

# Dr. David Turner, Gospel of John, Session 1, Introduction, Part 1

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Hello, my name is David Turner and we're in Grand Rapids, Michigan at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary to do a course with Bible e-learning on the Gospel of John. So, it's our pleasure to share this with you, 20 or so lectures on video on John. The approach that we'll be using is going to be multidisciplinary.

I'm a jack-of-all-trades if anything, and I'm not a specialist in any one of these areas, so I want to essentially try to share with you some of the areas that I think are important for John. And so sometimes we'll be just following the text through and just a narrative flow. Part of the time we'll be dealing with specific questions that arise in terms of the historical background of the text.

Other times we'll be looking into cultural matters and things like that. We'll just be sort of using all these different tools to understand the text better, and at times I may even get a little preachy and show the application of the text for today, at least as I'm thinking about it. So, we're beginning here with two sets, two lectures on the introduction to John.

The first one will deal with literary and theological matters. The second one will be dealing with historical and textual matters. So, as we begin, we notice the way John has been viewed in the past as one of the four Gospels, and the four Gospels in the church early on were viewed in terms of the four creatures of the book of Ezekiel, which are adapted by the Apocalyptists in Revelation chapter 4 as well.

So, we have these beautiful illuminated manuscripts from the book of Kells which deal with these things, looking at the four Gospels in terms of one with the face of the ox, one with the face of the man. This would be the ox. This would be the human.

This would be the lion, and finally the eagle. We're interested in the eagle because that is how they viewed John and the Gospel of John. I love to find eagles when we're out and about in northern Michigan.

Here's one that I saw a few years ago over in the vicinity of Ludington. So the church thought of the four Gospels in terms of the four creatures in Ezekiel and Revelation 4 because they viewed them as characteristics of those books themselves. And while there's a little bit of variation in it, they thought of the Gospel of John as the eagle because they thought John's Christology sort of soared over the world, particularly when they began to read the prologue.

They thought of sort of an overall beautiful perspective in that way. So as we begin, we're thinking about, first of all, what kind of a book John is. And let me ask you, when you pick up the Gospel of John and read it, how do you read John? How do you read the newspaper? Anymore, we don't have newspapers, so perhaps some of you don't know what a newspaper is.

We have websites now, and newspapers have websites. But it used to be we had these archaic things that came every evening or every morning called newspapers, and they had different sections in them. Some of the newspapers would be the front page where you supposedly got the news.

Then you would get editorials on what the editors, the people who wrote the newspaper, thought of the news. Then you would get like the comic strips. Then you would have classified advertisements trying to sell you things.

Each of those parts of the newspaper, as you would guess, had its own way of making meaning and its own approach. So, when you were reading the front page, it used to be you were supposed to think that you were getting the news, just the facts. When you read the editorial, you were finding out what the people who owned the newspaper were trying to make you think about the facts.

The comics were obviously things that would make you laugh. And when you read the classified ads, you'd find out whether or not you wanted to buy that used car. I submit to you that you probably had a different set of learning expectations when you read the front page than you did when you read the classified ads, because the classified ads were trying to sell you something, and the front page was supposed to basically just tell you what was going on.

We compare that to the library of books that make up the Bible and all the different types of literature that we have there. In the Bible, we have stories, and historical narratives. Perhaps you prefer to think of them that way.

We have poems. We have prophecies. We have proverbs and wisdom sayings.

We have letters. And we have visions that God gave to various people about what he was doing and would do in the future. So, when we look at the Gospels in general and the Gospel of John in particular, we're asking, how does this book make meaning? How do we understand the narrative books in a way that honors what they're trying to do? So, when it comes down to the Gospels, we sort of ask the question, is John a historical book or a theological book? Sort of an oversimplification, but one that I think gets to sort of the heart of the matter, as John is viewed in many places today.

So, do we think of the book as just a book that gives us data about Jesus, information, or is the book that wants to put a spin on the information in a way to make us take on a particular political or particular worldview that would be about Jesus? So, is John a historical book or a theological book? And if you're tracking with me, you're probably guessing, that I know what he's going to do now. He's going to say it's both and. And yeah, it didn't take too much to figure that out.

So, when we think about the genre of the Gospel of John, in some sense, it has historical content, but it also has theological emphasis as well. So the question is, how does all this work out when it comes to John? When we think about John as one of the four Gospels, many people would say that it's pretty clear that John takes a different approach than the synoptic Gospels, because the synoptic Gospels are a little more, many people would say, historically oriented, and the Gospel of John is a little more theologically oriented. But that, I think, remains to be seen.

So, I'm thinking about the four Gospels together as one genre, and they are a bit different, obviously, but they have more similarities than differences, at least in my opinion. We'll talk more about that as we go on here. So, a book that is just about history, a chronicle of history, is just giving us events, just telling us what happened.

And the purpose of a book like that is simply to show you what went on back in the day. And the stress of a book like that is investigatory. It's just telling you what happened.

It's a way in which the past is looked at in terms of its facticity, just that it happened. A book that is theological tells us more about the significance of the events, more about what happened, and the way in which what happened is interpreted. So if you let me play a little bit with the two words, investigation and interpretation, we can get at this thing a little bit better.

The question would be, when the Gospel authors looked at the events of Jesus' life and wrote them down, were they primarily just investigating the past, or were they interpreting the past for the present, for the audience that they were seeking to edify and to help with the information about Jesus? And I think we would have to say that both activities were going on. Luke's prologue to his Gospel gives us quite a bit of information about how he did his work with a great deal of historical research and looking into people who were actually there. He calls them *autoptai* or eyewitnesses.

He speaks about how they passed traditions on down, I think, both in writing and orally. And so, he is attempting to add his information to what is already out there about Jesus. So obviously we don't have a statement like that in the Gospel of John.

The author of John was purportedly, as we read the book, a companion of Jesus, not someone like Luke who wasn't. But I think when it comes to the genre of the Gospels

and the way they turn out, these two ideas of investigation and interpretation are both helpful in this respect. So, the Gospels aren't simply telling us what happened with Jesus.

They are asking a question, so what? Why do we need to know about Jesus and what is so important about him that we need to do it? Another factor that we need to think about in addition to the historical and the theological side is the literary side. It's clear that the Gospels, even when you just look at the first three Gospels, the synoptics, they're rather different in some ways and they all have their techniques in the way they tell the story of Jesus to make it a little bit different. And so overall the story is the same, but in some individual Gospels, they have their individual emphases.

So, there is the issue of literary creativity. This is especially true with John where there are many things about John that don't quite comport with the way the story of Jesus is told in the synoptic Gospels. So, in the Gospel of John, then, I think we have lots of freedom and people are already acknowledging that this is a beautiful book.

It's a book that's aesthetically pleasing and it is a book that clearly has a literary agenda. John tells us at the end of the book that he could have told us lots of things about Jesus, but he's limiting what he has written to the things that have led people to faith so that they might have life. So, he stresses a particular agenda that leads him to select what went on and craft his book accordingly.

So, to try to describe what the Gospels are in general and the Gospel of John in particular, we might use this type of language, that the Gospels creatively tell us the theological significance of the historical events of the life of Jesus. They're not just there to provide information for us, but they're there to provide information that will accomplish edification and ultimately transformation into the life of Christ. So, as we continue, we can maybe illustrate what we're talking about here about the John of the Gospels with the test case from John chapter 13.

At a very poignant moment in the life of Jesus, the disciples are in the supper with him in John 13 and he's just washed their feet and given them the troubling news that something has been troubling him deeply that one of them will betray him. You probably have read the story before. So as soon as he says that, Peter, always sticking his nose into things, always speaking up, wants to know who did it.

So, he asked the beloved disciple, who in my view is John, who is nearest Jesus, to ask him who did it. So, Jesus explains this to them in sort of an insider way by saying it's the one to whom I give a morsel of food. So, when Jesus gives a special morsel of food to Judas, Judas then departs after Jesus says to him, what you're doing, do quickly.

We have this very interesting text in John chapter 13 verse 30 that says, as soon as Judas took the bread, he went out and it was night. It was night. So, if we think of John as simply a historical book, then we're saying, okay, John has given us a lot of specific information here about the exact time in which Judas went out to betray Jesus.

He did it at night. The sun had gone down, and we are to think of that as giving us precise chronological data on the way in which the betrayal began. On the other hand, if night has more of a poetic or metaphorical meaning, we are to think about it in the sense that Judas was a benighted individual.

Judas had not been exposed in his inner person to the light of the gospel in a transforming way. He had obviously become acquainted with it to some extent but had not really been changed by it, or he would not have betrayed Jesus. So, what is this verse telling us? Is it basically telling us when Judas left to betray Jesus, or is it telling us what kind of a person Judas was? Or is it some of both? Is it mostly there to give us chronology and we can get a little bit of a moral application from it, or is it mainly there to tell us what kind of a person Judas was with just, you know, we get a little bit of chronological information about it? So how can we answer a question like this? It would seem to me that we have to answer a question like this in light of the overall flow of this gospel and the overall way in which the terminology is used.

So, if the overall way in which the terms night and light and darkness and brightness in John are used strictly in a chronological way to tell you what time of the day it is, then perhaps you would say this is simply a historical statement, and it gives us information about when Judas was left to betray Jesus. On the other hand, if in the gospel of John, we find out that John uses this sort of language in a way to teach us other things, perhaps things about ethics, perhaps things about theological truth, then we would begin to get the impression for sure that when Judas went out it was night, is something that makes us ponder that it's a bit coincidental that not only did he go out at night historically, but that was fitting for a person of his lack of spiritual illumination to do his dirty work at night. So, when you think about how light and darkness are used in John, we only have to start thinking in John chapter 1, and the very first thing that it talks about the Lord Jesus doing there is that it says that he was light and that he brought light into the world, and light is connected deeply with life there.

Later on in the gospel, John chapter 8 verse 12, as you probably know, Jesus said, I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life. That's interesting after we have just an incidental comment in chapter 3 to the effect that the man named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night.

So, we see these things like this going on in John. I would even wonder whether in chapter 21, where we have the incidental remark that's made when the disciples

went fishing, that they caught nothing all night long, but when Jesus arrived at dawn, immediately he helped them find a great catch of fish. Maybe that's stretching it a bit.

Maybe that's strictly a historical detail that we don't need to press, but in a book like the Gospel of John, where the real world many times has symbolic overtones, I personally don't think it is pressing it too much. Then we can add to Johannine thinking in the first letter of John in chapter 1, where he speaks about the Christian life as a life which is supposed to be lived in the light. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with him, and his blood cleanses us from all sin, and we need to confess our sins when we realize we have dark spots in our lives.

Even thinking about the apocalypse, which is not as easy to connect with the Gospel letters of John, you'll recall that as Revelation 21 and 22 conclude the canonical scriptures, it does so with language that's very reminiscent of the first two chapters of the Bible in Genesis 1 and 2. Among them is a stress upon light. You'll recall that we're told in Revelation 21 and 22 that the New Jerusalem is a city that does not need a lamp, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light, and the sun and moon are not even needed any longer there. So it seems to me that when we take into account not only the way in which light and darkness are used in the Gospel of John, not only there, but in the epistles and even the apocalypse, we can see clearly that when Judas went out and it was night is a statement that I would personally take to be factually true, historically true, but John is building upon that historical veracity to teach us something about the benighted nature of Judas' spiritual state and what a sad state it was, as we learn later in John.

So, we can only turn back to someone like St. Augustine and his comment on John in one of his homilies. So, we have a little Latin lesson for us here, *erat autem nox*, it was night, and he who went out it was night. This is Augustine quoting the Vulgate.

So, here's his comment, it was night, and he who went out was night. So Judas himself personified and epitomized the night, and so when we see this as an example of John as a historically-based, yet theologically motivated document with a great deal of literary creativity and excellence and beauty, we can agree with what L.T. Johnson said in his introduction to the New Testament book, that the Gospel of John is stylistically simple, yet symbolically dense. I think that tells us a great deal about the genre of the Gospel of John and how it makes meaning.

So, we move on now to the understanding of how John tells us the story of Jesus, and he does so in a way that, as do the Synoptic Gospels, focuses on the public ministry of Jesus in Galilee and in Jerusalem. But John is very unique in a couple of the ways in which he does this. First of all, John has this prologue or preface to his Gospel in chapter 1, verses 1 through 18, where he speaks of Jesus as the Word connects Jesus up to Moses, and connects Jesus up to John the Baptist.

He speaks of the Lord Jesus then as the one who is the ultimate exegesis of the glory of God, and then he begins to tell in the story how that works. So, he has introduced Jesus as the one who has been testified by John in the prologue, and in chapter 1, verse 19, as the narrative begins, the very first part of it is about John. So, we run from then chapter 1, verse 19, about John the Baptist's ministry and how John's disciples come over to followers of Jesus.

Jesus begins to go to Jerusalem after he does the miracle of changing the water into wine at Cana of Galilee. So, we have a series of events then that goes on in public all the way over to the end of chapter 12. During this time, Jesus went back and forth a few times between Galilee and Jerusalem, and so in that sense, much of that material describes the same period of time in Jesus' life as do the synoptic Gospels.

However, most of that material is not at all found in the synoptic Gospels. Then we have what we might call the private ministry of Jesus, which shifts from the visible signs he did for the crowds to the way he shows the glory of God to his disciples in chapters 13 through 17. It's sometimes called the upper room discourse, but the term upper room is a term from the synoptic Gospels, not from John himself, so I'm not sure we should call it the upper room.

On the other hand, it's called the farewell discourse, and that really doesn't work either because Jesus assures the disciples that he's not going away. He is coming back. How he's coming back through the Spirit is somewhat difficult to grasp there.

Perhaps we'll talk more about that in a later video. So, if we call it the farewell discourse, we'll probably be a little bit closer to John's terminology than calling it the upper room discourse. So, in this material, we have Jesus preparing the disciples for his departure.

He washes their feet to illustrate to them the nature of their own service and to teach them a lesson about spiritual cleansing. He tells them that although he's departing, the comforter will come, the helper, the advocate, however, we want to translate the Greek word *parakletos*, and the Holy Spirit then will pick up where Jesus has left off essentially in their lives, and he will meet their needs. To finish that part of the discourse, of course, we have the marvelous prayer of Jesus in John chapter 17, which seems to be one of the most amazing chapters in the amazing book which comprises the Bible.

So, following the public ministry of Jesus in chapters 1 to 12, and the private ministry in chapters 13 to 17, we have the passion account. Here's where John comes back and tends to follow much more of the synoptic tradition and has parallel accounts with many of the events that are there. So, as you know the story, Jesus has just said

they should be not worried in the world, John 16:33, because he has overcome the world.

How does he overcome the world? He overcomes the world by being arrested, which seems like a strange way to overcome the world. He is arrested, he is tried, he is crucified, yet he rises from the dead. So, Easter shows the nature of the victory that Jesus has been talking about, and after that resurrection narrative in chapter 20, we have the incident where Thomas wasn't there to meet Jesus and doubts that he was really resurrected.

So, Jesus comes the next time around and meets Thomas and says, here I am, you better believe it now. Thomas says, I do, I get it, my Lord and my God. So, we have the editorial comment at the end of John chapter 20 to the effect that Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written here in this book, but these are written that you might believe and that you might have life in his name.

So, you would think at that point in John chapter 20, verse 31, the curtain comes down and the book is over. In fact, I think if we were reading the gospel of John and chapter 21 started on the next page, we might even stop at the end of chapter 20, verse 31, and think that we had completed the book. But we have this extra chapter that some people think was added on by a later author.

I'm not so sure of that at all, but we could call it an epilogue. The epilogue in John chapter 21 tells us essentially that Jesus appears to Peter and the disciples as they're back in Galilee fishing again, and Jesus sort of puts Peter on the spot by asking him three times if he loves him. And each time when Peter affirms that he loves him, Jesus reiterates to him that if you love me, then you take care of my people.

You feed my sheep, you pastor my flock. So, Peter is basically reaffirmed in his ministry as Christ's apostle and the beloved disciple comes in there for a little bit of attention as well. And he signs off by affirming that his witness is indeed true.

He could have written more, but the whole world itself couldn't contain all the books that ought to be written. So, this is how the Gospel of John concludes then with this epilogue about Peter that reaffirms him in his ministry. The book then has essentially a public and private section with the prologue and the epilogue.

Looking at it a little bit more visually, I guess we could say that the Gospel of John has what many scholars call the Book of Glory, chapters 13 through 17, which follows the Book of Signs, the public ministry of Jesus. So, the prologue and the epilogue then sort of set off these two books, these two chunks, if you will, to use a technical term, from chapters 1 through 12, which stresses the signs of Jesus, and chapters 13 through 17, which shows basically how he explains and manifests the glory of God to



his disciples. We could add to this perhaps the insight that the reason why John wrote this book is made clear at the end of chapter 20.

The key to John is hidden at the back door, so to speak. So, this gives us a pretty good idea about why and how John has written. He could have said lots of things that he chose not to say that he omitted because he wanted to stress what he calls signs.

Signs are significant. They are significant things that happened that point to who Jesus really is. And so, the things that he tells us, the little vignettes, the little episodes, the persons that he comes into contact with throughout chapters 1 through 12 are there, I think, to illustrate the truth that is at the heart of the prologue.

The heart of the prologue is he came into his own and his own didn't receive him, but to those who did, he gave the authority to become the children of God. We began reading then in the public part of the gospel of John, chapters 1 to 12, and we see all these different individuals that Jesus encounters. Some receive him, some do not.

Some are authorized to become children of God, and some are not. And so we, after reading this, find out what we've been reading in chapter 20, verses 30 and 31. John has given us all these vignettes, all these people that Jesus encountered to illustrate and show us what it's like, what it means when he says in chapter 1, verse 12, as many as received him, he authorized them to have become children of God.

So, if we look at these significant events, these signs, and we think about the significance of Jesus in the gospel of John, we notice that there are seven, and they seem to sort of go in an ascending way in terms of their power and in terms of the miraculous nature of them.

The first one, of course, is the transformation of the water into wine at Cana of Galilee in chapter 2. It's interesting that this is noted to be Jesus' first miracle in Galilee, and that he does it in a rather understated way. He doesn't really let anybody know how he's doing it.

The only people who know that he changed the water into wine are the people who brought him the big containers of water, to begin with. The reason for this understated way of doing it is, as Jesus told his mother at the beginning of that narrative, his hour had not yet come. He was not attempting to draw attention to himself in that respect very much at that point.

The next thing that's called a sign is the healing of the royal official's son at the end of chapter 4, and that event is linked back to the one in chapter 2 with the saying that this is the second sign that Jesus did in Galilee.

The third one is the healing of the paralytic at the pool with five porticoes, which we identify as the pool Bethesda in Jerusalem, which would be at the north end of the temple complex as we'll show after a bit. Things are perhaps becoming a bit more miraculous on a scale of miraculousness, if there is such a thing, from changing water to wine to healing a royal official's son to a person who could not move, a paralytic.

The next thing that Jesus does, which is typically identified as a sign, is the feeding of the multitudes in John chapter 6, which is the only miracle of Jesus that is narrated in all four of the Gospels. So, the healing of the multitudes reminds them and is intended to remind them of the manna in the wilderness, and Jesus teaches that it wasn't really Moses who fed them the manna, but it was God who sent them the manna. Jesus himself is manna of a new and better kind.

So, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes feeding thousands of people with the contents of a knapsack is pretty amazing.

The next event that is described as a sign is right after that, the walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee. The disciples go on in the boat.

Jesus has gone up on the mountain to avoid the crowds, and he meets them back again at a miraculous stilling of the storm and meeting them there and stilling the waters and being on shore again miraculously. Only God is the one who can control the storm, so Jesus is implicitly showing himself to be God in this miracle.

The next one will be healing the young man born blind, which turns it up a notch, I guess, as far as amazing things.

This is a situation of congenital blindness, the person is never able to see. This is an interesting story because it speaks to the prejudice of the time that they assumed that anyone who was sick had sinned. And Jesus explains that that is certainly not the case in this person's life.

And the chapter ends by using the man born blind to show the irony of the Pharisees who think they see, but actually refuse to see the light that's in Jesus, as opposed to the young man who was able to come to sight both physically and spiritually.

Again, we're sort of becoming more and more miraculous as we go along to the ultimate miracle in John, which is raising Lazarus from the dead in chapter 11. Lazarus looms large in John's narrative of Jesus' triumphal entry and of his early time in Jerusalem on his final visit, because due to the healing of Lazarus, the raising of Lazarus, many, many, many more people were following Jesus, and so the triumphal entry is almost a triumphal entry of Jesus with Lazarus beside him, not literally, but almost that way, because it adds to the popularity of Jesus.

And the Pharisees and the Jewish leaders decide that they might as well kill Lazarus too, which seems to be quite paradoxical since Jesus says just raise him from the dead, they say no matter, we'll kill him. So, sort of an irrational thing going there. So the raising of Lazarus is a huge deal, which brings Jesus into Jerusalem for the final time in John chapter 11.

So, signs are a big deal in the Gospel of John. Another thing that's very similar in the Gospel of John is the term works. The works of Jesus in many ways are parallel to the signs, and so John uses both these terms and says much about each of them.

Jesus will often say the works that I do are not my works, they're the works that the Father has given me to do. So, if you don't like my work, then you don't like my Father, because I don't do anything that my Father has not given me and authorized me to do. The signs in the Gospel of John are quite an amazing matter because they have a lot to do with faith, and there's a complex relationship between signs and faith in the Gospel of John.

The very first sign that Jesus does in Cana of Galilee, the pericope ends by saying he did this sign and he revealed his glory and his disciples believed in him. Then Jesus went to Jerusalem and he did signs there. They're not specified which ones he's doing, but as you come to the end of John chapter 2, you see many believed in Jesus while he was in Jerusalem when they beheld his signs.

The only problem with that is the next verse says Jesus did not believe in them. They committed themselves to him, he did not commit himself to them, because he knew humanity. He knew what people were like, he knew what was in people.

So that sort of leaves us wondering, what does that mean? To understand this a bit better, chapter 3 tells us that there was a man who came to Jesus by night, his name was Nicodemus, and the first thing he said to Jesus was, we know that you're a teacher come from God or you couldn't be doing these signs. So, I think Nicodemus was the type of person that's described in general at the end of John chapter 2. Nicodemus was in that sense a believer in Jesus, perhaps not a believer in the sense that we would like to see him to be a believer, but the story isn't over yet with Nicodemus as John proceeds as we will see as we move along. All this to say that there is this uneasy thing about signs and faith in John.

In chapter 4, Jesus is exasperated that the royal official won't believe in Jesus unless he sees a sign. He wants the healing and so that is a bit of an exasperation. In chapter 6, Jesus says to the people who saw him, who received the meal, the miraculous meal, that you're following me not because you saw the sign, but because you ate.

But of course, they did see the sign or did they see the sign and do they really believe in Jesus or do they just want Jesus to be what they want him to be? They're using the

sign to confirm their pre-understanding of Jesus as someone who would just care for their material needs. After all, in many instances in 2nd Temple Judaism, that's what they thought the Messiah was. The Messiah would be someone who would get the Romans off their back and bring them back to the glory of the Davidic kingdom back in the day.

But Jesus was not that kind of a Messiah. So, he said to them in chapter 6, you're following me not because you saw the signs, but because you ate and you got a full stomach. So, this sort of concludes as we noted previously in chapter 20, where Thomas comes to believe in Jesus after seeing, in a sense, a sign.

The resurrection of Jesus is perhaps the ultimate sign in John. And Jesus speaks to Thomas and says, because you have seen, you believed, blessed are those who believe without seeing. Then he goes right into saying many other signs Jesus did in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

So, Thomas sees with the aid of what seems to be a sign. Jesus pronounces a blessing upon those who believe without seeing a sign. So, there are those who see and believe truly.

There are those who see and believe in some sense that we would probably think is less than genuine faith. And there are those who are brought by the Spirit to faith apart from seeing any sort of miraculous deeds of Jesus. In any event, as we study through the Gospel of John, we'll have a repeated occasion to notice the relationship between signs and faith.

And we'll have some opportunity to think through it again as we go. So, as we finish this first video on John, we want to just point out a couple of nice sources on it. To study the theology of John, we have a very nice new book by Andreas Kostenberger called *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*.

Another helpful book on the theology and understanding of John is edited by Richard Bauckham and Carl Moser on the *Gospel of John and Christian Theology*. A nice and more readable approach to this by Moody Smith, *Theology of the Gospel of John*. One of the books that is more influential in the study of the Gospel of John is by J. Louis Martin.

Martin believes that the Gospel of John was written to speak to the issue of Jewish people who were being thrown out of the synagogue due to their faith in Jesus, alluding to the few places in John where that occurs, including Chapter 9 where the man who was born blind was healed. So, keep those books in mind and others as you think about the future and study the Gospel of John and its theology. A few themes that we'll talk about here as the last portion of our first lecture, are some major Johannine themes and ideas.

John, of course, in the prologue speaks of Jesus as the ultimate revelator of God. John 1, verse 1, the beginning was the word, the word was with God, the word was God, this one was in the beginning with God, in him was light, and the light was the life of the world. There's a statement also, of course, in verse 14, after saying in the beginning was the word in Chapter 1, verse 1, says in Chapter 1, verse 14, and the word was made flesh.

So, Jesus is not only the original creator, Jesus is the ultimate revealer of God. Similar statements, of course, about Jesus as the word in the first verse of the first letter of John, as well as in Revelation Chapter 19. So, to read John correctly, we need to understand it as a which features Jesus as the ultimate revealer of God.

Jesus has shown us the Father. Philip asks, show us the Father and we'll be happy, please do that. Jesus says, if you have seen me, you have seen the Father, Chapter 14.

So, check that out. Another important thing in John is the way in which he speaks of polar opposites in terms of ethical dualism. I'm calling it ethical dualism, not in any sense an ontological dualism or a metaphysical dualism, but a dualism of ideas.

God is opposed, of course, by Satan. See this so clearly in Chapter 8, where Jesus says, I do the deeds of my Father, you do the deeds of your Father. They protest and say our Father is Abraham.

Jesus says, no, your Father is the devil because you don't live like Abraham lived. You don't believe me like Abraham would have believed me. And so we have this very strong dichotomy between God and Satan.

As such, we have a strong dichotomy between heaven and earth and the respective values that are found in those places. That's sort of epitomized and typified by light and darkness, about which we already spoke, and the way in which those who are obedient to God through Jesus are walking in the light. Those who refuse the truth of the gospel of Jesus are walking in the darkness.

We discussed that a bit ago in Judas and his departure. Here are some other texts as well that deal with that. If you want to follow up on them, we won't work harder on them right now.

So, we have Jesus as revealing God. This revelation of God is shown in a pattern of ethical dualism, and it's also tied to people from the history of God's dealings with Israel. So, Jesus' forerunner is John the Baptist.

John the Baptist is the one who is not the light, but he bears witness of the light, even though later Jesus refers to him as a light that shined for a moment. John himself didn't view himself as the light. The prototype of Jesus was Moses, and there's a great deal of subtle Moses typology going on in John chapter 1, as we will see in a couple of videos from now.

So, Moses' desire to see God and to experience God more intimately so that he could lead God's people, particularly in Exodus chapters 33 and 34, becomes quite an interesting background, I think, for what's going on here in John chapter 1. Jesus says to the people in chapter 5 that they say they believe in Moses, but if they had believed in Moses, if they had believed in scripture, they would have believed in Jesus because Moses wrote about Jesus. So, Jesus is clearly saying that if you get Moses right, you'll get me. If you don't get me, you don't really get Moses either.

So what Jesus is showing them is what Moses longed to see. Moses longed to see God's face. Moses received instead a partial revelation of God in Exodus 33-34, but in Jesus, we have the full-blown living color HDTV, if you will, the revelation of God, and Jesus is exegeting God.

He is the one who is in the bosom of the Father, if you will, according to chapter 1, verse 18. Very interesting word, which I think perhaps is best explained by showing that Jesus is the one who was embraced by the Father. Jesus is within the Father's embrace.

Jesus is in the most intimate possible relationship with God. Therefore, Jesus shows who God is throughout the Gospel of John, and if you have seen him, you have seen the Father, and you have had a chance to understand what the glory of God is all about. Finally, another emphasis in the Gospel of John, of course, is on the advocate, the helper, the comforter, if you will, depending upon how you translate the word *parakletos*.

The Spirit is mentioned as early as chapter 1, where John the Baptist says that I was told that the one upon whom I see the Spirit descending and remaining, John says, which I think is interesting, one upon whom the Spirit descends and remains, this one is the Lamb of God. We're told at the end of John chapter 3 that he gives the Spirit without measure. Apparently, that verse is a bit ambiguous, but apparently that refers to the Father giving the Spirit without measure to Jesus, possibly to Jesus giving the Spirit without measure to his people, but I think more likely to God endowing Jesus, the Father endowing the Son with the Spirit in an unlimited fashion.

Another key text in this whole discussion of the Holy Spirit in John is John 7 verses 37 to 39, which as we'll see later, again, I think speaks of Jesus as the source of the Spirit. It is actually from Jesus' being that the Spirit flows to the church. The text also

says in John 7 verse 39, the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Of course, this text isn't speaking of the existence of the Spirit, but of the Spirit's ministry to the people. And so, we find this further explained in chapters 14 through 16, where Jesus makes the astounding statement in chapter 16 that it is expedient for you that I leave. I just think how crazy it must have sounded to Jesus' disciples for him to say to them, you'll be better off if I'm gone.

Essentially, that's what he's saying. He says, if I don't go, the comforter, the advocate won't come. The comforter who will be the one who will not only equip you to understand better what I've been teaching but will also be the one who will convict the world.

So, Jesus says, not so much that I'm leaving and you're going to be orphans now, I'm not abandoning you. He says I'm simply transforming the way that I'm going to be present with you. I have been physically present with you.

Now I'm going to be present with you through the Spirit. The Spirit will basically be to you what I have been and will meet your needs as I have met them. So, the Spirit is in a sense, the continuing presence of Jesus with the disciples.

The Spirit's job is essentially to remind the disciples of what Jesus has already told them and to teach them new things from Jesus. So, the Spirit is Christocentric. The Spirit is about who Jesus has been and the Spirit is the word of Jesus to them and they go ahead.

So as Jesus departs and plans to go on one of his last words about the Spirit in chapter 20, verse 22, essentially is that as the Father has sent him, so he is sending them. And of course, he doesn't say that until he says to them, receive the Holy Spirit. So, you wonder just how much to press that.

The Gospel of John does not directly mention that John the Baptist baptized Jesus. It simply says that John was told that the one upon whom he sees the Spirit descending is the one who will baptize with the Spirit. Nevertheless, we know that Jesus was endowed by the Spirit from the Father for his mission.

So as Jesus prepares the church for its mission, he similarly endows the church with his Spirit. We'll have some reason to talk about this text in John chapter 22 a bit more, how it ties into the biblical theology of the New Testament on the Pentecost, but we'll save that for another time. So, we just tried to introduce briefly in this lecture, this first lecture, the overall genre and literary content and theology of John.

To do something like this in one lecture is to be crazy, I think, to try to accomplish all this. You've perhaps heard the saying before that the Gospel of John is such a simple book that a child can understand it, yet it's such a complex book that scholars never really think they have understood it. Sometimes that's compared to a child wading in the stream to a large animal like an elephant drowning in a stream.

So perhaps you're already catching this a bit just from this first video, that when we are introducing the Gospel of John, simply that is what we're doing. We are just introducing it. We'll simply be introducing it in the next 20 or so videos as well because there's certainly going to be a great deal there that we're not able to cover and that we don't yet grasp.

And as we continue to study the Gospel of John, God will continue to show us more things from it that will be to his glory and our good in the days ahead.

So, thank you for the first lecture. We've enjoyed it. I hope you have too.