

Dr. David Turner, Gospel of John, Session 22, The Future in John

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This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 22, Life Eschatologicalized, the future in John.

In our studies in the Gospel of John, we've presented 20 videos going through John chapter by chapter, attempting to follow the flow of the text and discuss various important topics that come up as we do so.

We're also presenting a lecture on John 1 and Genesis 1, trying to get at the way in which protology, the doctrine of first things, connects the two books together, and arguing that in John it's not so much alluding to Genesis in order to affirm that Jesus is the original creator, but instead to affirm based on the fact that Jesus is the original creator, to affirm in addition to that he's the renewer of creation. So, we've been talking about the origins issue in light of John 1 and Genesis 1. So in our final lecture on John, we're going to present a study of how John presents the future. We're calling it Life Eschatologized, and on our cover slide you may have noticed that we have a picture of a very strong apocalyptic image, that of Albrecht Durer, something that's been done about 500 years ago, a popular image of course, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse from Revelation chapter 6. In this respect, this is most often what we think of when we think of eschatology, that of things that will happen in the future.

However, in this study we're going to try to understand John's distinctive note of eschatology, which to my mind is the eschatologizing of the present rather than projecting the future as something qualitatively different from the present. So by way briefly of the introduction, in this study we're going to present a summary of John's eschatology with special reference to the life of Jesus' followers. John's teaching about the future is less prominent and relevant than his teaching about the present.

John's interest is not so much to project what will be as it is to describe what is in light of what will be. What anticipates what will be, and what will be has already begun. Jesus' followers have already been raised by his word to eternal life.

Their resurrection betokens the resurrection of humankind on the last day. The hour is coming and now is, as John makes clear in chapter 5 verses 24 through 29.

The first thing we want to do as we look at this information is to discuss some historical assumptions.

The working assumption of this study should be identified. Neither the gospel nor the letters nor the Apocalypse of John specify that John the Apostle, the beloved disciple, is their author. Nevertheless, a strong case can be made for the view that the Apostle John wrote all five of these works, or at least was the source of the traditions transmitted by his immediate followers.

Views of this sort remain common amongst conservative scholars. Be that as it may, the theological continuity of this corpus is more relevant to the present study than its authorship. How the gospel, the letters, and the Apocalypse of John came to be is not exactly clear.

One might posit the composition, circulation, and reception of the gospel of John as the setting for the letters and ultimately the Apocalypse. An opposite scenario is also plausible, one in which the letters reflect the developing Johannine teaching, which later comes to its full expression in narrative and apocalyptic denouement. Whatever the historical relationship between the gospel and the letters, the Apocalypse may plausibly be taken to represent a later stage of Johannine teaching, one which envisions the victory of Jesus that has already been narrated in the gospel and which applies it to specific situations represented in the letters.

One interesting approach to this is that of Luke Timothy Johnson in his book, *The Writings of the New Testament*. Johnson suggests that the varying reception to John's gospel leads to the three letters being sent as a packet carried by Demetrius to a single community. Third John recommends Gaius' fidelity, exposes Diocletian's opposition, and endorses Demetrius.

Second John is to be read to the church as a cover letter or an introduction to First John. First John is a homily exhorting faithfulness to the elders' tradition as expressed in the gospel of John. Beyond that, as it may, it's interesting to think about the historic origins of these books, but what we're attempting to do today is to understand their thematic correlations and continuity.

So, the first thing we want to think about in reference to Johannine eschatology is how we ought to style it as realized future or inaugurated eschatology. The most basic question facing a study of the future in the Johannine writings is whether the future is addressed at all. Ladd bluntly stated in his *New Testament theology* that, quote, the most superficial comparison of the synoptics and John leads one with the impression that the Johannine Jesus is little interested in eschatology.

Stephen Smalley's comment is more nuanced. The fourth evangelist has little to say about the last things as such and is more concerned about the, to him at least, the vital interrelationship between time and eternity. Certain Johannine teachings stress the present realization of things typically understood as yet to come.

For example, Jesus the Messiah has already come to reveal God and to establish authentic worship. John chapter 1 verses 14 through 18, John chapter 4 verses 21 to 26, bring alongside that 1 John chapter 4 verse 2 and chapter 5 verse 6. Another proposition such that Jesus has already overcome the world, his work of redemption is finished. Such text as John 16:23, 17:4, 19, 30, as well as 1 John chapter 2 verse 8, chapter 3 verse 5, and even the book of Revelation 1, 5, 3, 21 and 5, 5. Another Johannine eschatological teaching is that believers in Jesus have already overcome the evil one.

1 John chapter 2 verses 13 and 14, 1 John 4:4, 1 John 5:4 and 5, Revelation chapter 12 verses 10 and 11, all these texts I think referring back to and working from the seminal words of Jesus in 16:33, I have overcome the world. The hour of resurrection according to John is already here. Dead people are hearing the son of God's voice and they're coming to life according to John 5 verses 25 to 29.

Another interesting statement about the present realization of eschatological facts is that Satan, the prince of this world, has already been judged. John chapter 12 verses 31, 16:11, 1 John 3:8, compare Revelation 12 verses 7 through 10. Believers in Jesus already have eternal life.

Unbelievers are already under judgment according to texts like John 3, 18, John 3, 36, 1 John 5, 12, and 13, and verse 19 as well in that chapter. Finally, antichrists according to 1 John are already in the world. 1 John 2:18, 22, 1 John 4:3, and 2 John verse 7. So, John speaks in a very dramatic way about things we typically consider to be the future as having already begun.

On the other hand, John does speak univocally about the future. Jesus will go to prepare a place for his disciples and then come from them according to John 14. Although this text is much debated, it seems like a future sort of eschatology is at least an implication of this passage.

Additional future eschatology text in the Gospel of John would be chapter 21 verses 22 and 23. We can compare this to references to the future coming of Christ in 1 John 2 verse 28, chapter 3 verses 2 and 3, as well as Revelation 1:7, 2:5, several more texts in chapters 2 and 3, as well of course as the conclusion of the book in chapter 19, and chapter 22. Another aspect of future eschatology in John would be that Jesus' enemies may be permitted to overcome his people for a time according to Revelation 6:2 and other texts in the apocalypse, but ultimately Jesus will overcome all his enemies, Revelation 17 verse 14.

Another future eschatology aspect of John's teaching is that the hour of resurrection is coming. Although the hour of resurrection is already here in a sense according to John 5, John 5 goes on to say the second time the expression occurs that the hour of resurrection is coming when all people will be raised either to life or to judgment.

According to 1 John 2 verse 18, there are indeed present antichrists, but these antichrists demonstrate the reality of the future antichrist.

John also says in 1 John chapter 2, 18 that it is the last hour and that believers in Jesus may anticipate judgment day with confidence, 1 John chapter 4, verse 17. The complexity of John's teaching in this area has led scholars such as C.H. Dodd and Rudolf Bultmann to argue that the future in John should be taken as having already been fully realized in the present. Dodd argued that the delay in Christ's coming led early Christians to sublimate a primitive futuristic apocalyptic eschatology into a more nuanced mystical sense of Christ's indwelling through the spirit.

Bultmann's demythologizing existentialist agenda resulted in his denial of all things miraculous, including an apocalyptic end of the world. He understood eschatology as authentic personal existence and attributed futuristic text in John to a later interpolation. The more recent work of von Walde handles things similarly.

They are arguing for three additions to the fourth gospel. These additions progressively develop eschatology from the first stage, where possession of eternal life by the believing community leads to a second stage, the spiritual existence of believers beyond death, which leads to a third stage, the future physical resurrection of believers at a time of reckoning to be determined. An opposite view is typically expressed by traditional dispensationalists, for whom God's reign is entirely future.

Charles Ryrie downplayed the role of the gospel and letters in the study of Johannine eschatology, stating that Johannine eschatology is found mainly in the apocalypse. This statement assumes a strictly futuristic approach. John Walvoord acknowledged that the kingdom of God was present in some sense during Jesus' first advent, but went on to say that, quote, the hopes and promises and expectations associated with his coming did not take place.

The eschatology which included them was not realized. Walvoord's view of a promised advent without even the least realization of promised eschatological blessings is starkly futuristic. Similarly, Alva J. MacLean's treatment of John 5, 25 through 29 separates the present hour of spiritual regeneration from the eschatological hour of physical resurrection so strictly that one wonders why Jesus would even describe the former in terms of the latter.

In the larger context of New Testament theology, this sort of futurism has affinities with what has been called the consistent eschatology or consequentia eschatology of Johannes Weiss. New Testament scholarship by and large across the board, all across the theological spectrum, has resisted both of these all-or-nothing approaches. Viewing the realized and futuristic aspects of New Testament eschatology as complementary and correlative, not contradictory and corrective.

The differences between John's focus on eternal life and that of the Synoptics on the kingdom of God are commonly understood not as disparate teachings but as distinct emphases. W. F. Howard argued that the Johannine teaching of Jesus as the exegesis of God's glory in 1:14 through 18 requires an ultimate full manifestation of that glory. C. F. D. Moul believed that John's emphasis on personal individual eschatology led him to a realized emphasis.

Speaking about John 3:17 and following, Rudolf Schnakenberg stated that no one grasped the significance of John's eschatological revelation better than John and that John's emphasis on present judgment does not delay the future judgment, excuse me, does not deny the future judgment, which perfects the saving action of God in the present. David Aune traced the realized or mystical aspects of Johannine eschatology into a cultic setting. W. G. Kummel spoke of the substantive necessity of hope in the promised future consummation as part of the divine saving act which led to the present reality of salvation in John.

C. K. Barrett acknowledged the Johannine emphasis on the present but insisted that John retains a measure of last-day apocalypticism in texts like John 6:39, 40, 44, and 53 in the so-called bread of life discourse. Leonhard Goppelt linked present and future in the fourth gospel by viewing the former as the ultimate concrete and visible, by viewing the latter as the ultimate concrete and visible manifestation of the former. Moody Smith remarks that in John, salvation is not only a present reality but that by virtue of its presence, the future is already a matter of assurance rather than hope.

Frank Thielman describes John's emphasis on the present as unusual in the New Testament yet he takes John's corresponding emphasis on the necessity of perseverance during persecution as evidence that future eschatology is a theological necessity for John. Thomas Schreiner begins his treatment of New Testament theology by utilizing already not yet language as a fundamental characteristic of the kingdom of God. Craig Kester describes the coming of Jesus as a rift in time that ultimately and decisively changes the world by transforming the relationship of future hopes and present realities.

G. K. Beale's overarching approach to the New Testament biblical theology is based on God's action in Christ to inaugurate the renewal of creation as a whole concluding with the discussion of the relationship between inaugurated and consummated eschatological realities. In light of this survey of prominent biblical theology folks, it seems clear then that John portrays God's glorious reign neither as fully realized nor as fully future but as both partially realized in the present and yet to be fully realized in the future. New Testament theologians commonly speak of both the ethical vertical present fulfillment of future realities and of the eschatological horizontal future consummation of those same realities.

In describing Johannine teaching the term inaugurated is more important than the term, more appropriate I should say, than the term realized. This term inaugurated is perhaps related to the terminology in German of Joachim Jeremias who said, who spoke of a *zick realiserende eschatologie* which I guess would roughly translate into something like eschatology in the process of realization. Strictly futurist eschatology truncates the Johannine stress on the powerful impact of Christ's death, life, death, resurrection, and descending the spirit to empower his people to do his work.

Texts such as John 20 verses 21 and 22, 1st John chapter 2 verse 8, 21:4, 20:27. Strictly realized eschatology truncates biblical teaching about what God will do to finish what is already begun in Christ. Johannine eschatology links the already to the not yet and that the eschatological life already experienced by followers of Jesus abides in them by the spirit and empowers them for the troubles that are ahead.

Texts such as John 15 verses 18 through 16:11, John 16:20 through 22, and allusions in the prayer of Jesus, John 17:14, and in the words to Peter in chapter 21 verse 18. Further in John, teaching about eternal life as a present reality assumes the future consummation which is based on it. When one applies this approach to the already not yet points laid out above, a reliable, remarkable theological perspective emerges.

First, Jesus has come from the Father to reveal God and to establish authentic worship. He will go to the Father to prepare a place for his followers and then return to earth to consummate his relationship with them. Second, Jesus has finished the Father's work and overcome the world and its prince.

His followers share in this victory through faith, yet they will experience troubles and will even be overcome temporarily by Jesus' enemies before they share in his ultimate vindication and victory. Third, Jesus' message is already raising people from the death of alienation from God to the life of fellowship with him. The present possession of this life assures believers of its permanence in the future.

One day, Jesus will fully, will resurrect all humans for reward or punishment. From this general perspective, one may profitably examine Johannine themes which portray the future. Selecting such themes for a short study as this requires difficult methodological choices.

One might profitably survey John's teachings topically, as does W.R. Cook, who treats death, eternal life, resurrection, heaven, judgment, and Christ's return. Due to space limitations, however, the remainder of this study will engage only a few highly relevant Johannine themes. First, the coming yet here hour.

Second, the kingdom of God. Third, the coming of Jesus. And fourth, the renewal of creation.

So, we turn then to some selected eschatological themes in the gospel of John. First we look at the hour that is already, that is coming yet already here. Although the word hour occurs about 25 times in the fourth gospel, the saying, the hour is coming and now is, in John 4:23 and 5:25, requires special attention.

In its two occurrences, this striking expression epitomizes the presence of the future, to use a term, a way of speaking coined by George Ladd. The present fulfillment of prophetic promises as a precursor to their ultimate apocalyptic consummation. Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4 led to his teaching about authentic messianic worship in spirit and in truth.

A worship that transcended historic rivalries between Jerusalem and Gerizim of the Samaritans, John chapter 4 verses 21 through 25. The woman insightfully perceived Jesus' prophetic identity and alluded to the historic divide between Samaritan worship on Mount Gerizim and Jewish worship in Jerusalem, John chapter 4 verse 20. Jesus candidly affirmed the centrality of Jerusalem and redemptive history to that point but noted that the present movement of God prioritized the manner of worship over the place of worship, John 4:21. Jesus was not speaking of the rejection of the Jews and of Jerusalem, but as the messianic renewal of the Jewish church and of Jewish worship, in keeping with God's promise to Abraham back in Genesis chapter 12.

According to the Old Testament, the Jerusalem temple was to be a house of prayer for all nations, Jews, Samaritans, and all humanity, John chapter 2 verse 17, citing Psalm 69:9. The Samaritans coming to faith in Jesus as the narrative unfolds in John chapter 4 verses 39 to 42, showed that God's plan to reach all humanity was already coming to pass, John chapter 1 verse 9, 3:16. Many other texts in John speak of people coming to Jesus. Thinking ahead into 1 John chapter 2 verse 2, that Jesus is not the propitiation for our sins only, that of the Jews, but for those of the whole world. Revelation chapter 5 verses 9 and 10, where people from all manner of ethnic diversity are there around the throne of God, giving praise to the Lamb, and other texts in the book of Revelation.

So then in John chapter 4, the hour of authentic spiritual worship was already being realized through Jesus the Messiah, John chapter 4 verses 23 to 25. On Jesus' second trip to Jerusalem, his healing of a paralyzed man on the Sabbath led to conflict with the authorities, just as his clearing of the temple had led to conflict on his previous trip. Jesus defended his actions by linking his Sabbath work with the Father's constant activity, affirming that his own actions simply mirrored those of the Father and that the Father had entrusted to him the work of raising the dead to life and judging them, John 5:16 through 23.

Such language would typically refer to the future resurrection and the judgment at the last day, but Jesus explains it is already occurring. He is already giving life to

whom he will. Those who receive him have already passed from death to life, experiencing a resurrection, quote-unquote, that removes them from condemnation at the last day.

In this sense, the hour of eschatological judgment is already present in that dead people, living life apart from God, are hearing Jesus' life-giving message and receiving eternal life, John 5:25 to 27. This present hour of ethical spiritual inner renewal should not be surprising to Jesus' audience, since it augurs the future hour of physical resurrection when all in the tombs will be raised to life or condemnation, John 5:28 and 29, which anticipates Revelation chapter 20, verses 11 through 15. Jesus' later conversation with Martha about the death of Lazarus, John 11, verses 17 to 27, is best understood in light of this teaching about the coming yet present hour.

Jesus intentionally arrives in Bethany after Lazarus' death and promises Lazarus' sister Martha that her brother will rise again. Martha indeed affirms her belief in the ultimate resurrection of her brother on the last day, compared John 6:39 and 40. Jesus acknowledges Martha's belief in John 11:25, but he emphasizes a more profound truth.

His Messianic identity as the giver of resurrection life means that those who believe in him already have life and will never die. Their vital dynamic relationship with God transcends the grave. Lazarus' coming out of his tomb demonstrates what Jesus had already taught in John 5:21 to 29.

It also anticipates the empty tomb of Jesus, the dawn of the coming day. The striking expression, the hour is coming, yet now is, found in both John 4 and John 5, does not minimize the reality of God's future redemptive work, so much as it maximizes the present availability of the life to be experienced at Christ's coming. The genuine, though partial, fulfillment of salvation is predicated on the assumed reality of a future eschatological consummation.

A second key eschatological theme that we need to think about is the way in which John speaks of the kingdom of God. Although the kingdom of God is not frequently mentioned in the fourth gospel, it is nevertheless a key to understanding the future in John's teaching. Jesus has come from above, from heaven, as the agent of God's authority on earth, according to texts such as 1:14, 1:51, 3:13, and many others.

Jesus' words to Nicodemus speak of spiritual rebirth in John 3:3-8 as a necessity for participating in the kingdom of God. Despite his learning, Nicodemus is boggled by this statement. Given his background, he likely thought of the kingdom in terms of the prophets' promises of God's future blessings on Israel, restoring them to his favor in the land promised to them, judging their enemies, and bringing them everlasting shalom.

Jesus' words do not appear to challenge Nicodemus' assumptions about the kingdom itself, so much as to challenge his nationalistic assumptions about entering it. Since Jesus' kingdom is not from this world, according to John 18:33-38, transformational supernatural birth and resulting insight are required to experience it. Compare John 1:12, John 3:3-10, John 6:14-15, and other texts.

All of this is consistent with the view that the kingdom of God in John transcends the present ministry of Jesus and will have a future consummation. A third key eschatological theme to be discussed is the way the coming of Jesus is portrayed in John. John's narrative highlights that Jesus has already come as God's messianic king.

Jesus' promises of a future coming, chapter 21, verses 22 and 23, compare 1 John 2, verses 28-33, are emphasized primarily in the discourse found in John 13:31-16:33, bracketed at the beginning by the foot-washing and bracketed at the end by the prayer in chapter 17. These promised comings present ambiguities leading to much scholarly discussion. Only a brief summary is possible here.

Jesus' promise to come again to his disciples after going to prepare a place for them in chapter 14, verses 1-6, perhaps compared to that 21, verses 22 and 23, is likely best understood as a reference to his future coming as eschatological messianic king, leading to the disciples being taken to dwell with him. It's, of course, possible that this futuristic language should also be understood to refer to the work of the Spirit and the disciples as present, in the present, leading them into the Father's presence. The promise appears to be alluded to in 14:28 and 29, and in 16:28.

Jesus' promise to manifest himself to the disciples so that they will see him and not be orphaned in 14:18-21, most likely refers to the post-resurrection appearances narrated later in the gospel in chapters 20 and 21. This promise seems to be alluded to in 16:16-24. Jesus' promise to come with the Father and abide with those who love him and keep his word should probably be taken with the passages that promise the coming of the Helper Spirit, chapters 14, verses 15-17, 25 and 26, 15:26 and 27, and 16:7-15.

As the Father sent the Spirit to equip Jesus for his ministry, Jesus bestows the Spirit on his disciples after the resurrection to equip them to continue his ministry, chapter 20, verses 22 and 23. The Spirit's Christocentric ministry is both retrospective and prospective. He causes the disciples to remember what Jesus has taught, and he teaches them about things to come and convicts the world through their ministries.

Thus, the Helper's ministry continues the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus beyond the scope of the fourth gospel's narrative. Both the post-resurrection comings of Jesus and his proximate coming to the disciples with the Father through the Spirit enable the disciples to carry on Jesus' ministry despite all the trouble to come before his ultimate coming. Accordingly, the Upper Room discourse turns out

to be not so much a farewell address as it is an exhortation that Jesus' disciples continue his ministry as they experience his ongoing transformed presence through the Helper Spirit he will send.

A final eschatological theme in John that we wish to discuss is the renewal of creation. A somewhat neglected example of John's theology of the coming hour, which is already here, is found in the prologue in John 1:1-18. This majestic text presents the word, the logos, not only as the pre-existing a sarkos, unfleshed creator, but also as the incarnate, en sarkos, and flesh creator, revealer of God.

John 1:1-3 presents the word as the original creator of everything. John 1, verses 4 and 5 presents the word as revealer in a fashion that validates a latent Johannine new creation theology. This is seen in the extensive use of light and darkness language to portray the life available through faith in the logos in chapter 1, verses 12 and 13, as well as the way that death remains for those who do not believe, John 3, verses 16-21, they remain in darkness.

John's portrayal as the logos, as life and light, underscores Jesus as the renewer of creation. John's teaching on the word as revealer, more clearly emphasized in John 1, verses 14-18, draws on Moses' experiences of God in Exodus 33 and 34, especially chapter 34, verse 6. What is commonly understood to be explicitly communicated by Paul in epistolary argument, Romans 5:12-21, and other texts, an Adam-Christ eschatological analogy, where salvation is portrayed as new creation, is also communicated by the author of the fourth gospel, albeit implicitly through narrative artistry. Commentaries tend to make isolated observations about the creation overtones of various details of John 1, but extended treatments of the theme are relatively uncommon.

Certain commentaries and other studies find seven days in John 1:19 and following, which are viewed as echoing Genesis 1. Other studies find evidence of a paradise motif in John 20, verse 15's reference to a garden. Compare Revelation 2, verse 7, Revelation 22, 1 and 2, and verses 14 and 19. John 20, verse 22, may be an allusion to Genesis 2, verse 7. All in all, the association of the reality of life in the word with the metaphor of light in John 8, verse 12, is especially significant for the understanding of John 1, verses 4 and 5 as a new creation text.

1 John also associates light and life. Those who claim to be in the light while living in darkness demonstrate that they are not part of the new creation, 1 John 1, verses 4 through 7. The present encroachment of God's light on Satan's darkness is a metaphorical presentation of ethical dualism and progressive creation renewal, in 1 John 2, verses 8 through 11. 1 John 2:13 and 14 evokes Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1 by referring to believers as those who know him who is from the beginning, whose speech brought light forth into existence.

In addition, John's apocalypse attributes to Johannine theology of Jesus' creation renewal. It is likely that the description of Jesus as the beginning of the creation of God in Revelation 3, verse 14 has reference to Jesus as the exalted head over creation's renewal. Jesus is opposed by Satan, described as the old serpent in reference to his deception of Adam and Eve, Revelation 12 and 20.

The praise given to the enthroned creator in Revelation 4, verse 11 is paired with the praise given to the slain lamb in Revelation 5, verses 9 and 10. At the end of the throne room scene, the enthroned one and the lamb receive the same praise, culminating in eternal dominion over creation. In Revelation 10, 6, an angel swears by the God who created everything in heaven, earth, and the sea that judgment is to be delayed no longer.

God's role as the protological creator entitles him to be the eschatological purifier of the creation. Similarly, in Revelation 14:7, those who live on the earth are urged to worship the God who made heaven and earth as Babylon is about to fall under the wrath of God. God's agent of judgment is His logos in Revelation 19, 13.

Ultimately, the fall of the wicked city Babylon prepares the way for the descent of the holy city Jerusalem as all things in heaven and earth are made new, Revelation 3:12, Revelation 21:1, and the following compare 2 Peter 3:13. Such language harks back to Isaiah 65:17-66. Several features of the new Jerusalem remind the attentive reader of Genesis 1-3, amongst them the end of death and all the pain related to it, the availability of the water in the tree of life, and the presence of unending divine light.

God's presence is fully mediated to His people since the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. Finally, we draw some conclusions regarding John's presentation of life eschatologized.

In conclusion, articulating and embodying a biblical theology of life eschatologized.

No doubt John emphasizes what has come to be known as inaugurated eschatology, the presence of the future, more than the future itself. This is seen particularly in Jesus' teaching that the presence of the coming hour means that authentic worship is no longer a matter of geography and that believers already experience unending life in communion with God. Along the same lines, Jesus teaches the necessity of present spiritual transformation for participation in the coming Kingdom of God.

He must go to the Father and come again in order for the eschatological participation to be realized. But in the meantime, he will appear to his disciples after his resurrection and will send the Spirit as his proxy to be their helper. His overarching goal in all this is nothing less than the renewal of the world, a new heaven, and a new earth in which God dwells with His people in a new Jerusalem.

The differences between John and the synoptic Gospels on the future should not be overly pressed. Both clearly teach, as Ashton put it, that the place people will occupy in the life to come is entirely determined by the moral decisions made in the present life. In Ashton's view, John's emphasis on the immediate consequences of belief and unbelief de-eschatologizes final judgment.

But it is more true, to John's thought, to say that John is not so much de-eschatologizing the future as he is eschatologizing the present, underlining the urgency of belief in Jesus and the reality of true fellowship with God through him. What does this life eschatologized look like? Fundamentally, it is the abundant life, John 10:10, engendered by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, John 6:63-68. Jesus is himself life from God, being born again. John 14:6, 1 John 1:1, 5:11 and 20.

As the life of God, Jesus gives life to the world, John 17:2, John 20:31. Jesus' life-giving Word comes to benighted people in a sin-darkening world, illumining them just as God illumined the world he originally created, John 1:1-5, John 3:16-21 and other texts. This life is actually of the same sort that is already shared by Jesus, his Father, and the Comforter, in John 6:57 and 17:3. It is a life of authentic worship in spirit and truth, whatever the place in which it occurs, John 4:23-24. It's a life of love, a love for Jesus, fellow Christ followers, and other humans. This love is actually the same sort of love as that already shared and shown by Jesus, his Father, and the Comforter, according to the New Commandment text in John 13:34-35, compared to 1 John 3:14-16. It's also a life of obedience to Jesus.

This obedience is actually the same sort of obedience as Jesus' own obedience to the Father, according to John 15:10. It is a life of unity with fellow believers, the sort of unity that is actually of the same sort as that shared by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, namely a missional unity designed to bring the world to faith in Jesus, according to John 17:21-23. Finally, it is a surviving life, one which anticipates transformed life after death, following the resurrection on the last day, John 5:28, 6:40, 6:54. Compare Revelation 2:10-24. This is actually the same sort of life experienced by Jesus that first Easter morning. Compare Revelation 2:8. When Paul passed on the Eucharistic teaching of Jesus in 1 Corinthians 11:24-26, he taught that believers come to the table not to ponder the future, but to remember and proclaim the past, the Lord's death, with a view to the future until he comes. The decisive foundational significance of Christ's work in the past necessarily renders the coming day no more absolutely essential, yet in a sense anticlimactic.

The glories of the future only amount to the unfolding of the infinite value of what Jesus has already accomplished in the work given to him by the Father. Eichten's words merit some thought and reflection on our part. Eichten says the nature of Christian belief entails some reduction in the importance attached to futurist eschatological expectation of any kind.

By far the most crucial revolution in man's relationship to God has been achieved by Christ. Without some conviction of this kind, the gospel would be relatively small beer.

So, we conclude by reminding ourselves of some key thoughts in the gospel of John and in the writings of John as a whole.

We're told in John 16, verse 33 that Jesus has overcome the world, echoed in John, Revelation 5:5. The lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered. Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and wealth, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing, Revelation 5: 12. Compare John 17.

Come, Lord Jesus, come to the kingdom of God. Revelation chapter 22, verse 20. The hour is coming and now is.

This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 22, Life Eschatologicalized, the future in John.