

“The King/Prince” (Jn. 1:47-51)

1. Son of God (47-49)
 - a. The idiomatic “son of x” is used due to the Hebrew language’s lack of adjectives for categorizing general classifications e.g. “ ‘a wicked man’ might be called ‘a son of wickedness’ (Ps. 89:22); people in trouble are ‘sons of affliction’ (Pr. 31:5; NIV ‘oppressed’); valorous men are ‘sons of valour’ (Dt. 3:18; NIV ‘able-bodied men’). Those deserving execution are ‘sons of death’ (1 Sa. 26:16). Small wonder, then, that Judas Iscariot can be called (literally) a ‘son of perdition’ (*cf.* notes on Jn. 17:12). In the sermon on the mount, peacemakers are called ‘sons of God’ (Mt. 5:9), because their peacemaking attests that in this respect at least they are imitating God. Like father, like son: so it was in the ancient world.”¹
 - b. From a more prophetic sense regarding ‘son of God,’ see Ps. 2:12; 110:1 *cf.* Mat. 22:44-45; Heb. 1:5, 8).
2. King of Israel (49)
 - a. “King of Israel” would indicate divinity more so than “son of God.”
 - b. In his commentary on John, Leon Morris states: “King of Israel” is an unusual expression. In the New Testament it is used, apart from this passage, three times only. At the triumphal entry Jesus was hailed in these terms by the multitude (12:13). As he hung on the cross Jesus was saluted as “King of Israel” and invited to come down (Matt. 27:42; Nathanael used sincerely at the very beginning of Jesus’ ministry a title that was to recur in mockery at the very end!). And Mark reports mockers as referring to “this Christ, this King of Israel” (Mark 15:32). In the Old Testament God is the King of his people, and it is clear that in the intervening period the Messiah came to be thought of as exercising the divine prerogative of rule. Nathanael is speaking in the highest terms available to him.”²
 - c. God Himself was expected to come to Zion (Jerusalem). Deut. 30:1-10 *cf.* Isa. 59:20.
 - d. He will come to His Temple Mal. 3:1 *cf.* Mat. 3:3 & Isa. 40:3
 - e. Many Jews failed to recognize such after His triumphal entry. See Lu. 19:41-44.
 - f. Perhaps the most declarative episode of Jesus’ kingship was in a private conversation w/ Pilate (Jn. 18:36-37).
 - g. The Israel of God (49-51)
 - i. The continuity of OT promise and NT procuration is found in this King of Israel.
 - ii. John continued to link Moses’ Law and the Prophet to Jesus (vv. 17 & 45). Also see 5:46!! And v. 39!!! The continuity and fulfillment is unmistakable. →
 - iii. Specific continuity of Israel can be seen here with vv. 47-51 in relation to Hos. 9:10 and the ‘Jacob’s Ladder’ episode (see Gen. 28:12ff.).
 1. Regarding ‘Jacob’s Ladder’, some rabbis taught that the angels were ascending and descending on Jacob himself. Here, Jesus claims such! Here, Jesus claims to be the point – the Person – in whom heaven and earth commune.
 2. Furthermore, Jacob called the place of the event Bethel “house of God.” (see Gen. 28:17-19).
 3. I love the way N. T. Wright phrases the intent: “Verse 51, then, seems to be a tight-packed and evocative way of saying: ‘Don’t think that all you will see is

¹ Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 161). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

² Morris, L. (1995). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 147). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

one or two remarkable acts of insight, such as you witnessed when I showed you that I knew about you before you even appeared. What you'll see from now on is the reality towards which Jacob's ladder, and even the Temple itself, was pointing like a signpost. If you follow me, you'll be watching what it looks like when heaven and earth are open to each other. You won't necessarily see the angels themselves, but you'll see things happening which show that they're there all right."³

4. It seems that Jesus was surprised that Nate's confession of His divinity came so easily and thus says in essence, "You ain't seen nothin' yet!"
5. "I assure 'you all' ..." = plural, not just to Nate but a promise to all His disciples.

iv. Regarding continuity of identity of "Israel."

1. Jacob (the deceiver) had his name changed to Israel by the Angel of YHWH (Gen. 32:22-30) correlating to Jesus renaming Peter.
2. Jesus told Nathanael he had no deceit thus correlating to Jacob the deceiver's new identity as Israel (cf. Ps. 32:2).
3. As Jacob saw angels ascend and descend so Jesus correlated such to Himself.
4. Enter Hosea 9:10 correlating to Jesus seeing Nate
5. Nate's doubt about expectations correlates to Hosea's surprise about finding fruit in a barren land i.e. grapes in the wilderness.
6. Enter Zech. 3:10 correlating to Phil to Nate
7. There are other Scriptural links not mentioned here but one more intriguing relation of Nathan's confession of Jesus' Kingship is that he is "without deceit" and only those "of the truth listen to my voice" (Jn. 18:37).

v. Titles of Jesus: at least 10 in this chapter and ironically, only the nonbelievers in this Gospel account address Jesus by His birth name whereas the others attribute titles to His person.

3. Son of Man (50-51)

- a. Dan. 7:13. As noted above: Just as "King of Israel" alludes more to divinity than "Son of God," so too "Son of Man" more than "King of Israel."
- b. For all other worldviews and religions, salvation or actualization is a one way affair of pursuit and achievement. And even then, there is no real guarantee of achieving such. But finding and following Jesus is always initiated by God and involves a relationship of volition, love, and redemption!
- c. We considered the OT links to this passage and their implications but John Chrysostom (known as the golden tonged preacher) discussed the pronouncement at some length without any reference to the Genesis text: "For on Him as on the King's own Son, the royal ministers ascended and descended, once at the season of the Crucifixion, again at the time of the Resurrection and the Ascension, and before this also, when they 'came and ministered unto Him' (Matt. 4:11), when they proclaimed the glad tidings of His birth, and cried, 'Glory to

³ Wright, T. (2004). *John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10* (pp. 18-19). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

God in the highest, and on earth peace' (Luke 2:14), when they came to Mary and Joseph."⁷⁷

- d. The contemporary N.T. scholar D. A. Carson emphasized Jesus fulfillment of this statement: The fulfillment of the promise of 1:51, the culmination of the Father's attestation of the Son, the privilege of seeing the glory of the Son of Man—these transpire throughout the Fourth Gospel, and are climaxed by Jesus' death and resurrection. Thus, 'you shall see' relates not to a future beyond the death of Jesus (as in Mark 14:62), but to the entire gamut of the action of the Son of Man for the kingdom of God: from the heaven that became open at his baptism, the blessings of the saving sovereignty will be poured out through him in the signs he performs, the revelation of his word, the life that he lives, the death and resurrection that he accomplishes ... till the goal is attained when the Son of Man welcomes the redeemed to the Father's house (14:3) (Beasley-Murray, p. 28).⁵

PC: "Many in the One" (Jn. 1:19-46)

After introducing Jesus as co-creator and as God himself, John established that the many roles of the Messiah are found in Jesus alone. As Hank Hanegraaff often says, "Only Jesus could walk through the door of the Old Testament prophets." And the prophets spoke much about the coming one. Granted, no single prophet spoke about all the roles of Messiah but the accumulation of the prophets provide a collage of aspects of the person and work of God's anointed who would come to Zion. Here in our focal passage, John provided a swiftly stated collection of titles for which others and Jesus himself attributed to his essence and mission. Each attribute and role is essential to our salvation.

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It is not so amazing that the eternal God created the cosmos, but it is incomprehensible that God became flesh. It is not so amazing that after He was incarnated that He justified believers, but it is wonderfully amazing that He confounded the wise and achieved His mission via profound humiliation, faith, and sacrifice. Jesus is the King of Glory (Ps. 24) and yet He is the Son of God i.e. God's Prince/Warrior, from which the term Israel is derived (Gen. 32:27-28). Jesus Messiah is the King who reigns from heaven. Jesus is also the Son of Man who ascended on the clouds (only God rides the clouds) "to the Ancient of Days" (Dan. 7:13-14) after securing salvation for His people resulting in exaltation from those He came to save via serving as a slain Lamb (Rev. 5).

⁷⁷ *Homily 21* (NPNF, 1st. ser., 14.73). Origen's commentary is unfortunately not extant on this passage. The earliest commentator to mention Jacob at Bethel seems to have been Augustine, whose exegesis is on the whole less plausible than Chrysostom's. Augustine noticed that Jacob "anointed the stone which he had placed at his head" (Gen 28:18), and saw this as "a pointing out of Christ," the anointed Stone of Isaiah 28:16 and 1 Peter 2:6. The angels he interpreted as "good preachers, preaching Christ; this is the meaning of 'they ascend and descend upon the Son of man.'" *On the Gospel of John*, 7 (NPNF, 2d ser., 7.56–57). For a good brief survey of patristic views, see Bernard, 1.70–72.

⁴ Michaels, J. R. (2010). *The Gospel of John* (p. 136). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Beasley-Murray G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC 36; Word Books, 1987).

⁵ *Ibid.* Carson. pp. 164–165.