

CONTEXTUAL AND GENRE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HISTORICITY OF JOHN 11:41b-42

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I. INTRODUCTION

Two assumptions commonly made by scholars engaged in gospel research and criticism are that the sayings of Jesus in the fourth gospel are generally historically suspect and that even greater uncertainty attaches to the authenticity of Jesus' prayers in John. As a case in point this paper considers John 11:41b-42, the prayer offered immediately before Lazarus' resurrection:

Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said [prayed] this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me (NIV).

Objections to the view that Jesus actually uttered this prayer when John says he did come from different quarters. Representative examples may be summarized in three categories.

1. *Source and redactional hypotheses.* The major source and redactional studies by R. Bultmann, R. Fortna, W. Nicol, R. Schnackenburg, H. Teeple, S. Temple and W. Wilkens all conclude that the prayer in 11:41b-42 was not part of the original core or narrative source that is said to lie behind the miracle stories in John.¹ The thanksgiving has been variously assigned—in whole or in part—to a discourse source, an evangelist or redactor, none of which preserves eyewitness testimony concerning what may have actually happened. The prayer is viewed as a redundant statement inserted into the narrative for editorial purposes. B. Lindars, for example, says that "the prayer is unnecessary, and indeed for that very reason has been put in the form of a thanksgiving."² Viewed like this the words

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¹See R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971) 407 n. 1 (cf. D. M. Smith, Jr., *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel* [New Haven: Yale University, 1965] 44); R. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel* (SNTSMS 11; Cambridge: University Press, 1970) 83, 240; W. Nicol, *The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1972) 30-40; R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium* (Freiburg: Herder, 1965-1975), 1. 64-67; 2. 400; H. Teeple, *The Literary Origin of the Gospel of John* (Evanston: Religion and Ethics Institute, 1974) 142-211; S. Temple, *The Core of the Fourth Gospel* (London: Mowbrays, 1974) 184-185, 192, 272; W. Wilkens, "Die Erweckung des Lazarus," *TZ* 15 (1959) 26.

²B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1972) 401. Cf. Temple (*Core* 192), who says that the prayer, not being part of the original "core" of the fourth gospel, was "created by the 'rewrite' author."

are often not even held to reflect or echo authentic tradition about Jesus. They certainly do not attain to whatever degree of historical veracity may be assigned the posited narrative source. The upshot of such views is obvious: The prayer is a literary fabrication that has been put into Jesus' mouth, a mouth that never uttered it.

2. *Theological presuppositions and conclusions.* These objections take two forms: (1) Anyone familiar with the theological agenda of the fourth evangelist notes several characteristically Johannine concepts and expressions in 11:41-42. Because of these, some conclude that the prayer originated in the evangelist's mind rather than Jesus'. The thanksgiving is viewed as a statement about John's theology, not Jesus' piety. In the words of A. Loisy, "le Christ johannique prie pour exposer les theses de l'evangeliste."³ (2) A related view is the idea espoused earlier by W. Bauer and Loisy, and in our generation by E. Käsemann, that John's Jesus is docetic, a "god walking on the earth," who does not—in fact cannot—offer genuine prayer. He merely accommodates himself to human appearances and offers *Schaugebet* or *Scheingebet*. According to Käsemann, when John's Jesus prays what we get is "proclamation," a theological "address." W. Bauer stated flatly that there is no basis for seriously considering 11:41b-42 a prayer because "der johannische Christus überhaupt nicht wirklich beten kann."⁴

3. *Personal sensitivities concerning the nature of prayer.* R. H. Fuller's discussion of John's Lazarus story contains the following observation:

To the modern reader this prayer is irritating, if not offensive. The whole thing looks like a put-up show, anything but genuine prayer. Jesus knows he need not pray, but apparently stages a prayer to impress the bystanders.⁵

Less explicit statements to the same effect may be found in other interpretations. At best this type of thinking hardly encourages one to seek help for his prayer life in John. At worst it leads to the scrapping of a portion of the gospel text on the highly questionable ground that it does not conform to a modern reader's personal conception of what constitutes genuine prayer. A specific example of the jettisoning of part of the text may be seen in the work of A. R. George. Speaking about the prayer in John 11, George says with reference to v 42b:

³A. Loisy, *Le Quatrieme Evangile* (2d ed.; Paris: Nourry, 1921) 353. So also E. F. von der Goltz (*Das Gebet in der ältesten Christenheit* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901] 29). Cf. W. Bauer (*Das Johannesevangelium* [2d ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1908] 149): "eine Reflexion des Evangelisten in Gebetesform darstellt"; R. Schnackenburg (*Johannesevangelium*, 1. 400): "Jesu Gebet zum Vater (V41-42) hat der Evangelist hinzugefügt."

⁴See on such "accommodation" H. J. Holtzmann (*Evangelium, Briefe und Offenbarung des Johannes* [3d ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1908] 139); on Jesus' prayer as "*Schaugebet*," C. H. Weisse (*Die evangelische Geschichte kritisch und philosophisch bearbeitet* [Leipzig: Oslander, 1838] 261); as "*Scheingebet*," F. C. Baur (*Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien* [Tübingen: Fues, 1847] 192-193). For E. Käsemann's understanding of the Johannine Jesus' ability to pray see *The Testament of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968) 5. W. Bauer's remark is made in *Johannesevangelium* 149.

⁵R. H. Fuller, *Interpreting the Miracles* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963) 107.

If . . . we affirm that Jesus did in fact pray, there seems no reason to deny that He may have offered this thanksgiving *aloud* simply for the sake of the crowd; what is intolerable is that He should have used this very prayer to convey the fact. Anyone may offer aloud a prayer which in the absence of others would have been offered in silence, not indeed with the purpose of letting others know that he needs to pray, but in order that they may join in the prayer; but it is no mark of devotion to use the prayer to "preach" at the bystanders. We are thus driven to regard these words as "a comment or interpretive gloss of the evangelist," which has somehow got into the text . . . If that is so, we can ignore it for our purpose.⁶

The problem here is the prayer's so-called "dual address," the fact that Jesus speaks through the thanksgiving to both the Father and the crowd at the same time. It is implied that such intolerable crassness assuredly did not characterize the prayer life of (the synoptic or historical) Jesus, but John's Jesus does not seem to know any better.

There have also been those who, because they regard authentic prayer a highly personal and nontransferable existential encounter with the distant God, are bothered by both how and what John says Jesus prayed. Truly authentic prayer, for such persons, is intensely private by definition and is usually also petitionary. Often it is characterized by paradoxical tension between the assertion and surrender of the will.⁷ From such a viewpoint Jesus' public thanksgiving, offered in confidence that God always hears, simply cannot be considered a real prayer.

These three categories of objection can be made to support one another quite easily. But in nearly any combination the historicity or legitimacy of Jesus' prayer is impugned. This paper suggests, in contrast, that there are grounds on which to argue that Jesus could have spoken the words John says he did in 11:41b-42 and that they may be regarded as genuine prayer.

⁶A. R. George, *Communion with God in the New Testament* (London: Epworth, 1953) 198-199.

⁷The exegete with the greatest influence in this area has undoubtedly been R. Bultmann. For Bultmann prayer is an existential encounter with God, and such experiences are dialectical to the *nth* degree. It can be readily demonstrated from Bultmann's *Jesus and the Word* and the volumes of his *Theology of the New Testament* that he conceived of prayer as a paradox. Cf. A. Malet, *The Thought of Rudolf Bultmann* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971) 110. Bultmann maintains that such existential experiences are so highly individualistic that they "smash all human standards and evaluations." Prayer takes place in a "situation in which all observation is excluded" and in which "no standard whatsoever from the past or from the universal is available." When one prays he participates in an event "in which the present world and history cease to be." As a consequence of thinking like this, he says (*Jesus and the Word* [London: Nicholson and Watson, 1935; New York: Scribner, 1958] 188-189) that it is "a great mistake to discuss the prayer life of Jesus, to speak of him as a praying man, to call him the greatest man of prayer in history; even historically one has no right to do this. How a man prayed concerns no other man, not even the historian. And whoever allows himself to judge how fervently or deeply Jesus prayed, proves only that he neither understands nor respects Jesus' conception of prayer. For whoever so judges either sees in prayer merely a psychological phenomenon which can become the object of interesting analysis, or he arrogates to himself God's own right. For according to Jesus, prayer is talking with God; whoever assumes he can evaluate any prayer presumes to stand in the place of God." This is not the place to respond to such a view at length, but we can ask whether John's account of Jesus' prayer in chap. 11 actually seems to support it. If Bultmann's view of prayer is right, nothing is available from the study of Jesus' prayers that might assist others. Each man and woman enters the paradox of prayer alone. God is encountered absolutely alone. There are no such things as universals or principles that govern existential paradox.

II. DOES "JOHANNINE" OR "FROM THE EVANGELIST" NECESSARILY MEAN HISTORICALLY UNRELIABLE?

One must readily agree that the prayer that begins in 11:41 is unquestionably Johannine in both its language and theology. Loisy's conclusion that "le Christ johannique prie expose les theses de l'evangeliste" may well be correct. But is this a place where "les theses de l'evangeliste" equals mere redactional theological fabrication? The contemporary critical consensus seems likely to answer "yes." D. M. Smith, Jr., speaks for many when he says:

If [the historical] Jesus actually spoke as he speaks in the various strands of the Synoptic tradition, I find it impossible to believe that he also spoke as the Johannine Christ.⁸

Yet it is not necessary—either historically or logically—to assume that because the theology of the evangelist and the Johannine Christ may be the same, John caused his Jesus to pray in form or content something that the Jesus of history could (or did) never say. O. Cullmann rightly notes that this sort of approach, the Johannine Christ or the historical Jesus, may not take adequate account of John's theology itself. Cullmann observes that

the importance to the evangelist of the theological statement that "the historical Jesus and the Christ present in the community are one" must have been a stimulus to him to portray the words and deeds of the first member . . . as faithfully as possible.⁹

Cullmann would go on to say that methodologically one cannot assume the converse: that John's theology of history demands that the prayers of his Christ be the same as those the historical Jesus may have uttered. Yet it seems to me that it is neither scientific nor objective to assume before serious consideration of the evidence that the Johannine community (and its evangelist) were so preoccupied with immediate difficulties as to have completely forgotten the One to whom they ultimately owed their very existence.

The fourth gospel states on several occasions that Jesus prayed. And although only one of these prayer events (6:11) is explicitly corroborated outside the Johannine literature, it simply does not follow automatically that the others are not based on memories of Jesus or that they are merely theological constructs designed to meet the needs of a worshiping and teaching community. The point at issue has been stated by T. W. Manson:

We need not ask that the documents should be exempt from any of the tests that are applied to other ancient historical texts; but we must ask that they should be taken seriously as evidence for the events they purport to describe; and in the first instance as evidence for *those events* rather than for the states of mind of first-century Christians.¹⁰

⁸D. M. Smith, Jr., "A Major Commentary on John," *Int* 21 (1967) 475.

⁹O. Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle* (Philadelphia: Westminster) 25.

¹⁰T. W. Manson, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus—Continued," *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* (ed. M. Black; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962) 10.

Far too often events in the gospel of John have not been taken seriously. Jesus' prayers therein are a case in point.

We cannot suppose that it follows automatically that material constituting the substance of the Johannine prayer events makes sense only in the life of Jesus, however. H. E. W. Turner is right when he says:

Criticism rightly raises the question of the setting of the Gospel material in the life of the early church; [but] it certainly does not follow that the historicist is wrong in seeking a setting for the same material within the life of Jesus himself. Methodologically the two questions cannot be reduced to each other, nor does the one make the other dispensable. As T. W. Manson pointed out there is a *Sitz im Leben Kirche* but there is also a *Sitz im Leben Jesu*. Both are proper questions for the historian to ask of his material, but an affirmative answer to the first idea does not automatically carry with it a negative answer to the second.¹¹

Given the circumstances, it seems to me that the prayer is precisely what one should expect John's Jesus to have said. After reading through such remarks as 5:19a; 9:33; 11:22; etc., it would seem odd if something like the thanksgiving were not found in the Lazarus story somewhere. But the theological foundations of the prayer are interwoven into the material from which John constructs his portrait of Jesus. And it is very difficult to find a satisfactory procedure by which the prayer and its theological foundations and motifs might be extracted from the gospel without also calling into question the whole of John's understanding of Jesus. If the prayer is unauthentic and to be discarded, then large portions (if not most) of the gospel should also make their "exodus onto the scrap heap of the secondary" along with it.

Is there evidence that establishes that regarding John 11:41b-42 as historically secondary is not mandatory? Comparison of the prayer's context and basic content with traditions preserved by the other evangelists suggests that "from the fourth evangelist" need not be taken as automatically meaning "historically questionable."

1. *Concerning the prayer's context.* It will be clear to any reader of John 11 that the occasion is one of great dramatic intensity. John brings trauma and uncertainty to a very high level, and the situation becomes progressively more and more public as the story unfolds. Such a context would seem to be the occasion *par excellence* for the Käsemann-Bauer-Loisy "God going about on the earth" docetic Jesus to make his move, to act decisively, to save the day, so that those present may behold his glory. What in fact happens?

Faced with this situation, John tells us, Jesus was troubled and disturbed (11:33); he burst into tears (11:35); he again experienced personal difficulty (11:38). He has to ask where the tomb is (11:34) and makes no effort to move the stone off the top of it when he finally is led to the site (11:39). Then, when the situation is all in readiness, he does not (as in the postulated sources) immediately raise Lazarus; rather, he prays. Chrysostom asks: "What could be a

¹¹H. E. W. Turner, *Historicity and the Gospels: A Sketch of the Historical Method and Its Application to the Gospels* (London: Mowbrays, 1963) 42-43. Turner's reference to Manson may be found in *ExpTim* 53 (1941-1942) 249.

greater sign of weakness, if he needed prayer?"¹² None of this seems particularly godlike—but what might the synoptic Jesus have done?

We are fortunate in having a fairly wide spectrum of scholarly interest in the synoptic Jesus' prayer life. In a recent treatment one is told: "*Prayer was [the synoptic] Jesus' regular response to situations of crisis and decision.*"¹³ Other scholars hold the same point of view.¹⁴ We ask, "Is not the whole Lazarus incident correctly entitled 'A Situation of Crisis and Decision'?" Some describe this tendency of the synoptic Jesus by saying that he resorts to prayer before turning points in his life and ministry. Is it not hard to escape the conclusion that John 11:53-54 explicitly shows that the event was a turning point of major proportions in John's Jesus' life?

Certainly the case for the prayer-incapacitated docetic Jesus is hardly aided by the Lazarus incident if the present text is taken seriously and material not discarded according to various hypotheses as to what the story must have looked like in a source John may have used. The fact that John represents Jesus as having prayed is completely coherent with the (so-called) more historical picture of Jesus' prayer life taken from the synoptics.

2. *An overview of the thanksgiving's content.* A brief consideration of the prayer's content also does not leave the impression that the Johannine idiom should be viewed as a distortion or deviation from what the synoptic Jesus may have prayed on a similar occasion.

The thaumaturgic value of the raising of the eyes notwithstanding,¹⁵ it has long been maintained that first-century Jewish custom dictated that "prayers were generally said with downcast eyes."¹⁶ The Psalter counsels: "O Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high" (131:1a RSV); and *b. Yebam* 105b directs: "Let him who prays cast his eyes downwards, but turn his heart upwards." Thus it seems improbable that John has merely taken over the gesture from Judaism.

Jesus' personal use of the gesture is attested in the synoptic accounts of the

¹²PG (Brepols: Turnhout, 1976) 48, col. 783. Cf. F. Schleiermacher's observation: "By first offering a prayer and representing what follows as the answer to his prayer, Christ leads us to believe that the act was not his, but God's" (*The Life of Jesus* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975] 201; cf. also p. 218). See further B. Lindars (*Behind the Fourth Gospel* [London: SPCK, 1971] 57). A similar thought may be found in Moses' words in Num 16:28.

¹³J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975) 21 (italics his).

¹⁴Cf. J. Navone, *Themes of St. Luke* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1970) 118-131; P. T. O'Brien, "Prayer in Luke-Acts," *TB* 24 (1973) 111-127; S. S. Smalley, "Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer in Luke-Acts," *NovT* (1973) 59-71.

¹⁵See C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965) 183; R. Fortna, *Gospel of Signs* 83.

¹⁶G. Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua* (New York: Macmillan, 1929) 152-153. Cf. Str-B, 2. 246; F. Heiler, *Das Gebet: Eine religionsgeschichtliche und religionspsychologische Untersuchung* (5th ed.; Munich/Basel: Reinhardt, 1969) 101-103. Contrast with this conclusion F. J. Dölger, *Sol Salutis: Gebet und Gesang im Christlichen Altertum* (2d ed.; Münster: Aschendorff, 1925) 305-311. Texts of interest are Ps 123:1; Lam 3:41; Josephus, *Ant.* 11.126; 1 Esdr 4:58.

feeding miracle in Mark 6:41; Luke 9:16; Matt 14:19. Since there is no hard evidence that the gesture had sacramental significance in the apostolic age, its historicity in the synoptic traditions should not be doubted. The only other synoptic reference to the gesture in association with prayer is the prayer-teaching passage in Luke 18:9-14, also attributed to Jesus.

It would appear that John has probably not taken the eye movement over from the feeding stories, as 6:11 (where he omits it) indicates, and there is no association of it with the prayer teaching in John's last discourses. John also represents Jesus as looking up to heaven before the prayer in chap. 17. We suggest that, given the rarity of the gesture in first-century Judaism, its unique association with Jesus in the gospel traditions¹⁷ and its multiple attestation (Mark—in the feeding stories; Luke—prayer teaching; John—17:1 [and possibly the pre-Johannine "Gospel of Signs" source according to Fortna—11:41]) give a substantial impression of historicity to the presence of the gesture in the Lazarus story.

Little need be said concerning the address to God except to note that Jeremias and Dunn have established that "when we 'listen in' on [the synoptic] Jesus' prayers the distinctive word we hear is 'Abba'"¹⁸ and that H. Odeberg rightly noted in his commentary: "11:41: *Pater* exactly corresponds to the Aramaic inception 'b'."¹⁹

The initial part of the prayer, *pater eucharistō soi* ("Father, I thank you"), recalls another aspect of the synoptic Jesus' prayer life: that preserved in the tradition utilized in Matt 11:25; Luke 10:21, where the same type of expression is also found. Jeremias indicates that this attitude of thanksgiving when approaching God in prayer "was born" with Jesus. Working from the synoptic evidence he concludes:

It is characteristic of this new mode of prayer that it is dominated by thanksgiving. The only personal prayer of Jesus of some length from the time before the passion is a thanksgiving in spite of failure (Matt. 11:25 par. Luke 1:21). An echo of this pre-dominance of thanksgiving is preserved in John 11:41.²⁰

One should not think that the aorist *ēkousas* ("you [have] heard") in the second part of the prayer refers to the fact that Lazarus is already alive in the tomb when Jesus prays, or even less that he never really died.²¹ Rather, it would seem best to take the past tense as a reference to a previous (private) personal prayer

¹⁷Cf. Mark 7:34. Is a prayer represented here by the word *estenazen* ("he sighed deeply/groaned")?

¹⁸Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* 21, who cites J. Jeremias, *Prayers of Jesus* (Naperville: Allenson, 1967) 54-57, to this effect: "Jeremias notes that all five strata in the gospel tradition agree that in prayer Jesus addressed God as 'Father'—in Jesus' speech, 'Abba,' as preserved in Mark 14.36. Their testimony is also unanimous that he used this address in *all his prayers*" (italics Dunn's).

¹⁹H. Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel* (Uppsala: Almqvist, 1929) 334.

²⁰Jeremias, *Prayers* 78; cf. also A. Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Johannes* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1930) 255.

²¹See on such views H. van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1965) 585-586.

offered by Jesus on behalf of his friend.²² Allusions to the private devotional life of the synoptic Jesus are common, as is well known.²³ But apparently periods of private prayer were also an aspect of the personal piety of John's Jesus too.²⁴

In the third part of the prayer we find the claim that Jesus knows that the Father always hears him. The statement implies that the speaker is sinless (as reflection on Ps 66:18; Prov 28:9; etc. will readily establish). It seems unlikely that such an idea is drawn from Judaism and placed in Jesus' mouth: The OT states flatly that all men are sinful (cf. 1 Kgs 8:46; Ps 130:3; Prov 20:9; etc.), and the later apocryphal and apocalyptic writers seem preoccupied with establishing the origin and responsibility of sin, which they assume all men have (cf. Wis 2:24; Sir 25:24; 2 Esdr 7:118; 2 Bar 54:15-19; 1 *Enoch* 10:7-8; etc.). We personally are unaware of any rabbinic messianic speculation asserting that the coming one would be sinless.

Such an idea could have originated in Christian circles. The gospels scrupulously avoid any mention of the concept that Jesus had personal sin. Something of this notion must lie behind the tradition of Jesus' temptation. O. Cullmann says it perhaps explains the wording difference between Mark 10:18 ("Why do you call me good?") and Matt 19:17 ("Why do you ask me about what is good?").²⁵ C. F. D. Moule has argued that the picture of Jesus' balanced yet unimpeachable integrity with women is something that must "have fairly forced its way through an atmosphere . . . alien to it."²⁶

An important factor in deciding whether Jesus himself could have believed himself to be sinless (see in addition to this passage John 7:18; 8:46; 14:30) will be one's attitude toward those parts of the gospel tradition that connect the forgiveness of sins with Jesus as the Son of Man (e.g. Mark 2:10). If one accepts the authenticity of such a saying,²⁷ it does not seem overly difficult to believe also

²²Some would place this prayer at either 11:33 or 11:38. These verses are said to refer to "an agonizing prayer to discern the Father's will in the situation" by E. Grubb, "The Raising of Lazarus," *ExpTim* 32 (1921-1922) 407. St. Thomas offered the touching thought: "nam lacrymae quas Christus pro morte Lazari fuderat, vicem orationis habuerunt" (text as given by M.-J. Lagrange, *Evangile selon Saint Jean* [4th ed., Paris: Gabalda, 1936] 308). But surely the prayer is to be placed at some point in the chronology prior to what is related in 11:11, perhaps even as early as 11:4. At any rate, it is the fact of this reference to Jesus' private prayers that is important. Just when Jesus offered the prayer is of no concern to John, and little is gained by recent speculations.

²³One thinks of Jesus' remark to Peter in Luke 22:32. See on Jesus' private prayer life Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* 20.

²⁴Compare with the synoptic Jesus' habit of praying on mountains alone John 6:15b. Here John's Jesus is said to "again" (*palin*) withdraw to a mountain by himself. It should also be noted that the blind man in 9:31 assumes Jesus' private prayer life as well.

²⁵O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (2d ed., Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963) 93-95.

²⁶C. F. D. Moule, *The Phenomenon of the New Testament* (Naperville: Allenson, 1967) 63-65.

²⁷Evidence for the authenticity of the saying may be found in I. H. Marshall, "The Synoptic Son of Man Sayings in Recent Discussion," *NTS* 12 (1965-1966) 341-342. Marshall notes (342 n. 8) that V. Taylor and W. G. Kümmel both accept it as genuine.

that the sinlessness implication that it carries had not escaped the consciousness of Jesus.²⁸ (It may be noted in passing that the judgment ideas associated with Jesus [e.g. Mark 14:62; Matt 7:21-23; 25:31] also probably assume an attribute of sinlessness of some sort.)

This material comes from several different parts of the gospel tradition, and one wonders if it is correct to put it all down to the Christological utterances of early Church prophets concerning the priestly servant of God. The sinlessness idea appears in the epistolary writings of the NT (cf. 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 5:15; 7:26; 9:14; 1 John 2:1; 3:5, 7; 1 Pet 1:19; 2:23; 3:18) but usually in the context of discussions of priesthood, sacrifice or consecration, which do not seem to be motifs in John 11.

To summarize, then, a case for the likelihood that Jesus could have said things that imply that he believed himself to be sinless cannot be convincingly argued historically in terms of the so-called "criterion of dissimilarity" because the concept appears in Christian literature. Yet there is a kind of unintentional self-consistency and coherence in material from several places in the synoptic tradition that implies Jesus' sinlessness, and this phenomenon may be taken as evidence that the concept of his sinlessness is likely to have had its original *Sitz* in the words and actions of Jesus himself. It does not seem impossible that Jesus could have prayed, "Father, I know that you always hear me," as John says he did.²⁹

"I said it for the benefit of those standing around" is undoubtedly the portion of the prayer that has caused the greatest difficulty to the most people. Schnackenburg says that the "stylistic device" of making people "listen in" to Jesus' words is fairly frequent in John, and he mentions 1:48; 9:40; 13:27-28 as other examples.³⁰ But in addition to the editorial issues, an important assumption behind the problem here is the notion that it is morally obtuse to say things that will have an effect on others during public prayer to God: One may not assault heaven and the audience at the same time. It is wrong to do so.

This idea is addressed at greater length below. We point out here that a survey of the NT leaves the impression that some writers responsible for accounts of public prayer may not have felt this problem very acutely. The examples we mention are not precisely parallel to John 11:41-42, but they do suggest something about first-century attitudes. The synoptists indicate in Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:46 that Jesus prayed in a loud voice from the cross. There is a similar type of prayer in Acts 7:60 (cf. Luke 23:34) offered by Stephen—again, in "a loud voice." One cannot argue from this evidence that Jesus and Stephen

²⁸It should be noted that a passage that emphasizes the necessity of forgiveness, Matt 6:8-15, seems to explicitly suggest that "forgive us our sins" is to be the disciples' prayer, not Jesus'. Cf. also Luke 11:2: "When you pray, (you) say." Jesus, as O. Cullmann rightly notes (*Christology* 93), does not associate himself with those he says need to be forgiven.

²⁹Cf. L. Morris on John 8:46: "Only one who was in the closest and most intimate communion with the Father could have spoken such words. It is impossible to envisage any other figure in history making such a claim"; *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 465.

³⁰R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (New York: Herder, 1969-1982), 2. 517 n. 66. Schnackenburg goes on to observe that it is "impossible for Jesus to speak in any other way" because of the dictates of "Johannine Christology."

intend to address both God and those who are standing around. Perhaps Jesus is found praying in "a loud voice" because the evangelists wish to demonstrate that he voluntarily died (in possession of substantial vigor right up to the end?) as opposed to being involuntarily killed. But this seems inapplicable in Stephen's case: He is only a believer (not the Lord) and has just been stoned. Yet it does seem to us that the evangelists used these traditions in such a way as to show that they believed these prayers did have an effect on others who were present when they were offered. Certainly it seems plain that they desired their readers to be addressed by them. One wonders if these traditions would have been handled as they were if the authors or their intended readers thought the idea of "dual address" in prayer was illegitimate.

Paul also may not have been bothered by this matter.³¹ The thanksgiving he mentioned in 1 Cor 14:14-15 apparently has a twofold intent. Verse 17 indicates that "you may give thanks well enough" (which seems to mean that the blessing is acceptable to God), but Paul goes on to say that listeners, "the other man," may also expect to be "edified" by it as well. (Passages such as Eph 4:14-19 imply the same idea.) We have an initial impression that (from a first-century perspective at least) the concern that Jesus voices in John 11:42 for the crowd should not by itself be taken as adequate grounds for rejecting the material's authenticity.

Our initial impressions are that John 11:41b-42 may have a larger claim to historicity than is often allowed: It does not—its Johannine idiom notwithstanding—seem fundamentally incongruous with several aspects of the prayer life of the synoptic Jesus. It will be noted in what follows that this *prima facie* indication of the possibility of a *Sitz im Leben Jesu* does not lack for additional support.

III. JESUS' THANKSGIVING, THE *HODAYOTH* AND THE PERSONAL THANKSGIVING PSALM

1. *John 11:41-42 and the Hodayoth.* In an article that has escaped the attention of most who write on John, J. M. Robinson has shown quite conclusively that Jesus' prayer in John 11 is to be placed in the *Hodayoth* tradition on grounds of its form.³² J.-P. Audet pointed in this general direction earlier on the basis of continuity of motifs, although he overstated the evidence for some of his views.³³ If John 11:41-42 stands in this genre, there are several aspects of the *Hodayoth* form and personal thanksgiving psalmography that are important in correctly interpreting it.

As a nonliturgical example of the *Hodayoth* genre, the thanksgiving may formally be analyzed as follows:

³¹Cf. A. Dietzel, "Beten im Geist: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Parallele aus den Hodajot zum paulinischen Gebet im Geist," *TZ* 13 (1957) 12-32.

³²J. M. Robinson, "Die Hodajot-Formel in Gebet und Hymnus des Früh-christentums," in *Apophoreta* (BZNW 30; Leiden: Brill, 1964) 194-225.

³³J.-P. Audet, "Esquisse historique du genre littéraire de la 'benediction' juive et de l' 'euchariste' Chretienne," *RB* 65 (1958) 371-399.

*Formal Characteristics**Jesus' Prayer*

- | | |
|--|--|
| I. <i>Berakoth/Hodayoth</i> and the naming of God | I thank you, Father, that you have heard me (11:41b) |
| II. <i>anamnesis</i> with implications for the present situation | I know that you always hear me, but I said this because of the crowd standing around (11:42ab) |
| III. implicit or explicit petition | that they may believe that you sent me (11:42c) |

Robinson says that the second part of these prayers usually sketches the present situation in light of what the petitioner knows about the nature and action of God.³⁴ And 11:42ab seems to do just that. That 11:42c is an implied petition has not been pointed out in most commentaries, yet certainly this is the case. "That they may believe" is the reason for the whole event. The answer to the petition is related in 11:45, not in 11:44.³⁵

If it is right to group this prayer of Jesus with other nonliturgical *Berakoth* and *Hodayoth* as Robinson does,³⁶ there is an important implication for the "having happenedness" question regarding the prayer itself and the miracle associated with it. Robinson says:

It is in such formulae as these [nonliturgical *Berakoth* and *Hodayoth*] that one finds the roots of historicity of the Bible. For here we have to do with the oneness of the historical and historic: the occurrence to which the formula refers is expressed in its meaning, in terms of an act of God. But this meaning is not a secondary, theological interpretation added belatedly to the occurrence.

The use of the formula is thus both a reliable historical hint about the event and itself part of the historic effect of the event. The very structures of the formulae have arisen because of occurrences.³⁷

³⁴Robinson, "Hodajot-Formel" 204-206. H. Teeple's suggestion that part of the prayer comes from a Hellenistic quasi-gnostic source seems less likely in light of the evidence (largely Jewish) advanced for this "knowledge" by Robinson. The Psalm scroll from Qumran also provides evidence that one may praise and thank God on the basis of what he "knows" about him in Palestinian—albeit sectarian—Judaism. Teeple's "Hellenistic mysticism" seems less compelling as a background for John 11:41b-42 than the type of Semitic piety reflected in the *Hodayoth* of the OT and QL.

³⁵G. Lathrop, "The Prayers of Jesus and the Great Prayer of the Church," *LQ* 26 (1974) 162, errs when he assumes that the "implied petition" in the prayer is "continue to hear me." Lathrop ignores the content of the earlier portion of the prayer: "You hear me always." Jesus prays for others, not himself.

³⁶In another article ("The Historicity of Biblical Language," in *The Old Testament and Christian Faith* [ed. B. W. Anderson; New York: Harper, 1963] 124-158) Robinson lists the following examples of such prayer in nonliturgical contexts: Gen 24:27; Exod 18:10; Ruth 4:14; 1 Sam 25:32; Tob 11:17; John 11:41; 1 Cor 14:18.

³⁷Robinson, "Historicity" 135. The use of "historicity," "historic" and "historical" in this is extremely subtle. Robinson says (127 n. 8) that his "historic" translates "*geschichtlich*" and "historical" equals "*historisch*." He concludes the note: "For the union of historicity and historicness, I employ in this essay the term 'historicity'."

This does not mean that on the basis of the use in the prayer of the *Hodayoth* formula one can automatically affirm that the miraculous resurrection of Lazarus "actually happened." (The *anamnesis* of part II of the prayer does not even refer to Lazarus.) But one can certainly affirm that something happened. In response to the implied petition in part III of the prayer, some did believe. And this is mentioned several times: 11:45; 12:11; 12:18 (cf. 12:1). What is said to "actually happen" in response to the prayer is that so many "believed" (cf. 11:42c) that even the opposition is reported to have confessed that "the whole world is gone after him." Here is the "historicality" implied by the formula in which the prayer is couched: The presence of the prayer in *Hodayoth* form suggests that the belief Jesus implicitly petitioned for in 11:42c actually happened as a result of the action of God in history.

Although the formula of the prayer implies nothing about it, one may also suggest that given the circumstances a most expedient means by which God might answer the prayer and produce the belief Jesus requested would be to draw (cf. 6:44) those standing around by means of resurrecting Lazarus.

There is also a parallel dynamic in the miracle story in John 9, which emphasizes in v 32 the unbelievableness of its event: "Since the world began it has never been heard" as occasioning just what Jesus prays for in 11:42c: "that they may believe that you sent me." Compare the implication of 9:33: "This man is from God." In the circumstances narrated in even the briefest "source" that has been conjectured for 11:1-45, a similar "unbelievable event" (which might produce an answer to Jesus' prayer) would be something like Lazarus' resurrection. It seems appropriate here to use a figure of C. F. D. Moule's. Could we not say that what precedes the prayer, the form of the prayer itself, and what follows it rip a hole either in history or the mind of the Johannine community exactly the size and shape of the resurrection of Lazarus? We see no reason not to.

Robinson himself seems to imply this in the way he lists his evidence. He says that "the occasion for the use of nonliturgical *Berakoth* and *Hodayoth* is an occurrence," and among the examples of such occurrences one finds "Lazarus survives death (John 11:41)."³⁸ Yet "surviving death" is cryptic enough to indicate that Robinson may doubt that which (to our mind, at least) his analysis seems to point: (1) that the prayer actually occurred in history: "The [*Hodayoth*] formulae arose as part of the original events when they happened"³⁹; (2) that the resurrection of Lazarus also actually occurred in history:

[The *Hodayoth* prayer is] to be understood within the category of acclamations called forth by an epiphany.

[Such prayers] do not stand as unhistoric and unhistorical structures in tension with the history itself, . . . rather the formulae share in the historicality that characterizes their contents.

The cast given the material by these formulae corresponds to the cast which the history had as it was experienced when it happened.⁴⁰

³⁸Ibid., pp. 134-135.

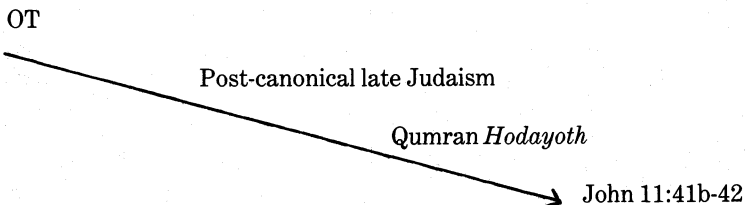
³⁹Ibid., p. 134.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 136, 136 and 134 respectively.

If Robinson's conclusions regarding the historicity of events associated with the nonliturgical *Hodayoth* in Biblical literature are affirmed—and there seem no compelling reasons not to affirm them—John 11:41b-42 cannot be discarded as mere redactional reflection by the evangelist so easily as some have implied. And the thanksgiving seems inaccurately characterized as an unnecessary pandering to the crowd by means of “show prayer.” The verses do not seem to be in tension with the history of what transpired. Rather, they are essential to understanding the entire narrative. John does not make his Jesus into a showman. Both the prayer and the miracle that immediately follows have one focus: the glorification of the Father (“that they may know that you sent me”).⁴¹

2. *John 11:41b-42 and the personal thanksgiving psalm.* John 11:41 is said by Robinson to represent a stage in the *Formgeschichte* of the *Hodayoth*. The immediately preceding stage in the development (some would say the “deteriorization”) of the genre is represented by the *Hodayoth* or “Thanksgiving Hymn” scroll from Cave One near Khirbet Qumran (1QH). In his volume on 1QH Menahem Mansoor cites as authoritative the conclusion of S. Mowinckel that 1QH itself represents a late stage in the development of the noncultic personal thanksgiving psalm.⁴² Diagrammed together, Robinson, Mansoor and Mowinckel sketch the following developmental progression of the genre.

Personal Thanksgiving Psalm/Hodayoth Development



Viewed as an example of this type of personal thanksgiving, Jesus' prayer in John 11 represents the psalmography of the learned (cf. John 7:46). But as scholars working in the field agree, by the time one reaches the first century the hymnic structure and metrical characteristics amount almost to chaos. Mansoor says, “Older patterns of symmetry (meter) and many classical forms of thought rhyme (*parallelismus membrorum*) have largely broken down or been lost.”⁴³ This indicates that Robinson's placement of the prayer in this line of develop-

⁴¹There is a substantially parallel (certainly equally dramatic) situation in the LXX at 1 Kgs 18:36 where Elijah prays: “Let this people know that you are the Lord, the God of Israel, and that I (am) your servant, and for your sake have done these works.” The similarity of motives behind the prayers of Elijah and Jesus—that the Glory of God may be seen and that the observers not view the one praying as a “wonder worker” but rather be convinced that he is God's representative—is quite striking. Cf. C. H. Dodd on the use of *pisteuein* with a *hoti* clause in 11:42b (*Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge: University Press, 1953] 182-183).

⁴²M. Mansoor, *The Thanksgiving Hymns* (STDJ 3; Leiden: Brill, 1961) 26.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 25.

ment should not be faulted because the thanksgiving does not have all the stylistic characteristics of earlier representatives of the genre. Jesus' thanksgiving may be classified as a representative of the *Hodayoth* on grounds of its basic form, while its lack of poetic structure is characteristic of later stages in the development (or deterioration, if one prefers). The major matter that may be addressed by this finding concerns the perceived offensiveness of the "dual address" in the later part of the prayer.

Mowinckel⁴⁴ advises that

the thanksgiving psalm is a testimony . . . ; it has a twofold object. From one point of view it is meant from the fellow-countrymen present; it is sung for them and in their hearing, and has the character of a laudatory and narrative testimony before them to the saving work God has performed upon the worshipper. But at the same time and first of all it is intended to be a laudatory thanksgiving to God . . . ; the testimony has the purpose of increasing God's honour in the congregation and in the world.⁴⁵

"Consequently," he advises, "the thanksgiving psalm may become chiefly instructive."

Addressing himself to the next representative of the genre, the postcanonical learned psalmography, Mowinckel says:

In spite of the didactic character of the "learned psalmography," it has one characteristic in common with genuine psalmography: these . . . are, and must be considered as *prayers* . . . ; they address God, even though they often address men as well.⁴⁶

In another place he says:

The object is twofold: partly to give personal expression to the piety of the author and . . . partly to teach the disciples the proper fear of God and give them the proper knowledge of the character and the work of God.⁴⁷

A prominent feature of this type of psalm was the worshipper's testimony *coram publico* In such a testimony something of a desire to win other people for God is always included.⁴⁸

We believe this cannot but suggest to the reader the final portions of Jesus' prayer before raising Lazarus. But it is necessary to show that these characteris-

⁴⁴For characteristics of the learned thanksgiving psalm see S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (2 vols.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1962); "Psalms and Wisdom" in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (VTSup 3; ed. M. Noth and D. W. Thomas; Leiden: Brill, 1955) 205-224.

⁴⁵This and the following quotation: Mowinckel, *Psalms*, 2. 38.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁴⁷Mowinckel, "Psalms and Wisdom" 222.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 218. What Mowinckel speaks of may be seen in this quotation from Tob 12:6: "Praise God and give thanks to him; exalt him and give thanks to him in the presence of all the living for what he has done for you" (RSV). Tobit is urged to give thanks to God, but to do so "in the presence of all the living" so as to produce a reaction (for God) among the hearers. The remainder of the verse leaves no doubt: "It is good to praise God and to exalt his name, worthily declaring the works of God." Such a declaration is not for the sake of God, but—as in 11:42—"because of the people standing around."

tics appear in the Qumran *Hodayoth* that precede John 11:41-42 in the development of the genre.

We give here from Mansoor's translation examples of the "testimony *coram publico*" with a "desire to win other people for God" in the Qumran thanksgivings. Minor translational and textual reconstruction differences abound in scholarly work on this literature. Other authorities have been consulted to insure that what follows does not represent a minority opinion concerning translation of the texts in question. References are to column and line after the text of E. L. Sukenik.

i 32-33

Thy great lovingkindness didst strengthen the spirit of man . . . so that he may recount Thy wonders in the presence of all.

ii 30-31

In the assemblies I bless Thy name. I praise Thee, O Lord.

iii 22-23

And Thou hast apportioned an eternal lot to man amongst the spirits . . . to praise Thy name in exultation in community, and to rehearse Thy wondrous deeds in the presence of all Thy works.

vi 11-12

The men of Thy counsel, in the midst of the sons of men, to recount Thy wonders unto everlasting generations; and on Thy mighty acts they meditate ceaselessly so that all peoples shall acknowledge Thy truth, and all nations Thy glory.

xi 5-6

Shape my lips unto a place for rejoicing, so that I may sing the praises of Thy lovingkindness, and in Thy might I may muse, all the day. Continually, I bless Thy name, and declare Thy glory among the sons of men.

The same concepts are expressed less explicitly in xii 3; xviii 6-7. Other material—vii 24; xi 23-26; xiii 11; xvii 17—also invites comparison.

From J. A. Sanders' *editio princeps* of 11QPs^a we give translations from the "Plea for Deliverance" (11QPs^aPlea):

xix 8-9, 17

My soul cries out to praise thy name, to sing praises for thy loving deeds; to proclaim thy faithfulness—of praise of thee there is no end.

Let my brothers rejoice with me and the house of my father, who are astonished by thy gracious . . . [text breaks off].⁴⁹

These examples from the Qumran *Hodayoth* suggest (1) that Mowinckel's discernment of a desire on the part of those who pray to win others to God through their thanksgiving is not fanciful; lines such as "I bless Thy name, and declare Thy glory among the sons of men" (xi 6) are difficult to understand in any other way; (2) that the positing of a trajectory of *Hodayoth*/personal thanksgiving

⁴⁹J. A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPs^a)* (DJD 4; Oxford: University Press, 1965). Comparison is also suggested with Sanders' Hebrew reconstruction (from the Syriac) of the first two verses of 11QPs^a 154. But these are not found in the Qumran text, so we omit them here.

prayer—as was done above—is not ill-conceived; (3) that the placement of John 11:41b-42 in this line of development, and hence attribution to Jesus of a similar desire to testify through thanksgiving *coram publico*, is reasonable.

What has been presented above may not convince everyone that classification of Jesus' thanksgiving as a representative of the *Hodayoth* genre completely justifies the claim that it is developmentally related to the personal thanksgiving or learned psalmography of Judaism. Yet the discussion should serve reasonably well to establish that from the perspective of the ancient Near Eastern thanksgiving tradition such remarks concerning John 11:41b-42 as "the whole thing looks like a put-up show, anything but genuine prayer" and "Jesus . . . stages a prayer to impress the bystanders" are manifestly unjust as criticism of what John claims Jesus said. It is likely that in the first century such a prayer might have earned precisely the opposite kind of reaction. To discard the "dual address" aspect of the prayer is to overturn (because of modern offense) a tradition of piety that developed for centuries. Others have approached this question differently but have come to a similar end.

A. T. Hanson proposed that the initial words of Jesus' prayer (the *Hodayoth* formula) are actually a quotation of Ps 118:21a (LXX 117:21).⁵⁰ The parallel is striking, and no commentator appears to have noticed it previously. There are difficulties with Hanson's view,⁵¹ but given the use of Psalm 22 by the synoptic Jesus from the cross his idea is not impossible. Psalm 118 is an early canonical example of the personal thanksgiving genre that has just been discussed, and Hanson's suggestion indicates that our placing of Jesus' prayer in this genre is appropriate, even if one declines to accept that the phrase in question is a direct quotation of Ps 118:21a. One of several implications Hanson draws from the parallel in wording supports our conclusion that Jesus' utterance should be regarded as a genuine prayer: "The connection with the Psalm would also tend to confirm the view that Jesus really is praying here, not just pretending to pray, since the Psalmist is certainly uttering a prayer of thanksgiving."⁵²

We thus find it reasonable to conclude that the relationship that John 11:41b-42 has to the *Hodayoth*/thanksgiving psalm tradition is a significant support for the view that the prayer is likely to have had an original *Sitz im Leben Jesu*.

If the kind of language and concept found on the lips of the Johannine Jesus is known to have been current in his day, it is just as reasonable to suppose that the Jesus of history could have known and used it, as it is to suppose that any other first-century Jew could have done so.⁵³

3. *A question of hermeneutics.* During the period in which the NT was written,

⁵⁰A. T. Hanson, "The Old Testament Background to the Raising of Lazarus," *SE 6* = TU 112 (Berlin: Akademie, 1973) 252-255.

⁵¹Both verbs are different.

⁵²Hanson, "Old Testament" 255. Essentially this same point is also made by M. Wilcox on grounds of the interpretation given to the psalmist's words in the Targum to Ps 118:21: "I give thanks before thee that thou hast received my prayer." Wilcox notes: "The concept of [real] prayer is made explicit"; "The 'Prayer' of Jesus in John XI.41b-42," *NTS* (1977) 132.

⁵³A. J. B. Higgins, "The Words of Jesus According to St. John," *BJRL* 49 (1966-1967) 381.

those standing in the stream of Jewish piety reflected in the OT, OT apocrypha and rabbinic writings conceived of prayer as substantially more than private petition and supplication. Benediction, blessing and thanksgiving characterize this form of piety. The orientation of prayer was essentially theocentric, and in this regard it stands out in marked relief against modern conceptions in which anthropocentric philosophy and asking for things loom so large.⁵⁴ One may not impose modern understandings of prayer on John 11:41-42 without obscuring, in some way or other, the Jewish matrix in which John says it originated. The Jesus who prays in John 11 lived in a world that was waiting anxiously for Messiah to usher in a new age, an age expected to be characterized by prayers of thanksgiving:

In the world to come all sacrifices will cease, but the thank offering will remain for ever; likewise all confessions will cease, but the confession of thanks will remain for ever (*Pesiq. R.* 79a, 17-19).

Interpretive keys to the understanding of John 11:41-42 must be drawn from the environment in which Jesus lived. The prayer must ring true as genuine prayer from the orientation of the first century, not the twentieth. There is something amiss somewhere when one is given the impression that, for a Jew such as Jesus, prayer was unnecessary.

IV. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The authenticity of Jesus' prayer prior to the raising of Lazarus is commonly doubted, and more than a few scholars give the impression that this material is not needed in John's narrative of the miracle. The fact that the thanksgiving is not only public but addressed to the crowd as well as to God has seemed offensive to several interpreters. The material is often regarded as a literary device fabricated by the evangelist and not really a prayer at all. Some suggest that these ideas prove that John's Jesus is docetic: that he simply cannot pray at all. This study indicates that this type of approach is not required by the evidence.

1. *Overview: context and content.* It seems likely that the circumstances that John narrates in chap. 11 could have produced essentially the same type of prayer response from the synoptic Jesus. The behavior of John's Jesus, particularly the fact that he prays when he does, seems to militate against understanding him as a docetic figure.

2. *Form: Hodayoth.* The prayer in question has a *Hodayoth* form. Due to the way in which this thanksgiving prayer form has been employed in Biblical literature it may reasonably be inferred (1) that a substantial probability of historicity attaches to John 11:41b-42 and (2) that Jesus' prayer is an essential element in the miracle narrative. It does not seem that these considerations assist in any

⁵⁴See *inter alios* C. E. B. Cranfield, "Divine and Human Action: The Biblical Concept of Worship," *Int* 12 (1958) 387-398; H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster: 1956) 144-148; O. A. Piper, "Praise of God and Thanksgiving: The Biblical Doctrine of Prayer (1)," *Int* 8 (1954) 3-20; T. Worden, *The Psalms are Christian Prayers* (New York; Sheed and Ward, 1961), esp. 1-9.

way assertions to the effect that the prayer is merely a redundant portion of Johannine *theologoumena*.

3. *Genre: the Jewish thanksgiving tradition.* Because of its form the prayer seems to be genetically related to and a part of a tradition of piety exemplified by the Jewish personal thanksgiving psalm. Thanksgivings of this sort are characteristically prayers that both God and spectators are meant to hear. This type of prayer was not offensive but commendable (perhaps even expected among the learned pious) in the religious environment in which John says Jesus prayed. It seems clear that the way the prayer is framed, particularly its highly public two-fold address to God and the crowd, does not constitute a compelling reason for rejecting the possibility that material in John 11:41-42 had its original setting in the life of Jesus.

4. *Modern sensitivities.* Interpreters may legitimately feel that the way Jesus is said to have prayed in John 11 offends their religious sensitivities. Yet such sensitivities do not seem to have characterized either Christians or Jews in the first century, and a correct approach to exegesis requires that determinations of whether Jesus' thanksgiving is a real prayer be based on first-century Jewish, not modern, criteria. In the historical context that the evangelist gives it, the prayer seems authentically real and quite uniquely appropriate.

The foregoing considerations suggest that John 11:41b-42—although characteristically Johannine—ought not to be viewed merely as nonhistorical theologizing by the evangelist. The prayer in question may be regarded as genuine without the compromise of responsible exegetical procedure, and there is evidence that it is something that Jesus could have uttered. If we understand the synoptics correctly, the Jesus of history was certainly not less than a pious, thanksgiving-oriented first-century Jew.