

The Christology of the Fourth Gospel

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Superficially, it would appear to be a truism to say that John's gospel is profoundly Christological, but to those within the milieu of Johannine scholarship, it is a profound truth that needs to be re-discovered. The true centre of the gospel is often wrongly located in the life of the Community, whereas it is the life of Jesus¹, and the "life" which belief in his name brings, which is the Evangelists primary concern (20:31). Barrett comments: "What John perceived with far greater clarity than any of his predecessors was that Jesus *is* the Gospel, and that the Gospel *is* Jesus. It was through the life, and especially through the death and resurrection, of Jesus that men had been admitted to the blessings of the messianic kingdom, and the highest blessing of that kingdom was... the life of communion with Christ himself.... That is, when the Gospel was offered to men it was Christ himself who was offered to them, and received by them. It was intolerable therefore that the person of Christ should remain undefined."². John's christological focus has a soteriological intent³.

From Mark to Chalcedon?

Whilst the Chalcedonian definition⁴ cannot be read off the pages of John, the Fathers rightly saw their endeavour as drawing out and defending the implicit affirmations of Scripture regarding the person and natures of Christ⁵. The Fourth gospel clearly proclaims Jesus as both fully human and fully God. This is also the somewhat implicit and undeveloped position of the synoptics. John is clearly different (as even the Gospel's most primitive readers show themselves to be aware). Here Jesus speaks about himself in long discourses, whereas in the Synoptic he teaches about the Kingdom in parables.⁶ It is sometimes argued that the high Christology of the Fourth Gospel is a later development incompatible with the Synoptics⁷. However, the Johannine Christ is congruent with the Synoptists' portraits and the difference should

¹ Reading the Fourth Gospel against the background of contemporary βίαι is helpful in recovering this emphasis. See Burrige, R, What are the Gospels? A comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography SNTSMS 70 (Cambridge, CUP, 1992)

² Barrett, C. K., The Gospel According to St John – an introduction with commentary and notes on the Greek text second edition (London, SPCK, 1978) p70

³ Barrett, Op. Cit., rightly points out that the concerns of the Fourth Evangelist are integrated: "Eschatology is bound up with Christology, salvation with faith and knowledge, miracles with sacraments; if any of these themes is isolated from the rest, indeed if any is discussed in isolation from the rest, distortion becomes inevitable." (p67).

⁴ See e.g. Kelly, J. N. D., Early Christian Doctrines Fifth edition (London, A & C Black, 1977) p339f for a convenient version of the confession.

⁵ Although much of the language is extra-Biblical, the Fathers claimed to be systematizing the teaching of Scripture, rather than inventing doctrine *de novo*, and the Fourth Gospel was a particular locus of the debate in the first five centuries.

⁶ The statistics are impressive: KINGDOM: Mt 47X; Mk 18X; Lk 37X; Jn 5X; "I": Mt 17X; Mk 9X; Lk 10X; Jn 118X. The relationship between these two themes is apparent: in Mark 1:14f, for example, it seems that the Kingdom has come because King Jesus has come. Jesus' identity and the Kingdom are closely connected. John emphasises that Jesus' kingdom is not of (? from) this world.

⁷ see Dunn, James D. G., Christology in the Making (London, SCM, 1980) pp 213-250. We should note from Paul and Hebrews that high Christology is not necessarily late, as many non-Evangelical scholars, such as Barbara Shellard, would admit.

not be over-estimated⁸. As Blomberg points out, the synoptics are by no means averse to making exalted claims for Jesus⁹. At most, John represents a development and expansion of the tradition. He is not inventing new teaching as he meditates on the Christ of Faith, but enlarging an element already present in the historical teaching of Jesus from the beginning (c.f. 14:25-26)¹⁰. Indeed it would be very difficult to show that any single incident or saying could not be original.

True Man – the Word made flesh

Despite the protestations of some scholars, there is no doubt that the Fourth evangelist presents Jesus as truly a man. Ernst Kasemann erroneously characterised John's Christology as "naively docetic", claiming that he presents "God striding across the earth", with such divine glory that the humanity of Jesus cannot reasonably be maintained in any meaningful sense. The Johannine Christ is inhumane and unbelievable¹¹.

Contrary to Kasemann's case, John's gospel is, if anything, anti-docetic¹². Thompson says: "Many of those things which are characteristic of John's description of Jesus may be related specifically to the consideration of Jesus' humanity"¹³. Jesus is called *ανηρ* (man/male) in 1:30 and *ανθρωπος* (man/human-being) in 8:40; 4:29; 5:12; 7:46; 9:11,16,24; 10:33; 11:47; 18:17, 29; 19:5. Whilst Jesus is certainly the man "from above", from God, the Fourth Gospel also affirms Jesus human origins and parentage (1:46; 4:43-45; 7:25-52; 12:34)¹⁴. Jesus' human relations are further referred to in 2:1-11; 6:42; 19:25-27; 6:42; 2:12; 7:3, 10¹⁵. Jesus is subject to ordinary human emotions and weaknesses: he grows weary and thirst (4:6f; ?19:28), weeps and rages in himself at the death of a friend (11:33, 38) and is troubled or perplexed in

⁸ We should note the so-called "Johannine Thunderbolt" in Matthew and Luke (Q?) and the parabolic teaching in John (such as the Vine or Good Shepherd discourses).

⁹ For example, he forgives sins (Mk 2:5) and receives worship (Mt 14:33). As in John, final destiny depends on response to him (Mk 8:38; Lk 12:8-10). Just as John takes over Old Testament metaphors for Yahweh and applies them to Jesus, so in the Synoptics Jesus associates himself with teaching concerning the Lord of the Harvest, the Shepherd, the Sower, the Vineyard Owner, the Bridegroom and the Rock.

¹⁰ "It is a marked feature of John's gospel that its presentation of the person of Christ in many ways goes beyond the Christology of the synoptic Gospels. No doubt this is the result of the further reflection which was undertaken within the Johannine church, when on the basis of authentic Christian tradition a more profound interpretation was given to the nature of Jesus. In John's Christology, moreover, we now have the key to his theology", Smalley, Stephen, John – Evangelist & Interpreter, revised edition, (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1998), p238.

¹¹ Ernst Kasemann, The Testament of Jesus which works back from John 17 to a re-interpretation of John 1:14 contrary to the usual incarnational reading, based on his presuppositions concerning what it means to be truly human. For an extended response which is largely persuasive, see Thompson, M. M., The Incarnate Word – Perspectives on Jesus in the Fourth Gospel (Peabody, Hendrickson Publishers, 1993) originally published as The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel (Fortress Press, 1988)

¹² This is a trajectory which is developed even more clearly in 1 John. Rather than calling John anti-docetic, it may be preferable to think that the humanity of Jesus was merely assumed. For those who had known the historical Jesus, as our author claims to have done, it was an unquestioned given. See Thompson, Op. Cit., p122. Reymond, Op. Cit., similarly argues that: "Nowhere is Jesus' humanity more apparent in a natural and unforced way than in John's gospel" (p32).

¹³ Thompson, Op. Cit., p3

¹⁴ For the significance of Jesus being of God and also having human origins, see Keck, Leander E., 'Derivation as Destiny: "Of-ness" in Johannine Christology, Anthropology, and Soteriology' in Exploring The Gospel of John ed. Culpepper, R. A.

¹⁵ Thompson, Op. Cit., pp5-8

spirit as he contemplates the cross (12:27). Jesus' real death is stressed (19:34), and his true humanity is thus emphasised. The wounds in his hands and side even remain visible in his resurrected humanity (20:20, 27; 21:9-14).

More Than A Man – we beheld his glory

Falling into the opposite error to that which we found in Kasemann (his sometime pupil), Bultmann emphasised not the glory of Jesus (1:14b), but that he was made flesh (1:14a). The Revealer is nothing but a man and Jesus is the Revealer in his "sheer humanity"¹⁶.

This judgement from Bultmann is extraordinary, for it is abundantly clear from that Fourth Gospel that while fully human, Jesus is also presented as much more than a man. A great array of titles are brought forth to delineate Jesus' significance¹⁷, but the Christology of the Gospel is much more sophisticated than a trawl through a list of appellations would suggest. Characters frequently raise the question of Jesus' identity (as for example does the Baptist in 1:15 or Nicodemus more obliquely in 3:2) and a number of prominent confessions of Jesus are made throughout the gospel (e.g. 1:41, 45, 49 from the outset, through to the climactic 20:28ff). It is reasonable to think that John hopes his readers will come to share in the growing appreciation of who Jesus is with those in the story who come to grasp something of his significance: notice the growing awareness of the Samaritans¹⁸. Or note the way in which the man born blind comes to see, not only in the sense that he gains his physical sight, but that he is able to perceive who Jesus is, whereas the Pharisees remain spiritually blind (9v39). His growing insight can be charted: v11, Jesus is "the man they call Jesus", of whose whereabouts he is ignorant, v17, the man declares, "he is a prophet", possibly sinless, v25, v27ff, the God-fearing man from God. The man is willing to believe in the Son of Man¹⁹ (v35f) then he said, "Lord, I believe, and worshipped him".

¹⁶ Thompson, Op. Cit., p2

¹⁷ We can well imagine that the Evangelist would agree with the Hymnist that: "Join all the glorious names / of wisdom, love and power, / that ever mortals knew, / that angels ever bore; / all are too poor to speak his worth, / too poor to set my Saviour forth." (Isaac Watts), Sing Glory, no. 46

¹⁸ 4v9, "you", v11, "sir" - κυριε - a word with a wide semantic range from a polite form of address to Lord, and the LXX translation of Yahweh - The word is also used in 1:23; 4:3; 6:23, 68; 9:38; 11:2, 3, 12, 21, 27, 32; 13:6, 9, 13, 14, 16, 25, 36, 37; 14:5, 8, 22; 20:2, 18, 20, 25, 28; 21:7, 12, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21. Reymond seems too keen to always give the term a very strong meaning, but we should not react by thinking that the fullest sense can never be present. "... when John refers to Christ as 'the Lord' ('o kurios) in the narrative of his gospel (Jn 4:1; 6:23; 11:2; 20:20; 21:12), he intends the title, used as it is in the Septuagint to translate the divine name Yahweh, in its most eminent, that is to say, in its divine Yahwistic sense" (Reymond, Op. Cit. p39) – v12, "greater than our father Jacob", v19, "a prophet", v29, "the man who told me everything I ever did. Could he be the Christ?", v42, "the Saviour of the World".

¹⁹ How much the man understands by the term Son of Man is questionable. All of John's uses of the phrase are unique to him. "The thirteen uses of the expression "Son of Man" in John's gospel (1:51; 3:13f; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23, 34; 13:31) – beginning with 1:51, which forms an introduction and guide to the meaning of the others – are used to expound the central Christological theme of the identity of Jesus, who is related immediately both to God and to humankind" (Smalley, Op. Cit. p241) For Voss the title: "connotes the heavenly, superhuman side of Jesus' mysterious existence" (Reymond, Op. Cit. p45) "Clearly, for Jesus the Son of Man sayings, above all others, embodied his conception of Messiahship; and beyond question its associations were supernatural, even divine" (Reymond, Op. Cit. p45). Jesus is the anti-typical ladder of Jacob (Gen 28:12) – the mediator through whom heaven and earth meet. Vindication after suffering is suggested (Daniel, 1 Enoch, 2 Esdras, cf Mk 8:31) as are ideas of humiliation & glory, included in expressions "lifted up" 3:14; 8:28;

The various witnesses of the Gospel could therefore be thought of as bringing forward evidence in the great trial of Jesus' identity²⁰. The evangelist emphasises his own eye-witness testimony that we who have not seen Jesus might believe.

It is particularly the signs²¹ of the Fourth Gospel constitute evidence of Jesus' uniqueness and set him apart from the rest of humanity (15:24). According to 20:31, the signs indicate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God²². Whilst the *δυναμια* (powerful deeds / might works) of the Synoptics are certainly much more than conjuring tricks, the *σημεια* (signs) of the Fourth Gospel are particularly laden with meaning. It is by them that Jesus reveals his *δοξα* (glory – a supreme property of God) and they provide an occasion for faith. Jesus' provision of the equivalent of seven-hundred and fifty bottles of the finest wine is more than wonder-working, or even a powerful act of compassion. The new wine of Christ replaces the insipid water of Judaism (note the six stone water jars which "the Jews" use for ritual purification, v6). Perhaps the wine is suggestive of the blood of Christ which will eventually bring about cleansing and fulfil the law. Certainly the abundant provision of wine at a wedding banquet anticipates the amazing blessings of Messiah's kingdom. Jesus' provision of the bread for the five thousand is also likened to the giving of manna in the wilderness. Jesus is the Prophet like Moses of Deuteronomy 18, but even more he

12:34 and glorified (12:23; 13:31). The Synoptic emphasis on future glory is usually lacking – cf Mk 13:26; 14:62 but note 5:27. John's use is not *very* different from synoptic tradition (Smalley, Op. Cit., p242). The Son of Man is a real and representative figure. Jesus is the true Israel (15:1; 1:47-51; Ps 80:8-19; Is 5:1-7) and the True Man – Adamic background: Dn 7:13f; Ps 8:4; Ez 2:1; Mt 8:19-20. He ascends into heaven, having descended from it (1:51; 3:13; 6:62; 13:31). The heart of John's Son of Man Christology: "In the 4th gospel the S of M is above all the one who because of his unique nature can bring heaven down to earth, and earth up to heaven. Moreover, Jn takes his Christology one stage further by letting us glimpse the pre-existent character of the Son of Man. He is one with God not only in time and beyond time, but also before time. He comes from God and is exalted to God. By 'descending from heaven', therefore, and undergoing a death which is at the same time glorification, he can be the Saviour of all believers. Precisely because he *is* the Son of Man, Jesus can bring God's judgement continually to the world, and enable the believer to live eternally" (5:27; 6:27, 53, Smalley, Op. Cit., p242f). "the main statements of the kerygma in the Fourth gospel are all given in terms of John's Son of Man Christology: as Son of Man, Jesus comes to the world, dies, is exalted, and is given the authority to execute judgement" (3:13f; 12:23; 5:27, Smalley, Op. Cit., p243). See further, Burkett, Dalbert, The Son of Man in the Gospel of John JSNT Supplement Series 56 (Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1991).

²⁰ This is reminiscent of the Isaianic trial to which Yahweh calls the other nations and their so-called gods. In the Fourth gospel, it seems likely that we ought to think of not only Jesus on trial, but in fact a reversal with the whole of humanity on trial (c.f. the trial before Pilate: who is the true Judge? Does Jesus sit down on the judgement seat?). There is a similar subversive reversal in chapter 1: Nathaniel comes to see Jesus, but in fact Jesus has already seen him! It should be added that Jesus knows what is in a man and therefore he does not entrust himself to men. Jesus does not ultimately need the questionable witness of men: his signs testify on his behalf, the Scriptures bear witness to him and the Father testifies that he has sent him. Subsequently, the Paraclete will also act to bring Jesus' words to the minds of the disciples and to convict the world regarding its need of Him.

²¹ The exact number of signs is not easy to determine. Six are explicitly identified by John: water into wine (2:1-11); healing the official's son (4:43-54); healing the lame man (5:1-18); the feeding of the 5000 (6:1-15); the healing of the blind man (9:1-41); raising of Lazarus (11:1-57). Some would also include the walking on the water, the miraculous catch of fish and the cross / resurrection.

²² Given the constraints of space, it seems sensible to give particular attention to these two titles which the Evangelist himself has highlighted as outstandingly important (20:31). Other titles, such as "Lamb of God" certainly also merit a fuller consideration than it has been possible to give.

is the great heavenly manna, the true bread from God²³ (not just from Moses), which nourishes his people. The healing miracles are likewise pointers beyond themselves to Jesus' true identity. For example, "no healing of a blind man is reported in the Old Testament (9:32). In the Old Testament the giving of sight is associated with God himself (Ex 4:11; Ps 146:8) and is particularly represented as a messianic activity (Is 29:18; 35:5; 42:7)"²⁴.

We should note the frequent attention which the evangelist draws to the feasts of "the Jews". No doubt they often serve as time markers, but few would want to argue that John is more interested in chronology than theology²⁵! The imagery of the feasts (water, light, Tabernacles, Passover Lambs) often resonates with the associated discourses, sayings or signs, implying that Jesus is the ultimate fulfilment of all the expectations and shadows that have prepared for his coming.

The synoptic language of Messianic hope is even more prominent in John. John alone uses the transliterated form of the Hebrew or Aramaic *Messiah*, *Messias* in 1:41; 4:25. He calls Jesus Χριστός seventeen times and Ἰησοῦς Χριστός on a further two occasions.²⁶

We do not find the so-called "Messianic secret" in the Fourth Gospel; Jesus is acknowledged as the Christ from the first (1:41), but there are possible echoes of the "Messianic Secret" in 10:24; 12:39. Barrett comments: "The fact is that in John the Messiahship of Jesus is both hidden and revealed. It is hidden from the unbelieving and revealed to the believing whom God has called.... Christ is not manifest to the world but to his own."²⁷ There is some truth in Barrett's suggestion that Mark's tension of present hiddenness and future revelation is partly brought into the present (contrast 14:22f), but we should remember that a similar openness/blindness to Jesus operates according to Mark 4:10-12. Likewise, it is also true that according to John the disciples did not understand many of the events of Jesus ministry until after Easter.

²³ This introduces us to Jesus' saying "I am the bread of life" – the first of the "I am" sayings. The εγω εἰμι formula also appears in 6:35, 48, 51 – I am the bread of life; 8:12; 9:5 – I am the light of the world; 10:7, 9 – I am the door of the sheep; 10:11, 14 – I am the Good Shepherd; 11:25 – I am the resurrection and the life; 14:6 – I am the way, the truth, and the life; 15:1 – I am the vine; 8:58; 13:19; 6:20; 8:24, 28; 18:5-8. The formula echoes the LXX translation of the divine name, Yahweh, ("I am who I am", Ex 3:14). Of itself the formula is not necessarily a divine claim: it is used by the blind man in 9:9. J. A. T. Robinson, *Priority*, says that the "I am" sayings do not reflect an unambiguous divine self-consciousness on Jesus' part but are susceptible to subordinationist interpretations. However, in such statements as "Before Abraham was, I am", it is hard to miss the connection. Note the Jews' response, indicating they perceive a blasphemy and also the way the arrest party falls back when they hear Jesus' declaration, 18:6. Blomberg, *Op. Cit.*, concludes that: "their cumulative effect remains too powerful for us to content ourselves with a picture of Jesus as merely an emissary or spokesman of God". (p164). See further, Ball, David Mark, "I am" in John's Gospel – Literary function, background and theological implications (Sheffield, JSNT Supplement 124 Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

²⁴ Reymond, *Op. Cit.*, pp40-41

²⁵ It is common to think that the Evangelist has subordinated history (and chronology) to his theological creativity.

²⁶ The question of Messiahship is prominent in the Gospel: the Baptist emphasises that he is not the Christ (1:20; 3:28); the Jewish authorities (7:52), the common people (7:25-31, 40-3; 12:34) and the Samaritans (4:29f) discuss Messiahship; the earliest disciples confess the Messiahship of Jesus (1:41; cf 4:29; 9:69), although to do so is an offence punishable by excommunication.

²⁷ Barrett, *Op. Cit.*, p71

True God – the only begotten God

In common with the synoptics, Jesus is also presented as “the Son of God” in the Fourth Gospel (20:31). Jesus speaks of God as ‘Father’ in Matthew 23 times, 4 times in Mark, 15 times in Luke, but 106 times in John²⁸. The phrase is often found in parallel to “the Christ” and probably has a similar meaning. In the Old Testament, the title could refer to angelic beings, to the righteous man loyal to the law (c.f. also Wisdom 2:18) and to the kings as God’s chosen one (Hosea 11:1; Psalm 2:7)²⁹. Jesus is *the* Messianic king, God’s appointed ruler *par excellence*. However, it is also apparent that John thinks of Jesus as uniquely God’s Son in a way in which the Old Testament kings were not.

A distinctive (development?) from the Synoptics is that Jesus is often referred to absolutely as “the Son”. The meaning seems to be more than “Messiah”. Again, this is not to be identified with referring to Jesus as God the Son, but it is easy to see how the language could move in that direction.

John stresses the filial relationship between Father and Son. It is frequently emphasised that the Son is “sent” by the Father³⁰. Jesus comes as revealer in the name of the Father and acts as his representative (5:37, 43; 14:20; 15:23). Jesus, the perfect Son (5:30; 8:28; 12:49) who always does the will as the Father can act for the Father and reveal him perfectly. God has delegated authority to judge and to give life to the Son (5:21-23, 17, 29f). It is likely that this presentation owes much to the concept of the *shaliach*, the sent one or messenger, an agent who acts on behalf of the master. Borgen comments: “Thus there are striking similarities between the halakhic principles of agency and the ideas of the Fourth Gospel, as (a) the unity between the agent and the sender (b) although the agent is subordinate, (c) the obedience of the agent to the will of the sender, (d) the task of the agent in the lawsuit, (e) his return and reporting back to the sender, and (f) his appointing of other agents as an extension of his own mission in time and space”³¹.

John’s Christology is often said to be “functional”. It is certainly true that John is very concerned about what Jesus has come to do, not simply conducting an abstract speculation into the essential being of the Second Person. As Lindars writes: “The main discourses... are concerned with Jesus’ qualifications for his function as the agent of God’s final act of redemption”³². Nevertheless, it is wrong-headed to antithesise function and ontology. Indeed, who Jesus is in himself and how he relates

²⁸ Reymond, Op. Cit., p41

²⁹ It has also been common to see Hellenistic concepts of the θεος ανηρ or divine man in the background to the Fourth Gospel. Whilst this is possible (especially if we think John has a broadly Hellenised audience in mind), it is not certain how widespread the concept was at the time of Jesus and exactly how we should describe its import. Following the study of the Dead Sea scrolls, it has become more common to see John against a (Hellenised) Jewish background, and it is certainly the case that the Old Testament sufficiently accounts for the description of Jesus as the Son of God.

³⁰ Classical orthodoxy has argued, largely on the basis of this presentation, that Jesus is equal in being and dignity to the Father in his essence, and yet subordinate to him according to the economy.

³¹ Borgen, Peter, ‘God’s Agent in the Fourth Gospel’ in The Interpretation of John ed. Ashton, John (London, SPCK, 1986)

, p72

³² Lindars, Op. Cit., p78

to the Father are explicitly connected in 14:11. Jesus' actions reveal his nature and it is because of who he is that he is qualified to do his work.

The prologue initiates the reader into knowledge of something of the cosmic relationship between Jesus and God. Four times, and exclusively in this section, John calls Jesus the *λογος*, the word, reason, or rational principle. Logos ideas seem to go back to Heraclitus (6th C BC), for whom the logos was the eternal principle in the midst of the ebb and flow of the universe making the world a *cosmos*³³, an ordered whole. The Stoics held a concept of the seminal / spermatic logos pervading all things. This notion was used to solve the problem of form / matter dualism (an idea wholly alien to the Hebrew mind, which thought of the material world³⁴ as the good creation of the only God and of man as a psychosomatic unity) and provide a basis for a rational moral life. Philo of Alexandria has the logos as the means of mediation between and God (the absolutely transcendent) and the material universe. The logos is the divine pattern of the universe and the power that fashioned it. However, as we noted in connection with the title Son of God and Divine Man Christology, it is the Bible itself which provides the most convincing background for the concept of the logos. It is by his word that God reveals himself. He creates and saves by his powerful word (Genesis 1:3; Psalm 33:6; Jeremiah 1:4f). The personification of wisdom (*σοφία*) in Proverbs 8:22-31 is probably also connected³⁵. Smalley comments: "Like the figure of wisdom, the Word of God is always 'with God'. Yet, like wisdom again, the Word of God is also and throughout time the faculty by which God is at work in the world accomplishing his purposes (Isaiah 55:10f)"³⁶. Whilst wisdom is certainly personified, G. E. Ladd and Leon Morris argue that the personalization or incarnation of the Logos seems without parallel³⁷. With Lindars we can observe "the subtle [and yet monumentally significant] shift from *metaphorical* language of personification to the *metaphysical* concept of personal relations within God himself"³⁸.

The God-Man

Reymond concludes: "There can be no doubt that John's Gospel Christology is incarnational in the highest conceivable sense, Jesus Christ being true man but also true God. No view of John's Christology which would claim otherwise can claim to be exegetically sound."³⁹ Because Jesus is the God-Man he is the perfect mediator:

³³ Note that the term *cosmos* is an important one for John, although he uses the concept somewhat differently particularly of society as it is organised in rebellion against God.

³⁴ It is precisely in and through the material world that Jesus as the word made flesh reveals God. His signs are likewise material acts with spiritual weight.

³⁵ Wisdom and the Wisdom of Sirach also provide close parallels for: coming into the world to enlighten those who have eyes to see (1:9), being written of by Moses and the prophets (1:45; 5:46), being known by Abraham (8:56), having the glory Isaiah saw (12:41), coming and going from heaven, supplying God's people with bread to eat, bringing the dead to life, speaking in lengthy discourses. See Witherington III, Ben, John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel (Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), pp18-27.

³⁶ Smalley, Op. Cit., p243

³⁷ Reymond, Op. Cit., p34

³⁸ Lindars, Op. Cit., p75

³⁹ Reymond, Op. Cit., p39. John holds the convictions that Jesus is truly human and truly God together, with neither jeopardising the other. For example, Lindars points out that: "John's concept of the pre-existence of Jesus carries no implication that he is anything less than fully and truly human." (p75). It is John's doctrine of the incarnation, that the Word became flesh, by which he maintains these two facts.

“John’s major Christological titles are all interpreted with reference to his basic understanding of the person of Jesus: as both divine and human... John’s Christology is intimately related to his soteriology.... As the revealing and glorified Son of Man, incarnate Logos, Son of God and Messiah, Jesus, in whose flesh the spiritual is decisively communicated, becomes the final mediator of eternal life.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Smalley, *Op. Cit.*, p249.