THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN JOHN'S GOSPEL AND EPISTLES

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INTRODUCTION

Never, in its two hundred years of existence has the discipline of New Testament theology been in such disarray. Emerging originally as a handmaiden to dogmatics, the new science early became a tool of liberal higher criticism to shake the very foundations of traditional theological structures. When they finished they left in their wake a howling wasteland. The present century has undertaken a reconstruction. No doubt the most prominent individual in this undertaking is Rudolph Bultmann. Like theological paleontologists, he and his disciples have set themselves to the task of excavating the traditions to surface what, if anything, is left intact of that which the Founder of Christianity actually said and did. This too has failed. Using the second-hand tools of liberal historical criticism and following the bogus schematic of subjective existentialism, the precious treasures of New Testament theology have been unearthed only to be grotesquely reconstructed. Like a modern "Junk-art" sculpture, it may be found in the noisy marketplace of theological faddism, offered to the highest bidder as a curious conversation piece.

What then, is the agenda for theology today? Abused by liberalism and misunderstood by neo-liberalism, is it possible that the New Testament has something to say for itself? Is it possible that the Christ of history is also the Christ of theology? Could it be that the formulators of the Apostolic Church and of the New Testament were not the creative geniuses Bultmannians often suppose, but simply followers of the Messiah, recording what they learned of/from Him and what they knew/believed
to be true? Is there a chance that the final "source" of the Gospel is Christ Himself?

The Aim of This Study

The intent of this dissertation is to present the theological conceptions of the Person of Christ in the Gospel and Epistles of John. It will be to pursue the origin and substance of John's thought and to show that while much of John's purpose is theological, it is "received" theology, not "reconstructed" theology. John is best understood when it is recognized that he represents authentic Apostolic doctrine.

This dissertation will also show that Johannine christological conceptions permeated post-apostolic writings. Thus in the debates and ultimate conclusions of the early trinitarian and christological controversies it will be shown that John not only guided the early church toward theological precision, but it was he whose writings initially spawned the debate.

The Presuppositions of This Study

The discussion follows upon two basic assumptions. First, it is presupposed that the Bible, in its original autographs, is the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God in all of its parts. Questions involving the exact wording of the text may influence how the original is rendered. But, problems arising from form and source criticism are here considered to have their basis in an anti-supernatural and anthropocentric methodology. The most important issue for New Testament theology is not to answer the questions of supposed sources lying behind the narrative. The crucial question is: What does the text say and mean? No one writes in a cultural, social, or theological vacuum. This must be admitted at the outset. This includes Mark as well! Hence, the task is not to peel away
the culture, *Sitz im Leben*, and the theology; thus to arrive at the authentic message (kerygma) of the "historical Jesus." On the contrary, the task is to observe, to analyze, to classify, and to faithfully represent the ideas of the New Testament writers. After all, they claim to have been written under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This writer chooses to take that claim seriously.

The second assumption builds upon the first. The Gospel and Epistles of John, regardless of questions of authorship, are considered parts of the Canon of Scripture and thus, authentic and reliable records of the life, teachings, gospel and theology of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is acknowledged, as noted above, that the human writer was influenced, no doubt, by ideas current in his world. These certainly had to include Hellenism, Judaism, apocalypticism, platonism, and perhaps even gnosticism. Furthermore, it is admitted that most, if not all of the thought forms in John's writings are taken from these traditions. In other words, to speak of "inspiration" is not to speak of "dictation." However, regardless of the cultural or ideological origins of John's language, it is here asserted that it is sanctified and guided by divine purpose (1 Pet. 1:20, 21). Thus, its full meaning is best discerned within the biblical context, not outside of it. As God's Son became incarnate without compromising essential Deity, God's Word became incarnate in human language without compromising its accuracy or intent.

**The Importance of This Study**

This is an investigation into the Person of Christ by the disciple who may very well have known Him best, the Apostle John. The Synoptics give distinctive accounts of the "gospel." They faithfully record the story of Messiah's mission to Israel in particular and the world at large.
Their account is "good news" indeed! But, if one is anxious to come to know the Lord Jesus as a Person, he must allow His beloved friend, John, to introduce Him.

It is strange that in the "new quest for the historical Jesus" it is John's testimony that is most often passed off with slight-of-hand. Ever learning, they seem never to be able to find the Truth.

There is no nobler science than the theological pursuit. But, there is no nobler theological pursuit than the study of the Person of Christ. On this basis, John's testimony concerning Him deserves to be heard.

The Method and Plan of This Study

The Science of biblical theology is customarily defined as that branch of theology which gives special attention to the progressive unfolding of revelation in the Bible in its historical and environmental context. As any science it involves a systematic analysis and arrangement of specific data. However, there are several approaches which have been utilized historically and which often influence the outcome.

One major approach is to find a central point around which the author moves and then relate all the data to it. While this approach has the advantage of de-emphasizing the preconceptions of the investigator, it is only accurate to the degree the biblical author intended to centralize his thought. It also tends to be fragmentary.

Another approach is to isolate the major concerns of Scripture as specified in systematic theology. This approach runs the risk of importing concepts to the text which have their roots more in dogmatics than the theology of the biblical writers. However, when one wishes to limit his field of investigation or arrange his material in an especially orderly
way, this method becomes desirable. It is for both of these reasons that this approach is adopted here.

Since the purpose here is also concerned with the symbols of Nicea and Chalcedon and the degree to which they define and defend Johannine ideas, the plan of the study will be to show how John develops the concepts of the states of Christ, His two natures, and the manner in which he perceives these factors as concurring in one person. Then, it will be shown how these concepts were driven into the soil of history as sign-posts to the early Church to guide her in the theological pursuit.
Notes

1 Thomas C. Oden, Professor of Theology and Ethics at Drew University expresses well the concern of many with regard to the destructive results of modern theological studies. He calls for a return to the classics in order to identify authentic Christianity. Agenda for Theology.

2 However, one must be careful here to note that, while the biblical author may have drawn from a common reservoir of concepts and ideas, that reservoir may not be termed his "source." There is no attempt here to suggest that John subscribed to the tenets of Qumran, or Hellenism, or any other influence which may be included in the linguistic pedigree of the terms he employed.

3 See discussion which follows in chapter one.

4 The expression has gained currency since the publication of James M. Robinson, A New Quest for the Historical Jesus.


6 Jesus said of his enemies that while they searched the Scriptures to find eternal life, they overlooked the life-Giver because of unbelief. John 5:38-40.

7 L. S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, 8 vols., I:16, 17.

8 Gerhard F. Hasel outlines four major current approaches in New Testament Theology. There are others as well.
CHAPTER I

"THERE WAS A MAN WhOSE NAME WAS JOHN"

It is not the intent of this study to probe deeply into the questions of authorship and receivership. However, there are several matters that require attention before any intelligent theological discussion can be undertaken.

The Authorship of the Gospel

It is the opinion of this writer that the author of the Gospel of John, was the son of Zebedee. Clearly, this opinion is not shared by all\(^1\) and, therefore, a summary of the evidence which commends this position is in order.

Evidence Within the Text

The data derived from the text falls into two broad categories: (a) passages citing the author directly, and (b) passages suggesting that the author was an eyewitness.

Passages citing the author

It is true that the identity of the Gospel writer is intentionally obscured. However, there are curious hints throughout the writing which cause one to suspect that the writer did not intend for his identity to be altogether eradicated. If only to add authority to what is said, it seems to have been important to the author to say a few things about his personal credentials. And it is here that a process of elimination
leads, quite convincingly, to the Apostle John.

This discussion begins at the end, in John 21:24. "This is the disciple who bears witness of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his witness is true."² The most natural antecedent to the relative "this" is the "disciple whom Jesus loved," mentioned in 21:20, already identified as the writer of the Gospel.

This disciple who is the special object of Jesus' love is, again, nowhere named in the Gospel. However, he appears anonymously on several occasions. He was among the seven disciples to whom Jesus appeared by the Sea of Tiberias (John 21:2-7), these are given as Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee (James and John, Matt. 4:21), and "two others of His disciples." He hastened, with Peter to the empty tomb (20:2). He witnessed the crucifixion and accepted the care of Mary (19:26, 27). He reclined next to the Lord and Peter at the Last Supper (13:23). While the fourth Gospel does not name those present on this occasion, Mark records that it was limited to the circle of the Twelve (Mark 14:17).

He is frequently associated with Peter. They are together when Mary Magdalene reports the disappearance of Jesus' body, and rush together, to the tomb (20:2-8). They are together again in 21:7 when Jesus appeared on the seashore. What is interesting here is that Peter is also cited as a frequent companion of John. For example, they with James constituted an inner circle of disciples who were present on at least three occasions when the others were absent (Mark 5:37, 9:2, 15:33). Peter and John were selected to prepare the Passover on their last night together (Luke 22:8). Even after the ascension they are frequently cited together (Acts 3:1, 11; 4:13; 8:14). Again, along with James (the Lord's brother), they are called "Pillars" of the church
by the Apostle Paul (Gal. 2:9).

What then, by way of summary, may be said about the "beloved disciple" and his relation to the question at hand? He is identified as the author. He is an eyewitness. He is one of the Twelve. He is one of the inner circle (Peter, James, John). But he is not Peter, since they are distinguished. This only leaves the two sons of Zebedee.

What of James? We know only that John's brother died very early at the hands of Herod (Acts 12:2). If James is the "beloved disciple" and author of this Gospel, he would have had to write it almost immediately after the beginning of the Church at Pentecost. This does not square with any of the tradition surrounding the writing (about which more will be said below), nor with the probable late date ordinarily assigned the Gospel. Thus, the most likely choice is John.

Passages suggesting the author was an eyewitness

Twice in the gospel the writer refers to himself as an eyewitness. In John 1:14 he says, "we beheld his glory," (see also 1 John 1:1-4). Here the sense clearly indicates at the outset that the writer is anxious to establish his credentials as an eyewitness to the events recorded.3

Another passage which may relate, but which is somewhat ambiguous is John 19:35. "And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he (ἐκεῖνος) knows that he is telling the truth..." If ἐκεῖνος refers to the eyewitness, immediately cited, then the passage is a clear reference to the authority of the writer as a witness to the events. However, it must be admitted that the passage is unclear.

There are numerous other evidences in the text which suggest that the author was a contemporary of the Lord and a personal witness to what was written. He knew the size and number of waterpots at Cana (2:6). He
knew the distance rowed across the Sea of Galilee in 6:19. He knew the
distance the boat was from land in 21:8, as well as the exact number of
fish caught (21:11).

He includes many small details which suggest that he was per­
sonally present. For example, he mentions the "barley" loaves (6:9),
the "house. . .filled with the fragrance" (12:3), how Peter "gestured to
him" (13:24), the reaction of the soldiers when Jesus presented Himself
for arrest (18:6), the weight of the spices used for the embalming (19:39),
and intimate knowledge of personal details about the Lord and the disciples
in candid situations (cf. 2:11, 12; 4:27; 6:19-21, 60-70). On many occa-
sions, where John's narrative parallels the Synoptics he provides details
omitted in the latter (cf. 6:7; 12:3; 18:10).

While there is little evidence to say whether John had copies of
any of the Synoptics in hand when he wrote this Gospel, it is clear he
intends to write an independent work. The fourth Gospel is significant
both in terms of its omissions as well as its additions to the Synoptics.
For example, there is no genealogy, annunciation, infancy narrative,
early childhood and youth narrative. Nothing is said of the life,
ministry, imprisonment and death of John the Baptist. The temptation
and transfiguration of Christ are not discussed. Nothing is said of the
raising of Jairus' daughter, the institution of the Lord's Supper, the
agony in Gethsemany, Jesus' messianic claims at His trial, or the ascen-
sion. Nothing is said of children, demoniacs, lepers, scribes, sadducees,
publicans. There is no mention of Hell, Hades, Gehenna, Tartarus. There
is no detailed eschatology. There are no parables.

On the other hand, more than ninety percent of John's Gospel
is original. There are strange new metaphors applied to Christ (Bread of
Life, the Vine, the Gate, the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Light, the
Truth). Instead of discourses, John details fourteen private conversations with a fixed pattern throughout. Of the eight recorded miracles, six are new. John introduces many new people to the reader, such as Nathanael, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the impotent man, Lazarus and Malchus. There are new titles applied to Christ, including the Logos and the Only Begotten. The Holy Spirit is addressed as the Paraclete. In addition there are at least twenty-three occurrences or discourses unique to John. While he parallels the Synoptics most in his treatment of the passion narrative, even here he includes new material. Only he records the reaction of the soldiers when they came to arrest Jesus; and that it was Peter who cut off Malchus' ear. Only John records the statements of Christ to Pilate about His kingdom of truth not being of the world, Pilate's statement, "Behold the man!" the division of the garments by the soldiers, the commitment of Mary to the Beloved Disciple, the blood and water from Jesus' pierced side, and the help provided by Nicodemus in the burial.

Another important consideration has to do with indirect evidences to authorship. The author demonstrates a familiarity with Jewish customs, with Jewish history and current events, and has personal acquaintance with Palestinian geographical sites.

Evidence from Early Christian Tradition

The tradition that the Apostle John wrote the Fourth Gospel at Ephesus as a very old man is found first in Irenaeus, about 180 A.D. "Afterwards (after the three Synoptic Gospels) John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon his breast, himself published his Gospels, while he was living in Ephesus in Asia." Bishop Polycrates writing about ten years later, in a letter preserved in Eusebius also reflects
this tradition. Bishop Melito of Sardis (c. 190) cites the Gospel of John in the same manner in which he cites other apostolic documents. In the Epistula Apostolorum, late second century, the Gospel of John is used repeatedly, and John is listed first among the Apostles. Finally, the Muratorian Canon clearly establishes that the Roman tradition was identical to that established in Asia Minor at the time of Irenaeus. Thus, the uniform tradition in both Asia Minor and Rome in the last quarter of the second century is that the Fourth Gospel was written by the apostle John, who is also to be identified with the Beloved Disciple. From this point on the tradition is virtually undisputed.

Why then, is the apostolic authorship almost universally rejected in contemporary critical scholarship? Several reasons are generally given. (1) It is considered that Irenaeus' sources are questionable (viz. Polycarp and Papias). (2) It is possible that there were two Johns in the early church--the apostle and the "elder." (3) It is claimed that Apostolic authorship contradicts the tradition that John was martyred early. Yet, again, none of these arguments withstand critical examination. Guthrie is, no doubt, correct when he states that the reason many scholars reject the evidence for apostolic authorship of the Gospel of John is because the "evidence conflicts with their critical conclusions."

To say that the evidence establishes, with absolute certainty, that the Fourth Gospel is a production of John, the son of Zebedee, is to overestimate its value. Yet, on the other hand, to suggest that the objections to the apostolic authorship render any first-hand link with the circle of the twelve an "impossibility" is to misrepresent the testimony of Scripture and history.

On the contrary, the safest assumption is that the Fourth Gospel
must be considered to have come from the hand of the Apostle John unless hard contradictory evidence can be presented to prove otherwise. After a meticulous examination of the external evidence for authorship, even R.E. Brown is forced to conclude:

"The only ancient tradition about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel for which any body of evidence can be adduced is that it is the work of John, son of Zebedee. There are some valid points in the objections raised to this tradition, but Irenaeus' statement is far from having been disproved."

**The Purpose and Date of the Gospel**

John's purpose is clearly stated in 20:30, 31: "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."

Two facts emerge from this statement. (1) John is being selective. The question whether John knew or used any of the Synoptics may not be answerable. Regardless, this says nothing about historicity. He is using only that which serves his purpose. Hence, one is unwise to make too much of the fact that he does not often correspond to the other three Gospels in general content or detail. It is here also that John has often been unjustly criticized in his relation to the Synoptics. It is claimed that he has an overriding purpose which is theological, therefore it is not historical. This is a false distinction. Furthermore "the question of historicity cannot be confined to one Gospel. There is theology in all of them. It is increasingly accepted in modern writing that all four Gospels are basically theological documents."

(2) The writing is evangelistic, "written that you may believe." The critical question here is: who is "you?" Does it refer to Christians
or non-Christians? The aorist tense of the verb stresses the notion of "come to believe," or "in order that you may believe." John, then, appears to be writing to non-Christians. But what kind of non-Christians? Are they pagans or Jews? Some argue that the Greek influences in the Gospel suggest a predominately Hellenistic audience. Yet several other factors would suggest that his intended reader was most probably an unsaved Jew. The Jewish character of the author has already been shown. In addition, his stated purpose is to give content to their faith, i.e. to convince them that Jesus is the "Christ." There is little doubt that this ascription is used in a peculiarly Jewish sense of "the Anointed One," or "Anointed King." Even the related title, "Son of God," while often used to suggest a Hellenistic audience, is intentionally drawn into a Jewish milieu by its association with the Messiah (cf. 1:49 and here). John Marsh observes:

John's concern is to show that the reality of what the Jews already had and hoped for was to be found in Jesus. He is thus the 'real' temple, the place that is to replace both Jerusalem and Samaria as the right place to worship God (4:21). He is the 'real' manna sent from heaven, the 'real' passover Lamb offered to God (18:28); He is the 'real' source of the law Israel had received (5:17 ff).

Thus, John writes to convince his kinsman according to the flesh, that Jesus was who He said He was, and that they may have life through believing in His name. But, into what period in the life of the apostle does one place the writing of this Gospel appeal?

Fortunately, the "dating of John is possible today with tolerable certainty within relatively narrow limits." With the discovery of Rylands Papyrus 457 and the Egerton Papyrus 2 the radical theories positing a late second century date for the composition of John have been quieted. In fact the terminus ad quem may not be given as later
than A.D. 135. Since it has been established that the Apostle John wrote the Gospel, it must be dated within his lifetime, or before the end of the first century. If the testimony of Irenaeus is taken seriously, the Apostle John lived in Ephesus until the time of Trajan, then the latest possible date would be A.D. 85-95.

As for the **terminus a quo**, it is almost impossible to say with any degree of certainty. Fairly strong arguments have been compiled for both a very early date (before A.D. 70) as well as for a later date (A.D. 80-90). Most critical scholars favor the late date in order to accommodate John's dependence on the Synoptics. While it is unlikely that John used the other Gospels as "sources" for his own, it is probably safest to assume the later date since this best explains several significant omissions (Saducees, Kingdom, etc.) and the attitude displayed toward "the Jews." It also fits best with the second century tradition regarding the date of composition (Clement of Alexandria) and to the maturity of the theological insights (to be discussed below).

Thus, John writes at a time when the national aspirations of Israel have been destroyed, the Jewish and Christian communities had been increasingly polarized and there was a rather serious disorientation prevalent among the Jews in coming to terms with their Jewish heritage without the benefit of the "Holy City" and its culture.

What better time to concentrate on reaching these people with the Gospel? Their national soul was desolate. Perhaps now they will believe--but believe what? That Jesus (the man) is the Christ (and a pre-existent Messiah at that!), the Son of God (diety) and that believing they might have life. Here is contained the outline of John's purpose and of this study.
The Apostle John and the Three Epistles

Whenever a specific source is assigned to the Fourth Gospel, as has been suggested here, there are immediate implications for the three epistles bearing John's name. The earliest traditions manifestly affirm the canonicity and apostolic authorship of these epistles, although there were some questions regarding 1 and 2 John.

As for the text itself, there are several indications to suggest authorship. (1) He appears to have been an eyewitness (1 John 1:1-3). (2) The Epistles bear the mark of authority (the much repeated expression "little children," cf. also 1 John 2:18; 4:1-3, 6; 2 John 1, 5, 6, 9, 10; 3 John 4, 9, 10). (3) The author speaks of himself as "the Elder." It is quite probable Papias' words relayed through Eusebius, detail only that the Apostle John was also known as "the Elder" due to his advanced age. If this is so, it would clear up a great deal of confusion and harmonize many otherwise contradictory statements.

Thus, it seems appropriate, given the stated conviction, regarding the authorship of the Gospel to include the Epistles in this discussion.

It is also important to observe, before concluding this chapter that John's purpose in the Epistles is not unlike his purpose in the Gospel, although his intended audience for each is distinct. 1 John 5:13 is very reminiscent of the Fourth Gospel (John 20:31). "These things I have written to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life" (cf. also 5:20). As he proposed to generate faith in the readers of the Gospel, his goal in the first Epistle is to perpetuate that same faith. It is also significant that while his audience is now clearly Christian and probably more pagan in its heritage, John no longer needs to stress Jesus' precise relation-
ship to Israel. In the Gospel it was the "Son of God the king of Israel." (John 1:49). Now it is the "Son Jesus Christ. . . the true God." (1 John 5:20). His Christology is still very much intact whether he seeks to cause faith to awaken or to abound.

This stated purpose of 1 John is also evident in the second and third epistles.

**Summary**

In this chapter the case for the Apostolic authorship of the Gospel and Epistles of John has been briefly traced. It has also been shown that John's supreme intent in writing is christological and that in his apologetic treatise to unbelieving Israel he lays down the essential planks of Jesus' pre-existence, His incarnation, His humanity, His deity, and the unity of His person.

These profound insights were to occupy the greatest theological minds that the next four centuries would produce in the young Church.
Notes


2 All Scripture quotations are taken from The New American Standard Bible.

3 For those who reject the view that the writer was an eyewitness, it is generally considered that this passage and 21:24, 25 are redactions and refer to the general knowledge of the Christian community. See Charles H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles, p. 12; Charles Kingsley Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, pp. 119, 138.

4 While in the past much has been made of the uniqueness of John to question its historicity, it is more likely that John's innovations are more an evidence for than against apostolic authorship, D. Guthrie, p. 225.


7 1:28 (comp. 12:1); 2:1; 3:23; 4:5, 21; 5:2; 9:7; 11:54; 18:1. Many, such as C. K. Barrett, pp. 102-4 and C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition is the Fourth Gospel, pp. 243f, tend to discount this as evidential since it merely points to a reasonably accurate source. However, a closer examination of their arguments reveals a bias in favor of a methodology originally developed by Johannes Weiss, Julius Wellhausen, Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Debelius and first popularized in English by Fredrick C. Grant, Form Criticism and Vincent Taylor, The Formation of the Gospel Tradition. If one does not reject, from the beginning, the Apostolic authorship of this gospel, he will surely not be led to it by the internal evidence.

8 Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. 3. 1. 2. cited in Eusebius, HE 5. 8. 4.

9 HE 5. 24. 2.

10 Bernard Lohse, Die Passa - Homilie Des Bishop Militon Von Sardes, p. 26. Note Barrett, p. 94. "There can be no doubt, that Melito was familiar with gospel material peculiar to John. He alludes to the raising of a man four days dead (Homily 78: of John 11:39-44)."
In a description of the crucifixion in Homily 95 he uses the word τύλος (John 19:19 and in no other canonical gospel), and, still more important, says that Jesus υφσε ηται εις τη ξυλον ζυμανον; on John's characteristic use of υφσεν see . . . 3:14. Most significant of all is the recurrence of Johannine theological themes, especially that of the Paschal lamb. Homily 7 brings together this and other themes: . . .

11 R. M. Grant, "The Fourth Gospel and the Church," Harvard Theological Review, 35(1942):104, employs this to show that the Fourth Gospel was considered the Gospel of John.

12 The assumption, commonly made, is that the only sources available to Eusebius were those specifically mentioned. See, for example, Kummel, p. 173. The problem with this assumption is that it is based on silence and presumes upon the integrity of Eusebius' scholarship. See James Drummond, An Inquiry into the Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel, p. 348.

13 Eus. HE 3. 39. 3-5. Here Eusebius, in the much disputed text quotes Papias: "I was accustomed to inquire about the sayings of the presbyters, what Andrew or what Peter had said (ξηνα) or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples; and what Aristion and the presbyter John the disciples of the Lord, say (ληγοντων)." Barrett, p. 88-90, argues that there are three groups indicated (Apostles, other disciples, and the Elders); the apostles (among them, John) are dead, the elders (including a "John") are still speaking, hence contemporary with Papias. An unbiased exegesis of the text will admit only (1) that the text is very ambiguous; (2) that Papias was accustomed to inquire of any of the elders or disciples who might have had first or second hand contact with the Lord.

14 This is generally supported by the prophesy in Mark 10:39, (which is rendered ex eventu, hence a fact of known history) and several 5th and 6th century allusions to hear-say reports that John was martyred early. Barrett, p. 87, who would like to establish proof for an early martyrdom for John freely admits that hard evidence to support it is non-existent.

15 Guthrie, p. 259. These conclusions may be summarized as follows: the Gnostic language of the discourses, the reluctance of the early church to quickly accept the Gospel, John's dependence on Mark, supposed contradictions with the Synoptics, the fact that John is never mentioned in the Gospel, and the suggestion that the lofty language of John does not square with Acts 4:13. cf. Kummel, pp. 154-61, 174. For an analysis of these and other ideas see Leon Morris, Studies in the Fourth Gospel, pp. 215-92.


17 Brown, 2 vols., I:1xxxviii-xcii.

18 That is not to say that many noble, but unconvincing attempts have been made to demonstrate a literary dependency. See Barrett, p. 14,
but also Morris, pp. 15-38.

19 Morris, p. 78. This is certainly one of the positive contributions Bultmannians have made to biblical studies. While their bifurcation of the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history is a false one, their assertion that the N.T. contains essentially theological documents instead of historical documents is correct.

20 The most recent editions prefer the aorist subjunctive \( \pi \lambda \omega t \varepsilon \gamma \omega n t e \), no doubt from internal evidence, even though the Siniaticus, Vaticanas, and Koridethi Codices support the present tense. See also Dodd, Interpretation, p. 9 and Barrett, p. 479. While the aorist is more compatible with an evangelistic purpose, some like R. C. H. Lenski, argue for a Christian audience anyway. See The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel, p. 7.


25 W. G. Kummel, p. 175.

26 Note Floyd V. Filson, "A New Papyrus Manuscript of the Gospel of John," The Biblical Archaeologist, 20(1957):54-63; also discussions in Dodd, Traditions, p. 328 and Barrett, p. 92. Both of these fragments indicate that John’s Gospel was circulated as far as Egypt in the first quarter of the second century.

27 Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. 2. 22. 5, 3. 3. 4. Cited in Eusebius, HE. 3. 23. 3-5.

28 Ibid.


30 While few authors are likely to suggest a specific date with any degree of certainty, T. C. Smith, Jesus in the Gospel of John, pp. 22-56 provides one of the most convincing arguments from internal
evidences for the later date. It is this writer's opinion that he is probably correct.

31 Ibid., pp. 22-36.

32 Irenaeus (De Haer. 3. 16. 5. 8.); Clement of Alexandria. Strom. 2. 15. 66, 3. 4. 32, 3. 5. 42. 44, 4. 16. 100 and Tertullian (Adv. Marcion 2. 16, Adv. Prax. 28, Adv. Gnost. 12) along with Origen and Dionysius all frequently use the first Epistle and relate it to the author of the Fourth Gospel. Likewise there is a strong tradition for the Apostolic authorship of the other two Epistles. See Clement of Alexandria (Strom. 2. 15. 66.), Origen (In Joann. 5. 3.), Eusebius (HE 6. 25.), Gionysius (Eusebius, HE 7. 25.).

33 Probably generated by Papias' ambiguous statement about "the Elder," (Eusebius, HE 3. 39. 4.). Cf. also Eusebius, HE 3. 25. 3. and Jerome (De Vir 3. 11. 18.).

34 However, see Dodd, The Johannine Epistles, pp. 2-3 who asserts that the neuter pronouns in the passage must refer to the content of the message, not to the person of Christ Himself. There is much to be said for this objection. However, this does not nullify the force of the author's claim since the uniqueness of his authority to speak is underscored in the words, "What we have seen and heard, we proclaim to you also;" (1 John 1:3).

35 Even if the Apostolic authorship is denied, it would still be appropriate to include the Epistles because of numerous similarities which point to a common source. See, esp. Guthrie, pp. 877-83.
CHAPTER II

THE STATES OF CHRIST

John's insights are always profound. It is not possible to approach Johannine literature casually. To the observer his ideas are bold, crisp, and well-defined. But, be not deceived, on the surface one only sees a fraction of the whole.

One of the most amazing of John's affirmations respecting the Person of Christ is that He is declared to have been "sent into the world." Matthew begins with His genealogy, Mark with His baptism, Luke with His unusual birth. But John takes the reader back in time to the "beginning." But, what beginning? He does not say. It is anarthrous "In (any) beginning." It is curious, indeed. What manner of man is this who "comes into" the world "from" a prior state of existence?

In this chapter the term states is used to describe that in John which contemplates the general context of Christ's personal existence.¹ They are (1) His pre-incarnate, glorified state, (2) His incarnate, kenotic state, (3) His incarnate, glorified state.

The Pre-Incarnate, Glorified State

John begins with pre-existence, and so it is placed here in this study. Two features predominate in coming to terms with its significance. First, there is the fact of Jesus' pre-existence. This is easily established by direct claims, indirect assertions and authoritative testimony. The second feature is more complex and relates to
the nature of Christ's pre-existence. Few question that John teaches pre-existence, but what he "meant" by that is quite another matter. Here it will be necessary to analyze two titles which John utilizes: the "logos," and "only-begotten." In order to unravel the precise meaning of these appellations in John, all possible antecedents and first-century influences will need to be surfaced.

The Fact of Pre-existence

To speak of a pre-incarnate state of Christ is to speak of a state of existence prior to His human birth. The concept of Christ's pre-existence is certainly not a Johannine novelty. Although more oblique, there are references in the Synoptics which imply or affirm pre-existence (cf. Matt. 11:3; Mark 12:6; Luke 7:19). Likewise throughout Pauline writings this doctrine receives strong emphasis (note especially 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:5-7; Col. 1:15-20; Eph. 1:10, 14).

But the concept is nowhere more fully expostulated than in the fourth evangelist. Throughout the Gospel, even when he is developing other themes, there is the background thought of Jesus sharing a unique relationship with the Father from eternity. In the Prologue Christ is depicted as eternally existent with God (1:1, 2). When the world was called into being He was there, identical in essence with God ("the Word was God"), yet personally distinct ("the Word was with God"). It is impossible to miss the connection between John 1:12; 1 John 1:1-3, and Genesis 1:1. He is spoken of as having descended "from above" (3:21, 31) because He "was" from above (8:23). He co-existed with the Father "before Abraham" (8:58) and recalled His former glorious relationship in Heaven before the world was framed (17:5, 24). T. E. Pollard has summarized well the numerous expressions in John suggesting pre-existence.
The pre-existence of the Logos with God 'in the beginning' is emphatically stated in the opening words of the Gospel (1.1-2). The pre-existence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is explicitly asserted in the Gospel itself (1.15, 30; viii.58; xvii.5, 24); it is also implicit in the many references to his 'having come' (v.43; vi.14; vii.28; ix.39; x.10; x.27; xii.46; xv.22; xvii.37), 'being from God' (vi.46; vii.29; ix.33; xvi.27, 28; xvii.8), 'having been sent' (iii.17, 34; iv.34; v.23, 24, 30, 36, 37; vi.29, 38, 39, 40, 44, 57; vii.16, 18, 29; viii.8, 16, 18, 26, 29, 42; ix.4; x.36; xi.42; xii.44, 45, 49; xiii.20; xiv.24; xv.21; xvi.5; xvii.3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; xx.21).

The Nature of Pre-Existence

It would be presumptuous to suggest that John gives a full outline of Nicean trinitarian theology. He does not. And, of course, it is not the purpose of this study to try to read into John any subsequent insights. However, Pollard's observations, regarding an earlier statement by F. C. Conybeare is well taken.

'If Athanasius had not had the Fourth Gospel to draw texts from, Arius would never have been confuted.' That is however only part of the truth, for it would also be true to say that if Arius had not had the Fourth Gospel to draw texts from, he would not have needed confuting.3

Pollard goes on to observe that it was "St. John that brought into sharpest focus the problems which created doctrinal controversy in the early church. . . ."4

The problems center on two ascriptions employed by John in relation to Christ's pre-incarnate state: Logos, and Only-begotten. Both of these will require careful scrutiny in order to bring John's thinking into focus.

The Logos

The title which was to become the springboard for much early Christological reflection (particularly among the apologists of the second and third centuries) was "Logos." As a Christological concept, the term occurs only in John (John 1:1-18; 1 John 1:1; and Rev. 19:13).5
This of course, is not to say that the idea expressed is not implied elsewhere. But that, of course, is precisely the question at hand. What does John mean by the use of the term? Why does he use it in the Prologue and never again in the Gospel? And, how does one relate this concept to other documents of the sacred text?

As a language symbol significant to John's usage, the idea goes back approximately seven centuries before the writing of the Gospel and Epistles which bear his name. Important also to this consideration is the fact that by the end of the first century the Logos idea had been widely circulated and significantly modified since its earliest beginnings. It is reasonable to suspect that as a christological term, the Johannine usage draws upon this rich background. It is also evident that John adds new insights to it. To fully understand why John is led to employ the Logos idea as he does and to appreciate his distinctive use of it, it is necessary to examine both its history and its peculiar employment in his writings.

Extra-biblical antecedents

Lexical considerations. The term \( \lambda \delta \gamma \omicron \varsigma \) carries with it a multiplicity of meanings. The noun fundamentally means "gathering," or "gleaning" in the critical sense. Figuratively, the term may signify "counting up" or "reckoning." As a mathematical term, it may denote "proportion," "relation," or "element." It also came to be used to speak of man's "reason," or his "ability to think."\(^6\)

In a philosophical sense the term originally conveyed the very simplest notion of "word." This is not an address or word of creative power (as for example \( \pi\nu\nu\nu\ ) in the O.T.), rather, it denotes "the causing of something to be seen for what it is, and the possibility of being
orientated thereby.\textsuperscript{7}

As the term sustained development, two aspects of its meaning came to be distinguishable: (1) \textit{λόγος} as "speech, word, utterance, revelation (not as something "proclaimed and heard," but "displayed, clarified, recognized, and understood"); (2) \textit{λόγος} as a metaphysical reality as employed in philosophy and theology.\textsuperscript{8}

It is presupposed as self-evident by the Greek that there is in things, in the world and its course, a primary \textit{λόγος}, an intelligible and recognizable law which then makes possible knowledge and understanding in the human \textit{λόγος}. But this is not taken to be something which is merely grasped theoretically. It claims a man. It determines his true life and conduct.\textsuperscript{9}

Development in the Greek world. In Heraclitus (and later in Aristotle) both of these ideas are still united, but as the term is used by Sophists, the unity is disrupted, with particular emphasis placed on \textit{λόγος} as the rational power in man; the power of speech and thought.\textsuperscript{10} It was this concept which was pursued by Socrates and Plato to its logical end and linked to "being" in order to establish a basis for their politics. Here the \textit{λόγος} becomes the "basic fact in all life and society. . . . Just as there is a kind of pre-existent harmony between the \textit{λόγος} of the thinking soul and the \textit{λόγος} of things.\textsuperscript{11}

Thought, word, matter, nature, being and norm . . . are all brought into a comprehensive interrelation in the \textit{λόγος} concept. Thus Plato in Crito, 46 b/d can say of the \textit{λόγος} of Socrates that they were not just \textit{λόγοι} ἐνεκα λόγου, a mere speaking, nor were they παλαιά and φαναρία (46b), but they were essence and deed, since they stood up even in face of death.\textsuperscript{12}

Hellenistic development. "In Stoicism, \textit{λόγος} is a term for the ordered and teleologically orientated nature of the world . . . (as such it is) equated with God."\textsuperscript{13}

In association with Zeus it becomes the principle by which the world is created, ordered and sustained. It is that power which extends
immanently in all things. Man partakes of this power as a rational being. As such he shares in the λόγος. "An extension of content significant for later development is to be found in the equation of λόγος with φύσις... as a creative power."  

In dialogue with Stoicism neo-platonism stressed the λόγος as "a shaping power which lends form and life to things..." In many instances this was expressed in terms very much akin to John's Prologue.

The religious significance of λόγος was greatly enhanced in the Hellenistic mysteries. Here it was used to speak of "Holy and mysterious doctrine, revelation and sacred history." This religious sense is not found in the secular Greek usage. It is this religious sense which also finds expression in the Hermetic literature. There the Logos is the active expression of God and even spoken of as God's "son." The λόγος is the intermediary contact between God and matter, and God and man. It is that which brings order out of chaos.

The Logos of Philo. Older than John by a little more than a generation is the Jewish philosopher, Philo. Committed to the authority of the Old Testament and enamored by the speculations of Greek philosophy, Philo attempted a synthesis of the two. This resulted in an often confusing, and always unique approach to both. He allegorized the Old Testament in order to accommodate the Greek idea he desired to employ. Then often he did little more than adopt Greek terms, imbuing them with Jewish content to suit his needs. What is important here is Philo's very non-Greek conception of the Logos.

Two aspects are clearly non-Greek. The first is the linguistic form with a genitive or adjective (Θεοῦ or Θεοσ). The second is the fact that he frequently employs the term personally. Philo adopted
the Greek idea of the transcendence of God. In order to account for
God's immanence it became necessary to adopt the Logos as a mediator
between God and His creation. In Philo, the Logos is a god, but of the
second rank. Thus, it is a high-priest and Mediator. Often he employs
metaphors that denote a father-son relationship.

C. H. Dodd considers the relationship between John's Prologue
and Philo "remarkable" and suggests close "affinity" if not depen-
dence. Kummel's criticism of Dodd is, no doubt, valid since there
were many common influences in the period to be reflected in both
writers. There is no reason to suppose that John did not employ the
linguistic currency of his day. On the contrary, since his treatise is
written for evangelistic purposes, there is every reason to presuppose
that he did.

Old Testament antecedents

In analyzing the Logos in Greek and Hellenistic literature, it
is not difficult to understand why critics were, for some time, drawn
to seek an explanation for John's Prologue in that world of ideas. How-
ever, in recent years the search has taken a new turn.

Today there is an ever-increasing tendency to seek for the seeds
of the Johannine Logos in the Old Testament and Palestinian Judaism.
The comment of W. F. Howard is typical: "The overwhelmingly Jewish tone
and setting of the Gospel reminds us that the Evangelist uses the term
in a way that accords with Jewish ideas." There are four concepts which surface in this discussion: (a) the creative word, (b) Law, (c) wisdom, and (d) Memra.

The creative word. It is difficult not to associate the
opening of John's Prologue with the opening of Genesis 1: 'In the
beginning God created the heavens and earth. . .and God said. . .and God said. . .(Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, etc.). In similar fashion, John starts "in the beginning" and proceeds to expound "the Word" of God.

The parallel ideas of creation, light, and life are all quite visible. Hence, it is argued, the connection is intentional, and the roots of John's Logos are to be found in Hebrew thought, rather than Greek.

In the Old Testament this creative word is expressed in the term יִדְרָךְ, "word," which was used to signify the "divine" as well as the "spoken" word. In the Old Testament it is used in a variety of ways to signify (1) "speech or discourse;" (2) a "matter, or event." In the first category it is used of God as well as men. In association with God it is used some 394 times to denote a "divine communication in the form of commandments, prophecy, and words of help to his people. . .
Gen. 15:1, 4; Ex. 16:16, 32; 19:7; Dt. 6:8."29

For theological evaluation it is important to understand that יִדְרָךְ is not simply a sound uttered to express meaning. Analysis of the term must distinguish between two main aspects: the "dianoetic" element and the "dynamic" element. In the former category יִדְרָךְ is always a "thought." It conveys "the meaning" of a thing. Thus, יִדְרָכִי always belongs to the field of knowledge. To perceive the יִדְרָךְ is to perceive the thing itself. In other words, its essential nature becomes transparent. But along with this is the dynamic element which, even though it is not always prominent, is always present. Every יִדְרָךְ is "filled with power which can be manifested in the most diverse energies."30

For the Hebrews, these two elements are most forcefully displayed in the Word of God, which brings to light the will and law of God, and
possesses an objective power which is present independent of its reception.  

Only in the Hebrew "יְהֹוָה" is the material concept with its energy felt so vitally in the verbal concept that the Word appears as a material force which is always present and at work, which runs and has the power to make alive. . . Gen 15:1; 22:1. . . From. . . examples it may be seen that the LXX concept cannot be wholly explained in terms of the Greek λόγος or ρήμα but can be fully understood only against the background of the Hebrew "יְהֹוָה".  

Thus, for the Hebrew, the "יְהֹוָה" is active and powerful whether it is applied to God, (Ps. 33:6, 7, 9) or to man.  

In prophetic literature the "Word of God," is formed in the mouth of the prophet, with power to effect what it announces. "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, To pluck up and to break down, To destroy and to overthrow, To build and to plant," (Jer. 1:9, 10). 

This is linked to the Old Testament concept of inspiration.  

Adolphe Lods observes:  

They think of themselves as grasped by the hand of Jahweh (Is. viii, 11), on terms of the closest intimacy with him (Amos iii, 7, 8; Jer. xxiii, 18, 22), filled with his spirit (Is. xxxvii, 1; xii, 1, etc.). "Thou hast deceived me," says Jeremiah to his God; 'Thou art stronger than I and hast prevailed' (xx, 7). The words which they speak are not their own: They accompany them with the formula 'Then saith Jahweh' or 'the Word of Jahweh.' When they speak in the first person, it is a matter of indifference to them whether they use their own name or that of Jahweh."  

"The Word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision" (Gen. 15:1). Moses declares, "I was standing between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the Word of the Lord," (Deut. 5:5). Repeatedly, this idea is reinforced in the Old Testament prophetic literature (See Isa. 2:3; Jon. 1:1; 3:1; Mic. 1:1, etc.). 

Sometimes the prophets are known to "act out" their prophecies (Jer. 27:1-22; Isa. 2:1-6). In these instances the acts were, themselves,
prophecies, and there is no distinction made between the "word" and the "deed." 

When applying the concept to the Johannine Logos, the thought is as follows: The יずっと is the agent of creation in Genesis 1. The Logos is the Mediator of creation in John 1. This Logos John equates with Christ, who is the Word of God, the Mediator and Sustainer of creation.

So in the Johannine understanding of the Logos and traditions of the earlier Logos theology and the later Christology meet... It is understandable that from now on this great idea should dominate the Christian conception of creation, and even more determine the Christian understanding of God's creative and reigning power.

After surveying other concepts in John's Gospel which appear to have Old Testament roots Richard Morgan observes: "There can be little doubt that the Hebrew concept of word as deed plays a major role in understanding the meaning of the Logos." He goes on to say, "So Jesus is God's final Word to man, a word not merely spoken through the lips of prophets, ... but ... which became flesh and dwelt among us."

The concept of Law. The first enunciation of the Ten Commandments are introduced by the words: "When God spoke (יずっと) all these words (םיחודש), saying" (Exod. 20:1). Likewise in 34:27 the Lord instructs Moses: "Write down these words (םיחודש), for in accordance with these words (םיחודש) I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." In 34:28 it is said that Moses "wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments (םיחודש)."

Kyle observes: "The Hebrew word debar, plural, 'words,' is another general term used in the Pentateuch to denote laws." Dodd also notes:

In considering the question, it is well to bear in mind that this term (םיחודש) is largely interchangeable with החרה; cf. Is. ii.3 (Mic. iv.2), where the two terms, in the LXX ותנשא
and λόγος κυρίου, are in parallelism. Thus the 'word' of God can always be conceived as having a permanent, concrete embodiment in the Torah.

Another important consideration here is the relationship between wisdom of God and the Torah (Deut. 4:6; Ecclus. 24:3, 8, 23). It is not unusual to find references in Rabbinic Judaism which depict a kind of "incarnation" of the Word of God in the Torah (Ecclus. 24:23).

Dodd, who nonetheless argues for a Hellenistic source for the Fourth Gospel, admits that the author had considerable knowledge of the Torah. He goes on to document numerous instances where the writer appears to be answering to contemporary ideas about the Torah by demonstrating how they are fulfilled or superceded in Jesus Christ.

He notes, first, that the evangelist "draws an explicit contrast between Christianity and the Torah." In John 1:17 "grace and truth" answer to ἀλήθεια καὶ δόξα. "That these attributes of God were revealed in the Torah was the assumption of the Jewish religion. Cf. Midr. Ps. on Ps. xxv. 10, 'all thy ways are ἀλήθεια καὶ δόξα.' 'Grace: that means God's acts of love; truth: that means the Torah.' However, in the Fourth Gospel, it is Jesus Christ who holds the true revelation of God's grace and truth.

In 5:39, when John records Jesus' words: "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life." The term ἐραυνάω was a technical expression in rabbinic literature to denote the intensive study of the Torah ("e.g. Pirge Aboth vii. 6, 'Torah... gives to them that practice it life in this age and in the age to come.'"). John makes it clear that life does not come through the words of the Torah, but through the words of Jesus (John 6:63).

There are also numerous symbolic contrasts drawn between the
Torah and the incarnate Word. For example "In Talmud and Midrash the Torah is constantly compared to water." John, on the other hand, contrasts the well of Jacob to the living water (4:12-14), and the water "for purification" according to the Jewish custom is contrasted with the "good wine," which resulted when Jesus "manifested His glory" at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11). It is significant, as well, that the vine is also used as a symbol for Torah. In Exod. R. 25:7, the words of Proverbs 9:5 are interpreted:

II
III

Again, while "manna," per se is not used, the symbol of "bread" is very often employed denoting the Torah. John records: "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of Heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread out of Heaven . . . I am the bread of life. . ." (John 6:32-35).

Likewise, the symbol of light is one that was used to depict the Law. In similar fashion John declares Jesus to be "the light of the world," (John 8:12).

Finally, it is apparent that many of the statements regarding the Logos in the Prologue have direct counterparts in rabbinic literature. Dodd traces this back to the great Praise of Wisdom in Sirach 24. "With this passage in view, we are justified in concluding that the doctrine of Torah as the pre-existent thought of God revealed in time, which we find in Talmud and Midrash, is by no means a late creation." The pre-existence of the Logos, the prior existence of the Logos with God, the Logos as an agent of creation, the Logos as light and life, the Logos as having power to make men "sons of God,"
all find earlier expression with reference to Torah. W. F. Howard has summarized this evidence as follows:

The following points deserve attention. Corresponding to the words 'In the beginning,' pre-existence is ascribed to the Torah. Thus 'seven things were created; namely, the Torah, Repentance, the Garden of Eden, Gehenna, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, the name of Messiah.' 'The Logos was with God.' Compare with this: (The Torah) 'lay on God's bosom while he sat on the throne of the glory.' 'The Logos was divine.' So we read: 'My daughter, she is the Torah.' 'All things were made through him.' Note the parallel: 'The words of the Torah are life for the world.' 'And life was the light of man.' So in 2 (4) Esdras, iv. 21: 'for the world is set in darkness, and they that dwell therein are without light, for thy Torah is burned, therefore no man knoweth the things that are done of thee, or the works that shall be done.' 'Full of truth.' In the Midrash on the Psalms we find: 'Truth: by this the Torah is meant.'

To this may be added the passage from Pirge Aboth, iii, 19.

Beloved are Israel, that they are called sons of God . . . Beloved are Israel, in that to them was given the precious instrument wherewith the world was created . . . , as it is said, 'For a good doctrine I have given you; forsake not my Torah.'

Thus Dodd concludes: "The evangelist therefore writes all through with the intention of exhibiting the revelation in Christ as offering in reality that which Judaism meant to offer, but failed to provide--a genuine knowledge of God conveying life to men . . ." Several factors enter in at this point to suggest caution. First, it is important to note that while a familiarity with rabbinic literature is suggested in John, there is certainly no place in rabbinic Judaism to account for the Logos of John who is also the Son who returned to the Father. Kirn's objections are also well-taken:

. . . In these cases the spirituality and omnipotence of God are the fundamental thoughts, and the proclamation of his unconditional unity leaves no place for a personal principle besides himself as the mediator of his activity in the world. Moreover, wherever on purely Hebraic soil in later times the idea of a creative intermediate cause appears, it is connected with the name not of the Word but of Wisdom (Prov. 8:22-31; Ecclus. 24).

Personified Wisdom. In Proverbs 8:22-31 the writer says of
Wisdom: "When He (God) marked out the foundations of the earth; then I was beside Him, as a master-workman (Prov. 8:29, 30). Probably the most developed expression of personified Wisdom is in the Wisdom of Solomon 7:22-9:18. There, some twenty-one qualities are presented among which Wisdom is depicted as an emanation from God, a reflection of eternal light, the fashioner of all things. Here also there is an association made between the "word" and "wisdom" (9:1-2; 16:12; 18:15).56

In the Old Testament נ 넘 is employed in a variety of ways. It may denote "technical skill" or "aptitude" (1 Kings 7:14); "experience" or "good sense" (2 Sam. 20:22); "worldly wisdom" (1 Kings 5:10); "godly wisdom" (Ps. 90:12); "God's wisdom" (1 Kings 3:28); or "personified Wisdom" (Job 28:12ff; Prov. 8:1-36).57

As personified Wisdom, נ 넘, has a part in creation, is begotten of God and has pre-existence in God. As such נ 넘 is the master-workman who resides at the side of God from everlasting, and from whom God receives daily delight. This conception in the Wisdom literature represents the semi-hypostatized or personified thought of God. It becomes the medium of creation and revelation.

Naturally, from these ideas many striking parallels may be drawn to John's Prologue.58 C. H. Dodd observes: "...in composing the Prologue the author's mind was moving along lines similar to those followed by Jewish writers of the 'Wisdom' school."59

When the Creator of all things gave me a commandment, and the one who created me assigned a place for my tent. And he said, 'Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance.'60

This "tabernacle" metaphor certainly derives from Exodus 40
where the glory of Jehovah came in a cloud, covering the tent of meeting. In Leviticus 20:11, 12 the Lord says: "Moreover, I will make My dwelling (lit. "tabernacle") among you . . . I will also walk among you and be your God." In this connection, one cannot help but notice the curious expression of John 1:14: "the Word became flesh, and dwelt (σκευοδύν, "tabernacled") among us, and we beheld his glory." A promise which the Wisdom writers found fulfilled in the tabernacling wisdom of God and which the rabbis took to mean the Torah, the glory of Israel, John seems to relate to the incarnate Christ.

However, while there are many striking similarities to be observed between the λόγος and wisdom, several factors should be noted. "In Judaism, Wisdom was personified and hypostatized, but never apotheosized." While Wisdom could be regarded in Judaism as a mediating principle, their rigid monotheism could never allow it to be assigned an independent personality. It should also be noted, with Ladd, that "wisdom is never called the word of God, even though she came forth from the mouth of the Most High (Sir. 24:3), and wisdom is placed in parallelism to the word in the Wisdom of Solomon (9:1, 2)."

Memra. C. F. Burney, at the turn of the century, set out to establish the Aramaic origins of the Fourth Gospel. In 1922 he published a book by that name which remains one of the most comprehensive presentations of that theory. Part of his argument hinges on what he cites as Aramaic influences on the Logos of John's Prologue. Here he presents the following:

... the λόγος conception of the Prologue must undoubtedly be derived from the third and most frequent Targumic conception representing God in manifestation; that of the word of the Lord.' We should no doubt trace the origin of the conception of the Memra, Memra to O.T. passages in which "word" is employed in a connexion which almost suggests hypostatization,
e. g. Ps. 107.20, 'He sent forth His Word and healed them; Is. 33.7, 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made.' The latter passage, with its reference to the Word's action in creation, recalls the repeated דָּבָר, 'And God said' in Gen. 1, where the Hebrew verb דָּבָר is identical with the Aramaic root from which Memra is derived. Memra occurs repeatedly in the Targums in passages where the Hebrew represents God as speaking, acting, or manifesting Himself in a manner which seemed too anthropomorphic to Jewish thought of later times.64

Burney goes on to support his theory from passages such as Genesis 3:8, 10; 6:6, 7; 8:21, and 9:12, where the term Memra is inserted in the Targums (for example: in Gen. 3:8 the text reads: "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking . . ." In the Targums it reads "And they heard the voice of the Memra of the Lord God walking . . .").65

However, the main problem with Burney's theory is that he has misread the Targums. The Memra was little more than a circumlocution for the scrupulous Jew who was reluctant to speak God's name, especially in anthropomorphic passages.66

Burney's argument simply does not stand up under careful examination. John's Logos concept clearly represents a designation of the personal incarnate Christ. This cannot be said for the Memra concept. Barrett observes, "Memra is a blind alley in the study of the biblical background of John's logos concept."67 There is no hint of a concrete hypostasis of the Godhead or of a being mediate between Him and the world in the Aramaic Memra.

New Testament antecedent

Pauline antecedents. With all the attention given to antecedents outside the context of the New Testament, it is not surprising that eventually there would be efforts to relate Johannine dependence to one or another of the New Testament writers. C. K. Barrett is especially enamored with the idea of a Pauline dependence. In fact,
it is his contention that both John and Paul build upon the foundation of the Old Testament doctrine of God. However, John is considered to have added to Paul rather than to have developed his Logos concept independently from the Old Testament. To this Benjamin W. Brown agrees, but inclines more toward Judaism than the Old Testament per se:

The roots of the Johannine Logos doctrine run back by way of Hebrews and more especially by way of the great Pauline Epistles of the second period, Colossians, Ephesians. to the common ancestor, the Wisdom of Solomon. We have said, "All of the Logos doctrine but the name is already present in the Pauline Epistles. We might say with almost equal truth, the whole Christology of John."

There are a number of parallels which may be cited between Pauline and Johannine Christology, particularly as it relates to the Logos concept. In 1 Corinthians 1:24 Christ is depicted as "the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 Corinthians 8:6 reads very much like the opening of John's Prologue: "...there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things...and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we exist through Him." Colossians 1:15-19, the locus classicus of Pauline Christology reads: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth...And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together..." For Paul, the preaching of the "Word (Logos) of God is tantamount to preaching Christ (Col. 1:25-28; 3:16; 4:3; Eph. 3:17; Gal. 6:6; see also Rom. 1:9, 15, 16; 1 Cor. 4:15; 2 Cor. 2:12, 17; 4:1-6).

Given these examples it is not difficult to understand how the first pastor of the Ephesian church, whose works were certainly extant, may have provided the suggestive factors which stimulated John's Logos Christology. However, Dodd's caution is cogent:
That the evangelist has not escaped the powerful influence of the first great Christian theologian, ..., is probable enough. But the actual range of Pauline influence upon Johannine thought has been exaggerated. Those who tie John down too closely to the Pauline tradition are inclined to undervalue his distinctive contribution to ... early Christianity.70

Furthermore, this assumption is built on the idea that early Christian doctrine developed in a continuum from Paul, through Hebrews, to John. This hypothesis has yet to be proven. It is much safer to say, with Guthrie, "that several co-lateral streams, of which Paul, Hebrews and John represent contemporary manifestation, developed at an early stage."71

Other New Testament antecedents. As with Paul, John's Christological concepts are often traced to other New Testament documents, particularly Hebrews, James, the Synoptics and Acts. In the Prologue to the Hebrews, for example, the author depicts Christ as the final word of God. "God...in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:1-3). Here are all the essential elements of John's opening sentence: the creation, glory, power, equality and pre-existence with God. In Hebrews 4:12, "The word (λόγος) of God is living and active. ..." But, notice the next verse, "And there is no creature hidden from His sight. ..." The antecedent of αὐτοῦ is ambiguous, but may very well be the λόγος of verse 12. Furthermore, its proximity to "Jesus, the Son of God," in verse 14, who is also depicted as a "high-priest, tempted in all things," and the dispenser of "grace," (4:14-16) is very suggestive of Johannine conceptions detailed in the Prologue to his Gospel.72

In James 1:18 it is said that "He brought us forth by the word
of truth . . ." Here the thought is very much akin to 1 Peter 1:23: "for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but im-
perishable, that is, through the living and abiding word (\( \lambda \delta \gamma \omicron \omicron \) of God." While the thought expressed may be related to John, it is clear that what is signified by James and Peter is the word of the gospel (cf. also 1 Pet. 1:25), it is the word "which was preached."

This usage is also common in the Synoptics and Acts (cf. Mark 4:14, 33; Luke 5:1; Acts 10:36, et al.) where \( \lambda \delta \gamma \omicron \omicron \) is used to signify the preached word, or the substance of apostolic teaching.73 Probably a more significant parallel is the manner in which Luke expresses himself in the opening verses of his Gospel. He notes: "those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word . . ." Mark speaks of "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, . . ." (Mark 1:1). In both cases "beginning" is related to the lifetime of Jesus of Nazareth. But in Luke the further association is made to the "Word." Some, like J. Ramsey Michaels, are inclined to conclude, from this, that John's usage is often the same.74 However, it is clear that the "beginning" as it is associated with the Logos of John's Prologue is intended to convey a far more expansive idea than that of Luke or Mark.

Another important concept in the Synoptics is that which relates Christ to the Old Testament Law (Torah). He spoke with authority, not like the scribal interpreters of the Old Torah (Mark 1:22, 27). He refers to the Law as "The Word (\( \lambda \delta \gamma \omicron \omicron \) of God" (Mark 7:13). This is also reflected in Matthew's Gospel,75 especially in Chapter five where Jesus' teachings are taken as a refinement of Moses' Law.

Significance in John

Outside the Prologue. Analyzing John's usage of \( \lambda \delta \gamma \omicron \omicron \) outside
the Prologue reveals immediately that with the exception of 1 John 1:1-3 and Revelation 19:13, John does not again identify the λόγος directly with Christ. Sometimes it is used synonymously with ἰδιωτα. Sometimes it is used for a "saying" or "discourse." Ordinarily, it is used to signify the word which is spoken and heard to signify meaning or rational content. Occasionally it is used to signify the Word of God (viz. the Old Testament) as distinct from the person of Christ (John 5:38; 10:35; 17:14, 17).

Within the Prologue. Speculation here is nearly as broad as the background of the term. Some relate the significance of the Logos concept in John's Prologue simply to the fact that it conveys a fairly universal idea of the pre-existent and absolute thought of God. For example, Otto Kirn writes:

When John identifies the person of Jesus Christ with the Logos, his purpose is to express in a universal way, comprehensible without as well as within the limits of Israel, that Jesus is set over the world, in union with God as the eternal mediator of creative and redeeming will, and that therefore he is in his historical appearance the absolute and universal self-revelation of the Godhead, the exclusive conveyor of salvation. He does not so much as touch the metaphysical problems ... 76

Others, as has been noted, are inclined to link John's thought here with one or several of the extra-biblical or intra-biblical ideas. Generally the choice is largely determined on the basis of whether one views John as a Jewish, Hellenistic, Gnostic, or Christian document. C. H. Dodd rightly observes that the question does not simply revolve around the meaning of the Logos. Rather

... it is the question whether the proposition 'in the beginning was the Logos' belongs to a philosophy which gives primacy to the abstract thought or to one which gives primacy to active power, or whether, indeed the 'word' itself, as medium of communication, is after all an essential element in the author's meaning. That question cannot be decided either by the lexical meaning of the terms employed or by the elucidation of the propositions of which the
prologue is composed, in their proper interrelations. It receives an answer only when the student has made up his mind about the purpose of the gospel as a whole. Thus in the study of this gospel, exegesis of the text, and interpretation in the wider sense, are interdependent to an unusual degree. 

Indeed, it appears that the essential idea behind John's employment of the Logos is so original that any search for background sources will surely "lead us astray." Whatever influences may have been present they are clearly controlled by the gospel writer. "There is no book, either in the New Testament or outside it, which is really like the Fourth Gospel." 

Given all of this then, what is the significance of the Johannine Logos? A full answer to this question must await a much larger treatise than the present one. Yet, of importance at this juncture is what is said of the pre-existence of Christ. The several facets of John's doctrine may be tabulated as follows.

(a) For John, the Logos is the title of pre-existence. Whatever else is suggested by the expression, it denotes a state of existence enjoyed by Jesus Christ prior to the moment when "the Word became flesh." This is indicated first, by the fact that "logos" in Greek, Hellenistic, and Hebraic thought universally conveys the idea of the pre-existent thought of God. Whether the conception is philosophical, spiritual, or personal; abstract or active, it denotes pre-existence. This assertion does not presuppose dependence on any or all of the background ideas. But it does understand that, as a language symbol, λόγος must certainly derive "meaning" from its history. In this instance, the predominant, although not exclusive, suggestion is that of pre-existence.

The pre-existence of Christ is no invention of John. It is indicated in 8:58 in Jesus' words: "Before Abraham was born, I AM."
(Compare Exod. 3:14, Deut. 32:39). It is also predicated in Jesus' prayer in 17:5: "glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with thee before the world was." The concept is also implicit throughout the New Testament (Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:15-17; et al.).

Second, pre-existence is indicated by the introduction of the Logos in the Prologue: "In the beginning was the Word." The anarthrous ἄρχη and the imperfect ἦν, provide a timelessness to the statement which, in John's mind, is resolved in eternity. While the expression is suggestive of Genesis 1, it goes beyond it. The Logos is not a part of creation but antedates it (cf. 1:3). This will be developed further under the discussion of Christ's deity in John.

(b) John's use of the Logos also denotes a prior relationship with God the Father, "the Word was with God." In classical Greek πρός with the accusative denotes 'in relation to,' and taken here would significantly limit the force of John's statement. It is better to render the expression in the light of other clear New Testament usage to mean "in the presence of" (cf. Mark 6:3; Matt. 13:46). It should be remembered that this was said of Wisdom (Prov. 8:30) and the Torah. John is certainly aware of these traditions and so he amplifies the statement with: "and the Word was God." By this John is asserting that the λόγος is not merely an attribute or extension of divine activity, but equal in essence with God. Thus, to say, as he does in this context, that the Word was "with" God is to say that he has individual existence. Later John will record that the Son of Man has "descended from heaven" and therefore is qualified, as no other prophet before Him to speak of "heavenly things" (John 3:12, 13).
Not only is presence indicated, but a relationship as well. G. H. C. Macgregor notes:

The word with...while emphasizing the communion of the Logos with God, yet safeguards the idea of his individual personality: it expresses nearness combined with the sense of movement towards God, and so indicates an active relationship. The Logos and God do not simply exist side by side, but are on terms of living intercourse, and such fellowship implies separate personality. 85

This force is further reinforced in 1:2, "He was in the beginning with God." "This is no mere repetition. The Word does not come to be with God; the Word is with God in the beginning." 86

John's Logos is used ontologically. 87 When John asserts "Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος," he elevates the Logos above any conception heretore contemplated. The absence of the article accomplishes two objectives. First, it places the stress on the "quality" of the Logos (viz. "the word was deity"). 88 The essential nature of the Logos is that of deity. Not even the semi-hypostatized Wisdom and Torah of the Old Testament and post-exilic Judaism could receive such a designation. Second, the anarthrous Θεὸς guards against any form of Christomonism or modalistic conception of the Godhead. John is not delimiting the parameters of Deity, but the essential nature of the Logos. This, among other things, is certainly an ontological statement. The author's intent is that the whole of the "gospel shall be read in light of this verse. The deeds and words of Jesus are deeds and words of God; if this is not true the book is blasphemous." 89

John's Logos denotes a unity and continuity between the pre-existent and the incarnate Christ. The Baptist testifies: "He existed before me." This is no contradiction of the Synoptic tradition that John the Baptist was born before Christ. It is, in fact, no less significant than Jesus' claim of existence "before Abraham" (8:58).
But then John goes on to assert that the λόγος came "into the world" (1:9), "became flesh" (1:14), and manifested "His glory" (1:14) in the display of "grace and truth...realized through Jesus Christ" (1:14, 17).

Here is no clumsy kenotic theory. The eternal, pre-existent Logos enters history by becoming "flesh" and dwelling "among us," in the person of Jesus Christ. This concept will be developed further below.

While it is certainly not in the form in which it was subsequently expressed, it is clear that John's Logos idea contains all the essential ingredients of the later christological debates. The Word was God and at the same time was with God. Cullmann observes: "We must allow this paradox of all Christology to stand. The New Testament does not resolve it, but sets the two statements alongside each other:..."90 This same idea is connected later with the Son of God concept, where John records Jesus' words: "I and the Father are one" (10:30), yet, on the other "The Father is greater than I" (14:28).

In light of the Jewish audience, to which John addresses his Gospel, it would seem that his intent in the employment of the "Logos" must derive, in part from their conception of it and, in part, from his own unique purpose.

John is not unique in depicting the self-revelation of God as receiving ultimate expression in Jesus Christ (cf. especially Heb. 1:1-3; 5-10). This is especially applied, by way of contrast, to the Law (Torah). The Torah was life in this age and the age to come; like water (Isa. 55:1), the Torah is life (Prov. 4:22) for the world. Again, the Torah was the bread (Prov. 9:5) which, like manna from Heaven, is given by God to sustain the world. The Torah was wine (Prov. 9:55). All
these ideas about the Law, John applies, in superior fashion, to Christ, the Logos. The Jews of the first century were a people of the "Book." Part of the reason they did not accept Christ was His lack of conformity to their pre-conceived ideas about the meaning of that Book. John sets out to show that this is due to the superiority of Christ to popular conceptions (and misconceptions) not an inability on His part to equal Scriptural standards.

It is true that the Logos concept, providentially, sustained a much more universal application than this. But, it must be remembered that John's "intent" was limited to reaching his Jewish kinsmen and convincing them of the truth of Jesus Christ.

In summary, the superiority of John's Logos is seen in two broad categories: authority and personality. The Logos of John is eternally pre-existent with God, distinct from Him, yet one with Him. As such he has both power and authority to speak. And when he speaks he "exegetes" the Father (1:18) in a manner unsurpassed in human history.

Thus, it may be said that while John is influenced by Logos concepts current in his day, his usage is clearly his own. He writes in a manner intelligible, as well as revealing, to his readers. It is important to see here that when John employs Logos in the Prologue, he is not equating it with the impersonal notions characteristic of Greek and even Hebrew usage. It is a term which contributes to his Gospel because it is pregnant with the idea of pre-existence, and in its association with duty, already says something about Christ which is true, albeit incomplete. But, as has been shown, John's usage surpasses anything that has gone on before in conveying the notion of distinct personal existence both before and in history.
Historically, \( \text{o} \) has been a central theme in any discussion of Christology, although the conclusions drawn have not always been the product of sound exegesis. Its usage may be traced from Hesiod throughout much of Greek literature in the normal sense of "sole descent." But it can also be used more generally without reference to derivation in the sense of "unique," "unparalleled," or "incomparable.

The word also has a rather broad application in the LXX, where it may signify "the only one" (Judg. 11:34); "desolate," "all alone," (Psa. 25:16; 68:6); "a priceless or irreplaceable possession" (Psa. 22:20; 35:17); or "preferred," "favored," "unique" (Gen. 22:2, 12, 16). In the LXX \( \text{o} \) is ordinarily used to translate \( \tau \). It is significant that the LXX also employs \( \text{ayannTos} \) to translate the Hebrew \( \text{rn} \) (Gen. 22:2, 12, 16; Jer. 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zech. 12:10) giving an altogether new dimension to the interpretive possibilities.

The New Testament employs \( \text{o} \) nine times. In Luke it always signifies an "only son or daughter" (Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38). In Hebrews 11:17 it is used to speak of Isaac in the same manner as the LXX, in Genesis. Only in John is the term of Christological significance, it occurs in the Gospel (1:14, 18; 3:16, 18) and in 1 John 4:9, always with reference to Christ. However, given the background of \( \text{o} \) it is not altogether clear what John is suggesting by it. It is due to this ambiguity that this term has been variously cited to refer to Jesus' virgin birth (Rice, Gromacki), Jesus as the Revealer of God (Bultmann, Sidebottom), Jesus' sacrificial and soteriological work (De Kruijf), or Jesus' eternal relation to the Father (Buchsel, Walvoord, and others).
Only-begotten refers to Jesus' virgin birth.

Gromacki asserts that the most acceptable view respecting the significance of μονογενής is that it refers to the incarnation of the Son of God. He supports this contention as follows. First, he understands Psalms 2:7 as the definitive passage on all references to the "begetting" of Christ. "The Lord said unto me, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (cf. Heb. 1:1; 5:5). In Luke 1:35, the Angel says to Mary: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring (γεννώμενον) shall be called the Son of God." Gromacki insists that the common etymology of "begotten" in Psalms 2:7 and "offspring" in Luke 1:35 proves they point to the same thing--the incarnation.

Gromacki then goes on to show that in Paul's sermon in Acts 13, the Apostle draws upon Psalms 2:7 to distinguish two senses in which Christ was "raised up." One is the resurrection (Acts 13:34-7), but the second is the unusual birth of Christ (as examples of this usage he cites Acts 7:18; 20:30; Rom. 9:17; Matt. 22:24). Two additional arguments which may be adduced to support Gromacki's view (although he does not mention them) are explained by Gerhard Vos. First, if the Prologue is taken chronologically, the appearance of μονογενής in 1:14 must not be considered accidental; it is argued that "a vital nexus exists between the point of introduction and the manner of introduction." The glory displayed as such by the μονογενής could not happen until the incarnation. "Before the incarnation the Son was simply Θεος, and as Θεος He shared in the invisibility pertaining to God as such (John 1:18)." In the second place,
supernatural human birth of Jesus because in close proximity the new birth...of believers is spoken of, and some analogy between this and the Monogenes birth seems to lie in the mind of the speaker or writer.\textsuperscript{104}

To these arguments it should be noted that while Gromacki's ideas are interesting they are far from compelling. His logic is \textit{a priori}; the examples he cites are not convincing, and the ground he affords to the radical bifurcation of the pre-existent Christ and the historical Jesus is too precious to concede. Regarding the first argument cited by Vos it clearly rests on a dubious exegesis of the Prologue. The first chapter is not necessarily chronological and even if it were, the placement of \textit{μονογενὴς} in the chapter does not demand a reference to the incarnation. Furthermore, it is doubtful that 1:14 is the first reference to the incarnation. C. K. Barrett has demonstrated that the incarnation is already implicit in 1:9\textsuperscript{105} The same may also be said of verses 10, 11.

The final argument advanced for this position is that it is necessitated by the nature of John's supposed analogy. If the author is relating the "new birth" of the believer and the \textit{μονογενὴς}of Christ, then this argument is fairly cogent. However, the context of 3:16, 18 is soteriological and the "analogy" seems far more coincidental then intentional.

Vos has summarized the seriousness of the theological issues at stake here.

Consistency will drive to the position that, if monogenes be related to the incarnate state, the sonship as such will have to receive the same reference, and the Trinitarian construction of the triad Father, Son, Spirit, as eternally inherent in the Godhead might seem in danger of losing its Johannine support.\textsuperscript{106}

The question is not whether John supports the idea of pre-existence, but whether he teaches that Jesus existed as the Son in the
pre-existent state. Gromacki's view seriously weakens the latter notion in John's Prologue. 107

Only-Begotten signifies Jesus as the Revealer of God

A second view expressed regarding the use of υἱόν θεοῦ in John is that it is the language of myth to express the truth that Jesus is the supreme Revealer of God. This view is born out of a predisposition which limits the concept to the historical Jesus. Sidebottom is convinced that rabbinic Judaism forms the background of the Prologue, and that his essential purpose is to stress the divine unity through analyzing God's relation to Christ. This he does by reworking the Wisdom concept of rabbinic literature. "... Although it is the career of the divine Wisdom which is in mind, the references to Jesus' earthly ministry are unmistakable ... ." 108 Drawing the distinction between "Jesus" and the "Word," Sidebottom goes on to explain: "So the pronouns can be taken as referring to Jesus as well as the Word. He too is θεός." 109 Thus, when one enters into a relation with Jesus he is perceived in John as having entered into a relation with the Father. As Sidebottom puts it: "To give a name to anything, to find the word for it, is to make it known, to establish relations with it. Jesus is the word for God." 110 Howard adds: "His earthly life made visible to men the life which existed with the Father. This life has now become an experience of men enjoying fellowship with the Father and the Son, who is none other than Jesus Christ." 111 It is in this sense that Jesus is absolutely "unique." 112

Several problems may be observed with this view. It presupposes a dependence in John on rabbinic conceptions which are antithetical to
John's stated purpose. To suggest, as Sidebottom does, that John "nowhere makes Jesus claim directly to be divine,"\textsuperscript{113} is to miss entirely the intent and purport of John's Gospel. Furthermore, this view seems to read into John a kind of primitive modalism. But, John's Logos has existence even prior to revelation. In an effort to explicate the specific nature of Jesus' revelation, this position is inclined to underestimate the seriousness with which John undertakes his task.

Only-begotten is a soteriological title

The work of De Kruijff, by which \textit{\textmu\ov\\textnu\ov\\textnu\ov\\textnu\ov} is rendered a soteriological and sacrificial designation deserves special attention. This is so particularly since his work is based on a meticulous exegesis of the term in Johannine literature. If he is correct, \textit{\textmu\ov\\textnu\ov\\textnu\ov} would be effectively removed from any discussion of John's Christological ontology.

He argues, correctly, that in the LXX, \textit{\textgamma\textnu\alpha\pi\t\textnu\ov}, "only child," \textit{\textalpha\gamma\acute\textalpha\pi\textomicron\textomicron\textomicron\textomicron\textomicron\textomicron\textomicron\textomicron} , "beloved," and \textit{\textmu\ov\\textnu\ov\\textnu\ov\\textnu\ov\\textnu\ov} "only-begotten" are brought together in the story of the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22. He goes on to show that this motif was taken up in pseudepigraphical texts in connection with Israel.\textsuperscript{114} He then shows that when \textit{\textmu\ov\\textnu\ov\\textnu\ov\\textnu\ov\\textnu\ov} is correctly understood in the context of Hebrews 11:17 and Luke 7:12; 8:42; and 9:38 two main themes predominate. These are (1) the greatness of the salvation and the Savior, and (2) human faith and fidelity. "The prototype of both the situation as told and the theological themes expressed in the stories is, of course, the story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22, which is cited in Hebrews xi.17."\textsuperscript{115} Pursuing this idea De Kruijff explains:
The only son Isaac is not only irreplaceable because he is an only son, but even more so because he is the only bearer of the promise of God. The two themes are here intimately connected: the faith and the fidelity and the trust required of Abraham are precisely the qualities required of people who believe that God is the one who will save even when everything seems to be lost.\textsuperscript{116}

The Isaac-theme is maintained to have been transferred to Christ in the New Testament. This is suggested if one takes the παραβολή in the sense of "type" in Hebrews 11:19. The idea is also implicit in Paul (Gal. 3:15; 4:21-29; Rom. 3:24, taken together with 8:32) and the Synoptics (Mark 12:1ff, cf. Matt. 21:33ff; Luke 21:9ff; comp. Psa. 118:22-23). Insofar as the theme is connected to ο νοογενής it provides a strong indication of the significance of the latter.\textsuperscript{117} In order to demonstrate this relationship, De Kruijf proceeds to show that even in John's usage the sacrificial motif provides the most intelligible background for his employment of the term. He shows that there is little doubt that the setting of John 3:16, 18 is soteriological. This, of course, fits well with the Isaac-theme. The setting of the Prologue is not so easily explained. De Kruijf argues that a significant clue is found in the expression: ἐθαυμάσατο τὴν δοξὴν ἡμῶν. He argues correctly that this does not mean spiritual insight but knowledge acquired through historical experience. He insists, not so correctly, that this could not refer to Jesus' signs since Jesus had not yet been glorified as late as 7:39 of the Gospel. It must refer to His exaltation on the cross (cf. 12:23, 24). Therefore,

...the manifestation of the glory of the Word of God, made flesh, as the only Son... (is) the event of his death. Again, it is the sacrifice of his only Son that manifests God as a faithful and loving Saviour. At the same time again the utmost faith and fidelity are asked of man...\textsuperscript{118}

This argument is further reinforced by the problem of the apparent absence of John's theme in the Prologue: "It is stated, but in
an anticipatory way." Also, this is confirmed by the fact that John, in part, writes against certain gnostic tendencies. "Not a mystical knowledge of God leads to salvation but faith in 'the Lamb that was slain' (Rev v.6)." Finally, this is confirmed by John's passion narrative with its emphasis on the shed blood (19:34) and correlation with the Paschal Lamb (19:36; cf. Num. 9:12; Exod. 12:46). Further, John's citation of Zechariah 12:10 is especially telling since the Hebrew מַעֲלַהָן occurs in the very next clause.

The strength of this position is that it draws so heavily on serious exegetical considerations. However, several problems may be cited which are not easily resolved. First, the relationship of the σήμερα, "signs," to the manifestation of the "glory" may not be passed off as casually as De Kruijf is inclined to do. It is clear that they form an integral part of John's purpose (20:30, 31) and they were (at least in part) a demonstration of His glory (2:11). This is treated in rather cavalier fashion by De Kruijf as though it were a minor problem. But it is crucial to his argument. Only one exception is necessary to show that he has misread the significance of John 7:39. The statement in 2:11 is an exception.

Second, if John intends to draw a link between μονογενής and the event of Christ's death, why does he not make that association explicit at the climax of the story when he quotes from Zechariah 12:10? If it is characteristic of John, as De Kruijf asserts, to tease his readers with ideas which will later be enlarged, why does the author not do so in this case? He completely ignores the reference to מַעֲלַהָן in the verse.

Finally, while it is maintained that 3:16, 18 has a soter-
iological force, this is not so easily related to the Prologue. On the contrary, \( \text{μονογενής} \) in 1:14, 18 derives its essential thrust from its relation to God the Father. Throughout the Prologue, John has been showing that the Logos, who was "with" God and who "is" God is uniquely qualified to make God known. It is on this note that \( \text{μονογενής} \) is introduced because it signifies the unique "relationship" between the Logos and the Father. It is here that John transcends all other contemporary ideas. He is saying that the full significance of Jesus' function is governed by an ontology. The work and words (i.e. revelation) of the historic Jesus have profound import because He is uniquely "related" to God as \( \text{μονογενής} \). This may also be said of the occurrence in 3:16, 18. The value of Jesus' death is indicated by his relationship to the Father.

Only-begotten refers to Jesus' eternal relation to the Father.

It is accurate to say that \( \text{μονογενής} \) to some extent is related to the virgin birth, the revelatory ministry, and the soteriological work of Christ. But, it is a mistake to limit and force of this title to any one of these ideas or to make any one a controlling factor in defining the term in John. In John \( \text{μονογενής} \) denotes more than the uniqueness of Jesus. He is expressly called or regarded as the Son in the passages where John employs the term. Accordingly, \( \text{μονογενής} \), in John, denotes source. It is a predicate of majesty, and it lends authority to His word and work. It is more than a comparison, it is a title signifying an eternal relationship applicable only to Jesus.\(^{124}\)

Eternal generation is supported by several factors: the first is the close proximity of \( \text{μονογενής} \ ύλος \text{ το} \ ό \ \text{δύ} \ \text{είς} \ \text{το} \ \text{κόσμον} \ \text{το} \ \text{πατρός} \) (lit. "who is in the bosom of the Father") in 1:18.\(^{125}\) The present tense
lends a timelessness to the verse which contemplates Jesus' eternal existence with the Father, much like ἖ν in 1:1.

Second, the only natural way to understand John 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9 is that God is "sending" the μονογενής "into" the world. Accordingly, the idea is contemplated apart from and previous to the incarnation. This thought is further amplified in 17:5, 24, where μονογενής is not employed, but Jesus' unique relationship with the Father and with the shared ὁ δύτα is indicated.

A third argument is that throughout the Gospel the Sonship of Jesus and that of believers are both related and distinguished. This is so because they are both alike and very different. They are alike in that they depict a relationship with the Father. They are different in that one is totally unique, the other is shared by all believers alike. Ladd correctly observes:

It is possible that John intends the term to include the idea that Jesus was begotten by God, for 1 John 5:18 says: 'He who was born (begotten) of God keeps him.' However the word translated 'begotten' comes from genos, meaning kind or sort, not from gennao, to beget. At the least John means to say that Jesus' Sonship stands apart from that of all other sons.

A final argument is the function of the μονογενής ὅλός as the mediator of life. This is explicit in 3:16, 18 as well as 1 John 4:9. However, it is not absent from the Prologue (cf. 1:4). This vital function is explicated in 5:26 and 6:57. John records the words of Jesus when he said that he receives life from the Father. Thus life and Sonship are linked in John's Christology. They are both contemplated from eternity and are both descriptive of a relationship with God the Father. Origen is known for his preoccupation with John's Gospel. He also is the first in the Christian era to speak of the "eternal generation" of the Son. In light of the above, the concept of "eternal generation"
does not appear to be an invention of Origen, but his way of explaining what John meant. 130

What then does John say about the pre-existent state of Christ in his use of μονογενής? It was a glorious existence (1:14, 18; cf. 17:5, 24). It was characterized by the closest intimacy and intercourse with God (3:18), as such the Son is contemplated as personally distinct, yet in the closest possible relation to the Father (cf. John 10:30). It was a vital relationship. That is, the Son had life in Himself (5:26; 6:57). This life was derived life (whence: "begotten") from the Father. In this sense John denotes the "kind" of relationship (i.e. Father/Son). He also denotes "source" rather than "origin." 131 This is important because John views μονογενής from the perspective of eternity. This life was also a shared life (3:16; 1 John 4:9). Since the μονογενής ζωή possesses life in Himself, He is able also to be the Mediator of life. For this reason men are obligated to believe in Him and are subject to condemnation if they withhold faith (3:18).

Finally, his pre-incarnate state was characterized by the Father's limitless love. It is only in this sense that 3:16 becomes at once both intelligible and unfathomable since that love was both measured and expended in terms of the Father's love for a world of lost people.

Thus, μονογενής is not the title for, but certainly the basis for, Jesus' revelatory activity and sacrificial work. Again, while it does not signify virgin birth, it does provide a backdrop against which the necessity for the virgin birth may be understood. From the foregoing, then, it is evident that John has planted the seeds which were to take root in the early Church and germinate in the landmark Christ-
ological symbols of the fourth and fifth centuries.

Summary

In order to capsulize John's teaching regarding the pre-existent, glorified state of Christ the following will suffice. The fact of pre-existence is affirmed in direct or indirect statements. Such allusions may occur on the lips of Jesus or a disciple or the writer, but they are manifestly evident. There is no serious challenge to the fact that John taught the pre-existence of Christ. The real question turns on the "meaning" of that affirmation. This, inevitably, leads to a discussion of the titles Logos and Only-begotten. Those who would like to find Hellenistic antecedents in John usually want to spiritualize the Logos in a fashion similar to that found in early Greek, later Hermetic, Hellenistic, or Philonic philosophy. Often the results are the same when Palestinian or rabbinic sources are posited since the rigid monotheism places strict controls on the parameters of hypostatization or personification. This also leads generally to a bifurcation of the Logos (i.e. "Christ") and the historical Jesus.

None of the supposed antecedents adequately explains John's Logos-concept. It has been shown that what John does with it is unique. As such it depicts pre-existence certainly, but goes far beyond that. It denotes a pre-existent relationship with the Father. It has ontological significance. It is connected intimately with the incarnate Christ, who is the historical Jesus in John's writings. It depicts God's means of self-revelation and lays the foundation for later Christological reflection.

"Only-begotten" is another title in John which is often diluted to encompass only temporal characteristics or relationships evident in
the earthly life of Jesus. However, this was shown to be a misunderstanding of the term in John. It is a title of pre-existence and one which depicts, as no other, the intimate and unique relationship enjoyed by the Father and the Son in eternity. It was shown to have been a glorious existence. It spoke of a relationship between persons. It was vital and characterized by the infinite love of the Father for the Son. Related, as it is to John's contemplation of the Father and Son as individual, yet one, the full sense of the title points to the mystery of the Godhead.

The Incarnate, Kenotic State

To suggest, as some have, that John's Jesus is a docetic Christ is to fail to give adequate attention to John's total witness. On the contrary, a careful reading of John's Gospel and epistles will reveal a very visible concern of the author to depict Christ in "real" human terms. He is Christ, "come in the flesh" (1 John 4:2) and with that every true believer must concur.

The Fact of the Incarnation

John intends from the outset to present Jesus in His earthly session in factual, concrete terms. He does this, first, in relation to His human experience, and second, in relation to theological orthodoxy.

Affirmed by His human experience

There can be no doubt that, in John, Jesus is a bona fide figure of history. In His relationship to His family and nation numerous names and expression are employed by John to convey this idea. The very name "Jesus," adapted from the Old Testament "Joshua," occurs as a very common name in Israel. As it is used in John, as well as the other Evan-
gelists, it recalls the man of flesh and blood who was a part of contempor­
ary history. This is especially visible in such expressions as "Jesus of Nazareh," Mark 1:24; John 1:45, and "Jesus the Galillean" (Matt. 21: 10f.; 26:69). It is the name by which most prefer to address Him, as it was the name given Him by His mother (Luke 2:27, 43; John 9:16; 10:19; Matt. 21:10f.; John 18:6).\textsuperscript{134}

He is called the Son of Joseph, and of Mary (John 1:45; 6:42). Leaving, for the moment, the questions regarding the virgin birth, it is clear that John is not attempting to depict Christ as some angelic, or divine appearance, to be distinguished from authentic humanity. On the contrary, He is Jesus, the carpenter's Son (John 1:45; 6:42; 19: 25-27. cf. also Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Luke 4:22). In a legal, adoptive sense, this was certainly true, even though, as the Synoptics are clear to point out, this was not to be understood as a relationship sust­tained by paternal generation (Luke 3:23).\textsuperscript{135} What is important to note here is the absence of the gross, sensual or fanciful images common to contemporary myths.\textsuperscript{136} The Jesus of John is the pre-incarnate Logos, made flesh, and subjected to a lowly human existence made worse by ignominious ridicule and attacks upon His person.\textsuperscript{137}

Another concept which does not receive as much attention in John's writings as in other New Testament writers, but which is present nevertheless, is that of Christ as the Davidic king. In this opening chapter of the Gospel the exuberant affirmation of Nathaniel is re­corded: "You are the King of Israel" (1:49). John expounds on this expression further in 7:42 where he records the problem many of Jesus' contemporaries had correlating what they knew of Jesus with Old Testa­ment promises regarding the "Davidic" king (compare also Rev. 3:7; 5:5;
Again, one can only infer from these passages that John wants the reader to know that Jesus was a descendant of David, and possessed the right to his throne. This is a truth clearly visible to his followers and one which required no defense before the skeptical. But at the same time John does not want the reader to miss the fact that as the Davidic King, He is also the Son of God (1:49). Make no mistake, this is "Immanuel."

Also significant here is the description of Jesus as the "bread that came down out of heaven" (John 6:48-51). Jesus asserts that the bread which He gives for the life of the world is "My Flesh." In a profoundly simple affirmation, John depicts Christ as having a heavenly origin, yet possessed of "flesh" by which life was to be given to the world. He, no doubt, has in mind the fact that shortly He would suffer physical death, and it would be through faith in the accomplishment of that event that the world could receive life (compare also 6:1-13, 26, 31-34). The theological a priori of such a passage is the incarnation.

The Son of man concept in John provides a further clue in identifying John's doctrine of the incarnation. A common error is to view the Son of Man expression as a simple affirmation of Jesus' humanity. This is true as far as it goes. But there is much more to be observed in John's employment of the expression, particularly in noting the two sides of His mission: that of suffering and of glory. The Son of Man came down from heaven to earth, He must also return to heaven by way of the cross (cf. 3:13). The "ascent" of the Son of Man upon the cross (8:28; 12:32), marks also the moment of His glorification (12:23; 17:1). In His ultimate act of humiliation He draws all men
to Himself (3:14; 12:32). Yet, in this act, His capacity to offer eternal life is made possible only because He is the Son of God (cf. 3:14-16; 6:27). In His supreme exaltation He will judge the world and this is made possible only because He is the "Son of Man" (5:27). Taylor correctly observes, "The Son of Man is the link between heaven and earth, whereby the glory of God is made known to men." John records: "You shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (1:51). While the Epistles do not employ the title Son of Man, the concept of Sonship is proportionately, much greater than the Gospel. It is, therefore, not without significance that John speaks of the Son as having been "sent" three times (4:9, 10, 14), and this is an "incarnational" context (cf. 4:1, 2).

Thus it is seen that in terms of Jesus' earthly relationships and mission John views Him through the lens of a very significant incarnational theology.

Affirmed as theological orthodoxy

The incarnation is the foundation truth upon which John's Christology rests. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." (John 1:14). It is essential to John, first, because it is implied in Old Testament prophecy. This is linked in John's thinking to the Old Testament messianic promises respecting "He who comes." Promised first by Moses (Deut. 10:10) this undying hope served to bring faithful Israelites through many dark hours (Dan. 7:22; Hab. 2:4). But what is particularly important in these passages is that this "One who comes" is God. The fundamental affirmation of Christ is that He is the pre-existent God, the Son, manifest in history as a human being. Thus,
having established that Jesus is God in the flesh, the affirmation of
the Baptist is inserted to make the connection clear, "This is... He
who comes" (John 1:15, 27). Later, in the face of doubts, Martha is
heard to say: "I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even
He who comes into the world." (John 11:27; cf. also 6:14). These are
no accidental comments. They are quite intentional. Jesus could not be
the promised Messiah unless He was God come in the flesh.

In light of this, it is not difficult to understand why John
also considers the incarnation essential to saving faith. He warns his
readers: "every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the
flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not... is... antichrist
(1 John 4:1-3; cf. 2 John 7). The test of orthodoxy is worded very care­
fully by John. Alexander Ross notes:

... John does not say 'come into the flesh,' but 'in the flesh.'
Christ did not descend into an already existing man, as Cerinthus
and others were teaching, but He came in human nature; He
became flesh (John 1:14). Further, John does not say that the Confession
is to be of Christ who came, but of a Christ who is come, who came
and who abides in the flesh - a perfect tense being used.144

John does not view this affirmation simply as a factual component
in the response of saving faith. Rather, he views this as the natural
response of the person who has the Spirit of God (as opposed to the
spirit of antichrist) abiding within (cf. 3:24; 4:4-6). Indeed, for the
person who has been vitally united to God (i.e. received eternal "life")
the in-flesh-ment of Christ is critical (cf. John 6:51, "the bread also
which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh"). To deny the
incarnation is to deny the fact of objective redemption.

The Nature of the Incarnation

The passages cited above do more than reflect on the place of
the incarnation in John's theology. As the comment by Alexander Ross signifies, they also say much about what John wishes to convey with the concept.

Even Michael Goulder admits that the firmest evidence for the traditional doctrine of the incarnation is to be found in the writings of John. On that point, at least, he is correct. But, what does John mean when he says "the Word became flesh"?

Current speculations as to the theological import of this expression are profoundly disparate. Some views are reminiscent of Nicea and Chalcedon. Others prefer to see this as a spiritual concept identical in meaning to the display of God's glory (cf. also 2 Cor. 4:6; Psa. 19). W. L. Walker goes as far as to identify this as some part of pantheistic union of God with the "world's life" as idealized man. Others, influenced by contemporary positivist philosophy and form-critical hermeneutical methodology are more imaginative yet.

For obvious reasons, it will not be necessary to discuss those views which are born out of a disregard for the authority of Scripture. John put it best when he said, "indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

To discuss John's theology of incarnation, it is from his pen that the interpretive clues must be formed. Here the study focuses upon the affirmation of John 1:14 and the Son of Man theology in the Gospel.

The Word became flesh

John 1:14 is the axis upon which turn the Prologue and the remainder of the Gospel. In the beginning it is the Logos, in the end it is Jesus, the Davidic King, the Messiah, the Son of God, the Son of Man, and much more. But, never again is He cited as the Logos. Earlier
in this study, the literary unity of John's Gospel was established. How, then, is the Logos of the Prologue related to the Man featured in the remainder of the Gospel?

First, the pre-existent Logos and historical Jesus are understood by John to be the same Person. In the Prologue the Logos is the "light." In 9:5 "the man who is called Jesus" asserts: "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." In the Prologue, the Logos, as the light, shines in the darkness and is not comprehended or received. In the Gospel Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world, he who follows me shall not walk in darkness" (8:12). Immediately John records the failure of Jesus' enemies to either comprehend or receive His words (8:14,ff.)151 In the Prologue "life" is found in the Logos. In 5:21, Jesus declares that as the Son, He is the dispenser of life. In the Prologue, the Baptist is the primary witness to the identity of the Logos. In 1:15-36 he introduces "Jesus." It is very difficult to miss this explicit association. His purpose here is not so much to explain the mechanics of this union, "but to impress it upon his readers as a fact already realized in his own experience, and by the knowledge of which they too 'might have life.'"152 The Logos "has been brought into a vital and historical connection with human life."153

Second, the incarnation is viewed as a creative act. The use of ἐγένετο links 1:14 to 1:3. "As 'all things became through the Word,' so He Himself 'became flesh.'"154 While it is true that the virgin birth is not explicitly recorded in John's writings, one cannot help but suspect that the word-choice here is intentionally designed to shed light on the divine role in the birth of Christ. Further, the word ἐγένετο must not be construed to suggest that the Logos ceased to be
what He was before. It is "became" in the sense that one becomes a parent, or one becomes a student. Its primary import is the positive acquisition of something, not the loss of anything.\textsuperscript{155} This is particularly evident when comparing 1:1 with 1:18. Perhaps this is also the reason John inserts the miracle at the wedding in Cana. This "sign" is a curious addition to the Synoptic accounts. Also in light of the fact that John says very little that does not have a theological "twist," the student of his writings is wise to investigate further. A peculiar distinctive of John is to record earthly events to demonstrate heavenly truth.\textsuperscript{156} John has just taken the reader from the pre-temporal existence and the Logos to the incarnation, and on to the incredulous and enthusiastic observations of those who first experienced Him. Then, much as the Word became flesh, the water becomes wine. In this miracle, the water does not cease to be water (in a strict molecular sense) rather it takes up elements which were not previously there. The end result is the "best" wine. The incarnation appears to be like that. The Logos does not cease to be God, but rather He takes up "flesh" and the end result is vastly superior to any born of mankind.

Third, the term "flesh" signifies human nature. The word "flesh" is not used to convey a kind of Apollinarian bifurcation of the composite elements of Jesus' human nature.\textsuperscript{157} On the contrary, \textit{\sigmaφυς} is employed in preference to say, \textit{\deltaυ\phi\πος}, "in order to mark especially the visibility, the coporeity, the sensuous and phenomenal aspect of this His last and greatest self-communication to man."\textsuperscript{158} W. E. Best adds this cogent observation: Our Lord used the word \textit{flesh} (John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16) to signify nature, for \textit{flesh} is not a person. Had he used the term \textit{man}, he would have meant a person, thus, he would have made
Himself two persons. . ."159

"The simplicity of the expression is no doubt directed against the Docetae. . . who maintained that the Word only apparently took human nature."160 When John adds: καὶ ἐσκηνώσαεν ἐν ἡμῖν, , he also guards against any suggestions that the flesh was simply a tent for the Logos to dwell in. The term ἐσκηνώσαεν is employed technically to signify the dwelling of God among men (cf. Lev. 26:11, 12; Ezek. 43:7; 37:27; Sir. 24:8, 10). Here the Logos does not dwell in the "flesh," but ἐν ἡμῖν; "among us." Hence, the "logos/Flesh" constitutes the manifestation of the divine Shechinah" and so John adds, "we beheld His glory. . . ." This is vitally important if John's conception of the relation between the two is to be correctly understood.

Does John include the idea of the "sin nature" in the term "flesh?" Apparently not. There does not seem to be any ethical notion implied, as is often the case in Paul's use of the term. Even John 2:16, the expression, "the lusts of the flesh" appears to connect the two ideas only "accidentally," and not "necessarily."161 Hence, while the idea of "flesh," as John uses it, says something very positive about the essential character of human nature, it says nothing negative about the essential character of the incarnate Logos.

The Son of Man

The nature of the incarnation is also significantly clarified in those passages in which the Son of Man is used in relation to Jesus. Few expressions in the Bible have occasioned as much theological discussion as the so-called Son of Man sayings.162 However, there is a surprising paucity of literature written about the expression in John.163
Furthermore what has been written represents almost no consensus in terms of approval or interpretation. It is vitally important to discern the antecedents (if any) of this expression and to survey the contemporary opinions about the Son of Man Christology in John. However, here it is probably best to follow the approach adopted by Moloney when he observes: "in the face of (the) multiplicity of interpretations it appears that the most satisfactory method to arrive at some sort of synthesis is to study each of the Son of Man sayings in its own context.\textsuperscript{164}

1:51

In the first reference the title comes at the end of a long series of titles. He is the Lamb of God, the Son of God, the Messiah, Him of whom Moses wrote, Rabbi, King of Israel, and finally, the Son of Man. As the Prologue seems to point to 1:18: "The only begotten God, ... He has explained Him," the remainder of the chapter points to 1:51 where the Son of Man is promised to be the ultimate revealer of heavenly things.\textsuperscript{165} If Westcott is correct about the significance of the double $\alpha\mu\nu$ as being used to correct a misconception,\textsuperscript{166} then the force of the passage could be even greater. It would suggest the idea that those who were employing terminology to indicate Jesus' identity were not going far enough. "In the Johannine Gospels the most important thing about Jesus is that he came from heaven."\textsuperscript{167} While all the other titles give honor to Christ, they fall short of what Jesus related in v. 51. The significance of the use of "Son of Man" cannot be overlooked.

As to the question of the fulfillment of this promise to "see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending ..."
the immediate context does not provide any clues. It is doubtful that the reference is to any specific event which was to occur in the manner of Genesis 28:12. Additional clues must follow.

3:13, 14

The reference to the Son of Man in 3:13, 14 appears to enlarge the earlier reference. As in the first chapter, there are a number of statements made about Jesus (by Nicodemus) which are true so far as they go. He is called Rabbi, He is said to have "come from God," He is uniquely related to God to perform "signs." In the conversation which ensues, Nicodemus is unable to understand Jesus' teaching.

The answer is especially significant. "No man has ascended into heaven...." (i.e. to retrieve information from God and bring it back to earth). Jesus is more than Nicodemus implies. He is the Son of Man who has descended from heaven and who, alone, can reveal heavenly things. This seems to suggest the import of verses 14, 15: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life." That which Nicodemus believed about Christ was not enough. He must look upon Him as those who looked upon the serpent. More than a great teacher, more than a miracle-worker, Jesus is the Man from Heaven who reveals heavenly truth which is effectual to the giving of eternal life in the hour that He is "lifted up." For the believer, who has already "read the last chapter" the allusion to Calvary here is unmistakable, but to the unsaved Jewish target to whom John writes the words were no doubt as enigmatic as they were to Nicodemus. On the other hand, the picture of the Son of Man has expanded in a very significant way. The reader now understands that what the Son of Man has come to make known
is intended for his benefit—he may have eternal life.

5:27

The third passage provides still additional insights: "And He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man." Judgment and revelation are intimately linked in John's Gospel (see 3:19; 8:16; 12:31; 16:8; 16:11). In the earlier passages the positive aspects of Jesus' revelation were emphasized, although in 3:19 it is clear that lifting up of the Son of Man brings the viewer to decision and then to judgment. So here, the one who "hears my word, and believes . . . does not come into judgment." The converse of this is also true. The one who does not believe will "come into judgment."

6:29, 53, 62

In the sixth chapter the Son of Man is cited three times. The first (v. 29) looks back and seems to reinforce the idea that Jesus comes from heaven. This fact is attested by the confirmation ("seal") of God, the Father. It is for this reason that what the Son of Man reveals about the attainment of eternal life has the authority of God.

Verse 53 must be interpreted in the light of 1:14. The Son of Man, as the Logos, becomes "flesh." To eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man is to appropriate the truth which is revealed when He is "lifted up." The reference cannot be to the Eucharist. Of course, it is only in light of the incarnation that the Logos can offer up His "flesh." It is only as the Son of Man that the revelation is come to the world. It is only as the Logos (the pre-existent God) that sufficient merit is assigned to provide life to the world.

The reference in v. 62 is best understood as a rhetorical
question. In the context his audience is divided. They must now decide whether to accept His authority or to reject Him. It is a crucial point in the narrative. All along John has underscored that the uniqueness of Jesus is that He is come from God and is, therefore, the authoritative Revealer of God. It would do absolutely no good to "ascend" back to heaven and return because it could never change His message. And so He adds: "The words that I have spoken are spirit and are life" (6:63).

8:58
In 8:28 John appears to be again using the Son of Man in the context of revelation, and consequently of Judgment. What the Son of Man speaks is what He has been taught by the Father. Here is the claim to authority and they will know this when "they" lift Him up. R. Bultmann is probably correct when he suggests the implied predicate to "I am" is the Son of Man. However, the knowledge gained must be understood in light of the previous development of this concept in the Gospel. They will know that Jesus was the Revealer of God in all that He spoke and did.

9:35
The reference to the Son of Man in 9:35 seems to be a final appeal for all John has developed regarding the Son of Man to this point. He opens the eyes of the blind man and reveals Himself to him as the Son of Man, calling upon him to believe in Him. At the same time the Pharisees are blind to the truth, thus illustrating the aspect of judgment.

12:23, 24; 13:31
The climax comes in 12:23, 24 and again in 13:31 where the hour for the Son of Man to be lifted up and to be glorified is announced.
Thus, the Son of Man is seen to be a title uniquely dependent upon the incarnation. The title is applicable to Christ in John only after the Word was made flesh, and has particular reference to His role as the "Revealer" of God, the climax of which was the crucifixion. It is in the acceptance or rejection of this revelation that the world is judged. In the passages where this title is used the incarnation is viewed from two perspectives: the Son of Man from heaven, and the Son of Man lifted up. There is a relationship with God that explicates His origin. There is a relationship with humanity that depicts His rejection, suffering, and death. What, for any other would have been an hour of infamy, for the Son of Man, becomes the hour of glory because at that moment He vindicates His message and "exegetes" the Father. No effort is made by John to conflate or compromise these two truths. They are viewed as constituting two vital aspects of the one Person.

The Incarnate Glorified State

Systematic studies generally prefer to speak of the incarnate glorified state as the state of exaltation. The wording here is deliberate. While it is true that Jesus underwent a radical change in the general conditions by which the state of His existence was to be defined, the Gospel accounts (including John) do not suggest that He ceased to have a human nature. He is still the man Jesus, albeit exalted to a glorious state.

The Fact of the Incarnate Glorified State

There are at least eight passages which explicitly assert that Jesus is to ascend back to the Father in heaven or that He presently abides there: John 7:33, "Jesus therefore said, 'For a little longer I
am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me;" 14:2, 3, "I go (to My Father's house) to prepare a place for you;" 14:12, "I go to the Father;" again the same assertion is given in 14:28; in 16:10, 16, 17, twice the assertion is made, "I go to the Father and you no longer behold me;" 16:27, 8, "I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world, I am leaving the world again, and going to the Father;" 17:11, 13, "I am no longer in the world. . . . But now I come to Thee (Holy Father);" 20:17, "I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God;" 1 John 2:1, "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

In addition to these assertions John gives a detailed account of several post-resurrection experiences with Jesus (Chaps. 20, 21) which provide many helpful insights into the nature of His state subsequent to Easter morning.

The Nature of the Incarnate Glorified State

Three vital truths about this state are certain from John's analysis. First it was "incarnate." That is, Jesus still appears to be in flesh and united with a human nature (contrast the Logos of the Prologue and the pre-existent state). Then, it was glorious; it was a restoration of the condition by which His pre-existence was characterized. Finally, it was permanent.

It was an incarnate state

First, several interesting features converge to suggest this in John. The body is missing after the resurrection. This appears to have been the moment of crisis for the writer. It is said that when he entered the tomb and saw the body gone, he "believed." This singular
fact is vitally important if John is to be squared with 1 Corinthians 15 and subsequent Pauline Christology. The body is gone, the suggestion, of course is that it was resurrected. A "spiritual" resurrection would not require this.

Second, several of Jesus' followers saw Him after this. Mary saw Him, apparently "clung" to Him, and talked with Him (20:11, 13). An unspecified number of disciples saw Him that same evening (20:19-23). Thomas, the following Sunday, is convinced by the still visible signs of the crucifixion that this is truly Jesus in the flesh (20:26-29). Finally, on a later occasion Jesus appeared on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias and prepared breakfast for several of the disciples, apparently sharing it with them. It is unlikely in this Gospel that such a detail is merely incidental. Certainly John's anti-docetic polemic is still at work asserting Jesus' authentic humanity.

It was a glorious state

In 17:1 John records the words of Jesus, just before His death, "the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee. Then He adds (17:5) "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee before the world was." From this one may understand that the glorious state of the pre-existent Logos (developed in the Prologue), may also be contemplated with reference to the incarnate, resurrected Christ. In the appearance to the disciples in the closed room there is also some indication that the resurrected body of Christ possessed some very unusual properties. Although this is not as explicit as it appears in the Synoptics, there is something very mysterious about the way Jesus comes into the room. They are in hiding for fear of the Jews, and suddenly Jesus is "in their
It is a permanent state

There are several indications that Jesus' glorious, incarnate state is permanent. His role as Judge is one such indication. While it is unlikely that Jesus has in mind an eschatological judgment in 5:26, 27, it is certain that 5:29 does contemplate a future eschatological judgment. Insofar as this judgment is authorized by virtue of His being the Son of Man, there is a direct link between the incarnation and Jesus' future role as Judge. Another indication is found in 1 John 3:2. The future state of the believer is said to be "like Him." This cannot be taken in an ethical or spiritual sense, because the entire appeal of 1 John is that the full range of spiritual qualities are presently available to the believer. The promise of 3:2 is to something that is not now possible or available. If the promise is not to be rendered in ethical terms, it must have reference to the future state of the believer, i.e. like that of Jesus Christ. There is no way the future state of believers can be "like" that of Christ if He is not still incarnate. By the same token, the reader could not possibly take this passage as an eschatological promise if the future condition is not also glorious. Thus, it is quite proper to infer from 1 John 3:2 that Jesus is still in the incarnate glorified state at the time of the Rapture.

Although argumentation ex silentio is rarely decisive, it is worthy of observation at this point that no further change in Jesus' "state" is contemplated either by John or any other New Testament writers. Silence argues for the permanence of this final state. Indeed, given the fact that the Revelation of John brings the New Testament reader all the way to the eternal state, any changes in the states of
Christ, most certainly would have been clearly indicated.
Notes

1 The author recognizes that the manner in which the "states" are defined is open to question in relation to the larger theological concerns involved. (See, for example, H. Hoeksema, Reformed Dogmatics, pp. 398ff; L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 332.) However, the term is adopted here in its simplest sense for the sake of introducing the subject for consideration in the Johannine corpus.

2 T. E. Pollard, Johannine Christology and the Early Church, pp. 16, 17.

3 Ibid., p. 3

4 Ibid.


6 TDNT, s.v. "Ἀνελθα et al," by H. Kleinknecht, IV:77-78.

7 Ibid., p. 80.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., p. 81, (emphasis mine).

10 Ibid., p. 82.

11 Ibid., p. 83.


13 Ibid., p. 84-85.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., p. 86.

17 Ibid., pp. 87, 88.
There is a figurative association of Melchizedek and the High-Priest.


Kleinkecht, IV:89, 90.


Ibid., p. 276-77.

Ibid., cf. also pp. 54-73.


Dodd, *Interpretation*, pp. 74, 75, cites two main factors which have brought this about:

First, the Semitic element in the language of the Fourth Gospel has been recognized and studied. Burney, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (1922), maintained that the Greek of the Gospel is only a thin disguise for Aramaic, that it is in fact translation Greek . . . Torrey, in his two books, *The Fourth Gospel* and *Our Translated Gospels* (1936), maintained a similar thesis for the whole four . . . Meanwhile Adolph Schlatter . . . discovered . . . traces of Hebrew idiom rather than of Aramaic Idiom . . . He holds that the writer was bilingual, like some of the authors of Talmud and Midrash, and that, writing in Greek, he betrayed his native idiom.

The second, and more important factor, is the fresh study of Judaism, and its applications to problems of the New Testament. Until the early years of the present century, Christian scholars found it almost impossible to make effective use of the documents of Rabbinic Judaism . . . The student of the New Testament is especially indebted to G. F. Moore, *Judaism* (1927), a comprehensive and authoritative account of the Jewish religion as it was in the early Christian period based upon Rabbinic evidence accurately datable to the period.


31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., p. 93.

33 The account of the misplaced blessing Genesis 27 and of the ill-informed curse in Judges 17 both testify to the irrevocable nature of a man's "זָרַע ".


35 As H. H. Rowley notes: ". . . the acted prophecy may convey just as truly the word of God as the spoken oracle." The Re-Discovery of the Old Testament, p. 96.


38 Ibid., p. 160.


40 Dodd, Interpretation, p. 269.

41 Ibid., pp. 82-86.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid., cf. pp. 173-76.

44 Ibid., Dodd also cites other examples.

45 Ibid., Dodd cites Siphre on Deut. 11:22; Prov. 4:22; Ps. 19:8; Isa. 55:1; and the Targums on Isa. 12:3.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., he cites R. Berechiah on Prov. 25:21; Gen. R. on Deut. 10:18; R. Joshua on Prov. 9:5.

48 Thus Siphre on Num. 6:52; Baba Bathra 4a; Deut. R. 7.3 on Song of Solomon 1:3. Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.
51 Howard, pp. 50-51.
52 Cited by Dodd, Interpretation, p. 86.
53 Ibid.
54 Kummel, p. 155.
59 Dodd, Interpretation, p. 275. J. Randel Harris suggests that it was a hymn in honor of Wisdom which has been worked over by a Christian. The Origins of the Prologue to St. John's Gospel, p. 6.
60 Sir. 24:8.
61 Lev. 26:11, 12; Ezek. 37:27, Zech. 2:10, 8:3, 8.
62 Smith, Jesus in the Gospel, p. 60.
63 Ladd, p. 240.
64 Burney, p. 38.
65 Ibid.
67 Barrett, p. 128.
70 Dodd, Interpretation, p. 5.
72 The objections of Alexander C. Pardy notwithstanding. The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 635.
See also E. C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, pp. 159-60.


Benjamin W. Bacon, Studies in Matthew, pp. 145-326, suggests that Matthew has collected the sayings of the Lord into five books, analogous to the five books of Moses.

Kirn, p. 13.

Dodd, Interpretation, pp. 3, 4, (Emph. mine).

Ibid., p. 6.

Ibid.

Although further implications respecting Deity, per se will be detailed later.

See discussion above.

F. C. Burkitt, The Church and Gnosis, p. 94, argues for the classical sense.

cf. above.


Barrett, John, p. 130.

Pollard, p. 17, n. 4, provides a worthy caution in the use of terminology which derives from a later stage of theological development. "Difficult though it may be to avoid speaking in terms like 'essence,' 'essential,' 'ontology,' etc., we must not transform St. John into a fourth-century Father."

Homer Kent, Jr., Light in the Darkness, p. 27.

Barrett, John, p. 130.

Oscar Cullmann, The Christology of the New Testament, Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles Hall, trans. However, caution is in order with respect to Cullmann's use of "paradox." Perhaps "mystery" would be a better term here. This will be discussed later.


Buchsel notes that Plato applies it to the world (Timaeus, 31b); Parmenides applies it to being (On Nature). It is also interesting that Clement of Rome, who was a contemporary of John, applies it to the fabulous bird, the Phoenix (I Cl. 25.2).


Buchsel, pp. 739-41; John F. Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord, p. 44. This is also the uniform tradition of the ancient church.

Gromacki, p. 65.

Ibid., 65, 66.


Barrett, John, p. 134.

Vos, p. 219.

Ibid., pp. 224, 225.

Sidebottom, p. 48.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Howard, p. 55.

Sidebottom, p. 32; Davey, Jesus of St. John, p. 103. For Davey this would mean that the only idea conveyed is that "men abiding in God are begotten of God and can be without sin (ideally, at least)."

Sidebottom, p. 47.

116 Ibid.
117 Ibid., p. 116.
118 Ibid., p. 122, parentheses mine.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid., p. 123.
121 Ibid.

122 See Peter Riga, "Signs of Glory," Interpretation 17 (Oct., 1963): 402-24, where it is shown that the only difference between the "signs" and the "passion" in manifesting God's glory is in degree.

123 De Kruijff, p. 119.
124 Walvoord, p. 44.

125 The reading, \( \mu \nu \nu \gamma \epsilon \zeta \sigma \varsigma \, \upsilon \omicron \omicron \upsilon \nu \iota \omicron \nu \omicron \varsigma \), is preferred since the alternate \( \mu \nu \nu \gamma \epsilon \zeta \sigma \varsigma \, \theta \omicron \omicron \varsigma \) is an invention of subsequent Egyptian influence. The Western texts preserve the original. See Buchsel, p. 740, n. 14.

126 Vos, p. 221.

127 Ibid., p. 222. Vos notes that if the virgin birth were signified by \( \mu \nu \nu \gamma \epsilon \zeta \sigma \varsigma \, \upsilon \omicron \omicron \upsilon \nu \iota \omicron \nu \omicron \varsigma \), against the new birth of the believer, the latter could be interpreted as even more singular and unique since it is true that the virgin birth was accomplished without a human father, but the regeneration of the believer is accomplished without a human father or mother.

128 Ladd, p. 247. He goes on to point out that John characteristic- lly employs \( \tau \epsilon \chi \nu \omicron \omicron \omega \nu \omicron \), not \( \upsilon \omicron \omicron \omicron \), to describe men in their relation to God (except for 12:36). See also J. Schneider, "God," Dictionary of N.T. Theology, C. Brown Ed., pp. 75-76. D. Moody, JBL 72, 1953, pp. 213-19; R. E. Brown, The Gospel According to John, I, 1966, p. 13.

129 Ibid., p. 220. Both Vos and Ruchsel, p. 740, recognize this as a significant factor in coming to terms with John's use of \( \mu \nu \nu \gamma \epsilon \zeta \sigma \varsigma \).

130 The writing of Origen's Commentary on John was not a task taken up lightly. "It is a carefully--indeed painfully--wrought out work, agonizing over the last logical detail according to his exegetical method, and must be considered one of the most serious attempts at a systematic construction of a Christological position in the history of Christian thought." Williamina M. Macaulay, "The Nature of Christ in Origen's Commentary on John," Scottish Journal of Theology, 19 (1966):176.
Buchsel, p. 741, argues from 1 John 5:18 for the idea that \( \nu \varphi \varphi \gamma \varepsilon \nu \zeta \) signifies also the birth, or begetting "from" God. As such it denotes "origin." This conclusion, however, is unsound since it is based on a very ambiguous text (at best) and is contradictory to the other side of John's Christological reflections.

Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, pp. 3, 139. Schweitzer passes over John entirely with the unqualified comment that he represents a total disjunction between the historical Jesus and the supra-mundane Christ of later theology. He follows Bruno Baur, Criticism of the Gospel History of John (1840), and is, in turn, followed most notably today by Kasemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 44.

Many biblical personages bear this name: Joshua, the Son of Nun (Num. 13:3); Joshua, the high priest (Zech. 3:17); Joshua, the priest (1 Chron. 24:11); a Levite (2 Chron. 31:15); certain contemporaries of Ezra (Ezra 2:6; 3:9); an ancestor of Christ (Luke 3:29); and a companion of Paul (Col. 4:11). The author of Ecclesiasticus was named Jesus, as was his grandfather (Sir. 50:27). There is also substantive evidence that the personal name of Barabbas, whose place on Calvary was assumed by the Lord, was also Jesus (cf. Matt. 26:17 in Origen and some Syrian sources; Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, s.v. "Barabbas," by D. E. Hubert, 5 vols., 1:472.

Here is a good place to observe that the names and titles may not serve as reliable clues to supposed "sources" of New Testament documents. The passages cited clearly reflect both natural and supernatural qualities about Jesus. The point is that these are simply historical facts that occurred and were faithfully recorded.

See J. G. Machen, The Virgin Birth, pp. 317-79; Boslooper, The Virgin Birth, pp. 135-36; R. G. Gromacki, The Virgin Birth, pp. 177-81, where the bankruptcy of any attempts to relate the N.T. account to pagan mythology is clearly demonstrated.

Ibid.

What is particularly interesting about this exchange is Jesus' total reluctance to cast His pearls before swine. He prefers to suffer their indignities than to subject the most intimate truth of Himself and His mother to their scrutiny.

Those who heard these words of Jesus misconstrued the sense to suppose He had in mind the literal eating of His flesh. That this is not Jesus' intent is clear from His explanation in 6:58, "not as the fathers ate . . . ." Strangely, sacramentalists continue this error to this day, as is illustrated by Dodd, Interpretation, pp. 338-39 and Father Leopold Sabourin, The Names and Titles of Jesus, pp. 106-15. Charles G. E. Chilton rightly notes the hermeneutical blunder in failing to observe the symbolic language here, since John employs so many symbols (the vine, the door, etc.). If the latter do not suggest that Jesus was composed of plant fiber, wood, etc., the former can hardly be used to support the magical dogma of transubstantiation. Satisfaction from the Scriptures, pp. 41, 42.
139 Much more exhaustive treatment of the Son of Man concept will follow under the heading of "The Nature of the incarnation in John."

140 See, for example, John Peter Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Luke, p. 4.

141 As H. R. Reynolds observes: "not a tertium quid, neither God nor man; but God in the plentitude of power, man in the sufficiency of his knowledge and sympathy." Pulpit Commentary: John, 2 vols., I:cxxxiv.


143 With no less than 24 references.

144 Alexander Ross, Commentary on the Epistles of James and John, p. 197. Brooke, Johannine Epistles, pp. 108-9, argues that John is not asserting a polemic against Docetism here. He takes the expression ἐν σαρκί ἐν θεότητα as a description of the "method" rather than the "fact." Regardless, as he observes, the results are the same in terms of accommodating any kind of docetic teaching. "The confession . . . is of one who is Jesus Christ incarnate, a man who lived on earth a true human life, under the normal conditions of humanity, and who is also the pre-existent Christ who manifested God's glory in this form." See also William Hendriksen, New Testament Commentary, p. 33.

145 Although he is quick to assert that John could not have received such a doctrine from Jesus. Michael Goulder, "The Two Roots of the Christian Myth," The Myth of God Incarnate, John Hick, Ed., p. 64. On the controversy sparked by this book see also Michael Green, The Truth of God Incarnate.

146 In fact, William Hendrickson, N.T. Commentary: John, quotes nearly half the Chalcedonian Symbol to explicate John's meaning, p. 84. Others, like Macgregor, John, pp. 16, 17, and Reynolds, Pulpit Commentary: John, pp. cxxxii, iii are more discreet, but no less committed to the same conviction that the Chalcedonian Symbol faithfully represents John's meaning.

147 For example, see Andrew R. Osborn, "The Word became flesh," Interp., 3(Jan., 1949):42-49.

148 An interesting variation on the Logos/wisdom equation. See W. L. Walker, The Spirit and the Incarnation, p. 239f. The view of Dodd, Interpretation, pp. 279-85, would also lead logically to the same end.

149 See Maurice Wiles, "Christianity without Incarnation," in The Myth of God Incarnate; and the same writer's article in the sequel Incarnation and Myth, M. Goulder, ed., "A survey of issues in the Myth Debate." In the latter volume, see also, Nicholas Lash, "Interpretation and Imagination," Charles Moule, "Three Points of Conflict in the

150 Michael Goulder, "Jesus, the Man of Universal Destiny," _The Myth of God Incarnate_, p. 48, is especially candid when he writes: We don't believe in hell (most of us) or the devil or verbal inspiration, and when such ideas are derided we join in the laughter: 'Did you really think we believed that?' we say. Even when the incarnation, or divine providence, or almost any view of the atonement is derided, the Christian is often found to be joining in too . . . . This is not to ignore important scholarship. On the contrary, it is to restrict discussion to authentically "biblical concerns." While philosophical speculations about specific biblical data may be interesting, as such, it does not deserve the status and dignity which the appellation "biblical scholarship" signifies.

151 See also 3:19; 6:17; 12:35, 46. One wonders if much that goes under the banner of contemporary Christological reflection continues to validate this indictment of those who walk in darkness.

152 MacGregor, p. 16.

153 B. F. Westcott, _John_, pp. 10, 11 goes on to observe that the phrase the Word became flesh is absolutely unique. The phrases which point toward it in St. John (I John iv.2), in . . . Hebrews (ii.4) and . . . Paul (Rom. viii.3; Phil. ii.7; I Tim. iii.16) fall short of the majestic fullness of this brief sentence, which affirms once for all the reconciliation of the opposite elements of the final antithesis of life and thought, the finite and the infinite.

154 Ibid.

155 Hendricksen, p. 84; see also John Murray, _Collected Writings_, 2 vols., II:136.

156 See, for example, the "wind" in Ch. 3; the "water" in Ch. 4; the apprentice motif in 5:19; the "loaves" of Ch. 6; the "Feast of Lights" in Ch's. 7, 8; the blind man in Ch. 9 (note esp. the divine 'intent' in 9:3): the shepherd and his sheep, Ch. 10; the death of Lazarus, Ch. 11; footwashing in Ch. 13; the vine in Ch. 15; the early morning crow of the rooster in Ch. 18; and the breakfast of Ch. 21.


158 Reynolds, p. cxxxi. The force here is very much like Paul's usages in Rom. 1:3 and 8:3. See also Heb. 2:17 and 10:5. ἐνὸς is also frequently employed in the New Testament in the general sense of "human being," cf. Rom. 3:20; 1 Cor. 1:29; Gal. 2:16. This usage is also found elsewhere in John's Gospel (17:2).
W. E. Best, Studies in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, p. 33. Here it is important to use some degree of caution. Best's logic is correct. However, it is anachronistic to suggest that the text "meant" to signify a distinction between "nature" and "person" in the selection of the term. On the other hand it is curious that in Phil. 2:7, where αὐθεντήτως occurs, the wording is very cautious: ἐν ὑμοιομοίωτι αὐθεντήτως.


This distinction, although less obvious, is probably true of the Pauline usage as well.


Francis J. Moloney observes: "Scholars often make this remark, but it remains true." Johannine Son of Man, p. 1. This is not to say that there is no interest at all. Moloney goes on to survey current literature through 1975, pp. 1-22.

Moloney, p. 22. (Parenth. mine)

See Moloney's excellent development of this idea, pp. 33-38. Also, R. Schnackenburg, St. John, 2 vols., I:511-12.

Westcott, p. 48.

Moloney, p. 35; see also E. Kasemann, New Testament Questions of Today, p. 155; Pollard, p. 6-15.

If this were so, it is curious that no such fulfillment is forthcoming in this Gospel or the Synoptics. On the other hand, the only clue provided suggests something they will see in their lifetime (i.e. it does not appear to be an eschatological reference).

See Deut. 30:12; Prov. 30:4; Bar. 3:29; Wisd. 9:16-18; IV Esdras 4:8.

There may even be overtones of anti-gnostic ideas here. See H. Odeberg, Fourth Gospel, pp. 72-94 who argues that the passage is a polemic against Jewish Merkabah mysticism, influenced by Hermetic and Mandaean antecedents. At any rate, it is certainly difficult to see how Bultmann, pp. 146-153 could possibly argue in support of a Gnostic revealer who ascends and descends.

See Introduction.

Barrett, p. 238; Hoskyns, p. 292; Bernard, p. 191; Morris, p. 359; Stracken, pp. 185-86.
173 Only his sacerdotalism drives Moloney to suggest otherwise, p. 115.

174 Ibid., p. 138.

175 An obvious reference to the cross and the Jewish complicity in it.

176 Bultmann, p. 349. Although this fits well with his thesis, Moloney prefers the absolute εγώ ειμι p. 138.

177 Guthrie, N.T. Theology, p. 385; Moloney, p. 213.

178 For a concise summary of contemporary literature and thought on the Johannine Son of Man, see Guthrie, N.T. Theology, pp. 287-90.
CHAPTER III

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

If one takes the text of the New Testament seriously, it is impossible to discuss the humanity of Christ without reference to John's testimony. John categorically denies the possibility of any true believer equivocating on this vital truth (1 John 4:2, 3; 2 John 7). On the other hand, few seem to be willing to pursue the question of what John meant by such an assertion. Ryrie does not discuss it. Cook briefly discusses 1 John 4 and the Prologue of the Gospel and then follows Westcott in reading the Chalcedonian Creed back into John's thought to explicate his meaning. Kasemann denies altogether that John asserts an authentic humanity. Ladd sketches a few passages in the Gospel which suggest human qualities, but concludes that John was not really concerned with any ontological speculations. The question turns on whether John had an ontology of human nature, and if so, what use he made of it in relation to Christ. Cook and Westcott merely assume that he did and that it was identical to the formulations of Chalcedon. Kasemann assumes that he did and that he was careful not to confuse it with Christ's essential nature. Ladd and Ryrie (since he does not discuss it) seem to go on the assumption that he did not have an ontology and that the visible features of human nature are mere accidents of the historical record.

A study of this sort cannot afford to assume anything (even when that seems reasonable). Thus the approach here will be to examine
whether the Bible, as a whole, has an ontology of man, and if so, to
determine the extent to which John consciously or unconsciously,
works from it. Then, the evidence in John for Christ's humanity can be
examined, and its theological significance discussed.

The Concept of Humanity

In the Old Testament

The Old Testament employs two kinds of terms in discussing man. There are terms that depict man as a living entity as distinct from the
Creator or other created beings. Then, there are terms which are in-
tended to particularize one or several characteristics of man. In the
former category are adam, adam: "a human being;" ish: "an indi-
vidual, husband;" enosh, enash: "a mortal;" ben, ben adam: "a son, a son of man, human being;" baal: "owner, master, lord; gebor, gebar: "a mighty man;" zakar: "a male;" nefesh: "a soul, a breathing creature;" and echad: "one, an individual."

In the latter category are such terms as basar: "flesh;" neshama: "breath;" ruach: "spirit;" nefesh: "soul;" bal, leb, lebab: "heart;" sekvi: "covered part, inner man;" meim, "bowels;" kelayoth, "kidneys, reins, seat of emotion."

In the first grouping, the terms employed are sometimes generic
e.g. adam, ish to depict man as distinct from God (1 Sam. 15:29) and
animals (Gen. 1:26) or they may be used to include man or woman (cf. Gen.
2:7ff.; 18ff.). Some terms view man in terms of his dignity and nobility
with power and sovereignty. Other terms tend to view man in terms of
his mortality (Ps. 8:4), particularly as consequence of the Fall (Gen. 2:7;
3:19). Some see this latter event as constituting an ontological change in man which through the recreation of the new birth is restored. If this idea is accepted the only valid references to authentic humanity would be in the context of believers. However, this is not the case. The catastrophe of the Fall brought about radical changes in man's relationships to his Creator and the creation. It also introduced profound ethical and moral changes. But, the Old Testament still depicts man as "man," both before and after the first sin.

In the second grouping, where the Old Testament particularizes certain characteristics of man, the intent is not so much to divide man into different parts (as in Greek thought) but to emphasize certain aspects which are normative for man as a whole. In this sense "flesh" depicts man's transitoriness (Ps. 78:39). "Spirit" is used to denote man as a living being (Ps. 146:4) or as a person (Ezek. 11:19). The "soul" is not a separate part of man but the life principle which animates his body (1 Sam. 19:11). It marks him out as an individual (Deut. 24:7; Ezek. 13:18f). The soul is neither pre-existent nor exempt from death. It is the whole man (Gen. 2:7). Terms such as "heart," "inner man," "bowels," "reins" all depict certain inner qualities of man in terms of his emotions, intellect, or will, in contrast to his outward characteristics.

The Old Testament ontology of man is more implicit than explicit. Man is viewed in a unique position by virtue of his creation. He is "basar" and a living "nephesh," at one with all other living creatures on the earth. As such he possesses a "material" existence which binds him to time and space. He is both creaturely and transitory. But man is more. He has "inner" qualities which seem to be uniquely his. These
inner qualities seem to constitute driving forces which motivate him to great positive goals as well as unspeakable evil. They mark him out as capable of exercising dominion over the rest of creation. Thus man is viewed as "flesh," and as a "person." But the Old Testament implies yet more. Man is not only a creature of the earth. He has the obligation and the capacity to maintain a relationship with God. It was this relationship which was shattered in the Fall and restored to a limited degree in accordance with divinely ordained means.

Thus, man is unique in relation to the earth, to himself, and to God. It is in this sense that the Old Testament "defines" him.

In the New Testament

In the New Testament man is viewed as distinct from animals and plants (Matt. 4:19; 12:12; 1 Cor. 15:39; Rev. 9:4), from angels (1 Cor. 4:9; 13:1), from Christ (Gal. 1:12; Eph. 6:7), and from God (Matt. 7:11; 10:32, 33; Mark 10:9; John 10:33; Acts 5:29; Phil. 2:7). While the terms ἄνθρωπος and ἄνδρα are frequently used synonymously, the force of the former suggests "a human being," and the latter, the sense of "male." ἄνθρωπος is depicted as dependent on the Lord (James 1:7). The term is also used to designate Jesus historically (Matt. 26:74; Mark 14:71; John 19:5, and with respect to his true humanity (Phil. 2:7; 1 Tim. 2:5). It also occurs in relation to human nature in general (Rom. 3:5; 1 Cor. 3:3; 15:32; 1 Pet. 4:6; Rom. 6:19; 1 Cor. 10:13).

The New Testament also develops specific qualities of man with such terms as σώμα, "body;" σάρξ, "flesh;" ψυχή, "soul;" πνεῦμα, "spirit;" νους, "mind;" συνείδησις, "conscience;" and καρδία, "heart." Like the Old Testament terms, these concepts are not so much a reference to a distinct component of man's ontology as a characteristic of man as a
whole person. When \( \omega \nu \alpha \) is used it may have reference to physical body, or of the person as a whole (Phil. 1:20; 1 Cor. 15:44; cf. Phil. 3:21). \( \chi \rho \alpha \rho \varepsilon \) is sometimes used as a synonym for \( \omega \nu \alpha \), sometimes to depict man in his sinfulness, sometimes of man as a human being (2 Cor. 4:10, 11; 15:50; Rom. 8:1-3; 2 John 1:14). The \( \psi \chi \eta \) seems to be used much like nephesh as the life principle animating man's physical body (2 Cor. 12:15; 1 Cor. 15:44). \( \nu \varepsilon \nu \nu \alpha \) depicts the inner man having consciousness of himself and the capacity of communication with God (Rom. 8:16). \( \kappa \rho \delta \alpha \) is a similar term expressing the seat of human thought and emotion. \( \nu \omega \nu \) focuses attention upon man's capacity for rational thought. The \( \sigma \nu \nu \nu \lambda \delta \omicron \sigma \omicron \zeta \) denotes the capacity of man for moral thought.

Thus, in the New Testament, as in the Old, man is viewed in wholistic fashion as a person with unique qualities. As Berkouwer correctly observes: "we never encounter in the Bible an independently existing abstract, ontological, structural interest in man."\(^{12}\) But again, that is not to say, with John A. T. Robinson, that the terms represent a "chaotic" conglomeration, incapable of yielding a clear insight into the components of man's ontological structure.\(^{13}\) The New Testament terms, like those of the Old Testament, view man in a three-fold sense. He has temporal, physical qualities. He is a rational and emotional being. He has the capacity for communication and fellowship with God.

In John

John's usage of most of the terms common to New Testament anthropology reflects an understanding consistent with other writers. He employs the term \( \sigma \chi \rho \varepsilon \) to convey the idea of authentic humanity (as
opposed, say, to an "apparent" humanity).\textsuperscript{14} In its usage the term seems to signify man the creature as opposed to God the Creator (cf. 1: 13, 14). Likewise, \textmu\omega\mu\alpha denotes, essentially, the physical, external component of man (2:21; 8:15; 19:38, 40). Yet, both may be used to address the whole person (3:6; 5:24, 28; 6:51 ff.; comp. 19:38-40 with 20:2, 12). His use of \textomicron\nu\omicron\theta\omicron\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\upsilon\zeta is consistent with the other New Testament usage (1:13; 2:24, 25; 3:4, 27; 7:23, 46, \textit{et al.}). He also contemplates the "inner" qualities of man with such terms as \textkappa\omicron\omicron\lambda\lambda\alpha\varsigma, "belly," \textkappa\alpha\rho\omicron\omicron\alpha, "heart," \textpi\nu\varepsilon\omicron\theta\omicron\alpha, "spirit" and \textvarphi\chi\nu\nu, "soul." Frequently, in this latter category, he has in mind certain emotional qualities (13:21; 14:26; 16:6); conscience (1 John 3:20, 21), or mind (3 John 2). At other times the force appears to denote a point of contact with God (3:6; 4:24), or the life principle animating the body (19:30).

\textbf{Evidence of Christ's Humanity}

Given the foregoing discussion, evidence to support the humanity of Christ must demonstrate that his essential being is in keeping with the ontology of man as it is found in the rest of the Bible. It must also demonstrate that He had the common lot of mankind with a human ancestry and relationships. It should reflect that He had ordinary human characteristics (without regard to sin and its results) and was known historically in human terms. The argument here will be developed along these lines.

\textbf{Essential Elements}

Given the above it does not suffice at this point to merely affirm that Christ had a body, soul, and spirit, although John mentions all three (e.g. body, John 2:21; 19:38; soul, John 12:27; and spirit,
John 13:21, 19:30). Rather, it must be shown that Jesus is characteristically depicted in terms common to human nature. In this regard John speaks of Jesus as a member of the human family with authentic historical existence. He became "flesh" (i.e. a human being), John 1:14. He came into the world and existed among men (John 1:10, 14, 26; 6:14; 12:46). He is found moving about from place to place through ordinary means. When He appears to supervene natural laws (as in 6:16-21) it is always clear that John intends to underscore His divine mission (cf. 6:27), but never at the expense of His humanity (cf. 6:35-63).

John also speaks of Jesus in terms of the "inner man" (2:24, 25; 6:15; 11:33, 38; 12:27; 13:21). Here Jesus is a thinking, rational, emotional, and volitional being. He decides to do things and, in terms governed by His circumstances, He makes judgments and pursues ideas and goals that are His alone.

Finally, Jesus is related to God as a man. He prays to God (11:41, 42; 17:1ff.). He views His earthly life in terms of obedience to God's will (17:4, 6-8). Throughout the Gospel He is depicted as a man who knew God as His Father, who loved Him, and defined the ethical and moral propriety of all His actions in terms of God's Word and purpose.

Thus, without submitting to strict ontological definitions, John views Jesus in terms common to all men.

Human Appellations

It is a mistake to assume that the names and titles of Christ have only a functional purpose. While some, like "Lamb," "Son of Man," "Messiah," etc. are preeminently functional (though not exclusively), many are employed simply because it was by these terms that Jesus was known or addressed. As such, many have an ontological force (e.g. "Son,"
"Logos," "Lord," etc.).

The man

In relation to Jesus' humanity the most obvious appellation of importance is "the man." The Baptist addresses Him as "a man" (ἄνηπ) that comes after him (John 1:30). The woman at the well testified of Jesus "come see a man (ἀνήπ) that told me all things" (John 4:29). The officers sent to seize Him returned with the report: "never did a man speak the way this man (ἀνήπ) speaks" (John 7:46). The man whose sight had been restored identified Him as "the man called Jesus" (John 9:11). His enemies in the Sanhedrin repeatedly call Him a man to underscore their charge of blasphemy (John 9:16, 24; 10:33; 11:47). Caiaphas prophesied that one "man" should die for the people (11:50). John is certain this was an unintentional prophecy of Jesus' crucifixion given to him by God because he was high priest that year (18:14). At His trial He is cited by His enemies as well as Pilate as "the man" (18:27, 29; 19:5).15 What is inescapable in the use of this expression by John is that friend and foe alike were impressed with Jesus as a person whose appearance was quite consistent with what was externally discernable about "men" in general. Sevenster even wants to assert that placement of the appellation as it occurs in the Gospel narrative is calculated to impress the reader with the fact that Jesus was so "profoundly absorbed" into the human family that even the "unconscious declarations of the governor" would be inclined to view Him accordingly.16 Given John's theological purposes, Sevenster is quite probably correct.
Jesus

John also employs the name "Jesus" throughout the Gospel. This is the name given to Him by His parents and which highlights His relationship to history. In this same connection, John is careful to speak of both Mary and Joseph as Jesus' legal parents (whence the expression "son of Joseph and of Mary," 1:45; 6:42). The point already discussed above is that Jesus has a solidarity with the human race which is not only authentic, but theologically essential. His lineage may be traced back through David (1:49; 7:42; cp. Rev. 3:7; 5:5; 22:16) and Jacob (cf. Matt. 1:1, 2; Luke 3:34; cp. John 1:47) to ancient promises given through Moses and the prophets (1:45; 5:46). The importance of this focuses primarily upon Jesus' sacrificial death as authentic man for sinful man. In this same connection John talks about Jesus' brothers (2:12; 7:3-5, 10) and even His maternal aunt (19:25). Thus John's portrait of Jesus (to use the terminology of art) is realistic, not impressionistic. It is not an attempt to create an appearance, but to reproduce an authentic figure of history, Jesus the Nazarene.

Son of Man

The title, "Son of Man," insofar as it is the title of "incarnation," is also a title of humanity. The title is the one most commonly utilized by Jesus to refer to Himself in the Gospels, and in John is employed in a unique way to point to His Messianic mission. Its association with the "bread of life" presupposes the capacity to die as a man (6:29, 53, 62). Its employment in relation to the cross has the same force (12:23, 24; 13:31).
Soteriological titles

There are also several appellations used by John which are intended to convey a soteriological idea, but which suggest authentic humanity at the same time. These are the "Lamb," the "Bread of Life," and the Resurrection.

In spite of the difficulties which it presents to many, the Lamb no doubt is antitypical of the Paschal Lamb of Exodus 12, rather than the lambs destined for daily sacrifice of the temple (cf. Exod. 29:38-42). The title, as such, occurs on the lips of John the Baptist (1:29, 36). This may be accounted for in terms of John's predilection for integrating theology with the narrative. Or, better, it was a prophetic pronouncement by the Baptist (who may or may not have understood its full significance) which provides the perfect introduction to Jesus in John's Gospel whose ministry climaxes at Golgotha. The Paschal typology is further underscored by several other ideas incorporated by John. For example, "Not a bone of him shall you break (19:36; cf. Exod. 12:46). The use of hyssop to bring the vinegar to Jesus' mouth (19:29) recalls Exodus 12:22. John is also careful to point out that Jesus died on "the Preparation Day of the Passover" (19:14, 31). Also, many other parallels with Exodus abound in John which are difficult to ignore, and which point to the Paschal motif.

But John's significance does not seem to be restricted to the Paschal idea. The Lamb of which he speaks "takes away the sin of the world." The Paschal sacrifice was substitutionary, but not expiatory. It is here that John weds the Paschal Lamb with the suffering servant of Isaiah. This "Lamb of God" is "led to the slaughter" (Isa. 53:7; Jer. 11:19) and "bears the sins" (Isa. 53:4, 11). Only when these two
ideas are united is the full significance of the Lamb seen in both the Johannine context, and in other New Testament writers (see also 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Rev. 5:8, 10; 14:1, 3, 4, 9; 5:12; 13:8). The Lamb slain marks His followers with His blood, purchases them for God, and leads them to victory, "worthy . . . to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:12).

Christ, as the "Lamb slain" cannot have merely an "apparent humanity." To qualify He must be taken "from the sheep" (Exod. 12:5). His mission demands that He be "like unto His brethren" (Heb. 2:17). Then, having accomplished his task He has "passed into the heavens" (Heb. 4:14, 15; cf. John 16:25-33) leading His followers to victory (16:33; 1 John 4:4).

Other soteriological titles are also inexplicable apart from an a priori assumption of real humanity. The "Bread of Life," for example, connects the importance of Jesus' "flesh" and "blood" existence to the faith of His followers. It is only as a man that He could lay down His life and offer Himself to the world. But this also becomes the basis for the impartation of life and fellowship for those who receive Him. Again the Exodus typology emerges in John's writing. The Paschal Lamb was not only slain, but was eaten in obedience to God's command. As such, those who believed and obeyed, received deliverance. The manna in the wilderness accomplished the same result. Those who received it lived. But now John records Jesus' promise, "those who eat this bread shall live forever" (6:58). The antitype transcends the type.

Likewise "the Resurrection" as a title for Christ presupposes certain things about Jesus. John seems to say that what Jesus provides,
He must also possess. He gives life and He is life. He brings love, and He is love. He brings victory over death, because He has achieved it. It is also important to notice that the concept of the resurrection in John does not imply any ontological changes. There are changes, but only in degree and capacities. The resurrection of Lazarus back to his original state under sin was intended to show what Jesus meant by "resurrection" (11:17-26, 38-44). This is not merely a ghostly, "spiritual" existence, but a material existence. Lazarus is raised back to life, in full possession of all his faculties. Later, when Jesus is raised, John is careful to point out that people touched Him (20:16, 17; 25-28); He "breathed on them" (20:22); He ate with them (21:12, 13); He talked with them (21:15-23). This is important to John because human existence does not seem to be contemplated otherwise. Berkouwer correctly observes: "Anyone expecting that Christ's deity would completely overshadow his genuine humanity in this period is mistaken. The great change which took place ... is His transition from the cross to glory; but he himself, the man Jesus Christ, remained unchanged." It is also important to keep in mind that John does not contemplate sin as an essential component of human nature, hence, the relative difference between Lazarus and Jesus in terms of resurrection is not an ontological one. It is rather a difference in "state." Lazarus was raised back to the state of humiliation. Jesus was raised to a glorified state.

Human Characteristics

It has been shown that John's portrait of Jesus conforms to his implied ontology of human nature. It has also been shown that Jesus was known as a man and addressed by His contemporaries in human terms. His earthly ministry is further described in terms which imply and necessitate
authentic humanity. It remains here to show that, in terms of Jesus' appearance, emotions and circumstantial contingencies, Jesus behaved the way human beings characteristically behave.

A man among men

What John has to say about Jesus in His day-to-day associations and involvements with men emphatically underscores his commitment to the reality of Jesus' full humanity. While it is true that he is not concerned with the "Christmas story" as it is developed in the Synoptics it is a gross over-simplification to suggest that he is not concerned to present Jesus as subject to the common afflictions, passions, and contingencies as all men.

Aside from the fact that Jesus repeatedly calls Himself a man (8:40), and Jesus' contemporaries clearly recognized Him to be a man (10:33; 4:9, "a Jew"), there is evidence in John's Gospel to show that this was not intended as an accommodation, on the one hand, or misunderstanding on the other.

In terms of Jesus' earthly relationships the whole manner of His life is human. He attends a wedding with family and friends (2:1-11) and responds in a predictable way to His mother's request to secure more wine (2:3). "He had brothers who told him what He ought to do in a manner which anyone who has grown up with brothers will immediately recognize (7:3-5)." He demonstrates a concern for His mother and His friends which shows deep filial attachments common to human relationships (11:5; 13:1; 19:26, 27). The prospect of His death disturbed Him and He ponders, for an instant, the options available to Him (12:27). He demonstrates many emotions such as anger (2:14-16), fear for His life (7:1, 10), love (11:5; 13:1), compassion (11:14, 15; 16:19-33), sorrow
anxiety (13:21). He is also subject to the common lot of man. He grew tired and thirsty (4:6, 7; 19:28). While He showed a remarkable ability to understand human nature and the dynamics of human interaction (2:25; 6:26), there are times when He lacks information and seeks it through questions (6:67; 11:26; 11:34; 18:34). The fact that He must anticipate restoration to His former glorious state shows that He is restricted to time/space (17:4, 5). He is subjected to rejection and betrayal (6:66; 13:21).

Finally, He died as a man. Given Kasemann's bias he asserts that the passion narrative is merely "a postscript" which John felt compelled to include because it was such a deep-seated tradition he could not avoid it.31 Morris retorts: "Some postscript!"32 Indeed, if Kasemann is correct one has to wonder what happened to the rest of the Gospel. It must have originally constituted a much larger document! Here is a "full and absorbing narrative. It cannot be said that John has skimped on this part of his story."33 In fact, rather than providing the reader with a half-hearted review of some of the events least damaging to his supposed docetism, he seems to go out of his way to emphasize the human aspects of the event. He cites the presence of Jesus' mother and aunt (19:25). He records Jesus' very human concern for Mary's future welfare (19:26, 27). He cites His thirst (19:28). When the soldiers pierce His side John emphasizes that blood and water came out, and that this is attested by an eye-witness.34 What John is saying by this is that the wound was post-mortem (i.e. Jesus had really died) and His body fluids separated in precisely the way they would in any person who had been dead for several hours.35 Then he meticulously records what was done with His body in keeping with Jewish burial rites.
Jesus' relationship to God also points to the reality of His human nature. Davey has developed this evidence extensively. He depends on God for power (5:30), for knowledge (8:16), for His mission and message (4:34), for His being, nature, and destiny (5:26; 6:57; 18:11), for His authority and office (5:22, 27; 10:18; 17:2), for love (3:16; 17:24-26), for glory and honor (13:32; 5:23; 17:24), for His disciples (6:37, 44; 17:6), for testimony (5:31, 37), for the Holy Spirit (1:33; 3:34). Davey goes so far as to deny that any "relative attributes" of deity are ascribed to the earthly Jesus in John's Gospel. Ladd, however, is no doubt correct when he calls for a more balanced approach to the two natures in the Gospels.

There can be no question that an honest, unbiased appraisal of the humanity of Christ in John will recognize two facts. The first is that John's gospel and epistles were written against the backdrop of a gnostic docetism. The second is that John writes, in part, to counter this heresy with an emphasis upon the authentic humanity of Christ.

A man apart

Not only is Jesus' humanity authentic in the Johannine corpus, it is also distinctive. It is important to note here that the Bible never views sin as an essential part of human nature. Sin is an intruder. It is that which reduces man by so much from that which God intended him to be. Even in the teachings of Paul this is to be observed. While it is true that Paul does bring sin and the flesh into close relation (Rom. 6:6; 7:18; 8:3), his writings reflect a two-fold usage of the term "flesh." He uses it to speak of human nature conditioned by the body (without an ethical connotation) and human nature conditioned by the Fall (with an ethical connotation). But nowhere does he imply that flesh, itself,
is sinful. This is evidenced by the fact that he says it can be cleansed and sanctified (1 Cor. 6:13, 19, 20; 2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 6:13; 12:1). Thus sin detracts from true humanity, it does not validate it. To this general view of human nature John is in agreement. To speak of the true humanity of Christ is not to introduce the necessity of a sin nature. On the contrary, John, as the Synoptists, regards Jesus as sinless. Again, this does not detract from His humanity any more than Adam could be contemplated as less than human before his sin. "Only in that which makes the rest of us less than human did He differ from us." 

This doctrine of impeccability is extensively developed in John. There are direct claims such as 6:69 where Peter's testimony is given, "You are the Holy One of God;" 7:18, in an indirect statement about Himself Jesus says He is "true and there is no unrighteousness in Him;" 8:29, Jesus asserts: "I do always the things pleasing to (God);" 14:30, Jesus claims "the prince of this world ... has nothing in Me;" and 18:38 (cf. 19:4, 6) Pilate's thrice repeated judgment, "I find no guilt in Him." There are also passages which relate Jesus' life and work in terms of His obedience to the will of the Father. In 4:34 Jesus declares, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me." In 10:36 He asserts that the Father "sanctified (Him) and sent (Him) into the world." Jesus was able to reflect upon the totality of His life in 17:4-12 and without reservation say to God "I have glorified thee ... I have accomplished the work Thou gavest Me to do ... I have manifested Thy name." There are also passages which show the futility and even the absurdity of certain attempts by Jesus' detractors to effectually level the charge of sin against Him (7:23, 4; 8:46; 9:24-34).
Then there are passages which reflect John's theological opinion. For example, he develops the concept of "light" in the ethical sense of "right" or "good" as opposed to "darkness" which denotes "evil." The immediate source of this idea appears to have been Christ Himself (11:9, 10; 12:35, 36). When Jesus employed the expression with reference to Himself He used it to show that as the "Light" He defines right living and exposes the evil of men by His very presence (cf. John 15:22-25). John picks this up and develops it. He asserts in 1 John 1:5, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." This makes his remarks in the Prologue all the more intelligible. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. The Baptist was the "lamp" (John 5:35), but not "the light" (i.e. he is not "the light" in the same sense as the incarnate Logos, 1:8). But what, exactly, was the light? Jesus defined it as "the witness which I have" and "the works which the Father has given me" (5:36). The same connection is made in 9:4, 5. Given the opportunity to heal the blind man Jesus declares that He must work the works of God because He says, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." The expression here then, is primarily a functional designation. It is in this same sense that a connection can be seen between John 9:4, "we must work the works of Him who sent Me" (Jesus includes His disciples in His mission) and 1 John 2:6-11 where John understands that the light is still shining insofar as believers continue in His word (i.e. continue to work the works of God, cf. also 1 John 1:5-7). The force is equivalent to Matthew 5:14, "Ye are the light of the world." Thus, as the Light, Jesus defines right living (simultaneously exposing wrong living) because His works are always in conformity with God's will. This concept requires impeccability if one is to make any sense of it at all.
The sacrificial lamb motif is also important to John in relation to Jesus' sinless character. The Baptist introduces Him to his followers as "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). John extrapolates from this when he asserts: "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin" (1 John 3:5). The climax of the Gospel which leads inexorably to the precipice of Golgotha's hill takes its significance from the sinless character of the Lamb slain there. The term which John uses in another context is "worthy" (Rev. 5:9).

At this point there are two problems. The first is related to the baptism of Jesus. Insofar as this was a baptism of repentance from sin (Mark 1:4), does not John's inclusion of it vitiate the notion that he taught Christ's absolute sinlessness? The second problem has to do with the meaning of sinlessness in John. Does it refer to an incapacity to sin or a capacity not to sin? Further, is it possible to even discern which?

The first problem focuses upon the question as to how Jesus could have had anything to do with a baptism which presupposes sin. While much could be said about this given the added input of the Synoptic accounts, the search for answers within the parameters of John's writings imposes difficulties which make concrete conclusions very unlikely. But the search will not go unrewarded. John does point the way toward an amicable solution fully consistent with the Synoptics and his explicit assertions of Jesus' sinlessness.

In his gospel, John discusses the ministry of the Baptist in relation to his announcement of Christ (1:19-36). A careful analysis of the passage will show that John understood the significance of the
baptism of Christ as obedience to a divine mandate by which the Messiah was to be manifested to Israel and identifiable to the Forerunner (1:31, 33). It is interesting that he does not refer to it as a baptism of repentance (as does Mark for example), but underscores John's role as "forerunner, to make straight the way of the Lord" (1:23). Given John's portrayal of Christ this distinctive is especially conspicuous. By the same token, he should not be charged at the outset with manipulating the data to fit with a docetic bias. In the first place, there is no "conflict" with the Synoptics. What he says is in full harmony with what is recorded by the other gospel writers (cf. Matt. 3:15). In the second place, there doesn't seem to be any reason why the idea of repentance is necessary here, given John's purpose. On the contrary, he does not intend to tell the reader why he was baptizing others. He only intends to tell the reader why he was supposed to baptize Jesus. That purpose is two-fold: (a) to be manifested to Israel (1:31), and (b) to provide the necessary context by which John would be able to identify Him as the Messiah (1:33).

Another interesting feature about John's narrative is that he begins his story at least forty days after the actual baptism of Christ. The chronological clues are given in 1:29, 35, and 2:1. According to the Synoptics, Jesus was baptized and led immediately into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (Mark 1:12). He then returned, ministering in Judea until John was arrested. Then he went to Galilee (Matt. 4:12; Mark 1:14; Luke 4:14). In John's account Jesus was in Cana only three days after His introduction by John as the Lamb. Again, given the Synoptic record, one may safely conclude that John was arrested shortly after that incident (3:22-30 must be placed earlier in the chronology). Thus, one of
the last pronouncements of the Baptist concerning Christ is given in 1:29-34. On that occasion, John was baptizing in the Jordan when he saw Jesus coming to him. He recognized Him immediately and declared to those around him, "Behold the Lamb of God . . . the Son of God." He testifies that he knows Him because of the unusual events at His baptism; events which he goes on to share with the gathered crowd of followers.

Again, the only reason the baptism is mentioned here is because it provides, on the lips of the Baptist, a testimony to Jesus' role as the Lamb and the Son of God. In this sense John's testimony fits perfectly with John's stated purpose for writing (1:34; cf. 20:31). Thus, whatever else John had in mind, he is not suggesting, for a moment, that Jesus' humanity was not real. Nor is he, conversely, implying by this reference that Jesus had to repent of previous sins in order to qualify for His subsequent ministry.

Yet all this still begs the question. Given the fact that John's baptism ordinarily signifies repentance, its usage in the Fourth Gospel is problematic. If the dual purpose indicated above is asserted then a contradiction seems to be implied. If not, then Jesus' sinlessness seems to be impugned.

John resolves this with the introduction of the Paschal Lamb. There is a direct connection between Jesus' baptism and his manifestation to Israel as the "Lamb of God." Berkouwer notes, "like the presentation in the temple, which was directly related to Israel's deliverance out of the house of bondage (Jesus submits to baptism because He is) bound to this people and thus bound he will bear its guilt." Hence, to declare Him to be the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" is tantamount to saying, with Matthew, that it was "to fulfill all righteousness
Both statements reflect a vicarious relationship. Jesus identifies totally with Israel in her sin. If S. Craig Glickman is correct about the meaning of the fast in the Bible, then that too was an outward expression of Jesus' identification with the sins of the people.

H. D. McDonald expressed it this way:

In His act of baptism Jesus gave vivid expression of His identification with humanity. He identifies Himself with the people who had come to Jordan confessing their sins. He will publicly renounce the sin which He has always renounced in deed and spirit. At the Jordan He openly unites Himself with Human sin; at Calvary He will openly atone for it. As man He takes His place with sinful humanity and goes forth to His task with the seal of God's approval and acknowledgement upon Him. He has been dedicated to His work in the baptismal waters and anointed with the Spirit for the fulfillment of it.

Thus, there is no conflict either with Jesus' relationship to the essential meaning of John's baptism (repentance) or with what John makes of it. It may be said that Matthew 3:15 provides a straight-forward prophetic purpose for the baptism while John provides a practical purpose (to make Christ identifiable). But there is no contradiction.

The final concern requiring discussion here has to do with the specific nature of Jesus' sinlessness. What does John mean when he says: "in Him there is no sin" (1 John 3:5). The question is not whether sin was ever committed by Jesus. That idea is emphatically denied by John. Rather, the question has to do with why this happens to be the case. Is it because, as a man subject to all human contingencies including the posse peccare, Jesus had a profound ability to resist sin's temptations? Or is it that, given Jesus' essential nature as the Logos in flesh, sin was impossible for Him?

Some have argued that temptation implies the possibility of sin. Insofar as Christ was tempted, it was possible for Him to have sinned. Others have argued that the uniqueness of the theanthropic
Person implies the absolute impossibility for Him to sin. In this view, temptability and impeccability are two entirely separate matters. Still others refuse to advance to this question, arguing that it is sufficient to simply assert the factual sinlessness of Christ.

The issue is much more clearly defined for systematics than it is for a biblical theology. In the first place, the argument typically centers on the wilderness temptation experience. But it has already been shown that John does not even mention this. Furthermore, John nowhere discusses Jesus' temptation abstractly so as to provide a theological rationale for it. At this juncture, one is tempted to hasten to McDonald's conclusion, that the question is not answered (at least in John).

A careful study, however, will show that John is not altogether indifferent to Jesus' temptations. The Synoptics record that Jesus was tempted of the Devil in the wilderness following His baptism. But none of them imply that this was the last time Satan accosted Him with solicitations to evil (cf. Matt. 16:23; Luke 4:13). What is also true about the temptation accounts is that they appear to be representative of the three kinds of attack Satan used to convince Jesus to by-pass His ultimate plan for coming into the world; namely, to put away sin and bring many sons to glory by way of Calvary.

He is first tempted to focus on the material needs--bread. The answer: "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God" (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; cf. Deut. 8:3).

Then He is tempted to attract a following by presumptuously flirting with death and demonstrating His power over it. His answer is, God must not be tempted. While this answer first seems rather enigmatic,
further reflection will show that Jesus is asserting that God has providentially established a certain order and plan for His creation and it is presumptuous to tempt Him to obviate that order. In the case of Christ this has particular import for the manner and timing of His death and resurrection.

The third temptation was to secure His ultimate goals by submitting to Satan as His sovereign and receiving the kingdoms of the world as His reward. His answer was that God, alone, is sovereign and worthy of worship and service.

While the temptations are three in number, they are singular in purpose, i.e. to convince Christ to by-pass the cross and deal with the sin problem by some other means.

Now this raises a serious question. The very heart of John's Gospel is the cross. The entire book moves methodically (not to say ominously) towards it. Furthermore, John interprets Jesus' incarnate ministry in terms of a conflict with Satan to destroy his works (1 John 3:8; cf. 4:4). How could he totally ignore the most profound demonstration of that conflict and the resultant victory over Satan's attempts to turn Christ away from Calvary. The answer is that John does not ignore it. It is not necessary for John to discuss Jesus' wilderness temptation because (1) the other Gospel writers, whose works were extant and already being circulated at the time of John's writing, have already given this account, and (b) because John integrates these three temptations into Jesus' daily encounters and shows how Satan came back again and again with the same propositions.

In chapter 5 Jesus fed the multitude with bread. In chapter 6 that same multitude is prepared to follow Him anywhere because, as
Jesus put it, they "ate the loaves and were filled" (6:26). Here the temptation is so subtle one is apt to miss it. But Jesus didn't. He recognized this for what it was and gave the same answer He gave in the wilderness: "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life" (6:27). He then went on to introduce Himself (the eternal "Word" of God) as the "bread of life."

The second temptation is mediated through His brothers (7:1-10). They advise Him that if He wants to gather a following, He ought to go down to the Feast of Tabernacles and openly display His powers (7:3). But John points out that the reason Jesus was not willing to go to Judea was that "the Jews were seeking to kill Him" (7:1). To follow this advice would have been as lethal as jumping off the pinnacle of the temple. Again Jesus meets the temptation with a recognition of God's timing and the presumptuousness of walking into a dangerous situation just to show off His powers. He may as well have said: "Thou shalt not tempt God."

The third temptation occurs three times (one suspects the triad is intentional). The first time it occurs on the lips of Christ Himself (12:27, 28). He confesses to His disciples: "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, Father, save me from this hour?" Jesus supplies the answer as well, and it comes almost as a benediction to God: "Father, glorify Thy name." The second time this alternative is indicated is when Jesus is arrested. Peter draws his sword as if to defend Jesus from the Roman authorities (18:10, 11). Again, the temptation is incredibly subtle. Yet, anyone who knows the dynamics of the human instinct for survival will know that there was never a time when Jesus was more vulnerable than at this moment. When one acts on instinct his true character is revealed. Here Jesus is presented with the last
possible chance of escape from impending death, and He knows it. Perhaps there is an alternative. Overthrow the power of Rome by resorting to the arm of flesh. But that would be to submit to Satan's rule. And so His answer is the same. He must honor the will of the Father: "The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" (18:11).

Then in His last hour, Pilate comes to Him with both a claim and an offer (19:10, 11). The claim: I have authority over You. The offer: cooperate with me and I will release You. Once again Jesus answers by affirming that there is, ultimately, only one Sovereign, and it is not Pilate, nor the world-system he represents (which, for John, resides in Satan, cf. 1 John 5:19). God alone has arranged this scenario and it is He who must be honored in terms of the role each will play and the resultant consequences. In another time and place He would have said: "You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only." With that in mind He turned and walked the lonely road to His death.

Thus the three-fold temptation is clearly visible in John. Only His approach is different. Going back, then, to the original question, does John give any indication, in all of this, as to the dynamics of Jesus' resistance to sin? Are there any clues to suggest that John wants the reader to know that there was a real possibility for Him to make the wrong decision, or is it John's intent to show that even in the face of Satan's most subtle and forceful advances, Jesus could do only the will of His Father.

The answer is conditioned by two considerations. First, Christ is introduced in John's Gospel as the Logos in flesh (i.e. God incarnate). Thus, whatever follows in his Gospel is conditioned by this dual nature. What is given in the Prologue must have been intended to help the reader
interpret everything about Christ which follows it. Thus, it is inappropriate to consider the sinless life of Jesus in terms only of His human nature, or only His divine nature. He is a Person who has a dual nature. This is not an incidental feature, it is essential. To argue from the side of His humanity to insist on the possibility of sin (in a parallel to Genesis 3, for example), or to argue from the side of His deity to establish a kind of empirical sinlessness, is to bifurcate the two natures. Berkouwer correctly observes, "In the sinlessness of Christ we are concerned with the Person of Jesus Christ and not with the sinlessness of God." This is precisely John's conception of it.

The second consideration is the relation of Jesus' sinlessness to His aggressive pursual of the Father's will. Christ is sinless precisely because He is always obedient to the Father's will (8:29). John does not present an abstract metaphysical quality of sinlessness. He presents the incarnate Person who is incapable of sin because He is one with the Father. He confronts temptation, not as one who might be deterred from His divine mission, but as One who demonstrates only the capacity for obedience to it (again cf. John 6:26-59; 7:6-9; 12:28; 18:11; 19:11).

There is, therefore, no question that John's doctrine intends to affirm that in Christ, there is not even the possibility of sin. He is the Logos in flesh, come to do the will of the Father who sent Him. To that mission He was indefatigably faithful unto death--even the death of the cross. It could be said that John converges with Paul at this point. But, impeccability is not an abstract sort of thing for John. It is that which both motivates Jesus in His mission, and qualifies Him to accomplish it.
The Theological Importance of Christ's Humanity

When John affirms "Christ as having come in the flesh" he is asserting that in the historical person, Jesus, there is full and real humanity of the pre-existent Christ against any suggestion of docetism that might challenge it. In fact, John considers this doctrine of such great importance that one may use it to differentiate authentic from counterfeit Christianity (1 John 4:2, 3; 2 John 7). The AV rendering of this passage is misleading. It seems to view this as a mere credal affirmation. That is not John's intent at all. "The confession is not of the fact of the incarnation, but of the incarnate Christ." But why is this so important to John? Is this supposed to be acknowledged because it is an essential distinctive of Christian faith, or is it an essential of Christian faith for specific acknowledged reasons? For John, it is the latter. In both the Gospel and especially the First Epistle, John details a number of crucial factors which have meaning for the child of God only because "Christ is come in the flesh."

In the Gospel

The first concern for John relates to Jesus' role as the Revealer of God. In 1:14-18 he is careful to note that the pre-existent Logos "became flesh" and "dwelt among us and we beheld His glory." John is aware that "no man has seen God." But this One, the Logos who was "with God," and who "is God," and who was "in the bosom of the Father;" He alone has "exegeted" God. This One is not "a prophet." He is "the Prophet" (1:21). The incarnation as a doctrine affirming full humanity is absolutely crucial in John's scheme of things. This is the "true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man (1:9; cf. 9:5)."
He is God in flesh. God, living, breathing, moving up and down among His people and revealing the very heart of God. He is the Light in the same sense that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is at once, the "ideal" man and the only "truly authentic" man. In His life He is the prototype and example (cf. 1 Pet. 2:21). In His death, He is the propitiation (1 John 2:2). In glory He is the Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1).

John also gives expression to the idea that Jesus came to fulfill Old Testament prophecy and as such, the incarnation was essential. He is the "Prophet" (1:21), "Messiah (Christ)" (1:41), the long awaited "King of Israel" (1:49), who is a "Jew" (4:9), "Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph" (1:45), the One who was anticipated with gladness by Abraham (8:56), prophesied by Moses (1:45), and spoken of in all the Scriptures (5:39). If He only appeared to be a man, He only appeared to fulfill the Scriptures.

Furthermore, John speaks of Jesus' death and resurrection in relation to His human nature (2:20, 21; 11:50, 51). An apparent body could only apparently die and be raised. But John testifies that these were very real events (19:17-42; 20:1-29). The entire Gospel turns on the reality of the incarnation in relation to this point. How else could He be "the Lamb?" As God, how else could He truly suffer and die? How else could the resurrection of the believer correspond to His (1 John 3:2)?

In the Epistles

The affirmation in 1 John 4:2, 3 is more than just one of the criteria by which the Christian can know He is born of God (cf. 5:13), although it is certainly that. But it forms a key which unlocks the
full significance of the present ministry of Christ in the life of the believer. John sees a direct link between Jesus' incarnate life and ministry and His present and future ministries in relation to the Christian.

He demonstrates first of all that the incarnation was important to the historical verification of the message ("word") of life. This is not an idea, as such, that John is preaching. It concerns "what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands have handled." What is it that John has seen and heard and handled? It is "the life manifested . . . to us." Throughout this Epistle, John expands on the "normal Christian life." He knows what it is because he walked and talked with the perfect, living manifestation of it. With that thought in mind John proceeds to explain that his purpose in writing was to show the reader how to maintain fellowship with "us" (Christians) who, in turn, are in fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ (1:3). Only then will they experience the fulness of joy.

But to have this fellowship, sin must be dealt with. How? On the basis of the shed blood of Jesus Christ (1:9). He is the "Advocate" and the "propitiation for our sins." Again the basis for these concepts is the authentic humanity of Christ.

Further, if Christ did not become a man there is no substantive hope for the Christian. John expresses this in 3:2 in the words: "when He appears, we shall be like Him." If He never became "like us" the promise of this verse can never be true, for we shall surely never take on the essential nature of Deity. Nor does John intend to say that. Rather, his thought is much like Paul's in 1 Corinthians 15. The
resurrection of Christ is the firstfruits and the believer's resurrection is the harvest. His resurrection is both the basis and the pattern for the believer's.

John goes on to relate the purpose of Christ's incarnate ministry in relation to Christian purity (3:5-10; cf. 1:5-7). The practice of sin is entirely antithetical to the work of Christ to "destroy the works of the devil." Christian love also finds its definition in the incarnate Christ, particularly in the context of Calvary (3:16; 4:9). The very gift of salvation is owing to the incarnate ministry of Christ (4:10, 14). In fact, if the Christian is to have any spiritual understanding at all about God and the nature of his life in God, it is because "the Son of God has come and given us an understanding" (5:20). It is no wonder that for John only antichrist could deny this vital truth so necessary to salvation, godly living, and hope of glory.
Notes

1C. Ryrie, Biblical Theology.

2It is beside the point whether he is correct. His methodology is wrong. W. R. Cook, Theology of John, pp. 60-62.

3E. Kasemann, Testament of Jesus, p. 9.


5This is not to denigrate the value of the evidence from their perspective. On the contrary, such "accidental" evidence would tend to be the most significant of all since it would constitute unbiased historical data.

6While John may not have "consciously" had an ontology of man it is a mistake to assume that he did not have one.

7A. C. Custance, Man in Adam and in Christ, pp. 340-50.


9Ibid.

10The term here is employed to depict the qualities of intellect, emotion, and will.

11Ibid.

12G. C. Berkouwer, Man, the Image of God, p. 196.

13A. T. Robinson, A Study in Pauline Theology, p. 16.

14See above, pp. 65, 66.

15Some, like Sevenster, "Remarks on the Humanity of Jesus in the Gospel and letters of John," Nov. Test. 24 (1972):185-93, see in 19:5 an intentional reference to Jesus' humanity (in the most humiliating sense) situated in juxtaposition to the equally profound expression: "Behold your king" (19:14).

16Ibid., p. 193.

17 Discussed above, pp. 58, 59. It is John's favorite designation for Christ.

18Ibid.


22. Sabourin, Names and Titles of Jesus, pp. 161, 162.


27. Cf. Supra, pp. 71-75.

28. The term Morris repeatedly utilizes to describe Kasemann's evidence for Docetism in John, pp. 38, 50.

29. Ibid., p. 48.

30. While emotion is found here, it is not altogether clear what emotion. The passage permits anger or perhaps disappointment, but probably denotes sorrow or compassion for those grieving. At least this is what eye-witnesses made of it (11:36).


32. Morris, p. 46.

33. Ibid.

34. Perhaps John himself (cf. Introduction).

35. Modern medical science could make even more out of these facts.


37. Ibid., pp. 77, 170.


To borrow an expression from H. D. McDonald, Jesus, Human and Divine, p. 38.

Ibid.

Supra, pp. 70, 71, 89, 90.

McDonald, p. 38.

This is not to deny that the concept had currency in the Essene sect, and had a fairly wide-spread extrabiblical usage in the first century A.D. but only to say that John is influenced more by what Jesus made of this expression than with what the Qumran community did with it.

Most agree with Hendricksen when he equates it with the attributes of truth and love (pp. 72-73). Again, most, like Ladd, p. 250, relate this to Jesus' divine nature exclusively. Here, it can be seen that the concept has particular and profound import for His humanity. In this sense there is a close affinity in John with the ethical dualism of Qumran where the Sons of Light were those who followed Moses' Law as interpreted by the Teacher of Righteousness, only here it is Christ who stands as the ultimate standard by which righteousness is defined. For discussion see R. E. Brown, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 17(1955):403-419; 559-574; L. Mowry, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Early Church, pp. 28-31, William S. LaSor, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament, pp. 191-205.

Berkouwer, Person, p. 245, parenthes. mine.

S. Craig Glickman, Knowing Christ, pp. 39, 40. See also John 3:7, 8; Esther 4:16; Lev. 23:27-29; Ezra 10:6; Judg. 20:26; 1 Sam. 3:6; 2 Chron. 20:3; Joel 1:14; 2:12; Jer. 36:9; Ezra 8:21; Neh. 1:4.

McDonald, p. 30.

Hodge, Systematic Theology, 2 Vols., II:457.

L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, pp. 318, 319; Walvoord, Jesus Christ our Lord, pp. 145; Berkouwer, Person, pp. 263, 264.

McDonald, p. 32, although such a view ultimately favors peccability, since no commitment implies that the question is open--hence there is the "possibility" of the possibility of sin.


Berkouwer, Person, p. 259.
54 Ibid., pp. 258-65.

55 The text favors the construction which views the entire phrase as a connection. As Brook notes: "The confession needed is of one who is Jesus Christ incarnate, a man who lived on earth . . . , and who is also the preexistent Christ who manifested God's glory in this form." ICC: The Johannine Epistles, p. 109.

56 Ross, NIC: Commentary on James and John, p. 197.

57 Brooke, p. 109.
CHAPTER IV

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

This study has established two facts pertaining to John's christology. First, it has established that John understands Jesus as having come into the world from a pre-existent, glorious state—a state to which He returned when His earthly mission was accomplished. John introduces Him, not in a manger, but "in the beginning" uniquely related to God as the Logos and the Monogenes.

Second, this pre-existent Logos has entered history as vere homo. "The Word became flesh." Against the backdrop of contemporary gnostic heresy, John's affirmation of Jesus' humanity is seen as deliberate, explicit, and theologically essential.

But, the predominant focus of John's christology has not yet been examined. The climax of the Prologue identifies the Logos as "the only begotten God" (1:18). The witness of the Baptist is: "this is the Son of God" (1:34). Nathanael exclaims: "You are the Son of God" (1:49). His enemies seek to kill Him because He was "making Himself equal with God" (5:18; cf. 10:33; 19:7). Doubting Thomas believes and worships the risen Christ with the affirmation: "My Lord and my God" (20:28). Immediately the light of the entire Gospel is turned toward the reader with the arresting words: "these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (20:30, 31). The christological focus of John's Gospel is the deity of Jesus Christ.
The Purpose of John's Gospel

There can be little question about John's purpose when he writes. He characteristically explains his purpose in unequivocal terms. In the Gospel his purpose is to solicit faith in the reader with respect to the mission and Person of Jesus. As "Christ" He came to give life. As "Son of God" He is worthy and able to accomplish that goal. Accordingly, even the reader who, perhaps, has "not seen" yet believes, may have life.

To speak of the deity of Christ is to speak of Him in relation to God. Few question that such a relationship exists in John's writings. What is questioned, however, is the specific nature of that relationship. Obviously, one may be related to God in a variety of ways. Even the appellation "son of God" may denote any one of several biblical ideas. It could designate an angelic being (Gen. 6:2-4; Job 1:6; 2:1); a person living in loving obedience to God (Hos. 1:10); Adam, as the direct creation of God (Luke 3:38), a New Testament believer (Rom. 8:14, 19; 2 Cor. 6:18); or it may be used christologically (Mark 1:1; Luke 1:32, 35; John 1:34; 10:36; etc.).

Furthermore, one may legitimately question the meaning of the term God. In the Bible the term is used to speak of false gods (Judg. 11:24; 1 Kings 11:5; 2 Kings 1:2), human judges (Ps. 82:6; cf. John 10:34) or Jehovah (Deut. 6:4).

Even when applied to Jehovah, there is a radical difference between the full understanding of this concept for the Jew of the first century and the Christian. It was precisely this distinction which occasioned Calvary and forever distinguished Christianity from the Commonwealth of Israel.

A further word of caution is also in order here. In a subject
of this sort, the temptation is to draw from systematics. Accordingly, the approach would be to show that what John says about Jesus squares with the orthodox conception of deity. However, even if this could be done it would contribute nothing toward the understanding of John's doctrine, since it presupposes an anachronism; namely, that John's conception of deity was the same as that of a modern systematic theologian. Therefore, in this chapter, the first order of business must be to show what John understood about the nature of God. Then it must be shown that this understanding was extended to Jesus Christ. And finally, it must be shown how this all contributes to John's overall purpose to convince his Jewish kinsmen of the truth and import of the gospel.

**Doctrine of God in John**

John makes several important statements which provide insight into his doctrine of the nature of God.

**God Is Spirit**

First, he says that "God is spirit" (John 4:24). Cook is correct when he notes that the anarthrous construction emphasizes "the nature or quality of 'spirit' rather than the personal identity of 'a spirit.'"\(^1\) God is not hereby indicated as one of a company. Nor is it likely that the passage signifies the Holy Spirit.\(^2\) However, Cook's subsequent observation that this "is an affirmation that God is transcendent, pure person," presents some difficulties. In the first place, it is not altogether certain what Cook means. His rationale appears to be more arbitrary than compelling. This is not to say that he is necessarily wrong; only that Cook reflects a poor methodology here.

What is clear in the passage is that Jesus is instructing the
Samaritan woman that there is coming a time when it will no longer be necessary to offer true worship to God at the temple in Jerusalem, or at any other geographical location for that matter. "Because God is spirit, he cannot be limited to any one place, be it Jerusalem or Gerizim." In other words, the nature of God is such that He is not restricted to time and space. Hence men shall worship God not in a "place" but in "spirit and in truth." Of course John knows this dialogue will have as much impact upon his Jewish reader as it had upon the woman at the well, and as such, will go a long way toward removing the obstacle of the Jewish concept of worship toward the practices of the first century Church.

There are also several additional ideas which John associates with God as spirit that are important. In 3:8 the term is used in its original sense of "wind" to illustrate the mysterious and inscrutable power of God evidenced in regeneration. Like the wind, He is not seen. But also like the wind, the effects are sovereign, and visible.

In 11:33 and 13:21 "spirit" occurs as a psychological term to signify the seat of violent emotion. Although these passages do not relate to God, per se, they are important in showing that John's language is more closely allied to Hebraic, than to Greek thought (cf. Gen. 41:8; Ezra 1:1, 5; Exod. 6:9; Deut. 2:30).

In 14:17; 15:26; 16:13 the Holy Spirit is depicted as the πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας. Again, John's affinity with tradition is vitally important. For John ἀληθείας does not denote some hidden, eternal reality born out of a Hellenistic dualism of form and particular. Holmes is correct when he says it is a "mistake to suppose that the Greek language and thence the New Testament use of ἀληθεία reflects
... a platonic or even Gnostic epistemology. John's use of \( \lambda \eta \theta e \zeta \alpha \) is much more influenced by the Old Testament use of \( \nu \nu \) in relation to persons and their acts (cf. Gen. 24:49; 47:29; Josh. 24:14; Ruth 3:12; 2 Sam. 7:28; Isa. 59:14; Mark 5:33, 12:32; John 8:44-46). \( \nu \nu \) as an attribute of God signifies something open and revealed for what it is. Hence, it speaks of His integrity, faithfulness, and trustworthiness (Ps. 89; Hos. 2:19-23). Thus John parallels Paul's thought in Romans 1:20: "His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made. ..."). Truth, as such, has reference to God's self-revelation as it corresponds to the reality of His Person.

Further Old Testament influence upon John's writing is seen in his association of the \( \nu \nu \nu \nu \) in 6:63 with the giving of life. There is some question as to whether this is a reference to the Holy Spirit or the attribute by which Jesus' \( \varphi \mu \mu \alpha \) are characterized. The NASB translators chose the former idea. Dodd is correct when he associates it with Jesus' words as indicated by the next clause. He observes a virtual hendiadys with \( \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu \varphi \mu \mu \) \( \kappa \alpha \) \( \zeta \omega \) , in spite of the fact that it might militate against his thesis that John is writing under Hellenistic influence. The \( \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu \) finding expression in words with life-giving power is without parallel in Greek thought.

As the life-giver, \( \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu \) is further denoted in John as the medium of regeneration (3:5), contrasted with \( \sigma \rho \) as the medium of natural birth (1:13). Here \( \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu \) no doubt refers to the Holy Spirit, but the stress of the antithesis is upon God's "mysterious power as the 'living God' while human flesh is feeble, powerless, the victim of natural processes." This again is more properly an Hebraic antithesis
In 4:24 Ryrie sees the suggestion that to worship God "in spirit" is the antithesis of "carnal and outward" worship. But the force is more than "inward vs. outward." It is "effectual vs. feeble." Ryrie's antithesis is Hellenistic. John's is Hebraic.

Thus when John speaks of God as spirit he is depicting God in Old Testament terms as superceding human existence, unrestricted by time and space, sovereign, powerful, and inscrutable. He is known to man particularly in His capacity as the life-giver. Completely foreign to John is the idea that the άνεξαντία is born out of the Hellenistic concept of the invisible, ultimate reality. Such an assertion completely misunderstands John and vitiates what He says about the mission of Christ as the Son. But this anticipates subsequent discussion.

God Is Light

1 John 1:5 contains an expression similar in style to John's assertion that God is spirit. Here he says: "God is light." There are several approaches which may be taken in explaining this statement. Some have dismissed it as belonging to another author or redactor. This view would deny the common authorship of the Gospel and First Epistle. Dodd takes this view because he wants to say that John's concept of light is identical to that of Philo. In this view light and life are considered aspects of the Logos. "For John as for Philo, the eternal fons deitatis, the Father to whom the Logos is Son, is prior to all archetypes." Such a view is incompatible with a high view of Scripture and, therefore, must be dismissed.

Another approach is to associate it with one or another of the activities of God as love, self-revelation, or redemption. However, as
Cook observes, "the statement 'God is light' is an affirmation about God's nature rather than about His activity."\textsuperscript{18} Some prefer to relate it to one or another of God's attributes. Cook follows Weidner in relating it to the attribute of holiness primarily because the context of 1 John 1 is concerned with "walking in the light" and thus, having "fellowship with the Father." Cook elaborates: "The light that makes fellowship possible must be construed as the absence of sin (light is the absence of darkness . . .). God's holiness represents . . . His absolute moral perfection. He is totally separated from sin in His essential being."\textsuperscript{19} Ryrie agrees with this view but adds "revealedness, because when the light shines there can be no shadows (this does not necessarily imply revelation but simple revealedness); and infinitude, for light is not bound except by darkness and in God there is no darkness."\textsuperscript{20} In spite of the ambiguity and imprecision of these ideas, they do not appear to be too far from what John is saying.

A. E. Brooke is certainly correct when he says, "The primary idea suggested by the word in this context is 'illumination.' It is the nature of light that it is and it makes visible. God's nature is such that He must make Himself known, and that knowledge reveals everything else in its true nature"\textsuperscript{21} (cf. 1 John 2:3ff). Certainly, in context it is impossible to exclude the ethical implications. The qualities of holiness, freedom, "revealedness" (?), infinitude, etc. may certainly be used to explicate the force of the term, but one must be careful not to limit the expression to these ideas exclusively (as will be shown). "The nature of man's relation to God is determined by the fact that God is light."\textsuperscript{22} Thus, whatever may be known of God, insofar as it is shown to man, illuminates the way he ought to live.
God is Love

The same anarthrous construction used to say "God is spirit," and "God is light," is employed by John to say "God is love" (2 John 4:8). The force is also the same. He is saying something about the nature of God, not His behavior. Concerning this several facts must be observed.

First, to say God is love is to say that God must love. It has already been noted that it is the nature of God as "light" that He is and makes visible. Thus, what may be said about His essential nature is visible as the light and, accordingly, defines human behavior. To say, with John, that God is love is to say something about what He is and the texture of the light that issues from Him. John makes this association explicit in 1 John 2:10 when he says: "the one who loves . . . abides in the light. Obviously, this relationship has profound soteriological (and christological) implications, which John does not fail to note in 1 John 4:9, 10. God's love is manifested in that He sent forth His Son as a propitiation. If it is a part of God's nature to manifest Himself, then Calvary is not arbitrary, but demanded by His love. God is, and therefore must love. If this is not so, then neither is He the light as defined by John.

As for the ethical implications of this truth, to say that God is love is to qualify human love (1 John 4:11, 16). Calvary is crucial to man's understanding of what love is. The song-writer speaks of the "shadow of the Cross." John would prefer to speak of the "light of the Cross." In terms of love this event discerns all human expressions of love.

But what is love? To say that God is love, what has John said
about Him? Without getting unduely involved here, it is enough to say that John's predilection for Hebraic thought, and the ethical application given in the context and the relation drawn between God's love and Calvary (1 John 4:10), argue for an Old Testament motif to explain John's meaning. In the Old Testament, to love God is to keep His commandments (Exod. 20:6, Deut. 5:10) or to serve Him (Deut. 10:12; 11:13; Isa. 56:6) or to walk in His ways (Deut. 10:12, 19:9, 30:16). But, such love is not simply external conformity to a code. It is an attitude that originates in the innermost recesses of the heart and soul (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 4:4, 31:33; Ezek. 11:19) and is, in its ultimate sense, God-given. This conforms to Jesus' words in John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (cf. also 14:21-24). This theme is further developed in 1 John 5:1-3. Thus, the love of God is not a "bleeding-heart" concept often depicted in contemporary theology. Rather it finds its ultimate sense in the character of God Himself. God always is and acts in perfect harmony with His own perfect character. Just as authentic love always manifests itself in conformity to the commandments of God (i.e. expressions of His character and will) so God cannot deny Himself. He abides faithful to His nature (cf. 2 Tim. 2:13). Thus, His response to sin must be according to His infinite justice and holiness. The solution to the sin problem must account for a full expression of the wrath of God against it. This theme is further developed, soteriologically in Romans 3-5. In the final analysis there is no definition of God's love--only a demonstration--the cross. At this point the dominant themes of John and Paul converge.

Summary

It may be concluded that John's concept of God is firmly rooted
in the Old Testament doctrine. The reader can be assured that John is not going to deny the essential affirmations of the Old Testament regarding the nature of God which are so vital and important to his Jewish heritage. This doctrine is vital for John's ethics, his soteriology, and for his christology (as will be seen). But to relate the Old Testament doctrine, with its profound emphasis on the unity of God, to John's thesis that Jesus is also God, presents for John no mean assignment. Indeed, any student of historical theology will immediately recognize that John is already presented with all the essential elements of the Trinitarian and christological debates which were to preoccupy the best minds of the church for the next four centuries.

Divine Names and Titles

The Logos

The Logos and Monogenes Huios have already been discussed in an earlier chapter. However several observations are noteworthy here.

It has been shown that John's doctrine of God gives particular attention to God as spirit, light, and love. In each of these qualities John presents God in terms of His relation to man. As spirit He is unrestricted and therefore accessible to all. As light He radiates what He is and thus discerns (and judges) all. As love He acts consistently with His own character to provide a solution to the human predicament. This solution John identifies as the sending of His Son to make propitiation for the sins of the world.

In its relation to this concept of "light" the Logos becomes a significant argument for the deity of Christ. The Logos is God (John 1:1), life (1:4), and light (1:4, 9). It is the nature of light that it is
visible, and so John adds: "the Logos became flesh . . . and we beheld his glory" (1:14). But when John speaks of His revelation as the light he is not speaking of a sensuous or existential event, he is talking about the essential nature of God as He is and must be known. In the person of Jesus Christ this was manifest. Any Jew should have known that God's nature was such that the incarnation was both necessary and to be expected. The reply of Jesus to Philip illustrates this fact.

"Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Yet again, Jesus has a particular idea in mind. He does not speak of His human "form" (nor yet His divine "form," cf. 5:37), but of His words and works (14:10, 11). What follows in John's use of light in relation to Christ is very interesting. In the Prologue He affirms that the light is the very "life" of God shining in the darkness. This light is that which "enlightens every man" (1:9). It came first through the agency of the Baptist who was not "the light," but the λόγος, the "lamp" (John 5:35), then through "the Christ" (note the proximity between the two antitheses of John and "the light," (1:6-8), and John and "the Christ," (1:20). Thus while the Baptist is properly only the λόγος, Christ is the true light (the very light itself). How was it that the Baptist manifested the light? John observes that it was through his "witness" (1:7, 8). Jesus virtually equates the terms of light and witness in 5:35, 36: "you were willing to rejoice for a while in his (John's) light. But the witness which I have is greater than that of John . . . ." This renders Jesus' words explicable when He said: "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." He means that He, in His
ministry, is directly communicating the life of God to men (cf. John 12:12). As John arranges his material, Jesus' final appeal to the multitude was: "for a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light . . . while you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light" (John 12:35, 36). Thus, there is an unmistakable and necessary connection between the incarnation and God's self-manifestation (i.e. "light"). Accordingly, when Jesus was no longer in the world, that ministry would be relegated to the "sons of light" (i.e. the disciples), as it was earlier to the Baptist (John 5:35; 14:12). This is fully consistent with the Matthean "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14), and the very intimate relationship indicated between the ministry of the first Christians and the ascended Christ (Acts 9:4, 5).

For John the ultimate witness (i.e. light) which communicates the life of God is the cross. In 3:14-21 there is the association made between "lifting up the Son of Man" and the assertion that "light is come into the world" (3:19). Again, in 8:28 when Jesus is criticized by the Parisees for His claim: "I am the light of the world," He tells them: "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am (the light?)." Again in 12:35, 36, Jesus' statements about the light come after the statement: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (12:32). For John, this event coincided with the ultimate manifestation of His glory (cf. John 7:39; 12:16; 13:31, 32; 17:1).

At this juncture, John has come full circle. In the Prologue he asserts that the Logos is the life, which, in turn, is the light. The Logos became flesh and manifested His "glory." But how? As the
light He manifested His glory when He made the "life" of God visible and available. In the thinking of John there is a very necessary and logical relationship between the nature of God and His self-manifestation in Jesus. As "spirit" God must be accessible. Jesus is "He who comes into the world." As light God must be visible. Jesus makes it clear that to see Him is to see the Father--He has "exegeted" Him to the world. As love God must be true to Himself. Jesus said, "I am the truth." Only in this sense could God's holy character be satisfied (propitiated).

John has turned the tables on His Jewish reader. The nature of God as he had come to know Him in the Scriptures does not obviate the claims about the deity of Christ, it renders them both valid and necessary. Either God has entered history in the person of Jesus of Nazareth or He should be expected to do so through someone else just like Him.

The Monogenes Huios

In the context of the foregoing discussion the concept of the only-begotten Son takes on an added dimension. It has already been shown that the term expresses the idea of "eternal Sonship." Thus it signifies preexistence and deity. But it has also been shown that this term is uniquely related to the Son as the "life-giver," and the manifestation of God's love (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8-10). Now it has been shown that this work of the Son at Calvary was a necessary demonstration of God's love and communication of His life. In this event the light of the glory of God drew the attention of the world to Jesus Christ (John 12:32)--not simply to spotlight Him as a great example to man, but as the "light" (12:35-36), hence (in John's language) the Revealer of God.
Son of God

In addition to the μονογενής υἱός the larger concept of the Sonship of Christ in John requires discussion. Without doubt, in contrast to the Synoptics, "Jesus' sonship is the central christological idea in John." In the fourth Gospel, Jesus cites God as "Father" or "My Father" 130 times--twice as often as in all of the Synoptics combined. In the Prologue He is μονογενής υἱός. In His first introduction in the narrative He is announced by the Baptist as "the Son of God" (1:34). John acknowledges that part of his purpose is to demonstrate that Jesus is the Son of God (20:31). While John's purpose is acknowledged as theological, whatever he is signifying must be considered in agreement with the common tradition. "As the Synoptic evidence shows, it is founded upon the knowledge that Jesus had spoken of Himself as 'the Son' in a pre-eminent sense." Yet the question remains: what is the precise meaning of the expression? Schnackenburg has tabulated at least four approaches to this question in contemporary scholarship. 

1. Some hold that Jesus used the expression to depict Himself as the unique Son of God. This is the traditional and conservative view.
2. Some suggest it is a concept derived from the Hellenistic/gnostic concepts of the "divine man." 
3. Others argue that it is a term used in the theology of the early Church to express subsequent reflection upon certain seminal ideas expressed by Jesus (i.e. baptism narrative, servant motif, Son of David, etc.). 
4. Still others say there is no way of knowing exactly how Jesus used the expression (if at all) since it only reflects the developing theology of the early Church.

All but the first of these approaches may be dismissed at the outset. The debate as to whether the expression may be attributed to
Jesus' usage of it depends upon the interpretation of the so-called "Q" saying, Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22; Mark 12:6; and Mark 13:32. Taylor, Jeremias, and Marshall have argued convincingly that these texts are undeniably authentic, that the expression is Palestinian and Jewish in origin to express a father-son relationship, and that Jesus used it, not as a "title," but within a statement which depicts His true relationship to God.30

While the term has Messianic implications (John 1:49; 11:27), it contains the unmistakable claim to deity, and as such was not misunderstood by those that heard it (John 10:33, 36).31 Jesus used it in John's Gospel to depict His eternal relation to the Father (5:25; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4) and to explain His supernatural power (5:17-79, 25; 9:35; 10:32; 11:4; 14:10). It is used to depict the Son as the special object of divine love (5:20; 10:17). He uses the title to give divine authority to His words (8:26, 28, 40; 14:24). Because of this relationship of the Father to the Son, Jesus claims equal honor with God from man (5:23; 14:1).

In addition to Jesus' employment of this title, there are many other striking features in John's Gospel which are germane to this discussion. These have been summarized by Guthrie as follows: (1) the Son is sent by the Father (3:34; 5:36, 38; 7:29; 11:42). (2) The Father loves the Son (3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 17:24). (3) The Son is dependent on the Father (5:19, 30; 14:28, 31; 15:10). This, as noted above, is significant only in light of the incarnation. (4) The Son prays to the Father (11:41; 12:28; 17:1-26). (5) The Son is the exclusive Revelation of the Father (6:46; 8:19; 10:15; 14:8-9). (6) The Son speaks the words of the Father (10:18; 12:49; 14:24; 15:15; 16:25). (7) The Father has given
all things into the Son's hands (13:3; 16:15; 18:11). (8) The Son returns to the Father (14:12, 28; 16:10, 28; 20:17).32

In the Epistles John speaks of the Son in much the same way. As Son He was sent by the Father (1 John 4:9, 10, 14). To Him the Father bears witness (5:9). He is the true object of faith (5:5, 10, 13). His blood cleanses from sin (1:7). He is manifest to undo the works of the devil (3:8). He must be confessed (4:14) or denied (2:23). With the Father He bestows grace, mercy, and peace (2 John 3). He makes propitiation for sins (4:10). He is the source of eternal life (5:11). He gives understanding (5:20).33

Lord

For over a half century34 the importance of the title Lord has been generally recognized as having vital significance for understanding the honor given to Christ in the New Testament.

The fundamental meaning of the term is "having power or authority."35 (a) The term occurs most frequently in the sense of "owner" or "master," or as a term of respect when addressing a superior (cf. Matt. 21:30; 27:63; Acts 16:30). (b) In the LXX it occurs sometimes as a general title of honor (i.e. Gen. 19:2), but its most common and important usage is to render the Hebrew Adonai as well as the personal name Jehovah. As applied to God it "denotes His sovereign power. It is a title which corresponds to His nature."36 It speaks of Him as Creator and Ruler with power over life, death, the world, and man.37 (c) In pagan usage it was used as a cult name in Caesar worship and in the mystery religions. It was used in Egypt of Ptolemy XIII, Herod the Great, and Agrippa I and II. It was applied to Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. It was applied in Pagan worship to Osiris, Sarapis, Hermes-Thoth, Isis,
Artemis, and Cybele. 38 "Thus it may be said with certainty that at the
time when Christianity originated 'Lord' was a divine predicate intelligible to the whole Eastern world." 39

But this does not necessarily indicate a dependency upon the
Hellenistic milieu to account for the New Testament use of the term.
Boussett has argued that in the "prevailing atmosphere" the early Chris­tian community developed its own cult-hero and gradually assigned νομοσ to Jesus. 40 Taylor disagrees. He observes, "a simple process of borrow­ing can never be a sufficient explanation even if it took place in the uncontrollable depth of the soul of a community." 41 Sabourin gives a
much more reasonable account of the New Testament usage of this title in reference to Christ. He argues that the early Christian community did
not borrow from contemporary Hellenistic ideas, they displaced them.
"To adore Christ as the only νομοσ was, then, to reject two false cults:
the one, of the Hellenistic deities, and the other, of the emperor." 42

In John the term is explicitly colored by its LXX usage. In the
Gospel Jesus is first introduced by the Baptist as the One for whom he is preparing the way. To explain the nature of his own ministry he
employs Isaiah 40:3, "make straight the way of the Lord (Jehovah),"
(1:23). The next day he sees Jesus coming and declares: "This is He on behalf of whom I said, After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I . . ." (1:30). The NASB translators have beautifully captured the sense of ὅς ἐπετειλέω τοῦ Ἰησοῦν. The expression is unmistakably exegetical of νομοσ in 1:23. Thus, "Lord," as quoted from Isaiah may not be merely passed off as a reference to the Old Testament Jehovah—it is an identification of the Old Testament Jehovah with Jesus. The rest of the Gospel goes on to prove this fact, climaxing with 20:28,
when Thomas who is finally convinced declares: "My Lord and my God."

A word needs to be said about the claim of many scholars that *Kurios* is exclusively a post-resurrection title and was never used of or by Jesus before that time. Taylor is typical when he says: "It is clear that the evangelist feels it appropriate to speak of 'the Lord' in these contexts (resurrection and post-resurrection), but does not feel at liberty to use the title in connexion with the earlier ministry." He goes on to conclude "it is highly improbable that this title was used in the lifetime of Jesus. It is as the Risen and Ascended Lord that He is *ὁ κύριος*."

This assertion is rejected for three reasons. First, in order to reach such a conclusion all absolute uses of the title which occur before the resurrection must be excluded. Aside from frequent passages in the Synoptics, John employs *ὁ κύριος* in 4:1, 6:23, and 11:2. Taylor follows Bernard and Hoskyns in asserting that these are a copyist's gloss. He bases this on "textual and exegetical grounds." But the only clear reason stated is a predisposition against such a usage. Such reasoning is clearly subjective and inconclusive. Second, the usage of *κύριος* in 9:36-38 must be considered as more than a "titular nominative." Here the man who had been healed of his blindness responds in much the same way Thomas later did when he "saw" Christ for who He really is. John notes: "And he said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped Him" (9:38). This is more than mere "respect or even reverence to his benefactor. In the Gospel of John the verb always indicates divine worship (see also 4:20, 21, 22, 23, 24; 12:20). "These scenes, and the offer of Divine homage unrebuked by Jesus and uncommented upon by the evangelist, are among the most potent arguments for the belief of the Church
in the Divine nature of the Lord." Third, to assert with Taylor that John only feels comfortable using the ὁ Κυρίος as a divine title after the resurrection, one is hard pressed to explain how it is that John, who writes his entire Gospel after the resurrection, would be reluctant to employ the term to cite any incident in the earthly life of Christ. The assertion makes no sense unless John is writing a sort of "daily diary." Taylor is certainly not saying this! Furthermore, if this is correct, it follows that the epistles would contain an even higher incidence of the title. But this is not the case. Apart from 2 John 3 it is not used at all.

In John, "Lord" is explicitly associated with Jehovah on the one hand, and Jesus on the other. The term is used to assert Jesus' deity at the outset, to recognize His deity throughout the Gospel and to confirm His deity at the conclusion. To be sure, the resurrection went a long way toward confirming this fact, but it is a mistake to think that it was not appropriate to use Κυρίος in its relation to Jesus until after that event.

God

Related, theologically, in the early confessions of the Christian community are the titles "Lord" and "God." John assigns the latter appellation to the historical Jesus, (1:18 and 20:28), and to the pre-existent Logos, (1:1). There can be little doubt that these references in John offer "striking testimony to the firm conviction of the evangelist that the man Jesus about whom he writes his gospel is none other than God." Nor can any convincing evidence be presented to prove Barrett's contention that they reflect later liturgical influence upon the gospel writer. Again, in Guthrie's words: "It is not without some signifi-
cance that this gospel which begins with so strong an affirmation that Jesus is God should end with one of the disciples of Jesus confessing the same truth."  

**Divine Works and Signs**

**Works That Presuppose Deity**

John's doctrine of Christ's deity is further amplified by ascribing to Him divine works. This falls into two categories. First, there are passages which speak of Christ as exercising divine prerogatives and doing things that only God can do. For example, (a) he speaks of Christ as the Creator in John 1:3, "All things came into being through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being. . . ." (b) He is the life-giver: "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes" (5:21; cf. 5:25; 1:12; 11:43, 44; 20:31). (c) It is said that He baptizes with the Holy Spirit (1:33) and promises to send the Holy Spirit to be the "Paraklete" in His place when He is gone (7:37-39; 14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:7; cf. 1 John 3:24). (d) He says that to Him has been given all judgment (5:22). This is uniquely related in John to the concept of light, which has been shown to be an aspect of the nature of God. As light, God in the person of the Son makes all things visible. Although Dodd is certainly wrong in tracing the roots of this idea to contemporary Hellenistic circles, he is correct when he brings the concepts of light and judgment together with the essential meaning of "discrimination."  

There is no contradiction between 3:17, 8:15, and 12:47 where Jesus says He was not sent to judge the world and the claim in 5:22, 27 which implies just the opposite. John distinguishes between the negative sense of judgment (i.e. condemnation) spoken of in the former passages, and
the positive sense of judgment (i.e. bringing things to light) Dodd observes:

The purpose and intention of the coming of Christ are in no sense negative or destruction, but wholly positive and creative; but by an inevitable reaction the manifestation of the light brings into view the ultimate distinction between the truth and falsehood, between good and evil. Hence it is ΥΠΟΘΕΤΗΣ, discrimination. Men by their response to the manifestation of the light declare themselves, and so pronounce their own 'Judgment.'

There are also other works which John ascribes to Jesus which are related to His prerogatives as God. (e) He cleansed His "Father's house, the temple--an audacious undertaking if He was not, at the very least empowered with divine authority (2:13-17). (f) He forgives sins. Even if John 8:10, 11 is not taken as authentic, there is certainly 5:14 and the explicit assertion that His blood is the basis for all forgiveness for the believer (1 John 1:7-9). (g) His promise to hear and answer prayer was predicated upon His deity (John 14:13). (h) 1 John 2:2 asserts that He made propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Only God could ultimately propitiate the holiness of God (comp. John 1:29). (i) The negative purpose of the atonement is "that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). (j) Finally in 1 John 2:1, John assures the believer that Jesus is his advocate (the same term used in John 14-16 to signify the Holy Spirit--"Paraklete") before the Father. To put it in the words of F. F. Bruce, such a promise assumes that Jesus is "a peer of the Most High." 

Works That Authenticate Deity

C. H. Dodd's arrangement of John's Gospel, adopted by Hull, and more recently by Dale Moody is misleading. Excluding the Prologue and perhaps Chapter 21, he divides the Gospel into two books. The Book of Signs (1-11), and the Book of the Passion (12-21). It is misleading,
first, because it lends credence to the suggestion by Bultmann (long since refuted) that there is behind the present text of John a "Semeia-Quelle." Secondly, the "theology of the signs" has ramifications for the whole Gospel, not just part of it. Indeed the most profound sign of all is given in Dodd's so-called Book of the Passion (cf. 2:18, 19; 3:14; 12:32, 37-41; 20:30).

Peter Riga's study of the signs in John's Gospel, done more than fifteen years ago still stands today as one of the most important works on the subject in recent years. While he is certainly no friend to conservative evangelicalism, his work on this subject is worthy of serious consideration. The essential elements of his argument are given as follows.

In John it is inappropriate to translate semeion as "miracle," since John does not, in fact, ever speak of "miracles." Semeion is used in the more comprehensive sense of "significant event." As such, it is used by John to depict both miracles and discourses "taken together." In contrast to those who only saw the "extraordinary works" Jesus performed, John invites the reader to see in them "revealing signs of the presence and personal action of God, authenticating the ... Son of God." They serve as the substantiation of specific revelation given by Jesus Christ. This seems to be the promise of Jesus to Nathanael in 1:50, 51. Because of his faith he would see the heavens opened.

The signs are crucial in creating "the option between death and life, faith or unbelief in each of those who beheld them (3:36; 5:24; 11:25, 26, 40; 12:37)." They bring all men to the point of decision.

Since these are the signs of the incarnate Son of God, a man engages himself forever by his decision to accept or reject this person; and this decision can only be made by a consideration of
the signs which Christ performed. Thus, in their implications, the *semeia* are judicial, prophetical, messianic, and eschatological.67

The use of signs in John is best understood against three New Testament themes: The literary parabolic theme, the *semeia* and glory in John, and the justification theme.

**The literary parabolic theme**

Riga shows from Ezekiel 17 and Matthew 13 that the Semitic use of parables differs from the Greek. They are indeed pedagogical, but they are more enigmatic and progressive. There are three essential steps: (a) the parable (an enigmatic story), (b) the response (of "faith," leading to step "c" or "unbelief," reverting to blindness), (c) the explanation (further illumination).68 "Thus we see . . . (a) divisive element in the parables. Those persons of hostile disposition, deceived as to their own desires, do not care to ask Christ about the further spiritual meaning of the parables."69 He observes: "This blindness is not restricted to the words (parables) of Christ, but it is also reflected in the accounts of the miracles (Mark 3:23). This phenomenon is common in the *semeia* of St. John."70 By way of contrast, those who are "well-disposed" will come for further enlightenment and it is to them that "it is given to know the mystery" (Mark 4:11).71

In the *semeia* of John these three elements are also observed. "Christ pronounces an enigmatic formula of His own or one from the Old Testament (or He performs a significant action); the listener misunderstands His words or actions, or takes them in a purely material sense; Christ then explains what He means. . . ."72 Accordingly, the *semeia* contain a "divisive" element to separate those who believe and those who cannot or will not understand. "Thus blindness for some and salvation.
for others result from the way in which they understand the *semeia.* Riga illustrates this from Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus (3:3-8); the Samaritan woman (4:1-30), and the discourse of chapter 6. In each case Jesus first presents an enigma, there is a response (demonstrating a misunderstanding), then there is further illumination. In the end some are scandalized and walk no longer with Him (cf. 6:6, 7) and there are those who believe what He says "because He is the Son of God and what He says must be true (vss. 68ff)."

The divine pedagogy in the enigmatic (parabolic) theme is the same in St. John as it is in the synoptic Gospels. The *semeia* are proposed as signs to be read by men. Essentially obscure they are the mode proper to the revelation of the incarnate word.

**Semeia and glory in St. John**

Numerous passages throughout the Gospel illustrate the relationship between Jesus' "signs" and His "glory." The comment in 2:11 is especially instructive: "This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him." (Compare also 2:18; 4:48, 53; 5:36; 6:32, 43; 8:21; 9:1-9). "The ... sign is a mode of revelation given to man for his deep consideration. Contemplating these 'works' (5:35-38) man must choose; either he rejects them and seeks even to kill the source (5:18; 11:53; 6:61; passim), or he recognizes that the one who performs this miracle is from God and worthy of faith." This is illustrated by Mary (2:5), the Samaritan woman (4:39), Peter and the disciples (6:71), the man born blind (9:15), Martha, Mary and Lazarus (11:4, 5).

According to Riga, the precedent for John's use of sign and glory is to be found in the Old Testament. There, God reveals His glory by performing wonders, especially on behalf of Israel. Man gave glory
to God when this relationship between Jehovah and the prophet was recognized (i.e. Exod. 3:12; 4:17; Judg. 6:17; 1 Sam. 10:1, 7). The great works of God in the Old Testament (i.e. creation, crossing the Red Sea, the manna, the water from the rock, etc.) "made a great impression on the mind of the Jews as God's direct intervention in their favor."77

St. John explains that this same marvellous power of God which was revealed to the Jews in the Old Testament for their salvation (semeia kai Teraka) in Jer. 32:20; Ps. 85:17; ... Num. 14:22; Wisd. of Sol. 5:13; Is. 6:1ff.) has now become incarnate in Christ in whom the presence and power of God are in their full and perfect form (John 2:11; 4:54; 11:40-41; 12:41). The appearance of signs announces the beginnings of the messianic times and justifies the claims of him who works these signs (Mal. 3:1; Zech. 14:21).78

Where the revelation of God was only partial in the Old Testament (cf. Exod. 33:20; Deut. 4:33; Judg. 13:22, 23; Isa. 6:5; Ps. 16:11; 17:15), with Christ there now exists the perfect revelation of God.79

The most profound manifestation of this glory was the transfiguration (Matt. 17:2, 3; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:8-32; 2 Pet. 1:16-19). While this particular event is not recorded in John's Gospel, Riga contends that the theme is woven throughout with the signs.80 He argues that this association is intentional and evidenced by John 1:14 where John brings the two ideas of "tabernacle" and "glory" together. Such an association immediately evokes contemplation of the presence of God at the tabernacle in the wilderness and the brash suggestion of Peter on the mount to make "three tabernacles" to contain the glory.

John writes to show that "Christ manifested his glory ... throughout the whole of his earthly existence and not simply in one anticipatory manifestation."81 His "miracles are a continuous transfiguration."82 When the disciples saw His glory they would know that He was from God, but the glory he manifests is properly understood as that of the Father Himself.83
The works of Christ and the Father

When the fundamental meaning of the signs are recognized, they are to be seen as the *ergon* of God for the salvation of His people (Exod. 34:10; Deut. 3:24; 11:3, 7; 32:4; Josh. 24:31; Judg. 2:7, 10; Ps. 66:3-6; 77:12-21). This work is now continued in and through Christ. "This latter affirmation gave Christ the occasion (5:17-20) to affirm the unity of (His) works ... with the works of the Father Himself." 84

The full revelation of the identity of Father and Son is given to the apostles in the final section to St. John's Gospel, chapters 12-19. Here Christ openly tells them of the unity of being between the Father and Himself. "Who sees me, sees the Father. . . ." 85

"The Work of Christ is not simply a copy of the works of the Father. It is the very same activity now given over to the Son." 86 Accordingly, He raises the dead (5:21), gives life (5:21), executes judgment (5:22), to recognize the Son is to recognize the Father (5:23), His word has power to give life (5:29). Indeed, there is no activity proper to the Son that is not also the work of the Father (3:34; 5:17, 26; 6:57; 7:28, 29; 8:16, 26, 29; 10:28, 37, 38; 11:25; 12:49, 50; 17:2; 1 John 5:11). 87

Thus, His signs surpass anything in the Old Testament. "He is pictured for us by St. John as a perfect revelation of the Father to all men, and as the one who alone . . . can lead his people to salvation. This is the most profound significance of the *semeia*. . . ." 88

To summarize the argument of Riga, it has been shown that John's use of signs is akin to the use of the parables in the Synoptics with three distinctive elements: enigma, misunderstanding/response, and illumination. They are used to demonstrate God's glory in the Person of Christ, and they bring the work of the Father and the Son into
intimate harmony. Taken together they are a profound evidence for the deity of Christ.

**Jesus as distinct from the Father**

Since this matter will occupy subsequent discussion, it need only be observed that, while John sees a "unity" of Jesus with God, he also sees a distinction. He has been sent by the Father and obeys His commandments (15:10; et al). He (Jesus) will pray to the Father, and He (the Father) will send the Paraklete (the Holy Spirit) cf. 14:16.

Thus, there is in John both the affirmation of the deity of Christ, but also a distinction between the persons of the Godhead. 89

**The sign-works and their meaning**

It has been shown that in John "signs" may be discussed in terms of the works (i.e. miracles) of Christ and His words (i.e. discourses and claims). Here only the former are being considered. There are at least seven miracles given in John to attest to Jesus' deity. 90 It is best to follow Hendriksen's word of caution in securing the specific meaning of each from the context. 91 Cook is typical of many who carelessly assign arbitrary meanings to the signs with almost no justification whatever, aside from a fertile imagination. 92

The seven sign-miracles which John records are given as follows: (a) turning the water to wine (2:1-11), (b) healing of the Nobleman's son (4:46-54), (c) healing of the impotent man (5:1-15), (d) feeding of the five thousand (6:1-14), (e) walking on the water (6:16-21), (f) healing of the man born blind (9:1-41), and (g) the raising of Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44).

In the first sign the unique relation between the pre-existent
Logos and the man, Jesus, is established. This suggestion was made in an earlier discussion, but it is interesting that Dale Moody, following independent research makes the same suggestion.

The incarnation of the Word in the flesh of Jesus was . . . complete . . . in which the Word remained Word and Jesus remained a true man. When the water became wine, there was something added, but the water did not cease to be water. The same word, ginomai, is used in 2:9 that was used in 1:14. If the Word ceased to be the Word . . . the result was a metamorphosis as in Greek mythology, but if the Word continued as the Word and Jesus continued to be a man . . . then there was an incarnation.

The sign really points backward in the Gospel to validate the claims of the Prologue. John specifies the response in 2:11: "and His disciples believed in Him." Given the model suggested by Riga, that which follows (the assertion of His divine authority at the temple) serves to underscore the force of the sign, viz Jesus is God, indeed! The "true temple" is now Jesus' "body." In Him now dwells the Shekinah of God. The full force of this statement did not occur to His disciples until after the resurrection (2:22). The reaction, again, is mixed. Some believed, but Jesus is skeptical of most (2:23-25).

The second miracle also occurs in Cana. This appears as only a casual geographical reference, but is probably significant for John's purpose here. These people have already had a sign (the text implies "many" signs, 4:45, 48). Jesus rebukes them for what appears to be little more than idle curiosity about His powers (they have missed the point of the signs). "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe" (4:48). At that point the Nobleman (the only one demonstrating any faith at all in story) makes his request: "Sir, come down before my child dies" (4:49). Then Jesus gives him the sign. The response of the Nobleman is noted by John, "he believed" and went home. What is significant is that only he and his household actually received
this sign. The crowd never saw the miracle, they only saw Jesus make a claim, and a man who believed it. When this man arrived home, his faith was confirmed by finding his son well.

The third sign is given in 5:1-15 with the healing of the impotent man. This led to a confrontation with the scrupulous Jews who questioned Jesus' authority to tell the man to take up his pallet and walk (5:10-12). In the ensuing interchange Jesus makes explicit assertions of Deity (5:18-27). There is a two-fold response. The Jews reject His testimony of Himself and set about to kill Him (5:16, 18). The only faith evidenced in the passage is with the man himself. Jesus finds him later in the Temple and adjurs him to sin no more (5:14). As for the unbelieving Jews, Jesus rebukes their lack of faith in Him, their rejection of the Baptist, their refusal to acknowledge the significance of His works, their failure to recognize the witness of the Father, the Scriptures and Moses (5:31-47).

In the feeding of the five thousand (6:1-14) Jesus is clearly denoted as the sustainer of life (6:32-35; 47-51; 54-58). Again those present are shown to be brought to a decisive point in their relation to Him. Many can no longer follow Him (6:60, 66). The twelve respond in faith with the profound affirmation of Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God" (6:68, 69).

The next sign (6:15-21) seems to be intended for the disciples alone, whose faith stands out in sharp relief against the ignorance and blindness of the multitudes. It was late (dark?) when Jesus is seen coming to them, walking on the water. The pathos of the situation is difficult to miss. Jesus is pursued by the blind multitudes who mis-
understand his message at every turn. Only the disciples know Him for who He really is. This knowledge is now reinforced with a sign that demonstrates authority over more than Moses (5:45-47)—He defies nature itself! When they first respond with fear, He quiets them with the words: "It is I, do not be afraid" (6:20). Against the backdrop of the unbelieving multitudes, John shows that these men of faith have entered into a much more intimate relationship with Jesus than any others. There is still the enigma and still the misunderstanding, but when they are brought to an understanding, they are fifty fathoms higher than their contemporaries. Is it any wonder that Peter is so confident the next day?

The sixth sign is the healing of the man born blind (9:1-41). John employs it to assert Jesus' deity as the "light of the world" (9:5). In the events which transpire following the miracle, the formerly blind man believes and worships Him (9:38). The rest are "blind" to the truth and their sin remains (9:41).

The highest point of the sign-miracles is the raising of Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44). This was certainly not the first, or only time Jesus raised anyone from the dead. But this incident is chosen because it is so appropriate to John's purpose. It presents a series of enigmas which occur and are resolved as Jesus makes the truth known. He is informed of Lazarus' illness and Jesus explains it is for the glory of God (11:4). Only Jesus knew what He meant at that time, as is evidenced by the disciples' reaction (11:8). Then Jesus tells them that Lazarus has fallen asleep (11:11). Again the disciples do not understand and He explains that Lazarus is dead (11:14), then He adds: "I was not there so that you may believe (11:15). Then Jesus is further misunderstood by
Martha when He comforts Her with the promise: "Your brother shall rise again" (11:23). He reassures her that He is the resurrection and the life, but again she demonstrates a lack of comprehension of what He was saying. Yet, even in her ignorance, she gives the most comprehensive statement so far in the Gospel as to who Jesus is: "You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world" (11:27). Even Mary lacks understanding (11:32). It is no wonder "Jesus wept" (11:35). When His instructions are met with resistance, He counters with a promise that they are going to "see the glory of God." He prays to the Father (for the sake of the multitude), and calls Lazarus forth (11:41-44). The results are again varied. "Many believed" (11:45). Others conspire (within the providence of God) to kill Him (11:47-53).

As to the significance of this event there can be no question that it is to demonstrate Jesus' deity. Even the objections of the Pharisees begin to sound hollow as John notes the true source of their opposition and scrupulosity--it is self-interest (11:48).

**Divine Claims**

This facet of John's argument for the deity of Christ falls naturally into two categories. There are claims made of Him by others, and there are claims made by Him of Himself.

**Testimony of Eye-witnesses**

Parallel to the "signs" John marshals the evidence of eye-witnesses to Jesus' ministry to prove that He is God, manifest in history. Concerning this line of evidence it may be contended that it is not "evidence" as such. The various "opinions" of Jesus' contemporaries provide insight as to how they interpreted His ministry, but they do not actually
"prove" anything. But to this, it must be remembered that against John's stated purpose of the Gospel (20:31) everything he includes is intended to contribute to that end. In other words, these testimonies are not accidental in John (as indeed nothing is). He includes them in the narrative because they underscore his argument. They have the function of a "journalistic anecdote." Thus, whether or not anyone chooses to assign historical value to their testimony is quite beside the point. John's purpose is theological and everything he says contributes to it. By the same token, such testimonies do provide historical evidence because they reflect first-hand interpretation of what happened. The burden of proof is upon those who wish to say that they misinterpreted what they saw. Also, it must be considered that John's purpose is a dual one. He wishes to establish who Jesus really is, but also to lead the reader to "believe" in Him. Any evangelist knows the value of personal testimony in leading the lost to faith in Christ.

John the Baptist

In the introduction, John the Baptist is the one chosen by John to introduce his "Logos" of the Prologue as He appeared in "flesh." In 1:29 it is said that he "saw Jesus coming to him and said, 'Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.'" While this is primarily a statement of Jesus' "mission" and not about His "person," it presupposes something about His person. The obvious association with the Paschal Lamb asserts that Jesus is "worthy." In fact John makes this association explicit in Revelation 5:8-14. Augustine remarks: "How weighty must be the blood of the Lamb, by whom the world was made, to turn the scale when weighed against the world!"96

The Baptist further testifies that it was on this Jesus that he
previously witnessed the coming of the Holy Spirit, concluding "I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (1:34). The words of the Forerunner recall the testimony of God from heaven (cf. Matt. 3:17) "This is My beloved Son." They also corroborate John's "only begotten God" (1:18). Thus, this is nothing less than the affirmation of "essential Sonship."

Andrew

Since Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist and a witness to his testimony concerning Jesus as the Lamb and the Son of God, it is significant that he immediately turned aside to follow Jesus. It can only be assumed that his response of faith is made because he believes the Baptist to be telling the truth. Andrew sought out his brother, Simon, and announced "We have found the Messiah" (1:41). It does not appear that the Baptist used this title. Thus, the testimony must have come from Andrew's own experience and understanding of Jesus. In terms of the writer's purpose, the conjunction of "Christ" together with the "Son of God" (cf. 20:31) appearing here in close proximity is significant. While the average Jew of the first century was not necessarily inclined to associate deity with the Messiah, it is vital to John's thesis that such a relationship be made and recognized at the outset.

Nathanael

The testimony of Nathanael (Bartholomew of the Synoptics) adds to that of Andrew to bring the concept of the coming "King of Israel" into John's theological understanding of Jesus' identity. When Jesus tells him that He saw him under the fig tree, Nathanael recognizes that this is One with unusual abilities. Jesus' response to him is that
his faith would be rewarded with the promise that he would see "even greater things than these" (1:50, 51). Such is, indeed, John's promise of what is to follow.

Samaritan woman

Impressed with Jesus' unusual knowledge of her past (4:29), the Samaritan woman testifies to the men of the city (who were certainly in a position to qualify her testimony!) that this man has told her "all the things that I have ever done" (4:29). She pauses and, since it would be inappropriate for her as a woman to instruct them, she poses a question which recalls Jesus' earlier claim of Himself (cf. 4:25, 26). "This is not the Christ is it?" (4:29). What appears to be doubt is really faith. This fact is further confirmed by the fact that her testimony came across with such conviction that it led to a virtual "harvest" of persons who subsequently believed (cf. 4:35-42).

Peter

Following the discourse which accompanied the feeding of the five thousand, Peter is heard to declare: "We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God." Hendriksen notes the significance of this declaration. "Jesus is confessed to be the Holy One; i.e., consecrated unto God to fulfill his messianic task; He is set apart and qualified to perform whatever pertains to His office (cf. 10:36; Acts 3:14; 4:27; Rev. 3:7). He is God's Holy One, belonging to God and appointed by God."¹⁰⁰ The expression drawn from Isaiah 48:17 and Hosea 11:9 gained currency in the first century and was often used to denote Christ in His association with the fulfillment of God's purpose in His suffering and death (cf. Acts 3:14).
The man born blind

The christological implications of the affirmation of 9:38 have already been discussed, however, it is worth noting here how the testimony of the man argues for the deity of Christ. First, in his use of kurios (the LXX term used in relation to Jehovah) he is seen by John to recognize Jesus as God. The arguments put forth that this should be translated "sir" are unconvincing since they fail to account for that which follows. Second, he worships Jesus. Since Scripture forbids worship of any other than God (Exod. 20:35; cf. Matt. 4:8-10; Acts 12:21-23), and since no exceptions to this are recognized (cf. Acts 10:25, 26; 14:8-15; Rev. 22:8, 9) it is both an affirmation and a claim to deity when Jesus is worshipped by the man without any further comment (comp. 5:23; Matt. 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 16:15-17; 28:9, 17; Phil. 2:10, 11; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:8-13).

One further observation could be made at this point. If Jesus had come to a pagan culture, the response of this man would have suggested little or nothing. But it must be remembered that Jesus is in Palestine, and the rigid monotheism of the Jews is well attested by history. It is no small thing for a man, nurtured in Judaism, to bend the knee to a man. Even more audacious is the suggestion that a man so nurtured should allow it to happen to Him--unless, of course, He is worthy. John's reader has to be impressed.

Martha

Chapter eleven brings several themes in John together with the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Here "sign" and "glory," "light" and "life," "knowledge" and faith," "darkness" and "unbelief," are all
brought together in one profound moment. But the highest point of the chapter is Martha's confession: "Yes, Lord; I have believed that you are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world" (11:27). Here is the most comprehensive statement given as to the identity of Jesus. In these words the earlier affirmations of deity, incarnation, Sonship, and messiahship are all brought to converge upon Jesus at once. John does not make the later Cerinthian error of distinguishing between Jesus and the Christ. He is one and the same, even "He who comes into the world" (cf. 6:14; Matt. 11:3; Luke 7:19f). Lenski notes:

In what sense Martha addresses Jesus as "Lord" is shown by the titles she at once adds. . . . In stating the sum and substance of her faith she shows that she has apprehended the chief and true point in the self-attestation of Jesus, which is his own person.101

To those who would reduce this affirmation to something less than deity, Lenski adds: "We feel bound to say that Martha understood 'the Christ, the Son of God,' in the same sense in which the unbelief of the Jerusalem Jews found blasphemy in it. . . ."102

Thomas

The final attestation of Jesus' deity is given by Thomas in 20:28, "My Lord and my God." It constitutes the final appeal of John's Gospel, and forms the transition from "sign" to "faith." Obviously, as Jesus predicted (12:35, 36), He is no longer present to continue providing additional signs. This is both inappropriate and impossible since the greatest sign of Calvary has already been given and confirmed by the resurrection.

The interchange between Thomas and Jesus appears to have been especially meaningful to John. Hendriksen has noted how every demand made by Thomas (20:25) is met by Christ when He shows Himself. The
demands of doubt are to see and to handle in order that faith may be affirmed. Jesus invites him in 20:27 to "see . . . and reach forth your hand . . . and be not unbelieving, but believing."\(^{103}\) In the opening of his First Epistle John repeats this sequence (1:1, 2) to account for the unique relationship shared by all Christians alike. Even so, the appeal of the Gospel is that Jesus is "Lord" and "God." The testimony of Thomas and the signs recorded are evidence enough to solicit the faith of the reader--that "believing" they might have "life in His name" (20:31).

### Self-Claims

Ladd has summarized the self-consciousness of Christ as God in terms of (a) His claims of unity with the Father, (b) the so-called "I am sayings" and (c) His distinction of Himself from the Father.\(^{104}\)

The first of these has already been considered in this study. It remains to consider the last two areas.

#### Jesus as Ani hu

Largely due to the work of Ethelbert Stauffer,\(^{105}\) it is generally agreed among conservative scholars\(^{106}\) that the background of the אֲנִי הָאָדָם of the New Testament is to be found in the Old. Employed by Jesus in the Synoptics, and especially in John, the force of the expression is illustrated in the contemporary use of Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 43 in Jewish liturgical celebration, where God is repeatedly addressed as "Ani hu." In fact the expression became a popular phrase by which to speak of Jehovah in His manifestation to His people (cf. also Exod. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 46:4). Stauffer contends that this expression is "the most authentic, the most audacious, and the most profound claim by Jesus as to who He was."\(^{107}\) There is also ample evidence
that the expression *hu* was a favorite designation for Jehovah in the early part of the first century A.D.\textsuperscript{108} It is only as an affirmation of deity that the response of Jesus' contemporaries to His use of it is fully explained (i.e. faith/devotion or unbelief/accusations of blasphemy).\textsuperscript{109}

The claims appear in two forms: "I am" with a predicate, and in an absolute form. The former occur as follows: "I am the bread of life" (6:20), "I am the light of the world" (8:12), "I am the door of the sheep" (10:7), "I am the good shepherd" (10:10), "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25), "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6), "I am the true vine" (15:1). The absolute use occurs in 4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8.

In the first group Jesus asserts deity by claiming to meet the deepest human needs.\textsuperscript{110} Deity is also indicated in terms of their relationship to John's images already shown to connote aspects of the nature and attributes of God (viz. light, life, salvation, truth).

The absolute use of *évō élw* is certainly the most distinctive of Jesus' claims to deity. In most cases an antecedent may be generally suggested from the context. But 8:58 is intended as an obvious contrast between *évō* and *γένεσθαι* (the only such occurrence in the New Testament).\textsuperscript{111} The claim is an unmistakable allusion to Exodus 3:13-15. No Jew reading this Gospel could miss this association. Jesus is at once claiming pre-existence (before Abraham) and unity with Jehovah (I am). Those who heard Him understood Him in this way and charged Him with blasphemy.

The Resurrection

The christological significance of the resurrection can hardly
be overestimated. This is so particularly as relates to the authentic humanity and deity of Christ.\textsuperscript{112} While John does not develop the theological significance of this event as thoroughly as Paul (e.g. 1 Cor. 15), there is no question that he recognizes both the fact and importance of it. He records Jesus' prediction of it in John 10:17, 18. He also records the fulfillment of it in John 20. In the former instance, the resurrection is associated with His divine mission. In the latter, it is given as convincing evidence to the reality of Jesus' identity as developed throughout the Gospel (20:8) \textit{viz.} "the Christ, the Son of God."

The reality of Jesus' resurrection also forms the underlying assumption of much of John's teaching in the Epistles. For example, the recurrent emphasis on life as the antithesis of death is meaningful only because Jesus is victorious over death (cf. 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:14; 5:11-13, 16, 20). John also makes note of "that which we have handled" (1:1, ff.), as having relevance to his readers. This reference must include the resurrected Christ since it would make little sense to cite a dead man.

There are also numerous instances in the Apocalyptic which depict the work of the resurrected Christ in terms predicated upon deity (Rev. 1:5, 17-18; 5:9; 20:2, 10, 14).

\textbf{Conclusion}

John's treatment of the deity of Christ forms the fundamental core of his Gospel. However, it is developed for a unique application to a Jewish reader late in the first century A.D. He traces his concept of God in terms of spirit, light, and love. He does this to show that what is taught about God in the Old Testament is entirely compatible with John's claims with respect to the deity of Christ. When the
evidence for Christ's deity in John is examined, it falls into three categories: works which evidence deity, claims to deity, and the resurrection. These are woven together in a christological tapestry to convince the reader that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."
Notes

1 W. R. Cook, Theology of John, p. 40. See also B. F. Westcott, John, p. 73.


3 Ladd, p. 292.

4 Indeed, in those decades following the destruction of the Jerusalem and its temple, such an assurance would fill a profound void in the heart of the devout Jew whose only place of true worship had long since been destroyed, while the temple of His body (cf. 2:19) is promised perpetuity.

5 C. H. Dodd, Interpretation, pp. 223, 226, is wrong when he asserts that John does not make any "final or absolute distinction" here. He is forced to make such an assertion because he follows Origen in identifying John's use of pneuma with the "stoic pervasive gas" of Hellenistic metaphysics. John certainly does make a distinction between the "heavenly things" and the "earthly things."

6 Again, Dodd, ibid., is wrong when he equates John's pneuma with the Hermetic nous.


8 Ibid.

9 The notion of truth as faithfulness is often raised by those who seem to think that it gives a notion of truth that differs, for example, from a correspondence view of truth. However, it is important to distinguish clearly between a theory of truth, the specific use made of the terms for truth or meaning, and/or a theory presupposed by a specific writer in a specific document. See the excellent treatment of this subject by A. C. Thiselton in The Two Horizons, pp. 411-15 and The International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Truth," 3 vols., III:874-902, and N. L. Geisler, "The Concept of Truth in the Inerrancy Debate," Bib. Sac. 137(Oct.-Dec., 1980):327-39.

10 Dodd, p. 224.

11 Ibid.
12 Again, as Dodd admits, ibid., pp. 224-25.

13 Ryrie, Biblical Theology, p. 318.

14 It should be noted that Cook's definition (p. 40) cited earlier is a serious concession to the radical view.


16 Dodd, Interpretation, p. 203.

17 See G. B. Stevens, Theology of the New Testament, R. Law, Study of the First Epistle of John, respectively.

18 Cook, p. 41.

19 Ibid.

20 Ryrie, p. 319.


22 Ibid., p. 13.

23 Ladd, p. 247.

24 W. Taylor, The Names of Jesus, p. 56.


26 Ladd, pp. 247-48; Cook, pp. 43-44; Ryrie, p. 223-26; Berkouwer, Person of Christ, pp. 171ff.

27 W. Bousset, Kyrios Christos, pp. 52-57; 91-98; 150-54; see also R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, I:128-33.


29 Bultmann, Theology, I:131; F. Hahn, The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity, pp. 279-333.


32 Guthrie, New Testament Theology, pp. 312-16.

33 Summary of H. D. McDonald, Jesus Human and Divine, pp. 93, 94, and Guthrie, p. 316.
34. W. Bousset's (1913) is generally recognized as a watershed in contemporary scholarship on the import of this title in Christology. For more recent analysis of Bousset's "adventurous theories" and the concept in general see L. Cerfau, Christ in the Theology of St. Paul; O. Cullmann, TDNT, s.v. "Kyrios, et al," by G. Quell and W. Foerster, III:1039-1100; Sabourin, Names and Titles of Jesus, and Taylor.


36. Quell, III:1061.

37. Ibid., III:1058-81.

38. A. Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East, pp. 349-62; Foerster, III:1046-58; Bousset, pp. 91-101.


40. Bousset, p. 99.

41. Taylor, p. 40.

42. Sabourin, p. 254.

43. Taylor, p. 43.

44. Ibid.


46. Taylor, p. 43.

47. Hendriksen, John, p. 93. See also Westcott, St. John, p. 149.


53. Ibid.

54. Given in his response to the very excellent contribution to the Zondervan "Probe" series by Jon A. Buell and O. Quentin Hyder, Jesus: God, Ghost or Guru?, p. 123.


Peter Riga cites the evidence of E. Schweizer (Ego Eimi, Gottingen, 1939), to demonstrate that "from a purely literary point of view, the Fourth Gospel constitutes a totem homogeneum composed by one and the same author. It is, therefore, impossible to determine ... strata to be attributed to the original writer, and another to the redactor (Semeia-Quelle)." "Signs of Glory," Interpretation, 17(Dec., 1963):402.

61 His Kantian and higher critical presuppositions are evident throughout.

62 Westcott, p. 39, argues that miracles are, however, contemplated under the term, "works" (cf. 14:11). He is probably correct.

63 Dodd also came to this same conclusion, particularly in light of the very obvious Hebraic (as opposed to Greek) usage employed by John. Interpretation, pp. 141-43.


65 Ibid., pp. 402-3. He notes that this is in conformity to the function of the sign in the Old Testament (Exod. 3:12; 4:21; Judg. 6:17; 1 Sam. 10:1-7). See also Westcott, p. 39.

66 Riga, pp. 402-3.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid., pp. 403-7.

69 Ibid., p. 406.

70 Ibid. Although some, like Hendriksen, p. 117, are reluctant to generalize this principle in John with reference to an explicit association in the context.


72 Ibid., p. 408.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid., p. 110.

75 Ibid.
Ibid., p. 401, Riga argues throughout that the contemplation by faith is necessary in order for the individual to actually "see" the signs. While there is certainly some truth to this (cf. 1:50, 51), Riga is guided more by his epistemology than the text of John. There the signs were manifest to all. Indeed, Riga's assertion undercuts his thesis that the signs call all men to decision.

Ibid.

Ibid., pp. 411, 412.

Ibid., p. 413.

Ibid., pp. 414, 415. This would be very much like what he does with the temptation account. He weaves it throughout. Supra.

Ibid., p. 415.

Ibid., p. 416.

Ibid., p. 415. Guthrie notes: "God is not only assumed to be glorious, but is the pattern for the measuring of glory in others, even in the case of the Son (cf. 17:5), p. 90. For a contrasting view see Kasemann, pp. 4-26.

Riga, p. 417.

Ibid., p. 418.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 419.

Ibid., p. 421.

If it is permissible to use "Godhead" here. Cf. also T. E. Pollard, Johannine Christology, p. 18 and Ladd, p. 251.

Certainly the draught of fish in chapter 21 was a miracle, but it does not appear in the Gospel as a sign of His deity. It was a device Jesus used to call the attention of the disciples to Him because of its relation to His previously having done this.

Hendrickson, p. 117.

Cook, pp. 55, 56. His suggestions are not worth discussion.

Supra, p. 70.

Moody, p. 406. However, this writer does not wish to identify with what Moody does with this to defend the christology of Theodore of Mopseustia against Cyrillian christology. Cf. also N. Pittinger, The Word Incarnate, pp. 108ff. Moody defends a Whiteheadian interpretation
of the incarnation formulated by L. S. Thornton, *The Incarnate Word*, p. 164, as identical to God's normal incarnation in creation, the Church, and the Christian. It reduces the incarnation to an "indwelling" in Moody's words. Actually, this view is more akin to pantheism than it is to "indwelling."

95 Ryrie, p. 327.


98 Westcott, p. 25.

99 Some, like Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, p. 142, affirm from this that Christ demonstrates omnipresence. While this may be so there is no reason in the immediate context to demand such an extreme interpretation. Regardless, it demonstrates an extraordinary ability which Nathanael did not fail to recognize.

100 Hendriksen, p. 248.

101 Lenski, p. 804.

102 Ibid.

103 Hendriksen, p. 465.

104 Ladd.


107 Stauffer, p. 174.

108 Ibid., pp. 183ff.

109 See Buell and Hyder, pp. 30, 36-38. Cf. also Westcott, p. 140.

110 Cook, pp. 56, 57.

111 Buchsel, "Eimi, Ho on," TDNT, II:399.

112 Guthrie, p. 390.
CHAPTER V

THE THEANTHROPIC PERSON OF CHRIST

The Question Considered

Before the subject of the unity of the Person of Christ can be explored, two crucial matters must be considered. The first, in order of importance, has to do with the legitimacy of such a discussion. Guthrie is typical of many scholars today when he says that the New Testament presentation of Jesus does not go beyond the "paradoxical presentation of the divine and human natures . . . ." ¹ He contends that the questions are speculative and not foreshadowed in the New Testament.² But it hardly seems fair to the New Testament writers to say that they did not ponder the mysterium Christi, or that the Holy Spirit did not guide their hand to provide clues with regard to the manner in which the two natures interrelate. To be sure, the questions and answers do not occur in didactic fashion to explain such specific queries as, "How could God become truly man?" or "How do the two natures coexist?" etc. On the other hand, a more accurate assessment of the New Testament will show that such metaphysical questions are not only tangential to, but often provoked by the text (e.g. John 1:14; 5:19-20; 8:58; 10:30; 17:1-5; cf. Phil. 2:7-11; Heb. 2:6-18; 4:15; passim).

Furthermore, it is just as presumptuous to call the New Testament doctrine paradoxical as it is to read the creeds of Nicea and Chalcedon into it. A paradox, in Guthrie's usage, involves an apparent contradiction.³ These are not altogether absent from the Bible (e.g. the
presence of good and evil, the prosperity of the wicked, the suffering of the righteous, etc.). But when these apparent contradictions are introduced, it is only to provide an answer or to give insights which will enable the reader to cope with them. In other words, they do not provide a rationale for the irrational, but an opportunity to shed light on what would otherwise be a puzzling circumstance.

Regardless, the Bible does not present the incarnation (or the tri-unity of God for that matter) in this way. To be sure the incarnation constitutes a "mystery" (cf. 1 Tim. 3:16). But there is no evidence in Scripture that any of the biblical writers construed the mysteries of God as apparent contradictions. They are mysteries insofar as they await further revelation in order to be fully understood. In fact, in most cases, mysteries are truths that only "previously" were unknown, but are now made plain (cf. Matt. 13; Rom. 16:25, 26). It was this curious feature which caused Lewis Sperry Chafer to define mystery in the Bible as "a truth hitherto withheld." 4

To speak of mystery in connection with the incarnation may only be to assert that the unity of the two natures is not exhaustively penetrable to the human intelligence, and not to do as some to derogate the confession of the Church by reducing it to a vague indication of the suprarational or irrational with no attempt to do justice to the revelation concerning Christ. Berkouwer is correct when he says that "the incomprehensibility of God's work is not on a level with the puzzles in which human life abounds. It is the incomprehensibility of the work of God, which was disclosed in His Word. Hence we may never, by means of a vague appeal to mystery, oppose the man who believes on Scriptural grounds in the plain, though incomprehensible, reality of
the mystery of God." As touching Christology, the subject is of special consideration with respect to the "relationship between the two natures in connection with the revelational significance of Jesus Christ." It has already been demonstrated in this study that John, in particular, argues for the deity of Christ in such a way as to show that what was known about Jesus of Nazareth was fully consistent with what the Old Testament said about God. If this is a paradox then so is the central theme of John's gospel.

The New Testament theologian must avoid two dangers. He must avoid the danger of reading too many subsequent patristic insights back into the text. But he must also avoid the equally dangerous error of underestimating the import of the biblical data. To say that the New Testament "shows no awareness of the tension of the two natures" is correct, but to say on that basis, with Guthrie, that the testimony of Scripture is paradoxical is quite another matter. Furthermore, it is simply not true, with respect to the unity of the person of Christ that "further questions may have to remain unanswered, because the NT provides no data for the purpose." The problem lies not in the paucity of data, but in the understanding of it. The very absence of a tension between the two natures in the New Testament is evidence in itself of the unity of the person. The question really comes down to whether or not the biblical writers understood what they were saying. To call their witness a paradox at once implies the negative answer (a resolved contradiction is no contradiction at all). On the other hand, if one gives them the benefit of the doubt, their testimony must be examined and discussed. In this light, since John says so much about the two
natures, it is quite legitimate to discuss the theanthropic person of Christ in his writings.

The second crucial factor has to do with the question of approach. Historically, theologians have tended either toward an "Alexandrian" christology, with the emphasis on the unity of the person, or an "Antiochan" christology, with an emphasis on the distinction between the natures. The former was given early expression in Cyril, but later distorted by the monophysite tendencies of Eutyches. Luther's doctrine of consubstantiation led him to approach the two-nature doctrine from this direction. Antiochan christology tends to emphasize the distinction between the natures. This was the approach of Nestorius in the fifth century. Luther combatted it in Zwingli's idea of alloëosis which tended to reduce the unity to a manner of speech. It is also to be observed in the so-called extra-Calvinisticum—the insistence by Reformed theologians that one cannot entirely enclose the Logos in the finite human nature. The former leads inevitably to monophysitism, while the latter often leads to some form of adoptionism.

Today the question of methodology focuses on whether to approach christology "from above" (ontological) or "from below" (functional). The first of these leads to an incarnational type of christology which generally tends to fall back to the post-Chalcedonian tension between unity and diversity. The second leads to a reductionist christology tending to move from Jesus' immanence and human relationships to transcendence and revelation. This approach is already monophysite but of a different sort than that of Eutyches. The ancient doctrine absorbed the humanity into the deity. The modern doctrine absorbs the deity into the humanity.
In coming to John's doctrine the investigator will do well "to guard against imposing upon it a methodology which is alien to it." In several approaches to this matter have gained popularity in recent years. (1) One approach is to view John's Christology in the context of historically conditioned theological strata. R. H. Fuller divides these into 'earliest Palestinian,' 'Hellenistic Jewish,' and 'Gentile mission.' John's writings are viewed as the most recent; developed because of its relevance to the Gentile world. Preexistence and incarnation are brought together with the idea of a new order of humanity. J. Knox views a similar development but traces it from adoptionism, through kenoticism, to docetism. In this view John is seen as representing a docetic tendency in the later apostolic Church. (2) Another approach is presented by O. Cullmann who says that the biblical authors are not concerned with ontology but function. Hence, the Johannine corpus simply records what was believed to have been authentic tradition with respect to the life and teachings of the historical Jesus. (3) A third approach is explained by Guthrie. He accounts for the uniqueness of the historical Jesus, and subsequent apostolic reflection upon it in terms of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the human Jesus and His later ministry to the New Testament writers in guiding them into their exalted view of Christ. (4) A fourth approach is to say that John's insights are precisely those of the Nicene and Chalcedonian symbols and therefore there is no need to investigate further.

It has already been shown that while John's Christology is not preoccupied with them, many ontological and metaphysical concerns are both implied and answered. Thus it is a mistake to say, with Cullmann, that his Christology is exclusively functional. Guthrie correctly ob-
serves that "a functional explanation cannot be entirely divorced from
the reality implied by the function." It is also a mistake to construe
some sort of strata in New Testament christology, especially in terms of
opposing schools of thought. It has already been shown that John's
christology is in harmony with both his Hebrew heritage and his apostolic
contemporaries. With reference to the third approach it is certainly true
that the Holy Spirit must be taken into account when evaluating the life
of Jesus and the biblical account which undertakes to give its signifi-
cance. But Guthrie's argument is so construed because of his need to
account for the "paradoxical" nature of New Testament christology. This
too is a serious mistake because it imports an alien epistemology and
because it suggests that John was not consciously aware of the substance
of his christology. As to the last approach it is clear that such an
attempt to explain John is anachronistic and begs the question (it is
precisely this relationship that is under investigation).

The approach taken in this study proceeds under two assumptions:
(a) John's christology is incarnational, and (b) it is intelligible to
its author.

There is little question in contemporary scholarship that John's
christology is incarnational. Even R. H. Fuller and J. Knox acknowledge
this (albeit with a different slant). Thus, when one comes to the
christology of John the debate between ontological vs. functional is
beside the point. Whether one wishes to agree with him or not, John's
christology is preeminently ontological. The investigator is thus
forced back to the more traditional question of whether John's christology
anticipates the later Antiochan or Alexandrian viewpoints. Here, no
attempt is made to preempt further discussion by positing one over
against the other. It is entirely possible the answer is neither.

Secondly, it is only fair, and certainly more reasonable, to pursue John's theology under the assumption that he, through the Holy Spirit, knew what he was talking about. Furthermore, given his perspective (stated or implied) it will be much more instructive to ask why the two-nature doctrine was not a problem for him, than to account for this fact by an additional hypothesis (e.g. contemporary influence or paradox).

Thus, in terms of approach what seems to be in order is a kind of tertium, or third approach. At one extreme are those who wish to read into John certain contemporary insights (Bultmann, Fuller, Knox, Kasemann) or subsequent insights (Westcott, Cook). The other extreme proposes to halt the investigation before any rationale or synthesis of John's christology is secured (Bushnell, Baillie, Guthrie, etc.). Indeed, if John's christology is paradoxical, no synthesis is forthcoming.

A better approach is to begin with the hypothesis that a synthesis of John's christology is possible without polluting the stream of his thought with alien influences (either in the interest of novelty or orthodoxy). This approach is fully justified by the nature of the science of biblical theology and promises to be much more fruitful. Indeed, if the question of the two-nature doctrine in John can be answered one may very well have at once the solution to John's method and to the larger questions raised in subsequent christological reflection.

The Question Related to His Attributes

In previous chapters it has been shown that in terms consistent with other biblical writers John's teaching is that Jesus possessed the essential attributes of humanity and deity. He is *vere homo* and *vere Deus*. Now it must be answered how John brings these two vital truths
The Attributes and the Two Natures

The question is, how are the two aspects of Jesus' humanity and deity developed in John? There are at least seven variations to be observed.20

First, some attributes are true of His whole person, such as those which pertain to His mediatorial work, i.e., the one having come into the world (cf. 1:9, 14, 18, 49; 5:27; 6:51, 68, 69; 11:27; 12:27, 28). Obviously these designations are theanthropic and hence presuppose the two natures. He is God having come and He is a man manifesting God to the world.

Second, some attributes are true only of deity, but the whole person is the subject. For example, preexistence is asserted by the historical Jesus when He declares, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). But obviously, this could only be true with respect to His deity. The same idea is inherent in Jesus' recollection of His former glory with the Father (17:5). It has also been shown that John's use of μονογενής, in reference to Jesus, denotes an eternal relationship. Again, eternality pertains only to Jesus' deity. John records Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit when He is gone (14:16, 17; 15:26). This promise is certainly predicated upon Jesus' relationship to the other persons of the Trinity;21 a relationship not dependent upon or sustained in any manner by His human nature. That John recognizes this distinction is seen in several instances. He uses the Logos to speak of Jesus in His preincarnate state, but then drops it altogether when He takes flesh. John repeatedly refers to the fact that although Jesus' contemporaries knew of His temporal beginnings (John 1:45; 6:42; 7:27;
8:41, 57), they knew nothing of His true origins (8:19, 23; cf. 3:13; 6:38, 39). This is not to say there is any attempt on John's part to bring these truths together in metaphysical terms, yet there is certainly no attempt to erase them either.

Third, some attributes are true only of Jesus' humanity, yet the whole person is subject. John speaks of Jesus in terms of weakness and temporal existence. He grows tired (4:6, 7) and thirsty (19:28). He submits to human authorities (18:12), albeit as a sovereign! (19:11). He suffers and dies (19:17-37). When this is placed against John's recognition of such attributes as self-existent life (5:26, "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself"), omnipotence (6:19-21, Jesus' power is recognized; 17:2, He has "power over all flesh"), at once the transcendence of God and the deity of Jesus Christ (1:18, "No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him"), one is tempted to find a disparity in his thought.

However, it is unfair to John to say that this aspect of his christology involves a contradiction. John rather seems to view it as a solution to the problem so eloquently voiced by Job centuries before, "He is not a man as I am . . . (and) there is no umpire ("daysman" in AV) between us . . ." (Job 9:32-33). Although it is ancillary to this study it is important to recognize that there is a vital nexus in John between the person who is both God and man and His soteriological mission. In detailing those features of His person which demonstrate Jesus to be both the Son of man who executes all judgment, and the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, it is extremely important to John to affirm both deity and humanity in their full light. But he does this
without falling into an adoptionistic interpretation on the one hand, or theopaschitism on the other. Here it is to be noted that, without distorting His doctrine of God or vitiating His doctrine of Christ's deity, He recognizes in Jesus attributes which must, in the final analysis, be rooted in His human nature.

Fourth, sometimes John assigns human attributes to Jesus when the divine nature is in view. For example, in John 12:32 He speaks of His divine prerogatives when He says "I will draw all men to myself" but He accomplishes this in the act of His death ("if I be lifted up"). Previously, in this same passage (12:27) Jesus ponders His impending death from the vantage of eternity ("but for this purpose came I to this hour"), yet He is "troubled."

Fifth, sometimes John assigns divine attributes to Jesus when the human nature is in view. He assigns infinite value to His "flesh" (6:51). As "Jesus" who is both "seen" and "heard" as a man, He receives divine honor when the blind man worships Him (9:35-38); cf. also the charge of His enemies in 10:33, "you, being a man make yourself out to be God"). Prior to His death He makes certain promises predicated upon His omnipotence ("If you ask Me anything in My name I will do it," 14:14) and omnipresence ("I will come to you," 14:18). Walvoord also adds John 6:62, "what then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where He was before?" As the title of incarnation, "Son of man" views Christ preeminently in His human nature, but obviously, He was not human "before." Preexistence belongs only to His divine nature as John has presented it.

Sixth, sometimes Jesus is described according to His divine nature, but the designation is predicated upon both natures. For example in John 5:25-27 Jesus, as the Son of God, is given authority to execute
judgment (a divine prerogative). Yet, John adds, this authority is given "because He is the Son of man" (a human designation).

Seventh, sometimes the person is described in terms of His human nature but the statement is predicated upon both natures. This is evident in the Baptist's testimony (1:29, 30). As the "Lamb of God" Jesus' human nature is in view, yet to add "that taketh away the sin of the world" is to speak of an infinite (and therefore divine) accomplishment. Obviously, it was as a man that Jesus went to Calvary, but deity alone or humanity alone would render this work impossible or inefffectual. The same connection is made in the next verse, "After Me comes a man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before Me." The reference is to the historical person, but the honor given Him is predicated upon the divine nature of this person.

The Attributes and the Person

In light of the above, several conclusions can be drawn with respect to John's understanding of the person of Christ. First, John makes no attempt to make a personal distinction between the pre-incarnate Logos and the historical Jesus. This fact was observed earlier in connection with the states of Christ. However, here the point takes on even greater significance. It is He who "was with God" and who "was God" from the beginning who "takes flesh" and takes up residence in Palestine in the first century. It is also this same One who, being in "the bosom of the Father . . . has explained Him" (John 1:18). By the same token, it is the man who is about to die who recalls the glory He had from eternity with His Father (17:5), and who, speaking of His body, said: "destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" (2:19-21). "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (1:45) is also "the
Son of God, the King of Israel" (1:49) and "He who comes from heaven" (3:31). His older cousin, John the Baptist, testified of Him, "He existed before me" (1:15, 30). Though appearing centuries later John faithfully records Jesus' claim, "before Abraham was, I am" (8:58). It is "Jesus" as "Son of man" who receives worship (without rebuking it) as though He were God (John 9:35-38).

Certainly it is a mistake to read into this the insights of later christological symbols, but it may not be incorrect to say that later reflection enlarges upon the Johannine teaching. Indeed, the twin peaks of Jesus' unity and diversity are clearly visible.23

The reconstruction of John Knox, cited above, has aided Johannine studies along this line in two ways. He has shown that John is not alone in giving a "theological interpretation" of the person and work of Christ. He has also shown that John, more than any other, has penetrated the deeper insights of the mystery of Christ. While conservative scholarship can never accept his reconstruction of the history of the text, his understanding of John's contribution to christology is correct.24 He shows that, more than any other New Testament writer, John poses the dual problem of the relationship between the preexistent Christ and the Godhead and the relationship between the divine and human in Jesus.25

The second conclusion which may be made regarding John's understanding of Jesus' attributes is that he assigns them, ordinarily, in wholistic fashion to the person—not to any specific nature. For example, it is Jesus, the son of Mary who manifested His glory at the wedding in Cana (2:11). John speaks of the "temple of (Jesus') body" (2:21). Jesus, as the Son of man, tells Nicodemus that He "descended from heaven" (3:13). Jesus remits sins (5:14; 8:11). He declares to
His detractors, "You know neither Me, nor My Father .... You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world" (8:19, 23). He asserts preexistence (8:58), and recalls it with fondness (17:5, 24). He claims to be able to lay down His life and to take it again (10:18) — an audacious undertaking if considered in relation to deity or humanity exclusively. He sends the Holy Spirit (14:16; 15:26). He dies and is buried (19:30-42). In each of these instances it is clear that Jesus' two natures are uniquely implicated. Yet, John does not differentiate. What may be said of Him as God or man is said of Him as a singular person. Horace Bushnell acknowledges this truth.

I insist that he stands before us in simply unity, one person, the divine-human, representing the qualities of His double parantage as the Son of God, and the son of Mary .... He is that Holy Thing in which my God is brought to me, --brought even down to a fellow relation with me. I shall not call him two. I shall not decompose him and label off his doings, one to the credit of his divinity, and another to the credit of his humanity. I shall receive him, in the simplicity of faith, as my one Lord and Savior, nor any the less so that he is my brother.26

On the other hand Bushnell was certainly rash when he went on to say that exploring the nature of this union is tantamount to "... killing the animal, that we may find where the life is hid in him, and detect the mode of its union with his body."27 One cannot help but be provoked to speculation by such a picture of Christ as John gives. He is sufficiently ambiguous to retain the element of mystery. But he is also sufficiently explicit to demand a synthesis. Jesus is God (as defined by Moses and the Prophets) and He is man. Yet, He is not two, He is one. As man He is subject to all the sinless infirmities common to the race. As God He demonstrates prerogatives of deity which infinitely separate the creature from his Creator (e.g. omnipotence, omnipresence, sovereignty, and freedom). In order to advance beyond this seeming antinomy some
dismiss the "... metaphysical or speculative difficulties involved in the union of the divine and human... by observing that Christ is not here for the sake of something accomplished in his metaphysical or psychological interior, but for that which appears and is outwardly signified in his life."\(^\text{28}\) But to do this one must also be prepared to say that John is inherently contradictory.\(^\text{29}\) This will not do. Such an assertion is not suprarational. It is irrational.

Third, John views the historical Jesus as a revelation of God, not a concealment. In the Prologue it is said that the Logos was the true light which coming into the world enlightens every man (cf. 9:5). As God incarnate, Jesus' glory is viewed in history (1:14; 1 John 1:1-3). He has manifested the Father to the world (1:18). Throughout the Gospel His "signs" and works manifest His glory in such a way as to be unmistakable (cf. 2:11; 5:36; 6:68, 69; 8:54; 10:25-30; 11:40-45; 12:27, 28; 13:31; 14:8, 9; 17:1-3; 20:26-28). Much has been made in twentieth century research of the "incognito Christ."\(^\text{30}\) Such a conception of the incarnation in John requires massive interpolation of his thought. In John the failure to recognize Jesus for who He was is not due to the nature of revelation but rejection and unbelief.

Given this insight John also contributes significantly to the renewed interest in the kenosis.\(^\text{31}\) In this regard, two facts must be recognized. The first is that for John the union of the humanity and deity in Christ is constitutional, not functional. He does what He does because He is who He is. No induction of responsible exegesis can reduce the christology of John to any less than this. The second fact has to do with the reality of deity as manifested in Jesus of Nazareth. On this point one writer's comment with respect to the larger New Testament
witness is also applicable to John's.

I am speaking, also, to such as believe the Scriptures, and therefore, it should be something to notice that they often re-present the Savior in ways that indicate the same view of his per-son: He is Emanuel, God with us—the Word made flesh—God manifest in the flesh—the express image of his person—the life that was manifested, the glass in which we look to behold the glory of the Lord—the fullness of God revealed bodily—the power of God—the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ—the image of the invisible God. In all these, and in a very great number of similar instances, language is used in reference to Christ, which indicates an opinion that his advent is the appearing of God; his deepest reality, that he expresses the fullness of the life of God. Nor does it satisfy the language at all, to conceive that Christ is a good man, or a perfect man, and that so he is an illustration or image of God. Such a construction might be given to a single expression of this kind; for we use occasionally an almost violent figure. But his is cool, ordinary, undeclamatory language, and the same idea is turned round and round, appears and reappears in different shapes and becomes, in fact, the hinge of the gospel—the central light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, shining unto men.32

It is just as absurd to define Jesus' deity by the human person who appeared in history as it is to define the man by the preexistent Logos. Perhaps Taylor is right when he says that "christology . . . is uncurably kenotic."33 But by the same token, John's christology will never allow this suggestion to legitimize a distinction between God, as defined in the Hebrew Scriptures and Jesus as seen and heard by eye-witnesses.

The Question Related to His Titles

The dominant themes of the Gospel of John are that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that salvation can come through faith in His accomplished work (i.e. "exegeting" the Father and manifesting His glory to the world).34 But there is also a careful distinction between the "different roles of Christ"35 in terms of His presentation as the Son of man and Son of God respectively. In fact this distinction is so clear that it is sufficient to warrant the suspicion that it is intentional.
Francis J. Moloney argues convincingly that a comparison of John's use of these two titles shows how they "refer to Jesus as the revealer and as revelation itself, but in different ways." The following is a summary (with some modification) of his argument.36

Son of man is always used in the detached third person, and is never associated with "I," although its application to Jesus is made clear in 12:32. On the other hand, Jesus is given a clear and explicit identification in "the Son" or "Son of God" (1:49; 5:19, 23-25, 30; 10:36-38; 11:27; 14:13-14; 17:1-5; 19:7; 20:31).

The Son of man has particular reference to the human Jesus. It is clear from 3:13 and 6:62 that He has preexisted, but the title has a unique application to Jesus in His human state.37 However, Son of God is sometimes used to make explicit reference to the preexistent state of Christ (1:18; 17:1, 5).

Son of man is never used to denote a relationship to the Father. In 6:27 the Father has "set His seal" on the Son of man, but this does not involve a Father/Son of man relationship. Son of God, on the other hand, always speaks of Jesus' intimate relation to the Father as Son.

Son of man is the revealer of God because He, alone has come down from heaven (3:13; 6:62), placing a unique stress on the incarnation. The Son of God reveals God because of His union with the Father (see esp. 3:16-21, 34-36; 5:19-26).

The Son of man is judge (1:51; 5:27; 8:28; 9:35-41; 13:31-36; 19:5). The Son of God, by contrast, has not come into the world to judge (3:17; 8:15; 12:47), however, His presence brings judgment (3:17-21). Here there seems to be a vital union between the overriding messianic purpose of the Son of God and the necessary consequences of the incarnation (i.e. to bring judgment).
The title Son of man is applied exclusively, but consistently, throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, starting with His early promise to Nathanael in 1:51 and ending at His glorification on cross (8:28; 12:23; 13:31; 19:5, 6). Son of God, however, may be used to speak of Jesus in terms of His preincarnate (1:18; 17:1-5), incarnate (3:16; et. al.), or His glorified state (8:35; 17:1). The Father/Son relationship first occurs "in the bosom of the Father" (1:18) and concludes in the Father's presence (17:5).

The Son of man is "lifted up" on the cross and crucified (3:13; 8:28; 12:23, 32, 34). But John never speaks of the Son of God as lifted up or crucified. Albeit he does associate the Son of God with that event (cf. 3:16; 1 John 1:7). The primary distinction observed here seems to be that as Son of man Jesus is glorified on the cross (12:23; 13:31; 19:5), while, as Son of God, He is glorified through the cross (11:4; 17:1) in His return to the Father (13:32; 14:13; 17:1, 5).

Jesus' revelation as Son of man reaches a "high point" in His passion and death. It is the "hour" which does not come until Jesus is delivered up on the cross (1:51; 3:14; 6:27; 8:28). At this time the Son of man will be ultimately vindicated as He is "seen," "lifted up," "given," and "eaten" (12:23, 34; 13:31; 19:5). Whereas, the Son of God "is never linked with this movement toward the passion. The revelation of the Father in the Son is a permanent fact, even if not believed in." Moloney concludes:

The Son of man revealed God to men and brought judgment to men through his presence, as a man, among them. The high point of this revelation and judgment took place on the cross. After the glorification of the Son of Man on the cross, the title no longer has any meaning for John. There is a very important distinction between this idea and John's use of 'the Son (of God).’ The latter speaks of the basis of Jesus' existence and purpose--his union with the Father before, during and after the incarnation.
The question of whether to approach New Testament christology from an ontological or functional direction takes an interesting turn here. For John, Jesus is qualified to accomplish His task as Son of man by virtue of His abiding relation to God as eternal Son. Yet, at the same time, He is vindicated in His personal claims by the consummation of His work on Calvary. From this perspective it can be seen that the polarization of ontological vs. functional in current christological debate has done more to obscure the truth of the New Testament than to clarify it.

The Question Related to His Character

The truth of Jesus' sinlessness in John has already been established in this study. Here the question turns on whether such a doctrine vitiates the revelation of God in Christ, and consequently, touches on the very heart of the matter being discussed: that is, the specific relation of the historical Jesus to God. Berkouwer has shown that the earlier question of whether Christ took on "fallen" humanity or "ideal" humanity in the incarnation has taken on new proportions. In the last century the debate focused on the hiddenness of Christ in the flesh and His true humanity. Today, however, the idea is given the form of a dialectic between revelation and concealment--the humanity of Christ concealing the revelation of God. If Christ's sinlessness is affirmed then the dialectic is lost in the light of full disclosure. It is argued that concealment is a necessary correlative of revelation, because only then is there room for offense, misinterpretation and rejection. Only the enlightened heart can respond and "see" the revelation (cf. Matt. 16:16, 17; Luke 5:26; John 8:41; 10:20; Luke 11:15; 1 Cor. 1:13, 23; 12:3). In John this question is resolved by recognizing
several facts.

First, it must be noted that the problem has not arisen from an inductive study of Scripture. It is borne out of an approach to the New Testament which superimposes Heideggerian epistemology upon it. As such, language is viewed as an inadequate vehicle for the conveyance of metaphysical truth. The study of John illustrates the bankruptcy of this methodology for the study of christology.

Second, John views revelation in the sense of open disclosure of the glory of God (cf. John 2:11; 7:39; 12:28; passim). The sinlessness of Christ does not violate the revelation of God in Christ; it is an essential part of it in the theology of the fourth evangelist. In His sinlessness He is the light. To walk in the light is to live free from the contamination of sin. As God's revelation Jesus discerns the darkness and those who walk in it. Accordingly, He brings judgment as well as the possibility of eternal life.

Third, John construes the rejection of the revelation of God in Christ as a "noetic," not an "ontic" problem. Men are condemned, not because of the essential structure of revelation (i.e. it is rendered in such a way as to require divine unction to be recognized), but because of unbelief (John 3:18; 6:60-64). Faith is not the instrument by which the truth is secured, it is the response of commitment to the full disclosure of truth.

One cannot help but see in John 21:25 the affirmation of amazement and delight at the appearance of Jesus Christ whom the disciples had come to know. He was certainly not mistaken for any man in that instance. Indeed, it was this man who assured his followers: "be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (16:33).
There is in John's presentation an essential unity between the
man from Nazareth, and the manifestation of the glory of God. John does
not allow for any kind of adoptionistic interpretation of this truth.

The Question Related to His Works

It was noted above that John unites Jesus' words and works, His
claims and accomplishments, His ontology and function. This development
in his thought is sufficient to provoke speculation as to whether it is
even possible to consider them independently. Consider, by way of re-
capitulation, the following. Christ has been presented to John's reader
as the One in whom the invisible God has been made visible (1:18; 14:9);
to see Him (the historical person) is to see the Father. Accordingly,
He is the "Word" of God (1:1; cf. Rev. 19:13). Having been given life
in Himself He gives life to whomever He wishes (1:12; 5:21, 25; 11:43, 44;
20:31). He promises to send the Paraclete (7:37-39; 14:15-17, 25, 26;
15:26; 16:7). To Him has been given all judgment (5:22). He has the
audacity to cleanse the temple (2:13-17). He forgives sins (5:14; 8:10,
11; 1 John 1:7-9). He promises to hear and answer prayer (14:13). He
asserts His capacity to pay the infinite debt of man's sin (1:29; 1 John
2:2).

Yet to vindicate and/or accomplish these works it is necessary
for Him to take flesh (1:14; cf. 1 John 2:18; 4:1, 2; 5:5), to be re-
jected of men (12:37-50), to be lifted up (3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 24), to

There is no question that John intends to show that a unique
relationship exists between the divine purposes and prerogatives of
Christ and His human service and suffering. But how is this to be
interpreted? The importance of this question for theology can hardly
be overestimated. History abounds with attempts to make these two ideas intelligible. At one extreme are those who account for the divine authority and presence in Him as an added measure of the indwelling Holy Spirit. At the other extreme are those who explain the life and ministry of Jesus in Docetic terms as hardly more than an extended theophany. In the first instance the full deity of Christ is lost. In the second, His authentic humanity is denied.

It has already been shown that it is a mistake to construe John's christology in such a way as to vitiate or (at least) to truncate Jesus' authentic humanity. To do so one must render half of His Gospel as contradictory and deny altogether that John had anything to do with the writing of the three epistles which bear his name.

However, the question as to the relationship of Jesus to the Holy Spirit deserves attention. This is so for two reasons. First, since John has so much to say about the Holy Spirit, one cannot help but be optimistic that a solution to the problem of the nature of this relationship would be forthcoming from his writings. Second, the consequences for John's christology are far-reaching. Indeed, if God in Christ is really only the Holy Spirit at work in Him, the manner in which the deity of Christ is to be understood in John must be radically altered.

It is sometimes charged that the uniqueness of Jesus is to be attributed to the indwelling of God through the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the Prophet in whom the quenched Spirit enters history with great power. Drawing from John 1:14 the incarnation is interpreted (in Whiteheadian terms) as a "skenosis." Even in some conservative writers this influence is visible (e.g. H. D. McDonald—who, incidentally,
also takes his start from John; cf. 3:34). Others, like C. H. Dodd, do not seem to make any substantive distinction between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of the believer and His relation to Christ.

Most conservative writers since Kuyper have recognized that the Holy Spirit played a very active role in the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Here, of course, the full implications of this relationship cannot be considered, but there are several inferences given by John which seem to point in the direction of an amicable solution. And, as will be seen, that solution comes remarkably close to the formulations of Nicea and Chalcedon.

The Spirit and the Baptism

John's account of Jesus' baptism is placed on the lips of the Baptist who testifies as to the facts and meaning of that extraordinary event (1:29-34). On that occasion it is said that He saw (τεταμωυ) the Spirit descending like a dove on Jesus. Guthrie has noted that "the verb for seeing. . . cannot be construed as a visionary experience, but demands a literal object. . . ." According to the eye-witness account, it is said that this descent of the Spirit enabled John to identify Jesus as the Son of God and the One who would baptize with the Spirit. The christological implications of this incident are as follows. (1) Jesus is shown as distinct from the Holy Spirit. (2) The Holy Spirit is shown to annoint Jesus at the outset of His public ministry. (3) The specific "function" of this annointing does not seem so much to be associated with "power and authority" as it is "witness" and "testimony" to the identity of the One being baptized. In other words, Jesus is not seen to submit to the Holy Spirit. Rather, the Holy Spirit is seen to contribute to the overall messianic purpose of Christ. (4) The annointing
is permanent (1:32, 33, "He remained upon Him").

The Spirit and Regeneration

As was discussed earlier, John shows that the Holy Spirit is intimately involved in regeneration. This is especially evident in John 3:5, 6; but the idea also seems to make the best sense of 6:63. The contrast with "flesh" shows that the life communicated by the Spirit involves a radically new experience. It is also in this context that the best reading of John 3:34 is to be understood. Most agree that the concluding section of John 3 is the evangelist's own comment. If so, it is epexegetical of that which precedes it (i.e. the discourse on the new birth and its relation to the distinctiveness of Jesus' ministry over against that of John the Baptist). In contrast to John, Jesus is seen as the One who comes from heaven (3:31) and who "speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure (3:34). Then the writer goes on to add: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life" (3:36). In the concluding remark he shows that he is still talking about the new birth introduced at the beginning of the chapter.

The flow of the argument is unmistakable. John the Baptist had said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Jesus cites the necessity of the new birth and the Spirit is denoted to be the Agent of this new birth. Jesus is then declared to give the Spirit without measure. With that promise, John issues the unqualified offer that anyone who believes in the Son has eternal life. To demonstrate the extent of this truth he goes immediately to Samaria to underscore to his Jewish reader that anyone can have this life (again cf. allusions to the Holy Spirit in 4:14; compare 7:38-39).

In this scenario the specific relationship of the Holy Spirit to
Christ is given an altogether different force than that commonly assigned to it (largely due to the "unto him" in the AV).\(^{53}\) He is not seen to empower Jesus by His unqualified indwelling, but to assist the Son (into whose hands the Father "has given all things," 3:35) in the work of regeneration. This does not appear to be equated in John with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (note the distinction implied in 7:38-39) but is restricted to His work of regenerating those who respond in faith to Jesus' message.

The Spirit and God

Given the understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit reflected in Acts, there is no doubt that the teachings given in the Upper Room Discourse (John 14-17) represent an authentic account of that which was communicated to the disciples prior to Jesus' departure.\(^ {54}\) In the discourse, several passages provide the key for this understanding of both the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

In 14:16, 26; 15:26 and 16:7 the Holy Spirit is designated as the Paraclete. The word literally means "one called alongside." As a title it is used also of Christ in 1 John 2:1. Taken altogether the use of the term signifies a commonality in the respective ministries of Christ and the Spirit on behalf of the believer. In its association with Christ the term also underscores the idea that in both instances the reference is to a person, not an impersonal force.

In 14:17; 15:26; and 16:13 the Spirit is signified as the Spirit of truth. Accordingly He is and communicates truth. The association of this with the statement in 1:17 that "grace and truth" come by Jesus Christ again underscores a parallel between the ministries of the two.

In 15:26 the Spirit "proceeds from the Father," but elsewhere
He is shown to be sent by the Father and the Son (14:26; 16:7). These expressions not only signify unity of purpose, but nature, since they show that the relationship of the Spirit to the Father and to the Son is identical in kind.

The Spirit and Christ

In addition to works on behalf of the disciples, in particular, and the world, in general, John also speaks of several operations of the Spirit which are specifically directed toward Jesus Christ. His major function is given in 16:14 as glorifying Christ. Indeed, He does not speak on His own initiative but He will "take of mine" i.e. Jesus Christ, who in turn is in possession of all things pertaining to the Father (16:15).

Then it is said that "He will bear witness of Me" (15:26), a fact which is intimately involved with the witness of the believer (15:27).

The Epistles also enlarge on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in similar language. Guthrie summarizes:

As in John's gospel, the Spirit's part in witness is clearly expressed. 'The Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth' (1 John 5:7). There are different ways in which the Spirit may be said to witness to the truth. He may do so by witnessing through the life and ministry of Jesus (seen in the gospels). He may further be witnessing in the contribution he makes through the OT to our understanding of Christ. John seems to be alluding to a spirit-directed testimony from the past which is still a present reality. Moreover, the Spirit is linked with water and blood as witness bearers (1 John 5:8). In spite of the debate over the meaning of this passage, the Spirit's witnessing function is not in dispute. Where the Spirit abides truth must reign. The Holy Spirit and falsehood do not go together. This is vividly brought out by the contrast between the Holy Spirit and the spirit of antichrist (1 John 4:1-6). The sign of the Holy Spirit is his witness to the real incarnation of Jesus Christ. Antichrist denies this. There can be no confusion over this. The distinction is unmistakable.
Summary

It has been shown that Jesus is uniquely related to the Holy Spirit throughout His ministry. Furthermore, He does not appear to maintain the same kind of relationship to Him that the believer has. Rather, His relationship is like that of the Father. During His incarnate ministry, the Holy Spirit is uniquely involved as the agent of regeneration and witness to the authority and divine origin of Jesus. Whatever else may be said, it is not possible to reduce the divine prerogatives of Christ to a position subordinate to the Holy Spirit (to the Father, yes (esp. 5:19-30), but not to the Spirit). Obviously, work needs to be done here to bring this thought into harmony with the Synoptics (see esp. Matt. 12:28).
Notes

1D. Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 406. In this he is thoroughly consistent. See for example, his discussion of Jesus' sinlessness, p. 235. Although, to be fair, he is not willing to leave things at that. He does reserve the right to raise the metaphysical questions, even though he is skeptical that they can be answered. See also H. E. W. Turner, Jesus, Master and Lord, p. 185; L. Morris, The Lord from Heaven, p. 108.

2Ibid.

3The writer is well aware that the employment of this term does not necessarily imply that a true contradiction exists--only that it appears to exist (although some, like Bushnell, God in Christ, p. 160, have not been afraid to suggest that "the Gospel of John is the most contradictory book in the world"). The point here is so stressed because it is misleading to use the term synonymously with such terms as M. Baillie, God Was in Christ, pp. 106-32. Indeed the terms mean quite different things (see Sergius Bulgakov, The Wisdom of God, p. 116, note). Also, to apply the term here is to say something about the nature of the New Testament revelation respecting the person of Christ. Indeed, it is to say something about the nature of revelation itself. It is argued by some (Brunner, The Mediator, Barth, Dogmatics, I, 2) that without faith revelation is indistinguishable from that which is non-revelational, i.e. it is revelation in concealment. Without the element of faith Jesus could be mistaken for any man. (For critique see G. C. Berkouwer, The Person of Christ, pp. 329-64). But the Scriptures speak quite differently. The causa scandalii is not the concealment of deity in humanity, it is unbelief in a divinely disclosed message. To employ such a concept of revelation as Brunner, one "... must proceed to eliminate, with ruthless consistency, all the moments of glory (doxa) from the earthly course of Jesus' life." (Ibid., p. 348).

4L. S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, 8 vols., IV:76.

5Berkouwer, p. 332.

6Ibid.

7Guthrie, p. 401.

8Ibid., p. 406 (emphasis mine).

9The adage, "finitum non capax infiniti" does not originate with Calvin, but certainly does reflect his approach to the problem. See Berkouwer, pp. 281-86.

11 Guthrie, p. 402.

12 See R. H. Fuller, pp. 243ff., for summary.


14 O. Cullmann, Christology of the New Testament. Cullmann's reductionist christology has received wide support from those who are anxious to begin their christology with critical exegesis (i.e. those who are doing biblical theology). See W. Pannenberg, Jesus, God and Man, E. Fuchs, Studies in the Historical Jesus, G. Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, etc. For criticism of this approach to christology see Gerald E. Bray, pp. 2-9.

15 See also O. Cullmann, Circle, pp. 86-94, esp. p. 92.

16 Guthrie, pp. 405-7; 570-72.

17 Cook, Theology of John, pp. 61, 62.

18 Guthrie, p. 405.

19 O. Cullmann argues that this notion is "greatly exaggerated" in contemporary Johannine studies, Circle, p. 58. He is correct.

20 The following has been summarized by John Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord, pp. 117, 118. It is not without significance that what he observes about the total New Testament could, mutatis mutandis, be well said of the Johannine Christ.

21 These insights were noted earlier to point the way toward the formulations of Nicea.

22 Walvoord, p. 117.

23 C. K. Barrett, St. John, pp. 77, 78; V. Taylor, Person of Christ, pp. 231, 232.

24 J. Knox, Humanity and Divinity, pp. 1-18.

25 For discussion see T. E. Pollard, Johannine Christology, pp. 5, 6.
26 Bushnell, God in Christ, pp. 163-64.
27 Ibid., p. 157.
28 Ibid., p. 163.
29 In this writer's opinion, even the "paradox" of Guthrie, logically considered, is only a euphemism for what Bushnell asserts in his archaic naivete.
30 This idea was given prominence in Kierkegaard, Training in Christianity, but received renewed thrust in 1927 by Emil Brunner, The Mediator, (ET, 1947), and subsequent dialectical theologians. Since then the idea that revelation always comes in concealment has received general and widespread acceptance in contemporary Protestant scholarship. See Arthur M. Ramsey, Sacred and Secular; John MacQuarrie, New Directions in Theology Today, III, God and Secularity; Gustave H. Todrank, The Secular Search for a New Quest. See also Norman Pittinger, The Word Incarnate and Christology Reconsidered; Dale Moody, The Word of Truth; John Baillie, The Sense of the Presence of God. Nor is it absent from Roman Catholic writers since Teilhard de Chardin. For example see Teilhard's Divine Milieu; or E. Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter With God; Klaus Reinhardt, "In What Way is Jesus Christ Unique," Communio, 1(Wint., 1974):343-64; H. Kung, On Being a Christian; Does God Exist (for RC reaction see The Kung Debate: Facts and Documents, published by the United States Catholic Conference, esp. pp. 130-45. Berkouwer's objections that such a view is incompatible with the nature of revelation and the witness of Scripture remains valid for evangelical scholarship. For discussion and arguments see Person, pp. 329-64.
32 Bushnell, pp. 150-51.
33 Taylor, p. 272.
35 F. J. Moloney, Johannine Son of Man, pp. 211ff.
37 Ibid.
Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 213. In this Moloney draws from R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel According to St. John, 11:166-67, in opposition to E. Kasemann who is led to read into John a "naive docetism" (p. 7) by his failure to recognize this distinction.

Supra, pp. 99ff.

Berkouwer, pp. 342ff.

For E. Kasemann, a liberal, John is pictured as holding to a docetic view of Christ in contrast to the Synoptics. For others, like Spiros Zodhiates, Was Christ God?, and W. E. Best, Studies in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, who are both evangelical, while giving service to Jesus' humanity, their understanding of the christology of John and the rest of the New Testament is essentially docetic.

The Holy Spirit is not always clearly given the status of person in this scheme. See Moody, pp. 124-26, 424-26.


The influential cosmology of A. N. Whitehead is developed most fully in his Process and Reality, given originally in the Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh in 1927, 1928.

See W. Norman Pittinger, The Word Incarnate; J. Knox, Humanity and Divinity; Dale Moody.

See for example H. D. McDonald, Jesus, Human and Divine, pp. 33-36. McDonald starts with John 3:34 to say "that the Spirit was given to Him 'without measure.' True enough the words 'unto Him' do not occur in the original Greek, but the arguments that they should be presupposed are overwhelming." Unfortunately, he does not suggest what these "overwhelming" arguments are.

Dodd, Interpretation, pp. 226-27. He sees the incident in John 20:22 (when Jesus "breathed on them" and they received the Holy Spirit) as the "ultimate climax of the personal relations between Jesus and His disciples."


Guthrie, p. 526.

Ibid., p. 527.
53 Cf. Pache, Person and Work, p. 43; Walvoord, Holy Spirit, pp. 92, 93, etc.

54 H. Windsch, The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel, argues that the 'spirit-sayings' must have been read back into the Gospel account. For discussion and rebuttal of this see G. Johnston, The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John and D. Guthrie.

55 Guthrie, p. 535.
CHAPTER VI

THE INFLUENCE OF JOHN IN EARLY
CHRISTOLOGICAL REFLECTION

It is now possible to specify the distinctive emphases of John in terms of the person of Christ so as to identify where and how they occur in subsequent theological reflection. First, it has been shown that John recognizes at least three states in relation to Christ's personal and conscious existence, namely, a preexistent state (developed in terms of the Logos and the Monogenes); an incarnate, "kenotic" state ("the Word made flesh"), and an incarnate, glorified state. This last state is seen as "like" the preexistent state as "glorious" (John 17:5), but also as "unlike" the preexistent state, in that it involves a resurrected body.

Second, it has been shown that John recognizes Christ to be a real man. John does not contemplate this in metaphysical terms, but it is clear that whatever John understands about human nature as such he also understands about Christ.

Third, John presents Jesus Christ as vere Deus. Again, John is not interested in presenting this concept in philosophical or ontological terms. Instead he argues for Christ's deity by showing that what was known about Jesus of Nazareth was fully consistent with what the Old Testament said about the person and prerogatives of God. At the same time, Christ, the Logos/Son, is viewed as distinct from the Father. This is a mystery which John affirms, but does not attempt to explain.
Then John presents the deity and humanity of Christ in such a way as to retain both without losing, mixing or bifurcating them. In fact, this seems to be precisely the point he makes against docetic gnosticism which sacrificed His humanity upon the altar of His deity. Here the student of theology is confronted with the second great mystery of Christ in John; namely, the union of the two natures in the one person. Here, as above, it does not seem to occur to John that what he is saying about Christ presents profound philosophical problems, particularly in light of prevalent notions about the nature of God and His creation. But then it is not John's purpose to explain these mysteries as much as it is to set them out, as concisely as possible, as truth to be received even if not understood.

Finally, throughout John's discussion Christ is viewed as the Mediator between God and man in creation, revelation and redemption. While John does not use this term, it is clearly evident in his use of the Logos in the Prologue of his Gospel. This concept is developed not in Philonic or gnostic terms as an "intermediary," but in the unique sense of One through whom God is directly at work. This is important for subsequent discussion, as will be seen.

What follows is not intended to present a detailed history of christological speculation from the Apostles to Chalcedon. Rather, the purpose of this chapter is to show that in subsequent theological reflection the "great ideas" were really John's and to the extent that the Fathers developed these ideas the way John did they remained orthodox. By contrast, when they rejected these ideas or attempted to explain them in terms of prevailing pagan philosophy their christology was problematic and subsequently rejected by the church at large. In this process Nicea
and Chalcedon are significant because they are the symbolic monuments of the synthesis which transpired in the early centuries to explicate biblical truth.

**Second Century Christology**

It should come as no surprise that the first order of business in the fledgling church was to reconcile Old Testament monotheism with New Testament claims to the deity of Christ. After all, Christ, the Apostle, and the nucleus of most first generation churches were all Jews who recognized the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures and found there the basis for their teachings in precept, type and prophecy. As will be seen, these early attempts were far from precise. What is of special significance here is the frequency with which they made use of Johannine concepts in their efforts to achieve christological clarity. The earliest Fathers are important because they appear to be working with ideas in common with John. The laters Fathers are clearly dependent on him.

**Clement of Rome**

It is necessary to look at Clement for three reasons. The first is that he is a second generation believer, dating to the time of the Apostles in the first century A.D. As a companion of Paul (Phil. 4:3) he could be expected to reflect the essential teachings of his great mentor. He is also important because he is not given to speculation. While he does reflect a "Judaistic and Stoic tone," his thinking is clearly controlled by the Old Testament and the teachings of the Apostles. Finally, in his *Epistle to the Corinthians* Clement employs several ideas which are evident in the Johannine corpus. This fact demonstrates that
subsequent Johannine emphases were not only early, but quite in keeping with current theological reflection.

Clement employs several concepts which one is accustomed to seeing in John. The first is his unique emphasis upon the blood of Christ. In Clement, the blood is related to several matters, not the least of which is his very Pauline soteriology. But of special interest is the manner in which he relates the blood to the deity of Christ in order to secure its value. It is the blood of "Christ" and of "the Lord." As such it is "precious to the Father." While his sources are no doubt derived from Paul, Peter, and Hebrews, the christological deductions he makes from them are also very much akin to John who relates the blood to the deity of Christ in much the same way (John 6:46-58; 19:34; 1 John 1:7; 5:6-8).

Clement also makes use of Jesus' relationship to the will and purpose of the Father in a passage very reminiscent of John 17:18. He says: "The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ (has done so) from God. Christ, therefore was sent forth by God and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments then, were made in an orderly way according to the will of God." Then too, Clement employs ascriptions of Christ which find parallel use in John. He speaks of Him as "Lord," and cites His mediatorial work in salvation. He employs the concept of "light" and speaks of Christ as "the Holy One."

Clement also affirms the unity of God and the deity of Christ, while also recognizing a personal distinction between the two.

May God, who seeth all things, and who is the Ruler of all spirits and the Lord of all flesh--who chose our Lord Jesus Christ and us through Him to be a peculiar people--grant to every soul that calleth upon His glorious and holy Name, faith, fear, peace,
patience, long-suffering, self-control, purity, and sobriety, to the well-pleasing of His Name, through our High Priest and Protector, Jesus Christ, by whom be to Him glory, and majesty, and power, and honor, both now and forevermore. Amen. 14

The first great mystery of christology is left intact here. If Clement perceives a problem, he does not acknowledge it.

Finally, Clement stresses the unity of Christ's person while recognizing at once that He is both God and man. He speaks of the "blood of the Lord," 15 and explains: "Jesus Christ our Lord gave His blood for us by the will of God. His flesh for (hiper) our flesh and His soul for our souls." 16 The stress on the "flesh" and "soul" (psuche) shows that he does not contemplate a docetic union, but (to use the language of a later age) a communicatio idiomatum. Again, the second great mystery of christology is affirmed in Clement, but left intact without philosophical scrutiny.

Thus, it would be a mistake to relegate, off hand, the christological conceptions of John to a later age. They are already evident in the thinking of the church at large in the first century.

Ignatius of Antioch

A disciple and associate of the Apostle John, Ignatius provides the earliest extant evidence of John's thinking and teaching outside the New Testament. The seven letters of the third bishop of Antioch which receive the imprimitur of authenticity by a consensus of scholarship have special value because of the broad spectrum of theological ideas contained in them. As to his christology his instruction is quite specific and almost always Johannine. 17

On the deity of Christ, Ignatius speaks of Him as "Jesus Christ, our God." 18 He declares that "Jesus Christ ... from eternity was with
the Father."\(^{19}\) He is "one with the Father."\(^{20}\) He is the "Son of the Father,"\(^{21}\) "... who came forth from one Father in whom He is and to whom He has returned."\(^{22}\)

But for Ignatius Christ was also truly human. He is "of the race of David,"\(^{23}\) "baptized by John,"\(^{24}\) "truly nailed to the cross for our sake under Pontius Pilate,"\(^{25}\) "suffered truly, and just as truly raised Himself from the dead."\(^{26}\)

Yet this One who is truly a man is "God in man."\(^{27}\) He is depicted as "son of Mary and Son of God."\(^{28}\) He is "the eternal, the invisible, who became visible for our sake."\(^{29}\) He is God's Word, proceeding from silence."\(^{30}\)

There can be no doubt that Ignatius considers himself monotheistic, as he affirms as much explicitly at times and grounds the unity of the church and of Christians upon it.\(^{31}\) By the same token he affirms the deity of Christ.\(^{32}\) Yet, while he sometimes almost seems to drift into an incipient Modalism,\(^{33}\) he manages to balance his thought with a clear distinction between the Father and the Son. Christ "comes forth from the one Father;"\(^{34}\) He has been "sent"\(^{35}\) by the Father. Both the unity and the distinction are eternal. "Jesus Christ ... was with the Father before the beginning of time ("before the ages") and in the end was revealed."\(^{36}\) Pollard correctly observes: "This double emphasis rules out both Modalism and Adoptionism."\(^{37}\)

But the focal point of his christology, as for John, is the incarnation. But for Ignatius, this is not a "Logos-christology." Indeed the Logos occurs only three times in his writings.\(^{38}\) Ignatius would rather transfer the preincarnate activities of the Logos to the Son than vice versa. This is distinctly Johannine. But in this
connection Christ is both "Son of God\" and Son of man.\" Ignatius presents this as a mystery. Christ is "begotten and yet unbegotten,\" God in man, true life in death, son of Mary, and Son of God, first able to suffer and then unable to suffer, Jesus Christ, our Lord.\" On this point Grillmeier observes:

"Here there is \ldots a contrast between the reality of the flesh and of the Godhead in Christ in the Johannine sense. This theological understanding of the unity of Christ finds its clearest expression in Ignatius in his use of the so-called \'exchange of predicates,\' where the divine is predicated of the man Christ and the human of the Logos, while the distinction between the two kinds of being is clearly maintained. This way of speaking is possible only because the unity of the subject is recognized.\"

Finally, it should be observed how Ignatius is controlled by Johannine terminology in the designations by which he speaks of Christ. Jesus is "Son of man and Son of God,\" "Lord,\" "the Word,\" the "only Son\" of the Father, the "bread of God,\" the "Shepherd\" of the "sheep,\" "the Door,\" and the "beginning and the end of life."

By way of summary, Ignatius preserves the essential ideas of John regarding Christ's deity and humanity. He affirms but does not speculate on the unity of God and of the two natures of Christ and of the unity of His person. In this respect he is guided by, but does not add to the christology of John.

Polycarp of Smyrna

Polycarp was a contemporary of Ignatius and probably a disciple of John. He drank deeply from all the apostles and reflects an intimate knowledge of their writings in his own. He became bishop of the Church at Smyrna and from there it is said that he took up the mantle of John in Asia. Because of this close association with John he is especially important in measuring the influence of Johannine thought at
the beginning of the second century. Also, like Clement and Ignatius, Polycarp is not so much given to theological speculation as he is to passing on, intact, the teachings of the Apostles. Accordingly, he can be relied upon to represent their doctrine faithfully.

Polycarp follows John in warning against the docetic idea of Christ's humanity. "For everyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is antichrist . . ." He speaks of Christ as the "Judge of the living and the dead." In his prayer, offered up on the occasion of his martyrdom, he speaks of Christ as the "beloved and blessed Son" of the Father, and "the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ." Doubtless, his friends who witnessed and composed the account of his death reflected the influence of John in Polycarp when they spoke of Christ as the "only-begotten Son."

Early Christological Variations

After the earliest Fathers, the documents emerging from the second century reflect considerable diversity and confusion with regard to the christological questions. Popular ideas and the influence of Judaism are reflected particularly in the Didache, The Odes of Solomon, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. There is also considerable evidence that many of the ideas circulating at the time were parallel to or dependent upon John.

In the Shepherd the "Logos" is given the "Name" of God, signifying both honor and function. As such it denotes both deity and pre-existence. There was a kind of "Angel-christology" that was also popular during this time. It seems to have been derived from the Angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament. In its original form the sense was primarily functional. But its later expression took on an ontological
sense which played into the hands of Gnostic Christianity.60

These factors and others drove the early church to come to terms with the relationship of Christ to the Father, and to answer the questions posed by Celsus as to how deity and humanity could be united in Christ without either falling into docetism on the one hand or subordinationism on the other.

A rather general agreement between the Odes of Solomon, John and Ignatius has often been observed.61 The connection with John is especially visible in the use made of the Logos as Mediator of creation,62 revelation,63 and salvation.64

Melito of Sardis

A prolific writer during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, Melito was known only through his fragments until 1940 when the text of a newly discovered fourth century papyrus was published.65 In 1960 another papyrus (from the third century) was discovered and subsequently published, providing helpful corrections on the earlier publication.66

The significance of this work is seen in its very advanced christology. He deals with such concepts as physis and ousia in discussing the relationship of Christ to God. He also wrestles with the communicatio idiomatum, and demonstrates a conscious effort to keep the deity and humanity of Christ in balance.67 His debt to John is seen in the kinds of questions he seeks to answer and his use of the Lamb, sheep, Law/Grace, and earthly/heavenly imagery.68

Justin Martyr

Justin was born of pagan parents in Samaria, and experimented with several philosophical systems of his day before becoming a
Christian. Even after his conversion it is clear that he still maintained a profound respect for the schooling which shaped his mind as a young man.

His approach to theology and history is christocentric. His God is the transcendent God of the philosophers. His Christ is the Logos who, as an intermediary, bridges the gulf between the ineffable God and the world. The world was created by the Logos and a correct understanding of history must view it in terms of the "christological intention." He was thus, one of the first Christian thinkers to attempt to work out a christocentric worldview.

But this "Logos not only provides the bridge between God and the world; it also provides the bridge between pagan philosophy and Christianity." Justin employs the term Logos Spermatikos to denote the immanence of the Logos in the world as "Reason," and to whom all men are partakers. Greek philosophers and Old Testament saints are thus spoken of as "Christians before Christ."

It can be seen, then, that Justin is not a biblical theologian. He actually culls from Middle Platonism, Stoicism, the Old Testament and the Gospels to construct a Christian philosophy. While he draws ideas from John (especially the Prologue) his conceptions are clearly his own. He builds upon, rather than explicates the Johannine ideas. Justin is important in the development of Logos-christology, particularly as it was to flourish in Alexandria. However, since he "uses" John rather than "exegetes" him he serves to obscure Johannine thought more than to clarify it. It is also significant that to the extent that Justin obscured the essential Logos/Son christology of John, his views were incompatible with subsequent Western christology.
Theophilus of Antioch

Like Justin, Theophilus was born a pagan. He was converted to Christianity through the careful reading of the Scriptures.⁸⁰ According to Eusebius he became the sixth bishop of Antioch in Syria during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 168).⁸¹ He is important for Johannine studies because he is the first to attribute the Fourth Gospel to "John" and to quote explicitly and authoritatively (if not accurately) from it.⁸² He is also the first to use the term *trias* ("Trinity") to describe the Godhead, however he does not use it to speak of three "persons" but of "God, and His Word and His Wisdom."⁸³

Theophilus presents problems, however, for subsequent discussion for several reasons. First, what he means by the Logos is not altogether clear. He uses the Prologue of John to develop his thought, but it is not certain that he made any more of it than Philo. Furthermore, he utilizes Stoic terms to describe the relationship of the Father and the Son—an approach which was to find a home much later in Marcellus of Ancyra. When Theophilus says "at first God was alone and his Word was in him"⁸⁴ he opens the door for the Antiochian theologian to say that at first the Word did not have personal existence.⁸⁵ Here, as in Justin, the measure of theological respectability of the ideas presented by Theophilus in the Christian community at large is directly proportional to the degree to which he faithfully understood and utilized the Johannine terminology.

Irenaeus of Lyons

Gustaf Aulen observes:

Yet, of all the Fathers there is not one who is more thoroughly representative and typical or who did more to fix lines on which Christian thought was to move for centuries after his day. His
strength lies in the fact that he did not, like the Apologists and the Alexandrians, work along some philosophical approach to Christianity, but devoted himself altogether to the simple exposition of the central ideas of the Christian faith itself.86

At the heart of the theology of Irenaeus is his doctrine of redemption, which is understood in the sense of a recapitulation. "... the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through his transcendent love, became what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself."87 Central to this doctrine of redemption is a very Johannine doctrine of incarnation. "For it was for this end that the Word of God was made man, and He who was the Son of God, became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the Son of God.88

Against the powerful attacks of Gnosticism and docetism, in the persons of Basilides, Valentinus, and Marcion, the Bishop of Lyons, marshalled the theology of John and Paul. Beginning with a typological interpretation of Genesis 1-3 he correlated the immanence of God in Christ from John with the work of God in Christ from Paul.89

Nor did Irenaeus bifurcate the person of Christ. He is "... one and the same Word of God ... the only begotten, and that He became incarnate for our salvation ... we should not imagine that Jesus was one, and that Christ another, but should know them to be one and the same."90

There is no doubt that the author seeks to capture the intent of John since he views his battle against gnosticism to be identical to that waged by the Apostle much earlier.91

Unlike Justin and the later Apologists, Irenaeus is content to leave the mysteries of the Scripture intact. Thus, he affirms the distinctions and yet the unity of the Godhead and avoids all speculations
Third Century Christology

Approaching the third century John has been seen to have played a crucial role in helping the church come to terms with the categories necessary to develop a clear statement on the relationships between the Persons of the Godhead and the mystery of the two natures of Christ. During this time the church, in its conflicts with Jewish and gnostic ideas, increasingly sensed the need for providing a more adequate definition of its thought. The writing of John also played an important role during this time. Pollard observes:

By the end of the century St. John's Gospel had established its position within the church, it gave to the church a terminology which had points of contact with pagan thought and at the same time placed in her hand a weapon with which to defeat the syncretizing forces of gnosticism.92

At that point, the ultimate goal was threefold: to bring Christian faith into harmony with Jewish monotheism, to show that its beliefs were compatible with reason, and to differentiate faith in the deity of Christ from pagan polytheism.

The early second century pastors were content to rehearse and explicate apostolic doctrine. They did not attempt to speculate upon or extrapolate from it. Thus, on the questions of the Trinity and of christology, their writings are full of tension. They clearly recognized the deity of Christ within the context of Jewish monotheism. They also affirm the true humanity of Christ and the authentic unity of His person. They vehemently rejected all docetic or Cerinthisan speculations.

The apologists, on the other hand made the first feeble attempts to demonstrate that Christianity was compatible with both the Old Testament and sound philosophy. They resorted to the Logos-concept of John
to explain the deity and preexistence of Christ, but instead of looking for the meaning of this concept in the Fourth Gospel itself, they went to the available philosophical systems to secure the sense of it. Accordingly, they introduced serious questions as to the "personal" preexistence of Christ with the Father, and as to the ontological integrity of the "trinity" in general. They sought, in vain, throughout the current philosophical systems to find the categories to build a coherent apologetic. But the problems raised by Christianity "burst the bounds of any one system."93

By the end of the second century two directions were possible. There could be a return to Scripture to discern if, in fact, the Logos had been rendered properly and to determine if there were additional related terms in Scripture that would help them make sense of it. Or there could be a continued effort to reconcile Christianity with the current systems and to prove its superiority as the ultimate gnosis or true philosophy. In the third century both directions were taken.

In the West, Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Novatian carried on the tradition of Ignatius and Irenaeus to carefully define and preach the faith as it was received from the Apostles. For them, apologetics and theology became two distinct disciplines. In the East, the mantles of Justin and Theophilus are taken up by the disciples of Pantaenus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. For this latter group, theology and apologetics were all part of one task? to prove Christianity to be the ultimate philosophy. No doubt the intellectual climate in these two centers had an influence as well. In the West the concerns were much more practical with more interest in law than philosophy. Alexandria, on the other hand, had long been known for its pluralistic culture. There the
intellectual atmosphere was much more diverse and speculative. The problems facing the third century church stemmed from a distorted view of the transcendence and unity of God. The God of the philosophers was so "wholly other" that any direct contact with creation was either impossible or unthinkable. To resolve this problem the gnostic systems continued to view Christ as some sort of intermediary. They found biblical support for this in the Johannine Logos. The Dynamic Monarchians, on the other hand, resolved this same problem by a denial of the full deity of Christ. As it was maintained by Theodotus of Byzantium, Theodotus of Rome, Artemon, and Paul of Samosata, Christ was understood as a man indwelt by the presence and power of God.

Praxeas, a highly respected opponent of Montanism, hastily accepted the assumption of the Dynamic Monarchians that there could not be but one person in the Godhead. However, he wanted to retain, at the same time, the deity of Christ. The result was patripassianism--the view that Christ and the Father are one and the same person who suffered and died on the cross. This heresy was subsequently avowed in the West by Noetus, Epigones and Cleomenes. Later in the East its most famous adherent was Sabellius, who bequeathed his name to it.

So much use was made of Johannine statements on both sides of the debates that it is fair to say the christology of John brought to the discussion more than the solutions--it brought the problems as well. Indeed had it not been for John, there may not have been any debate.

In the West, a careful exegesis of John led them to place less emphasis on the "Logos" concept and more on the concept of "Sonship" to deal with the problems. This proved far superior and eventually led the way to an amicable solution. But, in the East, the answers continued
to be sought in the philosophical systems in hand. This eventually led to a crisis in the Alexandrian church and (in time) the whole of Christianity.

The Western Church

Hippolytus

In the third century Hippolytus was the first important voice in the West to be heard in defense of the New Testament christological claims. He is still heard in the extant fragments which bear his name, particularly in his treatise against the heresy of Noetus.

The teaching of Noetus is outlined sufficiently in the body of Hippolytus' response to glean some very helpful information about the Noetian monarchianism as well as accepted christological dogma of the period. What is especially interesting is the use made of John.

According to Hippolytus, Noetus fell into error for four reasons. First, he took his monotheism from philosophy, not Scripture. Second, his use of the Old Testament is selective and often misleading. Then, he ignores the Logos doctrine of John's Prologue. Finally, he misinterprets the sense of John 10:30 and 14:9 in order to prove his case.

The refutation of Noetus is constructed, first, around a very careful study of the Old Testament texts involved. Then he shows that biblical monotheism is not opposed to a plurality in the "economy" of God. He goes on to marshal a number of passages (primarily from John) to signify that it is necessary to recognize this distinction between the Father and Son or else "abandon the Gospel." Even the favored texts of Noetus from John (10:30 and 14:8, 9) argue more against Noetus than for him.
If, again, he allege His own word when He said, "I and the Father are one," let him attend to the fact, and understand that he did not say, "I and the Father am one, but are one" (ego, kai ho pater—hen esmen, not hen eimi). For the Word are is not said of one person, but it refers to two persons, and one power.

Finally, Hippolytus turns to the Logos of John's Prologue to show that the concept is more than a "figure of speech." It is a vital aspect of New Testament christology. However, what he does with the Logos is problematic. He realizes that it is related to Sonship somehow, but the way he develops this in terms of the "economy" and "power" of God is itself a type of Modalism. "Over against the successive Modalism of Noetus, he propounds an expansionistic Modalism. The one God expands into a trinity in the course of Heilsgeschichte." This idea will be repeated again in Marcellus of Ancyra where it will be correctly identified in the subsequent Sabellian controversy. For now this is sufficient to silence the Noetian heresy.

Tertullian

In coming to Tertullian the understanding of apostolic christology takes a giant stride forward. Tertullian was born in Carthage, received a classical Roman education, and became a lawyer in Rome. Following his conversion in middle life he returned to the city of his birth. He became a catechist and, it is assumed, a presbyter of the church in Carthage where he wrote and drifted eventually into Montanism, a sect of Christianity he found more in harmony with his austere approach to the Christian life and church discipline. What is of interest here is Tertullian's method and his insights into the trinitarian questions circulating in the third century.

Tertullian ostensibly had a very negative approach toward pagan philosophy and those who attempted to bring it into harmony with
Christianity. This attitude is seen particularly in his Ad Nationes, Apologeticum, and De testimonio animae. Yet, in practice, he comes down sounding very much like Justin. When he speaks of ideas derived from universal common sense, he is really borrowing from Stoic philosophy. But, this also goes on to illustrate that Tertullian really recognized only one authority--that of revelation. It is for that reason that Tertullian's method must also be contrasted with Justin's.

Tertullian wrote at a time when trinitarianism was generally looked upon with suspicion as a "refined polytheism." To the untaught mass of Christians some sort of Modalistic Monarchian model was reasonable to explain the problems posed by their faith in the unity of God and the deity of Jesus Christ. Warfield sums up the historical situation remarkably well when he says:

It is not at all strange, therefore, that the unsophisticated Christian should tremble on the verge of accepting Modalistic Monarchianism, especially when presented, in guarded form, as a simple and safe solution of a vexing problem. It was thus that it was quick to commend itself; and it was on this ground that it was in its most prudent formulation exploited at Rome as the official faith. When it was brought to Rome, we must remember, it was set over against, not developed Trinitarianism, but rather, on the one side, the crude humanitarianism of the Dynamic school of Monarchianism . . . and on the other, the almost equally crude emanationism of the Logos speculation, which had held the minds of thinking men for a generation. It was therefore naturally treated as a deliverance from opposite heresies, along whose safe middle way men might walk in the light of the twin truths of the deity of Christ and the unity of God.

Hippolytus had correctly diagnosed the theological disease which plagued Rome, but he was not received well. His chief legacy to christology was to force the church to modify its pronouncements. But the disease remained. Indeed, Hippolytus, himself, as noted above, held to a highly refined form of Modalism.

Then too, it must be observed that Tertullian does not introduce his ideas as something of a novelty. In his tract against Praxeas it is
clear that he is working with old ideas and truths which are perceived
in the original deposit of the faith.\textsuperscript{111} He notes:

That this rule of faith has come down to us from the beginning of
the gospel, even before any of the older heretics, much more before
Praxeas, a pretender of yesterday, will be apparent both from the
lateness of the date which marks all heresies, and also from the
absolutely novel character of our new-fangled Praxeas. In this
principle also we must henceforth find a presumption of equal force
against all heresies whatsoever—that whatever is first is true,
whereas that is spurious which is later in date.\textsuperscript{112}

The essential components with which Tertullian is dealing are
given in the passage immediately following. He explains:

... All are of One, by unity (that is) of substance; while the
mystery of the dispensation is still guarded which distributes the
Unity into a Trinity placing in their order the three Persons—the
Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three, however, not in con-
dition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power
but in aspect; yet of one substance and of one condition, and of one
power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms
and aspects are reckoned under the name of the Father, and of the
Son and of the Holy Ghost.\textsuperscript{113}

The balance of the treatise against Praxeas is an attempt to show
how these basic propositions are intelligible without resorting to
Modalism. To accomplish this objective Tertullian first affirms the
"Monarchia" of God (from 1 Cor. 15:24-8 and Ps. 110:1)\textsuperscript{114} and then he
shows that the idea of a diversity in the "economy" of God's purpose
is not inconsistent with the Monarchy.\textsuperscript{115} He then goes to John's
Prologue to procure the Logos-concept. But he goes to Proverbs 8 in
order to explain the sense of this (here he follows Justin and Hippolytus).
Thus his Godhead demonstrates diversity as Reason and Wisdom. Here the
Logos "evolves" from the Father.\textsuperscript{116}

Then, driven by the arguments of Praxeas, Tertullian is forced to
consider the Father/Son relationship. Here he deals extensively with
Johannine texts, but because he is already controlled by a faulty Logos-
christology, he is led to speak of Sonship is terms of emanation, like
the "root" and the "tree," the "fountain" and the "river," the "sun" and the "ray." In this type of thinking the Sonship of Christ is contingent upon creation.\[117\]

Then Tertullian is pressed further to explain John 10:30 against his enemy. Borrowing from Aristotle, Tertullian shows that Praxeas is illogical because correlative beings, by virtue of their very nature co-exist.\[118\] But it is here that his Logos-christology must be left behind. The Logos will have to be interpreted in light of Sonship, not the other way around.

Tertullian goes on to present his case for unity in diversity in the Godhead from numerous Old Testament passages and a minute exegesis of John's Gospel to explain passages which Praxeas has either misappropriated or ignored. Here Tertullian is deeply indebted to John for enabling him to maintain the distinctions without resorting to some kind of subordinationism.\[119\] He employs the Johannine concepts of "sender and Sent, between Begetter and Begotten, between Maker and Agent or Mediator."\[120\]

Since some Monarchians had resorted to the distinctions between the "flesh" and "spirit" to explain that the "son" was only the flesh of Christ and the "spirit" is the Father, God,\[121\] Tertullian concludes this treatise with a discussion of the second mystery of John's christology, the unity of the human and divine in the Person of Christ. In this section he resorts to the distinction clearly evident from Scripture that Christ was "one person," both human and divine, but not a "mixture." He relies upon previous argumentation to say that this is not altogether illogical. Without enlarging this idea further, Tertullian leaves it, but to the trained eye he can be seen to point unmistakably toward Chalcedon.\[122\]
For christology Tertullian figures prominently because he manages to introduce several terms which will prove helpful in subsequent discussion. He is also important because he is the first author "to attempt a systematic exposition of the trinitarian and christological implications of St. John's Gospel." In so doing he is forced to bring the Logos doctrine into harmony with the concept of Sonship (vital to the understanding of John and crucial for later theological development).

Tertullian's influence was both immediate and far-reaching. Although (as a sectarian) he is not directly quoted again in the third century, it is clear that the men who followed him are indebted to his brilliant insights.

"Hand me the Master," Cyprian used to say to his secretary. Novatian's work on the Trinity rests on Tertullian's, the Commonitorium of Vincent of Lerins and its criterion of catholicity owe much to his De Praescriptionibus, Leo's Tome draws on Tertullian for its christological conceptions and terms . . . . With all his exaggerations and perversions of detail, he was yet a major force in keeping the West steady and sensible, historical and biblical against the much more fundamental perversions of theosophical and . . . philosophical speculation.

Novatian

The influence of Hippolytus and, to a greater extent, Tertullian, in Rome, is clearly evident as early as A.D. 250 in the person of Novatian. His tract, De Trinitate depicts Christ as the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, manifested in His preexistent state in the Old Testament. He explains His unity with the Father as a communion of substance. He received His human body from Mary and as such the two natures are "woven" together. He vehemently rejects Monarchianism in both its modalistic and dynamic forms.

Like Tertullian he distinguishes the natures of Christ, but his
union is explained more along the lines of the Stoic krasis di' holon. He retains much of the weakness of the Hippolytean Logos-sarx theology over against the deeper insights of Tertullian as the Son of man and Son of God. Like Justin, Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Tertullian, he takes his starting point from John's Prologue and to the extent that he represents John's thinking he contributes favorably toward an amicable solution.

The Eastern Church

At the opening of the third century there existed in Alexandria a catachetical school whose founder was Pantaenus, a former Stoic philosopher who had engaged in missionary activity in the Far East before coming to Egypt. Formed originally as a bulwark against gnosticism, the school came to be distinguished for its characteristic way of presenting Christianity as the "true gnosis." This was especially so under Clement, the successor of Pantaenus. Seeking intellectual integrity, the school at Alexandria took from the best of pagan philosophy, Greek culture, Jewish religion, and Christian faith to provide an atmosphere where theologian and philosopher alike could sit together in harmony.

Under the thirteen years of Clement's leadership the influence and popularity of the school attracted so much attention that in A.D. 202 the African Emperor Septimus Severus determined to close it down. In the persecution that followed Clement was driven into exile and Leonidas, Origen's father was martyred. Origen himself barely escaped with his life. The school was reorganized the following year with Origen as its head.
Clement of Alexandria

Like Justin and more immediately, his master Pantaenus, Clement was converted to Christianity from paganism. He was born in Athens and schooled in philosophy before coming to faith. An intellect of the first order, he soon gained the deep respect of his colleagues and students. Of the many books that he wrote three are important in understanding his teaching. These are *Cohortatio* (The Exhortation), *Paedagogos* (The Instructor), and *Stromata* (The Miscellanies). Together, these books are constructed upon the theme of the Logos.

In the first of the books the Logos attracts. In the second He directs. In the third He perfects. He is the spiritual Magnet that draws all men who have any spiritual affinity with Him, whether Jew or Gentile. He is the spiritual Star that guides the faithful amid the darkness and uncertainties of life. He is the spiritual goal which, once reached, fills the soul with the knowledge and love that ultimately guarantee fellowship with God.128

Clement's conception of God demonstrates a profound influence from Middle Platonism and Stoicism, both fashionable at the time in Alexandria. His God is that of Plato, the absolute, transcendent, Father and Ruler, embracing all reality, transcending the monad.129 God's Son, the Logos, corresponds to Nous of Middle and Neo-Platonism. He generates from the Father from eternity, animating the world of the creature.130 The Spirit is the power of the Logos which pervades the world and attracts men to God.131

Pollard follows Crouzel to show that Clement also derives much of his Logos doctrine from Philo rather than the New Testament.132 While he uses John's Prologue, it is only a point of departure in order to explore his own philosophical speculations. In so doing the incarnation of John's Gospel becomes an extended theophany.133 His views become difficult for christology and contributed very little to subsequent discussion.
Origen

At the age of eighteen, in the year following the death of his father and the expulsion of Clement from Alexandria, Origen was given the task of reorganizing the school at Alexandria. From A.D. 203 to 230 he remained in that position with the exception of a four-year self-imposed exile to Caesarea to avoid persecution. This was in A.D. 215-19. During the period following his exile he was supported by Ambrose (one of his converts) enabling him to retain a rather large staff for the purpose of transcribing his books. This was to be one of the most productive periods of his life. It was said by Jerome that Origen wrote more than any one person could read in a lifetime.¹³⁴

Despite his erudition, intellect, and popularity, Origen never really won the confidence of his Bishop, Demetrius, who resisted efforts to allow Origen to preach or be ordained. Even when his friends (who were bishops in Caesarea and Jerusalem) did him this honor, Demetrius was furious and had him, forthwith, recalled, defrocked, and expelled from the city. He spent the remainder of his life in Caesarea, enjoying a great deal of respect and influence in Asia minor, Arabia and Greece. After forty-five years of extremely productive, if difficult and tragic, ministry Origen was offered up in martyrdom during the Decian persecution.

Due to the sheer volume and complexity of his work, Origen has always been more difficult to analyze and understand than to ignore. "The central point at issue today is whether he was primarily an exegete, philosopher, theologian, or mystic."¹³⁵ The full range of this matter cannot be discussed here, nor need it be since the one important fact influencing this study is almost universally agreed upon; namely, that
Origen draws from both Scripture and Hellenistic philosophy in the development of his christology. There is an on-going debate as to the specific immediate sources of his thought and the precise relation they had to each other in terms of priorities, but again the question is not exactly pertinent here. It is only his doctrine of God (which is quite explicit) and of the Logos (also quite explicit) with which this study is concerned.

Origen's doctrine of God is a fusion of Scripture and Middle-Platonism. God is the One (Monas) and the absolutely Singular (Henas), He is utterly transcendent, Mind (Nous) and Being (Ousia), yet beyond mind and being. But, in addition to these obvious platonic conceptions Origen draws from Scripture to say that God is Good, the God of the living and the Father of the Son.

Being in perfect goodness, God must have had objects on which to exercise Himself, hence Origen must posit a world of spiritual beings (souls) co-eternal with Himself. He accounts for the diversity of condition of spiritual beings (Logos, angels, man, demons) by positing the concept of free will. Originally created equal, all souls (except that of the Logos) were involved in a pre-mundane fall. The present world is a school of punishment and correction for souls which fell more than the angels, but less than demons.

Here, enters the Logos. Against the backdrop of Origen's Platonic cosmology the Logos is made necessary, not as a Mediator, but as an Intermediary between the Uncreated and the created beings. The Logos thus must be inferior to God, but eternally generated (as are all spiritual beings). Origen contended that John said it correctly when he asserted that the Logos was Theus, but not Ho Theos, since there is only one "God-
It may be easily concluded, then, that Origen is driven in his Logos doctrine, not by the exegesis of John's Gospel, but by his Platonic understanding of God and its corresponding cosmology. Only against this can Origen be fully understood. It is not surprising that in subsequent christological reflection the only aspects of Origen's thinking to survive were those which overlapped with true Johannine doctrine, namely the eternal generation of the Son (although understood quite differently) and the subordination of the Son to the Father (again, taken quite differently in later christology). The extent to which Origen left the foundation of Apostolic truth, his work was unacceptable as a model for theological reconstruction. John remains even here as a rock which cannot be moved.

Christology of the latter half of the third century

Throughout the remainder of the third century, the controlling influences were Tertullian in the West and Origen in the East. Others continued to restate, with only minor revision, certain aspects of their teachings, bringing to the surface both the strengths and weaknesses of both.

At Alexandria the church, itself, does not appear to have ever been entirely sympathetic to Origen's teaching, and upon his removal, the center of his influence appears to have shifted to Caesarea and to have been taken up, most prominently, by Eusebius.

However, Origenistic influence continued to be felt in Alexandria through Dionysius and later Theognostus and Pierius, in the form of a subordinationist christology (a teaching which, taken out of the context of Origen's cosmology, became immediately suspect). By the end of the
century, when Peter took control of the school, the faith of the Alexandrian church, is visible in the school for the first time. Derided earlier by Clement and Origen, the "simpliciores" really did not have a knowledgeable spokesman until Athanasius. This ushered in what Pollard calls the "neo-Alexandrian" tradition, which most closely resembled the Western tradition.

The only other significant influence in the third century, for christology, was at Antioch in the person of Paul of Samosata. Paul followed Theophilus of Antioch, holding that God had the attribute of Wisdom or Reason which He communicated abundantly to Jesus Christ, who was a man like any other man. The experience of Abraham, Moses, and that of the Prophets, of the indwelling Word, is understood as identical (to a lesser degree) to that of Christ. Hence his doctrine represents a variation on the theme preached among the Dynamic Monarchians, and fails to give adequate recognition to the mystery of the incarnation. Incarnate deity becomes an indwelling of power and wisdom. Paul was later condemned by the Bishops in Syria who had been trained under Origen in Caesarea.

It can be readily seen that of these three traditions, only the Western "understood St. John's intention that the central concept for christology must be that of the Father-Son relationship." It also "appears to have been more representative of the faith of the majority of Christians everywhere."

Nicene Christology

The formenting of ideas finally reached crisis proportions early in the fourth century when the Presbyter, Arius, began propagating his ideas at Alexandria. By this time Origenist influence had been suppressed
and a much more moderate position was taught in both the church and the

school. At the same time there were several distinctive approaches being
taken to deal with the christological questions. In Syria, the Samosatean
teaching was being continued by Eustathius of Antioch and his contemporary
Marcellus of Ancyra. It was to come into heated combat with Eusebian
Origenism, Arianism, and Western christology, and would surely not sur-
vive—at least not with any degree of theological respectability.

At Caesarea Eusebius maintained the cosmology and the christology
of Origen intact. He would later represent a mediating position against
Arius to say that Christ and God were of a "similar" substance—placing
the Logos at least closest to God in the hierarchy of beings. His Logos
doctrine is also appreciably weakened from that of Origen since Eusebius
thinks (as did Philo) of eternity in temporal terms. Thus, he cannot
really affirm the idea of "eternal generation" as Origen did. Indeed,
the Logos is both inferior and posterior. One can readily see how Arius
would not be afraid to make the logical deduction from this view, that
there was a time when the Logos did not exist.\footnote{146}

At Alexandria, Alexander and Athanasius found new ground for
Origen's doctrine of eternal generation in the field of soteriology (as
opposed to a Platonic cosmology). The result was a much harder breed
of the doctrine which was to prove much more resilient in the atmosphere
of the fourth century. Both Origen and Athanasius take their starting
point from John's Prologue, but where the former found it only a conven-
ient framework for this philosophical speculations, Athanasius used it
as a launching pad into the Gospel. In his scheme, the Logos is not
made necessary, as an intermediary, for God to communicate with His
creation. Rather, it is necessitated as a Mediator, by God's initiative
in restoring fallen humanity to the image of God. In this scheme, he
does not speculate upon the mysteries of the unity and diversity in the
Godhead, or the deity and humanity in Christ—he assumes them throughout
in the same way John did.

He identified the Logos with Jesus Christ, the Son of God and
Savior of men, and nowhere gives to the Logos-concept any other
content than that given to it by St. John. He does not interpret
the Prologue either in the light of current philosophical specula-
tions about a subordinate or second God, or in the light of Old
Testament concepts of personified Word and Wisdom, but rather in
light of the Son-concept of St. John's Gospel and in the light of
the gospel of salvation proclaimed in the whole New Testament. 147

With Athanasius as its champion, the spotlight of Western
Christology was to shine its brightest in Alexandria.

Arius introduced a fourth distinctive of the christology of this
century when he began his teaching around A.D. 318 in Alexandria. Almost
immediately he drew the attention of his Bishop, Alexander, who took
immediate measures to silence him.

Arius began with a Platonic conception of God as a Monad, and
entirely transcendent. Thus, the Logos cannot properly be considered
God, but rather He is part of the created order. Albeit He was brought
into being before the ages. Both Origenistic and Philonic tendencies
are clearly visible in his system. It was the controversy which ensued
which eventually motivated the first Christian Emperor to call a council
at Nicea to settle the matter. This occurred in A.D. 325. 148

What came out of that council was more than a triumph for Alex-
ander and Athanasius. It was a triumph for both orthodoxy and, more
specifically, the christological conceptions of John on the matter of
the unity and the diversity of the Godhead. While it would be fifty
years before the political skirmishes would be quelled, there could be
no question as to the consensus of the council. If biblical truth was
to be maintained, and Christianity to retain its distinctives, the mystery of the Trinity must remain intact.

**Chalcedonian Christology**

After the Council of Nicea, the trinitarian question was not exactly put to rest, but it was clear that the decision made in 325 was going to stand. In time the problems went away, but not without the able assistance of the "three Cappadocians." The most serious problem to which attention was turned was that of the relationship of the two natures in Christ. This was the second of the great mysteries of Johannine christology. Several attempts were made before the Church was to resolve this issue.

Athanasius does not really deal with the question at length. But when he does, he appears to have shared the view of the Arians that Christ's human nature consisted only of the real "flesh" to which the Logos was joined as the life principle. 149

Apollinaris of Laodicea followed this lead to say that the Logos was, in fact, the immaterial nature of Christ. What Athanasius seems to have forgotten or ignored, Apollinaris denied.

The "incomplete humanity" view of Apollinaris subsequently evoked strong criticism from Antioch in the person of Theodore (later Bishop of Mopsuestia). In a view later espoused by his disciple, Nestorius, it was asserted that there are actually two vital life centers united in Christ in "will" but not in "substance." Cyril of Alexandria, driven more by politics than theology objected to this and led a council in Ephesus in A.D. 431 which condemned Nestorius and had him sent into exile.

Then there was Eutychus, a loyal, but dogmatic and untaught supporter of the Alexandrian tradition who so mixed the two natures as
to form a tertium quid. Flavian presided over a synod in 448 in Constantinople which had Eutychus condemned. Then Dioscorus retaliated. The young nephew of Cyril, who had succeeded him to the See of Alexandria condemned the action of Flavian and had him deposed. At this point the matter had gone too far.

Leo (the Great) of Rome attempted to impose his will on the Synod in Ephesus over which Dioscorus presided and his letter was not so much as read. He declared it the "robber Synod" and called for another council to set the matter straight. The Emperor, Theodosius II would not give consent, and it was not until A.D. 451, after the untimely death of Theodosius that this successor, Marcian agreed to another council to consider the matter of the two natures of Christ.

At this time Leo's Tome, drawn chiefly from Tertullian, was employed, along with the writings of Cyril to write a definition to which all could agree as representing the essential teaching of the New Testament. The result was a document which affirmed the mystery of the union of the two natures in the one person without subjecting the doctrine to philosophical speculation.

Thus, it was that John's Christology was consistently woven into the fabric of theological discussion to keep the crucial christological issues always in view and to bring the sophistries of men into subjection to the authority of revelation, and ultimately to guarantee the distinctions of New Testament Christianity.
Notes

1 For many years it has been fashionable to deprecate any efforts to systemize revelation because of the acclaimed limitations and instability of human speech and language. Consequently, many previous formularies of theological propositions have been passed off with indifference. This attitude is fed by two opposing fallacies: On the one hand there are those who draw far too sharp a line between the events of Scripture (kerygma) and the record of those events (didache). Such an attitude does serious injustice to the function of language and the response evoked by it to the original recipients of Scripture. On the other hand there are those who fail to recognize that language is a fragile instrument and fully expect to find God at the end of a "neatly contrived syllogism" (Martin H. Scharlemann, "The case for Four Adverbs: Reflections on Chalcedon," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXVIII:12 [Dec., 1957]:881-92). The present attitude is clearly a reaction against such rigid thinking. In fact, there have been moments when biblical scholarship and counsel has managed to bring seemingly disparate and contradictory truths of Scripture together into sublime harmony. But this has ordinarily come about only in the heat of much controversy. Two notable instances of this dynamic are the counsels of Nicea and Chalcedon where, respectively, the two great mysteries of christology (the unity and diversity of the Godhead; and the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ) were given propositional formulation. For additional discussion, see Ibid.

2 Henry Chadwick, Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition provides a summary of the various approaches taken with regard to the influence of John's Gospel upon the writers of the second century. Considerable debate has ensued since 1932 when W. Von Loewenich (Das Johannesverständnis im zweiten Jahrhunderte) undertook to discuss the significance of the problem. In 1941 Bultmann, (The Gospel of John) proposed the view that John's Gospel was actually a product of second century gnosticism. Two years later, J. N. Sanders, The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church, said that no conclusions could be reached with any degree of certainty except to say that if the church in the first half of the second century knew of the Gospel, it treated it with suspicion. To this C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to John, 1955, agreed, with if anything, even more skepticism than Sanders that any influence in the first half of the second century could ever be found, p. 52. Drawing from a much wider range of evidence, F. M. Braun, Jean le theologien et son evangile dans l'église ancienne, 1959, has built a convincing case for the widespread knowledge of and respect for John's Gospel throughout Egypt, Asia Minor, Syria, and Rome in the first half of the second century. The suggestion by T. E. Pollard, Johannine Christology and the Early Church, 1970, pp. 24-26, is probably correct when he suggests that the reason why John’s Gospel was not directly quoted in early patristic literature (before A.D. 170) is probably due to the use made of it by the Valentinians. It appears to have been viewed with some degree of
suspicition until Justin adopts the Johannine Logos concept to defend orthodoxy. Theophilus of Antioch was the first to actually quote from it explicitly and to attribute its writing to John.

As to Bultmann's suggestion, recent research into the origins of gnosticism from the Nag-Hammadi literature (esp. the Gospel of Truth) has demonstrated his thesis of a Johannine dependence upon gnostic mythological imagery to be untenable. See G. Quispel, The Jung Codex, pp. 49, 77ff. Also Dodd, New Testament Studies, pp. 13-25.

3Clement of Rome is almost certainly to be identified with the companion of Paul mentioned in Phil. 4:3. He subsequently assumed the leadership of the Church at Rome and wrote at least one letter to Corinth to deal with many of the same problems first indicated in Paul's letters to the same city. Only the so-called "First Epistle" is here considered an authentic production of Clement. See "Introduction" to Clement in Ludwig Schoopp, Ed., The Fathers of the Church: The Apostolic Fathers, pp. 3-6; Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, p. 86.

4A point which Irenaeus confirms (Adv. Haer 3. 3. 3.)

5Grillmeier, p. 86.

6Obviously, Clement could not be dependent upon John since he probably wrote contemporaneously with the Apostle. Nevertheless, it should not be surprising, insofar as they are contemporaries, to see them working with common ideas.

71 Clem. 7. 12. 21.

8Ibid., 7.

9See also Ibid., 36.

10Ibid., 42. One must be careful not to read too much into this kind of a statement. Clement does not make of the "will" what Justin does to make the procession of the Logos dependent on creation, which in turn, proceeds from God's will. Here Clement is merely stressing the sovereignty of God over all things.

11Ibid., Salutation, 58.

12Ibid., 36.

13Ibid., 23.

14Ibid., 58.

15Ibid., 12.

16Ibid., 49., parens mine.

17Despite the contention of C. K. Barrett that there is no influence of the Fourth Gospel evident in the first half of the second century (Gospel of John, pp. 52, 53). Braun, Jean le theologien, pp. 271ff. and
others Grillmeier, pp. 86-89 and Pollard, pp. 26-33, have argued convincingly that the similarities between Ignatius and John are more than accidental.

18 Eph., Salutation.

19 Magn. 6.

20 Ibid., 7.

21 Rom., Salutation.

22 Magn. 7.

23 Trall. 9.

24 Eph. 18.

25 Smyrn. 1.

26 Ibid., 2. comp. 3. Here, as in Eph. 18; Trall. 9; and Smyrn. 1. 2. Ignatius piles up phrases with the adverb alethos ("actually," "truly," "genuinely," "really"). His utter abhorance of docetism is reflected by this characteristic. Indeed the reality of revelation and salvation depends entirely upon the reality of Jesus' humanity (cf. Eph. 9; Smyrn 2).

27 Eph. 7.

28 Ibid.

29 Polyc. 3.

30 Some (Virginia Corwin, Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch, p. 123; L. W. Barnard, Studies in the Apostolic Fathers, p. 26) contend that "Silence" here is a metaphysical term for God Himself. There is a connection of Sige, Logos, and Charis in the Valentinian Gospel of Truth with Ennoia, God's feminine counterpart. The connection is also found in a number of gnostic documents from Nag-Hammadi. Rather than suggesting dependence, it is asserted that Ignatius simply takes over the terminology of contemporary speculation. Pollard, pp. 26-31, argues that such an association is problematic, at best, and astonishing in light of God's persistent acts of revelation and His ultimate revelation as a man. It is also highly unlikely that Ignatius would so use the term in a single isolated passage. Here the expression "the Word proceeding from silence" refers specifically to the incarnation, but Ignatius does not, thereby, intend to suggest that God had previously been totally hidden and unknown (cf. Corwin, p. 114). Indeed, in Magn. 8 and Philad. 5-9 he recognizes God's Self-revelation in the Old Testament prophets.

31 See esp. Magn. 8. 9.

32 See above.
He speaks of the "blood of God" (Eph. 1), "the passion of my God" (Rom. 6).

Magn. 7.

Magn. 8.

Magn. 6.

Pollard, p. 32.

Rom. 2; Magn. 8; Smyrn. Pref.

Eph. 20.

The terms ἀγέννητος, which means unoriginate and eternal, and ἀγεννητός, which signifies not generate, were used interchangeably in anti-Nicene literature and it was not until Nicean controversy that the confusion of terms came to an end. The son was said to be γέννητος, begotten, and not γεννητός, created. For discussion see Francis J. Hall, The Trinity, pp. 60-61; Grillmeier, pp. 88, 89. Here Ignatius employs the terms in question, but one must be careful not to read post-Nicean insights back into Ignatius. The sense is best understood in the earlier Hellenistic sense of "come into being."

Eph. 7.

Grillmeier, p. 89. See Ignatius, Eph. 1. 18; Rom. 6; Smyrn. 5.

Eph. 20.

Magn. 7, passim.

Ibid., Phila. 8.

Rom. Pref.

Ibid., 7.

Phila. 2.

Ibid., 9.

Eph. 14.

The association between John and Polycarp is not entirely clear. The tradition depends primarily upon the testimony of Eusebius (HE. 4. 14. 3-8) who, in turn, received it from Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. 3. 1. 1-2). See discussion above in the "Introduction."

Most who have undertaken to trace Johannine influence in second century christology, curiously pass over him without a mention. See Pollard; Grillmeier; V. Zamoyta, The Theology of Christ: Sources; Sanday, Christologies: Ancient and Modern; passim. On the other hand R. E. Brown
while recognizing the problems with relying too heavily on Eusebius'
testimony as to the relationship between Polycarp and John, often traces
Johannine tradition through Polycarp. Cf. Gospel According to John,
pp. lxxxviii-xcii, 691, 934, 1108.

53 Polycarp Phil. 7.
54 Ibid., 2.
55 The Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, 14.
56 Ibid., 20.
57 Ibid.

58 For a survey of recent discussion see J. Danielou, The Theology of Jewish Christianity; The Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture; and
Grillmeier, pp. 37-85.
59 See esp. Vision III, 3; Parable IX. 14. 5. 6.
60 This danger is particularly evident in the Shepherd, Parable IX. 1. 3; Mandate 5. 1. 7; The Gospel of Peter 39. 40. It is still evident in Origen, De Orat. 15. 2.
61 See Corwin, Ignatius; R. M. Grant, "The Odes of Solomon and the Church of Antioch," JBL, LXIII (1944) pp. 363-77; Pollard, p. 34.
62 Odes, 16.
63 Ibid., 7. 7. 12; 8. 8; 12. 10; 41. 13.
64 Ibid., 31. 14; 41. 11-15.
65 C. Bonner, The Homily on the Passion by Melito, Bishop of Sardis.
67 Grillmeier, p. 94, notes "the God-man Jesus is ... the dominant point of the theology of the Bishop of Sardis."
68 Testuz (Ed.) Homily on the Pasch, pp. 30-35, 102-5, 140.
69 Apol. 1. 2; Dial with Tryph. 2-8.
70 Apol. 1. 10; 2. 6; see also Apol. 1. 52-53; Dial 14. 8.
71 Grillmeier, p. 90.
72 Ibid.
Pollard, p. 38.

Apol. 1. 46.

Ibid. See also discussion and sources in Pollard, p. 38.

Despite objections to the contrary by H. Chadwick, Early Christian Thought, pp. 9-20.


Despite objections to the contrary by H. Chadwick, Early Christian Thought, pp. 9-20.

The question arising from the fact that Justin takes such liberties with John on the one hand and ignores other use of the Gospel which could have been helpful to his case raises questions about Justin's attitude toward the canonicity of the Fourth Gospel. See Sanders, The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church, pp. 27-31; Barnard, Justin Martyr, p. 60; Chadwick, Early Christian Thought, pp. 4, 124f; Pollard, pp. 39, 40.

ad Autolyc. 1. 14.

Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. 5. pref. Irenaeus is not, incidentally, the first to speak of a "recapitulation" in a soteriological sense. See Epistle of Barnabas 5. 11.

Ibid., 3. 19. 1.

The former is derived largely from John's Prologue, see esp. Adv. Haer. 3. 11. 1-7. The latter is built upon the Pauline conception of the first and Second Adam. Ibid., 3. 22. 2. 3; 23. 1-8.

See the anecdote which Irenaeus received from Polycarp regarding John's encounter with this heretic at the bath. Adv. Haer. 3. 3. 4.

Pollard, p. 49.
Grillmeier, p. 107.


No attempt is made here to enter the debate concerning which documents are to be conceded as genuinely Hippolytean, since very little of the debate centers on c. Noet, which is all of importance for this discussion, that needs to be cited, with the exception of Philosophoumena, which also has strong critical support.

C. Noet.9, see also Philos.9. 3-5. This is open to question. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, pp. 109ff. argues that Noetus came to his position because of the inherent ditheism of Justin and Theophilus. See Philosophoumena 9. 7.

C. Noet. 2-4.

Ibid., 15.

Ibid., 7.

Ibid., 3.

Ibid., 6.

Ibid., 7.

Ibid., 15.

Ibid. Although this, in itself, is an important contribution for further discussion.


The sources are not all in agreement on this question. See S. L. Greenslade (Ed. and Trans.) LCC: Early Latin Theology, p. 21.


Ad Nat. 2. 5. 2. A fact generally recognized in patristic scholarship, Danielou ably documents in the Tertullian corpus. Origins, pp. 212-23; See also Rusch, Trinitarian Controversy, pp. 11, 12.


Ibid., pp. 10, 11.

Prax. 1-4.

Ibid., 2. See also De Praescript. 29.
Ibid. For discussion see Danielou, Origins, pp. 361-71; Grillmeier, pp. 117-21.

Ibid., 4.

Ibid., 3.

Ibid., 5. B. B. Warfield, pp. 3-37, is correct when he argues that this effort was not successful. Indeed the premise that John's Logos is interpreted from Prov. 8 in terms of Stoic philosophy was ultimately doomed because its presumption that John derives its meaning from that passage is fallacious.

A conclusion which Tertullian makes more explicit in Adv. Herm. 3. See discussion in Pollard, pp. 62, 63.

See Prax. 10. This argument, drawn from Aristotle (Categories 7) will figure rather prominently in the subsequent controversy with Arianism.

Although Seeburg, History of Doctrine, would disagree, p. 126.

Pollard, p. 69.

Prax. 27.

He even wrestles with the communacatio idiomatum, without actually improving on previous insights (see Melito), but he sketched a formula for it which was to prove helpful in later reflection. See Seeburg, History, p. 127; Grillmeier, pp. 122-31.

Pollard, p. 70.


Grillmeier, p. 132.

Williams, pp. 89-92.

Ibid., p. 93.

Strom. 5. 16. 3; 7. 5. 5.

Ibid. 4. 156. 1; 5. 16. 3.

Ibid., 6. 138. 1; 7. 9. 4; 7. 79. 4.

Pollard, pp. 80-86. See also Crouzel, Theologie de l'image de Dieu chez Origene, pp. 52ff.
For further discussion see Pollard.

Williams, p. 98, claims he wrote six thousand books and articles.

Pollard, p. 86. For a summary of recent discussion see pp. 86-105.

de Princ. 1. 1. 6; Jon. 1. 22; Cels. 7. 38.

Jon. 2. 11; de Princ. 1. 2. 13.

de Princ. 1. 1. 6; C. Cels. 7. 38.

de Princ. 1. 8. 1.

c. Cels. 3. 34.

Jon. 2. 2.

Pollard, p. 117.

Ibid., p. 116.

Ibid.

See especially his Demonstratio Evangelium.

For the link connecting Arius to the extremes of Antiochian christology (through Lucian, Eusebius of Nicomedia, Asterius the Sophist, and Paulinus of Tyre) see Pollard, pp. 141-47.

Ibid., p. 137.

Ibid.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to examine Johannine Christology in relation to subsequent theological development. From this analysis the intent has also been to give support to the hypothesis that the New Testament is not the product of a theological evolution, but the basis for all subsequent theological development.

To accomplish this aim, the first order to business was to show that the Gospel and Epistles were received by the early church as from the pen of the Apostle John. Accordingly, they were recognized as inspired Scripture and authoritative for doctrine and instruction.

Then four particulars of John's Christology were analyzed. These include the states of Christ, the humanity of Christ, the deity of Christ, and the theanthropic person of Christ. There is no question that these christological issues are of paramount concern to John, especially in justifying his understanding and presentation of the Gospel.

His argument is uniquely fitted to his Jewish audience and intended to show that there is a way to bring Jewish Monotheism into harmony with the New Testament affirmation about Jesus Christ.

The nature of John's purpose, contributed, to an unusual degree, to raising questions pertaining to Jesus' relationship to God and the manner in which His two natures concur in the one person.

In the final chapter, the influence of John's Christology was traced through the first four centuries of the Church. It was seen that what culminated in the landmark decisions of Nicea and Chalcedon were due
to a commitment to the authority of John's writings and an attempt to resolve the apparent conflicts sometimes derived from his Christology.

In the end it was seen that the radical approach of many contemporary scholars is not justified by the evidence presented. The New Testament stands totally apart from all subsequent theological discussion as inerrant, definitive, and authoritative. The early Christians recognized this authority and brought their thinking into harmony with the Apostolic doctrine. Thus, the Christology of the Nicean and Chalcedonian councils was not an attempt to make theology, but to make New Testament theology intelligible. In this sense they relied heavily upon the New Testament witness, and especially that of John. The result was a careful synthesis of biblical truth; not the capstone of christological evolution.
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