

The Supreme *Σημεῖον* of
Jesus' Death-and-Resurrection
in the Fourth Gospel

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is the supreme *σημεῖον* in the Fourth Gospel (FG). By focusing on the present text of the Gospel, without regard to questions of tradition and redaction, the above proposition is discussed and defended in three steps. Firstly, an analysis of the seventeen occurrences of *σημεῖον* in FG demonstrates that the word's meaning and referent cannot be limited to the miraculous activity of Jesus. A Johannine *σημεῖον* pertains broadly to any deed of Jesus viewed from the perspective of its function of revealing Jesus as the divine Messiah and Son of God. In this context of broad meaning and reference, the crucifixion-and-resurrection – arguably the greatest complex deed of Jesus – is the supreme *σημεῖον*.

Secondly, an analysis of five important and significant Johannine themes – namely *δόξα*, *ὑψωσις*, *ἔργον*, *ώρα*, and *πίστις* – lends strong support for the thesis. As regards *δόξα*, it is clear that the function of the *σημεῖα* is to reveal Jesus' and the Father's glory (2:11; 11:4, 40). This is precisely what the crucifixion-and-resurrection did supremely, so that the Fourth Evangelist (FE) can describe it as the glorification of the Son of Man (12:23). From this perspective, the cross-and-resurrection may be described as the supreme *σημεῖον*. As regards *ὑψωσις*, FE employs it to paradoxically describe the crucifixion as the exaltation of Jesus. Thus, it overlaps with *δόξα*. Part of the investigation of *ὑψωσις* is a brief consideration of *σημαίνειν*, which FE consistently and exclusively uses to refer to the manner of Jesus' death (12:33; 18:32; cf. 21:19). In connection with the typological use of Num 21:8–9 in John 3:14, FE's use of *σημαίνειν* appears to be a subtle indication of the view that the crucifixion is the supreme *σημεῖον*. As regards *ἔργον*, it is clear that the cross-and-resurrection is the consummation of Jesus' *ἔργον*. On the basis of the overlap and near-equivalence of *ἔργον* and *σημεῖον*, it may be concluded that the cross-and-resurrection is also the culminating *σημεῖον*. As regards Jesus' *ώρα*, it describes the cross-and-resurrection as the “hour” of Jesus' glorification and

exaltation. The earlier *σημεῖα* announce (2:4) and precipitate (11:47–53) the emergence of Jesus' *ώρα*. Put differently, the earlier *σημεῖα* precipitate the arrival of the supreme *σημεῖον* of the cross-and-resurrection. Finally, as regards *πίστις*, the *σημεῖα* play a positive role for the faith of those who witness them and of the readers (2:11; 20:30–31). This is also a role of the cross-and-resurrection, as 19:35 and the post-resurrection narrative in John 20–21 attest. Overall, these five themes focus on the cross-and-resurrection, and in many important ways they project it as the supreme *σημεῖον* of Jesus in FG.

Thirdly, an analysis of five carefully chosen passages from the Gospel bolsters the thesis that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is the supreme Johannine *σημεῖον*. The first passage, the temple incident pericope (2:13–22), is significant not only because it is the Johannine Jesus' first appearance in Jerusalem during his public ministry, but also because it recounts the first demand for a *σημεῖον* in FG. Jesus' deeply revelatory deed in the temple should have sufficed to indicate to the *Ἰουδαῖοι* that he is the true Messiah and Son of God. But in unbelief they not only fail to heed Jesus' all-important message but also confront him with a demand for an authenticating *σημεῖον*. Jesus' response consists in an allusion to his death-and-resurrection as the true *σημεῖον* that will justify his attempt at regulating the temple worship.

The second passage, the feeding miracle and the Bread of Life discourse in John 6, is significant because it recounts the second demand for a *σημεῖον* in FG. The feeding miracle, with the dominant symbolic element of bread, should have sufficiently communicated to the Galileans that Jesus, who gives physical food, is ultimately the giver of eternal life. However, not only do the Galilean multitude fail to discern the message of the *σημεῖον*; they also (like their Jerusalem counterparts), in unbelief, demand Jesus to produce an authenticating *σημεῖον*. Jesus' response, which is explicated in the ensuing discourse, is substantially the same as before: the true *σημεῖον* of his identity as the giver of life for the world is his death-and-resurrection. His sacrificial and salvific death is graphically described in verses 51c–58: Jesus' flesh is true food and his blood true drink. Those who eat and drink of this food shall have eternal life now and shall be assured of full salvation on the

last day. The resurrection of Jesus is included in the “ascent” of the Son of Man back to the Father in 6:62.

The third passage, the account of the raising of Lazarus in John 11, is significant in its pivotal role as the catalyst for the Sanhedrin’s official decision to put Jesus to death (vv. 47–53). In itself the raising of Lazarus is a *σημείον* pointing to the identity and role of Jesus as “the resurrection and the life” (vv. 25–26). In other words, it is a *σημείον* that signifies the greatest *σημείον* of the cross-and-resurrection. John 11 shows that Jesus’ task of giving life for Lazarus can be accomplished only at the cost of his own life. Jesus’ death is necessary if believers in him are to receive eternal life. But death itself is not a problem for Jesus, for just as he is able to raise Lazarus from the dead, he is also able to raise himself up from the dead (10:18). Thus, the raising of Lazarus points to the far greater reality of Jesus’ resurrection.

The fourth passage is 19:16–37, which recounts Jesus’ crucifixion and death. There are at least six aspects in this account that, individually and collectively, support the status of Jesus’ death as a *σημείον*. First, the crucifixion took place in explicit fulfillment of the scriptures, signifying that it was divinely ordained. Second, the crucifixion was the exaltation and enthronement of Jesus as the true King not just of the *Ἰουδαῖοι* but also of the world. Third, the crucifixion was the saving sacrifice of the true Lamb of God. Fourth, the crucifixion was the ground for the formation of a new community of those who believe. Fifth, the cross was the consummation of Jesus’ work as the divine Messiah and Son of God. Lastly, as the most important deed of Jesus and as the greatest of all the *σημεῖα*, the reality and significance of the cross is vouchsafed by the eyewitness testimony of the beloved disciple. All of these factors, of course, have meanings and significance other than in relation to the *σημεῖα*. But individually and collectively they establish the fact that the cross is not a disqualification of Jesus’ messianic claims. On the contrary, from FE’s post-resurrection perspective, the cross is the supreme *σημείον* of Jesus’ identity and role as the true Messiah, Son of God, and Saviour of the world.

The last passage is John 20, which recounts a catena of appearances of the

risen Lord. These appearances, individually and collectively, establish for the witnesses and the readers the reality of Jesus' resurrection. The fundamental point is that the one who was crucified is now alive again. Thus, the supreme *σημείον* is not the cross alone, viewed in isolation. Apart from the resurrection, the crucifixion cannot be a positive *σημείον* for Jesus. By the same token, the resurrection presupposes the death of Jesus. Together, they constitute the supreme Christological *σημείον* in FG.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ACNT	Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament
Acts Pet.	Acts of Peter
Aeschin.	Aeschines, <i>On the Embassy</i>
AGSU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Spätjudentums und Urchristentums
A.J.	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>
ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i> . Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 1885–1887. 10 vols. Repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
Antipho	Antiphon, <i>On the Murder of Herodes</i>
Apol.	Xenophon, <i>Apologia Socratis</i>
Aret. SD	Aretaeus, <i>De causis et signis acutorum morborum (lib. 2)</i>
Ar. Nu.	Aristophanes, <i>Clouds</i>
ASV	American Standard Version
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
AThR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
Autol.	Theophilus, <i>Ad Autolycum</i>
Bar.	Baruch
BBET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>

BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BDF	Blass, Friedrich, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
Bek.	Bekorot
Ber.	Berakot
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BH	Biblische Handbibliothek
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
<i>B.J.</i>	Josephus, <i>Bellum judaicum</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BPC	Biblical Performance Criticism
<i>BRev</i>	<i>Bible Review</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
<i>BWANT</i>	<i>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>Cal.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Gaius Caligula</i>
<i>C.Ap.</i>	Josephus, <i>Contra Apionem</i>
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>

CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
ConBNT	Coniectanea Neotestamentica: New Testament Series
Clem.	Clement
COQG	Christian Origins and the Question of God
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CTL	Cambridge Textbooks on Linguistics
<i>CTQ</i>	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
<i>DBSup</i>	<i>Dictionnaire de la Bible Supplément</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	Justin, <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>
<i>Didaskalia</i>	<i>Didaskalia</i>
Dio	Cassius Dio, <i>Historiae Romanae</i>
<i>DNT</i>	<i>Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Daniel G. Reid. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.
<i>DNTB</i>	<i>Dictionary of New Testament Background</i> . Edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.
<i>Dom.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Domitian</i>
<i>DRev</i>	<i>Downside Review</i>
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin. 12 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976–1992.
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
Eccles. Rab.	Ecclesiastes Rabbah
ECL	Early Christianity and Its Literature
<i>EDB</i>	<i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider. ET. 3 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990–1993.
<i>EJud</i>	<i>The Encyclopedia of Judaism</i> . Edited by Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and William Scott Green. 2nd ed. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
En.	Enoch
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>

<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ExAud</i>	<i>Ex Auditu</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>Gal.</i>	<i>Galenus</i>
<i>GELS</i>	Takamitsu Muraoka. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint</i> . Leuven: Peeters, 2009.
GNB	Good News Bible
GS	Geistliche Schriftlesung
Ḥag.	Ḥagigah
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
Hdt.	Herodotus, <i>The Histories</i>
Hermeneia	Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
HKNT	Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTCNT	Herder's Theological Commentary on the New Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HvTSt</i>	<i>Hervormde Teologiese Studies (HTS Teologiese Studies/HTS Theological Studies)</i>
IBT	Interpreting Biblical Texts
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDB</i>	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by George A. Buttrick. 4 vols. New York: Abingdon, 1962.
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>ITQ</i>	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBLMS	Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
<i>JBTh</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JGRChJ</i>	<i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>

<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Judaism</i>	<i>Judaism</i>
<i>KD</i>	<i>Kerygma und Dogma</i>
Ketub.	Ketubbot
L&N	Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene A. Nida, eds. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains</i> . 2nd ed. New York: United Bible Societies, 1989.
LB	Living Bible
LBS	Linguistic Biblical Studies
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
<i>Leg.</i>	Philo, <i>Legum allegoriae</i>
Let. Aris.	Letter of Aristeas
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and R. McKenzie. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
LXX	Septuagint
Menah	Menahot
MHT	Moulton, J. H., W. F. Howard, and N. Turner. <i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i> . 4 vols. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908–1976.
MT	Masoretic Text
NA ²⁸	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , 28th ed.
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NIDB</i>	<i>New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld. 5 vols. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2006–2009.
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible

NKJV	New King James Version
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NPNF</i>	<i>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTA	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTL	New Testament Library
NTR	New Testament Readings
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
Num. Rab.	Numbers Rabbah
<i>NZSTh</i>	<i>Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie</i>
ÖTK	Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
<i>OTP</i>	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by James H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1983, 1985.
<i>Pacifica</i>	<i>Pacifica</i>
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
Pesiq. Rab Kah.	Pesiqta de Rab Kahana
Pl. Phaedr.	Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i>
PNTC	Pelican New Testament Commentaries
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
Pss. Sol.	Psalms of Solomon
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
<i>RelSRev</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
Rh.	Rhetores Graeci
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RST	Regensburger Studien zur Theologie
RSV	Revised Standard Version

Ruth Rab.	Ruth Rabbah
<i>SacSc</i>	<i>Sacra Scripta</i>
<i>Sammelb.</i>	<i>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten</i>
Sanh.	Sanhedrin
SANt	Studia Aarhusiana Neotestamentica
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SBG	Studies in Biblical Greek
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>Scorp.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Scorpiace</i>
Šeqal.	Šeqalim
Sib. Or.	Sibylline Oracles
SIJD	Schriften des Institutum judaicum delitzschianum
Sir	Sirach/Ecclesiasticus
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
Sotaḥ	Sotaḥ
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>Spec. Laws</i>	Philo, <i>On the Special Laws</i>
SPNT	Studies on Personalities of the New Testament
<i>SR</i>	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
SSEJC	Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
Str-B	Strack, Hermann Leberecht and Paul Billerbeck. <i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash</i> . 6 vols. Munich: Beck, 1922–1961.
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.

Th.	Thucydides, <i>The Peloponnesian War</i>
<i>Theol</i>	<i>Theology</i>
<i>ThTo</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
T. Levi	Testament of Levi
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
UBS ⁵	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> , United Bible Societies, 5th ed.
UTR	Utrechtse Theologische Reeks
<i>VE</i>	<i>Vox Evangelica</i>
Vulg.	Vulgate
WBC	Word Biblical Commentaries
Wisd	Wisdom of Solomon
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>Worship</i>	<i>Worship</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZEB</i>	<i>Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible</i> . Rev. ed. Moisés Silva. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Statement of the Problem

As is well known, *σημεῖον* is among the most important and characteristic terms in the Fourth Gospel (hereafter FG). This is indicated not only by the frequency of its occurrences,¹ but also by the fact that it is the word by which the Fourth Evangelist (hereafter FE) characteristically describes Jesus' deeds. FE uses it twice to describe Jesus' public ministry as a whole (12:37; 20:30–31). He also uses it in the formulation of the Gospel's purpose (20:30–31).²

But what does the Johannine *σημεῖον* mean? What does it refer to? What is it exactly and what is it not? In this regard I believe that there exists a problem – a need for clarity and precision – in the current state of Johannine scholarship. This question, which is definitional and conceptual, constitutes the foundational stage of the problem that this thesis seeks to address. By raising this question, I am not suggesting that there has been scant scholarly attention paid to *σημεῖον*. On the contrary, as will be shown in the next chapter, there has been a tremendous amount of research into the subject in the last seven decades or so. However, in my view many of the existing conclusions – for instance, on what the *σημεῖα* pertain to – are not entirely satisfactory and do not seem to reflect FG's overall teaching. It is part of the task of this thesis to demonstrate how it is that many of the existing views do not seem to cohere with the whole data of the Gospel.

The second part of the problem, which is the main focus of this thesis, is definitionally and logically connected to the first. It has to do with the question of

¹ The occurrences and usage of *σημεῖον* will be discussed in ch. 3 below. The verb *σημαίνειν* will be discussed in §4.3.1 below.

² As is also well known, FE nowhere uses the word *δύναμις*, a preferred term of the Synoptic Gospels for the miraculous deeds of Jesus.

the relationship between Jesus' death-and-resurrection³ and σημεῖον. Is the death-and-resurrection of Jesus, which arguably is his greatest deed and which in FG is conceived of as a theological unity, a σημεῖον? While some may think that this question is unrelated to the first, I am convinced that it needs to be asked and answered when one is trying to clarify what σημεῖον includes and excludes. Once again, this is not to imply that there are no existing views on this question in current Johannine scholarship. In fact the answer that I hope to defend here will not be entirely *de novo*, but will build on some of the more coherent views already available. But again some of the main views on the connection between σημεῖον and Jesus' death-and-resurrection do not seem to me to be entirely satisfactory, and the need for greater precision remains.

In sum, this thesis focuses on a two-part problem related to the Johannine σημεῖον. The first part has to do with the referent of σημεῖον in FG and the second with the precise connection between σημεῖον and Jesus' death-and-resurrection.

1.2. Statement of the Thesis

I seek to articulate and defend a twofold thesis. First, in regard to meaning and referent, I submit that the Johannine σημεῖον pertains to a deed of Jesus – miraculous or otherwise – which FE has recorded in his Gospel in order that the reader may believe in Jesus (20:30–31). I deviate from the prevalent view that equates the σημεῖα with the seven or eight miracles recounted at length in the Gospel. Second, I submit that Jesus' crucifixion-and-resurrection, as a complex event, is the supreme σημεῖον in FG. That is, it supremely reveals Jesus' identity and mission as the Messiah, the divine Son of God, and Saviour of the world.

³ In this thesis I use the hyphenated expression “death-and-resurrection” (alternatively “crucifixion-and-resurrection” or “cross-and-resurrection”) to convey the view that in FG Jesus' death-and-resurrection constitute theologically unified, though temporally distinguishable, events. This is important for my argument. See §9.1.2 below.

1.3. Scope and Limits of the Study

Firstly, this is not a study of the miraculous accounts (i.e., the eight miracles recounted in John 2–11, 21), although three of those miracles will be included here (i.e., the multiplication of the loaves and the walking on the water in John 6 and the raising of Lazarus in John 11). Part of a long-standing assumption in Johannine scholarship is the view that the *σημεῖα* equate with the seven or eight miracles in the Gospel, so that a study of the Johannine *σημεῖα* might immediately be thought of by many as an investigation into those miracles. Of course, the *σημεῖα* may be investigated by precisely that procedure, for the *σημεῖα* no doubt also include those miracles. However, that is not the procedure employed here. Moreover, this thesis espouses a broader meaning and referent of the *σημεῖα* and does not limit them to the miraculous activity of Jesus or the eight miracles recounted in the Gospel.

Rather, this study is an investigation into the Johannine notion or concept of *σημεῖον* – what it is and what it includes. As has been mentioned, a main purpose of this study is to ascertain the term’s meaning and referent. Thus, an important part of this investigation is the survey of all the seventeen occurrences of *σημεῖον*, as well as the threefold use of the verb *σημαίνειν*.

Secondly, this is not a study of the literary and conceptual backgrounds of the *σημεῖα*, although I occasionally mention in passing the probable links of the *σημεῖα* to some traditions in the OT, such as, for example, the Egyptian plagues in Exodus. Rather, this is a study of *σημεῖον* on the basis of the text of FG as it now stands. There will be no attempt at source- and redaction-critical inquiry.

Thirdly, this is not an investigation into FG’s theology of Jesus’ death-and-resurrection. Accordingly, I am not going to address such questions as whether or not FG has a “theology of the cross,”⁴ nor will I take account of the various ways whereby FE has discussed the importance of Jesus’ death-and-resurrection.⁵

⁴ On which see, e.g., U. B. Müller, “Die Bedeutung des Kreuzestodes Jesu im Johannesevangelium,” *KD* 21 (1975): 49–71; Jörg Frey, “Die *theologia crucifixi* des Johannesevangeliums,” in *Kreuzestheologie im Neuen Testament*, ed. A. Dettwiler and J. Zumstein, WUNT 151 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 169–238; Esther Straub, “Der Irdische als der Auferstandene: Kritische Theologie bei Johannes ohne ein Wort vom Kreuz,” in *Kreuzestheologie*

1.4. Presuppositions and Methodology

In this thesis I operate from the assumption that FG is a coherent piece of work whose overall message can be successfully discerned by close attention to its language, details, and structure. As to its authorship and provenance, it is not necessary for this thesis to speculate on the details and espouse a particular view. For instance, when I use the appellation “the Fourth Evangelist” (FE), I do so without presupposing a particular identity.

Methodologically this study is concerned with the meaning and referent of *σημείον*, not from the perspective of (and by inquiring into) putative sources and redaction, but from that of (and by inquiring into) the Gospel text as we have it. As to Jesus’ death-and-resurrection, my concern is narrow and defined. When I argue that Jesus’ cross-and-resurrection is the supreme *σημείον*, I am obviously focusing upon its revelational aspects – I am looking at the crucifixion-and-resurrection from the point of view of *σημεία*. But I am not suggesting that this is all that the crucifixion-and-resurrection means and achieves in FG.

1.5. Procedure and Shape of the Argument

Apart from the customary chapters (ch. 1: Introduction; ch 2: Review of Literature; and ch. 10: Conclusion), the bulk of the thesis – as well as the shape and flow of its argument – will consist of the following three parts.

First, ch. 3 lays the foundation of the thesis by analysing the seventeen occurrences of *σημείον*. What is the overall meaning and referent of this term? Does this overall meaning allow or disallow the inclusion of Jesus’ death-and-

im Neuen Testament, ed. A. Dettwiler and J. Zumstein; WUNT 151 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 169–238; idem, *Kritische Theologie ohne ein Wort vom Kreuz: Zum Verhältnis von Joh 1–12 und 13–20*, FRLANT 203 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003); John Morgan-Wynne, *The Cross in the Johannine Writings* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 1–211, esp. 132–91.

⁵ On which see, e.g., Udo Schnelle, “The Cross and Resurrection in the Gospel of John,” in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, ed. C. R. Koester and R. Bieringer, WUNT 222 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 127–51.

resurrection in the category of *σημεῖα*? If it can be shown that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is included in the broad category of *σημεῖα*, this will raise the question of whether the cross-and-resurrection is a sort of supreme *σημεῖον*. Also in ch. 3 the purpose of the *σημεῖα* will be briefly considered.

Second, ch. 4 will explore and analyse five Johannine themes – namely *δόξα*, *ὑψωσις*, *ἔργον*, *ώρα*, and *πίστις* – that further strengthen the thesis that the crucifixion-and-resurrection is the supreme Johannine *σημεῖον*. These thematic studies build on the foundation laid in ch. 3.

Third, this final step will constitute the bulk of the thesis (chs. 5–9). Here I focus on the exegesis of specific passages that bear on the positive connection between *σημεῖον* and Jesus' death-and-resurrection. Chapter 5 will deal with the account of the temple “cleansing” (2:13–22). Chapter 6 will address the feeding miracle, the walk on the water and Bread of Life discourse in John 6. Chapter 7 will focus upon the raising of Lazarus in John 11. Chapter 8 will deal with the account of Jesus' death on the cross in 19:16–37. Then ch. 9 will focus upon the catena of the appearances of the risen Lord in John 20.

The choice of these passages is not random but is guided by important textual and narrative considerations. For instance, the temple “cleansing” and the bread miracle are bound together by the two incidents of the demand for a *σημεῖον* (2:18 and 6:30–31, respectively). The temple “cleansing” is significant in its own right because it is Jesus' first appearance in Jerusalem and in the temple during his public ministry. In other words, it is his first encounter with Judaism. The feeding miracle is also significant in its own right because it represents the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry in FG. With regards to the raising of Lazarus, its primary importance lies in the fact that it directly precipitates the Sanhedrin's decision to put Jesus to death. In other words it is a transitional event, ushering in the *ώρα*, which has been the target of the Johannine narrative.

The remaining two chapters (8 and 9) concentrate on FG's accounts of the crucifixion and resurrection. Chapter 8 focuses upon John 19:16–37 because this is the immediate account of the crucifixion. Because the focus of this thesis is narrowly upon the crucifixion account, the entire Passion account (John 18–19) is

not going to be treated here. The same rationale applies to the focus of ch. 9 upon John 20. The catena of post-resurrection appearances in John 20 suffices for the purposes of this thesis, and John 21, which recounts another post-resurrection appearance, need not be included.

Overall, the thesis builds a cumulative case for the view not only that Jesus' crucifixion-and-resurrection belongs in the category of Johannine σημεῖα, but also that it is the supreme σημεῖον.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

Much has been written and said concerning the Johannine σημεῖον. The secondary literature is profuse,¹ and it is not easy to sort out the various views. One way to

¹ Apart from commentaries, the following specialized studies are in existence (this list is inexhaustive): Donatien Mollat, “Le semeion johannique,” in *Sacra Pagina: Miscellanea biblica Congressus internationalis catholici de re biblica*, 2 vols., ed. J. Coppens, A. Descamps, and É. Massaux, BETL 12–3 (Paris-Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1959), 2:209–18; Sydney Temple, “The Two Signs in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 81 (1962): 169–74; F.-M. Braun, “Quatre ‘signes’ johanniques de l’unité chrétienne,” *NTS* 9 (1963): 147–54; Peter Riga, “Signs of Glory: The Use of Sēmeion in St. John’s Gospel,” *Int* 17 (1963): 402–24; Donald Guthrie, “The Importance of Signs in the Fourth Gospel,” *VE* 5 (1967): 72–83; Frankie Earl Rainey, “Σημεῖον in the Gospel of John: A Clue to the Interpretation of the Gospel” (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968); Robert T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel*, SNTSMS 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); idem, “Source and Redaction in the Fourth Gospel’s Portrayal of Jesus’ Signs,” *JBL* 89 (1970): 151–66; Morris A. Inch, “The Apologetic Use of ‘Sign’ in the Fourth Gospel,” *EvQ* 42 (1970): 35–43; Karl Rengstorff, “σημεῖον” in *TDNT* 7:200–61; W. Nicol, *The Sēmeia in the Fourth Gospel: Tradition and Redaction*, NovTSup 32 (Leiden: Brill, 1972); Merrill C. Tenney, “Topics from the Gospel of John: Part II: The Meaning of Signs,” *BSac* 132 (1975): 145–60; W. D. Davies, “The Johannine ‘Signs’ of Jesus,” in *A Companion to John: Readings in Johannine Theology (John’s Gospel and Epistles)*, ed. M. J. Taylor (New York: Alba House, 1977), 91–115; Marinus de Jonge, “Signs and Works in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Miscellanea Neotestamentica*, vol. 2; ed. T. Baarda, A. F. Klijn, and W. C. Unnik; NovTSup 48 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 107–25; Marc Girard, “La composition structurelle des sept ‘signes’ dans le quatrième évangile,” *SR* 9 (1980): 315–24; Douglas K. Clark, “Signs in Wisdom and John,” *CBQ* 45 (1983): 201–09; Mark Kiley, “The Exegesis of God: Jesus’ Signs in John 1–11,” in *Society of Biblical Literature 1988 Seminar Papers*, ed. D. J. Lull (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 555–69; Marianne M. Thompson, “Signs and Faith in the Fourth Gospel,” *BBR* 1 (1991): 89–108; Gilbert van Belle, *The Signs Source in the Fourth Gospel: Historical Survey and Critical Evaluation of the Semeia Hypothesis*, BETL 116 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994); Loren L. Johns and Douglas B. Miller, “The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel: Reexamining the Evidence,” *CBQ* 56 (1994): 519–35; Christian Welck, *Erzählte Zeichen: Die Wundergeschichten des Johannesevangeliums literarisch untersucht: Mit einem Ausblick auf Joh 21*, WUNT 2/69 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994); Andreas J. Köstenberger, “The Seventh Johannine Sign: A Study in John’s Christology,” *BBR* 5 (1995): 87–103; Y.-M. Blanchard, “Signe: IV: Théologie des signes dans l’évangile selon saint Jean,” in *DBS* 12.71 (1996): 1303–30; H.-C. Kammler, “Die ‘Zeichen’ des Auferstandenen: Überlegungen zur Exegese zum Bekenntnisglauben,” in *Johannesstudien: Untersuchungen zur Theologie des vierten Evangeliums*, ed. O. Hofius and H.-C. Kammler; WUNT 88 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 191–211; T. Söding, “Die Schrift als Medium des Glaubens: Zur hermeneutischen Bedeutung von Joh 20,30f,” in *Schrift und Tradition: FS J. Ernst*, ed. K. Backhaus and F. G. Untermassmair (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996), 343–71; B. H. Riedl, *Zeichen und Herrlichkeit: Die christologische Relevanz der Semeiaquelle in den Kanawundern Joh*

classify the research and discussion is by way of methodology and orientation. Many – e.g., Rudolf Bultmann and Robert Fortna – have approached the subject with overriding diachronic interests, focusing on questions of sources and redaction. Other, more recent, scholars have tackled the subject synchronically, with an overriding focus on the literary and rhetorical meaning of the σημεῖα.

Another way of classifying the scholarly discussion, which will be the approach of this review, is based on the question of the definition and referent of the Johannine σημεῖον. What precisely is the Johannine σημεῖον, and what is it not? At times, one's answer to this question is largely influenced by his or her methodology. For instance, as will be evident below, the σημεῖα-Quelle hypothesis tends to support the view that σημεῖον equates to miracle. Hence in the following review, methodology will be inevitably mentioned.

For heuristic purposes I am going to group the various scholarly views on what is and is not a σημεῖον into two: (1) the narrower views and (2) the broader views.² These are not intended to be neat groupings. In the narrower views belong

2,1–11 und Joh 4,46–54, RSTh 51 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997); Gilbert van Belle, “The Meaning of ΣΗΜΕΙΑ in Jn 20,30,” *ETL* 74 (1998): 300–25; Michael Labahn, *Jesus als Lebensspender: Untersuchungen zu einer Geschichte der johanneischen Tradition anhand ihrer Wundergeschichten*, BZNW 98 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998); W. H. Salier, *The Rhetorical Impact of the Sēmeia in the Gospel of John*, WUNT 186 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); John Painter, “The Signs of the Messiah and the Quest for Eternal Life,” in *What We Have Heard from the Beginning*, ed. T. Thatcher (Waco, TX: Word, 2007), 233–56; R. Alan Culpepper, “Cognition in John: The Johannine Sign as Recognition Scenes,” *PRSt* 35 (2008): 251–60; Craig R. Koester, “Jesus’ Resurrection, the Signs, and the Dynamics of Faith in the Gospel of John,” in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, ed. C. R. Koester and R. Bieringer, WUNT 222 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 47–74; Gitte Buch-Hansen, “*It is the Spirit that Gives Life*: A Stoic Understanding of Pneuma in John’s Gospel,” BZNW 173 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2010), 275–345; Christos Karakolis, “Semeia Conveying Ethics in the Gospel of John,” in *Rethinking the Ethics of John*, ed. J. G. van der Watt and R. Zimmermann; WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 192–212; Eric Eve, “Signs and *Synchriseis* in John and the Wisdom of Solomon,” in *The New Testament and the Church: Essays in Honour of John Muddiman*, ed. J. Barton and P. Groves; LNTS 532 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 24–36; Jörg Frey, “From the *Sēmeia* Narratives to the Gospel as a Significant Narrative: On Genre-Bending in the Johannine Miracle Stories,” in *The Gospel of John as Genre Mosaic*, ed. K. B. Larsen, SANt 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 209–32; Uta Poplutz, “Die johanneischen σημεῖα und ihre Funktion im Plot des vierten Evangelium,” in *Erzählung und Briefe im johanneischen Kreis*, ed. U. Poplutz and J. Frey; WUNT 2/420 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 1–23; Udo Schnelle, “The Signs in the Gospel of John,” in *John, Jesus, and History: Volume 3: Glimpses of Jesus through the Johannine Lens*, ed. P. N. Anderson, F. Just, and T. Thatcher (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 231–42; Hans Förster, “Der Begriff σημεῖον im Johannesevangelium,” *NovT* 58 (2016): 47–70.

² Albert Denaux uses the (similar) categories of “minimalist” and “maximalist” interpretations. But he does not discuss the further distinctions and differences in each of these

two subgroups: (a) non-source-critical views and (b) source-critical views. In the broader views belong three subgroups: (a) the view that includes the crucifixion in the seven or eight *σημεῖα*, (b) the view that includes the resurrection in the *σημεῖα*, and finally (c) the view that understands the *σημεῖα* as referring, broadly and inclusively, to the deeds of the incarnate Christ. There are two further topics that fall under the broader views: (1) the notion of the narrated *σημεῖα* and (b) the crucifixion-and-resurrection as the supreme *σημεῖον*.

2.2. Narrow Views of the Johannine *Σημεῖα*

A dominant view of the Johannine *σημεῖον* is that it refers to a miraculous deed of Jesus, so that a non-miraculous deed, no matter how important or significant – e.g., the “cleansing” of the temple, or even Jesus’ crucifixion – is not and cannot be a *σημεῖον*. The majority of the proponents of this view hold that the *σημεῖα* are found only in the first half of the Gospel, chs. 1–12, which is usually described as “the Book of Signs.” But some other proponents diverge from this and include the miracle in John 21. Proponents also diverge methodologically: some are very much concerned with diachronic, source-critical questions, while others simply focus on the final form of the text.³ The following discussion will categorize the narrow views on the basis of their methodologies: (1) non-source-critical views and (2) source-critical views.

categories (“The Twofold Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: A Reading of the Conclusion to John’s Gospel (20,30–31),” in *Studies in the Gospel of John and Its Christology*, ed. J. Verheyden, et al., BETL 265 [Leuven: Peeters, 2014], 525–26).

³ It will become clear that most scholars who approach the *σημεῖα* synchronically tend to have “broader” views of what the *σημεῖα* refer to.

2.2.1. The Johannine *σημεῖα* as Miracles: Non-Source-Critical Perspectives

What used to be, and perhaps still is, the dominant view as to what the Johannine *σημεῖα* mean and refer to is the view that equates the *σημεῖα* with the seven miracles recounted at length in the first half of the Gospel. Many of the proponents of this view come to this conclusion by way of traditional exegesis, without regard to questions of sources and redaction.⁴ The so-called “seven” *σημεῖα* are as follows:

1. The miracle of turning water to wine (2:1–12)
2. The healing of the nobleman’s son (4:47–54)
3. The healing of the cripple at the pool of Bethesda (5:1–16)
4. The feeding of the five thousand (6:1–15)
5. The walking on the water (6:16–21)
6. The healing of the man blind from birth at Siloam (9:1–17)
7. The raising of Lazarus from the dead (11:1–44).

One may query why the miraculous catch of fish in John 21 is not included in this list. Leon Morris explains:

The miraculous catch of fish in chapter 21 would certainly qualify, except for the fact that this lies outside the public ministry of Jesus. Further, whether or not chapter 21 is from the same hand as the rest of the Gospel, it is agreed that it forms something in the nature of an appendix. If we concentrate on the public ministry of Jesus as this Gospel records it, there are seven signs.⁵

However, contrary to Morris’s suggestion, the status of John 21 is far from settled, and there are scholars who argue that John 21 is an inherent part of the Gospel,

⁴ E.g., Tenney, “The Meaning of the Signs,” 147–54; Davies, “The Johannine ‘Signs’ of Jesus,” 93; Leon Morris, *Jesus is the Christ: Studies in the Theology of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 22–3; idem, *The Gospel According to John*, rev. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 163, 609; Mark W. G. Stibbe, “A Tomb with a View: John 11.1–44 in Narrative-Critical Perspective,” *NTS* 40 (1994), 38–40; Schnelle, “The Signs in the Gospel of John,” 232–34.

⁵ Morris, *Jesus is the Christ*, 22.

written by the same hand that produced the rest of the Gospel.⁶ Should these scholars then count the miraculous catch of fish as the eighth σημεῖον? Still no, according to Morris, for John 21 lies outside the scope of Jesus’ “public ministry,” by which Morris means the ministry of Jesus prior to the cross.⁷

In fact, some other scholars, who are also of the view that the Johannine σημεῖα refer only to the miraculous deeds of Jesus, insist that there are eight σημεῖα, the miraculous catch of fish in John 21 included.⁸

2.2.2. The Johannine Σημεῖα as Miracles: Source-Critical Perspectives

Some other scholars, who are also of the view that the Johannine σημεῖα refer exclusively to Jesus’ miraculous deeds, adopt a source-critical methodology. Although the source-critical approach to FG has become at present a minority

⁶ See, e.g., D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 665–68; Howard M. Jackson, “Ancient Self-Referential Conventions and Their Implications for the Authorship and Integrity of the Gospel of John,” *JTS* 50 (1999), 1–34; Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John’s Gospel: Issues & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 272–73; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 1219–222; Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium*, HNT 6 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 777–79.

⁷ “Public ministry,” if used to refer to Jesus’ ministry prior to the cross, particularly to John 1–12, may be a misleading term. For, are not the events of the passion and the post-resurrection appearances also part of Jesus’ public ministry? Is not the crucifixion itself the most public act of Jesus’ ministry (cf. e.g., 19:17–37)? Of course, as to the post-resurrection appearances, their audiences were considerably smaller – the disciples only – but still, that (in my view) is enough to constitute the appearances public. In other words, we may understand Morris’s view of the σημεῖα as confined to the miraculous deeds of Jesus performed prior to the cross. But this view is contradicted by 20:30–31, where σημεῖα in its immediate context pertains to the appearances of the risen Lord and where, as will be argued below, the expression ποιεῖν σημεῖα most likely pertains generally and inclusively to the deeds of Christ during his earthly ministry, whether miraculous or not, both before and after the cross, and even including the cross.

⁸ See, e.g., B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1908), 1:cliii; Donald Guthrie, “Importance of Signs,” 72–83; Robert Kysar, *John: The Maverick Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 14, 95–7; R. Alan Culpepper, “Cognition in John: The Johannine Signs as Recognition Scenes,” *PRSt* 35 (2008), 253; Kasper B. Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger: Recognition Scenes in the Gospel of John*, *BibInt* 93 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 112–13; Anthony M. Moore, *Signs of Salvation: The Theme of Creation in John’s Gospel* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2013), 132.

view,⁹ it is worth including here.¹⁰ I am going to confine myself to Rudolf Bultmann's *Σημεῖα*-Quelle hypothesis and to Robert T. Fortna's "Gospel of Signs."

2.2.2.1. Rudolf Bultmann's *Σημεῖα*-Quelle Hypothesis

Rudolf Bultmann is well known for, among other things, his complex source-critical views of FG.¹¹ He believed that FG in its present form is not the original Gospel written by FE, but is the work of what he called the "ecclesiastical redactor,"¹² who was responsible, Bultmann supposed, for the addition of ch. 21 as well as of various interpolations.¹³ As far as the "original" Gospel is concerned, Bultmann believed that it was composed from three sources: (1) the *Σημεῖα*-Quelle for the narrative portions of John 1–12; (2) the *Offenbarungsreden*, a pre-Christian gnostic source, for the prologue and the discourses; and (3) the Passion source.¹⁴ I am here concerned only with Bultmann's *Σημεῖα*-Quelle.

Bultmann believed that the *Σημεῖα*-Quelle was a written source, containing a collection of miracle stories which the evangelist, not the ecclesiastical redactor, used for the narratives in John 1–12.¹⁵ He also believed that the miracles in the

⁹ Some recent source-critics of FG include Folker Siegert, *Das Evangelium des Johannes in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt: Wiederherstellung und Kommentar*, SIJD 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007); Michael Theobald, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes: Kapitel 1–12*, RNT 4/1 (Regensburg: Pustet, 2009), 32–42; Urban von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 3 vols., ECC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).

¹⁰ Of course, not all who adopt a source-critical approach to the Johannine *σημεῖα* (and to the Gospel in general) end up espousing that the *σημεῖα* refer only to Jesus' miraculous deeds. One can be source-critical in methodology yet espouse a broader, more inclusive, conception of the Johannine *σημεῖα*. More will be said below.

¹¹ Bultmann provided no systematic formulation of these views, and they are scattered across the pages of his magisterial commentary *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray, R. W. N. Hoare, and J. K. Riches (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster), 1971. For a critical examination and discussion of Bultmann's literary theory see D. Moody Smith, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel: Bultmann's Literary Theory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965). For a comprehensive historical survey and critical evaluation of the *Σημεῖα*-Quelle hypothesis, not just that of Bultmann but also those of other scholars, see Van Belle, *Signs Source*, *passim*.

¹² Bultmann, *Gospel*, 17 n. 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6–7, 112–13; for further references and discussion see G. Van Belle, *Signs Source*, 25 n. 142.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 97, 113.

source were numbered, and that numbering influenced the numbering of the first two σημεῖα in the present Gospel (2:11 and 4:54, respectively). Furthermore, Bultmann claimed that John 1:35–50 belonged in and was the introduction to the source, and 12:37 and 20:30–31 its conclusion.¹⁶

Supposing that the so-called Σημεῖα-Quelle had a distinct Christology, Bultmann claimed that it had a somewhat superstitious belief in the prodigious (*Wunderglaube*) and depicted Jesus as a θεῖος ἀνὴρ (or θεῖος ἄνθρωπος) “in the Hellenistic sense, a man who has miraculous knowledge at his command, does miracles, and is immune to the plottings of his enemies” (1:40–42, 47–48; 4:17–19; 5:6).¹⁷

How then does FE make use of this supposed σημεῖα-Quelle? Here I refer to Van Belle’s summary of Bultmann’s view of source-redaction in FG:

The evangelist used the miracle narratives from the signs source in a two-fold way: as the beginning of a section, or as the introduction to a discourse. As in the signs source, Jesus is presented by the evangelist as a miracle worker and as all-knowing; his divinity is also illustrated in his mysterious elusion of harm or arrest until his hour has come. The σημεῖα reveal Jesus’ δόξα (2:11; cf. 9:3; 11:4), and non-belief in the signs is censured (12:37). This θεῖος ἀνὴρ theology, nevertheless, is not taken over without critique; repeatedly in the Gospel, we encounter reactions to faith based on miracles (4:48; 20:29; 6:26, 30; 2:18). For the evangelist, in contrast to the signs source, the miracles are not proofs but σημεῖα, i.e., symbols which, as *verba visibilia*, are subject to the same misunderstanding as the words of the Johannine Jesus. According to John, Jesus in his pure humanness paradoxically lays claim to the status of Revealer who brings χάρις and ἀλήθεια. The miracle stories serve this Christology. They are no longer legitimations of faith, and are tolerated only to arouse ‘a first shock’ (*Anstoss*). As concessions to human weakness they are merely of preliminary importance and, for believers, superfluous.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., 113, 452, 698.

¹⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols., trans. K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951–55), 2:42. For relevant passages in his commentary on FG, see pp. 102, 104, 106, 116 n. 5, 131, 138, 180, 187, 188, 296 n. 4, 299 n. 5, 402, 406 n. 4, 661 n. 4. For his discussion of the Hellenistic θεῖοι ἄνδρες (or θεῖοι ἄνθρωποι) see his *Theology*, 1:130.

¹⁸ Van Belle, *Signs Source*, 38–39.

In other words, though FE made use of the so-called *σημεῖα*-Quelle, he nonetheless rejected its Christology and deviated from its understanding of the role of miracles for faith. Whereas the source stressed the prodigious aspects of Jesus' miracles, FE (so Bultmann supposed) was interested in the symbolic meanings of the miracles. It is the word of Jesus, not the *σημεῖα*, that is crucial for the birth of faith. At any rate, for Bultmann the Johannine *σημεῖα* are the miracles found in John 1–12. Although heavily source-critical in terms of methodology, his view that the *σημεῖα* equate to the seven miracles found in the first half of the Gospel is essentially the same as that of the scholars surveyed in 2.2.1 above.

2.2.2.2. Robert T. Fortna's "Gospel of Signs"

It is Robert T. Fortna, in his *The Gospel of Signs*,¹⁹ who has done the most in terms of trying to reconstruct the text of the so-called *σημεῖα* source behind FG. But Fortna did not just go farther than his predecessors by trying to reconstruct the hypothetical source; his understanding of the source also differed in some ways from his predecessors'. For instance, while Bultmann envisaged the source as consisting of miracles only, Fortna's source contained not just accounts of miracles but also the passion and resurrection narratives as well as other pre-Johannine material (1:6–7, 19–34; 3:23–24; 1:35–50; 4:4–42; 6:67–71; 20:30–31).²⁰ In the end, Fortna's source amounted to a rudimentary gospel, which he called "the Gospel of Signs."²¹

Having reconstructed the so-called "Gospel of Signs," Fortna then proceeded to investigate how FE redacted the source, which Fortna did in a series of four articles²² as well as in his 1988 monograph.²³ His 1970 essay, entitled

¹⁹ For full bibliographical details see n. 1.

²⁰ See Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs*, 27–109 for the "Signs Source," 111–58 for the "passion and resurrection narratives," and 159–200 for other "pre-Johannine material."

²¹ For further summary see Van Belle, *The Signs Source*, 141–50.

²² Robert T. Fortna, "Source and Redaction in the Fourth Gospel's Portrayal of Jesus' Signs," *JBL* 89 (1970): 151–66; idem, "From Christology to Soteriology: A Redaction-Critical Study of Salvation in the Fourth Gospel," *Int* 27 (1973): 31–47; idem, "Theological Use of Locale in the

“Source and Redaction in the Fourth Gospel’s Portrayal of Jesus’ Signs,” is especially relevant here. Before turning to this essay, it is worth asking here why Fortna chose to designate his reconstructed source as “the Gospel of Signs” if in fact it contained not just the miracles but also the passion and resurrection narratives as well as some other material. Did Fortna think that *σημείον* does not just refer to miracles but broadly encompasses the entire deeds of Jesus? He answers this question negatively in his 1970 essay. *Σημείον* in the source, Fortna supposed, referred narrowly to Jesus’ miraculous deeds, and this referent was carried over into FG.²⁴ Thus, Fortna’s title “the Gospel of Signs” appears to be misleading.

Fortna believed that the word *σημείον* already existed in the source, where it referred to Jesus’ miracles. FE took over this word and attempted no alteration as to its referent.²⁵ But FE deliberately diverged from the source as to the meaning assigned to *σημείον*. Fortna spelled out the difference thus: in the source the *σημεία* were signs of Jesus’ messiahship; for FE, however, the *σημεία* signified a deeper reality: Jesus’ divine sonship.²⁶ This short summary of Fortna’s redactional views will suffice for our purposes.

Despite the differences, Fortna is not unlike Butlmann when it comes to his understanding of the referent of *σημείον* and source-critical methodology. He rightly belongs in the category of scholars who equate the *σημεία* with the miraculous deeds of Jesus recounted at length in the Gospel.

2.2.3. Summary and Conclusion

To sum up, the narrow views of the Johannine *σημεία* understand the *σημεία* as referring to the seven or eight miracles narrated in the Gospel. The majority of the

Fourth Gospel,” *ATR* 3 (1974): 58–95; idem, “Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Redaction-Critical Perspectives,” *NTS* 21 (1975): 489–504.

²³ Robert T. Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel* (London: T&T Clark, 1988).

²⁴ Fortna, “Source and Redaction,” 152.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 154.

proponents hold to the seven *σημεῖα* found in the first half of the Gospel, while some others insist on the inclusion of the miracle in John 21, making the *σημεῖα* eight in total. While many espouse and use source-critical perspective and methodology, others use traditional exegesis, irrespective of sources and redaction.²⁷

2.3. Broader Conceptions of the Johannine *Σημεῖα*

If 12:37 and 20:30–31 were not part of FG, there would probably be no reason to question the validity of the view that equates the *σημεῖα* with the seven or eight miracle narratives in the Gospel. Moreover, there would be no basis for postulating a broader meaning and reference of the *σημεῖα*. But precisely on the basis of these two verses,²⁸ among other things, there is a valid ground for questioning the narrow views of the *σημεῖα* and for advancing a broader, more inclusive view. When I speak of broader conceptions of the Johannine *σημεῖα*, I am referring to views that do not restrict the reference of *σημεῖον* to the miraculous, such as, for instance, the seven or eight miracles that have been recounted at length in the Gospel. However, it is important to note that there is not just one broad view of the Johannine *σημεῖα*. In fact, there are many, as will now become clear.

²⁷ In my view source-criticism is not the best way to account for the Johannine *σημεῖα*. Arguably the greatest weakness of a source-critical approach, such as Bultmann's or Fortna's, is that at the end of the day a supposed source, such as the "signs source," remains hypothetical, and there is simply no way of independently determining its existence. For a recent view of the improbability of the "signs source" hypothesis see Joanna Dewey, *The Oral Ethos of the Early Church: Speaking, Writing, and the Gospel of Mark*, BPC 8 (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013), 45.

²⁸ These are crucial verses of the Gospel: 12:37 constitutes a summary of Jesus' ministry and an initial conclusion of the Gospel; 20:30–31 is the conclusion of the whole Gospel.

2.3.1. The Inclusion of the Crucifixion

A number of writers take a broader view of the referent of the Johannine *σημεῖα* by including the crucifixion.²⁹ The broadening occurs by adding one non-miraculous event to a set of miraculous deeds. The list is as follows:

1. the miracle of turning water to wine (2:1–11)
2. the healing of the royal official's son (4:47–54)
3. the healing of the paralytic at the Bethesda pool (5:1–16)
4. the feeding of the five thousand (including the walking on the water (6:1–21))
5. the healing of the man blind from birth (9:1–17)
6. the raising of Lazarus from the dead
7. the lifting up of Jesus on the cross (chs. 18–19)

As we can see, the walking on the water is not treated as a separate *σημεῖον* but included in the feeding miracle. Also, the miraculous catch of fish in John 21 is excluded. Now if the *σημεῖα* can include a non-miraculous deed such as the crucifixion, one wonders why other important and significant deeds of Jesus are not included. Of course, there is no question about the supreme importance of the crucifixion (along with the resurrection). But how about Jesus' other deeds, such as the temple "cleansing," the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the washing of the disciples' feet, and so on? The exclusion of the miraculous catch of fish may also be questionable. Moreover, why is the walking on the water lumped together with the bread miracle? One gets the impression that although the inclusion of the crucifixion in the *σημεῖα* is a correct move, the broadening does not seem to be brought enough.

²⁹ For example, John Marsh, *Saint John*, PNTC (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 65–6; Girard, "La composition structurelle," 315–24; Joseph A. Grassi, "Eating Jesus' Flesh and Drinking His Blood: The Centrality and Meaning of John 6:51–58," *BTB* 17 (1987): 24–30.

2.3.2. The *σημεῖα* as Referring to the Ministry of the Incarnate Christ

I have mentioned above the important passages 12:37 and 20:30–31 as providing the basis for a broader scope of the *σημεῖα*. In these verses the phrase *ποιεῖν σημεῖα* is used rather surprisingly to summarily describe the earthly ministry of Jesus. Moreover, in 20:30–31 *ποιεῖν σημεῖα* is also used in connection with the purpose of the Gospel. In light of these passages, a number of scholars have come to the conclusion that the Johannine *σημεῖον*, in the final analysis, refers inclusively to the deeds of the incarnate Christ, whether those deeds are miraculous or not.

Fifty-eight years ago Donatien Mollat observed, correctly in my view, that the Johannine *σημεῖον* “peut signifier purement et simplement miracle.”³⁰ Then he adds:

Toutefois, le *semeion* johannique n'est pas nécessairement un fait miraculeux. Et même lorsque le fait est un miracle, – ce qui est le cas le plus fréquent, – saint Jean, en l'appelant systématiquement *semeion* et non pas *δύναμις* ou *τέρας*, a voulu mettre en relief son caractère de fait ou d'événement surnaturel, non seulement extraordinaire, mais significatif. Le *semeion* johannique est un signe divin.³¹

At the end of his essay Mollat says: “Les *semeia* sont pour saint Jean les gestes du Verbe fait chair demeurant parmi nous; ils sont les ‘signes’ du Fils de Dieu.”³²

Mollat's conclusion, that the Johannine *σημεῖα* are “les gestes du Verbe fait chair demeurant parmi nous” (“the deeds of the incarnate Logos dwelling among us”), is echoed by W. Nicol in his 1972 monograph *The Sēmeia in the Fourth Gospel*. Commenting on the use of *ποιεῖν σημεῖα* in 12:37 and 20:30 to summarily describe the whole lifework of Jesus, Nicol acknowledges that the expression means more than “perform miracles.” Nicol speaks of the widening of the meaning of the word. Then he concludes: “*ποιεῖν σημεῖα* must in the last analysis include all that the Gospel of John preaches about Jesus, both the works and the words ...

³⁰ Mollat, “Le semeion johannique,” 210.

³¹ Ibid., italics his.

³² Ibid., 217, italics his.

[T]he historical tradition and the spiritual interpretation are bound together by one expression.”³³

Many other scholars, in the light of 12:37 and 20:30–31, have come to the same conclusion as Mollat and Nicol. Ulrich Wilckens writes: “Dabei weitert sich allerdings der ‘Zeichen’-Begriff aus auf alles, was Jesus auf dem Wege seiner Sendung gewirkt hat.”³⁴ Hatwig Thyen is also of the same mind: “Der Gebrauch des prominenten Lexems *σημείον* und der Verweis auf ‘dieses Buch’ fordern vielmehr, hier alle im Evangelium erzählten Zeichen Jesu ins Auge zu fassen.”³⁵ Similarly Ridderbos writes:

[T]he word ‘signs’ refers not only to certain miraculous acts but to any event in which Jesus’ divine glory is manifest (cf. 2:11). In that sense we can understand that the word ‘signs’ is used here as a summarizing characterization of Jesus’ self-revelation ... As such the signs eminently belong to the manifestations of Jesus’ ‘glory in the flesh,’ which is posited as central in 1:14.³⁶

In his discussion of 20:30–31, Derek Tovey rejects the hypothesis that this passage was taken over from a “Signs Source.” He also rejects the restriction of the reference of *σημείον* to a “miraculous event.” He writes:

[T]he signs are by way of identifying marks, indicators, signposts, or tokens of the status and identity of Jesus. In so far as this is the case, any number of events and acts which Jesus performs may be taken as signs ... Thus, in

³³ Nicol, *Sēmeia*, 115. What Nicol meant by “historical tradition” and “spiritual interpretation” is that FE, in composing his Gospel, made use of a *σημεία* source. This is the “historical tradition.” The “spiritual interpretation” refers to FE’s redaction of the source: whereas the source greatly stressed the miracles, FE stressed the deeper meaning (hence, “spiritual interpretation”) imbedded in the miracles, and this is evident (Nicol believed) in the discourses which FE attached to many of the *σημεία*. Nicol is one example of a scholar who employs a source-critical methodology to the study of the *σημεία* and comes to a broad conception of what the *σημεία* refer to. Later scholars who, to some extent, adopted Nicol’s broad view include Udo Schnelle (*Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John*, trans. L. M. Maloney [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992], 138–39), and Schnelle is in turn followed by Gilbert Van Belle (“The Meaning of ΣΗΜΕΙΑ,” 300ff.).

³⁴ Ulrich Wilckens, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 319.

³⁵ Hatwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium*, HNT 6 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 774.

³⁶ Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. J. Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 651.

the Fourth Gospel, the term ‘sign’ is used not to identify a given class of event or action (namely, a miracle), but to serve as a marker, or a question to the reader, requiring him/her to infer what should be understood about the character of Jesus in the light of the event.³⁷

Finally, Johannes Beutler is also worth quoting (in his comments on 20:30–31):

The book to which John refers here is better understood as the whole of his Gospel than as a part of it ... The fact that the last miracle of Jesus has been reported in 11:1–44, with the resurrection of Lazarus, speaks for the thesis that the passion, death, and resurrection/exaltation of Jesus form the last of the “signs” of Jesus, in the perspective of the fourth evangelist.³⁸

Although many more scholars could be cited,³⁹ the above citations will suffice to indicate the strong scholarly opinion in regard to a broader scope of the reference of the Johannine σημεῖα on the basis of 12:37 and 20:30–31. The key points may be summarized as follows. In the final analysis and irrespective of traditions and sources at FE’s disposal, the Johannine σημεῖα cannot be limited in its reference to the seven or eight miracles narrated at length in the Gospel. The word σημεῖα as it is used in 12:37 and particularly in 20:30 must refer broadly and inclusively to the deeds of the incarnate Christ, only some of which have been included in the narrative of the Gospel. Many of these are miracles, but there are also non-miraculous deeds which are no less important and significant and are also σημεῖα.

³⁷ Derek Tovey, *Narrative Art and Act in the Fourth Gospel*, JSNTSup 151 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 86.

³⁸ Johannes Beutler, “The Use of ‘Scripture’ in the Gospel of John,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. A. Culpepper and C. C. Black (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 153.

³⁹ E.g., F. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John: With a Critical Introduction*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1879–1880), 3:333; B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1908), 2:357; R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John’s Gospel: A Commentary*, ed. C. F. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 336; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 617; Robert Kysar, *John*, ACNT (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1986), 309; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 661; Ben Witherington III, *John’s Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 345; D. Moody Smith, *John*, ANTC (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999), 385–86; Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John’s Gospel: Issues and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 271; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, BNTS (London/New York: Continuum, 2005), 505; Marianne M. Thompson, *John: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015), 66.

2.3.3. Narrated Σημεῖα

A number of scholars have called attention to the expression *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* in 20:30–31. In v. 30 FE speaks of the many other *σημεῖα* of Jesus, which he has not included in the Gospel. Then in v. 31 he focuses upon those *σημεῖα* that have been recorded so that the reader may believe in Jesus as the Christ and Son of God, and thereby find eternal life. One such scholar is Christian Welck, who published his *Erzählte Zeichen* in 1994. Focusing upon the seven miracle stories in the first half of the Gospel, Welck consistently finds two levels in the literary structures in all of the narratives. First, there is the “vordergründig-dramatische Dimension” (preliminary dramatic dimension) in which the story is told from the perspective of Jesus’ ministry and presented in its “material aspect.” Second, imbedded in the narrated story is the deeper “hintergründig-heilsdramatische Dimension” (salvation-dramatic dimension), which is often linked by a number of clues or hints to Jesus’ passion and resurrection and their saving effects upon the readers of the Gospel.⁴⁰ As is indicated in the book’s title (*Erzählte Zeichen*, “Narrated Signs”), Welck believes that the Johannine *σημεῖα* do not refer to the miracles of Jesus during his public ministry but refer only to those miracles in their present narrative and literary forms. It is through FE’s role as author and narrator that the miracles of Jesus’ ministry have now become *σημεῖα* for the readers.

Although Welck has employed a narrative-critical methodology, yet he upholds a narrow view of the *σημεῖα*, equating them with the seven miracle narratives. This is rather surprising, where one would expect Welck to have argued for a broader view on the basis of 12:37 and 20:30–31.

Jörg Frey, in his 2015 essay “From the *Sēmeia* Narratives to the Gospel as a Significant Narrative: On Genre-Bending in the Johannine Miracle Stories,” is in basic agreement with Welck in regard to the two dimensions of FG’s *σημεῖα* narratives. For instance, in his analysis of the narrative of the wine miracle in Cana

⁴⁰ Welck, *Erzählte Zeichen*, 132–33.

(2:1–11), Frey comments: “On the mere dramatic story level, the narrator presents Jesus performing an impressive miracle with the effect that his disciples ‘believe in him’ (v. 11). But in view of the numerous interpretive elements, this reading cannot simply remain on the surface of the narrated story.”⁴¹ Frey identifies eight of these elements.⁴² He then concludes:

[T]hese textual elements strongly suggest that the episode should be read within the framework of Jesus’ death and resurrection ... [T]he narrative urges its readers ... to perceive it in the framework of his whole ministry and its ultimate effects, as a presentation of the eschatological salvation ultimately fulfilled in his death and resurrection.⁴³

But Frey goes farther than Welck by asking “whether the σημεῖα in the Johannine perspective are only and precisely the miracle stories or whether the character of the σημεῖον ... can also be found in other textual elements of the Gospel.”⁴⁴ It is clear that Frey is of the view that the σημεῖα do not simply refer to the seven or eight miracles narrated in the Gospel. Based on 20:30 Frey believes that the post-resurrection appearances are σημεῖα.⁴⁵ He also believes that, for example, Jesus’ triumphal entry to Jerusalem, the washing of the disciples’ feet, and other important narratives are σημεῖα. How about the crucifixion? Frey explains:

The problem is that all the other signs are linked with the events of Jesus’ death and resurrection so that the signifying structure suggests viewing the cross and resurrection as the *sēmainomenon*, the element signified or referred to by the signifying elements. Unlike any other episode in Jesus’ earthly ministry, the cross not only points to salvation, it *is* the act of salvation so that it cannot be labeled a “sign.”⁴⁶

⁴¹ Frey, “*Sēmeia* Narratives,” 219.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 219–21; e.g., the mention of “third day” in v. 1, the wedding motif, the mention of Jesus’ “hour,” and so on.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 221–22. It is worth noting that this kind of reading is not entirely new. See, for example, R. E. Brown’s exposition of the same passage (2:1–11) in *Gospel*, 1:101–11.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 225–26.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 227–28.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 229–30.

In conclusion, it cannot be denied that what we are dealing with in FG is with narrated *σημεῖα*. But of course there remains the question of whether the narrated *σημεῖα* include the entire Gospel or only portions of it. In other words, the question of referent remains.

2.3.4. Jesus' Death-and-Resurrection as a *Σημεῖον*

The above discussion has focused upon the various scholarly views on the referent of the Johannine *σημεῖα*. There are scholars who limit it to the seven or eight miraculous deeds of Jesus recounted in the Gospel. Other scholars argue for a broader reference that includes also the non-miraculous deeds of the incarnate Christ that have been written down in the Gospel. At home in the broader view is the belief that Jesus' death-and-resurrection constitutes a *σημεῖον*, and not just any *σημεῖον*, but the supreme *σημεῖον*.

2.3.4.1. C. H. Dodd⁴⁷

Dodd is one those scholars who take a broad view of the Johannine *σημεῖα*: he does not think that the *σημεῖα* are confined in the first half of the Gospel,⁴⁸ nor that the *σημεῖα* refer exclusively to the miraculous deeds of Jesus. For Dodd even the non-miraculous deeds of Jesus (e.g., the “cleansing” of the temple, the washing of the disciples' feet, and so on) are also *σημεῖα*.⁴⁹ In the summary of his discussion of what he terms “the Book of Signs” (John 2–12), Dodd writes:

[T]he Christ of the Book of Signs is the Christ who dies and rises again; and this truth about Him is the essential presupposition of the whole

⁴⁷ C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

⁴⁸ Dodd's twofold division of the Gospel into (1) the Book of Signs and (2) the Book of the Passion (ibid., ix–x) may mislead the reader into thinking that Dodd thinks the *σημεῖα* are found only in John 1–12. But that is not actually the case.

⁴⁹ That the “cleansing” of the temple is a *σημεῖον* see ibid., 303; that the anointing at Bethany is a *σημεῖον* see ibid., 370; that the triumphal entry to Jerusalem is a *σημεῖον* see ibid., 371; that the washing of the disciples' feet is a *σημεῖον* see ibid., 401.

picture of His ministry. *The works of Christ are all 'signs' of the whole picture of His ministry. The works of Christ are all 'signs' of His finished work.* The 'signs' are all true, provided that He who works them is the Son of Man who was exalted and glorified through the cross.⁵⁰

This breadth of reference enables Dodd to consider (without difficulty) the Passion of Jesus as a σημεῖον. For Dodd, “the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ is “a σημεῖον on the grand scale ... [the] supreme σημεῖον.”⁵¹ It is “the final and all-inclusive σημεῖον.”⁵² It is not simply the crucifixion that is (for Dodd) the supreme σημεῖον, but also the arrest and trial of Jesus. But interestingly Dodd uses the singular (σημεῖον), although he is in fact describing more than one event. It means that for Dodd the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus constitute a single formidable and supreme σημεῖον.

What enables Dodd to reach this conclusion is what he calls “instructive pointers” within John 18–19 which convey FE’s “theological interpretation.”⁵³ He identifies and discusses five of these pointers. First, in the context of Jesus’ voluntary self-surrender to the arresting party in the garden, FE notes in 18:9, “This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, ‘I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.’” Based on this note, which actually refers back to earlier passages in the Gospel (such as 17:12; 10:27–28; and 6:37–40), Dodd supposes that Jesus’ act of self-surrender in the garden is “a σημεῖον of His action upon a larger and a higher plane; and this action upon a larger and a higher plane is the true meaning of His action in the garden.”⁵⁴ Dodd goes on:

Having already devoted Himself to the Father’s will (xii. 27–8, xviii. 19), [Jesus] went to meet [the arresting party] ... The Shepherd went to meet the wolf to save His flock ... [T]he ethical and spiritual quality of the action whereby Christ gives eternal life to men is precisely the quality exhibited within a restricted situation in His self-surrender in the Garden.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Ibid., 383; italics added.

⁵¹ Ibid., 438.

⁵² Ibid., 439.

⁵³ Ibid., 432.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 433.

Second, in the context of the transference of Jesus from the Sanhedrin's jurisdiction to that of Pilate, FE comments: "This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die" (18:32). This refers back to 12:32–33, which speaks of the "lifting up" of the Son of Man. Dodd observes: "There must ... be significance in the fact, not only that [Jesus] died, but that He died not by stoning (like Stephen), or by the sword (like James, or by burning (like Nero's victims), but by crucifixion; and the evangelist has found the clue to this significance" in the word ὑψωθῆναι.⁵⁶ Dodd adds: "[T]he death of Christ is at once His descent and His ascent, His humiliation and His exaltation, His shame and His glory; and this truth is symbolized, for the evangelist in the manner of His death – crucifixion ... which is, nevertheless, in a figure (by way of σημεῖον), His exaltation from the earth."⁵⁷

Third, in the context of Jesus' trial before Pilate, where Jesus' kingship is in question, Jesus tells the Roman governor: "For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice" (18:37). Dodd notes the trial context of the scene: "Pilate believes himself to be sitting in judgment on Jesus, while he actually being judged by the Truth ... In this Pilate stands for the unbelieving world. Thus the trial of Jesus ... illustrates what is meant by xiii. 31 νῦν κρίσις ἐστὶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου."⁵⁸ Dodd points out that the whole question of kingship – of Jesus' kinship – is the question of authority to judge. He explains: "In the end Pilate himself confesses that Christ is king, by the inscription which he places on the cross. Asked to withdraw it, he confirms what he has written (xix. 22). He is thus, as it were, subpoenaed as an unwilling witness to Christ's authority, as Son of Man, to judge the world."⁵⁹ Dodd then sees Pilate's famous *ecce homo* (ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος) as a "disguised confession" of Christ, and links it with Jesus' identity as the Son of Man.⁶⁰ It is implied that Dodd

⁵⁶ Ibid., 434.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 435.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 436.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 437.

finds the whole trial scene as a *σημεῖον* of Jesus' kingship defined in terms of witnessing to the truth and judging in truth.

The fourth is the crucified Jesus' pregnant cry *τετέλεσται* (19:30). Dodd points to a special sense of *τελεῖν*: "It is used of the due performance of religious rites, such as sacrifices or initiations ... As therefore the liturgical term *ἀγιάζειν* is used of Christ's self-oblation in xvii. 19, so here His death is declared to be the completion of the sacrifice, regarded as the means of man's regeneration, or initiation into eternal life."⁶¹ But Dodd does not clearly link this to *σημεῖον*. His point seems to be that Jesus' death is the supreme *σημεῖον* in that through it Jesus has fulfilled his God-given task.

Finally, FE in 19:34–35 calls special attention to the outflow of water and blood from the pierced side of the crucified Jesus. Dodd sees in this passage inevitable allusions to 6:55 (where Jesus is said to give his flesh and blood as true food for the world) and 7:38 (where the water which comes forth from Jesus' body [Dodd's view] is equated with the Spirit). Then Dodd writes: "[I]t [is] clear that the sustenance of the eternal life in man depends on Christ's death as self-oblation in fulfillment of the will of God."⁶²

Dodd summarizes these five pointers with these words:

We find in the story of the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ a *σημεῖον* on the grand scale, to whose significance each detail contributes: Christ's self-surrender in the Garden, the transference of His case to the Roman court, His *apologia* upon the charge of claiming kingship, the way He died, and the efflux of blood and water from His body after death.⁶³

One is tempted to ask at this point: where does the resurrection of Jesus figure in Dodd's supreme *σημεῖον*? Are not the crucifixion and resurrection unified and inseparable events in the Johannine point of view? Does not the proposition "the crucifixion is the supreme *σημεῖον*" already include the necessity and inevitability of

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 438.

⁶³ Ibid.

the resurrection, so that the supreme *σημεῖον* as a matter of course includes the resurrection?

Dodd does affirm the unity of the crucifixion and resurrection, and he does (in passing) mention that the resurrection is a *σημεῖον*.⁶⁴ But he does not give it importance, for “it can, consistently with Johannine theology, do no more than carry on the significance already recognized in the crucifixion ... [F]or John the crucifixion itself is so truly Christ’s exaltation and glory ... that the resurrection can hardly have for him precisely the same significance that it has for some other writers” in the NT.⁶⁵ But in the light of what we already know as the inseparability of the crucifixion and resurrection, is it not wrong to overstress the importance and role of the crucifixion at the expense of the resurrection, as though they were separate events? Is it not rather that the crucifixion can only be rightly described as Jesus’ glorification precisely because of its continuity with and inseparability from the resurrection? For is it not true that the crucifixion – regardless of how well we describe it – remains “a miserable and humiliating end” (to use Dodd’s terms)⁶⁶ if Jesus did not also arise from the dead?

2.3.4.2. Marc Girard and Joseph A. Grassi

Girard’s argument is that Jesus’ death is the seventh *σημεῖον* in FG. He is committed to the idea of seven (and no more than seven) *σημεῖα* in FG, in which the seventh holds greater significance than the earlier *σημεῖα*, in the sense that it completes and perfects the series. The seven *σημεῖα* are as follows:

1. l’eau changée en vin (2:1–11)
2. guérison d’un moribond (4:43–54)
3. guérison d’un infirme (5:1–18)
4. multiplication des pains (6:1–15)
5. guérison d’un infirme (9:1–6)
6. réanimation d’un mort (11:1–44)

⁶⁴ Ibid., 439.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 440.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 439.

7. le vin aigre, l'eau et le sang (19:17–37)⁶⁷

This list excludes the walking on the water (6:16–21) and the miraculous catch of fish (John 21). For Girard, the seventh σημεῖον is the crucifixion of Jesus narrated in 19:16–37. He describes it as “grand signe de la croix.” He pays attention to FE’s all-encompassing focus on the cross, where “tout gravite autour de la croix, nouvel arbre de vie, pole et centre du cosmos.”⁶⁸ Girard gives no thought to the possibility that the “grand signe” might also include Jesus’ rising from the dead.

Following Girard, Joseph A. Grassi⁶⁹ is also committed to the notion of seven σημεῖα in FG, the crucifixion being the seventh. But unlike Girard, Grassi narrows the seventh σημεῖον to John 19:35–37, focusing on “the water and blood from Jesus’ side.” His reason for doing so is the fact that the element of witness (that of the beloved disciple and of Mary the mother of Jesus) is expressly associated with the “extraordinary flow of blood and water from [Jesus’] side.”⁷⁰ In other words, strictly speaking for Grassi it is not the crucifixion *per se* but the outflow of water and blood from Jesus’ pierced side that constitutes the seventh σημεῖον. Like Girard, Grassi has not dealt with the place of Jesus’ resurrection in this so-called seventh σημεῖον.

2.3.4.3. Donald Senior

In his study of the Passion of Jesus in FG,⁷¹ Donald Senior speaks of not just one but two “signs,” namely (1) that Jesus’ bones were not broken and (2) that blood and water came out from the pierced side of Jesus. Senior describes these as “signs of new life.” He explains: “[These events] are not prodigious or awe-inspiring in themselves; in fact, on the surface they are further brutalities inflicted on Jesus. But

⁶⁷ Girard, “Composition Structurale” (see n. 1), 320.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 318.

⁶⁹ Joseph A. Grassi, “Eating Jesus’ Flesh and Drinking His Blood: The Centrality and Meaning of John 6:51–58,” *BTB* 17 (1987): 24–30.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 26.

⁷¹ Donald Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991).

the evangelist gives the reader clear signals that these events are signs of deeper, wondrous realities streaming from the life-giving death of Jesus.”⁷² Like Girard and Grassi, Senior does not mention or discuss the role of Jesus’ resurrection in the supreme σημεῖον in FG.

2.3.4.4. Gilbert Van Belle

Gilbert Van Belle⁷³ speaks of the “sign of the cross,” of the cross as “the sign par excellence in the gospel of John.” Operating from the hypothesis that FG is a “highly poetic work,”⁷⁴ Van Belle musters three arguments to support his view. First, FE “employs the same vocabulary with respect to the passion and death of Jesus as he does with respect to the miracle stories” (referring to the miracle stories in John 2–11). These words include ὥρα, σημεῖον, and δόξα/δοξάζειν.⁷⁵ Second, Van Belle points to the well-known phenomenon of the passion and resurrection of Jesus (John 18–20) being preceded by the explanatory farewell discourse (John 13–17), and that this arrangement is like that of most of the earlier σημεία narratives, where a σημεῖον is often accompanied by a discourse.⁷⁶ Third, “the evangelist employs the same literary techniques in the passion narratives as he does in his miracle narratives,” namely: “1. emphasis on the material as the expression of the incarnation of Jesus; 2. explicit portrayal of Jesus’ supernatural knowledge and omniscience; and 3. presence of the same Christological titles in the evangelist’s interpretation.”⁷⁷

⁷² Ibid., 120.

⁷³ Gilbert Van Belle, “Introduction,” in *The Death of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. G. Van Belle; BETL 200 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), xv–xxxi; idem, “The Death of Jesus and the Literary Unity of the Fourth Gospel,” in *ibid.*, 3–64; idem, “The Meaning of ΣΗΜΕΙΑ in Jn 20,30–31,” *ETL* 74 (1998): 300–23.

⁷⁴ Van Belle owes this notion to Hartwig Thyen. By this Van Belle means that FG “can only be explained as an intertextual game involving [the] synoptic predecessors and the Old Testament. John interprets his predecessors in a free and highly creative manner and even provides us with clues to this fact in his use of repetitions, synonyms and asides, remarks, comments or parentheses” (“Death of Jesus,” 15).

⁷⁵ Ibid., 15–28.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 28–30.

⁷⁷ Van Belle, “Introduction,” xvii.

By saying that the cross is the “sign par excellence,” it is unclear whether Van Belle has in mind the crucifixion event alone (as with Girard and Grassi) or the whole passion of Jesus (as with Dodd and Senior). But probably the crucifixion itself would have been included, and central, in Van Belle’s thought. As to his arguments, one can see that they are all based on observed continuities and/or parallels between the miracle stories in the first half of the Gospel and the farewell discourses and the passion narrative in the second half. These continuities are genuine (in my view), and that they largely support Van Belle’s thesis that the cross is the supreme *σημεῖον*. But Van Belle has failed to note significant emphases within the passion account itself that lend support to his thesis.⁷⁸ Moreover, like Girard, Grassi, Senior, and Dodd (to be discussed below), Van Belle has not dealt with the probability that the supreme *σημεῖον* may also include the resurrection of Jesus.

2.4. Conclusion: Lacuna in Scholarship

It is apparent in the above survey that much scholarly attention has already been given to the broad reference of the Johannine *σημεῖα*. This broad view is the starting point of my research. Yet, as we have seen, there is diversity of views on what is included in this broad reference. Do the *σημεῖα* pertain inclusively to the deeds – both miraculous and non-miraculous – of Jesus? Or are Jesus’ words or utterances also included? The specific starting point of my research is the former view: that the *σημεῖα* refer inclusively to Jesus’ deeds. I am not of the view that Jesus’ words are included in the category of *σημεῖα*, for, as has been mentioned, the role of Jesus’ words or utterances in FG is to illuminate the true meaning of the *σημεῖα*. Moreover, as has also been mentioned and will be mentioned again, the characteristic description of the *σημεῖα* as those which Jesus performed in the presence of specific witnesses (see esp. 12:37; 20:30–31) implies that the *σημεῖα* are

⁷⁸ These will be teased out in the discussion of John 19:16–37 in ch. 8 below.

visible physical actions, rather than spoken words. Thus, I am going to bracket out the view that includes Jesus' words in the *σημεῖα*.

There are further differences of opinions among those who hold that the *σημεῖα* pertain inclusively to the deeds of Jesus. In this broad reference and meaning of the *σημεῖα*, some have argued that the crucifixion is the supreme *σημεῖον*. Others have argued that the resurrection is the supreme *σημεῖον*. Here the lacuna in scholarship that I seek to fill begins to emerge. No one has yet systematically argued that the true supreme *σημεῖον* in FG is not the crucifixion alone, nor is it the resurrection alone, but is, in fact, the crucifixion-and-resurrection together as a theologically unified and complex event. The theological unity and inseparability of the cross-and-resurrection is a well-known feature of FE's thought.⁷⁹ If there was no resurrection, it is hard to see how the crucifixion can truly be a *σημεῖον* of Jesus' identity. If there was no resurrection, the crucifixion would simply be a stunning defeat for Jesus. But since Jesus truly arose from the dead, and precisely from this post-Easter point of view, there arises the question of whether or not the crucifixion is truly Jesus' greatest *σημεῖον*. Similarly, Jesus' resurrection presupposes his death. The resurrection would be inconceivable unless Jesus had first died. Thus, in the broad reference and meaning of the Johannine *σημεῖα*, it is worth ascertaining whether the complex of the cross-and-resurrection serves as the supreme Christological *σημεῖον* in FG.

⁷⁹ See §9.1.2.

CHAPTER 3 THE JOHANNINE ΣΗΜΕΙΟΝ: OCCURRENCES, USAGE, SCOPE, AND PURPOSE

3.1. Introduction

The review of literature in ch. 2 has surveyed the diverse scholarly views on the Johannine *σημεῖα*. There are narrow or minimalist views, which equate the *σημεῖα* with the seven or eight miraculous accounts found in the Gospel (John 2–12, 21). There are also broad or maximalist views, which do not confine the *σημεῖα* to the miraculous deeds of Jesus, nor to the first half of the Gospel. In my view the narrow and minimalist views are unsustainable from the perspective of the entire Gospel.

The goal of this chapter is to determine, as precisely as possible, the referent and scope of the *σημεῖα*. Moreover, it seeks to understand the purpose of the *σημεῖα*. To determine the referent and scope of the *σημεῖα*, the seventeen occurrences of *σημεῖον* in FG will be analysed.¹ The purpose of the *σημεῖα* will be ascertained by a close analysis of 20:30–31.

3.2. Occurrences, Usage, and Scope of the Johannine Σημεῖον

*Σημεῖον*² occurs seventeen times in FG.³ Sixteen occurrences are spread out in John 2–12, and the remaining one is in John 20. The word does not occur in the farewell

¹ The threefold occurrence of the verb *σημαίνειν* in FG will be analyzed in §4.3.1 below.

² *Σημεῖον* basically refers to a “mark by which a thing is known” (LSJ, p. 1593; so also BDAG, pp. 920–21; L&N §33.477; O. Betz, “σημεῖον,” *EDNT* 3:238). It is “that which serves for identification” (GELS, p. 620). In the Septuagint *σημεῖον* is used, for example, for the rainbow as the designated sign of God’s covenant with Noah (Gen 9:12–17), to circumcision as the sign of God’s covenant with Abraham (Gen 17:9–14), to the blood of the Passover lamb smeared on the doorposts of the houses of the Hebrews in Egypt (Exod 12:13), exempting their firstborn from death, to the pole on which Moses attached the brazen serpent in the wilderness (Num 21:8–9), to

discourses (John 13–17). But it does occur at the end of the Passion and resurrection narratives (20:30–31). The mention of *σημεῖα* in the purpose statement of the book (20:30–31) indicates the importance and centrality of this word.

The following discussion will analyse the seventeen occurrences of *σημεῖον* in FG. The intent of the study is to determine the meaning and referent of *σημεῖον* in a given passage. What are the passages where *σημεῖον* denotes a miracle? Are there passages where *σημεῖον* may denote a non-miraculous activity? Is there any instance where *σημεῖον* may have inclusive reference to both the miraculous and non-miraculous activity of Jesus? In short the goal is to get a clear overall understanding of what the Johannine *σημεῖον* means and refers to.

The procedure is to analyse the occurrences according to their chronological order. Afterwards we will be able to better organize the data and reach some conclusions.

2:11 ταυτήν ἐποίησεν ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ ἐφάνέρωσεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ.

This – the first (or beginning) of the signs – Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee; he thereby revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

This verse concludes the account of the wine miracle at a wedding in Cana (2:1–11), which is the inaugural act of Jesus’ public ministry. This miracle is described

name a few. *Σημεῖον* can also refer to a symbolical prophetic action, such as Ezekiel’s dramatisation of the siege of Jerusalem, which was intended as a “sign” for the house of Israel (Ezek 4:3). In all of these examples, *σημεῖον* pertains to a thing, object, or physical act, which is not necessarily miraculous, but is pregnant with deeper (divine) meaning. In Exod 4, we have examples of *σημεῖον* referring to miraculous deeds. Yahweh tells Moses, who is hesitant to go to the Israelites in Egypt, that he will empower him to perform three *σημεῖα* (namely, his staff will become a snake, his hand will become leprous when tucked into his cloak, and the water from the Nile will turn to blood [vv. 6–9]) so that the Israelites will believe and listen to him. For helpful studies of the meaning and usage of *σημεῖον* in biblical and extra-biblical sources see Rengstorf, “σημεῖα,” in *TDNT* 7:200–261; Wolfgang J. Bittner, *Jesu Zeichen im Johannesevangelium: Die Messias-Erkenntnis im Johannesevangelium vor ihrem jüdischen Hintergrund*, WUNT 2/26 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), part 1; Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 18–45.

³ 2:11, 18, 23; 3:2; 4:48, 54; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30. *Σημεῖον* occurs a total of 77 times in the NT: 48 times in the Gospels; 13 in Acts, 8 in Pauline epistles, once in Hebrews, and 7 in Revelation.

as ἀρχὴ τῶν σημείων, which can be translated in several ways depending on the meaning of ἀρχή. Most English Bible translations render it “first of the signs.”⁴ But ἀρχή can also mean “commencement” or “beginning”⁵ (*Ausgangspunkt*). Thus the phrase may also be translated “beginning or commencement of the signs.”⁶ In other words, ἀρχὴ τῶν σημείων does not just describe the wine miracle itself, designating it as a σημεῖον; it also anticipates more σημεῖα to come, as in a series. Moreover, the expression implies that the wine miracle as a σημεῖον is programmatic: just as the first σημεῖον revealed Jesus’ glory, so the rest of the σημεῖα are also going to be redolent and revelatory of Jesus’ glory, through which the beholders may come to faith in Jesus.⁷

In this verse it is clear that σημεῖον denotes a miracle. Does the fact that the first σημεῖον is a miracle require that the following σημεῖα are also miracles? While it suggests this, it does not necessarily require that conclusion. The expression ἀρχὴ τῶν σημείων, since it is at the opening and inauguration of Jesus’ public ministry, is best understood as introducing and anticipating the ministry as a whole, rather than just a segment of it, such as the miracles. Of course a large portion of that ministry consists in miracle working. But Jesus also performed other revelatory acts – such as his protest in the temple (2:13–22), the triumphal entry into Jerusalem (12:1–8), the washing of the disciples’ feet (John 13), and so on – which are no less important and significant. In short, while the first σημεῖον is a miracle, the following σημεῖα need not always be miracles.

⁴ So, e.g., RSV, NRSV, NJB.

⁵ BDAG, p. 137–38; so also O. Michel, “Der Anfang der Zeichen Jesu,” in *Die Leibhaftigkeit des Wortes*, ed. O. Michel and U. Mann (Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1958), 20; W. Nicol, *The Sêmeia in the Fourth Gospel: Tradition and Redaction*, NovTSup 32 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 114; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 113.

⁶ So, e.g., NAB; Salier, *Rhetorical Impact*, 50; George L. Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif*, WUNT 258 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 121.

⁷ For the argument that the wine miracle is not just the first but also the key to Jesus’ σημεῖα see R. F. Collins, “Cana (Jn. 2:1–12): The First of His Signs or the Key to His Signs,” *ITQ* 47 (1980): 79–95; Hans Förster, “Die johanneischen Zeichen und Joh 2:11 als möglicher hermeneutischer Schlüssel,” *NovT* 56 (2014): 1–23.

2:18 ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· τί σημεῖον δεικνύεις ἡμῖν ὅτι ταῦτα ποιεῖς;

Then the Jews said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing these things?”

The context of this verse is Jesus’ provocative yet deeply significant act of trying to “halt” the sacrificial worship in the Jerusalem temple (2:14–16). In response, the temple authorities confront him by demanding that he show an authenticating σημεῖον to justify his “unacceptable” actions. The verb δείκνυμι, usually translated “show,” suggests that the σημεῖον being requested is something to be seen with the eyes. Δείκνυμι itself means “to exhibit something that can be apprehended by one or more of the senses” or “to prove or make clear by evidence or reasoning.”⁸ It is probable that the temple authorities had in mind a miraculous (extraordinary) act that will unmistakably convey to them that Jesus had the warrant of God. This is the interpretation of most commentators. For instance, Godet explains the requested σημεῖον as “a demonstrative miracle as a sign of [Jesus’] competency.”⁹ For Bultmann it is “a miracle which would prove [Jesus’] authority.”¹⁰ Witherington describes it as “a validating action or miracle providing evidence of [Jesus’] divine authority and power to act the way he had acted.”¹¹ Lastly, for Lincoln it is “some convincing miraculous deed.”¹² We may firmly conclude, therefore, that σημεῖον in 2:18 denotes a miracle.

2:23 ὡς δὲ ἦν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐν τῷ πάσχα ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ, πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ θεωροῦντες αὐτοῦ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίει.

When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing.

⁸ BDAG, pp. 214–15.

⁹ Godet, *Gospel*, 2:33.

¹⁰ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 124–25.

¹¹ Witherington, *Wisdom*, 88.

¹² Lincoln, *Gospel*, 139. See further Lightfoot, *Gospel*, 112; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:348; Carson, *Gospel*, 180; Moloney, *Gospel*, 81; Thompson, *John*, 73.

A number of commentators tend to interpret the *σημεῖα* of 2:23 as denoting miraculous deeds;¹³ but in fact the *σημεῖα* here are unspecified and may have a broader referent. One could suppose that since the first *σημεῖον* (the wine miracle) is a supernatural act and the requested *σημεῖον* in 2:18 is also a supernatural act, the *σημεῖα* in 2:23 must also be supernatural acts. But the usage of *σημεῖα* in 2:23 does not require that conclusion, and the possibility remains that non-miraculous but equally significant deeds of the Johannine Jesus might also be included.

A brief consideration of the context of 2:23 is in order. The passage 2:13–3:21 is an account of the Johannine Jesus’ first public-ministry journey to Jerusalem. The account is very selective – it recounts only two specific events: the temple “cleansing” in 2:13–22 and Jesus’ encounter with Nicodemus in 3:1–21. But 2:23 itself suggests that the Johannine Jesus performed many deeds, not just these two, during this journey.¹⁴

If *σημεῖα* in 2:23 pertains to miraculous deeds of Jesus, one wonders why FE has not recounted a miraculous deed in this section. Instead, he has chosen to provide a lengthy report of Jesus’ attempt to “cleansing” the temple (2:13–22), which itself is not miraculous. What is more, the temple “cleansing” is immediately followed by the *σημεῖα*-comment in 2:23. While many interpreters see no connection between the temple “cleansing” and the *σημεῖα*-comment in 2:23 and do not consider the temple “cleansing” as a *σημεῖον*, it is probable that the summative *σημεῖα*-comment in 2:23 includes the temple “cleansing.” If so then the *σημεῖα* of 2:23 is an inclusive term and does not equate narrowly with a miracle. Moreover, on this view the temple “cleansing” may have been recounted as an example of the *σημεῖα* in 2:23 (more on this below).

But this connection would not be there if *σημεῖον*, such as in 2:23, were taken to be equivalent to a miraculous deed. This narrow reading, however, does not suit the context of 2:23. It is better to understand the *σημεῖα*-comment in 2:23

¹³ E.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 1:124; Bultmann, *Gospel*, 130; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:358.

¹⁴ This is also the impression one gets from 3:2, which will be discussed below.

as logically connected with the preceding temple incident. In this reading, the temple incident is seen as a specific example of the plural *σημεῖα* in 2:23.¹⁵

3:2 οὗτος ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ῥαββί, οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐλήλυθας διδάσκαλος· οὐδεὶς γὰρ δύναται ταῦτα τὰ σημεῖα ποιεῖν ἃ σὺ ποιεῖς, ἐὰν μὴ ᾗ ὁ θεὸς μετ’ αὐτοῦ.

[Nicodemus] came to [Jesus] by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one is able to do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.”

The context of this verse is the same as that of 2:23. It belongs to 2:13–3:21, which recounts the Johannine Jesus’ first public-ministry journey to Jerusalem. As in 2:23, the *σημεῖα*-comment in this verse is summative and inclusive. Nicodemus – described as “a Pharisee” (3:1), “a leader of the Jews” (v. 1), and “a teacher of Israel” (v. 10) – comes to Jesus at night and talks to him. The stress on God-given ability (or power) to perform *σημεῖα* suggests that Nicodemus is here thinking of supernatural deeds. However, although that may be so, the fact is that *σημεῖα* in 3:2 is unspecified. In short, 3:2 does not require the equation of *σημεῖον* with a miraculous deed. In fact, the *σημεῖα* of 3:2 may have the same scope as the *σημεῖα* of 2:23. If that is so, the *σημεῖα* of 3:2 may well also include the temple “cleansing.”

4:48 εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πρὸς αὐτόν· ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδητε, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε.

Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe.”

Whether 4:48 should be seen as a rebuke for a desire to see *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα* or simply a statement of the positive role of *σημεῖα* for engendering faith is debated.¹⁶

¹⁵ For the view that the temple “cleansing” is a *σημεῖον* see Dodd, *Interpretation*, 303; S. A. Panimolle, *Lettura Pastorale del Vangelo di Giovanni* (Bologna: Dehoniane, 1978), 201; Köstenberger, “Seventh Johannine Sign,” 87–103; idem, *John*, 102 n. 6; Jennifer A. Glancy, “Violence as Sign in the Fourth Gospel,” *BibInt* 17 (2009): 112–15; Thompson, *John*, 66.

The expression *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα* (“signs and wonders”) occurs only here in FG. But this is a familiar OT (LXX) phrase, which translates the Hebrew *אוֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים*, in reference, for example, to the plagues that God had sent upon Egypt in the context of the exodus.¹⁷ The plagues were suitably called *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα* because they were not merely judgments upon Egypt but also demonstrations (hence, “signs”) of God’s power as well as of his covenant faithfulness to Israel.¹⁸ The expression also occurs elsewhere in the NT, where it regularly denotes a

¹⁶ For the view that 4:48 is a rebuke against a *σημεῖον*-based faith see, e.g., Bultmann, *Gospel*, 207; Karl Rengstorf, “*σημεῖον*,” 7:244. For the view that 4:48 is a positive statement of the role of *σημεῖα* for faith see, e.g., Thompson, *Incarnate Word*, 71–76; L. L. Johns and D. B. Miller, “The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel,” *CBQ* 56 (1994): 530–31.

¹⁷ See Exod 7:3; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 13:2f.; 26:8; 28:46; 29:2; 34:11; Isa 8:18; 20:3; Jer 32:20f.; Ps 78:43; 105:27; 135:9; Neh 9:10.

¹⁸ As the list of passages in the previous note shows, *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα* occurs once in Exod (in 7:3 LXX) in connection with what we commonly know as the ten Egyptians plagues. The exact expression in Exod 7:3 is τὰ σημεῖά μου καὶ τὰ τέρατα. Yahweh calls the plagues, literally, “my signs and wonders.” Outside the book of Exodus, the expression almost always (exceptions are Deut 13:2; 28:46 [both sing.]; Isa 8:18) refers to “the leading of the people out of Egypt by Moses and to the special circumstances under which the people stood up to the passage of the Red Sea and in all of which God proved himself to be the Almighty and showed Israel to be his chosen people” (Rengstorf, “*σημεῖον*,” 216). It occurs no less than eight times in Deuteronomy (see previous note) in straightforward rehearsal of the same theme. Based on Exod 4–12, there appears to be a threefold purpose for the plagues: revelation, punishment/judgment, and covenant. That the plagues served a *revelatory* purpose is clear in, for example, Exod 7:5, where Yahweh declares, “The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out from among them” (see also 9:14–16). This revelatory purpose is expressed in 6:2–8 in connection with the Israelites themselves: “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has freed you from the burdens of Egypt” (vv. 6b–7; see also 10:1–2). Aside from the revelatory purpose, the plagues also served a *punitive* purpose. A number of times the Lord calls them “mighty acts of judgment” (Exod 6:6b; 7:4; cf. 4:23; 13:15). This notion of punishment or judgment is also apparent in the use of the expressions “I will lay my hand upon Egypt” (7:4), “I will stretch out my hand against Egypt” (7:5), “the hand of the LORD will strike ...” (9:3), and “how I have made fools of the Egyptians” (10:2). Finally, the plagues also served a *covenantal* purpose. The Lord’s call of Moses in Exod 3 is premised on his covenant with Israel: “I have observed the misery of *my people* who are in Egypt ... Indeed I know their sufferings” (v. 7). In v. 10 the LORD tells Moses: “So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring *my people*, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” When Moses was to meet the Israelites, the Lord instructed him to tell them this: “The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you” (3:15). This is repeated and expanded in vv. 16–17, and also in 4:5. Indeed, the whole event of Israel’s exodus from Egypt and their eventual settlement in the Promised Land is founded on Yahweh’s unfailing faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is not surprising then that *אוֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים*, or *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα*, has become “a living tradition within Israel” with “profound implications for the present and future of Israel’s faith” (B. D. Russell, “Signs and Wonders,” *NIDB* 5:251).

supernatural deed or phenomenon.¹⁹ According to Lindars, the expression is “applied to the works of Jesus (Acts 2:22) and to comparable acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:43; 5:12; etc.; 2 Cor 12:12) as signs of the new age; so they are guarantees of the messianic claims about Jesus, and grounds for belief in him.”²⁰ Based on this background, it may be concluded that *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα* in John 4:48 denotes miraculous deeds, in the general sense.

4:54 τοῦτο δὲ πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλθὼν ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν.

This was the second sign that Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

The demonstrative pronoun *τοῦτο* refers to the healing of the royal official’s son (4:46–53). That miracle is here described as “the second *σημεῖον* that Jesus performed after he had come out of Judea back into Galilee.” Here *σημεῖον* clearly denotes a miracle.

Source critics consider the numbering of the *σημεῖα* in 2:11 and 4:54 as a strong indicator of the existence of the supposed *σημεῖα* source.²¹ They believe that in the source the *σημεῖα* were numbered, but that the evangelist took over the numbering of the first two *σημεῖα* only. This is ultimately a speculative suggestion.²² It seems better to understand the numbering (note that the two

¹⁹ In Matt 24:24 and Mark 13:22 *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα* is used of the future pseudo-messiahs. According to Rengstorff (“*σημεῖον*,” 241), lying at the background of this was “the current Messianic interpretation of Deut 18:15, 18 ... that *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα* will accompany the Messiah as the promised prophet.” In other words, pseudo-messiahs in the end-time will use “signs and wonders” to cause people to believe them. In Acts (2:19, 22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 14:3; 15:12), the expression denotes the miraculous deeds of the apostles.

²⁰ Lindars, *Gospel*, 240.

²¹ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 113; Haenchen, *John*, 1:236; see also idem, 2:71–2; Siegfried Schulz, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, NTD 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 7–8; F. Schneider and W. Stenger, *Johannes und die Synoptiker*, BH 9 (Munich: Kösel, 1971), 72 n. 19; Eduard Schweizer, “Die Heilung des Aussätzigen,” in *Neotestamentica* (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1963), 407; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:335; J. Becker, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 2 vols. ÖTK 4 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1979), 1:112; Lindars, *John*, 132; Fortna, *Gospel of Signs*, passim; Nicol, *Sēmeia*, passim.

²² There is nothing objectionable in the suggestion that FE used “sources” for the composition of his Gospel. But the claim that he used a so-called *σημεῖα*-Quelle is a different

miracles were performed in Cana) as intended to function as an inclusio of this first section or phase of Jesus' public ministry.²³

6:2 ἡκολούθει δὲ αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς, ὅτι ἐθεώρουν τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίει ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσθενούντων.

A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick.

It is clear in the text that *σημεῖα* denotes miraculous healings. The statement is summative and no particular healing is told. These miraculous healings are cited as the reason why a large crowd of Galileans kept following Jesus.

6:14 οἱ οὖν ἄνθρωποι ἰδόντες ὃ ἐποίησεν σημεῖον ἔλεγον ὅτι οὗτος ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

Then when the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world."

Here *σημεῖον* refers to the multiplication of bread and fish. Thus, it clearly refers to a miraculous deed.

matter: we simply have no way of verifying the independent existence of such a source. See D. A. Carson, "Current Source Criticism of the Fourth Gospel: Some Methodological Questions," *JBL* 97 (1978): 411–29.

²³ According to Udo Schnelle, FE "counted the two miracles *in Cana* in order to highlight them as the beginning and end of Jesus' first public appearance. In addition, he apparently had a strong interest in Cana as a special place of Jesus' revelations" (*Antidocetic Christology*, 93; italics his); see also John Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah: The History, Literature and Theology of the Johannine Community*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 107; Glancy, "Violence as Sign," 113. For the significance of Cana in John's Gospel, see Peter Richardson, "What has Cana to do with Capernaum?" *NTS* 48 (2002): 320–24. On 2:1–4:54 as a section see Francis J. Moloney, "From Cana to Cana (2:1–4:54) and the Fourth Evangelist's Concept of Correct (and Incorrect) Faith," in *Studia Biblica 1978: II. Papers on the Gospel*, ed. E. A. Livingstone; JSNTSup 2 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 185–213. Peter-Ben Smith prefers to call this section "Galilee-to-Galilee Cycle" rather than "Cana-to-Cana Cycle," arguing that it is not the village of Cana itself that is of importance, but the wider location of Galilee ("Cana-to-Cana or Galilee-to-Galilee: A Note on the Structure of the Gospel of John," *ZNW* 98 [2007]: 144).

6:26 ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ζητεῖτε με οὐχ ὅτι εἶδετε σημεῖα, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐφάγετε ἐκ τῶν ἄρτων καὶ ἐχορτάσθητε.

Jesus answered them, saying, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.”

Although this verse lies in the context of the feeding miracle, which is a σημεῖον (so 6:14), the plural σημεῖα probably does not have in mind the feeding miracle only, but also the healings generally referenced in 6:2. In other words, σημεῖα here clearly denotes Jesus’ miraculous deeds.

6:30 εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ· τί οὖν ποιεῖς σὺ σημεῖον, ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν σοι; τί ἐργάζῃ;

They then said to him, “What sign are you going to perform then, so that we may see it and believe you?”

This is the second demand for a σημεῖον in FG (the first is in 2:18). The context of this verse is the feeding miracle, which signifies Jesus’ role as ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ κόσμου (“the bread of life”) (vv. 35, 48, 51a).²⁴ The demand is occasioned when Jesus tells the Galileans to believe in him: τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα πιστεύητε εἰς ὃν ἀπέστειλεν ἐκεῖνος (“This is the work of God: that you believe in the one that he has sent”) (v. 29). The word ἴδωμεν indicates that the σημεῖον that the Galileans have requested is something to be seen with the eyes, a visible demonstration of Jesus’ power that will convince them to believe in him. Thus, σημεῖον here seems to denote a miracle.

²⁴ It is as the bread of life that Jesus has come into the world through the incarnation (cf. vv. 32b–33). It is as the bread of life that he sacrificially gives himself over to death, for his σὰρξ is ἀληθῆς βρῶσις and αἷμα ἀληθῆς πόσις (vv. 51c–58). Anyone who “eats” Jesus’ flesh and “drinks” his blood (these are figurative expressions for believing in Jesus) has eternal life now in the present and is assured of full salvation in the future (vv. 35b, 39–40, 51b, 54).

7:31 ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου δὲ πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν καὶ ἔλεγον· ὁ χριστὸς ὅταν ἔλθῃ μὴ πλείονα σημεῖα ποιήσει ὢν οὗτος ἐποίησεν;

Yet many in the crowd believed in him and were saying, “When the Messiah comes, will he do more signs than this man has done?”

Some scholars consider this verse problematic²⁵ because of the supposed contradiction between what it affirms – that the Messiah is a doer of σημεῖα, understood as miracles – and our knowledge that in first-century CE Jewish eschatological expectations, the Messiah (the eschatological Davidic king) was not expected to perform miracles.²⁶ But this perceived problem may not actually be real. For instance, on the basis of such passages as Mark 13:22 and John 6:15, R. E. Brown brings up the possibility that “the idea of a miracle-working Messiah may have developed by NT times.”²⁷ While acknowledging that a miracle-working Messiah is not clearly attested in Jewish literature, both Dodd and Bultmann maintain the possibility that miracles could also be associated with the Messiah. Bultmann writes: “[I]t seems that the miracles which were expected to occur in the age of salvation ... could also be thought of as accrediting miracles for the Messiah.”²⁸ Dodd writes:

In Jewish sources there is not very much about signs to be wrought by the Messiah (though there is much about signs heralding his coming); but it is always assumed in general terms that he will be equipped with miraculous powers; and as prophets were believed to have corroborated their message with miracles, and even Rabbis to have given miraculous proof of the rightness of their decisions on disputed points, we may assume that the Messiah would establish his claims in a similar, but even more striking way.²⁹

²⁵ Consider, for example, Bauckham’s comment: “This is the most problematic statement in the Gospel about any of the eschatological figures” (“Messianism According to the Gospel of John,” in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. J. Lierman; WUNT 219 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006], 63); see also Marinus de Jonge, “Jewish Expectations about the ‘Messiah’ According to the Fourth Gospel,” *NTS* 19 (1973): 257–59.

²⁶ See summary of the evidence in, e.g., Martyn, *History and Theology*, 90–8; John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), 178.

²⁷ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:313.

²⁸ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 306.

²⁹ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 89–90. Dodd claims that FE in 7:31 may actually be referring to current Jewish belief (*ibid.*, 90).

For Barrett, it would be rash to affirm that “no Jews hoped for miracles from the Messiah ... it would be natural for Jews, even if they had not been expecting a miracle-working Messiah, to wonder, if confronted by miracles, whether the miracle-worker might not be the Messiah.”³⁰

A few other solutions to the perceived problem in 7:31 hinge on the possibility that the Messiah depicted in FG may be a composite figure. One suggestion, most fully developed by Wayne A. Meeks, is that the Messiah depicted in FG may have been patterned after Moses who, as Meeks demonstrates, was regarded in some Jewish and non-Jewish literature as both prophet and king.³¹ As Moses himself was a miracle-worker, so the coming Messiah would also perform miracles.

J. L. Martyn’s proposed solution is also of this type: he suggests the possibility that, while the eschatological Davidic Messiah was not expected to perform miracles, traits “properly” belonging to other eschatological figures associated with miracle-working (e.g., the eschatological Elijah and the coming prophet) may have “rubbed off” on the Johannine Messiah.³²

The immediate context of the verse is 7:25–31, where a crowd in Jerusalem, during the Feast of Booths, is divided over who Jesus is. While some of the people say that Jesus could not be the Messiah because they know where he is from (whereas no one knows the origins of the Messiah) (vv. 25–27), others are said to have believed in him and to have said: ὁ Χριστὸς ὅταν ἔλθῃ μὴ πλείονα σημεῖα ποιήσῃ ὧν οὗτος ἐποίησεν; (“When the Messiah comes, will he do more signs than this man has done?”) (v. 31). The point of this verse is that “the Messiah himself could not do any greater signs than Jesus.”³³ In this context σημεῖα is general and inclusive,

³⁰ Barrett, *Gospel*, 323. Similarly, Ashton (*Understanding*, 182) speaks about “the general tendency ... to assign wonder-working powers to any important and influential figure of the day.”

³¹ Wayne E. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, NovTSup 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1967). That Moses was regarded as a “type” of the coming Messiah, see Joachim Jeremias, “Μωυσῆς,” *TDNT* 4:848–73, esp. 857.

³² Martyn, *History and Theology*, 97. See also Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 178–83.

³³ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:148.

and in John 7 there is no specific account of a miraculous deed. What we find instead is a reference to Jesus' teaching activity in the temple. Due to its lack of specificity, 7:31 cannot be used to support the conclusion that a σημεῖον always denotes a miracle.

9:16 ἔλεγον οὖν ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων τινές· οὐκ ἔστιν οὗτος παρὰ θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὅτι τὸ σάββατον οὐ τηρεῖ. ἄλλοι [δὲ] πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος ἀμαρτωλὸς τοιαῦτα σημεῖα ποιεῖν; καὶ σχίσμα ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς.

Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided.

The context of 9:16 is the healing of the man blind from birth, which Jesus performs on a Sabbath (vv. 14, 16a). This miracle draws two contrasting responses from the people. Some of the Pharisees conclude that Jesus is not a man of God, for he flagrantly violates the Sabbath law.³⁴ By contrast, others are impressed, echoing Nicodemus's earlier statement (3:2): πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος ἀμαρτωλὸς τοιαῦτα σημεῖα ποιεῖν; (“How can a man who is a sinner perform such σημεῖα?”) (9:16b). The plural σημεῖα no doubt includes in its reference the healing of the blind. It is doubtful, however, whether the term in this context has a confined reference to the miraculous.

10:41 καὶ πολλοὶ ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ ἔλεγον ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν σημεῖον οὐδέν, πάντα δὲ ὅσα εἶπεν Ἰωάννης περὶ τούτου ἀληθῆ ἦν.

And many came to him, and they were saying, “John performed no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.”

³⁴ The description οὐκ ἔστιν οὗτος παρὰ θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος (“this man is not from God”) in v. 16a is supplemented in v. 16b with the word ἀμαρτωλός (“sinner”). For a helpful discussion of this term see Severino Pancaro, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel*, NovTSup 42 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 1975), 30–52.

In FG, *σημεῖα* are exclusively Christological.³⁵ No one else does them – not the disciples and, here, not even John the Baptist. The expression is emphatic in Greek and may be rendered “John the Baptist never performed a *σημεῖον*.”³⁶ Considering the summative nature of this verse,³⁷ *σημεῖον* may have in mind the miraculous activity of Jesus, viewed wholly.

11:47 συνήγαγον οὖν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι συνέδριον καὶ ἔλεγον· τί ποιοῦμεν ὅτι οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος πολλὰ ποιεῖ σημεῖα;

So the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council, and said, “What are we to do? This man is performing many signs.”

The context of this verse is the raising of Lazarus. In 12:18 it is explicitly noted that this miracle is a *σημεῖον*. It is the immediate cause for the Sanhedrin’s meeting. But note that the Sanhedrin is concerned not just about this one *σημεῖον*. They are also concerned about Jesus’ cumulative *σημεῖα*, and cannot allow him to continue performing any more *σημεῖα*. In this context, *σημεῖα* seems to have the miracles as its referent. But again, this verse cannot be used to rule out the inclusion of non-miraculous deeds of Jesus from the *σημεῖα*.

12:18 διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ ὁ ὄχλος, ὅτι ἤκουσαν τοῦτο αὐτὸν πεποικέναι τὸ σημεῖον.

It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him.

This verse refers back to the raising of Lazarus. Thus, *σημεῖον* here refers to a miracle.

³⁵ See Rengstorf, “*σημεῖον*,” 243.

³⁶ So Brown, *Gospel*, 1:413.

³⁷ John 10:40–42 is both a spatial and chronological transition from 8:12–10:39, which recounts Jesus’ heightened confrontation with the Ἰουδαῖοι, to the concluding section (chs. 11–12) of the first half of the Gospel. See Lincoln, *Gospel*, 312.

12:37 τσαῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ σημεῖα πεποιηκότος ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν οὐκ ἐπίστευον εἰς αὐτόν.

Although he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him.

It is generally agreed that John 12:37–43 concludes the account of Jesus’ public ministry (chs. 1–12). Bultmann entitles this portion of FG “the revelation of the δόξα to the world.”³⁸ Both Dodd and Brown call it “the Book of Signs.”³⁹ As for the section 12:37–43, Schnackenburg, for example, entitles it “the Result of Jesus’ Work of Revelation: The Riddle of Unbelief”⁴⁰ and notes that it marks “the end of Jesus’ public activity (12:36b) with a retrospect and a reflection on human unbelief.”⁴¹ Brown calls it “an evaluation of Jesus’ ministry to his own people,”⁴² Israel. Hoskyns comments that “12.37ff rounds off the story of Jesus’ public ministry.”⁴³

If, as these commentators maintain, 12:37–43 is the conclusion of the account of Jesus’ public ministry, it seems rather odd that the evangelist would use the expression ποιεῖν σημεῖα (v. 37). If σημεῖον refers narrowly and exclusively to the miraculous activity of Jesus, particularly to the seven or eight miracles that Jesus performed, then ποιεῖν σημεῖα hardly describes or summarizes Jesus’ public ministry as a whole, but only a part of it. Other parts of that ministry, which are no less important and which the evangelist has also included in the Gospel – such as, for example, the temple “cleansing,” the triumphal entry to Jerusalem, the anointing of Jesus’ feet, and so on – are left out. Is this what FE intended to mean?

Bultmann and his fellow source critics were baffled by ποιεῖν σημεῖα both in 12:37 and 20:30. The sole focus on σημεῖα, coupled with the absence of any reference to Jesus’ discourses, was baffling to Bultmann especially because of his assumption that, for FE, the discourses are more central and important than the

³⁸ Bultmann, *Gospel*, vii.

³⁹ Dodd, *Interpretation*, x; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:xi.

⁴⁰ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:412.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 411.

⁴² Brown, *Gospel*, 2:483.

⁴³ Hoskyns, *Gospel*, 427.

σημεῖα (viewed narrowly).⁴⁴ Bultmann's source-critical solution is to reckon 12:37 and 20:30–31 as originating from and part of the so-called σημεῖα-Quelle. It is supposed that these verses constituted the conclusion of the source, and that FE, finding these verses useful, took them over and appropriated them at this point (12:37) as well as in 20:30–31. However, appealing to an ultimately hypothetical source, in the way that Bultmann has done, is hardly the best explanation for ποιεῖν σημεῖα. Whatever the sources at FE's disposal, the task of the interpreter is to try to make sense of ποιεῖν σημεῖα in the context of the present Gospel.

Granted that 12:37–43 summarizes and concludes Jesus' public ministry, then ποιεῖν σημεῖα in v. 37 is best understood as summarizing that ministry as a whole. In other words, rather than simply referring to a segment of Jesus' ministry (i.e., the performance of miracles), σημεῖα here is used broadly to refer to Jesus' deeds, whether miraculous or not. Is it so broad as to include the discourses? The expression ποιεῖν σημεῖα seems to pertain to deeds, rather than words also. I see no indication in 12:37 that the σημεῖα include the discourses. This is not to deny that they are part of Jesus' lifework. They often, but not always, serve the purpose of explicating the meaning of Jesus' acts. The discourses work hand-in-hand with Jesus' deeds in revealing Jesus' divine identity. However, in keeping with ποιεῖν, as well as ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, the σημεῖα in 12:37 refer, in my view, to Jesus' deeds.⁴⁵ Relevant discussion will be made below on 20:30–31.

⁴⁴ Bultmann supposed that for FE the σημεῖα, which are dispensable and are concessions to human weakness, are merely symbolic illustrations of the truths of the discourses. Genuine faith believes Jesus' word without needing to see a σημεῖον. A faith that seeks to see a σημεῖον is hardly genuine. But the so-called σημεῖα-Quelle, which Bultmann hypothesized as the source for the Gospel's miracle stories, had a high view of the σημεῖα (which referred to miracles). Indeed, the source portrayed Jesus as a wonder-worker, akin to the Hellenistic θεῖος-άνθρωπος (see Bultmann, *Gospel*, 452, 695–96).

⁴⁵ See further p. 23 n. 63.

20:30–31 πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεῖα ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ, ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ· ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύσητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

A few remarks on the grammar, structure, and context of the passage are in order. The conjunction οὖν (v. 30), translated “therefore,” “so,” or “then,”⁴⁶ links these two verses to the immediately preceding Thomas-pericope (vv. 24–29), which in turn is part of the catena of appearances of the risen Lord in John 20. Since οὖν is a consecutive and inferential conjunction,⁴⁷ its use here means that vv. 30–31 has the function of a conclusion or summary. It concludes the Thomas-pericope, which in turn is part of John 20, and John 20 itself is part of the narrative of the passion-and-resurrection, comprising John 18–20. Moreover, as is the view of many interpreters, 20:30–31 is the conclusion and the purpose statement of the Gospel itself, with John 21 as an epilogue.⁴⁸

The affirmative particle μὲν, which introduces v. 30, is a conjunction correlative with δέ, which introduces v. 31.⁴⁹ These two particles frame and govern the thought of vv. 30–31. Μὲν ... δέ are usually translated “to be sure ... but,” “on the one hand ... on the other hand,” or “although ... however.”⁵⁰ A number of

⁴⁶ BDAG, pp. 736–37.

⁴⁷ BDF §451(1); see also MHT 3:337; LSJ, p. 1271–1272; BDAG, *ibid.* According to Daniel B. Wallace (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan], 673), an inferential conjunction gives “a deduction, conclusion, or summary to the preceding discussion.” Similarly see BDAG, *ibid.*

⁴⁸ E.g., Godet, *Gospel*, 3:332; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 144, 290; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:335; Tenney, “John,” 196; Lindars, *Gospel*, 617; Girard, “Composition,” 317; Smith, *John*, 385; Witherington, *Wisdom*, 345.

⁴⁹ LSJ, p. 1101: Μὲν is “used partly to express certainty on the part of the speaker or writer; partly, and more commonly, to point out that the word or clause with which it stands is correlative to another word or clause that is to follow, the latter word or clause being introduced by δέ.”

⁵⁰ BDAG, p. 629; LSJ, p. 1101; Wallace, *Grammar*, 672; Albert Denaux, “The Twofold Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: A Reading of the Conclusion to John’s Gospel (20,30–31),” in

if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written”).⁵⁵

What about these *πολλὰ ἄλλα σημεῖα*? First, the eyewitness testimony of the disciples is stressed. Jesus performed these “many other signs” *ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν [αὐτοῦ]* (“in the presence of his disciples”). In context, the immediate connection of the expression is with the appearances of the risen Lord to the disciples recounted in John 20 (more on this below). That is, Jesus performed *πολλὰ σημεῖα* other than the reported post-resurrection appearances. This implies that, as has been said, the post-resurrection appearances themselves are *σημεῖα*. Now FE talks about many other *σημεῖα*. These many other *σημεῖα*, as well as the *σημεῖα* of the post-resurrection appearances, were all performed in the presence of the disciples.

The emphasis on the plurality of Jesus’ *σημεῖα*, as well as upon the claim that the *σημεῖα* were seen by eyewitnesses, recalls 12:37, where the *σημεῖα* are described as performed in the presence (*ἔμπροσθεν*) of the *Ἰουδαῖοι*.⁵⁶ The only difference is that in 20:30–31 the eyewitnesses to Jesus’ *σημεῖα* were the believing disciples, whereas in 12:37 the eyewitnesses were the unbelieving *Ἰουδαῖοι*. It also recalls 2:11, a programmatic verse and the first reference to the *σημεῖα*,⁵⁷ where the disciples are said to have seen the divine glory of Jesus through the *σημεῖον* of turning water to wine, and that they believed in him.

Further to the claim that Jesus performed many other *σημεῖα* in the presence of his disciples, we may recall that the disciples also witnessed the multiplication of the bread (6:3, 8, 12), as well as the walking on the water (6:16, 22, 24). They also witnessed the healing of the man blind from birth (9:2), as well as the raising of Lazarus in John 11. Indeed, Jesus’ summative comment in this connection is 15:27:

⁵⁵ Ulrich Wilckens cautioned: “Doch ist diese Bemerkung hier sicher nicht als plerophore Schlußwendung, sondern als konkrete Andeutung zu werten, daß dem Joh evangelisten eine sehr viel umfangreichere Jesusüberlieferung vorlag, aus der er die Stoffe ausgewählt hat, die er in seinem Buch übernommen hat” (*Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, NTD 4 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998], 318).

⁵⁶ So Van Belle, “ΣΗΜΕΙΑ,” 315–16. In 12:37 the evangelist looks back to and summarizes Jesus’ public ministry in terms of *ποιεῖον σημεῖα*. If so, then *σημεῖα* in this verse apparently has a broader and more inclusive meaning than the reference to the seven miracles recounted in John 2–11. This broad referent and meaning is made clearer in 20:30–31, a passage which is generally regarded as the Gospel’s purpose statement.

⁵⁷ See pp. 38–39 above.

καὶ ὑμεῖς δὲ μαρτυρεῖτε, ὅτι ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐστε (“You are also to testify because you have been with me from the beginning”).⁵⁸

Second, these many other *σημεῖα* have not been included ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ (“in this book”).⁵⁹ In other words, FE assures his readers that there is no scarcity but only abundance as far as the *σημεῖα* are concerned. The point of course is that, linking it with 12:37, the Ἰουδαῖοι rejected the Messiah not because of lack of *σημεῖα* but despite the abundance of them. This formulation stresses “Jewish” unbelief and obduracy.⁶⁰ The mention of βιβλίον (“book”) in v. 30 is self-referential,⁶¹ pertaining to the Gospel as a whole – rather than, say, the hypothetical *σημεῖα-Quelle*⁶² – as a literary entity.⁶³

What does ταῦτα in v. 31 refer to? As is the case with the relative pronoun ἧ in v. 30b, the demonstrative pronoun ταῦτα in v. 31a is grammatically related to the *σημεῖα* in v. 30a: feminine accusative plural. Thus the antecedent concept of ταῦτα is *σημεῖα*. But while the *σημεῖα* in v. 30 refers to those which the evangelist did not include ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ, the *σημεῖα* implied in the ταῦτα in v. 31 refers to those which the evangelist has written down. Both the word *σημεῖα* as well as

⁵⁸ The notion of ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ (“in the presence of his disciples”) in 20:30 alludes to ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ (“we have seen his glory”) in 1:14. Although *σημεῖον* does not occur in 1:14, probably it is included in the idea of the incarnation mentioned there.

⁵⁹ Βιβλίον refers to either a “brief written message” or a “long written composition” (BDAG, 176). It no doubt carries the second meaning in its twofold occurrence in FG in 20:30 and 21:25. See n. 63 below.

⁶⁰ On the “obduracy” motif in FG see Craig A. Evans, “Obduracy and the Lord’s Servant: Some Observations on the Use of the Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis*, ed. C. A. Evans and W. F. Stinespring (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987), 227–28.

⁶¹ Frey, “*Sēmeia* Narratives,” 226 n. 73.

⁶² So, e.g., Godet, *Gospel*, 3:332; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 290; Lindars, *Gospel*, 617; Girard, “La composition structurelle,” 317; Merrill C. Tenney, “John,” *EBC* 9:196; Kysar, *John*, 309; Beutler, “Use of ‘Scripture’,” 153; Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 136; Witherington, *John’s Wisdom*, 345; Smith, *John*, 385; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 650; Wilckens, *Evangelium*, 319; Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 772–74.

⁶³ The reference to the Gospel as a βιβλίον (see n. 59) connects with the mention of βιβλία in 21:25: “Ἔστιν δὲ καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ ἃ ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἅτινα ἐὰν γράφηται καθ’ ἓν, οὐδ’ αὐτὸν οἶμαι τὸν κόσμον χωρῆσαι τὰ γραφόμενα βιβλία (“But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if everyone of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written”). The ἄλλα πολλὰ (“many other things”) in 21:25 refers to the πολλὰ ἄλλα *σημεῖα* (“many other signs”) in 20:30. That these many other “signs” have not been included in “this book” (20:30) is explained in 21:25 with hyperbole: the world would not be enough to contain all the books if all of Jesus’ deeds were to be written down.

the phrase ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ in v. 30 must be supplied in v. 31.⁶⁴ Thus, v. 30 talks about the many other σημεῖα which are excluded from this book, while v. 31 talks about the σημεῖα which are recounted in this book.

The purpose for the writing of the Gospel is expressed in the two ἵνα-clauses in v. 31: (1) ἵνα πιστεύητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ; and (2) ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. These important phrases are going to be discussed in a separate section below.

What do the σημεῖα γεγραμμένα in v. 31 refer to? Here we need to recall the various views summarized in ch. 2 of this thesis.⁶⁵ The narrow or minimalist views limit the σημεῖα to the seven or eight miraculous deeds that have been recounted at length in the Gospel. Some proponents of these views say that the σημεῖα are found only in the first half of the Gospel, usually called “the Book of Signs” (John 1–12). Other proponents of these views argue that the miraculous catch of fish in John 21 should be included, yielding a total of eight σημεῖα. The broader or maximalist views do not limit the σημεῖα to the miraculous deeds of Jesus, nor to the first half of the Gospel, but include also the non-miraculous – but equally important – deeds of Jesus which have also been included in the Gospel, such as, for example, the “cleansing” of the temple, the washing of the disciples’ feet, and others, and most important of all is Jesus’ death-and-resurrection.

For some compelling reasons, the narrow views seem untenable insofar as the interpretation of σημεῖα γεγραμμένα in 20:30–31 is concerned, and only the broader and maximalist views appear to be sustainable. First, the textual location and function of 20:30–31 militates against interpreting the σημεῖα γεγραμμένα as referring only to the miracles in John 2–11 (or even including John 21),⁶⁶ and seems to necessitate a broader view. As has been pointed out, 20:30–31 is the conclusion not only of the Thomas pericope (20:24–29), or of the post-resurrection appearances in John 20, or of the passion-and-resurrection account (John 18–20),

⁶⁴ So, e.g., C. H. Dodd, “A Note on John 21,24,” *JTS* 4 (1953), 212; Colin Roberts, “John 20:30–31 and 21:24–25,” *JTS* 38 (1987), 409; Welck, *Erzählte Zeichen*, 293.

⁶⁵ The source-critical views which explain 20:30–31 as coming from a source and inserted here by FE need not be discussed.

⁶⁶ See observations in Frey, “*Sēmeia* Narratives,” 226.

but of the whole Gospel itself. In effect, there are more *σημεῖα* in John's Gospel than has been traditionally thought. Since 20:30–31 immediately follows the appearances of the risen Lord, then those appearances – if we are to interpret *ταῦτα σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* correctly – are also *σημεῖα*. Moreover, since 20:30–31 also concludes the bigger section of John 18–20, there also arises the question of whether the most important events in the Gospel – Jesus' death-and-resurrection – should not also be included in these *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα*.⁶⁷ And since 20:30–31 also concludes the Gospel as a whole, are not those earlier acts of Jesus – which are traditionally excluded from the *σημεῖα* – also to be included? Second, the phrase *ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ* in v. 30, echoed in v. 31, clearly indicates that the *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* pertains to the Gospel as a whole. The whole Gospel itself, rather than only its first half (chs. 1–12), is to be described as a “book of signs,” where *σημεῖον* broadly encompass both the miraculous and non-miraculous deeds of the Lord. In this view, the death-and-resurrection is not simply included as a composite *σημεῖον*, but also the greatest and supreme *σημεῖον* (as I will attempt to demonstrate in this thesis).

In summary, the seventeen occurrences of *σημεῖον* in FG may be categorized into three groups insofar as referent is concerned. First, ten occurrences clearly refer to a miraculous deed, whether that deed is actual or potential: namely, 2:18; 4:48, 54; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 7:31; 10:41; and 12:18. Based on these occurrences, the supposition that *σημεῖον* refers exclusively to a miraculous deed of Jesus can be sustained. Second, five occurrences, while also denoting miraculous deeds, seem to have a broader reference and cannot be limited to Jesus' miraculous activity: 2:11, 23; 3:2; 9:16; and 11:47. These passages provide clues that *σημεῖον* may mean more than just a miraculous event, and they cast doubt upon the view that the *σημεῖα* can only refer to miracles. Third, the remaining two occurrences, which are the

⁶⁷ There is no compelling reason why they must not be. To say that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is not a *σημεῖον* because FE has not explicitly labeled it as such is not a sound argument. For neither has the evangelist labeled the healing of the cripple in John 5 as a *σημεῖον*, yet scholars universally acknowledge it as such (the same can be said of Jesus' walking on the water in John 6). On the contrary, since 20:30–31 also concludes the whole account of the passion-and-resurrection, it may be legitimately concluded that the summative mention of *σημεῖα* in this passage is inclusive of Jesus' crucifixion-and-resurrection.

two summary statements of the Gospel, with the second being also the purpose statement, necessitate a broader and encompassing referent and scope of the *σημεῖα*. In 12:37 *σημεῖα* summarizes the entire public ministry of Jesus. That is also true in 20:30–31 and, additionally, the *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* concerns the “book” (*βιβλίον*), that is, the whole Gospel itself (rather than, say, John 1–12 only). Therefore, from the perspective of the whole Gospel, a *σημεῖον* refers to the activity of Jesus, be it miraculous or otherwise, which the evangelist has included in his account of the life and ministry of Jesus.

3.3. The Purpose of the *Σημεῖα Γεγραμμένα*

The purpose of the *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* is twofold, expressed by the two *ἵνα*-clauses in 20:31.

3.3.1. *Ἴνα πιστεύητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (20:31)*

The first purposive *ἵνα*-clause may be further subdivided into two parts: the first has to do with the verb *πιστεύειν*, and the second with the Christological titles.

3.3.1.1. *Πιστεύητε (“You may believe”)*

The verb *πιστεύειν* may, in turn, be subdivided into two parts: the first has to do with the positive role of the *σημεῖα* for the faith of the readers, and the second clarifies the issues associated with *πιστευ[σ]ητε*.

3.3.1.1.1. The positive role of the *σημεῖα* for the faith of the readers

It is not for mere curiosity that FE has written down the *σημεῖα*. He, addressing the reader in the second person, is entirely transparent with his purpose of helping them to believe in Jesus. I have elsewhere mentioned the scholarly debate on the

question of whether the *σημεῖα* have any positive role at all for faith.⁶⁸ John 20:30–31, especially as it is the Gospel’s purpose statement, provides strong support for the view that the *σημεῖα* play a positive role for faith.

Although faith is clearly a prominent and fundamental theme in FG, a detailed discussion of it is not possible here. It shall suffice to mention here a few summative remarks. First, briefly put, faith is the rightful human response to Jesus who is the divine Messiah and Son of God (see, e.g., 20:30–31). Second, as will also be discussed below, faith (so defined) is necessary for the experience of salvation, defined as the possession of eternal life in the present and awaiting full realisation on the last day (see, e.g., 1:12; 3:14–16). Third, the affirmation that faith is genuine human response is balanced with the equally important affirmation that no human being is able to have faith (to believe) in Jesus unless enabled by the Father (cf. e.g., 6:37, 44).⁶⁹

3.3.1.1.2. Πιστεύητε or πιστεύσγητε? (20:31; cf. 19:35)

This thesis prefers the *πιστεύητε* reading, rather than *πιστεύσγητε*. Both the NA²⁸ and UBS⁵ editions of the Greek New Testament indicate *πιστεύ[σ]ητε*, giving the impression that neither of the variant readings is superior.⁷⁰ But *πιστεύητε* is clearly the *lectio difficilior*, as Gordon D. Fee (for instance) has demonstrated.⁷¹ *Πιστεύητε* has the following manuscript support: P^{66vid} א* B Θ 0250 892. Meanwhile,

⁶⁸ Rudolf Bultmann and Ernst Käsemann exemplified the two opposing views on this question; see the lucid summary and critique of their positions in Thompson, “Signs and Faith,” 89–108, esp. 91–92.

⁶⁹ For textual support for these points, see §4.6 below.

⁷⁰ This impression is confirmed by Bruce M. Metzger who asserts that “both [readings] have notable support” (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [London: UBS, 1971], 256). Many commentators have followed such assessment. For instance, G. R. Beasley-Murray thinks that “the evidence is evenly balanced” (*John*, 387). Similarly Carson writes, “the textual evidence is fairly evenly divided” (*Gospel*, 659–60); see also idem, “The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: John 20:31 Reconsidered,” *JBL* 106 (1987), 640.

⁷¹ Gordon D. Fee, “On the Text and Meaning of John 20,30–31,” in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, ed. F. Segbroeck, et al.; BETL 100 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 2193–2205. See also H. Riesenfeld, “Zu den johanneischen ἴνα-Σätzen,” *ST* 19 (1965): 213–20; Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1056; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:338.

πιστεύσητε is supported by the following: A C D K L rell.⁷² This is worth correlating with the identical case in 19:35, where both the NA²⁸ and UBS⁵ also indicate πιστεύ[σ]ητε.⁷³ In this case, πιστεύητε is supported by P^{66vid} א* B Ψ Origen, while πιστεύσητε is supported by rell.

According to Fee, contrary to the supposition that evidence for both readings is finely balanced, “in fact the only ‘notable early support’ is for the present subjunctive. Here the primary Egyptians (P⁶⁶ א* B, the earliest and best of the MSS for this Gospel), plus some secondary witnesses from this tradition (0250 892) and the non-Egyptian Θ, form a considerable combination of evidence in favor of πιστεύητε.”⁷⁴

Part of the debate concerning the variant readings is the discussion about the probable addressees, as well as the purpose, of the Gospel. Was the Gospel written for a mainly non-Christian audience, with the purpose of evangelising them? Or, was it written for a largely Christian readership, with the view of confirming and deepening their faith in Jesus Christ? Πιστεύσητε, which is aorist subjunctive – usually translated “you may come to believe” – is supposed to support the first position, while πιστεύητε, present subjunctive – usually translated

⁷² “Rell” is a textual criticism terminology derived from the Latin *reliqui*, meaning “[the] rest.” That is, the rest of the manuscript tradition supports the reading in question.

⁷³ It is worth noting that 19:35 and 20:30–31 are the only two places in the Gospel where FE personally addresses his readers. Compare: 19:35: καὶ ὁ ἑωρακῶς μεμαρτύρηκεν, καὶ ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, καὶ ἐκεῖνος οἶδεν ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγει, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύ[σ]ητε (“He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth”); 20:31: ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ (“But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name”).

⁷⁴ Fee, “On the Text and Meaning,” 2195–196. Fee adds: “[T]he earliest evidence for the aorist is a group of witnesses from several textual traditions from the fifth century (A C D W), which have in common that they are frequently the earliest witnesses to readings, usually patently secondary readings, that form the basis of the Byzantine textual tradition. All of this to say, then, that the external evidence is not even; rather, it weighs significantly in favor of the present subjunctive” (ibid., 2196). Fee further writes: “All of this together ... suggests most strongly that in John 20,31 the author wrote ἵνα πιστεύητε and that later scribes changed it to ἵνα πιστεύσητε, either because they thought such a sentence leaned toward the notion of ‘coming to faith’ or because the aorist subjunctive would have been a more common idiom for them. This suggests further that the indecision on the part of the UBS editors should be put to rest. The reading πιστεύητε may be confidently placed in the text, and I would think with a ‘B’ rating” (ibid., 2198). D. A. Carson, in a later essay, shifts his previous stance and now thinks that πιστεύητε “should be taken, by a wide margin, as the most likely reading” (“Syntactical and Text-Critical Observations on John 20:30–31: One More Round on the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 124 [2005]: 697).

“you may continue to believe” – is supposed to support the latter. But this fine point of grammar, though helpful as a starting point,⁷⁵ cannot definitively settle the question of the identity of the addressees and the purpose of the Gospel.⁷⁶ On other grounds, of course, the view that the Gospel was written for Christian readership, with the purpose of confirming, strengthening, and deepening their faith, is more textually sustainable than the alternative view. To quote Lincoln at length:

The witness of this book to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is meant to produce continuance in belief. The shape of the argument, whereby implied readers are expected to share the point of view set out in the prologue if they are to appreciate the ironies of the unfolding story and then to be confirmed in this perspective by the time the narrative reaches its conclusion, also suggests that its primary purpose is to reinforce the faith of those who are already Christian believers. The account of Jesus’ public mission is not formulated as if the intent were to make a case about Jesus to unbelievers. In particular, Jesus’ discourses and disputes with opponents presuppose some knowledge on the part of the believing readers about the issues faced in their own time about Jesus’ identity ... In addition, implied readers are expected to identify in particular with the role of Jesus’ followers in the narrative and a large portion of that narrative (chapters 13–17) is devoted to addressing explicitly the concerns of such followers. Quite different rhetorical strategies would be required if the aim were to persuade readers to come to initial belief.⁷⁷

The precise *Sitz im Leben* of the addressees is debated, although the “expulsion” theory⁷⁸ is arguably the dominant view.⁷⁹ The Gospel itself, particularly the

⁷⁵ So, e.g., Fee, *ibid.*, 2199–2204; Keener, *Gospel*, 1215–1216.

⁷⁶ So, e.g., Barrett, *Gospel*, 135–35, 575–76; Lindars, *Gospel*, 617; Painter, *Quest*, 119; Keener, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Lincoln, *Gospel*, 87; see also Fee, “Text and Meaning,” 2204–205.

⁷⁸ To quote Robert Kysar, “[T]he Johannine community suffered a traumatic expulsion from the synagogue and a prolonged and violent controversy with the Jews of that synagogue” (“The Gospel of John in Current Research,” *RSR* 9 [1983], 316). According to David Rensberger, “[T]he Gospel of John derives from a Christian community that suffered a difficult and traumatic separation from its original home in the synagogue” (“Sectarianism and Theological Interpretation in John,” in *What is John? Volume 2: Literary and Social Readings of the Fourth Gospel*, ed. F. F. Segovia [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998], 139).

⁷⁹ Martyn (*History and Theology*) and R. E. Brown (*The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves, and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times* [New York: Paulist, 1979]) are the chief advocates of this view. As is well known, Richard Bauckham edited the volume *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark,

threefold mention of ἀποσυνάγωγος, suggests that its Christian readers experienced some kind of persecution from the surrounding Jewish circles (synagogue). In 9:22 the parents of the man blind from birth, whom the Johannine Jesus has healed, are afraid of the Ἰουδαῖοι, for they have already decided that anyone who confesses Jesus as the Messiah should be expelled from the synagogue. In 12:42 many, even of the authorities, did not make their faith public because they were afraid to be ἀποσυνάγωγοι. In 16:2 the threat for being disciples of Jesus is not just of being ἀποσυνάγωγος but also of being killed. From these passages and others we may glean that the believers to whom the evangelist wrote needed not only encouragement to keep up their faith in Jesus, but also a helpful presentation and defense of why Jesus is the true Messiah and Son of God. Perhaps the goal was not simply to encourage them to keep on in the midst of hostility and persecution, but also to equip them to respond appropriately to dissenting objections about Jesus, with perhaps a more positive end-goal of sharing the faith.

3.3.1.2. Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (20:31)

It is important to ascertain the content of the faith that FE seeks to promulgate through the σημεῖα γεγραμμένα. We will do so by analyzing the confession Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 31).⁸⁰

1998), in which he and his colleagues advocated the view that the canonical Gospels were not originally written for somewhat hermetically sealed communities (which in scholarship are designated the “Matthean,” “Markan,” “Lucan,” and “Johannine” communities) but for general circulation and, thus, for all Christians. In the second of his two contributions to this volume, “John for Readers of Mark” (pp. 147–71), Bauckham argued, based on what he saw as evidence within FG suggesting a readership already familiar with the Gospel of Mark but not with Johannine traditions, that FG (therefore) was not written for an ostensible “Johannine community” but for general circulation among the churches. On Bauckham’s proposal that FG was written for readers of Mark’s Gospel, I think Wendy E. Sproston North (“John for Readers of Mark? A Response to Richard Bauckham’s Proposal,” *JSNT* 25 [2003]: 449–68) has convincingly shown that Bauckham’s interpretation of John 3:24 and 11:2, upon which his whole case is built, is flawed. Overall, the view that the Gospels were written for specific, though probably not hermetically sealed, communities seems to remain the more plausible position. But one contribution arising from Bauckham’s and his colleagues’ thesis is that the notion of disparate and hermetic Gospel communities is flawed.

⁸⁰ For statements such as this as creedal confessions see David Aune, “Christian Prophecy and the Messianic Status of Jesus,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992), 406.

What does it mean to say, such as in 20:31, that Jesus is *ὁ χριστός*? As is well known, the title *ὁ χριστός* is a Jewish designation referring to the Davidic royal Messiah⁸¹ – certainly the most important, though not the only, figure in Jewish eschatological expectations.⁸² The acknowledgment or confession of Jesus as *ὁ χριστός* poses a problem on two counts. Firstly, ultimately the Jewish notion of *ὁ χριστός* as the promised Davidic king is insufficient to adequately capture and represent the Johannine Jesus’ identity as not simply human but also divine (see below). The promised Davidic king, though anointed by God, is nevertheless only a human figure. When the Jewish Scriptures describe the king of Israel as “son of God” (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; 89:26–27), that is not tantamount to declaring the king as god or a god. As Adam Winn, who describes the “divine sonship” of the Israelite kings as metaphorical rather than literal, writes: “[T]he king of Israel was not perceived in any way as either divine or a literal son of God.”⁸³ Meanwhile, the divine sonship of the Johannine Jesus is clearly of a different category, for there are

⁸¹ So, e.g., Nils A. Dahl, *The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1974), 27; De Jonge, “Jewish Expectations,” 251; Bauckham, “Messianism,” 54.

⁸² The diversity of Jewish eschatological expectations, including messianic hopes in particular, during the Second Temple period has been well noted: see, e.g., Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, and Ernest S. Frerichs, eds., *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992); John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010); Craig A. Evans, “Messianic Hopes and Messianic Figures in Late Antiquity,” *JGRChJ* 3 (2006): 9–40. FE himself shows awareness of this diversity. For instance, in 1:19–24 we read of the three figures *ὁ χριστός*, *Ἡλίας*, and *ὁ προφήτης* from the lips of priestly and levitical representatives sent from Jerusalem to inquire with John the Baptist concerning his identity and motives for ministry. Apparently the Baptist’s “behavior suggests that he casts himself in one of the roles Jewish expectation assigned to various eschatological figures” (Bauckham, “Messianism,” 36). The Baptist firmly denies that he is any of the three; in FG, his role is that of a *μάρτυς* to Jesus (cf. 1:6–8, 15, 29–37; 3:22–30).

⁸³ Adam Winn, “Son of God,” in *DJG*, 886. Moreover, despite being described as “son of God,” the Israelite king “never became an object of veneration in the Israelite cultus” (Michael F. Bird, review of *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature*, by Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *JETS* 52 [2009]: 854). The divine sonship of the Israelite kings may convey a variety of meanings and significance. For instance, it may pertain to “the king as the recipient of God’s paternal faithfulness ... (2 Sam 7:14–16; Ps 89:24, 28–37); the king as God’s agent who exercises God’s authority on earth (Ps 2); the king as the heir and the recipient of God’s inheritance (Ps 2:7–8); the king as the recipient of God’s paternal discipline (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89:20–27); and God’s role as the progenitor of the king, since it is God who called and established Israel’s king” (Winn, *ibid.*). See also David R. Bauer, “Son of God I: Gospels,” in *DNT*, 1027.

passages in the Gospel that clearly set forth the Johannine Jesus as himself θεός (so, e.g., 1:1; 20:28) (more on this below).

Secondly, the promised Davidic Messiah is unavoidably a political and militant figure,⁸⁴ and this does not cohere with the facts of Jesus' life and ministry, and particularly with the fact of his death on the cross. Therefore, how is FE able to call Jesus ὁ χριστός, and what does this mean?

It is important to stress at the outset that the more central Christological titles in FG are ὁ υἱός, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (to be discussed below), and ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Other titles, such as προφήτης, βασιλεύς, and even ὁ χριστός do not take on a defining role in the formulation and expression of Johannine Christology.⁸⁵ As John Ashton observes,

[T]he theme of Jesus' messiahship is not really one that excites the evangelist's interest or stimulates his theological imagination. His main *speculative* developments centre upon the nature of Jesus' relationship to God, on judgment and revelation ... Important as it is, the messianic status of Jesus prompts John's theological creativity much less than the title of Son of Man or the notion of Jesus' divine mission.⁸⁶

Nevertheless, it remains that Jesus of Nazareth is ὁ χριστός ὃν ἔγραψεν Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ οἱ προφῆται ("about whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote") (1:45). FE uses ὁ χριστός 19 times, although apart from 17:3, none of the occurrences are on Jesus' lips but on the lips of the characters in the story who either acknowledge his messiahship or debate whether he is the Messiah.⁸⁷ If the Scriptures wrote about Jesus as ὁ χριστός, it means that he fulfills them. It also means that the Scriptures testify to his messiahship, and to disbelieve or reject his messiahship is ultimately to disbelieve the Scriptures themselves (see 5:39–47). It

⁸⁴ See, e.g., Collins, *Scepter*, 229.

⁸⁵ See, e.g., Marinus de Jonge, "Jewish Expectations," 251–52; idem, "Signs and Works in the Fourth Gospel," in *Miscellanea Neotestamentica*, vol. 2; ed. T. Baarda, A. F. Klijn, and W. C. van Unnik, NovTSup 48 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 109; Ashton, *Understanding*, 147–48; Nils A. Dahl, "The Johannine Church and History," in *The Interpretation of John*, ed. J. Ashton; 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 152.

⁸⁶ Ashton, *ibid.*, 148; italics his.

⁸⁷ See Bauckham, "Messianism," 54.

is important to stress, however, that while Jesus is the Messiah announced in the Scriptures, he is not the sort of Messiah that the Ἰουδαῖοι of FG, to the extent that they had in mind a political Messiah, had expected (see, e.g., 6:14).

As to the meaning of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, scholarly interpretations vary. Is this a messianic title, synonymous with ὁ χριστός,⁸⁸ so that the expression ὁ χριστός ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ becomes a pleonasm, a preacher's way of stressing a point? Or, does ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ add a new dimension not already contained in and expressed by ὁ χριστός?⁸⁹

The expression “son/s of God” is used in a number of ways in biblical and extra-biblical contexts.⁹⁰ It is used in the Jewish Scriptures in reference to angels (e.g., Job 1:6; 2:1; cf. 38:7), to Israel (e.g., Exod 4:22–23; Deut 1:31; 32:6; Jer 31:9, 20; Hos 11:1), and to the kings of Israel (e.g., 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; 89:26–27). It is used in later Jewish literature to describe the righteous (e.g., Jub. 1:24–25; Wis 2:18; Sir. 4:10). In the NT (e.g., Matt 5:9), the peacemakers (οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί) are called “sons of God” (υἱοὶ θεοῦ). In Luke 6:35–36 those “who love their enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return ... will be sons of the Most High” (υἱοὶ ὑψίστου).

Then there is the messianic usage⁹¹ which depends ultimately on such passages as 1 Sam 26:17, 21, 25; 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; 89:26–27. The passage 2 Sam 7:14 (“I will be his father and he shall be my son”) is quoted in connection with the Davidic Messiah in 4QFlor (MidrEschat^a) 1.6–7. Psalm 2:7 (“You are my son; today I have begotten you”) likely underlies 1QSa 2.11–12. Moreover, it seems certain that Psalm 2 underlies other accounts of the Davidic messiah such as those found

⁸⁸ So, e.g., Kysar comments: “Son of God is meant here in its Jewish sense as a title for the Messiah” (*John*, 310). For Steven B. Nash, ὁ χριστός and ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ are “two key OT messianic titles” (“Psalm 2 and the Son of God in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality: Volume 2: Exegetical Studies*, SSEJC 15 / LNTS 392 [London/New York: T&T Clark, 2009], 85). See also Yigal Levin, “Jesus, ‘Son of God’ and ‘Son of David’: The ‘Adoption’ of Jesus into the Davidic Line,” *JSNT* 28 (2006): 415–442.

⁸⁹ Most Johannine interpreters think so, rightly in my view. To cite a few: Lindars, *Gospel*, 617–18; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 653; Moloney, *Gospel*, 56, 543; Smith, *John*, 387; Lincoln, *Gospel*, 507; Ashton, *Understanding*, 143; Thompson, *John*, 430–31.

⁹⁰ See, e.g., Jarl Fossum, “Son of God,” *ABD* 6:128–137; Terrence L. Donaldson, “Son of God,” *NIDB* 5:335–41.

⁹¹ See, e.g., Eduard Lohse, “υἱός κτλ.,” *TDNT* 8:360–62.

in Pss. Sol. 17:23–24; 4QFlor (MidrEschat^a) 18–19; 1 En. 48:10; Ezra 13:35. In 4 Ezra (7:28–29; 13:32, 37, 52; 14:9) the Davidic Messiah is referred to as “my son” (that is, “God’s son”), and this may have been derived from Ps 2.⁹²

On the basis of this collective evidence, it may be concluded that ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, as it is (for example) applied to Jesus in FG, has messianic connotations. However, is that all that it means? Is ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ pleonastic? That is hardly the case.

The titles ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ and ὁ χριστός should be interpreted not in isolation from but in the light of the overall portrait of Johannine Christology.⁹³ Yes the Johannine Jesus is the Messiah announced by the Hebrew Scriptures. But clearly Jesus is so much more than that. He is ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεός, as Thomas confesses in 20:28b. He is ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ who has been eternally with God and is himself God (1:1–2), through whom all things were created (1:3), and in whom is life (ζωή) (1:4) and is himself the life (14:6). He is the μονογενὴς υἱὸς of God (1:18; 3:16, 18), the revealer *par excellence* of the Father (1:18), ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου (4:42), and many more.⁹⁴ In other words, FE is not calling his readers to believe in a new David or a new Moses (or a new Jacob, and so on). He is calling them to believe in someone who is nothing less than the embodiment of the God of Israel himself, and this someone is none other than Jesus of Nazareth.

To summarize, FE has written down the σημεῖα of Jesus (not all but a selection of them) for the purpose that the readers may believe in Jesus the divine Messiah and Son of God.

⁹² So Bauckham, “Messianism,” 58.

⁹³ So Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1060.

⁹⁴ For the other key titles applied to Jesus in FG see, e.g., the list in Beasley-Murray, *John*, lxxxii. Larry W. Hurtado is right to comment: “[I]n GJohn, asserting Jesus’ messiahship and divine sonship means much more than the claim that he is Israel’s rightful king. The Johannine assertions that Jesus is ‘Christ’ and ‘the Son (of God)’ connote the belief that Jesus is in some intrinsic way also divine and of heavenly origin ... Jesus’ divine sonship includes a transcendent significance and quality” (*Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans], 362).

3.3.2. ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ

Looking now at the second ἵνα-clause, the recurrence of the verb πιστεύειν is notable. We recall that, according to the first ἵνα-clause, it is for the faith of the readers that the σημεῖα have been written down. As we saw, the object of that faith is the affirmation that Jesus is ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. Now the evangelist builds on that and speaks about the saving benefit that results from that faith: ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχητε, (“in order that you may have life”). Brief remarks about ζωὴ, which is a key Christological theme in FG,⁹⁵ will suffice here.

The word ζωὴ occurs 37 times in FG, 18 of which are in the expression ζωὴ αἰώνιος. Right from the start, in the Prologue, we are told that ζωὴ is found in Jesus alone: ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων (“In him was life, and the life was the light of humankind”) (1:5). This is reiterated throughout the Gospel. For instance, in 3:14–15 it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up so that believers in him may have ζωὴν αἰώνιον. The last verse of John 3 reads: ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον· ὁ δὲ ἀπειθῶν τῷ υἱῷ οὐκ ὄψεται ζωὴν, ἀλλ’ ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐπ’ αὐτόν (“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God’s wrath”) (v. 36). In John 4, Jesus is the giver of ὕδωρ ζῶν (v. 10), and we learn from 4:14 and 7:37–39 that ὕδωρ ζῶν is a metaphor for the Spirit whom Jesus, after his “glorification” (7:39, referring to the complex of the crucifixion-resurrection), gives to those who believe in him. If in John 4 Jesus gives the ὕδωρ ζῶν, in John 6 he does not simply give the ἄρτον τῆς ζωῆς; he is himself ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς. Note the first predicative ἐγώ-εἰμι statement of the Gospel: ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς (6:35, 48, 51a). But it is not only the idea of

⁹⁵ In the words of Rudolf Schnackenburg, ζωὴ “belongs to the core of John’s theology and gospel” (*Gospel*, 2:352). Some of the more important studies on ζωὴ in FG are Dodd, *Interpretation*, 144–50; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:505–08; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:352–61; C. F. D. Moule, “The Meaning of ‘Life’ in the Gospel and Epistles of John,” *Theol* 78 (1975): 114–25; J. C. Davis, “The Johannine Concept of Eternal Life as a Present Possession,” *ResQ* 27 (1984): 161–69; Marianne Meye Thompson, “Eternal Life in the Gospel of John,” *ExAud* 5 (1989): 35–55; Morris, *Jesus is the Christ*, 190–209; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Gospel of Life: Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 1–14; Paul S. Minear, “The Promise of Life in the Gospel of John,” *ThTo* 49 (1993): 485–99; Ruben Zimmermann, “Abundant and Abandoning Life: Towards an ‘Ethic of Life’ in the Gospel of John,” *ABR* 64 (2016): 31–53.

ἄρτος or βρώσις (“food”) that dominates John 6. There is also the complementary theme of πόσις, “drink,” which harks back to the ὕδωρ ζῶν of John 4. In 6:51–58, the true “food” is Jesus’ σὰρξ and the true “drink” is his αἷμα, and anyone who “eats” his flesh and “drinks” his blood will live forever (ζήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). This talk of Jesus’ flesh and blood being the true food and drink alludes to his sacrificial death on the cross, which has already been alluded to, for instance, in the lifting up of the Son of Man in 3:14. The reference to the ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man in 6:62 (also 13:1; cf. 12:23, 32) seems to confirm this allusion.

There are many more passages that can be cited on the theme of ζωή (e.g., 10:10; 11:25; 14:6), but those cited already are sufficient for my present purposes. In the light of all these passages, we may summarily describe Jesus’ mission in coming to earth (with all that that entails – his public ministry, culminating in his death and resurrection) by saying that he came to give ζωή to those who would believe in him (e.g., 3:16; 10:10). That purpose now becomes the purpose – *mutatis mutandis* – of the σημεῖα γεγραμμένα, of the Gospel itself, with respect to its readers.

With regards to the phrase ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ, its immediate reference is to Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in the first ἴνα-clause. According to Brown, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ “can modify the sphere of salvation as well as the sphere of belief.”⁹⁶ That is correct as far as theology is concerned. However, to be precise, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ does not pertain to πιστεύοντες but to ζωὴν ἔχητε not only because of their position in the sentence but also because of the preposition ἐν.⁹⁷ This preposition can connote “sphere” as well as “agency,”⁹⁸ and both seem applicable here. Jesus alone is ἡ ζωή and is the giver of ζωή, and so in and through him alone can humanity find ζωή.

⁹⁶ Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1056.

⁹⁷ Lindars, *Gospel*, 618.

⁹⁸ See BDAG, pp. 326–30, esp. 328–29.

3.4. Conclusion

Our main finding in this chapter is the realization that the Johannine *σημεῖον* pertains to Jesus' deeds, both miraculous and otherwise, which have been recorded in FG. This finding has implications for some of the "received wisdom" in Johannine scholarship, such as, for example, the lingering view which equates the *σημεῖα* with the seven or eight miracles recounted at length in the Gospel, and the (misleading) designation of John 1–12 as "the Book of Signs" (as though there are no *σημεῖα* in the second half of the Gospel).⁹⁹

But the more important implication relates to the core of this thesis. Since the *σημεῖα* pertain to Jesus' deeds inclusively, which have found their way into the Gospel, Jesus' death-and-resurrection, as a theologically unified event, may be included there. Moreover, since Jesus' death-and-resurrection is the most important of all of Jesus' deeds in his earthly career, it may also be the greatest – the supreme – *σημεῖον*. The ensuing chapters will investigate whether this is so.

⁹⁹ Also, the designation of John 13–20(21) as "the Book of Glory" needs to be nuanced, for it seems to suggest (wrongly) that Jesus' earlier ministry (John 1–12) was not characterized by glory. Of course it is true that the crucifixion-resurrection constitutes the *ῥα* of the Son's glorification (12:23, 32; 13:1). But it is also true that Jesus' earlier deeds (*σημεῖα*) also revealed his glory (see 2:11; 11:4, 40). It seems to me that *δόξα* and *σημεῖα* pertain to the Gospel as a whole, rather than to parts of it.

CHAPTER 4 FIVE THEMATIC STUDIES

4.1. Introduction

The main contention of this thesis – that *σημείον* pertains inclusively to the deeds of Jesus, and that in this broad reference the crucifixion-and-resurrection is the supreme *σημείον* – has been articulated in ch. 3. The foregoing study of the occurrences and usage of *σημείον* has shown that in the final analysis the concept of *σημείον* is not and cannot be limited to the seven or eight miracles recounted in the Gospel, but refers inclusively to the deeds of Jesus – whether miraculous or not – which FE has recounted. It follows naturally from this broad and inclusive reference that the crucifixion-and-resurrection – being the greatest complex deed of Jesus – is the supreme *σημείον*.

But there is more to be said by way of further laying the foundation. The five themes to be studied in this chapter – namely *δόξα*, *ύψωσις*, *ἔργον*, *ώρα*, and *πίστις* – provide further elucidation and support, individually and collectively, to the thesis. As will become evident, the importance of these themes lies in their concentration upon Jesus' death-and-resurrection, as well as in their links to the concept of *σημεία*.

4.2. Δόξα

4.2.1. Occurrences and Usage

Like *σημεῖον*, *δόξα* is one of the most important words in FG, as is readily indicated by its nineteen occurrences¹ and by the twenty-three occurrences of the verb *δοξάζειν*.² It is a subject that has attracted much scholarly attention.³ How does FE use this word?

In 5:41 and 7:18a *δόξα* means no more than *δόξα παρὰ ἀνθρώπων* (“glory that comes from human beings”), and in context it is contrasted with *ἡ δόξα ἡ παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ* (5:44: “the glory that comes from the one who alone is God”) (cf. 7:18b). In 5:41 Jesus does not seek *δόξαν παρὰ ἀνθρώπων*, but, by implication, seeks the *δόξα* that comes from God himself (cf. 8:50). By contrast, the unbelieving

¹ 1:14(bis); 2:11; 5:41, 44(bis); 7:18(bis); 8:50, 54; 9:24; 11:4, 40; 12:41, 43(bis); 17:5, 22, 24. Compare with 23 occurrences (combined) in the Synoptic Gospels. The total occurrences in the NT are 165.

² 7:39; 8:54(bis); 11:4; 12:16, 23, 28(bis); 13:31(bis); 13:32(bis); 14:13; 15:8; 16:14; 17:1(bis), 4, 5, 10; 21:19. This verb occurs only 14 times in the Synoptics (combined). The total occurrences in the NT are 61.

³ See, e.g., Dodd, *Interpretation*, 206–08; Riga, “Signs of Glory,” 402–24; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:503–04; G. B. Caird, “The Glory of God in the Fourth Gospel: An Exercise in Biblical Semantics,” *NTS* 15 (1969): 265–77; Gerhard Kittel, “δόξα,” in *TDNT* 2:232–55; Th. C. De Kruijf, “The Glory of the Only Son,” in *Studies in John: Presented to Professor Dr. J. N. Sevenster on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. W. C. van Unnik; NovTSup 24 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 111–23; Nicol, *Sēmeia*, 119–22; Margaret Pamment, “The Meaning of *Doxa* in the Fourth Gospel,” *ZNW* 74 (1983): 12–16; W. Robert Cook, “The ‘Glory’ Motif in the Johannine Corpus,” *JETS* 27 (1984): 291–97; Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 374–81; Rainer Schwint, *Gesichte der Herrlichkeit: eine exegetisch-traditionsgeschichtliche Studie zur paulinischen und johanneischen Christologie*, HBS 50 (Freiburg: Herder, 2007), 369–78; Nicole Chibici-Revneanu, *Die Herrlichkeit des Verherrlichten: Das Verständnis der doxa im Johannesevangelium*, WUNT 2/231 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); idem, “Gottes Herrlichkeit: Impulse aus dem Johannesevangelium,” *NZStH* 50 (2008): 75–94; idem, “Variations on Glorification: John 13,31f. and Johannine δόξα-Language,” in *Repetitions and Variations in the Fourth Gospel: Style, Text, Interpretation*, ed. G. Van Belle, M. Labahn, and P. Maritz; BETL 223 (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 511–22; Andreas J. Köstenberger, “The Glory of God in John’s Gospel and Revelation,” in *The Glory of God*, ed. C. W. Morgan and R. A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 107–26; Jesper Tang Nielsen, “The Narrative Structures of Glory and Glorification in the Fourth Gospel,” *NTS* 56 (2010): 343–66; Jörg Frey, “‘Dass sie meine Herrlichkeit schauen’ (Joh 17,4): Zu Hintergrund, Sinn und Funktion der johanneischen Rede von der δόξα Jesu,” *NTS* 54 (2008): 375–97; idem, “The Use of δόξα in Paul and John as Shaped by the Septuagint,” in *The Reception of Septuagint Words in Jewish-Hellenistic Christian Literature*, ed. E. Bons, R. Brucker, and J. Joosten. WUNT 2/367 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 85–104; Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 43–62.

Ἰουδαῖοι seek glory from one another, rather than from God. This seeking for human glory is cited as a reason why the Ἰουδαῖοι do not come to and cannot believe in Jesus, and for why they reject him (5:44). At the close of John 12, the love for human glory, rather than for God’s glory, is again cited as a reason why some Jewish religious authorities, who otherwise were sympathizers of Jesus, did not come out to confess their faith publicly (vv. 42–43), a sort of faith which falls short of true Johannine faith.⁴

FE uses δόξα a few times positively in connection with God the Father. Verses 7:18b and 8:50 have already been cited, where it is the Father’s δόξα that Jesus seeks, and which the Ἰουδαῖοι do not seek. Verse 12:43 has also already been cited, where God’s δόξα is mentioned in opposition to the δόξα that comes from humans, in the context of explaining the ultimate rejection of Jesus by the Ἰουδαῖοι. In 11:4 God’s δόξα is the higher purpose for Lazarus’s illness and death.

Most of the occurrences of δόξα in FG are Christological. Even the references to the Father’s δόξα are worded in such a way that they, in one way or another, have a bearing on Christology. The first occurrence of δόξα in the Gospel is also the most important and significant: καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth”) (1:14).⁵ This foundational and programmatic statement, where δόξα occurs twice, makes clear right from the beginning of the Gospel three

⁴ So, e.g., Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 447; Keener, *Gospel*, 885.

⁵ John 1:14 is both the climax of the prologue and the key to the 21 chapters that follow (so, e.g., Hengel, “Prologue,” 265–94). Worth mentioning in relation to 1:14 is the well-known and important dispute between Rudolf Bultmann and Ernst Käsemann. Bultmann concentrated his interpretation on the σὰρξ in 1:14a, asserting that in his sheer “humanity” Jesus is the revealer of God. “The Revealer is nothing but a man,” and this is in essence the offence of the Christian gospel, reasons Bultmann (*Gospel*, 62). By contrast, Käsemann concentrated on the δόξα of 1:14b, asserting that the incarnation was an epiphany, and that Jesus is a glorious god striding across the earth (*The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17*, trans. G. Krodel [London: SCM, 1968], 21–3, 52–3). However, neither interpreter does full justice to the meaning of 1:14. See Marianne M. Thompson’s summary and critique of Bultmann’s and Käsemann’s positions in *Incarnate Word*, 89–108.

important truths, centered on Jesus Christ.⁶ First, the eternal Logos possessed glory even in his incarnate existence. As Frey comments, “Von Anfang an ist der Weg des irdischen Jesus umglänzt von seiner Herrlichkeit.”⁷ In other words, the Logos’s existence in the flesh did not entail the abandonment of his glory, nor did this new mode of existence hide that glory or suppress the revelation of it. On the contrary, FE affirms that it is in and through the incarnate life of the Logos that his divine glory was supremely revealed to humankind and was seen by those who had the “spiritual eyes” (faith) to see it. Second, the phrase *δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός* means that the glory of the incarnate Logos is one with and the same as the glory of his Father. As D. A. Carson explains, “the glory displayed in the incarnate Word is the kind of glory a father grants to his *one and only, best-loved* Son – and this ‘father’ is God himself. Thus it is nothing less than God’s glory that John and his friends witnessed in the Word-made-flesh.”⁸ Third, the incarnation made it possible for the believing disciples to behold the glory of the Logos. Indeed, the claim is straightforward: *ἑθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ*. These three truths are foundational for Johannine Christology.

In regard to the question of how the eternal and incarnate Logos revealed his glory in such ways that the believing disciples saw it, the incarnation itself may be the summative and encompassing answer. The incarnation, succinctly expressed in 1:14, made possible what otherwise was impossible: earthly human beings may now “see” God, as never before, in and through Jesus (cf. 14:9). The “we”-group in 1:14 affirms summarily that in the incarnate Logos’s “tabernacling” in their midst they beheld his glory, and this glory is as the glory of God the Father. The final verse of the Prologue says: *θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο* (“No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known”) (1:18). In John 14, one of Jesus’ disciples makes the request: *κύριε, δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν πατέρα, καὶ ἀρκεῖ ἡμῖν* (“Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us”) (v. 8). In reply

⁶ These points are not necessarily exhaustive.

⁷ Frey, “Herrlichkeit,” 375.

⁸ Carson, *Gospel*, 128 (italics his); also Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, 51.

Jesus declares: *ὁ ἑώρακώς ἐμὲ ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα* (“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father”) (v. 9). Jesus also says in 12:45: *ὁ θεωρῶν ἐμὲ θεωρεῖ τὸν πέμψαντά με* (“Whoever sees me sees him who sent me”) (cf. 8:19). The glory of Jesus emanates from his union with the Father, and to the extent that the incarnation reveals the Father and reveals Jesus to be one with the Father, then the incarnation reveals Jesus’ glory.

Moving on to more particular ways whereby the incarnate Logos revealed his glory, two answers appear accentuated in the Gospel: first, the *σημεῖα* of Jesus are revealers of his glory, and second, Jesus is glorified supremely through the crucifixion-and-resurrection.

4.2.2. Δόξα and Σημεῖα

The relationship between Jesus’ *δόξα* and his *σημεῖα* is that the latter reveal the former.⁹ That Jesus’ *σημεῖα* reveal his *δόξα*, there is hardly any dispute. However, what and which ones are the *σημεῖα* of Jesus? As we saw in ch. 2, there are varying scholarly answers to this question. Those who equate the *σημεῖα* with the seven or eight miracles in FG run into difficulty here, for, as we will see, even non-miraculous deeds of Jesus, most especially the cross, also reveal his glory.

There are two passages that explicitly address the relationship between *σημεῖα* and *δόξα*: John 2:11 and 11:4. The verse 2:11, which concludes the account of the first *σημεῖον* (the turning of water to wine), does two things: it harks back to 1:14 and looks forward to and anticipates the rest of the Gospel. These two verses, 1:14 and 2:11, are bound together by the mention of *δόξα* as well as the reference to the “we”-group. John 1:14, where the disciples beheld the glory of the eternal and incarnate Logos, is a general and summative statement which is then particularized in 2:11 (among others), where the same disciples beheld the glory of Jesus manifested in and through his inaugural deed. But 2:11 specifies a new element not explicitly mentioned in 1:14: the *σημεῖα* of Jesus. But if 1:14 is truly a

⁹ See, e.g., Riga, “Signs of Glory,” 402–24.

summative description of the entire incarnate life of Jesus Christ, then the *σημεῖα* cannot really be said to be absent from that verse, although the word itself does not occur there. Moreover, the disciples' beholding Jesus' glory in 1:14 alludes to the revelation of Jesus' glory in and through the *σημεῖα*, such as in 2:11.¹⁰

John 2:11 is the clearest statement in the Gospel affirming that the *σημεῖα* are redolent and revelatory of Jesus' glory. Moreover, as we have seen, it is programmatic: it introduces not only the first *σημεῖον* but also the series of *σημεῖα* in the Gospel, and appears to invest all of them with the function of revealing Jesus' glory.

The second passage is John 11:4 (cf. v. 40), in connection with the raising of Lazarus. That the raising of Lazarus is a *σημεῖον* is clear in 12:18 (cf. 11:47). The Johannine Jesus says in 11:4: *αὕτη ἡ ἀσθένεια οὐκ ἔστιν πρὸς θάνατον ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δι' αὐτῆς* (“This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it”). Reminiscent of 1:14 and 2:11, 11:4 speaks of the glory of the Father, as well as the glorification of the Son of God, as the ultimate purpose for Lazarus’s illness and death. As will be discussed at length in ch. 7 of this study, the raising of Lazarus will glorify both the Father and the Son in that God’s power in and through his Son is manifested clearly in the vanquishing of death and in the giving of life for Lazarus. But this *σημεῖον* also has a special and pivotal role in that it directly precipitates the arrival of the *ώρα* of Jesus’ glorification on the cross (cf. 11:47–53).

4.2.3. The *δοξασθῆναι* of the Son

The previous section dealt with the fact that the *σημεῖα* of Jesus are revealers of his *δόξα*. This present section deals with the fact that the crucifixion-and-resurrection is the *δοξασθῆναι* (“glorification”) of Jesus. That is to say, if there was one event in the life and ministry of Jesus that glorified him and the Father supremely, it was

¹⁰ See Thompson, *Incarnate Word*, 39–42, 48–52.

the crucifixion-and-resurrection. Before I discuss the relationship between these two affirmations, it is important to first discuss the concept of the *δοξασθῆναι* of Jesus.

The notion of the *δοξασθῆναι* of Jesus is bound up with those of his *ώρα* and *ὑψωσις*, related themes which will be discussed below. The interrelationship among these three concepts may be briefly stated thus: all converging on the cross, the *ώρα* of Jesus is the occasion of both his *δοξασθῆναι* and of his *ὑψωσις*. This is clear for instance in 12:20–36, which speaks about the universal, salvific benefits of the cross-and-resurrection.¹¹ In v. 23 the *ώρα* of Jesus is said to have arrived, and it is described as *ἡ ώρα ἵνα δόξασθῆ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* (“the hour of the glorification of the Son of Man”). A few verses later, the notion of the *ὑψωσις* of the Son of Man appears: *καὶ γὰρ ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς, πάντας ἐλκύσω πρὸς ἑμαυτόν* (“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself”) (v. 32; so also v. 34).

The opinion of many interpreters is that although *δοξασθῆναι* and *ὑψωσις* overlap in their common reference to Jesus’ death-and-resurrection, they are not synonymous. For instance, according to Rudolf Schnackenburg, “*δοξάζειν* has a wider field of application than *ὑψοῦν*.”¹² He explains: “[I]n the term ‘glorify’ John has created a linguistic instrument which brings under a particular concept *the whole of Jesus’ saving work*, as it continues and is completed in the action of Christ with God through the Spirit, in the disciples.”¹³ Then he adds: “The real, full glorification ... takes place in Jesus’ ‘hour’ ... a mutual glorification of the Son and the Father.”¹⁴ As regards *ὑψωσις*, Schnackenburg points out that it does not pertain to Jesus’ ministry as a whole but narrowly to the crucifixion.¹⁵

Jörg Frey is also of the same opinion. Concerning *ὑψωσις*, he comments: “Die Erhöhung des Gekreuzigten ‘von der Erde’ (Joh 12.32) wird so zum Bild für den paradoxen Sinngehalt der Kreuzigung als Einsetzung in eine universale

¹¹ So, e.g., Frey, “Herrlichkeit,” 386.

¹² Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:401.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 402, italics added.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 398–99.

Heilsbedeutung.”¹⁶ On the other hand, *δοξασθῆναι* “ist weniger präzise auf die Kreuzigung Jesu bezogen. Sie bleibt offen für die Einbeziehung der österlichen Ereignisse oder des nachösterlichen Geistwirkens.”¹⁷

Now if Jesus’ *ώρα*, which denotes his crucifixion-and-resurrection, is his *δοξασθῆναι*, how does this connect and cohere with the fact that the *σημεῖα* of Jesus reveal his and the Father’s glory? Firstly, one way of seeing the connection is through the oneness and continuity of Jesus’ glory. The glory of Jesus revealed through the *σημεῖα* is one and the same glory revealed supremely through the cross-and-resurrection. It is the glory defined by who Jesus is and what he has come to accomplish for the salvation of humankind. Jesus is the incarnate, divine, and eternal Logos of God (1:1, 14). He is the Messiah, Son of God (20:31), and the Saviour of the world (4:42). The *σημεῖα* of Jesus reveal who he is and the salvation he brings. For example, the *σημεῖον* of the raising of Lazarus reveals that Jesus is “the resurrection and the life” (11:25). When Jesus restored the life of Lazarus, he showed that he holds the principle of life itself and that he has power over death. But it is through the crucifixion-and resurrection that Jesus’ glory is manifested supremely.¹⁸

Secondly, the connection between the *σημεῖα* being revelatory and redolent of Jesus’ glory and the crucifixion-and-resurrection being the occasion of Jesus’ supreme glorification can be best described by way of a broad meaning of *σημεῖα* where, contrary to the notion that the *σημεῖα* are narrow and exclude the crucifixion-resurrection, it actually includes it. In this broad and inclusive definition, the *σημεῖα* are not confined in John 2–12, nor are they restricted to the miraculous activities of Jesus. Rather, the *σημεῖα* pertain broadly to FE’s account of Jesus’ ministry (cf. 12:37; 20:30–31). If viewed and understood this way, the crucifixion-and-resurrection of Jesus becomes the most important *σημεῖον*. And as the supreme *σημεῖον*, the crucifixion-resurrection does not merely reveal Jesus’ glory as do the earlier *σημεῖα*; it is itself the glorification of Jesus.

¹⁶ Frey, “Herrlichkeit,” 387.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See ch. 9 below.

4.3. Ὑψοῦν (3:14–15; 8:28; 12:32, 34)

Ὑψοῦν¹⁹ is another important and significant Johannine term that merits our attention. As has been mentioned, it is conceptually connected with δόξα and overlaps with it,²⁰ but deserves a separate consideration here. Not as frequently occurring as δόξα, it occurs only five times in FG.²¹ All of its occurrences, however, are significant: always in reference to the Son of Man, and always – either expressly or implicitly – in connection with the crucifixion-and-resurrection.

Previous research has made it sufficiently clear that ὑψοῦν in FG consistently has a double and essentially paradoxical meaning. So Georg Bertram writes, “In Jn. ὑψόω has intentionally a double sense in all the passages in which it occurs ... It means both exaltation on the cross and also exaltation to heaven.”²² H. Hollis explains, “Being ‘lifted up’ does not simply denote a means of death or an elevation to a position of glory but also demonstrates the paradoxical union of these two events ... [I]n Jesus’ crucifixion he is exalted.”²³ Similarly, Hellen Mardaga describes the meaning of “lifting up” as a *double entendre*. She explains: “The first meaning of the verb is the generic ‘lifting up,’ while the second implied meaning is ‘exaltation,’ a part of the overall cross event (crucifixion, death, resurrection, ascension).”²⁴ Schnackenburg speaks of a twofold, paradoxical meaning of the crucifixion, under the term ὑψοῦν, which he claims to be FE’s innovation. He writes, commenting on John 3:14:

¹⁹ BDAG (p. 1045) provides two meanings for it: (1) “to lift up spatially ... raise high,” and (2) “to cause enhancement in honor, fame, position, power, or fortune ... [to] exalt.” LSJ (p. 1910) distinguishes between a literal meaning, “to lift high, raise up,” and a metaphorical meaning, “to elevate, exalt.”

²⁰ See Frey, “Herrlichkeit,” 386–91.

²¹ 3:14 (bis); 8:28; 12:32, 34. It occurs twenty-two times in the NT (FG included).

²² Bertram, “ὑψος,” *TDNT* 8:610.

²³ H. Hollis, “The Root of the Johannine Pun - ὙΨΩΣΘΗΝΑΙ,” *NTS* 35 (1989), 475.

²⁴ Hellen Mardaga, “The Repetitive Use of ὑψόω in the Fourth Gospel,” *CBQ* 74 (2012), 111. So also Catrin H. Williams, “Another Look at ‘Lifting Up’ in the Gospel of John,” in *Conception, Reception, and the Spirit: Essays in Honor of Andrew T. Lincoln*, ed. J. G. McConville (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015), 58.

By considering the Crucifixion ... as a salvific ‘exaltation,’²⁵ which also becomes the ‘glorification’ of the Son of Man ... the evangelist takes a most important step in Christology. In earlier Christian theology, the Crucifixion marked the lowest point of humiliation, which was only followed later by ‘exaltation’ which led to Jesus’ installation as Lord at the right hand of God ... But John sees the Cross itself as ‘exaltation,’ as the beginning of the salvific Lordship of Christ ... as the ‘glorification’ by the Father.²⁶

Granted and presupposing these results of past research, I want to investigate ὑψοῦν in a new way, which – I believe – has not yet been done in previous research. It will become clear whether or not FE’s concept of ὑψοῦν is something that confirms the thesis that Jesus’ death-and-resurrection is a σημεῖον and the supreme σημεῖον. The procedure will be as follows. First, I begin with an analysis of 12:32–34, a passage where both ὑψοῦν and σημαίνειν occur. I will contend that the use of σημαίνειν in this passage is significant in the light of the Christological use of σημεῖον in the Gospel. Second, as a counterpart to 12:32–34, I am going to analyze 3:14–15, the first passage in the Gospel where ὑψοῦν occurs, and where it occurs twice. The importance of this passage is that it provides an OT type – Moses’s lifting up of the brazen serpent on a pole in the wilderness – for the ὑψωσις of the Son of Man. I am then going to look into this OT passage (Num 21:8–9) and discuss the use of σημεῖον in the LXX in reference to the pole upon which the brazen serpent was fastened. Third, on the basis of this intertextuality, I will then argue that in the light of FE’s Christological use of σημεῖον, and of his use of Num 21:8–9 in 3:14–15, the repeated use of σημαίνειν in reference to the mode of Jesus’ death appears to be a firm indication that the crucifixion-and-resurrection of Jesus constitutes for the evangelist a σημεῖον, and not just any σημεῖον but the most important one.

²⁵ This is Schnackenburg’s word for ὑψοῦν.

²⁶ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:396.

4.3.1. Analysis of John 12:32–34²⁷

John 12:32–34 is the last passage in the Gospel where ὑψοῦν occurs, and it occurs twice here (in vv. 32, 34). This passage is an account of a brief exchange between Jesus and a certain crowd in Jerusalem during the final Passover feast in the life and public ministry of the Johannine Jesus. The exchange actually begins from v. 31 and ends in v. 36a, but the present study will focus upon vv. 32–34 only. The exchange is so brief that Jesus has only two opportunities to speak, while the crowd gets only one. Jesus speaks in vv. 31–32, the crowd objects in v. 34, and then Jesus responds in vv. 35–36, whereupon the exchange terminates. The narrator’s comment occupies v. 33.

The key data that need to be explained are as follows: (1) Jesus’ use of ὑψοῦν in v. 32; (2) the evangelist’s use of σημαίνειν in v. 33; and (3) the crowd’s use of ὑψοῦν in v. 34. Before delving into the analysis of these data, a consideration of context is in order.

The theme of Jesus’ death is a key and dominant one particularly in John 11–12, and this is the context of the talk of ὑψοῦν in our passage (12:32–34). A clear turning point in the plot development of the Gospel is the Sanhedrin’s juridical decision to put Jesus to death, which is their consolidated response both to the σημεῖον of the raising of Lazarus as well as cumulatively to the many other σημεῖα that Jesus has performed (11:47–53). The theme resurfaces in 12:1–8, where Mary anoints Jesus for his burial (see v. 8). The theme emerges again in 12:20–26 where, upon hearing about some Greeks who are in Jerusalem for the feast, desiring to see him, Jesus declares the arrival of the ὥρα of the Son of Man’s δοξασθῆναι (v. 23) and where he talks about the parable of a grain of wheat, which must fall to the earth and die if it is to produce and bear fruit. The theme is also present in vv. 27–29 where, despite his troubled spirit in the face of his impending death, Jesus commits himself totally to facing his ὥρα, for by this the Father and

²⁷ Regardless of the question of the literary relationship of FG to the Synoptics, it is worth observing that John 3:14–15; 8:28; and 12:32–34 are comparable to the Synoptics’ threefold predictions by Jesus of his death. So Grundmann, “δέξαι,” *TDNT* 2:24; Moloney, *Son of Man*, 61; Ashton, *Understanding*, 364.

the Son will be glorified mutually. Then comes our passage, where Jesus' death is referenced in terms of ὑψωσις. After our passage, there follows FE's summary of Jesus' public ministry in terms of ποιεῖν σημεῖα, where FE provides a theological rationale for the rejection of Jesus by the Ἰουδαῖοι (12:37–43).

Let us proceed to the analysis of Jesus' use of ὑψοῦν in 12:32. This verse reads: κἀγὼ ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς, πάντας ἐλκύσω πρὸς ἑμαυτόν (“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself”). The double and paradoxical meaning of ὑψοῦν, to which I drew attention above, applies here. An important feature of this verse is Jesus' speaking in the first person. In the first two passages where ὑψοῦν is used, 3:14–15 and 8:28, Jesus speaks in the third person and the subject of ὑψοῦν is the Son of Man. By applying ὑψοῦν directly to himself in 12:32, the Johannine Jesus expressly identifies himself with the Son of Man. The title “the Son of Man” actually occurs a number of times in the context of John 12. It is mentioned in v. 23 in connection with the arrival of the ὥρα of the glorification of the Son of Man. It is mentioned again, twice, in v. 34, on the lips of the incredulous crowd in Jerusalem, who cannot believe that the Son of Man is going to be “lifted up.”

As in 3:14–15, where the ὑψωσις of the Son of Man is necessary in order that believers in him may have eternal life, in 12:32 Jesus' drawing all people to himself – which, in context, is a salvific act (see 12:23–26) – is conditional upon his ὑψωσις. If he is not lifted up from the earth then he cannot and will not be able to draw all people to himself. This drawing *all* people to himself is not universalism, as in all people without exception, but all those who would believe in Jesus (cf. 3:16), all the children of God (cf. 11:52), all those whom the Father has drawn (6:44, 65) and given to the Son (6:37, 39).²⁸

I turn next to the narrator's comment in 12:33 upon Jesus' statement in 12:32. FE says: τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγεν σημαίνων ποίω θανάτῳ ἤμελλεν ἀποθνήσκειν (“This he said signifying the kind of death he was about to die”). The important question is, does σημαίνειν here have a deeper meaning than simply “to indicate” or “to

²⁸ See D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 186.

signify”? Are we to see a deeper significance in this word in the light of the consistent Christological usage of *σημεῖον* in this Gospel? More specifically, does the use of *σημαίνειν* in connection with the manner of Jesus’ death (crucifixion) somehow suggest that the crucifixion itself is a *σημεῖον*? For some interpreters, *σημαίνειν* in 12:33 means only that Jesus’ language of *ὑψοῦν* *signifies* his death on the cross, and that is all.²⁹ But this interpretation does not sufficiently account for the links that exist between *σημαίνειν* and *σημεῖον*. A discussion of the use of *σημαίνειν* in FG may perhaps help us to determine whether this term itself possesses a distinct significance.

*Σημαίνειν*³⁰ is used three times in FG: 12:33; 18:32; 21:19.³¹ It is helpful to reproduce these verses here.

12:33 τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγεν *σημαίνων ποίω θανάτῳ* ἤμελλεν ἀποθνήσκειν

“This he said, signifying the kind of death that he was to die.”

18:32 ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ πληρωθῇ ὃν εἶπεν *σημαίνων ποίω θανάτῳ*
ἤμελλεν ἀποθνήσκειν.

“In order that the word, which Jesus spoke signifying the kind of death he was to die, might be fulfilled.”

21:19a τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν *σημαίνων ποίω θανάτῳ* δοξάσει τὸν θεόν.³²

“This he said, signifying the kind of death by which he would glorify God.”

The similarities among these verses are striking. First, common to all three is the central and formulaic expression *σημαίνων ποίω θανάτῳ* (“signifying the kind of death”). Additional terms are shared by 12:33 and 18:32 (i.e., *ἤμελλεν ἀποθνήσκειν*

²⁹ E.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 1:468.

³⁰ The verbal equivalent of *σημεῖον*, *σημαίνειν* has three meanings (BDAG, p. 920): (1) to make known; (2) to intimate something respecting the future; and (3) to provide an explanation for something that is enigmatic. *EDNT* (3:238) provides the meanings “make known, report; foretell.” *L&N* (33.153) defines it as “to cause something to be both specific and clear.” *LSJ* (p. 1592) defines it as “to show by a sign, indicate, point out.”

³¹ Outside FG, it occurs only three times in the NT: Acts 11:28; 25:27; Rev 1:1.

³² Compare those parts that are underlined once, those that are underlined twice, and those that are marked with broken lines.

[“he was about to die”], and by 12:33 and 21:19 (i.e., the introductory formula τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγεν/εἶπεν [“this he said”]). Second, all three verses are parenthetical comments of the evangelist. In connection with this, it is worth recalling that σημεῖον is the evangelist’s preferred term in reference to Jesus’ messianic deeds. As is often noted, FE does not use δύναμις (common in the Synoptics), but uses σημεῖον instead. If the evangelist has consistently called Jesus’ deeds σημεῖα, it may not be insignificant that he has also consistently used σημαίνειν in connection with the greatest of Jesus’ deeds – his death on the cross. Third, in all these cases σημαίνειν is consistently and exclusively used in connection not just with the general notion of dying but apparently there seems to be an emphasis on a particular mode of death. In 12:33 and 18:32 the shared expression σημαίνειν ποίῳ θανάτῳ ἤμελλεν ἀποθνήσκειν has in mind the death of Jesus on the cross. Similarly in 21:19 Peter’s death is in view, which (based on the juxtaposition of 21:19 with 12:33 and 18:32 as well as on tradition³³) also happened by crucifixion. Based on this brief survey it may be concluded that FE’s use of σημαίνειν in relation to Jesus’ death on the cross indicates that the crucifixion itself is part of the category of σημεῖα; it is a σημεῖον. This meaning will become clearer as the discussion progresses.

Looking more closely at these verses, τοῦτο in 12:33 refers back to what Jesus has said in 12:32 where, as we saw, Jesus uses ὑποῦν to allude paradoxically to his death on the cross.³⁴ It is this ὑποῦν-utterance which, according to the evangelist, signifies (σημαίνει) the kind of death that Jesus is soon going to die. This is repeated in 18:32 where ὁ λόγος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὃν εἶπεν pertains retrospectively to Jesus’ threefold ὑποῦν-utterance in 3:14, 8:28, and 12:33. Once again the ὑποῦν-utterance is said to signify (σημαίνειν) the kind of death that Jesus is going to die. The τοῦτο in 21:19 refers back to Jesus’ words to Peter in 21:18, “Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and go wherever

³³ That Peter died by crucifixion see Tertullian, *Scorpiace* 15; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.25.5–8. That Peter was crucified upside down see *Acts of Peter* 40.11; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.1. On Peter’s martyrdom see *1 Clem.* 5.

³⁴ I have also pointed out above the two earlier occasions, 3:14 and 8:28, where the Johannine Jesus, using ὑποῦν, alludes to his death on the cross. Thus, the τοῦτο in 12:33 may be recalling these earlier occurrences as well.

you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” This utterance of Jesus, according to the evangelist, signifies (*σημαίνει*) the kind of death which Peter was going to die, which, as has been mentioned, was also death on the cross.

As has been mentioned, some interpreters do not reckon this threefold use of *σημαίνειν* to be significant. But others see a deeper significance in the term. Dodd interprets it in accordance with Philo’s interpretation. Citing Philo’s comment on Gen 16:6, Dodd points out that Philo uses *σημαίνειν* “for the underlying symbolical meaning” in OT passages, in distinction from *δηλοῦν*, by which Philo refers to “the ordinary meaning of the words.”³⁵ But Dodd says nothing else beyond this, and we are left to be content with the general view that FG’s *σημαίνειν* is symbolic. Westcott sees in the phrase *σημαίνων ποίω θανάτω* in 12:33 a reference to “the nature of Christ’s atoning death.”³⁶ But that is all that Westcott says. Schnackenburg has a long comment on 12:33, and the part that relates to *σημαίνειν* is this: “The cross has a symbolic significance, not in the sense of a *σημεῖον*, but as a symbol of hidden divine thoughts which Jesus recognizes and to which he refers (*σημαίνω*) in talking about the ‘lifting up’.”³⁷ For Schnackenburg, the cross is a symbol but not a *σημεῖον*. Yet later on, in his comment on 18:32, he speaks of “the sign-nature of Jesus’ crucifixion as ‘lifting up’.”³⁸ The cross is not a “sign,” yet it has a “sign-nature.” Schnackenburg can grant that the cross has the nature of *σημεῖον*, but is unwilling to grant that it is a *σημεῖον*. This strikes one as being either ambiguous or self-contradictory. If the cross truly possesses the nature of *σημεῖον*, that is perhaps because, in the first instance, the cross itself is a *σημεῖον*.

For Beasley-Murray, the “crucifixion is clearly in view” in 12:33 and “Christian readers are expected to understand its pointer to the throne of

³⁵ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 141.

³⁶ Westcott, *Gospel*, 1:183. Westcott fails to note that this expression recurs elsewhere in FG.

³⁷ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:394.

³⁸ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:246.

heaven.”³⁹ Beasley-Murray’s use of “pointer” is not different from the common meaning of σημεῖον. Keener is perhaps the most straightforward in interpreting the Johannine σημαίνειν. Commenting on 12:33 he writes: “Jesus used this ‘lifting up’ to ‘signify’ (σημαίνων, function as a sign; cf. 2:18–19) the kind of death which he was going to die.”⁴⁰

In addition to what these scholars have said, the formulaic use of σημαίνειν in connection with Jesus’ death needs to be seen also in light of the consistent and distinctive use of σημεῖον in FG in reference to Jesus’ deeds. The fact that σημαίνειν is used consistently and exclusively to refer to the manner of Jesus’ death appears to be a subtle indication that the crucifixion also is included in the category of σημεῖα. And if the Johannine σημεῖα broadly and inclusively pertain to Jesus’ deeds, which means that the crucifixion itself is included, then the evangelist’s threefold use of σημαίνειν further supports the identification of the cross as a σημεῖον of Jesus.

Let us now turn to the crowd’s use of ὑψοῦν in 12:34. The verse reads: ἀπεκρίθη οὖν αὐτῷ ὁ ὄχλος· ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν ἐκ τοῦ νόμου ὅτι ὁ χριστὸς μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, καὶ πῶς λέγεις σὺ ὅτι δεῖ ὑψωθῆναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; τίς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; (“Then the crowd said to him, ‘We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?’”). This verse constitutes the crowd’s objection to Jesus’ statement in 12:32.⁴¹ That being the case, it seems strange that the crowd would mention the Son of Man (twice) whereas the Johannine Jesus did not actually mention the Son of Man in 12:32. The crowd should have said something like: “How can you – who claim to be the Messiah – say that *you* will be lifted up?”⁴² However, the crowd’s objection in 12:34 should be seen as directed not just to 12:32 but also allusively to 3:14 and 8:28, where ὑψοῦν has the Son of Man as its

³⁹ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 215.

⁴⁰ Keener, *Gospel*, 881.

⁴¹ See De Jonge, “Jewish Arguments Against Jesus,” 47–8.

⁴² It may also come as a surprise that the crowd seems able to understand that “lifting up” means “to die.” But as Bauckham (“Messianism,” 65) observes: “[I]t is not necessary to suppose that they [the crowd] understand that Jesus’ talk of the lifting up of the Son of Man refers to his death ... For their objection to hold, it would be sufficient for them to understand ‘lifted up from the earth’ (12:32) as some kind of removal from the earth.”

subject. This is supported by the δεῖ of divine necessity expressed in the crowd's objection (δεῖ ὑψωθῆναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), which also occurs in 3:14. In other words, 12:34 objects generally to and rejects the Christian claim that Jesus (who has since died, let alone died on the cross, and disappeared from the earth, which would have been especially acute from the perspective of the writing of FG in late first-century CE) was the Messiah. The ground of this objection is said to be scriptural: the scripture⁴³ says that the Messiah remains forever. There are many biblical and extra-biblical texts that enable the view that the rule or kingdom of the Messiah – understood here as the Davidic messianic king⁴⁴ – and by implication the Messiah himself, would be eternal. The following passages can be cited: Gen 49:9–12; 2 Sam 7:12–13; Ps 89:28–29, 35–37; Isa. 9:7; Ezek 37:25; Pss. Sol. 17:4, 21–43; 1 En. 49:1; 62:14; Sib. Or. III, 49–50; 4Q246 II 5–9.

In the light of the objection in 12:34 it is clear that “the Christian doctrine of the Messiah based on the cross of Jesus and his glorification does not fit into the usual Jewish picture of the messianic king.”⁴⁵ As for the crowd in 12:34, their conclusion can only be one: Jesus is not and cannot be the Messiah, for not only did he die – he also subsequently disappeared from the earth. As to the figure of the Son of Man, the crowd does not know what Jesus precisely means by it (whether or not it is equivalent to the Messiah).

In conclusion, while the Ἰουδαῖοι reject Jesus' messiahship because of his death (let alone death on the cross) and eventual disappearance from the earth (because of his ascent back to the Father), FE seems to be saying that it is precisely these things (the crucifixion-resurrection-ascension) that reveal Jesus' messiahship. The evangelist's repetitious use of σημαίνειν in connection with the manner of

⁴³ The original Greek expression in 12:34 is ὁ νόμος, which has the wider meaning of “Scripture,” as in 10:34 and 15:25 (so, e.g., Marinus de Jonge, “Jewish Expectations,” 260 n. 4; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:395). Although there is no specific scriptural quotation in 12:34, Ps 89:35–37 (“Once and for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His line shall continue forever, and his throne endure before me like the sun”) has been proposed (see W. C. Van Unnik, “The Quotation from the Old Testament,” *NovT* 3 [1959], 174–79).

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:394–95; Bauckham, “Messianism,” 64–67.

⁴⁵ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:395. See also H. J. de Jonge, “Jewish Arguments Against Jesus,” 47–8.

Jesus' death indicates that the ὑψωσις of the Son of Man is one, if not the greatest, of his σημεῖα.

4.3.2. Analysis of 3:14–15

John 3:14–15 is the first passage in the Gospel to speak of the ὑψωσις of the Son of Man. It reads: καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψωσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον (“And just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life”). The most important contribution of this passage to our understanding of the ὑψωσις of the Son of Man lies in its reference to a specific OT tradition, to which I shall later turn. At the moment we need to appreciate the typology present in this passage, phrased by way of καθὼς ... οὕτως (“just as ... so”).⁴⁶ The typological relationship is not between Moses and the Son of Man (Jesus), nor is it between the serpent and the Son of Man. Rather, it centers on the notion of salvific ὑψωσις across the wide sweep of God's salvation history: just as it was necessary that Moses lift up the brazen serpent upon a pole in the wilderness in order that those bitten by poisonous snakes might look to the uplifted serpent and be saved, so must (δεῖ) the Son of Man also be lifted up (ὑψωθῆναι) in order that believers in him may find eternal life.

Before I segue to the OT text for the lifting up of the serpent, a brief look at the context of 3:14–15 is in order. John 3:1–21 recounts an encounter and dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus, which eventually turns into a lengthy monologue of Jesus from vv. 11–21. Nicodemus, described as a Pharisee (v. 1), “a leader of the Jews” (v. 1), and “a teacher of Israel” (v. 10), is a representative figure here,⁴⁷

⁴⁶ For the discussion of καθὼς ... οὕτως in connection with first-century CE Jewish messianic expectations, particularly the expectation for the Mosaic prophet-king, and FE's attitude to this expectation, see Martyn, *History and Theology*, 115–23.

⁴⁷ So, e.g., Marinus de Jonge, “Nicodemus: Some Observations on Misunderstanding and Understanding in the Fourth Gospel,” *BJRL* 53 (1971): 338; Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 79; R. Alan Culpepper, “Nicodemus: The Travail of New Birth,” in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative*

exemplifying those who hold a sympathetic yet inadequate view of Jesus (i.e., they consider him a rabbi and admire his *σημεῖα*) but are unable to understand the meaning of salvation, of being born again in and through the Spirit. Ultimately Nicodemus and those like him in faith fall short of true Johannine faith (cf. 12:37).⁴⁸

The heart of the dialogue-turned-monologue is vv. 13–15, which is further elucidated in vv. 16–21. In vv. 13–15, Jesus bears the important title *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, the one who alone has come from heaven and from the heavenly realm, and thus the only true revealer of God and of the things of God (cf. 1:1–2, 14, 18). He has descended into the world, through the incarnation (cf. 1:14), to reveal and to bear witness to what he has seen (cf. 3:11). But this revelation does not consist in the impartation of esoteric information, but in his salvific *ὑψωσις*.⁴⁹

I segue now on to the OT passage alluded to in John 3:14. The well-known story of the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness is recounted in Num 21:8–9. What follows is a consideration of this passage in the LXX⁵⁰ in order to see what it contributes to our understanding of *ὑψωσις* and *σημεῖον* in FG. The text reads:

⁸Καὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν Ποίησον σεαυτῷ ὄφιν, καὶ θές αὐτὸν ἐπὶ σημείου, καὶ ἔσται ἐὰν δάκη ὄφεις ἄνθρωπον, πᾶς ὁ δεδηγμένος ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ζήσεται, ⁹καὶ ἐποίησεν Μωυσῆς ὄφιν χαλκοῦν, καὶ ἔστησεν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ σημείου, καὶ ἐγένετο ὅταν ἔδακεν ὄφεις ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ἐπέβλεψεν ἐπὶ τὸν ὄφιν τὸν χαλκοῦν καὶ ἔζη.

⁸And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole;

Approaches to Seventy Figures in John, ed. S. A. Hunt, D. F. Tolmie, and R. Zimmermann; WUNT 314 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 254; Craig R. Koester, “Theological Complexity and the Characterization of Nicodemus in John’s Gospel,” in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*, ed. C. W. Skinner; LNTS 461 (London/New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 169–72.

⁴⁸ So, e.g., de Jonge, “Nicodemus,” 340–41; Moloney, *Son of Man*, 47, 52; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 84.

⁴⁹ For a helpful, brief discussion of Jesus’ revelatory work in FG see D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 91–93.

⁵⁰ That FE mainly used the LXX, with occasional recourse to the Hebrew text, see Maarten J. J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form*, CBET 15 (Kampen: Pharos, 1996), 205ff; also Wm. R. Bynum, *The Fourth Gospel and the Scriptures: Illuminating the Form and Meaning of Scriptural Citation in John 19:37*, NovTSup 144 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 112ff.

and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.”⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.”

The whole idea of the brazen serpent – the making and lifting of it to a visible pole – was God’s initiative and design as a saving provision for those Israelites who were dying due to poisonous snakebites. The poisonous snakes were themselves God-sent as a punishment for the people’s rebellion (Num 21:4–7). Thus the idea is that God graciously provided salvation for these rebellious people, and provided that they looked to the uplifted serpent, they would live. FE saw this whole incident – focusing on the uplifting of the brazen serpent – as prefiguring the salvific uplifting of the Son of Man. It is worth pointing out that although FE makes use of the imagery of the salvific lifting up of the serpent, he does not reproduce the same Greek word for it: where Num 21:8–9 LXX has *τίθημι* (twice), John 3:14 has *ὑψοῦν* (twice).⁵¹

But there is a particular detail in Num 21:8–9 which is relevant and significant for my purposes: its twofold use of *σημεῖον* in reference to the pole upon which the brazen serpent was placed.⁵² Yahweh’s express instruction for Moses is to put the brazen serpent *ἐπὶ σημεῖου*, and that is precisely what Moses does: he puts the brazen serpent *ἐπὶ σημεῖου*. Since FE certainly drew from this passage, it raises interesting possibilities in relation to his use of *σημεῖον* in reference to Jesus’ messianic deeds and also in relation to the use of *σημαίνειν* in connection with the notion of Jesus’ *ὑψωσις* on the cross. We already saw John 12:32, 34 where the talk of *ὑψοῦν* is said to signify (*σημαίνειν*) the crucifixion. Moreover, we saw that *σημαίνειν* is used somewhat formulaically in FG in connection with crucifixion (12:33; 18:32 and 21:19).

If in Num 21:8–9 LXX the pole on which the brazen serpent was uplifted is called *σημεῖον*, could FE also have envisaged the cross of Jesus as a *σημεῖον*?

⁵¹ There are good reasons for supposing that FE’s language of *ὑψοῦν* is indebted to Isaiah, particularly Isa 6:1 and 52:13. On this see Frey, “Herrlichkeit,” 385ff.

⁵² The twofold use of *ποιεῖν* in Num 21:8–9 may also be significant in the light of the fact that FE frequently uses the expression *ποιεῖν σημεῖα* to describe Jesus’ ministry (see, e.g., 2:11; 12:37; 20:30–31).

However, FE's focus is not really the cross itself, but what happened on the cross. If it is true, as I have argued, that the Johannine *σημεῖον* pertains inclusively to Jesus' deeds, and since the crucifixion, together with the resurrection, no doubt constitutes the greatest of Jesus' deeds, it may be deduced, in connection with the *σημειον* in Num 21:8–9, that the crucifixion, rather than the wood itself, is the point with which the connection exists. It is possible that FE intended a shift of focus: whereas in Num 21:8–9 LXX *σημεῖον* is applied to the pole, in FG *σημεῖον* is applied to Jesus' death on the cross, rather than to the cross itself.

Overall, FE's allusion to Num 21:8–9 in John 3:14–15 appears to provide another basis for the argument that the crucifixion-and-resurrection is a *σημεῖον*, and the greatest of the *σημεῖα*.

4.3.3. Conclusion: The cross as *σημεῖον*

The above investigation into the use of *ὑψωσις*, its background in the OT, as well as FE's formulaic expression *σημαίνων ποίῳ θανάτῳ* in relation to Jesus' death, has lent further support to the thesis that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is the supreme *σημεῖον* in FG.

4.4. Ἔργον

A study of the Johannine *σημεῖον* will not be complete without due consideration of an equally important Johannine theme: that of the *ἔργον* of Jesus. Here I am concerned with the precise connection between these two terms. Although comparative studies of these concepts have been done in the past,⁵³ the results, in my view, are less than satisfactory, and I believe that, if we investigate further, greater clarity will be achieved. I believe that *ἔργον* can help us to understand *σημεῖον* better, and vice versa. In particular, I believe that *ἔργον* will provide further

⁵³ Specific literature will be provided below.

support to the thesis that the cross-and-resurrection is the supreme *σημεῖον* in John's Gospel.

It should be pointed out in the beginning that any attempt at correlating *σημεῖον* and *ἔργον* is shaped and determined by one's definitions of these terms. As regards *σημεῖον*, we have seen in ch. 2 the diversity of opinions as to what it is and what it includes. In ch. 3 I argued for a broad and inclusive definition and referent of *σημεῖον*, in which it denotes the deeds (inclusively) of the incarnate Logos. That definition is presupposed here.

4.4.1. Occurrences and Usage

The word *ἔργον*, including its plural *ἔργα*, is used in FG a total of 27 times.⁵⁴ Its verbal form *ἐργάζειν* is used a total of eight times.⁵⁵ This frequency shows the importance of this term. To be sure not all of these occurrences pertain to Jesus.⁵⁶ My focus here is upon the 20 occurrences of *ἔργον* and three of *ἐργάζομαι* that directly pertain to Jesus.

Two occurrences of *ἔργον* clearly have in mind the entirety of Jesus' mission or ministry. In 4:34, Jesus tells his disciples: Ἐμὸν βρῶμα ἐστὶν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντος με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον ("My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to complete his work"). In 17:4, Jesus prays to the Father, saying: ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τὸ ἔργον τελειώσας ὃ δέδωκάς μοι ἵνα ποιήσω ("I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do"). Both verses expressly say that the *ἔργον* is the Father's which he then gave to the Son to complete or accomplish (*τέλειν*). In 4:34 the Johannine Jesus expresses his commitment to fulfilling or accomplishing the *ἔργον*; in 17:4, he declares that he has indeed accomplished that work, thereby glorifying the Father. It is worth noting that 4:34

⁵⁴ 3:19, 20, 21; 4:34; 5:20, 36(bis); 6:28, 29; 7:3, 7, 21; 8:39, 41; 9:3, 4; 10:25, 32(bis), 33, 37, 38; 14:10, 11, 12; 15:24; 17:4.

⁵⁵ 3:21; 5:17(bis); 6:27, 28, 30; 9:4(bis).

⁵⁶ E.g., τὰ πονηρὰ ἔργα τοῦ κόσμου ("the evil works of the world") is a common theme: see, e.g., 3:19–20; 7:7; 8:4.

and 17:4 are, respectively, the first and the last references to ἔργον in FG, thus encapsulating or sandwiching all the other references to ἔργον in the Gospel.

Many other occurrences of ἔργον – mostly in the plural (ἔργα), but sometimes also in the singular (ἔργον) – have in mind individual or specific elements of Jesus’ mission. So we read in 5:20 that the Father will show the Son μείζονα τούτων ἔργα (“greater works than these”). The plural τούτων includes the just-performed work of healing the lame man at Bethesda (5:1–9), presumably including also the earlier works and miracles. The ἔργα greater than these seem to anticipate upcoming works such as the feeding of the multitude (ch. 6), the healing of the man blind from birth (ch. 9), the raising of Lazarus (ch. 11), and the greatest ἔργον of all – the crucifixion-and-resurrection (chs. 18–20). Therefore, the use of ἔργα in 5:20 has in mind the particulars of Jesus’ mission. The same conclusion applies to the references to ἔργα in 5:36 (where ἔργα occurs twice); 7:3, 21;⁵⁷ 9:3, 4; 10:25, 32,⁵⁸ 33 (ἔργου), 37, 38 (τοῖς ἔργοις); 14:10, 11, 12; and 15:24.

A third group of references to ἔργον in FG takes the verbal form ἐργάζομαι. Of its eight occurrences,⁵⁹ only 5:17 and 9:4 are directly relevant to our discussion. In 5:17, Jesus tells the Ἰουδαῖοι who criticize and oppose his healing on the Sabbath: ὁ πατήρ μου ἕως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται καὶ γὰρ ἐργάζομαι (“My Father has been working until now, and I also am working”). The context of this statement is the healing of the lame man at Bethesda, which took place on a Sabbath (5:9–10, 16). John 5:17 has for its referent the parallel and, in fact, united operations of the Father and the Son.⁶⁰ In 9:4, which has already been cited above, the verbal infinitive ἐργάζεσθαι also occurs, preceded by δεῖ: ἡμᾶς δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντος με ἕως ἡμέρας ἐστίν (“We must work the works of him who sent me while

⁵⁷ The emphatic singular ἐν ἔργον (“one work”) is used in 7:21, referring back to the miracle in 5:1–9 (the healing of the lame man at Bethesda).

⁵⁸ In 10:32 both ἔργα and ἔργον are used: πολλὰ ἔργα καλὰ ἔδειξα ὑμῖν ἐκ τοῦ πατρός· διὰ ποῖον αὐτῶν ἔργον ἐμὲ λιθάσετε; (“I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which work are you going to stone me?”)

⁵⁹ See nn. 54–55.

⁶⁰ For a good exposition of John 5:17, as well as of the entire discourse in 5:19–47, see Dodd, *Interpretation*, 320–32. Dodd comments: “The sole condition on which the Son exercises divine functions is that He acts in complete unity with the Father, a unity which has the form of unqualified obedience to the Father’s will. Given such unity, every act which the Son performs is an act of the Father” (327).

it is day ...”) (9:4a). So even here, as in 5:17, the reference to ἔργον is tied in context to a particular deed of Jesus: the healing of the man born blind.

To summarize, it is clear that ἔργον, insofar as its Christological use in FG is concerned, refers to the mission of Jesus. Oftentimes the particulars of that mission are in view, such as, for example, the miracles. At other times, the whole mission is envisaged, without regard to individual components. In other words, the referent and scope of ἔργον appears to be similar to that of σημεῖον (as we saw in the last chapter). The significance of this for my thesis is that just as Jesus’ death-and-resurrection is the most important and the culmination of his ἔργον, it is also the most important among Jesus’ σημεῖα.

4.4.2. The Connection Between Ἔργον and Σημεῖον

Johannine interpreters have explained the connection or relationship between ἔργον and σημεῖον in either of two ways. Scholars who hold a narrow view of the σημεῖα – that is, that the σημεῖα pertain to the seven or eight miracles in FG, or even including the other miraculous deeds of Jesus, such as the post-resurrection appearances – assert that the σημεῖα overlap with ἔργον only insofar as these miracles are concerned. They contend that ἔργον, which can refer to Jesus’ entire mission, is a broader category of which σημεῖον is a subset. Other interpreters, who hold a broader view of the σημεῖα – that is, that the σημεῖα, like ἔργον, can pertain to Jesus’ earthly mission as a whole, as well as to the particulars of that mission – naturally argue for a broader overlap between these two concepts. This broader overlap pertains to the deeds of the incarnate Jesus, miraculous or otherwise, many of which have been narrated in the Gospel. In what follows I am going to review both positions, with the aim of locating myself in favour of the second view. But before I do so, I should point out why ἔργον and σημεῖον are not entirely equivalent insofar as referent is concerned.

There are three areas where ἔργον and σημεῖον appear to be different from each other. First, they differ in who does them. Σημεῖα is exclusively Christological: only Jesus does them. None of Jesus’ disciples are said to have performed, nor are

any prospective disciples said to perform, any σημεῖα. FE even points out emphatically that Ἰωάννης μὲν σημεῖον ἐποίησεν οὐδέν (“indeed John [the Baptist] performed no sign”) (10:41). The rationale evidently is that FE reserves σημεῖον as a special designation for Jesus’ activity – whether in part or in whole – as the supreme revealer of the Father (cf. 1:1–2, 14, 18; 14:6), as the divine Messiah and Son of God (cf. 20:30–31).⁶¹ Thus, John the Baptist or anyone else cannot be said to perform a σημεῖον, for neither of them is the Christ. Jesus alone, as the true Messiah and Son of God, performs the σημεῖα.⁶² On the other hand, ἔργον is not an exclusively Christological category, for other actors can perform it, too. For instance, in 14:12 the believer in Jesus is said to also do the ἔργα that Jesus did and to perform even greater ἔργα because Jesus is returning to the Father. In 3:19 those who do not come to the light – that is, those who refuse to believe in Jesus – are said to be doers of πονηρὰ ἔργα. In 8:39 we have the expression τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, which is contrasted in the following verses with τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου (8:41–44). Thus, it is clear that ἔργον, unlike σημεῖον, is not exclusively Christological in FG.

Second, despite their broad overlap insofar as referent is concerned, ἔργον and σημεῖον still differ in that the former is not apparently limited to the earthly ministry of Jesus, while the latter is arguably confined to Jesus’ deeds during his earthly ministry.⁶³ That the ἔργον of Jesus is not limited to his deeds performed during his earthly ministry but may also pertain to the works of the exalted Lord is implied in, for instance, 14:12. In this verse Jesus says that the one who believes in him will also do his ἔργα and will perform even greater ἔργα because he is ascending back to the Father. The phrase ὅτι ἐγὼ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα πορεύομαι, which is the ground for the believer’s ability to perform even greater ἔργα, implies that the ἔργα in question are the ἔργα of the exalted Lord performed through the agency

⁶¹ So Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:520.

⁶² Andreas J. Köstenberger correctly observes: “The signs’ sole purpose in John is their authentication of Jesus as God’s Messiah (cf. esp. 20:30–31; cf. also 7:31). They are therefore linked inextricably to Jesus, and to Jesus alone, during this particular phase of salvation-history” (“The ‘Greater Works’ of the Believer According to John 14:12,” *Didaskalia* 6 [1995]: 38).

⁶³ So, e.g., Pancaro, *Law*, 154; Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 149; Van Belle, *Signs Source*, 385.

of the believer.⁶⁴ This means that ἔργον can also pertain to the work/s of the exalted Lord. This, however, could not be said of the σημεῖα. All of the seventeen occurrences of σημεῖα in FG pertain to Jesus' deeds done during his earthly ministry. For instance, the last occurrence of σημεῖον, in 20:30–31, looks back to the earthly ministry of Christ and summarizes it with the expression ποιεῖν σημεῖα. In this passage, there is a definite sense of closure in the sense that the σημεῖα are deeds of Jesus in the past, performed during his earthly ministry, and the evangelist is clearly not looking forward expecting any future σημεῖα.

Finally, ἔργον and σημεῖον differ in terms of point of view. The difference is not exactly as Lucien Cerfaux has suggested, who claimed that the σημεῖα become ἔργα when they are perceived “dans la foi parfaite.”⁶⁵ As has been noted, it is the Johannine Jesus who uses ἔργον, whereas σημεῖον arguably is FE's preferred term. It is not that Jesus perceives his own deeds with “perfect faith,” that is why he calls them ἔργα. It seems more precise to say, with Severino Pancaro, that Jesus has “perfect knowledge concerning his origin and destiny,”⁶⁶ and apparently it is from this point of view that Jesus' deeds are called ἔργα. The believer in Jesus, while he may not possibly attain “perfect knowledge” of Jesus' identity to the same degree that Jesus knows himself, may nevertheless share this point of view. By faith the believer grasps that Jesus' σημεῖα are also his ἔργα, understood in the sense of, for instance, 5:36: τὰ γὰρ ἔργα ἃ δέδωκεν μοι ὁ πατήρ ἵνα τελειώσω αὐτά, αὐτὰ τὰ ἔργα ἃ ποιῶ μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ ὅτι ὁ πατήρ με ἀπέσταλκεν (“the works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me”).⁶⁷

⁶⁴ So, e.g., Wilhelm Thüsing, *Die Erhöhung und Verherrlichung Jesu im Johannes-evangelium*, NTA 21 (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 1970), 407; Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 149; Köstenberger, “Greater Works,” 41.

⁶⁵ Lucien Cerfaux, “Les miracles, signes messianiques de Jésus et oeuvres de Dieu selon l'évangile de S. Jean,” in *Recueil Lucien Cerfaux* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1962), 2:47.

⁶⁶ Pancaro, *Law*, 154.

⁶⁷ Further to the difference in point of view between ἔργον and σημεῖον, Brown comments: “The term ‘work’ expresses more the divine perspective on what is accomplished, and so is a fitting description for Jesus himself to apply to the miracles. The term ‘sign’ expresses the human psychological viewpoint, and is a fitting description for others to apply to the miracles of Jesus” (*Gospel*, 1:529). Leaving aside the question of referent (where it is not correct to limit ἔργον to Jesus' miracles, cf. 4:34; 17:4), that ἔργον involves the divine perspective on Jesus' deeds is certainly

Having seen that ἔργον and σημεῖον are not entirely equivalent terms in FG and having seen their differences, we may now consider the two scholarly views on the relationship between these two terms. As has been mentioned, some Johannine interpreters are of the view that ἔργον is a broader category than σημεῖον, the latter being a subset of the former. Perhaps the most succinct expression of this view is R. E. Brown's, who writes: "*Sēmeion*, 'sign,' is a somewhat narrower term than *ergon*, 'work'; while both are used for miracles, *sēmeion* is not used of the whole ministry of Jesus."⁶⁸ Brown reasons that ἔργον is used in 17:4 to refer to the whole ministry of Jesus. That is correct, and I add to 17:4 the verse 4:34. Brown fails to note that, as has been mentioned above, ἔργον is often used to designate particular elements of the ministry of Jesus, such as the miracles. However, Brown's assertion that σημεῖον is not used of the whole ministry of Jesus is incorrect. On the contrary, as has been argued earlier in this thesis, the whole ministry of Jesus is described in 12:37 and 20:30–31 with the expression ποιεῖν σημεῖα. That is to say, on the basis of 12:37 and 20:30–31 Jesus' entire ministry itself may be described by the term σημεῖον. To be sure, Brown and like-minded interpreters do not take the σημεῖα in these verses as broad and inclusive, confining them to the few miracles that have been recounted at length in the Gospel. But that interpretation is questionable, particularly in light of the fact that 12:37 and 20:30–31 are summative statements pertaining to Jesus' ministry in general and are, in my view, inclusive, and 20:30–31 pertains to the whole Gospel itself.

Udo Schnelle is also of the view that ἔργον is a broad category of which σημεῖον is a small subset. He claims that σημεῖον and ἔργον intersect only in terms of

correct, although it should be added that this perspective may be, and is intended to be, attained by human beings, through faith. That is, a beholder is intended to discern, by faith, the true meaning of a σημεῖον, and if he does so successfully then he has also understood that the σημεῖον is actually Jesus' ἔργον. If the beholder fails to discern the true meaning of the σημεῖον, then he fails to share in the divine perspective into Jesus' deeds. Brown's other comment, that σημεῖον has to do with human psychological viewpoint, is not very precise. Surely σημεῖον is more than psychology and cognition, though it certainly involves them. It also involves Johannine πιστεύειν. Johannine faith is basically faith in Jesus as the supreme revealer of the Father (cf. 1:1–2, 14, 18; 20:30–31), and this faith is as much a genuine human response as it is also a gift of the Father (cf. e.g., 6:44). See §4.5 below.

⁶⁸ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:528. Also of this view are Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 150–51; Van Belle, *Signs Source*, 385; Morris, *Gospel*, 607–13; Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 225.

their common reference to Jesus' miracles.⁶⁹ He believes that ἔργον is used in FG to refer to “the whole event of the incarnation ... The ‘one work’ of Jesus refers to the salvific work of the earthly Jesus,” without excluding a consideration of the work of the exalted Lord.⁷⁰ For Schnelle, the ἔργον of Jesus encompasses his miracles as well as his words. On the other hand, the σημεῖα, according to Schnelle, pertain only to the miraculous deeds of Jesus, particularly those that have been singled out in the Gospel.

Schnelle has again articulated this view in a recent essay in which he equates the σημεῖα with the miracle stories of FG.⁷¹ Particularly in this essay he lists the following as the σημεῖα: (1) the first Cana story (2:1–12); (2) the healing of the son of a βασιλικός (4:46–54); (3) the healing at the Bethesda pool (5:1–9a); (4) the feeding of the five thousand and the walk on the water (6:1–25); (5) the miraculous arrival of the boat (6:16–25); (6) the healing of the man born blind (9:1–41); and (7) the raising of Lazarus (John 11).⁷² But, similar to my critique of Brown's interpretation, Schnelle's observation that ἔργον describes “the whole event of the incarnation” may well be applicable also to σημεῖον. As I have argued earlier, on the basis of 12:37 and 20:30–31 – where Jesus' whole ministry is described in terms of ποιεῖν σημεῖα – it is not possible to equate or limit the Johannine σημεῖα to the seven or eight miracles that have been narrated at length in FG. In my view, Schnelle and Brown are not correct in their narrow definition of the scope of σημεῖα, although they are correct in their broad conception of ἔργον. In other words, the overlap between σημεῖον and ἔργον is greater than Brown and Schnelle acknowledge. If in 4:34 and 17:4 ἔργον pertains to Jesus' ministry as a whole, σημεῖον in 12:37 and 20:30–31 also pertains to the entire earthly ministry of Jesus. If ἔργον is often used to denote individual elements of Jesus' ministry, so is σημεῖον (actual passages will be discussed below).

Other Johannine interpreters are of the view that ἔργον and σημεῖον are broadly, though not entirely, equivalent terms insofar as referents and function are

⁶⁹ Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 150.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁷¹ Schnelle, “Signs,” 231–43.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 231–35.

concerned. Karl Rengstorf, in his article “σημεῖον” in *TDNT*, describes the close connections between ἔργον and σημεῖον in FG this way:

Most of the 27 ἔργα passages in Jn. are clearly related to the σημεῖα of Jesus (Jn. 5:20, 36; 6:29; 7:3, 21; 9:3 f.; 10:25, 32, 37 f.; 14:10ff.; 15:24; 17:4). Furthermore they not only establish a close connection between *the ἔργα of Jesus as σημεῖα* and the work of God effected in the ἔργα ... Obviously they also neither can nor will say anything about *these ἔργα of Jesus as σημεῖα* without thinking at the same time of the ἔργα of God (Jn. 4:34; 5:36; 9:3 f.; 10:32; 14:10; 17:4). This shows us why σημεῖον and ἔργα can be used in such close relation in John.⁷³

Twice Rengstorf uses the phrase “the ἔργα of Jesus as σημεῖα.” To further illumine what he means by this, Rengstorf talks about the “sign-character” of Jesus’ ἔργα. He bases it upon “the biblical belief” that God’s “primary revelation ... is in His works. If Jesus is united with God in His operations, then in the works which He does He has a fully responsible share in the divine self-revelation.”⁷⁴ Then Rengstorf adds: “In Jn. Jesus’ ἔργα show themselves to be σημεῖα because as His ἔργα they serve God’s self-revelation.”⁷⁵

Severino Pancaro is also of this view. He writes: “The ἔργα themselves are σημεῖα under a certain aspect, from a certain point of view ... The ἔργα themselves ‘signify,’ ‘manifest.’ They manifest God as the Father of Jesus and manifest Jesus as the Son of God.”⁷⁶

Finally I would like to consider Willem Nicol’s view. At first he seems to espouse an interpretation identical to Brown’s and Schnelle’s. For instance he says that ἔργον “usually seems to have a wider meaning than *sēmeion*.”⁷⁷ He acknowledges that in 4:34 and 17:4 ἔργον refers to the entire mission of Jesus, and that elsewhere ἔργον frequently refers to specific components of that mission, such as, for instance, the miracles. Yet the word “seems” suggests that that is not

⁷³ Rengstorf, “σημεῖον,” 247–48; italics added.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 248. Rengstorf here seems to be thinking along the lines of 5:19–47. For the gist of this discourse, see the quote from Dodd in n. 58.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 249.

⁷⁶ Pancaro, *Law*, 154.

⁷⁷ Nicol, *Sēmeia*, 116.

actually Nicol's view. With regard to his view of *σημεῖον*, Nicol (unlike Brown and Schnelle) does try to give due weight to the summarizing verses 12:37 and 20:30–31. He writes: “The expression *ποιεῖν σημεῖα* is twice used to summarize the whole life-work of Jesus, in 12:37, the conclusion of the first half of the Gospel describing the public ministry, and in 20:30, the conclusion of the whole Gospel.”⁷⁸ Then he adds: “*ποιεῖν σημεῖα* must in the last analysis include all that the Gospel of John preaches about Jesus, both the works and the words ... [Σ]ημεῖον was chosen for the final characterisation of the revelation brought by Jesus.”⁷⁹ From this it is clear that Nicol does not espouse a narrow view of the referent of *σημεῖα*, contrary to Brown and Schnelle. Nicol believes that *σημεῖον* can, like *ἔργον*, refer to Jesus' whole lifework as well as to the particulars of that work. It does appear that Nicol espouses the equivalence of *σημεῖον* and *ἔργον* insofar as both terms can denote either the lifework of Jesus viewed as a whole or the lifework of Jesus viewed in its parts and particulars.⁸⁰

The view that both *σημεῖον* and *ἔργον* refer to Jesus' mission, either as a whole or in parts, can shed light on the interpretation of *σημεῖον*. I draw attention in particular to the fact that as far as Jesus' entire mission is concerned, the cross-and-resurrection is clearly the greatest element of it. It is the point at which the lifework of Jesus is said to have been fulfilled, accomplished, and consummated. It is on the cross where Jesus cries out the word *τετέλεσται* (19:28–30; cf. 4:34; 17:4). After that shout, the text says that Jesus bowed his head and gave up his spirit. If the cross-and-resurrection is the culminating and the greatest element of the *ἔργον* of Jesus, and if *σημεῖον* refers broadly to the incarnate deeds of Jesus, one cannot avoid the observation and conclusion that the cross-and-resurrection also serves as the culminating and the supreme *σημεῖον* in FG.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 115.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ With the exception that *ἔργον*, unlike *σημεῖον*, can pertain also to the work of the exalted Lord.

4.5. Ὥρα

Ὥρα is another important theme which relates to σημεῖον.⁸¹ Sometimes this word refers simply to a literal, chronological time, such as, for example, in 4:6, 52, 53.⁸² Its more important usage is Christological, as in the phrase ἡ ὥρα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, where ὥρα refers metaphorically to the climactic event of Jesus' death-and-resurrection.⁸³ This is going to be my focus here.⁸⁴

R. E. Brown has grouped the Christological occurrences of ὥρα in FG into two: (1) those that describe it as not yet come, or that it is still coming, and (2) those that describe it as having already come.⁸⁵ But there is a third category that needs to be added: those occurrences that paradoxically describe the ὥρα of Jesus

⁸¹ It occurs 26 times in FG: 1:39; 2:4; 4:6, 21, 23, 52(bis), 53; 5:25, 28, 35; 7:30; 8:20; 11:9; 12:23, 27(bis); 13:1; 16:2, 4, 21, 25, 32; 17:1; 19:14, 27.

⁸² For a study of the broader concept of time in FG, see Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel*, JSNTSup 69 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 44–66; Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric Rowe, “Telling time in the Fourth Gospel,” *HTS* 64 (2008): 291–320.

⁸³ Studies on ὥρα in FG include (this is not exhaustive): Brown, *Gospel*, 1:517–18; Guenter Klein, “Das wahre Licht scheint schon: Beobachtungen zur Zeit- und Geschichtserfahrung einer urchristlichen Schule,” *ZThK* 68 (1971): 261–326; Thomas Knöppler, *Die theologia crucis des Johannesevangelium: Das Verständnis des Todes Jesu im Rahmen der johanneischen Inkarnations- und Erhöhungschristologie*, WMANT 69 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchen Verlag, 1994), 103, 106–07, 110; J. Neugebauer, *Die eschatologischen Aussagen in den johanneischen Abschiedsreden: Eine Untersuchung zu Johannes 13–17*, BWANT 140 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1995), 122, 133–34; Andreas Dettwiler, *Die Gegenwart des Erhöhten: Eine exegetische Studie zu den johanneischen Abschiedsreden (Joh 13,31–16,33) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres Relecture-Charakters*, FRLANT 169 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), passim; Craig E. Morrison, “The ‘Hour of Distress’ in *Targum Neofiti* and the ‘Hour’ in the Gospel of John,” *CBQ* 67 (2005): 590–603; Nicole Chibici-Revneanu, “‘The Hour Comes and Now Is Here’ (John 4,23; 5,25): The Eschatological Meaning of the Johannine Ὥρα,” *SacSc* 6 (2008): 78–94.

That Jesus' ὥρα pertains not only to his death but also to his resurrection (so Brown, *Gospel*, 1:99, 517; Collins, “Cana,” 85–6; Smith, *John*, 84) is based on the view that in FG the cross and resurrection are theologically inseparable (see §9.1.4). Yet, as Nicole Chibici-Revneanu has shown, there are eschatological implications to Jesus' ὥρα. She writes, “*There is no end to the Johannine ὥρα*. For the Fourth Evangelist, this terminus refers to the eschatological age beginning with Jesus' Passion and continuing into the presence of the evangelist and the believers: ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν ... In addition to being a specific event tied to a specific place in time, Jesus' Passion is the beginning of a new age that determines the (eschatologically qualified) present and future of the believers. In soteriological terms, history seems to be divided into two eras that could be described ... as ‘before Passion’ and ‘anno Crucifixi’” (“The Hour Comes,” 82–83, italics added; see also idem, “Variations on Glorification,” 520).

⁸⁴ We saw above that this climactic event is referred to as the “lifting up” and “glorification” of the Son.

⁸⁵ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:517.

as “coming, yet is now here.” The occurrences, grouped accordingly, are as a follows:

a. Those that describe the ὥρα of Jesus as not yet come, or that it is coming

- 2:4b οὐπω ἔρχεται ἡ ὥρα μου (“my hour has not yet come”)
5:28b ἔρχεται ὥρα ἐν ἧ πάντες οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις ἀκούσουσιν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ (“the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice”)
7:30b ἐζήτουν οὖν αὐτὸν πιάσαι, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπέβαλεν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὴν χεῖρα, ὅτι οὐπω ἐληλύθει ἡ ὥρα αὐτοῦ (“then they tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come”)
8:20b καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπίασεν αὐτόν, ὅτι οὐπω ἐληλύθει ἡ ὥρα αὐτοῦ (“but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come”)
16:2b ἀλλ’ ἔρχεται ὥρα ἵνα πᾶς ὁ ὑμᾶς δόξῃ λατρεῖαν προσφέρειν τῷ θεῷ (“an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God”)
16:25b ἔρχεται ὥρα ὅτε οὐκέτι ἐν παροιμίαις λαλήσω ὑμῖν, ἀλλὰ παρρησίᾳ περὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀπαγγεῶ ὑμῖν (“the hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father”)

b. Those that describe it as already come

- 12:23 ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (“the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified”)
12:27 νῦν ἡ ψυχὴ μου τετάρακται, καὶ τί εἶπω; πάτερ, σῶσον με ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης; ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦτο ἦλθον εἰς τὴν ὥραν ταύτην (“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour”)
13:1b εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἦλθεν αὐτοῦ ἡ ὥρα ἵνα μεταβῇ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα (“Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father”)
17:1 πάτερ, ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα· δόξασόν σου τὸν υἱόν, ἵνα ὁ υἱὸς δοξάσῃ σέ, (“Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you”)

c. Those that paradoxically describe it as “coming, yet is now here”

- 4:23a ἀλλ' ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν, ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ
προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ (“But the hour is
coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the
Father in spirit and truth”)
- 5:25 ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν ὅτε οἱ νεκροὶ
ἀκούσουσιν τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἀκούσαντες ζήσουσιν (“Very
truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will
hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live”)
- 16:32a ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ ἐλήλυθεν ἵνα σκορπισθῆτε ἕκαστος εἰς τὰ ἴδια καὶ
μόνον ἀφῆτε (“The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be
scattered, each to his home”)

It is beyond the purview of this study to discuss each of these passages. So I am going to limit myself to summative observations as well as to a discussion of a few key passages. Since, as has been said in the opening paragraph of this section, the ὥρα of Jesus pertains to his death-and-resurrection, it is not difficult to understand the repeated descriptions of Jesus' ὥρα as “not yet come” (Category 1). Moreover, it is also not hard to understand those passages that speak of the ὥρα as already come (Category 2). A few words may be said in this regard.

John 12:23 is evidently the point in the Gospel at which the ὥρα of Jesus is explicitly said to have arrived.⁸⁶ This is significant. Jesus' death-and-resurrection itself takes place in John 19–20, yet already in 12:23 the ὥρα has arrived. According to the context of 12:23, it is the request of “some Greeks” (“Ἕλληνές τινες, νν. 20–21) to see Jesus which triggers his proclamation of the arrival of his ὥρα.⁸⁷ But I believe that the context for the arrival of Jesus' ὥρα can be extended back to the Sanhedrin's death sentence upon Jesus in 11:47–53. That decision is pivotal in the Gospel's plot development and in the arrival of Jesus' ὥρα. In congruence with the Sanhedrin's decision, the arrival of Jesus' ὥρα means that, among other things, the

⁸⁶ So, e.g., Chibici-Revneanu, “Hour,” 73–4.

⁸⁷ This proclamation also includes a reference to the parable of a grain of wheat (that it must fall to the earth and die if it is to bear fruit), which provides a rationale for why Jesus should die (12:24). It is implied that the “fruit” of Jesus' ὥρα (death-and-resurrection) is the salvation not just of Jews but also of Greeks (Gentiles). This is confirmed a few verses later when Jesus declares: “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people (πάντας) to myself” (12:32).

Jewish authorities may now successfully lay hold of Jesus. Previously they tried to arrest and kill him, but they failed because the ὥρα had not yet come. The arrival of Jesus' ὥρα signals the divine permission of the Father for the Son's suffering, death and resurrection to begin. Jesus himself is aware of this, and as we know from John 18, he does not wait for the Jewish authorities to lay hold of him; rather, he voluntarily turns himself over to the arresting party (18:1–11).

We turn now to the three passages (Category 3: 4:23; 5:25; 16:32) where we find the paradoxical and oxymoronic expression ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν (“[the] hour is coming and is now [here]”).⁸⁸ If ὥρα here pertains to Jesus' death-and-resurrection,⁸⁹ then we can understand why ἔρχεται is used. But then why is it simultaneously described as νῦν ἐστίν? This question properly belongs to the subject of Johannine eschatology,⁹⁰ a full discussion of which is not possible here. Brown explains ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν by speaking of “an inchoative or anticipated effect of Jesus' hour upon the disciples.” He goes on to say that “the resurrected Jesus ... acted in continuity with what he had already begun during his ministry. And so during the ministry the effects of the hour may be said both to be

⁸⁸ In 16:32, it is ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ ἐλήλυθεν.

⁸⁹ So Carson, *Gospel*, 224.

⁹⁰ Jörg Frey's three-volume *Die johanneische Eschatologie*, WUNT 96, 110, 117 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997, 1998, 2000) is arguably one of the most thorough treatments of the subject. A summary of his findings and conclusions is accessible through his essay “Eschatology in the Johannine Circle,” in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writing Seminar*, ed. G. van Belle, J. G. van der Watt, and P. Maritz; BETL 184 (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 47–82. Frey rejects the suggestion that it is the Gospel author's lack of logical skill that gave rise to the diverse and “contradictory” data in the Gospel (such as the expression ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν), as well as the attempt to divorce the two streams of eschatological thought (realized eschatology and futuristic eschatology) by assigning the radically present eschatology to the Gospel writer and the futuristic eschatology to a later redactor (who sought to amend FE's eschatological conception). Frey's conclusion, which he arrived at not by way of comparison or correlation with the well-known “already/but not yet” schema (such as that found in Paul's writings) but by “historical and traditio-historical” investigation of “the eschatological traditions” alive in the Johannine circle (for this Frey derived material from both the Gospel and the epistles), is: “[T]he Johannine community was aware of very different forms of eschatological traditions and expectations (of the parousia, of judgment and resurrection, and even of the coming of ‘the antichrist’). But the eschatological ideas of the community were not only dominated by expectations of the future. There were also sayings which expressed the believers' certainty of life or the present possession of ‘eternal life’ or even the hope not to see death – whatever this meant – and if we cannot distinguish between different groups within the community arguing about eschatology we have to conclude that all these traditional expressions ... were used and understood as a whole. There is no reason to assume that the Johannine preachers or the community members thought that they were mutually exclusive” (“Eschatology,” 65).

coming and to be already here.”⁹¹ This is also how Carson understands the expression. According to him, the period of true worship (4:23) and the giving of eternal life (5:25) is not only coming; it is also

proleptically present in the person and ministry of Jesus before the cross ... The passion and exaltation of Jesus constitute the turning point upon which the gift of the Holy Spirit depends (7:38–39; 16:7); but that salvation-historical turning point is possible only because of who Jesus is. Precisely for that reason, the hour is not only ‘coming’ but also ‘has now come.’⁹²

Within the tensive eschatology⁹³ of FG we may be able to see a number of ways whereby *ώρα* and *σημεῖα* correlate. First, perhaps the most important correlation is their common use in connection with the crucifixion-and-resurrection. It has been my argument that the crucifixion-and-resurrection is the supreme *σημεῖον* in FG. As has mentioned, *ώρα* too denotes Jesus’ crucifixion-and-resurrection. In other words, *ώρα* and *σημεῖον* appear to be distinct yet complementary ways whereby FE has conceived and understood the death-and-resurrection of Jesus. Moreover, we are perhaps to view these two terms as part of a larger constellation of terms and concepts employed in FE’s rich understanding of the cross-and-resurrection. Above we discussed the notions of “glorification” (*δοξασθῆναι*) and “lifting up” (*ὑψωσις*), which also denote the crucifixion-and-resurrection.

Second, a further correlation between *ώρα* and *σημεῖον* is evident in the narratives of the earlier *σημεῖα*. Two passages may be considered. The first is the narrative of the changing of water to wine (2:1–11), which is the first *σημεῖον* (v. 11). In v. 4 of this passage we encounter this surprising and puzzling statement of Jesus to his mother (who told him that the wine had run out): *τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι; οὐπω ἤκει ἡ ὥρα μου* (“Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come”). Commentators are agreed that the *ώρα* of Jesus here alludes to his

⁹¹ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:518.

⁹² Carson, *Gospel*, 224.

⁹³ See Paul N. Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2011), 32–34.

forthcoming death-and-resurrection.⁹⁴ It is immediately transparent how important the cross-and-resurrection is to FE. He alludes to it right from the start of the Gospel. He does so here in 2:4 using the word *ώρα*, in the context of Jesus' inaugural *σημείον*. Moreover, it is not only the *ώρα* itself that alludes to Jesus' crucifixion-and-resurrection; this particular *σημείον* itself also points to the cross-and-resurrection. The expression *ἀρχὴ τῶν σημείων* (“[the] first or beginning of the signs”) in 2:11, if understood from a broad and inclusive point of view as set out in ch. 3, may be seen as anticipating all the subsequent *σημεῖα*, including the supreme *σημεῖον* of the cross-and-resurrection. Furthermore, the revealing of Jesus' *δόξα* through the turning water to wine (v. 11) anticipates the glorification of Jesus through his death-and-resurrection. Lastly, that the disciples believed in Jesus through this *σημείον* anticipates a future moment when the disciples will believe more fully, and that moment was brought about by the cross-and-resurrection. This fuller belief, lying in the future of the narrative, is conditioned both by the cross-and-resurrection and by the coming of the Spirit, which in turn depended on Jesus' glorification (e.g., 7:39). In sum, right from the start of the Gospel (i.e., 2:1–11), *ώρα* and *σημείον* are used side by side and are used in a complementary way to allude to the cross-and-resurrection. The inaugural *σημείον* of the wine occasioned the first occurrence of *ώρα*. Both enable the reader to anticipate the cross-and-resurrection.

The second passage is the raising of Lazarus in John 11. That the raising of Lazarus is a *σημείον* is explicitly said in 12:18 and most certainly indicated in 11:47–48. Although the *ώρα* of Jesus is not explicitly mentioned in John 11, it is probable that the *ώρα* of 11:9 alludes to it.⁹⁵ Moreover, the notion of the *ώρα* of Jesus is present in John 11 in an important way. As is well known, the raising of Lazarus, as well as the cumulative *σημεῖα* of Jesus, precipitates the Sanhedrin's decision to put Jesus to death (11:47–53). In other words, the *σημείον* of the raising of Lazarus, plus the other *σημεῖα*, brings about the arrival of Jesus' *ώρα*. One could

⁹⁴ E.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 1:99–100; Haenchen, *John*, 1:173; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 105–06; Collins, “Cana,” 85–6; Smith, *John*, 84.

⁹⁵ So, e.g., Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 391; J. R. Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 619–20.

also say that the earlier *σημεῖα* precipitate the emergence of the supreme *σημεῖον*. Moreover, just as in John 2:1–11, we also find in John 11 the theme of *δόξα*, which, as we know, is essentially linked with both *ῥα* and *σημεῖον*. In v. 4, it is said that the ultimate purpose for Lazarus’ illness is not death, but *ὑπὲρ τῆς δόξης, ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δι’ αὐτῆς* (“for God’s glory, so that the Son of Man may be glorified through it”). The raising of Lazarus, as a *σημεῖον*, will glorify the Father and the Son in two ways. First, the raising of Lazarus itself, as an event whereby the power of God operative in and through Jesus defeats the power of death and rescues a beloved disciple (Lazarus) from death, glorifies both the Father and the Son. Secondly, the raising of Lazarus will supremely glorify the Father and Son by propelling the plot to the climactic episode of the Gospel, which is the crucifixion-and-resurrection. Thus it is true that the raising of Lazarus brings about the *ῥα* of Jesus.

In conclusion, the following points may be reiterated. First, the *ῥα* of Jesus pertains to his death-and-resurrection. It is the *ῥα* of Jesus’ glorification (12:23), “lifting up” (12:32, 34), and return to the Father (13:1). Second, since it refers to the cross-and-resurrection, Jesus’ *ῥα* therefore also pertains to the supreme *σημεῖον* in the Fourth Gospel. Third, the earlier *σημεῖα* announce, anticipate, and precipitate the *ῥα* of Jesus. Cumulatively, they cause the arrival of that *ῥα*, when the Sanhedrin officially decides to put Jesus to death. In so doing, the earlier *σημεῖα* also bring about the occurrence of the supreme *σημεῖον*.

4.6. Πίστις

The subject of *πίστις*, as is well known, is a key theme of FG.⁹⁶ Many interpreters have, not surprisingly, written on it.⁹⁷ I am not going to attempt a full discussion

⁹⁶ See, e.g., Merrill C. Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), *passim*.

⁹⁷ Aside from the usual commentaries, see the following: Gerald F. Hawthorne, “The Concept of Faith in the Fourth Gospel,” *BSac* 116 (1959): 117–26; Rudolf Bultmann, “πιστεύω κτλ.,” *TDNT* 6:222–28; John Painter, “Eschatological Faith in the Gospel of John,” in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology, Presented to L. L. Morris on His 60th Birthday*, ed. R. Banks (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 36–54; N. Walker, “Glaube und

of this subject here, but will focus attention upon the relationship of πίστις to σημεῖον.

The relationship of σημεῖον to πίστις in FG is controversial in Johannine scholarship. Do the σημεῖα of Jesus play a positive role in engendering true faith in him? In other words, is faith that emerges from the seeing of a σημεῖον legitimate or not? Or, do the σημεῖα play no positive role at all for faith, so that true faith is that which arises without seeing any σημεῖον? In other words, are σημεῖα in John's Gospel mere "concessions to man's weakness," unnecessary and dispensable?⁹⁸

The difficulty arises from the fact that the Gospel data seem to be ambiguous. There are passages that appear to speak positively of the causal relationship between the seeing of a σημεῖον and believing. We can think, for example, of 2:11 where the positive relationship seems to be straightforward: Jesus revealed his glory through the σημεῖον of turning water to wine, and his disciples, who witnessed it, believed in him. We find the same positive connection in the purpose statement of the Gospel (20:30–31), where the express purpose for the σημεῖα γεγραμμένα is to help readers come to faith in Jesus, and thereby have eternal life.

On the other hand, there are passages that seem to disparage the faith that seeks σημεῖα. A well-known example is the statement of Jesus to the royal official in 4:48: ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδῃτε, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε ("Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe"). Another well-known example is Jesus' sobering words to Thomas in 20:29: ὅτι ἐώρακάς με πεπίστευκας; μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ

irdischer Jesus im Johannesevangelium," in *Studia Evangelica*, vol. 2; papers presented to the Fifth International Congress on Biblical Studies held at Oxford, 1973; ed. E. A. Livingstone (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982), 547–52; Adele Reinhartz, "John 20:30–31 and the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel" (PhD diss., McMaster University, 1983), chs. 2, 4, 6; B. A. du Toit, "The Aspect of Faith in the Gospel of John with Special Reference to the Farewell Discourses of Jesus," *Neot* 25 (1991): 327–40; Ferdinand Hahn, *Studein zum Neuen Testament: Vol. 2: Bekkenntnisbildung und Theologie in urchristlicher Zeit*, ed. J. Frey and J. Schlegel; WUNT 192 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 521–37; Thompson, "Signs and Faith," 89–108; Craig R. Koester, "Hearing, Seeing, and Believing in the Gospel of John," *Bib* 70 (1989): 327–48; idem, "Jesus' Resurrection, the Signs, and the Dynamics of Faith in the Gospel of John," in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, ed. C. R. Koester and R. Bieringer; WUNT 1/222 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 47–74; Victor Hasler, "Glauben und Erkennen im Johannesevangelium: Strukturele und hermeneutische Überlegungen," *EvT* 50 (1990): 279–96.

⁹⁸ So Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:56; idem, *Gospel*, 634.

πιστεύσαντες (“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe”).

These tensions, or seeming contradictions, have provided a basis for some scholars to hypothesize that FE, in composing his Gospel, made use of a pre-existing document which proponents have called, to use a generic designation, the “Signs Source.”⁹⁹ Although this hypothesis is, as has been noted, now not as influential as it once was,¹⁰⁰ it is worth mentioning here because it offers an explanation for the relationship between σημεῖον and πίστις.

Advocates of this theory claim that the positive role of σημεῖα for faith that we find in the Gospel actually belongs not to FE but to the Christology of the “Signs Source.” It is supposed that this source was written for the purpose of winning Jews to the Christian faith, and that it presents the σημεῖα of Jesus as demonstrations of his messiahship and as intended to command belief. However, though FE made use of this source, he took exception to its portrayal of Jesus as a wonder-worker, “whose mighty acts were such as to evoke faith; John himself regarded faith based on signs as unsatisfactory – perhaps hardly a genuine faith at all.”¹⁰¹ In other words, these scholars believe that the contradictions or tensions – in regard to the relationship of σημεῖα to faith – reflect the contradictory views of the source and of the evangelist.

Insofar as the composition of the Gospel is concerned, the possibility that FE made use of sources, whether oral or literary or both, can hardly be denied. What these pre-existing sources were is another question and has been a subject of extensive debate and speculation. At the end of the day, we have no independent way of knowing whether a hypothetical source such as Bultmann’s *Σημεῖα-Quelle* or Fortna’s “Signs Gospel” truly existed or is just a figment of scholarly

⁹⁹ E.g., Bultmann, *Gospel*, 119 n. 5, 209; Smith, *Composition*, 11–12; Fortna, *Gospel of Signs*, 16–7; Nicol, *Sēmeia*, , 27–30; J. Becker, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 2 vols.; ÖTK 4 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1979), 1:113–14.

¹⁰⁰ But of course from the beginning this hypothesis never really commanded the assent of most of Johannine scholars, and some leading interpreters, while not rejecting the probability that FE used sources, have never been convinced of the existence of the so-called *Σημεῖα-Quelle*. See, for instance, C. K. Barrett’s review of Fortna’s *The Gospel of Signs* (*JTS* 22 [1971]: 571–74).

¹⁰¹ Barrett, *Gospel*, 74. Barrett himself does not subscribe to the *Σημεῖα-Quelle* hypothesis, see *ibid.*, 77.

imagination.¹⁰² Ultimately to try to make sense of FG by an appeal to a hypothesised source does not seem to be the best methodology.

On the other hand, if we try to make sense of the Gospel as we now have it, irrespective of the sources, a better explanation of the data seems to be that the FE has a complex view of the relationship of *σημεῖον* and *πίστις*. From this perspective, those passages that speak of *σημεῖα* as engendering faith (e.g., 2:11; 20:30–31) need not be construed as contradicting those passages that seem to disparage a *σημεῖα*-seeking faith (e.g., 4:49; 20:29). They are understood, rather, as simultaneously affirming different aspects of that complex relationship.

A number of important questions will be investigated in what follows. Does the evangelist believe that *σημεῖα* can help to engender faith (in other words, that true faith can arise from seeing a *σημεῖον*)? Does the evangelist believe that *σημεῖα* may not result in any faith at all? Can a *σημεῖον* occasion a faith which is less than genuine? Does the evangelist believe that true faith may arise without any encounter with *σημεῖα*? Does the evangelist disparage a mere seeking for a *σημεῖον*? The analysis below will show that these questions are answered affirmatively in FG.

Is it true that *σημεῖα* are useless for faith, and that genuine faith is based only on hearing the proclamation of Jesus' word? As will be shown briefly, the answer to this is negative. True faith may arise from a mere hearing of Jesus' word, and it may also arise from a perceptive seeing of a *σημεῖον*. In both of these cases, the faith engendered is genuine, and it is not correct to suppose that the genuine faith engendered through the seeing of a *σημεῖον* is less real than that which is engendered through the hearing of the word. For instance, the genuine faith of Jesus' first disciples, who believed in Jesus on account of the *σημεῖα* they saw (e.g., 2:11), cannot be said to be less real than the genuine faith of subsequent generations of Christians who believed on the basis of the testimony of the earliest Christians.

¹⁰² So Riga, "Signs of Glory," 402 n. 4.

This complex relationship between *σημεῖον* and *πίστις* is borne out in the Gospel text itself. What follows is a brief consideration of passages in the Gospel in order to demonstrate the complexity. First, the positive causal relationship is clear in, for example, 2:11 and 20:30–31. As has been mentioned above, the first passage tells us that as a result of seeing the first of Jesus' *σημεῖα*, his disciples believed in him. Most commentators understand this belief to be genuine faith. In the second passage, which is actually the Gospel's purpose statement, we are told that those *σημεῖα* recounted in the Gospel have been written so that the hearers/readers may come to believe in Jesus. These two passages are obviously important, for they are the first and last references to *σημεῖα*, encapsulating almost the entire Gospel in an overarching *inclusio*.

Within this *inclusio* there are also other references to the *σημεῖα* engendering genuine faith among the witnesses. For instance, the man blind from birth, whom Jesus healed in John 9 at the pool of Siloam (and this act of Jesus is a *σημεῖον*), believed in Jesus and worshiped him (v. 38). In connection with the raising of Lazarus in John 11 – which is also a *σημεῖον* – many of the *Ἰουδαῖοι* who witnessed the event believed in Jesus (v. 45).¹⁰³

Second, the evangelist is aware that the *σημεῖα* may engender a less than genuine faith. It is perhaps better to say that this is not faith, in the strict sense, at all, but mere admiration for Jesus' ability to perform extraordinary deeds.¹⁰⁴ So, for instance, we are told in 2:23 that because of the many *σημεῖα* that Jesus performed in Jerusalem during his first journey there, many people believed (*ἐπίστευσαν*) in his name. Yet the following verse clarifies that Jesus rejected this faith, for he knew these people's hearts. The less-than-genuine belief of the crowd provides an implicit contrast to the faith of the disciples in 2:11 and foreshadows the ultimate rejection of Jesus by the *Ἰουδαῖοι*.

The case of Nicodemus in John 3 provides another example. He acknowledges Jesus' *σημεῖα* – that they prove him to be a teacher from God (v. 2).

¹⁰³ *Σημεῖον* does not occur in 11:45. The raising of Lazarus is explicitly called a *σημεῖον* in 12:18. Moreover, I think a reference to the raising of Lazarus is present in the use of the plural *σημεῖα* in 11:47–48.

¹⁰⁴ Thompson, *Incarnate*, 64–5; Koester, "Hearing," 333.

Yet Nicodemus disappears from the story without a notice of him coming to faith.¹⁰⁵ We also read in 6:2 of a large Galilean crowd that kept following Jesus because of the *σημεῖα* that he had performed. Yet it is clear by their response to the additional *σημεῖον* of the feeding that they have actually gravely misunderstood the *σημεῖα*, particularly that of the feeding, misconstruing it as meaning that Jesus is an aspiring and potential political leader (see vv. 14–15). Not only that: the fact that on the following day they asked for another *σημεῖον* (vv. 30–31) implies that they have seen many *σημεῖα* without ever grasping what they truly meant. It also shows that the quest for the spectacular and the marvelous can be endless and insatiable. At the end of John 6, many of the “disciples” of Jesus – people who have witnessed so many of his *σημεῖα* – gave up following him because they stumbled on his “hard” teaching (v. 60) concerning the necessity of “eating his flesh and drinking his blood” (vv. 51c–58).

¹⁰⁵ Scholars dispute whether or not Nicodemus eventually came to true faith in Jesus. For instance, Carson (*Gospel*, 186) explains that although in John 3 Nicodemus does not believe, “yet eventually he comes around to side with Jesus (7:45–52) and ultimately to take his place at Calvary (19:38–42).” If Carson means that Nicodemus eventually reached true faith in the Johannine sense, I beg to differ. Of the three passages that mention Nicodemus, the third one (19:38–42) seems to be the one that has convinced many interpreters that Nicodemus became a true follower of Jesus. But the passage itself never says that Nicodemus truly believed. In 19:38 we are told: “After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, *though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews*, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus.” Nicodemus comes into the scene in v. 39: “Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds.” The following verses narrate that these men took Jesus’ body, wrapped it with spices in linen cloths, and buried it according to Jewish customs. This act, although admirable, does not necessarily signify true faith in the Johannine sense. It may only signify respect or admiration, much like what Nicodemus exhibited in John 3. More determinative for our interpretation is the evangelist’s comment in 19:38 (which probably pertains by extension also to Nicodemus): “Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews.” Those familiar enough with the Gospel would not want to quickly conclude that Joseph and Nicodemus were “true disciples” just because they were described as “disciples of Jesus.” Remember that in John 6, those in Galilee who abandoned Jesus and no longer followed him due to his “hard” teaching about “eating his flesh and drinking his blood,” were described as “disciples.” And there is more in 19:38. The description continues: “though a secret [disciple] because of his fear of the Jews.” On this basis, I believe that Joseph and Nicodemus were not true disciples of Jesus. The reason is, in FG a “secret disciple” is no true disciple. There is no third (or mediating) category between those who truly believe and those who do not. I think that Joseph and Nicodemus are representatives of what is described in 12:42–43: “Many, even of the authorities, believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human glory more than the glory that comes from God.” For more about this view see Marinus de Jonge, “Nicodemus,” 337–59; Moloney, *Son of Man*, 47.

Third, the evangelist is also aware that *σημεῖα* may result in unbelief – rather than engender true faith – and in some cases not just unbelief, but even antagonism or deadly hostility toward Jesus. The case of the lame man at the Bethesda pool whom Jesus healed in John 5 is actually a case of a recipient of (not just a witness to) a *σημεῖον* who did not come to true faith. Moreover, this *σημεῖον* triggered “Jewish” persecution of Jesus and their attempt to kill him (vv. 16, 18). Then there is the cumulative case of the Ἰουδαῖοι in John 12:37: “Although Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him.” And it is not just unbelief; we know that these Ἰουδαῖοι are the ones who will put Jesus to death.

In short, for FE the relationship of *σημεῖον* to *πίστις* is complex. The positive role is real. The characters in the Gospel story, as well as the hearers/readers, are called to believe in Jesus on the basis of the *σημεῖα*. If people do not believe despite the *σημεῖα*, they will be held accountable and will be judged (12:47–48). Yet the Gospel never claims that the positive role of *σημεῖα* for faith is absolute, or assured in every case. While stressing the importance of *σημεῖα*, the evangelist knew that, by the nature of the case, some believe while others do not. Jesus’ disciples believed, but the majority of the people – both in Galilee and in Judea (Jerusalem) – did not, though all of them equally saw the abundance of Jesus’ *σημεῖα*. What made the difference? This study of the relationship between *σημεῖα* (external evidence) and faith will not be complete without factoring into the discussion the sovereign initiatory role of God. FE himself is deeply aware of it, and he brings it up at crucial points in the Gospel. So for example, in John 6, in the context of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee, so many disciples turn back and no longer follow Jesus (v. 66); yet, the Twelve stay with him and confess him to be ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ (“the Holy One of God”) (vv. 68–69). What makes the difference in this case? It is divine election.

The sovereign initiatory role of God in salvation has already been mentioned a number of times earlier in the Bread of Life discourse (so, e.g., v. 37: *πάν ὃ δίδωσίν μοι ὁ πατήρ πρὸς ἐμὲ ἔξει, καὶ τὸν ἐρχόμενον πρὸς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ ἐκβάλω ἔξω*, [Everything that the Father gives to me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away]); cf. vv. 39, 44). Then it is repeated in v. 65b: *οὐδεὶς*

δύναται ἔλθειν πρὸς με ἐὰν μὴ ᾗ δεδομένον αὐτῷ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς (“No one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father”). Then in v. 70 divine election is reiterated with Jesus as the subject: οὐκ ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς τοὺς δώδεκα ἐξελεξάμην; καὶ ἐξ ὑμῶν εἷς διάβολός ἐστιν (“Did I not choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil”). In other words, when it comes to the *ultimate reason* why some people truly believe in Jesus and why others do not, it has more to do with God’s sovereign initiatory work of election than with the σημεῖα, or any other external evidence.

This same truth is reiterated in John 12 at the close of Jesus’ public ministry. Commenting on why the Ἰουδαῖοι rejected Jesus despite the numerous σημεῖα he performed in their midst, the evangelist says that οὐκ ἠδύναντο πιστεῦειν (“they could not believe”) (v. 39). Why? He quotes Isa 6:10: God τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐπώρωσεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν (“has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts”) (v. 40). In other words, the Ἰουδαῖοι did not believe in Jesus because God did not apply his sovereign initiatory work upon them. That of course does not cancel out the moral responsibility of the Ἰουδαῖοι for rejecting the Messiah.

Having referenced divine election in our discussion, what has been said so far should suffice for my present purposes in regard to the relationship of σημεῖα to πίστις in FG. Other related subjects – such as the tension between divine election (God’s sovereignty) and the human responsibility (for instance, in faith) in FG – may be important, but they are beyond the limited scope of this section.

4.7. Conclusion

The above thematic investigation has yielded positive confirmation of the thesis that Jesus’ death-and-resurrection is the supreme σημεῖον in FG. As to the theme of δόξα, the general statement that the σημεῖα are revelatory of Jesus’ glory includes the specific statement that the crucifixion-and-resurrection, which is – I have argued – the supreme σημεῖον, is Jesus’ glorification. With regard to ὑψωσις, our investigation of Num 21:8–9, which is cited in John 3:14 as the background for the lifting up of the Son of Man, as well as FE’s formulaic description of Jesus’

crucifixion using the word *σημαίνειν*, has shown that the lifting up of the Son of Man on the cross and in the resurrection constitutes not just a *σημεῖον* but the supreme *σημεῖον*. As to the theme of *ἔργον*, I have argued for its greater overlap with *σημεῖον*, in terms of their common reference to Jesus' deeds. On that basis, it became clear that just as the crucifixion-and-resurrection is the fulfillment of Jesus' lifework, it is also the supreme *σημεῖον* that reveals Jesus as the true Messiah and Son of God. With regard to the theme of *ῥα*, the crucifixion-and-resurrection is the *ῥα* of Jesus' glorification and lifting up. It is the *ῥα* of the fulfillment of all his *ἔργον*. This theme also lends support to the view that the crucifixion-and-resurrection is the supreme *σημεῖον* in FG.

CHAPTER 5
THE TEMPLE INCIDENT AND THE “PROMISED”
ΣΗΜΕΙΟΝ OF JESUS’ DEATH-AND-RESURRECTION
(JOHN 2:13–22)

5.1. Introduction

John 2:13–22 (esp. 18–22) is fundamental to my thesis for it clearly alludes to Jesus’ death-and-resurrection as a σημεῖον. In response to Jesus’ provocative actions in the temple courts (vv. 14–16), the Ἰουδαῖοι confront him by demanding that he produce a σημεῖον to justify his actions (v. 18). In v. 19 Jesus responds by “promising” a σημεῖον in a puzzling utterance (not as the Ἰουδαῖοι would have expected): λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν (“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”). The Ἰουδαῖοι misunderstand Jesus by taking his words literally (v. 20).¹ In v. 21, the evangelist explains, from a post-resurrection perspective, what Jesus’ words truly mean: the ναός refers to Jesus’ own body (σῶμα), destroyed on the cross but raised up again in three days’ time. In short, the σημεῖον that justifies Jesus’ provocative actions in the temple precincts appears to be no less than his death-and-resurrection. Whereas the Ἰουδαῖοι misunderstand Jesus’ utterance and remain in that misunderstanding, by contrast the “disciples” – in the light of the resurrection – believe the scripture and Jesus’ word (v. 22b).

The following discussion of the temple incident will consist of three main parts. The first focuses on the demand for a σημεῖον in 2:18. The second deals with Jesus’ response to the demand, which takes the form of an utterance or, I suggest, a “promise” of a σημεῖον, in 2:19–21. The final part reflects on the whole incident by focusing on Jesus as the new “temple,” on Passover, and the “promised” σημεῖον.

¹ It will also be shown below, in our treatment of v. 22, that the disciples also do not correctly grasp Jesus’ utterance until after the resurrection.

5.2. The Demand for a *σημεῖον* (2:18)

Following and in response to Jesus' protest at the temple courts (vv. 14–15), the Ἰουδαῖοι confront him by saying: τί σημεῖον δεικνύεις ἡμῖν ὅτι ταῦτα ποιεῖς; (What sign can you show us for doing these things?).² As has been noted, the word *σημεῖον* can mean many different things.³ Most commonly and generally it means “a sign or distinguishing mark whereby something is known.”⁴ For instance, in the case of Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey* (19.317–507), his scar became the *σημεῖον* whereby Eurycleia was able to detect his true identity.⁵ To cite one example from the LXX, the blood of the Passover lamb, smeared on the lintels and doorposts of the houses of the Hebrews, became the *σημεῖον* that distinguished the houses of Yahweh's covenant people from those of the Egyptians (Exod 12:13), and spared their firstborn from death.

Another meaning of *σημεῖον*, but one that still involves the functions of confirmation and recognition, is that of “an event that is an indication or confirmation of intervention by transcendent powers.”⁶ This is the meaning present in 2:18, as most commentators maintain:⁷ the Ἰουδαῖοι demand nothing less

² This is the first of two demands for a *σημεῖον* recorded in FG, the second being in 6:30–31 (to be discussed in ch. 6 below). The Synoptic Gospels also report a similar demand for a *σημεῖον* (see Matt 12:38–39; 16:1–4; Mark 8:11–13; Luke 11:16, 29), but it does not occur during the temple “cleansing.” Concerning the Johannine chronology vis-à-vis the Synoptic chronology of the temple “cleansing,” see n. 11 below.

³ See p. 37 n. 2.

⁴ BDAG, pp. 920–21.

⁵ For a relevant discussion of this see Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger*, 1.

⁶ BDAG, *ibid.* LSJ (p. 1593) provides the following meanings: “(1) mark by which a thing is known; (2) sign from the gods; (3) sign or signal to do a thing; (4) standard or flag.”

⁷ So, e.g., F. Godet writes: “There has been asked of Jesus a demonstrative miracle, as a sign of His competency” (*Gospel*, 2:30); R. H. Lightfoot writes: “The Jews [of the Fourth Gospel] ... were prone to demand a sign or miracle if they were to be persuaded of the presence or reality of divine truth or revelation” (*Gospel*, 112); Rudolf Bultmann writes: “The Evangelist will certainly have taken the *σημεῖον* asked for here, as in 6.30, to be a miracle which would prove [Jesus'] authority” (*Gospel*, 124–25); D. A. Carson remarks: The Ἰουδαῖοι “demanded ... of Jesus some *miraculous sign* ... presumably some sort of miraculous display performed on demand” (*Gospel*, 180–81; italics his); Ben Witherington III writes: “The word sign (*semeion*) has the sense of a validating action or miracle” (*Wisdom*, 88); Andrew T. Lincoln writes: The Jews “now demand an authorization for Jesus' action that would take the form of some convincing miraculous deed” (*Gospel*, 139); Marianne M. Thompson writes: The sign asked by the Jews is “likely a heavenly voice or miraculous portent” (*John*, 73).

than a miracle – the intervention of God – to justify or validate Jesus’ actions and implicit claims.

5.2.1. Lodged by the Ἰουδαῖοι (v. 18)

The Ἰουδαῖοι who demand a σημεῖον are mostly likely the temple authorities: “the ‘overseers of the temple’ who had charge of good order and controlled the levitical temple police.”⁸ Carson identifies them as “representatives of the Sanhedrin” who, as such, “had every right to question the credentials of someone who had taken such bold action in the temple complex.”⁹ Yet, at the same time, Ἰουδαῖοι also has a deeper meaning in John, most aptly put by Barrett as follows:

Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ... is the title regularly given by John to Judaism and its official leaders, who stand over against Jesus ... Their headquarters are at Jerusalem, where their conflict with Jesus reaches its height. They defend the letter of the Law (e.g. 5.16), refuse to accept the authority of Jesus and his messianic status (e.g. 9.22), and, denying their true king, finally deny their own status as the people of God.¹⁰

As this is the Johannine Jesus’ first visit to Jerusalem and to the temple during his public ministry, this is also the first occasion where the Ἰουδαῖοι encounter him during that ministry.¹¹ But even before this encounter, they probably have already

⁸ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:348.

⁹ Carson, *Gospel*, 180. See also Karl Barth, *Erklärung des Johannes-Evangeliums (Kapitel 1–8)* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976), 205.

¹⁰ Barrett, *Gospel*, 171–72. In his study of the characterization of the Ἰουδαῖοι in FG, R. Alan Culpepper shows that the Ἰουδαῖοι as representatives of unbelief are set in distinct contrast to the believing disciples (*Anatomy*, 115, 125). Culpepper rightly points out the important role of the Ἰουδαῖοι to the Gospel’s plot development (ibid., 126–29). They, who demand a σημεῖον in 2:18, will be the ones to demand Jesus’ crucifixion in John 18–19.

¹¹ As is often noted in Johannine scholarship, FG’s chronology of the temple “cleansing” differs from that of the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–48), where the incident takes place during Jesus’ Passion week. Some writers try to solve this apparent contradiction by postulating two “cleansings” – one that happened at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry (which FG recounts), and another temple “cleansing” that took place at the close of Jesus’ ministry (which the Synoptic Gospels report) (William Hendricksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker)1:120; Morris, *Gospel*, 188–91; Carson, *Gospel*, 177–78; Allan Chapel, “Jesus’ Intervention in the Temple: Once or Twice,” *JETS* 58 (2015): 545–69). But this suggestion seems implausible, for none of the four Gospels give any indication of a twofold temple “cleansing.” Moreover, it is doubtful that the temple authorities would permit

heard about him through John the Baptist (1:19–28). The Baptist told their representatives:¹² “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal” (vv. 26–27). But the fact that the first thing they do when they encounter Jesus is to demand a σημεῖον shows that they have not heeded the Baptist’s testimony. Moreover, it appears it is not just the Baptist’s testimony which they have ignored. They have also failed to discern the deeper meaning of Jesus’ deeply significant action in the temple courts. To this I now turn.

5.2.2. In Response to Jesus’ “Protest” in the Temple Courts (2:13–16)

The demand for a σημεῖον is directly occasioned by Jesus’ dramatic, provocative, yet deeply revelatory act in the temple courts, recounted in 2:14–16. A correct understanding of the meaning of this incident, from FE’s point of view, is essential for the argument of this thesis. Hence, this subsection of the chapter will analyze the temple incident pericope, starting from v. 13 since it provides the context for the episode.

5.2.2.1. *Jesus Goes to the Temple (vv. 13–14)*

Verse 13 – καὶ ἐγγύς ἦν τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβη εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα ὁ Ἰησοῦς (“The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem”) – depicts a

Jesus to perform a highly provocative action twice. In my view, it seems more probable that the temple “cleansing” happened only once, and while the question of chronology may not be settled with absolute certainty, the Synoptic chronology of the “cleansing” may be more preferable, for there the “cleansing” serves as a key reason for Jesus’ arrest by the Jewish authorities, leading to Jesus’ passion-and-resurrection. The Johannine chronology of the cleansing may have been influenced by the Jesus traditions at his disposal. Moreover, a clear theological rationale seems to have governed FG’s placement of the “cleansing” in the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry: the evangelist desires for the reader to understand, right from the beginning of the Gospel account, that Jesus is the true temple of God (see 2:19–21; cf. 1:14) as well as the true sacrificial lamb. This, along with the proleptic reference to Jesus’ death-and-resurrection in 2:19–21, will be teased out in the ensuing discussion.

¹² According to 1:19, 22, 24 the Ἰουδαῖοι from Jerusalem send priests, Levites, and Pharisees to inquire about who the Baptist is.

movement of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem in the context of the Passover feast. This verse provides the context not just for the temple incident but also for the whole activity of Jesus during this first journey to Jerusalem, recounted in the Gospel in 2:13–3:21. Verse 14 locates Jesus in the temple courts and provides the immediate context for the temple incident. Brief comments on Passover (v. 13) and the temple (v. 14) are in order.

5.2.2.2. The Passover of the Ἰουδαῖοι (v. 13)

Passover is an important and significant festival commemorating Israel's deliverance – by Yahweh, through the agency of Moses – from slavery in Egypt.¹³ As Exod 12 makes clear, and is suggested by the word itself, “Passover” is first and foremost a salvation from death, as Yahweh “passed over”¹⁴ (Exod 12:13, 23, 27) the homes of the Hebrews and spared their firstborn, including those of their livestock (Exod 11:5), from death on account of the blood of the Passover sacrificial lamb, smeared on the doorposts and lintels of their homes. Meanwhile, all the firstborn of the Egyptians, including those of their livestock (Exod 12:29), died.

But Passover is not just the sparing of the Israelite firstborn; it is also the salvation of the whole covenant nation from slavery in Egypt and their eventual

¹³ See Joachim Jeremias, “πάσχα,” *TDNT* 5:896–904; Baruch M. Bokser, “Unleavened Bread and Passover, Feasts of,” *ABD* 6:755–65; Frank H. Gorman, “Passover, Feast of,” *EDB*, 1013–014; J. Jocs, “Passover,” *ZEB* 4:676–83. Some of the studies of Passover in FG are Bertil Gärtner, *John 6 and the Jewish Passover*, ConBNT 17 (Lund: Gleerup, 1959); J. K. Howard, “Passover and Eucharist in the Fourth Gospel,” *SJT* 20 (1967): 329–37; Cullen I. K. Story, “The Bearing of Old Testament Terminology on the Johannine Chronology of the Final Passover of Jesus,” *NovT* 31 (1989): 316–24; Gerald L. Borchert, “The Passover and the Narrative Cycles in John,” in *Perspectives on John: Method and Interpretation in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. R. B. Sloan and M. C. Parsons (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1993), 303–16; Paul M. Hoskins, “Deliverance from Death by the True Passover Lamb: A Significant Aspect of the Fulfillment of the Passover in the Gospel of John,” *JETS* 52 (2009): 285–99; Dorothy Lee, “Paschal Imagery in the Gospel of John: A Narrative and Symbolic Reading,” *Pacifica* 24 (2011): 13–28; Stanley Porter, *John, His Gospel, and Jesus: In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 198–224.

¹⁴ “Passover” translates the Hebrew פֶּשַׁח, as in Exod 12:13, “I will *pass over* you, and no plague shall fall upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.” In the LXX it is πάσχα, and that is the same Greek word used in the NT.

settlement in the Promised Land.¹⁵ Thus Passover is essentially connected with the exodus, which encompasses all those significant experiences that Israel went through in transit from Egypt to Canaan: the crossing through the Sea of Reeds, the provision of the manna, the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, and many more. The importance of the Passover is shown by the fact that Yahweh commanded his people to celebrate it perpetually, throughout all generations (Exod 12:14, 24), and that they are to teach the Israelite children throughout all generations this: “It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses” (Exod 12:27).

During the time of Jesus, Passover was a pilgrimage festival centered in the temple in Jerusalem. Jews (and proselytes) from within Palestine, as well as many from the Diaspora, flocked to the holy city to participate in the feast.¹⁶ It is in this context that we read of Jesus in John 2:13 as going up (*ἀναβαίνειν*) to Jerusalem when “the Passover of the Jews” was near.¹⁷ Why does the Johannine Jesus do this? In the light of the Christology spelled out in the Prologue and of the Baptist’s twofold confession of Jesus as the Lamb of God (*ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ*),¹⁸ the reader cannot suppose that Jesus undertakes this Passover pilgrimage as would a normal, ordinary devout Jew. Already the description *τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων* (“the Passover of the Jews”) suggests that, for the evangelist, Jesus stands in a quite different relationship to this feast than do the *Ἰουδαῖοι*.¹⁹ That is hardly surprising or

¹⁵ See Jocs, “Passover,” 676.

¹⁶ Josephus gives huge figures for Passover participation of both Jerusalemites and pilgrims in Jerusalem. At a certain Passover, he gives the figure of 255,600 lambs as being slain and 2,700,000 people in attendance (*B.J.* 6.420–27). At the Passover in 65 CE he estimated the crowd in Jerusalem to be at 3,000,000 (*B.J.* 2.280). Skeptical about these figures, scholars of our time propose more conservative estimates. Joachim Jeremias (*Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period*, trans. F. H. and C. H. Cave [London: SCM, 1969], 83) put the figure at about 180,000 (consisting of 55,000 Jerusalemites and 125,000 pilgrims). E. P. Sanders (*Judaism: Practice & Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* [London: SCM, 1992], 128) finds reasonable the figures of 300,000 to 500,000.

¹⁷ Note that the temple incident is framed by a twofold reference to the first Passover of Jesus’ ministry: at 2:13 and 2:23.

¹⁸ In 1:29: *Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου*, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”; in 1:36: *Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ*, “Behold, the Lamb of God.”

¹⁹ A probable reason why Passover is a feast of the *Ἰουδαῖοι* is that Christians at the time of the evangelist’s writing no longer participated in it (and other Jewish feasts) (so, e.g.,

controversial, for Jesus is not just any Jew: he is himself the very Son of the God. He is the eternal Logos of God who, in his incarnation, has “tabernacled” among “us” (1:14).

Given Jesus’ exalted identity in FG, it is significant that he shows interest in the Passover of the Ἰουδαῖοι. Thus the reader, convinced that Jesus is not an ordinary Jewish pilgrim, cannot avoid asking what the Johannine Jesus wishes to accomplish by this visit to Jerusalem on this occasion. The answer will emerge from the ensuing verses.

5.2.2.3. Jesus at the Temple (v. 14)

Having considered Passover, we now consider the central element in our passage: the Jerusalem temple. The religious importance and significance of the temple cannot be overestimated. It was the focal institution of Judaism, and this fact needs no lengthy statement here.²⁰ This is reflected most fundamentally in the fact that in the Hebrew Scriptures the temple was commonly described as בית יהוה (“the house of the LORD”) (e.g., 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 5:3–5 [MT 5:17–19]; 6:2, 37) and תבי האלהים (“the house of God”) (e.g., 1 Chr 9:11, 23; 26:20; 28:6, 10; Ezra 3:8–9; Neh 13:4, 9; cf. Ps 5:8; 135:1–2).

But not all Jews during the Second Temple period accepted and honored the actual Jerusalem temple. For instance, the Qumran community, convinced that the current temple and its leadership were corrupt, did not participate in the temple services, adopted an interim mode of worship and life that did not include animal sacrifices (1QS 9:4–5; Josephus, *A.J.* 18.15.18–19), and awaited the

Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:345; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 39). The description might also have been intended for the benefit of Gentile readers (so, e.g., Bernard, *Gospel*, 1:89; Morris, *Gospel*, 169).

²⁰ See, e.g., Shmuel Safrai, “The Temple,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*, CRINT 1/2 (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum / Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1987), 865–907; Sanders, *Judaism*, 51–72; N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, COQG 1 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992), 224–26; Margaret Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (London: SPCK, 1991), passim; Gregory Stevenson, *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation*, BZBW 107 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 115–82; Timothy Scott Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity*, WUNT 2/291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 14–20.

establishment of a new temple (11QTemple). We know through Josephus that there existed a rival temple at Leontopolis, Egypt, founded by a Zadokite priest (*B.J.* 1.1.1 §33; 7.10.2–3 §§ 423–36). The Samaritans rejected the Jerusalem temple in favor of their own on Mt. Gerizim (cf. John 4:20). But these instances notwithstanding, on the whole, mainstream Judaism continued to espouse the same temple theology that had already existed during the first temple. For instance, Josephus believed that the temple embodied the worship of the one true God by the people of God (*C. Ap.* 2.193). It was God’s dwelling place, into which God had sent a portion of his Spirit (*A.J.* 8.114, 131).²¹

In our passage, in v. 14 the word used for the temple is *ἱερόν*, a term which literally means “holy place.”²² *ἱερόν* is a broad term: unless otherwise limited by context, it has in mind the whole temple complex, including the entire precinct with its buildings, courts, and so on.²³ But its meaning in 2:14 is narrower: it refers specifically to the so-called “Court of the Gentiles.”²⁴ It is here where Jesus encounters merchants, moneychangers, and sacrificial animals. In 2:15 *ἱερόν* occurs again (with the same meaning), when Jesus drives the sellers and the animals *ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ*. Our passage also uses another word for temple, *ναός*,²⁵ which will be discussed below.

According to 2:14, Jesus finds in the temple precincts people who are selling cattle (*βόας*), sheep (*πρόβατα*), and doves (*περιστεράς*), and the money changers seated at their tables. Two elements are alluded to here that are fundamental to the Jewish religion and temple cult: the sacrificial worship and the temple tax. Sacrifice is the most prominent feature of the worship at the temple.²⁶ It entails the

²¹ In his essay on the opposition to the temple during the time of Jesus, Craig A. Evans has this to say: “The overall Jewish view of the Temple as a divinely given institution was undoubtedly positive” (“Opposition to the Temple: Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth [New York: Doubleday, 1993], 235).

²² LSJ, p. 822.

²³ So BDAG, p. 470. L&N (§7.16) write: “With the exception of *ἱερόν* in Ac 19.27 (a reference to the temple of Artemis in Ephesus), *ἱερόν* in the NT refers to the temple in Jerusalem, including the entire temple precincts with its buildings, courts, and storerooms.”

²⁴ So, e.g., Bernard, *Gospel*, 1:89; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:115; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:346.

²⁵ *Τέμενος*, another word for temple, does not occur in our passage.

²⁶ Margaret Barker points out that sacrifice “was the central act of Israel’s cult” (*Gate of Heaven*, 32). Jacob Neusner writes: “Where heaven and earth intersect, *at the altar*, whence the

sacrificing, not merely slaughtering,²⁷ of an animal for the sake and on behalf of the worshiping individual or community.²⁸ The Torah (see Lev 1–7) mandates that, for sacrificial animals, only cattle, sheep, goats, doves or pigeons are acceptable. Worshipers who could not afford quadrupeds may offer doves or pigeons instead (Lev 5:7).

The Torah (see Exod 30:11–16; cf. Neh 10:32; Matt 17:24–27; Josephus, *B.J.* 7.218; *A.J.* 3.194–96; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.78) also mandates every Jewish male, twenty years old and over, to pay the annual half-shekel temple tax.²⁹ This was the most significant source of income for the temple,³⁰ and “was chiefly utilized to defray the expenses of the daily burnt-offering and of all the sacrifices in general made in the name of the people, as well as for other daily purposes”³¹ (see Neh 10:32–33;³² *m. Šeqal.* 4:1–3). That payment of this tax was observed in the time of Jesus, both in Palestine and in the Diaspora, we have evidence (Matt 17:24–25; Josephus, *A.J.* 18.9.1; *B.J.* 6.6).³³

flames rising from burning meat, grain, oil, wine, and above all, blood, from fires burning day and night ascend toward heaven, there in the fragrance of incense and in clouds of smoke, *Israel encounters God*” (*EJud* 4:2361; italics added).

²⁷ Lev 17:3–4 requires that all animal offerings be sacrificed, rather than simply slaughtered.

²⁸ Reid explains, “Some sacrifices were occasional, called forth by particular sins or blessings or deliverances, and others were regularly prescribed, such as the daily morning and evening sacrifices, the weekly Sabbath sacrifices, the monthly new-moon sacrifices, or the yearly Passover and Day of Atonement sacrifices” (“Sacrifice and Temple Service,” in *DNTB*, p. 1038).

²⁹ To be paid in the month of Adar (February–March) (*m. Šeqal.* 1:1, 3). The standard currency for this tax, and for all other payments and donations to the temple, was a Tyrian coinage of silver (*t. Ketub.* 13:3; *m. Bek.* 8:7).

³⁰ So Reid, “Sacrifice,” 1045.

³¹ Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, rev. and ed. by Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, Matthew Black; gen. ed. Pamela Vermes; 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–1987), 2:272.

³² Nehemiah lists the following for which the temple tax was used: “the rows of bread, the regular grain offering, the regular burnt offering, the sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed festivals, the sacred donations, and the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.”

³³ The Qumran community, however, maintained that the tax should be paid only once in a lifetime, as opposed to annually (4Q159 2:6–7; see discussion in Schürer, *History*, 2:271 n. 52). On the question of Jesus’ attitude to the tax, based on Matt 17:24–27 (the only NT text that explicitly speaks on the matter), although Jesus himself paid it, it appears that he had misgivings about it (see Evans, “Opposition,” 243–44). But he still paid it so as not to give offense. For the view that Jesus considered the tax inappropriate see Richard Bauckham, “The coin in the fish’s mouth,” in *Gospel Perspectives VI: The Miracles of Jesus*, ed. D. Wenham and C. Blomberg (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986), 219–52; idem., “Jesus’ Demonstration in the Temple,” in *Law and Religion*:

The trade of sacrificial animals and the money changing services at the Court of the Gentiles, rather than elsewhere, could be legitimately faulted.³⁴ But no doubt many worshipers would have been helped by the availability of these services at the temple premises. Not all worshipers were able to bring their own sacrificial animals – which had to be up to the approved standards – to the temple. Even Jerusalemites, who needed to make a sacrificial offering but did not have an unblemished animal in their possession, would need some way of procuring one that met the standards. It was a convenience to be able to purchase clean animals right at the temple courts. This could not be truer for pilgrim-worshipers coming from Galilee or even from farther afield in the Diaspora.

The same observation could be said of the money-changing services. The temple tax must be paid, but only in the acceptable currency, which was in Tyrian coinage (*t. Ketub.* 13:3; *m. Bek.* 8:7). Worshipers carrying many different coins needed help to have those coins exchanged for the acceptable ones. Thus there were moneychangers in the Court of the Gentiles, sitting at their tables, offering services for a fee.³⁵

When the Johannine Jesus arrived at the temple,³⁶ those two basic elements of the Jewish cult greeted him. If he were like any other pilgrim-worshiper, he

Essays on the Place of the Law in Israel and Early Christianity, ed. Barnabas Lindars (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 73–4.

³⁴ As Craig S. Keener observes, “[T]he commercial activity in the outer court [the Court of the Gentiles] ... risked marginalizing Gentile visitors’ worship of Israel’s God” (*The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009], 293).

³⁵ According to the Mishnah (*m. Šeqal.* 1:3), moneychangers set up their tables in the temple three weeks before the Passover (on 25 Adar) and, presumably, remained there for a week until 1 Nisan, when payments were to be made (cf. *Šeqal.* 3:1–3). It is not just the tax payments of individuals that must be converted to the accepted currency, but also collected payments of big quantities coming from diaspora communities (see *Let. Aris.* 40; Josephus, *A.J.* 14.7.2 §§110–14; 16.2.3–4 §§28–41). Barrett (*Gospel*, 197) suggests 2–4 percent of service fee, but he cites no evidence for it.

³⁶ Of course participants in the feast (or any worshiper for that matter) who are ritually impure may not enter the temple without first having gone through the normal purification process. For instance, a person who has had contact with the dead, whether human or animal, has become ritually impure (*Num* 19:11) and needs to be purified. The purification ritual for this impurity is prescribed in *Num* 19:17–19. A ritually clean man takes the ashes of a red heifer, mixes them with water from a spring or running stream, and, using a hyssop branch, sprinkles the mixture upon the impure person. Sprinkling is done on the third and seventh days (purification takes seven days). On the seventh day, the impure person purifies himself or herself by bathing and washing clothes. (See Sanders’s helpful description of a pilgrim-family who goes to the Jerusalem

would consider – if he had money – purchasing a sacrificial lamb. If his money was not enough for a lamb, he could buy a pair of doves. Since he was an adult Jewish male, he needed to pay the annual temple tax of half a shekel. If he needed, he could have a coin exchanged for the acceptable currency and pay his tax. But Jesus does neither of these,³⁷ as vv. 15–16 (to be discussed next) strongly suggest. This is not surprising to the reader, in the light of the Christological identity set out in John 1. As has been said, Jesus is no mere ordinary pilgrim-worshiper. He is the incarnate *Logos* of God. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We now consider what he does upon seeing the trade of sacrificial animals and the money-changing services.

5.2.2.4. *Jesus “Empties” the Temple (2:15–16)*

This is what the Johannine Jesus does when he sees the trade of sacrificial animals and the money-exchange in the temple precincts:

¹⁵καὶ ποιήσας φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων πάντας ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τὰ τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας, καὶ τῶν κολλυβιστῶν ἐξέχεεν τὸ κέρμα καὶ τὰς τραπέζας ἀνέτρεψεν, ¹⁶καὶ τοῖς τὰς περιστερὰς πωλοῦσιν εἶπεν· ἄρατε ταῦτα ἐντεῦθεν, μὴ ποιεῖτε τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου οἶκον ἐμπορίου.

¹⁵And, making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He instructed those who were

temple for a national feast and observes the processes required for ritual purity [*Judaism*, 112–14]). According to Philo, in observance of the law the ritually impure worshiper should “stay outside [the temple] for seven days and be twice sprinkled on the third and seventh day, and after that, when he has bathed himself, it gives him full security to come within and offer his sacrifice” (*Spec. Laws* 1.261; see also Josephus, *B.J.* 6.290). FG appears to reflect knowledge of this Jewish practice. For instance, the evangelist records in 11:55: “Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves” (ἵνα ἀγνίσωσιν ἑαυτοὺς). In John 18, during Jesus’ trial before Pilate, the Ἰουδαῖοι consciously do not enter Pilate’s headquarters “so as to avoid ritual defilement (ἵνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν) and to be able to eat the Passover.” But FE does not say whether Jesus observed any of these rituals.

³⁷ This is not arguing from silence. As vv. 15–16 explicitly say, Jesus does the exact opposite: instead of buying a sacrificial animal, he drives all of the animals out of the temple. Instead of exchanging a coin, he scatters the monies on the floor and overturns the moneychangers’ tables.

selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!”

Jesus’ “protest” is composed of three interconnected acts, the third of which is an utterance. First, in v. 15a, Jesus, using a whip of cords, drives *all* – including the sheep and the cattle – out of the temple.³⁸ The scope and force of *πάντας* (masculine) must be observed: it pertains to the traders, including their sacrificial animals (cattle and sheep).³⁹ One may get the impression from v. 15a that Jesus whipped both the traders and their animals out of the temple. But the evangelist probably did not mean to say that.⁴⁰ Since the idea of Jesus using violent force upon people does not cohere with the overall portrait of him in the Gospel, it

³⁸ As commentators regularly mention (e.g., Barrett, *Gospel*, 197–98; Lindars, *Gospel*, 138–39; Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 230), the syntax of the Greek in v. 15a is complicated. But the core of the sentence itself is clear: *πάντας ἐξέβαλεν* (lit., “all he drove out”). But what does *πάντας*, which is masculine plural, refer to? At first sight it seems to refer to all those mentioned in v. 14: “people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.” However, not all of these items grammatically match *πάντας*. The accusative participle *τοὺς πωλοῦντας* (“those who were selling”), the noun *βόας* (“cattle”), and the accusative phrase *τοὺς κερματιστὰς καθήμενους* (“the moneychangers seated at their tables”) do match *πάντας*, but *πρόβατα* (neuter) and *περιστεράς* (feminine) do not. Moreover, according to vv. 15b–16, although Jesus has driven “all” out of the temple courts (so at v. 15a), actually the moneychangers (v. 15b) and the dove sellers and their doves (v. 16) are still inside the temple courts. In short, *πάντας* in v. 15a has a narrower referent and does not necessarily include all those mentioned in v. 14. It certainly does not include those items mentioned in vv. 15b–16 as still remaining inside the temple courts. If we separate these items from the list in v. 14, what remains (people selling cattle and sheep and their animals) seems to me to be the referent of *πάντας* in v. 15a. This appears to be confirmed by the mention of the qualifying phrase *τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας* in v. 15a (a phrase which has already been mentioned in v. 14, though in a reverse order: *βόας καὶ πρόβατα*).

³⁹ See previous note.

⁴⁰ There are many commentators (e.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 1:115: “Seemingly Jesus used the whip on the merchants” [also]) and Bible translations (e.g., NJB, NKJV, GNB, LB) that suppose that Jesus whipped both the sellers and their animals out of the temple courts. But the syntax of v. 15a itself does not require that conclusion (again see n. 38). While *πάντας ἐξέβαλεν* means that Jesus *drove* out of the courts both the sellers and the animals, the fact that the sellers themselves are not explicitly mentioned (again) in v. 15a but are simply alluded to in the pronoun *πάντας*, plus the fact that “the sheep and cattle” are mentioned again, seems to indicate, in my view, that the use of violent force associated with the whip has been directed only upon the animals. If the evangelist wanted to mean that the sellers also were object of the whipping, why did he only mention explicitly the sheep and the cattle in v. 15a? Thus a better conclusion seems to be that while Jesus drove *all* (both the sellers and their animals) out of the temple courts, it was only the animals on whom Jesus used the whip.

seems best to understand Jesus as using the whip only upon the sheep and the cattle.⁴¹

Second, in v. 15b Jesus directs his attention to the moneychangers. He empties their tables by pouring out the coins and then turns those empty tables upside down. That suggests a “total halt” to the money-changing operations and, in turn, to the collection of the payments for the temple tax. Third, there still remain the dove sellers and their doves. So in v. 16a Jesus commands the sellers to take the birds out of the temple. Assuming that the sellers obeyed Jesus’ command, the consequence is “total paralysis” of the temple cult: no sacrificial animals and no temple tax.

Before going on to the third act of Jesus’ protest (v. 16b), I want to look more closely at a key element of Jesus’ actions – the driving out of *all* the sacrificial animals from the temple – and the important connection it may have with the Passover feast. As I have pointed out above, the temple incident is encapsulated within two references to the Passover: in 2:13 and 2:23. Thus, when the evangelist mentions βόας, πρόβατα, and περιστερὰς being sold in the temple precincts (2:14), the connection seems to be mainly, though not exclusively, with Passover sacrifice.

In Exod 12 the Passover sacrifice was a lamb (πρόβατα) from the sheep or from the goats (vv. 3, 5). In Deut 16:2, reflecting later practice, what maybe offered for the Passover is no longer limited to πρόβατα but may now also come from the herd (βόας). The doves are not really connected with Passover sacrifice, but they are some of the animals that the Torah accepts for other sacrificial purposes (e.g., Lev 1:14–17; 12:6–8). Going back to the temple incident, we note that the sacrificial animals Jesus finds in the temple precincts are mentioned in this order: βόας, πρόβατα, and περιστερὰς (v. 14). At first sight it seems that this order simply reflects what Jesus would have seen first, second, and third upon entering the temple courts. Βόας are big animals, so Jesus sees them first. Περιστερὰς are small (they were probably kept in cages), so Jesus sees them last. But the evangelist

⁴¹ So, e.g., Mark R. Bredin, “John’s Account of Jesus’ Demonstration in the Temple: Violent or Nonviolent?,” *BTB* 33 (2003): 46–7; N. Clayton Croy, “The Messianic Whippersnapper: Did Jesus Use a Whip on People in the Temple (John 2:15)?,” *JBL* 128 (2009): 555–68; Andy Alexis-Baker, “Violence, Nonviolence and the Temple Incident in John 2:13–15,” *BibInt* 20 (2012): 73–96.

alters this order when he describes Jesus' driving the animals out of the temple (v. 15a). He first mentions πρόβατα, followed by βόας, and περιστερὰς is mentioned separately in v. 16. Given two options of interpreting this as either significant or insignificant, I think that the Passover context makes it significant. As has been said, πρόβατα and βόας are the two animals acceptable for Passover sacrifice, and these are precisely the animals that Jesus vigorously (even violently) drives out of the temple. Πρόβατα receives pride of place because this was the only allowed sacrificial animal during the historic, first Passover in Egypt. That Jesus drives out βόας also is important and significant because later practice allowed cattle (in addition to πρόβατα) to be accepted for Passover sacrifice. Deut 16:2 is worth quoting: "You shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the LORD your God, from the flock and the herd (πρόβατα καὶ βόας), at the place that the LORD will choose as a dwelling for his name." This is precisely how Jesus drives them out: πρόβατα καὶ βόας.

Second, Jesus does not by himself take out of the temple the doves but tells the sellers to do so. This may be because if the birds were kept in cages, Jesus would surely need lots of hands to take them out. But the fact that Jesus also wants the birds to be taken out of the temple suggests that he is concerned about the "stoppage" of the whole cult itself, and he does so on this most important occasion of the Passover. The inevitable question of course is, what will happen next, now that Jesus has "emptied" the temple of all the sacrificial animals? Is the evangelist trying to tell us that Jesus himself, whom he twice calls "the Lamb of God" (1:29, 36), is or will be (in some way) the sacrificial victim (in particular, the Passover lamb)? An affirmative answer to this second question appears to me to be defensible, as I will attempt to demonstrate below.

I now proceed to the third act of Jesus' protest, which consists in his utterance in v. 16b: μὴ ποιεῖτε τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου οἶκον ἐμπορίου ("Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"). The earlier actions of Jesus may have given the impression that he is opposed not just to the trade in the Court of the Gentiles but also to the cult itself. For, does not the "emptying" of the temple (of the sacrificial animals and the tax) come across as an attack on the cult itself? Has he not, by

driving out the sacrificial animals, deliberately disrupted the sacrificial worship? Yet in v. 16b Jesus seems to espouse a positive view of the temple, when he calls it *ὁ οἶκος τοῦ πατρὸς μου*.

As mentioned above, that the temple was the house of God was already the common temple theology in OT times. Apparently the Johannine Jesus shares this view, except that in his case the temple is the house of *his* Father. Does the Johannine Jesus, then, have a contradictory or inconsistent outlook toward the temple? There seems to be no contradiction or inconsistency, in my view. It may not be accurate and/or appropriate to describe the Johannine Jesus' outlook to the temple as one of either for or against. Rather, it seems to be characterized by the awareness that he is himself the true temple of God (see, e.g., 1:14; 2:19, 21) (to be explained below). With Jesus' incarnation (and its climax in the cross-and-resurrection), the Jerusalem temple has been replaced and superseded.⁴² Jesus' protest in the temple courts may be seen as a symbolic enactment of that fulfillment and/or supersession. Yet Jesus can still call it *ὁ οἶκος τοῦ πατρὸς μου* as long as that description is understood from a qualified perspective. In what follows I suggest a few elucidations on what this qualified perspective entails.

First, biblical and extra-biblical sources tell us that the notion of the temple as God's "house" was understood in the light of the tension between the immanent and transcendent presence of God. The temple is God's house, yet that is not to say that God is circumscribed there. By being truly present in the temple, God has not thereby become small, losing his otherness and transcendence. We get a clear sense of this tension in Solomon's prayer of dedication for the first temple:

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? *Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built!* Regard your servant's prayer and his plea, O LORD my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today; that your eyes may be open night and day toward *this house*, the place of which you said, "My name shall be there" ... Hear the plea of your servant and of your people when they pray toward this place; O hear in *heaven your dwelling place*; heed and forgive. (1 Kgs 8:27, 29–30; cf. 2 Chr 6:18–21)

⁴² See, e.g., Dodd, *Interpretation*, 300–02; Lee, "Paschal Imagery," 20.

In the NT, in Acts 7:47–50, Stephen refers to Solomon building a “house” (οἶκος) for God, but Stephen quickly qualifies this by saying: ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὁ ὑψιστος ἐν χειροποιήτοις κατοικεῖ (“Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands”). Then he quotes Isa 66:1–2 to support his point.⁴³ Josephus too knew the tension between God’s immanent and transcendent presence in relation to the temple (*A.J.* 8.4.2–3).⁴⁴ In light of this, we may not take Jesus’ description of the temple as his Father’s house in an absolute sense.

Secondly, if the temple is the house of Jesus’ Father, does it not in itself constitute a reason for Jesus’ anger when he sees it being abused and misused? Does it not in itself constitute a warrant for his attempt at “cleansing” (to use a traditional term) it? The Johannine Jesus himself thinks that by the trade going on at the temple precincts the Ἰουδαῖοι have made his Father’s house a marketplace (ἐμπόριον). Thus it appears that Jesus has done what a good son is supposed to do in a similar situation: to act in the interest of his Father.

The third qualification may be expressed in terms of temple symbolism. The temple is a material reality that symbolizes a greater reality.⁴⁵ Two symbolic construals of the temple existed during the Second Temple period: (1) the temple

⁴³ Isa 66:1–2: “Thus says the Lord: Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is my resting place? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine. But this is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit, who trembles at my word.”

⁴⁴ In *A.J.* 8.4.2–3, Josephus describes the dedication of the Solomonic temple. He refers to the descent of a thick cloud upon the Ark in the temple. Of this cloud Josephus says: “[I]t produced in the minds of all ... an impression and belief that God had descended into the temple and had gladly made His abode there.” Then Josephus paraphrases Solomon’s prayer of dedication, a part of which says: “I entreat Thee also to send some portion of Thy spirit to dwell in the temple, that Thou mayest seem to us to be on earth as well. For to Thee even the whole vault of heaven and all its host is but a small habitation—how much less this poor temple! Nonetheless I pray Thee to guard it for ever from sacking by our enemies, as Thine temple, and to watch over it as Thine own possession” (Thackeray, LCL).

⁴⁵ This is not unlike the concept of *σημεῖον*, by which FE consistently refers to the revelatory and authenticating messianic deeds of Jesus. The Greek word for symbol is *σύμβολον*, which comes from the verb *συμβάλλω*, to “throw together, dash together; bring together, unite” (LSJ, p. 1674). The noun *σύμβολον* refers to “each of the halves or corresponding pieces of an *ἀστράγαλος* or other object, which two *ξένοι*, or any two contracting parties, broke between them, each party keeping one piece, in order to have proof of the identity of the presenter of the other.” It also refers to “any token serving as proof of identity” (LSJ, p. 1676). According to Craig R. Koester (*Symbolism*, 4) a symbol is “an image, an action, or a person that is understood to have transcendent significance.”

symbolizes the cosmos,⁴⁶ and (2) it is an analogue to a temple located in heaven.⁴⁷ FE espouses neither of these views but, rather, advances his own symbolic understanding of the temple in terms of Christology.

The temple, which is God’s “house” in a qualified sense, symbolizes Jesus, who is the “temple” of God in an absolute sense. Arguably the most significant statement of this claim is made in 1:14a, where the evangelist expresses the incarnation of the eternal Logos of God in terms of tabernacle: *καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν* (“And the Word became flesh and lived among us”). The important word here is *ἐσκήνωσεν*. As is well known, the verb *σκηνώω* (“live, settle, take up residence”⁴⁸) has its nominative counterpart in *σκηνή*,⁴⁹ which is used in the LXX to refer to Yahweh’s tabernacle (*ἡ σκηνή τοῦ μαρτυρίου* [“the tent of the testimony”] in, e.g., Exod 27:21; 29:4; Lev 1:1; Num 1:1). It is worth noting that the purpose why Yahweh commanded the Israelites to make the tabernacle (MT: *מִקְדָּשׁ*; LXX: *ἀγίασμα*) was so that he might dwell (MT: *יָשַׁב*; LXX: *ὀφθῆσομαι*) among them (Exod 25:8 [LXX 25:7]). In the next verse (Exod 25:9 [LXX 25:8]) this sanctuary is called *מִשְׁכַּן* in Hebrew (which is kindred to the verb *יָשַׁב* in the previous verse) and *σκηνή* in the LXX.

That Yahweh would, through this sanctuary, tabernacle among Israel is reiterated in Exod 29:43–46:

I will meet with the Israelites there, and it shall be sanctified by my glory; I will consecrate the tent of meeting (*τὴν σκηνήν τοῦ μαρτυρίου*) and the altar ... I will dwell (*יָשַׁב*) among the Israelites, and I will be their God. And they

⁴⁶ Evidence for this view exists in the writings of Josephus, Philo, rabbinic literature, and elsewhere. For instance, Josephus in *B.J.* 5:212–13 interprets the veil hanging above the temple gate as symbolizing the universe. In *B.J.* 5:218 he interprets the twelve loaves on the table as symbolizing the zodiac and the months, and the *menorah* as symbolizing the seven planets. For a helpful summary of the evidence see Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 114–28.

⁴⁷ Evidence for this view is found in apocalypses, liturgical texts, rabbinic literature and elsewhere. For example, 1 En. 1–36; T. Levi 3:2–8; 8:1–19; b. Hag. 12b; b. Sanh. 94b; b. Menah 110; y. Ber. 4:5, 8c/40–41. For a helpful summary of the evidence see Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 128–42.

⁴⁸ BDAG, p. 929.

⁴⁹ BDAG, p. 928: “1b: of a movable cultic tent—Yahweh’s tabernacle”; L&N §7.17): “the relatively large tent used as a central place of worship by the Jews prior to the building of the Temple.”

shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell (יָשַׁב) among them; I am the Lord their God.

The association of Yahweh's dwelling among the Israelites with the tabernacle was eventually transferred to the temple, when the latter was built during Solomon's reign (1 Kgs 8:12–13, 29; 2 Chr 6:1–2, 6, 9, 20). I have cited above sufficient OT passages that describe both the first and the second temples as “the house of the LORD.”

It is not just the verb *σκήνωσεν* that establishes an essential link between the incarnation of the eternal Logos with the dwelling of Yahweh among Israel through the tabernacle and the temple. The word *δόξα*, which occurs twice in John 1:14, also establishes that essential connection. For instance, when the tabernacle was erected and its equipment installed (Exod 40), “the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle (*δόξης κυρίου ἐπλήσθη ἡ σκηνή*). Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle (*δόξης κυρίου ἐπλήσθη ἡ σκηνή*)” (vv. 34–35). Note the emphasis on Yahweh's glory filling the tabernacle. The same phenomenon happened during the dedication of the Solomonic temple (1 Kgs 8; cf. 2 Chr 6). First Kings 8:6 reads: “Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place.” Then “when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD (*ὅτι ἐπλησεν δόξα κυρίου τὸν οἶκον*)” (vv. 10–11).⁵⁰

The “tabernacling” of the eternal Logos among the believers (the “we” of John 1:14) is no doubt of a far greater dimension than the dwelling of Yahweh with Israel successively through the tabernacle and the temple. For as the OT itself attests (as has been pointed out above), there is a sense in which Yahweh dwells and does not dwell in the temple which had been fashioned by human hands. But

⁵⁰ See also 1 Sam 4:11, 21–22; Ps 26:8 [LXX 25:8].

with the incarnation of the Logos, such a limiting qualification does not apply. Rather, the evangelist makes it clear from the beginning that the Logos which became flesh has eternally been with God and is in fact God (John 1:1–2). Thus the “tabernacling” of which the evangelist speaks is unprecedented and is of an absolute category. And so is the glory that accompanied that “tabernacling.”⁵¹ In light of these observations, the Johannine Jesus’ reference to the temple as “my Father’s house” (John 2:16b) is best understood as symbolic. The Jerusalem temple was a symbol of God’s presence among his people on earth. It was not the absolute presence of God among his people, but anticipated the fullness of God’s presence. That fullness came with the incarnation of the Logos (1:14). This is the key to what might, at first sight, seem to be contradictory and inconsistent outlook of Jesus to the temple: the one who attempted to put an end to the sacrificial worship (on the one hand) and who (on the other hand) called the temple the house of his Father is in fact the reality which the temple symbolized.⁵²

There is an allusion in Jesus’ words in v. 16b, *μὴ ποιεῖτε τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου οἶκον ἐμπορίου* (“Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!”), to the

⁵¹ In addition to 1:14, attention may also be called to 1:51, where Jesus tells Nathanael: “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” The discerning reader will find here an allusion to Jacob’s dream at Bethel (Gen 28), in which Jacob sees “a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it” (v. 12). In this dream Yahweh appears to Jacob and reassures him of his presence and promise (vv. 13–15). When Jacob wakes up, he says: “Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it ... How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God (בית אלהים; οἶκος θεοῦ), and this is the gate of heaven” (vv. 16–17). So Jacob calls the place Bethel (MT בית־אל; LXX οἶκος θεοῦ) (v. 19). Moloney observes that the main point of John 1:51 is to “assert that Jesus, the Son of Man, will be the place of heavenly revelation ... the disciples are told that they will see God’s revelation in the Son of Man” (*Son of Man*, 40). In addition, we must press the point in light of the Prologue: Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God because he is the incarnate Logos of God. If Jesus the Son of Man is the ultimate locus of God’s revelation (1:51), that can only be so because of who he is: he is the incarnate Logos of God, who fulfills all the symbolism of tabernacle and temple.

⁵² The subject of Jesus as the fulfillment and replacement of the temple (as well as of other institutions of Judaism) in FG has been investigated by a number of scholars in recent years. See, e.g., Alan R. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus’ Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John*, JSNTSup 220 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001); Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, PBM (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).

prophecy of Zech 14:21b:⁵³ “There shall no longer be a כנעני in the house of the LORD on that day.”⁵⁴

The word כנעני has been used in the Hebrew Scriptures in two ways. First, it is used for an inhabitant of the land of Canaan, before the Israelites conquered and occupied it: thus, “Canaanite” (e.g., Gen 12:6; 38:2; Num 21:1; 33:40; Josh 13:4). Second, it is used to mean trader or merchant (e.g., Job 40:30; 41:6; Prov 31:24; Isa 23:8).

Which meaning is intended in Zech 14:21b? The LXX prefers the former, translating כנעני with Χαναναῖος.⁵⁵ Older English translations of the Bible do the same. Thus the KJV has: “In that day there shall be no more Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts” (so also ASV, NASB). But other translations prefer the latter meaning. So, for instance, in his Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, Aquila (ca. 100 CE) renders כנעני with μετὰβολος, a word which refers to an “agent promoting production and subsequent distribution or marketing of a product.”⁵⁶ Jerome translates it with *mercator*, which means merchant or trader.⁵⁷ Many newer Bible translations also prefer the second meaning. For instance, the RSV has: “And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the LORD of hosts on that day” (so also NRSV, NIV). So is it “Canaanite” or “trader”?

Apparently the “Canaanite” option does not make sense in the context of Zech 14:21b. For why should a Canaanite (or the Canaanites) be excluded from the eschatological temple when in fact the prophet has just invited “all the nations” and “all the families of the earth” to go up to Jerusalem “to worship the King, the LORD of hosts” (vv. 16–17)? The meaning “trader” makes good sense in Zech 14:21, particularly in light of the festal and temple context of the surrounding

⁵³ The NA²⁸ indicates in the margin of John 2:16 that it alludes to Zech 14:21. See also, among others, Dodd, *Interpretation*, 300; Maarten J. J. Menken, “Minor Prophets in John’s Gospel,” in *The Minor Prophets in the New Testament*, ed. M. J. J. Menken and S. Moyise; LNTS 377 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 92–93. Carson (*Gospel*, 179) suggests an additional allusion to Mal 3:1, 3: “Then suddenly the LORD you are seeking will come to his temple ... he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.”

⁵⁴ MT: ולא יהיה כנעני עוד בבית יהוה צבאות ביום ההוא

⁵⁵ LXX: καὶ οὐκ ἔσται Χαναναῖος οὐκέτι ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ κυρίου παντοκράτορος ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.

⁵⁶ GELS, p. 453.

⁵⁷ Vulg.: *Et non erit mercator ultra in domo Domini exercituum in die illo.*

verses.⁵⁸ There will no longer be traders in the eschatological temple because they (i.e., their services) will no longer be needed. “On that day ... the cooking pots in the house of the LORD shall be as holy as the bowls in front of the altar; and every cooking pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the LORD of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and use them to boil the flesh of the sacrifice” (Zech 14:20–21a).⁵⁹ Moreover, “the temple compound, which was a place of economic transaction, would no longer be such.”⁶⁰

Just as Zechariah 14:21b anticipates the disappearance of traders from the temple, so Jesus drives out all the traders and their sacrificial animals and the moneychangers from the temple courts, and he charges them: “Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.” Thus it appears that Zechariah’s prophecy finds fulfillment in Jesus’ actions in the temple.

5.2.3. What the Temple Incident Means Thus Far⁶¹

Although a fuller statement of FE’s understanding of the temple incident awaits and requires analysis of 2:17–22, it is appropriate here to state tentatively what the

⁵⁸ So, e.g., Mark J. Boda, *The Book of Zechariah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 782.

⁵⁹ See discussion in H. J. de Jonge, “The Cleansing of the Temple in Mark 11:15 and Zechariah 14:21,” in *The Book of Zechariah and Its Influence*, ed. C. M. Tuckett (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003), 90.

⁶⁰ David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 160.

⁶¹ The diversity of scholarly opinions on the meaning of Jesus’ protest in the temple is well known. However, it is not my purpose here to detail these various views. For helpful summaries see Jostein Ådna, “Jesus and the Temple,” in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, ed. T. Holmén and S. E. Porter (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011), 2654–2665; E. P. Sanders, “Jerusalem and Its Temple in the Beginnings of the Christian Movement,” *Judaism* 46 (1997): 190–92; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, COQG 2 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 413–15. Ådna (ibid.) groups these views into two: (1) eschatological and (2) non-eschatological. Non-eschatological interpretations include: (1) a prophetic protest against deplorable conditions in the temple; (2) a protest against the desecration of the temple; (3) a protest against a nationalistic holiness ideology; and (4) an attempt to reform the temple cult in order to include all Israel. Eschatological interpretations include: (1) an act to establish the temple’s holiness; (2) a symbolic act pointing to the renewal of the temple, or to a new temple; (3) an act preparing Zion for the pilgrimage of the peoples; (4) a fulfillment of prophetic announcements; (5) a spiritualizing transcendence of the temple cult; and (6) an ultimate call for repentance at the threshold of the kingdom. This bewildering array of views suggests that the temple incident, reported by all the evangelists, may be polyvalent. Nonetheless my current focus is upon the Johannine perspective of the incident.

temple incident means thus far. Apparently the evangelist is not concerned with the question of how effectively Jesus' actions halted the operations of the temple.⁶² Granted, the Court of the Gentiles was vast and the traffic of people and animals was heavy and that Jesus' actions, no matter how zealous, most probably would not have covered the whole area.⁶³ It seems clear, rather, that the evangelist's concern lies with the symbolism of the act—its deeper and greater meaning and significance. Thus it is significant that the evangelist can describe the disruption of the temple operations as though it was total. As Mary Coloe writes:

The temple is emptied of its sacrificial animals ... the tables are cleared of coins then turned upside down ... Israel's sacred place is empty ... Dramatic tension is created through the juxtaposition of the emptied temple, the presence of Jesus already introduced to the reader as God's indwelling presence (1:1, 14, 18) and the words 'my Father's house.' In this scene Israel's temple physically surrounds and stands as symbol of the new meeting place between God and humanity.⁶⁴

That new meeting place, in fact the new "temple," which is Jesus himself, will be the subject of 2:18–22, to which I shall turn below.

In connection with the temple "cleansing" as a symbolic act, I would like to briefly discuss the question whether this incident is a *σημεῖον* or not. Not surprisingly this is a debated question mainly because of the related (and prior) debate on the definition, referent, and scope of the Johannine *σημεῖον*. Those who suppose that the Johannine *σημεῖον* equates to a miracle, and that the *σημεῖα* are the seven or eight miracles recounted in the Gospel, quite naturally reject the idea that the temple incident is a *σημεῖον*. However, as I have attempted to demonstrate in chs. 3–4 of this thesis, although the Johannine *σημεῖα* certainly include the miracles recounted at length, it seems clear that, from the perspective of the whole Gospel, and particularly in light of 12:37 and 20:30–31, the *σημεῖα* pertain inclusively to

⁶² The historicity of the incident is not my present concern.

⁶³ Witherington writes, "In view of the fact that the outer court of the temple was some 300 meters wide by 450 meters in length, and served as the marketplace for Jerusalem in various respects, it is unlikely that Jesus drove *everyone* out of the temple court" (*Wisdom*, 87; italics his).

⁶⁴ Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 81.

Jesus' deeds, miraculous or otherwise, which have been recorded in the Gospel. In the words of 20:31, these are the *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα*. If that is so, I see no reason why the temple "cleansing," which is undoubtedly a very significant act of Jesus, is not a *σημεῖον*.⁶⁵

Objections to this view, such as the usual remark that the word *σημεῖον* is not expressly used in connection with the temple "cleansing," do not carry weight. Those who raise this kind of objection should remember that, in fact, only four out of the seven or eight miracles, which have been widely and generally recognized as *σημεῖα*, are expressly called such. For instance, the healing of the cripple in John 5, which virtually all scholars regard as a *σημεῖον*, is not actually called a *σημεῖον*. Moreover, we must not discount the possibility that the plural *σημεῖα* in 2:23 may in fact include the temple "cleansing." The occurrence of the singular *σημεῖον* in 2:18 may also suggest that the temple "cleansing" is a *σημεῖον*, if the whole temple incident is correlated with the feeding miracle in John 6. In that passage (John 6), there is the feeding miracle, which is expressly called *σημεῖον* in v. 14. In the middle of John 6, the Galileans demand a *σημεῖον* (vv. 30–31), although they already saw the powerful *σημεῖον* of the feeding. Similarly, we can say that the Ἰουδαῖοι in 2:18 demand a *σημεῖον*, although Jesus has just performed the "σημεῖον" of the temple "cleansing."

That the temple "cleansing" is a *σημεῖον* seems to cohere with what we see as FE's interest in the symbolism of the incident. The imagery of the total disruption of the operations of the cult appears to signify the "end" (both in the sense of *telos* and replacement) of the temple and its cult.⁶⁶ Hopefully this will become clearer in the next verses.

⁶⁵ There have been a number of scholars who view the temple "cleansing" as a *σημεῖον*. Dodd (*Interpretation*, 303) writes: "[T]he miracle of Cana and the cleansing of the temple are *σημεῖα* which signify the same fundamental truth: that Christ has come to inaugurate a new order in religion." According to Tovey (*Narrative Art*, 241), the temple incident "forms part of a series of two signs (the miracle at Cana, the temple cleansing) which are followed by two significant discourses, one with a Jew (Nicodemus), the other with a Samaritan woman." So also Hunter, *Gospel*, 33; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 42; Carson, *Gospel*, 181; Köstenberger, "Seventh Johannine Sign," 87–103; idem., *John*, 102 n. 6.

⁶⁶ Is FG anti-Jewish and is Johannine Christology is supersessionist? These are contentious questions and cannot be dealt with here. See, e.g., Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and F.

5.3. Jesus' Response: The "Promise" of a σημεῖον (2:19–21)

We saw that Jesus' dramatic and provocative actions in the temple courts, during the Passover, have caused the Jewish authorities to confront him with a demand for a σημεῖον (2:18). We saw that the σημεῖον asked was nothing less than a miracle to corroborate the authority and status implied in his actions. Though Jesus does not say "no," he provides no miraculous σημεῖον either. Instead, he replies to them with this puzzling utterance: λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν ("Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up") (2:19).

Two initial observations on 2:18–19 are in order. First, there is a sense in which Jesus has refused the demand, and there is also a sense in which he has granted it. That is so because the Jewish demand really has two sides to it. On the one hand the Ἰουδαῖοι appear to have in mind that Jesus, by performing a miracle, should prove himself to them as some sort of God-sent prophet. This is not unlike the case of Moses, who performed miracles (MT: תִּיָא; LXX: σημεῖον) in order to convince the Israelites in Egypt that he was indeed a deliverer sent to them by Yahweh (Exod 4:1–9, 29–31). But there are two problems with this sort of demand. One, it is not the practice of Jesus to perform miracles merely to convince people to believe in him (cf. 4:48). Although σημεῖα can play a positive role for faith, ultimately genuine faith does not depend on σημεῖα.⁶⁷ Two, the demand presupposes that ultimately Jesus is merely a prophet, whose credentials must be verified through empirical evidence. From this perspective, the demand is inappropriate for Jesus.

Vandecasteele-Vanneuville, eds., *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001). I am of the view that FG's "anti-Judaism" and supersessionism is rooted in its Christology. In the words of Adele Reinhartz, "the Gospel's anti-Judaism is a by-product of the Evangelist's strong conviction regarding the identity and salvific role of Jesus, on the one hand, and his tendency to view not only attributes and actions but also communities in a polarized way, on the other" ("Jews' and Jews in the Fourth Gospel," in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, 225).

⁶⁷ For discussion of the role of σημεῖα for faith, see §4.5 above.

Second, Jesus' reply (v. 19), however, cannot really be categorized as a flat refusal of the demand.⁶⁸ It is in fact a positive reply. Thus, while he has refused to grant the *σημεῖον* desired by the Ἰουδαῖοι, he seems to be giving or, more precisely, “promising” a different sort of *σημεῖον*, one which the Ἰουδαῖοι have not thought about, but nevertheless one which will truly demonstrate his identity and status, not as a miracle worker or a prophet, but as ὁ χριστός, as ὁ λόγος ἐνσαρκός, and so forth. Therefore, I am of the view that even though Jesus' reply in 2:19 does not mention the word *σημεῖον*, Jesus' utterance provides, by way of promise, the *σημεῖον* which reveals the essence of his person and mission and justifies his provocative actions in the temple courts.⁶⁹

The promised *σημεῖον* in 2:19 has two components: (1) the destruction of the temple and (2) its subsequent rebuilding. Our task is twofold: first, we need to determine what is meant by temple and by the destruction and subsequent rebuilding of it; second, we need to interpret 2:19 in relation to Jesus' earlier actions (2:14–16) and of the evangelist's interpretive commentary in 2:21–22. But before I discuss these questions, it is helpful first to see how some scholars have interpreted this puzzling utterance of Jesus. I will briefly look at Bultmann's and Dodd's approaches and interpretations. I have chosen these two scholars not just because they are leaders in the field but also because they represent varying methodologies.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus flatly and bluntly refuses the request for a *σημεῖον*. For instance, the Gospel of Mark reports: “The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, asking him for a sign from heaven (ζητοῦντες παρ’ αὐτοῦ σημεῖον ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ), to test him (πειράζοντες αὐτόν). And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, ‘Why does this generation ask for a sign (τί ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη ζητεῖ σημεῖον)? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation’ (εἰ δοθήσεται τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ σημεῖον). And he left them” (8:11–13a). See also Matt 12:38–39; 16:1–4; Luke 11:16, 29.

⁶⁹ So, e.g., Bultmann (*Gospel*, 125) writes: “The destruction and the building of a new temple will be the *σημεῖον*”; Moloney (*Gospel*, 81–2): “Jesus' response to ‘the Jews’ must be understood as the promise of a ‘sign’”; Thompson (*John*, 73): “The sign that will be given to justify Jesus' demonstration in the temple is a sign of its destruction and subsequent rebuilding”; Ridderbos (*Gospel*, 117): “Jesus does respond with a pronouncement in which the prospect of such a ‘sign’ is held out to them.” However, none of these interpreters go on to systematically argue that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is the supreme *σημεῖον* in FG.

⁷⁰ Bultmann's concern is mainly diachronic and he uses source- and redaction-critical methodology, while Dodd focuses his interpretation and bases his conclusions on the text as it now stands.

In a move typical of him, Bultmann assigns 2:19 (as well as 2:14–16, 18) to a literary source,⁷¹ 2:13, 20–21 (and some smaller additions in vv. 15f.) to the evangelist, and 2:17, 22 to the evangelist or an ecclesiastical redactor. Bultmann writes: “The source had linked to the story of the cleansing of the temple the saying, which also occurs in Mk. 13.2 and Acts 6.14 simply as a threat of the *destruction of the temple*, and combined it with the prophecy of the *rebuilding of the temple* in three days, Mk. 14.58 (or Mt. 26.61); 15.29.”⁷²

This assertion betrays significant assumptions,⁷³ which I cannot deal with here. By breaking up the text and assigning the parts to three different successive hands (the source, the evangelist, and the redactor), Bultmann is able to find more than one perspective within the text. But clearly he is concerned mainly with the views of the source and of the evangelist.⁷⁴ Bultmann supposes that Jesus’ utterance in 2:19 refers (at the level of the source) literally to the temple in Jerusalem. The destruction and subsequent rebuilding that Jesus speaks of are prophecies of the destruction and subsequent rebuilding of the temple.⁷⁵ This, Bultmann claims, is the *σημείον* which Jesus provides in response to the demand of the *Ἰουδαῖοι*. Bultmann, however, fails to demonstrate why 2:19 should be interpreted literally (or only literally), and he has not addressed the possibility that “temple,” “destruction,” and “rebuilding” might be polyvalent terms even in the source. By ruling out any metaphorical meaning in Jesus’ words in 2:19, limiting the meaning only to the literal, Bultmann has driven a wedge between the alleged source and the evangelist. For it is unmistakable that the evangelist in vv. 20–21

⁷¹ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 122. The “source,” Bultmann maintains, was not the Synoptics, nor oral tradition, but a literary source, one which nevertheless “was almost certainly related to the Synoptic accounts” (*ibid.*).

⁷² *Ibid.*, 126 n. 1 (*italics his*).

⁷³ Bultmann assumes much when he says that the source added to the cleansing story the utterance about the temple’s destruction and rebuilding. Aside from the fact that the “source” is ultimately hypothetical, Bultmann presumes that he knows much about what the *original* temple cleansing story looked like. Bultmann also assumes much when he says the the utterance about the temple’s *destruction* and *rebuilding* originated disparately, which the source then combined in 2:19.

⁷⁴ The view of the redactor, in regard to the temple incident, does not seem to matter to Bultmann. This is not the case, however, with his treatment of other passages in FG. For instance, in his discussion of the Bread of Life discourse, Bultmann focuses on the views of the evangelist and of the redactor (*Gospel*, 218–37).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

has interpreted Jesus' utterance metaphorically: the "temple" refers to Jesus' body, and the "destruction" and subsequent "rebuilding" refer allusively to Jesus' death-and-resurrection. However, according to Bultmann this interpretation is secondary; it belongs to the evangelist, not to the source.⁷⁶

In contrast to Bultmann, Dodd interprets 2:19 metaphorically: "The destruction of the temple ... with its rebuilding is not (certainly is not in the evangelist's view) anything that actually happens: the expression is metaphorical, and stands for something quite different from the destruction and restoration of a building."⁷⁷ When Dodd says "not anything that actually happens," he means that 2:19 is not, and must not be construed as, a prophecy of a literal destruction and rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. What, then, is its metaphorical meaning? First, Dodd asserts that Jesus, by saying, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up," invites

his questioners to see in the actual occurrence of the Cleansing of the Temple the *σημεῖον* they desire. The purging of the temple—that is, the expulsion of the sacrificial animals from its courts—signifies the destruction and replacement of the system of religious observance of which the temple was the centre: a new 'temple' for an old one.⁷⁸

I concur with Dodd's assessment of the meaning of Jesus' protest at the temple courts (that it signifies the replacement of the Jerusalem temple with a new one, which is Jesus himself), and with qualification I agree that Jesus' actions are too meaningful not to be considered as a *σημεῖον*.⁷⁹ But Dodd's claim that Jesus in 2:19 invites the *Ἰουδαῖοι* to see his earlier actions as the desired *σημεῖον* is problematic. One problem is that Dodd assumes that the *Ἰουδαῖοι* have themselves witnessed Jesus' dramatic actions, whereas the text does not clearly say so. It is more likely

⁷⁶ Ibid., 126 n. 2.

⁷⁷ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 300–01.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 301.

⁷⁹ One may object by saying that *σημεῖον* is not actually applied to the temple cleansing. But this objection assumes that every "sign" must be explicitly called *σημεῖον*, whereas in fact (1) there are some "signs" in FG (e.g., the healing of the lame in John 5), which are not directly called *σημεῖον*, and (2) with regard to the temple incident, the summative mention of *σημεῖα* at 2:23 may include, but not be limited to, Jesus' dramatic actions in the temple courts.

that the Ἰουδαῖοι, meaning the temple authorities, did not themselves witness Jesus' actions, and their knowledge of what happened was through verbal reports. The second problem is that, granted that Jesus' protest is a σημεῖον, it is not at all certain that 2:19 is referring backward to it, rather than forward to a new and different σημεῖον. In my view, rather than pointing back, 2:19 appears more to be pointing forward and "promising" a future σημεῖον (more will be said on this).

The second metaphorical meaning is fundamentally connected with the first. Dodd is convinced that from the very start,⁸⁰ Jesus' utterance in 2:19 was "associated both with the idea of supersession of the old order of Jewish religion, and with the death of Jesus: with His death and, surely, with His resurrection."⁸¹ In other words, Dodd finds in 2:19 a metaphorical destruction of the old temple and its replacement by a new temple, in the person of Jesus, within the context of Jesus' death-and-resurrection.⁸² Thus Dodd can conclude (contra Bultmann):

The association, or identification, of the temple which is to be destroyed and raised up with the body of Christ is in no way forced upon the passage: it is implicit in the tradition; since the process by which the transition is made from the old to the new is identical with the process of Christ's death and resurrection. John has only made it explicit.⁸³

It is clear from this brief review that Bultmann and Dodd represent opposing approaches and interpretive conclusions with respect to the temple incident (focusing particularly on 2:19). Apart from the question of approach (in which I side with Dodd), there is the question of the interpretation of the terms ("temple," "destruction," and "rebuilding") in 2:19: are they literal (Bultmann) or metaphorical (Dodd)? There is also the question of how to relate 2:19 to the preceding and the following verses. Bultmann is unclear how he interprets 2:19 in

⁸⁰ Dodd (*Interpretation*, 302) connects Jesus' utterance in 2:19 with Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of the temple recorded by all the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 13:1-2; Matt 24:1-2; Luke 21:5-7) and with the testimony of false witnesses at Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:57-58; Matt 26:60-61). When he compares the Marcan and Johannine versions of the saying, Dodd finds John's version to be nearer to "primitive Semitic forms of the saying" (ibid., 302 n. 1). In other words, Dodd finds FG's version to be more original.

⁸¹ Ibid., 302.

⁸² Ibid., 301.

⁸³ Ibid., 302.

relation to Jesus' earlier actions. He sees the metaphorical interpretation of the evangelist in 2:20–21 as a later addition, superimposed upon an incident which in the source was meant literally.

5.3.1. The Two Components of the “Promised” *σημεῖον* (v. 19)

As has been mentioned, the “promised” *σημεῖον* in 2:19 has two essential components: the (1) destruction of the temple and (2) its subsequent rebuilding. The two are, in the nature of the case, logical, indispensable, and inseparable: the destruction occasions the rebuilding, and one is inconceivable without the other. The complete picture is not that of a torn temple only, but of a temple destroyed and rebuilt. And there is that temporal note: *ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις* (“in three days”). All this constitutes a unity, which is the “promised” *σημεῖον*. Based on the post-resurrection perspective of the evangelist, the destruction of the temple is a metaphorical expression for Jesus' death, and the subsequent rebuilding of the destroyed temple refers to Jesus' resurrection, accomplished in three days. Thus the *σημεῖον* that Jesus “promises” to the *Ἰουδαῖοι* is nothing less than his own death-and-resurrection, viewed as one complex event. In what follows I will attempt to elucidate on these two components.

5.3.1.1. *λύσατε τὸν ναόν* (v. 19a)

In 2:21–22 the evangelist has firmly enunciated his post-resurrection understanding of 2:19. But before I analyze the evangelist's post-resurrection view, it is important to perform a prior investigation, centered on the following two questions. First, what does the statement *λύσατε τὸν ναόν* mean in relation to and in the light of Jesus' earlier dramatic actions in the temple? Second, how might the Johannine Jesus' utterance have come across to his hearers, and how does it compare to the evangelist's post-resurrection understanding?

In my analysis of 2:14–16 above, it became clear that the Johannine Jesus, by driving out the traders with their sacrificial animals and the moneychangers from the temple courts (ἱερόν), appears to have attempted no less than a “stoppage” of the sacrificial worship in the temple. Such actions are symbolic of both the fulfillment and replacement of the temple cult. When Jesus tells the Ἰουδαῖοι in 2:19 to “destroy this temple,” such language unavoidably calls to mind his earlier dramatic actions. He seems to be verbalizing what his earlier actions have symbolized. But what does this “destruction” of the “temple” mean? Is it, as Bultmann claims, a prophecy of a future, literal destruction of the Jerusalem temple? Or is it, as Dodd claims, a metaphorical expression whose meaning is solely that enunciated by the evangelist in later verses? The answer, I think, is not a complete “either/or” but a qualified “both/and.”

The post-resurrection interpretation of the evangelist does not cancel out or contradict the probability that 2:19 from the beginning carried a particular reference to the physical temple, in terms of a prophecy concerning its future destruction. That Jesus prophesied the destruction of the temple is firmly established in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 13:1–2; Matt 24:1–2; Luke 21:5–6). But the phraseology of John 2:19a is clearly different from that of the Synoptics. It employs what Bultmann calls “the ironic imperative of prophetic style,”⁸⁴ a mode of expression found also in, e.g., Amos 4:4; Isa 8:9; Jer 7:21; and Matt 23:32.⁸⁵ By saying, λύσατε τὸν ναόν, Jesus is not literally commanding the Jewish authorities to destroy the temple; he is merely stating the inevitable fate of the Jerusalem temple, against the backdrop of the stubborn unbelief of the Ἰουδαῖοι in him who is in fact the true temple. In Beasley-Murray’s words, 2:19a “is an ironical call for them [the ‘Jews’] to carry on their behavior to its limit, which will end in the destruction of the temple of which they are guardians.”⁸⁶ When FG was written in post 70 CE,

⁸⁴ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 125.

⁸⁵ To quote two passages, here is Amos 4:4a: “Come to Bethel—and transgress; to Gilgal—and multiply transgression”; Matt 23:32: “Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors.” It is worth noting that this Matthean passage is followed right away by the prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem (23:37–39) and of the destruction of the temple (24:1–2).

⁸⁶ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 40.

the Jerusalem temple no longer stood and the cult was no more. Jesus' prophecy proved true.

With regard to how the hearers of the Johannine Jesus understood his utterance, it is similar to the other question of what the utterance meant to the hearers prior to the cross-and-resurrection, and this is to be distinguished from and compared with the later, post-resurrection interpretation of the evangelist. In 2:20 the Ἰουδαῖοι understood Jesus' words literally and were incredulous at Jesus' claim to rebuild in only three days a huge structure that had been in construction for forty-six years. It is interesting that they do not focus on 2:19a, the destruction of the temple, but upon 2:19b, the rebuilding of the temple in three days' time (2:19b will be discussed below). In regard to 2:19a, I have shown above that this verse, although the evangelist interprets it metaphorically, might also have the literal sense of being a prophecy concerning a future destruction of the physical temple. But the Johannine Ἰουδαῖοι do not pick up this point, when in fact they should have done so. For is it not a grave offense to speak against the temple, let alone prophesy its downfall?⁸⁷

There is no need for Bultmann's suggestion that the misunderstanding motif in 2:20 is an artificial device added later on by the evangelist in order to demonstrate the contrast between his post-resurrection understanding of Jesus' utterance and the (assumed) source's literalistic understanding of it. The misunderstanding in 2:20 is not an artificial device, and we have no basis to assume that it is only the Ἰουδαῖοι who took Jesus' words at an entirely literal level. The fact that it is only after Jesus' resurrection that FE came to a fuller understanding of Jesus' words (see v. 22) implies that he and the rest of the

⁸⁷ When the prophet Jeremiah prophesied against the temple and against Jerusalem (Jer 25:4–6), the temple authorities arrested him and sought his death: “You shall die! Why have you prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant?’” (vv. 8b–9). In Acts 6 the accusation of false witnesses against Stephen, which paved the way to his martyrdom, amounted to this: “This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us” (vv. 13–14). See also Acts 25:8; Josephus, *BJ*. 6.300–05.

disciples also initially took Jesus' words only at a purely literal level. They had as yet no idea that Jesus' words had a much deeper meaning and reality.

After the death-and-resurrection of Jesus, and in the light of these events, the evangelist grasped the deeper reality behind Jesus' enigmatic words. The evangelist writes: ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἔλεγεν περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ ("He was speaking of the temple of his body") (v. 21). The word *σῶμα* here can only refer to the physical body of Jesus. This word occurs six times in FG, and without exception it refers to Jesus' physical body. Its usage here in 2:19 is connected with death ("destroy this temple") and resurrection ("I will raise it up in three days"). Moreover, the remaining five occurrences are all in John 19–20, also in the context of Jesus' death-and-resurrection. In 19:31 the dead *σώματα* of Jesus and the two criminals crucified with him must not remain on the cross on the Sabbath. In 19:38 Pilate permitted Joseph of Arimathea to take Jesus' *σῶμα* away, and so the latter came and removed Jesus' *σῶμα*. In 19:40 Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took Jesus' *σῶμα* and prepared it for burial. Finally, in 20:12 Mary Magdalene saw that Jesus' *σῶμα* was no longer in the tomb.

The Greek word for "temple" in vv. 19–21 is *ναός*, a term which, in the NT, shares with *ἱερόν* the general meaning of "temple."⁸⁸ But the two terms are not entirely equivalent in meaning. If we compare the meanings of *ναός* and *ἱερόν* provided in LSJ,⁸⁹ we find that the former has the additional distinctive meanings of (1) "inmost part of a temple, shrine containing the image of the god"⁹⁰ and (2) "portable shrine carried in processions."⁹¹ BDAG's definition of *ναός* echoes the same point: "a place or structure specifically associated or set apart for a deity, who is frequently perceived to be using it as a dwelling."⁹² With regard to *ἱερόν*, BDAG points out that when it is used of the Jerusalem temple, it has in mind "the whole

⁸⁸ G. Schrenk, "ἱερόν," *TDNT* 3:232–33; O. Michel, "ναός," *TDNT* 4:882.

⁸⁹ Pp. 1160 and 822, respectively.

⁹⁰ E.g., Herodotus used *ναός* to refer to a temple in Babylon "wherein is a great image of Zeus sitting, made of gold, and by it is placed a large table of gold, and his footstool and seat are of gold also" (*Hist.* 1.183 [Godley, LCL]). See also Herodotus, *Hist.* 6.19; Xenophon, *Apol.* 15.

⁹¹ E.g., in *Hist.* 2.63 Herodotus used *ναός* to refer to "small shrine of wood" containing the image of a god in Papremis (in Egypt), which the devotees brought in procession.

⁹² BDAG, pp. 665–66.

temple precinct with its buildings, courts, etc.”⁹³ If it is permissible to find a heuristic analogy from the structure of the tabernacle and of the temple in the OT, the distinction between “the holy place” (שֶׁהַקֹּדֶשׁ; τὸ ἅγιον) and “the Holy of Holies” (קֹדֶשׁ הַקֹּדֶשִׁים; τὸ ἅγιον τῶν ἁγίων) may be helpful.⁹⁴ In the case of the tabernacle, the said two places were to be separated by a curtain (Exod 26:31–33), and the Ark of the Covenant was to be placed in “the Holy of Holies” (v. 34). It was there at the Ark in the Holy of Holies where Yahweh has promised Moses: “There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the covenant, I will deliver to you all my commands for the Israelites” (Exod 25:22). With regard to the Solomonic temple, we know that it was most commonly called “the house of the Lord.”⁹⁵ But the distinction we saw in the tabernacle also applies here. Located in the “innermost part” of the temple was the “inner sanctuary” (NRSV) (פְּנִימָה הַבַּיִת; ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ οἴκου), where the Ark of the Covenant was housed. This “inner sanctuary” is in 1 Kgs 8:6 called “the holy of holies” (שֶׁהַקֹּדֶשׁ הַקֹּדֶשִׁים; τὸ ἅγιον τῶν ἁγίων). This distinction further applies to the second temple, although a major difference is that “the holy of holies” of the second temple did not have the Ark of the Covenant,⁹⁶ for it had disappeared when the Babylonians destroyed the first temple in 587 BCE. Using this analogy, whereas both ναός and ἱερόν can refer to the temple, only the former can distinctively refer to what in the OT is known as the “holy of holies.”

FE appears to reflect this nuance as well. He uses ἱερόν 11 times,⁹⁷ and the consistent reference is to the temple courts. For instance, in 2:14–15 ἱερόν refers specifically to the Court of the Gentiles where the trade happened and where Jesus

⁹³ BDAG, p. 470. Compare also with L&N’s definitions: ἱερόν: “a temple or sanctuary and the consecrated area ... With the exception of ἱερόν Ac 19.27 (a reference to the temple of Artemis in Ephesus), ἱερόν in the NT refers to the Temple in Jerusalem, including the entire Temple precinct with its buildings, courts, and storerooms” (7.16); ναός: “a building in which a deity is worship (in the case of the Temple in Jerusalem, a place where God was also regarded as dwelling)” (§17.15).

⁹⁴ See e.g. Exod 26:33; 1 Kgs 6:16; 8:6–9; 2 Chr 3:8, 10; 5:7–9; cf. Heb 9:3–4.

⁹⁵ E.g. 1 Kgs 6:37; 2 Kgs 12:6–9; 1 Chr 9:11.

⁹⁶ This is implied in Josephus’s description (*BJ*. 1.7.6) of what the Roman general Pompey saw when the latter attacked Jerusalem and entered the Holy of Holies in 63 CE: he found “the candlestick with its lamps, and the table, and the pouring vessels, and the censers, all made entirely of gold, as also a great quantity of spices heaped together, with two thousand talents of sacred money.” The Ark of the Covenant does not figure in the list.

⁹⁷ See 2:14, 15; 5:14; 7:14, 28; 8:2, 20, 59; 10:23; 11:56; 18:20.

protested. With regard to *ναός*, the evangelist uses it only in 2:19–21 (three times), where in a most profound way he applies it to the *σῶμα* of Jesus. If at one level *ναός* refers to the holiest place in the temple—the holy of holies where the Ark of the Covenant is located—there maybe a very profound and significant reason why the evangelist now applies that term to Jesus’ body. This calls to mind the “enfleshment” (*σὰρξ ἐγένετο*) of the eternal Logos of God, and his “tabernacling” (*ἐσκήνωσεν*) among “us” (1:14). As Barrett points out,

John’s thought ... rests not upon general observations or speculations about the relation of the human soul to God but upon the unique mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son (14.10 and often); the human body of Jesus was the place where a unique manifestation of God took place and consequently became the only true Temple, the only centre of true worship; cf. 4.20–4.⁹⁸

In light of this, *λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον*, the first component of the “promised” *σημεῖον*, clearly refers to Jesus’ death—the “destruction” of his body.

The verb *λύσατε*, second person plural imperative, indicates the role of the *Ἰουδαῖοι* in Jesus’ death. The *Ἰουδαῖοι* have asked to see a *σημεῖον*. But they are unaware that they actually have a decisive role in bringing about the supreme Christological *σημεῖον*. The evangelist clearly stresses this role: towards the end of Jesus’ public ministry (11:47–53), the Jewish “supreme court,” the Sanhedrin, passes the resolution that Jesus must die, a decision that they make sure will be actualized, as the later narrative of Jesus’ trials shows (see esp. 18:36–40; 19:12–16).

The occurrence of the theme of Jesus’ death in 2:19a bids us to go back to 2:17: *ἐμνήσθησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι γεγραμμένον ἐστίν· ὁ ζῆλος τοῦ οἴκου σου καταφάγεται με*, “His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’” This verse cites Ps 69:9a (LXX 68:10a), and the wording follows exactly that of the LXX, except for the change of the verb tense from aorist (*κατέφαγεν*) to future (*καταφάγεται*). Ps 69 is a lament psalm of the righteous

⁹⁸ Barrett, *Gospel*, 201.

sufferer who, on account of his devotion of Yahweh, suffers unjustly at the hands of enemies and the powerful but is eventually vindicated by Yahweh. If the psalmist suffered because of his zeal for Yahweh's house, Jesus too will suffer for the same reason. But there is fundamental difference: if the Johannine Jesus is zealous for the house ("temple") of his Father, he himself is the true "house" of which the Jerusalem temple is a symbol. The verb *καταφάγεται*, "will consume," does not describe the burning or consuming emotion of the psalmist or of Jesus for Yahweh's house, but refers "to the lethal hostility that his zeal was to evoke from his adversaries."⁹⁹ Thus this verb, in the context of Jesus' life and ministry, unavoidably means that Jesus will die because of his zeal for his Father's house.¹⁰⁰ To be faithful to Johannine Christology, it must be said in addition that the one whom the *Ἰουδαῖοι* crucify is, in fact, the true "temple" of the Father.

5.3.1.2. *καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν (v. 19b)*

Καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν ("and I will raise it up in three days," 2:19b) is the second component of the "promised" *σημεῖον* and, from the post-resurrection perspective of the evangelist, it refers to Jesus' resurrection.

The expression itself, along with 2:19a, is undeniably ambiguous and enigmatic. The direct object *αὐτόν* refers back to *ναός* in 2:19a,¹⁰¹ which, as we saw, the *Ἰουδαῖοι*, as well as the disciples prior to the resurrection, understood only as referring to the Jerusalem temple. The verb *ἐγείρειν*, like *λύειν* in 2:19a, can mean many different things, and the evangelist himself uses it in many different ways.¹⁰² It can be properly used of a physical building, although the evangelist does not

⁹⁹ Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 116–17. Also, Carson comments: "The righteous sufferer of Ps 69 prefigures, and thus predicts, the one in whom righteous suffering would reach its apogee" ("John and the Johannine Epistles," 249).

¹⁰⁰ Although FE's placement of the temple incident at the beginning of Jesus' ministry differs from that of the Synoptic Gospels, where it is placed in the week of Jesus' Passion, FE nevertheless shows awareness that the temple incident was a major cause of Jesus' death.

¹⁰¹ In other words, *λύειν* and *ἐγερῶ* share the same object: *ναός*.

¹⁰² For instance, in 5:8 the Johannine Jesus uses it to command the cripple at the Bethesda pool to get up (*ἔγειρε*), pick up his mat, and walk. In 7:52 it is used to say that no prophet is to arise (*ἐγείρεται*) from Galilee.

actually use the word in this sense. However, this is precisely how the Ἰουδαῖοι understand the word in 2:19.¹⁰³ But whereas 2:19a (the destruction of the temple) has an immediate bearing on the temple, in the sense of a prophecy of its future destruction, the promise of rebuilding in 2:19b does not concern the temple in Jerusalem. From the perspective of the whole Gospel, it is inconceivable that Jesus, the incarnate Logos of God and supreme embodiment of God’s glory and presence among humanity, should promise to erect and perpetuate the Jerusalem temple and its cult. In other words, ἐγείρειν in 2:19b refers entirely and exclusively to Jesus’ bodily resurrection.¹⁰⁴ But the Ἰουδαῖοι, as well as the disciples prior to the resurrection, unable to fathom the deeper meaning of Jesus’ utterance, can only understand his words at a superficial level. The Ἰουδαῖοι, therefore, are incredulous that Jesus claims to erect in just three days a structure that has been in construction for forty-six years (v. 20). But the enigma, the ambiguity, was cleared when Jesus rose again from the dead. The disciples then grasped what Jesus truly meant.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Josephus (*A.J.* 8.96) used ἐγείρειν in the context of Solomon’s building the first temple: “Outside of this he built another sacred precinct in the form of a quadrangle and erected (ἐγείρας) great and wide porticoes.” (Thackeray, LCL)

¹⁰⁴ Mary L. Coloe, in her article “Raising the Johannine Temple” (*ABR* 48 [2000]: 47–58), interprets the ἐγείρειν τὸν ναόν in 2:19 ecclesiologicaly. She writes: “For the plot of [FG’s] narrative to be effective the reader must see in the death of Jesus the destruction and raising of the temple ... [T]he plot announced in chapter 2 is brought to its promised conclusion at the cross” (p. 48). She then adds: “As the soldiers destroy the ‘body/temple’ of Jesus, the Nazarene temple-builder is in the process of raising up a new temple/household of God, thus fulfilling Jesus’ words ‘destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up’ (2:19)” (p. 57). What Coloe has in mind as the “temple building” which fulfils Jesus’ words in 2:19 is the scene in 19:25–27 (pp. 54–57) where, by the act of the crucified Jesus, Mary becomes the mother of the beloved disciple and the beloved disciple becomes Mary’s son. However, as the evangelist himself clarifies in 2:21, the ἐγείρειν τὸν ναόν in 2:19 actually pertains to Jesus’ resurrection, and Coloe herself is fully cognizant of this meaning (p. 48). Insofar as 2:13–22 (the temple-incident pericope) is concerned, ἐγείρειν τὸν ναόν does not actually pertain to the establishment of the “household of God,” and as such provides no warrant for Coloe’s ecclesiological interpretation. Thus Coloe is not right in asserting that ἐγείρειν τὸν ναόν is fulfilled and concluded at the cross. Rather, insofar as that phrase pertains to Jesus’ resurrection, it is fulfilled on Easter morning (John 20), rather than at the cross. Another reason why ἐγείρειν τὸν ναόν in 2:19 cannot pertain to the establishment of the church is the fact the ναός in this verse is first destroyed (by the Ἰουδαῖοι) and then subsequently raised up by Jesus. This description does not fittingly describe the church, for the church is not an entity that Ἰουδαῖοι first destroys and then Jesus subsequently rebuilds. In short, the destruction and subsequent rebuilding of the ναός in 2:19 arguably refers exclusively to Jesus’ death-and-resurrection. As regards the interpretation of 19:25–26, that is another matter, to be discussed in ch. 8 below.

¹⁰⁵ Aside from 2:19b, there are two other places in the Gospel where ἐγείρειν is used for Jesus’ resurrection: 2:22 (ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν) and 21:14 (ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν). Of course there were

An important aspect of the usage of ἐγείρειν in 2:19b is its active voice: Jesus will raise the temple. Since he himself is the temple, the action becomes reflexive: Jesus will raise himself up from the dead. He is the agent of his own resurrection.¹⁰⁶ The active verb ἐγερω suits the context of the demand for a σημεῖον. Jesus has been challenged to prove his authority for attempting to halt the operations of the temple cult. He responds with the “promise” of his own resurrection, which he will perform upon himself. Calvin appropriately describes the resurrection as “a *sign* of no ordinary value; for no greater approbation of the divine power in Christ could be desired than his resurrection from the dead.”¹⁰⁷

The Johannine Jesus specifies that he will raise up the destroyed temple ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις. Does this temporal expression refer to the timing of Jesus’ resurrection, or does it simply refer generally to a short time? Some interpreters do

other words available to the evangelist to describe Jesus’ resurrection, such as ἀνάστασις and its verbal form ἀνίστημι. But he does not actually use ἀνάστασις to describe Jesus’ resurrection. He does use ἀνίστημι, but only once, in 20:9 (ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι). But the evangelist flexibly uses all of these words when he speaks generally of the resurrection of the dead. He uses ἐγείρειν in 5:21 to speak of the Father raising (ἐγείρει) the dead and giving them life; in 12:1, 9, 17 to describe Lazarus “whom Jesus raised (ἤγειρεν) from the dead.” He uses ἀνάστασις twice in 5:29 to speak of the resurrection to life (ἀνάστασις ζωῆς) and the resurrection to judgment (ἀνάστασις κρίσεως); in 11:24 Martha confesses her belief that her brother will rise again in the resurrection (ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει) at the last day; in 11:25 Jesus declares that he is the resurrection (ἡ ἀνάστασις) and the life. The evangelist uses ἀνίστημι in 6:39, 40, 44, 54 in the repeated promise of Jesus “I will raise him up (ἀναστήσω) at the last day”; in 11:23 Jesus tells Martha that her brother “will rise” (ἀναστήσεται) again. But for Jesus’ resurrection, FE has surely used ἐγείρειν more than the other terms.

¹⁰⁶ The evangelist also stresses this in 10:17–18a: “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again (ἵνα πάλιν λάβω αὐτήν). No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again (καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω πάλιν λαβεῖν αὐτήν).” This is not necessarily inconsistent with the emphasis on the Father as the agent of Jesus’ resurrection, which is widespread in the Synoptics (e.g., Matt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Luke 9:22), in Acts (e.g., 2:24; 3:15; 4:10; 10:40; 13:30), and in the epistles (e.g., Rom 4:24; 8:11; 10:2; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:4; 2 Cor 4:14; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20; 1 Thess 1:10; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 1:21). First, while the emphasis on the agency of the Father in Jesus’ resurrection is stressed, there are passages that represent Jesus as the agent of his own resurrection. In Mark 8:31 Jesus predicts his resurrection using the verb ἀναστῆναι (aorist active infinitive, “to rise”). The same verb is used in Luke 24:46, where the resurrected Christ explains to his disciples that “the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day.” Second, these two affirmations are in fact also present in FG, for while the active ἐγερω is used at 2:19b, the other two occurrences of this word are passive: ἠγέρθη at 2:22 and 21:14. In other words, for FE the two affirmations are complementary, not contradictory; for the Father and the Son are one (10:30). The operations of the Father and of the Son are one and the same, for “whatever the Father does the Son also does” (5:19b; cf. 5:17, 19a, 20a). Hence, it is both correct to say that the Father raised Jesus up from the dead, and that Jesus raised himself up from the dead.

¹⁰⁷ Calvin, *Gospel*, 1:97.

not see a connection between this temporal expression and the resurrection.¹⁰⁸ But a greater number of interpreters see a connection with Jesus' resurrection. For instance, Hoskyns thinks that the expression is a "veiled reference" to the resurrection.¹⁰⁹ For Keener, "in three days" is equivalent to "on the third day" because "part of a day was counted a whole."¹¹⁰ My interpretive concern is not with the pre-Johannine origins and meanings of this expression, but how FE uses it. From this perspective, it does not suffice to say that ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις generally refers to a short period of time. Certainly, three days is a short time, especially when compared to forty-six years, as the Ἰουδαῖοι seem to think in 2:20. But that is not the Johannine point. From the post-resurrection perspective, the rebuilding of the temple in three days can only refer to Jesus' resurrection, which happened on the third day (cf. 2:19; 20:1).

5.4. Jesus the New and True Temple, the Passover, and the "Promised" σημεῖον

The foregoing discussion has centered on Jesus' death-and-resurrection as the "promised" σημεῖον in 2:19. I must now pursue a related question I initially broached above, which has to do with the significance of the Passover context of the temple incident. This is an important question, one which interpreters continually fail to fully answer. Let me put it this way: in light of the Passover context, what is the significance of Jesus driving all the sacrificial animals out of the temple? Moreover, what does it have to do not just with the clear emphasis, within the pericope, on Jesus' death and with σημεῖον, but also with the fact that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is a "promised" σημεῖον? The answer that accounts for

¹⁰⁸ For instance, according to Schnackenburg, ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις is a conventional phrase which expresses a short time, and that it is not the same as the definite "on the third day" of Jesus' resurrection such as found in 1 Cor 15:4 and Matt 16:21 (*Gospel*, 1:349). Morris's comment, which is a bit unclear, seems to be of the same view: "In three days' means 'within the space of three days' and does not pinpoint the event" (*Gospel*, 205). See also J. B. Bauer, "Drei Tage," *Bib* 39 (1958): 355; Lindars, *Gospel*, 143.

¹⁰⁹ Hoskyns, *Gospel*, 199–200.

¹¹⁰ Keener, *Gospel*, 529. So also Godet, *Gospel*, 2:33; Robertson, *Grammar*, 586–87; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 302.

the interconnections and interrelationships between Jesus' death, Passover, and σημεῖον appears to be this: What constitutes a σημεῖον is not simply Jesus' death in a general sense, but in the sense that Jesus dies as the Passover sacrificial victim.

That FE portrays Jesus' death in terms of Passover sacrifice is universally agreed. But interpreters usually come to this proposition only later in the Gospel narrative, when they reach the narrative of the Passion. Of course it is in the Passion narrative where the evangelist has made it very clear that Jesus dies right at the time when Passover sacrificial lambs are being slaughtered in the temple. But in reality this proposition is already hinted at in the temple incident pericope, and interpreters tend to miss or ignore it. Four factors in the temple incident—namely the Passover context, Jesus' emptying the temple of the sacrificial animals, the motif of Jesus' death, and the promised σημεῖον of Jesus' death-and-resurrection—coalesce meaningfully and cause the reader to ask, rather ironically: now that Jesus has “emptied” the temple of all sacrificial animals, will the temple authorities then arrest him and have him “sacrificed” instead? Will Jesus then become some sort of “replacement” Passover sacrifice? Or, in light of the Johannine claim that Jesus is the true “temple,” is Jesus also the true Passover sacrificial victim? These are precisely some of the questions that the Passion narrative provides answers to: Jesus dies on the cross at the instigation of the Ἰουδαῖοι at the time when the Passover lambs are being sacrificed in the temple (cf. 18:28; 19:14, 31). Explorations of these questions will await chapter 8 of this thesis. But at the moment we cannot avoid the conclusion that the temple incident pericope provides some sense in which Jesus' death is not simply depicted as a consequence of his protest: Jesus' death seems to be in some profound way connected with Passover.

Consider now these two premises. First, in FG Jesus dies as a Passover sacrificial victim. Second, Jesus' death constitutes a part of the σημεῖον which the Johannine Jesus has promised to the Ἰουδαῖοι. A logical conclusion is that Jesus' death as a Passover sacrificial victim constitutes a σημεῖον.

5.5. Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis of the temple incident, it is clear that Jesus' death-and-resurrection, as a complex event, constitutes a "promised" σημεῖον. It is a σημεῖον of his authority to regulate the Jerusalem temple, particularly of his authority to symbolically halt the temple's sacrificial cult. He has the authority to do so because he himself, in his own body (σῶμα)—crucified and risen—is the new and true temple of God. When the true temple has come, that which served as its symbol—the Jerusalem temple and its cult—has been fulfilled and superseded.

In regard to Jesus' death, it is not just death in general that is in view. There is an allusion in the temple incident pericope to what later becomes explicit in the Passion narrative: that Jesus dies as a Passover sacrificial victim. In other words, the σημεῖον is not just Jesus' death, generally conceived; it is his death understood as a Passover sacrifice. The implication is profound: Jesus is not just the true temple of God; he is also the true Passover sacrifice on behalf of God's people. I end with this quote from Carson:

It is the human body of Jesus that uniquely manifests the Father, and becomes the focal point of the manifestation of God to man, the living abode of God on earth, the fulfillment of all the temple meant, and the center of all true worship ... In this 'temple' the ultimate sacrifice would take place; within three days of death and burial, Jesus Christ, the true temple, would rise from the dead.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Carson, *Gospel*, 182.

CHAPTER 6 THE TRUE “BREAD” FROM HEAVEN (JOHN 6)

6.1. Introduction

The central Christological identity that John 6 advances is that Jesus is ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς (“the bread of life”). This is what the σημεῖον of the feeding is intended to reveal, and this is what the ensuing Bread of Life discourse explicates. In this chapter I am going to argue that there is a σημεῖον greater than the σημεῖον of the feeding miracle, which supremely reveals Jesus as ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς, and that is his death-and-resurrection.

The procedure will be as follows. First, I will briefly discuss the meaning of 6:1–21 (the feeding miracle and the walking on the water) and show that the σημεῖον of the loaves is meant to signify Jesus’ Christological identity as ὁ ἄρτος τοῦ θεοῦ. Second, I will discuss the Galileans’ demand for a σημεῖον analogous to the manna (vv. 30–31). I will attempt to show the basis for this demand in Jewish eschatological beliefs, particularly beliefs in connection with the Mosaic eschatological prophet. The point is that the Galileans, by lodging the demand, insist that Jesus prove himself as the Mosaic eschatological prophet, something which Jesus clearly disavows in v. 15. Third, I will discuss Jesus’ response to the demand (vv. 32–33), in which he talks about ὁ ἄρτος ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὁ ἀληθινός. I will also discuss the subsequent parts of the discourse, in which Jesus explicitly and repeatedly identifies himself as ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς (vv. 35, 48, 51c), speaks repeatedly about his κατάβασις (vv. 33, 38, 50, 51; cf. 41–42) and once about his ἀνάβασις (v. 62), and highlights the necessity for human beings to “eat” his flesh and “drink” his blood in order to have eternal life. I will argue that Jesus’ death is a σημεῖον pointing to himself as the true “bread” of God.

6.2. The *σημεῖον* of the Loaves and Its (Mis)Interpretation (6:1–15)

The feeding of the five thousand, recounted in John 6:1–15, performed in Galilee (v. 1) in the context of the second Passover of Jesus' public ministry (v. 4), is not simply a showcase of Jesus' power and humanitarian concern. It is first and foremost, as far as FE is concerned, a *σημεῖον* (v. 14a) of Jesus' true identity and mission spelled out, for example, in the Gospel's purpose statement: Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (20:30–31). In particular the Christological identity that the miracle of the loaves signifies, as the ensuing Bread of Life discourse shows, is that Jesus is God's "bread" for the life of the world. The most significant element of the story is the bread, which Jesus provided and himself distributed to the reclining Galileans (v. 11). All the people eat as much as they want and are satisfied. Yet there is much more bread left over, which the disciples, following Jesus' instruction, gather into twelve basketfuls. To say that it is a lavish feast is to put it correctly. The most pressing question in everyone's mind is: Who truly is this man Jesus? What are his intentions?

The Galileans' ready and immediate response to the *σημεῖον* is a fervent and enthusiastic confession: οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον, ("This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world") (v. 14b). They also suppose that Jesus is a βασιλεύς, and they want to seize him to make him king (v. 15). The problem with all this confession and acclamation is that, though sincere, it is inadequate and mistaken. The fact that they want to seize Jesus to make him king strongly suggests that they perceive Jesus in a political and militant sense.

As several key studies have shown, ὁ προφήτης and βασιλεύς probably pertain to the eschatological figure of "the Mosaic prophet," a figure which, in some Samaritan and Jewish circles, combined prophetic and kingly functions.¹ At any rate, a figure like this whose kingship is to be conferred by the people hardly suits the Johannine Jesus (cf. 18:36–37). Thus it seems clear that the Galileans have misunderstood the *σημεῖον* and have misconstrued Jesus' actions and intentions.

¹ See esp. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, passim; Martyn, *History and Theology*, ch. 6.

Thus, lest he be seized by the crowd, Jesus withdraws from them and went to the mountains by himself (v. 15).

The response of Jesus' immediate disciples to the σημεῖον is not reported. If they have been exposed to the crowd's flawed and inadequate conceptions of Jesus' identity, that exposure would certainly pose some risk to them in terms of being drawn into popular but wrong ideas of who Jesus is. But on the same night, Jesus performs a σημεῖον specifically for them.² In the midst of the dark and stormy sea, while the disciples are by themselves and their boat buffeted by strong winds and big waves, Jesus walks on the water and goes toward them. They are terrified because they do not recognize him. He then speaks to them saying, ἐγὼ εἰμι· μὴ φοβεῖσθε (v. 20).³ They then recognize him and want to take him on board; but before they know it, they already reach their destination (v. 21).⁴

The expression ἐγὼ εἰμι is pregnant: it alludes to Yahweh's divine name in the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g., Exod 3:14; Deut 32:39; Isa 43:10) and it anticipates

² The walking on the sea is not explicitly called σημεῖον. But as has been mentioned elsewhere in this study, just because something is not explicitly called σημεῖον does not necessarily mean that it is not a σημεῖον. That seems to be the case with Jesus' walking on the water. Moreover, as has been said many times, this study takes a broad view of the σημεῖα, where the meaning of σημεῖον is not limited to the seven or eight miracles recounted at length in the Gospel. To explain further, I have often cited as an example the similar case of the healing of the cripple in John 5: it is not expressly described as a σημεῖον, yet virtually all scholars regard it as a σημεῖον. As a matter of fact, only four out of the seven miracles which have traditionally been regarded as σημεῖα are explicitly described as such: (1) the wine miracle in Cana, 2:1–11; (2) the healing of the royal official's son, 4:46–54; (3) the feeding miracle, 6:1–15; and (4) the raising of Lazarus, John 11. The healing of the man blind from birth (John 9) is only indirectly described as a σημεῖον through the plural description in v. 16. Andreas J. Köstenberger ("The Seventh Johannine Sign," 87–103), using a threefold criteria ([1] the Johannine σημεῖον must be part of Jesus' public ministry; [2] it must be explicitly identified as σημεῖον in the Gospel; and [3] it must reveal Jesus as God's true representative), reckoned that Jesus' walking on the water is not a σημεῖον since it fails to meet the first criterion. But Köstenberger's argument is not convincing, and the first two of his criteria are susceptible to serious criticism. Was not Jesus' walking on the water a public act if the disciples were sufficient to constitute an audience? If not, what then constitutes the proper audience for an act to be considered public? Does not John 20:30–31 describe the σημεῖα as those deeds which Jesus performed "in the presence of his disciples"? Is not the walking on the sea precisely of this nature? With regard to the second criterion, Köstenberger is being inconsistent: how can he call the healing of the cripple a σημεῖον and the walking on the water not a σημεῖον when in reality both of these miracles are not called σημεῖα in the Gospel? For the view that Jesus' walking on the water is a σημεῖον see, e.g., Dodd, *Interpretation*, 383; Robert Kysar, *John: The Maverick Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 14, 95–7; and Keener, *Gospel*, 671–72.

³ Ἐγὼ εἰμι may be translated with either "It is I" or "I am."

⁴ For the view that the instantaneous landing constitutes a distinct σημεῖον, see Schnelle, "Signs," 233–234.

the many predicative ἐγώ-εἰμι utterances of Jesus in the ensuing discourse and in other parts of the Gospel.⁵ What has happened on the sea was a Christophany,⁶ a Christological “σημεῖον”:⁷ Jesus’ walk on the water, coupled with his significant⁸ ἐγώ-εἰμι utterance, identifies him with the God of Israel, the “I Am.”⁹ It cannot be determined how much of this identity the disciples have grasped. But without a doubt through this σημεῖον the disciples catch a glimpse of the real Johannine Jesus, a glimpse into his divinity (cf. 1:1–2). This experience, and the new insights gleaned from it, are a corrective to the faulty assessment of Jesus’ person and mission by the Galilean crowd.

On the following day, the Galileans who have eaten the loaves search for Jesus and find him in Capernaum. In this encounter the Johannine Jesus interprets for them the σημεῖον of the loaves. The key verses are 27 and 29: the loaves, described as “the food that perishes,” signify “the food that endures to eternal life,” which the Son of Man, whom God the Father has sealed¹⁰ and sent to the world,

⁵ The seven predicative ἐγώ-εἰμι utterances in FG are (1) ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς, “I am the bread of life” (6:35, 48); (2) ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου, “I am the light of the world” (8:12; 9:5); (3) ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα, “I am the door” (10:7, 9); (4) ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός, “I am the good shepherd” (10:11); (5) ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ, “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25); (6) ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6); and (7) ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή, “I am the true vine” (15:1). Absolute ἐγώ-εἰμι statements include 4:46; 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8.

⁶ Or a “theophany” (so Anderson, *Christology*, 186, 193).

⁷ See n. 2.

⁸ Schnelle has the adjective “majestic” (*Antidocetic Christology*, 109).

⁹ Rudolf Schnackenburg sees profound significance in ἐγώ εἰμι. He writes: “The evangelist makes the saying Jesus’ full proclamation of himself, a revelation of himself as divine ... This ἐγώ εἰμι bears the full weight of Jesus’ claim to be the bread of life come down from heaven ... [It has] overtones of divine authority ... It is this which banishes the disciples’ fear” (*Gospel*, 2:27–8).

¹⁰ The Greek word is ἐσφράγισεν, from σφραγίζω, “to mark with a seal of identification” (BDAG, p. 980). Scholars have varying, though at times overlapping, interpretations of this word. Godet (*Gospel*, 2:222) is of the view that the “sealing” pertains to God’s attestation of Jesus through miracles. Westcott (*Gospel*, 1:224) shares a somewhat similar view: “solemnly set apart for the fulfillment of this charge and authenticated by intelligible signs.” Hoskyns (*Gospel*, 292) interprets it in terms of “ownership and authenticity,” with the additional connotation of “consecration or setting apart for sacrifice.” Lightfoot (*Gospel*, 158), Beasley-Murray (*John*, 91), and Ridderbos (*Gospel*, 224) interpret it in terms of Jesus’ being the God-appointed and accredited bringer and mediator of salvation. Perhaps it is best to interpret the sealing along the lines of attestation and authorization: σφραγίζω “could be used technically for sealing and signing as a witness. Here the ratifying or attesting is done by God as the witness (cf. 5:32, 37) and underlines the authorization given to the Son of Man as God’s unique agent in the giving of eternal life” (Lincoln, *Gospel*, 226–27).

will give. The God-ordained access to this imperishable food is through believing¹¹ in the Son of Man, who is Jesus himself. He is not “the Mosaic prophet-king” (to be explained below) as the crowd have earlier thought (vv. 14–15). Rather, he is the Son of Man who will give, and is himself, the eschatological “food.” By believing in him, the world may find and receive eternal life. At this point, it is unclear how Jesus will give this “food which endures to eternal life.” But this will become clear in the next parts of the discourse.

6.3. The Demand for a *σημεῖον* Analogous to the Manna (6:30–31)

Jesus’ explanation of the *σημεῖον* of the loaves, which included a call to believe in him, the Son of Man (vv. 26–29), does not elicit a response of faith, but only provokes a challenge from the Galilean crowd. If Jesus’ *σημεῖον* was misunderstood, his explanation of it has been rejected. The challenge of the crowd takes the form of a demand for a *σημεῖον*, which is ironic, considering that they have already seen the powerful *σημεῖον* of the feeding (vv. 1–15), as well as the earlier *σημεῖα* of healings upon the sick (v. 2). The demand is phrased as follows:

- v. 30 τί οὖν ποιεῖς σὺ σημεῖον,
 ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν σοι;
 τί ἐργάζῃ;
- v. 31 οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν τὸ μάννα ἔφαγον ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ
 καθὼς ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον·
 ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς φαγεῖν.
- v. 30 What sign are you going to perform then,
 so that we may see it and believe you?
 What work are you going to do?
- v. 31 Our Fathers ate the manna in the wilderness,
 just as it is written,
 “He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”

¹¹ As is well known, FE does not use the noun *πίστις* but only the verb *πιστεύειν*.

The challenge is for Jesus to produce an “accrediting sign”¹² to prove himself as worthy of belief. The construction of v. 30a is emphatic: “So what ‘sign’ can you *yourself* provide...?”¹³ I am going to focus on two important elements in these verses: (1) the principle of “to see is to believe,” which is the basis of why the demand is lodged, and (2) the demand specifically for a σημεῖον analogous to the manna.

First, the crowd demand to see a σημεῖον so that they could believe. To want to see a σημεῖον is not in itself unbelieving or sinful. The Gospel’s purpose (20:30–31) in fact commends σημεῖα for faith. But the glaring irony of this demand is that, as we have already seen, the crowd who want to see in order to believe have actually already seen a great deal: only one day ago they saw the powerful σημεῖον of the feeding. Earlier than that they saw also many σημεῖα of healings that Jesus performed upon the sick (6:2). That being the case, this demand for yet another σημεῖον serves only to betray the Galileans’ persistent spiritual blindness or unbelief.

Second, in v. 31 the crowd goes on to (1) specify, so it appears, the kind of σημεῖον that they want Jesus to produce and (2) justify their demand by appealing to the scriptures. It appears that they want Jesus to produce a σημεῖον analogous to the manna: οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν τὸ μάννα ἔφαγον ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ (“our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness”) (v. 31a).¹⁴ For the first time in the discourse, this

¹² Beasley-Murray, *John*, 91; or “a legitimating sign” according to John Painter (“Jesus and the Quest for Eternal Life,” in *Critical Readings of John 6*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper; BibInt 22 [Leiden: Brill, 1997], 79). According to Hoskyns, the σημεῖον demanded is “a visible act that will correspond with and make evident the invisible sealing by God which Jesus had referred to as providing him with his authority” (*Gospel*, 293). Bertil Gärtner explains that the Galileans “seek a sign from heaven in order to believe” (*John 6 and the Jewish Passover*, ConBNT 17 [Lund: Gleerup, 1959], 22).

¹³ So, e.g., Bernard, *Gospel*, 1:193.

¹⁴ According to Peder Borgen (*Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writing of Philo*, NovTSup 10 [Leiden: Brill, 1965], 22), v. 31a “is a brief summary of events during the exodus from Egypt.” But to be precise, v. 31a alludes only to the giving of the manna, and does not really summarize the exodus itself. A summary of the exodus would have to refer to other equally important events (e.g., the Red Sea crossing, etc.). First Cor 10:1–4, which Borgen also refers to, perhaps comes close to summarizing the exodus. With regard to the so-called summaries of the exodus, Borgen says that they “were a common pattern of haggadic tradition in Judaism, both in Palestine and in the Diaspora” (ibid.). It may be that the

important word “manna” (with all its symbolism) comes up (it recurs in vv. 49, 58). Aside from manna, there is also the important word φαγεῖν (“to eat”), which occurs twice in this verse and recurs frequently later on (see vv. 49, 50–53, 58).

The crowd’s request specifically for a σημεῖον analogous to the manna raises a number of important questions. What made them ask for this sort of σημεῖον? What does a σημεῖον similar to the manna prove or authenticate? How does it relate to the σημεῖον of the loaves? Finally, how does it relate to the crowd’s previous estimation of Jesus as ὁ προφήτης-βασιλεύς (vv. 14–15)? I will tackle these and similar questions below in the subheading “The Σημεῖον of the Manna and the Mosaic Prophet-King.”

In v. 31b, the crowd appeals to the scriptures to prove that, indeed, the manna was true (i.e., that it truly came down from the clouds) and that their ancestors did truly eat of it. This appeal to the scriptures also serves to authorize their demand, and to give it an aura of orthodoxy.¹⁵ They preface the quotation with the words καθὼς ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον,¹⁶ which Jesus himself will also use later on in v. 45. The scripture quotation is, ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς φαγεῖν (“he gave them bread from heaven to eat”) (v. 31b). Here the manna is alternatively called “bread from heaven.” The occurrence of ἄρτος here is very important, for it both recalls the σημεῖον of the loaves (vv. 1–15) and ushers into the discourse the overarching and controlling imagery of “bread.”¹⁷ We should recall that when Jesus interpreted the σημεῖον of the loaves in v. 27, he used the word βρῶσις (“food”): there he spoke of τὴν βρῶσιν ἀπολλυμένην (“the food which perishes”) versus τὴν βρῶσιν τὴν μένουσαν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον (“the food which endures to eternal life”). Although βρῶσις does not drop out of the discourse but will recur once or twice,

crowd’s demand for a σημεῖον simply means that they want Jesus to repeat the miracle from the previous day (so Painter, “Jesus and the Quest for Eternal Life,” 79).

¹⁵ So Martyn, *History and Theology*, 121.

¹⁶ On the quotation formulas in John’s Gospel see, e.g., Craig A. Evans, “On the Quotation Formulas in the Fourth Gospel,” *BZ* 26 (1982), 79–83; Carson, “John and the Johannine Epistles,” 247–48; Bruce G. Schuchard, “Form versus Function: Citation Technique and Authorial Intention in the Gospel of John,” in *Abiding Words: The Use of Scripture in the Gospel of John*, ed. A. D. Myers and B. G. Schuchard; RBS 81 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 23–46.

¹⁷ The occurrences of ἄρτος in John 6 are vv. 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 23, 26, 31, 32(bis), 33, 34, 35, 41, 48, 50, 51, and 58.

ἄρτος will prove to be the most dominant word in John 6. The Johannine Jesus himself will use this word very frequently. Which OT passage is being quoted cannot be determined with certainty, for the wording of the citation does not entirely match any one OT text. It is probably a composite citation¹⁸ of such passages as Ps 78:24; Exod 16:4a; Neh 9:15a; and Ps 105:40.

In several publications Peder Borgen¹⁹ has argued for the centrality of the scripture quotation in v. 31b to the thought and structure of the whole discourse. He argued that the discourse (he meant 6:32–58) is meant to be an exegesis – a *midrash* – of the scripture quotation in v. 31b.²⁰ He pointed out, correctly, that words from the quotation are repeated throughout the discourse; but, Borgen adds, not just repeated but also paraphrased, together with “haggadic fragments,” in vv. 31a, 32–35, 38, 41, 42, 48–51, 52–58.²¹ He lists the repetitions and paraphrases as follows:²²

- v. 32 δέδωκεν (ὑμῖν) τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ—
δίδωσιν (ὑμῖν) τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
- v. 33 ὁ—ἄρτος—ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
- v. 34 δὸς—τὸν ἄρτον
- v. 35 ὁ ἄρτος
- v. 36 (ὑμῖν)
- v. 38 (ἀπὸ) τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
- v. 41 ὁ ἄρτος—ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
- v. 42 ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
- v. 48 ὁ ἄρτος
- v. 49 ἔφαγον
- v. 50 ὁ ἄρτος—ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ—φάγη
- v. 51 ὁ ἄρτος—ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ—φάγη—τοῦ ἄρτου—ὁ ἄρτος—δώσω
- v. 52 (ἡμῖν) δοῦναι—φαγεῖν
- v. 53 φάγητε
- v. 58 ὁ ἄρτος—ἐξ οὐρανοῦ—ἔφαγον—ἔφαγον—τὸν ἄρτον

¹⁸ So, e.g., Barrett, *Gospel*, 289; Smith, *John*, 152–53.

¹⁹ Peder Borgen, “The Unity of the Discourse in John 6,” *ZNW* 50 (1959): 277–279; idem, “Observations on the Midrashic Character of John,” *ZNW* 54 (1963): 232–240; idem, *Bread from Heaven*, passim.

²⁰ Idem, “The Unity of the Discourse,” 277.

²¹ Idem, *Bread from Heaven*, 23.

²² Idem, “Observations,” 232–33.

This helpful tabulation shows convincingly how important the scripture quotation in v. 31b is. There is no doubt about that. But Borgen's study is susceptible to a number of sound criticisms and is in need of correction. First, his focus on 6:31–58 has unnecessarily, and wrongly, left out vv. 25–30, which are essentially part of the discourse. I stress particularly the importance of v. 27: actually this verse enunciates, as I have tried to show above, the “correct” interpretation – “correct” because it is the Johannine Jesus' interpretation – of the *σημεῖον* of the loaves, and this interpretation is the theme of the whole of John 6: Jesus, the Son of Man, is the giver of the food that endures to eternal life. The whole discourse will explicate this theme. Later utterances of Jesus, such as “I am the bread of life” (vv. 35, 48, 51a), are crystallizations of the theme already enunciated in v. 27.

Second, many of the words which Borgen explains as coming from, and provided by, the scripture quotation in v. 31b actually can be traced back to the feeding miracle. The most important of these words is *ἄρτος*, which already appears several times, earlier than the discourse, beginning with the feeding miracle (vv. 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 23, 26). The same is true with *δίδωμι* (vv. 11, 27) and *φαγεῖν* (vv. 5, 23, 26). Thus, while the scripture quotation in v. 31b is undoubtedly one of the key verses in the discourse, it is doubtful whether the discourse is really designed to be an exegesis of that scripture. It is preferable to say that the whole discourse is an explication of the theme “Jesus is the eschatological food/bread,” a theme which is first illustrated by the *σημεῖον* of the loaves and, then, explicated by the Bread of Life discourse.

6.3.1. A *Σημεῖον* Analogous to the Manna and the Mosaic Prophet-King (6:14–15, 30–31)

As we have seen, the notion of a *σημεῖον* analogous to the manna explicitly comes up in 6:30–31 in connection with the demand for a *σημεῖον*. The Galileans want Jesus to produce, or reproduce, the manna as an accrediting *σημεῖον* for his claims.

They are not thinking of the manna in a metaphorical or spiritual sense,²³ but in an earthly, material sense. They were keen to see the manna with their own eyes (note the verb ἰδωμεν, v. 30). They wanted to experience what their forefathers had experienced: “Our forefathers ate the manna in the wilderness.”²⁴ It appears that we have here a piece of evidence for the expectation that somehow the manna would come, or be given, again.

The expectation for the restoration of the manna is also attested outside the Gospel of John. The following are four pieces of evidence from the late first-century to the early second-century CE (round about the time when FG was written). The first attestation is biblical: Rev 2:17b: τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου (“To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna”). The “I” here is Jesus, and the giving of the manna lies in the future (from the writer’s perspective). Jo-Ann Brant comments: “The identification of manna as one of the rewards for members of the church in Pergamum who remain steadfast ... corroborates that this Jewish tradition has its roots in the Second Temple period.”²⁵

The second attestation comes from the second-century CE apocryphon 2 Bar. 29:8: “And it will happen at that time that the treasury of the manna will come down again from on high, and they will eat of it in those years because these are they who have arrived at the consummation of time.”²⁶

The third attestation comes from Sib. Or., Fragment III, 49:

²³ There were traditions of metaphorical or spiritual interpretations of the manna. For example, in Deut 8:3, the manna (a physical food) symbolizes a spiritual food, God’s word, by which also humans will live. Philo also sometimes allegorizes the manna. For example, in *Leg.* 3, 169–76, he describes the manna as God’s logos, which is the food of the soul. See discussion of additional evidence in Barrett, *Gospel*, 288.

²⁴ A summary of the Israelites’ experience with the manna is recounted in, e.g., Exod 16:13b–17a: “And in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, ‘What is it?’ [The NRSV footnote says: “Or ‘It is manna’ (Heb *man hu*, see verse 31)”. For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. This is what the LORD has commanded: “Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents.”’ The Israelites did so” (emphasis added).

²⁵ Brant, *John*, 128.

²⁶ Trans. by A. F. J. Klijn, in *OTP* 1:631.

οἱ δὲ θεὸν τιμῶντες ἀληθινὸν ἀέναόν τε
ζωὴν κληρονομοῦσι, τὸν αἰῶνος χρόνον αὐτοί
οἰκοῦντες παραδείσου ὁμῶς ἐριθηλέα κῆπον
δαινύμενοι γλυκὺν ἄρτον ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος.²⁷

Here manna is called γλυκὺς ἄρτος ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος (“sweet bread from starry heaven”). This fragment was cited by Theophilus of Antioch in *Autol.* 2.36:

But those who worship the eternal God,
They shall inherit everlasting life,
Inhabiting the blooming realms of bliss,
And feasting on sweet food from starry heaven.²⁸

Finally, here is another attestation from Sib. Or. 7.149: “No longer will anyone cut a deep furrow with a crooked plow; no oxen will plunge down the guiding iron. There will be no vine branches or ear of corn, but all, at once, will eat the dewy manna with white teeth.”²⁹

Although the rabbinic writings are much later than FG, they also attest to the expectation for the restoration of the manna. To cite an example, the *Mekilta* on Exod 16:25 reads: “You will not find it [the manna] in this world but you will find it in the world to come.”³⁰ Other relevant rabbinic passages are Pesiq. Rab Kah. 5.8; Num. Rab. 11.2; Ruth Rab. 5.6; and Eccles. Rab. 1:9.³¹

The expectation for the restoration of the manna was bound up with the expectation for the Mosaic eschatological prophet. This seems to be evident twice in John 6. It is evident first in the account of the σημεῖον of the loaves (vv. 1–15). Why did the crowd, after seeing the feeding miracle, readily acclaim Jesus as ὁ

²⁷ J. Geffcken, ed., *Die Oracula Sibyllina* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1902), 232. For a translation, see the following quotation from Theophilus.

²⁸ *ANF* 2:237. According to Dodd (*Interpretation*, 335), the oracle may be pre-Christian. According to Bruce J. Malina, the fragment “certainly dates before 150 AD, since it is cited by Theophilus of Antioch” (*The Palestinian Manna Tradition: The Manna Tradition in the Palestinian Targums and Its Relationship to the New Testament Writings*, AGSU 7 [Leiden: Brill, 1968], 64).

²⁹ Trans. John J. Collins, in *OTP* 1:413. According to Dodd, “Baruch and the Sibylline Oracle are sufficient evidence of the belief about the time when [John’s Gospel] was written” (*Interpretation*, 335 n. 2; emphasis added).

³⁰ *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, 2nd ed.; 2 vols.; trans. Jacob Z. Lauterbach (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 1:266.

³¹ See discussion in Hoskyns *Gospel*, 293–94; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:265.

προφήτης-βασιλεύς (vv. 14–15)? What is the connection between the feeding miracle and this particular eschatological figure? The answer, I think, is twofold. First, it appears that the Galilean crowd held to a prior belief in “the coming prophet” (in v. 14: ὁ προφήτης ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον) who would restore the manna. They seem to have believed that to restore the manna was one of “the prophet’s” signature acts. Second, the crowd saw the feeding miracle as analogous to, or in some sense resembling, the manna. Thus they concluded, firmly and with much resolve, that Jesus must be the one that they had been waiting for. The firmness and strength of their confession is notable: οὗτος ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον (“This man is truly the prophet who is to come into the world”) (v. 14). The people are even willing to use force, as suggested by ἀρπάζειν in v. 15, in order to make Jesus their βασιλεύς.

The second place in John 6 where the association between a σημεῖον analogous to the manna and the Mosaic prophet-king reappears is the passage that has been cited many times: the demand for a σημεῖον in vv. 30–31. When the crowd asked Jesus to produce the manna as an accrediting σημεῖον, what sort of identity were they expecting him to prove? Not a “high” Christology (e.g., that Jesus is the incarnate Logos). They wanted to ascertain whether Jesus was truly “the prophet-king” as they had earlier thought (cf. vv. 14–15). But is this not “most awkward,” writes Bultmann, “when the feeding miracle ... would have [already] served that purpose”?³² Not really. Although they were quite sure at first that Jesus was “the prophet-king” (vv. 14–15), his refusal to accept their acclamation and his repudiation of their plan to make him their king caused them to think twice and become unsure about his intentions. But in spite of the initial setback, the powerful impression and impact of the miracle of the loaves would have remained in their minds. Their demand that Jesus authenticate himself by reproducing the manna would have been their way of ascertaining whether Jesus was truly the Mosaic prophet-king as they had earlier supposed. If Jesus were able to cause the manna to descend, that would have been not only for their benefit in terms of

³² Bultmann, *Gospel*, 218; emphasis added.

having food to eat but also unmistakable evidence that this man was truly the promised redeemer.

Who is the Mosaic prophet-king? This question can only be discussed partially here. The unusual combination of “prophet-king” is derived from John 6:14–15, where we find the figure ὁ προφήτης ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον who should become βασιλεύς. It should be stressed that it is the Galilean crowd who attributed this composite title to Jesus (v. 15 is by way of report of the evangelist), and we must be careful to distinguish between the evangelist’s own Christology and the Christological “guesswork” of the various characters in the Gospel story. Although scholars generally consider Deut 18:15–18, where Yahweh promised to raise up for Israel a prophet like Moses, as providing the background for the eschatological prophet-king in John 6:14–16, opinion is divided over the precise identity of this composite figure. On the one hand, there are those who interpret “the prophet-king” messianically. That is to say, the prophet-king “is ... not a forerunner of the Messiah but ... the Messiah himself.”³³ Barrett adduces three factors to argue for this view. The first is the suffix ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον, which accompanies the title ὁ προφήτης in 6:14. Barrett points out, correctly, that in Matt 11:3 and Luke 7:19 ὁ ἐρχόμενος is a messianic title. The second factor is the word βασιλεύς in John 6:15; Barrett thinks that word is decidedly messianic. Thirdly, Barrett points to the fact that one of the ways whereby the Deuteronomistic promise of a Mosaic eschatological prophet was understood in the history of interpretation is from the messianic point of view. Although Barrett does not expound this, I believe this is the strongest of the three supporting factors for the view that the prophet-king of John 6:14–15 is the Messiah himself.

On the other hand, there are scholars who interpret the prophet-king non-messianically. They understand the figure as referring to “the eschatological prophet,” a figure distinct from the Messiah himself. One of these scholars is Richard Bauckham. He maintains that “the Fourth Gospel ... consistently

³³ Barrett, *Gospel*, 277.

distinguishes the Messiah from ‘the prophet’.”³⁴ Nowhere, not even in 6:14–15, claims Bauckham, does FG equate or assimilate “the Messiah” with “the prophet.” He insists on interpreting 6:14–15 in “the paradigm of the prophet like Moses.”³⁵ Bauckham does not say anything about the suffix *ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον*. He also does not think that *βασιλεύς* in v. 15 is a messianic title. He explains:

That the people should wish to set over them as leader or governor someone they identified as the prophet like Moses is entirely to be expected, but it seems unlikely they would have called this position kingship. This makes it probable that John’s use of *βασιλεύς* (which he does not directly attribute to the people) is his own choice of terminology ... John has chosen the word *βασιλεύς* in order to link this passage with the theme of true and false understanding of Jesus’ kingship ... But he need not be understood to mean that the people in chapter six confuse the figures of prophet and Messiah.³⁶

I find it rather surprising, however, that Bauckham does not mention or deal with the fact that one strand of interpretation of Deut 18:15–18 is messianic: the view that Moses was a type of the coming redeemer/Messiah.³⁷ Evidence for this view comes from both Samaritan and rabbinic sources. Of course this is nothing new, and many good analyses of the evidence have been done a long time ago.³⁸ It appears to me that the acclamation and proposition of the Galilean crowd to make Jesus king is better explained by way of the messianic interpretation of the

³⁴ Bauckham, “Messianism,” 36.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ In his summary of the history of interpretation of this passage, Martyn (*History and Theology*, 108) writes: “(1) While Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 was understood by the Deuteronomist to be a promise referring to an inexhaustible line of prophets rather than to an individual eschatological figure, it was interpreted in the latter way by various Jewish and Samaritan sources prior to the Christian era. (2) The oldest form of this interpretation appears to have referred the prophecy not to the Messiah, but rather to the Prophet like Moses. In the Qumran scrolls the Mosaic Prophet is apparently expected as a figure distinct from the Messiah(s). (3) However, both among Samaritans and among the rabbis a second step was taken. The Deuteronomic promise was understood to refer to the Messiah (or the Taheb). We may call this a hope not for the Mosaic Prophet, but for the Mosaic Prophet-Messiah.”

³⁸ See, e.g., Howard M. Teeple, *The Mosaic Eschatological Prophet*, JBLMS 10 (Philadelphia, PA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1957), esp. ch. 3; T. Francis Glasson, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel*, SBT (London: SCM, 1963), chs. 2–3; Joachim Jeremias, “Μωυσῆς,” *TDNT* 4:857–63; Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology*, trans. H. Knight and G. Ogg (London: Lutterworth, 1969), 352–406; Meeks, *Prophet-King*, chs. 2–6.

Deuteronomistic promise. There is no need to suggest, as Bauckham does, that βασιλεύς was a term added the evangelist, which he attributed to the crowd. It could very well have emerged from the crowd themselves: they wanted to seize him to make him what? Bauckham seems happy with any other word (e.g., ruler, governor, and so forth) as long as it is not “king.” But since evidence shows that Moses was regarded in certain quarters of Samaritans and later rabbis as both prophet and king, that seems to be precisely what we find here in 6:14–15. In the conclusion to chapter 4 of his *Prophet-King*, Meeks writes:

It [is] quite clear from rabbinic as well as non-rabbinic sources, that in some circles of Judaism over an extended period of time, from at least *the second century B.C. until the middle ages*, Moses was regarded as Israel’s ideal king as well as prophet. In isolated traditions the two titles were found closely connected, as the basic offices of Moses, and evidence was found for a notion of a succession of *prophetic kings* continuing the functions of Moses.³⁹

In light of the evidence that Meeks and others have collected and analyzed, we may confidently and firmly conclude that “the prophet-king” figure in John 6 owes itself to the messianic interpretation of the promised Mosaic prophet in Deut 18:15, 18.

There is one more aspect of John 6:14–15, and of the figure “the prophet-king,” that needs to be addressed: when Jesus flees from the crowd in v. 15, what is it that he is disavowing? I will try to answer this question in conversation with Wayne Meeks, Marinus de Jonge, and Paul N. Anderson.

In the conclusion of his analysis of John 6, Meeks writes: “The themes of chapter 6, like those of the trial before Pilate, are found to be very close to those of chapter 10, where it is by ‘laying down his life’ that the Good Shepherd establishes the ‘one fold.’”⁴⁰ There is nothing objectionable in this statement. Then Meeks

³⁹ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 214 (italics added). Similarly John Painter writes, “Thus we are warned against insisting that the categories of eschatological prophet and messianic king were always viewed separately. Clearly they are closely related by those depicted in John 6:14–15 and this should not be seen as a Johannine or early Christian construction but as a popular perception of Jesus in response to his signs and the feeding sign in particular” (“Jesus and the Quest for Eternal Life,” 71).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

adds: “The mission described in this manner is the mission of ‘the prophet coming into the world’ who ... is to be ‘king.’ The identification of Jesus as this prophet-king is by no means denied by Jesus’ ‘flight’ to the mountain; only the time and the manner in which men seek to make him king are rejected.”⁴¹ With this statement Meeks becomes susceptible to some serious criticism. Meeks claims that what Jesus is disavowing is simply “the time and the manner in which men seek to make him king.” I first note Anderson’s dissenting and, in my view, correct assessment:

[T]here is more to Jesus’ fugitive withdrawal than the untimeliness and demeanor of such a coronation ... [I]t is precisely the popularistic understanding of leadership that Jesus is portrayed here as eschewing. While Jesus is quite clearly connected with the Prophet-like-Moses figure, sent from the Father, it does not seem so clear that the Johannine Jesus is all that ready to accept the conventional expectations that ‘kingship’ would entail.⁴²

In other words at stake in John 6:14–15 is the definition and meaning of Jesus’ “kingship.” What Jesus is disavowing is a definition of kingship that is political and militant, a kingship that is “of this world.” Elsewhere in the Gospel, particularly in the trial before Pilate, the kingship of Jesus is affirmed, but it is described as οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (“not of this world”), and Jesus’ kingly function is defined as ἵνα μαρτυρήσω τῇ ἀληθείᾳ (“to testify to the truth”) (18:36–37).

Another weakness of Meeks’s analysis and conclusion is his supposition, already evident in the quote above, that Jesus’ kingship is qualified or redefined in terms of Jesus’ prophetic role, and vice versa. Commenting on the Good Shepherd discourse in John 10 and Jesus’ trial before Pilate in John 18:33–38a, Meeks writes: “In both passages – and in the whole of the Fourth Gospel – kingship is being radically redefined. The remarkable thing is that it is being redefined in terms of the mission of the prophet.”⁴³ Here Marinus de Jonge rightly criticizes Meeks. De Jonge asks: “Why, for instance, does the Fourth Gospel avoid the word ‘prophet’ in its obvious redefinition of kingship in John 18? Was that word not so suitable after

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Anderson, *Christology*, 177.

⁴³ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 67.

all and is, perhaps, also the notion of prophecy redefined in the course of the [G]ospel?”⁴⁴ With regards to John 10, de Jonge points out, correctly in my view, that “the expression ‘shepherd,’ so prominent in 10:1–16 and clearly referring to Jesus’ kingship, is replaced by ‘the Son’ who lives in unity with ‘the Father’ (see, especially vv. 25, 29, 30 and already v. 15).”⁴⁵ I concur with de Jonge’s conclusion that “Jesus’ kingship and his prophetic mission are both redefined in terms of the unique relationship between Son and Father, as portrayed in the Fourth Gospel.”⁴⁶ Moreover, the central titles in the Gospel are not “king,” “prophet,” or even “the Christ,” but “the Son of Man” and “the Son of God.”⁴⁷

To recapitulate, Jesus performed the *σημείον* of the loaves to reveal himself to the Galileans as “the bread of life,” sent by God, for the world. But the Galileans, misunderstanding the *σημείον*, concluded that Jesus was “the prophet-king” – an earthly, political leader (similar to Moses). But Jesus is not that, and he refused it. On the following day, the crowd pressed Jesus to prove, by the token of restoring the manna, whether he was really the Mosaic prophet-king that they thought he was. How Jesus responds will be our next subject.

6.4. Jesus the True Bread from Heaven (6:32–58)

We saw that the Galilean multitude, in response to the *σημείον* of the feeding, readily acclaimed Jesus as “the coming prophet” (v. 14) who should become king, even if that entailed the use of force by the multitude (v. 15). We also saw that Jesus disavowed such an acclamation and plan. Evidently the people misconstrued the *σημείον* and wrongly perceived Jesus’ person and mission. Furthermore, we saw that on the next day, when Jesus explained to the people what the *σημείον* truly meant (vv. 26–27) and called on them to believe in him as the Son of Man, sealed by God to be the giver of “the bread that endures to eternal life” (v. 29), they did not respond in faith but rather demanded that he produce an authenticating

⁴⁴ Marinus de Jonge, “Jesus as Prophet and King,” 162.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 161; see also n. 1.

σημείον, one that was analogous to the manna of old (vv. 30–31). Now we turn to Jesus’ response to this demand, recorded in vv. 32–33.

- v. 32a ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν
οὐ Μωϋσῆς δέδωκεν ὑμῖν τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ,
v. 32b ἀλλ’ ὁ πατήρ μου δίδωσιν ὑμῖν τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸν ἀληθινόν.
v. 33 ὁ γὰρ ἄρτος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ καταβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
καὶ ζωὴν διδοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ.
- v. 32a Very truly, I tell you,
it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven,
v. 32b but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.
v. 33 For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and
gives life to the world.

Three important remarks are in order. First, in v. 32a, with οὐ Μωϋσῆς, Jesus emphatically negates Moses as the giver of the bread from heaven.⁴⁸ That Jesus does so implies that the crowd, although they do not literally mention Moses (cf. vv. 30–31), believe that it was Moses who gave the manna. That is, Moses appears to be the subject of ἔδωκεν in the crowd’s scripture quotation in v. 31. This is a fundamental theological error, because the central role, which truly belongs to God, has been wrongly ascribed to the man Moses.⁴⁹ Moreover, the crowd uses this flawed understanding of scripture, in line with contemporaneous Jewish speculations concerning the “Mosaic prophet-king,” to discern Jesus’ identity and role: they suspect Jesus as merely a new Moses (cf. vv. 14–15) and now they want to test whether he could somehow duplicate the manna.

Second, after negating Moses, Jesus does two things in v. 32b: (1) he firmly acknowledges and affirms the role of his Father as the giver of “the bread from heaven” and (2) he shifts the focus of attention from the historical manna to what his Father is doing now in the present:⁵⁰ “but my Father gives (δίδωσιν) you the true bread from heaven.” A sharp contrast is made between “the bread from heaven” (the manna) and “the *true* bread from heaven.” Of course, both are

⁴⁸ So, e.g., Barrett, *Gospel*, 290; Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, 63–64.

⁴⁹ So Lindars, *Gospel*, 257; Carson, *Gospel*, 286.

⁵⁰ So, e.g., Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 144.

provisions of Jesus' Father, and both are described as ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Yet only the latter is called ἀληθινὸς ἄρτος, suggesting that it belongs to an altogether different category.⁵¹ It recalls the comparison in v. 27 between “the food that perishes” and “the food that endures to eternal life.” In our discussion of that verse we saw that the loaves, which Jesus provided and the crowd ate on the previous day, was (by implication) cast as an example of “the food that perishes.” That the manna also belongs to this category is shown by the fact that in vv. 49 and 58b Jesus bluntly says that none of the Israelites who ate the manna lived to this day but all of them died. In v. 27 it is the Son of Man, on whom God has set his seal, who will give (δώσει) “the food that endures to eternal life.” In v. 32b it is Jesus' Father who gives (δίδωσιν) “the true bread from heaven.” The following verses will make clear that “the food that endures to eternal life” and “the true bread from heaven” refer to the same thing. The implications of the verb tenses will become manifest also as we proceed.

Third, v. 33, which opens with γάρ, explains why it is that the present “bread” from heaven, which Jesus' Father now gives, is the only bread worth describing as ἀληθινός.⁵² But Jesus tweaks the nomenclature a bit: whereas in v. 27 it is called “the bread that endures to eternal life” and in v. 32b “the true bread from heaven,” it is now called “the bread of God.” All of these designations combine to stress the supreme quality of the “bread”: it is from heaven, from God himself and sent by him, and it alone can provide everlasting life to the world. Using the copulative ἐστιν, Jesus provides two distinguishing attributes of this bread: (1) ὁ καταβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (that which [or, he who] descends from

⁵¹ The adjective ἀληθινός means “true, trustworthy, genuine, authentic, real” (BDAG, p. 43); “agreeable to truth: truthful, true” (LSJ, p. 64). In relation to its use in the NT, Hübner (*EDNT* 1:58) remarks, “The adjectives ἀληθῆς and ἀληθινός ... embody ... all the nuances on the spectrum of meaning of ἀλήθεια: *true* in the sense of *dependable, constant, real, genuine, and faithful*” (italics his). In FG, Jesus himself is the ἀλήθεια (14:6, ἐγώ εἰμι ... ἡ ἀλήθεια) and is described as πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (“full of grace and truth”) (1:14). It is notable that ἀληθινός is also used of the Father in 17:3. Moreover, ἀληθινός is also used in metaphorical expressions that parallel the expression ὁ ἄρτος ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὁ ἀληθινός (“the true bread from heaven”), such as τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινός (“the true light,” 1:9) and ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή (“the true vine,” 15:1), among others. All of these expressions refer to Jesus. Brown's comment is incisive: “*Alēthinos* implies exclusivity in the sense of ‘the only real,’ as compared with the putative or would-be. It is used in a contrast between the heavenly and earthly, or between the NT reality and the OT type” (*Gospel*, 1:500–01).

⁵² So Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:42.

heaven”), and (2) [ὁ] ζῶν διδοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ (“[that which – or, he who – gives life to the world”). Both attributes are important and significant. I will try to show below that, in light of the fact that the “bread” is Jesus himself, the first attribute or characteristic pertains to the incarnation, and the second pertains to the crucifixion-and-resurrection.

But before explaining these two characteristics of “the true bread,” it is important to look back and summarize Jesus’ response to the demand for a *σημεῖον*. Similar to the incident of the first demand for a *σημεῖον* in 2:18–19, in the second demand in 6:30–33 there is a sense in which Jesus has refused the demand, but there is also a sense in which he has granted it. Clearly Jesus is not inclined to redo the feeding miracle or perform any other miracle resembling the manna. As we saw, the crowd demanded that Jesus produce a *σημεῖον* analogous to the manna because they wanted to test whether he was truly “the Mosaic prophet-king” (a political, militant figure) as they had earlier supposed in 6:14–15. But it is also clear that Jesus repudiated this estimation of his person and role (v. 15). The demand, therefore, reflects not only the crowd’s continuing unbelief but also their stubborn desire to project onto Jesus a messianic identity fashioned after contemporaneous Jewish speculations about “the Mosaic eschatological prophet” that do not cohere with Johannine Christology. It is not surprising that Jesus would refuse such a demand. However, if we carefully scrutinize Jesus’ response in vv. 32–33, we realize that right after refusing to grant a manna-like *σημεῖον*, he has immediately brought up the notion of “the true bread from heaven,” which “my Father gives you.” It appears that this “true bread from heaven” constitutes the positive response of Jesus to the challenge of producing a *σημεῖον* of his identity. Additionally we also saw in v. 33 the twofold attributes or characteristics of this “true bread.”

Since “the true bread from heaven” is Jesus himself (cf. vv. 35, 48, 51a), it does not make sense to say that this “bread” is a *σημεῖον* of Jesus’ identity. Rather, “the true bread from heaven” appears to be, in our passage, what and who the Johannine Jesus is. In other words, “the true bread from heaven” is not a sort of *σημεῖον*; instead, it is a metaphorical expression of the Christological identity or

role that John 6 seeks to advance. This seems to be the singular point of the chapter as a whole. As Jesus himself would repeatedly utter in the discourse, ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς (“I am the bread of life”) (vv. 35, 48, 51a). This is what the σημεῖον of the feeding signified, although the crowd entirely missed it, and this is what the discourse explicates. If so, what then is the σημεῖον implied in Jesus’ response in vv. 32–33? It seems to be what Jesus has said in v. 33, the two attributes or characteristics of “the bread of God.” That is, v. 33 appears to be answering the question: What is it that identifies Jesus as “the true bread”? Two answers are given, which I am going to discuss shortly.

Thus, although Jesus refuses to produce a σημεῖον akin to the manna (for why should he validate the crowd’s faulty estimations of his person and role?), he does seem to bring up a different sort of σημεῖον, one which points to his true identity and role as God’s “true bread” for the world.

6.4.1. ὁ καταβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (v. 33a)

The first attribute of the true “bread” (Jesus) is that it (he) “descends from heaven” (καταβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ). This is evidently a very important idea, because it is mentioned seven times in a span of about thirty verses. Apart from v. 33a, we note the following occurrences: v. 38: καταβέβηκα ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (“I have descended from heaven”); v. 41: ὁ καταβάς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (“I am the bread that descended from heaven”); v. 42: ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβέβηκα (“I have descended from heaven”); v. 50: ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνων (“this is the bread that descends from heaven”); v. 51: ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς (“I am the bread that descended from heaven”); v. 58: ὁ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς (“this is the bread that descended from heaven”). It is notable that in vv. 38 and 42 Jesus speaks directly of himself, without using the “bread” metaphor, as having descended from heaven. In vv. 33, 50, and 58 it is the “bread,” which (of course) refers to Jesus, which is described as “descending,” or having descended, from heaven. Verses 41 and 51 combine what the other verses do: the Johannine Jesus speaks in the first person and uses the “bread” metaphor in connection with having “descended from heaven.” In all this it is clear that the

“bread” is Jesus himself, and that the heavenly origins of this “true bread” are greatly emphasized.

The notion of *κατάβασις* (“descent”) from heaven, which in FG is often used in conjunction with *ἀνάβασις* (“ascent”) back to heaven (3:13; cf. 1:51) is an important motif in FG and has been a subject of numerous studies.⁵³ I cannot here engage fully with the various scholarly views on this subject. My immediate concern is, obviously, with the meaning of this motif as it relates to Jesus (the true “bread”) in John 6. Worth mentioning is the fact that *κατάβασις*’s pair, *ἀνάβασις*, occurs in 6:62, to which I shall turn in due course. Thus it appears that the *κατάβασις/ἀνάβασις* motif is present and crucial in the discourse. In what follows we shall be able to ascertain its importance. It is also worth pointing out that, as past studies have shown, this motif is associated with the Son of Man (cf. 1:51; 3:13).⁵⁴ As Painter writes, “The use of Son of Man draws attention to Jesus as a heavenly being first descending and then ascending to heaven again.”⁵⁵ Wayne A. Meeks, in his influential essay “The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism,” stressed that the main function of the *κατάβασις/ἀνάβασις* motif is to highlight Jesus as “the Stranger *par excellence*.”⁵⁶ But apparently Meeks has overemphasized

⁵³ See, e.g., E. M. Sidebottom, “The Ascent and Descent of the Son of Man in the Gospel of John,” *ATR* 39 (1957): 115–22; Wayne A. Meeks, “The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism,” *JBL* 91 (1972): 44–72; C. P. Toby Holleman, “Descent and Ascent in the Fourth Gospel: The Johannine Deconstruction of the Heavenly Ascent Revelatory Paradigm” (PhD diss., Rice University, 1990); John W. Pryor, “The Johannine Son of Man and the Descent-Ascent Motif,” *JETS* 34 (1991): 341–51; James F. McGrath, “Going Up and Coming Down in Johannine Legitimation,” *Neot* 31 (1997): 107–18; Madison N. Pierce and Benjamin N. Reynolds, “The Perfect Tense-Form and the Son of Man in John 3.13: Developments in Greek Grammar as a Viable Solution to the Timing of the Ascent and Descent,” *NTS* 60 (2014): 149–55; Charles A. Gieschen, “The Descending Son of Man in the Gospel of John: A Polemic Against Mystical Ascent to See God,” in *The Open Mind: Essays in Honour of Christopher Rowland*, ed. J. Knight and K. Sullivan; LNTS 522 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 105–29.

⁵⁴ E.g., Sidebottom, “The Descent and Ascent,” 115–22; Meeks, “The Man from Heaven,” 52; G. C. Nicholson, *Death as Departure: The Johannine Descent-Ascent Schema*, SBLDS 63 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1983), 60–2, 75–104. For a dissenting opinion see Pryor, “The Johannine Son of Man,” 341–51.

⁵⁵ John Painter, “The Enigmatic Son of Man,” in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, ed. F. Van Segbroeck, et al.; BETL 100 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 1870. See also John Ashton, “The Johannine Son of Man: A New Proposal,” *NTS* 57 (2011), 512.

⁵⁶ Meeks, “Man from Heaven,” 50. Meeks adds: “The pattern, descent and ascent, becomes the cipher for Jesus’ unique self-knowledge as well as for his foreignness to the men of this world” (ibid., 60). Moreover: “The descent and ascent of the Son of Man becomes not only the key to his

the “otherworldliness” of the Son of Man at the expense of the equally important fact that this heavenly Son of Man has truly entered the realm of humanity by becoming a real human being. If the Son of Man truly “descended” from heaven, he has done so through the incarnation. Thus, the Johannine Son of Man, though a divine figure, is simultaneously a true “son of man” – a real human being (cf. 6:41–42). That is, the Son of Man is as much “this-worldly” as he is “otherworldly.”

I mentioned above the seven occurrences of *καταβαίνειν* in connection with “the true bread” (Jesus). It is probably worthwhile to look into the *Aktionsarten*⁵⁷ and the aspect⁵⁸ of the various forms of this verb: the perfect indicative

identity and identification, but the primary content of his esoteric knowledge which *distinguishes* him from the men who belong to ‘this world’” (ibid., 60–61; italics his).

⁵⁷ *Aktionsart* literally means “kind of action,” and refers to “how an action actually takes place” (Constantine R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008], 21–2); it “describes the *procedural characteristics* of a verbal occurrence” (T. V. Evans, *Verbal Syntax in the Greek Pentateuch: Natural Greek Usage and Hebrew Interference* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 19; italics added). BDF (§318) identifies five most important *Aktionsarten* (“kinds of action”) in Greek (including the NT): “(1) The *punctiliar* (*momentary*) in the aorist stem: the action is conceived as a point with either the beginning or the end of the action emphasized ... or the action is conceived as a whole irrespective of its duration; (2) the *durative* (*linear* or *progressive*) in the present stem: the action is represented as durative (in progress) and either as timeless (ἔστιν ὁ θεός) or as taking place in present time; (3) the present stem may also be *iterative*: ἔβαλλεν ‘threw repeatedly (or each time); (4) the *perfective* in the perfect stem: a condition or state as a result of a past action is designated; and (5) ‘*perfectivizing*’ by means of *prepositions* ... the action is conceived as having reached its consummation ... or as continuing to its completion or as repeatedly achieved.” Evans (*Verbal Syntax*, 297) identifies three kinds of action: durative, punctiliar, and iterative.

⁵⁸ “Verbal aspect” (or simply, “aspect”) is a separate and distinct category from *Aktionsart*. Although some areas of verbal aspect remain unresolved (e.g., the verbal aspect of the perfect tense-form; and the precise number of aspects, that is, are there two or three aspects? or more?), the consensus among recent theorists is that verbal aspect has to do with an author’s or speaker’s viewpoint of the action or condition which the verb describes. So K. L. McKay (*A New Syntax of the Verb in the New Testament Greek: An Aspectual Approach*, SBG 5 [New York: Peter Lang, 1994], 27) writes, “Aspect ... is that category of the verb system by means of which an author (or speaker) shows how he views each event or activity he mentions in relation to its context.” Compare this with Stanley E. Porter’s (*Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament with Reference to Tense and Mood*, SBG 1 [New York: Peter Lang, 1989], 32): “Greek verbal aspect is a synthetic semantic category (realized in the forms of verbs) used of meaningful oppositions in a network of tense systems to grammaticalize the author’s reasoned subjective choice of conception of a process”; with Buist M. Fanning’s (*Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, OTM [Oxford: Clarendon, 1990], 84): “Verbal aspect ... is that category in the grammar of the verb which reflects the focus or viewpoint of the speaker in regard to the action or condition which the verb describes. It shows the perspective from which the occurrence is regarded or the portrayal of the occurrence apart from the actual or perceived nature of the situation itself”; and with Evans’s (*Verbal Syntax*, 14): Aspect “is now usually taken ... as a viewpoint feature, referring to the way in which a speaker or writer views a verbal occurrence in relation to its internal temporal constituency.” See further

καταβέβηκα, the aorist participle καταβάς, and the present participle καταβαίνων. We are concerned with the questions: How does the evangelist conceive of the κατάβασις of the “bread”? What did he have in mind in using these varying forms of the verb? In terms of *Aktionsart*, the perfect καταβέβηκα (vv. 38, 42: “I have descended”) envisages the κατάβασις as a completed past action that brought about the present reality of Jesus’ being in the flesh. The idea is that Jesus historically took on flesh and presently (in narrative time) remains in that condition. This accords well when καταβέβηκα is viewed in terms of verbal aspect: the descent is

Bernard Comrie, *Aspect: An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems*, CTL (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 1–6; J. W. Voelz, “Present and Aorist Verbal Aspect: A New Proposal,” *Neot* 27 (1993): 157; Constantine R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament*, SBG 13 (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 1; idem, *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs: Further Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament*, SBG 15 (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 14; Rodney J. Decker, *Temporal Deixis of the Greek Verb in the Gospel of Mark with Reference to Verbal Aspect*, SBG 10 (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 26; Maximillian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples* (Rome: Instituto Biblico, 2001), 77; T. V. Evans, “Future Directions for Aspect Studies in Ancient Greek,” in *Biblical Greek Language and Lexicography: Essays in Honor of Frederick W. Danker*, ed. B. A. Taylor (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 201; David L. Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect in the Book of Revelation: The Function of Greek Verb Tenses in John’s Apocalypse*, LBS 4 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), 22–3; Steven E. Runge and Christopher J. Fresch, eds., *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), esp. Christopher J. Thomson’s contribution “What is Aspect?,” pp. 13–80.

But while scholars agree that verbal aspect is a “viewpoint feature” (to use T. V. Evans’s terminology), they diverge in the question of how many verbal aspects there are. On the one hand, J. P. Louw (*Semantics of New Testament Greek* [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1982]), K. L. McKay (“On the Perfect and Other Aspects of New Testament Greek,” *NovT* 23 [1981]: 289–329; idem, *A New Syntax*, passim), S. E. Porter (*Verbal Aspect*) and some others argue for three verbal aspects, as follows: (1) the perfective aspect, represented by the aorist, signifies the conception of an activity as a whole action or simple event; (2) the imperfective aspect, represented by the present and the imperfect, signifies an activity or event in process/progress; and (3) the stative aspect, represented by the perfect and the pluperfect, signifies “a condition or state of affairs in existence” (Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 91). On the other hand, Fanning (*Verbal Aspect*), T. E. Evans (*Verbal Syntax*), Campbell (*Verbal Aspect; Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs; Basics of Biblical Greek*) and others insist that there are only two verbal aspects: (1) the perfective aspect and (2) the imperfective aspect. Evans (*Verbal Syntax*, 18) explains: “The perfective aspect views a verbal occurrence as a complete unity ... The imperfective aspect views an occurrence as incomplete, with reference to its internal temporal constituency.” As a matter of fact, these scholars agree on perfective and imperfective aspects. The point of contention is: what is the verbal aspect of the perfect (and pluperfect) tense-forms? The first group of scholars take the perfect (and pluperfect) tense-forms as constituting a distinct and separate aspect, and they call it stative. The latter group of scholars, committed to “a binary opposition between perfective and imperfective aspects” (Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 18), thinks that there is no such thing as stative aspect, and takes the perfect (and pluperfect) tense-forms as encoding imperfective aspect. Space does not permit any more probing into this complicated debate. But for the sake of my exegesis, I am going to follow the threefold aspect scheme as already cited above.

viewed as “a condition or state of affairs in existence.”⁵⁹ Then there is the aorist participle *καταβάς*⁶⁰ (vv. 41, 51, 58). In terms of *Aktionsart*, it denotes a completed past action. It envisages the *κατάβασις* of the bread “with greater stress on history: on a unique occasion in time Christ did descend.”⁶¹ The *κατάβασις* is envisaged primarily in terms of its being a historical event.⁶² In terms of verbal aspect, the *κατάβασις* is viewed as a whole action or simple event. Finally, there is the present participle *καταβαίνων*⁶³ (vv. 33, 50). Its *Aktionsart* is durative: the *κατάβασις* of the “bread,” in terms of the incarnation, is taking place in present time. The present participle also has a characterizing function: Jesus is characterized as the “descending bread.”⁶⁴ In terms of verbal aspect, the evangelist conceives of the *κατάβασις* (the incarnation) as an event in progress.

This brief study of the *Aktionsarten* and aspects of the various forms of *καταβαίνειν* has suggested two things in regard to the *κατάβασις* of Jesus the true “bread.” First, Jesus is characterized as the one who “descends” from heaven (ὁ καταβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, see esp. v. 33). He is the “descending” and “ascending” one. In John 6, it is as the eschatological “bread” that he “descends,” to “feed” the world. In light of this characterization, one wonders whether it is permissible to speak of “descents” and “ascents” of Jesus. John 6, however, does not permit an answer to this question. Second, at one specific point in time, Jesus did “descend” (and “ascend”) climactically and supremely. This is the thrust of the perfect *καταβέβηκα* and the substantival aorist participle ὁ καταβάς. This climactic *κατάβασις* is the incarnation of the eternal Word of God (see 1:14), the “enfleshment” of the eschatological “bread.”⁶⁵ The *κατάβασις* is not so much spatial

⁵⁹ Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 91.

⁶⁰ If this word were to occur alone, it should be translated as “after descending” or “having descended.” But in its threefold occurrences its form is a substantival aorist participle, ὁ καταβάς. Hence it should be translated with “he who descended,” and since it refers to the bread, it may also be translated with “that which descended.”

⁶¹ Barrett, *Gospel*, 290–91.

⁶² Lightfoot, *Gospel*, 167.

⁶³ In its twofold occurrences in the Bread of Life discourse, its form is a substantival present participle, ὁ καταβαίνων.

⁶⁴ So Lightfoot, *Gospel*, 167; Barrett, *Gospel*, 290.

⁶⁵ Not all interpreters of the Bread of Life discourse highlight the connection between the “descent” of the true “bread” and the incarnation. Some who do include James D. G. Dunn, “John

as it is the unprecedented participation of the divine with humanity, as the eternal and divine Logos of God took on himself human flesh (see 1:1–2, 14, 18).

It is not necessary here to enter into a discussion of FE's belief in the incarnation.⁶⁶ Instead, I proceed directly to this question: does FE imply in 6:30–33 that the incarnation is a *σημείον*? That seems to be the case. As I have said, the Christological identity and role that is being advanced in John 6 as a whole is that Jesus is the “bread” of God, an identity which is closely tied to Jesus' self-designation as the Son of Man. The *κατάβασις* of the “bread” of God from heaven is the first of two characterizations stated in v. 33 that signify Jesus as the true “bread” of God. Since this *κατάβασις* took place climactically and decisively in the incarnation, it appears, therefore, that the incarnation is here alluded to as a *σημείον*. There may be objections to this interpretation, such as the familiar comment that nowhere in FG is the incarnation explicitly termed a *σημείον*. I have more than once refuted this sort of objection, and I probably need not repeat that here.⁶⁷ Perhaps a more germane objection, or difficulty, is the fact that the incarnation seems to be too broad a category for a *σημείον*. But this objection appears to overlook that FE himself at times uses *σημείον* broadly and inclusively. I am thinking not only of those summative uses of *σημεία* such as in 2:23; 3:2; and so on, but also of 12:37 and 20:30–31 where evidently the evangelist has used the word *σημεία* to describe the earthly career – one can say “the incarnate existence” – of Jesus.⁶⁸

vi—A Eucharistic Discourse?,” *NTS* 17 (1971), 336; Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 147; Jey J. Kanagaraj, *‘Mysticism’ in the Gospel of John: An Inquiry into its Background*, JSNTSup 158 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 207.

⁶⁶ On which see, e.g., James Parker, “The Incarnational Christology of John,” *CTR* 3 (1988): 31–48; David J. MacLeod, “The Incarnation of the Word: John 1:14,” *BibSac* 161 (2004): 72–88; Charles H. Talbert, “‘And the Word Became Flesh’: When?” in *The Future of Christology*, ed. A. J. Malherbe and W. A. Meeks (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 43–52; Jörg Frey, “Joh 1,14, die Fleischwerdung des Logos und die Einwohnung Gottes in Jesus Christus,” in *Das Geheimnis der Gegenwart Gottes: Zur Schechina-Vorstellung in Judentum und Christentum*, ed. Bernd Janowski; WUNT 318 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 231–56.

⁶⁷ See, e.g., §6.2.

⁶⁸ See ch. 3.

6.4.2. ὁ ζῶν διδούς τῷ κόσμῳ (v. 33b)

The second characterization of the “bread” of God is expressed in v. 33b: [ὁ] ζῶν διδούς τῷ κόσμῳ (“he who, or that which, gives life to the world”). This is thematically inseparable from, and logical to, the first characterization, which is the *κατάβασις* of the “bread” from heaven. We know from elsewhere in FG that the very purpose of Jesus’ coming into the world is to grant salvation (eternal life) to those who would believe in him (see, e.g., 3:14–18; 10:10). In the idiom of John 6, the purpose for the “bread’s” *κατάβασις* into the world is to “feed” the world. And as we have just seen, the climactic and decisive *κατάβασις* of the “bread” is the incarnation. With the thought of v. 33b, the evangelist will substantially advance his argument by saying that the “bread” (or “food”) and “drink” that Jesus shall give for the life of the world is his own flesh and blood. The evangelist will also stress the necessity of “eating” Jesus’ flesh and “drinking” his blood if the world is to receive the eternal life that it needs.

But before we turn to the discussion of the relevant passages, we should remind ourselves that the whole idea of ὁ ἄρτος τοῦ θεοῦ ... ζῶν διδούς τῷ κόσμῳ is Jesus’ response to the Galileans’ demand for a *σημεῖον* akin to the manna. At stake is the question of a *σημεῖον* of Jesus’ identity and mission. Who is he precisely, and what will demonstrate his true identity? The Galilean crowd assumed (wrongly) that Jesus was “the Mosaic prophet-king,” a recognition and acclamation that Jesus has refused (vv. 14–15). Rather, Jesus, as the Son of Man, is the giver and is himself the true “bread” “descended” from heaven to the world. In v. 33 Jesus brings up two things that attest to himself as “the bread of God”: his “descent” from heaven, alluding to the incarnation, and his giving life to the world, alluding to his death-and-resurrection

6.4.2.1. The bread of God possesses life and dispenses it to the world.

In the second characterization of the bread of God in v. 33, the verb used is δίδωμι, “to give.” It occurs a total of twelve times in John 6 (twice outside the Bread of Life discourse: vv. 11, 65; ten in the discourse). Of its ten occurrences in the discourse, five are directly relevant to the topic of the eschatological bread giving life to the world, namely: v. 27: ἐργάζεσθε ... τὴν βρῶσιν τὴν μένουσαν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον, ἣν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑμῖν δώσει, “work for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give (δώσει) you”; v. 32: ἀλλὰ ὁ πατήρ μου δίδωσιν ὑμῖν τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸν ἀληθινόν, “but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven”; v. 33: ὁ γὰρ ἄρτος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ ... ζωὴν διδοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ, “the bread of God is ... that which gives life to the world”; v. 51c: καὶ ὁ ἄρτος δὲ ὃν ἐγὼ δώσω ἡ σὰρξ μου ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς, “and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh”; and v. 52b: πῶς δύναται οὗτος ἡμῖν δοῦναι τὴν σάρκα [αὐτοῦ] φαγεῖν; “how can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

My earlier discussion of the *Aktionsart* and aspect of καταβαίνειν applies here as well. We note, first of all, the characterizing function of the present participle διδοὺς in v. 33b: it is the quality or property of the eschatological bread to give life to the world. What is envisaged is not a one-off but a continuing giving of life: the “bread” sustains the life of the world. The thought is not different from that expressed in 1:4, ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, “In him was life, and the life was the light of all humankind.” Second, there is a present aspect to the giving: the eschatological *now*. Jesus tells the Galileans in v. 32: “Truly, truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives (δίδωσιν) you the true bread from heaven.” The action is happening now, even as Jesus speaks to the people. His interlocutors do not understand, but the readers do, that in the person of Jesus, God has provided the true “bread” for the world. Third, there is also a future aspect (in narrative time) to the giving. In v. 27b, Jesus says that the Son of Man, on whom God the Father has set his seal, will

give (δώσει) the food that endures to eternal life. In v. 51c, Jesus says that the “bread” that he will give to the world is his own flesh. As most scholars acknowledge, these are proleptic allusions to Jesus’ death.⁶⁹ The death of Jesus is the climactic giving of life to the world, just as the incarnation is the climactic “descent” of the true “bread” to the world.

The life-giving quality of God’s “bread” is stressed and elucidated in a further couple of places in the discourse (vv. 47–50 and v. 58) by way of contrast with the manna. The first passage is vv. 47–50:

⁴⁷ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὁ πιστεύων ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον. ⁴⁸ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς. ⁴⁹οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ἔφαγον ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τὸ μάννα καὶ ἀπέθανον. ⁵⁰οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνων, ἵνα τις ἐξ αὐτοῦ φάγη καὶ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ

⁴⁷Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.

Verse 47 stresses faith in Jesus as the prescribed access to eternal life, a truth that has been repeatedly stressed before (cf. vv. 27b, 29, 32b, 33b, 35, 37, 40); it also stresses that eternal life is a present reality and a present possession for those who believe in Jesus. Verse 48, ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς (“I am the bread of life”), is an exact repetition of v. 35a (cf. v. 51a). Then comes the contrast with the manna in v. 49. This verse deliberately recalls v. 31a, where the Galileans cited the provision of the manna in the wilderness as a basis of their demand for a σημεῖον. The manna was a perishable food (cf. v. 27) and could provide only perishable life; those who ate it eventually died (physical death is in view). By contrast, Jesus is “the bread of life” (vv. 35, 48) and “the living bread” (v. 51a). He is “the imperishable food” (v. 27). He is “the bread of God” who “descends” from heaven and gives life to the

⁶⁹ E.g., Hoskyns, *Gospel*, 292–293, 297; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 339; Marsh, *John*, 295; Barrett, *Gospel*, 283; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:36–37, 54; Dunn, “John vi,” 331; Carson, *Gospel*, 295; Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 202–203; Moloney, *Gospel*, 221; Keener, *Gospel*, 687; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 238; Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 346, 364; Anderson, *Christology*, 135, 207.

world (vv. 33, 50a, 51a). The man or woman who “eats” of this “bread” – who “eats” Jesus – will never die (v. 50),⁷⁰ but possesses eternal life in the present (v. 47) and will live forever (v. 51b).

How it is that Jesus, as “the bread of life,” possesses and dispenses eternal life is explained in terms of his origins, which cannot be divorced from his identity: v. 50a: “This is the bread that descends (*καταβαίνων*) from heaven”; v. 51a: “I am the living bread that descended (*καταβάς*) from heaven” (cf. vv. 32b, 33a, 38a). Jesus’ heavenly origins and identity are stressed. He is heavenly “bread,” as opposed to earthly bread. The manna, although it was God-given, was ultimately an earthly bread. As has been pointed out, the present participle *καταβαίνων* characterizes the bread as “descending” from heaven to earth to give life to the world. Meanwhile, the aorist participle *καταβάς* has in mind a “descent” of the bread at one point in history; this, as we saw, pertains to the incarnation – the climactic *κατάβασις* of the “bread” of God.

The contrast between the true “bread” of God and the manna is reiterated in v. 58: “This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” This verse concludes and summarizes the discourse. It sums up the key themes of John 6. The first line refers to the climactic *κατάβασις* of the “bread” of God in the incarnation. The third line presupposes a number of themes simultaneously. “S/he who eats this bread” presupposes Jesus’ sacrificial death, and it is at the same a metaphor for faith/belief in Jesus. Then there is the promise of eternal life to every one who believes in Jesus. All these affirmations are contrasted with the manna in the middle or second line: all those who ate the manna died; none has survived.

⁷⁰ This is not a promise that believers in Jesus will never die physically. Rather, it is a promise that believers in Jesus will never die spiritually. “Death” in v. 49 is physical; “death” in v. 50 is spiritual. So, e.g., Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, 172–73; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:271, 277; Kysar, *John*, 106.

6.4.2.2. *Jesus' Flesh and Blood: The "Food" for the Life of the World (vv. 51c–58)*

The climax of the Bread of Life discourse is John 6:51c–58, where the subject of Jesus as “the bread of life” is climactically defined in a surprisingly scandalous way: the “food” and “drink” that Jesus gives for the life of the world is nothing less than his own flesh and blood, and that human beings can find eternal life only by “feeding” on his flesh and “drinking” his blood.

Scholarly debates on this passage are well known: Does this passage belong thematically to the Bread of Life discourse, or not? Did it come from the same hand that penned the preceding parts of the discourse, or not? Does it refer to the sacrament of the Eucharist, and was it written to advance a sacramental theology? These are important questions, but to tackle them here would detract from my narrower focus.

As many writers have demonstrated, there are no compelling reasons to divide up the discourse and assign the parts to various sources.⁷¹ As to whether the passage is sacramental (and promotes sacramental theology) or not, a greater number of interpreters are convinced that *σάρξ* and *αἷμα* primarily allude to Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross, and that the threefold injunction to “eat” Jesus' flesh and “drink” his blood metaphorically refers to the believer's appropriation, by faith, of Jesus' divine claims and the benefits of his salvific death.⁷² In other words,

⁷¹ For a fairly recent argument for the stylistic and theological unity of John 6 see Thomas Popp, *Grammatik des Geistes: Literarische Kunst und theologische Konzeption in Johannes 3 und 6*, ABG 3 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2001), 256–76. See also Eugen Ruckstuhl, *Die literarische Einheit des Johannesevangeliums*, SUNT 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988).

⁷² E.g., Calvin, *Gospel*, 1:267; Godet, *Gospel*, 2:243; Westcott, *Gospel*, 1:238–42; Hoskyns, *Gospel*, 297; Barrett, *Gospel*, 284; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:55; Dunn, “John vi,” 328–38; Moloney, *Son of Man*, 115–16; Tenney, “The Gospel of John,” *EBC* 9:77; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 93–4; Thompson, *Incarnate Word*, 44–8; Carson, *Gospel*, 276–82; Morris, *Gospel*, 333; Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 195; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 238; Smith, *John*, 157; Keener, *Gospel*, 688; Lincoln, *Gospel*, 231–32; Hans Burger, *Being in Christ: A Biblical and Systematic Investigation in a Reformed Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 287–90; Meredith J. C. Warren, *My Flesh is Meat Indeed: A Nonsacramental Reading of John 6:51–58* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015), 187–244; Gerry Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John's Gospel*, SNTSMS 162 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 110.

the passage is primarily Christological and soteriological, rather than sacramental or Eucharistic.

Σάρξ, which occurs six times in vv. 51c–58,⁷³ does not primarily refer to the institution of the Lord’s Supper, which FE does not actually report.⁷⁴ In the accounts of the institution of the Lord’s Supper found elsewhere in the NT, the word consistently used is not σάρξ but σῶμα.⁷⁵ Rather, the primary meaning of σάρξ within FG is evidently the same as that of 1:14, where σάρξ pertains to the incarnation of the Logos.⁷⁶ As we have seen above, the incarnation figures importantly in the Bread of Life discourse through the repeated mention of the κατὰβασις of the “bread” of God, and this “bread” is identical with the Son of Man. Now if σάρξ in vv. 51c–58 alludes to the incarnation, then we have here a reiteration of the first quality of “the bread of God” in v. 33a.

But the thrust of vv. 51c–58 is not upon the incarnation generally, but particularly upon Jesus’ sacrificial death. Verse 51c, in which converge the important words ἄρτος, σάρξ, δώσω, and the phrase ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς, contains a clear allusion to Jesus’ sacrificial death.⁷⁷ The future verb δώσω (“I will give”), anticipates the complex of Jesus’ death-and-resurrection. We recall that a similar form of the verb, with an equally firm allusion to the cross, has already occurred in v. 27: the Son of Man, sealed by God the Father, “will give (δώσει) the imperishable food.” The phrase ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς (“for the life of the world”), points to the sacrificial nature and salvific benefit of Jesus’ death, and there is a stress on the global or universal scope of it, as opposed to, say, the Israelites only. The universal saving function of the “bread” has already been disclosed early on in the discourse, when Jesus responded to the demand for a

⁷³ Verses 51c, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56; cf. v. 62.

⁷⁴ FE also does not report the baptism of Jesus.

⁷⁵ E.g., 1 Cor 11:24: τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν; Matt 26:26: λάβετε φάγετε, τοῦτό ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμά μου; Mark 14:22: λάβετε, τοῦτό ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμά μου; Luke 22:19: τοῦτο ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον.

⁷⁶ That the σάρξ of 6:51c–58 should be interpreted in the light of 1:14 has been stressed by many scholars; e.g., Hugo Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel*, repr. (Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner, 1968), 260; E. Schweizer, “σάρξ,” in *TDNT* 7:140; Moloney, *Johannine Son of Man*, 115.

⁷⁷ So, e.g., Hoskyns, *Gospel*, 297; Barrett, *Gospel*, 298; Bruce, *Gospel*, 158; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 94; Keener, *Gospel*, 687; Wheaton, *Jewish Feasts*, 99.

σημείον by declaring that the “bread” of God “descends” from heaven and gives life “to the world” (v. 33). But the important contribution of vv. 51c–58 is the additional information that the giving of eternal life to the world takes place in and through the death of Jesus.

The imagery of σάρξ is expanded in vv. 53–56 with the addition of αἷμα. Many interpreters have supported their sacramental reading of the passage by referring to this word. Yet again the primary reference is not to the Lord’s Supper. The combination of σάρξ and αἷμα is an emphatic way of referring to what is human, such as, e.g., in 1:12–13. The same usage is attested outside FG, such as in 1 Cor 15:58; Matt 16:17; Sir 14:18; 17:31. Even a sacramentalist such as R. E. Brown acknowledges that “flesh and blood” is a Hebrew idiomatic expression for “the whole man.”⁷⁸ Moloney puts it well: “‘Flesh’ and ‘blood’ represent vividly and realistically that Jesus, the mediator of eternal life, has expressed his function in the role of a human being.”⁷⁹

Αἷμα also strengthens the connection with, and emphasis upon, Jesus’ sacrificial death. In vv. 53–56 the Johannine Jesus asserts:

⁵³ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ φάγητε τὴν σάρκα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πίνητε αὐτοῦ τὸ αἷμα, οὐκ ἔχετε ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς. ⁵⁴ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον, καὶ γὰρ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ. ⁵⁵ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ μου ἀληθὴς ἐστὶν βρώσις, καὶ τὸ αἷμά μου ἀληθὴς ἐστὶν πόσις. ⁵⁶ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἐν ἐμοὶ μένει καὶ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ.

⁵³Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; ⁵⁵for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.

No doubt the language here is repulsive, especially to Jewish listeners. But these expressions are not to be understood literally. Rather, they are metaphorical

⁷⁸ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:282.

⁷⁹ Moloney, *Johannine Son of Man*, 116.

expressions of the believer's appropriation, by faith, of Christ's sacrificial death. This, of course, has been made clear early on in the discourse. In vv. 27 and 29, where Jesus speaks about "the food that endures for eternal life," which the Son of Man will give, he adds that the way of access to this gift is faith in the Son of Man (v. 29). This is reiterated in v. 35: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

6.4.2.3. *Jesus' Death as a Σημεῖον*

It seems clear from the above analysis that Jesus' death is the climax of the Bread of Life discourse. Of course the incarnation is also greatly emphasized, for it presupposes the heavenly and divine origins of the "bread." But the discourse moves progressively toward vv. 51c–58, where the "eating" of Jesus' flesh and "drinking" of his blood graphically allude to his sacrificial and salvific death on the cross. It is important to stress that the whole talk of the *κατάβασις* of the "bread" and its giving life to the world is Jesus' response to the demand for a *σημεῖον* (vv. 30–33). Of course we know that the *Ἰουδαῖοι* want Jesus to prove himself as a political ruler (cf. vv. 14–15). But Jesus seems to be giving, or "promising," them a different sort of *σημεῖον*, one that will truly convey to those with the eyes of faith that he is "the bread of life" – the life-giver for the world. I discussed above that the incarnation, based on the motif of the *κατάβασις* of the "bread," seems to be presented as a *σημεῖον* that signifies Jesus as "the true bread." Now it appears that Jesus' death itself is presented as a *σημεῖον*.

The question arises whether Jesus' incarnation and death constitute two different *σημεῖα* of his identity and role as "the bread of life." But, as has been noted above, the incarnation is a very broad category that encompasses the deeds of Jesus in his earthly existence, including his death. Thus, to describe the incarnation as a *σημεῖον* includes, among other things, the proposition that Jesus' death is a *σημεῖον*. In other words, the *σημεῖον* of the incarnation and the *σημεῖον* of Jesus' death cannot be separated, although they may be distinguished.

It is also true that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is the climax of the incarnation. The Son of Man "descended" from heaven to earth in order to "ascend" back to heaven, and he did so by way of the cross. Thus it is evident that the eventual focus is not really upon the incarnation itself, but upon Jesus' death. We saw this reflected in the discourse, where Jesus' sacrificial and salvific death is alluded to as early as v. 27, and becomes the intense focus in vv. 51c–58, with the vivid language of "eating" Jesus' flesh and "drinking" his blood. Thus, it appears that there is a greater focus upon the σημεῖον of Jesus' death.

6.5. The Ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man (6:62)

Although my focus in this section is narrowly upon the ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man in 6:62, a brief summary of 6:60–71 will be helpful here. This passage recounts two contrasting responses to Jesus' teaching in John 6, particularly to the claim that it is the flesh and blood of Jesus (the Son of Man) – descended from heaven through the incarnation and "sacrificed" on the cross – that God has ordained as "the bread of life" for the world.⁸⁰ First, ἐκ τούτου πολλοὶ [ἐκ] τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ("many of Jesus' disciples") (v. 66), turned back and no longer followed him. That is, they ceased to be Jesus' disciples.⁸¹ They stumbled over the above-said teaching of Jesus, which they found to be σκληρός ("offensive")⁸² (v. 60), and they were "scandalized" (v. 61) by it. Godet is probably right in describing this scenario as "the decisive crisis of the faith in Galilee."⁸³

Second, in contrast to the many deserters, οἱ δώδεκα ("the Twelve") (v. 67), or, more accurately, "the Twelve minus Judas Iscariot" (cf. vv. 70–71), did not stumble over Jesus' teaching. Rather, they confess, through Simon Peter: κύριε, πρὸς τίνα ἀπελευσόμεθα; ῥήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου ἔχεις, καὶ ἡμεῖς πεπιστεύκαμεν καὶ

⁸⁰ Similarly, Lindars (*Gospel*, 272) writes: "[T]he teaching which gives offence to these disciples is the necessity of the Incarnation and the Cross in order that God may give life to the world." Also, Dunn ("John vi," 331) writes: "The hard saying ... is the talk of Jesus' incarnation *and his death*" (italics his). See also Lincoln, *Gospel*, 236.

⁸¹ So Keener, *Gospel*, 695.

⁸² Lincoln, *Gospel*, 236.

⁸³ Godet, *Gospel*, 2:200.

ἐγνώκαμεν ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ (“Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God”) (vv. 68–69).

The reference to the ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man in v. 62 is part of Jesus’ response (vv. 61–64a) to the objection of those “disciples” who eventually deserted him. Their objection is that Jesus’ teaching is offensive (and incredible); no one is able to believe it (v. 60). Jesus asks them in v. 62: ἐὰν οὖν θεωρῆτε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀναβαίνοντα ὅπου ἦν τὸ πρότερον; (“Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?”). As commentators regularly note, this Greek sentence is incomplete: “it is an aposiopesis, that is, a conditional clause which has the protasis, but lacks the apodosis.”⁸⁴ Brown translates it to read: “If, then, you behold the Son of Man, ascending to where he was before?”⁸⁵ The implication for the connection between the σκάνδαλον and the seeing of the ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man may be either of the following: (1) seeing the ἀνάβασις will intensify the σκάνδαλον; or (2) it will reduce or eliminate it. But as many have pointed out⁸⁶ and as we will tease out below, these possibilities need not be mutually exclusive.

I proceed now to the meaning of ἀνάβασις. It is most certain that we are to take this word as the counterpart of the oft-repeated κατάβασις of the true “bread” in the preceding discourse.⁸⁷ We know that “the bread of life” is not just a gift of Jesus, but is, in fact, Jesus himself, and that Jesus is the Son of Man (cf. vv. 27, 35, 48, 51a). Thus we can be confident that we have in John 6 the motif of the κατάβασις/ἀνάβασις, a motif associated with the Son of Man (see also 3:13).⁸⁸ But

⁸⁴ Moloney, *Johannine Son of Man*, 120.

⁸⁵ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:295.

⁸⁶ E.g., Westcott, *Gospel*, 1:247; Barrett, *Gospel*, 303; Lindars, *Gospel*, 273; Carson, *Gospel*, 300.

⁸⁷ So, e.g., Bultmann, *Gospel*, 445 n. 3; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:71; Lindars, *Gospel*, 273; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 96.

⁸⁸ In 1:51 the pair καταβαίνειν/ἀναβαίνειν also occurs, but its subject is “the angels of God,” who “ascend and descend upon the Son of Man.” For a study of the κατάβασις/ἀνάβασις motif in FG, see E. M. Sidebottom, “The Ascent and Descent of the Son of Man in the Gospel of St. John,” *ATR* 39 (1957): 115–22; Wayne E. Meeks, “The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism,” *JBL* 91 (1972): 44–72; C. P. Toby Holleman, Jr., “Descent and Ascent in the Fourth Gospel: The Johannine Deconstruction of the Heavenly Ascent Revelatory Paradigm” (PhD diss., Rice

what does the ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man mean? Some interpreters say that it refers to the ascension of Jesus.⁸⁹ Others object to this, arguing that the ascension of Jesus is not actually recounted in FG.⁹⁰ But I think that on the basis of ὅπου ἦν τὸ πρότερον (“where he was before”), the ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man must include the notion of the ascension of the risen Jesus back to the Father, even though that event itself is not recounted in the Gospel.⁹¹ But it is also important to stress that in Johannine thought the ἀνάβασις of Jesus is not really confined to the idea of ascension as it is conceived elsewhere in the NT (e.g., Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:9–11). We know that in FG, Jesus “ascends” to the Father by way of the cross and the empty tomb (resurrection).⁹² Thus it is evident that the evangelist, through the concept of ἀνάβασις, views the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus as theologically inseparable, though temporally distinguishable, events.⁹³

Going back to v. 62, how shall we interpret the question, “Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?” As has been indicated, Jesus is here addressing those “disciples” who later abandon him. As has also been noted, FE does not actually record the actual physical ascension of Jesus to heaven. Thus, although ἀνάβασις in Johannine thought broadly pertains to the crucifixion-resurrection, here in v. 62 it does not seem to pertain to the physical ascension of Jesus to heaven. Moreover, since “unbelievers” do not actually get to

University, 1990); John W. Pryor, “The Johannine Son of Man and the Descent-Ascent Motif,” *JETS* 34 (1991): 341–51; James F. McGrath, “Going Up and Coming Down in Johannine Legitimation,” *Neot* 31 (1997): 107–18; Madison N. Pierce and Benjamin E. Reynolds, “The Perfect Tense-Form and the Son of Man in John 3.13: Developments in Greek Grammar as a Viable Solution to the Timing of the Ascent and Descent,” *NTS* 60 (2014): 149–55.

⁸⁹ E.g., Bernard, *Gospel*, 1:216.

⁹⁰ E.g., Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 245.

⁹¹ The ascension is probably alluded to in 20:17. See, e.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 2:994.

⁹² An important passage in this regard is 13:1, in the context of the foot washing. The narrator says: πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἦλθεν αὐτοῦ ἡ ὥρα ἵνα μεταβῆ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, ἀγαπήσας τοὺς ἰδίους τοὺς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτούς (“Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end”). The ὥρα of Jesus, which is here defined as the departure from this world and return to the Father, cannot be limited to the crucifixion alone, or to the resurrection alone, nor to the ascension alone. Rather, it seems best to understand it as pertaining inclusively to Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension as constituting the process of Jesus’ ἀνάβασις to the Father.

⁹³ Again, I am cognizant that FE does not have an account of the ascension, although 20:17 may certainly be alluding to it. Concerning the theological unity of the cross-and-resurrection of Jesus in FG, see §9.1.2 below.

see or witness the risen Christ (in keeping with the fact that the risen Christ appears only to his followers),⁹⁴ the ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man in v. 62 may also not pertain to the resurrection or the post-resurrection appearances. Thus it appears that we should interpret it as pertaining specifically to Jesus' death on the cross,⁹⁵ which, as we know, is the ὥρα of his glorification (cf. 12:23), of his being "lifted up" (cf. 3:14; 8:28; 12:32), and of his return to the Father (cf. 13:1). Yet we may not, with Bultmann, conclude that it means "no other than the ὑψωθῆναι and δοξασθῆναι that takes place on the cross."⁹⁶ For we know that the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension in FG constitute an unbreakable *catena* of a threefold event under the rubric of the ἀνάβασις (and ὑψωθῆναι and δοξασθῆναι) of the Son of Man.

If the ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man in 6:62 pertains in particular to the crucifixion, then the two alternatives mentioned above may both be acceptable. If Jesus' interlocutors are offended by his claims to be "the bread of life," how much more will they be offended by the crucifixion?⁹⁷ From the eyes of unbelief, the supreme offence or scandal is that "a mere man, whose life ends in [ignominious] death, solemnly lays claim that he is the Revealer of God."⁹⁸ By contrast, through the eyes of faith the "lifting up' by human hands of Jesus on a cross will be recognized as the exaltation by God of the Son of Man, via resurrection, to the throne of God, making possible a blessed eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man."⁹⁹ Thus, "the whole process of the return of Christ to the

⁹⁴ In John 20–21, Jesus appears only to a handful of his followers, unlike in 1 Cor 15 where it is said that the risen Christ appeared to Peter and the Twelve, to more than 500 brothers and sisters on one occasion, and to Paul. The appearances of the risen Lord to his disciples in John 21 are discussed in ch. 9 below.

⁹⁵ Some scholars object to this interpretation by saying that the question in v. 62 is hypothetical and does not necessarily entail that Jesus' interlocutors would see the ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man (see, e.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 1:296; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 245–46). But this objection has no force. Just because Jesus phrased it in the interrogative does not mean that it will not come to pass. If ἀνάβασις in v. 62 refers specifically to the crucifixion, then we know that not only "unbelievers" witness it (see 19:19–22); they also are the ones instrumental in bringing it about (see 8:28; 11:47–52; 19:1–16). Thus, it would appear that this question of Jesus in v. 62 actually is fulfilled in and through the crucifixion of Jesus.

⁹⁶ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 445.

⁹⁷ As Bultmann (*ibid.*) comments: "Then the offence really will be great!"

⁹⁸ Bultmann, *ibid.*

⁹⁹ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 96.

glory of the Father, including as it does the crucifixion, was both the supreme scandal, and the vindication of Christ as the Bread of Life; and, at the same time, the proof that eating his flesh and drinking his blood was neither murderous nor magical.”¹⁰⁰ It is from this perspective that the crucifixion may be seen as a σημεῖον, and what it signifies is that Jesus is himself the “bread” of life.¹⁰¹

6.6. Jesus’ Identity in John 6

John 6, as does the whole Gospel, presupposes and introduces a Jesus who is truly divine and truly human, in keeping with the evangelist’s overall Christology. Jesus’ true humanity is presupposed and taken for granted in the fact that he interacts as man with fellow humans; in John 6, with Galileans. Very importantly, his humanity is presupposed – in fact, shown – by the fact that the Galileans know his father and mother, and they know him as Ἰησοῦς ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωσήφ (v. 42). On the basis of this knowledge of Jesus’ earthly origins and parentage, the Galileans took umbrage at his claims to divine origins: “How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” (v. 42b). Thus for the unbelieving Ἰουδαῖοι, humanity and divinity cannot coexist in one person. God cannot become human, and a human being cannot be God. Jesus’ claims to divine origins are superfluous and must be seriously repudiated. Although they have problems with Jesus’ claims to divinity, the Galileans are willing to admire, honor, and “follow” him. In fact, as we have seen, after the feeding miracle they acknowledge him as “the coming prophet” and want to make him their king (vv. 14–15). They could go this far in honoring Jesus because “prophet,” “king,” or even “messiah” are not categories of divinity. On the

¹⁰⁰ Barrett, *Gospel*, 303.

¹⁰¹ Keener (*Gospel*, 694) shares this thought, although he does not mention σημεῖον: “The proof of Jesus’ identity would come in his ascent back to the Father ... though in this Gospel he is lifted up first of all by way of the cross, which hardly seems like compelling evidence to such opponents as these.” Beasley-Murray (*John*, 96) is more direct to the point: “[T]hey who can ‘see’ signs may see in this event [the crucifixion] the ultimate sign which illuminates all their problems.” Similarly, Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 2:71) comments that “only when the Son of God is exalted and glorified can his true identity be recognized ... Only then will the Son of Man give the food of eternal life and offer men his flesh and blood, which they must eat to have eternal life.”

other hand, the Johannine Jesus betrayed no interest or fascination with political rule or military might.

But while presupposing Jesus' true divinity and humanity, John 6 focuses the spotlight on Jesus' identity and mission associated with the title "the Son of Man." John 6 of course does not permit us to assign this title to either the divine or the human nature of Jesus. As already said, the Jesus of John 6 is both divine and human, and that is the Jesus who is called the Son of Man. This title proves to be closely connected with the theme of John 6: "the bread of life." The Son of Man is the giver of and is himself "the bread of life" (vv. 27, 35, 48, 51a). The widespread emphasis on the bread's *κατάβασις* from heaven – which not only implies the bread's heavenly and divine origins but also stresses its unprecedented *κατάβασις* in terms of the incarnation – coheres with the motif of the *κατάβασις/ἀνάβασις* of the Son of Man, a motif attested both in John 6 and in 3:13. A crucial part of the discourse (vv. 51c–58) is that the Son of Man (see esp. v. 53) gives his flesh as "food" and his blood as "drink" for the life of the world. As we saw, this pertains to Jesus' sacrificial and salvific death on the cross, which actually constitutes part of the *ἀνάβασις* of the Son of Man to the Father (v. 62).

In short, while presupposing Jesus' overall identity as truly divine and truly human, John 6 focuses on Jesus' identity as the Son of Man who is the giver of and is himself the true bread of God for the world. The death of Jesus is conceived sacrificially: it is the occasion whereby the Son of Man will offer his flesh and blood as a sacrifice for the sake of the life of the world. Thus, it appears that death is a, if not the, quintessential mission of the Son of Man. He descends from heaven (incarnation) in order to ascend back to the Father by way of the cross-and-resurrection.¹⁰² In all this, Jesus' death comes across as a distinctive marker or *σημείον* that shows forth his identity as the "bread" of God. That is why in 6:30–33, Jesus responds to the demand for a *σημείον* by pointing to himself, and by alluding

¹⁰² See Ben Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 1:566; Cornelis Bennema, *The Saving Power of Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel*, WUNT 2/148 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 202.

to the cross-and-resurrection, resembling his response to the first demand for a σημεῖον in 2:18–19.

6.7. Summary and Conclusion

A very important result of this investigation is the demonstration that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is depicted in John 6 as a σημεῖον. The specific Christological identity and role that the crucifixion signifies is that Jesus, the Son of Man, is both the giver of, and is himself, God's true "bread" for the life of the world. It is for the purpose of "feeding" the world that he "descended" from heaven to earth, through the incarnation, and "ascended" back to the Father by way of the cross-and-resurrection. To the eye of faith Jesus' death on the cross (along with the resurrection) as a σημεῖον reveals that he is the source of eternal life, and it further reveals that this eternal life comes at the cost of the sacrifice of Jesus' own flesh and blood. Thus, toward the end of John 6, Peter, representing the Twelve, confesses that Jesus, "the Holy One of God," possesses "the words of eternal life" (vv. 68–69). But to the eye of unbelief, Jesus' death on the cross serves only as the supreme scandal and offense, upon which the unbelieving κόσμος, such as the many "disciples" who later abandon Jesus in v. 66, stumbles to their own peril.

These findings support the broader scope of the Johannine σημεῖον which I am advocating. It seems clear that the incarnation itself, as a general and inclusive category, is depicted in the Bread of Life discourse as an encompassing σημεῖον of Jesus' identity and role as "the bread of life." But the emphasis is not confined to the general subject of incarnation, but also includes and focuses specifically upon the crucifixion (see esp. vv. 51c–58), as well as the resurrection (v. 62), of Jesus. From the perspective of σημεῖον, and particularly of Jesus' response to the demand for a σημεῖον (vv. 30–33, and so on), the cross-and-resurrection appears to be the σημεῖον that the Johannine Jesus has intended in order to signify his true identity and role as "the bread of life." Thus far, my twofold thesis – that the Johannine σημεῖον broadly pertains to those deeds of Jesus recounted in FG, the most important of which is Jesus' death-and-resurrection – stands.

CHAPTER 7 THE ΣΗΜΕΙΟΝ OF THE RAISING OF LAZARUS (JOHN 11)

7.1. Introduction

This chapter is the third and last one dealing with a selection of the earlier *σημεῖα* of John's Gospel. It deals with the *σημεῖον* of the raising of Lazarus recounted in John 11.

Looking back, in ch. 5 I analyzed John 2:13–22, which recounts Jesus' protest at the precincts of the temple and the ensuing Jewish demand for a *σημεῖον* from Jesus, to which Jesus responds by proleptically speaking about the "temple" of his body being destroyed and raised again: that is, by alluding to his death-and-resurrection. I argued that we have in this passage (2:18–22) a clear allusion to Jesus' death-and-resurrection as a *σημεῖον*.

Ch. 6 was devoted to the analysis of John 6. The controlling theme of the *σημεῖον* of the multiplication of the bread is that Jesus is the bread of life. To those with the eyes of faith, the feeding miracle (vv. 1–13) reveals that Jesus – the Son of Man (vv. 27, 53, 62) – gives, and is himself, the bread of life. A significant element of John 6, in continuity with John 2:18–19, is the second demand for a *σημεῖον*, specified as something analogous to the manna (vv. 30–31). This demand was born out of the Galilean crowd's erroneous perception of Jesus' identity and goals: they thought that he was the anticipated Mosaic prophet-king (vv. 14–15). Similar to the way he responded to the first demand, Jesus did not perform a miracle, but instead told his interlocutors about two things that identify him as the true bread of God: (1) he descends from heaven and (2) gives life to the world (v. 32–33). This is tied to the motif of the *κατάβασις/ἀνάβασις* of the Son of Man. As I attempted to show, this refers to Jesus' incarnation, the climax of which is his crucifixion-and-resurrection. In the end, it became apparent that Jesus' response to

the second demand for a σημεῖον is to point allusively to his death-and-resurrection.

This present chapter will discuss the central theme of Jesus as “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25–26). In John 11, the Ἰουδαῖοι will not demand a σημεῖον in order that they could believe (unlike in John 2 and 6). Instead, as a result of the raising of Lazarus, which itself is a σημεῖον, the Jewish ruling council (the Sanhedrin) decides to put Jesus to death (vv. 47–53).¹ If John 2 and 6, which recount the two demands for a σημεῖον, have shown that Jesus’ death-and-resurrection is a σημεῖον, that point is not reiterated in John 11. Rather, what the Sanhedrin does is to put in place an official, juridical mandate for Jesus’ death, unwittingly precipitating the supreme σημεῖον of all.

A couple of important details in John 11 need to be highlighted. First, the decision to kill Jesus is a proposal put forth by the high priest Caiaphas, a proposal which the Sanhedrin immediately ratifies. After the official decision has been made, then comes the evangelist’s note on the nearness of the Passover. The role of the high priest, which the evangelist interprets as that of prophesying, is important for my thesis. Jesus’ death (and resurrection) is the supreme σημεῖον in John’s Gospel because Jesus dies as the Passover lamb.

7.2. The Raising of Lazarus as a Σημεῖον

It cannot be doubted that Jesus’ raising of Lazarus from the dead² is one of the σημεῖα of Jesus. There are two passages that establish this: 11:47–48 and 12:17–18.

¹ Of course this is not to suggest that the impact of the raising of Lazarus is altogether negative. As will be discussed below, many Ἰουδαῖοι (from Jerusalem) will come to faith in Jesus through this σημεῖον. It will also be stressed below that the conversion of these many Ἰουδαῖοι appears to be a major contributing factor for the Jewish leaders to decide to put Jesus to death.

² Following Philip F. Esler and Ronald A. Piper (*Lazarus, Mary, and Martha: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Gospel of John* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2006], 1 n. 1), as well as Derek M. H. Tovey (“On Not Unbinding the Lazarus Story: The Nexus of History and Theology in John 11:1–44,” in *John, Jesus, and History: Volume 2: Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. P. N. Anderson, F. Just, and T. Thatcher; ECL 2 [Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2009], 216, n. 5), I reserve the term “resurrection” for the raising of the dead to a form of life no longer subject to death, such as the resurrection of Jesus as well as the resurrection in the eschaton. In this meaning

The first passage comes on the heels of the raising of Lazarus and partly recounts the Sanhedrin's official reaction to the miracle. It is these Jewish leaders who say: "What are we to do? This man is performing many signs (*πολλὰ σημεῖα*). If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation." We know that this Council meeting was directly precipitated by the raising of Lazarus, yet the comment of the Jewish leaders, *πόλλα σημεῖα* ("many signs"), indicates that they have in mind not just the raising of Lazarus but also the many other *σημεῖα* of Jesus which have earned him a good following among the people. I will come back to this passage below. At the moment it will suffice to note that this text subsumes the raising of Lazarus under the heading of *σημεῖα*.

The second passage, though it falls outside my present textual focus, must be herein cited. This time, the singular *σημεῖον* is specifically applied to the raising of Lazarus, and it is the evangelist, as narrator, who mentions it. The evangelist says: "So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign (*τὸ σημεῖον*) that the crowd went to meet him" (12:17–18).

Having seen that the raising of Lazarus is a Johannine *σημεῖον*, it is important to clarify whether or not it is the greatest and last of all the Johannine *σημεῖα*. Many interpreters have put forth the idea that the raising of Lazarus is the greatest and the last of all the Johannine *σημεῖα*, a view which has been widely influential. For instance, Udo Schnelle describes the raising of Lazarus as "das größte Wunder im Neuen Testament"³ and "der Höhepunkt des öffentlichen

of the word, Lazarus's case cannot be described as a "resurrection," for he was simply restored to his former mortal life.

³ This appears to me an exaggeration or overstatement. We must not lose sight of the fact that as far as the category of "a dead person being brought back to life (to a previous ordinary, mortal life)" is concerned, the raising of Lazarus is only one among many in the NT, namely: (1) the raising of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11–15); (2) the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:41, 42, 49–55); (3) Peter's raising of Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36–41); and Paul's raising of Eutychus from the dead (Acts 20:9, 10). Thus it seems to me incorrect to single out the raising of Lazarus as the greatest "wonder" in the NT. Those strong and vivid details with which FE has recounted the miracle, such as the fact that Lazarus was already in the tomb for four days and

Wirken Jesu.”⁴ Similarly, for Rudolf Schnackenburg the raising of Lazarus is “the climax of all [of] Jesus’ signs.”⁵ This is also one of the foundational suppositions behind the well-known twofold structural division⁶ of the Gospel into (1) “the Book of Signs” (John 1–12 or 2–12) and (2) “the Book of Glory” (John 13–20/21).⁷ It is also a fundamental assumption in the traditional reckoning of “seven” Johannine σημεῖα, such as W. D. Davies has listed.⁸ For him the Johannine σημεῖα are seven (and only seven): (1) the miracle at Cana of Galilee, 2:1–12; (2) the healing of the nobleman’s son, 4:47–54; (3) the healing of the sick man at the pool of Bethesda, 5:1–16; (4) the feeding of the five thousand, 6:1–14; (5) the walking on the water, 6:15–21; (6) the healing of the man blind from birth at Siloam, 9:1–17; and (7) the raising of Lazarus, 11:1–44. Two important implications of this list are that (1) the raising of Lazarus is the greatest, culminating σημεῖον of Jesus, and (2) there are no σημεῖα beyond John 11.

But I am convinced that the raising of Lazarus is neither the greatest nor the last σημεῖον in FG. In fact, I doubt whether it is (at all) legitimate and helpful to try to single out a σημεῖον among the many earlier σημεῖα in the Gospel and call it

already caused a stench (11:17, 39), do not make this miracle qualitatively greater than the other similar miracles that I have cited.

⁴ Udo Schnelle, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, THKNT 4 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998), 208; see also idem, *Antidocetic Christology*, 125.

⁵ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:316.

⁶ The problem, in my view, is not with the bipartite structure itself, but with the fact that some headings, such as “The Book of Signs” and “The Book of Glory” can be, and are, misleading. See the following note.

⁷ The terminology is R. E. Brown’s (*Gospel*, 1:xi-xii; 2:ix-x). C. H. Dodd (*Interpretation*, x), who wrote earlier than Brown, similarly calls John 1–12 as “the Book of Signs,” but differs from Brown in that he calls John 13–20/21 “the Book of the Passion.” Unlike Brown, Dodd does not think, and I suppose he is correct to do so, that the σημεῖα are confined to the first half of the Gospel. In fact, as I have shown elsewhere, Dodd argues that Jesus’ death is the supreme σημεῖον of the Gospel (ibid., 438). Thus it turns out that Dodd does not really mean, by calling John 1–12 as “the Book of Signs,” that the σημεῖα are confined to that part of the Gospel. In effect, he is really saying that the whole Gospel is a book of σημεῖα. A more recent commentary, that of Andrew T. Lincoln (*Gospel*, 4–5), still reflects the earlier assumption that σημεῖα are confined to John 1–12. Lincoln divides the Gospel into (1) Jesus’ public mission (signs of glory) (1:19–12:50) and (2) Jesus’ farewell, passion and resurrection (departure as glory) (13:1–20:31). Another more recent commentary, that of Andreas J. Köstenberger (*John*, vii) also reflects this assumption. Köstenberger divides the main body of the Gospel into “The Book of Signs” (1:19–12:50) and “the Book of Glory” (13:1–20:31) (ibid., vii). Thus it is obvious that the assumption that the σημεῖα are only found in the first half of the Gospel, with the raising of Lazarus being the final one, remains widespread and persistent.

⁸ Davies, “Johannine ‘Signs,’” 93.

the greatest. Rather, I look at the raising of Lazarus as one in a series of earlier and preparatory *σημεῖα* that both herald and precipitate the eventuality and arrival of the supreme *σημεῖον*, which is Jesus' death-and-resurrection. I have elaborated on this in chs. 3–6 of this thesis. At the moment, it is clear that I do not share the view that the raising of Lazarus is the last or greatest *σημεῖον* in the Gospel. But it is also clear, and undeniable, that it is a *σημεῖον*. So what I am going to do now is to find out how this earlier *σημεῖον* relates to the supreme *σημεῖον* of Jesus' death-and-resurrection.

7.3. The Function of the Raising of Lazarus in the Plot and Its Location in the Structure of FG

If “plot” means “the organization of events into a coherent unity characterized by a causal and temporal logic,”⁹ then it is easy to see the “pivotal function”¹⁰ that John 11 plays in the plot development of the Gospel.¹¹ Without discounting the cumulative contribution and impact of the earlier *σημεῖα* of Jesus, it is the raising of Lazarus, by far the greatest and most dramatic deed of Jesus, that becomes the proximate cause for the Sanhedrin to act decisively in favour of killing Jesus.¹² This is important from the point of view, as far as narrative plot is concerned, that Jesus' death is the *Zielpunkt* as well as the *Vollendung*¹³ of the Johannine account of Jesus' life and ministry.¹⁴ Many recent interpreters have emphasized the

⁹ Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John's Gospel*, NTR (London: Routledge, 1994), 34). For R. Alan Culpepper (“The Plot of John's Story of Jesus,” *Int* 49 [1995], 348), “the plot of a narrative is that which explains its sequence, causality, unity, and affective power” (see also idem, *Anatomy*, 79–98).

¹⁰ So, e.g., Josef Wagner, *Auferstehung und Leben: Joh 11,1–12:19 als Spiegel johanneischer Redaktions- und Theologiegeschichte*, BU 19 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1988), 12, 410.

¹¹ On the key and pivotal role of John 11–12 in FG's structure and narrative see, e.g., Michael Labahn, “Bedeutung und Frucht des Todes Jesu im Spiegel des johanneischen Erzähllaufbus,” in *The Death of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. G. Van Belle; BETL 200 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 431–56.

¹² Yet see n. 3.

¹³ Jörg Frey, “Edler Tod – wirksamer Tod – stellvertretender Tod – heilschaffender Tod: Zur narrativen und theologischen Deutung des Todes Jesu im Johannesevangelium,” in *The Death of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. G. Van Belle; BETL 200 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 64.

¹⁴ Even Bultmann (*Theology*), who reckoned that in FG Jesus' death is subordinate to the incarnation, for whom “Jesus' death has no preeminent importance for salvation” (2:52) and who

narrative (not to mention the theological) centrality of Jesus' death in FG. Donald Senior describes the Johannine story as moving "forward to the Passion because it is there that the culmination of Jesus' mission will take place."¹⁵ Margaret Davies claims that from the very beginning of the Gospel Jesus' death is already anticipated in many and various ways (and she identifies 10 of these ways).¹⁶ In 1992 Jean Zumstein describes the raising of Lazarus with these words: "Le récit était clairement orienté vers l'heure de la croix."¹⁷ He reiterates the same point in a subsequent study in 2007: "En parcourant l'évangile selon Jean, son lecteur découvre rapidement que le récit n'aborde pas le problème de la mort de Jésus dans le seule histoire de la Passion (18–19), mais que, tout entier, il est orienté vers la croix."¹⁸ In short, the raising of Lazarus is the decisive step that catapults the plot to the apex, and the apex is Jesus' death-and-resurrection.¹⁹

argued that Jesus' resurrection was not "an event of special significance" (2:56), nevertheless acknowledged the pivotal role of the raising of Lazarus in the plot development of the Gospel. In his commentary on FG, he writes: Jesus' "last act leads to the decision of the authorities to kill, and his last words lead to the final division between faith and unbelief. In this way the whole [John 11–12] forms the transition to the Passion Narrative, and to the scene of Jesus' departure from his own that precedes it" (*Gospel*, 392).

¹⁵ Senior, *Passion*, 33.

¹⁶ Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference*, 54–5.

¹⁷ Jean Zumstein, "L'interprétation Johannique de la mort du Christ," in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, ed. F. Van Segbroeck, et al.; BETL 100 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 2133.

¹⁸ Jean Zumstein, "L'interprétation de la mort de Jésus dans les discours d'adieu," in *The Death of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. G. Van Belle; BETL 200 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 95. See also Herbert Kohler, *Kreuz und Menschwerdung im Johannesevangelium: Ein exegetische-hermeneutischer Versuch zur johanneischen Kreuzestheologie*, ATANT 72 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1987), passim; Thomas Knöppler, *Die theologia crucis des Johannesevangelium: Des Verständnis des Todes Jesu im Rahmen der johanneischen Inkarnations- und Erhöhungschristologie*, WMANT 69 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994); H. K. Nielsen, "John's Understanding of the Death of Jesus," in *New Readings in John*, ed. J. Nielsen and S. Pedersen (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 232–54.

¹⁹ This, as is well known, differs from the Synoptic chronology, in which it is Jesus' protest in the temple courts that leads to the Passion. It is also well known that only FG recounts the raising of Lazarus. It is irrelevant here to talk in detail about the literary relationship between the FG and the Synoptics. I do not think that there were two temple "cleansings." Moreover I concur that the Synoptic chronology of this event is to be preferred, and that "the Fourth Evangelist had no intention of correcting the timing of this event, but set his account at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus to highlight its significance for understanding the course of the ministry" (Beasley-Murray, *John*, 38–9).

7.4. What the Raising of Lazarus Signifies

Since the raising of Lazarus is a pivotal σημεῖον, it is important to inquire into its significance as well as the light it sheds on the meaning of the supreme σημεῖον of Jesus' death-and-resurrection. I will do so in two steps. First, attention will be paid to those passages that talk about the greater purpose behind Lazarus's illness and death (11:4, 14–15, 40). Second, those passages that explicitly speak of the significance of the miracle (11:22–26, 41–42) will also be tackled.

7.4.1. The greater purpose for Lazarus's illness and death

Concerning the greater purpose for Lazarus's illness and death, 11:4 is clearly the key text. But two more passages may be added: vv. 14–15 and 40. Following is an analysis of these passages.

The evangelist narrates in 11:4: αὕτη ἡ ἀσθένεια οὐκ ἔστιν πρὸς θάνατον ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δι' αὐτῆς (“But when Jesus heard it [that Lazarus was ill], he said, ‘This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it’”).²⁰ This passage provides a clear answer, in two parts, to the question of the purpose of Lazarus’s illness.²¹ The first part is negative: the purpose is not death. The second is positive: it is for God’s glory and for the glorification of the Son of God.

²⁰ Many scholars have rightly stressed the important function of v. 4 in John 11. It is a “programmatically interpretation,” says Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 2:323), of the ensuing miracle story. According to Lee (*Symbolic Narratives*, 199–200), “the language of v. 4 is the first hint of the real nature of the σημεῖον.” Schnelle (*Evangelium*, 209) writes: Verse 4 “gibt eine erste Deutung des bevorstehenden Geschehens.” Finally, Michael Labahn (*Jesus als Lebensspender: Untersuchungen zu einer Geschichte der johanneischen Tradition anhand ihrer Wundergeschichten*, BZ NW 98 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999], 403) comments: “Joh 11,4 ist eine an den externen Hören oder Leser gerichtete Deutungsanweisung mit eindeutigem Signalcharakter.”

²¹ As to the nature of this illness, the evangelist says nothing. The word used is ἀσθενέω (the noun form is ἀσθένεια), which means “to be weak, feeble, sickly” (LSJ, p. 256). L&N (§2:36) provides three meanings for it: (1) incapacity; (2) illness; and (3) timidity. Ἀσθενέω occurs eight times in FG. Its first occurrence describes the condition of the royal official’s son (4:46). We are not to assume that the son’s illness was mild, for the evangelist comments in v. 47 that the boy was in fact at the point of death. The word is used twice in John 5 to describe the many “invalids” (v. 2: ἀσθενούντων) lying at the pool of Bethesda, one of whom, described as ὁ ἀσθενῶν (v. 7), is cured by

When the Johannine Jesus says that Lazarus’s illness is not *πρὸς θάνατον*, he does not mean that Lazarus is not going to die.²² For, as Hengstenberg and Barrett contend,²³ Lazarus was already dead when the message from the sisters reached Jesus,²⁴ and this Jesus knew supernaturally (as vv. 11, 14 imply). Rather, as Hoskyns comments, “The words ‘not unto death’ mean to the hearers that the malady is temporary, but to Jesus they mean that ‘the death of Lazarus is but a temporary death.’”²⁵ Implied in Jesus’ statement is that he will do something so that death will not be the illness’s ultimate end. More specifically, if it is true that Lazarus is already dead at this time and Jesus knew it, then Jesus’ words further imply his intention of raising Lazarus back to life.

Positively the purpose of Lazarus’s illness and death is *ὑπὲρ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δι’ αὐτῆς*.²⁶ I have elsewhere discussed the theme of *δόξα* (of God and of Jesus) in FG.²⁷ I shall presuppose that discussion here. The most important question before us is: How can Lazarus’s illness and death redound to God’s glory and lead to the glorification of the Son of God? Commentators regularly point out (rightly) that the answer provided in John 11 is in two stages or levels. First, on the level of the story itself, Lazarus’s death will

Jesus. The word is used summarily in 6:2: a large Galilean crowd followed Jesus because “they saw the *σημεῖα* that he performed upon the sick (*ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσθενούντων*).” The remaining four occurrences are in John 11. We have here a case of *ασθένεια* which is so severe that Lazarus actually dies. Overall, we must appreciate the fact that each occurrence of *ἀσθενέω* is connected with a *σημεῖον*: (1) the healing of the royal official’s son (4:46–54); (2) the healing of an invalid at the Bethesda pool (5:1–16); (3) the healing of many sick people in Galilee (6:2); and (4) the raising of Lazarus (John 11).

²² As is evident in John 11, FE believes in two kinds of death: there is a kind of death which is ultimate and permanent; there is also a kind of death which is temporary and physical. A believer in Jesus, who now possesses eternal life, cannot die the ultimate, permanent kind of death. But s/he can and may die the physical, temporary death. As a beloved friend and disciple of Jesus, Lazarus’s death can only refer to temporary physical death (vv. 25–26) (see Jaime Clark-Soles, *Death and the Afterlife in the New Testament* [New York: T&T Clark, 2006], 125).

²³ Hengstenberg, *Gospel*, 2:34; Barrett, *Gospel*, 391; Bruce, *Gospel*, 240.

²⁴ Hengstenberg (*ibid.*, 2:34) writes, “Lazarus must have died shortly after the departure of the messenger.” For a contrasting view—not only that Lazarus was still alive when the message reached Jesus, but also that Jesus deliberately allowed Lazarus to die—see C. F. D. Moule, “The Meaning of ‘Life’ in the Gospel and Epistles of John,” *Theol* 78 (1975), 114–15.

²⁵ Hoskyns, *Gospel*, 399.

²⁶ The grammatical construction “*ὑπὲρ* plus the genitive of a thing” means “for the sake of” (BDF §231), or “for, on behalf of” (MHT 3:270). Barrett (*Gospel*, 390) translates it with “for revealing,” “in order to reveal.”

²⁷ See §4.2.

redound to the glory of God and of the Son of God because God, through Jesus, is going to raise Lazarus back to life. Thus, although Lazarus's death is not a good thing, nevertheless it is an opportunity for God, through Jesus, to come to Lazarus's aid and, in the process, reveal his glory not only to Lazarus but also to those with the eyes of faith. From this point of view the raising of Lazarus is a very powerful σημεῖον (11:47; 12:18) that betokens Jesus' power over life and death. It betokens God's power operative in and through the Son.

Yet that is not all. There is a second level or stage to the glorification of the Father and the Son through Lazarus's death. This level builds on the first one, and it transcends, though it is logically connected with, the narrative of John 11. Jesus' raising of Lazarus, which is a σημεῖον, will precipitate Jesus' death, which in FG is described as the ὥρα of Jesus' glorification (cf. 12:23). In other words, the σημεῖον of the raising of Lazarus will precipitate the supreme and greatest σημεῖον, the crucifixion-and-resurrection. This of course has a profound sense of Johannine irony: Jesus' act of giving life to a "beloved friend" (11:3, 5, 11) comes at the cost of his own life (cf. 15:13).

Two things important for my thesis are evident in 11:4. First, the pivotal and causal role of the raising of Lazarus (a σημεῖον) for Jesus' death (the supreme σημεῖον) is implied. This will become much clearer in our discussion of 11:47–53 below. Second, just as Lazarus's coming back to life is here depicted as redounding to God's and Jesus' glory, similarly Jesus' death is implied as also redounding to the mutual glorification of God and the Son. Here we can see an important connection between σημεῖον and δόξα, a theme which has been discussed in §4.2.

The second passage which speaks of the greater purpose for Lazarus' illness is vv. 14–15, where the Johannine Jesus tells his disciples: "Lazarus is dead (ἀπέθανεν). For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe (ἵνα πιστεύσητε). But let us go to him." If 11:4 enunciates the greater purpose for Lazarus's illness in terms of the glory of God and the Son, 11:14–15 does it in terms of the prospective, positive impact of this σημεῖον upon the disciples,

expressed in terms of πιστεύειν.²⁸ That the raising of Lazarus may, and is intended to, foster faith among the disciples coheres with the fact that that is precisely one of the intended functions of a Johannine σημεῖον (cf. 2:11; 20:30–31). This prospect of faith occasions rejoicing on the part of Jesus (11:14–15), suggesting that he cares deeply about his disciples’ belief. But it is not just the disciples’ faith that Jesus cares about. In 11:41–42, just before he raises Lazarus, Jesus prays to his Father for the crowd standing there with him in front of the tomb that they “may believe that you sent me” (ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας). The ὄχλος is composed of Ἰουδαῖοι – Jewish friends of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus who have come from Jerusalem to Bethany to console the sisters (cf. 11:18–19, 31–37, 45). I will come back to this passage below.

The third passage that speaks about the greater purpose for Lazarus’s death is 11:40, where Jesus tells Martha: οὐκ εἶπόν σοι ὅτι ἐὰν πιστεύσῃς ὄψῃ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ; (“Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”). This verse combines the themes of God’s and the Son’s δόξα and the disciples’ πίστις that we saw in 11:4 and 11:15, 42, respectively. Perhaps the most important contribution of this verse to our understanding of the Gospel’s theology of σημεῖα is this: only by faith can the δόξα of God, revealed through a σημεῖον, be grasped.

In sum, the greater purpose of Lazarus’ illness and death may be enunciated in two ways. First, it is for God’s glory and for the glorification of Jesus (11:4). This is so because Lazarus will not remain dead: Jesus will raise him back to life. This raising is a σημεῖον of Jesus and, as such, is revelatory of his glory (cf. 2:11), and this glory is one with the glory of the Father (cf. 1:14). Moreover, Lazarus’s illness and death will redound to God’s glory and the glorification of God’s Son in a much wider and deeper sense: because it will precipitate Jesus’ death, which in John’s Gospel is the ὥρα where Jesus and his Father are glorified supremely, and is the supreme σημεῖον. The second way of enunciating the greater purpose of

²⁸ In the light of the previous narratives where the disciples were said to have already believed in Jesus (e.g., 2:11; 6:67–69), this is most likely not initial faith but “a further boost to the process of believing” (Lincoln, *Gospel*, 321), “a fresh vision of [Jesus’] glory” (Beasley-Murray, *John*, 189), or “to receive a new and stronger stimulus for their faith,” especially as the ὥρα of Jesus’ Passion draws near (Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:327).

Lazarus's illness and death is through the vantage point of the disciples' faith (11:14–15). Of course, it is not the illness and death themselves but the raising of the dead Lazarus which will occasion the witnesses to believe in Jesus as one sent by God, as one who gives life and who has power over death.

7.4.2. The Christological Significance of the *Σημεῖον*

We proceed to the Christological significance of the raising of Lazarus. For this I am going to discuss three passages: (1) 11:21–27; (2) 11:41–42; (3) 11:49–53.

7.4.2.1. *John 11:21–27*

John 11:21–27, which recounts a conversation between Jesus and Martha, is “the theological climax” of the story.²⁹ We will see that that description is justified, for we have here the most important and significant utterance of the Johannine Jesus in John 11 (namely, vv. 25–26) to which Martha responds with a Christological confession (v. 27). I am going to discuss this passage in five parts: (1) vv. 21–22; (2) v. 23; (3) v. 24; (4) vv. 25–26; and (5) vv. 26c–27.

1) vv. 21–22: εἶπεν οὖν ἡ Μάρθα πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, Κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὥδε οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός μου· [ἀλλὰ] καὶ νῦν οἶδα ὅτι ὅσα ἂν αἰτήσῃ τὸν θεὸν δώσει σοι ὁ θεός (“Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him’”). Martha’s words are not entirely clear. Scholars have interpreted in two ways the first part of her statement (v. 21). Some see it as a reproach for Jesus’ absence during her brother’s sickness and his failure to save Lazarus’s life.³⁰ Others do not see it as a

²⁹ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:328; Georg Rubel, *Erkenntnis und Bekenntnis: Der Dialog als Weg der Wissensvermittlung im Johannesevangelium*, NTA 54 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2009), 192–203.

³⁰ Lightfoot, *Gospel*, 221; Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 201; idem., “Martha and Mary: Levels of Characterization in Luke and John,” in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*, ed. C. W. Skinner; LNTS 461 (London/New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 202.

reproach but as “a painful regret”³¹ and, more positively, as “the voice of living faith in this painful situation” which meant “no criticism of Jesus.”³² In light of verse 22, the interpretation that takes verse 21 positively (without the element of reproach, and simply as a “means of pressing home the point that Jesus was not there to cure the illness”³³) is preferable. I turn now to v. 22.

Interpreters generally take v. 22 positively: as exhibiting Martha’s faith in Jesus. All agree that Martha’s confession, which opens with οἶδα (a term which she repeats in v. 24), reveals her settled trust and confidence in the power of Jesus’ prayer: she is convinced that God always hears Jesus. But beyond this point, interpretations diverge. Some interpret it as an indirect, implicit request by Martha for Jesus to raise Lazarus back to life.³⁴ This interpretation, however, is contradicted by the fact that in v. 24 (to be discussed below) Martha explicitly expresses her hope, not that Jesus would raise Lazarus now, but that her brother will be raised at the eschaton (ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ). It is further contradicted by the fact that, in v. 39, when Jesus orders the stone that covers Lazarus’s tomb to be taken away, Martha strongly objects. Thus, the suggestion that Martha in v. 22 implicitly requests Jesus to raise Lazarus now appears to have no solid basis. Martha does believe that her brother will not remain dead but will live again. But she does not believe that that event will take place now. What else is involved in Martha’s confession, besides the fact that “she regards Jesus as an intermediary who is heard by God”?³⁵ We cannot know for sure. Schnackenburg’s comments, speaking of the evangelist’s characterization of Martha, shall suffice: “Martha is presented as a woman prepared to believe (καὶ νῦν οἶδα), who, in a form deliberately kept general (ὅσα ἄν) and indefinite, indicates a hope and expresses a request which leaves all possibilities open.”³⁶

³¹ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 401.

³² Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:329; so also Udo Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 130; Klaus Wengst, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 2 vols.; THKNT 4/1–2 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2007), 29.

³³ North, *Lazarus Story*, 142–43.

³⁴ E.g., Bultmann, *Gospel*, 401–02; Barrett, *Gospel*, 395; Haenchen, *John*, 2:61; Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 130.

³⁵ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:433.

³⁶ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:329.

2) v. 23: λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀναστήσεται ὁ ἀδελφός σου (“Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again’”). Many have pointed out the deliberate ambiguity of Jesus’ utterance in this verse.³⁷ With the absence of any temporal qualification for the verb ἀναστήσεται, Jesus’ terse statement may easily be taken as referring to the Jewish belief in and hope of future resurrection.³⁸ But the reader, by recalling what Jesus had said in 11:11 (“Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to *awaken* him”) and especially if the reader has read through the whole narrative, knows that Jesus’ ἀναστήσεται does not refer to a resurrection far away into the future, but to one which he will perform today. Lazarus will rise again today. But Martha does not have this insight.

3) v. 24: λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ Μάρθα, Οἶδα ὅτι ἀναστήσεται ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ (“Martha said to him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day’”). As has been said, Jesus’ words to Martha in v. 23 are capable of being interpreted in terms of Jewish belief in a future resurrection. In v. 24 that is precisely how Martha interprets Jesus’ words, as commentators commonly point out.³⁹ Note that Martha in v. 24 qualifies that ἀναστήσεται with the phrase ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, thereby betraying her belief in traditional Jewish eschatology.

³⁷ For instance, it “is a masterpiece of planned ambiguity,” says Carson (*Gospel*, 412). “Jesu Antwort ist bewußt mehrdeutig formuliert,” comments Schnelle (*Evangelium*, 212). Or, more positively, Georg Rubel (*Erkenntnis und Bekenntnis*, 189) describes it as “eine offene Zusage,” which suggests that Jesus’ utterance is capable of more than one interpretation.

³⁸ As is well known, belief in a future, final resurrection “is a firm constituent belief of Pharisaic Judaism” (Barrett, *Gospel*, 395), as evidenced, for example, in the following diverse sources: Dan 12:2; Mark 12:18–27 pars.; Acts 23:8; Josephus, *B.J.* 2.163; Sanh. 10.1; Soṭah 9.15. N. T. Wright (“The Resurrection of Resurrection,” *BRev* 16 [2000], 10) explains: “‘Resurrection’ is not simply death from another viewpoint; it is the reversal of death, its cancellation, the destruction of its power. That is what pagans denied, and what Daniel, 2 Maccabees, the Pharisees and arguably *most first-century C.E. Jews affirmed*” (italics added). Granted that most first-century CE Jews (the well-known exception was the Sadducees [see, e.g., Acts 4:1–2; 23:6–8; Matt 22:23; Josephus, *A.J.* 18.1.4 §16; *B.J.* 2.8.14 §165]) believed in a future, final resurrection, it may well be, and we shall soon see, that Martha herself upholds this hope, and the Ἰουδαῖοι who came to console her and Mary (11:18–19, 31, 45), might have possessed this hope as well. It is likely that these Ἰουδαῖοι (or some of them) tried to console Martha and Mary by reminding them that Lazarus will one day come out of his grave.

³⁹ E.g., Barrett (*Gospel*, 395) writes, “Martha’s statement of her faith is ... orthodox Pharisaism.” According to Lindars (*Gospel*, 394), “Martha’s statement can ... be taken as

Since, as has been mentioned, Jesus' meaning for ἀναστήσεται is that Lazarus will be brought back to life *now*, thus Martha misunderstands (or fails to understand) him. She is a disciple of Jesus, and her deceased brother is a disciple of Jesus, too, yet she views the fate of her brother, and probably hers as well, quite apart from the power and presence of her and his Master. As Lee has observed: "She has interpreted his words in terms of a future eschatology without reference to his presence in Bethany."⁴⁰ On the most important question of life and death, Martha still thinks within a traditional Jewish paradigm, a paradigm where Jesus exercises no jurisdiction and prerogatives in terms of life giving and judging.

4) vv. 25–26b: εἶπεν αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ· ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ καὶ ἀποθάνῃ ζήσεται, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ("Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die'"). John 11:25–26 is the "Höhepunkt"⁴¹ and the "theological core"⁴² of the Lazarus story.⁴³ This is yet another one of the predicative ἐγώ-εἰμι utterances of Jesus in FG.⁴⁴ The word ἀνάστασις means "rising from the dead,"⁴⁵ "resurrection,"⁴⁶

representative of a considerable body of Jewish opinion." Labahn (*Lebensspender*, 418–19) explains, "Obgleich Martha Jesu Wundermacht anerkennt (V.21), und zwar als eine Macht, die ihn in besonderer Weise mit Gott verbindet (V.22), versteht sie die Zusage Jesu, Lazarus werde auferstehen (V.23), im Sinne traditioneller eschatologischer Vorstellungen."

⁴⁰ Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 202.

⁴¹ Rubel, *Erkenntnis*, 192.

⁴² Lee, *ibid.*, 203.

⁴³ It is worth mentioning that the σημεῖον of the raising of Lazarus varies from other σημεῖα narratives in that here the explanatory discourse (vv. 1–42) precedes the σημεῖον itself (vv. 43–44) (see Dodd, *Interpretation*, 363). The supreme σημεῖον of Jesus' death-and-resurrection (John 18–20) also seems to be of this format, in that it is preceded by the explanatory farewell discourses (John 13–17).

⁴⁴ For the list of the seven predicative ἐγώ εἰμι utterances in FG, see p. 136 n. 5 above. Bultmann (*Gospel*, 225 n. 3) has identified four different uses, ranging from banal to sacral, of ἐγώ εἰμι in biblical and extra-biblical (e.g., Gnostic and pagan) writings. (1) The first is the "presentation formula," in which the speaker uses ἐγώ εἰμι to introduce himself/herself in response to the question "Who are you?" For instance, God identifies himself to Abraham at Gen 17:1 with the words: "I am *El-Shaddai*." (2) In the "qualificatory formula," ἐγώ εἰμι is used to answer the question, "What are you?," to which the response is, "I am that and that" or "I am the sort of man [or woman] who." Bultmann cites the example of Isa 44:6: "I am the first and the last, and apart from me there is no God." (3) In the "identification formula," the speaker identifies himself with another person or object. As example Bultmann cites is the Egyptian god Rê who identifies himself with Chepre: "I am he who arose as Chepre." In this formula as well as in the preceding two, ἐγώ εἰμι

or “to come back to life after having once died.”⁴⁷ In v. 25, it is used with the definite article: ἡ ἀνάστασις. In context, it is best to understand it as referring to the resurrection of which Martha speaks in v. 24: the resurrection of the dead at the eschaton.⁴⁸

In this light, Jesus’ claim ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις is very striking and powerful. First, the Johannine Jesus expressly links to himself, to his person, and surely to his messianic vocation, the Jewish hope for the final resurrection of the dead. In Jewish belief, this hope rests on God’s power and faithfulness (Wisd 3:7–8). In John 11:25, Jesus claims this for himself as well. At this point in the Gospel, this claim is not new. Already in 5:19–47,⁴⁹ Jesus the Son is depicted as performing two divine functions that are proper to God alone: ζωοποιεῖν and κρίνειν.⁵⁰ That Jesus exercises the divine function of ζωοποιεῖν is enunciated in 5:21: ὡςπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζωοποιεῖ, οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὗς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ (“Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes”). That Jesus exercises the divine function of κρίνειν is enunciated in 5:26–27: ὡςπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὕτως καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ἔδωκεν ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ. καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν, ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν (“For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man”). We are not to think that Jesus exercises these divine functions separably from and independently of the Father. As Dodd explains:

the subject. (4) Finally, in the “recognition formula,” in which ἐγώ is the predicate, the speaker answers the question: “Who is the one who is to be expected, asked for, spoken to?”, to which the reply is “I am he.” According to Bultmann, five of the seven ἐγώ-εἰμι utterances in John are “recognition formulas,” where “the ἐγώ is strongly stressed and is always contrasted with false or pretended revelation.” The other two—11:25 and 14:6—are “identification formulas,” where the predicate identifies the subject, ἐγώ.

⁴⁵ LSJ, p. 121.

⁴⁶ EDNT 1:88.

⁴⁷ L&N §23.92.

⁴⁸ So Carson, *Gospel*, 413.

⁴⁹ Dodd (*Interpretation*, 364) rightly regards 5:19–47 as a “programmatic discourse.” Barrett (*Gospel*, 395) describes it as “the best commentary on the raising of Lazarus.”

⁵⁰ See discussion in Dodd, *ibid.*, 320–28.

The sole condition on which the Son exercises divine functions is that He acts in complete unity with the Father, a unity which has the form of unqualified obedience to the Father's will. Given such unity, every act which the Son performs is an act of the Father. The acts of ζωοποιήσις and κρίσις of which He gives 'signs' are in the fullest sense acts of God, since in them God's will is fully operative. As this identity in operation is conditioned, on the Son's part, by unqualified obedience, so, on the Father's part, it is based upon His perfect love for the Son.⁵¹

Thus for the Johannine Jesus to imply that ἡ ἀνάστασις rests on his power (11:25–26a; cf. 5:25, 26–27) is not contradictory to the equally true teaching that the resurrection rests on God's power.

Second, whereas in Martha's formulation in v. 24 the resurrection belongs to the distant future, Jesus, by declaring ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις, brings the reality of the resurrection to the present. By doing this, Jesus is not abandoning or contradicting the hope for a future resurrection. The key point is that Jesus, by whose power and activity the dead will be raised to life in the eschaton, is now face to face, in flesh and blood, with Martha. But Martha, based on v. 24, has not grasped that she is in fact standing in front of the one who is himself the resurrection. She speaks of her hope that her brother will live again someday, yet is ignorant of the fact that she stands right now in front of the one who is himself the maker of all things (cf. 1:3), the giver of life (both βίος and ζωή) (cf. 1:4; 5:25–26), the Savior of the world (cf. 4:42), and the one who will restore the dead back to life (cf. 11:25–26a). Thus Jesus tells her: "I am the resurrection."

When we come to the word ζωή, which is also used with the definite article, the important initial question is whether this word is a mere pleonasm, or whether it has a distinct but complementary meaning to ἡ ἀνάστασις. C. F. D. Moule, among others, is of the opinion that not only the expression ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή but also the whole of 11:25–26 is a sheer tautology.⁵² But, following Brown and others,⁵³ I take ἡ ζωή as having a distinct but complementary meaning

⁵¹ Dodd, *ibid.*, 327.

⁵² Moule, "Meaning of 'Life,'" 120.

⁵³ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:434.

to ἡ ἀνάστασις. Ζωή is an important word in FG.⁵⁴ It does not refer to physical life (βίος), but to “that life from above which is begotten through the Spirit”⁵⁵ and is indestructible by either physical or spiritual death. When Jesus says ἐγώ εἰμι ... ἡ ζωή,⁵⁶ it means not only that he dispenses eternal life but also that he himself is “the life” (cf. 1:4).⁵⁷ Brown teases out its significance in light of the other “I-am” utterances of Jesus: “In his mission Jesus is the source of eternal life for men (‘vine,’ ‘life,’ ‘resurrection’); he is the means through whom men [and women] find life (‘way,’ ‘gate’); he leads men [and women] to life (‘shepherd’); he reveals to men [and women] the truth (‘truth’) which nourishes their life (‘bread’).”⁵⁸

The remaining elements of 11:25b–26b elucidate, successively, the meaning of Jesus’ ἐγώ-εἰμι utterance in v. 25a. It may be arranged as follows:

- v. 25 (b) ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ (c) καὶ ἀποθάνῃ (d) ζήσεται
 v. 26 (a) καὶ ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ (b) οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα

Verse 25bcd elucidates ἡ ἀνάστασις. Verse 25c, καὶ ἀποθάνῃ (“even though s/he dies”), refers to physical, not spiritual, death. Verse 25d, ζήσεται, (“[s/he] will live”) (note its verbal tense), refers to the future resurrection, but here the specific reference is to the future resurrection of those who believe in Jesus (note 25b: ὁ

⁵⁴ FG has the verb ζάω 17 times and the noun ζωή 36 times, totaling 53 times (compare this with Romans’s 37 and Revelation’s 30). On this basis alone, “John has a greater interest in life than other New Testament writers” (Morris, *Jesus is the Christ*, 190). Right at the opening of the Gospel we are told: ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων (“In him was life, and the life was the light of all people”). The conclusion of the book and its purpose statement tells us: ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ (“But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name”) (20:31) From this vantage point, FG may be fittingly described as “Gospel of Life” (see Beasley-Murray, *The Gospel of Life: Theology in the Fourth Gospel* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991]).

⁵⁵ Brown, *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Note that this utterance is repeated in 14:6.

⁵⁷ In the discussion above (pp. 13–14) I have referred to the passage 5:19–47, which talks about Jesus exercising two functions that are proper to God alone: the function of judgment (κρίνειν) and the function of giving life (ζωοποιεῖν). That passage is equally relevant to the claim of Jesus as ἡ ζωή. I quote 5:21 again, where Jesus says: “Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes.”

⁵⁸ Brown, *ibid.*, emphasis added.

πιστεύων).⁵⁹ How can it be that believers in Jesus who succumb to physical death are assured of future resurrection? It is because Jesus is himself the resurrection (v. 25a). Verse 25bcd, therefore, appears to be a fitting description of the fate of Lazarus whom the text portrays as a beloved friend and disciple of Jesus (cf. 11:3, 5, 11, 36). Though a believer in Jesus, Lazarus has died. But that death is only physical and temporary.

Verse 26, in its entirety, elucidates ἡ ζωὴ and complements the thought of v. 25. Looking at v. 26a, notice that one and the same definite article, ὁ, governs the participles ζῶν and πιστεύων, meaning that they refer to one and the same individual. The participle πιστεύων (in v. 26a) has already appeared in v. 25b, and in both places the meaning is the same: it refers to an individual who truly believes in Jesus: πιστεύων is a present participle, which denotes an ongoing and habitual, rather than a one-time, belief. How does the present participle ζῶν in v. 26a relate to the future verb ζήσεται in v. 25d? As has been said, ζήσεται refers to the future resurrection of specifically the believers in Jesus, who have suffered physical death; that is why it is a future verb. The present participle ζῶν describes the current spiritual condition/standing/status of those who believe in Jesus: as much as they are believers in Jesus they *now* live spiritually. Ζωή (eternal/spiritual life) is a present possession of every believer.⁶⁰ But why does ζῶν precede πιστεύων in v. 26a? It is because ζῶν denotes the essential internal change in the individual, whereby s/he is born of God (cf. John 3:3); as a concomitant result of this prior internal work of God, the individual believes. Finally, v. 26b is a promise that believers in Jesus will never die spiritually.

⁵⁹ Not only does FG, despite its heavy emphasis on realized eschatology, retain the belief in the resurrection at the eschaton, it also enunciates clearly and fundamentally that this future resurrection is dual: μὴ θαυμάζετε τοῦτο, ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα ἐν ἣ πάντες οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις ἀκούσουσιν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκπορεύονται οἱ τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες εἰς ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς, οἱ δὲ τὰ φαῦλα πράξαντες εἰς ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως (“Do not be amazed at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his [the Son of God’s] voice and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation”) (5:28–29). The specific reference of ἀνάστασις 11:25–26 is to “the resurrection of life,” because it has in mind the resurrection of believers in Jesus, such as Lazarus.

⁶⁰ So, e.g., at 5:24: Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντί με ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται, ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν (“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life”).

Has the Johannine Jesus, with his powerful utterance in vv. 25–26, done away with the future-oriented eschatology such as enunciated by Martha in v. 24? Bultmann and some others would have us believe that that was the case. In Bultmann’s opinion, vv. 25–26 are directed against and corrects “the primitive concept of resurrection,” the belief in a resurrection at the eschaton. He adds that in these verses “the idea of the eschatological ἀνάστασις is so transformed that the future resurrection of Martha’s belief becomes irrelevant in face of the present resurrection that faith grasps.”⁶¹ But, on the contrary, as many other scholars have shown,⁶² both the realized and the futurist aspects of eschatology are present and affirmed in these verses. The verb ζήσεται (“will live”) in v. 25d is an indicator that, although the realized aspects of eschatology are stressed, the futurist aspects still remain. Or, take the case of Lazarus, whom Jesus has raised from the dead. Although he has been returned to life, we know that he, sooner or later, will die again (cf. 12:10–11), since his “resurrection” is undoubtedly merely a return to the former life. In short, John 11 does not obliterate the traditional belief in a future resurrection to take place at the eschaton. In Schneiders’s words:

Jesus has not abolished final eschatology ... but has given it a new dimension of depth, the experience of union with the risen Christ in this life which constitutes the possession, here and now, of eternal life. The resurrection on the ‘last day’ is not a future purely beyond time which would defer life until the eschatological future but a future already filling up the present.⁶³

⁶¹ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 402–03. See also Haenchen, *John*, 2:62–63.

⁶² E.g., Barrett, *John*, 395; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:431–32; Beasley-Murray *John*, 190–91; Witherington *John’s Wisdom*, 201; Smith, *John*, 222; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 397–99; Carson, *Gospel*, 412–13; Hans-Joachim Eckstein, “Die Gegenwart des Kommenden und die Zukunft des Gegenwärtigen: Zur Eschatologie im Johannesevangelium,” in *Eschatologie – Eschatology*, ed. H.-J. Eckstein, C. Landmesser, H. Lichtenberger; WUNT 272 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 149–69; Wim J. C. Weren, “Death and Beyond in the Fourth Gospel: Conflicting Views in the Lazarus Story (John 11,1–53),” in *Studies in the Gospel of John and Its Christology: Festschrift Gilbert Van Belle*, ed. J. Verheyden, G. Van Oyen, M. Labahn, and R. Bieringer; BETL 265 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 269–72.

⁶³ Sandra M. Schneiders, “Death in the Community of Eternal Life: History, Theology, and Spirituality in John 11,” *Int* 41 (1987), 52–53.

5) vv. 26c–27: πιστεύεις τοῦτο; λέγει αὐτῷ· ναὶ κύριε, ἐγὼ πεπίστευκα ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος ([Jesus asked Martha] “Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world”). No interpreter would deny that Martha’s confession in v. 27 represents a sincere and genuine faith in Jesus.⁶⁴ But interpreters diverge in precisely what to make of this sincere confession of faith. Some say that it is already a full Johannine faith.⁶⁵ Others, while acknowledging that Martha’s faith is sincere and growing, maintain nevertheless that it is deficient and falls short of the kind of faith that the evangelist would have desired for his readers.⁶⁶ Perhaps the most nuanced interpretation is that of D. Moody Smith who writes that Jesus

is presumably not asking whether [Martha] shares this eschatological scheme [the one enunciated in vv. 25–26], or any eschatological scheme per se, but whether she believes in his crucial status and role. Martha does believe (v. 27), and says what she believes about Jesus. All that she affirms about Jesus is certainly true and necessary to affirm, but *whether she even yet responds in a fully adequate way may be an open question ... Probably Martha’s answer is correct as far as it goes, but does not quite touch Jesus’*

⁶⁴ As Bultmann (*Gospel*, 404) has noticed, Martha’s response “drops the ‘I,’ and speaks only of ‘Thou,’” and this seems to manifest “the genuine attitude of faith.”

⁶⁵ For Schneiders (“Death,” 52–53), Martha demonstrates “true and perfect Johannine belief in the Word of Jesus ... [her] response is the most fully developed confession of Johannine faith in the Fourth Gospel” (emphasis added). North (*Lazarus Story*, 143–44) is of the same view, claiming that FE here presents Martha as “the ideal of Johannine faith.” Bultmann (*Gospel*, 404 n. 5) is also of the same view, and thinks it “incomprehensible how many exegetes can say that Martha did not rightly understand Jesus” (that is, Jesus’ utterance at vv. 25–26). For Rubel (*Erkenntnis*, 203), Martha’s confession is the “christologische Spitzenbekenntnis” with which “der Dialog zwischen Jesus und ihr in Joh 11,21–27 nicht nur an sein Ende, sondern darüber hinaus auch an sein Ziel.” So also Lindars, *Gospel*, 396; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 191; Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 394; Robert Gordon Maccini, *Her Testimony is True: Women as Witnesses According to John*, JSNTSup 125 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 148–49; Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 528–29.

⁶⁶ E.g., Brown understands Martha’s confession as similar to that of the Samaritan woman in John 4. In that passage, “Jesus presented himself to her as the source of living water, but she could understand him only as a prophet (iv 19). Ultimately Jesus had to send her off to call her husband in order to lead her to deeper faith. So here in xi, in order to make Martha understand that he has the power to give life, he will act out a drama of the gift by raising Lazarus. He does not reject her traditional titles, but he will demonstrate the deeper truth that lies behind them” (*Gospel*, 1:434). So, also, Lightfoot, *Gospel*, 222; Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 205; Witherington, *John’s Wisdom*, 199; Lincoln, *Gospel*, 142.

own fundamental eschatological role, a role that shapes and refocuses eschatology per se. Like other friends and followers of Jesus, Martha is on the right track, but cannot be said to have yet arrived. Yet until Jesus' hour has come and he has been glorified, he cannot be fully comprehended, although those who are willing can acknowledge him as the one sent by God. *Martha has gone about as far as anyone can go.*⁶⁷

6) Summary of the discussion of vv. 21–27. According to 11:25–27, the Christological meaning of the σημεῖον of the raising of Lazarus is that Jesus is ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή. This expression is not pleonastic, as I have attempted to show. The resurrection hope of which Martha speaks in v. 24, which lies far in the future, in the eschaton, has been drawn to the present, to Martha's present, in and through the presence of Jesus. What does this mean? It does not mean that belief in a future resurrection is canceled out. It remains true that believers in Jesus who have physically died will not remain dead but rise again at the future resurrection. It means that believers in Jesus who have died physically are not dead in the sense of eternal and spiritual death. The death of those in Christ is temporary.

The second part of the ἐγώ-εἰμι utterance is that Jesus is ἡ ζωή. This life, which denotes “eternal life,” humans do not naturally possess, but rather it is a gift of God. Now, with Jesus' claim of ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ζωή, this “eternal life” becomes the gift of Jesus as well: he is the one who dispenses life, because he is “the life.” A fundamental truth about this life is the realized aspects of it: those who believe in Jesus already are endowed with eternal life in the here and now.⁶⁸ Thus, believers are never said to die truly, in the sense of eternal death, for their Jesus-given eternal life is indestructible by either physical or spiritual death.

What about the Christological titles that Martha attributes to Jesus in v. 27? The Johannine Jesus does not reject any one of them; thus, he implicitly accepts that he is ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος. But again, in v. 25, the

⁶⁷ Smith, *John*, 223; italics added.

⁶⁸ But we may not conclude from the Johannine text that this “eternal life” which believers in Jesus already possess *here* and *now* is exhausted of any future realization. For the evangelist, believers in Jesus, though already possessing “eternal life” *here* and *now*, still await a futuristic ζήσεται (11:25). There remain dimensions to “eternal life” that await the eschaton for their realization. I may also cite again 5:29, where the evangelist speaks of believers in Jesus being assured of “the resurrection to life” (and unbelievers beings assured of “resurrection to judgment”).

Johannine Jesus prefers to speak directly of himself in terms of ἡ ἀνάστασις and ἡ ζωή. This self-confessed Christological identity seems to be more fundamental to FE than the traditional titles, though, again, the titles are not explicitly rejected. Perhaps the best way to interpret vv. 25–27 is to say that Jesus’ self-confessed identity as ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή in vv. 25–26a supplies the specific and controlling Christological content for the titles that Martha applies to Jesus in v. 27. We know that these titles, whether χριστός or the others, may have acquired in first-century CE Judaism particular connotations that are incompatible with FE’s Christology.⁶⁹ John’s use of these titles, therefore, cannot be unqualified. That seems to be the case here in 11:25–27.

How does the Christological identity enunciated in vv. 25–27 shed light on the raising of Lazarus? Lazarus is a beloved friend and disciple of Jesus who succumbs to physical death. As a believer in Jesus, Lazarus already possesses eternal life. Although he has physically died, Lazarus remains spiritually and eternally alive, for this eternal life that he has received from Jesus is indestructible either by physical or spiritual death. Although Lazarus’s raising is not the same as the resurrection that will take place ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ (see 5:28–29; 6:54), it is nevertheless a powerful σημεῖον of the ultimate destiny of those who are in Christ: none of them will be lost, but all will live.

⁶⁹ We may recall, for instance, the incident reported in John 6 where an enthusiastic Galilean crowd (who witnessed the σημεῖον of the feeding) confessed Jesus as ὁ προφήτης ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον (v. 14). Verse 15 adds that they also planned to make Jesus their βασιλεύς. That the people thought they could make Jesus “king” indicates that the sort of kingship they had in mind is precisely that which Jesus expressly rejects during his trial by Pilate. Jesus tells Pilate, in response to the latter’s question whether Jesus was ὁ βασιλεύς τῶν Ἰουδαίων (18:33), that his kingdom οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (18:36), and he adds that the nature of his kingship is ἵνα μαρτυρήσω τῇ ἀληθείᾳ (v. 37). With regard to 6:14–15, many studies, particularly that of Meeks (*Prophet-King*), have shown that the composite title “prophet-king” pertains to the Jewish eschatological figure of “the prophet like Moses.” Meeks writes that the historical Moses “was frequently described by just such a combination of royal and prophetic images. In some circles of both Judaism and Samaritanism Moses was regarded as the prototypical king and prophet of Israel” (ibid., 286). In light of this, when the Galilean crowd acclaimed Jesus as “the prophet-king,” they assumed that Jesus was the promised Mosaic prophet. But it is clear that the evangelist does not espouse this conception of Jesus’ identity and role (cf. 6:15). For him, Jesus is so much greater than Moses. Jesus is himself the eternal Son of God, the incarnate Logos of God (and more).

7.4.2.2. John 11:41–42

John 11:41–42 reads: ἤραν οὖν τὸν λίθον. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἤρην τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἄνω καὶ εἶπεν· πάτερ, εὐχαριστῶ σοι ὅτι ἤκουσάς μου. ἐγὼ δὲ ᾔδην ὅτι πάντοτέ μου ἀκούεις, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὄχλον τὸν περιστῶτα εἶπον, ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν ὅτι σὺ με ἀπέστειλας (“So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked up and said, ‘Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me’”).

I have partially discussed this passage above in connection with Jesus’ concern not just for the faith of his immediate disciples but also for the faith of the Ἰουδαῖοι who came to console Martha and Mary. Here Jesus’ prayer⁷⁰ is that through the raising of Lazarus they might be able to believe that God “sent” him. As is well known, that Jesus is sent by the Father is a key Christological truth of FG. This whole idea is based upon the Jewish legal concept of agency,⁷¹ the basic principle of which is: “an agent is like the one who sent him.”⁷² If we correlate the “sentness” of Jesus with the central affirmation in vv. 25–26, then we may

⁷⁰ Although the text does not mention the word *προσευχή* (“prayer”), there is no doubt that vv. 41–42 recount a prayer which Jesus utters just before he raises Lazarus from the dead. Jesus’ looking upward (v. 41), which also occurs in 17:1, is a gesture associated with praying (so Mark 6:41; Matt 14:19; Luke 9:16; 18:13). The first word on Jesus’ mouth is *πατέρ*, which was Jesus’ characteristic way of addressing God in prayer (so 17:1, 11, 25; cf. Luke 11:2; Mark 14:36). The opening content of Jesus’ prayer is thanksgiving, which, according to Brown (*Gospel*, 2:436), is true of classic Jewish prayers. A number of questions and issues relating to this prayer are not now my concern. For instance, since in v. 41 Jesus thanks his Father for hearing him, there is the question of when and where Jesus had uttered a prayer (on which see North, *Lazarus Story*, 102–05; idem., *A Journey Round John: Tradition, Interpretation and Context in the Fourth Gospel*, LNTS 534 [London/New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015], 80–2). There is also the question of whether Jesus, the divine Son of God, is at all capable of genuine prayers. Loisy (*Évangile*, 651) thinks that Jesus’ prayer is “*prière pour la galerie*” (“a prayer to the gallery”), and H. J. Holtzmann (*Evangelium, Briefe und Offenbarung des Johannes*, HKNT 4 [Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1891], 139) thinks it a *Scheingebet* (“sham prayer”) or a *Schaugebet* (“show prayer”). For the view that Jesus’ prayer in 11:41–42 is a genuine prayer see Hoskyns (*Gospel*, 406) and Brown (*Gospel*, 1:436).

⁷¹ See, e.g., Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, 158–164; idem, *The Gospel of John: More Light from Philo, Paul and Archaeology*, NovTSup 154 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 167–78; Witherington, *John’s Wisdom*, 140–41; Paul N. Anderson, “The Having-Sent-Me-Father: Aspects of Agency, Encounter, and Irony in the Johannine Father-Son Relationship,” *Semeia* 85 (1999): 33–57; William Loader, “John 5,19–47: A Deviation from Envoy Christology,” in *Studies in the Gospel of John and Its Christology: Festschrift Gilbert Van Belle*, ed. J. Verheyden, et al.; BETL 265 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 149–64; idem, *Jesus in John’s Gospel: Structure and Issues in Johannine Christology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 23–4, 361–63.

⁷² Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, 162.

summarize the Christological identity and mission thus far in this way: The purpose for which Jesus came into the world, for which the Father sent him, is to mediate and dispense God's gifts of resurrection and eternal life. Jesus raises Lazarus to signify precisely this truth, and Jesus prays that the eyewitnesses to his act may discern his true identity.

7.4.2.3. *John 11:43–44*

In connection with vv. 43–44, which recount the actual raising of Lazarus, the climax of the whole story, a couple of questions need to be dealt with. Does the raising of Lazarus, as a *σημεῖον*, signify Jesus' resurrection? If so, how?⁷³

The parallels between the raising of Lazarus in John 11 and Jesus' resurrection in John 20, both in terms of similarities and contrasts, are numerous and impressive, so that some sort of connection between these two events no doubt exists. Dorothy Lee has summarized the parallels,⁷⁴ which I reproduce here with slight modifications. The similarities are as follows:

- (a) Like Jesus with Lazarus, Mary Magdalene “comes to the tomb” (*ἔρχεται ... εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον*, 11:38; 20:1).
- (b) As with the tomb of Lazarus, the narrative focuses largely on the grief and faith of women disciples (Martha and Mary of Bethany, Mary Magdalene).
- (c) The tomb is probably a cave with a horizontal opening against which a stone (*λίθος*) is laid (11:38; 20:1). The heavy stone is in some way removed (*ἀΐρω*, 11:39, 41; 20:1).
- (d) The text makes explicit reference to the covering for the dead man's face (11:44; 20:7). Both men are freed from the grave-clothes (11:44; 20:6–7).
- (e) Both narratives are concerned with faith in relation to the Easter events

⁷³ Esler and Piper (*Lazarus, Mary and Martha*, 125–26) argue that the point of the raising of Lazarus lies in commending “trust among [Jesus'] followers in relation to their concerns about death” (ibid., 126), and they question the rightness of the attempt to find connections between the raising of Lazarus and Jesus' resurrection. But as we will see shortly, there is more than enough textual indication that the two are connected in some important way. Since the raising of Lazarus is connected in important ways with Jesus' death, it is not far-fetched that a connection with Jesus' resurrection also exists.

⁷⁴ Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 214–15. See also Lindars, *Gospel*, 382; North, *Lazarus Story*, 159–60.

(11:40; 20:8, 16, 18).⁷⁵

The contrasts are as follows:

- (a) Jesus' resurrection, unlike Lazarus's, is never described and takes place without human agency. It occurs as the result of Jesus' authoritative power over his own life given him by God, to which no other human being can lay claim.
- (b) Jesus is not restored to normal human life as is Lazarus but to a life that transcends mortal limits (see 12:10; 20:17, 19, 26).
- (c) The face-veil has a deeper symbolic significance for Jesus, pointing to his unique role in relation to God.

What then is the connection between the raising of Lazarus and Jesus' resurrection? Lindars described the raising of Lazarus as "a sort of dress rehearsal for the Resurrection of Jesus himself."⁷⁶ Perhaps more to the point is Édouard Delebecque's idea of prefiguration: "la mort et la résurrection de Lazare préfigurement la mort et la résurrection de Jésus."⁷⁷ But the most straightforward answer in my view is that the raising of Lazarus is a *σημεῖον* of Jesus' resurrection. Lee, who describes the connection in terms of both *σημεῖον* and symbol, writes aptly: "Lazarus's emergence from the tomb ... finds its meaning in pointing analogically to Jesus' rising to life, which is of an entirely different quality."⁷⁸

7.4.2.4. *John 11:45–53*

The last passage that I am going to discuss for the Christological significance of the *σημεῖον* of the raising of Lazarus is 11:45–53, which recounts the effects and impact of the miracle. The raising itself is referred to implicitly three times. In vv.

⁷⁵ Lindars (ibid., 382–83) adds to the list the doubts of Thomas (cf. 11:16; 20:24).

⁷⁶ Lindars, ibid., 382. He also sees the two events as constituting an *inclusio* which encapsulates the entire story of the Passion (ibid., 383).

⁷⁷ Édouard Delebecque, "‘Lazare est mort’ (note zur Jean 11,14–15)," *Bib 67* (1986): 97.

⁷⁸ Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 216.

45–46, it is described twice as ἃ ἐποίησεν (“that which Jesus performed”). In v. 47 it is included in the πολλὰ σημεῖα spoken of by the Sanhedrin.

The passage may be divided into five parts. First, vv. 45–46 recount the contrasting effects of the σημεῖον upon the Ἰουδαῖοι who have witnessed it. Second, vv. 47–48 recount a meeting of the Sanhedrin, directly precipitated by the raising of Lazarus. The agenda of the meeting, however, concerns the cumulative threat of all the many σημεῖα that Jesus has done so far. Third, in vv. 49–50, the high priest, Caiaphas, proposes a strategy to deal with Jesus (and the perceived threat that he poses) and to secure the Jewish nation and the Jewish holy place (the temple) and city from a potential Roman intervention. Fourth, in vv. 51–52, we have the evangelist’s interpretation of Caiaphas’s words, understood as a prophecy of Jesus’ death not only ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους (“on behalf of the nation”), but also ἵνα καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ διεσκορπισμένα συναγάγῃ εἰς ἓν (“to gather into one the dispersed children of God”) (v. 52). Finally, in v. 53, the Sanhedrin concludes the meeting by passing the resolution that Jesus must die. Let us look more closely at these verses.

First, apparently the raising of Lazarus was such a powerful σημεῖον that πολλοὶ ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων οἱ ... θεασάμενοι ἃ ἐποίησεν ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτόν (“many of the Jews who ... witnessed it came to believe in [Jesus]”) (v. 45).⁷⁹ An important thing about these new converts is not only that they are many, but also that they are evidently Jerusalemites (cf. vv. 18–19). It seems probable that when τινὲς Ἰουδαῖοι (“some Jews,” those who did not believe in Jesus despite having seen the σημεῖον, v. 46) went to give report to the Pharisees, they reported not just the miracle itself, but also the fact that many of their fellow Jerusalemites have now confessed faith in Jesus. This seems to be implied in the words of the Sanhedrin in v. 48. Apparently the Jewish leaders calculate, and are anxious, that Jesus’ growing popularity due to his σημεῖα, now even among the people of Jerusalem, may actually lead to some social or political unrest which would provoke military

⁷⁹ Many commentators, when talking about the effect of the raising of Lazarus, tend to focus immediately upon the Sanhedrin’s decision to put Jesus to death, without first paying attention to the amazing positive impact of the σημεῖον upon many of the onlookers.

intervention from Rome,⁸⁰ leading to the destruction of the temple, the city, and the nation itself.

Second, as has been mentioned above, and as often stressed in scholarly analyses of John 11, the raising of Lazarus is pivotal to the plot development of the Gospel, in that it precipitates the Sanhedrin's decision to put Jesus to death.⁸¹ To repeat what I said above, the σημεῖον of the raising of Lazarus is the catalyst for the emergence of the supreme and greatest σημεῖον of Jesus' death-and-resurrection. Yet, as has also been mentioned, the Sanhedrin's concern in their meeting recounted in vv. 47–53 is not just this one σημεῖον. Rather they are deeply concerned about οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος πολλὰ ποιεῖ σημεῖα (“this man who is performing many signs”) (v. 47). Moreover, as has been noted, they are concerned about the potential social and political repercussions of Jesus' growing popularity among the people, which in their calculation would lead the nation to the brink of disaster with the prospect of Roman military intervention.⁸²

Third, perhaps the most significant part of our passage is Caiaphas's counsel to the Sanhedrin: συμφέρει ὑμῖν⁸³ ἵνα εἷς ἄνθρωπος ἀποθάνῃ ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ μὴ ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος ἀπόληται (“it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed”) (v. 50). The Sanhedrin accepts and ratifies Caiaphas's proposal, and they pass the resolution to put Jesus to death (v. 53). With this Jesus' fate is sealed. His raising of Lazarus does indeed precipitate his own death. On the level of intention it is doubtful that Caiaphas has attached any theological significance to his words. When he speaks of the benefits (or expedience) of Jesus' death on behalf of the Jewish nation, he most likely does not have in mind spiritual and theological benefits. Instead, he has in mind primarily the safety of the Jewish nation, of Jerusalem, and of the temple from the threat of

⁸⁰ Richard Bauckham, “The Bethany Family in John 11–12: History or Fiction?” in *John, Jesus, and History: Volume 2: Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. P. N. Anderson, et al.; ECL 2 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2009), 194.

⁸¹ See, e.g., Andrew T. Lincoln, “‘I Am the Resurrection and the Life’: The Resurrection Message of the Fourth Gospel,” in *Life in the Face of Death: The Resurrection Message of the New Testament*, ed. R. N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 139–40.

⁸² See Bauckham, “Bethany Family,” 194.

⁸³ The variant ἡμῖν (“us”) is also well attested: A K W Δ Θ Ψ f^{1,13} 33 565 579 700 892^s M c f r¹ vg^{st,ww} sy sa^{mss} ly.

destruction at the hands of the Romans. He has in mind the maintenance of the *status quo*, and probably the preservation of the Jewish leaders' hold on power. In short, Caiaphas's counsel – to get rid of Jesus in order to protect the nation and the people – is simply a sagacious act of *Realpolitik*.⁸⁴

However, for FE, Caiaphas became an unwitting spokesperson – a prophet – of the true meaning of Jesus' death (vv. 51–52). Irrespective of Caiaphas's motives, his words are profoundly significant and deserve to be analyzed here. The basic point is simple: save the many by “sacrificing” the one. But there is more to his statement, together with the evangelist's comments, in vv. 51–52, that will help us to gain a greater understanding of the meaning of Jesus' death in FG.

We begin by noting Caiaphas's use of the expression ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ κτλ. The idea behind ὑπὲρ is evidently important to the evangelist's understanding of Jesus' death, for he also uses it twice in the expression ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους in vv. 51–52.⁸⁵ The commonest meaning of ὑπὲρ plus genitive is “on behalf of.”⁸⁶ According to Harris, this meaning “seems to have arisen from the image of one person standing or bending *over* another in order to shield or protect him, or of a shield lifted *over* the head that suffers the blow instead of the person.”⁸⁷ As many grammarians have pointed out, the idea is not simply that of “on behalf of” but also “instead of,” because “what is done *on behalf of* someone is often done *in one's stead*.”⁸⁸ In other words, it appears that Jesus' death is here depicted as both sacrificial and substitutionary.⁸⁹ This view of Jesus' death appears evident not only in the ὑπὲρ τοῦ

⁸⁴ So Bultmann (*Gospel*, 411) comments: “Political sagacity requires that the lesser evil be preferred to the greater, and it demands that the fundamental principle be put into effect that the individual be sacrificed in the interest of the nation.”

⁸⁵ See also 6:51; 10:11, 15; 15:13. Together with 11:50, 51, 52, ὑπὲρ is used a total of seven times in direct connection with Jesus' death. See John Dennis, “Jesus' Death in John's Gospel: A Survey of Research from Bultmann to the Present with Special Reference to the Johannine Hyper-Texts,” *CBR* 4 (2006): 331–63.

⁸⁶ BDF, §231; also L&N §90.36; LSJ, p. 1857.

⁸⁷ Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 207; italics his.

⁸⁸ MHT 3:271, italics theirs; so also Robertson, *Grammar*, 631; C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 64; LSJ, p. 1857; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basic* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 383.

⁸⁹ For the view of Jesus' death as both salvific revelation and expiatory sacrifice see, e.g., Bruce H. Grigsby, “The Cross as an Expiatory Sacrifice in the Fourth Gospel,” *JSNT* 5 (1982): 51–80; Max Turner, “Atonement and the Death of Jesus in John—Some Questions to Bultmann and

λαοῦ expression in v. 50a, but also in the last clause of Caiaphas’s utterance: “that the whole nation should not perish” (v. 50b: καὶ μὴ ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος ἀπόληται). The whole Jewish nation or people⁹⁰ are here envisaged as facing the threat of utter destruction⁹¹ at the hands of the Romans, and the way to avert this disaster is through the sacrificial death of one man. Why does the evangelist add v. 50b? Is it not sufficient to say: “It is expedient for you (or us) that one man should die for the people”? If v. 50b were to drop out from Caiaphas’s utterance, the sense becomes less clear. The earlier clause does not spell out clearly the nature of the threat that the people face. Why does one man need to die for the people? What will that death accomplish on their behalf? What or where precisely is the expedience? With v. 50b, we get clearer answers. We know that “the people” (ὁ λαός), in fact, “the whole nation” (ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος), will be utterly destroyed unless “one person” (εἷς ἄνθρωπος) dies on their behalf. Thus, the death of one person means salvation/security/life for the whole nation. We should note that ἀποθάνῃ in v. 50a is paralleled by ἀπόληται in v. 50b. For Caiaphas, there is only one way to proceed: save the Jewish nation from destruction by killing Jesus. The other option – that of letting Jesus go on performing σημεῖα (vv. 47–48) – is unthinkable.

With regards to the evangelist’s comment in vv. 51–52, mention has been made of his twofold ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους. Mention has also been made of the fact that for the evangelist, Caiaphas became an unwitting mouthpiece of the deeper meaning of Jesus’ death. The new thought that the evangelist adds is this: καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ διεσκορπισμένα συναγάγη εἰς ἓν (“but to gather into one the dispersed children of God”) (v. 52). In a Jewish context the expression τὰ τέκνα τοῦ

Forestell,” *EvQ* 62 (1990): 99–122; Thomas Knöppler, *Die theologia crucis des Johannesevangeliums: Das Verständnis des Todes Jesu im Rahmen der johanneischen Inkarnations- und Erhöhungschristologie*, WMANT 69 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukircher Verlag, 1994), passim; H. K. Nielsen, “John’s Understanding of the Death of Jesus,” in *New Readings in John*, ed. J. Nielsen and S. Pedersen (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 222–54; D. A. Carson, “Adumbrations of Atonement Theology in the Fourth Gospel,” *JETS* 57 (2014): 513–22.

⁹⁰ The Johannine Caiaphas uses the words λαός and ἔθνος, which here refer similarly to the Jewish people or nation. See John Painter, “The Church and Israel in the Gospel of John: A Response,” *NTS* 25 (1978), 106–07; also Lightfoot, *Gospel*, 230; Bruce, *Gospel*, 251; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 198.

⁹¹ The verb used is ἀπόληται, from ἀπόλλυμι, which means “destroy utterly, kill” (LSJ, p. 207).

θεοῦ τὰ διεσκορπισμένα (“the dispersed children of God”) would mean the Jews of the Diaspora, and the prophecy of future ingathering into one would mean the ingathering in the messianic age (cf. Isa 43:5–6; Jer 23:2; Ezek 34:12; 36:24; 4 Ezra 13:47).⁹² But it is possible that τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ διεσκορπισμένα in 11:52, similar to ἄλλα πρόβατα ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς αὐλῆς ταύτης (“other sheep that do not belong to this fold”) in 10:16, may not only pertain to Jews of the Diaspora, but also allude to people who are non-Jews, in other words, Gentiles.⁹³ As Lincoln writes, “Jesus’ death ... is on behalf not only of Israel but of all who believe, both Jews and Gentiles.”⁹⁴ Or, in the words of Dodd, “The Good Shepherd not only lays down His life for the sheep, but also brings in the ‘other sheep,’ that there may be one flock as there is one Shepherd (10:11, 16).”⁹⁵

Fourth, in vv. 51–52, in his interpretative commentary on the high priest’s utterance, the evangelist does not oppose the basic idea of Jesus dying on behalf, and instead, of the Jewish people/nation. He does make use of the same fundamental idea of salvific and substitutionary death, but whereas in Caiaphas’s mind Jesus’ substitutionary death was nothing but a sagacious act of *Realpolitik*, for the evangelist Jesus’ death is of fundamental theological, Christological, and soteriological importance. Theologically, Caiaphas himself, as the high priest that year, unknowingly became the mouthpiece of God’s great salvific plan. By what he said, Caiaphas unwittingly prophesied Jesus’ sacrificial and substitutionary death. Christologically, it does, by implication, present Jesus’ death as something that God himself has willed and sanctioned. The death of Jesus is not an accident, nor a theological anomaly. Death is part, and the climax, of the God-ordained vocation

⁹² So, e.g., Barrett, *Gospel*, 407.

⁹³ So, e.g., Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 410.

⁹⁴ Lincoln, *Gospel*, 330.

⁹⁵ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 368. Ridderbos stresses the same point: “The redemptive significance of Jesus’ death is universal. He is the Shepherd who gives his life for his sheep wherever they may come from and will therefore ‘draw all people’ to himself and in his elevation on the cross give them the great gathering point and center of their unity (12:20ff., 32, 33). The picture is no longer that of the Gentiles streaming toward Mount Zion to be incorporated into the people of God. It is, rather, of a new unity of believers from Israel and from the nations and, accordingly, of the new people of God ... Belonging to the flock therefore gains a new meaning, that of being known by and knowing the good Shepherd ... or, as here, that of being ‘God’s children’” (*Gospel*, 410).

of the divine Messiah. Soteriologically, Jesus dies ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους (vv. 51–52a) and also ἵνα τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ διεσκορπισμένα συναγάγῃ εἰς ἓν (v. 52b). Schnackenburg is worth quoting at length:

The evangelist is deliberately broadening the Jewish perspective, but even then he does not simply say “for the world” (cf. 1 Jn 2:2), but choose words which allow his idea of the true Israel (cf. 12:13 with 12:19) to show through. It is as though he transcends the word ἔθνος with its restriction to the Jewish people of the time, and puts in its place the idea of the eschatological Israel ... In his attitude to the pagan world, however, he does not retain the original idea of the pagans streaming to God’s holy mountain Zion ... but adopts the further developed ecclesiological view that a single new people of God made up of Jews and Gentiles is already being formed as a result of Jesus’ death. It is not the tribes of Israel who are to be gathered out of the dispersion, but the “children of God” ... The “children of God” here are those who are called and chosen for faith in Christ, and who then prove themselves to be so by joining the community of Jesus. This predestinarian view of the children of God has deep roots in Johannine theology.⁹⁶

7.4.3. Summary of the Christological Significance of the Raising of Lazarus

It is time to summarize the Christological meaning of the σημεῖον of the raising of Lazarus. The above discussion has dealt with the key passages of John 11. Verse 4 shows that the illness, death, and raising of Lazarus has a divine (theological and Christological) purpose: for God’s glory and the glorification of God’s Son. It will glorify the Father and the Son both in the immediate and in the ultimate senses. In the immediate sense, the restoration of Lazarus, who had been dead and entombed for four days, reveals the Father’s and the Son’s glory through the act of vanquishing death and bequeathing life. In the ultimate sense, the raising of Lazarus will directly precipitate Jesus’ death, which is the ὥρα of the glory/glorification of the Father and the Son. Verses 14–15 speak of a greater purpose for Lazarus’s illness, death, and raising in terms of the prospective faith of the disciples. The object of this faith is expressed in later verses.

⁹⁶ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:350.

The Christological meaning of the raising is spelled out explicitly in vv. 25–26: *ἐγὼ εἶμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ κτλ.* This utterance bears on the situation of Lazarus and all those who believe in Jesus, and is as much Christological as soteriological. The Christology is that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. The divine power and prerogative of resurrection, which properly belongs to God alone (cf. e.g., 5:21–24), belongs to Jesus also. With the coming of Jesus in the flesh, in and through his ministry whose culmination is the cross-and-resurrection, eternal life has become a present reality for those who believe. Soteriologically, believers in Jesus already possess eternal life here and now. Yes, they may still succumb to physical death, as did Lazarus, but they do not die the permanent, ultimate kind of death. Even if they do die physically, they possess the assurance of the hope of resurrection, which will happen on the last day. The present reality of eternal life and the hope of a future resurrection, a resurrection not to damnation but to full salvation (cf. 5:28), belong to the believer in Jesus.

In vv. 41–42, the meaning of the *σημεῖον* is expressed in terms of Jesus being sent by the Father. First, Jesus is the giver of life and the conqueror of death precisely because he comes from God and is himself God. The sentness of Jesus does not mean inferiority to the Father. It must be understood in the light of the Jewish concept of agency, in which the sent one is as the sender. If Jesus is as the Father, it is no wonder that he too exercises the divine prerogatives of giving life and conquering death, functions that are proper to God alone. Second, Jesus is sent by the Father to mediate life and resurrection to the world, and Jesus did so through his public ministry, which consummated in his death-and-resurrection.

In connection with vv. 43–44, we saw that Lazarus’s coming back to life, though it is merely a return to mortal life, is a *σημεῖον* of Jesus’ own resurrection. This connection is based on the many parallels between John 11 and 20, which appear to be deliberate and purposeful on the part of the evangelist.

Finally, it is clear in vv. 49–53 not only that the *σημεῖον* of the raising of Lazarus directly precipitates the greatest *σημεῖον* of Jesus’ death-and-resurrection, but also that it is through Jesus’ death-and-resurrection whereby Jesus gives life to God’s people, to gather into one God’s dispersed children (vv. 51–52). Thus, Jesus’

claims of being the resurrection and the life and of being sent by God are realized and demonstrated most fundamentally at the cross and at the empty tomb.

7.5. Overall Summary and Conclusion

The σημεῖον of the raising of Lazarus demonstrates the Christological truth enunciated in 11:25–26: Jesus is the resurrection and the life. When Jesus raises Lazarus, who has been dead four days and has already been in a state of decay, Jesus has performed an activity that is proper to God alone: to give life and overcome death. It is important to understand the evangelist correctly here: Jesus is not another God, who dispenses life and raises the dead independently of the Father. Rather, these works – these σημεῖα – that Jesus does are precisely the works of the Father, which Jesus performs in united operation with the Father. Thus, before he raises Lazarus, Jesus first prays to the Father. But this prayer is unlike the prayers of mere mortals. Jesus prays not to plead for a hearing, but to thank the Father for having heard him and for always hearing him. Thus, we inevitably realize, looking again at the central affirmation in vv. 25–26, that Jesus is the resurrection and the life because he is the Son of God (11:4), sent to the world to accomplish God’s work (11:9).

In our analysis of John 11, we have seen the pivotal role, in terms of plot development, of the raising of Lazarus in bringing about the verdict of death handed down upon Jesus by the highest authority of the land, the Sanhedrin. This particular σημεῖον, as well as the other σημεῖα that Jesus has performed thus far, crucially leads to the greatest σημεῖον of Jesus’ ministry: his death on the cross (and the concomitant resurrection). But it is not just the plot development that matters here. We have also seen that the central affirmation of Jesus being the resurrection and the life cannot be conceived apart from Jesus’ own death-and-resurrection. It is by dying, and by no other means, that Jesus gives life to God’s children. In the case of Lazarus, Jesus’ decision to go to Bethany in order to “awaken” his beloved friend is simultaneously a deliberate decision to face death head-on. Jesus is fully aware of the grave threat that awaits him in Judea. He also knows the full repercussions of

raising Lazarus: that it would precipitate no less than his own death. Committed to his God-given mission, Jesus goes. That is to say, as Jesus sets out on this journey, he has already accepted his vocation of death, for the sake of restoring Lazarus to life. And that is how it unfolds: Lazarus is restored to life, and Jesus is sentenced to death.

As a σημεῖον, the raising of Lazarus, where Jesus grants life at the cost of his own life, points to a much bigger reality, where Jesus lays down his life for the sake of God's children – children of God coming from within the Jewish nation and also coming from without (the non-Jews, those scattered abroad). Jesus dies in order to gather them and make them one. At the close of John 11, the high priest himself, who counsels the Sanhedrin to have Jesus killed, unknowingly becomes God's mouthpiece in declaring Jesus' vicarious death.

CHAPTER 8
JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS:
THE SUPREME ΣΗΜΕΙΟΝ (JOHN 19:16–37)
(PART 1)

8.1. Introduction

That I wish to argue that the crucifixion-and-resurrection of Jesus is the supreme *σημεῖον* in FG has already been sufficiently indicated in the foregoing chapters of this thesis. In ch. 5, through our analysis of 2:13–22 (esp. vv. 18–22), we saw that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is “promised” in response to the Jewish demand for a *σημεῖον*. In ch. 6, where we discussed the second demand for a *σημεῖον* in the context of the feeding miracle and the Bread of Life discourse in John 6, Jesus' response to the demand, as in 2:19, also focuses on his death-and-resurrection (see esp. vv. 51c–58, 62). These two passages, John 2 and 6, strongly suggest that the crucifixion-and-resurrection is the supreme *σημεῖον* in FG. In ch. 7, where we focused on the raising of Lazarus in John 11, I argued that this particular *σημεῖον* precipitates the supreme *σημεῖον* of Jesus' death-and-resurrection: the raising of Lazarus, in addition to the other earlier *σημεῖα*, causes the Sanhedrin to decide to put Jesus to death (vv. 47–51). Overall, I am arguing that the crucifixion-and-resurrection should be included in the category of the Johannine *σημεῖα*, and that it is the greatest and supreme *σημεῖον*.

The present chapter focuses on FG's account of Jesus' death. As such, I am going to focus narrowly on the immediate account of Jesus' crucifixion in 19:16–37, rather than include the entire Passion account (John 18–19).

If my argument – that John 2:18–21, 6:30–33, 51c–58, 62, and 11:47–51 suggest or indicate Jesus' death-and-resurrection as the supreme *σημεῖον*¹ – is correct, then the important question to ask in our consideration of FG's crucifixion account is not “Is

¹ See chs. 5–7.

Jesus' death a σημεῖον?"² but, rather, "Given that Jesus' death is his supreme σημεῖον, how does it corroborate his true divine identity and mission?" How does the crucifixion, which otherwise is a stumbling block and foolishness for unbelievers,³ in fact demonstrate Jesus to be the divine Messiah and Son of God? In his narration of Jesus' death, what aspects and details does FE emphasize in order to suggest that the crucifixion, together with the resurrection, is indeed Jesus' greatest σημεῖον?

Pursuant to these questions, I am going to discuss six emphases in FG's account of the crucifixion that, from the Johannine point of view, uncover the true meaning and accomplishment of Jesus' death and, in turn, reveal Jesus' true identity as the true Messiah, Son of God, and Savior of the world. Firstly, FE stresses that Jesus' death on the cross took place in explicit fulfillment of the Scriptures, signifying that the crucifixion was divinely ordained (vv. 23–24, 28, 31–37). Secondly, the crucifixion was, against all appearances, Jesus' enthronement as king, thereby revealing the true nature of Jesus' kingship (vv. 18–22). Thirdly, the crucifixion was the sacrifice of the true Paschal Lamb, signifying both the salvific and sacrificial nature and function of Jesus' death, as well as Jesus' true identity and role as God's true paschal lamb for the salvation of the world (vv. 31–37). Fourthly, the cross is the ground for the formation of a new community, further signifying the soteriological and ecclesiological benefits of Jesus' death (vv. 25b–27). Fifthly, the cross is the consummation of Jesus' mission, signifying that the crucifixion was part of Jesus' calling as the Savior of the world, and that he completed his divinely ordained task (v. 30). Finally, as the supreme σημεῖον, the saving significance of the cross is vouchsafed by the eyewitness testimony of the beloved disciple (v. 35).

There may be more themes in FG's account of the crucifixion, but I will limit myself to these six. Moreover, these themes may have meaning and significance other than the ones I am proposing here. In fact, almost without exception scholars have not analyzed 19:16–37, and the themes that it foregrounds concerning the crucifixion, in relation to the σημεῖα. This is probably due mostly to the long-standing assumption that

² The status of the crucifixion-and-resurrection as a σημεῖον seems to be sufficiently indicated by the passages just mentioned.

³ Cf. 1 Cor 1:22–23: "For Jews (Ἰουδαῖοι) demand signs (σημεῖα) and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified (Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον), a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles."

the σημεῖα are confined in John 1–12 and that the crucifixion-and-resurrection is not a σημεῖον. But from my perspective (that the σημεῖον is a broad and inclusive category in which the crucifixion-and-resurrection is the supreme element), this passage should also be analyzed and correlated with the σημεῖα.

As is well known, FE does not actually use the word σημεῖον in his account of Jesus' passion. One may be tempted to suppose that this supports the exclusion of the crucifixion-and-resurrection from the σημεῖα. But this interpretation is not acceptable based on two grounds which have already been amply discussed in the preceding chapters: (1) the cross-and-resurrection must be included in the category of Johannine σημεῖα based on the expressions ποιεῖν σημεῖα and ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ in 20:30–31, where σημεῖα is used in reference to Jesus' ministry as a whole (see also 12:37) and in relation to the whole Gospel; and (2) the cross-and-resurrection has already been depicted as a σημεῖον in the context of the two demands for a σημεῖον from Jesus in 2:18–22 and 6:30–33, 51c–58, 62. It is possible that FE may have thought these salient indications to be sufficient for the reader to grasp the broad and inclusive nature of the σημεῖα and the preeminence of the cross-and-resurrection as a σημεῖον. It is also possible that, given FE's subtlety as a thinker and writer,⁴ he purposefully refrained from mentioning σημεῖον in the passion account in order to stimulate readers to draw connections between the earlier σημεῖα and the cross-and-resurrection event.

At any rate it is clear that in the crucifixion account, FE has not explicitly designated the crucifixion-and-resurrection as the supreme σημεῖον. Instead, by highlighting several of the important facets and aspects of Jesus' death, FE has, among other things, stressed the σημεῖον-nature and -function of the cross. This is no less a powerful and subtle way of demonstrating to those with the eyes of faith that the cross signifies and fortifies, rather than nullifies, Jesus' claims to being the divine Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world.

Finally, the crucifixion is the supreme σημεῖον only in light of the resurrection. In itself and apart from the resurrection, the crucifixion can never be a positive σημεῖον of the true Messiah and the divine Son of God. Apart from the resurrection, the cross

⁴ See, for example, Ashton, *Understanding* (1st ed), 512.

would be the greatest σημεῖον disproving the claims and status of the Johannine Jesus. But the evangelist never viewed the cross in isolation but always in the light of the victory of Easter, always from the post-resurrection perspective. Thus, as I have been arguing, the supreme σημεῖον in FG is not the crucifixion alone, nor the resurrection alone, but the crucifixion-and-resurrection viewed as a continuous and inseparable complex of Jesus' deeds. Having said that, this chapter and the next are intended as a two-part discussion of the supreme σημεῖον.

8.2. The crucifixion took place in explicit fulfillment of the Scriptures (vv. 23–24, 28, 31–37).

The first thing to notice with FE's understanding and portrayal of Jesus' death is the overwhelming emphasis on the fact that the crucifixion took place in explicit fulfillment of the Scriptures.⁵ FE believed that the crucifixion was, ultimately speaking, willed by God. It was neither fortuitous nor purposeless. Non-believers – Jewish or otherwise – would, of course, not share this view. To them the crucifixion was the greatest proof that Jesus was not and could not have been the Messiah (cf., e.g., 1 Cor 1:23; Gal 5:11; Justin, *Dial.* 32.1). Particularly for the Jews the σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ had a “religious character going back to Deuteronomy 21.23,”⁶ which stipulates that “anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse” (more on this below). FE seemed to have been aware of this

⁵ FG's use of the OT has been the subject of many studies, and some of the more important ones are: C. K. Barrett, “The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” *JTS* 48 (1947): 155–69; E. D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, NovTSup 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1965); Craig A. Evans, “Obduracy and the Lord's Servant: Some Observations on the Use of the Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee*, ed. C. A. Evans and W. F. Stinespring (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987), 221–36; D. A. Carson, “John and the Johannine Epistles,” in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 245–64; Martin Hengel, “Die Schriftauslegung des 4. Evangeliums auf dem Hintergrund der urchristlichen Exegese,” *JBTh* 4 (1989): 249–88; Bruce G. Schuchard, *Scripture Within Scripture: The Interrelationship of Form and Function in the Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John*, SBLDS 133 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992); A. T. Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel: A Study of John and the Old Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 1996); M. J. J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form*, CBET 15 (Kampen: Pharos, 1996); Alicia D. Myers and Bruce G. Schuchard (eds.), *Abiding Words: The Use of Scripture in the Gospel of John*, RBS 81 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015).

⁶ Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross*, trans. J. Bowden (London/Philadelphia: SCM, 1977), 84; see also Joel B. Green, “Death of Christ: Gospel,” in *DNT*, 266.

contrary perspective (cf. 12:34). By emphasizing that Jesus' death on the cross was ultimately willed by God, FE seems to have taken a major step in dealing with the probable objection that Jesus died as one cursed by God and one who, therefore, could not have been the Messiah. By doing so, it appears that FE has also taken a crucial step in implicitly portraying the crucifixion itself as a *σημείον* of Jesus.

In the account of Jesus' death in 19:16–37 we find four instances of explicit fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures.⁷ The first occurrence is in 19:24, where FE states that the soldiers' act of taking and dividing Jesus' clothes for themselves (19:23) and casting lots for Jesus' seamless tunic (19:24a) fulfills (ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῆ [ἡ λέγουσα]) this specific passage from the Scripture: “They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots” (Ps 22:18). Here FE has quoted verbatim the LXX of the psalm: διμερίσαντο τὰ ἱμάτιά μου ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἱματισμὸν μου ἔβαλον κλῆρον (Ps 21:19).

The next occurrence of the motif is in 19:28: μετὰ τοῦτο εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἤδη πάντα τετέλεσται, ἵνα τελειωθῆ ἡ γραφή, λέγει· διψῶ. Interpreters have disputed whether the ἵνα-clause goes with the preceding verb τετέλεσται (in which case the translation should be: “Jesus, knowing that all things have been accomplished in order to fulfill the Scriptures, said, ‘I thirst’”⁸), or with the following verb λέγει (in which case the translation should be: “After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said [in order to fulfill the scripture], ‘I am thirsty.’”⁹). The issue here is, what fulfills what? The former translation implies that the events of Jesus' Passion prior to 19:28 have fulfilled the Scriptures, and the Scriptures here is understood generally without reference to a specific OT text. The latter translation implies that it is Jesus' statement “I am thirsty” that fulfills a specific OT text. Stylistically, in a complex Greek sentence, the dependent

⁷ “Direct and explicit quotations” are one of the ways whereby FE has utilized the Jewish Scriptures. Two more ways can be identified: “apparent quotations from and allusions to the OT,” and “OT themes and the replacement motif” (these are categories of Carson, “John and the Johannine Epistles,” *ibid.*). With regard specifically to the explicit quotations, see discussions in, e.g., Craig A. Evans, “On the Quotation Formulas in the Fourth Gospel,” *BZ* 26 (1982): 80; *idem*, “Obduracy,” 225; *idem*, *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John's Prologue*, JSNTSup 89 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 174–75; Carson, “John and the Johannine Epistles,” 247–48.

⁸ So, e.g., G. Bampfylde, “John xix 28: A Case for a Different Translation,” *NovT* 11 (1969), 260.

⁹ So, e.g., NRSV. For a brief summary of the positions see David E. Garland, “The Fulfillment Quotations in John's Account of the Crucifixion,” in *Perspectives on John: Method and Interpretation in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. R. B. Sloan and M. C. Parsons (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1993), 239–42.

clause normally follows the main clause.¹⁰ But John 19:28 is an exceptional case:¹¹ the dependent clause, here a ἵνα-clause, precedes the main clause λέγει· διψῶ.¹² A further support for this view is the argument from consistency: Since in the other occurrences of the fulfillment motif (in 19:16–37) FE has a specific OT text in mind, 19:28 is likely not an exception.¹³ Now the question is, which Scripture is it? It is another difficulty: some scholars have suggested Ps 69:21 [LXX 68:22]; still other texts have been suggested.¹⁴ “I am thirsty” (διψῶ) is certainly not a verbatim quote of any OT text. But it seems clear that Jesus’ thirst and the soldiers’ attempt at quenching it is an enactment of Ps 69:21b: “for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”

The third occurrence of the fulfillment motif is found in 19:36: ἐγένετο γὰρ ταῦτα ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῆ· ὅστοῦν οὐ συντριβήσεται αὐτοῦ (“These things occurred so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, ‘None of his bones shall be broken’”). The context of this quotation is the fact that the soldiers, when they found Jesus already dead, did not break his legs, whereas they broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus because they were still alive. Perhaps also important as far as context is concerned is the fact that it was the Ἰουδαῖοι who sought permission from Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken, presumably to hasten their death. But Jesus was spared the crucifragium; none of his bones were broken. Which Scripture does this event fulfill? There are two possibilities. First, the evangelist may have had in mind Exod 12:46 (“You shall not break any of its legs”) and Num 9:12 (“They shall ... [not] break a bone of it”). The context of both of these texts is the regulations governing the Passover lamb. Second, the evangelist may have had in mind Ps 34:20 (“He keeps all their bones; not one of them will be broken.”). Due to the strong emphasis on the Passover context of Jesus’ death in John’s Gospel, I think that the Pentateuchal passages are the primary referent of the fulfillment. But it is possible that the fulfillment motif in 19:36 also concerns Ps 34:20, since this psalm is about God’s protection of the righteous sufferer.

¹⁰ MHT 3:344.

¹¹ Similar cases in the NT are Matt 9:6; 7:17; John 19:31; Acts 24:4; and Eph 6:21.

¹² MHT, *ibid.*; BDF §478.

¹³ So, e.g., Douglas J. Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), 275–78; Carson, *Gospel*, 619.

¹⁴ E.g., Ps 22:15; 42:2; 63:1.

FE introduces the fourth and final fulfillment motif in 19:16–37 with a different phraseology but not necessarily with a different meaning: *καὶ πάλιν ἑτέρα γραφή λέγει* (19:37a). The word *καί* connects this verse to v. 36, where we find the usual introductory formula *ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῆ*. Verse 37b cites the Scripture: *ὄψονται εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν* (“They will look on the one whom they have pierced”). The word “pierced” relates this Scripture to the events recounted in 19:33–34, where a soldier thrust a lance in Jesus’ side, resulting in the outflow of blood and water from Jesus’ body. What Scripture did John have in mind here? There is unanimity among scholars in attributing the quote to Zech 12:10b LXX: *καὶ ἐπιβλέψονται πρὸς με ἄνθ’ ὃν κατωρχήσαντο* (“They will look on me whom they have pierced”).

What does this strong and insistent emphasis on Jesus’ death being a fulfillment of the Scriptures suggest or imply? There may be a number of implications, and the one aspect that has long been emphasized in Johannine scholarship is that of apologetics.¹⁵ R. E. Brown, for instance, explains: “In this preoccupation with the OT background for the passion, John is probably reflecting the general early Christian concern to show the Jews that the crucifixion did not eliminate the possibility that Jesus was the promised Messiah but rather fulfilled God’s words in Scripture.”¹⁶ We may also recall Barnabas Lindars’s *New Testament Apologetic*, which pertained to the NT in general and in which Lindars spoke of the “passion apologetic” where the earliest Christians used the OT to demonstrate to Jewish non-believers that Jesus’ passion and death took place in accordance with God’s will.¹⁷ Another scholar, Anton Dauer, describing FE’s emphatic use of the OT in the passion narratives, wrote: “[D]er Evangelist nimmt die Waffen des Gegners, das Alte Testament, das ihm als Gottes Offenbarung heilig ist, um ihn damit zu widerlegen.”¹⁸ Craig A. Evans commented: “[T]he Old Testament testimonia in the second half [of John’s Gospel] are meant to prove specifically that the disgrace of the

¹⁵ In this connection, and with regard to the NT in general, we may recall the theory of J. Rendel Harris who, in his *Testimonies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916–20), theorized that prior to the writing of the NT books, there existed in the early church books of testimonies consisting of OT passages which the early church believed to have been fulfilled in Jesus.

¹⁶ Brown, *Gospel*, 2:913.

¹⁷ Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM, 1961), 75–137, 265–67.

¹⁸ Anton Dauer, *Die Passionsgeschichte im Johannesevangelium: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche und theologische Untersuchungen zu Joh 18,1–19,30*, SANT 30 (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1972), 304.

crucifixion, a controversial item in any dialogue with Jews, was Jesus' very purpose and work and, indeed, was his hour of glorification and return to his Father in heaven."¹⁹ Finally, Robert T. Fortna wrote

[T]he whole painful story is to be understood as no more and no less than the necessary fulfillment of prophecy. All had been foreordained and (to those with the eyes of faith) written beforehand. The intended effect of this concentration of OT testimonia ... is apologetic—that is, they justify the shocking fact of Jesus' innocent and degrading death. It was unavoidable, indeed inevitable, ordained by divine necessity; therefore, it is not only theologically tolerable but in fact necessary and appropriate.²⁰

The apologetic intent in FE's persistent portrayal of Jesus' death on the cross as a fulfillment of the Scriptures cannot be denied and should not be underestimated. However, scholars have neglected to relate this to the important subject of *σημείον*. Whatever the *Sitz im Leben* of the intended readership of FG, it seems likely that the purpose for which the Gospel was written involved some apologetic, and perhaps also evangelistic, intent (cf. 20:30–31). Thus the evangelist's insistence that the crucifixion fulfilled the Scriptures may be, in an important way, connected with the *σημεία*. What is, and where lies, the connection?

I do not think that we can deduce from this the conclusion that the evangelist views the Scriptures as a Christological *σημείον*. It is clear that the *σημεία* are significant and revelatory deeds of Jesus performed during his earthly ministry. The Scriptures do not belong to this category. Rather, the role of the Scriptures in regard to Jesus in FG is that of witness (*μάρτυς*). This is clear in 5:39 (cf. 1:45; 5:46–47). Thus, the pronounced and emphatic “fulfillment-of-the-Scriptures” motif employed in John's passion narrative is part of the witness of the Scriptures to Jesus, particularly in regard to his suffering and death. The Scriptures bear witness to the fact that death – particularly death on the cross, which is precisely the kind of death that Jesus endured – is the destiny and mission of the Messiah. Thus, as far as the witness of the Scriptures is concerned, Jesus'

¹⁹ Evans, “Obduracy,” 228.

²⁰ Robert T. Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 178–79. But Fortna goes too far when he appears to rule out any other purposes besides apologetics in John's emphatic use of the OT in the passion narrative (see p. 179).

crucifixion is in fact a positive token, rather than a negative one, that he is the rightful Messiah.

I contend, rather, that there is a fundamental connection between the crucifixion and the *σημεῖα*. Jesus' death on the cross is a *σημεῖον*, and the evangelist has used the witness of the Scriptures to establish that. FE's emphatic use of the Scriptures to show that Jesus' death on the cross was ultimately willed by God appears to counter the objection which says that Jesus cannot be the Messiah because not only did he die, but also that he died on the cross. As has been mentioned, this Jewish objection might have found a basis in Deut 21:23: "Anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse" (quoted in Gal 3:13).²¹ FE was aware of this objection, as suggested, for instance, in 12:34. In this verse, the objection is put in the mouth of a Jerusalem crowd who says to Jesus: *ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν ἐκ τοῦ νόμου ὅτι ὁ χριστὸς μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, καὶ πῶς λέγεις σὺ ὅτι δεῖ ὑψωθῆναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; τίς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου;* ("We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?").²² The crowd seems to be at a loss concerning the identity of the Son of Man. But the Gospel's reader knows that the Son of Man, as well as the Messiah, is Jesus himself. Regardless of the crowd's uncertainty over the Son of Man, they are certain that according to the Scriptures (*ὁ νόμος*)²³ the Messiah should not

²¹ The view that victims of crucifixion were cursed by God (that is, in terms of Deut 21:22–23) was current in first-century CE Palestine (see Green, "The Death of Christ," 266). For a detailed discussion of the history of interpretation of Deut 21:22–23, see David W. Chapman, *Ancient Jewish and Christian Perceptions of Crucifixion*, WUNT 2/244 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 117–49. A brief discussion is found in David W. Chapman and Eckhard J. Schnabel, *The Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus*, WUNT 344 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 370–71. Chapman shows that the phrase "curse of God" was interpreted in a number of ways in early Jewish literature. "The earliest extant view (being witnessed in the Septuagint and Old Latin texts, as well as in the Temple Scroll and later in Targum Neofiti) is that the hung person is cursed by God. Yet the most common rabbinic view (also witnessed in Josephus, Symmachus and the Peshitta) is that this person has cursed God by being a blasphemer." Another alternative view is that "those hung, though not themselves cursing God, nonetheless in some way bring defamation upon the Lord in whose image they were created" (Chapman, *Ancient Jewish*, 147–48).

²² For a helpful discussion of this verse see Marinus de Jonge, "Jewish Expectations," 260–62; H. J. de Jonge, "Jewish Arguments," 47–8; Bauckham, "Messianism," 64–7.

²³ Most interpreters interpret *ὁ νόμος* here, as well as in 10:34 and 15:25, as pertaining broadly to the whole Jewish Scriptures, rather than to the narrow sense of *ὁ νόμος* as the Pentateuch (see, e.g., Barrett, *Gospel*, 427; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:395; Pancaro, *Law*, 336–37; Keener, *Gospel*, 828, 881 n. 132).

and does not die, but remains forever.²⁴ The implication is that Jesus, who died on the cross, is not and cannot be the Messiah.

The important point for me is that these objectors appeal to the Hebrew Scriptures to repudiate Jesus' claim to messiahship, and the early Christians' claim for Jesus' messiahship, because of the crucifixion.²⁵ FE's response to this is not to deny or hide the reality of the crucifixion. Rather, like the objectors, he too appeals to the Jewish Scriptures, and he makes sure that he outstrips their scriptural argument. For while the objectors in 12:34 simply refer to the Scriptures generally without providing specific citations, FE mounts a thorough and sustained scriptural argument, replete with scriptural citations, especially in the Passion account.²⁶ By doing so he has silenced his objectors and disarmed them. The outcome is that, rather than being a discrediting factor against Jesus' messiahship, the crucifixion has now become a mark of Jesus'

²⁴ It is unclear whether FE, in speaking of the Messiah's *μένειν αἰῶνα*, had a specific OT text in mind. Insofar as the Messiah's *μένειν αἰῶνα* is concerned, scholars have suggested such passages as Ps 109(110):4; Isa 9:6; Ezek 37:25; and Dan 7:4, which are all messianic passages and speak of an eternal reign. But the word *μένειν*, central in John 12:34, is absent in these passages. The expression *μένειν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα* does often occur in the OT, but only once in a messianic context, in Ps 88:37. This passage reads: *τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα μενεῖ* (LXX). The previous verse, Ps 88:36, indicates that the *σπέρμα* here is David's, referring to the Davidic royal Messiah. Thus, the Jewish crowd's assertion in John 12:34 that the Messiah is to abide forever appears to have a clear basis in Scriptures. See also 1 En. 49.1; 62.14; Sib. Or. III, 49; Ps. Sol. 17.4.

²⁵ In Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, Trypho the Jew also uses the Scriptures to prove that Jesus cannot be the Messiah, particularly on the basis of the fact that Jesus was crucified. Trypho says to Justin: "These and such like Scriptures, sir, compel us to wait for him who, as Son of man, receives from the Ancient of Days the everlasting kingdom. But this so-called Christ of yours was dishonorable and inglorious, so much so that the last curse contained in the law of God fell on him, for he was crucified" (32.1 [ANF 1:562]).

²⁶ Scholars have long noticed FG's use of the Jewish Scriptures. In the first half of the Gospel the Scriptures are usually cited with the expression *καθὼς ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον* ("as it is written"). But from 12:38 onwards FG's scriptural citations are regularly prefaced with *ἵνα πληρωθῆ* ("in order to fulfill") – thus the fulfillment motif becomes an explicit and consistent feature of the narrative. An important point for my purposes is that by this feature FE shows clearly and firmly that Jesus' suffering and death took place in fulfillment of the Scriptures. Evans ("Quotation Formulas," 82) makes the observation that "whereas various details in the public ministry of Jesus [in the first half of FG] are viewed in terms of correspondence to certain Old Testament passages ... details in the passion are regarded as accomplished in order to fulfill scripture." But this analysis is probably not entirely correct. It is better to say that the whole of Jesus' earthly career, from the beginning up to the cross-and-resurrection, took place in fulfillment of the Scriptures. The explicit and consistent fulfillment formulas in the second half of the Gospel show that "the fulfillment motif is more forcefully stressed the closer one gets to the rejection of Jesus culminating on the cross. And this in turn suggests an audience that needs to be provided with a rationale, a biblical rationale, for the substantial rejection of Jesus by his fellow Jews" (Carson, "John and the Johannine Epistles," 248).

messiahship. It has become, in effect, a σημεῖον that Jesus is truly the Messiah and Son of God.

8.3. The crucifixion is Jesus' enthronement as King (vv. 18–22).

Another important and significant element of FG's portrayal of Jesus' death on the cross is that the crucifixion, contrary to all appearances, is in fact the enthronement of Jesus the King. This feature is almost always a part, and rightly so, of every scholar's analysis of the Johannine account of the crucifixion. Yet I know of no scholarly analysis that relates this feature to the Johannine σημεῖα. Seeking to fill in this lacuna, I contend here that the conception of the crucifixion as enthronement (or exaltation) is, among other things, part and parcel of FE's broader understanding of the crucifixion as the supreme σημεῖον of Jesus. From this point of view, the identity of Jesus that is being revealed (cf. 20:30–31) is that he is indeed King, not just of the Ἰουδαῖοι (ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων) but also of the world (more on this below). Yet he is a different sort of King, for his throne is the cross, and the crucifixion is his enthronement.

The kingship of Jesus is an important theme in FG and is enunciated in key passages, particularly in the accounts of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (12:12–19) and the trial before Pilate (18:33–19:16a).²⁷ But arguably the climactic passage on Jesus' kingship is 19:18–22, which is my focus here. It is the climactic passage because here Jesus is enthroned as King via the crucifixion.²⁸

²⁷ Also 1:49, where Nathanael acclaims Jesus as βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ, and 6:15, where the Galileans scheme to make Jesus their βασιλεὺς (although Jesus strongly disavows this). We may also consider those passages where Jesus is described as ὁ χριστός. For studies on Jesus' kingship in the FG see, e.g., Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 61–81; Dauer, *Passionsgeschichte*, 249–75; Marinus de Jonge, “Jesus as Prophet and King in the Fourth Gospel,” *ETL* 49 (1973): 160–177; Jey J. Kanagaraj, “Jesus the King, Merkabah Mysticism, and the Gospel of John,” *TynB* 47 (1996): 349–66; Reimund Bieringer, “My Kingship is not of this World’ (John 18,36): The Kingship of Jesus and Politics,” in *The Myriad of Christ: Plurality and the Quest for Unity in Contemporary Christology*, ed. T. Merrigan and J. Haers; BETL 152 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 159–75; Hans Kvalbein, “The Kingdom of God and the Kingship of Christ in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Neotestamentica et Philonica: Studies in Honor of Peder Borgen*, ed. D. E. Aune, T. Seland, and J. H. Ulrichsen; NovTSup 106 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 215–32; Marvis Leung, *The Kingship-Cross Interplay in the Gospel of John: Jesus' Death as Corroboration of His Royal Messiahship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011); Jane Heath, “You Say that I Am a King’ (John 18.37),” *JSNT* 34 (2012), esp. 240–46; Beth M. Stovell, *Mapping Metaphorical Discourse in the Fourth Gospel*, LBS 5 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), ch. 8.

²⁸ See esp. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, *ibid.*; Dauer, *Passionsgeschichte*, *ibid.*

In our passage there are two elements that lend support to the view of the crucifixion as Jesus' enthronement. First, there is the description of Jesus as being crucified in between two individuals (v. 18). At first glance this may not appear to have anything to do with kingship or the enthronement of a king. But the phraseology of the verse may offer a clue: *καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἄλλους δύο ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν, μέσον δὲ τὸν Ἰησοῦν* ("and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them") (v. 18b). According to J. Ramsey Michaels, the evangelist carefully describes the scene so that readers can visualize it.²⁹ More importantly, Beasley-Murray comments: "By this rather fulsome expression John may have wished to draw attention to Jesus' position, for with Jews when three persons are present the most honored shall take his place in the middle."³⁰ In fact, as the next few verses will enunciate, the man in the middle is no less than "the King of the Jews." Thus it appears that the two men "become part of the crucified King's 'retinue' as he takes his place on the throne of the cross."³¹

The second element, which dominates vv. 19–22, is the *τίτλος* (a loanword from the Latin *titulus*) that Pilate wrote, or caused to be written (*ἔγραψεν*),³² and fastened on Jesus' cross.³³ We know that, generally speaking, the purpose for the *titulus* was to indicate, or expose, the criminal's name as well as the charge (*αἵτια*) or crime for which he was executed.³⁴ But apparently this is not the express purpose the *titulus* serves in FG. Rather, it appears that its main function is to proclaim – in the three main languages of the time (Ἑβραϊστί, Ῥωμαϊστί, Ἑλληνιστί)³⁵ – Jesus' kingship. The exact inscription reads: Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ("Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews") (v. 19b). The Ἰουδαῖοι naturally did not like the wording of the

²⁹ Michaels, *Gospel*, 949.

³⁰ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 346. For evidence see discussion Str-B 1:835.

³¹ Senior, *Passion*, 103.

³² Barrett is confident that "caused to be written" is the correct meaning of *ἔγραψεν* in 19:19 (*Gospel*, 549). Although that may be correct, we need to appreciate the strong emphasis of the evangelist upon Pilate's role and responsibility for the *titulus*. See Brown, *Gospel*, 2:901.

³³ Meeks is right to notice that the *titulus* is "the center of attention" in vv. 19–22 (*Prophet-King*, 78–9).

³⁴ See, e.g., Suetonius, *Caligula* 32; *Domit.* 10.1; Dio 54.8; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.44; see also BDAG, 1009; Ernst Bammel, "The *Titulus*," in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, ed. E. Bammel and C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 353–64.

³⁵ Carson explains, "Aramaic was the language in common use in Judea; Latin was the official language of the army; and Greek was the *lingua franca* of the Empire, and well known in Galilee" (*Gospel*, 610).

inscription and sought to have it changed to: ἐκεῖνος εἶπεν· βασιλεὺς εἰμι τῶν Ἰουδαίων (“This man claimed, ‘I am King of the Jews’”) (v. 21). Pilate, however, was adamant and firm: ὁ γέγραφα, γέγραφα (“What I have written I have written”) (v. 22).

Following Meeks, we may summarize three important, characteristically Johannine, points from our passage: “(1) the indication of the universality of the king’s reign, implied by the three languages of the inscription, (2) the rejection of the proclamation by ‘the high priests of the Jews,’ and (3) the ironic insistence upon its irrevocability by Pilate’s reply.”³⁶

Thus it is clear that for FE the crucifixion was the occasion of the proclamation of Jesus’ universal kingship. As Jesus the King was crucified, he was simultaneously lifted up to his throne, which was the cross. The trilingual τίτλος, placed on the top of Jesus’ cross and throne, proclaimed his kingship to all peoples, not just to the Ἰουδαῖοι. And that proclamation is irrevocable: what has been written has been written.

Jesus is King, and his throne is the cross. Worldly and human thinking cannot accept this idea of kingship and this sort of king, and would even attempt to force a political kingship upon Jesus, as did the Galileans in 6:15. But the kingship of Jesus is not of this world (cf. 18:36: ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου), and the evangelist would insist that the cross was the occasion where that kingship was supremely displayed. Through the eyes of faith, and certainly from the vantage point of the post-resurrection period, FE overcame worldly conceptions of kingship, came to understand the true essence of Jesus’ kingship and messiahship, and grasped that the cross was in truth not incompatible with but was, rather, the very occasion of Jesus’ enthronement.

If the crucifixion was the enthronement of Jesus the King, it is not hard to see how it functions as a σημεῖον, revealing to the world the true king, as well as the nature of his kingship. Moreover, this understanding of the crucifixion – like the previous one, that the crucifixion was ultimately willed by God – may be seen as an additional response to the common objection that Jesus, who was crucified, was not and could not have been the Messiah. In this view, it may be said that, just as it was God’s will that

³⁶ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 80.

Jesus die on the cross, it was also ultimately God himself who made it possible for the crucified Jesus to be universally and irrevocably declared as King, through the *titulus* that Pilate affixed on the cross. And if the crucifixion is the enthronement of King Jesus, the Ἰουδαῖοι themselves are unwittingly instrumental in making that come pass (see 8:28). But if the enthronement of the King on the cross is a σημεῖον, the Ἰουδαῖοι are nevertheless completely blind to it, and can only see it as a stumbling block.

8.4. The cross is the ground for the formation of a new “community” (vv. 25–27).

At first sight, the cross as the ground for the formation of a new community may seem unrelated to the σημεῖα. Thus, some may question the inclusion of this discussion here. But part of the nature and function of the σημεῖα is that they bring blessing and salvation to humankind. In her 1991 article “Signs and Faith in the Fourth Gospel,” Marianne M. Thompson showed that the σημεῖα are not just about the revealing of Jesus’ identity and character. They are also about effecting and imparting life and salvation, through Jesus, in the present. She wrote: “Jesus’ works do indeed point to the fact that he himself is life, but they do so because they themselves are also gifts of life ... Signs do not merely symbolize or point to the availability of eternal life through Jesus; they themselves offer life in the present.”³⁷ If a σημεῖον is a deed of Jesus that brings salvation to humankind, surely, from the post-Easter point of view, there can be no greater σημεῖον than the crucifixion.

John 19:25–27 describes the formation of a new “community” by the King who is enthroned on the cross. From the cross Jesus addresses his mother: γύναι, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου (“Woman, here is your son”) (v. 26b). He then addresses the beloved disciple: ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου (“Here is your mother”) (v. 27a). Then v. 27b tells us that ἀπ’ ἐκείνης τῆς ὥρας ἔλαβεν ὁ μαθητὴς αὐτὴν εἰς τὰ ἴδια (“from that hour the disciple took her into his own home”).

³⁷ Thompson, “Signs and Faith,” 97.

This passage lends itself to two levels of interpretation. The literal/filial interpretation is plain enough that scholars do not dispute it. Just before he dies, Jesus gestures his loving care for his widowed mother by entrusting her to the care of the beloved disciple, to which the latter responds positively and accordingly. But as to the precise symbolic meaning of the passage, interpreters disagree.³⁸ Even those who see the formation of a new community as the symbolic meaning disagree as to the precise nature of the representative functions of Jesus' mother and the beloved disciple.³⁹

In my view as well, FE is depicting in these verses the formation of a new community – a new family – which represents the church, the new family of God. The text describes this community in two ways. First, it is a community of disciples formed and called into existence by the crucified Jesus. Note that vv. 25b–27 is prefaced with the

³⁸ See discussions in, e.g., Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 611–15; Senior, *Passion*, 108–14. Bultmann's view (*Gospel*, 673), that Jesus' mother represents Jewish Christianity while the beloved disciple represents Gentile Christianity, seems far-fetched (so thinks Haenchen, *John*, 2:195). For instance, it is hard to see how exactly the beloved disciple, who is a Jew and, at this point in the narrative, has not yet, in my view, attained the resurrection faith, represents Gentile Christianity. Some other writers have advocated, with regards to Jesus' mother, what may be described as mariological views, which are clearly anachronistic and go beyond what the Gospel text affirms. For instance, as Senior (*ibid.*, 109–10) points out, there is a view that asserts that Mary shares "in Jesus' redemptive act by being associated with him at the hour of his death, becoming a kind of 'co-redemptrix' with Jesus." There is also the view that proclaims Mary as "the 'New Eve,' fulfilling the promise of the 'woman' in Genesis 3:15 who will finally crush the head of evil by her association with the redemptive act of Jesus." R. E. Brown (*Gospel*, 2:922–27) is a proponent of the latter view. Focusing on the symbolism of Jesus' mother, he writes: "[T]he Johannine picture of Jesus' mother becoming the mother of the Beloved Disciple seems to evoke the OT themes of Lady Zion's giving birth to a new people in the messianic age, and of Eve and her offspring." He adds: "Jesus' mother and the Beloved Disciple are being established in a new relationship representative of that which will bind the Church and the Christian" (*ibid.*, 926). But, contrary to Brown's claim that it was Mary (representing the church) who took care of the beloved disciple (representing the Christian), v. 27b clearly states the opposite: it was the beloved disciple who took Mary, from that hour, into his own home.

With regards to the beloved disciple, many recent interpreters see him as the disciple *par excellence* (e.g., Raymond F. Collins, "The Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel," *DRev* 94 [1976]: 24–46, 118–32, esp. 132; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1983], 100–07; William S. Kurz, "The Beloved Disciple and Implied Readers," *BTB* 19 [1989]: 100–07; Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community*, 2nd ed. [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2003], 242; Brendan Byrne, "Beloved Disciple," *ABD* 1:658–66, esp. 659), while others think of him as the ideal witness and author (e.g., Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007], 82–5; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 171–81; Dorothy A. Lee, "Witness in the Fourth Gospel: John the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple as Counterparts," *ABR* 61 [2013]: 1–17). With Bauckham (*ibid.*), it seems not entirely correct to regard the beloved disciple, or any other disciple for that matter, as the *ideal* disciple. Bauckham himself is of the view that the beloved disciple is, in FG, the ideal witness and author, which I think is a plausible view. But of course, the category of "ideal witness" does not preclude the beloved disciple (or other characters) having a symbolic function in the Gospel story, which, I think, is present in 19:25–27.

³⁹ See, e.g., Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:1019–1026.

words *παρὰ τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* (“near the cross of Jesus”). In other words, to say that the disciples (Jesus’ mother and the beloved disciple) are near Jesus is not as precise as saying that they are near the cross of Jesus, or near the crucified Jesus. It is as the crucified one – or as one enthroned on the cross – that Jesus is able to call into existence this new family.

Second, this family is constituted by the beloved disciple and the mother of Jesus, understood symbolically. That these two characters are not referenced through their personal names supports our notion that they, particularly in the present passage, function symbolically.⁴⁰ The beloved disciple (lit., “the disciple whom Jesus loved”) here symbolises the person who is spiritually related to Jesus; that is, related by discipleship. We may speak of the beloved disciple as the ideal disciple, especially because he is the only male disciple of Jesus who persists in following his Lord even up to the foot of the cross.

The mother of Jesus here symbolises the person who is related to Jesus through the flesh; hence, not only Jesus’ biological family but also the *Ἰουδαῖοι*, the physical descendants of Abraham. Yet that physical kinship is now superseded by spiritual kinship – by discipleship – even as Mary herself, just like the beloved disciple, is also related to Jesus by faith. By Jesus’ act of “testamentary disposition,”⁴¹ Jesus’ mother becomes the “mother” of the beloved disciple, and the beloved disciple becomes a “son” of Jesus’ mother.⁴² FE’s remark “from that hour the disciple took her into his own home” (v. 27b) puts the emphasis on the right place: it is the beloved disciple who accepts and cares for Jesus’ mother, not the other way around. Thus, in this new family formed by the crucified Jesus and through the benefits of his death, Mary and the beloved disciple –

⁴⁰ So R. Alan Culpepper, “The Theology of the Johannine Passion Narrative: John 19:16b–30,” *Neot* 31 (1997): 28. References to the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (apart from Jn. 19:26–26) are: 13:21–30; 18:15–18; 21:7, 20. Some also regard the anonymous disciple in 1:35–39 as the beloved disciple. Efforts at identifying the historical figure behind the beloved disciple have not yielded a consensus.

⁴¹ E. Stauffer writes, “A crucified man has the right to make testamentary dispositions, even from the cross. Jesus now makes use of this right” (*Jesus and History*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston [New York: Knopf, 1960], 113). See also Murray J. Harris, *The Seven Sayings of Jesus on the Cross: Their Circumstances and Meaning* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016), 49.

⁴² Also, Jesus and the beloved disciple gain a new dimension of relationship: they become brothers for they share the same “mother.”

who are not biologically related – become mother-and-son spiritually to one another, and this family or community is related to Jesus by faith and discipleship.

The creation or birth of God’s new family as the culminating act of the crucified Jesus is a strongly suggestive indicator that the crucifixion was far from a purposeless, meaningless, shameful event that non-believers think it is. If Jesus did not die, the Christian community would not have been born. It was the crucified Jesus – the King enthroned on the cross – who called this new community into existence. From this point of view, the cross is in fact a powerful *σημείον* of Jesus’ identity and vocation as the true Messiah, Son of God, Savior of the world, and the builder of the church.

8.5. The Crucifixion is the Sacrifice of God’s True Lamb (vv. 31–37).

It is a well-known fact that in FG, just as in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus’ death took place in the context of Passover.⁴³ Moreover, in FG the crucifixion coincides with the slaughter of the Passover sacrificial animals in the temple (cf. 13:1; 18:28; 19:14, 31, 42).⁴⁴ Of

⁴³ But it is also well known that unlike the Synoptic Gospels, FG has what Stibbe (*John as Storyteller*, 191) calls a “Passover plot.” That is, FE has structured his Gospel story around a cycle of three Passovers, where the third one occasions Jesus’ death. See further Stanley E. Porter, “Can Traditional Exegesis Enlighten Literary Analysis of the Fourth Gospel? An Examination of the Old Testament Fulfillment Motif and the Passover Theme,” in *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. C. A. Evans and W. R. Stegner; JSNTSup 104 / SSEJC 3 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 396–428 and Dorothy A. Lee, “Paschal Imagery in the Gospel of John: A Narrative and Symbolic Reading,” *Pacifica* 24 (2011): 13–28.

⁴⁴ This is how most scholars interpret the Johannine chronology of the crucifixion. See, e.g., Hoskyns, *Gospel*, 531; Brown, *Gospel*, 2:951; Barrett, *Gospel*, 553, 557; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 341; Herbert Kohler, *Kreuz und Menschwerdung in Johannesevangelium: Ein exegetisch-hermeneutischer Versuch zur johanneischen Kreuzestheologie*, ATANT 72 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1987), 199; Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 115; Porter, “Traditional Exegesis,” 406; idem, *John, His Gospel, and Jesus: In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 205; Ulrich Wilckens, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, NTD (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 289–290; H. K. Nielsen, “John’s Understanding of the Death of Jesus,” in *New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives*, ed. J. Niessen and S. Pedersen (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 251; Christopher W. Skinner, “Another Look at the ‘Lamb of God,’” *BSac* 161 (2004), 99; Udo Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. M. E. Boring (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 695; Lee, “Paschal Imagery,” 27.

course the belief in Jesus as God's paschal lamb is not unique to FG, but was a common feature of primitive Christology (e.g., 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pet 1:19; cf. Rom 3:25). But FG is unique in its portrayal of Jesus' death as happening simultaneously as the Passover lambs were being slain in the temple.

That for FE Jesus is God's lamb, whose death on the cross is the true "Passover" sacrifice, is a widely accepted view in Johannine scholarship.⁴⁵ A couple of quotes may suffice to show this. J. K. Howard writes:

[In Jesus' Passion] John sees the whole of [the] Passover symbolism reaching its great climax. The new Paschal Victim is led to the place of slaughter at the very moment when the priests are immolating the sacrificial lambs in the Temple (19.14). Just as the blood of sacrificial victims was poured out, so also is the blood of Christ poured forth (19.34), the symbol of the new covenant of deliverance which this death ratified, and like the Paschal victim no bone of His body was broken (19.33–36, cf. Exod 12.46, Num 9.12).⁴⁶

Dorothy A. Lee writes:

The cross becomes the place where Passover ... and the character of Jesus most fully and radically cohere: in the crucifixion at the hour of slaughter, in the wholeness of the bones, in the aqueous flow—in the whole act of self-immolation. There is a giving, in this event, an offering, a sacrifice, in which paschal and cultic symbolism are indispensable for the unveiling of Jesus in this Gospel.⁴⁷

Yet it is surprising that there is hardly any attempt in Johannine scholarship at trying to explore the links between this particular conception of Jesus' death and the theme of *σημείον*. Dorothy A. Lee's 2011 article "Paschal Imagery in the Gospel of John"⁴⁸ may at first seem to be an exception, for there Lee speaks about the coherence of the character of Jesus and Passover at the cross. She explains: "The implied reader sees the face of Jesus in the rituals of Passover, and sees the Passover in the face of Jesus, especially as

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Barrett, *ibid.*, 553; Brown, *ibid.*, 2:930; Porter, "Traditional Exegesis," 406.

⁴⁶ J. K. Howard, "Passover and Eucharist in the Fourth Gospel," *SJT* 20 (1967), 337; emphasis added.

⁴⁷ Lee, "Paschal Imagery," 27.

⁴⁸ See n. 49.

that blending displays itself on the cross.”⁴⁹ But Lee does not actually draw any connections between these and the *σημεῖα*.

It is my purpose here to try to explore these connections. I envisage the connection in this manner: among other things, the evangelist’s conception and presentation of the crucifixion as a paschal sacrifice is an important element of his view of Jesus’ death on the cross as the supreme Christological *σημεῖον*. The crucifixion, in this case understood and depicted as a paschal sacrifice, signifies or reveals important facets of Jesus’ messianic identity and mission (cf. 20:30–31). To develop this subject, I want to connect the paschal-sacrificial-death of Jesus with (1) the testimony of John the Baptist that Jesus is the Lamb of God, (2) the temple incident, and (3) the feeding miracle. The rationale for choosing these passages will become clear as I proceed.

First, the notion of the crucifixion as a paschal sacrifice, in which Jesus is – by implication – the paschal lamb, is in some fundamental way connected to John the Baptist’s testimony in the opening of the Gospel that Jesus is *ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου* (1:29, 36). As far as the lamb imagery in FG is concerned, the Baptist’s testimony appears to be the *terminus a quo* and the crucifixion is the *terminus ad quem*. These two points form a narrative inclusio,⁵⁰ whereby “la narration construit grâce à la figure de l’agneau pascal une courbe de tension qui place l’ensemble de la narration sous le signe de la croix.”⁵¹

Ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ is the first in the series of Christological appellations applied to Jesus in 1:29–51. Outside the Prologue and apart from the quotation from Isa 40:3 in v. 23 (where *κύριος* is applied to Jesus), *ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ* is the first title ascribed to Jesus in the entire Gospel. Zumstein describes it as “la première définition positive de l’identité

⁴⁹ Lee, “Paschal Imagery,” 27.

⁵⁰ Brown, *Gospel*, 2:895.

⁵¹ Jean Zumstein, “L’interprétation johannique de la mort du Christ,” in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, vol. 3; ed. F. van Segbroeck, et al.; BETL 100 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 2120; italics his. Dorothy Lee also sees the lamb symbolism, which she designates by the narrower/more specific expression “paschal imagery,” as beginning with the Baptist’s testimony and climaxing with the crucifixion. She adds: “The narrator expands the paschal overtones of [the Lamb of God] to incorporate other Old Testament insights associated particularly with temple and cult. The feast of Passover develops into its own metaphorical field, pushing the narrative towards the cross as the climactic moment of revelation. On the way, paschal imagery incorporates not only the lamb but also the shepherd who lays down and takes up his life on behalf of the sheep. Passover becomes a major symbol in the Fourth Gospel, capturing vital, Christological aspects of John’s understanding of the cross” (“Paschal Imagery,” 13).

du Christ joh dans le cadre de la narration proprement.”⁵² Knöppler describes it as “das Eingangstor zum joh Verständnis Christi,”⁵³ underscoring its positive programmatic character in the articulation of Johannine Christology.⁵⁴

Although ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ is an ambiguous title and has been variously interpreted in scholarship,⁵⁵ it probably possesses a composite meaning that encompasses a number of OT terms and concepts for sacrificial animals.⁵⁶ The choice of the word ἀμνός for lamb in John 1:29, 36 connects naturally with the lambs used for the daily burnt offerings in the Tabernacle/Temple (Exod 29:38–41) as well as the lambs used in diverse other kinds of sacrifices (e.g. Lev 14:10–12; Num 6:12, 14; 2 Chron. 29:21–22), all of which are designated in the LXX by the word ἀμνός. Apart from this, ἀμνός also connects naturally with the sacrificial lamb of Isa 53, which is also described by the same word in the LXX (Isa 53:7).

Moreover, the connection with the lamb of Isa 53 is strengthened not only by the fact that FE quotes copiously from Isaiah (e.g., Isa 53 is quoted in John 12:37–41 to provide a theological rationale for the Ἰουδαῖοι’s ultimate rejection of Jesus), but also because Isa 53’s theme of Yahweh’s servant’s righteous suffering on behalf of Israel coheres with FE’s fundamental understanding of Jesus’ death as a sacrifice on behalf, and for the sake, of others (see John 6:51; 10:11, 15; 11:50–52; 15:13; 17:19; 18:14).

In connection with Passover, although the paschal lamb is called πρόβατον (rather than ἀμνός) in the LXX (e.g., Exod 12:3, 4, 5, 21; Deut 16:2), ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in the Baptist’s declaration probably includes, rather than excludes, the Passover lamb.⁵⁷ The

⁵² Zumstein, *ibid.*

⁵³ Thomas Knöppler, *Die theologia crucis des Johannesevangeliums: Das Verständnis des Todes Jesu im Rahmen der johanneischen Inkarnations- und Erhöhungschristologie*, WMANT 69 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukircher Verlag, 1994), 67.

⁵⁴ So J. T. Nielsen, “The Lamb of God: The Cognitive Structure of a Johannine Metaphor,” in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*, ed. J. Frey, J. van der Watt, and R. Zimmermann; WUNT 200 (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 2006), 242.

⁵⁵ For the range of proposed meanings see, e.g., Marsh, *John*, 123–24; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:58–63; J. Blank, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 4 vols.; GS (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1977–81), 1:130–55; Morris, *Gospel*, 127–29; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 69–75; Skinner, “Another Look,” 89–104; Nielsen, “Lamb of God,” 225–26.

⁵⁶ See Barrett, *Gospel*, 176–77; Nielsen, “Lamb of God,” 225–56; Lee, “Paschal Imagery,” 13–28.

⁵⁷ This is the view of the majority of Johannine interpreters. See nn. 44 and 59.

Passover is so important and significant in John's Gospel,⁵⁸ so that it makes no sense to exclude the paschal lamb from the broad symbolism of ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. In particular, as I have shown above, the crucifixion is depicted as a paschal sacrifice, in which Jesus is the sacrificial lamb.⁵⁹

If it is correct that the Lamb of God in FG compositely alludes to the various sacrificial animals in the OT, the evangelist may be saying that Jesus fulfills as well as supersedes those sacrifices,⁶⁰ since he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin not just of Israel but also of the world. Moreover, the crucifixion becomes the ultimate saving sacrifice, similarly fulfilling and superseding the sacrifices of the Jewish religion. From this perspective, it is easy to discern how the crucifixion functions as the supreme σημεῖον, in that it supremely reveals Jesus' role as the lamb of God.

Secondly, there is an important connection to be made between the crucifixion as a paschal sacrifice – which takes place on the third Passover – with the events of the first and second Passovers narrated earlier in the Gospel. Let us recall one significant event during the first Passover: the temple incident recounted in 2:13–22. I discussed this passage in detail in ch. 5, in which I argued that the crucifixion-and-resurrection is “promised” in response to the demand for a σημεῖον that would justify Jesus' authority for trying to “empty” the temple of the sacrificial animals during the Passover feast. In the light of the Baptist's testimony that Jesus is the lamb of God (1:29, 36), the evangelist's point seems to be that in the presence of the true Lamb of God, there is no more need for sacrificial animals. The Ἰουδαῖοι (the temple authorities), however, fail to discern this deeper meaning. Affronted, they ask Jesus to produce an authenticating σημεῖον, to which Jesus responds rather enigmatically: λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν (2:19). We learn from the evangelist's comment in v. 21 that Jesus is actually talking not about the literal temple but about the “temple” of his body. This

⁵⁸ As is exhibited, for instance, by the structuring of the Gospel into a threefold Passover plot (see M. W. G. Stibbe, *John's Gospel*, NTR [London: Routledge, 1994], 36–8; Porter, “Traditional Exegesis,” 396–428).

⁵⁹ See further Lightfoot, *John*, 96–7; Hunter, *Gospel*, 24; Marsh, *John*, 123–24; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:299–300; Barrett, *Gospel*, 176–77; Kysar, *John*, 36; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 24–25; Brodie, *Gospel*, 152; Morris, *Gospel*, 130; Moloney, *Gospel*, 58–9; Schnelle, *Evangelium*, 49–50; Keener *John*, 454; Köstenberger, *John*, 66–8; Lincoln, *John*, 113; Lee, “Paschal Imagery,” passim; John Dennis, “Lamb of God,” *DJG*, 482–83.

⁶⁰ So Barrett, *ibid.*, 177.

means that the “destruction” and “rebuilding” that Jesus talks about refer figuratively and allusively to his death-and-resurrection. Thus, with the crucifixion of Jesus during the third Passover, the “promised” σημεῖον in 2:18–22 (during the first Passover) is partially fulfilled and realized, with the full realization awaiting Jesus’ resurrection. From the post-resurrection perspective, particularly in light of the understanding that the crucifixion was the true paschal sacrifice of the Lamb of God, FE looks back to the temple incident and understands why Jesus saw it fit to drive out the sacrificial animals from the temple. Jesus is the true Lamb of God, and his death on the cross is the true sacrifice for the sins of the world.

But we must not miss the broadening of the Christological meaning of the temple incident. If we look back for a moment to the Baptist’s witness (1:29, 36), the Christological focus there is on Jesus as the Lamb of God. This meaning is also present in the temple incident pericope, but it is broadened to include a new meaning. Jesus’ enigmatic reply λύσατε τὸν ναὸν κτλ. (v. 19), as well as the evangelist’s comment ὁ ναὸς τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ (v. 21), shows that Jesus himself, his body, is the true “temple” of God. In other words, Jesus is both the temple and the sacrificial victim. It does not suffice to say, with respect to Jesus’ provocative protest in the temple, that there is no more need for animal sacrifices, for the lamb of God has come. It must also be said, in addition, that there is no more need for the temple, for the true “temple” of God has come.⁶¹ Thus, it appears that Jesus entirely replaces the temple cult.⁶²

Thirdly, a connection is to be drawn between the death of Jesus on the cross which took place on the third Passover – with the feeding miracle (John 6), which took place during the second Passover. I have discussed this feeding miracle in detail in ch. 6. There is no

⁶¹ On Jesus as the fulfillment of the temple in FG see, e.g., Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001); idem, “Temple Imagery in John,” *Int* 63 (2009): 368–81; Alan Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus’ Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John*, JSNTSup 220 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, PBM (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006); Stephen T. Um, *The Teme of Temple Christology in John’s Gospel*, LNTS 312 (London: T&T Clark, 2006).

⁶² Ridderbos is of the same view: “Jesus is the Lamb, as he is also the temple (2:19) and the rituals of the great festivals in Jerusalem and the meaning of the Sabbath find their fulfillment in him” (*Gospel*, 74). Also, Morna D. Hooker, commenting on how the Johannine “Lamb of God” should be interpreted, writes: “Perhaps it is best understood to be the one who is the fulfillment of all the Jewish festivals: in him are brought together all the functions of the old rituals – but now they are effective for the world” (“The Johannine Prologue and the Messianic Secret,” *NTS* 21 [1974]: 43 n. 1).

doubt that the feeding miracle is a σημεῖον (6:14). Its Christological meaning is teased out in the ensuing discourse, and in brief it is this: Jesus is the bread of life for the world (vv. 35, 48, 51c). He does not just give the true bread; he himself is that bread. We must not overlook the fact that in John 6, we have the account of the second demand for a σημεῖον (6:30–31). What the Galileans have in mind when they demand a σημεῖον is either that they want Jesus to repeat the feeding miracle which he performed the day before, or they want him to produce an even greater feat. Jesus' response is, as in 2:19, a pregnant assertion which, as the rest of the discourse unfolds, actually centers on his death-and-resurrection. Jesus' death is the focus in 6:51c–58, with the repetitive mention that the “food” that Jesus offers to the world is nothing less than his own flesh and blood. Once again, we see the crucifixion being depicted as a sacrifice (see esp. v. 51), and although Jesus is not explicitly identified as a lamb in John 6, the sacrificial language especially in 6:51c–58 cannot but also allude to his role as the Lamb of God. The resurrection too is included in the mention of the ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man in 6:62.

How does this connect with the crucifixion? The cross is the realization of the claim that Jesus is the bread of life for the world. Through his sacrificial death, Jesus offers his flesh and blood as the source of eternal life for anyone willing to “come” and “eat” (that is, believe). Moreover, even as Jesus focused on his death-and-resurrection in response to the second demand for a σημεῖον, it may be concluded that Jesus' death once again is being depicted as a Christological σημεῖον (cf. 2:18–21; 6:30–33, 51c–58, 62), revealing him who is “the bread of life.”

In conclusion, the overwhelming emphasis on the crucifixion as a sacrifice of the lamb of God provides a basis for the conclusion that the crucifixion is a σημεῖον. In this case, it confirms and reveals the identity and mission of Jesus as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Further basis is provided through connections with the first and second demands for a σημεῖον, to which Jesus responds consistently by alluding to his death-and-resurrection. Legitimacy for making these connections is provided by the threefold Passover plot: Jesus dies during the third Passover, whereas the two demands for a σημεῖον happen during the first two Passovers.

8.6. Veracious Eyewitness Testimony and the Faith of the Readers (v. 35)

Following the death of Jesus on the cross⁶³ comes this important comment of the evangelist: *καὶ ὁ ἑωρακῶς μεμαρτύρηκεν, καὶ ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, καὶ ἐκεῖνος οἶδεν ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγει, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύητε*⁶⁴ (“And he who saw has testified – and his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth – so that you also may believe”) (19:35). In Johannine scholarship, this verse is not normally linked to the *σημεῖα*. But I am going to argue here that this comment supports the supposition that the crucifixion is the supreme *σημεῖον*.

It maybe helpful to begin by ascertaining the identity of the unnamed witness, as well as the referent of *ἐκεῖνος* in the second part of the verse. There are three compelling reasons for the view that *ὁ ἑωρακῶς μεμαρτύρηκεν* in 19:35a refers to the beloved disciple.⁶⁵ First, according to 19:26–27, the beloved disciple – and he alone among Jesus’ male disciples – was present at the crucifixion. It is natural that the masculine *ὁ ἑωρακῶς* (“he who saw”) in 19:35 would refer back to him.⁶⁶ Second, the identification of the witness in 19:35 with the beloved disciple receives further confirmation if 19:35 is correlated with 21:20–24. In 21:20 the beloved disciple is explicitly referenced, with a further identification: *ὃς ἀνέπεσεν ἐν τῷ δείπνῳ ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος αὐτοῦ* (“who who had reclined next to [Jesus] at the supper”) (cf. 13:23). Then in 21:24 we read: *οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθῆς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν* (“This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true”). The formal similarities between 19:35

⁶³ Particularly right after that death has been confirmed by the soldiers who, because Jesus was already dead, did not break his legs, but, instead, pierced his side with a spear, resulting in an immediate outflow of blood and water.

⁶⁴ For the defense of *πιστεύητε* as the correct reading, rather than *πιστεύσητε*, see §3.3.1.1.2.

⁶⁵ For a different view, see Lindars (*Gospel*, 589) who thinks that the unnamed witness is the soldier who pierced Jesus’ side.

⁶⁶ The dissenting suggestion that the beloved disciple was no longer present at the crucifixion from 19:28 onwards, for he had gone to take Mary into his home (19:27), is based on a doubtful interpretation of *ῥα* in 19:27b. That the beloved disciple took Mary to his own home *ἀπ’ ἐκείνης τῆς ῥα* (“from that hour”) does not necessarily envisage that they left the crucifixion scene at that very moment and thus missed the remaining important events at the cross. As is well known, the word *ῥα* is a pregnant term in the Gospel, referring to the “hour” of Jesus’ death, which is also the “hour” of his “glorification” and “lifting up,” and in 19:27 it need not mean “this very moment.”

and 21:24 are striking: they both speak of the one who has borne true witness (testimony) to what he saw. But the contribution of 21:20–24 is to tell us directly that the unnamed witness to Jesus’ death in 19:35 is the beloved disciple himself. In addition, 21:24 attributes the authorship of FG to the beloved disciple himself (ὁ γράψας ταῦτα).

Third, the identification of the unnamed witness in 19:35 with the beloved disciple is consistent with this Gospel’s portrayal of the beloved disciple as an ideal witness.⁶⁷ I have already cited John 21:20–24, which expressly identifies the beloved disciple as witness of the events recounted in the Gospel and makes him responsible for its writing (see v. 24).⁶⁸ Bauckham identifies three elements that make the beloved disciple an ideal witness.⁶⁹ The first is the element of special intimacy with Jesus, which is already apparent in the designation ὁ μαθητῆς ὃν ἠγάπα/ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20), and evident in 1:35–40⁷⁰ and 13:23. Second, the beloved disciple has witnessed the key events of Jesus’ public ministry. If the anonymous disciple of 1:35–40 was the beloved disciple, then he would have witnessed the earliest days prior to the inauguration of Jesus’ ministry; he would have heard the Baptist’s testimony that Jesus is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29; cf. v. 36). Moreover, the beloved disciple was there when, during the last supper, Jesus foretold his betrayal (13:21–30). Arguably his most crucial role as eyewitness was being the only male disciple present at the cross, witnessing the very death of his Lord (19:35). Then on resurrection morning he, along with Peter, was there to see the empty tomb (20:1–10). Finally he is

⁶⁷ See Bauckham, *Testimony*, 82–7; idem, “The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author,” *JSNT* 49 (1993): 21–44; idem, “The Fourth Gospel as the Testimony of the Beloved Disciple,” in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. R. Bauckham and C. Mosser (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 129–39; Lincoln, *Truth on Trial*, 155–58, 384–89; idem, “The Beloved Disciple as Eyewitness and the Fourth Gospel as Witness,” *JSNT* 85 (2002): 3–26;

⁶⁸ For the view of the beloved disciple as “ideal author” see Bauckham, “The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author,” passim; idem., *Testimony*, 87–9.

⁶⁹ Bauckham, *Testimony*, 85–6.

⁷⁰ Of course the anonymous disciple in 1:35–40 is not expressly identified with the beloved disciple. But that does not prevent many interpreters from supposing that that disciple may well be the beloved disciple. Bauckham is quite confident about this: “The anonymous disciple here is almost certainly the beloved disciple, who cannot, of course, on first acquaintance be called, as he is later, ‘the disciple Jesus loved.’ Of course, to the first-time reader/hearer of the Gospel the anonymous disciple of these verses is enigmatic, but the curiously precise specification of the hour of the day may already be intended to give a hint of eyewitness testimony” (*Testimony*, 85). So also Harold W. Attridge, “The Restless Quest for the Beloved Disciple,” in *Early Christian Voices in Texts, Traditions, and Symbols*, ed. D. H. Warren, A. G. Brock, and D. W. Pao (Boston/Leiden: Brill Academic, 2003), 71.

explicitly named as one of the seven disciples who met the resurrected Lord by the Sea of Tiberias (21:1–14).

The third element is the portrayal of the beloved disciple as a perceptive witness, “with spiritual insight into the meaning of the events of the Gospel story.”⁷¹ This spiritual insight, no doubt, is related to the post-resurrection perspective through which FE viewed and interpreted Jesus’ earthly ministry.⁷² This post-resurrection perspective need not mean that the evangelist’s account of Jesus’ ministry is unreliable. After all, the evangelist himself insists on the veracity of the witness of the beloved disciple (19:35; 21:24).⁷³ In light of this discussion, it may be firmly concluded that the unnamed witness to the death of Jesus in 19:35 is the beloved disciple himself who, according to 21:24, is also responsible for the writing of the Gospel.

In regard to the referent of *ἐκεῖνος* (in *καὶ ἐκεῖνος οἶδεν ὅτι ἀληθινὴ λέγει*, “and he knows that he tells the truth,” 19:35b), it is best to understand it as referring back to *ὁ ἑωρακώς μεμαρτύρηκεν*, who – as we have seen – is the beloved disciple himself.⁷⁴ We may again refer to 21:24, where, as we have seen, the beloved disciple is expressly identified, and where a similar phrase occurs: *καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν*. Here it is “we” who know that the beloved disciple’s testimony is true. In 19:35b, it is the beloved disciple himself who knows and vouches for the veracity of his own testimony.

I proceed now to the two elements ascribed to or associated with Jesus’ crucifixion in 19:35, which are characteristic of the *σημεῖα* in general: (1) veracious

⁷¹ Bauckham, *Testimony*, 86.

⁷² In this respect, I differ from Bauckham (*Testimony*, 86), who hesitates to give a clear answer to whether the beloved disciple possessed this spiritual insight already during the earthly ministry of Jesus or only after the resurrection. I think that, on the basis of 2:22; 12:16; and 20:9, not just the beloved disciple but also all of Jesus’ disciples did not have a full understanding of the meaning of Jesus’ person and mission during the earthly ministry, and that it was only after Jesus rose from the dead, specifically after the risen Lord appeared to the disciples, and with the outpouring of the Spirit, that they were able to comprehend, by faith, the meaning of Jesus and his ministry.

⁷³ For the nature, significance, and implications of the post-resurrection perspective of FG see D. A. Carson, “Understanding Misunderstanding in the Fourth Gospel,” *TynB* 33 (1982): 59–91; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 27–32; Gerald L. Borchert, “The Resurrection Perspective in John: An Evangelical Summons,” *RevEx* 85 (1988): 501–13; Thompson, *The Incarnate Word*, 122–26; idem, *John*, 8–13; Jean Zumstein, *Kreative Erinnerung: Relecture und Auslegung im Johannesevangelium*, 2nd ed.; ATANT 84 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2004), 47–63.

⁷⁴ There are other interpretations, such as the view that *ἐκεῖνος* refers (1) to Christ or to God, or (2) to the evangelist, who is other than the eyewitness. See discussion in Carson, *John*, 625–26.

eyewitness testimony and (2) positive role for the reader's faith. These characteristics, I maintain, betray the character of Jesus' crucifixion as a *σημεῖον*.

8.5.1. Emphasis on veracious eyewitness testimony

The stress on veracious eyewitness testimony in 19:35 in connection with Jesus' death is remarkable: *καὶ ἑωρακῶς μεμαρτύρηκεν, καὶ ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, καὶ ἐκεῖνος οἶδεν ὅτι ἀληθὴ λέγει* ("He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth").⁷⁵ What is the significance of this emphasis? I propose that one of its implications is the connection with the *σημεῖα*. In the Gospel the *σημεῖα* are things that Jesus performed in the sight of particular witnesses to help them come to faith in him. For instance, the first *σημεῖον* – the wine miracle in Cana – was performed in the presence of the disciples (2:11). In 12:37, we are told that Jesus performed so many *σημεῖα* presence of the Ἰουδαῖοι. Turning to the Gospel's purpose statement, we read of a summary of Jesus' ministry, and of FG itself, in relation to the believing disciples: "Jesus performed many other *σημεῖα* in the presence of his disciples" (20:30). It is clear from these passages that the *σημεῖα* are public deeds of Jesus, and the evangelist stresses the fact that people saw them.

⁷⁵ Notice that both the *μάρτυς* and *ἀλήθεια* word-groups are represented twice in this verse. John Chrysostom paraphrased the element of eyewitness testimony this way: "I heard it not from others, but was myself present and saw" (*Homilies on the Gospel of St. John* 85.3 [NPNF 14:622]). Cyril of Alexandria also commented that the beloved disciple "was a spectator and eyewitness of what took place" (*Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. [London: Walter Smith, 1885], 2:645). Among recent interpreters, Keener writes, "the emphatic claim to eyewitness testimony ... suggests that John reports what he believes to be an eyewitness account, not merely a symbolic event" (*Gospel*, 1152). But it is not just eyewitness testimony that is emphasized: the veracity of that testimony is equally stressed. A good summarizing comment on this notion of veracious *Zeugenbericht* maybe that of Howard M. Jackson, who wrote, with a view to the entirety of the Gospel: "The author wants his narrative accepted as a factual and accurate presentation of events in which he himself participated or to which he was himself an eyewitness" ("Self-Referential Conventions," 29). Commenting specifically on 19:35, Jackson speaks of the stress on the "reliability of what [FE] has reported" (*ibid.*, 30). Bauckham, who maintains that FG was not just based on eyewitness accounts but was actually written by an eyewitness (the beloved disciple), is also worth quoting: "[T]he nature of the Beloved Disciple's witness and the role it plays in the Gospel bring it *functionally* very close to historiographic autopsy" (*Eyewitnesses*, 386; italics his). "Autopsy" translates *αὐτόπτης*, which is the technical Greek word for eyewitness (*ibid.*, 385).

The strong accent on veracious eyewitness testimony in 19:35 suggests that Jesus' death is part of the *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* which the evangelist talks about in 20:30–31.⁷⁶ Moreover, this strong emphasis shows a consciousness that what is being recounted is no ordinary deed of Jesus and is no ordinary *σημεῖον*, but is the greatest deed and supreme *σημεῖον*.

8.5.2. For the faith of the readers

In addition to the stress upon veracious eyewitness testimony in connection with Jesus' death on the cross, there is also in 19:35 a reference to the faith of the readers: *ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύητε*⁷⁷ (“in order that you also may believe”). The particle *καί*, here translated “also,” implies that the beloved disciple, who witnessed the events narrated, believed, and now wants his readers also to believe. The object of believing is not expressly stated. In light of the emphasis upon veracious eyewitness testimony in the earlier part of the verse, the implied object of faith most probably includes the reality of the suffering and death of Jesus, as well as the surrounding circumstances (e.g., the fact that Jesus was spared the *crucifragium*, the outflow of blood and water from Jesus' side resulting from the *coup de grace*, and so on). But it would be incorrect to limit it to bare facts. True faith includes the acceptance of the meaning, significance, and implications of Jesus' deeds. Just as FE believed not just that Jesus truly died but also the meaning and significance of that death, so too are the readers called upon to believe not just that Jesus died but also what it meant, both in respect of Jesus' person and of the saving benefits of his death. As Barrett explains, paraphrasing 19:35: “You (the readers of the Gospel) are not merely to believe that blood and water did in fact issue from the side of the Crucified, but to believe in the full Christian sense.”⁷⁸ To non-believers, the crucifixion meant only that Jesus died a cruel death at the hands of the Romans. To them it has no

⁷⁶ For instance, the phrase *ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ* in 20:30 no doubt includes the beloved disciple who, as has been mentioned, is depicted in this Gospel as the ideal witness to the life and ministry of Jesus and is credited with the Gospel's authorship (see 21:24). Also, the *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* implied in 20:31 no doubt includes the death of Jesus, whose witness is the beloved disciple himself (19:35).

⁷⁷ Concerning the textual variants *πιστεύητε* and *πιστεύσητε*, and for the reasons why I prefer the former, see §3.3.1.1.2.

⁷⁸ Barrett, *Gospel*, 558; see also Lincoln, *Gospel*, 384.

deeper meaning – both in regard to the spiritual benefits of that death and the identity of the one who died – that elicits a response of faith. But to the evangelist, Jesus’ death is full of meaning both in terms of elucidating Jesus’ identity and in terms of securing the salvation of the world. This deeper meaning, which the evangelist perceived and embraced through faith, elicits a response of faith from the readers.

The purposive expression *ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύητε* in 19:35, in the context of the crucifixion, suggests that the crucifixion itself is a *σημεῖον*. We know that in FG *σημεῖον* and faith are connected, and I have argued elsewhere for the positive role of the *σημεῖα* for faith.⁷⁹ I need not rehearse here again those passages in the Gospel where the *σημεῖα* are said to assist positively the characters in the story to come to faith in Jesus. What remains to be done, I think, is the correlation of 19:35 with 20:30–31, this time focusing on the role of the *σημεῖα* for faith. Verse 20:31 speaks about the *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* (“written or recounted signs”) as well as the purpose for why they were written: *ἵνα πιστεύητε*⁸⁰ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζώην ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. The common expression *ἵνα πιστεύητε* in 19:35 and 20:31 seems to be yet another piece of evidence for my argument. Just as the *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* have the purpose of helping the readers to believe, so also the establishing of the reality of Jesus’ death through the veracious eyewitness testimony of the beloved disciple has the same purpose. Now if the *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* in 20:31, with their stated purpose, already include the crucifixion, why does the evangelist articulate that purpose in 19:35? Perhaps, it is because the crucifixion itself, together with the resurrection, is arguably the climax of the Gospel story. In the broad scope of *σημεῖα*, the crucifixion-and-resurrection is not just one of many but also the most important one, the supreme one.

8.7. The crucifixion is the consummation of Jesus’ work (vv. 28–30).

The final theme that I am going to discuss from our passage is that found in vv. 28–30: the crucifixion is the consummation of Jesus’ work. Like the earlier themes, this one can

⁷⁹ See §4.6..

⁸⁰ For a discussion of the textual variants of this word, and for my reasons for preferring the present subjunctive reading, see §3.3.1.1.2.

be approached from many angles, although my own approach will be, as usual, from the perspective of the *σημεῖα*. Moreover, this theme may have significance and meaning other than the one I am proposing here. Like the above themes, this one may not immediately appear to be connected with the *σημεῖα*. This is perhaps an effect of the widespread assumption that there is no *σημεῖον* in the second half of the Gospel, and that the crucifixion itself is not a *σημεῖον*.

For this discussion, I presuppose my earlier study of *ἔργον*,⁸¹ in which I argued that although *σημεῖον* and *ἔργον* are not entirely equivalent, they overlap in their common reference to Jesus' deeds – whether viewed wholly or in part – as well as their common function of revealing Jesus' true identity and mission.

That the crucifixion is the consummation of Jesus' work is clearly emphasized in 19:28–30:

²⁸Μετὰ τοῦτο εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἤδη πάντα τετέλεσται, ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή, λέγει· διψῶ. ²⁹σκεῦος ἔκειτο ὄξους μεστόν· σπόγγον οὖν μεστόν τοῦ ὄξους ὑσσώπῳ περιθέντες προσήνεγκαν αὐτοῦ τῷ στόματι. ³⁰ὅτε οὖν ἔλαβεν τὸ ὄξος [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· τετέλεσται, καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα.

²⁸After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said, in order to fulfill the scripture, “I am thirsty.” ²⁹A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they [the soldiers] put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. ³⁰When he had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” ³¹Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Notice that *τετέλεσται* (“it is finished”) occurs twice in this passage. In v. 28a the narrator says that *ἤδη πάντα τετέλεσται* (“all was now finished”), and that Jesus is fully aware of it. In v. 30b, the Johannine Jesus himself, just before he gives up his spirit, proclaims his final word from the cross: *τετέλεσται*.⁸²

⁸¹ See §4.4.

⁸² Worth mentioning also is the use (in our passage) of a near-synonym, *τελειωθῇ* (v. 28b), from *τελειοῦν* (“to make perfect, complete, accomplish,” [BDAG, p. 996]), in the context of the motif of the “fulfillment-of-the-scripture.” Actually the more common word used for the many occurrences of the “fulfillment-of-the-scripture” motif in FG is *πληροῦν*, “to fill (up), complete, finish, fulfill” (BDAG, pp. 825–27). It occurs fifteen times, though not in our passage. Its adjective form *πλήρης* occurs in the

Going back to 19:28, if “all has now been finished,” what does “all” (πάντα) refer to? Apparently it means all that has transpired up to 19:27. But there is one thing that ἤδε πάντα τετέλεσται does not yet include: Jesus has not yet died (Jesus dies at 19:30). The point of v. 28a seems to be that all of the things that must take place prior to Jesus’ death have already taken place; all of the things that Jesus must do before he breathes his last he has already done. Now he is ready to perform the greatest act of his ministry.

We notice, however, that Jesus does not die immediately after v. 28. There is in fact one more thing that he does before he dies. He takes the cup full of sour wine, which the soldiers give him. Then comes the note in v. 30: ὅτε οὖν ἔλαβεν τὸ ὄξος ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· τετέλεσται, καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα (“Then when Jesus had received the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit”). The importance of the cup (ποτήριον) in this scene may be due to the fact that in the primitive Christian tradition, the Passion of Jesus was described as a “cup” to be drunk.⁸³ In FG itself, during the arrest in the garden, Jesus, refusing self-defense, rebukes Peter who tries to defend him with the sword. He then admonishes Peter by saying: βάλε τὴν μάχαιραν εἰς τὴν θήκην· τὸ ποτήριον ὃ δέδωκεν μοι ὁ πατήρ οὐ μὴ πίω αὐτό; (“Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?”) (18:11).⁸⁴ If drinking the cup symbolizes Jesus’ death, it appears that these two converge in 19:30: Jesus drinks the cup and then dies. His work is thereby consummated.

The last word that comes out of the mouth of the crucified Jesus, just before his death, is τετέλεσται (“It is finished”) (19:30). As commentators generally acknowledge, this dramatic statement is not a mere admission of his imminent death. Rather, it emphasizes the fact that in and through his death on the cross Jesus completes and

important verse 1:14 to describe the incarnate Logos as “full” of grace and truth. Its nominal form πλήρωμα occurs two verses later: “From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace” (v. 16).

⁸³ Cf. Mark 10:38–39; 14:36; cf. the use of ποτήριον in the institution of the Lord’s Supper: 1 Cor 11:25; Mark 14:23; Matt 26:27; Luke 22:17.

⁸⁴ Cf. Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane in Mark 14:36: ἀββα ὁ πατήρ, πάντα δυνατά σοι· παρένεγκε τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ· ἀλλ’ οὐ τί ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλὰ τί σύ (“Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet not what I want, but what you want”).

fulfills his messianic vocation.⁸⁵ Τετέλεσται is a shout of victory, not of defeat. For FE, the cross, from the post-resurrection perspective, was an essential part – in fact, the most important part and the climax – of the mission of the divine Messiah. The fact that Jesus was crucified shows, signifies, and authenticates – rather than disproves or contradicts – his messianic calling and identity. In other words, from the perspective of the fulfillment of Jesus’ mission, the crucifixion serves as the supreme σημεῖον.

The connection between the crucifixion as the consummation of Jesus’ mission and the crucifixion as the ultimate σημεῖον will become more apparent when we (1) locate the crucifixion as not just a part but actually the most important part of Jesus’ messianic ἔργον and (2) realize that σημεῖον and ἔργον actually have overlapping referents and functions in the Gospel.

8.7.1. The Crucifixion and Jesus’ ἔργον

The verb τέλειν, from which τετέλεσται comes, means to “complete an activity,”⁸⁶ “fulfill, accomplish, execute, perform,”⁸⁷ or “to bring to an end, complete.”⁸⁸ The meaning refers to the successful completion of an activity or endeavour. Its nominal form, τέλος, means “consummation, fulfillment, execution.”⁸⁹ Τέλειν occurs only twice in John’s Gospel. The occurrence in 19:30 has already been mentioned. The other occurrence is in 19:28, where the same form of the verb (τετέλεσται) is used: μετὰ τοῦτο εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἤδη πάντα τετέλεσται, ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή, λέγει· διψῶ (“After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said – in order that the scripture might be fulfilled – ‘I am thirsty’”) (19:28).⁹⁰ Πάντα, as has been discussed, refers to “all that the Father had given the Son

⁸⁵ So, e.g., Alfred Loisy, *Le Quatrième Évangile* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1903), 490; Bernard, *Gospel*, 2:638; L. Th. Witkamp, “Jesus’ Thirst in John 19:28–30: Literal or Figurative?” *JBL* 115 (1996): 493.

⁸⁶ BDAG, p. 997.

⁸⁷ LSJ, p. 1771.

⁸⁸ Hans Hübner, “τελειόω,” *EDNT* 3:346.

⁸⁹ LSJ, p. 1772.

⁹⁰ For a helpful discussion of Jesus’ thirst in this passage, see Witkamp, “Jesus’ Thirst,” 509–10, who argues that Jesus’ thirst pertains to “his desire to do the will of God in finishing the work the Father had given him to complete and in laying down his life out of love for his own ... In thirsting, Jesus is not simply giving expression to his feelings of torment at the moment he dies; he consciously fulfills the

to do.”⁹¹ It encompasses the entirety of Jesus’ messianic vocation. The important point for me here is that the crucifixion is the point at which Jesus’ vocation is said to be finished and consummated. In this sense, the crucifixion may be rightly described as the τέλος of Jesus’ messianic vocation.

A pertinent verse is 13:1: πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἦλθεν αὐτοῦ ἡ ὥρα ἵνα μεταβῆ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, ἀγαπήσας τοὺς ἰδίους τοὺς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτούς. Notice the use of τέλος in this verse, which connects naturally with the use of τέλειν in 19:28–30. Jesus “loved his own to the end” (or “to the uttermost”). That is, he loved them so much that he died for them. That τέλος here refers to Jesus’ death is confirmed by the mention of the arrival of Jesus’ ὥρα “to depart from this world and go to the Father.” What I want to stress with regard to 13:1 is the fact that here Jesus’ death is described as τέλος, and this connects naturally with the twofold τετέλεσται in the account of Jesus’ death. It is clear that Jesus’ death is not simply the end but also the fulfillment, the consummation, the perfection, of his messianic mission.

With regard to Jesus’ messianic vocation and his successful discharge of it, we need to look back to the concept of ἔργον in FG, which has been discussed in §4.4, in which I tried to relate it to the concept of σημεῖον. A few important points are worth reiterating.

To be sure the word ἔργον is not always used in FG to predicate Jesus, but nevertheless its predominant usage is Christological. This usage may be summarized as follows. First of all, ἔργον refers to the work of the Father (e.g., αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον in 4:34 [where αὐτοῦ refers to the Father]; τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ in 6:28 and 9:3; τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ in 6:29; τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ in 14:10 [where αὐτοῦ again refers to the Father]; etc.). Second, the Father has entrusted this ἔργον, and the accomplishment of it, to the Son. Hence, in 5:36 Jesus speaks of τὰ ἔργα ἃ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ ἵνα τελειώσω αὐτά (“the works that the Father has given me to complete”), and in 17:4 Jesus says: ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τὸ ἔργον τελειώσω ὃ δέδωκας μοι ἵνα ποιήσω (“I glorified you on earth by finishing the work

scripture [Psalm 69], which had already spoken of his thirst for death as the way to complete the work of the Father and to go back to his sender.”

⁹¹ Brown, *Gospel*, 2:207. So also Bultmann, *Gospel*, 673 n. 6; Dauer, *Passionsgeschichte*, 286–94; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 351; Bergmeier, “TETEΛΕΣΤΑΙ,” 286.

that you gave me to do”). Moreover, ἔργον is mentioned in the context of the Father’s sending of the Son (see 4:34; 6:29; 9:4). Thus, the ἔργον of the Father and of the Son is one and the same.

Third, a sense of divine necessity or obligation is stressed in relation to this ἔργον, and Jesus is portrayed as totally committed to accomplishing it. For instance, Jesus declares in 4:34, ἐμὸν βρῶμά ἐστιν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον (“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work”). Jesus is also portrayed as successful/victorious in fulfilling his God-given ἔργον. In 17:4 he prays to the Father, ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τὸ ἔργον τελειώσας ὃ δέδωκας μοι ἵνα ποιήσω (“I glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do”). Divine necessity with regard to this work is expressed in 9:4a: ἡμᾶς δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με (“We must work the works of him who sent me”). The second part of the verse indicates urgency: ἕως ἡμέρα ἐστίν· ἔρχεται νύξ ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι (“while it is day; night is coming when no one can work”) (cf. 4:34).

Fourth, while it is true that Jesus does the ἔργον (e.g., 5:36) and completes it (17:4), he does so in complete unity with the Father. For instance, Jesus says in 14:10b, ὁ δὲ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (“the Father who dwells in me does his works”). In 10:25b Jesus speaks of τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς μου (“the works that I do in my Father’s name”) (cf. 5:17). In short, not only do the Father and the Son share one and the same work; they are also one in fulfilling and completing it.⁹²

Fifth, FE flexibly uses both ἔργον and ἔργα to refer to this “work.” When ἔργον is used, the whole mission of Jesus seems to be in view. This is true in 4:34 and 17:4, both of which have already been quoted. The verse 7:21 is an exception, where ἔργον (modified by ἐν) refers back to a specific work of Jesus: the healing of the lame man at the Bethesda pool (recounted in John 5). Meanwhile, the use of the plural ἔργα has in

⁹² The discourse in 5:19–30, which is occasioned by the healing of the lame man at the Bethesda pool on a Sabbath, explicates clearly the fact not only that the Father and the Son have one and the same work, but also that they are operationally one in fulfilling it. As Dodd comments on John 5:19–30: “The sole condition on which the Son exercises divine functions is that *He acts in complete unity with the Father*, a unity which has the form of unqualified obedience to the Father’s will. Given such unity, *every act which the Son performs is an act of the Father*. The acts of ζωοποίησις and κρίσις of which He gives ‘signs’ are in the fullest sense acts of God, since in them God’s will is fully effective. As this identity of operation is conditioned, on the Son’s part, by unqualified obedience, so, on the Father’s part, it is based upon His perfect love for the Son” (1953, 327; italics added).

view specific elements/components of Jesus' work. For instance, the phrase τὰ ἔργα, occurring twice in 5:36, clearly has in mind the just-performed healing of the lame man at the Bethesda pool as well as the earlier deeds of Jesus. Another example is the occurrence of τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντος με in 9:4, which introduces the healing of the man blind from birth. The phrase, therefore, has in mind this specific miracle and includes the earlier deeds of Jesus as well.

Above I linked the twofold τετέλεσται of 19:28–30 with the τέλος of 13:1 and concluded that the crucifixion is the τέλος of Jesus' messianic vocation. There is a further connection to be made. Jesus' victorious shout in 19:28–30 connects importantly and significantly with 4:34 and 17:4. These two verses have already been cited. John 4:34 speaks prospectively about Jesus' devotion to the fulfillment of his God-given ἔργον. John 17:4 speaks, in a retrospective way, about his fulfillment of that ἔργον. In both verses the verb used is τελειοῦν, which means “to complete an activity”⁹³ or to “make perfect, complete, accomplish.”⁹⁴ This verb is virtually synonymous with τέλειν⁹⁵ of the victorious shout of Jesus in 19:28–30.⁹⁶ By this connection, it becomes clearer that the crucifixion constitutes not just a part but the most important part of Jesus' ἔργον, and that it is also the point at which that ἔργον has been fulfilled.

8.7.2. The crucifixion as both Jesus' ἔργον and σημεῖον

Having seen that the crucifixion constitutes the climax and τέλος (cf. 13:1) of Jesus' messianic ἔργον (that is, the crucifixion itself is an ἔργον and the fulfillment of Jesus' entire ἔργον) (cf. 4:34; 17:4; 19:28–30), I now proceed to discuss a Christological function of ἔργον which it shares with σημεῖον, which is the function of revealing or signifying Jesus' true identity as the divine Messiah and the Son of God (cf. 20:30–31). Again, I presuppose here my discussion of the relationship between σημεῖον and ἔργον in

⁹³ BDAG, p. 996; similarly, “to bring an activity to a successful finish” (L&N §68.22).

⁹⁴ LSJ, p. 1770.

⁹⁵ So Hübner, “τελειόω,” 3:344.

⁹⁶ Τέλειν, τελειοῦν, and πληροῦν are the three verbs used by FE for his concept of “fulfillment.” Although all of these verbs share the general meaning of “fulfillment,” τέλειν and τελειοῦν focus particularly on the completion of an activity, while πληροῦν stresses the idea of fulfilling or making something full or whole (for this nuance see Tabb, “Johannine Fulfillment,” 496).

§4.3. There I showed that although these two terms are not entirely equivalent (for instance, *σημεῖον* is exclusively used of Jesus, while *ἔργον* is used also of the disciples),⁹⁷ they do share an overlapping function in connection with the revelation of who the Johannine Jesus truly is. Here I want to focus upon one aspect of that revelation in order to further illuminate the question of whether the crucifixion may be rightly considered as the supreme *σημεῖον*. I am referring to the revelation of Jesus' *δόξα*.

It is clear in the Gospel that a fundamental function of Jesus' *σημεῖα* is to reveal his *δόξα*. For instance, in the programmatic statement connected to the first of Jesus' *σημεῖα* (the first miracle in Cana) it is noted that Jesus *ἐφανερώσεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ* ("revealed his glory") (2:11). The phrase *ἀρχὴ τῶν σημείων* ("[the] first of the signs") implies that the revealing of Jesus' glory is a function not only of this first *σημεῖον* but also of all the *σημεῖα* that follow. This is expressly reiterated toward the end of the first half of the book, in connection with the raising of Lazarus, which is also a *σημεῖον*. We are told that Lazarus's illness (and death) *οὐκ ἔστιν πρὸς θάνατον ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δι' αὐτῆς* ("does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it") (11:4).

If by nature and by function the *σημεῖα* of Jesus are revelatory of his *δόξα*, what then is the crucifixion, which is overwhelmingly portrayed in the Gospel as the "hour" of Jesus' glorification? It is hard to escape the conclusion that the crucifixion is the supreme *σημεῖον* of Jesus.

8.8. Overall Conclusion

I believe that the six factors discussed above – arising from FE's account of the crucifixion (19:16–37) – provide further support for the view that the crucifixion is the supreme *σημεῖον* in FG. A *σημεῖον* is a deed of Jesus that manifests his divine identity and saving role to those who have faith (cf. 2:11; 20:30–31). The crucifixion, as FE has

⁹⁷ Only Jesus performs the *σημεῖα*. For instance, in 10:41 the evangelist stresses that John the Baptist performed no "sign" (because the Baptist is not the Christ). Meanwhile, with regard to *ἔργον*, the Johannine Jesus says: "Whoever believes in me will also do the works (*τὰ ἔργα*) that I do and, in fact, will do greater works (*μείζονα τούτων*) than these, because I am going to the Father" (14:12).

recounted it, does that supremely. First, that the crucifixion explicitly fulfilled the Scriptures means not only that crucifixion itself is the climax of the God-ordained vocation of the true Messiah, but also that Jesus of Nazareth who endured the cross is precisely that Messiah.

Second, the crucifixion reveals aspects of Jesus' true identity. Jesus is king. He is the king not just of the Jews but of the whole world. But the crucifixion immediately cautions us against misconceiving Jesus' kingship in terms of human politics and power. Jesus is king and his throne is the cross. His kingdom is not from this world. As such, it is unacceptable or absurd to the eyes of the world. But FE, through the eyes of faith and from the post-resurrection vantage point, has embraced this true meaning of Jesus' kingship. And now he seeks to convey it to his hearers/readers. Another aspect of Jesus' identity revealed through the cross is the metaphorical expression "Lamb of God." Jesus is the true Lamb of God – superseding all the sacrificial animals of the Jewish sacrificial system, superseding even the temple – by whose sacrificial death on the cross salvation has been obtained for those who believe (cf. 1:29, 36). From this angle we can see why the cross is necessary: apart from it there is no salvation for the world. From this angle we can also see that Jesus is the saviour of the world, and he saves the world by nothing less than the sacrifice of his own life.

Third, it is the crucified Jesus who calls into existence a new community of faith. In this light, it is the crucified Jesus who is the foundation of the new community. This is because the life of this new community derives from the benefits of Jesus' sacrificial death. Finally, the veracity of Jesus' death on the cross, as well as the faithful construal of it, is vouchsafed for the hearer/reader by the beloved disciple, who himself was there when Jesus breathed his last. He has borne witness concerning it so that the hearer/reader may believe that indeed Jesus "is the Christ and Son of God and, believing, may have eternal life in his name" (20:31).

CHAPTER 9
THE RESURRECTION (AND POST-RESURRECTION
APPEARANCES) OF JESUS (JOHN 20):
THE SUPREME ΣΗΜΕΙΟΝ (PART 2)

9.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the resurrection of Jesus as the second essential and indispensable component of the supreme σημεῖον in FG. As the title indicates, it is a sequel to ch. 8, which discusses the crucifixion as the first component. The textual focus of the present chapter is going to be John 20:1–29. Before delving into this passage, it will be helpful to discuss a number of introductory points, namely: (1) the bases for speaking of the resurrection as a σημεῖον; (2) the theological unity of the crucifixion-and-resurrection; (3) a clarification concerning the resurrection and post-resurrection appearances; and (4) the exclusion of John 21 from this study.

9.1.1. Bases for Speaking of the Resurrection as a Σημεῖον

To begin with, it is helpful to look back to the previous discussions and recall some of the specific passages in the Gospel where a connection between σημεῖον and the crucifixion-and-resurrection is evident. On what bases can we speak of the resurrection as constitutive of the Johannine σημεῖον, let alone the supreme σημεῖον? The following discussion will cover four points.

9.1.1.1. In John 2:18–22 the resurrection is the second element of the “promised” σημεῖον.

The connection between σημεῖον and Jesus’ death-and-resurrection has been explicitly indicated early on in the Gospel. In the context of the temple incident

(2:13–22), when the Ἰουδαῖοι confront Jesus and demand that he produce an authenticating σημεῖον (v. 18), he replies to them with this enigmatic statement: λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν (“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”) (v. 19). Whereas the Ἰουδαῖοι – misunderstanding Jesus’ utterance – suppose that he is referring to the physical Jerusalem temple (v. 20), the evangelist informs the reader that Jesus is in fact talking about “the temple of his body” (v. 21: ὁ ναὸς τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ). If that is so, then the “destruction” of the “temple” and its subsequent “rebuilding” in three days’ time refer in fact to Jesus’ death-and-resurrection.

This is significant in view of the fact that this is Jesus’ response to the demand for a σημεῖον (2:18). To recall, the demand is precipitated by Jesus’ attempt at regulating the temple cult: he drives out all the sacrificial animals from the precincts and scatters the monies of the moneychangers and overturns their tables. When the temple authorities confront Jesus and demand to see a σημεῖον, they want Jesus to prove his authority for doing these things (ταῦτα) – for trying to regulate the temple cult. Significantly, Jesus does not say no to the demand. Rather, he replies affirmatively, though enigmatically, “promising” a σημεῖον – which is nothing less than his own death-and-resurrection. It should be pointed out that here the crucifixion-and-resurrection are conjoined, and together they form a “promised σημεῖον.”

9.1.1.2. The resurrection also features in the account of the σημεῖον of the feeding miracle and in the Bread of Life discourse in John 6, particularly in the reference to the ἀνάβασις of the Son of Man in 6:62.

The crucifixion-and-resurrection of Jesus has also been alluded to in the context of the feeding miracle in John 6. The theme of this particular σημεῖον (v. 14) – as explicated in the ensuing discourse (vv. 25–58) – is that Jesus gives himself as the bread of life for the world (vv. 35, 48, 51a). He is the true bread that descends from heaven – from God himself – which all the perishable food, including the manna in the OT as well as the bread which Jesus has provided for the Galileans, points to (v. 27). In the ensuing discourse it becomes clear that the bread is nothing less

than Jesus' own flesh and blood, and that any human being who "eats" Jesus' flesh and "drinks" his blood (these are figurative expressions for believing in Jesus) receives eternal life in the present and is assured of future resurrection (vv. 39–40, 54). No doubt the mention of flesh and blood, as well as the imagery of "eating flesh" and "drinking blood" (vv. 51c–58), alludes graphically and strongly to Jesus' death on the cross, and in particular it anticipates and connects with the significant event recorded in 19:31–37, where blood and water gushed forth from the pierced side of the crucified Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the true saving "food" precisely through his sacrificial death on the cross.

This connection with the cross, the reader will notice, is repetitive and emphatic, particularly in 6:51c–58. Then in v. 62 the *ἀνάβασις* of the Son of Man is mentioned. This word is significant because it does not simply refer to the crucifixion, but also to the resurrection. I should also point out that we do not simply have the *σημείον* of the feeding in John 6; we also have the second incident of the demand for a *σημείον* (vv. 30–31), precipitated by Jesus' challenge to the Galileans that they should believe in him whom God has sent (v. 27). Similar to 2:18–21, Jesus does not respond to this demand with a "no," but rather speaks about the true bread that comes from God himself (vv. 32ff.). As I have said, the discourse equates this bread with Jesus himself, who gives himself sacrificially on the cross. The *ἀνάβασις* of the Son of Man in 6:62 is a Johannine technical expression that encompasses the crucifixion-and-resurrection of Jesus. In short, in John 6 the feeding miracle – as a *σημείον* – signifies the crucifixion-and-resurrection of Jesus and the benefits it provides to believers. Moreover, the demand for a *σημείον* and Jesus' response to it suggest that the crucifixion-and-resurrection itself constitutes a *σημείον* pertaining to Jesus as "the bread of life."

*9.1.1.3. The resurrection of Jesus also features in the *σημείον* of the raising of Lazarus in John 11.*

The Christological message of the *σημείον* of the raising of Lazarus is contained in Jesus' words to Martha: *ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ· ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ κἀν*

ἀποθάνῃ ζήσεται, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (“I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die”) (11:25–26a). Lazarus, a beloved disciple of Jesus, succumbs to physical death. Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life, breaks the power of death and brings Lazarus back to life (though it was simply a return to a former, mortal life). But precisely on account of this very act Jesus too will succumb to physical death: the Sanhedrin decides to put him to death (11:47–51). But also precisely by this death – which is a death on the cross – Jesus’ glory, which is one with the Father’s glory (cf. 1:14), will be supremely revealed. Even as Jesus rescued Lazarus from death, so death will not be able to hold Jesus in its power, for he is the resurrection and the life. In other words, if the raising of Lazarus, as a σημεῖον, reveals Jesus’ identity as the resurrection and the life, how much more will Jesus’ own death-and-resurrection reveal that identity? We may therefore infer that the crucifixion-and-resurrection is the greatest and supreme σημεῖον, in that it supremely validates Jesus’ claim of being the resurrection and the life. If we compare the death-and-restoration of Lazarus as a σημεῖον with Jesus’ own death-and-resurrection as also a σημεῖον, we cannot possibly say that they are equal. Our conclusion can only be that Jesus’ death-and-resurrection is the supreme σημεῖον.

9.1.1.4. The resurrection appearances are clearly σημεῖα according to 20:30–31.

An important passage which provides a clear basis for considering the resurrection (as well as the resurrection appearances) as a σημεῖον is the Gospel’s purpose statement. The passage 20:30–31 concludes the catena of appearances of the risen Lord: the appearance to Magdalene (vv. 14–18), the appearance to the gathered disciples, where Thomas is absent (vv. 19–25), and the appearance to Thomas (vv. 26–29). The Gospel’s purpose statement says this: πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεῖα ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ, ἃ οὐκ γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ· ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ (“Now Jesus did many other signs in the

presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name”). This passage shows that the recounted appearances of the risen Lord are part of the *σημεῖα* that FE has recounted in this Gospel.

9.1.2. The Theological Unity of the Crucifixion-and-Resurrection

The subject of this chapter is the resurrection of Jesus as the second essential and indispensable component of the supreme *σημεῖον* in FG. The first component, discussed in ch. 7 of this work, is the crucifixion. My argument has been that the complex of Jesus’ crucifixion-and-resurrection constitutes a *σημεῖον*, which is also the greatest of all of Jesus’ *σημεῖα*. As is widely noted in Johannine scholarship, FE views the crucifixion-and-resurrection as inseparably bound, though distinguishable, events.¹ R. H. Lightfoot explains:

[A]ccording to John, from one point of view the Lord’s incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and bestowal of the Spirit are regarded as drawn together into one, each of the five features therein including and requiring all the others; but from another point of view each may be regarded as a distinctive event, the five together forming a connected temporal process, with a beginning (incarnation and ministry), a middle (crucifixion and resurrection), and an end (ascension and bestowal of the Spirit).²

D. Moody Smith writes: “The resurrection of Jesus, which of course presupposes his death, is the precondition and basis of revelatory knowledge about him. But apart from the death of Jesus there is no resurrection, and therefore no revelation

¹ R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1983), 96; Robert Kysar, *John*, ACNT (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1986), 163–4; Ulrich Wilckens, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, NTD 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 340–41; D. Moody Smith, *John*, ANTC (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999), 115; R. Bystrom, *God Among Us: Studies in the Gospel of John* (Winnipeg: Kindred, 2003), 115; Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John’s Gospel: Issues & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 191; Jacobus Kok, *New Perspectives on Healing, Restoration and Reconciliation*, BibInt 149 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017), 275–76.

² Lightfoot, *Gospel*, 332.

of God.”³ U. Wilckens observes: “Von daher wird nun der kühnste Gedanke johanneischer Theologie verstehbar: Der Kreuzestod Jesu wird mit seiner Auferstehung ineinsgehesen.”⁴ He adds: “Man kann geradezu sagen: Das Ineinsfallen von Kreuzigung, Auferstehung und Erhöhung Jesu ist die Folge der im Kreuz bewährten und vollendeten Einheit des Sohnes mit dem Vater und des Vaters mit dem Sohn.”⁵

The theological unity of Jesus’ death-and-resurrection is not an extraneous construct imposed upon the Gospel, but is based upon and established by the text itself. Allusions to the complex of Jesus’ death-and-resurrection abound right from the beginning of the Gospel.⁶ For instance, a clear allusion is found in the account of the first miracle in Cana. The expression τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς τρίτης (“on the third day”) in 2:1 alludes to Jesus’ resurrection.⁷ While FE does not use this expression in his account of Jesus’ resurrection in John 20, he does use a similar expression in 2:19, ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις, where the reference to Jesus’ resurrection is clearly provided by FE himself (2:19–22). Keener’s suggestion is plausible that τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς τρίτης in 2:1 and ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις in 2:19 function as an *inclusio* binding the first Cana miracle and the temple “cleansing” together, “so that they interpret one another; the sign of 2:1–11 thus points to the ultimate sign of the resurrection (2:18–19), and Jesus’ assault on the institution of the temple must be read in the setting aside of the ceremonial pots in 2:1–11.”⁸

³ Smith, *John*, 115.

⁴ Wilckens, *Evangelium*, 340.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 341.

⁶ Udo Schnelle (“Cross and Resurrection,” 134–45) claims, rightly in my view, that the complex of the cross-and-resurrection shapes the narrative structure of the Gospel. He finds allusions to this complex in as early as 1:5, καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτοῦ οὐ κατέβαλεν (“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”). Schnelle writes: “There is no explicit reference [in this verse] to the cross and resurrection, but to what else should the rejection of Jesus refer, if not to the cross? One might object that it relates to death in general as the condition of his return. But in the Gospel of John such a ‘death in general’ does not exist. Rather, it is always the unique and concrete death of Jesus of Nazareth on the cross that leads to the resurrection and makes life possible for all believers” (134).

⁷ So, e.g., Dodd, *Interpretation*, 300; Lightfoot, *John*, 1:105; Barrett, *Gospel*, 190–90; Marsh, *John*, 143; Lindars, *Gospel*, 128; Schnelle, “Cross and Resurrection,” 135; Keener, *Gospel*, 496–98.

⁸ Keener, *ibid.*, 497–98.

The expression οὐπω ἦκει ἡ ὥρα μου (“my hour has not yet come”) in 2:4 clearly and firmly alludes to Jesus’ death.⁹ The ὥρα of Jesus has been discussed at length elsewhere in this work, where it has been shown that it refers, primarily, to the “hour” of the cross. This is firmly established by such passages as 13:1, where Jesus’ ὥρα is said to have arrived; 19:4, where it is on the sixth ὥρα when Pilate sentences Jesus to death; and 19:27, where from that very ὥρα the beloved disciple takes Jesus’ mother under his care.

In short, in the account of the first miracle in Cana there is a clear allusion to the complex of Jesus’ death-and-resurrection; one is not alluded to without the other.

Another allusion is found in the account of the temple “cleansing” (2:13–22). As this passage has been discussed at length in ch. 5, brief comments will suffice here. The complex expression ὅτε ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν (“after he was raised from the dead”) in v. 22 alludes to the complex of Jesus’ death-and-resurrection. The verb ἐγείρειν pertains to Jesus’ resurrection, as ἐκ νεκρῶν pertains to his death. The expression inseparably binds the cross-and-resurrection together. This is supported by the fact that, as has been argued in ch. 5, the cross-and-resurrection appears to be Jesus’ response to the demand for a σημεῖον in 2:18. That is, the Johannine Jesus seems to view to his death-and-resurrection as a unit – rather than two disparate parts – by putting it forward as a σημεῖον.

The account of the raising of Lazarus in John 11 is another passage containing firm allusions to the complex of the cross-and-resurrection. As this passage has been discussed at length in ch. 7, brief comments will suffice here. The words of the Johannine Jesus allude to the complex of the cross-and-resurrection: αὕτη ἡ ἀσθένεια οὐκ ἔστιν πρὸς θάνατον ἀλλ’ ὑπὲρ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δι’ αὐτῆς (“This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”).¹⁰ The mutual glorification of

⁹ Lightfoot, *John*, 1:101; Bernard, *Gospel*, 1:75–6; Barrett, *Gospel*, 191; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:99–100; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:328–30; Lindars, *Gospel*, 129; Brodie, *Gospel*, 176; Schnelle, “Cross and Resurrection,” 135.

¹⁰ There is another reference to God’s glory in v. 40.

God and of the Son of God does not simply pertain to the cross but also to the victory of the resurrection.¹¹ The motif of *δόξα* is coupled with the equally significant motif of *ᾠρα* in v. 9. Most commentators tend to interpret *ᾠρα* in this verse only temporally, failing to link it with the key notion of the *ᾠρα* of Jesus,¹² which – according to 13:1, among others – refers to the return of Jesus to his Father, by way of the cross-and-resurrection.¹³ This connection is arguably present in 11:9 in the light of the occurrence of the *δόξα* motif as well as the dominant allusion in John 11 to Jesus’ death.¹⁴

Many more passages could be cited to show that the complex of the crucifixion-and-resurrection is borne out of the text, rather than an alien construct imposed upon the text.¹⁵ But the above sampling shall suffice for my present purposes.

It is in the light of the unity and inseparability of the crucifixion-and-resurrection that this chapter, as well as the whole thesis, is written.

9.1.3. The resurrection or the post-resurrection appearances?

Since the resurrection of Jesus – his actual rising from the dead – was an unobserved phenomenon, how can it be rightly described as the second element of the supreme Johannine *σημεῖον*, since a *σημεῖον* by definition is something observable? This is a question of basic importance. It is true that in the accounts of the canonical Gospels nobody ever saw the very event of Jesus’ resurrection. What the earliest disciples witnessed were the empty tomb, the grave clothes, the face veil, and, most importantly, the actual appearances of the risen Lord. One may be tempted, therefore, to conclude that it is these “effects” of the resurrection, rather than the resurrection itself, which are *σημεῖα*. Of course, I maintain strongly that the appearances of the risen Lord are *σημεῖα* (cf. 20:30–31). However, after

¹¹ See discussion on *δόξα* in §4.2.

¹² To my knowledge, except Bernard, *Gospel*, 2:377.

¹³ See discussion on *ᾠρα* in §4.5.

¹⁴ See, e.g., vv. 8, 16, 47–51.

¹⁵ See again Schnelle, “Cross and Resurrection,” 134–45.

affirming that the appearances are *σημεῖα*, I equally affirm the inseparability of the resurrection and the post-resurrection appearances. If the resurrection did not first take place, the post-resurrection appearances would be unthinkable and impossible. Conversely, no one would have known that Jesus conquered and overcame death if he did not show himself – with the identity markers (wounds/scars from the crucifixion) in his hands and side – to his followers. Thus, the resurrection and the post-resurrection appearances always go together and cannot be divorced. One need not choose between the two, as though one can be had without the other. This unity and inseparability is coterminous with the unity of the crucifixion and resurrection.

When I speak of the resurrection of Jesus as a constitutive element of the supreme *σημεῖον*, my main meaning is the fact that the Crucified One is now the Risen One. That focus immediately presupposes that Jesus, who died on the cross, subsequently arose from the dead and that he has shown himself to certain witnesses who have then told of their encounters with him. In other words, it is not a case of either/or but both/and. Thus, the question “the resurrection OR the post-resurrection appearances?” sets up a false alternative. In this thesis, I keep both elements in tight and inseparable unity. I presuppose the rising of Jesus from the dead, yet at the same time the passage with which I am concerned (John 20) recounts the earliest disciples’ encounters with the risen Lord.

I have already stated my view that the appearances of the risen Lord themselves constitute individual *σημεῖα*. The appearance of the risen Lord to Magdalene is a *σημεῖον*; the appearance to the gathered disciples is also a *σημεῖον*, as is also the special appearance to Thomas Didymus. Each of these encounters signifies to the witnesses that the Crucified One is now the Risen One, and also, as we will see, through these encounters the witnesses come to a full faith in the resurrected Jesus.

When John 20 opens, it is assumed that the resurrection had already taken place. What we find narrated in John 20 are observed facts and happenings arising from the prior fact of the unobserved resurrection: the disappearance of Jesus’ body from the tomb on Sunday morning; meanwhile, the presence of the grave

clothes as well as the face veil, neatly arranged in the tomb. These are all vouchsafed by three witnesses: Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, and the beloved disciple. Next we find a series of appearances of the resurrected Christ, first to Mary Magdalene, then to the gathered disciples (where Thomas is absent), and then to the gathered disciples where Thomas is present (and where Jesus presents himself to Thomas in a special way). There is also an additional post-resurrection appearance to seven of the disciples on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, recounted in John 21, which, as I explain in the next section, will not be included in this study.

9.1.4. How about John 21?

Although John 21 recounts a fourth appearance of the risen Lord to seven of his disciples on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, I am not going to include it in this study. The exclusion has nothing to do with debates on the status of John 21, both in regard to authorship and in regard to relationship to the rest of the Gospel.¹⁶ The catena of post-resurrection appearances in John 20 is sufficient for my purposes.

9.1.5. The Argument of this Chapter

The argument of this chapter is this: as *σημεία*, the threefold appearances of the risen Lord in John 20 establish, first for the earliest disciples (witnesses) and second for the readers, the reality of Jesus' resurrection. The Crucified One is now the Risen One: this is the supreme *σημείον* in FG. In other words, the individual *σημεία* of the post-resurrection appearances help to establish the supreme *σημείον* of Jesus' death-and-resurrection.

¹⁶ My own view concerning the authorship of John 21 is that it came from the same hand that wrote the rest of the Gospel, and that it is the Gospel's epilogue, matching the prologue (1:1–18). For a fuller statement of this view see Keener, *Gospel*, 1213, 1219–222.

Now I proceed to the analysis of John 20:1–29, which I divide into four parts: (1) the discovery of the empty tomb and the initial reactions of the disciples; (2) the risen Lord’s appearance to Mary Magdalene; (3) the risen Lord’s appearance to the disciples, where Thomas is absent; and (4) the risen Lord’s appearance to Thomas.

9.2. Empty Tomb, “Missing Corpse,” and Despondent Disciples (20:1–10)

Are the empty tomb, the grave clothes, and the face veil also *σημεῖα*? Some interpreters think so. For instance, in her 1983 article entitled “The Face Veil: A Johannine Sign (John 20:1–10),” Sandra M. Schneiders offered this interpretation of the *σουδάριον* (face veil) mentioned in 20:7: “The face veil is best understood as a johannine semeion, i.e., as a sign in and through which a properly disposed person can encounter the glory of God revealed in Jesus.”¹⁷ Similarly, Jörg Frey has recently argued that not just the face veil but also the empty tomb itself as well as the grave clothes are *σημεῖα*.¹⁸

The usual proof adduced for supposing that the empty tomb, the grave clothes, and the face veil are *σημεῖα* is the note in v. 8: τότε οὖν εἰσηλθεν καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητῆς ὁ ἐλθὼν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσεν (“Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed”). The believing noted here is usually understood as full (resurrection) faith: when the beloved disciple saw the face veil, he believed that Jesus rose again from the dead.¹⁹ But this interpretation runs into a number of serious difficulties. First, if, upon seeing the face veil, the beloved disciple really thought and believed that Jesus was

¹⁷ Sandra M. Schneiders, “The Face Veil: A Johannine Sign,” *BTB* 13 (1983), 94.

¹⁸ Jörg Frey, “From the *Sēmeia* Narratives to the Gospel as a Significant Narrative: On Genre-Bending in the Johannine Miracle Stories,” in *The Gospel of John as Genre Mosaic*, ed. K. B. Larsen; *SANt* 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 226–28.

¹⁹ The interpretation of 20:8 is disputed. That the beloved disciple came to full resurrection faith is the view of the majority of Johannine commentators. See, e.g., Bultmann, *Gospel*, 684–85; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:312; Schneiders, “Face Veil,” 95–7; Smith, *John*, 374–75; Thompson, *John*, 411–13. Bultmann (*ibid.*) is of the view that not only the beloved disciple but Peter also came to full resurrection. Ridderbos (*Gospel*, 633–34) is of a different mind, arguing that the beloved disciples’ believing here is undefined, and that FE “intentionally keeps silent on the subject in order to describe a situation that is unclear to both disciples.”

alive again (v. 8), why does the Gospel writer say in v. 9, οὐδέπω γὰρ ᾔδεισαν τὴν γραφὴν ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι (“for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead”)? To assert that the “they” in v. 9 – the implied subject of ᾔδεισαν, which is specified in v. 10 as οἱ μαθηταί – does not include the beloved disciple, but refers only to Simon Peter and the other disciples, is a doubtful proposition. Arguably ᾔδεισαν, in the light of οἱ μαθηταί in v. 10, refers to the disciples *in toto*, the beloved disciple included. This usage is consistent with, and should be understood in the light of, 2:22 and 12:16 where οἱ μαθηταί also refers to the disciples as a group.²⁰ Thus, in light of 20:9, which clearly says that up to this time in the narrative the disciples did not yet know from the scriptures that Jesus who died must live again, the believing of the beloved disciple (v. 8) cannot be interpreted as belief in the resurrection of Christ. What precisely the belief of the beloved disciple consisted in, I will state below.

Second, note the next verse: ἀπῆλθον οὖν πάλιν πρὸς αὐτοὺς οἱ μαθηταί (“Then the disciples returned to their homes”) (v. 10). If it is true that the belief of the beloved disciple in v. 8 is belief in the resurrection of Christ, it is very striking and strange that, as v. 10 shows, he would simply go back to his home, much the same as Simon Peter did who also saw the empty tomb and the grave clothes and yet was not said to have believed. Why is there no rejoicing? Why is there no jubilant sharing of the good news with Simon Peter and Mary Magdalene? Is it not the greatest news ever that the crucified Lord is now risen? Why did he simply go home, as though still carrying that despondent spirit produced by the crucifixion?

²⁰ John 12:16 reads: ταῦτα οὐκ ἔγνωσαν αὐτοῦ οἱ μαθηταί τὸ πρῶτον, ἀλλ’ ὅτε ἐδοξάσθη Ἰησοῦς τότε ἐμνήσθησαν ὅτι ταῦτα ἦν ἐπ’ αὐτῷ γεγραμμένα καὶ ταῦτα ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ (“[Jesus’] disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him”). It is clear in this verse that “Jesus’ disciples” (there seems to be no basis for excluding the beloved disciple here) did not immediately think that Jesus arose from the dead, and that they came to that realization only after Jesus was “glorified.” When was Jesus glorified? Although the “glorification” of Jesus in FG begins from and includes the crucifixion, in this verse it most probably pertains to the latter part of the process of Jesus’ “glorification,” i.e., Jesus’ ascent to the Father and the giving of the Spirit to the believers, which I understand to have happened in 20:22 (on this see Keener, *Gospel*, 1196–1205). The verse 14:26 is helpful in this regard: “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.” See also 7:39.

Third, a proof that the beloved disciple did not share the news of Jesus' resurrection with Mary Magdalene, which in turn strongly suggests that his belief in v. 8 is not faith in the resurrection of Jesus, is her attitude and spirit depicted in vv. 11 and following. Mary Magdalene stayed at the graveyard, weeping. The cause of her sorrow is evident in her words to the two angels (whom apparently she did not recognize as heavenly beings): ἤραν τὸν κύριον μου, καὶ οὐκ οἶδα ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν ("They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him") (v. 13b). She basically stays with her original assumption, when she first saw the opened tomb (v. 1), that Jesus' body was stolen (v. 2). Resurrection is the farthest thing from her mind. When the risen Jesus appears to her, she actually mistakes him for the gardener, because essentially she is not expecting him to be alive. In fact, she is looking for his corpse. In v. 15b she repeats for the third time her belief that Jesus' body had been stolen, but this time she is expressing it to the risen Jesus himself: κύριε, εἰ σὺ ἐβάστασας αὐτόν, εἰπέ μοι ποῦ ἔθηκας αὐτόν, καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἄρῶ ("Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away"). She wants to recover the dead body of Jesus and keep it. This is such an act of devotion, though entirely misguided! She is utterly clueless that she is actually face to face with the risen Jesus himself. In conjunction with v. 8, one cannot help thinking how selfish and indifferent the beloved disciple was if he kept to himself the knowledge of the resurrection of Jesus. But he was not selfish or conceited if he, too, like Simon Peter and Mary Magdalene, as v. 9 suggests, did not as yet know that Jesus was alive. In other words, the disciples (as in 2:22 and 12:16) are all in the same situation. It will take no less than the actual appearances of the risen Jesus for them to realize that he is alive, and for them to interpret the empty tomb, the grave clothes, and the face veil as meaning that Jesus' body was not stolen or moved, but that in fact he is alive.

What then did the beloved disciple believe in v. 8? My understanding is that he believed Mary Magdalene's initial report, conveyed to the disciples in v. 2: "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have

laid him.”²¹ He saw the empty tomb, the grave clothes, and the face veil and concluded in his mind that indeed Jesus’ body was truly missing. Resurrection did not occur to his mind at this point (cf. v. 9). Whether or not he also believed Mary Magdalene’s implied assumption of corpse theft is not certain.

The fact that Simon Peter, the beloved disciple, and Mary Magdalene did not immediately realize that Jesus was alive does not lessen the importance of their witness to the empty tomb, the grave clothes, and the face veil. As far as FG is concerned, only these three disciples saw with their eyes the empty tomb, the grave clothes, and the face veil. Additionally, Mary Magdalene saw two angelic beings in the empty tomb. The importance of their eyewitness role cannot be overestimated. No doubt a key purpose for 20:1–10 is to commend to the readers these three disciples as eyewitnesses. This is especially true of the beloved disciple who, as has been mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, is presented as the ideal witness to Jesus, and to whose authorship the Gospel is attributed (cf. 21:24).

Going back to the question of whether the empty tomb, the grave clothes, and the face veil are also *σημεῖα*, my answer is no. I am not denying the “apologetic” value of these things. No doubt they, to a certain extent, demonstrate that on Easter day the body of Jesus was no longer in the tomb. The presence of the grave clothes and the face veil intact in the tomb goes against the corpse-theft theory, though curiously Mary Magdalene (who persisted in thinking that her Lord’s body was stolen) never seemed to have discerned it. The reason why I think the empty tomb, the grave clothes, and the face veil are not *σημεῖα* is because a Johannine *σημεῖον*, strictly speaking, refers to a visible act of Jesus, whether that act involves supernatural powers or not (for a full discussion of my view of the definition and scope of the Johannine *σημεῖον* see ch. 2 of this thesis). Meanwhile, the empty tomb, the grave clothes, and the facial veil are strictly speaking not acts of Jesus. Rather, they may be described as “after-effects” of the act of Jesus, which in this case is the resurrection.

²¹ For a similar view see Paul S. Minear, “We Don’t Know Where ...’ John 20:2,” *Int* 30.2 (1976): 125–39; Witherington, *John’s Wisdom*, 324–25.

9.3. The Risen Lord Appears to Mary Magdalene (20:11–18)

We proceed now to the threefold appearances of the risen Lord in John 20. I am arguing that these appearances, which constitute individual *σημεῖα* (cf. 20:30–31), demonstrate to the earliest disciples, as well as to the Gospel readers, that the crucified Jesus is now the risen Lord. The resurrection itself, as I have been arguing, constitutes the second component of the supreme *σημεῖον* in the Gospel. With the reality of the resurrection being firmly established by the appearances, the supreme *σημεῖον*, such as has been indicated, for instance, in 2:18–21, is completed. The death-and-resurrection of Jesus is the greatest *σημεῖον* of his divine identity as the true Messiah and Son of God.

We begin with the first appearance of the risen Lord, which is to Mary Magdalene (20:11–18). Why to Mary Magdalene?

We must remember the important role of Mary Magdalene in John 20. It is she who, early on Easter day, while it is still dark (*πρωτὶ σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης*), goes to the tomb. Judging by her use of the plural verb *οἶδαμεν* in 20:2, she does not seem to be alone but, instead, in the company of some other women disciples.²² Her visit to the tomb on Easter morning does not appear to be motivated by her expectation that Jesus is rise again on this day, in fulfillment of his own words (cf. 2:19).²³ That is why when she sees the stone cover removed from the tomb, her conclusion is not that Jesus is alive again, but that his body has been stolen.²⁴ It would be fair to

²² So, e.g., Hunter, *Gospel*, 184; Lindars, *Gospel*, 600; Morris, *Gospel*, 734; Keener, *Gospel*, 1178.

²³ As many writers have point out, *σκοτία* in 20:1 may mean more than simply to indicate chronological time. As with Nicodemus's coming to Jesus at night, it may also pertain, on a deeper level, to Mary Magdalene's unenlightened understanding of Jesus at this point in the narrative. See, e.g., Jean Zumstein, *L'évangile selon Saint Jean (13–21)*, CNT 4b (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2007), 270.

²⁴ Mary Magdalene's exact words are: *ἤραν τὸν κύριον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου καὶ οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν* ("They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him") (20:2b, repeated twice in vv. 13b and 15b). It is not clear who Mary Magdalene thinks are responsible for the disappearance of Jesus' body. It seems clear, however, that she has corpse-theft in mind (so Barrett, *Gospel*, 562). In Matt 28:11–15, the idea that Jesus' body was stolen originates from the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem in response to reports, which they hear from the soldiers themselves who are charged with guarding Jesus' tomb, in connection with the disappearance of

say, in light of 20:9, that in fact no one among Jesus' disciples expects Jesus to live again on Easter day.²⁵ All of them are broken in spirit at the death of their Master, and nothing short of the actual appearance of the risen Lord, along with the dispensing of the Spirit, is going to heal and restore them.

At any rate, as we focus on Mary Magdalene's reaction to the opened tomb, she does not keep to herself her mistaken conclusion that Jesus' body has been stolen.²⁶ She runs back to the rest of the disciples and tells them the news and her (faulty) interpretation: ἦραν τὸν κύριον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου καὶ οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ἔθηκεν αὐτόν ("They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him") (v. 2b). None of the disciples rebukes Mary Magdalene by saying, "What nonsense are you talking about? Do you not remember and believe what the Lord himself had earlier told us, that though he would die, yet he would live again? Our Lord's body was not stolen! He is alive! That is why the tomb is open." Rather, two of the male disciples – Simon Peter and the beloved disciple – seemingly accepting Mary Magdalene's theory that Jesus' body was stolen, run to the tomb. When the male disciples reach the tomb, they indeed see for themselves that Jesus' body is not in there anymore. They also see the grave clothes, as well as the face veil. The text tells us nothing of Peter's reaction to what he sees, but it does tell us that the beloved disciple sees and believes. But as I have argued above, this is not belief in the resurrection of Jesus, but belief in Mary Magdalene's report of the disappearance of Jesus' body from tomb. In short, the importance of Mary Magdalene lies in the fact that it is she who first sees the opened tomb, yet in unbelief she goes in the opposite direction by concluding wrongly that Jesus' body has been stolen, and spreads this news of unbelief to the rest of the disciples.

Jesus' body from the tomb on Easter morning; in short, in connection with the resurrection. These Jewish leaders, according to Matthew, pay a large sum of money to these soldiers in order to have them circulate publicly the false report that Jesus' disciples stole his body from the tomb. In FG, it is Mary Magdalene who infers corpse-theft from the opened tomb.

²⁵ So, e.g., Jason S. Sturdevant, *The Adaptable Jesus of the Fourth Gospel: The Pedagogy of the Logos*, NovTSup 162 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 157.

²⁶ For evidence that tomb robbery was a real phenomenon in first-century Palestine see F. de Zulueta, "Violation of Sepulchre in Palestine at the Beginning of the Christian Era," *JRS* 22 (1932): 184–97.

It is worth noting how adamant Mary Magdalene is in her conviction that Jesus' body has been stolen. She repeats it three times (vv. 2b, 13b, 15b). Moreover, she persistently holds on to that conviction despite additional indicators that Jesus is alive. In addition to the opened tomb (v. 1), she later sees two angels dressed in white, "sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet" (v. 12).²⁷ The angels talk to her, asking her why she is weeping. But she has no idea that she is talking to angels. She reiterates her belief that her Lord's body has been stolen, citing it as the reason for her grief (v. 13b). Then what she sees next is none other than the risen Lord himself, the one she has been looking for. But, as the evangelist tells us, οὐκ ᾔδει ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστίν ("she did not know that it was Jesus") (v. 14b). Jesus talks to her, asking her why she is weeping, and whom it is that she is looking for. But she still does not recognize him, or even recognize the sound of his voice. Mistaking him for the gardener,²⁸ she persists in her idea that her Lord's body has been stolen. She asks Jesus: κύριε, εἰ σὺ ἐβάστασας αὐτόν, εἰπέ μοι ποῦ ἔθηκας αὐτόν, καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀρῶ ("Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away") (v. 15b).

This is a profoundly ironical scene: Mary Magdalene is still searching for the dead body of her Lord whereas he – alive – is right there in front of her. What is more, she is asking the risen Jesus whether he has taken away the remains of the dead Jesus. Nothing can be more ironical! Can we fail to notice what unbelief or misunderstanding can do to a loyal follower? This is not to heap blame on Mary Magdalene for her lack of faith and understanding. Nor is it to disregard her otherwise noble virtues of fidelity and love for her Master.²⁹ Nor is it still to suggest that she is worse off than the other disciples. As I have already mentioned,

²⁷ I think Larsen's description of the two angels as another "token" of Jesus' resurrection being presented to Mary Magdalene is fitting (*Recognizing the Stranger*, 199).

²⁸ This is one of the many cases of misunderstandings in FG. See Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspectives*, 2nd ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 239.

²⁹ For a discussion of Mary Magdalene's positive traits see Jaime Clark-Soles, "Mary Magdalene: Beginning at the End," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John*, ed. S. A. Hunt, et al; WUNT 314 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 632–34.

it appears that none of the disciples at this point has believed that Jesus is alive.³⁰ But this is to point out the genuine difficulty of the earliest disciples in believing the resurrection of Jesus.

The turning point in Mary Magdalene's case is when Jesus speaks her name: *Μαριάμ* (v. 16). She then realises that the person she is talking to is not a stranger but Jesus himself. We cannot overestimate the profundity of dramatic emotions involved in this recognition scene.³¹ On the part of Jesus, his disciple's lack of faith, shown particularly and especially in Mary Magdalene's failure to recognize him at first appearance, and even mistaking him for a stranger-gardener, does not deter him from taking a further step to reveal himself to her. Jesus is indeed the Good Shepherd (cf. 10:1–18) who has laid down his life for his sheep, who knows his sheep, and who does not abandon them but calls them by name. When Mary Magdalene responds to Jesus' call (v. 16b), she shows herself to be one of his flock.³²

A question arises, in the light of John 10:3–4's assertion that Jesus' sheep hear his voice (*τὰ ἴδια πρόβατα τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούει*), as to why Mary Magdalene does not recognize Jesus on the basis of his first address to her in v. 15a, that is, on the basis of hearing his voice. Bultmann explains it by saying: "It is possible for Jesus to be present, and yet for a man [or woman] not to recognize him until his word goes home to him [or her]."³³ That is true and, at any rate, Mary Magdalene's case is hardly the only one in FG. Jesus' post-resurrection appearance to the seven disciples on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, recounted in John 21, is a similar case. There the risen Jesus does not simply reveal himself to them: he also talks to them and instructs them to cast their net on the right side of their boat. All along the disciples do not recognize Jesus. It is only later, after they haul in their catch, that the beloved disciple realises that the stranger is Jesus himself.³⁴

³⁰ See n. 25 above.

³¹ Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger*, 201–03.

³² R. E. Brown, *A Risen Christ in Eastertime: Essays on the Gospel Narratives of the Resurrection* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 66; Sturdevant, *Adaptable Jesus*, 161–62;

³³ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 686.

³⁴ Outside FG, a similar case can be found in Luke's account of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13–35). It is worth noting that Jesus walks with the two disciples to Emmaus,

In short, even seeing the risen Lord face to face does not guarantee an immediate recognition of him by his disciples. In my view, this is mainly due to the fact that they do not expect him to be alive, which reflects their failure to understand his pre-death announcements of his own death-and-resurrection (cf. 2:19). It takes the disciples – all of them – some time to assimilate into their conceptual framework that their crucified, dead, and buried Master is now in fact the risen Lord.

In the case of Mary Magdalene, Jesus' mention of her name suffices to awaken her to the realization of the otherwise incredible fact that Jesus is now alive. Jesus' calling her by name is in continuity with the past, and he thereby re-establishes the personal relationship that she thinks she has forever lost.³⁵ Finally, her oft-repeated complaint that “they have taken the Lord's body, and we do not know where they have laid him” is now laid to rest. And even as she is the first to spread the flawed conclusion that Jesus' body was stolen, she is also the first one to encounter the risen Jesus and, as I shall mention below, she is going to be the first to proclaim the all-important message, *έώρακα τὸν κύριον* (“I have seen the Lord”) (v. 18), thereby undoing or nullifying her previous declaration.

But although Mary Magdalene has now come to realise that Jesus is alive from the dead, her understanding of who Jesus is and his relationship to her does not yet reflect the implications of his death-and-resurrection but rather still operates on an “old” paradigm. For instance, she calls him *ραββουνι*, for which the evangelist has provided a translation in the text: it means “teacher” (v. 16b: *διδάσκαλε*). I concur with Brown who thinks *ραββουνι* a rather “modest title,” one that implies a beginning faith rather than a culminating one, and one which falls far short of Thomas's later confession of Jesus as *ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου*

talks to them, and explains the Scriptures to them, showing them from the Scriptures that *ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ* (“the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory,” v. 26). He even stays with them in the village. But it is only at the supper, when Jesus *λαβὼν τὸν ἄρτον εὐλόγησεν καὶ κλάσας ἐπέδιδου αὐτοῖς* (“took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them,” v. 30) that the two disciples' eyes *διηνοίχθησαν καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν* (“were opened, and they recognized them,” v. 31). But then Jesus *ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ' αὐτῶν* (“vanished from their sight,” v. 31).

³⁵ So Beasley-Murray, *John*, 375.

(20:28).³⁶ It is true, as some interpreters have pointed out,³⁷ that *ραββουνι*, literally translated “my teacher,” conveys much esteem for Jesus. But at the end of the day the view of Jesus as rabbi, no matter how highly esteemed, still falls short of the kind of faith in Jesus which the evangelist seeks to promulgate (cf. 20:28, 30–31). Bultmann is worth quoting: Mary Magdalene

does not grasp who [Jesus] is as the Risen One. She still misunderstands him, insofar as she thinks that he has simply ‘come back’ from the dead, and that he is again the man she knew as ‘Teacher’; that is to say, she thinks that the old relationship has been renewed, and in her joy she wants to embrace him—as a friend would do to a friend who has come back again.³⁸

As for Mary Magdalene, I believe that she is able to attain, or is granted, a deeper understanding in v. 17,³⁹ when Jesus tells her: *μὴ μου ἄπτου, οὐπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα· πορεύου δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου καὶ εἰπέ αὐτοῖς· ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου καὶ πατέρα ὑμῶν καὶ θεὸν μου καὶ θεὸν ὑμῶν* (“Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God’”).

Why does Jesus instruct Mary Magdalene to “stop clinging” on to him? A present imperative which involves a prohibition, such as *μὴ μου ἄπτου*, envisages “the breaking off of an action in progress or has been attempted.”⁴⁰ Most commentators interpret *μὴ μου ἄπτου* not as prohibiting Mary Magdalene from touching Jesus but as telling her to stop clinging on to him. Moreover, while the verb *ἄπτειν* can mean “to touch,” as in the Latin *noli me tangere*, it can also denote physical contacts other than “touch,” such as “to take hold of,” “to cling to,”⁴¹ “to

³⁶ Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1010. So, also, Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger*, 203. That Jesus was regarded by his contemporaries as “rabbi,” see Andreas J. Köstenberger, “Jesus as Rabbi in the Fourth Gospel,” *BBR* 8 (1998): 97–128.

³⁷ E.g., Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 637.

³⁸ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 687.

³⁹ So Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:317.

⁴⁰ BDF §336; so also Barrett, *Gospel*, 565.

⁴¹ BDAG, p. 126.

fasten oneself to, to grasp.”⁴² The latter meaning, that of clinging (and the like), seems preferable in our text in the expression *μὴ μου ἄπτου*.⁴³

Bultmann claims that *μὴ μου ἄπτου* implies a critique against

views that lie at the root of Mt. 28.9; Lk. 24.38–43, where the Lord permits physical contact, or even demands it; it also illuminates the Easter narratives that the Evangelist himself reports. While he certainly has no need to contest the reality of the events narrated, it is plain that both in this one and in the story of Thomas he would have us understand that these events do not establish the genuine Easter faith.⁴⁴

But I do not think that phrase prohibits physical contact. Rather, as has just been discussed, physical contact – that of holding or clinging – seems to have already taken place, and *μὴ μου ἄπτου* is concerned with the breaking off of that contact because (1) Jesus has not yet ascended to the Father and (2) so that Mary Magdalene can then proceed to carry the message that the risen Lord sends to the rest of the disciples (see the rest of v. 17).

It is a different matter to claim, as Bultmann does, that FE assigns only a secondary and dispensable value to the appearances of the risen Christ.⁴⁵ Bultmann views the appearances in the same way as he does the *σημεῖα*: he claims that for the evangelist, all these things are secondary and dispensable to the Christian faith – these are concessions to human weakness – and what is primary and indispensable is the word of Jesus.⁴⁶ I take issue with Bultmann’s assertion that the appearances of the risen Christ can be done away with and that they are merely concessions to human weakness.⁴⁷

⁴² LSJ, p. 231; cf. Dodd, *Interpretation*, 443 n. 2: to “hold,” “grasp,” or even “cling.”

⁴³ See Keener, *Gospel*, 1192–193

⁴⁴ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 687–88.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; idem, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols.; trans K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner’s Son, 1955), 2:56–7.

⁴⁶ That is, genuine faith does not seek any tangible proof, but believes on the basis of the word (this is of course fundamentally of a piece with Bultmann’s source-critical interpretation of John’s Gospel, where FE’s views of the *σημεῖα* of Jesus are at odds with the views of the source). For a critique of Bultmann’s view of *σημεῖα*, see Marianne M. Thompson, *The Incarnate Word* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), ch. 3.

⁴⁷ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 696.

In my view, Bultmann errs fundamentally by failing to take account of the fact that in FG, it is at the appearances of the risen Christ that his earthly mission is completed. As is well known, Bultmann thinks that the crucifixion is all that is theologically significant, and that the resurrection contributes nothing theologically to the work of Christ.⁴⁸ On the contrary, while it is true that it is at the cross where Jesus said, “It is finished” (19:30), and while it is also true that on the cross Jesus was lifted up, it is equally true that the work of Christ of ascending to the Father is not yet finished, so that Jesus could then tell Mary Magdalene in 20:17 that she should stop clinging to him because he *has not yet ascended* to the Father, which is then clarified in the same verse by the present ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα (“I am ascending to the Father”).

Perhaps the most important oversight of Bultmann is the fact that without the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, particularly the appearance to the gathered disciples narrated in 20:19–23, the Spirit would not have been given to the disciples. This is not a dispensable thing, as Bultmann would have us believe. Rather, it is only by “breathing” the Spirit upon the disciples – and this took place during the second post-resurrection appearance – that the mission of Jesus is finished (20:22). How can one say that the post-resurrection appearances can be done away with?

We have to interpret Mary Magdalene’s clinging to Jesus in the same way that we interpret her addressing him ραββουνι. In the words of Brown,

When Magdalene sees Jesus, she thinks that he has returned as he promised and now he will stay with her and his other followers, resuming former relationships ... Magdalene ... mistakes an appearance of the risen Jesus for his permanent presence with his disciples. In telling her not to hold on to him, Jesus indicates that his permanent presence is not by way of appearance, but by way of the gift of the Spirit that can come only after he has ascended to the Father.⁴⁹

And as Larsen explains, the command μὴ μου ἄπτου

⁴⁸ Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:56–7.

⁴⁹ Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1012.

does not primarily seek to protect Mary (and [Jesus] himself) from moral or ritual defilement, but to correct her understanding. Mary thinks that the story has now come to an end, since she has been beautifully reunited with her beloved master ... and, accordingly, she seeks to hold on to this recovered reality. But ... Jesus' resurrection does not merely reestablish the tangible presence that was before, but points toward a new mode of being together.⁵⁰

To conclude, at a basic level the risen Lord's appearance to Mary Magdalene, as a *σημείον*, demonstrates the reality that the Crucified One is now the Risen One. It takes no less than this *σημείον* for Mary Magdalene to realise that her dead Master is now alive again. Apart from this encounter, it is hard to conceive how Mary Magdalene would have been able to attain the resurrection faith. Yet this *σημείον* has profound things to teach her, as well as the reader. Her gesture of clinging on to him signifies her belief that the Lord has come back to her to resume the former mode of relationship, and she does not want him to disappear again. Yet the Lord tells her to cease clinging on to him, for he needs to ascend (*ἀναβαίνειν*) to the Father. This *ἀνάβασις* to the Father anticipates the dispensing of the Spirit – which takes place in the next verses – upon Mary Magdalene and all believers in Jesus, and a new mode of communion between the ascended Lord and his followers will be ushered in through the Spirit. Meanwhile she, as the first eyewitness to the reality of her Lord's victory over death, must go and bear the news of the resurrection to the rest of the disciples.

9.4. The Risen Lord Appears to the Gathered Disciples (20:19–25)

The second appearance of the risen Jesus is to the gathered disciples. Although we are not told the precise composition of this gathering, *οἱ μαθηταί* in v. 19 probably includes Mary Magdalene, to whom the risen Jesus has earlier in the day appeared,

⁵⁰ Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger*, 204.

as well as some others,⁵¹ in addition to the ten male disciples. Judas Iscariot would of course not be in this gathering, and we learn from 20:24 that Thomas Didymus is also absent (for unstated reason). The time is stated in v. 19a: ούσης ὀψίας τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνη τῆς μιᾶς (“on the evening of that day, the first day of the week”). This ties up well with 20:1, τῆς δὲ μιᾶς τῶν σαββάτων ... πρωτὶ σκοτίας ἔτι ούσης (“early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark”) (when Magdalene discovers the opened tomb, and so on). Thus, all the events in 20:1–25 happen on the day of the first Easter. The precise location (in Jerusalem) of the gathering is not indicated.

John 20:19–25 may be outlined into four parts:⁵²

- (1) The risen Lord appears to the disciples (vv. 19–20a).
- (2) The disciples recognise the Lord (v. 20b).
- (3) The risen Lord breathes the Spirit upon the disciples, and then he commissions them (vv. 21–22).
- (4) The commissioned disciples proclaim their encounter with the risen Lord to Thomas (vv. 24–25).

9.4.1. The risen Lord appears to the gathered disciples (vv. 19–20a).

It is certainly true, as commentators regularly point out,⁵³ that the reference to Jesus’ appearance in the midst of the disciples despite the doors being locked (v. 19) does imply something about the nature of Jesus’ resurrection body. Being able to pass through closed doors certainly implies that Jesus does not possess a body similar to a normal, ordinary human body restricted by space and matter. No ordinary human being can pass through closed doors. On the other hand, Jesus is physical and tangible enough to be showing his hands and his sides to the disciples, and for the disciples to be able to see him. He is physical and tangible

⁵¹ Such as, for example, the women (in addition to Mary Magdalene) who, together with the beloved disciple, were present at the crucifixion (see 19:25).

⁵² I am indebted to Larsen (*Recognizing the Stranger*, 206) for this fourfold outline.

⁵³ E.g., Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:322; Kysar, *John*, 303; Carson, *Gospel*, 646.

enough for Mary Magdalene to grasp him, and for him to offer to Thomas to probe his wounds (to be discussed below).

But it is clear that the reference to the closed doors is not primarily intended to teach about the nature of Jesus' resurrection body. Rather, the disciples gather behind closed doors because of their fear of the Ἰουδαῖοι (v. 19a). It is true that the closed doors will be mentioned again in v. 26 without connection to the fear of the Ἰουδαῖοι. But we do have to give due weight to the disciples' fear (φόβος) in v. 19a. It means that the news of Jesus' resurrection, conveyed to the disciples by Mary Magdalene earlier in the day (v. 18: *έώρακα τὸν κύριον* ["I have seen the Lord"]), does not dispel "the fear generated by the crucifixion."⁵⁴ The disciples' fear does "not take into account Jesus' promise to return to them ... they act like the secret believers John has so often condemned for acting 'on account of fear of the Jews' (7:13; 19:38; cf. 12:42)."⁵⁵ It is worth noting that the disciples' fear is juxtaposed with the peace that Jesus is going to offer them in a moment (20:20b–22), and contrasts with the fulness of joy that they will soon experience. In light of this fear, the character of the risen Jesus' appearance to the disciples as a *σημείον* will become manifest, as will be pointed out below.

Jesus' appearance is described briefly: *έστη εἰς τὸ μέσον*, which in some English Bibles is rendered periphrastically: for example, "Jesus came and stood among them."⁵⁶ The manner of Jesus' entry to the room is not mentioned. As commentators usually point out,⁵⁷ this post-resurrection appearance fulfils Jesus' earlier promise to his disciples in 14:18–19: *οὐκ ἀφήσω ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς, έρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς. έτι μικρὸν καὶ ὁ κόσμος με οὐκέτι θεωρεῖ, ὑμεῖς δὲ θεωρεῖτέ με, ὅτι ἐγὼ ζῶ καὶ ὑμεῖς ζήσετε* ("I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live").

⁵⁴ Brant, *John*, 271. Similarly, Thompson writes: "Apparently [the disciples] do not accept Mary's testimony that she has seen the Lord; at least her report has made no difference to their conduct or faith" (*John*, 419).

⁵⁵ Keener, *Gospel*, 1200; see also Calvin, *Gospel*, 2:263; Brodie, *Gospel*, 568; Bernard, *Gospel*, 2:672; Westcott, *Gospel*, 2:348.

⁵⁶ E.g., RSV; NRSV.

⁵⁷ E.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1021.

We are not told the immediate reaction of the disciples to Jesus' sudden appearance. Since they do not appear to be expecting his coming, as suggested by their fear, they may have been terrified by the unexpected sight.⁵⁸ But if they were, that fear would have been immediately arrested by Jesus' opening words: εἰρήνη ὑμῖν. This statement, just as his coming itself, recalls and fulfils 14:27: εἰρήνην ἀφήμι ὑμῖν, εἰρήνην τὴν ἐμὴν δίδωμι ὑμῖν· οὐ καθὼς ὁ κόσμος δίδωσιν ἐγὼ δίδωμι ὑμῖν. μὴ ταρασσέσθω ὑμῶν ἡ καρδία μηδὲ δειλιάτω (“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid”). The risen Lord's words enable his terrified disciples to come to a recognition of him.

In addition to the greeting of peace, a very important component of this encounter is Jesus' showing his hands and side to the disciples. This scene, together with the earlier appearance to Mary Magdalene and the following encounter with Thomas, constitute some of the clearest and most powerful recognition type scenes in FG.⁵⁹ In light of 20:26, we may conclude that what Jesus shows to his disciples in 20:20a are the wounds (or scars) on his hands and side. These wounds (or scars) serve as “identity tokens” that enable the disciples to realise that the one who has suddenly and supernaturally appeared in front and in the midst of them is not a ghost, but is the Lord himself. Now it is not just Mary Magdalene who has seen the risen Lord; the rest of the disciples (except Thomas) too have seen the Lord. By this experience, the disciples realise their lack of faith when they deduced from the empty tomb that Jesus' body was stolen. They also realise their lack of faith when apparently they did not accept the full implications

⁵⁸ Did they immediately realize that it was Jesus, or did they mistake him for a ghost (cf. Luke 24:37) (recall that Magdalene mistook Jesus for the gardener)?

⁵⁹ F. R. M. Hitchcock, “Is the Fourth Gospel a Drama?” *Theol* 7 (1923): 316; Klaus Berger, *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1984), 325–26; Culpepper, “The Plot,” 356; idem, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, IBT (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998), 85; Stibbe, *John's Gospel*, 36; Sjeff van Tilborg, *Imaginative Love in John*, BIS 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 199–208; Adeline Fehribach, *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 143–67; Jo-Ann A. Brant, *Dialogue and Drama: Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 50–57; Stan Harstine, “Un-doubting Thomas: Recognition Scenes in the Ancient World,” *PRSt* 33 (2006): 435–47; Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger*, 185–87.

of Mary Magdalene’s report of her encounter with the risen Jesus (vv. 17–18). Now they have seen for themselves, with their own eyes, that Jesus is truly alive. No doubt, this experience enables them to fully believe.

There is in Jesus’ showing his hands and side to the disciples an unmistakable emphasis on the reality and tangibility of the risen Jesus. Westcott calls Jesus’ wounds (or scars) “a sign not to be mistaken.”⁶⁰ More particularly the emphasis is on establishing beyond doubt the identity of the risen one with the crucified Jesus.⁶¹ Keener writes: “Jesus showing his wounds (20:20) undoubtedly serves as evidence ... that he is in fact the same Jesus who was crucified and that he has therefore been raised bodily.”⁶² Those who stood by Jesus at the crucifixion – such as the beloved disciple and the women disciples – just three days ago, would very vividly recall the grim and painful memory of their Lord being nailed to the cross, and being pierced in the side with a lance. As the risen Jesus presents himself to them, those memories would return, but the emotions are now different, overcome by and replaced with joy and jubilation.

9.4.2. The disciples recognise the risen Lord (v. 20b).

The display of Jesus’ identity-markers enables the disciples to recognise him as the one they knew, as the one who was crucified, and as the one for whom they mourned. But now he is alive and has returned to them. This recognition, this reunion, gives them the fullness of joy: ἐχάρησαν οὖν οἱ μαθηταὶ ἰδόντες τὸν κύριον (“then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord”) (v. 20b). The mere sight of the empty tomb does not give Peter, the beloved disciple, and Mary Magdalene this joy (vv. 3–10). Neither does Mary Magdalene’s proclamation of her personal encounter with the risen Lord (v. 18). It takes no less than the personal appearance

⁶⁰ Westcott, *Gospel*, 2:349.

⁶¹ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:323.

⁶² Keener, *Gospel*, 1202.

of the risen Lord for the disciples to truly believe that he is alive,⁶³ and for them to be filled with joy.

With the disciples being overjoyed at the personal encounter with the risen Lord, a reversal of their spiritual condition takes place. It is a reversal from fear arising from unbelief and uncertainty to a state of joy arising from a settled faith in the risen Lord. The disciples' rejoicing upon seeing the risen Lord is a fulfillment of what he has earlier promised them in the Farewell Discourses. For instance, in 16:20–22 he told them:

ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι κλαύσετε καὶ θρηνήσετε ὑμεῖς, ὁ δὲ κόσμος χαρήσεται· ὑμεῖς λυπηθήσεσθε, ἀλλ' ἡ λύπη ὑμῶν εἰς χαρὰν γενήσεται. ἡ γυνὴ ὅταν τίκῃ λύπην ἔχει, ὅτι ἤλθεν ἡ ὥρα αὐτῆς· ὅταν δὲ γεννήσῃ τὸ παιδίον, οὐκέτι μνημονεύει τῆς θλίψεως διὰ τὴν χαρὰν ὅτι ἐγεννήθη ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὸν κόσμον. καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν νῦν μὲν λύπην ἔχετε· πάλιν δὲ ὄψομαι ὑμᾶς, καὶ χαρήσεται ὑμῶν ἡ καρδιά, καὶ τὴν χαρὰν ὑμῶν οὐδεὶς αἴρει ἀφ' ὑμῶν.

Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. (cf. 15:11; 17:13)

The rejoicing of the disciples, which implies that they have come to faith in the risen Lord – that is, in the fact that their crucified Lord is now alive again – attests to the nature and function of the risen Lord's appearance as a σημεῖον. Moreover, the appearance itself, as a σημεῖον, attests convincingly to the larger σημεῖον of the resurrection. From the post-resurrection perspective, FE looks back and sees the resurrection, inseparably connected with the crucifixion, as the greatest σημεῖον of Jesus' claims as the divine Messiah and the eternal Son of God.

⁶³ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 696.

9.4.3. The risen Lord commissions the disciples and imparts the Spirit to them (vv. 21–23).

The risen Lord does not just show himself palpably and tangibly to his gathered disciples. He does not just display to them his hands and side, bearing the marks of his suffering and death, identifying him as the crucified yet is now the living one. After the disciples recognise him and are filled with joy, the risen Lord does three important things in addition.

First, in v. 21 he commissions them: εἰρήνη ὑμῖν· καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὰρ πέμπω ὑμᾶς (“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you”). The “sentness” of Jesus is an important Christological theme in FG,⁶⁴ a theme which must be understood in the light of the Jewish notion of agency.⁶⁵ Although in one sense the work or mission of Jesus has already been accomplished through his saving death on the cross (19:30) and subsequent resurrection, in another sense his saving work has only just begun.⁶⁶ And now, as the Father had sent him, he too sends his disciples to carry on the work that he began. Although the commission in v. 21 is brief (for instance, it does not mention the content or message of the mission), probably the essence of this commission, as Lincoln suggests in light of 18:37 and 15:26–27,⁶⁷ is that of bearing witness. If we press this point further, we inevitably arrive at the purpose statement of the Gospel in 20:30–31, where bearing witness to the crucified and risen Lord takes the form of writing down his *σημεῖα*, for the saving benefit of the readers.

Second, in v. 22 the risen Lord breathes on the disciples and bestows upon them the Spirit. This scene is of fundamental importance, for it involves the impartation of the Spirit upon the disciples. Brown describes this scene as “the

⁶⁴ See Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 84–111.

⁶⁵ See, e.g., Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, 158–64; idem, *The Gospel of John: More Light from Philo, Paul and Archaeology*, NovTSupp 154 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 167–78; Witherington, *John’s Wisdom*, 140–41; Paul N. Anderson, “The Having-Sent-Me Father: Aspects of Agency, Encounter, and Irony in the Johannine Father-Son Relationship,” *Semeia* 85 (1999): 33–57.

⁶⁶ Köstenberger, *Missions*, *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Lincoln, *Gospel*, 498.

high point of the post-resurrectional activity of Jesus.”⁶⁸ Smith describes it as “the culmination of the resurrection narratives.”⁶⁹ It is true that the interpretation of v. 22 is hugely debated.⁷⁰ But setting aside the debatable points, we ought to notice that it is the risen Lord who dispenses the Spirit for an expressly missiological purpose: to empower the disciples as they carry on the risen Lord’s work. The impartation of the Spirit here fulfills Jesus’ earlier promise to his followers concerning the coming of an eternally abiding advocate: the Spirit of truth (14:16–17, 26; 15:26; 16:7–15).

Third, in v. 23 he grants them the authority to forgive and retain sins. If linked to the commission in v. 21, then it pertains to the disciples’ task of preaching the gospel, “which either brings men to repent ... or leaves them unresponsive to the offer of forgiveness ... and so they are left in their sins.”⁷¹ As Lincoln explains: “The response of the recipients of the message is decisive for whether their sins are forgiven or retained ... God stands behind the disciples’ witness, so that forgiveness or retention of sins by them is forgiveness or retention by God.”⁷²

In other words, the *σημεῖον* does not merely consist in an “appearance.” He does three things for them. First, in fulfillment of his promise, he grants them peace. Second, in fulfillment of another promise, he dispenses the Spirit to them. Third, he sends and commissions them to carry on the work that the risen Lord had received from the Father.

⁶⁸ Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1037.

⁶⁹ Smith, *John*, 380.

⁷⁰ Cornelis Bennema (“The Giving of the Spirit in John’s Gospel: A New Proposal?” *EvQ* 74.3 [2002]: 201–211) lists as many as seven scholarly interpretations of John 20:22. In my view, the main interpretative question is whether or not John 20:22 is the Johannine equivalent of the Lucan pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit recorded in Acts 2. In this regard, I agree with the vast majority of Johannine scholars who answer that question affirmatively. See, e.g., Dodd, *Interpretation*, 222, 227, 429–30, 442–43; Barrett, *Gospel*, 570; Bultmann, *Gospel*, 692–93; Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1037–39; Lindars, *Gospel*, 611–12; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:325–26; Haenchen, *John*, 2:211; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 380–82; Burge, *The Anointed Community*, 123–31; William Loader, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Structure and Issues*, 2nd ed.; BETL 23 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1992), 72–73, 85, 124, 132; Keener, *Gospel*, 1196–1200, 1204–1206; Sandra M. Schneiders, “The Raising of the New Temple: John 20.19–23 and Johannine Ecclesiology,” *NTS* 52 (1996): 337–55.

⁷¹ Marsh, *John*, 641–42.

⁷² Lincoln, *Gospel*, 500.

9.4.4. The commissioned disciples proclaim their encounter with the risen Lord to Thomas (vv. 24–25a).

Just as Mary Magdalene, who was the first to encounter the risen Lord, proclaims and testifies to the disciples saying, *ἑώρακα τὸν κύριον* (v. 18), so too the commissioned disciples (vv. 19–23) proclaim and testify of their encounter with the Lord, saying, *ἑώρακαμεν τὸν κύριον* (v. 25b). The recipient of their proclamation and witness is a fellow disciple, Thomas Didymus, who was absent from the previous gathering (v. 24). Did Thomas know of the empty tomb, the grave clothes, the face veil, and the disappearance of Jesus' body? Did he also hear of Mary Magdalene's earlier testimony of a first-hand encounter with the risen Lord? The text does not say. We also do not know why he was absent from the very important gathering in the evening of Easter day. At any rate, he now hears the witness of not just one but many of his fellow disciples, testifying of their personal encounter with the risen Lord. This testimony is particularly powerful, for it is not solitary but a collective testimony.

9.5. The Risen Lord Appears to Thomas (20:25b–29)

The appearance of the risen Lord to Thomas is the third and last in the catena of post-resurrection appearances in John 20. I am going to argue that, just like the two previous appearances, the appearance to Thomas is also a *σημεῖον*. As do the previous two, this *σημεῖον* attests to the reality of the resurrection of the crucified Lord, which, together with the crucifixion, constitutes the supreme *σημεῖον* in FG.

I am going to discuss this recounted incident in four parts: (1) Thomas's unbelief (v. 25b), (2) the risen Lord's appearance to Thomas (vv. 26–27), (3) Thomas's response and confession (v. 28), and (4) Jesus' concluding comment (v. 29).

9.5.1. Thomas's unbelief (v. 25b)

Unbelief in Jesus' resurrection is a real and ongoing problem in John 20. Mary Magdalene, when she sees the opened tomb, does not think that Jesus was alive, but, instead, unbelievably concludes that Jesus' body was stolen. Peter and the beloved disciple both see the empty tomb, the grave clothes, and the facial veil, but do not believe that Jesus is alive.⁷³ They believe only what Mary Magdalene has opined: that Jesus' body has been stolen. Unbelief (and blindness) continues. When the risen Lord appears to Mary Magdalene, she fails to recognise him. Instead, she mistakes him for the gardener. Jesus has to call her name before she is able to recognise him. In the case of the other disciples, it seems likely that they do not accept or believe Magdalene's report of having seen the Lord. This is suggested by their fear of the *Ἰουδαῖοι*. It takes no less than Jesus' actual appearance for these disciples to be changed from being filled with fear to being filled with joy.

Thomas's unbelief at the collective testimony of his fellow disciples is the acutest in the Gospel (or, at least, expressed in the acutest way): *ἐὰν μὴ ἴδω ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ τὸν τύπον τῶν ἥλων καὶ βάλω τὸν δάκτυλόν μου εἰς τὸν τύπον τῶν ἥλων καὶ βάλω μου τὴν χεῖρα εἰς τὴν πλευρὰν αὐτοῦ, οὐ μὴ πιστεύω* ("Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it") (v. 25). The testimony of the disciples was not enough to convince Thomas that the resurrection was real. At stake here is one's attitude and response to the disciples' collective eyewitness testimony. This is of fundamental importance to readers of the Gospel – both immediate and future – whose access to Jesus and to the reality of his resurrection is only through the disciples' testimony.

Thomas epitomises skepticism and unbelief both by rejecting the testimony of eyewitnesses – people whom he personally knew and could personally trust – and by making belief dependent upon the actual empirical encounter with the risen

⁷³ See §9.2 above.

Lord.⁷⁴ There is a stress in Thomas's statement upon the empirical senses of seeing, touching, and probing: he does not just want to see the mark of the nails (ἴδω ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ τὸν τύπον τῶν ἥλων); he also wants to put his finger into it (βάλω μου τὴν χεῖρα εἰς τὴν πλευρὰν αὐτοῦ) (v. 25). Moreover, he wants to put his hand in the wound in Jesus' side. It will take no less than his empirical probing of the marks of the crucifixion for him to believe that the crucified Lord is now risen.

There is a good basis for interpreting Thomas's implied demand for an empirical encounter with the risen Lord as an implicit demand for a σημεῖον.⁷⁵ I am not suggesting that Thomas is no different from the Jewish leaders who demanded a σημεῖον in 2:18 and the unbelieving Galileans who also demanded a σημεῖον in 6:30–31. I maintain that despite his doubt and unbelief Thomas was still a disciple of Jesus (cf. 20:24). I also maintain that in fact, in John 20, all of Jesus' disciples struggle to believe the resurrection of their Lord, and that it takes no less than the actual encounter with the risen Jesus for them to fully believe.

But Thomas's case is unique because he has publicly insisted on seeing the risen Lord. Moreover, his implicit demand echoes what Jesus told the royal official in 4:48, ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδῃτε, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε (“Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe”). The reasoning behind 4:48 and 20:25 appears to be the same: faith is dependent upon the seeing of σημεῖα. In the case of Thomas, a specific kind of faith is tied to a specific kind of σημεῖον.⁷⁶ That is, it is faith in the resurrection of Jesus which is made dependent upon an empirical encounter with

⁷⁴ So, e.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1026, 1045; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:330; William Bonney, *Caused to Believe: The Doubting Thomas Story as the Climax of John's Christological Narrative*, BIS 62 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 159; Margaret Beirne, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel*, JSNTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 201–02; Michael Theobald, “Der johanneische Osterglaube und die Grenzen seiner Narrativen Vermittlung,” in *Studien zum Corpus Iohanneum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 467; Nicolas Farelly, *The Disciples in the Fourth Gospel: A Narrative Analysis of their Faith and Understanding*, WUNT 2/290 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 123–25; Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger*, 208. For a positive reading of Thomas' response to his fellow disciples' testimony (20:25) see Thomas Popp, who asserts that Thomas is not a doubter, does not question his fellow disciples' encounter with the risen Lord, and that Thomas simply “wants to ascertain through his own touch and sight that the Risen One is identical with the Crucified One” (“Thomas,” in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. S. A. Hunt [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016], 516–17). Dorothy Lee sees a combination of faith and misunderstanding in Thomas' insistence to see the risen Lord (“Partnership in Easter Faith,” 43).

⁷⁵ This is echoed by Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1046; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:331–32.

⁷⁶ So, e.g., Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:330.

the risen Lord. In other words, the appearance of the risen Jesus – together with the display of the marks of his crucifixion – is, in effect, the *σημεῖον* that Thomas wants to see in order that he could attain the resurrection faith.

9.5.2. The risen Lord appears to Thomas (vv. 26–27)

As has been said, this is the third appearance of the risen Jesus. We are not to think that Thomas is all by himself when Jesus appears to him. There is a time gap between the disciples' telling Thomas of their encounter with the risen Lord (v. 25) and this particular gathering of the disciples where Thomas is now present (v. 26). So the appearance is actually set in the context of the gathering of the disciples on the eighth day. It is remarkable that although Thomas does not believe his fellow disciples' testimony (v. 25), and although he was absent from the previous gathering (vv. 19–24), he is now present among them in this particular gathering. It shows that despite his unbelief in the resurrection, despite his rejection of his fellow disciples' collective testimony, he still counts himself as one of Jesus' disciples. It is the resurrection that he does not accept without clear empirical evidence. But obviously he still considers himself a follower of Jesus, more specifically, a follower of the crucified one.

The description of Jesus' appearance is the same as in v. 19: *καὶ ἔστη εἰς τὸ μέσον* ("he came and stood among them"). The doors of the house, where the gathering is taking place, is also described as closed or locked, but there is no more mention of the fear of the *Ἰουδαῖοι*. Thus, the description seems to focus now upon the supernatural way whereby the risen Lord is able to show himself truly and tangibly to the disciples despite closed doors. Jesus' greeting, *εἰρήνη ὑμῖν*, goes to all the disciples gathered, rather than to Thomas alone, and it is the same greeting as in vv. 19–20.

After the greeting, Jesus addresses Thomas individually, and we are to think that the rest of the disciples are looking on. It is worth reminding ourselves that whereas this is Thomas's first face to face encounter with the risen Jesus, it is the second time for the other disciples, and the third time for Mary Magdalene (on the

assumption that she was present both in the appearance in vv. 19–24 as well as here). Jesus tells Thomas: φέρε τὸν δάκτυλόν σου ὧδε καὶ ἴδε τὰς χεῖράς μου καὶ φέρε τὴν χεῖρά σου καὶ βάλε εἰς τὴν πλευράν μου, καὶ μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός (“Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe”) (v. 27). What is striking here is that Jesus, in addition to merely appearing to Thomas, in fact invites him – rather than prohibits or castigates him – to see, touch, and, hence, probe his wounds (or scars). In other words, Jesus graciously grants the σημεῖον upon which Thomas has made his faith in Jesus’ resurrection depend. As Thomas’s earlier demand is

set out in a repetitive triple progression: ‘Unless I see ... and put ... my finger ... and put my hand ... ’ Jesus ... gives a further triple progression, one which absorbs that of Thomas and surpasses it: ‘Bring your finger here and see ... and bring your hand and put ... and do not be unbelieving but ... ’ The effect ... is to show both that Jesus knows all the pedantic details of Thomas’s arguments and that he is calling him to a reality which surpasses them.⁷⁷

But while the risen Lord grants Thomas’s demand to see him physically and probe his wounds (whether or not Thomas did in fact probe Jesus’ wounds will be considered below), Jesus adds a rebuke, which also fundamentally addresses the role of σημεῖα in relation to faith: καὶ μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός (“stop being unbelieving, and show yourself a believer”).⁷⁸ It is worth noting again that what Thomas did not believe was the reported resurrection of Jesus, relayed to him by his fellow disciples who claimed to have seen the risen Lord. It is of course probable that Thomas was aware of the report concerning the empty tomb, and he might have accepted the theory – spread by Mary Magdalene – that Jesus’ body was stolen. It is equally probable that Thomas heard Mary Magdalene’s testimony of having seen the risen Lord, which overrides her earlier theory of corpse theft. Of course, it is the proclamation of the gathered disciples in vv. 19–25 which is given as the one which Thomas heard and repudiated. When Jesus rebukes Thomas in v.

⁷⁷ Brodie, *Gospel*, 571.

⁷⁸ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 385.

27b, he is essentially telling him to believe the resurrection on the basis of the testimony of the first witnesses. But again, that rebuke comes after Jesus grants Thomas' request of a personal encounter with the risen Lord. In other words, this passage does not teach that the σημεῖα have no positive value for faith. Otherwise, why would Jesus particularly invite Thomas to probe his wounds, which explicitly meets Thomas' earlier desire for precisely that σημεῖον?

9.5.3. Thomas' Response and Confession (v. 28)

In keeping with his request, did Thomas accept Jesus' invitation to probe the wounds on Jesus' hands and side? Although the text does not expressly say that Thomas did or did not do so, and despite some speculation that Thomas did precisely as Jesus invited him,⁷⁹ the impression given in the text is that Thomas did not do it.⁸⁰ First, note that there is no intervening opportunity between the invitation to touch Jesus' wounds and the accompanying rebuke/admonition to believe. Second, as far as Thomas' response is concerned, there is only the confession, and nothing else is said. In other words, the appearance of the risen Lord, together with the display of the marks or signs (v. 25: τύποι) of the crucifixion on his body, seems to have sufficiently indicated to Thomas that indeed the crucified Jesus is now the risen Lord.⁸¹

Thomas' reversal from unbelief to faith, as a result of his face to face encounter with the risen Lord, is such that his resulting confession constitutes the zenith and climax of all Christological confessions in the entire Gospel: ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου.⁸² Lee is right in saying that this confession “embodies the Easter faith of the believing community.”⁸³

⁷⁹ For instance, according to the second-century CE *Epistula Apostolorum* 11–12, Thomas did touch the wound on Jesus' side and Peter touched the nail marks in the hands, and so on. Ignatius in *Smyrnaeans* 3.2 wrote that Peter and others, on Jesus' invitation, did touch Jesus' resurrection body and believed.

⁸⁰ So, e.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1046; Brodie, *Gospel*, 571.

⁸¹ So, e.g., Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger*, 210.

⁸² As many commentators stress, κύριος here serves more than honorific purposes. Schnackenburg writes, “Now κύριος becomes a confession which applies to the risen one” (*Gospel*, 3:333). Lindars points out that κύριος is regularly applied to God, such as in Ps 91:2 (*Gospel*, 615).

Although at one point he epitomised doubt and unbelief, Thomas is in fact the first character in the story who actually confesses Jesus as God.⁸⁴ But it takes the *σημείον* of the risen Lord's actual appearance and the display of the marks of the crucifixion before Thomas reaches the height of Christological faith. In the end, Thomas joins the ranks of the rest of the disciples who witnessed the risen Lord face to face, and as such became witnesses to others concerning him who was crucified but is now alive.

9.5.4. Jesus' Concluding Comment (v. 29)

Jesus' final words to Thomas, in v. 29, has two parts: (1) *ὅτι ἑώρακάς με πεπίστευκας*; ("Have you believed because you have seen me?"); and (2) *μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες* ("Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe").

NA²⁸ renders the first part of Jesus' statement as a question,⁸⁵ although there are commentators who take it as a statement.⁸⁶ But regardless of whether it is a question or a statement,⁸⁷ it is clear that Thomas, as well as the rest of the Easter community, believes in the risen Lord because of the *σημεῖα* of the post-resurrection appearances. None of them believed purely on the basis of hearing

Also worth noting is the fact that "Jesus is Lord" is a primitive Christian confession (1 Cor 12:3). *Κύριος* does not occur alone in Thomas' lofty Christological confession; it is coupled with *ὁ θεός*. The occurrence of this composite title here forms an overarching *inclusio* over the entire Gospel with the opening verse of the Prologue, where Jesus is also described as *θεός* (1:1; cf. 1:18). This composite title harks back to the Jewish Scriptures (e.g., Ps 35:23, "my God and my Lord"), and apparently Jesus is here being identified and related with Yahweh. The reader will recall the careful formulation of John 1:1, where the *λόγος* – the one who "tabernacled among us" (v. 14) – is described as *θεός*.

⁸³ Lee, "Partnership," 45–6.

⁸⁴ R. E. Brown writes: "The final irony of the gospel is that the disciple who doubted the most gives expression to the highest evaluation of Jesus uttered in any gospel: 'My Lord and my God'" ("The Resurrection in John 20—A Series of Diverse Reactions," *Worship* 64.3 [1990]: 206). Dorothy E. Lee speaks of the representative function of Thomas's faith: "Thomas's confession ... embodies the Easter faith of the believing community" ("Partnership in Easter Faith: The Role of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in John 20," *JSNT* 58 [1995]: 45–6).

⁸⁵ So also NRSV; Bernard, *Gospel*, 2:684; Bultmann, *Gospel*, 695; Lindars, *Gospel*, 616; Kysar, *John*, 307; Lincoln, *Gospel*, 503–07.

⁸⁶ So, e.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1027; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:334; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 386; Carson, *Gospel*, 659; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 648.

⁸⁷ Westcott (*Gospel*, 2:356) thinks that it is half interrogative and half exclamatory.

reports of eyewitnesses.⁸⁸ As we saw, the only difference with Thomas is that he insisted, more than the others, on seeing the Lord first before he could believe. But this does not render Thomas's faith, and the faith of the Easter community, inferior. Their faith – if it is true faith in the risen Lord – is blessed, although in the phraseology of v. 29a there is no explicit beatitude.⁸⁹

The second part of Jesus' closing statement (v. 29b) concerns future believers whose basis for believing is not an actual physical encounter with Jesus but the witness and testimony of those who saw the risen Lord. This was of course the situation applying to all believers from the time the risen Lord ascended to his Father. In particular this was the situation of the believers who would have read FG in late first-century CE. By the declaration of the risen Lord that these later believers are blessed because they believed although they have not physically seen Jesus, readers are being instructed (indirectly) against a Thomas-like insistence on empirical encounter with Jesus. As far as the post-ascension dispensation is concerned, any insistence on empirical encounter with Jesus will not and cannot be granted. Anyone who wishes to know Jesus must know him through the testimony of those who saw him empirically. In this regard the post-resurrection appearances of the risen Lord, in addition to the earlier deeds of Jesus, now recorded in the Gospel, constitute the *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* whereby readers may come to a true saving faith in Jesus – the divine Messiah and Son of God (20:28, 30–31).

9.6. Conclusion

I conclude this chapter by reiterating the following points. Firstly, it seems clear that one of the evangelist's purposes in the narrative is to show that none of the disciples expected their crucified, dead, and buried Master to arise from the dead on Easter morning. Up until that time none of them understood "the scripture, that Jesus must rise from the dead" (20:9; cf. 2:22; 12:16; 14:26).

⁸⁸ So Bultmann, *Gospel*, 696.

⁸⁹ So, e.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1049–1050.

Secondly, the turning point in the disciples' faith is not the event of the resurrection itself, but the appearances and, what is more, the self-identification of the risen Lord to his disciples. The disciples' total lack of expectation for Jesus' resurrection becomes like scales that cover their eyes, so that even when the risen Lord has appeared to them, such as in the case of Mary Magdalene, they do not immediately recognise him. Thus, the risen Lord does not just appear in front of them. He speaks to them. In the case of Mary Magdalene, he calls out her name. In the case of the rest of the disciples, he shows them the scars from the crucifixion in his hands and side. Then the turning point of the disciples' faith takes place. Now they see that their Master is alive. He has conquered death.

Thirdly, the nature and function of the post-resurrection appearances as *σημεῖα* is discernible from their impact upon the disciples. The appearances prove, beyond any doubt, to the disciples that the crucified Jesus is now the risen Lord. In other words, these *σημεῖα* individually and collectively attest to the larger truth of Jesus' resurrection, which, together with the crucifixion, constitutes the supreme *σημεῖον* in the Gospel. The impact of the post-resurrection appearances upon the disciples, in addition to enabling them to attain the resurrection faith, enables them to receive the Spirit – and with the reception of the Spirit the giving of joy and peace – and their being sent out to carry on Jesus' mission.

Fourthly, the greatest confession and expression of faith in the entire Gospel came from the mouth of Thomas: *ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου*. It is the greatest Christological confession in the Gospel. This type of faith – a faith that confesses Jesus as Lord and God – is the result of the *σημεῖον* of the appearance of the risen Lord. This confession, which is recorded in 20:28, is linked to and supplementing the purpose of the *σημεῖα* enunciated in 20:30–31: that readers may believe in Jesus as “the Christ, the Son of God, and that through believing they may have life in Jesus' name.”⁹⁰

⁹⁰ In §3.3.1.2, in the context of explaining the meaning of the titles *ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ* (20:31), I pointed out that these titles must be interpreted not in isolation but in the light of the other Christological titles applied to Jesus in FG as well as of the overall Johannine Christology.

Finally, there is stress upon the unity and continuity between the crucifixion-and-resurrection, which constitute the supreme σημεῖον in the Gospel. The risen Lord is the crucified Jesus, and the crucified Jesus is now the risen Lord. When the evangelist looks back to Jesus' public ministry, he sees everything from the perspective, and in the light, of Easter. He sees the cross, as well as Jesus' entire ministry, not in isolation from, but rather in the light of, the empty tomb. The cross, if it were the end of Jesus' life, would rightly be described as a shameful defeat for the man from Galilee. The cross, by itself, could only be the supreme negative σημεῖον, nullifying Jesus' claims to divine messiahship and eternal Sonship with God. But the resurrection makes all the difference. Together, the crucifixion-and-resurrection, as the supreme σημεῖον, attests that Jesus is the true Messiah. It attests that that the cross itself was part of the Messiah's mission of saving the world.

CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter discusses the following: (1) summary of the findings, (2) contributions, (3) implications, and (4) a point for future investigation.

10.1. Summary of the Findings

I have advanced the thesis that Jesus' crucifixion-and-resurrection is the supreme *σημείον* in FG. I have argued for this thesis in three steps. First, by analyzing the occurrences and usage of *σημείον* in FG,¹ it has become evident that, overall, *σημείον* cannot be restricted or limited to the miraculous activity of Jesus. Although *σημείον* often pertains to a miraculous deed of Jesus (e.g., 2:11), some of its occurrences (e.g., 2:23; 12:37) tend to be general and appear to be inclusive of non-miraculous (yet significant) deeds also. This breadth and inclusivity is confirmed in 12:37 and 20:30–31 where the whole public ministry of Jesus, rather than just a segment of it, such as the performance of miracles, is summarized by and described with the expression *ποιεῖν σημεῖα*. Furthermore, in the Gospel's purpose statement (20:30–31), the evangelist speaks of both the *σημεῖα* which he has not included in the Gospel and the *σημεῖα* which he has written down (*σημεῖα γεγραμμένα*). In other words, the Johannine *σημείον* is a category that encompasses the deeds – whether miraculous or otherwise – of the divine and incarnate Logos of God. This conclusion is the foundation for the thesis that Jesus' death-and-resurrection, viewed as a theological unity, is the supreme *σημείον* of all.

Second, an investigation into the themes of *δόξα*, *ὑψωσις*, *ἔργον*, *ώρα*, and *πίστις* – all significant terms in FG – has shown that these themes, individually and collectively, support the thesis that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is the supreme

¹ See ch. 3.

σημείον.² For instance, in our study of δόξα, we saw that the σημεία are revealers of Jesus' divine glory (e.g., 2:11; 11:4, 40). This is precisely what the crucifixion-and-resurrection did supremely. The cross-and-resurrection is the glorification of the Son of Man (e.g., 12:23). This suggests that it is the supreme σημείον.

Related to and overlapping with δόξα is the theme of ὑψωσις. The “lifting up” of Jesus on the cross is paradoxically his “lifting up” to glory. From this point of view, the crucifixion is not the lowest point of Jesus' humiliation; on the contrary, it is his exaltation by the Father. In other words, among its many implications, the crucifixion does not invalidate Jesus' claims to being the divine Messiah. Instead, it shows him to be the true Messiah and Son of God because God exalted him precisely through the experience of the cross. Part of our analysis of ὑψωσις is a consideration of the verb σημαίνειν (12:33; 18:32; cf. 3:14; Num 21:8–9), which FE has used consistently and exclusively to pertain to the mode of Jesus' death. In light of the importance of σημείον in FG, it became apparent that FE's consistent use of σημαίνειν for the crucifixion is a subtle way of affirming that the crucifixion is itself a σημείον.

The next theme is ἔργον. In FG the cross is the consummation of the whole ἔργον of Jesus (cf. 4:34; 17:4; 19:28–30). And since, as I have argued, ἔργον and σημείον share the common reference to Jesus' deeds as well as the common function of revealing his identity, the cross may also be seen as the culminating σημείον.

The next theme is ὥρα – particularly Jesus' ὥρα – which is bound up with the themes of δόξα and ὑψωσις. Δόξα and ὑψωσις converge at the cross, which is the ὥρα of Jesus. Since δόξα and ὑψωσις foreground (among others) the σημείον-nature and -function of the cross, ὥρα too appears to do the same. The ὥρα of Jesus is that which, among other things, supremely reveals him as the glorified and exalted Messiah and Son of God.

The last theme is πίστις. The σημεία have a positive role for the faith of the witnesses, as well as of the readers. This is true in the case of the earlier σημεία, as

² See ch. 4.

exemplified, for example, by the turning of water to wine (whereby the disciples came to believe in Jesus, 2:11) and the raising of Lazarus (whereby many Ἰουδαῖοι came to believe in Jesus, 11:45). This is even more so with the crucifixion-and-resurrection. For instance, right after Jesus died, FE addressed the readers saying: “He who saw has testified so that you also may believe” (19:35), echoing the Gospel’s purpose statement where the purpose of the *σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* is to help readers to believe in Jesus (20:30–31). Moreover, we know that it was after Jesus’ resurrection, with the dispensing of the Spirit upon the believers (2:22; 12:16; 14:26; 20:9; cf. 7:39), that the disciples came to a fuller understanding (faith) of the meaning of Jesus’ actions and words. In other words, if the *σημεῖα* play a positive function for the faith of the witnesses and readers, then the cross-and-resurrection is a far greater sort of *σημεῖον*, for it enabled the disciples to fully understand and believe and to attain the post-resurrection perspective into Jesus’ earthly life and ministry.

The third and last step, which constitutes the bulk of the thesis, consists in the analyses of five carefully chosen passages from the Gospel: the temple “cleansing” (2:13–22), the feeding of the multitude (John 6), the raising of Lazarus (John 11), the crucifixion account (19:16–37), and the resurrection (John 20). The first two passages are chosen for two important reasons: they recount the two incidents of the demand for a *σημεῖον*. Moreover, the temple “cleansing,” which takes place on the first of three Passovers in FG, is Jesus’ first encounter with Judaism during his public ministry. The feeding miracle, which takes place on the second Passover of the Gospel, constitutes the bulk and turning point of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee. The importance of the raising of Lazarus lies in the fact that it directly precipitates the Sanhedrin’s decision of putting Jesus to death. In other words, it brings about the turning point in the plot. The reasons for the choice of the remaining two passages are obvious: they are, respectively, the accounts of Jesus’ death-and-resurrection.

The first passage is the account of the temple “cleansing” (2:13–22),³ where the Ἰουδαῖοι (temple authorities) demand that Jesus produce a σημεῖον to justify his “provocative” actions in the temple courts (Jesus’ attempt to “regulate” the worship in the temple). Jesus responds to this demand by saying: λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν (v. 19). Through the evangelist’s comment in v. 21, the reader understands what the Ἰουδαῖοι fail to grasp: Jesus is metaphorically referring to his own death-and-resurrection. The important point for my purposes is that this is Jesus’ response to the demand for a σημεῖον. In effect Jesus appears to be “promising” his interlocutors a different sort of σημεῖον, which is in fact the greatest one: the σημεῖον of his own death-and-resurrection. It should be stressed that Jesus’ response does not pertain to the crucifixion only, or to the resurrection only, but to both of these elements. Thus, right from the opening of the Gospel it has become apparent that the supreme σημεῖον is not the crucifixion only, nor is it the resurrection only, but the crucifixion-and-resurrection as logically connected and inseparable events, forming a theological unity.

In John 6, which recounts the σημεῖον of the feeding and the ensuing Bread of Life discourse, the second demand for a σημεῖον takes place (6:30–31).⁴ As in 2:18, the demand is for an authenticating σημεῖον, but this time specifically for something analogous to the manna, in order that Jesus’ interlocutors might be convinced to believe him. Also as in 2:18, Jesus responds to this not by performing a miracle as requested, but by alluding to his death-and-resurrection. At first sight, it may not be obvious that Jesus is doing this, but I argue that he is. His response is: ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ Μωϋσῆς δέδωκεν ὑμῖν τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἀλλ’ ὁ πατήρ μου δίδωσιν ὑμῖν τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸν ἀληθινόν· ὁ γὰρ ἄρτος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ καταβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ζωὴν διδοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ (“Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world”) (vv. 32–33). The “true bread from heaven” (v. 32b) and the “bread of God” (v. 33) are metaphorical expressions

³ See ch. 5.

⁴ See ch. 6.

referring to Jesus himself (cf. vv. 27, 35, 41, 51). The verb *καταβαίνειν*, as is well known, is in FG often paired with *ἀναβαίνειν*, and this *κατάβασις/ἀνάβασις* motif is (such as here in John 6 [*ἀναβαίνειν* occurs in 6:62]; but particularly in 3:13–14) the exclusive property of the Son of Man who, in John 6, is the giver of the “imperishable food” (v. 27). As the discourse progresses, Jesus explicitly and repeatedly confesses: *ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς* (vv. 35, 48, 51a). In other words, the “bread of life” that Jesus gives for the world is none other than himself. How exactly will Jesus give himself as the “bread” of life for the world? According to vv. 51c–58, Jesus will do so through his sacrificial death on the cross. In these verses Jesus metaphorically describes his flesh as true food to be eaten and his blood as true drink to be drunk. He also stresses the necessity of eating his flesh and drinking his blood (metaphorical expressions for faith) if humans are to receive eternal life.

Where does the resurrection figure in this? It is included in the verb *ἀναβαίνειν* in 6:62: *ἐὰν οὖν θεωρῆτε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀναβαίνοντα ὅπου ἦν τὸ πρότερον*; (“Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?”). Thus, eventually Jesus’ response to the demand for a *σημεῖον* boils down to a reference back to himself as the giver of eternal life through his death-and-resurrection. Once again, this is not different from his response to the first demand for a *σημεῖον* in 2:18. In effect, on two counts Jesus’ death-and-resurrection appears to be depicted as the *σημεῖον* which the Johannine Jesus “promises” in response to the challenge of the *Ἰουδαῖοι* (2:18) and the Galileans (6:30–31).

In John 11, we have the account of the *σημεῖον* of the raising of Lazarus, whose theme is expressed by Jesus’ utterance *ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ* (vv. 25–26).⁵ But here there is no additional demand for a *σημεῖον*, probably because the twofold demand in 2:18 and 6:30–31 is sufficient to indicate the people’s unbelief, both in Jerusalem and in Galilee, and because the point has been made (through Jesus’ consistent response) that the crucifixion-and-resurrection is going to be the *σημεῖον* that will truly reveal his true identity, supremely reveal his glory, and

⁵ See ch. 7.

consummate his saving mission. Rather, the role of the raising of Lazarus is to directly precipitate the Sanhedrin's decision of putting Jesus' to death (11:47–53) and thereby usher in the arrival of Jesus' *ῥα* of glorification and lifting up, and hence of the final *σημείον*. In terms of plot development, the raising of Lazarus is the decisive turning point. But aside from this role, we also saw that Lazarus's death-and-return-to-life signifies, by way of similarities and contrasts, Jesus' own death-and-resurrection. I highlighted, for example, the profound fact that restoring the life of Lazarus came at the cost of Jesus' own life. This in itself signifies the greater sacrificial and saving purpose of Jesus' death. Also, Lazarus's return to life contrasts significantly with Jesus' resurrection. The main difference is that Lazarus merely returned to the old mortal life, still susceptible to death (though not spiritual death). But Jesus' resurrection is of a totally different order, and the differences can be clearly seen by comparing the respective accounts.

With regard to the account of Jesus' crucifixion in 19:16–37, I discussed six complementary aspects whereby the evangelist, although he does not use the word *σημείον* in this part of the Gospel, builds the case for the crucifixion to be, in effect, not a negative *σημείον* discrediting and nullifying Jesus' claims to be the true Messiah and Son of God, but, on the contrary, the greatest positive *σημείον* in support of those claims.⁶ First, the crucifixion took place in explicit fulfillment of the scriptures. It happened according to God's will. Second, in conjunction with the themes of *ὑψοῦν* and *δοξάζειν*, the crucifixion is the enthronement of Jesus as the true king not just of Israel but also of the world. Third, from the perspective of soteriology and ecclesiology, the crucifixion is the ground for the formation of a new community. The King enthroned on the cross calls into existence a new spiritual family where Mary and the beloved disciple become related to each other by virtue of their common spiritual relationship to Jesus. Fourth, from the perspective of both Christology and soteriology, the crucifixion reveals Jesus as the Lamb of God sacrificed for the salvation of the world. Fifth, the crucifixion is the climax and consummation of Jesus' "work." This relates to the previous points,

⁶ See ch. 8.

such as that the crucifixion was planned and willed by God, that it was the ground for the formation of a new community, and so on. Finally, as it was customary for evangelist to stress the aspect of veracious eyewitness testimony to the *σημεῖα*, so he stresses the veracious eyewitness testimony of the beloved disciple with regard to the key events at the cross: Jesus' giving up his spirit and the gushing forth of blood and water from Jesus' pierced side.

Without denying that these points certainly have other very important meanings and implications, their overall, combined effect is that Jesus' death on the cross – far from being a foolishness, a stumbling block, and a disqualification of Jesus' status as the divine Messiah and Son of God – actually is the supreme *σημεῖον*, for those who have faith, of Jesus' true identity and mission in the world.

The last passage that we analyzed was John 20, on the resurrection and appearances of the risen Lord.⁷ The catena of post-resurrection appearances in John 20 is no doubt a series of *σημεῖα*, for the list is capped with the well-known purpose of the Gospel, where FE speaks of *ταῦτα σημεῖα γεγραμμένα* (vv. 30–31). And as we have seen, the main function of these appearances is to convey to the despondent disciples that the crucified Master is now the risen Lord. He has not left them as orphans, but has returned to them. By returning to them, their joy has been made complete. But in the post-resurrection dispensation, his way of relating with them is going to be different. He cannot remain physically with them as before, for he must ascend back to the Father. But it remains true that he is not leaving them as orphans, for he breathes upon them the Spirit, who shall be with and in them forever. Because the living Lord reappears to his disciples, not only is their faith restored; now their faith is made complete, for they now truly believe that their crucified Lord is not dead but forever alive. Thus John 20 is a series of stories of victorious faith, and the climactic story is that of Thomas, who first refused to believe in Jesus' resurrection, but, having seen the risen Lord, came to the loftiest Christological confession in the Gospel: *ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου* (v. 28b).

⁷ See ch. 9.

Over against some scholars who say that the crucifixion is the greatest Johannine σημεῖον, I have stressed that the supreme σημεῖον is not the crucifixion alone, for the crucifixion without the resurrection can only be a negative σημεῖον for Jesus. If the story of Jesus did not continue beyond the cross, then the cross itself becomes Jesus' ultimate and shameful defeat. But FE never viewed the cross in isolation. Writing retrospectively, FE viewed the whole earthly career of Jesus, including the cross, from the point of view of Easter.

Nor is the supreme σημεῖον the resurrection alone. The resurrection itself presupposes that Jesus had died. Thus, the supreme in FG is the crucifixion-and-resurrection of Jesus, viewed as a theological unity.

10.2. Contributions

I cite three contributions of this thesis to the broader study of Johannine σημεῖα in particular and of FG in general. First, despite the profusion of research on the Johannine σημεῖα, surprisingly no one, to my knowledge, has yet systematically and coherently analyzed the seventeen occurrences of σημεῖον in FG and inquired about the referent and meaning in each case, as well as overall. This I attempted to do in this thesis, and the result has been that the overall referent of σημεῖον is not solely the miraculous activity of Jesus, but also includes deeds that are not necessarily miraculous in nature. It became apparent, from this perspective, that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is the greatest of all the σημεῖα.

Second, whereas the argument that Jesus' death-and-resurrection as the supreme σημεῖον is not new, I have offered new and fresh points here in support of that thesis. For instance, no one else has attempted to exegete systematically the two demands for a σημεῖον in 2:18 and 6:30–31 in support of the argument that Jesus' death-and-resurrection is the supreme σημεῖον. My contribution is not only to acknowledge the exegetical significance of these two incidents in connection with the study of σημεῖον but also to interpret them cumulatively in relation to the overall plot of the Gospel. I was able to see that Jesus' responses to the two demands appear to be consistently the same: he responds not by performing a

σημείον on the spot but, rather, by speaking allusively of his death-and-resurrection. In effect, it seems clear that in both passages the crucifixion-and-resurrection is cast as Jesus' response to the demand for a σημείον.

Third, while many have espoused the view that Jesus' death is the supreme σημείον in FG, my own contention has been that, it is not Jesus' death only, but Jesus' death-and-resurrection, which is the supreme σημείον. We know that in FG the crucifixion-and-resurrection of Jesus are closely intertwined and are in fact theologically inseparable, though they are of course chronologically distinguishable. The uniquely Johannine conception of the cross as the ὥρα of the glorification and lifting up of the Son of Man cannot, in the nature of the case, refer solely to the crucifixion. We must remember that the cross, apart from the empty tomb, is nothing but a stunning defeat for the Man from Galilee. Thus, the description of the crucifixion as the supreme σημείον necessitates the inclusion of the resurrection, and vice versa. In other words, the Johannine supreme σημείον is the crucifixion-and-resurrection of Jesus. This is the greatest vindication of Jesus' claim to being the divine Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. And this, I believe, I strongly argued in this thesis.

10.3. Implications

This thesis has important implications for some of the "received wisdom" in Johannine scholarship. I discuss three here.

10.3.1. On the Nature and Referent of Σημείον

One implication of this thesis, which I have occasionally mentioned above, relates to the nature and referent of the Johannine σημείον itself and how it has been widely understood in scholarship. Evidently the view that equates the σημεία with the seven or eight miracles in the Gospel remains widespread.⁸ However, in my

⁸ Udo Schnelle's recent essay "Signs in the Fourth Gospel" (2016) is an example.

view, this position must be abandoned. While it is methodologically correct to investigate the σημεῖα by focusing upon the miracle narratives, one must do so with the awareness that the Johannine σημεῖον is broader, that there are other things in FG (for instance, the temple “cleansing”) that are also σημεῖα (although they may not be explicitly described as such), and that in fact the greatest σημεῖον is the crucifixion-and-resurrection. Evidently for FE what constitutes a σημεῖον is not so much the aspect of wonder as it is the revelatory capacity of a particular deed of Jesus. In this regard, the deeds of the incarnate Christ, inclusively and broadly speaking, inasmuch as they were wrought with the purpose of revealing himself and the Father, are σημεῖα.

10.3.2. On the Structure of FG

In my view, the well-known and widespread twofold division of FG into the “Book of Signs” (John 1–12) and the “Book of Glory” (John 13–20/21) needs to be rethought. This division is misleading: it ignores the plain facts that (1) the word σημεῖα in fact comes up again in the second half of the Gospel in the statement of its purpose, and (2) the theme of glory is not confined to the second half of the Gospel but is already present in the first half. The whole Gospel itself is a book of “signs” and “glory.”⁹ The problem is not with the twofold division *per se*, but with how to correctly designate those divisions. I think Bultmann’s titles for the two divisions, which have also been widely followed, seem to be, *mutatis mutandis*, more coherent with the Gospel overall: (1) the revelation of the δόξα to the world and (2) the revelation of the δόξα to the community.¹⁰

⁹ Richard Bauckham seemed to be aware of this when he entitled his recent book on FG *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015).

¹⁰ Bultmann, *Gospel*, vii–xii.

10.3.3. On the Function of Jesus' Death-and-Resurrection

As regards the role of Jesus' death-and-resurrection, it is not surprising that the focus in scholarship has been upon its soteriological function. The focus has been upon the necessity as well as the power and capacity of Jesus' death-and-resurrection for making salvation and eternal life available to those who believe. Another focus in scholarship is the Christological function of the crucifixion-and-resurrection. Dying on the cross and rising again is the task of the true Messiah (this fundamentally connects with the soteriological purpose mentioned above). Surprisingly, however, interpreters have generally not looked at the crucifixion-and-resurrection from the perspective of *σημείον*. That the crucifixion-and-resurrection is the supreme *σημείον* does not entail contradiction with or disregard of the soteriological and Christological functions of the cross-and-resurrection. Rather, it is precisely through the soteriological (the saving benefits) and Christological (the capacity for revealing who the true Christ is) functions of the cross-and-resurrection that this complex event can be described as the supreme *σημείον*.

10.4. A Point for Further Investigation

I cite just one point for potential future investigation. In the process of writing this thesis, it became evident to me that Passover is in some fundamental way connected with the notion of Johannine *σημείον*, yet I could not pursue it because it seemed to detract from my original purposes. Here was how the connection occurred to me. It is generally agreed that FG recounts three Passovers of Jesus' earthly ministry. The first demand for a *σημείον*, which belongs to the account of the temple "cleansing" (2:13–22), took place in the context of the first Passover (vv. 13, 22). As I have argued in this thesis (see ch. 5), Jesus' response to this demand took the form of an allusion to his death-and-resurrection as though Jesus was saying that his death-and-resurrection would be the *σημείον* that would legitimise his actions in the temple.

In the context of the second Passover (6:4) the second demand for a σημεῖον is lodged (6:30–31). Similarly in this case Jesus' response took the form of an allusion to his death-and-resurrection as the σημεῖον to reveal his identity and role as the giver of the bread of life. Now the question is this: What takes place on the third Passover in FG? Answer: Jesus' death-and-resurrection. What is the connection of Passover and σημεῖον? Does FE suggest that the supreme σημεῖον is the salvific sacrifice of the Lamb of God? If so, what becomes of the resurrection? Does it become the resurrection of the Lamb of God? Are there indications in John 20–21 that the resurrected Lord is, in some ways, portrayed as the risen Lamb of God? I think this is an interesting and potentially productive line of inquiry.

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