

The Gospel of John – 3.b

On Salvation:

¹³“**And no one has gone up (ascended) into (heaven) the heavens, except the *One Who came down (descended) from (heaven) out of the heavens, the Son of Man, Who is in the heavens.*** ¹⁴“**And even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, thus it is needful for the Son of Man to be lifted up (exalt, highly glorified); ¹⁵“that everyone who believes in Him should not perish, but may have everlasting life. ¹⁶“(In this way) God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that everyone who believeth in Him should not perish, but may have everlasting life.**

- ❖ John 3:13-16 is the first time in the narrative of the Gospel of John that speaks directly of the passion (as having happened but, narratively, yet to happen) ... While the synoptics speak about how the Son of Man will be killed, delivered to be crucified and suffer, John on the other hand uses ...lifted up, or exalt, and glorified speaking of the raising up of Christ in the Cross.” (Behr)

The ‘Son of Man’ ascends to heaven on the Cross and in some sense descends returns to earth in the person of the Paraclete...the Holy Spirit makes Jesus present on earth as the Son of Man (the title used by John for the one who is exalted and glorified on the Cross). (Behr)

- ❖ Christ ascends through martyrdom of the Cross in order to descend into the world through those who take up their cross and by following Him make Christ present in the world. (Behr).
- ❖ Moses lifted up the bronze serpent those bit by the poisonous snakes were healed, this is a foreshadowing of the Cross and those who look to it being healed of death and receive eternal life.
- ❖ Eternal Life: “John uses the term ‘eternal life’ in place of the term ‘kingdom of God’ or ‘salvation’. Eternal life is not simply a life that has no end, but a life qualitatively different and more sublime than the present life. It is life in Christ, in God. It is a life in peace and reconciliation with God, with our neighbor and with ourselves. This is how man was created from the beginning...to live in real communion with the only eternal and true God. (Bp. Gerasimos, Commentary on John).”

Son of Man (Jesus alone refers to himself with this title)

The term, ‘son of man’ is, in itself, simply a Semitic idiom, *barnasha*, used to refer to a human being, and can be used to refer to the person speaking about oneself. But it is also associated with the enigmatic figure of one ‘as a son of man’ in Daniel (7:13), it comes to have apocalyptic associations.

9 “As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days (is a title for God) took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze... ¹³ “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, [a] coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language

worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

Son of Man: “I am the man you are all looking for; I am the One, I am the human being, there is no other” (Hopko, *The Names of Jesus*)

On Judgement

¹⁷“For God did not send forth His Son into the world in order that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸“The *one* who believes in Him is not judged; but the *one* who believes not has already been judged, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. ¹⁹“And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. ²⁰“For everyone who practices bad things hates the light and comes not to the light, lest his works should be reproved; ²¹“but the *one* who does the truth comes to the light, in order that his works might be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God.”

❖ God reveals Himself to the world first as Savior and second as Judge (Chrys.)

Gregory the Great: “Therefore, even all believers rise again, but they rise to torment, not to judgement. For the Day of Judgement does not try those who are already banished from the sight of a discerning judge because of their unbelief. Rather, it tries those who, retaining the profession of faith, have no works to show that back up that profession.”

St. Irenaeus: “Separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness.”

Cyril of Alexandria: “Such people, in fact, in failing to choose enlightenment, determine their own punishment against themselves and provoke their own suffering, which was in their power to escape. God preserved human freedom so that people might justly receive praise for good things and punishment for the contrary.”

Augustine: “You must hate your own (evil) works and love the works on God in you. The beginning of good works is the confession of evil works, and then you do the truth and come to the light...this very sin in you, which displeases you, would not displease you if God did not shine on you and His truth shows it to you.”

²²After these things Jesus came, and His disciples, to the Judean land; and there He was spending time with them, and was baptizing.

¹Since then the Lord knew that the Pharisees heard that “Jesus makes and baptizes more disciples than John” ²(and yet Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples), [Jn. 4:1,2]

❖ Christ did not baptize people but Christ baptizes through His disciples (Bp. Gerasimos)

²³And John was also baptizing in Aenon near Saleim, because there was much water there. And they were coming and were being baptized. ²⁴For John had not yet been cast into the prison.

❖ Jesus is beginning his public ministry before the imprisonment of John (Bp. Gerasimos)