

Dr. David Turner, Gospel of John, Session 20, John 20:1-21:25

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This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 20, Jesus is Raised and Appears to Disciples. John 20:1-21:25.

Hello, this is our final video on the Gospel of John. In this video, we're going to look at John chapters 20 and 21 and follow the resurrection of our Lord Jesus and see his resurrection appearances to the disciples. Primarily look at chapter 21 where he appears to the disciples and has a conversation with Peter that I'm sure was very necessary but at the time very uncomfortable for Peter.

So, we're so thankful that we have left Jesus buried at the end of our last video but now in the beginning of this one, we're able to move right from his burial to his resurrection. The cover slide for this presentation has a very interesting interpretation of what that might have been like in the day when the Roman guards around the tomb are somehow stunned by the aura that proceeds when the angel pulls the rock off the tomb. I doubt very much that the tomb actually looked anything like that, that's not really the point that I'm making here with this.

What I wonder about is whether those there would have noticed any sort of an aura exactly like that or if this sort of gives you the impression that the angel had to remove the stone in order for Jesus to get out. I wonder whether the stone was removed in order for Jesus to get out, I doubt that, I think the stone was removed so that people on the outside could see that he was no longer there. I don't think the miracle of the resurrection needed a kickstart, if you will, by the work of an angel opening the tomb.

I'm not sure that biblical text is all that explicit about this whole question one way or the other, but it is worth thinking about, isn't it? Whether the stone was rolled away to let Jesus out, I don't think so, rather the stone was rolled away to let everyone else in to see that he had already been miraculously resurrected. Be all that as it may, we'll look first at the flow of thought here in Revelation chapter 20 and then we'll come back and look at some of the geographical issues involved here as well as other theologically oriented matters. So, we're reading about Easter Sunday here and we have, first of all, the discovery of the empty tomb.

So, we start picking it up here at John chapter 20 and verse 1, early on the first day of the week while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So, she evidently did not proceed further. She went running to Peter and her interpretation of the situation, she explained to Peter and beloved disciple was that they had taken the Lord out of the tomb.

It is interesting that in light of the way in which Jesus had predicted his resurrection, his death, and resurrection, in the synoptic tradition it's apparently much more explicit than in what we have seen so far in the Gospel of John. We have not seen so much a specific prediction of him rising from the dead after three days. It's been more like, I will see you again.

I'll be gone for a while, a little while you won't see me, and then a little while you will see me again. And we have back in chapter 2, of course, the reference to destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again in the context of him clearing the temple. And of course, the editorial remark there is that after the resurrection the disciples figured out what he was talking about, but evidently they did not know ahead of time.

So, the Magdalene was concerned that the body was gone and thinking someone had stolen it. So, Peter and the other disciple, who would be the beloved disciple, ran to the tomb. If we're correct in identifying the beloved disciple as John, John beat Peter to the tomb, but reached the tomb, but evidently stood there bent over, looked inside.

Peter came running along later. Perhaps he was not in shape, I don't know, but he went straight into the tomb and both of them observed the burial cloths, the strips of linen used to bind up bodies in that day. Both of them found all that there plus the head cloth laying and it was separate from the linen.

So finally, the beloved disciple went in and the text says in chapter 20 verse 8, he saw and believed. Parenthetical note, they still did not understand from scripture that Jesus had to raise from the dead. Then they went back to where they were staying.

Evidently, then Peter and the beloved disciple leave, but Mary is still there. So, in verses 11 through 18, we see the next part of the story, how Jesus appears to Mary and gives her a commission of sorts in which he wants her to tell the others. So, as we look at this section of the material, Mary is seen by two angels, she sees two angels and she says to them, they've taken my Lord away and they say to her, why is it you're crying? Excuse me, she turns around and sees a person whom she does not recognize, turns out to be Jesus.

So, he says to her, why are you crying? Who are you looking for? Thinking he was the gardener, she said, sir, if you've carried him away, tell me where you put him, I will get him. Somehow in her confusion, she felt that the missing body of Jesus had been removed by somebody, this person whom she didn't recognize yet, she took to be perhaps the person who had removed the body. So, he simply said to her in verse 16, just use her name, Mary.

Somehow that brought her out of her lack of understanding and just hearing his voice, she turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, Rabboni, which means teacher. At that point, Jesus says, don't try to hold on to me for I've not yet ascended to the Father, but go instead to my brothers and tell them. Interesting way that Jesus refers to the disciples as his brothers.

Tell them I'm ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. Again, quite an interesting distinction here, not simply I'm ascending to God or I'm ascending to our God, rather I am ascending to my God and your God, my Father and your Father. At the same time, however, Jesus says, go tell my brothers, go tell my brothers.

So, there's an interesting way in which the language of the text links Jesus to his people, but also distinguishes him from the people. So Mary went to the disciples with the news. She said, I've seen the Lord and she told them everything that he had said these things to her.

So evidently then the next week, verse 19, we're told that a week later perhaps on the first day of the week, or is it later the same day on the evening of that first day of the week? Could be that same evening. It's a bit ambiguous. Jesus is going to appear to the disciples.

So, in verses 19 through 23, on the evening then of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, it's an interesting little snippet, of whether they were already being investigated by the religious leaders and were needing to hide because of their activity or whether they were just worried that they would be sought out by the Jewish leaders. We don't know that for sure one way or the other, I guess. They were meeting surreptitiously in a battened-down situation, but miraculously, evidently, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be to you.

After he said this, he showed them his hands and sighed. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again, he said to them, Peace be to you.

As the Father sent me, so I am sending you. So here we have sort of the second commission in the text. In the first one, Mary is commissioned to go tell the disciples that they understand so they can understand that Jesus has indeed risen from the dead.

In the second commission, the disciples themselves are equipped with the Holy Spirit and then sent out to preach the gospel. So, Jesus says, Peace be to you. As the Father sent me, so send I you.

This would then be drawing an analogy between Jesus as the agent of the Father and the disciples as the agents of Jesus and of the Father who sent Jesus by implication. To equip them for their work as being sent as his emissaries, he breathes on them and says, Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven.

If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven. That shows us, I think, that to be the emissaries of Jesus, whatever our mission is about in terms of caring compassionately for human needs and helping people out with their obvious felt needs and social problems if our ministry does not center on preaching a message of the cross that has to do with the forgiveness of sins, we aren't that much different than some very commendable human agencies that do good work but don't do it in the name of Jesus or with the power of the cross as the basis of it. So, Jesus then bestows upon them the Holy Spirit in some sense.

This is a difficult text to understand exactly how to look at it in light of Johannine pneumatology in and of itself, but particularly when we compare Johannine pneumatology here to the way in which the Spirit is bestowed, for example, in Luke-Acts where we have the day of Pentecost. So, we'll talk a bit after a while about the various ways we can understand that. So, one of the disciples named Thomas was not at this meeting, and so a week later a very remarkable thing occurred with Thomas.

Thomas, it says, also known as Didymus, chapter 20 verse 24, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So, I guess the problem that arises here is what happens when you don't assemble yourself together with the saints, perhaps. Let's make sure we do that so we don't end up like Thomas.

So, the other disciples told him, we've seen the Lord, but Thomas wasn't having it. Thomas said, unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were and put my hands into his side, I will not believe it. So, a week later his disciples were in the house again, verse 26, Thomas was with them.

Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, peace be with you, as he had said when he appeared the last time in verse 19 and in verse 21. So then he said to Thomas, showing full realization of what Thomas had said when Jesus was not there, nevertheless Jesus is aware of what Thomas said, says to Thomas, put your finger here, see my hands, reach out your hand, put it into my side, stop doubting and believe. We're not told whether Thomas took Jesus at face value and actually did probe his body with his hands and with his fingers.

Apparently, he did not. The text doesn't say. Apparently, Thomas was so totally astonished by what he saw that he simply exclaimed, my Lord and my God.

This would be one of the climactic statements in the Gospel of John that confirms what we have suspected and been growing in our understanding of since the very first verse of the book, that in the beginning was the word, the word was with God and the word was God. So, there is something of an *inclusio* here, a literary book ending where the book begins by affirming that the word was God and now Thomas is simply confirming that statement and confirming what has happened in many places before now, that Jesus is indeed a supernatural being, a pre-existent one who came from heaven from the Father's side to bring the Father's glory to the earth. Jesus then makes this remarkable statement in verse 29, because you have seen me, you have believed.

Sometimes this is punctuated as a question. It would be just as clear that way, I think. Since you have seen me, have you believed? It's hard to know whether to do it in the original language could be punctuated either way.

So, Thomas' coming to faith based on sight, based on seeing Jesus then, is contrasted with those who have believed apart from that. Jesus then extrapolates from the incident of this one individual, Thomas, to something of a proverb, a blessing on people who believe in Jesus in various ways. So, blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

So not everyone is like Thomas, needing to have more empirical evidence, I suppose. Some are convinced simply by the power of the message of the gospel. So here we have then the last of the red letters for a while, and at this point the author, the beloved disciple, sort of summarizes things and draws a ribbon around the box and wraps it up for us, really going all the way back to the narrative that has begun in chapter 1, verse 19.

John says Jesus has performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book. He says, I might have said lots of other things and told you lots of other stories about Jesus. However, I did not choose to do that.

I left a lot of things out. So, Jesus did a lot of things that are not recorded in this book, but these are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you might have life in his name. This, I think, takes us all the way back to the prologue of John in chapter 1, verses 12 and 13, where the amazing irony is put there for the first time, even though Jesus had made the world and he came into his own, yet his own did not receive him.

Well, that's a bit of an overgeneralization because as many as did receive him, those he authorized to be children of God, those who believed in his name. So, we have another *inclusio* of sorts here with an emphasis on the need to believe in Jesus. John says then that here by the end of the book, telling us what he was telling us at the beginning, that this book is calculated to bring people to faith.

Some have interpreted this to mean that it's calculated to strengthen the faith of people who are already believers in Jesus, and there are some who work with the tense of the verb in the subjunctive clause here. These are written that you might believe. Some have taken it to mean that you might keep on believing.

I'm not sure that exegetically that is a viable position, at least based on the grammar of the verb tense. But in any event, when you think about the content of the Gospel of John and you compare it to this statement, the Gospel of John certainly is the kind of book that is powerful to bring people to faith. But when we read it as faithful people, as people who believe in Jesus, certainly our faith is strengthened.

So, I'm not sure we have to act like this is an either-or matter, and if you take one view, you can't hold the other. Certainly, both are true. We alluded back in our introductory lectures to a current view amongst Gospel scholars that the Gospels were written for all Christians, the book by that name edited by Richard Balcombe, *The Gospels for All Christians*.

That book is written to stress the idea that the Gospels were written for all Christians. Gospels weren't just written for small segments of the church but for the church as a whole. In other words, from the beginning, they were intended to be widely circulated amongst Christians all over the known world.

Perhaps though something that begs the question about that book is the word Christians in the title, *The Gospels for All Christians*. As I said, the Gospel of John certainly has its role in strengthening our faith, and I think we never get tired of reading it and pondering its profound implications. But it seems to me that of all the Gospels, the Gospel of John certainly has an evangelistic purpose as well.

So, the Gospel of John isn't simply a Gospel written for all Christians, but I think it's a Gospel written for all humans, for all the world to see Jesus and to come to faith in him. Those of us who believe can certainly have our faith strengthened when we read this wonderful book. So, we've surveyed the flow of thought here in John chapter 20.

We want to take a moment and think geographically about some of the events that are referred to here. We've used this map before. We're using it now to introduce you to a question about where Jesus may have been buried and where did the resurrection occur?

Our faith does not rest upon being able to precisely locate these matters with the GPS machine or something like that, obviously, but it is interesting to think about how this would have worked historically. So, most likely, Jesus would have received his final trial before Pilate here on the western side of the Old City to the south of the

Jaffa Gate in the governor's palace, which had been used by the Romans, Herod's palace later on used by the governors. So, the Via Dolorosa, most likely, if there was such a thing, the walk of misery would have been one to the north outside the city wall near where the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is today.

Traditionally, Jesus was tried at the Fortress Antonia in the northwest corner of the temple and made a short walk to the west, slightly to the south perhaps, to this area of the Golgotha, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher area. Tradition for that goes back at least to the 4th century and as we shall see in a bit, there are tombs right inside the enclosure of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which are dated back to the 1st century. Nevertheless, there is another approach to it, thinking that Jesus was buried further north from even the Fortress Antonia outside what would have then been the walls of an even later city, way up to the north of where the walls were at the time, at a place called Gordon's Calvary.

I am under the understanding that before it was called Gordon's Calvary, the region was called Jeremiah's Grotto. So, when we begin then to compare these things, looking at a map of Jerusalem, if Jesus had been under trial at Antonia, which I don't think is as likely, the walk to crucifixion most likely would have been in this direction. However, if he was actually tried over on the west side, south of Jaffa Gate, would have been somewhere over in here and the walk would have been in this direction.

If we are then thinking about Gordon's Calvary and the site associated with it, the Garden Tomb, this would be way up here off the map in an area outside even later walls of the city, an area to the north of the present-day Damascus Gate of the old city of Jerusalem. So, it's interesting to look at pictures and understand why folks were thinking that Gordon's Calvary was indeed where Jesus was crucified. There is an escarpment, I guess you could call it, or a cliff on the north side of Jerusalem.

This is again fairly near the Damascus Gate which had been called the Grotto of Jeremiah in the late 19th century. Other people besides General Gordon had looked at this place and had determined that it possibly could be Golgotha, the place of the skull, simply because of the way the soft limestone had been eroded there. They were looking at the seemingly eyes and nose and mouth sort of a thing, which I guess if you look at that and use your imagination, block out other features that sort of get in the way of that interpretation with your confirmation bias already firmly established.

If you're looking for a skull, you can see one there, obviously. So there was this place, as you can see, which was rather barren in the late 19th century. In the mid-20th century, you can see that the cemetery up on top, an Arab cemetery, was becoming more pronounced.

The strata of the rock were weathering away quite a bit. You see much less rock right here above what folks would say would be the left eye. Here you see a little bit more rock there.

So, things were crumbling away. Today, tourists to Jerusalem continue to see this place. In the meantime, they have built a bus station right underneath it.

Here it is right here. Of course, still you have the cemetery building up and the modern buildings in Jerusalem as well. A more close-up version of it, I guess, helps you see perhaps why you could think of it as the place of the skull.

If you go to this vicinity today in Jerusalem, there is a nice group of Anglican folk who are superintending it or running it. They will not make the claim that Jesus was actually crucified there or that the nearby tomb was the place where he was buried. They will tell you that it might have looked something like this.

To their way of thinking, to see it in a more natural setting is a better way to remind ourselves of what happened in those events. Of course, when we look at the Holy Sepulcher Church, it's not at all the way it would have looked at that time. So, the garden tomb, which is a couple of hundred yards west of so-called Gordon's Calvary, looks like this.

It has been interpreted in various ways. Those who think that it was indeed the tomb of Jesus notice this channel through here. They say this is where the rolling stone would have covered the entrance.

The archaeologists, however, tend to think that this channel was an irrigation channel coming from much later times. What they are calling the tomb itself, you see, has been blocked in. This was all open at a time.

One interpretation of that, I think, is that this is a much earlier cistern from the First Temple times, not from the Greco-Roman times at all. The stone was quarried after the cistern was built. So, as they are taking the rock out chunk by chunk, all this would have been solid rock, until they come up to the face of the cistern.

What they are doing, essentially, is excavating one wall of the cistern out. So, you are left with this blocked-in area. Once you go inside the garden tomb, you will see something that looks like this.

You can, I guess, picture if you are already thinking that this is the place where Jesus was buried, that indeed it was. The problem with that is, archaeologically, there is just no evidence whatsoever for this site. The archaeology that has been done here tends to confirm that this was not a Second Temple site, so much as a First Temple site, as I understand it, at least.

We do have a tradition, going back quite early, to the fact that the Holy Sepulchre Church is the place where Jesus was buried. It is simply tradition. We don't know exactly, but the tradition is an ancient tradition.

When we looked at our map of Jerusalem a bit before, this gray dome here is essentially where the Holy Sepulchre Church is. There are actually two domes there, a smaller one with windows beneath it, and a larger, wider dome. When you get to the building, you will be looking at it from this side, and other pictures will be.

You will see the smaller dome on the right, and the larger, flatter dome on the left. These, respectively, are over the site of Jesus' crucifixion and of Jesus' burial. If you go in the door here and go up the steps, you will be under this area, where there are chapels dedicated to the crucifixion of Jesus.

If you move to the left a bit, you will be in this huge rotunda, where the aedicule, as it is called, covers the area of Jesus' burial. Here are the doors to the Holy Sepulchre Church. The one on the right is blocked in.

If you go inside make a right turn and go up, you are under the dome, which commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus. If you are under the dome on the right, the larger dome, and you have a gizmo where you can fly around up above, you could take this picture, I suppose. During Holy Times, this area is totally jammed with various processions and Christians.

You see the large tower that protrudes out of it. From below, it does not look quite that tall, but you have an idea of how high the dome is up above as well. Typically, when you go to the Holy Sepulchre Church, people are winding around in long lines to get into this thing called the aedicule.

This is a picture of what it looks like from the front. Here is a better picture of what it looks like from the front. You will see a pilgrim kneeling there in the very area that commemorates the tomb of Jesus.

If you have a fisheye lens on your camera, you could take this picture, a recent picture from this very spring, March 2018, of the recently refurbished area where there are many marble slabs and other decorative items, which are, by tradition, laid over the top of bedrock in the tomb where Jesus was buried. You can take that tradition as far as you wish to go with it, as far as your mind and your conscience lead you to go with it. I'm not so sure this would be the exact place, but it certainly helps us remember.

Nearby the aedicule, over in the western side of this area of the church, there is what is sometimes called the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, where there are tombs which

are described by archaeologists as these niches are called kochs, or together they would be called two kochim here. This would have been the inside of a burial chamber, and the rolling stone of which the Gospels speak would have been the entrance to this chamber, not the rolling stone covering these niches, these kochs, where bodies were buried. Right within the Holy Sepulchral Church, just around the corner, just to the west of the aedicule, there are these period tombs from the life of Jesus that will give us a better idea of what it really would have been like at the time.

So, it would have been very, very plausible, we don't have specific details on this, but very, very plausible that the tomb in which Jesus had been buried would have looked something like this, a hollowed-out room entered into by a rolling stone covering the door within the chamber would have been niches like this in which bodies were buried. Here's another similar tomb in a sad state of disrepair, the chalky limestone rock there is crumbling all around. This is over at the Dominus Flavit church grounds on the western slope of the Mount of Olives, and you would have entered the tomb here in the bottom right, you can see the squared-off corner of the entryway, and we have here three of the kochim, where bodies would have been placed at their burial.

These sorts of tombs are not at all rare in Israel today, so if you go and study there, you will have ample opportunity to see this sort of thing. If we move then on to John chapter 21 and try to follow the narrative flow of what is happening there, we find how the resurrection plays out in the early days of Jesus' life and ministry after the resurrection. Chapter 21 verses 1-11 tells us a fishing story, this one doesn't say anything about how big the one that got away, it tells you that after fishing all night the disciples were unsuccessful, yet with Jesus' advice they were able to catch a huge group of fish, some 153 of them according to verse 11.

So as the story begins, chapter 21 verse 1, Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Galilee, it happened this way, notice it says by the Sea of Galilee, so take note, we have been in Jerusalem to this point evidently, now we have transferred up to Galilee. So, Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Galilee, this ties into the synoptic tradition that Jesus told the disciples after the resurrection, I'll see you in Galilee, and has reference to a place that Jesus had appointed. So Simon, Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together, Peter says I'm going out to fish, and the other disciples said we'll go with you.

I guess a question that comes up here is whether somehow when Peter says he's going fishing, he is somehow renouncing his apostolic commission from Jesus. There are interpreters who take it that way, that Peter has become a person who is cynical, or Peter has become a person who is doubting, or Peter has thought that his denials of Christ were so severe that he has no more value to Jesus as a disciple, so he's going to go back to his commercial fishing career. I tend to think that's reading all too much into this, and that Peter is not so much renouncing his apostleship as he is

simply realizing that he's hungry and he needs to have something to eat, something to prepare for his family to take care of them, something along those lines.

So, I wouldn't put all that unspiritual motivation on Peter for this necessarily, unless there are other reasons that that should be done. I haven't found them yet. So they went out and fished all night, and caught nothing.

Early in the morning the next day Jesus stood on the shore, according to verse 4. The disciples didn't yet realize it was Jesus. He called out to them and said, Have you caught anything? Do you have any fish? They said no. So, he said, Try throwing the net out on the right side of the boat.

I was reading that fishermen today in the Sea of Galilee still like to fish at night, and it's much more likely you catch fish at night than that you catch them in the morning. I don't know if that's true or not. I'm not an expert on fishing anywhere, let alone the Sea of Galilee.

But in any event, these are people who knew how to fish and they caught nothing all night. So, Jesus says, Toss the net on the other side. Immediately the net is full.

They can hardly haul it in because of the large number of fish, according to verse 6. Peter immediately intuitively realizes that it's Jesus. The beloved disciple realizes that, but once again Peter, though he doesn't necessarily perceive what's going on first, acts first. So as soon as the beloved disciple says it's the Lord, Peter jumps in the water, having stripped himself of his outer garment, and swims to the shore.

The other disciples are slowly making their way to the shore as they tow the huge net full of fish in with them. So, when they get there, they find Jesus is already cooking breakfast. There's a fire burning coals with fish on it and some bread.

So, Jesus says to them, Bring the fish that you've caught. In verse 10, Peter climbs back to the boat and brings the net ashore. 153 large fish.

Despite that quantity, the net is not torn. Jesus invites them to come and have breakfast. But everything is very scary at this point.

They're not even able to say to Jesus, It's you, isn't it? Verse 14 then reminds us that Jesus has already appeared to the disciples twice. This will be then the third time that he has appeared. You can go back and tie this into chapter 20 and count the first, second, and third appearances.

So, no one has even said directly to Jesus, It is really you, right? Or anything like that. They're just having a meal and evidently the elephant is sitting on the couch, so to

speak, and no one is able to say anything about it at this point. I guess they're waiting for Jesus to speak.

So, verses 15 through 23 have this well-known story about what Jesus has to say to Peter. And he asks him three times, beginning in verse 15, continuing in verse 16, and for the third time in verse 17, Do you love me? And Peter makes a positive affirmation each time. And the final time Peter was hurt, it says in verse 17, he was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, Do you love me? Perhaps Peter was aware of Jesus' intent here in getting him to accept his apostolic commission and his Christian commitment.

Three times to offset and by affirming three times, Peter erases his threefold denial of Jesus. So, Jesus, the third time around says, Feed my sheep. And I tell you that when you were young, you did what you wanted to do.

You dressed yourself. When you're old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you. Someone else will lead you where you do not want to go.

It's that last phrase, they will lead you where you do not want to go. That sounds a bit scary, doesn't it? And often that's taken that Jesus is saying to Peter, this is how you're going to die. In verse 19, Jesus said this to Peter to indicate by what kind of death he would glorify God.

Then he said to Peter once again, Follow me. Those are, I think, the very first words that Jesus had said to the disciples back in John chapter 1. So, this is the interaction that Jesus has with Peter and it's all well and good. Sounds great.

It's a great sermon text, 21:15-19. However, Peter gets a bit distracted here wondering what's going to happen with the beloved disciple. In verses 20-23, Peter asked Jesus about that.

He turned and he saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and said, Lord, who is it who's going to betray you at Peter's behest? We see this somewhat interesting relationship between Peter and the beloved disciple whom we take to be the author of this book, the Apostle John. So, Peter says, what about him? In verse 21, what about the beloved disciple? It's not quite clear whether Peter and the beloved disciple had some sort of a rivalry going in the way they followed Jesus.

They were both prominent amongst the disciples. Perhaps their personalities sort of abraded against each other and they were not necessarily the most typical friends that you would expect, but their common commitment to Jesus brought them together. So, Jesus replies to Peter when Peter says, what about him, the beloved disciple? Jesus essentially says, if I want him to remain until I return, so what? You

have to follow me, repeating in verse 22 what he had said to Peter in verse 19 and other times much earlier in the gospel.

So, because of this interchange between the Lord and Peter, a rumor developed somehow amongst others that the beloved disciple would not die until Jesus returned. But the beloved disciple, if indeed he's writing the material here, says that's really not what Jesus said. He didn't say he would stay alive until Jesus returned.

He simply said, what if I want that to happen? That's none of your business. What's that to you? So, we have then the conclusion of the gospel of John in verses 24 and 25. We're calling it here the author's signature.

He is saying then, this is the disciple, this very disciple about whom Peter asked, what about him? This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. Then this is the closest thing we have in this book to an affirmation of who the author was. It seems that this book then is saying that the beloved disciple is the author.

So, he then affirms himself to have been an eyewitness, not only of this particular incident but of many other incidents during the book. So, we know that his testimony is true. The final verse sort of reminds us of the final verses of the previous chapter.

Jesus did many other things as well. Chapter 21, verse 25. Well, we already know that because we were told in chapter 20, verse 30, Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples.

John, however, at the very end of the book says, I suppose that if every one of them were written down, even the whole world could not contain all the books that ought to be written or that could possibly be written. So that sort of takes the other tack from what it says in chapter 20 and verse 31, that the author has limited himself to information that brings people to faith. Here he says, if we were to have expanded beyond that, where would we have ever been able to stop? We would have filled up the whole world with all the books that could be written about Jesus.

So, on that note, the Gospel of John concludes and it sort of seems sad that we have now have to sort of leave it behind. But we're not leaving it behind. We're going to go back and look at some of the issues that have come up in these last two chapters.

One of them would be the prominence of Mary Magdalene back in chapter 20. We don't learn a whole lot about Mary Magdalene in the Gospel of John, just a few things about her going back to chapter 19, verse 25. We probably find out more about Mary Magdalene here in Luke's Gospel in chapter 8 than we find out in the Johannine tradition.

You may be aware that Mary Magdalene looms large in Dan Brown's fictional book, *The Da Vinci Code*. There is a whole industry out there of people who are writing books about Mary Magdalene and doing very specific things with her, very, I guess I should say, speculative things in reference to her. There are those who believe that the church's interest in Mary Magdalene has been somewhat voyeuristic, that often the male members of the early church and medieval church, being somewhat ascetically minded, have tried to blow the lurid details of Mary Magdalene's past out of proportion.

Be all that as it may, there is a great deal written about Mary Magdalene these days. If you're looking into that, make sure that you try it back to the New Testament because I think a lot of it is highly speculative and just sort of plain wrong. Another theme that we notice here early on in John chapter 20 and even into chapter 21 is the disciples' lack of understanding.

Chapter 20, verse 9, says they still did not understand from scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. We recall perhaps back in chapter 2, after Jesus had cleansed the temple, he brought up to those who asked him for a sign to validate this rather strong act that he had done, what sign do you show us to show your authority to do this? Jesus said to them way back then in chapter 2, verse 19, destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days. The audience, of course, was incredulous at that.

Herod's remodeling project had been going on for decades. They say it's taken 46 years to get this far, you're going to raise it in three days? But the text says the disciples came to realize after the resurrection that he was speaking of the temple, which was his body, and after the resurrection they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. So, to this point, they were not fully aware of the reality of the resurrection.

The question would remain, I guess, whether Jesus had specifically promised it or just whether the general tenor of his words, that he would see them again, ought to have led them to think that he was going to be raised from the dead. Another text which is appropriate, I think, is the triumphal entry text in chapter 12, where Jesus is riding on the donkey, which has a similar rubric around it. The disciples did not understand the significance of what he was doing, according to 12.16, until after the resurrection when Jesus was glorified.

Once again, in chapter 14, verse 26, when it has to do with the promise of Jesus about the Holy Spirit, when he says to them, the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and remind you of everything that I have said to you. Of course, this is all predicated on Jesus' resurrection and glorification. We could add here chapter 7, verse 39, which also ties

things back to the resurrection of Jesus, as does the comment in chapter 16, verse 16, where Jesus says, in a little while you will see me no more than after a little while you will see me.

So, instead of having as nearly an overt, clear resurrection prediction as we have in the Synoptics, John leaves it a bit more open. And so, I think the disciples' lack of understanding is much more excusable, the way the story is told in John than it was in the synoptic tradition. One of the more perplexing parts of the chapter, I think, for us to consider is the way in which Jesus bestows the Spirit upon the disciples in chapter 20, verses 22 and 23.

When we think about the earlier predictions in the book, we're not at all surprised at this, given what we have heard about Jesus being the one all the way back to chapter 1, who will baptize with the Spirit. Jesus is the one, according to chapter 7, from whose innermost being the Spirit will flow to other individuals. At least, that's the way I would want to interpret that text.

He has told them numerous times that he will send the Spirit to them. So, the fact that they are receiving the Spirit here is not at all a surprise. It would be expected, given what we've already learned in John.

What is, I guess, of some consternation and difficulty about this passage is the way in which Jesus bestows the Spirit. We have read, obviously, in the synoptic tradition, particularly in Luke's narrative, which phases from Luke 24 to Acts chapter 1, that Jesus promises the Spirit to the disciples once they have waited in Jerusalem for a while. Wait for a little while and you will receive the Spirit not many days from now.

So, when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, 50 days after Easter, the Jewish Feast of Weeks, seven weeks, this is the Sunday when we have the coming of the Spirit in the book of Acts. So, we well know the Day of Pentecost and that tradition in Luke-Acts. So, how are we going to relate the way in which the Spirit is received here in John to that of the way the Spirit is received in Luke? I think there are probably three or four perspectives on this that we could take.

We could take the tradition, but we won't, that these two traditions are contradictory and that there is a sort of one strand of early Christianity that had one tradition about the coming of the Spirit, one had another, and that factually speaking, one of these has to be wrong. I'm not inclined at all to take that position, although some would take it. On the other hand, we could say, as some do, that what we have here in chapter John is a temporary endowment of the Spirit which will supply them with the power and the insight that they need, the spiritual understanding and insight, but that this is a temporary or a partial endowment with the Spirit which will get them to Pentecost when they will receive the Spirit in full or complete or a more permanent reception of the Spirit.

Many people take that view of it. I'm not so sure that one would be the case either. I would think it's more likely that what we have going on here in John chapter 20 is, in light of biblical theology overall, a sort of prophetic portrayal of the coming of the Spirit which would happen later.

So, I guess I would say if that is the case, then what we have going on here when Jesus lays his hands on the disciples and breathes on them and says, receive the Holy Spirit, what he is doing is acting out what will happen to them on the day of Pentecost. He is saying to them, this is in fact what will happen to you, and he is making a prediction, as it were. Notice that he breathes on them and says, receive the Holy Spirit.

It's well known, I think, that the word in Greek and in Hebrew for breath is also the word that is used for the wind and also the word that is used for the Spirit. So, whether we are talking about ruach in Hebrew or pneuma in Greek, either way, we are making a bit of a pun here when we speak about the Holy Spirit and breath or wind. I would grant that, apart from attempting to bring some sort of harmony between John and Luke, we probably would not have even been asking this question, nor would we have needed the solution that I just proposed it.

If all we had were the Gospel of John, we would not really think we had any need at all for the day of Pentecost. I think that is strictly a factual point. On the other hand, I think that when we find the whole scriptures as one book, one Bible, one Lord who providentially guided all of the authors and who spiritually led them to say what he wanted said, that it does behoove us at times to come to trying to find unity in these types of things.

So, it appears to me at least, and you can see you are certainly free to agree or not, that when we put the whole New Testament together on the final analysis, it is at least plausible that what actually happens here in the Gospel of John is Jesus making an acted prophecy of what would happen on the day of Pentecost. The interaction with Thomas, of course, hits a theme that we have already belabored perhaps too much in the book, but I have to mention one more time, that the situation with Thomas is another instance where we have someone who has faith based on sight, faith based on, if you will, a sign. In fact, when we are told in chapter 20 of verse 30, Jesus performed many other signs, it is as if his resurrection or at least his post-resurrection appearance to Thomas is to be put alongside the culminating resurrection of Lazarus back in chapter 11 as perhaps the ultimate sign in John's Gospel.

So, we know that some folks came to faith through signs. We have repeated texts in John that describe that. We also know that some folks who came to faith through signs came to a sort of faith that was not fully persevering, not fully adequate, not a

full grasp, a real grasp of what the signs were pointing to, not really a true understanding of who Jesus was and what the nature of his ministry was.

All that, I think, came to a head in chapter 8 most clearly, in the last half of chapter 8, and I think we are introduced to that for the first time at the end of chapter 2. The persons in chapter 2 who were impressed with Jesus believed that he was somebody because the signs he did are typified by Nicodemus' perception of Jesus in chapter 3. Once again, in John here for the last time, there are those who are told about the signs of Jesus so that they might believe, so that they might have life. All of that is true and there is certainly nothing about a faith based on signs that is a deficient faith necessarily. There are those who see the signs and who see beyond the sign to the person, the ministry, the Messiah whom God intended.

However, there were those who saw the signs and only saw the kind of Messiah they already wanted, that they were already conditioned by their culture to receive. The signs sometimes were received by those with what today is called a confirmation bias. They saw in the signs the person they had already been groomed to see.

They saw what they wanted to see, which was not truly who Jesus was. Others, however, were able through the signs to come to genuine faith and this is the type of person that Jesus is speaking of here. However, there are those who can come to genuine faith apart from any signs whatsoever.

As Jesus said to Thomas, because you have seen me you have believed, blessed are those who have not seen and who yet have believed. Here we have a picture of Thomas drawn by the great artist Caravaggio. This one actually has Thomas putting his finger into the side of Jesus.

The text does not exactly specify that Thomas did this. It's quite interesting the way he is portrayed here as really gazing intently at the torso of Jesus and actually inserting his finger into Jesus' body. You also notice here on Jesus' left hand the mark of the nail.

I think that these classic pieces of art are interesting in the way that they demonstrate the exegesis of the passage in a visual way. A very different type of art is now portraying Jesus in John chapter 1 as meeting the disciples in the lake after they have fished all night and caught nothing, directing them then to throw the net on the other side of the boat. Peter appears to be doing the breaststroke there to come to see Jesus on land.

If we were to go to Israel today to find a place to commemorate this event, there is a small church called the Church of the Primacy of Saint Peter to the southwest of Capernaum, even further west than Tabgha there around the corner from the Migdal Junction and the biblical site of Magdala. This small dark stone church on the shore is

the church of which I am speaking and it is intended to be built upon a site to commemorate the events that we've just been looking at in John chapter 21. It's interesting that in this picture the water level is rather low and you see lots of stones around the church.

Other pictures I've seen show the water coming up even as high as these rocks that are right here along the side of the church. This church is built over the top of this, I guess you would call it boulder, this outcropping of bedrock so that once you go into the church you find that these rocks are still there on the, I guess you would call it the platform of the church, the altar of the church. In fact, if you go in there today you will see that the rock that was outside the wall has continued in here and they built the wall right over the rock the place is called Mensa Christi in Latin, the table of Christ.

So, here's a way that they are trying to commemorate the rock upon which Jesus grilled the fish over the coals to roast it, whatever, to feed the disciples on that day. So, we look at places like this and we say, well perhaps this was the place and perhaps not, but it was a place like this. Turning then to John chapter 21 more directly and thinking about some of the things that go on here, the relationship of this thing to the synoptic tradition I think is interesting, and the way in which Jesus meets the disciples in Galilee and speaks to them there and commissions them there, interesting in light of the commission in John chapter 20 which apparently happened in Jerusalem.

So, we have some issues in tying the two traditions together and it's not been our purpose in this class to look into that in-depth, but we are aware of these things and perhaps you're of a mind to study it more fully and I hope you do if that's where you feel led. The prominence of Peter is clear in chapter 21 of John. We recall back in chapter 20 that when it comes to discovering the body of Jesus, Peter and the beloved disciple both go rushing to the tomb.

Beloved disciple runs faster, and stands on the outside looking in. Peter arrives and is the first one to rush into the tomb itself. Peter's prominence is also seen as he's the one who suggests that they go fishing.

As soon as Peter suggests that they go fishing, verse 3 says, they say, we will go with you. As soon as they hear this man telling them to throw the net on the other side, the beloved disciple is the first to recognize it to be Jesus. Peter is the first one to jump into the water to go see Jesus.

So, we're not surprised at any of this if we know the character of Peter from the Gospel of John and the synoptic tradition as well. He is the one who typically is impetuous, who lacks patience, and who speaks first. Sometimes he speaks well, sometimes not so well, but he's going to speak and act one way or the other.

So, the prominence of Peter I think is interesting here, particularly because it leads us into the way in which Jesus relates to Peter in verses 15 through 17 by asking him three times whether he loves him. So, there's a great deal of discussion about the way in which these questions are phrased and why we have the repetition. And the reason why we have the repetition here three times is because we get different words being used to describe the situation.

So, you may have heard various kinds of teaching on Peter and Jesus here and the different Greek words that are used. We're not assuming a lot of Greek knowledge here on those of you who are looking at the video. If you've had some Greek, you'll understand what I'm saying.

If not, I'll try to break it down in a way that helps you understand the way the passage is often taught. The main thing that's brought up as the passage is taught is that there are two different Greek words here for love being used, one *agapao*, the other *phileo*. *Agapao* is a word for love that often has to do with a volitional sort of love, a rational sort of love, a love that is based on willful commitment.

Phileo is the type of love that in its context stresses an emotional kind of love or a very fervent kind of love, a very deep-seated and deeply felt love, not so much necessarily a love that is rationally based. What I've just said, however, is simply deductions from some of the uses of the words, not all of them. And the words can be used often in ways that are almost interchangeable, if not totally interchangeable.

In fact, if you were to get a concordance and study how these two words are used, use a computer database, search them out, whatever, you'll find that in other places in John the word *agapao* and the word *phileo* are used in a very synonymous fashion. There are those who will say that *agapao* kind of love is divine love, a *phileo* kind of love is human love. However, there are texts in John where humans, *agapao*, and texts in John where God, *phileos*.

So that does not hold true. So, we have to be careful in realizing that we determine the meaning of words not by etymologizing them and trying to think that they have some magical entity within them that gives them a specific meaning, but by looking at how words are actually used and discovering the semantic range of the words in various contexts in which they're found. When we do that, we get the impression that perhaps what's going on here is not so much a way of trying to distinguish between types of love, but just basically a literary way of making the text more interesting to read because of the vocabulary words are not repetitive.

So, when Jesus says to Peter, do you love me? And Peter says, yes, I love you. It's often taken to mean that Jesus uses a word of more profound significance. Peter counters by saying, yeah, sort of.

In other words, he's not fully coming up to the level of divine kind of love or rational, volitional commitment love that Jesus is asking him for. What he's saying instead is, yeah, I feel good about you. Yeah, yeah, I like you, something along that nature.

So, if you take it that way, then finally after asking him this once and getting this answer, asking him twice, getting this answer which is less than satisfactory, Jesus then condescends to Peter's level. And finally, Peter is able to say for the third time, yeah, yeah, I do. So in this exegesis of the text, Jesus sort of takes what he can get from Peter.

He challenges him to a high level of commitment. And Peter is honest and says, well, I don't quite have that, but I do have this. And in the end, Jesus says, OK, I'll sort of take what I can get.

I think that's probably a big mistake in understanding the passage. Instead of focusing on the relatively speculative differences between the two words used, I think we'd be better off if we chalk that up to just a literary variation for stylistic purposes and realize that the point of the passage is not the shaving the words here and there and finer points of possible meaning, but the fact that Jesus makes it happen three times. So, Jesus really is, dare I say, rubbing Peter's nose in it here and reminding him of his threefold denial.

But that must have been very hurtful to Peter. But I think this is what we sometimes hear called tough love. This is Jesus hurting Peter, in a sense, in order to heal him.

So, Peter's going to hurt for a little bit by being reminded of his denials, but he's going to be helped by realizing that Jesus is cleansing him from that and giving him a renewed commission to feed the sheep, to care for his people. So instead of trying to think of these words as slightly different and psychologize what's going on in Jesus' head and what's going on in Peter's head, let's just stick with the obvious facts here. Three times Peter denied Jesus.

Jesus requires Peter to three times affirm his loyalty and his love for Jesus. Another reason why we don't think the issue is so much in the different words that are being used for love is that when we look at the rest of this text, Jesus is using different terminology for taking care of the sheep. When he tells Peter, essentially, if you love me, then you need to love my people.

You can't talk about your commitment to me unless you're committed to my followers and your mission that I'm now recommissioning you for is to care for the sheep, to take care of my people. Don't tell me you love me and then leave my people high and dry. I don't accept that.

But as Jesus unfolds this for the three times, he is using two different words that we typically would translate shepherd or care for or pasture or whatever. He's using the word *bosko* in Greek as well as word *poimino*. In fact, he's even using two different words for the sheep.

He's speaking about the *arneon*, which has more to do, I think, with lambs, and the word *probiton*, which has to do more with the flock, sheep indiscriminate of their maturity. So, the fact that Jesus is using different words for sheep, I don't think he's saying here take care of the junior church and also take care of the adults or anything like that. He's just saying, using different words to mix it up a bit and to make it more interesting to read so that you don't get bored by seeing the same word repetitively used over and over again.

So, what we would glean then from this material in John 21, 15 through 17 is, on the one hand, just think how much Jesus loves Peter that he would put up with his denials and come back to him later and essentially forgive him and recommission him to care for his sheep. I'm speaking to a friend of mine right now who has had some issues in his life regarding sin, a sin of which he has repented and begun to follow the Lord in a renewed way. Yet at times, he has the moments where he wonders, am I really back on track or not? Can I get back on track? Am I ever going to be able really to put this behind me? And I say to him more than once, if God could forgive Peter for what he did, God certainly can forgive you.

I think none of us really know the vastness of God's love and the depth of his mercy and his grace to us. We perhaps find it more difficult to forgive ourselves than God finds to forgive us. So, I think we need to take courage from someone like Peter, who was able to rebound from his mistakes by the grace of God, not by his own strength, and be recommissioned by Jesus in this way.

So, one lesson from this text is just how much we can take from the love of God for us, realizing that grace is greater, as the old hymn put it, than all of our sin. On the other hand, we would take some responsibility from this text by realizing that however much we might say we love Jesus, we will demonstrate our love for him by taking care of his people here on earth. So, if we feel that we have loved him, then we are essentially enlisting in his service to care for his sheep.

Because if he loves us enough to forgive us, and he expects us then to love him and to love the people that he died for and rose again and is head of the church. We looked at a painting of Thomas. Here is another one of Peter.

I find this one to be quite interesting as well. As Peter, for all of his impetuosity, for all of his lack of patience, for all of his blurting things out, sometimes rightly, sometimes wrongly, Peter is told here by Jesus that someday he will not be able to stretch out his arms and dress himself and take care of business like he wants to.

Indeed, someday others will do that for him and will take him places he does not want to go.

That is typically interpreted, I would think, very likely, correctly, to indicate that someday Peter will be persecuted and martyred for the faith. Caravaggio here is attempting to show Peter. Notice he is looking with his eyes toward the big nail in his hand.

Not a very pretty picture, I grant you. As you look at Peter there, it is almost like the expression on his face is a memory. Perhaps he is looking back to this time when he is now recalling what Jesus said to him about the day when someone would take him where he did not want to go and stretch out his arms in ways he did not want them to be stretched out.

You notice that this text also reflects the early church tradition, which we would not glean necessarily from the scriptures, that Peter was crucified upside down with his head down on the cross. We are not so sure of that biblically, but you see that the person is pulling the rope and straightening up the cross for Peter to be crucified upside down. I am not sure of the historical veracity of that practice, whether that can be shown in other texts or not, but that would be interesting to search out more fully.

What is John 21 doing for us as far as the gospel of John as a whole? We will conclude on this note. In terms of literature, in terms of telling the story, in terms of bringing the plot to full resolution, I guess we could say that one of Jesus' first disciples in John 1 was Peter. Jesus' last disciple is Peter.

In other words, Peter is the focus of much of John here and there, and here we have come full circle with Peter. We began with him in chapter 1 as one of the early followers of John the Baptist who follows Jesus. Here in chapter 21, he is restored to ministry.

Certainly, by the time that John had written, likely at the end of the first century or toward that time, Peter had ongoing prominence in the church. When this message was read and this was understood in the church, Peter's commission to ministry would have been strengthened and his status in the church would have been confirmed by this text. The text also clarifies to some extent the complementary roles played by the beloved disciple and Peter.

However, they would have been viewed in the late first century by various factions within the church, various groups, and various geographical regions would perhaps be helped by this. Ultimately, Peter is tied to Rome in early church tradition. Ultimately, the beloved disciple John is tied to Ephesus in Western Asia Minor.

They would have been highly respected leaders in these various spots. This text then would have shown them the background of how they had begun to be who they were when this text would have been written. So, literarily, this would be how I think the beloved disciple and Peter's respective roles in John come to a conclusion and come full circle.

Canonically, when we think about how we understand the gospel of John in light of previous and even more importantly following texts, this helps us understand in terms of an overall biblical theology about the role of Peter. As we know from the book of Acts, particularly up through Acts chapter 15, Peter has a great deal of prominence. Peter is the one who preaches on the day of Pentecost.

Peter is the one who opens the gospel to the Gentiles, not Paul. Often people assume that Paul later described himself as the apostle to the Gentiles and that was indeed his ministry. But when we read Acts chapter 10, it is Peter who speaks at the household of Cornelius, not Paul.

Paul indeed comes into the picture soon there and Paul takes the first mission trip in Acts 13 and witnesses to the Gentiles and becomes known as the apostle to the Gentiles. But if you continue reading as far as chapter 15, the so-called Council of Jerusalem, where they're discussing the demographics of the church and the incursion of Gentiles into it and how to assimilate them into the church, Peter is the one who endorses Paul and says that the ministry of Paul is indeed the way we want the church to go. So, Peter is supporting Paul there and that's sort of the last we hear of Peter in the book of Acts pretty much.

But Peter looms large all the way in Acts up to that point. I find it the case that in Protestant Christianity, we often lionize Paul and diminish Peter severely. I think that's a mistake when we look at the biblical theology of Peter, the prominent role that he has in the Gospels, the way in which he leads the church early on throughout the book of Acts, at least to the middle of the book, and not least the two letters that we have from Peter that he has left for us from his teaching.

Whether we think of Peter as the first bishop of Rome or not, whether we take it even beyond that to think that Peter began an apostolic succession that continues to this day or not, and I don't, whether we do any of that, we certainly need to give Peter the prominence that is his due in his role in the early church and in biblical theology. Overall, I think theologically, John 21 reminds us of something that we ought already to know in a very poignant and clear way, if we claim to love someone, we will do what they say. This is quite clear in John chapter 15, where Jesus says if you abide in my love, you will keep my commandments.

Jesus holds out that truth to Peter three times here. Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me? Yes, yes, yes. Okay then, if you say you love me, show me you love me, show me where your heart is by your care for my people.

Certainly, all of us in the hearing of this video today, myself included, need constantly to be reminded that if we claim to be people who are in love with Jesus Christ, we will be in love with his mission and with the people who are part of that mission. So may the Lord convict us of that and strengthen us in that resolve when we reflect on John chapter 21. This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John.

This is session number 20, Jesus is raised and appears to disciples. John chapter 20 verse 1 through chapter 21, verse 25.