

# (John) 01 - the Past

by Alan Redpath

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*Alan Redpath's sermon explores the profound themes of the Gospel of John, emphasizing Jesus' divinity and the importance of belief in Him.*

**Duration:** 50:05

**Scripture:** John 1:1-5, John 3:1-21, John 4:1-42, John 6:35, John 8:12, John 10:11-18

**Topics:** "John"

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## Description

The video is a sermon on the Gospel of John, specifically focusing on the prologue and the themes presented in the book. The speaker emphasizes that analyzing this gospel is almost blasphemy because of its depth and beauty. The prologue is divided into three distinct paragraphs, discussing the revelation of Jesus in relation to God, creation, and humanity. The speaker highlights that John's Gospel is unique in its account of the first year of Jesus' ministry and the message of the new birth, as well as the profound teachings given to the disciples at the Last Supper.

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## Transcript

I'll send that up to heaven. Thank you very much. Great to be with you.

Thank you for your prayers and the Lord Jesus for answering me. I feel so grateful to him. Let's sing a chorus together.

Do you know the chorus, Thank You, Thank You, Jesus? You do? Who's taught it to you? You knew before you came here. How many of you know this chorus, Thank You, Thank You, Jesus? Thanks. We're going to have a little prayer chorus before the lecture begins, but I want to say one or two things to you on these lectures.

It's very difficult for you to have somebody coming in with something new at this time of term. It wasn't meant to be that way. I've missed 20 hours of lecturing and so very much behind on schedule or schedule.

Normally, this Saturday or next Saturday will be an essay test on John Scott's book, but you saved that, so you can be thankful very much. That will happen, I hope, next term. But we're just introducing it to you tonight and the following three evenings, and we'll continue next term, hopefully.

Then the only other thing I want to say is that I'm a bit of a stickler about time. 6.30 means not 6.31, but 6.30 or 6.32. It means 6.30. And if you do your part of the bargain, I'll do mine. Because I think if the

lecture begins promptly at 6.30, it ought to finish promptly at 7.25. So I'll finish on time, and you come on time.

And if anybody's late, except for severe emergencies, of course, I wouldn't know that at the time, but if you have an emergency and you're not able to get in time, well, make an exception. But otherwise, we'll finish promptly as you come in promptly. In these lectures, I try not to go fast, but I get excited.

And how can you help it when you're talking about the Lord Jesus? And if I go too fast, just shout at me. If I'm too slow, just raise a hand, sort of indicate you want me to go a bit quicker. I'm very sorry for people who have to take lectures in English when it's not your language.

I try to remember them and not to go too quickly. I don't expect you to get it all, but the gist of it. Not the whole thing, piece by piece, but the gist of it.

If I'm too quick for you to get that, just raise your hand and stop. Now, if I speak to you quietly, which isn't at all likely, but if I do, you raise your hand and I'll raise my voice. But if I speak too loudly, which is much more likely, just raise two hands in horror and I'll quieten down.

I think that's all, so that we have the technique of it all. If you have a problem with something I say that you can't understand, please don't stop me, because your problem might not be somebody else's. Just make a note of it.

Mark alongside your notes and have a chat with me afterwards at any time about it. Is that okay? I hope that's clear. Possibly you've been told all that by others, but I just want to be sure that you know where we're going and how we're going to get there.

All right. You know, we're very dependent upon the Spirit of God in lectures and ministry, and so we want to sing together a little prayer chorus which echoes what we feel. You may know this one, too.

Thank you, God, for sending Jesus. Thank you, Jesus, that you came. Holy Spirit, won't you teach me more about his lovely name? Do any of you know it? Would you like to come and sing a solo? No? Right.

You just sing I mean now, play it. Thank you, God, for sending Jesus. For sending Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus, that you came. Thank you, God, for sending Jesus. Thank you, Jesus, that you came.

Holy Spirit, won't you teach me more about his lovely name? Rightly in prayer. Thank you, God, for sending Jesus. Thank you, Jesus, that you came.

Holy Spirit, won't you teach me more about his lovely name? I want to thank you, Lord, for before these dear folks, for your blessing and your healing and your restoring touch. Thank you, Heavenly Father. Thank you for people who pray and thank you for a Savior at your right hand, whoever lives to make intercession for us.

Grant that out of every experience in life, each one of us may learn more of you, more about your lovely name. At that end, we give ourselves thanking you for this day, for what it's meant to us, praying for the mission in concert tonight and this weekend, asking that many may come to trust you and love you, and praying that you will open our mind and our heart and our understanding to your word. Speak, Lord, for thy servant here.

Speak just now, some message to meet my need, which thou only dost know. Speak now through thy holy word and make me see some wonderful truth thou hast to show to me. For Jesus' sake.

Amen. Now then, have you got your Bible open at John, chapter 1? First chapter of John's Gospel, and I'm just going to read the first 18 verses to start with tonight. As a matter of interest, how many of you use the King James Version? How many of you use the Revised Standard Version? How many of you use the New English Bible? How many of you use the American Standard, Revised Standard? Oh, yeah.

And how many of you use New International? Wow. How many of you use Living Bible? How many of you use some other Bible? Oh yes, tell me what it is. Pardon me? Oh, yes.

Yes, right. And how many of you use any other Bible? Good news, I didn't mention that one. Anyone else using Good News? Mm-hmm.

How many of you use another Bible? Japanese? No? How many? What one are you using? Oh yes, Amplified, right. Oh yes, New Jerusalem. Chaotic, isn't it? However, I hope we don't have any more versions, we've got plenty of them.

Well, I refer to quite a number of versions, but mainly the lectures will be from the Revised Standard Version. Here's the Gospel of John, in the first chapter. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God, all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light that all might believe through Him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world knew Him not. He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not.

But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. We have upheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

John bore witness to Him and cried, This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me breaks before me, for He was before me. And from His fullness have we all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known. Now if you've got your analysis of the gospel on your desk, which you should have done, if you haven't got it, raise your hand and I can let you have one.

Have you all got one piece? All set? Thank you. Now just to get some of the background of this thrilling gospel. It was written between 90 and 100 years AD.

Somewhere between 90 and 100. And written by the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who lent on his breast at the Last Supper. Let me see that if you want to, in chapter 13 verse 23.

Chapter 21 verse 20. 13 23 and 21 verse 20. He was the last surviving apostle.

The last surviving apostle. And more than 20 years before this was written, Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed by the Romans. And the Jews were scattered.

Previous to that, the entire New Testament had been written. With the exception of John's contributions to it. Can anybody tell me what contribution John made to the New Testament? The gospel, and revelation, and three letters.

That's three, five. Five books in the New Testament. One or two of them, very brief.

So far all clear? Nobody in trouble? Yes sir. Yes sure. Of John, that he'd written the gospel, three epistles.

Now that's not a female apostle of course. Epistle, that's a letter. Three epistles.

First, second, and third John. Right? And the gospel, and the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation.

Okay? Now this gospel is absolutely different from all the others. Absolutely different from all the others. The compositions, miracles, contacts with other people, intercourse with the disciples, all different.

I'll just repeat. Compositions, and miracles, and contacts with other people, intercourse with his disciples, all different. But contrasts are never contradictions.

Contrasts are never contradictions. There's a vast, or vast, vast number of events and experiences that are not covered at all by the other three gospels. Great number of things in John, which aren't in any other three.

Now I'm slowing right down now, going into bottom gear, and really speaking, I hope, at dictation speed. Now this is just an important way so that you may understand it at the beginning. About a generation after Jesus rose from the dead, if any of you don't get this, shout at me now.

About a generation after Jesus rose from the dead, serious error had come in about who he was, his person. Have you, in the course of the lectures, been through Colossians at all? Not yet. Well, that was why Colossians, Paul wrote that letter to combat this error about the person of Jesus.

And by the end of the first century, it was widespread. And John had these heresies in mind when he wrote. Three out of his five writings are an unfolding of the person of Jesus Christ.

Three out of his five writings are an unfolding of the person of Christ. That's the gospel, revelation, first John, first epistle. And this gospel is written to show that Jesus is the son of God.

And the book of Revelation, as you probably know, that word, revelation, is an apocalypse, or Greek word, I'll spell it, ready, coming, a p o k a l u p s i s. I'll go over it again. Apocalypses. A p o k a l u p s i s. It means an unveiling.

Taking off the covering. Taking off the covering. An unfolding of the power and the glory of Jesus.

That's why this gospel is written. Of course, you know, you've been through other gospels, probably. Matthew is the gospel of Jesus the king.

Mark, gospel of Jesus the servant. Luke, gospel of Jesus the son of man. And John, Jesus the son of God.

That's why you get contrasts in accounts of various things. Now, if the gospels are at the heart of the Bible, John's gospel is at the heart of all the others. And almost everything here is new.

Only John gives us an account of the first year of our Lord's ministry. Chapter 2 through 4. Only John gives an account of the first year of the ministry of Jesus. Chapter 2 through 4. And only John gives us, or records, the great message of the new birth.

The living water. The bread of life. The good shepherd.

The light of the world. Just go through that again. Okay, repeating.

It's John alone who records the message of the new birth. The living water. The bread of life.

The good shepherd. The light of the world. Together with that tremendous unfolding of the purpose of Jesus, as he gave it to the disciples at the Last Supper.

The account of the Last Supper here is superb. These are things are all in chapter 13 through 16. You got that vaguely? Just okay.

Only eight miracles are recorded in this gospel. Only eight. Six of them are not in the other three.

Six of them are not in the other three. Maybe you could tell me which they are. But in case of the possible possibility of delay, I'll give them to you.

Turning water into wine. Chapter 2. It's a marriage feast incidentally. Wonderful that Jesus went to weddings.

Changing water into wine. Chapter 2. The healing of a nobleman's son. Chapter 4. The impotent man.

Chapter 5. The man born blind. Sorry if I'm too quick for you. Pardon me.

Oh, I'll give you that. Long word. Sorry.

I-M-P-O-T-E-N-T. It means powerless. Right? The man born blind.

Chapter 9. The raising of Lazarus. Chapter 11. Always a bit sorry for him.

He had to go through it all again. The raising of Lazarus. Chapter 11.

And the draft of fishes. Chapter 21. Draft.

D-R-A-U-G-H-T. I don't know why, but draft. Not draft, D-R-A-F-T, but draft.

Right? Draft of fishes. That means a whole lot of them. It tells you how many there were, actually.

Got it? That's Chapter 21. Now, I'll just go through this again. It's not vital, but it's interesting.

Six out of eight miracles. Only in John's Gospel. You'll only see these six recorded.

Changing the water into wine. That's Cain of Galilee. Chapter 2. The healing of a nobleman's son.

Chapter 4. The impotent man. Chapter 5. The man born blind. Chapter 9. The raising of Lazarus.

Chapter 11. The draft of fishes. Chapter 21.

And the other two, to make up the eight, the other two are the feeding of the five thousand. Which, incidentally, is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. The feeding of the five thousand, recorded in all the Gospels.

And Jesus walking on the water. That's also recorded in Matthew 14 and Mark 6. All right so far? Nobody in distress? But it's not only what John says that's distinctive. It's what he doesn't say.

It's what he doesn't say. In this Gospel, there's no genealogy. Oh, that's another long word.

I'll spell it and then explain it, in case you need me to. G-E-N-E-A-L-O-G-Y. Genealogy, which means your sort of family tree, your descendants, your ancestors.

All right. There's no genealogy of Christ in this Gospel. There's no birth of Jesus.

There's no boyhood. There's no growth. There's no baptism.

There's no record of the temptation. And there's not even a word about Gethsemane. G-E-T-H-S-E-M-A-N-E.

No record of Gethsemane. You see, it's not only what he says, that's what he doesn't say. Got that? Genealogy, birth, boyhood, growth, baptism, temptation, Gethsemane.

Nothing about any of them. Everything, everything in this Gospel is directed with one great target. To prove that Jesus is the Son of God.

John 20, verse 31. These things were written that you might know that he is the Son of God. And the whole book is a witness to this truth.

The word witness, incidentally, is one of the key words in the Gospel. It occurs about 50 times. Witnessing, witnessing, witnessing, the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

With me? All right. Now when we come through, come to go through the Gospel, we'll see the growing unbelief reflected in chapters 5 through 12. The growing unbelief, chapter 5 through 12, and chapter 18 and 19.

The growing unbelief was in the claim of Jesus to be divine. There was a growing unbelief in that, in those chapters. 13 through 17, and I'm sorry, 5 through 12, and 18 through 19.

But a growing belief is reflected in chapters 13 through 17. And also chapter 20. That Jesus was the Son of God.

That's the issue, the battleground, and the entire book centers around this one truth. And we're blessed or unblessed, according to our attitude, of the self-revelation of Jesus. Now we haven't even begun yet.

So if you've got your, what do you call it, analysis there, just turn to it a moment. And notice it's headed with the word prologue, the past. Chapter 1, verse 1, of the whole content of the Gospel.

Here is Jesus revealed. Now, note this carefully. First, he is the eternal life.

In the beginning, with God, the creator of all life. In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God. First five verses, he's the eternal life.

And he's revealed there. Then verses 6 through 13, he's the eternal light, the light of man, which is going to shine in the darkness. Verses 6 through 13.

And then he's the eternal love, dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. Verses 14 through 18. Now, we see a prologue in the analysis.

The divine light revealed, verses 1 through 5. Life revealed, sorry. The divine light displayed, verses 6 through 13. The divine love expressed.

And that's the key to the understanding of the whole book. Because, look at that outline again. And notice the headings I've given to the various parts of it, part A. Chapter 1, verse 19 through chapter 12, to the end of it.

Christ as life revealed to the world. That's the theme of the first part. Christ as life revealed to the world.

Then, chapter 13 through 17, in part B in your prologue, in your analysis. Christ as light revealed to the disciples. Verse 13, chapter 13 to 17.

And chapter 18 through 20, Christ as love revealed to everybody at Calvary. And through the tomb, and the resurrection. And of course, chapter 21 is the epilogue.

Now, just to look for a few moments at the epilogue, the prologue itself. As a matter of fact, to analyze this gospel is almost blasphemy. It's far too wonderful for that.

Somebody, one commentator has put this about it. It's a river deep enough for an elephant to swim in, but shallows where a little lamb can wade. And that's rather lovely.

Deep enough, deep enough for an elephant to swim in, but shallow where a lamb may wade. And it's really divided into five parts, as I've given you in the analysis. And mark these divisions from your analysis in your Bible.

I hope you believe in messing up your Bible. Just make a thorough mess of it. That's good.

I reckon you keep a Bible out ten years maximum. After that it's through. But be sure that you wreck it at Capenry.

And you can start, if you haven't done so already, by wrecking it in John's gospel, that would be fine. Put these divisions in the gospel, in the particular chapter where they come, and then you have the outline there. And master.

In a sense, my concern is not that you should master John's gospel, but John's gospel should master you. And me. Going through my Bible once a year, tremendous thing to do.

But my word, let the Bible go through me once a year, that's horrifying. And that's what Capenry is all about. Excuse me, that wasn't meant to be said.

That's not you, stupid. Sorry, that's me. Now look at this prologue already.

Ready for it? Come on now. Looking back, and three distinct paragraphs in it. First, the revelation of the word.

Jesus, in his relation to God. This is one and two. In his relation to creation, there are three.

And his relation to men. This is four and five. Now who on earth can possibly exhaust that? God has only spoken one word.

But that's the whole language. He's only spoken one word. In the beginning was the word.

One word. But that's the whole language of heaven. Ah, terrific.

I've just jotted down in my Bible today, words. You can jot it down into twos, if you like. I think it's quite good myself.

Excuse my humility. Words are used to express ourselves. Jesus is God expressing himself.

God's word means his power in action. And Jesus is God in action. I'll just give you that again.

Let it grip you. Words are used to express ourselves. Jesus is God expressing himself.

God's word means his power in action. Jesus is God in action. I don't think anywhere, anything ever could express more plainly the divinity and eternity of the Lord Jesus.

You should walk around those words. Get into them. Lie down on them.

He who is the creator is our Redeemer, the light and the life of men. And the darkness cannot overcome the light. That's thrilling.

That's the divine life revealed. Know that? Now, second thing here is this. It's a long word again.

I'll spell it. It's the historic, here it comes, manifestation of the word. In verses 6 through 13.

The historic manifestation, M-A-N, I-F, E-S, T-A, T-I-O-N. He who was from all eternity was made known in time. The light was revealed, verses 6 through 9. It was also rejected, verses 10 through 11.

And verses 12 through 13, it was received. See, everybody has got to do something with the light. Verse 9. The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world.

He made the world, and was in it, but it wasn't known by it. Verse 10. He came to his own home, his own people, the Jews, who didn't receive him.

You come from an ungodly home, unconverted parents, people who don't know Jesus, break your heart. Jesus had that experience. He wasn't known.

He was rejected. Verse 11. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not.

And all the time, Christ is at the door of my heart, in my home. Hope we've all let him in. Amazing how many churches there are today, and Jesus is outside.

Good organizations, but no life. That's possible of many of us. I hope you've let him in.

And life has come, but the world is dead. And light has come, but the world is in darkness. Are you? Remember, you can reject the light, but you can't quench it.

You can reject it, you can't put it out. Verse 4 and 5. In him was life, and life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

There's the divine light displayed. And the human understanding of the word, in verses 14 through 18. You notice, here we have the witness of the apostles.

And the word became flesh, and was among us, full of grace and truth. We have beheld his glory, as of the only son from the father. This is the little bit I want you to get down again.

So, I'm decelerating, going to bottom gear, and speaking at dictation speed. Right? If I go too fast, shout at me. What do you think is meant by the glory of God? It is, in verse 14, the word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

We have beheld his glory. Glory as the only son from the father. Now then, slowly, the glory of God, is the unity of grace and truth.

Not the one, apart from the other. In his government, there can be no lowering of the standard of truth. I repeat that.

In his government, there can be no lowering of the standard of truth. Nor can there be any departure from the passion of grace. Nor can there be any departure from the passion of grace.

Therefore, therefore, the cross becomes necessary. Because of the nature of God. I'll give you again.

The cross becomes necessary, because of the nature of God. I'll just, I'll just quote that again. The glory of God.

Some people say glory is heaven. That's the ultimate. But that's not the glory.

The glory of God is the unity of grace and truth. Not the one, apart from the other. In his government, there can be no lowering of the standard of truth.

Nor can there be any departure from the passion of grace. Therefore, the cross is made necessary, by the very character of God. Some people suggest that Jesus went to Calvary because it was the only way he could show the love of God.

That's rubbish. He went to Calvary because God hates sin. Hates sin.

And he shows his hatred of it at the cross. That's what brought Jesus to Calvary. Lord, give me and you a holy hatred of what brought Jesus to the cross.

Here we have then the witness of the apostles, and also the witness of John the Baptist. Verse 15. John bore witness of him, and cried, This was he of whom I said he who comes after me ranks before me.

He was before me. The witness of John the Baptist, and the witness of the church. Verses 16 through 18.

And from his fullness have we all received grace, O grace, that was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Truth never changes.

Unchanging. Grace is unlimited. The law, Oh, get this.

The law makes demands upon us which we cannot possibly meet. But grace meets them all. Yes, sure I will.

Nearly makes me jump through the roof. The law makes demands upon us which we cannot possibly meet. Somebody says a Christian life is awfully difficult.

Nonsense. It's not difficult, it's impossible. The law makes demands upon us which we can't possibly meet.

But, grace meets them all. In answer to faith and obedience. That's the basic principle of Christian living.

Got it? Really got it? Notes? Mind? Heart? Hallelujah. Have we received his fullness? Just ask yourself that question. 725, it'll be in one minute.

Have we received his fullness? It's possible to have truth, be orthodox, but have little grace, be unattractive of his fullness. Have we received full of grace and truth? Hallelujah. Let's pray.

Thank you, dear Father, for such a wonderful Saviour and such a wonderful God. We long to know him better. I'm sorry, but we know so little about him.

And we give ourselves and our lives and all we are to know him. And to know the reality that all the fullness of the Godhead is in us by the Spirit, so we may live that lifestyle which commends Christ to us. We ask it for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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