

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

THE 'SON OF MAN LIFTED UP' IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the idiom 'the Son of man lifted up' in John 3:11-15, 8:23-30, and 12:23-30. The idiom reflects the Fourth gospel writer's particularization of the expression 'son of man' through which he articulates a vision of Jesus as a figure of paradox.

Chapter One investigates the religious/literary background of the expression 'son of man' in Hebrew Bible literature (notably Psalm eight, Ezekiel and Daniel seven), and in the Synoptic Gospels, giving an overview of the salient themes associated with the expression.

Chapter Two consists of an exegetical analysis of passages in John in which the expression 'the Son of man lifted up' appears (3:11-15, 8:23-30, and 12:23-30).

Chapter Three concludes with a discussion of how themes already associated with the expression 'son of man' contribute to the Fourth gospel presentation. I also discuss the significance of the Johannine idiom for the first century church.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BJRL	The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
NEB	New English Bible
NTS	New Testament Studies
RecSR	Recherches de Science Religieuse
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
VD	Verbum Domini
VT	Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

INTRODUCTION

In the Gospel of John the expression 'son of man' functions as a christological title used intentionally to describe Jesus.¹ However, the writer of the gospel has chosen to use this expression in an unusual and innovative way. Only in John is 'son of man' used three times in conjunction with the Greek verb hupsothēnai (to be lifted up) which together produce the phrase 'the son of man (must be) lifted up'.²

The verb hupsothēnai literally means 'to be lifted up' in a physical sense but it is also used figuratively to mean 'to glorify' or 'to exalt' in the sense of honouring or worshipping someone. The Fourth Gospel writer always uses this expression to refer to Jesus' crucifixion. This particular meaning is taken up in John 3:11-15 and 8:23-30 and it is clearly expressed later in 12:31-33.

Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.
This he said to show by what death he was to die.

In John, the expression 'son of man' used to describe Jesus, is intimately associated with a christology of paradox in which a weak and broken figure is understood to

impart or reveal ultimate strength and authority.³ Because of the double entendre of the verb, Jesus is actually glorified or exalted when he is lifted up in crucifixion, suffering and death. This Johannine vision of Jesus challenges any previous concept envisioning the Son of man as a figure characterized primarily by strength or success, and it also recasts the crucifixion - and not the resurrection - as the first principle of early Christian salvation history. This is the event in which Jesus, the Son of man, fulfills the task given to him to reveal God to man.

The expression 'son of man' exists outside of John. It is scattered throughout Hebrew Bible literature,⁴ pseudepigraphal literature,⁵ and in the Synoptic Gospels. In the Psalms, Jeremiah, and in Isaiah, it always appears as a synonym for 'man'. In Ezekiel, it is the name or stereotyped formula by which a particular prophet is addressed. In Daniel, it is used to describe a mysterious figure, 'one like a man' (7:13) who appears with the clouds before the Ancient of Days. Finally, in the New Testament Gospels, Son of man is used as a messianic title for Jesus.

Since the expression appears in Hebrew, in Aramaic (the book of Daniel), and also in Greek (the Synoptic Gospels), scholars often avoid comparative textual studies because it

is assumed that the phrase in one language, (i.e. Hebrew), cannot be the equivalent of the phrase in another language, (i.e. Aramaic or Greek). Nevertheless, much has been written on the possible nature and significance of the expression in biblical literature. Son of man research has been described as "the great centre of debate in New Testament Studies of the twentieth century".⁶ The literature available has also been called "vast", "a bewildering mass", and the problem described as perhaps "an insoluble one".⁷

It is not my intention to attempt to resolve the current 'son of man' debate but simply to provide the reader with a background to the expression from which one may gain perspective on its use in John. To this end, the first chapter will provide a cursory overview of the use of son of man as it appears in Biblical, post-Biblical and early Christian literature before John. My approach will be a literary one. Current scholarship likes to perceive the title or phrase 'son of man' as a problem for syntactical analysis. But since the Bible is a collection of literary works that seems to reflect an historical development, the expression should also be considered as a literary theme that develops through time. The Hebrew Bible and Post-Biblical Jewish literature operate in a religious arena that reflects parallel usages, as well as a development of

specific ideas and themes. In the Bible, as in all literature, literary phrases or images are discovered and re-echoed creatively in other texts and in other languages in order to communicate appropriately to audiences of different eras. The comparative literary study which follows operates according to this hypothesis.

In the following comparative analysis I shall survey the religious and literary arena in which the Fourth Gospel operated in order to determine the working context of the ancient writer. The goal of the following study is to analyse and to assess the role and function of 'son of man' in Biblical texts before and contemporary with the Gospel of John.⁸ An overview of the important concepts linked to the expression as it develops historically will be formulated and to these the role and function of John's 'Son of man lifted up' will be compared.

CHAPTER ONE

The Son of Man in Biblical Literature before John: An Overview

In the Hebrew Bible the expression son of man appears in Psalms 8:4, 80:17, 144:3, 146:3, in Isaiah 51:12, 56:2, in Jeremiah 49:33, 50:40, 51:43, throughout the book of Ezekiel, and in Daniel 7:13 (8:17). These are the only occurrences of the expression in Hebrew Bible literature. Son of man also appears in the books of 1 Enoch 37-71 and in 2 Esdras 13. This survey embraces all of the above texts except 1 Enoch and 2 Esdras since it is likely that these books date to the latter part of the first century C.E.⁹ It is probable that they did not contribute to the understanding of the expression in the Synoptic Gospels or in John.¹⁰

The earliest and most frequent use of the expression son of man in biblical literature is simply as a synonym for man. Examples of the expression as synonym appear in Jeremiah 49:33, 51:43, in Psalm 8:5, 80:7, 144:3, and in Isaiah 51:12 and 56:2. As a synonym, son of man often functions as a poetic parallel which reiterates and emphasizes a previously mentioned idea or image. Such is the case in the following example taken from Jeremiah 50:40

As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbour cities, says the Lord, so no

man shall dwell there and no son of man shall sojourn there.

In this example the phrase "and no son of man shall sojourn there" mirrors the preceding "so no man shall dwell there" and it simply emphasizes the idea that no one shall inhabit the vicinity of Sodom. This kind of parallel is representative of most occurrences of son of man used as a synonym for man.

The expression, however, does not remain as a simple or unadorned synonym. On a second level, it also embraces significant nuances associated with the word 'man'. The most important of these nuances takes their root from the three terms used to represent 'man'. The first term is ish,¹¹ meaning a man of virtue or a valiant man. The second is adam,¹² which takes its root from adamah or earth, meaning 'earthborn'. The third and final term is enosh,¹³ meaning mortal, weak or frail. Since 'son of man' always appears, as either ben adam or as ben enosh it necessarily becomes associated with the concepts of weakness and mortality. These are important nuances associated with the expression. Ben ish, the valiant man, for example, never appears as an idiom for son of man.¹⁴

This understanding of man/son of man as a frail creature of dust whose life inevitably succumbs to death is

reinforced within the context of whole verses that speak about his condition in the world. For example, in Isaiah 51:12 one reads,

I, I am he that comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, or the son of man who is made like grass.

or again in Psalm 144:4-5,

O Lord, what is man that thou dost regard him, or the son of man that thou dost think of him? Man is like a breath, his days are like a passing shadow.

Repeatedly, in form and in context, the synonymous figure of man/son of man is portrayed in a realistic and sober perspective by the ancient Hebrew writers as a frail and mortal creature.

Thus far we have seen the expression son of man used only as a synonym for man where man is described simply as a mortal and frail creature. The expression is used in other passages, however, to describe man as a figure of greater complexity. This should not surprise us. The process of literary creation is an increasing dialectic between the necessity to use established forms in order to be able to communicate coherently and the necessity to break and remake these forms.¹⁵ In this regard the writers of other Hebrew bible passages make use of this idiom but they realign or enhance it by attaching other nuances to it. In Psalm eight, for example, son of man is used as a synonym for man

where man is a mortal but yet an authoritative figure who carries out a commission for God. In Ezekiel, the expression is used to identify a particular man, the prophet Ezekiel, and in Daniel son of man is an expression used to describe an ideal of the Messiah. In the following pages I shall discuss the role and function of son of man in Psalm eight, Ezekiel, and Daniel seven because each presents and develops the expression as more than a simple synonym for man.

The Son of man in Psalm Eight

- 1 For the musical director. According to the gittith. A psalm of David.
- 2 O Lord, our governor, how majestic your name is in all the earth. I will worship your majesty above the heavens.
- 3 From the mouths of babes and sucklings you have established strength on account of your enemies, to put at rest both foe and avenger.
- 4 When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers the moon and the stars which you have established.
- 5 What is man that you are mindful of him? and the son of man that you attend him?
- 6 But you have made him little less than God and you will crown him with glory and honour.
- 7 You will make him master over the work of your hands, you have set everything beneath his feet.
- 8 All sheep and cattle, and even the beasts of the field.

- 9 The birds of the air and fishes of the sea, whatever passes through the pathways of the seas.
- 10 O Lord, our governor, how majestic your name is in all the earth.¹⁶

Psalm eight is a hymn of praise that glorifies God as creator, though more precisely it may be classified as a psalm of creation.¹⁷ It is difficult to date this psalm. There are certain similarities between it and Genesis One with respect to creation in general and the place of mankind within it. It is important to note the centrality of creation in Hebrew and Israelite thought from a very early period.¹⁸ Some scholars think it plausible that Psalm eight is pre-exilic, possibly related to the religious movement which began with Amos around the middle of the eighth century B.C.E.¹⁹ If Psalm eight is indeed an early work then it is also important because it provides an excellent starting point in our study of son of man with which later occurrences of the expression in Ezekiel, Daniel, and the gospels may be compared.

Psalm eight is significant as a vehicle for a presentation of a theology of man. In this theology, man is described as a weak and relatively insignificant creature who, paradoxically, is given great authority by Yahweh. In the following analysis of Psalm eight I shall demonstrate that this particular theology of man must change one's

perception of son of man as simply a frail and mortal creature (cf. v.5). Son of man exists as a synonym for man in a psalm that describes a paradoxical theology of man. Therefore the expression itself becomes associated with that theology.²⁰ According to his nature this son of man is weak and mortal but he functions as a powerful and authoritative representative of Yahweh. The psalmist's blending of these two characteristics (weakness and strength, insignificance and authority) in the one figure is what gives this 'son of man' a distinctive identity.

Psalm 8:2-3 The First Paradox

In Psalm eight the psalmist asserts that the greatness and the majesty of God is revealed through his name (vv.2, 10). 'Name', when applied to God, means more than the designation by which he is known. The word 'name' here represents not only God, but also God's revelation of himself. Essentially, it denotes his nature as revealed through his acts.²¹ It is with this understanding that the psalmist elaborates upon the acts of Yahweh starting in verses two and three.

2 O Lord, our governor, how majestic your name is in all the earth. I will worship your name above the heavens.²²

3 From the mouths of babes and sucklings you have established strength on account of your enemies to put at rest both foe and avenger.

According to the above translation it appears that the psalmist has set up a contrast between babes and sucklings, on the one hand, and the foe and avenger on the other.²³ Between the contrasted parties is God who establishes 'strength'.²⁴ In this context, God uses the mouths of babes and sucklings, in some manner, to establish his strength on account of the presence or existence of enemies. Thus, the first act of Yahweh is a paradoxical one. It is through those who are by nature weak and seemingly insignificant that Yahweh establishes strength, effectively putting at rest the opposition of his enemies. According to the psalmist, Yahweh reveals himself as the one who establishes his authority unexpectedly through the weak. This first paradox of the psalm prepares the reader for a second involving man (vv.4-9).

Psalm 8:4-9 The Second Paradox

In verses four to nine, the psalmist introduces the theme of man. Man is defined by juxtaposing two seemingly opposing characteristics. On one hand, the psalmist describes him using traditional qualities of weakness and frailty. According to his nature man is insignificant within the vastness of the created order (v.4). Just as the babes and sucklings appear insignificant before Yahweh's foes, so man seems insignificant within the context of the

universe. The perplexity of the psalmist is underscored by the heartfelt cry, "What is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you should attend him?" (v.5). It is incomprehensible to the writer that man should be recognized at all. The Hebrew words chosen to describe man, enosh, a frail and mortal human being, and ben adam, son of the earth, emphasize an understanding of him as a frail and mortal presence within creation.

On the other hand, man is also defined according to an act of Yahweh which stands in contradiction to his weakness and insignificance. Man functions as a representative of Yahweh. It is to man that Yahweh gives great authority. The authority of man is described in three parts. First, man is "a little lower than God" (elōhîm). There are varying interpretations of the word elōhîm. Strictly speaking it means 'god' or 'gods'. Many of the earliest versions, the Greek and Syriac Old Testaments, the Vulgate and the Targum, took the word to mean 'angels'. Other versions like Aquila and Symmachus took the word to mean 'God'.²⁵ Recent translators judge that 'God' is an appropriate translation.²⁶ In the mind of the psalmist this insignificant creature of dust is somehow a little less than God. Second, man is crowned with glory (kāvōd) and honour (hadar). These attributes are usually ascribed only to God as supreme king of the universe.²⁷ Finally, he is given

dominion over all the works of God's hands - sheep, oxen, small cattle, birds and fish (vv.7-9). These verses are reminiscent of the Genesis story (1:28ff) which describes God giving man the authority "to replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth". In both passages man is understood to function as an authoritative agent of God who rules over all creation.

By the end of verse nine the psalmist completes his theology of man. No longer is man presented as simply a creature of weakness and frailty. Rather, as a result of Yahweh's initiative, he is a creature of paradox, at once frail, mortal and insignificant, and also "a little less than God", crowned with glory and honour, master over the earth and all that lies in it.

Summary: The Role and Function of Son of man in Psalm Eight

In the context of Psalm Eight, 'son of man' exists as a poetic synonym for man. In as much as this psalm develops an important and paradoxical theology of man the expression 'son of man' necessarily becomes associated with that theology. In this way the contradicting attributes of weakness and strength, insignificance and authority

associated with 'man' become associated with 'son of man'. The psalmist holds the contrasting nature and function of man/son of man in a creative tension which allows the reader to interpret 'son of man' as a figure of complexity. 'Son of man' now becomes identified as a figure of paradox who, by nature, is utterly weak and mortal and yet functions as an authoritative emissary of Yahweh.

The Son of Man in the Book of Ezekiel

The expression son of man appears also in Ezekiel, a text named after the prophet Ezekiel who lived during the rule of Nebuchadnezzar II, king of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty (605-562 B.C.E.).²⁸ The expression plays a particularly important role within the text because it is the name or title by which the main character Ezekiel is addressed. Ezekiel is only once called by his proper name (24:24). Otherwise the stereotyped formula 'son of man', used ninety-three times in all, represents the hero figure.²⁹ In Ezekiel, son of man or ben adam, carries no messianic overtones. It simply stresses the prophet's status as a human being.³⁰ In as much as the expression identifies who Ezekiel is and how he functions, it becomes associated with characteristics peculiar to him. As the title identifies Ezekiel, so the character of Ezekiel defines and qualifies the title.

In the text, Ezekiel functions as a prophet-messenger of Yahweh to the exiles of Jerusalem. The historical character Ezekiel was born in Jerusalem around the year 623 B.C.E., some twenty-six years before the Babylonian empire attacked and conquered the city (597 B.C.E.).³¹ Along with many of the city's key citizens Ezekiel and his family were carried off into exile to a community established at Tel

Abib near the River Chebar (3:15). The writer describes Ezekiel's first vision of Yahweh that he received by this river. The vision causes him to give up his hereditary role as priest and assume instead the role of prophet, or nabi, responsible for communicating Yahweh's message to the Jerusalem exiles.

It is often supposed that a messenger of God must be dynamic and strong in order to deliver appropriately his message to inspire and impress his audience. Ezekiel, the son of man, however, does not conform to the standards of popular expectations. In this second study of the role and function of 'son of man' in Biblical literature I shall demonstrate that the expression in Ezekiel is placed within the great tradition of the prophets. In this tradition the character of the prophet enters willingly into undesirable and often humiliating circumstances in order to convey a powerful message.³² Ezekiel, the son of man, functions in this manner and the expression is used by the author to identify an almost tragi-comic figure, dogged by weakness and misunderstanding.³³ The following two passages (4:8; 5:12) are representative of others describing the prophet. I shall show that Ezekiel, the prophet-son of man, is portrayed as a weak and enigmatic figure through whom Yahweh reveals his authority.³⁴ The clarity of the message

delivered by Ezekiel as 'son of man' is dependent upon his willingness to demonstrate weakness. Thus in the context of the text, the expression becomes associated, as it did in Psalm eight, with a paradoxical concept: Yahweh reveals himself through the weak to establish his strength and authority before men.

Ezekiel 4:1-8 Ezekiel and the Siege of Jerusalem³⁵

- 1 And you, O son of man, take a brick and lay it before you, and portray upon it a city, even Jerusalem;
- 2 and put a siegeworks against it, and build a siege wall against it, and cast up a mound against it; set camps also against it, and plant battering rams against it round about.
- 3 And take an iron plate, and place it as an iron wall between you and the city; and set your face toward it, and let it be in a state of siege, and press the siege against it. This is a sign for the house of Israel.
- 4 Then lie upon your left side, and I will lay the punishment of the house of Israel upon you; for the number of days that you lie upon it, you shall bear their punishment.
- 5 For I assign to you a number of days, three hundred and ninety days, equal to the number of years of their punishment, so long shall you bear the punishment of the house of Israel.
- 6 And when you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the punishment of the house of Judah; forty days I assign you, a day for each year.

- 7 And you shall set your face toward the siege of Jerusalem with your arm bared; and you shall prophesy against the city.
- 8 And behold, I will put cords upon you, so that you cannot turn from one side to the other, till you have completed the days of your siege.

Throughout the book of Ezekiel it is evident that the mandate of communicating Yahweh's message demands the prophet's full participation. As 'son of man', Ezekiel experiences many powerful visions (1:1-3,15; 3:16a-22ff; 8-11; 37:1-14; 40-48). Visionary experiences are also found in earlier written prophecy (Amos 7:1-8; 8:1-2; 9:1-4; Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 4:23-26; 24:1-10). The distinctive feature of Ezekiel's visions, however, lies in the fact that the prophet himself participates in the event, acting out each message with symbolic gestures. His participation in the enactment of the divine message is, at times, so complete that he himself symbolizes the message, becoming a sign or mofet to the people (12:6-11; 24:24-27).³⁶

Such is the case in 4:1-8 where Ezekiel enacts Yahweh's first message to the Jerusalem exiles at Tel Abib. His enactment of the divine message takes place in two stages. In the first stage, he takes a brick while it is still soft and on it draws a map of the city outlining the walls and key buildings (v.1). He then begins to besiege the model city with models of the instruments of siege: towers, siege

mound, military camps, battering rams, etc. (v.2). Finally, he places an iron griddle between the map and the model and lies behind it gazing continually at the model. His view would be impeded by the intervening plate (v.3). This first series of actions represents a sign to the house of Israel (v.4). With this dramatization Ezekiel, the son of man, enacts the wrath of Yahweh toward the city of Jerusalem. This is the significance of the enacted siege, the prophet's gaze, and the iron plate which separates the city from his gaze. The anger of Yahweh is further demonstrated through the baring of the prophet's arm (v.7). This act is reminiscent of a soldier's preparation for battle at which time he pulled back his upper garment to be free to fight. Thus Ezekiel's bared arm is symbolic of Yahweh's preparation to do battle with the city. It is a gesture of threat.³⁷

Since by these actions Ezekiel is meant to demonstrate the wrath of Yahweh against the city, it is remarkable that he should be required to be prostrate and bound while doing so. The meaning of the phrase, "I will put cords on you" (v.8), is not clear. It could be taken literally. In this case, the prophet/son of man would actually have bound himself with cords during the dramatization of the divine command. Or, the phrase might be a metaphor, as in 3:23, indicating that the prophet was restricted from other activities until the symbolic actions had been completely

accomplished.³⁸ Whether one takes the literal or the figurative interpretation of the phrase it is clear that Ezekiel as son of man is not in control or manipulating the unfolding drama. Rather, he presents the message of God and to a certain degree he suffers as a consequence.

It is evident in verse five that Ezekiel himself bears or suffers something of the divine wrath of which he speaks: "I have made the years of their punishment to be for you the number of days; three hundred and ninety corresponding to the years the house of Israel had sinned".³⁹ Here the Hebrew word mispar, or number, reveals an interest in a detailed reckoning of guilt to be born by the prophet/son of man. Ezekiel was to lie on one side for three hundred and ninety days, corresponding to the years the house of Israel had sinned, and then afterwards, on his right side for forty days, corresponding to the additional years the southern kingdom had sinned. Interpretations of the exact significance of the numbers vary.⁴⁰ What is important for my topic matter is the interest shown in a correspondence between the scale of guilt and the length of the substitutionary sin-bearing which, finally, must be born by the son of man himself.⁴¹ According to the writer of the book of Ezekiel, the prophet as son of man functions as the guilt-bearer for the people.

The suffering of Ezekiel is further expressed through the term nasah aon or guilt-punishment which is repeated several times (4:4-6). According to Walther Zimmerli in his Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel, one of the uses of this term may be found in priestly literature where it expresses the 'guilt-bearing' of a substitute or scapegoat.⁴² The scapegoat was understood to be ordained by God to bear the guilt of the people on itself in order to make atonement for them (Leviticus 10:17; 16:22). It is in this sense that the prophet/son of man acts as a substitutionary guilt-bearer. Zimmerli concludes,

... in this proclamation of the binding of Ezekiel as an event in which he bore the guilt of the house of Israel, the idea is expressed that Ezekiel portrayed publicly, in a meaningful sign, a condition of guilt ... Ezekiel, by lying bound, became a revealer of guilt, an accuser, as he had been previously in threatening punishment (4:1-3). We must add a further consideration to this. In the prophet's guilt-bearing there occurs at the same time an act of public identification. His own life is brought into the aon or guilt-bearing of the people. He brings together in his symbolic bondage the guilt of Israel as a burden in his own life.⁴³

In summary then, the unusual and dramatic actions of Ezekiel help to convey a powerful message to the exile community. Through the enactment of the divine message the prophet/son of man functions as the messenger who reveals the strength and authority of Yahweh over the city of Jerusalem. Standing in contrast to the divine message is

the emphasis on the son of man as mortal or human. There is a comfort on the part of the author to speak freely about the human characteristics of this son of man. The weakness of the prophet and his voluntary decision to enter obediently into a difficult and humiliating circumstance is required in the process of communicating the message of Yahweh to the exiles. In order to perform the actions that assert God's authority, Ezekiel - the son of man - must be weak, bound and suffering, as a sign for the community. In this passage, therefore, the expression son of man becomes associated, in the character of the prophet, with a figure of weakness through whom, paradoxically, Yahweh is understood to reveal his strength.

Ezekiel 5:1-2 Ezekiel and the Shearing of Jerusalem

This theme is taken up many times throughout the book of Ezekiel. In each dramatization used to portray the strength of Yahweh and his threat of destruction upon Jerusalem the prophet/son of man becomes the weak and fragile bearer of the message. His enactment of the divine message often entails his own humiliation. In chapter 5:1-2, for example, the humiliation of the son of man becomes the vehicle through which the message of Yahweh's strength and judgment is described.

1 And you, O son of man, take a sharp sword; use it as a barber's razor and

pass it over your head and your beard; then take balances for weighing and divide the hair.

- 2 A third part you shall burn in the fire in the midst of the city when the days of the siege are completed; and a third part you shall take and strike with the sword round about the city; and a third part you shall scatter to the wind, and I will unsheathe the sword after them.

The timing of the actions that Ezekiel is now instructed to perform is uncertain though it is possible that they were done after the various actions described in chapter four. In this account, Ezekiel, in full view of onlookers, takes a sharp sword and begins to shave the hair from his head and jaw, collecting it carefully into a pile in front of him. Then he takes a balance of the kind a merchant would use and weighs out the hair into three equal heaps. The first pile of hair is burned in a fire, the second chopped up by the sword and the final portion is tossed up into the air to be carried by the wind.⁴⁴

Even before this oracle there was great symbolism attached to the act of shaving. Among the Hebrews shaving of the head could be a sign both of shame and of mourning.⁴⁵ In Isaiah 7:20 the prophet threatens the people, "In that day Yahweh will shave with a razor which he hired beyond the river the head and the hair of the feet and it will sweep away the beard also". Jeremiah 41:5 (cf. 48:37 and Isaiah

14:2) mentions the shaving of the head as a sign of mourning, and in 2 Samuel 10:4ff one reads of the humiliation of the compulsory shaving of a free man. There, the act was regarded as sufficient grounds for the declaration of war.

In the act of shaving, scattering, cutting and burning his hair over the model of Jerusalem, Ezekiel dramatizes the imminent humiliation of its citizens. The act of shaving is to be understood as indicating that Yahweh himself will draw his sword against the city. Through the symbolic shaving of the messenger/son of man Yahweh conveys the message that Jerusalem will be stripped of its honour and its joy. As a dignified man would be shamed by having his head publicly shaved before a mocking audience, so too would the city be shamed by having its citizens evacuated, cut down and burned.

Once again it is evident that the prophet/son of man functions not only as the conveyer of Yahweh's message but he is also the recipient of the force of the message. To deliver appropriately the divine message Ezekiel, the son of man, must become a figure of weakness. His humiliation is required as a vital part of the message that communicates the absolute authority of Yahweh over the city. Again, the expression 'son of man' is associated with weakness as the

prophet/son of man becomes an object of shame and mourning. Ezekiel is a visible sign of the humiliation to be endured by the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Summary: The Role and Function of Son of Man in Ezekiel

In the book of Ezekiel one may find many other examples in which weakness is required of the son of man in order to convey a message portraying Yahweh's strength and authority. In chapter 12:17-20, for example, the prophet eats bread and drinks water while trembling as if he is in mortal terror.⁴⁶ By these actions he demonstrates to his audience the fearful condition of the inhabitants of Jerusalem as they dine on the eve of their city's doom. The book is replete with examples of this type. The prophet is consistently portrayed as a figure of weakness like the guilt-bearing scapegoat, the shaven and humiliated figure, and the fearful, trembling citizen.

In as much as Ezekiel is consistently addressed and identified as son of man and in as much as this expression becomes something of a title which he bears, the expression becomes inextricably linked with this incongruous figure. In Ezekiel, the prophet/son of man is never portrayed as a healthy, robust and dynamic figure delivering the message of Yahweh with strength and confidence. Instead, through the

enigmatic character of Ezekiel, son of man is constantly associated with a tragi-comic figure, dogged by weakness, who functions successfully as an agent-messenger of Yahweh because he obediently takes upon himself the characteristics of weakness and frailty necessary to communicate the divine message.

In Ezekiel, the son of man is linked with the tradition of the prophets, where the prophet voluntarily enters into uncomfortable and even humiliating circumstances in order to convey the divine message. As in Psalm eight, the nature and function of this figure are held in tension. Ezekiel's son of man is the vehicle of divine revelation and he functions as an authoritative envoy of Yahweh, not in spite of his nature as a frail and vulnerable human being, but because of it. It is the son of man as mortal or human who functions most appropriately as agent of the divine message.

The Son of Man in the Book of Daniel

The goal of this third study of son of man in Hebrew Biblical literature is to analyse and assess its role and function in the context of Daniel. The expression son of man in the Book of Daniel (Daniel) only occurs in 7:13.

I saw in the visions of the night, and behold with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

Despite its limited use in Daniel the expression son of man in the above context has been the focus of much biblical research.⁴⁷ In New Testament scholarship especially the expression is understood to be significant because it is often seen as the working context of the gospel writers in reference to Jesus' apocalyptic son of man sayings.

Then will appear in heaven a sign that heralds the son of man ... and they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with great power and glory (Matthew 24:30-31).⁴⁸

According to the gospel writers, the Danielic imagery was significant within the Jewish religious community of Jesus' day. This is evident in the angry reaction of Caiaphas, the High Priest, during Jesus' trial as depicted in Matthew 26:63-66, Mark 14:61-65 and Luke 22:67-71. In response to his question, "Are you the Messiah?" Jesus employs the above Danielic imagery, saying, "The words are yours ... From now on you will see the Son of man seated on

the right hand of God and coming on the clouds of heaven". Upon hearing Jesus' words, Caiaphas tears his robes and judges that Jesus has spoken blasphemy. By referring to himself in these terms Jesus accords himself a lofty religious identity that Caiaphas finds unacceptable.⁴⁹

The religious significance of Daniel's son of man takes its roots from the context of the book of Daniel and from chapter seven in which the expression originally appears. Daniel is an apocalyptic book. The word apocalyptic is derived from the Greek word apocalypsis which means "uncovering or disclosure, manifestation or revelation". The term 'apocalypse' has been extended to cover a certain type of literature which dates from the fifth century B.C.E. through the first century C.E. General features of this type of literature include mythology, transcendentalism, dualism, the division of time into periods, conflicts between light and darkness, good and evil, mysteriousness, and a pessimistic treatment of history. These various 'marks' belong to apocalyptic literature, not in the sense that they are essential to it or are to be found in every apocalyptic writing. Rather, they pertain to it because, in whole or in part, they build up an impression of a distinct kind of literature which conveys a particular mood of thought or belief devised to meet a pressing religious need of the day.⁵⁰

It is within this apocalyptic framework that the mysterious figure of the son of man or "one in human likeness" appears (7:13). In this study I shall demonstrate that the author depicts the son of man as an authoritative agent of God, representing a heavenly and eternal power which opposes and triumphs over all earthly and temporal authorities and powers. Furthermore, in as much as this figure symbolizes the authority or reign of God that triumphs in the face of great adversity, the term 'son of man' becomes associated with messianism in a broad sense.

To understand how the expression 'son of man' in Daniel acquires this significance one must consider the larger context in which the expression appears. Daniel, written in Aramaic (2:4b-7:28) and in Hebrew (1:1-2:4a; 8:1-12:13) is composed of ten distinct but interconnected sections which may be divided into two larger parts.⁵¹ Chapters one through six are a series of midrashic stories about a young Jew named Daniel at a foreign court. By his ability to interpret royal dreams and through divine revelation he becomes a counsellor to kings. Chapters seven through twelve recount the apocalyptic visions of Daniel for which he in turn must seek interpretations from an angel. The stories and visions are set in the Babylonian and Persian periods (sixth to fourth centuries B.C.E.) but themselves reflect having been written and edited at a later time (i.e.

during the reigns of the successors of Alexander the Great - second to first centuries B.C.E.).⁵² In the last half of the book, references are made to the oppressive measures of Antiochus IV Epiphanes against the Jews of Palestine. In the face of his intense persecution the book gives encouragement to the Jews by promising God's ultimate vindication of the righteous.⁵³

The expression 'son of man' falls in the apocalyptic, Aramaic narrative of chapter seven. Chapter seven is important because it connects the apocalyptic stories of the second half with the folk tales of the first half. It accomplishes this, not merely because linguistically it continues the Aramaic of the folk tales, but because it is a deliberate revision and updating of the story of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the composite statue of chapter two.⁵⁴ In the story of chapter seven, Daniel has a vision in which he sees four immense beasts coming up out of the sea. The first is like a lion. The second resembles a bear. The third is like a leopard and the last creature is a terrifying monster with ten horns. In the vision, three of these horns are uprooted by a small horn which has the eyes of a man and speaks arrogantly. The Ancient One, a symbol of God, then appears in glory and judgment. He slays the fourth beast, takes dominion away from the other beasts and gives everlasting dominion to the son of man, bar 'enas,

or the "one in human likeness". After the vision, Daniel seeks enlightenment as to its meaning. An angel explains that the lion symbolizes the Babylonian kingdom, the bear the Median, the leopard the Persian, and the terrifying monster with the ten horns is the Hellenistic (Seleucid) dynasty.⁵⁵

In the context of the vision the human figure, bar 'enas, is symbolic. This is evident from the use of 'k' before bar 'enas (ke bar 'enas literally means "in the likeness of a son of mankind").⁵⁶ The same turn of phrase occurs in verses four and six where 'k' is used before 'aryeh (ke 'aryeh, "in the likeness of a lion"), and before nemar (kinemar, "in the likeness of a leopard"). Therefore, bar 'enas does not refer to a real or specific human being anymore than ke 'aryeh or kinemar refer to a real lion or leopard. All of these figures are symbolic.⁵⁷

Since the expression son of man is symbolic, it is often understood as representing a particular group, notably a group called "the holy ones of the Most High" (v.27). This interpretation comes from the latter part of chapter seven in which an angel standing by (v.16) reveals to Daniel the meaning of his vision. According to the interpretation of the angel, the authority given to the son of man is later given to a specific group called "the holy ones of the Most

High". They will possess the everlasting dominion and kingship originally given to the son of man. According to some of the leading scholarship of the past decade this group is actually a code name for those faithful Jews persecuted by Antiochus IV.⁵⁸ In accordance with the character of apocalyptic literature which is devised to meet a pressing religious need of the day this passage delivers a message of hope for a better future to those Jews persecuted under the reign of Antiochus. The expression son of man thus becomes a symbol of the Israel of faith which will eventually replace this pagan empire.

While this interpretation of the significance of son of man has merit, especially given the historical context in which this passage was probably written, it must also be said that the expression may represent far more than a particular group. The list of the four kingdoms, for example, clearly fulfills a theological rather than an historical function. There is, in fact, no record outside of Daniel of a Median kingdom between the Babylonian and Persian empires. The list of kingdoms merely functions as an acceptable historical framework to emphasize a theological point in which two powers or reigns are contrasted. The four kingdoms, symbolized by the four beasts represent an unholy or pagan power characterized by horror and chaos. They originate from the chaotic ocean

(vv.2-3), are mismatched in form, and the most dreadful of the four is destructive in nature (v.7). The type of rule or reign exemplified by the pagan kingdoms is used to set in relief the orderly character of the fifth kingdom established by God. This fifth kingdom is represented by the son of man whose celestial environment ("with the clouds of heaven") contrasts with the chaotic ocean from which the four beasts originate.⁵⁹ Just as the four beasts symbolize an unholy or pagan reign, so the son of man symbolizes the holy. In other words, in the vision the point of the comparison of the four beasts representing world powers with the man-like figure to whom is delivered everlasting rule, is the wielding of power or authority rather than the representation of a group.⁶⁰ On a larger scale then, Daniel's son of man may also be understood to represent a type or model of rule. As an agent of God, he represents the holy rule or power of God which triumphs over all other rules. In character with the apocalyptic genre, the authority of good challenges the authority of evil, and good prevails.

In chapter seven the rule of God, as represented by the son of man, is described by contrasting it with that of the rule espoused by the pagan kingdoms - especially that of the fourth kingdom. The rule of the fourth kingdom is characterized primarily by arrogance (7:8,11,25), the

quality that allows the fourth beast to "utter words against the Most High".⁶¹ As a result he is cut off from God and his reign is effectively discontinued. In contrast to this, the reign of the son of man is closely aligned with the Ancient One or God. He comes "with the clouds", is exalted by God, and given authority to rule forever (v.14). The reign of God, as represented by the son of man, is thus portrayed as being diametrically opposed to the arrogant and temporal reign of the fourth pagan kingdom. The author uses the figure of the son of man as a vehicle through which he describes the existence of a heavenly rule or reign that is fundamentally different from any worldly or pagan rule.

Summary: The Role and Function of Son of man in Daniel

The use of son of man in Daniel chapter seven differs from the use of the expression in Psalm Eight and in Ezekiel. In Psalm Eight it is used to represent the paradoxical role of mankind in general and in Ezekiel it refers to a particular man, the prophet Ezekiel. In both these texts 'son of man' is clearly a human figure who functions, often paradoxically, as an emissary or envoy of the divine. In Daniel, son of man also functions as an agent of the divine. In the context of chapter seven, he cannot be said to be a real or specific human being since he is only "in the likeness of a son of mankind". He is,

however, likely to be symbolic of a group (i.e. those Jews persecuted under Antiochus Epiphanes) or of a type of rule (i.e. the rule of God).

What is important about this Danielic 'son of man' is his closeness to the divine ("with the clouds") and his authority to function as an agent for God. It is from God that he receives the authority with which he reigns. In this sense, the expression 'son of man' represents the reign or rule of God. In the context of Daniel, this reign is understood to be radically different from any form of independent or pagan rule and thus is able to triumph in the face of tremendous adversity. Since the expression may be equated with the rule or reign of God which brings salvation to his people, it may be equated with the concept of messianism in a broad sense. Only in later Jewish apocalyptic literature (the Parables of Enoch and II Esdras) and in the Synoptic Gospels does the figure shift from a literary personification of messianic power to a real person, the Messiah.

The Son of Man in the Synoptic Gospels

Introduction¹

The Synoptic Gospels present the reader with a substantial amount of material on 'Son of man'. The expression is used over seventy times in the third person singular with reference to Jesus.² The Synoptic writers share this large resource of Son of man sayings, the sum total of which may be divided (roughly) into three categories: those sayings dealing with the future coming of the Son of man as judge, those dealing with his earthly activity, and those dealing with his suffering and death.³ Of the three gospels, it appears that Mark makes most use of the title, molding it to suit his theological perspective. Mark's picture of Jesus as an authoritative agent of God is developed in two directions: Jesus is the Son of man who must suffer and he is also the Son of man who will be vindicated at the parousia. The sayings about the one who must suffer are juxtaposed with sayings which reflect Daniel 7:13-14 to stress that the one who returns is the one who has suffered.⁴

The following study will give an overview of all of the Synoptic gospel Son of man passages. I propose that the combined references in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, present two significant streams of tradition about the Son of man, one

asserting his humiliation, and the other his exaltation. The traditions arising from the sum total of these Son of man sayings are important because they carve out a christological perspective which may be shared with or received by John.⁵

The Humiliation of the Son of man

In the Synoptic Son of man sayings, Jesus is understood as the agent who brings about the kingdom of God. As an agent for God he acts out his commission as 'Son of man'. The Son of man passages in the Synoptic Gospels may be divided into two main categories: those which describe Jesus as the agent of God who experiences humiliation as a man, and those which describe him as exalted and powerful. Those Son of man passages that describe the humiliation of Jesus are as follows.⁶

First, there are those that describe Jesus as a man with a mission. Jesus the 'Son of man' labours as one who 'sows the good seed' (Matthew 13:37) and as one who seeks and saves the lost (Matthew 18:11; Luke 9:56; 19:10). He is also the leader on whose behalf the disciples are called to suffer (Matthew 5:11; Luke 6:22). In his messianic mission, it is apparent that he is acquainted with discomfort. He knows, for example, both physical and psychological

hardship. Something of the hardship he endures is reflected in the saying, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head' (Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58). Psychologically, he is also the recipient of criticism. In Matthew 11:19 and Luke 7:33-34, Jesus reflects upon the words of his critics and comments to his disciples,

For John came neither eating nor drinking and they say, 'He has a demon';
the Son of man came eating and drinking and they say, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners'.⁷
(Matthew 11:19)

The Synoptic writers often describe Jesus as 'servant' by referring to him as the Son of man who gives his life for many and teaches his disciples to do the same.

But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many'.⁸
(Matthew 20:25-28; cf. Mark 10:42-45)

This type of saying goes hand in hand with other Synoptic Son of man sayings that refer directly to Jesus' role as the man who suffers and dies. The Synoptic authors, especially Mark, give the reader a vivid picture of Jesus as the man who experiences weakness, suffering and death. Two important passages in this regard are found in Matthew 20:18

and in Luke 9:44. In the first passage, Jesus teaches his disciples,

Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death.

In the second passage he reiterates the ominous saying: "Let these words sink into your ears: for the Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men". All of the above Son of man passages are significant because they underscore the author's understanding of Jesus as a human figure who knows and experiences life as any man might experience it. He hungers and thirsts, requires shelter and rest, knows criticism, functions as a servant and, above all, anticipates suffering and death. It is Jesus' humanity that is being emphasized, especially with reference to his suffering and death, and thus, it is under this title that he experiences his passion. In his role as an authoritative agent for the divine, he clearly knows humiliation as he anticipates and experiences servitude, hardship, suffering and death. All these experiences are appropriate to Jesus as Son of man within the Synoptic tradition.

That Jesus is described by these writers as distinctly human is not surprising. Ezekiel, the prophet-son of man, as we have seen, also experiences humiliation in his role as an authoritative agent for God. What is surprising,

however, is the way in which the Synoptic writers have also chosen to describe Jesus as the agent Son of man who incorporates a highly exalted status. The humiliated Son of man of the Synoptics is also the exalted and glorified Son of man, as we shall see in the next series of passages.

The Exaltation of the Son of man

While it is evident that there are many passages in the Synoptics which emphasize the humiliation of Jesus as Son of man, there are also many others that emphasize his status as a glorified, powerful and exalted emissary of the divine. In the first instance there are those passages that identify Jesus as the Son of man who possesses the authority to forgive sin.

And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, 'Take heart, my son, your sins are forgiven.'

And behold, some of the scribes said to them, 'This man is blaspheming'. But Jesus, knowing their thoughts said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven" or to say "Rise and walk"?'

But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins' - he then said to the paralytic - 'Rise, take up your bed and go home'.¹⁰
(Matthew 9:2-6; cf. Mark 2:10, Luke 5:24)

The exalted status attached to Jesus in his proclamation to the paralytic derives its force from the

fact that by saying, "Your sins are forgiven", Jesus was presumably speaking for God, a prerogative usually assumed only by the priesthood.¹¹ In this passage the Synoptic authors are describing Jesus as the agent who possesses or claims the divine authority to forgive. This does not necessarily mean that Jesus has gone so far as to claim that he takes God's place in forgiving sin.¹² Rather, the important claim here with respect to Jesus' identity as Son of man is that he is endowed with this authority by God. At the very least, he is the authoritative agent who, in the tradition of the prophets, speaks for God. One may add to this kind of saying those passages which describe Jesus as lord of the Sabbath (e.g. Matthew 12:8, Mark 2:28 and Luke 6:15: "For the Son of man is lord of the Sabbath").¹³ Again, what is significant in terms of Jesus' status as Son of man is the claim that he possesses the authority from God to speak on matters concerning the Sabbath.

Jesus' role and function as an authoritative and exalted emissary for God appears most prominently in those Son of man passages in which he alludes to himself as an apocalyptic-eschatological figure who comes at the end of time. For example, in Matthew 26:64 Jesus responds to Caiaphas' question using the imagery of Daniel 7:13. Here, he refers to himself as the Son of man who comes in glory with the clouds before the Ancient of Days.

But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of the power and coming on the clouds of heaven.¹⁴

The importance of this reference is the allusion to the authority of Jesus as an emissary of the divine. Like the figure in Daniel seven, he is understood to be in close proximity to God and is thus able to act on his behalf. These apocalyptic sayings, coupled with those concerning the resurrection of the Son of man, (cf. Matthew 12:40; Mark 8:13, 9:31; Luke 9:22; 11:31; 24:7), give to the Synoptic Son of man an highly authoritative status as emissary for God.

For he was teaching his disciples and telling them, 'The Son of man is now to be given up into the power of men, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again'.
(Mark 9:31).

The fact that the divinely appointed agent is resurrected by God underscores his exalted status as emissary for the divine. God is understood to initiate the resurrection of his agent who has faithfully carried out his mission on earth. The assertion of Jesus' resurrection speaks eloquently not only for the authority of Jesus as Son of man but also for his favourable and exalted position as God's emissary.

Summary: Jesus as the Humiliated/Exalted Son of Man

In the Synoptic Gospels, the expression Son of man is a title used to describe Jesus as Messiah. What is unusual about the title, however, is the way in which it embraces two seemingly opposing characteristics. On the one hand, Jesus is described as the agent-Son of man who experiences humiliation as he carries out his divine mission. He avoids none of the perils of humanity, experiencing hunger and thirst and homelessness, servanthood, suffering and death. On the other hand, he is understood to possess and experience, at the same time, an exaltation or glorification at the hands of God as he wields the authority of priests (he forgives sin and acts as 'Lord' of the Sabbath), describes himself according to the authoritative imagery of Daniel seven, and experiences resurrection as the favoured agent of God. As such, the Synoptic tradition contains within its diverse Son of man passages two opposing themes - the humiliation AND the exaltation of Jesus as Son of man. These two seemingly disparate themes are held in creative tension within the one figure.

The Son of Man in Biblical Literature before John

In the texts studied thus far we have seen that the expression 'son of man' is a distinctive idiom used to identify a figure that functions as an emissary for Yahweh. In Psalm eight 'son of man' is a simple synonym for 'man' (i.e. mankind) and it is used to identify mankind as an insignificant and yet authoritative agent of God on earth. In Ezekiel, son of man becomes the formula used to identify a particular man. The prophet Ezekiel is the enigmatic messenger for God to the Jerusalem exiles at Tel Abib. In Daniel, the figure is both the representative of the faithful Jews persecuted under Antiochus Epiphanes and also the representative of an authoritative messianic rule that stands in contrast to the rule of pagan powers. Finally, in the Synoptic Gospels, the expression becomes a messianic title that identifies Jesus as a special emissary for God. By the first century C.E. the idiom 'son of man', once used as a general term for mankind, has become particularized. Where once it represented mankind in general (Psalm eight) or even a group or type of rule (Daniel seven), it now represents a particular person (Ezekiel or Jesus).

Each 'son of man' functions as a commissioned and authoritative agent or emissary for God. This role is shared among these diverse figures. Notably too, each 'son of man' also becomes associated in some way with either the

concept of humiliation/weakness or of exaltation/strength - or both - as he carries out his role as authoritative agent of Yahweh. The son of man of Psalm eight is weak and insignificant, likened unto babes and sucklings, and yet he is exalted by God, crowned with honour and glory and given dominion over the earth. Ezekiel functions as an authoritative emissary for God and, in the tradition of the prophets, must undergo a certain amount of humiliation in order to communicate the message. The enigmatic son of man in Daniel acts as an authoritative agent for the divine and appears to be highly exalted. He comes 'with the clouds' and his reign lasts forever. Also, the combined Son of man passages in the Synoptic gospels describe Jesus as the one who undergoes both humiliation (suffering and death) and exaltation (resurrection, reappearing at the end of time) in his role as God's emissary. The concepts of strength-exaltation and weakness-humiliation are associated, individually or in tandem, with the expression 'son of man' in Biblical texts before John and provide part of the working context from which the Johannine author might well have drawn.

CHAPTER TWO

The 'Son of Man Lifted Up' in the Gospel of John

Introduction

In the Gospel of John the title 'Son of man' occurs thirteen times.¹ As in the Synoptic Gospels the expression is a christological title used to describe Jesus. Only in John, however, is the title Son of man combined with the Greek verb hupsothēnai, 'to be lifted up', to create the idiom 'the Son of man (must be) lifted up'. This unusual and innovative use of Son of man represents a uniquely Johannine contribution to the ongoing New Testament use of the title since it would not appear to be borrowed from the Synoptic Gospels or from any of the Hebrew Bible texts previously discussed.

The idiom 'the Son of man lifted up' appears in John 3:14, 8:28 and in 12:32,34, and it is used by the author to communicate a specific teaching about Jesus as Messiah for the edification of the first century church. The purpose of the following exegetical analysis of John, 3:14, 8:28 and 12:32,34 within the larger context of 3:11-15, 8:23-30 and 12:20-36 is to determine the important concepts attached to the title Son of man through the idiom 'the Son of man

lifted up' and to assess the role and function of the Johannine Son of man according to this particular theme. As a result, I hope to determine both the author's understanding of Jesus as Messiah which he endeavored to communicate to his first century audience and his unique contribution to early Christian christology.

John 3:11-15 An Exegetical Study

The expression 'the Son of man lifted up' first appears in John 3:14. To understand something of the force and significance of the idiom one must consider the context in which it lies. Verse fourteen is situated within a transitional phase of the chapter, that is, between the Jesus-Nicodemus conversation (vv. 1-10) and a block of theological commentary given by the author (v.16).² Chapter three opens with the story of a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Council. As a member of this Council, Nicodemus represents the Jewish religious authorities of the day and yet he is unable to understand what Jesus claims as basic spiritual truths (v.10). According to the perspective of the Johannine author, Nicodemus' confusion is directly related to his inability to accept Jesus' authority to speak about them (v.11).³ In light of Nicodemus' confusion, Jesus begins to discuss his identity as Son of man (vv.13,14) and the conversation quickly becomes a monologue. The whole of the

Jesus-Nicodemus conversation is, in fact, a clever foil used by the author to discuss the question, 'Who is Jesus'? The answer to this question is then dramatically expounded through the idiom 'the Son of man lifted up' (v.14). In this exegetical analysis I shall demonstrate that the Johannine author employs this idiom to identify Jesus as the heavenly envoy-Son of man whose 'exaltation' takes place, ironically, at the moment of his crucifixion.

John 3:11-13 Jesus' Identity as the Exalted, Heavenly Envoy

- 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen; but you do not receive our testimony.
- 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?
- 13 No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man (who is in heaven).

A clear transition, marked by the solemn asseveration 'truly, truly' (amēn, amēn)⁴ and followed by an unexpected series of plural verbs, 'we speak, we know, we bear witness, we have seen' (oidamen, laloumen, eōrakamen, marturoumen) begins this section in which Jesus describes himself to Nicodemus according to the title Son of man. Before the title ever appears Jesus describes himself in exalted terms, confronting Nicodemus - and thus the religious authorities of his day - with all the authority of a heavenly revealer.

The authority attached to his person is first established through the series of first person plural verbs in verse eleven: we speak, we know, we bear witness, we have seen. In the English translation, as in the original Greek, these plurals arrest the attention of the reader because they stand in contrast to the singular verb lego, 'I say (to you)', used in the same verse, and to the singular eipon, 'I have said (to you)', in verse twelve. In this sense, the use of the four plural verbs 'we speak, we know, we bear witness, we have seen' appears to be deliberate. Through them, the author ascribes to Jesus the authoritative plural of majesty.⁵

If Jesus is represented by the author as speaking for himself alone then the first person plural 'we' is indeed a plural of majesty suggesting Jesus' consciousness of his high dignity. Since the plural of majesty is not ascribed to Jesus anywhere else in this gospel some exegetes see its use here as associating the disciples with Jesus in this testimony.⁶ In this sense 'we' would be understood to mean 'my disciples and I speak of what we know'. Since the inclusion of the disciples at this point in the Jesus-Nicodemus conversation is markedly unlike the tone of the rest of the discourse in which Jesus speaks for himself without referring to his disciples, this second interpretation of the plurals in verse eleven is untenable.

In the whole of this gospel there is no other example of the disciple's testimony being mentioned together with Jesus.⁷

Bernard, in the International Critical Commentary, has proposed that John 3:11 does not reproduce the actual words of Jesus as much as the conviction of the early church that its teaching rests on the testimony of eye-witnesses. This too is a possibility. In the final analysis, however, it is obvious that whether the words reflect the testimony of the early church or whether they are to be taken as the words of Jesus in dramatic form, the combined effect is such that they promote the idea that Jesus speaks with authority. The two parallel expressions 'we speak of what we know and bear witness to what we have seen'⁸ indicate a progression in which a first-hand and certain knowledge is stressed.⁹

Hints of Jesus' status as a majestic and authoritative heavenly revealer (v.11) are confirmed and elaborated upon in verses twelve and thirteen. In these two verses Jesus' person is directly linked to that of the Son of man by his claim to know both 'heavenly' and 'earthly' things. In verse twelve the author begins to describe Jesus' status as Son of man by contrasting ta epourania, 'the heavenly things' and ta epigeia, 'the earthly things'.¹⁰ It is his claim that Jesus possesses the authority and the ability to speak about both. Until this point (vv.1-10), Jesus has

merely presented Nicodemus with the initial elements of his revelation, that is, 'the earthly things'. The concept of new birth (vv.3, 4), although important, represents only ta epigeia or 'the earthly things' which stand in contradistinction to the deep secrets of ta epourania or 'the heavenly things'.¹¹ According to the tone of verse twelve, Nicodemus and the religious authorities he represents do not yet understand 'the earthly things'.¹² The 'if' clause (ei) is a real supposition. In their present state of mind it is scarcely credible (pōs) that they will believe if Jesus speaks of 'the heavenly things'.¹³ There is, therefore, a huge gap of understanding between Jesus and his questioner(s) due to Jesus' knowledge of the heavenly.

In verse thirteen, the author links Jesus, as the one who is able to speak about the intimate secrets of God, to the figure of the envoy-Son of man. By definition this Son of man knows ta epourania because his origin is heaven. He ascends and descends from that place. The ascent-descent theme of verse thirteen is significant because it is used to further define the role and function of the envoy-Son of man. Through the expression ho katabas, 'the one who came down', and ánabebēken, 'he ascended', the author communicates two specific ideas about the Son of man. On the one hand, ho katabas in the aorist tense, designates an

action completed in time past. It means 'the one who came down once in the course of history'.¹⁴ On the other hand, anabebēken in the perfect tense, designates an action completed in time past which has continued relevance in the present.¹⁵ Anabebēken means, 'the one who now dwells in heaven continually'.¹⁶ This thought is underscored by the occasional MSS addition 'he who dwells in heaven' placed at the end of the verse. With such wording the author promotes the timeless existence of the Son of man in the heavenly places while yet he is manifested on earth.¹⁷

It is to this authoritative and exalted Son of man that Jesus is linked. The ascent-descent theme of verse thirteen is a continuation of the heavenly-earthly theme of verse twelve. The argument presented by the author is that no one may speak with authority about the 'heavenly things' except one who has been in heaven.¹⁸ This person is referred to with the emphatic phrase 'he who came down from heaven', ho katabas¹⁹ and ho katabas refers specifically to the Son of man, the authoritative envoy who came down from heaven once in time.²⁰ Since, in the context of this passage, Jesus is understood to claim an authoritative knowledge of the 'heavenly things', he consequently becomes identified with this exalted Son of man. Thus, verses twelve and thirteen provide many allusions to Jesus' dignity and exalted status as Son of man.²¹

It is this exalted description of Jesus, however, that Nicodemus fails to grasp. In this passage Jesus has been speaking about the theme of the ascension and descension of the Son of man. Nicodemus fails to understand the theme as it becomes particularized or personified in the person of Jesus. Therefore, in light of Nicodemus' inability to understand, Jesus proceeds with a statement, verging on a prediction, that his identity as Son of man will ultimately be revealed in his 'lifting up'. According to verse fourteen, the true exaltation of the Son of man does not stem primarily from his heavenly origins, although these are stated clearly. Rather, in the face of unbelief²² or the inability to comprehend, the 'lifting up' of the Son of man will become the moment when Jesus' identity is fully revealed.

John 3:14-15 Jesus' Identity as the 'Son of man lifted up'

- 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up,
- 15 that whosoever believes in him may have eternal life.

The phrase 'to be lifted up' and the author's sudden reference to a serpent in the wilderness may seem foreign and ill-placed to the reader since this is the first reference to Moses and the serpent in the whole of the New Testament. However, this verse reflects, in Johannine form,

a standard theme of ancient teaching in which the author makes a typological application of a story (in this case from Numbers 21:8ff).²³ It is from this episode that the motif 'as Moses raised up the serpent in the desert' is taken and elements from this story will be used by the author to declare the exalted role and function of Jesus as Son of man.

In the story of Numbers 21 the Israelites have grown impatient with the rigours and trials of desert life. They confront Moses and complain, "Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in the desert where there is neither food nor water?" (21:5). This complaint is taken as a sign of their faithlessness (21:7). As punishment, God sends poisonous snakes among the people. Many are bitten and die. With sudden change of heart, the people meet with Moses again and they plead with him to ask God to rid them of the snakes. Moses complies and God responds to his plea for a cure by commanding him to set a bronze serpent upon a standard and set it before the people so that those who have been bitten might look upon it and live. The healing of the people takes place dramatically - and ironically - through a symbol of the very thing they despise.²⁴

The Johannine author makes use of the lifting up of the bronze serpent in the Numbers story to comment upon the

significance of the lifting up of the Son of man in John 3:14. There are, according to Schnackenburg, at least three significant points of comparison between the two stories.²⁵ First, the serpent and the Son of man are both 'lifted up' and their lifting up has both a literal and also a figurative meaning. Literally, the bronze serpent is erected onto a standard and set high in the air before the people. Figuratively, the model of the despised serpent is made to be exalted and looked upon as an object of worship. It is in this sense that the story becomes laden with irony. The figure of the hated serpent lifted upon a standard becomes a symbolon sauterias or symbol of salvation (cf. Wisdom 16:6-7).

Although the Greek verb 'to be lifted up' (hupsothēnai) found in John 3:14 is not used in the Septuagint translation of the Numbers story, there is undoubtedly a parallel. In John the verbs hupsoun and hupsothēnai are always found in connection with the title Son of man.²⁶ It is also strongly ambivalent and possesses both a literal and a figurative meaning. Literally, it means 'to erect' and it is used by the author to allude to the act of crucifixion. The use of the verb as a direct reference to the erection of Jesus on the cross is readily apparent. In John 12:32 Jesus' words, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself", are followed by the comment, "This he said to

indicate the kind of death he was to die". In this case, there is no doubt that the verb hupsoun used in conjunction with the title Son of man refers to the crucifixion. The reference to the serpent in John 3:14 already alludes to what will be stated clearly in 12:32. Figuratively, hupsoun is also the equivalent of 'to exalt' or 'to glorify'. In Acts 2:33 and 5:31 it is used to speak of the exaltation of Jesus to God's right hand.

It therefore appears that the 'lifting up' of the bronze serpent in Numbers 21 is used by the author of John to comment upon the irony of the 'lifting up' of Jesus as the Son of man. Both are, in a figurative sense, exalted or glorified. They are placed before the people as objects of worship. In Numbers, those who look in faith upon the bronze serpent lifted up before them are delivered from death. In John three, the author implies through the typological application of the Numbers story that those who look in faith upon the 'Son of man lifted up' shall also be delivered. Both are also figures of rejection and humiliation. It is the figure of the despised serpent that is made to be erected on a standard before the people in Numbers 21. In John 3:14 the 'lifting up' of the Son of man alludes strongly to Jesus' suffering and death on the standard of the cross. The Son of man lifted up, like the serpent, is a despised figure.

As a second point of comparison, Schnackenburg suggests that the 'lifting up' of the serpent and of the Son of man are both salvific events.²⁷ In Numbers 21, those who look in faith upon the bronze serpent lifted up are delivered from death by poison. Furthermore, as the story is explained in Wisdom 16, the uplifted serpent is, in itself, a 'symbol of salvation'. In John 3:14 the 'Son of man lifted up' also has salvific power in that all who believe in him are understood to have eternal life (v.15).²⁸ The Son of man becomes the focus of attention for the Johannine audience as much as the serpent became the focus for the repentant in Numbers 21. The words en auto (in him) of verse fifteen underscore the author's vision of the Son of man as mediator of salvation.²⁹ Salvation is thus understood to be effected by the Son of man raised up on the cross and by him alone.³⁰

Finally, Schnackenburg suggests a third point of comparison between the serpent and the Son of man.³¹ Both exaltations are understood to be necessary. The bronze serpent in Numbers 21 is lifted up in response to a divine command to be the remedy for the ills of a repentant people. The 'lifting up' of the serpent figure is necessary for their healing. In John 3:14, the necessity of the lifting up of the Son of man is underscored by the Greek word dei which means 'it is necessary'. Dei is actually placed on

the lips of Jesus by the author and it becomes a prediction from the heavenly envoy, not only of his own death, but also of the manner of that death.

Summary: The Identity of the Son of man lifted up in John 3:11-15.

By using the Numbers motif the Johannine author draws out specific characteristics about the Son of man (vv.14, 15) which contrast sharply with the portrait of him in verses eleven to thirteen. In John 3:11-13, the author first leads his reader along a path of discovery towards a vision of Jesus as Son of man in which he is described as one whose testimony is given with authority because he understands both heavenly and earthly things. His claim that Jesus possesses the authority and the ability to speak about the 'heavenly things' provides the vital link connecting his person with that of the Son of man whose home or origin is heaven. The author's description of Jesus as Son of man is therefore a highly exalted one. Jesus is the 'heavenly-envoy Son of man' who is able to witness with authority to the deep secrets of ta epourania.

In light of the problem of unbelief posed within this passage, the Johannine author is moved to assert a second, very different description of Jesus as Son of man (vv.14, 15). Through a typological application of the theme 'As

Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert' from Numbers 21, he redefines the exaltation of the Son of man. The exaltation or 'lifting up' of the Son of man is still in place but it no longer stems uniquely from his heavenly origins - although these origins are never denied. The exaltation of the Son of man now stems from the crucifixion. It is in the event of his suffering and death that the Son of man is now exalted and becomes, like the uplifted serpent, a sumbolon sauterias through whom men are saved from death. John's Son of man lifted up functions as a much needed mediator of salvation, but through death.

By considering the crucifixion in the light of the Numbers motif the author makes an important christological statement. Instead of cloaking the crucifixion, he brings it to the fore at the beginning of his Gospel. No longer is it the lowest point of humiliation for Jesus as Son of man, to be followed by his 'lifting up' or exaltation to the right hand of God.³² Instead, this author considers the crucifixion itself as an exaltation and the traditional ascent of the Son of man is now redefined. It begins, ironically, with his being lifted up on the cross. It is here, in the midst of suffering and humiliation, that his power to save is fully disclosed.

The 'Son of Man lifted up' in John 8:23-30Introduction

In John three the author uses a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus as a foil to discuss Jesus' identity as Son of man. Son of man is described in exalted terms. He is the heavenly messenger who is able to bear witness to both earthly and heavenly things because his home is heaven (v.13). In the face of Nicodemus' inability to understand Jesus as such, the author has Jesus give a statement, verging on a prediction, that his identity as Son of man will ultimately be revealed in his 'lifting up' (v.14) which is likened to Moses' lifting up of the serpent in the desert (Numbers 21). The author uses the combination of the verb hupsoun (to lift up) and the motif from Numbers to define (or realign) the figure of the exalted Son of man previously described. The exalted Son of man of verse fourteen is now linked to a humiliated and crucified figure. The Son of man of John 3:14, like the serpent in Numbers, is indeed a mediator of salvation, but through suffering. The exaltation of John's 'Son of man lifted up' is now to be found, paradoxically, in the moment of his humiliation on the cross.

The drama of John's 'Son of man lifted up' continues in chapter eight. In this passage (8:23-30) a heated debate

between Jesus and a crowd provides the context in which Jesus' identity as Son of man is again discussed. In the following exegetical study, I shall demonstrate that the Johannine author describes Jesus through a combination of the phrase 'Son of man lifted up' and the divine title egō eimi, 'I am'. This combination will take the title Son of man beyond that of being a 'symbol of salvation', as alluded in chapter three. Son of man will now be associated with the source of salvation itself.

John 8:23-27 Jesus' Identity as the Heavenly Envoy and the Recurrent Problem of Unbelief

- 23 He said to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.
- 24 I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am."
- 25 They said to him, "Who are you?"
Jesus said to them, "Even what I have told you from the beginning.
- 26 I have much to say about you and much to judge; but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him."
- 27 They did not understand that he spoke to them of the Father.

John 8:23-30 falls within the context of a substantial debate already in progress between Jesus and a crowd. The religious authorities, (i.e. the Pharisees), have already accused Jesus of bearing witness to himself when he said, "I

am the light of the world" (v.12). In their opinion, his testimony about himself is untrue because he is the only one asserting its validity (v.13). Jesus responds to their attack (vv.14-20) by asserting that there are, in fact, two witnesses to his testimony. Both he and 'his Father' bear witness to his words; therefore his witness is true (v.18). When this response is misunderstood, ("Where is your father"? v.19), Jesus takes up the debate alluding once again to his origins. In verse twenty-one he tells them that he will leave them and that they will not be able to follow him where he goes. 'The Jews', (i.e. the Jewish religious authorities),¹ again misunderstand and they conclude that Jesus intends to take his own life (v.22). Jesus ignores the question and he begins to describe the division between himself and the crowd. The division concerns their different origins. It is with this description of his origins that Jesus first sketches out his identity before the hostile crowd.

In verse twenty-five, Jesus' identity as an authoritative heavenly envoy is presented through two sets of contrasting statements. Jesus differentiates between himself and the crowd by asserting, "You are from below (tōn katō), I am from above (tōn anō), you are of this world ek tou kosmou), I am not of this world (ouk ek tou kosmou)". The contrasting ideas, 'from below' and 'from above', are

not foreign to Judaic thought. Things and situations 'from above' (shel malah) and 'from below' (shel matah) become technical terms for 'heavenly' and 'earthly'.² The parallel contrasting themes of 8:23 (from below/this world; from above/not of this world) continue the theme of the 'heavenly and earthly things' begun in chapter three and reinforce the author's description of Jesus as the heavenly envoy from above who is able to witness to ta epourania.

In this verse the author also reinforces the theme begun in chapter three concerning the gap of understanding between Jesus and his listeners. In chapter eight, however, this gap of understanding is characterized by an increasing antagonism on the part of the crowd.³ The contrasts of verse twenty-three in combination with the emphatic pronoun, egō (I) and humeis (you), are used freely to convey the idea that Jesus, as the one from above, and the crowd, as those from below, are set in dramatic opposition.⁴ This theme of opposition continues in verse twenty-four where the discussion of Jesus' identity according to his origins only sharpens the misunderstanding and mutual opposition between himself and the crowd. In verse twenty-four the logion takes on a particularly threatening ring as Jesus says, "You will die in your sins unless you believe that I am." The meaning of the expression, "You will die in your sins", is not clear. Schnackenburg suggests that it relates back

to 8:21 and ultimately to 16:9 where judgment is understood to be passed on through men's failure to believe in Jesus.⁵ In any case, the expression is indicative of the widening gap between Jesus and the crowd which will only increase with his use of the term egō eimi (I am) at the end of the verse.

This egō eimi is significant as the first of two 'I am' declarations appearing without a predicate in 8:23-30. The use of 'I am' without any other qualifying statement is important in terms of its suggestive ambiguity. Many exegetes understand it to be an existing, pre-formed phrase taken up from the language of God used in the Hebrew Bible.⁶ Egō eimi is thought to be the equivalent of the Hebrew expression 'ani hou found in Isaiah 48:12 because in the Septuagint 'ani hou is translated into the Greek as egō eimi.⁷

Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am (he) ('ani hou = egō eimi), I am the first, I am also the last.

Thus, the Johannine Jesus' revelation of himself in terms of the divine absolute, egō eimi (I am), is at once mysterious and strange and yet authoritative and powerful. By choosing to identify himself, however ambiguously, with the title used of Yahweh in Hebrew Scripture, Jesus alludes to himself as an exalted and even divine figure. This again sharpens the division between himself and the crowd.

Jesus' references to himself as the one from above and as the divine 'I am' understandably confuse and anger the already sceptical crowd. In verse twenty-five, they challenge him openly by saying, "Who are you?" (su tis ei;). At the very least this question suggests that 'the Jews' have failed to grasp the real force of what has been said, supposing Jesus' preceding sentence to be unfinished (v.24).⁸ Their question reveals a mixture of antagonism and scorn towards Jesus along with an inability to believe in him as the exalted heavenly messenger. A more colloquial interpretation of the Greek which catches the flavour of their question would be, "Why are you going about giving yourself such airs?"⁹ In this sense, "Who are you?", is a scornful challenge to Jesus' declared identity as the exalted heavenly messenger. They simply do not believe in him as such.

Jesus responds to the challenge put to him with an equally scornful statement/question. It is not possible to give a precise translation to his reply but the tenor of biting rebuke is clear. All interpretations of his reply depend upon one's translation of the Greek words tēn archēn. Tēn archēn, taken simply, means 'the beginning' or 'at the first' (Genesis 43:20; Daniel 8:1, 9:21).¹⁰ As such, it stands as a sound classical construction and may be translated in the following ways. First, the expression may

be used adverbially. If the sentence is a question then the phrase tēn archēn will have the meaning 'at all' and the Greek word oti rendered as 'why', allowing for the translation, 'Why do I speak to you at all?'¹¹ While this is a valid translation it should be noted that, taken as a whole, this rendering goes badly with the next verse where Jesus tells the crowd that he has yet many things he could say to them. C.K. Barrett, for example, rejects the above translation on the grounds that it does not fit logically into the context of verse twenty-one to twenty-six.¹²

A second option involves translating tēn archēn according to its primary meaning, 'the beginning'. Tēn archēn is then rendered as 'at first' or even 'since the beginning'.¹³ Two possible translations then arise: '(I am) from the beginning what I tell you' or '(I am) what I tell you from the beginning'.¹⁴ This is, in fact, the first choice of the translation according to the Revised Standard Version.

In summary, the Johannine author underscores the unbelief of the crowd by highlighting their antagonism and hostility towards Jesus when he reveals himself as the authoritative heavenly envoy. Jesus is pictured as responding to their challenge with a certain amount of anger. His answer, whether as the question, 'Why do I speak

to you at all'? or as the exclamation, 'What I tell you from the beginning!', comes as a biting rebuke. The tenor of this verse thus underscores the gulf of incomprehension and antagonism that separates Jesus, as one from above, from the crowd, as those from below.

Verse twenty-six does not mesh well with verse twenty-five and must be seen as a continuation in terms of key words, notably, lalein.¹⁵ In this verse, Jesus repeats his claim to be the authoritative envoy from heaven. The theme of judgment, "I have many things to say about you and to judge", takes up the teaching of 8:16 where Jesus says, "... I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone that judge, but I and he who sent me". Here, Jesus implies that he could say much more about his opponents and that if he did, it would be in terms of judgment. The salient point of his pronouncement, however, is not his own ability or power to judge the unbelieving but his close ties with God from whom all judgments are derived. According to the text, Jesus' judgment is true not because it is his own but because it reflects the judgment of the Father who sent him. The tenor of the verse is summarized neatly in 12:49 where he again asserts, "It was not on my own that I spoke".¹⁶ Jesus' ability to speak (lalein) and to judge (krinein) is determined by his claimed origin as one sent from the

Father.¹⁷ The reliability of his words rests upon the fact that the things he says are what he has heard from the Father. Since the Father is true (alēthēs), Jesus's words must also be true.

This second reference to Jesus' origins is met, predictably, by the crowd's inability to understand. In the brief statement of verse twenty-seven, the author confirms that the crowd does not recognize Jesus' heavenly origin and therefore does not understand that he has been talking to them about the Father. This remark, which comes rather awkwardly in a context in which Jesus has been speaking emphatically about himself,¹⁸ may be indicative of the author's tendency to speak about Jesus and the Father in the same breath. The widening rift between Jesus and the Jews is understood to have come about as a result of the unorthodox linking of these two identities.

John 8:28-30 Jesus' Identity Revealed as the
'Son of Man Lifted Up'

- 28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of man then you will know that I am, and that I do nothing on authority but speak thus as the Father taught me.
- 29 And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone for I always do what is pleasing to him".
- 30 As he spoke many believed in him.

Until this point, Jesus has described himself to the crowd as the one from above who is not of this world. He is the judge who speaks the truth because he has come from the Father. As in chapter three, his audience cannot accept or understand these references to his unusually close relationship with the Father. So, in response to their unbelief Jesus once again asserts his identity as the 'Son of man lifted up'. In verse twenty-eight he says to the crowd, "When you have lifted up the Son of man then you will know that I am, ..." This particular occurrence of the expression 'the Son of man lifted up' is distinctive because the verb hupsothēnai appears in the active voice. In all other occurrences of the verb in John (3:14; 12:32,34) it appears in the passive voice with dei (it is necessary). Thus, in view of their present mind set, Jesus makes the statement that an action of theirs, accomplished in the future (gnosesthe) will precipitate their knowledge of his identity. They will not understand who he is until they have 'lifted him up' as Son of man.

The expression 'to be lifted up' in verse twenty-eight is again used, as it was in 3:28, as a 'double entendre'. On one level it refers to the exaltation or glorification of the Son of man by the crowd while, on a second level, it also refers to the 'lifting up' of the Son of man at the crucifixion and thus alludes strongly to his suffering and

death (12:33). The author's linking of these two concepts to the title is unusual and provocative. In chapter twelve, for example, the Johannine author makes it clear that the concept of a triumphant, everlasting Son of man (as described in Daniel seven) is readily accepted by Jesus' first century Jewish audience while the concept of a mortal, suffering Son of man is not (12:34). It is highly unusual then that the author should at this point deliberately introduce the expression egō eimi (I am) without a predicate and link it to the idiom 'Son of man lifted up'. If it is unacceptable in the minds of Jesus' audience (compare chapter twelve) that the 'Son of man' should die, how much more unacceptable is the concept that the Son of man as the divine egō eimi or 'I am' should be exposed to death.

Bernard states that the title Son of man is the implied predicate of egō eimi (i.e. I am the Son of man),¹⁹ However, both Bultmann and Brown consider this occurrence of 'I am' as one of the four relatively clear instances in John of its absolute use without a predicate.²⁰ As such it stands as a use of the divine name for Jesus as Son of man, attributing to him something of the exalted and authoritative status of God himself and fitting well into the author's estimation of him as Lord and God (20:28). Verse twenty-eight (of chapter eight) is, in fact, set up as a response to the question posed in verse twenty-five. The

answer to the crowd's question, 'Who are you'? is gathered up in the combination of the idiom 'the Son of man lifted up' with the divine title egō eimi (I am).²¹ Through this combination the author identifies Jesus as the crucified Son of man who exists in profound and mysterious unity with the Father.

The theme of the unity of Jesus, as Son of man, with the Father is reinforced in the latter part of verse twenty-eight and also in verses twenty-nine and thirty. The end of verse twenty-eight is dependent on the verb gnosethe (you will know). The meaning here is that the one who has been 'exalted' on the cross will force the recognition that in his days on earth he did nothing of his own accord but always spoke and acted according to the instructions of the Father.²² Verse twenty-nine emphasizes that the intimate communion between Jesus and the Father will always exist since Jesus always (pantote) carries out the will of the Father. Finally, in verse thirty, the author briefly gives the result of Jesus' dialogue with the crowd. As he speaks, many 'believe in him'. The reader is led to understand that the formidable gap of incomprehension described in verses twenty-three to twenty-seven is not unbreachable.

Summary: The Identity of the Son of Man lifted up in
John 8:23-30

In John 8:23-30, the author expands upon several of the themes established in chapter three. First, Nicodemus' inability to understand is paralleled and it is amplified in the unbelief and animosity of the Jewish crowd. To Jesus' words, 'You shall die in your sins', they project, not surprisingly, an antagonism and hostility not found in the Nicodemus story. Thus, the question of Jesus' identity is brought to the fore in the form of the rebuke, "Who are you?" put to Jesus by the crowd. Jesus responds angrily to their challenge by exclaiming, "Why do I even speak to you at all?" or, "What I've been telling you from the beginning!" By the end of verse twenty-five the author has painted a picture of unbelief strengthened by sheer animosity.

Jesus' origins as the heavenly-envoy Son of man are also reiterated in chapter eight, but this time, the author emphasizes his uniquely intimate relation with the Father. Jesus is the one 'from above' (v.23), he has been sent from the One who is 'true' (v.26). He says only what he has been taught from the Father (v.28) and is never abandoned by Him (v.29). Even without any of the alleged references to the divine name 'I am', one is left with the impression that Jesus and the Father are in an intimate and unbroken

communion. Perhaps in the mind of the author it is not completely out of context to insert the commentary of verse twenty-seven, "They did not understand that he spoke to them of the Father". This statement may be intentional, serving to drive home the somewhat controversial message that Jesus often speaks of himself and the Father in the same breath.

According to the context of the passage, the discussion of Jesus' identity along these lines is what eventually drives the wedge between Jesus and his audience. In light of the animosity of the Jewish crowd, the author directs Jesus' prediction of his death directly at them. "When you shall lift up the Son of man, then you shall know that I am". These words (v.28) mark the climax of the drama of conflict described by the author in 8:23-30. In the face of opposition and unbelief the Johannine author proposes that Jesus' identity will be fully revealed at the 'lifting up of the Son of man', that is, at the crucifixion. The author's linking of the idiom 'The Son of man lifted up' with the divine title 'I am' is a new and striking innovation in the development of the title Son of man, giving it a highly exalted status not found in John three or in any of the Hebrew Bible texts previously mentioned. With this combination the author moves beyond identifying Jesus as Son of man, the symbol of salvation, (to be likened to the mediating symbol of the uplifted serpent in Numbers 21). He

identifies Jesus as the source of power originating behind the symbol - the divine "I am". The final answer to the question posed in verse twenty-five, 'Who are you'? is now gathered up in the powerful combination of the idiom 'the Son of man lifted up' and the divine title egō eimi to confirm that the exaltation, that is, the crucifixion, of Jesus the Son of man is that of 'I am' himself.²³

The Son of man lifted up in John 12:20-36Introduction

The phrase 'Son of man lifted up' appears for a third and final time in John twelve within a context used by the author to mark the end of Jesus' public ministry. Some Greek proselytes to the Jewish religion approach the disciple Philip seeking an interview with Jesus.¹ Hearing that the non-Jewish world is at his doorstep Jesus begins a narrative concerning his imminent suffering and death (vv. 24-28) and reiterates the 'Son of man lifted up' theme by declaring, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (v.32).

In the following exegetical study, I shall demonstrate that the author now solidly links the phrase 'Son of man lifted up' with the theme of suffering and death. Jesus is the suffering and mortal Son of man whose role and function is contrasted to that of the triumphant and everlasting Danielic Son of man of popular conception. As in chapters three and eight, the author uses the questions and responses of a second party. In this instance, a crowd functions as a dramatic foil through which he describes Jesus' identity as Son of man. In chapter twelve, Jesus' identity as a suffering and mortal 'Son of man lifted up' is not understood by the crowd and his discussion with them is

never resolved. At the end of this passage (12:20-36) the author pictures Jesus as ending his public ministry by simply disappearing from their midst.

John 12:20-26 The Theme of Death is Introduced

- 20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.
- 21 And these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus".
- 22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and told Jesus.
- 23 And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.
- 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- 25 He who loves his life loses it and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.
- 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if anyone serves me, the Father will honour him".

The episode recorded in 12:20-36 takes place in the wake of an enthusiastic reception of Jesus in Jerusalem during the Feast of the Passover. Certain religious authorities display consternation at Jesus' growing popularity and comment, "You see that you can do nothing: Look, the whole world has gone after him" (v.19). Their comment is followed immediately by the episode of the

'Greek' enquirers who arrive to fulfill the unconscious prophecy of verse nineteen. The non-Jewish world is now asking after Jesus.

Again the Johannine author uses the crowd as a foil to introduce the theme of Jesus' identity. The incident at first seems curious because the 'Greeks' simply say to the disciple Philip,² "Sir, we would like to see Jesus", and then they disappear from the text. The verb translated as 'to see' (idein) means 'to have an interview with'. Anyone could see Jesus in the Temple court but these men wished for something more intimate.³ The requested interview never comes to pass. Instead, hearing of their arrival, Jesus begins a monologue concerning his role and identity. The coming of the 'Greeks' indicates that the climax of his mission has arrived and in verse twenty-three he declares that 'the hour' (ōra) has come (elēluthen).⁴

The discussion of Jesus' death and 'glorification' as Son of man begins in verse twenty-three with the theme of the 'hour'. Here, as in 2:4, 7:30 and 8:20, where the hour has not yet come, and as in 12:27, 13:1 and 17:1, where it is an immediate prospect, the ōra is the hour of Jesus' death. In verse twenty-three, however, the ōra is described as the moment of the doxasthēnai or glorification of the Son of man. The paradox of the 'hour' is thus underscored by

the Johannine author. The 'hour' of the glorification of the Son of man is also the hour of his passion and death (vv.24-33).⁵

The discussion of Jesus' identity as the Son of man glorified in death continues and is elaborated upon in verse twenty-four where the solemn 'Truly, truly' introduces a statement of importance. Only the grain of wheat that dies is able to bear fruit. Death, as the grain of wheat illustrates, brings forth life, not only for Jesus, but also for those who follow him (v.26).⁶ With the image of the grain of wheat the author now extends the paradox concerning the hour of death as the hour of glorification. The way of fruitfulness lies through death.⁷ Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it will not bear fruit.⁸

Verse twenty-five continues the theme of death with a series of paradoxical statements. He who loves his life loses it while he who hates his life keeps it forever. This verse, in fact, reflects a synoptic saying found in Mark 8:35 which parallels Matthew 10:39 and Luke 17:33: "For whoever would save his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it". The technique of contrasting verbs such as love and hate, will lose⁹ and saves, is typically semitic¹⁰ and lends to the strong, sharp tone of the verse. The Johannine author uses

the Synoptic logia but tailors them to his language and theology in order to emphasize the necessity of discipleship even unto death. The way of death undertaken by Jesus is now understood to be taken up by his disciple also.¹¹

Discipleship or 'following' is the appropriate consequence of John's marturia or witness, and in verse twenty-six the author elaborates on the theme of following Jesus to death.¹² The first emoi (me) is specifically emphatic and throughout the rest of the verse the first person singular, egō and emos, is prominent. As with verse twenty-five, verse twenty-six is itself a Johannine variant of a synoptic saying in Mark 8:34 which parallels Matthew 10:38: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me". The kind of service (diakonia) implied in the text may be understood from the fact that verse twenty-six follows and explains the saying about 'hating' one's life. According to John twelve, to serve Jesus is to follow him (akolouthein) and he is going to his death.¹³ The reader is meant to interpret the 'honour' given to the disciple according to the logic of the paradoxes set out in verses twenty-three to twenty-five. The Father honours the one who follows Jesus but the honour given to the disciple may be of the kind with which he was honoured, that is, death (v.23).¹⁴

John 12:27-28 Jesus Confronts the Reality of his own Death

- 27 "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No! For this purpose I have come to this hour.
- 28 Father, glorify they name". Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it and I will glorify it again".

In verse twenty-seven, the author describes Jesus' response to the possibility of his own death. The role of the Son of man is to suffer and die. Confronted with this reality, Jesus exposes his own feelings of deep anguish and struggles with the decision of whether or not to pray to the Father to be released from this role. The expression, "My soul is troubled" (hē psuxē mou tetaraktai), indicates strong inner emotions of disturbance and agitation. The verb tarassein (to trouble) also appears in John 11:33. Here, Jesus encounters Mary mourning the death of her brother Lazarus and, seeing her weeping, is "deeply moved" (etaraxen). In 13:21 the expression is used again to describe Jesus' deep agitation of spirit when he announces that one of the disciples will betray him (etaraxthē tō pneumati).¹⁵ In 12:27 the declaration, "My soul is troubled", in combination with the two questions, "And what shall I say?"¹⁶ and "Father save me from this hour"¹⁷ momentarily exposes the real hesitation and horror felt by a man facing death. The genuine hesitation expressed as

Jesus' own is then quickly resolved as Jesus answers his own question: "No. For this purpose I have come to this hour".¹⁸ With this understanding in mind he turns to the Father, confirming his intention to live out the drama intended for him as Son of man.

Jesus' declaration, "Father, glorify thy name", and the response to it from the voice from heaven, "I have glorified it and I will glorify it again", underscore the Johannine theology of glorification in which the exaltation of the Father by the Son and the Son by the Father are a fundamental, indissoluble unity (cf. 13:31-32).¹⁹ This sense is achieved in the original language and phrasing of the text. Grammatically, the words edoxasa, "I have glorified", and doxaso, "I shall glorify", could be supplied with the direct object, "my name" (to onoma mou). To onoma mou, however, is not supplied, creating a deliberate ambiguity.²⁰ It has been suggested²¹ that edoxasa in the aorist tense may refer to the raising of Lazarus (22:40) where the spectators are described as having seen "the glory of God". It may refer to the signs (semeia) of 2:11, 9:3 and 11:4,40 in which the author asserts that the glory of both Jesus and God is revealed.²² The future doxaso in the context of this chapter likely refers to the cross as the moment of Jesus' ultimate glorification. Whatever the interpretation of the latter part of verse twenty-eight, it is apparent that here

the author once again refers to the authority of Jesus as Son of man as a figure in close relation to the Father. Through the motif of the heavenly voice²³ Jesus is understood to come to terms with the 'hour' by looking to the Father who gives him assurance of glorification.²⁴

John 12:29-30 Jesus' Identity Misunderstood

- 29 The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him".
- 30 Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine".

In chapters three and eight the Johannine author uses the response of Jesus' audience - (Nicodemus or a crowd of listeners) to bring to the fore the problem of man's inability to understand. Jesus' audience is either unable to accept his identity as a heavenly-envoy Son of man or else they simply do not understand who he is despite constant references to his heavenly authority. Again in this chapter, the author takes for granted the presence of a crowd as audience in order to comment upon the continuing drama of misunderstanding. Here, again, he illustrates the listener's lack of understanding with respect to the event of revelation. After the voice from heaven has spoken, the crowd gives two interpretations of it. One group says that 'it thundered'. It is quite possible that they took the noise to be a divine response to what Jesus had said (cf.

Exodus 9:28, 2 Samuel 22:14, Psalm 29:3, Job 37:5 and Jeremiah 10:33.)²⁵ A second group from the crowd interprets the noise as the voice of 'an angel'. Whatever their interpretation, neither group truly understands the voice. The two opinions are not opposites but rather two examples of incomprehension.²⁶ The voice remains for them an inarticulate noise.²⁷ In this context, the words of Jesus in verse thirty, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine", is a comment made by the author on the sadness of their incomprehension. The voice has come for their benefit and the message relayed is precisely what they should know but they are unable to understand.²⁸

John 12:31,33 Jesus' Role as the One 'lifted up'

- 31 "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out;
- 32 and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself".
- 33 He said this to show by what death he was to die.

The theme of man's understanding set out in verses twenty-nine and thirty is followed by an assertion of Jesus' identity as the authoritative and yet suffering 'Son of man lifted up'. Without any transition, Jesus talks about judgment (krisis)²⁹ to the crowd whose unwillingness or inability to believe in him as Son of man becomes more and

more apparent (v.34). In verses thirty-one and thirty-two Jesus identifies himself as the one 'lifted up'. The title 'Son of man' is not stated. Yet it is understood in this verse since Son of man is associated with the verb hupsoun in John (3:14, 12:28) and since the crowd affirms the combination of the title with the verb in their response in verse thirty-four: "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?"

The authority of Jesus as 'Son of man lifted up' is asserted through the proclamation, "Now the ruler of this world shall be cast out".³⁰ The phrase 'the ruler of this world' is peculiar to John and appears again in 14:30 and 16:11 but it is not further elaborated. The figure is, however, clearly an adversary of Jesus'.³¹ The 'and I' of verse thirty-two is emphatic designating Jesus' authoritative position as victor over his adversary. With this assertion Jesus confronts his adversary with all the authority of the heavenly envoy described in chapters three and eight.³² Jesus, as the authoritative Son of man, is able in his 'lifting up' to initiate the krisis or judgment through which his adversary is cast out and through which men will be drawn to himself.³³

Jesus' 'lifting up' (v.32) is both an allusion to his glory and exalted status as the heavenly envoy Son of man and, it is an allusion to his role as the one who must die. On one hand, both Barrett and Schnackenburg think the phrase ek tēs gēs (from the earth) reinforces a spacial conception inferring that the one who is 'lifted up' is the Son of man who has gone up again to where he was before (cf.3:13, 6:62). Ek tēs gēs thus points christologically towards Jesus' ascent into the heavenly world.³⁴ By returning to his origin, he is 'lifted up' or exalted. On the other hand, the verb hupsoun is ambiguous and is used to allude strongly to the lifting up of Jesus on the cross. In John, hupsoun is always used to refer to Jesus' execution on the cross and this reference is made indisputable by the author's comments in verse thirty-three: 'He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die'.³⁵ Thus the paradox of the grain of wheat bearing fruit only in death (v.24) is given specific reference in the death of Jesus. Jesus is the exalted Son of man who, paradoxically, must die in order to fulfill his mission.

John 12:34-36 The Son of Man: Two Schools of Thought

34 The crowd answered him, "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?"

- 35 Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he goes.
- 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light". When Jesus had said this he departed and hid himself from them.

Jesus' identity as the Son of man lifted up in death is not understood or accepted by his listeners. The problem outlined by the author in verse thirty-four is one of expectations. In this passage he uses the crowd as a foil to declare that 'the Christ remains forever'. When the crowd responds, it sets its own view of the Son of man as a powerful, everlasting Messianic king against that of Jesus' crucified and dying Son of man figure.

The crowd is plainly taken aback by Jesus' teaching³⁶ and the continued references to himself as a Son of man whose mission is fulfilled in death. Their expectation of a national Messiah does not include his going away or his death. J.H. Bernard catches the tenor of the Greek by paraphrasing their response (v.35) as: 'The Son of man must be crucified you say? Who can this Son of man be? He cannot be the Son of man of Daniel's vision, whose dominion is to be everlasting'.³⁷ In this way the author draws a picture for the reader, contrasting one popular first century Jewish expectation of a triumphant, Messiah-Son of

man with that of Jesus' voluntary role as a suffering and crucified Son of man.

Jesus never answers the question put to him by the crowd. Instead he repeats the austere warning alluded to before (7:33, 9:4) that he will not be among them much longer.³⁸ He had claimed to be the light of the world (8:12). But many had not grasped what he meant.³⁹ Therefore, he simply continues with the exhortation, "Walk while you have the light".⁴⁰ In the Johannine drama these words represent Jesus' final call to faith in himself, the light of the world, while there is still time.⁴¹ At this point the reader might expect the text to read, "While you have the light, walk in the light". Instead one reads, "While you have the light, believe ...". This serves as a reminder in a passage which has the purpose of discussing Jesus' identity, that Jesus himself is understood as the light (cf. 8:12, 9:5) and that the disciple is called to put his faith in him.⁴² The theme of the urgency of putting faith in Jesus is not new (7:33). But in this hour when he is about to be 'lifted up' it acquires a new force and power.⁴³ With this last exhortation Jesus concludes both the discourse and his public ministry. The Johannine author puts great emphasis on the sudden end of Jesus' revelation to the world, "After he said these things, Jesus went away from them and hid himself".

Summary: The Identity of the Son of man lifted up in
John 12:20-36

In this passage the author purposely uses the theme of death to outline the role and function of Jesus as Son of man. The request of the 'Greeks' marks the beginning of the end for Jesus. At their arrival he announces that the 'hour' has come for the Son of man to be glorified (v.23), that 'hour' of course representing the hour of his death.

The theme of death is further reinforced by the parable of the grain of wheat (v.34). The grain that must die in order to bear a rich harvest corresponds to the necessity of the death of the Son of man. It is in death that he draws all men to himself (vv.32, 33). In verses twenty-five and twenty-six the journey to suffering and death is extended from the Son of man to his servants or disciples. The 'way' taken by the Son of man is also the 'way' of his servant.

In verse twenty-seven, the author describes Jesus' struggle with the possibility of his own death and later contrasts his voluntary and full acceptance of it (v.28) with his listener's inability or unwillingness to accept it (vv.34-35). The crowd is convinced that the Son of man should continue forever (v.34) and Jesus' teaching about the necessity of the death of the Son of man goes against their expectation for a triumphant and powerful Messiah figure and

cuts deeply into their national pride. In effect, verse thirty four acts as a foil to encapsulate the author's point about the role and character of Jesus as Son of man. The crowd maintains the popular view that the Son of man must be powerful, triumphant and "live forever" while the Johannine author asserts that the Son of man in the person of Jesus is a figure who voluntarily suffers and dies. It is over the issue of the death of the Son of man that Jesus and the crowd eventually clash and the concluding question from the crowd, "What Son of man is this?" underscores their confusion, anger and unwillingness to accept the concept of death as an appropriate role and function of that figure.

Conclusion: The Son of Man Lifted Up in John Three, Eight, and Twelve

In John three, eight and twelve the author develops several distinctive themes as he attempts to delineate the character and function of Jesus as Son of man. One of the themes concerns Jesus' origins. He is the Son of man in close relation to the Father. The other theme asserts, ironically, that the Son of man will suffer and die. The theme of the death of the Son of man is an important one in these three chapters. These two themes, the first concerning the exaltation of the Son of man, and the second concerning his humiliation, are met in turn, by other major themes concerning the response of Jesus' interlocutors. According to the Johannine author, it is clear that Jesus' audience rarely understands his claims and when they do they are often only antagonistic. The themes of misunderstanding, unbelief and antagonism are common in the passages studied. Throughout it is clear that the popular expectations of Jesus' audience are often thwarted as they attempt to come to grips with the concept of the Son of man as both an exalted and a suffering figure. If they understand the Son of man to be an exalted figure only, then they are led to reject Jesus' claim that death and humiliation are appropriate to the role and function of that figure.

In essence, the passages we have studied reflect some of the contours of a first century Christian religious dilemma. The dilemma or problem in question concerns Jesus' death. In the texts studied thus far there are two primary elements. On the one hand, there is the assertion that Jesus is an exalted figure, an agent of God who has or will bring about the kingdom of God. On the other hand, the author also asserts the reality of Jesus' death, a death which is a fundamental part of the "coming to be" of God's kingdom and a necessary requirement (dei) of the agent of God. The combination of these two descriptions was not typical of messianic proclamations in the first century Palestinian milieu. The tension arising from this combination seems to have resulted in misunderstanding, unbelief and antagonism. The Johannine author's use of the combined title and verb, Son of man and 'to be lifted up' is, in fact, a clever device used to elucidate this problem. The 'double entendre' inherent in the combination allows for a discussion of the two distinctive and opposing themes associated with the figure Son of man. The 'Son of man lifted up' is both the Son of man exalted and also the Son of man lifted up in crucifixion.

The first theme concerning the exaltation of the Son of man is one with which a first-century Palestinian audience would already be familiar because of the popularity of texts

like that of Daniel 7:13ff. In Daniel, the 'one like a man' is a powerful figure, close to the Ancient of Days or God, who judges on his behalf and whose dominion remains forever. Jesus, the Son of man, as described in John's gospel, is also exalted. He too is in close relation to the Father (8:28). He is the judge who has knowledge of the judgments of the Father (8:28), descends from heaven (3:13) and enjoys everlasting dominion as he dwells in heaven continually (3:13 - anabebēken). This is the first statement of importance which John associates with Jesus as 'Son of man'.

The second theme associated with the idiom 'the Son of man lifted up', however, was unexpected. According to the 'double entendre', 'Son of man lifted up' also refers to the execution of the Son of man on a cross. Throughout these three passages it is evident that Jesus, the Son of man, is also to be understood as the despised one lifted up like the serpent in the desert (3:14, cf. Numbers 21), the one who voluntarily chooses to experience the hour of death (12:27), and the one who must die, like the grain of wheat, in order to generate new life (12:24). The combination of the title 'Son of man' and the verb 'to be lifted up' is intentional. The author uses this idiom to expose and assess two popular and opposing views, one claiming the exaltation of the Son of man as a divine figure and the other his death and humiliation as a man.

Although Jesus, as the 'Son of man lifted up', is portrayed as an exalted figure and as the symbol of salvation (chapter three) or even as the source of salvation itself (chapter eight), the author makes it clear within the context of each passage that such assertions are not enough. They are, in essence, ineffective in the face of an audience's inability to believe. Therefore, in the face of unbelief or misunderstanding it is always the death of the Son of man that is brought forward as proof of his heavenly authority. In chapter three, when Nicodemus is unable to understand Jesus as the personification of the exalted Son of man, he is told that the Son of man must be lifted up (on a standard) as Moses lifted up the serpent in Numbers - a literary allusion to the standard of the cross. In chapters eight and twelve, the references to the lifting up of the Son of man in the course of debates with the Jewish authorities again allude to his death. In chapter twelve, this meaning is particularly clear: vv.32-33 - "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". In John, the heavenly authority of Jesus as 'Son of man' is actually ratified in his voluntary acceptance of suffering and death. Death, not everlasting life, humiliation, not popularity, are the characteristics that make John's 'Son of man lifted up' authentic and authentically 'from above'. John's vision of Jesus as Son of man is, therefore, radical in light of

his audience's general expectations because it insists on the truth of this central paradox even though it challenges traditional messianic expectations. The idiom 'the Son of man lifted up' is a dramatic and ingenious combination of a christological title and a religious theme. Through it, the gospel writer claims that the death of Jesus is fundamental to his role and function as Messiah.

CHAPTER THREEThe Significance of the 'Son of Man lifted up' in JohnThe Johannine Arena

Through the Johannine idiom 'the Son of man lifted up' the author asserts his belief that Jesus' authority as messiah is made authentic in death. His death is, in fact, the event of his glorification by God. He is a man of paradox. A weak, humiliated, and dying Son of man through whom the authority of God is made manifest. With these bold assertions the author mounts his challenge to a first century Christian dilemma: the death of Jesus. At the time this gospel was written, the concept of the death of a messiah-figure was neither expected nor acceptable. The death of Jesus - especially a death by crucifixion - would have been a stumbling block to any who would have considered him as an authoritative salvific figure. How could a man who could not save himself qualify as a messiah? Why should a man claimed as an authoritative envoy of God be allowed (by God) to be put to death? In practical terms, therefore, the idiom 'the Son of man lifted up' is a statement of deliberate purpose. It is employed by the author to deal with the problem of Jesus' death. The paradox of weakness and authority, humiliation and exaltation that is inherent

in this idiom, allows the gospel writer to present a reasoned defense and recommendation of a faith stance on a topic matter that is difficult and often misunderstood: Jesus' death.

The son of man passages in Psalm eight, Ezekiel, Daniel seven and in the Synoptics are important because they provide a substantial part of the religious/literary background or arena for the Fourth gospel writer. The unusual combination of weakness and authority evident in the idiom 'Son of man lifted up' may be found in most of the above Hebrew Bible son of man texts. The theme of paradox that is already attached to these figures provides a conceptual background from which the Fourth gospel writer might well have drawn in order to substantiate claims that weakness is an appropriate characteristic for an authoritative Son of man figure.

For example, in Psalm eight, man/son of man is a figure of complexity. He is described as being a little less than God, crowned with honour and glory. He functions as an authoritative agent of Yahweh who rules over creation, having dominion over all creatures. He is, at the same time, an insignificant figure within the context of the universe (cf. What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you attend him? 8:5). The designation

ben adam is an apt reminder of his inherent frailty and mortality. He is a figure of paradox, embracing the two seemingly contrasting characteristics of insignificance and substantial authority.

The theological understanding of man and of God that develops as a result of this combination is significant. God is traditionally thought of as a figure of strength and authority, but in this psalm he embraces weakness, choosing to reign over creation through insignificant man. Man is traditionally understood as a creature of weakness when compared to God. But here he incorporates great authority as he carries out his function as God's envoy. The interrelation of God and man brings about a change for both. An overly simplistic view of God (as only strong and authoritative) and of man (as only weak and insignificant) is no longer valid. As a result of the relationship, man/son of man possesses the authority to act on God's behalf. Weakness becomes the all important attribute through which God establishes his strength. This striking theology is reflected in the Fourth gospel writer's vision of Jesus as 'Son of man lifted up'. Jesus is the Son of man through whom God is understood to establish his authority and God, in turn, is the authoritative 'I am' hung on a cross. John's understanding of the relationship between

this Son of man and God reflects the theological complexity of the relationship described in Psalm eight.

The paradox inherent in the role and function of the prophet Ezekiel also contributes to the religious/literary heritage of the Fourth gospel writer. In Ezekiel, the theme of the authoritative judgment of God demonstrated through the frailty of the messenger is dominant. Ezekiel, the son of man, voluntarily becomes a sign or mofet for the people, a personification of their impending judgment. The revelation of the plan of God actually depends upon his voluntary acceptance of weakness and suffering. These themes are also found in John. The combination of authority and suffering described in Ezekiel provides a model for the development of a theology to deal with Jesus' death. As the 'Son of man lifted up' Jesus too becomes weak and voluntarily suffers in order to fulfill a plan of God. His 'lifting up' upon a cross, like the lifting up of the serpent in the desert, becomes a sign of salvation for men. Ezekiel thus functions as an important reference point for the Fourth gospel writer within the religious/literary arena since it establishes the concept of a son of man who acts authoritatively on behalf of God through voluntary weakness and suffering.

The son of man presented in Daniel seven is not a figure of paradox. In contrast to other biblical son of man figures, he does not embrace both weakness and authority, but only authority. However, the theme of the reign of the son of man may also contribute to the pre-Johannine religious/literary arena. In Daniel, the son of man is an eschatological figure who brings about the reign of God for a new age. This reign is understood to be radically different from any worldly rule. While the Fourth gospel writer does not employ the same imagery as appears in Daniel 7:13ff, he does manipulate the concept of a new reign to be initiated by the Son of man. In John, the reign of Jesus, like that of the son of man in Daniel seven, differs radically from other reigns. His elevation in glory does not occur 'with the clouds' but upon a cross. It is the death of Jesus that ushers in the new age.

The Synoptic Son of man figure is significant within the religious/literary background to the Fourth gospel because it advances the concept of paradox in a Christian milieu. On one hand, Jesus is presented as the powerful Messiah - Son of man who wields an authority usually reserved for members of the priesthood. In this manner, he is depicted as the man with authority from God to forgive sin, judge the laws of the sabbath, and heal the sick. His power to act is derived from his heavenly origins. On the

other hand, the gospel writers also emphasize Jesus' weakness and frailty as Son of man. He is homeless, subject to harsh criticism, and describes himself as a servant. He also anticipates and voluntarily accepts suffering and death in his role as Son of man. Claims of authority, power, and exaltation, and claims of weakness, humiliation, and death are interwoven, making Jesus a paradoxical Messiah figure. In this sense, the Synoptic writers do much to introduce an unorthodox picture of Jesus as the authoritative Son of man who dies. This theme will be reiterated in the Fourth gospel and particularized through the idiom 'the Son of man (must be) lifted up'.

In summary, the theme of paradox already plays an important role in son of man literature. In Psalm eight, son of man is a creature of insignificance who wields great authority for God. The theology of the psalmist demands that God and man become figures of complexity. In the reign of God, man embraces authority and strength, and God embraces weakness. In Ezekiel, the plan of God is effected through the voluntary weakness of the son of man who, in turn, becomes a sign of judgment for the people. Daniel seven promotes the concept of a son of man who initiates the reign of God that differs radically from all other reigns. Finally, the Synoptic writers promote the concept of an unorthodox Son of man who wields authority and yet dies.

These texts are significant because they link the concept of paradox or contradiction to the son of man figure. The existence of the themes of weakness and authority in the religious/literary background of the expression promotes a religious view that embraces complexity and paradox. It is from this background that the Johannine author might well have drawn in his attempt to articulate a vision of Jesus as the paradoxical Son of man who demonstrates his authority in death.

John's Particularized Presentation of Jesus as
'the Son of man lifted up'

In John three, eight, and twelve, the author employs the theme of paradox already associated with the son of man figure in Hebrew Bible literature to articulate a reasoned defense of Jesus' death. The uniqueness of the Fourth gospel presentation of Jesus as Son of man lies in its particularization of the title through the idiom 'the Son of man must be lifted up'. This unique combination of title and verb allows for a fresh presentation of the two familiar themes - weakness and authority - already associated with the expression. Through this idiom the writer intensifies the paradoxical nature of Jesus as Son of man. Not only does he embrace both weakness and authority (as does the figure in Psalm eight, in Ezekiel, and in the Synoptics), but the characteristic of weakness is, in fact, the most

important factor in claims of his authority. The uniqueness of the Johannine presentation does not lie in the assertion that Jesus must die (i.e. that weakness is an important factor), but in the bold assertion that he is exalted and glorified WHEN he dies (when he is weak). Death, (not a long and "successful" life), weakness (and not power), are the characteristics that make him the authoritative and authentic heavenly envoy Son of man.

The boldness of the Johannine 'apology' is evident in the way the author chooses not to avoid or cloak the fact of Jesus' notorious death. Instead, he brings it to the fore of his gospel, alluding to it first in chapter three. In John 3:11-15, Jesus is described as an exalted figure. Through the ascent-descent theme he is identified as the one who has come down from heaven. He is the heavenly envoy who speaks with authority about both heavenly (ta epourania) and earthly things (ta epigeia). In light of Nicodemus' confusion about his exalted status as heavenly envoy, Jesus describes himself as the Son of man who, like the serpent in Numbers twenty-one, is 'lifted up' on a standard.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believes in him may have eternal life.

Through the Numbers reference and the title-verb combination, the author makes his first statement about the

significance of Jesus' death. The verb 'to be lifted up' possesses both a literal and a figurative meaning. Figuratively, it allows for the interpretation that Jesus is an exalted and honoured Son of man. The 'lifting up' of the serpent and of Jesus are salvific events. Literally, however, 'lifted up' also refers to the standards upon which Jesus and the serpent are raised. The lifting up of the Son of man refers to his execution on a cross. Through the combination of the title Son of man and the verb 'to be lifted up' in tandem with the Numbers motif the author asserts that Jesus' authority to save is manifested most clearly when he is lifted up in weakness, suffering, and death. The death of Jesus is part of God's salvific plan. Jesus lifted high on the cross becomes, like the bronze serpent, a symbol of salvation.

The author's bold assertion of the importance and significance of Jesus' death is taken up again in chapter eight. In 8:23-30, the development of 'Son of man lifted up' continues. This time the idiom is combined with the divine title egō eimi. 'I am'. With this unusual combination the author enhances the paradox of weakness and authority by asserting that 'I am', that is, God himself, is made manifest in the figure of the crucified Son of man. Again, Jesus' listeners act as a foil through which the writer speaks about the identity of the Son of man. Not

surprisingly, they are confused and even antagonistic towards him because they do not understand or accept the many exalted references he makes about himself (cf. 'Who are you?' v.25). It is in response to the unbelief of the crowd that the combination of Son of man and hupsoun appears in conjunction with the title eqō eimi ('I am').

So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of man then you will know that I am ..."
(8:28a)

In the face of opposition and unbelief the Johannine author proposes that Jesus' identity is revealed at the 'lifting up' of the Son of man, that is, at the crucifixion. Paradoxically, his death becomes the event in which God himself ('I am'), is revealed. Extremes of weakness and authority, humiliation and exaltation converge in the one figure to assert that God is made manifest in weakness, and that the ultimate authority of Jesus is revealed in his death.

Finally, in 12:20-36, the Fourth gospel writer uses the idiom to confirm what he has been alluding to in 3:11-16 and in 8:23-30: the death of Jesus marks the zenith of his ministry. It is, in fact, the appointed hour which inaugurates the krisis or judgment of God. In the hour of death the 'adversary' is cast out, and all men are drawn to the Son of man (vv.31-32). The death of Jesus marks the hour in which the Son of man is glorified and in which God

initiates his reign. The cross, a symbol of Jesus' weakness and humiliation, thus becomes the symbol of his authority and exaltation, pointing from the earth (ek tēs gēs) to his origins. With this last occurrence of the idiom, the Johannine author asserts that the death of Jesus is the single most important event in his ministry as Son of man. Through death, God judges the world, defeats his 'adversary' (12:31), and ushers in a new age.

The Significance of John's Presentation of Jesus as the 'Son of man lifted up'

The unique Johannine idiom 'the Son of man lifted up' is a statement of deliberate purpose. Through it the gospel writer articulates an apology in which he presents a reasoned defense and recommendation of a faith stance on the matter of Jesus' death. The concept of the death of a messiah-figure was, no doubt, a difficult one for his audience, and the execution of Jesus as a criminal was likely open to popular slander. Through the idiom 'the Son of man must be lifted up' the author responds to this first century Christian dilemma by asserting the importance and validity of weakness and death in the role of Jesus as Son of man. This presentation of Jesus' death eventually would become a standard claim that particularized Christianity. In the centuries that followed most Christians believed that the death of a messiah-figure was to be expected. The 'Son

of man lifted up' in the Fourth gospel contributed significantly to this development.

The paradoxical characteristics of weakness and strength inherent in the idiom 'the Son of man lifted up' helps the Fourth gospel writer to articulate a vision of Jesus as the paradoxical Son of man whose authority is made manifest in weakness. His assertion that weakness is a legitimate characteristic for Jesus as Son of man is strengthened by the recurring themes of weakness and authority associated with son of man figures of other Hebrew Bible texts. The Johannine author builds upon the Hebrew view of God and man as beings of complexity and paradox who embrace both weakness and authority. This paradoxical concept is taken up and applied by the Fourth gospel writer for the sake of his apology. Only in this case, the paradox is intensified. In John's particularized presentation of Jesus as the 'Son of man lifted up', the author not only teaches that the weakness and death of Jesus is necessary, but that these attributes characterize the rule of God. Jesus' death is not a regrettable event that is somehow rectified by the resurrection. Rather, it is the event in which he is exalted and in which God is ultimately revealed.

FOOTNOTESChapter OneFootnotes for Psalm Eight

¹ John 1:51; 3:13, 14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23, 34 (twice), and 13:31 represent all the occurrences of the expression 'son of man' in the Fourth Gospel.

² The title son of man is found in conjunction with the Greek verb hupsothēnai in John 3:11-15, 8:23-30, and 12:20-36. These passages shall later be studied in depth.

³ The emphasis on paradox has to do with a sentiment which seems absurd and yet is true, a seeming contradiction.

⁴ In Hebrew biblical literature the expression son of man is found in the books of Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.

⁵ The list of books that might be defined as Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal are as follows: The books of the Apocrypha are those books included in the Septuagint - III Ezra; Tobit; Judith; Additions to Esther; Wisdom of Joshua ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus); Baruch with the Letter of Judah; the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men; Susanna, Bel and the Dragon; I and II Maccabees.

The books of the Pseudepigrapha are those other Jewish works that have come down to us through the Oriental Christian churches - the Letter of Aristeas; the Book of Jubilees; the Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah; The Psalms of Solomon; III Maccabees; the Sibylline Oracles; the Ethiopic Book of Enoch; the Slavonic Book of Enoch; the Assumption of Moses; IV Ezra; the Syriac Apocalypse of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs; the Life of Adam and Eve. Cf. D.J. Silver, A History of Judaism, (New York, Basic Books), 417. J.H. Charlesworth further describes the features of this collection as those writings: i) that, with the exception of Ahiquar, are Jewish or Christian; ii) that are often attributed to ideal figures in Israel's past; iii) that customarily claim to contain God's word or message; iv) that frequently build upon ideas and narratives present in the Old Testament; v) and that almost always were composed either during the period 200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E. or, though late, apparently preserve, albeit in an edited form, Jewish traditions that date from that period. Cf. The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, V.1, xxv.

⁶ B. Lindars, Jesus, Son of man: A Fresh Examination of the Son of man Sayings in the Gospels, (London, SPCK), 1.

⁷ J.R. Donahue in "Recent Studies on the Origin of 'Son of man' in the Gospels", CBQ 48, 1986, 484-498, gives an excellent bibliography of some of the most recent 'son of man' research. In this bibliography he summarizes the 'son of man problem' as "vast", "a bewildering mass", and "insoluble".

⁸ The popular view among scholars asserts a late first century dating for the Fourth Gospel. Cf. R.E. Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, (New York, Paulist Press), 1979, 22-23 and R. Bultmann, The Gospel according to John, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell), 1971, 14.

⁹ A post-Christian dating of the Similitudes is argued by C.F.D. Moule and J. Barr. Moule considers that the uncertain date of the Similitudes weakens the common idea that the son of man who figures in them is a pre-Christian Jewish conception. The Phenomenon of the New Testament, (London, SBT second series 1), 1967, 34. Barr believes that the absence of the Similitudes from the Qumran texts probably means that they are post-Christian and may represent syncretistic Judaistic Christianity. "Messiah", Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark), 1963, 651. While a post-Christian dating has been popular, E. Isaac in his recent translation of the Similitudes concludes that there is yet no conclusive evidence as to whether the Similitudes are indeed post-Christian. He himself is convinced that 1 Enoch already contained the Similitudes by the end of the first century C.E. The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, (London, Darton, Longman and Todd), 1983, V. 1, 7.

A post-Christian dating of 2 Esdras 13 is argued by C. Colpe. H.J.B. Higgins summarizes Colpe by saying that the vision of the man from the sea, "something like the figure of the son of man", represents too late a stage in the development of the son of man to be used as background for the Synoptic figure. H.J.B. Higgins, The Son of man in the Teaching of Jesus, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 1980, 9.

B.M. Metzger states that according to most scholars, the original Jewish document known today as 4 Ezra was composed about 100 C.E. This opinion rests upon a more or less plausible interpretation of the opening sentence, which states that "in the thirtieth year after the destruction of our city, Salathiel, who is also called Ezra, was in Babylon and underwent the experiences recounted in the visions that follow" (3:1). Although this purports to be in the thirtieth year after the destruction of Jerusalem by

Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.E., it becomes obvious when one begins to study the book that this statement is intended to refer cryptically to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. Since it is difficult to believe that a Jewish book of this kind could have found its way into Christian circles after the Bar Kokhba revolt when church and synogogue had become hopelessly alienated, the date of the completion of the Hebrew original cannot be placed much after 120 C.E., making Fourth Ezra a post-Johannine text. J. Charlesworth (ed.), The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, (London, Darton, Longman and Todd), 1983, 520.

¹⁰ It is in light of the recent scholarship cited above that I have decided not to include 1 Enoch and 2 Esdras 13 in this study. I am aware, however, that future discoveries proving an early first century existence of these texts will make this decision unjustified.

¹¹ F. Brown, S.R. Driver, C.A. Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, (Oxford, Clarendon Press), 35.

¹² Ibid., 9.

¹³ Ibid., 60.

¹⁴ This is my own observation. After having made a list of every occurrence of the title 'son of man' in Hebrew biblical literature I noted that the term ben ish, a 'valiant' man, is never used. Therefore, whenever the expression 'son of man' is used in the Hebrew Bible, it refers to man (ben adam or ben enosh) as a mortal, weak and frail creature.

¹⁵ R. Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative, (New York, Basic Books), 46.

¹⁶ This rendering of Psalm Eight is taken from the translation of Peter Craigie in his book Psalms 1-50.

¹⁷ Standard references used in this section are as follows:

C.A. Briggs, Psalms, The International Critical Commentary, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark), 1936.

A. Cohen, The Psalms, (London, Soncino Press), 1945.

P. Craigie, Psalms 1-50, (Waco, Texas, Word Books), 1983.

M. Dahood, Psalms 1-50, The Anchor Bible, (Garden City, New York, Doubleday and Co.), 1966.

A. Weiser, The Psalms, Old Testament Library, (Philadelphia, Westminster Press), 1962.

18 P. Craigie, Psalm 1-50, (Waco, Texas, Word Books), 106.

19 H.M. Orlinsky (ed.), The Psalms 1-50, (New York, Ktav Publishing House), 180. Orlinsky sees Psalm eight as a companion piece to Psalm 19a and he thinks it plausible that, like this psalm, it is pre-exilic.

20 Furthermore, because it occurs in one of two existing Psalms that ask the important question, 'What is man?' (cf. Psalm 144:3), it is perhaps inevitable that it should become associated with this theology.

21 A. Cohen, The Psalms, (London, Soncino Press), 18.

22 The crux in verse two pertains to the meaning of the words אשרהנה. The Masoretic text is undecided both with respect to the syntax of אשר and the vocalization of נה. According to Dahood (Psalms 1-50, p.49) and to Craigie (Psalms 1-50, p.105), the best solution involves the joining of the two forms into a single word, אשרנה, and pointing it as a piel imperfect with energetic ending from the verb שרה, "to minister or to serve". It is this solution which has formed the basis of the translation above.

23 The interpretation of verse three is rendered difficult by virtue of the uncertainty as to its proper translation. The immediate problem of verse three concerns whether the opening line mentioning "babes and sucklings" should be taken as qualifying the praise of verse two. For example, "I will worship your majesty above the heavens from the mouths of babes and sucklings", or "From the mouths of babes and sucklings you have established strength on account of your enemies to put at rest both foe and avenger". I have opted for the latter according to the translations of the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible and of P. Craigie.

24 F. Brown, S.R. Driver, C.A. Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, 738. "Strength" or ty signifies a stronghold or a founded strength for a defense. (cf. Jeremiah 16:19 - "O Lord, my strength and my stronghold, my refuge in time of trouble").

25 C.A. Briggs, The Book of Psalms, V. 1. 66-67.

26 P. Craigie, Psalms 1-50, 108.

27 A. Cohen, The Psalms, 19.

Footnotes for Ezekiel

28 Some standard references for Ezekiel are as follows:

G.A. Cooke, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel, The International Critical Commentary, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark), 1936.

W. Eichrodt, Ezekiel: A Commentary, The Old Testament Library, (Philadelphia, Westminster Press), 1970.

M. Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-22, The Anchor Bible, (Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Co.), 1983.

J.W. Wevers (ed.), Ezekiel, The Century Bible, (London, Thomas Nelson and Sons), 1969.

W. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press), 1979.

29 This is a particularized use of the expression. In the vision of Amos (7:8; 8:2) and in Jeremiah (1:11; 24:3) the prophet is always addressed by his proper name.

30 Since adam can also be used collectively (Genesis 1:26) the individual reference is expressed by the preceding ben, meaning 'You, individual man'.

31 P. Craigie, Ezekiel, (Philadelphia, Westminster Press), 1983, 3.

32 The prophet Hosea falls within this tradition. Hosea is commanded to "take a wife of harlotry" (1:2) and through this relationship with her to enact the judgement and love of Yahweh for Israel.

33 The reader is led to suppose that the crowds Ezekiel addresses often fail to understand his message. This is the sense of 21:5 where the prophet comments, "Ah Lord Yahweh, they say of me, 'does he not speak mysterious figures'".

34 Note also 3:15ff; 4:9-17; 12:1-16; 17-20.

35 Scripture quotations in this section are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

36 As a sign or mofet for the people, Ezekiel functions as a portentous example of what is to befall the Israelites (12:11, 24:24). This sense is found elsewhere only in Isaiah 8:18. Cf. M. Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, 211. In 12:6ff, Ezekiel's actions were a sign of what would happen to the "prince of Jerusalem" (presumably Zedekiah, 2 Kings 25:4) and to the other inhabitants of Jerusalem. In 24:24 Ezekiel's inability to mourn his wife's death becomes

a sign of how Israel in captivity will be unable to mourn openly when the temple is profaned.

37 S.B. Freehof, Ezekiel, (New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations), 1978, 40.

38 Ibid.

39 One hundred and ninety days in the Septuagint.

40 W. Zimmerli gives an excellent description of the difficulties involved in interpreting the significance of the three hundred and ninety day period. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 165, 166. See also J.W. Wevers, Ezekiel, 61 and W. Eichrodt, Ezekiel: A Commentary, 84.

41 Cf. W. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 164.

42 Ibid., 164.

43 Ibid., 165.

44 The part burnt on the brick might signify the demise of the population by starvation and pestilence. The portion cut down all round it denotes those who fall in battle for its defense. The last third scattered to the wind stands for the survivors who escape by flight or by being carried into exile, giving only too true a picture of the horrors of defeat. W. Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 87.

45 See P. Craigie, Ezekiel, 36 and J.W. Wevers, Ezekiel, 63.

46 Only here is שׁוּן used of the quaking of man. Otherwise it denotes an earthquake. The quaking of the son of man is thus depicted as being of a violent nature, indicative of a great inner anxiety or fear. W. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 276.

Footnotes for Daniel

47 Standard references used for this study are:

J.J. Collins, The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel, (Missoula, Montana, Scholar's Press), 1977.

T.F. Glasson, "The Son of Man Imagery: Enoch 14 and Daniel 7", NIS 23, (1976), 90-101.

R. Hammer, The Book of Daniel, The Cambridge Biblical Commentary, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 1976.

L.F. Hartman, The Book of Daniel, The Anchor Bible, (New York, Doubleday & Co.), 1978.

A. Lenglet, "La Structure litteraire de Daniel 2-7", Biblica, 53, (1972), 169-90.

A. Lacocque, The Book of Daniel, (London, SPCK), 1979.
 J.A. Montgomery, Daniel, The International Critical Commentary, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark), 1978.

48 Similar wording also appears in Matthew 24:40; 25:31, Mark 13:26 and Luke 9:26; 21:27. Cf. E.P. Gould, ICC, St. Mark, (T & T Clark, Edinburgh) 1969, 251-252.

49 In this passage Jesus is put under solemn oath to answer the claim of being the Messiah. Whatever the ruling party might have understood concerning the coming of the Messiah, it should be emphasized that the act of claiming to be the Messiah was not one which was in itself blasphemous. We have no evidence of what view was taken in ruling circles about the use of the term 'God's Son'. W.F. Albright, Matthew, The Anchor Bible, (New York, Doubleday and Co.), 1971, 332, 333.

In the Interpreter's Bible, G.A. Buttwick suggests that here the blasphemy does not consist in Jesus' claim to Messiahship but in the prediction that Jesus would be at God's right hand. The Greek phrase translated as 'from now on' is quite emphatic. Those listening to Jesus are asked to see in him the Man-in-Glory, the cloud rider of Daniel 7:13ff. Though he does not say "You will see me", the identification is plain enough to his hearers. N.B. Harmon ed.), The Interpreter's Bible, (New York, Abingdon Press), V. 7, 1951, 588.

50 This definition of apocalyptic literature is taken, in part, from L.F. Hartman's description in The Book of Daniel, 63, 64. For more information on the nature of apocalyptic literature see also A. Lacocque, The Book of Daniel, 4, 5.

- 51 The ten sections are:
- i Daniel and his companions at the court of Nebuchadnezzar (1:1-21).
 - ii Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the composite statue (2:1-49).
 - iii Worship of the Golden Image (3:1-30).
 - iv Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity (3:31-4:34).
 - v Balshazzar's Feast (5:1-6:1).
 - vi Daniel and the Lion's Den (6:2-29).
 - vii Vision of the Four Beasts and the Man (7:1-28).
 - viii Vision of the Ram and the He-Goat (8:1-27).
 - ix Revelation of the Seventy Weeks of Years (9:1-27).
 - x The Final Revelation (10:1-12:13).

52 L.F. Hartman, The Book of Daniel (p.31), asserts that Daniel was not written in the sixth century B.C.E., nor

does it intend to convey real history. Rather, the book merely employs a commonly accepted "historical framework" as a setting for its inspired narratives and apocalyptic visions. The stories and visions are set in the Babylonian and Persian periods (sixth to fourth centuries B.C.E.) but reflect having been written and edited at a later time (second to first centuries B.C.E.). Cf. J.A. Montgomery, Daniel, 59.

53 Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Seleucid ruler of Palestine (175-164 B.C.E.) was hated by the Jews. He plundered temples and shrines, including the Temple at Jerusalem, in an effort to solve a financial crisis that arose because of the corruption of his own regime. In an effort to control Jerusalem he seized the city (169 B.C.E.) and massacred many Jews (II Maccabees 5:11-16). In 167 B.C.E. he ordered a general named Apollinius, commander of the Mysians, to enter the city on a Sabbath and slaughter a large number of the inhabitants. He later abolished Jewish sacrifices and festivals, prohibited circumcision and desecrated the great altar of the Temple by placing upon it a statue of Zeus. He is therefore considered by many scholars to be the thinly disguised archvillain of Daniel 7-12. An excellent account of the reign of Antiochus may be found in E. Schürer's The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark), Revised edition, 137-163.

54 L.F. Hartman, The Book of Daniel, 208.

55 Ibid., 212-214. Here Hartman gives a worthwhile commentary on why each beast is an appropriate representative of each of the four pagan kingdoms. For further commentary of the identity of each beast see J.A. Montgomery, The Book of Daniel, 286. The symbolizing of 'heathen' powers with beasts or with mythological monsters, which then become rationalized into formal types, is common in the Old Testament. Cf. Ezra 29:3ff; Isaiah 27:1; Psalms 68:31, 74:13f, 80:14; Psalms of Solomon 2:29.

56 L.F. Hartman, Daniel, 219.

57 This, again, is an assertion made by Hartman owing to the grammatical fact that 'k' in Hebrew means 'like' or 'as'. On the use of 'k' in Hebrew see also, N. Pick, Dictionary of Old Testament Words, (Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications), 1977, 19.

58 Colpe sees a two stage development. In the first stage, the "one in human likeness" changes from a symbol of the eschatological dominion to a representative of the "holy ones of the Most High", an expression which refers to the angelic host. In the second stage, "the holy ones of the

Most High", become the faithful Jews who were persecuted under Antiochus IV. C. Colpe, "ho huios tou anthropou", Theological Dictionary of the New Testament 8, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans), 423-477.

See also C. Coppens, "La Vision daniélique du Fils d'homme", VI 19, (1969), 171-182 and Z. Zevit, "The Structure and Individual Elements of Daniel 7", ZAW 80, (1968), 385-396. Zevit is of the opinion that the "one in human likeness" is the angel Gabriel who represents "the holy ones of the Most High", i.e. the Jewish people in the kingdom of the future.

59 "With the clouds". Not "on the clouds" which would ordinarily be said only of God. Clouds accompany the human figure on its arrival. L.F. Hartman, Daniel 206. See also A. Lococque, Daniel, 137.

60 This statement encapsulates an assertion made by Colpe in his article "ho huios tou anthropou". Cf. A.J.B. Higgins in, The Son of Man in the Teaching of Jesus, (Cambridge University Press), 8.

61 L.F. Hartman, Daniel, 203, 206. In 7:11, the phrase "Because of the arrogant words" literally means "from the sound of the great words".

Footnotes for the Synoptic Gospels

- 1 The basic references used in this section are:
 J.R. Donahue, "Recent Studies on the Origin of 'Son of man' in the Gospels", Catholic Biblical Quarterly, V. 48, July 1986, 484-498.
 J.D.G. Dunn, Christology in the Making, (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press), 1980.
 J.A. Fitzmeyer, 'The New Testament Title "Son of Man" Philologically Considered', A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays, (Missoula, Scholar's press), 1979.
 A.J.B. Higgins, Jesus and the Son of Man, (Philadelphia Fortress Press), 1964.
 _____, The Son of Man in the Teaching of Jesus, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 1980).
 B. Lindars, Jesus Son of Man, A Fresh Examination of the Son of Man Sayings in the Gospels in Light of Recent Research, (London, SPCK), 1983.
 J.L. Mackenzie, Dictionary of the Bible, (New York, Macmillan Publishing Co.), 1965.
 E.P. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press), 1985.
- 2 Cf. A. Plummer, St. Luke, ICC, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark), 1969, 156.
- 3 R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, (New York, Scribner's), 1955. 30-31; The History of the Synoptic Tradition, (2nd ed.; New York, Harper and Row), 1968, 120-30.
- 4 Cf. J.R. Donahue, "Recent Studies on the Origin of 'Son of Man' in the Gospels", CBQ 48, 1986, 492-493.
- 5 The Gospel of John is generally accepted by scholars as a late first century text and, therefore, is likely post-Synoptic. Cf. R. Bultmann, The Gospel according to John, 12.
- 6 Cf. J.A. Mackenzie, Dictionary of the Bible, 831-833.
- 7 W.C. Allen in St. Matthew, ICC, thinks that this paragraph is aimed at Jesus' opponents, i.e. the Pharisees, who judged the Baptist and Jesus by the standard of their Pharisaic righteousness. It seems out of place as addressed to the multitudes, and probably originally belonged to a context in which Jesus was addressing the Pharisees. Luke has endeavoured to prepare for it by inserting 7:29-30: "When they heard this all the people and the tax collectors justified God having been baptized with the baptism of John; but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him".

8 An excellent overview of the debate on the substance of Mark 10:45, its origins and its significance for the early church may be found in Higgins, Jesus and the Son of Man, 36-50. Higgins concludes that the main background elements of Mark 10:45 could well be derived from the 'suffering servant' language of Isaiah 53:12: "I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for their transgressions".

9 "But that you may know that the Son of Man 'upon earth' has the authority to forgive sins ..." (Mark 2:10).

The somewhat emphatic position of 'on earth', epi tēs gēs, seems intended to give implicit expression to the underlying contrast 'in heaven'. In heaven, God alone can forgive sins, but on earth the Son of man has authority (delegated to him by God) to do so. The Son of man has, therefore, received from God the power of exercising a function otherwise restricted to God alone. Allen, St. Matthew, ICC, 88.

10 The reply expected is that it is easier to say, "Thy sins are forgiven", because such a claim could be neither proved nor disproved. On the other hand, to say, "Arise and walk", would be to court ridicule when failure followed. Therefore, Jesus supports his right to make the apparently easier statement by demonstrating his power to make the seemingly harder. W.C. Allen, St. Matthew, ICC, 87.

11 Cf. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, 273-274.

12 Ibid., 273.

13 In all three accounts the noun kurios or 'Lord' comes first and is therefore emphasized. In Mark the phrasing kai tou sabbatou, ('is Lord also/even of the Sabbath') further underscores the lordship of Son of man.

14 Mark is unique among the Synoptic writers because he explicitly links the 'divine' with the figure of the Danielic Son of man. Not only does Jesus align himself with the figure of the 'cloud man' but he also refers to himself, in the same breath, with the divine name 'I am' (egō eimi): 'And Jesus said, "I am"; and you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven'. (Mark 14:62).

FOOTNOTESChapter TwoFootnotes for John Three

¹ 1:51; 3:13,14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 12:23,34; 13:31.

² Source references used for this block of verses:
R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 1, (New York. Seabury Press, New York), 375, 376. A.H. McNeile, St. John, ICC, Vol. 1, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark), 109, 110. F.J. Moloney, The Johannine Son of Man, 2nd ed., (Rome, Las), 47, 48.

³ Nicodemus, as "a man of the Pharisees" and "a ruler of the Jews" represents Judaism. Jesus and Judaism are the two parties in the discussion, but it is not to be regarded as a Johannine anti-Jewish polemic since Jesus is completely open with his interlocutor and he will later reveal himself completely to him (vv.11-21). Nicodemus is prepared to see Jesus as a Rabbi, a teacher, 'from God', a prophet, and even as having God with him, but he cannot or will not see him as 'Son of man' or understand the message of rebirth from above in the spirit. Cf. F.J. Moloney, Johannine Son of Man, 47.

Further article references on Nicodemus are: G. Gaeta, "II Dialogo con Nicodemo", Studi Biblici 26, (Brescia, Paideia), 1974, 44-69. I. de la Potterie, "Jésus et Nicodemus: de necessitate generationis ex Spiritu (John 3:1-10)", VD 47, 1969, 194-214. M. de Jonge, "Jesus and Nicodemus: Some observations on Misunderstanding and Understanding in the Fourth Gospel", BJRL 53, 1970, 337-359.

⁴ The formula of solemn asseveration (amēn; amēn) with which the discourse begins serves in the Johannine gospel either to take words spoken by Jesus a stage further in order to elucidate their revelatory content or to answer a question emphatically, (i.e. 3:3; 6:26,32; 8:34,58; 13:38). See also 5:19, 24; 6:53; 10:1,7; 12:24 and 13:28.

⁵ For more on the use of the verbs in 3:11 as authoritative plurals, see R.E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, (Garden City, Doubleday), 132, and also R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, (New York, Seabury Press), 375, 376. The idea of authority is also expressed in the first person singular in 8:38 and 12:50.

⁶ Bernard in St. John, ICC, 110, cites Godet and Westcott as exegetes who think that the plurals of verse eleven associate the disciples with Jesus in this testimony.

See also R.E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, 132 and C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, (SPCK, London), 211.

⁷ J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, 110.

⁸ Amēn, amēn lego soi hoti ho oidamen laloumen.
Truly, truly, I tell you, what we know we speak.

Although legein and lalein both mean 'to speak' the distinction in classical Greek which holds true to a certain extent in John is that legein relates to the substance of what is said while lalein has to do with the manner of utterance. In the English translation of this verse the two verbs cannot be distinguished. However, if there is any special tinge of meaning in lalein as compared with legein, it is that lalein suggests a frankness and openness of speech. This verbal nuance, when added to the majestic plural ascribed to Jesus in the same verse, further asserts Jesus' authority. Cf. J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, 109.

⁹ R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 1, 375.

¹⁰ The contrast between ta epigeia and ta epourania also appears in 1 Corinthians 15:40; 2 Corinthians 5:1; Philippians 2:10, 3:19 and in James 3:15. Both J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, 110, and R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, 378, think that the point of John 3:12 is most like that of Wisdom 9:16,17: "Hardly do we divine the things that are on earth, and the things that are close at hand we find with labour; but the things which are in the heavens, who ever yet traced out ... except thou gavest wisdom and sentest thy Holy Spirit from on high". For further commentary of 3:12, see also R.E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, 132; C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 212; L. Morris, The Gospel according to St. John, 222, and R. Bultmann, The Gospel according to John, 147.

¹¹ J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, 110.

¹² Nicodemus and the religious authorities he represents are indicated with the use of the second person plural forms pisteuete/pisteusete in verse twelve.

¹³ R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 1, 377.

14 (Ho) katabas constitutes an active, aorist participle which becomes a substantive meaning, 'the one who came down once in the course of history'. The words ho katabas thus qualify Jesus as an authentic historical figure.

15 Anabebēken, a perfect active verb, indicates an action completed in time past which has continued relevance in the present. It means, '(no one) has ascended' and refers to 'one who now dwells in heaven continually'. The expression 'ho katabas' and 'anabebēken' thus describe Jesus as a figure inhabiting two distinct time realms. He is the man who lived once in time and he is also the one who continues to live as a heavenly being beyond the realm of human history.

16 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 1, 393. This is Schnackenburg's analysis of the verb anabebēken.

17 J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, 112. Because the argument of the verse is complete without this addition it is often considered to be an interpretative gloss of the second century.

18 Ibid., 111.

19 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 1, 393.

20 John 3:13 deals with a theme familiar to Hebrew and Apocryphal literature. That is, the theme of 'the one who ascends and descends from heaven'. In Proverbs 30:4 the suggested answer to the question, 'Who went up to heaven and came down?' is 'God alone'. To the question posed in Baruch 3:29, 'Who hath ascended to heaven and taken her (Wisdom) and brought her down from the clouds?' the suggested answer is, 'No one!' J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, 111.

21 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 1, 393. The designation 'Son of man' at the end of verse twelve is fully deliberate since this theological title is used consistently in John in connection with the thought of ascent (6:62) and exaltation (3:14; 12:34).

22 The theme of belief (and consequently, unbelief) is a dominant one in John. The verb pisteuein (to believe) is used about one hundred times, that is, at nine times the frequency with which it is used in the Synoptics. Cf. 1:50; 4:42,53; 5:44; 6:64; 11:15; 12:39; 14:29; 19:35; 20:8,25. Furthermore, pisteuein, used absolutely has throughout the

same value as pisteuein eis to onoma autou (1:12). (R. Bultmann, The Gospel according to John, 51). Thus, the 'signs' performed by Jesus were not merely wonders or prodigies (terata), but signs by which men might learn that he was the Christ (20:31) and "believe in him". (J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, 81).

23 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 1, 394.

24 The making of bronze snakes for the purpose of cult worship was practised throughout Canaan. Cf. R.E. Brown, (ed.), Jerome Biblical Commentary, (New Jersey, Englewood Cliffs), 94. That the people are healed through the very symbol they despise is my own observation. J.G. Frazer, in his book The Golden Bough: A Study of Magic and Religion, (ed. 2, London), 1900, 276, also notes this story from Numbers 21 in connection with an ancient practice of getting rid of vermin by making images of them. Thus, the Philistines, when their land was infested with mice, made golden images of the creatures, and sent them out of the country. Apollonius of Tyana is said to have freed Antioch from scorpions by making a bronze image of a scorpion and burying it under a small pillar in the middle of the city. In the context of these stories in which images of hated vermin are made and then hidden or sent away, the Numbers story is striking because in it the symbol of the hated serpent is not hidden but displayed, and becomes, ironically, the very symbol through which the people are healed.

25 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 1, 396.

26 Cf. 3:14, 8:28, 12:32,34.

27 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 1, 396.

28 "In order that those believing in him might have eternal life" (3:15) is a familiar and oft repeated phrase in John. Compare 3:36; 6:47 and 20:31.

29 This idea is expressly stated in verse fifteen because the words en autō (in him) do not depend on the verb pisteuein (believe) but on the verb echē (might have) and are placed before it for emphasis.

30 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 1, 397.

31 Ibid., 396.

³² For examples of Jesus' exaltation to the right hand of God, see Acts 2:33-36; 5:30ff, and Philippians 2:8-11.

Footnotes for John Eight

1 Once again the theme of misunderstanding is presented. In chapter three the man Nicodemus, a representative of the Jewish religious authorities, does not understand Jesus' allusions to himself as the Son of man. Here in chapter eight, Jesus' 'interlocutor' is now a group that misunderstands his references to himself as the Son of man 'from above'. In this passage, however, the misunderstanding or unbelief displayed by the religious authorities is characterized by an increasing hostility.

2 The concepts of 'above' and 'below' are recurring themes in John. Cf. R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, (New York, Seabury Press), 198.

3 Barrett thinks that the sharp antagonism toward "the Jews" in this passage reflects something of the tension that existed between church and synogogue towards the end of the first century. C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 334. One must keep in mind, however, that the so-called Jewish-Christian polemic displayed in John may well reflect an 'in-house' Jewish disagreement since a great part of the first century church was Jewish. Furthermore, as Reuven Kimelman points out in his article, "Birkat ha Minim and the Lack of Evidence for a Anti-Christian Jewish prayer in Late Antiquity", the Johannine author uses the presence of Jewish leadership groups primarily as a literary foil through which he describes Jesus identity. E.P. Sanders (ed.), Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press), Vol. 2, 396.

4 Egō ouk eimi ek tou kosmou toutou (v.23). Egō eimi in this position is emphatic and is set in direct contrast with humeis. Bernard observes that this phrase represents the perpetual theme of the Fourth Gospel in that he who was not 'of the world' came 'into the world' for its rescue. J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2 (Edinburgh, T & T Clark), 299.

5 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 196.

6 Exegetes who think the phrase egō eimi in this passage is the equivalent of the divine name 'ani hu' are J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 300, 301; R.E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, 348, and R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 199. Further references on the use of egō eimi in John: H. Zimmerman, "Das absolute Ego eimi als neutestamentliche Offenbarungsformel", BZ 4, (1960), 54-69. A. Feuillet, "Les

Ego Eimi christologigues du Quatrième Evangile", RecSR 54 (1966), 5-22. J.B. Harner, The "I am" of the Fourth Gospel, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press), 1970.

7 Egō eimi without a complement (see also vv. 28, 58 and 13:19) is hardly a Greek expression, and it is therefore natural to look into its Jewish background. The words occur frequently in the LXX where they are used to tender 'ani hu', literally 'I (am) he', which occurs especially in the words of God himself, and there is a particularly close parallel to the passage in Isaiah 43:10: hina gnote kai pisteusete kai sunete hoti egō eimi ('ani hu'). C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 343.

8 C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 341.

9 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 201.

10 J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 301.

11 This rendering of oti, although rare, is quite possible as is seen in the disciple's question in Mark 9:28; hoti humeis ouk edunethemen ekbalein auto; (Why could we not cast it out?).

12 C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 343.

13 C.A.E. Luschnig, Introduction to Ancient Greek, (New York, Scribners), 217. On page 217, Dr. Luschnig gives at least six common uses for the accusative. One of these is the 'Accusative of Extent of Time or Space'. It is possible that this type of usage is employed in John 8:25.

14 The supplying of an unwritten 'I am' is a common occurrence in classical Greek.

15 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 210.

16 Cf. R.E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, The Anchor Bible, (New York, Doubleday), 336.

17 The importance of Jesus' origins is discussed throughout the Gospel, notably in 3:14 where he is described again as the 'son of man lifted up' whose home is heaven.

18 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 201.

19 J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 303.

20 See R.E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, 348 and also R. Bultmann, The Gospel according to John, 343.

21 R.E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, 350. R. Bultmann, The Gospel according to John, 349.

22 Cf. R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 203.

23 The author's claim of Jesus as 'I am' along with the claim that he must also be crucified brings the conflict between Jesus and the crowd to the fore. In their minds, 'I am' i.e. God, could never be subject to death. Therefore, when he claims that Jesus the Son of man/I am is crucified, the Johannine author highlights a christology that must inevitably divide the crowd. It is understandable and perhaps inevitable that the crowd should display unbelief and hostility as a result of this highly controversial presentation of Jesus as Son of man.

Footnotes to John Twelve

¹ The word hellen does not strictly signify one of the Greek race but rather one of non-Jewish birth. Similarly, in John 7:35 and in Mark 7:27, a woman first described as a 'Greek' (Hellenis) is further described as a Syro-Phonician. The men in 12:20 were not hellenistai, that is, Greek-speaking Jews, but hellenes, Greeks who had become proselytes of the gate and accordingly attended Jewish festivals (see Acts 17:4 and 8:27). Such people belonged to a class known as 'God fearers' whom Josephus says liked to go to Jerusalem as pilgrims for Passover. References for further reading: C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, (London, SPCK), 421. J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark), 430. R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, (New York, Seabury Press), 381, and B.H. Kossen, "Who were the Greeks of John 12:20?", Studies in John, 97-110.

² In the ICC, Bernard suggests that Philip's Greek name may have encouraged the Greek-speaking proselytes to speak to him. J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 430, 431.

³ Ibid., 431.

⁴ Elēluthen means 'to come' and it is in the perfect tense. It means, 'the hour is come and stays with us'. Here, as in 2:4, 7:30; 8:20 (where the hour has not yet come) and in 12:27; 13:1 and 17:1 (where it is an immediate prospect), the hour is the hour of Jesus' death. But the death of Jesus means his glorification. Cf. v.16. Further reading on 'the hour': J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, 432, 433; R.E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, 470; R. Bultmann, The Gospel according to John, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell), 427-430; C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 422.

⁵ R. Bultmann, The Gospel according to John, 424.

⁶ R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, 380.

⁷ 'Unless it dies ... it remains alone'. (v.24). The phrase autos monos menei puts emphasis on the aloneness of the grain that does not die.

⁸ Cf. L. Morris, The New Testament Commentary on the New Testament. (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans), 593. This is the first illustration that life comes through death, viz. the law that the grain of wheat must die before it can bear

fruit. To this law Paul appeals in his statement of the resurrection of man (1 Corinthians 15:30).

9 The verb apoluo, often translated as 'looseth', literally means 'destroys'. Philip's paraphrase of this verse is "the man who loves his own life will destroy it". In other words, he is the cause of his own perdition. Note that the verb 'destroys' is in the present tense where one might expect a future tense to match 'shall keep' (fulaxei). This present tense also lends to a sharper and stronger tone in the saying. R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, 384.

10 This assertion is made by R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, 384. A contrast built up by the use of the verbs 'love' and 'hate' is also apparent in Luke 14:26 and Matthew 10:37.

11 Ibid., 384. R. Schnackenburg asserts that John is also applying the saying to the situation of his community of disciples which has to face hatred, persecution and death (cf. 15:18-21; 16:1-3).

12 Akoluthein means 'to follow as a disciple' but it also has a literal meaning. It is probable and characteristic of his style that here and in verses 38, 40 and 43, John is playing on both meanings. The verb 'to follow' also appears in John 1:44, 8:12, 10:4,27; 12:26; 21:19, 20 and 22.

13 C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 424.

14 J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 435.

15 A good cross reference paraphrase of verse 27 is Mark 14:34: 'My soul is very sorrowful, even unto death'. C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 425.

16 Ti eipō: 'What shall I say?' A deliberative subjunctive which expresses a genuine, if momentary indecision. J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 436.

17 It is possible to punctuate either with a full stop or with a question mark. The deliberation of ei eipo; perhaps suggests the latter, but little difference is made. Cf. C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 425.

18 Alla dia touto. Alla, in classical Greek after a self-question means, 'No!' Therefore, we would render this phrase, 'No. For this purpose I have come to this hour'.

19 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 387.

20 R. Bultmann, The Gospel according to John, 429.

21 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 388, 389.

22 The signs or semeia theme is an important one in John. The signs are not simply expressions of extraordinary power but they are introductions to Jesus and are presented in the Fourth Gospel as works of the Father performed by him. The unity of Jesus and God in action is the motif of the signs, and they invite men to ascertain that unity if they will. Cf. P. Riga, "Signs of Glory: The Use of 'Semeion' in St. John's Gospel", Interpretation, 17 (1963), 402-410.

The seven signs of the Gospel are as follows: The changing of water into wine (2:1-11), The Healing of the Official's Son (4:43-54), The Healing at Bethesda (5:1-15), The Multiplication of the Loaves (6:1-15), Walking on the Sea of Galilee (6:16-21), The Healing of a Blind Man (9:1-34), The Raising of Lazarus (11:1-44)

Further reading: L. Morris, The Gospel according to John, 684-691; R.E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, Introduction, 139-144; R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 1, 515-528 and R. Kysar, The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel, (Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House), 225-233.

23 "There came a voice from heaven". This expression first appears in Daniel 4:31 where a voice from heaven warns Nebuchadnezzar. According to the gospel narratives, heavenly voices were heard by Jesus at three great moments of crisis and consecration in his ministry: after his baptism, at the transfiguration and before his passion. J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 439.

24 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 389.

25 J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 440.

26 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 389.

27 R. Bultmann, The Gospel according to John, 430.

28 Ibid., 430.

29 Krisis, like krinein, has the sense of condemnation or of a decisive criterion which in a given case results in condemnation. C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 217.

30 Ekbalein exo. 'To cast out' is a powerful expression which the author uses elsewhere (6:37; 9:34,35).

31 The title 'ruler of this world' is applied to Beliar in the earlier part of the Ascension of Isaiah (1:3; 2:4; 10:29) which is probably contemporary with the Fourth Gospel. Similar phrases are found in Ephesians 2:2; 6:12; 2 Corinthians 4:4 and Matthew 4:8ff. J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 441. See also, C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 427.

32 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 393.

33 "Pantas". "All men". Barrett suggests that the expression "all men" may mean 'and not to Jews only'. The phrase is appropriately placed within the context of a story that begins with the inquiry of the 'Greeks'. C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 427.

34 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 393. C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 427.

35 Touto de elegen. "This he was saying". The imperfect of lego is also found in 5:18; 6:71; 8:31. This explanatory comment is repeated in 18:32 and shows the interpretation which the evangelist gives to hupsoun. The verb emellen, 'he was about (to die)', carries the idea of the inevitability of Jesus' death (cf. 11:51; 18:32). J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 442.

36 Pōs. "How or what" in the semitic sense means, "What do you mean 'by?'" The crowd takes offense at Jesus' reference to the 'lifting up' of the Son of man. R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 395.

37 The reaction of the crowd reflects that of the Jew Trypho who, in dialogue with Justin said, "The Son of man is to be full of glory and honour but your so-called Christ was without these and was struck by the worst curse in the law of God by being crucified". R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 395. See also J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 443.

38 Mikron kronon. "For a little while". The author represents Jesus as speaking only indirectly of himself and his approaching departure. J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 444.

39 To phos. "The light". Notice the stress on the word 'light'. This noun occurs five times in the next two verses (vv.35, 36).

40 Peripateite. In the present imperative we might render this as, "Keep on walking or conducting yourself in such a way". It is notable that whenever peripatein is used in John in a sense not strictly literal, that it is used in connection with light and darkness (8:12; 11:9ff; 12:25). In 8:12, the verb is connected with 'following' Jesus but here with 'believing' in him. C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to John, 428.

41 "Lest the darkness overtake you". The only other place where katalambanein, (to overtake and so get the better of), is found in John 1:5, '... and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overtake it'. J.H. Bernard, The Gospel according to St. John, ICC, Vol. 2, 444.

42 L. Morris, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans), 601. To believe in the light is to become a Son of light (huios photos). A Son of light is the equivalent of "an enlightened man" and first appears in a saying of Jesus' recorded in Luke 16:8. Further reading on 'believe' in John: R. Bultmann, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. 1, Article on "pisteuo", 197-228, and R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 558-567.

43 R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, Vol. 2, 395, 396.

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