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THE SIGNIFICANCE  
OF  
THE DESIGNATIONS OF JESUS  
IN  
THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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**CHAPTER I**  
**INTRODUCTION**

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. The Problem

The entire Bible may be said truly to abound in designations of Deity. The Gospels richly abound in names and titles of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel is deserving of particular mention in this respect. This book reveals not only a fuller general use of titles used by others of Jesus but also a larger use of self designations by Jesus than the other Gospels, or portions of the Scriptures. These titles are distributed throughout the book, beginning with the very first verse. People in the Gospel, of all shades of understanding and belief, use them; the author betrays his fondness for them; the common people debate their meaning; the hostile Jews argue endlessly over their import. Why they are present and what they mean, forms the problem of this study.

#### B. Justification of the Study of This Problem.

The reasons for undertaking the study of the designations of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are:

1. Any study of the titles of Jesus is a study in the field of evidence concerning Jesus; of crystallised opinion, succinctly put, directly or indirectly expressed.

Through these titles we see contemporary opinion of Him; the convictions of those who beheld Him

in the flesh, associated daily with Him, and who felt in their lives the force of His challenging personality; the evidence of eye-witnesses, which is evidence of the first rank.

Through the majority of these titles we behold crystallised Biblical opinion concerning Him, opinion which had undergone a process of development at the hands of a multitude of religious leaders from the earliest days of revelation unto the day of Christ, opinion which gave, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Him - testimony rich alike in age and association as in content, the evidence of the prophet, philosopher, sage and saint, the testimony of centuries.

Through many of these titles we behold Jesus adding His own contribution to the body of evidence concerning Himself, a contribution especially outstanding in the Gospel according to John and comprising evidence illuminating and irrefutable.

2. Any study of the titles of Jesus is a study of the claims of Jesus, the claims made by His friends and disciples as well as the claims advanced by Himself. These claims are embodied, portrayed and proclaimed in and by these titles. Into the richness of these titles has been poured the fullness of His claims, and to study one is to study both.

3. Any study of the titles of Jesus is a study

of the Master Himself, a study of His person and His work, for the titles deal directly with the various relations which Jesus bears both to God and to man. This fact alone should justify this study.

4. And finally, a study of the titles of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is a study of them in that environment in which it may be truly said that they have come into their own. From first to last, the titles pervade the book. John the Baptist, Jesus, the disciples, the author, the friends of Jesus, wayside travelers, the Jewish leaders, the common people, groups at the great religious feasts, the Roman governor, the soldiers - all have their share in the use and discussion of these terms. The Fourth Gospel literally glows with designations of Jesus. And as an illustration of the author's fondness for titles we note that in lieu of giving his own name anywhere in the book, he rejoices in designating himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

#### C. Plan of Procedure.

Inasmuch as our particular inquiry will be into the significance of these designations of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel as that significance relates to His person and work, we purpose to accomplish this in three broad steps or parts, as follows:

The first part will consist of a general canvass of the fundamental element in this study, to wit, the Jewish

conception of designations. The period to be canvassed begins with the earliest days of Jewish history and continues to the time of Christ and His apostles. The design of this will be to furnish background for the particular study of each individual designation of Jesus in this Gospel.

The second part will be concerned with the task of eliminating from the total number of designations used of Christ in the Gospel all those names and titles which are used in a purely designatory sense together with those titles which may best be called honorific. This is necessary in order that we may have the remaining titles to deal with as a group having one type of content.

And in the third part we will consider the so-called Messianic designations, both the old and the new, searching out their sources, noting the various facts related to their use, the occasion, the method or manner, and endeavor to evaluate the significance of these titles for the person and work of our Lord. This course, we feel, should produce sufficient evidence to serve as a basis for a just conclusion of the issues involved, and may lead us to affirm, even as one long ago did (also on evidence), "My Lord and My God."

#### D. The Sources.

The primary sources for this study, in addition to the Fourth Gospel, are the various books of the Canonical



and Apochryphal Old Testament, and the religious literature of the Jews besides the Scriptures. And indeed, if we found sources elsewhere, we would be more surprised than benefited. For the Christ was of the tribe of Judah and it is eminently fitting that the foreshadowing of Him should arise among the members of Judah's house.

The canonical books which especially provide sources for these designations are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 1 Samuel, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Malachi.

The extra-canonical books which emply these designations and contribute toward their development are: The Book of Enoch, The Psalms of Solomon, The Apocalypse of Baruch, The Second Book of Esdras and the Sibylline Oracles. Most of the references, however, in these books to the titles of Jesus, are not to the titles generally, but to one title in particular, namely, Messiah.

#### E. Explanations.

1. The Greek text for this study is the text of Westcott and Hort, and the Greek terms appearing on these pages are from that text unless otherwise noted in the body.

2. For the purpose of this study, the term "Messianic" will, unless otherwise noted at the time, be understood in its distinctive Christian sense, with special reference to the question of the Deity of the Messiah.

Hence we shall not use the terms "Messianic" and "Deistical" because for us Messianic includes Deistical. This we believe is in strict keeping with the meaning which the author of this Gospel placed on the term, who in the very climax of his book described Jesus as "The Christ, the Son of God".

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PART ONE  
CHAPTER II  
DESIGNATIONS  
/ ACCORDING TO THE JEWS

PART ONE

CHAPTER II

DESIGNATIONS, ACCORDING TO THE JEWS

A. Introduction.

Like all other peoples, the Jews employed names to designate persons, places and objects and to distinguish them one from the other. They doubtless employed some names with no other thought or purpose in mind. But with a large proportion of their names, especially those found in the Bible, it is most strikingly true that the purpose of the name performs a far wider service than that of a mere designation. It is due to this fact that the study of these names makes at once a broad, interesting and challenging study. Dr. G. B. Gray, a leading authority in this field says of this study:<sup>1</sup>

"The importance attached to names makes the study of them a valuable means to appreciating the religious and social ideas of the Hebrews."

And hence to appreciate in a fuller way the various designations used for Jesus in the Fourth Gospel we will review some of the more significant facts pertaining to the Jewish conception of names, beginning with the earliest records and extending through the time of Christ and His Apostles, which is the period with which this study is concerned, and during which period Jewish onomatology

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1. Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. III p.481, Article, "Name."

attained and maintained uniformity. In this way we hope to sketch something of the background of this wide and important field.

#### B. The Names of Places.

We will begin with the names of places. Many of these with which the Jews had to deal, were already in existence in the numerous places into which they came, and so do not properly form a part of our inquiry, not being given them by the Jews. But those names which were of their own selection bear witness repeatedly to the practice of putting rich content in names, especially along the following lines:

A place was named for some outstanding physical characteristic, as, for example, the name given to the portion of Joshua in the dividing of Canaan was "Timnath-serah", or "Portion of Abundance", because of its exceeding fruitfulness.<sup>1</sup>

In other cases, a place was named in description of some historical occurrence known to have transpired in that locality, as with Mizpah, where Laban and Jacob, deciding to live at peace towards each other, set Jehovah as "Watch" between them.<sup>2</sup>

More significant still, many places received their names because in them, great spiritual experiences had laid hold upon men. It was such an experience that led Jacob to name an otherwise unattractive place the very

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1. Joshua 19:50
2. Genesis 32:49

"House of God", Bethel;<sup>1</sup> and another, the place of his wrestling with the angel, "The Face of God", Peniel.<sup>2</sup>

A most illuminating light is thrown upon the Jewish conception of names by the readiness with which they gave a new name to a place when they felt that for any reason such a thing should be done. An example for this is the change of the name for Kiriath-arba "The City of Arba" (which Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim) to Hebron.<sup>3</sup>

Significant also is that large group of places the names of which embody the name of God; two instances of this being the names "Jehovah-jireh" and "El Elohe Israel". The latter means, God, the God of Israel; the former, Jehovah will provide, and is the name which Abraham gave to a mount in the land of Moriah where he went to offer Isaac for a burnt offering.<sup>4</sup>

#### C. Personal Names.

##### 1. Names of special preference.

With regard to personal names, the Jews have manifested marked preferences for names which in various degrees permitted the expression of their religious interests, or revealed their character traits. As illus-

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1. Genesis 28:17,19.
2. Genesis 32:30
3. Joshua 14:15
4. Genesis 22:2, 14; 34:20.

trations of the popularity of this custom in ancient Israel, the following cases will suffice:

The names which had reference to some attribute of Deity, as Ishmael, "Jehovah seeth", or Jochebed, "Jehovah is Glorious".<sup>1</sup> Names which described some relation between God and man, as Lemuel, "Belonging to God", Elimelik, "God is King", Jehosophat, "Jehovah judges", Abijah, "Jehovah my Father".<sup>2</sup>

Names which mentioned some act of God, as Jonathan, "Jehovah gives", and Eleazar, "God helps".<sup>3</sup>

Names which expressed hope or thanksgiving, or made some petition of God, as Joshua, "Jehovah is Salvation", and Samuel, "Asked of God".<sup>4</sup>

Names designed to serve as a pledge of Divine guidance, as Ishmael, "God seeth", and Jedediah, "Beloved of Jehovah", (the name given to Solomon by Nathan the prophet).<sup>5</sup>

Names designed to serve as a prophecy, as Shearjashub, "A Remnant will return", and Maher-shalah-hashbaz, "The Spoil speedeth, the Prey hasteth".<sup>6</sup>

Names designed to display some prominent personal

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1. Genesis 16:11; 6:18-20.
2. Proverbs 31:4, Ruth 1:2, 1 Kings 15:24; 11:29.
3. 1.Sam. 13:2; Ex. 6:25.
4. Num. 13:16; 1 Sam. 1:20.
5. Gen. 16:11, 11 Sam. 12:25.
6. Isa. 7:3; 8:1-4.

trait, as Jacob, "Supplanter".<sup>1</sup>

Names intended to indicate a man's true nature, as Israel, "Prince of God", and Nabal, "Fool".<sup>2</sup>

Names intended to serve as an omen, as Benjamin, "Son of my right hand".<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Use and Development of Personal Names.

A name was used to express authority, as shown in the following incidents relating to the use of names of kings, conquerors and husbands. Jezebel sent letters "in Ahab's name" in connection with the seizure of Naboth's vineyard.<sup>4</sup> Captured cities had the names of their conqueror's "called over" them, signaling the authority of their new owners.<sup>5</sup> Women had the names of their husbands "called over" them, signaling their subjection to their authority in marriage.<sup>6</sup>

The term "name" came to mean "fame, renown, reputation, character gained or expressed".<sup>7</sup> Instances are at hand in which "name" meant posterity, or issue, as in

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1. Gen. 25:26.
2. Gen. 32:28, 1 Sam. 25:25.
3. Gen. 35:18.
4. 1 Kgs. 21:8.
5. 11 Sam. 12:26-28.
6. Isa. 4:1.
7. Davis, John D.: "Name" in the Intern. Standard Bible Ency. Vol. 1V. p.2112. See also 11 Chron. 26:8,15; Prov. 22:1; Zeph. 3:20.



the statement, "to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel".<sup>1</sup> The name was even used as an equivalent to personality and character, as evidenced by the statement, "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven",<sup>2</sup> and by this quotation from the last book in the New Testament:<sup>3</sup>

Thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.

#### D. Names of Deity.

The more popular general names of Deity were Elohim, Adonai, Shaddai and El. Elohim, the most common of original appellatives of God, is plural, the plural of majesty or excellence. It is thought to signify "He who is the object of fear or reverence", or "He with whom one who is afraid takes refuge". Adonai is a name for God occurring often as a substitute for Jehovah and meaning "My Lord". Shaddai is a name descriptive of the overpowering strength of God and is usually translated "The Almighty". El is a common name for God and is used largely in poetry and prophetic prose and in construction of place and personal names.<sup>4</sup>

The particular covenant name, and distinctive per-

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1. Deut. 25:7.
2. Luke 10:20. See also Acts 1:15 where "names" in the Greek is translated "persons" in the A.R.V.
3. Rev. 3:4.
4. Einstein, J.D.: "Names of God" in the Jewish Ency. Vol.9, p.162.

sonal name, of God among the Jews was Jehovah. It occurs in the Old Testament 6,823 times and is understood to signify "He who is self existing, self-sufficient", that is, "He who lives", "The Source and Author of Life".<sup>1</sup>

Some characteristic descriptive titles of God are: Jehovah of Hosts, The Rock, The Rock of Israel, The Redeemer, The King of Jacob, The King of Israel, The Saviour, The God of Israel and The Holy One of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

The significance of "Name" or "The Name" as applied to God is revealed in many passages of the Scriptures, of which the following with their explanations may constitute a summary sufficient for our purposes at present. The divine name is often spoken of as equivalent to the divine presence, or power, or glory, as in the expressions "Thy name is near" and "My name is in Him".<sup>3</sup> To mention Jehovah's name is to express confidence in His ability and willingness to help. This is seen in the expressions "Jehovah's name is to be praised", and "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust".<sup>4</sup> Love, joy and praise are elicited at the contemplation of His name, as in the exhortation, "Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee".<sup>5</sup>

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1. McLaughlin, J.F.: "Name of God", in the Jewish Ency., Vol.1X, p.162.
2. Isa. 13:4; 44:6; 30:29; 41:14; 4:21; 43:3; 45:15; 1:4.
3. Ps. 75:1; Ex. 23:20-23.
4. Ps. 113:3,7.
5. Ps. 5:11. See also 7:17 and 9:2.

The glory and power of God are comprised in His name, as in the exclamation, "How excellent is thy name in all the earth".<sup>1</sup> His name is closely associated with the sanctuary and the altar, as the following regulation will testify:<sup>2</sup>

"But unto the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek and thither shalt thou come".

The pious Jew would not even mention the name of any false god, in accordance with the following Mosaic statute, "And make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth."<sup>3</sup> The blessedness of that relation which Israel bears to Jehovah is sometimes expressed in the phrase "to walk in the name" of Jehovah, as witnessed in the prediction that on the return from exile, Israel shall "walk .. in his name".<sup>4</sup> When God revealed a new name to His people, it described a new personal relation He entered into with them, as in the expression, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour".<sup>5</sup> Jehovah's name denoted His character, as witnessed in the assertions, "Thy name, O Jehovah, endureth forever", and "Thy name, which thou hast given 'put upon' me".<sup>6</sup> Of such importance was the right

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1. Ps. 8:1.
2. Deut. 12:5.
3. Ex. 23:13.
4. Zech. 10:12.
5. Isa. 45:15.
6. Ps. 135:13. See also Isa. 26:8, "The desire of our soul is to thy name". See also John 17:11 where it is said that God has put His name (His essential nature) upon Jesus.

attitude toward His name that one of the great Ten Commandments was devoted to it.<sup>1</sup> The term, "name" came to be used as an absolute equivalent of the name of Jehovah, as witnessed by the statement, "The son of the Israelitish woman blasphemed the Name, and cursed; and they brought him to Moses".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ex. 20:7, "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain". See also Deut. 5:11.
2. Leviticus 24:11. See Hall, W.P., "A Remarkable Biblical Discovery", page 34, where is stated:  
"Apparently from the time that ancient Israel believed the true God had forbidden them to pronounce His name in its original form -- according to Leviticus 24:11, 16 in the Septuagint (greek) Old Testament where the expression "blasphemeth the Name" as used in the English version is rendered "names (or utters) the Name", and where such naming or utterance, of the Name of God in its original form is forbidden under penalty of death by stoning -- they habitually substituted for the Name as originally expressed, in their vocal prayers, vocal readings, and quotations from the Scriptures, and when they had occasion otherwise to speak or utter the same, the word Adonai in the Hebrew, which is Moryo in the Aramaic, Kurios in the Greek, Dominus in the Latin and Lord in the English".  
See also article by McLaughlin, J.F., in the Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 9, p.160, entitled "Name of God", where we read: "Like other Hebrew proper names, the name of God is more than a mere distinguishing title. It represents the Hebrew conception of the divine nature or character, and of the relation of God to His people. It represents the Deity as He is known to His worshippers, and stands for all those attributes which He bears in relation to them and which are revealed to them through His activity on their behalf. A new manifestation of His interest or care may give rise to a new name. So also an old name may acquire new content and significance through new and varied experience of these sacred relations".

### E. Summary.

In view of the foregoing facts, we feel justified in making the observation that the Jews attached a singular importance to names as evidenced by the following particulars:

1. The seriousness with which these ancient people of God viewed this whole matter of the selection and employment of names becomes evident upon even a slight contact with these names, and our appreciation of this seriousness becomes all the clearer and stronger as we view the wide field into which their exertions in this matter led them, and as we study the various purposes which they made names to serve.

2. The richness and variety of the classes and kinds of names which the Jews applied to places, or to persons, or to Jehovah, their God, is surely so evident that he who "runs may read", for the Jews have left indelibly the stamp of their most colorful life upon the places of their earthly pilgrimage, and their personal names have borne witness to a fine appreciation and evaluation of the many-sidedness of both human and Divine character, while from the names of Deity an impressive theology could be readily established.

3. The intimate connection between the name of a person and his personality or his character is one of the revelations which stands out most prominently.

In their conception, a person's nature was expressed by his name.

4. The remarkable and wide spread use of the term "name" or "the name" in substitution for the actual personal name is a fact which lends its own peculiar emphasis to the conclusion that names were considered most important by the Hebrews.

5. And, finally, the onomatology of the Jews, even from this brief survey, reveals them as a people whose life in all its phases was permeated with religious ideals, and who, because they saw great possibilities in names, were fortunate in transmitting to posterity many of the most inspiring and eternally precious truths in the form of certain names they had fashioned long ago.

Thus we have surrounding, supporting and interpreting the designations used of Jesus in the Gospel according to John, an extensive background of names and titles, hallowed by age, rich in imagery and instruction, and prepared to receive as its dominating note the description of Him who is Redeemer, Lord and King.

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PART TWO  
CHAPTER III  
NAMES AND TITLES OF JESUS  
IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL  
WHICH ARE USED IN  
A PURELY DESIGNATORY SENSE

PART TWO

CHAPTER III

NAMES AND TITLES OF JESUS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL  
WHICH ARE USED IN A PURELY DESIGNATORY SENSE.

A. Introduction.

Coming now to the designations of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, we find, as we would naturally expect, that a few names and titles of Jesus are used in some places with apparently no other purpose than that of distinguishing Him from other men, or as in a few cases, of heaping reproach upon Him. Our purpose with respect to these designations is to review them briefly, making such comments as shall appear helpful in ascertaining their significance and placing them in their proper relation to the designations used with other purposes in mind. And indeed, we shall not be surprised to find that the same designation is used at one time without special significance, and at another time with very special significance.

B. The Names and Titles.

1. Jesus. This is the original, single personal name of our Lord, and was given Him by special divine direction.<sup>1</sup> It is by far His most popular designation in the Fourth Gospel. It occurs 239 times, is found in every chapter save one (the 15th), and is fre-

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1. Luke 2:21 and Matt.1:21



quently used in combination with other designations. It is used by the author,<sup>1</sup> and by various groups,<sup>2</sup> and by Jesus Himself.<sup>3</sup> It is used without restriction before all groups and individuals, yet it is never used in direct discourse with Jesus.

"Jesus" is the Hellenized form of the popular Hebrew personal name "Joshua", and by its etymology means "Saviour". Having this meaning it possesses the best of rights to real significance as a title for our Lord, but, judging from its use, and that not only in the Fourth Gospel but throughout the New Testament, there is little if any indication that it was used with this significance prominent.<sup>4</sup> In estimating, then, the usage of this name as a designation for Jesus in the Gospel according to John, we feel that the evidence is well summed up by Dr. Pratt in these words:<sup>5</sup>

"Jesus was our Lord's common name and, except to the few who knew of its personal application as Saviour as revealed to Joseph and Mary by the angel at his birth, had no special significance. It was a favorite name among the Jews even as Jesus is now among the Spanish."

2. Jesus of Nazareth. This title occurs in the Fourth Gospel but four times. Its first appearance is

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1. John 1:29; 2:7, 13, etc.
2. John 12:21; 6:42.
3. John 17:3,
4. See Burton, E.D.; New Testament Word Studies, p.26.
5. Pratt, S.W.: The Deity of Christ, p.27.

in the account of Philip's testimony to Nathanael, and seems to be solely for the purpose of stating the home of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> The second and third occurrences are to be found in the incident of our Lord's arrest, when the rabble, on being asked whom they sought, cried out, "Jesus of Nazareth."<sup>2</sup> The tone here may be that of contempt, and the term may be rendered "Jesus the Nazarene", as also in the case of the fourth appearance of this title, namely in the sign on the cross.<sup>3</sup> Although this term appears only four times in this Gospel, its use in Jesus' day, states Dr. Plummer, tends<sup>4</sup>

to the general conviction that it was among the people at large a popular designation for our Lord, giving as it does, his personal name and his native city, and thus observing a practice which was very widespread in that day.

3. Man. This designation is used twelve times in this Gospel, and while apparently bearing no special significance as to our Lord's Person, it has the distinction of bearing three different emphases. First, as showing Jesus' humility, illustrated in its use by John the Baptist.<sup>5</sup> Second, it is used of Jesus in ignorance of His true nature, as illustrated by the words of the woman of Samaria.<sup>6</sup> And the third emphasis is that of studied,

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1. John 1:45.
2. John 18:5,7.
3. John 19:19.
4. Plummer: Commentary on John, p.320.
5. John 1:30.
6. John 4:29. See also 5:12; 7:46; and 18:17.

and perhaps bitter, contempt, as in the conversation between the Pharisees and the man born blind, in which the former say, "This man is not from God because he keepeth not the Sabbath."<sup>1</sup> This third is the most frequent use of the term, since this designation was popular among the foes of our Lord.<sup>2</sup>

4. Son of Joseph. This designation of Jesus occurs but twice in the Fourth Gospel. In the first instance it is upon the lips of a friend of our Lord's, Philip, who found Nathanael and brought him to Jesus.<sup>3</sup> The other case was its use in contempt by His foes when deriding His claims they cried out, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?"<sup>4</sup> Thus, the very same designation was used in an attempt to defeat and destroy the work of Jesus which had previously played an important part in securing a valiant apostle for Him. At the same time, all that we feel justified in claiming for this designation in its contexts is simply that it is another term to distinguish Jesus from other men.

5. King. As a designation for Jesus, King occurs a total of thirteen times in the Fourth Gospel, in nine of which it appears to serve no other purpose than

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1. John 9:16. See also 9:24.
2. John 11:47; 18:14, 17, 31; 19:6.
3. John 1:5.
4. John 6:42.

that of differentiating Him from other men or of casting reproach upon Him. Of these nine instances, four appear to be clear cases of simple designation, namely, Pilate's question repeated twice to Jesus, "Art thou a king?"<sup>1</sup> and the request of the Jews to Pilate with reference to the words on the cross, "Write not, The King of the Jews, but that he said I am king of the Jews."<sup>2</sup> The other five instances reveal the use of this designation by the soldiers in their mockery of Jesus,<sup>3</sup> and by Pilate who evidently seized the occasion offered by the trial of Jesus to display his contempt for Jesus and the Jews alike.<sup>4</sup> It should not be a matter of surprise to us, as we think of the many foes whom Jesus had, and especially when we bear in mind the cause and manner of His death, that some terms should have been used of Him in mockery, bitterness and contempt. It was to be expected. At the same time, His manner of meeting every such insult only served to prove that even in their ignorance and malice, these foes spake the simple truth when they called Him King.

#### C. Conclusion.

These then, "Jesus", "Jesus of Nazareth", "Son of Joseph", "Man", and "King", comprise the list of names

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1. John 18:33,37.
2. John 19:21.
3. John 19:3.
4. John 18:39; 19:14, 15, 19.

and titles of Jesus used in the Fourth Gospel as terms of simple designation. We note that they are few; and that with the exception of the personal name "Jesus", they are used rarely.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE  
HONORIFIC TITLES  
OF JESUS  
IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

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A. Introduction.

There are some designations of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel which appear to take an intermediary position, the simple designations and the Messianic ones. It becomes our task now to locate them, to study them in their several contexts, and to evaluate them by comparison with the other names and titles of Jesus.

B. The Titles.

1. Rabbi or Teacher. "Rabbi" an Aramaic term meaning "great One" is found in this Gospel seven times, and "Rabboni" "My Great One" (a term in Jesus' day practically equivalent to Rabbi), is found once. The title "Teacher" occurs seven times. Since these designations appear to have practically the same connotation, they will be considered together.<sup>1</sup> There is only one instance in this Gospel where the title Rabbi or Teacher is used by persons who were unfriendly to Jesus, and this instance is in the request of the scribes and Pharisees in the matter of the adulterous woman.<sup>2</sup> Its use by the disciples is interesting and significant. They used it frequently

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1. See John 1:38, "Rabbi" (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher). See also John 20:16, "Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher."
2. John 8:4.

in their public address of Him in the early part of His ministry, but abandoned it later, substituting in preference a designation "more significant of His real nature."<sup>1</sup> But Matthew uses the title "Teacher" at a rather late date,<sup>2</sup> and Mary Magdalene employs it (Rabboni) at the very close of the record.<sup>3</sup>

In two instances of the use of this term "Rabbi", the author thought it necessary to explain its meaning.<sup>4</sup> This emphasizes the fact that it was a comparatively recent term in his day, as Dr. Plummer remarks, "having come into use in the time of Herod the Great, and therefore required explanation to Gentile readers."<sup>5</sup> And this term which originally may have meant a learned expounder of the Scriptures and the religious traditions, was at this time very largely a title of respect. The Rabbis of Jesus day were the religious leaders of the Jews.<sup>6</sup>

That Rabbi or Teacher was applied to Jesus as an honorific designation in preference to a term such as Miracle worker is a significant indication of the type of impression which Jesus made on His disciples and friends, and indeed, on the public in general. He was preeminently the Teacher, and as such they would recognize His work and

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1. Bernard: Com. on John, Vol. 1, p.55.

2. John 11:28.

3. John 20:16.

4. John 1:38; 20:16.

5. Commentary on John, p.78.

6. On this see Strachan, R.H.; The Fourth Gospel, p.316.



accord Him honor.

2. Lord. As a designation of Jesus, "Lord" occurs in this Gospel a total of forty-four times. In eight of these instances, it appears to be employed solely as a term of courtesy. Since these cases are our particular concern here, we will proceed to their examination, deferring to a later section the consideration of the remaining occurrences of this title.

The first three instances of this type of its use are the following statements by the woman of Samaria:<sup>1</sup>

"Sir (or Lord, margin), thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep."

"Sir (or Lord, margin), give me this water that I thirst not."

"Sir (or Lord, margin), I perceive that thou art a prophet."

The fourth instance of its use occurs in the request of the nobleman for the healing of his son, "Sir (or Lord, margin), come down ere my child die."<sup>2</sup> The fifth instance is in the statement of the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda, "Sir (or Lord, margin) I have no man when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool."<sup>3</sup> The sixth context in which it occurs describes the plea of the multitude for the bread which came down from heaven, "Lord, evermore give us this bread."<sup>4</sup>

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1. John 4:11, 15, 19.
2. Ibid. 4:49.
3. Ibid. 5:7.
4. Ibid. 6:34.

The next use of this term simply as a title of courtesy occurs in the reply of the woman taken in adultery, who, when Jesus asked if any remained to bring charges against her, replied, "No man, Lord."<sup>1</sup> And the final use is in the question of the man born blind, who, in order that he might believe on Jesus, asked who He was, saying, "And who is he, Lord, that I might believe on Him."<sup>2</sup>

From the context of each of the above cases it is clear that the people here cited as using this term did not attach any significance to it other than that of a courteous expression. For one reason, they were not sufficiently advanced in their understanding of Him to accord Him, at the times specified, a title of any higher or fuller significance. The term "Lord" was often used for "Master", and its correlative was "servant." Hence speaking of Jesus as "Lord" did not necessarily carry with it the significance, in the first century, which it ordinarily does today. Sometimes pagan emperors claimed the title "Lord", and in the thought of the Gentile world of that day there were "gods many and lords many."<sup>3</sup>

3. Prophet. The designation "Prophet" is used of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel but four times, and in each

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1. John 8:10, 11.

2. Ibid. 9:36.

3. See Strachan; The Fourth Gospel, p.457, for the foundation of these facts and for fuller treatment of this subject.

case as a term of especial honor. It is not found on the lips of the twelve, nor was it given Him by His foes, the Jews, but was employed by certain other individuals and groups, and on certain occasions which place a singular emphasis upon the position of honor which Jesus was gaining for Himself in His daily ministry. Of the four times of its occurrence in this Gospel, two appear to be cases of the use of honorific terms only. Thus it was used by the Samaritan woman who, on hearing Jesus describe her past life, exclaimed, "I perceive that thou art a prophet".<sup>1</sup> And in like manner it was used by the blind man who, while still ignorant of the real identity of his benefactor, nevertheless affirmed of him, that he was "a prophet."<sup>2</sup> Thus two grateful individuals, wishing to do Him honor, proclaimed Him "prophet".

#### C. Conclusion.

These honorific titles, like the other classifications of designations in the Gospel according to John, begin to appear in the record in the early chapters. Such was the impression that Jesus made upon His friends and acquaintances right from the beginning of His ministry that we find them saluting Him in terms of sincerest honor, respect and courtesy.

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1. John 4:19.
2. Ibid. 9:17.

These titles are in the main, in their meaning and in their use, distinctively Jewish, and reflect in no uncertain color the Jewish background of the book. Prophet and Lord as older terms, and Rabbi as a more modern one, were outstanding in Jewish use. They were the very terms that one would expect to hear applied to a prominent spiritual leader in a community of Jews.

The use of honorific titles by the disciples, while never large, was in time discontinued by them altogether. This is well illustrated by the title Rabbi which had some popularity among the disciples early in the ministry of Jesus, but was later abandoned. Apparently, experience of Jesus had revealed the need of other terms for the expression of their fuller understanding of Him.

And when these titles were used by persons other than the twelve, they were used by persons friendly to Jesus, who were the recipients of His favors, or who were impressed by His powers, yet who had not at that time sufficient knowledge of Him to enable them to accord Him titles of higher significance. And thus they appear to us as persons who were doing the best they could, under the circumstances.

Now this group of designations is neither large, nor of much use. Two chief titles, Rabbi and Lord and one subsidiary title Prophet, comprise the group. They are used but seventeen times in all. The simple yet out-

standing significance of this fact is that those who as a rule accorded names and titles to Jesus, employed designations conveying either something less or something more than the honor and respect which is ordinarily attributed to a man. His friends, for example, could not feel that they had done Jesus justice in merely according Him a title of honor; and His foes, on the other hand, held themselves under no obligations to do even that much. Thus do we account for the paucity of titles of honor and for their limited use.

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PART THREE

CHAPTER V.

THE

OLD MESSIANIC DESIGNATIONS

OF JESUS

IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

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A. Introduction

There is a group of designations applied to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel which had long been in use among the Jews and which generally bore a Messianic significance, or to say the very least, occasionally bore such a significance. We propose to study these designations as a group, believing that they have definite values, not only individually, but as a group. With a two-fold purpose in mind we shall call them the "old Messianic" designations: first, to secure a brief yet comprehensive title for the group, and second, to draw a distinction between these designations and those terms used at a later time to depict the Messianic consciousness and labors of our Lord. It becomes our task now to examine these titles, studying them with regard to their sources and original meanings, their evident meaning in the light of their several contexts in which they appear in the Gospel, and noting the bearing these matters will have upon the Messianic claims of Jesus.

## B. The Designations.

1. The Coming One. This term as a designation of Jesus is found eight times in the fourth Gospel.<sup>1</sup> And in addition to the use of this particular phrase, there are twelve statements by Jesus in which He refers to Himself as having come from heaven, or from God, to save the world.<sup>2</sup> Thus the employment of this designation and the emphasis placed upon it by the corroborating statements of Jesus prepare us to expect a rich and definite significance in the use of it.

a. Source. Dr. Warfield, who regards this as the simplest of Messianic designations, states that it is<sup>3</sup>

based apparently on Malachi 3:1 or Psalms 40:7 or 118:26, and is itself the basis of a customary method of speech of the Messiah as "coming".

b. Usage. This designation was used consistently in testimony to certain qualities which men found to be in Jesus. Thrice did John the Baptist use it in bearing witness to Israel of Him whom he heralded.<sup>4</sup> The Samaritan woman used it with reference to the Christ.<sup>5</sup> It was twice on the lips of the multitudes, being the

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1. John 1:15, 27, 30; 4:25; 5:43; 6:14; 11:27 and 12:13.
2. See John 3:1; 8:14-16, 42 and 12:46, 47.
3. Warfield, B.B.: The Lord of Glory, p.76.
4. John 1:15, 27, 30.
5. Ibid. 4:25.



spontaneous reaction to glimpses of His power or His glory.<sup>1</sup> It is used by Martha in her glowing confession of faith in Christ.<sup>2</sup> And Jesus uses it of Himself as He testifies before the Jews concerning His origin.<sup>3</sup>

c. Significance. Messianic content in this phrase is indicated by certain associations which clustered around it; for "He that cometh" is more fully defined by the addition of "into the world", in which form it occurs also in Matthew and Luke.<sup>4</sup> And when we find this idea embodied in such words as "This is of a truth that prophet which cometh into the world,"<sup>5</sup> it may easily mean that this epithet was generally regarded in Jesus' day as connected with the Messianic interpretation of Deuteronomy 18:15-18.<sup>6</sup>

The Messianic implications of this designation reveal themselves also in the fact that John the Baptist, the Samaritan woman, Martha, the multitudes, all used it in most glowing tributes to the Person and work of Jesus; and Jesus, in His own use of it, traces His coming as being direct from God.

And in one instance of its use this designation produced startling "Messianic" reactions, for we

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1. John 6:14; 12:13.
2. Ibid. 11:27.
3. Ibid. 5:23.
4. Ibid. 11:27. See also Warfield: Lord of Glory, p.190.
5. Ibid. 6:14.
6. "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee like unto me; etc."

read<sup>1</sup>

When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world. Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

Commenting upon this, Dr. Bernard says that they plotted to seize him<sup>2</sup>

and make him king, that is, Messianic King. The Jerusalem crowd had the same idea when they cried "Hogannah", and greeted him as the one who came in the name of the Lord.

2. The Holy One of God. As a designation of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, this phrase occurs but once, in the great confession spoken by Peter in behalf of all the disciples.<sup>3</sup>

a. Source. The source of this designation is deep in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Isaiah where God is frequently spoken of as "The Holy One" and "The Holy One of Israel."<sup>4</sup>

b. Significance. With reference to the Messianic content of this designation, Dr. Bernard affirms that<sup>5</sup>

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1. John 6:14, 15. Note that we are using "Messianic" here in the Jewish rather than the Christian sense.
2. Bernard, J.H.: Commentary on John, Vol. 1, p.183.
3. John 6:69. "And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."
4. Isaiah 10:17; 12:6; 43:15; etc. These two epithets are used 45 times in the O.T., of which 29 are by Isaiah.
5. Bernard: Commentary on John, Vol. 1, p.122.

Peter's confession is two-fold in John's version. "Thou hast the words of eternal life"; this is the acceptance of Jesus as Prophet. "Thou art the Holy One of God": this is the recognition of Him as Priest.

Dr. Warfield includes this designation in a group of titles comprising the following: The King of Israel, The King of the Jews, The Son of David, and The Son of God, each of which he claims is equivalent to the simple Messianic designation "Christ".<sup>1</sup> The fact that this title occurs elsewhere in the Gospels only spoken by a demoniac, has led to much discussion. But we see no reason to doubt the judgment of Bishop Westcott who states that "the knowledge of the demoniacs reached to the essential nature of the Lord."<sup>2</sup> And that the title was both well known and acknowledged as Messianic, we have the word of Dr. Holtzmann, who, after pointedly affirming the former, cites proof of the latter from Mark's record that the demons designated Jesus "Son of God" as well as "Holy One of God."<sup>3</sup>

3. Prophet. This term is applied to Jesus four times in the Gospel according to John. In two of these instances it seems to be solely a term of honor.<sup>4</sup>

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1. See The Lord of Glory, p.13.
2. Westcott, B.F.: Commentary on John, p.111.
3. Holtzmann, H.J.: Hand Commentary on the N.T., p.76.
4. John 4:19 and 9:17.

In the other two instances it seems to have Messianic implications.<sup>1</sup>

a. Source. As to the general source of this title there seems to be no doubt. It is the entire Old Testament. No man was held in such general and high esteem as a true prophet.<sup>2</sup> And while we may not speak positively with reference to a particular source for this designation, it gives good indication of being derived from a statement in a great prophecy of Moses, namely, "....a prophet .....like unto me."<sup>3</sup> Be that as it may, we know that this title comes from long and honored usage among the Jews, into Christian terminology, freighted with a rich content.

b. Usage. The first of the two instances in which this title was used of Jesus describes the reaction of the people who had witnessed the feeding of the five thousand by Jesus, and is in these words:<sup>4</sup>

When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world.

Let it be noted that "the people" proclaim Him prophet. They are at first called a "great multitude," over five thousand men, pressing upon Jesus because they had seen

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1. John 6:14 and 7:40.

2. I Samuel 3:19-21. See also Jeremiah 43:1-7.

3. Deuteronomy 18:15-18.

4. John 6:14.

the "signs" which He had done on them that were sick. In their zeal they would make Him king. This group hails Him as the prophet that should come.<sup>1</sup>

Practically similiar emotion was displayed on the other occasion of the use of this title. Debate is running high at the Feast of Tabernacles; the subject is the Person of Christ; the surging throngs have listened to His great challenge; discussion follows. And one group exclaims, "This is of a truth the prophet!"<sup>2</sup> Thus another multitude passes judgment upon Jesus to the effect that He is "The Prophet," and this group like the former, spoke only after witnessing a display of some remarkable power of His.

c. Significance. Regarding the Messianic content of this title, we would refer to a statement by Dr. Randolph, who after connecting it with the term "Prophet" in Deuteronomy 18:15, and after affirming that both Jewish and Christian tradition gave a Messianic interpretation to that passage in Deuteronomy, says,<sup>3</sup>

Jesus Christ is the ideal prophet who sums up in Himself all the prophets. It is the spirit of Christ who spoke in them, so that, in a true sense, Christ Himself is the only Prophet.

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1. John 6:15.
2. Ibid. 7:40.
3. Randolph, B.W.: Christ in the Old Testament, p.49.

We feel that there is Messianic content in this title despite the fact that in one context there is a seeming contrast between "Prophet" and "Christ". We refer to the statement, "This is of a truth the prophet; and others said, This is the Christ."<sup>1</sup> Although these statements appear to place these titles over against each other, and to claim that if He were the "Prophet" He could not be the "Christ", and vice versa, we do not see that this inference necessarily follows since as Messiah He would be King, and as Messiah He would be Priest, and as Messiah He would be Prophet. There may be, however, no contrast here at all, because there was a definite, separate expectation concerning a prophet even as there was a great expectation concerning the Messiah.<sup>2</sup>

4. Saviour. As a designation of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, "Saviour" appears but once.<sup>3</sup>

a. Source. For its source we turn also to the Old Testament. The terms "save", "saviour" and "salvation" were among the most familiar in all the Jewish religion.<sup>4</sup> Besides, there are frequent references to God as Saviour.<sup>5</sup> This fact was of such general

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1. John 7:40, 41.

2. Ibid. 1:25.

3. Ibid. 4:42.

4. Psalms 54:1; Isaiah 43:11; Psalms 24:5.

5. Psalms 106:21; Isaiah 43:3, 11; 45:15, 21; 49:26; 60:16.

knowledge and esteem that it was even incorporated in personal names, notably that of Joshua which means Jehovah is Salvation.<sup>1</sup>

b. Significance. The references to Jesus as Saviour in the Gospel according to John occurs in this remarkable and comprehensive phrase, "The Saviour of the World", expressed by the Samaritans and not the disciples or the people of Israel, which fact has caused prolonged dispute among the commentators. Dr. Bernard states the modern position when he says:<sup>2</sup>

This great title reflects the conviction of a later moment in Christian history, and of a more fully instructed faith.

We have an instance here, according to Dr. Bernard, of the deliberate placing of a later, richer confession of faith upon the lips of a people who could not possibly have attained so early such a conception of Jesus. And as a buttress for this position, he further tells us that this same procedure was followed in other cases by the author of this Gospel, indeed followed in so many cases that it might well be called a rule of action or principle of pedagogy with him.

That there is, however, scholarly opinion for the position that the Samaritans used and understood the title "The Saviour of the World" is illustrated in

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1. See Numbers 13:16.

2. Bernard: Commentary on John, Vol.1, p.161.

the comments of Dr. Westcott and Dr. Warfield as well as many other able scholars who affirm that these Samaritans, after they had heard Jesus, recognized the "salvation" and concluded for themselves that He was indeed the "Saviour of the World".

There remains, however, another cause for debate concerning the Messianic content of this title. It is claimed that "Saviour" is not a designation with Messianic significance because the references to it in the Old Testament, and especially Psalms 24:5; 62:7; and Isaiah 12:2 in particular, indicate that the "Saviour" is God and has no reference to the Messiah. Dr. Bernard expresses this as follows,<sup>1</sup>

Yahweh in the Old Testament theology, is the author of Salvation and to Him it is always ascribed.

And while in later literature there are some slight indications that the Messiah was sometimes thought of as Saviour, it must be borne in mind that "that in the first century Messiah was given the title σωτήρ is not proven."<sup>2</sup> Such is the statement of the case on one of its sides. But that there is another side to this matter, and one well capable of being maintained, is revealed by the following considerations.

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1. Commentary on John, Vol. 1, p.161.
2. Idem.



In the first place, the underlying idea of the Messianic task, according to the entire New Testament, was that of salvation.<sup>1</sup> Discussing this, Dr. Vos strikes at the very root of the matter when he says that although "the technical terms 'saviour' and 'salvation' are not frequent in the Gospels, the idea back of them is most pervasive."<sup>2</sup>

And in the second place, that there is Messianic content in the designation "Saviour" would appear from a consideration of the prominent features in such Messianic passages as Isaiah 9 and 11, Micah 5 and Zechariah 9. What is prominent here if not the soteric element? What was the Messiah really to do if not to save His people? That, may we ask, was the purpose of all the other intentions, if it did not result in saving His people? We feel that without the hope of salvation to be offered through Him the greater part of the reason

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1. Vos, G.: The Self Disclosures of Jesus, p.258, gives the basis for this statement. Continuing he writes, "It is the method of the Fourth Gospel to resolve the Saviour's task into the several aspects of what He is by His eternal nature, His historical equipment..... There is, however, one comprehensive term in which Jesus and after him the N.T. writers and witnesses have characteristically described His mission. This is the term  $\sigma\acute{o}\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$  "to save".
2. Cf. The Self Disclosures of Jesus, p.258.

for the existence of the Messiah would fall away, or to put it in the words of Dr. Vos,<sup>1</sup>

The Messiah stands for salvation, indeed. "Saviour" is the most popular name by which the Christ has come to be known among His followers.

5. Lord. The designation "Lord" (Κύριος) is, with the single exception of the personal name "Jesus" the most popular title for Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, being used a total of forty-four times. In eight of these occurrences, however, it seems to be used simply as a term of honor.<sup>2</sup> Its meaning in the remaining thirty-six contexts is now to be considered.

a. Source. Of wide and well known use in the Old Testament is this term. It appears frequently in connection with Jehovah, and occasionally alone.<sup>3</sup> It became the special name for Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, after Israel decided to forbid the use of the name Jehovah for fear it would be blasphemed, and as such was used synonymously with "The Name".

b. Usage. Coming now to the thirty-six occurrences of this term as a designation of Jesus, we find that it was used once by John the Baptist,<sup>4</sup> twice by

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1. Cf. The Self Disclosures of Jesus, p.23.

2. Ibid. p.22.

3. Genesis 15:2; Ps.8:1; Josh.7:7; and Ps.66:18.

4. John 1:23.

Jesus,<sup>1</sup> seven times by the author as the ordinary designation in the narrative,<sup>2</sup> seventeen times by the disciples,<sup>3</sup> and the remaining ten times by close friends of Jesus or by persons well disposed to Him.<sup>4</sup> Or to state an interesting feature of this case from another angle, we have seven uses of this title by persons when confessing or reaffirming their faith in Jesus,<sup>5</sup> in five cases its use is related to recognition of the superhuman power of Jesus,<sup>6</sup> in six cases it is used of the risen Christ and in fact receives special prominence as a designation of the risen Christ, being surpassed in this respect only by the personal name Jesus.<sup>7</sup> And it is noteworthy, in the use of this term throughout the entire Gospel, that not once was it used by a foe of Jesus or by any one who might be termed as unfriendly to Him.

c. Significance. The question of the Messianic content of this term is one not easily to be settled, and one upon which the student must enter with caution, especially since so thorough and conservative a scholar as Dr. Warfield has said of the deistical con-

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1. John 13:13, 14.
2. Ibid. 4:1; 6:23; 11:2; 20:20 and 21:7, 12, 20.
3. Ibid. 6:68; 11:12; 13:6, 9, 25, 36, 37; 14:5, 8, 22; 20:25, 28; and 21:7, 15, 16, 17, 21.
4. Ibid. 9:38; 11:3, 21, 27, 32, 34, 39; and 20:2, 13, 18.
5. Ibid. 6:68; 9:36; 11:27; 20:28 and 21:15, 16, 17.
6. Ibid. 11:3, 21, 32; 13:25 and 14:8.
7. Ibid. 20:18, 20, 25 and 21:7, 7, 12.

tent of this title, that <sup>1</sup>

only in the great passage (John 20:28) where Thomas' doubt breaks down at the sight of His risen Master and he cries to Him "My Lord and my God" do we catch an unmistakable suggestion of its highest meaning.

That, however, there may be at least some instances in which this term is employed in its highest meaning, would appear to be not only possible but most probable because it is a term capable of having the very highest Messianic significance, being a title of God Himself. Furthermore, it was employed by the very people who were capable of placing the highest Messianic content in it, being used only by those who "believed" in Him. And finally, it was used on the very occasions in which a term of such significance would have been appropriate, to wit, in confessions of faith,<sup>2</sup> in reaffirmations of loyalty,<sup>3</sup> and in references to the risen Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Thus it would appear that there were at least some instances in which this title was used to convey real Messianic significance, which fact is sufficient for our purpose and not at all weakened by the ad-

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1. Cf. The Lord of Glory, p.181.
2. John 11:27; and 6:68,69.
3. Ibid. 21:15.
4. Ibid. 20:18, 20,25,28 and 21:7,7,12. The followers of Jesus, after the resurrection, continued to call Him Lord; that is, they needed no other or new designation.

mission that different degrees of understanding obtained among the followers of the Lord. This title then should take its place among the Messianic designations of Jesus as another attempt on the part of His early disciples to portray their Master to men in His real Person.

6. King. As a designation of Jesus, this title is found in the Fourth Gospel thirteen times. At present we are concerned, however, with but four of these occurrences, the other nine having been treated in Chapter 111. In these four instances the title appears to bear Messianic significance.

a. Source. In our search for the source of this title we are directed by its use in one of the passages (12:15) to that stream of Old Testament prophecy which dealt with Israel's King, the source of which stream as of this designation for Jesus, appears to be the Second Psalm.<sup>1</sup>

b. Usage. Nathanael is the first to use this title and does so after being convinced by a display of Jesus' supernatural powers that he is indeed "The Son of God, The King of Israel".<sup>2</sup> Its next use is during the

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1. The Manner of the coming of the King as described in John 12:15 is a fulfilment of the prophecy of Zech.1:9. In this same prophetic stream, see Isaiah 9:6,7; and especially Psalms 110:1-3.
2. John 1:49.

great triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem when the multitude<sup>1</sup>

took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet him, and cried out, Hozannah; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the king of Israel.

Its third use is by the author, who, in quoting from prophecy writes, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold thy king cometh, sitting on an ass's colt."<sup>2</sup> And its final use is in the answer of Jesus to Pilate, who, on being questioned as to His being a King, accepted the title, defined the kingship, and gave His approval to that use of this term.<sup>3</sup>

c. Significance. The reasons which argue in favor of the Messianic content of this designation may be stated as follows:

In the first place, the title "King of Israel" is an approximation of the title "Son of David" which latter was the most popular Messianic designation among the Jews. But "King of Israel" was preferred by Jesus because it did not have the erroneous temporal associations of the other title, and thus was capable of expressing His spiritual Kingship in a clearer way, or at least permitted Him to place in it His conception of spiritual Kingship.

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1. John 12:15.
2. Idem.
3. John 18:37.

In the second place, the title "King of Israel" reveals a close affinity with the other well known Messianic designations, "Son", "Christ", and "Son of God" which also have their source in Psalm 2. And that it has a connection with the new Messianic title which was in especial favor with the Master, namely, "The Son of Man", is maintained by Dr. Vos, who, speaking of the Messianic element in the Scriptures says that it is at bottom<sup>1</sup>

a species of the eschatological. The Messiah is the great final King, who stands at the close of the present world order and ushers in the coming world.

In the third place let it be noted that in one instance of the use of this title, it occurs as companion designation with the title "Son of God"<sup>2</sup>

And finally, the fact that the excited multitude, after witnessing the sign of the loaves and fishes, desired to make Him king, argues clearly and strongly that one element in Messiahship at least was kingship.<sup>3</sup>

7. Christ. As a title for Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, "Christ" appears a total of seventeen times, and

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1. Cf. The Self Disclosures of Jesus, p.17.
2. John 1:49 which states that "Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel".
3. John 6:15.

in two instances is accompanied by the Hebrew form "Messiah".<sup>1</sup> It appears to have been used with Messianic significance in every instance, and so our study here is concerned with the entire seventeen appearances of this title.

a. Source. The English "Christ" is a transliteration of the Greek Χριστος which in turn is an exact equivalent of the Hebrew term Moshiah (Messiah) meaning "anointed".<sup>2</sup> This term occurs as a title of the expected Messiah in Psalm 2 and Daniel 9:25.<sup>3</sup> Another passage often suggested as an additional source of this title is Psalm 45:7 which reads,<sup>4</sup>

Thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

There are yet other Old Testament passages from which the idea in this title may be derived because the term is of rather frequent occurrence, passages referring to the leaders of the nation as being anointed and thus consecrated to their high offices. It was used of the High Priest,<sup>5</sup> of the King,<sup>6</sup> of Cyrus,<sup>7</sup> and even of the

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1. John 1:20,25,41; 3:28; 4:25,29; 7:26,27,31,41,42; 9:22; 10:24; 11:27; 12:34; and 20:31. Messiah occurs in 1:41 and 4:25.
2. Burton, E.D.: New Testament Word Studies, p.26.
3. So H.H. Currie states in his article "Names and Titles of Christ" in Hastings Dict. of Christ and the Gospels, Vol. II. p.219.
4. Warfield, B.B.: Christology and Criticism, p.7.
5. Leviticus 4:5.
6. 1 Samuel 2:35.
7. Isaiah 45:1.



whole people of Israel.<sup>1</sup> It was an exceedingly well known term among the Jews and one excellently equipped to depict the particular mission of the Lord. In fact Dr. Dalman, a chief authority in this field, feels that this term has in the Old Testament a source so broad and general that it cannot be limited to any single text.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to its use in the canonical books of the Old Testament, this term is found in the following early Jewish writings (which fact emphasizes its breadth of source and general popularity in Israel's religious literature): the Book of Enoch (cf., 48:10 and 52:4), the Psalms of Solomon (cf., 17:16 and 18:6,8), the Apocalypse of Baruch (cf., 36-40, 53-74), Second Esdras and the Sibylline Oracles (cf., lll L. 97, L 807, and L 652 ff.). The Targum of Psalm 2 describes the Messiah as Son, and Targums of Isaiah 42:1; 43:10 and 53:13 and on Zech. 3:8 depict the Messiah as Servant. This title then gives every indication of having a genuine Hebrew source and background.

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1. Psalm 105:15.
2. Dalman, G.: The Words of Jesus, p.289 to 291 where among other statements he says, "The fact is, that no single passage, on the ground of Messianic interpretation can be made responsible for the title "Messiah". When a name was wanted for the King of Salvation, as depicted in Isaiah 11:1-5, there was a title which at once recommended itself ..... and it was all the more convenient because the divine appointment and recognition formed the vital element in the case of the expected King."

b. Usage. There are a number of observations to be made regarding the use of this designation in the Gospel according to John. It is used, apparently with the same content, by a large and very diverse number of people ranging from close friends and supporters of Jesus as the author, John the Baptist, Martha and Andrew, to the Jews who were such bitter foes that they would drive from the synagogue any who received Him as Christ.<sup>1</sup> It is revealed as being connected in the minds of the people with definite authority in religious matters,<sup>2</sup> supernatural knowledge and power,<sup>3</sup> well known Scriptural predictions,<sup>4</sup> and a lively expectation of a coming deliverer.<sup>5</sup> It is found frequently in most serious questionings and lively debates, causing sharp divisions among the people.<sup>6</sup> And of course it occurs in clear cut, outstanding confessions of faith in Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

c. Significance. That we may be prepared to receive elements of richest worth in this title, the following words from Dr. Wm. Sanday contribute:<sup>8</sup>

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1. See John 1:20,41; 4:25; 7:31; 11:27; 20:31; and 9:22.
2. John 1:25. "Why baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ?"
3. Ibid. 4:25,29 and 7:31.
4. Ibid. 7:27,42. "Hath not the Scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"
5. Ibid. 1:20; 3:28; 1:41; 4:25; 10:24.
6. Ibid. 7:26,27,31,41,42. See also 10:24 and 12:34.
7. Ibid. 11:27. "Thou art the Christ". John 20:31, "Jesus is the Christ."
8. Christologies, Ancient and Modern, p.174.

The most definite, the most comprehensive and the most exalted (according to the current ideas of exaltation) of all the titles which our Lord took to Himself was the Jewish title "Messiah".

To this we would add a statement from Dr. Vos to the effect that "The Messiahship is the most pronouncedly supernaturalistic conception in the whole range of Biblical religion."<sup>1</sup>

Coming now to the definite question of the content of this title, let us review its prominent elements as they have arisen in the various stages of the development of this idea.

i. From the Old Testament books we have emphasized chiefly the following elements: the Kingly,<sup>2</sup> the Prophetic,<sup>3</sup> the Priestly,<sup>4</sup> the Suffering Servant,<sup>5</sup> and the Apocalyptic.<sup>6</sup>

ii. Certain elements stressed by the Jewish apocalyptic writers are as follows: The Book of Enoch represents the Messiah in His great privilege,

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1. Self Disclosures of Jesus, p.20.
2. See 11 Samuel 7:11; Isaiah 9:6,7; Micah 5:2-5, Jeremiah 23:5,6; Zechariah 3:8; 9:9; Psalms 2:2; 18:50; 84:9; and 89:38.
3. See Isaiah 11:2-5 and Deut. 18:16-19.
4. See Jeremiah 33:18 ff., and Zechariah 3:8; and 6:11.
5. See Isaiah 40, 42:1-4; 52:13 to 53:12; 61:1-3; Psalms 22:1-11.
6. See Daniel 7:13-14.

pre-existence, judgment and saviourhood;<sup>1</sup> the Psalms of Solomon describe Him as the Hope of Israel, depicting His sinlessness, wisdom and power of attracting all people unto Himself.<sup>2</sup>

iii. A chief element in the Messianic conception of the Jew in the day of Jesus was that of a "conquering hero who would exalt Israel above the heathen."<sup>3</sup>

iv. A broad, pervasive and ever present element in the conception of the Messiah was that of "vast dominion."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Briggs, C.A.: The Messiah of the Gospels, pp.23-25., where he gives the following summary: "The Similitudes of the Book of Enoch present the Messiah as The Elect, the Son of Man, full of grace as a holy angel, the righteous possessor of the treasures of wisdom. He was named before the sun and the stars were made and was concealed before God ere the world was created, and he will abide before Him forever. He will sit enthroned at His side in judgment. The dead will rise to be judged, and he will select the righteous to be saved and to dwell upon the earth with joy; but the wicked will be forced from His presence into shame and darkness and will be committed to the angels for punishment."
2. Ibid. p.48.
3. Zenos, A.C.: "Messiah" in Standard Bible Dictionary, p.543.
4. Sanday: Christologies, Ancient and Modern, p.174. "This title certainly included.....the idea of vast dominion. It included that idea of vast restoration, redemption or salvation according to the Jews' notion, in the first instance, of their own people, but through them, for the human race."

v. The New Testament emphasizes the following matters related to Messiahship: the fact that the Messiah is identified with Jesus,<sup>1</sup> the authority of the Messiah,<sup>2</sup> His deity,<sup>3</sup> the spiritual nature of His kingdom,<sup>4</sup> the reality of and necessity for His passion,<sup>5</sup> the second coming in power and glory<sup>6</sup> and Jesus' own contribution to this idea.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Briggs: The Messiah of the Gospels, p.309.
2. Mark 1:22-27; 2:1-12; Luke 4:31-36; 5:17-26; and Matt.7:28,29.
3. Mark 8:38; 16:36; 26:39; Matt.16:27; 11:25-27; Luke 3:28 and John 5:17-29.
4. Matt. 25:1-46; Luke 24:13-35; John 18:33-40. See also Zenos, A.C.: "Messiah" in Standard Bible Dictionary, p.543, which states that Jesus' disciples recognized a "two-foldness" in his messiahship. First they saw realized in His past life the ideal servant of Jehovah, the spiritual Messiah,.....and second, they looked forward to the realization of the Davidic and conquering Messiah in his second coming in power and glory to conquer the nations and to reign over them. But the Jewish and Christian ideals part from each other at this point. The Christian ideal took to itself all the spiritual elements of the Hebrew thought of the O.T., blended them into a unity, grouped them under one head of anointing from above, and traced them to Jesus, who was thence forth considered preeminently the Anointed. With the Greek name Christ, the conception passed from its Jewish to its universally human stage."
5. Mark 8:31; Matt.16:21-28; Luke 9:28-36; 43-45; and 24:13-35.
6. Matt. 24:1-51; Mark 13:1-37; and Luke 21:5-36.
7. See John 4:26; Matt.11:2-6. Comp. with John 12:12-19. See also, Denny, James: Jesus and the Gospel. p.312.

It remained then for Jesus Himself to reveal the true nature and ministry of the Messiah, which He accomplished as He alone could, and which concept He filled to overflowing with spiritual values.<sup>1</sup>

8. The Son, The Son of God. "The Son" as a designation of Jesus and with the meaning of son of God occurs in the Fourth Gospel nineteen times, and the fuller title, "Son of God", appears ten times.<sup>2</sup> Bearing, for all practical purposes, the same significance, these titles will be considered together.

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1. Fairbairn, A.M.: Christ in Modern Theology, p.358 states that "The change Jesus effected in the Messianic idea was parallel to the change He effected in the Theistic, and the two must be taken together before either can be understood. Neither idea could have been without Judaism, but neither the God nor the Messiah of Jesus was of the Jews. The element He introduced was the most distinctive and constitutive in His thought, and may be described as on the one side the paternal, on the other, the filial, these terms being strictly inseparable and correlative, affecting both the Messianic and the Theistic idea. As regards the former, it had a two fold form, a Godward and a manward; the Messiah was the Son of God and the Son of Man, and each in such a sense that it involved the other."

See also, Sanday, Wm.: Christologies, Ancient and Modern, p.175, where discussing the change which Jesus effected in this designation, Messiah, it is said: "In particular he (Jesus) fused it with two other conceptions: first, that contained in the prophetic ideal of the Servant of Jehovah, an ideal that was never far from His thoughts; and secondly, the sense of closest intimacy with God, a sense which He expressed by speaking of Himself as 'The Son' and of God as 'The Father'."

2. "Son" occurs in John 1:18; 3:16,17,35,36,36; 5:19,19, 20,21,22,23,26; 6:40; 8:36; 14:13; and 17:1,1. "Son of God" occurs in John 1:34,49; 3:18; 5:25; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4,27; 19:7; and 20:31. For "Only Begotten" with "Son" see John 1:18; 3:16,18.

a. Source. As a designation for Jesus, "Son" in the sense of son of God has its roots in the Old Testament, particularly in Psalms 2 and 89, where among other statements relative to the idea of sonship we read:<sup>1</sup>

Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son;  
This day have I begotten thee.

Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye  
perish in the way.

I will also make him my first born,  
The highest of the kings of the earth.

And the broader base from whence this title draws its meaning is in a number of Old Testament passages depicting Israel as the son of God,<sup>2</sup> and the theocratic king, as the son of God.<sup>3</sup>

b. Usage. This title has a most significant usage in the Fourth Gospel. Of the twenty-eight times of its occurrence, it is used at least nineteen times and probably twenty-two times by Jesus Himself; the others using it are John the Baptist, Nathanael, Martha,

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1. Psalms 2:7,12 and 89:27. See also Bernard: Commentary on John, Vol. 1, p.52.
2. Deut. 14:1; Exodus 4:22 and Hosea 11:1. See also Fairbairn: The Place of Christ in Modern Theology, p.359 footnote.
3. 11 Samuel 7:14. See also Sanday; Christologies, Ancient and Modern, p.181. See also Currie, H.H.; "Names and Titles of Christ" in Hastings Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Vol. II, p.221. In this article it is said that this designation probably came to Christ through its use for the kings of Israel. The term is politico-religious, ethico-religious and also metaphysical.

the Jews and the author.<sup>1</sup> It appears to be used with uniform significance throughout. It was used only once by persons unfriendly to Jesus (the Jews), who declared that their opposition to Him was due to the fact that He claimed to be the Son of God; thus showing that they were opposed to Him for the very same reason that His friends supported Him.<sup>2</sup>

The usage of this title by the author reveals certain striking facts. "Son of God" is one of the two titles which appear in the great statement of purpose in the Book.<sup>3</sup> It is the only designation used in his great summary of the Gospel.<sup>4</sup> Twice the author qualifies this title by the term "Only begotten". He is the only author in Scripture who has done this.<sup>5</sup> And very prominent are the long sections in his book which the author devotes to the arguments between Jesus and the Jews over His Sonship and God's peculiar Fatherhood toward Him, sections which culminate in the great exclamation, "I and the Father are one."<sup>6</sup>

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1. John 1:34,39; 11:27; 19:7; 20:31; 3:16,17,18.
2. See John 19:7 and comp. with 1:34,39 and 11:27.
3. John 20:31.
4. Ibid. 3:16.
5. "Only begotten" is found qualifying "Son" in John 3:16,18 and in 1 John 4:9. In John 1:18 it appears in the text as qualifying Son and in the margin as qualifying God, which latter reading we accept.
6. John 10:30. For these debates, see John 5:19-46; 6:37-65; 8:18-30; 10:25-39; and 12:44-50.



The use of this title by Jesus is most illuminating. According to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus did not refuse to apply the title "son of God" to Himself but used it in four of the ten instances of its occurrence in the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> However, it is clear that His preference was for the shorter designation "Son", which occurs nineteen times in this Gospel seventeen of which are by Jesus Himself. And if we are to appreciate the wide extent as well as the wealth of revelation which Jesus gave concerning this conception we must also take into account His references to God as "The Father" and "My Father" which number approximately one hundred and twenty times. The simple designation "Son", which Dr. Warfield calls the "culminating Messianic designation in John", comes indeed into its own in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>2</sup> Worth of special note is Jesus' use of that title in His numerous debates with the Jews, for while He employs it six times in speaking with His friends, and twice in prayer, His debates with the Jews called it forth a total of twelve times.<sup>3</sup> So then, they who so proudly boasted that their

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1. John 5:25; 9:35; 10:36; and 11:41.
2. On this see Warfield: Lord of Glory, p.196. It is thought that a larger use by Jesus of the title "Son of God" would have been of very doubtful value. It would have tended to have brought Him into conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities, and at the same time would have been more liable to misunderstanding by the people at large.
3. John 5:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26; 6:40; 8:36 and 10:36.

father was Abraham,<sup>1</sup> were privileged to behold One who indeed "came forth from God."<sup>2</sup>

c. Significance. That the designations "Son" and "Son of God" as they appear in the Gospel according to John have Messianic content is established on the following grounds:

In the first place, the employment of these designations by the friends of Jesus (the author, John the Baptist, Nathanael and Martha) is robbed of any rational purpose except that we see in their use the means taken by these friends of expressing their faith in His Messiahship. In order to have meaning, these titles must have Messianic meaning.<sup>3</sup>

In the second place, the charge made by the Jews who demanded the death of Jesus is meaningless unless

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1. John 8:39.
2. Ibid. 8:42.
3. See Carpenter, L.L.: The Doctrine of the Servant, p.130. See also Scott, E.F.: The Fourth Gospel, p.196, where we read: "Jesus as the Son was of the same nature as the Father. All the divine powers and attributes desolved in Him in virtue of His inherent birthright a Son of God."

See also Reynolds, H.R.: "Gospel of John" in Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. 11, p.725, where we are told that "We find in this title a revelation of the highest glory and the most perfect sympathy, not a tertium quid, neither God nor man, but at once both God and man."

See also Plummer: Commentary on John, p.82, who states that "Son of God" was a Messianic title "does not admit of doubt."

that term has Messianic content. They shouted, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."<sup>1</sup>

In the third place, the significance which the author attached to this title is clarified and emphasized by three outstanding facts in his use of the title, all of which bear witness to the full Messianic content of the term. The author employs this title as one of the two selected from his wide range of designations for a place in his great statement of purpose in the very climax of the book, in which he manifests an ardent desire that all who read his book may "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing .....may have life in his name."<sup>2</sup> Unless the term here has the highest significance, then the interest of the author, and the description of Jesus, and the whole point of the appeal, are utterly unintelligible. Again, the author qualified this term with that most striking phrase "only begotten" by which he appears to

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1. John 19:7. See also Bernard: Commentary on John, Vol.1, p.52. See also Reynolds, H.R.: "Gospel of John" in Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol.11, p.724, where among other statements occurs this; "God born was the highest superlative to denote glory and authority."
2. John 20:31. See also Vos: Self Disclosures of Jesus, p.200, where it is stated that the "Messiahship is of such a nature that it demands for its prerequisite a wholly unique relationship to God."

be determined that his exact conception of "Son of God" shall be clear without any shadow of doubt. "Only begotten", according to Dr. Vos, depicts the "preincarnate i.e., pretemporal, premundane state" of the Son.<sup>1</sup> And finally, when the author referred to Jesus as Son he used the greek term  $\text{ὁ υἱος}$ , and when referring to any other a son, he employed the term  $\text{τέκνον}$ . This appears to be a plain instance of his desire to make clear exactly what he believed concerning the Person of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The use of this title by Jesus Himself lends support also to the conviction that the title contains Messianic significance. In the mind of Jesus, it is associated with the privileges, honors and functions of the Messiah;<sup>3</sup> it describes one who bears a unique relation to the Father;<sup>4</sup> and portrays the object of the faith whereby men are saved.<sup>5</sup> In Jesus' use of this title, its meaning becomes a convenient vehicle for revealing not only the Son but the Father as well, so much so that Jesus could finally say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."<sup>6</sup>

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1. The Self Disclosures of Jesus, p.200.
2. Ibid. p.201.
3. John 5:22-27.
4. Ibid. 5:19-20.
5. Ibid. 3:36; 6:27-59; 8:36; and 9:35.
6. Ibid. 14:9. See also 5:19-47.

### C. Conclusion.

A review of our study of the Old Messianic designations as they appear in the Fourth Gospel reveals certain emphases placed upon the usage of these titles. All of the well known and recognized Messianic designations are used. This list comprises: The Coming One, The Holy One of God, The Prophet, Saviour, Lord, King, Christ and Son of God.<sup>1</sup> These titles were not only used but they were given an exceedingly full use, being employed a total of ninety-nine times. They were used each in its own acknowledged significance according to the meaning determined by its source, or by its history, or as interpreted by Jesus or His disciples. They were used in confessions of faith in Him, in describing His nature and His ministry, and in proclaiming Him to others. They were used, in the main, by the people themselves, the disciples, the author, the friends of Jesus, the multitudes who heard Him speak or otherwise received His services. These designations might well be called the peoples' designations as compared with another group which we will treat later which were not used by the people at large. With the exception of "Son", Jesus used the Old Messianic designations but little.

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1. A seeming exception to this is the absence of the title Son of David. It, however, is an equivalent of "King" which is discussed in this chapter.

But He received and acknowledged these designations; He accepted every one of them and tacitly gave His approval to them, and that without drawing any distinctions or openly stating any preferences.

A review of our study of the Old Messianic designations reveals also certain facts pertaining to the Messianic implications of these designations. There is the fact of Jesus' Messiahship itself. This is emphasized and enforced in practically every available manner. The full and consistent use of recognized Messianic titles, the affirmation of faith through them by the friends and disciples of Jesus, and the acceptance of these declarations by Jesus - all emphasize the fact of Jesus' Messiahship. It is difficult to imagine how a stronger presentation of the Messiahship of Jesus could have been given. Another item, the elements of Messiahship, receives its emphasis in these titles and in the contexts of their use. We have noted especially the following elements: pre-existence, descent from heaven, holiness, spirituality, authority, supernatural knowledge, passion, glory, exaltation, vast dominion, equality with God, intimate relation and communion with God. Then also we noted the presentation of the ministry of the Messiah in the following particulars: He is the great Deliverer of His people, the Prophet greater than Moses, the Messianic King, the Ruler and Defender of His people, the Suffering Servant, the Priest

who is also Sacrifice, the Son in fullest communion with God the Father, laboring and pleading for His own. And finally we observed that the reaction among the people occasioned by the use of these titles was such as might be expected from the employment of terms with Messianic implications. For some who were earnestly looking for the Messiah accepted Jesus as such, became His disciples, affirmed their faith through the use of the titles and proclaimed Him to others. They received Him because He claimed to be the Messiah. But many others, among them the religious leaders of the Jewish nation, openly and violently rejected Him, His teachings and His principles and all that He represented, because they could not, or rather would not, receive Him as their Messiah. They rejected Him because He claimed to be the Messiah. The storm center in the bitter and repeated arguments and disputes in which the fourth Gospel abounds was this very question of the Messiahship of Jesus. The people at large and the religious leaders in particular, stood ever ready to discuss this question. And furthermore, the appeal made to the Romans that Jesus must be destroyed gave as its reason that He made Himself a king, and the Roman governor ordered placed in a superscription on the cross of Jesus the epithet "The King of the Jews." Thus Pilate declared to the world that Jesus died because He came unto His own as Messiah.

And finally, our study of these Old Messianic titles reveals an emphasis upon the fundamental relation of Jesus to the economy of redemption as witnessed by prophecy and history and by the interpretation of these by Jesus Himself. Through these titles it is declared of Him that the Father has commissioned and sent Him, has set the bounds of His work, has received and approved His work. In Jesus prophecy was fulfilled and history interpreted; by Him salvation is brought to man; for His rule, a mighty kingdom is prepared; of Him, the Father declared in no uncertain terms, He is my Son.

In a word then, these Old Messianic designations present Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God the Father, as set forth on Hebrew prophecy and history, in title, type and symbol, and as interpreted by Jesus Himself.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE  
NEW MESSIANIC DESIGNATIONS  
OF JESUS  
IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

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A. Introduction.

There are a large number of designations of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel which may properly be called New Messianic designations because they had not been used of the Messiah previous to the day of Jesus, and of which as a group it may be affirmed that although they are now well known due to their use in this Gospel, only three of the entire sixteen designations appear in the other Gospels.<sup>1</sup> Some of these designations are names or titles and shall be treated as such; others are neither names nor titles but figurative terms and shall be treated in a group by themselves; and one designation, "The Sent of God", we shall term a descriptive epithet and give it separate consideration. Our concern with these designations is to ascertain their significance and note the relation which they bear to the author's purpose.

B. The Designations.

1. The Titles.

a. The Bridegroom. As a designation of Jesus, this

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1. "The Bridegroom" is one of these and appears also in Matt. 9:15, Mark 2:19 and Luke 5:34,55. The other titles are "Son of Man" and "God".

term occurs in the Fourth Gospel three times, all in the same verse.<sup>1</sup> It is also found in the Synoptic Gospels where it is a self designation of Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

i. Source. Bridegroom, as a designation of Jesus, has its roots in many Old Testament passages which depict the relation of Jehovah to His people,<sup>3</sup> sometimes as Husband of Israel,<sup>4</sup> sometimes as betrothed to Israel.<sup>5</sup> That a substantial source for this title is to be found in the Old Testament Scriptures is evident from the following statement by Dr. Bernard:<sup>6</sup>

Israel conceived of herself as in covenant with Yahweh, and the prophets speak of her as Yahweh's wife. Thus the Jews were accustomed to think of themselves as peculiarly the children of God.

ii. Usage. The employment of this designation in the Fourth Gospel is limited to John the Baptist who uses it three times, and that in one incident in one statement. It is,<sup>7</sup>

He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this, my joy, therefore is made full.

Despite the scarcity of the use of this term, there are

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1. John 3:29.
2. Mark 2:19 "And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bride chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?"
3. As in Ezekiel 16: and Malachi 2:2.
4. As in Exodus 34:15; Deut. 31:16; and Psalms 73:27.
5. Hosea 2:19.
6. Commentary on John, Vol. 1, p.16.
7. John 3:29.

two facts here well worth our notice. In the first place, this statement gives clear testimony to the excellent character of John the Baptist as a witness because it was called forth by certain remarks from some disciples of John's who seemed to be disappointed with the results of his ministry and who chided him with the announcement that Jesus was now receiving all the popularity. And in the second place, the occasion produced by this remark of his disciple gave John the Baptist the opportunity of bearing witness to Jesus, and that not in a usual or ordinary way but in comparison with or contrast to Him, and at a time when the question of their relation to each other was at stake.

iii. Significance. The Messianic significance of this title as used here is founded on the following considerations.

In the first place, the context in which it is used very definitely connects the Bridegroom with the Christ. The question under discussion was the position of John the Baptist and his relation to Jesus. And John, in defining this relation, had said immediately before he used the figure of the bridegroom, "Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but I am sent before Him."<sup>1</sup> In fact John often spoke of this

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1. John 3:28.

relation<sup>1</sup> - Jesus was the Bridegroom; he was but the friend of the Bridegroom.

In the second place, the Old Testament background of this title points to a Messianic significance. The term appears in evident dependence upon that large body of prophecy wherein Jehovah is represented either as betrothed to, or husband of, Israel.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Swete, in commenting on our Lord's use of this term as recorded by Mark, says, "so the Lord identifies Himself with the Bridegroom of Old Testament prophecy, i.e., God in His covenant relation to Israel."<sup>3</sup> And what Jesus does for Himself as reported by Mark, John the Baptist does for Him as reported in this Gospel.

b. The Lamb of God. As a designation of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, this phrase is found twice.<sup>4</sup> It is not found at all in the Synoptics but occurs elsewhere in the New Testament as "A Lamb" or "The Lamb."<sup>5</sup>

i. Source. This designation has abundant roots in the Old Testament, especially in such passages as Exodus 12:13,22 (referring to the Paschal lamb), Jeremiah 11:19 (the Gentle Lamb) and Isaiah 53:6,7 (the Lamb before

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1. See John 1:19-28, 30-34.
2. Hosea 2:19 ff; Isa. 54:5; Jer. 2:20; Ezek. 16: etc.
3. Swete, H.B.: Commentary on Mark, p.44. See also Streitfield, G.S.: Jesus Christ, The Supreme Fact in History, p. 92.
4. John 1:29-36.
5. Acts 8:32. 1 Peter 1:19. Rev. 5:6,8,12,13. 6:1,16. 7:9, 10,14,17. 12:11. 13:8. 14:1,4,10. 15:3. 17:14. 19:7, 9. 21:9,14,22,23,27. 22:1. John the Baptist (John 1:29, 36) and Peter (Acts 8:32, 1 Peter 1:19) use the ordinary word for lamb, ἀμνός. The author of the Apocalypse used the diminutive term, ἀρνίον.

its shearers); and in addition to these and other particular passages, this phrase roots itself "in the whole sacrificial system culminating in the passover."<sup>1</sup>

ii. Usage. The employment of this title is limited to John the Baptist who, on two occasions, exclaimed "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world",<sup>2</sup> and "Behold the Lamb of God".<sup>3</sup> Thus it was used in testimony to Jesus early in His ministry and in Jesus' own presence, and its use secured for Jesus His first disciples. These men had followed John; now they followed Jesus.<sup>4</sup>

iii. Significance. Several matters lend proof to the affirmation that this designation as here used has Messianic content.

In the first place, the statement (qualifying the Lamb) "that taketh away the sin of the world", could not well be accounted for on any other basis than that of Messianic redemption. The Lamb here described was not simply one of gentleness who could bear with patience the ills to which he would be subjected. No, this Lamb had authority to take away sin, and that through sacrifice! Jesus was the reality of which all animal sacrifice was

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1. Warfield: Lord of Glory, p.192.
2. John 1:29.
3. Ibid. 1:36.
4. Ibid 1:29-42.

the symbol.<sup>1</sup>

In the second place, the two disciples who heard John affirm that Jesus was the Lamb of God, and who thereupon followed Jesus, became entirely convinced that he was the Messiah, and on that basis appealed to others to accept Him.<sup>2</sup>

c. The Word. As a designation of Jesus, "The Word" occurs in this Gospel four times, all in the first chapter and is peculiarly the author's own term.<sup>3</sup> It does not occur anywhere in the Synoptics, but in the New Testament is found twice elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

i. Source. A fairly common practice among the Old Testament writers was that of personifying the word, or wisdom of God, usually as an agent for executing the will of God. Earliest intimations of this method appear in the repeated expressions "God said" found in Genesis. Striking instances of it are found in the Psalms and Proverbs.<sup>5</sup> In the Apocrypha the practice appears in increasing prominence, and in the Targums, or Aramaic

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1. See Dods, M.: Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. 1, p.695. See also Bruce, A.B.: Commentary on John, p.26.
2. John 1:35-42. See also Warfield: Lord of Glory, p.192.
3. John 1:1,1,1,14.
4. 1 John 1:1 and Rev. 19:13.
5. See Ps.33:6; 107:20; 119:89; 147:15 and Prov.8 and 9.

paraphrases of the Old Testament, a further advance is made.<sup>1</sup>

ii. Usage. The use of this title of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel reveals the following facts: it was used by the author four times and only in the first chapter of his book, in the section generally known as the Prologue; it was the very first designation that he used of Jesus, although it was the last in point of experience; and it was used in evident effort to depict Jesus in relation to God and to humanity, and to appraise His Person and work.<sup>2</sup>

iii. Significance. Messianic content is claimed for this title for two reasons:

In the first place, it is plainly stated in the context that the "Word" was God. The Word was in the beginning was with God and was God. It is difficult to see how a statement could be clearer or more emphatic.<sup>3</sup> This is the very first designation that the author applies to Christ, and he employs this particular one because he wishes to carry his readers back to most fundamental and unconditioned conceptions.<sup>4</sup>

In the second place, the conception of the sphere and manner of his ministry proclaims His Messianic

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1. On the whole matter of the source of this phrase see Bernard: Commentary on John, Vol.1, Intro.p.cxlii.
2. John 1:1,1,1,14.
3. John 1:2.
4. See Warfield: Lord of Glory, p.177.



nature. It is shown that He has an authoritative relation to all creation,<sup>1</sup> He is the life and light of men,<sup>2</sup> He came to the world in human flesh,<sup>3</sup> He dwelt among men, being full "of grace and truth",<sup>4</sup> men beheld His glory, "glory as of the only begotten of the Father",<sup>5</sup> He gave His grace to men,<sup>6</sup> and He revealed the Father.<sup>7</sup>

d. The Comforter. As a designation of Jesus, this term occurs but once in the entire gospel, and even that by implication. The instance is in a statement of Jesus, "I will pray that Father and he shall give you another comforter that he may be with you forever."<sup>8</sup>

i. Source. The Old Testament source of this designation appears to be general rather than specific, and to comprise all that body of teaching throughout the Scriptures which was designed to be of comfort and inspiration, notably, that large section of the Prophecy of Isaiah known as the Book of Consolation.<sup>9</sup> But, that it may possibly have a more definite source in the Old

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1. John 1:3.

2. Ibid. 1:4,9.

3. Ibid. 1:14.

4. Idem.

5. Idem.

6. John 1:16.

7. Ibid. 1:18. See also Clark, H.W.: The Christ from Without and Within, p.18. "It is in our word that the inmost nature comes to birth for the world beyond. So Christ is the direct, immediate method by which God utters Himself."

8. John 14:16.

9. Isaiah 40:66. Comp. also Ps. 40: 56: and 57.

Testament than is commonly supposed, we have the testimony of Dr. Bousset who "connects the Paraclete with Menachem which is employed in the later Judaism as a Messianic title."<sup>1</sup>

ii. Usage. The usage of this term as a designation for the Master is Jesus' own. In speaking of the Holy Spirit as another Comforter, He implies that He also is a Comforter.<sup>2</sup> The Greek term παράκλητος is found in the New Testament only in the writings of John, occurring four times in his gospel and once in his first Epistle.<sup>3</sup> The occasion of its use was the farewell address which Jesus gave His disciples for the purpose of preparing them for His departure and assuring them of continued inspiration, protection and guidance.<sup>4</sup>

iii. Significance. The ministry of Jesus as Comforter is compatible with none other than a Messianic ministry. The office of Jesus herein depicted is suggested by a wealth of splendid terms, such as The Paraclete, The Helper, The Intercessor, The Advocate, The One who comes to the aid of another in a trial at court, "The One who", as Dr. Plummer expresses it, "suggests true reasonings to our minds and true courses for our lives, convicts our

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1. Quoted by Warfield: Lord of Glory, p.193.
2. John 14:16.
3. In the Gospel at 14:16,26; 15:26 and 16:7.  
In the Epistle 1 John 2:1.
4. On this see John chapters 14 through 17.

adversary the world of wrong, and pleads our cause before the Father".<sup>1</sup>

The sphere of this ministry of Jesus as Comforter is so exalted that only a Messianic Person could attain unto it, for this ministry is exercised at the "court of heaven".<sup>2</sup> There Jesus will intercede with the Father for His people as they pray,<sup>3</sup> and from thence He will return for them, to receive them unto Himself.<sup>4</sup>

e. God. As a designation for Jesus, this term occurs in the Fourth Gospel three times.

i. Source. Its source is the entire Old Testament and literature of the Jewish people, but especially the very first verse of Genesis, "In the beginning God". And we are the more bold to present this verse as the source of this designation because the very wording with which the author first employed it forces attention upon this passage in Genesis.<sup>5</sup>

ii. Usage. The first instance of its use is in these words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."<sup>6</sup> In this striking way the author begins his book. It is his first

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1. Plummer: Commentary on John, p.280.
2. Bernard: Commentary on John, Vol.2. p.545.
3. John 14:13,14.
4. John 14:3,18,28.
5. John 1:1.
6. Idem.

declaration in a long body of testimony. We might say it is his thesis. The second use of this title is also by the author. We read, "No man hath seen God at any time; God, only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him."<sup>1</sup> The third and last instance of its use is near the close of the book where Thomas, finally convinced of Jesus' resurrection, exclaims, "My Lord and my God".<sup>2</sup>

iii. Significance. Regarding the significance of this term as a title of Jesus, let us note with reference to its use on the first occasion that the One here described, to quote Dr. Warfield, "is of eternal subsistence..... eternally with God.....in some high sense distinct from God; and yet.....in some deep sense identical with God".<sup>3</sup> Referring to the title "God Only Begotten", the form in which we find the second use of this title, Dr. Bernard states that it "suggests the relation of Christ to God, as the Son to the Father which has not yet been mentioned, but which is prominent in the Fourth Gospel".<sup>4</sup> And concerning its use in the great declaration of Thomas, it is readily observed that his great confession stands at the very

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1. John 1:18 margin.

2. John 20:28.

3. The Lord of Glory, p.177. See also Dods,M: Commentary on John, p.31.

4. Commentary on John, Vol. 1, p.31.

climax of the book, and since it was won from doubt, it closes historically the progress of faith which John had been tracing. The author began by declaring his own faith, and now shows that this faith was secured in the actual contact of the disciples with Christ, it cannot but be understood as a confession of faith in His Person; and the words which follow show that Jesus accepted this declaration of His deity as the true expression of faith.<sup>1</sup>

To speak of Jesus then as God, as the author does here quite clearly in these different instances, is to depict Him in terms of such magnitude and excellence as to leave no room for expressions or descriptions of any higher nature or scope. Even though many other titles should be of doubtful significance with respect to His Person, surely this one cannot be.<sup>2</sup>

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1. For the facts stated in this paragraph, and for fuller treatment of this whole subject, see Westcott: Commentary on John, p.297.
2. Lest it be felt that the use of the term "only begotten" might discount the Messianic content in this title, let it be remembered that the same term occurs later qualifying the title, "Son of God". The references are John 1:14 and 3:16,18. Furthermore, the emphasis on the term "only begotten" appears to be not in derivation of essence, but in uniqueness of relation. See Vedder, H.C., "The Johannine Writings", p.170; where he states concerning it: "Philo applied this term to the Logos to express the idea of unique generation, or proceeding forth, from God, and this is the natural meaning for it in a Logos philosophy. On the contrary, in the Fourth Gospel, the conception of the relation of the Son to the Father is predominantly an ethical one, that of unity of will and purpose, of filial dependence and loving communion." See also Liddon, H.P., "The Divinity of our Lord", p.236, where he explains that "only begotten" means "not merely that God has no other such son, but that His only begotten son is, in virtue of His sonship, a partaker of that incommunicable and imperishable essence, which is sundered from all created life by an impassable chasm".

f. Son of Man. As a designation of Jesus, this phrase occurs eleven times in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>1</sup> It is used in the Synoptic Gospels more frequently than in John, the relative number of its occurrences being: in Mark fourteen times, in Luke twenty-five times, and in Matthew thirty times.<sup>2</sup> Outside of the Gospels it appears in the New Testament as a title for Jesus only in the Acts.<sup>3</sup>

i. Source. The phrase "son of man" is found in the various books of the Old Testament more than a hundred times and appears to have, according to its contexts, four different meanings. It appears to denote man in general, as in the statement "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help."<sup>4</sup> Sometimes it refers to a definite individual, as for instance a prophet whom Jehovah customarily addressed by means of this phrase.<sup>5</sup> Again, it appears to refer to an ideal man, as in the statement, "What is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?"<sup>6</sup> And finally it has the meaning of a great world ruler as depicted in the

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1. John 1:51; 3:13,14; 6:27,53,62; 8:28; 12:23,34,34; 13:31.
2. Habershon, A.R.: New Testament Names and Titles of the Lord of Glory, p.3.
3. Acts 7:56 gives Stephen's declaration that he saw the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.
4. Psalm 146:3. See also Ps. 144:3, Numbers 23:19, Job 25:6.
5. Ezekiel 2:1,3,8; 3:16,17 etc. See also Daniel 8:17.
6. Psalm 8:4.

following passage:<sup>1</sup>

I saw in the night-visions, and, behold there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even unto the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not be destroyed.

This passage is the one commonly agreed upon by Biblical scholars as the source passage of the Son of Man designation.<sup>2</sup>

ii. Usage. In the Fourth Gospel this title was used indiscriminately before disciples, friends, the questioning multitude and the hostile Jews.<sup>3</sup> It was a favorite self designation of Jesus in this Gospel as in the Synoptics, for of the eleven times it occurs, in all but two instances it is found on the lips of Jesus, and these two instances are but echoes of His use of the term.<sup>4</sup> It was used in passages dealing with the mystic spiritual food of believers.<sup>5</sup> It was used quite commonly in passages having reference to the death of Jesus,<sup>6</sup> depicting its immanence, manner, necessity, purpose and results. And it is associated in this Gospel, as in the Synoptics, with eschatological

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1. Daniel 7:13,14.
2. Cf. Anderson, F.L.: The Man of Nazareth, p.85.
3. John 1:51; 3:13, 6:27 and 8:28.
4. John 12:34 gives the two instances of the use of this term by others than Jesus.
5. John 6:53. See also 6:27.
6. Ibid. 12:23; 3:14; 8:28; and 13:31.

doctrine. It is in speaking of Himself as Son of Man that Jesus tells His disciples that they shall see "the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending" upon him.<sup>1</sup>

iii. Significance. As an introduction to the study of this title, and as an aid toward appreciating the wide and rich content of this term, let it be noted in the very beginning that the title "Son of Man" among the Jews in the day of Jesus was not a recognized title for the Messiah, although as Dr. Dalman states, "the son of man in Daniel 7:13 was certainly understood sometimes to denote the Messiah", yet "a regular Jewish name for the Messiah never was formed from the passage in question."<sup>2</sup> That this title was not a recognized Messianic one in Jesus' day appears to be substantiated by several reasons. In the first place, its use by Jesus, unlike the use of such a title as Christ or Son of God, did not bring Him into conflict with the Jewish authorities. In the second place, the multitude to whom the title Christ had a definite content, ask, "Who is this Son of man?" Very clearly He appeared to them as a person of mystery.<sup>3</sup> And in the third place, with all the confessions of faith in

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1. John 1:51. See also John 3:13 and 6:62.
2. The Words of Jesus, p.248.
3. John 12:34.



Jesus as Messiah or Lord, and with all the testimonies to Jesus' Person in which this Gospel abounds, there is not a single reference to Him as "Son of Man".<sup>1</sup>

The very fact that this was not a known Messianic title, permitted Jesus a larger freedom in placing within this term just that content which He desired. To His hearers the title constituted a challenge to reflect upon His Person, and to endeavor to solve the problem, as Dr. Dalman puts it, of the "mystery of the personality of Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

Our Lord's use of the title Son of Man, when contemplated in the light of His own and His disciples' reference to Himself as Son of God, naturally disposes us to feel that He was concerned in announcing and demonstrating His real and complete humanity, with emphasis upon humility and condescension, that in a word, He who was actually Son of God was really a Son of man. This indeed is a fact and abundantly supported by the Gospels, and a fact which must not be lost sight of. At the same time another fact, equally striking and fully as significant, is that Jesus, in His use of the title "Son of Man" makes emphatic, and this not merely occasionally, but regularly, not His human limitations, but His divine

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1. John 12:34 gives the only use in this Gospel of this title by any other than Jesus.
2. The Words of Jesus, p.259.

being and prerogatives, or as Dr. Stalker expresses it,<sup>1</sup>

as early as Origen we find the hermeneutical principle laid down, that throughout the Scripture the divine nature of Christ is mentioned with human characteristics and the human nature adorned with divine attributes.

The definite significance of this title for the Messiahship of Jesus appears to relate itself to four outstanding elements. In the first place, the preexistence of the Messiah is emphasized in the passages depicting Jesus as the Son of Man from heaven.<sup>2</sup> In commenting upon this Dr. Bernard says, "It is only the Son of Man who came down from heaven, which is His home, who can speak of it and of τὰ ἐπουράνια with the knowledge of authority".<sup>3</sup> In the second place, emphasis is placed upon the suffering of the Messiah with its purpose and results. To give Jesus' own words:<sup>4</sup>

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him may have everlasting life.

And this lifting up is "the elevation on the cross".<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Briggs maintains, in company with many other scholars, that Jesus incorporated the conception of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah taken from the prophecy of Isaiah, in

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1. The Christology of Jesus, p.48, is the source of this quotation and the facts of the entire paragraph. See also John 3:13,14; 6:27,53 and 12:23.
2. John 3:13. See also John 6:62 and 8:28.
3. Commentary on John, Vol. 1, p.111.
4. John 3:14. See also 8:28 and 12:34.
5. Milligan and Moulton: Commentary on John, p.69.

this Son of Man designation.<sup>1</sup> In the third place, by His use of the title "Son of Man" Jesus placed emphasis upon that phase of the Messiah's work which consisted in His providing the support of life for His people, as witnessed in the statement,<sup>2</sup>

Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give you.

Commenting upon this, Bishop Westcott states,<sup>3</sup>

He, as the absolute representative of mankind will give this food of the higher life, the life also being His gift.

The final element in this designation as interpreted by Jesus in His use of it in the Fourth Gospel is that of the glory which is rightly His, and which shall be manifested after He has passed through suffering and death. This comes into prominence in the statements, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified", and "Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in him".<sup>4</sup> Concerning this, Dr. Plummer writes:<sup>5</sup>

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1. See Briggs: The Incarnation of the Lord, p.23.
2. John 6:27. See also 6:53.
3. Commentary on John, p.100. See also Milligan and Moulton: Commentary on John, p.148:- "The two points here are that life is obtained from the Son of Man - from the God-man alone, and that it is a free gift from Him. See also Plummer: Commentary on John, p.154.
4. John 12:23 and 13:31.
5. Commentary on John; p.229. Comp. John 5:23; 7:39; 10:30, 38; 12:16; 13:32 and 17:1,5. See also Milligan and Moulton: Commentary on John, p.274, where we read: "The Glorification of these passages consists in the full manifestation of Jesus when, all His labors and sufferings over, He shall be elevated, with the Father, to the possession and exercise of that power to carry out His work upon the widest scale which was now limited by the conditions of His earthly lot".

"Being glorified" is a frequent expression in this gospel for Christ's death regarded as a mode of His return to glory: and this glorification of the Son involves the glorification of the Father.

## 2. The Figurative Terms.

a. The Bread of Life. As a designation of Jesus, this phrase appears in the Fourth Gospel eleven times, all in the same discussion in the same chapter.<sup>1</sup> But it occurs in different forms; twice it is simply "the bread of life", once "the living bread which came down from heaven", twice "this bread" referring to the preceding statement, once "the true bread from heaven", once "the bread out of heaven" and once "the bread of God". The meaning, however, is practically the same throughout. The term is not found elsewhere in the Gospels or throughout the New Testament.

i. Source. For locating the source of this designation we are given by the context of its use here the plainest directions. These sign posts direct us to the book of Exodus and to the record there of Jehovah's feeding Israel with the manna from heaven.<sup>2</sup> Immediately prior to our Lord's use of this term the Jews had said, "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat."<sup>3</sup>

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1. John 6:32,32,33,35,41,48,50,51,51,58,58.
2. Exodus 16:4,15. See also Neh.9:15, Numbers 7:9.
3. John 6:31. Westcott: Com. on John, p.101 states that there was a tradition among the Jews that as the first redeemer caused the manna to fall from heaven, even so should the second redeemer cause the manna to fall from heaven.

ii. Usage. The entire eleven occurrences of this designation are to be found in but one chapter of the book, and to be concerned with but one incident, or at most two incidents in the life of our Lord, namely in the defence of the great sign of the multiplied bread and fishes first before the rabble, and second before a Jewish congregation.<sup>1</sup>

This designation has the distinction of being one which the foes of Jesus provided for Him. They had just said to Him,<sup>2</sup>

What then doest thou for a sign that we may see and believe thee? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.

and He answered:

It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven.

Following this pronouncement He continued to describe Himself as the "Bread of Life". His foes had unwittingly provided Him with a most accurate and significant designation.

iii. Significance. The Messianic content of this term manifests itself in several ways. In the first place, the context of this term describes a Messianic

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1. John 6:22-59.
2. Ibid. 6:30,31.
3. Ibid 6:32.

source for the "Bread of Life". This Bread originated from "My Father" and came "down out of heaven".<sup>1</sup> In the second place, the context describes also a Messianic service which this Bread out of heaven will render. He is presented as the object of faith to men;<sup>2</sup> as the means provided by God for the support of the spiritual life;<sup>3</sup> as having life in Himself and so imparting it to His people;<sup>4</sup> and therefore as indispensable to His people and as Divine. And in the third place, the fact that the Jews objected to the use of this designation by Jesus is at least a suggestion that it depicted the Messianic status, for we read that the Jews therefore "murmured concerning him, because he said, I am the bread which came down out of heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how doth he now say, I am come down out of heaven?"

b. The Door. The Shepherd. As designations of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, these terms may be studied together. They appear together in the text, having places in four verses in one chapter, occurring twice in each and dealing with the shepherd relation.<sup>5</sup> As a designation of Jesus, "The Door" does not appear elsewhere in the

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1. John 6:32,41,50,51,58.
2. Ibid. 6:33-35.
3. Ibid. 6:57.
4. Ibid. 6:41-42.
5. Ibid. 10:7,9,11,14.

Gospels or in the New Testament, but "The Shepherd" occurs in two of the other gospels as well as in two other books of the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

i. Source. We are not able to cite any particular passage in the Old Testament or in any Jewish writings for the designation "Door", but the passages which serve as a basis for "Shepherd" are indeed plentiful and prominent, and in themselves provide indirectly the basis for the phrase "The Door of the Sheep". These are The Shepherd Psalm, The Shepherd passages in Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and others.<sup>2</sup>

ii. Usage. These designations are used with singular impressiveness. They follow the very serious parable of the Sheepfold which had been introduced by a double "verily", which also was introduced by another double "verily". The effect of the whole is very solemn and impressive.<sup>3</sup> Equally true is it that these terms are used in a most tender, touching, affectionate and comforting manner, as the following selection bears witness,<sup>4</sup>

He calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep

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1. Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25 and 5:4.
2. Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34:2ff; Isaiah 40:11; Jeremiah 23:1ff.; Zechariah 11:3ff., and Micah 5:4.
3. John 10:1-6, gives the parable of the Sheepfold. John 10:7-18 gives Jesus' explanation of it.
4. John 10:3,4,14,15.

follow him: for they know his voice....  
I am the good shepherd and I know mine  
own, and mine own know me.....and I  
lay down my life for the sheep.

iii. Significance. Messianic implications of  
these designations as here used are evidenced in a number  
of ways.

That to which this "Door" affords entrance is  
salvation, and to accomplish the salvation of His people  
is an especial work of the Messiah.<sup>1</sup> The fuller form of  
this designation "The Door" is "The Door of the Sheep",  
which is not the door of the fold (a term which would  
apply mainly to outward organization), but the door of  
the sheep (a term which refers mainly to life, in distinc-  
tion from organization), that is, the one means of en-  
trance into life for His people.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus offered Himself as "The Door", i.e., the  
only door, the absolute door, to eternal life. This is  
the distinctive prerogative of the Messiah.<sup>3</sup>

The psalmists had portrayed Jehovah as the  
Shepherd of His people, and the prophets had foretold  
that the coming Redeemer would "feed his flock like a

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1. John 10:9.
2. Westcott: Commentary on John, p.152, cites the facts  
of this paragraph.
3. John 10:7,8,9.



shepherd"; and Jesus in applying the Shepherd designation to Himself presents His claim as Israel's Redeemer and as Divine.<sup>1</sup>

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus had the same intimate relation to the Father and the same commission for service as He had as Son and as Christ, which fact implies Messianic content to this term. Let us look at His own words,<sup>2</sup>

I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore doth the Father love me because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I of my Father.

And that these terms had Messianic significance is indicated by the reaction which their use caused among the Jews. Immediately there was raised an objection, and this was carried to the point of declaring Jesus to be demon possessed. As we read,<sup>3</sup>

There arose a division again among the Jews because of these words. And many of them said, He hath a demon, and is mad. Why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the sayings of one possessed with a demon.

Manifestly in the eyes of the Jews Jesus was placing

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1. The Jehovah-Shepherd passages in the Psalms: 23:1; 77:20; 79:13; 80:1 and 95:1ff.; and in the prophets, Isaiah 40:11; Micah 5:4 with which compare Jeremiah 31:10-14.
2. John 10:14-18.
3. John 10:19-21.

His claims entirely too high.

c. The Resurrection. The Life. These terms, descriptive of Jesus, occur together in the Fourth Gospel, and they appear but once.<sup>1</sup> The "Resurrection" as a designation of Jesus does not occur elsewhere in Scripture, but the "Life", as such, both in definite terms and by implication, occurs in several places in the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> We may well study them together due to the obvious connections in their meaning.

i. Source. The designation "Resurrection" appears to be based upon certain general hopes and convictions of the Jews touching the life hereafter, rather than upon any definite statements in the several books of the Old Testament canon. That these hopes and convictions had attained general acceptance among the Jews during the late Old Testament period and during the earthly ministry of our Lord is clearly shown in the New Testament.<sup>3</sup> The designation "Life" finds its broad source throughout the entire revelation of the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, beginning with the demonstration of life in Genesis 1:3 (as interpreted by John 1:4) and further declared in such statements as "with thee is the fountain of life".<sup>4</sup>

ii. Usage. The general incident which brings this combination of designations is the death of Lazarus, and the particular occasion was our Lord's conversation

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1. John 11:25.

2. John 14:16. "I am the way, the truth and the life".  
See also Col. 3:4; 1 John 1:2; 5:20. Comp. John 6:48.

3. See John 11:24; Mark 12:8,23; Luke 14:14 and Acts 23:6.

4. Psalms 36:9.

with Martha in which, after declaring her faith in His power over death and her hope in the final resurrection of her brother, she was privileged to hear Jesus say,<sup>1</sup>

I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.

These terms appear then as designations given in the first instance in the presence of but one person, Martha, and as such stand alone among all the designations of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>2</sup> And they were given at a time of great sorrow, and doubtless were then, as they have been for the centuries since, a source of unbounded comfort.

"What sublimity and what comfort is this testimony of Christ concerning Himself".<sup>3</sup>

iii. Significance. The significance, here, must be Messianic, because it is through Jesus, as indicated by the term "Resurrection" that believers experience the resurrection.<sup>4</sup> Again, it is through Jesus, as indicated by the term "life", that believers receive and enjoy eternal life.<sup>5</sup> And it is because of Jesus that believers possess, here and now, eternal life.<sup>6</sup>

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1. John 11:22-26.

2. Ibid. 11:17-30.

3. Lange, J.P.: Commentary on John, p.351.

4. John 11:25a, "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live".

5. Idem.

6. John 11:25b, "And whoso liveth and believeth on me shall never die". See also Plummer: Commentary on John, p.253.

d. The Way. The Truth. In one instance in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus designated Himself as the "Way" and as the "Truth".<sup>1</sup> This is the only instance in Scripture of the application of these terms as descriptions of Himself.

i. Source. We find in the Old Testament parallels to the conception embodied in the designation "way" in the statements wherein warnings were given to the people against turning aside from God's way,<sup>2</sup> and in such passages as "Teach me thy way, O Jehovah",<sup>3</sup> for the religious significance of this term was very familiar to the Jewish mind, and indeed, the early followers of Christ, before they were called Christians, were called people of "the way".<sup>4</sup> And for Old Testament parallels of the designation "truth", we have such suggestions as the expressions "I have chosen the way of truth",<sup>5</sup> and "I will walk in thy truth",<sup>6</sup> where way and truth seem to be used synonymously.<sup>7</sup>

ii. Usage. Of these designations as employed here, the context seems to place more emphasis on the first, "The Way". Some scholars indeed feel it to such

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1. John 14:6.
2. See Deut. 5:32; 31:29. Comp. Isaiah 30:21 and 35:8.
3. Ps. 27:11.
4. Bernard: Commentary on John, Vol. II, pp.537,538.
5. Psalm 119:30.
6. Psalm 86:11.
7. These sources suggested by Bernard: Commentary on John, Vol, 2, p.538.

an extent that they make Jesus' statement "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" read, "I am the true and living way". This has not met with general acceptance however.<sup>1</sup>

The occasion of the use of these terms was a conversation between Jesus and His disciples. Jesus was speaking of His departure and had said that they knew where He was going, and therefore knew the way. Thomas immediately objected, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" Then Jesus answered him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me".<sup>2</sup> In this conversation with Thomas, Jesus is putting the emphasis upon the way; Thomas seems more concerned about the goal, but in Jesus' final statement "both the goal and the way are disclosed".<sup>3</sup>

iii. Significance. The Messianic significance of these terms is apparent in the following particulars.

In the first place, the matter under discussion in the incident in which Jesus employed these terms was the "Father's House" and the manner of entering it, upon the former of which it was highly appropriate for the Messiah to give knowledge, and with regard to the latter,

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1. Dods: Commentary on John (Expos.Grk.Test. Vol.1) p.822.
2. See John 14:1-7.
3. See Dods: Commentary of John (Expos.Grk.Test. Vol.1) p.822.

His chief service for His people was in providing them a safe and sure entrance.<sup>1</sup>

In the second place, the statement which immediately follows in the context of this incident shows that Jesus is speaking of some function of the Messiah. The statement is, "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also; from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen him".<sup>2</sup>

In the third place, the plain meaning of the terms here used naturally inclines us to expect Messianic significance. These are not only clear and strong terms in themselves, but they are used in an absolute sense, and their meaning is further enforced by the statements of the context.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Westcott states that Jesus as the "Truth" is the One in whom is summed up "all that is eternal and absolute in the changing phenomena of finite being".<sup>4</sup>

e. The Light. As a designation of Jesus, this term occurs in the Fourth Gospel thirteen times, and in the following striking phraseology: "the light", "the true light", "the light of life", "the light of men", and "the light of the world".<sup>5</sup> It is found as a designation of Jesus else-

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1. John 14:1-7.
2. John 14:7. See also Coffin, H.S.: Portraits of Jesus, p.95 where speaking of Jesus as the "Way" he says "the human life which began at Bethlehem is the unveiling of the life of God. What Jesus was, His and our Father, is, from everlasting to everlasting.
3. John 14:1-24.
4. Westcott: Commentary on John, p.202.
5. John 1:4,5,7,8,8,9; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35,35,36,36,46.

where in the New Testament, in Matthew, Luke and the First Epistle of John.<sup>1</sup>

i. Source. A number of Old Testament passages contain suggestions for this designation. There are the passages describing the pillar of fire which guided the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness.<sup>2</sup> There are pointed statements in the Psalms and in the prophecies of Isaiah, as the following:<sup>3</sup>

Jehovah is my light and my salvation,  
Whom shall I fear.

For with thee is the fountain of life  
In thy light shall we see light.

Jehovah will be unto thee an everlasting light.

The people that walked in darkness have seen a  
great light: they that dwelt in the land of the  
shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles  
that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of  
the earth.

ii. Usage. This designation is used both by the author and by Jesus. With regard to its use by the author let it be noted that it occurs in the Prologue;<sup>4</sup> it is used to distinguish Jesus from John the Baptist,<sup>5</sup> and to define the ministry of the Baptist;<sup>6</sup> it was used

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1. Matt. 4:16; Luke 2:32; 1 John 2:8,9,10.
2. Exodus 13:20-22; 14:24.
3. Psalms 27:1; 36:9; Isaiah 60:19; 9:2; 49:6.
4. John 1:4,5,7,8,9.
5. John 1:8a.
6. John 1:8b.

in close connection with the conception "life";<sup>1</sup> it was used with reference to a relation to all mankind;<sup>2</sup> and it was used in vivid contrast to the darkness, and in suggestion of that perpetual conflict between the forces of right and those of wrong.<sup>3</sup>

We note that Jesus used it to describe Himself;<sup>4</sup> the realm of safety, knowledge and progress,<sup>5</sup> and the temporary mission He was performing while incarnate.<sup>6</sup> He used it in connection with an appeal to faith in Him as the Deliverer from darkness.<sup>7</sup> He used it frequently in His discussions with the Jews concerning the nature of His Person and His ministry.<sup>8</sup> And He used it in His final appeal to the Jewish people.<sup>9</sup>

iii. Significance. We feel that this designation has Messianic significance because the intimate connection, maintained both by Jesus and by the author, between life and light, indicates Messianic significance. Commenting on the statement that "the life was the light

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1. John 1:4.
2. John 1:9.
3. John 1:5.
4. John 8:12a, "I am the light of the world".
5. John 8:12b, "He that followeth me shall in no wise walk in the darkness but shall have the light of life".
6. John 12:35,36, "Yet a little while is the light with you. While ye have the light believe on the light".
7. John 12:46 I am come a light into the world that whosoever believeth in me may not abide in darkness."
8. John 8:12; 9:5; and 12:35,36.
9. John 12:26, "believe on the light".



of men", Dr. Lange says,<sup>1</sup>

Here life kindles up into light. As God the Father is in the absolute sense life and light, so is the Son likewise. Christ is not  $\phi \tilde{\omega} \varsigma$  simply, but  $\tau \acute{o} \phi \tilde{\omega} \varsigma$  the only true light.

Again, the prominent treatment given in this Gospel to the conflict between the light and the darkness argues in favor of the Messianic content of this term. The type of the ministry as described in the figure light as opposed to darkness, together with the stated and assured victory of the light, outlines elements of the Messianic program.<sup>2</sup>

And finally, the description of the light as the true light in contrast with the borrowed intellectual and moral light of John the Baptist and other leaders, argues in favor of Messianic content for this term. The original adjective here is not  $\tau \acute{o} \alpha \lambda \eta \theta \acute{o} \nu \iota$ .e., true as opposed to false, but  $\tau \acute{o} \alpha \lambda \eta \theta \acute{\iota} \nu \omicron \nu$  truth as opposed to that which is borrowed or imitated; thus presenting a contrast between the perfect original and the more or less imperfect copy. It is the "lumen illuminans" as distinct from the "lumen illuminatum".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Lange: Commentary on John, p.58.
2. John 1:5; 12:35. See also Milligan and Moulton: Commentary on John, p.8.
3. The facts in this paragraph are from Schaff's comments in Lange: Commentary on John, p.66. See also Westcott: Commentary on John, p.128 and Revelation of the Father, p.51. See also Vedder, H.S.: The Johannine Writings, p.73.

f. The Vine. As a designation of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, this term appears twice, first as the "true vine", and second simply as the "vine".<sup>1</sup> It is not found in the other Gospels as a designation of Jesus, nor elsewhere in the New Testament.

i. Source. Old Testament parallels for this designation are suggested in several passages. There is the well known parable of the Vineyard of Isaiah,<sup>2</sup> also the statement in Jeremiah concerning Israel's privileges under Jehovah, "I have planted thee a noble vine",<sup>3</sup> and statements in Ezekiel and the Psalmists.<sup>4</sup>

ii. Usage. This designation appears in but one place in the Gospel according to John, being used in a brief portion of the final discourses of Jesus with His disciples before His arrest and crucifixion.<sup>5</sup> It was used by Jesus to portray the intimate relation existing between His followers and Himself, and their abiding dependence upon Him.<sup>6</sup> It has the distinction of being the last designation through which He revealed Himself to His disciples.<sup>7</sup> Very interesting speculation has been

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1. John 15:1-5.
2. Isaiah 5:1-6. This reference and the two following references to source are from Lange: Commentary on John, p.461.
3. Jeremiah 2:21.
4. Ezekiel 15:2; 19:10 and Psalms 80:8. See also Bernard: Commentary on John, Vol.2,p.478.
5. John 15:1,5.
6. John 15:4,5.
7. The self designations of Jesus appeared by chapters as follows: Son of Man 1, Sent of God 4; Bread of Life 5; Light of World 8; Door and Shepherd 10; Resurrection and Life 11; Way and truth and Comforter 14; Vine 15.

held regarding the probable suggestion of this figure to the mind of our Lord by the representation, on the doors of the Temple, of Israel as the vine of Jehovah.

iii. Significance. We feel that there is Messianic significance in this designation as used here because Jesus is pictured as bearing to the individual Christian a relation which no mere human being could bear, to wit, that of the mystic source of life and fruitfulness to him.<sup>1</sup>

Again, the fact that Jesus is here depicted as bearing a deep, abiding relation to God which He could only bear as His Son argues in favor of Messianic significance for this term.<sup>2</sup>

And further, the fact that Jesus is here depicted as bearing a relation to the cleansing, growing, purifying work of God in the world which only a supernatural being could possess argues in favor of Messianic significance for this term as used here.<sup>3</sup>

#### C. The Descriptive Epithet.

The Sent of God. There are thirty eight references to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel as the One whom the Father

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1. John 15:5.
2. See John 15:1-27.
3. John 15:2,3,6,16.

hath sent into the world.<sup>1</sup> This designation of Jesus is used also in the Synoptics, and by Paul, though not on nearly so large a scale as in this Gospel.<sup>2</sup>

a. Source. The Scriptural basis for this designation of the Christ appears to be in that extensive body of revelation in the Old Testament dealing with the great work of redemption. Included in this, are those passages which depict God as the Author of redemption,<sup>3</sup> which declare that God's work among His covenant people and in the world at large is prosecuted by persons whom He has designated to represent Him,<sup>4</sup> and which affirm that His representatives are called, commissioned and sent by Him, having His Spirit put upon them and being appointed to definite tasks in His work, as witnessed in the statement:

The spirit of Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath appointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.<sup>5</sup>

And doubtless the chief and central basis for this designation lies in that great promise extending through history, prophecy and psalm, assuring God's people, that

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1. John 3:17; 4:34; 5:23,24,30,36,37,38; 6:29,38,39,44,57; 7:16,18,28,29; 8:16,18,26,29,42; 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44,49; 13:16,20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:3,18,21,23,25; and 20:21.
2. Matt. 10:40; Mk.9:37; Lk.4:23; 9:48; Gal.4:4,6.
3. Examples of this are: Isa.43:1-7; and 44:6-8.
4. Examples of this are: Isa.6:8; Jer.1:4; Amos 7:14,15.
5. Isaiah 61:1.

in His own way and time, He will send, for their redemption, His Anointed One.<sup>1</sup>

b. Usage. Of the thirty-eight times this designation is used of Jesus in this Gospel, thirty-six instances are clearly the use of Jesus Himself, and even the other two instances may be His.<sup>2</sup> After the personal name Jesus and the title Lord, this is the most popular of the twenty-nine designations of Jesus in this Gospel, for it occurs a larger number of times and in a larger number of chapters and incidents.<sup>3</sup> There are sixteen separate incidents in which the term is used of Jesus. In five of these Jesus uses the term a total of twenty-one times in stirring debates with the Jews.<sup>4</sup> In two of the incidents He employs it three times in discussions with the general multitude,<sup>5</sup> and in nine incidents it is used fourteen times in describing Jesus and His mission to His disciples and friends.<sup>6</sup> Thus it appears as a term constantly and in all situations on the lips of Jesus.

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1. Deut. 18:15-18; Ps.2; Isa.7:14; 9:6,7; 11:1-5; 42:1-4; Isa.53; Micah 5:2-4; Zech.9:9; and 13:1,2.
2. John 3:17 and 17:3, where the term, if not by Jesus, is by the author.
3. "Sent of God" occurs 38 times in 16 chapters. "Jesus" occurs 239 times in 20 chapters. "Lord" occurs 40 times in 11 chapters. "Son" occurs 25 times in 11 chapters.
4. John 5:23,24,30,36,37,38; 6:29,38,39,44,57; John 7:16,18,28,29; 8:16,18,26,29,42; 10:36.
5. Ibid. 11:42; and 12:44,49.
6. Ibid. 3:17; 4:34; 9:4; 13:16,20; 14:24; 15:21,16:5; 17:3,18,21,23,25; and 20:21.

Noteworthy is the use of this term in the intercessory prayer of Jesus. It occurs here four times, which is a substantial percentage of the total for the book, and twice as much as the only other designation used in the prayer. This fact alone is sufficient to clothe this term with peculiar favor in the eyes of our Lord.<sup>1</sup>

c. Significance. Messianic content is claimed for this phrase, in its use in this gospel, for the reason that it expresses, in the light of its several contexts, a mission so exalted, so universal, and so in keeping with God's will for saving the world, that only the Messiah could fulfill it;<sup>2</sup> also because it describes a communion with God so intimate, so full, so free, that only the Messiah could attain unto it;<sup>3</sup> and a dependence upon God so complete, and so joyously loyal that only the Messiah could show it;<sup>4</sup> and a position of such privilege that only the Messiah could merit it;<sup>5</sup> and finally, a claim for the Person and work of Jesus of such a nature that the religious leaders of the Jews openly and determinedly rejected Jesus and accused Him, among other

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1. John 17:18,21,23,25. ("Son" appears twice in vs.1).
2. See John 3:17. See also Meyer, H.A.W.: Commentary on John, p.133. See also John 6:38,57 and Dr. Warfield's comment thereon in The Lord of Glory, p.191.
3. John 4:34; 8:16,29. Comp.7:29.
4. John 6:38,57; and 9:4. See also Meyer: Commentary on John, p.301.
5. John 5:23,37; and 8:18.

charges, of blasphemy.<sup>1</sup>

C. Conclusion.

A review of the foregoing study of the New Messianic designations in the Fourth Gospel brings to our attention in summary form the following:

1. Certain facts pertaining to their use:

a. There are sixteen of these designations employed ninety-five times. This is a large number, but not comparatively, a large use. Six of the designations are used but once, and three but twice. The designations are: Bridegroom, Lamb, Word, Comforter, God, Son of Man, Bread, Door, Shepherd, Resurrection, Life, Way, Truth, Light, Vine and Sent of God.

b. As a group they may be considered peculiar to the Fourth Gospel because only three of them appear elsewhere in the Gospels. In this particular, they distinguish themselves sharply from the older Messianic designations.

c. As a group they may be termed the self designations of Jesus, since only four of them were ever employed by any one else. This fact distinguishes them very markedly from the Old Messianic titles, because they were chiefly of the people's coinage and use. Thus we must recognize that in the new designations we are brought face to face with special values which the Master

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1. See John 5:43-47. See also 6:60-69; and 10:32-39.

Himself, of His own initiative, brought for our consideration.

2. Certain facts pertaining to the Messianic implications in these designations:

a. The first fact is that of Jesus' Messiahship. These new designations are shown to have definite Messianic content.

b. And the second fact deals with the emphasis placed upon Jesus' Messiahship.

i. Here we have practically the same Messianic elements as were revealed by the older Messianic titles, including sense of mission, pre-existence, equality with God, suffering, holding vast dominion, glory, etc., but with the difference that certain phases of the life-giving and sustaining powers of the Messiah receive larger emphasis. A very outstanding and pervasive element in the Messianic doctrine of this group of titles is that of "life".

ii. The Messiahship of Jesus according to these new terms appears to be revealed more in its practical aspects, as opposed to its fundamental ones, and to relate itself more to definite acts. This is not to deny certain deep, fundamental aspects and relations of the Messiahship as embodied in these New Messianic



designations but only to claim that, in the large, and as distinguished from the older Messianic titles, these terms place the emphasis rather upon the practical aspect, the definite acts, of the Messiah in the redemption of His people.

iii. There appears here also an emphasis upon the relation of the Messiah and His work to the individual. To the individual believer, as over against on one hand, His relation to the Father, and on the other His relation to the Jewish nation, or to the Kingdom of God, or to the world. There is a certain tenderness in that close relation which Jesus describes Himself as having with the individuals who receive Him and believe in Him, even as in the older Messianic designations there was such signal reference to the unbroken and unlimited communion which Jesus as the Son had with God the Father.

3. Certain facts related to the understanding of the Messianic titles:

a. By the use of these new Messianic designations, Jesus had opportunity to correct misconceptions of the disciples as well as of the Jewish people concerning the nature and ministry of the Messiah; to turn their hopes from the materialistic conception, to the spiritual, from the political to the moral, and from the local and

temporal to the universal and eternal. This, we believe, He endeavored to do, and as one means toward its accomplishment, He employed these new Messianic designations.

b. Also, through these new designations He had a new and open field for the constructive and unopposed presentation of Himself to His nation as the true Messiah, for outlining that definition of Messiahship which He was able to illustrate in Himself while present in the flesh with His people, and for that interpretation of the known Messianic titles which He and He alone could give and in Himself fulfill.

c. And through these titles, an effective channel was provided for stressing the redemptive work of the Messiah in its relation to sin on the part of the individual and to death on the part of the Saviour. The task of depicting the Messiah's sufferings, in all their meanings and relations, was a task which demanded new terms, for not only the great body of the Jewish people but also the closest friends of Jesus and even the inmost circle of disciples, were in sore need of instruction in this matter.

May we not say, then, that these new Messianic designations present Jesus, as the Christ, The Son of God, who is able to give life to those who receive Him because He has so thoroughly identified Himself with man and has provided for his every need?

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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Our study, then of the designations of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel results in certain convictions which may be characterized and listed as follows:

1. Undoubtedly, these titles were used with a purpose. It is a matter of most general knowledge and agreement that names and titles among the Jews had special significance and were so used throughout the period in which this study is concerned. It has been seen in this study that these designations of Jesus were rich with meaning. We have been impressed also with the large number of designations used, and the large use of these designations, exceedingly far above any similar section of the Scriptures. We have noted those who have used them, especially the friends of Jesus, the disciples, the author of the Gospel, and have seen that they were the very people to use these titles with a definite purpose. And lastly, we have noted Jesus' own use of the titles, which fact alone would establish the contention, that the titles were used for a purpose.

2. One of the definite purposes of these titles was to present the Messiahship of Jesus. We have noted that after all eliminations were made of all names and titles which did not bear Messianic significance, or which were doubtful as to this, there remained a large body of titles

of richest content and fullest use, which titles furnish the basis for these Messianic claims. Reviewing the outstanding facts in regard to this presentation of the Messiahship of Jesus, we note the following:

a. These designations arose out of just those sources from which Messianic designations only could arise, that is, from the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament. We have traced these titles to their sources and have found them to be in the very heart of the sacred books of the Jews. We cannot but be impressed with the emphasis which these designations, considered in the light of their origin, use and development in the canonical and apocryphal books of the Old Testament, and in Jewish Literature generally, place upon the elements on the Jewish background to this entire Gospel.

b. These designations received a uniform use in the contexts dealing with the subject of Jesus' Messiahship. This Messiahship is sometimes denied, but more often affirmed; it is continually discussed by the people generally, and debated by the Jews: it is confessed by the disciples; it is received and interpreted by the Master. The attitude toward it might be a very variable quantity, but the subject was one and the same.

c. These designations furnished the author with most convenient and effective materials for the erection of his structure of testimony. Prior to the time in which

he took occasion to state his thesis, "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," the author had been building up his testimony and adding witness to witness to testify concerning the Messiahship and one of his most popular and effective methods was the employment of these Messianic designations.

3. Another goal of this purpose was the presentation of Jesus' own interpretation of His Messiahship.

a. We have noted that situations are repeatedly presented in this Gospel in which Jesus is brought face to face with the use of these designations by the various groups and individuals with whom He was surrounded as He went about His daily work. The author makes it clear that Jesus was conscious of the use of these terms by the people in reference to His Person and work; of the problem which was involved in their use; of the arguments, debates and disputes among the people because of them. Equally clear does the author make it that Jesus did not forbid the use of these terms, nor the discussions which arose over them. On the other hand, it is shown that Jesus Himself took part in these discussions, received these titles as applied to Him, and did not forbid or restrict their use by the people.

b. We should be impressed in like degree with the position maintained by Jesus on several occasions by which He not only passively received these Messianic titles, but most positively and openly acknowledged their applica-

tion to Him and His earnest claim to be the fulfillment to which these terms pointed. The author does not represent Jesus as being fearful that He might be misunderstood or as being hesitant as though He might not be quite clear in His own mind as to the propriety of the procedure, or as to the actual fact of His own knowledge of His Messiahship. Quite the contrary is the case with the author of this Gospel. Jesus here, unhesitatingly and boldly, asserts His Messiahship in the reception and application of these titles to Himself.

c. And in equal, if not greater degree, should we be impressed with the emphasis which Jesus puts upon His Messiahship by means of His own use of the Messianic titles, both the new as well as the old. That Jesus did not content Himself with simply receiving and approving these titles but also made large use of them himself, is abundantly illustrated in our study of these titles. This fact can only mean that He regarded them as convenient and effective channels for the presentation of His Messiahship. And it is only as we appreciate the significance of this fact that we grasp the distinctive contribution which the Fourth Gospel makes to an understanding of Jesus' Messiahship as presented by the Messianic designations.

i. Jesus used these titles to describe the Messianic mission. This mission He set forth as being, not a national, political and temporal deliverance, but

a personal, spiritual, universal and eternal redemption. It was most practical, providing the exact supply for every need of the redeemed; and most mystical, involving the suffering and death of the Messiah and fulfilling the types and symbols of the old economy. This Messianic mission was now being prosecuted in the world, in the presence of the Messiah, quietly, gradually, without pomp or display. It was meeting with bitter opposition, but on the part of those who were accepting it, it was the firm support of their faith and the glorious fulfilling of their hopes.

ii. And Jesus used these titles to portray the relationships of the Messiah.

(a) His relations to men are revealed.

To the whole body of mankind the Messiah stands related in the matter of providing the means and presenting the offer of salvation, in bearing rule and in administering judgment; and to the group of those who receive Him (and it is this group which receives special attention in this Gospel), the Messiah bears in addition the most intimate personal relation.

(b) His relations to God are depicted.

On this, the emphasis in the Fourth Gospel is particularly strong. Jesus made large use of the designations to describe the relations between the Messiah and God.

(i) This relation is, in one



aspect, that of agent to master. God had sent His Messiah to fulfill a certain task, to prosecute it according to definite instructions of which He alone is the Author, and to report the results of this stewardship to Him.

(ii) In another aspect this relation is that of vice-regent to monarch. The Messiah is God's vice-regent on earth. Even as God the Messiah bears rule under God. For this, He was made Messiah, i.e., Anointed. For His ministry of rulership He is accountable to God alone.

(iii) But it is in His relation as Son that the Messiah is set forth preeminently in the Fourth Gospel. There God is the Father, the Messiah, the Son, and not simply Son in the semi-legal, semi-technical expression "Son of God", nor yet simply Son as in the new and mysterious "Son of Man" title, but Son as in the expression "Son of the Father". The Messiah is the son of God in a sense in which no other person is the son of God. He is entitled to call God His Father in a sense in which no other person can. "Son" is the culminating designation for the Messiah in this Gospel, and as such imposes its meaning upon all the others, interprets all the others, organizes all the others into a solid body of testimony to the Person and work of the Messiah.

We would, then, most humbly yet most confidently affirm that the designations for Jesus in this Gospel add their rich and colorful testimony to the other great streams of evidence, witnessing the Messiahship of Jesus Christ and appealing to men to place their faith in Him.

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APPENDIX

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