

# THE JESUS OF THE GOSPELS

by Graham

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*Graham's study of Jesus as portrayed in the four Gospels, examining His life and ministry through the distinctive perspective of each evangelist. The work analyzes how Mark presents Jesus as a worker of miracles, demonstrating His divine mission and authority through powerful deeds.*

4 Chapters

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## 1-The Jesus of Matthew: A Prophet

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Graham, Ronald W. "The Jesus of Matthew: A Prophet." Public Lecture. Glen Iris, Vic.

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THE JESUS OF MATTHEW A Prophet By Ronald W. Graham "Herod feared the people, because they held Jesus to be a prophet." (Matthew 14:5, RSV).

Introduction I have three words of introduction. 1) Versions Many times the scripture I shall cite in the course of these lectures will be from the first edition of the Revised Standard Version, which I have been using regularly since the New Testament translation published in 1946. At other times we shall be hearing the 1971 second edition, the 1968 edition of the Jerusalem Bible, the 1970 edition of the New English Bible, the 1971 edition of Today's English Version, the 1973 edition of the New International Version, and on occasion the 1611 edition of the King James Version. These are respectively denoted in my manuscript but will not be distinguished in this oral presentation. 2) Inclusive language When the wording is mine I shall refer to men and women, her as well as him. When I am citing the writings of others, including scripture, I shall nearly always respect the past by sticking with what is there in the original and we shall time and again understand "man" and "men" and "he" to be generic, including women as well as men. In referring to Jesus, I shall always use "he" because I am at a loss to know what we are saying if we deny the scandal (if you like) of his historical particularity, namely, his maleness. In my text I have lower cases for "he" and "him" when used of Jesus because we are thinking of him as the human face of God. The scriptures refer to God in both masculine and feminine terms, though, to be sure, the masculine predominates, especially in the "Father" language. "As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who [reverence] him" (Psalms 103:13)--that is the Psalmist's imagery, and it is there; like as a nursing mother comforts her child, so God comforts those who are depressed, disconsolate, and afraid (cf. Isaiah 66:13)--that is the imagery of "Isaiah," and that is there too. God may be personal--that may be how God is best, though nonetheless inadequately, described. We are shut up to using human words and human experiences to describe God; and the language of personhood is the best we have and it is the most honoring. Better that God be "he" or "she"--it matters not which--; better that God be he or she than that God be mindless, heartless, uncaring, unfeeling, uninvolved. But to speak of God in personalistic terms does not make God a Person, much less a male person. God has no sexuality--he is not male, nor is she female; God is just, well, God is just God. We attribute to God the highest attributes found in humankind: attributes found sometimes in this man, sometimes in this woman; found in the greatest, most fully human, women and men, men and women. For one thing, I shall use the term "God" as much as possible. For another, I shall on occasion use "Him" and not switch from "Him" to "Her." Third, in the text I have capitalized "He" and "Him" in order to hint that the Deity is not anthropomorphically masculine. 3) Procedure Now to get down to the main business on hand this evening. First of all I should like to say a word about the gospel, the Gospels, and the human face of God. Second, we shall pay attention to Matthew's portrayal of Jesus as a prophet. Third, we shall draw five

conclusions.

1. The Gospel, the Gospels, and the Human Face of God

a. The New Testament The only thing Jesus of Nazareth had to show for his matchless life, and cruel, undeserved death, and surprising resurrection was the church and the scriptures that the church wrote to explain and define itself. Those scriptures--what, around the end of the second century, Tertullian of North Africa first called the "New Testament"<sup>1</sup> are primarily a body of documents witnessing to the revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth. The New Testament is the record of what the early church knew (or thought it knew) about Jesus, what it believed and taught, and what implications for life it drew from its memories. The books that make up the New Testament "enshrine for us the comment and exposition and application of the teaching and the significance of Jesus by some of the earliest Christians, [people] who lived very near indeed to the historical source of light, [persons] who had known the apostles or known others who had known them."<sup>2</sup> The Jesus of the Gospels is Jesus as seen by his contemporaries.<sup>3</sup> What we have of Jesus is not what he said but what he is remembered as saying or is thought to have said. What we are given is the impression Jesus left. What emerges [from a study of the Gospels] is a lively picture of the kind of thing that Jesus did, the kind of attitude which his actions revealed, the kind of relations in which he stood with various types of people he encountered, and the causes of friction between him and the religious leaders.<sup>4</sup>

b. The Gospels As far as the New Testament is concerned, we can make Dodd's affirmation chiefly on the basis of the Gospels. The early church produced some twenty or more books that go by the name of "Gospel of ... :" the Gospel of Thomas as well as the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Peter as well as the Gospel of John 5:1-47 But from early in the second century four such writings were being singled out from all the rest as of pre-eminent authority. Why four--these four--and not five or three? "The Gospels could not possibly be either more or less in number than they are" is the answer to that question made by Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, toward the end of the second century. "Since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, ... the foundation of the Church [which] is the gospel, fittingly has four pillars."<sup>6</sup> It would be simpler, and perhaps nearer the mark, to say, "There are four Gospels in the New Testament because there just never were any others like them." They are four, and not one. Yet there is a oneness to them. Irenaeus immediately proceeds to say this: "[God] gave us the gospel, fourfold in form but held together by one Spirit."<sup>7</sup> Fourfold--but one. One. It is said that a church member in the late third century would not have possessed the New Testament in one complete volume, as we do. The first and most important volume would have been the EVANGELLION "The Gospel," for it was the singular that was regularly used of the fourfold gospel, and it was a century later before people "began to speak of each Gospel separately as a Gospel, and to use the plural of the four."<sup>8</sup> One Gospel. Tatian, an Assyrian Christian, confronted with the fact that the first three Gospels contain much that is represented twice and three times over, conceived the notion of combining all that was contained in the four Gospels, without repeating any part common to two or more, into a single connected narrative. So he took a Greek text of the Gospels current about A.D. 170 in Rome, where he was living at the time, and rearranged it--a scissors and paste job, as we would phrase it. It came to be called the Diatessaron--dia tessaron "out of four, [one]." On his return to his native country, it became the Gospel for many churches up and down the valley of the Euphrates. It is a loss that neither the Greek nor the Syrian texts survive.<sup>9</sup> In a sense the church does live with only one Gospel. For one thing, the first three Gospels have been known as the Synoptic Gospels, and each of the first three Evangelists as a synoptiker, "a synoptic writer," for

the last two centuries now.<sup>10</sup> Synoptic, because Matthew, Mark, and Luke may be seen together; synoptists, because all were writing from the one general view. One consequence of that is that few commentators on, say, Matthew, can resist comparing Matthew's Gospel with those first of Mark and then Luke. A commentary on one of the Synoptics tends to become a commentary at one and the same time on all three. For a second thing, experientially and devotionally the church's image of Jesus tends very much to be a composite one, in large measure a harmony of all four Gospels. The Western church might have banned the Diatessaron--one connected story in written form--as heretical, but West, as East, has lived with the Jesus of "the Gospel," rather than the Jesus of Matthew, as distinguished from the Jesus of Mark, as compared with the Jesus of Luke, as contrasted with the Jesus of John. But that one gospel--the good news of the fact of and the significance of the fact of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth--takes a fourfold form, as Irenaeus clearly saw and as the Roman church rightly judged, as against Tatian. Even with all the emphasis on the threefold tradition, there is the gritty fact of the Gospel of John: the "Fourth Gospel," as it used to be called at the height of its disparagement. And it is the fourfoldness of the form that is going to be set before us these four nights. c. The human face of God Matthew's Gospel begins: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ [i.e., Jesus as Messiah], the son of David, the son of Abraham" (1:1). According to a number of ancient manuscripts, Mark's starts: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). Luke writes that he is going to tell the story of the Jesus who "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man" (2:52). John commences with a Prologue about "the Word [that] became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" (1:14), but at the end he says that his purpose was to bring people to believe, and nurture them in the conviction, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (20:31). Messiah, son of David, son of Abraham, Son of God, the Word, one who stood high in the estimation of both his peers and his God--each of these is a category for interpreting the significance of Jesus of Nazareth. And the list could be greatly lengthened. In his 1953 study, *The Names of Jesus*, Vincent Taylor listed ten principal names and titles of Jesus in the New Testament and then went to consider a further thirty two.<sup>11</sup> In his 1959 statement on *The Christology of the New Testament*, Oscar Cullmann discusses nine, or perhaps ten, categories: a list not quite identical with Taylor's.<sup>12</sup> The fact is that no single category exhausts all that a given Evangelist testifies to about Jesus. Which is understandable. The more significant the person and the richer the personality, the more numerous the categories of understanding need to be; the deeper the mind and the broader the spirit, the greater the variety of people who appreciate that person. I am therefore being quite limiting, highly selective, and somewhat arbitrary in choosing to speak about: The Jesus of Matthew: A Prophet; The Jesus of Mark: A Worker of Miracles; The Jesus of Luke: A Man of Prayer; and The Jesus of John: Lover of Men and Women. What will be said may constitute a beginning for looking at the Jesus of Nazareth, whom we confess as the human face of God; it is by no means intended to depict, much less define, the end of such a description. There is mystery in Jesus, depths beyond depths, as in every human being--as there is mystery in God, height beyond heights.

## 2. Jesus as a Prophet in Matthew

As a Book, the Old Testament has three divisions: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. In general, the writers of the New Testament feel closer kin to the Prophets than to the other two, though Matthew has a greater respect for the Law than the other three. Jesus might have been a

teacher, a prophet, a sage, or an apocalypticist. (By apocalypticist I mean "a seer whose main task was to enable his contemporaries to understand the signs of the times in which they were living, ... and to inculcate the qualities of vigilance, endurance and steadfastness which were demanded by such a moment in history."<sup>13</sup> More than any other Evangelist, Matthew has an interest in the relation of Jesus to the prophetic tradition and the role of the prophet in Judaism. a. Fulfillment For one thing, there is the motif of fulfillment. Matthew is convinced that many of the happenings in the life of Jesus took place in order to fulfill some word by a prophet. "This took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet" (Matthew 1:22): it is almost a formula. These are the events that took place to fulfill prophecy:

Mary's conceiving and the naming of her child;<sup>14</sup>

the place of Jesus' birth;<sup>15</sup>

the Holy Family's flight to Egypt;<sup>16</sup>

Herod's killing of the two-year olds;<sup>17</sup>

Jesus' being brought up in Nazareth;<sup>18</sup>

Jesus' spending some time in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, across the Jordan;<sup>19</sup>

the ministry of healing and casting out of demons;<sup>20</sup>

Jesus' withdrawal from the people at one stage and his ministering incognito;<sup>21</sup>

Jesus' teaching in parables;<sup>22</sup>

his entry into Jerusalem;<sup>23</sup>

Judas' burial in the potter's field.<sup>24</sup>

Three times the theme of the fulfillment of scripture appears on the lips of Jesus: in relation to the purpose of his ministry,<sup>25</sup> the reason for his not calling to his defense twelve legions of angels,<sup>26</sup> and his betrayal and arrest.<sup>27</sup> On the one hand, each of these citations lacks the formula shape that all the others have, although the idea of fulfillment runs through them. On the other hand, they are quite vague and general--"the law and the prophets," "the scriptures," and "the scriptures of the prophets": they lack the quotation of scripture and the reference to a particular prophet. Just what scripture is in mind in the last two of them is unknown. Five brief comments may be made on this aspect of Matthew's Gospel. One, the idea that specific events in the life of Jesus took place in order to fulfill some prophetic word is never placed on the lips of Jesus. This is an explanation of Jesus that we owe to the Evangelist, not to Jesus, and Matthew may very well be aware of that fact. Two. every single one of these fulfillment formula statements is peculiar to Matthew. Three, what is fulfilled, with the exception of the virgin birth, is not at the center of what is most significant about Jesus. Four, the scriptures cited are from Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Exodus, and the Psalms, with the stress on the prophetic books. Jesus is made to stand within Israel's prophetic tradition. Five, Matthew has a notion of the prophets and the Law belonging together and Jesus' teaching was the climax to the prophetic interpretation of the Law.<sup>28</sup> b. A Moses typology Moses occupies an incomparable position in the history of Israel. None among his contemporaries could match him, none among his successors equal him. He was prophet, priest, and

lawgiver--without peer as a prophet, says the writer of Deuteronomy, capsulating his achievement: "There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."<sup>29</sup> There is something of a Moses typology in Matthew. There is in the birth-story of Jesus what is also there in the birth-story of Moses: a perceived threat to a king triggers an infanticide.<sup>30</sup> There is the sojourn in Egypt, and God's calling his Son out of Egypt is like Moses' leading Israel out of the land of slavery.<sup>31</sup> The temptation in the desert of the Jordan has something of the character of the proving of Moses before the establishing of the covenant with Israel.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the teaching of Jesus given in five blocks is perhaps parallel to the five books traditionally ascribed to Moses.<sup>33</sup> All of this is found only in Matthew.

c. John the Baptist

- 1) The Evangelist regards John the Baptist as a wilderness preacher who has been sent to prepare the way for Jesus Christ and in this he was fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 34:1-17
- 2) John was held in high regard by the populace as a prophet and it was for that reason that Herod the tetrarch feared to put him to death.<sup>35</sup>
- 3) When Jesus was questioned once about the character and source of his authority, Jesus rejoined: "I will ask you just one question, and if you give me an answer I will tell you what right I have to do these things. Where did John's right to baptize come from: from God or from men?" They started to argue among themselves, what shall we say? If we answer, 'From God,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe John?' But if we say, 'From men,' we are afraid of what the people might do, because they are all convinced that John was a prophet."<sup>36</sup>
- 4) In this passage by inference and in two others explicitly Jesus expresses his appreciation of John as a prophet. He had occasion to say this to the crowds one day about the Baptist: "When you went out to John in the desert, what did you expect to see? A blade of grass bending in the wind? What did you go out to see? A man dressed up in fancy clothes? People who dress like that live in palaces! Tell me, what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you [and] you saw much more than a prophet."<sup>37</sup>
- 5) Herod the tetrarch might have feared the people but he feared even more breaking his impulsive promise to his wife's dancing daughter<sup>38</sup> and so he had John beheaded after all, and Matthew adds this at the end of his grim story: "And [John's] disciples came and took the body and buried it; and they went and told Jesus."<sup>39</sup> On the way down the mount of Transfiguration, Jesus had conversation with his intimates, Peter, James, and John about the coming of the Son of Man. The three said to him, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" To which Jesus replied, "Elijah has already come, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they pleased." "The disciples," adds Matthew, "understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist."<sup>40</sup>

d. The disciples

- 1) Jesus is represented as regarding his disciples as prophets. By implication, in the Sermon on the Mount, they are the new prophets who are destined to suffer persecution as had the old: "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you."<sup>41</sup>
- 2) Of the ministry of the Twelve Jesus said this: To receive you is to receive me, and to receive me is to receive the One who sent me. Whoever receives a prophet as a prophet will be given a prophet's reward, and whoever receives a good man because he is a good man will be given a good man's reward.<sup>42</sup>
- 3) In the context of chapter 23, they are the prophets who are scourged, or who will be scourged, in the synagogue of the Pharisees during the time of the early church.<sup>43</sup>
- 4) As in the Old Testament so in the New, there are both true prophets and false prophets and not all who claim the name deserve it, as Jesus points out in a saying that is peculiar to Matthew: "Not everyone who calls me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of my heavenly Father. When that day comes, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name, cast out devils in your

name, and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them to their face, 'I never knew you; out of my sight, you and your wicked ways!<sup>44</sup> e. Jesus as a prophet in the eyes of others 1) The common people took Jesus to be a prophet. The Evangelist says that at one time when Jesus came to the territory near Caesarea Philippi, which was an important Greco-Roman city on the Southwest lower slope of Mount Hermon, he put this question to the disciples: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" (NIV). They said, 'Some say John the Baptist, ... others say Elijah, while others say Jeremiah or some other prophet." (TEV). Then Jesus asked, "What about you? ... Who do you say I am?" (TEV).<sup>45</sup> The multitudes were not totally off target! 2) When Jesus was entering Jerusalem, "triumphantly" as the tradition has it, the crowds answered the city's agitated question, "Who is this?" by saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee."<sup>46</sup> 3) Jesus entered the city, cleansed the Temple, and returned in the evening to Bethany, which is a mile or so to the east of the Temple. The next morning he returned to the Temple area and began to teach. When the chief priests and the Pharisees saw the direction his teaching was taking, says Matthew in a passage that is peculiar to him, "though they would have liked to arrest him they were afraid of the crowds, who looked on him as a prophet."<sup>47</sup> 4) The people's welcoming Jesus as a prophet receives some derisive confirmation in the trial before Caiaphas the high priest, the scribes, and the elders. At the end, writes Matthew, in an account which in essence is found in all three Synoptic Gospels: "They spat in his face and beat him; and those who slapped him said, 'Prophesy for us, Messiah! Guess who hit you!'"<sup>48</sup> f. Jesus and the prophets At a number of points, Jesus is represented as having a deep appreciation for and a sense of affinity with the prophets. 1) One time when some scribes and Pharisees came to him asking for some tangible sign that would validate his message he responded with a word of commendation for the moral preaching of Jonah.<sup>49</sup> 2) Some four chapters further along (chap. 16), there is a repetition of this question, perhaps more threatening this time, by Pharisees and Sadducees, and again the example and experience of Jonah is set forth in response.<sup>50</sup> 3) In the predictive passage in chapter 24, one of the signs to be looked for is one that the Jesus of Matthew sees the prophet Daniel as having written about.<sup>51</sup> 4) On a day when Jesus found himself taking issue with Pharisees and scribes over moral priorities in religion-arduous attention to the cleansing of cups and the washing of hands coupled with neglect of and disrespect for parents--he is said to have expressed a fellow feeling for a frustrated, disappointed, and disheartened Isaiah: "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said ..."<sup>52</sup> 5) The persecution that Jesus foresaw for at least some of his followers he perceived as being as wrong for them as it had been for prophets of old.<sup>53</sup> The thought of it called forth the lament: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold your house is forsaken and desolate."<sup>54</sup> 6) The so-called Golden Rule: "In everything do to others what you would have them do to you"--regarded by some as the be-all and end-all of Christianity--is said by the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount to be nothing but a summing up of "the law and the prophets."<sup>55</sup> 7) The answer that was given to the question, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" was this: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>56</sup> And then comes the clincher, found only in Matthew, "On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."<sup>57</sup> 8) Jesus' teaching in parables and the disappointing response he often encountered is seen as a repetition of Isaiah's experience and in

that sense a fulfillment of prophecy (propheteia).<sup>58</sup> 9) What Jesus taught and what he accomplished was of such a character that "many prophets and righteous men," he said, 'longed to see what you [disciples] see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."<sup>59</sup> 10) In a saying found only in Matthew, the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount affirms that he in no wise came to abolish the law and the prophets: on the contrary: "Truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished."<sup>60</sup> 11) In Jesus' summing up of the Law and the prophets--not simply the Law; in his feel for Isaiah and his situation; in his evaluation of his own life and ministry; and In his affirmative and creative stance toward the Law and the prophets. we have already begun to move beyond Jesus' affinity with and appreciation for the prophets of Israel to his viewing himself as a prophet.<sup>61</sup> g. Jesus viewing himself as a prophet 1) In two places in Matthew, Jesus straightforwardly and unambiguously identifies himself as a prophet. At the end of extensive instructions to his disciples, Jesus speaks with the prophet's poetic parallelism: "To receive you is to receive me, and to receive me is to receive the one who sent me. Whoever receives a prophet as a prophet will be given a prophet's reward.<sup>62</sup> (The saying is peculiar to Matthew.) Plainly Jesus was referring to both himself and his disciples, who had just been granted authority to conduct healing ministries of their own and preach the good news of the Kingdom of heaven as prophets.<sup>63</sup> 2) Likewise, in consequence of a visit to Nazareth where his own people--friends and neighbors--stumbled at his well-known, familiar background and persistently questioned his authority, finally rejecting him,<sup>64</sup> Jesus was led to exclaim, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."<sup>65</sup> (And, incidentally, the upshot of that was that "he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief."<sup>66</sup> These two unequivocal statements which Matthew places on the lips of Jesus come at the end of two important sections of the Gospel: the commissioning of the disciples to heal and preach and Jesus' own teaching in parables. The Jesus of Matthew understands his healing and teaching ministry to be the work of a prophet living within and out of Israel's prophetic tradition.

#### Conclusion<sup>67</sup>

1) In August 1928 there was a conference of British and German theologians at which C. H. Dodd delivered a paper entitled, "Iesous ho didaskalos kai prophetes." It was later published in expanded form as a chapter, "Jesus as Teacher and Prophet," in *Mysterium Christi*.<sup>68</sup> We have concentrated on Jesus as prophet in Matthew but he really should be viewed, perhaps above all in Matthew, as a teacher who is also a prophet: a teacher--a teacher among teachers, an expert in the Law who possessed the skill of the scribe; a prophet--speaking out of and addressing himself to particular circumstances in history, like the prophets speaking out of a sense of direct communion with God and therefore speaking with a certain intransigence, authoritativeness, and urgency as well as with their freedom and directness; and perhaps we should add to teacher and prophet, a touch of the charismatic, esoteric seer thrown in. But to say that Jesus was a teacher who was also a prophet should not be allowed to obscure the fact that he was not just a teacher among teachers but that as a prophet he was a religious figure in his own right.<sup>69</sup> What do I mean by that?<sup>70</sup> 2) For one thing, fundamental to Jesus' life and ministry was his baptism, which is best understood as an expression of a vocational decision akin to the seminal "call" to prophesy felt by Men like Moses, Samuel, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Advocates of a doctrine of the sinlessness of Jesus are regularly puzzled by Jesus' being baptized by John, when John's was a

baptism signifying repentance.<sup>71</sup> It seems to me that Jesus' baptism expresses his response to a "call," a call to a vocation, in this case "sonship" and all that that entailed. As Matthew depicts our Lord's baptism., it is a highly personal, deeply spiritual, that is, a religious, experience: And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."<sup>72</sup> 3) Second, the prophetic vocation involves the possession of--if "possession" is the most appropriate word--a divine revelation that is received in intimate communion with God. So Matthew has this, as also has Luke: "All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."<sup>73</sup> And to that only the Jesus of Matthew adds: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."<sup>74</sup> 4) Third, the Hebrew prophets thought of themselves as not merely declaring the Word of God, but as playing a part in the fulfillment of that Word. The prophet believed that his ministry had actual consequences in history, under God's Providence. (This was something that distinguished the prophet from the "mere" teacher.) Jesus is in this tradition, with its concomitant sense of self-worth. He speaks as though his life and work was the decisive event in history. Especially, so it seems, did he expect momentous consequences to follow from his death. Matthew has it that from the time of the Caesarea Philippi incident, "Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day he raised."<sup>75</sup> Moreover, Jesus foretells that death, not as an accident that may happen to him but as an event held within the Providence of God whose intention it is to save: "Drink of [this cup], all of you," said Jesus at the Last Supper, "for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."<sup>76</sup> 5) Finally, to say that Jesus was a prophet is to say something about his personal religion, if it be permissible for me to put it that way. His communion with God is direct, personal, childlike. He brings to God unshakable faith in his goodness and power as a "living God."<sup>77</sup> His prayer is a serene acceptance of God's will, whether it call him to do or to suffer. He repudiates the notion of prayer as a meritorious religious exercise and insists instead that it is essentially converse with "your Father who sees in secret."<sup>78</sup> In addition, he bids his followers do what he himself does: "ask ... seek ... knock," in the assurance that the child who asks the parent for bread will be given bread and not a stone.<sup>79</sup> His own prayers, in lonely places and in the crises of life, are surely of this character. "His final prayer in the Garden, reasserting faith in the boundless power of God, craving help in desperate need, and rising to unreserved acceptance of His will, represents the ideal to which all prayer of the prophetic type tends."<sup>80</sup> Jesus recognized in John the Baptist "a prophet, and more than a prophet." If Jesus was so persuaded of John, how much more we of Jesus. But that dimension of his Person and Work--"a prophet, yea, and more than a prophet"<sup>81</sup>--lies beyond the scope of this survey.

#### FOOTNOTES

1 Alexander Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, rev. C. S. C. Williams, 2nd ed. (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1954), p. 144.

2 R. P. C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 249.

3 Cf. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Man from Nazareth: As His Contemporaries Saw Him* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1950); Etienne Trocme, *Jesus: As Seen by His Contemporaries*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973).

4 C. H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity* (London: Collins, 1971), p. 36.

5 M. S. Enslin, "Apocrypha, NT" in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 199-2), A-D, 166-69.

6 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, ed. Cyril C. Richardson, in *Early Christian Fathers*, Vol. I, *Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), iii, 11, 8.

7 Ibid.

8 Souter, p. 11.

9 Ibid., pp. 50-51.

10 Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745-1812). See Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), pp. 79-80 and "Synoptic Question," *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible*, 2nd rev. ed., Louis F. Hartman, C.S.S.R. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), col. 2376.

11 Vincent Taylor, *The Names of Jesus* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1953).

12 Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 2nd ed., trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1963).

13 A. E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), p. 57.

14 Matthew 1:22; Isaiah 7:14.

15 Matthew 2:5; Micah 5:2. 16 Matthew 2:15; Hosea 11:1; Exodus 4:22.

17 Matthew 2:17; Jeremiah 31:15.

18 Matthew 2:23; what prophets?

19 Matthew 4:14; No. 9 = M; Isaiah 9:1-2.

20 Matthew 8:17; No. 48 = M; Isaiah 53:4.

21 Matthew 12:17; No. 71 = M; Isaiah 42:1-4.

22 Matthew 13:35; No. 99 = M; Psalms 78:2.

23 Matthew 21:4; No. 196 = M; Isaiah 62:11; Zechariah 9:9.

24 Matthew 27:9; No. 243 = M; Jeremiah 32:6-15; Jeremiah 18:2-3; Zechariah 11:12-13.

25 Matthew 5:17; No. 21 = M.

26 Matthew 26:54; No. 240 = M.

27Matthew 26:56; No. 240: Mark 14:49.

28 Cf. Matthew 5:17; Matthew 7:12; Matthew 11:13; Matthew 22:40.

29Deuteronomy 34:10.

30Matthew 2:16-18; Exodus 1:1-22.

31Matthew 2:13-15; Hosea 11:1; Exodus 4:22.

32Matthew 4:2; Exodus 24:18. No. 8: Mark 1:13 and Luke 4:2 have only forty "days."

33Matthew 5:1-48; Matthew 6:1-34; Matthew 7:1-29; Matthew 9:36-38Matthew 10:1-42; Matthew 13:1-52; Matthew 17:22-27, Matthew 18:1-35; Matthew 23:1-39; Matthew 24:1-51; Matthew 25:1-46. Each block is preceded by narrative material and the conclusions are marked by the formula, "When Jesus finished these words," or "these parables," or "this teaching" (Matthew 7:28; Matthew 11:1; Matthew 13:53; Matthew 19:1; Matthew 26:1).

34Matthew 3:3; Isaiah 40:3; No. 1: Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4-6.

35Matthew 14:5; No. 111: Mark 6:20.

36Matthew 21:24-26 (TEV); No. 202: Mark 11:32; Luke 20:6.

37Matthew 11:7-9 (TEV); No. 65: Luke 7:26.

38 Whose daughter in fact she was is a matter of debate. Cf. Francis Wright Beare, *The Gospel according to Matthew: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 324.

39Matthew 14:12. 40Matthew 17:10-12 a, 13: No. 125: Mark 9:9-13.

41Matthew 5:12; No. 19: Luke 6:23.

42Matthew 10:41 (NEB).

43Matthew 23:34.

44Matthew 7:21-22 (NEB). No. 42.

45Matthew 16:13-14; No. 122: Mark 8:28; Luke 9:19.

46Matthew 21:11; No. 198.

47Matthew 21:46 (JB); No. 204.

48Matthew 26:67-68 (TEV); No. 241: Mark 14:65; Luke 22:64.

49Matthew 12:38-41; No. 87.

50Matthew 16:4 (tou prophetou in some manuscripts of Matthew); No. 119: Luke 11:29.

51Matthew 24:15. No. 216, Ila.: Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20.

52Matthew 15:7; No. 115: Mark 7:6.

53Matthew 23:29-31; No. 210: Luke 20:47-48, 23:34. No. 210: Luke 24:49.

54 Matthew 23:37; No. 211: Luke 13:34.

55 Matthew 7:12 (NIV); No. 40.

56 Matthew 22:37-39; No. 208:cf. Mark 12:31; Luke 10:28.

57 Matthew 22:40.

58 Matthew 13:14; Isaiah 6:9-10; No. 91.

59 Matthew 13:17; No. 92: Luke 10:24.

60 Matthew 5:17.

61 The saying, "for all the prophets and the law prophesied until John [the Baptist]; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come" may also fall into this category. Cf. 11:13; No. 65.

62 Matthew 10:40 (TEV).

63 Matthew 10:1; Matthew 10:7-8.

64 Matthew 13:57 : eskandalizonto: "took offense at" (RSV, NIV); "rejected" (TEV). "fell foul of" (NEB). "offended" (RJV). No. 108: Mark 6:4. 65 Matthew 13:57.

66 Matthew 13:58.

67 I have devoted my attention exclusively to those passages in Matthew in which prophetes, propheteuo, and propheteia appear. In his study of "Jesus as Prophet in Matthew" in the class on Matthew at Lexington Theological Seminary in the fall of 1983, Homer Hecht helpfully drew our attention to a number of "beneath the surface" prophetic dimensions to Matthew's portrayal of Jesus. These are barely hinted at in this conclusion.

68 C. H. Dodd, "Iesous ho didaskalos kai prophetes," *Theology*, 17 (1928), 205-208; "Jesus as Teacher and Prophet," in *Mysterium Christi*, ed. George K. A. Bell and D. Adolf Deissmann (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1931), pp. 53-66.

69 Harvey, p. 59.

70 In what follows, see Dodd, "Jesus as Teacher and Prophet," pp. 63-65.

71 3:2, 6, 8, 11, 14.

72 3:16-17.

73 11:27; No. 67: Luke 10:22.

74 11:28-30.

75 16:21; No. 122: Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22. Matthew has "he," meaning Jesus, whereas the others have "Son of man."

76 26:28.

77 22:29-32.

78 6:4, 16, 18.

79 7:7-11.

80 Dodd, "Jesus as Teacher and Prophet," p. 65.

81 Cf. 11:9 (KJV).

Thanks to Ronald W. Graham for permission to publish this lecture as an electronic text.

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## 2-The Jesus of Mark: A Worker of Miracles

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### II. THE JESUS OF MARK A Worker of Miracles

"Which is easier to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk'?" (Mark 2:9)

#### Introduction

As far as we can best determine, the earliest writings in what is now the New Testament are Paul's Letters. The first of them precede the Gospel of Mark by perhaps 15 years, although the traditions enshrined in Mark go back some 20 years beyond the penning of Paul's first Letters. Paul has few citations of, but a number of allusions to, the teaching of Jesus. He holds him up as an example for the Christian. His ethic is close kin to the Galilean's. He is sure that the Christ whom the church worships is the Jesus whom the church remembers. But for all that, there must have been a felt need for a more tangible account of Jesus. Hence the Gospels. Unless Paul and the rest of us can put some content into "Jesus" in the confession, "Jesus is Lord," we do not know what we are saying or why we are saying it. Hence, I repeat, the Gospels. Tonight we are going to isolate in Mark's Gospel the portrayal of Jesus as a Worker of Miracles. The Gospel story is a narrative of words and deeds and life and there is no strand of the early traditions about Jesus that does not include the deeds. I am going to consider the stories as they are, for it is "as they are" that for the most part the church lives and has lived with them. First, I should like to say a word about the terms used. Second, we shall look at the miracles in each of their four categories: exorcisms, healings, nature miracles, and raising from the dead, summarizing some findings as we go along. Then I should like to make six concluding comments.

1. Terms and Comparisons First, then, a word about the terms used and some comparisons between the Gospels. In the Synoptic Gospels, the usual term for "miracle" is dynamis. It means "might," strength, "authority," "a force." "a mighty work," a "powerful deed." It is used ten times in Mark and not at all in John. The NIV renders the word "power(s)," five times; "mighty work(s)," three times; miracle," only once. The RSV translates it as "power(s)," seven times and "mighty work(s)," three times; never as "miracle." The NIV has "miracle(s)" or "miraculous powers" four times, and the TEV and NEB three times each. None of them have "mighty work(s)"; all have some feel for "power(s)."1 In John, the parallel term is ergon, "work" or semeion, "sign," when used by Jesus; semeion when used by others. Except in the book of Acts, the wondrous, astonishing, amazing, marvelous aspect of the deeds of Jesus is played down. The word for a wonder or a marvel is teras. In the Gospels it is found only in the expression "signs and wonders"; once in Mark, and the parallel passage in Matthew 2:1-23 and once in John 3:1-36 and in every instance it is used disparagingly. All the Evangelists play down the sheerly astonishing, the merely marvelous, in the deeds of Jesus. The figures that I am now going to cite are practically the same

for Matthew and Luke respectively as for Mark. In Mark, there are seven accounts of exorcisms (casting out of demons); in John, none. In Mark, there are 11 or 12 healings; in John, three. In Mark, either four or five nature miracles; in John, three. In Mark, perhaps one raising from the dead, the daughter of Jairus; in John, certainly one, Lazarus.

## 2. The Miracle Stories in Mark

Second, then, let us look at the mighty works of Jesus in their respective categories, making some summaries as we move along. a. Exorcisms To begin with, the exorcisms. 1) 1:21-28: The man in the Capernaum synagogue. (No. 12: Luke 4:31-37; Matthew 7:28-29) Jesus' first public appearance was at Capernaum, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was the Sabbath. He entered the synagogue, which was a lay institution, needing neither priest nor rabbi. As an acknowledged competent interpreter of scripture, he was invited to expound the Word of God. There is no record that Jesus ever said "thus saith the Lord." He expected his teaching to be given a serious hearing either because its truth was self-evident or because it was his word. His teaching was felt to be with power. And there was a man there with an unclean spirit, a demon (Luke 4:33). The demon cried out to "Jesus of Nazareth," whom he calls "the Holy One of God." But Jesus cut the demon short and told him to hold his tongue and come out of the man. Which he did, convulsing the man. Whereupon the possessed man let out a loud shriek. The onlookers were astonished and saw this happening as a confirmation of the fact that Jesus taught with authority. And his fame spread through that region. 2) 1:32-34: A summary of exorcisms (No. 14: Matthew 8:16-17; Luke 4:40-41) At twilight of that same day, perhaps still at Capernaum and possibly in the house of Simon and Andrew (vv.29-31), the sick and the demon-possessed were brought to Jesus. The Sabbath was ended and so it was lawful to carry the sick to Jesus. The demons, viewed by Mark as spiritual beings, recognized Jesus, but what they recognized him as, Mark does not say. Part of the usual technique of exorcism was to force the demon to speak, but Jesus does not allow them to do so. Jesus is no ordinary wonder-worker who must follow a prescribed procedure.<sup>4</sup> Why only "many" of the demon-possessed were cured Mark does not indicate. 3) 1:39: Another generalized summary (No. 16: Matthew 4:23-25; Luke 4:44) This is another generalized summary: Jesus travelled all over Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons. 4) 3:7-12: A third generalized summary (No. 71: Matthew 12:15-21; Luke 6:17-19) This is the third generalized summary. Jesus withdrew from the villages and towns and the controversies of the synagogue to the Lake. But the crowds followed him from all parts of Palestine inhabited by Jews. They came even from parts beyond: from east across the Jordan and from northwest, from the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon. 5) 5:1-20: The Gerasene demoniac (No. 106: Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39) This mighty work took place in Gentile country somewhere east of the Lake: in the territory of the Gerasenes or the Gadarenes. The manic-depressive psychotic, as sore identify him, was probably himself a Gentile. He was a self-punishing, tomb-dwelling deranged person of prodigious strength. He ran to Jesus, did him reverence, and with considerable trepidation appealed to him, "Son of the Most High God." And Jesus cast out the demon or demons that possessed him. Jesus did not use any formula of exorcism but he did ask the demon his name, as exorcists were accustomed to do. The answer came back that his name was "Legion," that is, there was not one demon, there were five or six thousand. Then the demon begged and begged Jesus not to send him out into the desert, the home of demons, but to let him remain among human beings where he could continue his activity. Then the unclean spirits asked

Jesus for permission to enter a herd of pigs feeding on the hillside. Permission was given and the pigs rushed into the sea and were drowned. Mark does not debate whether demons could rise to the surface and swim to safety. Nor does he raise the question of the morality of destroying one man's herd of 2,000 pigs--whether the man were Gentile or Jew--in order to ... In order to what? The herdsmen spread the word abroad, in town and country, and folk came out to see the former demoniac, "clothed and in his right mind," and the sight scared the wits out of them, and so they pleaded with Jesus to leave their territory. The former psychotic implored Jesus that he might companion with him, but Jesus sent him home to what had not been home to him and to friends who had found it difficult to befriend him to testify to God's mercy. And thus it was that the gospel was proclaimed among people in the Decapolis, the ten Greco-Roman cities situated around Lake Galilee.<sup>5</sup> 6) 7:24-30: The Syrophenician woman (No. 116: Matthew 15:21-28) One day Jesus was found somewhere up in the direction of Tyre and Sidon. He was travelling incognito, perhaps in exile. And a Greek woman, by nation a Syrophenician, got to hear that he was in her vicinity and came to him and fell at his feet, entreating him to drive the demon out of her little daughter. Jesus responded with this seemingly harsh statement: "Let us feed the children first; It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" (TEV; "children" being understood to refer to the Jews, "dogs" to non-Jews). The desperate mother, stubbornly humble, refusing to be rebuffed, was open to receive whatever help Jesus was prepared to give. "Sir," she retorted, "even the dogs under the table eat the children's leftovers" (TEV). At that, Jesus answered: "For such an answer you may go home; the demon has gone out of your daughter" (TEV). Verse 27 has long presented difficulties, first at the point of the suggestion that the Jews must be given the bread of the gospel before it can be shared with the Gentiles, and second, the sharpness of Jesus's response. These are attempts that have been made to tone down Jesus' seeming rudeness:

(1) He spoke in half-jest, referring playfully to house dogs or puppies. (The Jerusalem Bible translates the word, *kyrania*, as "house dogs.") But that is not very funny humor.

(2) He spoke sharply to put the mother's faith to the test.

(3) His response was not intended as an insult but was a reflection of his own uncertainty: was he obliged to give to the Gentiles that which in large measure he had not been able to give to his own people?

(4) His response was all the more harsh because his understanding of his own mission had a growing edge to it: it was now becoming acutely clear to him that the good news could not be confined to his own nation.<sup>6</sup>

This pagan woman's faith--or her confidence, or desperate hope, or stubborn refusal to be put off, or humble openness--found reward in her little girl's restoration to a sound mind in a healthy body: "she went home, and found the child lying in bed, and the demon gone." 7) 9:14-29: The epileptic boy (No. 126: Matthew 17:14-21; Luke 9:37-43 a) A father had a son who had a "dumb spirit" (RSV), that is, an evil spirit that had "robbed him of speech" (NIV). He took the boy to the disciples of Jesus, but they were not able to drive out the demon. Then he brought the lad to Jesus, describing his pitiful condition, which he had had from childhood, and said: "If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us" (NIV). Jesus responded, not in terms of his motivation, compassion, but in terms of his power released through another person's faith. "Everything is possible for the person who has faith" (TEV). To which the anxious father said: "I do have faith, but not enough.

Help me have more!" (TEV). Whereupon Jesus cast out the unclean spirit, forbade it to ever enter the boy again, and set the youngster on his feet, well. At that the disciples asked why they could not cast out demons to which Jesus replied: "Only prayer can drive this kind out; nothing else can" (TEV).

Summary What is it that catches your eye in these stories of exorcisms? 1) Whether Jesus was convinced of the reality of the spirit world, angels and demons, we do not know. Many Jews lived with good and evil spirits impinging on their lives, but not all. In a statement to the Jerusalem Sanhedrin Paul said that the Sadducees denied, while the Pharisees affirmed, the existence of angels and spirits, presumably evil spirits.<sup>7</sup> The Jesus of John is not presented as driving out a single demon. In Mark, it is the smaller number of cures of human ills that is recounted as exorcisms. Perhaps on occasion an insightful Jesus found it necessary to begin, not with reality as such but with a given individual's perception of reality.<sup>8</sup> 2) There was no shingle swinging outside his carpenter's shop announcing that he was an exorcist on the side. He is never depicted as taking the initiative in effecting these miracles: the man in the synagogue cried out; people are brought to Jesus; the Gerasene demoniac ran to him; the Syrophenician mother came to him on behalf of her daughter; the father brought the epileptic lad to Jesus. 3) Some recognition of Jesus as a person of unusual power and personality is made by demons and a demon-possessed man, but Jesus is not comfortable with this. I take it that it is a fully personal response that most delights his spirit. 4) To be sure, those who came to Jesus, or appealed to him, or were brought to him had some expectation of a significant response, though faith as such is not underscored. Where faith is noted, it is a mother's for the sake of her daughter and a father's on behalf of his son. 5) Jesus is portrayed as a person of extraordinary power. He impressed people as being a dynamic person, a man of authority. And it is not to be wondered at that Mark says they were astonished. 6) Jesus was not the only exorcist at work in Judaism in his time. There is a scene in Mark in which it is said accusingly that Jesus is able to cast out demons only because he is in league with the prince of demons. To that he said, with devastating logic, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" Matthew and Luke have Jesus driving home the point with a second question: "If I drive out demons by [the prince of demons], by whom do your people drive them out?" (NIV).<sup>9</sup> b. Healings Now, the healings. 1) 1:29-31: Peter's mother-in-law, a fever (No. 13: Matthew 8:14-15; Luke 4:38-39) This took place on the Sabbath, probably in Capernaum. Simon Peter's mother-in-law was sick with a fever. Jesus was informed of this. "He took her by the hand, and helped her to her feet. The fever left her and she waited upon them" (NEB). 2) 1:32-34: The sick healed at evening (No. 14: Matthew 8:16-17; Luke 4:40-41) These twilight healings took place the same day, or rather, by Jewish reckoning, at the beginning of the new day. All the sick were brought to Jesus and many of them were healed. More than that Mark does not say. Why "all" the sick were brought but only "many" were healed he does not indicate. 3) 1:40-45: The leper. (No. 45: Matthew 8:1-4; Luke 5:12-16) In some undesignated place a leper came to Jesus and said, "If you want to, you can make me clean" (TEV). Jesus was moved with compassion and reached out and touched this untouchable and said: "I do want to. Be clean!" (TEV). And straightway the leprosy left him and he was healed. Jesus thereupon dismissed the man with instructions that had an edge to them: "Be sure you say nothing to anybody. Go and show yourself to the priest, and make the offering laid down by Moses for your cleansing; that will certify the cure" (NEB). But the healed man could not contain himself; blabbed it all out in public so that crowds gathered about Jesus. He retreated to "the country," but still they came. 4) 2:1-12: The Paralytic (No. 52: Matt. M-8; Luke 5:17-26) This

healing took place in Capernaum, either in Peter's house or in Jesus' own house. It is packed so tight that when four friends brought a paralytic on a mat, they could not get through the front door. It was probably a one-room dwelling with an outside stairway to the roof, so the four men carry the sick man up on to the roof, tear up part of the roof, and let down the paralyzed man. When Jesus saw their faith, he said: "My son, your sins are forgiven." Healing and teaching with authority might cause astonishment but they would not necessarily arouse hostility, but this aggressive word of forgiveness could be, and was, regarded as an invasion of God's prerogative. The statement by Jesus implies not that he has forgiven the man but that he knows that God has forgiven him. However, it is understood by some critical scribes to mean that Jesus claims to be an intermediary between God and the paralytic. According to Judaism, forgiveness depends on true repentance, and by repentance is meant: "sorrow for sin, open acknowledgement of it, and resolute turning away from it, together with such restitution as may be possible. Where these conditions are present, God forgives sin unflinchingly without the need of any human mediation or absolution."<sup>10</sup> But Jesus pronounced this man's forgiveness without any evidence of repentance. The sensitive and perceptive Jesus, reading his critics' body language, put this question to them: "Is it easier to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, pick up your mat, and walk'?" (TEV). Obviously if all that is involved is saying, it is easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven," than to say, "Get up and walk." So to begin at the level of the questioners' perceptions, Jesus said to the paralytic: "Get up, pick up your mat, and go home" (TEV). And the people "were all astounded and praised God saying, 'We have never seen anything like this'" (JB). 5) 3:1-6: The man with a withered hand (No. 70: Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11) This was another example of Sabbath activity by Jesus. He went to synagogue and there was a man there who had a "shrivelled" hand (NIV). And there were those present who watched Jesus with a jaundiced eye, ready to lay a charge against him should he infringe a Sabbath law. He goes on the offensive and poses this question: "What does our Law allow us to do on the Sabbath? To help, or to harm? To save a man's life, or to destroy it?" (TEV). But for the critics of Jesus, that was not the question. The Law of the Sabbath is divine decree; it is clear enough; and the question is obedience or disobedience. But to Jesus the first question is: Is God active in our lives for good, or is he not? Does God seek to heal and therefore save, or does God not heal and therefore destroy? Jesus looked around at those who took issue with him, angry and sorry at the same time, because their hostility kept them from judging the case on its own merits. So he said to the man with the "crippled" hand (TEV), "Stretch out your hand." And the fellow did; and his hand was well again. Whereupon the Pharisees--and perhaps in synagogue that day there were present some fanatical Pharisees--took counsel with some of those who were close to Herod Antipas, how they might destroy Jesus. There is Markan irony in this story: Who is right? The one who would heal on the Sabbath or those who, on the same Sabbath, would plot the death of the healer?<sup>11</sup> 6) 3:7-12: A generalized summary (cf. "Exorcisms," No. 4) This is a generalized summary. People came to Jesus from all over, and of some importance in the tradition of the healings effected is the fact that Jesus touched the afflicted. 7) 5:25-34: The woman with a hemorrhage (No. 107: Matthew 9:20-22; Luke 8:43-48) This incident took place when Jesus was on his way to the home of Jairus, a ruler of a synagogue, on the northwest or northern shore of Lake Galilee. A woman had had a hemorrhage for twelve years. She had suffered on two counts: one because of the disorder, the other because she had used up all her resources going unsuccessfully from doctor to doctor, getting worse rather than better in the process. She had heard reports about Jesus and came up

behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak in the hope that if only she could touch his clothes she would get well. She did, and the source of her bleeding dried up. Jesus perceived that power had gone out from him and turned and looked around at the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples told him that in view of the number of people pressing upon him that was a dumb question. But Jesus kept on looking around until the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came to him, trembling with fear, fell at his feet, and told him the whole truth. To that Jesus said: "My daughter, your faith has restored you to health; go in peace and be free from your complaint" (JB). 8) 6:53-56: Healings at Gennesaret (No. 114: Matthew 14:34-36) This is a generalized statement of healings that took place south of Capernaum. Wherever Jesus went people were magnetically drawn to him, bringing sick neighbors and relatives on mats laying them out in the busy marketplaces in the belief that if only they could touch the tassel on his cloak, they would be healed. "And as many as touched it were made well." 9) 7:31-37: The deaf mute (No. 117: Matthew 15:29-31) This healing took place somewhere in the region surrounding Lake Galilee. In or between the region of the Decapolis is how Mark puts it, but we do not know the territorial boundaries of these ten Greco-Roman cities. The man, who was a deaf mute, was brought to Jesus. Jesus took him aside privately, then put his fingers into his ears, spat, touched his tongue, and said, "Ephphatha" ("Be opened"), and the man spoke clearly, the embarrassing, inhibiting impediment gone. There is almost something secular about this story. "The use of saliva, the groan uttered by the healer, and the healer's word in the original language, are all marks of ancient miracle tales." 12 Jesus told the onlookers and hearers not to say anything about this, "but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it" (JB). "Astonished beyond measure" is how Mark says they reacted to the healing. 10) 8:22-26: The blind man This cure took place at Bethsaida, which may have been located on the east side of the Jordan north of the point where it opens into Lake Galilee. Some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch him. Jesus took him by the hand and led him outside the village. Then he spat on the man's eyes and placed his hands on him and asked him "Can you see anything?" The man looked up and said, "Yes, I can see people, but they look like trees walking around" (TEV). Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes a second time. "This time the man looked hard, his eyesight came back, and he saw everything clearly" (TEV). Whereupon Jesus sent him home, ordering him not to re-enter the village or, perhaps, not to tell anyone in the village (NEB). 11) 10:46-52: Blind Bartimaeus (No. 193: Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43) The last of the healings took place in Jericho, at the beginning of the journey--the last journey--up to Jerusalem. His disciples and a great crowd of people were accompanying him. There was sitting by the side of the road out of Jericho a blind man, by name Bartimaeus, and when he heard that the center of all those goings on was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, "Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me!" (TEV). Some of the bystanders scolded him and told him to keep quiet, but he only shouted the more loudly, "Son of David, have pity on me" (JB). "Jesus stood quite still and said, 'Call him here.' So they called the blind man, saying, 'It's all right now, get up, he's calling you!' At this he threw off his coat, jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked him. The blind man answered, 'Oh, Master, let me see again!' (Phillips). "Go on your way then," responded Jesus; "your faith has healed you." Immediately the man's sight returned and his way became the way of Jesus: he followed him along the road.

Summary What is it that invites your attention in these stories of healings? 1) Once again, Jesus is never portrayed as taking the initiative. Others inform him of Peter's mother's fever; the leper came

to him; the four friends carried the paralytic to him; the woman with a hemorrhage touched him; the blind man at Bethsaida and the deaf mute in one of the ten Cities were brought to him; blind Bartimaeus of Jericho called out to him. He was no promoter, busy advertising himself. 2) Those who cried out to Jesus for help had some hope in his power; those who carried others to him were anxiously expectant; those who laid their sick in the marketplace thought there was magic in the mere touch of the tassel of his cloak; but only of two--the woman with the hemorrhage and blind Bartimaeus--does Jesus say, "Your faith has restored your health." On the other hand, Mark does say that Jesus stood in awe at the unbelief that shuts out the grace of God: "He could do no mighty work there [meaning Nazareth?], except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief" (6:5-6). 3) Jesus' power was not used for himself. It was used with the interests of others at heart. One can sense in these stories the longings, the fears, the despair, the hope of a whole people who had little or no access to medicine, and amongst whom disease was constantly present in every form. Jesus was concerned for people, especially the simplest and neediest folk of the Galilean countryside, and it was thus that he found a way to their hearts. 4) The wondrous healings have something in common with accounts of other such miracles in the ancient world: the saliva, the healer's groan, the word uttered in the original language, but there was also much that was different: the interest in the Good News, of which the healings are but one expression; the demand for faith in God; Jesus' human compassion; and his fundamental conviction that in the totality of our existence God is for us, not against us, active for our good, seeking to heal and restore and therefore save.

c. Nature miracles

Third, the nature miracles.

1) 4:35-41: Calming the storm (No. 105: Matthew 8:18; Matthew 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25) Jesus and his disciples, or some of them, were going by boat across Lake Galilee. It suddenly "began to blow a gale and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped. But [Jesus] was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep. [The disciples] awoke him and said to him, 'Master, do you not care? We are going down!'" (JB). Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind, telling the waves to be still. "The wind dropped and there was a dead calm" (NEB). And he said to the disciples, "Why are you such cowards? Have you no faith even now?" They were awestruck and said to one another, 'Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him'" (NEB).

2) 6:30-44: Feeding the 5,000 (No. 112: Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17) The "apostles" (disciples) and Jesus crossed Galilee by boat to get some rest from the demands of the crowds, but they were observed and people followed around the shore on foot. They made better time than he. When Jesus arrived where the people were, "he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd": "a nation without a national leader, ... a Maccabean host with no Judas Maccabaeus."<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus began to teach them. When it grew late, the disciples came to Jesus with the suggestion that he dismiss the people so that they might go to villages and farms to buy food. Jesus' response was to ask them to give the people something to eat. They asked if they might go and buy "two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" (A denarius was the wage a day laborer would earn. Nothing is said about where the money would come from. Apparently the intention was to give, not sell, the bread.) Then Jesus instructed them to find out how many loaves could be secured then and there. "Five, and two fish" was the answer, after searching. Then the people were asked to sit on the grass in orderly fashion, in groups of hundreds and fifties. Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven, broke the bread and had it distributed, then divided the fish. All ate and were filled. Twelve baskets full of scraps were gathered up. Five thousand people were fed that day. (In

8:1-10 there is the account of the feeding of 4,000. If Matthew and Luke used Mark, both turn to the account of the feeding of the 5,000 [Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-62, but only Matthew uses the second Markan feeding [15:32-39]. (The chief differences between the first and second Markan accounts are: 5,000 as against 4,000; five loaves and two fish as against seven loaves and a few small fish; and twelve baskets full as compared to seven.) 3) 6:45-52: Walking on water (No. 113: Matthew 14:22-33) This miracle takes place after the feeding of the 5,000. Jesus withdrew into the hills that run down to the Lake to pray. Some time between three and six in the morning, looking down on the Lake, he saw that the disciples, who had set out for Bethsaida by boat, were straining at the oars. He came to them, walking on the sea, making to pass them by. The disciples thought it was a ghost and were terrified. Jesus said, "Take heart, It is I; have no fear." And then he got in the boat with them and the wind dropped. Why Jesus wished to pass by the distressed disciples or was on the point of doing so is problematic. Some think it was to test their faith; others, to show that he was master of the wind and the waves. Mark has three comments on this miracle: the disciples were "utterly and completely dumbfounded" (JB); they had been oblivious to the meaning of the feeding of the 5,000; and the reason for their lack of comprehension was the fact that their hearts were hardened. The Evangelist does not say how he thinks their hearts became hardened, nor does he suggest how hardened hearts can be "unhardened." If they were insensitive and lacking in insight, what would be the use of performing a miracle? For the person who expects nothing, nothing comes to pass. 4) 11:12-14: The cursing of the fig tree (No. 199: Matthew 21:18-19) Jesus and some of his followers were going into Jerusalem from Bethany when Jesus got hungry. (Bethany is a mile and a half east of Jerusalem, on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. Orientals of that time

- 20 - ate little for breakfast.) In the distance, he saw a fig tree in leaf and went to it to see if it had any fruit. (Fig trees bore fruit ten months in the year around Lake Galilee; in Jerusalem, only in the summer.) If whatever happened took place at Passover, then this was not the season for figs--not in Jerusalem.

Jesus found leaves but no fruit. Mark says "it was not the season for figs"--an obvious reason for there being no fruit on the tree. So Jesus cursed the tree into fruitlessness--and Mark concludes with: "And his disciples heard him say this" (JB).

Summary What is it that arouses your notice in these stories of nature miracles? 1) None of these miracles were performed in Jesus' own behalf. 2) In each instance, what he did was evoked by other people. 3) Every one bears testimony to his power. 4) In one account, the disciples are taken to task for unbelief, in another, for being hard hearted. 5) Condemning the fig tree to lifelong barrenness for not bearing fruit out of season is the only curse miracle attributed to Jesus in the Gospels. It strikes us as vindictive and unwarranted punishment and therefore out of character. Perhaps what we have here is a parable about a barren fig tree, found subsequently in Luke 13:6-9, turned into a "miracle" that symbolizes the rejection of either Israel or the priesthood. In Luke (19:41-44) it is replaced by Jesus' weeping over the city and predicting its destruction. d. Raising from the dead 1) 5:21-24, 35-43. Jairus' daughter (No. 107: Matthew 9:18-19; Matthew 9:23-25; Luke 8:40-42; Luke 8:49-56) In the Gospels, Jesus is portrayed as effecting three raisings from the dead: in John, Lazarus; in Luke, the son of the widow of Nain; and in each of the first three Gospels, the daughter of Jairus. There is some question as to whether Mark means for this to be understood as a raising from the dead or a healing, since Jesus says to the mourners, "Why

all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep" (NIV). In the Old Testament and elsewhere "sleep" is often a synonym for death. In the New Testament, early Christians looked upon death as a temporary sleep in hope of the resurrection. If Jesus used "asleep" as a synonym for death, he must have meant something like, 'She is not dead, not really; she only appears to be dead.'" The incident took place on the shores of Galilee. Jairus, a ruler of the local synagogue, came to Jesus on behalf of his twelve-year old daughter, who was at the point of death, pleading for him to come and place his hands on her so that she would get well and live. Jesus set out in response, followed by a crowd. On the way, messengers came with word that the girl was dead, and saying that there was no need for the Teacher to trouble himself any further. (There is a touch of Markan irony in that: they do not realize the depth of the Teacher's compassion or his power to act when everything seems lost.<sup>14</sup>) But Jesus said to the president of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only have faith" (NEB). Then he took with him Peter and James and his brother John and went to the house, put the professional wailers out of the house, took in with him the father and mother and (probably) the three disciples, took the youngster by the hand, and said, "Talitha, koum," which means, "Little girl! Get up, I tell you!" (TEV). And she got up and started walking around. Those who saw it were overcome with astonishment. "But Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone, and said, 'Give her something to eat'" (TEV).

Summary What is it that awakens your mind in this story of a raising? 1) Again, Jesus moves at the bidding of another. 2) Once more, he is antithetical to the publicizing of his miracle-working. 3) As before, what is contrasted with faith is fear. 4) Yet again, whether this was a healing or a raising, a father's concern for his daughter, his expectation of Jesus, and his faith in the active goodness of God play a part in the little girl's being set on her feet and sent on her way.

## Conclusion

There are many teasing questions that these miracle stories raise and many fascinating comments that may be made. I must draw some conclusions within narrow limits. 1) These miracle stories show an extraordinary restraint in the accumulation of any kind of detail. Emphasis sometimes is laid, as might be expected, on the amazed reaction of the bystanders. But this emphasis is almost never reinforced by the addition of details that would heighten the miraculous impression. 2) To our surprise, compassion is infrequently designated as Jesus' motive for action. He is said to have stretched out his hand and touched the leper out of a sense of pity (1:41); twice it is written that he had compassion on the crowds in general (6:34; 8:2); once he is appealed to on the basis of his compassionate nature but he responds not in terms of pity but of power (9:22-23). Mark allows for pity, but not as the primary motive in the majority of miraculous incidents. 3) It might be that Jesus performed miraculous deeds in order to acquire fame, popularity, and authority but Mark does not share that reading of things. The deeds evoked astonishment but they are never presented as being performed for the sake of this reaction. 4) As with the teaching in the parables, so with the miracles, the meaning was not immediately apparent. The restored and the observer were expected to reflect and perceive; and even to the disciples, says Mark, the feeding of the 5,000 was an enigma (Mark 6:52). 5) One of Mark's emphases is that it is the glory of God, not that of the wonder worker, which is the consequence of the mighty deeds of Jesus. That is in keeping with the accounts of the miraculous deeds of Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and others in the Old Testament. It is summed up in the claim by the Jesus of Luke: "If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."<sup>15</sup> C. S. Lewis contends (in

Miracles: A Preliminary Study) that the Christian works with two basic assumptions, neither of which should be subsumed under the other: one, the data offered by our senses recur in regular patterns, and miracle, therefore, has to be viewed against the normal stability of nature, and two, Christianity begins with the conviction that there is some reality beyond nature. 6) Five of Jesus' healing miracles are cures of the deaf, the dumb (Mark 7:31-37), the blind (Mark 8:22-26; Mark 10:46-52), and the lame (Mark 2:1-12; Mark 3:1-6). But these were without precedent in his own culture, either in the Old Testament or in subsequent Jewish writings.<sup>16</sup> One explanation we are faced with is that Jesus was demonstrating the possibility of overcoming those constraints and limitations which we instinctively feel stand as intractable and inexplicable barriers in the way of our attaining a better life and a fairer world. Jesus' teaching has retained its power because ... it contains an invitation to undertake what normally seems to lie on the far side of what is possible for human beings. It challenges us to do the impossible. The same is ... true of [his] mighty works ... [Mark's Jesus goes] beyond the limits of the possible, [he pushes] back to a significant degree the constraints of the impossible.<sup>17</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

1 "Miracle(s)" or "miraculous powers": 6:2, TEV/NIV/NEB; 6:5, TEV/NIV/NEB; 6:14, NIV/NEB; 9:39, TEV/NIV.

2Mark 13:22; Matthew 24:24.

3John 4:48.

4 Sherman E. Johnson, *The Gospel according to St. Mark 2:1-28* nd ed., reprinted with corrections (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1977), p. 50.

5 Ibid., pp. 100-103.

6 Ibid., p. 137.

7Acts 2:38. The statement may very well be true, regardless of the historicity of the defense depicted by Luke.

8 Cf. Raymond E. Brown, S.S., "How Much Did Jesus Know?" in his *Jesus: God and Man* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1967).

9Mark 3:23-30; Matthew 12:25-37; Luke 11:17-23.

10 Johnson, p. 56.

11 Ibid., pp. 71-72.

12 Ibid., p. 139.

13 T. W. Manson, *The Servant-Messiah: A Study of the Public Ministry of Jesus* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1953), p. 70.

14 Johnson, p. 108.

15Luke 11:20.

16 A. E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), p. 115.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 118.

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## 3-The Jesus of Luke: A Man of Prayer

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### III. THE JESUS OF LUKE A Man of Prayer

"He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray'" (Luke 11:1).

#### Introduction

I should like to speak this evening about The Jesus of Luke: A Man of Prayer. First of all, we shall consider some facets of the church's classic confession about Jesus, namely that he was "truly God, truly man."<sup>1</sup> This as the context for viewing Luke's portrayal of Jesus as a religious person. Second, we shall look at every passage in the third Gospel that presents Jesus as a man of prayer. We shall be looking at those that include *proseuchomai*, "to offer prayers," "to make vows," "to worship," *proseuche*, "prayer," *deo* "to ask for [a thing] from [someone]," "to beg [a person] to do [something]," "to beseech," and *deesis*, "a prayer," "an entreaty," "an asking," "a beseeching." From time to time we shall have to glance across at Matthew and Mark, because without that contrast, we cannot appreciate the nuances of what Luke has to say about Jesus as a man of prayer. Third, we shall draw four conclusions to our study.

#### 1. "Truly God, truly man"

The church has long defined the significance of Jesus of Nazareth in terms of "truly God, truly man." In doing so, it has found that it has had two tasks of major proportions on its hands. One has been to define what is meant by the "godness" of Jesus; the other has been to keep Jesus fully human. a. The godness of Jesus Let us begin with the godness of Jesus. The godness of Jesus has traditionally been defined in either or both of two ways: he is unique in his person; he is unique in his works. One answer to the question of his godness is that he did what no other person has done: he performed miracles, he was crucified for our sins, he was raised from the dead. A second answer to that question is that he was what no other person has been: he was the Son of God, he was born of the Virgin Mary, he lived out his life sinlessly. Sometimes "truly God" has been interpreted as meaning that Jesus is totally and absolutely other than what we are and also that he exhausts the being of God--there is no more to God than what we have seen and experienced in Jesus Christ. That interpretation is not without some problems. These are some others that the church's thinkers have put their fingers on: 1) Jesus is not the only one for whom the performance of miracles has been claimed. 2) It was not the fact that Jesus died but the fact that it was Jesus of Nazareth who died that was significant. Two others were crucified with him that day and their deaths are not remembered as important. We are therefore dealing with the moral significance of the central man who was crucified. 3) Jesus is not the only one in the Bible designated as a "son of God," though he is the one described as the "only" 'Son of God,' that is, Son of God in some

special way. The question is, What way? 4) Virgin birth has been claimed for others than Jesus in the course of human history. 5) Jesus' sinlessness is difficult to prove. Easy enough to claim, hard to prove. Paul in one place, the writer of First Peter in another, and the author of Hebrews in yet another<sup>2</sup> make the claim that Jesus was sinless, but the claim does not make him so. Only God could know for sure whether Jesus was in fact sinless. Among other things, sinlessness has to do with the secret places of the heart. Furthermore, none of these writers seeks to back up his claim. Whatever sinlessness might mean, it did not signify, according to the Evangelists, that Jesus was not tempted to sin nor did it mean that he was incapable of sinning. In addition, what the Evangelists do depict is not something negative, sinlessness, the absence of sin, but something positive, goodness. As the Peter of Acts puts it to Cornelius, there was in Jesus of Nazareth an unquenchable "energy of goodness."<sup>3</sup> That was why he spent his life "going about, doing good." 6) Whatever the resurrection of Jesus may mean, it cannot signify something of worth that he did. "God raised him from the dead" is the way the writers of the Testament account for that surprising event. Furthermore, the Evangelists nowhere portray Jesus as making divine choices one day and human choices another, as thinking like God in some circumstances but like other human beings in different circumstances, in praying like a god--however the gods pray--in one crisis but praying like a human being in another. He is simply--if simply is the appropriate word--depicted as one whole person. b. The humanity of Jesus Let us move on, then, to the humanity of Jesus. Truly God, truly man. The second issue that has occupied the church's attention has been the full humanity of Jesus. John in the Gospel defines his humanity in terms of his dependence, especially his dependence on God. You and I are dependent upon the created order, on others, and on God, because we need what the other supplies: the conditions for living, knowledge and skills beyond our own, greater wisdom than is ours, deeper insight, friendship, richer compassion, and so on. God and the other meet needs that we cannot meet out of our own resources. Dependence upon others is one of the marks of our humanity. At point after point John depicts Jesus as reaching out to God, dependent upon God, his Father. John also shows Jesus as reaching out to his disciples, looking for their appreciative response and sympathetic support. On the other hand, John defines the divinity of Jesus in terms of his self-giving love. If God is love--if that is the central truth about God--then what is central about God must be central about Jesus too, if we are to regard Jesus as divine. We cannot have two kinds of divinity. Truly man in his dependence; truly God in his loving. That leads me to say a word about Jesus as a religious man. We have real difficulty if we understand that he was commending a trust in God, a confidence in God, a faith in God, a commitment to God which he did not first of all have and make himself. Jesus can only with integrity encourage us to cast all our cares on God in confidence that God is for us--God has our best interests in mind, and God is trustworthy--if that is how he himself found God to be. Luke and Matthew are the Evangelists who have the stories of the infancy of Jesus. They each employ a different cycle of stories. Luke seems to be at pains to emphasize that Jesus was brought up in a devout, upright family. He learned as we all learn. He learned to smile because loving parents smiled at him. He learned to talk because parents talked to him, with some feel for words, their beauty and their power. He learned as we all do by observation and by drawing conclusions from observation and experience--his parables are plenteous with illustrations of this fact. He learned to pray because his parents prayed. He took pleasure in synagogue and Temple because Joseph and Mary did. To underline that, it has been suggested, is at least one of the purposes Luke had in mind in his stories of the childhood of Jesus, the conclusion of which reads: "Jesus increased in

wisdom and in stature, and in favor with Cod and man" (2:52). Christians sometimes talk about Jesus Christ as though he had walked down the stairway from heaven a ready-made man, with a complete outfit of true ideas and most worthy values in his head; as though he only pretended to be a baby in a cradle. Luke's stories, however, imply that without Mary and Joseph, Jesus would not have been anyone on earth. As Austin Farrer put it in one of his Oxford sermons: The divine life came to earth in Jesus, he was the heart and centre of it: but the divine life could not live or act in Jesus alone. The divine life had to use his parents, his kindred and his friends, to., make Jesus a man; and had to use his disciples and associates to keep hip, being a man; for we cannot go on being human, any more than we get to be human, without other people ... Jesus could only be Jesus, by having Peter, James and John to be himself with; ... Jesus became the saviour of his friends, by attaching them to himself; but the attachment was mutual. When it came to his hour of trial, he did not want to be alone; he took them with him when he prayed in Gethsemane, he begged them to keep awake and see him. through his agony of spirit.<sup>4</sup>

2. Jesus, Man of Prayer, in Luke

In the second place, then, let us take up what Luke has to say about Jesus as a man of prayer.

1)Luke 1:10: (proseuchomai) Zechariah was a priest in the Temple in Jerusalem. His turn came to burn incense in the Temple. An Angel of the Lord appeared to announce that his wife Elizabeth would bear a son, named John. This took place when "a whole multitude of people were praying outside at the hour of incense." The coming of Jesus, for whom John was the forerunner, is thus set within Judaism's devotion to the Lord.

2)Luke 1:13: (deesis) That Zechariah's wife would bear a son is said to have been in answer to his prayer: "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer" (TEV).

3)Luke 2:37: (deesis) When Jesus was eight days old, his parents had him circumcised. There was a prophetess at the Temple, named Anna. She was up in years: she was either 84 years old or she had been widowed for that length of time.<sup>5</sup> "She never left the temple, but worshipped day and night, fasting and praying" (NEB). And this presentation of Jesus to the Lord she saw as an act of great significance for Jerusalem, for all who were looking for the holy city's redemption.

4)Luke 3:21-22: (v.21, proseuchomai) (No. 6: Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 3:13-17) We do not know why Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. John's baptism was for the remission of sins. Had Jesus committed sins that he needed to repent of? Was he a "born again Christian"?! ... Or was it that he reckoned that John's movement represented the best chance for Israel at that time and, by being baptized, did he want to show whose side he was on and where his sympathies lay? ... Or, rather, did baptism for Jesus signify his decision to enter upon a public ministry, the nature of which eventually led him to his death? Whatever his baptism signified for Jesus, it did mark his "going public." It was an occasion, moreover, that is reported to have had God's commendation: "Thou art my Son, my Beloved; on thee my favor rests" (NEB). Only Luke among the Synoptists has it that this approval was given by God while Jesus "was praying."

5)Luke 5:12-16: (v.16, proseuchomai) (No. 45: Mark 1:40-45; Matthew 8:1-4) The first three Evangelists each tell of a man who was covered with leprosy--an outcast from society, to touch whom rendered one ritually unclean--who came up to Jesus, "threw himself down and begged him, if you want to, you can make me clean!" Jesus reached out and touched him. 'I do want to,' he answered. 'Be clean!'" (TEV). And straightway the leprosy left him. Jesus commanded the man to go to the priest and make an offering for his cleansing so that he might get certification that he was rid of his leprous condition, but not to noise abroad what had happened. But naturally enough, the man with skin now healed and clean could not contain his joy, and talked freely about the Healer. This mighty work was followed by others so that crowds came to hear him and to be healed; but

there was something about a ministry of working miracles--or something about people's understanding of that ministry and their response to it--that troubled Jesus, and so "he would ... go off to some place where he could be alone and pray" (JB). Jesus did not come just to be a miracle worker and he was not at ease with a response that was merely wonder and astonishment, without the reorientation and commitment of the life. 6)Luke 6:12-16: (v.12, preuchomai, proseuche) (No. 72: Mark 3:13-19; Matthew 10:1-4) The choosing of that inner circle of Twelve to whom Jesus most fully gave himself was not something that he did light-heartedly. Matthew says simply and succinctly that Jesus made the choice. Mark writes that he went up into the hills to make his decision. But Luke says, "He went out one day into the hills to pray, and spent the night in prayer to God. When day broke he called his disciples to him, and from among them he chose twelve" (NEB). No doubt the prayer had to do with the character of his own vocation, the nature of his own mission, and what it was that should be looked for in those who would be invited or challenged to join him in that mission. 7)Luke 6:28: (proseuchomai) (No. 75: Matthew 5:44) There is a saying attributed to Jesus in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount which runs like this: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." It is found in strengthened form. in Luke: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." It is an injunction which Jesus binds to his own heart--but only the Jesus of Luke--in the word from the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (23:34). The narrow way that Jesus enjoins he walks also himself. The cross he calls upon others to carry he too carries. 8)Luke 9:18-22: (v. 18, proseuchomai) (No. 122: Mark 8:27-33; Matthew 16:13-23) By all accounts, the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi, "You are God's Messiah" (TEV, NEB), was a turning point in the ministry of Jesus. Luke has it that shortly after this, Jesus "made up his mind and set out on his way to Jerusalem" (v. 51, TEV). The King James Version's phrasing of this, "he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," has held the attention of the church for generations. Although Peter's confession--if that is the best word to describe it--is recounted by all three of the first Evangelists, it is only Luke who says that the question "Who do the people say I am?" (NEB) arose "one day when Jesus was praying alone in the presence of the disciples" (NEB). 9)Luke 9:28-36: (v. 28: proseuchomai) (No. 124: Mark 9:2-9; Matthew 17:1-8) Following on the heels of the Caesarea Philippi confession, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a "high mountain." (Mount Tabor, visible from many parts of Israel, is the traditional scene, but Mount Hermon, 9, 100 feet high, would be nearer Caesarea Philippi.) It became the mountain of Jesus' transfiguration when, as Luke puts it, "the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white," and out of the heavens there came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him." The transfiguration is pictured by each of our first three Evangelists, but it is only Luke who tells us that the reason why Jesus was on the mountain, in company with Peter, John, and James, was that he took them up there with him to pray. 10)Luke 10:1-16: (v.2, deomai) (No. 139: Matthew 9:37-38) Both Luke and Matthew tell of a mission on which Jesus sent his disciples--not simply the Twelve, but a wider group of some 70 persons. They were to proclaim the gospel, and at the same time they were encouraged to beseech God--God who is "the lord of the harvest"--that he would send even additional laborers into the field. 11)Luke 11:1-4: (vv.1-2, proseuchomai) (No. 146: Matthew 6:9-13) The Lord's Prayer is found in two places in the Gospels: in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and in a different setting in Luke. Only in Luke is it said that the disciples came to him asking him to teach them how to pray because he himself was praying. His life was transcendent, victorious over circumstances, because he tapped depths

deeper than himself, he aspired to heights that rose in majesty above him. Prayer meant so much to Jesus that what he had they wanted too; what it did to him they wanted done to them also. These are the features of the response that Jesus made to the disciples' request: The focus of all prayer is first of all on God. The first question in the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Confession of the 17th century is, "What is the chief end of man?" And the looked-for answer is, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever."<sup>6</sup> That gathers up Jesus' first teaching about prayer. It is God's rule of love, justice, mercy, and truth that comes first, in women and men. To give ourselves to the achievement of that: that is how God's name is hallowed. That is how we show respect for God and how we express filial obedience to God. Second, the need for daily bread to sustain and nurture our life is a legitimate need. It is right and proper to pray for the meeting of that need. Third, we people do wrong, and what is wrong needs to be set right. And so the prayer moves on to a petition for forgiveness of sins. But the nature of the process of forgiveness is such that we are not able to receive what God has to give and is willing to give, unless we are willing to grant to others what we ask of God. Finally we are taught to pray not to enter into temptation--or not be brought to "the test" (NEB, JB) or to "hard testing" (TEV)—which probably means: "Cause us not to succumb to inward temptations and seductions and the kind of outward tribulations and trials which can overthrow faith." 12)Luke 19:45-48: (v.46, proseuche) (No. 200: Mark 11:15-19; Matthew 21:12-13) The cleansing of the Temple by Jesus is a story told by Luke, Mark, and Matthew. There are some differences among the three accounts, but in all three what distressed Jesus was that worship had been perverted. Its primary purpose had been to glorify God--it was to have been "a house of prayer," say all three; to join people together in an ecumenical fellowship--"a house of prayer for all the nations," as Mark put it;<sup>7</sup> and to achieve and sustain justice in people's dealings with other people; but it had been turned into a place for raising and making money. 13)Luke 22:31-34: (v.32, deomai) (Nos. 237c, 238: Luke 22:39; Mark 14:26-31; Matthew 26:30-35) The accounts of the last days of Jesus reveal that the disciples were tense, apprehensive, anxious. One disciple who the Master felt would be especially tested by the events at hand was Simon Peter. Of him Jesus said: "Satan demand[s] to have you, that he might sift you, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren." That Jesus had this special concern for Peter and took this extra thought for him is something that is said only by Luke. 14)Luke 22:40-46: (vv.40, 41, 43, 44, 45, proseuchomai, proseuche) (No. 239: Mark 14:32-42; Matthew 26:36-46) If in the Gospel of Luke we are looking at Jesus as a man of prayer, the most moving incident of all is the one which, by every token, was the experience that was of greatest importance to Jesus, namely, the prayer in Gethsemane's garden. It is a prayer uttered under threat of death. The circumstances were such that Jesus sought the company of those closest to him to sustain him. It was a prayer for knowledge of God's will--often, in the particular, not easy to come by--and for strength to do that will. It was a costly prayer--costly in its praying, costly in its outcome. The heart of the matter is expressed variously by each of the Evangelists: Plen ouch hos ego thelo all' hos su--is what Matthew has;

all' ou ti ego thelo all' ti su--is how Mark has it;

plen me to thelema mou alla to son ginestho--is what Luke writes. But the meaning is as Luke has it, "Not my will, but thine, be done." What made Jesus God's Son and earned him God's commendation was his willingness to seek out and do the will of God. What makes us sons and

daughters of the Most High is that same search, dedication, and commitment.

Conclusion Now let us put down some things by way of conclusion. a. Luke and Mark and Matthew The first three references to prayer and praying in Luke have to do with the quality of the environment into which he was born. They are found only in Luke. Of the remaining 12, including "Father, forgive them" prayed as Jesus hung from the cross, two are found in Matthew as well as Luke (Nos. 7 and 10) and two occur in all three Synoptic Gospels (Nos. 12 and 14). The other eight are peculiar to Luke. New Testament scholars sometimes think in terms of various strands in the Jesus tradition: what is there in Mark and has been made use of by Matthew and Luke; what is found in the "Q" (Quelle) source that is common to Matthew and Luke though not found in Mark (although that cannot establish the boundaries of "Q"); what is peculiar to Matthew ("M"); and that which occurs only in Luke ("L"). The portrayal of Jesus as a man of prayer owes something to Mark and "Q" but most of all to "L". How much Mark had available to him but for one reason or another did not use, but which was known to Luke and used by him, we do not know. How much derives from Luke's special source(s) we cannot say. How much is Luke's invention--finding it necessary to account for Jesus in terms of some ultimate Source beyond himself--we cannot be sure of. What we can say with confidence is that Luke at least found it impossible to tell the Good News about Jesus without underlining the fact that he was a man of prayer. b. Prayer 1) After the temptation in the wilderness, graphically depicted in both Luke and Matthew but referred to only in a single verse in Mark 8:1-38 Jesus began a ministry of teaching in his "home town" (TEV/NIV/NEB) of Nazareth. They all three say the teaching regularly was given in synagogue. But Luke's is a fuller, richer statement: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day."<sup>9</sup> Jesus was an active participant in the life of the synagogue and the Temple. The first of these is evidenced in the invitation extended to him that day in Nazareth to expound the prophet Isaiah. He was a critical loyalist. He set out to reform and build up what they stood for at their best, not reject and tear down. Regular, public worship--or regular, private prayer, for that matter--will not guarantee that on every occasion we shall have a deeply moving, significant, uplifting, life-clarifying experience of God. But the chances are that it will make such experiences more likely. On the 26th of February, 1943, I bought my first book of prayers: *The Temple*, by W. E. Orchard.<sup>10</sup> After forty years and many books since, I still cherish it as one of the greatest. In the Introduction, Dr. Orchard said: The setting apart of regular times of prayer, however short, is most desirable, and the value of them is not to be judged by the fact that these will rarely be the times of greatest devotion or when the heights of communion are attained; but they may be preparations for the great times. In the writer's very limited experience of these higher reaches of the life of prayer he has always found that any great visitation of God, which has surprised the soul when it was not consciously seeking, has nevertheless nearly always followed some more assiduously disciplined season of prayer.<sup>11</sup> Baron Von Huelgel, the Roman Catholic theologian and philosopher (1852/1925), engagingly linked together the relationship between form and life, life and form, in this word: "I kiss my child not only because I love it; I kiss it also in order to love it."<sup>12</sup> There is profound wisdom in the habit of life that is pictured by Luke of Jesus in this statement: "he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day." 2) What follows is some indication of the range of Jesus' interests and concerns in prayer. We have already taken account of the fourfold movement in the Lord's Prayer on putting God first; on our need for bread day by day; on forgiveness; on asking not to be put in situations where the forces against us are so great that faith is likely to be put to rout. I would

argue that what the Jesus of Luke taught he first of all practiced. On putting God first: That is there in the character of synagogue worship and teaching and Jesus' giving himself to both; and it is there also in the "Not my will, but thine, be done." What William Temple said about worship includes what needs to be said about prayer, for prayer is at the heart of worship: It is the opening of the heart to receive the love of God; it is the subjection of conscience to be directed by Him; it is the declaration of need to be fulfilled by Him; it is the subjection of desire to be controlled by Him; and, as a result of all these together, it is the surrender of will to be used by Him. It is the total giving of self.<sup>13</sup> On Jesus' need for daily sustenance: That is seen in the praying that centers on: the meaning of life, the choice of vocation, and the spirit in which that vocation is to be lived out--these decisive issues especially (Nos. 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 14); the choice of friends (No. 6); the well-being of those friends (No. 13); and the quality and the character of the people's religion, especially that it should have God in mind first, that it should be ecumenical in outreach, and that it should aim at the achievement of justice in people's dealings with people (No. 13). On forgiveness: That is found in Jesus' extending forgiveness to those who without just cause were making that young life ebb away on a cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." It was the living out in his own circumstances of that saying that occurs only in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."<sup>14</sup> On asking not to be taken unawares by some overpowering temptation or some overmastering trial: There is no indication in Luke or the others that the strong Son of God prayed such a prayer or needed to, although the saying from the cross that is found in Mark and Matthew, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani" ("My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?")<sup>15</sup> may suggest that such a prayer would not have been inappropriate in the heart and on the lips of Jesus. c. Christology Finally, we may draw a conclusion that has to do with Christology, our doctrine of Christ. In their definition of Jesus, the writers of the New Testament move between the poles of his union with God and his being distinct from God. Three comments may be made about this polarity, the last of which especially has to do with our study tonight. First, much, of course depends on the character of Jesus' union with God. Second, taken one by one and overall the authors of the New Testament do not stake out the claim that Jesus of Nazareth exhausts the being of God: that there is no more to God than what we have seen and experienced in Jesus Christ. Third, if Jesus is totally identified with God, it is difficult to make sense of Luke's depicting Jesus as a man of prayer. He would be but a god who prayed to himself, self-centered, if not narcissistic in his concentration on himself. How do we account for: "[when Jesus ceased praying], one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray'"; "Father, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come"; "Simon, Simon, I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail"; "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"; "not my will, but thine, be done"<sup>16</sup> if Jesus is in the fullest and most literal sense God? Better to look upon Jesus as the human face of God--dependent upon God for daily bread and for guidance and strength in all the great crises of life, devoting himself to the will of God, at one with God in loving obedience--with God taking pleasure in a person of Jesus' character and disposition, and affirming, "You are my Son, whom I love" 3:22, NIV).

## FOOTNOTES

1 We believe in ... the one Lord, Jesus Christ, ... true God from true God ... He came down from heaven: ... and became man": The Nicene Creed--Contemporary Translation, in The Proposed Book of Confessions in the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Atlanta: Materials Distribution Service, 1976), p. 10.

22 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; Hebrews 4:15.

3Euergeton, which C. H. Dodd somewhere suggests should be, or might be, translated as I have it. Most translations have Jesus "going about doing good."

4 Austin Farrer, A Celebration of Faith (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), pp. 104-105.

5 Cf. NEB.

6The Proposed Book of Confessions in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, p. 133.

7Mark 11:17.

8 No. 8: Luke 4:1-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13.

9Luke 4:16.

10 W . E. Orchard, The Temple: A Book of Prayers (London): J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1913).

11 Ibid., p. ix.

12 Friedrich Von Huelgel, Essays and Addresses, First Series, p. 251, cited in D. M. Baillie, The Theology of the Sacraments (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 54.

13 William Temple, The Church and Its Teaching Today, p. 15, cited in Daily Readings from William Temple, compiled by Hugh C. Warner (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1948), p. 29.

14Matthew 5:23-24.

15 No. 250: Mark 15:34; Matthew 27:46.

16Luke 11:1; Luke 11:2; Luke 22:31-32; Luke 23:34; Luke 22:42.

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## 4-The Jesus of John: Lover of Men and Women

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### IV. THE JESUS OF JOHN Lover of Men and Women

"When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be healed?'" (John 5:6).

#### Introduction

I should like this evening to speak about the Jesus of John and concentrate on his presentation of Jesus as a lover of men and women, of women and men. We shall begin by putting back to back the statement by the author of the First Epistle of John (whom we shall call the Epistler, a term that goes back to the 17th century), "God is love,"<sup>1</sup> and the assertion by the writer of the Fourth Gospel (whom we shall designate the Gospeller, a term that goes back to the 10th century), "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son."<sup>2</sup> Then, second, we shall consider certain individuals in the Gospel of John whose lives move into the circle of light whose center is Jesus of Nazareth: Nicodemus, the scribe, of Jerusalem; the much-married Samaritan woman; the Jerusalem woman caught in adultery; and the Bethany friends, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Finally, we shall gather up three conclusions.

1. The Epistle and the Gospel a. "God is love" (1 John 4:16) John the Epistler says that "God is love." Like Biblical writers in general, he believes in a living God, a personal God, a God active in history, a God who means well and does good, a God whose characteristic activity is loving.<sup>3</sup> God, for this writer, is "love-in-action." As a statement, "God loves" can stand alongside other statements, such as 'God creates,' 'God rules,' 'God judges'; that is to say, it means that love is one of His activities. But to say 'God is love' implies that all His activity is loving activity. If He creates, He creates in love; if He rules, He rules in love; if He judges, He judges in love. All that He does is the expression of His nature, which is--to love.<sup>4</sup> It is obvious, I trust, that the theological consequences of this principle are very far-reaching indeed. If the reality of love is absolutely central, and if all other so-called divine attributes are secondary to that love, then it is no longer adequate to think of God in terms of absolute power, or stark, dictatorial moral demand, or a metaphysical first cause never Itself--I say Itself advisedly, because Himself or Herself would be inappropriate to such an understanding--a metaphysical first cause never Itself affected by us men and women. If we begin with God self-disclosed in human affairs as love-in-action, then we have to begin to think in terms like these: God as love-in-action is more than any particular expression of His love (hence He is transcendent); God as love-in-action is always available (hence He is omnipresent); God as love-in-action is able to envisage every situation in its deepest and truest reality and accommodate Himself to it, so that He can indeed achieve His loving ends (hence He is omniscient and omnipotent); God as love-in-action is unswerving in His love, unfailing in its expression, unyielding in His desire to confront men [and women] with the demands of love (hence

He is righteous).<sup>5</sup> John the Epistler does not define in any comprehensive way what he means by love though he does disclose a few of the understandings he is working with. 1) The first thing he says is that the most significant expression of God's love-in-action is Jesus Christ--an active expression of God's readiness to forgive sins.<sup>6</sup> I take it that Jesus is no abstract principle for him, but an enfleshed spirit: one whom "we have seen with our eyes, [whom] we have looked upon and touched with our hands." His was a "life [that] was made manifest; we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim that which we have seen and heard."<sup>7</sup> His conviction and point of view are like the Apostle's: "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us"; and "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."<sup>8</sup> 2) The second word the Epistler has to say is that the person "who loves is born of God and knows God."<sup>9</sup> He repeats that: "No [one] has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us."<sup>10</sup> The reverse of that is that "[the one] who does not love does not know God, for God is love."<sup>11</sup> This too is repeated: "If any one says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."<sup>12</sup> 3) The Epistler's third word is that when we say "God is love" we are being profoundly human though not humanistic. "We love because he first loved us"; "in this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us."<sup>13</sup> 4) The fourth thing the Epistler writes is that we prove that we love God in two intimately related ways: "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and this [is the] commandment, ... that he who loves God should love his brother also."<sup>14</sup> And the other side to that he also keeps in mind: "he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."<sup>15</sup> 5) Fifth, it may be that the Epistler has the loving Christian reaching out no further than fellow members of the church--"the brother," and "the child of God"<sup>16</sup>--but that is defensible. If the gospel is that God is love, then that Good News has not only to be proclaimed but has also to be given hands and feet; it has to be seen not only in individuals but in the community of faith and hope and love. Deriving from the fact that God is love, the church not only proclaims the Good News but is itself the Good News. b. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16) John the Epistler claims that "God is love" and then spells out some, but not all, of the conclusions to be drawn from that. John the Gospeller does not begin with where the Epistler does. We may phrase it like this: "God is love, such love as is seen in ..," and the Gospeller is all taken up with the "as seen in ...". It is not that the Gospeller just takes for granted that God is love and is ready to pass over that and move on to something else. Not that at all. If there is something about Jesus that is everlastingly true, true about God, then "the Word was with God," "the Word was God," "[the Word] was in the beginning with God."<sup>17</sup> If Jesus was experienced as full of grace and truth, it is because God is a God of grace and a God of truth.<sup>18</sup> For both Epistler and Gospeller it is a fact of great importance that "no one has ever seen God."<sup>19</sup> But neither rests content with that as all that can and should be said. For the one, it is crucial that "if we love one another God abides in us," and for the other it is definitive that "the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, he has made [God] known" (NEB).<sup>20</sup> God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.<sup>21</sup> The Gospel, then, is a gathering up of traditions about the creative and revelatory<sup>22</sup> life of the man in whom God acted definitively. c. Agapao, agape; phileo; philos The Gospeller uses these three words to denote love: the verb agapao, "to love," which he uses 36 times; the verb phileo, "to love," 13 times; the noun, agape, "love," seven times. In addition, the word philos, "friend," occurs six times. He obviously has a marked

preference for the verb forms, that is, for "love-in-action." Furthermore, he uses these three words in a variety of relationships. so interrelated that it is somewhat artificial to separate their and categorize them. For example, in John 14:21 the Jesus of John says: Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me; and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him (JB). And again, in John 15:9-10; John 15:12 : As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you (JB). And yet once more, in John 17:23 : With me in them and you in me, may they be so completely one that the world will realize that it was you who sent me and that I have loved them as much as you loved me (JB). In spite of my reservation, let me distinguish the various facets of "love" that we find in the Fourth Gospel: 1) God is presented as one who loves. God loves the world; God loves those who love Jesus; God loves Jesus.<sup>23</sup> If Jesus is God's idea of a human being, in whom He therefore takes pleasure, It follows that God will delight in those who are at home in the company of Jesus. 2) Often it is said that God loves Jesus as a Father loves a son--or a parent a child.<sup>24</sup> If parental love is one of the great loves of our human experience, it is right and proper to think of God in terms of a value that we rate among the highest. 3) The most frequent references--about two-fifths of the total--are to Jesus as one who loves. If God so loved the world that he gave his only Son; if God is love; then Jesus must pre-eminently be one who loves. If God, who cannot be seen, is love; and if Jesus of Nazareth who can be seen is an expression of that love; then it follows that it is of crucial importance that Jesus be seen or be portrayed as one who loves. John, I take it, understands the implication of what he is claiming for Jesus. Only once is it said that Jesus loves God the Father.<sup>25</sup> That may reflect something immensely significant about Jesus, namely, his reticence with respect to his deepest personal religious experience. Rightly understood this reticence is positive evidence of two things: the intense reality and deep sacredness of the experience itself, and the true manhood of Jesus. We are so made that we cannot lightly speak of the things that most profoundly move us: and for every man the Holy of Holies in his life is hedged about with silence. The thoughts that lie too deep for tears do not easily clothe themselves with words: and, if they do, the words are not such as can be shouted from the housetops. Such things as these may be spoken of--or hinted at--only to those who know to take their shoes from off their feet because the place whereon they stand is holy ground. In this matter the Jesus of our [earliest] records is at one with us.<sup>26</sup> Only once is it said that Jesus loves God but many times is it written that Jesus loved people: Martha of Bethany; the circle of intimate friends; the disciple who reclined on the couch close to him at the last supper; those who keep his commandments; and Lazarus;<sup>27</sup> and twice folk are spoken of as friends: Lazarus and the disciples.<sup>28</sup> 4) Often enough the disciples are described as those who love Jesus.<sup>29</sup> If God is love; if what is at stake in human history is the triumph or the tragedy of the love of God; if God so loved that he gave his only Son; and if Jesus loved as he was convinced that he was loved by God, then what he looked for supremely was a beloved community made up of women and men who loved him and each other as he loved them. That is all love asks for: recognition, and a loving response. 5) A number of times the disciples are enjoined to love one another.<sup>30</sup> These, then, are the five facets of the language of love in the Gospel of John. Strangely enough it is never once said that the disciples love God.<sup>31</sup> The movement is from God to Jesus to the disciples, and from the disciples to Jesus and to one another. When Jesus is said to be doing the loving, it is most commonly the disciples who are

loved. How Jesus loved them is not stated in so many words. It is in the friendships, the teaching and sharing, and the laying down of his life for them. But for the most part it is not particularized, much less dramatized: not for any one of them. How did he love Andrew? How did he love Philip? How did he love Nathanael? John does not say. So I should like now to turn to certain persons--Nicodemus, the scribe of Jerusalem, the much-married Samaritan woman, the Jerusalem woman caught in adultery, and the Bethany friends, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha--whose encounters with Jesus constitute a significant part of the Gospel and study these narratives to see what they disclose about Jesus as a lover of men and women, of women and men.

2. Jesus as Lover of Men and Women in John a. Nicodemus, the scribe, of Jerusalem: John 3:1-15; John 7:45-52; John 19:38-40 1) Nicodemus of Jerusalem appears on stage three times in the Fourth Gospel, the first occasion being more germane to our purpose than the other two. The first is found in chapter 4, the second in chapter 7, and the third in chapter 19. In John 7:45-52, we read that the command was given for Jesus to be arrested by the Temple police but they returned to the chief priests and Pharisees empty handed. Understandably they were met with the question, "Why didn't you bring him in?" (NIV). The officers weakly replied, "No one ever spoke the way this man does" (NIV). To which the authorities said, "Is there a single one of our rulers who has believed in him, or of the Pharisees? As for this rabble, which cares nothing for the Law, a curse is on them" (NEB). Then it was that one of their rulers indeed, Nicodemus, raised a lonely voice in protest on behalf of Jesus, "Does our law permit us to pass judgement on a man unless we have first given him a hearing and learned the facts?" (NEB). In John 19:38-42, we come to the first sequel to Jesus' being tried, convicted, and crucified. It was the day for preparing for the holy Sabbath and there was a hurried up burying of the bodies broken on the cross. Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus, asked for his body and was given permission to take it and bury it. "Nicodemus," writes the Gospeller, "went with Joseph, taking with him about one hundred pounds of spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloes. The two men took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices." They paid their last loving rites to the body of a crucified man which was regarded as a sheer pollution, and then laid Jesus in "a new tomb where no one had ever been buried" (TEV). That brings us to John 3:1-15, which tells of the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus. It is what in John leads up to "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." The Gospeller says that Nicodemus was "a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews." By that no doubt he means that Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, the highest governing body of the Jewish people. Its 70 members, presided over by the high priest, came from priests (Sadducees), scribes (Pharisees), and lay elders of the aristocracy. He came to Jesus on the strength of what John calls "signs" and which Mark describes as "mighty works." It seemed to him that Jesus might be engaged in a mission that had God's approval and that the presence of God was with him. Presumably (vv. 3, 5) there was also in the foreground of his mind the stir aroused by the preaching of John the Baptist and the early preaching by Jesus. He addressed Jesus as "Rabbi." Nicodemus might have been brought up in the schools, trained to expect to find God's activity in the conventional, "the tradition of the elders,"<sup>32</sup> but he had managed to keep a certain open-mindedness. He apparently felt that there was something here in Jesus or in the "Jesus movement" that was not to be dismissed out of hand but should be looked at with care and at firsthand. He came to Jesus by night. Perhaps because by nature he was a cautious man. though subsequent events would somewhat qualify that, unless his meeting with Jesus that night invested him with a courage that he had not been wont to manifest prior to that. Perhaps because he was

conscious of being a leader of the people and therefore had no business following on impulse every seeming prophet and plunging enthusiastically after every last cause. He therefore felt obliged to meet Jesus face to face and base his decision not on carried stories but on firsthand experience. Or perhaps his coming by night reflected the rabbinic custom of staying up at night to study the Law and Jesus was acquiring a reputation for being an interpreter of that Law.<sup>33</sup> "Rabbi," the scribe said, "we know that you are a teacher sent by God; no one could perform these signs of yours unless God were with him" (NEB). "Jesus answered" is how his response is introduced but if there was a question it is unvoiced in the narrative. The scribe's address has to do with Jesus as a person of authority; the Teacher's first word has to do with the rule of God in the human heart. There is the assumption here that the rule of God is all about life, new life; and the substance of the Teacher's word is, "if the new life is ever to be lived, there must be a wholly new creature—mere tinkering at oneself is of little or no use." The Teacher goes on to say that in the renewing of a person's spiritual nature, there is a certain spontaneity to the divine action that is akin to the wind's blowing "where it listeth" (KJV). The scribe is puzzled by the assertion that a new spirit in a person has to come from Someone beyond the self. "How can one be born anew? How can one come to shrink from evil as from pain, to deeply feel the hurts of others, and be sensitive to God's touch?" And the Teacher said to the scribe: "Are you a 'famous teacher of Israel [and yet] ignorant of such things?'" (NEB). In his pouring over the scripture, had the scribe been deaf to God's word to Ezekiel: A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you;<sup>34</sup> and had he never stood where the Psalmist stood: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and steadfast spirit within me"?<sup>35</sup> One is left with the feeling that the scribe was stumbled at the idea of starting anew. The commentaries on the scripture had already been written, and what was written must stand: there was no revising. There is no going back to live things over again. Character has been shaped and cannot be reshaped. Not even the miracle worker can make an old man young again. On the other hand, one is given the impression that the younger Teacher did not agree with the older scribe. God is a freshening, cleansing, invigorating Spirit, so he was persuaded, who can break in—who can guess where, who can tell when?—to make over dull flesh into spirit, with new spiritual dreams and purposes and deeds.

2) Wherein do you see the Teacher loving the scribe? First, no teacher can really teach unless there is the expectation that the other wants to learn, to grow, to at least entertain the possibility of change. To live by that expectation is how every teacher loves his or her students. So did Jesus love Nicodemus. Second, every good teacher begins where people are and teases, entices, prods them to move beyond the known to the unknown, the familiar to the unfamiliar. In this case, a scribe had become so at home in the familiar scriptures that he had become blind to some of their deeper thought and further reaches. And the Teacher sought to lure him out of his place of dull safety. That is how Jesus loved Nicodemus of Jerusalem.

b. The much-married Samaritan woman: John 5:5-30; John 5:39-43

1) There is a Galilean emphasis to the ministry of Jesus in the first three Gospels and a Jerusalem/Judean stress in the Fourth Gospel. As the Gospeller puts it, Judea is "his own country" (4:44). According to the Synoptists, it is Galilee. In the first three Gospels, Jesus makes but one visit to Jerusalem during the days of his ministry: the last visit, which results in his crucifixion. In the Fourth Gospel, he makes at least three. After one of these, perhaps the first, Jesus returned to Galilee and did so by the way of the patriarchs, up through the hill country that constitutes Palestine's backbone, rather than by the Transjordan. So "he must

needs go through Samaria" (KJV). He came to Sychar (Shechem), some 40 miles (60 kilometers) north of Jerusalem. Sychar was at the crossroads of the Jerusalem-Galilee road and the East-West road that led from the Mediterranean, 25 miles away, through the pass down to the valley of the Jordan. To the southwest was Mount Gerizim, the Samaritan rival to Mount Zion (Jerusalem), and to the east lay a fertile valley.<sup>36</sup> Jesus stopped by Jacob's well, a place of holy memories.<sup>37</sup> It was about one hundred feet deep: both a spring (pege, vv. 6, 14) and a cistern (phrear, vv.11-12), as the Gospeller says. It was high noon and Jesus, tired out and thirsty, sat by the wellhead. The disciples, meanwhile, had gone to town to buy food. And a woman came to draw water. She was a Samaritan. The usual time for drawing water was the cool of the evening, when the women gathered to get water for sure but also to hear and tell the news. Strange that this woman should have come at midday. Perhaps it was to fetch water for the men working in the fields close by. Perhaps she was a bedraggled person, always behind-time, her whole life disordered. Or perhaps her seamy life had made her unpopular in the town, and the other women pointedly ignored and shunned her. And rather than be publicly snubbed, she had taken to going out to the well when it was reasonably certain she would meet no-one. For whatever reason, there she was. And it was Jesus who made the first move. He threw himself upon her courtesy, asking something of her, "Give me a drink." Simple though the request was, the woman was taken aback by it, and responded, "What! You, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a Samaritan woman?" (NEB). (The Gospeller's comment on this runs, "Jews will not use the same dishes that Samaritans use" [TEV].) And the Jew looked pityingly at this faded Samaritan, so eager for what she took to be a colorful life yet with only this drab, blemished thing to show for it, and said, "If only you knew what God gives, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would ask him and he would give you living water" (TEV). Naturally enough, the Samaritan woman could not see how this thirsty Jew sitting there without bucket or rope could possibly give her water from a deep well, and "perhaps with a flicker of the old archness of long ago she attempted to rally him as one talking boastfully or without meaning":<sup>38</sup> "Sir, ... you have no bucket and this well is deep. How can you give me 'living water'?" (NEB). To which he answered, "Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Understanding him prosaically, the woman responded eagerly, feeling that if there were any substance to what this Jew was saying, here was a possible end to her trudging through the glare of the noonday sunshine, and her tiring carrying of heavy waterpots, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water" (NIV). Then comes an abrupt shift in the conversation: "'Go call your husband,' Jesus told her, 'and come back here'" (TEV). She hesitated, but answered honestly enough, as far as it went: "I have no husband." But then Jesus pressed her further, reminding her of the fact that she had had five husbands and that her present husband was indeed a live-in companion. The woman, feeling that things were growing too probing and uncomfortable, tried to escape by beginning a conversation about religion--hers and his, the Samaritans' and the Jews'. She raises the question of the relative merits of worship centered in Mount Gerizim and worship made local in Mount Zion, and asks Jesus as a prophet who knows the mind of the Lord to settle the issue. Jesus accepts the role and responds that a new day is dawning when the religions of both Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion will be superseded by a knowledge of God as universal Father (or parent) and when God will be worshiped accordingly: Believe me, woman, the time will come when men will not worship the Father either on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You

Samaritans do not really know whom you worship; we Jews know whom we worship, because salvation is from the Jews. But the time is coming, and is already here, when the real worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. These are the worshipers the Father wants to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth (TEV). (I take it that when the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel says that "salvation comes from the Jews" he has in mind the universalism that is found in a number of the prophetic writings like Isaiah and Malachi which the Samaritans, who regarded only the first five books of the Old Testament as scripture, did not accept.<sup>39</sup> The woman was impressed and, looking at Jesus, began to size him up afresh. A prophet, with eyes that had seen clearly and deeply into her life? That for sure, but perhaps more than that, the thought half-phrased in her words: "I know that the Messiah ... will come. When he comes he will tell us everything" (TEV). To which Jesus said, "I who speak to you am he." Whereupon the Samaritan woman left her water pot, went back to town, and said to the folk there, "Come and see the man who told me everything I have ever done. Could he be the Messiah?" (TEV). In consequence of which people left the town and made their way out to see Jesus. Two other facets of the Gospeller's story we must take note of: one, when the disciples returned, as the Samaritan woman was on the point of leaving, they were astonished to find Jesus talking to a woman; and two, many of the Samaritans living in Sychar came to believe in Jesus because of the woman's testimony. 3) Wherein do you see this Jewish man loving this Samaritan woman? First, it could be that Jesus' taking the first step in the conversation was an honoring thing for him to do. There are people who are convinced that Jesus loves their because they feel he has asked them to do something for him. They are attracted to him not because he gives but because he asks. Here was a woman being asked to hold a pitcher to Jesus' lips to make him less tired and thirsty. Second, the fact that this Jew asked a drink of this Samaritan, this man of this woman, transcended the barriers of religion and sex. Jesus related to this Samaritan woman as a person. To show respect for the other as person is one of the most significant ways in which any one of us can show love toward that other. There is a freedom and a sanity to Jesus' chance encounter at Jacob's well with this Samaritan woman from Sychar. Third, according to the narrative, it was enormously releasing for this woman to face herself, get the facts out in front of her eyes, see herself honestly and realistically, and not hide any longer behind subterfuge: Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly." The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet." Fourth, Jesus related to this woman hopefully. He was attempting to arouse in her a thirst for some quality of life that she had never envisaged before. She was being incited by Jesus to reach out further and further for some higher level of spirituality, some broader ecumenical fellowship, some more searching genuineness in her religion, and resources to sustain such a life: Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give will never thirst; the water that I shall give ... will become in [her] a spring of water welling up to eternal life ... .The hour is coming and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth, God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. Fifth, at least as far as the Fourth Gospel goes, for Jesus to respond to "I know that the Messiah will come" with "I am he" (TEV) was the clearest revelation, up to that time, granted to anyone. And it was made to this faded failure of a woman--a most unlikely person indeed. So did Jesus love the much-married Samaritan woman from Sychar. c. The Jerusalem woman caught in adultery: John 7:53; John 8:1-11 1) I am running a risk in including in a study of the Jesus of John the narrative of the Jerusalem woman caught in the act of

adultery and brought to Jesus. The translators of the RSV put the passage, John 7:53; John 8:1-11, in small print at the bottom of the page. The TEV has it in parenthesis. The NIV says, "The most reliable early manuscripts omit [it]." The Jerusalem Bible has this: "The author of this passage is not John; the oldest [manuscripts] do not include it or place it elsewhere." The NEB has this note: This passage, which in the most widely received editions of the New Testament is printed in the text of John, 7:53-8:11, has no fixed place in our witnesses. Some of them do not contain it at all. Some place it after Luke 21:38, others after John 7:36, or 7:52, or 21:24. In the end, the NEB chooses to place it after John 21:24. It is a "happy chance" that this passage has been preserved in the manuscript tradition of John and a fact that all five modern versions include it in John. Its being a piece of "floating tradition" does not make it any the less authentic, for it is a passage whose portrayal of Jesus is all of a piece with what we see in a number of different strands of the tradition:

the call of Levi the tax collector, which is in Mark (No. 53: Mark 2:14) and then Luke (Luke 5:27-28);

the feast that follows this call with tax collectors and irreligious folk (No. 53: Mark 2:15-17; Luke 5:29-32);

the recognition of the worth of Zacchaeus, which is in Luke's special source (No. 194: John 19:1-10);

the woman who had lived an "immoral life" (NEB) and who in the house of Simon the Pharisee anointed Jesus' feet with ointment, which story is primarily teaching on forgiveness and which also is in Luke's special source (No. 83: Luke 7:36-50);

the parable of the lost sheep, which deals with the grace of God and is in "Q," the source common to Matthew and Luke (No. 133: Matthew 18:12-13; Luke 15:4-7);

the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, which also comes from Luke's special source and is teaching on prayer (No. 186: Luke 18:9-14);

the parable of the children in the market place, from "Q," the source common to Matthew and Luke (No. 65: Matthew 11:16-19; Luke 7:31-35) and the saying, "the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you," which is from Matthew's special source (No. 203: Matthew 21:31), both of which are simple comments on the actual situation in the ministry of Jesus.

"All of [these] in their different ways exhibit Jesus as an historical personality distinguished from other religious personalities of His time by His friendly attitude to the outcasts of society."<sup>40</sup> The incident recounted in this passage is set in the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus was seated, teaching, with a crowd gathered around him. Some teachers of the Law and some Pharisees interrupted his teaching as they brought to him a woman caught committing adultery. They stood before her "in full view of everybody" (JB). They reminded him that in the Mosaic Law it was commanded that such a woman be stoned to death and they put the question, "What have you to say?" (NIV). The narrative continues: "They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him" (NIV). What was it that Jesus was being asked to decide? One (unlikely) suggestion is that the woman had been tried but not sentenced and Jesus was being asked to decide the punishment. A second is that the woman had not yet been tried because the Sanhedrin had lost

the power to decide cases that might call for capital punishment. If in accordance with Mosaic Law Jesus declared that she be stoned, he would be deciding contrary to Roman Law. If, on the other hand, he decided the case in the woman's favor and advocated her release, he would be contravening the Law of Moses. A third suggestion is that in spite of Rome's restriction on the Sanhedrin, some Pharisees and others were about to exercise lynch law and stone the woman. But there was an unresolved point of law which Jesus was being asked to settle: Was it necessary for the woman to have been warned about the punishment that committing adultery would entail?<sup>41</sup> For a time, Jesus made no reply, save what he wrote with his finger on the ground. His critics pressed their question. Whereupon he sat upright and said: "That one of you who is faultless shall throw the first stone" (NEB). He then bent over again and once more wrote on the ground. Unable to pass the test that Jesus put to them, they slipped away one by one, the elders making the first move. Then Jesus, left alone with the woman still standing before him, said to her: "Where are they? Has no one condemned you?" Her reply was pointedly brief: "No one, sir." In response to this Jesus said: "Nor do I condemn you. You may go; do not sin again" (NEB). 2) Wherein do you see the judge, Jesus, loving this woman? First, Jesus was most unwilling to pass judgment either on the woman or on the case. He "bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground." But the accusers "continued to press their question" (NEB). They had first of all trapped the woman and now they sought to entrap Jesus. Finally he "straightened up" (TEV) and said to them, "Whichever one of you has committed no sin may throw the first stone at her" (TEV). Then he bent over once more and again wrote on the ground. Jesus took no pleasure in being dragged in on such a situation. Second, there were the questions of fairness and mercy. In order for the case against the woman to be sustained, there would have to be two witnesses who could testify that she had willingly had intercourse with the man who was not her husband. However could that have been brought to pass? Had the husband, perchance, cynically arranged to have his wife caught by carefully prearranging that there be witnesses to her sin, perhaps witnesses who were scribes and Pharisees? That, instead of seeking to win her back by love? Jesus' judgment on his critics and her accusers was that they were zealous for the letter of the Law but had little or no concern for its purpose: they were all for justice with nothing of compassion for her and only malevolence toward him. Third, Jesus accepted the woman as she was and affirmed her as a person. He did not play games and pretend that she had not sinned. He did not condone or explain away her adultery. He did not throw it up at her. But whereas her accusers probably only made her bitter and afraid and defiant, Jesus challenged her to a new self-understanding, a new dignity and self-respect, and a new way of life: "Go now and leave your life of sin" (NIV). So did Jesus love the Jerusalem woman who was caught in the act of adultery. d. The Bethany friends: Lazarus, Mary, and Martha: John 11:1-44 1) Lazarus, the brother of 'Martha and Mary, appears only in the Gospel of John. In chapter 12 he is present, on the eve of the Passion, when Jesus and at least Judas were guests in the Bethany home. The sisters served, Lazarus reclined at table with the guests, and Mary at one point anointed the feet of Jesus with fragrant, costly perfume. According to chapter 11, Lazarus fell ill and his sisters sent for Jesus. Lazarus died and for some unstated reason Jesus did not come until he had been in the tomb four days. When the grieving sisters heard that Jesus was on his way, Martha went to meet him. There may be rebuke in her greeting to Jesus: "If you had been here, sir, my brother would not have died" (NEB). Martha went and got Mary and they returned to Jesus, still strangely where Martha had left him. Mary reiterates Martha's rebuke or plea. Then all three made their way to the tomb and Jesus raised Lazarus,

restoring him to life. The narrative centers on Jesus and his being "the resurrection and the life" to every person who has faith in him (John 11:25), but what it says about his relationship to this family of three is not without importance. Martha could converse with Jesus about her belief in the resurrection (John 11:21-27), indicating that her mind was not confined to the kitchen. When Martha and Mary went to Jesus, weeping, he was deeply moved and burst into tears (John 11:31-35). At the tomb, it was Martha who protested rolling away the stone that sealed it on the ground that smell and sight would be too much to bear. After the raising of Lazarus, "many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary [after her brother's death] ... put their faith in [Jesus]" (John 11:45, NIV). The way the Gospeller presents it, first one sister, then the other, is featured and each has her identity. 2) Wherein do you see Jesus loving his friends, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary? First, the Jesus of John can refer to Lazarus as friend (John 11:11). That Jesus needed and had friends is itself of huge importance in understanding him and seeking to discern the lineaments of his loving. Later, in chapter 15, he will speak of his disciples not simply as servants but as friends (John 15:14-15) and friends by definition are givers as well as receivers: mutuality is of the essence of friendship. Discipleship has become a transforming friendship. Jesus loved Lazarus (John 11:3) as a friend loves a friend. Second, there is an astonishing openness in the relationship between Jesus and Martha and Jesus and Mary. Martha felt free to rebuke him, even though, or because, she respected him. Jesus could take issue with her without condescension. Feelings between them could run deep. From the two women Jesus could receive; to them he could give. Tension, sorrow, and joy they could openly share. So did Jesus love these two sisters.

## Conclusion

First, the passages we have studied, albeit from one point of view only, all bear testimony to a Jesus who did not relate to people in any formalistic or mechanical way. People are not all lumped together and treated alike; no one is dealt with as a stereotype. There are a thousand different ways to love and the Jesus of John manifests love's knowledge of the other, respect for the other, sensitivity to the uniqueness of the other. Second, in the first three passages, each of these persons is related to hopefully. Love is at work broadening horizons, arousing new expectations, stirring people to learn, to grow, to change. These are illustrations of the fact that love is infinitely resourceful, unfailingly creative, and always ready to believe and hope for the best. Third, human beings are magnificently important to Jesus of Nazareth. If it is true that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son," then the Good News is the trouble that God took to fashion a world of people. God seemingly values people enough both to make them and save them. The work of Christ was never a raid on an alien world universe; God saves what He first created ... The fulfillment of human beings, whatever that means exactly, is wanted by God even at a great price.<sup>42</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

1 John 4:16.

2John 3:16.

3 Cf. Leon Morris, *Testaments of Love: A Study of Love in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981).

4 C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1946), p. 110. Italics in the original.

5 Norman Pittenger, 'The Last Things' in a Process Perspective (London: Epworth Press, 1970), p. 109.

61 John 3:5; 1 John 3:8; 1 John 4:9-10.

71 John 1:1-3.

8Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:19.

91 John 4:7.

101 John 4:12.

111 John 4:8.

121 John 4:20.

131 John 4:19-20.

141 John 5:3; 1 John 4:21.

151 John 4:20.

161 John 5:1; 1 John 4:20.

17John 1:1-3.

18 Cf. John 1:16-17.

191 John 4:12; John 1:18.

20 Ibid.

21John 3:16-17.

22 Cf. what John has to say about the Word in the Prologue, John 1:1-18.

23John 3:16; John 14:21; John 14:23; John 17:23; John 16:27 (phileo); John 15:10.

24John 3:35; John 10:17; John 15:9; John 17:24; John 17:26; John 5:20 (phileo).

25John 14:31.

26 T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus: Studies of Its Form and Content*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1935), p. 108. Manson has "earlier" where I have "earliest" because he has the Synoptics in mind. What I have pointed to may suggest that at this point the Jesus of the Synoptics and the Jesus of John are one.

27John 11:5; John 13:1; John 13:34; John 15:9; John 15:12; John 13:23; John 19:26; John 21:7-20; John 20:2 (phileo); John 14:21; John 15:10; John 11:3; John 11:36 (phileo); John 11:11 (philos).

28John 11:11; John 15:14-15.

29John 8:42; John 14:15; John 14:21; John 14:23-24; John 14:28; John 21:15-16; John 16:27 (phileo); John 21:15-17 (phileo).

30John 13:34-35; John 15:12-13; John 15:17.

31 Only the negative is found with God as the object of "love": John 5:42.

32Mark 7:3; Mark 7:5; Mark 7:8.

33 Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *The Gospel according to John, I-XII* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), p. 130.

34Ezekiel 36:26-27.

35Psalms 51:10, RSV mg.

36 D. C. Pellett, "Sychar," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), R-Z, 471; W. L. Reed, "Shechem," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), R-Z, 313-15.

37 Reed, *ibid.*, p. 314.

38 Arthur John Gossip, "Exposition of the Gospel according to St. John," *Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), 8:523.

39 Cf., e.g., 1 Kings 8:27; Isaiah 66:1-2; Isaiah 66:18-23; Malachi 1:11. 40 C. H. Dodd, *History and the Gospel* (Digswell Place, England: 1938), p. 94.

41 Brown, *ibid.*, pp. 333-38; Barnabas Lindars, ed, *The Gospel of John* (Greenwood, S.C.: Attic Press, Inc., 1972), pp. 305-312.

42 Helen Oppenheimer, *The Hope of Happiness* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1983), p. 5.

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