

Annual Moore College Lectures 1977

F. F. Bruce: *The Time Is Fulfilled*

Lecture 2: *It is they that bear witness to me*

1997-09-08

(00:00) Three questions were handed in on Tuesday evening and I shall deal with them briefly.
(00:07)

One asks about the two titles of Our Lord, Son of Man and Son of God, and asks: "Do you see any indication of difference in Jesus' sanctification by these different titles or what is the reason for this difference?" (00:24) I don't see any difference between the titles in respect of Our Lord's sanctification; (00:30) I think that he was, by lowing [knowing?] himself to be the Son of God, reticent about making this claim in public and preferred to designate himself the Son of Man, (00:44) largely, as I suggested, because that was not a current expression by way of the title of a figure expected to appear, (00:56) so that when he used that designation he could fill it with whatever meaning he himself chose, (01:03) without the difficulty of its being already filled with some other meaning in popular thought. (01:10)

(01:15) The next question relates to a reference I made to the passage in second Corinthians 13 about Our Lord's having been crucified as the Son of God in weakness; he was crucified in or through weakness. (01:28) The questioner asks if this has any relation to the fact of his bearing the sin of the world; whether the work of sin bearing weakened or exhausted him and whether that might be the point of the reference to weakness. (01:47) In second Corinthians 13 I think there's no particular reference to his sin-bearing work; the contrast is simply between the spectacle of weakness, by human standards, of a man nailed hand and foot to a cross and the spectacle, on the other hand, of that same man being raised from the dead by the power of God. (02:08) Crucified through weakness he was and, while from the human point of view there could be no more obvious spectacle of weakness than a man in that situation, nevertheless, Paul says elsewhere, Christ crucified is the power of God as well as the wisdom of God. (02:28)

Then, a question of a different kind: "I am wondering", says this questioner, "if your study and research has actually been illuminating for you in an excitingly encouraging way, or whether the complexities and complications revealed are actually exhausting". (02:45) I can answer that question very easily; the study has certainly been illuminating for me in an excitingly encouraging way and not at all exhausting. (02:58)

(03:01) We turn then to tonight's subject: *It is they that bear witness to me* (03:05)—in the words of the Authorised Version "they are they that testify of me"—the words are drawn, as you know, from John chapter 5, and as our Tuesday-evening lecture related mainly to the Gospel of Mark and, in part, to the other two synoptic gospels, tonight's lecture will relate mainly to the Gospel of John. (03:24)

"You search the scriptures", said Our Lord to the religious leaders in Jerusalem who had found fault with him for claiming to exercise the divinely delegated function of raising the dead and

pronouncing judgement, (03:38) “you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life—and it is they that bear witness to me—yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life”. (03:49)

In the immediate context, Jesus invokes a wide variety of witnesses to the authenticity of his claim: (03:57) the testimony of John the Baptist, the testimony of the Father, the testimony of his own works, the testimony of scripture. (04:05) The testimony of scripture involves preeminently the testimony of Moses. (04:12) “If you believed Moses”, he goes on to say, “you would believe me, for he wrote of me, (04:18) but if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” (04:24) In speaking thus, Jesus confirms the testimony of Philip to Nathanael, in chapter 1 of this gospel, “we have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote: Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph”. (04:40)

Can we ascertain from the wider context of the fourth gospel something about the specific terms in which the scriptures in general and Moses in particular bore witness to the coming Christ? (04:53) I believe we can and in the first instance would [we?] direct attention to the passage about the coming prophet in Deuteronomy 18. (05:04) Looking forward to the Israelites' settlement in the promised land, Moses tells them that, when they wish to ascertain the will of God, they must not have recourse to necromancy, soothsaying, or divination such as the Canaanites practise. (05:21) When God wished to reveal his will to them, He would do so through a prophet, as He did through Moses. (05:28) “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren; him you shall heed.” (05:36) According to Moses in the plains of Moab, God had announced that he would do this nearly forty years previously, at Horeb, on the day of the assembly. (05:48) In the ordinary text of the Pentateuch there is no word of this earlier announcement, but the Samaritans' edition, true to its propensity for filling in parallels, inserts the announcement between verses 20 and 21 of Exodus 20, that is to say immediately after the ten commandments. (06:09)

It might be supposed that the announcement was fulfilled every time a prophet was sent to communicate God's will to the people. (06:19) However, even in Deuteronomy itself, and in the series of historical writings which it introduces—Joshua to second Kings—it is clearly indicated that not every prophet was a prophet like Moses. (06:36) In the short obituary notice of Moses, with which Deuteronomy ends, it is said that “there has not risen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face-to-face”. (06:48) Earlier in the Pentateuchal narrative, a distinction is made by God Himself between an ordinary prophet, to whom He would make Himself known in a vision or speak with Him in a dream, and my servant Moses. “With him”, says God, “I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech, and he beholds the form of the LORD.” (07:14)

It was long before a prophet of this calibre arose again in Israel. (07:20) How extensive a perspective is implied in the language of the end of Deuteronomy 34, “there has not risen a prophet since like Moses”, is uncertain. (07:31) It is plain, however, that while Joshua succeeded to Moses' leadership he did not succeed to Moses' prophetic office. (07:40) In the course of preexilic history, only two prophets appear who are comparable with Moses. (07:48) These are Samuel and Elijah. (07:51) To Samuel, acknowledged by all Israel as a prophet of the LORD, the LORD revealed Himself at Shiloh by the word of the LORD, after a long period of

spiritual drought, when the word of the LORD was rare, and there was no frequent vision.

(08:09) Samuel, moreover, assumed the national leadership at a time when Israel's continued existence as a people was in jeopardy, and, under God, he ensured its survival. (08:22) He performs priestly functions as well, at a time when the family of Eli comprised only minors. (08:27) He not only sacrificed, but—which was much more important—he acted as a prevalent [sic?] intercessor on the nation's behalf. (08:41) Moses and Samuel are coupled together by Jeremiah, at the beginning of chapter 15 of his prophecy, as two men of God who, for all their righteousness and intercessory power, could not avail to save apostate Jerusalem if they were resident there in its last days. (09:00)

Elijah, hailed as Israel's chariot- [?] and horseman [?], stood foursquare and resolute in a time of national apostasy and was the principle agent through whom the LORD turned the people's hearts back to himself. (09:16) His altar and sacrifice on Mount Carmel reveal him as exercising priestly functions on a national scale (09:25) and, when he gives orders in the name of the Lord, they are carried out in faith [face? place? spite?] of the known [?] wishes of the royal court. (09:32) Ahab may be king, but it is Elijah who, in the Hebrew historian's estimation, is the true leader of Israel in his day. (09:43) When Moses and Elijah appeared together on the mount of transfiguration, Elijah was not an unworthy companion for Moses. (09:52)

If, in the preexilic period, Samuel and Elijah were recognised as prophets of Mosaic stature, (10:01) the belief grew up in the postexilic age that there would be only one prophet like Moses after Moses himself, (10:10) and that his appearance, the appearance of this prophet like Moses, would mark the end of the current age and the dawn of the new age. (10:19) The cessation of the prophetic gift lent strength to this expectation. (10:24) It was taken for granted that many questions of sacred procedure must remain unsolved until a prophet, who might well be **the** prophet of the end time, arose to declare the will of God in regards to them. (10:39) In first Maccabees for example, the stones of the great altar which had been polluted by the superimposition of the idolatrous altar (10:50) were dismantled at the time of the rededication of the temple and stored in a suitable place until a prophet would appear to say what should be done with them. (10:59) Again, when a popular assembly, after the winning of independence from the Seleucids, had to make provision for the high priesthood, (11:11) it decreed that Simon, the brother of Judas Maccabeus, should be high priest for ever, (11:16) that is to say that his high priesthood should pass to his descendants, (11:21) that he should be a hereditary high priest—(11:24) until a trustworthy prophet should arise [arrive?], a prophet, that is to say, who could give clear guidance about the high-priestly line. (11:33)

The identification of the prophet like Moses with **the** prophet of the end time is seen in its most radical form among the Samaritans. (11:44) The Samaritans did not recognise a succession of prophets as the Jews did; (11:50) God's last revelation of His will had been granted to Moses, and there would be no further revelation until the prophet like Moses arose. (12:00) It is on the prophet like Moses that what is loosely called the Samaritans' Messianic hope was fixed. (12:08) They had nothing to do with the tribe of Judah or with the prince of the house of David; they looked for the prophet whom they called the [a?] Taheb, (12:17) that is to say the restorer. (12:21) When, therefore, the Samaritan woman in John 4 perceived that Jesus was a

prophet, (12:26) she may have implied much more than a Jewish speaker would have meant by the same words. (12:32)

In Jewish thought, the expected prophet was not necessarily substituted for the royal Messiah; (12:41) the two figures might stand alongside each other, and might even be accompanied by a third. (12:46) Thus, among the Qumran texts, the one called *the rule of the community* or *the manual of discipline* lays down regulations which are to be valid until the rise of a prophet and of the Messiah of Israel and Aaron. (13:04) This is commonly interpreted as alluding to the royal and priestly Messiahs who were expected to arise at the end time in company with the prophet like Moses. (13:16) To the same effect, a collection of *testimonia*, or prophetic proof texts, found in Cave 4 at Qumran, (13:28) brings together three Pentateuchal passages which were believed to point forward respectively to these three figures: (13:37) the divine announcement about the prophet like Moses, from Deuteronomy 18; Balaam's description of the Star out of Jacob, from Numbers 24; and part of Moses' blessing of the tribe of Levi, from Deuteronomy 33. (13:52) The announcement of the prophet like Moses in this document is quoted, not according to the Masoretic text, but from the context in which it first appeared in the Samaritan Bible, that is to say in Exodus 20. (14:07)

(14:10) When, according to the narrative which follows immediately upon the prologue to Saint John's Gospel, (14:17) a delegation from Jerusalem interviewed John the Baptist and asked which figure of prophetic expectation he claimed to be, (14:26) he declined to be identified with any of them. (14:29) When he had denied that he was the Messiah, or the returning Elijah, foretold in Malachi chapter 4, (14:36) they said "are you the prophet?". (14:40) John had no need to say which prophet; he knew that they meant the prophet like Moses, so he answered "no". (14:49) John, by his own confession, was neither the Messiah nor the prophet like Moses. (14:55) Jesus was both, (14:58) as the Gospel of John makes plain, and more besides. (15:03)

So far as his being the prophet like Moses is concerned, this is repeatedly, in this gospel, a confession on the lips of those who saw and heard him, (15:14) people who were not gifted with penetration into the full truth of his person and mission. (15:20) "The prophet like Moses" is far from giving an adequate account of him, but it is true so far as it goes; (15:28) the Evangelist nowhere hints otherwise. (15:32)

Other New Testament strata [?] attest Jesus' identification with the prophet like Moses; (15:39) Peter's speech in the temple courts, for example, in Acts 3, and Stephen's defence before the Sanhedrin, in Acts 7, (15:49) actually quote the passage from Deuteronomy 18 and apply it to Jesus, (15:55) but of special importance in the gospel narrative is the voice from heaven at Jesus' transfiguration "this is my beloved son; listen to him", "pay heed to him". (16:09) There is a similarity between this wording and the heavenly voice at the baptism, with which indeed its text has been variously contaminated in the course of transmission, but the clause, "listen to him" or "pay heed to him", is certainly derived from Deuteronomy 18 verse 15: "the LORD your God will raise up a prophet among you like me; you must pay heed to him". (16:34)

So the heavenly voice at the transfiguration points to Jesus as the prophet *par excellence* as well as being God's beloved son. (16:47)

There are two specially important places in the fourth gospel where Jesus is hailed as “**the prophet**”. (16:54) In John 6 verse 14, after the feeding of the multitude, the people who had seen this sign said “this is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world”. (17:08) In John 7 verse 40, after Jesus had stood in the temple court on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles and proclaimed “if anyone thirst, let him come to me, and let him drink who believes in me”, some of his hearers said “this is really the prophet”. (17:26) On both occasions they meant the prophet like Moses. (17:30) A later rabbi is credited with the observation “as the first redeemer fed the people with manna, so will the last redeemer; (17:40) as the first redeemer fetched water from the rock, so will the last redeemer”, the first redeemer being Moses, and the last redeemer the Messiah, (17:51) envisaged in his role as a second Moses, the **prophet** like Moses. (17:56) The analogy of the manna becomes explicit in the narrative of John chapter 6; the analogy of the water from the rock remains implicit in the narrative of John chapter 7, but, even if implicit, it is there. (18:13) We shall return to this in a moment, but at present we should look at a variant reading right at the end of John chapter 7. (18:22)

Jesus' activity in the temple court during the Feast of Tabernacles caused great disturbance among members of the Sanhedrin, (18:31) some of whom were disposed to take preemptive action against him. (18:36) Nicodemus reminded them that it was illegal to pass judgement on a man without first hearing the evidence and giving him an opportunity to speak for himself. (18:47) This provoked the scornful rejoinder: “Are you a Galilean too? Search, and see that a prophet doth not arise from Galilee.” (18:57) This was a curious statement; some of the prophets did probably arise from Galilee, (19:05) but one witness to the text—actually, the oldest extant witness to the Greek text of John, the so-called Bodmer papyrus B66, (19:16) dated towards the end of the second century AD—makes the speaker say not “a prophet does not arise from Galilee” but “**the prophet** does not arise from Galilee”. (19:28) We have to bear in mind that this is very much a minority reading, even if it is the reading of our oldest witness to the text of the passage; (19:37) nevertheless it is a reading which would certainly be relevant in the context, and indeed it tightens the Johannine irony which infuses the whole context. (19:51) Some said “this is the prophet”; others said “this is the Messiah”. (19:56) To the latter suggestion it is objected “but the Messiah comes from Bethlehem, not from Galilee”; (20:02) to the former suggestion it is now objected “but the **prophet** does not arise from Galilee”. (20:09) How it could be known whence **the prophet** would arise is not clear. (20:16) The Evangelist and his readers, however, know something which enables them to savour the irony of the situation. (20:24) Whether he was identified with the prophet or with the Messiah, Jesus was born in Bethlehem not in Galilee, but the crowd in Jerusalem didn't know that. (20:33) It is with special reference, however, to Jesus' function as the spokesman of God, the prophet like Moses, that the scriptures, and especially the Pentateuchal scriptures, are said to bear witness to him. (20:52) “He whom God hath sent utters the words of God.” (20:57)

(21:02) In the narrative of the feeding of the multitude in John chapter 6 there is a natural transition from the prophet like Moses, (21:10) with whom some of the witnesses identified Jesus, and [sic] the theme of his address in the Capernaum synagogue, the bread from heaven. (21:21) The feeding of the five thousand, the only sign of the Galilean ministry common to the fourth gospel and the other three, (21:30) provides the cue in John's record for Jesus' discourse on the bread of life delivered in the Capernaum synagogue. (21:38) The

discourse falls into three parts, with an epilogue. (21:43) Part one speaks of the true bread from heaven, of which the manna, eaten by the wilderness generation, was but a foreshadowing. (21:52) The manna was God's gift, the grain of heaven, (21:57) the bread of the angels; but those who ate it died nonetheless. (22:04) The true bread of God gives life to the world; it bears the same relation to the manna as did the living water of which Jesus spoke [does] to the water in Jacob's well, (22:17) and Jesus himself is the one authorised by God to impart the life-giving bread, as he is the one who bestows the living water. (22:27) As the Samaritan woman said "sir, give me this water", so now in Capernaum Jesus' hearers say "sir, give us this bread always". (22:37) This request, "give us this bread always", leads on to part two of the discourse. (22:45) Jesus not only gives the bread of life, he **is** the bread of life. (22:51) "He who comes to me shall never hunger; he who believes on me will never thirst." (22:57) Partaking of him who is the living bread means coming to him, believing in him. (23:04) The result of so coming and believing is the possession of eternal life now and the certainty of resurrection at the last day. (23:13) The sacrificial implication of Jesus' claim to be the bread of life becomes explicit at the end of part two of the discourse: "The bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." (23:28) And this becomes the theme of part three of the discourse: "Unless you eat flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you; (23:40) it is he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood who has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day." (23:48) Faith in Christ is not simply a matter of accepting the gifts he bestows; it involves appropriating **him**, partaking of **him**, union with **him**. (23:59) "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him." (24:05) The language is startling and in the original context must have been scandalous, (24:12) but the impossibility of taking it literally challenges the hearer or reader to consider what it means. (24:19) When Jesus says "it is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is of no avail", he shows that the eating and drinking of which he speaks denote an activity in the spiritual realm. (24:33) Material food cannot impart spiritual life. (24:37) The distinction between spirit and flesh here is as sharp as it is in the conversation with Nicodemus in chapter 3. (24:46) This part of the Capernaum discourse does not refer directly to the Holy Communion, but it does expound in one way the truth which the Holy Communion sets forth in another way, (25:01) the truth well summarised in the exhortation to the communicant in the Book of Common Prayer: "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving." (25:14) I don't know if here in Sydney you are as familiar with the language of the order of Holy Communion according to the 1662 Prayer Book as was once the case. (25:27) I know that when one quotes the 1662 Prayer Book in England, even to Anglicans, many of them look blank; (25:34) they don't [*unintelligible*] recognise what it is that you are quoting, so habituated are they to Series 3 and Series 4. (25:41)

(25:46) While Jesus both **gives** and **is** the bread of life, he does not identify in this way with the living water which he imparts. (25:55) He gives the living water, but he doesn't say "I am the living water" as he says "I am the bread of life". (26:02) However, the Evangelist sees in Jesus' words about the living water a reference, rather, to the spirit. (26:10) There are two places in the Gospel of John, mentioned already, where the theme of living water comes to the fore: the conversation at Sychar's well, in chapter 4, and the proclamation in the temple court on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, in chapter 7. (26:28) The nature of the water

which Jesus undertakes to give in his conversation with the Samaritan woman is not expressly specified, but it can be plainly inferred nevertheless from his words. (26:41) “The water that I give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto life eternal.” (26:47) Of this utterance, as of his later proclamation in the temple court, the Evangelist might well have said “this he spoke of the spirit”. (26:59)

The rabbis, or some of them, used similar language regarding the Torah, the Jewish law. (27:08) “Of him who labours in the Torah for its own sake”, Rabbi Me’ir said in the second century, “such a man is made like a never-failing fountain, and like a river that flows on with ever-sustained vigour”. (27:25) The Samaritans, as well as the Jews, had this interpretation of the Torah; (27:32) for the Samaritans, perhaps, the Torah, with the Samaritan interpretation of it, was symbolised by Jacob's Well, (27:41) for Samaritans, as well as Jews, call Jacob “our father”. (27:45) For John, as for Paul, the Age of Torah was superseded by the Age of the Spirit, through the completion of Jesus' earthly ministry; (27:56) and, for John, this is relevant to Samaritans as much as to Jews. (28:01) During the Age of Torah, their varying interpretations of the Law kept Jews and Samaritans apart; (28:10) in the Age of the Spirit that barrier is removed. (28:14) Formerly, it was a matter of importance whether the God of Israel was worshipped on Zion or on Gerizim. (28:23) Now the hour is coming and now is when the Father's worship is tied to neither of these sacred hills; (28:29) the true worshippers, whether Jews or Samaritans, or indeed non-Israelites altogether, worship him in spirit and in truth, and have fellowship one with another in such spiritual worship. (28:43)

The offer of living water at the Feast of Tabernacles, the annual Harvest Home, includes an Old Testament reference which has not been identified with certainty. (28:56) It is generally agreed that the offer was made against the [a?] background of the ceremony of water pouring, which took place on each of the first seven mornings of the festival. (29:08) According to the Mishnah, the written codification of Jewish law compiled towards the end of the second century, in the tractate that deals with the Festival of Tabernacles, (29:23) they used to fill a golden pitcher holding one and a half pints with water from Siloam. (29:29) When they reached the Water Gate, they blew three blasts of the trumpet, the shofah. (29:34) The priest on duty ascended the altar ramp and turned to the right where there were two silver funnels: (29:42) the funnel to the west, for libations of water, and that to the east, for wine. (29:49) Into the western funnel the water from Siloam was poured as a libation. (29:56) The water pouring was, in part, an act of thanksgiving for the rain of the past season, without which there would have been no crops to harvest, (30:04) and, in part, an acted prayer, for a similar blessing in the following season. (30:11) It was on the morning of the eighth day, the last day of the feast, when this ceremony was not enacted, that Jesus made his proclamation. (30:22) In the absence of material water, he spoke of spiritual water. (30:27) “He that has a [?] thirst, let him come to me, and let him drink who believes in me.” (30:32) If we punctuate that way, we have a rhythmical couplet. (30:38) Then follows the scriptural allusion “as the scripture has said, out of his belly—out of his inmost being—shall flow rivers of living water”. (30:48)

As it stands, the statement suggests that the believer is not only certainly [thoroughly?] refreshed by living water but becomes a channel through which it flows into the lives of others. (31:02) An Oxford professor, C. F. Bernie [?], pointed out over fifty years ago that the Aramaic

word for “belly” and “fountain” have the same consonants, and he envisaged an Aramaic original of Jesus' utterance meaning “rivers shall flow forth from the fountain of living water[s?]”, the fountain of living water[s?] being God himself, (31:27) as he is for example in the book of Jeremiah. (31:29) This hypothesis is attractive but unnecessary. (31:34) If we retain the Greek wording and render “out of his inmost being will flow rivers of living water”, (31:41) we may find the Old Testament source, referred to in the words “as the scripture has said”, in one or another of those prophecies which foretell a day when, (31:53) as it is put in Zechariah 14 verse 8, “living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem”, “from under the threshold of the temple” says Ezekiel, “from the house of the LORD”, says Joel. (32:06) In another Johannine book of the New Testament, this stream becomes the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb — (32:18) In another Johannine book of the New Testament, this stream becomes the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, which waters the new Jerusalem, and spreads life and healing wherever it flows, (32:35) at the beginning of Revelation 22. (32:37) Here, plainly, the river has become a pictorial symbol of the blessings of the gospel, imparted by the spirit. (32:47) Something to the same effect is present in Jesus' words about living water spoken in the temple court, (32:53) interpreted by the Evangelist as a reference to the spirit which believers in Jesus were to receive when once he was glorified. (33:02)

(33:07) In referring to the ceremony of the water pouring, I mentioned the Pool of Siloam, from which the water was drawn. (33:16) This reminds us of the reference to the Pool of Siloam in the narrative of the cure of the blind man in John chapter 9. (33:25) Here however it is enlightenment rather than refreshment that is in view. (33:33) During the Feast of Tabernacles, says the Mishnah in that same tractate to which I referred, during the Feast of Tabernacles, there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light of the Beth ha-She'ubah; (33:49) *Beth ha-She'ubah* means the place of water drawing, (33:53) an expression which relates to the language of Isaiah 12 verse 2: “Therefore with joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation.” (34:03) The light of the world as well as the water of life was symbolised by features of this festival. (34:11) When Jesus bid the blind man wash the clay from his eyes in the Pool of Siloam, the Evangelist notes that the name, *Siloam*, corresponding to the Old Testament *Shiloah*, means **sent**. (34:26) The deeper meaning is, then, that spiritual enlightenment can come only from the one whom God has sent.

(34:39) We turn to another theme in the Gospel of John in which we may see the scriptures bearing witness to Christ; this theme: the Passover lamb. (34:50) Attempts have been made in various places in the fourth gospel to find references to the Passover lamb, especially to the Passover lamb as having found its antitype in Jesus. (35:05) John's chronology of the Passion season has been understood in this sense and perhaps rightly. (35:12) But I think we have the only unambiguous allusion to the Passover lamb in the Passion narrative towards the end of chapter 19, when, after Jesus' death, (35:30) the soldiers come and break the legs of the robber on either side of him but did not break Jesus' legs. (35:39) And these things, that is the non-breaking of Jesus' legs, took place, says the Evangelist, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled “no bone of him shall be broken”. (35:51) Now I have just called this allusion to the Passover lamb unambiguous, but that statement may have been too unqualified. (36:00) To

me it is unambiguous, but it isn't unambiguous to everyone. (36:05) Some students of this gospel have seen here a reference to Psalm 34 verse 20, where God is viewed as the deliverer of the righteous man who trusts in Him. (36:16) He, that is God, keeps all his bones, all the bones of the righteous man; not one of them is broken. (36:23) If this scripture were in the Evangelist's mind here, it would underline Jesus' righteousness (36:31) and vindication of his trust in God, much in the spirit of Luke's rendering of the centurion's testimony at the cross "certainly, this man was innocent". (36:43) But in Psalm 34, the divine preservation of the righteous man's bones is a vivid expression for the preservation of his life and general well-being. (36:56) Thus, while the late professor Dodd, for example, finds a reference to Psalm 34 more likely here than one to the paschal lamb, (37:06) it seems to me more likely that the Evangelist had in mind the literal prescription with regard to the paschal lamb in Exodus 12 verse 46 "you shall not break a bone of it". (37:21) Jesus, in the Evangelist's eyes, is the antitypical paschal lamb; here at least, John is in agreement with Paul: "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us". (37:33)

(37:37) This may remind us—it certainly will remind us—of the title *the Lamb of God* given twice to Jesus by John the Baptist in the first chapter of this gospel. (37:47) But it is doubtful if the title *the Lamb of God* has a specifically Passover reference. (37:55) The Passover lamb was not generally regarded as a sin offering, (37:59) whereas the Lamb of God is said to take away the sin of the world. (38:03) Probably no single Old Testament passage underlies the designation *the Lamb of God*; rather, it sums up a number of Old Testament themes, of which the Passover lamb is one, (38:18) others being the Lamb of God's providing spoken of by Abraham, in Genesis 22, and, more particularly, the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, led like a lamb to the slaughter and giving his life as a sin offering. (38:33)

(38:41) Another prophetic theme featured in the Gospel of John: the presentation of Jesus as the king of Israel. (38:53) When Nathanael, in John 1 verse 49, hails Jesus not only as the Son of God but also as the king of Israel, he strikes a note which is echoed later in the Gospel. (39:08) The Old Testament prophecies of a coming king were understood in various ways in the first century AD. (39:16) There were the militant Messianists, like those who, after the feeding of the multitude, tried to compel Jesus to be their king; (39:25) but he was not prepared to be the kind of king they wanted and they were not interested in the only kind of kingship to which he would lay any claim. (39:36) The nature of that kingship emerges in the Parable of the Good Shepherd in John chapter 10. (39:44) In this parable, Jesus presented himself to those who understood his language as the true king of Israel. (39:53) In ancient Israel, as elsewhere in the Near East, the king, whether divine or human, is frequently portrayed as a shepherd. (40:03) "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel", prays the psalmist in Psalm 80, "thou who leadest Joseph like a flock". (40:11) If he who is enthroned upon the cherubim is the shepherd of Israel, the same title is borne by his anointed king. (40:21) Of the coming ruler in Israel foretold in Micah chapter 5, the prophet goes on to say "he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD". (40:30)

In the shepherd discourse of Ezekiel chapter 34, God Himself speaks as Israel's divine shepherd who appoints under-shepherds to care for His flock and denounces them for their breach of trust. (40:47) His sheep have been scattered because of those under-shepherds'

carelessness, but He Himself will seek them out and gather them together again, (40:57) giving special tendance to the weak and wounded among them. (41:01) “And I will set up over them”, he says, “one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them; he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them”. (41:16) In Ezekiel's day, *my servant David* cannot be the historical David; he is, rather, the coming Son of David, under whom lasting peace and prosperity would be established. (41:31) So [?] in John chapter 10, which echoes the language of Ezekiel 34, Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd who assembles his sheep from the fold of Israel and protects them with his life, (41:47) bringing to join them other sheep, not of this fold, so that there might be one flock, one shepherd. (41:55) The close association between God and his servant David in Ezekiel 34 is reflected in the close association between Jesus and his Father in John chapter 10. (42:08) “My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me, and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. (42:17) My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand; I and the Father are one.” (42:28)

The kingly role of Jesus is underlined again in John's account of his entry into Jerusalem in chapter 12. (42:39) The crowds, who cry Hosanna, expressly acclaim Jesus as the king of Israel, and in John 12 verse 15, the oracle of Zechariah 9 verse 9 is quoted in an abbreviated form. (42:55) “Fear not daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt.” (43:03) The nature of Jesus' kingship is suggested partly by the context of the gospel narrative—not least in his choosing an ass for a mount, that denotes humility rather than the self-assertion commonly associated with kingship—(43:21) and the nature of his kingship is partly suggested by the context from which the Zechariah oracle comes, (43:27) for there, in Zechariah 9, Zion's king puts an end to war and establishes worldwide peace. (43:36) But John brings out the nature of Jesus' kingship most tellingly in his report of the interchange between Jesus and Pilate at the end of chapter 18. (43:47)

The charge on which Jesus was arraigned before Pilate was that he claimed to be king of the Jews. (43:55) That was indeed the charge on which he was sentenced to death, (43:59) as the inscription on the cross testified. (44:02) The implication of the charge was that he aimed at being the kind of king which he actually refused to be in Galilee, a king such as the militant Messianists looked for. (44:17) Jesus emphasises to Pilate that he is not that kind of king at all. (44:23) His kingship is the kingship that is acknowledged by those who are on the side of truth, who love the truth. (44:32) As professor Dodd used to point out, readers of John's gospel towards the end of the first century might not be greatly interested in the question who was or who was not legitimate king of the Jews in AD 30. (44:46) But concern for truth is a mark of serious minds in all ages, (44:52) and, for such, Jesus' true kingship is of abiding relevance. (44:57) But historically it was as king of the Jews that Jesus was crucified; (45:03) the fourth evangelist agrees on this point with the other evangelists. (45:08) John draws special attention to the inscription proclaiming his kingship: to its trilingual presentation; to its publicity, there by the roadside, where many were coming and going to the city of promise; (45:21) to the chief priests' protests against Pilate's choice of words; and to Pilate's conclusion “what I have written, I have written”. (45:31) There, beneath that inscription, Jesus committed his spirit to God, and there, to make sure he was dead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear.

(45:41) And in the piercing, John recognises the fulfillment of another element in the Old Testament portrayal of Israel's true king; another scripture says "they shall look on him whom they have pierced". (45:57) This reference is to Zechariah 12 verse 10, a passage, the historical context of which is difficult, perhaps impossible, to establish. (46:10) I have discussed its relevance to the Passion narrative in some detail in *This is That*, (46:18) but suffice it here to say that the pierced one of the prophecy is probably the king, (46:26) the representative of God, devoting himself for the well-being of his subjects. (46:31) In the opinion of some, the reference in Zechariah 12 is to a moment in the national liturgy, in which the king suffered for his people's deliverance. (46:43) In any case, both in the Masoretic text and in the Hebrew text underlying the Septuagint translation, or, rather, here mistranslation, the God of Israel Himself is the speaker; (46:57) it is He who says "they shall look on **me** whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for **him**". (47:05) This transition from the first-personal pronoun *me* to the third-personal pronoun *him* is rather awkward, but the awkwardness is dealt with skilfully in the New English Bible which renders "they shall look on me, on him whom they have pierced". (47:26) The New English Bible puts quotation marks around those words, treating them as a quotation from some source or other, in which the king figured as the representative of God, and thus the piercing of the king is recognised by God as a hostile act against Himself. (47:46) And then the prophet goes on "and they shall wail over him" and so forth. (47:52) The repeated references to the house of David in the immediate context of Zechariah 12 verse 10 confirms that it is the king, the king of Israel, who is in view. (48:03) The exegesis of the passage in Zechariah 12, however, is not our present concern; (48:09) the point to emphasise is that John sees in the piercing of the king of the Jews upon the cross the fulfillment of a royal oracle in which, as in Ezekiel's shepherd oracle, the God of Israel and his anointed are one. (48:25)

The shepherd king is pierced, and from his piercing flows salvation for the world. (48:34) This is the witness borne by the last prophetic passage cited in the Gospel of John, and on this particular testimony John lays exceptional emphasis, because it will help so greatly to promote the purpose of his Gospel: the awakening or strengthening of his readers' faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. (48:59) If, for him, the cross of Christ is the supreme unfolding of the incarnated glory, here he finds the inmost significance of that unfolding. (49:10) But Mark teaches in one way by his record of the rent veil; John teaches in another way by his record of the piercing, and, to the testimony of the scriptures which he quotes, he adds the testimony of a reliable eyewitness. (49:26) "He who saw it has borne witness; his testimony is true and he knows that he tells the truth, that you also may believe."

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