

Dr. David L. Turner, John, Session 22, Life Eschatologized: The Future in John 6-Min. Video Overview

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All right, let's dive into something that might just change the way you think about the future, especially when it comes to the Bible. We're going to tackle a fascinating puzzle from the Gospel of John. You know, when most of us hear the end times, our minds immediately jump to some pretty dramatic apocalyptic scenes, right? We think of stuff like Albrecht Dürer's famous woodcut of the four horsemen, you know, chaos, judgment, this huge epic event way off in the distant future.

That's the picture most of us have in our heads. But here's the thing: the Gospel of John paints a totally different, and let's be honest, kind of confusing picture. It makes you ask this wild question.

What if the future isn't just something we're waiting for? What if, in a really important way, it's already here? To really get what John's doing, we have to start with the central problem. It seems like his writings are saying two completely opposite things about when all this end times stuff actually happens. And this is where the puzzle really takes shape.

See, on one hand, John says things that make it sound like the future is now. He says believers already have eternal life, that Satan has already been judged. But then, in the same breath, he talks about the future being, well, later.

He says Jesus will come again and there will be a final resurrection. So what is it? Is it now or is it later? For a long time, this apparent contradiction pushed scholars into one of two camps. The first group basically said it's all now.

This view is called realized eschatology. Thinkers like C.H. Dodd argued that all those future promises have already been fulfilled just in a spiritual, mystical kind of way. For them, the future is completely 100% present.

And then you have the second camp, which took the total opposite view. Futuristic eschatology. These scholars, focusing heavily on books like Revelation, claim that pretty much everything is still in the future.

The real action hasn't even started yet. It's all still to come. So you've got these two opposing ideas.

One says it's all now. The other says it's all later. So who's right? Well, what's fascinating is that most scholars today have landed on a more elegant answer.

They say the truth is, it's both. And this leads us to the solution, a brilliant concept often called the already and the not yet. Seriously, this idea is the key that unlocks John's entire way of thinking about the world.

Now, the fancy technical term for this is inaugurated eschatology. I know it's a mouthful, but let's just break it down. Inaugurated simply means launched or kicked off.

The idea is that Jesus' first coming didn't just point to the future kingdom. It actually started it. The end has already begun, even though it's not yet finished.

And this is probably the best analogy you'll ever hear for it. Think about D-Day in World War II. The invasion of Normandy was the decisive battle, the turning point.

Once the Allies established that beachhead, the final outcome of the war was basically guaranteed. The victory was already secured. But, and this is key, the war was not yet over.

There were still many hard battles to fight before V-E Day. That tension, that's exactly what John is talking about. This is the absolute key right here.

John's perspective holds both of these truths together. God's kingdom has broken into our present reality, but its full, final completion is still something we look forward to. It's both here, and it's on its way.

So, once you have this already-not-yet key in your hand, you start to see how it unlocks all these other massive themes all throughout John's gospel. In fact, Jesus says it himself, twice, using this paradoxical phrase that should just stop you in your tracks. The hour is coming, and now is.

That's not a typo. It's the perfect, most concise summary of inaugurated eschatology. He's pointing to a future reality that is, at the same time, bursting into the present moment.

So how does this actually work? Well, take worship. When Jesus is talking to the woman at the well, he uses this exact phrase. He's telling her that the future age of true worship, one that isn't tied to a specific building or a particular mountain, has already started.

Why? Because he is here. And it's the same thing with resurrection. When he's talking to Martha, who's grieving her brother, she says she knows he'll rise again in the future, on the last day.

But Jesus pushes back and says, I am the resurrection and the life. He's saying that for those who believe, they've already passed from spiritual death to life. This present spiritual reality is the down payment, the guarantee of the physical resurrection to come.

Okay, so this is all really fascinating. But what's the big takeaway? Why does this even matter for how we live our lives right here, right now? Well, this brings us to what is maybe the most powerful point of all. You see, John's goal isn't to make the future seem less important.

It's actually the exact opposite. He is, and get this, he is eschatologizing the present. What that means is he's pumping our everyday normal lives full of the power, the reality, and the ultimate significance of the future.

The future is invading the now. So what is this abundant life, as Jesus calls it, actually look like? Well, it's a life that's defined by authentic worship. Not just on a Sunday morning, but anywhere, anytime.

It's a life marked by sacrificial love, joyful obedience, and this incredible missional unity with other people. These aren't just things to hope for one day. They're a foretaste of the future kingdom that we can experience right now.

At the end of the day, this perspective changes everything. The future isn't some totally new thing that's going to drop out of the sky one day. No, it's the complete and total unfolding of the victory that Jesus has already accomplished.

The decisive battle has been won. Now we get to live in the light of that victory as its glories are revealed. So the final question really is for you.

If the power and reality of God's future have already broken into our present world, if that final victory is already secured, how does that change how you live your life today, tomorrow, and the day after that?