

same thought as the Pauline appeal to faith, baptism, and the Spirit as elements uniting Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, into one in Christ (1 Cor 12:12-13; Gal 3:25-28).

## Jesus as the Unique High Priest in the Gospel of John

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DOES THE GOSPEL OF JOHN present Jesus as a high priest? Past attempts to establish the high priesthood of the Johannine Jesus have centered on interpretations of certain passages deemed to contain a *conceptual theme* of Jesus' priestly character, for example, a cultic theme underlying the statement of the incarnation (1:14), the purification of the temple (2:13-22) as indicating Jesus' priestly entrance into the heavenly sanctuary, Jesus' consecration of himself in his so-called priestly prayer (17:19), an alleged priestly mediation of Jesus who opens the way (14:6; 17:24), or the innocence, holiness, and sinlessness of Jesus (8:46).<sup>1</sup> A more critically exegetical approach has focused on the symbolism of the crucified Jesus' seamless tunic (19:23) as a high priestly garment. I. de la Potterie, followed by others, has rejected the high priesthood of the Johannine Jesus on this basis.<sup>2</sup>

We would like to reconsider the issue on a broader basis by commencing with those passages that contain *explicit references* to the high priest, before turning to the symbolism of Jesus' seamless tunic. We suggest that an

<sup>1</sup> For an overview and refutation of this kind of exegesis, see I. de la Potterie, "La tunique sans couture, symbole du Christ grand prêtre?" *Bib* 60 (1979) 255-69.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 255-69; I. de la Potterie, *The Hour of Jesus: The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus according to John* (New York: Alba House, 1989) 99; see also D. Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (Passion Series 4; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991) 106-7; B. G. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture: The Interrelationship of Form and Function in the Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John* (SBLDS 133; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992) 128.

application of the method of narrative criticism with attention to the responses of the implied reader offers a new perspective.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, we propose that the Johannine Jesus does function as a high priest, not in the systematic and sweeping manner of the Letter to the Hebrews, but in a more subtle and symbolic way as part of the Fourth Gospel's well-established dramatic irony.<sup>4</sup> As we shall demonstrate, the high priesthood of the Johannine Jesus is ironic, recognized not by the characters in the narrative but only by the reader; it is new and different, as Jesus sacrifices himself rather than an animal; and it is unique, since Jesus is the one and only true high priest in contrast to a plurality of Jewish high priests. As high priest Jesus not only contrasts with the Jewish high priesthood but also transcends it in his ability to lead and provide for the welfare of the people he serves. The high priesthood of Jesus thus takes its place along with those other Jewish institutions,

<sup>3</sup> For an explanation of the narrative-critical approach that we will follow, see M. A. Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* (GBS, NT series; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990). See also R. A. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (FFNT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); J. L. Staley, *The Print's First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel* (SBLDS 82; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988) 21-49; W. S. Vorster, "The Reader in the Text: Narrative Material," *Reader Perspectives on the New Testament* (Semeia 48; ed. E. V. McKnight; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989) 21-39; M. W. G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (SNTSMS 73; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 5-29; A. Reinhartz, "Great Expectations: A Reader-Oriented Approach to Johannine Christology and Eschatology," *Journal of Literature and Theology* 3 (1989) 61-76; idem, *The Word in the World: The Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel* (SBLMS 45; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992) 1-15; M. C. de Boer, "Narrative Criticism, Historical Criticism, and the Gospel of John," *JSNT* 47 (1992) 35-48; F. J. Moloney, "Who is 'The Reader' in/of the Fourth Gospel?" *AusBR* 40 (1992) 20-33; idem, *Belief in the Word: Reading John 1-4* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> P. D. Duke (*Irony in the Fourth Gospel* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1985] 17) describes irony thus: "Irony as a literary device is a double-leveled literary phenomenon in which two tiers of meaning stand in some opposition to each other and in which some degree of unawareness is expressed or implied." Referring to irony as both a specific rhetorical device and a more encompassing literary mode, G. R. O'Day ("Narrative Mode and Theological Claim: A Study in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 105 [1986] 663) explains the dynamics of irony more precisely: "We can understand irony as that specific rhetorical figure or more encompassing general literary mode in which two contradictory or conflicting meanings are held together in one image or expression. In order to read and interpret irony, the reader is not asked merely to substitute the 'correct' intended meaning for the 'incorrect' surface meaning of the ironic expression, but rather is asked to hold the two meanings in tension and, as a result of moving through that tension, to arrive at what the author intends to express." See also Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 165-69; H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft* (2d ed.; Munich: Hueber, 1973) §§582-85, 902-4. In our case, the two contradictory meanings that are held together involve the Jewish leaders putting Jesus to death on the one hand, and Jesus laying down his own life on the other. By arranging the death of Jesus, the Jewish high priestly leaders, as victims of the irony, are unwittingly enabling Jesus to be the new, true, and unique high priest who sacrifices himself on behalf of his people.

such as the law (1:17), ritual cleansings (2:6), the temple (2:20-22), and manna (6:32), that the Johannine Jesus supersedes.

To demonstrate our thesis we will focus upon those passages that concern the high priesthood in the order in which they occur for the reader of the narrative: first, the high priest Caiaphas' advice to the Sanhedrin that one man, Jesus, die for the people (11:45-53), second, the arrest and trial of Jesus before the Jewish high priestly leadership (18:1-27), and third, the Roman soldiers' decision not to divide the seamless tunic of the crucified Jesus (19:23-24).

### I. The Advice of the High Priest Caiaphas (11:45-53)

As high priest, Caiaphas exercises a leadership that stands in sharp contrast to the leadership Jesus has indicated for himself in the good shepherd discourse. Although Caiaphas is introduced as "one" of the Sanhedrin gathered together by the chief priests and the Pharisees, he rather gruffly rebukes the inferior knowledge of those he leads, "You do not know (οὐκ οἴδατε) anything" (11:49), and then informs them, of his own superior knowledge, that it is expedient for them that one man die for the people (11:50). But as the good shepherd, Jesus has indicated that he and those he leads enjoy an intimate and mutual knowledge of one another: "I am the good shepherd and I know (γινώσκω) mine and mine know (γινώσκουσι) me, as the Father knows (γινώσκει) me and I know (γινώσκω) the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep" (10:14-15).<sup>5</sup> Whereas Caiaphas must inform those he leads that it is better if one man die for the people, those Jesus leads know that he is the one who lays down his life for them.

Caiaphas' statement that it is better for them that one man die for the people and the whole nation not perish (11:50) accords with the sacrificial nature of the Jewish high priesthood. According to Leviticus 16, it was the duty of the high priest to sacrifice one animal in atonement for his own sins and another animal in atonement for all the sins of the people of Israel. This was to be done once each year on the day of atonement.<sup>6</sup> Caiaphas thus knows

<sup>5</sup> Some commentators, such as I. de la Potterie ("Οἶδα et γινώσκω: Les deux modes de connaissance dans le Quatrième évangile," *Bib* 40 [1959] 709-25), draw a distinction between γινώσκω referring to knowledge acquired by experience and οἶδα referring to a more immediately perceived knowledge; but as R. E. Brown (*The Gospel according to John* [AB 29-29A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966-70] 514) cautions, "John may tend to use one verb in one way and the other verb in another way, but it is really a question of emphasis and not of sharp distinction. The evangelist is not so precise as his commentators would make him."

<sup>6</sup> On Leviticus 16, see J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 1009-84, who prefers the translation "purgation" rather than "atonement" (pp. 1079-80).

the value of sacrificing one animal for the sake of many people and transfers this idea to the sacrifice of one man for the benefit of the whole people.

Three times—twice in this passage (11:49,51) and once in the passion narrative (18:13)—Caiaphas is referred to as “being high priest that year.” This not only implies a temporal limitation to Caiaphas’ high priesthood (only that year) but also indicates that he was the one who was high priest that fateful year in which Jesus died.<sup>7</sup> The word for year (ἐνιαυτοῦ) here is the same word that is employed in the LXX of Lev 16:34 in reference to the high priest’s duty to offer the sacrifices of atonement: “This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the people of Israel once in the year (ἐνιαυτοῦ) for all their sins.” The triple notice that Caiaphas was high priest “that year” thus also reminds the reader that it was the duty of Caiaphas to perform “that year” the atonement sacrifice for the people.

But the Johannine reader already knows that Jesus will be a sacrificial victim. To the first disciples John the Baptist pointed out Jesus as “the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29,36). The imagery of Jesus as lamb of God associates him with the rich sacrificial connotations of both the Passover lamb slaughtered for the benefit of the people (Exodus 12) and the suffering servant of the Lord slaughtered as a lamb for the sins of the people (Isa 52:13–53:12).<sup>8</sup> That “not a bone of him will be crushed,” in fulfillment of the Scripture that refers to the Passover lamb (Exod 12:10,46; Num 9:12), confirms Jesus as the sacrificial Passover lamb of God after he has died (19:36).<sup>9</sup> The sacrificial death of Jesus as the lamb of God will take away the sin not just of the Jewish people but of the whole world.

Moreover, as the good shepherd, Jesus assumes the sacrificial duty of a new kind of high priest who sacrifices not an animal, as in the Levitical tradition, but himself, the lamb of God, for the “sheep” who believe in him: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (10:11). Whereas the high priest Caiaphas indicated that it would be beneficial if one man died for the people (11:50), the narrator’s aside makes it clear that Caiaphas was not speaking “of himself”: “He did not say this of himself, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the

<sup>7</sup> Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 439-40.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 58-63; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978) 176-77; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 148-51; L. Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 143-50; R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium: Einleitung und Kommentar zu Kap. 1-4* (HTKNT 4/1; Freiburg: Herder, 1972) 284-89; R. Summers, *Behold the Lamb: An Exposition of the Theological Themes in the Gospel of John* (Nashville: Broadman, 1979); G. L. Carey, “The Lamb of God and Atonement Theories,” *TynBul* 32 (1981) 97-122.

<sup>9</sup> Note how the slaughter of the Passover lambs was considered a “sacrifice” (see θύσαστε and θυσία in the LXX of Exod 12:21,27); Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 137-38 n. 22.

nation” (11:51). This not only means that his statement was not from himself but from God as a prophecy but also emphasizes that the “one man” to die is not Caiaphas himself but Jesus. The fact that Caiaphas did not say this of himself (ἄπ’ ἐαυτοῦ) stands in pointed contrast to Jesus’ emphatic insistence that he will sacrifice himself as the good shepherd: “The Father loves me because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself (ἄπ’ ἐμαυτοῦ)” (10:17-18). In contrast to Caiaphas, Jesus serves as a unique high priest who sacrifices himself for his people.<sup>10</sup> The high priesthood of Jesus, then, emerges from his being both the good shepherd who lays down his own life and the lamb of God, the expiatory victim who takes away the sin of the world.

The benefit of the self-sacrificing death of Jesus as high priest will exceed that envisioned by the high priest Caiaphas’s sacrificial death of Jesus. To the chief priests and Pharisees, concerned to preserve their “place” (the temple) and nation from destruction by the Gentile Romans if all believe in Jesus (11:48), Caiaphas advises that it is better for them that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish (11:50), but the universalizing and unifying effects of the death of Jesus as the good shepherd-high priest will far surpass this narrow nationalism. The Jesus who sacrifices his own life for the sheep has proclaimed that he has other sheep that do not belong to this fold, that is, all, Jew or Gentile, who are not yet believers. These also he must lead, and they will hear his voice, and there will be “one sheep herd, one shepherd” (10:15-16).<sup>11</sup> Whereas Caiaphas wants to sacrifice Jesus so that the whole Jewish nation not perish (μὴ ἀπόληται), Jesus, by sacrificing himself, will give all his sheep, his believing Jewish and Gentile followers (10:26-27), eternal life, and they shall not perish (οὐ μὴ ἀπόλωνται) for eternity (10:28). Whereas Caiaphas was high priest only “that year,” the effects of the high priestly activity of Jesus last “for eternity.”

The narrator confirms the universalizing and unifying effects of the high-priestly death of Jesus when he informs the reader that Caiaphas unwittingly prophesied that Jesus was going to die not only for the nation but also for gathering into one the scattered children of God (11:51-52). According to the Johannine prologue, the “children of God” (τέκνα Θεοῦ) are all those who

<sup>10</sup> In the biblical tradition there may have been some idea of the atoning effect of the death of the high priest himself. Num 35:25 prescribes that a killer’s term of detention in the city of refuge is to last “until the death of the high priest who has been anointed with holy oil.” T. R. Ashley (*The Book of Numbers* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993] 654) comments that “it is possible that the death of the high priest expiated the death of the victim and hence brought the bloodguilt of the killer to an end. . . . In this case, the high priest’s death was on behalf of the killer, much as the priest offers sacrifices on behalf of the people elsewhere.”

<sup>11</sup> Brown’s translation (*Gospel according to John*, 387).

receive Jesus and believe in his name (1:12). Their description as "scattered" (δισκορπισμένα), a term applied to sheep elsewhere in the biblical tradition,<sup>12</sup> assimilates them to the "other sheep," future believers who do not yet belong to the fold, but who will be united into "one flock, one shepherd" (10:16). In contrast to the chief priests and Pharisees, who gathered (συνήγαγον) the Sanhedrin to save the Jewish nation from the Gentile Romans (11:47-48), Jesus will die to gather (ἵνα συναγάγη) into one the scattered children of God, both Jews and Gentiles (11:52).<sup>13</sup>

The universalizing and unifying effects of the death of Jesus facilitate an ironic double meaning of Caiaphas' pronouncement. On the level of Caiaphas' own consciousness as high priest, he is advising the chief priests and Pharisees, concerned to preserve their Jewish nation (ἔθνος, 11:48), that it is better for them that one man die on behalf of the Jewish people as the chosen people (λαός) of God than that the whole nation (ἔθνος), the Jewish people as a political entity, perish (11:50). But on a deeper level, the level of the self-sacrifice of Jesus as high priest, the reader realizes that Caiaphas is unconsciously advising that one man die on behalf of the people (λαός) as the new community of believers composed of Jews and Gentiles, and that the whole Jewish nation (ἔθνος) not perish, because believing Jews will now be part of the universal people of God. Jesus' dying on behalf of (ὑπέρ) the people parallels his laying down his life on behalf of (ὑπέρ) the sheep (10:11, 15), that is, those who believe in him (10:26-27).

The narrative aside to the reader not only confirms but advances this deeper level. It confides that Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus was going to die not only on behalf of the Jewish nation (ἔθνος) but also in order to gather into one the scattered children of God (11:51-52), an expression referring no longer to the Jews of the diaspora but to the future Jewish and Gentile believers, including the implied readers of the Gospel, who will compose the new people (λαός), the new children of God.<sup>14</sup>

To sum up our results thus far: in contrast to Caiaphas, who, in accord with the sacrificial nature of his high priestly office, wants to sacrifice Jesus, Jesus, as the good shepherd, will perform a new and unique high priestly activity by sacrificing himself. Whereas the high priest Caiaphas wants to sacrifice Jesus instead of allowing the whole Jewish nation to perish, Jesus'

<sup>12</sup> LXX Zech 11:16; 13:7 (quoted in Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27); Jer 10:21; 23:1-2.

<sup>13</sup> Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 439; M. W. G. Stibbe, *John* (Readings; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993) 129-30.

<sup>14</sup> On this purposeful distinction between "people" and "nation," see S. Pancaro, "'People of God' in St. John's Gospel?" *NTS* 16 (1969-70) 114-29; on the irony involved, see Duke, *Irony*, 88.

high-priestly sacrifice of himself will have far greater effects. He is the sacrificial lamb of God who will take away the sin of the whole world. His death will unite the scattered children of God into one, universal people of God, composed of all who believe, Jew or Gentile, so that there may be one flock, one shepherd.

## II. Jesus' Arrest and Trial before the High Priest (18:1-27)

### A. *The Arrest of Jesus as His Unique Self-sacrifice*

The self-sacrifice of Jesus as high priest begins when he surrenders himself as a victim to Judas, the band of Roman soldiers, and the officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, who have come to arrest him in the garden he entered with his disciples (18:1-3). "Knowing everything that was coming upon him," Jesus is in full command of the situation (18:4). That his opponents "withdrew backwards and fell to the ground" at Jesus' powerful assertion "I am" illustrates his superiority and points to his ultimate victory over them (18:4-6). When he reiterates his powerful "I am," he not only identifies and surrenders himself to his enemies but wins the release of his disciples (18:7-8).<sup>15</sup> Thus, as the good shepherd-high priest, Jesus is laying down his own life in self-sacrifice for his disciples, the sheep (10:11).

In securing the escape of his disciples by sacrificing himself, Jesus allows the word which he had previously spoken to be fulfilled: "I did not lose a single one of those whom you have given me" (18:9).<sup>16</sup> Jesus is thus beginning to fulfill the deeper level of Caiaphas' unconscious prophecy, namely, that it is better for one man to die for the sake of the "people" (11:50), that is, the new people of God, all those believers "given" or entrusted to the leadership

<sup>15</sup> Jesus' reply, "I am he," or more literally, "I am" (ἐγώ εἰμι, 18:5,6,8), not only identifies him as the Nazorean but resonates with all of his previous "I am" predications (4:26; 6:20, 35,41,51; 8:12,18; 10:7,9,11,14; 11:25; 15:1,5), and especially with his absolute statements "I am" which identify him as *the* revealer of the Father, who offers believers eternal life (8:24,28,58; 13:18-19). For a discussion of the Johannine "I am" statements, see Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 533-38.

<sup>16</sup> This refers, first of all, to what Jesus said in his farewell prayer to the father for his disciples as those whom the Father has given him (17:2,6,9): "When I was with them I guarded them in your name that you gave me, and I protected them, and none of them was lost (ἀλώλετο) except the son of destruction (υἱός τῆς ἀπωλείας), in order that the scripture might be fulfilled" (17:12), which refers to Judas (see 6:70; 13:2,27; also J. V. Brownson, "Neutralizing the Intimate Enemy: The Portrayal of Judas in the Fourth Gospel," *SBLASP* 31 [1992] 52). Since Judas, however, has separated himself from the disciples and associated with the Jewish officers and Roman soldiers (18:5), he is no longer among those whom the Father has given to Jesus. Indeed, Judas, the thief (12:6), has come as a "son of destruction" (υἱός τῆς ἀπωλείας), "to destroy" (ἵνα ἀπολέσῃ) the sheep, whereas Jesus, the good shepherd, came that they might have abundant, eternal life (10:10,28).

of Jesus, here represented by the disciples.<sup>17</sup> As the Jewish high priest, Caiaphas is willing to sacrifice, to lose or let perish, one of those entrusted to him as leader of the people. As a new and unique high priest, however, Jesus did not lose anyone of those whom God has given him. That Jesus did not lose or let perish (ἀπώλεσα) a single one of those entrusted to him as the good shepherd-high priest indicates how he surpasses the high priest Caiaphas by giving eternal life to all the sheep without exception, so that they shall not be lost or perish (οὐ μὴ ἀπόλωνται) for eternity (10:28).<sup>18</sup>

By cutting off the right ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest himself,<sup>19</sup> Peter effects a mutilation that disqualifies this chief representative of the high priest from assisting in his sacrificial office (18:10).<sup>20</sup> Peter is thus hindering the high priest's sacrifice of Jesus. But Jesus commands Peter to put the sword back in its sheath, since Peter is actually hindering Jesus' own high-priestly self-sacrifice in accord with God's plan. Peter's violent defense is preventing Jesus from "drinking the cup" of suffering and death the Father has given him (18:11).<sup>21</sup> Jesus' willingness to "drink the cup" the Father has given him resonates with his being the good shepherd-high priest who freely sacrifices his own life for the sheep (10:11-15), in accord with the command

<sup>17</sup> "Those whom you have given me (δέδωκάς μοι)" includes not only the disciples but all listeners who respond with faith to the appeal for their belief. In the discourse on the bread of life (6:22-59) Jesus declared that all (πάν) that the Father gives (δίδωσι) him will come to him, that is, will believe in him (6:35-37). His saving the disciples from perishing in a sea storm by walking on the sea (6:16-21) illustrated and substantiated his proclamation that "this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose (or "let perish," ἀπολέσω) all (πάν) of what he has given me (δέδωκέν μοι), but raise it up on the last day" (6:39). See J. P. Heil, *Jesus Walking on the Sea: Meaning and Gospel Functions of Matt 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52 and John 6:15b-21* (AnBib 87; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1981) 155-57. In Jesus' farewell prayer he disclosed that the Father gave him authority over all (πάσης) people, so that he might give eternal life to all (πάν) whom, as he says to the Father, "you have given me (δέδωκάς μοι)" (17:2). As the narrator had earlier announced, God gave his only Son to the world, so that everyone (πᾶς) who believes in him may not perish (ἀπόληται) but may have eternal life (3:16). That Jesus did not "lose" or "let perish" a single one of those "given" to him, then, assures the reader that in laying down his own life Jesus is providing eternal life for all who believe in him.

<sup>18</sup> The verb ἀπόλλυμι in the middle voice means both to be lost and to be destroyed or perish; see BAGD, 95; A. Kretzer, "ἀπόλλυμι," *EDNT* 1. 135-36.

<sup>19</sup> As T. L. Brodie (*The Gospel according to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1993] 527) notes, "the proximity to the high priest is highlighted by the Greek word order: not 'he struck the servant of the high priest' but 'he struck the of the high priest servant,' as though the servant to some degree 'contained' or represented the high priest."

<sup>20</sup> Lev 21:16-23; B. T. Viviano, "The High Priest's Servant's Ear: Mark 14:47," *RB* 96 (1989) 71-80.

<sup>21</sup> In the biblical tradition, the image of the cup one must drink refers to one's destiny determined by God: Pss 11:6; 16:5; 75:9; Isa 51:17,22; Ezek 23:31-35; Jer 25:15-17; Hab 2:16; Lam 4:21; see BAGD, 695.

he has received from his Father (10:17-18). Drinking the cup of death the Father has given (δέδωκε) him will enable Jesus to surpass the high priest Caiaphas by not losing or letting perish but providing eternal life for all those the Father has given him (οὐς δέδωκάς μοι, 18:9).

Jesus continues to allow himself to be the sacrificial victim as the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish officers arrest, bind, and lead him before Annas first, for he is the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest of that year (18:12-13). The narrator then reminds the reader that it was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it was better for "one man" to die for the people (18:14). That Peter, despite his violent assault of the high priest's servant (18:10), has not been arrested along with Jesus underlines the uniqueness of Jesus as the one and only sacrificial victim. Only the "one man," Jesus, not Peter also, will die for the people.

The uniqueness of Jesus as the one high priest who sacrifices himself as the unique victim contrasts with the confusing plurality evident in the Jewish high priesthood. That Jesus is led before Annas "first" implies that he will face the high priest Caiaphas himself later (18:13). This expectation is apparently fulfilled when Jesus enters the courtyard of the high priest (18:15) and is then questioned by the high priest (18:19). The statement at the end of the inquisition, however, that *Annas* then sent Jesus to Caiaphas the high priest (18:24) surprises the reader, who presumed that the high priest who conducted the inquisition was in fact Caiaphas, earlier identified as "high priest that year," rather than Annas, his father-in-law (18:13)!<sup>22</sup> That both Annas and Caiaphas are referred to as high priest creates confusion for the reader about who is truly the high priest leading the people.<sup>23</sup> This confusion reinforces the singularity of Jesus as the "one man" to die for the people (18:14), the one victim who offers his own life as the one and only true high priest, the "one" shepherd (10:16) who gathers into "one" God's scattered children (11:52).

### B. Peter and the Disciple Known to the High Priest

Even after Jesus was arrested, Simon Peter and another disciple followed (ἠκολούθει) him (18:15), demonstrating that they are the sheep who

<sup>22</sup> According to de la Potterie (*Hour of Jesus*, 43), "Annas had himself been high priest from the year 6 to the year 15, but he had been deposed by the Romans. He continued, however, to exercise considerable influence in the sphere of the Jewish politico-religious activity. He was considered a person of great authority, as a wise counsellor; he was respected and frequently consulted." According to Senior (*Passion in John*, 59), "Annas may have continued to play an influential role in the religious affairs of Judaism at this period. He may also have been popularly addressed as the 'high priest' even though he did not formally hold that office." See also Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 820-21.

<sup>23</sup> J. L. Staley, "Subversive Narrative/Victimized Reader: A Reader-Response Assessment of a Text-Critical Problem, John 18.12-24," *JSNT* 51 (1993) 79-98.

follow (ἀκολουθοῦσι) the good shepherd rather than another leader (10:4-5, 27). That this other disciple "was known (γνωστός) to the high priest" (18:15) associates him not only with the high priest Caiaphas, but also, on a deeper level, with the high priest Jesus, who, as the good shepherd, lays down his life for the sheep whom, as he says, "I know (γινώσκω) and who know (γινώσκουσι) me" (10:14). That this anonymous disciple was known to the high priest Jesus makes him an ideal representative of the disciples for whom Jesus will demonstrate his great love by laying down his life for them (15:12-13). As one of the sheep for whom the good shepherd-high priest lays down his life, the other disciple entered the courtyard (αὐλή) of the high priest (18:15), which also represents the sheepfold (αὐλή) of the good shepherd (10:1,16).<sup>24</sup> Peter, however, did not enter the courtyard-sheepfold. He remained standing before the gate (θύρα), a symbol of Jesus, who declared, "I am the gate (θύρα) of the sheep" (10:7). "I am the gate (θύρα); if anyone enters through me, he will be saved and will go in and come out and find pasture" (10:9).<sup>25</sup> Then, for a second, emphatic time the other disciple is described as one who "was known to the high priest" (18:16), implying that he is familiar with the necessity for the high priest Jesus to lay down his life in self-sacrifice for the sheep. He went out and brought Peter, one of the sheep, through the gate into the courtyard-sheepfold of the high priest and good shepherd (18:16).

That the other disciple spoke to the gatekeeper (θυρωρός) in order to bring Peter in (18:16) places Peter in the position of being not only a sheep but also a shepherd. As Jesus has stated, "Whoever enters through the gate is shepherd of the sheep. For him the gatekeeper (θυρωρός) opens" (10:2-3). As a sheep, Peter numbers among the disciples for whom Jesus, the good shepherd, lays down his life, but as a true shepherd and disciple, Peter must in turn lay down his life for the sheep (10:11). Just as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, a gesture symbolic of his death for them, so they must wash one another's feet (13:14-16).<sup>26</sup> He commanded his disciples to love one another as he loved them. And no one has greater love than to lay down his life for his friends (15:12-13).

Although Peter was very eager to fulfill the role of both the good shepherd and the disciple who lays down his life when he promised Jesus, "I will lay down my life for you" (13:37), he instead fulfilled Jesus' prediction that

<sup>24</sup> Stibbe (*John as Storyteller*, 102-4) also relates the sheepfold of the good shepherd to the courtyard of the high priest.

<sup>25</sup> A. Bottino, "La metafora della porta (Gv 10,7,9)," *RivB* 39 (1991) 207-15.

<sup>26</sup> J. C. Thomas, *Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community* (JSNTSup 61; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991) 16-17. On John 13, see also F. F. Segovia, "John 13:1-20: The Footwashing in the Johannine Tradition," *ZNW* 73 (1982) 31-51; F. J. Moloney, "The Structure and Message of John 13:1-38," *AusBR* 34 (1986) 1-16; J. A. du Rand, "Narratological Perspectives on John 13:1-38," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 46 (1990) 367-89.

he would deny him thrice (13:38; 18:17-18,25-27). Nevertheless, Peter has entered the courtyard and sheepfold as one of the sheep for whom the good shepherd-high priest lays down his life. Before Peter (and the reader) can be a disciple-shepherd who lays down his life for his friends (13:14-16,37; 15:12-13), he must realize the need to be a disciple-sheep for whom the good shepherd and unique high priest Jesus first lays down his own life.

### C. Jesus' Superiority over the Jewish High Priest

The beginning of Jesus' reply to the high priest who asked him about his disciples and teaching (18:19) forms a chiasm (18:20) in which statements of the absolute universality and openness of his revelatory speaking to the world (a) frame statements of the more particular universality and openness of the teaching to "all" the Jews, "always," in the synagogue or temple (b):

- (a) I have openly spoken (λελάληκα) to the world;
- (b) I always (πάντοτε) taught in a synagogue and in the temple,
- (b') where all (πάντες) the Jews gather,
- (a') and in secret I spoke (ἐλάλησα) nothing.

In always teaching all the Jews in a synagogue and in the temple Jesus publicly offers to the whole world the revelatory word of God; this is signified by the use of the Greek verb λαλέω for his revelatory "speaking."<sup>27</sup>

Jesus' retort to the high priest (18:20) broadens the issue. More than merely being a teacher with disciples, Jesus has spoken and still is speaking (λελάληκα, perfect tense) openly (παρρησία), that is, definitively revealing God's word to the world, and not doing so in secret (ἐν κρυπτῷ). His rejoinder serves as a climactic summary of his mission as the divine revealer. Despite the attempt by the Jews to kill Jesus (7:1), he has done what his brothers urged when they said to him, "No one acts in secret (ἐν κρυπτῷ) if he seeks to be openly (παρρησία) known; if you do these things, manifest yourself to the world" (7:4).

With an emphatic "I" (ἐγώ, 18:20) Jesus indicates the superiority of his alternative high-priestly leadership to that of the Jewish high priest: "I," not you, the Jewish high priest, have openly spoken God's word to the world, and "I" have always taught the whole Jewish people. Whereas Caiaphas exercised his high-priestly leadership by advising "the Jews" (18:14, in fact, only the chief priests and Pharisees gathered in a private session of the Sanhedrin) of

<sup>27</sup> According to de la Potterie (*Hour of Jesus*, 44) "in religious language the word λαλεῖν has acquired a higher significance; in biblical Greek it is one of the terms signifying divine revelation: the revelatory word of God through the mediation of angels, prophets, men of God, visions . . . ; it is par excellence the word of him who is himself the Word of God." See also idem, *La vérité dans saint Jean* (2 vols.; AnBib 73-74; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1977) 1. 40-42.

the expediency for Jesus to die for the people (11:47-50), Jesus has always taught "all the Jews" not in secret but in the public gatherings in the temple (2:14-15; 5:14; 7:14,28; 8:2,20,59; 10:23) and the synagogue (6:59).

In Jesus' further reply he continues to insinuate the supremacy of his leadership over that of the Jewish high priest. Only some of the chief priests and Pharisees know what the high priest said privately about the benefit for the people in putting Jesus to death (18:14; 11:47-50), but anyone who has heard the open and public teaching of Jesus to all the people should be able to testify to the high priest what Jesus has "spoken," that is, what he has revealed about God. As Jesus says to the high priest, "Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I spoke (ἐλάλησα) to them. Behold, these know what I said" (18:21). The final and emphatic position of ἐγώ, "I," in the Greek text, "These know what I said" emphasizes Jesus' claim that the people know what he said but not what the Jewish high priest said. Emphatic "I" assertions thus open (in 18:20) and close (in 18:21) Jesus' aggressive pronouncement of his superiority over the Jewish high priest.

One of the officers continues the victimization of Jesus by giving him a slap (18:22). His question, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" (18:22), rings ironic for the reader, since Jesus has indicated his preeminence over the high priest as the divine revealer (18:20) and has himself demonstrated the qualities necessary for a true high-priestly leader. Jesus' reply to the officer who struck him challenges the officer to testify whether Jesus rightly or wrongly "spoke" God's revelatory word, not only presently, when he "spoke" to the Jewish high priest, but also previously, when he "spoke" to the world and to the whole Jewish people (18:20). If Jesus truly, and in superiority to the Jewish high priest, "spoke" divine revelation, then it is not he who has offended the high priest but the officer who has inappropriately and unjustly offended Jesus as a person superior to the Jewish high priest: "If (I spoke) rightly, why do you strike me?" (18:23).

We can now summarize what we have observed up to this point. First, whereas the high priest Caiaphas is willing to let the one man Jesus perish, Jesus, in surrendering himself and not letting a single one of those given to him perish, indicates how he, in contrast to the two high priests Annas and Caiaphas, is a unique high priest who sacrifices himself as the unique victim to die for the people. Second, Jesus, as the good shepherd-high priest, must first lay down his own life for Peter, a sheep whom the disciple known to the high priest brought into the sheepfold and courtyard, before Peter can be a shepherd who lays down his life for his friends. Third, as the one who openly speaks divine revelation to the whole Jewish people and to the world, Jesus demonstrates the superiority of his high-priestly leadership over that of the Jewish high priest.

### III. The Seamless Tunic of the Crucified Jesus (19:23-24)

Jesus himself takes off his clothes (τὰ ἱμάτια, 13:4) when he washes his disciples' feet in order for them to have a share (μέρος) with him (13:8) symbolic of their "share" in, among other things, the eternal life which his death produces.<sup>28</sup> Jesus' clothes represent his life. His taking them off or laying them down (τίθησιν) symbolizes his laying down (τίθησιν) his own life (10:11) in self-sacrifice, as the good shepherd-high priest, to give eternal life to all who become his sheep by hearing, following, and believing in him (10:27-28).<sup>29</sup> By taking his clothes (τὰ ἱμάτια) and making four shares (μέρη), one for each soldier (19:23), the Roman soldiers ironically anticipate Jesus' death offering a "share" in eternal life to individual persons—even those who are Gentiles.<sup>30</sup>

To undermine the establishment of the true Jewish kingship of Jesus, the chief priests of the Jews implore Pilate not to write as the inscription on the cross, "The King of the Jews" but, "This one said, I am king of the Jews" (19:20-21). In ironic contrast to the chief priests of the Jews, the Roman soldiers who crucify Jesus unwittingly promote the universal and unifying leadership of Jesus as the true king of the Jews. After they have taken his clothes and made four shares, a share for each of them (19:23a), they advise one another not to tear or divide the tunic of Jesus (19:24), symbolizing the divinely profound unity which his crucifixion as the true Jewish king and unique high priest preserves for all who believe in him.

The Roman soldiers' concern not to divide Jesus' tunic, "seamless, woven from above as a whole" (19:23b), alludes to a rich biblical background in which the divinely determined and unified clothing of the high priest represents

<sup>28</sup> See Thomas, *Footwashing*, 93-94: "One of the first things the implied reader must see in μέρος with Jesus is a share in eternal life. . . . Consequently, the footwashing is a sign which points beyond itself to some deeper meaning. Two things point to the crucifixion-exaltation as essential to that deeper meaning. First, the qualities represented by μέρος (eternal life, identity with Jesus, sharing his destiny, mission, resurrection and martyrdom) are ultimately secured through Jesus' death. Second, Jesus' act of humiliation in washing the disciples' feet foreshadows his ultimate act of humiliation on the cross."

<sup>29</sup> See Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 129: "John would have the reader see in Jesus' crucifixion, in the distribution of his garments among the soldiers, the graphic consummation of that which Jesus anticipated in John 13. In his crucifixion, then, Jesus fulfills his promises by laying down his garments (i.e., his life) so that he might proffer life. Not only this, one sees in the distribution of these garments that this life is given not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles."

<sup>30</sup> On the biblical background and later eschatological connotations of the term "share" or "heritage" (μέρος) in 13:8, Brown (*Gospel according to John*, 565) states this: "Each of the tribes except Levi was to have its 'share' in the Promised Land, and this was its heritage from God (Num 18:20; Deut 12:12; 14:27). When the hopes of Israel turned to an afterlife, the 'share' or 'heritage' of God's people was pictured in heavenly terms."

the people of Israel. The construction of Jesus' tunic is elaborately described in a careful intercalation: it is (a) seamless (a term of unity), (b) woven from above (a term of divine origin), (a') as a whole (a term of unity). Thus, two terms of unity surround a statement of divine origin. Just as Jesus had indicated to Pilate that divine authority comes "from above" (ἀνωθεν, 19:11), the fact that Jesus' seamless tunic is woven "from the top" or "from above" (ἐκ τῶν ἄνωθεν) indicates that its emphasized unity has a divine origin.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, the intricate descriptions of the sacred vestments of the high priest underline their unified construction in accord with the command of God.

As Jesus' tunic was woven (ὕφαντός), so each of the various vestments of the high priest, according to the detailed descriptions in the LXX of Exodus 28 and 36, was a "woven work" (ἔργον ὑφαντόν). This was true of the ephod (Exod 28:6; 36:10,12), the breastpiece (Exod 36:15), the robe (Exod 28:32; 36:29), and the tunic (Exod 36:34). As Jesus' seamless tunic was woven as a whole (δι' ὅλου), and the soldiers did not want to tear it (19:24), so the robe of the ephod was uniformly woven "all," or "as a whole" (ὅλον), of blue (Exod 28:31; 36:29), and it was so constructed "that it might not be torn" (ἵνα μὴ ῥαγῆ, Exod 28:32; ἀδιάλυτον, 36:30). Thus Jesus' tunic, the undergarment worn under the clothes that the soldiers divided (19:23a), corresponds to the high priestly robe, described as an undergarment (ὑποδύτης, Exod 28:31; 36:29) worn under the ephod (Exod 36:29).<sup>32</sup> And just as Jesus' unified tunic was woven "from above," that is, from divine authority, so it is repeatedly reinforced that the unified high-priestly vestments were designed by God's decree—"as the Lord commanded Moses" (Exod 36:12, 14, 28, 33, 36, 38).

The high-priestly vestments were representative of the whole people of Israel. Two onyx stones engraved with the names of the sons of Israel—the names of six tribes on one stone and the names of the remaining six tribes on the other—were to be attached to the shoulder straps of the ephod (Exod 28:9-12; 36:13-14). As part of the high priest's clothing, these stones functioned "as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel," and Aaron was

<sup>31</sup> See also John 3:3,7,31, where ἀνωθεν connotes divine origin.

<sup>32</sup> De la Potterie ("La tunique," 255-69; *Hour of Jesus*, 99), followed by Senior (*Passion in John*, 106-7) and Schuchard (*Scripture within Scripture*, 128), fails to recognize this correspondence because Jesus' undergarment is a "tunic," and the high priestly robe of the ephod is not a tunic. In the LXX of Exodus 28 and 36, however, the robe, although it is not a tunic, is described as an undergarment worn under the ephod, and this allows for the symbolic correspondence. See also J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus* (SBLSCS 30; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 458. Furthermore, we maintain that the symbolism of the seamless tunic embraces both Jesus' death as a unique high priest and the unity it effects among people; see I. de la Potterie, "La tunique 'non divisée' de Jésus, symbole de l'unité messianique," *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke* (2 vols.; ed. W. C. Weinrich; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984) 1. 127-38.

to "bear the names of the sons of Israel before the Lord on his shoulders, a remembrance for them" (Exod 28:12). In addition, twelve stones inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were to be affixed to the breastpiece of judgment (Exod 28:21; 36:21). They symbolized the whole people of Israel, presented in remembrance before the Lord when the high priest Aaron wore the breastpiece in the sanctuary (Exod 28:29).

The prophet Ahijah dramatically illustrated how the tearing of a new garment representative of the whole people of Israel indicates division and destruction of unity. He took hold of the new garment he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces, symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he indicated to Jeroboam the destruction of unity that would occur after the death of Solomon: "Take for yourself ten pieces; for thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'See, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon, and will give you ten tribes'" (1 Kgs 11:29-31).<sup>33</sup>

Although there has been division (σχίσμα) among the Jewish people with regard to Jesus (7:43; 9:16; 10:19), the Gentile soldiers, by deciding not to tear or divide Jesus' tunic (μὴ σχίσωμεν), are symbolically, yet unwittingly, promoting the unity that Jesus' death as the good shepherd-king and unique high priest will effect (19:24a). The Roman soldiers' desire not to divide the dying Jesus' seamless tunic woven from above as a whole (δι' ὅλου), a symbol of unity, corresponds to the high priest Caiaphas' advice to preserve the unity of the whole (ὅλον) Jewish nation by putting the one man Jesus to death (11:50). Indeed, as the unique high priest who surpasses the Jewish high priest, Jesus dies not just for the unity of the nation but to gather the scattered children of God into unity (11:52).<sup>34</sup> By not tearing his unified tunic, the soldiers unwittingly advance the goal of Jesus as the good shepherd-high priest to unify all sheep (people) into a believing community, so that there will be one flock and one shepherd (10:15-16).

By preserving the seamless tunic that symbolizes the unity that comes "from above," from God, the Gentile soldiers enable Jesus, lifted up in death by crucifixion, to fulfill what he had earlier predicted, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all to myself" (12:32). All who are drawn to the crucified Jesus and believe in him, including the readers, may then be profoundly "one" and may participate in the intimate, divine unity "from above" that Jesus enjoys with his Father. Jesus referred to future believers, including the readers of the Gospel, in his farewell prayer for his disciples, "I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me and

<sup>33</sup> De la Potterie, *Hour of Jesus*, 101; Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 921.

<sup>34</sup> De la Potterie, *Hour of Jesus*, 102; Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 130.



I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me" (17:20-21). The Roman soldiers' desire to "cast lots" (19:24a) for their possession of the seamless tunic indicates that the Gentiles' share or allotment in this unity is determined "from above" by God.<sup>35</sup>

The Jewish chief priests protest the inscription that Pilate wrote (ἔγραψεν, 19:19), requesting that he not write that Jesus is the king of the Jews (19:21). Refusing their request, the Gentile governor establishes the Jewish kingship of Jesus for all peoples (19:20) by his authoritative scripture: "What I have written (γέγραφα), I have written" (19:22). In ironic contrast, the Gentile soldiers, by unknowingly fulfilling the authoritative Jewish scripture (γραφῆ), demonstrate the life-giving and unifying effects of Jesus' death as the good shepherd-king and unique Jewish high priest (19:24b). The chief priests want Pilate to write not that Jesus really is the king of the Jews, but only their false assertion that "he said" he was the king of the Jews (19:21). The Jewish Scripture, however, allows Jesus to state the truth about himself. As the speaker of God's authoritative word from Ps 22:19, Jesus himself pronounces the revelatory significance of his disrobing as the shepherd-king and high priest: "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots" (19:24b).<sup>36</sup>

As Jesus reminded Pilate that he would not have any authority over him unless it had been given him from above (19:11), it is ultimately because of God's authoritative plan that the Jews have delivered Jesus to the Roman governor. As the speaker of Ps 22:19, Jesus proclaims that the superior authority of God prevails in what Pilate's soldiers did when they crucified him. What the Gentile soldiers did with the clothing of Jesus ironically advances God's authoritative plan recorded in Jewish Scripture. They shared the clothes of Jesus among themselves, pointing to individual Gentiles appropriating the eternal life Jesus effects for all who believe in him by laying down his own life as the good shepherd-king. And they cast lots for his seamless tunic, demonstrating how Gentiles will preserve and participate in the divinely intimate unity of all believers, divinely determined "from above," and accomplished through Jesus' death by crucifixion as the unique high priest (19:24b).

#### IV. Conclusion

Recognizing that the Johannine Jesus functions as an ironic, new, and unique high priest deepens our understanding of the Fourth Gospel in several ways.

<sup>35</sup> On casting lots to allow God to decide, see Acts 1:24-26; see also BAGD, 462; Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 128.

<sup>36</sup> John 19:24b reproduces the LXX version of Ps 22:19; see Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 125-32.

First, the superior high priesthood of Jesus continues the theme of Jesus superseding and surpassing various Jewish institutions. For example, whereas the law was given through Moses, the gift of truth came about through the person of Jesus Christ (1:17); the abundant and choice wine that has now arrived with Jesus at Cana (2:10) replaces the water of the Jewish ritual cleansings (2:6); the resurrected body of Jesus replaces the destroyed sanctuary of the temple (2:20-22); the bread of life that Jesus gives surpasses the manna Moses gave (6:32).

Second, soteriologically, surpassing the Jewish high-priestly sacrifice of one man for the people of Israel (11:50), Jesus, as the superior high priest, sacrifices himself as the unique lamb of God to take away the sin of the world and provide eternal life for all who believe.

Third, christologically, it is the entrance of the high priest Jesus, who has surrendered himself to be a victim, into the courtyard, the αὐλή, of the high priest (18:15), which is also the sheepfold (10:1,16), that enables Jesus to function as the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (10:11-15). As the one who speaks divine revelation to the whole world, Jesus' high-priestly leadership transcends that of the Jewish high priest (18:19-23).

Fourth, with regard to discipleship, although Peter denies being a disciple of Jesus (18:17-18,25-27), he has entered the courtyard-sheepfold (18:16) as one of the sheep for whom Jesus lays down his own life as the good shepherd-high priest, so that Peter can become a shepherd who lays down his life for others.

Fifth, ecclesiology, as the irony of Gentiles preserving the seamless tunic of the high priest Jesus indicates (19:23-24), Jesus' self-sacrificial death unifies all believers into a universal people composed of Jews and Gentiles (11:45-53).