

I have started to discuss Jesus' view(s) of the afterlife, and it has occurred to me, based on some readers' comments, that it may not be clear why I am not appealing to what Jesus says about such things in the Gospel of John. That raises a very large question (or two) that I don't recall dealing with head-on on the blog before (though surely some sleuth will point out that I did!): how John differs from the other Gospels and whether it can be used to establish what the historical Jesus of Nazareth actually preached and taught.

My views are that John is (a) **very** different from the other Gospels and that it is (b) **not** a reliable guide to the word of the historical Jesus. That will be important for my discussion of Jesus' view of the afterlife, and so I will devote several posts to the issue as a kind of sub-thread.

In this post I begin by giving some essential information about John's Gospel, a foundational introduction to what it actually is and what it contains. This is drawn from my college-level textbook [The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings](#).

Despite its wide-ranging differences from the Synoptics, the Gospel of John clearly belongs in the same Greco-Roman **genre**. It too would be perceived by an ancient reader as a **biography** of a religious leader: it is a prose narrative that portrays an individual's life within a chronological framework, focusing on his inspired teachings and miraculous deeds and leading up to his death and divine vindication.

As was the case with the other Gospels, the portrayal of Jesus is established at the very outset of the narrative, by the introductory passage known as the Johannine Prologue (1:1-18). This prologue, however, is quite unlike anything we have seen in our study of the Gospels to this stage. Rather than...

You need to belong to the blog to read the rest of this post. It will be worth it. Joining the blog costs less than a Big Mac a month! And it is **so** much healthier for you. Moreover, all the money goes not to calories but to charities. So join!

You need to be logged in to see this part of the content. Please [Login](#) to access.



[Lunch in Boston?](#)

[Jesus' Teaching About the Kingdom of God](#)