

## That You May Continue to Believe...



### AN Exposition of the gospel of John

## Prologue to the Gospel of John John 1:1-18

Last week in our introduction, I repeated comments from Calvin, Luther and others that spoke to the fact that John is quite different than the other three gospels. I thought that prior to digging into the text this morning, I might flesh out for you exactly what Calvin, Luther and others meant when they spoke of John as being “**different**”.

Let me remind you of one of Luther’s quotes:

John writes very little about the works of Christ, but very much about His preaching, while the other Evangelists write much of His works and little of His preaching; therefore John’s Gospel is the one, tender, true chief Gospel, far, far to be preferred to the other three and placed high above them.<sup>1</sup>

Now my doctrine of Scripture won’t allow me to say that. But I understand exactly what Luther means. What he meant is this. John’s Gospel is more theologically focused. In John, there is less emphasis on the miracles of Jesus than on His words. That is not to say that there are no miracles in John. The miracles that are included in John’s Gospel are some of the most extraordinary ever

performed by our Lord. But John is not concerned with the miracles in and of themselves. He is really concerned with what the miracles mean.<sup>2</sup> John doesn't "pile up" miracles like the other gospels. Instead, John focuses on the quality and depth of the particular miracles he does use. Let me see if I can illustrate what I mean.

In Matthew's Gospel, there are 28 chapters and 22 miracles not counting the resurrection. That means there is one miracle every 1.2 chapters. Luke's Gospel is similar. It has 24 chapters and includes 21 miracles. That equals one miracle every 1.1 chapters. Mark's Gospel is the shortest with only 16 chapters but it contains 22 miracles, which means there is more than one miracle per chapter. John's Gospel on the other hand has 21 chapters and only 8 miracles, which means there is only one miracle every 2.6 chapters. Another way to say is that Matthew and Luke have twice as many miracles per chapter as John and Mark has three times as many miracles as John.<sup>3</sup>

Now, I don't know what conclusion you draw from that information but it tells me that John had a different purpose in mind than the other Gospel writers.<sup>4</sup> Part of that purpose can be further explained by comparing the amount of space given to a particular miracle and the amount of space given to the speech or proclamation associated with that miracle.<sup>5</sup> Let me explain what I mean.

In John 6:1-13, the Apostle John records the story of the Feeding of the 5,000. In telling the story John uses 13 verses. After telling the story of the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus explains the significance of what happened in a discourse that takes 43 verses. It's a discourse you know well. In fact, it is often called the "**Bread of Life**" discourse. It includes memorable lines like,

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:33**...For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:35**...Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:48**...I am the bread of life.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:51**...I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

Now in contrast, Matthew relates the same miracle in only seven verses and makes no comment as to its significance.<sup>6</sup> Mark tells the same story in eleven verses without interpreting it.<sup>7</sup> Luke doesn't interpret the miracle either and in fact only takes six verses to relate the whole story.<sup>8</sup>

Now let me be clear about this. That does not mean John got it right and the other gospel writers got it wrong. But it does certainly mean that John had a different purpose than the other writers.

John does same kind of thing in chapters 8 and 9. In chapter 8:12 Jesus begins a discourse in which he says...

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 8:12**..."I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

That discourse goes on for some 53 verses where it finally ends with Jesus saying...

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 9:5**...As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

When the discourse ends, Jesus performs a miracle that vindicates everything He said in the discourse. You will know, of course, that that miracle was the healing of the man born blind. It is a miracle that actually takes only two verses to recount. Immediately following that miracle, however, there arises a conflict where the significance of the miracle turns into a running debate between the man born blind, his parents and the Pharisees and that debate goes on for another 30 verses.

**Now, here's the point I want to make. In John, the miracles are important but they are important because they attest to the words of Jesus.** They affirm what He says. The miracles are signs of authentication.<sup>9</sup>

Somewhat related to that is the overall structure of the book. Most scholars see the book as being made up of four parts:

The Prologue (introduction)...John 1:1-18

The Book of Signs...John 1:19-12:50

The Book of Glory...John 13:1-20:31<sup>10</sup>

The Epilogue (conclusion)...John 21:1-25

Obviously, the Book of Signs is the portion of the gospel that contains most of Jesus' miracles.<sup>11</sup> Some scholars further divide what we are going to call the Book of Glory into two parts: (1) the Upper Room Discourse 13:1-17:26 and (2) the Passion Narrative 18:1-20:31<sup>12</sup>. But I think for our purposes I want to keep the simpler arrangement.

Now, let me relate just two other facts. First, let me explain how the miracles are spread over the Gospel of John. The prologue contains no miracles. The Book of Sign contains 7 miracles and at the end of the Book of Signs there is a conclusion by the author. The Book of Glory contains no miracles (except the resurrection) and at the end of the Book of Glory there is a conclusion by the author. The Epilogue contains only one miracle (the draught of fishes).

Secondly, of the eight miracles that John records, 5 are completely unique to John.<sup>13</sup> That is, they occur nowhere in the other Gospels. We'll talk more about that as we get into the passages where the signs occur. **My point and this bears repeating is that in John the miracles are important but they are important because they attest to the words of Jesus.**

Now having said all that, let's turn finally to the Prologue of the Gospel of John, John 1:1-18. Follow along with me as I read it

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:1**...In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. <sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was

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before me."')<sup>16</sup> And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.<sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.<sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Now the first thing I think you ought to recognize is the similarity between John 1 and Genesis 1. It doesn't seem to me to be any question that the Holy Spirit writing through the pen of John the Beloved wanted very much to make the connection with the creation account in Genesis 1.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:1**...In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.<sup>2</sup>

Notice too that that there are three distinct parts to verse 1. The word "was" is used three times and the word "word" is used three times and there is a sense in which the three terms are more or less set up as parallel to each other.

Now if you remember your English grammar you can see that the subject of each of the three phrases is "the Word" so that if you were diagramming them you would say the Word was, the Word was, and the Word was.

Now the first two phrases of the sentence are both modified by adverbial prepositional phrases and answer the questions "when?" and then "where?"

Now I want you to think about that. That means that when we look at that first phrase I can ask you the question, "The Word was 'when?'" And it means you would answer and say the Word was "in the beginning." And if you answered

like that I would say that's right...now what does that mean...the beginning of what?

And you would say, "It means the beginning of the beginning"...and what you would mean by that is that it means the beginning of Creation. Now obviously that is right. That is why John alludes to Genesis 1 with that initial phrase. Of course, if you had any doubt that that was what it meant you would have those doubts cleared up when you got down to verse three where John starts talking about the creation of everything that has been created. But I think perhaps it can mean even more than that. It may mean the origin or cause of all things.<sup>14</sup> John likes a bit of ambiguity. Sometimes he purposely chooses words that have more than one nuance.

Now the first time the phrase the "Word was" is used it is attached to a prepositional phrase that answers the question "when?"

The second time the phrase is used it is attached to the prepositional phrase "with God" which answers the question "where?" Now I want you to think about that. This character, this wonderful character...the Word was already at beginning of Creation and He was not only there but He was there with God. Now there is some sense in which the word "with" marks this character the Word as distinct from God. In other words, He is not the Father. He accompanies God the Father and has a relationship with God the Father but because He is with Him...He is not the Father.

But John doesn't want us to think of this character the Word as some sort of inferior created being...so he adds the third parallel phrase and the Word was

only this time no preposition but rather a good old fashioned noun...and what noun it is...the word God...theos.

Now it is true that the word God doesn't have article attached to it in Greek. It does not say the Word was the God. But that's a good thing not a bad thing. If it said "the God" it would make this person the same person the same exact person as the Father. But without the article it communicates about as well as could be communicated the reality that whatever God was...the Word was...and of course what you have here is a foundational passage for the idea of the Trinity...one God in three persons...separate persons...one essence.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:2**...He was in the beginning with God.

Now when you look at verse two you might initially think it is redundant or unnecessary. But it is there, I think for emphasis. John doesn't want us to miss the point that the Word really was in the beginning with God. He is not the Father but He is certainly eternal. He was there before there was anything. He was there before anything else was and He was there with the Father and He is fully and truly God.

Now verse three drives home the point that this person the Word is the creative power of God. He is not a created being. Rather He is the creative agency the Father uses to make all things.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:3**...All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.



Notice the text doesn't say He creates everything but rather in relationship with the Father He serves as the agent of Creation. It is wonderful how the Holy Spirit uses just the right word to preserve the relationship and work of both the Father and the Word. The Father Creates but He does so through the Word.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:4**...In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Now later on the Gospel of John, John is going to refer to "life" and "light" in terms of salvation and He is going to do that in the person of Jesus but here because of the immediate context, life and light almost certainly refer to Creation itself. The Word then is the fountain of life. He made life and he gave light to men. It is hard to know exactly whether John meant us to think of men's intelligence or rather fact that men are illumined in that they are made in the image of God. But what is clear is that whatever it means men received it through this wonderful person the Word.

Now part of the reason John has set up the passage the way he has is because later on he is going to turn to the subject of salvation and when he does he is going to say something like this, "In the same way, the Word gave life and light to men in Creation...He gives life and light in the new Creation...in salvation."

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:5**...The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Now verse 5 is wonderful. It is wonderful in that it continues with the general idea of Creation and light but begins even this early in the Gospel of John to

anticipate something the darkness and unbelief that is going to turn against the Word...the incarnate Word of God.

I think you get a hint at what is going to be clearly stated in verses 9-11.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:9**...The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

Anyway, let me summarize what John has said so far.

In the beginning was the wonderful character the Word.

He existed before Creation...before anything was made.

He was with God. That is, He was in relationship with the Father and in His presence. He was distinct from the Father but in no way inferior. What God was...He was.

He was the very agent through whom God made all things. He was of such import that nothing that was ever made was made without His direct involvement.

He gave men life in Creation and He gave them light.

The light he gives shines in the darkness...past and present...and the darkness has not/cannot overcome it.

Now I wanted to do that summary because in verse 6 there is a pivot. John stops talking about this mysterious character the Word for three verses and starts talking about John the Baptist.

No, that is probably not the right way to say it.

Perhaps, I should say it this way. John stops talking about the Word long enough to introduce the wonderful Prophet of God that will reintroduce the Word to His Creation.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:6**...There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

Notice what John says...a man was sent from God.

Now I should point out that the word for “was” used here in verse 6 is different that the word used early on for was in verses one and two. That word had the force of “already was.” This word has the force of became. I don’t want to make too much of the point but John was not “was” in the same way the Word “was.” The idea was that the Word always “was”, while John became. I want to make sure you get that because it will become a big point in just a few verses.

Anyway, John came along...sent from God. He was not the light...but was a witness to the light. Now the reason John was sent to be a witness was because this wonderful character the Word was coming into the world.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:9**...The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

Now notice here John doesn't use the word "Word" to describe the one coming into the world but instead uses the word "light." Still the context makes it obvious that he talking about this character the "Word."

John picks back up the idea that "he gives light" and here that is probably a reference to "Salvation" or "spiritual light." It may even be a reference to the idea of the "general revelation" for which He is responsible as God's agent in Creation.

Notice, too, the similarity of the structure of verse 10 with verse one. In verse 10 there are three uses of the word "was." There are three uses of the word "world." Still, I think you should notice that John's repetition here is not to stress the nature of the relation between the "Word" and the "world" but rather to do just the opposite. You see the three phrases are stacked up to show that unlike the Word's close identification and relationship to the Father...His relationship to world is all out of whack.

He was in the world.

The world came into existence through Him.

But the world didn't know who He was.

John emphasizes the point even further in verse 11.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:11**...He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

The word for “own” here is neuter. It could be translated, “He came to his own things.” In his commentary on John, Leon Morris says that it could be translated, “He came home.”<sup>15</sup> The Word came into the world, his own creation, a place where he should have been welcome and he was not. In fact, His own covenant people of the Old Testament did not receive. That is, in terms of their overall response to His incarnation, The Jews rejected their great Covenant King.

Many rejected Him. Still, some did accept Him. And those that did accept Him were changed and changed forever.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:12**...But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Verse twelve is so full.

To those that did receive Him...and by receive John means they believed in His name...in who He was and what He came to accomplish...to that group of people God gave the right to become something. That is, God gave them the right to change their status. Before they believed they were God rejecters. But when they believed God changed their status to that of being the Children of God.

And in case any of that is unclear, John makes the point that this status change is God's work. He is, of course, alluding to the new birth which he develops more fully in John 3.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:13**...who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Notice there are three phrases again. Those that receive the Word are not born of blood...that is the mingled desire of a mom or dad. They are not born of human will or more specifically the will of mankind. They are born of God and God's will.

Salvation then is God's work. Man responds but God initiates and enables belief by regenerating sinful human hearts.

I probably should say that I think verse 12 and 13 are the center hinge of John 1:1-18 but I think I'll wait till next week when we look at the chiasmic structure of the passage.

Now starting in verse 14, John unfolds the second half of the prologue.

I say it that way because John parallels much of the first half of the prologue but he does so in such a way that the reader sees a contrast.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:14**...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup> And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given

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through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Now the contrast I want you to see is between verse 1 and verse 14.

You see this wonderful, mysterious character the Word is finally identified. He is identified as the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who was the Word. He is the one who was...and yet He became. Now that idea is the heart of the incarnation and I have to tell you there is no way I can emphasize the importance of the idea here enough.

He was and yet He became.

He was eternal and uncreated. He was with the Father and what God was, He was and is and yet, he became what we are...he became flesh.

How is that possible? How can He who always was become. How can He who was in the beginning before there even was a beginning come to have a beginning? Do you see what I mean? It is the mystery of the incarnation.

And yet it was absolutely essential that that happen in order for us to be transferred from the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of Light. It was essential that he come down.

How does the Creed put it...who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven.

Luke and Matthew give the narrative or story of the incarnation and it captures our minds but John focuses on the extraordinary theological meaning of the event. John focuses on the fact the Word who always was...became flesh in order to secure our salvation.

I love that little phrase in the middle of verse 14 where it says, "he dwelt among us." It uses a strange verb...a verb associated with pitching tents. In fact, a number of translations focus on just that nuance and render the phrase...he pitched his tent among us, or he tabernacled among us, or he dwelt in our midst and the idea points back to the Tabernacle in the wilderness wanderings. God came down and dwelt in the midst of His people.

He did not have to become a part of the creation to have the creation exist. He spoke the word and it occurred. But he came into the creation, the one who "was" came into the realm of the "becoming", in order to accomplish something greater than the physical creation. He takes those of us who are part of this world and transforms us and we become something that is not natural to this realm. We become related to this realm of the "was" through Jesus Christ. All who believe have the power to "become" the children of God. That's his point. And he very carefully weaves the vocabulary and the structure together to make this point. It is brilliantly done.

As you work your way through the rest of the text you begin to see the result. We become the children of God but there is something more than that. He uses a contrast in verse 17...



<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:17**...For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Do you see what has happened? Jesus, the Word, was and caused all things to become. Because of our relationship to Him we become children of God. Grace and truth are ours through Jesus Christ because He caused them to become. He caused them to exist. It is not just the physical creation, though that is an important point. It is grace and truth that exist and are knowable because of Jesus Christ. John concludes the section by explaining how that that which is incomprehensible became comprehensible.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:18**...No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

This extraordinary person, the Word, has come into the world that he created and though he was not recognized and was, in fact, rejected by the very ones that should have received Him. He has provided for those that believe in Him the right, the authority, the power to come into a relationship with the Him and with the Father who sent Him. When we are discouraged we turn to Him and Him alone because He has bridged the path to God. He is the bridge to God.

Now surely the reality of that ought to sustain our souls.

I remember when I was in Bible College, there was a young man there who was Jewish. Somewhere along the way, the Spirit of God regenerated his heart and turned him to faith in Jesus. Now this young man was an ardent evangelist; he was absolutely brilliant. In our little fundamentalist circle he was a tremendous scholar. You would have thought that his parents would have been proud of him

for his academic and spiritual zeal. But you know what, they weren't. They cast him out of their home. They cast him out of their family. They actually held a funeral service for him. As far as they were concerned, he was dead...dead and gone and yet he kept on going undeterred.

Now I wanted to tell you that story not to make you feel sorry for him but rather to tell you that the thing that sustained him was the fact the Lord of Glory came down...came down bore his sin on the cross and gave him the right to become a child of God. That truth sustained him and it will sustain you as well in the end. And when you come many years from now to the end of your life you will be able to look back and say with John Knox...that is the place where I cast my anchor and it has held.

Let's pray.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, *Works of Martin Luther with Introductions and Notes*, Volume 6. Preface to the New Testament taken from the 1522 Edition from, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press), 443-4

<sup>2</sup> Marianne Meye Thompson, "John" in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers, 1993), 412. She writes: "Interspersed throughout the gospel are various signs (miracles) that Jesus did (Brown; Dodd; Smalley; Wead). While the other gospels recount numerous miracles, John tells but a few. But precisely because they are few in number, the miracles become an even more important structural feature in John. Often the miracles in John are paired with a discourse in which Jesus expounds on the miracle, elaborating it in such a way that it becomes a symbolic pointer (hence, "sign") to who Jesus is."

<sup>3</sup> It may be helpful to see how and what I counted as miraculous. Note the appendix, "Miracles in John".

<sup>4</sup> C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John: An Introduction with Notes and Commentary on the Greek Text*, (London: S.P.C.K, 1967), 62. "It would not be impossible for the casual reader of the synoptic gospels to pick out from them miracle narratives which he could regard simply as the work of a strolling magician.' It would be much more difficult to do this in the fourth gospel. With the miracles, as with other elements of the tradition, John has seized the Christological interpretation which is implicit in the Synoptics, clarified it, and stamped it upon the material in such a way

that the reader is not allowed to escape it. The miracles of this gospel are a function of its Christology. Rightly to understand them is to apprehend Christ by faith (10.38; 14.11)."

<sup>5</sup> B.L. Blackburn, "Miracles and Miracle Stories" in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1992) 555. Blackburn's article is very helpful. He notes both the number of miracles (though his count is different than mine) and the importance related to the different number of miracles cited.

<sup>6</sup> **Matthew 14:14**...When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. <sup>15</sup> As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." <sup>16</sup> Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." <sup>17</sup> "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. <sup>18</sup> "Bring them here to me," he said. <sup>19</sup> And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. <sup>20</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. <sup>21</sup> The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children

<sup>7</sup> **Mark 6:34**...When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. <sup>35</sup> By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. <sup>36</sup> Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." <sup>37</sup> But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" <sup>38</sup> "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five-- and two fish." <sup>39</sup> Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup> So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. <sup>41</sup> Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. <sup>42</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, <sup>43</sup> and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. <sup>44</sup> The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

<sup>8</sup> **Luke 9:12**...Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here." <sup>13</sup> He replied, "You give them something to eat." They answered, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish-- unless we go and buy food for all this crowd." <sup>14</sup> (About five thousand men were there.) But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." <sup>15</sup> The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. <sup>16</sup> Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. <sup>17</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

<sup>9</sup> C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1998), 445. Of course, some scholars go way too far in their understanding of such an emphasis. C.H. Dodd for example does not seem to have any problem saying that the evangelist simply creatively reinterpreted historical events. My understanding is different. I would say that the Holy Spirit simply revealed to the evangelist the truth of what certain historical events meant. Perhaps, the best way for you to see the difference is to read Dodd's own words. "This use of freely composed speeches to elucidate the significance of events does not in itself impugn the historical character of the narrative in the Fourth Gospel, any more than in Thucydides or Tacitus. There is however good reason to suspect that in some cases and in some respects the narratives which provide the setting for such speeches may have been molded by the ideas which they are made to illustrate. We may perhaps express the evangelist's attitude to history in this way. He accepts without qualification the general tradition of the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, as it was expressed in the apostolic preaching, and entered into the earliest confessions of faith; and he is concerned to affirm with all emphasis the historical actuality of the facts which it transmitted. He has meditated deeply upon the meaning of the Gospel story, taken as a whole. He then turns back upon the details of the story, and seeks in each particular incident the meaning of the whole, expressing that meaning partly by the way in which he reports the facts, partly by the order in which they are placed, and partly through carefully composed discourses and dialogues."

In seeking to interpret the facts he records, the Fourth Evangelist is not necessarily exceeding the limits proper to history. For it is the function of the historian, as distinct from the chronicler, to expose the course of events as an intelligible process, in which the human spirit interacts with its environment; and that means, both to envisage events as arising (on the one side) out of human thoughts and motives, and to make perceptible and intelligible the influence they in turn exert on the thoughts and motives of men, through which fresh events are prepared.

<sup>10</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, AB 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), cxxxviii-cxxxix. As far as I can tell the phrase, "Book of Glory" was made popular by Raymond Brown. Brown is a catholic scholar attributed with writing what may be the best commentary available on John.

<sup>11</sup> Brown, cxxxix.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Argument, Outline*, (Taken from the <http://www.bible.org> article), 12.

<sup>13</sup> Blackburn, 555. Blackburn says probably only four are unique.

<sup>14</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 65.

<sup>15</sup> Morris, 85.