Contrasts between John and the Synoptic Gospels

1) Material found only in the Fourth Gospel (John), not in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt, Mark, Luke):

   Prologue (1:1-18)
   “Signs,” beginning with the Wedding at Cana (2:1-12)
   Dialogue with Nicodemus (2:23—3:21)
   Jesus and/or his Disciples Baptize People (3:22-26; 4:1-2)
   Samaritan Woman at the Well (4:1-42)
   Jesus Heals a Sick Man at the Pool of Betheseda (5:1-18)
   New Details at the Feeding of the 5000, followed by Bread of Life Discourse (6:1b, 3-6, 8-9, 12b, 14-15; 6:22-65)
   [Woman caught in Adultery (7:53—8:11)]
   Jesus Gives Sight to a Man Born Blind (9:1-41)
   Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead (11:1-44)
   Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet (13:1-20)
   Last Supper Discourses, incl. “Paraclete” & “Vine and Branches” (13:31—16:33)
   Great Prayer of Jesus (17:1-26)
   New Details at the Trial before Pilate, and at the Crucifixion (18:28—19:16; 19:20-24, 26-28, 30-37, 39)
   First Resurrection Appearance to Mary Magdalene alone (20:11-18; cf. Matt 28:9)
   Resurrection Appearance to Thomas (20:24-29)
   First and Second Endings to the Gospel (20:30-31; 21:24-25)

2) Material familiar from the Synoptics but not found in John:

   No Infancy Narrative (cf. John 1:14 – “the Word became flesh”)
   No Childhood Episodes (cf. 1:12; 13:27 – believers called “children”)
   No Baptism of Jesus (cf. 1:19-34 – John testifies about Jesus)
   No Temptation in the Desert (cf. 8:44; 13:2, 27 – the role of Satan & the Devil)
   No Calls to Repentance (cf. 1:29; 5:14; 9:41; 15:22; 20:23 – on sin and forgiveness)
   No Sermon on the Mount or Beatitudes (cf. 13:17; 20:29 – Jesus calls believers blessed)
   No Lord’s Prayer (cf. 17:1-26 – the Great Prayer of Jesus)
   No Mission of the Disciples during Jesus’ Lifetime (cf. 13:20; 14:12; 20:21 – risen Jesus sends them out)
   No Parables (cf. 10:6; 15:1-8; 16:25, 29 – a few “figures of speech”)
   Few Predictions of Jesus’ Return (only 14:3; 21:22-23 – Jesus will “come again” or “come”)
   No Exorcisms (cf. 7:20; 8:48-52; 10:19-21 – Jesus accused of having a “demon”)
   No Transfiguration Story (cf. 1:45; 3:14; 5:45-47; 9:28-29 – Jesus associated with Moses)
   No Institution of Eucharist at the Last Supper (cf. 6:22-39; 13:1-20 – Bread of Life Discourse; Washing of Feet)
   No Ascension Narrative (cf. 3:13; 6:62; 20:17 – Jesus talks about descending and ascending)

3) Material significantly different in John and in the Synoptics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synoptics</th>
<th>John</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesus’ ministry lasts only about one year</td>
<td>Jesus’ ministry spans three Passovers (2:13; 6:4; 11:55)</td>
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<td>John the Baptist is “Elijah”; preaches repentance</td>
<td>John [the baptizer] is not Elijah but a “witness” to Jesus (1:19-36)</td>
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<td>Jesus’ ministry begins after John the Baptist’s arrest</td>
<td>Jesus’ ministry overlaps with John’s (3:22-30)</td>
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<td>First four disciples Jesus calls are two pairs of brothers:</td>
<td>First five disciples: Andrew, an anonymous second one, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathanael (1:35-51)</td>
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<td>Simon &amp; Andrew, James &amp; John</td>
<td>Only a few “signs” but several long monologues and dialogues</td>
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<td>Many “miracles” but few longer speeches</td>
<td>Jesus’ opponents usually called “the Jews” or “the world”</td>
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<td>Jesus’ opponents include Sadducees, Herodians, etc.</td>
<td>Opponents try to stone Jesus for blasphemy (8:59; 10:31-33; cf. 11:8)</td>
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<td>Opponents plot to destroy/kill Jesus for various reasons</td>
<td>midnight # visits # Jerusalem (2:13; 5:1; 7:10)</td>
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<td><strong>Only one journey to Jerusalem</strong></td>
<td><strong>Multiple visits to Jerusalem</strong> (2:13; 5:1; 7:10)</td>
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<td>Temple cleansing occurs one week before Jesus’ death</td>
<td>Temple cleansing at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry (2:13-22)</td>
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<td>Anointing at Bethany by anonymous woman, and objection by anonymous people</td>
<td>Anointing at Bethany by Lazarus’ sister Mary, and objection by Judas Iscariot (12:1-8)</td>
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<td>Last Supper is the Passover Meal; Jesus is crucified on the Day of Passover</td>
<td>Last Supper is before the Passover (13:1; 18:28); Jesus dies on the Preparation Day before Passover (19:14, 31, 42)</td>
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<td>“Love your neighbors”; “Love your enemies”</td>
<td>“Love one another” (13:34-35; 15:12; 17; focus within community)</td>
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<td>Peter is first and most prominent of the “apostles”</td>
<td>Mary Magdalene, Martha of Bethany, and the “Beloved Disciple” are more prominent as “disciples”</td>
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<td><strong>Future</strong> Eschatology: “Kingdom of God” is coming</td>
<td>Realized Eschatology: “Eternal Life” now (3:36; 5:24; 6:47-54)</td>
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<td>“Gethsemane”: betrayal through Judas’ kiss</td>
<td>“Garden” in Kidron Valley: Jesus IDs himself for arrest (18:1-11)</td>
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<td>Women prepare spices to anoint Jesus’ body after his burial</td>
<td>Joseph Arim. &amp; Nicodemus anoint Jesus’ body before burial (19:38-42)</td>
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</table>
4) “So What?” - Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- Why does the Fourth Gospel omit so many stories found in the Synoptic Gospels?
- Does the Fourth Evangelist presume that the reader knows the material contained in the Synoptics?
- What is the significance of all the new material found only in the Fourth Gospel?
- What is the significance of the changes or additions made in the stories found both in John and the Synoptics?