

I'm trying to explain how John is so very different from the other three Gospels in its presentation of Jesus' words and deeds. As I have shown, John tells different stories from the others. More striking when it tells the same kinds of stories, there are stark and compelling differences. Here is how I explain it in my New Testament textbook.

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The differences between John and the Synoptics are perhaps even more striking in stories that they have in common. You can see the differences yourself simply by taking any story of the Synoptics that is also told in John and comparing the two accounts carefully. A thorough and detailed study of this phenomenon throughout the entire Gospel would reveal several fundamental differences. Here we will look at two differences that affect a large number of the stories of Jesus' deeds and words.

First, the deeds. Jesus does not do as many miracles in John as he does in the Synoptics, but the ones he does are, for the most part, far more spectacular. Indeed, unlike in the Synoptics, Jesus does nothing to hide his abilities; he performs miracles openly in order to demonstrate who he is. To illustrate the point, we can compare two stories that have several striking resemblances: the Synoptic account of the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:21-43) and John's account of the raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44). Read them for yourself. In both, a person is ...

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