

John 20:30–31 (ESV)

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Q: Who is the “John” in the Gospel of John?

- John the Apostle. See supplemental info for more detail.

Q: Any idea when it was written? Who it was written to? What it was written for?

- 70-90AD near the end of John’s life. Probably not long before (or after) he wrote Revelation.
- A broad Mediterranean audience.
- Since it was written later it is more of a “theological telling” rather than a strict historical narrative (i.e. “Let me tell you something of the life of Jesus the Christ and why he was important.”).

Q: In the gospels Jesus frequently refers to himself as the “Son of Man.” What would a Jew living at that time have thought about such a title? (Hint: Daniel 7:9-14).

- It seems to the Jew who had knowledge of Scripture, this could be a very “theologically loaded” term. See <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/son-of-man/>

Q: Why didn’t Jesus just refer to himself as “the Messiah?” What sort of Messiah were the people looking for?

- The Jewish community living at the time of Christ and a few hundred years before had no clear vision of what was to come. They knew that their deliverance from Babylon fell short of a true restoration, but exactly what was to come...they didn’t know. Some were expecting an individual, but expectations varied widely as to what he would do, or who he would be. (For further background, read attached paper).
- If Jesus had called himself Messiah, it may have been *more* confusing for the people. Instead He shows them by his life and sacrifice what Messiah was intended to be.

Gospel of John
Westgate Church of Christ
Sunday Jan. 5, 2020

MORE DISCUSSION:

1. What book of the Old Testament do verses 1 and 2 remind you of? Why do you think John structured the opening this way?

Genesis. New Creation through Christ and to highlight the divinity and eternal nature of Jesus. See also:

Hebrews 1:2 (ESV)

² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV)

⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:15-16 (ESV)

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

2. What was the Father's role in creation? What was the Son's role? (See Gen 1:1-3, John 1:3, 1 Corinthians 8:6.) Explain in your own words.

Father commanded, Son implemented it. (The Spirit there too...hovering over the waters)

Genesis 1:1-3 (ESV)

¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

John 1:3 (ESV)

³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

1 Corinthians 8:6 (ESV)

⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

3. What do the symbols of life and light tell us about Jesus? How has he brought these qualities into your life?
4. Who is the "man sent from God" in verse 6? What did he come to do?

John the Baptist. Fulfill the prophecy of one preparing the way

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Malachi 3:1 (ESV)

¹ "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 40:3 (ESV)

³ A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

5. John contrasts Jesus' rejection by the majority with his reception by a few (verses 9-13). Have things changed today? Why or why not? What does this tell us about the condition of the human heart?

No difference today.

6. Verse 14 says, "The Word became flesh." Which of these statements accurately describes Jesus?
 - a. **He is 100% God and 100% man (See Feb 5 2017 handout, attached)**
 - b. He is 50% God and 50% man
 - c. Sometimes he is God and sometimes he is man
7. Why is it important that Jesus is both man and God?

Hebrews 2:14–18 (ESV)

¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. ¹⁷ **Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect**, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

8. What other important points do you see in this opening section of the gospel of John?

Introduction to

John

More than 150 fifty years ago, the New Testament scholar Merrill C. Tenney entitled his commentary on the Fourth Gospel, *JOHN: The Gospel of Belief*. An apt theme to be sure, and one which captures the essence of the apostle's purpose. With profundity wrapped in simplicity John sets forth his case. His Gospel is not always chronological like Luke, yet it is logical and highly theological. From the manifestation of the Word in chapter 1, to the post-resurrection appearance to the disciples in chapter 21, we find John emphasizing over and over again the excellence and eternality of the Son of God.

In this series, we emphasize practical exposition—not literary and exegetical detail—so comments on introductory material will be brief. For full coverage of background materials, see the Introduction to Gerald Borchert's work in *The New American Commentary*.

AUTHORSHIP

Historically, few have challenged the concept of Johannine authorship of the

Fourth Gospel. As early as 180 A.D., Theophilus referred to John as the author, and ten years later Irenaeus used 100 quotes from the Fourth Gospel, mentioning John. At the turn of the century in 200 A.D., Clement of Alexandria used John's name frequently in connection with this Gospel. And Tertullian cited passages from almost every chapter, attributing them to the apostle. Opponents of this view have usually come from theological camps outside mainline orthodoxy, such as the Gnostics.

Internally, the author of this book refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20, 24). He was clearly an eyewitness to Jesus' earthly ministry, knew Jewish life well, and was Jesus' intimate friend to whom the dying Lord committed his mother (19:25–27). Whether the son of Zebedee actually wrote the scroll is certainly a matter open to question. We do not challenge Peter's authorship of the epistles which bear his name, even though we know Silas helped with the text (1 Pet. 5:12). Borchert spells it out for us: “When all of the arguments both internal and external are set together, there seems little reason to reject the idea that the son of Zebedee was the towering figure and the authentic witness involved in the writing of this

Gospel. I would not think it necessary that he himself was the actual scribe.”

DATE OF WRITING

Most conservative scholars place the development of John’s Gospel toward the end of the first century ¹ about A.D. 90. However, as in many arguments of this type, one’s view of authorship colors one’s view of date. Scholars have argued that the more highly developed theology of the Fourth Gospel suggests that it originated later, but that is hardly definitive. Other scholars, particularly those who deny Johannine authorship, set a date somewhere in ¹the second century.

So there are those who want to date this book earlier than the fall of Jerusalem (¹ A.D. 70) and others who would like to see it dated well into ¹the second century. My own inclination is to adopt the traditional view of an aged John writing some sixty or seventy years after the resurrection of Jesus.

That we are right in regarding the Gospel of John as the fourth and last of the Gospels is clear not only from the fact that in the majority of manuscripts it is found in this position, but also from patristic references. Clement of Alexandria, for example, who died in ¹A.D. 212, stated on the authority of the elders of an

earlier age that John wrote his Gospel last of the evangelists. If the work was published during the last days of the life of John the son of Zebedee, as the evidence suggests, it can be confidently dated in ¹the last decade of the first century, probably at its close. Irenaeus stated that John survived until the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan, which began in ¹A.D. 98.

PURPOSE OF JOHN

Luke wrote for an individual (Theophilus). Matthew and Mark targeted Jewish audiences with their record of Jesus’ life and work. John wrote for the world, living as he did at the end of fifty years of church history, knowing that the gospel had already permeated the entire Mediterranean world. Indeed, he stated his purpose clearly: “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” ([John 20:30–31](#)).

The Gospel of John radiates faith. I like to say that John offers the motto, “Believing is seeing.” John focused on Jesus’ teaching, avoiding most of the miracles and all of the parables. Writing with a clear grasp of Jewish culture, his logic

appealed to Greek readers as well as he set forth an evangelistic theology. John carefully selected his material and unashamedly targeted unbelievers. Four ideas emerge in the theme verses quoted above:

Sign: The miracles of Jesus were not just demonstrations of power, but signs of Jesus' person and authority. The Greek word *semeion* connects the sign with what it signifies. This accounts for John's unique selection of the miracles of Jesus which he chose to record.

Selection: John chooses certain signs of the many in order to accomplish his purpose. Traditionally, seven miracles can be found in John, although some interpreters count as many as ten.

Significance: John intended his historical, theological record to produce thinking conviction that would lead to changed lives.

Salvation: John's favorite word for new birth in Christ is *life*, as we will see repeatedly in this study.

John wrote this Gospel so that the Holy Spirit could produce faith in the hearts of those who could not have an earthly, eyewitness experience like his own.

STYLE OF JOHN

For several decades theologians have

been "finding the historical Jesus." Actually, the search is not that difficult since four ancient writers have provided ample material. This particular Gospel, however, sets the history in a theological setting. John adds a geographical flavor, identifying numerous sites around first-century Palestine to connect history to the culture of the day. He uses simplicity, repetition, and great detail. He arranges his material carefully to offer interpretive analysis to his readers.

Several "keys" fall into our hands throughout this book. We could probably identify the *key verses* in the passage we noted as the purpose statement (20:30–31). We shall soon discover that the *key chapter* is the first. I also suggest that the *key thought* in the book comes to us in [John 1:18](#)—"God the One and Only." The *key words*, which are many, include "believe," "life," "word," and "world."

Do we find intentional structure in this Gospel? Several patterns have been suggested, though attributing any of them to John's intentionality seems out of the question. They do, however, help us grasp the material a bit more efficiently.

For example, the Fourth Gospel could be outlined on the basis of *Christ's relationship to earth*: "I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving

the world and going back to the Father” (16:28).

- From the Father (1:1–18)
- Into the world (1:19–12:50)
- Leaving the world and going to the Father (13:1–21:25)

On the basis of *Passovers* (though it is impossible to absolutely discern the number of Passovers in the text):

- Life up to the first Passover (1:1–2:12)
- First year of ministry (2:13–4:54)
- Second year of ministry (5:1–6:71)
- Third year of ministry (7:1–12:50)
- From the last Passover to the end of the crucifixion week (13:1–21:25)

On the basis of the *prologue division*, a system which allows 1:1–18 to set the pattern for the entire book:

- Revelation (cf. 1:1–4 with 1:19–6:71)
- Rejection (cf. 1:5–11 with 7:1–12:50)
- Reception (cf. 1:12–18 with 13:1–19:42)

On the basis of the *testimony about Christ*:

- The testimony of the evangelist (1:1–14)

- The testimony of the Baptist (1:15–36)
- The testimony of the first disciples (1:37–51)
- The testimony of the public ministry (2:1–12:50)
- The testimony of the private ministry (13:1–17:26)
- The testimony of his death (18:1–19:42)
- The testimony of his resurrection (20:1–21:25)

Martin Luther said that if we should lose all the books of the Bible except two—John and Romans—Christianity could be saved.

Perhaps, but inspiration and application of the whole Bible is the goal of evangelical Christianity. Nevertheless, this book is special with its wonderful portrait of Jesus, the Savior of the world. An old story suggests that an agnostic was challenged by Henry Clay Trumbell to study the Gospel of John. After emerging from his skeptical analysis, the man told Trumbell, “The one of whom this book tells is either the Savior of the world or He ought to be.”

Jesus the Messiah

Jesus Christ of Nazareth was both fully God and fully man.

The story of Jesus begins in a most unusual way: the virgin birth. God the Father could have sent Jesus down from Heaven as a fully-grown man, without any parents. Jesus could also have been born to two biological parents and then had his divine nature come upon him at some point later in life. Instead we get Mary, the Holy Spirit, and the mystery of the Virgin Birth.

Q: Why do you think that God the Father chose to send the Son in this way?

Certain heresies arose in the early church that denied the humanity of Christ; claiming that He only *appeared* to have a body.¹ Others claimed that the divine portion, the Christ, came in the form of a dove at Jesus' baptism and then left shortly before the Cross. These ideas were spreading even before the New Testament was fully written (See 1 John 4:2-3).

Q: Why do you think that these early groups were inclined to think this way? What can we learn from them?

Q: Why would you say that this denial of Christ's humanity is not true? (Hint: see Heb 2:11-18)

Q: Why is important to believe that Jesus was fully human? (see Heb 4:15-18)

FREE MIND BENDER:

In regards to the Trinity, it has been said that essence is what you are and person is who you are. Since God is one essence in three Persons, He is one "what," but three "whos." Since Jesus is two natures (=essence) in one Person, He is two "whats" but only one "who."

Q: Jesus is a human who also claim to be divine (John 8:58), the New Testament declares that He is the divine Son of God, and the Apostles and the Church vigorously affirmed that He was God.² Why is it important that Jesus was divine and not just another man of God going around performing miracles?

An implication of the two natures of Christ united in one Person³: Things that are true of one nature but not the other are nonetheless true of the *Person* of Christ.

- Christ's pre-existence is only in His divine nature, nevertheless Christ says that *He* is pre-existent: John 8:58.
- The death of Christ was only His human nature. Nevertheless, it is *Christ* who died, and thus His death for our sins is a divine-human achievement.

So What?

Q: How does knowing something about the two natures of Jesus Christ affect how you live your life?

¹ Esp. "Docetism," sometimes regarding as part of Gnosticism

² Because of this assertion C.S. Lewis famously pointed out that Jesus must be a liar, a lunatic or Lord.

³ The technical term for this is "Hypostatic Union" for all you Theology Nerds out there

Does Christ remain a Man forever?

The conventional Orthodox Christian understanding, held by Protestants, Catholics, and Greek/Eastern Orthodox Christians alike, over thousands of years, **is that He does.**

Jesus appeared to his disciples as a man after the resurrection, even with the scars of the nail prints in his hands (John 20:25–27). He had “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39) and ate food (Luke 24:41–42). Later, when he was talking with his disciples, he was taken up into heaven, still in his resurrected human body, and two angels promised that he would return in the same way: “This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, *will come in the same way* as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). Still later, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw Jesus as “the Son of man standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56). Jesus also appeared to Saul on the Damascus Road and said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5)—an appearance that Saul (Paul) later coupled with the resurrection appearances of Jesus to others (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8). In John’s vision in Revelation, Jesus still appears as “one like a son of man” (Rev. 1:13), though he is filled with great glory and power, and his appearance causes John to fall at his feet in awe (Rev. 1:13–17). On Earth Jesus refers to His Second Coming as the “Day of the Son of Man” (Luke 17:30, 21:27). He promises one day to drink wine again with his disciples in his Father’s kingdom (Matt. 26:29) and invites us to a great marriage supper in heaven (Rev. 19:9). If we are alive when Christ returns, we shall be transformed, body and soul, into his image directly; if already dead, we will receive Resurrection bodies that mirror the glorified body of Christ (see Rom. 8:17; 29; 1 Cor. 15:42–54 2 Cor. 3:18 2 Cor. 4:14; 2 Cor. 5:1–4; Phil. 3:21). Moreover, Jesus will continue forever in his offices as prophet, priest, and king, all of them carried out by virtue of the fact that he is both God and man forever (see Hebrews).⁴

As in Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday [when on earth] and today [now as we read] and forever.” In some mysterious way, Christ the Word chose to add to himself a human nature, a nature that He wears today in a glorified state, showing just how much He has thrown himself in with the Human race. Now that is love!

Philippians 3:21 (NIV)

²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

⁴ If you would like to read more about this Google “Incarnate Forever J.I. Packer” for a brief classic article explaining this doctrine.

The Book of Signs

The book of John naturally falls into two parts. The first part is called The Book of Signs and it covers three years of Jesus' life. The second part is called The Book of the Hour and it covers one week. We have no way of knowing how many miracles John saw Jesus do, but we know which ones he recorded for us:

The Book of Signs

Turning water into wine (John 2)

Healing an official's son (John 4)

Healing a lame man (John 5)

Feeding 5000 people (John 6)

Walking on water (John 6)

Healing a blind man (John 9)

Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11)

Three years

The Book of the Hour

The last week of Jesus' life on Earth

culminates in his resurrection (John 12-21)

One Week

words like “evangelist” and is related to words like “angel.” When the first Christians wanted to record the “good news” about the Man who was God, none of the familiar forms of literature seemed suitable. The Christians didn’t write the kinds of biographies or sacred texts that were common in Greek or Jewish culture. Instead, they created a new form: the gospel.

Many collections of Jesus’ words and deeds were composed in the century after His death, but God uniquely inspired four men to write the Gospels that would bear His authority. The early Christians took time and trouble to discern authentic from spurious records of Jesus’ life. The books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the *Synoptic* (one view) Gospels because they have much more material in common than any of them has with John.

The Synoptics focus on Jesus’ ministry in Galilee and His last week in Jerusalem, but John highlights Jesus’ ministry in Jerusalem during several visits over the space of three years. John omits Jesus’ birth, His human ancestry, His baptism, the Transfiguration, almost all of Jesus’ parables, the bread and wine of the Last Supper, and the agony in Gethsemane. Only one of the miracles John records (the feeding of the five thousand) is in all three of the other gospels. Instead of the short, pithy parables and sayings in the Synoptics, John gives us long discourses on subjects related to Jesus’ identity and mission. He records seven “I am” statements by Jesus, none of which are in the Synoptics. Why the differences?

Even an ordinary man is usually seen differently by different friends. We have accounts of Socrates by two different disciples that make one wonder if they are describing the same man. The Synoptics seem to be based on the memories of Peter, Matthew, Mary and others, while John’s gospel seems to be his own recollections independent of theirs. God apparently prompted John to show us another face of Jesus.

Many people have remarked on how different Jesus’ teaching in John is from His teaching in the Synoptics. Yet there are many possible explanations. For example, the parables and short sayings we find in the Synoptics are the kind of public teaching that rabbis used to make their students memorize. First-century students didn’t take notes on paper; people thought you hadn’t really learned a thing until you had memorized it. So, the Sermon on the Mount, the parables, and so on are probably material Jesus made His disciples commit to memory. “But any teacher does more than engage in public

discussion and instruction. There is also more informal teaching which takes place in private.”[5] It may be that John has given us some of Jesus’ informal discussions with His disciples and other people He met.

These are just a few of the differences between John and the other gospels. In His wisdom, God has given us a fuller portrait of His Son than one human mind could convey.

Misunderstandings

In your first reading of John, you may have noticed that almost everyone who encounters Jesus in this gospel misunderstands what He says and does. This fact and 20:31 suggest to some scholars that John wanted to clear up misunderstandings of what “the Christ” and “the Son of God” meant. The Jews had a distorted idea of the Messiah, so they were confused about Jesus’ identity and mission. Even the disciples didn’t understand Jesus’ words and deeds until after the Resurrection, when Jesus and the Spirit began to make things clear (2:22; 7:39; 12:16; 16:13-16). From the time of Jesus onward, it was dangerous for a Jew to profess faith in Jesus (9:22,34; 12:42; 16:1-4; 19:38), and John may have wanted to encourage his fellow Jews to understand and believe in Jesus despite opposition.[6]

But John was not only trying to sort things out for Jewish converts. His gospel so often explains Jewish customs that he seems to have had his eye on a Gentile audience as well. By the time John was writing, most Jews were rejecting the gospel, but Christians were finding many Gentiles hungry for it. John was apparently as concerned that they believe accurately and actively as he was that Jewish converts do so.[7]

A pattern occurs over and over in John’s gospel. Jesus reveals something about Himself through a sign or some teaching, and people react in mixed ways. Some accept the revelation—these receive further revelation and have their misunderstandings clarified. Others reject the revelation, and their misunderstanding deepens. John 9:39 is Jesus’ own statement on this pattern. As you study this gospel, think about why John may have emphasized this

WARNING:
THEOLOGY NERDS ONLY
PAST THIS POINT!

A COMPARISON OF MESSIANIC PORTRAITS IN 1 ENOCH,
PSALMS OF SOLOMON AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A Paper
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Dr. Michael Burer
Dallas Theological Seminary

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A COMPARISON OF MESSIANIC PORTRAITS IN 1 ENOCH, PSALMS OF SOLOMON AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Towards the end of Second Temple Judaism, Jewish reflection on messianic themes in the Old Testament scriptures gave rise to a mosaic of ideas regarding who and what the Messiah would be¹. The purpose of this paper is to examine messianic portraits in two specific Jewish texts: 1 Enoch and Psalms of Solomon, and to compare them to the messianic understandings prevalent in the New Testament, with specific attention to the ideas of the disciples and the principles promoted by Jesus himself.

MESSIANIC PORTRAITS IN 1 ENOCH

The Book of 1 Enoch is a collection of Jewish literature that most modern scholarship would date to the time of Herod the Great (37-4 BCE).² In his comprehensive literature review, Bock presents convincing evidence that 1 Enoch was “likely composed prior to the work of Jesus of Nazareth or contemporaneous with his Galilean ministry³.” The messianic material of 1 Enoch is found in a section known as the “Book of Parables” (Chapters 37-71).

A large part of the Book of Parables relates to Enoch’s vision of a messianic figure who is most commonly referred to as the “Chosen One” (“Elect One” in some translations)⁴ or the “Son of Man⁵.” In one passage, he is referred to as “the Righteous One⁶,” and in two

¹ Herbert W. Bateman, Darrell L. Bock, and Gordon H. Johnston. *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel’s King*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic Press, 2012), 255.

² James H. Charlesworth “The Date and Provenience of the Parables of Enoch.” In *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*, edited by Darrell L. Bock and James H. Charlesworth. (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 56.

³ Darrell H. Bock, “Dating the Parables of Enoch: A Forschungsbericht.” In *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*, edited by Darrell L. Bock and James H. Charlesworth. (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 112.

⁴ 1 Enoch 39:6, 40:6, 45:3, 45:4, 49:2, 49:4, 51:5a, 51:3, 52:6, 52:9, 53:6, 55:4, 61:5, 61:8, 62:1

⁵ 1 Enoch 46:3-4, 48:2, 62:5-9, 14, 63:11, 69:26-27, 69:29

⁶ 1 Enoch 38:2

passages (48:10, 52:4) a term is used that George Nickelsburg translates as “Anointed One”⁷ although many previous translators have rendered it as “Messiah”⁸.

The character of this figure seems to fit the grandeur of his titles: he is presented as pure (38:2), benevolent (49:3a), knowledgeable (49:4) and wise (51:3) (to the point of being nearly omniscient). He is subordinate to the “Lord of Spirits”⁹ (God) and has a special relationship with Him and preeminence before Him (“...*for the Lord of Spirits has chosen him, and his lot has prevailed through truth in the presence of the Lord of Spirits forever.*” 1 Enoch 46:3). Although disputed by some scholars¹⁰, the text of 48:3 (“*Even before the sun and constellations were created, before the stars of heaven were made, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits*”) and 48:6 (“*For this (reason) he was chosen and hidden in his presence before the world was created and forever*”) give strong indication that he was pre-existent. He may bear the title “Son of Man,” but this figure seems more divine than human.

The primary role of the 1 Enoch Messiah figure seems to be that of judge. He is given full authority of the process of judgment (69:27) and is the means of ushering in the “Day of the Chosen One” a period involving resurrection of the dead¹¹, the elements passing away in fire¹², and the slaying of sinners by “the word of his mouth.”¹³ His judgment involves the

⁷ George W.E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam. *1 Enoch: A New Translation*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), 63, 66.

⁸ e.g. Robert Henry Charles. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English: with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913).

⁹ 1 Enoch 38:2, 39:7

¹⁰ Michael A. Knibb “Messianism in the Pseudepigrapha In the Light of the Scrolls.” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 2, no. 2, (1995): 171.

¹¹ 1 Enoch 51:1, 61:5

¹² 1 Enoch 52:6-9

¹³ 1 Enoch 62:2b

punishment of the wicked¹⁴, but also includes the evaluation of the righteous¹⁵ and even the angels¹⁶.

The Enochic figure is a saving judge. Although his judgment upon the wicked is terrible (“*it would have been better for them, if they had not been born.*” 1 Enoch 38:2), he brings salvation to the righteous. He will be a source of strength and hope for the righteous (48:4, 48:6) and “the light of the nations” (48:4). In an interesting parallel to the New Testament, it is in his name that they are saved¹⁷ (conversely those who deny his name are judged¹⁸), and the “blood of the Righteous One¹⁹” is described as “rising in the presence” of the Lord of Spirits (47:1). Additionally, believers are described as being part of his body (49:3b).

Some Jewish texts from the same period present their particular messianic figures in a priestly context: i.e. one who comes to purify the people, “improve” them and provide intercession²⁰. In 1 Enoch 49:2 the messianic figure “stands before” God (which could be priestly intercession), and on two occasions he is said to dwell among the people (45:4, 62:14) (which indicates at the least that he isn’t aloof from them). Although, he does bring salvation, the priestly function of the Enochic figure seems minimal. The force of the text emphasizes his role as a judge.

Another minor role played by the Enochic figure is that of earthly king. Overt Davidic references are conspicuous in their absence. In 45:4-5 the figure is said to “dwell among them” (the people) and there is mention of a transformed earth, although it isn’t clear if the

¹⁴ 1 Enoch 38:2, 45:6, 46:4

¹⁵ 1 Enoch 45:3, 61:8

¹⁶ 1 Enoch 55:4

¹⁷ 1 Enoch 48:7

¹⁸ 1 Enoch 48:10

¹⁹ However, Charles’ translation renders as “blood of the righteous” (i.e. blood of martyred saints).

²⁰ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 255.

Anointed One will live on that earth or in the remodeled heaven. In Chap 52, the “Mountains of Heaven” that Enoch sees will help the Anointed One be “mighty and powerful on the earth,²¹” although this may simply be for his reign of terror during the “Day of the Chosen One.” In short, Enoch’s “Son of Man” has little if any role as an earthly king.

Although he may not be positioned as an earthly king, the Enochic figure will definitely be a heavenly one. He is pictured on numerous occasions sitting on a “throne of glory,”²² having been placed there by God himself²³. His reign is eternal (“everlasting glory”, 49:2) and transcendent: the righteous will have garments of glory that last forever (62:15-16) and after he begins to reign there will be “nothing that is corruptible” (69:29). The way that this divine king will be worshiped mirrors Isa 45:23 (“every knee will bow and every tongue confess”) since even the “kings and the mighty and the exalted and those who possess the earth” will come to a realization (much to their dismay) who this figure really is and will give him the worship he is due (62:3-6).

The messianic figure in 1 Enoch is a near-divine or divine figure that functions primarily as a righteous, yet salvific, judge. He has minimal, if any, role as a priest or earthly king but comes as a glorious divine king that deserves complete praise and utter fealty. Bock points out that this figure “appears not to have had an earthly career.”²⁴ Given the characteristics of this person, it is perplexing to find in 72:14 the assertion that Enoch is this figure. Perhaps this merely reflects the confusion of the authors as they tried to reconcile the promises of the Hebrew scripture with their own strongly monotheistic thinking. Likely, it was exceptionally difficult for them to imagine their monotheistic God existing as a person that could come as

²¹ 1 Enoch 52:4

²² 1 Enoch 45:3, 51:3, 61:8, 62:2

²³ 1 Enoch 62:2

²⁴ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 316.

Messiah. Since such a thing was unthinkable, Messiah must be human, no matter how divine the portrait, and therefore Enoch may be as good a candidate as any.

MESSIANIC PORTRAITS IN PSALMS OF SOLOMON

An unknown Jewish sect wrote the Psalms of Solomon. Determining authorship of this work is difficult, and widely disputed²⁵. William Lane sees the Psalms of Solomon as closely associated with the Pharisees,²⁶ but others disagree^{27,28}. Atkinson makes a strong case that the primary impetus for the writing was a response to corruption at the end of the Hasmonean reign and to the reign of Herod the Great²⁹.

Proposed dates of the writing also vary widely and include: circa 70-45 BCE (Bock)³⁰, circa 63 BCE related to Pompey's invasion per Willits³¹ who also says it was definitely prior to 40 BCE, and circa 37-30 BCE per Atkinson³² who also cites a traditional date among scholars of 60-50 BCE. Notably, all of these dates place the work well before time of Jesus and would theoretically allow for the possibility that the work had circulated and had informed the opinion of his audiences.

²⁵ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 240.

²⁶ William L Lane. "Paul's Legacy from Pharisaism: Light from the Psalms of Solomon." *Concordia Journal* 8, no. 2 (July 1982): 132-33.

²⁷ Joseph L. Trafton. "The Psalms of Solomon: New Light from the Syriac Version?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105, no.2 (1986): 227.

²⁸ Kenneth Atkinson. "Toward a Redating of the Psalms of Solomon: Implications for Understanding the *Sitz Im Leben* of an Unknown Jewish Sect." *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 17 (1998): 96.

²⁹ Atkinson, Kenneth. "On the Herodian Origin of Militant Davidic Messianism at Qumran: New Light from *Psalms of Solomon* 17." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118, no. 3 (1999): 435-460.

³⁰ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 269.

³¹ Joel Willits. "Matthew and *Psalms of Solomon*'s Messianism: A Comparative Study in First-Century Messianology." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 22, no. 1 (2012): footnote #2 on pp. 28-29.

³² Atkinson, "On the Herodian Origin of Militant Davidic Messianism", *JSP* (1998): 444

The messianic material in Psalms of Solomon is found almost entirely in Psalm 17 with the exception of a few verses in Psalm 18. The Messiah figure presented there is clearly Davidic. The Davidic covenant is carefully reiterated (17:4), the destruction of the Davidic rule by “sinners” (presumably the Hasmoneans) is lamented (17:5-6), and the displacement of these sinners by a “foreigner” is predicted in 17:7. Finally, the authors are explicit in their expectation that God will raise up a new king who is a “son of David” (17:21).

The king of Psalms of Solomon will not be a pacifist; Atkinson calls the characterization of him “graphically militaristic³³.” He will “smash” and “shatter” unrighteous rulers (17:22) and sinners (17:23-24), and will deliver the people from the uncleanness of profane enemies (17:45). Like the Enochic figure, he will destroy sinners “by the strength of his word” (17:36) and strike “with the word of his mouth” (17:35).

Unlike 1 Enoch, where the judgment of the whole world seems to be in view, the action of this kingly figure seems centered around Jerusalem. The allotments of the Promised Land will be restored and the alien expelled (17:28). He will interact with the surrounding nations, but mostly as a fierce king who is able to exert control over the whole world in such a way that the people will never again be threatened (e.g. he places the nation under his “yoke” (17:30), and in 17:34b we see that he will have “pity on all the nations” that are “before him in fear”). The geographic emphasis continues as this “Shepherd-King” (17:40) gathers a holy people that he will rule (17:26). The results of his efforts will make Jerusalem glorious and the whole earth will come to see it (17:30-31).

This future king is portrayed as a strong force for righteousness: purifying and convicting the people. He will drive out the sinner (17:23), detecting even sinful thoughts and attitudes (17:23, 25). 17:40 declares that he will keep the people from “becoming weak,” which is an excellent portrait of the type of ruler that he is: the Psalms of Solomon Messiah gathers the

³³ Ibid., 444.

strong and righteous³⁴ and keeps them that way. In this work we do not see a priestly mediator going before God on behalf of imperfect people, nor one who reaches out to heal the sinner. Perhaps he does such things, but they certainly aren't emphasized. In fact, in this perfected kingdom a priest or temple hardly seems necessary, and they aren't mentioned. This king rules by himself.³⁵

Although the Enochic figure is a heavenly king with divine traits, the Psalms of Solomon Messiah is presented as more of an idealized human leader: he is a man of great character who is "taught by God" (17:32-33) and relies on him (17:33, 37), who is pure from sin (17:36), and who acts with benevolence, leading the people as a fair and just shepherd (17:40-43). Although the wisdom of his insight seems almost super-human at times (17:25, 27), there is no indication that he is a heavenly or an apocalyptic figure³⁶. Likewise, from a spiritual perspective he is an enforcer of the law, but not an interpreter of it.

The Messiah of Psalms of Solomon is a Davidic militaristic ruler whose work is centered on the people of Israel and their promised homeland. He will drive evil out of the land and people will rejoice over his rule ("happy are those" who will see that day; 17:44, 18:6). He is modeled after Isa 11:2-4 and is presented as a "warrior, a judge, and a man of purity who will rule over a perfected Israel."³⁷

POPULAR MESSIANIC IDEAS AMONG THE PEOPLE OF JESUS' TIME

Literature from the period of 2nd temple Judaism reflects a wide range of ideas regarding who and what the Messiah would be³⁸. Possible messianic candidates are presented in

³⁴ 1 Enoch 17:26

³⁵ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 271.

³⁶ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 312.

³⁷ Atkinson, "On the Herodian Origin of Militant Davidic Messianism", *JSP* (1998): 444

³⁸ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 255, 418.

different literary works as prophet, priest, king, and sometimes heavenly or apocalyptic figures. Some manuscripts even advocate the possibility of multiple messianic figures fulfilling the different possible roles³⁹. Additionally, messianic pretenders had arisen before Jesus⁴⁰ (and would appear afterwards⁴¹), which further clouded the messianic picture in the 1st century. The broad diversity, even confusion, among the people seems to be a primary reason Jesus is cautious about publicly making messianic claims until the final week of his life⁴²—in this cultural context calling yourself “Messiah” might mean almost anything.

The gospel accounts reflect the confused and varied messianic expectation of the time. We see the disciples reporting to Jesus the widely varying beliefs about him (Mk 8:27-28), the Samaritans declare Jesus a prophet who must therefore be Messiah (John 4:42), and in John 7 we find an extended argument within the crowd about whether Messiah would come specifically from Bethlehem or whether he would be a transcendent figure. Later, Jesus’ popular approval will peak as he returns to Jerusalem on a colt and many embrace him as a political king figure. The people could not decide if Jesus was the Messiah in part because they could not agree what Messiah really was.

Atkinson points out:

While the communities that composed *Ps. Sol.* 17, the Qumran texts, and Revelation are commonly regarded as pacifistic, their common image of a warrior Messiah suggests that they looked forward with apparent eagerness to great bloodshed and annihilation of their enemies. Perhaps with this image in mind we can better understand the apparent frustration of those followers of Jesus who, having witnessed Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem as king, along with his rampage in the temple and prediction of its very destruction, were disappointed when Jesus become the slain Messiah, rather than the slaying Messiah.⁴³

³⁹ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 255-256.

⁴⁰ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 421.

⁴¹ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 427.

⁴² Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 420.

⁴³ Atkinson, “On the Herodian Origin of Militant Davidic Messianism”, *JSP* (1998): 460.

Although Jesus' disciples will later convince many of his resurrection and messianic character (cf. Acts 2), much of the populace will remain confused after his death and will keep yearning for a military/ political Messiah. The ultimate fruit of this desire may be the emergence of Simon Bar Kohkbah and the final Jewish-Roman War of 132-135AD⁴⁴.

Although they spent considerable time being taught by Jesus, at times the disciples display similar confusion about Jesus' specific messianic mission. Examples include Peter's objection to Jesus' prediction of his death (Matt 16:21-23, Mk 8:31-32) and the political ambition of the Sons of Zebedee (Matt 20:20-28, Mk 10:35-45). It is only after the death and resurrection of Jesus that they fully embrace and begin to preach Jesus' definition of Messiah, the fundamental claims of which we will examine next.

MESSIANIC PORTRAITS FROM JESUS HIMSELF

His Title

As previously noted, Jesus selectively reveals himself as Messiah. This is very different from the Messianic figure of Psalms of Solomon, although it may be similar in some aspects to the Enochic figure, depending on how one interprets 1 Enoch 48:6 ("he was chosen and *hidden* in his presence before the world was created"). Like the Enochic figure, Jesus frequently uses the title "Son of Man," with thirteen instances in the Gospel of Mark alone, divided nearly equally between references to Son of Man on earth, Son of Man in heaven and a suffering Son of Man.⁴⁵ Jesus is also referred to as Messiah (Hebrew) / Christ (Greek), a title equivalent to "Anointed One" in 1 Enoch. Contrasted with the Jewish texts that we have examined, Jesus is also explicitly called "Son of God" (Luke 1:35, Matt 8:29, Matt 16:16) and

⁴⁴ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 427.

⁴⁵ James D.G Dunn. "The Son of Man in Mark." In *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*, edited by Darrell L. Bock and James H. Charlesworth. (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 19.

“Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32), and he confirms this title before the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:70). The idea of Messiah as “Son of God” is unusual but not entirely unique to Jesus: this idea was present in some Jewish literature (namely 4Q246 2:1-9)⁴⁶.

Jesus as Prophet

In the synagogue speech at Nazareth Jesus presents himself as the one who declares the coming of God’s time of deliverance (Matt 13:53-58, Mk 6:1-6, Lk 4:16-30)⁴⁷, a seemingly prophetic role. He also plainly calls himself a prophet (Mk 6:4), he indicates future knowledge (Mark 13:2, Luke 19:41-44, Luke 22:31-34), and he doesn’t deny it when others declare him to be a prophet (John 4:19). Yet, he is more than one delivering information from God, his authority extends to reinterpretation of the law itself (Mark 1:27, Matt 5, Mk 14:22-25⁴⁸), and dominion over the law (“Lord of the Sabbath” Mark 2:27-28). In an additional shade of contrast, Jewish messianic ideas frequently anticipated an ultimate “law enforcer”, but Jesus frequently reinterprets the law to bring it closer to the heart.⁴⁹

Jesus as Priest

The prophecies immediately prior to Jesus birth declared that he will save his people from sin (Matt 1:21). During his ministry Jesus forgives individual sins (Matt 9:1-5). Both of these stand in contrast to the messiah figures of 1 Enoch and Psalms of Solomon. The Enochic

⁴⁶ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 430.

⁴⁷ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 444.

⁴⁸ A “re-interpretation” of the sacred Passover feast.

⁴⁹ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 430

figure never forgives sin,⁵⁰ and the Psalms figure is concerned with simply driving it out⁵¹. As an extension of his priestly function, Jesus purifies the temple (Matt 21:12-13). Jesus also sends the Spirit (John 16:13, Matt 3:11), which may interpreted as part of his “priestly” role. Later canonical writers will expand on the priestly motif of Jesus’ messianic portrait, most notably in Hebrews 9:11-28.

Jesus as King

Jesus presents himself as a ruler (king) having “all authority in heaven and earth” (Mt 28:18). Although he does not overtly display himself⁵² as a divine king while on earth, he displays divine supremacy including power over sin, nature (Mk 4:35-41), and spirit beings (Luke 4:41). He also predicts that he will assume a glorified and divine state, seated at the right hand of God (Matt 26:64, Mk 8:38, Mk 13:26-27, Mk 14:62, Luke 22:69), and he corrects the Sons of Zebedee for their earthly political kingdom ambitions (Matt 20:20-23). However, from an earthly perspective, Jesus’ Davidic roots are confirmed in the gospels (Luke 1:32), including nine times in Matthew's Gospel (e.g. 1:1,20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30,31; 21:9,15),⁵³ and he does not rebuke the crowd when they honor him as an earthly king during the triumphant entry (Luke 19).

As a ruling authority, Jesus has a messianic yoke (*Mt 11:28-30: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from*

⁵⁰ Dunn, “The Son of Man in Mark,” in *Parables of Enoch*, 20.

⁵¹ Willits sees a strong semblance between the emphasis of Psalms of Solomon and Matthew in regards to the Messiah’s role in purification from sin (Willits. “Matthew and *Psalms of Solomon*’s Messianism.” *BBR* (2012): 40), however I think given the drastic differences in their approaches to sin, the commonality must end there.

⁵² The Mount of Transfiguration (Matt 17, Luke 9) being a notable exception.

⁵³ Willits. “Matthew and *Psalms of Solomon*’s Messianism.” *BBR* (2012): 33

me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”). Willits points out the comparison with Psalms of Solomon 17:30, where the messiah also has a yoke that encompasses the “people of all nations.⁵⁴” However, the messianic figure of Psalms of Solomon *conquers* and places all the people under his yoke, whereas Jesus has a yoke that is voluntary and to which we are *invited*—a notable contrast.

Like the king of Psalms of Solomon, Jesus has a people that are/ will be gathered to himself (Matt 24:31, John 6:36-40). Additionally, in a similar fashion to both 1 Enoch and Psalms of Solomon, he is a king who will exercise future judgment (Matt 19:28, 25:31-33), and he is a ruler acting with wisdom (Matt 11:19).⁵⁵ His claim to be the “Good Shepherd” (John 10) mirrors the benevolence of 1 Enoch and the benevolence and shepherding motif in Psalms of Solomon. Another similarity between Jesus and the Psalms of Solomon is seen in the joy that some enlightened people express at his coming⁵⁶ (compare the account of Simeon (Lk 2:25-32) and Matt 13:16-17 with the “blessedness texts” of Psalms of Solomon 17:44, 18:6).

Among messianic figures, Jesus’ kingship also has some very unique elements. As opposed to the Davidic king of Psalms of Solomon, who merely has pity on the trembling fearful nations⁵⁷ (i.e. he does not decimate them), Jesus brings the foreigner near. Examples include the Canaanite woman of Matt 15:21-28, the good Samaritan and the Samaritan Leper. Another contrast is the transmission of Jesus’ power to his followers (Luke 9:1, Mark 16:19). Unlike the

⁵⁴ Willits. “Matthew and *Psalms of Solomon*’s Messianism.” *BBR* (2012): 37.

⁵⁵ Willits. “Matthew and *Psalms of Solomon*’s Messianism.” *BBR* (2012): 37

⁵⁶ Willits. “Matthew and *Psalms of Solomon*’s Messianism.” *BBR* (2012): 35

⁵⁷ Psalms of Solomon 17:34b

Enochic Son of Man and the Psalms of Solomon king, Christ does not rule alone, but shares his power (Luke 22:30).

One interesting similarity with the Psalms of Solomon king does emerge, namely, that because of who he (the Messiah) is, the temple becomes largely irrelevant. Willits delineates this extensively in his work:

There exists in both documents a similar ambivalence concerning the future of the Jerusalem temple after the restoration of Israel. In *Psalms of Solomon*, there is very little mention of the temple except for the corruption that it has experienced both by the invading Gentile leaders and corrupt Jewish religious leadership (cf. 2:3-5,8:11-13). There is even a hint that the group responsible for the document has boycotted the temple and has re-placed the sacrificial system with another form of atonement (*Pss. Sol.* 3:8). Embry has contested the view that the author has abandoned the temple by showing that the desire for a purified temple underlies the whole document. However, in *Pss. Sol.* 17:30-31, the glory that the nations will behold is the Messiah's. There is no mention of the temple here; rather, it seems that with the advent of the Messiah, the glory of the Lord that once resided in the temple is now residing in the Messiah. There are, however, no explicit statements about the future temple in the messianic age, and it would be inappropriate to draw any conclusions from the silence. The interest here is focused almost exclusively on the political realm and not on the priesthood.

The Gospel of Matthew is equally ambivalent about the temple in the future messianic age. Generally speaking, Matthew, through his narrative, showed a respect for the temple and its role in the life of the Jew. It was a house of prayer (21:13), a place for offering sacrifices (5:23-24), and a holy site sanctifying the objects within it (23:16-22).⁵⁰ But Matthew does believe that the corruption of the priests and others (21:13, 23:35) and the rejection of Jesus (21:42-43, 22:7) will bring about its divinely ordained destruction (24:2).⁵¹ Thus, while it is clear that Matthew believed that the Second Temple would be destroyed, it is not clear what he thought about the temple's future."⁵⁸

Truly Unique Elements in Jesus' Messianic Portraits

Although a "Suffering Servant" motif was present within the Hebrew Scriptures (Isa 42, Isa 49, Isa 50, Isa 53), this was not a prominent theme in Jewish messianic reflection and is absent from 1 Enoch and Psalms of Solomon. Jesus, however, repeats this motif at multiple points (Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34, 15:21-38. Luke 24:26) and is emphatic that it must be so. In

⁵⁸ Willits. "Matthew and *Psalms of Solomon's* Messianism." *BBR* (2012): 41-42

the apocryphal texts, the messianic figure, whether human or transcendent, is a person of unquestioned and complete authority. In contrast, Jesus claims that role for the future, and arrives there through the surprising path of suffering.⁵⁹

Another unique facet of Jesus' messianic portrait is his resurrection from death (Luke 24:46, Luke 9:22, Mk 8:31), a concept nowhere found in these two Jewish texts (or any messianic work to my knowledge). Later canonical writers will stress the importance of this aspect of Jesus' Messianism (e.g. 1 Cor 15).

Finally, the dual phase of Jesus' mission, his now and future ministry (Mark 13:32, Matt 24, Matt 25:31-33, Luke 21, Luke 17), seems to be completely unique amongst messianic reflections of the period. In some respects, it is this facet of his messianic program that allows him to fulfill so many of the messianic roles.

SUMMARY

1 Enoch presents a messianic figure that is divine, righteous and glorified. He brings a global judgment and is a divine ruler on a heavenly throne. He has little, if any, function as a priest or earthly king, and he has no Davidic connection.

The Psalms of Solomon presents a Messiah who comes as an earthly Davidic king. He is an idealized human ruler who is fiercely militaristic and a force for purification, expunging evil and enemies and building a perfected Israel.

Jesus comes as a Messiah who combines many previously disparate offices. He is a prophet, but with added authority. He is a priest, but with added dimensions. He is a Davidic king who can also claim a divine place of glory at the right hand of God. He comes as a ruler

⁵⁹ Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 347.

with all authority who shocks us by the sharing of his power, by his invited yoke, and by his example of suffering.

As the people of Jesus' day encountered him, they had many competing messianic portraits to compare him too. Jesus did not completely fit any of the pre-defined reflections and some elements of his program (suffering, resurrection and his "dual timeline" for example) must have been extremely foreign concepts to his audience, perhaps to the point of alienation. Even Jesus' followers were confused by what he meant for Messiah to really be. Yet, through the Spirit of God, the testimony of his actions, and his resurrection, they became convinced of the truth of his messianic portrait and went on to reiterate and more richly fill out that vision in the canonical writings and in the living body of the Church.

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