

Dr. David Turner, Gospel of John, Session 2, Introduction, Part 2

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This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 2, Introduction to the Gospel of John, part 2, Historical and Textual Matters.

Hello, we're back to the Gospel of John again in our second video.

Our first video attempted to introduce you to theological and literary aspects of the Gospel, and now we're back to do a second introductory video, this time more on historical matters, how we got the Gospel of John, the historical setting of the text, and how we got it today, textual criticism types of things. So again, we're wading in the pool of John and getting some of it, but we could drown in this, it gets very deep. So, we're trying to introduce you to the things you need to be thinking about with this Gospel, but we're hardly pretending that we're covering everything that needs to be said.

So, we echo what John said at the end of the book itself, that everything that needs to be said about the Gospel of John we can't say or else the whole world would be filled with things that should be said about the Gospel of John. So, we're just taking a few drips out of the ocean here today and hopefully, it will be useful to you in your life and ministry. So, as we think about the historical setting of John and everything, I can't help but mention this fine book by Craig Blomberg on the historical reliability of John's Gospel.

Craig has gone through and spoken about how much of John relates to the historical setting, and talked about some of the historical problems of the book, so it was a great overall resource on historical matters and for the Gospel of John. So, the first thing we want to discuss in relationship to the historical setting of John is the matter of its authorship, and to discuss the authorship of John we speak about internal and external evidence. External evidence has to do with what we know about the Gospel of John from people who have spoken about it in the early church.

Internal evidence basically is what the book itself implies about who its author might have been. So, we start with the external evidence and just note that in the early church, as early as the 2nd-century, people like Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Papias as cited in Eusebius who wrote during the 4th century, spoke about John and about its authorship and its setting and how it came to be. These writings, particularly the comment about Papias that Eusebius makes are interesting in that they typically will relate John to the city of Ephesus in Western Asia Minor, and we'll speak about how John carried out the end of his life and ministry there.

But Papias' statement is particularly interesting in that he refers not only to John the disciple, but John the Elder. And so, we have some exegetical problems with Papias trying to figure out whether he was speaking about two persons, two different Johns, John the disciple as one individual and John the elder as another. Not everyone looks at Papias in that way.

Could be he's speaking about the same person just using those two different titles for them. But if you want to delve into this more fully, this is a matter of some consternation trying to figure out exactly what Papias was referring to as far as John the Elder. It appears to me as a non-Johannine specialist, but someone who's just been working with John for some years along with lots of other things, that the gospel of John is certainly tied at the very least indirectly to John the apostle, the disciple of the Twelve.

And whether there was an elder John or other Johannine associates who formed the nucleus of what has been called a Johannine community, I think we would want to say that the teaching in this book is Jesus as filtered through John, the member of the Twelve, the original disciple. And it is the gospel according to that tradition, the tradition that came from the apostle John, one of the Twelve. What we can learn from internal evidence is basically that the author of this gospel was an eyewitness, someone who was one of the Twelve, one of the original followers of Jesus.

When he says, we beheld his glory, he is affirming that he is one who has actually been there and seen the things that he speaks of. Of course, we have other references to the beloved disciple in the gospel of John, and the beloved disciple is the one who was the closest to Jesus and who reclined, as the text says in John 13, reclined upon Jesus' breast at the meal. We'll take some time to try to unpack what that meant in the ancient Roman three-couch arrangement called the triclinium later, but it's clear that internal evidence, whether you accept it or not, affirms that the person who wrote this book was a close personal associate, an intimate friend, and companion of Jesus.

So, what we have in this book then, as the book concludes in chapter 21, is a reference to this individual, the beloved disciple, and the beloved disciple affirms that we know that his witness is true. He never really says what his name is, but he says, you know that I've been there, and I have done that, and so I know what I'm talking about. So, we're looking here at John 21, verse 25.

Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that should be written. So, he's making it very clear that he was a part of the early ministry of Jesus and knows that of which he speaks.

Since he does not name himself, we have what we, I guess, could call an oblique testimony to authorship, not a specific one that mentions the name of the author, but a very broad reference to someone who is a bit cryptically identified as the beloved disciple. And so, we don't have total anonymity when it comes to the author of the book. We have a sort of a qualified anonymity.

And through the early tradition of the church, this somewhat oblique evidence that we have in the book itself, by the majority of the church at least, has been understood to be a reference to the beloved disciple as John, a disciple, a member of the original 12. When we think about the intended audience for the Gospel of John, there has been a big debate in gospel studies of late about whether John was written for, of the gospel as a whole, written for wide or narrower audiences. It has become the rage, I guess, in the second half of the 20th century of New Testament gospel scholarship from the standpoint of the discipline known as redaction criticism, to think that the authors of the Gospels redacted or edited their traditions that were available to them in a way that was specifically tailored to meet the needs of their respective communities.

To some extent, then, these respective communities became the arbiters for how we would understand the content of the gospel. So, the theory, then, that the gospel content was based on the community became sort of a vicious circle, and people like Richard Balcombe, as we'll see in a moment, have spoken against that approach to the Gospels. But for a moment, let's just think about some of the thinking today about John's audience.

Ancient traditions, the ones that we just mentioned on the previous slide, tend to put John at or near Ephesus, and the end of his ministry was carried out there, so his materials were written for the church in that particular region. Of course, it was circulated more widely in the church after that time when it was originally focused there in Ephesus.

J. Lewis Martin and others have the theory that John was written for Christians, specifically Jewish Christians who were having difficulties maintaining their fellowship with synagogues across the Diaspora, because of their allegiance to Jesus, they were being thrown out of the synagogue. So, Martin was of the opinion that texts like John 9, which refers to the blind man whom Jesus healed, and texts like 12:42, which refers to those who had believed in Jesus but would not publicly let that be known, because they would be thrown out of the synagogue if it were known, and in 16, where Jesus warns the disciples that they will be persecuted and that their persecution will include them being thrown out of the synagogue.

So, Martin believed that John was written for this group of Christians who were essentially being persecuted for their faith in Jesus, who was being disfellowshipped from synagogues around the Western Asia Minor part of the world. A current

thinking that goes against that is based on a book by Richard Bauckham entitled *The Gospels for All Christians*, and Bauckham has edited the book and written the first chapter of it.

His article is called *The Gospels for All Christians*. The book takes its name from his article, and Balcom has said that the idea that the Gospels were written for tiny little communities, and then the tiny little communities that have been theorized then become the whole basis for the exegesis of the book, is a vicious circle, and so the hypothesis is confirmed by the data because the data confirms the hypothesis, and so it's what I've been hearing called recently confirmation bias, that if you have a theory about something, then you tend to think that you can prove it by the evidence because you're looking at the evidence strictly from the standpoint to prove the theory that you have going in. So Bauckham has amassed some evidence in this book about why all four of the Gospels were written, not for individual cell groups in this little town or this little place, or one particular class of Christians within the Roman Empire, but these Gospels were written for all Christians, and so the Gospels' differences are not explained by the differences amongst the audience, but the differences in the Gospels are explained by the author's individual stress that he or she wanted to make.

So, the focus then is more on the individual author's estimate of what the church as a whole needed, and the Gospels were then written with some awareness of the other publications but were written not so much for one little bit of the audience, but for what the author thought the church as a whole needed to hear. So, this is a fine book on this topic and contains some other interesting articles as well about how ancient literature was circulated in the Roman Empire, and how the Gospels could have been widely circulated not simply in one little area, but across the Empire in a fairly rapid time. So, Bauckham's argument sort of is the antithesis of what Martin and others were saying about a narrow audience for John.

One thing that we would all notice is that the Gospel of John is a very Jewish Gospel. It has many Jewish features in it. We probably would hear some people say John is the most Jewish of the Gospels, and then we hear people say, no, Matthew is the most Jewish of the Gospels.

So, I don't know how we're going to resolve that difficulty. They both have their different ways of showing how Judaism impacted Jesus, and how Jesus was the Messiah of Israel, and I don't know that we need to even debate that question anymore. But it's quite clear that there are lots of Jewish features in John, and John is constantly referring to the Old Testament by way of allusions or quotations.

The prologue to John's Gospel clearly ties Jesus to Genesis chapter 1, clearly ties Jesus to Moses, clearly ties John the Baptist, Jesus' forerunner, to Malachi, and to Isaiah chapter 40. So, we have many Old Testament roots in this Gospel that can't be

gainsaid. It's also likely that John wrote a bit later, that's the unanimous tradition, and that John was written perhaps as a supplement to the Synoptic Gospels.

We seem to have not only the idea that would be true just from sort of guessing at it, but from a statement about how the Gospel of John began, which we'll talk about in a little bit more fully. So, most scholars today would think that the Gospel of John was written late in the first century, perhaps around 90 of the Common Era, CE. Some would date it a bit later, there is a school of thought, amongst them John A.T. Robinson, who tried to argue that John was written before 70.

John was then dated very early, not many people have followed him in that debate. We do have a sort of a terminus ad quem, which is a point to which John must have been written by this date, because we have the earliest document from New Testament times was dated P52, typically around 125 AD. Some dated earlier, some dated a bit later, but 125 I think is a fairly safe date for it.

So, it's pretty clear then that John was written and was in existence some decades before that, or there would not have been a manuscript of it that had been written at that later time. So, by the mid-2nd century, John was quite well known. So how do we relate John to the Synoptic Gospels? So, we ask questions here, how is it that John is so different from the Synoptics, and how is it that John in some ways is similar to them? So, what are areas of common content between John and the Synoptics? What is their level of historical interest? What is their orientation to geography? How are they structured as literature? How do they tell the story? And finally, how do we look at their theological emphases and how do they differ? So, I'm going to show you a slide now that I don't think you'll be able to see on the video, but I think you'll have access to this material in a way that you'll be able to see it in print and be able to see this better.

Apologies for that, but it shouldn't handicap you too much. So, the structure of the four Gospels can be laid out as a comparative chart. And when we think about the way in which they're laid out, they clearly both talk about the public ministry of Jesus and about the passion in Jerusalem leading to the resurrection of Jesus and things that happened after that.

So, whether we're speaking of Mark, Matthew, Luke, or John, we have this common interest in a Galilean ministry, a public ministry, and a time in Jerusalem, as well as the resurrection of what happened after Jesus was crucified. To get to the heart of the matter, this next slide, which I think you are able to see, again, consult your written materials to see the previous slide. What we're noting about it is that both the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as John, have a lot to say about Galilee and a lot to say about Jerusalem.

The difference is that in the Synoptic tradition, Jesus is presented as having a ministry in Galilee that leads to a trip near the end of his ministry to Jerusalem, and then meeting the disciples again in Galilee after the resurrection. However, in the Gospel of John, things are quite a bit different. In the Gospel of John, you have Jesus moving from Galilee to Jerusalem very early on in chapter 2, then returning to Galilee, then returning to Jerusalem again, and back and back and back and forth.

Things are not quite moving the same. Jesus is traveling a lot back and forth in the Gospel of John. We note one thing that stands out about this that's quite amazing, is that the event which the Synoptic tradition places near the end of Jesus' ministry, when he arrives in Jerusalem, he has the temple incident where he clears out the money changers.

That incident occurs at the beginning of John's Gospel. Students of the Gospels have lots of debates about how that works, and how to understand when that actually happened. Evangelicals who believe it did happen take two different approaches to it, either thinking that Jesus actually had cleared the temple twice.

I think more people would think that he only did it once. Of them, the majority would say the Synoptic Gospels preserve the historical origin it, and John has put it early on in Jesus' ministry as a thematic, topical type of thing to show Jesus' problems with the Jewish leaders early on in his ministry, and not to postpone that incident until the end. This is a debatable point.

We're speaking at this point here just trying to understand the matter of how the Gospel of John tells the story, not so much about the exact way we need to understand this one particular matter. The gist of it is that John's focus on geography is very different than that of the Synoptics. In John, Jesus is in Jerusalem early on, goes back to Galilee, goes back to Jerusalem, goes back to Galilee, goes back to Jerusalem again, and then finally takes a bit of a brief hiatus in the east of the Jordan before coming back to heal Lazarus and to have what we've called in the Synoptic tradition usually the triumphal entry.

So, how much of John is actually found in the Synoptics? We commonly hear that only 10% of John is found in the Synoptic tradition. This is pretty much a settled thing that everyone would agree on. So, to put it another way, only about 170 of the 778 total verses in John have material that overlaps with the Synoptics.

Here we're not even talking about exact verbatim wording agreement, just overlap in the sense that they're covering the same sort of material and telling you the same story. So, if we will take a moment here just to run through the material that does overlap in John and the Synoptics. So, the testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus is very different in John than it is in the Synoptics, but the gist of it I think is very, very similar.

So, in John chapter 1 verses 19 to 28, we have reference to John's testimony to Jesus. We have the matter of Jesus clearing out the temple early on in John, later on in the Synoptics, but it is material that is in common. The healing of the official's son is likely the same incident in John 4 as we find in the Synoptics.

Jesus feeding the multitude in chapter 6 is the only miracle that occurs in all four Gospels. Jesus walking on the water right after that is also found in Matthew and Luke. The plotting of the Jewish leaders to kill Jesus, is obviously found in the Synoptic tradition.

The anointing of Jesus at Bethany, what we call the triumphal entry, Palm Sunday, Jesus predicting Peter's denials, Jesus being betrayed and arrested, Jesus before the high priest, Peter's denials of Jesus while all that's going on, Jesus appearing before Pilate, Pilate sentencing Jesus to death, Jesus being crucified and dying, obviously in all four Gospels, his burial, his resurrection, and his post-resurrection appearance to the disciples. All these things are in common. Pardon me, I have to get a drink.

So, all of this information that we noted just a moment ago, moving through very rapidly, shows us that although John is quite different, there are a number of things that John has in common with the Synoptic tradition. This was debated and known even in ancient times, so we have this famous quotation from Clement of Alexandria from the second century, written about by Eusebius in the fourth century, and it's translated like this, John last of all, conscious that the outward facts had been set forth in the Synoptic Gospels, I added the word Synoptic, that is his reference, that's obviously not a term that Clement used, the outward facts had been set forth in the Gospels, he was urged by his disciples, and being divinely moved by the Spirit, he composed a spiritual gospel. The translation plays on the term outward and spiritual for the ways the two Gospels are described.

The original language of Clement spoke of basically a distinction between somatic and pneumatic, that is to say, external or outward things versus internal or spiritual things. So many of us in the evangelical tradition are not exactly pleased with all of the hermeneutics that came out of Alexandria and Egypt, such as that of Origen and Clement and folks of their ilk, and many of us would tend to prefer the Antiochian type of hermeneutic of people like Chrysostom, but they have put their finger on something here that everybody has to acknowledge, whether you like the terminology or not. So maybe you would not want to compare John to the Synoptics by speaking of the difference between the somatic, the outward, the corporal, versus the internal, the spiritual.

Maybe you do not like that way of thinking about the terms, but there is something here that we do need to think about and consider, that if this historical setting of this is true, and that John indeed was writing as a supplement to the Synoptic tradition,

he clearly did not want to just reiterate that type of perspective again. So, John is much more selective, evidently, than the Synoptic tradition was in picking out specific things from the life of Jesus and people that he met in order to promote the idea that people needed to see his signs, trust him, and come to life by faith in him. This, of course, would be more narrow than the Synoptics, which have more of a focus on the kingdom of God and broader things, and the teaching of Jesus.

So, when we look at the Gospel of John and think of it as the spiritual gospel, it seems to me that we are struck with it right away, whether we want to use the word spiritual or not, with the way John begins with the prologue and ties Jesus as the creator in the book of Genesis. The way the Gospel of John begins to use language that is metaphorical in nature. Nicodemus has difficulty understanding what Jesus means when he tells him he needs to be born of water and the spirit.

As early as chapter 2, even before Nicodemus, Jesus spoke of the destruction of the temple, speaking of the destruction of his body. When Jesus meets the woman at the well in John 4, he offers her living water. She, of course, doesn't quite understand how that works until it's more carefully explained to him by her.

So, John's use of metaphorical language, his use of symbols, and his intentional double meanings that he uses, I think are perhaps what Clement was trying to get at when he spoke about John as the spiritual gospel. I think this is a very provocative comment, one that helps us understand what's going on in the Gospel of John and helps us explain how John is so different from the synoptics in many ways. So, if we move on then to one of the differences, which is the area of geography, and just try to get a handle on the Gospel of John and geography, the main difference is that Jesus moves back and forth multiple times between Galilee and Jerusalem in John, as opposed to the way it's presented in the synoptic gospels.

In addition, John has much to say about the various Jewish feasts that Jesus attends in his gospel, and this leads him then to tell us almost inadvertently that Jesus' ministry was three years long because there are three different Passovers that Jesus attends in the Gospel of John. We would not have known that just by reading the synoptic tradition. So, if you are oriented then toward Israel and Palestine and the way in which the land is laid out in the regions, if not, then quickly we'll note that Jesus is of course from Galilee, and he spends time in Samaria, which is an intermediate area between Galilee and Judea, and of course much figures then in Jerusalem.

Assuming then that you are familiar with this general layout of the land, we flip the map on its side and have an eastern orientation. I think this orientation is perhaps preferable in many ways to the north-south map that those of us in the Western world are more used to because I think it is more related to the actual way they

thought then, with the Mediterranean Sea being the frontier. So, we have the Sea of Galilee up here in the north, with the light and the shading.

I'm not sure you can see it. The Sea of Galilee, much of John is occurring around this region. We have the Jordan River Valley, which this nice topographical map shows us as a geological rift, leading us then to the lowest spot on the face of the earth, the Dead Sea, around 1,200 feet, 1,300 feet below sea level.

Nazareth, where Jesus is born in the synoptic tradition and mentioned also in John, is up here in this region of Galilee, west of the Sea of Galilee. Jerusalem, of course, down here in the south on the main mountainous ridge that comes up from the Jordan Valley. From that perspective, 2,700 feet or so above sea level, 1,200-1,300 feet below sea level here.

So quite a bit of distance here at 15 miles coming up a couple thousand feet. That's quite a steep travel. Imagine walking it or riding a donkey up that area.

So, we're only talking about 50 miles or so between Nazareth and Jerusalem. So those of us who live in the West at least, with rather large countries and lots of elbow room in the world, are first impressed when we go to Israel about how small it is. Thinking more about Jerusalem then, various events in the Gospel of John occur in and around Jerusalem, such as Jesus healing the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda, which is probably here to the north of the temple.

The Pool of Siloam is down here at the southern end of the lower city. Temple Mount is here. The fortress Antonia, the Roman fortress, is here at the northwest corner of the temple.

Many people think that the Last Supper of Jesus was in the upper room, which is in a place today that they call Mount Zion, which is not what the Bible calls Mount Zion. Mount Zion in the Bible is the city of David over here just south of the temple. Later on, Mount Zion became applied to the western hill in this region.

The Mount of Olives is the mountain roughly north and south, ridge to the east of the old city. On the other side of the Mount of Olives off the map, likely where Bethany was, where Jesus spent time with Lazarus and his family. Garden of Gethsemane, traditionally located just east of the temple.

Somewhere right in there, I suppose, can be established in ancient times as well. A great deal of debate about where Jesus was crucified. We have today the tomb that General Gordon thought he established, called Gordon's Calvary in the Garden Tomb, north of the current Damascus Gate.

Whereas in ancient times, the city wall probably was down around here. So, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is perhaps not a spot that Protestants all relish. Historically, the tradition for this being the site of Jesus' burial, is much more solid than anything related to this site up here at the so-called Garden Tomb.

Another part of the tradition of Jesus in Jerusalem is the matter of the Via Dolorosa, the Way of Sorrows that after Jesus was condemned by Pilate, where he went to the cross. If you go to Jerusalem today, you can walk and look at the various stations of the cross that have been traditionally added since New Testament times. And they take you basically from the Fortress Antonia area of Jerusalem, the northwest corner of the Old Temple Mount, essentially west and a little bit south to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Difficulty with that is that it assumes that Jesus was actually on trial at the Fortress Antonia, when in fact it may be more likely that Jesus' trial before Pilate was in the Palace of Herod, where the Roman provisional governors seemed to have hung out when they came to Jerusalem, which is just to the south, the ruins of it today, just to the south of the present Jaffa Gate into Jerusalem. So, it seems to most people today more likely that Jesus' time before Pilate would have been in the area of Herod's Palace, so the Via Dolorosa, whatever you want to call it, would have probably been more of a northerly trip than something that came essentially to the west from the Fortress Antonia to there. So, here is where current church tradition diverges to some extent probably from what's most likely historically.

So, the Temple Mount being here, the upper room traditionally being over in this area, the Garden of Gethsemane, traditionally speaking, right here with the olive trees, site of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. Well, that's something we're not that sure about. Tradition would help us probably more with the Church of the Holy Sepulcher than with Gordon's Calvary.

Moving then from just historical geographical matters to textual matters, how did we get the Gospel of John? The most early manuscript that we have pretty much of the New Testament at all, let alone the Gospel of John, is Papyrus 52. This is called Papyrus 52 recto. The next slide, Papyrus 52 verso, has to do with the way in which you see the fibers on the sheet being horizontal.

This is like the front of the sheet, easier to write on the papyrus when the fibers are running horizontally than when it's running vertically. So, this is a small scrap relating to John chapter 18 verses 31 through 33. And there are just bits of it that are still available.

The parts that you see underlined in the translation here are the parts that we have actual Greek words for in the manuscript. For example, the statement that the Jews said to him, it's not lawful for us to put anyone to death. Here's the word anyone in

Greek, oudena, sort of a double negative in Greek that's not provided in the English translation.

This means no one in Greek, actually. So, we have hannah, in order that, So, this would be the word logos, word.

And of course, the rest of the word logos is gone. So, we have in order that, and that's all we have in the manuscript. So, it's very interesting that some people devote their lives to studying these types of things and help us understand the rest of us who aren't as devoted to this very important discipline.

I'm not sure how easy it was to determine that this little scrap actually contained the Gospel of John, but it's quite clear that it does. Here's the back side of the same scrap with the same fragmentary material, this time from John 18 verses 37 and 38. Notice we only have like one couple of letters here of the word oudena again, nothing of Pilate's comment.

I find nothing wrong with Jesus. So, as New Testament manuscripts are available to us, we have others that are much more full in terms of the Gospel of John. Here is the Gospel of John in Papyrus 66 from around 200 of the Common Era.

And those of you who can read Greek can see clearly up here the title, Euangelion Kata Ioannine. And we have here the beginning of the Gospel of John, en arxe en o logos. This portion right here is the portion from John chapter 12.

He gave to those who believed in him, exousion, authority, techna theou, children of God, genesthai, to become. One thing that ancient manuscripts did that we don't seem to do much anymore is they had quite an interesting shorthand approach to writing sacred names, nomina sacra. This is the first and last letters of the genitive form of theou.

So, in order to save space and in order to highlight these sacred names, they would take the first and last letter, in this case the theta and the epsilon, put a bar across the top to show that this was a sacred name, a special name. And in addition to that, save a little space, save a little papyrus in the process. Today we throw away lots of paper and, unfortunately, fill up the landfills with it.

In ancient times it was quite precious. Moving then to the next generation, I guess you could say, of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. We're now looking at Codex Vaticanus, which is probably 150 years or so later than the previous manuscript we were looking at.

You can tell that the person who did this manuscript was a person who had some leisure and some skill in terms of artistic endeavor. So, here is where Gospel of John begins. And here we have a little bit of decoration.

Same words, *en arxe en o logos*. Here is how the Gospel of John ends. That the world itself could not contain all the books that ought to be written, *kata joannen*, according to John, the way we have the end.

So, by now people are professionals at copying manuscripts, whether they're monks or scribes or whatever, scribal monks, and they are doing a much more ornate job of it. We skip over the entire period of New Testament manuscripts, known as the minuscule period, where manuscripts became even more ornate, and even more carefully done, and go to the beginning of the printed era, around 1455, when the printing press was invented. And Gutenberg Bible came out, and here is where Gospel of John begins, with the words, *imprincipio erat verbum*.

In the beginning was the word in Latin, and looking at it a bit more carefully here, a little bit more of a close-up. Here it is again. *Verbum erat apudei*, word was with God, *et dei erat verbum*, and God was the word, 1455.

So, up to the time of the printing press then, New Testament manuscripts were copied by hand, and we have so many thousands of them that we have, you could say, an embarrassment of riches when we talk about all the different variations in the manuscripts. There are three that perhaps are most notorious in the Gospel of John, and maybe others that could be added here, but it might be wise for us just to take a moment to spend some time introducing the textual questions with these manuscripts. First of all, in John chapter 1 and verse 18, at the end of the prologue or preface to the Gospel of John, we have the amazing statement that is made about Jesus, no one has ever seen God, the one and only, the next word in most versions is son, others will have God.

So, how do you like to read it? No one has ever seen God, but the one and only God, or do you read the one and only son? Let's try it both ways. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only son who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, he has made him known. This is from the NIV.

But if you're looking at the NIV, and certain editions will give you some marginal readings with textual variants, it will say no one has ever seen God, but the one and only God who is himself God and in closest relationship with the Father, he has made him known. When we look at the external evidence for this question, we also compare it with the internal evidence. When it comes to textual criticism, external evidence has to do with the manuscript tradition.

What do the ancient manuscripts say in this regard? In fact, they have both readings. Some manuscripts have the word uios some have the word theos here. In Greek, both are four-letter words, Upsilon Iota Omicron Sigma versus Theta Epsilon Omicron Sigma.

They abbreviate the names with the bar across the top like we just looked at in the previous slide. We're talking about two letters here. In the manuscript, it would have either said Upsilon Sigma or it would have said Theta Sigma.

So, your question then relates to one letter in Greek, whether the letter in question was an Upsilon or a Theta. Uios or Theos abbreviated Upsilon Sigma or Theta Sigma. In terms of the external evidence, the manuscripts that we have, the more ancient ones typically have the phrase only God, have the word Thaos there.

In the more recent manuscripts, although there are many of them, the minuscules typically read a son rather than God. Textual critics also raise questions about these readings and try to understand which was more likely original in terms of what they call internal evidence. The question would be, what would John most likely have written? And if John had most likely written one thing, then would that explain how we got these other readings? So, two things, what would most likely have been written given his tendencies elsewhere, and which reading best explains the origin of the other readings? So, we know that John has used the terminology monogamous, one and only.

Some translations have it only begotten with the word son in texts like John chapter 3 verse 16. I think in 1 John as well. This would be the only time that the phrase monogamous Thaos, one and only God, occurs.

So, you say, well then it must be quite likely that he would have written one and only son. Well, perhaps in thinking of it that way, that's true. But who would have intentionally changed one and only son to one and only God since we have a very common Johannine expression here? In that respect, one and only God better explains why someone would have said, well, that's a bit odd.

That's unusual. Someone must have miscopied. Let's change the word theta, the letter theta, back to epsilon so we'll have one and only son.

So, one and only God in that respect much better explains the arising of the reading one and only son if we had an intentional change. But there's always the possibility as well that what happened was unintentional. A scribe who didn't know his Greek that well or was, I don't know, maybe half asleep because they'd eaten too much for lunch or whatever would have perhaps just unintentionally blown it and written epsilon sigma instead of theta sigma or vice versa.

The nice thing about this one is that either way, they both speak in a very high way of Jesus as the son of God in a way that befits the high theology of John. If we accept the alternate reading that the text actually says one and only God, maybe we should punctuate a bit differently as well. So, we might read the verse, no one has ever seen God, but the one and only, God, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, he has made him known.

Whatever you think about that, just be aware that that is a discussion and a debate and you can delve more into it in future times. Another interesting textual variant in the Gospel of John occurs in John chapter 5 with the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda. There was a thought going on at the time, evidently, that an angel was active in stirring up the waters of the pool and that when the pool was stirred up that way, the water was bubbling or there were waves or whatever, that the first person who was able to get in was going to be healed.

So, as you read the account of the story, it reads something like this. Sometime later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool which in Aramaic is called Bethesda, which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.

Here a great number of disabled people used to lie, the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. In the NIV that I'm reading and in most current English versions, it will skip from there to verse 5. One who was there had been an invalid for 38 years. But there is a longer reading of the passage which you will notice in the King James Version that has some additional material in verse 4. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie, the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.

Here's the additional part. And they waited for the moving of the waters. From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters.

The first one into the pool after such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease they had. One who was there who had been an invalid for 38 years, when Jesus saw him lying there and learned he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, do you want to get well? Sir, the invalid said, I have no one to help me get into the pool when the water is stirred. While I'm trying to get in, someone goes ahead of me.

So, the question is whether this matter of the angel stirring up the water was something that actually was true and actually was happening, whether this was just a popular mythology, a popular fable, an idea that people had. After all, they're trying to grasp for whatever hope they might have of being healed. And they had this popular view that angels did this sort of thing.

So, when we look at this text, whether we have this longer reading with the expansion at the end of verse 3 into verse 4, again, from the standpoint of the external evidence, there are fewer manuscripts that have the shorter reading that doesn't mention the angel stirring the water than there are manuscripts which have the reading. But the manuscripts which have the reading are not nearly as ancient. So, we have fewer yet more ancient manuscripts which omit the longer reading.

We have more manuscripts, but they're quite a bit more recent, which include it. Textual scholars typically prefer the more ancient testimony or other things being considered. From the standpoint of internal evidence, I guess we would want to ask ourselves the question, how would something this large, this large of a chunk, which in terms of several words here, such as this entire reading, waited for the moving of the water from time to time and angel of the Lord would come down and move the waters.

The first one into the pool after each disturbance would be cured of whatever disease they had. Something that large would not have dropped out of the text unintentionally, nor would it have been added in some unintentional way. So we're looking here at something that was evidently quite intentional.

So then in terms of internal evidence, we don't have to worry about it being an accident. It is intentional either to take it out or to put it in. Here, I guess we begin now to think in terms of internal evidence about biblical theology as we understand it and how God uses angels to accomplish his will with his people.

After all, the book of Hebrews tells us, are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be the heirs of salvation? So, from what we know of the way angels are used by God in the rest of scripture, does what we read here in John 5, verse 4 in this longer reading comport? Does it fit into what we seem to know about the character of God and his plan for angels? The gram, I think, called angels God's secret agents. That was a pretty good word for them, wasn't it? So, was there a divine secret agent who would stir up the water and then sit and watch to see who could get in first to heal them? I don't know how you picture this event, but it almost pictures to me like a Monty Python sketch.

Perhaps you've not heard of the British comedy troupe Monty Python, but they did lots of ridiculous, crazy things, and this almost seems to me like something they would do. Frankly, I have to say to you that at first blush, this doesn't sound to me to be the way God operates with angels in the Bible. Seems like this would be actually a rather cruel way for God to operate, to only extend healing to a person who in some way or another could manage to manipulate themselves into the pool.

All the rest of the poor, wretched people there trying to be healed would be disappointed because they couldn't quite flop into the pool as quickly as the other

person did. So, to me, this just doesn't pass the internal test. It doesn't seem to me that from the standpoint of internal evidence, this is really what God would have wanted written in his word.

So, it's possible that this would have been a matter of some marginal note that was added that later made its way in. Some scribe who was writing it wrote a note in the margin to the effect that this is why they were waiting. They did have this popular superstition.

This is what they thought, but I don't think that I would personally grant that this is originally part of the Gospel of John because it just doesn't pass the theological smell test to me. You may differ in that respect. We're not trying to be dogmatic here, but trying to get you to think about these issues.

So, here's another one of the textual issues in John that you will find information about when you're studying chapter five. Perhaps the biggest issue in John, textual issue, is in John chapter seven, the last verse in seven, then the first 11 verses of chapter eight. The story of the woman who was taken in the act of adultery and brought to Jesus as a pretext to get him in trouble, to get him to say something that would be controversial, get him to say something to contradict Moses perhaps, to get him into deep trouble.

So, John 7:53 to 8:11 is often called the pericope de adulterer. That's Latin for pericope of the adulteress, and you can take out the preposition de, put it in the genitive case, adultery. You've got the same thing, the pericope about the adulterous woman.

So, from the standpoint of external testimony, once again, the second verse, same as the first, the more ancient manuscripts do not include this chunk, this section. Many manuscripts do include it, but they are manuscripts that are comparatively much more recent. Those are the manuscripts that were available to the authorized version, the King James Version at the time, the so-called Texas Receptus.

So those relatively few manuscripts, relatively late ones, had this in it, so it entered itself into the King James Version. However, the pericope, scene is not found in more ancient manuscripts that are available for the most part, so many scholars doubt the authenticity of the reading from the standpoint of external evidence. Another thing about external evidence that's interesting about this pericope is that some manuscripts that have it have inserted it at other places in the Gospel of John.

Some manuscripts that have it have been inserted it at other places in the Gospel of Luke. This, in some ways, is a sort of floating scene that appears in the manuscript tradition at three or four various places, in addition to where we find it in most of the manuscripts that have it here at John 7 and John 8. Another interesting thing about

the manuscript from the standpoint of external evidence is that many manuscripts that do include it have it marked up in the margins. They were put in ancient times obelisks along the margin of a disputed reading, and some manuscripts that have the reading in it have included it but have marked it.

So, like a reader beware here, this may not be the real deal. From the standpoint of internal evidence, there are many unique words here that occur only here in the Gospel of John, and some things the wording is done in a way that makes people think it's not something that the original author of John would have written it in this particular way using these particular words. To my mind, the most important thing about the pericope, which leads me to think it was not originally a part of the Gospel of John, is the way in which it sort of gets in the way of the story.

If you read along the story in John 7 into John 8, it's a very tumultuous time in Jesus' ministry. He's come into Jerusalem and he's there for the feast of Booth's Tabernacle Sukkot, and so he's beginning to teach and people are just going every which way and responding to him. Some think he's the Messiah, some don't, some think he's not qualified to be because he's not from Bethlehem, and there are all these messianic opinions floating around when you read the story in John chapter 7. So, chapter 7 leads the religious leaders to try to get Jesus arrested so they can bring him in and check him out, but the arrest party they send doesn't exactly arrest him.

In fact, the people who were sent to arrest him were evidently so in all of his teachings that they were unable to carry out the act. So that story begins at 7:45. The temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees who asked them, why didn't you bring him in? No one ever spoke the way this man does, the guards replied.

You mean he's deceived you also, the Pharisees retorted. Have any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed in him? No. This mob that knows nothing about the law, there's a curse on them.

So now our friend Nicodemus makes an appearance again at 7:50. Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing? They replied, are you from Galilee too? Look into it, you'll find that a prophet does not arise out of Galilee. Now if we move from that directly to chapter 8 verse 12, we flip back to Jesus.

Jesus spoke again to the people. He said I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness.

He will have the light of life. The Pharisees challenged him, 8:13, here you are appearing as your own witness, your testimony is not valid. When you read the text in this way from 7:52 right to 8:12, it seems that the text makes sense.

However, when you read it including 7:53 to chapter 8 verse 11, it seems to flop back and forth in a way that is quite odd. So it would go like this if we included the scene about the adulteress. Nicodemus makes his comment, shouldn't we at least, you know, find out what he's been doing before we make a decision? They replied, are you from Galilee too? Look into it, you'll find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.

Then they all went home, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn, he appeared again in the temple courts. So, it's right there, that little abrupt shift from them going home, but Jesus going to the Mount of Olives.

Then he appears again the next day. It's like too many things are happening all at once and the literary unity of the text seems to be destroyed. Similar thing at the end, because Jesus has been talking to the leaders about the woman and to the woman about the leaders.

When you read the pericope, as you recall, he's writing on the ground a couple of different times. And he makes the decisive remark in chapter 8, verse 7, let any of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone. And then he writes on the ground again, people gradually begin to mill about and walk away so only Jesus and the woman are left.

They're the only two people there, everyone else has gone according to chapter 8, verse 9. At this point, Jesus straightens up and says to the woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? She says, no one, sir. Then neither do I condemn you, he says, go and leave your life of sin. Verse 12, when Jesus spoke again to the people, what people? People all walked away, nobody is there anymore, just Jesus and the woman.

So again, it seems like there is a bit of an abrupt shift, not only from 7:52 into the pericope but also as you move out of this pericope into the rest of the gospel from chapter 8, verse 11 into chapter 8, verse 12. So, for this reason, external and internal evidence alike, most scholars I think have concluded that 7:53 to 8:11 does not really fit in this portion of the gospel of John, it was not originally a part of the text. So, in this respect, it's like the pericope we just looked at in chapter 5, verses 3 and 4. However, internal evidence in the wider sense of thinking about how this comports with other teaching of Jesus is quite different here in John 7 and 8 than it is back in chapter 5. Many people when they read John 7 and 8 and read the story of the woman taken in adultery, conclude that Jesus was really sounding like himself here.

This is the sort of thing that does comport and fit in with the theology of Jesus as we know him elsewhere in scripture. Not a person who would compromise on sin, but a person who is merciful to sinners, the person who is most callous in his remarks to the religious people, the religious leaders, but tends to be quite kind and gentle to common people who are caught in sin, but who are willing to turn away from it. So, these concluding words of Jesus to the woman, "'As anyone condemned you, no, then neither do I. Go now and leave your life of sin,' seems like the perfect mixture, the perfect blend, the perfect way of balancing justice and grace, the perfect way of holding a high standard, but also exhibiting forgiveness to someone who is willing to turn away from sin.

For this reason, and from the fact external evidence-wise that this passage is found in other books of the New Testament here and there and some of the ancient manuscripts, many have concluded that this passage was originally tied back to a real tradition from the days of Jesus, that this really happened. So, then this pericope would be a text that has circulated around the early church along with other traditions of Jesus, never really finding itself a home in the original writings of the New Testament, but eventually finding itself into like second or third generation of the copying of New Testament manuscripts. For that reason, it's likely that this does represent truth from the historical Jesus, but not something that occurred originally in the Gospel of John.

So those of you who are listening to the video now, watching the video with a very strong doctrine of sola scriptura might doubt that you should ever even teach this passage in the church. I guess I would be a bit more moderate than that and teach the passage just the same, at the same time being aware that it wasn't originally in the Gospel of John as best we can tell. So, this concludes our second video on the Gospel of John and its introduction.

In this video we've been talking about the historical setting of John, how we got it, some of the geographical features of the book, and also the way in which the book came down to us, some of the textual problems. Hope you've enjoyed it. We'll see you soon for John chapter one.

This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session number two, Introduction to the Gospel of John, part two, Historical and Textual Matters.