

New Testament History, Literature, and Theology
Session 17: Intro. To John, Belief, Wine and Jesus as God
By Dr. Ted Hildebrandt

A. Review of John [00:00-3:25]

Well good afternoon this is the Saturday before Easter and we're talking about the book of John and in our last session, we were going over the person of John, or the author, or the perspective of the book and we tried to show that the book of John is very Hebrew and very Jewish oriented book. It picks up feasts that nobody else lists. It even has the feast of Hanukkah, called the Feast of Lights or Dedication, listed in the book of John that nobody else picks up. The author is very topographically aware of what's going on. He mentions Bethany on the other side of Jordan and other types of things that you would expect an eyewitness to pick up. For example, he lists "this was done in the sixth hour" or "this was done in the ninth hour." He lists exact hours, which is a mark of an eyewitness and someone that's Palestinian, that's Jewish. Then we went through various things in showing his special closeness with Christ. We talked about the disciple taking the moniker, that he was "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and that moniker is his way of portraying himself. The "disciple whom Jesus loved" is a special title. We also noticed that the disciple whom Jesus loved has a close association with Peter. Peter and the disciple went fishing, we saw in chapter 20 that there was a footrace and Peter was outrun by the disciple whom Jesus loved and so this disciple was close to Peter, fishing, Galilee, and those types of things.

The author showed special intimacy with Christ at the last supper. We were talking about he seems to be sitting closer to Jesus than Peter and Peter, who's never really bashful, asks this disciple, "Which one is going to going to betray us?" So Peter goes through this disciple whom Jesus loved as an intermediary.

We notice that Peter, James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, were close in many, many contexts, including Gethsemane, at the raising of the dead girl, and at the

transfiguration. Peter, James, and John were the inner circle of three. Also while on the cross Jesus looks at his mother and says to this disciple “this is your son, this is your mother,” and this disciple then took care of Jesus’ mother. So Jesus had to have really trusted this fellow to take care of his mother. Actually, with the footrace too, the guy’s probably younger because when you’re going to ask somebody to take care of your mother, you’re going to want somebody younger and not somebody older. So that would be another argument I would think against someone like Lazarus.

B. Review of John: Authorship and the Elimination Procedure [3:25-7:14]

Peter and John had close associations, we noticed that at the transfiguration, Garden of Gethsemane, and the healing. Later in the book of Acts, too, when they heal the cripple in Acts 3, Peter and John are together, “silver or gold have I none.” In Acts 3:1 and following. They’re before the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:19. So even the book of Acts picks up Peter and John are tight and they’re together, even after all this. When Paul refers to the disciples in Galatians 2, he says “Peter, James, and John were the three pillars.” When Paul picks the big honchos in the early church, it’s Peter, James, and John. So we would expect John to write a gospel and he certainly was qualified to do that. James is out of the picture early because James, the brother of John and the son of Zebedee, is killed very early in the church. So James is out of the way early. The writer of the book of James is probably the brother of Jesus, not James, the son of Zebedee, John’s brother.

The other way you can work this too is, let me do one other thing before we do the elimination procedure, but whoever wrote this book seems to know the inside of the thinking of the disciples. In John 2:22 it says, “After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scriptures and the words that Jesus had spoken.” So here, you have this disciple whom Jesus loved recorded the switch in the disciples thinking. After he rose from the dead, then the disciples got it. So it’s kind of like they didn’t get it before, but then after he rose from the dead, then they recalled the Scripture and reflected on these things. That’s kind of an internal description

of one who was there and who actually experienced this and described the shift that happened after Jesus rose from the dead in the resurrection and how the resurrection impacted their understanding.

So you go through the book and you work with what's called the elimination procedure that Westcott developed. You'll notice that the disciples who are named in the book can't be "the disciple whom Jesus loved" because he designates himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Peter is mentioned in the book, Nathaniel is mentioned in the book, and many of these other folks are mentioned in the books. It can't be doubting Thomas, there's a whole thing we'll go through on that. Lazarus, by the way, is mentioned by name in the book. If you look for, where are the major disciples then? We've got all these major disciples listed: Thomas, Nathaniel, Peter himself, listed in the book, then who is this disciple whom Jesus loved? If you eliminate all the people who are listed in the book there is one lacunae or one absence missing in the whole book and it is John. The disciple John is listed nowhere in the book. Peter is mentioned, John is not. So you'd think that a disciple who was around Peter that much, it would say Peter, James, and John. No, this book never says that and so many of the disciples are mentioned, including Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, all these other people we know really well, Nicodemus, etc. but John is never mentioned in the book. If you eliminate the people who *are* named in the book, that leaves us with John, who is a top candidate for being the writer of the book. So we would suggest that John is the writer of the book of John through this elimination procedure and all of these other details that we've gone through.

C. Relationship Between John and 1 John: 1 Jn 3:14 and Jn 5:24 [7:14-11:16]

Now, I also want to work the evidence a little bit between 1 John and John. I teach Greek and every year we go through 1 John. I've just been astounded: why do I do 1 John with my Greek students? I do it because 1 John is what I would call easy Greek. The writer of the book of 1 John repeats himself over and over again. He uses a smaller set of vocabulary and he repeats and recycles that and he says the same thing twice. Once

he'll say it positive, once he'll say it negative, but he uses the same vocabulary so it's very easy for first year students getting their feet wet in Greek to read 1 John because of the way he formulates his sentences basically. What I've noticed is there's certain places where 1 John and John connect. And so, what I want to show is that whoever wrote John, I'm suggesting wrote 1 John and indeed in the book of Revelation, it actually mentions, "I John."

I know some people go for John the elder, whoever that is, from the early church, but the book says "John." Traditionally the book of Revelation, especially is associated with the name John, the same way Paul in his letters would identify himself, "I, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ" so the book of Revelation, which has those letters to the seven churches there, identifies himself as John. But this connection between 1 John and John is kind of interesting, I think. You see here in 1 John 3:14 it says, "We *know* that we have" and notice the word "crossed over." *Metabainw*, "cross over." *Meta* means "beside" or "with," and *bainw* means "to go." So it means "to go with" or "crossed over."

So we crossed over, we *metabainw*-ed. What's very interesting here this word *metabainw* is used in the perfect tense, which is a special tense in Greek that's pretty rare. Normally Greek uses the present tense or the aorist a huge amount of time. This perfect tense is very rare. Not really rare, but pretty rare compared to the present and the aorist.

That word itself is seldom used in the New Testament in the first place and to have the perfect form of it only occurs in two places that "we have crossed over from death to life." The "have crossed over," tells us it's the perfect tense – "from death to life because we love the brothers." John 5:24 it says, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He has crossed over." This is *metabainw* again in the perfect tense. This is the only other place where *metabainw* is used in the perfect tense in the whole New Testament. The word is rare in the New Testament anyway and this matches exactly. But notice what it says, "He has crossed over from death to life." It's exactly the same phraseology so not only do you get a rare word, *metabainw* in the perfect tense, but you also get, "over from death to life" and this is the only place in the New Testament where *metabainw* in the perfect occurs and to have it

followed up by exactly the same phraseology from a writer who is into idioms and repeating himself.

D. Relationship between John and 1 John: Common Phrases and Revelation

[11:16-16:11]

“Truly, truly I say unto you.” Where does that come from? It comes from John. Where does John use that? *Amen, Amen legw humin*. “Truly truly I say unto you,” and you know you’re in John. When you see this life to death thing, again that’s a big idiom that John uses. There’s no other place in the New Testament that has the verb in the perfect, let alone followed by “from death to life” so that’s a good indicator that whoever’s writing these books, there’s a commonality here between these. Some people will say that’s because 1 John, or John even was written by the school of John, and so they adopted his phraseologies. That’s all conjecture, all I know is in these texts, there seems to be an exact parallel here that’s found nowhere else even close and yet these are rare and they’re found there. Again, it’s an indicator of John. The only two places where that verb is used like that.

Here’s another one. In John 16:24 it says, “Ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete.”—“that your joy being complete,” he says. 1 John 1:4 says, “We write this that our joy may be complete.” You get this “joy may be complete” parallel between 1 John 1:4 and John 16:24. The same type of phraseology keeps popping up and I could go down a list of a ton of these parallels and the use of light and darkness. The writer of John does this and the writer of 1 John uses that same contrast between light and darkness. There are these huge parallels. Another parallel that comes up is “having been born of God.” It’s found in John 3 with Nicodemus and we know that you’ve got to be born again. It’s also used in 1 John 3:9 and 1 John 5:1, so this idea of “having been born of God” occurs in John 3 and in 1 John 3 and 1 John 5. So again, that’s not normal phraseology if you look elsewhere in the New Testament, you’re not going to find that, especially, again, the word “having been born of God.” Rare, very rare and yet it occurs repeatedly in John and in 1 John. So again, he likes to repeat his phraseology and so we’d

expect to see that his letter follows from his gospel's similarities. There are many, many more of these we could go through and cite these connections between 1 John and John. These are the only places they're used, in John and 1 John. That shows, then, that there's some sort of relationship between these two books, we would suggest the same author. He writes with the same idioms and the same style

If you look over to the book of Revelation, he clearly identifies himself as the writer of John. In the book of Revelation, this word *nikaw* basically means "to overcome." So, in the book of Revelation you have a couple mentions of the letters to the churches here in chapter two, verse seven and verse 11. In chapter two of Revelation you've got this word of *nikaw*, overcome, being used. You've got the same word, and it's not a very frequent word in the New Testament, but you've got it repeated in the book of Revelation, you've got it used in 1 John 2:13 and following and you've also got in John 16:33. Again, this would link Revelation, this word *nikaw*, these overcomers with Revelation, with 1 John and with John, all three of them use this word that's not used very extensively outside the Johannine corpus, so that would link Revelation, John, and 1 John together and show Revelation's clear identification that John is the writer there.

E. John the Person: Fisherman and John's Mother [16:11-19:20]

In our record here, he's the son of Zebedee. Zebedee was a fisherman and his son, James and John, were fisherman. Jesus calls them by the Sea of Galilee. His mother basically, and this is interesting and I just picked this up this year. I kind of want to feature that a little bit. His father was Zebedee and this is said of his mother. Zebedee, the father of James and John, Zebedee really occurs nowhere in the Scripture other than that James and John were the sons of Zebedee, but the mother seems to have persisted with Jesus. Many women, this is Matthew 27:56, "Many women were there [at the cross]. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons." This woman was linked with Mary Magdalene and Mary the Mother of James and Joses, probably was Jesus' mother Mary, and that she is one of the three women listed at the

cross of Christ as coming down from Galilee. Other passages say that the women from Galilee supported Jesus in his ministry. Possibly a wealthy family from Galilee, a fishing family, the mother comes down and follows Jesus. I think this sheds a little bit of light on this instance. If you remember in Matthew 20, there's James and John's mother goes to Jesus and says, "Hey, Jesus, can my sons sit on the left and right when you come into your kingdom?" And normally that's like, "Who's this helicopter mother coming in and saying 'hey, I want my kids on your right and left when you enter the kingdom'"? But this mother, this wife of Zebedee, James and John's mother, comes in with this kind of rude and abrupt phraseology coming in, asking of Jesus and Jesus says, "Who goes on my right and left in my kingdom is prepared by my father and that's not for you to be asking." But it just shows that this woman, James and John's mother, seems to have an "in" with Jesus and it wasn't so abrupt. She felt comfortable that she could ask Jesus about her two boys and here we see her at the cross. She is one of the three last women at the cross there. So James and John's mother apparently was tight with Jesus in helping to support and make the thing go as Jesus was traveling around and had come down from Galilee. So it's interesting about James and John's mother.

F. Why 12 Apostles? [19:20-24:07]

The question comes up, "Why are there 12 apostles?" As soon as I say the number twelve, what comes to mind? Many of you have had Old Testament with me, and as soon as I say 12, you start thinking of the 12 tribes of Israel. Now you realize, and if you've been through Old Testament, that there are 12 tribes but then Joseph blessing Ephraim and Manassas, his two kids, and Jacob says "I adopt your two kids, Joseph" and Ephraim becomes one of the biggest tribes of Israel, as opposed to Judah in the south with Ephraim in the north. So there are actually 13 tribes, and then you remember the Levites don't get any inheritance with the land, they get the Levitical cities and so there's this-- still the number 12, for the 12 tribes of Israel. Moses sends out spies to spy out the land, he sends out 12 guys, one from each tribe, to spy out the land.

Joshua crosses the Jordan river and picks up 12 stones and sets up a memorial

after they cross the river, before they go to fight Jericho and the number 12 becomes pretty important. It seems like the number 12.

I'm quoting here from a friend, Dave Mathewson who is a New Testament scholar and wizard on these kinds of things. If I say the number seven to you, the number seven in Scripture is used so frequently...to be honest with you, I'm not much into numerology, that these numbers have secret meanings. I find that you've got to be careful about mysterious use of numbers. You're approaching a more "magical" way of looking at Scripture and I'm not into that at all. However, the number seven, we know, is a notion of completeness, fullness, or totality. The number 12, Dr. Mathewson suggests, is the number of the people of God. At first I was a little hesitant with that but as with all the things from Dr. Mathewson, as I think about it more, I think all of a sudden it dawns on me and I think "he's onto something here!"

The number 12 in the Old Testament and the 12 apostles. Is it particular that there are 12 of them? When Judas hangs himself, it was like Jesus picked 12 apostles but no big deal. But Judas hangs himself and so it's "Oh no, we've got eleven." That's not what happened. In Acts 1, after Judas hangs himself, they go through a big ritual to find the twelfth apostle, his name is Matthias. In Acts 1 they describe that the person had to be with Jesus from the beginning and there were certain requirements for being an apostle, "one sent," as apostle means. We realize later on that Israel had 12 but there were really the two sons of Joseph. So in the New Testament, you've got the apostle Paul in Acts 9 where the apostle Paul is called by Jesus directly. Jesus appeared to Paul directly and Paul then cites himself as being an apostle, one sent from Christ. So you get the 12 with the number thing even as you do with Israel. There are 12 tribes of Israel and there are 12 apostles.

Do you remember Jesus' statement? In Revelation 21:14, it describes the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven and it's got like 12 gates and the 12 gates represent the 12 tribes, but the foundations of the city are the 12 apostles. You've got the 12 apostles being the foundation of this new Jerusalem coming down with the gates being represented by the 12 tribes. Again, Dr. Mathewson takes the 12 gates and 12 foundations

to be representing the people of God, extensive. By the way, 144,000. 12 times 12 in the book of Revelation. Jesus also saying in Matthew 19:28 you disciples would be judging the 12 tribes of Israel. Jesus kind of sets this coordination up between his 12 disciples and that these 12 disciples will be judging these 12 tribes of Israel in Matthew 19:28. There are 12 apostles and in the book of Acts, they make sure of that.

G. Intimacy with Jesus, Sons of Thunder and Polycarp [24:07-27:33]

Special situations with Jesus, we've mentioned these before. The transfiguration with Peter, James, and John. The raising of the dead girl is with Peter, James, and John. The Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus goes to pray. Who goes the step further with Jesus? Peter, James, and John. These guys had a special intimacy with Jesus. In the book of Mark, James and John were outside and Jesus got rejected at one of these towns and James and John said to Jesus, "Jesus, do you want us to call down fire from heaven?" and they were called "the sons of Thunder." When they were called the sons of Thunder, that doesn't mean that Zebedee, their father, was named Thunder and so they called them the sons of Thunder. When you call someone the son of something in the Old Testament, it means that they have that quality. They're called the Sons of Thunder because this quality, we use that in slang terminology today, when we call someone a "son of a ..." or when we say you're a "son of a 'what,'" we're not lambasting your father, but we say you're a son of a blank, *you* have that quality. You're a son of a bleep, that means you have that quality, so we even use that today. So they were called the Sons of Thunder, so they must have been pretty fiery.

Here's an interesting thing from the early church. This guy named Polycarp actually studied under John. Polycarp was an early church father and lives, I believe to be 86 years old. John seems to have been younger with Jesus and John lives to be in the 90s, that's like 60 years after Jesus died. John was very old, I'm even talking about the late 90s, and some people suggest 95-98 A.D. One of John's disciples is named Polycarp. Polycarp, from being with John probably in the 80s and 90s basically lives into the second century and Polycarp has a disciple named Irenaeus and Irenaeus is Polycarp's

student, like Plato, Socrates' student and Aristotle being Plato's student. Irenaus writes down some of the things that Polycarp told him and some of the things he said. You've got to be careful with church history because they're not always 100%. You've got Polycarp, who goes way back, referring to the gospel by his mentor, John.

H. The Date of John and High Christology [27:33-34:48]

A lot of people see the book of John as being the latest of the gospels, talking very much later and he lives into the 90s and some suggest that he got boiled with oil and came out of the Isle of Patmos and we know that from the book of Revelation. That's kind of how they did criminals in those days, like the Alcatraz of the ancient world. A lot of writers say the book of John is the most sophisticated theologically. The word sophisticated probably isn't the right word, but let me just say "high theology." The way the book of John sees Jesus, it's not complicated like the writings of Paul. Even Peter says that Paul wrote some things he didn't understand, and that's true to this day, but with John, it's not complicated like that. It's more of a high view of Christ. John proclaims that Jesus Christ is God. When you want a Christology of Jesus Christ being God himself in the flesh, John is the place where you go for that kind of high theology.

What happens is that a lot of critics will inject and say "We think that you had this man named Jesus, a great prophet doing things like a sorcerer, and what happened is the church later on came and *made* Jesus Christ into this God figure, "so they say the theology is late then. And this reflects second century church. Again, that's really wrong. Everybody likes Jesus as the good prophet and as a souped up Mahatma Ghandi or a Martin Luther King on steroids. They like Jesus as a prophetic figure, but as soon as you say Jesus Christ is God, that's where people get bent out of shape. There's quite a bit of critique on the book of John because John is so much about Jesus Christ as God. By the way, you don't have to use John to prove that. We used Mark 1:1 when you look at some of the Old Testament passages, it refers to Yahweh and those passages that refer to Yahweh are applied to Jesus. Even in Mark 1, you get the same kind of thing and you get the same type of thing with Paul and the book of Revelation.

There's been some discussion of the late date of this. Some people push the date late of this and what's really interesting about this is what's called "P52." P52 is papyrus number 52 and that's what they found when they found these papyri in Egypt. They found all these papyri of Scripture that go way back and are earlier than our best manuscripts. Our best manuscripts will date from 400-600 A.D. or something in that ballpark. Our miniscule manuscripts that the King James is based on date from 900-16th century A.D. The uncials, which are written in all capital letters from 400-600 A.D. The papyrus go back not to 400 or 600 A.D., but they go back earlier and one of those papyrus that they've actually found dates from 125 A.D. That's within 30 years of when John wrote it. They've got a piece of John 18:31-33. Where do they find papyri? If you put papyri in Palestine, what's the problem? If you put them in Israel, there's too much moisture.

What is papyrus? Papyrus is from a plant that has fibers, they go this way and fibers that go that way, they press it and make a paper out of it. Well, what's the problem? You take that paper into Palestine and the moisture will destroy it within 200-300 years. This has got to last 2000 years. So Egypt is the only place dry enough to preserve these papyri. So they go down into Egypt and they find then this mound of papyri and it has Scripture in it and some of the texts are from the New Testament.

Now what's interesting is John is up at Ephesus in Turkey and these papyri, thirty years later, are found deep in Egypt along the Nile River. So you not only have a thirty year gap but you've got to get it from Ephesus all the way down into Egypt. This is kind of an astounding find. By the way, can you mention any other ancient text from Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, or Herodotus, any of these guys where there is a manuscript of within thirty years of when the guy lived. There is none. Scripture is unique. We've got better evidence for Scripture than any other document from the ancient world by far. It's within thirty years of when John lived we've got a piece of John here. So this is kind of amazing.

John is probably writing from Ephesus. You remember Paul on the Third Missionary Journey goes to Ephesus and spends three years in Ephesus. Then later

apparently after Paul left, John comes in and John will have a ministry at Ephesus but much later. Paul will die around 67-68 AD and John will minister there until 97-98 AD, thirty years after Paul is dead, gone and beheaded at Rome.

Here is a copy of the papyrus and you can actually see the Greek letters. Some of my Greek students will recognize this kappa, alpha, iota as the word *kai* meaning “and.” You can see how fragmentary it is largely is very brittle. It’s been there for two thousand years. If you look carefully I’m not sure whether the camera will pick it up but the fibers, you can actually see the fibers of the papyri. So then it is written on kind of like paper and broke up but you can see the writing. When you look at the writing on this you can deduce where it is from. It is from John 18. This papyri is dated by epigraphers to 125 AD and that’s generally established as right. So that is within thirty years of John. You get to see it in class. It is amazing in the world in which we live where this was buried for 2000 years, they discovered it and now you can come into a class like this I can put it up and you can see it. You don’t have to travel to the British Museum or the Louvre or someplace like that with the Internet it is amazing what we can see.

I. Purpose of the Book of John [34:48-37:02]

Now I want to shift gears here some. What I want to ask next is: what are the four purposes, four or yeah five purposes for the writing of the book of John?. So I’m going to go through this BCGGS acrostic These are the purposes for the writing. In other words, why did John write it? We’ve got an author, John, or whoever wrote it, and we’ve got an audience and so there is an interaction then between the author and the audience. And it is very important to understand that what is going on between the author and the audience that precipitated the writing of the book, its occasion. So we want to look at the reasons why he wrote it. Now what is interesting is that John actually tells us explicitly. For a lot of writers we have to figure it out using inductive and deductive processes. we deduce that from looking at the text. John doesn’t leave you to guess he tells you flat out. I like his candor. He just puts it right out on the table. John 20:30, why did John write the book? “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples who are

not recorded in this book, but these are written, [why?] that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.” Why did John write? He didn’t record everything. He said if you wrote everything Jesus did the books of the world couldn’t contain all of it. “But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you might have life in his name.

Notice the theology of the name. Notice the theology of life, as opposed to death, that we just saw transitioning over, the crossing over from death to life. Those themes are echoed now in John here. So “that by believing in his name you might have life.” How does one have life? One has life by believing in the name of Jesus as the Son of God. So John puts that flat out.

J. Comments on John 3:16 [37:02-39:02]

Then he says, for example, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.” Again that notion of believing connected to having life. John 3:16 is a very famous passage. By the way, I’ll just say this here now. Did you notice when I read “for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten.” I’m a King James Version person, I was raised in a very conservative church that used the King James Version only, so “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.” But it is very interesting that when you look at the Greek the word is not “only begotten.” “Only begotten” means “begat” from parents that is not the word that is used there. *Monogenes*—*mono* means “one,” *genes* basically means “one of a kind.” It’s a *sui generis* is the way others would put this. It that means he’s “one of a kind.” So actually more of your more modern translations will translate it more accurately. It is not “only begotten” Abraham had an “only begotten son Isaac.” Well, if you know anything about Abraham you know that Isaac was not his only begotten son because Abraham also had a son called Ishmael. He actually, after Isaac, had many sons as well that are listed in Genesis 12 and following. So what this is is that Jesus Christ is his *monogenes* “one of kind son.” So this is translated in the NIV, for

example, “for God so loved the world that he gave this *one and only* son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.”

K. Sign Miracles in John [39:02-40:48]

Let’s look at sign miracles. John is going to give these miracles. It is very interesting how John does his miracles. Now I want to look at these what are called sign miracles in John. There are about seven of these sign miracles in John. It is very different than the other gospel writers. In the other gospel writers, a guy will come up to Jesus and say, “My daughter is really sick, Jesus will you come and help me. I believe you can help me, but help me if you can.’ Jesus says, ‘What do you mean “if I can”’ He says, ‘Hey, if you believe I’ll go do it but if you don’t believe get your act together, I’m not coming down there if you don’t believe.’” The guy says “I believe but help my unbelief.” So what happens is in a lot of the other gospels belief is a precursor to doing the sign. A person must believe first and then they are healed. That is sequence in many of the other gospels. The order is a person believes and then they are healed.

Here in the book of John, it is very interesting John uses the miracles in a very different way than that. Here Jesus does the miracle and then after the miracle his disciples put their faith in him, after the miracle the people believe in him. So these are called sign miracles. John picks out a few, he doesn’t do all of them. He picks out just a few and he really hones in on these miracles that cause belief. What is one of his major themes: believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. John is pushing the notion of belief and having eternal life. So he uses the miracles. Jesus does the miracles and those who are the audience then respond with belief.

L. Sign Miracles: Wedding Feast at Cana [40:48-42:13]

One example of that is the sign miracle of the water to wine miracle. Now we’re going come back to this in chapter 2. Jesus is at the wedding feast of Cana. The city of Cana is not far from Nazareth his hometown. Mary, his mother, is there. Mary comes up to him and says, “Jesus, the guy’s has run out of wine, can you help with the situation here?” Jesus says, “Hey, what’s that between me and you? What’s that to us?” His

mother says to the servants, “whatever he tells you just do it.” Well, Jesus says, “Okay, take these stone water pots that are 160 gallons.” Jesus says, “fill them all up with water.” So the guys fill it up with water. He says, “Now take it and bear it to the governor of the wedding and let him drink it.” Jesus turns the water into wine. It was 160 gallons of wine, that’s a lot of wine. It must have been a big party. Actually the towns were not that big too so it must have been a big party for that town. So the wine goes to the governor, the governor says, “Wow, this is really good. Most people put forward the best wine first and then after people have drunk real well and they can’t taste much of anything then they put out the bad wine but you have saved the best until last.” Of course, the people knew it was Jesus who turned the water into wine. So this is the wedding feast at Cana where Jesus converts water into wine. By the way, John is the only one who records that miracle. After the miracles some believed on him.

M. Other Sign Miracles in John [42:13-47:22]

Another sign miracle is the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda. The water stirs, he can’t get in. He’s been there for 38 years laying there, yet he can’t get in. Jesus says, “Get up, take you mat, and go home.” Of course, what day does Jesus always do this. He’s going to heal this guy, he’s crippled, he’s going to take his mat and go home, always on the Sabbath. The Pharisees catch him, “Why are you carrying your mat on the Sabbath.” “The guy who healed me told me to carry my mat. So I’m just doing what I’m told.” So it’s chapter 5 at the pool of Bethesda. I’m just going over the Get Lost in Jerusalem virtual Jerusalem trying to develop it for online. When you go to the pool of Bethesda, it is very interesting. They have actually found the pools of Bethesda. They know where they are. It says there in John that there were five covered colonades. I think we mentioned this before. These five covered colonades they’ve actually found the bases that held up these colonades that were where the people were at that time. So they’ve actually been able to confirm exactly the way John has described it with these covered colonades at the pool of Bethesda.

The feeding of the 5,000. What is nice about the feeding of the 5,000 is that all

four gospels have the feeding of the 5,000. While John tells a lot of the unique miracles; this feeding of the 5,000, all the gospels have that one. So that is kind of interesting that way. Jesus walks on water some of the other the gospels have that.

The man born blind is in chapter 9. “Who sinned this man or his parents that he was born blind?” Jesus says “No, no, the guy was born blind had nothing to do with the sin of his parents or with his sin. This is done for the glory of God.” Jesus takes mud pies and puts them on the guy’s eyes and says, “Hey, blind man, go to the pool of Siloam.” The Pool of Siloam, by the way, he’s up on the temple mount when he does this mud-pie-on-the-eyes thing and the guy’s got to walk all the way down the city of David. That is a long haul down there. This blind guy has got to go all the way down to the Pool of Siloam. He goes down and he washes the mud off his eyes, and he comes back and he can see. Then the Pharisees and others are freaking out because he comes back and he can see. Now they are trying to figure out what’s going on with this guy who was born blind and now he can see. Was Jesus doing this? So there is a big controversy with this mud-pie-blind-eye guy. So that is a big one.

I want you to know for this class too the ones that are in yellow. These are unique ones to the book of John like the water to wine that is a big miracle most everybody should know that. The mud-pies-on-the-eyes Jesus’ healing his eyes again, this is a big one.

Lazarus was raised from the dead after four days. Many of us have heard many, many sermons on this Lazarus narrative. You have got Mary and Martha his two sisters, “Jesus, Jesus, if you had only been here.” They are saying, “You come four days late, Jesus. The guy’s already dead. Why didn’t come earlier Jesus. Jesus you are going to be late for your own funeral, Jesus.” So he comes late to Lazarus’ funeral. Martha seems be more the obsessive compulsive. Mary seems to be more a devoted kind of person, just different personalities there. So you’ve got to roll the stone away. “Jesus we can’t roll the stone away, he’s been in there four days. He’s going to stink by now.” They were very used to death. Death and dying was very much in their culture. In our culture we kind of wush the dead away and the undertaker takes care of them and the caskets and

everything smells good. They were very familiar with death. So they would take the person and wrap them in cloth and put spices on them and put them in there. They would melt down after a period of time. The flesh would decompose and then there would just be the bones left. They would take the bones and put the bones in a bone box, an ossuary, or put it under the bench. They would be laid out on a bench, the bones would be put under the bench. In Old Testament times they would call that “being gathered to your fathers.” What being gathered to your fathers means was you’ve melted down, that your flesh is gone and they took your bones and put them with your fathers who were placed in a compartment underneath the bench. Jesus comes up and says, “Lazarus, come out” and all of a sudden Lazarus comes hobbling out. It’s really interesting with Lazarus coming out there. Lazarus is raised from the dead kind of as a foreshadowing of Jesus himself being raised from the dead. It’s a major miracle. You should know Lazarus, Mary and Martha.

A catch of fish in chapter 21 they catch a number of fish. We said the last time the writer of John picks up exactly how many fish, 153 fish, that is the mark, it seems to me, of a fisherman who is claiming a big catch.

N. Water to Wine: Wine in the Bible [47:22-49:08]

Now what I’d like to do now is to discuss this wedding feast in Cana it is a sign miracle where Jesus makes water into wine. What I’d like to do is go through a discussion. By the way, this is one of those discussions where it’s okay to disagree with the prof but I’m going to give you my opinion, my way of looking at wine in the Bible. It was a big topic when I was growing up and it is still a big topic in our culture. What does the Bible teach on the issue of wine drinking and alcohol. So I’d like to discuss wine in John 2 the wedding feast of Cana. Coming out of that we just talked about that where Jesus’ mother asks and Jesus makes water into wine. He makes many, many gallons of it, well over a hundred gallons of wine for these people to drink.

First of all, drunkenness is a sin. Scripture is very clear. But let me before I do drunkenness is a sin let me put a positive spin on this. Here is Ecclesiastes 9:7: “Go eat

your food with gladness and drink your wine with a joyful heart for it is now that God favors what you do.” So the Bible is really not against alcohol. Now some people try to get rid of the book of Ecclesiastes. They don’t like Ecclesiastes. It’s one of my favorite books, there is tremendous truth there but you’ve got to sort through things. “Go eat your food with gladness and drink your wine with a joyful heart for it is now that God favors what you do.”

O. Drunkenness is a Sin [49:08-51:59]

But scripture does note that drunkenness is a sin and in 1 Corinthians 9 he’s listing various sins, lying, stealing, things like that, and he lists drunkenness as one of those evils. You have the virtues and vices and so one of the vices that’s going to be talked about substantially is this vice of being drunk. Being drunk is a problem. 1 Corinthians 5:11 says, “to separate from evils of drunkards.” Galatians 5:29 has the fruits of the spirit and the fruits of the flesh. One of the fruits of the flesh is drunkenness, so it’s listed in the vice list that is given in Scripture. Drunkenness is bad, but even with drunkenness you have to ask, “What is the situation there?”

Does anybody remember John Wayne movies of old? In days gone by, John Wayne goes out there and some indian arrow is shot into his leg and he is going to pull the arrow out by his own hand and he’s going to pull out this arrow that’s stuck in his leg. Before he pulls the arrow out of his leg, what does he do? Well, he drinks some whiskey. Now why does he drink whiskey? You realize, my son just told me this why do most people die when they’re shot? It’s not necessarily because of the shot itself, but it’s more because of shock. Because of shock and the body doesn’t know how to respond and the body goes into shock and the person dies from shock and not the actual wound itself. So John Wayne pulls out a shot of whiskey, what’s he trying to do? He’s trying to kill the pain. So in certain situations, they didn’t have anesthesia like we do. You know a person goes in for an appendix and you say, “I don’t want any anesthesia. I want to take it just as is.” They’re going to cut your appendix out and you want to be awake for that? But in the old days, they didn’t have that so what they would do is drink alcohol to basically kill

the pain and then they would, like John Wayne pull the arrow out. Be careful. Even getting drunk, in that kind of a context, had its function in ancient days, to stop a person from going into shock. But drunkenness, now you realize--that's a very rare thing. In every movie John Wayne gets shot, but in real life most people don't get shot everyday so it's a very rare that a person would go through. Anyway, drunkenness is a sin and the Bible's absolutely clear about that. Now let's look at some other things.

P. Results of Drinking in Scripture: Proverbs 31 and 23 [51:59-55:31]

The results of drinking are described in Scripture. Scripture doesn't leave it to your imagination, it describes things. Proverbs 31, when I say proverbs 31 to you, what comes to mind? The virtuous woman, or the "VW" but yet there's a mother going to teach her son and this is what she says, "It is not for you, Lemuel, not for kings to drink wine nor rulers to crave beer." In other words, if you're a leader, stay away from wine and beer. This is the mother's advice, you can hear the mother echoed in this thing. "It is not for kings, Lemuel, not for kings to drink wine nor rulers crave beer, lest they drink and forget what the law decrees." In other words, when someone drinks a little bit too much, what happens to their moral sense of justice? Of right and wrong? It goes down.

I grew up in an environment where I played basketball and football and lots of sports when up and after the basketball games what would happen? Guys would go out and drink at those times and guys that would go out and purposely try to get a girl drunk. Now why would they get the girl drunk? They would purposely try and get a girl drunk because what would happen is, she would forget what the law decrees and her moral character would go down if they could get her drunk. That's what happened in the high school where I grew up, although we use other substances today, that's what we used back in my day. So this mother is warning kings, "Stay away from this. If you're a leader and you get drunk and forget what the law decrees, you're going to hurt someone."

Here's another one, and this is kind of humorous actually. In Proverbs 23:31-35, "Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly," now you say man, that's an advertisement for Budweiser or something. "Do

not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a snake, it poisons like a viper. Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things. You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on the rigging,” you see this boat on the high seas with the rigging and the mast going back and forth and you’ll be like one lying on the rigging on the high seas. “‘they hit me,’ you will say, ‘but I am not hurt. They beat me but I do not feel it. When can I wake up so I can have another drink?’” Take a lamb, give him a little wine and all of a sudden he turns into a lion. “Hey I’m a tough guy now. You can hit me but I won’t feel it. I can take this” because a person’s drunk and so this thing of taking wine and getting big and courageous and I think we’ve all seen people and had friends like that, they would pick a fight. They wouldn’t normally pick a fight but you give them a few beers and all of a sudden the guy’s the big courageous person now.

Q. Pro’s and Con’s of Drinking and Three Kinds of Wine [55:31-59:27]

Here’s another one from Proverbs 23:20: “Do not join those who drink too much wine nor gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor.” For drunkards and gluttons become poor and all of us have seen people who are into alcohol and seen the way it’s led to poverty in their life. They get trapped in this downward spiral because they’re drunk. It says, “Drunkards and gluttons become poor and drowsiness clothes them in rags.” So it’s warning, saying there’s a connection between drinking too much and one’s poverty and it is saying be careful with this stuff.

Proverbs actually has a few sections on this but wine was used for medicine back in those days. So Paul, in 1 Timothy 5:23 and following, Paul tells Timothy, “Stop drinking the water. Drink a little wine for your stomach’s sake.” Well, Timothy apparently--and if you’ve ever traveled in the middle East, you know about drinking the water. You drink water in that culture, you’re in big trouble. They’ve got bacteria in their water that will give you the runs for 2, 3, or 4 days because the water is no good. There’s bacteria in the water. The only way you can do this, and I tell anyone who travels, you’re going to drink the water? You’d better have a good supply of Imodium AD to plug you

up because you're going to get sick if you drink the water. That's why a lot of people bottle water over there today. But Paul tells Timothy "drink a little wine for your stomach's sake." Does the wine kill the bacteria? Yes. So you drink a little wine for your stomach and you won't get this kind of problem.

It was used as a painkiller. Do you remember in Luke 10:34 and following with the Good Samaritan. The Good Samaritan takes the guy who's all beat up and what does he do? He mollifies the wounds by pouring wine on the wounds to help with the bacteria and various things. Wine is used on the wound. This is in Luke 10. So it's used as a medicine for the healing process and to aid in that.

In the Scripture, there's three types of wine now and this is going back to Old Testament, but there's *sheker*, often translated "strong drink," *yayin*, which is just the regular wine, and there's *tirosh*. *Tirosh* is said to be "new wine" and so those three words, *sheker*, *yayin* and *tirosh* for strong wine, regular wine, and new wine is a lot of what's prescribed in the Old Testament. I should say, when I'm looking at this...strong drink obviously has the power to get you soused. Wine, no problem. By the way, I should say. Do you remember Melchizedek came out to Abraham and they had a meal together using wine? So here you have Melchizedek as a Christ figure in the Old Testament with Abraham, drinking wine in a communal meal in the Old Testament. It was used in Deuteronomy 14:26. *Yayin* was used in giving a blessing. Even Madame Wisdom, which is really interesting in Proverbs 9:2, not Madame Folly. Madam Folly in proverbs is contrasted with Madame Wisdom, but Madame Wisdom prepares wine for the young man. So, even Madame Wisdom prepares this.

By the way, it was also a problem in the ancient world. You've got Lot's daughters in Genesis 19, getting him drunk and then conceiving from their father, but they get him drunk first. You can see the same kind of thing, they get him drunk and he doesn't know what he's doing.

R. Things the Bible Does NOT Teach: Communion and Abstinence [59:27-64:07]

Now here's some things the Bible does not teach about alcohol. First of all, the communion was not real wine. When I grew up they said, "No, no, Jesus in the communion it was grape juice. It was new wine." I should mention too, in the new wine, this is interesting, that new wine, remember in Acts 2 with the Feast of Pentecost and the spirit coming down on Peter and Peter speaking in other tongues and all these people are there at Pentecost. The people accused Peter of being drunk on glucose, or new wine. So, even new wine in Acts 2 has the ability to get one soused. What I'm saying is this. When you've got grape juice and you take it off and crush it and make juice out of it, how long does that stay grape juice if you don't have any refrigeration? Well, you say, "Just turn your refrigerator on!" Yeah right. Two thousand years ago these people did not have refrigeration like we do. They used to do some things with ice, some things underground, but still not like we have refrigeration. So the grape juice would turn to new wine rather quickly. We're talking 2, 3, or 4 days and this stuff will actually turn. So new wine does not mean that it did not have any alcohol in it. Even new wine, in Acts 2, had the ability to get one drunk.

Communion. Jesus said, "Take this cup" and this cup had wine in it and is described it in Scripture. Wine was being used in the communion cup. Many of you go to churches, if you go to an Anglican church, you have a single cup I think for me it was the St. Andrews church in Jerusalem, a Scottish Presbyterian church there. In that church when they passed the cup around, when they passed the cup around, it was one cup for the whole church so everybody is taking from one cup. I was worried I was going to get sick from somebody else but apparently the wine's helpful in that regard, keeping the bacteria down, but there's one cup that's sent around. Many churches do serve wine in their communion, although I've had communion services where they serve apple juice. But some follow the tradition going back to Jesus, of using wine in the cup. By the way, the wine in the cup actually goes back to the Passover service and the Jews have been doing the Passover service for over 3000 years now and Jews serve wine in their cup. Jesus is having a Passover meal so there was wine in the cup and the *matzo*, the unleavened bread, that's from the Passover service. Jesus was doing that with his

disciples. If you go to a Jewish synagogue even until this day, you'll find wine in the cup.

So the Bible does not teach abstinence anywhere. The only people that abstain were people that were, someone brought this up in class, the Nazirites, if you remember back to Numbers 6. People, such as Samson who was a Nazirite from birth, and were not supposed to have any product of the grape including raisins and grapes, not just wine. Samuel was another Nazirite. We get into the New Testament and the apostle Paul takes a Nazirite vow and goes up to Jerusalem to cut his hair and burn it on the altar to complete the Nazirite vow. People could take the Nazirite vow or they could be a Nazirite from birth. Some people think John the Baptist was a Nazirite from birth and didn't eat products of the grape or touch dead bodies and let his hair grow. Other times, you could take a Nazirite vow for a couple years and then complete your Nazirite vow and it wasn't something you did for your entire life. But anyway, in the Bible, the Nazirite vow which was a special vow for very few people in the Old Testament. Jesus, by the way, was not a Nazirite. Jesus drank wine and even if it were grape juice, a Nazirite could not drink *anything* from the grape. Jesus was a Nazarene, which means he was from the town of Nazareth. You've got to separate those.

S. Why Dr. Hildebrandt Doesn't Drink Alcohol [64:07-67:07]

The Bible nowhere teaches abstinence. So you say, "Okay, Hildebrandt, you're teaching all these positive things about wine, let's go back the other way." I think there are major problems in our culture. I've got statistics here, which are dated now, that in America, over 200,000 people die every year as a result of alcohol and alcohol related incidents, accidents, and diseases. 200,000. That's a lot of people to die. Two years of that is more than died in the Vietnam War. There are huge costs now and you think about how many these times were out on a boat and were partying, this was in Rhode Island, and the boat sinks and capsizes and these three guys who were drunk ended up drowning, so we've seen this happen. I had a good friend, his name was Eric. I taught Eric, he had red hair and was a fiery young man, a bright individual and really great kid. I really bonded with him, just loved this kid and he goes back home to the Philadelphia area.

He's out, coming back from a Christian concert or something, and it is two or three in the morning and a drunk runs a stop sign, this is in rural Pennsylvania, goes through and T bones Eric and instantly kills him [Cf. Monica DeMello, 2013]. In all of these accidents, what happens? The drunk walks away, but my friend Eric is in the ground today, dead because the drunk hit him and killed him. That angers me. Eric had all his life in front of him. He was going to do pre-med and had the brains to do it, he was all geared up for this and he was killed dead by a drunk. I used to counsel with a woman named Karen and her husband was a drunk and he would come home, take a two by four and he'd put it through the wall of the house when he was drunk. And he would get up the next morning and proceed to beat on his boys because he thought they put the two by four through the wall but it was he who put the two by four through the wall when he was drunk and he couldn't remember doing it so he thought it was his sons. Have you seen the damage that alcoholism does in a family and what that does to the family? You get a father who's drinking all the time and it's an abusive situation for the wife and for the boys. Do you know what's really bad? It's really interesting to me too, that Karen, her husband was an alcoholic and drank all the time and drank too much and did so much damage to those two boys. You'd think that when those two boys grew up that they'd see their father and turn from his ways. You know what happened when those boys hit about 17 or 18 you know what they're doing? They're drinking too, just like their dad. So you have this coming down from generation to generation and it's really sad.

T. The Evil of Alcoholism [67:07-71:02]

It's estimated, and this figure goes back to the 1970s, 50 million dollars is what alcohol abuse costs the American people. Now that's 1975, you can imagine it's astronomical now. Half of the traffic fatalities are a result of alcohol, drinking and driving. How much is alcohol involved in robbery? How much is alcohol involved in rapes that go on in our country? Assault? Homicide? How much of those are involved with alcohol as well? One third of the suicides involve alcoholism. So it's a big deal. As a result, I've taken a personal stance now and it hasn't worked out, I'll just describe this,

there's pros and cons to this. I've realized that a lot of these are cons now. In my home, I don't drink. I'm a tea totter, Gordon College would have let me outside of college campus. I can drink wine with the meals, there's no problem from the college where I teach. However, I've taken a total abstinence position myself. I don't have alcohol in my house. I actually hate alcoholism and I hate what it's done to the people that I know, like I said my good friend Eric is dead. Karen's husband has done all sorts of bad stuff and I've just seen too much of it. My brother-in-law David, who's a friend of ours, a couple of decades ago he was, again, drinking too much and took his \$30,000 truck and made a left turn right in front of somebody, totaled the truck. He has basically lost everything, the government was after him for what he did. He ends up coming to our house and we put him up for about six months while he was getting back on his feet. We picked up everything the man held in the back of our van. He was an expert carpenter and has made much more money than I'll ever make in my lifetime and yet he just got into this drinking and partying and it's really wrecked a lot of his life and the potential there.

So I hate alcoholism. I've often told people that if alcoholism were a person and came into my class and I had the ability, with my bare hands, to kill it and destroy it with my bare hands, I would do it in front of 100 students at Gordon College and I wouldn't care. I would be fired and kicked out of school but it's okay. If I could save the world from alcoholism and the damage it's done... I hate it and the damage that it's done. So I take a personal stance on abstinence.

Does the Bible teach that? No, it doesn't teach that. It's my own thing because of Eric and others that I've reacted and it's perhaps an overreaction on my part. It's kind of ironic to me that all my kids drink so it's kind of funny that I take an abstinence position and you say, "Well you set them up for that because you took such a hard line so they go off and drink." It's possibly true but I know I've got to be true to myself, not just to my kids.

And I also want to be sensitive. I've got a friend Niles, a good friend of mine, and he's probably 68 now and reflect back on his kids, he said his daughter went over to her uncle's house, and the uncle gave his daughter some alcohol and this girl was an

alcoholic and as soon as she tasted it, she was hooked. For twenty years or so of her life went down the tubes because of alcoholism. I think she's over it now but it was like twenty years of her life were messed up on marriage after marriage. I'm just suggesting I really hate it.

U. A Soft Abstinence, Christian Liberty, and the Weaker Brother [71:02-75:28]

I guess I would take a soft abstinence position. In other words, when I was in Israel, for example, we had some good friends, Perry, Elaine, we split an apartment for \$45 a month. It was really cheap and they knew that I didn't drink and we went to this lady's house Ora's house, she's one of the world's leading experts on Sinai. So we're going to go down to Sinai for three weeks and walk around for three weeks in the desert. It was an incredible experience, but we go to Ora's house and first of all, we're in Jerusalem, in a foreign country, and in Jerusalem they drink wine with their meals. So Ora comes out and is filling up everybody's glass of wine. To not take wine would have been an insult to her. But I say, "Hey, I'll drink the wine" and personally, I usually don't but I don't want to be an offense to her so I'll drink the wine. Afterwards I pretended like I was drunk and after we left Ora's apartment I went out and started walking funny and bumping into things and pretending I was drunk and they just looked at me and they treated me normally, even though I was acting like I was drunk. So then I realized, "oh, well" so then I started acting normal again, which is pretty close. I remember at the end of the year when we were leaving and Perry and Elaine were staying and we were reflecting on the year they went, "Oh, we remember when you got drunk" so I *did* fake them out and it was kind of funny.

Anyway, a couple other factors that play into this. 1 Corinthians 6:12 says, "All things are lawful to me, but not all things are not profitable." I guess my thing is to find the good things in life and go after the good things. I find people fascinated with always trying to play on the lines, see how far they can go over the lines. My thing is, I don't want to waste life. Life is too short. I don't want to waste life on bad stuff. I want to spend life on the good stuff, the best stuff. What is the good stuff? The good stuff is

spending time talking to your wife, watching movies with your family, going out and doing things with your family and friends and things like that. So think about that.

The weaker brother argument I think is strong too. If somebody sees you drinking alcohol, then they may use that as an excuse to say “So and so can drink, therefore I can drink.” Now, I know that’s a dumb argument but some people may do that and I don’t want anybody ever pointing the finger at me and saying “You’re the one who got me started. I saw what you did and therefore went and did it.” Be careful about your weaker brother, coming from Romans 14. Other people say if you doubt about something, don’t do it and the other big question is, “What is the chief end of man?” Let me ask you the Westminster Catechism: “What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy him forever.” So I’ve got to ask, does this activity I’m suggesting here glorify God and help me enjoy him forever? But then again, you’ve got to ask. You’re in a foreign country and don’t want to offend people. So I take a position of soft abstinence around the corners. My daughter’s wedding she had champagne I would take, even though I hate champagne.

So these are just some reflections on this water to wine type of thing. Further thoughts 1 Corinthians 6:12 and the weaker brother argument over in Romans 14. In Christian liberty, I’m free to do it. The question is, is it good, is it the best, is it going to be edifying, is it going to be beneficial to other people? What does love demand? So those would be things--so that’s why I call it soft abstinence and largely I do abstinence in honor of my friend Eric and other people that I’ve known that have struggled with this.

V. Why John Wrote [75:28-79:11]

Now, we’re talking about why John wrote. When we say John wrote because of belief: “I’ve written these things so that you may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name.” So that’s why he writes. One of the aspects that John writes then, is that Jesus is God. Several people Irenaeus and other have connected this with the errors of Cerinthus. Apparently there was this guy in the early church that some people say the book of John is writing to refute the errors of Cerinthus. Some of the errors of Cerinthus is that Jesus was a man on whom God

descended. So Jesus Christ was just a mere man, the spirit of God comes on him, he does miracles, he dies on the cross and the Spirit then left on Jesus. He is not God. He is a human being on whom the Spirit of God comes and when he rose, he rose only spiritually and when he dies, the Spirit goes off of him. So the spirit of God comes *on* Jesus, who is just a typical run of the mill man and then the Spirit comes on him and he does his stuff, he dies, the Spirit leaves him. Jesus doesn't rise physically from the dead, he rises spiritually. So these are the errors of Cerinthus, that Jesus was Christ was not God but that he was the human that had the Spirit.

Now, there's another group in modern times, too, that says Jesus Christ is not God. He is *a* god, he is not *the* God, and these would be the Jehovah's Witnesses and many of you have had Jehovah Witnesses, we just had last week that we were home and two women came to the door who were Jehovah Witnesses and this is what they hold. Jesus Christ is *a* god, Jesus Christ is not Jehovah God.

Jehovah God, and that's why they call themselves Jehovah's Witnesses, because they're witnessing for Jehovah, Jesus is *a* god, not *the* God. So Jesus was the son of God, created and hence he is inferior to Jehovah God. Jesus says that the Father is greater than I. If Jesus says the Father is greater than I, they say in John 14:28, then Jesus is not God. He is *a* god, but not the God. So it says in Colossians 1:15 that Christ is the firstborn of creation. He's the first one born so he's not God because he was firstborn and God is eternal. The problem with the word "firstborn" is, and you see God's Father is greater than I, Jesus was a human being so at that point in his existence Jesus was a human being. So the Father is greater than he is at that point, talking about his humanity. It is talking about the firstborn of creation not in the sense that he is the one that is born first, but that he is the prime, like a firstborn who is a title of honor. It's not talking about when he was born but that he was the firstborn of creation and is the best of creation.

W. The Mistranslation of the Jehovah's Witnesses [79:11-85:07]

So how do you work with this? What would you say? Suppose Jehovah Witnesses' comes to your door. How would you prove that Jesus Christ is not *a* god, but

the God. “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” In the Jehovah Witness’ New World Translation, it says, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was *a* god.” The word *logos* [word] was *a* God, not the God. So Jesus was a God, not the God. They use this then, in John 1:1. But the problem is that’s not really what it says.

So let’s look at some of the deity statements here in the book of John. So I want to bounce through the book of John and by the way, I should say as I do this that the Jehovah’s Witnesses will have arguments to refute everything I’m going to say. They had these cute little phrases. They’re all wrong, but they’ve kind of been brainwashed into this and they kind of see things in a certain way and it’s kind of like “don’t confuse me with the facts” thing when that doesn’t work. So here are some of the deity statements as we go through the book of John.

John 1:1 says, “in the beginning was the Word [*logos*] and the Word was with God [*theos*] and the Word was God.” And the word was not *a* god, it doesn’t say that, but “the word was God.” If you look at the King James Version, that’s what it says. King James Version was made in 1611. Go to the NIV translation, done in the later part of the twentieth century and then redone. The most recent NIV in 2010, they revamped it a little bit and made it a little more accurate, “and the word was God.” The NASB tries to be very literal and it says, “the Word was God.” The NLT, which is the New Living Translation which is more free and equivalent kind of dynamic says, “the Word was God” The NRSV used over in England done by some superb scholars as is the NIV and some others and it says, “and the Word was God.” The ESV says the same thing, the NAB, the New American Bible, the Bible used by Catholics, says the same thing. “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” All these translations agree. If you don’t know Greek, that’s fine you’ve got all these translation that say the same thing.

Then the Jehovah Witnesses pick up their New World Translation and it says “*a* god.” When all these scholars that have worked on these other things have said “No. It’s ‘and the Word was God,’” and they’ve got their own little cultic Bible and you’ve got to

say, “No, these guys are mistranslating.” Indeed, they are mistranslating and the Greek says, “and the Word was God” The *logos* was God. So they’ve actually mistranslated that but what you can just say is of these other translations are done by multiple people in different denominations from Catholic to Protestant to British to American to all over the place and basically that’s what the Greek says. So you want to go with that in the long run.

The Jehovah Witnesses will always come up to you and say, “In the Greek this means.” Now most of you don’t know Greek so you’ll say, “Well, I don’t know Greek.” Here’s something that happened to me. I’m out in a place called Winona Lake, where we used to live, and I’m over at the beach across the street from our house and my two daughters are swimming in Winona Lake and I’m sitting at the beach and I was just out there in the sun, watching my girls swim and I’ve got my Greek New Testament there. So I’m reading some New Testament and all of a sudden, this Jehovah witness guy comes up to me and says, “Hey!” and starts doing the Jehovah Witness bogey so I’m going back and forth with him and he makes the mistake of saying, “In the Greek it means the word was *a* god” and I said, “Oh really? I just happen to have my Greek New Testament here and I was just reading it.” So I pop it open to John 1:1. You have to know me, I’m kind of an ornery guy, so what I did was I handed him my Greek New Testament upside down. What’s the first thing you want to see a person do if they’re reading a book and it’s upside down? You want to see them flip it over, right? I hand it to him upside down and he starts staring at the Greek. He obviously can’t read Greek but he just *told* me “in the Greek this means” and finally he gives up and hands me back the book. He never turned it right side up. I may be good in Greek or Hebrew, probably even better, but I can’t read it upside down like that. Then this guy says, “I can’t read Greek” so he didn’t really catch the point that he was just bluffing me. He had no idea what it says. The honest truth is that “in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God” and that’s the way the Greek should be translated there and so they’ve got it wrong. I’m not going to give up that verse because it’s a beautiful verse. Just because they mistranslate it doesn’t mean I’m going to give it up. So in Greek John is saying the *logos*

has the quality of God and that's why it drops the definite article "the" there. Anyway, there are some other reasons we go through in Greek but we'll save that for Greek class. You should all take Greek!

X. Deity Statements in John 8:58 and 9:38 [85:07-88:28]

Now here's another one. John 8:58, let me pull this from the text here because I want to give a little bit of the context. John 8:58 Jesus is in conflict and says, "Now who do you think you are?" Jesus replied. 'If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father whom you claim is your God is the one who glorifies me and though you do not know him, I know him.'" And they say to him. "You are not yet fifty years old. Your Father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day and he saw it and was glad." They say to him, "Hey, man, you're not even fifty years old! and you have seen Abraham?" "I tell you the truth,' Jesus said to them, 'Before Abraham was born, I am.'"

When you hear that phrase "I am" and you think of Jewish people, what is the Jewish people's response to this? Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am." "At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the crowds." What was the deal with that? Why did they pick up stones to stone him? Because Jesus just made the claim to be God. In the Old Testament, if I said to you "I am," who is the "I am that I am"? That's how God Jehovah identified himself in the burning bush in Exodus 3:14. "I am that I am." This is Jehovah and so when he says "Before Abraham was, I am" the Jews clearly understood this was a blasphemous statement. So, "before Abraham was, I am."

Here's another one chapter 9 verse 38, "Jesus heard that they had thrown him out because he said," this is the blind man who had been born blind that Jesus healed. "He said, 'Who is this sir? Do you believe in the son of man?' 'Who is he sir?' the blind man asked. 'Tell me so that I may believe in him.' and Jesus said, 'You have now seen him. In fact, he is the one who is speaking to you' and the man said, 'Lord I believed *and worshiped* him.'" Now what's the problem with worship? If you go over to Revelation 19, John, in the book of Revelation tries to worship an angel and what does this angel do?

He says, “Hey, get up. You don’t worship me, I’m an angel. You don’t worship me, you worship God. God is the only one to receive worship.” And the angels repeatedly, this is in Revelation 19:10, but there’s several angelic instances when it happens, when people see an angel, they fall on their face and go to worship and the angel says, “Get up. Don’t worship me, worship God.” Here Jesus accepts worship from this blind man who he had just healed, worship being only reserved for God.

Y. Deity Statements in John 10:30 and 20:28 [88:28-91:36]

Here is another one, chapter 10. By the way, do you see this? This is chapter 8, chapter 9, and chapter 10. This is kind of interesting if you want to go in the book of John, start with John 1:1 and do chapter 8, chapter 9, and chapter 10. Chapter 10 down to verse 30 it says this, “And Jesus said, ‘I did tell you but you did not believe. The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me but you do not believe because you are not my sheep,’” and he goes on like that. “‘I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand,’” and then he makes this statement, “‘I and the Father are one.’” Now I want you to think about that statement as a Jewish person. When you hear “‘I and the Father are one” what goes through your mind? Every Jewish person in the world knows this verse, Deuteronomy 6:4 “‘Hear, O Israel, Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one.’” The Jews prided themselves on monotheism. When he says that he is one with the Father, that is a reflection back. Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him but Jesus said, “‘I have shown you many great miracles from the Father, for which of these do you stone me?’” and then the Jews respond like this, “‘We are not stoning you for any of these,’ replied the Jews, ‘but for blasphemy because you, a mere man, claim to be God.’” So the people that heard Jesus who were the original audience, they knew very clearly that he had just made a claim to be God. “‘I and the Father are one.’”

Now, Thomas, in John 20:28, let me just go a little bit faster here, Thomas in 20:28, remember doubting Thomas? “‘Hey, I’m not going to believe this until I can put

my fingers in his hand and until I can put my hand in his side” where the spear went in. Jesus comes up to Thomas and says, “Okay, Thomas. I’m risen from the dead. Go ahead, put your fingers in my palms where the nail prints were and Thomas responds, ‘My Lord and my God.’” It’s a direct address to Jesus, “my Lord and my God.” One of the clearest statements in Scripture about the divinity of Christ comes from Thomas in John 20:28, “my Lord and my God.”

Z. Deity of Christ Outside of John [91:36-95:06]

Let’s jump outside of John and I just want to run through these quickly, these are other passages that show the divinity of Christ, that Christ is God. Revelation 1:8 and 21:3-7, it refers to this alpha, let me read Revelations 1:8, “I am the alpha and the omega, says the Lord God.” Now when it says, “Lord God,” that’s Jehovah Elohim. “I am the alpha and the omega says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty.” So this is almighty God speaking. Jehovah speaking. He calls himself “I am the alpha and omega” and in Revelation 21:3 and following, “I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with him. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God.’ He said to me, ‘It is done. I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of water of life and he who overcomes will inherit all this and I will be his God and he will be my son.’” So the alpha and the omega, beginning and the end refers to God almighty, the Lord God. It’s very interesting that this parallels, if you go back to Isaiah 48:12, “I am the first and the last.” who is speaking there? Yahweh. Jehovah is speaking there in Isaiah 48. What’s very interesting is this next set. Guess what? The alpha and the omega, the alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet. Alpha is like our “a,” it’s the first letter of the alphabet and omega is the last letter of the alphabet. It’s like our “z.” What he’s saying is, “I am the ‘a’ to ‘z.’ I am the first letter, alpha, and I am the last letter, omega. The beginning and the end.” Now when you go to Revelations 22, guess what it says? “I am the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” Who is speaking there?

Jesus. Go back to Revelations 1:17-18 and it says, “When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead and he placed his right hand on me and said, ‘Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last. I am the living one. I was dead and behold, I am alive forever more and I hold the keys to death and hades.’” This is Jesus speaking. He’s saying “I am the first and the last.” That’s exactly the same title God choose there and Jesus takes that title for himself. So this book of Revelation has an interesting twist on this of showing that Jesus Christ is God. It is Jehovah God who is the alpha and the omega. No, it’s Jesus who is the alpha and the omega. Jesus *is* Jehovah God.

AA. The Granville Sharp Rule and Conclusion [95:06-99:03]

Now here’s one that’s a Granville Sharp rule but if you look at 2 Peter 1:1 and also the same type of thing occurs in Titus 2:13. These two places, I’m citing a grammar by a guy named Dan Wallace. Dan Wallace is probably one of the best Greek scholars in the country at this point. Daniel Wallace at Dallas Seminary. And Daniel’s book, *Beyond the Basics in Grammar* 600-700 page book on Greek grammar says that whenever you have word “the,” a definite article, plus a noun and a *kai* linked to a second noun, the first noun equals the second noun. This is called the Granville Sharp rule in Greek. The Granville Sharp rule. Let me read these verses to you. 2 Peter 1:1, “to those who, through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ,” God and Savior both refer to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God, Jesus Christ is savior. That’s 2 Peter 1:1. If you go down to Titus 2:13, and in the same type of thing occurs: “The blessed hope. The appearance in the sky of our great God and savior,” referring to Jesus Christ. Our savior is God. So Titus 2:13 uses this same type of argumentation.

What I’m suggesting to you is that a huge thing in Scripture is that Jesus Christ is God. Jesus Christ is not just a good prophet, he’s not just a souped up Mahatma Ghandi or a Martin Luther King on steroids. Jesus Christ is God and John brings that out in various ways and probably in refutation to the struggle with Cerinthus who said Jesus Christ was a man upon whom the spirit came and left later. So that’s a big thing and we ask the question then, “What does it mean for me to believe that Jesus Christ is God?”

and that's the basis for our salvation. That's a question I ask myself quite frequently: Am I a Christian? What does it mean to believe in Jesus? This is a big thing.

I think we want to call it quits there and when we pick this up, we'll go through some of the characters and do character studies in the book of John and what we'll find will be pretty interesting. We'll look at Nicodemus, doubting Thomas, and other people and see how this disciple whom Jesus loved portrays these other individuals. He seems to be sensitive towards and how these very diverse individuals move towards belief. We'll see how Nicodemus moves towards belief, how Nathaniel, this woman at the well moved toward belief in Jesus. We'll look at that next time. Thank you.

Transcribed by Faith Gerdes
Edited by Ben Bowden
Rough edited by Ted Hildebrandt