**The Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John: A Comparative Analysis**



Using the Synoptic Gospels as a whole and the Gospel of John separately, the main contrasts between the two are outlined in this essay. As mentioned in "The Identity of the Beloved Disciple and the Authorship of the Gospel of John," it will also touch on the identity of the beloved disciple and provide an analysis of the rising rift among the Johannine community as seen in letters 1, 2, and 3 John. The content, organisation, and language of the three Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are similar in several ways yet differ from the Gospel of John in several other ways.

**Significant Differences between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John**

1. Writing Style and Language:

* The Synoptic Gospels employ a similar writing style, known for their concise and direct narrative, utilising parables and analogies to convey Jesus' teachings.
* The Gospel of John exhibits a more philosophical and theological approach, employing longer discourses and elaborate theological language to present Jesus' message.

1. Chronology and Focus:

* The Synoptic Gospels follow a generally chronological order of events, emphasising Jesus' actions and miracles, particularly during his public ministry.
* The Gospel of John does not strictly adhere to chronology, focusing more on thematic elements, emphasising the divine nature of Jesus, and presenting symbolic miracles called "signs" to reveal his identity.

1. The Baptism and Genealogy of Jesus:

* The Synoptic Gospels include accounts of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist and provide genealogies connecting Jesus to David and Abraham.
* The Gospel of John omits these events, emphasising Jesus' preexistence and eternal nature as the "Word" (Logos) with God.

1. The Last Supper:

* The Synoptic Gospels narrate the Last Supper in which Jesus institutes the Eucharist with the familiar words of institution.
* The Gospel of John emphasises washing the disciples' feet as an act of humility and service.

1. Parables:

* The Synoptic Gospels include numerous parables used by Jesus to convey his teachings.
* The Gospel of John contains no parables but presents Jesus' teachings through lengthy discourses and dialogues.

**The Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John: The Identity of the Beloved Disciple and the Disintegration of the Johannine Community**

The identity of the beloved disciple, a prominent figure in the Gospel of John, has been a topic of scholarly debate for centuries. According to the provided article, the beloved disciple is traditionally believed to be John, the son of Zebedee, one of the twelve apostles. However, some modern scholars propose alternative identities, such as Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, or an anonymous symbol of the ideal Christian believer.

I lean towards the traditional belief that the beloved disciple is indeed John, the son of Zebedee. While the Gospel of John does not explicitly name the beloved disciple as John, the Gospel's early Christian community likely understood this connection. Moreover, early church tradition consistently attributes the Gospel of John to the apostle John. The intimate knowledge of the events and individuals in Jesus' life, demonstrated by the beloved disciple, aligns with John's position as one of Jesus' closest companions. While the evidence is not definitive, the traditional view holds considerable weight in supporting John as the beloved disciple.

The Johannine community, founded upon the teachings of the Gospel of John and its associated epistles (1, 2, and 3 John), experienced a growing rupture that eventually led to its disintegration. This division can be observed through the following aspects:

1. Theological Differences: As time progressed, diverse theological interpretations arose within the Johannine community. Some members focused on the spiritual and mystical aspects presented in the Gospel of John, emphasising the divinity of Christ. Others leaned towards more concrete, literal interpretations, leading to conflicts and divergent beliefs.
2. Christological Controversies: The Johannine community faced challenges in reconciling the belief in the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ. Some individuals within the community struggled with the concept of the Incarnation, leading to debates and divisions regarding the nature of Jesus.
3. Ecclesiastical Authority: Disagreements regarding leadership and authority within the Johannine community contributed to its fragmentation. Competing factions emerged, each claiming a unique understanding of the Gospel of John and its teachings.

**Conclusion:**

The Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John exhibit significant differences in writing style, focus, and content. While the beloved disciple's true identity remains debated, the traditional attribution to John, the son of Zebedee, remains a plausible interpretation. The Johannine community faced theological and Christological controversies and disputes over authority, ultimately leading to its disintegration. By understanding these differences and conflicts, scholars and readers gain a deeper appreciation for the diverse perspectives and challenges early Christian communities face in developing and interpreting the New Testament.

https://youtu.be/4BeFXVm8-8M

**References:**

Bruner, F.D. (2012). The Gospel of John: A Commentary. [online] Google Books. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. Available at: <https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Gospel_of_John.html?id=4mlyCgAAQBAJ>

Dyer, B. (n.d.). The Synoptic Problem: Four Views. www.academia.edu. [online] Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/27864000/The_Synoptic_Problem_Four_Views>

Sparknotes.com. (2019). SparkNotes: Bible: The New Testament: The Gospel According to John (John). [online] Available at: [https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/newtestament/section4/.](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/newtestament/section4/)