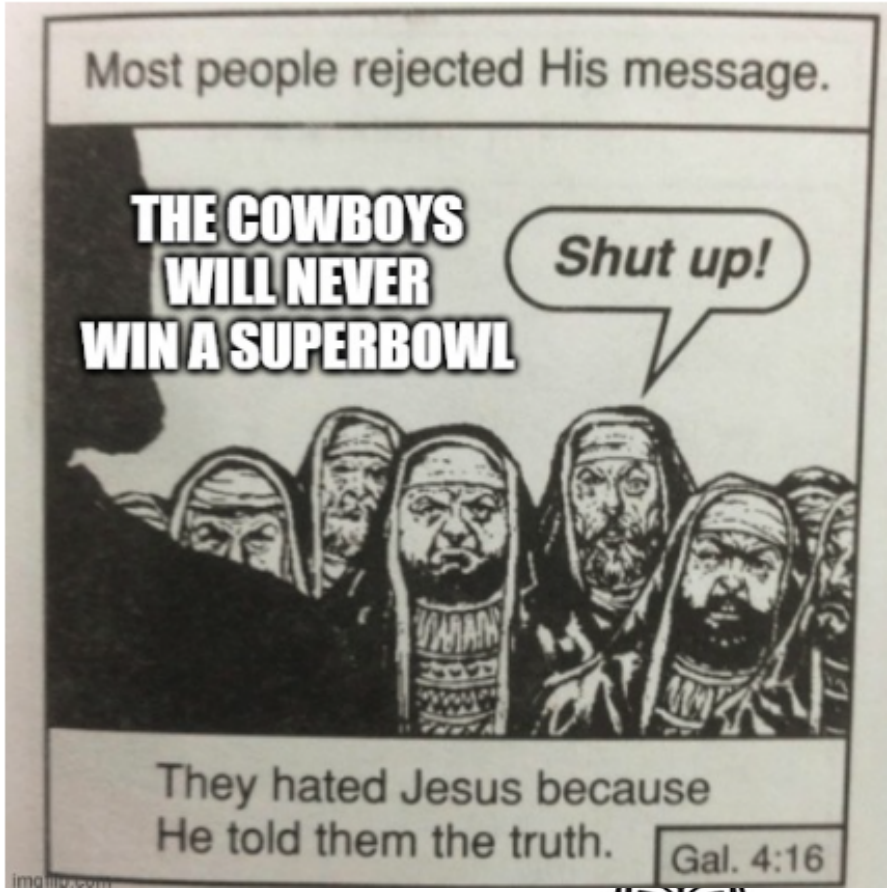
- Beware of heresy based on grammatical ignorance!
- 1:1 – “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God”
  - Some (Jehovah’s Witnesses) will read this as “the word was <u>*A*</u> god” due to the lack of a definite article – there are more than 1 god
  - However, this is a specific type of noun in ancient Greek called an “anarthrous noun”
  - Anarthrous nouns function as either qualitative – “the word was divine” – or definite – “the word was God” but not indefinite – “the word was a god”
  - John 1:49 – “You are the son of God, you are [the] king of Israel.”



WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

Significant Features – *Ego Eimi*

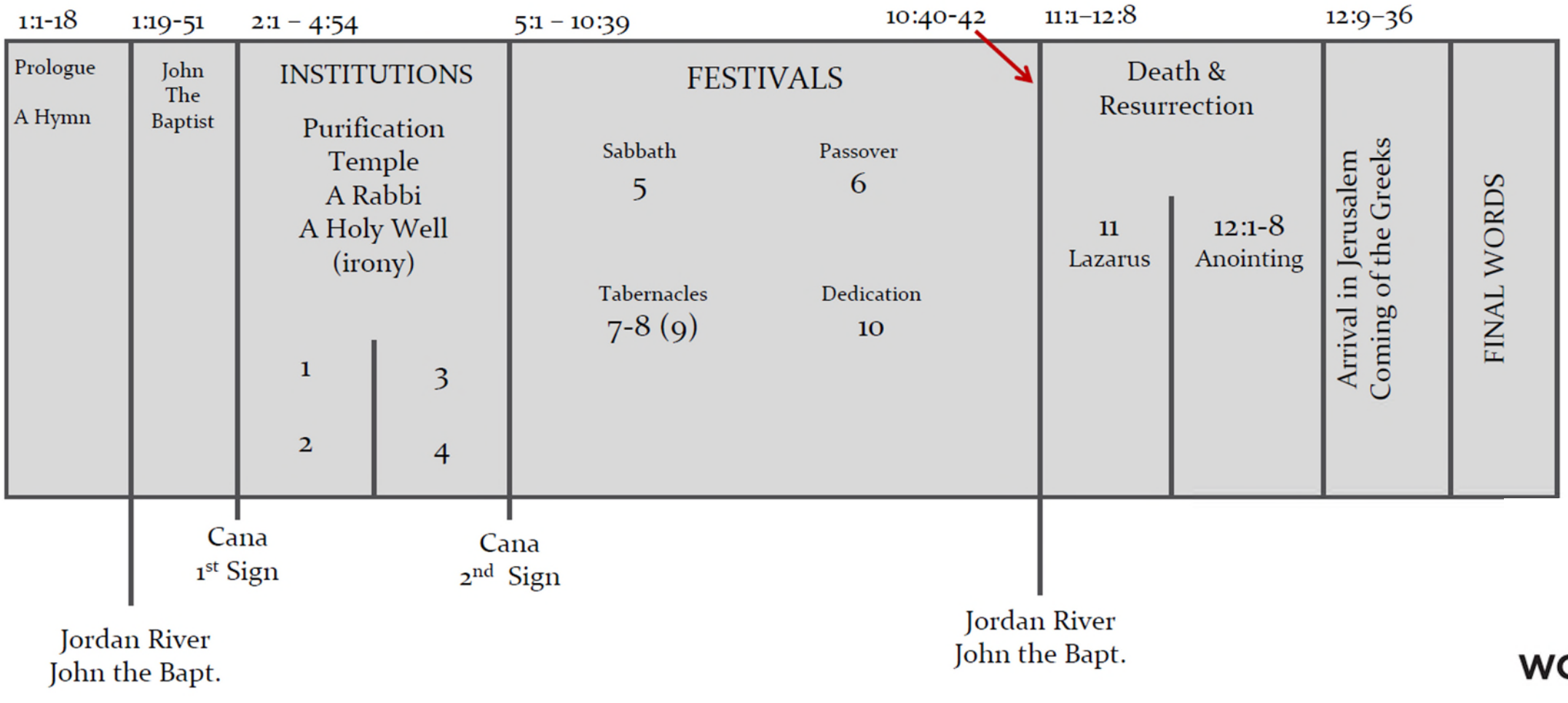
- Several places, Jesus uses the phrase “I AM”
- Divine theophany, cf Ex. 6:6
- Functions
  - Indicates Jesus’ divine status
  - Drive the character in the story/reader to a point of decision
  - Contrast to current Judaism
- Reaction of the audience
- Closely associated with Jesus’ death
  - Divinity irrevocably linked with crucifixion
  - The cross is the glory of Christ



WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

Structure of Gospel of John

Part I: The Book of Signs – Ch. 1 - 12



WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

Structure of Gospel of John

- The 1st major section of the Gospel of John is called the Book of Signs - has a list of enumerated miracles
  - Two major sections, the Jewish Institutions and the Jewish Festivals.
- Signs demonstrate that the Jewish institutions and festivals all ultimately point to Jesus
- John as the most Jewish gospel?
  - Intimate knowledge of Jewish festivals, culture, ideals
  - Assumes readers hold the same knowledge

WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

Part I - Institutions

- Jesus' work is superior to:
  - Jewish rite of purification - "stone jars for the Jewish rites of purification" (2:6).
  - The Temple – Jesus' resurrection will demonstrate he is focus of God's presence on earth.
  - A Jewish rabbi - undermining the Jewish religious social structure of the day
  - A holy well - Jesus offers not just a "well" (*pege*) but living water – *hudor to zoen*
- This section hits on the major Jewish themes of the 1st century –
  - Torah/ethnic boundaries (purification), covenant exclusivity (Temple), religious authority (rabbi), restoration/renewal (living water)



WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

Part II - Festivals

- Jesus co-opts the major festivals of Judaism to represent himself:
  - Sabbath (5:17) - “My father is still working, and I also am working”
  - Passover (6:35) - “I am the bread of life.”
  - Tabernacles (8:12) – “I am the light of the world”
  - Dedication (Hanukah -10:11) – “I am the good shepherd”
- Climactic sign is John 11 – resurrection of Lazarus
  - Event convinces the Jewish leaders to kill Jesus
  - John follows this with the symbolic anointing of Jesus with burial ointment, signaling the upcoming work of Christ on the cross.



Structure of Gospel of John

Part II: The Book of Glory – Ch. 13 - 21

13:1 – 30	13:31 – 17:26			18:1–19:42			20:1–29		21:1-25		
The Last Meal	THE FAREWELL DISCOURSE *"Where are you going and how will we know the way?"*			THE PASSION NARRATIVE			THE RISEN JESUS		EPILOGUE		
	13:31 – 14:31 Jesus' Departure & Disciples' Future	*15 – 16* Life after Jesus' Departure	*17* Concluding Prayer	*18:1 - 27* Arrest & Questioning	*18:28 – 19:16* Trial of Jesus	*19:17 - 42* Execution & Burial	At the Tomb	Where the Disciples Gathered	At the Sea of Tiberias	Jesus Speaks to Peter	Second Conclusion

WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

Structure of Gospel of John

- The 2nd major section of the Gospel of John is called the Book of Glory
- Completes the pendulum-like movement of Jesus transition from heaven (glory) to earth (humility) to heaven again (glory)



High

Prologue – In Heaven

High

Crucifixion/ Resurrection – Return to Heaven

Teaches about God/ Miracles

Low

Earthly Ministry Misunderstanding, Division, Rejection

Divine Personhood Revealed

WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

The Farewell Discourse

- Jesus explains his mission explicitly to the Disciples and explains what they (and therefore all Christians) will face when he ascends to heaven
- A “farewell discourse” is a common form in biblical literature where a leader summarizes his achievements and teachings and applies his message to future generations. Cf. Moses, Joshua, David, etc.
- Jesus is effectively turning his ministry over to them. His instructions include:
  - Keep the words of Jesus (14:15)
  - Remain in the vine and bear fruit (15:1ff)
  - Love one another (15:12)
- This comes with a promise:
  - Jesus will return and they will do even greater works than he did (14:12)

WOODSEDGE INSTITUTE

The Farewell Discourse

- The second half focuses on living the Christian life in the midst of persecution (Ch. 15-16).
  - 15:18 – “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.”
- References are made to social persecution as well such as being thrown out of the synagogues
- In the meantime, there will be a ***Paraclete*** to help
- Jesus ends with a prayer for the Disciples, the High Priestly Prayer in Ch. 17
  - Jesus prays for himself, the disciples, and all believers



WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

Epilogue of John

- Chapter 21 is the epilogue to the book:
  - 3rd time Jesus appeared to the disciples
  - Peter's restoration
  - Final editor comments address the life and death of the Beloved Disciple
- Peter's restoration completes his narrative arc throughout the gospels.
- This is in symphony with the other two types of disciple responses seen from the other portraits in John:
  - The women proclaim Jesus
  - Thomas doubts Jesus
  - Peter is restored



Today's Application

- Jesus is the perfect representation of God
  - The person you see in the gospels is the one who seeks relationship with us
  - The gospels are the keystone of the NT – everything else presupposes what they present

- Restoration of relationships with God and each other are an integral part of the Christian faith
  - God wants to restore our relationship with him
  - We are to be the peacemakers with others

WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

Today's Takeaways

- Luke's message of the Kingdom of God demonstrates it as a universal change of both divine relationship and social order
- The Gospel of John presents stories about Jesus that are independent of the Synoptics but complementary to them.
- John presents Jesus as God's *shaliach*, his divinely-appointed ambassador to represent the Father to the world.
- In John, Jesus follows a pendulum effect of humility (taking on flesh) and exaltation (the crucifixion and ascension), revealing his divine purpose.

WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE

Preparation for Next Week

- Reading:
  - The Acts of the Apostles
  - Burge / Green – Chapter 12

- Writing:
  - Theological ditty topic: “How do we know if the Holy Spirit is active in our church?”

WOODSEDGE
INSTITUTE