

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

## Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

---

Master of Sacred Theology Thesis

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

---

5-1-2012

### The Hour Has Come-A Narrative-Critical Analysis Of The Use Of ὥρα in the Gospel of John

Dennis Matyas

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/stm>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Matyas, Dennis, "The Hour Has Come-A Narrative-Critical Analysis Of The Use Of ὥρα in the Gospel of John" (2012). *Master of Sacred Theology Thesis*. 43.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/stm/43>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Sacred Theology Thesis by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

**THE HOUR HAS COME**  
**A Narrative-Critical Analysis of the Use of ὥρα in the Gospel of John**

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of  
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Exegetical Department  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

By  
Dennis W. Matyas, M. Div.  
May, 2012

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Bruce G. Schuchard Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
~~Dr. Jeffrey~~ A. Gibbs Reader

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. David Maxwell Reader



## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
ABSTRACT .....	vii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
The Thesis .....	1
The Current Status of the Question .....	1
The Plan of the Thesis .....	7
The Methodological Procedure to be Employed .....	8
The Outcome Anticipated .....	10
The Research Areas to be Pursued .....	10
2. THE USE OF ὥρα IN BIBLICAL AND EXTRA-BIBLICAL SOURCES .....	12
Greco-Roman Greek Sources .....	12
Jewish Sources .....	15
The New Testament .....	19
Oscar Cullmann .....	20
3. THE HOUR OF JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN .....	27
The Glory of Jesus in the Signs of Jesus .....	28
The Hour of Jesus .....	43
Summary .....	56
4. OTHER HOURS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN .....	57

The Ecclesiological Hour .....	57
The Proverbial Hour .....	68
The Hours of the Day .....	71
Summary .....	79
5. CONCLUSION .....	80
Appendix	
1. "TIME" WORDS IN JOHN .....	84
2. ΩΠΑ IN THE NEW TESTAMENT .....	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	87

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Bruce Schuchard, whose M. Div. class on John first gave me pause regarding the sixth hour at the well, and ultimately sparked my interest in the hour of Jesus. His oversight of this thesis has been indispensable, his wisdom on all things John astounding, and his attention to detail was second to none.

I would also like to thank my readers, Jeff Gibbs, and David Maxwell. Dr. Gibbs offered much appreciated help in the development of my topic idea and prospectus, and suffered patiently when I changed my topic several times. Dr. Maxwell's painstaking work with Cyril lends a truly unique perspective on the mindset of an ancient author.

A man's experience at seminary would not be complete without the support and camaraderie of his friends. A special thanks must be said to Tim Koch, who has to buy me a board game now because I finished my thesis quicker than he did, to Kyle Fittje, who constantly distracted me in our library study corral, and to Ruth McDonnell for all the coffee.

Finally, countless thanks are due to my wife, Valerie. When I told her our first year of seminary that I wanted to stay for an STM, she promptly burst into tears. I now truly understand how Adam felt when he gazed upon Eve and "in delight / Both of her beauty and submissive charms / Smiled with superior love." The hour has come, Valerie! Thank you for believing in me.

## **ABSTRACT**

After summarizing eschatology in the Gospel of John, this STM thesis examines the use of ὥρα in Greco-Roman Greek sources, extra-biblical Jewish sources, the LXX, and the New Testament. After this examination, the thesis argues that each and every use of ὥρα in the Gospel of John either refers directly to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death or bears a special relationship to it.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Thesis

Every instance of ὥρα in the Gospel of John either refers to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross or bears a relationship to it. This STM thesis will demonstrate that each and every occurrence of ὥρα is affected by this greater theme.

#### The Current Status of the Question

Much has been done and continues to be done in the study of John to connect the “hour” of Jesus (2:4) to the hour of his suffering and death (7:6, 8, 30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1). Most notable for our purposes are George Parsenios,<sup>1</sup> who studies the rhetorical foreshadowing of Jesus' suffering and death in John within the context of Greek drama, and Andreas Köstenberger,<sup>2</sup> who argues that the Gospel's ominously repeated reference to Jesus' “hour” reflects Greco-Roman literary conventions and supports the atmosphere of tragedy.

Much has been done also in the study of the Gospel's eschatology (see below). But little to no attention has been paid to the instances of ὥρα in John that do not make direct reference to the coming of Jesus' hour (1:38, 4:6, 52, 53; 5:35; 11:9; 16:21; 19:14, 27).

---

<sup>1</sup> George L. Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Andreas Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters: The Word, the Christ, the Son of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 104–24.



Raymond Brown<sup>3</sup> distinguishes between the use of ὥρα when Jesus' hour is yet to come or still coming (2:4; 4:21, 23, 25; 5:28, 29; 7:30; 8:20; 11:2; 16:25, 32), and when it has come (12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1), but he does not make a connection between these and what might be called the “orphan” instances of ὥρα. A lack of appreciation for the question has continued to describe the many commentaries that have appeared since Brown.<sup>4</sup> While the more obvious eschatological implications of ὥρα when used with reference to the hour of Jesus are recognized almost universally by commentators, the same commentators characteristically seem to take the “orphan” instances of ὥρα for granted as mere incidental temporal descriptors with no real connection to John's otherwise evident reasons for the use of the word.

Stephanos Mihalios comes closest to the goal of this STM thesis.<sup>5</sup> Through his close examination of the use of ὥρα in the Old Testament and in the otherwise extant Jewish literature of the first century, Mihalios argues that Jesus' ὥρα in the Gospel of John is consistently reminiscent of the eschatology of Daniel. Though Mihalios does not treat every instance of ὥρα in John, his study offers helpful insights into an understanding of the eschatology of John and of Jesus' hour.

For example, Mihalios argues that there is an explicit analogy between John 5:25, 28–29 and Daniel 12:1–2. The authority of the Son of Man to judge, the honor given to the Son from the Ancient of Days, and the similarity of the language in both texts support this connection.

---

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (The Anchor Bible 29–29A; 2 vols; Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 1:517. Though dated, Brown's encyclopedic commentary continues for good reason to be highly regarded.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (2d ed; Word Biblical Commentary 36; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999); Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (2d ed; The New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); and more recently J. Ramsay Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Stefanos Mihalios, *The Danielic Eschatological Hour in the Johannine Literature* (Library of New Testament Studies 436; New York: T & T Clark, 2011).

From this, Mihalios concludes that John deliberately alludes to the Danielic “hour” of judgment, and that this hour refers “to a final judgment and a final resurrection.”<sup>6</sup> He then continues to analyze John 12:23, 27 and 16:16–33 in light of the Danielic hour, concluding that Jesus reveals himself as the eschatological fulfillment of the Danielic eschatological prophecies. Such close connections to Daniel “echo eschatological Old Testament expectations” and show that “Jesus’s hour inaugurates the eschatological era.”<sup>7</sup>

Mihalios’s work notwithstanding, a comprehensive study of John’s extensive use of ὥρα is still lacking. A careful examination of the narrative significance of ὥρα when the term does not explicitly refer to the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death is needed still.

### **Eschatology in the Gospel of John**

Crucial to an understanding of the “hour” of Jesus is an understanding of John’s eschatology. Indeed, “eschatology touches on many topics in Johannine thought (e.g., life, faith, Son of Man, Paraclete/Spirit, judgment, union with God, *the hour*, Parousia, the prince of this world).”<sup>8</sup> According to Köstenberger,

the most appropriate place to begin to understand John’s teaching on the end times is with the Johannine worldview or *Weltanschauung*. John’s outlook ... contrasts the realms above and below, light and darkness, life and death, flesh and spirit, truth and falsehood, love and hate, and belief and unbelief as part of the grand cosmic drama in which God and his Messiah are opposed by Satan, “the prince of this world,” and the unbelieving world.<sup>9</sup>

John’s worldview can be described as having four characteristics. First, there is one God who delivered the Israelites from bondage and slavery many times throughout history.<sup>10</sup> Second,

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>8</sup> Brown, *Introduction*, 234–35. Italics added.

<sup>9</sup> Köstenberger, *Theology*, 295.

<sup>10</sup> See Köstenberger, *Theology*, 279–80 for this overview.

the Messiah of Old Testament expectation came in the person of Jesus (John 1:14). This is evident not only in the revelation of God's glory in Jesus (13:31–32), but in the manner in which John quotes the Old Testament. According to a thorough study of the form and function of John's explicit Old Testament references,

John's references to the Old Testament consistently touch on the identity of Jesus and assert that the details of Jesus' life and especially his death on the cross *fulfill Scripture*. For John, therefore, the past, the Old Testament with its observances and all its institutions, is not negated; it is confirmed and completed ... Thus, John employs Old Testament citations as discrete, concrete illustrations of his Gospel's larger scheme to convey John's conviction that the entire Old Testament testifies to Jesus (5.39, 45–46). Jesus, therefore, has fulfilled all of Scripture and is himself its ultimate significance.<sup>11</sup>

Third, Israel's history has come to fruition in the person of Jesus Christ (3:16; 20:31), whose miraculous signs and death revealed the glory of God (1:14; 2:11; 12:23, 28; 13:31–32). Fourth, humanity is in bondage to the darkness and can only be released through the light of Jesus (1:4–5, 7–9; 3:19–21; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9–10; 12:35–36, 46). This dualism between the world and its “prince” (12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and the children of the light (12:36) characterizes the cosmic struggle prevalent in the Gospel of John. Indeed, “in John's worldview, there is ultimately no middle ground between the striking contrasts of light versus darkness, life versus death, truth versus falsehood, love versus hate, and trust versus unbelief.”<sup>12</sup> In keeping with the dualism present in the narrative, it is appropriate to follow Brown in defining John's eschatology in terms that are vertical and horizontal, realized and futuristic.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Bruce G. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture: The Interrelationship of Form and Function in the Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John* (SBL Dissertation Series 133; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 154–56. Italics added.

<sup>12</sup> Köstenberger, *Theology*, 280.

<sup>13</sup> See Brown, *Introduction*, 234 and Brown, *John*, 1:cxxv.

## **Vertical and Horizontal**

Salvation comes from above (1:1–5; 3:3), yet the eternal Word accomplishes this when he takes on flesh and blood (1:14) at a specific time, for a specific purpose. The reason that Jesus came into the darkness was to reconcile all things unto the Father, which was accomplished by his hour (12:27; 19:30). These vertical actions take place for us and for our salvation in the horizontal realm. “Thus, salvation lies either in history or as a climax to history,”<sup>14</sup> or it has no meaning.

The vertical and horizontal dimension of John’s eschatology cannot be said to exist apart from each other. That is to say, one cannot point to the work of Jesus and declare it to be solely vertical *or* horizontal, since the vertical is in service to the horizontal (3:16–21) and vice versa (10:28–30). This is further supported by Jesus’ divine purpose and intentions for the physical nature of the fallen world. The Word became flesh and dwelt among the people (1:14), who have seen the fulfillment of his glory by his death on the cross (19:30; cf. 1 John 1:1). The gifts he brings to the people are heavenly, yet come for the sake of the redemption of creation, embodied typologically in the personhood of Jesus.

Therefore, there is a greater temple in Christ’s body than the one in Jerusalem (Jn 2:21). There is a divine begetting that takes place apart from a mother’s womb (3:3). There is eternal thirst-quenching water (4:14). There is life in the miraculously multiplying bread (6:14, 35). Sight is given to the blind both spiritually and physically (9:7, 38). Jesus is the resurrection and the life (11:43–44; 20:9). There is a literal hour of Jesus’ death (12:23; 13:1; 17:1; 19:14), which

---

<sup>14</sup> Brown, *Introduction*, 235. See also Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, 179, who writes “In the three decisive stages of the Christ-line of salvation the general process is drawn into the redemptive process. It is so in Creation: everything is created through Christ. It is so in Christ’s death and resurrection: everything is reconciled through him. It is so in the eschatological completion: everything is subjected to God, who is all in all.”

is the horizontal climax of the vertical in-breaking of the divine upon the created order, whose significance one sees in the resurrection of Jesus in the flesh. This “hour of Jesus’ passion, death, resurrection, and ascension in the flesh is the culminating hour in the long history of God’s dealings,” and fulfills Scripture (19:28), enacting the completion of God’s salvific purposes for Israel in history.<sup>15</sup>

### **Realized and Futuristic**

In the worship of God in Spirit and truth, Jesus has come as the fulfillment of the Jewish religion (4:22), and true worship is through him alone. Indeed, no one can even be his disciple unless the Father enables him (6:65), and he alone has the words of eternal life (6:68). Therefore there is nowhere else to go, and no one else to which to turn. This is the “now” of Jesus’ hour (cf. 3:19; 5:36; 9:5–7; 11:40–44; 14:23; 16:33; 17:26), which “is a characteristic of John, who tilts his emphasis to the *present* enjoyment of eschatological blessings.”<sup>16</sup> The believers are not going where Jesus is going, yet they are not to remain static while on earth (21:15–19). Furthermore, they will receive the Paraclete to continue the ministry of Jesus on earth (16:5–15).

This realized eschatology, however, is also futuristic. There will come an hour when every worshiper will do so in Spirit and truth (4:21, 23). This has begun to happen (4:39; 6:68; 9:36; 12:3), yet will take place more fully in the future, as even those who have gone before us in death will hear the voice of Jesus and come out of their graves (5:25, 28; 11:44!). Jesus acknowledges the curse of death for his believers, yet promises unending life and physical

---

<sup>15</sup> Brown, *Introduction*, 237–38. It is important to note Brown’s caution against those who find in the vertical/horizontal blending in the Gospel of John a product of the so-called “Hellenistic and Hebrew approaches to salvation.” Such blending, observes Brown, “occurred long before the Fourth Gospel was written.” In fact, Christian theology has traditionally embraced both “the vertical and horizontal in positing the immortality of the soul as well as the final resurrection of the dead.”

<sup>16</sup> Carson, *John*, 97. Italics original.

satisfaction (4:14; 6:35, 54; 7:37). This is the voice of the Good Shepherd, who has sheep now (10:4; 17:6) and will have more in the future (10:16; 17:20). Says Carson

This is neither an aberration in John's thought, nor a piece of unassimilated tradition clumsily added by an incompetent redactor. It is part of what makes it possible for Christians to think of themselves as living between the 'already' and the 'not yet', between D-day and V-day (to use Cullmann's famous analogy). If John insists that Jesus even now makes himself present amongst his followers in the person of his Spirit (e.g. 14:23), he also insists Jesus himself is coming back to gather his own to the dwelling he has prepared for them (14:1-3).<sup>17</sup>

This meager eschatological summary is sufficient to prepare us for the examination of Jesus' hour. The both vertical and horizontal, realized and futuristic orientation of John's eschatology finds expression in the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. There, the faithful are given to "see" Jesus' glory as anticipated in the proleptic glory of Jesus' signs (see Chapter Three).

### **The Plan of the Thesis**

Therefore, this STM thesis will pursue a narrative study of the Gospel of John comprised of five chapters. Chapter One will offer a thesis statement and a review of the current status of the question. The methodological procedure to be employed in completing the work of the thesis will be detailed, this thesis' anticipated outcomes will be stated, and the research areas pursued will be identified. Chapter Two will summarize what can be said regarding the use of ὥρα in the canonical and extant extra-canonical literature of the period in which the Gospel of John was likely to have been composed and published. Chapter Three will turn to the Gospel of John and will show how ὥρα serves first in the Gospel to describe either an hour of Jesus that will come or has come. Every instance of ὥρα which explicitly refers to Jesus' suffering and death on the

---

<sup>17</sup> Carson, *John*, 98.

cross will be examined. Building upon this chapter, Chapter Four will show that each and every other occurrence of ὥρα in John is effected by this greater theme. Every instance of ὥρα which otherwise does not seem explicitly to refer to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross will be examined as nevertheless bearing a measurable and important relationship to that hour. Chapter Five will offer summary reflection on this thesis' conclusions, including suggested areas for further research.

### **The Methodological Procedure To Be Employed**

In 1974, Birger Olsson wrote a structural analysis of the Gospel of John in which he concerned himself primarily with “an analysis of the constitutive elements in the text ... to determine its message and then describe its linguistic and literary form.”<sup>18</sup> Olsson's approach was indicative of the narrative criticism that would follow through which John would be subsequently studied. Following Olsson was Alan Culpepper who cast open the floodgates of the narrative critical study of the Gospel of John with his book *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*.<sup>19</sup>

Culpepper's narrative critical analysis of the Gospel identifies the many literary aspects of its narrative that were previously unmapped by Johannine scholarship. Of particular relevance to this thesis is his study of time. Culpepper distinguishes “narrative time” from “story time” and shows how anachronisms within the narrative “are so rich in allusions to previous and coming events that they quickly communicate a great deal of story content while leaving readers with unanswered questions to stimulate their interest.”<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Birger Olsson, *Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel: A Text-Linguistic Analysis of John 2: 1–11 and 4: 1–42* (Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series 6; Lund, Sweden: Gleerup, 1974), 3.

<sup>19</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

Culpepper's magisterial work inspired many other scholars to conduct narrative studies of the Fourth Gospel. Following Culpepper, Jeffrey Lloyd Staley examined rhetorical strategies in John.<sup>21</sup> His reading was based on a theory of communicative linguistics, and differentiated between the implied reader and implied author of the Gospel.<sup>22</sup> A few years later, Mark Stibbe continued Staley's work in advocating the reading of John as a narrative history of the Christian community.<sup>23</sup> R. Alan Culpepper then revisited his own narrative reading of John in 1998 with *The Gospel and Letters of John*.<sup>24</sup>

Another comprehensive narrative reading of John's Gospel is the three-part commentary by Francis Moloney.<sup>25</sup> Based on primary themes found within the greater structure of the Gospel, Moloney's work on the "glory" of Christ's death will be especially helpful to this thesis. More critical analyses of the Fourth Gospel are continually emerging as narrative criticism becomes more and more popular, not the least of which is George Parsenios's monograph on the drama of Jesus' trial.<sup>26</sup>

As reflected in current scholarship, the plan of the present thesis will be to pursue a narrative critical examination of the use of ὄρα in the Gospel of John. James Resseguie suggests that narrative criticism is a useful method for interpreting Scripture for three reasons.<sup>27</sup> First, it

---

<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey Lloyd Staley, *The Print's First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel* (SBL Dissertation Series 82; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 48–49.

<sup>23</sup> Mark Stibbe, *John as Storyteller* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992).

<sup>24</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> Francis J. Moloney, *Belief in the Word: Reading John 1–4* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993); *Signs and Shadows: Reading John 5–12* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1996); and *Glory Not Dishonor: Reading John 13–21* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1998). See also *John* (Sacra Pagina v. 4; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998).

<sup>26</sup> See Parsenios in footnote 1. See also the several useful essays in Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, eds., *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 200; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 38–39.



reads the text as a unified whole, rather than dismembering its parts and leaving them disjointed and unrelated to one another. Second, narrative criticism calls for a closer examination of the text in order to better understand its design as an integral story. Intricacies, idioms, and nuances are scrutinized in light of the narrative's greater thematic structure and meaning. Third, the effect of the text upon the reader is recognized and valued with narrative criticism. Such a methodology will prove useful in examining the rhetorical significance of ὥρα in John. Therefore, this thesis will pursue a narrative reading of the Gospel of John through the eschatological lens of Jesus' hour.

### **The Outcome Anticipated**

A greater understanding of John's use of ὥρα is anticipated. Specifically, a thoroughgoing understanding of John's use of ὥρα in terms of the eschatological hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross and its implications in the narrative setting of the Gospel of John is anticipated.

### **The Research Areas To Be Pursued**

Research areas necessary for the completion of this thesis include narrative critical readings of the Gospel of John, New Testament introduction, history, and theology, especially as these relate to John, Johannine eschatology, and the use of ὥρα both in the extant literature of the first century and in the Gospel of John.

Craig Koester has written several helpful books.<sup>28</sup> Now dated but still essential for the

---

<sup>28</sup> To name two, see Craig Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), and his more recent *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

study of John is the late Raymond Brown's Anchor Bible Commentary.<sup>29</sup> Brown's *Introduction to the Gospel of John*, edited after his death by Francis Moloney in 2003, is a helpful overview of the questions that have been taken up and the work that has been done in the study of John.<sup>30</sup> A recent, comprehensive Johannine theology has now been provided by Andreas Köstenberger.<sup>31</sup> Köstenberger's work will prove useful in surveying the Gospel's eschatology.

The encyclopedic untranslated work by Jörg Frey stands as the foremost authority in the study of the Gospel's eschatology.<sup>32</sup> Douglas Estes provides a helpful new framework for understanding the narrative value of time in the Gospel of John,<sup>33</sup> while Stephan Mihalios, as the title of his book suggests, gives a much more specific study of the biblical use of ὥρα.<sup>34</sup> Even with these detailed works, little if anything has been done on the instances of ὥρα which do *not* directly refer to the eschatological hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. Suffice to say, especially these uses of ὥρα in the Gospel of John remain a field ripe for narratological harvest.

---

<sup>29</sup> See footnote #4.

<sup>30</sup> Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (ed. by Francis J. Moloney; Garden City: Doubleday, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> See footnote #2. A recent magisterial NT biblical theology is G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011). Beale is exhaustive and faithful in his study of the narrative continuity of Scripture as a whole.

<sup>32</sup> Jörg Frey, *Die Johanneische Eschatologie* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 110; 3 vols; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997).

<sup>33</sup> Douglas Estes, *The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel: A Theory of Hermeneutical Relativity in the Gospel of John* (Biblical Interpretation Series 92; Boston: Brill, 2008).

<sup>34</sup> See footnote #7.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE USE OF ὥρα IN BIBLICAL AND EXTRA-BIBLICAL SOURCES

For most, the Gospel of John was written sometime between 70 and 110 A.D. in the Greco-Roman province of Asia Minor.<sup>1</sup> Because it was written in Greek for both Jews and Gentiles to hear and believe (John 20:31), it will benefit our discussion to explore how ὥρα was used and understood first in the extra-biblical Greek literature of the period that is neither Jewish nor Christian, second in Jewish literature (including the Old Testament), and finally in the non-Johannine works of the earliest church. The temporal theology of Oscar Cullmann will also be examined as a contextual foundation of the use of ὥρα in John. This chapter will help thus to build a context in which the study of ὥρα specifically in the Gospel of John can be done.

#### Greco-Roman Greek Sources

Perhaps because there is such uncritical uniformity regarding the meaning of the word, detailed studies of the Greco-Roman use of ὥρα are relatively scarce.<sup>2</sup> However, it can be shown

---

<sup>1</sup> See Köstenberger, *Theology*, 53. See also D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 264–67.

<sup>2</sup> Several mainstream theological dictionaries, such as George Arthur Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962); T. Desmond Alexander, et al., eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2000); Leland Ryken, et al., ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 1998); and Craig A. Evans & Stanley E. Porter, eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), though redeemable by many other good qualities, lack significant citations for the use of ὥρα in extra-biblical Greek literature, or else lack articles on “hour” and “time” altogether. The theological dictionaries most useful for the study of ὥρα are Colin Brown, et al., eds., *Pri-Z* (vol. 1 of *New Testament Theology*; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 3:845–50; and Gerhard Kittle and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976), 10:675–81. These two, along with Frederick William Danker, et al., eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3d ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); and Henry George Liddell, and Robert Scott, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), reference several helpful extra-biblical writings in their definitions of ὥρα.

that there are at least two different ways of understanding the frequent use of the term in ancient Greek literature. These, coupled with the Jewish and Christian use of the word, will provide a sufficient background for the study of ὥρα in John.

There are essentially two different uses of ὥρα in the Greek literature of the period: specific and nonspecific. Either ὥρα can mean a definitive period of time, “fixed by natural laws and revolutions, whether of the year, month, or day,” or it can have a more undefined, metaphorical meaning as in “the fitting time or season for a thing.”<sup>3</sup> In the former, the time (ὥρα) of year is further categorized into seasons, and the time of the day is separated into twenty-four ὥραι. “In ordinary life, the day from sunrise to sunset was divided into twelve equal parts called ὥραι.”<sup>4</sup> In Homer’s *Iliad*, ὥρα “is readily used to describe the seasons ... above all spring ... and summer,”<sup>5</sup> and the *Odyssey* uses ὥρα to mark “the customarily appropriate time for certain activities, e.g. the evening meal ... [and] going to sleep.”<sup>6</sup>

Nonspecific uses include the appropriate “time” to be married or the appropriate “time” to reap the harvest.<sup>7</sup> These uses can be characterized as nonspecific because they express a period of time that is open to subjective judgment. There is also a personification of αἱ ὥραι, “the goddesses of the seasons, who guard the heavenly gates of Olympus.”<sup>8</sup> The adjectival form of the word “means appropriate to the season, at the right time,”<sup>9</sup> which comes closest to the dramatic use of ὥρα in John. It would appear that the extra-biblical Greek use of ὥρα is not unlike the standard English use of the word “hour.”

---

<sup>3</sup> Köstenberger, *Theology*, 53.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. See also BDAG.

<sup>5</sup> Brown, *NTT*, 3:845.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> See Kittle, *TDNT*, 10:675.

<sup>8</sup> Brown, *NTT*, 3:845.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

With the specific use of the word, there are two methods for reckoning the twenty-four hours of the day: from midnight, or from sunrise. The late Brooke Foss Westcott was one of the few commentators on the Gospel of John to argue that the Evangelist reckoned the first hour of the day from midnight.

It must, however, be admitted that this mode of reckoning hours was unusual in ancient times. The Romans and Greeks, no less than the Jews, reckoned their *hours* from sunrise. But the Romans reckoned their civil *days* from midnight ... and not from sunrise, or from sunset (as the Jews). And there are also traces of reckoning the hours from midnight in Asia Minor. Polycarp is said (*Mart. Pol.* c. 21) to have been martyred at Smyrna “at the eighth hour.” This, from the circumstances, must have been 8 *a.m.* Pionius again is said to have been martyred (at Smyrna also) at “the tenth hour,” which can hardly have been 4 *p.m.*, since such exhibitions usually took place before noon.<sup>10</sup>

Responding directly to Westcott, Leon Morris denies that the Evangelist used the Roman time scheme, but corroborates the Roman evidence with a quotation from Pliny: “The actual period of a day has been differently kept by different people ... the common people everywhere from dawn to dark, the Roman priests and the authorities who fixed the official day, and also the Egyptians and Hipparchus, the period from midnight to midnight.”<sup>11</sup> The caution with this quote, argues Morris, is that there is no explicit evidence that this “official day” began at midnight. Such reckoning was usually reserved for “legal matters like leases.”<sup>12</sup>

The Codex-Calendar of 354 A.D., though late and Latin, can corroborate this use of “hour” in Greek. According to Michele Salzman, the week was divided into seven days based on

---

<sup>10</sup> Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Gospel according to St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 2:326, italics original.

<sup>11</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (2d ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 708n36.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* For further support of Westcott, see James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1909), 935–36, who writes that the twelve hours of the day, beginning at midnight, “were divided into the four military watches of three hours each.”

astrological calendars from Egypt.<sup>13</sup> The days were divided into two twelve-hour periods. On the Codex-Calendar, “each hour is recorded with its specific properties, considered either good (*bona*), bad (*noxia*), or indifferent (*communis*).”<sup>14</sup> Next to each hour is its corresponding planet, which rules over the particular hour. Of greater importance to the Codex-Calendar is the twelve-month astrological cycle, but Salzman’s investigation nevertheless demonstrates the existence of a twenty-four hour daily cycle beginning at midnight that was well established by the fourth century. We will discuss the midnight hour and its true significance to this thesis in Chapter Four.

### **Jewish Sources**

For our purposes, Jewish literature is especially important in determining the meaning of ὥρα in John, since the Gospel “seems to presuppose an audience that is already familiar with Scripture.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, John cites the Old Testament with the purpose of identifying Jesus Christ within the context of the Jewish narrative. When he explicitly does so, he quotes exclusively from the Old Greek. Bruce Schuchard notes that

The form of the explicit Old Testament citations in the Gospel of John is best explained in terms of John’s purposeful editing of passages which John recalls from the Old Greek. John’s citations are products of his editorial activity which reflect his authorial intent. John has carefully adapted his citations to their eventual literary and theological context. As such, John’s citations consistently complement both the immediate Gospel contexts in which they appear and the context of John’s Gospel as a whole.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, that this study takes the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures into account is critically important to its objectives.

---

<sup>13</sup> Michele Renee Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 31.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Köstenberger, *Theology*, 85.

<sup>16</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 152.

As with Greek literature, there is, generally speaking, in Jewish sources also a specific and a nonspecific meaning of ὥρα. It is typically translated from the Hebrew word שָׁעָה, which in the Old Testament frequently denotes a standard, specific time as well as a nonspecific time understood within an eschatological framework.<sup>17</sup>

In the LXX, ὥρα is used a total of fifty-three times.<sup>18</sup> It can denote a specific, regular, defined time for something, such as a dinner or an evening sacrifice (Dan 9:21). Thus, it is announced that the Lord will return to Abraham at the same “hour” next year and Sarah will have a son (Gen 18:10, 14). Elisha announces the same to the Shunammite woman (2 Ki 4:16, 17). It is not yet the “hour” for Laban’s flocks to be gathered when Jacob meets Rachel for the first time (Gen 29:7). It is the “hour” of the meal when Boaz invites Ruth to eat (Ruth 2:14). It is the “hour” of a meeting for Jehu (2 Kgs 10:6). The noun can also be used to tell time as modern humans would, as in “it is the 6th hour of the day,” though it is almost never used this way in the LXX (Dan 4:16 and Neh 8:3 are likely the only exceptions).

The use of ὥρα in the LXX can also be nonspecific, as in the time or season of a particular established event—though not exactly the time of day—like the Passover (Ex 13:10; Num 9:2), or the harvest (Hos 2:9), or the “hour” for God’s blessings to rain down (sometimes literally) upon his people (Deut 11:14; 33:13, 14, 16; Zech 10:1).

In addition, ὥρα is used eschatologically in the LXX. It denotes a divinely appointed hour (Job 24:1; 38:23), and is frequently associated with judgment. This is evident in the “hour” of the

---

<sup>17</sup> See Francis Brown, et al., ed., *The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic: Coded with the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 773.

<sup>18</sup> See Mihalios, *Danielic Eschatological Hour*, 4n11, for an explanatory listing. See also Kittle, *TDNT*, 10:676–77.

plague of locusts (Ex 9:18; 10:4), every “hour” in which the judges of Israel are to serve (Ex 18:22, 26), Aaron’s prohibition not to enter the Holy of Holies at any “hour” he chooses (Lev 16:2), Joshua’s victory over the northern kings (Jos 11:6), God’s punishment over David’s illegal census (2 Sam 24:15), Elisha’s economic prophesying (2 Kgs 7:1, 18), the “hour” of the finger writing on the wall (Dan 5:5), and universal distress over the final “hour” and the judgment of God (Dan 12:1, 13).<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the use of ὥρα in the LXX compares favorably to the specific and nonspecific uses in extra-biblical Greek sources. In addition, ὥρα in the LXX bears an eschatological sense of judgment and finality. Stephanos Mihalios’ study of the Danielic eschatological “hour” is crucial to this thesis, and deserves further treatment.<sup>20</sup>

Mihalios reports that the word ἡμέρα, occurring almost three-hundred times in the Old Testament, is translated in the LXX not only with ὥρα but also with καιρός and ἡμέρας. This is most notable in the phrase ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκεῖνον,<sup>21</sup> a phrase that can indicate the eschatological time of God’s intervention and a time of distress.<sup>22</sup> This is consistent with the eschatological use of ὥρα in the LXX listed above. Moreover, καιρός, appearing twice in John (7:6, 8), is interchangeable with John’s use of ὥρα (see Chapter Four). Thus, the nonspecific use of ὥρα in the LXX is virtually interchangeable with the eschatological use of καιρός. As Mihalios states:

By “eschatological” we mean God’s appointed time in history that introduces a distinct era in which reality as we know it is transformed; this eschatological time points to God’s final goal for history ... [“Hour” in Daniel] depicts the end-time

---

<sup>19</sup> Cf. also Jezebel’s threats to Elijah (1 Ki 19:2).

<sup>20</sup> Mihalios, *Danielic Eschatological Hour*, 4n11, himself suggests that, amid a flurry of ὥρα usage in the LXX, “the Danielic use of hour seems to be the only one specifically related and relevant to the Johannine uses.” This is noteworthy, since this thesis argues that each and every occurrence of ὥρα in John is eschatological.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Joel 4:1; Amos 5:13; Mic 2:3; 3:4; Zeph 1:12; 3:19, 20; Jer 3:17; 4:11; 8:1, 12; 10:15; 11:12, 14; 30:7; 31:1; 33:15; 38:1; 50:4, 20; 51:33; Ez 21:25, 29; 22:3; 30:3; Dan 8:17; 11:24, 35, 40; 12:1, 4, 9.

<sup>22</sup> See Mihalios, *Danielic Eschatological Hour*, 16.



period in which God will execute his judgment to the effect that any opposition against him no longer exists. The defeat of God's end-time opponent will result in the vindication of God's people and their resurrection to eternal life.<sup>23</sup>

Mihalios finds similar references to eschatological time expressions in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal Jewish literature, and in that of Qumran. For example, 1 Enoch 37–71 and 3 Enoch describe a Son of Man figure rejecting earthly kings and establishing his own judgment throne after a period of distress. The “hours” that are referenced therein “probably allude to the Danielic end-time era at which the Son of Man will execute judgment and in which the resurrection will take place.”<sup>24</sup>

In 4 Ezra, a future eschatological “time” is of primary concern. The theme of human distress “indicates the author’s intent to create awareness of a future appointed ‘time.’”<sup>25</sup> Relying heavily on 4 Ezra,<sup>26</sup> the author of 2 Baruch reflects the Danielic use of ὥρα when he mentions the coming of the Messiah (2 Bar 30:1–5) and the resurrection of all flesh (2 Bar 42:8). These things will happen “at that time,” which is “a future time that depicts the eschatological era of restoration and raises the anticipation of the reader.”<sup>27</sup>

The Community Rule (1QS) speaks also of a distinct division of peoples with the coming judgment, which “probably alludes to the Danielic division of the groups in the time of the end.”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the War Scroll (1QM) reflects the temporal phraseology of Daniel 8–12 “to describe the time of the end, which is both a time of salvation and a time of distress.”<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 30–31.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 67n44.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 75.

4QFlorilegium, likewise quotes Daniel and “demonstrates an awareness of the eschatological ‘time’ from Daniel and the themes that pertain to this ‘time.’”<sup>30</sup>

Mihalios’ eschatological exploration of temporal phraseology is important for this study for two reasons. First, it shows that the eschatological hermeneutic of Daniel was preserved in some form in the beliefs of second-temple Judaism. Most notably, distress will come upon the earth because of God’s judgment (Dan 12:1), and the dead will be raised either to everlasting life or to everlasting death (12:2). If in evidence, then a certain standardization of eschatology was likely both in Jesus’ time and in that of John’s composition. Second, it shows that the use of ὥρα in the Jewish sources is consistent with that of John. Thus, “John’s use of hour in connection to the end-time judgment and resurrection would not have been perceived as unique.”<sup>31</sup> We therefore turn now to the usage of ὥρα that is closest to this study’s interest in the Gospel of John: the use of ὥρα in the non-Johannine works of the New Testament.

### The New Testament

As is the case with the extra-biblical Greco-Roman and Jewish sources of John’s day, ὥρα is used in both specific and nonspecific ways in the New Testament.<sup>32</sup> Outside the works of John (see Chapter Three), ὥρα occurs sixty-four times.<sup>33</sup> The New Testament use of ὥρα describes a specific sixty-minute period of time (Matt 26:40; Mk 6:35; 11:11; 14:37; 15:25, 33, 34; Lu 22:59; Ac 5:7; 19:34), which is sometimes specifically numbered (Matt 20:3, 5, 9, 12, 27:45–46;

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>32</sup> Kittle, *TDNT*, 10:677, “The use of ὥρα in the NT corresponds very largely to that in non-biblical texts and the LXX.”

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Matt 8:13; 9:22; 10:19; 14:15; 15:28; 17:18; 18:1; 20:3, 5, 9, 12; 24:36, 44, 50; 25:13; 26:40, 45, 55; 27:45, 46; Mk 6:35; 11:11; 13:11, 32; 14:35, 37, 41; 15:25, 33, 34; Lu 1:10; 2:38; 7:21; 10:21; 12:12, 39, 40, 46; 13:31; 14:17; 20:19; 22:14, 53, 59; 23:44; 24:33; Ac 2:15; 3:1; 5:7; 10:3, 9, 30; 16:18, 33; 19:34; 22:13; 23:23; Rom 13:11; 1 Cor 4:11; 15:30, 11 Cor 7:8; Gal 2:5; 1 Thes 2:17; Phm 15.

Lu 23:44; Ac 2:15; 3:1; 10:3, 9, 30; 23:23). It can also refer to a specific instant in which an event takes place (Matt 8:13; 9:22; 14:15; 15:28; 17:18; 18:1; 26:55; Lu 2:38; 7:21; 10:21; 13:31; 20:19; 24:33; Ac 16:18, 33; 22:13; Gal 2:5).<sup>34</sup>

The time or season of a particular event can be referred to in a nonspecific way, as in the “hour” for the burning of incense in Luke 1:10, and the time of a banquet in Luke 14:17. It refers to a short—but nonspecific—period of time in 2 Cor 7:8, 1 Thess 2:17, and Philemon 15. However, unlike the Greco-Roman sources yet similar to the LXX, the more common nonspecific usage of ὥρα in the New Testament is eschatological. This can refer to a divinely appointed eschatological time, often applying to believers in the end times (Matt 10:19; 24:36, 44, 50; 25:13; Mk 13:11, 32; Lu 12:12, 39, 40, 46; Rom 13:11; 1 Cor 4:11; 15:30), and is often a time in which “obedience to God’s direction within the given situation”<sup>35</sup> is mandated. Scarce, but still present, are the non-Johannine references to the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross (Matt 26:45; Mk 14:35, 41; Lu 22:14, 53). This makes the eschatological hour of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross a decidedly Johannine issue.

### Oscar Cullmann

In the study of New Testament words for time, few have contributed to the discussion more than Oscar Cullmann.<sup>36</sup> As his work pertains especially to our greater study of biblical time in general and eschatological time in particular (and not simply the New Testament use of ὥρα), Cullmann’s theology merits particular attention.

---

<sup>34</sup> A common translation of these markers is “at that time.” With the exception of Galatians 2:5, these instantaneous hours function as temporal markers, which simply “[mark] time relative to a given context.” See Estes, *Temporal Mechanics*, 150–51.

<sup>35</sup> Kittle, *TDNT*, 10:678.

<sup>36</sup> See primarily Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History* (trans. Floyd V. Filson; London: SCM Press, 1962).

According to Cullmann, at the center of the proclamation of Christ is the Christian conception of time and history. The character of this conception is twofold: on the one hand, “salvation is bound to a continuous time process which embraces past, present, and future.”<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, there is the single unrepeatable, historical fact of Jesus’ death and resurrection. When taken together, the salvation of mankind is wholly dependent upon the life and acts of the second person of the Godhead.

For Cullmann, there are two views of time: rectilinear and non-rectilinear, or biblical and Hellenistic. The former views time as a straight line with a definitive beginning and end, while the latter views time as a cyclical, plenary concept with no real entrance or exit. With the biblical view, time as a straight line enables history to find meaning in the manifestation of a continuous story (*Heilsgeschichte*), while Hellenism breeds miscellaneous, unrelated events that may or may not be precipitated or governed by an outside force.<sup>38</sup>

The concept of “eternity” in relation to time differs based on these two views. For the Greek, eternity is timelessness, a void; the material plane becomes a trap governed by the oppression of time. As such, there can be no historical *telos*. Cullmann writes, “Because time in Hellenism is not conceived in a rectilinear manner, the scene of the working of providence can never be history as such but only the fate of the individual.”<sup>39</sup>

Alternatively, the biblical concept of eternity understands this not as timelessness, but as *endlessness*. The word αἰών, often translated “eternity,” is used “to designate both an exactly

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 54.

defined period of time and an undefined and incalculable duration.”<sup>40</sup> If time can be illustrated with a straight line, then with rectilinear time there is a definitive beginning and end of the line. According to Cullmann, the noun αἰών refers to a line for which there may be a beginning, but there is no end.<sup>41</sup> Never in Scripture is eternity thought of in Scripture as an ethereal, intangible concept like that of the Hellenists. The suggestion that a thousand years is like a day to God (Ps 90:4) does not mean that God acts on a different time scale than does his creation; rather, it means that, not bound by time, he is the Lord of time as well. In fact, to speculate as to the nature of God outside of his historical revelations is to speculate after a God who is beyond speculation, and thus irrelevant to creation.

The biblical concept of time is a presupposition for the biblical witness. Without a straight line, the Christ Event is but one of several dispensations or theophanies of God with no ordered *telos*. Biblical time is instead rectilinear, with the Christ Event as the culminating epoch of creation occurring at its informing center, with eternity (endless time) stretching out before the temporal boundary of creation and after the temporal boundary of Jesus’ return in glory. The deeds of God are revealed by him and recognized by his people from the beginning of creation; they are celebrated and proclaimed until the end of the age which is without end. The *telos* of this history is first the cross, then the Parousia, when Christ returns in glory and raises the dead to life everlasting lived in a new heavens and a new earth (Ps 110:1; Is 66; Jn 5:25, 28; Ac 1:11; 1 Co 15:50-55; Rev 22).

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 45. Such is the locutionary force of αἰών in Matthew 28:20. When Jesus promises to be with his church “*until* the end of the age,” he surely does not mean that he will *cease* to be with them when that end comes. He means that he will be with them in that incalculable duration of time.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 69.

Thus the rectilinear nature of time is not incidental to the Christian witness, but is instead fundamentally necessary to a proper understanding of salvation history. As mentioned above, salvation history exists not in an ethereal, timeless eternity, but instead takes place in the concrete experience of the distinctiveness of the eras. Already in Genesis 1 the formlessness and void of pre-creation describes a reality that is without beginning or end until God says, “Let there be ... ” whereupon God creates cycles indicative of both the existence and the passage of time—the sun and moon to govern the days, months, and years. Prelapsarian time is not an evil to overcome, nor something to be invaded or conquered. God did not create time as a punishment or pedagogy until the Coming One’s provision of some timeless void. Rather, time exists instead as a testimony to the unchangeable grace of God, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8). Only with the fallenness of creation does time become burdensome. But even then God only acts outside of time *for the sake of* salvation history (see Josh 10:13) and not to deliver His people *from* it. Such is the theological context in which John writes of Jesus’ eschatological hour.

Over three decades after Cullmann’s work, Bruce Malina critiqued Cullmann’s perception of the ancient Mediterranean understanding of time.<sup>42</sup> According to Malina, “the ancients were quite different from us moderns in time perception,”<sup>43</sup> and peasant societies (the implied readers of the biblical narratives) “invariably have the present as first order temporal preference.”<sup>44</sup> Second in preference would be the past, and the future would come in as a distant last consideration. Intangible, futuristic thinking, an orientation that “localizes objects and goals in

---

<sup>42</sup> Bruce J. Malina, “Christ and Time: Swiss or Mediterranean?” *CBQ* 51 (1989): 1–31.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

the extended or distant future,”<sup>45</sup> is a product of post-enlightenment thinking. Malina therefore essentially contended that Cullmann’s view was anachronistic.

The “peasants” did have a concept of the future, but Malina distinguishes this from modern Western thinking in two ways. First, he distinguishes between “experienced” and “imaginary” time. Whereas experienced time, as its name implies, is rooted in what can be experienced, imaginary time is unable to be actualized tangibly. As such, imaginary time belongs to God (and is revealed only to prophets) and has no place in the minds of the peasant society.<sup>46</sup> Second, Malina contends that the temporal thought process of peasant societies “encompassed a rather long duration ... spanning some forty or more years.”<sup>47</sup> Using modern sociological procedures, Malina suggests that interpretation of time should focus on a New Testament mindset that was forced to experience a shift from a present-experiential orientation to a future-imaginary orientation. “Jesus was once perceived by present-oriented people as forthcoming Messiah with power ... however, given the press of events, this perception had subsequently proceeded beyond that horizon into the realm of the possible.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, the unobtainable and transcendent (God) had become tangible (John 1:14).

However, when Malina’s conclusions alone are considered apart from his concerns regarding the intrusion of a more contemporary sociology, one discovers that his conclusions are in fact close to those of Cullmann, who has already suggested that those who were hoping for the coming of the Messiah (the end) and who found that hope realized in Christ experienced a shift

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 28.

of time orientation.<sup>49</sup> In other words, Jesus' incarnational encounters with the creation shifted the mid-point of salvation history from the future into the past. Christ's past time first advent became, then, the mid-point in salvation history, and his Parousia became its future time consummation. Thus, the eschatology of John, who is writing immediately after this historical shift in time, is appropriately *realized* and *futuristic* (see Chapter One).

The temporal language of the New Testament seems to support Cullmann's hermeneutic of salvation history.<sup>50</sup> Cullmann deals primarily with the distinction between *καιρός* and *αἰών*, and not *ῥα*. While he admits that "it is not easy to find an adequate translation for the various expressions that refer to time,"<sup>51</sup> Cullmann characterizes the New Testament use of *καιρός* as referring to that time which "has to do with a definite *point of time* which has a fixed content."<sup>52</sup> This is synonymous with John's nonspecific use of *ῥα* to refer to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. It is not surprising, then, that *καιρός* only appears in the Gospel of John twice (7:6, 8); it is synonymous with *ῥα* (see Appendix One and Chapter Three). Meanwhile, included in the meaning of *αἰών* is the idea of "a *duration* of time, a defined or undefined *extent of time*."<sup>53</sup> Moreover, *αἰών* occurs thirteen times in John<sup>54</sup> and always includes with its meaning the idea of endless time and eternal life (see Appendix One).

Cullmann's definitions of the biblical words for time have come under scrutiny over the decades.<sup>55</sup> To be sure, as far as New Testament theology is concerned, we must be wary of

---

<sup>49</sup> Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, 81–93.

<sup>50</sup> For a comprehensive overview of Cullmann's hermeneutic, see Theodore Martin Dorman, *The Hermeneutics of Oscar Cullmann* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press:1991). For a similar study on the biblical view of time, see Cullmann's student, Matthias Rissi, *Time and History: A Study on the Revelation* (trans. by Gordon C. Winsor; Richmond: John Knox Press:1966).

<sup>51</sup> Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, 39.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* Italics original.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* Italics original.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. 4:14; 6:51, 58; 8:35, 51, 52; 9:32; 10:28; 11:26; 12:34; 13:8; 14:16

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time* (Naperville: Alex Allenson, 1962).



attaching large theological constructs to individual words based on a wide range of meaning that, given the proper context, such words *can* help to express. As James Barr suggests:

When a theological word-book states that it “owes its conception to the conviction that the words of the Bible are not merely interesting objects of academic research, but are indeed the words of eternal life,” we must simply and firmly state that the words of the Bible [alone] are nothing of the sort. The “words of eternal life” are not the lexical units of the biblical languages, but the sentences and speeches and narratives of the Bible. The sentence quoted depends on a tacit passing from one sense to another of the word “word.”<sup>56</sup>

Therefore, the theology concerning time that Cullmann discerned should not be regarded as adhering intrinsically to specific lexemes, but rather from the use of those lexemes in particular contexts. However questionable his definitions may have been, Cullmann’s *hermeneutic* is nevertheless an appropriate backdrop for the study of the eschatological hour in John. Moreover, says Barr, “It is therefore naturally impossible to except any example of usage from full consideration on the grounds that it is ‘merely temporal’ and therefore not of theological significance.”<sup>57</sup> This is consistent with our main thesis: that each and every instance of ὥρα in the Gospel of John either refers to the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death or bears some relationship to it. That being said, let us proceed with our study of the use of ὥρα in the Gospel of John.

---

<sup>56</sup> James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time* (Naperville: Alex Allenson, 1962), 155. For another helpful treatment on the dangers of rote word-studies, see D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996).

<sup>57</sup> Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*, 49.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE HOUR OF JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

In the previous chapter, it was discovered that both biblical and extra-biblical sources use the word ὥρα in specific and nonspecific ways. The term can be used to define a fixed period of time belonging to a system of timekeeping, or it can be used to express a general, nonspecific period of time that is open to subjective discernment, meaning a number of different things. It was also determined in the previous chapter that, in addition to these categories, both Jewish and Christian sources utilize the noun with an eschatological sense. This eschatological use frequently typifies divine judgment at a specific, appointed “hour.” We will now examine the use of ὥρα in the Johannine literature.

In the Johannine literature, ὥρα appears thirty-five times.<sup>1</sup> On the surface, it is evident that John uses ὥρα within the typical semantic range of both the LXX and the New Testament. The word “hour” appears to describe a specific sixty-minute period of time four times (Jn 11:9; Rev 18:10, 17, 19); it is used to describe a specific numbered hour of the day five times (Jn 1:38; 4:6, 52, 53; 19:14),<sup>2</sup> and once it describes a specific instant in which an event takes place (Rev 11:13).<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jn 1:39; 2:4; 4:6, 21, 23, 52, 53; 5:25, 28, 35; 7:30; 8:20; 11:9; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:2, 4, 21, 25, 32; 17:1; 19:14, 27; 1 Jn 2:18; Rev 3:3, 10; 9:15; 11:13; 14:7, 15; 17:12; 18:10, 17, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 17:12; 18:10, 17, 19 are quantified with μία, but this is used to describe a specific, single hour, and not a specific time of day, as in John 1:38; 4:6, 52; 19:14.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Matt 8:13; 9:22; 14:15; 15:28; 17:18; 18:1; 26:55; Lu 2:38; 7:21; 10:21; 13:31; 20:19; 24:33; Ac 16:18, 33; 22:13; Gal 2:5, and the discussion in Chapter Two.

The remaining uses of ὥρα in the Johannine literature are consistently eschatological, even at a casual glance. “Hour” refers either to the time of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross (Jn 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1) or to his Parousia (Rev 3:3). Pursuant to this hour is the effect it has upon believers in Christ, including the marks of suffering upon his Church (Jn 16:2, 4; 1 Jn 2:18; Rev 3:10; 9:15), the resurrection of all flesh (Jn 5:25; 28), and the final judgment and the restoration of all things (Jn 4:21, 23; Rev 14:7, 15).

Each and every occurrence of ὥρα in the Gospel of John either directly refers to the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death or bears some relationship to it. However, this chapter will only examine those instances of ὥρα that specifically serve in the Gospel of John to describe either the hour of Jesus that will come or has come (namely, John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1). The remaining references will be explored in Chapter Four.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Glory of Jesus in the Signs of Jesus**

As described in detail in Chapter One, an understanding of the eschatology of the Gospel of John is necessary for an understanding of ὥρα. Indeed, “the eschatological element in the fourth gospel is not accidental; it is fundamental.”<sup>5</sup> Important to a proper understanding of the Gospel’s eschatology are the largely implicit distinctions of *vertical/horizontal* and *realized/futuristic* (see Chapter One). We shall see that especially Jesus’ signs (σημεῖον) embody this eschatology and direct the reader toward Jesus’ hour. In fact, the signs of Jesus in John function as such as “tokens of recognition.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Although the use of ὥρα in 1 John and Revelation are important, it escapes the purview of this thesis to include them beyond this point. Suffice to say, their eschatological use is clearly consistent with the Gospel of John.

<sup>5</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: S.P.C.K., 1967), 58.

<sup>6</sup> Parnsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama*, 108.

Seeing in part the relationship between the signs and the hour, Raymond Brown structured the Gospel into two “books”: the Book of Signs (1:19–12:50) and the Book of Glory (13:1–20:31).<sup>7</sup> In recent years, however, Brown’s understanding of the Gospel’s macro-structure has been called into question. Carson and Moo summarize several alternative structures, stating that “the designation ‘Book of Signs’ makes it sound as if the signs are restricted to 1:19–12:50, whereas 20:30–31 makes it clear that from the evangelist’s perspective the *entire* gospel is a book of signs: the passion and resurrection of Jesus is the greatest sign of all.”<sup>8</sup> However, as will be explored below, the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross is the *fulfillment* of the signs; it is not acceptable to suggest that the signs are in any way equal in significance to Jesus’ death and resurrection. Nevertheless, not a great deal of stock should be put into Brown’s original structure. Even Brown was reticent to follow this division, and did so mostly as a pragmatic way of dividing his commentary.<sup>9</sup>

To be sure, just as there is an explicit connection between the glory of Jesus and the hour of his suffering and death (12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1), there is an explicit connection between the glory of Jesus and most of the anticipatory signs that he performs (2:11; 4:48; 9:3; 11:40–42). Thus, the signs are performed in order to reveal the glory that reaches proleptically to the death of Christ, at which hour the task is finished (19:30). The former points to the latter. Both are written in order that the reader might believe and, believing, have life in his name (20:30–31). Both point to the finality of Christ’s glory in the event of his suffering and death on the cross.

---

<sup>7</sup> See Brown, *John*, 1:cxxxviii–cxxxix; and Beasley-Murray, *John*, xxviii–xxxi, xc–xcii, for a helpful bibliography and summary of the different opinions regarding the structure of the Gospel.

<sup>8</sup> Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 225. Italics original. See also Köstenberger, *Theology*, 118–20.

<sup>9</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:cxlii, “Even a cursory glance at the distribution of these signs throughout the chapters of John indicates that they scarcely form an adequate basis for the division of the Gospel ... We propose our own division with hesitancy, realizing the danger of imposing insights on the evangelist. But we do claim that there are certain indications in the Gospel itself for the broad lines of this division.”

Furthermore, writing on the connection between seeing the signs and believing in Jesus properly, Koester points out that each of the signs in some way “foster unreliable faith or unbelief.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, “the disciples and other exemplars of faith were called to follow Jesus before seeing any miracles. Conversely, those whose initial encounters with Jesus were based on the miraculous regularly interpreted what they saw in ways that led them away from genuine faith.”<sup>11</sup> This is doubtless because the true importance of the Son of God is his sacrifice for creation, not his deeds as a miracle-worker. The signs are performed in spite of misunderstandings (and perhaps *because of* misunderstandings), in order that the witnesses may dive deeper into the mystery of Christ. They do indeed serve to anticipate Jesus’ hour, through which saving faith is found, but they do so by calling all followers “to believe the verbal testimony of the gospel, which brings people to the faith that is life in relationship with the risen Christ and the God who sent him.”<sup>12</sup>

Commenting on the uniqueness of the Gospel of John to connect the signs with faith, Parnsenios declares that, since the sign at Cana is the ἀρχή of the signs, “what we say about this sign, then, can apply to all the signs.”<sup>13</sup> If John intended for the sign at Cana to be labeled “first,” he might have used πρότερος, instead of ἀρχή, which is more adequately translated “beginning.”<sup>14</sup> Brown writes that “John specifically relates it to the other miracles of Jesus and to a concrete place in the ministry of Jesus ... Thus, the first sign had the same purpose that all the

---

<sup>10</sup> Craig R. Koester, “Jesus’ Resurrection, the Signs, and the Dynamics of Faith in the Gospel of John,” in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (eds. Craig R. Koester and Reimund Bieringer, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 53.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>13</sup> Parnsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama*, 108.

<sup>14</sup> See Morris, *John*, 163; John F. McHugh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1–4* (The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 187.

subsequent signs will have, namely, *revelation about the person of Jesus*.<sup>15</sup> The focus of the miracle at Cana is not on the wine, or Jesus' mother, or the bridegroom of the wedding, but on Jesus himself; "the only reaction that is emphasized is the *belief* of the disciples."<sup>16</sup> Thus, since most of the signs include verses that explicitly reveal Jesus' glory (2:11; 4:48; 9:3; 11:40–42), and the interpretation of the first miracle at Cana is applicable to the other signs, it is logical to conclude that every sign reveals Jesus' glory in anticipation of its finality as given with the cross. Thus, they are thematically linked to the word ὄρα. For this reason, it is appropriate for this thesis to describe the essential significance of each of the signs.

However, a great variety of perspective has attended the study of Jesus' signs in the Gospel of John. Köstenberger includes a helpful bibliography and lists nine possible additional signs that might be added to the usually agreed upon six: (1) the temple-clearing (2:14–17); (2) the serpent in the wilderness (3:14–15); (3) Jesus walking on water (6:16–21); (4) the anointing of Jesus (12:1–8); (5) the triumphal entry (12:12–16); (6) the foot-washing 13:1–11; (7) the crucifixion and resurrection (18:1–19:42); (8) the post-resurrection appearance (20:1–21:25); and (9) the miraculous catch of fish (21:1–14).<sup>17</sup> According to Köstenberger, for a sign to be a sign it must bear at least one of the following characteristics: (1) the sign is performed as part of Jesus' public ministry; (2) the sign is explicitly called a sign; (3) the sign reveals Jesus' glory.<sup>18</sup> As we affirm the eschatological significance of the signs, the aforementioned possible additional signs will be briefly scrutinized. The legitimate signs are as follows:

---

<sup>15</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:103. Italics original.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>17</sup> Köstenberger, *Theology*, 323.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 329–33. See pp. 105–11 for his complete argument.

### **A Bath Becomes a Beverage (2:1–11)**

The wedding feast in 2:1–11 reveals the glory of Jesus in two ways: Messianic replacement and nuptial abundance.<sup>19</sup> The abundance of the miraculous wine is reminiscent of common eschatological imagery (cf. Amos 9:13–14; Hos 14:7; Jer 31:12). The specific enumeration of the stone jars emphasizes the large quantity of wine made by Jesus. John makes a special point of mentioning that the type of stone jars Jesus used for the miracle were the kind used for Jewish ritual purification through bathing (2:6). This deliberately establishes the importance of Jesus' work of salvation over against such practices (cf. 5:16, 9:14). The cleansing ritual for the wedding is thus eschatologically transformed by Jesus, who is “the one sent by the Father who is now the only way to the Father.”<sup>20</sup> His mother's comment that “they have no wine” (2:3) offers further reflection on the need for a fulfillment in Jesus which is to come; in other words, the Jewish religion is meaningless without Jesus. The statement of the banquet master that the bridegroom has saved the best wine until now adds finality to the suggestion of fulfillment; it “can be understood as the proclamation of the coming of the messianic days.”<sup>21</sup>

Immediately after this sign (2:12), and closely connected to it, is the “temple-cleansing episode.” There, Jesus suggestively relates the significance of the temple with the temple of His own body (2:19–22). “We should not miss the way this incident fits in with John's aim of showing Jesus to be the Messiah. All his actions imply a special relationship with God.”<sup>22</sup> All his

---

<sup>19</sup> Brown, *Gospel*, 1:104. Though Brown speaks of “replacement,” and uses phrases such as the “barrenness of Jewish purifications” (1:105), and that the Jewish religious feasts “lost meaning” in Christ's presence (1:104), this should not be read as though Christ is negating the validity of the Jewish religious practice. Rather, insofar as Christ fulfills the authentic messianic expectations, his work *fulfills* these things (cf. Mt 5:17–20), bringing true and final significance to both feasts and purification rituals.

<sup>20</sup> Brown, *Gospel*, 1:104.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:105.

<sup>22</sup> Morris, *John*, 172.

words point to a coming future in which Jesus' words and deeds will come to fruition. The event is significant because of its placement immediately after the wedding feast episode. The temporal phrase *μετὰ τοῦτο* marks an indefinite period of time while connecting the event to what preceded it.<sup>23</sup> The Jews demand a sign of Jesus (2:18), to which Jesus obliquely predicts his death and resurrection (2:19), which is the climax of his glory, the end-game of the purposes of God.

However, the temple-cleansing episode should not be called a "sign." The healing of the royal official's son is *explicitly* named as the second sign (4:54), thus leaving no room for the temple-cleansing or, for that matter, the serpent in the wilderness, since this also occurs before the second of Jesus' signs.<sup>24</sup> To be sure, the sign of Moses in 3:14–15 is significant for the gospel witness, but it does not in John's Gospel represent one of Jesus' signs. "In the Old Testament the sign and the symbolic action were by no means synonymous. Many symbolic actions were not considered signs."<sup>25</sup> Though these instances too look forward to the finality of the glorification of Jesus, they should not be counted as "signs."<sup>26</sup>

To summarize the significance of the first sign, two points should be made. First, Jesus revealed his glory at the wedding by creating an abundance of fine wine and by fulfilling the

---

<sup>23</sup> See Estes, *Temporal Mechanics*, 205–8.

<sup>24</sup> Köstenberger, *Theology*, 335 n 74, suggests "if the temple clearing were a Johannine sign, this would also provide an antecedent sign, notably in Jerusalem, for references to 'the signs' Jesus was doing shortly thereafter in the gospel narrative (cf. 2:23; 3:2). It appears that the reference to 'the second sign' in 4:54 merely pertains to Jesus' working of signs *in Galilee*, though this is disputed." Italics original.

<sup>25</sup> David Wead, *The Literary Devices in John's Gospel* (Basel: University of Basel, 1970), 28.

<sup>26</sup> The reference to additional unnamed signs (2:23) continues to madden scholars, though some have suggested that the sign-counting dilemma here may be resolved if the word *σημεῖον* "is understood as any act or word which makes people ask profound and existential questions about God." McHugh, *John 1–4*, 218. This thesis rejects such a broad, even anti-incarnational, interpretation of the signs. Nevertheless, Estes, *Temporal Mechanics*, 207, suggests that the disciples' recollection of Jesus' Messianic zeal "evokes several alternative temporalities: the sacred (past) in the Scripture, the mono-dimensional of the event (now), the post-Resurrection after (future), and the experienced event before (past)." In other words, the remembrance of the disciples (2:17) exhibits a realized yet futuristic eschatology, whether the temple-cleansing is a "sign" or not.



authentic expectations of the people of God. Second, Jesus declared the “not yet” of his hour (2:4) even as he performed the sign (2:11, 23), as a portent of his death and resurrection (2:19). That the disciples remembered this after his resurrection (2:23) exhibits both a realized and futuristic eschatology. Thus, Jesus’ future eschatological glory is both revealed by and yet also veiled in his miracle at Cana, for his hour had not yet come.

### **A Royal Son Lives (4:43–54)**

A greater treatment of this episode will be saved for Chapter Four, since it includes two of the occurrences of ὥρα that do not explicitly refer to Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross. The messianic significance of a *royal* son redeemed from the threat of death at a precise *hour* should be saved for later. As mentioned in the previous section, we should note that the Evangelist explicitly labels this sign as the second sign performed by Jesus (4:54), despite the reference to additional signs in 2:23. Upon this sign, the royal official, and his entire household, believe in Jesus (4:53).

The eschatological significance of this sign is in its manifestation of a realized eschatology. Jesus suggests to the royal official that the people will not believe unless they see signs and wonders (4:48). Indeed, the Galileans had already seen what Jesus had done at the Passover Feast (4:45), and they believe according to what they have seen. However, this may not be the case for the royal official. There is no indication whether or not he had witnessed Jesus’ signs before. What is explicit in the text is that the man “took Jesus at his word” (4:50). In other words, he believed that his son would be saved and so went away from Jesus in faith *before* the sign took place.

Francis J. Moloney finds that this sign forms a narrative inclusio with the first sign. Three similarities present themselves, namely, “the negative reaction of Jesus to the person making the request; belief in the word as the catalyst that sets the cure in motion; the miracle itself not reported in any way, and a lessening of interest in the theme of wonder from the witnesses.”<sup>27</sup> Once again, the focus is not on the sign itself, but on the faith of those who are present (4:53) and on what elicits such faith; the entire household subsequently also believes, and the royal official enjoys a present fulfillment of eschatological grace when his son is healed at the very hour of the speaking of Jesus’ words.

Not only do the signs so far manifest a realized eschatology; they manifest a futuristic one also. Jesus’ seemingly negative statements are conspicuous in light of the signs he continues to perform. In 2:4, Jesus declares that his hour has not yet come, then in 4:48 emphatically (οὐ μὴ) criticizes the demand for signs and wonders, condemning thereby an “unwholesome preoccupation with the miraculous.”<sup>28</sup> At the wedding, Jesus performs a sign to typologically demonstrate that the true fulfillment of religious purity will come with the hour of his suffering and death on the cross. For the royal official, a word is given and a sign is performed to inform true faith in the glory of Christ, which shall come at the same hour.

### **The Powerless Are Restored (5:1–15)**

The significance of this sign is twofold: Jesus healed the ailing man on the Sabbath, and because of this the Jews persecuted him and sought to kill him (5:16, 18). The scene is rife with premonition and dramatic irony, for the reader knows that eventually the Jews will succeed in

---

<sup>27</sup> Moloney, *Belief in the Word*, 190.

<sup>28</sup> Köstenberger, *Theology*, 205.

killing Jesus and, when they do so, the strength of the powerless will be restored. Moreover, Jesus performs this sign because of “his intimate relationship to the Father.”<sup>29</sup> Jesus’ words after the sign include another pregnant prediction: just as the Father raises the dead, so the Son can give life (5:21). Indeed, the hour of Jesus (5:25, 28–29), and thus his glory (5:44), is thematically connected to this sign.

Jesus once again places his work within and in fulfillment of Jewish religious practice (5:9, 10, 16). Jesus appears unconcerned by the fact that it is the Sabbath, and in fact *instructs* the former invalid to break it. Moreover, it is the time for a feast (ἑορτή) of the Jews. Which feast this is, exactly, is unimportant. What is important is that the celebration of a feast “recalls God’s active presence to his people in the past,” and is “*rendered present* in the liturgical celebration of the feast.”<sup>30</sup> The reader of the gospel will recall the words of the prologue (1:16–17); there is no discontinuity between the Jewish faith and the signs of Jesus (cf. 5:45–46).

At such offense against the Sabbath, the Jews persecute him (5:16). Jesus responds by equating the work he is doing on earth with the work that the Father is doing (5:17). Naturally, this elicits a violent response from the Jews (5:19–23). Contrary to the residents of Cana and the royal official, the Jews do not believe in Jesus, as the Evangelist has already informed the reader (1:11). This sign, unlike the first two, has the negative effect of disbelief. The necessity of faith in the words of Jesus is emphasized through the disbelief of the Jews. *His* words contain the fulfillment of Israel’s history, and the hour is coming when the dead will hear his voice and come out of their graves (5:25, 28). Jesus further condemns the Jews as being inconsistent with *their own* faith (5:45–46). The legitimacy of Jesus’ words is finalized when the Jews finally have their

---

<sup>29</sup> Morris, *John*, 274.

<sup>30</sup> Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 1. Italics original.

way at the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. Ironically, this is precisely the ultimate reason this sign is recorded (20:31).

### **A Multitude Is Fed (6:1–15)**

The eschatology implicit in this sign is also thematically linked to that of ὄρα. In 6:1–15, like the wedding at Cana, Jesus' command over the created order and the abundant food reveals the eschatological glory of Jesus. The details of the type of food owned by a mere boy (6:9) has been said to be an allusion to 2 Kings 4:42–44.<sup>31</sup> Whether John intended this to be directly typological to the Elisha story or not, "Andrew's point, of course, was that this tiny meal was inadequate to the need. John mentions it to heighten the miracle."<sup>32</sup> Hence, the great eschatological feast takes place (6:11; cf. 2:11; 21:13) in anticipation of the bread that Jesus shall give for the life of the world which is his very own flesh (6:51). The glory of Jesus is revealed by this sign with the result that the people put their faith in him (6:14). However, Jesus removes himself (6:15), because they persist in misunderstanding his true identity and are misguided in their faith.

The extent that this sign has to do with Jesus' glory is, like the feast at Cana, Messianic replacement/fulfillment and abundance.<sup>33</sup> Like the Post-Exodus Israelites of old, these people of God are wandering in an unpopulated area, and it appears that they are completely reliant on Jesus for even their physical needs. They are following Jesus because of the signs they saw him do on the sick (6:2), just as the Israelites followed the prophet Moses after ten signs (Ex 7–12). Following the parting of the Red Sea, the Israelites respond to the signs of God in faith (14:31),

---

<sup>31</sup> See Carson, *John*, 270.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> See again Brown, *John*, 1:104.

and God's continued provision for their physical needs shows his glory (16:7). Likewise, the multitude following Jesus onto the mountain, after being fed as much as they want (Jn 6:11), also respond in faith (6:14). They are correct in their assertion that Jesus is a prophet like Moses (cf. 1:17, 45), but they do not yet fully understand who he otherwise is (6:15). A fuller revelation of Jesus' person and work is momentarily shown only to his disciples, who are the sole witnesses of the next sign.

### **The Fearful and Forlorn Are Revisited (6:16–21)**

This is the only sign to be included amongst the “signs” that is not explicitly labeled as such, and so some disagree that it should be. Köstenberger, for example, claims that “the walking on water probably does not constitute a Johannine ‘sign’—though the event is miraculous—since, unlike in the case of the other six undisputed signs, no explicit reference is made to this event as a ‘sign.’”<sup>34</sup> However, following Köstenbergers' own characteristics of a sign, we may call it one because, closely allied with the one that immediately precedes it, it too reveals the glory of Jesus in a way that complements nicely the feeding of the great multitude.

It is evening of the same day (6:16), and Jesus had withdrawn by himself into the mountain (6:15). The disciples, therefore, are alone on a boat as they set off across the water (6:17). The description of evening and the darkness thereof is a symbol of misunderstanding being brought painfully to the foreground (cf. 1:5; 3:2, 19–21; 13:30; and conversely 8:12; 21:4; 1 Jn 1:5–7).<sup>35</sup> The fear of those who are now and so will be again forlorn is resolved (cf. Jn 1:14, 45; 1 Jn 1:1–

---

<sup>34</sup> Köstenberger, *Theology*, 210.

<sup>35</sup> See Koester, *Symbolism*, 141–74, for a lengthy discussion of the Johannine theme of darkness.

2) when Jesus revisits them on the water and, upon his arrival and at his word, translates them to their destination.

Crucial to the understanding of this sign in relation to the glory of Jesus is its proximity to the previous sign, where the multitude are fed—the misunderstanding of Jesus’ character immediately following this event forms an *inclusio* with the feeding of the multitude. The people originally follow Jesus because of the signs he performed on the sick (Jn 6:2). However, Jesus proclaims that they only follow him because they ate their fill the day before (6:26). Like the healing of the royal official and the water turned to wine, Jesus’ seemingly negative comment about the sign (6:26; cf. 2:4; 4:48) does not prevent Jesus from performing the sign, but makes it clear that the signs are subordinate to Jesus’ true identity and purpose as the Christ (6:30–59).

In this way, the disciples are exposed to the identity and purpose of Jesus in a special revelatory way, just as they will be (with needful understanding) after his death and resurrection (20:19, 26; 21:1). This is not unusual, as the Twelve are in all things (and chiefly in the end) “marked especially by their recognition of Jesus and belief in his claims.”<sup>36</sup> Following the so-called bread of life discourse (6:35–59),<sup>37</sup> the Twelve remain faithful, though many other disciples turn away and stop following Jesus (6:66). Peter confesses the unique identity of Jesus (6:68–69), which Jesus confirms (6:70). Thus, the signs continue to point to Jesus’ glory, which will come to fruition at the hour of his suffering and death on the cross.

---

<sup>36</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 115. However, Culpepper says, “they are not exemplars of perfect faith, but of positive response and typical misunderstandings.”

<sup>37</sup> This is a common short-hand reference to John 6:22–58. See Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 227, and most major commentaries.

## The Blind See (9:1–7)

Immediately after the Jews pick up stones to kill him (8:54–59), Jesus and the disciples encounter a man born blind. It is once again the Sabbath (9:14), and Jesus heals him as a revelation of God’s work in the man’s life (9:3). It is explicit that the work is accomplished by God through Jesus himself (9:4). In fact, Jesus is only glorified because of the Father (8:50, 54; 12:23, 28; 17:1), and the blind man puts his faith in Jesus because of it (9:38).

Once again, Jesus places his work within and in fulfillment of Jewish religious faith and practice (cf. 2:6; 5:9, 18). This sign causes a division between the Pharisees (9:16; 10:19). On the one hand, Jesus broke the Sabbath; on the other, how could a sinner do such signs? Surely Jesus is more than meets the eye. The theme of darkness returns (9:4–5), and the Light of the world heals a man born blind. It is more than symbolic that this sign is the healing of a *blind man*, as Jesus again announces his judgment of the Jews who think they see the light but do not (9:39–41). It is not seeing that produces faith, but faith which produces seeing (cf. 20:29).<sup>38</sup> As the Feast of Dedication continues in Jerusalem, Jesus continues to blind those who see and create faith in the blind (12:40).<sup>39</sup> Thus, his faith-creating and informing glory, which soon will redound

---

<sup>38</sup> Jesus’ words to Thomas after his resurrection are not a statement, but a rhetorical question. See BDF, §205. The word ὅτι, although commonly indicating direct discourse, is most often found *after* a verb of perception. That it precedes ἐώρακός here is noticeable in discerning whether or not this is a statement or a question. Moreover, we need not expect a marker of direct discourse here while our nearest evidence of Jesus’ speech does not have one either (cf. 20:15, 16, and especially 26 and 27). The rhetorical question is ironic: it *is*, in fact, because Thomas has seen the Lord that he believes, but it is not his physical sight *per se* that causes his belief. “Seeing” in the narrative accompanies more than just physical sight. It is the revelation of Jesus in the theological (and literal) *midst* (20:26) that finally collects the words and promises of Jesus throughout the narrative and demands that Thomas reassess everything he thought he knew about life and death, faith and sight, seeing and believing. See Koester, “Resurrection,” 70–72. Moreover, Jesus has a history in this narrative of asking rhetorical questions—or questions to which He already knows the answer—to stimulate a greater meaning (cf. 1:38; 4:7, 32; 5:6; 6:5, 61; 9:35; 11:9; 12:27; 13:38; 14:9; 18:4, 11, 34; 20:15).

<sup>39</sup> The question of the subject of the verbs in the citation from Isaiah 6:10 has been debated. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 100–101, suggests the subject to be the message (ἀκοή) which is heard and not believed by the Jews. This is consistent with the desires and words of Jesus elsewhere in the Gospel (cf. 3:16–20; 8:43; 9:39), as well as the eschatology of John, in which “Jesus comes as duly empowered eschatological Judge . . . But Jesus also makes it clear that he does not, in fact, pronounce judgment on the Jews (cf. 3:17–19; 8:15; 12:47).” The Jews have indeed judged and blinded themselves by their lack of faith in Jesus.

to the enlightened confession of him as “lord and God” (20:28), is foreshadowed in his signs (10:42).

### **A Dead Man Rises (11:1–44)**

Immediately upon hearing of Lazarus’ illness, Jesus declares the outcome of the episode: it will not end in death (11:4). Obviously this does not mean death would not happen *at all*, since Jesus deliberately waits two days before departing (11:6). In fact, the raising of Lazarus will be for the glory of God through God’s Son (11:4).<sup>40</sup> That Jesus waits in spite of the insistence of others is consistent with his actions in each sign thus far: at Cana he kindly rebuked His mother before changing the water into wine on His own terms (2:4). The healing of the official’s son happened *after* Jesus’ comment about the signs and faith (4:48). Jesus approached the invalid at the Pool of Bethesda and the man born blind unsolicited by them (5:6; 9:1). The multitude is fed by Jesus’ command (6:10). The Twelve are visited on the water and were frightened by the sight of him (6:19). It is clear that with each sign, Jesus initiates the action; he reveals his glory of his own volition (10:18). Moloney points out “that Jesus is not *shown* to the tomb; he *went* there.”<sup>41</sup> Jesus is on a mission of his own accord. This was *in order that* (ἵνα) God and His Son may be glorified (11:4) and *in order that* (ἵνα) the disciples may believe (11:15, 40).

The extent to which this event foreshadows later events cannot be understated. Jesus specifically declares His future glory (11:4), calls himself the Resurrection and the Life (11:25–26), and prays aloud for the sign to be for the benefit of the faith of the people watching (11:41–

---

<sup>40</sup> Morris, *John*, 478n14, favorably quotes Barrett as saying, “here as elsewhere the glory of God is not his praise, but his activity.”

<sup>41</sup> Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 170. Italics original.



42). This is the culminating act of Jesus' public ministry before his own hour on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Moloney rightly summarizes the episode:

The die is cast. The reader is aware that the stay at the edge of the desert is but a brief pause in the narrative, as Jesus moves resolutely toward violence, informing his disciples, Martha, Mary, and "the Jews" that he will be glorified by means of it ... Hence with mixed feelings the reader looks forward to violent events that will be the perfection of the hour: Jesus' lifting up, his glorification, the revelation of the glory of God, and the gathering of many.<sup>42</sup>

In summary, the above signs of Jesus are performed in public by Jesus in order to elicit faith and reveal His glory. Jesus' own death and resurrection should not be labeled as a "sign," "since they relate to the seven signs featured in John 1–12 as reality does to symbol."<sup>43</sup> In fact, the crucifixion and resurrection are themselves the final glorification of Jesus and the culminating moments of history, so to call them signs would be to insinuate that something is greater than those events! Rather, each sign typologically points to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. As Wead writes:

The signs point us to the messianic salvation. This salvation is interpreted through the person of the Christ in his signs. An important eschatological function of the sign is to establish the messianic authority of the Christ and to indicate the mistaken ideal of the Jewish nation as it related to the messianic salvation ... But one should use care that he does not *limit* this function to the signs of Jesus. For, indeed, all of the actions of Jesus pictured in the Gospel of John bring the message of the new salvation to clarity.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, our study of the signs of Jesus in the Gospel of John supports, but is subordinate to, our study of Jesus' hour. The signs reveal the glory of Jesus in a special, typological way, but they are always pointing to the final glory that takes place at Jesus' suffering and death on the cross.

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>43</sup> Köstenberger, *Theology*, 335. See also Koester, "Resurrection," 52, who confirms, "The signs Jesus does during his public ministry anticipate the culmination of the story in his death and resurrection."

<sup>44</sup> Wead, *Literary Devices*, 26. Emphasis added.

This happens in four ways. First, they exhibit a *vertical/horizontal* eschatology; Jesus is from the Father, and for the world. Second, they exhibit a *realized/futuristic* eschatology; the miracles are real, but temporary. As such, they point forward to the permanence of the Resurrection. Third, a certain amount of misunderstanding accompanies the signs, as does Jesus' identity and ultimate purpose. Fourth, the signs are often closely associated with the word ὥρα; it is either explicit in the account itself or else lurking in the nearby context. For these reasons, the signs are thematically connected to the word ὥρα in the Gospel of John; for it is the hour of Jesus that is the ultimate focus of life-giving faith.<sup>45</sup>

### **The Hour of Jesus**

There are seven obvious eschatological occurrences of ὥρα in the Gospel of John. In addition to these, there are two instances of καιρός which are here used synonymously with ὥρα. They will be examined singly, and upon close scrutiny they will be shown to refer to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death. They are divided into two categories:

1. Jesus' hour has not yet come

2:4: "Jesus said to her, 'What is it to me and you, woman? My hour is not yet come.'"

7:30; 8:20: "No one laid a hand upon him, because his hour had not yet come."

Cf. 7:6, 8: "Jesus said to them, 'My hour is not yet come ... I am not going up to this feast because my hour is not yet fulfilled.'"

2. The hour has come

---

<sup>45</sup> In response to the possible additional signs to the almost universally agreed upon six, namely the anointing of Jesus (12:1–8), the triumphal entry (12:12–19), the foot-washing (13:1–11), the post-resurrection appearance (20:1–21:25), and the miraculous catch of fish (21:1–14), we must conclude that they are not to be considered "signs". None of them are explicitly called signs in the Gospel, and they do not exhibit anything extraordinary. Nevertheless, they all point forward to (or back to) Jesus' death and resurrection.

12:23, 27: “The hour has come in order that the Son of Man be glorified ... Now my soul is vexed, and what would I say, ‘Father, save me from this hour?’”

13:1: “Jesus knew that his hour had come in order to be taken from this world unto the Father.”

17:1: “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son, in order that the Son may glorify you.”

### **John 2:4**

This occurrence of ὥρα includes the possessive μου, indicating that the hour belongs to Jesus.<sup>46</sup> It is a direct response of Jesus to His mother, who invites him to supply the wedding feast with wine. As mentioned above, Jesus acts only on his own terms. Just as he lays down his life (and picks it up again) on his own accord (10:18), he performs the sign at Cana on his own accord and gives specific instructions (2:7–8). The grammar of Jesus’ response to his mother is important, as the translation effects the meaning of hour in this text.

In fact, a grammatically questionable feature of this text is the phrase itself. The phrase οὐπω ἦκει ἡ ὥρα μου can be translated either as a statement or as a question. The minority translate it as a question. But grammatically speaking, “whenever the word οὐπω follows an interrogative (as here in 2.4), it itself has an interrogative force.”<sup>47</sup> This is the case in Matt 16:9, as well as Mark 4:40; 8:17, 20, but is not a rule.<sup>48</sup> Even though this phrase fits that criterion, in the eleven times οὐπω appears in the Gospel of John (2:4; 3:24; 6:17; 7:6, 8, 30, 39; 8:20, 57; 11:30; 20:17), this is the *only* occurrence where it follows a question (τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί). Moreover, four occurrences besides this one (7:6, 8, 30; 8:20) are clearly expressing a negative statement

---

<sup>46</sup> See Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 81–82. See also Frey, *Die johanneische Eschatologie*, 2:211–12.

<sup>47</sup> McHugh, *John 1–4*, 183.

<sup>48</sup> BDF, BDAG, and Wallace are all silent on this issue.

about Jesus' hour.<sup>49</sup> These verses are included in our examination (see below). Brown refers to Theodore of Mopsuestia and Gregory of Nyssa, both native Greek speakers, who interpret the phrase as a question. However, "the comparison with the very similar constructions in 7:30 and 8:20 should serve to convince that the phrase is negative here, corresponding with the negation implicit in 'What has this concern of yours to do with me?'"<sup>50</sup> The most convincing translation following this argument comes from McHugh, who translates the verse as one question: "What relationship is there, woman, between you and me, now that my hour is approaching?"<sup>51</sup> This would solve the dilemma of an apparent contradiction, says McHugh, and besides, "could not his 'hour' embrace, in a broader sense, the divinely appointed time of Jesus' public ministry in its entirety?"<sup>52</sup> Based on our observations above and our eschatological study of Jesus' hour, we must say that it could not. The phrase is best interpreted as a negative statement ("My hour has *not yet* come,"), and not a question, for three reasons:

First, there is no suggestion of a contradiction. Jesus, by his words and actions, distinguishes between the will of man and the will of God; Jesus always follows the latter. Second, the grammatical nuance of the negative οὐπω *may* introduce a question, especially if it follows one, but it does not have to and does not here. Third, a consistency of the Gospel's use of ὥρα calls for the phrase to be a statement. From the vantage point of Jesus' eschatological hour, Jesus' statement here makes perfect sense. The signs reveal Jesus' glory in a typological, faith-producing way; hence, the signs are a precursor to Jesus' hour and so all of them occur within the first eleven chapters. Yet it is the hour itself within which God's salvation comes, and to which

---

<sup>49</sup> In 7:8, P<sup>66</sup> reads ουδεπω.

<sup>50</sup> Brown, *John*, 99.

<sup>51</sup> McHugh, *John 1-4*, 184.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

the Gospel therefore points (20:30–31). This macro-event has the distinct ability to warp the entire narrative and bring time itself to a crawl. As Estes clarifies:

The Gospel also possesses a measured tempo with a feeling of epic progression; unlike modern narratives, it does not encompass creative highs and lows. In addition, the events that comprise the Gospel warp the tempo as well as the configuration of the narrative—we can feel the distortion between larger events in the text as well as nuances and glosses within events.<sup>53</sup>

In other words, time has been relatively indeterminate until 12:23, when the hour finally arrives and lasts a whole week, stretching over a full third of the Gospel. If the hour had already arrived in 2:4, not only would this directly contradict 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20, but the entire structure of the narrative.

Jesus states, “My hour is not yet come.” However, this also produces its own difficulties, two of which should be addressed. First, according to the late John McHugh, Jesus’ hour should “refer to a future moment when it would be proper for him to intervene ... in purely earthly affairs, and there is no evidence that in the Fourth Gospel, ‘the hour of Jesus’ ever has this meaning.”<sup>54</sup> In other words, if Jesus’ hour has not come to perform public signs, *when is it?* However, McHugh’s assumption about the hour of Jesus is incorrect. The hour does not refer to Jesus’ performance of signs, but to the hour of his suffering and death on the cross. Moreover, the signs of Jesus—particularly the first—are eschatological portents, and reveal the faith-eliciting glory of Jesus in His public ministry that is finally manifested in the hour of his suffering and death on the cross. Thus, the signs themselves are far more than simple parlor tricks to be performed and enjoyed at a party. As Barrett writes, “the hour when men may expect

---

<sup>53</sup> Estes, *Temporal Mechanics*, 226–27.

<sup>54</sup> McHugh, *John 1–4*, 182.

to see the divine glory manifested in the creative activity of the Son of God has not yet come.”<sup>55</sup>

McHugh’s possible solution is understandable, says Brown, “in view of the context; yet it runs against the rest of the Johannine use of the term and is refuted by the reiteration in 7:6, 8, 30, 8:20, that Jesus’ time or hour has not yet come.”<sup>56</sup>

Second, if Jesus tells his mother that his hour has not yet come, why then does he perform a sign which reveals his glory? If ὥρα always refers to the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross, the answer is obvious: the signs are typological to the hour, as our above examination has attested. “The juxtaposition of contradictory statements ... [is] an intentional move that leads one to reflect in a particular way on the paradox that lies at the heart of Jesus’ life and revelation.”<sup>57</sup> This is why Jesus is reticent to respond to his mother at Cana (2:4), and seemingly reticent to respond to the royal official in Galilee (4:48). Jesus furthermore hides Himself in 6:15 when the people wanted to make him king, and even in 12:36 immediately after exhorting others to put their faith in him. “This pairing of revelation and concealment is the only way to express the inexpressible reality that lies at the center of the Gospel of John—that eternity has entered time, and that the inexpressible Word of God has become flesh and has spoken.”<sup>58</sup> In short, the dualistic, ironic nature of John’s eschatology leads to an indescribable reflection on the Creator becoming Creature for the sake of creation.<sup>59</sup>

Therefore, ὥρα in 2:4 refers directly to the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death. Jesus revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him (2:11), but the sign of water changed to wine

---

<sup>55</sup> Barrett, *John*, 159.

<sup>56</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:100.

<sup>57</sup> Parnenios, *Rhetoric and Drama*, 123.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>59</sup> On irony as a distinct literary feature of the Gospel of John, see Wead, *Literary Devices*; and Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 165–79.

was only a foretaste of the messianic fulfillment that would take place on the hour when blood and water pour from his side (19:34).

**(John 7:6, 8)**

The difficulty with the interpretation of this passage is obvious: the word ὥρα is not present. However, as was briefly discussed in Chapter Two, καιρός too can indicate a “fateful and decisive point,” or a “specific and decisive point, especially as regards its content.”<sup>60</sup> It is not an indeterminate period of time; for that meaning, John uses the word χρόνος (5:6; 7:33; 12:35; 14:9). It would only marginally be helpful to enter into the lexical debate over καιρός, which would far surpass the limitations of this thesis.<sup>61</sup> Suffice to say, καιρός in 7:6, 8 is synonymous with John’s use of ὥρα for three reasons.

First, a possessive pronoun modifies the word. This is consistent with the use of ὥρα in 2:4; 7:30; and 8:20. Each of these occurrences is negative. The hour of Jesus’ suffering and death has *not yet* come. Second, the lexical meaning of καιρός includes overtones of divine providence.<sup>62</sup> This is consistent with Jesus’ words concerning his own actions; the Son does nothing apart from the Father (5:19; 8:28). Third, and most significantly, Jesus stays in Galilee (7:9) because the Jews in Judea were waiting to kill him (7:1). Jesus’ glory is ultimately revealed in his suffering and death by the hands of the Jews, but at this point in the narrative *the hour has not yet come*.

Raymond Brown is again helpful:

On the purely natural level it appears to the brothers that Jesus does not find this an opportune time to go up to the festival in Jerusalem. Jesus’ subsequent behavior in going up to the festival shows us, however, that this was not really what he meant.

---

<sup>60</sup> TDNT, III:459–60. See also Brown, *John*, 1:306, who says that καιρός “is a Johannine alternate for the ‘hour’ (compare 2:4); we find exactly the same alternation in Matt 26:18 and 45.”

<sup>61</sup> See Cullmann, *Christ and Time*; Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*; and Dorman, *Hermeneutics*.

<sup>62</sup> See BDAG, s.v. καιρός.

John has prepared the reader to understand Jesus' real meaning by the reference to death at the hand of "the Jews" in vs. 1. When Jesus speaks of his "time," he is speaking on the level of the divine plan. His "time" is his "hour," the hour of passion, death, resurrection, and ascension to the Father.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, *καίρός* in 7:6 and 7:8 refers to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross.

### **John 7:30**

After waiting until the Feast of Tabernacles was half over (7:14), Jesus makes an appearance at the temple courts in Jerusalem. If the people were divided over Jesus before (7:12), they were doubly so after this episode (7:43). This is the natural schism that takes place when the divine confronts the sinner (1:11–12; 3:18–21). The Jews become so further enraged by Jesus' teachings that they try to seize Him at the feast (7:30). However, since Jesus' hour has not yet come, they are unable to lay their hands on Him. The physical method of Jesus' escape is unclear in the text; the only "reason why he was able to escape was *because his time ... had not yet come*, the 'hour' when he would be seized and crucified according to the Father's will."<sup>64</sup>

This occurrence of *ώρα* has great continuity with that of His glory revealed in the signs. Three points should be noted. First, Jesus' references to His "one miracle" (7:21) is likely that of the man by the Pool of Bethesda in 5:1–15. Jesus' references to the Sabbath (7:22–23), as well as the location of the feast, makes this reasonably clear.

Second, that some of the people put their faith in him (7:31) is a reflection of the faith the disciples put in Jesus at Cana (2:11). Furthermore, this faith was *because of the signs*, and thus awaits more; some thought he was a prophet, some the messiah (7:40–41).

---

<sup>63</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:308

<sup>64</sup> Carson, *John*, 319.



Finally, like the ceremonial water jugs at Cana (2:6) and the healings on the Sabbath (5:16; 9:14), Jesus' discourse at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles pointedly declares that he is the fulfillment of Jewish religious practice. The Feast was a special ceremony of water with eschatological significance (cf. Ez 47:1–5).<sup>65</sup> The priest would take water from the Pool of Siloam, and pour it “into two vessels positioned on the altar, allowing the water and wine to flow out on to the altar.”<sup>66</sup> The significance of this act cannot be overstated:

Within the context of another Jewish feast marked by libations, and a promise of the coming Messiah who will repeat the Mosaic gift of water, the reader identifies Jesus as the source of living water ... No longer is there any need to hold daily ritual lustrations, carrying water from the Pool of Siloam.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, like the sign at Cana and the Pool of Bethesda, Jesus' actions and words point forward to the hour of his suffering and death, which will finally come to fruition in John 19:28 when the giver of the Water of Life is nailed to the cross and cries out, “I thirst.”<sup>68</sup>

### **John 8:20**

The setting has not changed since the previous occurrence of ὥρα—Jesus is still in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>69</sup> Francis Moloney argues that the discourses that take place “between Jesus and his interlocutors must be understood in the light of the significance of the major rituals of the Feast of Tabernacles: the water libation, the ceremony of light, and the rite of facing the temple.”<sup>70</sup> Of special significance for this occurrence of ὥρα is the ceremony of light, which carries eschatological overtones.

---

<sup>65</sup> Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 67.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 116.

<sup>69</sup> We will assume that 7:53–8:11 is an insertion to the original text and is not part of the original narrative. This assumption is “almost universal.” See Francis Moloney, *The Gospel of John: Text and Context* (Biblical Interpretation Series 72; Boston: Brill, 2005), 199–200.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

The ceremony of light took place at night during the Feast of Tabernacles. Menorahs would be lit, dancing would occur, and eschatological imagery would permeate the temple: “the light ceremony had links with the pillar of fire that led Israel through the wilderness (see Ex 13:21) which would return at the end of time.”<sup>71</sup> As has become a regular feature of Jesus’ ministry, he once again sets himself in deliberate fulfillment of the Jewish religion when he calls *himself* the light of the world (8:12). “The symbol of light, therefore, is closely associated with Johannine realized eschatology.”<sup>72</sup>

There is a continued misunderstanding on the part of the Jews, who pick up stones to kill Jesus (8:59). They praise the God of Israel every morning at the Feast of Tabernacles, but the Light of the World who has been sent from the God of Israel (1:3–9; 8:12–18, 26) is rejected and threatened. There is another veiled prediction of Jesus’ death (8:28), and many put their faith in him (8:30). Thus, the eschatological commonalities are also present here. Faith is elicited in some way and to some people in direct reference to Jesus’ death, Jesus preaches truth about himself that is greater than the established Jewish religion, and the authorities could not yet seize him, because the hour of his suffering and death on the cross had not yet come.

### **The Not-Yet Hour: Summary**

In summary, we may say that Jesus has revealed his glory to the world by his signs and words, and has shown himself “to his own people as the revelation of his Father,”<sup>73</sup> yet is rejected. Jesus himself declares that his hour has not yet come (2:4), and the narrative

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>73</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:cxxxviii.

consistently reports that Jesus escapes death because of this (7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). The true hour of glory, the hour of His suffering and death, is yet to come.

### **John 12:23, 27**

With the coming of the Greeks (12:20–22), Jesus explicitly declares the arrival of his hour. This hour is already demarcated with the aspects of Jesus' glory, which we have studied. First, the Passover is specifically mentioned (12:1, 20), making Jesus' hour coextensive with the highest Jewish holiday. Second, Jesus is anointed by Mary for his death with expensive perfume (12:3), and Jesus makes another ominous statement about his death (12:7–8), thus connecting his suffering and death to his hour. Third, the testimony of the resurrection of Lazarus is causing people to believe in Jesus (12:11, 17) and sing his praises in similar fashion to their reactions to his signs (2:11; 4:53; 6:14; 9:38; 10:42; 11:45). Finally, some Greeks (non-Jews) come to Philip, seeking Jesus (12:20–22), which (accompanied by the Isaianic citation in 12:38–41) coincides with the message of universal atonement in the Gospel of John (1:3–4, 29; 3:16; 4:23, 42; 10:16; 17:20, 25–26).<sup>74</sup>

The statements of Jesus in this chapter function in a way that is similar to how the scene of Jesus' agony in Gethsemane functions in the Synoptic Gospels, insofar as Jesus' emotions are concerned. Yet it is notable that there is no agony scene in Gethsemane, as there are in the Synoptic Gospels. Truly Jesus' soul is "vexed" (12:27), and "the verb [τετάρρακται] is a strong

---

<sup>74</sup> On universal atonement in Jesus' worldview, see Köstenberger, *Theology*, 403–4: "Israel's divine election is shown to be followed by her rejection of God's Messiah, despite the 'signs,' which presents the crucifixion, redemption, and resurrection as planks in the divine salvation-historical program with universal ramifications." For a similar interpretation of the Old Testament citation in John 12, see Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 89–90, who writes, "The Jewish rejection of Jesus and his signs signals not only the fulfillment of this prophecy of Isaiah but also the emerging climax of John's entire Gospel. In the final stages of John's Gospel, Jesus will bring to final completion both Old Testament prophecy and what he himself has anticipated in his former words and deeds."

one, and signifies revulsion, horror, anxiety, agitation.”<sup>75</sup> But this is understandable. “Surely it cannot be surprising that the prospect of the cross proved utterly daunting to Jesus on more than one occasion.”<sup>76</sup> Yet there is still no explicit scene. Brown points out that “there are elements scattered through John that parallel the Synoptic tradition.”<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, Jesus’ entire ministry has been leading up to the culmination of his death on a cross, so he will not pray to be saved from it (12:27). Such words hint at the well-known agony scene in Gethsemane, but it would hardly be consistent for the Evangelist to explicitly corroborate Jesus’ agony in the garden, given the prominent place this hour has had in the narrative.

The final revelation of non-Jewish people seeking Jesus (12:20–21) is the final narrative detail before Jesus declares the arrival of his hour. The phrase ἦσαν δὲ both delineates the following verses into a discrete unit and links them to the previous episode.<sup>78</sup> “From the viewpoint of thought sequence, the scene is an ideal conclusion to chs. 11–12... Truly this is a climactic scene.”<sup>79</sup> The crowd that had gathered for the Passover Feast welcomes Jesus into the city with shouts of praise, yet not even the disciples understood the ironic significance of this episode until after Jesus had died (12:16). Jesus has been prepared for burial (12:7), the Pharisees grumble one last time (12:19), the “whole world” goes after Jesus,<sup>80</sup> and the Passion Week bell tolls the arrival of the hour (12:23).

---

<sup>75</sup> Carson, *John*, 440.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:470.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:466.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:469.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Carson, *John*, 435, for whom “The Greeks who request to see Jesus...represent ‘the whole world.’”

## John 13:1

Before the passover feast (πρὸ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα), Jesus knows that his hour has come.<sup>81</sup> The narrative will now continue with specific linear time markers until 20:31.<sup>82</sup> Up until this point, markers such as μέτα ταῦτα have labeled the passage of time in indefinite ways (cf. 2:12; 3:22; 5:1, 14; 6:1, 66; 7:1; 11:7, 11). Now, however, the arrival of the hour of Jesus' glory warps the narrative. Now that the hour has arrived, the narrative slows to a crawl; the tale of a single evening and the daylight that followed stretches over seven chapters (13–19). This is common in ancient literature:

Within groups of events, a narrative can foreground key events, causing deceleration and narrative density, and subjugate less critical actions to backgrounded subordinate clauses to lighten weight and speed the tempo. *A slowly narrated event is also often a critical event for the reader.*<sup>83</sup>

Thus, the final discourse Jesus has with his disciples before his death takes place over the course of five chapters (13–17), and is sandwiched by two occurrences of ὥρα (13:1; 17:1), both of which are the most poignantly eschatological uses yet.

It is time for Jesus to leave the world and return to the Father. Therefore, Jesus will love his disciples to the end (cf. “τετέλεσται” in 19:30!). The final event before his arrest, after long speeches of encouragement, warning, and instructions, is a prayer Jesus makes to the Father at the hour of his glory (17:1).

---

<sup>81</sup> Most English translations presume that the phrase is indicating the current time. However, the temporal phrase might simply modify εἰδώς, indicating that Jesus knew his hour had come before the Passover had arrived.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. 18:1; 19:31; 20:1, 19, 26.

<sup>83</sup> Estes, *Temporal Mechanics*, 189. Emphasis added.

## John 17:1

John 17:1 is the final explicit reference to the hour of Jesus' death on the cross before the actual event takes place. Jesus speaks of himself in the third person (17:1–3), affirming the authority given to him in order to give eternal life to everyone whom the Father has given him. Jesus prays for himself (17:1–5), his disciples (17:6–19), and for those yet to become disciples (17:20–26). The *realized eschatological* sense of Jesus' departure confirms his previous words that, where he is going, no one can follow (7:34), but it must be so—this hour is the purpose of Jesus' ministry (12:27).

The universal offer of this eternal life is also seen in 3:16, when God gives his one and only son on behalf of the whole world, because of his great love for the world. The giving is nothing other than the lifting up of the Son of Man, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (3:14–15). No one takes Jesus' life from him; he gives it of his own accord (10:18). This must take place; the seed must die before the branches can grow (12:24; 15:5). This is the mysterious glory of God that no one understands until later (16:17–18). As Luther puts it,

He had accomplished great things: He had preached and worked magnificently, had demonstrated His power and might, so that all the world should rightly have given Him the most glorious praise, honor, and worship. But He encounters the opposite, that instead of all the honor and praise He is due, shame and disgrace are poured out upon Him. He must hang on the cross between two murderers and die as the most wicked, most desperate scoundrel the earth has ever endured, so that never has there been a murderer treated so shamefully and disgracefully.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, the ironic glory of God is shown through the eschatological hour of Jesus.

---

<sup>84</sup> AE 69:21.

## Summary

The hour of Jesus is the hour of his suffering and death. It is both vertical (being appointed by God) and horizontal (for the sake of the whole world). It is both realized (life in Christ is able to be transformed now) and futuristic (Christ will come again at the last to raise the dead). In these ways, the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross embodies the eschatological *Weltanschauung* in the Gospel of John.

This hour is the culmination of Jesus' glory, and is foreshadowed by the glory revealed to the people in the seven signs detailed in the narrative. These signs function both publicly to display the power of God in Christ and to create faith in the hearts of those who witness them. Because they function in this way, the hour is *yet* to come with Jesus' signs, and it is presently come with the climactic week of his suffering and death on the cross.

In this chapter I have examined every instance of ὥρα in the Gospel of John that explicitly evokes this theology. In the following chapter, I will argue that every other remaining occurrence of ὥρα in the Gospel of John refers to this hour in a special way.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### OTHER HOURS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Building upon Chapter Three, this chapter will show that each and every other occurrence of ὥρα in the Gospel John is effected by the meaning of the eschatological hour of Jesus. Every instance of ὥρα that otherwise does not seem explicitly to refer to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross will be examined as nevertheless bearing an important relationship to that hour. These final instances of ὥρα may be arranged according to three additional categories.

#### The Ecclesiological Hour

The hour which I have labeled “ecclesiological” is what Brown calls the horizontal view of salvation. According to this view, “God acts in and through the sequence of history. From the time of creation God has guided the world with its population inexorably forward to a climax, which is often seen in terms of divine intervention in the linear course of history.”<sup>1</sup> I call it the ecclesiological hour, as this label specifies the effect this hour has on the world—its effect is seen primarily through the church, which is conformed to faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus for the salvation of the whole world. As Jesus breathed on his disciples and gave them the authority to forgive and retain sins (20:22–23), he sends them into the world to fish for souls (21:11). This “ecclesiological hour” is only possible because of Jesus' eschatological hour of suffering and death on the cross. Indeed, the Church finds her identity in him (15:5; 17:6; cf.

---

<sup>1</sup> Brown, *Introduction*, 235.



Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27); it is the Church's vocation as the newly defined Israel to bring the Gospel of the rejected cornerstone to the world. "The transferral of kingdom stewardship also includes transferral of stewardship of the new temple, centered not in an architectural sphere anymore but now in Jesus [Jn 2:21] and all who identify with him."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Brown writes, "the principal episodes of the crucifixion are concerned with the gifts that the enthroned king gives to those who accept his kingdom ... The Johannine crucifixion scene is, in a certain way, less concerned with the fate of Jesus than with the significance of that fate for his followers."<sup>3</sup> Thus, the following occurrences of ὄρα reflect a horizontal eschatology. In this way they bear a special relationship to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, which is for the sake of all mankind (3:16).

#### **John 4:21, 23**

These two occurrences of ὄρα appear in a lengthy discourse between Jesus and a Samaritan woman. Jesus and his disciples have just traveled to the town of Sychar, and Jesus sits down at Jacob's well, while his disciples go into town to find food (4:5–8). Jesus, tired as he is, requests a drink from a Samaritan woman. John emphasizes the unusual nature of this request based on their differences (4:9). The ensuing discussion, and the proclamation Jesus gives her, is both eschatological and ecclesiological in nature. This is evident in at least three ways.

First, by acting "out of line" with regards to every known propriety, Jesus is instituting a radically inclusive communion for all who believe. The woman is a foreigner—a Samaritan, no less. Therefore, Jesus ought not drink from the same cup as her, or even speak with her.

---

<sup>2</sup> Beale, *Biblical Theology*, 681.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, *John*, 2:912.

Samaritans, as a blend of native Israelites and “foreign colonists” (cf. 2 Kgs 17:24), were viewed by many Jews as an illegitimate race of people.<sup>4</sup> Yet Jesus breaks down the barriers and declares salvation to whomever drinks the water he has to give (Jn 4:14). His sermon to her convinces her and many in the town that he is the savior of the whole world (4:42), regardless of race or religion (1:13).

Second, Jesus separates the true worship of God from any specific geographic location. As mentioned above, the Jews and Samaritans have a long history of disagreement:

The command in Deut 12:1–14 to worship God in the place that he will show follows the command to pronounce a blessing from Mt. Gerizim and a curse from Mt. Ebal (Deut 11:29). In the Samaritan Pentateuch of Deut 27:3 the place where an altar is to be built on arrival in the promised land is Gerizim, not Ebal as in the MT.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, later books in which Jerusalem was declared the legitimate location of the temple and the dwelling place of God (e.g. 1 Kgs 6:12–13) would have been viewed by the Samaritans as inauthentic. “In the Persian period a temple was built on Gerizim; it was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 128 B.C., but the Samaritans continued to worship on the sacred site.”<sup>6</sup> Jesus recognizes the disagreement (Jn 4:21), yet declares an ecclesiological hour in the present tense (ἔρχεται ὥρα ὅτε). This is a futuristic use of the present tense, and here describes “an event that is *wholly* subsequent to the time of speaking, although as if it were present.”<sup>7</sup> Jesus here detaches the ecclesial formulae of the church from any given boundaries. As in the signs of Jesus which demonstrate messianic replacement (see Chapter Three above), this is not to supplant or nullify any setting of worship or Jewish religious practice; on the contrary, it is to fulfill it (1:23, 45).

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1:170.

<sup>5</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 61.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 536. Italics original.

Third, Jesus declares the actual arrival of an hour of a realized worship in spirit and in truth (4:24). This is a reality *now*, and people are expected to follow Jesus *now*. Anyone who listens to Jesus and believes in him has eternal life (5:24); if you have seen Jesus, you have seen the Father (14:9). The hour of eschatological revelation has come now in the flesh and blood of Jesus (4:26), and he calls everyone to leave their water jugs (4:28) and drink from the living stream (7:37–38). He alone is the source that brings life and salvation (19:34!). He alone is the object of true worship.

Therefore, the two uses of ὥρα here, though not referring directly to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, nevertheless bear a critical relationship to it.<sup>8</sup> For it is through and because of that hour that the church, made up of all people, languages, and cultures, may have her hour of worship in spirit and in truth, being thus fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

### **John 5:25, 28**

The use of ὥρα in John 5 is closely related to the sign Jesus has just performed at the pool of Bethesda (5:8–9). There is no indication in the text of how much time has passed. However, Jesus' discourse (5:19–47) is a direct response to the Jews who were persecuting him because of the sign (5:19). Again, the sign reveals Jesus' glory, and Jesus answers his opposition with words of the resurrection. The hour has come (5:25) and will come in the future (5:28) when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and come out of their graves. These occurrences of ὥρα foreshadow the resurrection of Lazarus, which foreshadows the resurrection of Jesus himself.

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Wahlde, Urban C., *The Gospel and Letters of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 2:175, who writes, "In the present instance, the term refers to the hour in which the eschatological gift of the Spirit is made available to believers."

They also declare the ecclesiological hour in which all flesh will hear the voice of Jesus and be raised from the dead.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the sign of Lazarus' resurrection is the culmination of Jesus' anticipatory ministry, performed to elicit faith in the onlookers (11:15, 42). The sheep of Jesus know the sound of his voice (10:14, 16), and the true children of God love the one who was sent by God (8:42). It is no mistake, then, that Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead by *calling his name* like a shepherd to a sheep (11:43). Lazarus typifies the resurrection of all that is to happen at the church's final hour, which Martha declares will happen at the last day (11:24). The Son gives life to whomever believes in him (5:21), and whoever believes in him will live, even though he dies (11:25).

The use of ὥρα here also bears considerable continuity with the eschatology of Daniel. The authority given to the Son to judge (5:22, 24, 27) "alludes to Daniel 7:13–14, 26–27, where the Ancient of Days gives the Son of Man (or Israel) the authority to effect the final judgment."<sup>9</sup> In both texts the Son of Man is given honor (Jn 5:23; Dan 7:13), and "several scholars agree that the reference to a double resurrection in Jn 5:28–29 alludes to the eschatological resurrection in Daniel 12:2."<sup>10</sup> Therefore,

Within this context (Jn 5:19–30), John mentions the coming of an hour that has close affinities with the hour in Daniel; both hours (in Jn 5:25, 28 and in Dan 12:1–2) are eschatological and specifically refer to a final judgment and a final resurrection. In the Johannine context, this eschatological hour is perceived as inaugurated in 5:25 and consummated in 5:28–29.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Mihalios, *Danielic Eschatological Hour*, 123.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

In other words, the uses of ὥρα in John 5:25 and 28 are both *realized* and *futuristic* as they point towards the eschatological *telos* of the church, which is obtained after and because of the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross.

### **John 5:35**

A reference to John not yet in prison has already been made (3:24), so it is assumed that the reader knows the full story of his beheading, since the Evangelist does not mention him again. The context of Jesus' words here is in dialogue with the Jews upon the healing of the ailing man on the Sabbath. Jesus refers to the Jews' interaction with John (5:33), which is likely a reference to 1:19, when priests and Levites asked John who he was. The identity of this man was important, as the coming Messiah would be introduced by one calling in the wilderness, as John himself testifies (1:23).

The reader is reminded of this conversation, as well as the theme of light (5:35). Brown cites Josephus, who says "that men were highly elated at listening to John the Baptist, and it is to such passing enthusiasm that our verse refers."<sup>12</sup> John's mission belonged to that period of time before the coming Messiah, when all were to repent and prepare themselves for the hour of Jesus. The goal, of course, was to "remember that healthy response to John's preaching and recognize in Jesus the one whom the Baptist announced."<sup>13</sup> John himself was not the light, but came to testify about the light (1:8). However, Jesus refers to him as *the* burning and shining lamp (ὁ λύχνος ὁ καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων). The "lamp" may be a reference to Psalm 132:17,<sup>14</sup> the

---

<sup>12</sup> Brown, *Gospel*, 224n35. Confer Jesus' own words in Matt 11:11 and Luke 7:28.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Carson, *Gospel*, 261. See also, Morris, *Gospel*, 289, who thinks the definite article confirms the theory.

one established for the Messiah, or the lamps of Exodus 27, which are “burning and shining” from evening to morning in front of the Tent of Meeting.

This use of ὥρα is ironically juxtaposed to the previous two uses of ὥρα (5:25, 28), which are located in the context of the resurrection of the dead. It is not this hour, and ultimately not the hour of Jesus, that the Jews are putting their faith in. The Jews “never came to grips with [John’s] message,” even though they “professed to be the people of God and to be seeking the way of God.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, this occurrence of ὥρα signals dramatic irony to the reader and points ultimately to the object of John’s proclamation: the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross.

#### **John 16:2, 4**

The context of these occurrences of ὥρα is Jesus’ final discourse with his disciples. These refer to persecution that will come upon the Church after Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension. The Church will suffer, and is called to be patient in suffering (cf. Rev 6:10). This hour is indicative of a realized eschatology, for Christ’s resurrection and ascension will soon bring about the final hour of the church (1 Jn 2:18!), for which there will also be an hour belonging to the enemy (Jn 16:2).

Jesus warns the disciples of a future excommunication from the temple, and even a future threat of death. From the narrative, the reader knows this will happen, as it has already begun to happen at the time of the sixth sign (9:22). A future threat of death will become a present threat even by the end of the Gospel, when Jesus declares to Peter the kind of death he would experience (21:19). Furthermore, at the time of this Gospel’s composition, Saul’s murderous

---

<sup>15</sup> Morris, *Gospel*, 290.

rampages against the church had long since come and gone (Ac 8:1–3). There is little doubt that Paul thought he was serving God by destroying his church (Phil 3:4b–6; 1 Tim 1:12–14), just as Jesus indicates (Jn 16:2).

Furthermore, Jesus tells his disciples these things so that they would remember them later (16:4). This type of post-facto remembrance happens frequently in the Gospel (2:17; 3:24; 6:71; 11:2), and contributes to a narrative metalepsis.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the reader is aware that the community of believers *after* Jesus gains and maintains its identity *through* him. The church's hour is only present and possible because of his hour of suffering and death on the cross.

### **John 16:25, 32**

These occurrences of ὥρα, being in the same discourse as the previous two, are thus closely related in meaning with the former. Here, Jesus refers to a period of time in which he will no longer speak in figures of speech (see examination of 16:21 below), but will tell them plainly about the Father. The disciples respond to this declaration assuming that the hour is present already (16:29). Jesus replies with a rhetorical question (see note thirty-six in Chapter Three),<sup>17</sup> insinuating the disciples' continued lack of understanding (16:31).

What Jesus intends for his believers is that they would ask in his name (16:24, 26). This type of asking is “not primarily a question of the ordinary needs of life but of whatever will

---

<sup>16</sup> Estes, *Temporal Mechanics*, 243, aptly notes that “the narrator of the Fourth Gospel speaks into two worlds: the world of the testimonies about the Johannine Jesus and the world of the early Christian communities for whom the life of Jesus is the foundational epic. While the narrator is one of the devices that bridges the gap between these two worlds, the narrator is also primarily responsible for irrevocably conflating these two worlds as well.”

<sup>17</sup> Carson, *John*, 548, however, translates it as a statement, finding sarcasm an effective tool on the lips of Jesus. “Richer irony is preserved if their words are repeated with heavy exasperation: lit. ‘Now you believe!’”

deepen eternal life and make fruitful the work of the Paraclete.”<sup>18</sup> Jesus is laying a foundation of ecclesiological living in which the Holy Spirit is an integral and necessary part (16:7–15).

As in the other occurrences of ὥρα in the same discourse, the use in 16:32 also refers to an hour of suffering and persecution that will come upon the church. This great tribulation “can come only through suffering and death, and they must share in this if they are to understand and to believe.”<sup>19</sup> Indeed, even as he heads out to meet his death, Jesus reasserts his sovereignty over the entire hour (cf. 10:18). Regardless of the pain and trial facing the church in the time following Jesus’ hour, she can face her trouble with confidence, knowing that Jesus has overcome the world (16:33).

Further meaning of the “scattering” (16:32), echoing the language of Zechariah 13:7, could point to the events of the upcoming night. However, this is not as clear in John as in the Synoptics (see Mt 26:56; Mk 14:51–52). In fact, John 18:15 indicates Peter and John following Jesus, which seems to suggest that the scattering will take place *after* his death. However, Peter’s subsequent denial of his discipleship could perhaps be read as a “scattering,” and the main point of Jesus’ words is “that all of Jesus’ disciples did flee.”<sup>20</sup>

The use of ὥρα in 16:25, therefore, is *futuristic* in its prediction of the coming Holy Spirit, and indicative of the common life shared by believers. The use of ὥρα in 16:32 is *realized*, in that the disciples will scatter upon Jesus’ arrest in just a few short hours. Therefore, both of these occurrences of ὥρα are consistent with the eschatological hour of Jesus; indeed, the latter takes place simultaneously with the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross.

---

<sup>18</sup> Brown, *Gospel*, 2:734.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:736.

<sup>20</sup> Carson, *John*, 549. See also Beasley-Murray, *John*, 287–88; and Michaels, *Gospel*, 854–55, for further support.



## John 19:27

The final appearance of Jesus' mother harkens back to her first and only other appearance. At the wedding feast at Cana, where Jesus performed the first sign that revealed his glory (2:1–11), his mother's comments elicited an important response from Jesus (see Chapter Three above). Jesus' first interaction with his mother is defining the work of Jesus' ministry at a watershed moment, since he can only do the Father's will (5:19). McHugh cites Augustine and Aquinas as arguing that "now that [Jesus] was about to begin the work appointed by his heavenly Father, [he] could no longer hold himself at her bidding."<sup>21</sup> Carson writes,

This must have been extremely difficult for Mary. She had borne him, nursed him, taught his baby fingers elementary skills, watched him fall over as he learned to walk; apparently she had also come to rely on him as the family provider. But now that he had entered into the purpose of his coming, everything, even family ties, had to be subordinated to his divine mission. She could no longer view him as other mothers viewed their sons; she must no longer be allowed the prerogatives of motherhood.<sup>22</sup>

This is consistent with the second and final appearance of Jesus' mother in the Gospel (19:27). On the cross, Jesus further redefines the relationship he has with his mother by placing her in the care of the Evangelist (19:25–27). However, this is more than simple familial stewardship on Jesus' part.<sup>23</sup> Rather, Jesus' mother plays a unique role in the Gospel's narrative in regards to the hour of Jesus.

In short, Jesus' mother, appearing only at the first obvious reference to Jesus' hour (2:4) and at the very last (19:27), "marks the ending of the earthly story of Jesus, as she had also marked its beginning."<sup>24</sup> The sign at Cana first shows the proleptic glory of Jesus whose fullness

---

<sup>21</sup> McHugh, *John 1–4*, 182.

<sup>22</sup> Carson, *John*, 171.

<sup>23</sup> Yet it is not to be read in a Mariological fashion as if Jesus sets Mary apart for a specific ecclesiological purpose. See AC XXI.

<sup>24</sup> Lieu, Judith M., "The Mother of the Son in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 117 (1998): 69–70. Lieu adds, "Her real function has been to bracket the earthly ministry of Jesus and in some sense to mediate it."

is his suffering and death on the cross (19:30). “Cana-and-cross/cross-and-resurrection,” Lieu adds, “are bound together in a continually moving relationship. Cross must precede resurrection—Jesus’ hour must first come; but resurrection provides the context for cross and establishes it as a means of manifesting his glory.”<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, the disciple whom Jesus loved can be viewed as a symbol for the faithful exercise of a future Apostolic Ministry. Culpepper describes the disciple as a paragon: he believes and is closer to Jesus than the other disciples (13:23–25; 19:26–27; 20:2, 8; 21:7, 20–24).

The conclusion of the gospel (21:24–25) finally makes it clear that the Beloved Disciple is the link with Jesus, the source and authority of the traditions contained in the gospel and affirmed by those who speak of themselves as “we.” The conclusion renders the inclusion of 19:35 among the references to the Beloved Disciple probable. He is above all the one who has borne true witness. He has reminded the others of all that Jesus said and did, for there were many other things which could not be included in the gospel (20:30; 21:25).<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, the inclusio formed by the word ὥρα at the beginning and end of his earthly ministry begins with an ominous word about his forthcoming hour, and ends with the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross. The mother, as the one who gave birth to flesh and blood, points to the earthly purpose of Jesus. She embodies the object of its message, which is given into the hands of the newly formed community of faith, whose care is the trust of the disciple who takes the household of the savior as his own. Its message is trustworthy (19:35; 21:25) and is written so that the world may believe in Jesus and, believing, have life in his name (20:30–31).

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>26</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 122.

## The Proverbial Hour

There are two occurrences of ὥρα that are spoken in a proverbial sense.<sup>27</sup> In other words, they are used metaphorically by Jesus in dialogue with his disciples in order to help them better understand his identity and mission. Moreover, they are used both with a sense of inevitability and urgency. In this way, these two uses of ὥρα are consistent with the others, and bear a special relationship to Jesus' eschatological hour.

### John 11:9

The importance of this use of ὥρα lies not in its numbering, but in its context. Jesus is on his way to raise Lazarus from the dead, after waiting for two days (11:6) for Lazarus to die (11:15). When Jesus informs his disciples that he is returning to Bethany, they remind him that the Jews recently tried to kill him (10:31, 39; 11:8). Jesus replies by likening his mission to the twelve hours of the day (11:9).

The light/dark motif presents itself again here (see Chapter Three: The Faithful Are Revisited, above). The light is Jesus himself (8:12; 9:5), and all who walk with him do not stumble. Everyone is to “make the most of the presence of Christ, the Light of the world, for when he is withdrawn from them there is no possibility of their ‘walking’ without stumbling.”<sup>28</sup> While the implications of this text for future discipleship are present, its relevance to the ministry

---

<sup>27</sup> It is beyond our discussion to explore the differences between παράβολη and παροιμία, or “parable” and “figure of speech,” respectively. Both are translated from the Hebrew word מָשָׁל, but John conspicuously refrains from using παράβολη, opting instead for παροιμία (10:6; 16:25, 29), which is absent from the Synoptics. This is likely because the Gospel of John does not record “parables” in the same function as the Synoptics; John uses the signs to blind the unbelievers and fulfill Isaiah’s prophesy (12:37–41). Here, I have chosen the arbitrary designation of “proverbial” in an attempt to bypass the temptation of this discussion; the focus here should be on ὥρα, and not on the metaphors used.

<sup>28</sup> Morris, *Gospel*, 481.

of Jesus is more evident. Later in the Gospel, when Jesus declares the arrival of his hour (12:23, 27; 13:1), the Evangelist declares the arrival of darkness (13:30).

Jesus mentions the hours in a day to suggest that the time in which Jesus accomplishes his ministry as the Light of the world is both limited (7:33; 16:16) and focused on the moment in time when Jesus' work of revealing the Father (1:18) will happen. Being limited, Jesus "must therefore use such time as he has in doing God's will regardless of the consequences (cf. 9:4)."<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Jesus' ministry is not without a sense of urgency. "Until his hour arrives, Jesus and his followers will be protected from the threats of the Jews."<sup>30</sup> However, "threats are looming on the horizon,"<sup>31</sup> and the time is short.

In conclusion, at first glance, this use of ὥρα appears to have no major significance. The temptation is to read it as a mere proverb that Jesus uses to inform his disciples of their mission. However, due to its proximity to Jesus' words about the glory of God's Son (11:4), its proximity to the final and greatest sign in the Gospel (11:43–44), as well as its place in the light/dark motif present in the Gospel, this occurrence of ὥρα bears an unmistakable relationship to the hour of Jesus' revelatory suffering and death on the cross.<sup>32</sup>

### **John 16:21**

The poignant emotions of grief and joy are juxtaposed in this use of ὥρα, which is spoken within Jesus' final discourse and instruction to his disciples. The metaphor of a pregnant woman whose hour has come has both near and far implications for the disciples. First, the disciples will

---

<sup>29</sup> Barrett, *Gospel*, 325.

<sup>30</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 330.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Morris, *Gospel*, 481, hints at this possibility: "It is not impossible in view of the use of 'hour' in this Gospel that the reference to 'hours' here contains an allusion to the work that Jesus, the Light of the world, came to do."

soon grieve at the death of Jesus (19:38–42; 20:11, 19), but that grief will turn into joy when he is raised from the dead (20:20). Second, their grief in this world will continue after Jesus' ascension as they will be persecuted for the sake of the Gospel (15:18–19; 21:18), yet turn to joy at the Parousia. The latter implication is consistent with Scripture as it uses the same metaphor of a pregnant woman in labor.

In the Old Testament, the metaphor of labor is used in the “portrayal of the birth pangs that Israel will have to endure before the day of the Lord comes or before the Messiah comes.”<sup>33</sup> Isaiah 26:17–18 likens Israel to a woman giving birth to a child, writhing in pain. However, its dead bodies will arise out of the dust of the earth and shout for joy (26:19). Isaiah 66:7–10 continues the metaphor, depicting Zion as a mother giving birth to her children. Through this, God will comfort his people as a mother comforts her children (66:13), and Israel will rejoice (66:14). Hosea and Micah likewise prophesy pain and death, likening Israel's king to a woman in labor who fails to give birth (Hos 13:13), and the exile to the agony of labor (Mic 4:9–10).

The New Testament continues the imagery. While waiting for the imminent Parousia of Christ, Paul writes to the Thessalonians that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, like a woman caught with sudden labor pangs (1 Thes 5:3). A pregnant woman also cries out in pain in Revelation 12:2–5, who Louis Brighton likens to Jesus' mother, and a symbol for the Christian church in tribulation. She “thus represents the faithful people of God who longed for the Messiah to come, and who by their faith can be said metaphorically to be the mother of the Child and thus to have given birth to him.”<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Brown, *Gospel*, 731.

<sup>34</sup> Louis A. Brighton, *Revelation* (Concordia Commentary: A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture; St. Louis: Concordia, 1999), 327.

Certainly the tribulations of God's people versus the judgments over God's people are fundamentally different, but these references nevertheless show that Jesus' referral to the hour of a woman's birth has far reaching implications for both the world and his church. Therefore, this use of ὥρα coincides with the eschatology imbedded in Jesus' hour; there is a *realized* and *futuristic* eschatology for his disciples implicit in Jesus' words. As Brown writes,

The joy of the Christian disciple is not only the joy of recognizing that Jesus has conquered death in his resurrection (20:20); it is an abiding joy resulting from Jesus' presence in the Paraclete. The first joy follows the sadness and suffering of Jesus' departure in death; the second joy (which is the continuation of the first) exists alongside suffering imposed by the world.<sup>35</sup>

Such grief and joy are only possible through the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, to which this occurrence of ὥρα is also related.

### **The Hours of the Day**

It is this use of ὥρα that is most taken for granted (or overlooked entirely), and so is especially the original contribution of this STM thesis.<sup>36</sup> In what follows, I will argue that each of these specific uses of ὥρα, in addition to being standard time markers, bears a special relationship to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross.

In any discussion of these occurrences of ὥρα, a mention of the time of day is inevitable. As examined in Chapter Two above, there is ample evidence that two different systems of telling time were present in the environment in which the Gospel of John was written. One system included counting the hours of the day from sunrise; the other system began counting from midnight. There is no shortage of comments which discuss the actual time of day that these hours

---

<sup>35</sup> Brown, *Gospel*, 733.

<sup>36</sup> The closest anyone has come to my assertions is Mihalios, *Danielic Eschatological Hour*, 95, who says, "Although the reference to the hour in 4.52–53 and also the resurrection of the official's son are not eschatological in any direct sense, they might anticipate, nevertheless, the hour and the resurrection in 5.25, 28–29."

signify, and the problems intrinsic to either view.<sup>37</sup> However, as this thesis views the specific uses of ὥρα in the Gospel of John as more meaningful than mere time references, I submit that the Evangelist intended even the occurrences of ὥρα below to be eschatological in nature.

Generally speaking, this is evident for two reasons.

First, the Gospel of John includes twenty-four uses of the word ὥρα (the entire Johannine corpus thirty-five times). Meanwhile, the *combined* usage of ὥρα in the Synoptic Gospels is forty-six times (see Chapter Two). It has already been established that nineteen of the twenty-four occurrences of ὥρα in the Gospel of John (plus the two occurrences of καιρός) either refer directly to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross or bear a special relationship to it. Granted, ὥρα has several different semantic functions, yet it seems unlikely that the Gospel of John, which appears to be so deliberate in its use of ὥρα, would exclude only these few remaining instances from its eschatological use.

Second, Jesus himself spoke figuratively (see above in reference to 11:9; see also παροιμία in 10:6; 16:25, 29). Are there not twelve hours in a day? Actually, in Israel there are anywhere from nine hours and forty-eight minutes to fourteen hours and twelve minutes in the day, depending on the season.<sup>38</sup> Jesus' reference to the daylight is theological in nature, so one might expect other numerations of hours to be likewise theological. This might support Carson's view of the sixth hour in 19:14, which seemingly contradicts Mark's account of the time of Jesus' crucifixion (Mk 15:25).<sup>39</sup> Opposing several solutions, Carson opts for a generalization. Precise

---

<sup>37</sup> A lengthy and comprehensive overview of opinions can be found in Morris, *Gospel*, 138n91 and 708 nn. 36 and 37.

<sup>38</sup> Morris, *Gospel*, 480n20.

<sup>39</sup> Attempts to remedy the discrepancy by copyists are present as early as the 5th century.  $\aleph^2$ , D<sup>s</sup>, L,  $\Delta$ ,  $\Psi$ , *l*, and 844 all replace "ἕκτη" with "τρίτη".

time-keeping, he says, “could not have been achieved. The reckoning of time for most people, who could not very well carry sundials and astronomical charts, was necessarily approximate.”<sup>40</sup> Therefore, “two different observers might well have glanced up and decided, respectively, that it was ‘the third hour’ or ‘about the sixth hour.’”<sup>41</sup> However, if ὥρα in John 19:14 bears a special relationship to the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death, then the number may point to a deeper theological meaning instead of a specific hour. Furthermore, it is an unsatisfactory explanation that Mark and John, writing such important accounts, with the latter likely fully cognizant of the narrative and message of the former, would be so far from each other in their respective efforts at time-keeping. Every previous attempt at assessing the significance of these final references to an hour have yielded unsatisfactory results in light of every other occurrence of ὥρα in the Gospel of John. It is therefore the assertion of this thesis that even these final occurrences of ὥρα are intentionally placed by the author in his narrative in order to *signal dramatic irony* for the reader and deliberately *foreshadow Jesus’ hour*.

### **The Tenth Hour (John 1:39)**

The prologue to the Gospel of John references the beginning, where Christ is with the Father. Reference to John the Baptist follows closely (1:6). John’s actual testimony is detailed a few verses later (1:15), and his identity is established: “John the Baptist is not the one awaited for in mythic time.”<sup>42</sup> Instead, John’s purpose is to proclaim the coming Messiah, and to make straight his paths (1:23).

---

<sup>40</sup> Carson, *John*, 605.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Estes, *Temporal Mechanics*, 192.



Three identical instances of the same temporal marker—τῆ ἑπαύριον (1:29, 35, 43)—establish a dramatic progression of interconnected events over the course of four days. It can be diagrammed thus:

Day One: The Baptist gives testimony (1:19–28).

Day Two: The Baptist’s testimony continues, introducing Jesus (1:29–34).

Day Three: The Baptist offers final testimony, directing his own disciples to follow Jesus, and they begin to bring others to Jesus (1:35–42).

Day Four: Jesus is, in the absence of the Baptist, the focus, as his disciples continue to bring others to Jesus (1:43–51).

As can be seen, the repetition of “on the next day” and the succession of events moves “the narrative from creation to Jesus.”<sup>43</sup>

It is in the midst of this section that ὄρα appears for the first time in the Gospel of John, offering “a disconnected temporal color to the passing of the narrative sequences, yet remain[ing] meaningless for studies of configuration and emplotment.”<sup>44</sup> In other words, as the temporal marker “on the next day” is used to delineate the successive rhetorical units of the initial narrative, this use of ὄρα is a descriptor used to “reflect more the context of the narrative than the context of the narrator.”<sup>45</sup> Such a temporal descriptor is used to “bring a deeper sense of temporality and verisimilitude to individual narratives.”<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 192n38.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

In addition to verisimilitude, this first occurrence of ὥρα foreshadows Jesus' hour for the reader. The number ten carries significance for those who adhere to the Decalogue.<sup>47</sup> It was already testified that grace and truth comes through Jesus, whilst the law was given through Moses (1:17). The Baptist identifies Jesus as the Son of God (1:34, 36) and encourages his own disciples to go with the greater one. Andrew declares that he too has found the Messiah (1:41), while Philip declares Jesus to be the one about whom Moses wrote (1:45). Jesus' invitation to the Baptist's disciples to follow him and they will see (1:39) is therefore full of meaning as a call to discipleship in the dramatic context of the revelation of the fulfilling grace and truth of the Word of God (1:17) to Israel (1:49). Brown writes, "In 5:40; 6:40, 47, eternal life is promised respectively to those who come to Jesus, to those who look on him and to those who believe in him—three different ways of describing the same action."<sup>48</sup> The narrative moves swiftly through the progression of John the Baptist and Moses to Jesus. Indeed, "if the training of the disciples begins when they *go* to Jesus to *see* where he is staying and *stay* on with him, it will be completed when they *see* his glory and *believe* in him (2:11)."<sup>49</sup>

The context of discipleship and the arrival of the Messiah attested to first by Moses and the prophets and then also by John the Baptist provides a suitable setting for this reference to the tenth hour. At this hour, the people of Israel are being called to the fulfillment of their history in

---

<sup>47</sup> See Köstenberger, *Theology*, 298–99, "In his references to the OT, John spans the entire range from explicit quotations to verifiable allusions and thematic connections. In keeping with John's purpose statement, Jesus is identified as the Messiah and Son of God and set in relation to the major figures in Israel's history, whether Abraham, Jacob, or Moses, as well as the Prophet, by citations, or allusions to, Scripture." The number ten to allude to the Decalogue is no exception to this.

<sup>48</sup> Brown, *Gospel*, 1:79.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. See also Beasley-Murray, *John*, 26, "the nature of the narrative indicates [ἠκολούθησας] as a first step towards becoming disciples of Jesus."

Jesus (contra 5:35!), which will be finished (τετέλεσται, 19:28) at the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, an hour to which the narrative refers directly a few verses later (2:4).

### **The Sixth Hour (John 4:6; 19:14)**

It is frequently suggested that the Samaritan woman was an outcast of her society. This conclusion is drawn from two facts: that she had been married five times (4:18), and that it was the sixth hour (4:6) and therefore not a common time to gather water. However, if this woman is such an outcast, why are the people of her town believing her when she proclaims Jesus to them? (4:28–30, 39, 42). The focus of this story is not that Jesus came to offer salvation to a single outcast. Rather, the focus of this story is that Jesus asserts his universal lordship over creation, such that even non-Jews would have a part in his salvation.

The story is framed by a variety of eschatological details. In 4:4–6, the reader finds the setting to be a well dug by Jacob.<sup>50</sup> The encounter is reminiscent of the one between Abraham's servant and Rebekah in Gen 24:1–27,<sup>51</sup> the ultimate results of which are the birth of Jacob, Israel's father, and the assurance of the Messianic line. Similarly, Jesus' discussion with the Samaritan woman concludes with many Samaritans from the town believing in Jesus as the savior of the world (4:39–42). Thus, both narratives emphasize in some way the arrival of the Messiah and the salvation of the whole world.

The sixth hour is mentioned before the story commences (4:6). This signals anticipatory and dramatic irony to the reader, who will later see the sixth hour of the crucifixion of Jesus

---

<sup>50</sup> Morris, *Gospel*, 227, writes, "There is a reference to Jacob's buying a piece of ground in this vicinity (Gen. 33:19) ... There is no Old Testament reference to his having dug a well there, but there is nothing improbable about it."

<sup>51</sup> Michaels, *Gospel*, 237, also connects this story thematically to Genesis 29:1–12 and Exodus 2:15–21, both stories in which a man meets his bride. Michaels emphasizes here the marriage theme present in John.

(19:14). The common thread between these two occurrences is the characters in the story, who they are, what happens, and their reactions to Jesus.

Outside Sychar, the one who speaks with Jesus is a Samaritan woman (4:7), who worships “what you do not know” (4:22). She in turn tells the people of her town (4:28) about the living water Jesus has to offer (4:14, 26), and they believe first on account of her testimony (4:39), and then on account of Jesus’ words to them (4:41–42). In Jerusalem, the one who speaks with Jesus is Pontius Pilate (18:29–19:16), a Gentile. However, when Pilate brings Jesus out and declares “Behold! Your king!” (19:14), the Jews deny his kingship, pledge their fealty to Caesar, and demand that Jesus be crucified (19:15). The rejection of Jesus by his own people (cf. 1:11; 4:44!) is now complete.

Therefore, these occurrences of ὥρα, both referring to the “sixth hour,” are to be juxtaposed as appropriate and inappropriate responses to Jesus, respectively. The boundaries of ethnic religiosity have been erased, and “in place of the Jewish people who had been his own (1:11), he now has formed around himself a new ‘his own,’ the Christian believers (1:12).”<sup>52</sup> Jesus is the true vine, “the representative of Israel, and his disciples [are] the branches, participants in Jesus, the ‘new’ Israel.”<sup>53</sup> The means by which Jesus forms the new Israel is his hour. Thus, ὥρα in 4:6 and 19:14 together bear this special relationship to the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross.

---

<sup>52</sup> Brown, *Gospel*, 1:29.

<sup>53</sup> Köstenberger, *Theology*, 502–3.

### **The Seventh Hour (John 4:52, 53)**

It has been mentioned that the first sign of Jesus at Cana typifies the other six signs (see Chapter Three), all of which show forth the glory of Jesus (2:11). These occurrences of ὄρα are significant for the narrative, for they document a demonstration of Jesus' miraculous glory, which in turn signals dramatic irony and foreshadowing for Jesus' own hour. When the royal official asks for help, he must take Jesus at his word (4:50). Upon hearing the news of his son's well-being (4:51), the royal official made a point to check what time his son was healed (4:52). This confirmation serves to deepen his belief, and bring his entire household into the household of faith (4:53).

At this point of realization, the royal official is called the boy's "father" (4:53). Michaels suggests that this is recorded in anticipation of the man's "household."<sup>54</sup> This may be, but the irony intrinsic to the Gospel of John must also be considered. The royal father's son lives at the precise hour of Jesus' word; the divine Father's Son dies at the precise hour (12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1). In order for life to come to the world, Jesus' death must occur (2:22; 3:14–15; 12:24). Such irony aids the reader into a deeper understanding, much in the same way that the royal official first believed at Jesus' word, but his faith was deepened upon the realization of the hour that his son was healed. Irony, says Culpepper, "sweetens and spices the fellowship between reader and narrator ... [Irony] creates an intimacy which has a purpose, namely the creation of a relationship which is shared only by those who are committed at the deepest levels to the same life-transforming beliefs."<sup>55</sup> Thus, this occurrence of ὄρα, in addition to deepening the faith of

---

<sup>54</sup> Michaels, *Gospel*, 282–83.

<sup>55</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 180.

the royal official, deepens the narrative of the Gospel of John, as this too bears a special relationship to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross.

### Summary

The hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross is *horizontal*, which is to say it is for the sake of the whole world. Being so, the Church is given the responsibility of proclaiming this message to the whole world (20:23; 21:15–17). The Church's mission is eschatological in nature, being both realized (life in Christ is able to be transformed now), and futuristic (Christ will come again at the last to raise the dead). In these ways, the above uses of ὥρα that describe the status of the Church all point to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. Furthermore, Jesus uses two metaphors containing the word ὥρα (11:9; 16:21) to better assist his disciples in understanding his identity and mission. Moreover, the specific uses of ὥρα that include numbers are more than simple temporal descriptors. They carry with them the entire theological and eschatological weight of Jesus' hour. In this hour, the law is fulfilled (1:39), the Gentiles are evangelized (4:6), the glory of Jesus is shown (4:52, 53), and the Jews reject Jesus, condemning him to death by crucifixion (19:14). In this chapter I have examined every instance of ὥρα in the Gospel of John that implicitly evokes the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. In the following chapter, I will summarize the entire thesis and offer suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

In the Gospel of John, the death of Jesus on the cross is the climax of his glory. It is by nature eschatological, reflecting vertical (being appointed by God) and horizontal (for the sake of the whole world) aspects. In Chapter One, I argued that this eschatology is both realized (life in Christ is able to be transformed now), and futuristic (Christ will come again at the last to raise the dead). John frequently refers to Jesus' death as his "hour" (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20, 12:23, 27, 13:1; 17:1). As the hour of Jesus is inherently eschatological, in this thesis I have argued that each and every occurrence of ὥρα in the Gospel of John either refers directly to the hour of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross or bears a special relationship to it.

In Chapter Two, I examined the usage of ὥρα in history. In Greco-Roman Greek sources, there are specific and non-specific uses of the word ὥρα. In other words, ὥρα could be a definitive period of time, such as a year, month, or day. It could also convey a more undefined, metaphorical meaning, as in a period of time that is open to subjective judgment. In Jewish sources, the same specific and non-specific uses correlate to that of Greco-Roman Greek sources. In addition to these, Jewish sources include an eschatological use. This is especially prevalent in the LXX, and is frequently associated with judgment and finality. In the non-Johannine usage of ὥρα in the New Testament, all three uses (specific, non-specific, and eschatological) are found. Also in Chapter Two, I examined the significance of Oscar Cullmann's interpretation of time as

set forth in Scripture. As the salvation of mankind is wholly dependent upon the life and acts of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection is the single most significant, unrepeatable act in history. Time, therefore, is rectilinear, with the Christ Event as the *telos* of creation, and his Parousia the end of this present age and the beginning of the next. This is pertinent to the thesis in regards to Johannine eschatology, as Jesus refers to his suffering and death on the cross as his hour.

In Chapter Three, I examined each usage of ὥρα in the Gospel of John that refers directly to the hour of his suffering and death on the cross.<sup>1</sup> In order to discuss this effectively, each of the seven “signs” of Jesus were examined. It was determined that each sign is eschatological in nature, and foreshadows the glory of Jesus, which is ultimately fulfilled on the cross. Thus, the “hour” of Jesus, like the signs, are narrative precursors to his suffering and death on the cross.

In Chapter Four, I examined every other occurrence of ὥρα in the Gospel of John.<sup>2</sup> These I further divided into three groups. First, the ecclesiological hour, in which the eschatological hour of Jesus has a direct effect on the church. Second, the proverbial hour, which Jesus uses in order to foster a better understanding in his disciples about his own eschatological hour. Third, the hours of the day, each of which signal dramatic irony for the reader and foreshadow Jesus’ eschatological hour. Therefore, each and every occurrence of ὥρα in the Gospel of John either refers directly to the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross, or bears a special relationship to it.

The implications of this conclusion for the field of Johannine studies are many. First, this may shed light on Johannine numerology. If the primary narrative force of the numbered hours in

---

<sup>1</sup> Namely, John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1. Furthermore, 7:6, 8 (καίρως) are included because they synonymous with John’s use of ὥρα.

<sup>2</sup> Namely, John 1:39; 4:6, 21, 23, 52, 53; 5:25, 28, 35; 11:9; 16:2, 4, 21, 25, 32; 19:14, 27.



John 1:39; 4:6, 52–53; 19:14 is not to indicate the time of day but rather signal dramatic irony and foreshadowing, then perhaps there are more numbers in the book of John that indicate a similar narrative force.<sup>3</sup> These could be examined in light of John’s eschatology and this thesis’ understanding of the numbered hours.

Second, the eschatological significance of the ecclesiological hour can be used as further contextual proof against false eschatological views such as Millennialism. The single-mindedness of Jesus concerning the hour of his church lends itself to dissuading the reader from dividing the end times into smaller increments of time. Furthermore, Brighton writes concerning Revelation, “The repetition of events...suggests that Revelation cannot be interpreted on a linear, chronological scale.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, there are several parallel accounts of the same time period in the Apocalypse. The experiences of the church in each of these accounts might be juxtaposed with the ecclesiological hour in the Gospel of John. The thematic similarities could strengthen an interpretation of Revelation that excludes any form of millennialism and/or dispensationalism.

This thesis is in some way a fulfillment of Mihailios’ suggestion for future research.<sup>5</sup> To be sure, the Johannine theology of hour has been developed more fully in the preceding pages. Above all, however, this thesis has sought to affirm the truth of Christ’s death and resurrection as told by eyewitnesses like John. His creative testimony continues to unfold itself in new and faith-affirming ways. We wait for nothing else but the final return of Christ and the resurrection of the

---

<sup>3</sup> For example, the man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years (5:5), the one hundred fifty-three fish caught after Jesus’ resurrection (21:11), and the fact that the wedding in Cana happened on the third day.

<sup>4</sup> Brighton, *Revelation*, 29.

<sup>5</sup> Mihailios, *Danielic Eschatological Hour*, 176, “The Johannine use of the Danielic hour may also contribute to a fuller development of a Johannine theology of hour.”

dead. Until then, the truth must be delivered, for as Bob Dylan once sung, “Let us not talk falsely, now; the hour is getting late.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Bob Dylan, “All Along the Watchtower,” *John Wesley Harding*. New York: Columbia Records, 1967.

## APPENDIX ONE

### “TIME” WORDS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Word	Location
αἰών/αἰώνιος ~ eternity/eternal	3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 51, 54, 58, 68; 8:35, 51, 52; 9:32; 10:28; 11:26; 12:25, 34, 50; 13:8; 14:16; 17:2, 3
ἀρχή ~ beginning	1:1, 2; 2:11; 6:64; 8:25, 44; 15:27; 16:4
ἐγκαίνια ~ Feast of Dedication	10:22
ἐκ/μετά τοῦτο/ταῦτα ~ before/after this/these things	2:12; 3:22; 5:1, 14; 6:1, 66; 7:1; 11:7, 11; 13:7; 19:28, 38; 21:1
ἐνιαυτός ~ that year	11:49, 51; 18:13
ἐορτή ~ feast/festival	2:23; 4:45; 5:1; 6:4; 7:2, 8, 10, 11, 14, 37; 11:56; 12:12, 20; 13:1, 29
ἐπαύριον ~ tomorrow	1:29, 35, 43; 6:22; 12:12
ἔτος ~ year	2:20; 5:5; 8:57
ἡμέρα ~ day	1:39; 2:1, 12, 19; 4:40, 43; 5:9; 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 7:37; 8:56; 9:4, 14; 11:6, 9, 17, 24, 53; 12:1, 7, 48; 14:20; 16:23, 26; 19:31; 20:19, 26
καιρός ~ time [in John: hour]	7:6, 8
μεσώω ~ in the middle of	7:14
νύξ ~ night	3:2; 9:4; 11:10; 13:30; 19:39; 21:3
ὄψια ~ evening	6:16, 20:19
παρασκευή ~ preparation [for the Sabbath]	19:14, 31, 42
πάσχα ~ Passover	2:13, 23; 6:4; 11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14
πρωῖ/πρωῖα ~ early/early morning	18:28; 20:1; 21:4

Word	Location
σάββατον ~ Sabbath	5:9, 10, 16, 18; 7:22, 23; 9:14, 16; 19:31; 20:1, 19
τέλος ~ end	13:1;
τετράμηγός ~ a four month period	4:35
τετραταῖος ~ a four day period	11:39
τοσοῦτος ~ after these things	6:9; 12:37; 14:9; 21:11
χειμών ~ winter	10:22
χρόνος ~ time	5:6; 7:33; 12:35; 14:9
ώρα ~ hour	1:39; 2:4; 4:6, 21, 23, 52, 53; 5:25, 28, 35; 7:30; 8:20; 11:9; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:2, 4, 21, 25, 32; 17:1; 19:14, 27

## APPENDIX TWO

### ΩPA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Book	Location
Matthew	8:13; 9:22; 10:19; 14:15; 15:28; 17:28; 18:1; 20:3, 5, 9, 12; 24:36, 44, 50; 25:13; 26:40, 45, 55; 27:45, 46
Mark	6:35; 11:11; 13:11, 32; 14:35, 37, 41; 15:25, 33, 34
Luke	1:10; 2:38; 7:21; 10:21; 12:12, 39, 40, 46; 13:31; 14:17; 20:19; 22:14, 53, 59; 23:44; 24:33
John	1:39; 2:4; 4:6, 21, 23, 52, 53; 5:25, 28, 35; 7:30; 8:20; 11:9; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:2, 4, 21, 25, 32; 17:1; 19:14, 27
Acts	2:15; 3:1; 5:7; 10:3, 9, 30; 16:18, 33; 19:34; 22:13; 23:23
Romans	13:11
1 Corinthians	4:11; 15:30
2 Corinthians	7:8
Galatians	2:5
1 Thessalonians	2:17
Philemon	1:15
1 John	2:18
Revelation	3:3, 10; 9:15; 11:13; 14:7, 15; 17:12; 18:10, 17, 19

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, T. Desmond, ed. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Barr, James. *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- . *Biblical Words for Time*. Naperville: Alex Allenson, 1962.
- Barrett, C. K. *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction With Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*. London: S.P.C.K., 1967.
- Beasley-Murray, George R. *John*. 2d ed. Word Biblical Commentary 36. Waco: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 1999.
- Blass, F. and A. Debrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Translated by Robert W. Funk. Chicago: University Press, 1961.
- Borchert, Gerald L. *John 12–21*. The New American Commentary 25B. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002.
- Bowden, John. *Encyclopedia of Christianity*. Oxford: University Press, 2005.
- Brighton, Louis A. *Revelation*. Concordia Commentary: A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999.
- Brown, Colin, ed. *Pri-Z*. Vol. 1 of *New Testament Theology*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- Brown, Francis, ed. *The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic: coded with the numbering system from Strong's Exhaustive concordance of the Bible*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001.
- Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John*. The Anchor Bible 29–29A. 2 vols. Garden City: Doubleday, 1964.
- . *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*. Edited by Francis J. Moloney. Garden City: Doubleday, 2003.
- Buttrick, George Arthur. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.

- Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- . *Exegetical Fallacies*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
- . “Understanding Misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel.” *Tyndale Bulletin* 33 (1982): 59–91.
- Carson, D. A. & Douglas J. Moo. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.
- Cullmann, Oscar. *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*. Translated by Floyd V. Filson. London: SCM Press, 1962.
- Culpepper, R. Alan. *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
- . *The Gospel and Letters of John*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.
- Danker, Frederick William, ed. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- Dodd, C. H. *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge: University Press, 1960.
- Dorman, Theodore Martin. *The Hermeneutics of Oscar Cullmann*. San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press: 1991.
- Dylan, Bob. “All Along the Watchtower.” *John Wesley Harding*. New York: Columbia Records, 1967.
- Elowsky, Joel C., ed. *John 11–21*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 4b. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007.
- Estes, Douglas. *The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel: A Theory of Hermeneutical Relativity in the Gospel of John*. Biblical Interpretation Series 92. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Evans, Craig A. and Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Frey, Jörg. *Die johanneische Eschatologie*. Wissenschaftliches Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 110. 3 vols. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998.

- Hastings, James, ed. *Dictionary of the Bible*. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1909.
- Kittle, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley; 10 vols; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.
- Koester, Craig R. *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.
- . "Jesus' Resurrection, the Signs, and the Dynamics of Faith in the Gospel of John." Pages 47–74 in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John*. Edited by Craig R. Koester and Reimund Bieringer. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.
- . *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J. *John*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.
- . *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters: Biblical Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*. Commentary on the New Testament. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 1998.
- Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott, eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
- Lieu, Judith M. "The Mother of the Son in the Fourth Gospel." *SBL Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 61–77.
- Longman III, Tremper and Peter Enns, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2008.
- Luther, Martin and Christopher Boyd Brown. *Luther's Works*. American ed. St. Louis: CPH, 2009.
- Malina, Bruce J. "Christ and Time: Swiss or Mediterranean?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51 (1989): 1–31.
- McHugh, John F. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1–4*. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. New York: T & T Clark, 2009.



- Michaels, J. Ramsay. *The Gospel of John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
- Mihalios, Stefanos. *The Danielic Eschatological Hour in the Johannine Literature*. Library of New Testament Studies 436. New York: T & T Clark, 2011.
- Moloney, Francis J. *Belief in the World: Reading John 1–4*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993.
- . *Signs and Shadows: Reading John 5–12*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1996.
- . *Glory not Dishonor: Reading John 13–21*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1998.
- . *John*. Sacra Pagina v. 4. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998.
- . *The Gospel of John: Text and Context*. Biblical Interpretation Series 72. Boston: Brill, 2005.
- Morris, Leon. *The Gospel according to John*. 2d ed. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Olsson, Birger. *Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel: A Text-Linguistic Analysis of John 2:1–11 and 4:1–42*. Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series 6. Lund, Sweden: Gleerup, 1974.
- Parsenius, George L. *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.
- Poplutz, Uta. “Paroimia und Parable. Gleichniskonzepte bei Johannes und Markus.” Pages 103–120 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Edited by Jörg Frey. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.
- Resseguie, James L. *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.
- Rissi, Mathias. *Time and History: A Study on the Revelation*. Translated by Gordon C. Winsor. Richmond: John Knox Press: 1966.
- Rowe, Eric, and Jerome Neyrey. “Christ and Time—Part Three: ‘Telling Time’ in the Fourth Gospel.” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 40 (2010): 79–92.
- Ryken, Leland, ed. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998.

- Salzman, Michele Renee. *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Schuchard, Bruce G. *Scripture Within Scripture: The Interrelationship of Form and Function in the Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John*. SBL Dissertation Series 133. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992.
- Staley, Jeffrey Lloyd. *The Print's First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 82. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.
- Stibbe, Mark W. G. *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the fourth Gospel*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 73. Cambridge: University Press, 1992.
- Wahlde, Urban C.. *The Gospel and Letters of John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
- Watt, J. G. *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters*. London: T & T Clark, 2007.
- Wead, David. "The Johannine Double Meaning." *Restoration Quarterly* 13 (1970): 106–20.
- . *The Literary Devices in John's Gospel*. Basel: University of Basel, 1970.
- Westcott, Brooke Foss. *The Gospel According to St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954.