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Jesus and the Visibility of God: Sight and Belief in the Fourth Gospel

by

Luke Irwin

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

At

Durham University
Department of Theology and Religion

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ABSTRACT

This thesis establishes the value of the physical incarnation of God for belief. It asserts that the theological nature of belief derives from a God who can make himself physically visible in the world. While scholars have often debated the relationship between the empirical senses and belief in John, few have queried the presuppositions about God's invisibility that inform their positions. In response, this thesis argues across six chapters that unless God becomes physically visible in Jesus, belief does not obtain. Chapter 1 shows that God himself is ultimately the cause, content, and consequence of the belief that John 20:30-31 describes as the purpose of the Gospel. It establishes the theological nature of belief and thus the fact that the Gospel endeavours to draw humanity close to God via faith in Jesus. The remaining five chapters argue that seeing God in Jesus is both possible and desirable. Chapter 2 re-evaluates the metaphysics of divine visibility in Early Judaism and in John and concludes that God can be physically visible in Jesus's body. John does not regard divinity as invisible in itself; rather, he claims that seeing Jesus is seeing God. Two long chapters follow and substantiate the claims of Chapter 2. They point up the entwined nature of divine presence and material reality by arguing that Jesus's body is a divine place. This fact – coupled with John's depiction of Jesus as a man in divine places – stresses his divinity on earth even as it reveals his localized humanity. Chapter 5 argues that sight itself is the primary catalyst for belief in John. Although human hearts occlude proper vision, seeing remains key to human apprehension of God and belief in him. Chapter 6 draws the foregoing together by arguing that seeing Jesus is seeing God across the Johannine narratives, both despite and because of their deeply counterintuitive climax in the crucifixion.

Abbreviations

Where abbreviations are used, they follow the conventions as set out in *The SBL Handbook of Style*, Second Edition (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014).

DECLARATION

This work has been submitted to Durham University in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and no part of it has been previously submitted to the Durham University or in any other university for a degree.

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation of it should be published in any format, including electronic, without the author's prior written consent. All information derived from this thesis must be acknowledged appropriately.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By the end of the third day it seemed to be pretty much over. They were both half naked and John Grady had been blindsided with a sock full of gravel that took out two teeth in his lower jaw and his left eye was closed completely. The fourth day was Sunday and they bought clothes with Blevins' money and they bought a bar of soap and took showers and they bought a can of tomato soup and heated it in the can over a candlestub and wrapped the sleeve of Rawlins' old shirt around it for a handle and passed it back and forth between them while the sun set over the high western wall of the prison.

You know, we might just make it, said Rawlins.

— Cormac McCarthy (1993), 188

οἱ δὲ βουλόμενοι τἀγαθὰ τοῖς φίλοις ἐκείνων ἕνεκα μάλιστα φίλοι, δι᾽ αὑτοὺς γὰρ οὕτως ἔχουσι καὶ οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

It is those who wish the good of their friends for their friends' sake who are friends in the fullest sense, since they love each other for themselves and not accidentally.

— Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 8.3.6

Writing this thesis was difficult. The Covid-19 pandemic made it harder still. Yet when I consider the wise and loving friends, the gracious and patient teachers, and the wealth of resources and learning vouchsafed to me from the first day of this project until its close, I am overcome with gratitude. Such thanks as I can offer here must fall far short of the mark. To some, including my dear wife Rebekah and my primary supervisor Jane Heath, I am indebted beyond the telling.

First, I thank Jack Collins for putting me on to divine invisibility in the first place. This is not the project he suggested, but what I have done owes its beginnings to a conversation in his office. Robbie Griggs showed me that it was possible to apply for and pursue a PhD with funding in the UK; and I thank him for taking the time at the end of his own doctoral studies to help a witless seminarian write a research proposal.

I continue to be astonished at and grateful for the awards I received from Durham University. I could not have completed the Integrated PhD without the receipt of an MA bursary and a Durham Doctoral Studentship; and I thank the University for both. I am honored to have studied at the shrine of St Bede and St Cuthbert and at the seat of so many eminent scholars, many of whom gave special attention to John. I am also grateful to the College of St Hild and St Bede for the twice-given Hild Bede Trust Theology Scholarship, and to Covenant Theological Seminary for the award of its Grant for Graduate Theological Studies. I remain deeply thankful for the members of CPC Issaquah and Grace Church Kennewick for their generous gifts that helped to fund the MA year.

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I owe a great debt to numerous senior scholars for their friendship, criticism, and provision of resources when libraries were closed. Catrin Williams, Brittany Wilson, Tyson Putthoff, Michael Hundley, Stephen Barton, Carlos Siliezar, and Crispin Flether-Louis have all been exceptionally gracious and, in some cases, willing to have prolonged and helpful discussions. I especially thank Catrin Williams for the invitation to present a paper at her NT seminar at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. I am also grateful for the opportunities I had to present portions of this thesis at SBL and BNTC and to the *Harvard Theological Review* for accepting a version of Chapter 2 for publication.

One of the chief training grounds at Durham is the New Testament and Early Christianity Research Seminar. I have learned much from Francis Watson, Wendy North, Andy Byers, Nick Moore, Jane Heath, John Barclay and many others; and I am grateful to have "co-convened" the seminar with Francis from 2019–2020. I further thank Wendy North, Andy Byers, Nick Moore, and Robert Hayward for their friendship and for their willingness to read sections of this thesis and discuss it. One of my greatest teachers at Durham was George Boy-Stones, whose module on Plutarch and Middle Platonism taught me to read closely and to grapple with the mysteries of anamnesis. I can think of no better use of time than the hours of discussion spent over Plutarch's *Moralia* in his office.

Jane Heath and John Barclay supervised this project. Together, they form a supervisory team *in excelsis*, and I keenly feel how paltry my thanks must be in response to their guidance. This is especially true of Jane. For her trenchant insight, her *relentless* commitment to clarity, her gracious encouragement, and her friendship, I thank her. I hope that I may continue to learn from her for many years to come. Should someone read this thesis and find portions of it compelling, that person has Jane to thank.

I am grateful for the friendship of Ruth Perrin, Rio and Debs Floreza, Jackie and Alan Williamson, Clive and Margaret Burns, and Elizabeth and Gary Hobson of King's Church, Durham. They welcomed us to England and helped us feel at home here. Great thanks are also due to Anton and Beth Rose for letting out their house to us and to Alan Rose for fixing things when we broke them.

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Now I come to my dear wife Bekah and to the little one she carries, and I feel that my words must fail. For her love, patience, and true friendship – the kind that loves friends "for themselves and not accidentally" – I am so deeply grateful. For all our adventures in England and in Europe, and for her steadfastness and grace during the long months when she worked upstairs and I worked downstairs, I thank her with my whole heart. It is with love and hope that I dedicate this thesis to her. And to you too, little one.

Surrounded by such adept friends and teachers, one ought not to make mistakes. Alas, errors will persist; and any that follow are my own. The author of 2 Maccabees speaks for me: "if it is well written and elegantly disposed, that is what I myself desired; if it is poorly done and mediocre, that was all I could manage" (15:38). But I also pray with Hilary of Poitiers: "Grant us, therefore, precision of language, soundness of argument, grace of style, loyalty to truth" (*De Trinitate* 1.38).

Epiphany 2022
Durham

τίς ἂν θεὸν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα
ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἴδοιτ᾽ ἢ ἔνθ᾽ ἢ ἔνθα κιόντα;

Who may behold a god against his will,
whether going to or fro?

— Homer, *Odyssey*, 10.573–74

Teque deprecor, bone Iesu, ut cui propitius donasti uerba tuae scientiae dulciter haurire, dones etiam benignus aliquando ad te fontem omnis sapientiae peruenire, et parere semper ante faciem tuam.

I pray thee, merciful Jesus, that as thou hast graciously granted me sweet draughts from the word which tells of thee, so wilt thou, of thy goodness, grant that I may come at length to thee, the fount of all wisdom, and stand before thy face for ever.

— Beda Venerabilis, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 5.25

INTRODUCTION

I would like to begin this study with the unusual confession that I shall be discussing a subject which, in the last analysis, I do not understand.

— Ernst Käsemann (1968), 1

In his recent book *The Word Made Flesh: A Theology of the Incarnation*, Ian McFarland applies "a Chalcedonianism without reserve" to the New Testament's portrayal of Jesus as the God of Israel and as a human being.[1] On McFarland's account,

> fundamental to a Chalcedonianism without reserve is the principle that because the divine nature is inherently invisible and so not capable of perception (1 Tim. 1:17; cf. Col. 1:15; 1 John 4:12), when we look at Jesus, what we see is his humanity only. It follows that no aspect of that which we perceive in Jesus—his miracles, his faith, his obedience, or anything else—can be equated with his divinity; all are fully and exclusively human, and thus created, realities."[2]

He then goes on to distinguish the "what" – or nature – of Jesus from his "who" – or hypostasis – and concludes:

> The upshot of applying the distinction between nature and hypostasis to the person of Jesus may be summarized in the following two theses:
>
> 1. When we perceive Jesus of Nazareth, we perceive no one other than God the Son, the second person of the Trinity.
> 2. When we perceive Jesus of Nazareth, we perceive nothing other than created substance, and thus nothing that is divine.[3]

For McFarland, "what we see in Jesus is simply and exhaustively human flesh and blood."[4] While one does "see" God in the sense that one can come to recognize that Jesus is God, "*what* is seen in any such encounter is purely human."[5] God does not possess a substance

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[1] McFarland (2019).

[2] McFarland (2019), 13. Divine invisibility was also the subject of McFarland's *The Divine Image: Envisioning the Invisible God* (2005).

[3] McFarland (2019), 15.

[4] McFarland (2019), 15. He further notes: "It is a central thesis of this book that an orthodox account of Jesus' divinity necessarily includes the affirmation that nothing divine can be perceived in him. All that can be perceived in him is his humanity, and because his humanity is purely and exhaustively human, no empirically identifiable feature of Jesus—his height, strength, speed, knowledge, gender, piety, or anything else—may be identified with the divine. A Chalcedonian understanding of the incarnation thus denies that Jesus' status as the "one mediator between God and humankind" (1 Tim. 2:5) depends on his possessing certain empirically observable characteristics that constitute a link or bridge between the human and the divine."

[5] McFarland (2019), 15.

available to the empirical senses or to any other kind of objectifying observation because God is not a part of the world. Because he remains distinct as its creator, to equate any portion of the world with God is to commit idolatry.[6] God is therefore invisible even when Scripture and theologians describe him as becoming flesh.

Such thoroughgoing invisibility affects the ways in which one could come to believe in God. For McFarland, miracles cannot display Jesus's divinity since the biblical narratives also portray non-divine figures like the prophets as capable of performing them.[7] Their very visibility renders them "non-divine" and precludes their ability to directly reveal God because "to argue that the divine nature "shines forth" anywhere in Jesus' life seems to contradict the fundamental Christian conviction that the divine nature is inherently invisible."[8] McFarland will later argue that the visible creation can and does attest to God as its creator and sustainer.[9] Yet his conviction that divinity is inherently invisible and his appeal to the Chalcedonian claim that the Son "must be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion or change, without division or separation"[10] results in the assertion that Jesus's visible human life never directly reveals God. One is left to surmise that belief cannot be a function of visible encounters with Jesus.

Despite the apparent tension that his position creates between the Scriptural narratives of a visible God (e.g., Gen 16:13; 18:1; 32:30; Exod 24:9–11; 33:11, 20; 34:5–6; Num 12:6–8; Deut 34:10; Judge 6:22; 13:22–23; 1 Kgs 22:19; Job 42:5; Isa 6:1; Ezek 1:1–28; Dan 7:9–11; Amos 9:1; Matt 5:8; John 6:46; 1 John 3:2; Rev 22:4) and a metaphysically rigorous account of divine transcendence, McFarland remains eager to ground his understanding of

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[6] McFarland (2019), 14.
[7] McFarland (2019), 12.
[8] McFarland (2019), 12.
[9] McFarland (2019), 25–26.
[10] McFarland (2019), 11.

God's invisibility in the Bible itself. Because he takes the God revealed in the incarnation to be the God of Israel, he claims:

> If true knowledge of God comes through Jesus—whose life, in terms of both its immediate content and its broader Israelite context, is communicated in Scripture—then the words we use to talk about God must be grounded in the terms the biblical authors use to talk about God. And in this context it is significant that one of those things Scripture says about God is precisely that God cannot be seen.[11]

Scripture is the source, or at least provides the warrant, for the apophatic emphasis so prevalent in the theology of the creeds and thus for later theological endeavours. Nor should one fail to observe that in the course of making his case for divine invisibility, McFarland makes frequent appeals to the Johannine literature (e.g., John 1:18; 1 John 4:12). The terms one predicates of God "must hew closely to the biblical witness in order to ensure that they are interpreted in a manner consistent with God's own self-disclosure."[12] God is invisible, even in deeply metaphysical ways, because John and his fellow biblical authors say so.

But what precisely *does* John say about God's invisibility? McFarland is surely right when he shows the centuries-long importance of divine invisibility for Christian theology and the extent to which the claim that God is both invisible and incarnate has been grounded in the Johannine literature.[13] Yet on a plain reading, the Fourth Gospel seems to present God as both visible and invisible. At one level, John contends that God cannot be seen: the prologue concludes that "no one has ever seen God" (1:18). In conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus adds that "no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born from above" (3:3). In echo of Deuteronomy 4:12, Jesus later claims of God that "you have never heard his voice or seen his

---

[11] McFarland (2019), 25.
[12] McFarland (2019), 28. The full quotation runs as follows: "Given that in this life we remain incapable of perceiving how the terms we apply to God encompass and complete their everyday application, it follows that their deployment in theological contexts must hew closely to the biblical witness in order to ensure that they are interpreted in a manner consistent with God's own self-disclosure rather than simply following the conventions of everyday use."
[13] Barnes (1993, 1995, 2002, 2003); Ayres (2010); and especially Kloos (2005, 2011) have shown the importance of divine invisibility in Patristic Trinitarian theology. Divine invisibility also continues to capture broader theological, ethical, historical, and artistic interest. Works by Finney (1994); Kessler (2000); Jensen (2005; 2008); Kleinberg (2015); Welz (2016); and Carnes (2018) are representative of broader cross-disciplinary studies.

form" (John 5:37), a statement he reiterates in 6:46 when he asserts "not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father." Jesus also implies that "the Jews" do not have the authority he possesses because he can declare "what I have seen in the Father's presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father" (8:38). God's invisibility appears to be assured.

While such statements invite McFarland's Chalcedonian reading, John's equally adamant claims about seeing God call it into question. The Logos, who is God, becomes flesh and dwells or "tabernacles" among humanity with the result that "we have seen his glory" (1:14). Jesus has also "exegeted" the Father whom no one has ever seen (1:18) because Jesus has been in proximity to the Father (3:3–12; 8:38) and has seen him (6:46). The very statements that emphasize the Father's invisibility also undercut it by implying or announcing that Jesus has seen God.

As the narrative progresses, the emphasis shifts from invisibility to visibility. After the hour of glorification has struck, Jesus announces that the one who sees Jesus sees the Father (12:45; 14:9; cf. 15:24); and Thomas calls Jesus "my Lord and my God" after seeing him (20:28–29). The sense that God is visible in Jesus finds further support in Jesus's manifestation of glory in the signs (2:11; 11:40; 12:37–43) and from the emphasis on seeing Jesus himself, particularly at the opening and close of the Gospel (1:29–36, 39, 46, 51; 4:29; 6:40, 62; 9:37; 12:15, 41; 16:16; 17:24; 19:5, 35, 37; 20:18, 20, 25). The notion that God remains invisible even in the flesh of Jesus is by no means certain. Numerous questions arise regarding the relationship between seeing God, seeing Jesus, and belief.

From the perspective of a "Chalcedonianism without reserve," one of the most pressing questions is whether the metaphysical foundations of Nicaea and Chalcedon are implicit in the Johannine narrative. What do the words "visible" and "invisible" mean and are they applicable to John's portrayal of God, in which ὁρατός and ἀόρατος never occur? Even

the casual reader of John may query the extent to which one should privilege statements about not seeing God when numerous others suggest that he is visible in Jesus. One may also ask: if belief in Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of God" is the purpose of John (20:31) then how does God's invisibility affect one's understanding of this purpose? Regarding human beings, what does it mean to "see?" Is the "sight" in question physical, metaphorical, or noetic; and do different approaches to invisibility condition how one understands "sight" and its relation to "belief?"

In response to these questions, this thesis argues that, for John, God must become physically visible in Jesus in order for belief to obtain. Belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God and the reception of life in his name is impossible unless God himself becomes visible in the incarnation. To put it positively, the one who sees God in Jesus has come to believe. There is much to say and there are many important qualifications to make about how I read John and how I intend to unfold this argument. First, however, I wish to tell the "story" of divine invisibility in John at key points in the history of its reception and scholarship. Doing so will allow me to contextualize this thesis and make an argument for its value to the discipline.[14] Following this modified "literature review," I will turn to methodological considerations and provide a brief overview of how I read the text before presenting the structure of the thesis as a whole.

Divine Invisibility in Johannine Scholarship

One of the most striking features of the study of divine invisibility in John is that "invisibility" almost never receives a clear definition. As noted above, John never uses ἀόρατος in the Gospel; but most scholars are content to predicate "invisibility" of God on the

[14] Frey (2018), 3 acknowledges what Johannine scholars have known for some time: the "abundance of scholarly literature on the Gospel of John…can no longer be processed even by a specialist." Comprehensive literature reviews are no longer possible. This "review" targets influential strands of thought and prioritizes work on invisibility in the last fifteen years.

strength of the passages in which John and his Jesus insist that no one has ever seen him (John 1:18; cf. 5:37 and 6:46). It is surely reasonable to make this predication; yet the meaning of "invisibility" is often contingent on the philosophical and theological assumptions that the reader brings to the text. Chief among these is the longstanding association between "invisible" and "immaterial" in the secondary literature.

One also finds that the relationship between invisibility and belief is often assumed rather than argued for. The two are rarely treated in dialogue with one another, despite the fact that assumptions about one have implications for the other. If I believe that God is invisible, then I am less likely to endorse a mode of belief in which sight plays a formative role. If I argue that sight can lead to belief, then I am more likely to accept the position that God can make himself visible in earthly space and time. In what follows, it will become apparent that – with important exceptions – Johannine scholarship has not always investigated the links between divine invisibility and belief although it has often attempted to define belief and determine its relationship to sight and other senses.

With these observations in mind, one may undertake the following survey as a means of showing the intertwined "gaps" this thesis stands to resolve: the nature of invisibility and its relationship to faith. I begin with a brief account of the early Fathers since, as McFarland has shown, their readings of invisibility continue to influence contemporary scholarship. From the Fathers, who determine the underpinnings of mainstream Christianity for the Medieval and Reformation Churches, I will jump to modern scholarship on John. Beginning with F.C. Baur, I trace influential work on divine invisibility in John before turning to specific clusters of Johannine scholarship.

The Fathers

For much of the last two millenia, the answers to the question of what invisibility means have been apophatic and Trinitarian. They are apophatic in the sense that from Justin Martyr to

Clement of Alexandria and Origen and then from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas and through to scholars like McFarland, "invisibility" joins a cluster of predicates that define what God is not and that entail one another. A God who is metaphysically simple is a God who does not change and must therefore be a God who is not material and thus not corporeal or situated in space and time. Such a being is necessarily invisible. He is not simply hidden; he is intrinsically unavailable to empirical vision. Thus, when the Hebrew Bible describes a God that people see, it cannot be God-in-himself that they saw.

The Trinitarian solution is twofold. For the Economic Theologians, God is present in the theophanies as the visible Son. On this account, visibility and invisibility distinguish the Son from the Father and thus serve as a counterargument to Modalism. As the visible member of the Trinity, a feature the incarnation determines, the Son is necessarily the subject of the theophanies. However, against the threat of the Arian-adjacent Latin Homoians, Augustine contended that all divinity everywhere is necessarily invisible. The Father is not greater than the Son because he is invisible and the Son is not; rather, the divine nature of the Son is as invisible as the divine nature of the Father. This need not prevent the Son from being present and active in the theophanies, but Augustine argues that he is not theologically obligated to be their subject by virtue of his visibility. Augustine introduces the concept of "creature control" to explain how the Father can work through angels or created matter to interact with his creation while retaining the integrity of his divine nature.[15] Only the "pure in heart" (Matt 5:8) will attain the sight of God in the beatific vision that follows the final judgement. Until then, God remains invisible.[16]

[15] Augustine makes these arguments in *De Trinitate* 1–3. Kloos (2005, 2011) and Barnes (2003) describe the historical and polemical situation and present Augustine's arguments in detail. See Chambers (2019) for a fascinating comparison of Augustine's notion of "creature control" with Sommer's (2009) account of a multiplicity of divine bodies in ancient Israel.

[16] While it is not difficult to see the Platonic and Neoplatonic influences across the Fathers, one should bear in mind their commitment to the reality of the incarnation. Augustine, in particular, is critical of the Platonists for thinking that they could achieve the vision of God by way of philosophy alone. The incarnation is a necessary feature. See Ayres (2010), esp. 147.

The metaphysical construal of invisibility provides the lens through which the Johannine statements about not seeing God are read. Simultaneously, these statements become the warrant for applying such metaphysics to God. Once again, God is invisible because John "says so." Even by the second century, Clement of Alexandria had called John a "spiritual gospel," thereby distinguishing it from the more earthbound, "historical" narratives of the synoptics.[17] As he must be for so many of the Fathers, God must be invisible for Clement.[18] John is oriented toward a revelation of a God that not even the incarnation renders available to physical sight. In what follows, I will refer to the idea that God is necessarily and irrevocably invisible as an "absolute invisibility."

Modern Scholarship

This absolute invisibility also appears in the modern study of New Testament Theology, even where that study has abandoned Platonist metaphysics. While Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus shaped the ancient and medieval church, Luther, Kant, and Hegel form the theological and philosophical backdrop to F.C. Baur and Rudolf Bultmann, both of whom read John as the apex of New Testament thought.[19] Baur and Bultmann also understood John to emphasis divine invisibility. For Baur, John 1:18 describes the impossibility of seeing God

> because God's essential being as such absolutely transcends everything finite and is, by its nature, invisible. If God is invisible in himself, then this of course entails that nothing corporeal can be predicated of God. It entails that his essential being is purely spiritual, as opposed to all that is corporeal.[20]

God is also spirit (John 4:24), which means that he is "incompatible with spatial limitations" and "by nature invisible. His invisibility is just the negative side of the positive expression

[17] In *Hist. eccl*. 6.14.7, Eusebius gives this account of John, taken from Clement: "last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel. This is the account of Clement."

[18] See *Strom*. 6.5, in which Clement quotes the *Preaching of Peter* and its description God as ἀόρατος (invisible), ἀχώρητος (uncontained), ἀκατάληπτος (incomprehensible), ἀέναος (everlasting), ἄφθαρτος (incorruptible), ἀποίητος (unmade). Hägg (2006), 153–79 and Steenbuch (2017) provide an overview of the apophatic elements of Clement's theology.

[19] Morgan (2017), 236–60 has traced the similarities in their approaches to John.

[20] Baur (1860, ET=2016), 334.

that he is spirit."[21] Furthermore, "to say that no one has ever seen God does not rule out God's ability to be seen in a spiritual way, and God's being an object of representational and thinking consciousness." For Baur, even when Jesus says that to see him is to see the Father (John 14:8–11), Jesus means that "God as such can be seen only in a spiritual way."[22] Jesus's very flesh is a "non-physical corporeality, changeable, freely alterable," such that the phrase "became flesh" "cannot be understood as referring to a human nature in its authentic and full sense."[23] John presents an idealism, "in which, in the self-certainty of its own inner intuition… even the historical reality is ultimately just an external form that mediates for consciousness what is true in itself."[24] Thus, near the dawn of modern New Testament study, Baur presents the "spiritual Gospel" as spiritual in a truly immaterial and invisible sense; the physicality of the incarnation and of revelation become negligible factors.

Like Baur, Bultmann reads John as the culmination of New Testament theology, and his construal of invisibility forms a central component of his reading.[25] From his 1930 article, "Untersuchungen zum Johannesevangelium,"[26] to his commentary on John,[27] Bultmann remains one of the few scholars in the last hundred years who directly addresses the theme of divine invisibility in the biblical literature. In these works, Bultmann resists the notion that Platonism drives John's understanding of invisibility, and he points out that God is physically visible in numerous Hebrew Bible texts and that the evidence for a metaphysical understanding of invisibility in John is scarce. Bultmann focuses on the σάρξ of Jesus as the sole locus of revelation, revealing an emphasis on corporeality that Baur would eschew.[28]

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[21] Baur (2016), 334.
[22] Baur (2016), 334.
[23] Baur (2016), 342–43, cf. 358.
[24] Baur (2016), 376.
[25] Both thinkers accepted Gnosticism as the primary wellspring of Johannine thought.
[26] Bultmann (1930).
[27] Bultmann (1971).
[28] Nevertheless, idealism is important for both scholars. Where one can see the unfolding of Geist in Baur's reading of John, Bultmann's equally high view of John as the culmination of NT theology, especially in light of his demythologizing, shows a similarly Hegelian infiltration.

Despite these differences, Bultmann can still be understood as reading John to portray an absolute invisibility in two interrelated ways. The first stems from his Neo-Kantian understanding of the "non-objectifiable" nature of God. God is not available for humanity to grasp with the senses or with any other means available to them. While this metaphysic is less precisely Platonic, it resembles aspects of apophatic thought, especially in the sense that humanity cannot come to know God or learn about him via empirical observation.[29] God remains "invisible," and this notion of a "non-objectifiable God interlinks with the radical Lutheranism of Bultmann's teacher, Wilhelm Herrmann.

For Herrmann, only a psychological encounter with the risen Christ results in a psychological resurrection.[30] Here, the Lutheran understanding of justification meets the romance of Schleiermacher, the enlightenment constraints of Kant and Lessing, and, perhaps, the "passionate subjectivity" of Kierkegaard. The result is that those who rely on the empirical foundations and data of history are guilty of "justification by works."[31] Read against Herrmann's radicalized justification, Bultmann's anti-empirical redaction criticism becomes a deeply Lutheran endeavour. John has taken an alleged "signs source" and now critiques its reliance on human seeing. One ought to hear and accept Jesus and thus come to rely on God as the ground of all being. Those who need to see signs or God himself possess little or weak faith; they are seeking "justification" on their own terms. Although Bultmann himself does not use "invisible" or "invisibility" to describe this strain of his thought, one may rightly speak of a principle of invisibility in Bultmann's work, in which God and divine truth remain invisible and must be accepted as such. The need to see and the act of seeing are

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[29] Bultmann (1971), 81. On non-objectifiability, see Congdon (2015), 32–51.

[30] Jones (1992), 23–24.

[31] See Jones (1991), 24. Fergusson (1992), 12 also notes that "any attempt to prove the validity of faith by either philosophy or science can only resemble a desire to be justified by works rather than by faith alone." Barclay (2014), 83 observes that, for Bultmann: "the gospel is neither factual record nor academic speculation about God but good news *pro me* ("the Son of God loved me and gave himself *for me*"; Gal 2:20). In radicalizing this tradition, Bultmann was strongly influenced by his teacher, Wilhelm Herrmann (1846–1922), for whom faith could be neither identified with nor dependent on objectively provable "facts" (that would constitute an epistemological form of "justification by works").

weaknesses to which God, when he deigns to be visible, makes concession.[32] Invisibility and the belief predicated on it remain the ideal in terms of God's nature and in terms of human responses to him.

Bultmann remains the most influential Johannine scholar of his time and, perhaps, of ours. [33] However, he was not the only one to address divine invisibility. He draws from and responds to one of the very few monographs dedicated to the subject: Erich Fascher's *Deus Invisibilis: eine Studie zur biblischen Gottesvorstellung*.[34] For Fascher, Jesus is the visible God even though he does not fully express God. Fascher is reluctant to argue that God could simply be incarnate in a fully material sense. While the incarnation constitutes an unprecedented "sight" of God such that one cannot say that he is perfectly invisible, he remains elusive. Here, again, one encounters a view of divine transcendence in which anthropomorphism has no place and in which Hellenistic metaphysics seems to stand behind the New Testament construal of God. Fascher therefore resists the incursion of anthropomorphism in the NT documents, but he does make concessions to the incarnation.

Like Bultmann and Fascher, Ernst Käsemann emphasizes a visibility inherent in the incarnation. However, for Käsemann, John's focus is on Jesus's divinity rather than his flesh.[35] As God come to earth, Jesus is the "revealer" of God to the extent that Käsemann famously characterizes the Gospel as "naively docetic"[36] in its presentation of Jesus "as God walking on the face of the earth."[37] Indeed, "the Son of Man is neither a man among others, nor the representation of the people of God or of the ideal humanity, but God, descending

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[32] Bultmann (1971), 696.
[33] For Bultmann's continuing influence regarding the non-objectifiability of God and of God's invisibility, one can adduce many instances. Examples include Haenchen (1980), 131n5, who notes: "Gott is kein Weltding." See also Zumstein (2016), 88, who claims: "Wenn Gott ein in der Welt feststellbares und überprüfbares Objekt wäre, hätte er aufgehört, Gott zu sein." I first encountered both quotations in Filtvedt (2017). Further examples include Tuckett (2013) and Loader (2017), who remain indebted to Bultmann for their views on sight and Christology.
[34] Fascher (1930).
[35] Käsemann, (1968).
[36] Käsemann (1968), 26.
[37] Käsemann (1968), 73.

into the human realm and there manifesting his glory."[38] Where Bultmann prioritized the flesh of Jesus and downplayed the value of signs and of sight, Käsemann favours the visibility of glory and of God in Jesus. However, Käsemann's primary concern is to establish the historical situation of John, and he does little to define invisibility although he shows that Jesus's visible life and works can direct potential believers toward his true identity.[39]

Despite Käsemann's counter-arguments, scholarship in the latter half of the 20th century tends to follow in Bultmann's footsteps or re-assert John's Hellenistic background. C.H. Dodd's *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* remains committed to reading John against the Middle Platonic backdrop of Philo of Alexandria, in which invisibility remains the necessary attribute of an immaterial God.[40] Likewise, Louis Schottroff argues vehemently for a Gnostic reading of John, in which God must be invisible and true belief must eschew empirical sight.[41] In 1979, the Dutch scholar Th. Korteweg reasserted the potential relationships between Johannine, Platonic, and Stoic notions of an invisible God. However, Korteweg simultaneously admits that some aspects of the divine are opened to "concrete human experience."[42] For Dodd, Schottroff, and Korteweg, Hellenistic notions of transcendence and invisibility continue to govern readings of the Johannine God.[43]

In this same period, C.K. Barrett's "The Dialectical Theology of St. John" stands out for its brief but trenchant observations about invisibility.[44] Amidst other "dialectical" themes in John, Barrett notes that the "tension of visibility and invisibility is central in John's thought; faith depends on sight, yet it is independent of sight, and cannot be equated with

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[38] Käsemann (1968), 13.
[39] For Käsemann (1968), 25: "Faith means one thing only; to know who Jesus is." Earlier (9) he has noted that "he who has eyes to see and ears to hear can see and hear his glory. Not merely from the prologue and from the mouth of Thomas, but from the whole Gospel he perceives the confession, 'My Lord and my God.'"
[40] Dodd (1953).
[41] Schottroff (1970).
[42] Korteweg (1979).
[43] One should also note Michaelis's extensive entry on "ὁράω" in the TDNT (1967) that establishes clear links between the verb and the Platonic endeavour to see the Forms and/or God.
[44] Barrett (1972).

sight."[45] Barrett identifies Jesus as "the place where, once for all, and for a moment in time, the invisible became visible, and the work of God was done."[46] Simultaneously, he contends that "faith itself means trust in the invisible – the invisible truth in the visible man Jesus."[47] Barrett rightly avers that visibility and invisibility have roles to play in John. He is also right to see the dynamic between sight and belief come to revolve around the question of divine visibility in Jesus. Yet one wonders if identifying the tension is the same as resolving the challenge. Statements to the effect that when the Son of Man ascends, he will be a "heavenly invisible figure"[48] or that "there is an infinite qualitative distinction between time and eternity"[49] suggest that Barret takes an absolute view of invisibility – in which God could never be available to empirical sight. However, he does not disparage seeing, and he seems to allow some measure of divine visibility in the incarnation.

One must also acknowledge the work of Robert Fortna and W. Nicol.[50] Alongside many others, they participated in the now largely abandoned attempt to determine the Johannine sources in the wake of Bultmann. Even here, however, the notions of invisibility and sight played a role since both judged that a positive view of human sight in the alleged "signs source" was a key criterion for discerning an uncritical theology from a sophisticated Johannine redaction. This speaks to the ongoing influence of presuppositions about invisibility in Johannine scholarship. It suggests that, like Bultmann, Fortna and Nicol share the view that the God of John's Gospel is invisible and that belief should not require him to manifest himself.[51]

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[45] Barrett (1972), 60. He further notes: "This is a theme which, if time permitted, could be traced through the Gospel."
[46] Barrett (1972), 61.
[47] Barrett (1972), 60.
[48] Barrett (1972), 60.
[49] Barrett (1972), 66.
[50] Fortna (1988); Nicol (1972).
[51] Note that Nicol's stance towards sight is more generous than Fortna's.

In the 1980's and 90's scholarly interest in NT Christology[52] developed alongside a shift in Johannine scholarship towards the Jewishness of John's Gospel and its literary character.[53] This conjunction has proved to be increasingly fertile ground for studies of God and of the nature of invisibility in John despite the fact that scholars rarely address divine invisibility and some still labour in Bultmann's shadow. To be sure, the dominant paradigm in Johannine Studies from the 1970's onward has been the increasingly embattled two-level hypothesis of Martyn and Brown.[54] Nevertheless, several important works across the past three decades stand out for their focus on God, invisibility, and sight.

Among these, John Ashton's monolithic *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* gives serious attention to the Jewishness of John and John's potential links to apocalyptic literature, a corpus renowned for its visual themes and emphases.[55] While he draws extensively from Bultmann, Ashton explores the broader Early Jewish background of John, to which he gave further attention in his *Studying John: Approaches to the Fourth Gospel*.[56] While Ashton is sceptical of the value of seeing as it relates to belief, he is far less certain of the presence of an absolute, Platonic invisibility in John. In his focus on Judaism, Ashton was joined by Jarl Fossum and Fossum's student, Charles Gieschen. Fossum and Gieschen emphasize the power of the divine name, God's presence, and theophany across the Hebrew Bible, the Early Jewish Literature, and in John's Gospel as a part of their broader analyses of the NT.[57] Gieschen especially notes the value of the category "invisibility" in ancient depictions of God, although he does not define what he means by the term.[58] These studies signalled a shift towards the Jewishness of John. They are notable, as are those that follow, for the fact that

[52] Dunn (1980); Bauckham (1998); Hurtado (2003).
[53] Examples include Culpepper (1983); Staley (1988); and Stibbe (1992). One must also consider the massive influence of the DSS on Johannine scholarship, one that firmly contextualized the Gospel within Judaism.
[54] Martyn (2003); Brown (1979).
[55] Ashton (1991). Ashton's observations continue to bear fruit. Examples include Williams and Rowland, eds. (2013) and Reynolds (2008, 2017, 2020).
[56] Ashton (1998).
[57] Fossum (1995); Gieschen (1998).
[58] See Gieschen (1998; 2018, 2021).

instead of a lack of emphasis on sight or visuality – which one would expect if Judaism was "aniconic" – they begin to argue that the primary texts are concerned with God's visual revelation and presence on earth.[59]

Such emphasis entered the Johannine "mainstream" in Marianne Meye Thompson's 2001 monograph, *The God of the Gospel of John*. A direct response to Nils Dahl's classic "Neglected Factor in New Testament Studies," *The God of the Gospel* constitutes a much needed return to theology proper in Johannine scholarship.[60] Thompson denies that a Philonic understanding of transcendence is operative in John and reads God's "invisibility" as a prophetic hiddenness, the product of holiness and power.[61] She also defends the validity of visual revelation in John as a legitimate catalyst for belief, a subject for which she had already argued strongly in her published thesis, *The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*.[62] This book appeared one year after Udo Schnelle's *Antidoketische Christologie im Johannesevangelium*,[63] and both authors navigate the Scylla of Bultmann and the Charybdis of Käsemann in their insistence that divine glory is visible in Jesus's flesh and that the signs can cultivate belief in those who see them. Nevertheless, across her work, Thompson has been unwilling to grant that God is visible in Jesus such that humanity can see him prior to the eschaton.[64]

The legitimacy of sight and of visual revelation in John found further reassessment at the turn of the century in works from Larry Hurtado, Richard Bauckham, and Andrew

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[59] For an important German study in this line see Rahner (1998). She notes: "Die Dynamik der Menschwerdung durchbricht den Gedanken der absoluten Transzendenz Gottes" (67).
[60] Thompson's remains the best work on the subject. Other studies of God in John include Olsson (1999); Maloney (2002); Sadananda (2004); Frey (2018), 313–44; and the essays collected in Burz-Tropper, ed. (2019). Besides Thompson, the most important monograph is Larsson (2001), a study of John's God in Luther, Calvin, Westcott, Holtzmann, Bultmann, and Brown. Larsson observes that both Westcott and Holtzmann read John's God as "neo-platonic, or even Philonic" (265), although Larsson himself is less sure of such readings. Of Luther, he writes: "When Jesus says, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (14:9), he makes God even more incomprehensible" (260).
[61] Thompson (2001), 105.
[62] Thompson (1988).
[63] Schnelle (1987, ET=1992).
[64] Thompson (2007) is especially clear on this point.

Lincoln. Drawing in part from Fossum and his own evaluation of Jesus's proximity to God, Hurtado presents Jesus as the visual revelation of the Father in his substantial chapter on John in his opus, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*.[65] Bauckham likewise enlists John in his argument that Jesus partakes of the divine identity and simultaneously argues for a strong a creator-creation distinction.[66] While this distinction may create problems for how one understands God to manifest himself in Jesus's body on earth,[67] Bauckham defends the value of physical sight as an historical medium[68] and as the means by which John encourages one to see the theophanic glory of Jesus across John.[69] By contrast, Andrew Lincoln argues for a metaphorical reading of sight in John;[70] and his wariness of physical sight recalls Craig Koester's earlier argument for the subordination of seeing to hearing in John, itself an echo of Bultmann.[71] In these and other works, one finds that as scholars of Christology move towards the Jewishness of John, they acquire a greater regard for visibility and sight whereas Johannine specific scholarship tends to hew more closely to Bultmann.[72]

Whatever their views, one should not expect most of the modern authors I have surveyed to define what divine invisibility means in John. With notable exceptions like Bultmann and Thompson, that question is often outside the remit of their work. However, these authors frequently make arguments that either assume or partially articulate some notion of invisibility. Such assumptions guide their subsequent readings of Christology and

[65] Hurtado (2003), 358–407.
[66] Bauckham (1999, 2008).
[67] Both Fletcher-Louis (2015) and Forger (2017) pose trenchant critiques of Bauckham's understanding of the creator-creature distinction.
[68] Bauckham (2006b).
[69] Bauckham (2006b; 2015, 43–62).
[70] Lincoln (2002).
[71] Koester (1989, 2008). Note the range of studies on the seeing verbs in John. Examples include Cullmann (1950); G.L. Philips (1957); Traets (1967); and Hergenröder (1996). I cover this subject in greater detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis.
[72] One notable exception is Weder (1996), who takes embraces the materiality of the signs and finds them to express "nothing more than the being of the Christ himself, which has its origin in God and at the same time extends into the most extreme reaches of the world's materiality" (335).

belief in the Fourth Gospel, but they also raise complex and interwoven questions. One can still ask: does God's transcendent nature entail an absolute invisibility in the mode of Plato or Bultmann? What is Jesus's visual relationship to God as the one who manifests his glory? How should humanity respond to this manifestation?

Contemporary Study

Analysis of these themes and the questions they raise has only grown more acute in the last fifteen years. A kaleidoscope of studies pertinent to divine invisibility has addressed John's sensual, mystical, and intertextual[73] nature. These works have pointed up the value of the physical senses in John and shown their relationship to belief, and, in doing so, they have raised questions about the nature of divine invisibility. Few, however, have defined invisibility. None that I am aware of have spelled out its relationship to sight and belief. Beginning with the "sensual," I will offer a brief synopsis of important works under each heading before turning to four recent studies that directly address seeing God.

The Senses

The recent emphasis on the value of the senses in John and the extensive use to which John puts them comes as a welcome rebuttal to the longstanding wariness of the sensorium in Johannine scholarship. As a kind of coda to her 2002 monograph on the symbolic nature and material value of Jesus's flesh,[74] Dorothy Lee's "The Gospel of John and the Five Senses" shows that John does not shrink from describing his characters' empirical experience of Jesus and his signs.[75] John is no less material than the synoptics insofar as his use of sensory language is concerned. In line with Lee, despite different foci and assumptions, Josaphat

[73] Here I mean "intertextual" in its colloquial and broad sense. See the discussion below for my treatment of it as a theory.
[74] Lee (2002).
[75] Lee (2010).

Tam's *Apprehension of Jesus in the Gospel of John*,[76] Sunny Wang's *Sense Perception and Testimony in the Gospel According to John*,[77] and Rainer Hirsch-Luipold's *Gott wahrnehmen: Die Sinne im Johannesevangelium*[78] present three variegated arguments regarding the sensual nature of revelation. Each emphasizes the role of sight and of the sensorium in the cultivation of belief as well as the importance of material signs.[79] While Hirsch-Luipold argues for a Middle-Platonic backdrop to John with its notion of an absolute invisibility, both Tam and Wang situate John's theological commitments more firmly in the LXX and in the Judaisms of the first century.[80]

Despite increased interest in the entire sensorium, seeing and hearing continue to receive attention. Whereas Craig Koester reads John as advocating aural over visual revelation,[81] Marianne Meye Thompson has contended for the positive role of sight in belief formation.[82] More recently, Catrin Williams has considered the experiential nature of sight, arguing for the value of physical seeing while also registering the importance of spiritual insight.[83] Regarding hearing, Deborah Forger has reassessed the role of words in John: hearing is not a disembodied mode of revelation; rather it points to the embodiment of the Word itself in the incarnation.[84] Taken together, these works on the senses in John have ushered in a new focus on the positive role of physical experience although they differ in their accounts of how God makes himself available in Jesus and the extent to which hearing, physical sight, and spiritual insight must interweave or exclude one another. They suggest

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[76] Tam (2015).
[77] Wang (2017).
[78] Hirsch-Luipold (2017).
[79] One could include Kurek-Chomycz (2010) here as well.
[80] One should note that Wang is keen to emphasize the Graeco-Roman shape of John's rhetoric. Frey (2018), esp. 199-236 has also contributed to analysis of the senses in John.
[81] Koester (1989, 2008).
[82] Thompson (1988, 1991, 2001).
[83] Williams (2016).
[84] Forger (2020).

that John values the tangible experience of Jesus and raise the question of whether God himself becomes tangible in him.

Mysticism

It should be no surprise that increased interest in sight and visionary experience in John has both informed and grown out of the attempt to locate the Gospel in the Apocalyptic and mystical strains of Early Judaism and Rabbinic thought. While the association of John with Rabbinic extends as far back as Hugo Odeberg[85] and Adolf Schlatter,[86] one finds more recent emphasis on the Apocalyptic and Rabbinic parallels in the work of Jey Kanagaraj,[87] Christopher Rowland and Christopher Morray-Jones,[88] and Benjamin Reynolds.[89] While "Apocalyptic" and "Rabbinic" admit of numerous strands of thought and styles, they share an emphasis on seeing God, the visual manifestations of glory, and the divine name theology that attends this visual emphasis. With the caveat that reading John against the Rabbis invites anachronism, these scholars have shown that John is commensurate with the theophanic themes that underlie the Hebrew Bible, the Second Temple Period, and the attempts to see God and his chariot in the Merkabah and Hekhalot writings. While a popular reading of John is that he polemicizes against those who claim to have ascended to heaven and seen God,[90] the scholarship that reads John against apocalyptic and Rabbinic sources supports my claim that the Gospel retains theophany – albeit located in Jesus – as a goal of belief.

[85] Odeberg (1929).
[86] Schlatter (19375).
[87] Kanagaraj (2006).
[88] Rowland and Morray-Jones (2010).
[89] Reynolds (2008, 2020); Williams and Rowland (2013). Borgen (1965) has also made influential arguments taken from Rabbinic thought regarding agency and Christology in John 6. The Rabbinic construal of agency is that the agent represents his sender and is therefore equal to the sender in the eyes of the recipient.
[90] Examples include Hanson (1976), 95; Miller (2006), 127–51; Williams (2016c), 80; Reynolds (2017), 116.

Intertextuality

The study of Apocalyptic and Rabbinic parallels invites the question of how one can substantiate concrete ties to that literature from the text of John. While such ties do exist, one is on firmer ground with John's actual quotations from and allusions to the Hebrew Bible; and the prominence of Jewish Scripture in John's theology has received much attention.[91] Two features of the scholarship on John's use of the Hebrew Bible inform this thesis. The first is that it stands alongside Apocalyptic and Rabbinic parallels insofar as it reveals the Jewish nature of the Gospel. The second is that it emphasises theophany and sight, especially regarding John's use of the prophets Isaiah and Zechariah but also regarding the patriarchs Abraham, Moses, and Jacob.[92]

Spearheaded by Catrin Williams, several recent works address John's use of Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 (John 12:38–40) and John's observation that "Isaiah saw his glory" (John 12:41).[93] In his study of κύριος in John, Paul Riley has also linked the refrain of John 20: "I/we have seen the Lord" to Isaiah 6:1.[94] Likewise, John's use of Zechariah's statement: "they will look on the one they have pierced" (Zech 12:10; cf. John 19:37) has led Williams and William Bynum to emphasize the role of seeing and theophany – especially given that the referent of the "pierced one" in the MT is YHWH.[95] These studies suggest that John is well aware of the importance of divine visibility in the Hebrew Bible and incorporates it into his account of how Jesus reveals his identity and cultivates belief.

Recent study of John's use of the patriarchs has also drawn attention to how sight and theophany contextualize those references. Ole Jakob Filtvedt,[96] Mary Coloe,[97] and Alan

[91] Barrett (1947); Hanson (1994); Hengel (1994); Beutler (1996); Moore (2013), 21–32; Lieu (2000); Hays (2016), 343; Byers (2017), 117–20.
[92] The study of intertextuality in John is wide-ranging. For a good overview see Myers (2015).
[93] Williams (2014, 2015, 2016c, 2018a, 2018b); Brendsel (2014); Lett (2016).
[94] Riley (2019).
[95] Bynum (2012, 2015). See also Menken (1993) and Williams (2015).
[96] Filtvedt (2017).
[97] Coloe (2001).

Kerr[98] have drawn attention to John's references to Moses's request to see God (Exod 33:18) and the theophany at Sinai (John 1:14–18; 2:1–11; cf. Exod 19:1–25).[99] Ruth Sheridan[100] has also devoted a portion of her recent monograph on Abraham in John 8 to the questions of sight and pre-existence that attend Jesus's statement in 8:58. Christopher Rowland and Christopher Morray-Jones[101] and Richard Bauckham[102] have also continued to develop how the vision of Jacob (Gen 28:10–19) informs Jesus's statement to Nathaniel that "you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John 1:51). The garden place of the crucifixion and resurrection also features in numerous studies as a referent to the Edenic temple-garden of God's appearing.[103] Varied as they are, these studies suggest that John's notions about seeing or not seeing God come chiefly from his Scriptures. His use of them reveals that alongside his insistence that "no one has seen God," he is also eager to harness the power of theophany in his mission to develop belief in Jesus.

Recent Studies of Invisibility

As studies of God and visuality in John have proliferated, at least four important essays on divine (in)visibility in John have appeared in the last six years. These are Catrin Williams's "(Not) Seeing God in the Prologue and body of John's Gospel;"[104] Ole Jakob Filtvedt's "The Transcendence and Visibility of the Father in the Gospel of John;"[105] Veronka Burz-Tropper's "Joh 1,18 als Paradigma einer Theo-Logie des Johannesevangeliums;"[106] and Jutta

[98] Kerr (2002).
[99] Riley (2019) has also the potential relationship between the *noli me tangere* (John 20:17) and the theophany at Sinai (Exod 19:1–25). One should also recall older works from Glasson (1963); Borgen (1965); Meeks (1967); and Harstine (2002) on the many Mosaic themes in John, including the reference to Numbers 21:6–9 and seeing the Son of Man "lifted up" (John 3:14). Borgen especially draws out the theophanic themes in John 6. Recent studies include Hylen (2005).
[100] Sheridan (2020).
[101] Rowland and Morray Jones (2010), 126–28.
[102] Bauckham (2020), 5–14.
[103] Select studies include Wyatt (1990); Suggit (1999); Zimmermann (2008a); Rosik (2009); Schaper (2010); Brown (2010); Coloe (2013); Schaser (2020). The creation theme in John has also been a substantial intertextual focus. Recent examples include Siliezar (2015) and Murray (2008).
[104] Williams (2016c).
[105] Filtvedt (2017). See also Filtvedt (2016).
[106] Burz-Tropper (2019).

Leonhardt-Balzer's forthcoming "Divine Manifestations in the Gospel of John."[107] A brief account of each will conclude this survey.

Catrin Williams, 2016

Williams's argument is wide-ranging, but its primary point is that John 1:18 and the Gospel as a whole present "the vision of God as concentrated in Jesus."[108] While Williams does not fully define the nature of God's invisibility, she does acknowledge the potential "debates" in Early Judaism that surround the topic and admit of a variety of stances towards it. Like Thompson, she appears to suggest that God is not invisible in an absolute sense, noting Benjamin Sommer's point that "invisibility" may have more to do with the deadly consequences of seeing God than with a metaphysically necessary aspect of God's being.[109] Williams also suggests that in 1:18, John is polemicizing against traditions in which Moses was held to see God.[110] Simultaneously, on the strength of John 12:41 and John's use of Isaiah, she asserts that, for John, Isaiah was able to look ahead to Jesus's day and see Jesus as the embodiment of God's glory.[111] For Williams, Isaiah's "sight" includes physical seeing and spiritual insight, a necessary combination if one is truly to "see" Jesus as God's glory and believe in him.[112]

Williams's essay stands out for its willingness to explore the complexities of seeing God and to note the repercussions for belief. However, she does not answer how God is visible in Jesus although she hints that God can be physically visible in Jesus's person. Nor does Williams address the difficult question of how John 1:18 relates to the broader theophanic tradition of the Hebrew Bible. John may well be contending against some Second

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[107] Leonhardt-Balzer (2022).
[108] Williams (2016c), 97.
[109] Williams (2016c), 88–89, esp. 88n39.
[110] Williams (2016c), 90.
[111] Williams (2016c), 97.
[112] Williams (2016c), 96–97.

Temple traditions and/or mystical impulses; however, as Williams notes, he is willing for Isaiah to have seen God in some capacity. Even if John is polemicizing against Moses, he retains the language of Sinai across the Gospel as a means of describing the *visio dei* that Jesus presents. Nevertheless, Williams is right that John restricts the sight of God to Jesus, such that people can only see God in him, a claim that this thesis will build upon.

Ole Jakob Filtvedt, 2017

Like Williams, Filtvedt moves away from an absolute view of invisibility, and his article comes closer to the conclusions of this thesis than any other piece of secondary literature of which I am aware. Filtvedt's central argument is that the Father is visible in Jesus and that this visibility does not compromise the Father's transcendence.[113] While he does not cite Bultmann, Filtvedt's working definition of transcendence echoes Bultmann's principle of a "non-objectifiable" God: "God cannot be objectified, controlled, or fully explained by humans."[114] Nevertheless, by reading John 14:9 alongside the statements in 1:18; 5:37;[115] and 6:46, Filtvedt shows that God does become visible through the incarnation and that the paradoxical nature of this revelation, mediated as it is through Jesus's body, upholds the Father's transcendence while also revealing him to human sight.[116]

Filtvedt's work draws heavily on the Jewish backdrop of the passages in question, especially the theophany at Sinai and the Apocalyptic visions of Early Jewish literature. His conclusion is worth quoting in full:

> In seeing Jesus, one does not see something that merely resembles God, a manifestation that replaces the vision of God, or some divine attribute. God does not remain partly hidden behind his visible manifestation in Jesus. Although the vision of God in Jesus is mediated, it is not limited or partial...[117]

[113] While he draws from Thompson, Filtvedt is notable here for his resistance of Thompson's view that the Father remains visible only to Jesus and only in an eschatological way to the disciples, (2017), 92–96.
[114] Filtvedt (2017), 92n9.
[115] Filtvedt (2016) takes up the complexity of the Jesus's allusion to Deut 4:12 in John 5:37.
[116] Filtvedt (2017), 116–18.
[117] Filtvedt (2017), 116.

While I believe that Filtvedt is correct and will develop my own reasons for making a similar claim, I am also concerned to show why this visibility is important for belief. Filtvedt rightly addresses this question,[118] but this thesis will go further by assessing the role of visibility as the catalyst for all belief and by more deeply developing the Jewish strains of Johannine theology. The most striking aspect of Filtvedt's contribution is the argument that God can make himself visible without sacrificing his transcendence, even if one interprets that transcendence as Bultmann did.

Veronika Burz-Tropper, 2019 and Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer, 2022

While Williams and Filtvedt argue for the possibility of divine visibility in John, they do not represent a consensus. Burz-Tropper and Leonhardt-Balzer have, respectively, assumed and insisted that John's God remains invisible. Although Burz-Tropper's contribution to the discussion of (in)visibility is brief,[119] I include it here because it voices an old assumption in Johannine studies and reveals a problem that Leonhardt-Balzer attempts to solve.

As a part of her welcome argument that the revelation of God in John 1:18 is at the heart of Johannine theology, Burz-Tropper notes:

> Grundsätzlich gilt auch für das Johannesevangelium, was für den alttestamentlichen Gott gilt: Gott ist unsichtbar – niemand hat ihn je gesehen (Joh 1,18; 6,46), aber Jesus als der einzige Sohn hat ihn ausgelegt und erschlossen und wer ihn sieht, sieht den Vater (Joh 14,9) und kann einzig durch den Glauben an Jesus und den Vater das Leben erlangen (Joh 6,47 u. ö.).[120]

Two challenges emerge from this statement. The first is the fact that the God of the Old Testament is conspicuously visible, and the second is that it becomes quite difficult to speak of him as remaining invisible if, in fact, one sees him in Jesus. Burz-Tropper does not address

[118] Filtvedt (2017), 111–16.
[119] Burz-Tropper is the editor and contributor to a collection on the nature of God in John, which, like Thompson's *God of the Gospel of John*, is a response to Dahl's "neglected factor." See Burz-Tropper (2019).
[120] Burz-Tropper (2019), 77.

these questions, but her assumption that the God of the Hebrew Bible is invisible shows the longevity of the view that Judaism is aniconic.

While she is not responding directly to Burz-Tropper, Leonhardt-Balzer attempts to reconcile these challenges by distinguishing a "transcendent God" of Hellenistic-Judaism from the κύριος-YHWH of Judaism. This "transcendent God" is intrinsically invisible in accordance with Platonic and Philonic notions of transcendence and cannot be seen in Jesus.[121] By contrast, the alleged "Jewish God" is the λόγος incarnate. When one sees "the Father" in Jesus, they see this entity. Rather like the economic theologians of the second century, Leonhardt-Balzer uses (in)visibility as a means of distinguishing members of the "godhead."[122] Her argument proceeds on the assumption that transcendence entails an absolute invisibility, without which God would cease to be God.[123] While I am deeply skeptical of this claim, both Burz-Tropper and Leonhardt-Balzer rightly argue that John's Jesus is revealing God in some fashion and that true belief comes to recognize this God in Jesus. The questions that remain are about how such belief arises: do John's statements that no one has seen God entail the kinds of invisibility that prohibit visual revelation?

Synthesis

The foregoing survey makes clear that no consensus regarding invisibility exists and that the relationship between seeing God and belief remains undefined although scholars have begun to uncover further connections between theology, sight, and belief. I will return to the implications of this "gap." For the moment it will serve to recall the central argument of this thesis: unless God becomes physically visible, belief does not obtain. At least two features of

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[121] She (2022), 209 claims that "for the transcendent God what is stated in 1:18 remains true: "nobody has ever seen God" (Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε). If even a visual manifestation is precluded, this also rules out any physical appearance — even in Christ."

[122] Here she follows Roukema (2006).

[123] Leonhardt-Balzer revives a Platonist reading of invisibility. Other scholars continue to show interest in the Graeco-Roman backdrop to John. Examples include van Kooten (2005, 2019); Engberg-Pederson (2017); Hirsch-Luipold (2017); Despotis (2018); Attridge (2019); Seglenieks (2020); Atkins (2020).

this claim stand out against the foregoing. The first is that I will be arguing against the notion of an "absolute invisibility" in John. The second is that I have not yet defined "belief." It therefore remains to survey two important bodies of scholarship from which this thesis draws and to which it contributes: studies on the nature of belief in John and new research on divine embodiment in Hebrew Bible and New Testament scholarship. I turn to both before addressing the methodologies, presuppositions, and structures that this thesis employs.

Belief in John

John contains ninety-eight instances of πιστεύω, and the first of its two conclusions[124] describes the Gospel as signs γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε[125] ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ χριστός ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (20:31). Belief is central to the Gospel, and numerous studies have surveyed the role of πιστεύω across John.[126] In recognition of that centrality, this thesis acknowledges that any theme important to John will relate to belief in some fashion. In this case, Jesus's presentation of God's visibility in the incarnation stands to play a major role as the most basic feature of the incarnation to which belief responds.

Two of the most recent and comprehensive accounts of belief in John clarify this potential. The first – Teresa Morgan's authoritative overview of πίστις in the early Imperium, LXX, and NT – describes Johannine belief as evidence-based relationality. Even in propositional form, belief is directed towards God via Jesus's unity with God.[127] On Morgan's reading, "no one in John's gospel trusts/believes in God or Jesus without reason,

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[124] I read John 21 as an epilogue, and it rarely features in this thesis. While I accept the possibility that it may be a later addition, the evidence can only be presented on internal grounds. The challenge here is that these are usually oriented towards whatever theological presuppositions the reader brings to the text. In Bultmann's case, the utter lack of evidence for a Gnostic Redeemer myth suggests that the theology that also led to his source criticism has little basis in the first century world and is a product of 20th century protestant thought. For a good criticism see Frey (2014).
[125] For discussion of whether πιστεύ[σ]ητε is an aorist subjunctive and targets non-believers ("in order that you may *come* to believe) or a present subjunctive targeting believers ("in order that you *continue* to believe) see Carson (1987, 2005); Fee, (1992); Wang (2017), 38–51; Attridge, (2020). For my purposes, regardless of whether one or both readings are evident in John, recognizing God remains the goal of belief.
[126] For a helpful bibliography see Seglenieks (2020), 4–14.
[127] Morgan (2015), 394–437.

and no one is called to do so."[128] Furthermore, as is often the case in the LXX, "John's gospel uses *pisteuein* solely of putting one's trust in God or Christ."[129] The verb describes the twin themes of "trusting/believing in Jesus" and the "evolution in trusting/believing" that some characters experience after initial belief.[130] Belief transpires in the course of a relationship with Jesus, in which trust in him leads to acceptance of his claims.

Believers also orient their trust towards a being who is united to God. Not only are believers to put their trust in Jesus as they would in God,[131] but one can say that πιστεύω "in the Johannine corpus takes place between human beings and God" and that "the initiative for the divine-human relationship comes from God."[132] Humanity is called to believe in the theological titles, the fact that Jesus is God's Son and comes "from God," and three of the deeply theological "I am" statements (John 6:36; 8:24; 11:25–26).[133] As in Jewish Scripture, "one puts one's trust in God and lives. The difference is that God is uniquely and decisively revealed in Jesus Christ."[134] Morgan shows that belief unfolds as a relationship of trust based on encounters with Jesus in which he shows himself to be divine, reveals the Father, and calls for belief in his "oneness" with God.[135] Belief is oriented towards a God who gives visible proof of his relationship to Jesus and, on the strength of that proof, invites humanity to trust/believe that they too can draw near to God.[136] This suggests that divine visibility has a role to play in the cultivation of faith.

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[128] Morgan (2015), 403. She will later say that belief is not counter-rational. Instead, "it is based on signs, words, scripture, and consequentialism." Morgan also provides extensive evidence for the role of trust in first-century belief and the reliance on evidence and challenges that trust presents any potential believer.
[129] Morgan (2015), 397.
[130] Morgan (2015), 397.
[131] Morgan (2015), 397.
[132] Morgan (2015), 399.
[133] Morgan (2015), 401–402.
[134] Morgan (2015), 405.
[135] Even in the twelve ὅτι constructions in John, which seem to indicate propositional content, Morgan (2015), 425–27 identifies underlying relational aspects. She also notes that such statements tend toward further elaboration of the theological content already represented in the relational calls to belief across the Gospel.
[136] This is not to say that belief is easily attained. Morgan (2015), 398–415 underscores the difficulties that Jesus's human appearance causes for belief.

The second account is Chris Seglenieks's recent monograph *Johannine Belief and Graeco-Roman Devotion: Reshaping Devotion for John's Graeco-Roman Audience*.[137] Seglenieks calls for clarity regarding what he calls the "ideal response" to Jesus. He shows that the concept of "belief" extends beyond occurrences of πιστεύω and incorporates "cognitive, relational, ethical, ongoing, and public aspects."[138] However one might wish to add to or qualify these aspects, Seglenieks is right to give a more holistic picture of how John wants his readers to respond to Jesus. Yet even where he fleshes out the nature of belief, he is also dismissive of some of its sensory elements: "while seeing can lead to believing (2:11) it is not necessary for belief (20:29) and at times seeing does not lead to belief (6:36), for believing requires a volitional response."[139] The result is that "seeing and hearing can each be means to believing, yet neither comprise a response."[140]

Such statements invite clarification – especially for this thesis – because they raise questions about how invisibility, sight, and belief are linked. At one level, this thesis assumes that divine visibility is ontologically prior to belief. Belief responds to it. Nevertheless, "seeing" – and one could include any other senses here – is the way that humans receive visibility. I agree that sight is involuntary in the sense that one must interpret what one sees and make conclusions about it. At the same time, it is quite difficult to read John and not feel that John has invited one to see the glory (1:14; 2:11; 12:41; 17:5) and to see God himself in Jesus (12:45; 14:9; 20:28). Learning to embrace the truth of what one has seen and to accept the testimony of others' sight (e.g., 1:34; 3:32; 19:35) are hallmarks of the Gospel and key components of the relationality implicit in trust and belief.

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[137] Seglenieks (2020).
[138] Seglenieks (2020), 3.
[139] Seglenieks (2020), 7 adds that "while seeing can lead to believing (2:11) it is not necessary for belief (20:29) and at times seeing does not lead to belief (6:36), for believing requires a volitional response."
[140] Seglenieks (2020), 8.

This thesis is therefore also concerned with how humans see God and thus also with the value of human seeing as a response to God's physical visibility in Jesus. I agree with Seglenieks that multiple "aspects" attend belief; they must attend "sight" as well. However, this thesis will proceed on the understanding that sight is, in fact, a response to God's visibility in Jesus and therefore partakes of the "relationality" of belief. Later chapters will explore its value as such, and I will soon give a more detailed account of how the structure of the thesis will approach the priority of divine visibility and the response that human seeing makes to it. What emerges from Morgan and Seglenieks is that belief is John's desired response to the incarnation. I will argue that divine visibility is the catalyst for this response and that it also shapes the nature of one of its key components: human seeing.[141]

Divine Embodiment

The foregoing account of belief has established that one trusts oneself to God based on an encounter with him. The surveys of Johannine study have also demonstrated that recent Johannine scholarship shows the legitimacy of focusing on the physical visibility of that encounter. In addition to this work, I now draw attention to how the burgeoning scholarship on divine embodiment across the Hebrew Bible and – more recently – the New Testament provides further warrant for assessing the role of visibility.

In her as yet unpublished thesis, Deborah Forger is the first to introduce this work in substantial depth to Johannine scholarship, but its roots are in Hebrew Bible scholarship.[142] Benjamin Sommer's ground-breaking *The Bodies of God in the World of Ancient Israel*[143]

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[141] Seglenieks (2020), 8 overstates his case when he concludes that "sense perception is not part of the ideal response to Jesus."
[142] Forger (2017). While Forger and I both draw upon embodiment scholarship to address the incarnation, my work is aimed at invisibility, sight, and belief. Our work overlaps to the extent that we take divine embodiment to be operative in John's thought, but Forger is not arguing about the relationship between God's visibility and belief.
[143] Sommer (2009).

and Esther Hamori's *When Gods were Men*[144] stand out among other studies for their arguments that the God of Israel acquires bodily form in tangible ways although these bodies may differ.[145] Sommer contends that God is "fluid," insofar as he can be simultaneously in multiple places in multiple kinds of bodies. Hamori argues that anthropomorphism and transcendence need not be mutually exclusive. The "classical theism" of Maimonides or Thomas Aquinas does not appear to govern the thought of Hebrew Scripture.

Numerous important studies have followed,[146] but scholars of Early Christianity have only just begun to read the New Testament and other Christian texts in light of this research. Brittany Wilson has now published the first monograph-length treatment of divine embodiment and Christology in Luke-Acts.[147] Other scholars of Early Christianity who draw from Sommer and Hamori include Crispin Fletcher-Louis and Matthew Thiessen.[148] Christoph Markschies's *Gottes Körper: Jüdische, christliche und pagane Gottesvorstellungen in der Antike* explores the notion of God's body in Early Christian and Rabbinic communities.[149]

Taken together, these works suggest that God can simultaneously be creator and a part of his creation. They therefore set a precedent for focusing on the value of God's physical visibility as evidence for such a claim and as a natural consequence of it. The major repercussion for Johannine scholarship is that if one accepts that John is a deeply Jewish document, then these works require one to grapple with the possibility that a Jewish theology of divine embodiment underlies the incarnation. In the terms of this thesis, this means asking whether God can be seen in Jesus's body rather than needing to be invisible in a Platonic or

[144] Hamori (2008).
[145] These studies draw on much scholarship specific to ANE studies. Among the influences they cite, however, the work of Lorberbaum (2004, ET=2015) stands out for its account of Rabbinic belief in divine embodiment.
[146] These include monographs by Wagner (2010, ET=2019); Putthoff (2017, 2020); Herring (2013); McDowell (2015); and Smith (2016).
[147] Wilson (2021a). See also Wilson (2019, 2021b) and Putthoff (forthcoming).
[148] Fletcher-Louis (2015) and Thiessen (2013).
[149] Markschies (2016, ET=2019).

"Bultmannian" sense. Much of this dissertation is devoted to understanding whether this is true for John, and embodiment scholarship has driven this research.

Conclusion to the Literature Review

One can now step back and consider how this thesis stands to contribute to the scholarship I have described. The works I have surveyed show that a growing interest in divine invisibility is coupled with a longstanding lack of consensus regarding its nature and its repercussions for belief. The classic Middle-Platonist position remains in play, as does Bultmann's Neo-Kantian reading and the view that the God of the Hebrew Bible is unequivocally invisible. When they draw on the work of Ben Sommer, however, Catrin Williams, and especially Deborah Forger, show that a new understanding of invisibility is possible. Nevertheless, viewed "from above," Johannine scholarship has not resolved the actual nature of divine invisibility just as it has rarely connected the question of invisibility to the question of belief.

Despite this lack, scholars continue to pursue the nature of God, his (in)visibility, and the role of sight, signs, and belief in the Gospel. However, proceeding without a definite understanding of how God is visible or invisible in Jesus or "outside" of Jesus threatens to hamstring these endeavours. Any attempt to pursue how one could believe in a Jesus who willingly produces visible evidence of his divinity – both in the incarnation and via his works and signs – must resolve the relationship of belief to sight. Resolving this relationship depends, in the first instance, upon understanding whether the divine nature itself admits of visual revelation. Nor are the related notions of an absolute invisibility or a "Chalcedonianism without reserve" clearly present in John's account of the incarnation and his use of the Hebrew Bible. Thus, by arguing that God is visible in Jesus, this thesis proposes to resolve fundamental questions that lie behind much recent Johannine scholarship: is it possible for God to reveal himself to the physical senses? Does the incarnation take

concrete shape such that it calls forth a believing response from an embodied humanity? Within the trajectories of contemporary research, such questions have begun to loom large.

Having "situated" the thesis, it remains to account for my own approach to John. I will begin with a summary of how I read the text, touching on the nature of intertextuality, comparison, and the allusive potential of John while also commenting on my understanding of John's "Jewishness," authorship, and literary unity.

Reading John

Understanding the nature of divine (in)visibility in John involves both "intratextual" and "intertextual" study. John is intratextual because it is a narrative. In the footsteps of Alan Culpepper and many others since, I begin with the presupposition that John possesses its own interior logic and progression, however complex.[150] Such a reading leads me to trust that John has consistent notions of (in)visibility even when these notions appear contradictory. For instance, based on John 1:18, 5:37, and 6:46, God seems totally invisible. However, based on 6:46, it seems that the right person can see him; and based on 12:45 and 14:9, it seems that those who see Jesus also see God. Because I accept John as a whole, I proceed on the assumption that these statements have a meaningful relationship to one another in their current form. I must therefore ask how these various statements about invisibility qualify and contextualize one another and whether they participate in an underlying theological unity. I face the challenge of understanding how John coheres.

Determining the cohesion of the text requires one to search outside of John.[151] It also requires that one make decisions about where to search and how to evaluate one's findings.

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[150] Culpepper (1983).
[151] "Coherence" and "unity" are notoriously difficult to define. Regarding "coherence," I follow Teeter and Tooman (2020), 100: "for the present purposes, we will take "coherence" in a limited sense as referring to the compatibility between constituents of a text. Within this framework, "coherence" may apply to conceptual connectivity at multiple levels or extents of text, from the proposition, clause, and sentence (microstructural coherence) up to the complete text (macrostructural coherence). While readers perform an indispensable role in constituting that coherence, coherence cannot be separated from the text as a communicative strategy." Teeter

The challenges are immediate, difficult, and well-documented.[152] Any scholar who hopes to compare John to other primary texts and/or wishes to understand how John uses and interprets the texts that he quotes must face a vast number of primary sources with potential import for John as well as numerous theories about how to understand and apply that import. No consensus exists regarding any of these matters – not the texts to be read nor the methods to be used. Furthermore, current theories and methods are often targeting the blind spots and perceived ideological flaws of older approaches. While a number of these critiques are undoubtedly correct, one is left with little confidence in the longevity of any current theory. To recognize this challenge is not to dismiss the use of external sources or of theories in the search for a coherent Johannine theology. However, now more than ever, a scholar must be honest about the fact that s/he is the one who chooses which methods to apply just as s/he is the one who chooses which texts to compare. S/he must also offer a rationale for her choice. In what follows, I briefly describe how I read John as an intertextual document and the assumptions and theories I bring to bear on that reading.

Intertextuality and Comparison

The term "intertextuality" emerged from the linguistic theory of Julia Kristeva. The student of Roland Barthes and later member of *Tel Quel* alongside Barthes and Jacques Derrida, Kristeva drew from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin to develop a theory of textual relationships that functioned primarily as a means of political protest. Intertextuality resists the notion that

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and Tooman (2020), 101–102 go on to describe three kinds of "unity," two of which I presuppose in my reading of John. The first is "an analytic judgment about the internal semantic compatibility or consistency of a text, without expressing commitment to, and thus independent of, any particular conception of authorship or reconstruction of a text's historical development." The second is "an *a priori* assumption or anticipation brought to a potential text (any de facto bounded literary unit). "Unity" in this sense is a phenomenological postulate of all reading. It is what motivates a process of discovery and (re)construction of meaning, enabling the eventual experience of a text as coherent. It is what makes it possible to experience any text meaningfully. It is not a judgment about or justification of "unity," understood either as an historical claim about authorship or a claim about how a literary whole hangs together, but an expectation of the mutual compatibility of constituents; that the parts will relate meaningfully to the de facto whole."

[152] For an overview of the difficulties inherent to comparison see the essays collected in Barclay and White (2021). Many of the observations there are taken from Smith (1990).

meaning can be fixed, self-contained, and definitive; rather, all texts are at the interface of all other texts.[153] The "texts" themselves range from written works to cultural artifacts of all kinds. Whereas structuralism and political authority seek to determine the fixed meanings of isolated texts and their genetic relationships to sources, Kristeva and her allies undermined and subverted this "fixity." They argued that no text is separate from any other. No determinate meaning exists, and that the nature of "sources" is a moot point in a world where "source" and "text" are ultimately indistinguishable. Theirs is a stance towards the nature of reality; but, for the purposes of this thesis, what I take from intertextuality is the basic but important notion that all texts can be related.[154]

This acknowledgement notwithstanding, my reading of John runs contrary to a purely "intertextual" approach.[155] I read the Gospel in line with its self-proclaimed orientation towards belief. While John realizes this goal via a plurality of texts, he remains situated in a specific time and place and cultural context. Because I am attempting to grasp how John – as a denizen of a diverse first-century Judaism – understood divine (in)visibility, I therefore use "intertextuality" to refer to the Jewish texts antecedent to and roughly contemporary with his Gospel. [156]

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[153] One good example is the text of John itself as reconstructed in Nestle-Aland 28. Drawn from a regionally and chronologically divers set of manuscripts and arranged by scholars who are themselves the products of multiple universities, locales, and times, the "John" one reads in Greek is intertextual in the extreme and its translations only more so. However, with this caveat in mind, it remains the case that the manuscripts and papyri closest to the first century rightly retain authority as the closet approximations of an original source. For those who value understanding John in its first-century context, that approximation remains important. Even if unfiltered access to it is impossible, it is not meaningless or undesirable – as intertextuality claims – if one clearly articulates the admittedly subjective goal of reading John as a first-century document.
[154] Both Barton (2013) and Kynes (2013) provide brief but articulate introductions to the philosophical roots of intertextuality and its use, abuse, and amendment in biblical scholarship. Further insightful overviews include Sheridan (2020), 47–88; Hays, Alkier, and Huizenga (2009); Huizenga (2009, 2015); Myers (2015), 1–20.
[155] Sheridan (2020), 47–88 hews closely to a philosophically radical account of intertextuality, especially as Barthes articulates it. Her articulate account of intertextuality and comparison provides a helpful introduction to the challenges.
[156] This is a far cry from Kristeva's provocative interpretation of reality; nevertheless, it is the sense in which this thesis employs the term. Anyone who protests the abandonment of Kristeva's original intentions for the term must also admit the supreme irony of their complaint. Huizenga (2009), 49 rightly summarizes Kristeva's view: "intertextuality is not a method or perspective, not an option among others. Neither is it a call for renewed attention to the presence and role of sources in a more or less discrete literary work. It is a condition of all texts, written or otherwise. It undermines traditional notions of interpretation and is a tool for subverting traditional political orders."

Such an understanding of intertextuality has immediate repercussions for how one chooses to compare texts. Even my modified account renders the act of comparison subjective. The potentially infinite number of comparisons to be made – even within the context of Early Judaism – requires one to make choices about what to compare and to explain why one has made them. As Jonathan Z. Smith and many in his wake have argued, one crucial aspect of intertextuality thus defined is the articulation of a "third thing" – a comparandum – that is both the catalyst for and goal of comparing at least two texts. Thus, for instance, later in the dissertation I will read several Early Jewish texts alongside John with a specific comparandum in view: the garden of Eden and its theological role as a place where God and humanity meet. The question I seek to answer by way of this comparison is whether the similarities and differences in the accounts of Eden, a feature the texts share, can shed light on the nature of God's presence in Jesus's body in John.

What I do not argue is that John is directly dependent on some antecedent source for his understanding of the theological value of gardens. The role of comparison is explanatory rather than source-critical.[157] I read John as being in historically determined relationships to other texts, but I am not interested in determining whether these relationships are genetic. I do, however, prioritize their Jewish nature; and I will use the concept of "authority" and of an "encyclopedia" as controls regarding the texts I choose to compare.

Authority

Thus far, I have developed the notion of "possibility" regarding John's relationship to other texts, but the notion of "authority" also delimits the range of intertextuality. John's appeals to the writing (γράφω) and fulfillment (πληρόω) of ἡ γραφή reveal that he values the relationship between various texts within the Torah, Psalms, and Prophets and his own act of

[157] See Gathercole (2020), 174–75 for his helpful distinction between "relation" and "resemblance."

writing (γράφω) about Jesus (John 20:30–31).[158] The Torah, Psalms, and Prophets thus emerge as the texts with which John establishes continuity when he depicts Jesus. Whatever pre- or "proto-canonical" authority these texts possesses, John's desire to show their fulfillment suggests his reverence for and adherence to them. The ability to command reverence and adherence can rightly be called "authority" even in the absence of a specific canonical status.

A Jewish Encyclopedia

John's reverence for and use of ἡ γραφή thus signals that the likeliest referents of allusion lie within the broader textual and cultural world of Early Judaism. Here I turn to Leroy Huizenga's use of Umberto Eco's cultural "encyclopedia."[159] On Huizenga's reading, the "encyclopedia" of a given culture "registers all pieces of cultural knowledge: codes, rules, conventions, history, literature, truth claims, discourses, all the units that culture comprises; everything."[160] Nevertheless, "as a particular instantiation of cultural conventions, however, a text is a limited actualization of the encyclopedic possibilities."[161] The upshot for interpretation is that it "involves the interaction of the text itself with the cultural encyclopedia in which it was written, for the text and its encyclopedia share the same codes, conventions and potential intertexts."[162] In this construal, the intention of the author recedes before the value of understanding the actual cultural, textual world of the encyclopedia from which a particular text springs.[163] Yet for the reader who wishes to interpret the text – the

[158] John's citations of ἡ γραφή occur at 1:23; 2:17; 6:31; 6:45; 7:38; 10:34; 12:13, 14, 38, 39; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24, 36. Moyise (2015), 91–106 offers a brief but helpful introduction to each. See also Menken (1996). I use ἡ γραφή rather than "Scripture" so as to avoid implying that John has a physical "Hebrew Bible," canon and all, lying before him. Nevertheless, the term connotes an authority that John is eager to reference and utilize. The existence of the LXX alone, however piecemeal, underscores the authority of the Torah.
[159] Huizenga (2009) successfully integrates Eco with Richard Hays's more pragmatic criteria for determining allusion in order to better read the allusive potential of the Akedah in Matthew.
[160] Huizenga (2009), 27.
[161] Huizenga (2009), 28.
[162] Huizenga (2009), 35.
[163] Huizenga (2009), 36 adds that "knowledge about the author is important only for the identification of the appropriate encyclopedia, for the sender's or author's message is composed with codes and conventions with

"Model Reader" in Eco's phrase – "the encyclopedia is potential, the text actual. The encyclopedia is unlimited, the text limits. The text directs the Model Reader through the rhizome of the encyclopedia on a particular intended path."[164] Eco's notion of "encyclopedic" knowledge thus forges a way between reader- and author-centered notions of interpretation.[165] I have adopted it here because it qualifies – without destroying – the possibilities of intertextuality by way of the realities of authority, historical situatedness, and the inescapable intentionality of texts.

Because I regard NT texts as creative Jewish documents that have embraced Jesus as the Christ,[166] I read John as participating in an Early Jewish encyclopedia.[167] The text-specific contents of this encyclopedia range from the whole of what will become the Hebrew Bible to the many "extra-biblical" texts of the Second Temple period – from Qumran to the

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which the author was familiar. The role of the reader is not to peek into the empirical author's biography or mind but to make sense of the text in light of the appropriate encyclopedia."

[164] Huizenga (2009), 28. Eco describes the encyclopedia as a "rhizome labyrinth," in which all points may lead to all others.

[165] Huizenga (2009), 23 quotes Eco (1997), 43–44: "between the theory that the interpretation is wholly determined by the author's intention and the theory that it is wholly determined by the will of the interpreter there is undoubtedly a third way. Interpretive cooperation is an act in the course of which the reader of a text, through successive abductive inferences, proposes topics, ways of reading, and hypotheses of coherence, on the basis of suitable encyclopedic competence; but this interpretive initiative of his is, in a way, determined by the nature of the text. By the "nature" of the text I mean what an interpreter can actualize on the basis of a given Linear Manifestation, having recourse to the encyclopedic competence toward which the text itself orients its Model Reader."

[166] Mroczek (2016), 13 describes a "literary imagination" in Early Judaism that enabled Early Jewish writers to compose texts without a sense of canonical boundaries or even the limits of single books, insofar as the modern world understands books to be fixed entities. Approached in this way, one can see a "less defined textual world––one that was not constrained by a rigid concept of Scripture, and one that was not entirely within their reach…The way ancient people conceptualized the totality of their literary inventory was often vague and undefined—characterized by a cultural receptivity to incompleteness, fragmentation, and possibility." I am not prepared to accept each of Mroczek's claims, but I do think that the possibilities and freedoms that she describes can be a helpful means of approaching John's ability to compose a book about his divine Messiah that nevertheless relies on the authority of ἡ γραφή. One should also note the recent scholarly turn to understanding variation in texts and in textual traditions for their own sake and as windows onto diverse theologies not only in Early Judaism but into the present day. See Najman (2017).

[167] I note here two recent and important monographs on John's deeply Jewish character. Cirafesi (2022) argues that "when we consider how certain categories of Jewish ethnicity – peoplehood, laws, land, and national cult – were variously, even irreconcilably, negotiated, interpreted and preformed [*sic*] in antiquity, John can be read as a work "within Judaism," that is, as an expression of a diasporic Jewish identity" (279). Blumhofer (2020) argues that John presents "Jesus as an innovative figure who mediates through himself continuity with Israel's past and future. John functions from within the Jewish tradition as an innovative proposal for its ongoing integrity. It presupposes the election of Israel, the validity of the Jewish tradition, and the tradition's faithful way of nurturing eschatological hopes" (231).

"apocryphal" and Apocalyptic literatures.[168] Furthermore, I prioritize the "Jewishness" of this encyclopedia. I follow the priority of ἡ γραφή in John, one that leads him to also structure his narrative via key feasts,[169] develop the temple motif regarding Jesus's body,[170] and declare, via Jesus, that "it is not possible for ἡ γραφή to be broken" (10:35), "salvation comes from the Jews" (4:22), and "Moses wrote of me" (5:46). I am also agreed with the numerous scholars who have advocated for a sense of ἡ γραφή that understands Jesus to fulfill the larger narrative patterns that span what we now call the Hebrew Bible.[171]

Let me be swift to add that this encyclopedia does not exist in a separate "space" from a Graeco-Roman counterpart. Philo of Alexandria and Josephus offer clear instances of corpora that span cultures and theologies. In my view, John is aware of Graeco-Roman rhetoric and some measure of philosophical thought.[172] I do not, therefore, read John as hermetically sealed with respect to allusive possibility; however, later argument in this thesis will show how the text of John leads me to make more fruitful comparisons and allusions within more exclusively Jewish parameters.[173] He evidences a deeply Jewish theology.

An "encyclopedic" reading of John also entails a move away from the debates over Johannine authorship or the search for genealogical connections to sources. I am more certain of determining broader theological relationships – both similarities and differences within the encyclopedia – than of contributing any concrete advance to either set of disputes.[174] Thus, as

[168] At points in this thesis, I will refer to the Rabbis and draw on some scholarship that does. However, I never use them to make a central point about Johannine theology.
[169] Coloe (2001), Kerr (2002), Daise (2007), and Wheaton (2015) offer thorough accounts of the feasts in John. Wheaton (2015) rightly resists supersessionist readings.
[170] Rahner (1998); Coloe (2001), Kerr (2002), and Hoskins (2007) represent only a few of the many works on Jesus's relationship to the temple and its deeply Jewish nature. Like Wheaton (2015), Regev (2019), 198–221 resists the supersessionist readings that characterize these earlier studies.
[171] See footnote 91.
[172] Examples of recent treatment of Graeco-Roman rhetoric and themes in John include Bro-Larsen (2008); Meyers (2014); Wang (2017); van Kooten (2005, 2019); Attridge (2019); and Seglenieks (2020).
[173] As Huizenga (2009), 36 notes of Eco: "the encyclopedia records every possible pertinent aspect about something, but in interpretation and communication one actualizes only necessary aspects."
[174] At some level, each of these methodological frameworks I have described strike against the notion that sources exist as the final repositories of meaning and that the study of one text's use of another depends on isolating a particular source document with a concrete relationship to the original text. It should be clear from the above that sources remain essential. However, I am using these theories to articulate form of relationality

I have already mentioned, I am also less concerned with redactional theories about John than I am with its intertextual value as an expression of Jewish and Early Christian theologies.[175] It is difficult enough to determine what the extant texts say without attempting to construct what can only ever remain theories concerning authorship and direct dependence. To be sure, the notion of an encyclopedia is also theoretical, but it offers a more responsible account of relationships between texts as well as the relationship between a text and the scholar sifting it for evidence.

Synthesis

I opened this section as an attempt to define the "intratextual" and "intertextual" aspects of my reading. I close it with the recognition that no easy distinction lies between the two. John's text is itself a part of the Jewish "encyclopedia" from which it draws and to which it adds its portrayals of God, Jesus, and belief. It emerges from a matrix of other texts, but it expresses its own ideas and intentions. The practical ramifications are simple. Across six chapters I will exegete John's text alongside and in comparison with those texts within its "encyclopedic" space that I deem most pertinent based on my reading of both John and the primary texts around it. The goal remains elucidation of the relationship between divine (in)visibility and belief; however, by doing so, this thesis will also contribute to the position that John is an Early Jewish document. It is rife with possible allusions to variegated Jewish theologies although it remains a discrete text laden with its own intentions.

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between texts that does not require a direct genealogical link between sources or authorial intention in order to obtain.

[175] One should recall here that no external evidence exists for the hypothetical Johannine sources. Furthermore, the internal evidence often cited involves assumptions about John's attitude towards sight and belief as I noted above with Fortna and Nicol. Because this thesis is querying the foundations of the internal evidence itself, it cannot begin with the assumption that the sources are defined or even existed.

Structure and Outline

Having demonstrated the potential contribution of this thesis, and my mode of reading, I now turn to how I will carry out the argument that one can physically see God in Jesus and so come to belief. Two concerns shape the structure of this thesis. The first is that the visibility of God becomes a thoroughgoing Johannine concern if it informs the belief that John's Gospel exists to cultivate and maintain. The thesis must therefore begin by establishing the relationship between Johannine belief and God before making claims about God's visibility and/or human sight. The second is that my central claim also suggests an encounter with God. On one side of this encounter, I am arguing that there is a physically visible God. On the other side, I argue that human beings can physically see this God in Jesus Christ. In response to both concerns, the thesis will proceed in three parts, each consisting of two chapters.

Part 1, "God and Visibility," argues that apprehension of God himself is the goal of belief; and it also establishes the basic fact that God can indeed become visible for John. Chapter 1, ""My Lord and My God" in John 20:30–31," contends that the cause, content, and consequences of belief all suggest that Jesus is God. In John 20:27–29, Thomas sees Jesus and calls him "my Lord and my God." After Jesus blesses those who believe without seeing him, John claims that he has written down signs in this book so that his readers can come to believe that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" and "receive life in his name" (John 20:30–31). The proximity of both statements is not coincidental but reveals that 20:30–31 describes the same fullness of belief as Thomas's exclamation. What emerges is that John's portrayals of the "signs," the titles "Christ" and "Son of God," and the resulting "life in his name" are fundamentally theological. True belief will always make Thomas's declaration.

Recognizing God in Jesus may be the goal of belief, but one must ask whether God himself is available for recognition. Chapter 2, "Divine Visibility," argues that John's Christology affirms the visibility of God by reconciling the notion of an "unseen" God

(1:18a; 5:37; 6:46) to the visibility of the Father that Jesus presents (John 12:45; 14:9). It proposes that John 1:18a is best read as "no one has ever [fully] seen God [yet]". Three pieces of evidence support this claim. The first is that "unseen" and "invisible" are not synonymous. A survey of Early Jewish, Biblical, and Rabbinic literature reveals that one may not assume that all – or, perhaps, even many – Hellenized Jews embraced Platonist notions of invisibility. Second, John 1:18a exists in the same Gospel as John 12:45 and 14:9 – unqualified statements of divine visibility – however restricted it may be to Jesus's person. Third, John's use of Isaiah (John 12:41) suggests that the visibility of God in Jesus is consistent with God's visibility across the Hebrew Bible. If one reads John's God as "unseen," rather than as "invisible," the visibility of God in Jesus becomes possible and the tension between the seeing and not seeing God passages can be resolved.

Parts 2, "God and Place," begins to respond to my second concern by answering how humanity encounters the visible God in Jesus and determining the repercussions for belief. This section further argues that philosophical concerns surrounding materiality and immateriality do not constrain the fullness with which God is in Jesus. By establishing that John's account of God's presence and of belief relies on physical proximity in physical places, I advance the claim that God is visible in Jesus's body. Chapters 3 and 4 draw from the embodiment scholarship I have discussed above. They also comprise the most "intertextual" arguments in this thesis.

Chapter 3, "God on Earth," argues that the intimacy of worship presents Jesus's body as the place where one may see God. It opens with John's association of Jesus with the tabernacle and the temple (John 1:14; 2:21), the most comprehensive descriptions of Jesus's flesh and body in the Gospel. While much scholarship has focused on John's use of symbol and metaphor to describe the relationship between Jesus's body and the temple, this Chapter asks what it would mean to read Jesus's body as the literal "house of God." Evidence for this

reading comes from an overview of Israelite and Early Jewish conceptions of the tabernacle and temple as the places where God became available to empirical experience. The theologies of the Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism portray a God who can be in two places at once; and John evidences a corresponding understanding of God's dual presence not only in his association of the flesh and body of Jesus with the tabernacle and temple but in the Farewell Discourse. The interplay of "name," "glory," and "indwelling/abiding" language accompanies the basic implication that the believers whom God, Jesus, and the Spirit will indwell are embodied. The Chapter concludes that God can be on earth in Jesus's body as well as in heaven.

Jesus's body is not the only theologically relevant place in John. Jesus himself appears in a variety of places across the Gospel. Chapter 4, "Proximity, Place, and Cosmic Mountain," continues to evaluate the relationship between place and divine visibility in John. However, its focus is on how places *external* to Jesus's body reveal God's visibility in him. The chapter begins by developing the theme of "where." Across the Gospel, John is concerned both with where Jesus physically is and where he originated. He also presents the people who come in closest proximity to Jesus as being most likely to believe whereas those who remain at a distance or from whom Jesus distances himself become his antagonists. John's spatially charged portrayal of belief thus invites wider, spatially oriented study of the Gospel, and it reveals that physical proximity to Jesus is necessary for belief.

Chapter 4 takes up this invitation by pausing to consider the nature of place itself and to observe that all appearing occurs in places. This raises the question of whether certain physical topographies in the Gospel shape Jesus's appearance as God. Armed with the knowledge that God can be in two places at once, the Chapter recognizes the theophanic links between the mountains and gardens of John and the cosmic mountain of Israelite and Early Jewish theology. Such places can join the temple motif of John to accentuate Jesus's body as

the site of God because the places themselves are the traditional sites of God's appearing. The union of physicality, topography, and divine presence in these places underscores that the presence of God in Jesus is itself a complex weave of divinity and humanity that resists dualistic readings.

Part 3, "Seeing God," builds from Part 2 by approaching the visibility of God from the perspective of human experience. Jesus may present God as physically visible, but one must now establish whether human seeing is able to recognize God when it sees Jesus. Chapter 5, "The Efficacy of Empirical Vision," argues that physical sight can and should lead to belief in John. Scholars often cite John 2:23; 4:48; and 20:29 as evidence for John's own critique of physical seeing as a means of coming to belief. Close reading of each verse turns the tables. The broader contexts of John 2:23 and 4:48 reveals human hearts to be the true cause of unbelief and shows that physical sight is the catalyst for all unbelief and all belief. In relationship to both verses, one must also appreciate the material visibility of the signs, the crucifixion, and resurrection and the intended effect of that visibility on belief. Neither does John 20:29 condemn sight as a means of acquiring belief. Rather, it suggests that mediated seeing – via the text of the Gospel – can be as efficacious for belief as an actual encounter with Jesus. This section adduces John's emphasis on eyewitnesses and the broader context of John 20 to show that physical seeing remains the epistemic authority underlying the testimony of the Gospel and belief itself. The chapter concludes that sight is complex, but that no critique of the positive relationship between sight and belief exists in John.

Having established that God is the goal of belief, that God is physically visible in Jesus, and that physical sight can lead to belief, Chapter 6, "Seeing Jesus and Seeing God," draws these three points together by asking whether John portrays visual encounters with Jesus as visual encounters with God. The Chapter argues that the physical act of seeing Jesus is a *necessary* condition for seeing God in him despite the challenge that God emerges as

most visible in Jesus's most acutely human moments. Evidence for this position arises from exegesis of three passages in which Johannine characters see Jesus (John 6:19; 19:6; 20:14–29) as well as John's account of the crucifixion as glorification (12:1–50; 19:28–37). Each pericope reveals that no matter the reaction to Jesus, John identifies Jesus with God in each instance and underscores the importance of seeing for this recognition. However, seeing God remains counterintuitive. The Chapter closes by turning to the crucifixion and examining the profound irony of Jesus's death as the high point of divine visibility in the Gospel.

Concluding Remarks

Before diving into Chapter 1, I wish to add final remarks about some broader Johannine issues. I recognize that this thesis opens me to charges of "ableism:" is belief only available to the sighted? Nothing could be further from the truth. The entire sensorium is complicit in belief;[176] however, seeing is John's favoured sense. Furthermore, a fundamentally material visibility undergirds the experience of God and births the eyewitness testimony on which John depends and which he communicates. Having acknowledged that, it remains true that any who come to John now come as "blind" people in the sense that they do not directly see Jesus with their eyes in time and space. Those who would "see" must hear John's text; and Chapter 5 will explain my reasoning for why this "hearing" is mediated sight.

Talk of "eyewitness testimony" invites further reflection on John's relationship to history. In my view, one cannot separate the "historical" from the "theological" in John. If God has, in fact, become incarnate, then even the most mundane action of the incarnate God acquires theological potency.[177] "Conservative" handwringing over over-theologizing in the interest of establishing historical proof and the "liberal" distaste for historical proof in favour of establishing theology have no place regarding a text that clearly unites them. To be sure, I

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[176] See Lee (2010).
[177] Not only has the Word become flesh (1:14), but the world itself could not contain the books written about him (21:25).

do not deny that my arguments about physical visibility establish the value of material reality for John and thereby also suggest that John values the concrete times and places from which history arises. However, I am not interested here in establishing John's historical reliability. This thesis remains fixed on the theological nature of the Gospel.[178] Finally, when one considers history and John, one must also face the devastations of anti-Semitism. While I do not think that John is anti-Semitic, I will place "the Jews" in quotes out of respect for those who do[179] and out of concern for the horrific fact that many have used John to justify violence and hatred towards Jews over the centuries and that many continue to do so.

I wish to note two final points before the argument begins in earnest: γράφειν does not only mean "to write." It can also mean "to draw or paint."[180] Also, the "writing" in John exists prior to the Protestant fascination with the word and fear of the image.[181] When the Johannine Logos becomes flesh and when John composes a Gospel of the incarnate Logos's signs, sight and hearing are not at loggerheads in his theology. That which is written in the Gospel is also held out for the reader to see. Whenever one reads it, the question the angel poses to Ezekiel at the river of life streaming from the temple's side (Ezek 47:6 LXX) should stand before one: εἰ ἑώρακας υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου; I endeavour now to see as clearly as I may be permitted.

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[178] As Culpepper (1983), 11 notes "questions of historicity need not enter the discussion because the literary critic is concerned with the gospel and its meaning rather than with Jesus or the Johannine community. Appeals to general historical considerations regarding the age of the story, the culture it assumes and the meaning of the words with which it is told are, of course, necessary if one is to understand the dynamics of the narrative, but using historical data as aids to interpretation is quite different from using the gospel story for historical reconstruction."

[179] Examples include Reinhartz (2018); and Sheridan (2020). See the essays in Bieringer, Pollefey, and Vandecastelle-Vanneuville, eds. (2001) for the debate. In my view, on may vehemently decry the uses to which John has been put while denying that the text itself is anti-semitic.

[180] See LSJ, s.v. "γράφω."

[181] See the excellent introduction in Heath (2013) as well as Squire (2009), 15–87.

PART 1: GOD AND VISIBILITY

CHAPTER 1: "MY LORD AND MY GOD" IN JOHN 20:30–31

φῶς ἐκ φωτός, Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ

Light from light, true God from true God.

— *Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed*

Having completed his witness to the crucifixion and resurrection of his Lord, John concludes the body of his Gospel with an account of two reunions between the disciples and their master. While the cross and the empty tomb form the climax of Jesus's life, a parallel narrative of belief reaches its climax in the second of these meetings when Thomas recognizes the risen Christ as "my Lord and my God" (John 20:29). In response to Thomas, Jesus asks whether he believes because he has seen him before blessing those who do not see yet nevertheless believe. John follows Jesus's blessing with: πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεῖα ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν, ἅ οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ (John 20:30) as a segue into his summary of the Gospel: ταῦτα δε γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ χριστός ὁ υἱός τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ (John 20:30–31). Taken in the context of 20:26–29, John has written the Gospel so that those who "have not seen" may nevertheless believe, like Thomas, that Jesus is Lord and God.[1] The summary of this belief falls into three parts: the signs are its catalyst; the titles "Christ" and "Son of God" are its content; and "life in his name" is its yield.

This chapter takes up the question of *how* the signs, titles, and "life in his name" add up to "my Lord and my God." Here, several major commentators are agreed: John 20:30–31

[1] On the inseparability of John 20:30–31 from 20:26–29 see Thompson (1988), 75–6; van Belle (1998), 300–25; and Judge (2007), 339–42.

attains the theological heights of Thomas's declaration.[2] Raymond Brown represents many when he writes:

> The disciples who saw the risen Jesus, including the Thomas of xx 28 … penetrated beyond the startling appearance to believe that Jesus is Lord and God. John has recorded these appearances so that the reader who believes without seeing the risen Jesus may also come to this high point of faith.[3]

Despite this general consensus, commentators offer sparse theological evaluation of John 20:30–31. While much scholarship within the last fifty years has established a clear theological context in John for each of the three aspects of belief, most have only focused on one or two elements that appear in the conclusion. Few have given substantial treatment to the theological nature of the entire conclusion. The frequent, isolating focus on a particular word or concept risks tearing the delicate semantic weave of the Gospel with its complex interrelation of syntagms, words, and ideas.[4]

This chapter therefore strives to make a simple point in a simple way: recognizing God is the goal of belief, and I begin by showing how John links belief to God. While I affirm much of what previous scholarship has established regarding the theological freight of each aspect of belief in John 20:30–31, this Chapter offers a different tack: recognizing God in Jesus unites the purpose of the signs, Christological titles, and the concepts of "life" and "name." I am not primarily concerned with ongoing debates about *Religionsgeschichte* or with evaluating any single aspect of Johannine theology. Instead, this argument will lay a

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[2] Examples include Brown (1971), 2:1059; Barrett (1978), 573–74; Keener (2003), 2:1216. Thompson (2015), 430.

[3] Brown (1971), 2:1059.

[4] Many studies trace one element of John's conclusion across the Gospel such that 20:31 becomes another occurrence, however important, rather than a theological synthesis. The essays collected in Koester (2019) are typical in this regard even as they provide insightful analysis and chart the progression of specified studies regarding Jesus's titles. The many good books on the various aspects of the divine name also – perhaps unwittingly – emphasize stratification where John may favour unity of purpose. Thus, Ball (1996); Williams, (2000); Coutts (2017a; 2017b); and Riley (2019) all offer trenchant observations and Christological and theological conclusions but rarely indicate how John's varied allusions and uses of the divine name(s) intertwine and shape one another. However, Schnelle (1992), 136–8 is an exception. Hurtado (2003), 358–407 also provides a thorough treatment of the theological implications of 20:30–31. Surprisingly, Seglenieks (2020), 109 dismisses the role of God as the object of Johannine belief.

foundation for all that follows by seeking the most obvious, foregrounded places in the Gospel that allow "my Lord and my God" to emerge from John 20:30–31. I turn to each aspect of belief in Jesus in John 20:30–31 as if listening to the pulse of the Gospel to argue that recognizing God is at the heart of belief in Jesus, the formation – or cultivation – of which forms John's stated purpose.[5]

Signs as Acts of God

Understanding the relationship between the signs and the revelation of God entails a return to Thomas and a closer look at how John 20:30–31 flows from and expands John 20:26–29. One can begin by observing that σημεῖα can function as synecdoche for the life of Jesus in the Gospel. In John 20:19–29, Jesus twice appears and "stands among" (ἔστη εἰς τὸ μέσον) his disciples. He shows them the places of his wounds as indicative of his resurrection and, seemingly, to show continuity with his pre-resurrection self.[6] The wounds reveal the counterintuitive glory of the crucifixion (John 12:23) and thus evoke the glorious revelation inherent to all signs (John 2:11). After recounting these appearances, John notes that he has not written all the σημεῖα Jesus did in the presence of his disciples ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ (John 20:30). By his reference to the "many *other* signs" in "the presence of his disciples," John appears to be calling these post-resurrection appearances σημεῖα (John 20:30).

Two readings are available here. The first is that one may take John's reference to "this book" to refer to the entire Gospel rather than a hypothetical "Book of Signs." On this reading, σημεῖα refers not only to the post-resurrection appearances, but also to the preceding narratives of Jesus's life.[7] The second option is to read the σημεῖα in 20:30 only in reference

[5] See footnote 125 in the Introduction. For my purposes, regardless of whether one or both readings are evident, recognizing God remains the goal of belief.
[6] Moss (2017), 48–68 offers a helpful summary of ways in which the wounds indicate continuity.
[7] When John writes ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται in 20:31, ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ is undoubtedly implied. See examples of this common ending formula – in which the entire book is entailed – across the contemporary literature in Bultmann (1971), 697n2; Keener (2003), 2: 1214–15.

to the post-resurrection appearances. Nevertheless, reading them in light of those appearances still links Thomas's declaration "my Lord and my God" to belief in Jesus as "Christ" and "Son of God." Both readings show that John integrates the theological ramifications of Thomas's declaration with the σημεῖα. However, if one takes the broader reading, as I do, then the events of Jesus's entire life – his words and his works – tend toward the cultivation of belief in him as God. The entire narrative can contextualize their theological valence.

The σημεῖα themselves resist straightforward definitions. Scholars have laboured to count them, define their referents, and ascertain whether they encompass Jesus's entire life and work.[8] Based on passages like John 4:48, debate continues over whether John believes the σημεῖα can have a positive relationship to faith or whether they constitute a kind of negative example.[9] Others conclude that their purpose is symbolic: as literary devices they indicate truths about Jesus and his relationship to the Father but are ultimately ahistorical.[10] Equipped with an understanding of how the "signs" can operate as a summary of the Gospel and with Thomas's declaration in mind, one can – for the moment – lay these questions to the side. The guiding question here remains whether John links the σημεῖα to Jesus's divinity.

John offers two summaries that hint at the meaning of the signs. In the wine σημεῖον at Cana, Jesus "was manifesting his glory" (ἐcφανέρωσεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ), and the disciples believed (ἐπίστευσαν) in him (John 2:11). At the close of Jesus's ministry, John again summarizes the signs as revealing the same divine glory that Isaiah saw (John 12:41–43).[11] Both summaries identify σημεῖα as manifestations of God's glory that should cultivate belief

[8] The views range from only Jesus's resurrection appearances, as in O'Day (1995), 850–51, to Jesus's signs and resurrection appearances (Beasley-Murray (1999), 387) to only what the Evangelist calls "signs" – thus limiting Jesus's signs to the seventeen mentions of them spanning chapters 1–12, excepting John 20:30 (Schnackenburg, (1968), 3:337). Thompson's (2015), 429n46 summary is apt: "the diversity of views points up the ambiguity in the Johannine use of "signs."'
[9] Positive readings include Smith (1987), 177; Weder, (1996), 332–36; and Wang (2017), 151–76. Negative readings include Fortna (1988), 62–5; Schnackenburg (1968), 1:358; and Barrett (1978), 247.
[10] Examples include Dodd (1968) 143; Bultmann (1971), 118–21; (1955), 2:44–7; and Attridge (2019), 267–88.
[11] Brendsel (2014) and Williams (2014) offer some of the best analysis of Isaiah's vision and its relationship to John.

in Jesus as the one in whom God reveals himself.[12] The themes of glory and revelation find their root in the Prologue, where visible glory is the first result of the Logos's "tabernacling" (ἐσκήνωσεν) in flesh (σάρξ) among us: "we have seen his glory, glory as of the only one from the Father" (δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός). This glory of the visible λόγος, the one in exclusive proximity (μονογενοῦς, εἰς τὸν κόλπον) to the Father, is one way Jesus Christ has "exegeted" (ἐξηγήσατο) the God whom no one has ever seen (John 1:18). Taken in conjunction with the statements of John 2:11 and 12:41–43, Jesus's signs reveal this divine glory since they issue from Jesus's own proximity to God and make God known. The signs are ultimately from God, as is their glory. They manifest God in and through Jesus.[13]

The divine origins and revelation of the σημεῖα align with their use across the LXX. There, σημεῖον/σημεῖα appear where the MT employs אות/אותות – often in tandem with τέρατα (מופתים) as a translation of the "signs and wonders" God performs on behalf of Israel.[14] Σημεῖον also appears in accounts of what Thompson calls "indicators of God's work in the world" such as in the Passover lambs' blood (Exod 12:7); circumcision (Gen 17:11); and Noah's rainbow (Gen 9.12–13).[15] While Jesus's signs do at times echo God's אותות as in John 6:1–15, John also employs the σημεῖα to evoke the God of Israel as the author of Jesus's miracles. The signs cultivate belief in Jesus much as the signs God gave to Moses cultivated trust that God had sent Moses (Exod 4:8–9). They reveal Jesus's glory in physically visible

[12] On the relation between God's glory and Jesus's glory see Nielsen (2010), in which he strongly argues that the narrative structure of John associates Jesus's glory with God's and vice versa throughout the gospel. See also Pamment (1983): 12–16; Schnelle (1992), 80–81; Hurtado (2003), 374–81; and Bauckham (2015), 43–62.
[13] Bauckham (2015), 55–57 makes a similar argument. Bosman (2011) shows how signs were a means of determining divine evaluation in contemporary Graeco-Roman literature.
[14] In the LXX, see Exod 4:9, 17, 28, 30; 7:3; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 13:2; 26:8; 28:46; 29:2; 34:11; Isa 8:18; 20:3; Pss 77:43; 104:27; 134:9.
[15] Thompson (2015), 66. See also Peterson (2016), 371–97; and Keener (2003), 1:279.

ways that evoke unmistakable instances of God's work and glory.[16] To witness a sign is to witness God at work and even to see his glory (John 2:11).[17]

Jesus himself refers to the σημεῖα as his ἔργα, which originate from the Father.[18] Some scholars, Bultmann among them, have attempted to read Jesus's σημεῖα, ἔργα, and λόγοι as synonymous, but John does not allow for a clear interpretation either way.[19] Although the boundary between signs and works is imprecise, the signs appear to be particular instantiations of Jesus's works taken as a whole.[20] John *is* clear however, via his trademark repetition, that both Jesus's works and his signs do not originate in himself. Jesus affirms that he only does what the Father shows him (John 5:19, 30).[21] Because Jesus's works are from God, they witness to the fact that God has sent him (John 5:36). His works and his signs testify to his unity with the Father (John 5:18; 10:30) and achieve new creation – the bestowal of life in and for God – that Jesus came to give (John 10:10).[22] Thus, the "works of God" required of those who witness Jesus are "that you believe in him whom he has sent" (John 6:28–29). However one reads the connection between "signs" and "works," both follow a trajectory that originates in the Father and leads back to the Father by cultivating belief in Jesus. God authorizes and provides for everything Jesus does, which means that everything Jesus does can cultivate knowledge of God.

[16] Barrett (1978), 78 observes that "the miracles of Jesus, then, are not merely, as in the Synoptic Gospels, signs that the kingdom of God is at hand, but also clear indications that he by whom the signs are wrought is the Son of God and equal to God himself."
[17] Compare John 2:11 with Num 14:22, in which it is implied that the sight of God's glory occurs in the sight of his signs. See Nicol (1972), 114, 122 and Schnelle (1992), 81–2, 134–35.
[18] What John and "the Jews" call "signs" Jesus calls "works" (John 5:20, 36; 6:29; 7:3, 21; 9:3; 10:25, 32, 37; 14:10; 15:24; 17:4). On this overlap, see Barrett (1978), 75 and Schnackenburg (1968), 1:518–21. Bauckham (2006a), 215-21 describes the relationship of signs to first century Messianic expectations of works.
[19] Bultmann (1955), 2:70–74 collapsed "seeing" and "hearing;" "signs" and "words;" and "faith" and "knowledge" into the eschatological "now" of the kerygma.
[20] Brown (1971), 1:528 takes a similar stance.
[21] See also John 6:38; 7:16; 8:28; 9:3–4; 14:10–12; 15:24; 17:4; and Schnackenburg (1968), 1:519–20.
[22] Murray Rae (2008), 295–310 shows the relationship between creation and works across the Gospel.

Knowledge of God may therefore also be found in Jesus's words. Jesus is the λόγος made flesh; and the power of the λόγοι of the λόγος resound throughout the gospel.[23] Jesus's speech is from God (John 7:16a); and Jesus identifies the Father's command as stipulating his words (John 12:49). Like his works, Jesus's teaching originates in the Father, and often expounds the meaning of a sign. It affirms his proximity to the Father and challenges his hearers to believe that he came from God and will return to God – truths to which the glory of the signs attest. Jesus's words are also a vehicle of his God-given power since they initiate at least three of his signs.[24] The glory of these signs begins with speech from the lips of the visible Word, uniting speech and sign in aural and visual testimony of Jesus's work of revelation and bestowal of life. As Peter avows: "you have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68–69). One not only comes to know God through Jesus's words, but also through recognizing that the words themselves are from God and by witnessing their life-giving effects on the world.[25]

In short, the σημεῖα can and should elicit the response "my Lord and my God." They evoke God's past signs and wonders, his glory, the concrete visuality of the divine λόγος, and the potent speech of the λόγος. They also entail witnesses (ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν) and selectivity (ταῦτα δε γέγραπται).[26] *These* signs function as the Gospel's most explicit catalyst for belief or disbelief in the Father's sending of and presence in Jesus. *These* signs will constitute the disciple's words to future believers, as shown by the contents of this Gospel (John 17:20). As such, they present a concise theological summary of Jesus's life. They reinforce that God is the common origin and goal of the works and words that John has

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[23] John uses both ῥήματα and λόγοι to describe Jesus's speech. On the ability of Jesus's words to make God corporally known, see Forger (2020), 274–302.
[24] In response to his words, the son of the βασιλικός lives (John 4:48–53); a lame man walks (John 5:8–9); and Lazarus returns from death to walk out of his tomb (John 11:43).
[25] Koester (1989, 327–48; 2008, 47–74) describes the power of Jesus's words and emphasises the role of hearing in their reception. Chapter 5 of this thesis will respond to Koester's criticisms of sight.
[26] See van Belle (1998), 310.

chosen to portray.[27] Even before John names the content of belief in Jesus in John 20:31, his summary has already introduced recognition of God in Jesus's σημεῖα as the proper stimulus for such belief.[28]

The Christ the Son of God: God sent from God

The phrase "the Christ the Son of God" forms the content of belief in Jesus.[29] As with σημεῖα, a wealth of scholarship has examined the messianic roots of both titles, preferring in some cases to hunt for traces of Early Jewish or later Rabbinic messianisms and, in others, to compare the titles with Hellenistic concepts like the θείος ἀνήρ.[30] What is of interest here is not the provenance or pedigree of "Christ" or "Son of God" or of any other potentially messianic title in John such as "Prophet," "Son of Man," "King," "Lamb of God," or "Holy One of God." Instead, one may take Matthew Novenson's construal of messianism as a language game in a theological direction. For Novenson, "the grammar of messianism is the rules of the game: the way messiah language worked for the ancient authors who chose to use it, the discursive possibilities it opened up, as well as the discursive constraints it entailed."[31] In the "messianic language game" of the Fourth Gospel, John has woven theological meaning

[27] As Schnackenburg (1968), 1:521–22 observes.
[28] Nicol (1972), 115n52 notes: "the way in which John interpreted the miracles was also the way in which he interpreted the whole life, death and resurrection of Jesus. As with the miracles, John sought to see divine meaning in all the different aspects of the story of the earthly Jesus."
[29] For the appositional sense of ὁ χριστός and ὁ υἱος τοῦ θεοῦ, see Marcus (1989), 130, in which he suggests: "The two titles are in restrictive rather than non-restrictive apposition, so that the second qualifies the first … "Christ" is viewed as a member of a class which can be linguistically identified only through the modification supplied by the second, "the Son of God."" Based on "Messiah Son of X" formulas prevalent in Early Judaism, Marcus argues that only when it is taken in the restrictive sense does the claim to be "Messiah Son of God" become blasphemous. Novenson (2019) applies Marcus's argument to John in his account of Jesus as John's Messiah. Hurtado (2003), 359n18 observes that "in the religious "logic" of the New Testament text the honorific designations of Jesus are characteristically intended to be taken as functioning cumulatively to express Jesus' significance."
[30] On the strands of Messianism potentially represented across John see Novenson (2019) and de Jonge (1973). Bauckham, (2006a), 207–38 notes the role of σημεῖα in messianism. For a recent attempt to locate elements of the "Messianic secret" in John see Miller (2018).
[31] Novenson (2017), 14.

into the two titles of John 20:31. "My Lord and my God" echoes in "the Christ the Son of God."[32]

One can hear it by listening to John's seventeen χριστός statements, which occur in three basic categories: the confusions, challenges, and questions of "the Jews;"[33] statements from those who believe;[34] and editorial statements from John as well as Jesus's single use of the title.[35] Likewise, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ probably only occurs eight times.[36] A survey of both sets of occurrences must be cognizant of the fact that occurrence alone is not a failsafe method of establishing the meaning of either title. However, John has chosen these messianic titles for his summary, and the most straightforward theological links between John 20:30–31 and the Gospel will be most apparent in John's repetition. I begin with "the Jews."

Much of the Jewish confusion about Jesus's identity as "Christ" occurs during the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7). Initially, "the Jews" make the reasonable assumption that the "authorities" (ἄρχοντες) have not stopped Jesus from teaching in the temple during the feast because they know his true identity (John 7:26). Their assumption reveals implicit faith in the judgment of their leaders; and the issue of who is the rightful authority regarding Jesus's identity – Jesus and the Father or the Pharisees and Authorities – will continue to characterize the Gospel. Here the crowd dismisses Jesus as the Christ via the same logic the Pharisees use at the close of the chapter: appeals to the Christ's origins. At first the consensus appears to be that no one knows from where the Christ will come (John 7:27), although others soon claim that he must come from Bethlehem (John 7:41–42), a view the Pharisees may advocate in their rebuke of Nicodemus (John 7:52). Still others believe that Jesus is the Christ based on

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[32] Ashton (1991), 239–79, esp. 242 argues that in John "Christ" acquires a divine significance not original to it in Judaism. See also Hurtado (2003), 358–61.
[33] John 7:26; 7:27; 7:31; 7:40; 7:42; 10:24; 12:34
[34] John 1:20; 1:41; 3:28; 4:25; 4:29; 11:27
[35] John 1:17; 9:22; 17:3; 20:31
[36] John 1:49; 3:18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 19:7; 20:31. In John 1:34 the Baptist should be read as testifying to Jesus as the "Son of God." See Quek (2009), 22–34.

the number of his signs, although the degree to which they understand the signs is uncertain (John 7:31).[37] General uncertainty persists into Chapter 10, in which "the Jews" demand that Jesus tell them "plainly" (παρρησίᾳ) whether he is the Christ (John 10:24). Finally, they make a profoundly ironic appeal to the law ("the Christ remains forever") in response to Jesus's claim that he must be lifted up (John 12:34). In both appeals, "the Jews" remain unwilling to accept Jesus's account of himself as authoritative.

Jesus's responses reveal that a fundamental inability to know God underlies the inability to accept him as the Christ.[38] He does not correct the legitimacy of Messianic expectation; moreover, in response to the allegations regarding his origins, he declares: "you know me, and you know where I come from" (7:28a). However, "the Jews" have failed to recognize three critical facts: 1) "I have not come of my own accord"; 2) "He who sent me is true, and him you do not know"; 3) "I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me" (7:28b–29).[39] If "the Jews" knew God, they would be able to recognize Jesus as the Christ who comes from God before he comes from anywhere – or nowhere – else. Even for those who believe based on the *number* of his signs, Jesus's statements are a reminder that, however many or few, the signs first reveal that God himself works in the world.

Others, however, recognize Jesus to be the Christ because they believe that God has sent him. John the Baptist, Andrew, and Martha fall into this category. While the Baptist does not name Jesus as "the Christ," he denies that he himself is the Christ before directing his questioners to the yet unknown Jesus, which leaves little doubt as to whom he ascribes the

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[37] Their affirmation so alarms the Pharisees that they order Jesus to be arrested. This operation fails when their officers stop to listen to Jesus, and the Pharisees reprimand their troopers by appealing to themselves as the epistemological standard for knowing the law and correctly identifying the Christ (John 7:45–49). Against this standard, they can judge those who believe in Jesus as accursed for not "knowing the law" (John 7:49). The fact that Jesus has also accused the same crowd of not knowing the law (John 7:19) heightens the question of epistemological allegiance: does one side with the Pharisees or, ultimately, the one through whom God teaches (John 7:16).

[38] A theme John has already developed in exchanges with Jesus across Chapters 5–6 and which he further develops here. Note also John 5:37 and 6:46.

[39] See Jesus's proclamation in 7:16–19. His descriptions of himself as sent by God feature in almost every extended instance of his speech in the Gospel.

title (John 1:19–28). Although God has also sent John (John 1:33), he – the Baptist – is adamant regarding the supremacy of Jesus and Jesus's identity as the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29; 36), "the Son of God" (John 1:34) who "baptizes with the Holy Spirit" (John 1:33) and "takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).[40] The Baptist regards Jesus's origin and purpose as divine, but it is Andrew, who, after hearing John's testimony about Jesus and meeting Jesus himself, will declare to Peter: "we have found the Messiah" (John 1:35–41). While Andrew's understanding of Jesus as Christ will undoubtedly develop, his statement appears to be grounded in John's conviction that Jesus is from God.[41]

Martha's avowal of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world" (John 11:27) is remarkably like John 20:31. Her statement draws the titles together, thus associating the Christ with God. While commentators note that Martha's anxiety about the stench of Lazarus' body undercuts the strength of her belief (John 11:39), Jesus in no way corrects her use of either title. Indeed, the resurrection of Lazarus proves the identity Martha has expressed. This resurrection σημεῖον reveals God's glory (11:4, 40) and thereby confirms the belief that, as Jesus prays for the benefit of his hearers: "you [the Father] have sent me" (John 11:41–42).[42] Martha's declaration confirms Jesus's own understanding of himself even if she has not grasped its full import.[43]

In contrast to the incipient faith of Andrew and Martha, the Evangelist himself mentions Jesus as the Christ in three editorial statements, which associate "Christ" and "God."[44] In the first, John names the incarnate λόγος as Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (John 1:17) by way of contrast to and as fulfilment of Moses and the Law. Following his use of χριστός, he

[40] The Baptist's testimony in John 3:27–30 clarify his conviction that Jesus is the Christ, and he also calls Jesus "the Bridegroom." Likewise, if one reads John 3:31–36 as a continuation of John's speech, his understanding of Jesus as divinely ordained and commissioned by God becomes even more explicit.
[41] For the "focalizing" power of the Baptist's sight of Jesus and his words about him, see Williams (2016a), 46–60.
[42] On the signs as confirmations of particular frameworks of belief, see Koester (1989).
[43] See Thompson (2015), 245.
[44] John 1:17; 9:22; 20:31.

concludes the Prologue with the acknowledgement that although no one has ever seen the Father, the μονογενὴς θεὸς, who is in the Father's κόλπον, is the one who "exegetes" (ἐξηγήσατο) the Father. The λόγος who "was with God and was God" (John 1:1–2) is also Jesus Christ (John 1:17) and the μονογενὴς θεός (John 1:18). John thus yokes his concept of Christ to a divine identity and a divine revelation.

John's second statement notes that those who confessed Jesus as Christ would be put out of the synagogue (ἀποσυνάγωγος γένηται, John 9:22). Here, after his miraculous healing, the man born blind expresses his belief that Jesus came from God and is astonished that the Pharisees will not admit it (John 9:29–34). Following his refusal to recant, the Pharisees cast him out of the synagogue, a sign that they may interpret his belief that Jesus is "from God" to be tantamount to a confession of him as the Christ. John's third statement implies that only someone who did and said everything Jesus did and said could fulfil the category of Christ (John 20:31). The gospel narrative has defined the true "Christ," such that the full import of the name "Jesus Christ" in John 1:17 is most apparent in John 20:31 after the reader has witnessed the earthly life of the incarnate λόγος unfold. Taken alongside Jesus's account of his ἔργα and λόγοι as given to him by the Father, χριστός is first and foremost a category of divine revelation for John.

Jesus himself acknowledges that he is the Christ whom God has sent into the world. He endorses the Messianic expectations of the Samaritan Woman and appropriates the title for himself via the theologically charged Johannine ἐγώ εἰμι (4:25).[45] Neither does he dispute Martha's use of the title at Lazarus' tomb. In direct affirmation of the Prologue's first mention of "Jesus Christ" as the life-giving λόγος (1:12, 17), Jesus declares in prayer that "this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have

[45] See the section on "Life" and "Name" below.

sent" (17:3).[46] In striking resonance with John 20:30–31, eternal life is contingent on knowing God and his Revealer, the Christ. Any salvation that the Christ brings originates in God.

These occurrences of χριστός underscore the degree to which John establishes the divinity and revelation of the title in spatial terms. As the Christ, Jesus defies readily available categories of provenance and location.[47] He must be "lifted up," and he raises the dead. He reveals God because God has sent him as an incarnation of God. While Jesus acknowledges that the Father is "greater than I" (John 14:28), even the terms of subordination reveal proximity: Jesus returns to be with the Father because the Father is greater; but only Jesus can return to the site of his pre-existent glory at the greater Father's side (John 17:5).[48] Everything the Christ does is divinely ordained because the Christ is from God.

Son of God

Just as the Christ is "from God," so the Father sends the Son.[49] The second title – ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ – further establishes how John relates Jesus to God,[50] and it does so as a full expression of Jesus's consistent references to God as his Father and to himself as the Son.[51] Even though "Son of God" may seem to have obvious theological significance, my task remains to see

[46] Note the statement that follows: "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed" (John 17:4).

[47] Novenson (2017), 87 observes that John seems uninterested in providing Jesus with a Davidic lineage. Ashton (1991), 245 notes John's lack of interest in the Messiah theme and his focus on the relationship between Jesus and God.

[48] For the view that Jesus can be simultaneous equal with God and subordinate to him see Barrett (1978, 71; 1983, 19–36); Anderson (1996), 260–61; and Hurtado (2003), 392–96.

[49] Dodd (1953), 254 notes: "All through the gospel the Son of God is presented as one 'sent' by the Father. The verbs πέμπειν and ἀποστέλλειν, used apparently without any difference of meaning, occur in this connection over forty times in all parts of the gospel…We may therefore take it to be a regulative idea that the Son of God is He who is commissioned or delegated by God to mankind." See also Maloney (2017), 185–200.

[50] While "Son of Man" does not appear in John 20:30–31, John's use of it accentuates the theological dimensions of the "Son" language in John. On the apocalyptic associations, see Reynolds (2008; 2019). For the theological freight of "Son of Man" see also Dodd (1953), 241–49; Schnackenburg (1968), 1:529–42; and Ashton (1991), 337–68.

[51] By Thompson's (1999) count, "Father" appears 120 times. For the nature of the filial metaphor and the life of God see Van der Watt (2000), 161–392. By Maloney's (2017), 186 count, Jesus speaks of himself as "the Son" 20 times, with eight further references on the lips of others throughout the gospel.

how John shapes that significance. The title forms the basis of the three blasphemy charges against Jesus (John 5:18; 10:31; 19:7); Jesus refers to himself by it four times (3:18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4); and both Nathanael and Martha use it of him (John 1:49; 11:27). What emerges is that John deploys this title when he wants to underscore that which the relationship between Father and Son achieves and indicate how their identities are intertwined.

The charges of blasphemy against Jesus convey the theological potency of the title. The first arises from Jesus's assertion that he works when his Father is working, even if it is the Sabbath. For "the Jews," this claim implies equality (ἴσον) with God since only God can do legitimate work on the Sabbath (John 5:16–18).[52] In the second charge, "the Jews" accuse Jesus of blasphemy for making himself to be God after he claims to be "one" (ἕν) with the Father at the climax of the Good Shepherd discourse (10:33). Thirdly, the only specific allegation "the Jews" bring to Pilate is that Jesus has broken their law because "he has made himself the Son of God" (19:7).[53] The blasphemy charges equate being God's son and being "one" with God such that "Son of God" describes a unique confluence of identity between Jesus and the Father. While "the Jews" can claim that "we have one Father–even God" (8:41; cf. 11:52) and not count it as blasphemy, the connection between being Son and being "equal" or "one" with God drives the charges.

Jesus confirms this divine identity when he responds to the accusations in John 10:33. Via Psalm 82:6, he refutes the charge that "you, being a man, make yourself God" (John 10:33). Jesus clarifies that in the law, those to whom the word (λόγος) of God came were called gods (ἐγὼ εἶπα θεοί ἐστε) and adds that the Scriptures cannot be broken. A precedent exists – either for the existence of other gods or of men becoming gods – and it makes even

[52] See Ashton (1991), 137–40 on how Jesus's claim to be working associates him with the exclusively divine works of creation and judgement.
[53] This is seemingly the basis of their earlier claim that Jesus is "making evil (κακὸν ποιῶν)" (18:30). Loader (2017), 344 notes that "this is more than a false accusation about messianic claims…Pilate is filled with numinous fear."

more sense to understand Jesus as such a being if God has sent him into the world (10:35).[54] As the Sent Word, Jesus can rightly ask why calling himself "God's Son" is blasphemy. Both he and the Father give life (John 10:22–29) – they perform the same works – and this proves that the Father is "in" Jesus and vice-versa (10:37–38; cf. 14:9–11). If Jesus and the Father are "one" [55] – if they are "in" one another, and share each other's works – then Jesus is not blaspheming. He is simply also God, at least to the extent that he can claim "oneness" with the Father. Jesus's use of "Son of God" alongside Psalm 82 thus defends his identity as grounded in God regardless of how one understands the specific nature of their relationship.

Jesus's use of "Son of God" in John 10:36 therefore stands in thematic unity with his earlier claims to be God's Son (John 3:18; 5:17; 25). Such claims are based on his power to grant healing, life, and resurrection. In the first of these (John 3:16–18), belief in the "name of the only Son of God" (τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ) forestalls condemnation just as belief in the "Son" brings "eternal life." Three theological implications arise from Jesus's use of the title here. First, John's use of μονογενής emphasizes the exclusive relationship between Father and Son and recalls the reference to Jesus as μονογενὴς θεός in John 1:18.[56] Second, in John 3:16–17, God sends the Son, through whom (δι᾽ αὐτοῦ) the Father saves the world. Likewise, Jesus's works should be understood as being ἐν θεῷ (John 3:21). Third, belief in the Son (John 3:16) and in the name of the only Son of God (John 3:18) yields a salvation

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[54] John's challenging use of Psalm 82 and the baffling nature of the Psalm itself continue to exercise commentators regarding the precise nature of Jesus's relationship to God and Jewish understandings of monotheism. For Psalm 82 in Rabbinic exegesis see Kaminsky (2000), 15–43. For an application of Rabbinic exegesis of Psalm 82 to John 10:34, see Neyrey (1989): 647–663; and Ashton (1991), 147–50. For Psalm 82 in early Christian notions of theosis see Mosser (2005), 30–74. For the application of Patristic and Rabbinic concepts, *mutatis mutandis*, to John's use of Psalm 82 see Byers (2017), 187–99.

[55] While the neuter ἕν distinguishes between Jesus and the Father, it aligns their ability to prevent death, one that flows from the life each has "in himself." Brown (1971), 1:403 quotes Bengel as stating: "Through the word 'are' Sabellius is refuted; through the word 'one' so is Arius." See also Hurtado (2003), 374.

[56] On the basis of its links to the λόγος in the Prologue and the connection between the life-giving work of Jesus and the Father, Myers (2019), 154 argues that ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ implies an ontological equality between Jesus and the Father, especially in John 3:18 and 5:17. Of John 20:30–31, she consequently notes: "it is not the royal connotations of divine Sonship that occupy the majority of the Fourth Gospel's attention, but rather the ontological relationship between God and Jesus that explains his unique ability to give what he promises: eternal life."

originating in God and on a scale that only God can give. As the agent of salvation and the object of belief, the Son of God is sent by God *as* God, or at least with a power so profound that belief in him via his name functions like belief in God.[57]

Jesus's second use of "Son of God" in John 5:25 falls within the larger exchange of John 5:19–47, in which Jesus's numerous references to the Father and the Son serve to identify his life-giving work with God's. Here, Jesus's use of the full title "Son of God" occurs as a description of his role in the resurrection of the dead: "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (John 5:25). On Jesus's lips, the title summarizes the eschatological divine power and life (ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστιν) that he brings now and will bring later because the Father has given him divine life and divine authority (John 5:25–26). The Son of God possesses divinely-conferred life ἐν ἑαυτῷ, enabling him to achieve the divine work of resurrection. Fittingly, then, Jesus's final use of "Son of God" occurs within his summary of what Lazarus's sickness means.[58] Lazarus's illness "is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (John 11:4). As the Son of God who wields God's power to give life, Jesus glorifies God and thus glorifies himself.[59]

Finally, Nathanael (John 1:49) and Martha (John 11:27) are the only others who call Jesus the "Son of God." Nathanael's declaration is laced with messianic expectation,[60] and Martha does not perceive that the Son of God can bring resurrection at any time he chooses (cf. John 11:24). Jesus does not correct either of them in their attribution of the title, but he will dramatically expand their understanding of who the Son of God is through his signs and

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[57] Maloney (2017), 189 comments on John 3:16–21: "The choice of the title "the Son (of God) appears to be deliberately linked to those parts of the discourse which refer to the soteriological consequences of the incarnation. This is made even clearer in 5:19–26…"

[58] Jesus cries out with a loud voice (φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ἐκραύγασεν), at the sound of which, as he claimed in John 5:25, the dead man receives his life (John 11:44).

[59] Note Jesus's clear statement of the same in John 17:1–5.

[60] On Nathanael's insufficient confession, Maloney (2017), 192–93 comments: "for John the title demands a recognition of something more than the identification of Jesus with the Jewish messiah. It refers to his origin from God and his working in a continual union of love with God, his Father."

works. The last occurrence of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in John 20:31 implies – as it did with χριστός – that Jesus's entire life and work define what "Son of God" means: as God, he brings life.

"My Lord and my God" thus echoes across the occurrences of χριστός and ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in the sense that God is behind everything and in everything that Jesus does as the "Christ" and as "the Son."[61] While John does not, on his own, explicitly name Jesus as God,[62] the titles – read against John's narrative – show that Jesus, as God, reveals God to the world. One hears Thomas's declaration in "Christ" and "Son" as a cry of recognition that perceives God through the unsurpassed revelation that Jesus provides.

Life in His Name: God in Himself

In the last clause of the conclusion, John underscores what he has emphasized across the narrative: eternal life is the result of belief, the final cause of the Gospel (3:14–16, 36; 5:24, 28–29; 6:27, 40, 47; 7:38; 8:12, 51; 10:10; 11:25–26; 17:2–3).[63] God has "underwritten" the signs and the titles, but one fully encounters the Father and the Son in the life that belief yields. Belief leads to life, and Jesus's name will define that life. Thus, like the signs and titles, "life" and "name" are theological. A survey of both motifs will delineate how they draw the Father and the Son together as God and lead to conclusions about how belief participates in their relationship.

Debate may surround the nature of the dualism(s) operative in John's portrayal of eternal life, but the Father is unquestionably its source.[64] The Father's commandment is "eternal life" (12:50), and eternal life itself is knowing "you, the only true God, and Jesus

[61] Hurtado (2003), 362 likewise claims: "in GJohn, asserting Jesus' messiahship and divine sonship means much more than the claim that he is Israel's rightful king. The Johannine assertions that Jesus is "Christ" and "the Son (of God)" connote the belief that Jesus is in some intrinsic way also divine and of heavenly origin."
[62] Perhaps in a bid to lead the reader/hearer to make that confession for herself.
[63] By Thompson's (1989), 37 count, John uses ζωή 19 times, ζωή αἰώνιος 18 times, and ζάω 17 times. Like Thompson, Van der Watt (1989), 227 defends reading an implicit αἰώνιος in John 20:31 and across the book.
[64] The life Jesus gives operates at both physical and spiritual levels in the sense that Jesus restores physical life and, through his own physical death and resurrection, grants spiritual union with God as well as the promise of a future bodily resurrection (John 5:28–29; 11:25–26; 17:22–24; 20:17). For dualism and John's portrayal of life, see Dodd (1953), 144–50; Van der Watt (1985), 77–8; Thompson (1989), 39–42; and Ashton (1991), 214–19.

Christ whom you have sent" (17:3).[65] Life is thus a relationship with God, but it also characterizes the nature of the Father and thus extends his life – his way of being – to believers. The Father *is* life in the sense that he possesses life "in himself" (ἐν ἑαυτῷ) and thus allows Jesus to do the same (5:26). Jesus also refers to God as the "living Father," from whom Jesus's own life originates and whose life Jesus offers to believers (6:57).[66] Jesus brings God's life to the world (3:16; 6:33) where his works mirror the Father's ability to raise the physically and spiritually dead and give them life (5:19; 5:28–29; 11:25–26; 17:22–24; 20:17). Because of the Father's life, believers can become God's children through spiritual "birth" (1:12; 3:1–8). Across the Gospel, the Father remains the foundation of life, and life therefore characterizes both the Father and the "plane" on which believing relationships with him occur.

While life originates in the Father, Jesus is not merely a conduit of life from the Father to believers. Jesus also possesses life "in himself" (1:4; 5:27).[67] He is the "bread of life" (6:35, 51); the "resurrection and the life" (11:25); the "light of the world," who brings the "light of life" (8:12); and "the way the truth and the life" (14:6). Those who eat and drink of him will gain his life, which is also the Father's (6:53–57). Jesus also possesses the words of eternal life (6:68); and he lays down his life (ψυχή)[68] ἀπ᾽ἐμαυτοῦ and with ἐξουσία – yet in congruity with the Father's command – so that believers may have "life in abundance" (10:10–18). He gives eternal life because he and the Father "are one" (10:28–30).[69] Eternal

[65] Thompson (1989), 40 observes: "only those who know God, who live in fellowship with God and in harmony with the purposes of God, have eternal life, not because living in fellowship with God merits eternal life as a reward, but because fellowship with the eternal God is already to have a share in God's own life."
[66] On the life Jesus shares with the Father, see Thompson (1989, 39–42; 1999, 19–31; 2001, 57–100).
[67] Macaskill (2018), 237 argues that the divine life found in Jesus does not reduce Jesus to simply a mediator through which God, as the source of life, delivers life to humanity. Rather, "this property of the life that Jesus shares with others is understood to be a function of his own being, rather than simply a property that he mediates from another source (i.e., from a God considered *other*). He was, is, and will be the source of sustenance and satiety"
[68] On the relationship of ψυχή to ζωή αἰώνιος, see Thompson (1989), 38–9.
[69] The neuter points to a more "functional" role. But taken along the rest of the Gospel, that role has its base in ontological ability/nature. See note 57.

life not only entails knowing God but includes knowing Jesus Christ – who shared the Father's life and glory "before the world existed" (17:5; 1:1–4). Life not only binds the believer to Jesus and to God (6:57; 14:9), but it underscores the intimacy of the Father and the Son in the Godhead.[70] The life that Jesus possesses, gives, and manifests – in his ability to raise the dead and rise from death – unites him to the Father from whom all life comes.

The Name

No less is true of the divine name.[71] I have already cited four of the predicated "I am" statements, in which Jesus characterizes himself as being and bringing life while also aligning himself with the "I am he" of Isaiah 43 – the Lord who saves Israel.[72] However, before addressing the links between "life" and "name," I wish to sketch the theological potency of the name motif, which spans the Gospel via John's use of ἐγώ εἰμι,[73] κύριος,[74] and ὄνομα.[75] Key instances of each align Jesus with God and suggest that God's name transforms identities and communicates identity.[76] Even if one draws primarily from אני הוא/ἐγώ εἰμι in Isaiah 43:10, 25; 46:4[77] to characterize John's use of ἐγώ εἰμι, the correlation between "I am he" and "I am" is evident. Because the κύριος (YHWH) of Isaiah is God (Isa 43:3), he is the

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[70] The Spirit also participates in this unity (John 6:53).
[71] For a helpful overview of the name motif in John and in the Hebrew Bible see Hurtado (2003), 381–92. Note also the important research surrounding the "hypostatic," intermediary, and divine elements of the divine name in the Hebrew Bible and in the Early Jewish and Rabbinic literature. Examples include Segal (1977); Hayward (1981); Gieschen (1998); Boyarin, (2001); Attridge (2017); Schäfer (2020). Gieschen (esp. 2018; 2021) has argued strongly that the name points up Jesus's divinity in John.
[72] On Jesus's participation in God via the predicated and absolute ἐγώ εἰμι statements, see Thompson (1989), 41–44. Thompson further notes that all the predicated statements locate all earthly life, its origin and maintenance and health, in God, evoking a clear connection to the life-creating work of the λόγος in the Prologue. See also Williams (2000), 303. For the relationship of ἐγώ εἰμι to Isaiah 43–46, see Ball (1996), 24–42; and Williams (2000), 15-52. Note also that ἐγώ εἰμι, κύριος, and ὄνομα *all* occur in Isaiah 43 LXX in ways that John appears to evoke.
[73] Notable occurrences include the seven (occasionally repeated) predicated sayings (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:9, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1) and the key instances of the absolute form (John 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5–8).
[74] Riley (2019), 192–93 establishes fifty-one occurrences across John.
[75] Coutts (2017a), 2 counts twenty-five total occurrences, twelve of Jesus and eight of the Father.
[76] Hurtado (2003), 392 reminds that "Jesus" itself "derives from *Yeshua*…a compound from the Hebrew verb meaning to "deliver/save" (*yasha'*) and a shortened form of the divine name *Yahweh*…Matthew 1:21 confirms that in some early Christian circles with strong Jewish Christian influences this etymology was known and seen as highly meaningful."
[77] Macaskill (2018), 223–30 also notes Deut 32:39; Isa 45:8, 18–19, 22; 46:9; 51:12; 52:6. In Isa 43:3 LXX God is ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεός and אני יהוה אלהיך in the MT.

kind of being who redeems Israel: the "I am" is the "I am he," who delivers (43:10–25).[78] Jesus is the "I am" who walks on water (John 6:15–20), who existed before Abraham (John 8:58), and before whom the soldiers fall to the ground (John 18:4–8).[79] He is thus also the "I am," whose predicates all reveal him to be life. Moreover, he is the κύριος, whose resurrection reveals him to be the κύριος-YHWH (John 20:18, 20, 25, 28; cf. Isa 43:3, 15).[80] Jesus's relationship to God's name aligns his identity with God's.[81]

Ὄνομα functions within this matrix. Its ambiguities underscore the interchangeability or even parity with which John uses the Father's name, Jesus's name, and the Son himself. As Joshua Coutts has observed, 12:27–28 and 17:1 suggest that the "name" and the Son can receive equal glorification.[82] When the "hour" comes, Jesus prays that the Father will glorify the Father's name; and when he again announces that the hour has come, he asks the Father to glorify his Son (John 12:27–28; 17:1).[83] Glorifying the name can be glorifying the Son because Jesus summarizes his mission as revealing the name God gave to him (John 17:26). Jesus's manifestation of himself is a manifestation of the name, just as it is a manifestation of the divine glory (John 2:11) and of the Father himself (John 12:45; 14:9).[84] Jesus likewise performs his works in the Father's name as a witness to himself (John 10:25); and belief in

[78] Williams (2000), 303 takes a more "functional" view overall: "The Fourth Gospel therefore presents Jesus as the one in whom and through whom God speaks and acts, not in the sense that he presents himself as an independent divine being, but because his mission is to accomplish his Father's works." See Ball (1996), 15–16 on the importance of reading both the absolute and predicated statements alongside one another.
[79] Note a potential echo of the twice repeated ἐγώ εἰμι (Isa 43:25 LXX) in the repetition in John 18:5–8.
[80] Riley (2019), 189–94 argues that John consistently deploys κύριος in the sense of "sir" or "master" as an ironic twist to describe those who do not recognize that YHWH is before them and that only in the resurrection appearances is Jesus finally seen for what he is. Those who truly see Jesus as the Kyrios-YHWH can echo Isaiah's claim to have seen the Lord and his glory in Isa 6:1; John 12:41.
[81] Macaskill (2018), 226 notes: "the principle concern of the texts [Exod 3:14; Deut 32:39; Isa 43:10; 46:4–5; 48:12] is with divine identity: the status implications are derived from this."
[82] Coutts (2017a), 73–75. Coutts (2017b) has also emphasized the need for further discussion of how John uses the motif of the divine name to further his own theological concerns. See his overview of the many studies that have focused on history of religions background but have not yet answered "*why* the divine name is so prominent in the Fourth Gospel at all" (emphasis his).
[83] See Coutts (2017a), 71–76, where he also notes the nearly identical syntax of both statements: πάτερ, δόξασόν σου τὸ ὄνομα (12:28) and πάτερ, … δόξασόν σου τὸν υἱόν (17:1). Coutts further observes that the lack of a specified object in 12:28 may underscore the ambiguous relationship between "name" and "Son." See also John 13:31–32.
[84] Regarding the wine at Cana and the glory of the signs in general, Bultmann (1971), 119 observes that Jesus's "revelation of his δόξα is nothing more nor less than his revelation of the ὄνομα of the Father (17.6)."

the name of the Son yields eternal life (1:12; 3:18). He prays that the disciples, hitherto "kept" (τήρησον) in his name, which the Father gave him, might now be "kept" in the name of the Father (17:11-12), to whom Jesus's name grants access in prayer (14:13–14; 15:16; 16:23, 26).[85] Whichever form of the divine name John has in mind, it identifies its bearer(s) either as God or as being in such intimate proximity to him that his name can define them.[86]

Such is the case in John 20:31. Believers will experience the life that comes from the Father and from Jesus, both of whom are God and possess life in themselves (1:1–4; 5:26; 11:25; 14:6). This life occurs in Jesus's name, which the Gospel reveals to be the name of God, and which Jesus has manifested alongside God's glory and visibility. Jesus's name can achieve everything the Father's name achieves; and believers may enter the divine life and the relationality with God that living in Jesus's name provides. "My Lord and my God" therefore echoes in "life in his name" with unparalleled intensity. The Gospel's "final cause" is its most theologically explicit element and thus its most radical Christological tenet.

Conclusion

The theological import of John's conclusion is clear. Jesus's signs, works, and words derive from God even as they point to his revelation in Jesus's incarnate life. The Christological titles indicate Jesus's divine identity and affiliation; and the intertwined themes of "life" and "name" reveal the profound intimacy that the Father and the Son both enjoy and extend to humanity. John has tailored each element of belief; together they can elicit "My Lord and my God" from the reader with the same fervour that the sight of the risen Christ awoke in

[85] Fossum (1995) aligns the Hebrew Bible's depiction of God's name residing in the temple (e.g. Ezek. 43:7 LXX) with John's portrayal of Jesus as the one who tabernacles on earth, whose body is the temple, and who reveals God's name such that "according to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus the final dwelling-place of the Name of God." Hurtado (2003), 366, 381–92 follows Fossum when he reads John as emphasizing Jesus's divinity via the divine name rather than with Wisdom. The evidence certainly undergirds this position.
[86] See Coutts (2017a), 121–62.

Thomas. The signs, titles, and "life in the name" suggest that knowing and experiencing God are both the catalysts for and the goals of belief and thus shape the Gospel's purpose.

Such a claim constitutes a necessary first step in advancing the argument that seeing God is necessary for belief in Jesus. If seeing God is essential for belief, one must consider how one comes to know God and evaluate the role of sight in that process. Two substantial challenges arise here. The first is that God appears to be invisible. John declares that no one has ever seen God (John 1:18; 6:46); and Jesus denies that "the Jews" have heard God's voice or seen God's form (John 5:36). The second challenge suggests that even if God is visible, his visibility possesses little import since John may be critical of physical seeing as a valid means of acquiring belief. Jesus does not entrust himself to those who see his signs and believe (John 2:23–25); he seems to criticize the need to see "signs and wonders" (John 4:48): and he blesses those who have not seen but believe (John 20:29). The next three chapters turn to the first of these questions, arguing that God is directly available to empirical vision in and through Jesus's body. They will lay a foundation for answers to the second challenge by showing that divine transcendence can be physically visible.

CHAPTER 2: DIVINE VISIBILITY

The idea of the invisibility of God is by no means so obvious as one might assume.

— Rudolf Bultmann (1971), 81

John 1:18a has enjoyed a long history as a star witness in theological accounts of divine transcendence.[1] For many early Christians, θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε suggests that the human inability to see God is descriptive of God's invisible nature and thus invokes the metaphysical distinction between the worlds of being and becoming in Platonism. The phrase "no one has ever seen" becomes synonymous with the implications of the adjective ἀόρατος in the Platonist construal of reality. In this context, ἀόρατος often forms a constellation with many other alpha-privatives to describe God as ἀθάνατος and ἀσώματος and thus incapable of change and decay.[2] Visibility and invisibility become the hallmarks of a hierarchy of being: the material human world and the rarefied noetic realm of an immaterial Creator.

While the theologies of Early Judaism admit of similar understandings of divine invisibility, they also suggest that a distinction exists between "invisible" and "unseen."[3] Here I take "invisibility" to mean what I have described above: that God is invisible in his being and thus necessarily invisible to empirical sense. The Jewish authors for whom the notion of "invisibility" manifests itself most prominently are – potentially – Aristobulus

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[1] Origen, *Princ*. 1; Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 3.18–19, Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 11.209–214.

[2] For instance, ἀόρατος (invisible), ἀσώματος (incorporeal), ἀειδῆ (without form), ἄρρετος (ineffable), and ἀδέκαστος (incorruptible) often occur in various combinations across Philo's corpus, as Frick (1999), 40 notes. Pseudo-Aristotle [*Mund.*] 399b11–22; Plutarch, *E ap. Delph.* 392E–393D; Alcinous, *Epit.*10; Numenius, Frags. 4a–b and 16; Apuleius, *Dogm. Plat.* 1.5–191; Philo, *Opif., passim*; Josephus, *B.J.* 7.341–357; Aristides, *Apol.* 1; Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol*. 13–14; Tatian, *Or. Graec.* 4.3; Athenagoras, *Leg.* 10.1; and Theophilus of Antioch, *Autol.* 1.3–5 all take time to explain the worlds of being and becoming and situate divine transcendence according to them. Each of these authors use alpha-privatives to do so, ἀόρατος often foremost among them. Note also that seemingly in opposition to this apophatic view, Justin Martyr claims that the Jews think God has a body (*Dial.* 114). For Clement of Alexandria see Hägg (2006) 153–79, esp. 159. Examples of ἀόρατος in the NT include Rom 1:20 (τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθοράται); Col 1:15 (τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου); 1 Tim 1:17 (ἀφθάρτῳ ἀοράτῳ μόνῳ θεῷ) and 6:16 (ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν, φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπόσιτον); Heb 11:27 (τὸν γὰρ ἀόρατον ὡς ὁρῶν ἐκαρτέρησεν). Many instances exist across the Nag Hammadi literature, e.g., Tri. Trac. 59, 66; Apoc. Adam 2:3.

[3] For this distinction see also Malone (2007) 311–29 and Wilson (2019), 353–70.

(*Praep. ev.* 8.9.38–8.10.17),[4] Sib. Or. (1–3), Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 2.17, 23; *B.J.* 7.341–357), and Philo (*Opif.* and across his oeuvre).[5] These authors entertain notions of the worlds of being and becoming like those of some early Christians and Middle Platonist philosophers.

By contrast, I take "unseen" to refer to the challenge that God's majesty and holiness pose to human seeing rather than to his intrinsically invisible nature. "Unseen" therefore characterizes God as difficult to see because his visibility is so overpowering that it endangers mortal life.[6] Here, the Hebrew Bible[7] and LXX[8] stand alongside a variety of deuterocanonical sources,[9] early Christian literature,[10] Rabbinic texts,[11] and the Merkabah and Shiur Koma mysticisms[12] in its portrayal of a visible God. Access to God differs across

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[4] Aristobulus describes a God who descends and makes himself manifest at Sinai even as he emphasises the metaphorical nature of God's limbs. Giulea (2011) thus characterizes him as not belonging to the noetic turn in Judaism, which Giulea finds to properly begin with Philo.

[5] Further attestation to Hellenistic Jewish conceptions of God that may suggest immateriality are found in Strabo and Tacitus. See Stern (1976–1984). For Strabo see excerpt 115 and for Tacitus see excerpt 281. Regarding Tacitus, who says that the Jews conceive of one God with the mind only, it is important to recall that prohibition of images is not synonymous with an intrinsic invisibility. In *Cels*. 1.5, Numenius is quoted as attributing a view like Tacitus's to the Jews.

[6] See Sommer's (2009), 1–10 emphasis on this point regarding the Hebrew Bible's depiction of God.

[7] Prominent examples include: Abraham (Gen 18:1); Hagar (Gen 16:13); Jacob (Gen 32:30); Moses (Exod 33:11, 20; 34:5–6; Num 12:6–8; Deut 34:10); Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, the seventy elders (Exod 24:9–11); Gideon (6:22; cf. 2:1); Manoah and his wife (Judge 13:22–23); Micaiah (1 Kgs 22:19); Amos (9:1); Isaiah (Isa 6:5); Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1–28); Job (Job 42:5); and Daniel (Dan 7:9–10).

[8] While some scholars might see signs of a philosophical construal of transcendence behind Exod 24:9–11 LXX, the translators more frequently emphasize the sight of God in the Pentateuch. Genesis 16:13; 22:13; 31:13; and Exod 25:8 LXX clarify that someone did see God or introduce the concept where the Hebrew *vorlage* may not have. Likewise, the priestly blessing (Num 6:24–27) becomes a plea for an epiphany in which God will manifest (ἐπιφάναι) his face. As Hayward (2004), 390–92 notes, something like this comes to pass after the blessing in Lev 9:22–24 in both the MT and LXX: the glory of the Lord appears.

[9] Prominent Examples include *1 En.* 14:15–25; 46–48, 62, 71; *2 En.* 22:1–2; 39:4, 8; *3 En.* 22B:5–6; *T. Levi* 3–5. Across the Apocalyptic literature narrators balk at describing God once their protagonist attains the final level of heaven; but the sense is that an overwhelmingly and physically manifest visibility—one beyond description—is present. Such overwhelming physical visibility cuts against the otherwise complementary account in Philo of the soul's noetic ascent to a spiritually radiant God. Williams (2016c, 79–98; 2016b, 135–50) and Reynolds (2017) locate John's depiction of seeing God in relation to the apocalyptic literature.

[10] For early Christian literature see Rev 4:1–11; *T. Isaac* 6.27–28; *T. Jac.* 2.14–18; *Apoc. Sedr.* 2.3–5. See also Markschies (2016, ET=2019).

[11] As Neis (2013) has shown, cultivating the sight of God after the destruction of the temple was especially important to the Tannaim. Primary texts she cites regarding the sight of God include Mek. 1–2, 9; Gen. Rab. 65:0, 86:5; b. Sotah 30b–31a; m. Hag. 1.1–2l; Sipre Deut 143. See also Lorberbaum's (2015), 15–45, esp. 35 detailed denial of Maimonides's claim that "the doctrine of God's corporeality never occurred to the sages, may their memory be blessed, for even a single day" (*Guide for the Perplexed*, 1.46).

[12] The Hekhalot (palaces/temples) literature overlaps with Merkabah (chariot mysticism and Shiur Koma (measure of the stature) literature as Rabbinic ("mainstream" or otherwise) reflections on seeing God and measuring God's body. These texts are aware of the danger of seeing God, but this is due to an overwhelming visibility. Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009) present helpful analysis of this literature. Primary texts they adduce regarding the Hekhalot and Merkabah include HekhZ and HekhR while SKoma 47–63; SShiur 23–30;

these texts and seeing him remains difficult to achieve and highly dangerous. However, whether in the visions of mysticism – which nonetheless have substantial physical effects – or in the concrete experience of theophany or apocalyptic journey, God remains overwhelmingly visible: he is too glorious and too bright to see fully. Human flesh cowers in his presence because of its sinful and less powerful nature rather than its failure to be immaterial. Rather than an absolute immateriality or invisibility, God's holiness, power, and size appear to distinguish him from humanity.[13] The literature of Early Judaism does not therefore present a decisive background or set of parallels that support reading Platonist notions of invisibility in John 1:18.[14]

Whatever the case, Johannine scholarship rarely makes the distinction between "invisible" and "unseen." Many have relied on older, now problematic understandings of Israelite religion and Early Judaism as "aniconic," in which it is "classically Jewish" to understand God as invisible; but this view fails to comport with the visuality of the theophanies across the Hebrew Bible and other Early Jewish texts.[15] Others have assumed that because John is Hellenized, he must consider God to be invisible, such that the phrase "no one has ever seen" describes God's invisible nature in a way that has close parallels with a Platonist understanding.[16] One striking example is the recent proposal that Jesus can

SRaziel 88–117; SidRBer 48–66; and MerkR 21–26 include measurements of the body of the Kavod on the throne and lists of secret names.

[13] Even the Platonist authors describe the noetic realms in highly visual terms. The eyes of the soul perceive reality in the forms of colours, shapes, places, and light. See, e.g., Plutarch, *De gen. soc.* 590A–592F and Philo, *Opif.* 69–71. In Plato, *Tim.* 29A–32D; *Resp.* 10 595A–598D and Philo, *Opif.* 16–17 this world is somehow a copy or image of an invisible realm.

[14] John may have had as much access to the Greek materialists as he did to the Middle Platonists. See Engberg-Pedersen (2017), but see also King (2020), in which King finds Epicureanism to be incompatible with John. It remains difficult to associate John with any one school. Thom (2012; 2020) distinguishes popular philosophy from the schools in the contemporary literature.

[15] Commentators who take aniconism for granted include Schnackenburg (1968), 1:278 and Michaels (2010), 91. Uehlinger (2019) represents one of several recent challenges to such assumptions.

[16] Examples include Dodd (1953), 72; Schnackenburg (1968), 1:278; Korteweg, (1979), 59; van Kooten (2005), 156–57; Coutsoumpos (2017), 440. Behr (2019) likewise integrates many of the tenets of Classical Theism. In theology, one can also take note of the resurgence of "invisibility" as a divine attribute in Sonderegger (2015), esp. 49–131. As I showed in the Introduction, McFarland (2019) frames Chalcedonian orthodoxy in terms of invisibility and draws heavily on John to do so.

manifest the kyrios-YHWH of Hebrew Scripture but not the transcendent and invisible God and Father of Hellenized Judaism.[17]

By contrast, several John scholars assert that John 1:18 – and John's general conception of God and of sight – have little to do with Platonist metaphysics.[18] John never describes the worlds of being and becoming in Platonist terms, and he never uses alpha-privatives to describe God's ontology. Likewise, John 1:18 does not describe God; rather, it describes human inability to see him.[19] John may deploy "prepositional metaphysics" to distinguish the Son from the Father, but he appears unconcerned to establish Platonist notions of transcendence.[20] For instance, in John 12:28, God speaks with an audible voice from heaven, thus revealing a disregard for, or even an ignorance of, metaphysics. A Platonist reading is not, therefore, the only way to understand John 1:18, although this does not negate the possibility of Platonist or even Stoic elements. John was a Hellenized Jew; yet he remained free to accept, reject, modify, or ignore the worldviews of his time, and his portrayal of Jesus indicates someone who knew his own mind.

Here one must recognize two further truths. The first is that the distinction I make between "invisible" and "unseen" is not always clear in the primary texts. Some authors have enlisted the language of "invisibility" and incorporeality to describe a God whom they simultaneously depict as available to human vision.[21] Aspects of "invisible" and "unseen"

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[17] Leonhard-Balzer (2022) assumes that John 1:18 can only describe a divine transcendence that is intrinsically invisible in a way that precludes God's visibility in Jesus. Based on a problematic distinction between θεός and πατήρ, she argues that John 1:14 refers to the visibility of the "Jewish God" rather than the "transcendent God." Here, she follows Roukema (2006). Roukema also appears to assume that transcendence entails invisibility.
[18] Bultmann (1930; 1971), 80–81; Keener (2003), 1:406–407, 423; Thompson (2001), 105; Olsson (1999), 158–70.
[19] Hirsch-Luipold (2017), 27–32 acknowledges this even as he dismisses it.
[20] After arguing that prepositional metaphysics aid Paul and John in distinguishing members of the godhead, Kugler (2020), 214–25 claims: "there is no evidence in the Gospel of John, Paul's letters or the letter to the Hebrews that the early Christians included Jesus within their doctrine of creation so as to safeguard the transcendence of God the father, as though the latter's superior ontology required a safe distance from the material *kosmos*." Atkins (2020) also comments on the prepositional metaphysics of the prologue.
[21] *Apoc. Ab.* 16–19 provides a good example of overlap between "invisible" and "unseen." The Slavonic seems to have picked up the Greek alpha privatives like "invisible," "incorporeal," "incorruptible," "immortal," and "ungenerated" to describe a God who is also overwhelmingly visual and bright. God can be seen coming (16:3) but in a great sound (16:3), which is also fire (17:1); and Abraham is not allowed to look on God himself (16:4),

appear to merge in some accounts, however philosophically inconsistent such an overlap may be. From Philo onwards, some Jews and then many early Christians reconciled an overwhelmingly visible God with an overwhelmingly invisible one.[22] Different linguistic and philosophical modes of thought have come to describe the same God; and I make the distinction between "invisible" and "unseen" not to categorize John as being on one side of a Platonist divide but in order to underscore the nuance that must attend any attempt to understand what John means by seeing or not seeing God. John's Gospel likely exists in a theological space in which "unseen" and "invisible" have begun to coincide rather than rigidly demarcate one view of God from another. Furthermore, the incarnation is pushing John into new understandings of what sight and invisibility can mean.

The second, related truth is the basic but important observation that Ancient Near Eastern, Israelite, and Greco-Roman religion share a goal with Platonism, Christianity, Early Judaism, and the Rabbis: each hopes to achieve and/or maintain the vision of their god(s).[23]

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but seemingly because God is overwhelming bright (17:19; 18:13). Abraham needs Iaoel's help to bear the sight. Angels are described as invisible and incorporeal, yet their bodies also receive description (11:2–4), as does the heavenly chariot (18:13). On this theophany, see Orlov (2013), 46–53. *T. Ab.* 4:9–11 is also contradictory in Recension A. Angels are incorporeal, but Michael is visible as a man; however, he requires permission from God to eat and not "give away" his identity as incorporeal, so God sends a devouring spirit to keep up appearances. God himself is the "unseen Father" (16:3), although entities can stand in his presence. See also Ezek. Trag. 68–76, which describes God as a man seated on a throne atop Mt. Sinai and then describes Moses as unable to see God in the fire, even though Moses can perceive his shining words (96–103). Van Ruiten (2006) thus appears to neglect lines 68–76 when he claims that God is invisible in Ezek. Trag. in ways that he is not in Exod 3:6. In *Apoc. Mos.* 35:3 God is ἀόρατος; but in 37:4 he is sitting on a throne and stretching out a hand to receive Adam.

[22] For the "noetic shift" in Philo and its complexity, see Giulea (2011), 23–57; Mackie (2009; 2012); and Forger (2018). Both Giulea and Mackie are right to note that not even in Clement of Alexandria or in Philo is it clear that the noetic realm is perfectly immaterial or that seeing God lacks some level of materiality. It has effects on the body, and Philo cannot resist describing it in some physical terms via "light." While Philo has embraced Platonism, his own portrayal of God falls somewhere between "invisible" and "unseen," even if it is much closer to "invisible." Forger argues that God could unite himself with bodies, even according to Philo, via νοῦς; but this is a common feature of Middle Platonism and hard to reconcile fully with the notion of a corporeal God as described in Judaism. See Boy-Stones (2018), 253–55, 276 on the (very sheer) materiality of the soul as a vehicle for νοῦς in Middle Platonism. God himself remains immaterial, but the best means for mortal apprehension of him remains partially material.

[23] For the sake of space, I list recent monographs that include physical proximity to god(s) and seeing god(s) as being at the heart of the religions and philosophies I mention above. For Ancient Near Eastern approaches to the physical presence of gods among humans and theological anthropology, see Putthoff (2020) and Dick (2005). On the nature and importance of theophany in Israel, see Sommer (2009); Hamori (2008; 2010); Smith (2001; 2016). On the nature and cultivation of epiphany in Greco-Roman polytheism, see Platt (2011) and Petridou (2016). For the sight of the forms and, potentially, of God as the goal of Platonism, see Boy-Stones (2018), 367–75. For seeing God in the New Testament see Wilson (2019; 2021) and Heath (2013). For an account of

The question is not so much whether seeing God is possible or good, but how and when one can achieve it and to what degree. This "how" varies. It depends on the "what" and "who" of the god(s) in question and how they reveal themselves. It also depends on the "what" and "who" of human beings in relationship to deity and on the epistemologies their theologies delimit.[24] Thus, the distinction between "invisible" and "unseen" operates within a broader religious trajectory in which nearly all the religions and philosophical schools closest to Christianity participate, albeit in complex and widely divergent ways.

In this Chapter, I therefore read John 1:18 against the backdrop of the ancient endeavour to see God. However, while I follow those who do not assume that John's God is invisible in the sense I have defined it, I also recognize that the only sight of God that John permits is via Jesus.[25] I will therefore argue that one must read John 1:18 within the wider context of John, such that even though the Gospel limits the sight of God to Jesus, Jesus's body need not restrict the fullness of God's visibility within it – even if that visibility is not obvious. Two features of the Gospel lead me to make such a claim. The first is that John describes Jesus as presenting the sight of God (John 12:45; 14:9; 20:28–29). The second is that John suggests that Jesus himself appeared in the theophanies. Read alongside both, the claim in John 1:18 becomes one of degree and not of category; its meaning draws closer to "no one has ever [fully] seen God [yet]".[26] I make this argument by reading John 1:18 first in its immediate context and then alongside the other "seeing God" passages, especially 12:45 and 14:9. From there, I ask how John understands the nature of Jesus's pre-existence and of

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Neo-Platonist and Patristic approaches to the beatific vision, see Boersma (2018). For the sight of God in Early Judaism see Mackie (2009; 2012); Williams (2016b; 2016c). and Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009). For seeing God in the Rabbis, see Neis (2013), 41–81 and Lorberbaum (2015), 15–45. See also Wolfson (1994) and Goodman (2007).

[24] For the variegated ways one may "see" God see the above works and also the essays collected in Pettis, ed. (2013); Arnhold, Maier, and Rüpke, eds. (2018).

[25] As noted in Thompson (1993, 177–204; 2001, 101–43).

[26] For a related argument, see Filtvedt (2016; 2017). In both articles, Filtvedt argues that God has visually revealed himself in Jesus in unprecedented ways: "1,18 is not meant to negate or limit the degree to which God is seen in Christ, but only apart from Jesus" (2017, 99).

divine visibility in the theophanies by turning to John's use of Isaiah (John 12:37–43). I then return to the syntax of 1:18a before offering conclusions about the sight of God that Jesus presents – even if one insists on reading 1:18 as a blanket statement regarding the direct sight of God for all time.

The Context and Challenges of John 1:18

Scholarship often links the concept of seeing God in John 1:18 to the comparison that John draws between Jesus and Moses in 1:16–18. The law "was given through Moses"; "grace and truth" have been given through Jesus Christ (1:17).[27] Thus, "no one has ever seen God," but Jesus – the only God – has made him known (1:18).[28] At Sinai, seeing the fullness of God's glory would have killed Moses, but Jesus has "exegeted" the Father and comes from his κόλπος (1:18). While John 1:18 fails to mention that Jesus sees God, most studies of sight in 1:18 argue that the reference to not seeing is meant to elevate Jesus above any figure to whom later tradition or even the Torah has granted the vision of God. Jesus must therefore be able to see God in ways that Moses could not, and Jesus thereby excels him. The context of John 1:18 thus suggests that the sight of God is possible: Jesus has attained it. Moreover, as a means of underscoring Jesus's epistemic authority, John will state that Jesus has seen God (John 6:46; cf. 3:11–13; 5:19; 8:38). What is less certain is whether Jesus's ability to see God can become available to humanity.[29]

One can begin to answer this question by noting that the distinction between Moses and Jesus also turns on the ability to make God visible. John understands Jesus to make God visible in the incarnation. In John 1:14, the Logos became "flesh" and "tabernacled among us." The first thing John chooses to say of this act is "we have seen his glory, glory as of the

[27] For a summary of what continues to be a consensus see Hanson (1976), 90–101.
[28] Most commentators agree that the external evidence is in favour of "only God." See Fennema (1985), 124–35; Burkholder (2012), 64–83; and Coutsoumpos (2017), 435–446.
[29] Thompson (2007), 218 qualifies how directly God is available to human sight in Jesus.

unique one of the Father." "Tabernacling" in flesh appears to result in visible glory (cf. Exod 40:34–38 LXX). As the Logos, who is God (1:1), and who comes from the Father's κόλπος Jesus can "exegete" the Father (1:18). Jesus makes the kind of relationship he had with the Father available between humanity, himself, and the Father.[30] Such "exegesis" and intimacy are the result of becoming visible σάρξ and the achievement of works on earth, by which Jesus makes God known through his body and person.

John also joins seeing the divine glory of Jesus's signs to seeing the Father in Jesus. In John 12:45 and 14:9, Jesus claims that to see him is to see the Father; and he makes both statements during the hour of his glorification (John 12:23) and in the context of commentary on his signs, works, and glory (John 12:37–43; 14:11).[31] The Father himself is visible in Jesus; and the timing of Jesus's claims suggests that both the Father and his glory become especially visible during his crucifixion and resurrection. While the sight is restricted to Jesus, John makes no qualifications about the fullness of that vision.[32] Furthermore, he uses the same perfect form of ὁράω (ἑώρακεν), to deny the sight of God (John 1:18); to refer to Jesus's own sight of the Father (John 6:46); to describe the sight of Jesus as the Father (John 14:9); and to describe Thomas's sight of Jesus as God (John 20:29). He thus deploys the most theologically and even philosophically suggestive verb available to situate the sight of God in

[30] The Beloved Disciple reclines on Jesus's κόλπος (John 13:23), and the Farewell Discourse will essentially explain what that means.
[31] Even Roukema (2006), 218–23, who identifies Jesus with the Kyrios-YHWH of OT theophany and the Father with the invisible "Most High God" admits – on the basis of John 12:45 and 14:9 – that "in spite of God's essential invisibility, it appears to be possible to see God, that is, to see him in the person of Jesus, in whom the Logos and *Kyrios* was incarnated." If this is true, then Roukema must further admit that the Father's invisibility is not "essential." By the conclusion of his essay, he acknowledges that, despite their distinguishing characteristics – among which he has included invisibility – "God the Father" and "Jesus the Kyrios" possess a fundamental unity; but this ultimately suggests that an intrinsic or essential invisibility could not be one of those characteristics.
[32] Weder (1996), 331 notes that "there is no remnant concealed in God that would not encounter the world in the Logos. This means, further, that it is not merely a particular aspect or part of God that has become flesh in the incarnation." Filtvedt (2017), 94 makes a similar point.

Jesus.[33] The "journey" of ὁράω across the Fourth Gospel mirrors the journey of belief itself: from a lack of the sight of God to a complete recognition of him in the risen Christ.

With regard to the Platonist understanding of "invisible," one may further note here that whether John assumes a Platonist metaphysics or not, he takes no pains in John 12:45 or 14:9 to explain how the sight of God in Jesus comports with Platonism's metaphysical constraints.[34] He does not distinguish noetic from physical seeing.[35] He does not outline a theory of symbolism in which the Father can remain invisible and transcendent in Heaven but can somehow be "seen" in Jesus. Rather, Jesus brings the divine and human together: seeing Jesus *is* seeing the Father. John never qualifies the presence of God in Jesus as being opposed to Jesus's flesh even if seeing God in Jesus requires more than what unaided mortals can achieve (cf. John 3:6; 6:63). For instance, Jesus does not correct Thomas for declaring "my Lord and my God" (Jn 20:28–29). Regardless of whether one reads Thomas's seeing as problematic, Jesus himself characterizes "My Lord and my God" as belief that results from seeing his own body: "put your finger here and see my hands…you have believed because you have seen" (John 20:27, 29). However John understands the ontological relationship of God to Jesus's body, he is clear that Jesus makes God visible in and through it.

Yet if one returns to the earlier distinction between Jesus and Moses, the challenging fact remains that Moses and the Law also made God visible. They provided the holy places and legislation by which God could be seen and his physical presence realized in Israel's midst (e.g., Exod 25:8; 34:39 LXX).[36] John knows this just as he knows the theophanies that

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[33] On seeing verbs in John see Cullmann (1950); Philips (1957), 83–96; Traets (1967); Hergenröder (1996), 45–214. The consistency of ὁράω to describe the sight of God in John should be read alongside its long association with perceiving divinity. Note this association in Michaelis (1967).

[34] Compared to Philo of Alexandria's laborious distinctions in the case of theophanies, John makes no effort to qualify what he means. See, e.g., *Leg*. 3.7–10, 51, 100–101; *Abr*. 114–32, 142–46; *Mos*. 1.158–59

[35] While many of the authors I have cited attempt to find such a distinction in John's choice of verbs, with the important exception of Cullmann (1950), that hierarchy is difficult to maintain. More recently, Bauckham (2008), 136 and Sheridan (2020), 354–56 have rightly questioned it.

[36] Hayward (2004) and Anderson (2009) have shown the centrality of the tabernacle and temple as the place where one may see God.

occur across the Hebrew Bible, but he still claims that no one has ever seen God and that only Jesus has made him known and visible. But why does John use the imagery of the tabernacle and temple if he does not understand it to convey the visibility of God? I have already suggested that the distinction between "invisible" and "unseen" discourages metaphysics as the answer. More probably, John deploys Platonist concepts when it suits him but with less consistency than Philo. Metaphysics aside, then, a second answer suggests that John is eager to elevate Jesus at the expense of Israelite and Jewish heroes.

One popular response has been that John 1:18 polemicizes against figures like Enoch or Moses in an effort to reduce their authority vis-á-vis Jesus.[37] While John undoubtedly emphasizes that Jesus has seen God more fully than any other, this explanation does not account for the many theophanies that occur in John's Bible. Is John contradicting them?[38] The challenge here is that John draws heavily on the authority of his Scriptures. They are the only external literature he directly quotes, and he is eager to show their fulfilment. His Jesus claims that "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), that "salvation comes from the Jews" (4:22); and he effectively "subpoenas" Moses (John 5:46), Abraham (John 8:56), and Isaiah (John 12:41) because they attest to him in some way. Likewise, across the Gospel, Jesus criticizes "the Jews" not because of their Scriptures, but because "the Jews" do not accept the Scriptures' witness to himself. If the Scriptures that narrate the theophanies are so crucial to John's understanding of Jesus, then it is difficult to accept that John dismisses the theophanies wholesale.

"Isaiah Saw His Glory"

I therefore turn to how John understands theophany. The first step in understanding John's approach to the theophanies is to recognize that the patriarchs and prophets have anticipated

[37] Examples include Hanson (1976), 95; Miller (2006), 127–51; Williams (2016c), 80; Reynolds (2017), 116.
[38] Droge (2004), 174 reads John to be intentionally undermining the Hebrew Bible.

Jesus. For Abraham (John 8:56–59; cf. Gen 18:1–33), Isaiah (John 12:41; cf. Isa 6:1–10; 52:13–53:1), and Zechariah (John 19:37; cf. Zech 12:10 MT) this anticipation overlaps with their own visual experiences of God.[39] Because John's use of Isaiah offers the clearest example, I turn to Isaiah as illustrative of the whole. John's portrayal of Isaiah, who "saw his glory" (John 12:41), suggests that John has not diminished or contradicted the authority of the Hebrew Bible; rather, he has re-interpreted its theophanies as Christological.[40]

The context of John 12:41 illuminates how John draws the sight of God and of Jesus together. In John 12:23, Jesus announces that "the hour has come in order that the Son of Man might be glorified (δοξασθῇ)" (John 12:23). He calls on the Father to glorify his name; and the Father responds that he has "glorified it and will glorify it again" (John 12:28). Jesus then goes on to describe his death as being "lifted up (ὑψωθῶ)" (John 12:32), which suggests that his glorification involves his crucifixion. The link to Isaiah begins with John's use of Isaiah 53:1 and Isaiah 6:10 to explain why people have not seen God in Jesus (John 12:38–40).

In the wider context of both Isaiah texts, the subjects of these passages are also "lifted up" and "glorified." In Isaiah 52:13 LXX ὑψωθήσεται καὶ δοξασθήσεται depict the Servant of the Lord while in Isaiah 6:1 ὑψηλοῦ καὶ ἐπηρμένου describe the Lord's throne, and the Lord's δόξα fills the "house."[41] John's use of both verbs in Isaiah 52:13 thus echoes Isaiah's characterization of two vastly different kinds of glory, one via suffering and the other via divinity; and John makes the link explicit in John 12:41 when he writes that Isaiah said "these things" (ταῦτα) because "he saw (εἶδεν) his glory (δόξαν αὐτοῦ)." Here, ταῦτα unites both

[39] For further discussions of the theophanic experiences of Abraham, Isaiah, Zechariah, and Moses see Bynum (2012); Williams (2015); Sheridan (2020), esp. 353–55.
[40] The term "Christophanies" has a Trinitarian connotation that I wish to avoid. The issue at hand remains the sight of God and not the sight of Christ that comes to substitute for God especially among the economic theologians. Bucer (2018), 157–90 offers an insightful account of Early Christian and Patristic interpretations of Isaiah 6.
[41] By virtue of his presence on such a throne, one may also assume that the Lord himself is exalted. Here I also wish to draw attention to the longstanding emphasis in Johannine scholarship that the crucifixion is itself a kind of enthronement as Vistar, Jr. (2020), 199–202 has recently noted.

quotations (Isa 6:10 and 53:1), revealing them to be the result of (ὅτι) what Isaiah saw. What Isaiah saw and what prompted him to speak was the δόξα αὐτοῦ, and the antecedent of αὐτοῦ is Jesus.[42] Thus, far from denying Isaiah's vision of God, John uses Isaiah to draw the sight of God, the Servant, and Jesus together. Each is "lifted up" and "glorified;" and, for John, the glory of God and of the Servant coalesce in Isaiah's vision of Christ.[43]

John's use of Isaiah thus explains what the sight of Jesus means even as John uses both Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 to indicate why "the Jews" cannot see Jesus properly. John knows that Isaiah saw the Lord; and he shows that Jesus's glory was revealed in the Lord Isaiah saw, God himself.[44] Moreover, John's use of Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 draws seeing and belief together. Directly after the Isaiah quotations, Jesus himself proclaims that seeing him is seeing the Father just as believing in Jesus is believing in the one who sent him (John 12:44–45). The sight of God in Jesus is therefore possible even if God may choose to obscure it. However, John never claims the full vision of God – or of Jesus – for any Patriarch or Prophet. Abraham saw Jesus's "day," Isaiah saw his "glory," and Moses bore witness to him in the Torah. These are partial visions, in which God appears via angels, glory clouds, and in a variety of brief and terrifying glimpses. Such theophanies never deny God's direct and overwhelming presence, yet they never fully reveal it.

John's use of Isaiah thus yields two conclusions for John 1:18. The first is that one need not read John as contradicting Hebrew Scripture. If Jesus is the subject of the

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[42] See Brendsel (2014), 124–27 for a detailed defence of ταῦτα as referring to both quotations and αὐτοῦ as referring to Jesus.

[43] Debate continues about whether Isaiah saw the glory of the pre-existent Logos or of the future glory of Jesus in his earthly life. In my view, John is concerned to draw the glories together, and the reader is not left to distinguish between two objects of sight. The challenge of the crucifixion is that the heavenly glory of God and of the Logos are manifested on the cross; and the composite quotation suggests this by drawing the servant and God and Jesus together in the context of John 12 and Isaiah 6:1 and 52:13–53:12. For the debates see Williams (2014; 2018a); Brendsel (2014), 130–31; Lett (2016); and Bucur (2018), 190.

[44] Roukema (2006), 209 argues that John does not say that Isaiah saw God, but only his glory, which leads Roukema to suggest that John is shifting Isaiah's vision away from a direct theophany. This is a fair point, but it is also highly ambiguous given the number of times that seeing God's glory is itself tantamount to seeing God in the Hebrew Bible. Sommer (2009), 38–57 has gone so far as to describe the glory cloud as one of God's bodies; and Newman (1992), 1–153 has associated the glory with a humanoid form.

theophanies and if one understands that Jesus is God, then no contradiction need exist. The second is that one need not read John 1:18 to affirm the intrinsic invisibility of God. Read alongside John 1:18 and the theophany accounts of the Hebrew Bible, John's own understanding of theophany is that the patriarchs and prophets never fully witnessed God to the extent that they never fully witnessed Jesus and vice versa. John 1:18a thus describes the theophanies insofar as they were never entirely complete; yet the rejoinder of John 1:14–18, 12:45, and 14:9 is that the theophanies take on unprecedented fullness in Jesus (John 1:17). For John, Jesus is sufficiently aligned with God that John equates seeing God in the Hebrew Bible with seeing Jesus—even if the sight is partial. Many scholars here deploy the term "mediation" to describe how Jesus makes God visible,[45] and others suggest that the Logos comes to replace God in John's understanding of theophany.[46] Both readings are appropriate so long as one does not assume that "mediation" entails that God is not fully or directly present in Jesus or that the Logos is not less transcendent than God according to a criterion of (in)visibility but actually "overlaps" with God.[47]

Here I return to the distinction I made between "invisible" and "unseen." If one assumes that God the Father is necessarily invisible, then one must assume a break with the Hebrew Bible and a hierarchy of transcendence between Jesus and God or within God predicated on invisibility. Yet the Hebrew Bible never portrays God as intrinsically invisible, and I have shown that one cannot assume this to be the case in the Early Jewish Literature. John's use of Isaiah indicates that God's visibility in the past can be of a piece with his visibility in Jesus.[48] Jesus does not replace God in the theophanies; rather, he is present

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[45] As Filtvedt (2017), 116 notes: "In seeing Jesus, one does not see something that merely resembles God, a manifestation that replaces the vision of God, or some divine attribute. God does not remain partly hidden behind his visible manifestation in Jesus. Although the vision of God in Jesus is mediated, it is not limited or partial…it is evident that this full vision of God is tied to Jesus' signs, his passion and his departure."
[46] See Hanson (1976), 96.
[47] "Overlap" is intentionally ambiguous and, perhaps, necessarily so given the burgeoning discussion of Jesus's relationship to God. The essays collected in Novenson, ed. (2020) make this clear.
[48] This does not reduce the incarnation to another theophany; rather, it shows that the precedent exists in the Hebrew Bible. See Wyschogrod, (1996); Hamori (2008, esp. 64; 2010); and Sommer (2009), 122–44.

because God is present. What is clear for John is that the Logos has always been God (John 1:1; 8:59; 12:41; 17:24) and has always been able to become visible in some form.[49] What is clear from his Scriptures is that God has never had trouble in making himself visible even if people are unable to fully see him. The theophanies can thus be read Christologically but without a metaphysics that requires one to read Jesus in the place of God on the grounds that the difference between them is that Jesus is irrevocably visible and God is irrevocably invisible.[50] Jesus is visible because God is visible and vice versa, but this does not mean that God is easy to see or that Jesus is easy to recognize as God.

The Syntax of John 1:18a

Given John's understanding of theophany, I return to my proposed reading of 1:18a: "no one has ever [fully] seen God [yet]." Thus far, I have examined how the context of the Gospel encourages this view; however, I have not examined the syntax of the verse. If John 1:18 *is* directed at past claims about seeing God then the references to past time in his statement are important; but one must begin with θεόν. John's anarthous but not indefinite use of θεός across the prologue has received substantial attention, and many scholars read John 1:18 to identify both the Father and the Son as God or at least as divine.[51] By 1:18, this is not a new concept in the Prologue; but the proximity of an affirmation of the divinity of the Son to the claim that no one has seen God complicates that claim. John 1:14 has already shown that the

[49] Here I come very close to the view of Gieschen (1998; 2018; 2020), whose exemplary work acknowledges the importance of divine (in)visibility. Nevertheless, because Gieschen takes God to be invisible (a term that, to the best of my knowledge, he never defines), he has tended to read John as projecting Christ back onto the theophanies as the only option for a manifestation of God. I am less certain that such clear-cut assumptions about visibility are tenable.

[50] This is not to deny that metaphysics and ontology are somehow absent from John's account; it is simply to recognize that in his account *they can be different*. Until Augustine and Jerome, the most prevalent view seems to have been that Jesus was eternally visible as the Son. For the economic theologians, Jesus's eternal visibility explained the incarnation and the theophanies without compromising the transcendence of the Father. Augustine will show that this view compromises the transcendence of the Son and introduces the highly influential position that divinity (whether in the Father or Jesus) is always invisible until after the last judgement. The power of these theological interpretations continues to inform the presuppositions of Johannine scholarship. For further study of them see Kloos (2005; 2011).

[51] Examples include Thompson (2001), 17–55; Caragounis and Van der Watt (2008), 91–138; and Van der Watt (2018).

incarnate Logos reveals a visible glory, but now the same being whose self-disclosure is chiefly visual is also the God whom no one has ever seen.

The answer to this riddle may lie in the perfect ἑώρακεν and the extent to which it can limit πώποτε. The sense of οὐδεις ἑώρακεν is that no one has ever seen God and that the repercussions of this lack carry into the present. This is certainly the case in John 5:37, in which Jesus draws on Deuteronomy 4:12 and uses πώποτε to tell "the Jews" that they have never seen God's form (John 6:46). However, the irony is that Jesus – the μονογενὴς θεός – is standing in front of them; and the entire Gospel anticipates the proper recognition of Jesus (John 20:28). Past failure to see may therefore explain disbelief, but it can give way to proper seeing. God can become visible in Jesus.

Thus, πώποτε may mean "ever" or "yet" rather than "at any time in the past, present, or future." The adverb almost always accompanies verbs in the past tense, as if to suggest that no one has ever done "x" up to the present moment, but things may change in the future.[52] This is the case in occurrences of πώποτε across the Gospel (John 5:37; 6:35; 8:33) as well as in 1 John 4:12 and Luke 19:30, which accounts for all the occurrences in the NT – with the notable exception of John 6:35. There, πώποτε modifies διψήσει, a verb in the future tense. Those who believe in Jesus "will never thirst;" yet this rare occurrence of a future tense verb with πώποτε only strengthens the sense that the tense of the verb sets the remit of πώποτε. Only after belief occurs will thirst end. The grammar of θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε can thereby comport with John's portrayal of the theophanies and with John 12:45 and 14:9, which suggest that the time to see God has arrived.[53]

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[52] See LSJ, s.v. "πώποτε" and BDAG, s.v. "πώποτε," which states that πώποτε "refers to an indefinite point of time: ever, at any time." BDAG further notes that πώποτε almost always occurs with verbs in the past tense. Elizabeth Harris (1994), 93 registers the emphasis that πώποτε lends to John's statement, and she defines it as "a temporal reference to human capacities in time and history. This is underlined by the perfect tense of the verb, which is also in contrast to the eternal qualify of the μονογενὴς θεός (υἱός), being (ὁ ὢν) in the bosom of the Father."

[53] Regarding the perfect ἑώρακεν, Harris (1994) notes Moulton's (1906), 144 description of it as an aoristic perfect, acknowledging that there can be perfects of broken as well as of unbroken continuity, especially in the

Nevertheless, I admit that I cannot entirely rule out the fact that John may be describing a state of affairs for all people across all time. The occurrence of θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται in 1 John 4:12 (1 John 4:20) pushes in that direction, and commentators often take πώποτε to apply to all time. One can also ask why John did not choose the less ambiguous οὐκέτι.[54] Moreover, the question of where John's prologue stands regarding the narrative time of the Gospel remains a challenge. If the prologue is summarizing the Gospel, then it seems to prohibit the sight of God to all people despite the incarnation. If it is prologue to and thus anticipates the revelation of the incarnation – which it nevertheless appears to summarize – then 1:18 may still refer to the time prior to the incarnation.[55] While I stand by the reading I have presented, I wish to further ask what bearing my study has for those who insist that 1:18 applies to all time.

The Challenge of Recognizing God in Jesus

Three factors must condition John 1:18 regardless of how one reads ἑώρακεν πώποτε. The first is that John limits the revelation of God to Jesus (John 12:45; 14:6–9) and that he uses sight to indicate how this revelation occurs (John 14:7–11; cf. 6:40). The second is that if John is making a statement for all time, then John 1:14; 12:41, 45; 14:9; and 20:28–29 have mitigated it: somehow the Father is visible in Jesus. The third is that John 1:14; 12:41, 45; 14:9; and 20:29 are themselves mitigated: the incarnation qualifies what one sees of God in those verses. Unlike the Hebrew Bible theophanies, the Father one sees in Jesus rarely causes

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company of πώποτε. On the implications of aspect theory for the perfect tense in John, see Pierce and Reynolds, (2014), 149–55.

[54] While Harris (1994), 100–101, acknowledges that John 6:46 and 14:9 indicate that the incarnation could offer "a 'vision of God' strictly without exact parallel," she concludes that "the emphatic use of πώποτε in 1.18 may be doing more than affirming that in history prior to the coming of the Logos, Jesus Christ, no one had in fact seen God. If that were all that were intended it would have been sufficient to say, 'No one has ever seen God as yet (οὐκέτι) but now the man Jesus Christ is the one who has seen him."

[55] See Behr (2019), 245–70.

people to die or shrink away in terror (but see John 6:19; 18:6), and across the gospel the sight of Jesus – one may assume – is often mundane (John 6:42).

Indeed, the visibility of God in Jesus on earth is not obvious and is rarely apparent as glorious. While John suggests that Jesus's pre-existent glory with the Father is only fully visible *in heaven* in the sense that the Father himself may only be fully visible in heaven (John 1:18; 17:24; cf. 1 John 3:2), the divine glory is no less present in the radical and counterintuitive visibility of the crucifixion, the marks of which remain visible on Jesus's resurrected body (John 1:14; 12:23). John thus presents a striking irony given the deadly majesty of the theophanies: the incarnate Logos dies for claiming to be and revealing God (John 8:59; 10:30; 19:7), yet seeing the crucified Christ will result in life for those who believe (John 6:40). A fundamental visibility undergirds the encounter with God whether one approaches his dangerous fullness or Jesus's counterintuitive but life-giving crucifixion and resurrection.

Once again, then, the distinction between "invisible" and "unseen" does not require us to read John as depicting God's visibility at some remove from Jesus's visibility because one is material. The glory of heaven is the glory of the crucified Jesus because the Father is in and with the crucified one (John 14:10). John 1:18 (5:37; 6:46) may therefore forbid the sight of God's glory as it is in heaven (except to Jesus, 6:46) until the eschaton (17:24). Nevertheless, John also reveals that Jesus's humanity presents the unprecedented sight of God in a fullness that may be difficult to grasp but is no less present despite the difficulty.[56] John can therefore call on Isaiah to confirm the harmony of both glories – that of a God whose glory fills the temple and that of the servant whose glory results from his physical agony – because Isaiah saw them unite in Christ.

[56] Filtvedt (2017), 112–18 makes a similar point.

Conclusion

This Chapter has itself worked to harmonize the seemingly contradictory statements in John regarding the sight of God: no one can see God (John 1:18); yet Jesus makes him visible (John 12:45; 14:9). By uncoupling John 1:18 from a Platonist understanding of invisibility, I have shown that it can comport with John 12:45 and 14:9 without needing to suggest levels of transcendence between Jesus and God that a priori assumptions about materiality determine. Rather, John 1:18 anticipates 12:45 and 14:9 as indicating the means by which God makes himself visible on earth. "Visibility" and "invisibility" thus become "seeing" and "not seeing" in John because he is more concerned with the revelation that visibility affords than he is with the ontological categories that (in)visibility can demarcate. The question of whether God and his glory are intrinsically visible is never at stake for John; rather, he is concerned with how they are visible and thus with how one can see them – two questions he intertwines with belief (John 6:40; 11:40; 20:28–31).[57]

Where Chapter 1 showed that knowledge of God is at the heart of Johannine belief, Chapter 2 has argued that whatever divinity is, it may not be intrinsically invisible. The human eye can see it. While God remains dangerous and requires mediation, he can cross between the divine and human worlds at no risk to the integrity or transcendence of his being. The mediation in question need not arise from a need to safeguard God's transcendence in heaven. Rather, the mediated ways and beings through which God reveals himself on earth appear to have more to do with preserving the lives of those who witness him. While Philo and other Platonists are also much concerned with revelation, what arises from my reading of John is that the material world can exist in a close and sometimes inseparable relationship to

[57] Here I am largely agreed with Bultmann (1971), 80: "the assertion, however, that God is not directly accessible has nothing to do with the Greek idea that God is a being of such a kind that he cannot be grasped by the senses… For the Evangelist it is not the νοῦς but πίστις which sees him, and then only πίστις which is directed toward the Revealer." Unlike Bultmann, I will later emphasize the positive relationship of sight to belief.

the divine realm. Part 1 of this thesis therefore claims that perceiving God with the senses is not only possible but that it may be a desirable outcome of belief to the extent that it could furnish the knowledge of God in Christ that John describes in 20:30–31.

Later in the thesis I will argue that seeing God is indeed desirable in John, but first I wish to develop the suggestion in this chapter that God can be as fully present on earth as he is in heaven and therefore be available to human vision. He may look different and even be different – in incarnate form – but he remains God. The two chapters that follow argue that multiple strands of biblical and Early Jewish literature illuminate how John may understand God to be physically present and visible in Jesus's body.

PART 2: GOD AND PLACE

Michael Wyschogrod has famously suggested that the notion of incarnation need not be foreign to Judaism:

> The Jewish objection to an incarnational theology cannot be based on a priori grounds, as if something in the nature of the Jewish concept of God made his appearance in the form of humanity a rational impossibility. Very often, Jewish opposition to the incarnation is based on just such grounds without realization of the implications of such a posture. If we can determine a priori that God could not appear in the form of a man or, to put it in more Docetistic terms, that there could not be a being who is both fully God and fully human, then we are substituting a philosophical scheme for the sovereignty of God.[1]

While she does not use the term "sovereignty," Esther Hamori appeals to divine freedom while pointing up the contradictions that seem to exist between Jewish and Christian understandings of God and incarnation:

> The paradox is this: if Judaism includes an emphasis on the physical, spatial, earthly, and biological, and Christianity made a break from this by emphasizing a community based on only spiritual and not biological bonds, one might expect divine incarnation to be physical in Judaism and not in Christianity, and not the other way around. The point here, once again, is that we have good reason not to limit our notions of what God is and is not free to do.[2]

The underlying argument in both cases strikes at both Jewish and Christian notions of a creator God who is immaterial and thus invisible by virtue of his separation from the material, visible creation. For Jews, the concept of God as philosophically "obligated" to be immaterial is largely due to the medieval theologian Maimonides.[3] Likewise, much Christian thought from Nicaea to Thomas Aquinas and into the present day is concerned with how an immaterial God can become incarnate in the material world. Ian McFarland's "Chalcedonianism without reserve," with which I opened this thesis, is a prime example of a Christian affirmation of incarnation that does not break the "rules" of divine transcendence.

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[1] Michael Wyschogrod (1996, 204; cf. 2004). Neusner (1988) has also addressed the theme of incarnation in Judaism.
[2] Hamori (2010), 179.
[3] Lorberbaum (2015), 15–45.

The challenge is that the Hebrew Bible and most Early Jewish texts are not wedded to the concept of an exclusively immaterial God. Hamori herself is one of a growing number of scholars who have recently argued that the God of the Hebrew Bible, Early Judaism, and Rabbinic literatures may possess bodies available to physical sight and with which one could tangibly interact.[4] Such bodies are not merely angelic proxies; they include some measure of "real presence."[5] The discussion is complex, nuanced, and difficult; however, no single definitive statement about God's ontology arises from the texts. In the narratives themselves, God appears to be free to manifest himself in or as material entities when and where he chooses and thus also to become visible at his discretion.

In response to this scholarship, Part 2 pursues what God's visibility in Jesus means and whether, as Wyschogrod and Hamori imply, the theological narratives of Early Judaism and the Hebrew Bible allow for or even encourage a phenomenon like the incarnation. Chapters 3 and 4 read John against such narratives by addressing the nature of sacred places and spaces in relationship to human bodies and the bodies of God. They re-evaluate John's account of the incarnation and the visibility of God in Jesus Christ and argue that the Johannine "spiritual bonds" are forged precisely by way of "the physical, spatial, earthly, and biological."

[4] Examples include Wyschogrod (1996; 2004); Hamori (2008; 2010); Sommer (2009); Putthoff (2020); Wilson (2019; 2021a; 2021b).

[5] Sommer (2009), 22–34, 38–57.

CHAPTER 3: GOD ON EARTH

Surprised by profane glances, Jehovah acts as a destroyer, but Himself spontaneously points out to His favoured ones the places where it is His pleasure to allow Himself to be seen; and where men have seen Him and yet lived, there a sanctuary marks the open way of access to Him.

— Julius Welhausen (1885), 31

In order to understand how God makes himself seen in the Fourth Gospel, one must ask whether he makes himself physically present in Jesus. If he is not "there," then one cannot see him. This chapter therefore focuses on the tabernacle, temple, and incarnation because John's most straightforward claims about the physical body of Jesus and its role in the incarnation are given in terms of both structures (John 1:14; 2:21). John uses ἐσκήνωσεν to describe the life of the λόγος σάρξ ἐγένετο (John 1:14), and he claims that Jesus's σῶμα is a ναός (John 2:21). In John 1:14, the σκην- root recalls the LXX translation of שכן with σκηνή and evokes the theme of divine dwelling with humanity across the Hebrew Bible.[1] Given its immediate context – καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ and the reference to Moses and the law a few lines later (John 1:17) – John suggests that the σάρξ of the λόγος manifests a divine glory (ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός). Just as God enters the tabernacle and fills it with his glory in order for Israel to see him: ὀφθήσομαι ἐν ὑμῖν (Exodus 25:8; 40:34–38 LXX), so now John can write that the Logos has "'tabernacled' among us, and we have seen his glory."[2] In John 2:21, John clarifies that the temple Jesus refers to as being destroyed and rebuilt in three days (John 2:19–20) is Jesus's σῶμα. John thereby equates Jesus's body, even his flesh, with the two places that define Israel's worship as well as God's presence and

[1] Frey (2013) links the relationship between σκην-, שכן, and the theme of God's dwelling with humanity to the Rabbinic and Targumic concept of שכינה, "God's Dwelling on Earth. John's use of the verb σκηνόω is matched in the NT only in Revelation, where it occurs in reference either to heavenly dwellers (12:12) and the heavenly place where God and his name dwell (13:6). God also "tabernacles" over his people from his throne (7:15). His "'tabernacle' is with humanity, and he will 'tabernacle' with them" (21:3).
[2] Frey (2018), 261–84 has likewise developed the importance of "divine dwelling" as the key to understanding the incarnation in John 1:14.

visibility. By tying the incarnation to the tabernacle and temple, he evokes the long history of theophany that characterized Israel's relationship to God and God's relationship to creation.

John scholars have taken up these themes in a number of recent books, most of which are also concerned with establishing whether Jesus *replaces* the temple and the historical conditions surrounding this replacement.[3] What these scholars less frequently pursue is the theological backdrop against which John can equate Jesus's body with the dwelling place of God on earth.[4] It is not immediately obvious how a body and a temple could ever be "equated;" yet, as I will show, the theme is prevalent across the Hebrew Bible, Early Jewish literature, and NT documents. Even when scholars have developed these parallels, they often appeal to symbolism as the explanation for Jesus's relationship to the temple and God's relationship to the world. Such theories make a questionable assumption: John is dealing with two worlds, one above and one below, and "these worlds are incongruous and mutually exclusive."[5]

I agree that John is deploying symbols; and I likewise hold that John is dealing with two worlds. However, although language often struggles to relate God to humanity or Jesus's body to a temple, this difficulty does not require us to assume that behind such difficulties lies a gulf between the physical and immaterial worlds that only a symbol can cross. The distance between language and God and between God and humanity are two different kinds of distance. One is the distance of linguistic inability, the result of human language coming up short against something too mysterious or too awesome to capture. The other is a distance

[3] Examples include Coloe (2001); Kerr (2002); Um (2006); Hoskins (2007). Lieu (1999) and Regev (2019), 197–221 have insightfully challenged the notion of Jesus a temple replacement.
[4] Coloe (2001), 164–71 and Kerr (2002294–98 briefly address the overlap between communities and temples but do not reflect on the broader theological implications and scope of what it means for temples and bodies to overlap.
[5] Coloe (2001), 5.

that the Hebrew Bible, Early Jewish, and New Testament texts consistently describe God as mitigating – albeit in different and qualified ways.[6]

John does, of course, use symbols and metaphors to describe how God mitigates this distance, such that perceptions of distance can arise from depictions of proximity. John undoubtedly regards God as holy and majestic, but Johannine scholarship has been prone to map the distance of linguistic inability onto what it assumes is the "actual" distance between God and the world in the thought of the text.[7] Such assumptions risk characterizing the relationship between God and Jesus as symbolic when the text may be using symbolism to portray their intimacy not simply as "spiritual" – if one takes that word to connote "immaterial" and "invisible" – but as an empirical and embodied reality.

My statements here come very close to those of Sandra Schneiders, Dorothy Lee, and Mary Coloe: each emphasizes God's physical proximity to humanity through the physical body of Jesus, the symbol of God.[8] However, one of the key questions for this thesis again arises here: what notions of divine transcendence – how God is separate from and/or greater than his creation – are operative for John?[9] If, as I argued in Chapter 2, "unseen" rather than

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[6] Schneiders (2003), 63–77 and Lee (2002), 9–28 rely on Karl Rahner, Paul Ricoeur, and Paul Tillich to define a "symbol" as something that participates in that which it represents. For them, Jesus is the "ultimate symbol" of God in John, and he can present God as a sensible reality. I am largely sympathetic to this definition; however, Barrett (1983), 65–79 and especially Struck (2004) have developed historically grounded – but no less theologically relevant – accounts of "symbol" and "symbolism" that lead me to be wary of how Schneiders and Lee have applied modern theological understandings of the concepts to John. I am not convinced that Tillich, Ricoeur, and Rahner understand *transcendence* in the same ways that the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish authors understand it, and this makes me wary of applying their categories to John's account of how the incarnation draws heaven and earth together. Other accounts of symbolism in John have done much to develop their literary function but do not define divine transcendence in John. Examples include Van der Watt (2000) and Koester (2003).

[7] For Coloe (2001) symbolism is what draws her "mutually exclusive" worlds together by linking incongruous realities through the "surplus of meaning" that arises from the association of two things that cannot make literal sense; yet she simultaneously acknowledges that God is linked to the world because he created it, which seems to cut against these worlds being mutually exclusive. Following Sandra Schneiders, Alan Culpepper, and Craig Koester, she describes how Jesus's body being the temple is "nonsense" at the literal level (2001), 5. Such direct association may be nonsense at the *literary* level in the sense that John is using a metaphor, but the "literal level" remains an open question to the extent that Jesus's flesh-and-blood body may in fact be as inseparable from God as it is from its own humanity and thus be a kind of flesh-and-blood temple.

[8] See notes 19 and 20.

[9] Painter (1986), 47–55 is helpful on this question insofar as he shows that symbolism arises from transcendence, but he does not define what transcendence is.

"invisible" is the better qualifier of God's transcendent majesty in Judaism, then one can ask whether immateriality truly separates God from Jesus's physical life in John's thought, such that any material manifestation of God *must* be a symbol for God rather than God himself. This chapter takes up that question in the light of John's temple imagery by asking how John could have associated bodies, temples, and the presence of God. In the burgeoning literature on John's temple motif, what has *not* been done is to pursue Mary Coloe's "nonsensical" question of whether the literal association and "overlap" of the being and nature of two things is possible for John: whether Israelite and Jewish theologies of divine place and presence might help one understand whether Jesus's physical "flesh" and "body" make God available to sight.[10]

The introduction to Part 2 and, now, of Chapter 3 have brought together three complex bodies of thought: theologies of divine presence in the Hebrew Bible, John's relation of Jesus's body to the tabernacle and temple, and the nature of transcendence. As the Chapter unfolds, it will draw these themes together as a means of assessing what John's depiction of Jesus's body as a tabernacle and temple means for seeing God. I will begin by surveying theologies of divine presence in the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish Literature. Doing so will require extensive summaries of recent scholarship on the relationship of God to the tabernacle, temple and humanity. However, the yield will be greater access to the "Jewish Encyclopedia" that I described in the introduction of this thesis and thus, in turn, greater access to John's understanding of the temple and tabernacle as vehicles for God's presence on earth. I then address the nature of Jesus's body as the temple and as an indwelling and indwelt presence in John by examining the Farewell Discourse. Here, the themes of the divine name and glory join John's concept of "indwelling," the Holy Spirit, and seeing God.

[10] Coloe (2001), 5. "Overlap" is a vague term, and I choose to use it because it describes a complex and vague phenomenon. It will become clear as the Chapter progresses that for some ancient writers God could become one with material reality, and my use of "overlap" communicates this fusion even if its particulars and "mechanics" are perhaps impossible to understand or define.

Concluding reflections will follow regarding what one may see of God in Jesus's body as a tabernacle/temple.

God in Two Places

The survey that follows incorporates a wide breadth of sources spanning the Mesopotamian mythos and the Hebrew Bible as well as portions of the Early Jewish, New Testament, and Rabbinic literatures. Any such survey faces a variety of methodological pitfalls, and I begin with a brief preface to my own approach. My purpose in examining these texts is to show how ancient Israelite and Jewish sources consistently portray God as the kind of being who inhabits a temple and sometimes comes to identify his very self with aspects of the temple he inhabits. Whether this is Moses's tabernacle or Solomon's temple or the human congregations in Paul's epistles or in the Dead Sea Scrolls, temple places are what make God present amongst humanity. By John's day, a variety of authors, some ancient and some contemporary, have presented God, temples, and humanity as "overlapping:" they understand temples and bodies to be places that God can dwell within and, in some sense, as. To be sure, the texts differ. However, this Chapter underscores their emphasis that God is present in temple places and that humanity may meet with God and even come to share in his divinity, however mysteriously, in and as his sanctuaries.

I will begin with the Hebrew Bible and its evidence for God's willingness to participate *in* and sometimes *as* aspects of his physical creation. I draw on recent literature about Ancient Near Eastern notions of divine "fluidity," a term I define below; and I take time to develop this concept because it cuts against potentially dogmatic assumptions about a God relegated to the world of Being – the kind of "invisible" God I described in the Introduction and in Chapter 2. The Hebrew Bible is rife with God's tangible presence and

proximity to his people in the places where they worship him.[11] In the footsteps of many other scholars, I am suggesting that John is steeped in these texts, across which God consistently seeks to dwell amongst his people.[12]

The Early Jewish and New Testament texts also emphasize the potential of human beings to be the temples in which God can dwell and manifest himself. John's direct relationship to these texts remains ambiguous given the fact that he never quotes Paul, Qumran, or any other Early Jewish source. What *is* clear is that he shares their interest in what it means for humanity to be near to God and develops it – as they do and as the Hebrew Bible does – in terms of temple imagery. John is a participant in and product of the "Jewish Encyclopedia" I described in the introduction to this thesis.

The Early Jewish texts show that John is not alone in developing these concepts; they reveal that some of the ancient ideas in the Hebrew Bible possess an ongoing currency and pose an ongoing challenge: how can God and humanity, beings so similar and so different, dwell together? While the Early Jewish literature emphasizes God's distance from humanity and presents an increased interest in mediation, the boundary lines between God and his mediators are not always clear. God remains in heaven and on earth via distinct entities that simultaneously mediate and, in some cases, "overlap" with himself in the places of his presence – now associated with individuals and congregations of worship.

Positing the "overlap" of divine, angelic, and human identities challenges the notions of monotheism strongly advocated by scholars like Richard Bauckham and Larry Hurtado.[13] Without embroiling myself too far in these debates, I find Crispin Fletcher-Louis's recent

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[11] For the authority of ἡ γράφη in John see the Introduction to this thesis.

[12] Examples include Barrett (1947); Hanson (1994); Hengel (1994); Beutler (1996); Moore (2013), 21–32; Lieu (2000); Hays (2016), 343; Byers (2017), 117–20. Barrett (1947), 168 writes that "for [John] the O. T. was itself a comprehensive unity, not a mere quarry from which isolated fragments of useful material might be hewn." Along similar lines, Hengel (1994), 24 claims: "inseparably bound up with [John's] use of Scripture is the view of Israelite-Jewish "salvation history."

[13] Both have strongly argued for a rigid construal of monotheism. Bauckham (2008a) has done so by way of the creator-creation distinction and Hurtado (1998) by arguing that God is the sole recipient of worship. For a response to both regarding John and Early Judaism see Forger (2017) and Fletcher-Louis (2015).

critique a compelling point of departure: "The omission of any discussion of how God's presence on earth, in a temple, defines his identity means he [Bauckham] also works with a particular kind of sovereignty; a detached one."[14] The texts I will consider below underscore the longstanding currency of ancient Jewish theologies of divine and human embodiment and the close, sometimes "overlapping" relationship between God and humanity, especially in the context of places of worship. I begin with the concept of divine "fluidity" and its relationship to the Hebrew Bible.

Divine Fluidity and the Hebrew Bible

The fundamental observation I wish to make about divine presence in the Hebrew Bible is that God can dwell in heaven and on earth – apparently simultaneously and in embodied form.[15] Numerous passages describe God as inhabiting Zion and thus, most probably, the Jerusalem temple (Pss 9:11; 65:1; 76:2; 84:7; 99:2; 102:21; Isa 8:18; 10:12; 18:7; Jer 8:19; Joel 3:16,17, 21; Amos 1:2; Zech 8:3).[16] Likewise, multiple texts refer to God as living in heaven (Isa 63:15, 66:1; Ezek 1; Pss 11:4; 103:19; 115).[17] Several portray him as inhabiting both (Deut 4:39; Josh 2:11; Ps 11:4; 20:2; 1 Kgs 8:23).[18] God's dual presence does not necessitate a panentheistic reading of his relationship to the world, but it does require one to think in different ways about his relationship to materiality. Far from the immaterial God of Middle and Neo- Platonism, the God of Hebrew Scripture can inhabit both heavenly and earthly realms.

In the theophany accounts, God appears on earth (Gen 18; Exod 3:2–6), inhabits the tabernacle (Exod 40:34–38) or temple (1 Kgs 8:10–11; 2 Chr 7:1–2), leads Israel in cloud and

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[14] Fletcher-Louis (2015), 308.
[15] On the Hebrew Bible's consistent view that God possesses a body see Sommer (2009), 1–10.
[16] I draw these passages from Putthoff (2020), 131.
[17] Putthoff (2020), 131.
[18] Puffhoff (2020), 131. See also the ambiguous description running throughout Solomon's dedication of the temple in 1 Kings 8. Note also Levenson's (1985), 140 claim: "the Hebrew Bible is capable of affirming God's heavenly and his earthly presence without the slightest hint of tension between the two."

fire (across Exod and Num); or comes to earth briefly before ascending back to a heavenly dwelling (Judg 13:2–23; 2 Kgs 2:11–12). The texts are not metaphorical in their depictions of God's dwelling on earth; they reflect a widely held belief that God could inhabit this world. They give rise to Benjamin Sommer's influential claim that God possesses a body: "something located in a particular place at a particular time, whatever its shape or substance."[19] The shapes and substances of those bodies can change; but the real and encounterable presence of God, even in a material object or entity, remains available to the empirical senses.

Sommer uses the terms "fluid" and "fluidity" to describe God's ability to take up different bodies or be in multiple places at once. While he never calls God a fluid, as if God's essence is something like water, he does move forward on the assumption that an ontological link exists between the nature of fluid things and God's being.[20] Insofar as "fluidity" may be a helpful metaphor in describing God's ability to be present in multiple places, I am also content to use it.[21] My own understanding is that "embodiment" and fluidity of action can help one understand aspects of God's presence and his ability to become synonymous with material entities, but that these concepts can never fully capture what God's essence is.[22] What will emerge most strongly from what follows is that God can become material when he chooses, but not that he is intrinsically material *or* immaterial. While I am convinced that the Hebrew Bible depicts God's presence amongst Israel as materially available, neither mode of being appears to constrain him.

Understanding how Israelite theologies of divine presence work requires one to step away from evaluating divine transcendence and immanence between the poles of

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[19] Sommer (2009), 2.
[20] Putthoff (2020), 131 even refers to God's "fluid constitution," and "fluid ontology" (49, 86, 146).
[21] Fletcher-Louis (2015), 309–11 offers further critiques.
[22] Hundley (2013a), 139–52 presents a circumspect account of what remains unsaid and undefined about God in ANE theologies.

immateriality and materiality. Rather, the dominant understanding of "transcendence" and "immanence" in the Hebrew Bible is in terms of proximity to or distance from God, in whatever body he chooses to reveal himself. What remains consistent from the ANE theologies I am about to survey through to Israelite conceptions of divine presence and all the way to John is that *proximity to God occurs in places of worship, and sometimes God himself is the place*. Worship and the structures of worship are where the Hebrew Bible and the Early Jewish Literature portray God's body as most transcendent and holy but also as most tangible and accessible.

How, then, does divine "fluidity" work? Drawing from the Mesopotamian mythos, Sommer describes it in two ways. The first is what he calls fragmentation: there can be "several divinities with a single name who somehow are and are not the same deity."[23] Sommer finds deities like the various Ishtars of Assyrian and Mesopotamian religion to resemble "avatars," independent yet parallel identities of the same god whose individual manifestations are in accord with, yet lesser than the full presence of the god in question. Each avatar is often associated with a particular place or city. The second type of fluidity is "overlap of identity between gods who are usually discreet selves."[24] While a single god can have multiple avatars, multiple gods can have overlapping selves. In various Akkadian hymns to the gods Ninurta and Marduk, multiple gods coalesce to form the single body of Ninurta or Marduk and yet retain their own identities in the process.[25]

The fluid nature of these gods allows them to inhabit various bodies with what Sommer calls "real presence" while at the same time retaining their own distinct identity.[26] Scholars like Michael Dick find further evidence for this in the Akkadian descriptions of

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[23] Sommer (2009), 15.
[24] Sommer (2009), 16.
[25] Sommer (2009), 16.
[26] Sommer (2009), 22.

"mouth-opening (*mīs pî*)" and "mouth-washing (*pīt pî*)" ceremonies of cult statues.[27] These rites determined how – in spite of human craftsmanship – the god, whose origin is in heaven, now inhabits its image (*ṣalmu*) and thus renders the statue itself of heavenly origin. The divine self now overlaps with its representation, thus collapsing the distinction between the statue as a "sign" and the god in heaven as the "signified." The presence of multiple statues across a geographic area meant that multiple "real presences" could exist simultaneously: "the statue was identical with the god, but it did not encompass the entirety of the god."[28] Gods could also abandon their statues and return to heaven. A god could even return to *itself* in heaven, having possessed a statue's body as well as her own heavenly one.[29] Gods were too fluid to be bound to particular bodies; yet this fluidity did not restrict the reality of their presence.[30]

Fluidity and "real presence" illuminates the Hebrew Bible's portrayal of YHWH and the nature of his presence in particular bodies and places.[31] For instance, depictions of מלאכים consistently fail to include hard distinctions between a מלאך and YHWH or Elohim (e.g., Gen 16:7–10; 18:1, 13, 22; 19:1; 32–24–30; Exod 3:1–15; 12:21–29; 23:20–21; Josh 5:13–15; Judg 13:3–22).[32] The account of YHWH's visit to Abraham in Genesis 18 does not make a hard distinction between the Lord and his angels: "either a localized and perhaps temporary manifestation of the deity (that is, the result of a fragmentation of the divine self) speaks with

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[27] Dick (2005; cf. 1999) associates these rituals with transubstantiation in the Roman Catholic Mass. Herring (2008) also uses "transubstantiation" to describe these rituals, as does Putthoff (2020), 123.
[28] Sommer (2009), 22.
[29] Sommer (2009), 23–27.
[30] Sommer (2009), 27–28. Hundley (2013a), 363–71 offers a similar account; and Putthoff (2020) includes many examples and accounts of fluidity in ANE literature. Smith (2016), 72 is more sceptical regarding the ability of gods to be in two places at once in Sommer (2009), but Smith does not address the *mīs pî* ritual. Allen (2015) uses the metaphor "splintered" to describe the phenomenon of a single god in various locales or multiplied across them, and he explores the implications for Israelite and ANE religions more broadly.
[31] Somme (2009), 30–36 brings these concepts into conversation with the Hebrew Bible after investigating their prominence in Northwest Semitic cultures and addressing the important differences he finds between ANE modes of thought and Greek conceptions of the pantheon and the representation of statues. Putthoff (2020), 129–69 also applies these notions to the Hebrew Bible.
[32] While Gieschen (1998), 51–69 does not broach the subject of "fluidity" or ANE parallels, he does offer a compelling discussion of these passages that comports well with what Sommer, et al. describe.

Abraham, or the deity partially overlaps with one of several messengers."[33] In Genesis 32, Jacob wrestles with a "man," whom he later calls God (אלוהם) and which Hosea 12:4–6 describes as both אלוהם and מלאך.[34] A מלאך who is also YHWH appears to Moses in Exodus 3:2.[35] By far the most important angel for the Early Jewish authors is the angel of Exodus 23:21. God's name is in this angel (כי שמי בקרבו) and thus some level of God's being.[36] God can dwell in both heaven and earth; and his identity and presence can overlap with his messengers.

In the Hebrew Bible, the divine presence is not limited to angels, but it extends to sites of worship and even to the materials of those sites. The fluidity model applies to worship of YHWH in sacred places and manifests its importance in the pervasive theme of a house or sanctuary for God. Across Mesopotamian literature, the same word describes houses and temples.[37] Likewise, the Hebrew בית describes both, including not only the temple (e.g., 1 Kgs 8) but also places where God has appeared (e.g., Gen 28:16–19). Simultaneously, the concept of a בית אל in Genesis 28:16–19, indicates that God can inhabit the stone pillar Jacob erected after his vision of God.[38] Jacob anoints the stone and names it "God's house." Then, in Genesis 31:13, God identifies himself as the God "in Bethel."[39] In light of "fluidity," God

[33] Sommer (2009), 41.
[34] Esther Hamori (2008) examines the theophanies to Abraham and Jacob and argues that they are unique across ancient theophany and epiphany literature in their depiction of God as a man without any special divine enhancements or clues regarding his identity.
[35] Sommer (2009), 41–43.
[36] On the importance of the name residing in the angel, see Gieschen (1998), 66–67. See below for further analysis of angels in Early Judaism.
[37] Putthoff (2020), 142 provides further examples from Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, and Egyptian. Sommer (2009), 29 notes that a key term regarding the dwelling of gods in Ugaritic texts is *skn*.
[38] The specific concept of בית אל as the home of a god and even as a deity in itself is widespread in ANE cultures. See Sommer (2009), 28–29 and 49–51 and Putthoff (2020), 142–46.
[39] Sommer (2020), 50; Putthoff (2020), 145.

inhabits the stone;[40] and the LXX will only accentuate the relationship between seeing God and the place of God: ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τόπῳ θεοῦ.[41]

For some Israelites, YHWH could also inhabit the wood of Asherah poles. "Asherah" (אשרה) likely derives from words for "sanctuary" and "place for a divine image."[42] Inscriptions on the pithoi at Kuntillet Ajrud refer to a "YHWH of Samaria" and a "YHWH of Teman" and their asherahs.[43] The conversation and debate surrounding this find is extensive; but Putthoff, Sommer, and Herring argue that the goddess Asherah is not in view here.[44] Rather, the name "Asherah" refers to the cult object of the wooden pole, which the Israelites – like their ANE neighbours – could read as YHWH's localised body. While the kings Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah work to end this form of worship, the biblical evidence from some earlier periods of Israelite worship is less condemnatory of the poles themselves than it is of the deity who resides *in* the pole.[45] For Putthoff, then, YHWH "did not simply reside there in some ethereal, disembodied manner—"in spirit", as we might say today. Rather, he was physically there, ready to bestow blessings, in *asherahs* in Samaria and Teman."[46]

By contrast, the prevailing, "orthodox" view of God's presence in the P and D texts depict God as manifesting himself at select, sacred locations built on his instructions and via

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[40] According to Putthoff (2020), 145 Jacob understood it "not just as a symbol of god but as God himself," hence the name בית אל. "His syro-Palestinian contemporaries would easily have recognised the stone as his god's new body, and thus as the god himself." Genesis 31:23, in which Jacob names an altar "The God of Israel," appears to confirm this understanding. Gideon will also name an altar "The God of Israel" in Judges 6:4.
[41] As opposed to אנכי האל בית–אל in the MT. I take this observation from Hayward (2004), 386–88.
[42] Putthoff (2020), 139–40 notes that Asherah means "holy place" or "sanctuary." The term could have roots in the Akkadian *aši/ertu*, *ešertu*, *iši/ertu*, *ašru* as well as the Phoenician *'štrt* and Ugaritic *štrt*. These terms refer to a sanctuary or a special chamber that housed cult images.
[43] Putthoff (2020), 135–41 offers extensive analysis. See also Sommer (2009), 44–49.
[44] Putthoff (2020), 139 observes that worship of Asherah was in decline by the date of these inscriptions. See Sommer (2009), 46–47 and Herring (2013), 64–65.
[45] Sommer (2009), 39 argues that Jehu allows an Asherah to remain in the temple in 2 Kgs 13:6 because he viewed it as one of YHWH's cult objects and not one of Baal's. The evidence here also aligns with the curious passage in 2 Sam 15, in which Absalom travels to "YHWH in Hebron" (ליהוה בחברון – note the ב) in order to fulfil a vow, even though he is in Jerusalem, to which, by this time, David has brought the ark. See also Putthoff (2020), 133–35.
[46] Putthoff (2020), 141.

the presence of his glory and name.[47] In these texts, God is not synonymous with the tabernacle or the temple, but he does fill them with his visible glory (Exod 40:34–38), and, in the D literature, the temple becomes a house for his name (2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 8: 16–20). In comparison with the cult statues that a god could inhabit as one of its bodies, the glory emerges for the P authors as a more elusive yet no less visible form of divine presence.[48] In this regard, Michael Hundley rightly argues that the glory reveals God's majesty and power, just as magnificent garments delineate the glorious office of the High Priest (Exod 28:2, 40) or the power of Mesopotamian deities, yet it also cloaks whatever form or lack thereof lies beneath it.[49] God's presence in the glory thus presents an ongoing theophany, one occasionally veiled in cloud or by the tabernacle itself as it rests above the ark, yet one that clearly indicates *where* God is by making him visible.[50] While Hundley is careful to qualify his analysis, he presents a convincing case for reading the כבד as the P authors response to whatever conceptions of divine embodiment and fluidity they have encountered, essentially a reading that trades the כבד for a cult image. While God may gain "transcendence" in P and D, neither reduces his proximity or renders him invisible in an immaterial sense.[51]

Regarding the temple, the כבד fills it at its dedication (1 Kgs 8:10–11; 2 Chr 7:2–3), Isaiah witnesses it alongside God himself (Isa 6:1), and Ezekiel sees it depart from the temple (Ezek 8:1–18; 10:1–22). While an occasional rather than perpetual theophany seems to be in

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[47] I use the term "orthodox" to describe the view arising from reading the Hebrew Bible without the aid of the documentary hypothesis.

[48] Hundley (2011a) makes this argument across his monograph and in his more pointed response to Sommer (2015). Sommer and Hundley strike me as being fundamentally agreed regarding the very real and tangible presence of God in the glory, however differently they may construe P's understanding of whether God has only one body in the tabernacle (Sommer) or whether God can still be in heaven and on earth simultaneously, which is closer to Hundley's more nuanced position.

[49] Hundley (2011a), 40–43.

[50] Hundley (2011b), 43–45 also notes that the incense cloud would obscure the glory and that God and the priest work together to shield the priest from God's "lethal presence."

[51] Hundley (2011a), 49. Sommer (2009), 81 also characterizes P's stance on the tabernacle as "the site of an unceasing and ever accessible theophany." Mobility features in both Sommer and Hundley's accounts of the tabernacle and temple. I draw attention to Hundley's (2011a), 49 observations: "rather than using movement as a sign of transience, the Priestly texts use movement to indicate permanence. In the Priestly texts, the tabernacle follows the theophany, which moves by its own power. Instead of appearing as a temporary intrusion of heaven into earth, the Priestly theophany will remain on earth as long as Israel correctly serves YHWH."

view, the D sources also describe the temple as the house for God's name. Following von Rad, scholarship has often discounted the "name" as a way of communicating God's actual presence in the temple, claiming that the D authors construe divine transcendence in such a way that God must only reside in heaven for them.[52] While it is true that the "name" presents a less tangible and more abstract concept of divine presence than כבד, Ian Wilson has shown that Deuteronomy portrays God as present among the people (e.g., 6:15; 7:21).[53] Following Wilson, Michael Hundley has also challenged the consensus by showing how Deuteronomy's portrayal of Sinai indicates that God is in heaven and on earth simultaneously (Deut 4:32–40) and that שׁם consistently communicates the covenantal presence and obligations of God.[54] The presence of God's name in the temple suggests that God dwells there.[55] Rather than relegating God to heaven, the text appears to accord him the greater freedom of being wherever he will – heaven included – and at no loss to his majesty while overseeing his covenantal relationship to Israel.[56]

The notion of "place" also features heavily alongside God's presence, name, and glory in Deuteronomy and in the Deuteronomistic histories. Moses anticipates "the place the Lord your God will choose" (Deut 12:18, 26; 14:25; 15:20; 16:7, 15, 16; 17:8, 10; 18:6; 31:11) a syntagm that also occurs with the variants "to put his name there" (Deut 12:5, 21; 14:24) and "to make his name dwell there (Deut 12:11; 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2)." Likewise, 2 Samuel 7 will employ this term with its potentially messianic play on the "name" of the

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[52] See von Rad (1953), 37–44. See also Richter (2002). Drawing from this scholarship, Sommer (2009), 58–79 characterizes the D sources as still believing in a divine body, but only one body and only in heaven. He calls this a rejection of the fluidity model as JE portrays it.
[53] Wilson (1995) offers a convincing rebuttal to von Rad.
[54] See also Hundley's (2009) application of ANE parallels regarding divine name inscriptions and divine presence and his conclusion that such inscriptions indicate that God can be in both heaven and earth.
[55] Hundley (2009), 551 concludes: "Like YHWH and his glory, the name and YHWH are so intimately allied that the two could be equated yet distinguishable enough that the one does not encapsulate the other…"
[56] Hamori (2008), 64 summarizes a fundamental view evident across the work of Sommer, Herry, Hundlly and Putthoff when she writes: "this theophanic language, logically odd and irreducible, expresses something we have not seen before, and do not see in another way. We see, among other things, that God's freedom is not limited even in regard to embodiment."

Davidic lineage and its culminating announcement that David's offspring will "build a house for my name, and I will establish his kingdom forever" (2 Sam 7:13). When Solomon does build the temple in 1 Kings 8, the chapter is full of references to a house for God's name (1 Kgs 8:16–21) as well as indications that God is simultaneously present in heaven and on earth and yet neither place does him justice (1 Kgs 8:22–53).[57] 1 and 2 Chronicles – with their own carefully crafted and re-interpreted temple saga – identify the site of the temple as none other than Mt. Moriah, the place Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac (2 Chr 3:1).[58] A "place" and a "house" for God's name coalesce in the temple, which contains the tabernacle and rests on the same mountain where God tested Abraham, and which Genesis 22:14 LXX describes as the place where the Lord sees and is seen (καὶ ἐκάλεσεν Αβρααμ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ τόπου ἐκείνου Κύριος εἶδεν, ἵνα εἴπωσιν σήμερον Ἐν τῷ ὄρει κύριος ὤφθη).

Via its proximity to God, the temple itself acquires a theophanic nature. Gary Anderson argues that the tabernacle furniture presented the occasion for a theophany in fulfilment of Exodus 23:17 MT.[59] Unlike Sommer and Hundley, Anderson does not read the glory in the tabernacle or temple as a permanent theophany.[60] However, he does emphasize the spatial, material, and theological means by which both facilitate sensory encounters with God. Drawing from Luzzato, Geiger, Dillman, "and most moderns" Anderson claims that the niphal יראה in the injunction to "be seen by the Lord at the great festivals" (Exodus 23:17 MT) is a misvocalization of what should be a qal, which would render the Hebrew: "to see the face of the Sovereign."[61] For the Rabbis, who also read it as a qal, the means by which

[57] Note that Solomon brings the tabernacle and its furniture into the temple, after which God's glory fills it (1 Kings 8:1–11).
[58] *Jub.* 18:13 and Josephus (*Ant.* 1.224, 226) also identify Mt. Moriah as Mt. Zion.
[59] Anderson argues this in three places (2008; 2009; 2021).
[60] He (2009), 164 notes that "The dramatic theophany that Israel was witness to at the completion of the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34–35) was certainly not standard fare at every pilgrimage festival."
[61] Anderson (2009), 164. See also Chavel (2012), 17.

Israel saw God was via a display of the tabernacle furniture.[62] Following ANE scholarship in the vein of Sommer's fluidity model, Anderson concludes that "the ontological link between the furniture of the temple and the God who resided within was thought to be so close that seeing the former fulfilled the obligation of seeing the latter."[63] On Anderson's reading, the ark presents the sight of the God who has come to overlap with it by his proximity to it. That a parallel to this understanding appears in Rabbinic thought suggests its Biblical roots and emphasizes that God may be in heaven but can also be present in particular places on earth.[64]

Anderson acknowledges, however, that Exodus 23:17 LXX is also in the passive: ὀφθήσεται πᾶν ἀρσενικόν σου ἐνώπιον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου. Nevertheless, Exodus 25:8 LXX is clear that the tabernacle exists for God to be seen: και ποιήσεις μοι ἁγίασμα, και ὀφθήσομαι εν ὑμῖν. Exodus 24:9–11 LXX also redirects the sight of God that Moses and the elders enjoy in the MT to the sight of "the place where the God of Israel stood." Thus, "the common denominator that binds all these examples together is the notion of gazing upon the architecture and furnishings of the sanctuary as a fit replacement for seeing the face of God."[65] Anderson continues with a survey of a wide range of post-biblical evidence that he finds to provide "a more phenomenological, or even cultic, background against which we can set John's own theology of a visible and tabernacle-like presence of the logos."[66] Anderson's claims are important because they show the ongoing potency of divine presence in the temple

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[62] Anderson (2021), 101 draws from y. Hagigah 3.8 (79d). Regarding the Rabbis, Neis (2013), 41–81 documents the rabbinic desire to recover the vision of God in the temple. Her work demonstrates the importance of vision and of seeing God across the Rabbinic corpus.
[63] Anderson (2021), 101.
[64] Anderson (2021), 102 reads Numbers 4:20, in which God forbids the Levites to break down the tabernacle because they might see its furniture and die alongside Akkadian texts that likewise forbid the sight of sancta on the grounds that a divine essence has permeated them.
[65] Anderson (2009), 172.
[66] Anderson (2009), 185.

in ways that parallel "fluidity" traditions.[67] God remains present to human senses, especially in the tabernacle and temple and even through their physical structures and furniture.

Not only is God present, but his presence is so holy that it physically transforms people as well as temple furniture.[68] God forbids Moses to see his face because seeing it is deadly; yet Moses's own face shines because of God's presence (Exod 33:20; 34:29–30). God kills Nadab and Abihu when they approach him with "strange fire," (Lev 10). He kills Uzzah when Uzzah attempts to steady the ark (2 Sam 6:6–7), just as he killed the men of Beth-shemesh who dared to peer into it after its sojourn in Philistine territory – where it wreaked havoc (1 Sam 6:19–20; 5:1–12). A coal from God's altar purifies Isaiah (Isa 6:6–7). Across the Torah, his presence among Israel is the catalyst for her purity regulations, many of which pertain directly to bodies – including the command that the Kohathites not witness the dismantling of the tabernacle on pain of death (Num 4:20). Life in proximity to God defines Israel as a holy nation and kingdom of priests (Exod 19:6). It changes their bodies and their dress to *resemble* the tabernacle and temple in terms of purity.[69]

I began this chapter by asking how John could call the incarnate Logos's body a temple, and I have shown that God and the materials of his temples, houses, and sanctuaries can "overlap." Moreover, God can "overlap" with people insofar as encounters with him are transformative. I now press this issue further in light of research suggesting that the God of the Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism can inhabit human bodies as temples or cult objects and that this ability extends from the depiction of image-bearing in Eden through to the time of the NT. What I am in pursuit of here, then, as I was with the foregoing analysis, are the

[67] Anderson (2009), 183–94 comes closer than any John scholar I know of to identifying the ontological links between Jesus and the temple in Jewish thought. He concludes: "As God became one with his furniture, so God became one with flesh."
[68] As Putthoff (2017), 12 notes: "when one's bounded space overlaps with God's space, destruction or transformation – either a negative or positive change in the nature or shape of one's space – are inevitable."
[69] Harrington (2019) traces the parallels between pure bodies and a pure tabernacle/temple across the HB and Second Temple literature in an attempt to understand how bodies and temples can "overlap."

conceptual categories and precedents available to John such that he can call Jesus's human body a temple. Thus far, the notion of God's house, tabernacle, and temple have all been intertwined: God can be present in or within each. Now I turn to human bodies.

God and Human Bodies

One can begin by noting that "image" (צלם) and "likeness" (דמות) in Genesis 1:26–27 may be read to indicate that Adam and Eve's bodies are cult objects in which God makes himself present. Recent arguments in favour of this physical image-bearing return us to the "transubstantial" understanding of the Mesopotamian mouth-washing (*pīt pî*) and mouth-opening (*mīs pî*) rituals by which a god or a king could inhabit an image (*ṣalmu*).[70] The *ṣalmu* do not *represent*; they simply *are* the entity in question, hence the potentially strained yet compelling eucharistic analogy. The connection between *ṣalmu* and צלם אלהים in Genesis 1:27 stems from multiple lines of scholarship, which read the creation account in an ANE context where a god creates his heavenly court and the world in seven days and this world functions as a temple for his presence.[71] Of these arguments, two of the most convincing are the lexical connection between צלם and *ṣalmu* and the consistent use of צלם and דמות across the Hebrew Bible in reference to physical entities.[72] Likewise, the resemblance of Eden to a temple has been well-developed.[73] In Genesis, however, what is unique about the human images into whom God breathes life (Gen 2:7) is that they are not the divine retainers and attendants one might expect from ANE accounts. Yet, by the same token, humanity is joined more closely to God's life.[74]

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[70] Putthoff (2020), 152–69. See also Herring (2008; 2013); and McDowell (2015).
[71] Putthoff (2020), 154.
[72] Putthoff (2020), 150–51, 156–58.
[73] The secondary literature is substantial. See Putthoff (2020), 153–156; Herring (2008), 489. See also Levenson (1984; 1985; 1988); Wenham (1995), 399–404; Morales (2012).
[74] While the matter is far from settled, authors like Sommer, Herring, McDowell, and Putthoff do present a convincing alignment of God and humanity that much past scholarship has, I believe, been philosophically and theologically opposed to reading. The text itself seems to hold out – at the very least – the promise of a closer ontological relationship between God and humanity. See Putthoff's (2020), 164–69 observations.

Putthoff's observations here are especially pertinent, since he notes that God breathes the life into humanity and asks what this means for the physical bodies themselves. Drawing from Indo-European, Persian, Hittite, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian creation accounts as well as Early Jewish and Christian understandings of Adam, Putthoff cautiously suggests that Genesis 1 may have radiant bodies in mind. Most importantly, however, he concludes:

> For the Israelites, the self was literally a composite of the earth (עפד מן–האדמה) and God (נשמח היים, Gen 2.7)…the human self was neither purely physical nor purely immaterial, and neither purely divine nor purely nondivine. It was both and all at the same time.[75]

From the first lines of Hebrew Scripture, God and humanity can meet in a mixture of divine and human, physical and spiritual, and these meetings occur in God's temple-dwellings. God himself appears in human form in Genesis 18:1–33; 22:32–22 and then famously in Ezekiel 1:26–28 and Daniel 7:9. Carey Newman has further traced this motif across the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish Literature, arguing that the כבוד יהוה frequently evokes a mobile, visible, anthropomorphic presence.[76] Across these texts, human bodies, or at least bodies with a similar shape, can be candidates for and manifest divine inhabitation.

God's Presence in the Early Jewish, NT, and Rabbinic Literature

Thus far, the Hebrew Bible has been at the centre of this discussion; but the view that God, temples, and humanity can meet in ambiguous and overlapping ways finds complex and varied expression in the Early Jewish, New Testament, and Rabbinic literature. My overview must be brief, but it will show that the theme of God's active involvement in – and even as – elements of creation captures the imagination of authors nearer to John, who work to clarify

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[75] Putthoff (2020), 166.

[76] Newman (1992), 1–153. God's anthropomorphic appearance in Ezekiel and Daniel are often the point of departure for further explorations of seeing God and entering his heavenly, temple-like places. The Early Jewish texts include God's anthropomorphic aspects in the throne visions (*1 En.* 14; *T. Levi* 2–3, 5; *2 En.* 20–21; *Apoc. Ab.* 17–18; *L.A.E.* 25; Ezek. Trag. 68–76). The rabbis will also discuss God's appearance as a young warrior and old man based on Exodus 15 and traditions surrounding the dispensation Sinai and the appearance of God in Ezekiel and Daniel. For the Rabbis see Segal (1977), 33–59; Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009), 539–79; and Schäfer (2020), 71–80.

and interpret how the Hebrew Bible depicted God's presence on earth. These texts reveal an ongoing concern with how God could be present amongst his people, even if the temple was unavailable or destroyed. They also develop the concept of individual entities who originate in heaven yet dwell on earth and whom God inhabits.

The Early Jewish and New Testament texts are therefore important to this Chapter because they assign greater agency to entities within the Godhead or aspects of God like Jesus Christ, the Logos, and Wisdom. They also use temple and tabernacle imagery to describe how these beings dwell on earth; and some equate human bodies with temples. Each of these features will find a parallel in John. The value of this overview, as with the foregoing account of "fluidity" and the Hebrew Bible, is that heaven and earth emerge as distinct but without the need to posit worlds of being and becoming such that God must remain intrinsically invisible. He remains visible and present in both.

I begin with the "hypostatic" elements of God's nature. As it explores the prominence of certain features of God in the Hebrew Bible, Early Jewish literature develops a pantheon-like set of what Charles Gieschen calls "hypostases": "an aspect of the deity that is depicted with independent personhood of varying degrees."[77] God's Name (*Jub.* 36:7; *1 En.* 69), Wisdom (*1 En.* 42:1–2; *2 En.* 30:8; Wis 7:21–8:3; Sir 1; *Ebr.* 30–31; *Fug.* 109), Glory (*1 En.* 14:20; *Sib. Or.* 5, 414–427), Spirit (*Ant.* 4.118–121; 1QH[a] VIII, 20; IV, 38; XXIII 29–30, 33; Jude 16:14),[78] and Word (Wis 18:14–16; Ezek. Trag. 96–99; *1 En.* 61:7; *Conf.* 146) each

[77] Gieschen (1998), 45 continues: "The textual evidence shows that an hypostasis shares the nature, authority, and will of the deity since it remains an aspect of the deity." Even if Gieschen is using the "wrong" word because of its potential for an anachronistic theological reading, it remains telling that he and others have still chosen it to describe this phenomenon. These "hypostases" or entities set a loose precedent within Judaism for the Trinitarian debates to follow regardless of how dependent those debates will be on metaphysical categories.
[78] Drawing from Carol Newsom's work, Harrington (2019), 221–64 offers a helpful overview of the emphasis on the Spirit's presence in the Qumran community. Levison (1995) argues against reading the Spirit as hypostatic; nevertheless, the Early Jewish texts, and the NT and Qumran literature do suggest "hypostatic" elements, not least in John.

acquire some level of agency or even anthropomorphic quality while remaining divine.[79] Some "hypostases" can also become places. Exodus 24:10 LXX famously diverts the gaze of Moses, Aaron and the Israelite elders from God himself to the "place" where God stood; and Philo describes the Logos as that "place" (*QE* 2.37, 39; *Conf.* 97). God's wisdom, name, glory, and spirit can likewise dwell in or among angels and humans, occasionally in terms of "tabernacling."[80]

Alongside the "hypostases," Early Jewish authors also multiply angels.[81] The ambiguous מלאכים of the Pentateuch and historical books receive names[82] and, with them, levels of distinction from and renewed association with God. Some angels assume godlike abilities, appearances, names, and such proximity to God that they can be mistaken for him (*3 En.* 16:1–5).[83] Figures like Metatron, the "little YHWH," (*3 En.* 12:1–5) or the Angel of Israel (*Pr. Jos.*) – who bears God's name and "tabernacles" on earth *in* Jacob – suggest that God can in some fashion extend himself beyond the creator/creation distinction.[84] However one understands the "two powers" controversy in later rabbinic literature, the godlike nature of powerful angels surely stoked the anxieties of some Jews, suggesting that these texts challenged aspects of more "orthodox" streams of monotheism.[85]

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[79] Many of the texts cited above are taken from Gieschen (1998), 70–123. Sometimes these entities are in heaven and on earth simultaneously. Consider the Logos in Wis 18:14–16 and across Philo. For glory, also see Newman (1992), 1–153.
[80] This is especially true of the Name. Gieschen (1998) traces its development as something that can be in God's angel (Exod 23:21) to something that possess agency (*Conf.* 146), describes various angels (e.g., *1 En.* 69:15; *Apoc. Ab.* 10:3–8; *Pr. Jos.* 9), and tabernacles on earth (Sir 24:8–10). Note also that while *T. Sim* 5:5–7 may be a Christian interpolation, it may follow naturally from some strands of Jewish thought. God becomes manifest in a body in this account: "Then Shem shall be glorified; because God the Lord, the Great One in Israel, will be manifest upon the earth as a man." Note also Noah's blessing of Shem in *Jub.* 7:12: "may the Lord dwell in the dwelling place of Shem." See also *T. Levi* 5:2 "I shall come and dwell in the midst of Israel." Likewise, *3 Macc.* 1:1–2:20; 6:18–19 suggests that God is in the Holy of Holies but can also reveal his face (seemingly via two angels, but perhaps directly) at the Hippodrome in Alexandria.
[81] For the principal angels see Gieschen (1998),124–51.
[82] Each incorporates God's name in some way as Gieschen (1998), 124–51 explains.
[83] Gieschen (1998), 31–33 offers five criteria of divinity: divine position, divine appearance, divine function, divine name, divine veneration. While *3 En.* postdates the NT by several centuries, it still reveals unease about how close angelic figures came to God in some circles of Judaism.
[84] Regarding the *Pr. Jos.*, Smith (1983), 714 notes Origen's comment in *Philoc.* 33:19 that the angel Israel/Jacob is reminded of his angelic status by the archangel Uriel while "doing service in the body." Ashton (1998) also notes the ongoing challenge of distinguishing angels from God in Jewish texts, especially across *4 Ezra*.
[85] For the most recent entry in this discussion, see Schäfer (2020).

Human beings can also be drawn into God's life and perhaps even share in his being.[86] The most vivid example occurs in the Parables of Enoch, in which the Elect One/Son of Man sits on the throne itself (*1 En.* 45:1–3; 55:3–4; 61:8; 62:1–6; 69:29).[87] In *Joseph and Aseneth*, death must give way to God's spirit, which enters Aseneth's body and transforms her via the "bread of life and cup of immortality" (*Jos. Asen*. 16:1–16).[88] People can also become temples. In the Qumran literature, the community itself joins with angels and becomes a temple in which God can dwell, one that resembles Eden and which the Spirit suffuses (1QS 8:5–10, 9:5–6; 4QFlor III, 1–13).[89] Perhaps most pertinently, the Pauline and Petrine literature draw upon the Spirit and Glory to describe bodies and the early church itself as Christ's body and God's temple (1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:15–19; 12:12–31; 1 Peter 2:4–8).[90] Philo also claims that the purified mind and soul can become a spiritual sanctuary by which one can see God, which vision constitutes "the beginning and end of happiness" (QE 2.51).[91] One should also note that, as it did in the Hebrew Bible, glory continues to characterize places of worship in the Early Jewish literature – thereby suggesting God's presence in them – whether these places are the temple in Jerusalem, Jerusalem itself, or human bodies.[92] In the Psalms of Solomon (17:30–32) and in the DSS (4QDibHam IV, 1–9a; 4QFlor III, 1–13; 11QT XXIX 7–10), seeing the divine glory overlaps with messianic expectation and the expectation of a final temple. The Messiah would both build *and constitute* this place, such

[86] Putthoff (2017) is dedicated to this subject as is his forthcoming volume on Paul (2022). See also Macaskill (2014); Fletcher-Louis (2015); and Brittany Wilson (2021).
[87] In *2 En.* and *3 En.* the changes become increasingly dramatic but still congruent with the kind of transformation that proximity to God entails. Bauckham (1999) notes the unique divine status that sitting on the throne confers upon the Son of Man.
[88] Putthoff (2017), 32–67 offers an in-depth analysis of theme of transformation in *Jos. Asen*.
[89] On humanity-as-temple in Qumran see Dimant (1986); Brooke (1999); Regev (2018); Harrington (2019),146–56, 227–43; and Putthoff (2017), 103–37. See also Fletcher-Louis (2002), in which he argues that the priests make God/Glory visible to humanity in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice.
[90] See Macaskill (2014), 147–71; and Harrington (2019), 303–69.
[91] See also *Somn.* 1.149, in which Philo calls the soul "a house of God and a holy temple, a most beautiful abiding place."
[92] Newman (1992), 115–16 observes the ongoing Early Jewish association of God's glory with temple space (Pr Azar 31; Sir 49:12; *3 Macc.* 2:9, 14–17) and with Jerusalem (*Pss. Sol.* 2:3–5, 19; 11:6–8).

that the Glory of God, already similar to a "hypostasis," becomes further linked both to the temple and to a human form.[93]

Similar themes pervade Jewish mysticism.[94] The mystics could create a temple space from their bodies through study such that God could enter their bodies through their eyes.[95] The more extreme Hekhalot mystics, in search of a vision of the Merkabah, require that the self be destroyed in this vision before it can be refashioned.[96] The mystic achieves this through the power of the divine name, which transforms his body into "a portal through which the human self must pass in its journey to encountering God."[97] God's glory enters the mystic through his inner eyes and then unmakes him before recreating a new body out of the divine glory.[98]

One must also note the rabbinic understanding of God as a place. *Genesis Rabbah* 68:9 reads "coming to a certain place" (Gen 28:11) to mean that Jacob came to God. R. Huna asks: "Why do we give a changed name to the Holy One, blessed be He, and call him "the Place"? Because He is the Place of the world." *Genesis Rabbah* 68:12 elaborates that Jacob's vision is of a temple place and of the high priest ascending and descending the stairway to the altar.[99] Here, again, the place where one meets God is a temple-like structure, whether in heaven, on earth, or in bodies. God himself may be united with the place in question. The Jewish texts that characterize John's theological milieu may widely diverge, but they remain

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[93] See Newman (1992), 121–26. He writes: "The "place" is the "person," and consequently the Davidic Messiah becomes the revealer of the כבוד." Macaskill (2014), 167 observes: "The Messiah was not simply the builder of the eschatological temple, but was also part of its fabric." See also Kreitzer (2004).
[94] For a helpful overview of the mystical concept of a temple within one's body that includes commentary on John and Paul's association of bodies with temples, see Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009), 303–38.
[95] Putthoff (2017), 221 (see also 139–212) argues that "the rabbis believe that when a person beholds God's face it is no different than when he or she eats food. In both instances, the light of God's face enters the body and transforms and sustains it like food. The two entities become commixed the same way that food does inside the body." Puffhoff draws especially from *b. Sotah 49a*.
[96] Putthoff, (2017), 176–212 is drawing especially on *HekhZ* and the Enoch literature. For possible links between John's Gospel and Merkabah Mysticism see Kanagaraj (1998).
[97] Putthoff (2017), 222.
[98] Putthoff, (2017), 211–12, 221–22.
[99] I owe this observation to Kerr (2002), 153, who further notes the footnote attached to this statement: "The world is contained in Him, not He in the world."

awash with spiritual and physical transformation, the divine glory, the divine names, the presence of God in his temple and in his people, and the power of vision.

Synthesis

What emerges is a "constellation" of interrelated theological themes regarding God's presence in the temple among humanity. God's name, his glory, and his embodied, visible presence lead to the cultivation of worship, which, in turn, locates God's presence within physically visible structures. God's temple is the house for his name. Like the tabernacle before it, it is also the place where his glory-cloud manifests itself. Prior to the tabernacle and temple, even the places in which God appeared could become his "house." Eden itself is the temple for God's presence on earth, in which God creates humanity in his image as temple attendants, who possess God-breathed, pneumatic life. Thus, "house" (as divine dwelling), tabernacle, temple, place, name, glory, spirit, Eden, God, and human bodies cohere – however loosely – as the places and entities that suggest God's presence and availability to human experience. They signal an underlying theology of proximity to God that manifests itself in two ways.

The first is that God can be present *in heaven and on earth* without compromising his transcendence. While the specifics vary as to which places are the right places and to what extent God reveals himself, that basic fact remains the same across the Hebrew Bible. It also finds expression in the Early Jewish accounts of "hypostatic" entities, powerful angels, and God's Spirit. The second, related conclusion is that God can inhabit human beings and angels and acquire human form. Again, the variety and means by which this occurs and the dangers and/or transformations associated with such inhabitation take on different forms. Nevertheless, both observations suggest that God can be present to the empirical senses in cult objects and other "bodies" such as the glory-cloud and, in some capacity, humanity itself.

Humanity can physically draw close to God, so close that people can see and touch him at their peril but also so that he might draw them further into his life.

The Farewell Discourse and the Unity of Temples, Bodies, and God

In John, a similar "constellation" conveys God's presence and availability, only now organized around Jesus and his body as the place where God and humanity unite. The divine name, glory, and Spirit permeate the Fourth Gospel, as does John's focus on the temple, its feasts, and the language of "dwelling in" and "seeing." As discussed in the introduction of this chapter, John certainly deploys symbols; but the question here is whether one can read John in light of his Scriptures such that the distance – although not the distinction – between God and humanity collapses in Jesus's body. Given the above survey, the tabernacle and temple imagery that John associates with Jesus's body suggests that God can be so present in, with, and as Jesus that he is visible where Jesus is visible.[100]

Nowhere in John do these themes cohere more closely than in the Farewell Discourse. There, John employs the majority of his preferred terms for God's presence and visibility and focuses them on Jesus. I now turn to the themes of "indwelling," "name," "glory," and "seeing" – acknowledging the Spirit's role throughout and making space in each section for an overview of how each theme connects to the broader temple motif in John.[101] I then draw these studies together and read them alongside the findings from the survey of divine fluidity, temples, and bodies.

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[100] This suggestion is valid only if one accepts the distinction I made between "unseen" and "invisible" in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

[101] Um's (2006), 68–129 exhaustive work on the Spirit and the temple in John shows the Spirit to be a creative power and provides important links between the Early Jewish and Johannine concepts of the Spirit and the Spirit's role in fostering temple-like communities and union with God. While I do not address the Spirit in great depth here, Um shows how the Spirit draws humanity close to God as new creations.

Indwelling and the Temple

The language of μένω and μονή pervades the Gospel and the initial chapters of the Farewell Discourse, in which they describe God's mysterious ability to be "in" humans and vice versa.[102] The words indicate "dwelling," "abiding," and "permanent lodging."[103] They connote the continuity of ongoing presence in a place, and across chapters 14 and 15, Jesus uses them to depict proximity to God despite the fact that Jesus will soon depart the earth. What will emerge from the μένω/μονή language is that God, Jesus, the Spirit, and believers can dwell together even as they are also variously in heaven or on earth.[104]

This dwelling occurs with reference to the temple. Jesus opens the Farewell Discourse with an account of the μοναί in his Father's house (ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ πατρός μου, John 14:2).[105] These "dwellings" belong to God, and they correspond to the τόπος that Jesus is going to prepare (ἑτοιμάζω) "in order that where I am (εἰμὶ ἐγώ) you may be also" (John 14:3). I have shown that the anticipation of a τόπος for God's name is a recurring motif in the Torah, and the authors of the historical books find the fulfilment of this hope in Solomon's temple. In 2 Chronicles 3:1, the temple site is a place (τόπος) that David prepared (ἡτοίμασεν); and across

[102] Key occurrences in the Gospel narrative include John 1:32, in which the Spirit "abides/dwells" upon Jesus and John 8:31–35, in which Jesus defines discipleship as "abiding/dwelling" in his word. For an excellent summary of the theological role of abiding across the Gospel and an overview of the lack of emphasis on it in the major commentaries, see Latz (2010). Bockmuehl (2020), 1309 also raises the important point that mutual "abiding in" between Jesus and believers is the result of eating his flesh and drinking his blood in John 6:53–58. Regardless of whether John 6 references the Eucharist, one should recall the transformative effect of the "Bread of Life and Cup of Immortality" in *Jos. Asen.* (16:1–16) as well as the conflation of ingesting food and seeing God some Rabbinic literature. See Putthoff (2017), 221.
[103] Kerr (2002), 299 observes that in the LXX, μονή only occurs in 1 Macc 7:38, where it indicates permanent dwelling. Josephus uses it to describe Jerusalem (*Ant.* 13.2.1) and a cave where Elijah hid for some time (*Ant.* 8.13.7). Μονή can also refer to heavenly dwellings in *Test. Ab.* A 20. The sense of permanence continues there and in Philo (*Mos.* 1.316). John's use of μένω in 8:35 reinforces the sense of permanence. See Gundry (1967).
[104] In his study of *εἶναι ἐν* and *μένειν ἐν*, Malatesta (1978), 24–36, 54–58 notes that μένω occurs forty times and is implied three times across John while εἰμί is the most frequent verb in John, occurring 442 times, thirteen of which are with ἐν. Maletasta further notes that in the LXX, God is the subject of an *εἶναι ἐν* statement fifteen times and that in fourteen further occurrences, the syntagm describes his presence. In both sets, God "is in" a place, the land of Israel, Jerusalem, the temple, or the people of Israel. Malatesta also associates this phenomenon with σκην- language and ultimately the nature of the covenant.
[105] The only other instance of "my Father's house" in John is also reference to the temple: μὴ ποιεῖτε τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρός μου οἶκον ἐμπορίου (John 2:16).

the books of 1 Kings and 1–2 Chronicles, ἑτοιμάζω describes the temple's construction.[106] At several points in Israel's history, God is also "preparing" a people for himself (2 Sam 7:24; 2 Chr 29:3–35), and these statements feature in the context of the Davidic οἶκος and the temple οἶκος in which God will dwell.[107]

Mary Coloe further observes that in the Pentateuch – with one exception – the phrase "prepare a place" refers to the ark of the covenant, the holiest place and item in the tabernacle.[108] The exception is perhaps even more pertinent and occurs in Exodus 23:20–21, in which God says that he will send his angel to bring Israel to "the land that I have prepared (εἰς τὴν γῆν ἥν ἡτοίμασα)." This angel is to be obeyed since God's name is upon (ἐπί) it. The Early Jewish literature is fascinated with this passage; and John may likewise evoke it as a means of drawing the divine name,[109] "preparation," and "place" together alongside Jesus's own role as a mediator who is simultaneously divine.[110] God prepares places, temples, and people as a means of living in and among them.[111]

John also uses τόπος in several other temple-related passages. In John 4:2–24 Jesus denies that Jerusalem is "the place" for worship; in 11:48, "the Jews" cling to the temple as the "place and nation" that the Romans might take from them if they allow Jesus to continue his work.[112] The "Place of the Skull" (John 19:17) will also evoke another place of sacrifice:

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[106] Coloe (2001), 164 draws attention to 1 Kgs 5:18; 6:9; 1 Chr 22:2, 5, 14; 28:2; 29:2, 3, 16; 2 Chr 2:9; 31:11. She adds an important quotation from Wis 9:8: "you have given a command to build a temple on your holy mountain, and an altar in the city of your habitation, a copy of the holy tent that you prepared from the beginning." Kerr (2002), 307–308 further observes that in Sir 47:13; 49:12, ἑτοιμάζω describes the building of the first and second temples as well as the preparation of temple places in Isa 2:2 and Mic 4:1.

[107] Coloe (2001), 165 and Kerr (2002), 294–96 further develop this notion.

[108] Coloe (2001), 164. This pattern continues across the MT (1 Chr 12:2; 15:1–3; 2 Chr 1:4). Recall here Anderson's (2009; 2021) argument that the ark could double as a theophany.

[109] Jesus will soon follow his statement about μοναί with two ἐγὼ εἰμὶ sayings (14:6; 15:1, 5). The prevalence of ὄνομα across the Farewell Discourse is also noteworthy: the divine name is not far from John's thought. Jesus also prays that the disciples may be where εἰμὶ ἐγὼ (17:24).

[110] See Gieschen (1998), 51–69.

[111] Coloe (2001), 166 identifies several further references outside of the LXX to "preparation" and "place" regarding the temple: Wis 9:8; 2 Macc 1:27–29; 2:17–18; *Tg. Neof.* Exod 33:14; Num 10:33.

[112] See Coloe (2001), 165.

Mt. Moriah, which 2 Chronicles 3:1 describes as the temple site.[113] Genesis 22:3–14 uses τόπος four times in its narrative of Abraham's "sacrifice" of Isaac, at the close of which Abraham names the place: κύριος εἶδεν, ἵνα εἴπωσιν σήμερον ἐν τῷ ὄρει κύριος ὤφθη.[114] Jacob will also describe the theophany at Bethel as the "place" in which God is, the place of God's "house" (Gen 28:16–17); and God introduces himself to Jacob in Genesis 31:13 with: ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τόπῳ θεοῦ. The Hebrew Bible also refers to areas in the tabernacle or the temple as holy (Exod 26:33; Lev 16; 1 Kgs 8:6).[115] John's use of μοναί alongside the οἰκία τοῦ πατρός, ἑτοιμάζω, τόπος, and εἰμὶ ἐγώ thus suggests that the "dwellings" in question are temple-like and indicative of God's presence with his people. Such a connotation also flows from the juxtaposition of absence and presence across the Farewell Discourse. Jesus opens the discourse by encouraging the disciples in the face of his oncoming departure (13:36): they are to believe in God and to believe in him (John 14:1) because they will once more be near to Jesus and the Father in the μοναί of the Father's house (14:2).

Against this backdrop, Jesus himself may be the house in question in 14:2, just as John reveals him to be the temple in 2:16–22.[116] By washing their feet, Jesus prepares the disciples to enter and inhabit the dwellings of the temple "of his body."[117] His words have also cleansed them, enabling them to dwell in the true vine (15:3), who is Jesus himself. Jesus declares this in the seventh and ultimate "I am saying" (15:1–5), which may evoke the

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[113] Troost-Cramer (2017) offers a detailed study of Akedah themes in John. In my view, John 3:16 remains the most straightforward parallel.
[114] Coloe (2001), 165 makes this observation without noting the seeing motif.
[115] Coloe (2001), 166.
[116] Kerr (2002), 268–313 makes this argument.
[117] For the importance of footwashing before entering the temple, Kerr (2002), 290 adduces Philo *QG* 4.5; *QE* 1.2; *Spec.* 1.206–207; P. Oxy 840. For well-developed account of purity as a pre-requisite for the perception of divine revelation see Rogan (2021), esp. 59–99. He concludes that "In early Jewish writings, ritual purification was to prepare people only for what God reveals of God, whether knowledge of God, wisdom from God, or the vision of God. In the Fourth Gospel, John's ablutions are interpreted as a ritual purification in preparation for the revealing of Jesus to Israel, and the relation between ritual purity and the revelation of Jesus is retained throughout the narrative" (99).

longstanding symbol of Israel as a temple-vine that connects the underworld, earth, and heaven.[118] By way of the vine image, John may also be drawing upon the theme of divine planting (φυτεύω) in God's temple-place, one rooted in Eden (Gen 2:8), the exodus (Exod 15:17), God's promise of a house to David (2 Sam 7:10–14), Ezekiel's eschatological vision of a restored Israel (Ezek 17:22) and evident in the Qumran Pesher of 2 Sam 7:10–14 (4QFlor 1.1–13) as well as Nehemiah's prayer in 2 Maccabees 1:27–29.[119] Once cleansed, the disciples may enter this everlasting temple-vine and dwell with God and Jesus, a point John emphasizes by deploying his densest concentration of μένω/ μονή in John 15:1–10. Cleanliness, bearing fruit, dwelling, and glorification constitute this relationship, in which the Father is the "vinedresser" and reminiscent of God in Ezekiel 17:1–24.[120] Jesus's ongoing "dwelling" in heaven and on earth thus finds expression in the temple imagery of washed feet, purity, and the vine. Because Jesus constitutes God's temple, his place, the believers he cleanses may also come to comprise that temple.

Having established the temple-like nature of the μοναί, John continues to use μονή/ μένω language in the Farewell Discourse to underscore that Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit are actively "dwelling" or abiding in one another and in believers. Jesus reminds Philip that the Father, who dwells (μένων) in Jesus, is the one who does Jesus's works (John 14:10) and that the Father is "in him" (14:11). He then applies "dwelling," being "in," and seeing language to the Spirit and himself (14:15–31). Even though the world does not see or know the Spirit, the disciples "know him, for he dwells (μένει) with you and will be in you" (John

[118] See Kerr (2002), 343–45. On the temple vine see Hayward (1996), 158–61. See also Macaskill (2014), 252, 257–63.
[119] Tiller (1997), 312 notes the prevalence of an eternal plant(ing) – מתעט עולם – in Early Jewish literature: "The expression is used metaphorically in 4Q418 81 1 13 (Major Sapiential Work, 4Q415-18); 1 QS 8:5 and 1 QS 11:8; 1QH 6 (14):15 and lQH[a] 8 (16):6. Similar metaphorical expressions occur at 1 Enoch 10:16 ("plant of truth"); 84:6 ("a plant of the eternal seed"); and 93:5, 10 ("[eternal] plant of truth")…in CD 1:7 ("plant root"); and in IQH[a] 8(16):10 ("truthful planting")." See also Hayward (1996), 161 for the account in Josephus of the Golden vine on the entrance to the sanctuary (*B.J.* 5.210–11; *Ant.* 15.395) and for the theme of the temple-vine in *L.A.B* 159–61.
[120] On the vine theme in Ezekiel and John, see Fowler and Strickland (2018), 49, 117.

14:17). Jesus then explains that the disciples will come to know that they are in God because they are in Jesus and Jesus is in them (John 14:20). Those who love Jesus will find that he manifests (ἐμφανίσω) himself to them (John 14:21); and this manifesting evokes Jesus's earlier statement that the disciples will see him again (14:18). "Being in," "seeing," and the Spirit's indwelling set the context for Jesus's remarkable claim that he and the Father "will come and make our home (μονήν)" with those who love Jesus and keep his word (14:23). Even in Jesus's absence, the temple dwelling of human bodies persists because of his ongoing presence in believers alongside the Father and the Spirit.

John's use of "dwelling" language thus suggests God can be in heaven and on earth, sometimes simultaneously. God and Jesus make their homes with believers, and believers reciprocate by dwelling in Jesus and in his love as the "household of God" (cf. John 8:31–38). In one sense, believers can become the place of God, a temple-like entity, because they themselves dwell in the temple-like place that Jesus and the Father constitute. They will come to inhabit the dwellings of God's house even as they constitute his dwelling on earth. Reminiscent of the Davidic line, they form a "household" of God that Jesus is preparing.[121] The imagery of Jesus as the temple extends to his disciples even as this imagery also points to the "fluid" presence of God in Jesus, who is God's temple.

The Name and the Temple

Like μένω and μονή, the divine ὄνομα features across the Gospel and finds especially concentrated use in the Farewell Discourse.[122] John shows that the name bridges heaven and earth, suggesting again that God can be in both places, a theme already evident in John's use

[121] See Coloe (2001), 157–78 and her further development of this theme in Coloe (2007). See also Mouton (2016). The play on "house" here and the overlap with temple is also apparent in the 4QFlor 1.1–13. One should also note *2 Bar.* 48:6 and 23, which read, respectively, "you prepare a house for those who will be" and "for we are all a people of the name." "Preparation," "house," and "name" endure in this text as important ways of describing God's people and the hope of being near him.
[122] See Chapter 1 of this thesis for prominence of the name motif in John and how it unites Jesus to the Father.

of ἐγώ εἰμι.[123] Initially, the name in question is Jesus's name. In chapters 14–16, Jesus insists that anything the disciples ask in his name, either he will do or the Father will give (14:13, 15:16; 16:23, 26). Prayer in Jesus's name elicits an equivalent response from Jesus and the Father: both will answer to it. Jesus's name will also be the catalyst of future persecution because the persecutors do not know the "one who sent me" (15:21). Unbelievers do not yet associate Jesus's name with the Father, hence the persecution, which suggests that truly knowing God means knowing Jesus's name. Jesus will also send the Holy Spirit – ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται (15:26) – from the Father; and the Father will send the Spirit in Jesus's name (14:26). The Spirit will remind the disciples of everything Jesus said to them (14:26), presumably to better enable his words to abide in them (15:7). Jesus's name thus occasions the Spirit's arrival on earth for the purposes of drawing believers close to Jesus and close to God. Each of these statements about Jesus's name falls alongside John's emphasis on Jesus's origins from God (16:27–28), his being in the Father (14:10; 16:28–32), and his call to abide in himself and in his love (15:4–10).

The so-called "High Priestly Prayer" further aligns Jesus with the Father and believers with both via the Father's name. In 17:1–5, Jesus describes a mutual glorification of Father and Son on earth and in heaven, defines eternal life as knowing both "the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent," and then announces that he has manifested (ἐφανέρωσα) "your name" to the people the Father has given him (17:6).[124] Belief hinges on recognizing this name and accepting that Jesus has come from God (17:8). However, because Jesus is returning to God, he also prays that God will keep the disciples "in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one even as we are one" (17:11), and he reveals that "while I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you gave me" (17:12). As Joshua Coutts

[123] Both Kerr (2002), 336–45 and Macaskill (257–62) provide detailed accounts of how the predicated "I am" sayings reinforce temple imagery and the concept of union with Christ.
[124] As Coutts (2017), 73–5 observes, John 12:27–28 and 17:1 suggest that the "name" and the Son can receive equal glorification.

argues, “the divine name means divine prerogatives and character expressed in action.”[125] It associates Jesus’s identity with God’s, which establishes the “sphere” of ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου.[126] The one who bears the name is united to God, as is the one “kept” in it. At the end of the prayer, Jesus claims, “I have made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them” (17:26).[127] The name reveals divine identity and unity, thereby underscoring “oneness” as the goal of Jesus’s mission (17:20–25).[128] It functions like a “place,” in which believers enter the shared divine life of God and Jesus and thus also acquire eternal life.[129] God and humanity meet within it.

In light of the “hypostatic” quality of God’s name in the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish literature, John’s use of it to draw Jesus, the Father, and believers together does not come as a surprise. The angels who bear the divine name connect heaven to earth and lead humans between them as divine agents of God.[130] As I have shown, the Hebrew Bible also consistently refers to the temple as a “house” and “place” for God’s name.[131] What emerges from John’s use of the name in the Farewell Discourse is that Jesus is the “place” of the name on earth; one encounters the name in him. Even after he departs, the name will “keep” and define believers. This understanding parallels John’s account of Jesus’s body as the temple

[125] Coutts (2017), 128–29
[126] Coutts (2017), 129–33 notes the congruence between being “kept in” and “abiding in.”
[127] *Sib. Or.* 1:324–400 is a Christian text and, according to Collins (1983), 332 should be dated no later than 150. It is noteworthy because it describes the incarnation in terms of the grammar, syntax, and, perhaps, gematria (1:324–329).
[128] With specific regard to the question of “oneness” in John, Byers (2017) explains how the Shema forms a key backdrop to Johannine conceptions of oneness and theosis. After a survey of contemporary sources, Byers concludes: “the language of divine oneness stemming from Deuteronomy 6:4 possessed a degree of fluidity in which ‘one’ was a means of expressing *social identity* as well as monotheistic convictions” (emphasis his, 126). Byers does not mean “fluidity” as I do, but his choice of word is telling. Appold’s (1976) classic study continues to be valuable for its depiction of oneness as a theme that permeates the Gospel.
[129] Macaskill (2014), 252–70 offers a similar reading of the power of the name, in which he underscores divine presence. He further claims of Jesus that “the one who is sent is not simply ‘functionally’ divine: he ‘is’ God, and because he is God, he is able to bring salvation and life” (259).
[130] See Coutts (2017), 153–59 and Gieschen (1998), 270–80 for the power of the name and its relation to angelic tradition in the Early Jewish literature and in John’s use of these traditions to reinforce the divinity of Christ. See also Fossum (1995), 97–133.
[131] For further resonance in the Hebrew Bible, see Kerr (2002), 336–54.

even as it alludes to the broader themes of the divine name, its agency, and its connection to angelic mediators. God's dwelling and his name are places where believers meet God and both evoke the temple, the place of God. Jesus manifests it because he himself is a temple where it resides.

The Glory and the Temple

The Father, Son, Spirit, and believers have come to resemble places insofar as they present the opportunity for indwelling. God's name even invites comparison to a sphere or container in which believers are "kept" and that Jesus's simultaneously manifests. In similar fashion, John reveals that the divine glory is a defining characteristic of the places of divine habitation. In several cases glory appears to be the result of mutual indwelling.[132] The Father is glorified *in* the Son when the Son answers prayers made in the Son's name (John 14:13). Likewise, the Father is glorified when people bear fruit and thus prove themselves to be Jesus's disciples, the result of dwelling *in* Jesus (John 15:8). The Spirit glorifies Jesus when the Spirit reveals to humanity what belongs to Jesus – and, by extension, God (John 16:14–15). Just as glory describes the mobile, visible nature of God and the places where God dwells across the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish literature, so too does it characterize Johannine "indwelling."[133]

In Chapter 17, John further aligns "glory" with place, even as he increases his focus on "name" and seeing. Jesus lifts "his eyes to heaven" at the opening of the high priestly prayer, and he twice references the glory he shared with God prior to the creation of the

[132] Regarding the apocalypses, Koch (1972), 32 has likewise observed: "Glory is the portion of those who have been raised from the dead, who will thus become as the angels or stars of heaven (Dan. 12.3; I Enoch 50.1; 51.4). Glory is then the mark not only of man, however, but also of conditions, the "state" in which they live, the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21.ff; II Bar. 32.4), or of the eschatological ruler (II Bar. 30.1) who is above them." I take this quotation from Newman (1992), 81.
[133] On the consistency of this theme see Newman (1992), 1–153. I briefly note from his work that the LXX always uses δόξα to translate כבוד in the syntagm כבוד יהוה. That syntagm appears thirty-six times in the Hebrew Bible, and eleven of those occurrences are associated with movement while fourteen have to do with "appearing" (ראה). Newman demonstrates that "the movement…relates Glory to various spaces [often temple-related] where Yahweh is thought to be (visibly) present" and that "movement implies visibility" (17–24).

world (John 17:5, 24). Here, one may assume that he has in mind a heavenly glory, although it is not immediately clear whether this prior glory is of a different magnitude than the glory with which Jesus and the Father will glorify each other in his hour (John 17:1–4).[134] In either case, glory remains a product of the unity that Jesus achieves between God, himself, and humanity. It will also characterize Jesus's renewed proximity to the Father in heaven.

Jesus is therefore glorified in believers. He characterizes them as his own and the Father's (John 17:10); yet, Jesus also gives glory in order to *cause* perfect oneness: "I in them and you in me" (John 17:22–23). Note that the glories are indistinguishable. Jesus gives believers the glory that the Father has given him, which links being in the presence of God in heaven and the glory there with the glory that both unites and emerges from the union of believers to one another, to the Father, and to Jesus (John 17:22). Being "kept in the name" (John 17:11–12) is an experience of mutual glorification, in which glory – like the name – moves from God to Jesus to believers and then from believers to Jesus to God, seemingly by way of the Holy Spirit (John 16:5–15). If "dwelling" and "name" suggest the spatial proximity of unity and "being in," glory seems to suggest the experience both within that sphere and as the motivation to seek it.

Most importantly, the final occurrence of glory in John is nearly synonymous with the first (1:14) yet incorporates key differences. In John 17:24, Jesus requests that believers "be with me where I am, to see (θεωρῶσιν) my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world." This is remarkably close to: "and the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we have seen (ἐθεασάμεθα) his glory, glory as of the only begotten near the Father" (John 1:14). In both cases, proximity to Jesus yields the sight of divine glory. In the prologue, Jesus has come into the world and revealed this glory by

[134] Schnelle (1992), 80–82 argues that the various "glories" may express differences of time and place but retain a fundamental unity: "Insofar as *doxa*, for John, means nothing more than Jesus' divinity…we must maintain the unity in principle of Johannine *doxa* theology."

dwelling among people. Now he prays that believers will be able to come to where he is in order to see the glory he has always possessed.

The challenge here is that everyone seems to be on earth and in heaven at the same time.[135] When Jesus asks that the believers be with him "where I am" (17:24), the ambiguity seems intentional. Given all that he has said about unity and indwelling, "where I am" could mean anywhere believers are. Jesus has already described them as being in the name and as receiving the same glory from Jesus that the Father gave to him. This suggests that believers can see the glory Jesus shares with God in heaven in other believers while they are still on earth. On the other hand, Jesus has also emphasized that he is leaving this world and returning to the Father – although the Father is already "with me" (John 16:32).

The future hope of being with Jesus and the Father remains well-established, even as Jesus achieves the ongoing presence of himself and the Father with believers by his still future death, resurrection, and ascension. The ongoing situation of believers in the world through proximity to each other appears to mirror a future yet simultaneous proximity between Jesus and God and themselves in heaven. It is as if believers become a dwelling that houses Jesus's name and glory and thus his very presence in their bodies, even while he is also present with the Father in the glory they share. These spatial and eschatological conditions are the result of an indwelling in which God comes to define the identity of human beings by virtue of his incarnate son. Glory characterizes this experience because glory always accompanies the "where" of God.

[135] Martyn's (2003), 124–43 solution to this challenge is to see the Paraclete as the creator of a "two-level drama." I agree with many of his observations about how heaven and earth are brought together through the union of Jesus, the Paraclete, and believers. However, I am more convinced that a theology that allows for God to be in two places at once drives John's thought rather than the alleged historical events of the "two-level drama."

Regarding glory and the temple, then, God is consistently visible in John in terms of his glory.[136] Jesus manifests God's glory in the signs, and in the Farewell Discourse he shares that glory with believers even as he prays that they will be with him and experience the sight of it in heaven. Glory fills the divine places for John, and the most divine place in John is Jesus, from whom the glory may spread to those who believe. The glory is both stationary and mobile in the sense that Jesus is full of God's glory – like the temple and tabernacle. In the Hebrew Bible's construal of the tabernacle and temple, glory is what made God visible just as it concealed him and made him dangerous. It functioned as a divine "body."[137] In the Early Jewish and Rabbinic literature, glory likewise characterizes the vision of and body of God.[138] In John, the same is true but with a twist: the glory, however counterintuitive, manifests itself most visibly and jarringly in Jesus's wounded and crucified body – obscuring God even as it manifests him most fully in the moment that will achieve his enduring intimacy with humanity.[139] The glory remains visible yet dangerous in John in the sense that God himself will face death through Jesus in order to realize his glorious purpose.[140]

Seeing God in Jesus and in Believers

As the dwelling place of God's name and the embodiment of his glory, Jesus becomes a holy place along the same lines of Exodus 25:8, the place God chooses to make himself visible. As noted above, the Farewell Discourse makes divine indwelling apparent in spatial ways from

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[136] Bauckham (2015), 43–62 makes a similar argument. See Nielsen (2010), 366. He argues that "In the narrative structures of the Fourth Gospel δόξα/δοξάζειν principally means divine identity and recognition of this identity."

[137] See Sommer (2009), 60–61 and Newman (1992), 94–102.

[138] See Newman (1992), 79–102 and Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009), 502–79.

[139] Pamment (1983), 16 rightly claims that "In the Fourth Gospel, God's glory is manifested *in* the suffering and death of the Son of man on the cross. The forceful effecting of salvation through God's power, pictured in the O.T., is replaced in John by the effecting of God's salvation through the Son of man's voluntary self-surrender: the gift of God's son."

[140] Chapter 6 of this thesis explores this theme in greater detail. Frey (2018), 284 observes "the becoming flesh of the Word—as a variation of the dwelling of God in the midst of his people—is aimed at the cross, where the sent one, who is crucified as "king of the Jews," completes his way. And God's nature and primordial loving will are, according to John, enduringly recognizable precisely in this glorified crucified one."

its opening. Jesus's preparation and his identity as "the way, the truth, and the life" will allow believers to inhabit his Father's house (John 14:1–6; 15:1). In the next verse, in response to Thomas's question about knowing the way, Jesus will equate knowing that he is "the way" with knowing and seeing the Father (John 14:7–9; cf. 17:24). Seeing God is thus the result of knowing how to be where the Father is, and in John 14:7, Jesus implies what he makes explicit in 14:9: that to see him is to see the Father.

This is because "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:11). Seeing God results from being where the Father is, yet John also portrays the sight as available in Jesus's body. It is as if the Father himself replies to Philip: "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me?" (John 14:9). The Father has been making himself visible in the incarnation and in his works (John 14:11) ever since the Logos came into the world. Nor, apparently, has the world been bereft of this sight, since Jesus will claim that because of his works "they have seen and hated both me and my Father." Even if one does not believe, Jesus's body still presents the sight of God (15:24). John 14:1–11 thus casts John 1:38–39 – in which Jesus replies "come and see" to the question ποῦ μένεις – in a new light. The Father is the place where Jesus dwells, and the Father also dwells in Jesus. In a sense they are temples for each other and their mutual indwelling shapes their appearance.[141]

"Dwelling" and "being in" thus accompany seeing the Father, and both also lead to seeing the Holy Spirit and to seeing Jesus after his resurrection.[142] The world has "neither seen nor known the Spirit" (John 14:17); yet, the Spirit will "convict the world…concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you will see me no more" (John 16:8–10). If righteousness is loving one another and keeping Jesus's commands (15:10–15), then the

[141] See Kerr (2002), 300. Ford (2017), 79 notes that "for the reader of the prologue, the theological answer has already been given: "It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart [that is, 'into the bosom of the Father'], who has made him known" (1:18),"

[142] Latz (2017), 165–66 also connects the themes of seeing and witness to "abiding." Likewise, Kanagaraj (1998), 280, 264–81 argues from John's use of μένειν ἐν and γινώσκειν that "the indwelling of Jesus in the disciples is essentially an experience of 'seeing' Jesus and in him God."

Spirit's conviction seems linked to how the disciples will continue to see Jesus manifest (ἐμφανίζω) himself to them and in them in spite of his departure and in ways the world will not recognize (John 14:18–21; 16:16–19).[143] In answer to Judas-not-Iscariot's question of how this will be, Jesus answers that he and the Father will make their home with those who love them (John 14:23), likely via the Spirit and with reference to "being in" (John 14:19).

The temple motif, the divine name, and seeing God also coalesce in the "High Priestly Prayer." In John 17:6, Jesus again uses ἐμφανίζω to describe how he has communicated God's name, and he will reiterate that he has made God's name known (γνωρίζω) in 17:26. These statements fall alongside a request that the disciples may be kept in the name (17:11) and come to be where Jesus is in order to see the glory the Father has given him (17:24). In Exodus 28:36–37, God commands Moses to inscribe קדשׁ ליהוה (ἁγίασμα κυρίου) onto the gold setting of the high priest's turban as if it were a seal (σφραγίς). As Kerr notes, this inscription is reminiscent of the divine name angel in Exodus 23:21, and the Early Jewish sources make much of its presence on the high priest's person.[144] Crispin Fletcher-Louis also argues that Sirach presents the sight of the high priest Simon as the sight of God (Sir 50),[145] and the glory of this sight may parallel John's account of the manifestation of the name in

[143] Exod 33:13 LXX also uses ἐμφανιζω to describe Moses' request that God show his δόξα. In the context of Philip's request to see the Father and the broader evocations of Moses, Sinai, and seeing God that begin in the prologue (1:14–18), Jesus appears to be developing what the sight of God means and how it is possible.
[144] Kerr (2002), 332–35 notes the importance of the name inscription in *Let. Aris.* 98; *Vit. Mos.* 2.132; Sir 45:12. Coutts (2017), 154 rightly draws attention to Philo's claim regarding the ἁγίασμα: "that seal (σφραγίς) is the form of forms, by which God fashioned the world – indeed an incorporeality, perceptible only to the mind" (*Migr.* 103) and observes that it comes close to his description of the λόγος as an instrument of creation (*Migr.* 6). One might further note that Philo equates the high priest and the logos in *Migr.* 102; and the curious fact remains that in John 6:27, Jesus urges his audience to work for the bread of eternal life, "which the Son of Man will give to you, for on this one God the Father has set his seal (ἐσφράγισεν)." In light of John's focus on the name and the association of "sealing" with "naming" language in the LXX and in Philo, the seal in question is likely the name. This might also explain John's use of "Son of Man" here, whose divine nature the apocalypses are eager to disclose. At very least, both John and Philo associate the cult, the λόγος, the seal of the divine name, and creation with one another, thereby evoking the divine power and visual revelation that the name brings (cf. Exod 25:9, in which God commands the creation of an ἁγίασμα so that "I may be seen among you") – although Philo is swift to assign any revelation to the noetic realm. For the golden πέταλον on which the name was inscribed, see Behr (2019), 94–97.
[145] Fletcher-Louis (2020), 108–10.

Jesus and the sight of Jesus's glory with the Father (John 17:24–26).[146] Like the high priest, Jesus bears the name and extends it to believers in a way evocative of the Aaronic blessing, in which the priest extends the name to the people (Num 6:26–27).[147] The visible presence of the name on the priest in the context of temple and cult suggests that Jesus himself manifests a godlike vision via the temple imagery of his person and works.

Human beings may also participate in this vision and, seemingly, manifest some aspects of it in themselves.[148] Across the Farewell Discourse, "dwelling in" informs ongoing manifestation, seeing, and God's continued presence in humanity. The result is new identities, so long as people "dwell" within the parameters of loving Jesus and one another and keeping his commands (15:1–17). Consider that believers participate in the name (17:11) and the glory (17:22). In my view, John claims that the Spirit will convict the world of an ongoing inability to truly see Jesus (16:10) precisely because seeing Jesus remains a possibility via the bodies of those whom Jesus and the Father now inhabit and through whom they continue to be visible. The Spirit therefore most certainly redefines "location" in John when it comes to the temple and the nature of worship (John 4:20–24); but one must not assume that physical bodies lose their potential for revelation in this change.[149] John has not done away with spatiality, but he has radically changed it.[150] Bodies can continue to be sites of manifestation.

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[146] See also the description of Eleazer in *Let. Aris.* 83–99.
[147] Jesus's χιτών (John 19:23) may also evoke high priestly vestments, although this is not entirely certain (cf. *Ant.* 3.161). Kerr (2002), 319–20, is doubtful.
[148] See Schnackenburg (1968), 3:193: "[the community of disciples] becomes a perfect unity…and is at the same time called to make the mystery of divine unity visible in brotherly love."
[149] The resurrection, as Jesus describes it in John 5:28–29, prefigures it in John 11:44, and enacts it in John 20, indicates the continuity of human identity with the human form and body, however modified.
[150] Kerr (2002), 294 speaks for many when he claims that John has done away with spatialized worship. This, of course, is impossible for embodied humans. What Kerr and others really mean is that a localized, Jerusalem temple is no longer *the* place. I grant this, especially as John is writing after the loss of the Jerusalem temple. Nevertheless, John relocates the temple in human beings and in the relationships they forge, which are of necessity related to and constrained by the spatial nature of their bodies. Chapter 4 of this thesis will address the role of place and space and the value of physical topography in John.

Here the question arises whether Jesus's incarnation is the first among many: is the abiding presence of God in Jesus any different than his abiding presence in believers? In his recent analysis of "oneness" and its relationship to his construal of Johannine theosis, Andrew Byers demonstrates that John draws God and humanity together while preserving distinctions between them. Having argued that the monotheism of the Shema (the name! Deut 6:4) is the driving category behind John's conception of oneness across the gospel, he further notes how John's imagery nevertheless determines the distinctions between the incarnate "theosis" of Jesus and the Johannine theosis offered to believers. Jesus is the vine (John 15:1–11); the bridegroom (John 3:29); and the shepherd (John 10:1–18) while believers are branches, bride, and sheep. Byers categorizes them as "dependents."[151] Believers and those people who recognize his power worship Jesus and not each other (9:38; 18:4–8).

Byers also notes that John's filial language maintains subtle but consistent distinctions between Jesus and believers:

> Only Jesus is referred to as ὁ μονογενής (the only Son) and ὁ υἱός (the Son), both in the singular. The filial term of reference for believers is the collective τέκνα (and on one occasion ' sons' in the plural – υἱοὶ φωτός /' sons of light' – in 12:36). Though John the Baptist is referred to as being sent from 'God' (1:6), only Jesus is referred to as being sent by the 'Father'. Jesus is also the only character in John's Gospel to refer to God as 'my Father' (ὁ πατήρ μου, occurring 25 times in John). When he affirms the filial incorporation of the disciples within the divine family, the language is not 'I am ascending to our Father and our God', but 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father [πατέρα μου καὶ πατέρα ὑμῶν], my God and your God [θεόν μου καὶ θεὸν ὑμῶν]' (20:17).[152]

While believers come to be in God, they do so because they are in Jesus and because he and the Father reside in them.[153]

Nevertheless, because Jesus and therefore God are in them, they can still portray the sight of God to one another just as they labour to establish the place of God for one another

[151] Byers (2017), 182.
[152] Byers (2017), 182.
[153] Drawing from Shirbroun (1985), 231 Kerr (2002), 332 observes that God gives some things to Jesus which Jesus does not pass on to the disciples: the name, judgement, "all things," "life in himself." See also Macaskill (2014), 160–61.

by dwelling in Jesus's love. Having established this distinction, it remains to revisit the conclusions I made at the end of my survey of God's presence in the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish literature and to align them with my reading of the Farewell Discourse. I will then conclude with an account of the presence of God Jesus's body in John 1:14 and 2:21.

Conclusion

The two conclusions I took from the first part of this Chapter were that God could be present in heaven and on earth in tangible ways without compromising his nature as God and that God and humans could overlap, resulting in human transformation.[154] What occurs in John is the radical transformation of God into a human in order to effect the radical transformation of humans into God. Jesus is the dwelling presence of God in name, in glory, and in visible manifestation, and John suggests that God is empirically present in Jesus's body, just as he was empirically available in his temples and houses. His understanding of oneness also appears to derive both from his understanding of God's ability to inhabit human bodies and sacred architectures and from his understanding of the ecclesial identity formation that the Holy Spirit can cultivate. God is transcendent in John, but not because the physical world presents a barrier to him. He is transcendent because of the power of his name and because he is holy and glorious.

John implies that believers can experience the sight of God in one another as a corollary of his indwelling power. Seemingly through the gift of the Spirit and by the indwelling that Jesus makes possible, believers can constitute Jesus's body on earth, even as Jesus constituted God's body on earth, the place in which God dwells even as he reigns in heaven. Because Jesus is the site of God on earth, and the place where God chooses to make himself near to people, and because John describes his physical body as that site, he, in his

[154] Note the similarities between what I have articulated here and Barrett's (1982), 110 claim: "The paradox of the Son of man is that even when on earth he is in heaven; the mythical – or historical – descent and ascent is of such a kind that effectively the Son of man is in both places at once."

body – even when it becomes a multiplicity of believing bodies – presents the ongoing sight of God. Given that the theology John inherits has no objection to bodies and physical architectures, it becomes clear that even in Jesus's much touted "absence," he is very much present, and not just in purely "spiritual" ways – if by "spiritual" scholars imply or assume "necessarily invisible."

This is why the "fluidity model" is helpful. It need not suggest that reality is somehow exclusively material for John; but it does reveal that from the Hebrew Bible and down throughout Early Judaism, a category of thought persists in which the spiritual and earthly realms can intertwine. All the symbolic and metaphorical language in John points not to the fact that Jesus is an ultimate symbol, but that he *is* God. He is God "striding on the earth" as much as he is the human Jesus with a fleshly body that almost no one recognizes as God. Instead of mitigating distance, reliance on the concept of "symbol" can inadvertently increase it because it connotes that God is "out there" and Jesus is "here," pointing the way to him. For John, however, Jesus is God on earth, the way to God himself, and pointing to his Father in heaven all at once.

Such observations still do not fully answer the question of how the relationship between the Farewell Discourse and the Hebrew Bible aids an understanding of Jesus's body as the temple. How, then, does the constellation of indwelling, name, glory, and seeing further this understanding? John 1:14 describes the culminating act of the Logos's motion from God – yet as God – into the Cosmos. The Word comes "to his own" in the cosmos; and even if these do not receive him, others do. Here, belief in the name of the Word makes one a child of God, just as belief in Jesus will render life in his name in John 20:31. In order to achieve this, the Word chooses to enter the cosmos in flesh. In John 1:14 it "becomes" flesh and "tabernacles," and ἐγένετο must be understood in relation to ἐσκήνωσεν. Given the foregoing, "tabernacle," "glory," and "seeing the glory" put "became flesh" in the context of

Israelite worship and the presence of God (cf. Ex 25:8). Jesus's σάρξ body and the tabernacle intertwine as the dwelling place of God in the world.[155]

Jesus "exegetes" God (1:18) by movement to and from God and by manifesting him in the places to which he travels. He moves from the intimacy of God's κόλπος to "becoming flesh" via tabernacling with a divine glory. These are all divinely intimate spaces: the Adamic flesh as image of God into which God breathes life; the temple-garden as God's home on earth; the very κόλπος of God himself. Even as he moves "away" from God, the Logos only goes to God's other "houses." For his venture to the cosmos, a dark and unreceptive place, the Logos brings, in his own body, that which the cosmos was originally created to be: God's dwelling, the space of his intimacy with humanity. In Jesus's body, one can therefore come to see both God and the restoration of creation – including the restoration of oneself – precisely because, in the words of Deuteronomy 33:27: "The eternal God is a dwelling place."[156]

John establishes this restoration in the resurrection of Jesus's body as the rebuilt temple anticipated in John 2:21. The disciples remember that Jesus declared, "destroy this temple, and after three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19) after he "was raised from the dead" (John 2:22). The temple in question is not the Jerusalem temple, decades in construction, but "the temple of his body" (John 2:21). Yet, in one sense, for John, this temple has been under construction ever since Moses and the people waited three days for the Lord to descend on Mt. Sinai, thus beginning the series of theophanies that would institute the conditions of his dwelling amongst them (Exod 19:11). As the post-resurrection memories of the disciples indicate, this temple finally comes to its completion in the resurrection and ascension, which,

[155] One should also note that regarding in John 1:14, Sommer (2009), 122 identifies a tradition that will "unfold" the themes of sacred space and divine presence. John "relates God's expatriation from heaven to become Jesus" such that "the expatriation or self-exile these verses describe voids the need for Pentateuchal law even as it reverses the original disaster of Adam's exile: By becoming a human, God (in the body of a dying Messiah) atoned for all human sin and thus made law unnecessary." (122) Like Anderson (2009), Sommer goes to John as the prime example of NT resolution of the challenges that the movement and presence of the God of Israel present to conceptions of space, redemption, and seeing.

[156] Deut 33:27 LXX reads: καὶ σκέπασις θεὸς ἀρχῆς, suggesting that God enfolds and covers.

far from removing Jesus from his disciples or from the world, will create the possibility of unity between himself, God, and believers. If anything, Jesus does not so much replace the Jerusalem temple as expand it.[157]

Because his body is raised in crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension – as John's polyvalent usage of ἐγείρω and ὑψόω suggests – Jesus makes himself known as the way to God and the presence of God on earth. He also secures the presence of God in those who believe. The temple is Jesus's body and his Father's house; and its restoration "in-corporates" believers into the body of Christ on earth and the house(hold) of God on earth even as it anticipates their presence with Jesus in heaven. This makes them one with God and each other. What is more, none of this is purely "spiritual" – if "spiritual" means some kind of separation from bodies. Jesus's physical actions are real actions for John insofar as none of them is knowable apart from what happens to Jesus and thus what happens to his body. The disciples' memories testify to this. Nor should this come as a surprise, given the consistent portrayal of God as tangibly present and active in the tabernacle and temple. The same is true of Jesus's body. Even when spiritually present as an identity-shaping, indwelling entity, he is still known through the physical bodies of those who bear his name.

The aim of this chapter has been to show that God makes himself physically visible in Jesus's body and that John shows this by calling Jesus's body the temple but also by showing how possible it is for God and humanity to come together and be present in one another. The evidence in John remains inseparable from what Jesus does, but it also extends to humanity at large – to all who believe. Once John has connected the incarnation to Israelite worship as a place of direct meeting with God and ensuing transformation, he does not have to go far in order to make sense of it. In fact, he appears to go no further. Nor, for John, does this

[157] See the argument for expansion across Beale (2004b) and Regev's (2019) critique of "replacement."

compromise Jesus's distinct identity as "the Son."[158] The ways the Hebrew Bible describes God's presence in the world and with people appeals naturally to John as a means of explaining the *astoundingly novel yet entirely consistent* notion of the incarnation that he is committed to portraying. It is the intimacy of worship, always the site of divine and human meeting, that allows John to equate Jesus's body with the tabernacle and temple. It is there that one may see God.

[158] For more on this see Byer's notion of dyadic theology in his book. Opening two chapters.

CHAPTER 4: PROXIMITY, PLACE, AND COSMIC MOUNTAIN

Geography is simply a visible form of Theology.

— Jon D. Levenson (1985), 116

Chapter 3 concluded that Jesus is God on earth and that if one desires to see God, one must see Jesus. I wish to begin Chapter 4 by examining that conclusion alongside two observations about space and place in John. The first is that across the Gospel, the reader always knows where Jesus is. John names many of the towns, cities, and regions that Jesus visits; and he notes the topographies in which key events and discourses transpire. The second is that belief in Jesus has spatial components: true believers recognize that Jesus is from God and will return to him. They also draw near to him. I explore these observations in greater detail below, but I draw attention to them here in order to show that John always presents his readers with the spatial information that he considers necessary for belief. The upshot is that "place" in the Fourth Gospel acquires theological value. Knowing where Jesus is, where he came from, and where he is going contributes to belief and thus to recognizing God in him.[1] Recognizing God and seeing him are therefore tied to Jesus's location, such that, for John, seeing God and belief are contingent on places and knowledge of place.[2]

Chapter 4 will therefore develop the theological value of place as a means of understanding God's physical visibility on earth. Whereas Chapter 3 established that Jesus is a theophany via his temple-body, I now turn to places external to his body. Several challenges arise: what is "place" such that it can relate to theophany? Does John depict places that evoke theophany? How does one know? Given the many places in John, what makes some better candidates for examination than others? A further challenge is that although

[1] For the theological content of belief see Chapter 1 of this thesis.
[2] One does not need to determine the relationship between sight and belief in order to realize this. I discuss that relationship in Chapter 5.

scholars have addressed many aspects of Johannine place, very few have used it to study divine visibility.[3]

Despite this lacuna, several studies situate this Chapter and clarify its focus. Foremost among these are articles by Mark Stibbe and Jerome Neyrey, who show that knowing where Jesus is and being close to him contribute to belief.[4] Nevertheless, Neyrey concludes that "there is relatively little geographical or topographical space of concern in the Fourth Gospel."[5] Such dismissal of geography is of a piece with a broader trend in Johannine scholarship that justifies dismissing the theological value of geography because of Jesus's perceived denunciation of sacred places in John 4:20–24.[6] However, while scholarship shies away from the theological value of geographic locations like Mt. Zion, it continues to affirm the importance of temple imagery for understanding the incarnation.[7] Others argue that the garden settings of Jesus's arrest, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection should evoke the garden of Eden and a new creation.[8] These studies suggest that place *does* matter in John, but that the difficulty lies in knowing whether it exercises symbolic power and – if it does – the extent to

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[3] Much of the scholarship dedicated to place and space in John falls within highly specific categories: the historiography of places and place-names, e.g., Bauckham (2007), 93–112; Murphy-O'Connor (2012, 2013); Charlesworth (2018); evidence of redaction, e.g., Fortna (1974); Scobie (1982) political tensions between regions in light of the two-level hypothesis, e.g., Fortna (1974); Neyrey (2002a; 2002b); purely literary features, e.g., Segovia (1991); Resseguie (2001); postcolonial study, e.g., Dube (1996); and the spatial nature of eschatology, e.g., Park (2011). The increasingly popular social-constructivist theory of place and space finds its way into the approaches of David Kahan (2012) and Peter Claver Ajer (2016). Few address the relationship between place and God although Stibbe (1991), Lieu (1999), Mtata (2009), and Park (2011) are exceptions. Scholars have also incorporated the notion of a heavenly journey and apocalyptic motifs into theological accounts of Jesus's origins and the vision of God available in him, e.g., Grese (1988); Ashton (1991), 383 –406; Sandnes (2005); and Reynolds (2020). Almost every commentary covers the themes of "sending," "departure," and "return," particularly as they describe Jesus's relationship to his Father and to the world, but these are spatial categories rather than place-oriented. The two are related, and I draw on both, but see below for a distinction. For a thorough overview of place and space across the history of Johannine scholarship see Mtata (2009), 75–106.

[4] Stibbe (1991) and Neyrey (2002a; 2002b).

[5] Neyrey (2002b, 71; cf. 2002a, 656).

[6] Instances abound. Examples include Coloe (2001), 102, 112–13; Kerr (2002), 203–204; Lee (2004); Köstenberger (2006), 102–106; Kierspel (2008); Mtata (2009), 202–203. Davies (1974), 288–332 offers a rare instance of topographical and theological analysis that holds the two in tension.

[7] Examples include Coloe (2001), 219–23 and Kerr (2002), 371–76.

[8] Examples include Wyatt (1990); Suggit (1999); Zimmerman (2008a); Marion (2017).

which one should divorce its symbolism from the physical topography that gives rise to it.[9] Kathleen Troost-Cramer's recent argument that John relocates "worship space from geographical locale to person" is compelling for its claim that relocation does not abnegate physicality.[10] Yet few have considered what J.E. Malpas calls the "ontology of place," the question of what place itself is and how it can shape empirical experience and the nature of appearance.[11]

With the aid of Malpas and others, I will argue that the mountains and gardens of John are theophanic: they present the "where" of God, such that when Jesus is in them, they accentuate his divinity.[12] While other places are available for study in John, mountains and gardens possess a longstanding theophanic currency in the Jewish "encyclopedia" because of their ties to the temple as the place of God. Their physicality and theological value are also difficult to untangle. I will argue that first-century Jewish readers can also be expected to know the evocative power of such places and their relationship to divine presence and appearance.

My argument rests on the ongoing contention of this thesis that God is willing to locate himself in and as material reality. As the consistent sites of theophany, mountain and

[9] Anderson (2006a), 190 claims that "a detail is unlikely to be symbolic and is thus innocent of theologization if it is simply an empirical reference to a graphic or topographical detail" (emphasis his). For Brodie (1993), 27–29, 201–202 geography maybe symbolic and historiographic; yet the sometimes confusing geographic details are meant to elevate the "flesh-bound mind" to consider something deeper. Like Brodie, Resseguie (2001), 61–107 is willing to note symbolic aspects or features that certain topographies can accentuate, but his focus is almost exclusively literary and includes almost no consideration of Jewish theological notions of place. Koester (2003), 309–11 allots two pages in his book on Johannine symbolism to geography, but Lee (2010), 156–57, 222–23 is more generous. Meeks (1966) equates Jerusalem with rejection and Galilee with acceptance of Jesus. Neyrey (2002a; 2002b) makes similar associations.
[10] See Troost-Cramer (2017) 114, 146. Thettayil (2007), 160–65 appears to recognize this to some degree. Bauckham (2007), 103 also allows for the theological value of Johannine topography even as he asserts its conformity with ancient historiographical practice. He writes: "Ordinary history is transcended in metahistory, but this can happen only through Jesus' real presence in ordinary history. Thus the story bears emphatically the marks of historiography at the same time as it bursts the boundaries of space and time."
[11] See Malpas (2012). Malpas is notable for his articulation of place as a pre-condition for human experience, even as human experience shapes it. I return to him below.
[12] In my view, the modern reader does not have to choose between the historiographic and the symbolic. This, surely, is in keeping with the nature of the incarnation as John presents it and with his retrospective summary of the Gospel as a collection of selected signs (John 20:30–31).

garden places acquire their revelatory power from this willingness, one that imbues their physicality with meaning instead of transcending or opposing it – just as it does to human flesh. To be sure, the image of Jesus in mountain and garden settings is one that arises in the minds of readers – it is a mental construct. Nevertheless, what the reader "sees" of Jesus owes its nature and meaning to the physicality of Christ and to the physicality of the places in which the text presents him.

Before examining mountains and gardens, the first part of this Chapter will establish the importance of space and place for belief in John, such that one can say confidently that they are relevant to his theology. The second part will turn to Malpas and others in order to define what place is, such that its topography and theological power can illuminate Jesus's appearance. The third part will determine the recurring theophanic value of mountains and gardens across the Hebrew Bible, LXX, and Early Jewish literature; and the fourth will argue that John evokes them in the mountain and garden settings of his Gospel.

The "Where" of God and Johannine Belief

One can begin to understand the spatiality of Johannine belief by approaching it via God's ability to be in two places at once. The initial step is to examine John's portrayal of Jesus's distance from his Father. Again and again, the Father is the one who has sent the Son (e.g., John 3:16–17, 31–36; 5:24, 38; 6:29, 38, 57; 7:16, 18, 29, 33; 8:16, 26, 29, 42; 9:4; 12:45, 49; 13:20; 15:21; 16:5; 17:8, 18). "Sending" implies movement from one place to another at the behest of the sender, from whom the sent one moves away. The two places in view are Heaven (e.g., John 3:13–14, 27, 32; 6:38, 51, 58) and the κόσμος (e.g., John 1:9; 8:23). John uses ἄνωθεν/ἄνω (John 3:31; 8:23; 19:11) to refer to heaven. He also employs the ambiguous ὑψόω (e.g., 3:14; 8:28; 12:32) and the more straightforward ἀναβαίνω (John 6:62; 20:17) and καταβαίνω (John 6:51) to describe the vertical movement Jesus undertakes between heaven and earth. In addition to these verbs, the preposition παρά describes motion away from God,

usually to depict "coming from" him and thus implying "to this earth" (John 6:45–46; 7:28–29; 8:14, 42; 9:33; 13:3; 16:27–28; 17:8). The veiled language of ὑπάγω (John 7:33; 8:21; 16:5) also describes Jesus's return to the Father, which suggests that departing the κόσμος is how Jesus will return to the one who sent him.

John also implies that God's distance from earth is what makes him inaccessible to the human senses. In John 1:18 "no one has ever seen God." Only Jesus Christ, the Logos become flesh – the only God[13] – who is in the Father's κόλπος, has "made him known." While John does not say in John 1:18 that Jesus has seen God, he implies it in John 3:11–13 and claims it outright in John 6:46: "not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father." Jesus also claims that the Father who sent him bears witness about him; but then tells "the Jews" that they have never seen God's form or heard his voice (John 5:37). When God speaks, few, if any, appear to understand what he is saying (John 12:28). The cumulative effect of this language – both spatial and sensory – is that God is in his heaven and that this heaven, however metaphysical or metaphorical, is best described as different from the Cosmos in terms of vertical distance that prevents sensory experience of God.

Yet John also insists that God is on earth in the person and body of Jesus Christ. The opening lines of the Prologue establish that the Logos is both God and a distinct entity, and that this entity, as God, has become Jesus Christ, whose body is God's temple (John 1:1–2).[14] The Farewell Discourse further establishes that Jesus and God are "one," alongside John 10:30; and Jesus twice claims that the Father who sent him is "with me" (John 8:29; 16:32). The very nature of "sent-ness" and the distance it closes is what makes God present in the cosmos. Jesus brings the Father's "life" (John 6), "name" (John 5:43; 17:26), "glory" (John

[13] See page 74n28.
[14] Byers (2017), 30–37 uses the helpful term "dyadic" theology to describe how the Prologue preserves the unity and diversity of God and the Logos.

1:14; 2:11), "temple" (John 1:14; 2:21), and "Spirit" (John 20:22) to earth. He has the Father's life "in himself" (John 5:26)," and the Holy Spirit "abides" on him (John 1:32). Jesus is also the only one to have seen or heard the Father, just as he is the only one in whom the Father can be seen and heard (John 8:40; 12:45; 14:9; 15:24). This is because he is from God (John 6:46) and returning to God (John 13:1). The cumulative effect of this language is that the phrase "very God from very God" does not seem anachronistic as a summary of John's view: only God could be with God to experience God and then come to communicate God to earth.[15]

Thus, as I argued in Chapter 3, God is in two places at once, but this dual presence poses a substantial challenge to belief in Jesus as God. Few Johannine characters come to accept that God has entered this world in Jesus. They do not know that God is with them because they do not know *where* God is. In John 8:19, Jesus responds to the question of "the Jews," "where is your Father?" with "you know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." Lack of knowledge about where God is fuels many of the misunderstandings in the fraught dialogues that span Chapters 5 to 10, in which the primary challenge to belief is that Jesus enjoys a spatial relationship to God that attests to his own divinity. The "sending," "from," and "going away" language frequently occurs because Jesus communicates his identity in terms of his heavenly origin and destination to people who insist that both are within the geography of this world.

In response to Jesus's claim that he is the bread from heaven, "the Jews" respond: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'" (John 6:41). They later claim that "we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from"

[15] Bockmuehl (2020), esp. 1307–308 also notes the "simultaneity of Jesus's earthly and heavenly presence." Barrett (1982), 110 observes: "The paradox of the Son of man is that even when on earth he is in heaven; the mythical – or historical – descent and ascent is of such a kind that effectively the Son of man is in both places at once."

(John 7:27), a statement their unbelief ironically proves true. In response to Jesus's "I am going back to the one who sent me" (John 7:33), "the Jews" ask themselves whether he means the Greek diaspora (John 7:35) while in John 8:22 and 48, suicide and being a demon-possessed Samaritan are their exasperated answers to Jesus's insistence that he comes from above and teaches what he sees and hears from his Father, to whom he will return (John 8:14–47). By contrast, in response to the Pharisees' claim that they do not know where Jesus is from (John 9:29), the man born blind insists that Jesus is from God (John 9:33); and his affirmation will lead him to believe in the divine Son of Man (John 9:35–41).[16] Recognizing that Jesus is from God and will return to God constitutes a crucial step in coming to believe that he is God.[17]

It follows that physical proximity to Jesus and knowledge of where he is in Judea, Galilee, or Jerusalem, can be indicative of greater levels of belief in him while ignorance of his whereabouts and physical distance from him indicates unbelief. Consider that the Pharisees almost never know Jesus's geographical location. He either eludes them – seemingly miraculously – or they remain uncertain as to whether he will arrive at certain feasts (John 7:10–11, 30, 45–46; 8:59; 10:39; 11:56–57; cf. 4:1–3; 6:15).[18] None of Jesus's enemies know where he is with any certainty until Judas, who "also knew the place" (John 18:2), betrays him; but this is precisely because Judas has spent time in proximity to Jesus.[19] In John 6:66, those who do not believe Jesus physically distance themselves from him.[20]

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[16] The disciples finally accept that Jesus is from God in John 16:30.

[17] Davies (1974), 331 is right to claim that such knowledge is the primary goal of John's spatial language. It may be that instead of rendering geographical concerns "secondary," as he claims, it elevates them to an assisting role in the cultivation of this belief.

[18] Stibbe (1991) gives a thorough account of the "elusive" nature of John's Jesus.

[19] As commentators often note, Jesus remains in control of his destiny across the Gospel. He has known that Judas will betray him, and thus, seemingly, allowed Judas to "know the place."

[20] To be sure, the Pharisees are close to Jesus at several points, but one may observe that they grow more distant as the narrative progresses. They only time that John describes them as actively seeing Jesus is in the same moment that they cry out for his crucifixion.

By contrast, the few characters who do acknowledge that Jesus is from God and/or recognize God in him know where Jesus is and enjoy some sensory experience of or from him.[21] Jesus anoints the blind man's eyes (John 9:6), and Mary of Bethany falls at his feet (John 11:32), which she will later wash with tears and perfume (John 12:3). The beloved disciple leans against his κόλπος (John 13:23)[22] while Nicodemus – who knew where to find Jesus (John 3:2) – and Joseph of Arimathea will bear his body to its tomb and cover it with spices (John 19:38–42). After his resurrection, Mary Magdalene either touches him or attempts to do so (John 20:17),[23] and he shows the disciples his wounds (John 20:20) and invites Thomas to feel them (John 20:27).[24]

Regarding God, then, unbelievers do not know where he is, or, if they know that he is in heaven, they do not know the way to him. Jesus himself will claim that lack of knowledge of God precipitates lack of belief in himself and vice versa (e.g., John 8:12–20, 48–59). As a kind of mirror to this lack of knowledge and experience, few people know where Jesus is in this world. The people who believe least – the Pharisees – are also least likely to know where he has gone in Jerusalem or the surrounding countryside – except when he chooses to speak openly. However, those who believe in Jesus gradually come to recognize that he is both from God in heaven and is God on earth. Johannine belief therefore remains tied to acknowledging that Jesus is God on earth, both precisely because he comes *from* and *as* the God of heaven and regardless of how few people actually understand that God, in Jesus, is before them.

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[21] Neyrey (2002a; 2002b) has also suggested that physical proximity to Jesus signals greater likelihood of belief.
[22] Consider here that the Son comes from the Father's κόλπος (John 1:18). If it is true that the beloved disciple in John is meant to signify ideal discipleship, then this double use of κόλπος to refer to intimacy with the Father in heaven and intimacy with the Son on earth by way of physical action (reclining) further suggests that physical proximity to Jesus indicates an equivalent proximity to God.
[23] See below and Chapter 6 for my account of the challenge of John 20:17.
[24] Excepting Joseph of Arimathea, each of these characters has either heard directly that Jesus is from God, acknowledged it themselves, or acknowledged that Jesus is God.

Two kinds of theologically relevant spatial relationships are converging here. The first is the terminology of proximity and distance between Jesus and God, one that establishes Jesus as God on earth. The second is the relationship between knowing where Jesus is on earth and knowing that he is from God and is God. Physical proximity to Jesus intertwines with increased knowledge about his heavenly origin and destination. For others, lack of knowledge of Jesus's physical location, compounded by lack of proximity to him, indicates both a lack of belief in Jesus and a lack of knowledge – even sensory knowledge – of God himself. The prominence of both spatial themes across John suggests that questions of "where" – even as they pertain to physical geography – possess theological importance.

Recall here that John makes certain that the reader, unlike the Pharisees, knows the physical locations that Jesus visits as the Logos become flesh and that Jesus has come from God and will return to him.[25] Understanding where Jesus is leads to a better understanding of how he appears as God and cultivates clearer sight and clearer belief in him as God incarnate. The theological valence of geographical location is therefore central to the remainder of this chapter and to this thesis because appearance is a function of place. Determining the links between appearance and place will show how the "where" of God relates to seeing him. It will ground subsequent arguments that some physical topographies and locations in John underscore the divinity of Jesus by mirroring his own identity as the temple-place of God.

Place and Appearance

The argument now shifts away from John into the realm of spatial and geographical theory, but this philosophical interlude will show what places mean for human experience and establish how an understanding of place is applicable to seeing God. I begin this section with the philosopher J.E. Malpas because he underscores the relationship of place to experience,

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[25] Koester (2005), 127 also notes this.

appearance, and memory.[26] Establishing these relationships will clarify how certain places in John are important for seeing God and why place is an important feature of the cultural and theological memory of the Gospel.

Defining Place

Malpas defines place as "an open region in which the objects of inquiry are sorted and understood only through the interrelation and inter-connection of distinct, irreducible, but interrelated components."[27] I will return to these "interrelated components;" but it is crucial first to understand that it is from place that space receives its bounds, not, as is more commonly conceived, that place is somehow *within* space. For Malpas, without the fundamental structure of place, no human experience can occur. This is not to define place as either purely "materialist" or "plottable" – as if the co-ordinates on a map could define it – nor to treat it as purely socially constructed. Place is more than a set of material things arranged in a particular way. While it fosters subjective experience, place exerts its own inevitable shaping power on those within it.[28]

Place and human experience are inseparable. The experience of places, at least from a human perspective, requires navigating their constituent spaces – the "interrelated components" of place in Malpas's definition. Place provides the grounds for subjective experience of what we perceive to be the objective elements within places. This is because space renders place dimensional and thus allows for movement within it: movement *through*

[26] Malpas (1999; 2012). I am also drawing from Edward Casey (1993; 1997; 2001), who joins Malpas as a widely published and well-known philosopher in the continental tradition although both have worked to draw aspects of analytical and continental philosophy together. Their accounts of place are important because they argue that before it is socially affected and construed – and therefore political – place is simply there. Both recognize that people cultivate and create places; but by its very "thereness," place must always be foundational to experience and thus shapes experience before experience can begin to undertake the power struggles that occupy most studies of human geography. Malpas and Casey thus offer a more thoroughgoing account of place itself. Cresswell (2015) offers a helpful overview of the development of place theory.
[27] Malpas (1999), 18.
[28] Malpas (1999), 19–43.

space and *within* place gives rise to time.[29] The result is a claim crucial to this chapter: "the very possibility of the appearance of things…is possible only within the all-embracing compass of place."[30] By virtue of the structure of places, the things and people within them *appear*. Because place shapes experience it also, at very least, shapes perceptions and thus appearances.[31] Here, Edward Casey emphasizes the embodied self as that which experiences places: places furnish subjective experiences that are sensory because human selves are inevitably sensory and situated beings.[32] This place-conditioned relationship between perception and perceived joins the emergence of time that space – as interval – creates and thereby reveals place itself to also be the ground of memory and narrative.[33] One can never divorce experience, appearance, and memory from place; they remain yoked to the particular, definitive *physical* topographies of places even as those topographies may change over time.

Place and Cultural Memory

Before returning to John and with these definitions in hand, I wish first to draw attention to the fact that place can make memories available to us *which are not our own*, at least in the sense that we did not experience the events that inspired them. The philosopher of religion Mark Wynn argues that a place such as Ground Zero in New York City can make "an enduring claim upon us, in so far as it invites, or requires, a certain kind of bodily response

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[29] Malpas (1999), 21–23 and with more complexity and fascinating depth, 44–71.
[30] Malpas (1999), 15.
[31] On space and subjectivity, see Malpas (1999), 109–137, in which he argues that "the existence of the subject is, one might say, 'simultaneous'…with the existence of embodied, spatialised agency."
[32] This is, of course, a basic tenet of continental philosophy, especially in the wake of Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Martin Heidegger. Casey's (2001), 686 answer to the question of how place informs the identity of self is the concept of habitus: "habitus is a middle term between place and self-and, in particular, between lived place and the geographical self. This self is constituted by a core of habitudes that incorporate and continue, at both psychical and physical levels, what one has experienced in particular places." Habitus itself is: "a figure of the between: above all, between nature and culture, but also between consciousness and body, self and other, mechanism and tele-ology, determinism and freedom, even memory and imagination. Habitus is not mere routine but something improvisational and open to innovation."
[33] Malpas (2001), 157–93.

when we are located at the site in the present."[34] Places are able to accumulate history and "store" the accumulated experiences had within them.[35] They can retain their experiential power across generations and cultivate it even amongst those who may not have had direct experiences of the saints who lived in them or of the miracles performed at them. Pilgrimage, ritual, and architecture preserve memories. They can yoke experience and memory to the past that places come to embody.[36]

For Wynn, the ability to store experience couples with the empirical experiences that landscapes and architectures cultivate such that places are also able to impart what he describes as a "salience" or "hue." Wynn explains "salience" and "hue" by drawing from Johnathan Edwards's description of his conversion as effecting a complete alteration of the appearance of the world: "God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything; in the grass, flowers, and trees; in the water and all nature…"[37] For Edwards, these qualities of the divine nature inform the empirical qualities of the world. The materials themselves – both rightly perceived and in the ways they facilitate perception – offer a more vivid and sensory knowledge of the God they image: "certain qualities which we might also associate with the divine nature can become newly prominent in the sensory appearances, and because the sensory world can undergo a correlative shift in 'hue.'"[38]

Wynn's account of "hue" and "salience" is closely tied to presence. He gives the example of a cloth draped over his face such that that the cloth captures its contours. One

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[34] Wynn (2013), 78. Wynn (2009), 1–16 and across his monograph applies the basic insight he appears to share with Malpas and Casey – that place is prior to experience and gives rise to it – in his argument that "location matters independently of its implications for our mental life." Place is not merely a psychological construct.
[35] Wynn (2013), 78.
[36] As Wynn (2013), 78 claims, "in so far as the religious significance of a place is relative to its history, then even a perfect replica of the place will fail to reproduce in full its religious import, in so far as the replica has in relevant respects a different past."
[37] Wynn (2013), 83.
[38] Wynn (2013), 84. Wynn also uses the secular examples of falling in love and discovering that one is eating one's pet rabbit by mistake. These experiences are not purely internal or psychological, nor are they purely spiritual or metaphysical. Being in love and eating the rabbit charge our experiences but are not independent of them. For a more in-depth discussion of salience and hue see Wynn (2009), 17–43

might say that a cloth that only *happened* to look the same also presents an image of his face, but "we would not wish to say that…my face is present in the cloth."[39] Nor would one say that Wynn was present if the cloth obscured the contours of his face rather than revealed them.[40] Like the impression of a face onto a cloth, nature and physical place can acquire divine shape and the "hue" of divine appearance because God is present. God can embody himself in nature and in the physical places that house the accumulated experiences of him, and correct perception relies on the presence of God entwined with the material reality of specific places.

Taken together, Malpas's account of place and Wynn's use of "hue" and "salience" help one approach the *theological* nature of "cultural memory."[41] In 1992, the Egyptologist Jan Assmann introduced "cultural memory" to biblical scholarship with his ground-breaking *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*.[42] There, he applies the work of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs to Israelite and ANE religion.[43] Following Halbwachs, Assmann acknowledges the inseparability of place from memory; however, Assmann's primary concern is how the formations of canons preserve mythic memories in the interest of group consolidation and the maintenance of power. For Assmann and many since, the focus is on how cultures read their pasts through their present circumstances and needs. While Assmann acknowledges that place is crucial to memory, he does not consider how the places mentioned in the texts

[39] Wynn (2013), 87.
[40] Wynn (2013), 87.
[41] In the last two decades, cultural memory theory has grown increasingly popular in NT studies. See Spaulding (2009), 21–38 for an overview of key works, on which current studies continue to draw and expand.
[42] Assmann (2011).
[43] Assmann (2011), 26–27 notes that Halbwachs – in his book *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en terre sainte. Étude de mémoire* (1941) – studied the "legendary" spaces of the gospels; and Assmann summarizes Halbwachs's central argument: "Christian topography is pure fiction…The biographical elaboration of these memories did not come until later after expectations of the Apocalypse had faded. At this point it became important to embed the remembered sayings in biographical episodes that would furnish them with the order of time and place. There were no places incorporated in those memories, and therefore after Jesus's death they were augmented with particular settings by people well acquainted with the geography of Galilee." If one places Halbwachs conclusions to one side, one can still see how he recognizes the importance of place for memory.

acquire meaning in relation to each other and in relation to the theological significance of the events that transpire within them and which they have come to store.

Assmann remains important for my argument because he establishes how ancient cultures preserve the memories that form their corporate identities through texts and through the association of place with memory that texts can preserve. Here, then, one can see that Wynn's notion of place as a "store" of memory and Malpas's recognition of it as the cultivator of appearance can function across Israelite history in a memory deposit external to the human mind: the biblical texts. Unlike Assmann, however, my aim is to apply these fundamental observations to the actual topographies in which God is present in the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish documents as a means of understanding the narrative world of John. I have therefore shifted from an account of place, experience, and memory as cultivators of *direct* human experience to an account of how *texts* preserve places as the locus of experience. Nevertheless, I remain focused on the experiences the texts themselves relate rather than on social-scientific explanations for why the authors of the text thought such experiences worthy of preservation.[44]

What I take from Malpas, Wynn, and Assmann is that seeing God – both from the perspective of the characters in the text-world as well as for the reader of John – is inextricably linked to the *where* of God. Narrated place possesses the ability to shape appearance, memory, and experience. One may find the *where* of God in the cultural and textual memory of the Israelite topographies in which definitive, identity-forming theophanies occurred.[45] I will therefore argue that certain topographies in John bear an intertextual relationship to the "theophanic places" of the Hebrew Bible and that Jesus's presence in those topographies is meant to align his appearance with the appearance of God

[44] I am inspired to do this in part by my friend Stephen Campbell (2020), who applies Assmann's cultural memory to the text-world of Deuteronomy, rather than to the people behind it. Wang (2017), 67–70 also documents the role of communal vision in Deuteronomy as a theological necessity.

[45] Even if John is reinterpreting how the "where" of God can function in Jesus.

in those places. For the characters who encounter Jesus in the narrative and in the eyes of the reader familiar with the Hebrew Bible, theophanic places retain a divine "hue." The two remaining sections of this Chapter will interrogate the role of theophanic places in the Hebrew Bible, Early Jewish texts, and Johannine narratives.

Theophanic Place in the Hebrew Bible, LXX, and Early Jewish Texts

One must begin by establishing what the theophanic places of the Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism are. Starting with the Hebrew Bible, this section surveys the potency of the so-called "cosmic mountain" imagery and its alignment with the temple as the "where" of God and the place of his appearing. I then show how the LXX emphasizes this connection before examining the prominence and consistency of theophanic places in two influential Early Jewish texts: *Jubilees* and *1 Enoch*. These texts are distinct, theologically nuanced, and possess labyrinthine composition and reception histories. Without flattening them or eliding the challenges they pose, the primary questions of this section remain whether certain physical topographies recur as the sites of theophany and whether these sites relate to one another and to time, such that one can identify consistent spatio-temporal "coordinates" of God's appearance across the cultural memories of Judaism.

"Consistency" begins with the notion of the cosmic mountain. As Mircea Eliade argued in his classic studies, the concept of a "sacred centre" underlies most, if not all, religious conceptions of reality.[46] In ancient cosmologies and geographies, a cosmic mountain forms the *axis mundi* that unites heaven, earth, and the underworld. The mountain often emerges as the place of God's or the gods' abode after a divine champion defeats chaotic waters, which in turn become the new springs and rivers of the fertile temple-garden

[46] Eliade (1971; 1991). For a critique of Eliade and an examination of the "periphery" in religious symbolism see Smith (1987).

paradise at the summit of the mountain.[47] The cosmic mountain unifies the three topographies in question: mountain, garden, and temple – as well as the waters that accompany them. Each topography speaks to the presence of God and evokes his dwelling in a place that draws heaven and earth together and often unites the beginning and the end of time. As Malpas argues, place gives rise to time, to which the theologian can add eschatology.

Theophanic Place in the Hebrew Bible

Having established the cosmic mountain as the organizing principles of this survey, I begin at the beginning. The creation account(s) draws on cosmic mountain imagery (Gen 1:1–2:25) that the Pentateuch will continue to evoke at key junctures in the narratives of Israel's formation. During the seven days of creation, God demonstrates his power over the chaotic waters: Eden and its four rivers emerge; and God installs his image-bearers in the garden, a place where he walks (הלך (Gen 3:8)). Expulsion from Eden results in a loss of proximity to God, who places cherubim as guards in addition to a flaming sword at Eden's door (Gen 3:21–24). In the flood narrative, similar topographical details prevail (Gen 9:1–17). Water engulfs the earth while the ark, containing the remnants of created life, comes to rest on a mountain, from which the waters subside.[48] Noah plants a vineyard there. Babel then emerges as an unauthorized cosmic mountain: God does "come down" but only to reduce the effort to a chaos reminiscent of primordial waters (Gen 11:1–9). In the Exodus, Israel passes through the Red Sea on the way to Mt. Sinai – the mountain of God – from which God makes himself as close as possible to humanity, especially Moses, without killing them. From this mountain, God gives the decalogue and the "pattern" for the tabernacle and its various liturgies (Exod

[47] Morales (2014) has collected and edited twenty-four works spanning five decades of Hebrew Bible scholarship on the cosmic mountain motif in the Hebrew Bible and its parallels in ANE literature. Especially notable selections include those by Clements (69–84); Stager (99–118); Weinfeld (149–60); Wenham (161–66); Fishbane (389–408). Beale (2004b); Anderson (1988); Levenson (1984; 1985; 1988); and Morales (2012) provide accounts of the cosmic mountain and its relationship to Genesis and the temple-places of Israel. Stordalen (2000) offers an exhaustive account of the prevalence of Edenic imagery across the Hebrew Bible.
[48] For an extended account of how the flood narrative evokes the cosmic mountain, see Morales (2012), 121–92.

19–40). He then enters the tabernacle and travels with Israel towards a land of abundance (Exod 40:34–38). As L.M. Morales observes, "losing the *place* of Eden meant losing the *presence* of YHWH;" and thus re-gaining the place means re-gaining his presence.[49]

The tabernacle and temple recover the place of Eden and the cosmography that it represents.[50] Both architectures become new Edens by becoming the place where God dwells on earth with his people: the topography of Eden is inscribed into the structures themselves. Notable similarities between Eden, the tabernacle, and the temple include eastward facing doors (Gen 2:8; Exod 36:20–30; 1 Kings 7:21; Ezek 47:1); the presence of cherubim (Gen 3:24; Exod 25:19–22; 1 Kings 6:23); tree-like menorah (Gen 2:8; Exod 25:31–40; 1 Kings 7:49); mountain-oriented origins or locations (Gen 1:9; Exod 25:9, 40; 26:30; 2 Chron 3:1); references to and use of gold and gemstones (Gen 2:12; Exod 25:1–7; 1 Kings 6–7); the presence of water (Gen 2:10–14; Ex 30:17–21; 1 Kings 7:23–26); and God's visible presence in each place – either in some kind of bodily form or via his glory (Gen 3:8; Exod 40:34–38; 1 Kings 8:10–11).[51] Both architectures draw the priests, especially the High Priest, into the Holy of Holies as if it were Eden perched at the intersection of heaven and earth, where God walks.[52] The tabernacle and temple become the gateway back to Eden by appropriating its topography.

By looking backwards, these places also anticipate the eschatological mountain of God, at the summit of which a new Eden awaits. They evoke the narrative of God's desire to

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[49] Morales (2012), 104.

[50] Numerous, well-documented studies have established how the temple evokes Eden. I have provided only the major similarities here; and I take them from Levenson (1984; 1985, 111–42); Beale (2004b, 29–80; 2004a, 197–200); Hurowitz (2004), esp. 87–88; and Morales (2012, 73–88; 2014, 161–66) provide further evidence and elaboration.

[51] Amzallag (2019) examines the potential link between the gold that constitutes the skin of gods in some ANE settings and also covers the tabernacle furniture. There may be some further link here between the gold of Eden, the gold of the tabernacle and temple, and Anderson's (2008; 2009; 2021) notion that seeing the tabernacle furniture could be tantamount to seeing God.

[52] The verb הלך describes God's walk in Eden (Gen 3:8) and also appears in Lev 26:12; Deut 23:14; 2 Sam 7:6–7, in each of which God describes his travels with Israel as "walking" with them via the tabernacle. In the LXX, περιπατέω describes Gen 3:8 while ἐμπεριτατέω describes the other passages. Hundley (2011b, 2013b) provides a thorough account of holy space within the tabernacle and temple.

live amongst his people;[53] and, in the language of Mark Wynn, they "store" the experience of the past and thus also "store" the future. Because Adam and Eve first resided with God in Eden, Edenic imagery festoons all the accounts of a future life in God's presence. Ezekiel's flowing waters and new temple (Ezek 47:1–12)[54] join the holy mountain and restored Zion of Isaiah (Isa 11:1–10; 14:13)[55] and Jeremiah (Jer 31:1–40),[56] as well as the Zechariah's life-giving river (Zech 14:1–21) and Joel's Mt. Zion, where "a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord" (Joel 3:17–21). The sacred mountains and lush, garden imagery of the Psalms anticipate the ascent to Jerusalem and the mytho-poetic context of Jerusalem itself (e.g., Pss 2; 23; 24; 36; 46; 48).[57] In the Hebrew Bible, place shapes time: gardens, mountains, tabernacles, and temples draw one near to God.

The LXX

While the LXX does not elide this cosmic imagery, it accentuates the visibility of God in the temple to such an extent that it warrants a separate examination.[58] Following Robert Hayward, I begin with Exodus 25:8.[59] In the MT, God commands Israel to build him a sanctuary (מקדשׁ) so that he can tabernacle among them (ושׁכנתי בתוכם). In the LXX, ושׁכנתי

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[53] Here I simply mean the narratives of God's interaction with Israel, in which his consistent desire to live in proximity to Israel leads to the creation of the tabernacle, the temple, and the future hope of regaining the paradisal place of his presence.
[54] Note also the synonymy between Eden and the mountain of the Lord in Ezek 28:13-14. Ezek 48:35, the final verse of the book, renames Jerusalem "YHWH is there." The LXX is somewhat garbled, offering both complementary and divergent versions.
[55] Note the strong Messianic imagery.
[56] Here a return to Mt. Zion comprises the setting of the New Covenant.
[57] That the geography of Eden and Jerusalem overlap has been the subject of thought from the Hebrew Bible onward. *Midrash Rabbah Genesis* 14:8 locates the site of the temple as Eden itself, as does *Jubilees* 8:19. See Stager (1999) and Levenson (1985), 111–42 for more recent accounts, especially regarding the connection between the Gihon Spring and the Kidron Wadi. Levenson (1984), 295 observes that "perhaps it is not coincidence that the Hebrew Bible begins with an account of the creation of heaven and earth by the command of God (Gen. 1:1) and ends with the command of the God of heaven "to build him a Temple in Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 35:23). It goes from creation (Temple) to Temple (creation) in twenty-four books."
[58] While I have already noted divergences from the MT regarding place and theophany earlier in the thesis, it remains to give a comprehensive picture of how the LXX develops these themes.
[59] What follows is deeply indebted to Hayward (2004). I reproduce his main points in this section.

בתוכם becomes ὀφθήσομαι ἐν ὑμῖν while מקדש is glossed with ἁγίασμα.[60] In Deuteronomy 33:16 MT, Moses blesses Joseph with "the favour of the one who dwells in the bush" (שכני סנה), which the LXX translates as "the things acceptable to the one who appeared in the bush (τῷ ὀφθέντι ἐν τῷ βάτῳ). The bush refers to Moses's vision of God at Mt Horeb/Sinai, in which the angel of the Lord appeared (ὤφθη) to him (Exod 3:2) at a holy place (ὁ γὰρ τόπος…γῆ ἁγία ἐστίν (Exod 3:5)). "Seeing God" has translated "God dwelling." The translators are well aware that שכן refers to dwelling in a tent,[61] but they are also aware that God reveals himself to Moses in the bush as the one who has *appeared* to the patriarchs.[62] Theophanies will continue *in the sanctuary* that evokes God's mountain.[63]

That the LXX emphasizes the visual encounter with God – often in holy places – is evident from three further accounts of seeing God that either clarify or introduce a theophany where the MT does not. In Genesis 16:13, the translators clarify who actually sees God (καὶ γὰρ ἐνώπιον εἶδον ὀφθεντα μοι).[64] In Genesis 31:13, God introduces himself to Jacob with ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τόπῳ θεοῦ.[65] God's name (ἐγώ εἰμι), his appearance, and his place/house (בית–אל in the MT) foreshadow God's encounter with Moses, in which God appears, reveals his name, and orders Moses to remove his shoes because of the holy place on

[60] One can add to Hayward's observations about the Penteteuch that across the LXX, from holy place – including regions – (Exod 15:17; 25:8; Pss 77: 54; 68–69; 89:40;113:2; 131:8; Isa 63:18; Jer 17:12; 38:40; Lam 1:10; 2:20; Ezek 45:2–3; 1 Chron 22:19; 28:10; 2 Chron 20:8; 26:18; 30:8; 36:15–17; 1 Esdras 8:75; 2 Esdras 9:8; Amos 7:10; Jdt 5:19; Sirach 36:12; 47:10; 49:6; 50:11; *Pss Sol* 7:2; 8:4; Amos 7:10) to holy object or offering (Exod 28:36–37; 29:6; 34; 30:32, 37; 36:38; Lev 25:5; Ezek 20:40 Sirach 45:12) to (seemingly) a divine quality or moveable presence (Pss 131:18; *Pss Sol* 11:7; Lam 2:7; Ezek 48:21; esp. Zech 7:3; Isa 8:14; Ezek 11:16), ἁγίασμα describes the holiness of God regarding his place and presence and the quality of the objects and beings in proximity to him. The word is also closely associated with the name of God. In the NT, it describes sanctified people, but Heb 12:4 seems to acknowledge its connection to seeing God. Once again, God, holiness, and sanctuaries "overlap," just as sanctuaries, holiness, and people "overlap;" and sight links people to God. In *1 En.* 12:4, ἁγίασμα describes heaven.
[61] They consistently translate it with κατοικέω. See Hayward (2004), 386.
[62] The LXX maintains this sense of visual revelation across Genesis. Hayward (2004), 387n5 notes that in Gen 17:1; 18:1; 26:2, 24; 35:1, 9; 48:3, niphal forms of ראה are consistently translated with aorist passive forms of ὁράω.
[63] Hayward (2004), 387.
[64] As opposed to the obscure עליה אתה אל ראי כי אמרה הגם הלם ראיהי אחרי ראי, which Hayward translates: "have I indeed up to now seen, after the one who sees me?"
[65] As opposed to אנכי האל בית–אל in the MT.

which he stands. Recall here that the priestly blessing in Numbers 6:23 LXX (6:27 MT) places God's name (ὄνομα) on (ἐπί) the Israelites, and that the blessing itself is a plea for an epiphany (ἐπιφάναι κύριος τὸ πρόσωπον ἐπὶ σέ (Num 6:25)).[66] Such an epiphany occurred at Bethel (ἐκεῖ γὰρ ἐπεφάνη αὐτῷ ὁ θεός (Gen 35:7)) and in the description of God "coming forth" (וזרח) from Sinai and Seir in Deuteronomy 33:2, which the LXX renders ἐπέφανεν.[67]

The third instance, in Genesis 22:13, aligns seeing God, Mt. Moriah, Mt. Zion, and the temple. The Hebrew text of 2 Chronicles 3:1 has established Mt. Moriah as the site of Solomon's temple (בית יהוה/οἶκον κυρίου) and of the appearance (נראה/ὤφθη) of the Lord, a place (τόπος) David prepared (ἑτοιμάζω).[68] The translators know that the place Abraham sacrifices is the temple mount, which makes it all the more telling that they emphasize the appearance of God in that place:[69] καὶ ἐκάλεσεν Αβρααμ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ τόπου ἐκείνου Κύριος εἶδεν, ἵνα εἴπωσιν σήμερον Ἐν τῷ ὄρει κύριος ὤφθη.[70] Hayward further examines the temple in the LXX as a place of prayer where the Lord's name is invoked and where the Lord is made known; but I now draw out the association between mountains, sanctuary, preparation, place, dwelling, and seeing.

"Constellation" again describes these recurring themes, each of which has bearing on where God appears and where he meets his people. The Song of the Sea joins the above passages by showing the early roots of these associations. Moses and the people call upon God to "plant (καταφύτευσον) them in the mountain (ὄρος) of your inheritance," God's "prepared dwelling-place (ἕτοιμον κατοικητήριον), which you have constructed…the

[66] Note the correspondence to the angel of the Lord in in Exod 23:21 LXX. The name is upon (ἐπί) him, and the angel will go before their face (προσώπου) – suggesting an appearance – in order to lead them to the land that God has prepared (ἡτοιμασά).
[67] Hayward (2004), 391 notes that these constitute the only three occurrences of the verb in the LXX. He adds that something like an epiphany occurs in Lev 9:22–24 LXX, in which Moses and Aaron enter the σκηνὴν τοῦ μαρτυρίου, bless the people, and ὤφθη ἡ δόξα κυρίου παντὶ τῷ λαῷ. Here, again, blessing, appearance, and holy place intertwine.
[68] While the translations of the Pentateuch are earlier than those of Chronicles, the consistency reveals a commitment to the theme of God's appearance in holy places.
[69] Τόπος occurs four times in the narrative of Gen 22.
[70] The Hebrew may indicate that God is seen or that he sees and provides.

sanctuary (ἁγίασμα)…which your hands have prepared (ἡτοίμασαν)" (Exod 15:17).[71] In Hayward's view, the prepared dwelling on the mountain corresponds to a heavenly dwelling, such that the two are met on Sinai, much as Jacob's ladder bridges the house of God on earth and his place in heaven. He also notes the rare occurrence in Exodus 15:17 of ἁγίασμα, which recalls the tabernacle sanctuary where God will be seen (Exod 25:8), the paradigm (παράδειγμα) for which God will reveal to Moses on Mt Sinai, where God reveals himself on the third day (Exod 19:9–23) – the same interval between the beginning of Abraham's journey and its theophanic end on Mt. Moriah (Gen 22:4), site of the temple.[72]

In the LXX, the temple place continues the tradition of God's visibility to the patriarchs and makes it available to the Israelite people.[73] The cosmic mountain, the Edenic theme of planting, and the notion of a holy place that bridges heaven and earth define the sanctuary that God has prepared and will prepare. Future time and future place coincide with the mountains of God, the temple mount, and the tabernacle – each of which evokes Eden. God will plant his people where physical topographies unite times as well as worlds, and where the heavenly world is known by an earthly setting.

The Early Jewish Texts

Edenic and temple imagery intertwine across the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and Dead Sea Scrolls; and Philo and Josephus also consider their cosmic significance.[74] Given the number of sources and the complex problems of dating and transmission that accompany many of

[71] Recall here 4QFlor 1.1–13; Ezek 17:22–23; 2 Sam 7; and Gen 2:8. Brooke (1999) and Tiller (1997) draw these themes together.
[72] While Exodus 24:9–11 LXX (εἶδον τὸν τόπον οὗ εἱστήκει ἐκεῖ ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ισραηλ) is often held out as the translators' effort to secure divine invisibility in line with what commentators take to be Greek notions of transcendence, the evidence above suggests that the place of God is bound up with seeing him and potentially tantamount to seeing him. The emphasis on place is not so much a deflection but an accentuation of what one can see and accompanies the notion that see too much of God can result in death (Exod 24:11; 33:20). See my discussion of Gary Anderson in Chapter 3. It may also be the case that they see God's feet; later tradition will speculate about God's enormous size.
[73] Hayward (2004), 397.
[74] Hayward (1996), 108–53.

them, I limit myself to two texts: *1 Enoch*[75] and *Jubilees*.[76] I have chosen these books because they span centuries, genres, and theologies; yet each deploys the cosmic imagery of Eden, mountains, and temples to locate the "where" of God in places that entwine heaven with earth. Together with the Hebrew Bible and LXX, they further show that one might expect a Jewish text like the Fourth Gospel to depict God's location by way of the garden, temple, and mountain loci of his past and future presence.[77]

1 Enoch

The oldest stratum of the Enoch literature, the *Book of the Watchers* (1 Enoch 1–36), suggests a confluence of heaven, temple, mountains, and gardens. In 12:4, Enoch receives a call to condemn the watchers who have abandoned heaven, τὸ ἁγίασμα τῆς στάσεως τοῦ αἰωνος.[78] Heaven is the ἁγίασμα in which Enoch finds a temple-like complex, where cherubim accompany millions of angels before ἡ δόξα ἡ μεγάλη on the throne (14:1–25). God is visible there, although the sight is unbearable (14:21–24). Despite God's warning that heavenly beings belong in heavenly dwellings and that earthly beings belong on earth (15:10), Enoch nevertheless travels to places where heaven and earth meet or will meet in the future. Edenic, temple, mountain imagery, and the future presence of God characterize each locale.

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[75] *1 Enoch* is a composite work. Here I address its oldest and likely most influential section, the *Book of the Watchers* (1–36), which is itself likely composite and which may date to the end of the third century BC. The influence of *1 Enoch* can be seen in the recovery of multiple fragments at Qumran, its translation from Aramaic into Greek, Syriac, and Ge'ez, and the existence of later Enoch literature. One also sees its influence on subsequent Jewish works, including *Jubilees*, Ben Sira, the Aramaic Levi Document, *Genesis Apocryphon*, *Wisdom of Solomon*, and the NT. See Wright (2018), 178–97.

[76] Hanneken (2018), 510–16 dates *Jubilees* between 159 and 152 BC. Regarding its influence, he observes that fourteen Hebrew fragments of it were discovered at Qumran, where it was authoritative (cf. CD 16:2–4) and that it has was translated into Greek, Syriac (possibly), Latin, and Ge'ez.

[77] Here I am also taking VanderKam's (2007), 20 conclusion to heart that "the separation into different types of Judaism, the highlighting of oppositions, is too rigid if it does not allow space for the many examples of cross-fertilization in the sources. As we might expect, writers throughout the period [Second Temple] appear to have drawn on varied traditions within their shared heritage, without restricting themselves to one type."

[78] Dugan (2021) provides an excellent recent history of Codex Panopolitanus, the largest extant Greek manuscript of the *Book of the Watchers* and the one I use here.

In 24:1–25:7, Enoch journeys to seven mountains of precious stones, whose summits resemble thrones surrounded by fragrant trees.[79] One tree stands out for its beauty and fragrance, and the archangel Michael explains that the tall mountain – perhaps all or one of the seven – is God's throne, which he will occupy when he comes to judge (25:3).[80] God will plant the life-giving tree "upon the holy place – in the direction of the house of the Lord, the Eternal King" (μεταφυτευθήσεται ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ παρὰ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ βασιλέως τοῦ αἰῶνος (25:5)).[81] The elect who enter the holy place (τὸ ἅγίον) will find that the tree's fragrance enters them and preserves their lives.[82] Like the trees of Eden (Gen 2:9; 3:6), this tree is pleasing to the eye (ὡραῖα τῇ ὁράσει (24:5)) while its fruit resembles those of a palm tree, evoking the Palm and Cherubim carvings that decorate Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:29–33; 7:36).[83]

At the centre of the earth (τὸ μέσον τῆς γῆς), Enoch sees a "blessed place" (τόπον ηὐλογημένον), with a stream flowing from it and a holy mountain with more trees, likely Jerusalem (26:1–3).[84] Chapters 30–32 then describe a journey across vistas of scented trees and mountains, which evoke the topography of paradise and the ingredients of the incense offerings of Exodus 30:22–25; 34–37.[85] The journey culminates at the Garden of Righteousness (παράδεισον τῆς δικαιοσύνης), in which Enoch sees the Tree of Wisdom, the same that led to Adam and Eve's expulsion from the garden. Why this paradise is not located

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[79] In *1 En.* 18:6–10 Enoch has seen seven other mountains, which appear to join heaven and earth. In Gen 2:11, precious stones and gold describe of the land of Havilah, which the river Pishon surrounds. The Pishon has its source in Eden. Coblentz Bautch (2003), 27 joins Tigchelaar (1999), 41 and Himmelfarb (1991), 69 in reading Chapters 22–25 as a retelling of Chapters 17–19.
[80] Coblentz Bautch (2003), 59–66 makes a sustained argument that the mountain is Hermon and notes its consonance with the cosmic mountain.
[81] In *Apoc. Mos*. 22:3–4, God enters paradise on a chariot of cherubim to judge Adam. His throne is at the tree of life.
[82] *1 En.* 10:16–19 include the language of plants of righteousness and truth and of vines (ἀμπέλος) that yield abundance in their paradisal description of the eschaton.
[83] Knibb (2004), 404–406 likewise observes connections between the temple and garden imagery in *Book of the Watchers*.
[84] Suter (2007), 207 takes the stream to be the Gihon.
[85] Fragrances common to both include myrrh, galbanum, and cinnamon. *1 En*. 30:1–32:2 adds Sarara, aloes, mastic, and nard. Milik (1965) examines the spices and fragrances in *1 Enoch* and their consonance with the incense offering.

with the Tree of Life is a mystery;[86] but garden imagery does accompany the eschaton in later portions of Enoch. Already in 10:16–19, the image of the plant of righteousness and truth as well as of the vine and abundance of wine describes the elect. In 61:12, the elect dwell in the "garden of life."[87] While the book of the Watchers, and the text as a whole, employ the imagery of the cosmic temple complex without using the term "Eden" and sparingly refer to paradise, the presence of mountains, fragrance, God's presence, and the clear references to the Trees of Life and the Knowledge of Good and Evil evoke a temple-paradise.[88]

Jubilees

In Jubilees 2:5–7, God creates Eden on the third day,[89] the day of divine manifestation at the temple and tabernacle sites in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 22:4 Exod 19:9–23). However, he creates Adam and Eve outside of the garden and does not bring them inside it until forty and eighty days, respectively, have passed. Given the regulations in Leviticus 12:2–8, in which a woman must wait forty days if she bears a son and eighty days if she bears a daughter before entering the temple, Eden becomes a precedent for the temple.[90] Later, the angels will take Enoch there; and Enoch, following Adam, will offer incense, anticipating the temple service (4:23–25). Eden is therefore a holy place, one of the Lord's four sacred places "on the earth," the others being the "mountain of the East," Mt. Sinai, and Mt. Zion, "which will be sanctified in the new creation for the sanctification of the earth" (4:26).[91] Eden is also the "holy of holies," part of the dwelling of Shem, which includes the Gihon river – one of

[86] Himmelfarb (1991), 70–72 attempts an explanation, as does Tigchelaar (1999), 43–49, who suggests that one garden in heaven and another on earth. He agrees that both evoke Eden.
[87] The parable of the sheep describes a final, great house as the abode of the sheep with God (*1 En.* 90:30–36).
[88] While Tigchelaar (1999) is wary of the prominence of Eden in *1 Enoch*, the use of Edenic imagery is plainly apparent – even as the authors of *1 Enoch* repurpose it.
[89] In *Jub.* 2:5–7, Eden is created on the third day. Note that VanderKam (1989) provides a fragment from Epiphanius (*De mensuris et ponderibus* 22), in which ἔργα…ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρα describes the work of creation on the third day.
[90] Van ruiten (1996, 1999); Hayward (1996), 88–93; Knibb (2004), 410.
[91] Geist and VanderKam (2012) observe the importance of incense and theophany at these sacred mountains and note the challenge of identifying the "mountain of the East."

Eden's four – and the dwelling of God (8:12–22). Noah rejoices at Shem's inheritance and declares: "may the Lord dwell in the dwelling place of Shem" (8:18; cf. 7:12) because he knows that "the garden of Eden was the holy of holies and the dwelling of the Lord" among the other holy sites (8:19).

Divine dwelling in holy places pervades the book. God promises Moses on Mount Sinai that he will ultimately "transplant" his people "as a righteous plant…I shall build my sanctuary in their midst, and I shall dwell with them" (1:16–18). The author describes this dwelling as being in Eden (4:26; 8:12–22) and portrays God's people as plants (16:26; 21:24; 36:6), likely alluding to the theme of divine planting and dwelling that begins in Genesis 2:8 and extends to Exodus 15:17, 2 Samuel 7:10, and Ezekiel 17:22–24.[92] When Rebecca blesses Jacob's offspring, she prays: "may the God of righteousness dwell with them, and by them may his sanctuary be built into all the ages" (25:21). Abraham offers incense at the Feast of Booths in the morning and evening, again evoking the temple and the incense offering that Enoch and Adam performed in Eden and at its borders. Abraham also blesses God for establishing "a righteous planting for eternal generations" (21:24), a blessing Isaac will echo (36:6). In *Jubilees*, garden and mountain topography thus signal where God will be closest to humanity because these landscapes are sanctuaries.[93] Eden is a temple and thus the temple will be a kind of Eden, just as the land of Israel is the site of the original Paradise.[94]

Synthesis

The popularity and theological import of the cosmic temple-complex in the pseudepigraphal and apocryphal writings extend far beyond these texts.[95] They also appears in the NT. Paul's

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[92] The syntax of these verses includes divine and human "houses" as well as "mountains," "places," "sanctuaries," and "preparation."
[93] Hayward (1996), 87 notes the potential correspondence between angelic and human worship as well.
[94] See Geist and VanderKam (2012), 153n25 for a set of recent monographs dealing with the nature of sacred place and time in *Jubilees*.
[95] The Edenic imagery of paradise, gardens, trees, planting, mountains, rivers, precious stones, incense, divine presence, and the eschaton persists in a variety of combinations across the following: Sir 24:1–34; 50: 1–21; *T.*

Adam Christology (Rom 5; 1 Cor 15),[96] the transfiguration accounts (Matt 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 9:28–36; cf. 2 Peter 1:16–18),[97] and Hebrews's depiction of worship on Mt. Zion (Hebrews 12:18–24) reveal the ongoing development of imagery that finds its fullest expression in the New Jerusalem of John's Apocalypse, with its flowing waters,[98] throne, visible God, and life-giving tree (Rev 22:1–5).[99] From the Hebrew Bible to the NT, Eden, the temple, the tabernacle, and Sinai and Zion intertwine across the centuries as the holy place of God, in which he dwells and appears among humanity at the beginning of time and at its end.[100] The union of place, time, and theophany thus persists into the milieu of John's Gospel with a clearly eschatological dimension.

Theophanic Place in John

When Jesus meets with the Samaritan woman and declares that he is the Messiah, gives the sign of bread from heaven, and whenever he teaches in the temple, he is on a mountain. He is

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Levi 18:1–4; *T. Dan* 5:12; Wis 9:8; *2 En.* 8:1–9:1; *3 En.* 5:1–5; *Sib. Or.* 3:770–795; *Pss. Sol.* 11; 14; *apGen* 21:15–20. Jewish texts circa the first and second centuries with cosmic garden imagery include: *Odes Sol.* 6; 11; 12; 20; 30; 38; *Apoc. Ab.* 12:10; 21:6–24:14; *L.A.B.* 11:15; 12:8–10; 13:8–9; 19:10–14, *2 Bar.* 4:1–6; 51:7–16; *4 Ezra* 2:12, 19; 7: 46–55; 8:52; 13:35–36. Christian texts include *3 Bar.* 4:8–16. The *Apocalypse of Moses* is also rife with Edenic imagery that evokes John. Examples include the presence of fragrance in paradise (29:3–6), the Tree of Life as the site of God's judgement and throne (22:4), theophany (8:1; 22:1–4; 38:1–4), cherubim (33:3-5), Adam's burial in fragrance εἰς τὸν τόπον (40:6), and paradise as the site of God's later dwelling with humanity (13:4; 41:1–3). Eden features prominently across the later Christian *History of the Rechabites* and, as Anderson (1988) shows, in the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* and *Hymns on Paradise*. The proximity of many of these texts to John in time indicate that a first century Jewish-Christian use of this symbolism is in keeping with an attempt to "place" the relationship between God and humanity. Himmelfarb (1991); van Ruiten (1999); Stordalen (2000); and Bauckham (2010) trace the themes of Eden and Temple across the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish literature. See also the essays collected in Luttikhuizen (1999) and Bockmuehl and Stroumsa (2010). Shimoff (1995), 155 argues that in Rabbinic thought "the Pardes, the Temple, and the Holy of Holies, are all one. In the end, the Heavenly and Earthly Jerusalems will be joined. And we will have completed our journey from the Garden of Eden to Jerusalem."

[96] Macaskill (2010) provides an excellent account of the paradisal roots of Paul's Adam Christology and the Lukan reference to paradise (Luke 23:43).

[97] On the theme of the cosmic mountain in the transfiguration accounts of the synoptics see Orlov (2019), 79–143, esp. 110.

[98] Regarding the ongoing theme of water and its relationship to Eden and other themes in Early Jewish literature, see the essays collected in Ben Zvi and Levin (2014). Um (2006), 15–67 offers a thorough account of the life-giving role, eschatological role of water in the Early Jewish sources.

[99] Revelation 21–22 are also notable for their strongly Johannine account of the New Jerusalem in which "the dwelling place of God is with Man" (21:3); yet there is no temple "because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Rev. 21:22) and where the servants of God and the Lamb "will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads" (22:4) and "the Lord God will be their light" (22:5).

[100] Kister (2010) presents the ongoing value of Edenic imagery in Rabbinic and early Christian thought.

arrested, crucified, buried, and raised in gardens. While these places form the basic topographical backdrop of important moments in his life, their mountain and garden natures are the means by which they channel theological significance. Like the incarnation itself, their very physicality, charged as it is with centuries of theological reflection, signal the possibility of divine appearing. I now argue that when Jesus – himself the temple-place of God's manifestation – is in these places, they reflect his appearance as God incarnate. They contribute to the "salience" and "hue" of his being. I begin with the mountains.

The Johannine Mountains

Three mountains feature in John (John 4:20–21; 5:1–10:42; 6:3,15). Although he never names them, one is Mt. Gerizim, the site of the Samaritan temple; the other is Mt. Zion (John 5–10); and I will argue that the third recalls Mt. Sinai. As the site of a temple and a theophany, each mountain falls within the broader temple imagery of John. They evoke the cultural memory of theophany rooted in place and can therefore shape Jesus's appearance in them. I begin with Gerizim before moving to Zion and Sinai.

Mt. Gerizim

Mt. Gerizim first appears in John 4:20 when the Samaritan woman contrasts "this mountain" with Jerusalem as the place of true worship. According to Samaritan tradition, Mt. Gerizim was to be the primary site of worship instead of Mt. Ebal (Deut. 27) after Israel crossed the Jordan.[101] Believing that Gerizim was also the site of Jacob's theophany – the original בית אל (Gen. 28:10–22) – the Samaritans also built a temple there.[102] Just as God announced himself to Jacob at God's place with ἐγώ εἰμι (Gen 31:13 LXX), so now Jesus reveals himself with ἐγώ εἰμι to one of Jacob's "theological" offspring (John 4:26) at the site of Jacob's

[101] Coloe (2001), 101. On the many Samaritan traditions surrounding Jacob and Mt. Gerizim see Neyrey (1979).
[102] Coloe (2001), 101 also notes that Samaritan tradition also held that the Ark of the Covenant was hidden somewhere on the mountain.

theophany.[103] The בית אל of Mt. Gerizim combines mountain topography and a source of cosmic, Edenic water – Jacob's well[104] – to set the backdrop for Jesus's encounter with the woman against the backdrop of God's presence in "houses" and places.

The imagery of Mt. Gerizim accentuates Jesus's presence as the temple and as the physical manifestation of Jacob's God. Jesus's assertions about worshiping "in Spirit and in truth" do not reject physical place as such; rather, they relocate the בית אל, the water in Jacob's well, and the Jerusalem temple in Jesus himself. Having acquired a divine "hue" from past theophanies, Mt. Gerizim now contextualizes Jesus himself. Just as John drew from the imagery of Jacob's dream to locate heaven *and* earth in the Son of Man (John 1:51),[105] so now Jesus's body remains a specific physical location, from which spiritual water will flow and enliven the bodies of believers, thus extending the temple place to human bodies (John 7:38–39; 14:1–17:26).[106] Thus, while many scholars object to the value of physical place, physicality and place – insofar as bodies are places – still describe the nature of divine presence on earth as the place where one may meet God.[107] A similar principle of relocation and revelation accompanies John's portrayal of Jesus in the Jerusalem temple.

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[103] Coloe (2001), 91–92 notes that this is also the site of the magical well the Targums describe Jacob as digging. Adelman (2009) provides a rich exploration of how *Pirqe De-Rabbi Eliezer* associates the well with the patriarchs, Eden, Mt. Moriah, Jacob's theophany at Bethel, and the temple mount. She uses Bakhtin's notion of a chronotope to describes how the same "place" recurs across narratives and times."

[104] Coloe (2001), 93–96 argues that temple imagery from both Ezekiel and later Jewish tradition is at work in Jesus's physical placement of himself on the well (John 4:6). Positioned on top of the well, Jesus evokes the temple of Ezekiel 47:1–12, from which life-giving water flows as well as the Jewish tradition that the temple in Jerusalem sat above a crevice, at the bottom of which were the primordial waters of Genesis 1. Jacob's well thus reveals Jesus to be the source of the "living water" (John. 4:13–14; cf. 7:38–39).

[105] Rowland and Morray-Jones (2009), 127–8 note the parallels in rabbinic and targumic literature, in which Jacob is the ladder that connects heaven and the likeness of his face is carved on the Merkava, such that the angels who witness his face can learn of the actions of God. Rowland and Morray-Jones argue that Jesus likewise presence an image of God on earth that speaks to God's nature, and thus Jesus's body fulfils a function like Jacob's ladder. Kerr (2002), 136–166 offers an extensive account of how John 1:51 describes Jesus as a temple place that unites heaven and earth.

[106] While Troost-Cramer (2017), 95–114, 146–47 is opposed to the idea of the community of believers becoming Jesus's body on earth, she is right to identify the ongoing physicality of relocation. Um (2006), 136–39 connects his exhaustive study of life-giving, eschatological water (15–67) in Early Judaism to the water Jesus's offers the woman.

[107] Lee (2004), 280–81 rightly objects to the notion of the spirit as being an inward human "spirit" here as does Kerr (2002), 192.

Mt. Zion

The Jerusalem temple rests on Mt. Zion, the site of God's appearance to Abraham (Gen 22:14), to David (1 Chr 21:16), and to Solomon, the priests and the people (2 Chr 7:1–2). It is the chief place of God's visibility (Exod 25:8 LXX). Not only does Jesus appear in the temple, but he embodies aspects of the festal imagery of the Jewish calendar in his speeches and actions within it. The feasts accentuate the accumulated experiences of God's presence and action in the temple and maintain the Jewish cultural memory of God such that the temple fosters the meeting of divine place and time. Given the many studies of this theme,[108] an overview of John's portrayal of the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:1–8:59) will here suffice to show how John portrays Jesus's presence in the temple in light of its stored experiences and divine "salience."

During the feast (John 7:1–52), Jesus declares that he is the source of living water (John 7:37–39).[109] His statements take on added weight because of the cosmic symbolism that the feast preserves:[110] Tabernacles commemorates Solomon's placement of the ark in the temple (1 Kgs 8:2) and lasts seven days followed by an eighth solemn day after the temple dedication (2 Chr 2:8–9). The returned exiles celebrate Tabernacles at the Water Gate, and the law is read to the people (Neh 8:1–18). Isaiah depicts it as an eschatological event associated with going to the mountain of the Lord (Isa 30:29),[111] and in *Jubilees* 16:10–31, Abraham is the first of the patriarchs to celebrate Tabernacles after he circumcises Isaac. During the feast he offers an incense offering that includes nard and myrrh as well as other ingredients listed in Exodus 30:34. Coloe points out that in *Mishna Sukkah* 4:10, priests go to

[108] Coloe (2001), 115–56; Kerr (2002), 205–67; Hoskins (2007); Daise, (2007); and Behr (2019), 137–93 examine the feasts in detail. Spaulding (2009) focuses on Tabernacles and its relationship to cultural memory.
[109] Coloe (2001), 115–56 notes that Jesus will also proclaim that he is the light of the world, a statement that comports with the Mishnah's account of four large Menorah in the Court of Women. The association of Menorah with the trees of paradise may draw together light and the Tree of Life.
[110] Coloe (2001), 120 observes the long history of Tabernacles: it is known as Succot in Lev 23:34; Deut 16:13, 16; Ezra 3:4; Zech 14:16, 18–19; as the "Feast of Ingathering" in Exod 23:16; 34:22; as the "Feast of the Lord" in Lev 23:39; Judg 21:19; and as "the Feast" in 1 Kgs 8:2, 65; 2 Chr 7:8; Neh 8:14; Isa 30:29; Ezek 45:23–25.
[111] As well as in Zech 14:16-19 and Isa 2:2–4; 56:6–8. See Coloe (2001), 121.

the pool of Siloam and carry water back to the temple where they would pour water and wine into two separate bowls on the altar which connected to reservoirs below the temple that symbolized cosmic waters.[112]

The Gihon spring feeds the pool of Siloam, and the spring bears the same name as the Edenic river (Gen 2:13) and came to be associated with it in Jewish understanding.[113] Jesus himself "goes up" (ἀνέβη) to the temple (John 7:14), as if ascending the cosmic mountain to the water of God and in anticipation of his ascension to the Father (John 20:17). On the "great day" of the feast, he will declare that he gives the water of life and that this water can flow from the sides of those who come to believe in him (John 7:37–38; cf. 19:34).[114] The place of the temple as the cosmic mountain with its reservoirs thus comes to reflect and guide the appearance of Jesus as the place of God because Jesus is its source. Jesus himself resembles the ark of God's presence "within the temple" (7:14), and his offer of living water extends the imagery of Eden to believers and will align his crucifixion (John 19:34) with the temple ritual and the cosmic waters that spring from Eden and an eschatological Mt. Zion to renew creation.

Yet Jesus does not remain "within the temple" for long: from Tabernacles onward, his location in the temple mirrors his relationship with "the Jews." After the sharp discourse following the feast, Jesus – the I AM – departs the temple (John 8:59); and he will leave it forever at the Feast of Dedication (John 10:23). During these final confrontations with "the

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[112] Coloe (2001), 121. While one should be cautious about using the Mishnah to exegete John, which predates the Mishnah by a century, the Tannaim may nevertheless be preserving early temple traditions. See the discussion in Evans (1993), 18–28 regarding the use of rabbinic sources in NT study. It is difficult not to associate the cosmic associations of water and wine with the eucharistic undertones of John 6:52–58 and the flow of water and blood from Jesus's side at the crucifixion (John 19:34).

[113] For the affiliation of the Gihon, Siloam, Eden, and Jerusalem see Levenson (1985); Anderson (1988), 120n19, 372–373; Shimoff (1995); and Morales (2012), 17–18. Anderson notes: "In the world of the cult, when the deity was revealed to men and women, ordinary space became sacred space, the meager water source of the city became a cosmic river, the little knoll of Jerusalem became Mount Zion, the highest mountain on earth, and the peripheral city of Jerusalem, the center of the world."

[114] Coloe (2001), 125–28 presents a strong case for reading ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ῥεύσουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος (John 7:38) as being in reference to believers.

Jews," Jesus insists that he is God even as he moves further and further away from the Holy of Holies. His final departure from the Temple is eastward, re-tracing the movement of God from the temple in Ezekiel (Ezek 10:1–19) as well as the flow of the eschatological temple-river (Ezek 47:1–12).[115]

Like God, who becomes a ἁγίασμα μικρόν even after he leaves the temple (Ezek 11:16),[116] Jesus departs but brings Eden and the entire cosmic mountain and temple complex with him. The failure to recognize the Logos incarnate in the place where his identity should be most apparent does not so much result in the "end" of the temple as a place, but rather as the re-location of the temple into the place of Jesus's body, which will later expand to include the bodies of believers.[117] Its mountain location and primordial waters will characterize the "lifting up" of Jesus in his crucifixion and in the subsequent flow of water and blood from his side, which themselves take place in a garden. On Mt. Zion, the topographies of God's places and the meaning of his "times" continue to blend into one another and evoke God's presence in Jesus.

John is not rejecting these topographies. Rather, they continue to reveal who Jesus is. The church itself will become Jesus's body and assume the topography of the cosmic mountain, just as the stone not cut by human hands breaks Nebuchadnezzar's dream-image and becomes a mountain that fills the earth, a kingdom created by the "God of heaven" (Dan 2:34–35; 45). This topography will become the topography of human bodies, thus ensuring that physicality remains essential to divine presence on earth.

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[115] On the relationship with Ezekiel see Coloe (2001), 154 and Fowler and Strickland (2018), 81–82, who draw extensively from Davies (1974).

[116] Ezek 20:40; 45:2–3; and 48:21 also anticipate a future reunion with God in a cosmic temple place.

[117] If, as many scholars agree, John is responding to the loss of the temple in 70 AD in his portrayal of Jesus, then "relocation" makes sense, but at the narrative level I think that "extension" is the better metaphor given the deep significance of the temple for John's thought. Regev (2019), 197–221 offers compelling arguments against the "replacement" theme in John.

Mt. Sinai

While "the mountain" of John 6:3 remains unnamed, one can begin to understand its evocations of Sinai in Chapter 5.[118] There, Jesus associates his healing work with the works of God and asserts that "the Jews" "have never heard [God's] voice nor seen his form" (John 5:37b). Jesus's claim modifies Moses's summary of the Sinai theophany in Deuteronomy 4:12 – "you heard a voice but did not see a form" – as if to deny that his present interlocutors retain any accurate inherited memory of the event, even though they search the Torah. If anyone is capable of recognizing God, it should be "the Jews," who saw the fire and heard God's voice; but the incarnate Logos stands before them, and they cannot identify him.[119]

What literally "takes place", then, in chapter 6, is a re-staging of the Sinai theophany, in which Jesus is both mediator and mediated and thus conflates Moses and God in himself, just as he will identify himself as gift and giver in the bread of life discourse.[120] In John 6:2 a great crowd follows Jesus to a mountain because they see the σημεῖα he is performing on the sick. The reader knows that the σημεῖα reveal a divine glory because Jesus's first sign took place "on the third day" at the wedding in Cana, likely in reference to the "third day" of the Sinai theophany (Exod 19:11).[121] The reader also knows that God gave Moses visual and spatial σημεῖα to cultivate belief, and that the first of these was to meet God at Sinai (Exod 3:12–4:17 LXX). Like Moses, Jesus himself goes up (ἀνῆλθεν) onto τὸ ὄρος, where he sits with his disciples. Like God, however, he is also the one who has descended from heaven

[118] Hylen (2005), 123 suggests that the mountain can evoke Sinai as do Schnackenburg (1968) 2:14 and Barrett (1978), 273.

[119] Deuteronomy reinforces the need for accurate memory many times. Consider, Deut 4:9 LXX, which falls in the context of the verse Jesus has modified with its curiously intertwined aural and visual images: μὴ ἐπιλάθῃ πάντας τοὺς λόγους, οὓς ἑωράκασιν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί σου. The need to "see the Logos" applies to the whole of John's Gospel. Wang (2017), 63–73 underscores the power of communal memory in Deuteronomy and the use of eyewitness language to describe Israel's knowledge of God and ongoing need for visible reminders of his presence.

[120] Recall here how much of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy are take up with memory, e.g., the stones on the shoulders of the high priest (Exod 28:29) and the day of atonement (Lev 16:29). The whole of Deuteronomy is a recapitulation of Israel's experience of God and his commands for a new generation.

[121] Neis (2013), 41–112 shows that seeing God and being seen by him at the feasts would become a huge concern for the Rabbis in the wake of the destruction of the temple.

(John 6:33, 38, 51). That evening, Jesus will identify himself to the disciples with ἐγώ εἰμι as he crosses the sea, recalling God's power and presence over the cosmic waters of creation and his triumph at the Red Sea (John 6:19–20).[122] The Exodus-Sinai imagery of John 6:1–20 thus presents Jesus in God's places and roles.

Synthesis

Each mountain transports the reader back in time to when Israelite patriarchs and kings met with God and learned that God would live among them in a physical place. They align the time of Jesus's presence on earth with the time of God's dwelling on earth; Jesus is the *axis mundi*: the presence of God continuous with the place of God. If Jesus has "re-placed" the temple and the mountains, he has not established a "place-less" worship but offered a new topography in his body – one nevertheless continuous with these mountains. As a place, Jesus presents the site of God, the "where" of his appearing. These theophanic places have mirrored his divine identity by reflecting the cosmic architecture of his body. It follows that as the climactic action of the gospel the crucifixion and resurrection should transpire in places of acute theological resonance. I now argue that the Johannine gardens are such places.

The Johannine Gardens

The word "garden" (κῆπος) appears four times in John (18:1, 26; 19:41 (2x)), and "gardener" (κηπουρός) appears once (John 20:15). The gardens form an *inclusio* that stretches from the arrest of Jesus (John 18:2–12) to his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection (John 19:41; 20:15–

[122] Jesus evokes the Spirit of God hovering over the waters (Gen 1:1). O'Day (1997), 149–60 and Hylen (2005), 132–33 both argue that God is in view. O'Day suggests that creation is in view and Hylen argues that God's power over the water of the Red Sea makes more sense in light of the many Exodus allusions in John 6 and the recurring imagery of God passing through the sea in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Ps 76:20–21 XX). Given that the Exodus narrative is itself a re-creation and evokes the imagery of creation, including the subjugation of waters and encountering the presence of God on the cosmic mountain, one can read these narratives as sharing a theological pedigree.

18). Unlike the synoptics, John uses κῆπος to name the places of Jesus's passion and resurrection.While scholarship continues to assert the symbolic value of the gardens,[123] anyone wishing to make such claims must face the objection that across Genesis 2:8–3:24, the LXX uses παράδεισος rather than κῆπος where the MT uses גן.[124]

One can counter this objection by noting that in Origin's *Hexapla*, Aquila glosses גן with κῆπος in Genesis 2:8, which he does again – alongside Theodotion – in Genesis 3:2.[125] While the majority of the references to Eden in the LXX and Early Jewis Literature use παράδεισος, the LXX is not always consistent.[126] Ezekiel 36:35 reads κῆπος τρυφῆς where the MT reads גן עדן. Given that Ezekiel 28:13 LXX reads ἐν τῇ τρυφῇ τοῦ παραδείσου τοῦ θεοῦ where the MT reads בעדן גן אלוהים, the translator(s) of Ezekiel seem to have regarded παράδεισος and κῆπος as synonymous or nearly so.[127] In Ecclesiastes 2:5; Sirach 24:30–31; and Song of Songs 4:12–16, παράδεισος and κῆπος appear alongside one another to accentuate the beauty of a single place, further suggesting their potential synonymy.[128]

The sense of interchangeability persists if one widens the "aperture" of resonance and considers that κῆπος often appears in contexts that align it with Edenic and eschatological imagery.[129] Ecclesiastes 2:5 and Song of Songs 4:12–16; 5:1; 6: 2, 11, 8:12–13 associate

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[123] Hoskyns (1920), 214–15; Lightfoot (1956), 321; Wyatt (1990); Manns (1991), 401–29; Suggit (1999); McWhirter (2006); Karakolis (2007); Zimmermann (2008a); Rosik (2009); Schaper (2010); Brown (2010); Moore (2013); Coloe (2013); Marion (2017); Schaser (2020).

[124] Objections to reading the gardens symbolically include Brown (1971), 2:806 Anderson (2006), 190; and Keener (2003), 2:1077. Siliezar (2015), 174–90 offers the strongest arguments against reading the gardens as Edenic, and the depth of his research is impressive. Nevertheless, in my view, Siliezar downplays the potential synonymy between κῆπος and παράδεισος as well as the broader cosmic temple imagery in which both participate.

[125] Aquila also uses κῆπος in Gen 2:8; and Aquila is especially compelling here given his nearly contemporary status with John and because of his allegedly close associations with Rabbi Akiva and Judaism.

[126] On the history and development of the word παράδεισος see Bremmer (1999) and Schaper (2010).

[127] See also the use of παράδεισος in Ezek 31:8–9; and note that Gen 3:24 describes Adam being taken out of τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς.

[128] Bremmer (1999), 17–18 raises the question of why the LXX uses παράδεισος instead of κῆπος. While he concludes that the royal, park-like connotations of παράδεισος make it a better candidate, he adds that the differences between the two are not always substantial. Citing PSI VIII 917.5 and P. Mich. V 282.3, he notes that "in first-century Tebuntis we actually find a *kêpoparadeisos*."

[129] See Zimmermann's (2008a), 221–26 criteria for symbolism and his subsequent argument that the Johannine gardens are symbolic.

κῆποι with spices, trees, fruit, vineyards, flowing water, mountains, and pleasure – the same kinds of settings that attend descriptions of cosmic temple and eschatological places across the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish literature.[130] Sirach 24:30–31; Amos 9:14, and Isaiah 58:11; 61:11 feature κῆποι in eschatological garden-temple settings, likewise replete with spices, mountains, and rivers – contexts in which Amos and Isaiah include seeing God (Amos 9:1–15; Isaiah 65:1–66:24).[131] Given the cosmic temple themes surveyed above, κῆπος is poised to join mountains, sanctuaries, and paradise as a theophanic place.[132] It can evoke Eden in John 18:1 and 19:41.[133]

The Arrest

The garden of John 18:1–12 realizes this potential by way of its location near the Kidron Brook, which is likely fed by the Gihon spring. The spring sits below the City of David as the source of irrigation for the Kidron Valley and shares a name with the Gihon River, one of Eden's four (Gen 2:13). Terraced gardens and parks may have filled this district because of an aqueduct present since Solomon's time, which directed the flow of the Gihon and which Hezekiah's Siloam channel would later redirect.[134] The association of Gihon with Eden imbues both the pool of Siloam and the Kidron Brook with eschatological significance

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[130] Smith (2016), 97–8 observes the theological potency of geography in Song of Songs, in which – at one level – "the book may celebrate the political-religious centrality of Jerusalem, with the deity as king and the city as spouse." He includes the paradisal imagery as evidence.

[131] In these verses Isaiah condemns the idolatry that occurs gardens even as he uses gardens to depict the eschaton. Notably, in both cases gardens perform a temple-like function.

[132] Rubinkiewicz and Lunt (1983), 699 note that in *Apoc. Ab.* 12:10, "Eden" translates the Slavonic *vertepu*, which he identifies as the gloss of κήπος. In 23:10, "Eden" translates *ovoščiniku*, the gloss for which Lunt suggests is δένδρον, which he takes to imply a "newly planted area." Since no Greek manuscripts of *Apoc. Ab.* are currently available, this is speculative; but it remains noteworthy that Lunt did not give παράδεισος as a fitting gloss in either case, presumably because the Slavonic word for it is not present although Eden is obviously meant.

[133] As various studies of the Hebrew Bible quotations in John also suggest, John may well have access to Greek manuscripts that are no longer extant. See, for instance, Bynum (2015), 66–9 on John's use of Zech 12:15.

[134] Stager (1999), 183 makes this claim, drawing from 2 Kgs 23:4, 25:4; Jer 31:40, 39:4; Neh 3:15; and Eccl 2:5–6. Goodman (2010) is sceptical about the existence of any gardens in first-century Jerusalem. According to Shimoff (1995), some rabbis claimed that only one garden, a rose garden, existed in Jerusalem, for the furnishing of temple incense.

suggestive of the waters of Σιλωαμ (Isa 8:5 LXX)[135] and the healing waters of Ezekiel 47:7 LXX, which flow into Galilee to the east, a course which would begin from the temple and continue through the Kidron valley.[136] According to Jeremiah, the Kidron valley will itself become a ἁγιασμα as a part of the New Covenant (38:40 LXX), recalling the holy sanctuary where one may see God (Exod. 25:8).[137] The Gihon of Eden and the Gihon of Jerusalem thus overlap and suggest that any garden in the vicinity of the Kidron Brook is near Edenic water.

The Gihon's connection to the Kidron valley also affiliates the garden in John 18:1 with the Davidic dynasty.[138] Solomon is crowned king at the Gihon (1 Kings 1:33, 45).[139] In 2 Kings 25:4 and Jeremiah 39:4, 57:7, Zedekiah attempts to exit the city "near the king's garden," and Nehemiah 3:15 mentions construction of the wall of the "pool of Shelah of the king's garden."[140] Ten of the Davidic kings are buried in the City of David, but Manasseh and Amon are buried in gardens (2 Kings 21:18, 26). Nicolas Wyatt and Joachim Schaper argue that these garden tombs should not be seen as distinct from the location of the other royal tombs, which they place near the Kidron valley.[141] The presence of the entombed Davidic heirs anticipates Jesus's imminent death as "king of the Jews" yet hints at the immortal lineage promised to David and thus the promise of resurrection.[142]

The arrest itself recalls the actions of Adam and God in Genesis 3:1–24. Like Adam and Eve, Jesus must leave the garden and face thorns and nudity. At the climax of the trial, Pilate will announce Jesus as ὁ ἄνθρωπος (John 19:5). While the trial does not occur in a garden, the garden *inclusio* encompasses Pilate's declaration, and supports David Litwa's

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[135] Stager (1999), 183 claims that the waters of Shiloh evoke the "quiet, cosmic waters emanating from the primordial deep."
[136] Stager (1999), 188.
[137] Jer 17:12 LXX also uses ἁγίασμα to describe the throne of glory. Ezek 45:2–3; 48:21 also describe temple space as ἁγίασμα.
[138] Wyatt (1990) and Schaper (2010) both argue for the royal affiliation of the Kidron garden.
[139] See Wyatt (1990), 25n13. See also Anderson (1988), 376.
[140] Wyatt (1990), 29 notes that some Greek MSS read 2 Esdras 12:15 as Σιλωάμ.
[141] Wyatt (1990), 30; Schaper (2010), 25.
[142] Schaper (2010), 17-25 argues that the royal affiliations of both παράδεισος and κῆπος in the LXX may help to explain why John may have favoured κῆπος over παράδεισος.

assertion that the ἄνθρωπος in question evokes the Adam of Genesis 3:22 and *Vita Adae et Evae* 13:3.[143] Litwa argues that what leads God to describe Adam as divine in these texts is a fruit that has ironically also reduced him to death and mortality. For Adam, the acquisition of divinity is destructive; and Jesus resembles Adam in that his own declarations of divine affiliation have led to his flogged and bloody state when Pilate presents him as “the man.” However, the underlying irony is that Jesus’s destruction is his glory (John 12:23–25). Unlike Adam, for whom becoming like God resulted in death, the divine glory of Jesus’s hour arrives through his death, the marks of which will identify him as ὁ κύριος in the post-resurrection appearances (John 20:18, 25, 28). Jesus becomes an “Adam” for whom divinity is not the product of transgression.[144]

Jesus also resembles God in the scenes of his arrest. He knows the future (John 18:4); and when he declares ἐγώ εἰμι to Judas and the officers, they fall to the ground as if before a theophany (John 18:5–6).[145] Like God, Jesus is also the one who asks questions: τίνα ζητεῖτε; (John 18:4,7) recalls ποῦ εἶ (Gen3:8 LXX), in which identity and location intertwine. The theological significance of this question is clear from its repetition in John at key junctures in Jesus’s life and ministry: it forms his first speech in the Gospel (1:38), and he will ask this question of Mary Magdalene in the garden of his resurrection (20:15). The question is double sided: does one actually know who Jesus is, where he comes from, and where to find him? Does one know oneself well enough to know that one ought to seek this kind of person? Like God, Jesus also commands a sword in the garden; but he commands it to be put away (John 18:11; cf. Gen. 3:24).

The garden of Jesus’s betrayal thus suggests overlapping Davidic, Adamic, and divine identities by its cosmic imagery. These identities coalesce around Jesus’s actions and words

[143] Litwa (2010).
[144] Litwa (2010), 143 notes: “In John’s Christology, Jesus has the very knowledge and iconicity which in Genesis and *Vita* make Adam a divine being.” 143
[145] One is tempted to see in Judas, whom the devil has entered, the snake reduced to crawling on its belly here.

and in his arrest and trial because the garden place itself evokes the temple-paradise of divine presence, its death-inducing loss, and the hope to regain it. The physical topography of the place entwines with the theological potency of what happened there. Nor should one forget that Jesus "often met with his disciples there" (John 18:2): it follows that a place evocative of the Edenic temple-garden and presence of God with humanity would be the site of frequent meetings between the incarnate Logos – a divine Adam – with his disciples, of God with humanity. Such resonances continue in the garden of Jesus's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.

Crucifixion

Because Jesus is crucified in a place where there was a garden (John 19:41), many early and medieval Christians associated the cross with the tree of life.[146] In John, the association is most evident in the flow of water and blood from Jesus's side, which blends the sacramental, life-giving themes of John 6:52–58 with three eschatological rivers of life.[147] In Ezekiel 47:1–12, a river flows from the temple, sustaining life and nourishing life-giving trees because of its temple-source.[148] "Living waters" (ὕδωρ ζῶν) will flow from Jerusalem when the Lord returns to his mountains, abolishes darkness, and becomes king in Zechariah 14:4–9.[149] In Revelation 22:1–6, a river flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb and waters the Tree of Life. God (and the Lamb's) servants "will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads." John's recurring allusions to cosmic water culminate here (John 4:14; 7:38; 9:7) where "they will look on the one they have pierced" (John 19:37; Zech 12:10 MT).

[146] The cross is called a "tree" in Lk 5:30 10:39; 13:29; Gal 3:13-14. Some ancient exegetes understood Golgotha to be the place of Adam's skull or of his entire skeleton and the lance that pierced Jesus's side to be the flaming sword at Eden's gate. See Anderson (1988), 377–78 and Kister (2010).
[147] Anderson (1988), 373–4 makes an important connection here between the cosmic mountain and Israelite festival as well as Early Christian alignment of the Eucharist with the fruits of Eden: "Early Christian exegesis often equates the tree of life (or more generally, the fruits of the garden) with the elements of the Eucharist. This typological identification is not simply an act of eisegesis. It reflects a sensitive understanding of the cosmic mountain/temple as the source of feasting and "(eternal-)life.""
[148] Ezek 47:8–9 LXX emphasizes the life the river will bring.
[149] Note that Zech 14:9 reads: "on that day the Lord will be one and his name one."

The eschatological nature of the garden place finds resonance both in the water that flows from Jesus and in his final word from the cross. Τετέλεσται (John 19:30) echoes the use of συντελέω at the completion of creation, the tabernacle, and the temple (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 40:33; 1 Kings 8:1), suggesting a congruent but more perfect creative work. Should one also read Jesus as giving the Spirit in the same breath (John 19:30), then the garden-temple setting remains *the* place where God comes to dwell with humanity.

One should also recall the presence of God's throne at the tree of life in *1 Enoch* 24:4; 25:3–5 and *Apocalypse of Moses* 22:4.[150] Across the pseudepigrapha, the only entity to share the throne with God is the Son of Man,[151] just as the Lamb is the only one to share it in Revelation.[152] However one construes John's relationship to these texts, he depicts Jesus as both the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36) and the "lifted up" Son of Man (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32). As the place of glorification and judgement (John 12:31–32), the cross echoes the purpose of the throne in *1 Enoch*, *Apocalypse of Moses*, and Revelation. The ubiquity of these themes, intertwined as they are with the waters and trees of Paradise, suggests that in the garden, the cross can evoke both the throne and the Tree of Life.[153]

Burial

John does not reveal that Jesus is crucified in a garden until he describes Jesus's burial: ἦν δὲ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ὅπου ἐσταυρώθη κῆπος (John 19:41). Regarding the temple, the phrase ἐν τῷ τόπῳ possesses greater allusive power than initial readings suggest. Deuteronomy LXX anticipates a temple-τόπος that the Lord will choose, and in which his name will be called

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[150] Note that in *2 En.* 8:3, God takes a rest under the Tree of Life when he walks in Paradise. Note also Isaiah 6:1: εἶδον τὸν κύριον καθήμενον ἐπὶ θρόνου ὑψηλοῦ καὶ ἐπηρμένου. Jesus's will also be "lifted up" and glorified on the cross (John 12:23, 32).
[151] Note, however, Ezek. Trag. 68–76, in which Moses appears to occupy a throne that God vacates.
[152] See Bauckham (1999).
[153] The imagery of Eden, God's throne, and the cross also overlap in Ephrem the Syrian's *Cave of Treasures*, in which Jesus is crucified on the poles of the ark at the site of Adam's grave and skull.

upon (Deut 12:5, 11, 21; 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2).[154] *Jubilees* uses the language of place to describe God's holy mountains and garden (*Jub.* 4:26: 8:19);[155] and τόπος is a preferred descriptor for the temple and Jerusalem in 2 Maccabees 2:18; 3:12, 18, 30, 38–39; 5:16–20; 8:17; 10:7; 15:34 – to the extent that the author must clarify the relation of "the place" to "the people"[156] while establishing the power of God's ἐπιφάνειαι on behalf of both.[157] The *Apocalypse of Moses* twice repeats ἐν τῷ τόπῳ with reference to the site of Adam's burial in Paradise (40:6–7); and the idea that Adam was buried in Eden would also lead to the early and widely held Christian belief that Jesus was crucified at the site of Adam's grave, Golgotha – a Johannine τόπος (John 19:17).[158] John has already joined τόπος with ἑτοιμάζω in reference to his Father's οἰκία (John 14:2) – which echoes God's planting of his people on his mountain and his preparation (ἑτοιμάζω) of the ἁγίασμα in Exodus 15:17. Such evidence indicates that τόπος can bear temple allusions. John's repetition of κῆπος (19:41) underscores the nature of the place as the same in which Jesus was crucified, buried, and resurrected.[159]

Jesus's burial in the τόπος includes burial clothes (ὀθονίοις) and fragrant spices (ἀρωμάτων): myrrh and aloes (σμύρνης καὶ ἀλόης) (John 19:39). Fragrance has already attended Jesus's temple-body in the narrative. Like the glory of the Lord (πλήρης ὁ οἶκος τῆς

[154] Hayward (2004), 388–89 notes the emphasis on the temple as a place of prayer in the LXX Pentateuch.
[155] The extant Greek fragments do not extend to these verses, so I cannot verify that some Greek manuscripts do in fact read τόπος. It seems likely that they would.
[156] 2 Macc 5:16–20 reads: "God did not choose the nation for the sake of the place, but the place for the sake of the nation." This statement explains how Antiochus could enter the temple unscathed: if the nation is defiled then so is the place. The author appears to understand the relationship between place and people as symbiotic: the defilement of one is the defilement of the other; nevertheless, the place defines the people. Note here that Judas remains undefiled (2 Macc 5:27). He perpetuates the purity of the place in himself and is thus able to restore the place to purity. This is not a new idea. The themes of human purity mirroring tabernacle and temple purity extend back to the Pentateuch. See Harrington (2019), 61–9.
[157] In contrast to Antiochus, who enters and violates the temple (2 Macc 2:15) and whom the author reminds us four times is styled Ἐπιφανῆ (2 Macc 2:20; 4:7; 10:9, 13), God's ἐπίφάνειαι protect his τόπος (2 Macc 3:23; 12:22; 51:27).
[158] Africanus, Origen, Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom, and Epiphanius held that the site of Adam's burial was the site of the crucifixion and resurrection. See Quinn (1962), 77 and Anderson (1988).
[159] John has also noted that Judas "knew the τόπος," the Edenic Kidron garden where Jesus would be (John 18:2). See Kerr (2002), 152–56 for further associations of τόπος with the temple in the Hebrew Bible (e.g.,, Gen 28:10–19 LXX; Isa 18:7) and Early Jewish literature (e.g., *Somn.* 1.62–64). Kerr (2002), 153 also notes the rabbinic reference to God himself as a "place" (*Gen. R.* 68.9, 12).

δόξης αὐτοῦ (Isa 6:1)), the fragrance of the nard with which Mary anoints Jesus "fills the house" (ἡ δὲ οἰκία ἐπληρώθη ἐκ τῆς ὀσμῆς τοῦ μύρου) even as it portends Jesus's paschal death and burial (John 12:3, 7).[160] Such olfactory imagery, entwined with the theme of Jesus's glorious death, mixes the presence of God and his radiant glory with the scents of Paradise and the temple. Myrrh and a variety of fragrances attend nearly every description of παράδεισος, κῆπος, and incense offering in the LXX and Early Jewish Literature, and the burial of Adam in Paradise (*Apoc. Mos* 40:1–3) comes especially near to John's depiction. No attempt to recall the paradise of Jewish tradition could do better than to evoke its smells in a garden setting.

John's depiction of Jesus's burial and tomb also suggests similarities between his body and the ark of the covenant. After his resurrection, two angels sit where the head and feet of Jesus's body lay, evoking the location of the cherubim above the ark (John 20:12; Exod 38:6–8 LXX). Nicholas Lunn identifies further echoes: αἴρω describes the transport of Jesus's body (John 19:38) and transport of the ark (Exod 25:14; Num 4:15; 10:21 LXX). A cloth covers the ark when it is transported (Num 4:5 LXX), and Jesus's body is covered (John 19:40). Both Jesus's body and the ark are anointed with an oil made of myrrh (John 19:39; Exod 30:23-26).[161] As the place of Jesus's ark-body, his tomb resembles the Holy of Holies within the garden-temple.

Resurrection

Like the garden in John 18:1, the resurrection appearance in the garden of John 19–20 casts Jesus as both Adam and God. Like Adam, one can assume that Jesus is again naked when he appears to Mary Magdalene, having cast off the graveclothes and left the face-covering folded in the tomb (John 19:23; 20:6–7). Yet instead of mockery he becomes the object of

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[160] Recall here that Jesus's body is the temple. Kerr (2002), 202 also notes that John may be drawing on Isaiah 6:1.
[161] Lunn (2009).

adoration (John 20:17);[162] and Mary's presence in the garden, coupled with her longing to touch Jesus, present her as the Eve to his divine Adam.[163] Before she recognizes him, however, Mary mistakes him for the gardener (ὁ κηπουρός) (John 20:15), a title befitting Adam's commission (Gen 1:28–29).

The garden also casts Jesus in a divine light. Like God, he has "life in himself" (John 5:26); and when he rises from death, Jesus resembles the God who, by virtue of planting Eden and placing Adam there (Gen 2:8), is a kind of κηπουρός. Jesus will also breath the Holy Spirit into the disciples (ἐνεφύσησεν (John 20:22)) just as God breathes (ἐνεφύσησεν) the breath of life into ὁ ἄνθρωπος (Gen 2:7).[164] Although Jesus does not breath the Spirit *in* the garden, his breath creates a place evocative of the temple-garden *in* the disciples, with whom Jesus and the Father will make their μονή (14:23).[165] He extends the place of God to human bodies.

The resurrected Jesus may, however, pose a threat to human bodies. Like God's prohibition of touch regarding Sinai on the third day (Exod 19:12, 16) and regarding the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen 3:3), Jesus's difficult μή μου ἅπτου (John 20:17)[166] echoes the warnings that attend touching the places and things so close to God that they seem to have become an extension of his being. The risen Christ is unveiled (20:7) – unlike Moses, who covered his face to protect the Israelites from the divine glory reflected there (Exod 3:34–35; cf. 2 Cor 3–4).[167] Jesus's body may be so suffused with divine life in the moment of Mary's (potential) touch that it renders physical contact dangerous. Whatever the case, the encounter in the garden will lead Mary to exclaim: ἑώρακα τὸν κύριον (John 20:18) on the

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[162] McWhirter (2006) read this as referring to the garden of Canticles. One can recall here the long history of Jewish and Christian interpreters who read Canticles as the setting of God's overwhelming desire to be with his people.
[163] Eve herself is the mother of the living (Gen 3:20).
[164] Siliezar (2015), 153–72 reads this as an evocation of Gen 2:7.
[165] See Chapter 3 of this thesis.
[166] Bieringer (2008, 2013) gives the most thorough accounts of the challenges.
[167] See Schneiders (2003), 207–208 for the symbolism of the folded veil in the tomb.

morning of the third day, as if the garden were Eden, Sinai, the ἁγίασμα, and Moriah/Zion rolled into one. The prohibition thus recalls the cosmic mountain and the tabernacle furniture as the sites of theophany even as it hints at the perils of God's presence.

Regarding time, this theophanic "third day" joins the number "seven" and the notion of completion. Jesus is buried on the day of preparation so as not to hang on the Sabbath (19:31); and he exits his tomb while it is still dark on the morning of the first day of the week (20:1–2).[168] If τετέλεσται has implied that the work of creation is finished, then the "first day of the week" marks a new category of time, one that dawns in the sabbath rest of an Edenic place. Just as God placed Adam and Eve in Eden and rested after seven days (Gen 1:2–3), and Solomon brought the ark into the temple upon its completion after seven years (1 Kings 6:38), Jesus emerges to be seen as ὁ κύριος on the third day in the place most evocative of divine presence.[169]

Synthesis

The garden places of the passion and resurrection trigger the deeply embedded alignment of Eden, the tabernacle, the temple, and theophany in the cultural and theological memory of Judaism. The gardens charge Jesus's appearance with an Adamic and divine "hue" that stretches from creation to eschaton, and such "hue" is impossible without the rich combination of memory, physical topography, and future hope that only place itself can give. Far from being cast out of the garden, Jesus moves closer to God, as Adam himself was meant to do, and Jesus brings believers with him. While the gardens are external to Jesus's body, John shows their ability to mirror the very place that Jesus himself is: the cosmic

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[168] Coloe (2013), 80–82 also explores the potential for an eighth eschatological day in John's depiction.
[169] Oliver (2017), 14–21 provides a helpful introduction to the patterns of seven in Genesis and Exodus. See also Morales (2012), 91–100.

temple of God’s presence in human flesh on earth, the place where God is visible (John 19:35–37; 20:18).[170]

One can add that Jesus himself is a kind of paradise because his body is the temple. As the dwelling place of God on earth, he distils not only the theophanic, temple-oriented places of Israelite worship but also the redemptive-historical trajectories of biblical time – should one choose to characterize “redemptive-historical” as the well-documented desire of God across the Hebrew Bible to live in proximity to humanity. Seeing Jesus is seeing the places and times of God’s presence as congealed into one body and one time, that of the incarnation.

Conclusion

Having established that Jesus is the place of God such that God can be in two places at once, Chapter 4 began with the argument that knowing where to find Jesus is tantamount to knowing the “where” of God. The question “where is God?” thus emerged as central to belief: how can one encounter God or see him if one does not know how to find him? Place, then, is central to seeing God, as it is for any human experience; and place also characterizes that which appears in it. The temple places of Israelite religion and Judaism are the longstanding sites of God’s appearing; but few Johannine scholars developed how the physical topography of such places accentuates John’s theological and Christological claims.

I have argued that the garden and temple-topped mountains where life-giving water flows form a place that mirrors the place Jesus is: God’s temple, his “where.” Jesus is God and man on the earth, just as the garden of the crucifixion and resurrection is both Eden, the place God dwells with humanity, and a geographical location. When the narrative places Jesus there, the place itself depicts Jesus as God. It underscores his divine humanity and

[170] The emphasis on seeing the Lord across Chapters 19–20 is undeniable; and John regards it as an essential part of witness John 19:35–27.

human divinity. The God of Israel walks in the garden-temple once again, and the material world announces his presence although few recognize what they see. Part 3 of this thesis will therefore approach the question of seeing Jesus as seeing God with the sense that no easy bifurcation of the physical from the spiritual exists in John's portrayal of sight precisely because John never separates the presence of God from the physical topographies of place and body that determine his presence on earth.

PART 3: SEEING GOD

Defending the value of physical sight for belief marks a shift in this thesis from a focus on the visibility of God to the act of perceiving him in and through Jesus. In Chapter 5, I begin to connect belief to divine visibility by asking whether John actually values sight, a crucial point given my central claim that the physical visibility of God is necessary for belief.

Whereas Part 2 has focused on Jesus as the place where one can see God, Part 3 shifts to the human experience of that sight. Questions and challenges immediately arise. If God is fully present in Jesus, then why do so few of the people who encounter Jesus believe that he is God? Does John portray sight as being a desirable component of belief or is belief meant to operate independently of or even against seeing? John 2:23–25; 4:48; and 20:29 appear to resist the notion that seeing Jesus and his signs can lead to legitimate belief, and many scholars read them this way. I may have established that God is visible in Jesus, but it is not yet apparent that this visibility is important for belief formation.

Part 3 draws the visibility of God, sight, and belief together across two chapters. Through close readings of John 2–4 and 20:29, Chapter 5 argues that physical sight is necessary for belief formation. It therefore suggests the need for a physically visible God if belief is to occur. Chapter 6 then argues that John's various accounts of seeing Jesus indicate that seeing Jesus is seeing God and that Jesus's material presence is vital for belief, however counterintuitive the sight of God that he presents may be.

CHAPTER 5: THE EFFICACY OF EMPIRICAL VISION FOR BELIEF

Like finding Hans Christian Andersen hand in hand with Søren Kierkegaard.

— John Ashton (1991), 511

Distaste characterizes the dominant approaches to physical sight in John. Empirical vision is beneath the Evangelist. His spiritual and eternal grasp of truth transcends history and thus the crass and feeble means by which humanity is condemned to apprehend reality. Such distaste is as much a product of aesthetic and philosophical reasoning as it is exegetical. John's readers have always found him to resonate with their sympathies, be they Platonic,[1] Hegelian[2] or radically Lutheran.[3] For Rudolf Bultmann, who remains the chief architect of modern approaches to Johannine sight, the signs and resurrection appearances are concessions to faith that is weak because it relies on seeing.[4] His most passionate denunciation of sight emerges from his reading of Thomas in John 20:29 and still speaks for many in the generations that have succeeded him:

[1] Origen, *Princ*. 1; Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 3.18–19, Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 11.209–214.

[2] Baur (2016), 331–75. Frey (2017) examines the impact of Baur on Johannine scholarship, observing the Hegelian impulse behind Baur's construal of John's spirituality as the capstone of New Testament theology.

[3] As it did for Baur, John represents the capstone of New Testament theology for Bultmann (1955), 2:3–92. At the heart of Bultmann's theology is the Lutheran account of faith and works that Bultmann's teacher, Wilhelm Hermann, bequeathed to him: the understanding that any reliance on history – and of the empirical experiences that comprise history – as evidence for why one should throw themselves on God is "justification by works." For Bultmann, "hearing" will describe a kind of passive reception rather than an active attempt to justify oneself by seeing; and Bultmann will collapse Jesus's words and works and sight and hearing into one another. Barclay (2014), 83; Chalamet (2005), 31–59; and Fergusson (1992), 12 all describe the influence of Hermann's application of justification to history.

[4] Bultmann (1955), 2:56; (1971), 634–35, 688, 696. One can multiply examples of his influence, and the following examples represent a variety of approaches both blunt and nuanced, whose conclusions nevertheless resonate with Bultmann or draw directly from him: Schottrof (1970), 251–60; Becker (1970), 146; Fortna (1988), esp. 3; Koester (1989; 2008); Ashton (1991) is nuanced but see, esp., 511–14; 515–53; DeConick (2001), 68–85, 131–32; Lincoln (2002); Köstenberger (2006), 105; (2009), 205; Kierspel (2008); Michaels (2010), 92–93; Tuckett (2013). Nielsen (2008), 201 goes so far as to claim that "to understand [Jesus's] identity on the basis of his appearance and physical sight is hamartia because this approach erroneously rejects his divinity." Wang (2017), 1–21 offers a thorough and helpful bibliography of studies of the senses in John scholarship, much of it focused on the value of seeing. Judge (2007) provides a helpful overview of the scholars of Gnosticism –including George Riley (1995) and Elaine Pagels (2003), amongst whom one may class DeConick (2001) – who claim that John advocates a belief that eschews experience in direct opposition to the Gospel of Thomas, which advocates for personal mystical experiences that emulate Jesus rather than believe *in* him.

> The doubt of Thomas is representative of the common attitude of men, who cannot believe without seeing miracles (4:48). As the miracle is a concession to the weakness of man, so is the appearance of the Risen Jesus a concession to the weakness of the disciples. Fundamentally they ought not to need it! Fundamentally it ought not to be the sight of the Risen Lord that first moves the disciples to believe "the word that Jesus spoke" (2.22), for this word alone should have the power to convince them.[5]

Under Bultmann's deeply Lutheran influence, John 2:23–25; 4:48; and 20:29 have emerged time and again as the greatest evidence for the Evangelist's aversion to making physical sight the basis of belief.[6] Those who believe because they see Jesus's signs remain untrustworthy (John 2:23–25); an exasperated Jesus exclaims, "unless you see signs and wonders, you will never believe" (4:48), and Jesus delivers the *coup de grâce* to Thomas when he blesses those "who have not seen and believed" (20:29). Other scholars do not dismiss sight *tout court* but still split it into two modes: physical sight and spiritual insight. Based on appeals to the semantic range of verbs of sight in John,[7] they conclude that belief is the result of a noetic or spiritual insight that must transcend physical sight as a noetic vision.[8] While these readings indicate less scepticism than Bultmann about the role of seeing, they share his reticence regarding empirical sight.[9]

Yet when one reads these verses and considers the context of John's seeing verbs along the grain of the Gospel, the evidence resists straightforward aversion to sight, a fact

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[5] Bultmann (1971), 696.
[6] Much recent scholarly literature will simply cite one or more of these references as evidence that John disparages sight as the basis for faith.
[7] These are: βλέπω, θεωρέω, ὁράω, θεάομαι, ἰδού Note also the use of παρακύπτω in John 20:5, 11.
[8] Philips (1957); Traets (1967); Hergenröder (1996); Kanagaraj (1998); and Miller (2006) all appear to advocate some version of this position. See also Michaelis (1967), whose sixty-seven page entry on ὁράω focuses on its role in describing the vision of God and the noetic realm. Korteweg (1979) and Dodd (1953), 336 have likewise asserted the invisibility of the noetic realm in John and accorded ὁράω a sense closer to disembodied "vision" rather than empirical sight, a view that seems to inform or at least entwine with the use of the phrase "eyes of faith" in much scholarship to describe seeing that believes (e.g., Maloney (2017), 333). See below for further discussion of the seeing verbs.
[9] Fortna (1988), 245 does not make explicit arguments from the verbs of seeing, but he does distinguish physical from spiritual sight and ultimately claims that no seeing and believing is better than any seeing at all. Nicol (1972), 121–22, 133 is more circumspect. He notes two levels of sight but recognizes that physical sight and spiritual insight are intertwined.

increasingly apparent to many scholars.[10] John depends on sight to cultivate belief.[11] This chapter therefore builds on older critiques of Bultmann's approach and more recent work by conducting a reassessment of John 2:23–25; 4:48; and 20:29 as well as John's use of ὁράω. I argue that these verses and John's use of seeing verbs resist readings that uncover a distaste for sight as basely material or dependent upon evidence. While John's account of seeing remains complex, and those who see Jesus often fail to believe, the blame for unbelief lies with human hearts rather than with human eyes. Sight is catalyst rather than culprit. It remains necessary for belief.

Such claims require clear elucidation given that many continue to object to the value of sight and many others assume that the issue has been settled against it. The chapter therefore consists of four parts, one for each of the pericopes in question (2:23–25; 4:48; 20:29) and one for an overview of John's use of ὁράω. Structuring the argument around these points allows me to show how the chief evidence in the arguments against physical seeing can actually be read as supporting sight's value for belief formation: even these passages are windows onto the power of physical sight in John. Since the primary argument is a constructive reassessment of John's attitude towards sight before it is a criticism of scholarship, I have consigned the majority of the secondary discussion to the footnotes. The positions are well known, and extensive interaction with the voluminous literature at the level of the argument would prohibit a clear account of the text.

[10] The value of sight is so obvious, of course, that it required Fortna (1988), especially, to posit his version of the semeia source. However, most scholars now reject the signs source, e.g., Frey (2017), 15–19; and scholarship has only increasingly appreciated the value of sight and of Jesus's visible flesh in John, e.g. Thompson (1988), (1991), (2001), 101–43; Schnelle (1992), esp. 134–35; Johns and Miller (1994); Weder (1996); Lee (2002); (2010), 29–64; Tam (2015); Wang (2017).

[11] One should also note that Wang (2017), 23 has counted 124 seeing verbs in John, more than double the 59 occurrences of ἀκούω. While volume alone does not account for the value of sight in John, it does underscore its centrality as a theme.

John 2:23 and the Value of Sight for Belief

Initial readings of John 2:23–25 suggest that the believers for whom seeing led to belief are untrustworthy. In 2:23, John associates belief in Jesus's name with seeing Jesus's signs (ἐπίστευσαν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ θεωροῦντες αὐτοῦ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίει); but 2:24–25 appear to qualify this belief by noting: αὐτὸς δὲ Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἐπίστευσεν αὐτὸν αὐτοίς. The people believe in Jesus, but Jesus does not trust himself[12] to them because he knows all things and has no need for witness (μαρτυρήσῃ) to what he knows is in people (ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ). Most commentators therefore take 2:24–25 to indicate that the belief in question is inadequate and that sight or reliance on sight has led to this inadequacy.[13] True belief should not need to see Jesus or Jesus's signs.[14]

Taken by itself, the association of faulty belief with sight need not pose a problem; but within the broader context of John 2:1–25 and John's opening chapters, it strikes a discordant note. In John 1:12, those who believe in the name (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ) receive authority to become God's children (2:31; 3:18; cf. John. 20:31), which is exactly what the believers in 2:23 have done.[15] Thus, sight can lead to belief that meets a central criterion even if the people who are seeing and believing are imperfect. Indeed, until 2:24–25, every mention of sight has been positive. John declares that "we have seen his glory" (1:14). The Baptist learns who Jesus is by seeing, and he calls others to do the same (1:29–36). Jesus calls the Baptist's disciples to come and see where he stays, and the

[12] Ἐπίστευσεν especially connotes "trust" or "entrust" here; and Morgan (2015), esp. 36–55 has established the fundamental association of "believing" with "trusting." In John 2:24 one should also note the presence of εαυτον in other MSS, including P[66] and א[2]. Whatever level of "trust" these people have placed in Jesus, Jesus is not reciprocating it by entrusting himself to them.

[13] Examples include Bultmann (1971), 207–209; Schnackenburg (1968), 1:571; Koester (1989), 332; Lincoln (2005), 145. Maloney (2017), 334 (cf. 340) observes "while there will always be a visible aspect to the revelation of God in Jesus, there is also the danger that one might settle for the materiality of the "sign.""

[14] Fortna (1988), 246 – like many commentators – recognizes that varying levels of belief exist in John; but he inevitably concludes that "belief without seeing signs is a superior form of faith."

[15] Johns and Miller (1994), 529.

disciples echo his call to one another (1:39, 46).[16] Jesus himself sees the disciples following him (1:38), looks at Peter (1:42), and sees Nathaniel (1:47–48); and these "seeings" suggest that he has come to know them. Jesus also promises Nathaniel a vision of the open heaven meant to increase Nathaniel's belief (1:50–51).[17] At Cana, Jesus manifests his glory in the wine miracle, and his disciples believe (2:11). While John does not use a verb of seeing here, the miracle effects a visible change and is meant to be tasted. Sight thus takes the leading role in belief formation in John's opening chapters. If John 2:24–25 is critiquing the value of sight for belief, it undercuts not only the belief that has occurred up to this point in the narrative but also implies that Jesus, the Baptist, and the "we" of 1:14 rely on a faulty means of knowing and believing.

One may therefore ask whether John 2:23–25 suggests that human hearts and minds – rather than physical sight – are the underlying causes of Jesus's mistrust.[18] In these verses, John does not condemn sight. Instead, he observes that Jesus does not trust himself to these believers because (διά) Jesus knows all things, and he knows what is in humanity (ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ).[19] The next verse (3:1) opens with ἦν δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἐκ Φαρισαίων as a description of Nicodemus.[20] In his conversation with this "human," Jesus will insist that the Spirit must come to replace the "flesh" as the means by which humanity properly becomes God's

[16] Williams (2016), 54 characterizes the Baptist as a "focalizer." Via his baptism, his seeing, and his testimony "the hidden one is unveiled and, when seen, is made known."
[17] Reynolds (2020), 117–43.
[18] Nicol (1972), 132 likewise observes that "the reason for the rejection of the revelation by the world lies not with the revelation but with the world: the revelation is clear but the world, stubborn. This is particularly clear of the miracles. The "miracle-criticism" is not the criticism of miracles but of men." Dahl (1976), 106 notes that "when the Jews find a lack of conformity between the appearance of Jesus and Messianic dogmatics, they are at fault because they understand everything in a this-worldly manner." Even Fortna (1988), 244 acknowledges here that "the only instance where belief based on seeing signs is treated as invalid is in 2:23–25, but of course it is not the paschal pilgrims' having seen the signs that nullifies their faith, which follows naturally enough from that sight. Rather, it is something "in humanity" that calls this faith in question." See also Thompson (1988), 64; Johns and Miller (1994), 528–29; Wang (2017), 159.
[19] Seglenieks (2019), 59 suggests that the focus on seeing signs in scholarship is misplaced in this passage. The point is not to perceive an answer for why they did not belief appropriately, but to see the complexity of belief and inquire after what makes it genuine. Attridge (2019) makes a similar argument, although he too quickly dismisses the Jewish background of John.
[20] See Johns and Miller (1994), 529. Nicodemus seeks Jesus at night, indicating his lack of ability to clearly see.

children (John 3:6; cf. 1:13).[21] John's use of τί ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ thus suggests that τί refers to the thoughts and dispositions that characterize the inner life of humanity.[22] The dualism in question is not between material beings and immaterial Spirit; rather, it describes a cast of mind and heart incapable of knowing God unaided (1:13; 3:6; 6:63) and a Spirit-infused ability to see the truth.[23] At this point in the narrative, the Spirit has not come (cf. 7:39), and thus whatever is "in" people is likely closer to flesh than Spirit. The flaw in the belief of 2:23 therefore stems from interior inability and confusion rather than an external ability to see. The hearts and minds with which new believers embrace Jesus require further change. The *way* they see – rather than the fact *that* they see – needs to change.[24]

John's use of witness in 2:25 further suggests that faulty belief is the product of what is "in humanity" rather than sight. As a corollary of Jesus's omniscience, John notes that Jesus does not require a witness to know what is "in" human beings; and this lack stands in stark contrast to a hallmark of the Gospel: eyewitness testimony. In John 1:6–8, the Baptist's witness exists to cultivate belief; and it is expressly visual (John 1:19–36). He sees the Spirit descending like a dove on Jesus and proclaims: κἀγὼ ἑώρακα καὶ μεμαρτύρηκα ὅτι οὗτός

[21] Nicodemus recognizes that the signs indicate that Jesus is "from God." However, he still needs an internal change in order to realize what "from God" means.

[22] Such use corresponds to John's account of the salvific and truth-inducing presence of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, who will come to abide "in" believers.

[23] Thompson (1988), 39–44 rightly treats σάρξ as way of being, such that σάρξ and pneuma present different modes of existence: "while natural birth is contrasted to divine birth and flesh to spirit, flesh in and of itself is not condemned – but neither can it effect the new birth." For her, σάρξ in John 6:63 is "human standards," and one can recall John 7:24 and 8:15 here, in which Jesus rebukes those who judging according to appearances and according to the flesh. Behr (2019), 150–60, 245–67 presents a similar, albeit nuanced, account of σάρξ, especially in light of Jesus's passion – although, in my view, Behr elides the materiality of flesh across his monograph, particularly in his reliance on Michel Henry. See also Lee (2010), 29–64. Within the wider context of misapprehension or partial recognition of Jesus, John's use of "flesh" indicates a collective embodied experience of the world that has codified a particular criterion for truth. According to human judgement – signified by flesh – any sensory encounters of Jesus can only correspond to a fixed set of identities, and God is not on the list. Given the wider context of the Gospel and Jesus's own identity as flesh, John is not condemning bodies or empirical knowledge in themselves, but he is clear that Spirit-infused means of knowing must prevail in order to receive Jesus correctly and thus gain eternal life. Only with the Spirit is one able to correctly interpret the physical phenomena that Jesus embodies and presents, yet the only opportunities for Spiritually enhanced vision are simultaneously physical encounters.

[24] Jesus can therefore say: "if I had not done the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father" (John 15:24). The problem is *not* seeing; the problem is *hating*.

ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. Then, over the course of two days, he twice sees Jesus and twice calls others to behold him as the Lamb of God (1:29, 36). In Chapter 3, Jesus himself states that "we bear witness to what we have seen and heard" (3:10), and the Evangelist – or the Baptist – describes Jesus as bearing witness to what he has seen and heard (3:32). Later the Beloved Disciple will insist that he is bearing witness to the truth of what he saw at the crucifixion so that the reader can believe (19:35). Just as Jesus does not need to "believe" in people in the way that they need to believe in him, so also Jesus does not require a witness to inform him of what is in people. Rather, humanity requires trustworthy eyewitnesses to know who Jesus is.[25] The underlying theme in 2:23-25 is that believers need to see Jesus with greater clarity rather than not see him at all.

While this claim may be foreign to much Johannine scholarship, Graeco-Roman and Early Jewish authors almost always depict sight as the sense most able to secure accurate witness. Across Judaism and Hellenism, many authors appeal to sight as the sense that can lead one to truth and is therefore worthy of trust. Here, even a cursory sketch of the recent scholarship involving sight in Jewish, Graeco-Roman, and Hellenistic-Jewish sources – including the NT – will be sufficient to reveal its longstanding and ubiquitous value in John's cultural milieu and theological inheritance.[26] Regarding Judaism, Yael Avrahami asserts the primacy of sight in the Hebrew Bible, particularly in legal matters but also regarding the knowledge of God.[27] Jane Heath has surveyed the Hebrew Bible and LXX as the fount(s) of the visual piety she attributes to Paul;[28] and Sunny Wang has demonstrated the relationship

[25] Consider that when Jesus sees people in the Gospel, he knows and understands them: Peter (1:42), the man at Bethesda (5:6), the man born blind (9:1), the Beloved Disciple and Jesus's mother (19:26).

[26] These categories are highly porous. They present helpful organizational categories within a written taxonomy, such as this, but they do not reflect clean "divisions" in first century culture. I also wish to note that the primary sources are simply too extensive to provide here; however, the studies I cite are thorough and provide key references and discussion.

[27] Avrahami (2012), 223–76. Savran (2005; 2009) and Chavel (2012) explore the value of seeing and hearing in the theophany accounts and the power of face to face, eye to eye relationality in the HB.

[28] Heath (2013), 106–42. Regarding the LXX, Hayward (2004) and van der Meer (2019) have both asserted the value of sight, particularly with regard to seeing God.

between sight and knowledge in the theophanies, in Deuteronomy, and in Isaiah and their relevance to John.[29] Christopher Rowland has also drawn out the role of seeing in the revelatory accounts of the Apocalyptic literature, works suffused with visual images[30] while Rachel Neis has devoted a recent monograph to the sense of sight in the Rabbis, especially their desire to see God.[31]

Sight obtains an equal, if not greater value, across the echelons of Graeco-Roman culture. Recent work from Georgia Petridou,[32] Verity Platt,[33] and Richard Buxton[34] on epiphany and metamorphosis suggest the power and complexity of seeing in popular religion and literature.[35] Amongst the philosophical schools, noetic vision retains its nuanced primacy amongst Platonists; and the value of physical sight becomes the subject of heated debate between materialists – Epicureans and Stoics – and Platonists, especially in the context of the so-called scepticism of the New Academy.[36] The existence of the debate itself points up the importance of sight with regard to epistemology. Regarding ancient historiography, Samuel Byrskog,[37] Richard Bauckham,[38] and David Litwa[39] have all shown – albeit with different

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[29] Wang (2017), 52–86.
[30] Rowland (1979; 1982); Rowland and Morray-Jones (2010). One should also be aware of the efforts of the "Theophaneia School," most recently collected and summarized in B. Lourié and A. Orlov (2007), in which a number of Orthodox scholars link the language of theophany in the pseudepigrapha to early Christian mysticism.
[31] Neis (2013), esp. 41–81.
[32] Petridou (2016).
[33] Platt (2011).
[34] Buxton (2009).
[35] Two recent collections have also focused on seeing God in Graeco-Roman religion: Pettis (2013) and Arnhold, Maier, and Rüpke (2018).
[36] Scott (1995); Boy-Stones (1997); Opsomer (1998); and Bonazi (2014) are especially helpful here on the question of scepticism in the New Academy and the debates over the Stoic notion of κατάληψις. This thesis does not address the schools, but anyone familiar with them will realize that the way John understands sight to work differs from both materialist and Platonist positions even as it may bear traces of affinity. See Heath (2013), 79–87 on the schools and their construal of the nature of vision itself.
[37] Byrskog (2000), 92–99.
[38] Bauckham (2006b), 403–06; (2008b), 134–37.
[39] Litwa (2018).

conclusions – that appeals to sight are also at the heart of ancient historiography. Eyewitness testimony remains the choice means of cultivating trust, even in fictionalized accounts.[40]

Such an emphasis carries over into Hellenistic Judaism and the NT.[41] Thompson and Bauckham have discussed the power of eyewitness testimony in Josephus and note Philo's estimation of it as the most potent sense.[42] In her magisterial survey of faith in the early Imperium, the LXX, and the NT, Teresa Morgan consistently registers the value of sight for the acquisition and maintenance of belief in each body of literature.[43] Her observations – at least at a fundamental level – are in harmony with the emphasis on the generally accepted value of eyewitness testimony in Byrskog and Bauckham. While Morgan rightly notes the inherent fragility of all testimony, whether it is based on sight or any other sense, she also affirms that seeing retains its dominance across Paul, the synoptics, and John.[44]

The upshot is that any scholar who disputes the value of sight in John will fail to find support in the contemporary literature. To be sure, testimony must always achieve a measure of trust that even sight cannot fully ensure. Likewise, the *mode* of seeing varies: Platonist accounts privilege the alleged certainty of noetic vision above physical seeing; and the range of visions present across the prophetic and Apocalyptic literature do not easily break down into physical or non-physical categories. Nor, as Litwa has shown, does the appeal to eyewitness testimony automatically guarantee the historicity of an event. Nevertheless, the power of visual imagery and of experiences for which seeing remains the metaphor of choice underscores the value of physical sight itself, and this value is borne out in the historical and

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[40] Litwa (2018) examines the appeal to eyewitness testimony in works that almost certainly understand themselves to be fictional. Whether this "debunks" Bauckham's thesis is less clear; what *is* apparent is the value of eyewitness testimony across genres and experience.
[41] In light of the foregoing, one should recognize that this not because Hellenism introduced the value of sight to Judaism. It lends particular flavour(s), but it does not mark a substantial shift.
[42] Bauckham (2006b), 406; (2008b), 134–37; Thompson (2007).
[43] Morgan (2015).
[44] Morgan (2015), esp. 39–45; 176–211; 258–61; 391–93; 398; 403–15. Morgan notes that "no one in John's gospel trusts/believes in God or Jesus without reason, and no one is called to do so" (403) as well as the fact that "no basis for belief is invoked more often or more successfully in John's gospel, by Jesus, other characters, and the narrator himself than the signs Jesus performs" (404).

forensic reliance on eyewitness testimony across Graeco-Roman and Jewish literature. Read alongside these sources, the implication for John 2:23–25 and for the entire Gospel is that seeing can naturally lead to believing, thus reinforcing the claim that flaws in belief belong to viewers' interpretations rather than their reliance on sight as the natural foundation of belief.

The Glory of God and the Challenge of Truly Seeing

Thus far, I have shown that where the dominant interpretations of John 2:23–25 focus on sight as a flawed basis for belief, John places the blame on humanity's inability to properly internalize what it sees. John emphasizes the power of sight too strongly for him to undercut it; and he himself indicates that what is in humanity is to blame. I now wish to change the angle of approach and make the same argument from the perspective not of sight but of sight's object: glory. Here, the question becomes: does the role of glory in John 2:1–25 illuminate the value of sight?

First, one must understand what John means by glory in his opening chapters. The answer lies in his allusions to the theophany on Mt. Sinai. In John 1:14, the Logos tabernacles in flesh and reveals the glory of the God who tabernacled with Israel. In John 1:17–18, John compares Moses and Jesus in terms of their ability to see God. Moses could not see the fullness of God's glory although his labour on Mt. Sinai vouchsafed the visible presence of God in Israel's midst. However, through Jesus's fullness (1:17), the glory becomes visible (1:14). Jesus begins to make God known by manifesting his glory in the sign at Cana (1:18; 2:11).[45]

Like the signs that led Israel to follow Moses out of Egypt and see God at Sinai (Exod 4:1–9; 7:3–15:19), Jesus's signs manifest glory in ways that both reveal and anticipate further

[45] John later references the visible descent of the Spirit from heaven and the visible ascent and descent of angels onto the Son of Man from the open heaven (1:32; 51). While John does not use δόξα in either verse, the implication is clear that Jesus has brought heaven and earth together, and that the glory of heaven accompanies him.

revelation, especially the glory of the crucifixion and resurrection. Across John 2:1–15, the motif of "the third day" and of the Passover draws Sinai, Cana, the temple cleansing, the water for purification, and the seeing and believing in 2:23–25 together.[46] At Sinai, God reveals himself to Israel after three days of preparation: τῇ γὰρ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ καταβήσεται κύριος ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τὸ Σινα ἐναντίον παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ (Exod 19:11 LXX).[47] The wedding at Cana falls on the "third day" (τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ); and in response to "the Jews'" request for a sign that justifies the temple cleansing, Jesus claims that if they destroy the temple, he will raise it in three days (ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις).[48] While the Passover marks the first stage of Israel's journey toward the theophany at Sinai, Jesus's statements about his "hour" (John 2:4) and his temple-body (John 2:19–22) anticipate the Passover of his glorification (John 12:1, 23). The glory itself thus emerges as the glory of God, manifest on the third day at Sinai, on the third day at Cana, and on the three days of crucifixion and resurrection.[49] Like God at Sinai, Jesus manifests the glory in visible signs and encounters that evoke the timing and preparation for Israel's first direct encounter with God.

Given this rich theophanic context, John's note that the signs and seeing in John 2:23 occur during the Passover in Jerusalem further emphasizes the anticipatory nature of the signs and the ultimate manifestation of glory in the crucifixion and resurrection. At one level, the tightly knit themes of glory, crucifixion and resurrection, and the Sinai theophany further confirm that sight is not the problem in 2:23–25. Seeing God's glory is the underlying focus

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[46] In his monograph on John 2:1–11 and 4:1–42, Olsson (1974), 104 describes the events of John 1:19–2:11 as "seen through a screen derived from the Sinai theophany."

[47] The number three recurs in Exodus. Three days of journey into the wilderness (Exod 3:18); three months of journeying before arrival at Sinai (19:1); then in the space of 5 verses, four repetitions of "the third day" in anticipation of the theophany (Exod 19:11–16). John's own repetition of "three days" (John 2:1,18) resonates with the repetition in Exodus. Coloe (2001), 69 and Maloney (217), 335 acknowledge the connection. One can also recall the three days leading up to Abraham's encounter with God on Mt. Moriah, the temple site (Gen 22:4).

[48] One may note the underlying theme of purity. Israel needs three days of washing and other regulations to come near God. At Cana, Jesus turns the water into wine via jars for purification; and he appears to purify the temple – his Father's house.

[49] Williams (2013), 46–60; 50–55 has also noted that John's testimony (1:19–28, 29–34, 35–42) spans three days.

of John 2:1–25, just as 1:14 suggests that it forms the goal of the incarnation. The glory that characterizes God in the Hebrew Bible now characterizes Jesus, the Son of the Father. However, for John, this is not ultimately a change: God himself and his glorious presence remains the focus. John also knows that in the moment of Jesus's greatest glorification, Jesus does not appear as God did at Sinai. Even when he performs signs, Jesus is a man (cf. 6:42). The sight that should lead to belief also makes belief in him difficult.[50]

This challenge introduces a great paradox. People must see Jesus and his glory correctly in order to believe, but because of what is in them and because of divine intervention (John. 12:37–41) the majority will fail to see properly, and their belief will therefore be unable to resist their doubt and antagonism.[51] Failure to see correctly will lead to Jesus's death; but the crucifixion will be the most profound visible manifestation of the glory that people should have witnessed all along. In 2:23–25, Jesus is therefore right not to trust himself to the "many" in Jerusalem on the Passover. They will eventually kill him for the claims he makes and corroborates with his signs. Nevertheless, lack of proper seeing will only lead to a more profound visibility on the cross. The motif of glory in John 2:1–25 thus confirms that faulty belief is the result of what is "in" humanity. The visible manifestation of God's glory remains central to the signs and to John's entire narrative.

John 2:23–25 therefore falls within a context in which sight and glory determine the value of human seeing and reveal the flaws in human belief. The upshot is that human hearts and minds need help if they are to become trustworthy and faithful; and physical sight undergirds this help. One needs to see Jesus's signs, especially the physical events of his

[50] Morgan (2015), 403 notes that "John's narrative captures vividly both the power of Jesus' self-revelation and the fragility of revelation that depends on human beings' recognizing the divine in another human being." North (2015), 43 elucidates the paradox: "the humanity of the incarnate Logos has a very specialized role: it can either become the single factor about him which destroys the credibility of his claim to divinity; or it can provide for faith the key which will unlock the door to eternal life."

[51] Consider that in John 12:37–41, the author quotes Isaiah to suggest not that seeing is mistaken, but that seeing is so powerful that God himself must prevent it in order for the crucifixion and resurrection to occur. John is clear that humanity retains its agency; but his use of Isaiah is a tribute to the strength of sight.

crucifixion and resurrection; yet one also requires the Spirit's help to see Jesus fully and to receive witness about him. The Spirit changes *how* people understand what they see and not the fact *that* they see. Alongside the Spirit, eyewitness testimony challenges humanity not to fit what it sees within preconceived notions of who Jesus ought to be or can only be.[52] People need to let the glory that they see change who they think Jesus is. They may require the aid of the Spirit, external witnesses, and the challenging visibility that Jesus presents; however, none of these factors is opposed to empirical sight. Those who read John 2:23–25 as demeaning the relation between physical sight and belief must therefore look for evidence outside of the verses themselves. For many, John 4:48 yields promising evidence; but even there one may question the extent to which sight is the cause of faulty belief.

John 4:48 and the Value of Sight for belief

In John 4:48 Jesus declares: ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδετε, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε. Taken on its own, the verse appears to indict those who need to see "signs and wonders" before they believe.[53] Yet it might also be a statement of fact: seeing signs and wonders is the root of belief.[54] I thus acknowledge at the outset of this section that 4:48 presents one of Jesus's most challenging statements regarding sight. However, regardless of their position, most scholars do agree that the resemblance between John 4:46–54 and 2:1–25 should lead one to read 4:48 in the context of both pericopes.[55] This method corresponds well to the evidence of the text,

[52] Consider the fraught dialogues of chapters 5–10. Morgan (2015), 39–70 notes the complexity that attends trust of all kinds, especially in one's senses and in the experiences and testimony of others. She also notes the challenge that accumulated experience presents to the knowledge of something new, even if the new knowledge is the result of eyewitness experience. She presents the paradox that "trust in our senses tends to defer to accumulated experience, making it unreliable in the face of new experiences" (70).
[53] Examples include Bultmann (1971), 207; Maloney (2017), 339; Schottroff (1970), 228–263.
[54] Thompson (1988), 73; Schnelle, (1992), 91; and Wang (2017), 163 argue that it might simply be a statement of the truth, a pronouncement that believing naturally follows seeing. Johns and Miller (1994), 530 make the compelling case that, with two exceptions, οὐ μη "always expresses a solemn pronouncement. At least nine times it indicates some condition for salvation." Likewise, "the seventeen occurrences of ἐὰν μη…in the Fourth Gospel occur within a solemn affirmation of some truth or some prerequisite of salvation."
[55] Examples include Maloney (2017), 338, Thompson (1988), 70–72; Schnelle (1992), 91; Wang (2017), 160–161.

and it will enable me to draw out the value of seeing in relationship to the nature of what is "in" humanity. From this reading, a more subtle meaning of 4:48 will emerge – one that resists the sight-averse tendencies of much scholarship and brings nuance to unreservedly positive interpretations: Jesus is likely testing the official, whom 4:50 will also describe as ὁ ἄνθρωπος; however, this test need not be read as a condemnation of physical sight.[56] I begin with an overview of 4:46–54 in relation to 2:1–25 and then consider how 4:48 may function as a test of motivation rather than as a condemnation of sight as the basis for belief.

The similarities between chapters 2 and 4 begin when John informs the reader that Jesus has returned to Cana, where he made water into wine (4:46; cf. 2:1).[57] The settings of both signs are identical, and John reminds the reader of what Jesus has done there in the past. The official and Jesus's mother also behave in similar ways. They both understand Jesus to be capable of extraordinary action, and – despite his demurral (2:4; 4:48) – both make requests of him, confident of his ability (2:3, 5; 4:47, 49). Jesus acquiesces to both, just as he provides "the Jews" with a sign – by foretelling one – when they ask him to justify the temple cleansing (2:19–22). He turns the water in the jars for purification into wine (2:7–8), and he tells the official to go because his son will live (4:50). The result of both signs is belief (2:11; 4:50–54). In both chapters, the signs are distinctly visual and material: gallons of water have become good wine, and a sick child has recovered. Visibility allows seeing, hearing, and tasting to become legitimate causes of belief. John invites the reader to compare the signs at Cana with one another by cataloguing this healing as the second sign that occurred when Jesus was going from Judea into Galilee (4:54).

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[56] Fortna (1988), 240 argues that it is a test, however he mistakenly pits "signs" against "wonders:" "Rather, in addition to any broader reference it may have, it is designed to test the man's request for a healing, and to criticize faith that demands the miraculous – signs, that is, understood merely as wonders. So understood, the signs would cease to be truly signs; in focusing on the wondrous their signifying role would be ignored."
[57] Van Belle and Hunt (2016), 316 note traces of the Elijah cycle (1 Kgs 17:8–24) in both chapters.

Within this context of signs leading to belief, Jesus's statement in 4:48 appears *prima facie* as a contradiction. Is Jesus criticizing the relationship between signs and belief, or is he stating the obvious for undiscernible reasons? While many scholars read 2:23–25 and 4:48 to underscore John's negative views on seeing, one cannot neglect the fact that the majority of the similarities between 2:1–25 and 4:46–54 are the result of Jesus's willingness to perform signs and the belief that results from seeing. While I agree that the answer to the riddle of 4:48 lies in 2:23–25, the link between them emerges as a critique of humanity rather than of sight as the basis for belief.

In order to grasp how a critique of humanity rather than seeing relates 4:48 to 2:23–25, one must first begin with the similarity 4:48 also bears to 2:24. Within the narrative "mirrors" that 2:1–11 and 4:46–54 present to one another, 4:48 reflects Jesus's initial resistance to his mother: his "hour" has not yet come (2:4). Even as the "hour" in John 2:4 links the glory of the signs to Jesus's crucifixion on the Passover, so too does the phrase σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα align 4:48 with the underlying, Gospel-wide themes of the Passover, sight, and glory. Σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα recalls the events that precipitate the first Passover: καὶ πληθυνῶ τὰ σημεῖα μου καὶ τὰ τέρατα (Exod 7:3 LXX).[58] The plagues, culminating in the death of the firstborn at the Passover, are the signs that reveal God to Israel and lead it to follow Moses from Egypt.[59] Israel is to have other Passover signs as well. The blood of the Passover lamb will be a σημείον (Exod 12:13 LXX) just as the unleavened bread is a "sign (σημείον) on your hand and a reminder (μνημόσυνον) to your eyes (ὀφθαλμῶν)" (Exod 13:9 LXX).[60] Likewise, the sacrifices that accompany the consecration of the firstborn and

[58] This phrase comes to characterize the Exodus across the HB and pseudepigrapha: Exod 7:3,9; 11:9, 10; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 13:2, 3; 26:8; 28:46; 29:3; 34:11; Pss 78:43; 104:27; 105:27; 135:9; Jer 32:20, 21; Neh 9:10; Isa 8:18; 20:3 *Jub.* 48:4, 11–12; 49:3; Sir 36:6 (where it appears alongside glory). Wang (2017), 162 notes several of the same verses and observes that "in Exod 7:9 and 11:9–10, only מופת is used, but in LXX, the translator still translates it as σημεῖον ἢ τέρας."

[59] Recall that the Lord gives Moses signs with which he is to persuade Israel that the Lord has appeared to him and that they are to follow him (Exod 4:1–17)

[60] Note the accentuated visibility of the LXX compared to בין עינין (on your forehead) in the MT.

commemorate the Passover will be "a sign (σημείον) on your hand" and ἀσάλευτον πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου (Exod 13:16 LXX).[61] At the climax of the Exodus, Israel sees (εἶδεν) the Red Sea engulf Pharaoh's army and believes (ἐπίστευσεν) in God (Exod 14:31 LXX).[62] Against the backdrop of Exodus, σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα finds a thoroughgoing resonance in the emphasis on signs as visible acts of God that engender belief.

Alongside this reference to the Passover, other hints and echoes across John 4:46–54 foreshadow the crucifixion. Jesus heals the son of a royal official, echoing both his own titles as Son and King while hinting at the death of the firstborn Egyptian sons and the life-sparing actions of the Lord, who sees the blood of the lamb – the Baptist's title for Jesus. Jesus also heals at the seventh hour, a number that suggests his fulfilling work and anticipates the day of his crucifixion. The glory manifested in this sign – as in all his signs – thus looks forward to another hour, that of his glorification, which includes not only the death of the Son but also his resurrection. Both will result in the possibility of eternal life for the world. Whether one acknowledges each resonance or not, the consistency of the Passover allusions in 4:46–54 and John 2:1–25 make it difficult to accept that John is rejecting or even belittling belief in σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα.

Nevertheless, 4:48 still poses a challenge. The official requests a healing, and Jesus replies "unless you see signs and wonders, you will never believe." No indication exists that the official is trying to trap Jesus; he has heard about Jesus and seems to believe that Jesus can heal his son (4:47).[63] Here, further affinities with John 2:23–25 surface. In 2:23–35, people believe in Jesus, but Jesus alone knows that he should not trust himself to them. Jesus

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[61] Compare the emblem or band (מוטפת) on the forehead in the MT with ἀσάλευτον πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου. Note the similar construction in the Shema: καὶ ἔσται άσάλευτον πρὸ όφθαλμῶν σου (Deut 6:8). The imperative form of γραφω in Deut 6:9 LXX likewise anticipates the signs and the writing/Scripture in John 20:30–31.

[62] Neis (2013), 44 notes the Rabbinic tradition that all Israel witnessed God's victory (and saw the Lord there). Even wombs became transparent so that babies could see. Schäfer (2020) gives a concise account of how the vision of the younger warrior God at the Red Sea features in the "two powers" debates.

[63] He may have experienced some of Jesus's signs first-hand.

thus checks the official's enthusiasm, as if – knowing what is in humanity (2:25) – he wants to confirm that the official believes. Jesus's claim begins to resemble a test of motivation: *why* does the man wish to see signs and wonders? Signs and wonders do lead to belief, but they only instil it in those who let themselves be shaped by what Jesus shows them.

Both the Exodus narrative and wider context of John support this reading of 4:48 as a test of motivation rather than as a critique of sight itself. In Exodus, Israel's belief fails almost as soon as it begins. While God continues to care for them in highly visual ways – manna, quail, and water from a rock – Israel persists as a "stiff-necked", "stubborn", and "hard-hearted" people. As in John 2:23–35, the problem is what is "in" them. Neither God nor Moses criticizes seeing signs and believing; rather, they rebuke Israel for not trusting that God's previous signs and wonders ensure their present safety. Across John, people choose to interpret the signs according to their understanding of who Jesus is or should be. In many cases, requests for signs suggest an underlying need for Jesus to confirm biases.[64] Rather than allowing the signs to proclaim Jesus's divine glory and identity and thus override their own understanding, most characters in John accept him only insofar as he conforms to their idea of a prophet, king, or Messiah.[65] Even those who reject him do so according to their own taxonomies of objectionable persons: "Samaritan" (John. 8:48), "demon-possessed" (John. 8:48; 10:20), "insane" (John. 10:20), and "blasphemous" (John. 10:33; cf. 19:7).[66]

[64] Jesus furnishes physically visible evidence of his identity so long as people are not seeking to use the signs as proof of *their* understanding of his identity. "The Jews" demand signs as confirmations of Jesus's claims (John 2:18; 6:30; cf. 10:41); Philip asks to see the Father (John 14:9); and Thomas demands to see the risen Jesus (John 20:25). These characters recognize their own need for visible evidence even as they refuse to allow the full weight of the *pre-existing visible evidence* to change their minds.

[65] Thus, "Prophet" (John 6:14; 7:40), "King" (John 1:49; 6:15; 12:13), "Christ" (John 4:29; 7:41; 11:27), and "Son of God" (John 1:49; 11:27) occur with varying degrees of accuracy after encounters with Jesus in which he has performed a sign, shown some level of omniscience, or declared his own identity. Varying accounts of the "Christ" in John offer a second example. For some, Jesus cannot be the Christ because he is too familiar to them as a man from Galilee (John 6:42). For others, the Christ will have particular origins or none at all (John 7:40–52). For others, Jesus may be the Christ because he performs signs and it is hard to envisage the Christ doing even more signs than Jesus (John 7:31). They thus reveal the kinds of expectations and even the limits within which a "valid" Christ will operate. Others cannot reconcile Jesus's account of being "lifted up from the earth" with their understanding of a Christ who remains forever (John 12:32–34), but Jesus will then die a highly visible death.

[66] Notably, most of the most spurious appellations are the result of hearing Jesus and not of seeing his signs.

In light of both elements, Israel's failure to believe in God and the failure of "the Jews" to believe in Jesus present a continuum of human inability. Requests for signs are deficient when they come from those who cannot accept God on his own terms. Nevertheless, "signs and wonders" *are* God's terms.[67] Alongside theophanies, they constitute the chief means by which people believe in God in the Torah; and Jesus continues to provide them as a part of the work that God has given him to do.[68] Within this context, John 4:48 criticizes those who request "signs and wonders" because they want the signs to underwrite the very identities that Jesus is actually using his signs to oppose or redefine.[69] By contrast, Jesus uses signs to change the identities of those who see them; those who believe in him become God's children (1:12). The problem is that those who see the signs often use them to confirm their own misplaced convictions about Jesus's identity.

The validity of the official's request and the role of Jesus's statement in 4:48 thus become centred on motivation rather than means. The official's request would be flawed if it stemmed from lack of trust in Jesus or from a misplaced notion of who Jesus is. However, the official ignores Jesus's statement and continues to insist that Jesus heal his child. His tenacity indicates his belief, and Jesus heals his son – having apparently uncovered legitimate motivation and real trust. The man believes Jesus's words and then believes again when he finds his child recovered, a necessarily visible event.[70] He does not ask for proof that Jesus is

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[67] See also Wang (2017), 162–63; Johns and Miller (1994), 531.
[68] Remember that there would be little dialogue or discourse without the signs.
[69] One may go further and ask whether the signs and wonders of the Passover and Exodus find their ultimate referent in Jesus: he is the lamb of God, and he will soon reveal that he is the bread from heaven. To return to the Paschal theme, one must also rightly see what it means for Jesus to be "lifted up" and "glorified" as the Son of Man and Lamb of God, who is also Lord and God. That seeing will be counterintuitive; however – challenges notwithstanding – *right seeing* rather than not seeing is the emphasis. For John, Christ has been the object of sight from the beginning.
[70] Koester has suggested in two influential essays (1988; 2008) that hearing is superior in John because it often precedes sight and because the role of seeing is to confirm what is heard, as in this instance. Koester's position is questionable on two counts. The first is that the visibility of the incarnation precedes anything heard; it is what makes Jesus's speech possible in the first place. He may be the Word, but he is the Word incarnate, which means that only when he makes himself visible to humanity is anyone capable of knowing him. The second is that if the "job" of sight is to verify, which sense has more epistemic authority and is therefore more valuable? According to the logic of John's Gospel, it seems unlikely that anyone would believe or have recorded the signs if they only heard Jesus speak and never saw him perform signs or be crucified and resurrected. In this instance,

who he wants Jesus to be, and his knowledge ostensibly comes from others who have witnessed what Jesus can do and reported it. From this perspective, sight undergirds his belief from the beginning, and it only continues to do so.[71] The problem is not the existence of proof, but the end that proof serves.

John 20:29 and the Value of Sight for Belief

Whatever nuance may attend earlier narratives, the very existence of proof remains a point of contention for many scholars after Bultmann. Many insist that Jesus's "denunciation" of sight in John 20:29 condemns the need for proof for all time. Jesus declares to Thomas: ὅτι ἑώρακάς με πεπίστευκας μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες (John 20:29),[72] and thus defines ideal belief – the only kind available to future believers – as independent of and even opposed to sight such that Thomas himself should have believed without seeing. As in John 2:23–25 and 4:48 – but now with added emphasis near the conclusion of the Gospel – John is freeing belief from the shackles of experience.

The problem with this reading is that John never describes a belief that is free of the epistemic authority of sight and thus of the proof that sight yields – not even for future believers. Reading 20:25–29 in the broader context of Chapter 20 and alongside the Gospel-

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if the official's servants had not witnessed the recovery of the child and if the man himself had not returned to his child, then it seems unlikely that he would continue to believe. Koester is also silent about the amount of unbelief and antagonism that hearing Jesus causes. At very least, it offers a no surer path to belief than sight. One should also recall that the context is so in favour of sight that Fortna (1988), 4–5 had to argue that 4:48 was an aporia, a blatant editorial insertion of criticism. On the prominence of words, see also Maloney (2017), 339. Maloney is right to draw attention to the prominence of λόγος; but one needs to remember what λόγος means for John: the visibility of glory, the visibility of the Word. Forger (2020) offers a nuanced account of hearing and its relation to embodiment.

[71] Judge (2016), 312 emphasizes hearing but also notes the progression of faith based first on others' experience of Jesus.

[72] Jesus's statement to Thomas finds a curious parallel in his earlier statement to Nathaniel: "because I said to you, "I saw you under the fig tree," you believe" (John 1:49). Jesus will then go on to promise the sight of *greater things* to Nathaniel rather than a condemnation of seeing (John 1:51). Jesus describes the "greater things" as heaven opening and angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man, a clear allusion to the theophany of Jacob's ladder (Gen 28:12) and the Son of Man (Dan 7:13–14; *1 En*. 45:3–46:8; 51:1–3; 71:14). Here, imagery of Temple imagery combines with the sight of God, the exaltation of the Son of Man, and the themes of ascent and descent. The crucifixion and resurrection appear to be what Jesus has in mind, further suggesting that Jesus's body itself is the "open heaven," a possibility that the literal openness of the wounds in his temple-body suggest in his encounters with the disciples and Thomas.

wide motif of witness will illuminate this problem and lead to questions about what 20:29 means. Before tracing these wider themes, one must begin by acknowledging that Jesus's statement is a response to Thomas. Understanding what Thomas has done to prompt this response will illuminate Jesus's meaning.

Thomas has demanded physical access to Jesus as a condition of his belief (John 20:25), and the syntax of his ultimatum immediately suggests a connection to Jesus's claim in John 4:48:

20:35 ἐὰν μὴ ἴδω…οὐ μὴ πιστεύω

4:48 ἐὰν μὴ…ἴδητε…οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε

Further, the Paschal reference σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα in 4:48 finds a counterpart in the wounds that Thomas demands to see and touch. Jesus's hands and side reveal him to be the temple destroyed and rebuilt as well as the Lamb of God, from whom blood and water flow in the Paschal hour of his glorification. The object(s) of sight in John 4:48 and 20:25 are therefore linked insofar as both evoke the visible signs of God's deliverance from death in the first Passover. Nevertheless, however much John may deploy the language of Passover, the question remains whether he understands seeing the Passover to be valuable for belief.

One may begin to answer this question by recognizing that the affinity between 20:25 and 4:48 – and thus also 2:23–25 – allows one to return to those verses as a means of contextualizing Thomas's demand (20:25) and Jesus's macarism (20:29). What emerged from 2:23–25 and 4:48 is that the problem with faulty belief is not sight or what is presented to sight – the signs and wonders God provides – but rather an internal resistance to allowing what one sees to change how one understands Jesus. Jesus's paschal visibility thus remains fully warranted. In similar fashion, 20:25–29 shows that an unwillingness to accept what *others have accurately seen* and reported (cf. 19:35; 21:24) may also yield flawed demands to

see. Read against John 20:1–25, Thomas's doubt emerges as a failure to trust what the disciples and Mary Magdalene have seen rather than as a crass reliance on material proof.

Here, any objections to Thomas's demand that stem from a theological aversion to materiality fail to align with John's portrayal of the incarnation, in which theological revelation consistently takes material form.[73] At the level of John 20, they fail to explain why the resurrection appearances occur at all.[74] Jesus shows his body and wounds to his followers (John 20:20), resulting in the joyful refrain ἑωράκαμεν τὸν κύριον (John 20:18, 25, cf. 20:20).[75] Jesus is not making concessions to weak faith; rather, he willingly initiates the sight of himself just as he initiated the signs and just as the Father initiated the incarnation by sending the Son – the Logos who became flesh so that he could be seen. Indeed, Bultmann's use of "concession" with regard to the resurrection appearances contrasts strongly with John's language of "gift." God has *given* – not conceded – Jesus Christ (1:17; 3:16); and the incarnation is the mode of that giving. John never suggests that the visibility of the incarnation should be seen as a "concession" to weakness that one can somehow pry apart from the grace, truth, love, and eternal life that Jesus brings.

Neither is the embrace of materiality at odds with Jesus's impending absence. While Jesus will depart and the disciples will no longer see him, Jesus himself has indicated how belief will occur in the future. In the Farewell Discourse, he prays that those who believe

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[73] On the materiality of the signs and the glory, see Schnelle (1992), 80–82; Johns and Miller (1994), 519–35; Weder (1996), 334–35. Anderson (2005), 4–5 observes that "John has more archaeological, topographical, sensory-empirical, personal knowledge and first-hand information than all of the other gospels combined." Fortna (1988), 238 acknowledges that "the signs of the Messiah, inherited from the source, have become expressions of the incarnation."

[74] This may help to explain the number of scholars who endeavour to read John 20 as a later addition or who claim to see it as incongruous with the preceding narrative. Tuckett (2013), 170–71 summarizes the scholarship and argues that John critiques the value of sight across Chapter 20. Ashton (1991), 511 famously describes the resurrection appearances with "only a reader whose own imaginative responses have been blunted by familiarity or credulity will be left undisturbed by the shift from the elegance and finesse of, say, the farewell discourses to the fairy-tale atmosphere of the resurrection stories. It is like finding Hans Christian Andersen hand in hand with Søren Kierkegaard."

[75] I acknowledge that John 20:8 and the *noli me tangere* present challenges to a positive reading of materiality and presence. See Chapters 4 and 6 of this thesis for my reading of those verses. For the power of κύριος here see Riley (2019), 189–95.

through the word (διὰ τοῦ λόγου) of the disciples (17:20) "may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me" (John. 17:24). While belief through words will characterize the generations that do not physically see Jesus, the words themselves are an account of what the disciples have seen, and they anticipate future seeing. John's conclusion shows that the content of the words derives from sight when he concludes the chapter and the Gospel by acknowledging the "many other signs" that Jesus did in the presence of his disciples and claiming that "these," the contents of the Gospel, have been written in order to cultivate and/or initiate belief (20:30–31).[76] The words of the disciples are a narrative of what they saw.[77] Thus, at the level of the narrative *and* of the reader, seeing is what undergirds belief. The reader must inevitably "see" in mediated form – via reading or hearing – but the epistemic strength of the words rest on what the disciples saw and have now "spoken" through writing. Without the authority of sight, the disciples' words are meaningless and the content of belief is empty. Jesus may depart, but his visibility remains.[78]

To return to Thomas, the problem lies in his refusal to accept that the disciples' eyewitness testimony holds an equivalent power to the testimony of his own eyes.[79] Thomas demands *what he has already been given but failed to accept*, and this failure resembles that which renders people untrustworthy in John 2:23–25, and the potential for which leads Jesus

[76] See the discussion in Chapter 1 of this thesis.
[77] Thompson (1988), 62 notes "the signs point to Jesus' identity, and they do so not as ahistorical symbols, but as real deeds witnessed by real people. For this reason the evangelist reports that they were done "in the presence of the disciples" (20:30, the guarantors of the tradition distilled in the Gospel)."
[78] Barrett (1978), 247–48 acknowledges that "'blessed are those who believe without seeing' does not imply 'Cursed are those who believe because they have seen', for this would damn the apostolic testimony which the Gospel claims to represent." Barrett also thinks that belief should not rely on seeing the signs, and he appeals to John 2:23–25; but he is right to note the complexity. He ought to have further acknowledged that the apostolic witness in question describes itself as written "signs" (cf. John 20:3—31).
[79] Thompson (1988), 75–76 makes a similar case when she argues that no rebuke is present in Jesus's statements in John 20:29: "Jesus does not say they [who do not see] are more blessed, nor that those who believe when they see are not blessed." A recent reconsideration of Thomas's "doubt" includes Judge (2007), and in what follows I am agreed with his statement that "in claiming that true faith is founded only on the Word or personal, mystical insight, one can lose all contact with the concrete shape of the Word, all connection with the tangible life of God present in the Word" (928).

to test the official in John 4:48.[80] While Jesus graciously appears to Thomas and invites him to see and touch, he also calls him to become "believing" (πιστός) instead of "unbelieving" (ἄπιστος).[81] His rebuke of Thomas lies in this call to believe – ostensibly in the claims of the other disciples.

Thomas replies with the fullest statement of belief in the Gospel: ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου. His clear apprehension of Jesus comes from seeing, which belies any reading of sight as capable of furnishing only weak or introductory faith. Nor is Jesus's response – ὅτι ἑώρακάς με πεπίστευκας μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες – a specific rebuke of sight itself. Thomas has already been rebuked and the matter of his belief is settled. Jesus is now explaining how belief will operate in the future. He observes that Thomas's belief has come through seeing, and he says that those who do not see are blessed.

Far from opposing sight and belief, Jesus is comparing two different kinds of seeing that lead to belief.[82] The direct sight vouchsafed to Thomas and to the disciples is at an end; however, those who do not personally see but believe διὰ τοῦ λόγου of the disciples – the authority of which depends on seeing – can be as blessed as the disciples. They believe on the basis of the disciples' sight.[83] In this light, the narrative of Thomas's doubt and belief illustrates how direct sight and mediated sight have the same value relative to belief

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[80] Vistar (2020), 249 rightly notes that Thomas's demand resembles the demand of "the Jews" to see a sign (John 2:18). He also observes that Thomas's fault lies in failing to trust the disciples' witness, which does not undercut the value of signs and of seeing the resurrected Jesus for belief (250–252).

[81] Drawing from recognition scenes in the ancient literature, Harstine (2006) has argued that Thomas is more loyal than doubting. He does not suffer from unbelief so much as a lack of trust in the disciples' account until Jesus himself provides evidence. Harstine's construal of ἄπιστος (esp. 443–45) comports with Morgan's (2015), esp. 55–56, 66 substantial evidence for "untrusting/untrustworthy" rather than religious "unbelief" in a modern sense. Thomas has failed to trust the disciple's word and thus renders himself untrusting. Morgan (2015), 143 does observe that ἄπιστια can refer to atheism in Plutarch (cf. *Mor.* 165b). She nevertheless prefaces this section with the claim that even in the rarer instances of πίστις language where propositional belief seems to be in view, "belief and trust are so closely intertwined that it is impossible to separate them."

[82] Judge (2007), 928–29 makes a similar distinction: "the contrast, therefore, is *seeing* / *not-seeing*, and not *seeing* / *believing*" (emphasis his). By "seeing / not-seeing," he means what I am describing as "seeing" and "mediated seeing."

[83] One can add that via the indwelling of the Spirit and the performance of "greater works than these" (John 14:12) Jesus envisages more seeing and more believing as the result of it. Some aspects of direct sight will persist in later generations.

formation.[84] Sight remains the foundation of belief in both cases, but the challenge John poses to its readers is that he has done their seeing for them and written it down. The believer must trust that “he who saw it has borne witness – his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth – that you also may believe” (John 19:35; cf. 21:24). In light of the visibility that Jesus has given to believers, additional untrusting requests to see are flawed, but this does not mean that sight itself is a faulty basis for belief. By virtue of the visibility of the incarnation, sight remains the foundation of all belief.

John’s use of ὁράω and the Inseparability of Spiritual and Physical Sight

While they accept the value of sight, several scholars still insist that a spiritual or noetic vision supersedes empirical sight as the basis for belief in John. Sight may have a role in belief, but the sight in question transcends the physical; and seeing verbs are the key to understanding this hierarchy.[85] Among the scholars who have given them attention, the general consensus is that βλέπω represents the lowest level and refers to a basic material seeing while ὁράω indicates spiritual perception, and θεωρέω and θεαόμαι fall between them.[86] While it is plain that two kinds of “seeing” exist in John such that one can physically see Jesus and his signs and also be spiritually “blind” to the reality they manifest (John 6:26; 9:39–41), the challenge lies in understanding how physical sight and spiritual insight relate to one another. What emerges from a study of the verbs in their contexts is that two kinds of seeing do exist but do not admit of a dualistic hierarchy in which spiritual perception

[84] Thompson (2015), 423–28 makes a similar argument. Barrett (1978), 573–75 offers a nuanced but convoluted analysis in which he is drawn to Bultmann’s disparagement of faith that needs evidence but finds John to equate the “seeing” the Gospel mediates with the seeing the disciples experience.

[85] Maloney (2017), 332–34 is a good example of a scholar who does not examine the seeing verbs but still finds a difference between spiritual insight and physical seeing. Fortna (1988), 245 claims that John 6:26 “implies a distinction between seeing and seeing, sight that is purely physical and that which perceives theological significance.” He adds: “to see signs-and-wonders is not to see signs in the full and proper sense.”

[86] Philips (1957); Traets (1967); Hergenröder (1996), esp. 45–214; Kanagaraj (1998), 216–18; and Miller (2006) argue for the association of certain types of seeing, usually a hierarchy with “spiritual” insight at the top and physical sight at the bottom. However, Cullmann (1950), (1953), 40–41; Harris (1994), 95–101; Bauckham (2008b), 136; Lee (2010), 117; and Sheridan (2020), 354–56 argue that such distinctions are unfounded or at least too complex to assign to particular verbs with any consistency.

transcends physical sight. Rather, both inner recognition of the truth and physical sight are entangled and impossible to separate. A study of ὁράω will reveal that any hierarchy based on seeing verbs is problematic and that John presents physical and spiritual sight as intertwined and necessary conditions for belief.[87]

Ὁράω possesses a long history of philosophical and visionary use, which is partly why commentators find it easy to attach a purely "spiritual" value to it, such that seeing becomes understanding with the "eyes of faith."[88] The Baptist and the Beloved Disciple "have seen" (1:34 [ἑώρακα]; 19:35 [ὁ ἑωρακώς]), and they bear witness to what they "saw."[89] Jesus "has seen" things in heaven (3:32 [ἑώρακεν]) and with his Father (8:38 [ἑώρακα]). He tells Thomas that Thomas has known and "seen" the Father (14:7 [ἑωράκατε]), and he tells Philip that the one who has "seen" me (ὁ ἑωρακώς) has "seen" (ἑώρακεν) the Father (14:9). Both the insight of belief and seeing God refer to noetic understanding rather than empirical sight, and this appears to be the case especially when ὁράω is in the perfect tense.[90] For some, the verb suggests a perception of the truth that supersedes physical sight and must, in some cases, overcome it.

However, while the noetic value of ὁράω is well documented, its semantic range remains ambiguous: it can mean perceiving with one's eyes or fixing one's gaze as well as

[87] One should observe with Seglenieks (2020), 22–24 that John conflates the verbs for knowing (e.g., οἶδα and γινώσκω); loving (e.g., ἀγαπάω and φιλέω); and sending (e.g., ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω) to the extent that it becomes very difficult to apply specific theological nuance to them. Seglenieks offers a substantial bibliography of the debates. It is enough for us to note that John often uses different verbs to convey similar or synonymous meaning. I make a similar argument for the verbs of sight in what follows.
[88] Michaelis' (1967), 5:315–82 exceptional overview of ὁράω reveals its longstanding associations with the noetic realm.
[89] Lincoln (2002), 25 argues that, for John "seeing and testifying are the equivalent of believing and confessing." He contests that the Baptist's seeing is actually divorced from empirical objects and is thus a pure confession. He supports this claim by attempting to distinguish spiritual from physical sight. Williams (2016a) and (2016b), 145 provides a more nuanced view of the relationship between physical experience, seeing, and testimony regarding the Baptist; and Bauckham (2006b), 404–06; 2008b, 134–37 responds directly to Lincoln, affirming the value of sight and with regard to the importance of Jesus's fleshly life on earth.
[90] See Chapter 2 of this thesis. The one time John does not use a perfect of ὁράω to describe seeing God/the Father is in John 12:45, in which he uses θεωρέω. The other "seeing God" passages are John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46; 14:7, 9. I know of no scholarship that has directly addressed the role of the perfect ὁράω in John, but it does remain his tense of choice regarding his most accurate witnesses: Jesus, the Baptist, and the Beloved Disciple, as well as regarding the sight of God.

attaining insight and understanding. Above all, the various narrative contexts in which John deploys ὁράω reveal that both kinds of seeing operate simultaneously across the Gospel. I therefore turn to three pericopes in which one might be tempted to prise spiritual and physical seeing apart in order to demonstrate that the dual sense of ὁράω is actually the one John embraces: the Baptist's declaration that he sees and bears witness (1:34); Jesus's claim that the crowd has not "seen" the sign of the bread miracle (6:26); and Jesus's affirmation of the sight of the Father to Philip (14:9).

The wider context of the Baptist's declaration "I have seen (ἑώρακα) and borne witness (μεμαρτύρηκα) that this is the Son of God" (1:34) underscores how ἑώρακα communicates both physical sight and spiritual understanding. Multiple other seeing verbs attend and contextualize John's statement. John sees (βλέπει) Jesus coming toward him and declares: "behold (ἴδε) the Lamb of God" (1:29). He then explains that he saw (τεθέαμαι) the Spirit descend on Jesus as a dove and that this seeing verified Jesus's identity as per God's instruction (1:32–33). After this comes the summary statement: "I have seen and borne witness." The next day, John again sees (ἐμβλέψας) Jesus and announces for a second time "behold (ἴδε) the Lamb of God" (1:36).

In these verses the physical and spiritual resist separation. John uses βλέπω, a word most commentators take to mean basic or even crass material seeing, to describe how the Baptist sees Jesus (1:29; 36); but then the Baptist calls others to behold that here present among them is "the Lamb of God." John knows who Jesus is because God has granted visual confirmation of Jesus's identity by sending the Spirit as (ὡς) a dove to "abide" on Jesus (1:32–33). The upshot of τεθέαμαι is that John sees a dove descend and recognizes that it is the Spirit, which he could not have seen or recognized if the dove had not been present. While ὡς may render the physical reality or visionary nature of this sight uncertain, it remains the case that a verb of sight and an experience of the Spirit in visual terms leads the

Baptist to affirm that he has seen the physical Jesus and recognized the Son of God.[91] Thus, when the Baptist sees Jesus coming or walking towards him with his physical eyes, he can also call others to behold the physical man and recognize that he is the Lamb of God. The witness he bears results from the physical seeing that God has granted to him and which has led to proper understanding. John uses ἑώρακα to account for the sight of the Spirit-dove, the physical sight of Jesus, and the proper understanding of who Jesus is. Material reality has not obscured the truth; rather, it has presented an opportunity for the Baptist to internalize it.

As is often the case in John, however, one can fail to comprehend what the eyes have seen. However, such incomprehension reflects a flaw in the viewer rather than a defect in the relation between physical sight and belief.[92] After Jesus multiplies bread and fish, the people (ἄνθρωποι) see (ἰδόντες) the sign of the bread miracle and declare that Jesus is a prophet (John 6:14); however, Jesus will later claim that they did not see (εἴδετε) signs, but are only seeking him because of the food he produced (6:26). The ἄνθρωποι have clearly failed to understand what the sign means for Jesus's identity. Jesus, knowing what is ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ (2:25), tells them why they have failed to see. The problem is not that material reality is bad or that basing belief upon empirical sight is flawed. If that were true, it would reflect just as badly on Jesus as the people since Jesus himself indicates that he is concerned for the crowd to eat and he is responsible for the proliferation of food as a sign (6:5).

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[91] One can note, however, that John is not saying that it is "as if" John "saw;" rather, it is "as if" the Spirit were a dove. The emphasis appears to fall on the extent to which the Spirit is a dove rather than on the extent to which John is seeing something physical or experiencing a vision of a spiritual reality. Wherever the ambiguity lies, this passage still supports my overarching point that John is not interested in separating spiritual from physical vision.

[92] For instance, I cannot understand the Gospel of John if it does not exist in visible form before me. The opportunity for meaning arises from the meeting of my mind with the physical paper (or screen) via the simultaneous operation of my physical eyes and the metaphorical "eyes" of cognition. Another scholar might chide me for misunderstanding what I read in John, and say that I have failed to "see:" but the fault with this "seeing" lies with my mind rather than with my eyes. The cure for this mental "blindness" is further and better reading rather than no reading at all. Or, at a fundamental level, the cure is learning how to read so that the signs on paper make sense. In both cases, the writing must exist in a form that I can experience in order for my grasp of its meaning to emerge.

Rather, the problem remains the one that emerged from my earlier study of John 2:23–25; 4:48; and 20:29: people see, but fail to let their seeing truly change their minds and hearts. In this case, they call Jesus a prophet and try to make him king. The appellations are true, but the identities they represent in the mind of crowd vastly differ from how Jesus conceives of and enacts them. Instead, seeing the miracle should have led to understanding it properly and thus "seeing" the sign. In its second aorist form, ὁράω here suggests a failure of insight; nevertheless, without the miracle there would have been no sign to "see" and thus no opportunity for insight or belief. Sight may exist in different modes, and people will make mistakes – but the two "seeings" operate together rather than on different "levels." One could not exist without the other and vice versa.

This is why Jesus can say to Philip, "have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen (ὁ ἑωρακώς) me has seen (ἑώρακεν) the Father" (John 14:9). Philip should know that Jesus presents the sight of the Father because he has been seeing Jesus's works and hearing his words since the beginning of the narrative (1:43 cf. 14:10–11).[93] Jesus's response assumes that the accumulated "seeing and hearing that constitutes Philip's experience of Jesus will yield greater understanding, which is why he reminds Philip of Philip's experience of his works and words.[94] The sight in question is holistic in the sense that it aligns the physical experience of Jesus with the proper knowing and believing that should arise from it. While the Father is visible in Jesus because God can be in two places at once, Philip still needs to understand what he is seeing. Jesus's works – as the visible confirmations of his identity – reveal his relationship to the Father and his divine

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[93] Philip should remember his own advice to Nathanael: Come and see (ἴδε), which echo Jesus's original response to Andrew and the anonymous disciple (1:39 [ὄψεσθε]).

[94] Scholars (e.g. Seglenieks (2019), 56n3) often state that Jesus appeals to his works as a kind of secondary mode of belief, as if it were obvious that Jesus himself found it distasteful to use the signs as evidence. Schnelle (1992) 168–70 rightly argues that Jesus's works are a primary means of cultivating faith.

identity.[95] Once again, ὁράω admits of ambiguities that the context upholds and draws together.

If space allowed, one could multiply examples of ambiguous instances of ὁράω in which neither a purely spiritual nor a purely material "seeing" is apparent.[96] However, I now turn to instances of ὁράω and βλέπω in which one occurs in place of the other – thus undermining the dualistic, hierarchical readings that attempt to filter physicality from John's portrayal of sight. In the case of ὁράω, two key occurrences in the perfect tense describe a failure of belief. In the bread of life discourse, Jesus tells the crowd in the synagogue at Capernaum that he is the bread of life (6:35) and then declares ἀλλ᾽ εἶπον ὑμῖν ὅτι καὶ ἑωράκατέ με καὶ οὐ πιστεύετε (6:36). If one takes ἑωράκατε to refer to empirical sight, then Jesus may be saying: "you saw me but did not understand that I am the bread of life and have therefore not believed." In this instance, ἑωράκατε cannot convey spiritual insight because it has yielded unbelief. If John consistently upheld a dualistic notion of sight in his verbs, one would have expected to read βλέπω here.

[95] One is under no obligation to follow Bultmann (1955), 2:59–69 here and collapse Jesus's "works" into his "words" (cf. John 10:38; 14:10). Jesus has the authority to speak because of the works that the God who dwells within and as him does – because he is God's visible presence. Words and signs are both important and necessary, but they remain distinct.
[96] Examples include:
1:39 ὄψεσθε ("come and you will see" in answer to "where are you staying?")
1:39 εἶδαν ("so they came and they saw where he was staying.")
1:47a εἶδεν ("Jesus saw Nathanael coming")
1:48 εἶδον ("before…I saw you")
1:51 ὄψεσθε ("you will see heaven opened…")
4:45 ἑωρακότες ("the Galileans having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem)
6:22 εἶδον (the crowd sees that Jesus did not leave with his disciples)
6:24 εἶδεν (the crowd sees that Jesus is not there)
6.:46 ἑώρακεν ("not that anyone has seen the father except he who is from God")
6:46 ἑώρακεν ("he has seen the Father")
8:57 ἑώρακας ("you don't have fifty years and you have seen Abraham!")
9:1 εἶδεν ("he saw a man blind from birth")
9:37 ἑώρακας ("you have seen him and it is he who is speaking to you")
12:41 εἶδεν ("Isaiah saw his glory")
16:22 ὄψομαι ("you have sorrow now, but I will see you again")
20:18 ἑώρακα ("I have seen the Lord")
20:25 ἑωράκαμεν ("we have seen the Lord")
20:29 ἑώρακάς…ἰδόντες ("you have believed because you have seen…blessed are those who believe without seeing")

The same problems appear in John 15:24. Here, Jesus announces νῦν δὲ καὶ ἑωράκασιν καὶ μεμισήκασιν καὶ ἐμὲ καὶ τὸν πατέρα μου. At this point, Jesus has twice announced that seeing him is seeing the Father (12:45; 14:9). Now he affirms it a third time but only to show that despite the works he has done among them – which, he implies, have allowed people to see himself and the Father – the world hates them both. Once again, if ἑωράκασιν indicates a failure to perceive, then ὁράω is here functioning at the alleged "level" of βλέπω. If Jesus is suggesting that "the Jews" correctly understood his works to reveal that he himself presents the sight of the Father, this understanding has only led to antagonism – a strange result for a noetic vision.[97]

John's use of βλέπω where one would expect ὁράω presents the same problem in reverse. I have already noted the Baptist's complementary use of βλέπω alongside ὁράω, but more challenging instances occur when John describes Jesus's sight of the Father (John 5:19) and Jesus's famous juxtaposition of physical and spiritual blindness (John 9:39–40). In 5:19, Jesus says that he can do nothing from himself except for what he sees the Father doing and that whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise (οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱος ποεῖν ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ οὐδὲν ἐὰν μη τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιούντα). Here, βλέπῃ occurs precisely where one would expect ὁράω; and ὁράω will later describe Jesus's sight (ἑώρακεν) of the Father (6:46) and of what he has seen (ἑώρακα) with the Father (8:38).[98] But John appears to have no trouble using them synonymously. Likewise, in John 9:39–40, Jesus says that for judgement he has come into the world ἵνα οἱ μὴ βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ οἱ βλέποντες τυφλοί γέγωνται. Given the metaphorical use of blindness in this verse, one would expect Jesus to characterize the

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[97] The suggestion in both passages (6:36; 15:24) that sight, even accurate sight, has failed does not support the view that seeing is a faulty basis for belief so much as it underscores how entrenched human nature is. Sight is the catalyst of belief and unbelief. Those who see must either allow it to change them or they must resist it. Thus, the only time that John the authorities and chief priests as seeing Jesus directly follows the *ecce homo* and their immediate reply after seeing (εἶδον) is crucify (19:6). I discuss 19:6 in greater detail in Chapter 6.

[98] By the criteria of these authors, Philo himself is "inconsistent," which further reveals the semantic fluidity of these verbs. He uses βλέπω to describe seeing God in contexts that reveals to be a purely noetic setting (e.g. *Leg*. 3.172; *Opif*. 53).

sight he brings to the "blind" with ὁράω, but he does not. John's use of both ὁράω and βλέπω thus further reveals the lack of clear dualism in both verbs as well as the fact that their semantic ranges surpass the theological parameters many scholars have placed upon them.

This brief overview has countered the view that physical sight and spiritual (in)sight are separable at the level of the seeing verbs John deploys. Instead, they admit of complex and intertwined spiritual and physical components. While ὁράω is John's preferred verb for belief that truly sees, its ambiguities and contradictions steer one toward a complex understanding of physical and spiritual seeing rather than a rarefied noetic vision. If John is averse to physical sight as the basis for belief, his verbs hold insufficient evidence; and the contexts that determine the meaning of ὁράω suggest that what is in humanity remains the greatest deterrent of belief.

Conclusion

In light of the evidence of John 2:23–25; 4:48; and 20:25–29 and John's use of ὁράω, the fundamental conclusion of this chapter is that physical sight is the catalyst of belief and unbelief. As such, it remains necessary for any belief to occur. Belief is impossible for John unless the Logos comes to earth as a visible human, and John relies on eyewitness testimony to continue to deliver the truth about Jesus to future readers. Likewise, spiritual seeing does not exist in John apart from physical sight. For John, bodies *and* minds mediate what human beings see, and this mediation is what gives rise to two levels of seeing. Some believe and others are antagonistic, but *both sets of responses are cognitive interpretations of the same sensory experiences*. Thus, the two kinds of seeing evident in John are actually the two halves of what most scholars lump together as physical seeing: the act of seeing and the act of interpretation.

In this construal, the inner person is often more flawed than the outer; and the challenge is that one can see and know that Jesus is an ordinary man even as seeing Jesus

ought to lead to declarations of his divinity and thus to eternal life. Nevertheless, the unavoidable materiality of Jesus's body and of the signs reveals that physical sight is what challenges intransigent mental categories. The only evidence Jesus presents is visible evidence; his very speech is the product of his incarnate nature. To be sure, accurate physical seeing requires the Spirit's aid and even the Father's call, but consider here that the Spirit itself focuses on the physical events of Jesus's life.[99] It never deflects from the physical sight of Jesus's body or the concrete events of his ministry (e.g. John 2:22; 7:39).

As a post-Easter and thus Spirit-enabled document, the Fourth Gospel itself records the radical physicality of the crucifixion as the goal of the incarnation with the understanding that the challenge of the physical event deepens the mystery and beauty of its glory. Spiritual perception of the crucifixion as glorious is the result of the physical and spiritual looking that John re-presents alongside one another in his narrative (John 19:31–37; 20:30–31). From the perspective of the reader and the spirit-enabled author, such looking approaches the physical as a way of plumbing the depths of the spiritual and vice versa.[100] The challenge of the physical must prompt a spiritual re-ordering such that physical sight becomes an opportunity to correctly "see;" and the Spirit enables one to "see" Jesus correctly because it does *not* bypass the physical. The meaning of the events is inseparable from their materiality and thus their visibility.

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[99] A discussion of election exceeds the remit of this thesis. At a fundamental level, the Father's call and the Spirit's presence are necessary for belief; yet humanity remains culpable for its disbelief. Because John allows for human agency (cf. 3:18; 15:24), this study thus maintains its focus on individual and group responses to the challenge of God's visibility in Jesus. One must still acknowledge, however, that the Father does obscure sight: "the Jews" have not believed in Jesus despite the number of signs he has done, and John's reasoning is that this fulfils Isaiah's account of how God himself is blocking their vision (Isa 6:10; 53:1; cf. John 12:37). This does not suggest that vision is flawed or weak; rather, it shows that God himself must interfere with sight in order to prevent belief. John implies that unless God had intervened, the signs would have overcome internal objections to belief. See Morgan (2015), 418–25 on the ambiguities surrounding "pre-election" in John.

[100] Bauckham (2006b), 388 observes that "the testimony of the Paraclete and the disciples both continues and explicitly refers back to the witness of Jesus" and that "the beloved disciple's written witness can only interpret the seven witnesses if at the same time it does in some sense report them." He later notes that "empirical observation and theological perception are inextricable" (404).

Thomas can therefore exclaim “my Lord and my God” because he has seen the risen Christ and understood him to be God, and not because Thomas has transcended the need for physical vision. The two levels of seeing have aligned and now reinforce one another in Thomas’s heart and mind. Thomas does not look past the physical Christ; he fully sees him – Jesus’s body inseparable from his person and from God.[101] The resurrected Jesus does not appear only to or as νοῦς or πνεῦμα but to people with bodies via his own body. He appears as such also to the reader through the mediation of the text. Believers must break conformity with what they *want* physical sight to see by opening themselves to the Spirit’s account of what physical sight is actually communicating. If this is a rare occurrence in John, it is not because physical sight is a faulty basis for belief, but because people are capable of thoroughgoing self-deceit and because the Spirit “blows where it wishes” (John 3:8).[102] With this understanding of sight in mind, one can now turn to what seeing Jesus means as the culminating study of what seeing God means for belief.

[101] Compare with Nicol’s (1972), 114 account of the signs: “Jesus does not want the people to avert their eyes from the semeia to their meaning but to see the meaning *in* them.” Van Belle (1998) argues that the semeia John 20:30–31 apply to the incarnation as a whole and follows Nicol when he claims that “in their revelatory character, their materiality, and their reality, they also illustrate the incarnation of the Son of God (1,14) in a pre-eminent fashion” (324).
[102] And, as I have noted, because God himself prevents some from believing.

CHAPTER 6: SEEING JESUS AND SEEING GOD

But things are curiously double-sided: what at first seems to be the most radical revelation and to a certain degree does indeed always remain revelation, *the* revelation, is at the same moment the cause of the most extreme obscurity and concealment.

— Joseph Ratzinger (2004), 55

This thesis began with God, and, in true Johannine fashion, its central arguments now close with Jesus Christ. This Chapter asks whether seeing Jesus is John's answer to how one comes to believe in the God from whom the elements of belief in 20:30–31 derive and to whom they point. A brief summary of the ground covered thus far will trace an arc from God to Jesus and show why this Chapter forms the logical close of the thesis. Where Chapter 1 established the theological content of belief, Chapter 2 argued that God could be physically visible in Jesus's body and life by re-evaluating the metaphysics of divine visibility in Judaism and in John's Gospel. John does not regard divinity as invisible in itself; rather, he claims that seeing Jesus is seeing God. The two long chapters that followed substantiated this claim by pointing up the entwined nature of divine presence and material reality. Jesus's body is a divine place, and this fact – coupled with John's depiction of Jesus as a man in divine places – stresses his divinity on earth even as it reveals his localized humanity. Both chapters established the "divine side" of God's encounter with the material world in John. They determined that such an encounter *is* possible and possesses precedent in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish writings. Having established the potential for divine visibility and shown evidence for John's deployment of it via the nature of place, I then asked whether sight itself is valuable to John and whether it can lead to belief. While human hearts occlude proper vision, John shows that seeing remains key to human apprehension of God and belief in him – both at the level of the narrative and of the reader. I arrive at Chapter 6, then, having shown that belief is deeply theological, that God is visible in Jesus's flesh and that human seeing can lead to belief.

I now argue that John depicts visual encounters with Jesus as visual encounters with God such that seeing Jesus is tantamount to seeing God and leads to belief. As John 12:45 and 14:9 suggest, Jesus makes God visible and has done so throughout the Gospel, provoking Marianne Thompson's fitting observation: "this is the surprise twist, which causes the reader to reread the story from the beginning: where is God to be seen?"[1] From the perspective of God's interaction with the world, my response has already been that Jesus constitutes this *where*; however, it remains to examine this encounter from the vantage of human interaction with Jesus. While one should assume that people are seeing Jesus across the Gospel, John contains few sentences in which verbs of sight possess Jesus as their direct object.[2] When they occur, they appear at key junctures and with theologically relevant characters: the Baptist (1:29, 36); the disciples (6:19); the man born blind (9:37); the Greeks (13:21); Mary of Bethany (11:32); the chief priests and authorities (19:6); and the resurrection appearances to Mary Magdalene, the disciples, and Thomas (20:14, 18, 25, 29). Attention to these passages and their contexts affords the most straightforward way of understanding how humanity sees Jesus, whether they see God, and whether belief ensues.

Two challenges will shape my approach to the "seeing Jesus" passages and the structure of this Chapter as a whole. The first is that few Johannine scholars have approached the "seeing Jesus" passages as indicative of the visibility of God in Jesus, and I must therefore demonstrate their relevance.[3] The second challenge is that because Jesus is a human being, he looks like one. While I follow Käsemann to the extent that I take Jesus to be God walking on the earth, I am also agreed with Bultmann that the δόξα is only visible in the

[1]Thompson (1993), 195.
[2] Or a pronoun of which Jesus is the antecedent.
[3] Larsen (2008), Tam (2015), and Wang (2017) have come the closest to appreciating the relevance of the seeing Jesus passages in recent years. Hurtado (2003), 392 speaks for many when he writes "to encounter Jesus amounts to an encounter with God" (cf. Bauckham (2015), 72–73). Nevertheless, the question of whether one sees God in Jesus remains underdetermined.

σάρξ.[4] I must therefore also answer a variant of a question I raised in Chapter 5: how can belief be contingent on seeing Jesus if visual encounters with God in John are inseparable from Jesus's humanity?

Four of the "seeing Jesus" passages are especially well-suited to answering the question of whether John portrays seeing Jesus as seeing God; and they will also provide responses to the challenges that accompany this question. The Chapter is divided into two parts: in the first, analysis of three of the seeing Jesus passages – John 6:19; 19:6; and 20:14, 18, 25, 29 – will allow me to take soundings regarding the relationship of belief to seeing God. Given the wide range of responses to Jesus represented in these narratives, it will be possible to judge the importance of divine visibility as a criterion for belief in each case. Regarding the challenge of belief itself, John's own overwhelming focus on the crucifixion invites a return to John 12:1–50 and 19:28–37. The second part will read John 19:28–37 against the backdrop of 12:1–50 in pursuit of why seeing God in Jesus is so difficult, but it will also affirm its profound necessity.

Seeing Jesus, Seeing God, and Belief

Seeing God is always "in view" during encounters with Jesus, such that seeing God is a central metric of belief and disbelief in the Gospel. John 6:19; 19:6; and 20:14–29 are the focus of this section. Each text is embedded within contexts taken up with Jesus's identity and because those who encounter Jesus exhibit responses that range from partial belief to complete rejection or full acceptance of him as God. While the diversity of responses immediately suggests that God is not automatically apparent to all those who see Jesus, the broader context suggests that Jesus presents the sight of God and that belief emerges in

[4] Käsemann (1968); Bultmann (1971).

relationship to that seeing. I begin with John 6:19 since it anticipates the visual themes and belief responses of chapters 19–20.

Partial Recognition and Partial Belief in John 6:19

The themes of seeing God and seeing Jesus intertwine across John 6; and if one reads the chapter from the perspective of that dual visibility, the otherwise brief account of Jesus's sea-crossing (6:15–20) emerges as the focal point of the narrative.[5] For the first time in the Gospel, John describes the disciples as seeing Jesus (6:19). They do so at the juncture between the bread sign and the Bread of Life Discourse, both of which depict the struggle to understand his identity. Answering the questions regarding divine visibility and the nature of belief will show the importance of 6:19 for the broader context of John 6 and support the claim that God is physically visible in Jesus and that this visibility is essential to belief.

Prior to 6:15–20, the theme of divine visibility is apparent in Jesus's locale and actions. John 6 opens in a location reminiscent of a holy place, from which Jesus looks out (θεασάμενος) on a crowd who approaches him because they have seen (ἐθεώρουν) the signs he has done on the sick (6:2–3, 5). The place is a mountain evocative of Sinai, and Jesus surveys the people coming towards him as if he were God reviewing the Israelite males as they attended a feast or the Israelites gathered at Sinai after the Passover and the Exodus. From that perspective, the crowd, in turn, may be read as possessed of the opportunity to see God (Exod 25:8).

Further links to Sinai and its definitive theophany emerge from the note that the Passover is near (6:4) and the later references to a sea-crossing (6:15–20), Moses (6:31–32), "manna" and "bread from heaven" (6:31–58), and the challenge of seeing God (6:46). The bread miracle itself holds theophanic significance as a sign that manifests glory (6:26; cf.

[5] John 6 is also widely recognized as a centrepiece of Johannine Christology and theology, in which the overarching themes of the Gospel converge and find expression *in nuce*. The claims to this effect across Barrett (1972), 49–69; Anderson (1996); and Culpepper (1997) are well taken.

2:11); and, as the giver of bread, Jesus later hints that he has acted in the place of God when he clarifies that his Father, not Moses, gave the Israelites bread in the wilderness (6:32). Somewhat paradoxically, even Jesus's evasion of the attempt to make him king resembles God (6:15). The people (ἄνθρωποι) see (ἰδόντες) the bread sign but draw only partially correct conclusions about his identity (6:14–15), and Jesus reacts by withdrawing from them, thus instigating a pattern of absenting himself when "the Jews" fail to see him properly (cf. 8:59; 10:39; 12:36). Even this withdrawal evokes God's own "invisibility" and eventual departure from the temple in the face of Israelite disobedience (e.g., Isa 45:15; Ezek 10:18).[6]

Jesus next appears as one walking across the Sea of Galilee, and the topography again holds significance. While the prominent themes of Passover and Sinai suggest a symbolic link to Exodus,[7] John may be evoking a more primordial event. Just as the Exodus account recalls God's triumph over water and establishment of land and humanity at creation, so too does Jesus's appearance on rough waters in darkness (John 6:19) recall the presence of God in Genesis 1:1. As the Logos incarnate, Jesus is the agent of creation.[8] He demonstrates his power not only by walking on water and bringing the boat to shore,[9] but by identifying himself with ἐγώ εἰμι;[10] and the disciples' fear at the sight is consonant with other theophany

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[6] The fact that the works of God are to believe in the one he has sent suggests that wrong conclusions about Jesus are themselves a kind of disobedience (John 6:29).
[7] One should also note the Rabbinic emphasis on the theophany at the Red Sea and the prominence of that theophany in the "two-powers" controversy in which the "young God" and the "old God" become visible during the Exodus and Sinai narratives. Schäfer (2020), 71–80 offers a helpful synopsis.
[8] Most scholars affirm the basic theophanic and/or epiphanic resonance of the sea-crossing. Hylen (2005), 131–34 and O'Day (1997), 153-55 argue that John 6:16–21 is a theophany in which Jesus's assumes the role of God, noting multiple allusions to God's power over water in the LXX and Second Temple literature that embellishes the account in Exodus with further visual and aural manifestations of God. Keener (2002), 1:671–73 notes numerous ancient Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic-Jewish parallels in which God walks on waters, including Job 9:8; Ps 76:20 LXX. Borgen (1965), 180n1 claims that the disciples do experience a theophany. Anderson (1996), 180–87 notes the theophanic resonance as well.
[9] Madden (1997) 113–114, lists several commentators who support this reading of a double miracle, including Origen.
[10] Barrett (1978), 281 argues that "if in the present passage there is any hint of the epiphany of a divine figure it is not because the words ἐγώ εἰμι are used but because in the gospel as a whole Jesus is a divine figure." Carson (1990), 275 offers a modified response, but remains sceptical about the degree of theophanic resonance both in the scene and in the use of ἐγώ εἰμι. Keener (2003), 1:673 compares John's use with Mark's (Mark 6:50), which he reads as theophany. Madden (1997), 111–12; O'Day (1997), 155; Williams (2000), 216–28; and Hylen (2005), 133–34 read ἐγώ εἰμι as closely associating Jesus with God.

accounts (e.g., Exod 19:16; Judges 13:20–22; Isa 6:1; Rev 1:17).[11] Gail O'Day makes the important point here that, in contrast with the synoptic accounts (Matt 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52), John "moves the opening emphasis of the story away from what Jesus *does* (Jesus's rescue of the distressed disciples) and places it on what the disciples *see* (Jesus walking on the water)," a theophany.[12] John presents Jesus as one in the place of God, who speaks God's name and whose appearance elicits a response often reserved for the sight of God and/or his angel. All of this follows the failure to identify him correctly.

The sea-crossing likewise prefaces the Bread of Life Discourse, in which Jesus's visibility and theophany continue to intertwine although the crowd struggles to see clearly.[13] Having seen (εἶδον) only his absence, the crowd follows him (6:22–24) only to be told that they have *not* seen the bread sign as they should and must accept Jesus's divine provenance (6:25–29). While the crowd demands further signs to warrant Jesus's claims (6:30), Jesus begins to appeal to his own visibility as the one from heaven. The crowd has seen (ἑωράκατε) him but has not believed (6:36); nevertheless, the Father wills that πᾶς ὁ θεωρῶν τὸν υἱον καὶ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον, καὶ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν ἐγὼ ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ (6:40). "The Jews" struggle to accept that Jesus – "the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know" (6:42) – is a heavenly figure, and Jesus responds by grounding his authority in the will

[11] Madden (1997), 111 also notes that while the disciples fail to recognize Jesus, "the context, however, makes it clear that it is the presence of the divine in the person of Jesus that has inspired their fear." He further observes (112n107) the associations between divine presence and injunctions not to fear in the LXX that align μή φοβεῖτε and ἐγώ εἰμι (Gen 26:24, 43:3; Jer 1:8, 17, 26:28, 49:11). Hylen (2005), 134 and O'Day (1997), 154 concur that the presence of fear is theophanic and does not imply that the disciples fail to see God in Jesus. Anderson (1996), 180 takes the presence of fear to confirm John's account as theophanic and to translate ἐγώ εἰμι as "I AM."

[12] See O'Day (1997), 153. I am less certain that one is obligated to read the synoptic accounts as less theophanic because they emphasize the rescue.

[13] Borgen (1965), 158–63 remains one of the few scholars to emphasize how theophany informs Jesus's claims that he is the "bread from heaven." Borgen argues that Wisdom, Torah, and manna/bread converge in Jesus as the one who mediates the sight of God; and he draws on the Rabbis to give an account of juridical mysticism, in which a divine agent unites Wisdom, Torah, and Bread as one who represents God. Such mysticism helps contextualize Jesus as the flesh-and-blood bread from heaven, the proper experience of the theophany at Sinai, such that truly seeing Jesus incorporates material and spiritual vision (147–92). Borgen identifies many points of contact between Jesus and Sinai as well as further and more tenuous connections to Rabbinic exegesis and Merkabah mysticism.

of the Father and in the exclusive sight of God that he claims for himself: only the one from God "has seen (ἑώρακεν) the Father" (6:46).[14]

As in John 1:18 and 5:37, seeing God is the Son's prerogative; yet the Bread of Life Discourse also anticipates John 12:45 and 14:9, in which Jesus will claim that to see him is to see the Father. Not only has the narrative of 6:1–20 aligned the appearance of Jesus with God, but Jesus makes three "I am" statements (6:35, 48, 51) that imply his divinity and recall his absolute use of the phrase with the disciples on the lake (6:20).[15] Most importantly, the discourse concludes with a final exchange about the offense of eating Jesus's flesh and drinking his blood (6:60–65), and Jesus claims that seeing "the Son of Man ascending to where he was before" (6:62) will be even more offensive. John's proclivity to use "Son of Man" statements in relationship to Jesus's "lifting up" (e.g. 3:14; 8:28; 12:23, 32) should be read alongside the claim of offense as well as Jesus's earlier statement about seeing the Son and receiving life (6:40).[16] The "hour" of glorification is in view and thus also the crucifixion and resurrection (12:23); and here it is crucial to remember that Jesus does not explicitly associate the sight of himself with the Father *until the hour has struck* (12:45; 14:9; 15:24). In John 6, he stands before the crowd and his disciples as God incarnate and directs their vision to himself in anticipation of the vision of God that the crucifixion will afford.[17]

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[14] Borgen (1965), 151 argues that John 6:46 reveals John's understanding that "there is no vision apart from the Son, not even in the theophany at Sinai" and that "God's "form" (εἶδος), 5, 37, was the Son of God" 151. While Borgen is right to read John 5:37 as focusing the sight of God in Jesus, I find his reading of John 6:46 to be strained. The Gospel will make it clear that there is indeed no vision of God apart from Jesus, but the force of this statement has to do with Jesus's epistemic and ontological authority.

[15] Borgen (1965), 157 shows how the divinely resonant use of ἐγω εἰμι here can connect to Jesus's statement on the lake: "The allusions to the theophany at Sinai in John 6 have also given the "Ego eimi" sayings overtones from God's presentation of Himself, as in Ex. 20, 2 "I am the Lord your God." He adds (163): "the appearance and presence of the bread are consequently pictured as theophany (Torah), invitation (wisdom) and "juridical mysticism" (agency). The formula of "I am"…in this context receives the force of the self-predication of wisdom with overtones from God's theophanic presentation of Himself, in John, of course, through the representation by God's agent, the Son."

[16] Recall the Son of Man as the object of sight and worship in John 9:35–38.

[17] Both Barrett (1983), 98–115 and North (2015) use the language of "paradox" to describe John's presentation of Jesus as simultaneously God and human; and I think the word is helpful insofar as it communicates the challenge that Jesus consistently presents to human seeing. However, I am ultimately agreed with Käsemann (1968), 13 that "the combination of humiliation and glory is not paradoxical as such, because the humiliation makes the epiphany and presence of glory possible and represents its concretion."

What is plain from the foregoing is that various "seeings" progress the narrative and that the question of what one sees when one sees Jesus and his signs is central to whether one believes Jesus is from God or not. The question throughout is not whether one ought to see Jesus, but whether one is going to see him correctly. This returns us to John 6:19 as a verse that can index the proper sight of Jesus. Jesus is not simply a prophet or king, although both describe something true about him, he is God, the I AM.[18] He is not only the son of Joseph and Mary but also the divine Son of Man from heaven, who is thus the bread of life. He is God, and he is σάρξ. Placed between the sign and its discourse, John 6:19 is the only time John describes anyone as seeing Jesus in the chapter – the moment that Jesus walks on water in the darkness like the God who creates and saves and whom the darkness has not understood (1:1–5). John 6:19 is therefore an "index" in the sense that it suggests the full measure of what one *should* see and provides the criterion by which one ought to evaluate the responses of those who see Jesus and his signs. [19]

Measured against this standard, the responses themselves are inadequate. The more the crowd "sees" of Jesus, the less enamoured they grow: "Prophet" and "king" give way to "son of Joseph and Mary" and then ultimately to abandonment of the one whose signs and absence first led them to seek him further (6:66).[20] Those who leave Jesus are not merely the crowd, the people, or "the Jews," but πολλοὶ ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ, which implicates οἱ

[18] Meeks (1967), 319 argues that the "identification of Jesus as this prophet-king is by no means denied by Jesus' "flight" to the mountain; only the time and the manner in which the men seek to make him king are rejected." However, by identifying Jesus with God in the theophany on the lake, John is also substantially modifying the role of "prophet King," which Meeks later acknowledges. Brown (1971), 1:225 is right to claim: "he is much more than can be captured by the traditional titles of the "the prophet" and king; the walking on the water is a sign that he interprets himself, a sign that what he is can be fully expressed only by the divine name "I am."

[19] Madden (1997), 85, 106 claims that John 6:16–21 is a "distinct pericope" with no literary connection to what follows based on John's change of time in 6:22 and Jesus's refusal to answer the question about when he arrived and instead launching into the Bread of Life discourse. Certainly, 6:22 marks a new plot development; but Madden overlooks the fact that the theophanic appearance of Jesus on the lake has everything to do with the "the Jews" lack of true seeing when it comes to the signs. O'Day (1997) convincingly argues for the thoroughgoing literary and theological connections between 6:16–21 and the rest of John 6.

[20] One might say that the less and less Jesus reveals himself to conform to a predetermined category, the less people see him; yet, he is only making his true self more evident all along.

μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ, who formed the subject of θεωροῦσιν in 6:19. Darkness and fear are the conditions of the disciples' sight;[21] they themselves are ἄνθρωποι and liable to fail in their understanding of who Jesus is – like the ἄνθρωποι who see the sign in 6:14 and the ἄνθρωποι of 2:23–25 to whom Jesus does not entrust himself because he knows what is in them. While the disciples recognize a divine power, it is not clear whether they have come to associate Jesus with God.[22] The fear that attends their seeing in 6:19 compares unfavourably with the joy that accompanies seeing the risen Jesus under similar conditions of fear and darkness in John 20:20. They may recognize Jesus's power, but their later exit – with the exception of Peter and "the twelve" – suggest that they do not understand who Jesus is. Although Peter comes very close, he does not quite match Thomas's later recognition (6:68–69).[23]

To truly see Jesus and believe one must see God.[24] Such seeing entangles the physical and the spiritual. Jesus is the flesh-and-blood yet spiritual bread from heaven who gives the spiritual life that nevertheless anticipates bodily resurrection (John 6:40–51).[25] In doing so, he presents the life-giving sight of God in and through his body, and one cannot understand him apart from this sight. John 6:19 reveals that seeing God in Jesus is the metric

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[21] Madden (1997), 108 notes that this is the first separation of the disciples from Jesus in the narrative and that, apart from him, they are in darkness (σκότος) (cf. John 1:5; 8:12). Here, darkness can cloud both their physical and spiritual vision.
[22] While they "receive" one who speaks the divine name, which may evoke John 1:12 ("but to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become Children of God"), this reception is a stage on the way to full recognition.
[23] Jesus's challenging response to Peter anticipates John 12:38–40 and echoes his earlier statement about the Father's will (6:37, 44, 65). The will of God, ultimately, determines who will see Jesus correctly; yet a person's response still renders her culpable. Thompson (2015), 142–43 writes: "Jesus' presence is not always discerned; he must disclose himself in order to be recognized" and adds (144): "For now, they recognize Jesus, and they welcome his presence into the boat. Fuller recognition of who he is, Lord and God, will come after the resurrection (20:28)." Madden (1997), 107 notes that John is unclear whether the disciples are a group distinct from the οἱ ἄνθροποι in 6:14.
[24] Hanson (1965), 121 argues that John understands Christ himself to have given the manna in Exodus 16 and then again here in John 6, finding a parallel in Philo (*Her.* 499–500), in which the divine Logos gives the bread and Wisdom is the bread itself. Hanson argues that John retains a concrete historical interest that resists Philo's allegorical tendencies.
[25] Borgen (1965), 168 argues that "John keeps the Jewish and New Testament idea of the future general bodily resurrection." See also Thompson (1989).

of belief, however one reacts. I turn now to instances of seeing and rejecting Jesus, and seeing and accepting him, that reinforce this criterion of true belief across the Gospel.

Rejecting the Theophany in John 19:6

John's starkest portrayal of rejection is also the only time he describes the "chief priests and officers" – later "the Jews" (John 19:7) – as seeing Jesus (John 19:6).[26] After Pilate announces "behold the man," ὅτε οὖν εἶδον αὐτὸν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ ὑπηρέται ἐκραύγασαν λέγοντες· σταύρωσον σταύρωσον. While this response to seeing Jesus is clearly unbelieving, the question of whether Jesus presents the sight of God is more difficult. Answering it will require returning to John's understanding of Jesus's body as a temple and to how the nature of place entwines with sight and theology.

The theological ramifications of place are already evident from John's arrangement of the characters during Pilate's encounter with Jesus. Pilate and Jesus are in the πραιτώριον, the seat of Roman power in Jerusalem (18:28); but "the Jews" are determined to remain pure for the Passover meal and will not enter (18:28). The reader knows, however, that Jesus's body is the temple (1:14; 2:23) and that he is the Lamb of God (1:29, 36), whose body and blood are the meal that yields eternal life (6:52–58).[27] The great irony of these spatial details is that drawing close to God in the temple is a prerogative of the priestly office. One could see God there and be seen by him at the great festivals.[28] From John's perspective, fulfilling the law here implies drawing near to Jesus; but now Pilate must come in and out of the

[26] Jesus has told the crowd that "you have seen me but have not believed" (6:36). John 19:6 remains the only time that "the chief priests and authorities," "the Jews," are the subjects of a verb of seeing that has Jesus as the direct object.

[27] Recall that the events of John 6 also take place near the Passover (6:4) and anticipate the crucifixion.

[28] Anderson (2008, 2009, 2021) and Hayward (2004) show the prominence of seeing God in the temple and at the feasts.

πραιτώριον (18:29, 33, 38; 19:9), as if *he* were an unwitting high priest mediating between the ark and the people gathered outside the tabernacle.[29]

The dialogue at the πραιτώριον is also centred on the *where* of God and the nature of the law. "The Jews" desire to kill Jesus for "doing evil" (18:30), by which they mean the evil of blasphemy (19:7). Pilate then questions Jesus and learns that Jesus is king of a realm "not from the world," but that he has come to earth "to bear witness to the truth" (18:34–37). Although he finds him innocent, Pilate has Jesus flogged, crowned with thorns, and robed in purple before presenting him to the crowd with ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος (18:39–19:5). Despite Pilate's protests that Jesus is innocent, "the Jews" declare that their law requires death because "he has made himself the Son of God" (19:7). Their claim further agitates Pilate and leads him to return to the πραιτώριον to ask Jesus: "where are you from?"

This question has haunted the Pharisees since Nicodemus first approached Jesus (3:2; cf. 6:42; 9:29), and it reaches its climax here where the vexed exchange begun in response to "behold the man," comes to turn on the question of whether "the Jews" and Pilate are beholding God on earth. Jesus provides a characteristically difficult answer, but one that makes clear his connection to the authority given him "from above" (19:11).[30] When "the Jews" see Jesus, they know that he wants them to see God; and their cry becomes a grim corroboration of Jesus's earlier claims: "they have seen and hated both me and my Father (15:24)" and "I have said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe (6:36)." One can therefore see Jesus, know what the sight ought to entail, and still resist belief; yet the connection between seeing Jesus and recognizing God remains clear.[31]

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[29] Pilate's movements recall Aaron's on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:2, 3, 17–18, 23). Note that Lev 16:2 discusses Aaron's entrance into the tabernacle to see God. Williams (2020) traces the theme of atonement across the Gospel, especially regarding the sight of God in the crucifixion.

[30] Note the ambiguous and challenging presence of ἄνωθεν in both narratives (3:3; 19:11) .

[31] North (2015) 31 rightly observes: "'The Jews' see in Jesus only a man who *makes himself* equal with God, and this is why they construe his statement" (emphasis hers). They do not see a God who has made himself man.

What is less apparent is whether "behold the man" contains a veiled call to "behold the God." M. David Litwa's assertion that the *ecce homo* alludes to Adam provides the foundation for an answer.[32] He argues that Genesis 3:22 and themes in the *Vita Adae et Evae* 13:3 can inform the role of ἄνθρωπος in John 19:5.[33] In Genesis 3:22 MT God says: הן האדם, and the semantic fluidity of "Adam" in Hebrew makes it a potential reference to a name and to "humanity." While Genesis 3:22 reads ἰδοὺ Αδαμ, John's use of ὁ ἄνθρωπος with the definite article – also present in the Hebrew – may be foregrounding this second meaning of האדם while still recognizing the potential for allusion to Adam himself.[34] The Latin of *Vita* 13:3 necessarily reads "*Ecce Adam*," but Litwa shows that the context of the statement in both texts resonates in John 19:5.

This is because that which leads God to describe Adam as divine is that which has reduced him to death and mortality.[35] Thus, "any man's stint in the divine sphere – including the representative man, Adam – is bound to lead to disaster."[36] In *Vita* 13:3, God is described as making Adam in the divine image and presenting him to the angels for worship by saying: "Behold Adam! I have made you in our image and likeness."[37] For Litwa, image-bearing and worship in *Vita* approximate "the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being" in Hebrews 1:3.[38] However, he observes that the description of Adam's initial glory in *Vita* 13 follows the account of Adam's fall and his joint misery with Eve such that "when one hears the portentous phrase "*Ecce Adam!*" one tends not to think how great Adam

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[32] Litwa (2010).
[33] Behr (2019), 194–244 offers a rich account of the Patristic understanding of humanity, glory, creation, and martyrdom at the crucifixion. Jesus is a kind of Adam, but the potential to become fully human through martyrdom is also held out to his followers. The notion that humanity can be bound up in the divine glory through death is an ancient one.
[34] Litwa (2010), 135.
[35] In Genesis 3:22, God says: "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good from evil." Litwa (2010), 137 identifies a similar theme in Ps 82; Ezek 28:2, 12; and *T. Adam* 3:2, in which God says: "you wanted to be a god." 137.
[36] Litwa (2010), 137.
[37] Litwa (2010), 138.
[38] Litwa (2010), 138.

was, but rather how pathetic he has become."[39] In both Genesis 3:22 and in *Vita* 13:3, to behold the man is to behold the mortality gained by the sinful attainment of divinity or to behold the wreckage of what was once a divinely glorious image.

One of the great ironies of John 19:5, and the reason why Litwa can read it as he does, is that Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man is flogged and bloody when Pilate presents him to the crowd. According to "the Jews," it is precisely his mortality – his death – that is the consequence of his making himself "the Son of God" (John 19:7). In this way the *ecce homo* seems to put Jesus in the same place as the Adam of Genesis 3:22. He is crowned in the thorns evocative of Adam's curse and soon to be crucified naked and in shame. Nevertheless, these are the tokens of Jesus's glory, as John has made clear in his conflation of glorification and "lifting up" (John 12:23–33). The irony is that Jesus, the man, comes to give life and has life in himself. He will achieve this as "the Adam," yet as the Adam whose divinity is neither the product of sin nor compromised by it.[40]

This Adam has the power to restore the divine image as it was in the temple-garden of Eden where humanity originally enjoyed spatial proximity to God. Recall here that the passion begins and ends in gardens that evoke Eden and draw out Jesus's divine humanity.[41] The πραιτώριον scenes occupy the centre of this *inclusio* and perpetuate the temple themes; yet the tragic irony remains that the passion to fulfil the Torah leads to the crucifixion of the God whose visible presence Torah observance was always meant to ensure – such that the tabernacle and the temple were a means of restoring Eden. Nevertheless, by his death and the destruction of his temple-body, Jesus will not only restore Adam and his offspring but make himself the material means and material space by which a new humanity can exist in

[39] Litwa (2010), 139.
[40] As Litwa (2010), 143 notes: "In John's Christology, Jesus has the very knowledge and iconicity which in Genesis and *Vita* make Adam a divine being."
[41] See Chapter 4 of this thesis.

proximity to God. He will restore the divine presence and its visibility to human experience since, in himself, he presents sight of God.

One may therefore read the *ecce homo* of John 19:5, the garden imagery of Chapters 18 to 20, and John's overarching emphasis on seeing God as a continuation of the narrative trajectories of the Hebrew Bible and the theologies these narratives bear.[42] John incorporates Adam as the divine image as well as the presence of God in the Tabernacle and Temple into Jesus himself. Jesus's body offers the fixed sight of God's glory even as his body moves from an Edenic garden to the exile of a Roman πραιτώριον and ultimately death. The ironies of the *ecce homo*, the sight of Jesus that arises from it, and the chief priests' rejection thus turn on the fact that Jesus is the man *and* the God because he is also the space where God and man are met. Just as the tabernacle, the temple, and the ark served to present the sight of God, now Jesus – the one who fulfils the law (cf. John 1:17–18) – becomes the new and final *where* of God.

To see Jesus is to see God in human flesh, and this returns us to an important point: the reason why the demands for crucifixion are wrong is not only that Jesus is innocent but that "the Jews" refuse to accept that they are seeing God. As in John 6, seeing God in Jesus remains a key criterion for belief. While the refusal to see God results in Jesus's death, the profoundly ironic outcome is the salvation of the world; yet this salvation could not be known apart from seeing the resurrected Jesus and recognizing God.

Seeing God and Believing in John 20

Thus far, I have shown that seeing God in Jesus remains the Johannine standard by which one may judge the fullness of belief in cases of nascent faith and total rejection. In the case of

[42] Loader (2017), 344 has also identified a "numinous" element to Pilate's fear in John 19:8. It may be that this is the fear that often accompanies theophany (cf. John 6:19-20). Pilate's call to behold and his question "where are you from?" offers some warrant for this reading. I also thank Wendy North for drawing Pilate's fear to my attention.

John 20, the high volume of "seeing Jesus" statements" in the resurrection appearances invite examination as the final and most thorough testing ground of my claims. Following their reunions with Jesus, Mary Magdalene, the disciples, and Thomas exclaim, respectively, ἑώρακα τὸν κύριον (20:18), ἑωράκαμεν τὸν κύριον (20:25), and ὁ κύριος μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου (20:28).[43] I now argue that these are genuine expressions of belief because they indicate that the viewers have seen God in Jesus and have finally accepted what they are seeing. However, given my treatment of John 20 in prior chapters, the shape of this section will be somewhat modified. I have already given an account of Jesus's divine and human appearance in Chapter 4. Likewise, in Chapter 5, I defended the validity of Thomas's belief and the role of sight in its formation. I therefore take the text's depiction of Jesus as God as a given and do not treat it here.

It remains to examine the legitimacy of Mary Magdalene and the disciples' belief as summarized in their claims to have seen. Several scholars question the quality of their faith and not without reason. Two principal challenges arise from the text. The first is that Jesus commands Mary not to touch him, which leads some to read her belief as faulty and as an object lesson for future belief (20:17).[44] The second is that John describes the Beloved Disciple as believing after he sees the vacated tomb (20:8). Where Mary is taken to embody a negative example, the Beloved Disciple's belief is hailed as the standard by which one should judge the other responses of John 20 and of all future belief.[45] I begin with the challenge of Mary Magdalene's belief.

[43] Which Jesus then describes as the result of seeing (ἑώρακάς) (20:29).
[44] Bennema (2009), 199 describes Mary as having a perspective "from below." Many assert that Mary is "clinging" to Jesus in this scene and argue that a new, spiritual mode of knowing Jesus replaces a prior, physically defined paradigm after his resurrection: faith cannot now rest on physical, historical knowledge. See, for instance, Bultmann (1971), 687–88; Larsen (2008), 204; Tuckett (2013), 181.
[45] Examples include Byrne (1985); Brown (1990), 197; Ashton (1998), 506; Maloney (2017), 516–17. Tuckett (2013), 179–80 goes so far as to read John to criticize the Beloved Disciple for doing any kind of *seeing* and believing.

Mary Magdalene

Two questions arise from Jesus's baffling μή μου ἅπτου in response to Mary's recognition of him as "Rabboni" (John 20:17). The first is whether his prohibition of touch renders physical encounters with him as second-class modes of belief. [46] Many rightly take the γάρ of οὔπω γὰρ ἀναβήβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα to be causal[47] but then argue that Jesus is preparing his followers for a relationship in which sensory experience literally has no place.[48] This leads others to ask whether Mary's desire for physical proximity and knowledge of Jesus – the conditions of ordinary human relationship – compromise her claim to have "seen the Lord," such that one ought not to read it as a recognition of God in Jesus. Mary, we are told, is so consumed with physical recognition that she cannot be trusted to see Jesus clearly.[49]

One of the weaknesses of this claim is that it neglects the prominence of the seeing verbs in the post-resurrection narratives. Chapter 20 is second only to Chapter 1 in the amount of seeing verbs it contains, and Mary has more predicated of her than any other character in the chapter. Not only is she present at the crucifixion (John 19:26), but, as Jaimie Clark-Soles observes, she is the first to "come and see" the risen Jesus (John 20:1).[50] Even if Mary initially fails to identify Jesus, verbs of seeing mark her escalating experience of the resurrection. Mary *sees* (βλέπει) that the stone is gone (John 20:1). She stands, weeping, and *looks* (παρέκυψεν) into the tomb (John 20:11). She *sees* (θεωρεῖ) two angels in white

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[46] The difficulty increases when one considers that in a matter of days Jesus will invite Thomas to put his hands into his wounds (John 20:27).

[47] Bieringer's (2008), 210–17 careful overview of the different approaches to γάρ reinforces the majority position.

[48] Schneiders (2008), 153–76 has argued that physical, historical knowledge of Jesus is no longer the proper mode of knowing the post-Easter Christ, who retains a "bodyself" that is no longer material flesh. Schneiders makes a similar point to Behr (2019), 273–304 when he appropriates the work of Michel Henry. Where "flesh" is immaterial, a prior ground of Life for Henry, "body" is Schneider's preferred term for the incorporeal aspect of human life while "flesh" characterizes a material reality. What is less clear is why these distinctions must be made.

[49] Larsen (2008), 200 notes: "on a somatic level she is a sighted person, but cognitively she is blind."

[50] Clark-Soles (2016), 630–32 makes an important connection between the Johannine motifs of "coming into the world," (e.g. 4:25; 11:27) and the invitation to "come and see" (e.g. 1:39: 4:29) with Mary's determination to "come and see" in John. 20:1. Just as John the Baptist was the first to see the Logos enter the world, so Mary is the one who is first to witness his re-entry: in both cases sight marks and announces Jesus's actions in the world.

marking the length of Jesus's body and speaks with them (John 20:12). She turns around and *sees* (θεωρεῖ) Jesus standing but does not know him (20:14b). Once Jesus speaks her name, she recognizes him and calls him "Rabboni;" and, although he forbids her to touch him, she is able to return to the disciples and initiate the theological refrain of the chapter, if not the Gospel: "I have *seen* (ἑώρακα) the Lord" (20:18; cf. 1:14). Given this progression, Mary's initial failure to recognize Jesus is not a commentary on the innate inability of physical "seeing." Physical seeing remains the only way to know that he is present. If anything, repeated seeing yields further clarity rather than mistaken conclusions and faulty epistemic foundations.[51]

Three other factors suggest that Mary's seeing is accurate and her belief constitutes a genuine recognition of God. First, her progressive use of κύριος parallels her increasingly accurate sight. In the course of John 20:1–18, she refers to Jesus as κύριος four times (20:2, 13, 15, 18) in addition to calling him "Rabboni" and mistaking him for "the gardener." As Paul Riley shows, multiple, ironic instances of "sir" give way to a sincere declaration of "Lord," the YHWH of Isaiah's theophany (Isaiah 6:1).[52] Second, Mary does not declare she has seen the Lord until after he declares his proximity to God: ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου καὶ πατέρα ὑμῶν καὶ θεόν μου καὶ θεὸν ὑμῶν. The physical sight of Jesus merges with recognition of his proximity to God and thereby fosters recognition. Third, unless one is also prepared to read the exact same declaration from the disciples as lacking (20:25) – and their recognition begins with the intensely physical sight of Jesus's wounds – then it makes little

[51] However, Mary's failure does bring the pre-resurrection theme of humanity's failure to recognize what it sees into the post-Easter time of Jesus's glorification. Nielsen (2008) locates Mary's encounter with Jesus prior to the full visibility of Jesus's divinity in his appearance to the disciples; yet, this chapter has shown that the resurrection is not necessarily a prerequisite to seeing God in Jesus: the sight is available even if recognition is not forthcoming. Furthermore, that Mary and the disciples should declare the same thing after their encounters with the risen Jesus points to the continuity of their experience of Jesus as God.

[52] Riley (2019), 170–75 argues that Mary's declaration (ἑώρακα τὸν κύριον) is an allusion to Isaiah 6:1 (εἶδον τὸν κύριον), and that the wider context of her experience on the "third day" evokes Sinai. The fact that Jesus also sends her to proclaim the news to the disciples suggests that she has come to believe. For Larsen (208), 205, Mary's use of κύριος is ambiguous; but Tam (2015), 171 argues that it signals belief.

sense to treat Mary's recognition as insufficiently "spiritual."[53] Mary's declaration emerges as sincere and aware of its meaning.

To be sure, Mary needs Jesus to identify himself in order for her to recognize him. Yet this only reinforces the fact that Jesus's body and Jesus's life in and through his body remain the only means by which people can recognize God in him. Mary does not encounter Jesus outside of his appearance as a man regardless of why touching him is problematic. Indeed, it is a man whom she fails to identify: she mistakes Jesus for a gardener; and it remains a man who is immediately available to her physical vision and experience. As I have argued above, Jesus's physical presence as God may be overwhelmingly potent at this point, particularly if the ascension is, in fact, a process.[54] His prohibition of touch may have much more to do with his identity than it does with faulty belief. Regardless, sensory experience still sets the parameters for recognition that Jesus is God and presents the sight of God in Mary's encounter.[55] While Christ's ascension entails a future absence and a need for new ways of knowing him – especially through the Holy Spirit – future interaction with a physically absent Jesus is predicated on the triumphant nature of his past appearances and on the physical presence of those in whom he and the Father "will make our home" (John 14:23).[56] It possesses a material quality.[57]

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[53] Carson (1990), 646 claims that "she spoke better than she knew," but then appears to assume that disciples know exactly what they are saying.

[54] As ἀναβαίνω may suggest. On this reading, the prohibition of touch has more to do with the timing of the ascension and the potency of theophany than with Jesus's preparation for believers to know him in a purely "spiritual" way.

[55] The fact that Jesus appears *at all* after the resurrection is significant since his availability to physical vision is what creates any initial possibility of arriving at a deeper understanding of his identity.

[56] See also Bockmuehl (2020), who does much to show that John is less oriented towards absence as some of his commentators believe.

[57] Space forbids further reflection on the theory of "presence" and "absence," but Johannine scholars would do well to consider the recent philosophical monographs reflecting on the materiality of absence and its traces as summarized in Meyer (2012).

The Beloved Disciple

One might object that nestled within the narrative of Mary's encounter there remains a clear presentation of *not* seeing Jesus and yet believing. The Beloved Disciple εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσεν after looking into the empty tomb, prompting the question of whether his seeing is truly divorced from Jesus's presence and whether it somehow incorporates the sight of God. Regarding presence, the Beloved Disciple watched Jesus die and reports his witness of the crucifixion as a cause of belief (John 19:35).[58] Whatever his quality of belief is in the storyline, it remains contingent on the sight of Jesus; for even the absence of Jesus is here understood as an absence of his body, of a form the grave-clothes covered but do not now restrain. It remains a vision grounded in the physical sight of Jesus since a human-shaped body governs what the Beloved Disciple sees.

If one is to determine whether the Beloved Disciple sees God, one must first consider what the Beloved Disciple sees when he looks into the tomb. While scholarship often described this as an episode of "not seeing," the text brings sight and belief together, inviting an examination of what is available to sight in the tomb, namely the σουδάριον that Peter saw when he entered it (John 20:7). The only other σουδάριον in John features at Lazarus's resurrection, which Jesus commands to be removed (John 11:44–45). Here, it could be the case that Jesus, who needs no help in removing the grave clothes, has left the facecloth as a sign of his unambiguous glory and victory over death.[59] Read this way and in conjunction with the many allusions to Sinai in the Gospel, Schneiders may be right to suggest that the σουδάριον evokes Moses's veil (κάλυμμα), which obscured the glory of his countenance after his "face-to-face" discussions with God (Exod 34:29–35).[60] It follows from his

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[58] Bauckham (2008b) shows how the Beloved Disciple is revealed as the witness at the cross.

[59] North (2001), 159–61 notes that the stone and the grave-clothes must be removed for Lazarus, and, of course, he must be raised. But Jesus needs no such help: "the disciples may well enter Lazarus's slumber, as Jesus himself will do, but they can wake neither themselves nor Lazarus; only Jesus can do that."

[60] Schneiders (2003), 207–10 argues that it is not the absence of Jesus that leads to the Beloved Disciple's faith but the sight of the veil. She accounts for σουδάριον rather than κάλυμμα as a reference to Moses by way of the

glorification that Jesus should be unveiled in the resurrection, and that those who see him and believe be equally unveiled. Whether he knows it or not, what the Beloved Disciple sees in the empty tomb indicates what he will see in the locked room with the other disciples: the divinity to which Thomas will later give clear testimony.

Thus far, then, the Beloved Disciple sees an absence governed by Jesus's body and he believes; yet the text immediately calls the quality of this belief into question. While some scholars treat the absolute occurrence of πιστεύω as a marker of unqualified belief, John implies that something is lacking: the Beloved Disciple and Peter "did not understand the Scripture that it was necessary for him to arise from the dead" (John 20:9).[61] Two important points converge here. First, the Beloved Disciple and Peter have yet to see the risen Jesus as God. The second is that theophany is often the narrative event contextualizing John's use of the Scriptures. One can therefore approach the puzzle of seeing, believing, and not understanding via this theophanic emphasis.

Not only did Isaiah see the glory of Jesus (John 12:41), whose body is itself a new temple (John 3:18–22), but Abraham, (e.g. Gen 17:1), "rejoiced to see my day" (John 8:57); and Moses, whose face shone after he spoke with God and who saw a portion of God's glory (Exod 33:18–20; 34:29–35), "wrote of me" (John 5:46). Likewise, Zechariah 12:10 foretells that "they will look on the one whom they pierced" (John 19:37), and in the MT the pierced one is YHWH himself.[62] While the connection between "the Scripture" and resurrection in John 20:9 remains difficult to determine, John's use of Scripture consistently brings the sight of God and the sight of Jesus together in the context of glory, spatial proximity to God,

Targumim *Pseudo-Jonathan* and *Neofiti*. Byrne (1985) and Schneiders (2003) take the veil to be a "sign," but it is difficult to determine this with any certainty.

[61] This passage is notoriously difficult and the subject of much speculation. Whatever the "Scriptures" are and whatever the extent of the "belief" in question, the force of the γάρ implicates both Peter and the Beloved Disciple as having insufficient belief. Nor should one read the wider pericope as an ecclesial parable that pits Peter and the Beloved Disciple against one another. On both points I follow Tuckett (2013), 175–77.

[62] I treat the Zechariah quotation in greater detail below.

eternal life, and belief. Seeing the empty tomb and the σουδάριον may contribute to nascent belief; but the Scriptures seem to anticipate the sight of the resurrected Lord, one the Beloved Disciple has yet to witness.

The Disciples

He will get his chance that evening when Jesus appears to the disciples (20:19), "the twelve" (20:24), although Thomas the Twin – and Judas presumably – are absent. As with all of John 20, much debate surrounds this scene, mostly regarding Jesus's bodily composition and appearance, his wounds as evidence for continuity with his pre-resurrection body, and touching and/or seeing him as a hindrance to proper belief. One might also ask whether the disciples' use of "Lord" is evidence of true faith or whether their emotional and physical settings – fear and a dark room – compromise their ability to truly see.

John offers no explicit answers; but what he has thought important to write is the following. It is the evening of Jesus's resurrection (John 20:19a). For fear of "the Jews" the disciples have locked themselves in a room either in disbelief of what Mary has told them or in great uncertainty (John 20:19b). Jesus comes into their midst and says "peace to you" (John 20:19c). Then he shows (ἔδειξεν) them his hands and side (John 20:20). After seeing the wounds, the disciples rejoice, "beholding (ἰδόντες) the Lord" (John 20:20). Jesus again says "peace to you," sends the disciples as his Father has sent him, breathes on them, and then explains that they are receiving the Holy Spirit and that this comes with a measure of power to forgive and not forgive sins (John. 20:21–23). John then notes Thomas the Twin's absence and that the disciples tell Thomas: "we have seen (ἑωράκαμεν) the Lord" (John. 20:24–25).

The setting of this appearance recalls the first time that John describes the disciples as seeing Jesus (John 6:20): it is dark; they are frightened; and Jesus's appearance is sudden and unexplained. Here, Jesus "comes among them," again evoking John 1:9–12 in which the true

light comes into the world and those who believe in his name receive authority to become God's children.[63] Unlike 6:20, they rejoice and "behold;" and John's use of ἰδόντες and later reference to sin may indicate that the disciples have finally followed the Baptist's command: ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου (John 1:29).[64] This rejoicing and beholding follows Jesus's announcement of peace, in fulfilment of his promise in John 16:33, and his deliberate showing of his hands and side.[65] John says nothing about surprise or recognition at Jesus's appearance.[66] Rather, he draws attention to Jesus's body and the marks of his crucifixion and death.[67] The ironic, terrible beauty of Jesus's wounds are the only physically visible marks of his glorification; his resurrected life reveals their glory and thus

[63] Jesus's identity as the "true light" attends his appearance here. The room may be dark and the disciples may lack faith; but Christ enters the darkness as the light and illuminates their understanding. They see him by the light he brings (cf. Ps 35:10 LXX ὅτι παρὰ σοὶ πηγὴ ζωῆς ἐν τῷ φωτί σου ὀψόμεθα φῶς). Their sight of him is a microcosm of the Logos's mission, such that darkness refers to a state of being without Jesus rather than indictment of seeing. Once he is with them, the "darkness" dissipates, and they can see clearly; and therefore, they require his ongoing presence through the Spirit. See Bennema (2009), 120–21 on Jesus as light and the Spirit as a cognitive agent and Tam (2015), 170. In his haste to identify literary types, Larsen (2008), 207–208 elides the theological recognition that occurs.

[64] This is especially likely given Jesus's statements about the Apostle's authority over sin as the result of their reception of the Spirit.

[65] Koester (2008), 70 helpfully notes how many promises Jesus fulfils in this passage. Jesus also promised to come to the disciples and now he has (John 14:18–19). He promised to give the Spirit (John 14:16–17, 26; 15:26; 16:7). He promised that they would rejoice (John 16:22).

[66] Nor does he make any claims about visible glory, as Nielsen (2008), 195 seems to indicate in his claim that in his post-resurrection "The logos has resumed his unambiguously divine status, and this is the way he appears to his disciples in the resurrection narratives." Jesus appears, certainly, but it is not immediately apparent that he is divine. The evidence of crucifixion on body and basic fact that he is now living are all that Jesus shows to indicate his divinity as well as his continuity with his pre-resurrection body.

[67] Moss (2017), 66 is right to claim: "it is impossible to use the human form to represent anything, no matter how insubstantial, without invoking real bodies and the values placed on the characteristics of those bodies." Strangely, Moss never addresses the fact that God is ultimately the one the disciples and Thomas recognize in Jesus because of Jesus's scars, a fact that once again emphasizes the importance of John's use of Isaiah and Zechariah as well as linking the characteristics of Jesus's body directly to God himself. I also wish to draw attention to Josephus's use of τύπος to describe the image of God regarding statuary in *Ant.* 1.310, 322 15.329. Given the intensified visibility of God in Jesus at the glorification, it follows that the marks of that glory – inscribed in Jesus's flesh – could, at least, have the potential to connote God's image. I am very grateful to my friend Logan Williams for this observation.

his divinity to the disciples.[68] Only after encountering a Jesus who bears these marks, do the disciples "rejoice, beholding the Lord."[69]

As in the case of Mary Magdalene, escalating occurrences of "Lord" parallel growing clarity of sight. In 6:20, Jesus referenced the divine name when the disciples see him; and now John can say that the disciples are beholding the Lord, the κύριος of the Hebrew Bible. The allusion to YHWH seems clear, especially since it is the marks of crucifixion that make this seeing possible, and John has explained that the hour of Jesus's death is also the hour of his glorification (John 12: 20–43). Riley is right to claim: "by taking on the Isaianic testimony (Isa 6:1), the disciples have likewise beheld Jesus' glory, knowing that his identity as *kyrios* rightly signifies his divine identity."[70]

While John writes that the disciples have beheld the Lord after Jesus shows them his wounds, they only claim to have seen him after Jesus has breathed the Holy Spirit onto them. They require the Spirit – the agent of re-birth (John 3:4–8), of proper worship (John 4:23), and of proper knowledge (John 16:1–15) in order to own the sight of Jesus as God for themselves. Nor is their reception of the Spirit separate from Jesus's body and material life. As Sunny Wang observes, "Jesus performs a physical action when bestowing the Spirit…The Paraclete perfects the sensory encounter, he does not displace or undermine it."[71] The

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[68] With Larsen (2008), 207, I disagree with Brown (1990), 212n12, who represents the frequent attempt to read Jesus's ability to appear in locked rooms as a sign of difference between his pre- and post-resurrection bodies. If Jesus can walk on water in his pre-resurrection body, then appearing in locked rooms does not seem like a substantial change. The only difference that John himself notes is that Jesus bears the marks of his crucifixion. As Larsen observes: "there is no clear indication in the post-resurrection appearances that Jesus has become harder to recognize due to an external metamorphosis." Barrett (1978), 572 is also correct: "John was evidently of opinion that the resurrection body, though it could pass through closed doors, could also be handled; it was physically 'real.'"

[69] While Koester (2008), 70 is right to question any view of seeing that automatically guarantees belief, his argument that it is verbal communication that shapes the disciples' reaction to Jesus makes little sense given the fact that the disciples show no sign of believing in the promises of the Farewell Discourse or in Mary Magdalene's report. Indeed, the entire Gospel requires the post-resurrection appearances in order to understand Jesus's sayings rather than the other way around, as Koester seems to claim.

[70] Riley (2019), 175.

[71] See Wang (2017), 207. I am not committed to establishing a particular materialist metaphysic behind John's use of πνεῦμα, but I do wish to show that even in his provision for his physical absence, Jesus's body and bodily presence is necessary and indeed remains insofar, as breath, it infuses the bodies of those who comprise the nascent, Apostolic church.

bestowal of the Spirit – the necessary aide to true seeing – occurs from and through Jesus's body.[72] The disciples need to see Jesus, his body and material life, in order to recognize God in him; and Jesus's post-resurrection appearance and gift of the Spirit only confirm this.[73]

Synthesis

Close readings of John 6:19; 19:6; and 20:14–29 show that John has embedded these instances of "seeing Jesus" within larger contexts that are themselves laden with visual themes and filled with characters who grapple with Jesus's identity by way of his appearance. The prominent theme of sight across the narratives and John's pointed use of it in these passages link belief, God, and seeing: just as God is the goal of Johannine belief in 20:31, so too is he the ultimate goal of seeing Jesus. One should recall here the potentially widespread belief in Judaism that the etymology of "Israel" is "one who sees God."[74] God's presence, place, and perception all cohere in Jesus's person and in the very physicality of his life such that "Israel" has the chance to fulfil the potential of its name when it encounters him. Humans may or may not believe when they see Jesus. But if they do believe, it is because they have come to witness God's physical presence in Jesus's flesh.

Such seeing is profoundly difficult, and few achieve it. God is not obvious and where he is most apparent, there he is most obscured. I refer to the crucifixion, the high point of glorification, and the moment to which each "seeing Jesus" passage points, however

[72] Brown (1990), 203–204 notes the similarities with the creation of Adam in Genesis 2:7 LXX and one should also note Ezekiel 37:9–10. Also, even if one wants to make the more tenuous argument that Jesus gives the Spirit at his crucifixion, his body is no less involved. One may also note that John's use of Zechariah 12:10b ("they will look on the one they have pierced") occurs directly after the declaration in Zechariah 12:10a LXX of God's gift to "the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" of πνεῦμα χάριτος. It is in John 1:16 that χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος comes out of the πληρώματος of Jesus, a "fullness" interpretable as the completion of Scripture through the piercing of the crucifixion, the marks of which remain literally in view.
[73] Note that Jesus makes no objection to appearing. His appearances are not "concessions," as Bultmann (1971), 696 would have it, but gifts (cf. John 3:16).
[74] Smith (1983), 703 counts forty-nine instances of this etymology in Philo including other instances in several early Christian texts and *Pr. Jos*. Wolfson (1994), 13–51, esp. 50 acknowledges the potential Platonic background but argues that this etymology likely pre-dates Philo, drawn as it is from theophany accounts in the HB and given its presence in texts like the *Pr. Jos*.

obliquely. Each narrative prior to John 12 looks ahead to the glory of the "hour" and/or the "lifting up" of the Son of Man. This study itself must culminate at the place where John most desires his readers to see God, in the offence of the cross that both forestalls belief and renders it possible.

Seeing the Crucified God

When John conflates the suffering body of Jesus with God's glory and with the Father himself, he presents the ultimate fusion of glory with flesh. Exegesis of John 12 and the crucifixion account in John 19 will show that John uses Isaiah and Zechariah to portray Jesus at his most human and most divine, and that he does so in exclusively visual terms. While I have treated John 12 in Chapter 2, I return to some of my findings here. In my view, the significance and complexity of John's use of Isaiah bears repeating since it joins the challenges of belief and of seeing God to seeing God in Jesus.

The Counterintuitive Glory of John 12

John conflates Jesus's glory and crucifixion from the beginning of Chapter 12. Six days before the Passover (12:1), Mary of Bethany anoints Jesus's body in anticipation of his death and burial (John 12:1–8). Jesus enters Jerusalem as a king, but only after his glorification will his disciples understand how (12:12–16). Then "certain Hellenes" (12:20) ask Philip if they may see Jesus, and Jesus announces that the "hour" of his glorification has struck (12:23).[75] While John never discloses whether the Greeks gain their audience with Jesus, one can read

[75] As many have noted, Ἕλληνές most likely refers to Gentile "God-fearers" rather than Greek-speaking members of the diaspora community. The Greeks have come to Jerusalem to worship God. See Brown (2016), and van Kooten (2019). The Greeks make their request of Philip, an irony to be revealed in chapter 14 where Philip's request of Jesus to "show us the Father" will reveal that he himself does not know what seeing Jesus means (John 14:8). Jesus's surprised reply to Philip in John 14:9–11– that to see him is to see the Father – will also be the culminating response to the Greeks' request (John 12:45).

the remainder of John 12 as a complex answer to their request, in which John aligns seeing Jesus at his most physically vulnerable with seeing his divinity.[76]

Jesus immediately makes it apparent that the glory of the "hour" is counterintuitive. Although the crowd is entranced by the raising of Lazarus and even "bears witness" to his signs (12:17–18), Jesus claims that the Son of Man will be glorified by way of grim statements about death in the service of God: a grain of wheat bears fruit only when it dies, hating one's life in this world means keeping eternal life, and one can only serve by following – seemingly into martyrdom (12:24–26).[77] Yet all this is for the glory of the Father's name, and God himself declares it, although, tellingly, no one recognizes his voice (John 12:27–33; cf. John 5:37). Jesus continues to explain that he will be "lifted up" (ὑψωθῶ) and draw all people to himself, which John tells us is a reference to his mode of death (12:34). The crowd is baffled, however, and Jesus responds only with an echo of the Prologue's description of himself as light in the darkness (John 12:35–36).[78] As if to mirror and anticipate the severe challenge of his words – one which his crucified body will soon pose to human seeing – Jesus departs and hides himself after this dialogue (12:36).

John then offers a composite quotation in the form of Isaiah 53:1 and 6:1 as the answer for why people have not believed in spite of Jesus's many signs (12:37–40).[79] While these quotations explain disbelief as the will of God, they also suggest that seeing Jesus is seeing God and that nowhere will this be more evident than in the glory of the crucifixion. Isaiah 53:1 is fulfilled in the lack of belief in Jesus's signs, yet in light of this quotation, Jesus's signs become the message of God and a revelation of God's presence and power, his "arm."[80] In the broader context of this verse, the appearance, glory, and death of the Lord's

[76] Williams (2018b), 99 describes the Greeks' request as a "trigger" for the glorification statements.
[77] Behr (2019), 194–244 gives sustained attention to the theme of martyrdom.
[78] As Brendsel (2014), 132 notes: "already in John 8:28, Jesus' death as the "lifted up" Servant is linked with the revelation of the identity of "I am.""
[79] Williams (2018a) provides a thorough account of the role of composite quotations in John.
[80] Williams (2018b), 105–10 details how John understands Jesus to be the revelation of God's "arm" (105–110).

servant are crucial themes (Isa 52:13–53:12).[81] The servant ὑψωθήσεται καὶ δοξασθήσεται (52:2), and particular attention is given to the servant's "form" (εἶδος):

> …οὐκ ἔστιν εἶδος αὐτῷ οὐδὲ δόξα
> καὶ εἴδομεν αὐτόν, και οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλος
> ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἄτιμον ἐκλεῖπον παρὰ πὰντας ἀνθρώπους… (52:2–3).

Israel has seen the servant but because they see nothing to recommend him, they have also *not* seen him.[82] Not only Israel, but the nations (ἔθνη) will marvel, seemingly at both his glory and disfigurement (Isa 52:15 LXX). If the wider context of Isaiah 53:1 is allowed to speak alongside John 12, then one can understand John to join the physical sight of Jesus to perception of his glory – that of his signs and of his death.[83] As members of the "nations," the Greeks will also be able to see him.[84]

Isaiah 6:10 further explains "the Jews'" lack of belief (John 12:40). Again, the wider context of Isaiah 6:10 is crucial since John takes his quotation from the divine speech that follows Isaiah's vision of God in the temple (Isa 6:1–4). In Isaiah's vision, the Lord is seated on a throne that is ὑψηλοῦ καὶ ἐπηρμένου.[85] His δόξα fills the house, and the seraphim announce his holiness and glory while smoke fills the temple, evoking Sinai (Exod 19:16–25).[86] In his actual quotation of Isaiah 6:10, John increases the focus on seeing by either quoting a source that has dropped the aural references or by removing them himself. The implied message is that "seeing" (ἴδωσιν) with the eyes and "understanding" (νοήσωσιν) with

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[81] On the relation between failure to recognize God in Jesus and failure to believe in him and the means by which John deploys Isaiah 6 and 53 to this end, see Lett (2016). While Tam, (2015), 109–10 has correctly emphasized the overlap between Jesus and God's ability to predestine belief in John 12, he does not clarify how the chapter organizes belief – regardless of cause – around the proper sight of Jesus.

[82] The repetition of εἶδος evokes Jesus's reference to Deut 4:12 in John 5:37, in which he claims that "the Jews" have never seen God's form.

[83] Williams (2018b), 97 catalogues multiple other visual emphases across Isaiah LXX. She also presents the Second Temple understanding of Isaiah LXX as "The prophet who sees," whose entire book is understood as "ορασις" (Isa 1:1 LXX). On this point see also Williams (2014), 196–97.

[84] Brendsel (2014), 138–60 provides an extensive study of ὑψόω and its relationship to the nations in Isaiah 53 and within the broader context of Isa 40–55.

[85] Recall here the agreement among many John scholars that Jesus's crucifixion is his "enthronement" as king. Vistar (2020), 199–202 gives a summary of this position. Recall also the overlap between the cross (in the garden), the throne, and the Tree of Life (see Chapter 4).

[86] Savran (2005), 69–75 shows how quickly God recedes from view in Isaiah's theophany.

the heart are what ought to characterize an encounter with Jesus, but that God has prevented it in some cases. John then explains his dual quotation by claiming that Isaiah wrote "these things" (ταῦτα) because "he saw (εἶδεν) his glory (δόξαν αὐτοῦ)."[87] The antecedents of both pronouns are important since ταῦτα unites the sight of God and of the servant in Isaiah's vision of the δόξαν αὐτοῦ – Jesus's glory (John 12:36b).[88]

One can recall here that Jesus, the Servant, and God himself are all "lifted up" and "glorified" in ways that John and Isaiah portray as directly accessible to human sight. However, mortality appears to obscure this glory precisely because the σάρξ and δόξα are inseparable. To those who cannot recognize God – or refuse to do so – the glory of the crucified Jesus is only shame,[89] just as the servant is marred beyond recognition and desire. God himself recedes from view almost as soon as Isaiah sees him. His glory fills the temple and the earth even as seraphim and smoke separate him from the prophet.[90] Nevertheless, Isaiah and John are both clear that God can be seen; and John aligns the sight of God and his Servant by conflating them under the heading of Jesus's glory (12:41).[91]

Regarding this glory, the reader knows that it characterizes the appearance of the incarnate λόγος (1:14) and that it is evident in his signs (2:11). The reader also knows that the Baptist has understood Isaiah to be referring to Jesus as the Lord (1:23); and that Jesus's body is itself the temple, one filled with glory as in Isaiah's vision.[92] Read against John's

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[87] The ἵνα could also be ὅτε here, which would place further emphasis on Isaiah's having seen Jesus's glory at the time of his visions. Brendsel (2014), 127 notes the similarities here between John 12:41 and 8:56. He reads John as understanding both Isaiah and Abraham to have seen the incarnate Christ during his ministry on earth, as does Williams (2014), 200. In my view, the times and "glories" are conflated across time and space such that the throne vision reveals all the glory that will later be apparent in the crucifixion.
[88] See Brendsel (2014) 124–127 for a detailed defence of ταῦτα as referring to both quotations and αὐτοῦ as referring to Jesus. Williams (2014), 189 and Lett (2016), 170 make similar arguments.
[89] Brendsel (2014), 128 makes the important observation here that "Isaiah spoke…words of rejection (Isa 53:1) and obduracy (Isa 6:10) – and such statements are somehow grounded in, or perhaps motivated by, Isaiah's vision of Jesus' glory (12:41b)." The sight of Christ's glory leads to proclamation of his rejection, especially, as Brendsel later notes (128–29), the glory includes the that of the Suffering Servant.
[90] Note that Isaiah is conscious of his own uncleanness as a separating factor.
[91] Brendsel (2014), 125–60 and Williams (2018b), 98–101 take this position.
[92] Recall that the Chapter has begun with Mary of Bethany anointing Jesus's body with a perfume that "fills the house" (John 12:3).

portrayal of Jesus, Isaiah's servant remains nameless and disfigured and God himself remains inaccessible until one sees both in Jesus.[93] This reading finds further credence in Jesus's cry: "the one who believes in me, believes not in me but in the one who sent me, and the one who sees (θεωρῶν) me is seeing (θεωρεῖ) the one who sent me" (John 12:44–45).[94] While the sight of the Father is available to Jews and Greeks alike, one cannot see the glory of the cross until one understands that it is God's.[95]

The Crucifixion

The themes of John 12 culminate in the actual event of crucifixion (19:28–37). Here, John observes that Zechariah 12:10 (John 19:37) – ὄψονται εἰς ὅν ἐξεκέντησαν – is fulfilled in Jesus's death. Not only does this verse constitute John's final quotation of Scripture, but it also forms an *inclusio* with John's use of Zechariah 9:9 – ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεύς σου ἔρχεται (John 12:15). The Zechariah *inclusio* begins with the call to behold (ἰδού) the coming king[96] and ends with the claim that Jesus has been beheld and, perhaps, will be again. If one takes John to be quoting a source closer to the MT than the LXX, the object of this vision – the "pierced one" – is God himself. [97] It is God whom the broken flesh of Jesus makes visible and whom one ought to see. In this light, Jesus's final word from the cross – τετέλεσται – joins Zechariah 12:10 as referring to the completion – or perhaps the resolution – of the Scriptural narrative of God coming to dwell visibly among his people.[98] For the reader, as for the

[93] Lett (2016), 171–72 makes a similar point.
[94] "Crying out" (ἔκραξεν) may foreshadow the promise of resurrection (cf. 5:25–29; 11:43) and the sight of God that Jesus will provide there.
[95] On this point see Williams (2018b), 100–101.
[96] Pilate unwittingly echoes this in John 19:14 (ἴδε ὁ βασιλεύς) and by the γραφή he places on the cross (John 19:19). John does not call Pilate's writing γραφή; but he uses various forms of γράφω six times to describe what Pilate has written (John 19:19–22).
[97] Zech 12:10 LXX reads ἐπιβλέψονται προς με ἀνθ᾽ ὧν κατωρχήσαντο whereas the MT reads והביטו אלי את אשר דאקרו. The question of where, exactly, John is drawing from remains fraught. See Bynum (2012; 2015), and Williams (2018a) for the challenges. For this chapter, the most fascinating aspect of this question is that the MT reads "they will look on me whom they have pierced" and the antecedent of "me" is YHWH.
[98] Note the strongly eschatological and visual elements in Matt 24:30–31: "Then the sign (σημεῖον) of the Son of Man will appear (φανήσεται) in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see (ὄψονται) the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (δόξης πολλῆς)." Note

Beloved Disciple, the final act of Scripture becomes an act of *seeing* God in Jesus's bleeding body.[99] Thus, Isaiah 53 and 6 come to pass in a vision of the crucified God.[100]

Perhaps the most profound Johannine irony is that the one who sees Jesus at the apex of his "lifting up" and glorification – his death – will live if she recognizes that he is God. John 19:35, read in conjunction with John 6:40,[101] makes this clear: "The one who has seen (ὁ ἑωρακώς) has born witness, and his witness is true, and that one knows that he speaks truth, in order that you also [may] believe." Seeing Jesus, God himself, dying on the cross can ultimately result in life; whereas in the theophanies of the Hebrew Bible, any unclean person who encountered the ark, even Moses himself, would die if he saw God. The crucifixion indicates a reversal of the danger of God's presence even as it establishes the very presence that the grave injunctions of the Torah existed to maintain. This is precisely because God, in Jesus, allows himself to become endangered. One must see the crucifixion in order to believe that God has done this.

Conclusion

The human nature of God's visibility thus becomes the greatest deterrent to belief; nevertheless, were it not for Jesus's visible presence on earth, no one could believe. John is eager to show that seeing Jesus is seeing God, that the fullest expressions of belief recognize

the same themes in Rev 1:7: "Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see (ὄψεται) him, even those who pierced (ἐξεκέντησαν) him. Both texts appear to read Dan 7:13 LXX and Zech 12:10 together. The occurrence of ἐξεκέντησαν in Rev 1:7 makes it clear that the author is either using the same version of Zech as John does or a very similar one. Note also that in Rev 1:8, it is the κύριος ὁ θεός (cf. John 20:28), who announces ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ. For John, the lifted-up Son of Man appears to draw the eschatological vision of God into the moment of the crucifixion.

[99] As Menken (1993), 508; Bynum (2015), 71–74; and Williams (2018a), 122–24 argue, the proximity of ὄψονται to ὁ ἑωρακώς regarding the Beloved Disciple – whose seeing is meant to cause belief – leads readers to consider that the subject of ὄψονται extends not only to the physical witnesses of the crucifixion but also to those who inherit the narrative of that witness.

[100] Lett (2016), 171 rightly claims that "Jesus is not glorified in spite of his humiliation, nor does his glory remain hidden in his crucifixion; it is precisely because this is the very nature of God and God's glory that Jesus can will his own humiliation." Bauckham (2015), 72–73 makes a similar point and adds "Glory is the visible manifestation of God. In John's usage it is the visible revelation of God's character, what one would see if one could see the very face of God." In my view, one can say that one sees the face of God directly in Jesus's face.

[101] "For it is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

God's visibility, but the sight resists human notions of what "glory" would or should entail. The "seeing Jesus" passages and their frequently complex – but nevertheless visually-oriented – contexts furnish good evidence for this claim, despite the challenges that attend them. These passages are touchstones for true belief.[102]

An axiom thus emerges that is as true of God as it is of Jesus: before anyone can physically see him, he must be physically present. Such an obvious fact hides a more nuanced hermeneutical clue, one that serves as the key to the second and most difficult challenge of seeing God. When Bultmann wrote that the function of the entire Gospel is to answer "how can God's glory be manifested in the one who σὰρξ γενόμενος?", he was right to answer that "if man wishes to see the δόξα, then it is on the σάρξ that he must concentrate his attention, without allowing himself to fall a victim to appearances."[103] For Bultmann, the paradox of the enfleshed Revealer is his humanity, and revelation therefore only occurs in the encounter with his flesh.[104] If one understands that the sight of God's glory and even of God himself is inseparable from Jesus the Revealer and if Jesus is inseparable from his flesh, then one must acknowledge the constraints of the incarnation. However, the driving argument of this thesis has been to underscore *the possibilities* that the incarnation makes available during any encounter with him. Chief amongst these is God's ability be fully human and fully God, such that humanity may see him and live.

For John, the physical act of seeing Jesus is thus a *necessary* condition for seeing God. Constraint *and* possibility are present, a truth borne out in the fact that God is most visible in Jesus's most acutely human moments. Unless Jesus comes into the world in flesh, he cannot make God visible. The "grace and truth" in John 1:17, what one might term a "New Covenant," is precisely the vision of God that answers Moses's request at Sinai (John

[102] While John does not employ the language of εἰκών like the Pauline literature (e.g. Col 1:15), Frey (2017), 285–312 presents a convincing case that John understands Jesus to be God's image.
[103] Bultmann (1971), 63.
[104] Bultmann (1971), 60–83; (1955), 33–69.

1:17–18; Exod 33:18): δεῖξόν μοι τὴν σεαυτοῦ δόξαν. Like God, Jesus comes in glory and calls "by his name "Lord" before you;" but now one *can see his face and gain eternal life* (cf. Exod 33:18–20). The incarnation of John 1:14 issues in the χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος of John 1:16 and in this incarnation the one whom "no one has ever seen" becomes visible in the one who came from the Father's bosom (John 1:18) and whose glory is manifest on the cross.[105] The prerogative of the beloved one at Jesus's bosom (John 13:23) is to offer his Gospel as that which makes the sight of God possible to all who read it and believe. The intervening narratives develop what the prologue makes evident and the conclusion confirms. Even though seeing Jesus does not automatically bestow belief on the beholder, it remains the case that true belief cannot exist apart from seeing God in Jesus. Belief only obtains if this possibility exists.

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[105] Bauckham (2015), 74 makes a similar claim and writes: "what Moses *heard* is actually *seen* in Jesus's path to abject suffering and death" (emphasis his). Tuckett (2013), 185 also links the "seeing" of 1:14 to the crucifixion but draws the conclusion that "the event of the cross" is separate from "any visible tangible "proofs" that would take away the scandal of the crucifixion." For John, however, the tangibility of the cross *is* the offence just as the tangibility of God *is* the means by which one comes to believe in him.

CONCLUSION

μεθυσθήσονται ἀπὸ πιότητος τοῦ οἴκου σου
καὶ τὸν κειμάρρουν τῆς τρυφῆς σου ποτιεῖς αὐτούς
ὅτι παρὰ σοὶ πηγὴ ζωῆς
ἐν τῷ φωτί σου ὀψόμεθα φῶς.

They will be intoxicated with the fatness of your house,
And you will give them drink from the wadi of your delights,
Because with you is life's fountain;
In your light we shall see light.

— Psalm 35:9–10 LXX

This thesis has demonstrated the centrality of sight, theophany, and proximity to God in John's theology. In the light of the foregoing arguments, one finds it difficult not to read 1 John 1:1–4 as a theological coda, a further reflection on the content of the Fourth Gospel:

> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes (ἑωράκαμεν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν), which we have beheld (ἐθεασάμεθα) and touched with our hands concerning the word of life (τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς) – and the life was made manifest (ἐφανερώθη), and we have seen and we bear witness (ἑωράκαμεν καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν) and we proclaim to you eternal life (τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον) which was with the Father and manifested (ἐφανερώθη) to us – that which we have seen (ἑωράκαμεν) and heard we proclaim also to you, in order that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you in order that our joy may be complete.

The revelation of the word of eternal life that was "from the beginning" and "with the Father" occurs as a manifestation that one sees, hears, and touches and then proclaims. Five seeing verbs, four of them from ὁράω, and two instances of φανερόω establish the priority of what one sees as the basis for proclamation and witness and as the content of what is heard. The proclamation itself has been committed to writing for the purpose of cultivating κοινωνία, a word suggestive of the proximity and intimacy of relationship that the Fourth Gospel uses "abide" to communicate. Like "abiding, κοινωνία occurs with the Father, the Son, and other believers. The author of 1 John does not here explain the relationship between the visibility of God and the visibility of Jesus; nevertheless, the opening of the epistle implies that a visual revelation from God has brought eternal life to humanity.

This thesis has shown that what is implicit in these verses is evident, if not explicit, from close readings of John's Gospel as a first century Jewish text. John's emphasis on seeing divine revelation is due to his belief that Jesus presents God as visible to humanity. True belief recognizes God in the incarnation because God becomes visible in the temple-place of Jesus's body. A summary of the arguments will conclude the thesis and provide the chance for an evaluation of its significance and directions for further study.

Chapter 1 argued that the Gospel's purpose statement (John 20:30–31) is theological. The signs, the titles "Christ" and "Son of God," and the result of belief – life in the name – ultimately direct the believer to God. The signs are of a piece with God's salvific actions in the world, the titles refer to a divine messiah who comes from God as the Word, God incarnate. Life comes from the Father, but the Son also possesses life in himself and grants it to believers. Likewise, the name describes the divine protection that the Son grants to humanity as well as the divinity he and the Father share and that the Son has revealed. Indeed, across this thesis, the name has emerged time and again as a theophanic signifier, closely associated with glory, revelation, and power as well as with the mysterious ways in which God seems capable of sharing his divinity with others. The Chapter concluded that seeing God and the visibility of God will, in fact, be relevant to Johannine belief since that belief is oriented towards the knowledge of God and a relationship of trust with him.

Chapter 2 argued that God is visible in Jesus. It focused on John 1:18 as representative of the major statements of "invisibility" in John (e.g., 3:13; 5:37; 6:46), and claimed that God can be physically visible in Jesus. The Chapter distinguished between an intrinsic, Platonist reading of invisibility, according to which God remains invisible because he is immaterial, and a reading in which God is better described as "unseen." God is unseen because his visibility is overwhelming in its power, glory, and purity. The Hebrew Bible, LXX, and Early Jewish texts do not describe God in consistently Platonist terms; and they

also plainly state that he can be seen. The Chapter substantiated the claim of divine visibility by appealing to John's understanding of theophany. John's use of Isaiah suggests that one can see God and that Isaiah's theophany (Isa 6:1) was a vision of the visible God in which the pre-incarnate Christ was present as God rather than as the only visible member of the godhead. It then argued that John 12:45 and 14:9 show that God is physically visible in Jesus.

The "mechanics" of this visibility emerged from John's association of Jesus's body with the tabernacle and temple. Chapters 3 and 4 argued that across the Hebrew Bible, LXX, and Early Jewish literature at least two features of divine invisibility emerge. The first is that God can join himself to parts and/or members of the created order such that God can be in two places at once. God's houses and temples, the places where his name dwells, are the places best suited to seeing him because they mark theophanic sites. God was "there" in some very real and physical way. Chapter 3 argued that God is present in Jesus as a fusion of divinity with flesh and that John himself evidences some level of this thinking across the Farewell Discourse and in his description of Jesus's body as tabernacling (John 1:14) and as the temple that will be raised (John 2:21).

Chapter 4 further argued that a theophanic topography derived from the temple informs certain places in John such that Jesus's presence in them directs the reader to the visibility of God that Jesus presents. Jesus is God on earth, and it follows that God's visibility on earth will be most evident in the mountain, garden, and temple places in which he was wont to be visible across the "Jewish encyclopedia" that the Introduction to this thesis described. An overview of the nature of place and of the mountains and gardens in John revealed that Jesus's divinity is particularly visible in places reminiscent of the Cosmic Mountain. God is visible in Jesus's body according to the architectures of worship that defined how one might approach him in order to see him.

Chapter 5 pivoted from the nature of divine visibility to human seeing. This Chapter argued against the widespread scholarly view that John disapproves of sight as a valid means of believing. Exegesis of John 2:23–25; 4:48; and 20:29 revealed that John identifies human hearts as the source of unbelief rather than physical sight. Sight itself is the catalyst of all belief and disbelief. It forms the primary content of belief, that to which one bears witness and proclaims to others via speech or writing. It does not automatically guarantee belief, but it remains the fundamental means by which belief obtains.

Chapter 6 applied the three central findings of this thesis to visual encounters with Jesus himself. These findings were that belief is ultimately focused on God, that God is visible in Jesus, and that sight is the primary catalyst of belief. It then argued that readings of key "seeing Jesus" passages (John 6:19; 19:6; 20:14, 18, 25, 29) reveal Jesus's divinity to be the object of human sight. However, the Chapter acknowledged that God's visibility in Jesus is counterintuitive. God is most visible in the strange glory of the crucifixion. Nevertheless, this glory is held out to be seen and witnessed for the sake of belief.

I began this thesis with an explanation of Ian McFarland's "Chalcedonianism without reserve," with its necessarily invisible God. Whether McFarland offers an "accurate" reading of Chalcedon is beyond the remit of this thesis. What I have shown is that John is not so easily co-opted into accounts of divine invisibility that rely on Platonist and later Lutheran and more broadly Protestant frameworks for understanding the relationship between divine invisibility, human seeing, and belief. Understood as a response to the counterintuitive theophany that Jesus Christ presents, belief in John is the result of seeing God when one sees Jesus. This does not mean that God is easy to see or that the incarnation admits of straightforward explanation. Much remains mysterious, and the visibility made available is easily bypassed or rejected. What this thesis has shown is that God is physically present in Jesus and that John's orientation towards belief is also a call to experience the *visio Dei* that

Jesus presents. I wish to reflect briefly on the significance of these findings for NT scholarship as well as sketch further works for which this dissertation helps to lay a foundation.

This thesis has implications for at least three areas of study. The first is Johannine scholarship that remains skeptical about the value of the physical senses and, especially, of sight with regard to belief. Read against the Hebrew Bible, LXX, and Early Jewish texts, Bultmann's understanding of sight is ultimately flawed. Although, I agree with Bultmann that Platonist and Philonic readings of divine invisibility are mistaken, it remains the case – as stated so explicitly in 1 John 1:1–4 – that God makes himself the object of human sense-perception. At one level, this may render God even more inscrutable; nevertheless, it is *the* way that Jesus the Revealer makes God manifest and draws believers into communion with the Godhead. For his myriad of exegetical insights and his restoration of theology as the valid subject of NT study, Bultmann is rightly respected, but the God of John is not the God of Bultmann. This thesis joins a burgeoning chorus of work that resists Bultmann's influence on the study of Johannine belief as it pertains to sight.

The second area regards the nature of divine embodiment studies in NT scholarship. This thesis is now the second in five years to argue for an understanding of John's God as embodied or capable of embodiment according to a Jewish construal of God.[1] It also complements the work of Brittany Wilson on the nature of divine embodiment in Luke-Acts. It thus reinforces the longstanding emphasis on the Jewishness of John, particularly regarding theology proper. However, it also raises important questions for the renewed readings of John as a Graeco-Roman work, especially for those who read John against the backdrop of a particular philosophical school.[2] One need not exclude Hellenistic philosophy from John's

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[1] The first is Forger (2017). See the Introduction of this thesis (29n142) for a brief overview of the differences between us.

[2] Across his scholarship on John, Harold Attridge offers a nuanced view of how John is like and unlike the schools. However, taken together, his work tends to suggest that the best backgrounds available are exclusively

thought and writing. However, the thesis does suggest that where he has employed such thought, it serves a more deeply Jewish understanding of God instead of qualifying it.[3]

The third area is Johannine ethics and ecclesiology. 1 John 3:2 makes the remarkable claim that "when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see (ὀψόμεθα) him as he is." This statement anticipates a future vision of God and recalls John 17:5 and 24. Read alongside the Gospel as a whole, however, it summarizes the transformative nature of belief, one that so often parallels the transformation that the *visio Dei* effects on those who survive it. Like Moses (Exod 34:33), Isaiah (6:1–7), and Enoch (*2 En.* 22:1-10), those who see God are changed. Conversely, in order to see God, people also need to be changed. Paul uses "metamorphosis" to describe the transformation of those who see "the glory of the Lord" and come to possess "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 3:18–6:18). One could write an additional thesis on the relationships between the "visual pieties" of John and Paul,[4] but for now it must suffice to note that believers in John also become the body-temple of Jesus and that this notion is the result of a belief that sees God in Jesus.

Sight transforms the believer into one who shares the name, the glory, and the Spirit and who has the hope of seeing God "where Jesus is" (17:24). Regarding ethics, John offers the future hope of transformation into a person like Jesus and like God himself. He also reveals that in the course of their earthly life believers present the sight of God to themselves and to one another. Their very bodies hold the promise of theophany by virtue of the ongoing transformation that they experience as those who have seen God in Jesus. For John, the church is ultimately a body characterized by the *visio Dei* even as it anticipates a final vision

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philosophical. Van Kooten (2005; 2019) and Engberg-Pederson (2017) defend John as being more thoroughly Platonic or Stoic.

[3] This thesis has not directly argued with Richard Bauckham, but it does challenge aspects of the creator-creature distinction that underlies Bauckham's account of monotheism.

[4] I take this phrase from Heath (2013).

of him. Salvation itself hinges on this sight. Such a reading further resists Protestant interpretations of John that have, at times, been too concerned with the categories of justification to look up.

Regarding future work, the evidence given here could fuel a larger project on the nature of sight and visuality across the Pauline and Johannine corpora as well as in the Pastoral and Catholic epistles. However, more pressing – in my view – is the question of what divine transcendence actually means in the NT documents. I showed in the Introduction that few Johannine scholars have interrogated the nature of God in John and that this has led to assumptions and gaps regarding the value of divine visibility in Johannine theology. This thesis has now closed some of those gaps, but my work raises further questions. Are there multiple notions of transcendence operative across the NT? How do these notions inform the texts in which they appear? Likewise, do NT portrayals of transcendence stand in competition with one another or with the consensus in Patristic thought, already burgeoning in the second century, that God is transcendent in largely Platonic terms? Who is God? How does he relate to the world?

I hope to pursue these questions in the future, but it may be that all NT theses and books must ask them in some form. Perhaps as human beings we are both condemned and blessed with the task of asking them so long as we are able to do so or until a final vision is granted us. Whatever the case, this thesis must end where it began, with the hope of clear sight and with the question of Ezekiel's Angel as its final word: εἰ ἑώρακας υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου;

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