

Dr. David L. Turner, The Gospel of John, Session 2, Introduction, Part 2, Podcast Audio Overview

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All right, so we're diving into the gospel of John today. Ooh, exciting. We're going deep, beyond just the stories and everything.

Yeah, yeah. Really getting into the historical nitty-gritty, right? Think, like, authorship mysteries, ancient geography, even a little detective work with the ancient manuscripts. I like that.

So our main source material today is this awesome lecture series by Dr. David Turner. He's like a leading scholar on John. Okay.

And he brings up some really thought-provoking stuff, let me tell you. Yeah. So let's just jump right in.

Let's do it. The big question: who wrote this thing? The gospel of John. Right.

Is it really John, you know, the apostle, the one who's closest to Jesus? The beloved disciple? Yeah, yeah. What does Dr. Turner say about that? Well, it's a question that's kept scholars busy for centuries. Dr. Turner explains that there are these two main types of evidence we can look at.

We've got external evidence that's from early church figures who wrote about the gospel. And then we've got internal evidence that's like clues from the text itself. Ooh, I like that.

So like the text is speaking to us. Exactly. Okay.

So external evidence first. Who are some of these early figures who had opinions about the authorship? Well, Dr. Turner mentioned some big names like Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria. They both lived in the second century.

Okay. And they both attributed the gospel to John the apostle. So they're saying, yep, it's John, no question.

Yeah, but there's a twist, you see, because there's this other early figure, Polycarp, and he mentions a John the Elder. Okay. So now we've got a potential mystery.

Oh, I love it. Is this a totally different John, or is it like just a fancy title for the apostle? Right, right. It's like John, but with a PhD or something.

Exactly, exactly. Oh, this is good. Yeah.

Okay. So we've got some mixed signals from this external evidence. What about the internal clues? What does the gospel itself tell us about who wrote it? Well, the gospel actually claims to be written from an eyewitness perspective.

Really? Yeah. Yeah. There are like several instances where the author uses phrases like, we beheld his glory.

Really suggesting they were actually there with Jesus. Yeah. Yeah.

That's pretty compelling. Yeah. And then you have the whole mystery of the beloved disciple.

Right, right. The unnamed figure who seems to be like super tight with Jesus. Exactly.

And many scholars believe this beloved disciple is the author. Okay. And that it could be John the Apostle.

All right. So we've got external evidence kind of pointing to John the Apostle. Yeah.

But we've also got this mysterious John the Elder floating around. Right. And then we have internal clues that suggest an eyewitness.

Yes. Maybe even the beloved disciple. Exactly.

So where does all of this leave us? What does Dr. Turner ultimately conclude? Well, based on all the evidence, Dr. Turner concludes that the gospel likely originated, at least indirectly, from the Apostle John. Whether he wrote every single word himself, you know, or had help from, like, a community of his followers. Like a little writing team? Exactly.

Sometimes called the John Haneen community. You know, that remains a point of scholarly debate. Oh, I bet.

I bet. It's so interesting, you know, thinking about how these ancient texts, they might have been like more collaborative than we often imagine. Like we think of one guy with a scroll, but maybe it wasn't always like that.

Maybe not. But whether it's John Solo or John and his crew, we still got to figure out who they were writing this for. Absolutely.

Was it for like a super specific group or was it, you know, for Christians everywhere? Right. So that's the next big question. Yeah.

What are the main theories out there? So Dr. Turner presents kind of two main viewpoints. First, you know, you've got the idea that John wrote for a very specific, you know, narrow audience. Okay.

And this theory is supported by scholars like J. Lewis Martin, who argue that the gospel was specifically written for Jewish Christians who were facing persecution and even expulsion from synagogues because of their belief in Jesus. That makes sense. When you think about,

you know, some of the conflicts, the tension between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in the gospel.

Right. Like it does feel like there's this underlying sense of persecution. Yeah.

Are there any specific passages in John that point to this idea of a narrow persecuted audience? Yeah. Yeah. Dr. Turner highlights a few, like, for example, John 9, where Jesus heals a blind man, and it causes this big controversy among the Pharisees.

And then there's John 12.4 too, where it talks about people who believe in Jesus, but they're afraid to confess their faith publicly because they don't want to be ostracized, you know, like that. Yeah. That makes sense.

Like they're believers, but they're closeted believers for fear of, yeah, social repercussions. Right. Right.

So that's the narrow audience theory. What about the other side of the coin? Well, the other view argues that the gospels, including John, were actually meant for all Christians, you know, regardless of their background. So, like, a universal audience.

Exactly. And one of the key figures who argues for this is a scholar named Richard Bauckham. Okay.

Yeah. So we've got narrow audience versus universal audience. Right.

What are Bauckham's main points against the narrow audience theory? Well, he basically challenges the idea that early Christian communities were, you know, small and isolated. His book is called *The Gospels for All Christians*. Okay.

And he suggests that these early communities were actually much more interconnected and diverse than previously thought. Okay. And he believes that the differences between the gospels simply reflect the authors' individual, you know, styles and emphasis, you know, not a totally different target audience.

So he's saying John's gospel, while it's unique in its style and its content, it was ultimately still intended for this wider Christian community. Yes. Not just a tiny little subgroup.

Right. It's fascinating, you know, these different theories, how they can totally change our understanding of who John was writing for. And what his goals were.

But one thing that does seem pretty clear is that John's gospel is very deeply rooted in Jewish tradition. Oh, absolutely. Even if it was, you know, intended for a wider audience.

Yeah. Yeah. Dr. Turner, he really emphasizes this throughout his lectures.

He shows how John constantly draws on the Hebrew scriptures and uses the Old Testament to kind of present Jesus as the fulfillment of Jewish prophecy. Okay. Give me some concrete examples.

Like, where do we see this Jewishness most clearly in John's gospel? Well, right from the start, you know, the prologue of John, it echoes the language of Genesis 1. Okay. You know, identifying Jesus as the Word. Right.

Who was with God in the beginning. Through whom all things were made. And this clearly connects Jesus to the Jewish understanding of creation.

Yeah. And God is creator. Okay.

So he's setting the stage right from the start, like using these familiar concepts from the Jewish tradition to introduce Jesus. Yes. And then you have John the Baptist, who's, you know, presented as this prophetic figure very much in line with the Old Testament prophets.

Yes. Like Malachi or Isaiah. Exactly.

So he's really building this foundation, using these figures, these concepts to prepare the way for Jesus. Yes. Okay.

So it's not just the beginning, and we see it a little bit at the end. Right. What about all the stuff in between? What about all the stories and the teachings? Are there other places where John is kind of weaving in these Jewish themes in this imagery? Oh, absolutely.

I mean, one of the most striking examples is the way he portrays Jesus as like a new and greater Moses. You know, you think about it: Moses, Jesus- they both deliver God's people from oppression. They both provide bread in the wilderness.

That's true. They both reveal God's law. They establish a new covenant.

It's like he's drawing these very clear parallels to show how Jesus fulfills and even surpasses the hopes that are embedded in the Jewish scriptures. That's really powerful. It is.

And then you have all the direct quotations and allusions to the Old Testament that are just sprinkled throughout John's gospel. I mean, it's a text that really breathes and lives within the Jewish tradition. Yeah.

And it makes you realize, you know, you can't really understand John's gospel without understanding that context. Oh, really not. Of the Old Testament, of the Jewish scriptures.

Right. It's essential. Yeah.

Okay. So we've talked about authorship. We've talked about audience.

We've talked about, you know, John's Jewish roots. Yes. Now, let's add another layer of complexity here.

The fact that John seems to have written his gospel after the other three, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Right. What we often call the Synoptic Gospels.

Yes. So what's the deal with that? Why is that significant? Well, Dr. Turner points out that John likely wrote his gospel as a kind of companion piece to the Synoptics. Okay.

You know, offering a different perspective on Jesus's life and teachings. So how much overlap is there? Like are they telling the same stories or is John doing something completely different? Well, here's a fascinating fact. Only about 10 percent of John's content overlaps with the Synoptic Gospels.

Wow. That's a tiny amount. It is.

It is. So 90 percent of what we read in John. Yeah.

Is unique to John. It's unique to John. That's incredible.

It is. So if most of John's content is different, what are the few events that we find in both John and the Synoptics? So there are several key events that appear in both. For example, both John and the Synoptics describe John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus.

Okay. The cleansing of the temple, the healing of the official's son, the feeding of the five thousand. Hold on.

Are you saying like those iconic stories? Yeah. They're in both. Yeah.

I always thought those were unique to John. Well, they're definitely in John, but they're also found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Wow.

Okay. Interesting. Yeah.

And there's more. You know, both John and the Synoptics describe the Jewish leaders plotting against Jesus. Okay.

The anointing at Bethany, his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, his prediction of Peter's denials. Wow. And even the events surrounding the Last Supper, the betrayal, the arrest, the trials, the crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and the post-resurrection appearances.

That's amazing. Like how much common ground there is. But it's interesting because John's gospel just feels so different than the others.

Yeah. It really highlights how each gospel writer, you know, chose to focus on certain events and themes. Absolutely.

To emphasize their own unique perspective on Jesus. Exactly. And this is where that quote from Clement of Alexandria comes in.

Yes. You know, he called John a spiritual gospel. Right.

One that focuses on the internal meaning. Yeah. The theological significance of Jesus's words and actions.

Right. Right. And he contrasts that with the Synoptics, which he saw as focusing more on the outward facts of Jesus's life.

Yes. Yes. That's a really good way to put it.

Yeah. So John's all about that deeper meaning, like the why behind the what. Exactly.

Yeah. I could see that. I could see that in his writing.

Yeah. But let's shift gears a bit. Okay.

And talk about the geography in John. Dr. Turner points out the way Jesus moves around in John's gospel. Yeah.

It's quite different from the Synoptics. Right. Right.

So what's the difference? Well, in the synoptic gospels, Jesus's journey is kind of more linear. Okay. He starts in Galilee, spends most of his time there.

Yeah. And then makes this one big trip to Jerusalem at the end. Right.

Towards the end of his ministry. But in John, Jesus is going back and forth between Galilee and Jerusalem multiple times. Oh, interesting.

Throughout his ministry. So it's much more dynamic. It is.

A lot more movement. Yes. Does that I mean, does that difference have any significance? Well, some scholars believe that it reflects John's theological emphasis on the interplay between the earthly and the divine in Jesus's ministry.

Okay. So he's constantly moving between these different realms, highlighting the fact that he's not just a man. Right.

Also the son of God. Yeah. Yeah.

That's really interesting. It's like he's using geography. Yeah.

To kind of reinforce that theological message. Exactly. Almost like a visual metaphor.

Yes. Yeah. Yeah.

That's really cool. I may want to go back and reread John. Yeah.

And pay closer attention to those journeys. Right. And think about what they might symbolize.

Yeah. Speaking of journeys. How long does John say Jesus's ministry lasted? Well, John is actually the only gospel that explicitly says it was three years.

Oh, really? Yeah. Okay. And we know this because John mentions Jesus attending three different Passover festivals.

Oh, interesting. Okay. So we've got Galilee.

We've got Samaria, Judea, and of course, Jerusalem is the key location. Right. But Dr. Turner also goes into quite a bit of detail about specific spots within Jerusalem itself.

He does. He does. Which I love because it really brings the gospel to life.

Absolutely. So what are some of the sites that he mentions? So John mentions places like the Pool of Bethesda, where Jesus heals the paralytic. Okay.

The Pool of Siloam, the Temple Mount, Fortress Antonia, Mount Zion, the Mount of Olives. Wow. So many, so many iconic spots.

Are we talking about places we could actually visit today? Many of them. Yes. Wow.

Yeah. Archaeologists have been able to identify and excavate many of the sites mentioned in the gospel. So, like, we can actually walk where Jesus walked.

In many cases. Yes. That's incredible.

It is. It's amazing how it bridges that gap between, you know, the ancient world and our own time. Absolutely.

It's like we can step back in time and imagine him teaching in those very places. Yes. What about the location of the crucifixion and burial? Right.

Does John give us any clues about where those might have taken place? He does mention a few key locations, but just like with the authorship question. Right. There's a bit of mystery and debate surrounding the exact sites.

Okay. Yeah. I can imagine.

Dr. Turner, he mentions Gordon's Calvary. Okay. It's also known as the Garden Tomb and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, both of which are located within Jerusalem and have been proposed as possible sites of the crucifixion and burial.

Okay. So which one does Dr. Turner think is more likely? Well, while the Garden Tomb is a popular pilgrimage destination, Dr. Turner points out that the Church of the Holy Sepulcher actually has stronger historical and archaeological evidence to support it. So the evidence points more towards the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Right. But it's important to remember, you know, these things are often shrouded in mystery. Yeah.

Yeah. I can imagine. And there will always be different opinions among scholars.

Yeah. Yeah. I bet.

Yeah. It's like putting together this ancient puzzle. Yes.

You know, with all these little clues and bits of evidence. Yeah. Pointing in different directions.

Absolutely. But speaking of clues and evidence, let's talk about how we actually got the Gospel of John. Okay.

I mean, we're talking about an ancient text. Yes. Written almost 2,000 years ago.

Right. How did it make its way from those original manuscripts to the printed Bibles that we have today? That's a great question. And it takes us on this fascinating journey through history.

I bet. I bet. Dr. Turner explains that the journey started with papyrus scrolls.

Okay. Which were then replaced by codices, you know, the earliest form of books. Okay.

And these codices were copied by hand by scribes. Wow. Sometimes on parchment or vellum.

Okay. Then in the Middle Ages, you have the rise of minuscule manuscripts, which were written in a smaller, you know, more cursive script. And finally, in the 15th century, we have the invention of the printing press.

Right. Which totally revolutionized the way that texts were copied and disseminated. Yeah.

So it's this long, complex process. Yes. Of copying and recopying.

Absolutely. And transmitting this text over centuries. Yeah.

It's really remarkable. But all that hand copying. I mean, wouldn't there have been, like, variations?

Right. And discrepancies that crept in over time? Absolutely. I mean, scribes were human after all.

Right. And mistakes could happen. And sometimes, you know, scribes might have even intentionally added or changed things based on their understanding of the text.

Oh, wow. So there was no, like, perfect copy that was being passed down. It was subject to human error.

Absolutely. Wow. That's fascinating.

It is. It is. And Dr. Turner actually highlights three, three particularly fascinating textual variants in John.

He does. Hit me with them. What, what are these variants? And why are they so important? Well, these variants, they're not just like typos.

Okay. Yeah. They're significant.

Yeah. There are substantial differences that affect our understanding of the text. Oh, right.

And Dr. Turner, he emphasizes how scholars use both external evidence from the manuscripts themselves. Yeah. And internal evidence based on the author's style and theology to determine what the original text most likely said.

That makes sense. So the first variant we'll look at is in John 1:18. Okay.

At the very end of that prologue where it talks about Jesus's relationship with God. Right. Some manuscripts say no one has ever seen God but the one and only Son.

Okay. While others say no one has ever seen God but the one and only Son. Okay.

So it's just one word. Yeah. But it has huge theological implications.

It does. It does. Okay.

So is it son or God? Right. That's the question. What does Dr. Turner think is more likely to be original? Well, the manuscript evidence is a bit mixed on this one.

Okay. The older manuscripts tend to favor God. Okay.

While later ones lean towards the Son. Okay. But then you have to consider internal evidence.

You know, would John have used the phrase one and only God in this context? Yeah. Yeah. And does one reading better explain how the other reading might have arisen? Right.

Right. These are all questions that scholars wrestle with. It's so interesting how it's not just about, like, counting manuscripts.

Yeah. It's about using your knowledge of the author, the language, and the theology to kind of piece together what makes the most sense. Yes.

It's like being a detective. Right. You know, trying to figure out the.

Yeah. The most plausible explanation. And sometimes the answer might just be, we don't know.

Exactly. Yeah. Sometimes we just have to embrace the ambiguity and acknowledge that there are multiple possibilities.

Yeah. Yeah. We want those clear-cut answers.

Yeah. But sometimes the most honest answer is, yeah, we just don't know for sure. Right.

Okay. Hit me with the second textual variant. Okay.

This one's in John 5, in the story of the healing at the pool of Bethesda. Okay. Yeah.

Some manuscripts include a passage in verses three and four that describes an angel stirring up the water at the pool. An angel stirring the water. Yeah.

Okay. That's a pretty dramatic detail. It is.

What's the evidence for this angel story? Well, interestingly, the oldest manuscripts actually omit the angel story. Oh, wow. Yeah.

It appears in later manuscripts, which suggests it might have been added later. Okay. And when you consider internal evidence, the angel story doesn't quite seem to fit with the theology of John's gospel.

Oh, okay. How? How so? Well, the angel story suggests that healing is based on chance or luck. You know, whoever happens to be fastest gets healed.

Right. Right. The first one in the pool.

Yeah. But John's gospel emphasizes that Jesus is the source of healing. Yeah.

And that it comes through faith in him. Right. Right.

So the idea of an angel randomly stirring the water. Yeah. Feels a bit out of place.

Yeah. A little out of character for John. Yeah.

Exactly. So, maybe this angel story reflects a popular belief at the time. Right.

Right. But it wasn't originally part of John's gospel. Yeah.

Exactly. It's fascinating, you know, how these textual variants can give us a glimpse into the historical context and the cultural context in which the gospels were written and transmitted. It's amazing.

Yeah. Yeah. I love that.

Yeah. OK. Well, lay the third one on me.

OK. This one is a doozy. It involves one of the most famous stories in John.

OK. The story of the woman caught in adultery. Oh, yeah.

Found in John seven point five three eight point eleven. The let he who is without sin story. Yeah.

Yeah. Super powerful story. I mean, really challenging.

It is. But you're saying there's debate about whether it was originally part of John's gospel. That's right.

Yeah. This one's a bit of a head scratcher for scholars. It's absent from the oldest manuscripts.

Oh, wow. And even in later manuscripts, it shows up in different places. Really? Sometimes in John, sometimes in Luke, sometimes even marked as questionable by the scribes themselves.

It's like this wandering story. Yeah. Couldn't find a home.

Exactly. In the text. That's a great way to put it.

But what about the story itself? I mean, does it fit with John's writing style? Does it fit with the overall flow of his gospel? Well, that's where things get really interesting. Dr. Turner points out that if you read John seven, you know, straight into John eight, you skip the adultery story. Right.

The narrative flows perfectly. Oh, it's like that story interrupts the natural progression. Right.

Right. Like it's been spliced in. Yeah, exactly.

OK, so based on that, it seems like the evidence is kind of stacking up against this story being part of the original gospel. Right. But if it wasn't originally there, how did it end up in our Bibles? Well, one possibility is that it was, you know, a genuine tradition about Jesus that was circulating in the early church, but wasn't originally recorded in John.

You know, maybe a scribe who was copying the text later. You know, they decided to include it because they recognized its power and felt like it deserved a place in the biblical narrative. It's a good reminder that even though, you know, we believe the Bible is the inspired word of God.

Yes. It was still transmitted and copied by human hands. Yes.

You know, over centuries. And those human hands. Right.

They could make mistakes. Right. Or add their own interpretations.

Absolutely. It makes you appreciate the work of biblical scholars who are trying to reconstruct that original text and understand its historical context. Yeah, that's really fascinating.

Yeah. And these textual variants are just a small taste of the complexities and challenges that scholars face when studying the Bible. OK, so we've explored some really intriguing textual mysteries.

We have. We've wrestled with these questions of authorship, audience, and historical context. Yeah.

It's amazing how much depth and complexity there is to unpack in just these first few chapters. Absolutely. It's just the tip of the iceberg.

It's just the tip of the iceberg. Yeah. And we are.

Welcome back to our deep dive into John. Last time, you know, we were talking about those textual variants, and it really got me thinking about the whole journey of this text, you know, from those ancient manuscripts to the printed Bible we have today. Yeah.

It's quite a journey, isn't it? It really is. And it reminds us that the Bible isn't, you know, just some static document from the past. It's a living text.

Yeah. With this rich and complex history. But let's kind of shift gears a bit and dive back into the content of John's gospel.

OK. One thing that really struck me as we were prepping for this deep dive was how John uses these vivid metaphors and symbols throughout the gospel. Yeah.

It's almost like he's speaking in code sometimes. Right. He really is.

It's one of the hallmarks of John's writing style. OK. He's not content to just, you know, recount events.

He wants to unveil the deeper the deeper spiritual realities behind those events. OK. So give me an example.

Like, where do we see this metaphorical language most clearly? Well, one of the most striking examples is the story of Nicodemus in John 3. OK. Yeah. Yeah.

Nicodemus, he's a Pharisee. Right. A religious leader.

Right. He comes to Jesus at night seeking answers. And Jesus tells him very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.

Born again. Yeah. I remember being a little confused by that the first time I read it.

Right. It's a little strange, isn't it? It's a very strange phrase. Yeah.

And it definitely catches Nicodemus off guard. He takes it literally, you know, asking Jesus, how can someone be born when they are old? Right. Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born.

Yeah. Yeah. But Jesus is using this powerful metaphor of being born again.

Right. To describe a spiritual transformation. OK.

You know, this radical change of heart. OK. So it's not about physical birth.

Yeah. It's about spiritual rebirth. Exactly.

Like starting a new life with a new perspective. Yeah. A new way of relating to God.

Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah.

I'm starting to see how these metaphors really add, like, a whole other dimension of meaning to John's gospel. Yeah. They're really key.

Yeah. To understanding his message. And it's not just Nicodemus who struggles to grasp Jesus's metaphors.

Right. Right. Later on in John four, when Jesus meets this Samaritan woman at the well.

Yeah. He offers her living water. Yes.

And she's also confused at first. Yeah. She thinks he's talking about, you know, actual water from the well.

Right. She says, sir, you have nothing to draw with. And the well is deep.

Where can you get this living water? Right. Right. But Jesus isn't talking about physical water.

Right. He's using living water as a symbol.

For the spiritual nourishment and the eternal life that he offers. So it's like he's speaking the secret language sometimes. Right.

But a language that's so full of depth and meaning. Yes. Yeah.

It makes you really pay attention. Absolutely. And think about what he's saying on this deeper level.

It really does. Are there other examples of these kinds of metaphors in John? Oh, yeah. There are quite a few.

One that Dr. Turner highlights is in John, too, where Jesus says, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days. Oh, right. And of course, his listeners think he's talking about the literal temple in Jerusalem.

Right. Yeah. But Jesus is actually talking about his own body.

OK. Which will be destroyed on the cross, but raised to life again on the third day. OK.

So it's like a veiled reference to his death and resurrection. Exactly. But his listeners don't understand the metaphor at the time.

Right. They're taking it literally. Yeah.

They're missing the point. Yeah. And maybe John is being deliberate here.

You know, maybe he's intentionally using this cryptic language. Yeah. To challenge his readers.

Right. You know, to make them dig deeper and grapple with the true meaning of Jesus's words. I think you're right.

He wants to move us beyond a surface-level understanding of Jesus's ministry and help us grasp the profound spiritual truths that he embodies. And these metaphors become, you know, powerful tools for doing that. It makes me think of John's gospel as like a tapestry.

Yeah. Woven together with these intricate threads of symbolism and metaphor. It's not just a simple story.

It's a work of art. It is. That demands our attention and invites us to contemplate its deeper meaning.

Absolutely. It's beautifully put. And it brings us back to Clement of Alexandria's description of John as the spiritual gospel.

Yes. He was recognizing that John's primary focus isn't on external events. Right.

It's on revealing the internal, the spiritual significance of Jesus's words and actions. Absolutely. So John is giving us this glimpse into the heart and mind of Jesus.

Right. Using these metaphors and symbols to illuminate his divine nature. Yeah.

And his mission to bring spiritual life to the world. Yes. That's a really good way to sum it up.

Yeah. It makes me appreciate how each gospel writer they bring their own their own unique perspective. They do.

To the story of Jesus. Absolutely. And that's why all four gospels are essential.

Yes. They complement and enrich one another. They do.

Offering this multifaceted portrait of Jesus. Absolutely. That we wouldn't have if we only had one or two accounts.

You're right. Exactly. OK.

So we've talked about metaphors, symbols. Now let's circle back to something we touched on earlier. You know, John's deep connection to Jewish tradition.

OK. Yeah. You mentioned how Dr. Turner highlights this throughout his lectures, showing how John portrays Jesus as fulfilling Jewish prophecy, embodying the hopes of Israel.

Yeah. This is a crucial aspect of understanding John's gospel. Yeah.

You know, remember that magnificent prologue that we talked about. Right. Right.

The one that echoes Genesis one. Yes. Yeah.

Well, that's not just like a literary flourish. You know, it's a deliberate theological statement by identifying Jesus as the Word who was with God in the beginning, you know, through whom all things were made. John's grounding Jesus within the Jewish understanding of creation.

And God is creator. So he's establishing Jesus's divinity from the very start. Yes.

Connecting him to the foundational beliefs of Judaism. Absolutely. And you mentioned earlier that John draws these parallels between Jesus and Moses.

Yeah. How does that play out in the gospel? Well, throughout the gospel, John subtly but consistently presents Jesus as a new and greater Moses. OK.

You know, both Moses and Jesus. They lead God's people out of oppression. They both provide bread in the wilderness.

They both reveal God's law and establish a new covenant. It's like John is saying, you know, look, everything you've been hoping for in a messiah, everything you've been waiting for. Yeah.

Since the time of Moses, you know, it's all fulfilled in Jesus. Right. Right.

Yeah. It's such a powerful way to connect with his audience. Yeah.

To show that, you know, Jesus isn't just this random figure who came out of nowhere. Right. He's rooted in their history.

Yeah. In their scriptures. Yes.

In their deepest longings. Absolutely. And all those direct quotations and allusions to the Old Testament that we find, you know, sprinkled throughout John's gospel.

Right. They're not just accidental or decorative, you know; they're intentional echoes and connections that are woven into the very fabric of John's narrative. It's like he's having this dialogue with the Old Testament.

He is. He's showing us that Jesus isn't just, you know, some new teacher or prophet. He's the culmination of God's plan for his people.

Right. A plan that unfolds throughout the entire, you know, sweep of biblical history. It makes you wonder how Jewish audiences at the time would have responded to this.

You know, would they have embraced Jesus as this fulfillment of their messianic hopes?

Right. Or would they have rejected him as a heretic, as a false prophet? Yeah, that's a great question. And I'm sure there were diverse reactions.

You know, some may have been drawn to Jesus, recognizing him as the one they had been waiting for. Yeah. Others may have been resistant, you know, clinging to their traditional understanding of the Messiah.

And it's important to remember the Jewish community in the first century. Yeah. It wasn't monolithic.

Right. There were different sects. Yeah.

Different schools of thought. Absolutely. You know, each with their own interpretation of the scriptures.

Yes. So John's gospel, you know, likely sparked a lot of debate. Right.

And controversy. Yeah. Within the Jewish community.

Absolutely. You know, just as it does today. Yeah.

It's a text that challenges us to wrestle with these complex questions. It does. Of identity, belief, and the nature of God's revelation.

Absolutely. But even if some Jewish audiences rejected Jesus, you know, John's gospel is undeniably deeply embedded in Jewish thought and tradition. It is.

It is. It's a testament to the fact that Christianity emerged from Judaism. Right.

And that Jesus himself was a Jew who lived and taught within that context. Absolutely. And it's that tension between continuity and discontinuity.

Right. Between fulfilling and surpassing Jewish tradition. Right.

That makes John's gospel so, so compelling and thought-provoking even for readers today. Yeah. It's a text that invites us to explore the rich tapestry of our shared religious heritage.

Right. While also grappling with the radical newness. Yeah.

That Jesus brings. OK, so we've talked about metaphors. We've talked about symbols, John's connection to Jewish tradition.

Yeah. Now, let's shift our focus to something that always, always fascinates me about John. OK.

It's the way that he interweaves those profound theological themes with these very down-to-earth encounters that Jesus has with real people. Yeah. John is a master at showing us how those big theological ideas actually play out in the messy

Yeah. Complicated reality of human life. It's not just it's not just theory.

It's real life. It's lived experience. Yeah.

Absolutely. Think about the Samaritan woman at the well. Yeah.

Or the blind man who's healed. Right. Or even Nicodemus, that religious leader who comes to Jesus at night.

Yeah. Struggling to grasp who he truly is. Right.

These are real people with real questions, real struggles, real hopes. Absolutely. And it's through those personal encounters that John reveals the heart of Jesus, his compassion, his love, his desire to reach out to those who are lost and hurting.

It's not just about these abstract theological concepts. It's about real people experiencing the transformative power. Yes.

Of Jesus's presence in their lives. Absolutely. And it's not just about what Jesus says.

It's about what he does. Right. You know, the signs and wonders he performs.

Right. They play this crucial role in John's gospel. They do.

They do. And Dr. Turner points out that John deliberately calls them signs because they're meant to point to something deeper. OK.

You know, to reveal Jesus's true identity. OK. So they're not just they're not just miracles for the sake of spectacle.

They're revelatory acts. They are. They invite people to see Jesus as the Son of God, as the Messiah.

Right. Who has come to bring light and life to the world. Exactly.

They're like clues, you know, pieces of a puzzle that help us understand who Jesus truly is. Right. Each sign adds another layer to the picture, you know, building towards this fuller revelation of his divine nature and mission.

OK, I'm intrigued. So let's break it down. What are some of the key signs that John focuses on, and what do they reveal about Jesus? Well, right from the start, we have the wedding at Cana, where Jesus turns water into wine.

Right. Right. The first miracle.

Yeah. The one that kind of kicks off the whole party, so to speak. Yeah.

Yeah. What does Dr. Turner say about this sign? Well, he points out that it's a sign that reveals Jesus's power over the natural world and his ability to bring joy and abundance. It's like a little foretaste of what's to come.

Yeah. It's like a foreshadowing of the greater miracles that are going to that are going to unfold throughout his ministry. Absolutely.

Absolutely. So what's next? So then we move to the healing of the official's son. OK, this sign takes place in Capernaum, and it demonstrates Jesus's compassion and his authority over sickness and death.

Yeah. I remember that story. You know, the official is desperate to save his son.

Yeah. And Jesus heals him from a distance. Yeah.

Just by speaking a word. It's a powerful demonstration of his power and authority. OK.

So we've got the wedding at Cana. Yes. We've got the healing of the official's son.

What's next? And then we come to one of the most iconic miracles in all four gospels. OK. The feeding of the five thousand.

Yeah. The miracle is practically a blockbuster movie scene. Right.

You know, thousands of people gathered on this hillside. Yeah. And Jesus takes a few loaves and fishes.

Yeah. And multiplies them. Yeah.

To feed the entire crowd. It's amazing. Yeah.

What's the deeper significance of this sign? Well, it's not just about physical nourishment. It's a sign that points to Jesus as the bread of life. You know, the one who can satisfy our deepest spiritual hunger.

So it's about more than just filling our bellies. Right. It's about it's about feeding our souls.

Absolutely. Yeah. It's a beautiful metaphor.

It is. For that spiritual sustenance. Yeah.

That Jesus offers. Absolutely. OK.

I'm ready for the next sign. What's next? Well, then we have the healing of the blind man. OK.

This occurs in Jerusalem. OK. And it symbolizes Jesus's power to bring spiritual sight to those who are lost in darkness.

Oh, yeah. I love that story. And it's not just about physical blindness.

Yeah. It's about spiritual blindness. Yeah.

Right. The blind man represents all of humanity. You know.

Yeah. Groping around in the darkness, searching for meaning, for purpose. Yes.

And Jesus comes. Yeah. And he opens his eyes.

He does. Not just to the physical world. Right.

But to the spiritual reality of who Jesus truly is. Absolutely. It's this powerful image of transformation.

Yeah. And enlightenment. OK.

So we've got the wedding at Cana. We've got the healing of the official son. We've got the feeding of the five thousand.

We've got the healing of the blind man. Yeah. What's the grand finale? What's the most dramatic, powerful sign in John? Well, the grand finale, the climax of John's, you know, carefully crafted narrative is the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

Oh, yeah. The miracle that even Jesus's enemies couldn't deny. Right.

Right. What does this incredible act of power reveal about Jesus? Well, it's a powerful foreshadowing of Jesus's own resurrection and a declaration of his victory over death itself. So it's like the ultimate sign.

It is. It is the one that seals the deal. Yeah.

And confirms everything that John has been saying about Jesus. Absolutely. You know, throughout the gospel.

Right. Each sign is like a brushstroke, you know, adding detail and depth to this portrait of Jesus. Yeah.

That's John's painting and the raising of Lazarus. Yeah. Is this the final bold stroke? Yeah.

That brings the whole picture into focus. And it's not just about showcasing Jesus's power. Right.

You know, it's about inviting us to place our faith in him as the one who can conquer death and bring us into eternal life. OK. Well, we've covered a lot of ground in this deep dive.

We have. We have. We've explored metaphors, symbols, John's connection to Jewish tradition, the significance of the signs that Jesus performs.

Yes. It's been quite a journey. It really has.

And it's really just a glimpse into the riches of John's gospel. Absolutely. There's always more to uncover.

There's always more to uncover. But for now. Yeah.

We need to take a break. Join us next time as we wrap up our deep dive into John, exploring the implications of all that we've learned and reflecting on the lasting power. Yes.

Of this incredible text. Welcome back to the deep dive. We've spent the last two parts really digging into the gospel of John.

I feel like we've uncovered some real gems, you know. Oh, yeah. Lots of lots of great insights.

Yeah. And those signs, those miracles that Jesus performs, they really I don't know about you, but they really stuck with me. Oh, for sure.

It's like John's using those as these really powerful visual aids. Right. To reveal who Jesus is.

Right. Yeah, absolutely. It's like he's saying, look, this is who Jesus is.

Look what he can do. Yeah. And it's not just the big, splashy miracles.

Right. Yeah. Turning water into wine.

Raising Lazarus from the dead. Those are those are those are definitely showstoppers. You know.

Sure. But even the smaller encounters, the healings, the conversations, like with the woman at the well. Yeah.

They all point to something deeper. Right. Absolutely.

Every encounter, every conversation is layered with meaning. Yeah. You know, John, he really wants us to look beyond the surface.

And see the divine at work, even in ordinary life. Yeah.

Yeah. It's like he's saying, pay attention. Look closer.

You know, Jesus is revealing himself to you in every interaction. Right. And in every word, every gesture.

Exactly. Exactly. And speaking of paying attention, one thing I noticed is how much attention John gives to Jesus's final days.

Yes. Leading up to the crucifixion. Yeah.

It's a significant portion of his gospel. Yeah. And he's writing this, you know, after the other gospels are already out there.

So he's choosing to focus on things that maybe the others skimmed over or didn't include at all. So exactly. What are some of those key moments that John highlights? Well, one of the most striking is the Last Supper.

Yeah. Yeah. It has a much more intimate feel in John's account.

OK. Compared to the Synoptics. OK, yeah.

In fact, John doesn't even mention the institution of the Eucharist. Wait, really? Doesn't he mention the bread and the wine? No, not at all. That's so interesting because, you know, I always thought of that as a key part of the Last Supper story.

Oh, it's central to the synoptic gospels. Yeah. But John, he chooses to focus on something else entirely.

OK, what's that? The washing of the disciples' feet. Oh, right. Right.

Where Jesus humbles himself, washes their dirty feet. Exactly. Yeah.

What's the significance of that? Well, it's this incredibly powerful act of service and humility. Jesus demonstrating, you know, the true nature of leadership, not as, you know, power and dominance, but as love and self-giving. Yeah.

You know, he's setting an example for his followers. And it's a very countercultural message. It is.

Even today. Oh, yeah. You know, we're still so obsessed with power and success, climbing the ladder, being in charge.

You know. Yeah. And then here's Jesus washing feet.

Washing feet. It's a totally different model. It is.

And it's a message that's really at the heart of John's gospel. Right. Yes.

That call to love one another. Yeah. As Christ has loved us.

And that love isn't just, you know, a warm, fuzzy feeling. It's an action. Yeah.

A way of life. It's a way of being in the world. Yeah.

Yeah. OK. And then there's the farewell discourse.

Yeah. You know, those long conversations that Jesus has with his disciples. Yeah.

In the upper room after the Last Supper. Right. John devotes several chapters to these conversations.

And they're so rich. Oh, yeah. Full of profound teachings about love, about truth, about the Holy Spirit.

Yeah. Yeah. It's like he's giving them a roadmap, you know, for how to live in his absence.

You know. Exactly. He's preparing them.

Yeah. For his departure. Yeah.

And he's introducing this idea of the advocate. Right. Right.

Yeah. The Holy Spirit who will come in and guide them and empower them. Yeah.

The Holy Spirit is a central theme in John. It is. Representing that ongoing presence of Jesus in the lives of his followers.

Yeah. So it's not like it's not like he's just abandoning them. No.

You know, he's, yeah. He's sending them a helper. Yeah.

A guide. Yeah. A source of strength.

Yeah. Absolutely. OK.

And then, of course, you know, we have Gethsemane, the betrayal, the arrest, the trial, and the crucifixion. Yeah. All of that.

The really difficult stuff. Yeah. And John, he doesn't shy away from the pain and the suffering.

No, he doesn't. But he also portrays those events through this lens of triumph and victory. Yes.

Yeah. He's showing us that even in his darkest hour. Right.

Jesus is still in control. He's not a victim. No.

He's a conqueror. Right. Yeah.

But he willingly lays down his life. Yeah. You know, as the ultimate act.

Yeah. Of love and sacrifice. And then the resurrection.

Yes. John, he gives us those beautiful post-resurrection appearances. Yeah.

You know, those moments of joy and recognition when Jesus appears to his disciples. Reassures them. Yes.

That he's alive. Yeah. That his mission continues.

Right. Those appearances are so full of hope and promise. They are.

And they remind us that death is not the end. No. You know, that love triumphs over darkness.

That new life. Yeah. Always possible.

Absolutely. It's a message that still resonates with us today. It does.

You know, it offers comfort. Yeah. And hope.

To those who are grieving, to those who are struggling, you know, searching for meaning. Yeah.

In a world that often feels really broken and chaotic. Yes. And that's why John's gospel still speaks to us today.

Yeah. It's not just an ancient text. It's a loving word, you know, a source of wisdom and guidance.

And that's what makes this deep dive so rewarding. Yeah. You know, it's not just about accumulating knowledge.

Right. It's about letting that knowledge shape us. Yeah.

Challenge us. Inspire us.

Absolutely. To live more fully. To love more deeply.

It's about encountering Jesus. Yeah. And letting that encounter change us.

So as we wrap up our deep dive into John, I want to leave you with a final thought. We've explored this gospel from a lot of different angles. The historical context, the literary style, the theological themes.

But ultimately it all comes down to this. What does it mean for you? Yeah. How does it speak to your life, your questions, your hopes, your fears? Right.

Maybe there's a particular passage that resonated with you, a metaphor that you keep thinking about, or a story that challenged your perspective. Yeah. Take some time to reflect on what really stood out to you during these episodes and consider how those insights might shape your own understanding of Jesus and your own journey of faith.

Yeah. Because that's the beauty of John's gospel. It's not a closed book.

It's an invitation to an ongoing conversation, a relationship, a journey of discovery. And that can last a lifetime. So keep exploring.

Keep questioning. Keep listening. You never know what treasures you might uncover.