

The Gospel of John

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Date: 08 November 2015

Preacher: Harvey Guest

[0 : 00] Thank you. I always like you when Alexandra introduces me in this venue because she never says stuff like that to me otherwise. That's a topic for another day.

This talk is about the Gospel of John, just to get right down to it. I want to have a good time for a conversation today, so I've got a lot of material.

I'm going to keep looking over my left shoulder at the time up here just to make sure we have things right for, again, lots of conversation. I've learned much over the years, not enough much, I'm sure, from names that you'll be familiar with.

Some of you at least. Leon Morris has written about the Gospel of John, an earlier generation scholar. Leslie Newbigin, one of my favorites on the Gospel of John.

William Temple, a great Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote a commentary on John's Gospel.

Raymond Brown, a great Catholic scholar, has written massive volumes on John.

[1 : 05] I took a course years and years and years ago with Michael Green on this Gospel, which I loved very much and profited from it very much. But most, I must say, most of all, very much most, I have learned about the Gospel of John from Richard Baucom in volumes like this.

The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple, Narrative History and Theology in the Gospel of John.

Gospel of Glory, major themes in Johannine theology. Mr. Baucom is a world-class expert on the Gospel of John.

I've talked about him in this venue previously. St. Andrew is now at Cambridge. World-class scholar for sure. A man of God. He loves the Gospel.

He loves the one he writes about in such an amazing way. At least so I find it. The outline, again, getting right down to it, as is up here in front of us, the outline will go look at the prologue, which is a prologue about glory.

It extends beyond the prologue, as we'll talk this morning. And then there's going to be a bit about the author, which again will help to unfold the whole Gospel as well.

[2 : 26] I've got to hear an author. Please stand up. Mr. Baucom's written extensively about the authorship of John's Gospel. For those of you who are going to fall asleep during the talk, remember, before you nod off, up here I've noted something which is relevant to the Gospel of John.

The words, I love the girl whose number is 545. I love the girl whose number is 545. So if you wake up at the end of the talk, please do, and you'll have the mystery of these weird words explained to you.

It's no big deal. But I found them intriguing. I love the girl whose number is 545. That's not a phone number, in case you're a phone number.

Not at all. I love the girl whose number is 545. Mr. Baucom, again, quotes Calvin with approval as we get underway here. The great reformer said, I am accustomed to say, says Calvin, this Gospel, he refers to the Gospel of John, is a key to open the door to the understanding of the others.

Calvin continues, So there's an encouragement from Calvin to read, to know John's Gospel for itself, and also perhaps as a gateway into the others.

[4 : 07] It is a great text. As Augustine talks about reading scriptures, it's like looking at the face of God. So before we do that, let's pray.

Our Father, as we look today at your word, may the Spirit of Christ form Christ in us, so that we may know and love forever, our manifested Redeemer.

Amen. One way to read, to ponder, to soak yourself in the prologue to John's Gospel, I'm going to keep moving right along here today, one way to do that is to see it as a commentary on the Old Testament, really.

And again, much of what I say here today, perhaps all of what I say here today, I realize you know. So we're going over good, well-known ground, but it's such profound ground, you can't look at it too often.

The prologue to John's Gospel may be seen as a commentary on the Old Testament. Here for sure are, in the famous phrase, Greek words with Hebrew meanings.

[5 : 25] That's a great phrase to know. The New Testament is often that, Greek words with Hebrew meanings. In the beginning, says John, famously as his Gospel begins, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

You know it so well. Yes. John's words here, repeating literally the opening of Genesis, in the beginning.

That's how Genesis opens. To understand the prologue's opening five verses, early Genesis is necessary, and again, quite obvious.

You know how this works. And God said, says Genesis. Yes. Words initiate. They commence everything, according to Genesis.

And God said. So the Gospel of John says, in the beginning was the Word. Yes, God said, in the beginning was Word. And then Genesis themes are woven, aren't they, into the prologue.

[6 : 31] Life, light, darkness, great, elemental words of reality. He rehearses here. But of course, this is the staggering thing, that John's Gospel, puts in front of you, right off the bat, if you will.

Genesis, is being retold. Who would dare to do that, really? But John's Gospel, does that. Genesis, is being retold, strangely, and dramatically.

It is being retold. The Gospel of John says, again, right off the bat, a new beginning has happened in the world.

A new beginning has happened to the world. And here follows, the Gospel of John is this, a witness to this mystery.

I want to tell you about a man I have known, we have known, this Gospel says, and he is the beginning of the world, over again.

[7 : 45] That's what the prologue says. Here is a non-analysis, non-analogist, use a little fancy language here, mystery.

Jesus is non-analogist. There is nothing else like him. A sheerly transcendent he is.

This one we have known, I have known, the writer of this Gospel says. This man, this mystery that we have met, he defines himself.

We can even say that he initiates any kind of witness to himself. That is why the church has a high doctrine of Scripture. And if you move away from that, you're moving away from the Gospel.

God has sent the infinitely unique mystery of his Son into the world, and he has given to us a unique and mysterious divine witness to him in Holy Scripture.

[8 : 50] Yes. To understand then the last five verses of the prologue, prologue, we simply must remember the story of Moses on Mount Sinai.

John says about Jesus famously, we have seen his glory. You recall the prologue. We have seen his glory, he says.

Glory as of the only Son from the Father. Famous words, we all know them from the prologue.

Maybe we know them too well. In Exodus chapter 33, and this undoubtedly is what the author of John's Gospel is thinking of, Moses says to the God he is meeting, show me your glory.

Show me your glory, I pray, says Moses on Sinai. But Moses at most famously sees a passing glimpse of this glory.

He is hidden by God in mercy. He cannot see God and live. No. The Old Testament constantly rehearses this. You can't see God and live.

[10 : 07] Crucially, Moses hears God's name, but God, he does not see. And John's witness says this quite clearly.

No one, he says as the prologue nears its end, no one has ever seen God. No. Again, he's thinking of Moses.

On Selma, he's saying, Moses almost saw him. But he didn't. No one has ever seen God. The only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

The prologue is retelling the story of the Old Testament. This one, again, has become flesh, the prologue says.

All a very seeable flesh. Very seeable. Jesus became our very self. I can see you today.

[11:07] You can see me. Jesus was God seeable, if you will. He became our very self. Yes, John says it in the prologue.

We have seen his glory. Moses did not see his glory. But we, the witnesses to Jesus, we have seen his glory.

Yes. It's worth a moment here, of course, I think we can say, of course, just to try and define this word, glory, just a bit.

What is glory? It is a difficult word. It's a common word. I noticed this morning, during the liturgy, how often the word glory shows up. John's gospel is, in a sense, all about glory.

It's Hebrew root, if you like this kind of thing. Maybe here, it is a bit helpful. It's Hebrew root, is, to be heavy. That's what glory is.

[12:09] You know this. I can't help but remember that C.S. Lewis' famous sermon, maybe the most famous sermon written in modernity, one of the great sermons ever in Christian history, is called, The Weight of Glory.

That is perfect. Lewis captures there exactly what glory is. Glory is weight. Glory means, therefore, it means importance.

Glory means wealth. Glory means honor. It means power. It means prestige. Glory means reputation.

Glory means visible splendor. Glory means a lot. All of these things, we don't like to admit it, but we'd all like to have all of that list.

The weight of glory. That last one, visible splendor, seems to me so important. It leaves, the last one is, it reminds the Bible reader, I would think, of the transfiguration story.

[13:25] Is it not interesting, just sometimes I'll drop little fragments here, because no one quite knows what to make of them, although there's a lot of speculation about John's gospel and these kind of issues.

It's very interesting to note that John's gospel does not include the transfiguration story. Some people said John wrote it, the whole gospel, as a transfiguration story.

Here you see the glory. There, there at the transfiguration, of visible splendor erupts in the presence of the inner circle, Peter, James, John.

Visible splendor. And the word glory, it shifts around, strangely, as a Greek verb. It comes to mean to think, to believe, to suppose, to have opinions.

That which is manifest as opposed to that which is its essence behind it. But again, won't go into that now. Glory is a persistent theme in the Old Testament, as you know.

[14:27] Richard Baucom summarizes thus. A bit of a lengthy quote, but I think it's worth hearing. From the very, from the first appearance of the glory of the Lord, writes Mr. Baucom, the glory of the Lord in the wilderness after the Exodus, until Ezekiel sees it depart from the temple before its destruction by the Babylonians, the glory of the Lord is conceived, he says, as a fiery radiance that can be seen only in a veiled form, hidden within a cloud.

He continues, only when the glory returns to the new temple in Ezekiel's vision and lights up the new Jerusalem with glory visible to all people, will the glory appear without the cloud.

Thus, he says, in Israel's history, God is revealed only in hiddenness. That's a nice thing to say. I think it's true.

What is revealed is both the holy otherness of the God who is a consuming fire and the gracious presence of God in the midst of his people dwelling among them.

So writes Mr. Bauckham, summarizing the theme of glory in the Old Testament. I like that very much. Again, John's great and deeply layered prologue unfolds the Old Testament.

[16:05] image. In Hebrew, Exodus 34, verse 6, reads like this. The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

What a description of God. Abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. John's pregnant phrase I can show you after the scholarly literature which establishes this apparently without dispute.

John's pregnant phrase full of grace and truth you'll recall from the prologue describing Jesus.

John's pregnant phrase full of grace and truth is a precise Greek equivalent of the phrase abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Yes. The prologue to John's gospel takes up the great themes of the Old Testament and relates them all to the mystery of Jesus.

Here are indeed Greek words with Hebrew meanings for sure. John then this moves on from the prologue but you'll see the great themes continue here.

[17 : 35] John then famously unfolds his as you recall from your study of the gospel of John as individuals and perhaps in Bible studies John then unfolds his famous seven signs in his gospel as mighty works which mighty works reveal Jesus to Israel.

Isn't it it's typical of John's gospel that the seven signs seven here appears to represent all of the ministry of Jesus.

John has a way of doing this. In the synoptic gospels we have acts of healing of feeding of exorcisms there are no exorcisms in John's gospel.

Works of warning judgment works like the cursing of the fig tree and others again are in the synoptics. Just for a bit of background remember the seven mighty works in John's gospel are water into wine at Cana isn't that a lovely story just to rehearse these I find is a blessing chapter 2 the healing of the official's son in chapter 4 the healing of the layman in chapter 5 the feeding of 5,000 in chapter 6 healing the blind man in chapter 9 the raising of Lazarus in chapter 11 and as Mr. Bauckham counts them there's some ambiguity about how to count the seven he counts the resurrection of Jesus as the seventh mighty sign apparently the walking on water story in John's gospel and the famous catch of fish at 21 in John's theological imagination at least in literary terms he does not count amongst the seven mighty signs there they are seven means in John always fullness or completeness John loves numbers in his gospel apparently then at chapter 12 after the signs or most of the signs are related there is a summary passage at verse 37 though he had done so many signs before them they still did not believe in him then the gospel the writer of this gospel invokes

[20 : 16] Isaiah Lord who has believed what he has heard from us and then ominously he has blinded their eyes says says Isaiah is it the glory that blinds the eyes of Israel here Isaiah said these things says the prophet or says John Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory he saw his glory and spoke of him John never forgets the theme of glory in his gospel these are like brackets in the first half of his gospel again he quotes the prophet he had said these things in anticipation of the coming of Israel's great Messiah because the prophet had seen his glory and spoke of him glory dominates the prologue the works of Jesus are understood as glory and then he summarizes as Isaiah saw his glory it's interesting just to slow down

Mr. Baucom's very good at this and here I'm summarizing him there is a simple Johannine logic it isn't left in the realm of vague rhetoric there is a Johannine logic that simply goes like this Jesus is God visible in flesh so the prologue clearly says the signs he works this glory revealed likewise are very visible signs therefore God's glory is here in Jesus made visible that's what John is saying in seeing these signs Israel saw God's glory that's the logic God's glory is made visible the signs according to John's presentation of the mystery of

Jesus the signs are marvels compelling divine recognition but further again we're racing through this I know but looking at the whole gospel Isaiah saw famously as we all know a suffering servant a servant rejected humiliated suffering so that he was mutilated beyond human recognition and yet and yet at the same time in Isaiah's words he is one exalted and glorified exceedingly Isaiah 52 13 explicitly says that this one that Israel expects will be exalted and glorified exceedingly John unfolds Israel's true glory in her true identity that is in her

Messiah Jesus there it is of course there's a bit of a danger in this perhaps a mere juggling with paradox a humiliated one who becomes glorious we've got to be careful about again mere juggling with terms Mr.

Bauckham writes the paradox of the cross which is honor in humiliation visible splendor in disfigurement and death exists to make us reckon with a love that is sufficient to resolve the paradox close quote racing here I know through big themes very quickly but I think you get the picture there the great prophet Isaiah saw one humiliated but who enters into glory John does exactly that with his portrayal of Jesus in his gospel but there is again a logic to it it is love that takes on humiliation so that it may become glory it's it's not an accident

[24 : 59] I didn't think of saying this time for it's no accident for instance as you read John's gospel there's no last supper in John's gospel so what the author does is he takes the foot washing story and says if you ponder Jesus washing his disciples feet you'll understand his death you'll understand his resurrection you'll understand what he meant by giving out the bread and the wine Mr.

Bauckham I cannot repeat this argument I'm not up to it Mr. Bauckham thinks and I think successfully he can prove that the first readers of John's gospel knew Mark's gospels precisely not maybe not Matthew and Luke but he's almost certain he can prove they knew Mark John's gospel is presented as incomplete in places explicitly it's as if the author is saying you know things about Jesus don't you well I'm telling you another another vision of him it's a very sophisticated document John's gospel for sure so there is the prologue and its theme of visible glory and a very brief look very very very brief look at its unfolding throughout the gospel or at least throughout part of the gospel the prologue opens out into a story of glory in mighty works and how they're understood in the

Old Testament as anticipating the mystery of Jesus prologue glory done 932 sorry shouldn't shouldn't look and think aloud there is a there is a strong this is a bit less less weighty I can paradoxically use that word again there's a strong and usually unconscious belief a belief which is extremely reasonable reasonable enough that the people nearest to Jesus nearest to Jesus of Nazareth were among the famous twelve very common sense thing to believe especially and this is more reasonable for sure that people like Peter James and John the famous inner circle were the Lord's best friends they seem to be portrayed that way especially in the synoptics

Mr. Bauckham believes that this is probably wrong and the story of the authorship of John's gospel he believes is woven into this gospel and speaks Mr.

Bauckham and the gospel that he's writing about speaks to this issue fascinatingly if that's good grammar the author Mr. Bauckham believes has placed himself in the gospel so as to highlight the purpose of this witness to Jesus which is John's gospel there it is this Mr.

[28 : 24] Bauckham believes let me hasten to add that this author was indeed the one closest to Jesus in the days of his flesh as we say Mr.

Bauckham believes that for sure we're reading the witness in John's gospel of the man who probably knew Jesus as good as he was knowable in the days of his flesh so to this end let me just run through a few passages it's good to hear the voice of the gospel itself here so bear with me but I think it's interesting those of you who love John's gospel I hope will enjoy this if need be we might think of what follows here as a kind of thought experiment maybe for some like a kind of a political platform here's a thesis here's a set of ideas what do you think of this you know we've heard a lot of them recently at chapter 21 right at the end of John's gospel verse 20 we hear the Lord tells Peter how he's going to die famously and Peter turned Peter turned there's a quote from John's gospel Peter turned and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them the one who had been reclining at table close to him and had said Lord who is it that is going to betray you which as you know is a reference back to chapter 13 verse 23 one of his disciples whom Jesus loved was reclining at table close to Jesus and then so at the end of the gospel Peter wants to know how he this beloved disciple is going to die Peter was a curious guy and Peter famously was rebuked by Jesus what is that to you wonder how Jesus said that I'd like to have an actor do that at Pacific theater and oh there'd be so many different voice intonations that you could do Peter what's that to you or Peter shut up you're always too curious get on with the job

I'm giving you after Mary Magdalene finds the tomb empty she runs to Simon Peter and the other disciple the gospel says at chapter 20 the one whom Jesus loved yes how close this disciple is to Jesus while on the cross we continue our race through the gospel here while on the cross at chapter 19 verse 26 we hear this when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby and we all know the famous story how moving it is the crucified one gives each of these to the other from that hour says the gospel the disciple took her Mary to his home this beloved disciple is so close to Jesus that Jesus entrusts his mother to him can you imagine this one then this one sees a

Roman soldier thrust the spear into Jesus and then we hear at 19:35 he who saw it has borne witness amazing stuff at the time just after the Lord's arrest at chapter 18 verse 15 Simon Peter followed Jesus and so did another disciple says this gospel so did another disciple a disciple we are told known to the high priest imagine that and he gains entrance for Peter into the court of the high priest anonymous guy in the gospel always doing things and finally racing back through the gospel if you've noticed we're going backwards here for the most part finally at the opening of John's gospel Andrew you'll recall followed Jesus to the place where he

[32 : 47] Jesus was staying accompanied it's very subtly stated here in John's gospel but close close hyper close readers like Mr.

Bauckham notice these things he's accompanied by an unnamed disciple he's not named in the text it was about we hear in this text it was about the tenth hour says the gospel witness that's that's remarkable about the tenth hour whoever was there is saying I was there I was there it's about ten what are we to make of again here's one of these little fragments so I don't know what to make of it myself I don't know if Mr.

Bauckham really knows what to make of it what are we to make of the fact that in John's gospel the twelve appear for the first time at about chapter six verse sixty seven without explanation with no account of their appointment as a group the synoptics you know they get appointed the twelve they're always a different bunch Tom right likes to point out the list never agree because the twelve miss is important who composed the twelve isn't that important names are always interesting to note in the gospels Mr.

Bauckham is a world class expert on names in the gospels for instance just one example again this is a little fragment but interesting things to think about and especially in the context of Mark's gospel of studying it with some care these famously you know we hear of the violence in Gethsemane one who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear so witnesses Mark anonymous actors both one who stood by struck the servant of the high priest not so in John in John we hear then Simon Peter having a sword drew it and struck the high priest servant and cut off his ear and then John says are you interested the servant's name was Malchus I'll tell you his name if you want to hear it

Mark doesn't tell you his names the names John does why why why why why you can talk about that after I've got there's one theory but later summarizing here as we move right along lots of time for conversation lovers of the gospels love to discuss these things this anonymous disciple then in John remember now he sees the witness right at the beginning of the gospel he sees the witness of John the Baptist he was there and sort of he's at the transition from the Baptist over to the ministry of Jesus he is next to Jesus at the final supper of his life he stands this anonymous one at the foot of the cross he receives Mary into his home he sees the sword thrust which confirms the death of [36 : 21] Jesus the anonymous one he races with Peter to the tomb and he believes famously before Peter remember he saw and believed he saw and believed he saw and believed he's very close to Jesus he seems that he has insight and finally there's one more place where he mysteriously shows up in this gospel you recall right at the last chapter of this gospel as Jesus prepares breakfast on the seashore it is this disciple who first recognizes the stranger on the shore who famously said try the other side of the boat guys and he calls to them remember and this one says it is the Lord he sees him at a distance he recognizes Jesus at a distance this guy he is reasonable to believe that the author of

John right at the end there's some kind of editing that goes on at the end of John we have seen that there's a witness to his witness there's an editor there it is reasonable to believe that the author of John or the editor that the editors who did a little bit of work at its end they know surely who this disciple is that's always anonymous throughout the whole gospel they know who he is it's very reasonable to believe that it's also extremely reasonable to believe that the first readers of this gospel knew who it was the first hearers of this gospel they know who this guy is why is he anonymous in the text mr.

balken believes remember this hear this as a thought experiment if you want mr. balken believes this is a literary device it is meant to draw in later people like us attentive readers into the gospel here is mr.

balken believes the author of this gospel is saying this actually saying it about himself here is an ideal witness of the life of Jesus again he was there when Andrew went to see where Jesus was staying it was about the tenth hour mr.

balken literally that's the beloved disciple saying I was there yeah he was there on the lake and said to Peter it is the Lord here is the one again at the beginning and at the end of the mystery of the story of Jesus he's there he's just there he is indeed presented in his gospel as one possessing this is a quote from mr.

[39 : 22] Bauckham he's presented as possessing priority in spiritual recognition that's how he's presented he is spoken of at the gospel's end in very interesting terms again Peter having heard of the nature of his death desires to know about this unnamed disciple unnamed in the text and again I'm repeating myself Jesus says what is it what is that to you Peter what if then but this is the interesting thing if you recall the end of John's gospel Jesus says what if what if it is my will if he

remains until i come and famously this was a saying misunderstood by some to mean that the lord would return before his death it's very interesting the way these these themes present themselves in john's gospel the early christians you know did wonder for a short while i don't probably without too much anxiety but the early christians did wonder about the passing of the apostolic generation there was a concern in the very earliest church for well what's going to happen when the guys who knew jesus personally when they all die off want proof of that you find it clearly in second peter since i know that the putting off of my body will be soon to peter 1 14 and 15 says i will make every effort so that after my departure you may at any time recall these things there's a concern in the early church witnessed to in the new testament about what are we going to do when the eyewitnesses apparently are all gone because they're dying off there's a concern there this ideal witness leaves behind an ideal witness witness this person witness leaves behind an ideal written witness a graph a and his death is not recorded at the end of the gospel it's almost as if in a literary device saying very subtly he lives on you see in his witness the scriptures are as good as a living voice for us the underlying theological subtlety of the writer here yes he seems to remain anonymous to the end it would be quite strange if he was suddenly named why would you name him now john and james sons of zebedee are named at 21 verse 2 that's their first appearance in john's gospel there seems to be space between john zebedee and this guy this beloved disciple and there's lots of witness outside the new testament the first and second century that creates space between the two of them but that's a big topic richard bockham believes that this beloved disciple to tell you what he finally believes he believes that this beloved disciple is a john the elder known in the church at ephesus very well the one closest to jesus in his earthly ministry that's who he believes he is not john zebedee if it could be when mr bockham gets to heaven and he finds out john zebedee comes over and says i wrote that he's not going to faint but he

thinks john zebedee is going to come over and said you were a good reader of that gospel because i didn't write it it was john the elder who knew he was with us always it was a jerusalem based fellow he thinks there is a witness in the early church which mr bockham believes is not true but that this guy had been a priest and he wore part of the priestly garb all of his life imagine if the writer of john's gospel had been a priest in the temple who had heard about the messiah and had believed he does have access to the he gets peter right into the court he seems to always be southern based this guy seems to be a man he's confident enough in his position that he'll stand at the foot of the cross he wasn't afraid you get the impression from the synoptics that in gethsemane john zebedee and the others just took off in terror this guy has standing he stands but there you go this is my way of indicating that john's gospel really is just and i speak to the choir is simply a most profound piece of writing it is it is if you will a profound and deep surface you can read this right off its surface and and learn much most of john's readers would have just been blessed deeply but it invites it allows a search for other readings other layers are there uh pompey was uh famously uh destroyed mount vesuvius and our archaeologists and so much work restoring it found wonders there haven't they they found a lot of just everyday graffiti written on walls for instance things stupid things like i love the girl whose number is 545 not everybody in the ancient world was a poet you can tell i love the but apparently what you say in the ancient world antiquity that was just common sense way of talking it's graffiti it's common talk from regular folks i love the girl whose number is 545 again numerology was common in the ancient world john's prologue mr balkham believes this you don't have to i don't know if i believe it but there's scholarly stuff in this volume that'll turn your head it's so complicated numerology common john's prologue and the ending of this gospel especially things like a fish number like they caught 153 fish he believes are almost certainly examples of numerology this kind of composition probably the very number of syllables in the prologue there's a number mr balkham believes that has meaning that this this is a textured amazingly subtle piece of writing john's first readers john's first hearers again almost certainly know mr balkham believes mark's gospel it's interesting he makes a lot out of this john's gospel is explicitly incomplete he tells you at different points in the text there's stuff outside the text that you know but i'm not telling you he does this it's explicitly incomplete he acknowledges that is to say other sources for stuff about jesus it is other and different

from the synoptics but not in any way contradictory at least they're totally consistent mr balkham does all christians would instinctively believe this believe that i must add a lot of time for conversation this gospel i find this just a very good thing to remember what i like about a good scholar is i think that good scholar isn't afraid to say the obvious or what may be the obvious and

you say oh that's so interesting just to remember for instance mr balkham believes that this gospel must have been composed over many years that's that's that's an obvious kind of thing yeah oh maybe john zipped it off on a long weekend well some people might believe that sermon notes and he threw it together seven songs there's an idea i must remember how many fish they caught better come up with a prologue they like philosophy in the mediterranean world in the beginning was the word that's neat no no this was he preached taught pondered thought maybe use some numerology to so that the structure of the gospel will help the most discerning best readers discern its meaning and so he does this amazing work there's nothing casual here again he believes that the author was not one of the twelve on evidence both internal to the gospel and external he was a personal disciple of jesus he believes that perhaps here is the voice of the man who was closest to jesus of nazareth this is a man who knew jesus as well as anybody he was his closest person closest personal closest personal friend he died at ephesus there is a witness witnesses to these things and apparently he lived longer than most of the closest followers of jesus he lived to be an old man and people who knew him there said there's the man the last man alive maybe who knew jesus of nazareth and so he wrote weaving themes about the end into it so that you would have a picture in subtle literary terms of the ideal witness to jesus the church has always had this instinctive knowledge that the john's gospel was often called in the early church the spiritual gospel there's something there are themes constant themes taken from the synoptics which are then in narrative form commented on by john so you have jesus feeding the five thousand in the desert as in the synoptics but in john it becomes this meditation on i am the bread of life jesus talked to his disciples privately sometimes in such terms whereas in the synoptics it's the more like the the facts but in john it becomes spiritual meditation maybe so so much in john that is just just amazing it's it's part of the subtlety of the spirit it seems to me that he would give us matthew's distinctiveness mark and his distinctiveness luke and his very distinctive style and then this utterly strange and yet deeply integrated into the synoptic tradition but so different at the same time the spirit is it's proverbs subtle is the lord it's wow john's gospel in an hour there you go john's not john's gospel for dummies that would only apply to me there it is isn't john wonderful but mr bockham brings me back again to under to a deep appreciation again he's got a he's got a i think a major commentary in the works on john i just can't wait for wait for that to happen but it's just before 10 i think allow me to say a prayer again and then we must we must converse about this this great divine document lord thank you for the gospels and for the for holy scripture may we always read them in humility with teachable hearts may they accomplish in us that for which you sent them and we ask this in the name of the word made flesh for us jesus amen there you have it please allow i think form criticism is a big deal and new testament criticism allow them to form in your mind yes jane i'm just wondering what this gentleman would say about the author of revelation revelation he takes a very he thinks it's the same author three epistles the last book and john and the gospels i understand it but i stand corrected on that but i think there's obviously a deep family resemblance between gospel three epistles and the apocalypse the use of the number seven is just rife in the last book of the bible and it's very prominent in the gospel too isn't it so he likes this what do you make of that i find it it's supposed to set up resonances in the mind in the heart that works over the course of your entire life yeah my favorite number thing in the bible is one and two peter actually i don't know i've always found someone i must have heard in a sermon or in a book somewhere one peter talks about noah eight people came out of the ark it's two peter another casual mention of eight people came out of the ark why is a guy giving me a bible quiz here how many people came out of the ark get a sucker if you pass no he's saying that it's it's it's it's god created a new world and there's only seven days in the creation story so the eighth day is an impossible day but god's going to create an impossible day and a new world so the number eight starts to resonate in the imagination and the heart so seven in john are just perfection perfection the early church i think chose seven paul wrote church named churches that paul wrote to seven of them are chosen that they represent the perfection of paul's witness to the churches i think i think oh colleen and babble you guys supposed to be asking questions i'm wondering about the timing of when this gospel may have been written because i've heard all kinds of opinions on that what does this brockman think about i've been to patmos and they have this special church on the cougar island and this is where he wrote this and revelation this is the point yeah yeah what's what's what's what's yeah well i would just um um um i don't know the whole story but i'll go but uh here the internal evidence he would point to begin with is that last thing that last bit of the gospel see is raising the issue of what

about the the people closest to jesus dying off because jesus talks about death peter you're going to die this way and he wants what about john so the issue of the passing of the of the apostles is raised so he thinks that would be an indication that it's late because it's dealing with that minor anxiety and he does take very seriously um uh pro uh the the theme of some new testament scholars like gert the thyssen famously in germany and others very mainstream prestigious scholars who take very seriously the idea of protective anonymity that is to say mark is early this is crude but i think this is the way it goes mark is early and therefore it might be dangerous to mention that it was peter who cut off the high priest here let's not go with names there let's be quiet protect through anonymity by john's time it was peter chop and we even remember it was that guy man well maybe malchus had become a christian the one year or the guy with one ear briefly and then got it healed so it's safe to mention that indicates later so john's gospel is usually put out about 90 100 sometimes i think it may be earlier though some people put it much earlier i think john robinson put it quite earlier so no one knows they're guessing but there's the internal evidence according to mr mr baca might look at but um why doesn't john's gospel have the lord's prayer in it why no exorcisms why no last supper no actual bread and wine thing why but the great theme of he talks a lot about the foot washing the humility of jesus the utter in the ancient world foot washing was it was for utter nobodies it was a disgusting thing to do and jesus does it john's great theme is the utter humility of our god in saving us you know that way so it's spiritually profound john's gospel like very yeah there's a lot of interesting true thing the other interesting things that he notes uh here's here's a you guys haven't got your hands up so i'm going to keep talking it's interesting that uh it's interesting that uh i've heard a thousand sermons and i i think i still think it's probably true nicodemus you know came to jesus by night because he was proud and didn't want to didn't want to be seen with this nobody phenomenon admittedly but a nobody from nazareth what bachum says not that's probably not true he thinks nicodemus probably wanted uh an extent he was a somebody and wanted extended time with the guy so he says at night give me five hours and he probably showed up with a retinue he was a real somebody there's lots of stuff about the family of nicodemus out into the first and second century they were a famous filthy rich family they [59 : 25] were like the rockefellers of the jewish community they were they were power mr bachum thinks he can trace their story so i mean there's just a different take on i had never heard that one before oh sorry oh what no there was someone over here jane who would you feel well you're so modest with your hands probably does the elder does mr bachum comment on the differences in teaching between the between the gospel and the other gospels i'm thinking for example maybe about everlasting life about the role of the holy spirit about the teaching the prayers of jesus about the place of heaven on the whole he thinks not on the whole he thinks not he thinks that john is he thinks you can overrate the difference between john and the synoptics he thinks john is very aware especially of mark and he takes themes that the themes and then and then remembers other aspects of the of the ministry of jesus and and and brings out the meaning by expand not expanding on as as in making up but remembering that the lord emphasized this kind of thing as well i'm trying to i wish i could think of an example he does give examples what will be an aphoristic moment in a synoptic becomes an extended narrative in john sometimes that's that's what he'll certainly um the one that stands out for me the most is um his um john knows that his hearers and readers know the story of the last supper so he says now if you want to know the meaning of that he says it's not absent from what you know i can imagine john but he would then tell the lord washed his disciples feet that's what the that's what the the bread and the wine and the mystery of his death and resurrection means he he comes to cleanse he humbles himself cleanses himself cleanses us and then rises up at supper and teaches again it's almost philippians 2 in narrative form would be the foot washing story so there's an example but i don't think he would ever say there's there's a contradiction there's difference but not contradiction of course he is going against the type mr bockham is a um a wonderful witness a movie speaking freely as an orthodox christian in in this kind of venue mr bockham you see is taking on biggies who don't think about john's gospel like this in any way and he is he is trying to undermine a lot of mainstream scholarship about john there's there are people you know who read john 9 um the the healing of the blind man as a story about the johannine community and getting kicked out of the synagogue and john this writer is saying oh we're like him we were kicked out but we're being healed by jesus it's all about the johannine community and it's not about jesus the real jesus jesus of history at all and he's he's trying to blow up that kind of scholarship i think fairly very successfully he can he can he can change things mr bockham he can really undermine a lot of liberal scholarship he's very good

at that i think but that's another big that's another aspect of it not a relevant right now sorry sorry sorry um this should be quick and easy uh i'm trying to put together two pieces of what you said uh that john may have been a priest in jerusalem bockham doesn't think so no or in well but he was obviously on the scene yeah he he lived in john the elder lived in jerusalem okay or lived near he got from jerusalem to ephesus yeah yeah his ministry would have taken him far flung is there any uh bridge between point a and point b not that i know not that i know okay i was just looking for a bridge yeah yeah there's no mr bockham thinks that john's gospel was written initially with the author thinks this is going to be read throughout the whole church in the mediterranean world there's an obsession with some scholars but oh no he only wrote for the johannine community and it's all about the johannine community miss box says why should we believe that and there's no answer it was just it's the scholars get sort of tunnel vision about things and it needs a guy with a first rate brain like whoops i don't believe why should we believe it he says he doesn't believe that new testament scholarship works from the ground up assured results here and now more assured results so you go back to the rich early assured results and find out that they're based upon a few guys assertions and then everybody repeats them you know don't don't get mesmerized by secondary resources there's a there's a lot of yes karen please why does bacham think that the beloved disciple was not part of the twelve the circle of twelve because he because he's not presented as such in in john that's all that's that simple which one's the beloved disciple the anonymous literary literarily referred to fellow who is authoring this gospel the first hearers and readers knew who all these people were undoubtedly whenever they're mr bacham's just an expert on names the study of names has been has really i think thrown a lot of light on on the new testament been studied very in detail great detail but i think the the um the sample size gets up around around three thousand from all jewish literature hundred years before christ out a hundred years after rough limbs speaking in very rough terms and boy the jews had few names a lot of jews named lazarus a lot named john lots named jesus but they didn't have a wide spread of names and for about 250 years in all of jewish writing not once do you find the name david not once and it's uh and this is in a community that has very few male names not once no david they think the day the name david was so associated with messianic presence that no family would apparently dare name their boy david they reverence names these people no martin martin oh so here's a question which you didn't address really oh you want more about this girl so in john's gospel whenever you hear the phrase the jews it's always in a negative context and this has caused some balken bible translators a lot unease that they translate the phrase the judaicism some of them some of them post-holocaust they choose and does balken address this kind of issue sandy what what do you say in that course about how jews would address one another and uh they'd always call one another israelites right no please do you remember i thought you did i thought you corrected me on this there's definitely a way that jews before um the hebrews in the old testament they weren't called jews right that's what dr walkie has said that they weren't calling each other in the old testament yeah yeah oh i um there are there are um he is addressing non-jews law often he's thinking about uh that's why early on he says uh jesus uh was called a rabbi oh which means teacher you don't have to say that to a jewish audience so he's he's assuming that he's talking to uh a big church on the this basis with jews and gentiles so it's in that context that he might talk about the jews i don't know but tom wright likes to point out that you often you often even get in a prophet like jeremiah sometimes reference to the jews so it might be a kind of ironic john's gospel is filled with irony it might mean sometimes the people who are supposed to know god got it totally wrong the jews i think it may have sometimes that resonance the jews are god's people when they get it wrong it's bad he came to his own john says in the prologue jesus belongs to israel i think that jesus is israel he's her true identity it's like we meet our true selves in christ and the judgment is that there's my true self in christ but i'm still over here and god says there's the judgment that gap is the judgment on me myself myself in christ is there but what am i doing here i'm supposed to be i'm supposed to be myself in christ so israel is attacking herself when she attacks jesus because he is israel he is the true israel there's the irony of john's gospel he came to his own and his own received him not this is like this is a shock to the world so it's 10 out it's getting on any other john john you're saying earlier john john was one of the twelve you're saying earlier than john's gospel doesn't mention himself as one of the twelve is that correct yeah yeah yeah all mr bockham is saying is and at one level it's common sense mark especially has a big interest in the twelve and mark in priority has dominated in terms at least in terms of new testament scholarship mark has been seen as having priority but always we tend to think especially because of michelangelo jesus

and the twelve so that's the crowd so we get mesmerized into thinking that jesus his best friends must

have been amongst the twelve and that's a reasonable thing to believe but mr bockham just says isn't it reasonable to believe that jesus had people very close to him who were not amongst the twelve and you suddenly say yes think of mary and martha and lazarus how they're presented they are presented as i get them right they're very close to jesus he's over for lunch one day i doubt it i think whenever he was in jerusalem he probably stayed with mary martha and lazarus he wept at the grave of lazarus not just because he had loved this man and he was a friend they were his maybe a family that had taken jesus in so they maybe they were close john the son just to make the case john zebedee and his brother correct me if i've got this wrong they sent their mother one day over to jesus to say any chance that my boys could be number one and two in the kingdom this is not spiritual insight john zebedee didn't maybe was uh didn't know much about jesus he was getting there but this guy is presented as he gets jesus uh deeply yeah yes i'm just i hear what you're saying and it makes some sense but i still think that jesus kind of selected the three on several occasions yeah the transfiguration the garden was peter jesus and john and peter was the key figure and jesus oh yeah to some extent you know so i kind of wonder what happened to john that if he just sort of disappears into the background well he's in the book of acts still yeah um i i like i like the idea that that jesus chose peter at least for sure because he was he was a an activist he was a leader he was a he was a businessman and he knew how to make things happen he was a go-getter john the beloved disciple or john the elder whoever wrote john's gospel is is presented as a contemplative excuse me more the contemplative more the person who looks at jesus and feels the mystery of him senses would want to think about the foot washing no synoptic writer records foot washing john does oh the humility of our lord the lowliness the absolute willingness to identify with the absolute nobodies he ponders that so deeply i think i think very by the way on foot washing foot washing is uh mr bacham i've never read about foot washing before only one other place in the new testament is there even a reference to foot washing and it's from paul in the in the in a pastor one or two it's either first timothy or second timothy and he mentions about widows who have served the church well have washed the feet of the saints that's the only other reference to foot washing in the new testament and apparently out first section first century second century third century there are various references in different places to foot washing in in um non-canonical church writings mr bacham wonders was foot washing perhaps more common both liturgically and as christian practice in the home um then we realize he wonders if foot washing was uh perhaps part of the story of early christians

because this was a shocking mr bacham likes them say this is a a shocking thing it's a shock almost as shocking it's not it's it's it's in the same the cross is shocking but the foot washing is quite shocking that the word became flesh and dwelt among us and became this lowly slave who did work which only slaves did happens so in term lord is the care of who is the same as would be as wives so