Questions on Culpepper Reading

The Exam
For the “Gospel Content and Culpepper Reading” portion of our course exam, I will present you with a selection of the questions that follow. I will ask you to write on four (4) from among those I choose to present. You may use a Bible on this portion of the exam (this is a change from earlier correspondence with you).

Writing or Typing Is OK
Blue books will be provided in class. If you prefer not to write answers longhand, you may bring and use a laptop, type your answers, and email a document to me at the end of the exam session.

You may not use any answers or notes you previously prepared, etc. The only allowed external resource is a Bible.

Grading Criteria
I am asking for one to two paragraphs on each question. Pace yourself so that you can write four answers in an hour. Your answers will be scored on a 25-point scale as follows:

• Your answer is legible, the appropriate length, and focused on the question asked: up to 5 points.
• You explain the issue or answer the question accurately (accuracy is measured by whether your answer is defensible based on the content of the Gospel of John): up to 10 points.
• You cite material from the gospel of John to illustrate your answer: up to 10 points.

Questions

Chapter 1
1. Symbolic Language for Jesus
   Culpepper notes that John’s gospel uses “symbols of universal appeal” (e.g. light, bread, water) to interpret Jesus—in other words, symbols that are not unique to first century Jewish or Greco-Roman experience. Based on your study of the gospel, choose one such symbol and write a paragraph on how it is related to Jesus in John.

2. John and the Synoptics
   Choose one of these points of difference between John and the Synoptics and write a paragraph explaining how John differs from the Synoptics on the point you choose. The points of difference are: journeys, chronology, signs, teachings, content.
Chapter 2
3. Identity of the Beloved Disciple
   What evidence could be marshaled to argue that the Beloved Disciple was Lazarus? Make at least two observations from the gospel that would support this conclusion.

4. Identity of the Beloved Disciple
   Argue either for or against John, the son of Zebedee, as the author of the fourth gospel. Make at least two observations from the gospel that support your argument.

Chapter 3
5. The Johannine Community
   Culpepper notes several possible characteristics of the Johannine community (that is, the community of believers within and for which gospel and the letters of 1, 2, and 3 John were written). These characteristics are:
   - conflict with the synagogue,
   - the presence of secret believers, Samaritans, and Greeks in their ranks,
   - followers of John the Baptist in the community, and
   - difficulty in the community surrounding the death of the Beloved Disciple.
   Choose one of these characteristics and write one to two paragraphs on what it is in the gospel that has led scholars to surmise that this characteristic does indeed describe the community behind the gospel.

6. Two-Level Drama
   What are the two levels of the “two-level drama” that some scholars (such as J. Louis Martyn) see in John? Explain the idea in a paragraph.

Chapter 4
7. Tragedy?
   Culpepper and Stibbe both say at points in their writing that John is a tragedy. What are some of the features of John’s Gospel would lead someone to view it as belonging to the literary genre of tragedy?

8. Recognition
   Culpepper outlines several recognition (or non-recognition) scenes in John. Choose one of them and describe how that particular scene works. In your answer, address questions like these: Who is (are) the recognizer(s)? Who is the recognized? What does the recognizer know, or see, or believe? Is the recognition made by some characters in the story and not others? Is the recognizer’s knowledge partial, and if so, what remains hidden?
Chapter 5

9. Jesus in John
Culpepper lists these as particularly important ways of understanding Jesus according to John’s gospel: Word, Revealer, Redeemer, Son. Choose one of them, and write one to two paragraphs on how that way of understanding Jesus appears in the gospel of John.

10. The Holy Spirit
What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John?

Chapter 10

11. Ethical Challenges for Readers of John
Culpepper notes three ethical challenges to the gospel of John as a document of faith: (1) anti-Judaism in the gospel, (2) how/whether the gospel addresses the marginalized and oppressed, and (3) the theological exclusivism in the gospel.
Choose one of these ethical challenges, and in one to two paragraphs, do these two things:

a. State the problem, including at least one passage or story from John that illustrates the problem, and

b. State one element of a response to the problem. That is, what is one thing that we as interpreters might do to address the problem?