

Dr. Dave Turner, John, Session 21, Genesis 1 and John 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Turner, John, Session 21, Genesis 1 and John 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. David Turner's session on the Gospel of John explores the significant intertextual relationship between John 1 and Genesis 1. He argues that John's prologue intentionally alludes to the creation account to establish Jesus, the Word (Logos), not only as the agent of original creation but also as the one who brings about a renewal of that creation through the light of the Gospel. **The session examines key parallels such as "in the beginning," the concept of the Word, the act of creation, life, and the imagery of light and darkness.** Turner considers the historical, linguistic, cultural, and theological aspects necessary for proper exegesis, advocating for a theological exegesis that acknowledges the influence of the Old Testament on the New. **Ultimately, the study aims to understand John's theology of creation and new creation by tracing the connections back to Genesis.**

2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Turner, John, Session 21 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → John).



**Turner_John_Session
n21.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Turner, John, Session 21, Genesis 1 and John 1

Briefing Document: Genesis 1 and John 1 - Intertextuality and Creation/New Creation

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. David Turner in Session 21 of his teachings on the Gospel of John, focusing on the intertextuality between Genesis 1 and John 1. Turner argues that John's prologue intentionally alludes to Genesis 1, not merely to establish Jesus as the creator, but more importantly to present him as the one who is renewing and recreating the original world through the light of the Gospel. The session delves into specific linguistic and thematic connections between the two texts, exploring the implications for a Johannine theology of creation and new creation.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Intertextuality between Genesis 1 and John 1:

- Turner asserts that John 1 deliberately echoes Genesis 1, requiring an understanding of the historical, linguistic, cultural, and theological aspects of both texts.
- He emphasizes the importance of "theological exegesis" which acknowledges the influence of the Old Testament on the New and the canonical context. He states, "For me personally, it's impossible and inadvisable as well to read the Old Testament without awareness of and influenced by the New Testament use of those seminal scriptures."
- The study aims to understand how the Old Testament influences the New, viewing the New Testament as an authoritative interpretation of the Old.

1. John's Intention: Creation Renewal vs. Creation Theology:

- Turner poses the central question: "To what extent does John intend a theology of new creation or of creation renewal?" He believes John is building upon the doctrine of creation to show Jesus "is renewing the original world as it was created. He is recreating the world so to speak by shedding not only the light originally upon it but by renewing the world through the light of the Gospel which centers on him."

1. Critique of Concordism:

- Turner highlights John Walton's concept of "concordism" as an "ill-advised approach that tends to read modern scientific theories...back into ancient biblical texts." He warns against downplaying the historicity of scripture by attempting to force agreement with ephemeral scientific theories.

1. Johannine Prologue as Midrash:

- Turner suggests that the Johannine prologue functions as an "implicit midrash" on Genesis 1 and Exodus 33 and 34, indicating a deep engagement with these foundational Old Testament texts.
- He acknowledges the likely influence of other Jewish wisdom literature (Proverbs 8, Sirach, Wisdom, Baruch), Philo's concept of Logos, and Targumic ideas like Memra, but argues that the Johannine Logos "transcends these anticipatory entries."

1. Key Intertextual Elements:

- **"In the beginning" (John 1:1 & Genesis 1:1):** Turner details the occurrences and nuances of the Hebrew word "bereshit" and the Greek "arche" in both Testaments, highlighting their use in referring to various kinds of beginnings, including the creation of the world. He notes, "It's commonly noted that John 1:1 is modeled after Genesis 1 and understands Jesus, the word become flesh, as the agent of creation."
- **"The Word" (Logos):** Turner connects John's use of "ho logos" to God's creative speech in Genesis 1 ("kai eipen ho theos genetheto") and other Old Testament texts emphasizing creation by word (Psalm 33:6, 9). He also discusses the semantic overlap with Torah and Hokmah (wisdom) in the Old Testament and Second Temple literature, noting how John's Logos surpasses these concepts: "This greatly transcends the doctrine of personified wisdom as God's creative agent." He also points to New Testament parallels in 1 John 1:1, Revelation 19:13, and potentially 1 John 5:7 (though noting its disputed canonicity).
- **The Act of Creation (John 1:3 & Genesis 1):** Turner points out the allusion to Genesis 1:1 ("epoiesen ho theos to ouranon kai ten gen") in John 1:3 ("panta dei autou egeneto"). He also notes the echo of the "let there be" language ("egenetheto phos"). He discusses the Hebrew words "bara" and "asah" for creation in the Old Testament and the Greek "poieo" and "ktidzo" in the New Testament (though the latter is absent in John). He emphasizes the significance of

"ginomai" in John 1:3 and 1:10 as potentially alluding to the frequent use of "haya/ginomai" in Genesis 1:1. The sequence of God's speech leading to existence in Genesis 1 is highlighted as particularly relevant.

- **Life (John 1:3-4 & Genesis 1-2):** Turner emphasizes that "in him was life" (en auto zoe en) in John 1:4 alludes to the centrality of life in Genesis 1, where God creates "living creatures" (psukon zoson/nephesh heyra) and breathes the "breath of life" into humans. He explores the concept of life in the Old Testament as not just physical but also relational with God within the covenant. In the New Testament, Turner contrasts physical life with the transcendent life in Christ. He highlights John 8:12 (Jesus as the light of the world providing life) as significant for understanding John 1:4-5.
- **Light and Darkness (John 1:4-5 & Genesis 1:2-3):** Turner notes the allusion to the creation of light in Genesis 1:3 ("kai eipen ha theos genetheeto phos, kai egenetho phos") in John 1:5 ("kai to phos en te skotia phainei"). He discusses the metaphorical use of light and darkness in both Testaments, representing good and evil, blessing and judgment. He addresses the punctuation debate regarding "ho-gegonen" and its impact on the nuance of the allusion, suggesting the latter reading ("what happened in him was life") might better support the new creation implications. He concludes that John uses the Genesis 1:3 imagery as a "central metaphor for the mission of Jesus," presenting the Word as the "incarnation of light" overcoming the darkness.

1. Johannine Biblical Theology of Creation and New Creation:

- **Logos and Original Creation:** Turner asserts that John intentionally presents the Word as not only existing at creation but as the active creator: "Apart from him, nothing was made, and without him, nothing, not one thing happened." He emphasizes the Word's direct agency, rejecting the idea of a delegated or inferior creative role.
- **Logos and Renewal of Creation:** Turner argues that John portrays the Logos not only as the pre-flesh creator ("asarchos") but also as the incarnate revealer of God ("ensarchos"). The depiction of the Logos as "life and light" validates a "Johannine theology of salvation as renewal of creation." He suggests that while Paul explicitly teaches this, John communicates it more implicitly through narrative.

- He mentions scholarly works by Kostenberger and Brown that identify creation overtones and a paradise motif throughout John's Gospel, including potential allusions to the seven days of creation and Genesis 2.
- The potential allusion to Genesis 2:7 (breath of life) in John 20:22 (Jesus breathing the Spirit on disciples) is highlighted as a significant intertextual connection supporting the new creation theme.

1. **Conclusion:**

- Turner reiterates that John portrays the Word as the creator of everything in Genesis 1. He cautions against origin theories that diminish the Word's agency.
- He clarifies that John's purpose is not to debate the "how long" of creation but to provide the foundational context for understanding Jesus' story.
- The ethical dualism of light and darkness in John is rooted in the Genesis creation account.
- Canonically, John 1:1-5 is part of a larger trajectory from Genesis 1-2 through Old Testament prophecies to the new creation described in Revelation 21-22.
- Ultimately, "Jesus is the agent both of the original and of the new creation."

Quotes:

- "It is apparent to me that when John refers to Genesis chapter 1, he's not simply attempting to tell us that Jesus, the word of God in the New Testament is the creator of the Old Testament. He's attempting to build on that doctrine of creation to teach us that Jesus is renewing the original world as it was created."
- "For me personally, it's impossible and inadvisable as well to read the Old Testament without awareness of and influenced by the New Testament use of those seminal scriptures."
- "Concordism is Walton's term for an ill-advised approach that tends to read modern scientific theories, whatever they are, back into ancient biblical texts on the assumption that the Bible itself intends to speak directly to current scientific questions and that it will agree with the current scientific theory."
- "It seems to me that the Johannine prologue is a sort of implicit midrash on these two major texts, Genesis 1 and Exodus 33 and 34."

- "It's commonly noted that John 1:1 is modeled after Genesis 1 and understands Jesus, the word become flesh, as the agent of creation."
- "This greatly transcends the doctrine of personified wisdom as God's creative agent."
- "Apart from him, nothing was made, and without him, nothing, not one thing happened."
- "Jesus is the agent both of the original and of the new creation."

This briefing document provides a comprehensive overview of Dr. Turner's analysis of the intertextuality between Genesis 1 and John 1, highlighting his central argument for a Johannine theology of creation renewal centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ as the Logos.

4. Study Guide: Turner, John, Session 21, Genesis 1 and John 1

Study Guide: Genesis 1 and John 1

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What is Dr. Turner's primary purpose in exploring the intertextuality between Genesis 1 and John 1?
2. According to Dr. Turner, what is "concordism," and why is it considered a problematic approach to biblical exegesis?
3. Identify two ways the phrase "in the beginning" (en arche) in John 1:1 echoes Genesis 1:1 in both the Septuagint and Hebrew.
4. How does John's use of "logos" in John 1:1 relate to the concept of God's creative speech in Genesis 1? Provide one example from Genesis.
5. In what way does the description of creation in John 1:3 ("everything was created through him") allude to the creation account in Genesis 1?
6. Explain the significance of John's statement "in him was life" (John 1:4) in the context of Genesis 1 and the creation of living beings.
7. How does the juxtaposition of light and darkness in John 1:5 relate to the events described in Genesis 1:2-3?
8. According to Dr. Turner, what is the significance of the debate surrounding the punctuation of "ho-gegonen" in John 1:3-4?
9. Beyond the original creation, what does Dr. Turner suggest is another theological implication of John's allusions to Genesis 1, particularly concerning the "logos" as life and light?
10. Briefly describe one piece of scholarly support mentioned by Dr. Turner for the idea of "creation overtones" or a "paradise motif" in the Gospel of John beyond the prologue.

Answer Key

1. Dr. Turner aims to explore how John 1 alludes back to Genesis 1 to understand the nature of the logos and the doctrine of creation in John. He argues that John

is not just stating Jesus is the Old Testament creator but is also teaching that Jesus is renewing and recreating the world through the light of the Gospel.

2. Concordism, as defined by John Walton, is an ill-advised approach that reads modern scientific theories into ancient biblical texts. Dr. Turner explains that this approach downplays the historicity of scripture in its original context and underestimates the temporary nature of current scientific theories.
3. The phrase "in the beginning" (en arche) in John 1:1 directly mirrors the Greek Septuagint translation (en arche) of the Hebrew "bereshit" in Genesis 1:1. This linguistic parallel intentionally links the beginning of John's Gospel with the creation account in Genesis.
4. John's use of "logos" alludes to God's creation by spoken word in Genesis 1, where God says, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3), and other creative acts are initiated through divine speech ("and God said"). The "logos" in John 1 is presented as the active agent through whom creation occurs, similar to the power of God's word in Genesis.
5. The statement "everything was created through him" (panta di' autou egeneto) in John 1:3 echoes the concept of God as the active creator in Genesis 1:1 ("God made the heaven and the earth"). The use of the preposition "through" (di') emphasizes the agency of the Word in the act of creation.
6. John's statement "in him was life" (en auto zoe en) alludes to Genesis 1 where God creates living creatures (nephesh chayya) in the waters and on the land, and breathes the breath of life into humanity. Jesus, as the source of life, connects back to God as the original giver of life in the creation account.
7. The statement that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5) alludes to Genesis 1:2-3 where darkness covers the abyss before God speaks light into existence. John portrays Jesus as this light entering a world still marked by darkness.
8. The debate over whether "ho-gegonen" should be linked to verse 3 or verse 4 affects the nuance of the allusion to Genesis 1:3. Linking it to verse 3 emphasizes the universal scope of the Word's creation, while linking it to verse 4 stresses that life itself originated in what came into being through the Word, potentially supporting a new creation theology.
9. Beyond the original creation, Dr. Turner suggests that the portrayal of the logos as life and light in John 1:4-5 legitimizes a Johannine theology of salvation as the

renewal of creation. Just as the Word brought light and life to the original creation, it brings spiritual light and life to a world in darkness.

10. Andreas Kostenberger, drawing on the work of Janine Brown, identifies "creation overtones" throughout John's Gospel, including the motif of light and life in the prologue, and allusions in the Book of Signs, Passion Narrative, and Resurrection Account, such as Mary Magdalene encountering Jesus as the "gardener" (alluding to Eden) in John 20.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the key intertextual connections between Genesis 1 and John 1 as presented by Dr. Turner. How do these allusions contribute to John's portrayal of Jesus in the prologue of his Gospel?
2. Discuss Dr. Turner's argument that John 1 presents Jesus not only as the creator of the original world but also implicitly lays the groundwork for a "new creation" theology. What evidence does he provide, and what are the implications of this perspective?
3. Evaluate the significance of the concept of "logos" in John 1 in light of its Old Testament background, including the idea of God's creative word and the personification of wisdom. How does John's understanding of the logos transcend these earlier concepts?
4. Explore the metaphorical use of light and darkness in both Genesis 1 and John 1. How does John build upon the creation narrative to convey theological truths about Jesus' identity and his mission in the world?
5. Consider the potential challenges and benefits of employing "theological exegesis," as discussed by Dr. Turner, when interpreting biblical texts like John 1 in light of Genesis 1. How does this approach differ from strictly historical exegesis, and what are its implications for understanding the relationship between the Old and New Testaments?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Intertextuality:** The relationship between texts, especially literary ones. In this context, it refers to how John 1 alludes to and draws upon Genesis 1.
- **Logos:** A Greek term meaning "word," "reason," or "discourse." In John 1, it refers to the pre-existent divine Word through whom God created the universe, and who became incarnate in Jesus Christ.
- **Exegesis:** The critical interpretation and explanation of a text, especially of scripture.
- **Theological Exegesis:** An approach to biblical interpretation that considers the theological significance of the text within the broader context of the biblical canon and the history of its interpretation.
- **Historical Exegesis:** An approach to biblical interpretation that focuses on the historical, linguistic, and cultural context of the text to understand its original meaning.
- **Concordism:** An approach to interpreting Genesis 1 that attempts to align its details with modern scientific theories. Dr. Turner, following Walton, critiques this approach.
- **Septuagint:** The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.
- **Midrash:** A Jewish method of interpreting biblical texts by elaborating on their meaning and drawing connections to other parts of scripture. Dr. Turner suggests John's prologue functions as an implicit midrash on Genesis 1 and Exodus 33-34.
- **Ensarchos:** A Greek term meaning "in flesh" or "incarnate." Dr. Turner uses this to describe Jesus as the Word made flesh.
- **Asarchos:** A Greek term meaning "without flesh" or "apart from flesh." Dr. Turner uses this to describe the pre-existent state of Jesus before his incarnation.
- **Ethical Dualism:** The concept of two opposing forces or principles, such as good and evil, or in this context, light and darkness as metaphors for truth/righteousness and falsehood/sin.
- **New Creation Theology:** The theological concept that through Jesus Christ, God is not just redeeming individuals but is also in the process of restoring and renewing the entire created order.

5. FAQs on Turner, John, Session 21, Genesis 1 and John 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Genesis 1 and John 1

1. What is the primary purpose of John referencing Genesis 1 in the opening of his Gospel?

John's primary purpose in alluding to Genesis 1 is not merely to state that Jesus, the Word of God, was the creator of the Old Testament creation. Instead, he aims to build upon this foundation to present Jesus as the one who is renewing and recreating the original world. This renewal occurs through the light of the Gospel, which centers on Jesus himself, mirroring the original creation where light was first shed upon darkness.

2. How does Dr. Turner approach the interpretation of Old Testament texts in light of the New Testament, and why?

Dr. Turner embraces a theological exegesis, acknowledging that it's impossible and inadvisable to read the Old Testament without the influence of the New Testament's interpretation. He views the New Testament as the authoritative development and fulfillment of the Old Testament. Therefore, his exegesis seeks to understand how the New Testament authors, including John, utilize and build upon seminal Old Testament scriptures. He consciously acknowledges his predispositions as a reader of the full canon.

3. What is "concordism," and why does Dr. Turner caution against it when interpreting Genesis 1 and John 1?

Concordism, as defined by John Walton, is the approach of reading modern scientific theories into ancient biblical texts, assuming the Bible intends to directly address current scientific questions and align with contemporary scientific understanding. Dr. Turner cautions against concordism because it tends to downplay the historical and literary context of Scripture while overestimating the permanence of current scientific theories. His study focuses on the intertextual and thematic connections between Genesis 1 and John 1 within their ancient Jewish and biblical milieu, rather than attempting to find scientific agreement.

4. What are some of the key intertextual connections identified between "in the beginning" in Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1?

The phrase "in the beginning" (Hebrew: *bereshit*; Greek Septuagint and John: *en archē*) is a direct and significant link. In the Old Testament, *reshit* refers to various beginnings, including the creation of the world. John's use of *en archē* immediately evokes Genesis 1:1, establishing Jesus, the Word, as pre-existent and the agent through whom the creation occurred. This connection asserts Jesus' foundational role from the very start of existence.

5. How does John's concept of "the Word" (Logos) in John 1 relate to God's speech in Genesis 1 and the Old Testament understanding of God's word and wisdom?

John's use of "the Word" (Logos) directly alludes to God's creative speech acts in Genesis 1 ("Let there be..."). This echoes the Old Testament emphasis on God's word as powerful and effective in bringing about creation (Psalm 33:6, 9). Furthermore, the Logos in John transcends but builds upon the Old Testament concepts of God's *debar* (word) and *hokmah* (wisdom), which are personified as having an active role in creation (Proverbs 8:22-31). While Jewish wisdom literature anticipates a divine agent in creation, John presents the Logos as fully divine and the direct agent through whom everything came into being.

6. In what ways does John's Gospel portray Jesus as involved in the act of creation, drawing parallels with Genesis 1?

John 1:3 states that "all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." The verb "made" (*egeneto*) echoes the Septuagint's "let there be" (*genēthētō*) used in Genesis 1 for God's creative pronouncements. This establishes Jesus, the Word, as the active agent in creation, mirroring how God's speech brought forth existence in Genesis. The repetition emphasizes the complete dependence of creation on the Word.

7. How does John's use of "life" and "light" in John 1:4-5 connect with the creation account in Genesis 1?

John's statement that "in him was life, and the life was the light of men" alludes to the creation of living creatures and the creation of light in Genesis 1. In Genesis, God creates living beings (*nephesh heya*) and then light to dispel darkness. John presents Jesus, the Word, as the source of this life, and this life inherently brings light to humanity, contrasting with the darkness mentioned in Genesis 1:2 and the subsequent spiritual darkness. This suggests a renewal where the life in Christ overcomes the darkness of a fallen world.

8. Beyond the initial creation, what does Dr. Turner suggest about a "new creation" theme in John's Gospel in relation to Genesis 1?

Dr. Turner argues that John's prologue lays the groundwork for a Johannine theology of new creation or creation renewal. Just as the Word brought light to the original darkness in Genesis, the incarnate Word, Jesus, brings the light of the Gospel to a world now in darkness due to sin. While Paul explicitly teaches on new creation, John communicates this more implicitly through his narrative. The themes of life and light associated with Jesus, echoing the original creation, point towards a renewal of creation through him. The breathing of Jesus on his disciples in John 20:22, reminiscent of God breathing life into Adam in Genesis 2:7, is presented as a significant allusion to this new creative act through the Spirit.