

“Three Questions for John 7:53-8:11”
John 7:53-8:11
Ephesians 4:7-8 & 11-13
John 21:24-25
Matthew 7:1-5
January 19, 2020
Faith Presbyterian Church – Evening Service
Pr. Nicoletti

We will be looking at several texts tonight, but the passage we will be focusing on will be John 7:53-8:11.

We’re going to ask three questions about this text – and I’ll mention them before I read the text.

The three questions we will be asking about John 7:53-8:11 are:

- Is this text part of Scripture?
- Is the story in this text historical?
- Are the themes of this text consistent with the Bible?

So:

- First, is this text part of Scripture?
- Second, is the story in this text historical?
- And third, are the themes of this text consistent with the Bible?

With that in mind, we turn to the text itself, John 7:53-8:11.

^{7:53} [[They went each to his own house, ^{8:1} but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. ³ The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst ⁴ they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” ⁶ This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. ⁷ And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸ And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹ But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. ¹⁰ Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹ She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”]]

Let’s pray.

Lord, we come to this text tonight with important questions.

As we consider it, please guide our hearts and minds.

Help us to seek your truth.

Help us to honor your Word.

Help us to trust you in the ways that you have chosen to transmit your Word to us.

Grant this, we ask, for Jesus’s sake. Amen

Without any further delay then, let’s dive into our questions.

First: Is this passage part of Scripture?

I realize that for a number of you this will be review ... but I'd ask you to indulge me and bear with us for this point, because for a number of people this is not review.

First, if you haven't already, I'd ask you now to turn to this passage, so you have it before you. John 7:53-8:11. It's on page 894 of the pew Bible. You can turn to it in just about any modern translation to see what I'll be pointing out, but the ESV will match it word-for-word.

As you look at the passage, you'll notice something of a disclaimer in brackets right above verse fifty-three.

It says, in all caps "THE EARLIEST MANUSCRIPTS DO NOT INCLUDE 7:53-8:11"

And then, after that, the passage itself is in double brackets.

And it's not just the ESV. The NIV, the NASB, the NRSV – these translations all do essentially the same thing. The RSV – the Revised Standard Version on which our ESV is based – takes the passage out and puts the whole thing in a footnote. Virtually every modern translation notes that this text is suspect, or they state directly that it does not belong.

Which is what raises this question in the first place.

Is this passage part of Scripture?

My answer would be: Probably not.

That answer, of course, raises more questions.

So – let's address three sub-questions under this major question:

- How do we come to this conclusion?
- What are the implications for the reliability of our Bibles? And
- What are the implications for how we know God?

Let's tackle those three sub-questions now.

First: How do we come to the conclusion that this passage should probably not be considered as Scripture?

This conclusion is reached through the process called textual criticism.

We might think of the transmission of ancient documents – including the books of the New Testament – like a tree.

At the base of the trunk you have the original manuscript – in this case the account that John himself wrote with his own hand.

But then, if the document is to be circulated and preserved over time, it must be copied – and it must be copied by hand. It must be copied by hand multiple times. And then those copies must

be copied. And the copies of the copies must be copied. And as those copies are made, the documents branch out over time like the branches of a tree. Every copy branches out a bit further, and then the copies of that copy branch out further from that.

Now, as humans are not perfect, there are variations, because some scribes making the copies will make mistakes. And those mistakes can be transmitted down the line from that copy – from that manuscript.

The work of the textual critic is to consider all the copies – all the manuscripts – of a document we have from a range of branches and a range of time periods.

And as text critics do that, they can begin to identify differences, and then correct scribal errors. Imagine there is a verse, and as we look at the different manuscripts – different copies – we see a difference: some we might call Version A and some Version B. And we wonder which represents the original and which represents a scribal error. When we place all the copies – all the manuscripts – with that verse that we have in their place on the tree of textual transmission, we can often identify which version is the error and which represents the original. If all the manuscripts that have Version B of the verse are found on one branch of the tree, and if a diverse set of other branches have Version A, then we have multiple branches witnessing to Version A and it seems likely that a copy at the base of one branch introduced Version B by accident.

And both the branches that a manuscript is on and the dating of the manuscripts factor into these evaluations.

And while that might sound complicated ... it is actually far more complicated in practice.

But, in general terms, this is how textual criticism works. And *a lot* of text critical work has gone into the Greek manuscripts that were used to give us the modern English translations that we use today.

So – if that is how textual criticism works, then what text critical findings have led modern English translations to say that John 7:53-8:11 is probably not Scriptural?

Text critic Bruce Metzger, who wrote *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* expresses how clear the case is with this particular passage. He writes that the evidence that the Apostle John did *not* write this passage “is overwhelming.” He goes on to explain that this passage is absent from both early manuscripts and from diverse branches of manuscripts. In addition to that, there are other indications that the passage is not authentic. A number of the later manuscripts that do contain this passage mark it off with asterisks or other markings. Still other later manuscripts that contain this passage, don’t put it here, but put it in a different part of John’s Gospel, or even in Luke’s Gospel. [Carson, 333] After listing out the evidence, Metzger writes that “the case *against* [John’s authorship of this passage] appears to be conclusive.” [Metzger, 219-222 (emphasis added)]

It continues to be printed in most modern English translations in some part out of tradition. The story is known to many. The passage was included in the manuscripts that the translators of the King James Version of the Bible favored.

And so the balance that modern translations have struck in order to be true to the findings of textual criticism and to provide a translation of this well-known story, is to print it in brackets or with footnotes, as we have already noted.

And all of that is why the answer to our first question: “Is this passage part of Scripture?” is: Probably not.

That explains how we came to this conclusion, but then it leads right to our next question, which is: What are the implications of this for the reliability of our Bibles?

Because for some Christians, hearing about or reflecting on the field of textual criticism raises all sorts of concerns or even fears. It can make us feel like the Bible we have in our hands is less reliable. It can make us wonder if other things are wrong. It can raise anxiety about the confidence we can have in our faith.

And some have made careers off of those anxieties. Bart Ehrman is a well-known and scholarly text critic. He is also a skeptic and an agnostic. He has written five *New York Times* bestsellers that all argue that the Bible as we have it today is unreliable.

Yet, despite Ehrman’s skepticism and sales numbers, many scholars who work in the field of Biblical textual criticism (including Bruce Metzger, whom Ehrman studied under) – many scholars in this field are believing evangelicals – faithful Christians who believe in the reliability of the Scriptures. And many Christians find that understanding textual criticism actually *increases* their confidence in the reliability of the Bible, rather than decreases it.

Andreas Köstenberger and Michael Kruger, in their book *The Heresy of Orthodoxy* (which responds to the arguments of Ehrman among others) devote a chapter as to whether the realities of textual criticism means that our Bibles now are unreliable.

Their answer is that “We have good reasons to think that we are able to recover the New testament text in a manner that is so very close to the original that there is no material difference between what [the original authors] wrote and the text we have today.” [Köstenberger, et al., 205]

And they support that conclusion by arguing for four theses, which I want to spend a few minutes summarizing.

Those four theses are:

- First, that “we have good reasons to think the original text is preserved (somewhere) in the overall textual tradition.”
- Second, that “the vast majority of scribal changes are minor or insignificant.”
- Third, that “of the small portion of variations that are significant, our text-critical methodology can determine with a reasonable degree of certainty, which is the original text.”
- And fourth, that “the remaining number of truly unsolvable variants is very few and not material to the story [or] teaching of the New Testament.” [Köstenberger ,et al., 205]

Let’s consider those theses briefly [what follows draws and quotes from Köstenberger ,et al., 203-231]:

First, that “we have good reasons to think the original text is preserved (somewhere) in the overall textual tradition.”

In any field where you are dealing with manuscripts that had to be copied by hand – so anything written before the printing press – what scholars most want is a number of manuscripts, set as early as possible.

Unfortunately with many ancient documents, scholars don’t get this.

“For example, the writings of Tacitus from the first century, widely recognized as one of the greatest Roman historians, survive in only three manuscripts, and not all are complete.” Gaius, a Roman jurist in the second century is considered essential for his accounts of Roman law under emperors like Marcus Aurelius. Only three manuscripts of his key work exist, but the authoritative text rests on only one of them. The work *Jewish War* by Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, is quite better – with over fifty extant manuscripts – though “the text is mainly dependent on about ten of them.”

When it comes to the New Testament though, scholars possess over 5,500 manuscripts (in whole or in part) *in Greek alone*. Then, in addition to that there are over 10,000 copies in Latin. And then in addition to that there are thousands of more copies in Coptic, Syriac, Gothic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and other languages. And on top of that there are the extensive quotations of the New Testament throughout the writings of the church fathers.

As one scholar says: “We have therefore, a genuine embarrassment of riches in the quantity of manuscripts we possess ... The writings of no Greek classical author are preserved on this scale.” He goes on to say: “The point is that we have so many manuscripts of the [New Testament] ... that surely the original reading *in every case* is somewhere present in our vast store of material.” [Eldon Epp, quoted in Köstenberger ,et al.]

In addition to the number of manuscripts, there is also the dating of the manuscripts. Those other important historic texts again give us some perspective. The earliest manuscript of Tacitus comes from 800 years after it was written. The earliest usable manuscript of Josephus’s *Jewish War* comes almost 900 years after it was written. Gaius’s work does much better, coming 300 years after it was written.

By contrast, for the New Testament, which was all written in the middle or late first century, we have manuscripts from as early as the second century for at least portions of the Gospel of John, the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Luke, the Book of Revelation, and the Pauline epistles. In addition to that, we have major codices which contain nearly the entire Greek Bible from as early as the fourth century.

The abundance and the early dates of the available manuscripts all support the first thesis of Köstenberger and Kruger: “We have good reasons to think the original text is preserved (somewhere) in the overall textual tradition.”

The second thesis is that “the vast majority of scribal changes are minor or insignificant.”

Among the thousands of documents we have there are, unsurprisingly, also thousands of variants – maybe even as many as four hundred thousand. But the “vast, vast majority” of those variants have no impact on determining the original text.

These would be variants that include things like spelling differences, or nonsense readings that clearly result from something like a scribe skipping a line as he copied, or variants that only show up in only one manuscript out of thousands, or meaningless word order changes (since, unlike English, Greek does not rely on word order for meaning), or the use of definite articles before proper nouns, which does not affect meaning in Greek.

And because so many variants take these forms, “the vast majority of scribal changes are minor or insignificant.”

The third thesis of Köstenberger and Kruger is that “of the small portion of variations that are significant, our text-critical methodology can determine with a reasonable degree of certainty, which is the original text.”

By “significant” here we mean that the two variations have *some* difference in meaning.

But, in most of those cases text critics can determine which reading is the error. The evidence, when laid out, is fairly clear, and most text critics are in agreement about what the original text said.

Which brings us to the final thesis of Köstenberger and Kruger: that after text critics have examined a text, “the remaining number of truly unsolvable variants is very few and not material to the story [or] teaching of the New Testament.”

In some rare cases there are two versions of a verse, and both have good evidence for them, and it’s not clear which one was the original.

But in none of those cases does the variant compromise or threaten an essential Christian doctrine or claim.

Köstenberger and Kruger give some examples. They are things like whether it was Jesus’s mother and brothers who came for him in Mark 3:32, or whether it was his mother, brothers, and sisters.

Or is passages like Mark 7:9 and whether Jesus said the Pharisees rejected God’s commandments to “establish” their traditions or to “keep” them.

“Both of [these] examples,” Köstenberger and Kruger write, “are typical ‘unresolved’ variants – not only are they very rare, but most of the time they affect the meaning of the text very little (and thus are relatively boring).”

There are a couple more noteworthy cases where the variants are unresolvable at this point. One is whether the details of Jesus’s anguish in the garden in Luke 22:43-44 are part of the original text. Another is whether Mark 1:41 originally said that Jesus responded to a leper with compassion for his condition or anger at the causes of his suffering.

But in every one of these cases, no essential information of Jesus, no key Christian doctrine is in jeopardy. “The remaining number of truly unsolvable variants is very few and not material to the story [or] teaching of the New Testament.”

When we take all of these facts together, we see why we can have confidence in the Bibles we hold in our hands today.

As Köstenberger and Kruger put it: “We have good reasons to think that we are able to recover the New testament text in a manner that is so very close to the original that there is no material difference between what [the original authors] wrote and the text we have today.”

Which brings us to one more question on the nature of Scripture: What are the implications of textual criticism for how we know God?

What does textual criticism mean for our access to God and his truth?

Because that, I think, is the underlying question that really bothers people. As we think about this field, we begin to realize that we don't have truly direct access to the Word of God. The Word of God, it seems to us, is mediated through fallible humans – through these text critics. Suddenly we are relying on them ... and that feels insecure ... it feels less direct than we would like it to be.

What do we make of the fact that God would have his people reliant on fallible human beings in order to gain access to his Word? What are the implications of textual criticism for how we know God?

And the answer is that textual criticism is a good reminder for how God ordinarily works.

Because God, over and over again, seems to delight in calling his people to rely on fallible and finite human beings in order to know him.

Think about this. You might wish that we could eliminate text critics so that we don't have to depend on the work of human beings to receive the Word of God ... but cutting out text criticism wouldn't actually solve the problem.

Because even if we had a single perfect Greek New Testament ... it would still be in Greek. And so most of us here would still have to rely on human translators to have access to God's Word.

And even if you got around that – even if you learned Greek (and we'll just pass over the fact that you'd still have to rely on other people – either teachers or authors – in order to learn Greek) – but even if you learned Greek perfectly, the Greek manuscript you had would not be the original from John. It would still be a copy. A copy from a copy from a copy, many times over. Even if you eliminate the text critics, and even if you eliminate the translators, you would still be reliant on generation after generation of scribes to transmit the text to you.

In other words, you can never come to God's Word in isolation – as just you and God. You always come with other people – you always come *reliant* on other people.

God seems to like it that way.

He says so in many portions of Scripture – but we might consider just one, from Ephesians 4, starting in verse seven. The Apostle Paul writes:

“⁷ But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore it says,

‘When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
and he gave gifts to men.’

[Then, jumping down to verse eleven]

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Here the Apostle Paul writes about what gifts Jesus gave to his people, so that they might know him and grow in him and mature in their relationship with him. And the gifts God gave ... were people. He gave apostles and prophets, yes. But he also gave shepherds and teachers. And under the heading of teachers we might easily add that he gave scribes, and translators ... and even text critics. God seems to like working through his creatures. He apparently doesn't want you to come to him isolated from his people – but he has instead forced you to rely on them, if you are to know him.

The facts of textual criticism remind us that we need God's people. We need them if we are to grow in our relationship with God. We need them in our congregation. We need them in personal relationships. We need them if we are to receive, and discern, and understand the Word of God.

A significant theological implication of all of this is that we need God's people in order to know God.

So ... zooming out again, remember, we are asking three main questions:

- First, is this text part of Scripture?
- Second, is the story in this text historical?
- And third, is the theme of this text consistent with the Bible?

In answer to the first question: “Is this text part of Scripture?” we have said: Probably not.

Which brings us to our second question: Is the story in this text historical?

And the answer I'll give is: Quite possibly.

Though not part of the Scriptures, this story is still quite possibly historical. It is quite possible that it did really happen.

And that view is supported by some of the very same scholars who argue that the passage is not a part of the Scriptures.

Immediately after writing about how the case against John's authorship of this passage “appears to be conclusive,” Bruce Metzger continues and writes this – he says: “At the same time the account has all the earmarks of historical veracity. It is obviously a piece of oral tradition which circulated in certain parts of the Western church and which was subsequently incorporated into various manuscripts at various places.” [Metzger, 220-221] Another commentator writes: “There is little reason for doubting that the event here described occurred, even if in its written form it did not in the beginning belong to the canonical books.” [Carson, 333]

And if we think about it, this should not shock us, that there would be historical accounts of Jesus's words and deeds that were not recorded in the Scriptures. In fact the Apostle John himself told us that we should expect just that.

John identifies himself at the end of his Gospel, and then writes:

²⁴ This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

²⁵ Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

This story may be one such account, that happened but was not included in the Scriptures.

And in fact, the idea that this was a separate historical account also may explain how it got incorporated in later manuscripts of John's Gospel. It seems likely that some scribes wanted to include the text with some sort of formatting or marking to show that it was separate from the rest of the text. But then, in subsequent copies scribes may have eliminated those formatting distinctions or markings, assuming that they themselves were errors. The result is that an outside account – which may have been historical but was not written by John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – that this outside account was incorporated into the text of the Scriptures themselves, without anyone actually intending to deceive anyone.

With all that said, the answer to our question “Is the story in this text historical?” is: Quite possibly.

But before we go on, we need to pause on this question a little longer ... and we need to ask: What are the implications of that? What are the implications of the idea that we may have a historical but non-Scriptural account of the words and deeds of Jesus?

It is a good reminder of the value of such stories – both that they are not equal to Scripture, and that they still have true value.

As we think about how such stories are not equal with Scripture, one of the first distinctions that comes to mind is that we cannot have the same faith in their veracity – of their truth.

Scripture is the Word of God, and God cannot lie. And so we can have the fullest confidence that God's Word is true where human words may have errors. That is one important distinction.

But second, along with that, stories outside of Scripture are not equal to Scripture, *even if they are 100% accurate*, because of the question of *who* is talking.

We need to remember that what makes Scripture Scripture is not just that it is true – although that is essential – but what makes Scripture Scripture is that it is *God* speaking to us his people. It is *God's* Word. It is what God has said by the Spirit, to his people, for their teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. It is the word of Christ to his Bride, the Church.

You might think of it like this. One of the most important ways that my wife knows me is through the words that I speak to her. Now, a mutual friend might one day share with her a story about me that she hadn't heard before. That story might be 100% accurate. That story might, in some ways, enhance her understanding of me. But on a relational level, that story is not my word

to her. It is not the words of a husband to his wife, it is words *about* a husband to his wife. That doesn't erase the truth of the story or its value – but it means it doesn't fill the same *relational* role.

The Scriptures are the Words of Christ the Bridegroom to the Church, his Bride. What happens through the Scriptures, when we read them on our own, but especially when we hear them in worship with God's people, is that Christ is speaking *to* his bride. And for that to be the case, the words must be God's words. And those are found in the Scriptures. Which is why tonight our sermon is a bit different. We are not hearing *from* John 7:53-811 so much as we are hearing *about* it, with help and guidance from other portions of Scripture.

So – stories outside of Scripture are not equal to Scripture.

But along with that, stories outside of Scripture still have true value.

You can see that in the analogy I used a moment ago. A new story about me, told by someone else, from a time before my wife knew me, will never be *my* word to my wife. But it may still have value. It may still enhance her understanding of me. It may still help her see me in new ways. It may enhance our relationship *in a different way* than my words to her would.

And so it is with our relationship with God.

That means that this story, if it is historical, as Metzger and Carson suspect, is still instructive for us. It can still give us a window into Christ and what he is like.

It also means, by the way, that stories of what Christ has done for his people *since* he ascended to heaven can be valuable to us.

Stories of how Christ has worked in the history of his Church – whether in the broad movements of Church history or the spiritual lives of historic individuals – these stories too have real value for us. They teach us what Christ is like, even if such stories are not themselves Christ's words to us. This is much of the value in reading Christian biography and Church history.

But in addition to all that, this also means that it is important to have relationships with other believers in which we speak in authentic ways about what the Lord is doing in each of our lives. You can get to know the Lord better by hearing from another Christian what God is doing in their life. You can help others know the Lord better by sharing with them what he is doing in your life. This is one of the key ways that we build one another up in Christ (1 Thess 5:11) and bear one another's burdens in Christ (Gal. 6:2).

We can learn a lot about God even through stories that are not a part of the Scriptures.

We've answered our first question: "Is this text part of Scripture?" and said: Probably not.

We've asked: "Is this story in this text historical?" and said: Quite possibly.

And now we come to our third question: Is the theme of this text consistent with the Bible?

And my answer would be yes.

In this passage a group of scribes and Pharisees bring a woman to Jesus, say that they caught her in adultery, that the law demands the death penalty for her, and then they ask Jesus what they should do.

And the hypocrisy and cruelty of the men who bring this woman to Jesus is glaring.

First of all, one does not commit adultery alone ... the absence of the man she was with is striking. When the Bible condemns sexual immorality, its condemnation falls equally on men and women.

Second, there is very little evidence that capital punishment was carried out very often in Palestine in Jesus's day, especially in urban areas ... and beyond that, the Romans who ruled over the Jews had the exclusive right to issue death sentences.

In other words, these men are not interested in evenhanded justice, or in what should be done in this case.

They want to trap Jesus. And to do that they act as hypocrites – pretending to care about justice when they don't. And in the process, they treat this woman, who was caught in sin, as a mere pawn in their political maneuvers. They don't care about her at all.

Jesus's response is: "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

Jesus calls out their hypocrisy. They have likely sinned just in how they brought this charge to Jesus – by accusing the woman but not the man, by also using both the woman and God's law as pawns in an argument rather than treating them with value and respect.

And the accusers are cut by Jesus's words. And one by one they leave. When they are all gone, Jesus responds to the woman with a call to repentance. He does not condemn her, but offers forgiveness. And he calls her to turn from her sin.

And both Jesus's confrontation of hypocrisy and his compassion for sinners are seen again and again in the Gospels.

We think, for example, of how he confronts hypocrisy in Matthew seven. There he says:

"Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

Along with that, Jesus's mission to save sinners, to forgive their sins, to call them to repentance, to heal them so that they no longer live for sin but for God – this we see again and again in the Gospels.

The themes of this text are consistent with the Bible.

When others sin, it calls us to check our own sin, and to apply no measure of judgment that we would not apply to ourselves.

And when we sin, it reminds us that we can come to Jesus, and if we confess to him and trust in him, he does not condemn us, but offers us forgiveness, and calls us to a new life.

We've said a lot of different things about this passage tonight. But even as we've discussed technical aspects of textual criticism, we have encountered implications for how we relate to God's Word and God's people.

Regarding God's Word, we have been reminded of the importance of distinguishing Scripture from non-Scripture. And we have seen that despite all the complexity behind the text of the Bible we hold in our hands, still we can have confidence that what we have before us *is* the Word of God.

Concerning God's people, we have been reminded that we do in fact rely on the people of God to know Christ. We rely on them not only to live out the Scriptures, but to understand the Scriptures, and to even receive the Scriptures.

We have been reminded of the value of stories about the work of Christ among the people of God, both now and in the past – even if those stories are not in the Scriptures.

We have been reminded to imitate the way that Christ loves sinners, and not the hypocritical ways many have condemned others but not themselves.

Finally, we are reminded that in our own sin, Christ offers us compassion even when others do not.

This sermon was pulled out of our normal morning sequence because the text at the center of it is probably not the Word of God. Even so, in reflecting tonight we have learned much about how we are to live as God's people, and how much we can rely on God's Word.

Confident, then, in both the love of God and the Word of God, let us trust Christ, rely on his people, and have compassion for those in sin.

Amen.

This sermon draws on material from:

Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John*. PNTC. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.

Köstenberger, Andreas J. and Michael J. Kruger. *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with Diversity has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

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