

1. Review –

- Focus of Mystics is to see into the unseen nature of reality –
 - Genesis 28 – Jacob's Ladder
 - Ezekiel's Visions
 - Daniel 7 & the Son of Man
 - Paradox
 - Creation (Genesis 1)
- The Gospel of John is structured as creation – seven signs.
- The Greek word *mysterion* is used 27 times in the New Testament.
- For the early church and the Church fathers, *mysterion* represented the aspects of the Bible that lie below the surface of the literal meaning.
- The mysteries of the Gospel will be illuminated through God's revelation.

- Sacrament = mystery¹
- Sacraments are intended to lead us into the mysterious union with Christ.

- Christianity Dividing over the Mysteries:

"When we attempt to take possession of the secret things of the LORD, we find that they slip through our hands and leave us fractured and divided. There is no forum for unity when unity depends upon defining the indefinable."

First Fruits of Zion

1. John's Path to God

- John provides his community and future readers with the path to union with God.

2. Core of Mystical Teaching:

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| The core of Mystical Practice | Inner Transformation (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18) |
| Goal of Practice | Union with God/Christ |

¹ <https://www.etymonline.com/word/sacrament>

3. Definition of Christian Mysticism:

- Direct and transformative presence of God.
- Includes the preparation for, the consciousness of, and the transformative effect of the experience.
- Mystical life is a process or journey to God, not just a moment or a brief state of mystical union.²

4. The Mystical Way:³

- The Mystical Way or Path is a system or general path toward that mystical union with God.

5. *Unio Mystica* – Mystical Union:⁴

- To be united with God in spirit.
- Within Judaism and later Christianity, the goal was not absorption into God but the closeness of spirit while maintaining a distinction. (1 Cor. 6:17; John 17:21).
- Mystical Union with Christ is represented as the closeness between a husband and wife.
- The message of Jesus is that this mystical union is available right now to all humanity.

6. John's Mystical Way to God:

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| 1. Initial Enlightenment | Chap. 1 |
| 2. Baptism/Birth from Above | Chap. 3 |
| 3. Eucharist/Lord's Supper | Chap. 6 |
| 4. Enlightenment | Chap. 7 & 8 |
| 5. New Life | Chap. 11 |
| 6. Union with God | Chap. 17 |

² Bernard McGinn, *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*

³ L. William Countryman, *The Mystical Way in the Fourth Gospel: Crossing Over to God*

⁴ <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803110707752>