

Dr. David L. Turner, The Gospel of John, Session 21, Genesis 1 and John 1, Podcast Audio Overview

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Welcome back, everybody, for another deep dive. This time we're taking a look at Genesis 1 and John 1. Oh, that's a good one. It is a good one.

We're going to be using a lecture from Dr. David Turner. Oh, great. He is a biblical scholar, and he just does a fantastic job of going through and showing how much John uses Genesis to paint this really incredible picture of Jesus.

I'm excited. Yeah. Yeah.

I think this is going to be a really good one. So have you ever noticed just how much the gospel of John sounds a lot like Genesis? Oh yeah, absolutely. And it's so interesting what Dr. Turner points out: it's not just like they're similar, or they're kind of rhyming.

It's like John is really intentionally weaving these echoes of Genesis in there to make a really, really deep point about who Jesus is. Well, and right off the bat, they both use that same phrase in the beginning. Right.

It's like John's grabbing our attention and saying, Hey, remember that huge moment of creation? Well, guess what? Jesus is right there in the middle of it. Wow. I never thought about it that way before.

So it's not just that Jesus was present at creation. John is hinting at something even bigger. Absolutely.

So Dr. Turner really highlights how both of those texts emphasize the creative power of God's speech. So, like, you know, in Genesis, "Let there be light and boom, there it is. Light comes onto the scene.

It's almost like God is speaking reality into existence. Yeah, totally. And then John picks up on that idea and calls Jesus the Word.

Right. And not just a word, but the Word with a capital T, the Word. Right.

And so it's like saying Jesus is the ultimate embodiment of that creative power of God. So God spoke creation into being. And then John is taking that and saying that Jesus, as the Word, speaks life and light into the world.

Precisely. Yeah. And then, you know, those concepts of life and light, those are packed with all kinds of layers of symbolism in both Genesis and John.

Yeah. Well, this is where it gets really interesting because John takes that image of light from the first day of creation and uses that as this amazing metaphor for Jesus's purpose. It's not just that he's some random dude.

He is the light of the world, bringing spiritual illumination to everyone who believes. And I love how he connects light with all these really profound concepts like truth and genuine belief, even resurrection. These are things that bring us true life.

Not just, you know, physical existence, but a deeper, richer kind of life, both now and in the future. I'm starting to see how John is using these Old Testament echoes to make some really bold claims about Jesus. He's going way beyond just saying that Jesus created the world ages ago.

Is he suggesting that Jesus is actually renewing it in the present? You're picking up on exactly what Dr. Turner finds so fascinating about John: this idea of new creation. It's something we typically associate with Paul's writings. But John presents it in this kind of subtle, almost mysterious way.

Wait, hold on. New creation week. What does that even mean? Well, so Dr. Turner suggests that John might be hinting at a parallel between the seven days of creation in Genesis and certain events in Jesus' ministry.

So, like, you know, Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana. It's almost like a new creation miracle. And then there's that image of Jesus as the gardener after the resurrection, which Dr. Turner sees as a deliberate callback to the Garden of Eden.

Oh, wow. So are you saying that John sees Jesus as the one who's restoring paradise, bringing new life to our broken world? That's exactly what Dr. Turner argues. Wow.

And he even connects that imagery of Jesus breathing on his disciples in John 20, when they receive the Holy Spirit back to God, breathing life into Adam in Genesis. Oh, that's a powerful connection. So it's like John is saying that creation isn't just this one-time event in the distant past.

It's an ongoing process of renewal and transformation. And Jesus is the driving force behind it. Yes, exactly.

But if that's the case, where do we sit in? What's our role in all of this? That's a great question. And it takes us right into some of the deeper implications of John's gospel. Yeah.

If Jesus is actively renewing creation, what does that mean for us? Or are we just passive bystanders? Or are we called to participate in this incredible work? That's what I'm dying to find out. Are we supposed to be agents of this new creation? What would that even look like? Well, let's explore that further. If you think about the themes of light and darkness that we were talking about earlier.

So we were talking about light and darkness and how John kind of paints this picture of Jesus as the light of the world. And I'm starting to see how that really ties into this whole idea of new creation. It really is a central theme throughout John's gospel.

He's constantly contrasting light and darkness and showing us that the world is kind of this battleground between these two forces. And ultimately, he wants us to understand that light will win. But what does that mean for us practically? How do we actually live as people of the light when the world can still feel so full of darkness sometimes? Yeah.

John grapples with that question too. And we see it played out in the stories that he tells about Jesus. Remember that powerful line: the light shines in the darkness, and darkness has not overcome it.

That line gives me chills every time. It's such a bold statement of faith, isn't it? Yeah. John's saying, even though evil might seem so powerful, even though the world can feel so overwhelmingly dark, sometimes the light will always be stronger.

But we have to choose to embrace that light, right? We can't just sit back and wait for it to magically fix everything. Exactly. It's about actively choosing to follow Jesus, to let his light illuminate our lives and guide our actions.

And that's where our role as agents of new creation comes in. Okay. So I'm really curious about this.

What does it actually look like to be an agent of new creation? Does that mean we all need to go start performing miracles or something? It's not necessarily about replicating Jesus's miracles literally. It's more about reflecting his character and continuing his work in our own everyday lives. So how do we do that? Give me some practical examples.

Well, you know, think about the way Jesus interacted with people. He showed compassion to the outcast. He challenged injustice.

He spoke truth to power. He brought healing and hope to those who were hurting. And as agents of new creation, we're called to do the same.

So it's about bringing light into those dark places in whatever ways we can. Yeah. Maybe that's through acts of kindness or speaking up against injustice or just showing love and compassion to the people around us.

You're getting it. It's about reflecting the light of Christ in everything we do. But wait, I have another question.

If Jesus is this, like, cosmic divine being who's renewing creation, what difference can our little actions really make? You know, that's a question that a lot of people struggle with. Right. But John actually gives us a clue in the way he portrays Jesus's followers.

Think about the disciples. They were just ordinary people, fishermen, tax collectors, you know, nothing special in the eyes of the world. Right.

But Jesus chose them and empowered them to do these incredible things. Exactly. And that's the message for us today.

We might feel small and insignificant, you know, in the grand scheme of things. But John reminds us that through Jesus, we can be part of something so much bigger than ourselves. So it's not about our own power or abilities.

It's about tapping into the power of the word, the power of Christ working through us. Precisely. It's about allowing ourselves to be instruments of God's grace and love in the world.

This is really making me rethink what it means to be a Christian. You know, it's not just about believing certain things or going to church on Sundays. It's about actively participating in this ongoing work of new creation.

Yeah. And John's gospel gives us this incredible vision of what that can look like. He shows us that Jesus isn't just some distant figure who created the world and then, you know, left us to fend for ourselves.

He's intimately involved in our world, working through us to bring about this, you know, renewal and transformation. This also makes me think about what Dr. Turner said about that ambiguous phrase in John 1:4 to 5. What has come into being? He mentioned it can be interpreted in two different ways, both of which highlight Jesus's creative power. Can you unpack that a bit more? Absolutely.

That's one of the most fascinating things about John's gospel. He often uses this language that's open to multiple interpretations, which kind of invites us to wrestle with who Jesus is and how he works in the world. Yeah.

So even the grammar is working to deepen the mystery and our experience with the text. That's right. So in this case, the phrase *ho jyonon*, it could mean either what has come into being or what has happened.

And depending on how you translate it, you get a slightly different emphasis. Okay. Walk me through those two options.

Sure. So if you take it to mean what has come into being, it really emphasizes Jesus's role as the creator of everything. He's the source of all life and existence.

But if you translate it as what has happened, it takes on more of a historical focus. Exactly. It points to the events of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection as the ultimate act of new creation.

It's through these events that God breaks into history and brings about this radical transformation of reality. So both interpretations highlight Jesus's creative power, but in different ways. And that's the beauty of it.

John isn't trying to give us a neat and tidy theological formula. Right. He's inviting us into a mystery, this deeper understanding of who Jesus is and what he's done for us.

It's like John is saying, don't just take my word for it. Wrestle with these ideas. Yeah.

Grapple with the text and let the Holy Spirit guide you into a deeper understanding. I think that's a great way to put it. Yeah.

John wants us to be active participants in this journey of faith, not just passive recipients of information. This is giving me so much to think about. I feel like we've only just begun to scratch the surface of these connections between Genesis and John.

And that's the beauty of scripture, isn't it? There's always more to discover, always new layers of meaning to unpack. It really is a lifelong journey of discovery. Wow.

It really is amazing how these ancient texts can still speak so powerfully to our lives today. We've covered a lot of ground in our deep dive into Genesis and John, from the echoes of creation to this whole concept of new creation and our role in it. What stands out to you as the most significant takeaway? I think the most important thing to remember is that John isn't just presenting a dry theological treatise.

He's inviting us into a living, breathing story. Yeah. A story of hope and transformation that has the power to change our lives.

It's not just about intellectual ascent. It's about allowing the truth of who Jesus is and what he's done to actually take root in our hearts and transform us from the inside out. Exactly.

And that transformation isn't a one-time event. It's an ongoing process, just as creation is this ongoing process. So, too, is our journey of faith.

We're constantly growing, learning, and being renewed by the power of the Word. This reminds me of something Dr. Turner said about how John uses those contrasting images of light and darkness. He pointed out that the world is a battleground between these two forces.

Right. But ultimately, light will triumph. But if that's true, if God is ultimately in control and good will win in the end, what does that mean for our responsibility as agents of new creation? Are we off the hook? That's a great question.

And it's one that John definitely doesn't shy away from, while he assures us that light will ultimately prevail. Right. He also emphasizes our role in actively participating in this victory.

So, it's not a passive waiting game. It's about actively choosing to align ourselves with the light, to be instruments of God's grace and love in a world that really means it. Precisely.

And that's where our responsibility comes in. We're called to be bearers of that light, to shine it into the dark corners of our world, to reflect the love of Christ in everything we do. But what does that actually look like practically? We've kind of touched on this a little bit.

But I'd love to hear your thoughts on how we can actually live out this call to be agents of new creation in our everyday lives. Well, I think it starts with the small things. It's about being intentional in the way that we interact with others.

Right. Choosing kindness over judgment, offering forgiveness instead of holding grudges, extending grace to those who have hurt us. So, it's not necessarily about these huge gestures or these dramatic displays of faith.

Right. It's about weaving those threads of new creation into just the fabric of our ordinary lives. Exactly.

It's about allowing the transformative power of the gospel to seep into every aspect of our existence, you know, our relationships, our work, our communities, even the way we interact with the natural world. That actually brings up an interesting point. We talked earlier about how John presents Jesus as the one who's restoring paradise, bringing new life to this broken world.

Right. Does that suggest that maybe our role as agents of new creation extends to caring for the planet as well? You know, that's a question that a lot of theologians and biblical scholars are grappling with today. While John doesn't explicitly address environmental stewardship, right?

I think his emphasis on the interconnectedness of all creation and our role in participating in its renewal certainly lends itself to that interpretation. It's like John is challenging us to kind of see the world through this lens of new creation to recognize that everything is connected. Yeah. And that our actions have these ripple effects. Yeah.

that extend far beyond ourselves. Oh, and I think that's a powerful message for us today. You know, as we face these growing challenges of climate change and environmental degradation, yeah.

If we truly believe that Jesus is renewing all things, then, you know, our responsibility to care for the planet becomes an integral part of our calling as his followers. This deep dive has really been such a thought-provoking exploration of the connections between Genesis and Dr. Turner's lecture really opened my eyes to the depth and richness of these ancient texts and how they continue to speak to our lives in these really profound ways. It's a reminder that the Bible isn't just this collection of, you know, stories and teachings from a bygone era.

It's a living word that speaks to the deepest longings of our hearts and offers us hope and guidance for navigating the complexities of life in the 21st century. As we wrap up this episode, I want to leave you with a final thought to ponder. We've talked a lot about our role as agents of new creation.

Right. But what if instead of simply trying to bring about new creation through our own efforts, you know, we focused on just being receptive to the ways in which God is already at work, bringing renewal and transformation into our lives and our world? What if our role is less about doing and more about being, about allowing ourselves to be shaped and molded by the creative power of the word? That's a beautiful and challenging invitation.

And I think it's one that really lies at the heart of John's gospel. You know, it's not about us striving to earn God's favor or prove our worthiness. It's about surrendering to his love, allowing ourselves to be swept up in that grand narrative of redemption that he's writing

through history, and trusting that he'll use us in all our imperfections to bring about his purposes in the world.

Thank you for joining us for this deep dive into Genesis 1 and John 1 and the connections that we find there. We encourage you to continue exploring these texts and see what else you discover about yourself, about God, and about the world around you.