

JOHN 20:30-31 AND  
THE PURPOSE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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by

ADELE REINHARTZ, M. A.

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AUTHOR: Adele Reinhartz, B.A. (University of Toronto)  
M.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor E. P. Sanders

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the relationship between John 20:30-31 and the purpose of the Fourth Gospel. It argues that the passage expresses a purpose which is reflected in both the structure and the content of the Gospel as a whole. This purpose is to convince the reader that faith in Jesus as the Christ, Son of God, can and indeed should be based on the signs as recorded in the Gospel. In order to achieve this purpose, the Gospel uses the following arguments: the reader is seeking salvation; salvation is attained through faith in Jesus; faith in Jesus can be based on his signs; even the reader who has not seen Jesus' signs himself can "witness" them through the agency of the Gospel. The thesis demonstrates where and how the Gospel develops these arguments.

The thesis is intended to contribute to the discussion of several issues which are central to Johannine studies. It examines an aspect of the issue of the purpose of the Gospel which has not been the subject of extensive scholarly attention, namely the way in which the author(s) of the Gospel meant their document to function in the lives of its readers. In doing so, it discusses in detail three of the christological titles, "Christ", "Son of God", and "Prophet", and sheds light on the ways in which the Gospel demonstrates the appropriateness of these titles to Jesus. In addition, it argues against the interpretations of the term sēmeion as used in 20:30-31 and of the Gospel's view of a faith based on signs. Finally, the thesis offers some suggestions concerning the identity of the intended reader of the Gospel.

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## INTRODUCTION

Chapter twenty of the Gospel of John concludes with the following words:

Now Jesus did many signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name. (20:30-31)<sup>1</sup>

One of the few points of agreement in Johannine studies is that these words constitute an explicit statement of purpose for the Gospel as a whole.

The general consensus on this point can be observed by turning to the many commentaries on the Gospel of John, in which the note on 20:30-31 will typically begin with a comment to this effect.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore not

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<sup>1</sup>English quotations from the Fourth Gospel will be taken from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. See bibliography for full references to items cited in the footnotes.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Barrett, Gospel According to St. John, p. 575, begins his comment to 20:31 by saying "Both the purpose of the gospel and the author's theology are summed up in this verse." Bultmann, Gospel of John, p. 697, describes 20:30-31 as "a clear conclusion to the Gospel, in which the selective character of the narrative is stressed and its purpose declared." That 20:30-31 is the Gospel's statement of purpose and conclusion is accepted even by some of those scholars who do not view chapter 21 as a later addition, such as Lagrange, Evangile selon Saint Jean, pp. 519ff., and Vaganay, "Le Finale du Quatrieme Evangile", pp. 512-28. One of the few dissenting voices appears to be that of E. C. Hoskyns, Fourth Gospel, p. 656, who argues that the term "many other signs" in 20:30 refers to the resurrection appearances alone. In his view, the Gospel ends properly at 21:25, because "the Christian gospel ends

surprising that 20:30-31 should play an important role in the scholarly discussion of the purpose of the Gospel. What is perhaps surprising, however, is the fact that, despite this consensus, there are nearly as many theories concerning the purpose of the Fourth Gospel as there are theorists. W. C. Van Unnik and J. A. T. Robinson, for example, argue that the Gospel was intended as a missionary document directed towards Diaspora Jews.<sup>3</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg and C. K. Barrett, on the other hand, suggest that the Gospel was aimed at a primarily Christian audience, with the goal of educating them and deepening their faith.<sup>4</sup> C. H. Dodd views the Gospel as addressing

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<sup>3</sup>Van Unnik, "Purpose"; Robinson, "Destination".

<sup>4</sup>Schnackenburg, "Die Messiasfrage"; Barrett, Gospel of John and Judaism, pp. 1-19. Both of these works contain an explicit refutation of the views of Van Unnik and Robinson. The conclusion that the Gospel is directed towards Christians is reached by many other scholars, such as H. B. Kossen and G. L. Allen, who suggest that the Gospel addresses Diaspora Jews who had already become Christians. Allen suggests that such Jewish Christians were still observing the Jewish law, and that the Gospel aimed to dissuade them from doing so. See Allen, "Jewish Christian Church", pp. 88-92, and Kossen, "Greeks", pp. 97-110. Harald Riesenfeld's study of the hina clause in the Johannine writings, "Zu den johanneischen hina-Sätzen", supports the theory that the Gospel has Christian readers in mind. He concludes that the form of the hina clause seems related to the strengthening of the Christian community and not to any missionary purpose.

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properly, not with the appearance of the risen Lord to His disciples, and their belief in Him [Hoskyns' interpretation of 20:30-31], but with a confident statement that this mission to the world, undertaken at His command and under His authority, will be the means by which many are saved." This function, he argues, is served by chapter 21.



non-Christians who are concerned about eternal life and the way to it, and may be ready to follow the Christian way if this is presented to them in terms that are intelligibly related to their previous religious interests and experience.<sup>5</sup>

The source critic R. T. Fortna suggests that one of the main motives of the evangelist was to correct and deepen the christology of the signs | source which formed the basis of his narrative.<sup>6</sup> J. L. Martyn, who accepts the main outline of Fortna's source theory,<sup>7</sup> would see the motive of the Gospel's redaction of the source not in the desire to correct an inadequate christology but in the need to adapt to historical circumstances, and | especially to the deteriorating relationship between the church and syna- | gogue in the evangelist's city.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 9. A similar theory is argued by C. F. D. Moule, "Intention of the Evangelists".

<sup>6</sup>Fortna, "Source and Redaction". See also Becker, "Wunder und Christologie". Fortna, Gospel of Signs, argues that the Fourth Gospel constitutes the redaction of a written signs-source ("Signs-Gospel") which comprised the seven signs-narratives as well as a passion narrative. The presence of a signs-source underlying the present gospel is argued by many other scholars, including Bultmann, Gospel of John, Nicol, Sēmeia in the Fourth Gospel, and Teeple, Literary Origin. For discussion and further bibliography, see Kysar, Fourth Evangelist, pp. 9-37, and Martyn, History and Theology, pp. 164-68.

<sup>7</sup>See Martyn, "Source Criticism", p. 248.

<sup>8</sup>Martyn, History and Theology, passim. His theory is based to some degree on the conclusion that 9:22 and 16:2 reflect Birkat Ha-Minim, (Jewish benediction against heretics recited in the synagogue). Birkat Ha-Minim is interpreted by many, including Martyn and Barrett, Gospel of John and Judaism, p. 188, as the means by which Christians were excluded from the synagogue and therefore as the watershed in the

This small sampling indicates the wide range of theories of purpose as well as their foci. Most theories of purpose are concerned with pinpointing the identity of the original addressees of the Gospel as well as the Gospel's intention with respect to these readers.<sup>9</sup> Source and redaction critics, while dealing with the question of addressee,<sup>10</sup> view the Fourth Gospel as the redaction of its source or sources, and try to determine the motives of the redactor. Others focus on the impact of historical events on the Gospel and interpret the Gospel as an attempt to come to terms with these circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>See, for example, Freed, "Samaritan Converts".

<sup>10</sup>Nicol, Sēmeia in the Fourth Gospel, p. 79, argues that the sign source was a missionary tract, whereas the Gospel was intended for believers.

<sup>11</sup>Brown's theory that the Gospel was written to win over Christians of the apostolic churches to the Johannine community, as well as to act as a warning against the dangers inherent in the establishment of church offices and in other developments also falls into this category. See Brown, "Other Sheep not of this Fold". Robinson, "Destination", pp. 122f., focuses on the Jewish background of the titles, khristos and huios tou theou. He argues that both are Jewish messianic titles, and that therefore the author's purpose is to encourage his Jewish readers to view Jesus as the fulfilment of their messianic expectations.

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relationship between the synagogue and early church. It has recently been argued, however, that Birkat Ha-Minim was not directed against Christians, but against Jewish sectarians (Minim) and further, that Christians continued to be welcome in the synagogues. See Kimmelman, "Birkat Ha-Minim". Kimmelman's theory, while challenging the accepted interpretation of Birkat Ha-Minim, does not undermine Martyn's theory. Whether or not Birkat Ha-Minim referred to Christians and whether or not 9:22 refers to Birkat Ha-Minim, it seems clear that the Gospel intends its readers to believe that even in Jesus' lifetime the synagogue was excluding Jews who believed in Jesus. (

✓ All of these theories take 20:30-31 into consideration. For many  
 of them, the most important aspect of the passage seems to be the  
 christological titles, "Christ" (khristos) and "Son of God" (huios tou theou).  
 Indeed, the debate surrounding the identity of the reader and religious and  
 historical background of the Gospel has as a primary focus the meaning and  
 background of the titles as well as the relationship between them.<sup>12</sup> A  
 second matter of concern is the correct reading of the verb translated  
 ✓ above as "that you may believe". Manuscript evidence is equally divided  
 between the present subjunctive pisteuēte and the aorist subjunctive

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<sup>12</sup>Barrett, Gospel of John and Judaism, p. 17, challenges this interpretation: "John 20:30f. does not mean, ' . . . in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, ' that is, the Son of God (in the simple messianic sense), but ' . . . in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ' (the recognized title of the early Christian tradition), and acknowledge that this title signifies that he is nothing less than the divine Son of God, who has come down from heaven as the redeemer with divine authority. ' " It is probable, according to Barrett, that John wrote for Christians since he uses the titles in their Christian sense. For Martyn, History and Theology, p. 98f, the presence of the term khristos in the conclusion illustrates the centrality of the issue of Jesus' messiahship and of the correct interpretation of his signs in the Jewish-Christian debate in John's time. For Fortna, Gospel of Signs, pp. 197f, the presence of the terms khristos and huios tou theou in 20:30-31 bears witness to the christological intent of the Signs-Gospel to which 20:30-31 originally belonged. These examples illustrate the observation that the interpretations of the terms, and especially the christological titles, can and have been used to support almost any theory of purpose. As Schnackenburg, Johannesevangelium, 3:402, points out, Johannine scholars are necessarily caught in a hermeneutical circle: the meaning of the christological titles cannot be determined without knowing the background of the Gospel, and the background of the Gospel cannot be understood apart from the meaning of these titles.

pisteusēte. The former implies a continuing belief on the part of the reader, suggesting that the intended reader is Christian, whereas the latter can refer to a future coming to faith, suggesting that the reader is not yet Christian.<sup>13</sup> While the importance of these words to the meaning of the passage and therefore the purpose of the Gospel cannot be denied, they express only a part of the purpose as stated in 20:30-31. Similarly, while the theories in which these terms figure so prominently discuss questions important to the understanding of the Gospel, they do not speak directly to the question of the Gospel's purpose as it is formulated in 20:30-31.

The purpose of the Gospel as stated in 20:30-31 is expressed in the hina clause: "These (signs) are written in order that (hina) you may believe . . . and . . . have life in his name." In other words, the purpose of the Gospel is to present the reader with a written record of a selection of Jesus' signs in order to serve as a basis for his faith and therefore his

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<sup>13</sup>The major manuscripts supporting the present subjunctive are Bezae, Alexandrinus and those of the Byzantine tradition. The aorist subjunctive is supported by Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and possibly also p 66. This reading is followed in Nestle's critical edition. Riesenfeld, "Zu den johanneischen hina-Sätzen", p. 220, suggests that the normal usage of the hina clauses is the present subjunctive, a conclusion which would tend to support the theory that the Gospel is directed towards Christians. It must be pointed out, however, that theories of purpose cannot be hung on this point alone, both because the Gospel is not consistent in its use of tenses, and also because the aorist subjunctive does not necessarily have to have a future connotation. See Schnackenburg, "Messiasfrage," pp. 257ff, Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 1056, and MacRae, Faith in the Word, p. 57.

salvation. Hence, the emphasis of 20:30-31 is not on the identity of the reader, nor on the evangelist's attitude towards either his sources or his addressees, but on the Gospel's perception of itself and its role as a written document. To be sure, there are scholars who recognize this as the purpose of the Gospel as stated in 20:30-31. G. W. MacRae, for example, writes that "John is consciously aware of his function as a writer of the story of Jesus."<sup>14</sup> W. H. G. Thomas argues that everything in the Gospel is subservient to the precise purpose stated in 20:30-31, namely that the Gospel's record of signs may lead the reader to a definite relationship with Jesus.<sup>15</sup> There are, however, no full-length studies of the Gospel's purpose which focus on its self-description as stated in 20:30-31.<sup>16</sup>

Two reasons may be suggested for this gap in Johannine scholarship. The first and most obvious reason is that 20:30-31 does not answer the questions which are generally considered important for determining the purpose of the Gospel. Although the passage addresses its readers directly, by the use of the second person plural form of the verbs,<sup>17</sup> it does not inform

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<sup>14</sup>MacRae, Faith in the Word, p. 56.

<sup>15</sup>Thomas, "Purpose of the Fourth Gospel", pp. 254ff.

<sup>16</sup>Van Unnik, "Purpose", p. 389, begins his analysis, with 20:30-31, focussing primarily on the Jewish background and meanings of the title khristos.

<sup>17</sup>pisteuēte, ekhēte.

later readers of the origin, background, and identity of the original addressees. Neither does the passage provide any clear information about the historical circumstances which influenced the writing of the Gospel. 20:30-31 is therefore considered to reflect only "a general motive to articulate the kerygma of the faith", whereas the document as a whole is considered to reflect one or more specific purposes.<sup>18</sup>

The second reason is that while 20:30-31 states the Gospel's own view of its purpose, the passage is not in fact considered by many scholars to be adequate or even correct. This conclusion is not only reflected in the treatment of 20:30-31 in the various theories of purpose, but is also stated explicitly by some Johannine scholars. For example, Robert Kysar suggests that the question of purpose must be dealt with on two levels:

First, does the writer make an explicit statement of purpose anywhere in the Gospel? Second, do other passages imply a purpose and a destination which might not be explicitly stated?<sup>19</sup>

After discussing the Gospel's explicit statement in 20:30-31, Kysar proceeds to list the reasons why this statement is "less than adequate".<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, D. M. Smith comments on the inappropriateness of 20:30-31 as a summary of Jesus' ministry.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Kysar, Fourth Evangelist, p. 147.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Kysar, John, The Maverick Gospel, p. 15.

<sup>21</sup>Smith, "Setting and Shape", p. 231.

The dismissal of 20:30-31 as being inappropriate is based on two considerations. The first concerns the self-description of the Gospel as a written record of some of Jesus' signs. According to most scholars, the term sēmeia in this passage refers primarily to the seven or eight so-called signs narratives, such as the Wedding at Cana (2:1-11), and the feeding of the multitudes (6:1-14), with the possible addition of the post-resurrection appearances to the disciples (20:1-29).<sup>22</sup> The second consideration is the attitude towards signs-faith assumed by 20:30-31. 20:30-31 clearly implies that faith can and indeed should be based on the signs that Jesus did. This positive evaluation of signs-faith is reflected elsewhere in the Gospel, such as 2:11 and 12:37. On the basis of other passages such as 4:48 and 20:29, however, it is often concluded that in fact the Gospel intends a critique of signs-faith. If this conclusion is correct, then 20:30-31 cannot be a full and adequate theological statement.

Are these reasons valid? It will be argued in this study that, contrary to the opinion of most Johannine scholars, 20:30-31 is in fact to be taken seriously as the statement of purpose of the Gospel as a whole. It will be demonstrated not only that sēmeia has a much broader sense than that usually attributed to it, but also that the positive attitude to signs-faith, expressed in 20:30-31, is maintained consistently throughout the Gospel. Furthermore, it will be suggested that although 20:30-31 does not detail the

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<sup>22</sup>This view is held by Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 1057.

historical circumstances out of which the Gospel arose, it nevertheless constitutes a specific rather than a general statement of purpose.

This study, therefore, aims to show that in 20:30-31, the Gospel is expressing a purpose which was of importance in shaping the form and content of the Gospel. Though this purpose is not the only one which influenced the Gospel, its enunciation in the concluding statement of the body of the Gospel points to its importance. In describing itself as a report of some of Jesus' signs that are written in order to encourage faith, the Gospel claims a very important role for itself in the lives of its readership. Although neither the passage nor the Gospel as a whole permits a clear-cut identification of the addressee, one aspect of his identity is certain: the reader was not in a position to see signs for himself. The Gospel perceived the reader as being in need of the record of signs which it provided. It therefore asked to be considered as a valid substitute for the experience of signs to which its readers had no direct access except through the Gospel narrative.

How can it be demonstrated that this constitutes an important purpose of the Gospel? This study will draw on the same methodological principle used by other studies of the purpose of the Gospel, namely that an author's intended purpose in writing a document necessarily shapes that document and is therefore reflected in it. In other words, the purpose of the Gospel is to be seen not only in 20:30-31 but in the content and



structure of the entire Gospel.<sup>23</sup> It will be argued that if the Gospel's purpose is to substantiate its role as a valid substitute for the direct experience of signs, it must present arguments designed to persuade its readers to accept it as such. The narrative form of the Gospel genre precludes the explicit exposition of these arguments in their logical order. Rather the arguments are expressed through the content and structure of the story of Jesus' life according to John. It will therefore be the task of this study to elucidate them on the basis of the Gospel itself.

The arguments which the Gospel presents in favour of its self-designated role in the spiritual life of its reader are comprised of the following four propositions, all of which can be derived from 20:30-31.

1. "Life in his name", or salvation, is a desirable goal, that is, one which is or should be desired by the reader.
2. Faith in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God is the path to this goal.
3. The signs which Jesus did in the presence of his disciples are a valid and adequate basis for this faith.
4. The reader has access to these signs through their written form in the Gospel. Therefore the written report of a selection of Jesus' signs is a valid basis for faith and therefore salvation.

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<sup>23</sup>For example, Martyn's theory is based not only upon the vocabulary, such as the christological titles, but on a detailed analysis of several of the narratives in the Gospel, and a discussion of other relevant passages. See his History and Theology, pp. 24-62.

The first two propositions are not peculiar to the Fourth Gospel, but are reflected in the New Testament as a whole and were probably part of the earliest Christian kerygma.<sup>24</sup> The third and fourth propositions, while perhaps not exclusive to the Fourth Gospel<sup>25</sup> pertain specifically to the purpose of the Gospel as expressed in 20:30-31.

By examining where and how the Gospel states and argues these four propositions, the dissertation will demonstrate that 20:30-31, far from being a general statement of purpose, points to one of the important motives which shaped the Gospel as we know it. Before this examination is undertaken, however, it is necessary to show that there is indeed an integral relationship between 20:30-31 and the rest of the Gospel, that is, that 20:30-31 is appropriate to the Gospel as a whole on both theological and semantic grounds. Chapter one of this study will therefore focus on the meaning and scope of the term sēmeia as it is used in 20:30-31. Chapter two will examine the issue of signs-faith in the Fourth Gospel, and in particular those passages which have been interpreted as a critique of

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<sup>24</sup>Dodd, Apostolic Preaching and its Developments, pp. 43f.

<sup>25</sup>There is some evidence that Jesus' acts, especially his miraculous acts, were considered by the Synoptic writers to be signs of his christological identity and so were also seen as a proper basis for faith. See, for example Mark 14:22-33: the people in the boat worshipped Jesus as Son of God because they had witnessed Jesus and Peter walking on the water and the stilling of the storm. This aspect of the miracles is not emphasized, however. For discussions of the role of miracles in the Gospels, see R. E. Brown, "The Gospel Miracles", and Richardson, Miracle-Stories of the Gospels.

signs-faith. Chapters three through six will discuss the four propositions which constitute the way in which the Gospel aims to fulfill its stated purpose. In each of these four chapters the discussion will focus on the meaning of the propositions and the ways in which they are expressed in the Gospel. Chapter seven will present the conclusions of the study and examine how they relate to other theories concerning the purpose of the Fourth Gospel.

It is hoped that this study will contribute not only to the discussion of the purpose of the Gospel but also to other questions, such as the meaning of the christological titles and the Johannine views of signs and signs-faith. Before beginning, however, it is necessary to discuss briefly the assumptions made in this study concerning the questions of literary unity, authorship, date, readership, and religious-historical background of the Fourth Gospel.

In this study, the Gospel is considered to be a literary unit with an overarching chronological, theological, and thematic scheme which governs the whole and its parts. The only exception is 7:53-8:11, which is excluded from consideration on textual grounds.<sup>26</sup> This is not to say that the Gospel is free from both chronological and

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<sup>26</sup>See the discussion and bibliography in Brown, Gospel According to John, pp. 332-38.

theological contradictions and difficulties,<sup>27</sup> or that it is entirely the work of one person. Indeed, it is very likely that the present form of the Gospel is the result of a lengthy and perhaps complicated process of composition entailing pre-Johannine oral or written sources and traditions and one or more redactions.<sup>28</sup> It is assumed, however, that the main part of the Gospel<sup>29</sup> was intended by someone to be meaningful as

<sup>27</sup>The classic example of chronological difficulties in the Fourth Gospel is the question of whether chapters five, six and seven relate events in their intended order, or whether chapters five and six should be transposed. An example of a theological problem is that concerning eschatology: what is the relationship between the present or realized eschatology and future eschatology, both of which find their expression in the Gospel?

<sup>28</sup>According to Kysar, "Source Analysis", there is a growing consensus that the Gospel did undergo a lengthy process of composition, one aspect of which involved the redaction of a written signs-document.

<sup>29</sup>It is generally considered that chapter 21 constitutes a later addition to the Gospel, though it appears that the Gospel never circulated without it. Yet the resurrection appearances narrated in chapter 21 seem out of place after the concluding statement in 20:30-31. On the other hand, Lagrange, *Evangile*, p. 520, argues that the hypothesis that chapter 21 is an appendix is neither plausible nor necessary. He suggests instead that it has been misplaced, and would transpose it to just before the final episode, that is, apparently before the resurrection appearances to the disciples. Such a transposition creates more contextual problems than it solves, unless one argues that the Thomas episode occurred in Galilee. Yet this is doubtful, for it is too closely tied with 20:1ff., Mary Magdalene's discovery of the empty tomb, which must have occurred in Jerusalem. Lagrange is defended by Vaganay in "Le Finale du Quatrième Evangile".

it now stands, and that any sources, traditions, or earlier editions of the Gospel were refashioned by him to suit his needs.<sup>30</sup>

Although the identity of the author is still an unresolved issue in Johannine studies,<sup>31</sup> it is not considered relevant to the present study. The terms "author", "writer", "evangelist" or "John", will be used for convenience only to refer to the person or persons whose thought is represented in and by the Gospel, and are not intended to imply any conclusions concerning the identity of the author of the Gospel. Similarly, the question of the date to be assigned to the Gospel will not be considered important to the study. The majority of scholars date the Gospel to the last decade of the first century, although this conclusion has been challenged by J. A. T. Robinson and others.<sup>32</sup> All that it is necessary to assume for the present

<sup>30</sup>The importance of dealing with the Gospel in its present form is stated emphatically by C. H. Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 290:

"I conceive it to be the duty of an interpreter at least to see what can be done with the document as it has come down to us before attempting to improve on it . . . I shall assume as a provisional working hypothesis that the present order is not fortuitous, but deliberately changed by someone. . . (who). . . had some design in mind, and was not necessarily irresponsible or unintelligent. "

<sup>31</sup>For discussion of the various theories, see R. Kysar, Fourth Evangelist, pp. 86-101.

<sup>32</sup>As J. A. T. Robinson, Redating the New Testament, pp. 254-311, points out, the overwhelming majority consider John to date from the last decade of the first century. The discovery of Papyrus 52, a fragment of a manuscript of the Gospel dated to the early second century, places the latest possible date at the end of the first century. The earliest possible

study is that the Gospel was written at least one generation after the events it narrates.

As the various theories of purpose proposed by Johannine scholars indicate, the identity of the original addressee is another unresolved issue. This study will therefore not begin by adopting any particular theory concerning the ethnic and religious identity of the intended reader, although the study itself may shed some light on this subject. It will be assumed, however, that the reader was removed temporally and also probably geographically from the events which the Gospel describes. The temporal distance is indicated by the very issue under discussion, that is, the Gospel's self-designated purpose as the written substitute for the experience of seeing signs to which the reader clearly does not have access. The Gospel's emphasis on the witness of the disciples and of the narrator, as indicated for example in 19:35, suggests that the intended reader lived at least a generation, if not more, after the events described in the Gospel. The spatial distance is indicated by the description of Jerusalem and the Temple. For example, in 5:2 the reader is informed that "there is in

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date is more difficult to determine, especially since it cannot be proven absolutely that the Fourth Gospel knew one or more of the Synoptics. J. A. T. Robinson, Redating the New Testament, E. R. Goodenough, "John, A Primitive Gospel", and F. L. Cribbs, "Date of Origin", all argue for a very early dating; Robinson suggests that the Johannine tradition was formed as early as 20-50 C. E., with a first edition written in 50-55 C. E. According to his theory, the final edition would still have been completed after 65 C. E., making it the final gospel to be completed.

Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool. . . which has five porticoes". This description clearly assumes that the reader is not considered by the evangelist to be familiar with the pool, though he is expected to know that one of the gates to the Temple is called the sheep gate.<sup>33</sup>

Yet another difficult issue which will not be dealt with in the present study concerns the religious and historical background of the Gospel, an issue which is intimately tied with that of the identity of the readers as well as most of the other aspects of the Johannine problem. While it will be assumed that the Gospel bears the influence of contemporary Jewish and Gentile groups and cultures, it will also be assumed that the primary source for understanding the Gospel should be the Gospel itself.

This is not to deny the importance of the question of background to the understanding of the Gospel as it now stands. In considering the purpose of the Gospel, however, it will be assumed that the Gospel did not simply take over a particular term from its environment but exercised a certain amount of creative freedom by using the term in a way which reflected or suited its own intentions. For example, the term khristos is undoubtedly of Jewish

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<sup>33</sup>The reader is apparently assumed to have some knowledge about the Temple, its structure and role in first-century Judaism (cf. e. g. 10:23). This does not mean, of course, that the readers were familiar with Jerusalem first-hand; more than likely, the Jerusalem Temple was known to those outside Palestine either from Christian preachers themselves or from other sources.

origin, as the Gospel itself makes clear by its use of the Semitic form Messias (1:41). An examination of the use of the term in Jewish sources indicates that it refers to an eschatological redeemer-figure expected by various Jewish groups.<sup>34</sup> This general definition, however, can be gleaned without difficulty from the Gospel itself. The fact that the word appears frequently in the mouths of the Jews<sup>35</sup> implies at the very least that in the eyes of the Gospel the term is of particular relevance to the Jews. Furthermore, the confession by Martha of Jesus as the Christ (11:27) is a response to Jesus' self-exposition as the resurrection and the life (11:25-6), suggesting that for her, the term khristos refers to an eschatological redeemer-figure. A more specific definition of the term as used by the Gospel cannot be determined from its background, but only on the basis of its usage in the Gospel. Only from the text itself is it evident, for example, that Davidic descent and birth in Bethlehem are not important to the Johannine usage of the term (7:40-42), though they do figure in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>36</sup> This example suggests that while the usage of khristos or its equivalent in contemporary Jewish texts is not irrelevant, it should be secondary to the information supplied by the Gospel itself. This is especially true given

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<sup>34</sup>On the background of the term khristos, see the article khriō, khristos, in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 9:493-581.

<sup>35</sup>The Jews are the speakers in eight out of 18 occurrences.

<sup>36</sup>See chap. 5, pp. 131ff.



the fact that the background of the Gospel as a whole is still a matter of debate among scholars.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, the question of whether or not the story of Jesus as presented in the Fourth Gospel is, in whole or in part, historically accurate, will not be discussed.<sup>38</sup> It will be assumed, however, that the Evangelist believed, and certainly intended his readers to believe, that the story he was presenting was accurate.

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<sup>37</sup>For discussions and bibliography concerning the background of the Gospel, see Brown, Gospel According to John, pp. LII-LXVI, Kysar, Fourth Evangelist, pp. 1-2-146, Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, pp. 3-130, and Odeburg, The Fourth Gospel.

<sup>38</sup>See Dodd, Historical Tradition, for a detailed look at the historical value of the Fourth Gospel.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE MEANING OF SĒMEIA IN 20:30

The role given to 20:30-31 in the discussion of the purpose of the Gospel depends to a large degree on the interpretation of sēmeia in 20:30. The most narrow interpretation views sēmeia as a reference only to the seven or eight miracles of Jesus which are narrated in the Gospel. This interpretation is generally held by source critics, who consider 20:30-31 to have been the original ending of the signs-source.<sup>1</sup> A second theory would see sēmeia in 20:30 as a reference not only to the seven or eight miracles but also to the resurrection appearances. This interpretation is based on the fact that 20:30-31 follows immediately upon the narratives of Jesus' resurrection appearances (20:1-29). Hence the expression alla sēmeia ("other signs") in 20:30 could be interpreted as meaning "in addition to these signs which have just been narrated", that is, the resurrection appearances, although these are not explicitly called signs in 20:1-29. Raymond E. Brown and Rudolf Schnackenburg are among those who hold that the term sēmeia in 20:30 therefore refers to Jesus' resurrection appearances as well as to his miraculous acts as

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<sup>1</sup>Fortna, Gospel of Signs, pp.197f. Barrett, Gospel According to St. John, on the other hand, sees no reason why 20:30-31 could not be the evangelist's own comment.

narrated in chapters two through eleven.<sup>2</sup>

Both of these interpretations view sēmeia in 20:30 as a direct reference to only a small portion of the events described in the Gospel. They imply, therefore, that 20:30-31 omits all reference to the non-miraculous activity of Jesus, including his discourses, to which the majority of the Gospel is devoted. This conclusion, in turn, would suggest that 20:30-31 does not supply an appropriate statement of purpose for the Gospel as a whole.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear, therefore, that any argument for the adequacy of 20:30-31 as a statement of purpose for the Gospel as a whole must also demonstrate that sēmeia as it is used in 20:30 refers not only to Jesus' miraculous acts but to the entire range of his activity as narrated in the Gospel. Such a broad interpretation of sēmeia has been suggested, for example, by Rudolf Bultmann, who argues that, although the passage was taken over from a signs-source, in its present context it refers to both

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<sup>2</sup>Fortna, Gospel of Signs, p. 197, argues that the ending of the Signs-Gospel was made into the ending of the Fourth Gospel by the addition of the clause: "and that believing, you may have life in his name ". This change, according to Fortna, "From Christology to Soteriology", is indicative of the main difference between the Signs-Gospel and the Fourth Gospel, namely that the former is primarily christological and the latter soteriological.

<sup>3</sup>In fact, many scholars holding the narrower interpretation of sēmeia do see 20:30-31 as a statement of purpose for the Gospel as a whole, but they do not deal in any detail with the relationship between the meaning of sēmeia and the role of 20:30-31 in the Gospel. See Fortna, The Gospel of Signs, pp. 197ff., and Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 1057.

the works and the words of Jesus. This is possible, says Bultmann,

precisely because in his presentation of the Gospel story he has on the one hand made plain the meaning of the sēmeia as deeds that speak, and on the other hand represented the words of Jesus as divinely effected event, as rhēmata zōēs (6:63, 68) . . .<sup>4</sup>

Martyn also observes that the term "signs" in 20:30-31 is used to refer to the whole Gospel, although this is the only place in the Gospel in which it is used so broadly.<sup>5</sup> Neither scholar, however, undertakes to examine how and why this is the case.

It will be the task of the following pages to demonstrate that the broad understanding of sēmeia in 20:30 is correct. The demonstration will proceed by examining the usage of the three main terms used to describe Jesus' activity in the Gospel: sēmeion, ergazomai and poieō and their cognates. The following questions will be asked:

1. Who are the speakers and agents most often associated with each term?
2. To what actions or events do the terms refer?
3. What meaning is attached to these events within the Gospel itself?

The effort will be made to determine whether the Gospel implies a clear

<sup>4</sup>Bultmann, Gospel of John, p. 698. According to Lagrange, Evangile, p. LXX, only signs are mentioned because they are the source of all other activity, and authorize Jesus to speak in the name of his Father.

<sup>5</sup>Martyn, History and Theology, p. 93.

distinction among these terms, or whether there is an overlap in meaning and usage.<sup>6</sup>

The speakers and agents associated with each term are identified in the following chart:

<u>Speaker</u>	<u>sēmeion</u>	<u>ergon</u>	<u>ergazomai</u>	<u>poieō</u>
Jesus	2 verses	21 verses	2 verses	32 verses
Narrator	8	3		18
Jews (people)	5	2		6
Others	Nicodemus 1 Priests 1	Jesus' brothers 1		Pilate 1 Blind man 2 Nicodemus 1 Lame man 2 Samaritan woman 2 Jesus' mother 1
<u>Agent/doer</u>				
Jesus	16 verses	51 verses	2 verses	39 verses
Jews		10		9
Others	John 1	God 14		Samaritan woman 2 World 4 Disciples 8 Judas 1 Abraham 1 Soldiers 1 Servants (ch. 18) 1 Servants (ch. 2) 2

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<sup>6</sup>For studies of the background of sēmeion and ergon, see Brown, Gospel According to John, pp. 525-532; "sēmeion", Theological Dictionary

This chart indicates a marked difference between the usage of the terms sēmeion and ergon with respect to speaker and agent. Sēmeion appears to be the term by which others, primarily the narrator and the Jews, refer to the actions of Jesus. The term appears only twice in the words of Jesus, once in a general reference to "signs and wonders" (sēmeia kai terata -- 4:48), and a second time with respect to the signs recounted in chapter six (6:26). On the other hand, ergon is the term used most often by the Johannine Jesus with respect to his own actions. The term is also used to refer to the actions of others, for example in 7:7: "The world hates me because I testify of it that its works are evil ".

Do these differences in usage extend to differences in referent? After reading the Gospel, will the person who reads the word sēmeia in 20:30-31 tend to differentiate between the events referred to as signs and those referred to as works, or will he tend to identify them? The question can be decided only by looking at all of the relevant passages in order to determine the range of events and meanings covered by each term.

The term "signs" is generally understood to refer to several

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of the New Testament, 7:200-269; "ergon", Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 2:635-55; Cerfaux, "Le Christ et ses Miracles"; Formesyn, "Le Semeion Johannique"; Mollat, "Le semeion Johannique"; and Hofback, Semeion.

episodes during Jesus' ministry.<sup>7</sup>

1. The wedding at Cana (2:1-11)
2. Cleansing of the Temple (2:13-33)<sup>8</sup>
3. Healing of the Official's son (4:46-54)
4. Healing of the Lame man (5:1-9)
5. Feeding of the Multitudes (6:1-14)
6. Walking on Water (6:16-21)
7. Healing of the man born blind (9:1-7)
8. Raising of Lazarus (11:1-44)

All of these events, with the possible exception of number 6, are indeed specified as signs in the Gospel:

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<sup>7</sup>The list of events accepted as signs varies among scholars. Fortna, Gospel of Signs, p. vii, counts eight signs, omitting the cleansing of the Temple and counting chapter 21, the miraculous catch of fish. Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 333, counts the feeding of the multitude and Jesus' walking on water as a single sign.

<sup>8</sup>There seems to be some question as to whether the Gospel considered the cleansing of the Temple to be a sign as, for example, the wedding at Cana was, because it is not miraculous in nature. Yet the event certainly "signifies" Jesus' identity as Son of God, both by pointing to his power in his father's house (2:16) and by the reference to the crucifixion and resurrection (2:18-22). Bultmann, Gospel of John, p. 122, does not consider 2:13-22 to be a part of the signs-source. This conclusion is shared by Teeple, Literary Origin, p. 172. The reason is presumably that the pericope has very close parallels in the synoptics and therefore is not considered to have come from a source peculiar to the Fourth Gospel. On the other hand, Fortna, Gospel of Signs, pp. 144ff., suggests that it was present in the Signs-Gospel, as a prelude to the Passion, though it was not a "sign".

1. The transformation of water into wine is called "the first of his signs" which Jesus did at Cana in Galilee (2:11).
2. The cleansing of the Temple is included among the "signs which he did" in Jerusalem (2:23, 4:45, 3:2).<sup>9</sup>
3. The healing of the nobleman's son is called "the second sign which Jesus did when he came to Cana. . ." (4:54),
4. The healing of the lame man is one of the "signs which he had done on those who were diseased" (6:2).
5. The "feeding of the multitudes" is the sign referred to in 6:14: "When the people saw the sign which he had done . . ."
6. Jesus' walking on the water is perhaps included in the reference in 6:26: ". . . you seek me not because you saw signs . . ."
7. The healing of the blind man is referred to in 9:16: "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?"
8. The raising of Lazarus is called a "sign" in 12:18: "The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard that he had done this sign."

In addition to the use of the term sēmeion almost all of the narratives share another feature: the supernatural nature of the event. Each narrative depicts an unsatisfactory, or distressing situation. This

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<sup>9</sup>This conclusion is inferred from the structure of the passage, that is, the fact that the narrative of the cleansing of the Temple is followed by general references to signs that Jesus did in Jerusalem. See note 8.



situation is corrected through the agency of Jesus in an unexpected way which in most cases contradicts what might be described as the laws of nature. This feature of the narratives is summarized on the following chart:

<u>"Sign"</u>	<u>Distressing Situation</u>	<u>Resolution</u>
2:1-11	Shortage of wine	Superior wine made from water
2:13-22	Traders in Temple	Traders chased out
4:46-54	Illness of official's son	Healing of son
5:1-18	Lame man	Healing
6:1-14	Shortage of food	Multiplication of loaves and fishes
6:16-21	Jesus' absence from boat	Jesus walks to boat
9:1-7	Blind man	Healing
11:1-44	Death of Lazarus	Raising of Lazarus

There are two passages, however, which suggest that events outside the ones discussed above were also intended to be included under the category of signs. The first is 2:18 in which the Jews ask: "What sign have you to show us for doing this [i. e., for chasing the traders out of the Temple]?" Jesus' response is: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up " (2:19). According to the narrator, the "temple" to which Jesus refers is not the Temple of Jerusalem as the Jews understood it, but rather the temple of Jesus' body (2:20). Therefore the "sign" which will justify or explain Jesus' behaviour in the Temple is the crucifixion

and resurrection narrated in chapter 18-20.<sup>10</sup> The second verse is 20:30, which, as noted earlier, serves not only as a general conclusion to the body of the Gospel, but also as the end of the narratives depicting Jesus' resurrection appearances in chapter 20. The reference to the "other signs which Jesus did" includes, therefore, not only the signs other than the ones which are narrated in the Gospel as a whole, but also the signs other than the ones which Jesus did after his resurrection.<sup>11</sup> Therefore both the Passion narrative and chapter 20 may also be said to narrate signs, despite the fact that the word sēmeion is not used with specific reference to these events in the narratives in which they are described.<sup>12</sup>

That Jesus' signs were not limited to the events narrated in the Gospel is stated explicitly in 20:30: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples". This is implied also in other passages. For example, in 9:16 and 7:31, the term sēmeion is in the plural, sēmeia, suggesting that the specific sign which is referred to in each context is

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<sup>10</sup> For further discussion of the Temple cleansing, see p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> See pp. 20ff.

<sup>12</sup> Fortna, "Source and Redaction", p. 166, claims that for the Signs-Gospel, the resurrection was the supreme sign, whereas for the Fourth Gospel, Jesus' death is the supreme sign. Charlier, "La Notion de Signe", p. 444, agrees, calling the cross the ultimate sign. Bultmann, Gospel According to John, p. 634f., disagrees, arguing that neither the cross nor the resurrection are signs, though the resurrection appearances are. For Bultmann, this conclusion seems to be based on his theory that the hypothetical signs-source did not include a passion narrative, a conclusion opposed by Fortna, Gospel of Signs, passim.

considered to be an example of the type of actions that people have seen Jesus perform: "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" (9:16); "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done? (7:31)". Similarly, the plural form of sēmeion in 2:23 ("The signs which Jesus did in Jerusalem") implies that, in addition to the cleansing of the Temple, Jesus did other signs which are not related in the narrative. Therefore the term sēmeion seems to refer primarily to acts of Jesus, some of which are narrated in the Gospel. These acts are usually of a miraculous nature and serve to correct a distressing situation.

Turning now to the term ergon, it appears that in some cases at least, the term is synonymous with sēmeion.<sup>13</sup> In two verses, ergon refers to events which in other verses are called sēmeia. In 7:21, Jesus says: "I did one deed (ergon) and you all marvel at it ". The context, especially 7:23, indicates that the deed to which 7:21 refers is the healing of the lame man, recounted in chap. 5:

If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the Law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? (7:23)

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<sup>13</sup>Scholars seem to agree that there is not always a clear cut distinction between sēmeion and ergon. Fortna, "Source and Redaction", p. 152, suggests that sēmeion and ergon are synonymous in certain cases, the latter being the evangelist's word for the former which was used in the source, though not all usages of sēmeion are to be traced to the source. Hofbeck, Semeion, p. 182, and Riga, "Signs of Glory", pp. 417f., argue that the term ergon is used to denote the more profound meaning of Jesus' acts. Therefore Jesus' signs, if understood as revelatory of Jesus' relationship with the Father, are erga.

In 9:3-4, Jesus remarks with respect to the blind man:

It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works (erga) of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of Him who sent me, while it is day . . .

Other passages, such as 10:32, refer to events which are not specified: "I [Jesus] have shown you [Jews] many good works (erga) from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?" In this case, the erga may or may not include some of the sēmeia narrated in the Gospel.

That the term can be applied to actions which do not involve miracles or the overriding of the 'laws of nature' is indicated by its use with respect to the actions of others, as in 6:28-29:

Then they [the Jews] said to him, "What must we do to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

Hence the term ergon can refer to both miraculous and non-miraculous acts, to events narrated in the Gospel and perhaps also to events not narrated in the Gospel.

Like the terms sēmeion and ergon, the verb poieō is used to refer to a miraculous event which is narrated in the account of the ministry. For example in 6:6 it is said that "Jesus knew what he would do (ēidei ti emellen poiein)" which is a reference to the feeding of the multitudes. 7:23 ("I made a whole man's body well (holon anthropon hugiē epoiēsa)") and 9:26 ("ti epoiēsen soi") are references to the signs of the healing of the lame man and blind man respectively.

In other verses, the verb refers to a specific action that is connected to the sign but is not the central event itself. For example, the whip which Jesus made (poiēsas phragellion) was used to effect the cleansing of the Temple (2:15). Jesus made clay (epoiēsen pelon -- 9:6, 11, 14, 26) with which he anointed the eyes of the man born blind.

The use of poieō is not limited to actions within the signs-narratives, however. In 4:1 pleionas mathētas poiei refers to the making of disciples; 13:7 refers to the act of footwashing (ho egō poiō su ouk oidas artī -- 13:3-6). Both of these acts are non-miraculous in nature.

The majority of the passages, however, refer to unspecified actions of both Jesus and others, which may or may not be described in the Gospel. Two examples are 9:33 ("If he [Jesus] were not from God, he could do (poiein) nothing") and 8:38 ("I [Jesus] speak of what I have seen with the Father, and you [Jews] do(poieite) what you have heard from your father").

The verb is also used with respect to the actions of people other than Jesus. 6:15 refers to the action of making Jesus King (poiēsōsin basilea) and 12:2 to making a supper for him (epoiēsan . . . autōi deipnon).

This brief examination indicates both the similarities and differences in the Gospel's usage of the nouns sēmeion and ergon and the verb poieō. The terms all cover the same range of meanings: all are used to refer to miraculous actions of Jesus, as specified in the Gospel, to actions which are not miraculous in nature, and to actions which are not specified or narrated in the Gospel. The differences lie primarily in emphasis:

the term sēmeion is used most often to refer to Jesus' miraculous acts, whereas the other two terms are used more frequently to refer to unspecified actions of Jesus and others.

Despite these differences in emphasis, the overlap among the usages of the terms suggests that there is no intention in the Gospel to differentiate sharply among them. On the contrary, there is evidence of an effort to identify the terms. For example, in 6:30 the people challenge: ti poieis su semeion . . . ti ergazē? ("Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?"). The structure of the statement suggests a synonymous parallelism between doing a sign, poieō sēmeion, and performing a work, ergazomai ergon.<sup>14</sup> A second example is found in 7:21, which uses the word ergon to refer to an event, namely the healing of the lame man, which in 6:2 is called a sēmeion. Poieō, in turn, is the verb used most frequently in conjunction with the nouns sēmeion and ergon, appearing in fifteen of the seventeen sēmeion passages, and in sixteen of the twenty-five ergon passages. In many verses in which these two nouns do not appear, one or the other can be supplied as the implicit direct object. For example, the phrase ho (ha) epoiēsen (Iēsous) in 11:45 and 11:46 refers to the raising of Lazarus, which was narrated in 11:1-44. In 12:18 this event is called a sēmeion and therefore the word

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<sup>14</sup>6:30, in which both sēmeion and ergon occur, is attributed by the source critics to the evangelist. See Fortna, Gospel of Signs, p. 146, Teeple, Literary Origins, p. 49, and Bultmann, Gospel, p. 227.

sēmeion can be substituted for ho (ha) as the direct object of epoiēsen in 11:45-46. Similarly the phrase hosa epoiēsen in 4:45 is equivalent to ta sēmeia ha epoiēi in 2:23, referring to what Jesus had done when en tois Hierosolumois (2:23a). Finally, 3:21 indicates synonymous parallelism between poiōn tēn alētheian and ta erga . . . en theōi estin eirgasmena: "He who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God. "

The lack of differentiation among the meanings of the terms has the effect of broadening the meaning of the word "sign" in 20:30-31 to include a far greater number of events than the several episodes which are usually designated as such. In effect, every action of Jesus is potentially a sign. Theoretically, this would apply to the activity of Jesus to which much of the Gospel is dedicated, that is, his speech. Are the words of Jesus (logoi, rhēmata) to be included in the works or signs of Jesus?

A division between works and words is implied in 14:10-11:

. . . The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, there is also evidence to suggest that the separation between

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<sup>15</sup>This verse, along with 10:37f, is often interpreted as part of the Gospel's critique of signs-faith. According to Schnackenburg, Johannes-evangelium, 3:79, works are a help for those who are too weak to believe on the basis of words alone. Yet, as 14:10 indicates, words are works also. Hence, the issue is not as clearcut as these two verses suggest.

works and words is not thoroughgoing and complete. In 10:32-33 Jesus says: "I have shown you many good works (erga kala) from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?" The Jews reply: "It is not for a good work (ergon kalon) that we stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God." Jesus is punished not for a good work, but for what the Jews regard as an evil work, blasphemy. The other references to this charge (5:18, 19:17) indicate that making oneself God amounts to calling oneself Son of God (19:17) and making oneself equal with God (5:17). Therefore the evil work for which Jesus is to be punished is an act of speech. There are several passages which suggest that signs can be words as well. In 7:18, Jesus answers the Jews' request for a sign with the words "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up". While this may be interpreted as a refusal to do a sign on demand, or as a reference to the crucifixion and resurrection, there is a sense in which the words themselves, when properly understood (cf. 2:22), are a "sign" of Jesus' identity.<sup>16</sup> The same can be said of 6:30-32 in which Jesus again responds to the Jews' request for a sign with words: ". . . it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true

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<sup>16</sup>Whether or not Jesus gives the Jews the sign they request here is an unresolved problem. Some scholars suggest that Jesus' words in 2:19 indicate a refusal to give a sign, e. g. Barrett, Gospel According to St. John, p. 199. Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 301, suggests "In the words 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up', Jesus is not prophesying a significant event yet to come, but inviting his questioners to see in the actual occurrence of the cleansing of the Temple the sēmeion they desire."



bread from heaven " (6:32). The ensuing discussion indicates that the true bread from heaven is in fact Jesus. Furthermore, in 12:33 and 15:32, the verb sēmainō, cognate of sēmeion, is used of Jesus' words in which he prophesies his own death.<sup>17</sup>

The structure of the narratives of the ministry also suggests that there is no real separation between works and words. In almost all of the events which are normally called "signs", the "miracle" occurs not through wordless action of Jesus, but through his words.

At the wedding at Cana, Jesus' only action is to order the servants to fill the jars and draw the water. The result is "water made wine" (2:10). That it was Jesus who was responsible for the miracle is stated in 4:46: "so he came again to Cana in Galilee where he had made the water wine".

In 4:46-54, the healing of the officer's son is effected not through Jesus' coming to Capernaum and perhaps laying hands on the boy, as the officer might have expected (4:47). Rather, it occurs at the moment that Jesus speaks the words: "Go, your son will live " (4:50, 53). In this case, the detail that the healing took place over the large distance between Cana and Capernaum emphasizes Jesus' ability to do a sign without physical

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<sup>17</sup> Again, there is debate as to whether Jesus' words in these examples constitute signs. R. E. Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 528, suggests that they are, whereas Rengstorf, "semeion", Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 7:247, argues that they are not. The latter considers it significant that the verb sēmainō and not the noun sēmeion is used in these cases.

contact.

In 5:1ff., the lame man is also healed through Jesus' words:

"Rise, take up your pallet and walk " (5:8).

The raising of Lazarus (11:1-44) is accomplished through Jesus' call to Lazarus. In this case, the physical distance between Jesus and the one on whom the sign is done is even greater than in the previous examples discussed above, since the distance is that between life and death. Alongside the emphasis on the efficacy of Jesus' words, this episode adds another element: Jesus' prayer to the Father (11:41-2) which precedes his words to Lazarus (11:43). This prayer, as Jesus points out, is said aloud for the sake of the people, that they should know that God sent Jesus:

Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me. (11:41-2)

The implication of the prayer is that Jesus' power to do the sign lies not in himself but in God. This is brought out more clearly in the words of Martha (11:21-22):

Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.

Other signs-narratives exhibit a different relationship between the sign and the words of Jesus. Chapter nine, the narrative of the healing of the blind man, contains the element of physical contact which is missing from the narratives discussed above. The healing is effected not only through Jesus' words to the blind man, but through the clay which he makes

and with which he anoints the man's eyes. Only after the anointing is the command given: "Go to Siloam and wash." The making of clay is not an incidental but an integral aspect of the sign itself, as is indicated by the inclusion of this detail in some of the references to the sign which appear later in the chapter (9:11, 14, 15).

2:13-22 (Cleansing of the Temple) and the two episodes in chapter six present more striking deviations from the pattern discussed above. That 2:13-22 is to be considered a sign is implied by 2:23: "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs (ta sēmeia) which he did. . ." (also 3:2, 4:43). Nevertheless, it is not entirely clear to what specific actions the term refers. From the narrative itself, it would appear that the Jews do not understand the cleansing of the Temple as a sign, and they request a sign which will explain Jesus' behaviour in the Temple (2:18). Apparently Jesus' reply constitutes this "sign" or explanation; alternatively, it may be interpreted as pointing to the crucifixion and resurrection as the sign which will explain his actions.

Perhaps the clue to understanding the passage lies in the narrator's indications of how the disciples interpreted the scenes which they witnessed. These indications are 2:17 ("His disciples remembered that it was written: 'Zeal for thy house will consume me' " (Zechariah 9:9) and 2:22 ("When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken"). These verses suggest that the meaning in Jesus' behaviour

as well as in his words to the Jews does not lie in the action itself, as is the case in other passages, but in the concept of fulfilment. The cleansing of the Temple is the fulfilment of the Zechariah passage, and the crucifixion and resurrection, narrated later on in the Gospel, are the fulfilment of the "word" or sign which Jesus had said. The relationship between sign and word is therefore as follows: the sign is the fulfilment of the scriptural word as well as the word of Jesus.

Chapter six is the most complicated to analyse in terms of the relationship between signs and words. It presents two events which are seen either as two different signs or as two components of one sign. The second event, Jesus' walking on water, is not specifically called a sign, though it may be included as a referent in 6:26. It does present an action of Jesus which defies the "laws of nature". Its similarity to the parallel accounts in the Synoptic Gospels suggests that its shape in the Fourth Gospel is largely due to tradition.<sup>18</sup> Yet it is significant for the present discussion that the disciples did not accept Jesus into the boat until he had identified himself with the words "It is I" (6:20). Therefore, the disciples do not respond to Jesus' nature-defying action but rather to his verbal self-identification.

It is the first narrative (6:1-14), the Feeding of the Multitudes, that is central to the chapter, since it is the subject of, or the starting point for,

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<sup>18</sup>See Brown, Gospel According to John, pp. 116ff., for a comparison of the Johannine and Synoptic accounts of the cleansing.

the lengthy dialogue between Jesus and the people which comprises the remainder of the chapter. The narrative exhibits some of the features common to the narratives in 2:1-11, 4:46-54, and chapters 5:1-9, 9:1-7, and 11:1-44. The action has a supernatural element, similar to that in 2:1-11, which is emphasized by the gathering of the fragments that were left over from the meal (6:13). Precisely how the miracle occurred is not stated. It is implied however that it had a connection with the words of Jesus with which he had "given thanks" (eukharistēsas diedōken), presumably to God, for providing the food (6:11). It is only following this action that the food is distributed and is seen to be abundant. The reference to the miracle as eating the bread "after the Lord had given thanks" (eukharistēsantos - 6:23) also points to these words of Jesus as having a close connection with the performance of the miracle. This detail is reminiscent of the more explicit appeal to God in 11:41-2, and therefore might have been included here to emphasize a similar point: that it is God, and not Jesus, who ultimately is responsible for the abundance of food.

There is one important detail, however, which is inconsistent with the pattern seen in other signs-narratives, which is that the central event itself, the distribution of food, is done by Jesus himself. This stress on Jesus' action is significant especially in the light of the synoptic versions of the narratives, according to which the disciples do the actual distribution of food (Mt. 14:13-20; Mk. 6:32-44; 8:1-10; Lk. 9:11-17).

The key to the understanding of the sign is its relationship to the

words in the subsequent discourse. The discourse explicitly gives the event a symbolic interpretation. The main point of this interpretation is in the words with which Jesus answers the people's request for a sign in 6:30. In their request, the people mention the manna in the wilderness (Ex. 16:4, 15) which for them has some association with the distribution of bread which they had witnessed the previous day (cf. 6:22). Jesus' response draws a comparison between the Exodus event and the event which they had just witnessed: ". . . it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread" (6:32). The first clause implies that the manna was not the true, eternal bread, for two reasons: The fathers who ate of the manna died (cf. 6:49), and also the manna was not eternal, but had to be gathered and eaten each day (6:35). It did not satiate its consumers nor did it remain more than one day except on the Sabbath. The clause implies some connection between true bread from heaven and the bread which the people ate after Jesus had given thanks. The bread which they had eaten was in some way to be identified with true bread from heaven given by the Father. The reference to the Father in 6:32 corroborates the hints in the narrative itself concerning the role of the Father in the miracle. In 6:35, the symbolic meaning of the miracle is revealed in the identification of Jesus with the true bread. This implies the following set of equations: The Father who gives true bread is the God who sends Jesus to the people. Therefore Jesus' distribution of the bread in the narrative is equal to Jesus' distribution of himself to the people - though he is one person, he is enough

to satisfy everyone present and still leave many "leftovers" which can be enjoyed by others who are not present.

In what way is Jesus the bread, and in what way do the people partake? This question is often answered eucharistically, an interpretation which is suggested especially by 6:56: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him".<sup>19</sup> While there may be eucharistic undertones in this section, the terms "blood" and "flesh" which give eternal life (6:54) are, like the "bread" which gives eternal life (6:35), metaphors for the real life-giving agent; the words of Jesus, as 6:63 states, "It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life".

6:63 quoted above presents the concluding, and conclusive, set of terms in which Jesus' argument is phrased. These terms are repeated in the confession of Peter which ends the chapter:

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God. (6:68-69)

The end of the chapter therefore gives the concrete terms by which the narrative which opens the chapter should be interpreted.

In conclusion, the sign in chapter six is integrally connected to words. The sign is Jesus' giving of himself. It is equated with the Father's giving

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<sup>19</sup>Chapter six as a whole may be interpreted eucharistically. See R. E. Brown, Gospel According to John, pp. 289-91; O. Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), pp. 93-100.

of Jesus, and Jesus' giving of his words. The "consumption" of Jesus' words results in eternal life. This interpretation of the sign is substantiated by other passages in the Fourth Gospel. 17:8 expresses the same action in terms of "words" which 6:1-14 portrays in terms of "bread":

"I have given them the words which thou gavest me and they have received them and know in truth that I came from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me ".

The discussion of the narratives points to a complicated relationship between words and works or signs in the Fourth Gospel. The opposition of works and signs implied by 14:10-11 is only one aspect of this relationship. In fact, the two concepts, works and words, are so intertwined that the simple differentiation between them or between narrative and discourse sections of the Gospel, is often not possible. The narratives illustrate that signs are often accomplished through the agency of words, that signs may be the response to or illustration of words, that "signs" may actually be the words explaining a certain action, that actions and words function together to make a sign; and, as in chapter six, that a sign itself may consist of the distribution of words.<sup>20</sup>

The important role of words in the signs narratives can be explained as an attempt to de-emphasize the miraculous element in the narratives and to discourage the description of Jesus as a mere miracle-worker. But the

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<sup>20</sup>For an illuminating structuralist interpretation of this discourse, see Gary Phillips, "This is a Hard Saying".



emphasis on words has another important, related function: to stretch or redefine the term "sign" or "work" to include not only the actions but also the words of Jesus. Since almost all of the Gospel may be described as either the words or actions of Jesus, it follows that the term "sign" in 20:30-31 has a meaning far broader than the several signs narratives in the account of Jesus' ministry.

A full understanding of signs and of their role in the Gospel requires the examination of another question: the significance that is attached to the signs. It is clear from 20:30-31 that the events, actions and words recorded in the Gospel are intended to reveal something about Jesus as the Christ. That is, they have a significance beyond the actual content of the sign itself. For example, the healing of the lame man and the subsequent discourse are recorded in the Gospel in order to inform the reader concerning the events in the life of Jesus but also in order to convey a message concerning the nature of Jesus. An understanding of the significance of the signs requires a response on the part of one who witnesses the signs, a response which 20:30-31 calls believing (pisteuontes).

The sets of passages containing the words sēmeion and ergon convey information about both the significance of the sign and the response to it. The significance that the observers in the Gospel attach to the signs is stated explicitly in several passages. On the basis of the signs Nicodemus knows that Jesus is a teacher come from God (3:2). For the people who witness the healing of the man born blind, Jesus' action casts doubt on

the Pharisees' contention that Jesus is not from God (9:16a): "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" (9:16b). The man born blind explains the assumption lying behind this statement: "God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will, God listens to him" (9:31). Because God is the one who is ultimately responsible for doing the sign, the fact that Jesus does signs reveals his close and positive relationship to God. This interpretation of the significance of signs is supported by the miracles-narratives discussed above, especially the details of Jesus' prayer to God (11:41-2). It is also evident from the description of signs as manifestations of Jesus' glory (2:11, 11:4). Jesus' glory, like his power to do works, stems not from himself but from God. "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father who glorifies me" (8:54; cf. also 5:41-44). Therefore, according to the Fourth Gospel, the function of signs is to reveal Jesus' direct and special relationship with God.

Several passages indicate a second, related property of signs. Signs are valid proof of particular claims. This property is implied by 20:30-31 and is illustrated by the remark concerning John the Baptist in 10:42: "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true". John's words were true despite the fact that he did no sign to support or substantiate them. The evidential role of signs is also indicated by the Jews' request for a sign to support, explain or justify Jesus' behaviour (2:18; 6:30).

These two aspects of the significance of signs are related in two

ways. First, because signs are seen as demonstrating or revealing Jesus' relationship with God, the doing of a sign in effect calls in God as support or witness to the truth of the claim of Jesus' filial relationship with God. Second, the central claim made by and about Jesus in the Gospel is his relationship with God.

Because the signs are seen as proof of Jesus' relationship with God, the Gospel assumes that the appropriate response to the signs on the part of the witness of the sign is movement towards Jesus, and faith. This assumption is indicated in a positive way by the recording of a positive response after each of the narratives which recount miraculous signs, as well as in passages outside these narratives (e. g. , 13:18ff. ). In some passages, the response is expressed as believing, as in 2:23, 2:11 and 4:54. Less often it is expressed in terms of physical movement towards Jesus, such as following or seeking him. For example, 4:30 states: "The Samaritans went out of the city and were coming to him. "

The assumption that faith is the correct response to the signs is expressed in a negative way in 12:37: "Though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him ". In other words, the people should have believed in him on the basis of the signs which they had seen him do.

In conclusion, the signs can be described as revelatory of Jesus' true identity and the appropriate response to them as faith in, or approach to, Jesus.

In the passages containing the words ergon and ergazomai, the significance of Jesus' actions is expressed using the vocabulary of witnessing; whereas signs are a manifestation of glory, works are considered witnesses to Jesus' heavenly origins. This is expressed in 5:36: "These very works which I am doing bear me witness that the Father has sent me." The works are also seen as proof of the claim of mutual indwelling of Father and son:

If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father. (10:37-38; cf. 14:10-11).

Like the verses containing the word sēmeion, the ergon passages also assume the necessity of a personal response to works on the part of the observer. The word most often used to express this response is pisteuō, though the term "marvel" (thaumazēte) is also used (5:20; 7:21). Due to its context in the discourses, the verb pisteuete often appears in the imperative mood (e. g. , 10:37), or in the subjunctive (pisteuēte), indicating that belief is the demanded, or ideal response. This demand is expressed in 6:29: "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he sent".

The ergon and poieō passages record also a negative response to the works. Whereas the negative response is lack of belief in sēmeion verses (12:37), the former two groups point to a more violent expression, as in 10:32: "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For

which of these do you stone (lithazete) me?" Unlike the verb pisteuēte in 6:29, the verb lithazete is in the indicative mood. The use of moods to express response to Jesus' works and actions implies that whereas the ideal response to Jesus is belief, the actual response of many of the witnesses to Jesus was the desire to kill him. This response is attributed to the Jews and especially to the chief priests and Pharisees (cf. 11:45-53).

This negative response is engendered by an incorrect interpretation and understanding of Jesus and his works. For the Jews, Jesus' words and works indicate that he is a sinner or evil-doer (18:30). His works on the Sabbath are contrary to the law (9:16a, 5:15), and his words, by which he "makes himself God" (5:19), constitute blasphemy and sufficient cause for the death sentence: "We have a law and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God" (19:7). The possibility of both a positive and negative response to Jesus is illustrated in the narrative of the Raising of Lazarus (11:1-44):

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him; but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. (11:45-46)

The subsequent decision of the council to try to put Jesus to death (11:53) came from their interpretation of Jesus' works. They did not perceive them as a message concerning Jesus' eschatological identity, but rather as an indication of his power over the people and as a threat to the existence of the nation: "If we let him go on thus, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation" (11:4a).

The two possible responses, belief or rejection, are termed good and bad works respectively. The term "works" when it is applied to the "world" is not primarily an ethical or moral term, but one which indicates the doer's relationship with or orientation towards God (3:21). Since Jesus, the Son of God, has come into the world in order to make God known (1:18), one's orientation to God is seen through one's response and subsequent relationship to Jesus. It is for this reason that Jesus defines the work of God as belief in Jesus (6:29). Good works entail also following the example of Jesus (3:15), and doing what he commands (15:14, 15; 13:7). Evil works, on the other hand, include seeking to kill Jesus (8:34-41), and persecuting his believers (16:2, 3; 15:21).

This interpretation of the meaning of good and evil works is confirmed in the three major passages which deal with the issue: 3:19-21; 5:28-29; and 8:34-47. In 3:19-21, the test of whether one's deeds are good or evil is whether or not one comes to the light, the "light" being Jesus (1:5, 9; 12:35, 36, 46). 5:28-29 connects good and evil works with their eventual reward or consequences:

. . . all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgement.

In the light of the assertion that belief in Jesus is the only way to gain eternal life, and that hatred of Jesus is equivalent to sin and guilt, 5:28-29 also suggests that final judgment is made on the basis of one's orientation towards Jesus.

The comparison between Jesus and the Jews in 8:34-47 stresses the same point. The Jews claim God and also Abraham as their father (8:39, 41b). Jesus declares that their actions towards him disprove this claim and point instead to the devil as their father (8:44):

If you were Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me . . . If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded and came forth from God . . . You are of your father the devil and your will is to do your father's desires. (8:39b; 40; 42; 44)

This use of terminology contributes to the argument addressed to the reader, that belief in Jesus is a necessary response to knowing about Jesus. It also permits an explanation of problematic questions concerning the life of Jesus, especially the question of why the Jews did not accept Jesus and even sought to kill him despite the many good works which they saw him do. The answer is that the response of the chief priests and Pharisees was based on a blindness or lack of comprehension with respect to the true significance of the signs and works (cf. 9:13ff.). Support for this answer comes in the Nicodemus episode, which proves that even a "man of the Pharisees and ruler of the Jews" (3:1) could become a follower of Jesus if he understood him and his works in the correct way. Nicodemus comes to Jesus after seeing the signs which to him indicate that Jesus is a teacher come from God (3:2). This marks the beginning of Nicodemus' way to Jesus. His deepening faith and commitment are illustrated in his defense of Jesus' right to a fair trial (7:50-51) and his role in Jesus'

burial (11:39).<sup>21</sup>

The study of the terms relevant to the understanding of the concept of sign in the Fourth Gospel has pointed out several important differences between the usage of sēmeion and that of ergon and poieō. These differences include the speaker and agent most often associated with the respective terms, sēmeion appearing in the language of the narrator and the Jews and referring almost exclusively to the actions of Jesus, and ergon and poieō appearing primarily in the words of Jesus in reference to his own deeds. The terms also express a difference in emphasis. The term "sign" serves to emphasize the uniqueness of Jesus when compared to other people, for example, in the words of the steward at the wedding in Cana:

"Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee. . . .(2:10)

The uniqueness of Jesus is also stressed in one passage where the term ergon appears: "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did (ei ta erga mē epoiesā . . .) they would not have sin . . ." (15:24).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>De Jonge, "Nicodemus and Jesus", however, argues that in fact Nicodemus does not count as one of the true believers for whom Jesus prays in 17:6-9.

<sup>22</sup>The differences in the usages of sēmeion and ergon might suggest that the terms can be used to distinguish literary strata in the



In many other passages, however, the reason for the use of the term ergon appears to be in order to permit one of a number of comparisons: (a) between the works of Jesus and the works of believers: the works of believers should be like the works of Jesus (14:12); (b) between the works of Jesus and the works of God: the works of Jesus are equated with the works of God (14:10); similarly the works of believers are also called the works of God (6:29); (c) between good works, those done by Jesus (10:32) and his believers (14:12), and evil works, such as those done by the world (7:7) and Jews (8:39ff.), the doers of which will get their respective rewards (6:29). Therefore the presence of the term "sign" or "work" in a particular passage may depend at least in part on the context and the point which is being stressed in each case.

Despite the differences in usage, however, the Gospel in its present form does not seem to differentiate between signs and works but rather to identify them, that is, to broaden the definition of signs to include the works and also the words of Jesus. This identification can be detected in the passages where the two terms sēmeion and ergon are equivalent and also in the important role of words in the signs-narratives.

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Gospel. According to Fortna, "Source and Redaction", p. 152, this is not possible. Fortna argues that although the term sēmeion was found in the signs-source, most of the occurrences of the word in the Gospel are Johannine.

Furthermore, Jesus' signs, works, and words are all intended to reveal his identity as the Christ and the Son of God and thereby to evoke the faith-response in the reader.

Therefore, it may be concluded, with J. L. Martyn,<sup>23</sup> that the term sēmeia in 20:30-31 should be understood by the reader to refer to the acts of Jesus which reveal his "glory", that is, his true identity as the Son of God and the Christ. These acts include not only the seven or eight so-called signs-narratives but in fact all of the words and acts of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel, since from the point of view of the Gospel they all testify to the same truth.

If the Gospel intended in 20:30-31 to refer to all of Jesus' activity as narrated in the Gospel, why did it not merely substitute the more general term erga for the term sēmeia? It is suggested that the evangelist perceived his readers as attaching a very special significance to the term "sign", whether or not this term had actually been enshrined in a pre-Johannine signs-source or Signs-Gospel. Perhaps the readers looked to "signs" as the authentication par excellence of Jesus' identity. By broadening or stretching the meaning of sēmeion to include virtually all of the Gospel, the evangelist can say to his readers that not only Jesus' miraculous acts but all of his acts and words are to be considered as "signs", as pointing to his true identity. The net effect is to reduce

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<sup>23</sup>See note 5.

the emphasis on the miraculous while still maintaining the positive meaning given to the term by his readers.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>This could be true whether or not the readers to which the Gospel was addressed had produced, or knew of, a pre-Johannine, written signs-document.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE JOHANNINE VIEW OF SIGNS-FAITH

The study of the usage of the terms sēmeion and ergon demonstrated that according to the Fourth Gospel, the recorded acts and words of Jesus, all of which can be understood as signs of Jesus' identity, were intended to evoke a response of faith on the part of the reader. As 20:30-31 makes clear, the Gospel assumes not only a positive connection between signs and faith, but also a positive evaluation of that connection: it is good to come to faith on the basis of signs. This positive evaluation is evident in other passages. In 2:11, for example, the reader is told that after Jesus did the first of his signs, turning water into wine at Cana, his disciples believed in him. Similarly, after the healing of the nobleman's son, the nobleman and his entire household believed (4:53). The Gospel implies in both cases that such belief is good and proper. Even the narrator's disappointment that "though Jesus had done so many signs before them, still the Jews did not believe" (12:32), reflects the assumption that signs are an appropriate basis for faith.

As many commentators have pointed out, the connection between signs and faith made in these passages and others like them apparently is challenged or contradicted in other passages. As 12:32 indicates, for example, signs did not always evoke a response of faith. Many of the "Jews" who were witness to Jesus' acts and words still did not under-

stand their christological message, and therefore remained blind (9:41) and in their sin (15:24).<sup>1</sup> There are also indications in the Gospel that the signs of Jesus at times evoked an inadequate faith response. This appears to be the meaning of 2:23-24, which informs the reader that although "many believed in his name when they saw the signs which he did" in Jerusalem, "Jesus did not trust himself to them" (ouk episteuen auton autois).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fortna, "Source and Redaction", pp.159-60, discusses this in terms of the connection between seeing and not believing; cf. Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 530.

<sup>2</sup>This is usually interpreted as a comment on the inadequacy of a faith based on "mere" signs, or on the inadequate understanding of signs as indicators of Jesus' miraculous powers. Cf. e. g. Barrett, Gospel According to St. John, p.202. Hodges, "Untrustworthy Believers", questions this conclusion. He argues that the expression episteusan eis onoma autou (2:23) is indicative of a full faith, and that the contrast between full belief and inadequate belief usually seen in this passage is actually foreign to Johannine thought. Hodges explains Jesus' refusal to entrust himself to these believers as due to the fact that they were not ready for intimate fellowship with him. What Jesus knew about them was their reluctance to come to full and open confession. In this they were similar to other Jews, who believed in Jesus and yet were afraid to confess openly (12:42). Hence 2:23-25 is the introduction to a minor motif concerning faith, namely the importance of confession. Therefore, Hodges argues, there was nothing wrong with the faith of these people; they merely lacked the strength of their convictions to confess Jesus openly. While Hodges' interpretation of 2:23-25 is possible, it has a major flaw. There is no explicit connection made between 2:23-25 and the theme of fear of the authorities. Instead, 2:23-25 appears to have more in common with 6:15, in which Jesus escapes from, i. e. does not entrust himself to, the people who acknowledged him as prophet and wished to make him king after witnessing the sign of the feeding of the multitudes. This is not to suggest similar political connotations for 2:23-25, but rather that the connection between 2:23-25 and 12:42 is not the only one which may be drawn. In any case, the passage is still best read as a criticism of the people and also of the quality of their faith, though the reasons for this criticism, that is, what Jesus knew about them, are obscure.

The fact that it is possible to misunderstand Jesus' acts and words by failing to see them as signs of his identity as the Christ and Son of God does not contradict the idea that faith which stems from a correct understanding of the signs is seen in a positive light in the Gospel.<sup>3</sup> A more serious challenge to this idea is presented however by two passages, 4:48 and 20:29. In 4:48, Jesus addresses the nobleman, who has asked him to heal his son, with the following words: "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe?"<sup>4</sup> In 20:29, Jesus responds to Thomas' confession of him as Lord and God (20:28) by saying, "Have you believed because you have seen? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

These verses are usually interpreted as criticisms of the need to base faith on signs.<sup>5</sup> Scholars who hold this view claim that these verses

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<sup>3</sup>The importance of proper perception of signs is a theme throughout the Gospel. Indeed, Jesus' words and acts cannot function as signs, i. e. as signs of Jesus' identity, unless they are correctly perceived. This is stressed in the passages in which verbs of seeing - blepō, oraō, and others, which can denote both visual sight and spiritual perception - are combined with the term sēmeion and pisteuein, e. g. 6:2, 14; and 1:50, 6:10. See the discussions in Kysar, Maverick Gospel, pp. 65-83, Dodd, Interpretation, pp. 185f., and Hofbeck, Semeion, pp. 178ff.

<sup>4</sup>This has also been interpreted as a statement. This does not, however, change the sense of the verse, since the question is rhetorical. See Barrett, Gospel According to St. John, p. 247.

<sup>5</sup>This seems to be the majority opinion, as recourse to the many commentaries on the Fourth Gospel will bear out, e. g. Schnackenburg, Gospel According to St. John, 1:466. Schnackenburg adds that Jesus' denunciation is addressed not only to the nobleman but to all Galileans

express the Gospel's "real" attitude towards signs-faith: faith on the basis of signs is possible, but faith not based on signs is better.<sup>6</sup>

If this view represents the Gospel's "real" attitude, then the applicability of 20:30-31 as the statement of purpose of the Gospel as a whole must be called into question. If, on the other hand, one accepts 20:30-31 as the statement of purpose, it is necessary to question the usual scholarly interpretation of 4:48 and 20:29.

One of the most interesting and cogent expositions of the view that the Gospel intends a critique of signs-faith is presented by R. T. Fortna.<sup>7</sup> Fortna accounts for the presence of both a positive and a negative evaluation of signs-faith in the Gospel on the basis of source criticism.<sup>8</sup> Fortna argues that the positive evaluation of signs-faith is not Johannine but was built into the signs-source which the Fourth Gospel

<sup>6</sup>Fortna, "Source and Redaction", p. 163.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 151-166.

<sup>8</sup>Indeed, the aporias, or contradictions, have served as an important criterion for the separation of sources from the Gospel. Cf. Fortna, The Gospel of Signs, pp. 2ff.

since the verbs idēte and pisteusēte are plural. According to Lightfoot, St. John's Gospel, p. 128, "The Lord's words in 4:48 clearly express this distress at the general unreadiness to believe, in the absence of external or exceptional or marvellous evidence." Indeed, Fortna, "Wilcken's Further Contribution", p. 457, criticizes Wilckens for denying that 4:48 and 20:29 suggest that signs are a concession to human weakness.

incorporated.<sup>9</sup> Hence 2:11, or most of it, is to be considered pre-Johannine, as is most of 4:53.<sup>10</sup> Although the fourth evangelist does not contradict his source by denying the possibility of a real faith based on signs, he indicates through his redaction of the source that signs-faith is inferior to a faith not based on signs.<sup>11</sup> Thus for Fortna, 4:48 is to be considered a Johannine insertion into the story of the healing of the nobleman's son which appeared in the source.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, the Doubting Thomas story as a whole is to be seen as an insertion into the narrative framework of the Signs-Gospel.<sup>13</sup> According to Fortna, therefore, the Fourth Gospel reconciles the simple acceptance of signs-faith, evident in the Signs-Gospel, with a critique of signs-faith by viewing faith as a process, in which signs-faith represents only a step along the

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<sup>9</sup>Fortna, "Source and Redaction", pp. 155f.

<sup>10</sup>Not all such verses are considered pre-Johannine by the source critics. According to Fortna, 2:11 and 12:37, both of which express a positive evaluation of signs-faith, are Johannine. See his Gospel of Signs, and "Source and Redaction", p. 152, note 4.

<sup>11</sup>Fortna, "Source and Redaction", p. 162.

<sup>12</sup>Fortna, Gospel of Signs, p. 41. This view is held by other source critics, such as Bultmann, Gospel of John, p. 206, and Teeple, Literary Origin, p. 41. The latter suggests that 4:48 was added by a later redactor. Boismard, "Saint Luc et la Redaction", p. 192, suggests that it was Luke who inserted 4:48, since the verse is at odds with the overall signs-theme in the Fourth Gospel, but is akin to the view in the Gospel according to Luke.

<sup>13</sup>Fortna, The Gospel of Signs, p. 143.



way to a deep and true faith not based on signs.<sup>14</sup>

What is this true and deep faith to be based on if not signs?

This question, while not answered by Fortna, is taken up by Sebald Hofbeck in his study of the background and meaning of sēmeion in the Fourth Gospel. Hofbeck agrees with Fortna in positing several types or degrees of faith (Glaubensstufen), although he does not relate his theory to the composition history of the Gospel as does Fortna.<sup>15</sup>

Hofbeck would see three types or degrees of faith represented in the Fourth Gospel. On the lowest level is what he calls Wunderglauben, or "signs-and-wonders-faith". In this case, the believer values Jesus' acts only for their marvellous quality. Such belief is actually a misunderstanding or misperception of Jesus' acts. According to Hofbeck, 4:48 represents the evangelist's criticism of this type of "faith".<sup>16</sup>

The second stage is faith on the basis of works, the term "works" or erga referring, according to Hofbeck, to the sēmeia properly, that is, christologically, perceived.<sup>17</sup> 2:11, 12:11 and 12:37 reflect this second stage. This "works-faith", however, does not constitute an end in itself but is intended to lead to the third stage, that is, faith

<sup>14</sup>Fortna, "Source and Redaction", pp. 163f.

<sup>15</sup>Hofbeck, Sēmeion, p. 180.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

based only on the words of Jesus.<sup>18</sup> Therefore the purpose of 20:29 is to indicate to the reader that whereas belief on the basis of a work (Jesus' resurrection appearance) is possible, belief on the basis of Jesus' words, as recorded in the Gospel, is preferable. Other verses which indicate the superiority of this third stage, according to Hofbeck, are 14:11 and 10:37f. In 10:37f. Jesus tells the Jews:

If I am not doing the works of my Father then do not believe me, but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

In 14:11, Jesus makes a similar statement to the disciples:

Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.

In both of these verses, according to Hofbeck, Jesus is suggesting that signs are a concession to the weakness of those who cannot believe on the basis of words alone.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, in Hofbeck's view, words and not signs are the basis of the highest degree of faith.

Hofbeck and Fortna agree on several points. First, according to the Gospel, faith can be based on signs if the latter are properly understood not as miracles or supernatural events but as the manifestation of Jesus' glory and witness to Jesus' identity as Christ and Son of

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

God. Second, faith based on signs is de-emphasized in the Gospel in favour of faith not based on signs. Third, this critique is present especially in 4:48 and 20:29. In these verses, the Johannine Jesus addresses the reader through the nobleman and Thomas. The reader is thereby encouraged to base his faith on something other than signs, if he can.

Popular as this view of the Johannine treatment of signs-faith is, it is not the only possible, or even the most plausible, interpretation of the evidence. First, if the analysis of the usage of the meaning of sēmeia in 20:30-31 in chapter one is correct, then Hofbeck's careful distinction between "signs", signs understood as "works", and "words", breaks down. Since it would appear that all of Jesus' acts and words are to be understood by the reader of 20:30-31 as signs of Jesus' identity as the Christ and Son of God, then even Hofbeck's second and third stages of faith - faith based on works and faith based on words - are in fact, faith based on signs, though not on the seven or eight miraculous acts usually called signs. Second, both 4:48 and 20:29 may be interpreted in a way that does not at all contradict the positive evaluation of signs-faith which is evident in other passages of the Gospel.

This second point is especially clear with respect to 20:29. 20:29 is the final verse and climax of the narrative detailing Jesus' resurrection appearance to the disciples in 20:19f. The setting is a room, presumably in Jerusalem. Jesus appears to the disciples in this

room on the Sunday evening after the crucifixion (20:19). He shows them his wounds, as proof that he is indeed the Risen Lord, and gives them the Holy Spirit as well as the power to forgive sins (20:20, 22-23). At this point the reader is informed that Thomas the Twin was not present on this occasion (20:24). On being told of the risen Jesus, Thomas refuses to believe unless he is given tangible proof that the crucified man has indeed risen (20:25). Eight days later Jesus reappears to the disciples, Thomas among them, in the same location (20:26). Jesus offers Thomas the evidence he sought, inviting him to see the nail marks on his hands and touch the wound in his side (20:27). That Thomas saw Jesus is clear; whether he also touched him we are not told. In any case, Thomas is apparently satisfied that this is indeed the Resurrected Christ. He expresses full faith in Jesus, confessing him as Lord and God (20:28). The climax and the verse which provides the key to the interpretation of the story, is Jesus' response: "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." (20:29).

Exegesis of this verse attempts to answer two questions. The first is concerned with whether or not the Fourth Gospel, through the mouth of Jesus, intends to rebuke Thomas. Some scholars argue that Jesus' remark is not intended as a rebuke of Thomas. According to C.K. Barrett,

The words do not convey a reproach to Thomas; the beloved disciple and Mary Magdalene also believed when they saw; indeed, but for the fact that Thomas

and the other disciples saw the incarnate Christ there would have been no Christian faith at all.<sup>20</sup>

Helmut Wenz agrees with Barrett on this point, adding that Easter itself loses its meaning for the Christian kerygma if Jesus' remark to Thomas is read as a criticism.<sup>21</sup>

These remarks reflect the assumption that the Gospel would not undermine such an important feature of early Christian tradition as the Easter narrative. Yet from the structure of the verse alone, it is apparent that the Johannine Jesus is contrasting Thomas, who needed to see in order to believe, with others, who do not need to see in order to believe. The fact that the latter group is called "Blessed" certainly does imply a reproach, albeit a gentle one, of Thomas, and indeed, this is how most scholars would read 20:29.

2 The second question must be, therefore, on what basis, or for what reason does Jesus rebuke Thomas? According to Fortna, R. E. Brown and others, Thomas is rebuked primarily for being taken up with establishing the marvellous or miraculous aspect of Jesus' appearance, that is, for needing a sign as a basis for his belief.<sup>22</sup> This interpretation of 20:29 makes three main assumptions:

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<sup>20</sup>Barrett, Gospel According to St. John, p. 573.

<sup>21</sup>H. Wenz, "Sehen und Glauben bei Johannes", pp. 24f.

<sup>22</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 1046; Fortna, "Source and Redaction", p. 162.

1. That the resurrection appearances are in fact signs;
2. That in Jesus' words to Thomas, the Gospel is addressing the reader;
3. That a critique of Thomas' need to see a sign is equivalent to a critique of a faith based on signs.

In order to evaluate this interpretation of 20:29, each of these assumptions must be examined to determine if it is valid, and whether it supports the theory.

1. Are the resurrection appearances signs? If the broad interpretation of the term "sēmeion" is accepted then the resurrection appearances, like all acts in the Gospel, must be considered as signs, although the term sēmeion is not used explicitly in describing these events. Even if this broad interpretation is not accepted, however, there are indications in the Gospel that these events may also be considered signs in the narrower sense of the word. First, they share the important characteristics of the events which are explicitly called signs, such as the wedding at Cana and the healing of the nobleman's son. These characteristics include the miraculous nature of the event, the presence of disciples as witnesses to the event, the effect of the event on the faith of one or more of the witnesses, and the christological significance of the event. Second, the narrative structure of the text itself suggests that the resurrection appearances are to be considered as signs. 20:30, which follows Jesus' remark to Thomas, speaks of "other signs" which Jesus did in the presence of his disciples. Because 20:30-31

functions as the conclusion to the Gospel as a whole, the term "other signs" likely means "in addition to the signs recorded in the book". Yet in its context in ch. 20, the term also signifies "in addition to the signs which have just been narrated", that is, the resurrection appearances.<sup>23</sup>

While the narrative seems to support the theory that the Fourth Gospel intends a critique of signs-faith, the context of the narrative suggests that exactly the opposite is true. If 20:29 suggests that the superior kind of faith is not based on signs, 20:30-31 seems to contradict this view emphatically. It states:

These signs are written that you [the reader] may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you may have life in his name.

In other words, the Gospel intends that its readers should base their belief in Jesus as Christ and Son of God on the signs that it has recorded. Since this signs-faith will lead the reader to "life in his name", or salvation, it can hardly be called an inferior type of faith.

The argument just stated presupposes that the Gospel writer or redactor would not have permitted such a blatant contradiction in two consecutive verses. Those like Fortna who would see a critique of signs-faith in the Gospel can answer this objection by arguing that 20:30-31 was originally the conclusion to the signs-source which accepted signs-faith, whereas 20:29 is to be attributed to the evangelist who wanted to de-emphasize

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<sup>23</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 1058. See Chapter one, pp. 21f.

signs-faith. This argument is possible, but like most of Johannine source theory, it is ultimately unprovable. Even if 20:30-31 was originally the conclusion to a source document, the fact remains that the redactor took it over as the conclusion and statement of purpose of the Fourth Gospel. Having done so, it is unlikely that he would have criticized Thomas for basing his faith on a sign while in the very next verse encouraging his readers to do the same.<sup>24</sup>

2. The second assumption of the theory that the Fourth Gospel intends a critique of signs-faith is that Thomas is to be considered a role model for the reader; that is, in addressing Thomas through the mouth of Jesus, the Gospel is speaking of and to its reader. If Jesus' remark is a rebuke,

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<sup>24</sup>Fortna, Gospel of Signs, pp. 197f., recognizes the tension between his interpretation of 20:29 and the meaning of 20:30-31. He writes: "there is a certain sachliche tension between the two passages, for example, that between the high christology of Thomas' confession (28) and the more primitive messianism in 31. And the reader is, practically speaking, one who has seen (viz. the signs as represented in the Gospel), and on the basis of that seeing he can be expected to believe. . . he is thus closer to Thomas than to the makarioi of vs. 29, though this can hardly have been John's intent. . . ." Fortna recognizes that the passage intends the reader to identify with the makarioi and not with Thomas. The fact that his interpretation leads him to make the opposite conclusion is not due to the clumsiness of the narrative but to Fortna's own tendency to view the signs and sight as inextricably united. That is, according to Fortna, the makarioi are blessed because they do not need to base their faith on signs, whereas the reader in 20:31 is encouraged to do so. If one interprets 20:29 as blessing those who base their faith on hearing about signs rather than on seeing them at first hand, then the tension between vs. 29 and 30-31 disappears, since this is in effect what the Gospel is encouraging its readers to do.



then Thomas can be considered a negative role model, one whose example is not to be followed by the reader. Although the precise identity of the intended reader is difficult to determine, it is clear that he lived a generation or more after Jesus and was therefore unlikely to have seen signs at first hand.<sup>25</sup> It is in part for this reason, according to Fortna, that the Fourth Gospel de-emphasizes signs-faith. In the words of Fortna:

the situation of the second, or later, generation Christian (as John perceives it) is that he cannot see, but is dependent on the witness of others, and this circumstance can become a barrier to faith. It is just that consequence that John wants to rule out. Belief on the basis of concrete evidence is satisfactory, but belief without seeing is commendable.<sup>26</sup>

But this assumption, like the first, does not in fact support the theory of a critique of signs-faith. If the second or later generation reader is not to base his faith on signs, what is he to base it on? No answer is provided by the Fourth Gospel.<sup>27</sup> Rather the Fourth Gospel itself would suggest that although the reader does not have the opportunity to see Jesus' signs for himself, he does have access to them in the form of the accurate reports of the eyewitnesses, the disciples, which are recorded in the Gospel itself. The reader is encouraged to have faith on the basis of reading or hearing about the signs.

<sup>25</sup>See Introduction, pp.16f.

<sup>26</sup>"Source and Redaction", p. 162.

<sup>27</sup>Some commentators, such as Hofbeck, have found answers to this in the Gospel. See above, pp. 59f.

3. The third assumption upon which the usual interpretation of 20:29 is based is that any criticism of Thomas' need to see is a criticism of his need to base his faith upon a sign. Unlike the previous two assumptions, this one is not supported by either the content or the structure of the narrative. A faith based on signs does not necessarily require the believer to see the sign himself. The readers in 20:30-31 are encouraged to believe on the basis of reading about signs. Many people believed in Jesus after hearing about Lazarus (12:18f). The nobleman whose son was healed came to full faith merely after hearing of the cure from his servants before he reached Capernaum and could see his son for himself (4:46-53).

This discussion of the three assumptions indicates not only the shortcomings of the usual interpretation of 20:29, but also suggests an alternative. Thomas is criticized not for needing a sign, that is, concrete evidence or a specific event on which to base his faith, but for wanting to see this evidence with his own eyes. He could have avoided Jesus' rebuke by believing the report of the disciples after the first resurrection appearance. This has been recognized by some, such as R. E. Brown and Lagrange.<sup>28</sup> What has not been stressed, however, is that faith on the basis of the disciples' report is still a faith based on

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<sup>28</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 1046 and Lagrange, Évangile, p. 520.

! signs, not on seeing signs, but on hearing about signs.

This interpretation makes better sense of the narrative structure of the Gospel than that put forth by Fortna. The Doubting Thomas story, with its climax in 20:29, indicates to the reader that, unlike Thomas, he should be able to base his faith on the eyewitness reports of the disciples. In this way he will be one of those called "blessed". 20:30-31 makes clear that the Gospel contains the reports of the signs seen by the disciples precisely in order to encourage the faith of the reader and thereby lead him to salvation.

Contrary to Fortna's theory, therefore, the Doubting Thomas story does not seem to be a critique of signs-faith at all. The story of the nobleman's son can be interpreted along similar lines. The nobleman comes to Jesus at Cana and asks him to come down to Capernaum to heal his son. At this point Jesus remarks "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe" (4:48). On the basis of this verse it is usually suggested that Jesus is rebuking the nobleman for seeking to base his faith on a marvellous act, thereby misinterpreting the real nature of Jesus' identity.<sup>29</sup> The presence of the verb idēte, however, suggests that perhaps the nobleman, like Thomas, is being criticized not for his need to base his faith on a sign, but on his need or desire to be a personal

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<sup>29</sup>For a discussion of the meaning and background of the term sēmeia kai terata, see S. V. McCasland, "Signs and Wonders", and Birger Gerhardsson, Mighty Acts of Jesus, pp. 11-19.

witness to the sign.<sup>30</sup> Jesus acquiesced in the man's repetition of his wish (4:49) by saying "Go; your son will live" (4:50). As the continuation of the story makes clear, this meant that the son would be healed, but not in the father's presence. The nobleman believed Jesus' words and went home. On his way he met his servants who informed him of the recovery of his son, which occurred at exactly the moment that Jesus' words "Go, your son will live" were spoken (4:53). At this point, the reader is told, the nobleman and his household believed, that is, came to full faith in Jesus. In other words, the nobleman came to faith without having seen the miracle performed and before even seeing the concrete evidence that a miracle had indeed occurred, in the form of his cured son. Instead, his faith was based on the eyewitness report of his servants, whose report was to be trusted since they themselves saw only the concrete evidence of the cure without knowing the manner in which the cure had been effected.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Cf. note 3.

<sup>31</sup>Scholars who interpret 4:48 as a criticism of signs-faith suggest that the nobleman is here illustrated as undergoing the process of reaching full faith, beginning with an inadequate signs-faith, to a belief that Jesus speaks the truth, to full faith in Jesus' word. See, for example, Edward F. Siegman, "St. John's Use of the Synoptic Material". If 4:48 is understood, not as a critique of signs-faith per se but as a critique of the need to see signs personally, then the three stages would be: the need to base belief on a first-hand witnessing of the signs (the nobleman wants Jesus to come to do the signs in person), to a belief in Jesus' word that the signs will be done, to a full faith in Jesus on the basis of the signs as witnessed by others.

Therefore the nobleman's faith is in the final analysis still a faith based on a sign, not on the direct witnessing of a sign but upon hearing a trustworthy report of a sign. Unlike Thomas, who should have based his faith on the disciples' report, the nobleman presents a positive role model for the reader to emulate.

The above examination of 20:29 and 4:48 suggests that the Fourth Gospel does not in fact present contradictory views of signs-faith which must be accounted for by means of source-criticism or a theory positing several types or degrees of faith. Instead, the passages in which a relationship is made between signs and faith can be seen as stressing several different aspects of this relationship. First, a true and deep faith can be based on signs. Second, Jesus' words and acts must be properly understood, that is, perceived as signs of Jesus' identity as the Christ and Son of God, in order to be an appropriate basis for faith. Third, faith can be based on hearing about signs from reliable witnesses and not only on a first-hand witnessing of signs. Linking these three points is the Gospel's consistent positive evaluation of a faith based on Jesus' signs.

Having discussed why 20:30-31 is an appropriate statement of purpose for the Gospel on both semantic and theological grounds, it is now possible to proceed with the examination of the four propositions which constitute this purpose.

### CHAPTER THREE: "LIFE IN HIS NAME" AS A DESIRABLE GOAL

The claim that "life in his name", or salvation, is a goal worth striving for is basic to the Gospel's entire treatment of the life and career of Jesus, as it is to the New Testament. For the reader to be open to the Christian message he must believe that it offers him something he needs or desires--salvation. If the reader is a non-Christian, he must be persuaded to strive for this goal, in the ways set down in the Gospel; if he is already a Christian, his strivings must be encouraged.

The Gospel makes two different arguments in support of this proposition. The first argument might be described as philosophical. It is based on the Johannine perception of the world as a place of darkness, sin and evil. Salvation provides man with a way of escaping this world and of entering into a brighter reality. This analysis of man's plight and the solution to the plight is not an abstract concept but addresses the reader directly. The second argument may be termed anthropological. It stems from the claim that the search for salvation and for a personal saviour characterized the various religious and ethnic groups which composed the society into which Jesus came. The implication is that everyone, including the reader, is searching for the Messiah. The ways in which these two arguments are presented will now be examined.

Unlike Paul, the writer of the Fourth Gospel does not describe

in detail the plight of man before or apart from Christ.<sup>1</sup> Like Paul, however, the evangelist does conceive of the world as being in need of redemption. For example, in 1:5, the reader is told: "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it". From the context of this verse, that is, from the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, it is evident that the term "light" (phōs) refers to Jesus, and its antithesis "darkness" (skotia) to the world into which he came.

This verse conveys several clear meanings to the reader: First, because light is generally a positive image, the verse suggests that it is better to be in light than in darkness. Therefore darkness is a condition which should be avoided or remedied. Second, those who are in darkness, by definition, cannot see the light. If Jesus is the light, then the world is in darkness because it does not recognize Jesus. Third, the darkness is trying, albeit unsuccessfully, to overcome the light.<sup>2</sup> The verse therefore creates the image of a struggle between light and darkness. The ensuing

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<sup>1</sup>The classic Pauline description of the plight of man apart from Christ is Romans 7:7ff. Paul appears more concerned with describing this plight than the Fourth Evangelist, who alludes to it without clear elaboration.

<sup>2</sup>The Greek katalambanō (1:5) is usually translated "overcome". It can also mean, however, to seize, grasp or comprehend. This is the sense in which it is taken by Bultmann, Gospel of John, pp.47f. : "the darkness has not understood it". Both translations are plausible. If the darkness is the unbelieving world, then one can say that it has neither understood, that is, accepted Jesus as the Son of God, nor overcome him, though it attempted to.

narrative indicates that the Fourth Gospel perceives this struggle to be between Jesus and the Jews who refuse to see him as the saviour (e. g. 9:41). Indeed, they attempt to kill him, that is, to extinguish or overcome the light (e. g. 8:40).

The association between darkness, evil and the rejection of Jesus as saviour is made explicit in 3:19-20:

... man loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed.

The perception of the world apart from Jesus as evil is alluded to in a different way in 1:29. In this verse John the Baptist identifies Jesus to the reader<sup>3</sup> as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". Among the difficult questions raised by this verse are the issue of the source and background of the 'Lamb of God' title,<sup>4</sup> the precise nature of

<sup>3</sup>The Baptist's words are not addressed to anyone specified within the context of the narrative, and therefore are apparently aimed directly at the reader.

<sup>4</sup>Unlike the other christological titles, the meaning of the "Lamb of God" title is impossible to determine from its context in the Gospel since it appears only twice. Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, pp. 235f, would interpret this title as a reference to the Apocalyptic Lamb. Barrett, "The Lamb of God"; and Brown, Gospel According to John, pp. 60f, would see this meaning as more appropriate to the Baptist than to the Fourth Gospel itself. A second theory is that the "Lamb" is a symbol of the suffering servant in Is. 53, who is also described as an offering for sin (Is. 53:10). Jeremias, "Amnos tou Theou"; is a major proponent of this theory. The third suggestion is that the title is a reference to the Paschal Lamb. It may be argued that several of the details of the Johannine Passion narrative support this theory, such as the time of the crucifixion, the use of hyssop (19:29), and the fact that Jesus' legs remain unbroken (19:33). Versions of this theory are held by Barrett and Brown.



the "sin", and the way in which Jesus can be said to remove it.<sup>5</sup> What is clear, however, is the description of the world as having sin, a situation which is corrected by Jesus. The term "sin", though difficult to interpret with any certainty, clearly denotes an undesirable state which ideally should be remedied. That the "sin" of the world involves at least in part a rejection of Jesus is suggested in two passages: 8:34ff, and 15:24. In 8:34, Jesus informs the Jews that "everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin". A few verses later in 8:37, he refers to the Jews' attempts to kill him. This reference, and indeed the tone and content of the entire passage 8:34-59 imply that the Jewish sin was the rejection of Jesus. In 15:24, Jesus talks about the Jews to his disciples:

If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to connecting the Jewish "sin" with the rejection of Jesus and therefore of God, this passage suggests that the state of sin did not exist before Jesus' arrival; that is, it was Jesus who showed the world to be in darkness.

The idea that sin characterizes the life of the individual apart from Jesus and is removed by Jesus is dramatized in 5:1ff., where Jesus' healing of the lame man is described. After the man is healed, Jesus

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<sup>5</sup>On the question of sin in the Fourth Gospel, see Braun, "Le Péché du Monde" and Brown, "The Gospel Miracles".

<sup>6</sup>Cf. John 9:40. The "Jews", having seen the healing of a man born blind, and having claimed to understand Jesus to be a sinner, are themselves blind.

warns him, "Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you" (5:14). This verse implies some connection between the man's infirmity and his sin. It also suggests that in healing his infirmity, Jesus has removed his sin.<sup>7</sup>

These passages not only designate the world as being in a state of darkness and evil but also portray Jesus--the "light", the "Lamb of God"--as the one who has come to redeem the world. The desired effect of these verses is no doubt to encourage the reader to view Jesus as the one who will redeem him from his situation as he redeemed the lame man from his sin and the consequences of his sin.

The descriptions of the situation of man in the absence of Jesus as darkness and sinfulness constitute a negative argument for the proposition that life in his name is a desirable goal. That is, they encourage the reader to perceive his present life (in the case of a non-Christian) or past situation (in the case of a Christian), as one which he must escape. Whereas this negative argument is found in only a few verses in the Gospel, the positive side of the argument receives ample expression in the descriptions of "life in his name" as an attractive and desirable state.

The term "life in his name" (zōē . . . en tō onomati autou) appears only once in the Gospel, in 20:31. It seems to be synonymous, however, with "life" (zōē), "salvation" (sōtēria) and a host of other words and images

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<sup>7</sup>See Brown, "The Gospel Miracles", on the relationship in the Synoptics of sin and death or deformity, all of which are removed by the act of healing.

for that state which believing in Jesus brings about. The interchangeability of these terms is evident in 3:16-17:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (ekhē zōēn aiōnion). For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him (hina sōthē ho kosmos di'autou).

Although the term "to have eternal life" seems to be the Gospel's favourite word for describing the consequences of belief in Jesus as the Christ,<sup>8</sup> a variety of images and descriptions appears throughout the Gospel. The believers will be "children of God" (tekna theou genesthai) "born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God (1:12-13)". He will be born anew (anōthen) (3:7)<sup>9</sup> and will see the kingdom of God (3:5). As a sheep in Jesus' flock, the believer "will go in and out and find pasture" (10:9), an image suggesting both freedom and abundance.

The term "eternal life" suggests that the principal characteristic of the goal towards which the reader is asked to strive is a conquest over death. This is made explicit in several verses. In 8:51, Jesus promises the Jews that "if any one keeps my word, he will never see death". In 6:50 he informs the crowd of Jews that "This is the bread which comes

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<sup>8</sup>The expression occurs eight times in the Gospel.

<sup>9</sup>The adverb "anōthen" can be translated as either "from above" or "anew, again".

down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die". Other verses indicate that this freedom from death involves resurrection. The Son, the reader is told, gives life to whom he will (5:21), calls those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgement (5:29). The message is made even more explicit in 6:40:

For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

That resurrection of the dead is the reward or at least the consequence of faith in Jesus is illustrated by the story of the Raising of Lazarus (11:1ff). The description of Lazarus as "he whom the Lord loves" and the portrayal of his sister as a believer in Jesus as the Christ, Son of God (11:27) indicates that Lazarus was one who believed in Jesus. The fact that Jesus, with the help of God (11:40-42), returned him to life after he had been dead for four days indicates to the reader that Jesus does in fact have the power to give life as he claims to have (5:21, 26).<sup>10</sup>

Not only will the believer be raised, but he will also dwell with the Father and Son (14:2). Whereas the mutual indwelling of the Father, Son and believer can be said to take place in the present life of the believer (14:10; 17:21), the dwelling of the believer with God and Jesus as well

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<sup>10</sup>The connection between chapters 5 and 11 has been noted by Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 437, who notes that "in many details, ch. xi acts out the promise of ch. v (25-29)". See pp. 171 and 193ff below, as well as Dodd, Interpretation, pp. 148 and 366.

as the resurrection of the dead are relegated to an unspecified future time after Jesus' parousia:<sup>11</sup>

And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (14:3)

The passages which describe life eternal not only give details concerning the nature of salvation, but they also by implication warn the reader of the consequences of disbelief. He who refuses Jesus is condemned, and will be judged on the last day (3:19, 5:29). He will certainly not be resurrected and can therefore not look forward to any existence after death.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>The Johannine view of eschatology is a difficult and unresolved issue. The Fourth Gospel contains verses which suggest that salvation is a present reality (3:36, 5:24) as well as those which suggest that it is a future event (5:28, 6:40). According to Bultmann, Gospel of John, p. 261, the "true" Johannine view is represented by those statements in which salvation is described as realized, or present. Statements conveying a future eschatology Bultmann attributes to an editor who added them "in an attempt to reconcile the dangerous statement . . . concerning present eschatology with traditional future eschatology". C. F. D. Moule, "Neglected Factor in Johannine Eschatology", suggests that the so-called "future eschatology" passages refer to collective salvation whereas the passages expressing realized eschatology refer to individual salvation.

<sup>12</sup>The description of the world as darkness and of the happy fate of the believer suggest a rather dualistic world view, in which he who rejects Jesus and he who accepts him are conceived of as being in two different realms. That this is an aspect of Johannine thought is indicated in 17:6. On the one hand, "world" is the physical earth (17:11). On the other hand, it refers to those who reject Jesus (1:10). The believer is therefore seen as being a member of a different world or realm than the non-believer. What the Gospel is asking the reader to do is to make the journey from one realm to another. This type of language has caused many problems for the understanding of the Gospel and its background. Does this vocabulary reflect a true and thoroughgoing dualism such as that seen in Gnostic texts, or is it simply metaphorical? For a discussion of this, see Otto Bocher, Der johanneische Dualismus in Zusammenhang des Nachbiblischen Judentum.

The second argument used by the Fourth Gospel to support the proposition that "life in his name" or salvation is a worthy goal claims that the expectation of and search for salvation were characteristic of the people of Jesus' day, as represented by the characters in the Gospel narrative. Since the characters are intended to function to some extent as role models or paradigms for the reader, the implication is that the reader too is, or should be, searching for salvation.

This claim is made with respect to five groups:

1. the Jews,
2. the disciples of John the Baptist,
3. the Galileans,
4. the Samaritans,
5. the Greeks.

Of these five groups, it is the Jews that are discussed the most throughout the Gospel. The very first narrative in the Gospel (1:19-24) introduces both the Jews and their search for the Messiah. The passage portrays the priests and Levites, who are delegates of the Pharisees in Jerusalem (1:24), interrogating John the Baptist concerning his identity. The fact that the Baptist answers in terms of the eschatological title of "Christ" implies that, according to the Fourth Gospel, the Baptist understood immediately that in the question "Who are you? (su tis ei)" asked by the priests and Levites was not a disinterested request for name and occupation but rather signified: Are you the eschatological figure whom

we are expecting?

This impression is confirmed by the fact that the delegation continues its interrogation in more specific terms, asking whether John is Elijah or the prophet (1:21). John denies that he is any of these figures but finally describes himself as the precursor or forerunner of the Messiah (1:23). The second part of the conversation between the Baptist and the Jewish delegation reveals that it was John's baptizing activity that led the Jews to believe that he was the Christ, the prophet, or Elijah. This detail suggests that baptizing activity was expected of the Messiah.<sup>13</sup>

5:39ff. refers more explicitly to the Jewish expectation and hope of eternal life. In this passage, Jesus is addressing the Jews who had challenged his right to heal on the Sabbath (cf. 5:16):

You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. . . Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope.

This passage expresses an incomprehensible paradox: Jews are

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<sup>13</sup>The Gospel, however, insists that Jesus himself did not baptize, though his disciples did (4:2). Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 164, suggests that this verse is "almost indisputable evidence of the presence of several hands in the composition of John", because it modifies 3:22, where it is said that Jesus did baptize. The reason for this modification is difficult to determine. Brown suggests that perhaps the redactor feared that Jesus' baptizing activity would be used as an argument that he was only an imitation of John the Baptist.

searching and longing for eternal life, and believe they will find it through the scripture. Yet when what they are searching for is revealed to them, they refuse to acknowledge it. Jesus accepts both the goal and the method but criticizes their blindness in not recognizing him as the one towards whom the scriptures point.

The identity of the eschatological figures expected by the Jews and the meaning of "searching the scriptures" are made more explicit in 7:26-27, 7:40-42 and 7:52. These passages relate controversies among the Jews concerning the question of whether Jesus is the Messiah. It is the Jews and not the Johannine Jesus who introduce the title khristos into the discussion. In fact, khristos is a title used almost exclusively by others to refer to Jesus and almost never by Jesus to refer to himself.<sup>14</sup> This usage suggests that khristos was the title used by the Jews to designate the saviour whom they expected.<sup>15</sup> The controversies among the Jews raised the question of whether Jesus fulfilled the criteria for the expected Messiah. According to 7:42 and 7:52 it is clear that these criteria were derived from Jewish scripture. In both of these passages, the issue is the place of origin of the Messiah.

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<sup>14</sup>See chap. five for a discussion of the use of khristos in the Fourth Gospel.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. de Jonge, "Jewish Eschatological Expectations about the 'Messiah'".



Some said. "Is the Christ to come from Galilee?  
Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" (7:40-42)

In 7:52, the Pharisees reiterate: "Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee." These verses imply that the meaning of "searching the scriptures" (5:39) refers to finding passages in the Hebrew scriptures which can be interpreted as descriptions and prophecies of the expected Messiah. This methodology was also employed by early Christians, as New Testament writings testify.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, as 5:39 suggests, both the search for the Messiah and the focus on the prophetic aspects of Hebrew scripture are accepted and indeed taken over into Christianity; it is the Jews' blindness in not seeing Jesus as the fulfilment of the scriptures which is condemned.

The Johannine focus on the Jewish expectations of the Messiah is understandable in the light of the Gospel's preoccupation with the Jewish rejection of Jesus. Yet there are passages which indicate that in the view of the author of the Gospel, the other principal groups which comprised the society to which Jesus came also held expectations of the Messiah.

1:35-51 indicates that such expectations were held by followers of John the Baptist as well as by the Galileans. In 1:35ff., the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God to two of his disciples. They

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<sup>16</sup>Paul and the Synoptic Gospels clearly view Jesus as the fulfilment of Jewish scripture. Cf., for example, 1 Cor. 15:3-4, Mk. 1:2ff. See also Dodd, Apostolic Preaching, p. 38.

understood this to mean that they should follow Jesus. When they do so, Jesus turns around and says "What do you seek (tī zēteite)?" (1:38). While this may seem to be the natural question to ask when being followed by two strangers, the context and tone of the passage suggest that the question has a more profound meaning: Do you seek the Messiah? This meaning is confirmed by the words of Andrew, one of the disciples, who, after staying with Jesus (1:39), says "We have found the Messiah" (1:41). The verb eurēkamen pairs with the verb zēteite used in 1:38, suggesting that the Messiah whom the Baptist's disciples sought has indeed been found.

Similarly, Philip, the Galilean whose call to discipleship is described briefly in 1:43, uses the same verb heuriskō in his words to Nathanael: "We have found (heurēkamen) him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote. . ." (1:45). This verse suggests that, like the Jews of Judea, the Galileans, represented by Philip, were expecting a Messiah who would fulfill the Torah and prophetic writings. Unlike the Jews, however, Philip recognized and accepted Jesus as this Messiah.

The Samaritan expectation of a saviour figure is implied by the words of the Samaritan woman to Jesus in 4:25: "I know that the Messiah is coming. . . when he comes, he will show us all things". This expectation is emphasized by the eagerness of the Samaritans, to whom the woman testifies, to see and to hear Jesus for themselves (4:30, 39ff.), and to acknowledge him as the Saviour of the world (4:42).

Finally, 12:20ff. implies that the search and need for a Messiah applies not only to different groups of Jewish origin but also to non-Jewish Greeks.<sup>17</sup> This passage recounts the visit of the Greeks to the feast in Jerusalem, during which time they asked to see Jesus. This request, though refused at the time, indicates a desire on the part of the Greeks for that which they perceive that Jesus can give them.<sup>18</sup>

In conclusion, the Fourth Gospel portrays the world into which Jesus came not only as a world in need of salvation but as a world seeking salvation. The description of the various groups does not necessarily mean that the reader is seen by the evangelist as belonging to one or another of them, though all have in fact been suggested by scholars as representing the groups of origin of the reader. Rather, the description of the groups as searching for or expecting the Messiah is intended to point out to the reader that he too, no matter what his origin and background, should be searching.

This "anthropological" argument is logically connected with the

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<sup>17</sup>There is some debate as to the identity of the Hellēnes who are depicted as coming to Jesus in 12:20. Kossen, "Who are the Greeks of John 12:20", argues that they are Jews from the Diaspora, as do others who see the Gospel as a missionary document directed towards Diaspora Jews. See Introduction, p. 2. There is no convincing reason, however, why these Hellēnes should not be considered Greeks, as indeed they are by many commentators, such as Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 466.

<sup>18</sup>The passage suggests that the mission of Jesus does not open up to Gentiles until after his death.

"philosophical" argument. Those who expect the Messiah understand that only through him will they attain the goal of eternal life and by implication escape the "darkness" of the world. This connection between the two arguments is made explicit in 6:67ff. and 11:27. In 6:67, Jesus asks the Twelve whether they wish to leave him as many of his other followers have (6:66). Simon Peter responds:

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God. (6:68-9)

In 11:25-27, Jesus comforts Martha on the death of her brother Lazarus by describing himself as the resurrection and the life: "he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die". In 11:27 Martha acknowledges that she believes Jesus' words: "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world". In both of these passages, the believer confesses that Jesus is the awaited Messiah or Saviour through whom the goal of eternal life is attainable. 20:30-31 in effect encourages the reader to make Martha and Peter his models.

The Gospel therefore offers ample evidence for its proposition that "life in his name" is a desirable goal, by describing man in need of, and man in search of salvation. It may be suggested that the purpose of this proposition is not so much to persuade the reader as to encourage him to interpret his needs and his experience in a particular

way. Probably the reader actually accepted this proposition, because it was indeed a tenet held by the various groups present in the world of early Christianity.<sup>19</sup> It is also possible that this claim concerning the desirability of eternal life was not made consciously by the Evangelist, but was one of his unquestioned assumptions. This possibility is suggested by the fact that the proposition is not dealt with explicitly but is implicit in various parts of the narrative. It will be noticed that almost all of the "evidence" for this proposition links the need and search for salvation with the second proposition, namely that faith in Jesus is the way to attain eternal life. That is, the "plight" of man and the world is not articulated apart from the solution to that plight.<sup>20</sup> This suggests, that according to the Fourth Gospel, the nature of the plight is seen more clearly when the solution is understood and accepted.<sup>21</sup> It also, however, points out the logical need for this first proposition as a foundation for the stated purpose of the Fourth Gospel.

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<sup>19</sup>Cf. F. Cumont, Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, pp. 20-45.

<sup>20</sup>If this is the case, then the intellectual process (from solution to plight) undergone by the author(s) of the Gospel would be the same as that undergone by Paul. See E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, pp. 442f.

<sup>21</sup>This is indicated especially by 15:22.

## CHAPTER FOUR: BELIEVING AND SALVATION

The proposition that salvation is a desirable goal was probably assumed by both the author and the reader in a way that made its explicit articulation unnecessary. In contrast, the idea that salvation is attained only through faith in Jesus Christ is not only made explicit but is emphasized in the Gospel at every turn. Indeed, as the previous chapter illustrated, the first proposition is often to be inferred from overt expressions of the second proposition. For example, the description of the world as darkness occurs in the context of the description of Jesus as the light. Similarly, the description of the world as sinful is made in the context of the Baptist's identification of Jesus as the Lamb of God who removes the sin of the world. Furthermore, in the confessions of Peter (6:67) and Martha (11:27), the acknowledgement that they are in a plight from which they need saving is not made explicit but is to be inferred from the confession of Jesus as Christ, Son of God, and Holy One of God. Hence, all of the statements cited in support of the first proposition can also be cited in support of the second.

The Gospel's treatment of the proposition that faith in Jesus Christ leads to salvation consists of both explicit statements to that effect, such as those cited above, and narratives which dramatize or

illustrate this proposition. Both the relevant statements and the narratives will now be discussed.

While some of the statements concerning Jesus' role as saviour are spoken by John the Baptist (e. g. , 1:29, 34), the disciples (e. g. 11:27, 6:67), and the narrator (20:30-31, 3:16ff.),<sup>1</sup> most are attributed to Jesus himself. Of the latter group, some are simple assertions, such as 10:27f. , in which Jesus explains:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

Many, however, are conditional statements; that is, they express the conditions under which one may expect to receive eternal life. Approximately fifty-eight statements fit into this category. The basic form of this type of statement is illustrated by 5:24: "He who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life". The clause, "He who hears. . .and believes. . .", expresses the conditions under which one attains the result, that is, eternal life.

Thirty-seven of the fifty-eight statements take this form. In the remaining statements, the condition is expressed in a variety of ways:

"If anyone (ean tis) eats of this bread, he will live forever" (6:51).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>It is unclear whether 3:16=21 is the continuation of Jesus' words to Nicodemus in 3:1-15, or whether it is the comment of the narrator.

<sup>2</sup>Also 11:9b, 12:26, 7:37, 8:51, 10:9, 12:47, 7:17, 9:31, 15:6 and 14:23.

"Everyone who (pas ho pinōn) drinks of this water will thirst again" (4:13).<sup>3</sup>

"Blessed are those who (hoi) have not seen and yet believe" (20:29b).<sup>4</sup>

"Unless one (ean mē tis) is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (3:5).

"If you (ean humeis) continue in my word, you are my disciples" (8:31).

Most of the statements are spoken by Jesus, the exceptions being 9:31b

(Man born blind), 3:29 (John the Baptist), and 3:31, 33, 36 (Narrator,

or John the Baptist).<sup>5</sup> In the majority of statements, the referent of

"he who" is clearly the disciple, or potential disciple of Jesus, or even

more broadly, mankind in general, including the readers of all gener-

ations.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Also 11:26.

<sup>4</sup>Also 5:25.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Note 1 above.

<sup>6</sup>In 3:29 Jesus is the probable referent; in 3:31, Jesus ("he who comes from above") is contrasted with "he who is of the earth". In 3:33 the referent is unclear, though perhaps the most likely choice is the believer "who receives his testimony". In 10:1, 12, the referent is also uncertain. The passages read as follows: ". . . he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber" (10:1). "He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them" (10:12). From the context, i. e., Jesus' discussion with the Jews, it would appear that the Pharisees or Jews are intended as referents, though C. K. Barrett, Gospel According to St. John, p. 369, suggests that the "saviours of the Hellenistic world" are meant.



The examples listed above give a clear indication of the content and thrust of this group of statements. In their positive form (e. g. , 6:51), the statements give the conditions under which man will be saved, that is, they describe what he must do in order to gain eternal life. These conditions include eating the bread of life (6:51), doing what is true (3:21), keeping Jesus' word (8:51), entering the sheepfold by Jesus (10:9), and drinking of the water that Jesus has (4:13). All of these conditions are merely different ways of expressing the necessity for having faith in Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

The negative statements present the conditions under which man is not saved. Most often these are simply the converse of the positive

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<sup>7</sup>Many of the metaphors and images used in the conditional statements are those which occur also in the egō eimi statements examined below (pp. 94, 101-2). Indeed, in several cases the egō eimi statements and the conditional statements are found in the same context and are part of the same sequence of thought. For example, in 6:35 Jesus describes himself as the bread of life. 6:35, 37, 40, 47, 48, and 51 present what man's response to Jesus as the bread of life should be. "I am the bread of life, he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst" (6:35). The other instances are: "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (8:12). "I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (10:9). "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (11:25, 26). "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (15:5-6).

conditions, and positive and negative statements stand together in many cases. One example is 4:13-14:

Jesus said to [the Samaritan woman], "Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. "

In other cases, the negative statements are not the symmetrical matches for positive statements, even if they are found in the same context, as in 5:23b-25:

He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

The central message of this group of statements, therefore, is that salvation, eternal life, can come only as a result of one's response to Jesus. A positive response, that is, acceptance of Jesus as Christ, "Way", "bread of life", and bringer of salvation, will result in salvation. He who rejects Jesus and his message, however, forfeits salvation.

The passages in which the second proposition is expressed therefore take the form either of direct affirmation or conditional statements. To determine what is meant by this proposition, it is necessary to look more closely at the content of these statements.

The relationship between faith and salvation is expressed in three different ways, each of which contributes a different type of information to the reader's understanding of the second proposition. The

first way is by the use of the verb, to believe, pisteuō. The second is through the use of verbs which according to their contexts are intended to parallel pisteuō. The third is through the use of the term egō eimi, literally "I am", which Jesus uses to designate his self-revelation to the people. Each type will now be discussed briefly.

The Gospel expresses the concept of faith not with the Greek noun pistis, which never occurs in the Gospel, but with the verb pisteuō, which occurs almost ninety times. Hence, the Gospel speaks not of faith but of believing. From this usage it may be suggested that the Gospel conceives of believing not as a state in which one is and remains, or as something which one has, but as a process or action in which one must continually engage.<sup>8</sup>

The passages which speak of believing can be divided into four groups according to grammatical structure.

1. Passages in which the direct object of the verb pisteuō is a hoti clause, which expresses the content of belief. For example, Jesus in 4:21 says: "Woman, . . . believe me that (pisteue moi . . . hoti) the time is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father". In 14:11, he states: "Believe me that (pisteuete moi hoti) I am in the Father and the Father in me. . .".

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<sup>8</sup>Bultmann, Pisteuō, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 6:174-228.

The primary claims made by passages that exhibit this pattern concern Jesus' relationship with the Father and Jesus' identity. Hence 11:47, 16:27 and 17:8 all ask the addressees to believe that Jesus was sent by the Father. In 11:27 and 20:30-31, the content of the belief is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, whereas in 13:19 it is that "I am he", egō eimi, one of the ways in which Jesus expresses his own soteriological identity.<sup>9</sup> These passages suggest that faith or believing

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<sup>9</sup>The absolute use of egō eimi occurs in four verses: 8:24, 28, 38, 13:19. The meaning of this formula is difficult to pinpoint. The ultimate origin of the egō eimi formula is generally seen to be in the Old Testament. The LXX translates the ani hu, referring to God, as egō eimi, for example in Is. 41:4, 43:10, 25, 46:4, 48:12, 51:12. Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 535, Barrett, Gospel According to St. John, p. 292, and Kysar, Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel, p. 122, agree in seeing the primary influence on the Johannine egō eimi in Palestinian Judaism. Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 94, points to the use of ani ve-hu as a name for God in Rabbinic Judaism, and claims that it is in effect the shem ha-meforash (the Ineffable Name). Daube, New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 327-329, agrees, and sees as the model for egō eimi the use of ani hu in the Passover Haggadah. Here the term is associated with the terribleness of God, which if carried over into Johannine usage would explain why the soldiers fell on their faces in 18:6. E. Schweizer, Ego Eimi, pp. 111-112, finds some connections to Mandaean and other Gnostic texts, though in his view these do not account for the full meaning of the Johannine usage. MacRae, "The Ego-Proclamation in Gnostic Sources", pp. 133-134, also suggests some connections with gnostic texts. In particular he points to Thunder Perfect Mind, in which the goal of the "I am" statements is "A statement of the transcendence, not merely the universality of the revealer, perfect mind." MacRae suggests that "The Fourth Gospel, taking into consideration its over-all structure and its techniques, uses the form of egō eimi proclamation not merely to assert that Jesus must be recognized as or identified with the variety of human religious symbolism: bread, light, shepherd, life, etc., but that Jesus in his truest reality transcends all of this and is revealed only in the moment of his return to the Father, through death and

entails some intellectual knowledge of the identity of Jesus, of his filial relationship with God, and of his divine mission.

2. Passages in which the verb pisteuō is followed by a noun in the dative case which expresses the indirect object of the verb. For example, in 2:22, the reader is told:

When. . . he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scriptures and the words which Jesus had spoken (episteusan tēi graphēi kai tōi logōi hon eipen ho Iēsous).

In this case, the verb episteusan refers to belief in the testimony of scripture and of Jesus' word. Similarly, in 5:24, 38 and 46 the reference is to witnesses to Jesus' eschatological identity. In 5:24, the addressee is asked to believe "him who sent me" (tō pempanti me), that is, God. In 5:38, the Jews are accused of not believing "him whom he sent" (hon apesteilen ekeinos), that is, Jesus. In 5:46, Jesus states that the fact that the Jews do not accept him indicates that they do not

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resurrection, as the love of the Father for me.<sup>4</sup> Schnackenburg, Gospel According to St. John, 2:64-67, attempts a compromise solution. In his view, the evangelist's fundamental orientation is out of the Old Testament but his awareness of and dialogue with Hellenism have caused him to cast his use of the "I am" sayings in a form similar to that of Gnostic thought. Even this brief survey makes one fact abundantly clear: the issue of the ultimate origin of, and range of influences on, the Johannine egō eimi formula cannot be resolved apart from the question of the history-of-religions background of the Gospel as a whole. Without entering into this complex question, it would appear that the only indisputable source for the Johannine usage is the Old Testament, probably in its Greek version.

believe Moses.

In 4:50, 8:45-6 and 10:37-8, the construction pisteuō moi, "to believe me" (i. e. , Jesus), is used to mean "believe that which I am telling you". In 4:50, the nobleman is described as believing Jesus' word that his son will live. In both 8:45-6 and 10:37-8, Jesus accuses the Jews of not believing him though he speaks the truth. All of the nouns or pronouns which are in the dative case after the verb pisteuō - Moses, Jesus and his word, the Father, and scripture - are described as witnesses to Jesus (5:30ff. ).

Related to this category are the verses in which the construction pisteuō dia appears. In 1:7, it is said of John the Baptist that "he came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him (hina pantes pisteusōsin di'autou)". In this verse, the verb is used absolutely, although the context implies that the object is "the light" or Jesus. In 4:41, the Samaritans are described as believing through Jesus' word (episteusan dia ton logon autou), whereas in 4:42 they tell the Samaritan woman that they no longer need to believe through her word (ouketi dia tēn sēn lalian pisteuomen) now that they have heard Jesus' words for themselves. 4:42 further indicates that for the Samaritans, believing entails knowing "that this is indeed the Saviour of the world". In 14:11 the addressee is asked to believe Jesus' statement concerning the intimate relationship between him and his Father through his works (dia ta erga auta pisteuete). Therefore these

verses, like those containing the construction pisteuō plus a noun in the dative case, refer to witnesses to Jesus' identity -- John the Baptist, Jesus' words and his work.<sup>10</sup>

3. Passages in which the verb pisteuō is followed by eis plus a noun in the accusative case. This construction is the most frequent one and is considered by many to be the characteristic Johannine expression using pisteuō.<sup>11</sup> In most verses, the reference is to believing "in Jesus" or "in him" pisteuō eis ton Iēsoun (12:11), eis auton (2:11). In three verses, however, the reference is to believing "in his name" (eis to onoma autou) (1:12, 2:23, 3:18). The two expressions, "believing in Jesus", and "believing in his name", seem to be synonymous.<sup>12</sup> According to C. H. Dodd, these verses indicate that believing means not only intellectual assent to particular claims about Jesus but also involves yielding allegiance to him accepting and acknowledging him as the revelation of God.<sup>13</sup> This category expresses explicitly that which is only implied in the passages in which the verb pisteuō

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<sup>10</sup>Much has been written in recent years on the theme of marturia in the Fourth Gospel. See, for example, J. Beutler, Martyria and also his "Glaube und Zeugnis im Johannesevangelium". On the basis of this and related juridical themes in the Gospel, A. E. Harvey, Jesus on Trial, argues that the Fourth Gospel as a whole can be interpreted as an extended "trial" of Jesus.

<sup>11</sup>Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 183.

<sup>12</sup>Dodd, ibid., p. 184, suggests a connection between the Johannine expression and the fact that eis to onoma was used in primitive Christianity in the ceremony of baptism: one was baptized into the Name of Christ.

<sup>13</sup>ibid.

appears alone. For example, in 4:53, it is said of the nobleman simply that he "believed" (episteusen autos). In 1:50, Jesus asks Nathanael, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe (pisteueis)?".<sup>14</sup> Jesus is clearly the unnamed object of belief in these examples.

The passages in which the verb pisteuō occurs express very clearly the proposition that faith in Jesus leads to salvation. They also indicate that such faith involves both an intellectual assent to the claim that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God as well as a total spiritual commitment to him.<sup>15</sup> These same points are made in the passages in which the verb pisteuō is associated with another verb. In 17:7ff., for example, Jesus describes his disciples as those to whom he has given the words which the Father gave him:

And they have received (elabon) and know (egnosan)  
in truth that I came from thee; and they have  
believed that thou didst send me. (17:8-9)

Believing that Jesus was sent by the Father is an important aspect of believing in Jesus. This passage indicates that receiving Jesus' words and knowing Jesus' origins are also aspects of that faith.

The importance of receiving Jesus and his words is emphasized

<sup>14</sup>On the connection between faith and sight, cf. Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 186.

<sup>15</sup>For more detailed discussions on the nature of faith in the Fourth Gospel, see for example, Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, pp. 179-186; Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 2:70-94.



also in 1:12 and 5:43, and suggests a deep personal commitment to or acceptance of Jesus into one's life. The same sense is conveyed in 6:35, where coming to Jesus is parallel to belief:<sup>16</sup> "he who comes to me shall not hunger and he who believes in me shall never thirst".

In 17:7, 17:8, 17:25 and 6:69, the disciples are described as knowing, that is, giving intellectual assent to, particular claims: that everything that the Father has given Jesus is from the Father (17:7), that Jesus came from the Father (17:8, 25) and that Jesus is the Holy One of God (6:69).<sup>17</sup> In 17:3 the knowing (ginōskein) is of a more personal nature:<sup>18</sup> "This is eternal life, that they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent". Although the verb pisteuō is not used here, the connection between knowing and eternal life made here parallels that made between believing and eternal life elsewhere (e. g. , 6:40).

In 3:36, believing in the Son is paralleled with obeying him: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life. . .". Similarly in 8:51 the expression "keeping Jesus' word" is connected with never seeing death, and therefore with believing.

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<sup>16</sup>Therefore receiving Jesus and coming to Jesus express virtually the same experience, though the directions of the movement (Jesus to believer, believer to Jesus) are opposite.

<sup>17</sup>The close relationship between knowing and believing is indicated in 17:8, 6:69. In 4:25 and 11:27, knowing seems to be equivalent to believing.

<sup>18</sup>See Bultmann, ginōskein, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, I:689-719.

The nuances of this expression probably include obedience as well as a belief in the word which Jesus transmits to the people from the Father.<sup>19</sup> It also entails some type of appropriation of the words of Jesus (and of the Father) for oneself. For example, in 5:38, the Jews are told: "You do not have God's word abiding in you, if you do not believe him whom he has sent". Believing Jesus, or believing in Jesus, would therefore entail having God's word abiding in one.

The verses in which pisteuō is paralleled with other verbs serve to illuminate the Johannine understanding of faith or believing. Though none of the verbs used in association with pisteuō should be seen as completely synonymous with it, each one points out a particular aspect of faith. The intellectual side of believing, that is, believing that the claims for Jesus' eschatological identity are correct, is emphasized in the passages which speak of the need for knowing or acknowledging different "facts" about Jesus. The more personal, intimate aspect of believing is stressed in the passages which speak of receiving Jesus or coming to him, of knowing him, and of having God's word abide in the believer. That obedience is also a factor in the relationship between the believer and Jesus is indicated directly as well as implied.

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<sup>19</sup>In 8:51 and 14:23 men are asked to keep Jesus' word; here (17:6), it is God's word that men are asked to keep. Of course these statements are identical in meaning, since Jesus' words are God's words (7:16).

The third set of passages which point to faith in Jesus as the way to salvation are the egō eimi (I am) statements, in which Jesus speaks of himself and his eschatological role for the believer. The formula egō eimi appears fifty-two times in the Gospel. With the exception of eight verses, Jesus is the speaker and therefore also the referent of the formula.<sup>20</sup> The formula is used in a variety of ways; the usage which is relevant here is that in which the formula is followed by the predicative nominative. There are fourteen verses in this category:

6:35, 41, 48, 51	I am	the bread of life
8:12, 9:5		gate of the sheep
10:11, 14		model shepherd
11:25		resurrection and the life
14:6		way, truth and life
15:1, 5		vine

In each case the statement expresses Jesus' soteriological mission in a metaphorical way. The statement is almost always

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<sup>20</sup>Of the fifty-two verses in which the formula occurs, most contain references to Jesus. The four statements pertaining to John the Baptist (1:26, 21, 27, 3:28), the two to Simon Peter (18:17, 25), and the one to Pilate (18:35) are all negative: John the Baptist is not the Messiah, Prophet, or "bridegroom"; Simon Peter denies his identity as one of Jesus' disciples; Pilate points out that he is not a Jew. An exception is 9:9, in which the man born blind makes a positive identification of himself as he who used to sit and beg. There are also three statements which apparently contain quotations of Jesus' own words (6:41, 10:35, 18:6).

accompanied by a statement which expresses the importance of Jesus for the one who would be saved. Almost all of these statements take the conditional form discussed earlier,<sup>21</sup> and maintain the metaphor introduced in the egō eimi statement. In 6:15 Jesus states, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst". The "light of the world" illuminates the path of those who follow him (8:12). He who enters by the gate of the sheep will be saved and go in and out and find pasture (10:9). The model shepherd knows his sheep and is in turn known by them (10:14). Jesus provides the only way to reach the Father (14:6). Jesus is the resurrection, providing eternal life for those who believe in him (11:25). Finally, only the one who abides in Jesus, as the vine, will bear fruit (15:5). These metaphors clearly express the same message as that conveyed by the other passages discussed above, namely that faith in Jesus as the Christ is necessary for attaining "life in his name" or salvation.

The Gospel, through its many statements about the importance of Jesus for salvation, offers ample evidence for the centrality of the second proposition to the message of the Gospel. The relationship between faith and salvation, however, is not only stated but also is illustrated or dramatized in the narrative. The most obvious example of this is the Raising of Lazarus narrative. Not only does this narrative

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<sup>21</sup>Cf pp. 89ff.

illustrate the possibility of resurrection of the dead, but it implies that such resurrection is intimately connected with salvation, and is a possibility only for those who believe. This is conveyed through the information given to the reader about Lazarus and his sisters before the resurrection itself is narrated. The reader is told that Jesus loved Lazarus, Mary and Martha, and that it was Martha, Lazarus' sister, who anointed the Lord and wiped his feet (cf. 11:2, 12:1-8). This information implies that Lazarus and his sister must have been believers and followers of Jesus. This conclusion is supported by other details of the story, such as Martha's confession and the dialogue which precedes it (11:21-27), as well as the titles used for Jesus.<sup>22</sup> The message of the story is therefore that Jesus indeed has the power to raise those who believe in him that 5:29 and other verses say he does.

A second example of the way in which the Gospel illustrates the proposition is to be found in the portrayal of the disciples in the Gospel. From the call of the first disciples in 1:35-51 and the resurrection appearances (20:1-29), it is clear that the disciples believe in Jesus. This is stated explicitly (2:11, 6:67) and is also implied by the fact that they accompany Jesus on his travels, try to protect him (11:8) and also obey his wishes (6:10, 12-13). The temporal framework of the story does not permit the Gospel to narrate the death and resurrection/salvation

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<sup>22</sup>Teacher (11:28), Lord (11:27, 32, 34, 39).

of the disciples.<sup>23</sup> There are several passages, however, which suggest that the disciples were certainly destined for salvation. At various places in the farewell discourses, Jesus speaks of what will happen to the disciples after his departure. On the one hand, they will be persecuted, put out of the synagogue, and perhaps killed (16:2ff.). On the other hand, however, they will receive the Paraklete, or Spirit of truth (16:7, 13), and will be given cause to rejoice (16:20, 22). Finally, they will be taken by Jesus to be where he is (14:3) and will behold his everlasting glory (17:24). Although they are not explicitly promised eternal life, these passages suggest that this is in fact what they will attain. The narrative of Jesus' resurrection appearances to the disciples suggests that with Jesus' death and ascension, Jesus' promises concerning the future of the disciples are beginning to be fulfilled. The passage recounts the giving of the Holy Spirit and the power to forgive sins. The first gift is reminiscent of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, in which Jesus tells him that only those born of water and the Spirit will see the kingdom of God (3:5). This suggests, therefore, that the disciples are already in some measure seeing, or living in, the kingdom. The second, related gift, alludes to what the Gospel perceives as the plight of the world, namely its sinfulness. In giving the disciples a certain power over sins, Jesus is in effect saying

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<sup>23</sup>The exception is 21:23, which seems to indicate that the beloved disciple had indeed died. 21:24 credits this disciple with being the witness who has written "these things". Therefore the reference to his death can be used as evidence for the conclusion that chapter 21 was a later addition to the Gospel.

that they are no longer part of the sinful and dark world, but above it (cf. 17:7ff.).

The proposition that faith in Christ will lead to salvation, together with the proposition that salvation is a desirable goal, form the foundation for the Gospel's arguments in support of the third and fourth propositions concerning signs and their written form in the Gospel. As the discussion thus far has made clear, the first two propositions are integrally related and indeed are expressed in the same passages throughout the Gospel. Although the need for salvation, that is, the Johannine perception of man's plight, logically precedes the claim that faith is the way to salvation, there is evidence to suggest that the evangelist's understanding of the plight proceeds from his understanding of the salvation. This is especially clear in passages which equate sin, guilt or blindness with rejecting Jesus (3:16ff., 9:40, 15:22). The sin of rejecting Jesus cannot have existed before Jesus' coming into the world. Therefore the world can properly be said to be in sin and darkness only after it has been offered Jesus and has rejected him. Although the evangelist's mind may indeed have worked back from the second proposition - man's need for salvation - the logic of his argument requires that his readers assent to the first before the second. Similarly, these two propositions form the logical basis for the third and fourth propositions which express the purpose and *raison d'être* of the Gospel.

## CHAPTER FIVE: "SIGNS" AND JESUS' ESCHATOLOGICAL IDENTITY

As the discussions in the previous chapters indicate, the first two propositions, which form the basis of the Gospel's argument, were more than likely accepted, or acceptable, to early Christian and non-Christian readers alike. The third and fourth propositions, on the other hand, express the tenets which were specific to the purpose of the Gospel as expressed in 20:30-31. While the Synoptic Gospels probably assume that Jesus' acts or signs<sup>1</sup> reveal some aspect of Jesus' identity,<sup>2</sup> the Fourth Gospel both explicitly and implicitly expresses this proposition at every turn in the narrative. Indeed, it is this claim concerning the relationship between signs and Jesus' identity which is the most central to the purpose of the Gospel.

The third proposition claims that the belief that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God can and indeed should be based on signs. This formulation of the proposition focusses on the intellectual aspect of the act or process of believing. That is, it stresses primarily the necessity for the believer to believe particular facts or claims about Jesus, namely

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<sup>1</sup>In the Synoptics, Jesus' miraculous acts are usually called dunameis. See Gerhardsson, Mighty Acts of Jesus, pp.16-17, for a discussion of this term.

<sup>2</sup>Jesus' acts reveal, for example, his power over demons, as in Mk. 5:1-13.



that he is the Christ and Son of God. Furthermore, it argues that this intellectual knowledge can be based on signs. In other words, the signs in some way reveal or demonstrate the truth of particular claims.

How is this proposition concerning the revelatory function of signs expressed in the Gospel? The treatment of the signs-theme by Johannine scholars consistently points to one very obvious way in which the signs, understood as the seven or eight so-called signs-narratives, reveal Jesus' christological identity and his glory (doxa). The first sign, in which water is changed into wine at Cana, is explicitly described as a manifestation of Jesus' glory (2:11). The cleansing of the Temple points ahead to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, which are also integrally related to Jesus' glorification (cf. 2:18ff, 13:1ff.). The healing of the nobleman's son (4:46 ff.), the lame man (5:1ff.), and the blind man (9:1ff.) symbolize Jesus' power over health and life. This power receives its most explicit illustration in the raising of Lazarus (11:1ff.), which is also described as a revelation of Jesus' doxa (11:4). Because Jesus receives this power from the Father (5:26ff., 11:40-46), these narratives reveal Jesus' filial relationship to the Father. The feeding of the multitudes is symbolic of the saving power of Jesus, as the accompanying discourse points out (6:50ff.). Jesus' ability to walk on water, if it is to be considered a sign in the same category as the other signs-narratives,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>See above, Chap. 1, p. 25, note 7.

symbolizes Jesus' power over nature. Similarly the crucifixion and resurrection, whether or not they are "signs" in the sense that the Cana miracles are, are the supreme revelation of Jesus' glory.

Yet the Gospel's expression of the third proposition goes beyond the seven or eight signs-narratives, important as they are. If it is true that the term sēmeia is redefined in the course of the narrative to mean all of Jesus' acts and words,<sup>4</sup> then it may be said that the expression of this proposition extends to the Gospel as a whole. It will be shown in this chapter that virtually all of the narratives and discourses which comprise the Fourth Gospel play a role in illustrating or demonstrating the truth of the specific claims made by and about Jesus in the Gospel. That the Gospel quite consciously and explicitly attempts to prove the claims it makes about Jesus is evident at several points in the narrative. In 15:27, Jesus reminds the disciples that "you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning". The truth of this claim is indicated by the very structure of the narrative, in which the call of the disciples (1:35-51) coincides with the very beginning of Jesus' ministry. The truthfulness of Jesus' testimony before the High Priest is also illustrated by the structure of the Gospel. In 18:20, Jesus declares to the High Priest that "I have always taught in synagogues and in the Temple, where all Jews come together; I have said nothing secretly". The

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<sup>4</sup>See above, Chap. 1.

Gospel's care in proving this claim is indicated by the fact that except for the farewell discourses, which are outside the framework of Jesus' public ministry, most of Jesus' discourses are addressed to the Jews as a group<sup>5</sup> and the location is specified as either the Temple<sup>6</sup> (5:14, 7:14, 8:59, 10:23) or the synagogue (6:59).

The Gospel also takes care to indicate that Jesus is the fulfillment of scripture. This claim concerning Jesus is made repeatedly, especially in chapter five of the Gospel, in which Jesus criticizes the Jews for not recognizing him as the one of whom the scripture spoke (5:39ff. ; cf. also 1:45). At several points in the Passion narrative, the narrator points out to the reader that one or another detail of the crucifixion was done in order to fulfill the scripture (hina hē graphē plērōthēi) (cf. 19:24, 28, 36, 37). The acts and words which illustrate these claims may therefore be considered signs that the particular statements or claims made about Jesus are true.

In order to delineate the Gospel's expression of the third proposition it is necessary to look at the major claims made about Jesus, and the ways in which they are illustrated or revealed by the signs, that is, the

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<sup>5</sup>The exceptions are Jesus' conversations with Nicodemus (3:19), the Samaritan woman (4:7ff.), his brothers (7:6 ff.), and the disciples (4:34ff., 11:9 ff.).

<sup>6</sup>This detail is included not only to prove that Jesus speaks the truth in 18:20, but also to indicate Jesus' learnedness (he is qualified to teach in the Temple) and his right to the Temple, as his Father's son.

words and acts of Jesus which are recorded in the Gospel. According to 20:30-31, the major claims which must be accepted by the faithful are that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God. These two claims, as will be seen, contain within them many of the other claims made about Jesus. For example, the claim that Jesus is the Christ entails also the claim that he is the fulfilment of scripture (7:50). The claim that he is the Son of God entails also the claim that he speaks the words of the Father and therefore speaks only the truth (17:7ff.). A third christological title under which many claims about Jesus can be grouped is that of Jesus as the prophet. This claim and its illustration are evident, for example, in chapter eighteen, in which various events are described as the fulfilment of Jesus' word (18:9, 31-32; cf. also 12:33). Furthermore, the claim that Jesus is a prophet is integrally related to the claim that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God. The title "Prophet" (prophētēs) appears in connection with khristos in 1:19ff., 4:25ff., and 7:40-42, 50. Although in each case the two titles appear to be differentiated, there seems to be a consistent relationship between them. Finally, as the discussion below will indicate, the titles "Prophet", "Christ", and "Son of God" all point to the role of Jesus as the messenger, or agent of God, who transmits the word of God to the people (e. g., 17:7ff.).

Therefore the investigation of the third proposition will centre on the three titles - "Christ", "Son of God", and "Prophet". The usage of each title in the Fourth Gospel will be examined to determine the specific

meaning and content of each claim. It will be then shown in which ways the signs, understood as the words and acts of Jesus recorded in the Gospel, prove or illustrate the truth of these claims and therefore provide a solid foundation for the faith of the reader.

The term khristos, or "Christ", is used in eighteen verses in the Gospel. Its appearance in the form Messias, the Greek transliteration of mashiah (Hebrew) or meshiha (Aramaic) in 1:41 and 4:25, reveals the Gospel's awareness of the Semitic origin of the term. The fact that Messias is immediately explained in each case as meaning "the Christ" (ho estin methermēneuomenon khristos (1:41) implies an audience, at least for the final form of the Gospel,<sup>7</sup> which would not have understood the meaning of Messias without explanation.

As the Hebrew, or its transliterated Greek form, suggests, the term khristos is a "messianic" title, and for first-century Judaism was one of the titles attached to an expected eschatological figure.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>The parenthetical translation of Messias as khristos in 1:41 and 4:25 has been considered by some scholars as an explanatory gloss belonging to the final redaction of the Gospel. This theory would imply that the author of the "original" Gospel assumed a knowledge of the Semitic word on the part of his readers, whereas the redactors of the final form did not. See Bultmann, Gospel of John, p. 192, note 2.

<sup>8</sup>The original meaning of mashiah is "the anointed one", which in the Hebrew Bible usually refers to kings and sometimes to the high priests and the patriarchs. The title usually reads meshiah adonai, that is, the anointed one of the Lord, referring presumably to the principle of royal anointing which assumes that the king or high priest has been

Given the wide variety of eschatological expectations related to the title,<sup>9</sup> the term itself does not convey much information about the precise meaning of khristos in the Fourth Gospel. Rather, the meaning of the title must be determined through a detailed examination of the eighteen verses in which it appears.

These eighteen verses may be divided into two groups of nine verses each. In one group, the title is not defined directly, nor is its content the subject of any discussion. Khristos is used in these verses primarily to identify a particular character, most often Jesus. These verses however do contribute certain important elements to the definition of khristos in the Gospel. In the second group, the term is one element in a controversy or inquiry concerning the true identity of Jesus. These discussions reveal some of the expectations concerning the Christ which also serve as criteria by which the Christ is to be recognized. Whether these expectations were in fact held by the various first-century groups to which they are attributed in the Gospel cannot be determined with certainty in most cases.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 46; khrio, khristos, Theological Dictionary, 9:60ff.

<sup>10</sup>On the relationship between Jewish expectations as expressed in the Fourth Gospel and those actually held in first-century Judaism, see M. de Jonge, "Jewish Expectations about the 'Messiah'".

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anointed by God and therefore has divine sanction and protection. Therefore in its original usage, the word does not have messianic or eschatological connotations, though such connotations may have developed by pre-exilic times. See Grundmann et al, khrio, khristos, Theological Dictionary, 9:502ff., Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 87, and Mowinckel, He That Cometh, pp. 261ff.

Fortunately this state of affairs does not invalidate the present study, which is more interested in what the Gospel would have its readers know and believe than in the historical accuracy of the Gospel's assertions and claims.

The individual passages in each group will now be examined. The first group treats khristos primarily as a term of identification. Outside of the prologue,<sup>11</sup> the term khristos is first encountered as a negative identification for John the Baptist. In response to questioning by the delegation from Jerusalem, John the Baptist asserts that he is not the Christ (1:20), the Prophet, or Elijah (1:21). This assertion is repeated by the delegation in 1:25, who then wish to know who he is, if not one of these three figures. In 3:28, John reminds his disciples of the negative testimony recorded in 1:20ff., though the titles of "Prophet" and "Elijah" are not repeated. The questions of the delegation imply that the Christ, the Prophet and Elijah are three distinct figures, though the relationship among them is unclear. The context of the interrogation implies that these are not to be considered mere human figures. The pericope is sandwiched between two sections which speak of a figure bearing a close relationship with God and things divine: the prologue, (1:1-18) which speaks of the Logos, the true light who gave the believers in him the power to become children of God, and the witness of John the

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<sup>11</sup>1:17.

Baptist (1:29-34), which describes Jesus as the one on whom the Spirit descended and remained, and as he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Not only the context but also the three terms themselves would have indicated the eschatological level of the interrogation in 1:19-23 to the readers of the Gospel.<sup>12</sup> The passage, as well as its echo in 3:28, would therefore serve to deny John the Baptist eschatological status.<sup>13</sup>

Although 1:20, 1:25, and 3:28 apparently focus on the negative identification of John the Baptist, the main point of these sections is to contrast John the Baptist, the one who is not the Christ, with Jesus, the one who is. In 1:27ff. the contrast is accomplished using the terminology of baptism. John baptizes with water, but he does not compare in greatness with Jesus who baptizes with the Spirit (1:26, 33). In 3:29ff., wedding terminology is used: John the Baptist is the friend of the bridegroom, whereas Jesus is the bridegroom himself (3:29). Therefore the verses outlining the negative identification of John the Baptist as the Christ actually serve to make a positive identification of Jesus as the Christ.

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<sup>12</sup>On eschatological expectations in first and second century Judaism connected to the Prophet and Elijah, cf. R. Schnackenburg, "Die Erwartung des Prophetens", and G. Molin, "Elijahu der Prophet".

<sup>13</sup>These passages lend themselves to the theory that one of the purposes of the Gospel was to conduct a polemic against the followers of John the Baptist. Brown, Gospel According to John, pp. cxvii-lxxiii, 46-50.



In the remaining six verses in the first group of passages, the identification of Jesus as Christ is made more directly. In 1:17 and 17:3, the term khristos is attached to the name "Jesus", and seems to function as a proper name for Jesus:

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (īēsou khristou). (1:17)

And this is eternal life, that they [believers] know thee [God] . . . and Jesus Christ (īēsoun khriston) whom thou has sent. (17:3)

These two verses focus on Jesus Christ the person and not on khristos as a title, and therefore should not be used to determine the meaning of the term khristos. This type of usage is considered by some scholars to reflect a traditional formula of the early Johannine church, connected to confession and/or the liturgy.<sup>14</sup>

In two other verses, the term khristos is used in conjunction with the title "Son of God" (ho huios tou theou). In 11:27, Martha confesses to Jesus: "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world". In 20:31, the Gospel addresses its readers directly, indicating that "these signs are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, Son of God, and that believing you may have life in

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<sup>14</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 741, argues that 17:3 is a later insertion, because "although John has Jesus speak of himself in the third person . . . it is anomalous that Jesus should call himself 'Jesus Christ' ". Bultmann, Gospel of John, p. 79, note 1, regards both 1:17 and 17:3 as insertions by the evangelist into his source.

his name". These two verses raise the difficult question of the relationship between the two terms khristos and ho huios tou theou. The only conclusions that can be made with any certainty are that according to the Gospel both titles refer to an eschatological figure and both are considered as appropriate or belonging to Jesus.<sup>15</sup>

9:22, the final verse in this group, adds one very important piece of information concerning khristos, namely its role in the opposition between Christianity and Judaism: ". . . the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess him [Jesus] to be the Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue". This verse blames the split or opposition between Judaism and Christianity squarely on the Jews, by implying a conscious decision on the part of the Jewish community to exclude from the synagogue and hence from the Jewish community<sup>16</sup> those who confess

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<sup>15</sup>The view that the two terms are virtually synonymous is often held, according to Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 1059, by those who see the Gospel as a missionary document addressed to the Jews and as being primarily interested in proving that Jesus is the long-awaited Jewish Messiah. Another theory is that the term "Son of God" is an interpretation of "Christ", intended to deepen the meaning normally or traditionally attached to the "Christ". This possibility implies a de-emphasis on the title "Christ" and on its importance as an identification of Jesus. This view is often put forward by scholars who argue that the Gospel is addressed primarily to Gentile non-believers or to Christians, and is consequently interested in emphasizing "Son of God" over "Christ" as the central identification of Jesus. See Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 1060.

<sup>16</sup>For discussion concerning the exact type of Jewish ban to which 9:22 refers, see Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 374, and Martyn, History and Theology, pp. 50-62. See also Introduction, p. 3f.

Jesus. The identification of Jesus with the Christ figure is portrayed as the prime factor in the Jewish exclusion of Christians from the group.<sup>17</sup> This implies not only the gravity of the offence, from the point of view of the Gospel's Jews, but also the centrality of the confession of Jesus as Christ, for the self-definition of Johannine Christianity.

The first group of verses, therefore, reveal two important facts about the meaning of khristos in the Fourth Gospel: the title is applicable to Jesus, and to him alone; the identification of Jesus as the khristos was an issue in the controversy between the Johannine Jews and Jesus.<sup>18</sup>

The second group of passages provides more details concerning the Johannine usage of the term. These nine verses occur in the context of some dispute, discussion, or inquiry concerning whether or not the title "Christ" is appropriate to Jesus, that is, whether Jesus is in fact "the Christ". These discussions are not always directed to Jesus in the narrative, but are usually generated by specific actions of Jesus narrated in the Gospel.

The first two statements, 4:25, 29, are uttered by the Samaritan woman. The context is her discussion with Jesus. After Jesus has revealed her past marital life to her she pronounces him to be a prophet (4:19) and introduces a discussion of Jewish as opposed to Samaritan

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<sup>17</sup>See de Jonge, "Jewish Expectations about the Messiah", p. 251.

<sup>18</sup>This point is well argued by Martyn, History and Theology, pp. 91-100.

worship. Jesus responds with his analysis of worship, and concludes: "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (4:24). The woman's reaction, recorded in 4:25, is as follows: "I know that the Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things." Jesus responds: "I who speak to you am he" (4:26). This reply indicates that Jesus understood her statement as a question: "Are you the Messiah whom I know to be coming?" That this in fact was the intention of her statement is verified in 4:29b, in which she asks other Samaritans: "Can this be the Christ?"

4:25, 29b indicate two characteristics which, according to the Gospel, the Samaritans expected of the Messiah.<sup>19</sup> First, the Messiah was expected to be a "prophet", that is, to have the ability to know or see the background and past of others. It was Jesus' remarks concerning the Samaritan woman's previous husbands which led her to wonder whether he was the Messiah (4:25, 29). Secondly, the Messiah was expected to "show us all things", as the Revised Standard Version translates anaggelei hēmin hapanta in 4:25c. This characteristic is considered to be more definitive than the first. Whereas Jesus' prophetic abilities merely raised the possibility that Jesus was the Christ (4:29),<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>The messianic expectations recorded in ch. 4 do appear to accord with the Samaritan expectations concerning the "Taheb". Cf. J. Bowman, "Samaritan Studies".

<sup>20</sup>The word mēti in 4:29 (mēti houtos estin ho khristos) according to Arndt and Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 522, implies a degree

the statement in 4:25 is expressed as a definition of the central role of the Messiah. He who fills that role will be known to be the Messiah.

That Jesus possesses both of these characteristics is demonstrated throughout the Gospel in both the words and actions of Jesus. Not only does Jesus know the past of the Samaritan woman, he also saw Nathanael when he was under the fig tree, before Nathanael had ever heard of Jesus (1:48). Furthermore, he knew that Judas was a "devil" (diabolos) (6:70). This characteristic of Jesus is summed up by the narrator: "[Jesus] knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man" (2:25).

Before it can be judged whether the Johannine Jesus fulfills the second, and major criterion, that is, whether he "shows us all things", the meaning of this phrase itself must be determined. The Greek phrase reads: anaggelei hēmin hapanta. The commentators explain the meaning of this phrase in various ways. C. K. Barrett views the Messiah in this verse as he who will declare all that men desire to know.<sup>21</sup> C. H. Dodd

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<sup>21</sup>Barrett, Gospel According to St. John, p. 239.

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of uncertainty or doubt on the part of the Samaritan woman that Jesus is the Christ, despite the fact that Jesus has revealed his identity to her plainly (4:26). This implies that the woman has not reached complete faith, although her testimony to her fellow Samaritans does seem to have brought them to belief (4:39-42). See also Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 173, Barrett, Gospel According to St. John, p. 240, Bultmann, Gospel of John, p. 192.

sees him as one who will announce the whole truth in matters of religion.<sup>22</sup>

M. de Jonge interprets the verse as a reference to Jesus' knowledge of future events: Jesus will announce (anaggelei) what is surely to come (hapanta).<sup>23</sup>

As these comments indicate, the meaning of the verse rests on the meaning of the verb, anaggelei and its direct object hapanta. Although the Revised Standard Version has translated anaggelei as "he will show", a more accurate translation would be "he will declare", or "he will announce" as Dodd and Barrett have phrased it. The verb anaggelei, related to the word aggelos denoting "messenger", generally means to transmit by speech.<sup>24</sup> While it does not in all cases have to refer to the transmitting of a message which originated with someone other than the speaker, it often carries this nuance.<sup>25</sup> Only a survey of the usage of this verb in the Gospel will determine its meaning for the Gospel.

The verb appears in four verses in the Fourth Gospel in addition to 4:25. In 5:15 it simply means "tell", and does not carry the connotation of delivering a message: "The man went away and told (anēggeilen) the

<sup>22</sup>Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 315.

<sup>23</sup>de Jonge, "Jewish Expectations About the Messiah", p. 268.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Arndt and Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 50.

<sup>25</sup>For example, in Acts 14:27 and 15:4, the verb means "to report". Though the content of the "report" is "all that God had done with them", the nuance of message-bearing is not present.

Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him."<sup>26</sup> The remaining three instances of the verb appear in a description of the Spirit of truth:

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare (anaggelei) to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare (anaggelei) it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare (anaggelei) it to you. (16:13-15)

In this passage the verb clearly carries with it the nuance of transmitting a message that does not ultimately originate with the transmitter himself. The Spirit does not speak on his own authority, but declares what another, Jesus, bids him to declare. It is therefore through the Spirit that the people will hear the message of Jesus. The usage of anaggelei in this passage therefore opens the possibility that the verb in 4:25 is intended to suggest that the Christ, like the Spirit of truth, is a messenger, albeit an exalted one.

Hapanta, the neuter plural of hapas, means "all (things)" and is interchangeable with panta, the neuter plural of pas in koine Greek.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>The verb aneggelen in 5:15 occurs only in several manuscripts, including p66, 75. The remainder have eipen meaning "told". If the latter reading is followed, then the remaining four examples of anaggelei in the Gospel are consistent in connoting the transmitting of a message.

<sup>27</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 81. The variant panta is present for 4:25 in several manuscripts including p66, 75, perhaps in order to conform to the dominant usage in the Gospel. 4:25 is otherwise the only passage in which hapanta appears.

Because the word itself has a general, indefinite meaning, its precise referent in 4:25 cannot be determined from the verse alone. Nor does the immediate context provide a clear answer. Clues to the meaning of the word in 4:25 can be gleaned, however, from other verses in the Gospel in which the word is used in a manner similar to that used in 4:25.

Although the word hapanta or panta does not appear elsewhere in the Gospel as the direct object of anaggelei, it does occur as the direct object of other verbs which refer to the transmission of knowledge. In 14:26 it is used with the verb didaxei: "the Counsellor . . . whom the Father will send you in my name, he will teach (didaxei) you all things (panta)."<sup>28</sup> In this example, panta refers to the content of the message of the Paraclete. Didaxei may be considered functionally synonymous with anaggelei which is used of the Paraclete in 16:13-15. The context of 14:26, in particular the references to the Father, implies that the message has to do with heavenly or divine matters.

In 15:15, panta is the direct object of the verb egnōrisa, "to make known." Jesus tells his disciples: ". . . all that I have heard from my Father I have made known (egnōrisa) to you". Although the word anaggelei is not used here, the verse clearly depicts Jesus in the role of messenger. Panta here is given a more specific definition than in 4:25 or 14:16. It

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<sup>28</sup>For discussion concerning the relationship and possible identity between the Spirit and the Paraclete or Counsellor, see below, p. 187.



concerns "all that I have heard from my Father", supporting the conclusion reached with respect to 14:26 that in the appropriate context, panta can refer specifically to heavenly or divine things.

Similar to 15:15 is 17:7-8, in which Jesus, addressing himself to God, says:

Now they know that everything (panta) that thou hast given me is from thee; for I have given (dedōka) them the words which thou gavest me. (17:7-8)

The verses 17:7 and 17:8 express parallel thoughts. Panta in 17:7 is parallel to "the words which thou gavest me" in 17:8. "They know" in 17:7 is related to "I have given them" in 17:8, since it is through Jesus' giving (the equivalent of anaggelō) that the disciples can know what they know. Here again panta refers to divine or heavenly things.<sup>29</sup>

From these three examples it may be suggested that the combination of panta or hapanta and a verb pertaining to verbal transmission, in a context which refers to God or the Father, refers to the telling of heavenly or divine matters by a certified "messenger" of God to a third party. 4:25 has a context similar to the three examples cited above: the preceding verses deal explicitly with the worship of God the Father. Therefore 4:25 may also be interpreted along the same lines as 14:26, 15:15 and 17:7-8. The Messiah is the "Messenger" who will transmit to "us", the Samaritans, or perhaps more generally, the world,

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<sup>29</sup>In other examples, panta has a secular meaning, such as "all events", 18:4.

hapanta, that is, the heavenly matters of God. This interpretation is closest to that suggested by C. H. Dodd.<sup>30</sup>

This interpretation of 4:25 is supported by its immediate context. In response to the Samaritan woman's implied question concerning his identity, Jesus says: "I who speak to you am he" (4:26). Here Jesus explicitly identifies himself as the Messiah whom the Samaritan woman expects. It is significant, however, that he is made to describe himself as ho lalōn soi, when he could just as easily have said: "I am he", or "I who stand before you am he." Use of the participle lalōn serves to reinforce the idea that Jesus' function, which is also the function of the Messiah according to 4:25, is to transmit the words, or things, of the Father, to others by means of speech.

Emphasis on the words or speech of Jesus as indicating his messianic identity is also evident in 4:39-42. In this passage it is related that many Samaritans were drawn to Jesus because of the Samaritan woman's testimony (9:39). They invite Jesus to stay with them, and he stays two days. Immediately afterwards it is narrated:

And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."  
(4:41-42)

These verses imply that Jesus' major activity during his stay with the

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<sup>30</sup> Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 315.

Samaritans was speaking and this constituted decisive proof of his messianic identity.<sup>31</sup> Therefore the context of 4:25 supports the interpretation of the phrase anaggelei. . . hapanta as given above, and also implies that Jesus fulfils the messianic function to which the phrase refers. The contents of the other passages examined above in order to determine the meaning of 4:25 also serve as "signs" which demonstrate that Jesus announces the heavenly or divine things to those who listen. To paraphrase 17:7-8, Jesus has transmitted to his followers everything, that is, all of the words which the Father has given him. These words are presumably transmitted in the discourses which have such a prominent place in the Gospel. Furthermore, the disciples themselves acknowledge that Jesus "knows all things" (16:30). Their knowledge is based on what he has been telling them, presumably throughout the farewell discourses (16:29).

In sum, discourses of Jesus as well as specific statements made by various groups of believers function as signs which demonstrate Jesus' possession of the messianic characteristics articulated by the Samaritan woman. For this purpose it is not important that the various characters in the Gospel were not present at all of the discourses, or

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<sup>31</sup>This contradicts somewhat Jesus' statement to the High Priest in 18:20, that he always taught openly before all the Jews. The purpose of 4:39-42 is probably not to suggest that Jesus had some secret teaching which he shared only with Samaritans, but to emphasize that their belief was a response to his words and not to some other factor.

that the Jews were not witness to the farewell discourses during which Jesus "gave" so many of the important words of God. What is important is that the reader is present, since it is to him that the Gospel is trying to prove Jesus' identity as Christ.

The next three passages dealing explicitly with Jesus as the khristos form part of a series of controversies among the Jews concerning the identity and person of Jesus (7:10ff.). The controversies are provoked by Jesus' teaching in the Temple (7:14ff.) as well as by his background, activity and claims in general.<sup>32</sup>

The information which these passages convey concerns the characteristics which the Johannine Jews expect of the Messiah. These characteristics also constitute the criteria according to which these groups judge the messianic claims made for Jesus. In keeping with its purpose as stated in 20:30-31, the Gospel shows by means of the signs, that is, the actions and words of Jesus, that he does fulfill these criteria. Each passage, the criterion or criteria it discusses, and the signs which demonstrate their appropriateness to Jesus will now be examined.

The first controversy passage concerning the title khristos is 7:25-27. After Jesus' first speech in the Temple, some of the people

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<sup>32</sup>The first controversy section, 7:11-13, occurs before Jesus enters the Temple at this feast, and is apparently provoked by his earlier activity.

present say:

Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? Yet we know where this man comes from; and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.

The first part of the passage, 7:25-26, concerns the authorities' knowledge of and reaction to Jesus. It points to the hostile attitude of the authorities and expresses the onlookers' surprise that despite this hostility, Jesus has not been forcibly removed from the Temple, but apparently is being allowed to teach there. The only explanation for this paradox is that the authorities know that Jesus is the Christ, since presumably the Christ would be allowed to speak unhindered at the Temple.<sup>33</sup>

The passage then moves on to the question of whether Jesus really is the Christ, that is, whether the people should acknowledge him as such. 7:27 raises an objection to the identification of Jesus as the Christ: his background is known, whereas the origins of the Christ

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<sup>33</sup>It is striking that according to the wording of the passage, the issue is not whether Jesus really is the Christ, but rather whether the authorities will recognize him as such. This wording changes the issue from the question of Jesus' identity to that of the perception of the Jewish establishment.

are expected to be unknown.<sup>34</sup> In other words, the statement points to a characteristic expected of the Messiah, against which Jesus is being tested.

As many commentators have pointed out, this statement is a good example of Johannine irony.<sup>35</sup> The Jews believe that they know where Jesus comes from; they identify him as "Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know" (6:42), from the Galilee (7:41). Therefore he cannot be the Christ. Yet the reader knows that in truth Jesus is from heaven (6:33), and his true Father is God (1:18). This is in fact the response which Jesus makes to the controversy in 7:27:

You know me, and you know where I come from? But I have not come of my own accord; he who sent me is true, and him you do not know. (7:28)

Rather than denying his Galilean roots or earthly parentage, Jesus'

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<sup>34</sup>Many scholars consider 7:27 a possible allusion to the expectation of a "hidden" Messiah. This term refers to an apocalyptic strain of Messianic expectations which held that the Messiah's presence on earth will be hidden until such time as it will be shown to the people. See Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 53. According to Trypho (Justin, Dialogue with Trypho, vii, 4 cxi), Elijah will be the one to make the Messiah known. The fact that the Gospel denies John the Baptist the role of Elijah could perhaps be seen as an argument against this type of expectation, though in the narrative itself the Baptist does fulfill the function of pointing Jesus out as saviour both to the readers (1:29) and to his disciples (1:35). Cf. de Jonge, "Jewish Expectations of the Messiah", p. 256. Other verses may also be read as part of the hidden Messiah motif, e. g., 1:26 and 2:24. See also E. Stauffer, "Agnostos Christos: Joh xi. 24 und Eschatologie".

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 318.

response translates the terms of the discussion concerning his origins to a different plane. It is God the Father who sent him (8:18), whom the Jews do not know (8:19).

The fact that the Jews do not know or acknowledge Jesus' heavenly origins in effect proves that Jesus fulfills the criterion they themselves consider to be a messianic one according to 7:27. The Jews themselves admit their ignorance in a different context. In answer to the question of the man born blind ("Do you too want to become his [Jesus'] disciples?" 9:27), they reply:

You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.  
We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from. (9:29)<sup>36</sup>

Hence the words of both Jesus and the Jews, as recorded in the Gospel (7:28, 9:29), act as signs which illustrate that Jesus' true origins were unknown to the Jews.

The last statement of this same controversy section, 7:31, reveals another characteristic of the expected Christ: "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man [Jesus] has done?" In other words, the speakers consider that the signs which they have already observed may indicate that Jesus is the expected Messiah. Not only the doing of signs, but also the quantity of signs must be taken into

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<sup>36</sup>There are striking verbal parallels between 7:27 (oudeis ginōskei pothen estin) and 9:29 (touton de ouk oidamen pothen estin). This does suggest a possible connection between the two verses.

consideration in determining Jesus' identity. Although the healing of the lame man is the only sign to which the immediate context of this verse refers (7:21ff.), the plural noun sēmeia indicates that it is not the only sign which the speakers have observed.<sup>37</sup>

If the doing of a great number of signs, in the sense of miracles, is a criterion of messiahship, then the Gospel offers ample proof that Jesus is the Christ. Not only are a number of miracles narrated in the Gospel itself, but several allusions are made to the fact that these represent only a small selection of the total number which Jesus actually performed:

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book . . . (20:30)

But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. (21:25)

The final controversy section in chapter seven which concerns the

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<sup>37</sup>According to de Jonge, "Jewish Expectations about the Messiah", p. 259, there is no connection made between the Messiah and signs in Jewish sources. That signs were indeed expected by the Jews is suggested in several places in the New Testament. For example, the Jews in the Fourth Gospel twice demand a sign to authenticate a particular action or saying of Jesus, in 2:18, 6:30. Also, Paul declares in 1 Cor. 1:22, that the Jews demand signs whereas the Greeks seek wisdom. While none of these passages makes the explicit connection between signs and the Messiah found in 7:31, they do associate "sign" and an eschatological figure in whom the witnesses of the sign would potentially believe. For more discussion of this point, see Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 313.



identity of the Christ is 7:40-43. As a consequence of Jesus' words concerning the Spirit (7:37-39), the people seem to divide into three factions.<sup>38</sup> Some of the people are led to consider Jesus "the prophet" (7:40). Others say that he is the Christ (7:41a), implying, as in 1:20ff., that the "Prophet" and "Christ" are not synonymous terms. Yet another group objects against identifying Jesus as the Christ:

Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was? (7:41b-42)

This passage contains two messianic criteria against which Jesus is being measured. The first concerns his origins and therefore is related thematically to 7:27, discussed above. This passage raises a slightly different objection to Jesus' messianic identity than does 7:27. It focusses on Jesus' earthly origins and claims that they rule out his messiahship because first, the Messiah was to be of the seed of David, which Joseph, Jesus' father, and therefore Jesus himself were not, and second, the Messiah was to be in Bethlehem, whereas Jesus was born in Nazareth in the Galilee.

The Gospel remains curiously silent about these objections, not

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<sup>38</sup>It is possible that only two groups or factions are in fact represented, those who consider Jesus the prophet and those who consider him the Christ. The group in 7:41b-42 could then be seen as supporting the identification of Jesus as the prophet as opposed to the Christ. The context however implies the existence of a third group, which denies Jesus any special title at all.

providing any counter-arguments or rebuttals here or in any other place in the text. R. E. Brown interprets this silence as another example of irony in the Gospel. Although people think that he was born in Nazareth, in fact Jesus was born in Bethlehem, of the seed of David, and therefore he fulfills these messianic requirements. Brown supports this view by comparing 7:42 with 7:27. In 7:27 the Jews do not know of Jesus' true identity, but the readers of the Gospel do. Similarly here in 7:42, the Jews believe in Jesus' Galilean origin, whereas the readers know of the traditions, recounted in other Gospels<sup>39</sup> concerning Jesus' "true" place of birth. Hence the mistake in 7:42 would be as apparent to the readership of the Gospel as was the error in 7:27.<sup>40</sup>

This interpretation does not take into account, however, a basic difference between 7:27 and 7:42. With respect to the former, the information necessary to recognize the error of the Jews is amply provided by the Gospel itself,<sup>41</sup> while in the case of 7:42 it is necessary to argue that the Gospel assumes a knowledge of other specific traditions on the part of its readers. It is true that the Gospel assumes this type of knowledge at other points. The clearest example is 3:24, in which the Gospel alludes to John the Baptist's imprisonment, an event which

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<sup>39</sup>Cf. Mt. 2 and Lk. 2.

<sup>40</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 330.

<sup>41</sup>E. g., 8:18ff.

is presumably known to the readers but is not recounted in the Gospel itself. It is very possible, therefore, that such knowledge on the part of the reader is not ruled out with respect to other events or traditions as well. Nevertheless, it cannot be assumed from the Gospel's silence that 7:42 is one of these instances.

As R. E. Brown himself recognizes, there are other plausible explanations of the silence.<sup>42</sup> The most likely seems to be that of C. H. Dodd and M. de Jonge<sup>43</sup> who interpret the silence as an indication that the Gospel does not consider these issues important enough to debate. For the Gospel to rest its case on Jesus' earthly descent or birthplace would be to draw itself away from one of the central tenets of Johannine theology, namely Jesus' relationship with the Father. According to this interpretation, 7:42 is still parallel to 7:27, though for a different reason than that suggested by Brown. Both verses in effect transfer the question of Jesus' origins from the earthly plane to the heavenly plane by counting on the reader to supply information about Jesus' true origins and his relationship with God which the reader learned from other parts of the Gospel.

The second messianic criterion put forward in 7:41f. concerns the Messiah as the fulfilment of the scriptures, including the prophetic writings

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<sup>42</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 330.

<sup>43</sup>Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 91; de Jonge, "Jewish Expectations About the Messiah", p. 259.

as well as the Torah. This second criterion underlies the first one, since, according to the passage, the criteria of Davidic descent and birth in Bethlehem are based on scriptural prophecies.<sup>44</sup> The criterion is also implied in 7:52, in which the chief priests and Pharisees tell Nicodemus: "Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee".

The Gospel narrative asserts that Jesus is the fulfilment of scripture in various ways. First, there are three passages in which Jesus is described explicitly as the one of whom the scriptures speak. In 1:45, Philip describes Jesus as "him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph".<sup>45</sup> In 5:39, Jesus says to the Jews, "You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me". He continues in 5:46: "If you believed Moses you would believe me, for he wrote of me". Second, several events and details of Jesus' earthly life are said by the narrator to have occurred in order to fulfill

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<sup>44</sup>The only scriptural evidence for the idea that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem is Micah 5:1. Even so, there is no evidence that this was established messianic doctrine in the first century. Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 91, suggests that perhaps Jesus actually was born in Bethlehem, a fact which then revived interest in Micah's prophecy that had played little part in contemporary Judaism.

<sup>45</sup>It is possible that 1:45 contains an oblique retort to the idea of Davidic descent and birth in Bethlehem, by stating that it is precisely Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph, who is the Messiah foretold by scripture.

the scriptures. Among these are the triumphal entry (12:15), the unbelief of the people (12:38), the Jews' hatred for Jesus (15:25), and various details of the crucifixion (19:24, 28, 33, 34, 36, 37). The care with which the narrator points out these fulfilment-events implies that they are indeed to be understood as "signs" that Jesus possesses this messianic characteristic.

The next statement concerning the Christ is 10:24. The Jews, either out of frustration or hostility,<sup>46</sup> say to Jesus: "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly". The event which precedes and appears to prompt this question is the enigmatic sheep allegory.<sup>47</sup> The criterion implied in 10:24 is that the Christ will reveal himself to the people after a time. He will not remain hidden

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<sup>46</sup>The precise meaning of heōs pote tēn psukhēn hēmōn aireis in 10:24 is unclear. Literally the meaning is to "take away our life". Brown, Gospel of John, pp. 402f., remarks that the use of this expression to mean suspense is not well-attested and he suggests that it may mean "to bother" as in modern Greek. Bultmann, Gospel According to John, p. 351, note 5, sees the expression as meaning "to put in a state of great expectancy", citing Jos. Antiquities, XII, 48. It is possible of course that several meanings are intended.

<sup>47</sup>According to the chronology of the Gospel, several months have elapsed between the sheep allegory, which presumably was told during Tabernacles (7:1ff.), and the Jews' statement at the Feast of Dedication (10:22). For the reader of the Gospel, however, there is no such gap: the reader of 10:24 still has the allegory well in mind and would consider the Jews' statement as a response to it, especially since the terminology of the allegory is reintroduced in 10:25ff., which is Jesus' response to the Jewish demand for a sign.

forever.

Jesus responds directly to the request or demand of the Jews by stating that he has revealed himself to them. The Jews' lack of knowledge is not due to his secretiveness but rather to their inability or unwillingness to understand or to believe (10:25ff.).

The Gospel provides evidence both of Jesus' openness and of the Jews' disbelief. In 18:20, Jesus declares to the high priest: "I have always taught in the synagogues and in the temple where all Jews come together; I have said nothing secretly." This is substantiated by the discourses which are explicitly stated to have taken place in the synagogue at Capernaum (6:59) and in the Temple (e. g. , 5:14, 7:14).<sup>48</sup> Similarly, the Jews' disbelief is mentioned repeatedly by Jesus (e. g. , 12:37), and is seen as leading ultimately to his death (19:7ff.).

The final controversy concerning Jesus as the Christ challenges Jesus: "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of man must be lifted up?" (12:34) This question is prompted by Jesus' comment in 12:32, which the narrator interprets as a reference to Jesus' manner of death:

" . . . and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show by what death he was to die. (12:32-22)

Like 11:27 and 20:31, 12:34 associated a second title with the

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<sup>48</sup>See note 31 above.

title of "Christ", although in a different manner. Whereas in the former passages the two titles, "Christ" and "Son of God", are juxtaposed in a way which makes their relationship ambiguous, in the latter passage, the term "Son of Man" clearly is being used as a synonym for "Christ". The phrase "Son of man must be lifted up" (hupsō thēnai) is used as a contrast to "Christ remains forever" (menei eis tou aiōna).

In addition to assuming an identity between "Christ" and "Son of Man", 12:34 points to two characteristics of the expected Messiah. The first, contained in the phrase "We have heard from the law that . . .", is the same one which was examined in connection with 7:42, namely that the Christ will be the fulfilment of the Hebrew scriptures. The Gospel demonstrates that Jesus meets this criterion in a variety of ways, as outlined above.<sup>49</sup>

On the basis of this primary criterion, 12:34 asserts that "remaining forever" is also characteristic of the Messiah.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup>See pp. 134f.

<sup>50</sup>It is difficult to find direct scriptural background for the claim that the Messiah is to remain forever. There are passages which speak of the eternal rule of the Davidic line or the king (e. g., Ps. 89:4) or the Son of Man (Dan. 7:14), but none which speak of the Messiah. See Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 469. The solution suggested by Van Unnik is plausible. He argues that this expectation is linked to Ps. 88:37, which in the LXX reads to sperma autou (i. e., the seed of David) eis tōn aiōna menei. If the Messiah is considered to come from the house of David, then this verse might be interpreted as "the messiah remains forever." See Van Unnik, "The Quotation from the Old Testament in John 12:34".

Presumably "remaining forever" means immortality, since Jesus' comments about his impending death are taken to mean that he will not remain forever and therefore cannot be the Messiah. It is therefore Jesus' use of the verb hupsōthēnai in 12:32 which is understood by the Jews as a contraindication to his messiahship.

The verb hupsōthēnai, which is translated as "to be lifted up", or "to be exalted", also means "to draw closer to God".<sup>51</sup> For the Fourth Gospel, Jesus' crucifixion is a necessary part of the process of his exaltation. It is said that Jesus will ascend to the Father (16:10), and abide where God is (14:23) after the crucifixion. He will prepare a place for his disciples (14:12), send the Paraclete (14:16), and will himself return to the disciples (14:18) who will see him again (14:19). All of these events can occur only after the crucifixion and resurrection.

The double meaning of hupsōthēnai and the list of things which Jesus promises to do after the crucifixion point to the ironic meaning of 12:34. Whereas the Jews conceive of Jesus' impending death as the end of his life and therefore as proof that he will not "remain forever", the reader knows that in reality Jesus' death is a necessary step in his exaltation, his return to his true life with

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<sup>51</sup>Cf. Bertram, hupsōthēnai, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 8:607.



the Father.<sup>52</sup>

That Jesus' death did not mark the end of his true existence is demonstrated by the resurrection appearances, during which Jesus returns to his disciples several times (chaps. 20, 21). This indicates the fulfilment of at least one of his promises concerning post-crucifixion events, namely that he will return to his disciples who will see him again (14:19). Although the post-resurrection Jesus appears to have some powers which he did not exhibit before, such as the ability to walk through doors and walls (20:19, 26), he is quite "real" and even invites Thomas to touch him (20:27) though Mary had been forbidden to do so before the ascension (20:17).<sup>53</sup> The

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<sup>52</sup>Because the verb hupsōthēnai has the double meaning of "to lift up" and "to exalt", the contrast between hupsōthēnai and menein implied in 12:34 is not necessarily inherent in the two words themselves. According to C.C. Torrey, "When I am Lifted up From the Earth", the presence of the sharp contrast in 12:34 is due to the fact that the words recorded in 12:32 were originally spoken by Jesus in Aramaic. The verb for hupsōthēnai in Aramaic is istalek, the ordinary meaning of which is "to depart". It is this word which the people originally heard, and which is responsible for the sharp contrast they assume. Torrey argues that the Greek translation would not have rendered the verb in 12:32 as hupsōthēnai but for the narrator's explanation in 12:33. While Torrey's explanation is possible, the reading of the passage as deliberate Johannine irony, according to which the Jews rather blindly perceive only the literal meaning of hupsōthēnai is at least as persuasive.

<sup>53</sup>If the concept of "remaining forever", in the opinion of the Johannine Jews, included not only freedom from death but also pre-existence, the Gospel also contains proof that Jesus had an existence before being sent into the world. Cf. 1:1ff., 17:24, 8:57-58.

resurrection appearances, therefore, are the signs that Jesus did indeed "remain forever".

On the basis of this survey of the passages in which the term khristos is used, several conclusions can be drawn with respect to both the meaning of the title in the Gospel and the ways in which the Gospel demonstrates that Jesus is the Christ. Khristos or Messias in the Fourth Gospel refers to an eschatological figure whose coming was expected by the Jews and the Samaritans of Jesus' time. This figure was expected to have certain definite characteristics. According to the Johannine Jews, he was expected to be the fulfilment of the Hebrew Scriptures, and therefore to be of Davidic descent, to be born in Bethlehem, and to remain forever, though he was also expected by some to be of unknown origin. He was to do many signs, and after a time, to reveal himself plainly. The Samaritans, according to the Gospel, expected him to be a prophet and also to proclaim the divine things to them. Whether all of these views were held by all Jews and Samaritans is unclear from the Gospel. The setting forth of these criteria serves not only to define the Christ as a term but also to imply that Jesus' self-declaration was not enough for these groups. The Messiah was to be known by his deeds and background; whether a man was the Messiah or not was a judgment to be made by others, though as the controversies in the Gospel suggest, the issue of messianic identity was not always as straightforward as one might

have wished.

In conclusion, the passages in which the term khristos appears assign specific characteristics to the figure bearing this title. The signs, that is, the words and works of Jesus, demonstrate that Jesus possesses these characteristics, and that he is therefore to be identified as the Christ. In other words, knowledge about, and faith in, Jesus' christological identity can be based on the signs as narrated in the Gospel.

Son of God - (ho huios tou theou)

Unlike the title khristos, the major characteristics of which can be determined only from the context in which it is used, the title huios tou theou itself points to the central aspect of the title: the bearer of the title stands in a filial relationship to God. For this reason, the primary sources for an understanding of this filial relationship are not only the nine passages in which the full title occurs, but also the verses in which God is referred to as Jesus' father, and Jesus as God's son;<sup>54</sup> whereas the "Son of God" passages present the major characteristics of this eschatological figure, the latter two sets of verses serve to amplify or explain these characteristics. Therefore the discussion of this title will be structured around the "Son of God"

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<sup>54</sup>It has been argued, for example, by Lindars, "The Son of Man", p. 50, that the title "Son" is not only an abbreviation of "Son of God" but is also intended as a reference to the "Son of man". See Appendix for a discussion of this point.

passages, drawing on the other passages where necessary. It will also point to the "signs" which indicate that Jesus is indeed the Son of God.<sup>55</sup>

The term "Son of God" appears nine times in the Fourth Gospel. In all cases the referent is Jesus. In 5:25, 10:36 and 11:4, the term is used by Jesus to refer to himself. In other cases the term is used by another party to refer to Jesus (Narrator in 1:18, 3:18, 20:31; Nathanael in 1:49; Martha in 11:27; the Jews in 19:7).

The first appearance of the title is in the words of the Baptist in 1:32-34:

I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.

This passage defines the Son of God as "he on whom [the Baptist] saw the Spirit descend and remain" (1:32). Furthermore, it points to Jesus as the one who corresponds to this definition (cf. 1:29).

Therefore the vision described in the passages provides an important characteristic of the Son of God and also serves as a sign that Jesus possesses this characteristic, and therefore is the Son of God.

A second feature of the Son of God, according to this passage, is that he baptizes with the Holy Spirit. The Gospel narrative

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<sup>55</sup>One of the problematic issues concerning this title is its relationship to the title "Son of Man". For a brief discussion of this problem, see the Appendix.

emphasizes that Jesus himself did not engage in ordinary baptism (4:2). It does, however, associate Jesus with the giving of the Holy Spirit (7:39). The resurrection appearance to the disciples, in which Jesus breathes on them, giving them the Spirit as well as the power to forgive sins, serves as a sign that the disciples were indeed "baptized" with the Holy Spirit (20:22-23).<sup>56</sup>

The next passage in which the "Son of God" title appears is in Nathanael's confession in 1:49: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the king of Israel!" Nathanael's confession is seen as the consequence of Jesus' statement to him in 1:48: "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you ". While it could be argued that Philip's confession to Nathanael in 1:45, which led to the meeting between Jesus and "the true Israelite", predisposed Nathanael to interpret Jesus as an eschatological figure, Nathanael's comment in 1:46 ("Can anything good come out of Nazareth?") indicates the opposite. The fact that Nathanael came to a full understanding and confession of Jesus as King of Israel and Son of God becomes even more significant in view of Nathanael's initial skepticism.

The context indirectly provides another characteristic of the Son of God, namely, knowledge of people and their past. This

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<sup>56</sup>See pp. 134f. for further discussion of this passage.

characteristic, also associated with the Christ (4:29), and the prophet (4:19),<sup>57</sup> is illustrated not only with respect to Nathanael, but also with respect to Judas (6:71) and the Samaritan woman (4:7ff.).

Similar to Nathanael's confession is that attributed to Martha in 11:27: ". . . I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world.". Like 20:30-31, this verse links the titles khristos and huios tou theou, but does not permit any conclusion concerning their precise relationship. Both are described here as ho eis ton kosmon erkhomenos (cf. also 4:25), a phrase which is also associated with the prophet (6:14) and which signifies the expectation of an eschatological figure. Jesus' words in 11:25-26, which prompt Martha's confession in 11:27, provide a detailed description of the role she perceives Jesus to play:

I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

5:25 also deals with the Son of God as the giver of life, though it uses different vocabulary:

Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

The expression "hearing the voice" (akousousin tēs phōnēs) in 5:25 is equivalent to "believing" in 3:18, whereas the term "will live"

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<sup>57</sup>See pp. 118 and 163.

(zealousin) is equivalent to not being "condemned" (ou krinetai) in 3:18.

The narratives depicting the raising of Lazarus (11:1-44) and the healing of the official's son (4:46-54) are the most obvious "signs" that Jesus performs this life-giving function.

The opposition between the Jews and the believers in the Son of God, and indeed between the Jews and Jesus himself, which is alluded to in 3:18, comes to open expression in 10:35-36, in which Jesus asks the Jews:

If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken), do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world "You are blaspheming" because I said, "I am the Son of God"?

10:36 adds two important pieces of information to the picture of the "Son of God" title in the Gospel. First, it describes the Son of God as "he whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world". The focus is not on Jesus as the biological Son of God, but on Jesus as the chosen and consecrated agent of God in the world, sent by God to fulfill a special mission. Again, it is the Baptist's vision in 1:32-34 which can be interpreted as the sign that this description of Jesus is accurate. Second, it points to this title as the principal Jewish charge against Jesus. Jesus' claim to be Son of God constitutes blasphemy, a charge for which the punishment is death by stoning (cf. 10:33, 19:7).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>See Blinzler, Trial of Jesus, pp. 122f. and Harvey, Jesus on Trial, pp. 67ff., for a discussion of the Jewish charges against Jesus.

When read in context, however, 10:36 serves not only to describe the charge against Jesus but also to refute it, at least to the readers if not to the characters in the Gospel. This can be seen clearly by comparing 10:33 and 10:36. In 10:33, the Jews explain why they are stoning Jesus: "It is not for a good work that we stone you but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God ". 10:35-36 in effect answers that charge. In the first place, the scriptural reference, Ps. 82:6, implies that since the word of God has come to Jesus (cf. 12:49), he too is entitled to call himself a god according to scripture. More importantly, however, the Jews are mistaken with respect to both parts of their description of him in 10:37. He is not a man in the same sense that they are men: he is consecrated and sent by God. Neither does he make himself God. First, he is not God, but the Son of God, and second, he did not take this role upon himself on his own initiative. He does not make himself anything, but is made what he is by God (cf. 5:30). Evidently the Jews did not comprehend or believe this response, for in 19:7 they state their accusation before Pilate: "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God". This accusation is similar to the one in 10:33. The fact that in 19:7 the term "Son of God" is used instead of God does not seem to make any difference to the content or the severity of the charge. This implies that while the terms "God" and "Son of God" may not be synonymous, they are sufficiently close in



meaning to make the accusation valid.

11:4 also blurs the distinction between God and the Son of God. It contains Jesus' response to the news of Lazarus' illness: "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it ". The passage implies a very close relationship between the glory of God and the glorification of Jesus as the Son of God. In its context, the verse suggests that glorification bears a connection to the public display of Jesus' powers, that is, the resurrection of Lazarus. This is reinforced by 11:40 which immediately precedes the account of the resurrection itself: "Jesus said to Martha, 'Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?' " This promise is immediately followed by the resurrection of Lazarus, implying that it is in this event or sign that the glory of God is to be seen. 11:4, in its connection between God and the Son of God, suggests that thereby the glory of the Son of God is also revealed. The description of the Son of God which emerges from the nine passages in which the title appears is as follows: he is an eschatological figure, as are the Christ (20:31, 11:27), and the king of Israel (1:48). He bears a close, filial relationship with God (1:32-34, 19:7, 10:36), sharing in his glory (11:4) and in his life-giving role vis-à-vis the believer (3:18, 5:25, 1:33).

The nature of the Father/Son relationship can be described in more detail on the basis of the passages in which the terms "Father"

(patēr), in reference to God, and "Son" (huios), in reference to Jesus appear. In various passages, Jesus is described as being from the Father (16:27-28: para tou patros), as being because of the Father (6:57: dia ton patera), and as proceeding and coming forth from God the Father (8:42: ek tou theou). The preposition ek plus the genitive case can denote either separation from a particular place or origin as to family, city, etc.<sup>59</sup> The preposition para plus the genitive case is generally used after verbs of sending, coming, going and originating, and therefore also refers to the place of origin.<sup>60</sup> The very terms "Son of God" and "Father" suggest that these prepositions are being used to designate the Father as the point of origin of the Son. This does not necessarily suggest a biological relationship between Jesus and God. Rather, the Son originates with or from the Father in the sense that "he had come from God (apo theou) and was going to God" (pros ton theou) (13:3).<sup>61</sup> Therefore the relationship between God and Jesus involves not only a close "personal" relationship but also an identity of place or home. This identity of place is not entirely lacking while Jesus is away from "home", or his Father's house (14:2), since even on earth there is a mutual indwelling of Father and Son, as indicated by 14:11: "Believe

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<sup>59</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon, pp.233-34.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., pp.314ff.

<sup>61</sup>See also 14:2; 16:10; 20:17. See Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p.259.

me that I am in the Father and the Father in me",<sup>62</sup>

If Jesus' home is ultimately with God the Father, his presence in the world is due to his having been sent by the Father. That this is a central aspect of Jesus' sonship is indicated by the fact that God is repeatedly described as "the Father who sent me" (ho patēr ho pempas me: 6:44).<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Jesus may be described not only as God's son but also as God's agent, entrusted with a mission. This mission is to reveal the Father and the words of the Father to the world (15:15). Indeed, knowledge and vision of the Father can be achieved only through the agency of Jesus:

. . .no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. (14:6, 7)  
 . . .He who has seen me has seen the Father. (14:9b)

Love of Jesus implies love of the Father, and being loved by the Father (14:21). Conversely, hatred or rejection of Jesus necessarily entails hatred of the Father (14:23, 24b, 15:23).

The assertion that Jesus mediates the relationship between God and the believer is related to the claim that Jesus is the way to salvation. The way in which Jesus' revelatory and soteriological role functions is also expressed using Father/Son vocabulary: both Jesus' works and his words have their origin in the Father.

<sup>62</sup>See also 14:20; 10:38.

<sup>63</sup>See also 5:36; 8:16, 18; 10:36; 12:29, 49; 20:29.

That Jesus' works originate with God is expressed in 14:10: "The Father who dwells in me does his works". From this claim it follows that Jesus' works testify to his identity as the Son of God. This conclusion is derived not only from the statements concerning Jesus' power to do his Father's works, but also from the discourse in 8:31-58. The heated discussion between Jesus and the Jews which is described in this passage is based on the principle that the identity of the father can be determined by the actions of the son. Jesus tells the Jews:

If you were Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did . . . If God were your Father, you would love me . . . (8:40, 42)

According to this passage, the Jews have neither God nor Abraham as their father. Rather their rejection of Jesus and attempts to kill him indicate that their true father is the devil (8:44). The actions and works of Jesus, on the other hand, prove, that is, act as a sign, that God is his father (8:38). What are the "works" of the Father which Jesus does? According to 5:21-27, Jesus' most important works are the giving of life and judgment, both of which are involved in the process of salvation:

For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.

The claim that God is the source of Jesus' power to give life to those he judges worthy, that is, to believers in him, is illustrated most clearly

at the climax of the narrative of the Raising of Lazarus. Before Lazarus is resurrected, Jesus addresses a short prayer to God:

Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me. (11:41)

In asking God to hear him, Jesus is calling on God to do as he requests, namely, **to raise** Lazarus. This act will convince the onlookers that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus' acknowledgement that God hears him always, that is, that God always agrees to Jesus' requests, supports the claim that Jesus' works are in fact God's works, and that therefore all of Jesus' acts, including the other miracles narrated in the Gospel, are actually God's works. Hence not only the raising of Lazarus but all of Jesus' actions, are signs that he is the Son of God. The same is true of Jesus' words. According to 12:49-50, Jesus speaks only on the authority of his Father:

For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me.

Indeed, a crucial aspect of Jesus' mission involves transmitting God's words to the believers. In his final prayer, Jesus reports to God:

I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me. (17:8)

The words of God, spoken by Jesus, are presumably those

recorded throughout the Gospel in Jesus' discourses. The "sign" that Jesus accomplished this aspect of his mission is to be found in the narrative of the feeding of the multitudes (6:1ff.). The bread which Jesus distributed to the people is the true bread from heaven, given by the Father (6:32). This "bread" is Jesus (6:35), who has the words of eternal life (6:68).<sup>64</sup>

Just as the raising of Lazarus is the sign par excellence that Jesus' works come from God, so is the feeding of the multitudes the clearest sign that Jesus' words originate with God. Nevertheless, given the central role of Jesus' words in the accomplishing of the various miracles recorded in the Gospel, it can be said that all of the miracles themselves testify to the divine authority and origin of Jesus' words, as well as to his works, and therefore also to his identity as the Son of God.

In conclusion, the Son of God is he who brings life, salvation, resurrection and knowledge of God, to the believer. He accomplishes this by transmitting the words and performing the works of the Father. Therefore both the words of Jesus and the acts of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel serve as signs that Jesus is the Son of God, and therefore they also serve as a valid, intellectual basis for faith in Jesus as the Son of God. Yet another sign of Jesus' filial relationship with God, is

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<sup>64</sup>See chapt. one, pp. 38ff. for a more detailed discussion of this passage.

the fact that God responds when Jesus calls him "Father". This is illustrated in 11:40-43. Since Lazarus is resurrected after Jesus' prayer, it may be assumed that God responded to Jesus' prayer. A second example is 12:27, in which Jesus calls on God: "Father, glorify thy name." The narrative continues: "Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again' " (12:28). Though the crowd is in doubt about the identity or even the presence of the speaker (12:29), the reader knows that it is God who has spoken. God's response to these appeals implies that he acknowledges his role as Father to Jesus, and therefore proves the validity of Jesus' claim, or rather the Fourth Gospel's claim on behalf of Jesus, to be Son of God.

Not only the content of the Gospel, that is, the meaning and details of the miracles and discourses, but also its structure serves as a sign that Jesus is the Son of God. From the passages describing Jesus as the Son of God, a biography of sorts can be constructed: he originates with the Father; he is sent to the world by the Father in order to do his works and transmit his words to the world; having accomplished this mission he returns to the Father. This biography corresponds to the general outline of the Gospel narrative. Jesus' origins are described or alluded to in the prologue (1:18); his consecration to his earthly mission is portrayed in 1:32ff. ; his words and works are the subject of chapters 2-17. The process which will culminate in his re-ascent to his heavenly home is depicted in chapters 18-21, the account of the passion,

crucifixion and resurrection appearances.

Prophet - (ho) prophētēs

The third title to be examined is Jesus as "prophet" (prophētēs) or "the prophet" (ho prophētēs). The word prophētēs appears in fourteen verses in the Fourth Gospel. In six verses, the reference is to a specific Old Testament prophet (1:28, 12:38), to Old Testament prophets in general (1:45, 8:52, 53), or to their writings (6:45). In the remaining eight verses the word refers directly or indirectly to Jesus. In seven of these verses the word is applied to Jesus by a third party; only in 4:44 does Jesus use the word with reference to himself. Even in that case, however, he implies rather than states clearly that he is a prophet.

The eight verses in which the word prophētēs is applied to Jesus may be divided into two categories: four verses in which the usage is indefinite, in which the reference is to Jesus as a prophet, and four verses in which the word is preceded by the definite article and therefore refers to a specific, unique figure. In this second category, the term is used as a title rather than descriptively. Both of these categories will now be examined to determine the characteristics of "a prophet" and "the prophet" as well as the ways in which the "signs" as narrated in the Gospel demonstrate the appropriateness of the terms as applied to Jesus.

In 4:19, the Samaritan woman perceives that Jesus is a prophet on the basis of what he has told her of her past (4:16-18). Her



statement, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet" is immediately followed by another which delineates one of the differences between the Samaritans and the Jews: "Our fathers worshipped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship ". The entire context of 4:19 implies two characteristics of "a prophet", at least as far as the Samaritan woman is concerned: first a prophet has insight into the past histories of people whom he has never met; second, a prophet is seen as a spokesman for the Jewish group in matters of worship. For example, Jesus' acceptance of the designation "prophet" as well as of the implication that a prophet is a spokesman for Judaism is indicated by his reply. He prophesies:

The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father . . . (4:21; cf. 4:23).

Jesus' reply, in addition to indicating his acceptance of the designation of prophet, provides a third characteristic of a prophet: not only does he know the past, he can also see or prophesy the future.

Therefore, according to Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman, "prophet" is a term designating a member of a group which represents Judaism in some way, who has the power to see both the past and the future. The passage makes one additional point. The statements of the Samaritan woman in 4:25 and 4:29 suggest a possible connection between prophet and Messiah. The woman's remark that she knows that the Messiah is coming, and Jesus' subsequent confession that he is the

Messiah (4:25, 26) follow immediately upon the discussion of worship in 4:21ff. This sequence of statements implies that Jesus' concern with worship as well as his prophecies about future worship suggest to the Samaritan woman that he may be the Messiah. Jesus' ability to read her past also suggests this possibility to the Samaritan woman, who tells her fellow Samaritans, "Come see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" (4:29)

These statements do not equate prophet and Messiah. The Samaritan woman "perceives" (theōrō) that Jesus is a prophet but is unsure as to his messianic identity.<sup>65</sup> However, certain prophetic characteristics are also seen to be messianic characteristics. While not every prophet is a Messiah, it is possible or even likely that the Messiah will be a prophet.

The signs in the Gospel which demonstrate that Jesus has the prophetic qualities as outlined in this passage may be listed briefly. Jesus' insight into the past is pointed out with respect to both the Samaritan woman (4:19) and Nathanael (1:48).<sup>66</sup> Jesus' knowledge of the future is portrayed in many passages. For example, in 13:38, Jesus is portrayed as prophesying Peter's denial. The prophecy is fulfilled in 18:17, 25 and 27. Jesus' role as the true spokesman for Judaism is

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<sup>65</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 173. See p. 118.

<sup>66</sup>See pp. 143f.

implied in the passages which discuss Jesus' relationship to the Temple. Not only does he speak in the Temple on the major Jewish feasts (5:14, 7:14), but he also claims the right to cleanse the Temple, since it is his father's house (2:13ff.).

4:44 records the second usage of the term "a prophet". The narrator says that "Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country ". The occasion upon which Jesus said these words is unclear, as is the exact meaning of the statement. The saying is probably traditional, since it appears also in some form in the Synoptic Gospels (Mk. 6:4, Mt. 13:57, Lk. 4:24). For the purpose of the present study, however, it raises two important points. The Johannine Jesus considers himself a prophet, that is, belonging to the group of people known as prophets; prophets are rejected in their own country. The main problem in this passage is the meaning of en tē idia patriidi. In the Synoptics, the term appears to refer to Galilee, an interpretation which fits in with the context which speaks of the Galilean astonishment at Jesus' teaching. In John, however, the context speaks of the Galilean welcome for Jesus, which is implicitly contrasted with the more negative response Jesus receives in Jerusalem at the Passover (2:14ff.). This context is puzzling in view of the Gospel's repeated emphasis on Galilee as the home of Jesus. Two solutions have been suggested for this problem. One is that 4:44-45 intends to criticize the value or depth of the Galilean welcome, which is therefore not seen as being a true "honour" for

Jesus.<sup>67</sup> This solution preserves the interpretation of en tē idia patri di as Galilee; it does not however seem consistent with the portrayal of Galileans throughout the Gospel,<sup>68</sup> and especially in the immediate context.<sup>69</sup> The second theory suggests that en tē idia patri di refers to Judea. This theory requires that idia patri di refer not to Jesus' home but to the centre of establishment Judaism, a suggestion supported by the use of ta idia in 1:11: "He came to his own home(ta idia) and his own people received him not ". The theory posits a reinterpretation of the tradition being quoted here, since it appears from its use in the Synoptics that the original reference was to Galilee.<sup>70</sup>

The latter theory, while not entirely convincing, fits in more readily with the Gospel narrative, since the scene of Jesus' "dishonour" and rejection is invariably Jerusalem. This saying therefore not only implies the prophet's rejection in Jerusalem but also suggests that this very rejection may be seen as an indication, though not a primary one, that Jesus is in fact a prophet. The passages which describe this

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<sup>67</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 187.

<sup>68</sup>The symbolic meanings of Galilee, Samaria and Judea have been discussed in Meeks, Prophet-King, p. 313, and also in his "Galilee and Judea in the Fourth Gospel". See also Fortna, "Theological Use of Locale".

<sup>69</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 191.

<sup>70</sup>Meeks, Prophet-King, p. 39. Lindars, Gospel of John, pp. 200-201, argues that idia patri di refers solely to Jerusalem.

rejection, such as 8:59 and 10:31, serve as signs that Jesus possesses this prophetic characteristic.

The next occurrence of the indefinite noun prophētēs is in 7:52. This verse describes the Pharisees' response to Nicodemus' plea that Jesus be given a fair hearing before being judged:

They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee."

This verse may be seen as a response to 7:40, in which the question of whether Jesus is really the prophet is raised by the people. This aspect of the verse will therefore be discussed in conjunction with the verses containing the term ho prophētēs. An important point can be made, however, on the basis of 7:52 alone: as in the case of the "Messiah" title, the law or Hebrew scripture is considered to be authoritative and "prophetic" with respect to the characteristics of prophets. The expression "search" in this context, as in 5:39, refers to searching the scripture, as the context of 7:51 makes clear. In this case, as several commentators point out, the Pharisees err: the "law", (though not the Pentateuch), does speak of a prophet from Galilee: Jonas, son of Ammittai of Gath-hepher (2 Kings 14:25).<sup>71</sup> It is impossible to determine whether this error is a genuine one on the part of the Gospel or whether it is intended to serve some theological purpose, such as,

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<sup>71</sup>De Jonge, "Nicodemus and Jesus", p. 346; Bultmann, Gospel of John, p. 325.

for example, pointing out the Pharisees' lack of knowledge concerning their own scriptures.<sup>72</sup> The latter possibility requires that the readers be seen as being familiar enough with the biblical Books of Kings to catch the mistake and understand the irony. Such knowledge cannot necessarily be assumed. The most attractive theory is that the error is scribal. E. R. Smothers points out that in Papyrus Bodmer II, the reading is ho prophētēs, and suggests that in the process of copying the definite article ho was omitted and never recovered, because the sentence reads well enough without it.<sup>73</sup> This theory removes two difficulties. First, it brings the terminology in 7:52 into line with that of 7:40, with both passages now reading "the prophet". Second, it removes the error of the Pharisees since "the Prophet" may be seen as a figure quite distinct from "a prophet". As the discussion of the khristos title pointed out, the Gospel provides several "signs" that Jesus, whether in his role as Christ or as a prophet, is the one to whom the scriptures refer. For example, various details of the crucifixion are described as the fulfilment of biblical prophecies (18:24, 28, 36).<sup>74</sup>

The final reference to Jesus as "a prophet" is in 9:17:

So they [the Jews] again said to the blind man, "What do you say about him [Jesus] since he has opened your

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<sup>72</sup>De Jonge, "Nicodemus and Jesus", p. 346.

<sup>73</sup>Smothers, "Two Readings in Papyrus Bodmer II", pp. 110-111.

<sup>74</sup>See pp. 133ff.

eyes? He said, "He is a prophet."

This situation is very similar to that described in 4:16ff. Like the Samaritan woman, the man born blind perceives that Jesus is a prophet, that is, someone with extraordinary powers, because of an act which Jesus did, in this case, restoring the man's sight. This reveals that another of the characteristics of a prophet is the ability to do signs, a characteristic which is also attributed to the Christ (7:31). Also like the Samaritan woman, the man born blind moves from perceiving Jesus' prophetic nature to seeing him as a unique, eschatological figure, as his confession of Jesus as the Son of Man reveals (9:38). The miracle-stories narrated in the Gospel serve as signs that Jesus was indeed capable of doing signs in the narrower sense of the term.

On the basis of these passages, it may be concluded that prophētēs is not specifically an eschatological title but is a designation for a person who possesses certain extraordinary powers, including the ability to see the past and the future, and to do miracles. These powers, while rare, are not, it is implied, unique to Jesus, but they do put him in a select group. These powers are also shared by eschatological figures such as the Christ.

The second group of verses, in which the definite article is used with prophētēs, is four in number, or five if the textual variant in 7:52 is correct.<sup>75</sup> The first two occurrences, in verses 1:21 and 2:15, are

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<sup>75</sup>See note 73.

in the opening narrative of the Gospel, during the conversation between John the Baptist and the delegation from Jerusalem (1:19-1:28). The priests and Levites ask John whether he is the Christ, Elijah or the Prophet. John denies that he is any of these three figures (1:19-21). They later ask him why he is baptizing if he is not one of these three (1:25). John's answer in 1:26 points to Jesus, implying that it is Jesus for whom they should be searching.

The passage gives two characteristics of the figure called ho prophētēs. First, the prophet bears some relationship to the Christ and Elijah. The context suggests that all are eschatological figures, though their precise relationship is unclear. In the narrative, Jesus is explicitly identified with two of these three titles: khristos and ho prophētēs. Second, the act of baptizing is considered a prerogative of these three figures. John the Baptist replies to the question of why he is baptizing if he is not the Christ, Prophet or Elijah: "I baptize with water; but among you stands one whom you do not know ". This implies a contrast between John and Jesus in this matter. The nature of the contrast is clarified in 1:33. John baptizes with water, but Jesus performs a superior baptism, with the Holy Spirit. Jesus' gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples, described in 20:22-23, constitutes a "sign" that Jesus possesses this characteristic of the Prophet.

The next passage in which the term ho prophētēs occurs is 6:14. The passage stresses the eschatological nature of the title by means of



the modifying clause "who is to come into the world" (ho erkhomenos eis ton kosmon).<sup>76</sup> It also points to the doing of signs, in this case, the feeding of the multitudes, as a characteristic of the Prophet. 6:14a indicates that it was when the people saw this sign that they perceived Jesus to be the Prophet. This was also one of the characteristics of the non-eschatological designation of prophētēs, as 9:17 indicates, though the term sēmeion is not used in that context.

The last occurrence of the title is in 7:40, and perhaps also 7:52. 7:40 is part of a series of controversies concerning Jesus' identity. 7:37-39 tell of Jesus' proclamation to the Jews in the Temple on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, including his words about the Spirit.

When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This is really the prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ," But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee?" (7:40-42a).

The words of Jesus are taken by many people in the crowd to indicate that he is an eschatological figure, though there is no consensus as to whether he is the Prophet or the Christ. In 7:42 objections are raised with respect to the application of the latter title to Jesus, because Jesus does not seem to fulfill two characteristics of the Messiah found in the scriptures, namely Davidic descent and Bethlehem birth. Objections to the title of "the Prophet" are not voiced until 7:52. Again the objection concerns a characteristic laid down by scripture, namely place of

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<sup>76</sup>See p. 144.

birth. According to 7:52, Jesus cannot be the Prophet because he comes from Galilee. The passage as a whole therefore presents a puzzling situation. On the one hand, 7:40-41 implies a clear distinction between the figures of the prophet and the Christ, since the people appear to differ as to the appropriate way to identify Jesus. On the other hand, as 7:52 indicates, the objections against applying the "prophet" titles to Jesus are virtually the same as those against applying the "Christ" title, implying an identity or at the very least a very close relationship between the two titles. The latter impression is reinforced by the fact that there is no characteristic of the Prophet, or of a prophet, which is not also applied to the Christ. The speaking of words (7:39ff.), the doing of signs (7:31; 6:14), the knowledge of the past (4:19, 29), baptism (1:25), and coming into the world (6:14; 11:27) are all associated with both figures.

This situation could be explained in several ways. First, it could be argued that ho prophētēs and ho khristos are completely synonymous in the Gospel. The presence of both terms could therefore be due either to the use of sources or to the idiosyncratic style of the Gospel itself. Second, it could also be argued that one term is being redefined in terms of the other. Because the term sēmeion is used more frequently with the term khristos (20:30-31; 7:31) than with the term ho prophētēs (6:14), it could be said that the latter is being reinterpreted in terms of the former. This argument is difficult

to prove, however, since both sets of terminology are used primarily by characters other than Jesus, suggesting that neither is at the heart of Johannine christology.<sup>77</sup>

The third possibility, and the most likely, is that the closeness in meaning is not due to any necessary similarities in the absolute meaning of the two terms but rather stems from the fact that both are considered to be fulfilled in Jesus. The length and relative simplicity of the Johannine narrative limit the number of incidents and characteristics which could be assigned to Jesus while on the other hand a relatively great number of titles is used to describe him. Therefore some overlap between the meanings and usages of the titles is unavoidable. What then is the purpose of maintaining both titles? The suggestion is that each carries with it certain connotations and expectations which can be used by the Gospel in making its central points concerning the identity and mission of Jesus. Like the title khristos, the title ho prophētēs appears to be one of the ways in which the Jews of the first century described the expected eschatological figure.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>According to this criterion, it is the "Son" title which is at the heart of Johannine christology, since this is the way in which the Johannine Jesus most often refers to himself.

<sup>78</sup>According to the Community Rule, column 9, the Qumran community used "Prophet" as an eschatological title: "men of holiness. . . shall be ruled by the primitive precepts in which the men of the Community were first instructed until there shall come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel". Vermes, ed., Dead Sea Scrolls in English, p. 87. See also, ibid., pp. 47-52 for a brief discussion of the problem of identifying the messianic figures in the Qumran texts.

Studies of the Moses motif in the Gospel, such as those of Meeks and Glasson, argue strongly and convincingly that the term ho prophētēs is an allusion to the Moses-like prophet, whose coming is foretold in Deut. 18:15ff.<sup>79</sup> It has often been pointed out that the portrayal of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel corresponds in some important respects to the description of the Moses-like prophet in Deut. 18:15ff., which reads as follows:

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me [Moses] from among you, from your brethren, - him you shall heed. . . [And the Lord said] "I will raise up for them a prophet like you [Moses] from among their brethren and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. . . But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die." And if you say in your heart, "How may we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?" - when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken. . . (Deut. 18:15, 18, 20-22)

This passage reveals four characteristics of the Prophet whom the Lord will send: First, he will be a prophet like Moses; second, the Prophet will be "raised up" or sent by God; third, he will be raised from among the Jews; fourth, he will speak the words of God. The passage also gives the criterion according to which the credentials

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<sup>79</sup>Another possibility is that the term alludes to the Hellenistic theōs anēr, who can prophesy as well as perform miracles. See Teeple, Mosaic Eschatological Prophet, p. 120. The argument that Jesus is represented as the prophet-like-Moses is put forth in Glasson, Moses in the Fourth Gospel, and Meeks, The Prophet-King.

of the prophet may be judged. If his word comes to pass, he is a true prophet; if not, he is a false prophet. In the former case the prophet must be heeded, in the latter case he shall die.<sup>80</sup>

The Gospel leaves little doubt that Jesus possesses the four characteristics of the promised prophet.

1. His Jewish origins are stressed, as for example, in 1:11: "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not," and in 4:22: "You [Samaritans] worship what you do not know; we [Jews] worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews". As well, there are verses which speak of Joseph as Jesus' father and Galilee as his birthplace (1:45, 7:41, 7:52).
2. Jesus is frequently described as having been sent by God (e. g. , 10:36). This characteristic of Jesus is usually mentioned in the context of his role as Son of God, suggesting some overlap between the two titles.<sup>81</sup>
3. Direct or indirect comparison between Moses and Jesus is made in several passages. 5:47, for example, compares Moses' writings with Jesus' words. In 3:14, the serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness is compared with the Son of Man who must also be lifted up. In 6:32ff. ,

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<sup>80</sup>On the other hand, Deut. 13:2ff. suggests that the fulfilment of the sign alone is not an accurate criterion of the true prophet: first and foremost he must not incite the people to go after other gods.

<sup>81</sup>See p. 149.

the manna which the Israelites received while wandering in the desert under Moses' leadership is compared to the "true bread" from heaven, that is, Jesus. Although in the latter two cases the direct comparison is between Jesus and some act associated with Moses rather than between Moses and Jesus as figures, the implication is that that which Jesus is and has to offer may be compared to that which Moses offered, and indeed surpasses it. This superiority of Jesus over Moses has led Howard Teeple to conclude that in fact Jesus is not depicted in the Fourth Gospel as the prophet like Moses.<sup>82</sup> Wayne Meeks, however, is correct in pointing out the fallacy of this argument.<sup>83</sup> Jesus is both like Moses and superior to him. Like Moses he is acclaimed as prophet, king and judge, and he acts for the salvation of his people. The salvific acts and role of Jesus follow along similar lines and patterns to those of Moses, although of course the salvation offered by Jesus far surpasses that offered by Moses. Whereas Moses acted only for the worldly salvation of Israel from bondage in Egypt, Jesus acts for the eternal and ultimate salvation of all mankind. The superiority of Jesus not only to Moses but to any other figure, does not therefore preclude him from being the prophet like Moses.

4. The Johannine Jesus stresses repeatedly that he has come in

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<sup>82</sup>Teeple, Mosaic Eschatological Prophet, pp. 94ff.

<sup>83</sup>Meeks, Prophet-King, p. 23, note 6; p. 25.

the name of God (e. g. , 5:43). He does not speak of his own accord but utters the words of God (14:10); he gives his disciples the words which God has given him (17:8). Like 2, above, this characteristic is associated in the Gospel most directly with the Son of God figure, again implying overlap between the two titles.<sup>84</sup>

As Meeks has recognized, the Gospel provides proof that Jesus passes the criterion of the true prophet: that things that he announces come to pass. Meeks points to three verses which support this argument:<sup>85</sup>

And now I have told you before it [going to the Father] takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. (14:29)

I tell you this now, before it [the betrayal of Judas] takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. (13:19)

But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes [persecution of the disciples at the hands of the Jews] you may remember that I told you of them. (6:4)

These passages stress the prophetic nature of Jesus' words as well as the fact that their fulfilment at a future time will substantiate Jesus' claims concerning his eschatological identity.

Yet the Gospel's proof of Jesus' right to the title of "Prophet" extends far beyond these examples. Whereas in the three passages

<sup>84</sup>See p. 151.

<sup>85</sup>Meeks, Prophet-King, p. 46.

cited above, the future fulfilment of particular prophecies is itself prophesied by Jesus, the Gospel provides many examples which depict the actual fulfilment of prophecies made by Jesus at earlier points in the narrative. This is made explicit in two passages. In the first, Pilate says to the Jews:

"Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."  
The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." This was to fulfill (ho logos. . . plērōthē) the word which Jesus had spoken to show by what death he was to die. (18:31-32)

The narrator points to the crucifixion as the fulfilment of the many statements of Jesus' concerning his fate (e. g. , 3:14, 12:32). In the second passage, Jesus tells the Roman soldiers:

"I told you that I am he; so, if you seek me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word which he had spoken (plērōthē ho logos), "Of those whom thou gavest me I have lost not one." (18:8-9)

This passage describes the fulfilment of the prophecies which Jesus made in 6:39 and 17:12.

These two passages therefore demonstrate the truth of Jesus' statements in 13:19, 14:29 and 16:4 that his words will come to pass. The formula used to indicate this (ho logos plērōthē) is very similar to that used to indicate that a particular event occurred in order to fulfill the scripture (e. g. , 19:24): hē graphē plērōthē. Similarities between the two formulae imply that the words and prophecies of Jesus have the same status as those of the scripture, a claim which is also implied in 2:22:



When he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this [cf. 2:19]; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

This assertion in effect constitutes further proof of the divine origin of Jesus' words: like scripture, his words ultimately come from God.<sup>86</sup>

What has not often been noted, however, is that the demonstration of Jesus' identity as the true Prophet is not limited to the passages in which the process of prophecy and fulfilment is made explicit.<sup>87</sup> In fact almost all of the prophecies made by Jesus are at least partially fulfilled within the narrative of the Fourth Gospel itself. These prophecies are often signalled by one or more of the formulae such as, "the hour is coming" (or variation thereof), and "truly, truly I say to you. . .". The last step, therefore, in showing how the Gospel demonstrates the claim that Jesus is "the Prophet" and especially the prophet described in Deut. 18:15ff. is to examine the major prophecies attributed to Jesus within the Gospel and whether and how they are fulfilled.

The prophecies may be divided into three categories:

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 290.

<sup>87</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 220, for example, notes that the Lazarus story "echoes many of the words and ideas" of 5:26-30. He does not, however, use the concept of prophecy/fulfilment in order to understand this feature of the narrative.

1. Events in the life of Jesus. This category consists principally of the events in the Passion narrative.
2. Events which will occur after the crucifixion, to the world at large.
3. The experience of the disciples after the crucifixion.

While most of the prophecies occur in the words of Jesus, it must be noted that the words of the narrator and also those of the Jews contain "prophecies" which usually echo or correspond to those of Jesus. The narrator's "prophecies" are in fact explanations of certain sayings of Jesus, which the narrator interprets for the reader in order to stress the prophetic nature of Jesus' words, as in the following example:

"He who believes in me, as the scripture has said,  
'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water'."  
Now this he said about the Spirit which those who  
believed in him were to receive; for as yet the  
Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not  
yet glorified. (7:38-9)

The prophecies of the Jews are meant to be ironic; whereas the Jews intend their statements or questions literally, the audience understands them to be true in a non-literal sense:

Again he [Jesus] said to them [the Jews], 'I go  
away, and you will seek me and die in your sin;  
where I am going, you cannot come.' Then said  
the Jews, "Will he kill himself since he says,  
'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" (8:21-22)

On the one hand, the readers know that Jesus' death is in some

measure due to the Jews themselves. On the other hand, according to the words of Jesus in 10:17-18, the act itself, like suicide, is due to Jesus' own volition:

For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

Each prophecy will now be discussed briefly to determine whether and how it is fulfilled within the scope of the narrative.

#### 1. Events in the Life of Jesus

The principal events in Jesus' life, that is, the goal and climax towards which he was heading, according to the Fourth Gospel, are his crucifixion, resurrection and ascent to heaven. These events are not generally considered separately in the Gospel but together comprise the hour of Jesus' glory (13:1-2). They are described in several different ways: as dying (11:50, 51; 12:24), as exaltation (3:13; 8:28; 12:32, 24), as ascent into heaven (3:14; 6:62), as going to him who sent Jesus (7:33; 13:3), and as departing out of the world (13:1, 33, 36; 12:7).

The death of Jesus is a necessary part of the plan for salvation, as suggested by the following analogy:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a germ of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. (12:24)

Part of the purpose of the passion narrative is to show that Jesus correctly prophesied both the fact and the manner of his execution, as the narrator's note in 18:32 indicates.

This is true also with respect to related events, namely the betrayal by Judas, and Peter's denial. In each case, the prediction of the event appears in the words of Jesus. In 13:21, Jesus states: "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me ". Jesus' knowledge concerning that event is also stressed in the words of the narrator: "For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe and who it was that would betray him ". These words interpret the words of Jesus in 6:64a: "But there are some of you that do not believe ". The prediction is fulfilled in 18:3-5, which describes the actual betrayal.

The prediction of Peter's denial occurs in 13:38: "Truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow, till you have denied me three times."<sup>88</sup> It is fulfilled in 18:17, 25 and 27:

The maid who kept the door said to Peter, "Are you not also one of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not." (18:17)

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, "Are not you also one of his disciples?" He denied it and said, "I am not." (18:25)

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<sup>88</sup>Peter's denial is part of the tradition underlying all of the passion narratives; cf. Mt. 26:33ff., Mk. 14:29-31, Lk. 22:33-34.

Peter again denied it; and at once the cock crowed.  
(18:27)

The same process of prophecy and fulfilment is at work with respect to the resurrection and ascent to the Father. According to the narrator (2:21), the resurrection is predicted by Jesus in 2:19: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up ". The fulfilment of this prophecy is portrayed in 20:1-18, in which two disciples and Mary Magdalene find the empty tomb and then see Jesus. 20:9 makes it clear to the reader that Jesus' resurrection has occurred, though the characters in the narrative do not yet know this:

. . . for as yet they did not know the scripture,  
that he must rise from the dead.

The return to the Father is prophesied or discussed by Jesus, for example, in 16:5: "But now I am going to him who sent me. . .". The actualization of this third aspect of the process is not recounted explicitly in the Gospel. It may be suggested, however, that its fulfilment is alluded to in 20:16-18. Jesus remarks to Mary:

Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the  
Father, but go to my brethren and say to them, "I  
am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my  
God and your God. . .". (20:17)

From this passage it would seem that Jesus' ascent is imminent, though the exact timing is difficult to determine.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>If the ascension is a spatial equivalent to Jesus' glorification, as Brown, Gospel According to John, p.1012, argues, then the ascension could be seen as a process, begun by the crucifixion and including

2. Events which will come upon the world in general

(a) The Spread of Christianity

The spread of Christianity beyond the Jewish world is "predicted"

or at least alluded to in several passages, among them 10:16:

And I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I  
must bring them also, and they will heed my voice.  
So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.

The term "this flock" (aulē tautē) in its context in the Gospel refers to the Jews. "Other sheep", therefore, implies the Gentiles.<sup>90</sup> This turning to the Gentiles is also implied by 12:32: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" -- not only the Jews, but all men.

The idea that all men will be united in Christ is emphasized by the narrator in 11:51b-52:

. . . he [Caiaphas] prophesied that Jesus should die  
for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather  
into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

Like the crucifixion, the spread of Christianity beyond Judea is alluded to by the Jews. In 7:33-34, Jesus tells the Jews:

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<sup>90</sup>Kossen, "Greeks of John XII:20", argues that the Greeks in 12:20 were Gentile, and that the "flock" in 10:16 is Jewish-Christian. Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 312, agrees. Robinson, "Destination and Purpose", p. 124, argues that the Greeks of 12:20 are Greek-speaking Jews, a conclusion which supports his theory of the purpose of the Gospel. See Introduction p. 2.

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the resurrection and the giving of the Spirit. This explanation would account for the fact that no specific time for the ascension can be pinpointed in the Gospel.

I shall be with you a little longer, and then I go to him who sent me; you will seek me and you will not find me; where I am you cannot come.

The Jews ask one another:

Where does this man intend to go that we shall not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?

The Jews' remarks indicate a misunderstanding of Jesus' words. Nevertheless, they also constitute an ironic and unwitting prediction of future events.

Readers of the Fourth Gospel probably needed no written proof that this prediction of Jesus and the Jews had come to pass. If they themselves did not constitute evidence for the fulfilment of this prediction, that is, even if the Johannine community did not have Gentile-Christian members<sup>91</sup> they were doubtless aware that the word had spread. Paul's letters constitute written evidence of this. The Fourth Gospel demonstrates the interest of Greeks in Jesus and their readiness to believe in him, both of which are necessary for Jesus' missionary aims to succeed. This demonstration occurs in 12:20-22:

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew. Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus.

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<sup>91</sup>Brown, Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 55, interprets the author's explanation of Jewish terms as well as the introduction of the Greeks in 12:20-23 as an indication of a Gentile component in the Johannine community.

This passage echoes the call of the first disciples, in the approach by the Greeks through the mediation of the disciples, and the repetition of details about Philip's home town (1:43-44). These parallels imply that this passage also marks the beginning of a "call", or conversion process, and lead the reader to expect a continuation of the pattern set up in 1:35ff. , that is, that the Greeks see Jesus and come to believe in him. However, these expectations are not fulfilled within the scope of the Gospel narrative. Jesus' reply to Philip and Andrew in 12:23-26 speaks of the necessity of his death for the completion of his mission, for the bearing of fruit.

b. Neither Jerusalem, nor Mount Gerizim will be a centre of worship.

This prediction is made in the course of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman (4:7-26). The Samaritan woman points to the disagreement between the Samaritans and Jews:

Our fathers worshipped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus' response stresses that this controversy is no longer important because

the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . But the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. (4:21, 23)



This prediction emphasizes that in the future, worship will be centred not on a particular location but on the Father, that is, on Jesus, the son. The prediction emphasizes the impermanence of worship in Jerusalem as compared with the permanence of worship of Jesus, which is not tied to a particular location.

This prediction seems to pertain to the time after Jesus' death, and perhaps after the destruction of the Temple. A hint of its preliminary fulfilment, or the beginning of the process which will lead to its fulfilment, may be found in the Gospel itself. One of the many puzzling details concerning Jesus' itinerary in the Fourth Gospel is the claim that Jesus spent the second Passover that is recorded in the Gospel in Galilee, that is, without going up to Jerusalem. 6:1 reports Jesus' location as the other side of the Sea of Galilee. 6:4 repeats the familiar formula, "Now the Passover. . . was at hand ". This formula always pertains to the period immediately preceding a Jewish pilgrimage feast, which was devoted to preparation and travel to Jerusalem. Indeed, in every other place where the formula appears in the Fourth Gospel, it is coupled with a statement that Jesus and/or the people went up to Jerusalem.<sup>92</sup> The purpose of these statements is to show that Jesus, like all other Jews, spent the festivals in Jerusalem. Therefore, it is striking that in chapter six, the formula is connected not with a journey

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<sup>92</sup>Cf. 2:13, 11:55.

to the Temple mount in Jerusalem but to a mountain in Galilee. Since no other detail about this mountain is mentioned, it seems that its main attraction was Jesus (6:2). The detail about Galilee becomes even more striking in light of the assertion in 6:2 that the people were coming to Jesus because of the signs which they had seen him perform on the sick. In the context of the Gospel as it now stands<sup>93</sup> this statement implies that the people were leaving Jerusalem, where the signs on the sick had taken place according to chapter five, and were coming to Galilee during the period before the Passover. This scene therefore implies that this Passover was spent in Galilee and not in Jerusalem, and it acts as a partial fulfilment of Jesus' prophecies in 4:21, 23.

### 3. Events in the life and experience of the disciples

#### (a) Collacation of Jesus and the Disciples

Throughout the Gospel, Jesus promises the disciples that he and they will be together. The context of these promises suggests that their fulfilment is to be expected at some unspecified date after

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<sup>93</sup>If, on the other hand, one argues for the transposition of chapters five and six, then the signs on the sick in 6:2 could refer to the sign narrated in 4:46-54. This would imply that the people present for the feeding of the multitudes were Galileans, since the healing of the official's son occurred in Galilee. One argument against this interpretation is the fact that no crowd is recorded as observing the incident in 4:46-54. Therefore the narrator cannot mean to stress the Galilean origin of the crowd in 6:2ff.

the end of Jesus' earthly life: "Where I am, there shall my servant be also. . ." (12:26).

These promises can be divided into two categories, according to the direction of movement, those which speak of Jesus as moving towards the disciples and being where they are and those which speak of the disciples moving towards Jesus and being where he is.

Examples of the first direction of movement occur primarily in the farewell discourses:

I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you.  
 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more,  
 but you will see me; because I live, you will live  
 also. In that day you will know that I am in my  
 Father, and you in me, and I in you. He who has  
 my commandments. . . he it is who loves me. . .  
 and I will love him and manifest myself to him.  
 (14:18-21)

The expression "in that day" (en ekeinēi tē hēmara)<sup>94</sup> implies fulfilment in the future. However, the pattern of movement depicted in the passage is reflected in the accounts of Jesus' resurrection appearances to his disciples: The world sees Jesus no more-- as far as the world is concerned, Jesus is dead and buried (19:38-42)-- but Jesus comes to where the disciples are, to the closed room in which they are hiding from the Jews (20:19), where they and no one else can see him (20:20ff.).

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<sup>94</sup>In John the expression "in that day" does not seem to refer to the Messianic age or the day of judgement as it does in the Hebrew Bible, but rather to the period in the Christian community after the death of Jesus. Cf. 16:23, 26.

Another reflection of this pattern may be seen in 6:16-21.

After Jesus departs up the mountain (6:15), the world can no longer see him. The people who had witnessed the feeding of the multitudes seek him and do not know where to find him (6:22-25). Jesus comes to the disciples (6:17) who take him into the boat (6:21).<sup>95</sup>

The second direction of movement, that is, the movement of the disciples towards Jesus, is expressed in 13:36 and 14:2-3:

In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so would I have told you that I go to prepare a place

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<sup>95</sup>The two scenes (20:19ff. and 6:16-21) may be seen as parallel:

6:16-21	20:19ff.
Time: evening, Passover season	evening, Passover
Disciples in boat	disciples in room with doors shut
Physical separation from people	separation from people
Physical separation from Jesus	separation from Jesus
Jesus comes to disciples, overcoming limitations of nature	Jesus comes to disciples, overcoming limitations of death and the closed door.
Disciples frightened until Jesus identifies himself, then they are glad.	Disciples not glad until Jesus identifies himself by showing them his scars.
Disciples land immediately	Disciples receive the Holy Spirit

These parallels suggest that perhaps one of the purposes of the Johannine version of the "walking on the water" scene is to foreshadow the resurrection appearances of Jesus to the disciples.

for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (14:2-3)<sup>96</sup>

This passage is reminiscent of all the passages which speak of abiding (menein) such as 15:4:

Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides on the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

As in the previous section, there is no direct fulfilment of this in the Gospel, since fulfilment is predicted for the future. There are, however, several passages which could be seen as illustrative of this promise. These are the passages which stress the occasions on which the disciples and Jesus abide together:

After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers, and his disciples, and there they stayed (emeinan) for a few days (2:12).

After this Jesus and his disciples went into the land of Judea; there he remained (dietriben) with them and baptized (3:22).

Jesus therefore no longer went about openly among the Jews, but went from there to the country. . . and there he stayed (emeinen) with the disciples (11:54).

These passages are usually taken as transitional<sup>97</sup> and as being devoid of theological content, since no speeches or events are recorded, nor does the action seem to have any effect on anyone, as

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<sup>96</sup>This passage actually combines both directions of movement: Jesus comes to the disciples and then takes them with him.

<sup>97</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, pp. cxlff.

for instance, Jesus' stay with the Samaritans has on the latter (4:40-42). In addition to being transitional, however, these brief notes can be seen as paradigms of the collocation that is promised for the future. Another such paradigm may be found in 1:37-39, which has some interesting parallels with 14:2-3:

14:2-3

Jesus goes and prepares a place. Jesus comes to the disciples and takes them there so that they may be where he is.

1:37-39

Jesus has a place to stay. He approaches the disciples (turning around to speak to them) and invites them home. The disciples come with him and spend the day.

Although the parallel is not perfect, the pattern of movement is the same.

The collocation which is promised for the future is essentially a continuation on a higher plane of the intimacy which characterizes the relationship between Jesus and his disciples during his lifetime.

(b) The giving of the Spirit

The predictions about the giving of the Spirit are not made directly by Jesus but rather appear in the narrator's interpretation of the words of Jesus in 7:37-38:

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"

The narrator's interpretation follows in 7:39:

Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Another allusion to the giving of the Spirit is in the Baptist's report of his vision, in which Jesus was described as "he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit " (1:39).

This prophecy is fulfilled in 20:22-23:

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained. "

(c) The sending of the Paraclete

The sending of the Paraclete is promised by Jesus several times in the farewell discourses (14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, 13). The Paraclete will be sent from the Father (15:26), or by the Father at Jesus' request (14:16), and his mission is in some sense dependent on Jesus' departure to the Father: If Jesus does not go to the Father the Paraclete will not be sent.

It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor (ho paraklētos) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. (16:7)

The Paraclete's coming to the disciples is not recounted. But there are two ways in which the Fourth Gospel indicates that the promise was fulfilled. The first relates to the function of the Paraclete, and the second to the relationship between the Spirit and the Paraclete.

The function of the Paraclete is described in various ways: to teach the disciples things and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus said to them (14:26), to bear witness to Jesus (15:26), to convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (16:8), and to guide the disciples into all the truth (16:13).

Passages in chapters two and twelve imply that at least the first of these functions was accomplished, though the agent through whom it was accomplished is not named:

When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this [cf. 2:19] and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. (2:22)

Similar is 12:16, which comments with respect to 12:15, a quotation of Zech. 9:9:

His disciples did not understand this at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him.

Both of these passages imply an incomplete initial understanding of certain events and sayings on the part of the disciples and state that the understanding was complete only after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection (cf. also 13:7). It is possible that the events of the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension themselves provided the disciples with the knowledge and key to the understanding of the verses and events but in the light of the promises concerning the Paraclete and the function attributed to him, it is also possible that these passages are intended



as proof to the reader that the Paraclete did in fact come as promised.

In several passages the Paraclete is also called the Spirit of truth (14:17, 15:26, 16:13), or the Holy Spirit (14:26). Therefore the giving of the Spirit in 20:22 would also be the giving or sending of the Paraclete, who is the Spirit of truth (14:17). This interpretation is supported by parallels in language: The Spirit of truth or Paraclete (14:16) cannot be received by the world (ho kosmos ou dunatai labein - 14:17), but the Holy Spirit is received by the disciples (labete pneuma hagion - 20:22).

(d) The works that believers/disciples will be able to do after the departure of Jesus.

These are described in 14:12-14:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it.

As this passage indicates, the same mechanism by which Jesus does his works will be operative for the believers as well. Just as Jesus does his works through the agency of the latter (e. g. , 11:41ff.) so the believer will do his works through the agency of Jesus:

He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (15:5)

This promise is illustrated in two narratives, the healing of the official's son (4:46-54) and the raising of Lazarus (11:1-44). In the first episode, the official asks that his son be healed; his wish is granted after he believes the word of Jesus. In the raising of Lazarus, the point is made even more explicitly. The sisters ask that Jesus come and heal their brother. Despite the fact that Jesus arrives after the death of Lazarus, Martha confesses faith in Jesus (11:27). Because of this confession, her wish is granted. These episodes illustrate that God answers the request of believers through the mediation of Jesus. That this can continue even after Jesus is no longer materially present in the world is implied in 4:46-54. Jesus does not need to "come down" (katabē) to Capernaum from Cana, or, by implication, from heaven to earth, in order to grant the believer's request but can do so from a distance.<sup>98</sup>

15:1ff. suggests that the main work of the disciples is to bear fruit, that is, to spread the word of Jesus and gain believers. Therefore the disciples will be the ones to gain great numbers of believers for Jesus, a greater number than Jesus got for himself, but they can do this

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<sup>98</sup>The use of the verb katabainō in the official's plea to Jesus in 4:49 is the same as that used of Jesus' descent from heaven (cf. 6:33). This, plus the fact that Jesus heals from a distance, suggests that the episode may be seen as a paradigm for the relationship between the believer and Jesus after Jesus' glorification: the believer asks Jesus and Jesus responds without descending to earth again. This interpretation implies that katabainō is being used here both in its literal and in its spiritual meaning.

only through the agency of Jesus. This role of the disciples is illustrated by the fact that the Greeks in 12:20ff. seek to approach Jesus through the disciples.

The fulfilment of this prophecy might also be related to the giving of the Spirit. The giving of the spirit is associated with the disciples' ability to forgive sins. Since being free from sin means essentially being a believer in Jesus,<sup>99</sup> 20:22 suggests that only after receiving the Spirit

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<sup>99</sup>This interpretation is based on an analysis of 8:34-37. In 8:34 Jesus states: "Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin (ho poiōn tēn hamartia) is a slave to sin (doulos . . . tēs hamartias)". This verse suggests that the doing of individual sinful acts renders one subject to the condition of sin. Verses 8:35-37 outline the consequences of this condition and the importance of Jesus with respect to it. In 8:35 the Johannine Jesus states that the slave does not continue in the house forever, whereas the son does. This verse is not generally considered to refer to the slave to sin of 8:34, yet it may be suggested that such an interpretation is not out of the question. The verse contains the phrase ou menei . . . eis ton aiōna, which in 12:34 is used as a reference to immortality. Therefore Jesus' statement could indicate that he who is under the condition of sin does not live forever, whereas the son, presumably he who is not under sin, does. This interpretation suits its immediate context and fits in with one of the major themes of the entire passage, the identities of the father of the Jews and of Jesus. In 8:36 the term "son" becomes a reference to Jesus himself, and is described as the agent of the "slave's" freedom. That is, it is through the Son that the slave can be freed from his condition and therefore presumably gain eternal life. 8:37 refers to the starting point of the argument to outline in more detail the nature of the particular sin which puts the Jews in a state of sin. This sin is their effort to kill him, a sin which is based on the fact that Jesus' word finds no place in them. The implication is that were they to accept Jesus and his word, the Jews would be freed from sin (cf. 8:31). Hence the criterion of both sinful/non-sinful action and being a slave to or free from sin is rejection/acceptance of Jesus.

do disciples have the power to gather fruit.<sup>100</sup>

(e) The promise in 1:51: "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man".

The vision is promised not only to Nathanael (cf. 1:48-50) but to the disciples as a group, as the use of the second person plural indicates (legō humin). The verse emphasizes the role of Jesus as the ladder into heaven, which permits traffic between heaven and earth.<sup>101</sup>

The passage finds literal illustration in 20:11-13:

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stood to look into the tomb and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain. . .

This scene implies the descent of angels from heaven to earth, as well as the impending ascent of Jesus from earth to heaven.<sup>102</sup>

While only Mary Magdalene is mentioned as a witness to the scene within the Gospel narrative, in effect all believers and readers of

<sup>100</sup>This may be the reason why the conversion of the Gentiles begun in 12:20b is not continued at least until after Jesus' death.

<sup>101</sup>See Appendix for a fuller discussion of 1:51.

<sup>102</sup>The connection would be more explicit had the Fourth Gospel used the same wording as Mt. 28:2: "an angel of the Lord descended from heaven. . ." (aggelos. . .kupiōu katabas ex ouranou).

the Gospel are witnesses by virtue of the Gospel narrative itself.

(f) Unpleasant consequences

16:32 reads:

The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone; yet I am not alone. . .

The fulfilment of this prophecy is not recorded within the Gospel. It could be seen as a reference to the fact that most of the disciples were not present at the crucifixion, or perhaps to Peter's denial. It may also be a reference to the Johannine community, which the original readers would understand and see fulfilled in their own times.<sup>103</sup>

Other negative promises refer to the treatment of disciples and believers at the hands of the Jews. The hatred by the Jews of the disciples (15:18) will be expressed in persecution (15:20)<sup>104</sup> and in expulsion from the synagogue (16:2). Again, complete fulfilment is to come only in the time after Jesus and perhaps in the experience of the community which the Gospel is addressing.<sup>105</sup> But the beginning of the fulfilment is evident in the Gospel itself. In the story of

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<sup>103</sup>For a discussion of 16:32, see E. Fascher, "Johannes 16:32".

<sup>104</sup>The Pauline epistles record that Jewish persecution of the church began in the early decades after Jesus' death, if not earlier. e. g. , Phil. 3:6., Acts 9:10, 22:5.

<sup>105</sup>See Martyn's discussion of 9:22 in History and Theology, pp. 42ff.

the man born blind, the narrator explains that the man's parents avoided answering the Jews' questions directly,

because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. (9:22)

Indeed, the reader later learns that the man born blind himself had been cast out of the synagogue (9:34-35).

In 20:19 it is stated that the doors of the place where the disciples were, were shut, for fear of the Jews. This implies that the disciples either knew or suspected violence on the part of the Jews. The passage therefore depicts the beginning of the fulfilment of Jesus' prophecies concerning Jewish-Christian relations.

(g) Salvation

The ultimate consequence of Jesus' life and death for the believer is salvation. This is expressed in the many conditional statements, such as 8:51: "If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death ". The egō eimi statements with which the conditional statements are connected express one basic idea: it is only through belief in Jesus that one can gain eternal life (6:40, 47; 7:28). The conditions are all corollary to belief: keeping the words of Jesus (8:51), honouring the Son, coming to Jesus (6:35), hearing the word (5:24), following Jesus (8:12) and obeying him (14:21).

Salvation is described as eternal life and resurrection. The

way in which resurrection will occur is outlined in 5:26-29:

Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who will hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.

Several important points are outlined in this passage:

1. The formula "the hour is coming and now is" implies that the scheme for resurrection belongs to the future but will be begun in the present.
2. Not all will receive the reward of life, but only those who have done good, that is, have believed in Jesus.
3. The process by which resurrection will occur is as follows: Jesus will call the dead and at the sound of his voice they will come out of the tomb.
4. Jesus' power to resurrect derives from the Father.

This set of promises is illustrated in the narrative of the raising of Lazarus (11:1-44):

Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out."  
The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. (11:42-44)

This resurrection corresponds to the four points made in 5:26ff.:

1. It occurs within the framework of the Johannine narrative.

2. The resurrection is granted to Lazarus whom Jesus loved (11:3), a member of a family which confessed Jesus (11:27).
3. The dead Lazarus responds to Jesus' voice by emerging from the tomb when called.
4. 11:41-42 indicate that Jesus' power to raise Lazarus is derived from God.<sup>106</sup>

It is possible to point to another set of passages which are relevant to the issue of resurrection. The sheep allegory in chapter ten contains vocabulary and phrasing which echo that of 5:26-29:

He who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him (10:2-4).<sup>107</sup>

The examples discussed above make abundantly clear the process of prophecy and fulfilment at work in the Fourth Gospel. The prophecies are expressed primarily in the words of Jesus, often using

<sup>106</sup>See p. 153.

<sup>107</sup>On another level, the sheep allegory or parts thereof can be seen as a reference to the followers or the disciples of Jesus. This interpretation is illustrated by the episodes in the narrative which recount the call of various disciples in 1:35-51, all of whom become full believers after hearing Jesus' voice. Both levels of meaning are present in 10:27-28:

My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.



the prophetic formulae erkhetai hora kai nun estin and amēn amēn legō humin, though on occasion the narrator himself will interpret Jesus' words as being prophetic. The events in which the prophecies are fulfilled are for the most part the sign and passion narratives, or specific details thereof. This does not mean to say that the sole or even the primary function of these narratives is to demonstrate that Jesus' prophecies are fulfilled and that therefore he is the true prophet from God. Nevertheless by virtue of their correspondence with certain of Jesus' prophecies, they do fulfill this function as well.

The signs -- words and events concerning Jesus -- recorded in the Gospel therefore serve to demonstrate that Jesus is both a prophet, that is, a man endowed with certain extraordinary powers such as doing signs and telling people's pasts, and, also the eschatological Prophet, the true prophet like Moses prophesied by Deut. 18:15ff., sent by God to give the words of God.<sup>108</sup>

The discussions of the title khristos, ho huios tou theou, and ho prophētēs reveal an interesting aspect of their Johannine usage. On the one hand, the titles are clearly differentiated from one another, and each has its own distinctive features. For example, only the Christ

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<sup>108</sup>It is difficult to determine whether in fact the Gospel intended to differentiate between Jesus as a prophet, and Jesus as the Prophet. The principal difference between them seems to be that the latter is an eschatological figure, whereas the former is not; presumably the latter would possess the traits of the former as well as traits exclusive to himself.

is described as the one whose origin will not be known (7:27); only the Son of God is described as being in a filial relationship with God; only the prophet is described as dishonoured in his own country (4:44). On the other hand, the figures to which the titles refer share many more aspects than they do not. All three are described as transmitting the words of God, as doing signs, as having insight into the past and/or future. Both the Christ and the Prophet are foretold in the scriptures. Both the Christ and the Son of God are described as the way to salvation, while Jesus as the Prophet prophesies that believers in him will attain salvation.

This overlap does not, however, mean that the three titles are synonymous. Rather, each title emphasizes a different aspect of the eschatological role which the Gospel attributes to Jesus. The message which this portrayal of Jesus conveys is that Jesus is the fulfilment of all eschatological expectations and has the right to all eschatological titles.<sup>109</sup> Therefore the Gospel as a whole, in both content and structure, functions as a sign upon which the reader can base his faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

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<sup>109</sup>MacRae, "Fourth Gospel and Relionsgeschichte", argues that one of the ways in which the Gospel strives to appeal to several groups of readers is by showing Jesus to be the fulfilment of several sets of expectations, i. e., those associated with the various eschatological titles. In addition to "Christ", "Son of God" and "Prophet", Jesus is portrayed as the "Lamb of God" (1:29), King of Israel (1:48), "Holy One of God" (6:6a), "Lord" (20:29) and Logos (1:1).

## CHAPTER SIX: HEARING IS BELIEVING

Insofar as the reader is willing to accept signs as an appropriate basis for faith, the Gospel has fulfilled an important part of its purpose as stated in 20:30-31. At this point in the argument however, the reader can raise an important objection: granted that the acts and words of Jesus testify to his true identity and could therefore be a basis of faith for those who saw and heard them, how can they have any meaning or significance for those who cannot see or hear them? To counter this objection, the Gospel provides the fourth and final piece of its argument, namely that faith does not have to be based on a first-hand witnessing of Jesus' signs but can and should be founded on the written report of a selection of Jesus' signs such as that contained in the Gospel.

The Gospel provides two explicit arguments for this fourth proposition. First, the written reports of the signs as recorded in the Gospel are trustworthy and accurate. Second, faith can be based not only on seeing a sign, but also on hearing about it. The following discussion will focus on how and where these arguments are made in the Gospel.

The trustworthiness of the accounts of the signs as written in the Gospel rests primarily in the fact that they are based on the reports

of reliable eyewitnesses. These witnesses are the disciples. The role of the disciples as eyewitnesses to Jesus is made explicit in the farewell discourses. In 15:27, Jesus tells the disciples: "And you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning". The presence of the disciples is noted in some way at almost every turn in the narrative. Even in the few places in which their presence is not explicitly mentioned, it is safe to assume that the Gospel took their presence for granted. Jesus' command to Philip in 1:43 to follow him (akolouthei moi) implies not only a spiritual following or belief but an actual following in a physical, spatial sense. Similarly, 6:66 which describes the retreat of some of Jesus' disciples, implies that it was customary for the disciples to travel around with their master.

The assumption concerning the presence of the disciples is also evident in cases where their presence is not recorded explicitly at the beginning of the narrative, but in which it is apparent from what follows that they were present the entire time. For example, the disciples are not mentioned in the account of Jesus' going up to Jerusalem during the feast of Tabernacles (7:10) or in the subsequent lengthy discourses in chapters seven and eight. However, chapter nine, which records no change of scene from chapter eight, begins with a short conversation between Jesus and the disciples, implying, therefore, that they were present all along. In chapter twelve also, the focus is on Jesus' actions ("Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany"-12:13),

but from the references to Judas and the other disciples in 12:4, 16, 21-22, it is clear that the disciples were also present.

These examples suggest that the Gospel assumes that the disciples accompanied Jesus everywhere, and that they witnessed the events and heard the discourses even in the accounts where they are not explicitly mentioned (e. g. , 4:46-54; 5:1ff.). The fact that the disciples are not mentioned is not meant to suggest their absence. It merely reflects the fact that the foci of these passages lie elsewhere, and not in the disciples and their reactions to the events. When the absence of the disciples from the scene is intended, it receives explicit mention in the text. In the account of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman, the absence of the disciples is stressed by the references to their departure into the city to buy food (4:8) and their return to the scene in 4:27. Apparently in this section the author was more concerned to demonstrate Jesus' willingness to remain alone with the Samaritan woman (4:27) than to provide a witness for the scene. In any case, the narrator's comments concerning the disciples' reaction upon their return indicate that they were witness to the fact of Jesus' conversation and its irregularity, if not to the content of the conversation itself:

Just then his disciples came. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but none said, "What do you wish" or "Why are you talking with her?" (4:27)

The presence of the disciples as witnesses to the events defends

the Gospel against the possible accusation by the reader that the author had fabricated or embroidered his narrative. This provision is important given the miraculous or otherwise unbelievable nature of many of the events.

The trustworthiness of the account is further defended by an emphasis on the trustworthiness of the disciples themselves, which protects them from potential charges of giving false evidence or lying. This emerges most clearly in 19:35, which insists on the accuracy of the otherwise unbelievable detail recorded in 19:34:

But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness-- his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth-- that you may also believe. (19:34-35)

Although the reliability of the disciples is no doubt implied by the very fact of their close relationship with Jesus, in the final analysis it lies in their relationship with God. Their positive relationship to God is indicated not only by the fact that they follow Jesus and hence do "good works" or the work of God (cf. 6:28), but also in the fact that they were chosen by Jesus (6:70) and therefore by God since: ". . . no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father " (6:65).

The accuracy of the accounts, including the reliability of the witnesses, constitutes one argument for the possibility of belief on the basis of the Fourth Gospel. A second argument addresses the situation of the reader directly. The argument involves a shift in emphasis with

respect to the issue of signs-faith. Whereas the focus on the relationship between seeing signs and coming to faith is important for the development of the story, for the theory of signs-faith, and also for the witness of the disciples on which the Gospel account is based, it may be counter-productive for the faith of the readers to whom the connection between seeing Jesus and believing in him cannot apply. Therefore, the reader must be convinced that signs can lead to faith not only for the direct witness or observer but also for one who knows the actions only at second hand, through having heard of them. In other words, belief on the basis of the authoritative words of others, in this case the words of the disciples, is not only possible but commendable.

The positive relationship between hearing and belief is expressed directly in passages which discuss hearing the word of Jesus. For example, in 5:24 Jesus tells his listeners: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life". The Jews are criticized for not understanding Jesus' words: "Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word" (8:43).

Not hearing the words is equated with not believing the words, and therefore not understanding the works of Jesus. These equations are illustrated in the narrative of the man born blind. According to 9:13, the Pharisees were not present to witness the healing of the man born blind. They were told of the event by the man born blind and by

others who had observed his new-found ability but not the way in which the change had occurred (9:8-12). According to 9:18, "The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and received his sight" until his parents confirmed the information. Most important, they did not believe the blind man's testimony concerning the event itself. In 9:27 the blind man says: "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?" That is, the Jews had not listened to, understood or accepted the blind man's account of the event. Listening to his account would have indicated a desire to "become his disciples", and would have constituted a step towards belief.

In addition to this negative illustration of the connection between hearing of the sign from an eyewitness and believing in Jesus, the Gospel provides several positive illustrations. Indeed, a careful examination of the narratives recounting the call of the first disciples (1:35-53) as well as the conversion of the Samaritan community (4:39-42) reveals that almost all of the true believers in the Gospel came to Jesus originally through the words of others.

The first two disciples who follow Jesus and stay with him were prompted to do so by what John the Baptist had said to them: "Behold the Lamb of God " (1:29).

Peter (1:42) comes to Jesus because of the words of his brother Andrew: "We have found the Messiah. . ." (1:41).



Nathanael is persuaded to come to Jesus by Philip, who says: "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote . . ." (6:46). The only exception to this pattern in chapter one is the call of Philip, who follows Jesus because of the word or command of Jesus himself: "Follow me " (1:43).

The same pattern is exhibited in the case of the Samaritan community. The Samaritan woman believes on the basis of Jesus' words, which told her all she ever did (4:29). Other Samaritans are moved to come out of the city toward Jesus on the basis of the Samaritan woman's testimony. Similarly, the crowds in 12:18 "went to meet him [Jesus] because they heard that he had done this sign [i. e., the raising of Lazarus]".

These cases have two points in common:

1. In each case, a person or group of people is prompted to make a move towards Jesus on the basis of what someone else has reported. This move is not usually called belief or pistis but rather is expressed in terms of physical movement towards Jesus, such as coming to meet him (hupēntēsen autō -- 12:18).
2. What the "witness" who initiated the other's move towards Jesus has to say always involves Jesus' identity and is based on a personal experience or witnessing of Jesus. John the Baptist's testimony is based on his vision of the spirit (1:29ff.), Andrew's statement is based on his stay with Jesus (1:39), Philip followed Jesus (1:42), the

Samaritan woman conversed with him, and the people who prompted the crowd to come were presumably eyewitnesses to the raising of Lazarus (12:18).

An analogy between the situation depicted in these accounts and the situation of the reader can be made on two levels. On one level, the eyewitness testimony is the Fourth Gospel itself, and through reading/hearing its words the reader is led to Jesus. The step towards Jesus which the potential believer makes on the basis of hearing from an eyewitness is met by a step by Jesus. It is on the basis of Jesus' step that full belief and commitment emerge. Jesus' response to the actions of John's disciples is to turn towards them and invite them home (1:30ff.). Andrew is able to make his full confession to his brother only after he stayed with Jesus at his place (1:39). Peter becomes a disciple only after he is spoken to by Jesus (1:42) and Nathanael only after Jesus tells him: "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you " (1:48). The necessity of this second step is demonstrated especially by the story of the Samaritans. The Samaritans originally approached Jesus because of the Samaritan woman's testimony. But it was only after Jesus stayed with them for two days that they confessed: "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world "

(4:42). In some cases, Jesus' step involves words,<sup>1</sup> and in others, physical proximity or abiding together with the potential believer.<sup>2</sup>

In keeping with this analogy, the initial belief or movement towards Jesus which may be accomplished on the basis of the book must be followed by a more personal and individual encounter with, or knowledge of Jesus, upon which profound and complete faith is based. Yet if this is the analogy that is intended, the Gospel actually undermines its own stated purpose, or at least accords itself only a preparatory role in the spiritual life of its reader. Since there is no unambiguous evidence that this is the Gospel's intention, a slightly different analogy may be suggested. It is possible that the Gospel not only sees itself as fulfilling the role of preparing the reader for faith, but also as the medium through which the reader can have his personal and individual encounter with Jesus. If the disciples are paradigms for the reader, then it is the reader who is directly and personally addressed in the farewell discourses and who is promised a dwelling place with the Father and Son (14:2). Furthermore, as 13:20 and 17:7ff. indicate, learning of and believing in Jesus through the words and testimony of his accredited agents amount to a personal encounter with both Jesus and the Father.

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<sup>1</sup>E.g., 1:48.

<sup>2</sup>E.g., 1:39, 4:42.

He who receives anyone whom I send receives me,  
and <sup>3</sup>he who receives me, receives him who sent  
me.

Whereas the call of the disciples and the story of the Samaritans represent positive paradigms for the reader, the story of doubting Thomas presents a negative paradigm.<sup>4</sup> In 20:29 the reader is told that while Thomas' belief on the basis of the sign he requested and received was genuine, blessed is he who, unlike Thomas, does not need his own personal and concrete sign, but can base his belief on the trustworthy accounts of eyewitnesses.<sup>5</sup>

The positive connection between hearing and belief is made not only through these paradigmatic narratives, but also through direct statements, especially those which describe the role of the disciples. The primary role of the disciples is to gather or bear fruit, that is, to gather more disciples and believers for Jesus. In 15:16, Jesus tells his disciples: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide . . ." (cf. also 4:35-38). An account of the works and words of

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<sup>3</sup>Similarly, seeing Jesus is equivalent to seeing the Father (14:7). A third way of explaining this analogy is to argue that the first step in the process has already been completed by the time the reader picks up the Gospel; that is, he has been introduced to the book, by someone else. It is in reading the book that he encounters Jesus directly.

<sup>4</sup>See chap. two, pp. 61ff.

<sup>5</sup>The nobleman (4:46-54) is another positive paradigm for the reader. See chap. two, pp. 69ff.

Jesus such as that of the Fourth Gospel, is presumably one of the ways in which this mission is accomplished (cf. Acts 10:34-43). The "fruit", the people who come to belief through the disciples, are all heirs to all of the promises of eternal life that are given to the original followers:

I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one. . . Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world. . . (17:20-24).

From both statements and narratives, therefore, it is clear, that for the Fourth Gospel, the signs serve their revelatory and testimonial functions not only for those who witnessed them directly, that is the people of Jesus' time, but also for those who read of them in the Gospel itself. Therefore the faith response is incumbent upon the readers no less than upon the specific individuals and groups to whom the Johannine Jesus was addressing his discourses in the context of the Gospel narrative.

The fourth proposition, like the first three, is expressed through both the individual narratives and the discourses recorded in the Gospel. It marks the concluding component of the Gospel's argument that it be accepted as a written substitute for the experience of signs to which the readers do not have other access.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

The focus of this study was the role of John 20:30-31 in the Fourth Gospel. It was proposed that 20:30-31 is not a general statement of purpose but that it expresses a specific purpose which informs the content and structure of the Gospel as a whole. This purpose is to persuade the reader that faith in Jesus as the Christ, Son of God can and indeed should be based on the signs of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel.

Before proceeding to demonstrate where and how this purpose is expressed in the Gospel, it was necessary to discuss two issues pertaining to the relationship between John 20:30-31 and the Gospel as a whole. The first concerns the meaning of the term sēmeia in 20:30; the second concerns the Johannine evaluation of a faith based on signs. The importance of these issues lies not only in their centrality to the thesis being proposed in this study but also in their role in the larger discussion of the appropriateness of 20:30-31 as a statement of purpose for the Gospel as a whole.

A survey of the treatment of the question of the purpose of the Gospel in Johannine scholarship reveals a strange paradox. While commentators almost always refer to the passage as the Gospel's statement of

purpose, detailed discussions of the Gospel's aims often lead to the opposite conclusion. These discussions often state or assume specific answers to the questions posed above; they argue that the term sēmeia applies only to the seven or eight narratives explicitly called signs in the Gospel, thereby suggesting that 20:30-31 leaves out of account most of the content of the Gospel; they assert that the positive evaluation of signs-faith which is expressed in 20:30-31 is not indicative of the Gospel's true attitude to signs-faith, which is one of criticism. For these reasons 20:30-31 is considered to comprise only a general statement of purpose and conclusion, while the particular motives of the evangelist are sought elsewhere in the Gospel.

Because this study aimed to demonstrate the opposite point, namely that 20:30-31 does express an important motive of the Gospel, it was necessary to begin with these two questions. From a detailed examination of the usage of sēmeia, erga, and other related vocabulary, it was concluded that there is no attempt in the Gospel to limit the meaning of the term sēmeia in 20:30-31 to the seven or eight so-called signs-narratives. Indeed, this examination suggested that there is evidence that the evangelist began with the specific and narrow meaning of sign, derived either from a signs-source or elsewhere, and purposely expanded its meaning to include not only the miraculous acts of Jesus but all of his words and deeds. The discussion therefore concluded that the concept of sign as an act or event which signifies or points to Jesus' eschatological

identity as the Christ, Son of God is present in the Gospel even in passages where the term sēmeion is not used. This conclusion is consistent with the situation which obtains with respect to other important theological concepts. It is a given of Johannine studies, for example, that the concept of faith is present not only in those passages in the Gospel in which the verb pisteuō appears but also in statements concerning seeing, knowing, loving, abiding, and so on.<sup>1</sup> A second example can be found in studies of Johannine ecclesiology, where it is frequently asserted that although the word ekklēsia does not appear in the Gospel at all, the concept of ecclesiology is present nonetheless throughout the entire Gospel.<sup>2</sup> There is no reason which comes to mind for excluding sēmeion from similar treatment.<sup>3</sup>

The question of the Gospel's evaluation of signs-faith was answered by looking at 20:29 and 4:48. These verses are often interpreted as expressions of a critical attitude towards signs-faith which contradicts

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, the discussion of faith in Schnackenburg, Gospel According to St. John, 1:563ff., and in Kysar, John, the Maverick Gospel, pp. 65ff.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Brown, Community of the Beloved Disciple, pp. 13-24, and Schnackenburg, "Is there a Johannine Ecclesiology?"

<sup>3</sup>This study employed the same principle in its examination of the Johannine usage of the christological titles "Son of God" and "Prophet". With respect to the former it was argued that the Son of God concept is present in references to the Son, the Father, and related ideas. Similarly, it was suggested that the concept of prophecy/fulfilment of prophecy can be present even if the term plēroō is not used explicitly.



the positive attitude to a faith based on signs found elsewhere in the Gospel. )

A detailed study of these two verses in their immediate contexts as well as in the context of the Gospel as a whole suggested a different interpretation.

The verses do express a criticism or rebuke of Doubting Thomas (20:29) and the official (4:48), with respect to their expectation of signs and

wonders. The criticism is not, however, aimed at their need to base their faith on signs but their need or desire to witness the sign directly, )

( rather than rely on the authoritative report of eyewitnesses. The passages therefore do not express a critical attitude towards signs-faith. )

This interpretation explains the apparent inconsistencies in the Gospel's statements concerning signs-faith while it also takes into account the situation of the reader who, like Thomas and the official, was not an eyewitness to Jesus' acts and words.

An examination of the meaning of sēmeia in 20:30-31 and the Gospel's attitude towards signs-faith suggested that there was no real obstacle to considering 20:30-31 to express a central purpose underlying the Fourth Gospel. The thesis argued that this purpose entailed four propositions, all of which could be derived from 20:30-31.

The first proposition is that salvation, or "life in his name" is a goal which is or should be desired by the reader. This proposition is expressed in the Johannine description of the world without Christ as a place of darkness and death and also in the narrative's depiction of the various individuals and groups as seeking salvation from their plight.

These descriptions were intended to encourage the reader to view himself as needing or desiring salvation.

The second proposition is that this goal of salvation can be attained by believing in Jesus as the Christ, Son of God. This proposition is stated explicitly, especially in the ego eimi passages. It is also dramatized in the Gospel narratives such as the Raising of Lazarus. These first two propositions, which are basic to the early Christian kerygma, provide the necessary foundation for the third and fourth propositions, which express the specifically Johannine message to the reader.

The third proposition is that the signs which Jesus did in the presence of his disciples are a valid and adequate basis for faith; in other words, the words and acts of Jesus function as signs which demonstrate Jesus' rightful claim to the titles of "Christ", "Son of God" and also the "Prophet". The evangelist takes care to define each of the terms and then to demonstrate in the Gospel narrative itself that Jesus fulfils these definitions. It is in the discussion of this third proposition that the broad definition of sēmeia is most important, since it is argued that the "signs" or demonstrations of Jesus' eschatological identity are not limited to the so-called signs-narratives but are present throughout the entire Gospel.

The fourth proposition is that the readers, who were not themselves eyewitnesses to these signs, have access to them through their written form in the Gospel. It is argued first, that the written reports recorded

in the Gospel are both trustworthy and accurate, and, second, that faith can be based not only on seeing signs but also on hearing, or reading, about them. The rebukes addressed to the official (4:48) and Doubting Thomas (20:29) serve to emphasize this second point.

It is by weaving these four propositions into the narrative that the Gospel writer hopes to persuade his audience that it, as a written record of some of Jesus' acts and words, can serve as a valid basis for faith and therefore for salvation.

The final question which must be considered is the contribution of this study to the issue of the purpose of the Gospel as it is reflected in the secondary sources. In comparing the present study with those of Fortna, Martyn, Dodd, and others, it becomes clear that a true comparison is in fact not possible. The main reason for this is that these studies, while all addressing themselves to the issue of the purpose of the Gospel, in fact are asking different questions. Fortna asks how the evangelist used the hypothetical Signs-Gospel. Martyn asks what historical circumstances in the Johannine community are reflected in the Gospel. Dodd focusses on the leading themes and vocabulary of the Gospel in order to determine to what kind of audience the Gospel would be likely to appeal. The present study asks what role the Gospel saw for itself in the spiritual lives of its readers. Although all of these questions overlap to some extent, each one represents a different approach and a different set of exegetical interests. The theory set forth in this study

is therefore compatible with many other theories of purpose. Whether the intended reader is Christian or non-Christian, of pagan or of Jewish background, whether he comes from Baptist circles or is engaged in debate with the Synagogue, the Gospel still encourages and exhorts him to accept the Gospel as a record of Jesus' signs and as a valid basis for faith.

Although this study has not attempted to determine the identity of the intended reader, it does point to one possible aspect of his identity. It may be suggested that the Gospel was addressing a readership which, like Doubting Thomas, was expecting to receive, or perhaps claiming to receive, personal visions of the Risen Lord which were interpreted as "signs" of the truth of the Christian message. The fourth evangelist countered this claim or expectation not by denying the validity of signs but by redefining the term. By including Jesus' non-miraculous acts and his words as signs, and by focussing on the christological message of the miraculous signs, the purely supernatural aspect of the miracles and of the concept of signs itself is de-emphasized. In doing so, the evangelist can still give a positive value to "signs-faith" while criticizing the way in which that signs-faith has been interpreted by the reader.

The study of the stated purpose of the Gospel has revealed the evangelist's deep concern for the reader who, not having had first-hand experience of Jesus, must be given some way of entering the Christian

faith and/or maintaining his faith. By providing what he considered to be an accurate, authoritative and even sanctified account of the words and acts of Jesus, the evangelist hoped to reveal and explain to the reader the truth as he saw it, and in doing so, to help him attain "life in his name".

## APPENDIX: "SON", "SON OF GOD", AND "SON OF MAN"

In chapter five of this study, it was necessary to examine in some detail the Johannine usage of the "Son of God" title. The relationship between "Son of God", "Son", and "Son of Man" titles will now be looked at briefly. The two principal theories concerning this relationship are exemplified by E. D. Freed and Barnabas Lindars. Freed argues that the "Son of God" and "Son of Man", as well as the "Son" titles are basically equivalent in meaning if not in origin, and that their Johannine usage represents nothing more than the variation in language and expression which is evident with respect to other word groups as well. There is therefore no separate and distinct "Son of Man" christology at work in the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> Lindars argues against Freed, claiming that the Johannine usage of these three titles is not merely stylistic but reflects a difference in meaning and nuance. The Fourth Gospel, therefore, does indeed reflect a separate Son of Man christology.<sup>2</sup> This question can be decided only by looking at the usage of "Son of Man" (ho huios tou anthrōpou) and "Son" (ho huios) in the Gospel, keeping in mind the analysis of "Son of God" (ho huios tou theou)

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<sup>1</sup>Freed, "Son of Man in the Fourth Gospel".

<sup>2</sup>Lindars, "Son of Man in Johannine Christology".

in chapter five, pp. 141ff.

Son of Man - ho huios tou anthrōpou

From the meaning of the words alone, the titles "Son of Man" and "Son of God" would not seem to be equivalent, since one implies a positive link with humanity and the other a link with divinity.<sup>3</sup> Whether in fact this is the case, and whether there is a separate Son of Man christology can only be determined by examining the ten passages in which the term appears. In all of these verses the title is used by Jesus as a reference to himself.

The first appearance of the term is 1:51:

Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

Often taken to be a later addition to its present context,<sup>4</sup> this verse has been subject to several interpretations.

The verse is an allusion to Jacob's dream recounted in Gen. 28: 12ff. :

And Jacob dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

In the Johannine version, the Son of Man appears to have replaced the

<sup>3</sup>See Barrett, Gospel According to St. John, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Brown, Gospel According to John, pp. 88-89.

ladder, leading to the conclusion that the verse represents Jesus as the connection between heaven and earth,<sup>5</sup> or between the eternal and the historical.<sup>6</sup> This interpretation, interestingly enough, is compatible with the Son of God christology. The Son of God is sent by and from God, that is, from heaven, to earth. While on earth he acts as the means by which man can "reach" heaven, that is, know God.<sup>7</sup>

Other factors suggest a similarity in usage if not synonymity in meaning between the "Son of Man" and "Son of God" titles, according to this verse. The first is their respective contexts. Just as the title "Son of God" concludes the first formal introduction of Jesus on the scene by the Baptist (1:34), so the "Son of Man" title concludes the first scene in which Jesus speaks for himself. The second is the use of the verbs anabainō and katabainō. These are not used exclusively with the "Son of Man" title. Both appear also in first-person descriptions of Jesus<sup>8</sup> while katabainō appears in descriptions of Jesus as the bread

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>6</sup>Smalley, "Johannine 'Son of Man' Sayings", p. 288.

<sup>7</sup>1:51 implies an analogy between Jacob's dream and the vision promised to the believers. The verse may therefore imply that it is the Jews, i. e., the descendants of Jacob or Israel, who would be granted the vision promised in 1:51 by recognizing Jesus as the Son of God. On the Jewish background to this verse, see Brown, Gospel According to John, pp. 90-91, and Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, pp. 245-46.

<sup>8</sup>E. g., 6:41, 20:17.



of life.<sup>9</sup> There is a difference in usage, however: the Son of Man is described as ascending to and descending from heaven, whereas the actions of Jesus in ascending and descending are described in terms of the Father (20:17). These factors, while certainly not conclusive, do serve as a warning that it may not be easy to make clear-cut distinctions between the usages of the titles "Son of God" and "Son of Man."

The terms anabainō and katabainō appear in the next occurrence of the "Son of Man" title, 3:13-15:

No one has ascended (anabebēken) into heaven but he who descended (katabas) from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.<sup>10</sup>

In 3:13 it is not the angels but the Son of Man himself who is descending and ascending. The fact that this activity is described only in terms of "heaven" with no mention of "earth" at all, focusses the reader's attention on the divine end of the "ladder". This focus makes clear that in speaking of the Son of Man the Gospel does not intend a figure tied to the earthly, as the name itself might suggest, but rather a figure closely related to heaven and divinity.

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<sup>9</sup>E.g., 6:33, 50, 51.

<sup>10</sup>It is clear that these verses were written from the post-resurrection point of view. From the standpoint of the Gospel narrative, however, the verses identify Jesus' foreknowledge of all that is to befall him. Cf. 18:4. For an analysis of the "Son of Man" theme in 3:1-36, see Ruckstuhl, "Abstieg und Erhöhung des johanneischen Menschensohns".

The soteriological function of this figure is the subject of 3:14-15. This passage has three elements. The first is a comparison between the Son of Man and the serpent in the wilderness (Num. 21:9). Just as the serpent was lifted up to grant life to those who saw it, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. As in all comparisons between the persons and acts of Moses, Jesus emerges superior. Whereas the serpent raised by Moses granted only temporal life, Jesus grants eternal life.<sup>11</sup>

The second element is the idea that the Son of Man must be lifted up. The verb hupsōthēnai is used to convey a double meaning, that is to refer to the crucifixion and to the exaltation, the Son of Man's ascent into heaven after his earthly sojourn.<sup>12</sup> The third element is the stated function of the "lifting up" and descent and ascent into heaven, that is, to grant life.

The first and third of these elements are not unique to the Son of Man terminology. 3:13 is the only verse in which some analogy is made between Moses and the Son of Man. The other similar analogies in the Gospel are made with reference to Jesus without the help of any

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<sup>11</sup>The analogy is not between Moses and Jesus, but between the serpent raised by Moses, and Jesus. On the implications of this verse for the Moses theme in the Gospel, see Glasson, Moses in the Fourth Gospel, pp. 33-39.

<sup>12</sup>On the verb hupsōthenai, see chap. five, pp. 136ff.

christological titles.<sup>13</sup> Similarly the ability to grant eternal life is associated not only with the "Son of Man" but also with the titles of "Son of God" (20:31), "Son" (5:21), and "Christ" (20:31) as well as with Jesus in the first person (6:40).

The element which does seem peculiar to the "Son of Man" terminology is the use of the verb hupsōthēnai. The remaining occurrences of the verb in the Gospel -- 8:28 and 12:32-34 -- are in the context of "Son of Man" passages.

8:28 reads:

When you have lifted up (hotan hupsōsēte) the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me.

Except for the usage of the verb hupsōthēnai, and the appearance of the "Son of Man" title, 8:28 appears to use "Son of God" categories, both in its use of the term "Father" for God, and also in the theme of derived authority.<sup>14</sup> The phrase "he who sent me" (ho pempas me) (8:29), associated with the "Son of God", serves to substantiate this impression.<sup>15</sup>

In 12:32, the verb hupsōthēnai is used by Jesus in the first

<sup>13</sup>Cf., for example, 6:32.

<sup>14</sup>See chapter five, pp. 150ff.

<sup>15</sup>On the question of whether or not the "Son of Man" is intended as the antecedent of "I am he" (ego eimi) in 8:28, see Brown, Gospel According to John, p. 348.

person: "and I, when I am lifted up (hupsōthō) from the earth, will draw all men to myself ". The narrator interprets this statement for the readers in 12:33: "He said this to show by what death he was to die ". The crowd interprets the verb hupsōthō solely as a reference to Jesus' manner of death. "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" (12:34). To the Jews, this signifies that Jesus cannot be the Messiah because according to the law, the Messiah "remains forever" (eis ton aiōna), that is, does not die.<sup>16</sup>

Thus far the discussion follows along the same pattern as other controversies about Jesus' identity. What is puzzling in the present context, however, is the introduction of the title "Son of Man." According to the present version of 12:32, Jesus does not say that the Son of Man must be lifted up, but rather he speaks in the first person. It is the crowd which makes the association between the verb hupsōthō and the Son of Man. This implies a traditional connection between the two terms, which the Fourth Gospel has drawn upon in the Son of Man sayings. The crowd's final question is ambiguous. It can be interpreted as a request for the identity of the Son of Man, meaning "Are you the Son of Man?" It could also be interpreted as a question concerning the title itself, although in the present context it is the crowd itself which introduces it,

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<sup>16</sup>See chap. five, pp. 136ff.

and not Jesus.<sup>17</sup> 12:34 implies that the crowd understood the "Son of Man" to be identical with the "Christ", that is, he who is the Christ, is also the Son of Man. Hence, though the use of the verb hupsōthēnai implies a separate "Son of Man" tradition, the identification of "Christ" and "Son of Man" in 12:34 makes it difficult to conclude that the Fourth Gospel intends to put forth a "Son of Man" christology as distinct from a "Son of God" or "Messiah" christology.

5:27, like 12:34, associates the "Son of Man" title with the other christological titles, "Son" and "Son of God" (5:25):

Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. (5:25-27)

This passage makes two explicit claims. First, the Son is the Son of Man. Presumably the "Son" here refers to the Son of God since God is called the Father. Second, the execution of judgment is an attribute of the Son of Man. This second claim also seems to be operative in 9:35ff.

In 9:35ff., Jesus asks the man born blind whether he believes in the Son of Man (9:35).<sup>18</sup> After Jesus identifies himself as the Son of

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<sup>17</sup>For this reason, some scholars would prefer to place 12:34 after 8:29. See Bultmann, Gospel of John, pp. 347ff.

<sup>18</sup>In some manuscripts, such as Codex Sinaiticus and the Koridethis Gospels, the reading is not huios tou anthrōpou but huios tou theou. The former is the preferred reading.

Man (9:37), the man responds positively and worships Jesus (9:38).

This marks the only instance in which the "Son of Man" title is used in a confessional context. Hence the title arouses the same response as do "Christ", "Son of God" and "King of Israel", which are used in the other confessions recorded in the Gospel (1:41, 48; 11:27; 20:31).

Jesus' response to the man's confession is a short discourse on judgment:

For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind. (9:39)

At the end of this discourse he exercises his right to judge, and pronounces "some of the Pharisees" ( ek tōn Pharisaiōn) guilty, on the basis of their claim to "see" (9:40-41). Although the text itself does not make a direct and explicit connection between the Son of Man and Jesus' authority to judge, the structure of the passage does imply such an association. Jesus' comment concerning his role in judgment serves as a commentary on his act of healing the man born blind and on his identity as the Son of man, to which the healed man has just confessed.

To determine whether the act or function of judging is associated specifically with the Son of Man, the use of the words krisis and krinein in the Fourth Gospel must be examined briefly.<sup>19</sup>

The noun krisis appears nine times in the Gospel in addition to

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<sup>19</sup>The noun krima occurs only in 9:39.

5:27 discussed above. It is associated with the titles of "Son" (5:22), the "Paraclete" (10: 8), and "Jesus" in the first or third person (3:19, 5:24, 30, 8:16). In 7:24 the Jews are told by Jesus to use correct judgment. In 12:31 and 5:29 the noun is not related to any specific agent but rather to the one who is being judged. These passages assume that it is God or Jesus who is doing the judging.

The verb krinein appears in fourteen verses, two of which also contain the work krisis (5:22, 7:24). In 5:22 and 8:50 it is God who judges. In six verses (3:17, 18; 5:30; 8:15, 16, 26) Jesus is the judge, though 12:42 and 12:48 specify that not Jesus but his word will judge. In 7:24 as in 18:31 and 7:51, it is the Jews or the Jewish law who judge, though the validity of these judgments is questioned. In 16:11, the focus is on the one being judged, namely the ruler of this world. Presumably it is God or perhaps Jesus who does the judging in this case.

The usage of these two terms therefore suggests that judgment is not the exclusive function of the Son of Man. Rather, it is associated first and foremost with Jesus and only secondarily with Jesus as described by one of the various christological titles. Ultimately it is God who judges, and who gives the power to judge, not only to Jesus but also to the Paraclete.

Three "Son of Man" verses remain for consideration. In 6:27, Jesus admonishes the Jews:

Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal (esphragisen).

The connection between Son of Man and eternal life is evident also in 3:15, but, as was demonstrated in the discussion of the "Son of God" title, the same connection is made with respect to the "Son of God" and "Son". The description of the Son of Man as the one on whom God the Father has set his seal also implies a close association between Son of God and Son of Man. The verb esphragisen means "to mark with a seal as a means of identification", and in this case, to endow with power from heaven.<sup>20</sup> In Eph. 1:13, 4:30 and 2 Cor. 1:22 one is sealed by or with the Holy Spirit. Though the Spirit is not mentioned in Jn. 6:27, it will be recalled that the initial witness of John the Baptist to the identity of Jesus as the Son of God described the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus (1:32). In other words, the Baptist's testimony described how God set his seal, the Spirit, on Jesus, thereby consecrating him as the Son of God. Therefore, although the verb esphragisen is not used with respect to any other title, 6:27 implies a very close relationship between the Son of Man and Son of God figures, perhaps equivalent to complete identity.

12:23 and 13:31 both deal with the glorification of the Son of Man.

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<sup>20</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 804.



The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified (12:23).

Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified (13:31).

Both verses suggest that the hour of glorification is the hour of the passion. The glorification theme, like the judgment theme, is not the exclusive property of the "Son of Man" title, but it appears in connection with both the "Son of God" (11:4) and "Jesus" (7:39, 12:16).

In conclusion, there appears to be no effort in the Fourth Gospel to distinguish between the "Son of Man" and the "Son of God" in terms of either context or meaning. Both terms can appear in the same passage and both are associated with the same central themes of consecration, judgment, glorification, and relationship to God the Father.

Two distinctive features of the "Son of Man" verses however may be pinpointed. The first is the use of hupsōthēnai, which appears only in the "Son of Man" passages, and the second is the fact that the Son of Man descends from and ascends to heaven, whereas the "Son of God" and "Jesus" ascend to and descend from God the Father. These are both stylistic features, which express ideas and themes which appear also in connection with other titles especially the "Son of God" title. This implies that whereas a separate source or tradition, using a distinct vocabulary may certainly underly the Johannine "Son of Man" sayings, the Fourth Gospel does not use these sayings to express

a separate Son of Man christology, but rather seems to redefine the "Son of Man" in terms of the "Son of God". As christological titles, both are fulfilled in Jesus. More than this, however, the Son of Man seems to have the same relationship to both God and the world as does the Son of God.

Son - ho huios

Although the title "Son" is sometimes applied to Jesus in a "secular" sense, that is, with reference to Joseph as Jesus' father (1:45), it is most often used in contexts which speak of Jesus' eschatological identity. Because of this, it appears to be closely related to the title "Son of God" and also to the name "Father" as applied to God. Lindars, however, argues that the term "Son" is not merely an abbreviation of the "Son of God" title, but is intended to be an open-ended reference to the "Son of Man" as well.<sup>21</sup> The following examination of the fifteen verses in which the title is applied to Jesus will help to determine the meaning of the title as well as its relationship to the two other titles, "Son of Man" and "Son of God". The term appears ten times in the words of Jesus, and five times in the words of the narrator when referring to Jesus.

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<sup>21</sup>Lindars, "Son of Man", p. 50.

The title first appears in 3:16-17:<sup>22</sup>

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

The term "Son of God" is used in the following verse, 3:18. The connection between the Son and eternal life or salvation is the same as that made between the "Son of God" and "not being condemned" in 3:18, suggesting that here "Son" is again intended as a variation of "Son of God". This interpretation is however made less certain by the fact that only two verses earlier, the connection between "Son of Man" and eternal life is also made (3:14). In 3:16 the "Son" is unmistakably the Son of God, since he is referred to as God's only son (ton huion ton monogenē). In 3:17, the reference could conceivably be to the Son of Man. The explicit reference to the "Son of God" in 3:18, however, implies that it is still the "Son of God" who is intended. The argument, in 3:14-18, therefore, seems to move from the "Son of Man", to the "Son of God", using the title "Son" in between.

The title reappears in 3:36:

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<sup>22</sup>According to some manuscripts, such as Codex Alexandrinus, the term ho huios appears also in 1:18. In these manuscripts, 1:18 reads ho monogenes huios, instead of monogenes theos, as in p 75. 1:18 stresses two points: the intimate relationship between God and the Son, and the revelatory function or role of the Son in the world.

. . . the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him.

The focus on the intimate relationship and love bond between Father and Son, the power which the Son has derived from the Father, the connection between belief in the Son and eternal life, and the use of the term "Father" (3:35) suggest that it is again the Son of God who is intended in the reference to the "Son".

The next passage in which the title appears is 5:19-23:

Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.

Although the verses in the passage are connected, each makes a specific claim concerning the Father/Son relationship and its consequences for believers. 5:19 stresses that the actions of the Son are based on the Father. Because Jesus does only what he sees God doing, all his actions are from God. 5:20 argues that the reason for this is the love of the Father for the Son. The Father is the one who is permitting and indeed encouraging this situation by showing the Son all he does. 5:21-22

give two central examples of the actions which the Father does and which the Son likewise does: resurrecting the dead, that is, giving life, and judging. The Son's powers to do these things are derived directly from the Father. The hoped-for result is expressed in 5:23. In 5:24 Jesus switches from the third person in reference to himself to the first person, indicating beyond any doubt that he is the Son and the one who gives life.

The use of Father/Son vocabulary implies that the Son is the Son of God. This is supported by 5:25, in which the full title "Son of God" is used. The confusion or blurring of distinction among the titles occurs again however in the following verses. 5:26 reverts to the Father/Son vocabulary used in 5:19-23 and the eternal life theme of 3:16ff. and 5:21. 5:27 however introduces for the first time in this pericope the title of "Son of Man". This raises the possibility that the Son in 5:27 is in fact the Son of Man. This is not the only, or even the most plausible suggestion, on grammatical grounds. 5:26-27 constitute one sentence. In 5:27 the subject of the clause is God the Father. The antecedent of the indirect object "him" (autō) is the "Son" (cf. 5:26). 5:27 therefore reads "He (the Father) has given him (the Son) the authority to execute judgment because he (the Son) is the Son of Man". This phrasing suggests that a particular process is at work here: the two titles, "Son (of God)" and "Son of Man" are considered appropriate to Jesus. While they are not synonymous, they bear some relationship to

each other because they both have their fulfilment in Jesus. This verse implies that judgment or the authority to execute judgment is an attribute of the Son of Man. This authority is given to Jesus because, while he is the Son of God, he is also the Son of Man.

In 6:40, Jesus refers to himself in the third person as the "Son" and also speaks in the first person.

For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Like 5:19ff., the verse stresses the connection between belief in the Son, eternal life, and resurrection. 6:42, in which the Jews refer to Jesus as the son of Joseph, provides a bit of irony. The readers know that Jesus is the Son of God, whereas the Jews can see him only in earthly terms. The irony and the meaning of the verse therefore require that the "Son" be the Son of God.

The dialogue between Jesus and the Jews in 8:31ff. revolves around the theme of sonship. On the principle that one's Father is known by one's own actions, Jesus argues that his Father is God, and proves that the "Father" of the Jews is not Abraham or God, but the devil, since they seek to kill him (8:40). The Son therefore is the Son of God. It is he who can free them from sin (8:36).

In 14:13 the actions of Jesus in response to his disciples are connected to the glorification of the Father in the Son:

Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the son. . .

This connection is similar to that made in 11:4, in which God and the Son of God are considered to be glorified by the work surrounding Lazarus' illness.<sup>23</sup> The use of the Father/Son terminology and the theme of glorification which is also associated with the "Son of God" implies that here as elsewhere the Son is the "Son of God".

17:1 is the final passage in which the title Son appears:

Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that  
the Son may glorify thee. . .

The direct appeal to God as the Father, and the theme of glorification both prominent in the Son of God passages, suggest that here the Son is the Son of God. This is substantiated by the themes of consecration and sending in 17:3.

In conclusion, therefore, the "Son" does not seem to be an open-ended reference to either the "Son of God" or "Son of Man". Rather, it is an abbreviation of "Son of God". Like the "Son of Man", the "Son" title is the property of Jesus. This conclusion is suggested by the context of the passages as well as the themes they contain. These themes are the same as those associated with the "Son of God": the giving of life, judgment, doing the works of the father, glorification, the Son as an agent of the Father, and finally, the love of God for his son and for

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<sup>23</sup>The story of the raising of Lazarus is actually a dramatization of the process as stated in 14:13. The believers, Martha and Mary, call on Jesus, and he does work which constitutes the glorification of the Father in the Son.

the world, which is the motivating force behind Jesus' mission.

The study of the titles "Son of Man", "Son" and "Son of God" supports the conclusions of E.D. Freed rather than those of Barnabas Lindars. The usage of these titles does not seem to reflect different christologies so much as different traditions and sources. All three titles are fulfilled in Jesus, and are associated with the same themes. They do not all seem to be of equal importance, however. The most important and fundamental title is the "Son of God", as indicated by the frequent usage of the word "Father" for God, even in the "Son of Man" passages. The term "Son" is an abbreviation for the "Son of God". The term "Son of Man", on the other hand, probably originally referred to the figure in Daniel 7 and the apocalyptic literature, becoming re-defined in the Fourth Gospel in terms of the Son of God.



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