

9. John 18-21

An extraordinary weekend

D.A. Carson, The Gospel According to John, Pillar New Testament Commentary

Tom Wright, John for Everyone

Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John

Frederick Buechner, Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy and Fairytale

1.1 – 1.18		1.19 – 12.50		13:1 – 20:21		21.1-21.25	
Prologue		Book of Signs: Jesus' Ministry		Book of Passion : Cross and Resurrection		Epilogue	

1. Johanosynchrosynoptic Integration

- The first 3 gospels are called the 'synoptic gospels' because they give a **synopsis** of Jesus' life
 - *Most of Mark is contained in Matthew almost word for word, and a large amount of it is in Luke*
 - *The remainder of Matthew and Luke have a lot in common too, as well as some independent material*
 - *John has no overlap with the other 3 gospels except for occasional events, and in those cases they are told quite independently*
- The synoptics and John tend to be treated quite independently, and it is not fashionable to try to match them up too much, but it's amazing how well they read together, particularly around the passion³.
- Mark 14:58 ⇒ John 2:19: In Mark Jesus is accused of calling for the temple to be destroyed. But the saying is not recorded in Mark. It is in John however.
- The synoptics explain the detail of why the High Priests found Jesus guilty. But John has virtually nothing about what the inquisition contained. The events of John make more sense when you read the synoptics.
- Mark describes the Pharisees taking Jesus to Pilate, and Peter going into the high priest's courtyard, but John provides explanation as to why.

2. Peter's tragic trajectory - From Ear to Dispair and Repair

- Thursday lunchtime (13:36-8) Peter says he will go anywhere or do anything for Jesus. Jesus tells Peter he will deny him

³ There are also aspects of the synoptics and John that appear to contradict each other. I have not considered them here because of a lack of time, but there are many places where they are discussed more fully. My personal view is that there are some events that are difficult to synchronise, but the differences are no more than you would expect when independent witnesses report the same events. Each person will recall the parts that they considered important, so an absence or difference between accounts is not a big problem. If there were no differences, the implication of collusion, or the reliance on a single source would be a more difficult problem to resolve.

- Thursday night (18:10) Peter cuts off a servant's ear with his sword.
- Friday morning (18:17) Peter is denying his relationship to Jesus to anyone who asks
- After the resurrection (21:1-19) Jesus asks Peter three times whether he loves him. Peter is a broken man, but is more useful to God than when he had the courage to draw his sword

3. Who's the Pilate?

- Pilate's authority lay somewhere between his superiors and the Jewish leaders. He was the point where the power was exercised, but the circumstances forced him into a course of action he did not want to choose.
- Jesus' authority was far greater than Pilate's but he chose to give it up and be subject to the powerless men who condemned him to die.
- Pilate asked 'What is truth?', but was beyond the ability to know it. The question he needed to ask was 'Who is truth?', because then answer was right in front of him.

4. What Would Jesus Do In the End?

- It is surprisingly easy to forget that the gospels are all about Jesus. As much as it is important and interesting to consider all the threads that run through them, the purpose is to meet Jesus, understand his death and resurrection, and as a result entrust yourself to him.
- The scene in the garden has resonance with the garden in Genesis. The humans betray God in the garden, but this time the outcome is different. As Paul says in Romans 5:18, it took one man to bring sin into the world, and one man to bring it to an end.
- Jesus died during the Passover festival as the city sat down to eat their sacrificial lambs.⁴ This was a symbol of what Jesus' death was about, as well as the rejection of the Messiah who was to be its fulfilment⁵.

⁴ There was more than one meal/sacrifice during the Passover festival. The last supper was the traditional Passover meal, but there may have been other sacrifices made during the festival, and so one of these sacrificial lambs (chagigah) that the Sanhedrin members were eating during the crucifixion. Even if this was not the case, Jesus died outside the city with his blood being drained in a way that is evocative of the Paschal lamb, and their being a day apart does not detract from the connection. As with all symbolic fulfilment it is possible to argue minutiae to disprove the comparison, but this misses the point.

⁵ Given the history of anti-Semitism this is a very sensitive topic. It is worth noting that not all the Jews of Jerusalem rejected Jesus. For example all of the early 'Christians' were Jewish. The Christian gospel centres on Jesus' death being the fulfilment of Passover, and the Eucharist can only be understood in the context of Passover. This creates an incompatibility with mainstream Judaism, but in no way condones any persecution or racism towards Judaism. The best example of the how Christians should behave towards Jews over these issues is that of Jesus, who humbled himself completely. The Messianic rejection is a reason for mourning, not for self-righteousness or judgementalism.