

God Incarnate

The Word Made Flesh

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The Gospel of John presents perhaps the highest Christology in the New Testament, providing us with resources to think more deeply about what it means to say that Jesus Christ is God. Although the authorship of the Gospel according to John and its compositional history have been much debated by biblical scholars, the text as we have received it provides a powerful, scriptural witness of Jesus's divinity and his pivotal role in helping us fully realize our potential as sons and daughters of God.¹

John clearly distinguishes Christ from the Father by emphasizing that he was sent from God and always does the will of the Father. But at the same time, John does not shy away from presenting Jesus as God. This became a source of tremendous theological speculation in the early Christian period as people sought to make sense of how to understand the oneness of God in light of the definite New Testament witness of Christ's divinity. The Gospel of John gives a

witness of two equally true points of Christ's nature: his divinity and his obedience to the Father. It was written so that "ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). In the same spirit, it can be of very practical personal benefit to deepen our understanding and faith in Christ's divinity.²

As Latter-day Saints, we often put our theological emphasis on our status as the children of God and thus are sometimes misunderstood as either putting ourselves on the same level as Christ or denying his divinity. The Latter-day Saint doctrine of a premortal existence for human beings and of Heavenly Father as the literal Father of our spirits represents a radically different way of understanding our relationship with God. While we do want to preserve the power of this Restoration doctrine of our being spirit children of God, it must be combined with an appreciation and reverence for the unique status of Christ as the Only Begotten and the one through whom we become "the sons [and daughters] of God" (John 1:12). The Gospel of John offers a powerful vision of the divinity of Christ, that he "was with God" and "was God." Many Latter-day Saints may be hesitant to take seriously the claim that Christ is God because of fear of slipping into Trinitarian thinking. Nevertheless, the Gospel of John's high Christology can help us more fully appreciate our need to *become* the sons and daughters of God through Christ's divine person and power.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus regularly testifies of his Father and how he gets his power and authority from him, but the same Gospel presents Jesus as God. John does not work out all the philosophical or theological nuances in the relationship of the Father and the Son as members of the Godhead, but John does present Jesus as God as well as the Son of God, using biblical imagery and language to clearly emphasize both Christ's divinity and the need for his divinity to take on mortality. The biblical images and language that John uses would have been meaningful for his audience to testify of Christ's divinity and to show how that divinity is manifest in his incarnation. We will explore John's presentation by looking at Jesus as the Word, Christ

as the Creator, and Jesus as the Lamb of God, as well as by examining overarching patterns that link Jesus to Jehovah, such as the I Am statements. Given the depth of this topic, these examinations provide tools for meditation and closer reading but do not presume to exhaust John's presentation of Jesus Christ as divine.

The Word Was Made Flesh and Dwelt among Us

The Gospel of John sets out a clear preexistence Christology, beginning by referencing Genesis 1 and the Creation: "*In the beginning* God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1; emphasis added). "*In the beginning* was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1; emphasis added). In this way the Gospel not only proposes a powerful preexistence Christology, it also establishes that the Word, or Logos, is the means by which God creates.³ The Logos is the equivalent of the Old Testament Hebrew term *dabar*. In addition to the repetition of "God said" in the creation account of Genesis, in Psalm 147:18 God's creative power is connected to his word: "He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow." Here his word is "the proclamation of the creating power and loving will of God . . . which acts as a power of creation and proclaims God's will."⁴ John is using language that recalls the creation and Old Testament language for God's creative power.

While there were contemporary philosophical issues related to the concept of the Logos, the Gospel of John is distinct from the philosophical or theological efforts of contemporary Jews or later Christians. As T. E. Pollard argues, "this conjunction of divine and human, Logos and flesh, God and a man, is nowhere defined or analysed by St. John; it is simply part of his witness that this Jesus is the God-man through faith in whom men may have eternal life."⁵ John seems to simply use biblical language that his audience would have understood to give his witness of the paradoxical truth of Jesus's humanity and divinity.

A critical part of John's incarnation Christology is not just that the Word was in the beginning with God and was God, but that the Word was made flesh. The term for "flesh" here in John is the same found in the Septuagint of Isaiah that emphasizes the "transient nature of what is created."⁶

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. (Isaiah 40:6–8)

The Word is eternal, but flesh is as the grass. This verse contains the paradox of the incarnation and some of the likely tension for those who were taught it. John is emphasizing that the Word was made flesh, meaning that the eternal took on a temporary body, a paradoxical contrast difficult for many of this era.⁷

In addition to the biblical allusions with the term *flesh*, John uses another Old Testament term that can help us understand the condescension of God. He declares that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14), but this could literally be translated "tabernacled [*eskēnōsen*] among us" from *skeneōō*, to dwell in a tent. In the Septuagint the noun form of that verb, *skēnē*, is used to translate the Hebrew term for tabernacle (*miškān*). John is the only New Testament Gospel to use this verb. In Exodus 25:8 the Lord explains why they are being commanded to build the tabernacle: "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." God was able to dwell among his people by having a tabernacle or temple as his dwelling place.⁸

In the Old Testament the tabernacle or temple was a place where the glory of the Lord could be manifest. In Exodus 40:34–35 we read: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and

the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” John continues this connection to the Old Testament tabernacle by emphasizing the “glory” that was made manifest in the incarnation. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). In the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek Septuagint, “glory” “denotes the visible manifestation accompanying a theophany, which, in the Fourth Gospel was manifest in the signs of Jesus.”⁹ God’s glory is manifest when he reveals himself. Jesus’s miracles, called “signs” by John, are an important way in which Jesus reveals his divinity.

Another way that, paradoxically, the incarnate Lord reveals his glory is in his death. In the Gospel of John, the verb *glorify* “is used distinctively to signify the dying of Jesus. . . . It was a dying which revealed a life of *hesed we-emet* [grace and truth] faithfulness to the Father, who sent him, in compassion and faithfulness, to his own.”¹⁰ “The incarnate life of Jesus revealed God’s glory as *hesed we-emet* [grace and truth], and this was sharply focused in the moment of his dying.”¹¹ During Jesus’s suffering, he was manifesting God’s glory. At the end of the Last Supper, as he went to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus explained: “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him” (John 13:31–32). Then in the Intercessory Prayer Jesus exclaimed, “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: . . . I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:1, 4–5). Unlike some who might not be able reconcile the incarnation and the glory of God, John testifies of the paradox that only by being in a mortal tabernacle, and therefore being subject to suffering and death, could the glory of Jesus’s submission to the Father and his perfect love be manifest.

John’s use of the expression “tabernacled among us” gives deeper insight to the angel’s teaching to King Benjamin in Mosiah 3: “The

Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay" (Mosiah 3:5). Just as John testifies, we can see the incarnation as God (the Word made flesh) coming to dwell in an impermanent tabernacle of clay, just as previously God had come down to dwell in the temporary tabernacle in the wilderness.

All Things Were Made by Him

Another way we see John's witness of Jesus as God is his identification of Christ as the Creator. This identification is designed not only as a witness of his previous divine acts from the foundation of the world, but as a framework to understand the new life that Jesus comes to give. Having confidence that Jesus created the world gives confidence that he can re-create us in his image, as his sons and daughters. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12–13). John frames "the work of Jesus [as] the work of creation,"¹² but broadly conceived so that "it refers not only to what is established at the beginning, but also to what is brought to fulfillment at the end. Creation includes consummation and embraces therefore what can also be called redemption."¹³ It has been argued that John's introductory phrase in chapter 1, "in the beginning," was designed not only to identify the Word as the means of creation, but to point out that it was John's purpose "for the *whole* of the gospel to be read in light of Genesis, that it is in itself a new 'first book.'"¹⁴

John seems to echo the biblical account of creation in a spiritual parallel between the giving of life to Adam through breath in Genesis 2:7 ("And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul") and John 20:22 when the risen Lord breathed on the apostles "and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." As Murray Rae notes, "Like the Creator in Genesis 2—indeed, precisely because he

is the same one through whom all things came to be (John 1:3, 10)—Jesus has the power to give life. Again, this is not mere existence, but life in its fullness—that life which is God’s purpose from the beginning.”¹⁵ The connection between the reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost and a new life in Christ is a critical gospel insight that can help to explain the concept of being “born of God.”

After Jesus tells Nicodemus about the need to be “born again,” he uses the concept of breath in association with life in the Spirit. Jesus tells him: “The wind [*pneuma*, breath, spirit] bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). This discussion with Nicodemus follows the connection of Spirit and breath in Genesis 2. “Just as the spirit of God blows mysteriously at the dawn of creation, so too here, the blowing of the Spirit is a portent of new creation.”¹⁶ Jesus’s use of the term *breath* here might also be an allusion to Psalm 104:29–30: “Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created.” Connecting Jesus as the creator of the world with the re-creation that he offers to those who believe and follow him is a central point of the Fourth Gospel.

Jesus’s works bear testimony of him and point to spiritual realities: “one discerns in the work that Jesus performs the fulfillment of God’s purposes in creation.”¹⁷ In each of his healings we learn that we were created to be whole. In each of his miraculous interventions with water and food we learn that we were created to be nourished with his abundance. Marianne Meye Thompson observes that “John interprets the miracles by labeling them ‘signs.’ That is, they are tokens of Jesus’ own identity as the agent of God’s salvation . . . the Johannine miracles acclaim him as the agent through whom God brings life to the world.”¹⁸ John uses the Greek term translated “sign” seventeen times in his Gospel, compared to nine in Matthew, six in Mark, and nine in Luke.¹⁹ In the Synoptic Gospels the writers more often use other words such as *dynamis*, or “powerful deed or work,” to describe the miracles of Jesus.²⁰ Out of the seventeen uses of the

term *sēmeion*, or “sign,” sixteen of those usages are in the first half of the Gospel of John, known as the “Book of Signs.”²¹ “The signs of the Fourth Gospel are essential manifestations of the creative power of the incarnate Word (John 1:14) and are the very means by which the identity of Jesus, who was with and who was God (John 1:1), is revealed.”²² Through the carefully organized presentation of these “signs” to echo the days of creation, the Gospel of John allows the accounts of these miracles to function as tokens of the divine identity of Jesus.²³

In the Gospel of John, Jesus declares: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). From a Restoration point of view, we can appreciate how, through the gift of the Holy Ghost, the new life that is in Christ is made available to those who believe and covenant to follow him. While Paul, not John, uses the language of believers becoming a “new creature” “in Christ” (see 2 Corinthians 5:17), “John does speak of ‘new life,’ and it is clear that by virtue of the transforming work of Christ the things of creation are made new.”²⁴ The book of Revelation likewise gives us a vision of Jesus’s work of re-creation, picking up the same when it relates, “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. . . . He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Revelation 21:5, 7). All the miracles or “signs” that Jesus performed point to his creative power and ability to give life and can build our confidence in this ultimate creation of giving us eternal life and being re-created as sons and daughters in his image in celestial glory.

Behold the Lamb of God, Which Taketh Away the Sin of the World

Once we appreciate the extent to which “John’s very concept of glory is ‘anchored . . . to the paradox of the crucifixion,’”²⁵ we are better prepared to see the subtle ways in which he points to Jesus’s mission of salvation throughout his Gospel.²⁶ Some have discounted John’s use of terms that show up only in the first chapter, but a strong case can

be made that “though ‘Lamb,’ like ‘Logos,’ appears only at the head of the Gospel, its placement there is programmatic. The Evangelist wants us to read the entire book as the story of the Logos-become-flesh who laid down his life as God’s Lamb.”²⁷ In chapter 2, at the wedding at Cana, the shift from water to wine and Jesus’s comment that “mine hour is not yet come” (John 2:4) point toward his final sacrifice because at the cross blood and water come out of his side. “Blood and water, water and wine. John is telling us of the transformation from old life to new, from the blandness of water to the richness of wine. Is it new life we want? In linking the first sign to the seventh, John is telling us how we may have it. The new creation comes about because of the work of Jesus, brought to its climax on the cross.”²⁸ John’s entire Gospel narrative builds up to his “hour,” “the hour when he is lifted up on the cross and his glory is made known.”²⁹ In the incarnation Christology of the Gospel of John, Jesus’s humanity made his death possible and his divinity made his death glorious and redemptive.

Thompson observes that “one of the striking features of John’s account is the way in which he presents Jesus as deliberately advancing towards his death with the full knowledge that it accomplished God’s salvation of the world.”³⁰ John’s use of the sacrificial language of Lamb of God in chapter 1 ties to the hour of his sacrifice: “Jesus’ hour, the lifting up of the Son of Man, is the moment toward which, according to John, the whole of Jesus’ ministry is directed. The signs of the Gospel are to be understood in this context as a foreshadowing of this glory and a participation ahead of time in the new life that is to come.”³¹ Again, the structure of the Gospel of John has the first six “signs” of his divinity in the first half, and then presents the account of his crucifixion in the second half as the seventh sign, helping the readers to make sense of the glory of his sacrifice rather than to see it simply as a defeat.

So, while there is not extensive explicit elaboration on this Lamb of God imagery in the Gospel of John, it is clearly central to John’s vision of Jesus’s identity and the meaning of Christ’s incarnation—to

become mortal to give his life as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). John’s witness mirrors that of Abinadi who testified that “God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people” and “after working many mighty miracles among the children of men, he shall be led, yea, even as Isaiah said, as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth” (Mosiah 15:1, 6).

I Am

Just as the use of Logos and the Lamb in the first chapter create a framework for thinking about Jesus’s divinity and the purpose of his incarnation, the biblical “I Am” (or in Greek, *egō eimi*) statements in John can also be seen as a structuring device “for invoking [a] christological framework and thought about Jesus.”³² In passages unique to the Gospel of John, Jesus gives the Greek equivalent of the divine name that Moses was given by Jehovah and is then subsequently threatened with stoning for blasphemy. At the burning bush, Moses asks what name to give the children of Israel when they ask who sent him. We read that “God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you” (Exodus 3:14). While scholars discuss both linguistic and theological issues with these I Am statements, a compelling argument can be made that these passages should be understood as Christ’s self-revelation of his divinity.³³

There are two sets of I Am statements in the Gospel of John, and they can be categorized as either absolute I Am statements or I Am statements with predicates, that is, where Jesus is equating himself with something. Significantly, in both Hebrew- and Greek-language Old Testaments, one can likewise identify seven I Am statements made by Jehovah.³⁴ By having Jesus echo these seven biblical pronouncements of YHWH’s unique divinity, the Gospel of John powerfully asserts his divinity.³⁵ The statements with predicates are easier to distinguish in English:

- ✦ “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35, 41, 48)
- ✦ “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12; 9:5)
- ✦ “I am the door [gate] of the sheep” (John 10:7, 9)
- ✦ “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11, 14)
- ✦ “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25)
- ✦ “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6)
- ✦ “I am the true vine” (John 15:1)³⁶

The absolute I Am *egō eimi* statements, however, are more easily buried in the translation, and while they are more fiercely debated, they provide stronger identification of Jesus with the God of the Old Testament.³⁷

- ✦ To the Samaritan woman: “Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he” (John 4:26 KJV) or “Jesus said to her, ‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you’” (John 4:26 New Revised Standard Version)
- ✦ To the disciples on the boat: “But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid” (John 6:20)
- ✦ At the temple: “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he” (John 8:24)
- ✦ and “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he” (John 8:28)
- ✦ and “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58)
- ✦ At the Last Supper: “Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he” (John 13:19)
- ✦ At the arrest: “Jesus saith unto them, I am he” (John 18:5, 6, 8)³⁸

These absolute I Am statements seem to function as places where the Gospel of John has Jesus directly identifying himself as Jehovah.

One theological issue that gives some scholars pause when Jesus seems to use these statements as a simple way to identify himself with

YHWH, or Jehovah, relates to the passage in John 8:28 where Jesus says: “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.” The concern some have with this passage has been articulated in this way: “It is simply intolerable that Jesus should be made to say, ‘I am God, the supreme God of the Old Testament, and being God I do as I am told.’”³⁹ In some ways this reflects an effort to preserve the sovereignty and perfection of God by bringing into question the idea that Jesus is really claiming to be God with this I Am language. For some the idea of an obedient God can seem untenable. If he is actually God, what would be greater than him that he would he need to obey? For many Christians, however, and certainly for us as Latter-day Saints, John’s statement seems perfectly reasonable. John shows us Christ with his divinity manifest in his submission to his Father, just as it was manifest in his incarnation in the flesh. The Gospel of John testifies of Jesus Christ as God, the Creator, the Great I Am, and also as the perfect Son of God who came to do the will of the Father.

The Divine Word

Through repeated connections to Old Testament imagery and language, the Fourth Gospel testifies that Jesus is God. It thereby witnesses that he has power to heal and change our very natures, to re-create us in his image and give us the kind of life that he experiences, if we believe and accept the gift he is offering. Only faith in a God who is mighty to save can allow us to be one with him as he is one with the Father (see John 17:11, 21–24). John testifies that Christ is the perfect Son, including being human with us and setting an example, but also that he is the Lord God Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth. He testifies that the Word who was with God and who was God came down into a frail, mortal tabernacle to be the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

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Notes

1. For an overview of the consensus of most scholars on these questions, see Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, ed. Francis J. Moloney (New York: Doubleday, 2003). For an argument for earlier authorship, see Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011). We refer to John as the author for simplicity, but are not making claims about a particular theory of authorship or compositional history.
2. Significantly, the Book of Mormon also witnesses that Jesus Christ was God Incarnate. In the title page itself, Moroni explains that he is writing to convince “the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God.” Abinadi testifies that in the mortal life of Christ we have the fulfillment of the promise that “God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people” (Mosiah 15:1). Christ himself uses language very close to that in John 1 in 3 Nephi 9: “Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name. I came unto my own, and my own received me not. . . . And as many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God” (3 Nephi 9:15–17). Here we find both the emphasis on Christ as God and as Creator that is articulated in John as well as his role in our becoming the “sons of God,” that by having sufficient faith we can be re-created, reborn through him.

3. The idea that God's Word had almost a separate existence had previously been articulated by Philo, a Hellenized Jew living in Alexandria in the early first century. Pollard argues that the Logos-concept functioned for John as only a "point of contact" and that his use went beyond the Hellenistic worldview, having deep roots in Jewish and Old Testament meaning. T. E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 6, 13.
4. Martin Hengel, "The Prologue of the Gospel of John as the Gateway to Christological Truth," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 273.
5. Pollard, *Johannine Christology*, 19.
6. John Painter, "The Prologue as an Hermeneutical Key to Reading the Fourth Gospel," in *Studies in the Gospel of John and Its Christology*, ed. Joseph Verheyden et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 56.
7. For an introduction to some of the concerns that some gentiles would have had about the message of the incarnation and resurrection, see Jennifer C. Lane, "Jews and Greeks: The Broader Context for Writing the New Testament," in *How the New Testament Came to Be*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Frank F. Judd Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 62–77.
8. Paul A. Rainbow, *Johannine Theology: The Gospel, The Epistles and the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 174. Painter, "Incarnation of the Word," 56.
9. Painter, "Incarnation of the Word, 57."
10. Painter, "Incarnation of the Word," 57.
11. Painter, "Incarnation of the Word," 57.
12. Murray Rae, "The Testimony of Works in the Christology of John's Gospel," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 295.
13. Rae, "Testimony of Works," 296. See also Anthony M. Moore, *Signs of Salvation: The Theme of Creation in John's Gospel* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2013), 49.

14. Moore, *Signs of Salvation*, 134.
15. Rae, "Testimony of Works," 299.
16. Rae, "Testimony of Works," 300.
17. Rae, "Testimony of Works," 298.
18. Marianne Meye Thompson, "The Historical Jesus and the Johannine Christ," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 24. This is in contrast to the role of miracles in the Synoptic Gospels: "whereas the Synoptic miracles are linked to the fulfillment of the messianic age (Matt. 11:4; Luke 7:22) and to the manifestation of God's kingdom" (p. 24).
19. Moore, *Signs of Salvation*, 133.
20. Eric D. Huntsman, *The Miracles of Jesus* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014), 3.
21. Moore, *Signs of Salvation*, 133. John 12:37 is the last of the first group of usages of the term.
22. Moore, *Signs of Salvation*, 134.
23. Moore observes that "the seven miracles of Jesus described in the narrative of the gospel correspond closely to the 'seven days' of creation described in the opening chapter of Genesis, and so do make Jesus' divinity explicit. They reveal him to be at one with the Father (cf. John 10:30), manifesting the creativity of the Father and reaping the harvest (Jn 4:34–35; cf. 17:4) and, as the Resurrection and the Life, breathing the life of the Father, the one who sent him (Jn 4:34; 5:24; 5:30; 5:37; etc.) into the created order" (Moore, *Signs of Salvation*, 134).
24. Rae, "Testimony of Works," 296.
25. Rainbow, *Johannine Theology*, 179; citing Günther Bornkamm, "Towards the Interpretation of John's Gospel: A Discussion of *The Testament of Jesus*," in *The Interpretation of John*, ed. John Ashton, Issues in Religion and Theology 9 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 88.
26. Eric D. Huntsman provides an important discussion of how the Gospel of John consistently frames Jesus as the paschal lamb in the imagery of his being "lifted up" and having his flesh eaten by believers, as well as John's timing of the crucifixion to coincide with the slaying of the lambs by the

- priests in "The Lamb of God: Unique Aspects of the Passion Narrative in John," in *Behold the Lamb of God: An Easter Celebration*, ed. Richard N. Holzapfel, Frank F. Judd Jr., and Thomas A. Wayment (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2008), 52–55.
27. Rainbow, *Johannine Theology*, 183.
 28. Rae, "Testimony of Works," 308.
 29. Rae, "Testimony of Works," 303.
 30. Thompson, "Historical Jesus," 31.
 31. Rae, "Testimony of Works," 303.
 32. Stanley E. Porter, *John, His Gospel, and Jesus: In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 148.
 33. See Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel* *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 24 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 37. "At times, the expression is used simply meaning 'I am' without indicating a claim to deity on Jesus' part. At other times, especially in the seven absolute 'I am' sayings, Jesus' deity is clearly implied" (p. 37). "These pronouncements constitute clear allusions to Yahweh's own sevenfold self-declaration of unique and unrivaled divinity that occurs in the OT. John's point is clear: Jesus is Yahweh" (p. 125).
 34. See Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 245–47.
 35. Bauckham, *Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 247.
 36. See Bauckham, *Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 243.
 37. See Bauckham, *Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 246.
 38. One issue that some scholars bring up about these references is that in some cases the "I am" might simply be part of the normal conversation rather than a reference to the divine name (see Bauckham, *Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 244). Another point of debate centers on the Old Testament reference. The Septuagint uses a slightly different phrase than *egō eimi* in Exodus 3:14, *egō eimi ho ōn* ("I am the one who is"). Bauckham, *Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 246. The Hebrew for I Am in Exodus 3:14 might, however, be the source of the reference. See Bauckham, *Testimony*

of the Beloved Disciple, 246. Another Greek language biblical reference point for *egō eimi* looks to Deuteronomy 32:39 and a number of places in Isaiah when Jehovah declares: “See now that I, even I, *am he*, and there is no god with me” (Deuteronomy 32:39; emphasis added) and “Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and with the last; *I am he*” (Isaiah 41:4; emphasis added).

39. C. K. Barrett, “Christocentric or Theocentric? Observations on the Theological Method of the Fourth Gospel,” in *Essays on John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 12. There are a variety of views about the subordination of the Son to the Father in Christian thought. Some traditions, particularly Orthodox, are more comfortable with the idea of subordination while others see it as a heresy.