

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE**

**HUSSITE THEOLOGICAL FACULTY**

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**ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IN LIGHT OF  
CHRISTOLOGY**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Partial Fulfillment of Master (MTh.) degree in  
Theology**

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**MASTER'S THESIS**

**ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IN LIGHT OF CHRISTOLOGY**

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## Declaration



This thesis is a result of independent work. Wherever it is indebted to the works of others, acknowledgment has been made.

I hereby declare that this thesis has never been submitted in the same or different form to this or any other institution for an academic qualification.

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**Signature:** - - - - -

This dissertation has been submitted with my approval.

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JIŘÍ LUKEŠ, Th.D.

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## **ACRONYMS**

A.D: Anno Domini (In the year of Christ)

B.C: Before Christ

Cf: Compare

HTF-UK: Hussite Theological Faculty-Charles University

Ibid: Citation same as the proceeding reference

vv: Verses

## **Sacred texts**

### **Old Testament Texts - New King James Version**

Gen: Genesis

Is: Isaiah

Jer: Jeremiah

Zech: Zechariah

### **New Testament Texts – New King James Version**

Matt: The Gospel of Mathew

Mk: The Gospel of Mark

Lk: The Gospel of Luke

Jn: The Gospel of John

Col: Colossians

Rom: Romans

Heb: Hebrews

Rev: Revelation

## **Journals**

BTB: Biblical Theology Bulletin

JSNT: Journal for the Study of The New Testament

JNRS: Journal for New Testament and Related Studies

THTR: The Harvard Theological Review

NTS: The New Testament Studies



## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis presents a theological engagement with the Christ of the Gospel of John. Christology has two basic responsibilities. First, all Christology is required to demonstrate that it is rooted in scriptural reading. Second, consistent attentiveness needs to be paid to the dynamic relationship between Christ's person and work. The nature of these two responsibilities is elucidated by exploring some recent christological contributions quoted therein to formulate the topic in discussion. Chapter one provides the introduction of the research topic. It also illuminates on the objective and methodology framework of this research.

Chapter two reviews relevant academic literature. It is necessary to explore past works relating to the topic not only to get information on the background for the present research, but above all, to be well informed on various aspects pertinent to the Johannine Gospel. Based on this body of scholarly work, I have as well explored the relationship between the Gospel of John and the Synoptic Gospels. Here, it was noted that in order to explain the distinctive features of John's Gospel, it is necessary to note the context within which the author wrote and that his portrayal of Jesus is clearly different from the synoptics, the question of Johannine authorship was addressed in detail. In conclusion to authorship discussion, the precise name of the author remained unknown. John is taken as a name which was simply associated with the Gospel, therefore, whether; it was John the elder or an apostle-cum-disciple of Jesus remains obscure. On literary genre, features such as symbolism, metaphors, irony, allusions and prolepsis were major elements found to have been employed by the author.

Chapter three looks at a brief overview of the Gospel in general. It pinpoints to Johannine structural division; the prologue and the epilogue. It also elaborates thematical content of this Gospel, which were broadly categorized as; Christocentric, Eschatological and Soteriological. Apart from Christology, the latter two themes were further addressed. The description on the themes paves way to chapter four which entails an analysis of the Johannine prologue.

Chapter five is the epicenter of this research. Here, this work tried to explore various aspects of the Johannine Christology. The criteria used to identify these main christological motifs were based on literature review and the impetus gained from my previous research work on Christology in the book of Revelation. As has been mentioned above, the original objective was to examine and exegete texts that are christological in their presentation. Thus

in relation to this, three main christological perspectives was identified; 'The Son of Man', the 'I am' and 'The Son of God' perspectives.

Conclusion of this thesis is provided in chapter six. It was established that John's picture of Jesus has important points of contact with the earlier tradition; there is a very pronounced change of emphasis. Jesus awareness of an intimate relationship with God, whom he addresses as 'Father', becomes in John an insistent theme well understood mainly through these perspective analysis. Jesus constantly calls himself 'the Son' in a way that implies christological significance, equivalent to the less frequent designations 'Son of God' and 'Son of Man'. John's presentation of Jesus is thus unique in that he stresses in advance theological argument that Jesus Christ was both human and divine.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Scholarly works on the Gospel of John in the last decade are enormous but not what has been published in the Journals. Before completing this thesis, I examined several well-known Journals such as The Harvard Theological Review (*THTR*), Journal for the Study of the New Testament (*JSNT*), Biblical Theology Bulletin (*BTB*) and *Novou Testamentum*. The publication date was set between 1990-2008. Works on the Gospel of John in general were limited amounting to less than ten published topics in the above named Journals. On published books, the scholarly works of well known theologians such as Rudolf Bultmann, Petr Pokorný, Bohumil Souček, Martin Hengel, Alan Culpepper among others were studied, detail of which can be found in the bibliography.

The theme of Christology is that part of theology which deals with Jesus Christ In its full extent, it comprises the doctrines concerning both the person of Christ and His works.<sup>1</sup> Probably this is the topic which has been the focus of the most interest in connection with the Gospel of John. It is understandable given its incomparable influence on the creeds in the early church councils and the faith of the church in subsequent centuries. The question of why John's Christology is so distinctive, while nonetheless having so many points of contact with earlier Christian writings, is a puzzle that scholars are still wrestling with. In addition to the major volumes by various authors on the Christology or theology of the New Testament in general, there are a number of important studies specifically on John's Gospel, such as William Loader, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Structure and Issues*, and the useful article by Marten Menken, "The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: A Survey of Recent Research". On the Son of Man sayings there has been a particularly large amount of interest in recent years and this makes theologian and biblical student to develop more interest on this studies. However, studies categorizing specific Christology perspectives are wanting, thus, there is a continuous interest in this area in which this present research seeks to address.

Although it is true that there was a basic difference between Jesus' message of the kingdom and the post Easter church's message of him as the saving act of God, all of Jesus' words and work imply a Christology. Thus the critical quest for the historical Jesus yields a sufficient basis for the message of the post Easter church and is therefore necessary to legitimate it. The Christology of the earliest Palestinian Christian community apparently had two focuses. It looked backward to the earthly life of Jesus as prophet and servant of God and forward to his

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<sup>1</sup>Christology definition in catholic encyclopedia, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14597a.htm> accessed on 14 January 2008

final return as Messiah (Acts 3:21). Meanwhile Jesus was thought of as waiting inactively in heaven, to which he was believed to have ascended after the resurrection (Acts 1:9).

Soon the experience of the Holy Spirit by his disciples, whose descent is recorded in Acts 2, led the early Christians to think in terms of a two stage Christology: the first stage was the earthly ministry and the second stage his active ruling in heaven. This two stage Christology, in which Jesus is exalted as Messiah, Lord, and Son of God (Acts 2:36; Romans 1:4), is often called adoptionist. It is not the Adoptionism of later heresy, however, for it thinks in terms of function rather than being. At his exaltation to heaven Jesus began to function as he had not previously. Another primitive christological affirmation associates the birth of Jesus with his Davidic descent, thus qualifying him for the messianic office at his exaltation (for example, Rom. 1:3). This introduced the birth of Jesus and christological significant moment<sup>2</sup>.

Biblical researches have taken a great step moving from the primitive status that the field had held for several decades. It is also evident that the works that have been done in the past decades have enabled biblical scholars to reshape the field and thus come up with more elaborate results.

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<sup>2</sup> Detail of these motifs are well elaborated in Chapter five.

## 1.1 Background and Justification for the current study

Earlier studies on the Bible have covered a great deal of the New Testament. Out of those studies, a number of them have dealt with the Gospel of John. The main point of Christianity as a religion is rooted and grounded in the person of Christ's past, present and future mission in the midst of believers.

Interpreters of the Fourth Gospel continue to seek fresh approaches to its interpretation, often seeking to demonstrate the explanatory power usefulness of applying new methods. Alongside such efforts, interpreters continue to follow more traditional approaches and to ask traditional questions, these includes commentary and exegesis of biblical texts. One traditional line of questioning involves the examination of the connections between the Fourth Gospel and other Johannine epistles. However, Stephen Neill among others believes that understanding the Fourth Gospel requires a clear understanding of the Old Testament background: He writes;

“I am convinced that, the more carefully the Gospel is studied, the clearer it becomes that the Hellenistic elements belong to a secondary phase of interpretation, and that the deepest elements in the thought, the bony structure on which the whole Gospel is constructed, are derived from the Old Testament and our current interpretation.”<sup>3</sup>

It is therefore not in vain that those past studies that have focused on Christology in the Gospel of John were found justified as they have helped to shape the level of theological understanding. The current study specifically investigates the perspectives of Christology in the Gospel of John in light of Christology by focusing on the picture of Christ which I assume to be not identical from other previous scholarly works. Moreover, it will draw careful attention to Christ's attributes presented in the book. There is a possibility that due to the deep theological basis of the book, many Christians still may not understand its Christological basis. It is therefore desirable to obtain accurate information on the topic through analysis and exegesis work, and hence the need to carry out the present research.

The following study will therefore focus on the Gospel texts that are viewed to have Christological aspects and in particular these will be analyzed to make a precise discussion of the motifs that will be identified. The results obtained from accomplishing the objective of this study will be significant for the understanding of the Fourth Gospel especially in light of Christology. Since general readers mostly do not take deep account of the theological themes, I should like to

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The interpretation of the New Testament*: 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 346

use the outcome of this work to expand and keep the understanding of the book, especially among believers, by incorporating it with other biblical teachings.

## 1.2 Study objective and Methodological Framework of the Study

Since methodological choices have become so significant in Johannine studies, one finds it necessary to discuss one's methodological choices and concomitant inclinations or presuppositions. The following study attempts to be integrative in its approach to the biblical text. The main objective of the current study is to identify the christological perspectives, explore the Gospel of John and carry out exegesis and analysis on those christological perspectives that will be identified found therein. It will however, differ from other contemporary integrative approaches in certain respects. The recent focus on Christology and the literary dimension will tend to remain sensitive to the structure, style and themes of the Fourth Gospel as a whole.

With regard to historiographic concerns, two deserves special mention since they will be taken into account while carrying out this research. The first involves the source and composition criticism of the Forth Gospel, this, is only tangentially related to the following study. The second will be the literary-critical approach which will be considered on the basis of text exegesis and analysis. The latter needs more elaboration. Probably the most noticeable trend in contemporary Johannine studies is the focus on literary-critical approaches.<sup>4</sup>

In relation to this methodology, Rudolf Bultmann is often given a special recognition for demonstrating the promise of examining the Fourth Gospel as a literary work. One of the positive aspects of the literary-critical analyses of the Fourth Gospel has been a focus upon the text in its canonical form, diverting attention away from its sources and redaction. Although some have questioned the appropriateness and fruitfulness of literary studies, literary-critical terminology and theology and theory continue to be prominent in recent works on the Fourth Gospel.<sup>5</sup>

Even so, literary-critical approaches to the Gospel do not monopolize the field. The methodological diversity that characterizes the current scene in Johannine studies brings with it tendency toward exclusivity and conflict.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the most unavoidable area of conflict is between those scholars who continue to pursue source-critical approaches to the study of the Fourth Gospel. The conflict stems in part from the fact that several interpreters who are studying

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<sup>4</sup>Literary critical approach is here meant to describe a variety of approaches variously classified using descriptors like 'narrative criticism'

<sup>5</sup>Concerning appropriateness, see , John Ashton, *Studying John: Approaches to the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 156; concerning the limitations and concomitant presuppositions involved in the application of certain literary theories in the biblical studies generally.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Thomas Brodie's Short History of Interpretation Approaches to the Fourth Gospel and his observation about methodological ,totalitarianism' (*The Gospel According to John: A literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University, 1993), pp. 3-10

the Fourth Gospel from a literary-critical vantage point make optimistic statement about the basic unity of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>7</sup> Ashton, for one, finds such statements to be at the best superficial and at worst to be insulting to the proponents of source-critical hypotheses.<sup>8</sup> One can appreciate Ashton's complaints while one recognizing that source criticism depends upon evidence that supports disunity of the Fourth Gospel. Source critics need to find evidence of editorial work. On the other hand, literary-critical studies would benefit from establishing that the basic unity and coherence of the Fourth Gospel are evident in its canonical form.

In spite of points of tension, recent attempts toward more inclusive and integrative approaches to the Fourth Gospel seem to have picked on Meir Stemberg's conviction that "ideological, historiographic and aesthetic" concerns all contribute to one's understanding of biblical narrative.<sup>9</sup>

The preceding discussion of contemporary trends in Johannine studies thus gives prominence to the emergence of literary approaches to the Fourth Gospel. While literary theory and practice appear to be almost ubiquitous in recent works on the Fourth Gospel, it is evident to note that studies concerning the Fourth Gospel's themes, background, composition and authorship continue to be produced, at least in the last five decades<sup>10</sup>. Such studies may either question specific conclusions resulting from thematical and literary studies or find contemporary approaches to be tangential to their concerns. These researches also continue to insist that it is appropriate to ask questions that many thematical and literary-critical interpreters considered being of little significance. Indeed as this work is concerned, the basis will draw attention on exegesis in order to make accurate the thematical elements of christological nature.

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<sup>7</sup> Ashton, *Studying John*, pp. 144-8.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Meir Stemberg, *The Poetic Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1995), pp. 41-48

<sup>10</sup>Craffert, F. Pieter. Relationships between Social-Scientific, Literary, and Rhetorical Interpretation of Texts: *JBT*. Vol.26/1996 pp. 34

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 John and the Synoptic Gospels

When the Gospels are studied, John always takes a place separate from the other three Gospels included in the New Testament, known as the Synoptic Gospels precisely because one can set them side by side in parallel and find that large sections overlap. In contrast, John's Gospel offers a rather different portrait of Jesus. Mark's Gospel starts with Jesus' baptism. John's Gospel begins its narrative section with the same event, but without mentioning that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. Matthew and Luke begin their Gospels with narratives concerning the events surrounding Jesus' birth. While John's Gospel presumes that Jesus was born, it shows no interest in this event *per se*. Instead, John's Gospel begins with the Word who was in the beginning with God, the Word who subsequently became flesh and dwelt among us in the human life of Jesus. Language similar to this, drawn from Jewish traditions about the figure of Wisdom, is found in the epistles, as for example in Col. 1:15-20 and Heb. 1:1-3. But in contrast even with these writers, who do use rather exalted language in reference to Jesus, John's Gospel still has important differences.<sup>11</sup>

The Jesus described in John's Gospel walks around on earth conscious that his real origin is in heaven. Even if we presume that a reasonable amount of time passed between the composition and redaction of the Synoptic Gospels and the composition and editing of John's Gospel, we are still left wondering how the Gospel of John ended up being so different, and why or what factors led its author (and any subsequent editors who may have been involved with the process) to produce a Gospel that presents Jesus so distinctively. In what follows I will attempt to provide a short introduction to the 'what' and 'why' of John's distinctive characteristics. It is not until recently that biblical scholars embarked on the search of these key areas to acknowledge any sense of distinction between the gospel of John and the synoptic. I have found this question well elaborated in some previous research which supported the idea that John had the knowledge of other synoptic books.

That John knew Mark intimately can hardly be questioned, and is sufficiently proved by a reproduction, which cannot be accidental, of the number of the out-of-the way phrases of Mark. We can compare, e.g., Jn. 6:7 with Mk. 6:37, Jn. 12:3 and Mk. 14:3 and Mk. 14:54, it may also be noticed that where there is verbal variation between the synoptic, John usually agrees with Mark as against Mark and Luke. We are not however to suppose that John necessarily wrote with

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<sup>11</sup>Powel, Allan. M, *Introduction to The Gospels*. (Fortress Press. Minneapolis, 1998) pp. 1-9



a copy of Mark open before him. The materials he uses have all been fused in the crucible of his creative imagination, and it's from the image of his mind's eye more vivid than the written page, that he paints his picture. Yet quite clearly John presupposes knowledge of Mark on the part of his readers, and can therefore omit explanation which would otherwise be necessary (e.g. Jn. 3:24) the fact that this gospel is written, so to speak on top of Mark, is the key to many difficulties.<sup>12</sup>

To begin with, by looking at some of the distinctive features of the Gospel of John a bit more closely, before going on to ask why such differences might exist, it is important to note that in the Synoptic, Jesus is mostly a wandering teacher and healer, a storyteller, speaking mostly in parables with an emphasis on the Kingdom of God.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, John's Gospel contains long discourses in the first person. Although statistics can at times be misleading, here I think a simple numerical count shows up a genuine and important difference. The term 'kingdom' appears 47 times in Matthew, 18 times in Mark, and 37 times in Luke; in John, it occurs only 7 times. And whereas the first person pronoun 'I' appears on Jesus' lips only 17 times in Matthew, 9 times in Mark and 10 in Luke, in John Jesus is presented as using 'I' a full 118 times. Rather than speak of the 'Kingdom of God', John's Gospel also has a preference for the phrase eternal life.<sup>14</sup> While John does contain illustrations that are not wholly unlike the Synoptic parables, more typical of John's style are the well-known 'I am' sayings: 'I am the light of the world', 'I am the bread of life', 'I am the good shepherd' and so on. The well-known language of being 'born again' is also exclusive to John's Gospel, although Mathew and Paul do speak of new creation, and the Synoptic know a similar tradition which refers to the need to become as children in order to enter the Kingdom of God.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, whereas the main dialogue partners of Jesus in the Synoptic are the Pharisees, John groups all Jesus' opponents together under the common heading 'the Jews', a phrase that we will need to look at more closely.

How do these considerations affect one's assessment of the Christology of John's Gospel? Ordinary believers in churches are for the most part used to taking the words attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of John as straightforward accounts of the words of the historical Jesus. However, to those who read the Gospels with an openness to the possibility of different voices saying different things, it is immediately apparent that there are huge differences between the presentation of Jesus found in the Synoptic Gospels and in John. One problem that immediately arises is that the general reliability of the Synoptic accounts makes the Johannine presentation

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<sup>12</sup>Powell Allan Mark, *Introduction to the Gospels*: pp.112-15

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 114

<sup>14</sup> for these figures, see Dunn J. D, *The Evidence for Jesus*: (London: SCM Press, 1985) pp.34-35

<sup>15</sup> Ibid,38

appear suspect from a theological point of view, and the fact that tradition makes John the latest Gospel does nothing to allay our suspicion. Yet a number of writers have helpfully shown evidence that if John is not a straightforward account of the historical Jesus, neither is it a pure work of fiction. C. H. Dodd changed the tide of scholarship on this issue by a detailed study of the historical details in John and of sayings in John which appear to be independent versions of sayings recorded in the Synoptic.<sup>16</sup>

Likewise in the same vein, John Robinson took this argument to an extreme in arguing that John's picture, while different, is just as reliable as the Synoptic portrait, since it stems also from the historical Jesus. While Robinson downplays the distinctiveness of John at times, he makes a number of important points that have not been taken with sufficient seriousness by the scholarly community.<sup>17</sup>

At any rate, a fair, balanced, middle position is that taken by James Dunn. In his view, to regard John as simply historical is to ignore the vast difference between the ways the Jesus presented in his Gospel speaks in comparison with the Synoptic. For example, he affirms as I have noted before, that the language of the theme on Kingdom abounds in the Synoptic but is extremely rare in John, while the Johannine Jesus uses the first person pronoun 'I' over a hundred times, in comparison with less than twenty occurrences in the Synoptic.<sup>18</sup> This is further an acclamation that has been echoed by many.

There is also a huge difference in the frequency of Father/Son language. But to regard John as pure fiction is to ignore the fact that many of John's details and settings for discourses seem to be historically reliable. The only answer seems to be to regard the author of the Fourth Gospel as doing what was a frequent practice in his time; based on the words of his master, the author created discourses in which he presented what he considers that his master would have said in response to certain new situations which have arisen since his death. One may usefully compare John's presentation of Jesus with Plato's presentation of Socrates' trial, where it is generally assumed that Plato did not present an account of what Socrates said on that occasion, but primarily what he felt that he would have said had he been given the opportunity to answer his accusers at such length. This is not to say that nothing in John stems from the historical Jesus, but simply that the discrepancies between John and the Synoptic necessitate caution, and that we cannot rely on John to present the words of the historical Jesus, in particular when he differs from

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<sup>16</sup>see Dodd. C.H, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*: (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963) pp.54

<sup>17</sup> Robinson John, *The Relation of the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John*: (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) pp. 120-29

<sup>18</sup>Dunn James, *Christology in the Making*: (London: SCM Press, 1980)

other sources that have multiple attestation and are generally considered by historians to be more reliable.

This however, does not involve excessive skepticism: it is to do nothing more than reassert what is in itself a Biblical principle: one witness on his or her own does not have the same value that two or three witnesses have in proving a case. But let us not be overly pessimistic in our conclusions either! Let me quote John Robinson at length:

“John is still concerned with what Jesus is really saying and meaning, and the words, like the actions, can be understood at very different levels. Yet he does not simply set them down straight, and then comment upon them - allowing the sayings and their interpretation to stand side by side, with the raw material presented in its untreated state. Rather, it is worked up; the interpretation is thoroughly assimilated and integrated. But the same is after all true in different degrees with the Synoptic. For they too are interpreting the words and works of Jesus in the light of the one whom they have discovered him to be within the life-setting of their communities. One may freely grant that how they represent Jesus as speaking may be more like how he would have been heard if one had had a tape recorder around. That is to say, by the criterion of verisimilitude, as he was to be encountered 'in the flesh', their record may be truer to life. But in terms of what he was really saying, this may not be the case. The Johannine Christ is the Jesus John saw. No one else may have seen him thus. It is a highly personal portrait. The vocabulary, the perspective, the interpretation are distinctively and recognizably his. Yet the colouration may not be purely subjective.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus, in order to explain the distinctive features of John's Gospel we have noted in the preceding section, the two main factors that are regularly appealed to are the author of the Gospel, and the distinctive context in which he wrote. We consider that John's portrayal of Jesus is therefore clearly different from the Synoptic authors.

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<sup>19</sup>Robinson John, *The Priority of John*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) pp. 298-9

## 2.2 Authorship of the Johannine Gospel

To assume that the traditional title of this work gives us an adequate answer to the question I have just posed would be extremely naïve. Modern biblical scholarship has shown over the past few centuries that the traditional authorship of a number of biblical books simply cannot be taken for granted, without a great deal of further examination and discussion of the issue.<sup>20</sup> This is nowhere more true than in relation to John's Gospel. According to Jn. 21:20-24, the author of the Fourth Gospel comes into picture as an anonym but as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Traditionally, the oldest witness and confirmation of this authorship was laid by church father Irenaeus, (202 A.D) who said that the author was one of the twelve disciples, Apostle John the Son of Zebedee.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, for those approaching this Book without the presupposition that the Church's traditions regarding authorship are accurate (that is, hopefully, all Protestants and most other modern readers), the question becomes "Why should one attribute this Book to a particular Galilean fisherman who followed Jesus, rather than to any other of the large number of followers that he had?" If one jettisons Church tradition as providing authoritative answers to this question, then one is essentially left only with the internal evidence within the Gospel itself. And within the Gospel of the "Beloved Disciple", the author or source of information for the Fourth Gospel, thus simply remains anonymous as been observed above (unless of course Jn. 11:3 tells us who he is). We may nevertheless set aside the traditional question of authorship in terms of giving the author a name, and focus instead of the author inasmuch as he can be known from the hints given within the book he wrote.

However, before doing so, I should mention that, even if one concludes that John *ben* Zebedee was not the author, this need not to mean necessarily that the author's name was not "John". Other earliest Church Fathers indeed speak of the author of the Gospel as John the Disciple and John the Elder.<sup>22</sup> However, it is not immediately apparent that this person is the same individual as John ben Zebedee, one of the Twelve, writes Culpepper in his above cited work. And so it may be that 'John' is the right name, even if tradition has assumed this to refer to the wrong John. Also intriguing, however, is the suggestion (hinted at above of the beloved disciple) that Lazarus might be the source behind the Gospel. In Jn. 11:3 Lazarus is called 'the one whom you (i.e. Jesus) love' but this is my pure suggestion and I have no light of idea whether this had been brought to scrutiny before by theologians and other biblical scholars. I

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<sup>20</sup>Culpepper Allan. A, *John, The Son of Zebedee, The Life of a Legend*: (T.&T. Clark Ltd.,1994) pp.144-49

<sup>21</sup> For this commentary on authorship, see *Czech Bible, Nový zákon s výkladovými poznámkami, Česká biblická společnost New Testament with Interpretations and Remarks, Czech Bible Society*: (Praha 1987) pp. 158

<sup>22</sup>Culpepper. *John , The Son of Zebedee, The Life of a Legend*: pp. 154

noted that the verb used is *φιλέω* rather than *ἀγαπάω*, but the two are essentially synonymous in John. In essence therefore, if Lazarus were the source, this would explain the Gospel's interest in Jesus' visits to the Jerusalem area, rather than focusing on the Galilean ministry, as do the Synoptic. It would also explain the connection between Luke and John at a number of points, including the presence in Luke of a story about Martha and Mary (Lk.10:38-42), who are said to be Lazarus' sisters in the Gospel of John. Moreover, if Lazarus was the beloved disciple, then the fact that he had been raised from the dead would also explain why the rumor circulated that he would not die is justified. All of this evidence a court would probably consider circumstantial evidence, but that doesn't make it any less intriguing.

At least as interesting and important as the issue of the author is concerned is the context in which he wrote. For, as one quickly discovers when reading John, the context in which the Gospel was written appears to have had a very profound influence in shaping the content of the Gospel as a whole. It is thus more important in John's Gospel than in perhaps any other New Testament book to learn to read it on two levels. On the one hand, John's story claims to be about a historical figure, Jesus, who lived some decades earlier. On the other hand, this claim cannot be taken at face value, since in John one finds that Jesus, John the Baptist, and the narrator all speak in the same way, a way that bears close resemblance also to the language, expressions, and turns of phrase in the Johannine Epistles. So it is clear that, at the very least, the author has passed any traditional material he has inherited through the lens of his own unique perspective and language. In fact, those who know the Gospel of John well should not be surprised to find that a voice other than that of the historical Jesus, mentioned previously, is to be found in it. The author gives a great deal of attention to the role of the *Paraclete*, the "other comforter", the Spirit of Truth who will reveal things that Jesus could not say while physically present with the disciples on earth (cf. Jn. 16:12-13).

In this regard, a number of scholars have focused attention on the unique perspective of the Fourth Gospel's authorship, as the explanation of this work's distinctive features, and clearly there is some truth in this. Explanations along these lines as proposed by authors like (John Robinson and Martin Hengel) focus on the unique perspective that the Fourth Evangelist had, much as Plato and Xenophon had different perspectives on the work of Socrates. But however much this may be part of the explanation of the Fourth Gospel's distinctiveness, it quickly becomes obvious that all four Gospels had unique authors, and so while this author's unique perspective and style are important, they are not the only factors that interest theologians in looking for an explanation of why John is unique. When we read or study any piece of writing, if we ask *why* the author wrote what he or she did, we are usually looking for something beyond the

level of “He wrote what he did because he was Daniel Schön and not Judith Osweto” or “because he was Lukas Svoboda and not William Shakespeare”. In the same way, we are unlikely to be satisfied with an answer that says that John wrote what he did, as he did, because he was not Matthew, Mark or Luke. When we ask the question 'Why?', we are interested not just in the level of the individual author, as important as that may be, but also in the level of context. What factors, what social setting, what contemporary problems and issues, what influences led him to write as he did?

An influential figure in sparking off the authorship and contemporary interest in the *history of the Johannine community* as a key to understanding the Fourth Gospel is J. L. Martyn's work.<sup>23</sup> He asks towards the beginning of his trend-setting study, "May one sense even in [the Fourth Gospel's] exalted cadences the voice of a Christian theologian who writes *in response to contemporary events and issues* which concern, or should concern, all members of the Christian community in which he lives?" Martyn answers this question in the affirmative, and thus emphasizes that "when we read the Fourth Gospel, we are listening both to tradition and to a new and unique interpretation of that tradition with its author. Martyn is suggesting that attention to the context in which John wrote, and the needs of the church for which he wrote, can illuminate the question of why the Evangelist wrote as he did and that illuminates further on his personality. Martyn's work was pioneering in calling for a reading of John's Gospel on two levels. As we go on to examine the distinctive features of the Fourth Gospel's theology, it will be crucial to have in mind some information about the Christian community that produced this Gospel and about the context in which they lived and wrote and formulated their theology. This enables us to attest the authority of Johannine authorship and we can draw conclusion based on the understanding of his community.

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<sup>23</sup> J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*: 1979, pp.18-19

### 2.3 The problem with Johannine Authorship

Just as to continue with the preceding elaboration on authorship, it has however remains the major place where scholarly consensus appears to have more or less unchanged even in recent times. The traditional ascription of the Fourth Gospel to John the son of Zebedee is therefore accepted by few, although there is almost as little tangible evidence against the traditional view as there is for it. According to my own opinion having reviewed several publications on this Gospel, it is difficult to simply know for certain who wrote this Gospel. However, there have nonetheless been a few important studies of the question of authorship in recent times which, if not giving us the precise name we would like to attach to it, at least give us insights into the character of the evangelist. Of particular importance is Martin Hengel's, *The Johannine Question*, which tried to provide some elaborate discourse of the matter but still leaves a room for further discussion on the latter. In particular, I will make a brief summary of his work to justify this discussion.

Hengel has launched a counteroffensive against all source theory in his reassessment of the early evidence regarding the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. In *The Johannine Question*, Hengel proposes a reassessment of second-century references to John that overturns established views and rehabilitates both Papias and John the Elder. Hengel's thesis in short is that the Gospel and the Epistles of John (and probably an early version of the Apocalypse) were composed by one "towering theologian the founder and head of the Johannine school."<sup>24</sup> This influential teacher of Asia minor, however, was not the apostle but John the Elder.

Beginning with Irenaeus and working back into the early decades of the second century, Hengel observes that John referred to not as the apostle but as "John the Lord's disciple" or a teacher. The inscription εὐαγγέλιον κατὰ Ἰωαννῆς is preferred in pp66 and, Hengel contends, that it should probably be traced back to the circulation of the text at the beginning of the second Century. Hengel traces the attribution of the Gospel to the apostle John of Ptolemy A.D. 150) and cites the *Acts of John* as supporting evidence of the Apostle's growing reputation. Hengel finds the references and allusions to John in the middle of the second century to be more substantial than most other recent interpreters have allowed. Hengel's judgment of the tricky references in Justin is that Justin knew the Gospel quite well but did not use it,<sup>25</sup> perhaps because it was not generally accepted by the Roman Christians. Irenaeus's report that Polycarp knew John of Ephesus is credible. On the other hand, so are the early reports of the early martyrdom of John the Son of Zebedee, which can be traced to the second volume of Papias's work. The martyrdom

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<sup>24</sup>Martin Hengel, *The Johannine Question*: trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), ix

<sup>25</sup> Hengel, *The Johannine question*, pp.13

of John must then have been deliberately suppressed by Eusebius in order to support the apostolic authorship of the Johannine corpus.

John the Elder mentioned by Papias and known by Polycarp was the elder who wrote the Johannine Epistles (2 John 1; 3 John 1). The similarity of style and thought is such that all three Epistles must have been composed by the same elder. Similarly, the close relationship in style and thought between the Epistles and the Gospel points to common authorship at the hand of the Elder. The arguments for the stylistic, literary unity in the Gospel have never been answered. One cannot even distinguish either a signs Gospel or extensive later redaction from a different hand, though the idealized references to the beloved Disciple have the character of insertions. On balance, it is likely that the Elder wrote the Apocalypse at an early stage and that it was revised by one of his followers after death. The Epistles do not presume a widely accepted Gospel, so the final redaction of the Gospel probably did not occur until after the death of the Elder

The result therefore, is a vivid picture of a Judean disciple who established a Christian school in Asia Minor (Ephesus) late in the first century. As his name and Semitic Greek idiom indicates, John came from a Palestine home. John knew the topography of Judea and explained the meaning of Aramaic terms. He knew the Jewish law and numerous parallels to the Qumran document point to Palestine. John was also at home in the Hellenism that had pervaded the eastern Mediterranean since Alexander the Great. It is probable that author came from the aristocracy in Jerusalem, since most of the characters around Jesus belonged to the upper class (the royal steward, Nicodemus, Mary and Martha, Lazarus and Joseph of Arimathea). The John of the Apocalypse was banished to Patmos. Insignificant persons were not sent into exile: "For John to be banished into Patmos," writes Hengel "indicates that he had high social status."<sup>26</sup>

Hengel further speculates that the turmoil of the early 60s in Palestine forced John to immigrate to Asia Minor, "where at about the age of fifty he founded his school, which flourished for about thirty five years."<sup>27</sup> Hengel suggests that the Apocalypse was written by John the Elder about 68-70 A.D and reworked by his disciples after his death. The Gospel was written primarily for a gentile community; separation from the synagogue lies well in the past. The school had contact with other Christian communities, however, so that Paul and other Gospels were known to it. For the Elder, John the Son of Zebedee was the ideal disciple (in contrast to Peter), but his followers superimposed the two by means of the reference to "the Beloved Disciple"

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<sup>26</sup> Hengel, *The Johannine Question*, 126

<sup>27</sup>Hengel, *The Johannine Question*, 133



It is necessary here to quote in full Hengel's words: "Given the unique way in which the figures of John the Son of Zebedee and the teacher of the second school and author of the Gospel are deliberately superimposed in a veiled way, it would be conceivable that with the "beloved disciple" "John the Elder" wanted to point more to the Son of Zebedee, who for him was an ideal, even *the* ideal disciple, in contrast to Peter, whereas in the end the pupils impressed in this enigmatic figure the face of their teacher by identifying him with the author in order to bring the Gospel as near to Jesus as possible. Therefore I cannot believe that this ideal figure is pure fiction. In the teaching of the Evangelist and in the discussion of the school the beloved disciple had not only an ideal but some kind of "historical" significance which was ultimately related to two figures: the "apostle" John from the Twelve and the author himself."<sup>28</sup>

Hengel's *The Johannine Question* is thus a treasury of scholarship in the early references to John and the Johannine writings that I have found cited by many. He has forged a challenging thesis as a reasonable explanation of the riddle posed by the five Johannine writings, their relationship with the Synoptic Gospels, their setting in the Johannine school, and the references in the second century to John the Elder, the apostle John and the Johannine corpus. The scope and coherence of the thesis add to its strength.

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<sup>28</sup>Hengel, 131-32

## 2.4 Literary Genre

To deal adequately with all the literary techniques utilized within this Gospel is simply too large a task and beyond the scope of this work. Therefore this study will narrow the field by focusing on the implicit commentary contained within the narrative. In R. Alan Culpepper's valuable study on Johannine narrative style, he helpfully describes the distinction between the narrator's explicit and implicit commentary. The narrator communicates explicitly through character development, events, settings, and narrative asides—the obvious features. In contrast, implicit commentary is information conveyed between the lines through such literary features as multiple allusions, metaphors, misunderstandings, irony and symbolism.<sup>29</sup> A closer analysis of these techniques may provide a clearer picture of the Johannine message.

The first of these techniques is the use of multiple allusions and metaphor. Metaphors are expressions composed of two levels of meaning which complement one another. "Lamb of God" is a metaphor suggesting sacrifice. "Fountain of living water" is a metaphor suggesting source or origin. Metaphors are loaded with biblical-theological content. As Jesus uses them, the metaphors reveal the eschatological character of his person and work. In redemptive-historical framework, they are retrospective, that is, reaching back to the Old Testament and they are prospective, that is, reaching forward to heaven.

Further, the use of metaphor; "the lamb of God" is eschatological retrospectively. Christ is the eschatological Lamb of God because he is the last Lamb, the final lamb, the once-and-for-all lamb anticipated in the Passover lambs and in the sacrificial animals of the Old Testament cult. He is also the Lamb of God prospectively and eschatologically. Rev. 13:8 describes the heavenly Christ as the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He is the center of our future eschatological existence. It is importance to keep in mind that John's eschatological perspective (embodied, for instance, in his rich use of metaphors) is thus continuously retrospective and prospective.

Frequently John uses words that are polyvalent in meaning and this, points to allusion. On other occasions he chooses certain words, which clearly have one meaning, to allude to something else. When used in dialogues the words often have one meaning for the listener (lower or earthly), and quite another meaning for Jesus (higher or heavenly). One example of this literary devise is Jesus' reference to his body as the temple in 2:19-21. In this case the narrator explains what Jesus meant by his words. However in other instances he does not, as in ch.7:8, where Jesus speaks of going up (whether he had meant to Jerusalem or the Father is obscure).

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<sup>29</sup>Culpepper, R. Alan. *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*. Philadelphia: (Fortress Press, 1983)6-7

John uses these multiple allusions for two reasons. First, they often allow him to set up the misunderstanding/understanding literary device (4:10), or engage in irony (12:50-52). Second, they also make it possible to make an implicit theological statement in a provocative manner. An excellent example is the fourfold use of 'follow' in 1:37,38,40,43. The reader is led progressively to the higher meaning of 'follow' as one realizes that these men will become disciples. However, these multiple allusions do not negate the lower level of meaning but rather they extend and elevate that meaning.<sup>30</sup>

To these allusions, John develops the use of misunderstanding, which he employs in some sentences. Misunderstanding occurs when a double sense or double meaning is derived. In Jn. 2:19, Jesus says, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The audience misunderstands Jesus as referring to the Herodian Temple, when he is actually speaking of his body. "You must be born again" (Jn. 3:3, 4) is misunderstood by Nicodemus to refer to a literal re-entrance into and re-emergence from his mother's womb. Jesus is speaking of the activity of the Spirit and the passivity of the sinner. In the encounter with the woman at the well of Samaria (Jn. 4:10, 11), Jesus says, "If you knew who it is who asks you, you would have asked and he would have given you living water." The adulterous woman replies, "But you have nothing with which to draw."

We find allusion used whenever a character misunderstands the meaning of Jesus' words, leading Jesus to communicate fuller and deeper truths about himself. Upon noting that it is a literary device, one must also recognize that it represents a historical reality. The most frequent sequence is an ambiguous statement by Jesus, a misunderstanding by the hearer, then clarification by either Jesus or the narrator. Jesus' discourses on living water (4:10), food (4:32) and bread (6:33) furnish further excellent examples of these misunderstandings.

Culpepper delineates three effects of the misunderstandings upon the reader. The first is the enlargement of the gap between the 'insiders' and the 'outsiders.' The narrator makes the reader feel superior to the obviously less intelligent characters in the story. The misunderstandings cast judgmental shadows on those who ignorantly rejected Jesus, and these are the 'outsiders.' This, in effect, nudges the reader into the privileged circle of those who understand the implications of Jesus' words, the 'insiders.' Second, this device allows John to clarify and expand theological truth. The final effect is that they teach one how to read the Gospel. They help one recognize the two levels of language, and they warn that failure to

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<sup>30</sup>Shedd, Russell. "Multiple Meanings in the Gospel of John." *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*: Ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 256-57

understand identifies one with those foolish characters who did not rightly interpret Jesus' words.<sup>31</sup>

Another most implicit of John's literary techniques is that of irony. Irony is a literary twist in which two levels of meaning oppose one another in some way. In Jn. 6:42, the Jews are discussing the origin of Jesus. They say he comes from Nazareth (level one); he says he comes from heaven (level two). The irony is that both are true. John joins them in order to emphasize the incarnation. In Jn. 11:49, 50, Caiaphas says it is better that one should die than that the whole nation should perish. At one level, Caiaphas knows all (as he estimates the situation). At another level, Caiaphas knows nothing (as the situation turns out). The irony is that one dies and the nation(s) (ἔθνος = Gentiles) are saved. Although it is a difficult device to master, John exercises it with great effect to further his purpose. In fact it can be said that the author "smiles, winks, and raises his eyebrows as the story is told."<sup>32</sup> Thus John records statements that the speaker thinks are correct and the reader knows are correct, but in a different and often higher sense. It once again emphasizes the two levels within the Johannine text and the opposition between those two levels in relation to this, some theologians suggests that to exegete the text properly one must deal with both the meaning of the words as intended by the characters as well as the meaning the author wished to convey.<sup>33</sup>

Paul Duke has analyzed Johannine irony under two headings. The first, local irony is situated at a particular point in the text, such as Caiaphas' prophecy that Jesus would die for the people (11:49-50). Extended irony, the second type, is the development of an ironic theme through an episode or through the whole Gospel. The prime example, and the ultimate irony, is that Jesus was rejected by the world (1:10), and even more pointedly, by his own (1:11), the very people he came to save.<sup>34</sup>

What then is the effect of irony in John? Indeed, a hard question to contend with! Wead, however suggests that primarily, it draws the reader into union with the author. The reader is never the victim of irony and although he/she will probably miss the irony at some points, this will only strengthen communion when it is recognized during subsequent readings. Even those unsympathetic to the views of the author will find themselves being gently led toward the goal of the book (20:30-31). Through irony, "the author subtly welds a union between himself and the

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<sup>31</sup> Culpepper, 1983

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 165

<sup>33</sup> Wead, David W. "Johannine Irony as a Key to the Author-Audience Relationship in John's Gospel." *Biblical Literature: 1974 Proceedings*: Comp. Fred O. Francis. Tallahassee: American Academy of Religion, 1974.

<sup>34</sup> Duke, Paul D, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*: Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985

audience who will read the gospel. This unity is a delicate means to bring them to the faith John knows”.<sup>35</sup>

Another literary technique to be discussed is symbolism. Almost all would agree that abundant use of symbolism is one of the primary literary features of John’s Gospel. On one level this symbolism appears to be explicit instead of implicit commentary. But upon closer observation, it becomes obvious that not all symbolism in John is easily identified or interpreted. Symbolism has been defined as “the sensible expression of a present reality”.<sup>36</sup> The symbol’s function is to enable the reader to subjectively experience the reality of the transcendent. Using this definition one is able to treat Jesus himself, his words and his works as symbolic, for Jesus is the symbol of God (cf. Jn. 1:14,18).

If symbolism is so prominent in John, then we can ask what its theological purpose is. C.H. Dodd has recognized that the author has presented the very narrative as both historically accurate and symbolic of a deeper truth. It seems that once again the symbols can act as ladders to help the reader up to a higher level of reality, encouraging the reader to encounter the transcendent. Dodd finally notes this about the author: “He writes in terms of a world in which phenomena—things and events—are a living and moving image of the eternal, and not a veil of illusion to hide it, a world in which the Word is made flesh”.<sup>37</sup>

Before I conclude the study on the Johannine literary genre, it is worthy to notice that recently, a special study was published that provided a special type of style literary feature so specific and confined to the Fourth Gospel. In *Novum Testamentum Quarterly Journal*, Belle Van describes a style called prolepsis to be rampant in this Gospel. The term “prolepsis” can be defined in both rhetorical and grammatical terms. In the context of literary rhetoric, “prolepsis” (προληψις “anticipation”) is used for the prolepsis defensive anticipation of the opponent’s argument.<sup>38</sup> Prolepsis in the Fourth Gospel is used to describe anticipation of the subject with verbs which can take the accusative and infinitive or accusative and participle as well as a clause with “οτι or ινα”.<sup>39</sup> Drawing reference from different scholars, Belle states that these anticipations are often found in association with interrogative clauses. He quotes R. Bultmann stating that the “attraction” is the practice which was very common to Greek language, of subjoining the subject of a dependent declarative sentence to the main predicate to be governed

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<sup>35</sup>Wead, 1974

<sup>36</sup> Schneiders, Sandra M. “History and Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel.” *L’Evangile de Jean: Sources, Redaction, Theologie*. Ed. Martinus de Jonge. Gembloux: Duculot; Louvain; Louvain University Press, 1977.

<sup>37</sup> Dodd, C.H. *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953

<sup>38</sup> Gillbert Van Belle. Prolepsis in the Gospel of John, in *Novum Testamentum JNRS Vol..XLIII FASC. 4/2001* pp. 335-47

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 336

as an object. There is a scholastic mixture of response on the precise constructions of prolepsis as provided by Belle. Nevertheless, this does not extend to the meaning and use of this style in the Gospel. There are only contradictions in translation when the word οτι is used. The reader expects specific reaction to it, here Bell examines the work of other scholars who had sensed the disparity in the tense outcome when οτι is for instance rendered “when” or “that”, nevertheless, he maintains that this literary style is purely Johannine.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 AN OVERVIEW OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The gospel of John is admittedly different from the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. But that difference does not imply separate. The Trinitarian slogan of the Church is useful here—distinct but not separate. John's gospel is distinct but not separate from the Synoptics and its relationship with the Synoptics has been well elaborated elsewhere in this work. It is possible to say that John is a part of the "fourfold gospel."

This introduction leads to say that, if the Gospel of John had been the only account available of the life of Jesus, we might still be fascinated and intrigued by it. But the problem which it presents would not be so complex and difficult as they become when it is read as the last of the four Gospels, all purporting to describe the same thing.

The Gospel of John begins with the philosophical statement (Jn. 1.1-18), which has no counterpart in the Synoptic Gospels. Then move into familiar territory, in spite of the very different presentation from the Synoptic parallels. But this hope is quickly shuttered by the call of the first disciples (Jn. 1.35-51), which has virtually nothing in common with the Synoptic accounts (e.g. Mk. 1.16-20; Lk. 5.1-11), and indeed seems irreconcilable with them. This problem of the relation to the Synoptic Gospel continues through to the end.

At the same time a reading of John shows also differences of style. After the first two chapters, and the surprise caused by discovering the cleansing of the Temple (Jn. 2.13-22) before the ministry of Jesus has even begun, instead of near the end, the narrative ceases to be episodic and gives way to long discourses and debates of Jesus in Jerusalem, which are completely differently from the Synoptic Gospels. This difference extends beyond the literary form that I have already discussed elsewhere in this work; this is to the effect of the picture which is produced. Here Jesus emerges as a remote personality, almost wholly taken up with the subject of his personal authority in relation to God.

In brief, it is that I can give the breakdown on Jesus life as follows: (1) birth to death and resurrection (as Mathew and Luke do); from (2) Christ's baptism to his resurrection (as Mark does). However, John spent forty percent of his gospel describing one week—the most crucial week—Jesus' life (Jn. 12-20:25). John is preoccupied with the week of Christ's death and resurrection. By this, he is providing an overall clue to his story of Christ by featuring his death and resurrection. The beginning of John's gospel is not genealogy (Matthew), not godspell (Mark), not angelic annunciation (Luke). John begins with a magnificent paean of the glory of the Son (Word/Logos)—God's only begotten. The Johannine Prologue (Jn. 1:1-18) wondrously introduces this gospel which soars like the eagle. The Johannine Epilogue (Jn. ch. 21) poignantly

envelops the gospel with the conversation between the eschatological Shepherd and the destined under-shepherd reaching the climax of commissioning Apostle Peter to feed the lambs. In between Prologue and Epilogue, there is his glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14).

Thematically, a close observation of the Gospel of John reveals that it broadly consists of three main theological issues. The center of these themes is Christology which the current study tries to explore. These themes are thrilling and perhaps necessary to brief in this overview. I will summarize them under the headings Christocentric, Eschatological, Soteriological. John asks his readers to continually reflect on the question, "Who is Jesus?" This Christological question is answered from the Prologue to the Epilogue which will be in detailed discussed under exegesis in this research. The Gospel of John presents Jesus as the Word/Logos, the Son of God, who is God himself. This high antic Christology explains the centrality of Christ in John's gospel. From ch. 1:1 to 21:25, John concentrates on the person of Christ such that, he will not allow the reader to take eyes off Jesus. This adds to the conviction of many readers that the central character in John's Gospel drama is Jesus Christ.

### **3.1 Eschatology**

The second theological theme well elaborated in the Gospel of John is eschatology. When we read the Fourth Gospel immediately we realize that it talks of the present time of the realization of faith which in other parts of the bible is exempted for future time.<sup>40</sup>

Traditional study of eschatology has recognized that there are two sets of last things (εσχατα) which the Bible addresses; individual eschatology e.g. Parousia and the tribulation. The first category of information relates to matters of personal destiny, while the second deals more with God's future plans for the world in general. In practice however, attention seems to be given to one or the other in theological writing rather than to both.

On this topic of eschatology, Souček argues that in the Forth Gospel, Jesus is talking more about his earthly life and that eschatology is evident when Jesus utters such statements as in Jn.12. 31 (now is the judgment of this world). Further, he adds that there is no agreement as to whether eschatology should be limited simply to "last things" in a quantitative sense, that is, strictly to end time or present time.<sup>41</sup> A balance view which takes all the biblical data into consideration will need to give place to all these elements. On the other hand, other scholars on this subject insist that there is much revelation relating to both individual destiny and future of

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<sup>40</sup>Souček, B. Josef. *Teologické a exegetické studie (Theology and Exegetical Studies)*: (Česká Biblická Společnost, 2003) pp. 94

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.



Israel and the nations in relation to the wording of the Fourth Gospel. One of those scholars is Robert Cook who puts an emphasis upon both this age and the age to come with interplay between the two. He concludes that eschatology must be viewed as having strongly qualitative overtones as well as quantitative ones.<sup>42</sup>

To announce a subject such as eschatology in John's Gospel at this juncture of New Testament studies therefore evokes the consideration of such names that have been in this work adversely quoted. This includes C.H. Dodd, R. Bultmann, J.A.T Robinson, R. Schnackenburg and Josef B. Souček. These men have, and to some extent continue to set the direction for the discussion of this subject. They have made eschatology key to the understanding of the Gospel of John so that G.E. Ladd could say, "the question of the eschatology teaching of the Forth Gospel brings the entire Johannine problem into focus."<sup>43</sup>

The problem to which Ladd refers is the apparent discontinuity between the eschatology of the Johannine Jesus. He poses a question thus; how can we account for the great difference between the apocalyptic s and the contemporary emphasis upon eternal life immediately received through faith in Jesus Christ in John. It is held by many scholars that these messages are so desperate that they could not have come from the mouth of the same person. Were there indeed two schools of eschatology thought, one futuristic and one realized, which viewed for ascendancy in the early church? Did the latter eventually supplant the former and if so, why? Did Jesus set forth one line of thinking and editors (redactors) set forth another or are both representative of the thinking of differing groups of his followers? In any case, no matter which explanation is offered, it would be held that the evangelist who gave the record (in this case John), a later redactor, or a cycle of disciples whose views are being expressed, was honestly intending to represent the meaning of what Jesus said and did for the believing community. Since as is widely acknowledge, the gospel writers had access to and utilized available of traditions or sources, it is to be expected that somewhat different emphasis would evidence themselves. Dodd for example, formulates the question, "To what extent and under conditions may the Fourth Gospel be used as a document for the historian in that sense?"<sup>44</sup> That is, how may it be used to determine how things actually happened? He goes on to state, the answer to the question depends upon the sources of information which were of the disposal of the evangelist, thus if we assume that he intended to record that which happened, however, free he may have felt to modify the factual record in order to bring out the meaning.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Cook, W. Robert, *Systematic Theology in Outline Form*: (Portland: Western Baptist, 1981) pp. 719

<sup>43</sup> G.E Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*: (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) pp. 298

<sup>44</sup> Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Forth Gospel*.

<sup>45</sup> Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*.

In conclusion to the above brief discussion on eschatology, the view here is that the text of John's Gospel has significant eschatological message to the Church. There is no question that it is multi-dimensional in that it speaks to both the "already" and "not yet" of Christian revelation. It also includes reference to both the "I am" of the above and below, the heavenly and the earthly. Further, John points out the implications of eschatological truth, but that person may not escape its ultimate realities.

Eschatological truth in John is basically christological. For the most part it issues from Jesus' teaching and to a large degree focuses upon him. Whether the subject be death, heaven, judgment, eternal life, resurrection or Christ's return, he is directly involved. Finally, eschatological truth in this Gospel is prominently practical, is possible to conclude that it is immediate and fundamental.

### **3.2 Soteriology**

The third theme is Soteriology, which is the means by which the two previous themes are achieved. In the stated purpose for writing the Gospel (20:31), "But these are written that you may believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." An interesting observation is that relatively little has been published on Soteriology as an independent theme, seen in the light of the flood of publications on this Gospel. The trends in the research on the Gospel seem to be:<sup>46</sup>

- a) The theme is so dominant in the theology of John, that it is usually developed in relation to other themes in this Gospel, and not as an independent theme. It forms part of most of the descriptions of theological themes in this Gospel, but is rarely developed in depth on its own.
- b) Where the focus falls on the Soteriology, the presentation of the material is usually descriptive in nature. In-depth discussions are usually not attempted and sometimes the discussions follow detours.
- c) Although commentaries obviously treat the theme where it occurs in different verses, most of them do not treat it in-depth as a separate theme on its own. If it is done, the treatment is usually brief and descriptive (Beasley-Murray 1987)

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<sup>46</sup> Watt, G. Jan. *Salvation in the New Testament Perspective on Soteriology*: (Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2005) pp. 101-128

The argument to be unfolded here is that the Soteriology is developed within the context of and determined by a conflict (of which the contours cause a continuing debate in Johannine literature).

In making a brief conclusion on materials that I have explored on this topic, my deduction is that Soteriology of this Gospel is not formulated in an abstract, a-historical manner. It is formulated to address the specific conflict the Johannine community was experiencing with the disciples of Moses. The basic question is on where God was to be found. The Jewish opponents claimed that God was with them because of their relation with the Law, temple, and other cultic activities, their relation with Moses, or their ancestry through Abraham. The disciples of Jesus claimed that God was with them, based on the revelation of Jesus. This was substantiated by his words and deeds and was witnessed to by Scripture. Accepting or rejecting this revelation would mean experiencing salvation or not.

However, does not imply that John would address the issue of salvation in this fashion in every situation. As becomes clear in 1 John, he does not hesitate to refer to the blood of Jesus that purifies from every sin (1 John 1:7), or to refer to the loving God who sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice (ἵλασμός) for our sins (1 John 4:10). These expressions in 1 John refer to a different situation amongst Christians (an inner-community situation) where the questions about personal sin (wrong deeds and a broken relation between the individual and God) are being addressed. A different situation requires a different approach.

However, if the question were: where could I find God and therefore salvation, the answer would always be: at the door of the sheep pen, following the good shepherd, listening to the Word. For John it is possible to ask further questions, and refine one's answers according to changing questions and situations, but in the end, the essence of salvation is accepting Jesus as the Revelation of God and by accepting (believing in) him, becoming part of the family of God through birth from above.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 THE JOHANNINE PROLOGUE

Although the issue of the prologue is not the main theme of this work, it is undoubtedly impossible to explore the Fourth Gospel without at least a brief basis on the prologue. In other words, the Johannine prologue provides the backbone of the work a head and it's understandably the key to the understanding of the whole Gospel. Indeed, it is true I have to admit that this is not the first time the issue of the prologue is drawing the attention of a biblical scholar. Through several literatures that I have gone through in writing this work, the relation of prologue to the rest of this Gospel has received a great consideration by many recent scholars, namely; *R. Bultmann, A.E. Haigh, C.H Dodd, R.E Brown, E. Käsemann, E. Harris, P. Pokorný and Z. Sázava* just to mention but a few.

The prologue begins with the Logos, who apart from the parenthesis concerning John in v.17, where Jesus Christ occurs as a proper name. In a number of compressed statements the Logos is said to be with God and to be himself  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ . He exists with God before the creation of all that exists, of which he is the author, and which is the metaphysical light to that part of creation which is called 'humankind'. That light continues to shine in humankind despite a darkness which results from its origins. The divine quality of this light is indicated by the adjective 'true' and its continuing operation by the statement that it enlightens every human being. Thus, as the Logos, he was always in the world and yet was not known by his creation.

In the spiral movement of vv. 11-12 a particular coming of this ever present Logos is stated with a similar double result. It is coming to those who are his own, possibly a reference to the Jews, whose rejection provides the background for the establishment of the veracity of Jesus' claims and person, but more probably a reference to humankind in general, who in their ignorance and blindness did not receive him.<sup>47</sup> In contrast to this is the reception of the Logos by those who believed on his name, which constituted them children of God in a manner that goes beyond in a manner that goes beyond inheritance, human proclamation or self determination, and is a direct birth from God. In v.14 a distinction is drawn between those made the children of God in this way and who brings it about; and it is here that the concept of divine sonship begins to appear. The agent of the re-creation of humanity is the Logos incarnate, dwelling in the proximity with human beings and with him, through whom the divine glory is made evident. This glory is then defined in terms of sonship as that which belongs to one who is unique-the only begotten.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Robinson, *J. The Relation of the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John*: (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) pp. 23

<sup>48</sup> See detailed Son-Father relationship of the Johannine Gospel in this work under Christology perspectives exegesis and interpretation.

The prologue closes in vv. 15-18 with the witness of the John referred to in vv.6-8 as having come for witness to the light, in a series of compressed statements with reference to the historical figure Jesus Christ, who is the source of the fullness of grace and truth. This is further defined in terms of divine sonship, either explicitly with the reading in v.18 “the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father”, or implicitly, but not less forcefully, with the reading, “the unique one who is God, who is in the bosom of the Father”. The function of this figure has been to communicate to human beings the heavenly things. Thus divine sonship could be said to be a major, rather than the “master”, concept of the Logos μονογενής, whose being and operations it expresses in terms of unique filial relationship with the Father God. This Logos-Son has as his authoritative functions both to be the author of divine things from God to humankind.

Though the above elaboration provides only the basic content of the prologue, the approaches of scholars in understanding the prologue have remained diverse. Their treatment of the prologue is thus not amenable to any simple grouping. First may be considered the position that the prologue as it stands is the result of redaction of an already existent unit. The criteria for this kind of analysis were laid down by J.H. Bernard They were: (1) In accordance with the character of Semitic poetry, the verse lines must be short, roughly the same in length, and fall into parallel clauses; (2) as the unit is a hymn it must consist of statements; hence the argumentative verses (vv.13, 17 and perhaps 18) are to be excluded ; and (3) as it is an abstract statement proper names (John, Moses, Jesus Christ) are to be excluded (i.e. vv. 6-8, 15, 17).<sup>49</sup> But the best known exponent of this approach is Bultmann.<sup>50</sup> Due to the fact that the intention of this work was not to exegete solely on the prologue, I will provide here only a brief analysis of two major works that I found so consistent and detailed concerning the prologue. It will encompass the work of R. Bultmann and C.H. Dodd who are of course renowned theologians of twentieth century.

According to Bultmann’s analysis, the prologue has a literary character, which is that of a hymn, and is the hymn of a community. It is made up of couplets in poetic rhythm, and its entire form is governed by strict rules. However, this does not hold for vv. 6-8, 13 and 15, and these stand out as interruptions in being partly prose narrative either with a polemic purpose (vv. 6-8, 15) or as dogmatic definition (v.13). Consideration of rhythm also requires the excision of v. 2 as repetition of v.1 of ἀνθρώπων in v 9, of ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν καὶ in v. 10 and of ἐξουσίαν<sup>51</sup> in v. 12.

The analysis is not however purely literary, since Bultmann asks where the prologue first speaks

<sup>49</sup> J.H. Benard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to John* (2 vols. Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1928) referred to by E. Harris, *Prologue and Gospel, The Theology of the Fourth Evangelist*.. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. 1994), pp. 18

<sup>50</sup> R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A commentary*: (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Press, 1971), pp. 13-18

<sup>51</sup> ἐξουσίαν in this context used as *authority* that the Logos gives to those who received him.

of the incarnate Logos. His answer is that in the source this was at v. 14 and that the ‘we’ of vv.14 and 16 are the same, the witness of John in v. 15 being an assertion into the original hymnic form. Similarly, while in the original form vv. 1-5 and vv. 9-12 spoke of the pre-existent Logos and his ‘almost fruitless effect as Revealer in this form’.<sup>52</sup> Bultmann continues to argue that the evangelist takes v. 5 ‘the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it—as a reference to the historical Jesus and has therefore inserted vv. 6-8. These insertions are not to be eliminated as interpolations, they are the evangelists own comments’.<sup>53</sup>

Again, v. 12c and v. 13 are exegetical comments interpreting the idea of “the children of God” in v. 12b and v. 17 is an exegetical gloss on v. 16, while v. 18 is to be regarded on stylistic grounds as an addition by the evangelist. Bultmann concludes that the cultic hymn of the community which the evangelist has used as the basis of the prologue consisted of vv. 1-5, 9-12, which spoke of the pre-existent Logos, whose negative effect is offset by the statement of v. 14, which speaks of the incarnation of the Logos, which the evangelist already found in v. 5. It is only because the evangelist found in the word τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει<sup>54</sup>—an expression of the revelation given by the historical Jesus that he is able to introduce the Baptist at this point as the witness to the light.<sup>55</sup> Added to this theological consideration, Bultmann insists, is the polemic character of vv. 6-8, 15 which deny John as a gnostic revealer. So the evangelist utilized a Gnostic Baptist hymn, in which the cosmology of gnosticism had already given way to an expression of belief in the Creator-God of the Old Testament.

There are certain merits in Bultmann’s analysis which accounts for its acceptance in general by a number of scholars, even when they modify it in detail. The chief of these is the isolation within the present prologue of an original whose rhythmic structure and form correspond to its subject matter, and on the basis of which the attitude of the evangelist may be detected in the additions and comments he has made which disturb this form. Its weakness may be said to be twofold. First, on this view the hymn to the Logos was not the evangelist’s own deliberate construction, which he felt impelled to compose as a prolegomenon to his gospel, but something ready to hand which he felt he could use for the purpose. Secondly, the reasons that Bultmann gives for the evangelist’s insertions and adaptations, and for his addition of vv. 17-18, by which he edits such a tight-knit structure, are not particularly compelling.

The influence of Bultmann’s type of analysis upon a whole range of scholars may be seen in the table printed by R.E. Brown in his commentary, where he gives the reconstructions of an

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid. pp.17

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. pp.16

<sup>54</sup> Literarily *the light in the darkness appears or shines*

<sup>55</sup> Bultman, *John*, pp.17

original hymn made by J.H. Bernard, S de Asejo, P. Gaechter, H.C Green, E. Haenchen, E. Käsemann and R. Schanackenburg. These reconstructions have a good deal in common, but they also vary considerably, particularly after v. 5.

Elsewhere in this work I have mentioned the work of C.H. Dodd, who has continually offered tentatively his own construction hinting on the possibility of a Greek background into account on the prologue. He uses both the word ‘proem’ and the word ‘prologue’. Thus, according to him, ‘chapter 1 forms a proem to the whole Gospel. It falls into two parts: 1-18, commonly designated to the prologue, and 19-51, which we may, from the nature of its contents, conveniently call the Testimony’.<sup>56</sup>

After recalling Mk. 1.1-15 as similarly constituting an introduction or proem to the Gospel, and discussing Logos and other problems, he concludes: ‘The prologue thus represents a thoroughgoing re-interpretation of the idea which in the later part of the chapter is expressed in terms of the “realized eschatology<sup>57</sup>” of the primitive church’. He suggests that the evangelist wishes ‘to offer the Logos-idea as the appropriate approach for those nurtured in the higher religion of hellenism to the central purport of the Gospel, through which he may lead them to the historical actuality of its story, rooted as it is in Jewish tradition’.<sup>58</sup> He also observes that the two statements in 1.14 and 1.51 ‘contain in brief the substance of what the evangelist is now about to relate’.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, Dodd’s use of both ‘proem’ and ‘prologue’ recalls the dissatisfaction felt by ancient writers with the term ‘prologue’. As there, so here, both terms suggest ‘beginning’, but clearly Dodd sees in the prologue in some sense an announcing beforehand, a new interpretation of an old set of ideas around a central figure now called ‘Logos’. This is, as has been previously shown, in accordance with ancient usage, and could correspond with a state of literary creative freedom in the evangelist’s own time and milieu. It may be noticed that nowhere is it suggested by Dodd that philosophical speculation or metaphysics are to be thought to provide the interpretive key.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> C. H Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, p 292

<sup>57</sup> Realized eschatology is that study which reflect more to this age than the age yet to come

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 296

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

## 4.1 On Gnosticism and the Gospel of John

The Gospel of John has been a major focus in relation to the the Gnostic<sup>61</sup> movement of the first Century. This gospel shows some clearest similarity to later gnostic writing style in general, and parts of the gospel have a similar dream-like quality to the writing. Bultmann states, “Gnostic terminology places its stamp mainly on the words and discourses of Jesus” in *The Gospel according to John*; however, he goes even further stating that Gnostic terminology “runs through the whole Gospel and Epistles.” He proceeds further with this thought specifying that, “If the author’s background was Judaism, as rather frequently occurring rabbinical turns of speech perhaps prove, it was out of a gnosticizing Judaism that he came.”<sup>62</sup>

Bultmann further notes that “the literary devices with which [the author of John’s Gospel] builds the discussions—the use of ambiguous concepts and statements to elicit misunderstandings—are indicative that he lives within the sphere of Gnostic-dualistic thinking.” Bultmann notes that the Fourth Evangelist makes “use of ambiguous concepts and statements to elicit misunderstandings” and notes that these statements are “indicative that he lives within the sphere of Gnostic-dualistic thinking.” He states that the ambiguities and misunderstandings are not “merely formal technical devices. Rather, they are the expression of his underlying dualistic view.”<sup>63</sup>

These comments are squarely the same of what Petr Pokorný adds on gnostic ideas. He states that already before the writing of this gospel, the gnostic thought about miracles was broadened in the gnostic thinking, the dualisms and miracles stated in the gospel however, defers from gnosticism in that this stresses on the revelation of God in the historical presentation of Jesus from Nazareth.<sup>64</sup> For John to write about such miracles adds Pokrný, is simply giving new spiritual understanding to what the gnostics had already believed in. But in terms of gnosticism present concepts in the Johannine writings, Pokorný has the same view with Bultmann. He writes, “ in the Gospel of John and other Johannine writings, several gnostic perspectives are evident.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Gnostic is a name that comes from the Greek word for knowledge (*gnosis*), the gnostics claimed to have special knowledge about the ultimate secrets of the world, of the Savior and Salvation. Gnosticism ranged through a whole variety of sects and sets of belief, many of which are quite definitely not related to Christianity. The Gnostic dualism is the idea of struggle between good and evil, darkness and light. These correlates to the Johannine presentation in the Prologue and has raised several questions on the evangelist presentation of Logos.

<sup>62</sup>Bultmann, Rudolf, *Theology of the New Testament*, Volume II, Translated by Kendrick Grobel, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, paperback edition, 1955, Part III, “The Theology of the Gospel of John and the Johannine Epistles. pp. 13-14

<sup>63</sup>Ibid. pp. 14

<sup>64</sup>See, Pokorný, P. *Piseň o Perle (Song of Pearl)*: (Praha: Vyšerad, 1986) pp. 184-85

<sup>65</sup>Ibid. pp. 182



## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 CHRISTOLOGY EXEGESIS AND INTERPRETATION.

#### 5.1 Preamble

Biblical exegesis refers to using various methods of studying the Scripture for historical, cultural, and religious background; methods of writing; use of language and features of the Bible as literature; use in the ancient community of faith; development of the canon of Scripture for later use; etc. The purpose of exegesis is therefore to understand, as much as possible, what the text would have communicated in the context the time and culture that produced and used it, while still understanding that our questions are conditioned by our own language, culture, and history and so provide only one angle of vision into the text. In the beginning of this work, I made already an elaborate definition of Christology. In this regard, this work now turns not only to demonstrate the main christological motifs of the Johannine Gospel but to come up with an exegesis of the later and provide an elaborate interpretation and meaning of these strata. This chapter will thus introduce these features individually. In doing so, the Johannine prologue has been examined with the idea of creating a fundamental basis for the work at hand. Immediately by examining the prologue, one always notices that John is presenting certain christological motifs that are not available in the other New Testament writings.

#### 5.2 The Son of Man - υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου

The first expression to be considered is “the Son of Man”. It is introduced dramatically as the climax of the first ‘christological’ section of the gospel, 1.37-51, and by means of it certain crucial statements made in the first part of the gospel (it is absent from chs. 14-21) in addition to 1.51 at 3.13, 14;5.27; 6.27, 53, 62; 8.28; 9.35; 12.23, 34;13.31. The question here will be how far these important statements show links, however obscure, with what has been delivered to the readers by the prologue. It would be simplistic to say that the Logos, Jesus Christ and the Son of Man are one and the same. For that would fail to explain why the evangelist bothers to introduce not so much the figure designated by the term ‘Son of Man’ but the term itself, since he clearly saw no need to introduce it into the prologue, and could hardly have done so without great difficulty.

The origins, uses and meaning of the term ‘the Son of Man’ in the gospels as a whole (and in its only occurrence in the New Testament outside them, Acts 7.56) remain among the most hotly disputed questions in New Testament study.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, it is not necessarily the case

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<sup>66</sup> O’Day R. Gail, *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel*: Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1986

that what could be established for the term in synoptic tradition would necessarily be valid for its use in the fourth gospel.<sup>67</sup> The term in this gospel deserves to be studied on its own, in its own right, and with an open mind. A notable example of such a study is that of F.J. Moloney.<sup>68</sup> The author opens with a survey of the scholarly opinion on the Son of Man as a christological term in the Fourth Gospel, and notes a marked absence of consensus. He distinguishes six types of interpretation:

- (1) That which finds in the gospel no explicit Son of Man Christology, since the term means the same as Logos
- (2) That which sees the term as referring to a Jewish or Hellenistic ideal man
- (3) That which sees the evangelist as building on the synoptic tradition
- (4) That which postulates the Johannine tradition as being older than the synoptic
- (5) That which considers the evangelist to have been aware of the synoptic usages, but to have developed his own conception to suit his particular Christology
- (6) That which maintains that a completely new conception is to be found in this gospel.

Based on this interpretation, the first saying containing the Son of Man is rooted from ch. 1.51 and it is clearly, by its context, manner and content, of great importance in understanding the whole concept. It is in the context of a section, of which it is the finale, where the first disciples offer Jesus Jewish messianic roles, which he does not necessarily accept: ‘the messiah’, 1.45; him of whom Moses in the law and also in the prophets wrote, 1.45; the Son of God, the King of Israel. It is introduced by the first occurrence of the double ἀμήν and is the first pronouncement of Jesus in the Gospel. That motif takes the form of a prophecy. Jesus has just addressed Nathaniel as a true Israelite, and now promises that he will see greater things (1:50). What these greater things are to be, is presumably the content of (1.51). Indeed, J.H. Bernard maintains that the double ἀμήν never introduces a saying unrelated to what has preceded. However, it has to be admitted that to some extent v. 51 following after v. 50 appears to be explaining one conundrum by another, itself needing explanation.<sup>69</sup> Zuck, argues that v. 51 has the manner of an isolated statement, and that it is intrusive here. In favor of this view is the fact that the address of Nathaniel in v. 50 is in the second person singular while still an address to him, it is in the second person plural, as though directed to humankind in general.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 43

<sup>68</sup> Moloney, F.J, *The Johannine Son of Man*: (Bibliotheca de Scienze Religiose, 14; Las Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1976), pp. 9

<sup>69</sup> Benard J.H. *Critical and Exergetical Commentary on the Gospel According to John*.

<sup>70</sup> This argument is supported by a commentary done by Robert. Zuck in *Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth Colorado*: (Victor Books, 1991) pp 341.

On examining critically to the Johannine Gospel, it become apparent that the promise involved in this Christology presentation is twofold: that the heavens will be seen to have been opened, and that the angels will be seen continually ascending and descending on the Son of Man. These two are often taken as a single promise, but this is to be questioned, since the tenses of the participles are different. In the second part the tense is present, which denotes the ascending and descending as continuous and permanent activity.<sup>71</sup>

Nevertheless, my personal view is that the two are closely related. The comprehension here is of something more than the vision suggested in that the heavens have been opened may therefore need not to refer to just a single event of the divine disclosure, such as, for example, the baptism of Jesus as being depicted in the synoptic, or even in the event of the incarnation itself which is referred to in 1.14. This, rather, will be understood in the sense that the divine communication with human beings has been made available by God himself- that is the force of the perfect participle passive which depicts the relationship with the Son.

What is thus stated is compressed and developed in the next two Son of Man sayings in Jn.3.13 and 3.14. The accredited teacher of Israel, Nicodemus, becomes the foil for the first piece of extended instruction from Jesus, the subject of which is the necessity for a true relation with God, for a new spiritual birth. The stage is set for the supreme teacher to utter authoritatively, from his position of communication between heaven and earth, the heavenly things which human at large fails to understand. This would seem to be the logic of the abrupt change of person in the middle of 3.11, 'I say to you [Nicodemus] we speak what we know, and bear witness of what we have seen, and you [plural] do not receive our witness'; and the plural continues in Jn. 3:12. As the basis of the claim to be conveying to humankind heavenly things both heard and seen, a further step is taken from 1.51. Here is an indication that Jesus is more than the instrument of communication, he is the ladder upon which heavenly messengers ascend and descend. He is in this regard in his destiny as the communicator, and he is in this person as the Son of Man, ascender because first the descender.

What is however striking here is that this truth is stated by means of curious negative construction, 'no man has ascended into heaven', with which may be compared the similar negative to introduce the positive statement in 1.18. (In this context the emphasis in οὐδεὶς is probably better reproduced by 'no man' than by 'no one').<sup>72</sup> That is, communication between heaven and earth has not been, and cannot be, established from the human side. My opinion here

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<sup>71</sup> Edward et. al. *The Johannine Literature*.

<sup>72</sup> Berry. R. George, *The Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament with the Authorized Version*: pp. 323

is that perhaps the evangelist is ruling out all religious, especially Hellenistic, concepts of saviors of humankind storming heaven. But the negative may serve a positive affirmation.

There has been an ascent of human being to heaven, but only through the Son of Man in virtue of his previous descent from heaven to be man. Communication has been established in a human being in virtue of his heavenly origin and his descent from his existence with God. Thus 3.13 states in this negative-positive way in term of the Son of Man what I mentioned earlier of the Logos-Light in the prologue, that he was a heavenly figure who became a human being as confirmed in verse 1.4a

The presentation of the following verse 3.14 continues with a statement about the Son of Man: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up'. This is puzzling in several respects. First, it does not appear to have any logical connection with the preceding statement in verse 3.13, or to develop a thought. Secondly, the point of the comparison is not at all clear. The construction 'As...so ...' is deceptive, since apart from the use of 'to lift up' of both the snake and the Son of Man there is nothing to indicate what is, and must be common to them. Some interpreters have pressed the context and content of the story in Num. 21.6-9 to provide the point of comparison. Dodd for instance, argues that the gazing of the Israelites upon the elevated serpent which healed them is an Old Testament type of the believer who turns to the Son of Man so that he or she may (not perish but) have eternal life (3.15).<sup>73</sup> If this is the evangelist's intention, then it might appear to be exceedingly and obscurely expressed, since there is no reference to any contemplation of the Son of Man to attain belief and eternal life, but simply the necessity of his being lifted up.

In that context, therefore, it might be better to take as the evangelist's primary concern this divine possession of eternal life; by the believer, and to take 'lifted up' as a cryptic synonym, to be developed later, for the ascending of the Son of Man in the previous verse. The comparison would then be a comparatively superficial one with incident in the Old Testament, which involved a 'lifting up'. It is then as the heavenly one descending into the humanity so that he may ascend with humanity to God that he is the Son of Man, and this ascent is to be brought about by an action in the human sphere, his being lifted up. The Greek word for 'to lift up', 'to hoist up' or 'to elevate' (ὑψοῦν) is peculiar to the Fourth Gospel's theological presentation of the death of Jesus.<sup>74</sup> Along with other words, it expresses this evangelist distinctive understanding of the life and death of the Logos, Jesus Christ.

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<sup>73</sup> Dodd, C H, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*: (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1953)

<sup>74</sup> Berry. R. George, *The Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament with the Authorized Version*: pp. 326

An intensive exegesis of Johannine Gospel reveals that there are three further Son of Man sayings in which the term is connected with ‘to lift up’ 8.28, 12.23 and 12.34, and these may be considered here. In ch. 8 Jesus is in fierce debate with the Jews following his self-acclamation ‘I am the light of world’, and his claim that his followers will by no means walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (living, true light, 8.12). The Pharisees take up the cudgels and there follows a series of accusations arising from the exalted claims made by Jesus for himself and the theological fruits for believers. Scholars have argued that this dispute is predominantly in terms of Jesus’ sonship, with previously stated themes reiterated in slightly different ways—light, his heavenly origins, the Father who sent him and about dying in one’s sins.<sup>75</sup>

It is in this context that suddenly at ch. 8.28 that the Son of Man motif is emphatically mentioned, with the statement to the Pharisees, “ὅταν ὑψώσητε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου,”<sup>76</sup> you will know that ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι (that I am) [he?]. The term, once introduced is immediately dropped, and the dispute continues in terms of sonship and the absolute authority of the one who does nothing of himself, but speaks only what he has been taught by the Father. My argument is that what distinguishes the statement in 8.28a is that through it, the Pharisees, the leaders of the current Judaism, are placed in the dock, and are told that they will themselves effect whatever is ordained by the necessary lifting up of the Son, and that by this they will come to a certain knowledge of Jesus. What this knowledge is, however, remains obscure from the text.

Subsequently, this leads to the discussion of what might be meant by ἐγώ εἰμι which, in general remains difficult to comprehend. Perhaps it is necessary to pose such questions like; should one provide, as do most translators and commentators, a predicate ‘he’ ‘you shall know that I am he’? If so, does ‘he’ refer to the Son of Man? Does the text mean that only as one lifted up from earth to heaven, of which Jews will be the human agents in the crucifixion, can the Son of Man be recognized for who he is? Or does ‘he’ refer to what has been the main bone of contention in the dispute, ‘the Son’ (of the Father)? Is the meaning that is, lifting up of the Son of Man (i.e. his ascent to God) his abiding relationship with the Father will become evident? On the whole, the second seems preferable, especially as the statement continues, somewhat awkwardly, with ‘and I do nothing from myself, but as my Father has taught me’.<sup>77</sup> While wrestling with these sought of ambiguities to come up with interpretation, I do assume as an insight, what Bultmann thus provides. He comments that Jesus’ answer to the question ‘Who are you?’ Shows

<sup>75</sup> Bernard, J.H, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to John*: (2 vols. Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1928)

<sup>76</sup> Literary, “when ye shall have lifted up the Son of Man”. Here it is necessary to note the special use of the word “lifting up” in future context.

<sup>77</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John, A Commentary*: (Westminster John Knox Press, 1971) pp. 349

immediately that everything that he has claimed for himself is gathered up in the title “Son of Man.”<sup>78</sup>

Some would deny any necessity for a predicate, and would see as an adequate background for the Old Testament usage of ‘I am’, which indicates that God is meant.<sup>79</sup> In favour of this is the fact that it undoubtedly appears in form as the conclusion of the dispute with the assertion ‘before Abraham existed I am’ (8.58). This would not say more in terms of a dispute of this kind than the statement in ch.1.18, ‘the unique one, who is God’; and if the assertion in the prologue of the Logos becoming man (1.14a) has a corresponding statement in terms of the ascent of the Son of Man in ch. 3.13, so the definition of the Logos-Jesus Christ in ch. 1.18b may have a corresponding statement in terms of the Son of Man, that as a result of his exaltation through death his ‘divinity’ will be seen. Further, it may possible to say that the context of ch. 8.28 is a dispute arising from the claim in ch. 8.12, “ἐγὼ εἶμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου”, and that the followers of Jesus will not walk in darkness but will possess the living (true) light, and that this has been prepared for in the prologue with the Logos as the true light (1.9) who is not overcome by the darkness. Some interpreters however, asserts that what is meant here is that Jesus is the true light which illuminates every human being, and this may be reflected in the remarkable statement that the lifting up of the Son of Man will be the act through which, and the moment at which, they perceive the truth.<sup>80</sup>

In what has been hitherto observed, the context in ch. 12 is very different from that of ch. 8. The later has no concern with the Jews but with the Gentile world personified in the Greeks. This can be in some sense a world approaches with the request to ‘see’ Jesus. This request does not nevertheless receive a direct response, but is met with the statement that the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified, that is, to be invested with ‘glory’, which denotes the divine and heavenly existence.

The ‘hour’, which up until now has been said to be not yet, is now said to be present. That it is the hour of death, this is further clear from what follows about the corn of wheat which must die to be fruitful and about the troubling soul, which in the synoptic belongs to the scene in Gethsemane. In this context Jesus prays to the Father to glorify his name, to show himself through a voice from heaven.<sup>81</sup> It leads to a repetition of the original statement, though now in terms not of the Son of Man but the person of Jesus, and not of glorification but of being lifted

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 350

<sup>79</sup> Dodd, C.H pp. 231

<sup>80</sup> Wiersbe W. Warren, *The Bible Exposition Commentary Vol.1:* (New York: Victor Books. 1989) pp. 112

<sup>81</sup> This is the only instance of this device in this gospel, the evangelist perhaps uses this to indicate the unique divine relationship between the Son of Man and the godly head.

up: ‘I when I am lifted up ἐκ τῆς γῆς will draw all men to myself’ (12.32). The evangelist then adds one of his theological comments that in this Jesus was speaking symbolically of his death. The crowds also understand the expression ‘lift up’ to mean death, since they introduce a comparison with the doctrine they have been taught that the messiah, with whom they equate the Son of Man, abides for ever, and therefore question what kind of a messiah the Son of Man can be who is to be lifted up from the earth, or the death of one who is human, are identical for Jesus. But in the context something of great importance is added. Not only is this the case with Jesus as the Son of Man, but it has consequences for humankind. These are expressed by the use of forceful verb ἔλκυειν, ‘to drag’.<sup>82</sup>

It has already been noted that the theme of light introduced in the prologue almost as a synonym for the Logos, it is also associated in the Gospel with the Son of Man (1.51), ‘you shall see...3.19-21,;12.35-36). Here, further this perspective comes to a head in ch. 9 after the previous statement in 8.12 and then developed with heavy irony. Those in authority among the Jews, those who by right should see and know the truth, are shown to be those who are blind and obtuse with respect to it. The occasion is the miraculous Sabbath healing of a man whose blindness is said to be for the purpose that ‘the work of God may be made manifest in him’ (9.3). As a result of his healing and his subsequent interrogation by the authorities the man is, as a presumed disciple of Jesus, excommunicated from the synagogue.<sup>83</sup>

The story, however, does not end there, and his actual discipleship is secured by a further encounter procured by Jesus, who abruptly and surprisingly asks, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ the man replies, Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him? This is obscure. It could mean that he did not know what term the Son of Man was referring to or that he knew but asked for him to be identified. On his being identified as Jesus who he was now able to ‘see’ and who was talking with him, the man professed that belief and worshiped Jesus. It is not clear whether ‘worship’ here means some kind of reverence evoked in similar stories in the synoptics, or that which is in the strict sense is due to God alone, we can compare (4.20-24), and so here an apprehension of the divine in the gift of sight from the Son of Man.

Historically this is curious ending to the story. Theologically, however, it is appropriate in leading to the following words with which Jesus himself concludes the episode: that he has come into the world (from heaven) for the purpose of judgment, with the result that it is the (hitherto)

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<sup>82</sup> The verb is emphatic, expressing an action of force. Here used to express the idea that only when the Son of Man is lifted up could he drag those believing in him to himself. In the New Testament the word is used four times, among these only once outside the Johannine Evangelium (Acts. 16:19). In John, it is used in figurative sense.

<sup>83</sup> Burridge A. Richard, *John, The People's Bible Commentary*: (The Bible Reading Fellowship, Singapore. 1998) pp. 222

blind who are able to see (the truth), and it is those who think they see it who are shown to be blind.

So far the Son of Man motif has been relatively isolated in their context in discourses conducted largely in other terms, and the problem has to explain their occurrence and understanding. This is not the case in the discourse in ch. 6 on the subject of divine sustenance, where there are three such sayings (vv. 27, 53, 62); here they are not isolated but come at crucial points, and could be said to articulate the discourse. This chapter is notoriously difficult to interpret, as it raises the questions about elation of the text both to the synoptic tradition and to the liturgical tradition of the Eucharist.<sup>84</sup> Here it might suffice to leave these questions on one side and to attempt to understand the sayings in their context, with attention to what, if anything, they do add to the Son of Man materials examined so far.

The day after the miraculous feeding, the crowd searches for Jesus, which is said to be due not to their having seen a miracle but to their having been satisfied with a unique bread (6.26). They are told not to toil for food that perishes but for food that endures in respect of eternal life. This Son of Man will give; for this one God the Father has sealed (6.27). By itself this could mean to be a statement couched in the language of an early eschatology. The miraculous food itself becomes a sign or foretaste of food which is (1) abiding or heavenly, and (2) concerned with eternal life. It will be given sometimes in the future, and will be connected with participation in the life of the coming age. Its giver will be the Son of Man, the agent in the coming age. The discourse, however, does not stop there, but moves forward; and does so by way of discussion of the manna, which the Jews adduce as the instance of God's gift of heavenly food to Israel. This claim is denied; the interpretation of 6.32 is difficult to understand.<sup>85</sup>

Over against the manna is the true bread from heaven, which is almost a tautology, as 'true' and from the 'heaven' are synonymous. This, which the Father gives, is the bread of God, which is further defined, somewhat strangely, as that which comes down from heaven, its purpose being to give life not to Israel but to the world (6.33). The force of that definition then appears when Jesus defines himself as the bread of life, as being so because he in truth comes down from heaven (6.38). When the Jews object, the claim is reiterated and underlined.<sup>86</sup>

The discourse on bread refers also to Jesus' sonship. Jesus is the bread and in that he is the one who veritably comes down from heaven (6.50-51). More specifically it is his flesh that is his humanity, supplied to give life to the world. It appears difficult to understand certain

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<sup>84</sup> For the discussion of the interpretation of this chapter, see Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, pp.304-307; Moloney, *Johannine Son of Man*, pp. 89-100

<sup>85</sup> Barret, *St. John*, pp. 289-92 for discussion

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*



sentences that the evangelist implores here, for example, when the Jews object, ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’ It is an instance in which we need to understand the key meaning of the meaning of the “body/flesh”. They are nevertheless met with the insistence that ‘except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you’. This can be taken as a reference to the Eucharist given the discourse on the last supper, but that may be questioned based on the level of anthropological understanding. It is to be noted that ‘flesh’ and ‘blood’ are spoken of and not the Eucharistic ‘body’ and ‘blood’. Flesh and blood together denote humanity. Their separation into ‘flesh’ as ‘true food’ and as ‘true drink’ is therefore no more than a somewhat artificial way of insisting that ‘flesh and blood’(the humanity) of the Son of Man is true, heavenly and divine sustenance.

In my view, these statements cause a grave crisis, not now among the Jews but among the disciples. To assist them Jesus ask, “what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending where he was before?” This seems to mean that it will be possible to grasp, to comprehend, that Jesus as the Son of Man can through his humanity give the food of eternal life. This will be possible if the disciples perceive that same Son of Man, who has veritably come down from heaven as none other has, returning to his place of origin. His words are ‘spirit and life’ because it is these things that consistently link heaven and earth, heaven and earth, flesh and spirit and spirit and flesh. As the Son of Man coming from God and returning to God he holds all life, including his own, to its origin in the Creator, and is thereby the communicator of the life of heaven to the life of the world of human beings. Thus the life of the Son of Man is related to the Creator, who at the outset in the prologue has been identified as Logos (1.3), in whom also was life (1.4).

There remains to be discussed the saying in 5.27, ‘and he [the father] gave him [the son] authority to do (ποιεῖν) ‘to execute’ judgment because he is ‘Son of Man. This again appears suddenly in a discourse primarily concerned with the relation of the Son and the father and the participation of the Son in the life and activity of the Father. Its immediate context in 5.25,28-29 is reference to a coming hour (which is also said to be present) when the dead will hear the Son of God's voice and will live; and, more specifically, when even the graves will deliver their dead to a resurrection either to life or to judgment (condemnation). It is easy to understand this as a piece of synoptic-like eschatology in which Jesus functions also as the Son of Man, divine agent, in the future apocalyptic assize. But against this, however, are the following considerations.

First, elsewhere, but also in a measure here, the Johannine doctrine of sin and judgment is that human beings judge themselves for death or eternal life, and that they do so in the present by their response, or lack of response, to the light, that is, by the belief in Jesus. Those who do so believe have eternal life already, and do not come into judgment because they have passed from

the death of life (5.24). And those who reject the Son, or the Son of Man, by belief remains in their sins (8.24; 9.41; 16.9). The phrase 'to execute judgment' in 5.27 is not necessarily identical with the activity of the future judge at the final judgment. To effect judgment could mean that the audience are forced to choose (between belief and unbelief), and in so doing bring judgment on themselves.

Secondly, the statement that the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God could refer to not to the final judgment and the resurrection but to the effect of the death of Jesus, which is said to be the judgment of the world (12.31), and of his exaltation, through which human beings are drawn to where he is (12.32)-this is a Johannine equivalent to the tradition about the death of Jesus in Mt. 27.51-53. However, if that is so, then, the question that develops is that to whom does 'Son of Man' refer in 5.27? Whether it is the Son of God of 5.17, or must the reader wait until it becomes clear that it is the crucified and exalted Son of Man remain obscure Thirdly, there is a solution which takes seriously the fact that 'Son of Man' is anealous here.

The above survey therefore leads one to tangible projection that no matter whence the evangelist may have derived the expression 'the Son of Man', he has developed it in accord with his own presentation of the case for belief in the logos figure of the prologue. The Johannine Son of Man figure therefore complements that of the Logos and portrays a distinct meaning of that. The work of the Son of Man thus establishes the permanent availability of eternal life, and the provision of himself as divine sustenance for believers. Such teaching develops, albeit through very different language, what is said of the logos, Jesus Christ, in the prologue and stated pithily in 1.18. The death of the logos was not directly mentioned there, but it could be argued that it was deliberately omitted so that a full explication could be more profitably developed within the sphere of the ongoing drama. Since there was a familiar title to hand, namely Son of Man, the evangelist could exercise at 1.51 the same literary freedom as had been exercised at 1.1 with the abrupt presentation of the figure of the logos. Thus introduced the figure, whose very title contained within it the concept of humanity, was also given divine status. The readers will know that Jesus' authenticity was guaranteed by the vision and affirmations of the ordained witness, John. Similarly, what is to be claimed for Johannine Son of Man is given authenticity in the gospel through the affirmations of Jesus who himself is the divine Logos.

The question now raised is whether the evangelist wished to invest Jesus' death with the aura of a τὸ σημεῖον. At various point he uses distinctive theological language about that death, referring to the ordained hour, Jesus' being lifted up, his ascending to his place of origin and his glorification. The mention of 'glory' and its cognates leads one to reinvestigate the significance of that word in 1.14. It affirms that human beings perceive Jesus' divine status during his earthly

life. But his very God-status was emphatically proclaimed at the outset; so why introduced at this juncture in the prologue a new word, 'glory', packed with meaning? Could it not be the case that the evangelist has deliberately so written, and moreover placed it in close proximity to the assertion that the Logos had become flesh, because he intended to give it and its cognate a deep significance in the body of the work.

Perhaps this research may ask if the 'glory' used here (Jn. 1.14) of the 'flesh' of the Logos hint at or even prepare for, the frequent use of the verb when there is mention of Jesus' flesh at the point of death. The phrase 'was glorified' in the Fourth Gospel alone among the New Testament writings is frequently synonymous with the death of Jesus whether it is in respect of the Son of Man or concerning the Son of God. Its usage is also draws attention to past application in the Old Testament, where its concept is embedded to the visible manifestation of the invisible God, especially as he made himself known through the mighty things that he did for his people.<sup>87</sup> It seems better, therefore to include in any understanding of 1.14 the view that within the very word 'glory' in the prologue resides a seminal allusion to the death of the Logos-become-flesh. Later the verbal form is undoubtedly used to give a new and significant meaning to the human death of Jesus. The statement that 'the unique God has communicated divine thing' in 1.18 requires both the 'flesh' and the 'glory' of 1.14' before the body of the Gospel is begun.

Furthermore, those figures who act as foils to the extensive teaching by Jesus and give context to the Son of Man sayings also demonstrate the existing state of affairs by their non-comprehension, unbelief and outright rejection of Jesus *qua* Son of Man. Thus the cosmic proportions of alienation, first stated in the prologue in connection with the Logos, are reformulated as those confronting the Son of Man. Significantly, the coming of the enquiring Greek-that distinctive Johannine episode with its very Hellenistic theology contents as used by Jesus *qua* Son of Man *cum* Son of God is most explicit affirmation of universalism in the Gospel. In this way, the universalistic nature of the mission of the Logos in 1.3-5, 9-13 has been given authoritatively to the Son of Man.

Finally, reflection upon the triple reference in ch. 6 may be on order here. It is the Son of Man whom God has sealed; who will give imperishable food which is eternal, true heavenly, because it is non other than himself which he gives for mankind. He himself came down from the heaven and has to be appropriated by believers. The phrase 'flesh and blood' expresses his very humanity, while the necessity of devouring them as the source and sustenance of true life affecting an intimacy or an indwelling for believers, and is very Hellenistic. It is right to mention

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<sup>87</sup> Newman M. Barclay and Nida A. Eugene, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of John*: (London: United Bible Societies) 1980, pp. 23

here that this is pure Johannine material and it lays alongside the prologue assertions that the Logos was intimately available as the source of eternal life, which is enlightenment for all believers. As in the prologue, so here, the fruits for believers of life, which issues in knowledge of the things pertaining to God? It appears, then, that the language built up within the Son of Man theology is the chosen vehicle to express how and when the universal communication of divine things was irrevocably established. In answer to the earlier question—why introduce the Son of Man motif at all—it would appear that may be the evangelist deliberately avoided the common place of Hellenism that a god in human form was rescued from the experience of death. The Logos, unique God and creator, as a Son of Man (5.27) dies; and as divine Son of Man glorified, returns to the heavenly sphere dragging with him devotees. Thus he establishes himself not only on the highway for communication between heaven and earth but also as the source and sustainer of life eternal.

From most works that I have reviewed to write on this motif, it became apparent that nothing has been said which contradicts the prologue's assertion or diminishes the figure and functions of the Logos. However, a good deal more has been said about the manner in which the Logos - μονογενῆς communicates divine things. Furthermore, the factuality of the death has been given a 'symbolic' theology involving the picture of the Son of Man in the Johannine Gospel.

### 5.3 The I am-ἐγώ εἰμι

In introducing this motif, there are several points to consider. As far as the New Testament exploration is concerned, John is the only Gospel that uses the "I am" statements of Jesus as a framework for presenting his Gospel. New Testament scholars would here discuss whether these are the exact words of Jesus or John's style of structuring the teaching of Jesus. In any case, the uniqueness of these sayings to John's Gospel is noteworthy. It has been discussed that this feature of the Fourth Gospel has received various historical, literary and theological interpretation. There are further suggestions that "I am" sayings are part of how John wants the reader to hear his testimony about Jesus<sup>88</sup>. These sayings are clearly contrasted at the beginning of the Gospel with counter "I am *not*" statements from John the Baptist: It is necessary before the actual exegesis and consequent interpretation of this work to detail where the evangelist uses them within his book.

**Table 5.1**

**Elaborate presentation of the "I am" in the Johannine Gospel.**

<b>4:26</b>	Jesus said to her, " <b>I am</b> he, the one who is speaking to you."
<b>6:35</b>	Jesus said to them, " <b>I am</b> the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."
<b>6:41</b>	Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, " <b>I am</b> the bread that came down from heaven."
<b>6:48</b>	<b>I am</b> the bread of life.
<b>6:51</b>	<b>I am</b> the living bread that came down from heaven.
<b>8:12</b>	Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, " <b>I am</b> the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."
<b>8:23</b>	He said to them, "You are from below, <b>I am</b> from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world."
<b>8:24</b>	I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that <b>I am</b> he.
<b>8:28</b>	So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that <b>I am</b> he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these

<sup>88</sup> See, for instance, the suggestive but brief article of George L. Parsenios, *No Longer in the World (John:17:11) The Transformation of the Tragic in the Fourth Gospel*: (Journal of Harvard Theological Review. Vol.98, (2005) pp. 1

	things as the Father instructed me.”
<b>8:58</b>	Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, <b>I am.</b> ”
<b>9:5</b>	As long as I am in the world, <b>I am</b> the light of the world.
<b>10:11</b>	<b>I am</b> the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
<b>10:30</b>	The Father and <b>I are</b> one. the form is different here because the subject is plural
<b>10:36</b>	Can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, “ <b>I am</b> God's Son?”
<b>10:38</b>	But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and <b>I am</b> in the Father.
<b>11:25</b>	Jesus said to her, “ <b>I am</b> the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.”
<b>13:19</b>	I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that <b>I am</b> he.
<b>14:6</b>	Jesus said to him, “ <b>I am</b> the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
<b>15:1</b>	<b>I am</b> the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower.
<b>18:5</b>	They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus replied, “ <b>I am</b> he.”
<b>18:8</b>	Jesus answered, “I told you that <b>I am</b> he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.”

**Source:**

Denis Bratcher, *The I am in the Fourth Gospel*: Available from <http://www.crivoice.org/IAM.html> Accessed on 1 April 2008.

The very first question that crosses the mind of a modern biblical scholar is why the evangelist chose to use this sort of motif, for as I have above mentioned, no other evangelist shows any degree of awareness that such a Christology was appropriate. That observation raises a further question, namely whether this expression, like ‘Logos’ and the Son of Man, was universally known, and known, moreover, to belong to the speech of deities among whom the God the Jews was but one.

This short of expression is highly distinctive of this Gospel, being almost unknown in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>89</sup> It appears in two forms. The first is the **absolute use** ἐγώ εἰμι This is found

<sup>89</sup> Only in Mk 6.50 (Mt.14.27);13.6 (Lk. 21.8); 14.62

in 6.20; 8.24, 28, 58; 13.19; 18.5, 6, 8 and 4.24. The second is ἐγὼ εἰμι is completely **unidiomatic**. In Greek the personal pronoun is contained in the verb and is not separately stated.<sup>90</sup> The Greek for I am is “εἰμι”. Hence in any occurrence of ἐγὼ is presumably intended to be emphatic; I am. Haris Quotes E. Norden, who is said to have been the first to research the presence of the “I am” in ancient literatures in general, it was standardized stylized expression belonging to religious speech, generally in the mouth of a divinity; and in the second form, that with a predicate, ἐγὼ was emphatic over against the claims made by others, with the sense “it is the I who am”.<sup>91</sup> The matter is complicated both grammatically and theologically by the Old Testament. In the Septuagint, ἐγὼ εἰμι occurs a remarkable number of times. It does so in the lips of God and on the lips of human beings.

Going back to the use of absolute formula in this Gospel, it would appear on a first reading that at 6.20 and 18.5, 6, 8 it is a matter of simple identification-it is I, but on closer examination of the setting another level of meaning may be said to appear. At 6.20 the setting is Jesus walking on upon tumultuous sea towards a boat in which are terrified disciples. He identifies himself and enters the boat, which then miraculously reaches the safety of the other shore. The narrative and language here possibly suggest that Jesus is the master of the chaotic deep and delivers his followers into safety. Deeply rooted in Semitic mythology is the belief that the sea is a the abode of monsters and chaos, and is to be feared as having power to upset the right ordering of the cosmos, being itself evil and the source of evil. The incident is set between miraculous feeding and the search for Jesus by people who have tasted the heavenly banquet. The latter becomes the historical peg for the mention of loaves and for the development of a series of oblique references of the highly complex discourse on bread. The discourse itself centres on the positive presentation of Jesus as the giver of heavenly nourishment, which he himself is. It would therefore be fitting as a preparation for this if the ἐγὼ εἰμι at 6.20 were more than simple self-identification, and rather conveyed the presence of one who is from heaven himself.

In Jn. 18.5, 6, 8 the historical context is the pending arrest of Jesus. The inability of the Jews to affect this earlier has been due to the divine plan for him. His hour had not come (7.30; 8, 20). When therefore, Judas, already under the power of the devil from the time he has determined to hand Jesus over to the Jewish authorities, is allowed to effect the arrest, there is no doubt in the reader’s mind that he and those with him belong to the realm of darkness and evil.<sup>92</sup> They come apparently a whole cohort of Romans from the high priests and Pharisees, armed and

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<sup>90</sup> Bartoň, Josef, *Uvedení do novozákonní řečtiny*: Praha. (*Introduction to New Testament Greek*) (Koniasch Latin Press, 2001) pp. 21

<sup>91</sup> Haris E, *Prologue and the Gospel*: pp.130

<sup>92</sup> For this, see the Johannine dualism that I have described under the literary genre.

equipped for the arrest of a violent criminal. Jesus on the other hand, is the one who has just finished uttering the statements of chaps. 13-17, and has been consistently presented as speaking and acting totally in accord with God and his heavenly will. He would not be arrested but would lay down his life at the appointed time of his own volition according to the Father's will (10.17-18). This can be understood in a sense that he has authority over his life and death including his own. The problem for the evangelist and his readers is how it is possible for such a person to be arrested and taken into the power of others. Here, the evangelist method is to employ the ἐγὼ εἰμι formula, this time as a literary device with a heavy irony. Confronted by the representative of darkness Jesus, the supposed malefactor, turns the tables and takes control of the whole event, procuring his own arrest. He asks, "Whom do you seek?" and he identify himself with the ἐγὼ εἰμι. Faced by the truth and light of the world, by the Logos Jesus, the opponents representing Judaism fall to the ground at this as at theophany. This reaction is deemed by the evangelist to be perfectly suitable response by human being facing the "I am", the one who gives eternal life and heavenly succour, namely the heavenly figure of the prologue, to whom such exalted things have been ascribed to in the Gospel. Because of the powerfulness of his opponents Jesus is forced to repeat his ἐγὼ εἰμι, but now as a means of carrying out his previous claim that he would not lose a single disciple, and as the one in command he allows his arrest solely on the condition that they go free.<sup>93</sup>

In both cases that I have discussed above, the "I am" formula is part of, and crucial to an event and imparts to that event a theological meaning which involves the idea of heavenly, unique figure among human beings, to who the quality of the divine is to be attached. Its use in 13.19 is also closely related to the arrest, not as a public event but on its interior domestic side of being set in motion by the betrayal of Judas. Whereas the problem of the arrest itself, not as a public event but on itself was how one who, by his status and nature, is in complete control was to be taken into the power of sinful men, the problem on its internal side was how this cloud come about through one of the inner cycle of disciples.

In 13.12-19 Jesus expounds the meaning of the foot-washing for his disciples, but makes an exception in the case of Judas the betrayer. This betrayal, however, does not lie outside the knowledge of Jesus, and he informed them in advanced of the events so that when these things come to pass they may know that "I am", that his divine knowledge is in divine control.

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<sup>93</sup> This theme reappears at the trial, when Pilate is told that he has no power to influence the decision about Jesus' death except it be derived from heaven, and the reader already knows that the outcome of events can only be according to God's determined plan. Jesus' final word "it is completed" (19.30) demands a previous gradual build-up of him as the one with total authority and alone given the work of God to complete to perfect.



The remaining uses of the absolute ἐγώ εἰμι occur not in relation to events but as part of theological discourse in 8.24, 28, 58. The starting point for this is the statement in 8.12, “I am the light of the word”, and what he said in 8.13-28 as exposition to this. The statement is said to mean that Jesus gives the light of life that is the light which comes from, and is a constituent of, eternal life (cf. 1.4)<sup>94</sup> In this context the assertion is made that they will die in their sins, that is, unenlightened by the light of the world and ignorant of the Father, unless they believe that “I am”, that he is divine (v. 28). The recognition of this divine quality in “I am” will be made possible by this act of lifting up, which will be the means of showing that quality in his return to his divine origin, which is the Father. But since as I have explored, it is frequently the Son of Man who is said to be lifted up and thus the statement in v. 28 may implies the divine status of the Son of Man and of Jesus as the Son of Man.

As it can be seen through the above elaboration, the absolute use of ἐγώ εἰμι would be identified by the reader as some divine figure. But one problem with this is whether it is entirely based on the Old Testament texts where God reveals himself by the ἐγώ εἰμι formula, and is entirely limited to the confines of the Jewish thought. This problem is particularly raised by 8.58. As a climax of a bitter controversy over freedom and truth in relation to Abraham, Jesus solely asserts that those who keep his words will not see death; that is his speech is equivalent to eternal life. The Jews then, on the basis of the fact that Abraham, to whom both sides appeal, is dead, raise the question of who Jesus is making himself out to be. It is in reply to this, and to maintain a common glory with the Father who is the God of the Jews, that Jesus makes the statement, “before Abraham was, I am”. Bultmann, who in relation to verse 24 and 28 acknowledges some background in the Old Testament, regards the ἐγώ εἰμι in verse 58 as of a different kind. He comments: “The world’s conception of time and age is worthless when it has to deal with God’s revelation, as its conception of life and death. The “I am” which Jesus speaks of as the Revealer is the “I” of the eternal Logos, which was in the beginning, the “I” of eternal God himself. <sup>95</sup> In this instance, Bultmann links the formula with the opening words in the prologue and with the Logos who is the closest intimacy with God. There would seem to be evidence of how this could come about, to which Bultmann does not refer, in the Philonic interpretation of Exodus 3.14, which is the ultimate source of the sacred use of ἐγώ εἰμι.

Likewise there exists the ambiguous use of the title in 4.26. In this conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, who has asserted that when the eschatological messiah comes, he

<sup>94</sup> N.R. Peterson, *The Gospel of John and Sociology of Light* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1993) pp 10-14

<sup>95</sup> Bultmann R, *The Gospel of John. A Commentary*: pp. 327

will announce all things, Jesus says, “I am the one speaking with you”. This could be self identification; I am he- the messiah, the one who is speaking to you. But it is doubtful whether all the themes introduced in this discourse can be contained within the Samaritan concept of messiahship. But the historical event of the discourse is the drawing of water from Jacob’s well, into which are injected highly theological, if indirect, self-acclamations about the gift of God, which is living water. Further, the conversation with the woman prepares the stage for the first prolonged teaching to disciples (4.31-38), where Jesus asserts that his food is not earthly victual but is doing the will of the one who has sent him and to bring his work to completion. He is not only the source of living water but is himself nourished by doing the will of God. This would seem to require a wider background than Samaritan messianic expectations for the status of Jesus as the source of authoritative speech about ultimate things, and for his exalted origin, of which the reader has already been informed.

There is a similar self-acclamation in 8.18, “I am the one witnessing concerning myself”. Jesus has claimed to be the light of the world (8.12), a claim which is immediately challenged by the Jews. In reply the claim is defended by making himself one witness to the truth and God the other, and in this way satisfying Jewish legal requirements. Thus in the only two places, where ἐγώ εἰμι is followed by participle in the nominative, claims are made which requires for their meaning previously supplied information about the divine origin of Jesus and his speech..

I now turn to the use of formula ἐγώ εἰμι with a predicate. This is found in the text as follows:

I am ....the bread of life (6.35, 48); cf. I am the living bread, the one having come down from heaven (6.51;6.41). In connection with these may be taken “but my father gives you the true bread out of heaven” (6.32b) and the bread of God is the one coming down out of heaven and giving light to the world” (6.33).

ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου (8.12, cf. 9.5)

ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων (10.7, 9)

ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός (10.11, 14).

ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ (11.25)

ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ (14.6).

ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινὴ (15.1, 15.5).

These self proclamations in the mouth of the Johannine Jesus constitute the most extraordinary set of claims in the New Testament. Their origin and background have naturally been a matter of intense discussion. Their origin and background have been naturally been a matter of intense discussion. Some scholars have sought to place them entirely on an Old Testament background. Thus maintains that these similitudes by which Jesus describes himself

are in the Old Testament style of deity, as in Isa. 51.12; 44.24; 44.6, and that such a compound of formula would have been appreciated immediately by readers familiar with the Septuagint version. He further notes that the only other place in the New Testament where Jesus utters “I am” with a predicate are in Revelation (1.17; 2.23; 22.16), where an Old Testament background is evident. But others are arguing that there is no instance in the Old Testament of the Johannine form of expression, that is, of a metaphor which is determinative and with addition along with the verb “to be”. The issue is that the expression “I am the shepherd” appears in the Old Testament as “I am a shepherd” or “I am your shepherd” and generally followed by an addition “who.....”

Thus far the Johannine ἐγώ εἰμι formulations, though distinctive, may be said to rest on a wide religious usage whereby the speaker asserts, possibly against all others, a divine status for himself and claim to be the source of whatever belongs to the divine or heavenly realm. This was the language of the religious competition and syncretism that were rife in the first century A.D. Its employment in the context of a monotheism where “I am” was already reserved for the one God who is the source of all things would represent a profound revolution of thought.

### 5.3.1 The bread of Life - ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς

The discourse on bread in John 6 arises out of the feeding of 6.5-14, which is to be understood as a supernatural banquet, the miraculously provided food being sufficient to satiate a huge crowd, who as a result are compelled to follow Jesus (6.24-26). The incident reaches a climax in a negative command not to toil for perishable food, that is, not to work for earthly nourishment, and in a positive command to labor for food which remains in respect of eternal life, which the Son of Man, the man who has already been sealed by God the Father, will give (6.28). A transition is thus made from physical loaves which have been devoured (9.13, 26) to heavenly food (v. 27) which is then loosely connected with manna, which God supplied to Israel (v. 31).

The rest of the discourse is about supernatural food, which is variously defined. It is unlike Moses’ supply of manna, for it does not perish, being *true bread* of heaven (32), which a person may eat and not die (v. 50). Here, this can have some Hellenistic meaning of heavenly or perfect and everlasting, not subject to change. This is not only guaranteed by its own origin, but it guarantees eternal qualitative life to believers. Here we are clearly into the realm of ideas current in Hellenistic thought and concerned with salvation. The evangelist, however, does not use this term. Rather he takes the ideas he wants, removes them from the complex of pagan belief and

rites about escape from this mortal life may be received, and uses them to build up a doctrine of participation in eternal life here and now.<sup>96</sup> However, the self acclamation “I am the living bread (ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς) is introduced in this form to emphasize the human reality of the man Jesus. The new idea is not that the believers partake of the divine food, but that the flesh and blood, the humanity, of the man Jesus was speaking as the divine “I AM” is to be appropriated, eaten in order that the eternal life may be received. As the Father has sent Jesus, the Bread and he indwells God, so also whoever devours and takes into his or her very self that living Bread will similarly live because of Jesus (v. 51-57).

### **5.3.2 The Light of the World - ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου**

The use of light in religious thought is widespread.<sup>97</sup> It was from the religions of the East, especially Persia that it entered into Western religions. According to Harris Elizabeth, the use of light became a tenet of gnostic system and could take the form of belief in divinized men, who were frequently portrayed as gods with rays of sun emanating from their heads. She adds that the sun itself became less and less of a god and more a symbol of cosmic light or truth.<sup>98</sup> The use of light has first place in the Genesis creation narrative. John uses it to elaborate an invisible perception only acknowledged by the mind, which came into being as an image of the divine Logos.<sup>99</sup> Harris further asserts that nowhere in the Old Testament is God identified with light, but the rabbis used the term only metaphorically of the law, of individual teachers and of Israel, and God is referred to as a light or lamp, and that this though affords no parallel to the Johannine self proclamation in 8.12. But somewhat Harris objects this by quoting from Psalms 119, the Lord is my illumination and my savior.

In this example, it can be understood as the instance where the Logos is regarded through the symbol of light as a cosmic illuminator of human beings. This is in respect the unique relationship between the Logos-Light perceptions in the Prologue.

### **5.3.3 The Good Shepherd - ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός**

The self-acclamation “I am the Door” (10.7,9) remains a puzzle, both because it is introduced so abruptly and fits so ill with the following picture of the shepherd, and because the

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<sup>96</sup> Bultmann, *John*, pp. 220-24 illustrate both in text and notes how deeply engrained in many religions was the search for food which had celestial qualities and guaranteed that a believer was in a state of salvation.

<sup>97</sup> See Barrett, *St. John*, pp. 335-37

<sup>98</sup> H. Elizabeth, *Prologue and the Gospel*. pp. 146-47

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

use of “door” as a symbol in this way has no parallel in Hellenistic Judaism or anywhere else. Hence it is suggested that the use door in Lk. 13.24, Mt.7.13 lies behind its application here.

On the other hand the shepherd symbol is ancient and universal. It is frequently used as designation of kings and rulers. In the Old Testament God said to shepherd Israel; Moses shepherd God’s people and David is an ideal shepherd King. Jeremiah refers to unfaithful shepherds that are leaders, who harm their flocks. There are passages in the New Testament which plainly rest upon this Old Testament background. But, as Bultmann has observed, the particular use of the symbol in John 10.11,14 is marked more by the difference from than similarities to the Old Testament usage. Thus the contrast is not between good and bad shepherd, that is leaders, but between the good shepherd and the hirelings. There is a reference to a fold and to other sheep not of this fold. The relationship between shepherd and sheep consists in mutual knowledge, and the goodness of this shepherd consists in mutual knowledge, and the goodness of this shepherd consists in the fact that he lays down his life for the sheep. This suggests that the use of “shepherd” in John 10 is a composition with a background of thought which is not simply that of the Old Testament.<sup>100</sup> In Hellenistic thought “shepherd” was also used of kings and rulers, who could be thought of as in some sense divine by virtue of possessing souls which came from the higher regions of the cosmos.<sup>101</sup> On this, Bultmann refers to Plutarch as contrasting the hireling (μισθοτοϋς) with the divine leader (θεὸς ἡγεμῶν) who is Logos.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Bultmann, *John*. pp. 364-70

<sup>101</sup> Knox, W.L., *Some Elements in Primitive Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944). Reprinted 1980 by Kraus Thomson, Munich, by permission of the British Academy London.

<sup>102</sup> Bultmann, pp. 367

### 5.3.4 The Way, the Truth and the Life - ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ

Apart from recent works on Johannine Gospel, difficulties in the interpretation of the self-acclamation in 14.6 appear from early themes. They arise over the presence of the three nouns in it, and over their relationship to one another.<sup>103</sup> Some of the church Fathers understood the ‘the way’ as that which leads to a goal. Along this line ‘the way’ was sometimes interpreted as itself the truth which leads to eternal life as the goal. Augustine took ‘the way’ as that which leads to a goal, and along with Clement of Alexandria and Origen, possibly under the influence of Platonist thought, related ‘the truth and life’ as this goal to the Logos in his pre-existent.<sup>104</sup>

More recently, scholars have interpreted the text against variety of backgrounds: gnostic, Mandaean and Hermetic.<sup>105</sup> Here we find the idea of the ascent of the soul along the way to the heavenly spheres of truth and life. Bultmann reaches somewhat different conclusion, which is partly due to his view that the ‘I am’ sayings the ‘I’ is not the subject but the predicate. There is an access to God, which can also be referred as the goal by means of the symbol of the ‘door’. Jesus claims to be this, and alone to be it. This goal is further defined as ‘the truth’, that is the divine reality, and ‘the life’, that is bestowed on the believers.<sup>106</sup> In this way, the three concepts are bound together, which is in keeping with Johannine thought. Others prefer to understand the subject of the verb ‘I’ and the noun as the predicate. They take the first of the two copulas as exegetical (that is to say) and the second as a normal conjunction. The text then reads ‘I am the way, that is to say the truth and the life’.<sup>107</sup>

It may be significant that the self-acclamation here glossed by the Johannine idiom in which a negative in the form of an emphatic οὐδέεις is followed by a positive statement. This has already appeared in 3.13, where Jesus as the Son of Man is said effect what no human being can do in descending from, and then ascending to, heaven (cf. 1.51, heaven and earth).<sup>108</sup> Thus Jesus is the divine communicator, and what he communicates to believers as the things which belong in the divine realms are presented under the symbols of ‘light’, ‘bread’, shepherd’. This is now reiterated as ‘the way’, ‘truth’ and life’. It may further be noted that this mode of statement occurs first in the prologue with relation to the Logos, when John witnesses that no one has ever seen God, but the unique God, the one who is always in the bosom of the Father, has communicated the divine secrets. This could suggest that the self-acclamation in 14.6 belongs to the exposition in the Gospel of what has been said about the Logos in the prologue.

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<sup>103</sup> See Richards, *The Pople's Bible Commentary*: pp. 312

<sup>104</sup> MacCulloch Diarmaid, *Ground Work of Christian History*: (Southampton: Epworth Press, 1987) pp.59-73

<sup>105</sup> See Bultmann, *John*, pp. 603-607

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Favoured by Richards, pp. 323.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Also 1.3, 10, 11, 18; 13.13-14; 6.44

### 5.3.5 The True Vine - ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή

On the background of this image, scholars are divided. On the one hand the vine is used in the Old Testament of Israel, though generally of an erring Israel that has neglected God's ways (Jer. 2.21; Isa. 5.1, Ps.80.9-16) but this can hardly be responsible for what is said about the Vine here. As Dodd observes, the symbol 'suggests a unity like that of a living plant, in which a common life, flowing from the central stem, nourishes all the branches and issues in fruit.'<sup>109</sup>

As in ch. 14 the images of the way, truth and life extend from who Jesus is to the consequences for disciples. As the way he prepares a place of abode for them in his Father's house, and in seeing him and knowing they have seen and known the Father. As the Vine he parts to them life as the branches, and there is mutual indwelling between them. Because this gives life to the branches Bultmann takes the background of the imagery to be the tree of life.<sup>110</sup> The qualification 'true' gives the Vine the qualities of the genuine and the divine, so that the life imparted in and through it is divine life, of which it is the source (Jn.15.1, 5). The Johannine stamp is, however, pressed on the imagery, since here the life-flow does not refer to the mutual indwelling of the Father, Son and believers (contrast ch.17), but God stands outside it as the vinedresser.

Thus far, the discussion on this motif reflects understanding of what the 'I am' does in the Gospel. The Bread nourishes; the Light enlightens or illuminates; the Door is means by which the Logos goes to and fro (from heaven), keeping in communication with his own sheep as befits the perfect divine Shepherd who, by dying, supernaturally provides eternal life to his believers. The resurrection, the Way, the Truth and the Life similarly present heavenly truths about that which is available to believers; while the true Vine is best understood as stated earlier.

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<sup>109</sup> Dodd, *Interpretation*: pp. 196

<sup>110</sup> Bultmann, *John*: pp. 530.

#### 5.4 The Son of God - ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ

While important statements are made in the Fourth Gospel concerning the status and functions of Jesus by means of the term “the Son of Man”, and by the use of “I am” as we have observed above, the primary christological expression here is the Son of God, if along with it is taken the absolute use of the Son. In this the Fourth Gospel differs from the Synoptic in two respects.

First, these two terms are comparatively rare in the synoptic, while in the Fourth Gospel they are comparatively frequent, the first occurring eight times, the second eighteen times. Secondly, in the synoptics, the Son of God tends to be reserved for certain highly concentrated and significant moments which interpret the rest of the narrative. Thus it is found on the lips of the angel in the birth narrative (Lk.1.35), and on the lips of God in the baptism and transfiguration stories (Mk. 1.11), and in the lips of the demons in exorcism (Mk.3.11; 5.7), and of the devil in the temptation story (Mt. 4.3-6, Lk. 4.3-9). These are however, notable by their absence in the Fourth Gospel. The declaration of the incarnation of the preexistence Logos (1.14) hardly leaves room for narrative of a supernatural birth. There is no account of baptism as an event, but only an oblique reference to it in John’s testimony that God had prepared him to recognize as the Son of God the one on whom the Spirit descended as a dove (1.32-34). The theme of the transfiguration, that the glory of God is revealed in Jesus, is one which permeates this gospel, as does the theme of the temptation, in the sense that Jesus is depicted as in continuing conflict with the prince of this world.<sup>111</sup>

In John the phrase “the Son of God” is more evenly distributed, from its first occurrence in a christological confession by Nathaniel (1.49) to the evangelist’s concluding statement of the purpose of his work (20.31). This is also the case with ‘the Son’ as there is in John no single apocalyptic discourse preceding the passion, there is nothing equivalent to the statement, that not even the Son but only the Father knows the exact time of the end (Mk.13.32) nor is there any resembling the ecclesiastical injunction to baptize in the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28.19). The striking revelatory passages in Mt. 11.25-27/Lk. 10.21-22 is dubiously called ‘Johannine’, for while there are parallels in John to the mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son, the rest of the language in that passage seems foreign to the Fourth Gospel. Again, the Son is more evenly distributed throughout this Gospel, from its first occurrence, either expressly or by implication, in the climax of the prologue (1.18) through ch.17, which is a sustained prayer of the Son to the Father.

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<sup>111</sup> For instance, the centurion’s confession, ‘Truly this man was the Son of God’ at Mk.15.39 would be too ambiguous for the use by the Evangelist.



The background and source of this use of ‘the Son’ and ‘the Son of God’ in the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics as elsewhere in the early Christianity.<sup>112</sup> In his study of Johannine Christology, T.E. Pollard states that “the master concept of the Fourth Gospel is the Father-Son relationship, its recurring theme is that the Son of God Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man”.<sup>113</sup> This general theme is announced in the prologue, which is an overture in which the stage is set.<sup>114</sup> Whether it is the master concept is open to question, although clearly it is an important concept. It is proper to enquire, therefore, how and in what sense is the case?

In the body of the Gospel the theme of the Son and the Son of God are taken immediately and by means of repetitions and expansion by John of his witness in the prologue (1.29-34, 3.25-36, cf. 1.15-18), bracketing the words of Jesus in the opening discourse with Nicodemus (3.1-21).<sup>115</sup> The passage continuing from 1.29-34 is the evangelist’s equivalent of the synoptics’ story of baptism of Jesus, now in the form of an oblique reference to it by John himself. They have in common John’s assertion of his own inferiority, and the fact that the Spirit is seen to descend on Jesus as a dove, whereby he is established as the Son of God. Where they differ is that in the Fourth Gospel the ability to recognize Jesus’ divine sonship has been conferred by God himself on John alone as the divinely appointed witness to the light. This includes the knowledge that Jesus communicates the heavenly gifts in already baptizing with the Spirit.

In 3.25-36, the witness is both repeated and expanded. All gifts and vocations, including that of John, have God as their source, but he who is of heavenly origin is above all others, for he utters the words of God by witnessing to what has been seen and heard with God, and hence confers the Spirit without limit. This is theologically formulated in 3.36-36. It is out of his love for the Son that the Father, God, has given him authority over the creation, so that the possession of the creation’s perfection, eternal life or otherwise independent on a believing obedience to this Son. Here John’s testimony has incorporated something of the language of Jesus’ previous words to Nicodemus and the world. There, perception of, and entry, the kingdom of God, which is a synonym of eternal life, here standing as depending on a radically new beginning, described as birth from above (3.3, cf. 1.13), or birth from the Spirit. This is made possible by the descent from heaven of the only one able to communicate heavenly things (3.12). Then it is theologically formulated in terms of the love of God for the world in the sending to it of his only Son, belief in whose divine name (3.18, cf. 1.12-13), or otherwise, brings with it the final things-eternal life or condemnation (3.16; 3.36). And this, recalling the language of the prologue, is the entry of the

<sup>112</sup> For example, in Paul, Rom. 1.3-4, 8.3, 2Cor. 1.19; Gal.4.4; 1Thess. 1.10 and Heb. 4.14; 6.6

<sup>113</sup> *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp.14

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, pp.20

<sup>115</sup> In 1.49 Jesus is hailed as the ‘Son of God...the King of Israel’ in a series of christological confessions in the lips of potential disciples, but these are not developed and appear to be displaced by the Son of Man in 1.51.

light into the darkness (3.19-21, cf. 1.4-5). Thus, by the end of his mission John has repeated and expanded his statements in the Prologue; Logos Jesus is the Son of God who has authority over all things, and whose words are heavenly communications. Furthermore, he has introduced the theme of eternal life as a bridge to the teaching of Jesus in the rest of the Gospel, where it plays a large part in the disputes over the veracity of Jesus' words in the face of the opposition on non-comprehending audiences.

In ch. 5.1-18, the theme of divine sonship moves into the centre and is further developed. The context is not the words of Jesus but his healing or restorative acts, which in the synoptics are referred to as "might acts", but in this gospel either as "signs" in pointing to a corresponding eternal reality, or here, significantly, as "works". The occasion is the healing of a lame man, which is the subject of attack because performed on the Sabbath. This situation appears also in the synoptics, where the defence is that the law of rest from work on the Sabbath may be broken in some circumstances of special need (Mt.12.11; Lk.13.15; 14.5). Here the defence is quite different, and is entirely theological and christological. It is related to the Sabbath observance itself, and to the God whose Sabbath it was at creation. In contradiction of a possible deduction from the Genesis text that the Sabbath marked a permanent cessation of activity by God after creation, it is stated that the Father (God) is continually at work in relation to creation. And it is in cooperation with unceasing activity of God himself that, Jesus asserts, his work has been performed and is thus in a direct sense the work of God. It is perceived by the opponents, correctly, as a claim to be on a par with God, and hence as blasphemy.

The discourse in ch. 6 has been discussed already, because it is developed largely in terms of the Son of Man and of "I am". However, elements of the Father-Son relationship present in ch.5 are introduced to establish the heavenly nature of what Jesus communicates, now considered in terms of nourishment. Thus the claim as the Son of Man to be the living bread of God, which comes from heaven to be the nourishment of the world, is based upon a mutuality between the Father and the Son, whereby the Son comes from heaven to do the will of the Father, and the will of the Father is that the Son confers on believers eternal life now, and a consequent resurrection in the end (6.35-40). With this may be compared 3.11-18, with a similar transition from the Son of Man to the Son (of God). Further, in the face of opposition such a claim arouses, it is asserted in the language recalling that of the prologue (1.18) that no one has seen God (the Father) except one, the one who is from God and is sent by him; and for anyone to come to Jesus is itself the work of the Father (6.44-51). And behind the capacity of human beings to live, and to have eternal life by reason of Jesus, lies the fact that Jesus himself as Son lives by reason of the Father who lives (6.57)

In the reminder of the public ministry, chs. 8-12, some of these truths are repeated and others added. In 8.12-53 the question addressed is that of origins, implied in the idiom “son of, and their relation to character. The claims of the Jews to be a son of Abraham is denied on the ground that they do not in their actions reproduce the character of Abraham. Their claim to be sons of God and to have God as their Father is denied on the ground that they fail to respond to the one who has come forth from, and has been sent by God. They are rather sons of, and enslaved to sin; and permanent freedom from such a slavery they can find only at the hands of the Son, who continues for ever (8.35) and who pre-exists with God (8.58)

In ch. 10, the theme is the sheepfold and flock of God, of which Jesus is both the sole entry and the good Shepard, in that his knowledge of the sheep and theirs of him is a replica of the mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son. His gift to them of invisible life is the result of this being given to him by the Father, who is invisible God. This is then formulated as “I and the Father are one”, which might be understood as in will and operation. In the face of the charge of blasphemy, to which this statement leads, this unity in operation is stated as mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son.

In 12.44-50 the public ministry is brought to a close in a manner not uncharacteristic of the evangelist by a catena of compressed and seminal statements (cf.1.15-18) which are introduced by the dramatic verb κραζειν-Jesus ‘cried’ to them (cf.1.15). The sequence is as follows. Jesus is always the one sent from God (the Father), so that to believe in Jesus (cf.1.7) and to ‘behold’ him (cf.1.12) is to believe in, and to behold, God as the one who has sent him. In v.49 this is expressed by the compressed idiom possible in Greek but almost impossible to reproduce in English, ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ (already introduced in 5.37; 8.16, 18), where “having sent me” is placed between the article and the noun, so that God is known for whom he is, and as the Father, in and through his act of sending the Son. The coming of Jesus from the Father is the entry of light into the world (cf.1.4-9), and belief in him is to move out of darkness, for his mission is one of salvation for the world. Nevertheless judgment is also involved.

Some of the content of chs. 13-17 have already been examined in so far as they were related to the ‘Son of Man’ and the ‘I am’. These chapters may now be re-examined in relation to their bearing on the theme of the relationship of the Father and the Son, and the character of that relationship. The chapters form a distinct section of the Gospel with special introduction and conclusion of its own. They have been called Farewell Discourses; and while this is appropriate inasmuch as there is repeated reference by Jesus to his departure, it is by no means entirely so, since this departure is to be followed very quickly by a return, a permanent presence with those addressed either personally or through the Holy Spirit.

The section has in 13.1-3 a remarkably emphatic theological introduction, which provides the setting for all that is to follow. It is on the basis of his knowledge (from the Father) that the time has come for him to pass from the world and to rejoin the Father that Jesus (the Son) proceed to do and say what he does (13.1). This is further underlined by reiteration in 13.3. It is on the basis of his knowledge that his origin has been with God, and with the plan for his death already beginning to be set in motion that he is on his way back to the Father that Jesus acts and speaks. Thus, all that is to follow is given a pre-determined character. It seems from and omniscient participation by Jesus in the will and intention of the Father, and this includes the granting to him by the Father of universal control (13.3)

What immediately follows is that, Jesus is about to leave the world and he loves “his own”, whom he already loved from the world- these are the disciples who are not here as in the synoptics, to be limited to, or identified with the Twelve, and who probably here stand as representatives of all believers (cf.10.3-4 “his own sheep”, of the true, as opposed to the false, shepherd). The loving of his own continues in 14.1-16.33. Although the Son is expressly mentioned only in 14.3, there can be little doubt that in these discourses, which contain the word “Father” several times, it is the Son who is speaking throughout.

Further, in ch.14 the disciples are given assurance of ultimate achievement (14.12) and attainment of the heavenly goal (14.1-6). This is grounded in the fact that the speaker is one who, in a manner familiar in Hellenistic religious thought, cuts through the spheres to make a way to the heavenly for his adherents, with the result that there is committed to them truth and life. In ch. 15, the assurance of achievement is further is further developed in terms of disciples’ abiding as branches in Jesus the true heavenly vine, as he himself abides in the Father. The abiding which makes them continuously fruitful is in love, words and commandment of the Father.

In ch. 16 the theme of the attainment of life by those who have known the truths which the Son has communicated from the Father is continued, but now with particular reference to the future of the future of the disciples, to the coming hatred to them by the unbelieving world, to their perplexities, their bereavement and sorrow, but also to their ultimate recovering and invincible rejoicing. Of course crucial to this is the activity towards the disciple of the Paraclete-Spirit, whom here Jesus himself will send to them, and whose function as the Spirit of truth is to make the things of Jesus a present reality.

Thus far the relation of the Son to the Father, and both to human beings, has permeated the instruction given in ch.13-16. The sonship involves an inmate a participation in the divine plan for the world, a heavenly activity towards human kind on the part of the Son, who is present as a man but uniquely so (1.14). All these reach a surprising conclusion in ch.17 in a long and

uninterrupted monologue in the form of prayer. This chapter has hardly received from commentators the attention due to it by reason of its position in the Gospel, its character and contents. For there is no parallel to it in the Christian tradition of Jesus' concluding words on earth before the passion or outside it.<sup>116</sup>

An exception among commentators here is Käsemann, who in his book *The Testament of Jesus* makes ch. 17 the starting point, and a constant reference point, for his study, of this Gospel as a whole, his search for its place in early Christianity and for the nature of its Christology, ecclesiology and eschatology. In his view, it is unmistakable that this chapter is a summary of the Johannine discourses and in this respect is a counterpart to the prologue.<sup>117</sup> One may quarrel with the title of Käsemann book, since it depends on his judgment that in composing ch. 17 "the evangelist undoubtedly used a literary device which is common in world literature and employed in Judaism as well as by New Testament writers. It is the device of the farewell. It is the device of the farewell speech of a dying man."<sup>118</sup> He cites as a parallel Paul's speech to the Ephesians elders in Acts 20 and compares appendix VI of E. Stauffer's *The Theology of the New Testament*, where the characteristics of this literary genre are set out. But it is notable that prayer is very rare in, or entirely absent from, speeches of this kind, nor is the case that in this chapter Jesus says farewell to anyone. It is addressed to the Father whom he is soon to rejoin. Indeed, in defence to the actual contents of the chapter, Käsemann is forced to modify his original judgment when he says,

*"This chapter is not a statement in the sense of a last will and bequest, but rather in the sense of a final declaration of the will of the one whose proper place is with the Father in heaven and whose word is meant to be heard on earth."*<sup>119</sup>

It is evident at this point, as indeed from the beginning of this chapter that, that the one who addresses the Father this way, and who prays for others in the context of rehearsal of the significance of his own actions and words, is the unique Son of God. But more than that, he is the Son who has shared, share and will share the life and being of the Father (God), pre-existently and before creation. The prayer is thus a prayer which could only be uttered by the Christ, the Son of God, as the Fourth Gospel conceives him and portrays him; hitherto what we have

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<sup>116</sup> Dodd, in his investigation of these Farewell Discourses as a Johannine equivalent of Mk 13 and parallels (*Interpretation*, pp390-96) sees no parallel to ch 17. He suggests as parallel a dialogue concluding with a hymn or prayer in Hermetic writings such as *poimandres* or the *De Regeneratione*- see *Interpretation*, pp. 420-23

<sup>117</sup> Käsemann E., *The Structure and Purpose of the Prologue to John's Gospel*, in *New Testament Questions of Today*. (London: SCM Press, 1969), pp. 138-67

<sup>118</sup> Käsemann E., *Testament of Jesus*. (London: SCM Press, 1968), pp. 4

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 5-6

observed in form and content is governed by that fact. This is also to say that that it can only be a prayer of Logos-Son, who has the origins, qualities and divine activities of the Logos, who is with God, and himself *θεός* and who as *μονογενῆς θεός* in the bosom of the Father communicates heavenly things to humankind.

In conclusion to the exegesis and interpretation of this christological motif, I observe that these truths concerning the Son have been given repeated expression throughout the Gospel in the form of statements by the Son about himself and the Father and the relations between them. In being restated in the form of prayer addressed by this Son to the Father they are given a peculiar intensity, and are shown to be at the divine heart of all things. Indeed, the contents of ch.17, through the term 'Son', form a theological climax to all that Jesus acclaims and claims as Son. They are, it would appear, the most concentrated form of authenticated divine explication of 1.18 that can be written. It however remains to be shown that the remainder of the Gospel; chapter 18 through 21, was similarly influenced both in its construction and content by the prologue, and all that has been developed thereafter concerning the Logos *μονογενῆς θεός*.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

This work has explored various aspects of the Johannine Gospel, detail of which is provided in the abstract. Central to this research was the three problems connected with the Fourth Gospel. The first was that of its Authorship of which the question of Johannine authorship was elaborated in view of Martin Hengel. The second problem revolved around the literary genre, here, previous scholarly work was examined. Alan Culpeppers and Gilbert Van Belle's among others were noteworthy for citation. The last problem was analysis of three main christological themes; namely, The Son of Man, I am, and the Son of God sayings. To this, an overview of the Johannine structure was provided with subsequent description of the prologue in relation to the rest of the Gospel. As the main goal of this study, the following conclusion can be derived from the analysis of the three main christological perspectives rampant in the Johannine Gospel. These had very close connection with the prologue.

The development concept of the prologue was briefly examined. Emerging in ancient religious drama, and continuing in some form in the first century A.D. The prologue was intended to inform the readers in advance about the drama to be unfolded through christological motifs. The concept of prologue was then applied to the Johannine Gospel. On examining John as a figure in this Gospel, immediately this raised literary and theological problem. Modern Scholars have tended to see the verses about John in the prologue as insertions by the evangelist into an earlier hymnic structure. This view was refuted, and on the basis of R. Bultmann stylistic analysis the prologue was treated as a literary and theological unity. Further, it was argued that Jn. 1.15-18, and not 1.15 only, are to be taken as statements made by John. It was further argued that in the Gospel the final testimony of John is to be taken as stretching to 3. 36.

The prologue and John's witness in it reach a conclusion and climax in the highly compressed statement in 1.18. The work of C.H Dodd is reviewed in which he concludes that chapter one of this Gospel forms a proem to the whole Gospel. He divides the whole Gospel into two; the first part is the proem, Jn. 1. 1-18 which is identified as the prologue while Jn. 1.19-51 could be called the testimony. The conclusion on the prologue gives way to the exploration of the three dominant christological perspectives.

The first christological perspective was Son of Man. It was established that this is not the eschatological figure coming on the cloud of the synoptic tradition, but one who is pre-existent with God. The interpretation and analysis of this motif enables a realization that it is only the Son who can make the ascent to God since he alone has made the descent from God (Jn. 3.13) and

this was through the process of entering the creation as a man and thus establishing himself a permanent route of heavenly intercommunication between God and humankind (Jn. 1.51). Participation in his humanity, his flesh and blood, is the sole means to the possession of eternal life (Jn. 6.47-58). Connected with this Son of Man is his being “lifted up” a cryptic reference to his death as his exaltation to the Father. Through it the Jews will be able to apprehend the divine origin of himself and of his actions and words (Jn. 8.28-29), and the Gentiles his divine being which can be viewed as his glorification (Jn. 12.20-36; cf. 1.14).

It is to be noticed that the term “Son of Man”, as distinct from the “Logos Son”, appears to be deliberately introduced since it contains within itself the idea of manhood. Thus the term provided the author with a concept to be utilized with special regard to the actuality of Jesus’ human death without diminution of the concept of the divine status. The former concept, Jesus’ human death, is nonsense to the Jews whose God never entered human flesh, and for the Gentiles whose gods, when they took on flesh, did so only in appearance, for such gods were provided, by the divine intervention, with an escape from earthly reality of death. As for the latter concept, the divine status, this is crucial to the capacity of Jesus the Son of Man as one who communicates divine things; that is, as the actual route for ceaseless communication between God and humankind; as the divine communicator and as that which is communicated for the possession of eternal life.

The second christological perspective was ἐγώ εἰμι. It was observed that already this motif was applied and used in the Judaism as a divine mode of speech, but it was more widespread in various types of Hellenistic religion as well, especially when combined with a predicate. The speaker in this way identified himself and his functions with this or that heavenly entity, and with what was to be expected from them, here in terms of truth, light, life, shepherd among others. This type of saying on the lips of Jesus, which is peculiar to this Gospel, contributes considerably to Jesus’ presentation of himself and his functions. It is evident both in disputes with the Jews and in the instruction of the disciples. It may not be without significance for the origin of these religious symbols in the Gospel that, apart from the “door” and “resurrection”, which may be of Christian or Jewish-Christian origin, they are all found in the Jewish-Hellenistic writings of Philo attached in one way or another to the figure of the Logos, as Philo envisaged him. As previously, so here the person of Jesus who alone utters the ἐγώ εἰμι teaching claims certain divine functions. He asserts, by means of cryptic symbolism, that he is the provider of the means of access to, and the continuity of, eternal life. The veracity of his teaching stems from the divine authority which the Logos figure of the prologue alone can claim.



The third perspective discussed was the Son of God. As noted, it is found throughout the Gospel. On the one hand it was noted “son of” denotes derivation, where Jesus is “from” (ἐκ), this is an important question for the evangelist. His presence on the earth is the result of the mission, he is the one sent, and God is the Father who sent him. He initiates nothing, but reproduces faithfully what he sees the Father doing and speaks what he hears the Father saying. On the other hand, he and the Father work together. Like the Father, the Son has life in himself. In this regard, the prerogative of divinity, though this is given him by the Father and they can be called a unity (‘one thing’ Jn. 10.30). This issue comes to head in ch. 17, which the evangelist chooses to place at the end of the ministry and immediately before the passion episode, and which constitutes a kind of counterpart to the prologue. This is a monologue in the presence of the disciples in the form of a prayer of the Son to the Father. He prays as the one who has already perfected the task the Father had given him. This prayer is one that can belong only on the lips of the Son who is the Logos-Son and Creator-Son of the prologue.

The Son (of God) was also implied in the prologue and the summary above expresses the manner in which he effects the communication of the divine things, which is being examined here. This gives authentication to the oneness of the Jewish God and Son of the Prologue. Monotheism is not jettison for polytheism-which is vital to the author’s case in claiming the God of the Jews for the Christians. Yet the veracity of Jesus’ teaching and works demanded that the divine seal of approval was always his and that he had indeed been given all authority upon earth. If anything more than what is written in chs. 1-16 were needed to carry the case of Christianity then the intensity of the whole of ch. 17 certainly provides it. Here the future intimacy for believers is finally established as fact by means of the Son’s communicating with the Father as can no ordinary human being. Thus what has been hinted at in at the prologue is fully stated here, but stated in such a manner as to leave no doubt that all that ch.1.1-18 applied to the Logos-Son was vital for understanding the Son of God as well.

Finally, examination of chs. 18-21 revealed that the evangelist employs unique expressions which demand knowledge of Jesus’ divine origins, mission and teachings. Thus his death is said to be a return journey to God while the elevation or hoisting up is understood as a *semeion*. The unique entry into full humanity made apparent God’s glory. Similarly, the death is unique, both in its physical character and in its divine function. It is to be remembered that the evangelist, by beginning his work with a prologue, placed the entire work within a literary sphere of Greek religious drama. Consequently, it was directed to a widespread readership. From the prologue onwards, the evangelist skillfully unveils the full identity that is strongly christological.

The metaphysical identity, I can say is of the protagonist of this cosmic drama, the Logos  
μονογενῆς θεός Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.

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## Appendix:

### Harmony of the Gospel of John

	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION IN THE GOSPEL</b>
1	Pre-existence of Christ	1:1-18
2	John's testimony about Christ	1:19-28
3	John recounts Christ's baptism	1:29-34
4	The 1st disciples	1:35-51
5	The 1st miracle - turning water to wine	2:1-12
6	The 1st temple cleansing	2:13-25
7	Nicodemus meets Jesus at night	3:1-21
8	Disciples baptize many in Judea	3:22-24
9	Disciples ask John about Jesus	3:25-36
10	Jesus withdraws from Judea	4:1-3
11	Samaritan woman at Jacob's well	4:4-26
12	Disciples question Jesus	4:27-38
13	Samaritans come to Jesus	4:39-42
14	Jesus continues toward Galilee	4:43
15	Arrival in Cana of Galilee	4:43-45
16	The 2nd miracle - Official's son healed	4:46-54
17	Jesus in Jerusalem at the 2nd Passover	5:1
18	Man healed at pools of Bethesda	5:2-15
19	Jesus challenged for healing on Sabbath	5:16-47
20	12 return and they withdraw	6:1
21	Jesus teaches and heals the multitude	6:2
22	Jesus feeds 5,000	6:3-14

23	Jesus prays alone	6:15
24	Jesus walks on water	6:16-21
25	Bread of Life discourse	6:22-7:1
26	Feast of Booths at hand	7:2
27	Brothers advise Jesus to go to Judea	7:3-8
28	Jesus stays in Galilee	7:9
29	Jesus sets his face to go to Jerusalem	7:10
30	People afraid to speak publicly of Jesus	7:11-13
31	Jesus in the temple mid-feast	7:14-15
32	Jesus says some seek to kill him	7:16-19
33	Defense for healing on Sabbath	7:20-24
34	Jesus cries out in the temple	7:25-30
35	Multitudes amazed at Signs	7:31
36	Pharisees seek to seize Jesus	7:32-36
37	Last day of Feast	7:37
38	Rivers of living water	7:37-39
39	Division among the people	7:40-44
40	Pharisees question officers	7:45-47
41	Judgment of Nicodemus	7:48-53
42	Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives	8:1
43	Teaches at temple in the morning	8:2
44	Adulterous woman brought to Jesus	8:3-11
45	Light of the world - Taught in temple treasury	8:12-20
46	Sent by the Father	8:21-30



47	Temple debate about father Abraham	8:31-59
48	Jesus leaves the temple	8:59
49	Jesus heals a man born blind	9:1-7
50	Neighbors question the former blind man	9:8-12
51	Pharisees question the man and his parents	9:13-34
52	Jesus finds the man	9:35-39
53	Pharisees ask if they are blind	9:40-10:6
54	Jesus explains he is the Good Shepherd	10:7-18
55	Division among the Jews	10:19-21
56	Feast of Dedication in the temple	10:22-23
57	Jews confront Christ	10:24-39
58	Jesus goes to Aenon near Salim Lazarus of Bethany reported sick	10:40-42
59	Jesus delays for 2 days	11:1-6
60	Jesus prepares 12 to go to Judea	11:6
61	Arrives near Bethany, 2 days later	11:7-16
62	Martha meets Jesus	11:17-18
63	Mary comes to Jesus	11:19-29
64	Jesus comes to the tomb	11:30-37
65	Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead	11:38
66	Unbelievers report to Pharisees	11:39-44
67	Conspiracy to kill Jesus	11:45-46
68	Jesus goes to Ephraim	11:47-53
69	Journey toward Jerusalem for Passover	11:54

70	Jesus discussed by Jews and Priests	11:55-57
71	Jesus in Bethany	12:1
72	Mary anoints Jesus in Simon's house	12:2-8
73	Crowds come to see Jesus and Lazarus	12:9
74	Chief priests conspire to kill Lazarus	12:10-11
75	Triumphal entry into Jerusalem	12:12-18
76	Pharisees reaction	12:19
77	Greeks seek Jesus	12:20-22
78	Final public appeals to unbelievers	12:23-50
79	Jesus washes the disciples' feet	13:1-20
80	Jesus predicts his betrayal	13:21-26
81	Judas leaves	13:27-30
82	A new commandment	13:31-35
83	Jesus predicts Peter's denials	13:36-38
84	Jesus comforts the disciples	4:1-4
85	Jesus responds to Thomas	14:5-7
86	Jesus responds to Philip	14:8-21
87	Jesus responds to Judas not Iscariot	14:22-31
88	They sing a hymn and leave	14:31
89	The farewell discourse	15:1-16:33
90	Jesus prays for his disciples	17:1-26
91	The fellowship enters Gethsemane	18:1
92	Mob comes to arrest Jesus	18:2-3
93	Jesus answers the mob with authority	18:4-9

94	Peter severs the ear of Malchus	18:10-11
95	Jesus is arrested. The disciples flee.	18:12
96	Jesus lead to high priest's house	18:13-14
97	Peter follows at a distance	18:15-16
98	Peter's 1st denial - doorkeeping girl	18:17-18
99	Annas questions Jesus	18:19-24
100	Peter's 2nd denial - by the fire	18:25
101	Peter's 3rd denial - relative of Malchus	18:26-27
102	Jesus lead from Caiaphas to Praetorium	18:28
103	Jesus before Pilate	18:29-38
104	Pilate releases Barabbas	18:38-40
105	Pilate's soldiers crown and mock Jesus	19:1-3
106	Pilate tries to release Jesus	19:4-7
107	Pilate questions Jesus again	19:8-11
108	Pilate tries to release Jesus again	19:12
109	Pilate sentences Jesus	19:13-15
110	Pilate delivers Jesus to be crucified	19:16
111	Jesus carries the cross	19:17
112	Jesus is brought to Golgotha	19:17
113	2 robbers are crucified with Jesus	19:18
114	Inscription written by Pilate	19:19-22
115	Soldiers divide the garments of Jesus	19:23-24
116	"Behold your mother." "I thirst."	19:25-27
117	Jesus is offered sour wine on a reed.	19:28

118	"It is finished."	19:29-30
119	Jesus bows his head and dies	19:30
120	Request that legs be broken	19:30
121	Soldier pierces Jesus' side	19:31-32
122	Fulfillment of prophecy	19:33-34
123	Joseph requests body from Pilate	19:35-37
124	Joseph takes the body	19:38
125	Nicodemus and Joseph prepare the body	19:39-40
126	Body placed in new garden tomb	19:41-42
127	Women bring spices to tomb at dawn	20:1
128	Women run to tell disciples	20:2
129	Peter and John inspect the empty tomb	20:3-9
130	Peter and John go home	20:10
131	Mary Magdalene stands weeping	20:11
132	Mary sees two angels	20:12-13
133	Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene	20:14-17
134	Women report to the disciples	20:18
135	Jesus appears to disciples without Thomas	20:19-24
136	Disciples report to Thomas	20:25
137	Jesus appears to disciples and Thomas	20:26-29
138	John's first testimony	20:30-31
139	Jesus appears to seven by the sea	21:1-14
140	Jesus questions Peter 3 times	21:15-23

141	John's second testimony	21:24-25
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