

New Testament History, Literature and Theology

Session 16: Source theories and the synoptic problem; Intro to John

By Dr. Ted Hildebrandt

A. Source Criticism and the One Source Theory [00:00-3:15]

A: combine A-C; 00:00-9:55; Gospels Source and Form Criticism

Last time we were talking we finished up the book of Luke on prayer with the tax collector, and Pharisee, the persistent widow, the two parables on prayer, and we jumped into the synoptic problem. We've been looking at some of the similarities between Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which are the three synoptic gospels. In John, we showed that John was very different; 92 percent of John is unique material, where as only seven percent of Mark is unique material. We were talking about some of the synoptic problems, places where there is different order, places where there is different wording, where there seems to be conflict, so we were discussing some of the conflicts, which is called the synoptic problem.

Now what I'd like to do is jump over to a history of the synoptic gospels and how they were shaped according to, well, what we are going to look at first is called source criticism. Source criticism works with written documents, where the writers got the materials from earlier documents that they had. So, the source critics were late, probably to the nineteenth century, earlier part of the twentieth century. It should remind you, if you have been in my class in Old Testament of the JEDP theory, and we debunked the JEDP theory in the class, trying to show some of the major problems of the JEDP theory. It was developed by Julius Wellhausen in the eighteenth hundreds, it's really defunct now. Although it's taught, actually, it's assumed, I wouldn't say its taught much anymore, but its assumed by many critics at the universities. This source theory is different, it isn't. Whereas the JEDP theory said Moses did not write the Pentateuch, this one is possible. So this looks at the various sources and so what the one source theory says is that basically there was one source, and it was the Ur-Evangelium--the early gospel. The early gospel was used by all three writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all

three synoptic gospels used this Ur-Evangelium, this early source. So why are Matthew, Mark, and Luke so similar? They're so similar because they all drew on this early gospel record. It was an early record of Jesus, and they, all three of them, borrowed from that when they wrote and that's why there are so many similarities. This is called the one source theory.

Now the one source theory explains the similarities. It explains how Matthew, Mark and Luke are similar, but it does not explain the dissimilarities, why Matthew is different than Mark or Matthew, is different than Luke. So this was the one source theory and some people proposed that.

B. Source Criticism: Two and Four Source Theories [3:15-6:49]

Here is what's called the two-source theory. Now the two-source theory in this case says there's Markan priority. Mark came first, and why are there similarities? Because Mark was used by Mathew, Mark was used by Luke. And, by the way, does Luke tell us that he used sources? Luke tells us in Luke 1:1-4, we looked at that, that there were many accounts around and that he was going to talk to eye witnesses. Luke was not with Jesus, had never met Jesus or seen Jesus. He was on the Second Missionary Journey [2MJ] of the apostle Paul. Luke didn't become a Christian until after the 50s AD and Jesus had been dead for twenty years. But Luke then does historical research and one of those documents that he may have checked with, people suggest, is Mark and that both Luke used Mark and Matthew used Mark. I have a little trouble with Matthew using Mark just because when you think about it, Matthew was one of the twelve and at the lectures that Jesus gave and the dialogue and discourses that Jesus gave. So to say that Matthew is dependent on Mark in a slavish way that he's copying from Mark, Matthew was at these events himself as an eye witness. Whereas actually Mark was, probably, was not there. Mark was from Jerusalem, so he would see Jesus in Jerusalem, but now events that took place in Galilee, Matthew was there. There's an interesting dance you need to do between Matthew and Mark.

Now what's important with the two-source theories is what they call the Q

document. The Q or *Quelle*, the *Quelle* basically means “source.” I believe it’s a German word. Now the source document is when Matthew and Luke share things that are not found in Mark. If you remember the table that I put up, there were about a 170 segments that Matthew and Luke shared together that are not found in Mark--that Venn diagram kind of thing. So these would be those 170, they found in Matthew, they’re found in Luke, but they’re not found in Mark. So then there was a special shared source for Matthew and Luke. So they call this the two-source theory and the Q, whenever you’re reading about the gospels, you read about Q, this is what Q is. Q is what Matthew and Luke share that’s not found in Mark. They call that the Q source.

Now that’s the two-source theory, and if you’ve got a two-source theory here’s a fourth source theory. And the four-source theory says here’s Ur-Matthew, and Ur-Matthew presents material that’s unique to Matthew. Ur-Luke gives you material that is unique to Luke, there’s about 500 segments that are unique to Luke. Q is still embedded here. A lot of people accept this Q source the things that are found in Matthew and Luke, but not found in Mark. So Q still plays a role; but you’ve got Matthew with his unique material and Luke with his. This is called the four-source theory.

A lot of people would have held this theory in the 1950-60s, and I think some people today have the four source theory, this is kind of passé at this time a little bit, though some people will refer to Q so you need to know what Q is, and Ur-Matthew, and Ur-Luke. Now, that’s called the source theory, the source theory said that there were basically these early sources written sources that were used by Mark, and Matthew, and Luke. Q and those things were actual written sources.

C. Form Criticism and Oral Tradition [6:49-9:55]

Form criticism came in with Gunkel, and into the middle of the middle century, form criticism focused instead of on a slavish copying of documents between documents almost in a plagiaristic sense, although they would never say it like that; but that you’re actually copying from documents. The form critics they specialized in what’s called oral transmission of information. So they stressed more of the oralness of things. And when

things happen orally, things change orally, and so you've got to be careful then with oral. They've done quite a bit with oral tradition, and documents. For example, I think its in Czechoslovakia, where these bards, as they would say, these bards memorize songs of like twelve hundred lines long. These long poems, these legends, these myths, they'll memorize them and then these bards go from Alehouse to Alehouse recording and reciting these long poems that narrate the history of a country or legends or myths. So oral tradition is really big.

In our culture we don't push the oral very much. Does anybody remember orally very much at all. I remember even if you go back to Egyptian history, the Egyptian writings when first starting I believe it was in Egypt. The Egyptians did not want their children to learn how to write because they said if they learn how to write then they won't remember because they'll just write it down and they won't remember what we've told them. So there was this conflict between writing and oral. And we even get that today somewhat between the written and the oral. So these people, the form critics deal more with the oral and how oral legends, basically oral legends come down and so what happens is they schedule things into genres, different types of literature.

When you're dealing with oral stuff you need to set things up orally for your audience, so for example. If I said to you, "once upon a time," you would know immediately you're going to get a story that's what? That's some sort of fable, some fairy tale; you're going to get some tale. "Once upon a time there was a rich man, there was a poor man," you're going to get a story, once upon a time. So those types of things the once upon a time tells you.

So there's different genres, there's different types of literature are crafted orally. One of those would be a pronouncement story: pronouncements of Jesus when he was in controversial settings. "Woe onto these scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites" and then Jesus goes off. "Woe onto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites you clean the outside of the cup and the inside of the cup have all sorts of dirt." And so if you clean the outside of the cup what good is it if the inside is dirty? These pronouncement stories of Jesus are setting up these kinds of things.

D. Genres: Miracles, Narratives, and Parables [9:55-12:42]

B: Combine D-F; 9:55-17:41; Switch from Oral to Written

The miracle stories of Jesus. You have basically two types of miracle stories. One would be a therapeutic miracle. The other one would be non-therapeutic miracles. Therapeutic miracles would be when you've got a guy with a withered hand Jesus says you know let your hand be healed, and the guy can use his hand. So that would be a therapeutic miracle. Another therapeutic miracle would be, early, Jesus goes up to Peter's mother-in-law. Peter had a mother-in-law; Jesus goes up to her and she's got a high fever. Jesus heals Peter's mother in law of a fever. You've got a woman that was hemorrhaging blood and Jesus heals her. Those are all therapeutic miracles. A miracle that is non-therapeutic miracle would be Jesus walking on the water. He didn't heal anybody but he walked on the water. So that would be a non-therapeutic miracle where Jesus does something like that. Jesus goes out on the boat and he says "be still waves," and the wind obeys him and everything is still. That would be a non-therapeutic miracle as well.

Stories about Jesus would be things like the transfiguration, where there's the story about Jesus, something that Jesus did. Stories about Jesus and then we've got sayings of Jesus. I think I was just trying to remember but I was quoting, Jesus that said, "a worker is worthy of his hire." So Jesus has these sayings, you could say, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Those beatitudes are kind of sayings that, things that Jesus said in sage like wisdom sayings. Then there's the passion narrative. The passion narrative is when Jesus was beat by the soldiers. Those are kind of special stories that would be crafted.

Then parables and let me just set up a parable if I were to say to you just a few words, "the kingdom of heaven is like," you know that you're getting a parable next. So, I would set it up like, "the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, smallest of seeds or a real small seed grows up to be a big old plant, birds come in the air and lodge in branches, the parables, and so you get Jesus, the kingdom of heaven is like, giving parables as engaging stories. But, then there is also the mystery about the parables. Some

people understand them some people don't.

So you get this oral that's featured by form criticism. The oralness of the form critics featuring that as opposed to the source criticism, where the source criticism was more written documents and the disciples copying.

E. Why the Church Switched to Written Material: The Death of the Apostles

[12:42-15:20]

So, would the disciples know the oral stories, would those oral stories be passed down. Jesus, told his disciples. Again, Jesus himself wrote what? We have nothing have the written by Jesus. Jesus, in one sense, is like Socrates. Do you remember Socrates didn't really write anything? It was Plato his student that wrote down what Socrates taught that brings up what's called the Socratic problem. How much of what Plato wrote down is really Socrates and how much of that is Plato putting back into Socrates mouth what he wanted Socrates to say? So, how do you separate between Socrates and Plato? But here with Jesus you got oral, written disciples would have heard this. They would have heard these stories and passed these stories down orally and told the things that they knew. The apostles were with Jesus the whole time.

So why was there this move then in the early church to move from oral stories down to written form. Why was there this shift between oral and written? I think there are three things that come up, there's probably more, but there's these three things come to mind immediately. First of all the reason why you wanted to write stuff down was the apostles were dying off. The early church faced a dilemma. As long as the apostles were around, the apostles could say, "Oh, no, no, Jesus didn't say that, Jesus said this." The apostles could check things and tell what was right and wrong. The apostles then could tell stories about Jesus because they were there, and they remember those stories. But the apostles were dying off and as the apostles died off, there was a need to write down their stories in order to preserve it. So the death of the apostles in some senses, is what precipitated it. Let me just say it this way, what precipitated the writing of the gospels? It is possible the death of the apostles, when they were looking at Christians who were then

with Jesus dying off, and they realized they would no longer be around to tell people the stories of Jesus. So they wrote down the stories. So that would be a big precipitating factor on why you want it written down. What's the problem with oral? The neat part about oral is that it can be crafted and you can engage in audience with oral much more than you can with written. The problem with oral is once you say it, it's gone unless you've got a video camera, and you're trying to preserve it that way but otherwise the oral was gone. You speak it, the people in the room hear it, and when they go out, it's either in their head or it's not in their head and so you lose things orally when they are passed down. So there was a movement from oral to written as a result of the death of the apostles.

F. Why the Church Switched to Written: Heresies and Organization [15:20-17:41]

Another need for writing things down was there were heretics making their way into the early church. And in Greek class, now, we're reading 1 John, and in 1 John there are these cessationists. There are these people who left the church. There's this big tension because there seems to be these people who left the church are now seeking to pull people out of the church. They are manifesting hatred toward the believers, and John's trying to tell them, "No, no, the believers you love your brothers and that's how you know you're a Christian by their love." So against these cessationists who are falling out early in the church, not in the first century necessarily. Maybe a proto-Gnosticism, but in second century certainly you get Gnosticism going. Gnostic is very, very different way of thinking about things. So the early church needed the documents written down so that people could study them and they can get it right, as opposed to the heretics who are trying to say, "No, no, it wasn't like this; it was like that." And then with written documents with the rising of heresies in the early church you needed to have things written down.

And then thirdly, the church just plain needed was organization. The church initially would have been small, certain people get saved and there would be a small church in a house and things, that's not much of a problem. You know when you have

three or more people; it's not much of a problem. But as the church grows, you're going to need kind of an organizational structure. You're going to need elders, you're going to need deacons, you're going to need people to handle the finances, you're going to need people who are evangelists going out, you're going to need various types of people. So once the church starts getting structure, then you're going to need training of the people to make sure that they understand Christianity. You couldn't Google or go online to check stuff and so basically you had to have it written down so that there would be kind of a uniformity to the Christianity, in terms of your organization, that they would be truly Christian, and organized in a Christian way. So those would be three reasons: the death of the apostles, the coming of heresies into the church, and the need for organization in the church would call for these things to be written down.

G. Explaining Synoptic Differences: Quotes, Twice, and Translation [Q TTWPP] [17:41-21:07]

C: Combine G-H; 17:41-24:44; Synoptic "solutions"

Now, I want to run through these quickly. These are general rules for explaining the differences in the synoptic gospels. And I've kind of used a Q-TTWPP or you can, I got a little lisp there, but you can say Q-twip or Q-tip, kind of thing. What I'm using is an acrostic is the basic way of the six things that we'll run through quickly. We've talked about some of these already. When there's differences in the synoptic gospels, sometimes those differences, "this is Jesus, the king of the Jews," "the king of the Jews," "Jesus of Nazareth, the kings of the Jews." What was on the title over Christ's head? It's possible that the quote, you shouldn't think of the quote as quotation marks. A lot of times Jesus spoke in Aramaic and what we're getting in Greek in our New Testament is a translation of what he said anyways. So that these are summaries, these are abstracts, their condensations of what Jesus said. We don't have the whole two-hour discourse that Jesus gave. We've got something that must have taken ten minutes of that. So it's a synopsis, it's an abstract. The same way you would quote your friend and you'd say, "Hey, Johnny said this the other day about Jane." You don't say the exact words you just give a

summary. So with quotes be careful, they're not quoting word for word.

Jesus did many of these things twice. It's very likely Jesus preached the same sermon in different environments and preached the same message. It's very likely that Jesus gave some of his teaching more than once and to different audiences as he went around. It's possible that one writer quotes this source and one writer quotes that source and they're different, but they're the same Jesus' teachings.

So multiple things have happened, when Jesus sent out the twelve, he probably sent them out multiple times. It's possible by the way, and I should have raised this earlier and I didn't so let me do it now. Dr. Robert Newman, I believe, said basically the temple cleansing John has it early, Matthew, Mark and Luke have it late. It's very likely that the temple cleansing itself may have happened twice. Jesus may have done it early, he may have done it late. Actually Jesus may have done it several times and some of them not recorded.

Translation, we mentioned that Jesus spoke in, not Hebrew, but in Aramaic. Aramaic was the language among the Jews at that time. Aramaic was the language when they went to Babylon in 586 BC they were carried away by Nebuchadnezzar with Daniel preceding that. When they went to Babylon they picked up Aramaic. Hebrew, by the way, was just a Canaanite dialect. Hebrew was just a Canaanite dialect. It was the land of Canaan that's what they spoke. Hebrew was a Canaanite dialect that Abraham and family picked up when they came to Canaan. But when they moved to Babylon in 586 BC and came back from Babylon then they spoke Aramaic. Aramaic was the language of the world at that point. Aramaic is a sister language of Hebrew kind of like Spanish and Portuguese they are very similar. Jesus spoke Aramaic, but now what's the problem. The Romans have taken over, and when the Romans take over, they use Greek as kind of the universal language. Then eventually Latin will take over for a very, very long time in the church for over 1000 years the Latin Vulgate will be used. So translation, Jesus spoke in Aramaic, our New Testament is in Greek. So his actual words it had to be translated.

H. Explaining Synoptic Differences: Witnesses, Purpose and Part/Whole [21:07-24:44]

Eyewitnesses. Different eyewitnesses tell and see different things. And so one guy was right next to Jesus and heard Jesus say this, another guy was across the table and down the way. He was looking at a young man who was in the corner, and so he didn't catch what Jesus said there. There were different witnesses or different stories and we told about the woman who was hit near the telephone pole, by a bus near the telephone pole and we just said two stories two different eye witnesses. There are two different referees at a basketball game call a foul in a different way because they saw different things from different perspectives; different witnesses, different stories, different perspectives.

Purpose. Now purpose is important and I think, let me just make this explicit is that with purpose, the writer, the author is going to craft his stories in a certain way. He has a certain way that he wants to present something. So the author is really important and the message he's trying to display, how the author is looking at Jesus and then the audience. The author's writing for an audience. And so he will craft his story according to the audience and what is insignificant to them and what he thinks will find resonance in the audience. So basically you get this dance between the author and the audience.

Matthew is going to be writing to Jews, and so he's going to write differently, he's going to quote the Old Testament all over the place because the Jews know the Old Testament. Mark is writing to the Romans, and so Mark is going to be writing to a Gentile context, he's not going to quote the Old Testament, he'll quote it some but not as nearly as significantly as Matthew. Mark will pick up different themes by crowds and noise that fit with Rome. Luke, on the other hand, is a doctor and he picks up widows and only children and describes the diseases in certain ways. He picks up things for an audience for most excellent Theophilus. He's writing for this guy whose apparently a government official. He's trying to write about Paul's case or something and he's going to slant things that way. John is writing differently. So basically the author and the

audience in order to understand the book you've got to understand the author and the audience and the dance between those two. So that's how the message will be shaped.

So, and then part/whole, were there two demoniacs or was there only one demoniac? And so in some stories we are getting told the fuller story. In others, a very condensed story. Mark often times is very condensed. Those stories are then developed by Matthew and Luke, and so part/whole types of relationships. So this is Q-TTWPP, and these then these can be taken as solutions on why the differences. It is the synoptic problem, as they call it, highlighting the differences between Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Now John as we said, John's totally different. So we are going to have a look at John now.

So that ends our discussion about the synoptic problem. Some people spend their whole life actually studying the synoptic problem, the similarities the differences and all the nuances of how each Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell their story differently. Some of those synoptic scholars are really good people. They've studied Jesus for their whole life, Darrel Bock and other people like that, at the seminary and other places. They've done great work.

I. Introduction to the Book of John [24:44-28:09]

D: Combine I-M; 24:44-39:09; Jewishness of John

Now, what I want to do next is to jump over to the book of John. Let me see if I can do this here, first of all. I'm going to take the screen down a little bit and we're going to jump over to John. Now, John, as we've said--there is a huge part of John that is totally different than the other gospels. 92% of John is unique material, 92%. Only 8% is overlapping. So the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, give us one perspective; John gives us a different perspective. That's great, the more we can learn about Jesus the better. So in Matthew, Jesus Christ is king and the kingdom of heaven. In Mark, you've got the suffering servant, the amazing suffering servant, and in Luke, you've got the perfect man showing the development of Jesus and all of those unique parables and prayer. In John, Jesus is portrayed as God. If you've ever argued with folks or discussed

things with a Jehovah Witness and things who see Jesus as a god, but not the God. Jesus is not Jehovah for them and they'll make a real distinction there. "In the beginning there was the Word [*logos*], the Word was with God and the Word was a god," as they do in their New World Translation, unfortunately this is incorrect. But that's what they hold and I've often said none of the Jehovah Witnesses I've talked to know Greek, if you ask them flat out. I've handed them the Greek New Testament. None of them have been able to read it, including some of their leadership who are unable to read Greek. Yet they base so much of this on this Greek. John is the place where people go to show Jesus Christ is God. By the way, do you remember in this course, if we went back to Mark 1:1, you notice the quote from Malachi that Mark 1:1 actually shows that Jesus is Jehovah God. So that's another place you can go for this. But, John is the place to go where Jesus is portrayed as God.

Now, I want to basically talk, not so much about the person of God, we've got an expert here at Gordon College, a guy named Dr. Steve Hunt, whose spent a life time studying the book of John. He is a real expert in the book of John and he isn't so sure that John, he thinks maybe Lazarus or somebody else wrote the book of John. I disagree with that so we've got a running debate, I get about his expertise though he's the expert and I'm just kind of like a yapping dog on the side. But I want to go through some arguments for the person of John, but I just want to reflect the characteristics of the book of John and these are some of the characteristics. Some of the characteristics of the book of John are, and do you realize there are these titles "according to John," that are not in the original manuscripts. We have not got something that says John wrote this. Now in the book of Revelation, you know it says, "I, John," you know had this vision. So in the book of Revelation is clear and we ask which John is that, is it John the elder, or is it John the apostle? Most people think it's John the apostle but there's some debate.

J. The Jewishness of John: Religious Beliefs and Hanukkah [28:09-32:08]

Whoever wrote this book, whoever wrote this book is very Jewish. Whoever wrote this book is very Jewish and let me just give you some examples of the Jewishness of this book.

First of all, Jewish beliefs are contrasted with the Samaritans. In chapter 4, Jesus goes down to the woman at the well and you see the Jewish Jesus. Jesus was Jewish meeting the Samaritan woman there at the well. The Samaritan woman in chapter 4 verse 9 said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman,” both of those count, Samaritan and woman. “I am a Samaritan woman, how can you ask me for a drink.” Then in brackets it says “[for the Jews do not associate with the Samaritans].” And so you get this little comment dropped in there, “for the Jews do not associate with the Samaritans.” The Samaritan woman says, “We worship God on this Mount [on Mount Gerizim up there], you worship down in Jerusalem. You say that the temple in Jerusalem is the place, we worship here on Gerizim.” The author of the book of John picks up on this very Jewish idea. He’s very sensitive, we worship in Jerusalem, you guys worship on Mount Gerizim. So you get those kinds of things going down where he picks up the Jewish flavor.

The feasts, now before I get to the feast let me go back. I want to go back and talk about Hanukkah but before we do that I want to talk about first the Feast of Tabernacles. Now, the Feast of Tabernacles is when they were to go out and live in huts for a week, and usually in the month of September in the fall, and they go out and they remember the wilderness wandering when they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. So in the book of John, now, this is going to be--I’m trying to show its Jewish, chapter 7 verses 2 and 37 and following it says, “But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacle was near, Jesus’ brothers said to him, ‘You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do,’” and then it says, ““For even his own brothers did not believe in him.” Jesus delays and then he goes up to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. John, the writer of the book of John, picks up this Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus is going up there, his brothers say why don’t you go do some miracles down in Jerusalem and show everybody who you really are? They didn’t believe in him.” So the writer picks this up with the

Feast of Tabernacles.

Then even more pronounced the book of John is the only reference to this Feast of Hanukkah. In chapter 10 verse 22 it says, “Then came the Feast of Dedication,” which is I think in the King James is translated “Feast of Lights,” because they light the candles and Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication of Jerusalem, it was winter. It was winter when this Hanukkah comes. If I say to you Happy Hanukkah, when is Hanukkah? Hanukkah is right next to our Christmas, our celebration of Christmas, December 25th. Hanukkah is usually days before that. So the Feast of Hanukkah this is the only book that mentions the Feast of Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication referred to. It is the only gospel that picks that up. That’s very Jewish, the Feast of Hanukkah is not mentioned in the Old Testament because as we saw when we studied the Maccabean period, the Feast of Hanukkah comes out of the Judas Maccabees cleansing of the temple from Antiochus Epiphanes. Do you remember back around the 165 BC kind of period and then the Maccabees, Judas Maccabees? And so the Feast of Hanukkah was not known in the Old Testament and yet it’s very Jewish because the Maccabees are very Jewish, in their opposition to Antiochus Epiphanes.

K. The Jewishness of John: Weddings and Funerals [32:08-36:58]

What do you tell about a culture? When do you really get to see a culture? Have any of you watched the movie, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding?” At weddings you see a lot about a culture in their weddings. So if you want to learn about the Greeks, you go to this “My Big Fat Greek Wedding,” watch the movie. It’s a tremendous exposition on Greek culture, Modern Greek culture in America. So weddings and funerals, and what you have in the book of John in this book that we are looking at now, you’ve got the wedding feast of Cana. Jesus does his first miracle at the wedding feast of Cana they run out of wine. Jesus’ mother comes and says, “Hey, they don’t have any wine, you know the parties going down. Jesus, would you do something here?” What is that, between me and you, and Jesus says, ‘Take these stone jars and fill them up with water.’ These things held 160 gallons, and Jesus turns the water into wine. Then they take some of it to the governor or

the overseer of the wedding and he says, “This is the best wine we’ve had all night. Usually people give the best wine first, and when people have drunk well, they give the worst wine because they can’t, they’re kind of out of it a little bit, but you saved the best till now.” That was Jesus. So you get all this Jewish wedding stuff, and John picks that up in this book of John.

Lazarus’ funeral and being dead is another place John highlights, Jewish customs and culture. So you get things said. Let me just read from chapter 11 at the funeral Lazarus, “‘But Lord,’ Martha said, the sister of the dead man.” Because we are going to see Jesus roll the stone away, and Martha is freaking out a little bit here. She says, “This time there is a bad odor. He’s been in there four days Jesus. “And these people knew by the way they were around dead people more than America today where, the undertaker takes the body, and it goes in a casket, and in the ground. We aren’t used to the whole process of death and dying. Back then, they were there and so she said, “Four days he’s been in the tomb, this is not going to be a good time to roll the stone away. There’s going to be a bad odor for he has been in there for four days.’ Then Jesus said, ‘Did not I tell you that if you believed you will see the glory of God.’ So they took away the stone and when he had said this, he called with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus come out.’” The dead man came out, and then it gives this description: “The dead man came out. His hands and his feet were wrapped with strips of linen.”

So you get this little detail of Jewish people. How do Jewish people bury people. Now that’s a very significant thing because a Jewish person has to worry about clean and unclean. The dead person is unclean. So when a person buries a person you got to be careful with the clean and the unclean, given the Jewish background of this. So his hands and his feet are wrapped with strips of linen, and the cloth around his face. A *sudarium*, which is very interesting. There’s this cloth around Lazarus’ face. This was the cloth covering his face. John in this book here, chapter 11 verse 44, picks up about this face cloth being over the dead person. His hands are wrapped and his feet are wrapped in linen cloth. But his face has this cloth around it and things as *sudarium*, but it’s very interesting.

When Jesus in chapter 20, and actually Dr. Hunt develops this much better than I can. In chapter 20 verse 7, Jesus is now dead and what happens, they come on him and they make him like a pizza pie. They put all these spices on him and they're going to put him, and they're going to put him into the tomb. And so they spice him up. And then what happens, they put a *sudarium*, this exact word, which is an exceedingly rare word in scripture, this *sudarium* goes over Jesus. So, it happened with Lazarus you get this description of the face cloth and with Jesus. When Jesus rises from the dead, this *sudarium* is put over to the side. There's special mention that you know the linens were here and the *sudarium* was over there. And so it's pretty significant. This writer picks up on that Jewish cultural custom. And so the writer is good at describing Jewish weddings and funerals from a Jewish perspective. So again it shows the Jewishness of the book.

M. The Jewishness of John: The Temple Cleansing and Manna [36:58-39:09]

The temple cleansings with Jesus flipping over, driving out, and taking care of the doves and then in the temple saying, the temple of his body, "I'll destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up." The book focuses on Jerusalem. Manna, "I am the bread of life." And so you get this talk of manna coming down out of the heaven, and then Jesus explaining that he is the bread of life.

This one here, "my words are spirit and my words are life." I remember when I was a young person, I was reading a lot of liberal theology, and politics and I was getting really sucked into, kind of reading about God, but not having anything to do with the Bible. And all these wonderful philosophical ways of looking at God that were very satisfying intellectually, but very much removed from the Scripture itself. I went home one summer as I was struggling with this, and I didn't realize that the Bible was moving further and further away from me. I was inviting more and more of this, new perspectives and more philosophic ways of thinking about God and Jesus. I ran into a guy named, Paul Houser, who used to teach at a place called Grand Island High School and this guy was an exceedingly good teacher. He was teaching Plato and Aristotle to High School kids at Grand Island High School. He was just an incredible teacher that

influenced the intelligentsia, all the smartest and best kids that came through Grand Island High school. Paul Houser's class put a fire under them. But he also was a Christian and when I came back after reading a lot of this liberal theology, he put me onto this verse, that Jesus said, "My words are spirit, and my words are life." Therefore focus on the words of Jesus, Ted. That's what I needed to do, was focus on the words of Jesus. So Paul Houser got me back on the road then, and that was a real turning point for me in our discussion there. It comes from the book of John, "My words are spirit, and my words are life."

N. Palestinian Influence: Topographical Awareness of Palestine [39:09-42:17]

E: Combine N-R; 39:09-52:29; Palestinian and Eyewitness indicators

Now, the person of John, and again I'm not wanting to focus so much on the person *per se*, on whoever wrote the book, but to open it up say that whoever wrote this book, I think it's John, Dr. Hunt thinks its Lazarus or someone else and things. But whoever wrote this book, there was a Palestinian influence here. There's a topographical awareness of Palestine. If I were to tell you about Baseline Road in Grand Island, I grew up in Grand Island that's my home and therefore I know things like Wallace Drive and Love Road and Baseline Road and Ransom Road. Those are all roads that I travelled as a kid and so you just mention them naturally. And so it is in John here. If you're from Palestine, you're going to know these places because you're walked to these places. And so what you've got is statements of like this showing a keen topographical awareness. So it says in chapter 1 verse 28, "This all happened at Bethany, on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing." Why would he say that? There are at least two Bethany's. There's one on the Mount of Olives you guys remember when you went on the Get Lost in Jerusalem Program, when we went up to the Pater Noster or Our Father where there's a chapel with all these languages of the Lord's Prayer. It is just in the back east side of the Mount of Olives, just very close to that is the town of Bethany. Bethany was on the backside of the Mount of Olives and when you come up over Bethany and then just up over the Mount of Olives then right down on the Temple Mount. You guys

have seen from the top of the Mount of Olives you get a beautiful view of the Temple Mount area there across the Kidron Valley. So it was very close to Jerusalem, just over the ridge basically out more in the desert, but the town of Bethany. So there was a town right close to Jerusalem that was called Bethany.

So whoever wrote this book is saying, “I don’t mean that Bethany, when I say Bethany.” What are you going to think? It’s the same thing and if I said Warsaw, if I said to you Warsaw. This is at Gordon College in Wenham outside of Boston on the North Shore of Boston. If I said, on the North Shore of Boston if I said Warsaw, almost everybody in this room when I say Warsaw what would be the next word you’d think of? You think Warsaw, Poland. I mean Warsaw’s the capital of Poland or whatever. But actually I’m not talking about Warsaw, Poland. I’m talking about Warsaw, Indiana, where I taught in a place called Winona Lake, Indiana in Warsaw area for 20 years. So, I meant Warsaw, Indiana. But if I’m going to say Warsaw, I need to specify its Warsaw, Indiana so that you know its not Warsaw, Poland. So the guy here is aware that there are two Bethany’s and he’s got to tell them, “Bethany on the other side of the Jordan,” to the East, 20, 30, or 40 miles.

O. Palestinian Influence: Bethesda and the Temple [42:17-45:20]

So, whoever wrote the book as a keen topographical awareness. Here’s another example, and this is in John chapter 5 verse 2, do you remember there was a lame man who was lying by a pool. Whenever the waters would stir whoever got in the waters first God healed. Well, this guy had been there for like 38 years and hadn’t been able to get in the water. He was crippled and couldn’t get in. It says in chapter 5 verse 2, “now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate.” So first of all, do we know where the Sheep Gate is? Kind of ironically today, the Sheep Gate is called the Lion’s Gate. So if you go on the Get Lost Jerusalem Program you go to the Lion’s Gate that’s actually the Sheep Gate, that’s where they brought the sheep in. The reason why they call it the Sheep Gate is that’s where they brought the sheep in to go to the temple for sacrifices. So there was near the sheep gate a pool, “which in Aramaic is called, Bethesda, which is surrounded

by five covered colonnades.” By five covered colonnades. So you’ve got the pool of Bethesda with this water and these five-covered colonnades that are there. Do you know that they actually found this pool of Bethesda, they have actually found it in St. Anne’s Church. If you go through Lion’s Gate and take a right about fifty yards in, you’re at the St. Anne’s Church and this is where the pool of Bethesda is. They have found those five covered colonnades. So, exactly what he describes here, they’ve actually archaeologically been able to find this stuff. It’s just an interesting confirmation full of little tidbits, you know but all of a sudden you realize, we’ve found these exact five colored colonnades here. The bases of the columns are still here. So that’s at Bethesda, again very detailed description. It would be like me describing Wallace Drive where I grew up, I would describe it in very much detail because that’s home, that’s where I grew up.

In chapter 2 Jesus flips over the tables and he says, “Destroy this temple and I’ll raise it up in three days.” And people say then, “Wait a minute. It took Herod 46 years to build this temple.” Knowing it was 46 years to build this temple, that’s something that a Palestinian would know, somebody that’s lived there would know that. It’s kind of like if your in Boston, and I said the Big Dig to you, and in Boston the Big Dig went on for actually, now I don’t know anybody that knows, the Big Dig went on forever. It went from 1 billion dollars and ended up being over 15 billions dollars just kept multiplying, multiplying, kept going on and on and on. Just as all these people were trying to milk this project called the Big Dig. There’s kind of a double entendre there, the Big Dig tax wise for Boston area. But anyway, 46 years this temple was being built, and they knew that and again, it shows a Palestinian kind of framework.

P. Eyewitness Accounts: Use of “We” and Malchus’ ear [45:20-47:32]

Now, that’s the mark of an eyewitness, so whoever wrote this book was Jewish, in the way they describe the feast. Whoever described this book is not only Jewish, but is also Palestinian, very, very much aware of Jerusalem; very, very much aware of topography and knowing the two Bethany’s and where things are. Also, whoever wrote the book was an eyewitness also. And so you’ve got this flat out statement in John

chapter 1 verse 14, “we beheld his glory.” “We” includes the author, in other words the guy is saying, “I saw this.”

Now by the way, do we know that Luke did not see this? And Luke says, “I talked to eyewitnesses.” Luke didn’t say, “I’m an eyewitness.” Luke says, “I interviewed eyewitnesses, there are many other accounts. I took those into account,” from the book of Luke.”

This writer, whoever is writing here in John, is saying, “We beheld His glory.” I saw it; I’m an eyewitness. You’ve got these kinds of little details that tell you this author really was an eyewitness. So what happens is they’re at the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is going out praying once, and then he comes back and the disciples are asleep and he goes out and prays again, and comes back. Finally, he lets them go to sleep and Jesus goes out for a third time. Then Judas comes up with the crowd and Peter’s got his sword and Peter’s playing macho. He whips out his sword and he lops off the guy’s ear. Well, now other writers tell us, yes, Peter lopped off the guy’s ear. But the writer of this gospel tells us that this guy’s name was Malchus. We’ve actually got the name of the guy whose ear was lopped off. Then Jesus puts the ear back on the Malchus’ head and heals it. Jesus says, “Peter put up your sword, those who live by the sword die by the sword.” The swords not right right now, and here’s your ear back and he puts it back on Malchus’ head. The guy’s name was Malchus, that’s the sign of an eyewitness. In other words, he was there and saw exactly who it was and knew the name of the person. That’s absolutely incredible here. Malchus’ name is listed is the mark of an eyewitness author.

Q. Eyewitness Account: 153 Fish and Exact Times [47:32-49:48]

What is even more incredible is the fish. I don’t know if any of you will remember this. There used to be a movie called, “Rain Man,” back during the civil war when I was growing up. This guy had a problem with his brain, but then they dropped, I forget what, the toothpicks. They dropped a bunch of toothpicks and they looked down and the guy could tell you exactly how many toothpicks were on the ground.

Jesus is raised from the dead. Peter and the beloved disciple are out in the boat.

What happens? The guy on the shore says, “Hey, have you caught anything?” And the guy says, “No, we’ve been out all night and we haven’t caught a thing.” And he says, “Throw your net on the other side.” The guys throw their nets on the other side and all of a sudden they get this huge catch of fish. Peter concludes, this must be Jesus because Jesus has done this before. So Peter dives and swims to shore, while this other guy being the more responsible one hauls the fish. It says then that the fish that were counted, this is in John 21, this is after the resurrection. The guy says that there were 153 fish there. Are we talking obsessive compulsive or what are we talking here? Who would count exactly the number of fish? Who would do that? I mean, most people like me, we caught one hundred fish, we caught hundreds of fish; we caught a bunch of fish. You’d say something like that. This is one of the reasons why I would say that John wrote the book, John is a fisherman. So the guy counts out knowing the number of exact fish that you caught is important to a fisherman. And so the fisherman counts out, and he says a 153; that’s the mark of an eyewitness. Nobody would remember that kind of detail, this guy is an eyewitness, and so you get this 153 fish.

This writer, whoever it is, gives us the exact hour in a lot of times as he’s going through the narration of Jesus. He will tell us this was the third hour, this was the sixth hour, this was the ninth hour. They start their day, by the way, as sun breaks, when the sun comes out, so then you know, third would be like nine o’clock, the sixth hour would be like noon, that kind of thing. So the exact hour is listed, again that’s a mark of an eyewitness.

R. Eyewitness Confirmations [49:48-52:29]

Now, here’s one that’s interesting, these are explicit statements and I want to read through some of these cause I think they’re really important. These are explicit statements where it confirms this person was an eyewitness. Starting in chapter 19, verse 35, “The man who saw it has given testimony and his testimony is true.” Notice he’s talking about himself in the third person. He doesn’t say I, talking about this person: “The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true.” He knows that he tells

the truth and he testifies so that you may believe. The purpose of the book of John is so that you may believe. None of his bones were broken. This man knows it because he was there and he saw that none of Christ's bones were broken on the cross. I know that, I was there. This man who is writing to you now knows that that is true because he saw that none of Christ's bones were broken; chapter 19 verse 35.

This is an interesting one too: chapter 21 verse 24. "This is the disciple who testifies to these things. When Peter saw him he asked, 'Lord what about him?' Jesus answered, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.' Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple [doesn't name himself] but this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die, he only said, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?' This is the disciple who testifies these things." So he's referring to himself in the third person; he doesn't put his own name in there. He says, "I'm the one Jesus said this to." Peter says, "What about this disciple." By the way were Peter and John pretty tight? Peter, James and John were at the transfiguration. Those three are tight. What happened to James, by the way? James was killed early in the church, James passes off the scene very early. He is one of the first martyrs, James. Yes, Stephen was earlier, but James was martyred very early. So Peter and John are tight. Peter and John are tight and says, "what about this guy?" and he was told that he would live forever. But he said, "No, no, Jesus said, 'if I want him to remain alive.'" That's very contrary to the book of Luke. Luke says, "No, no, I am not an eyewitness though I'm checking with eyewitnesses. And so that's pretty significant here.

S. Special Closeness to Christ [52:29-54:57]

F: Combine S-V; 52:29-64:15; Closeness to Christ and Peter

Whoever wrote this is especially close to Christ. You get this special closeness. John is not named in the book. The book couldn't be written by Peter because Peter talks to this disciple. So any of the disciples who are named, and that would be Andrew is named, Thomas is named, Peter is named, so those can't be the writers of the book.

Actually Lazarus is named too, it's interesting, but how does the writer of the book designate himself? What is his self-designation? What does he call himself? In John chapter 21 verse 20 and following, here's how the writer of the book identifies himself. He says, "Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved." The disciple whom Jesus loved was following them, and when Peter saw him he asked the Lord, 'What about him?' Jesus answered, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?'" So this passage of, "what is that to you," in this discussion between Peter and Jesus is about this disciple. This disciple identifies himself as, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." That is a tremendous way to identify himself. He does not identify himself by his own personal name. He identifies with himself by his relationships. Jesus loves me.

I remember one time they asked Karl Bart, the great Orthodox Theologian, what was the most important thing you've ever learned? He has written volumes on Romans that are, thousands of thousands of pages, and he said, "Yes, Jesus loves me." I would confirm that in my lifetime that is one of the most important things I've ever learned in life. I've learned it in different ways in different stages, and in different stages of life you sing it as a child, yes Jesus loves me. You learn it in new as you go through adolescence and you have adolescence struggles. You learn, yes Jesus loves me, when you hit middle age and you start seeing for the first time in your life that death is an option for you. And as you get older, "Yes, Jesus loves me," you appreciate it as one of the most incredible things in life. So let me just from on this point, and we'll come back to this, the incredible statement there.

T. Special Closeness with Peter: Fishing and the Footrace [54:57-57:58]

Peter and the disciple, there is a question about him living forever, we've talked about that. Now Peter and the disciple go fishing and this is interesting. Chapter 21 verse 7, "then the disciple whom Jesus loved," that's how he identifies himself. "The disciple whom Jesus loved," said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.'" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, 'It is the Lord,' he wrapped up his outer garment around him, for he had taken it off, and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat towing the net full of

fish.” How many fish? 153. So this guy is a fisherman. Whoever he is, he’s in a boat fishing with Peter on the Sea of Galilee. Who is a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee that knows 153 fish? I would suggest to you that John the apostle fits better than Lazarus whose kind of a land-locked person from Bethany in the dessert, just on the back side of the Mount of Olives there. Whereas, John is a fisherman, so he’s out with Peter. We’ve seen the connection between Peter, James, and John.

Now, this is one of the great ones too, in chapter 20 verse 2, you get an interesting story here. Let me see if I got it in my notes here, let me just read it from Scripture itself, in John chapter 20 verse 2, the writer picks up this story. “So the early first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw the stone had been removed from the entrance. She came running to Simon Peter, the other disciple.” The other disciple, the one Jesus loved and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved is identifying himself, and said, “they have taken away the Lord out of the tomb and we don’t know where they have put him.” So, Peter and the other disciple, the disciple whom Jesus loved, started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.” So you got this guy in a foot race between Peter. The guy says, “Hey, I beat him, I beat Peter. Don’t let him tell you anything different. I beat him. I was the first one there. I beat him. I ran faster than he did, I got there first.” And so you’ve got him going off on this and “he bent over and looked in the strips of linen were lying there, but did not go in. And Simon Peter who was behind him went into the tomb and saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that’s a *sudarium*, the burial cloth that had been around Jesus’ head, the cloth was folded up by itself.” Finally, the other disciple, the disciple whom Jesus loved would reach the tomb first. Notice he said I got there first, also he went inside “and he saw and believed. They still did not understand the Scripture that Jesus had to raise from the dead.” And so this is the other disciple there.

U. Closeness to Christ: Last Supper and Gethsemane [57:58-61:11]

At the meal with Jesus, do you remember the last supper? This is in some of the great paintings of the world, the last supper. Peter is sitting once removed from Jesus. So he asked this disciple whom Jesus loved, after Jesus said one of you guys is going to betray me and Peter is asking, "Who is it?" And so he says, "Hey, ask Jesus who it is?" By the way, is Peter usually bashful? Now Peter is not usually bashful, but at this point he goes to the disciple whom Jesus loved, and he says, "Hey, you ask Jesus who is going to betray Him." So you get this disciple then who seems to be closer to Jesus than Peter. Peter goes through this disciple to get to Jesus. What I'm suggesting to you is that these three, Peter, James, and John were the three big disciples. On the transfiguration, who are all the disciples who were there? Peter, James, and John. James and John were the sons of Zebedee. James dies early; John you know lives a very long time actually. John lives into the 90s, probably to 98 AD when he's writing the book of Revelation. So Peter, James, and John, were at the transfiguration. There's a girl who's raised from the dead, Jesus, of the twelve disciples, he only takes in three: Peter, James, and John, to heal this girl.

Jesus is praying at the Garden of Gethsemane. Who goes closer out with him where Jesus is going to pray? Peter, James, and John. So what I'm suggesting is Peter, James, and John are tight. Those are the inner three, and then you get this beautiful statement from Jesus on the cross and this is just absolutely incredible. Jesus is on the cross he's had the tar beat out of him. He's been whipped, he's been beaten, he's carried the cross, and now he's crucified on the cross. Then chapter 19 verse 26, here's what Jesus says, "From the cross, on the verge of his cruel wicked death and a very painful death by crucifixion, "when Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby." So you've got Jesus on the cross, his mother is here, the disciple whom Jesus loved is standing near by, the disciple Jesus loved is the one who wrote this book, and he said to his mother, "'Dear woman, here is your son.' And to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'" And so you have Jesus from the cross just before he's dying in all this pain and agony that he's been beaten taking care of his mother and saying, "mother, here is your son now, here is your son here is your mother." In other words, the disciple whom

I love, you take care of my mother now. I'm going to die, I can't take care of my mother, you, the disciple whom I love, take care of my mother for me. Jesus' concern for other people is just absolutely incredible. He's dying and yet his concern is for his mother, and this disciple whom he trusts, and this disciple whom he especially trusts with the care of his mother shows his confidence in this disciple.

V. Closeness with Peter after the Gospels [61:11-64:15]

Peter and John's close association is not just in the gospels: after Jesus rises from the dead, transfiguration, Gethsemane, the healing of the dead girl, Peter, James and John, we just went through that. But later in the book of Acts, there's a healing of the cripple in Acts chapter 3, guess what it's Peter and John. The healing of the cripple in Acts chapter 3 verse 1, the Samaritans in chapter 8 verse 14, who again? Peter and John. Before the Sanhedrin in Acts chapter 4 verse 19, it is Peter and John. So what I'm suggesting is Peter and John are tight. Peter and John were both fishermen from the Sea of Galilee. So Peter and John are tight and so what I'm suggesting here is that the disciple whom Jesus loved is indeed John. Now again, I defer I need to think about what Dr. Hunt says on some of this. Let me just conclude this way. John was the disciple whom Jesus loved. Actually, Paul even in Galatians 2 lumps Peter, James, and John together as the pillars of the Church in Galatians 2:9. So, let me just conclude this way, how did the writer of the book of John identify himself? He identified himself as: the disciple whom Jesus loved. We talk a lot about Christian worldviews and how you look at your world. How do you look at the world? You want something that will change your life forever. You want to change the way you look at the world. View yourself as one whom Jesus loved and go through life knowing that you're loved, going through life knowing for sure that you are loved by God Almighty, by Jesus Christ who gave his blood and died for you. It is knowing, amidst all the chaos of life, all the rejection, all the failures, all the messy stuff of life, going through life knowing that you are one who's loved of God. That changes the way you look at the world. The world is no longer this place of chaos and depression and all sorts of nasty stuff. You're loved by God, and all of a sudden it

changes knowing that you're loved by God changes the way you look at the whole world. This was the beloved disciple. This is the disciple whom Jesus loved. Yes, Jesus loves me, changes your life forever. We'll look at more of the book of John next time.

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