

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 11, Pictures of Jesus

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Johannine theology. This is session 11, Pictures of Jesus.

We continue studying Johannine theology, and let us begin with prayer during this session.

Father, thank you for your holy word. May the same spirit who gave it through the apostles and prophets of old illumine us that we might understand it, believe it, obey it, and do your will for your glory. By your grace, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

We are studying the teaching of the fourth gospel. We've thought about John's style, structure, purposes, the I am sayings, the signs, the time sayings, the two responses to Jesus, and the numerous witnesses to Jesus.

Now we begin looking at pictures of Jesus, that is, Christological pictures, and then pictures of his saving work, which includes the atonement but is bigger than even just the cross. Jesus is the Christ. And, of course, we find this in the prologue.

John 1:17. Again, to get things in proper perspective. He's called the word and the light.

And then in verse 17, for the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. It's the first time we have his name Jesus, and his title, which became part of his name, or so it seems, Christ or anointed one or Messiah. The Christ, he is the promised one.

The Old Testament uses the word Messiah very rarely. But the idea is prominent in many Old Testament themes. And here we have afterword and light imagery.

The sun, appears in verse 14. And that is one of our Christological titles, son of God or themes. But Jesus Christ appears first in verse 17.

We find it in verse 45 as well of the first chapter, among the testimonies to Jesus, the other testimonies to Jesus after John the Baptist. And then we have Philip, Andrew. The next day, in 1:43 of John, Jesus decided to go to Galilee; he found Philip and said to him, follow me.

Now, Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, we have found him of whom Moses in the law, and also

the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph. There's not the word Messiah, but exactly it's the meaning Messiah, him of whom Moses in the law wrote, and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Here's the idea, the messianic idea, without using the word. The Old Testament spoke of him. That's what Jesus said in chapter five, and we saw that.

You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, but you won't come to me to have life. You don't seem to understand what the scriptures say about me. You put your trust in Moses; he's going to be your judge because you don't believe his writings.

If you really did, if you understood the spirit of his writings and the telos, the goal of his writings, you would believe in me.

John 2:19 to 22, we've seen this before, too; what sign do you show us for doing these things, for the so-called cleansing of the temple? John 2:19, Jesus said, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. If we were there, in the court of the Gentiles, or perhaps the court of the women, we would think he's talking about destroying that structure, which seems crazy, which seems wild.

And that's exactly how the Jews understood it. In verse 20 of chapter two, the Jews then said it had taken 46 years to build this temple. It's talking about the refurbishing that has gone on for all that time under Herod the Great, and will you raise it up in three days? Here comes the Johannine editorial comment, and of course, they misunderstand, but who wouldn't? But he was speaking about the temple of his body, that is, Jesus replaces, said better, fulfills, replaces, and extends many Old Testament references.

People, institutions, here, the temple. He's the true temple. His body is the true temple.

He's the presence of God. The word became flesh and tabernacled among us. But he was speaking about the temple of his body when, therefore, he was raised from the dead.

His disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture, and they believed, by ellipsis, the word that Jesus had spoken. Jesus is the Christ. Matthew would say, this happened that the scripture might be fulfilled, which said. Instead, we have these sayings where Jesus says, I'm the true vine, I'm the good shepherd, I'm the resurrection and the life.

In effect, he says, I'm the true temple, without using those words. Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up. His messiahship is shown by his fulfilling and replacing the major institutions of the Old Testament people of God.

Even their identity. He is the true Israel. And those in union with him, by faith union, those who believe in him and are united to him, they become the true Israel, the new Israel, the spiritual Israel.

4:12, the woman at the well says, are you greater than our father, Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock. Once again, this is one of the famous misunderstandings. The Christian reader says, dear lady, is he greater than Jacob? He created Jacob.

He's the Lord. He's God. Of course, he's greater than Jacob.

That's one of John's techniques for engaging the readership, this time with a little indignation in affirming the greatness of Christ. By the way, Hebrews uses a very different idiom than John, but it also shows the superiority of Christ to Old Testament persons, events, and institutions. Jesus is greater than Jacob.

Chapter 5:45 to 47. We've been here before. Here we go again.

The Old Testament scriptures speak of Jesus. They are fulfilled in him. Although the word Messiah is used seldom, the concept of the promised one is used a number of times.

If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. John 5:47, but if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? Moses wrote of a prophet like himself. Moses, in giving the whole sacrificial system, ultimately pointed toward the Lamb of God, John 1, who will take away the sin of the world.

I need to make a correction from my last lecture. I identified Mount Gerizim as Mount Sychar. It's embarrassing.

Sychar is a town in Samaria. Gerizim is the right word. I stumbled because I said, wait a minute, Gerizim is put opposite evil in the pronouncement of the cursings and blessings in the law, and it is, but it's the same Gerizim that appears here in the Gospel of John.

So, the mountain is not named Sychar. The city is named Sychar, which anyone reading John 4 would realize. The mountain is not named there, but it is Mount Gerizim, the same place spoken of in the law.

John 8:58, Jesus does battle with the Jews. Oh, my word. Oh, my word.

Abraham is our father, verse 39. If you were Abraham's children, Jesus says, you'd be doing the works he did. Now, you seek to kill me, a man who's told you the truth that I heard from God.

That is not what Abraham did. You're doing the work your father did. He hasn't said who their father is yet, but he's going to lower the boom pretty soon.

They said we were not born of sexual immorality. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke teach the virginal conception of our Lord, traditionally called the virgin birth. Mary bore some stigma from this, and here is a vestige of that.

It looks like a slur said of Jesus. In other words, Bultmann is wrong. The New Testament was not written by a bunch of country bumpkins who believed in angels popping out of boxes, virgin birth.

Oh, they're a dime a dozen. No, they weren't a dime a dozen, and people didn't believe that story of the angel if they even heard it. We were not born of sexual immorality as you were, is the thought.

We have one father, even God. Jesus said, if God were your father, you would love me, for I came from God, and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.

Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father, the devil. And your will was to do your father's desires.

He was a murderer from the beginning, a reference to the fall and his bringing death on Adam and Eve as he tempts Eve, and her husband joins in the sin, and they incur the death that God warned them about if they were to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which they did. And he does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he's a liar and the father of lies.

But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Showing their pedigree, they are not children of Abram.

Oh, they are ethnically, but spiritually, they are not Abraham's children. They would rather bear the resemblance in their actions, attitudes, and words to their father, the devil. Which one of you convicts me of sin? I do not recommend that any of us say that to our enemies, but Jesus could say it to his enemies.

Nobody did. If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.

Wow. The Jews said, are we not right in saying you are a Samaritan and that you have a demon? Notice their estimation of being a Samaritan. Jesus said, I do not have a demon, but I honor my father, and you dishonor me.

Yet I do not seek my own glory. There's one who seeks it, and he is the judge. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.

The Jews said to him, now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died as did the prophets, yet you say, if anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death. Excuse me.

Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? Here again, the Christian reader says, you betcha. And the prophets died. Who do you make yourself out to be? Jesus answered, if I glorify myself, my glory is nothing.

It is my father who glorifies me of whom you say he is our God. But you have not known him. I know him.

And if I were to say I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day.

Literally rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad. So, the Jews said to him, you are not yet 50 years old, and you have seen Abraham.

Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. So, they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hit himself and went out of the temple. It doesn't say it, but reading between the lines based upon the previous revelation in John, they picked up stones of stone at him, but they did not succeed because his time had not yet come.

Before Abraham was, I am. This is a claim to deity. Scholars of the fourth gospel used to say this is rooted in Exodus 3.14, the famous I am.

Now, the tendency is to identify it with the sayings, the latter sayings in the book of Isaiah, I am the Lord, there's none other, and so forth, that kind of things. In either case, it's plainly a claim to deity. Abraham saw his day in that Abraham believed in the promises of God.

Hebrews 11 teaches us, he saw them dimly and from afar, but nevertheless, the ultimate goal of his faith was in the promised one who would come. Jesus is that promised one. Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ of God.

He's the savior, and we have seen that many times. In 2:1 to 11, he is the bridegroom of the New Testament people of God, the bridegroom of the church, who provides the new wine of the kingdom of God when the wine for the wedding ran out. He replaces Judaism, which is symbolized in the water purification pots and ceremonies that go with him.

He annuls that, supersedes that, extends it, and replaces it with his own person and work. He brings the new wine of the kingdom of God, and as a matter of fact, it is temporarily put in the old pots. He is the savior, as the first sign indicates.

John 3:16 to 18, I've not dealt with yet. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order for the world to be saved through him.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God. Jesus is the savior. Here, it's written in beautiful prose, indeed.

God loves a world that hates him. It is a world that is so bad that it tries to stamp out his light whenever it can, and God's love is shown by God giving, and what more could he give for us, as Paul reminds us in Romans 8 than his son. Will he not be with him and also give us all things? God sent the son to live a perfect life, to die on the cross, to rise again and return to the Father so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Perishing is one of the biblical metaphors that speak of hell. Jesus came to deliver people from hell and give them its opposite, eternal life, which is both a qualitative notion. It is John 17:3, knowing the father and the son, which begins in this life, and knowing them even greater in a deeper, wonderful, greater way in the resurrection of the dead.

It is a quantitative idea for all eternity. God's people, God's redeemed and resurrected people, will glorify him and serve him on the new earth. God sent his son not to condemn but to save.

Condemnation is a byproduct. I've said a couple of times that missionaries don't go to condemn; they go to save. But those who hear their message and reject it will experience worse judgment than if they had never heard of missionaries or the gospel, or Jesus.

We have this realized eschatology, the already aspect of the last things in verse 18. Whoever believes is not condemned. There is a genuine, valid, accurate prediction of

the verdict at the last judgment, not condemned, to use Paul's speech, justified already by believing in Jesus.

One can know God's verdict on the last day. No condemnation, Romans 8:1. John 3:18. Now, one can know that.

However, whoever does not believe has been condemned already. The death sentence has already been given. Does that mean their fate is inexorable and they can't be changed? No.

It means they're to hear that word of woe, that warning of hell, and they're to run to Christ and cast themselves upon him, as my pastor likes to say, trusting him and him alone to rescue them. Jesus is not only the son of God, as this passage says, but in his role as the son of God, he is the savior of whosoever would believe in him. We see it in chapter 6. He's the savior who walks on the water and rescues his disciples who were in the boat in a rough sea with a strong wind.

He rescued them and apparently moved the boat immediately to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. He's the savior, as that sign showed. He's the savior.

The door into the sheepfold. Chapter 10. I'm the door of the sheep.

If anyone enters by me, he will be saved. That's what a savior does. He saves.

John 10, 7, and 9 show he is the savior in his role as the gate, the door into the sheepfold. There's no other way into the New Testament people of God than by believing in Jesus. I'm the way.

No one comes to the Father except through me. That's 14:6. Seven "I am" sayings, but there are only three different meanings. All three are summarized right there.

The first one, I'm the way. No one comes to the Father except through me. It should be interpreted in terms of the picture of the Father's heavenly house.

Jesus is the road to that house. He is the only savior of Jews and Gentiles who believe in him. John 21: to 14.

If we read this in light of Luke 5 and the miraculous catch of fish and the words that go with it, we should because John recognized it was Jesus because boom, as soon as there's the big catch of fish, they were not able to haul the net in because of the quantity of fish. John 21:6. That disciple whom Jesus loved, therefore, said to Peter; it is the Lord. He remembers Luke 5 and the reader; this is what John often does; he expects something of his readers.

We're to remember what Luke wrote in Luke 5, and we're to understand the words there apply here as well. I will make you fishers of men. I am the son of God, the savior, the Lord, as John calls him.

He dies and rises. This is after his resurrection. It's the third appearance to his disciples.

John let us know, and his saving ministry has been extended. We see it in chapter 20 as he breathes on the disciples, receives the Holy Spirit, be my witnesses, takes the gospel, and thereby looses and binds sins depending upon the response of faith or unbelief that they receive. Here, he reinforces their notion that they ought to be evangelists.

They're to be his servants, his ambassadors. They are to catch, not fish, but men and women, boys and girls, for God. Jesus is the Christ, the promised one, the Messiah.

He's the savior, the deliverer of sin. Very profoundly, he is the revealer of God. It's there in chapter 1:1 to 5. By virtue of the eternal life residing in the word alone, he created all things, and without him was not anything created that was created.

Revealer is number three. And that life, that eternal life in the Logos, is the light of men. The eternal life in the Logos, the source of all created life, is the light of men.

It's the revelation of God that shines on human beings—objective, genitive, light of people, of men. So, the pre-incarnate word was the revealer.

Therefore, it makes great sense that the incarnate word is the revealer, too. It is not a general revelation now, but a special revelation. The word became flesh, John 1:14, a man of flesh and blood, and dwelt among us for a short time.

And we have seen his glory, glory as of the only son of the Father, full of grace and truth. We've seen his glory. The word, the sentence, and the message are not personified; he is a person.

He reveals God's grace, truth, and glory as never before. He does so because he is God who became a human being. He, thus, is the perfect contextualization of God's revelation.

He is a revelation. The incarnation is a revelation. That word become flesh is the revealer of God.

Oh, he's more than that, but he is not less than that. 1:9, the true light was coming into the world. It illumined every person with whom he came in contact.

Anyone who heard Jesus' words or saw or experienced his miracle, his signs, God was revealing himself to them. The true light was coming into the world. 1:18, not only is the first word in the first sentence in the beginning was the word, which speaks of him as the speech, even as we use words to communicate our message, God did the same.

His word is his communication. So, there's an inclusion. 1:1, he's the word.

1:18, no one has ever seen God, who's an invisible spirit. The only God who's at the father's side, he has made him known. The son is the revealer of God par excellence.

He is the great prophet. 9:5, I am the light of the world. Jesus said, as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

As we will see, the spirit is Jesus' alter ego, the Holy Spirit, and he takes up Jesus' roles. And one of them is he's the revealer of God. He's the life-giver.

He convicts the world of sin and more. He teaches the disciples. I'm the light of the world, which means I am the revelation of God that shines on human beings in my character, my words, and my deeds.

14:6, I'm the way and the truth. He's the revealer of God who speaks the truth as never before. 12:49 and 50, there are more examples.

The book of signs is loaded with examples of Jesus being the revealer of God. 12:49 and 50, I have not spoken on my own authority, but the father who sent me has himself given me a commandment, what to say and what to speak. In other words, the Father has ordained for the incarnate son to be his revealer.

Specifically, I know this commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, is what the father has told me. The commandment is eternal life reminds us of first John.

I could have done a better job in this lecture series of showing parallels in 1 John. There are many of them starting with vocabulary and right on through, but perhaps John is enough for us to handle at once—pictures of Jesus in the fourth gospel.

He's the Christ. He's the savior. He's the revealer.

He's the son of God. He is called the son in the prologue. It is not the primary reference, but there he is.

In 14, we see his glory as the only son of the father. We see it in 2:11, the first sign that John records that Jesus did 2:11. The first sign Jesus did at Cana in Galilee and

manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him. I'm going to see if I made a mistake.

I think 2:11 might be a bad reference. If it's the only one in this lecture series, I'm okay, but I'll just strike it so as not to take any more of our time. Don't think that's right.

5:17 and 18 is right. When Jesus calls God his father, he is referring to himself as the son of God. The Jews were persecuting Jesus 5:16. You remember the context.

Jesus heals a man who had been an invalid for 38 years. They were persecuting Jesus 5:16 because he was doing these things on the Sabbath, but Jesus answered, my father is working until now, and I am working. As I said, later Talmudic words give us an idea of what the Jews already thought in New Testament times that God ruminated as they dealt with the difficult question, does God take Saturday off? Genesis 2 says he rested on the seventh day.

Well, he didn't rest at least in three areas: bringing babies into the world, taking people out of the world at death, and doing the work of providence. In that regard, Jesus is saying, look, God doesn't cease to work on Saturday. God, the one who you call your God, my Father, is working until now. Progressive ideas are present, and I am working.

That is scandalous language in their understanding because Jesus is putting his signs and actually his words on par with the providence of God Almighty. That's exactly what 18 says, John 5:18. This was why the Jews were seeking to kill him, the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but even calling God his own father, making himself equal with God. They would have said God was their father.

They wouldn't make as much of it as Jesus does for himself and his people, but they would not have denied that. But the way Jesus was doing it, my father's working until now, and I am working. That is blasphemy in their understanding.

At least they take him seriously. When he calls God his father, he is saying, I am the son of God. And what I do is the working of God almighty himself.

Jesus thus calls himself the divine son of God. 11.4. Who sinned? I'm sorry, I'm thinking of the blind man—chapter 11.

Lazarus was ill, and Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus. The one whom you love is ill. Jesus lets him die as hard as it was for them.

And they both had thought about it because they both said to Jesus right away, if you had been here, our brother wouldn't have died. This illness does not lead to death. John 11.4. It is for the glory of God.

Okay, I get it. He's talking about God so that the son of God may be glorified through it.

Whoa. Jesus tethers his own glory to the Father in such a way. Again, that indicates he is God.

Father, the hour has come. 17.1. Glorify your son, that your son may glorify you. Jesus here in 11 says, Lazarus died that God may be glorified and that the son may be glorified too.

Because when the son is glorified, the Father, too, is glorified. Notice the repetition, glory glorified. 11:25-27. The great I am statement.

I know he'll rise on the last day. I'm the resurrection of life. John 11:25, a famous funeral verse.

Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live. Whoever dies and believes in me, yet he shall never die. Do you believe this? Yes, Lord.

I believe you are the Christ, Mary affirms. She makes a beautiful confession of Christ. Mirroring what will later be said in the purpose statement in 20:30 and 31.

I believe you are the Christ, the son of God who is coming into the world. She implies the pre-existence of the son and states he assumes his incarnation in the language coming into the world. Sadly, his sonship shows up in the trials.

The crucifixion of Jesus is recorded in John 19:16-27 and even following some more. It is in the synoptic gospels that it is said he is crucified because he claimed to be the son of God. Don't see it in John 19:17 verbatim.

Jesus is the Christ, the savior, the revealer, the son, the life-giver. Man, we have seen that one so many times. He's the life giver in creation in the prologue 1-3.

He gives life, and he gives the right to become the sons of God in 1-12 to all who believe in him. He is the bread of life in 6-35. He gives eternal life to the sheep in 10:11 and 10:28.

He is the resurrection and the life 11:25. He's the way, the truth, and the life 14:6. He's the true vine that gives life to the branches 15:1.

Over and over and over again, Jesus is the life-giver. He heals a nobleman's son in 4-46-54, giving life to that boy who was near death. He gives light and life to the blind man.

He gives sustenance in John 6, 1-15 in feeding the multitudes, the bread, and the fish. He gives life to his friend Lazarus, who has died. Jesus is the life-giver.

I would say that is the major theme. All these themes are important, but the major Christological theme, the meaning of most of the signs, and the meaning of most of the I Am's is that he is the life-giver. Close behind it is the fact that he is the revealer, but what he reveals more than anything else is that he is the life giver.

Does he not reveal his atonement? Of course, he does, and that is very important. He's not only the Lamb of God who takes away the world, John 1, but there are other pictures too, which we'll look at in the next lecture concerning his death and how it saves. But above all, he is the one who bestows eternal life.

I'll say it this way. Through his death and resurrection, he bestows eternal life on all who believe in him. He's the son of man, 15:1, the mediator who replaces Jacob's ladder connecting heaven and earth, John 3:13 through 15.

This is something we hadn't looked at before already. Jesus refers to Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness in Numbers 21, specifically verse 9. God had sent fiery serpents to judge his disobedient, rebellious people. He told Moses to lift up a bronze serpent on a pole.

Everyone who looked and believed was spared. The others were not spared. Remember the context.

Nicodemus, you're the teacher of Israel. You should know these things. You're to be blamed for not knowing them, Ezekiel 36.

Those were strong words, but Nicodemus needed to hear them. If I told you earthly things, the new birth is earthly in that it's from God, but it happens on earth. If I spoke about what's going on in the presence of the Father in heaven, of which I'm aware, you wouldn't have any clue.

You couldn't even comprehend. No one has ascended into heaven except he, who descended from heaven, the son of man. Only the son of man is privy to that kind of information, but you can't take it in.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, John 3:13, 14 now, so must the son of man be lifted up. Moses lifted the serpent on the pole, the bronze serpent,

the instrument of salvation for those who look to it and are spared the poisonous snake bites, the fatal snake bites. So, the son of man must be lifted up.

The raised serpent on the pole, ironically in that Satan is a serpent, is a type, a foreshadowing in the action of the savior, the son of man. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lifted up. Here, two titles converge son of man and savior, which whoever believes in him may have eternal life, and life giver as well, who believes in him, revealer of the father.

John is packed with these titles. Here, the one actually used is the son of man. The son of man will be lifted up.

Moses' action in the wilderness in Numbers 21 is typological of the antitype, the exaltation of the son, savior, revealer, and life giver when he is crucified. 653, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Son of man actually has roots in the Old Testament in two different distinct realms.

Psalm 8 gives the frail, mortal son of man, what is the man that you're mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him, compared to God and the heavenly orbs, the stars, and so forth. Frail, mortal man. It's a favorite title of God for Ezekiel, who also was a man.

Daniel 9, however, the Danielic son of man, is a divine-human figure who is exalted and the object of worship. If you put all four gospels together, Jesus has the son of man sayings that sound like the frail, mortal of Psalm 8. Birds have their nests, foxes have their dens, son of man has no place to lay his head. Especially he predicted his death and resurrection as the son of man is going to be betrayed and turned over, delivered over to high priests and scribes who are going to crucify him, and he's going to be raised again on the third day.

And the son of man will come again with clouds of glory and so forth. Danielic son of man. Here in John 6, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

He's the divine-human son of man. Unless you believe in him, who was sent by God and who is a human being of flesh and blood, you have no life in you. And then again, as we've seen already in chapter 9, with this, we conclude this lecture: the former blind man is just malleable in Jesus' hands.

Do you believe in the son of man? Lord, tell me who he is so I can believe in him. I am he is the meaning of Jesus' words, and the former blind man says, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him. This is a cursory examination of pictures of Jesus.

He's the Christ, the savior, the revealer, the son of God, the life-giver, and the son of man. There's more, but these are perhaps the most important six pictures in the fourth gospel. In our next lecture, we'll tackle the pictures of Jesus' saving work.

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