

COMPANIONS TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE MANY FACES OF THE CHRIST

*The Christologies
of the New Testament
and Beyond*

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Acts, Book of" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:412-15.

24. Neyrey points out that there is overlap between the images of Jesus as Son of Man and prophet in Luke-Acts, particularly in the depiction of Jesus as judge (*Christ is Community*, p. 137).

25. L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991), p. 18, et. pp. 19-20. Throughout this section on Jesus as prophet I am indebted to Johnson's discussion.

26. This comports with Luke's major emphasis throughout his two volumes that it is the Spirit that brings salvation as well as its announcement. Jesus, like his disciples, must be full of the Spirit to perform his ministry. Jesus himself provides the paradigm of the Spirit-anointed and appointed and empowered person. It is not, however, true to say as Schnackenburg does (*Jesus in the Gospels*, p. 138) that Jesus is the only Spirit-filled and driven person during Jesus' life. This overlooks Mary, Anna, Simeon, John the Baptist, and others. Luke's view of the Spirit, like his view of prophets and prophecy, owes much to the Old Testament presentation of these matters.

27. See Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels*, pp. 150-51.

28. Consider, for example, the famous story of Josephus saving his own life by prophesying that his captor Vespasian would become emperor, which in fact did happen.

29. See Johnson, "Luke-Acts," p. 414.

30. R. H. Fuller and P. Perkins, *Who is this Christ?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 81-95, here pp. 93-95.

The First and Last Word: The Christology of the Johannine Corpus

THE GOSPEL OF WISDOM

ANY STUDY OF JOHANNINE CHRISTOLOGY has inevitably had to come to grips with the differences between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel in their portraits of Christ. Some scholars have seen such a marked difference between the Fourth Gospel and the other three in this matter that it has been said that in John Jesus bestrides the stage of human history like a colossus or God, not at all like the human and more approachable Jesus of the Synoptics. While this assessment is certainly a caricature, especially if one is comparing the Jesus of Matthew and of John, there is enough perceived and perceivable difference between the portrait of Jesus in the Synoptics and that in the Fourth Gospel to require some explanation. I have suggested in another context that one of the major reasons for the differences is that the Fourth Gospel is intended to provide the resources for and so is much more explicit and extensive in its treatment of Christology.¹ This is of course not the only major reason for the differences.

Another reason for the differences in approach between the Synoptics and John is that the discussion of two levels in the Fourth Gospel reflects and is part of a vertical eschatology, which may be contrasted with the more horizontal or end-time eschatology found in the Synoptics. By this I mean that the Fourth Evangelist sees reality somewhat dualistically such that on one side of the divide is heaven and all that comes with it (God, God's Son, the Spirit, power, eternal life) while on

the other side stands earth and all that comes with it (space, time, flesh, world). Obviously our author is not an absolute dualist, because he believes that the material universe is made by God and can and is being remade through Christ. Furthermore, our author seems more concerned with a moral dualism of good and evil than an ontological one. Our author also believes that the two realms of heaven and earth can be and have been bridged in God's Son, who through the incarnation has become the mediator between the two, with one foot in each realm throughout his earthly career. Flesh, earth, and world become the indispensable medium through which heaven, light, life, and the Spirit are mediated to human beings. Christ has come from above to bring salvation and has returned above to complete the salvific work he began on earth. Heaven and earth co-inhere through the Son. Unlike the Synoptics, which focus on kingdom, final salvation, and judgment being *out there* in the future, John focuses on these things being *up there* in heaven.² This perspective does not tell the whole tale, especially since there is also obviously a vertical dimension to eschatology in the Synoptics as well, but it goes part of the way to explain some of the differences. In particular it helps to explain the language of above and below, descending and ascending, and even before and after, when before has to do with the preexistence of God's Son (before the Baptist and even before Abraham).

A third, and perhaps the most significant, reason for the differences between John and the Synoptics, especially Mark and Luke, is that John intends to portray Jesus as God's Word and Wisdom incarnate throughout the Gospel, in a way that goes well beyond even what we find in Matthew's Gospel.³ R. Schnackenburg has put the matter thus: "Whereas the Synoptic Gospels offer, on the basis of Jesus' earthly appearance, a view of his salvific significance as a person, in the Gospel of John everything is revealed on the basis of his original being with God, his preexistence."⁴ It is the Wisdom factor, which generates the preexistence language, on which we will concentrate in this chapter.

It appears the Fourth Gospel was written to an audience that was expected to understand the sapiential orientation of the work, signaled by the prologue. In particular, the audience was expected to understand that the *logos* hymn conditions and prepares for all that follows. Knowing that God's Son/Word/Wisdom has come down from above and returned above is the key to understanding not only his identity but also his words and work while on earth. This hermeneutical key is provided up front for John's audience so they will have a christological

understanding of the story that the characters in the narrative for the most part do not. The *logos* hymn will state in one way what will be reiterated throughout the work—Jesus is the juncture between earth and heaven, being both God and human being. This is why, for instance we see angels ascending and descending on him in John 1:51. He is the gate of and to God and of and to humankind.

We have already dealt with the *logos* hymn when we studied the christological hymns,⁵ so it is not necessary to go into detail about the sapiential character of the hymn.⁶ It will be useful, however, to say something about the christological meaning of the very first verse (v. 14) and also v. 18, which occurs right after the hymn and comments.

In John 1:1 we have one of the few instances in the New Testament where the one who took on flesh and the name Jesus is called *theos*. This is by no means likely to be the first instance (chronologically) of this phenomenon in the New Testament books. Romans 9:5 is certainly earlier, and Heb. 1:8 and Titus 2:13 probably are as well. Here, as in Rom. 9:5, *theos* occurs without the definite article, which emphasizes the generic side of things (the *logos* is of the *genus* or species called *theos*). The word order and structure in the Greek of the first verse are such that the translation "the Word was a god" is surely inappropriate. *Theos* without the article here is surely the predicate of the sentence. It emphasizes the kind of being the Word is or the Word's true nature rather than the Word's personal identity [which is indicated by either the name Jesus or by a relational term such as "Son"]. It also makes clear that the Word does not exhaust the Godhead. In other words, we don't have the reverse proposition here "God was the Word," or "the Word was the God" [i.e., all there is to God].⁷ This is also made clear by the fact that in this same verse the Word is said to be *with* God, which thereby distinguishes the Word from the one that our author usually calls *theos*, namely, the Father.

The attempt by some commentators to argue that there is no comment on a personal preexistence of the Son here, but that the author is talking about an abstract idea or quality of God up until v. 14, is, quite frankly, incorrect. The things predicated of the Word in this christological hymn are also predicated of Jesus Christ, the Son who has seen God and made God known and is in the bosom of the Father (vv. 17–18). This is why later in this Gospel the statement "before Abraham was, I am" is seen as blasphemy by outsiders, but in the Fourth Evangelist's view is a true statement about the personal existence before the incarnation of the one speaking. It is precisely because our author believes

that the Son truly is and was *theos* even before the universe began, as the very first verse asserts, that what he says in the rest of the book about Jesus is assumed to be appropriate and within the bounds of the Christian monotheism he affirms. The one who is the redeemer is also the one who was the creator.

Verses 14 affirms that the Word took on flesh, or, as some have preferred to translate, "came on the human scene." The essence of the idea of incarnation is that a personal being who already existed added a human nature to that identity. There is nothing here to suggest that the Word turned into flesh in some sort of kenotic process where the former state is left behind and a new one taken up. Indeed, the statement "we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's only Son full of grace and truth" surely indicates that while on earth the Word retained the divine presence and attributes that were his by nature. It is the divine preexistent Word whose glory has been seen. This leads us to John 1:18.

Unfortunately there is a textual problem here. Does the text read "the only Begotten," "the only begotten Son," "the only begotten God," or simply "only begotten God"? Though the arguments are complex it seems probable that the appropriate reading here is the last one mentioned above, with the second reading listed being the second most likely.⁸ The key term in this phrase is *monogenēs*. Like texts such as Tobit 3:15, it refers to an only child. More important in view of the Wisdom background of the christological hymn in John 1 and indeed of this entire book is Wisd. of Sol. 7:22, where Wisdom is said to be *monogenēs*, which we may translate "alone in kind" (a translation that suits 1 Clement 25:2 as well).

What is being emphasized here is not merely the Son's personal uniqueness but his pedigree—he is the sole natural descendant of the Father. The issue here is not means or manner of birth but lineage and family connection. The term does not merely mean "beloved," as is shown by the expanded form of the phrase in 1 John 5:18 (see below on this text). In short, the word *monogenēs* means the only member of a kin or kind and when coupled with *theos* has the expanded sense of the only kin of God who is also God or the sole divine descendant of the Father or, as M. J. Harris translated it, "the only [natural] Son who is God." It is no accident that in both the Fourth Gospel and in 1 John Jesus alone is called Son of God (*huios Theou*) while believers are called children of God (*tekna Theou*).⁹ John 1:18 reflects this distinction. The Fourth Evangelist not surprisingly reserves *theos* with the

definite article for the Father, preserving some continuity with Jewish usage.

There is one further reference in this Gospel to Christ as *theos* (20:28), and it comes in the climactic confession, indeed the only fully adequate confession in the Evangelist's view, in this whole Gospel.¹⁰ It must be kept in mind that Israel had previously expressed adoration to Yahweh as the "Lord our God" (Ps. 98:8 Septuagint, 99:8 in English trans.), and Rev. 4:11 indicates that the same sort of acclamation was used by Christians of the Father. There may also have been some special aptness in the phrase for John's audience, as when the Fourth Gospel was likely written the emperor was being extolled with the phrase "Deus et Dominus noster." As for the meaning of the phrase, it recognizes not only Christ's personal lordship over Thomas but also Christ's essential oneness with the Father, which then makes legitimate Thomas's worship of the risen One. Both *kyrios* and *theos* are titles here, not proper names, and the former probably implies but the latter explicitly affirms the deity of the risen Jesus.¹¹ Thus, what we have seen here is that this Gospel is framed by the confession that Jesus is deity, and all that comes in between is grounded in this confession.

Throughout the Fourth Gospel the question of Jesus' identity comes up in various forms—sometimes in the form of an acclamation, sometimes in the form of an assumption about where Jesus came from, sometimes in the form of a question, sometimes in the form of a statement. For instance, in John 1 we hear in v. 13 that Jesus, as Son of Man, is the only one who has both descended from heaven and ascended into it. We also hear in this chapter the acclamation of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sin (1:29), and in John 3:2 Nicodemus admits that Jesus is a teacher "come from God," but in this irony-laden Gospel he does not realize the full significance of what he says. Knowing where Jesus has come from and where he is going is the key to understanding who he is in this Gospel.

In John 3:14 is the first presentation of the theme that the Son must be lifted up on the cross in order for salvation to come. This is apparently the first stage of his ascent back to be with the Father in heaven (cf. 8:28), for the death on the cross is the moment at which Jesus is said to be glorified in this Gospel. This is his "hour" (cf. 13:31 and 17:1). What John 3:14 shows us is that the Fourth Evangelist's theology of the Son of Man is conditioned by the story of Wisdom, perhaps especially by 1 Enoch 70:2 and 71:1, where Enoch ascends and is apparently

identified as the Son of Man, and by 1 Enoch 42, where Wisdom descends to earth and then returns to heaven rejected.¹² We see this influence again in John 6:62—"what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending?" But it is also his theology of Jesus as Son of God that is affected by sapiential ways of putting things, for it is as Son that the *logos* was sent into the world, as John 3:16-17 reveals.

If it is true that Jesus bestrides the Johannine stage as a God,¹³ it is also true that the Fourth Evangelist goes out of his way to stress the true humanity of Jesus and his subordination to the Father, even to a degree not seen in the Synoptics.¹⁴ For one thing, Jesus is called a man in this Gospel far more than in the Synoptics, and it is in this Gospel that it is stressed from the outset that he is the man born to die (see John 1:29 and contrast the earliest Gospel, where the passion theme really begins halfway through in Mark 8), a man who is said in John 20 to have nail-marked flesh. He is proclaimed in public at the climax of the trial in the form *ecce homo* (19:5). He is depicted, for instance in John 4, as one who experienced weariness, hunger, thirst. Yet on the other hand there is no Gethsemane agony or God-forsakenness on the cross in this Gospel. The most one gets is Jesus' remark in 16:6 that the disciples are sorrowful about his coming death, and by contrast Jesus repudiates the idea that he will ask to be saved from his "hour" (12:27). The cross scenes are suffused with glory, and even on the cross Jesus is still doing God's will and taking care of others.

In John 5:19 and many times thereafter, we hear things like "the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing." This in fact is part of a christological theme in the Fourth Gospel that is of importance. Using the Jewish language about agency,¹⁵ this writer portrays Jesus as God's *šaliḥ*, or agent and apostle on earth. He has been sent to earth for a specific purpose, namely, to complete the work the Father gave him (5:36-38, 6:29).¹⁶ It is not just that the Son has come down from heaven, for that of course could be said of angels as well, but that he was sent down on a mission of redemption as the Father's divine emissary, fully endowed with the power and authority to carry out such a rescue operation. He has a special relationship with the Father, such that only he has seen the Father (6:46), and this equips him to reveal and speak for the Father (7:16-17).

If understanding Jesus in the Johannine way of thinking amounts to knowing where Jesus came from and is going, that is, knowing he is pursuing Wisdom's trajectory, then misunderstanding manifests itself in having a false conception of Jesus' origins or destiny. Thus, for

example, in John 1:45-46 even disciples and potential disciples think they know who Jesus is by saying he comes from Nazareth and from the family of Joseph there, but they do not understand Jesus' ultimate origins. In John 7:25-27 the Jerusalemites say they know where Jesus comes from (i.e., Nazareth), but they do not know he came down from heaven. In John 7:41 it is asked "surely the Messiah doesn't come from Galilee, does he?" (cf. v. 52). In 8:41 it is implied that he was born out of wedlock (and thus his nature is dubious) while his opponents are true children of Abraham, to which Jesus rejoins that he preceded Abraham, which is far greater than descending from him. In 8:48 it is asked if Jesus is not from Samaria. In 18:5ff. the opponents stress that they are searching for Jesus from Nazareth. In each case the error comes from their not knowing his ultimate origins—that he is Son of Man, *Logos*, Son sent from God, God's Wisdom who descends and ascends. In John 7:35 the Jews misunderstand Jesus because they do not know where he is going. They ask if he may be heading for the Diaspora to teach the Greeks. Again in 8:21-22, when Jesus says he is going away, the Jews wrongly assume that this means he is going to kill himself. In 14:5 even the disciples misunderstand because they do not know where Jesus is going, and so can't follow him. Likewise, even after Easter in 20:16-17 Mary wrongly assumes that Jesus is back to stay and tries to renew merely earthly relationships with Jesus, calling to him *rabboni*. She does not understand that Jesus must ascend so she and other disciples can have a new form of relationship with Jesus. It is only when she understands the pilgrimage of Jesus as God's Wisdom (risen) Lord, "the basic confession of the earliest Jewish Christians,"¹⁷ All of this should be more than enough to establish that John's Christology is sapientially shaped and that he thinks that to understand who Jesus truly is requires a knowledge of the path Wisdom, in the person of God's Son, took to and from earth. Notice how the Gospel proper ends, so far as Jesus' speaking is concerned, in John 20:29 with Jesus as Wisdom offering a Wisdom saying or beatitude to the disciples, just to reinforce the point that has been made all along about Jesus' character and nature.

Once one understands this key to the Son's true identity, then other puzzling aspects of Johannine Christology fall into place. For instance, the author's attempt to reveal the role the Son played begins with creation in John 1, but also Jesus assumes the roles often predicated of Wisdom in her relationship to Israel (see Wis. Sol. 10). For instance,

Jesus is the one who came into the world enlightening God's people all along, and so Moses and the prophets were inspired by him to write about him (John 1:45, 5:46). Of Abraham it is said he saw the Son's day (8:56). Isaiah even saw his divine glory (presumably in a vision, see Isaiah 6 and John 12:41). Not that anyone actually saw him before the incarnation, because like the Father he was purely divine and no one was able to see him (see 1:18; 6:46).¹⁸ In other words, the Son existed before the incarnation and has had roles to play before that event as well. It is hard not to hear echoes of Wisdom of Solomon 10-11 here, where it is said that Wisdom aided Abraham (10:5), entered Moses allowing him to perform wonders and signs (10:16), gave him and others the gift of prophecy (11:1, cf. 7:27), and was present in the wilderness and sustained Israel with manna and water from the rock (11:26; 11:4, cf. John 4 and 6). The Johannine Jesus understands himself to be the one who has aided God's people to come through their trials in all previous generations.

There has been considerable debate about whether the use of *ego eimi* by Jesus in this Gospel is in some instances (e.g., 8:24, 28, 58, 13:19) a predication of the divine name to Jesus. This question is appropriately raised not least because we are told explicitly in John 17:6, 12, and 26 that Jesus has manifested the divine name and that it is a name the Father gave to the Son (v. 12). Furthermore, in the Hebrew of Isa. 51:12, and even more clearly in the Greek translation of this verse (which reads "I am 'I AM' who comforts you") "I am" is apparently taken to be the divine name. We may also point to the Greek translation of Isa. 52:6, which reads "My people shall know that 'I AM' is the one who speaks" (while the Hebrew simply says, "They shall know that it is I who speak"). We must conclude, then, that in all likelihood, in some cases the use of *ego eimi* by Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is a predication of the divine name to him.¹⁹

Further evidence that our author intends in various ways to say that Jesus is divine is found in John 5. Here Jesus heals a man on the sabbath and justifies this by saying that God continues to work (even on the sabbath) and so must he (v. 17). This passage draws on common Jewish beliefs that despite what Gen. 2:2-3 says, God could not have ceased all activities on the sabbath, because God had to maintain the creation in existence (cf. Philo, *Legum Allegoriae* 1.5). The point then of John 5:19-20 is to make clear that Jesus has God's full creative power and is undertaking the divine work which only God can or

should do.²⁰ Philo puts it this way: "His creative power is called God [*theos*] because through it he placed and made the universe" (*De Vita Mosii* 2.99).

But not only did the Son preexist and so have intimate knowledge of what came before, he also has considerable foreknowledge of things (see, e.g., John 2:24, 11:4). He thus has a sovereignty in the face of adversity not emphasized in the Synoptics (see 8:59, 10:39, 18:36, 19:11, 30, 20:17). Unlike the Synoptic parables and Gospel material in general, there is little or no christological indirectness in this Gospel. Jesus' discourses directly reveal who he is and provoke immediate reactions of acceptance or rejection. There is a certain unearthly quality to the Johannine Jesus.

Another christological dimension of importance is of course the "I am" sayings with predicates that characterize Jesus variously as living bread, light of the world, the door, life, and the authentic vine (6:35, 51; 8:12, 10:7, 9, 11, 14, 14:6, 15:1, 5). All of these things were already said to characterize Wisdom in the earlier Wisdom literature. In Prov. 8:38 Wisdom says "he who finds me finds life" and in Prov. 3:18 Wisdom is said to be the tree of life. In Wisdom of Solomon Wisdom is said to be light, indeed a reflection or effulgence of eternal light. In Sir. 24:17ff. Wisdom is said to be a vine that buds and bears abundant fruit. In Prov. 9:5 Wisdom beckons, "Come eat of my bread." The point of these sayings in John, as in their analogies in the Wisdom corpus, is to make clear that whatever one truly longs for or needs can be found in Wisdom, who in the Fourth Gospel is identified with Jesus, the Son of God. Furthermore, the "I am" sayings are also linked to discourses that expand on the themes of these sayings, not unlike the Wisdom discourses in Proverbs, Wisdom of Solomon, and Sirach.

The "I am" discourses are of course about Jesus' true identity, and they are linked with his signs, which are in various ways different from the tales of mighty works in the Synoptics. The chief reason is that John has cast these miracle stories in the form that miracle tales appear in the Wisdom corpus. Like John, the author of the Wisdom of Solomon thinks of miracles as signs from God that point to something larger than themselves (Wis. Sol. 10:1-6). In Wis. Sol. 16:6 all the wonders performed by God in Egypt and in the wilderness are seen as and called "symbols or signs of salvation" for God's people. This same text helps explain John 3:14, which speaks of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, and it is likened to the act of salvation on the cross.

The connection becomes clear if one knows Wis. Sol. 16:6, where the lifting up of the serpent is seen as a "sign of salvation" signifying the means by which humans passed from death to life.

The use of this sort of Wisdom material is not surprising, because as in the Fourth Gospel the author of the Wisdom of Solomon believes in and articulates a theology of eternal life and also its negative counterpart. In both of these writers' views human beings were made not for death but for everlasting life (see Wis. Sol. 2:23-24; 3:1-2; 5:15). Furthermore, the discussion of the devil's role in the Fourth Gospel is close to what we find in the Wisdom of Solomon. Death entered the world through the devil's envy (Wis. Sol. 2:24); it did not come from God, which is similar to what Jesus says in John 8:44, where the devil is seen as the father of the wicked and a murderer from the outset.

The discussion about Jesus being the way—indeed, the only way to the Father in the Fourth Gospel—draws on what is said about Wisdom elsewhere. Thus, the coming of Wisdom to earth causes a division of human beings: some seek and find (Prov. 8:17; Sir. 6:27; Wis. Sol. 6:12) while others do not seek and regret it too late (Prov. 1:28). This same language is used in John of the effect of Jesus on human beings (7:34; 8:21; 13:33).

The Farewell Discourse especially is laden with language that encourages the identification of Jesus with Wisdom if one already knows the Wisdom material. Sirach 4:11-13 is especially helpful at this point: (1) Wisdom teaches her children (cf. John 14-16); (2) Wisdom gives help to those who seek her (John 14:16ff.); (3) whoever loves Wisdom, loves life (John 14:15); (4) those who seek Wisdom from early morning are filled with joy (John 15:11); (5) whoever holds fast to Wisdom inherits glory (John 17:22); (6) the Lord loves those who love Wisdom (John 17:26). Jesus' disciples are called in this discourse little children (13:33), just as disciples are said to be Wisdom's children in Prov. 8:32-33 and Sir. 4:11 and 6:18.

There is a great deal more that can be said along these lines when one begins to compare John's Gospel and especially the christological material with the Wisdom corpus. The above will suffice, however, to explain perhaps the major reason why John's Gospel is so different from the Synoptics—it is about Wisdom come in the flesh, and everything is spun out on the basis of the insight shared in the *logos* hymn in John 1. In fact not only this hymn but also the V-shaped plot of the career of the Son, the "I am" sayings, the conception of miracles, the use of Father language, and various other aspects of Christology are all

indebted to Wisdom material, especially the late Wisdom material found in Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon. This is not all one needs to say about Johannine Christology, but it is perhaps the most important thing one can say. Jesus is the very exegesis of the Father, because he is Wisdom come in the flesh, not merely one who proclaims what God is like.

Another window on Johannine Christology comes from examining the structure of the Fourth Gospel. On the simplest level we have a book with a prologue (1:1-18), an epilogue (chapter 21), and an account of the ministry in between in three major parts: (1) 1:19-12:50, the so-called Book of Signs; (2) 13:1-17:26, the farewell discourses; (3) 18:1-20:31, the passion and resurrection narratives. What this does not in any way convey is the manner in which we have a crescendo of miracles in this Gospel climaxing with the giving of sight to the blind in John 9 and the raising of a man four days dead in John 11, and also a crescendo of confessions that become more and more insightful and adequate until in chapter 20 Thomas's confession matches that of the prologue. Furthermore, the sign miracles are woven together with discourses, probably seven of each, indicating that in Jesus the perfect revelation or Wisdom of God has appeared on earth and that if one wants the benefits of life and light that God offers one must accept God's agent on earth—Jesus. The overall impression left by having this large quantity of extended discourse material unlike what we find in the Synoptics is that the presentation of Jesus is much more by word than by deed. Our author is far more interested than the Synoptic Gospels in raising and answering christological questions. This is shown in the way the material is arranged (a crescendo of confessions), the repeated discussions of Jesus' origins and destiny (which one can understand only with a knowledge of the prologue and Wisdom thinking), and the fact that the miracles are seen as signs pointing not so much to the presence of the kingdom but to the presence of the King.

In fact, the crescendo of the miraculous continues into the passion narrative such that the ultimate sign in this Gospel is Jesus' own death and resurrection, which the seventh sign, of Lazarus's raising, merely foreshadowed. By placing Lazarus's raising where he does in the Gospel, the author prepares to make a larger christological point in the passion material, namely, that the death and resurrection of Jesus are a sign and miracle of God, not a disaster. Like Lazarus's death, Jesus' own can be said to be for God's glory, and so the Son of God may be glorified through it (11:4). We may also contrast the emphasis in this

Gospel on the way the disciples grew in understanding and awareness of who Jesus was after Easter (see 2:22; 12:16), but unlike what we find in Luke's Gospel, nothing whatsoever suggests that this Gospel is a chronicle of Jesus' own growing awareness of who he is. Notice how the baptismal scene is basically omitted, or, better said, the elements of the scene that suggest Jesus learned something about his own identity and ministry are omitted. Instead, 1:29-34 suggests that John received the revelation and then testified about who Jesus was. Also omitted are the actual act of baptizing or anything else involved with that act which might suggest Jesus' subordination to John.

Another interesting window on the Christology of the Fourth Gospel comes from analyzing together the sometimes neglected Son of Man sayings in the Fourth Gospel.²¹ These sayings in John, unlike what we find on the whole in the Synoptics, do not nearly fall into one of the three categories of ministry, suffering and death, or future coming sayings. One saying in John may refer to both suffering and future coming. This is not entirely surprising since for the Fourth Evangelist Jesus' death is already seen as a form of glorification and exaltation. In some ways, the Daniel 7 and Enoch material help us to understand some of the Johannine Son of Man sayings even more than most of the Synoptic ones. The concepts of representativeness, divine status and roles, glory yet in a context of suffering, and being in the presence of God, and perhaps corporateness, which are all present in the Son of Man material in Daniel and Enoch, are also found in the Johannine Son of Man sayings. We will look briefly at each of these sayings at this juncture. Before we do so it is apposite to bear in mind Schnackenburg's conclusion that these sayings show just how different the Fourth Gospel is from the Synoptics, for here the concentration is not on a future Son of Man coming on the clouds, but on his first coming to earth and what he accomplished from the time of the incarnation until the time he was lifted up on the cross. Vertical eschatology about the one who comes down and will be lifted up displaces an emphasis on horizontal eschatology.²²

The first of these is John 1:51. This saying stresses that Jesus is like Bethel, the gate of God, the juncture between heaven and earth, God and humankind. In this context Jesus discovers and discusses the true Israelite, just as in a sense Jacob did after wrestling with the angel. The saying reflects the notion that Jesus is the locus or center of divine activity, even in a sense holy ground, which raises the question of

whether this saying prepares for what we find in John 2, where Jesus is seen as the temple.

The second of these sayings is found in 3:13, and here again a true Israelite is found in the context—in this case Nicodemus. Here the Son of Man is himself an ascending and descending figure, though it appears from 3:14 that the ascending has to do with Jesus being lifted up on the cross. John 3:13 probably reflects the idea that the Son of Man has both preincarnate and postincarnate existence, being eternal. Yet he is also human because he came to earth in human form and died.

John 5:27 reflects the judgment theme found in the Synoptic future Son of Man sayings and in Daniel. Jesus judges because he is the Son of Man given this role in Daniel 7. This presumably means that Jesus will judge after he has lived and himself has been a defendant and a witness for others. He is able to do so because he knows in his own human nature and experience what humans are like, but he can defend precisely because he is the vindicated Son of Man.

In 6:27 and 53 the Son of Man is the provider of eternal life for God's people. It is as Son of Man that Jesus suffers and is able to provide flesh and blood (i.e., life) for the believer. Believers must be incorporated into him. This idea may go back to Daniel and imply the Son of Man's divinity since one can't be incorporated into an ordinary mortal.

In 6:62 ascending is mentioned again in association with the Son of Man phrase. This ascending is taken as evidence that Jesus is in fact the Son of Man and also evidence that he will be able to provide eternal life. His exaltation provides life for those who believe.

John 8:28 is a crucial saying, for it indicates that recognition of the Son of Man will only come when he is crucified. The point is that only then will Jesus be seen as the representative suffering figure of Daniel 7. In addition, knowing that Jesus is eternal ("I am") seems also to hinge on the lifting up of the Son of Man. The "I am" here is followed immediately by a statement about Jesus' utter dependency on the Father. It is then not an attempt to equate the Son of Man with the Father, but perhaps a way of indicating that, like the Father, the Son is eternal. It is interesting how, precisely because Jesus is a dependent obedient Son, he can also be called eternal, *theos*, Word, and the like. His correspondence with the Father's character and will are somehow related to or affected by his behavior. It is precisely as obedient Son that he manifests he is eternal Son. John 8:28 means that when Jesus

has been obedient even unto death this will reveal that he is all he claimed to be, including being Son of Man.

John 9:35 is the only place in the Gospels where anyone is asked if he believes in the Son of Man. Only here could the phrase be seen as a confessional title, and here the phrase seems to be almost a circumlocution for "I." That is, Jesus is asking, "Do you believe in me?" There is certainly nothing like this in the Synoptics.

John 12:23 reflects typical Johannine language, though the idea here is not terribly different from the suffering Son of Man sayings in the Synoptics (cf. Mark 14:41). Again the debt to Daniel 7 seems likely. One must also consider John 12:34, where the phrase is found on the lips of the crowd, who fail to even understand who the Son of Man is. The connection of the Son of Man being lifted up, which entails suffering and yet glory, shows the correlation of this saying with others in John and also with the background in Daniel and Enoch.

John 13:31 is the tenth and last of these sayings, and once again passion and glory are associated, and the Son of Man's relationship to the Father is expressed. The Son of Man's glory also belongs to the Father.

Having briefly reviewed all these sayings, it is time to draw some conclusions about Johannine Christology. All these sayings appear in the first half of this Gospel, with the exception of the last one, and all are relatively uniform in their meaning or range of meaning. It seems clear that all are better understood when read in light of the background of Daniel 7 and the Enoch material. It is clear enough that our author wants to reveal the ascending descending divine one in these sayings—in other words, the one who fleshes out the roles predicated of Wisdom in Jewish Wisdom literature. The phrase is used to help focus on the idea that Jesus is the juncture of the divine and the human, heaven and earth, and so they focus not just on his roles but on his identity. Indeed at one point the question is even raised as to who this Son of Man is so he can be not merely identified but believed in. In these sayings are allusions to the full scope of Christ's work as it is envisioned by the Fourth Evangelist—he has a preincarnate existence; he becomes incarnate; he dies, is exalted, and will serve a judging function.

The Son of Man is thus a heavenly and earthly figure but also an eschatological figure who is human and dies, yet has divine authority. In these sayings John intends to present the full cosmic and historical scope of the work of Christ. There is exaltation even in death; there is

present suffering but then vindication; there is salvation and yet also judgment; there is representativeness but also corporate personality. In short, the Son of Man sayings are another expression of the familiar Johannine high Christology. All such titles tend toward the revelation that the Son is in the Father and vice versa, which is to say they are preoccupied with making clear who Jesus is in relationship both to the Father and to human beings, especially his followers.

If we turn to the specific use of Son or Son of God language in the Fourth Gospel there is no question that this language is more prominent here than in the Synoptics. Already we find the term Son in the prologue, and it is present with some frequency in John 3, where it is made clear that the Son was sent by the Father (hence the Son pre-existed, as the prologue stated), and sent for the purpose of saving the world. The Son is not only the one sent; he is also the sole descendant of the Father (see above on *monogenēs*), and the one in whose hands God has placed all things, like an heir to the Father's fortune.

The first major discussion of Jesus' sonship does not really transpire until John 5:19–20. This may be seen as something of a parable and could be called the parable of the apprentice. Jesus as Son does only what he sees the Father doing. He can do nothing on his own. He is a man under authority and under orders. Of course in relationship to all other human beings he is a man in authority and can give commands or orders. The preexistence and divinity of the Son come out in these sonship sayings in a way that is seldom the case in the Synoptics, but other aspects of these sayings are not without parallel in the Synoptics.

In any detailed discussion of sonship language, besides the texts already mentioned one would also have to examine John 7:29, 8:28, 10:15, 37, 12:49, 13:3, 14:10, and 17:5, 25. Furthermore, since the Gospel begins in chapter 1 and ends in chapter 20 with sonship language (see especially the purpose statement in 20:31), there is something to be said for the conclusion that this is a key term or category for the Fourth Evangelist. The term "Son" or "Son of God" almost always comes up in contexts where the Father is also mentioned. In short, it is relational language. The term or phrase sometimes comes up in the same context as the phrase "Son of Man," but the terms do not seem to be interchangeable.

R. Bauckham sums up the evidence on Johannine sonship language in a helpful manner: