

**The Doctrine of God and the Liturgical Res
in John's Gospel:
Reading John 8:12–20
with the Theology of Disclosure**

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THE FOURTH GOSPEL presents Jesus in relation to a number of Jewish liturgies. The first action of Jesus's public ministry in John's Gospel, the Temple incident, takes place near Passover (2:13) and the last action of his mortal life, the crucifixion, takes place on the eve of Passover (19:14, 31). Passover also provides the setting for Jesus's feeding miracle and the accompanying Bread of Life discourse (6:4). Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for the festivals of Sukkot (7:2, 10), Dedication (10:22), as well as another unspecified feast (5:1). On several occasions, Jesus's actions on the Sabbath generate controversy (5:16, 18; 7:23; 9:14, 16). It has also been argued that the Wedding at Cana (2:1–12) reflects traditions associated with Pentecost and its commemoration of the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai.¹ Johannine scholars have studied the relationship between Jesus and the Jewish liturgies from different methodological vantage points (e.g., historical inquiry as to what role John's use of

¹ So Joseph A. Grassi, "The Wedding at Cana (John II 1–11): A Pentecostal Meditation?," *Novum Testamentum* 14 (1972): 131–36; Francis Martin, "Mary in Sacred Scripture: An Ecumenical Reflection," *The Thomist* 72 (2008): 530–42; Francis J. Moloney, *Belief in the Word: Reading John 1–4* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 77–92.

Jewish liturgies might have played in intercommunity polemic with non-Christ-confessing Jews; literary study of how this relationship appears in the Gospel considered as a narrative whole) and have reached different conclusions as to how best interpret it.²

This essay will consider a specific instance of the relationship between Jesus and the Jewish liturgies in John—Jesus’s claim to be “the Light of the World” (Jn 8:12) and its relationship with the Jewish festival of Sukkot—from a viewpoint under which it has not previously been considered: the theology of disclosure set forth by Robert Sokolowski.³ A resource very much underexplored by biblical interpreters, the theology of disclosure

² An illustrative example of these differences in scholarly approaches and interpretations appears in Raymond Brown’s *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, ed. Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 2003). As in his previous works, Brown classifies the relationship between Jesus and Jewish liturgical institutions in John as “replacement: Jesus takes the place of many of the institutions of Judaism” (76). Brown’s characterization of this relationship as replacement is deeply informed by his reconstruction of the Johannine community’s history in which the expulsion of some Johannine Christians from their synagogue in connection with their faith in Jesus plays a critical role. Francis Moloney, the editor of Brown’s posthumous *Introduction* and more of a literary-critical scholar than Brown, critiques Brown’s preference for “replacement” language, arguing that “fulfillment” is a more appropriate classification. Moloney writes the following: “There is a real sense of the Johannine Christology bringing to perfection what took place in the great festive ‘memories’ of God’s saving actions. However, the memory of the God of Israel, and the Jewish symbols used . . . retain their place in the Johannine theology” (76n73). Moloney elsewhere acknowledges some kind of separation of Johannine Christians from a synagogue community, but it has less hermeneutical influence on him than it does on Brown. See Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina 4 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 2–3, 294; *Signs and Shadows: Reading John 5–12* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 1–2.

³ See Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982); *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993); *Christian Faith and Human Understanding: Studies on the Eucharist, Trinity, and the Human Person* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006); “God the Father: The Human Expression of the Holy Trinity,” *The Thomist* 74 (2010): 33–56. For secondary treatments of Sokolowski’s theological works, see Peter Casarella, “Questioning the Primacy of Method: On Sokolowski’s *Eucharistic Presence*,” *Communio* 22 (1995): 668–701; Guy Mansini, O.S.B. and James G. Hart, eds., *Ethical and Theological Disclosures: The Thought of Robert Sokolowski* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003); Brian J. Shanley, O.P., “*Sacra Doctrina* and the Theology of Disclosure,” *The Thomist* 61 (1997): 163–87; William M. Wright IV, “The Theology of Disclosure and Biblical Exegesis,” *The Thomist* 70 (2006): 395–419.

is a mode of theological thinking that attends to the ways in which sacred things, especially divine realities, appear to the faithful. Informed by Husserlian phenomenology, the theology of disclosure takes the appearances of realities not as purely subjective or psychological apprehensions, but as objective means of disclosure by which things give themselves to a conscious subject. Sokolowski offers the theology of disclosure as both distinct from and complementary to systematic theology and historical theology.⁴ Whereas systematic theology treats theological things in themselves and in relation to other realities, the theology of disclosure focuses on the ways in which theological things appear, how they are distinguished from worldly things, what appearances reveal about identities, and the contexts in which those appearances are given. Whereas historical disciplines, like biblical exegesis, treat theological things in specific historical times and settings, the theology of disclosure discerns those things' essential structures of manifestation, which transcend particular historical circumstances. In this way, the theology of disclosure offers the positive theological disciplines some assistance for resisting historicist reduction and relativism.⁵

With regard to John 8:12–20, I will argue that the theology of disclosure highlights the need to register the relationship between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy in light of the new understanding of who the God of Israel is, which the Incarnation provides.⁶ The theology of disclosure calls for careful attention to the theological context, especially the understanding of God, within which sacred things appear. It invites readers of the Fourth Gospel to attend to the new theological context—the new understanding of the God of Israel—which the Incarnation establishes and which Jesus's interlocutors (the Pharisees, in the case of 8:12–20) do not entirely share. The new understanding of the God of Israel furnished by the Incarna-

⁴ Sokolowski discusses these distinctions between the theology of disclosure, systematic (or "ontological") and historical (or "positive") theology in a number of places; e.g., *God of Faith and Reason*, 92–100; *Eucharistic Presence*, 5–12, 174–79; "The Revelation of the Holy Trinity: A Study in Personal Pronouns," in *Christian Faith and Human Understanding*, 131–33.

⁵ Sokolowski, *God of Faith and Reason*, 99; *Eucharistic Presence*, 7–8, 177–78.

⁶ This framing of the matter in terms of "who the God of Israel is" is indebted to Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

tion necessitates certain modifications in how the liturgies offered to this God are understood. Moreover, through his phenomenological analysis of words, things, and identity in manifolds, Sokolowski provides a way for parsing the relationship between Jesus and a biblical reality (*res*), such as the festival liturgy, in a manner consistent with the continuity and discontinuity in the understanding of God across the two biblical testaments. As the Incarnation provides a new understanding of the God of Israel, it also causes new aspects of the festival liturgy to appear; that is, the festival liturgy comes to light as anticipating Jesus's revelation of the Father to the world and thereby participating in that revelation. But since the Incarnation is a more profound revelation of the same God of Israel, these newly revealed aspects of the festival liturgy do not displace those that have already come to light in the history, Scriptures, and religious practices of Israel. The theology of disclosure thus helps shed light on the importance of John's doctrine of God for understanding how a reality like the Sukkot liturgy can appear in the Gospel as an "anticipated participation" in the mission of the incarnate Word.⁷

Important Contributions of the Theology of Disclosure

There are two ways in which the theology of disclosure is especially helpful for this study of Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy in John 8:12–20: first, its attention to the importance of the uniquely Christian understanding of God and how that understanding comes to light in salvation history; second, its articulation of how biblical realities appear within this emergent theological horizon.

First, the theology of disclosure attends very carefully to the theological context in which divine realities appear. Of tremendous importance for Christian theological thinking is what Sokolowski calls "the Christian distinction between God and the world."⁸ The Christian distinction is crucially important because it provides the indispensable context in

⁷ The phrase "anticipated participation" is that of Francis Martin as found in his "Election, Covenant, and Law," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 4 (2006): 888.

⁸ Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 11. Sokolowski discusses the Christian distinction throughout his theological writings, and I summarize his major points here—see *God of Faith and Reason*, 1–30; *Eucharistic Presence*, 34–54; "Creation and Christian Understanding," in *Christian Faith and Human Understanding*, 38–50.

which all Christian theological thinking must necessarily take place. As the free Creator of all things, God exists independently of the world (i.e., the whole of creation). Being thus distinct from the world, God cannot be reckoned as a thing among other things in the world. God exists in absolute perfection and goodness apart from the world, and the existence of creation does not add anything to God's complete perfection and goodness. Accordingly, God is not defined by his relationship to the world. The Christian distinction reveals the whole of creation to be radically contingent and as possibly not having been at all. Since God does not create out of any necessity and creation need not be, creation exists only by virtue of God's selfless generosity. As Sokolowski summarizes it, "In Christian belief, we understand the world as that which might not have been, and correlatively we understand God as capable of existing, in undiminished goodness and greatness, even if the world had not been."⁹ The Christian distinction, therefore, imparts particular understandings of both God and the whole of creation.

The distinction between God and the world is a divinely revealed truth and not a conclusion that human beings can discover by means of natural reasoning. Sokolowski articulates the Christian distinction through a series of contrasts as to how the divine is understood in biblical and non-biblical religions.¹⁰ In philosophy or religions that develop out of the natural human religious impulse, the gods or the divine are reckoned among things in the world or are defined in relation to the world. Whether in a religious register (e.g., Zeus, Hera, and Apollo) or a philosophical register (e.g., Plato's the One or Aristotle's Prime Mover), the divine is considered the best or highest parts of the whole of things, or they are defined by their relation to the world. In non-biblical religion, Sokolowski writes, "the divine, even in its most ultimate form, is never conceived as capable of being without the world. It is divine by being differentiated from what is not divine and by having an influence on what is not divine."¹¹

The biblical understanding of God as the free Creator, who exists in complete goodness and perfection apart from the world, emerges over the course of biblical revelation and in contrast to pagan understandings

⁹ Sokolowski, *God of Faith and Reason*, 19.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 12–19.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

of the divine. Over the course of Israel's history, the identity of the God of Israel comes to light against the background of various pagan religions. Theologically, Sokolowski writes, "If God can do the things he is said to do in the Old Testament, he is divine in a way different from the way the god of Aristotle, Plato, or the Stoics is divine, and his relationship to the world is different."¹² God freely enters into a covenant with the people Israel and reveals to them how they are to live in relation with this God who is radically transcendent and other. Israel is to be the people of God and unlike the nations because YHWH is other to the world and unlike the gods of the nations (cf. Lv 20:26; Dt 7:6–7).¹³

According to Sokolowski, the biblical understanding of God undergoes a shift with the Incarnation. Jesus appears within the context of Old Testament revelation and its understanding of God, but the reality of the Incarnation also modifies this theological context. Whereas the Old Testament understanding of the one God would seem to preclude any possibility of the Creator being identified with a creature, in the Incarnation, Sokolowski writes, "God is revealed to be so transcendent that he can enter into his creation without suffering limitation in his divinity. His divinity is such that he can become man without ceasing to be God."¹⁴ The reality of the Incarnation and the revelation of the God of Israel as Trinity "deepens" or is an "intensification" of the understanding of God revealed in the Old Testament.¹⁵

The second major way in which the theology of disclosure is helpful to this study is its articulation of how biblical realities appear within this theological horizon. Drawing upon the phenomenological doctrine of intentionality, Sokolowski observes that when we read any written text, including Scripture, we must be very attentive to the referential nature of language and the kinds of "intending" that occur in reading.¹⁶ When a person reads written words, he or she is conscious not only of the written markings on a page, but also whatever the words present to one's con-

¹² Ibid., 125.

¹³ Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 145.

¹⁴ Ibid., 54.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ I use the verb "intend" here in the phenomenological sense as "the conscious relationship we have to an object"; cited from Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8.

consciousness. Sokolowski writes the following: "when the words stand out, we no longer intend just what is before us. A new kind of intending comes into play, one that makes these perceived marks into words and at the same time makes us intend not just the marks that are present, but the [thing], which is absent."¹⁷ Words are a means by which things, even absent things, are presented to an individual as a dative of manifestation. Words are a kind of appearance, a means of disclosure. As Sokolowski puts it, "Words, whether spoken or written, presents things. We never have 'just' words: words are vehicles to articulate and disclose things."¹⁸

Recognition that language is a means of presenting *things* is crucial because it makes the reality or state of affairs presented by the words the project object of consciousness—not the words, texts, or the authors' ideas *per se*. These are all means *by which* a reality is presented to a subject. To use the classic Augustinian and Thomistic terminology, it is the *res* presented by the *verba* or *signa* of the biblical text that one properly intends when reading Scripture.¹⁹ To regard the biblical text as an end, rather than a means by which things are presented, would be to commit the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Treating the written text as an end resembles, according to Sokolowski, "rationalism, historicism, and psychologism . . . In each case a form of manifestation—a text, a thought, a situated appearance, a perception—is taken to replace the thing manifested."²⁰ Such a detachment of appearances from things and the reduction of appearances to purely subjective matters, which are in turn regarded as the objects of human knowing, characterize what Sokolowski calls the "egocentric predicament" of modern epistemology.²¹

¹⁷ Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 78.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 141–42.

¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (ST) I, q. 1, a. 10, resp.

²⁰ Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 143.

²¹ Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 9–11. *Ibid.*, 9, thus describes the egocentric predicament: "Consciousness is taken to be like a bubble or an enclosed cabinet; the mind comes in a box. Impressions and concepts occur in this enclosed space . . . and our awareness is directed toward them, not directly toward the things 'outside.' We can try to get outside by making inferences . . . but we are not in any direct contact with [really existing things]." The end result of this egocentric predicament is epistemological and moral relativism: "If we are bereft of intentionality . . . then we do not enter into a life of reason, evidence, and truth. Each of us turns to his own private world, and in the practical order we do our own thing: the truth does not make any demands on us" (*ibid.*, 10). See also Casarella, "Questioning the Primacy of Method,"

Coupling this theological attention to the *res* presented by the biblical texts with the shift in the understanding of God between the testaments, Sokolowski argues that the realities given in Old Testament Scripture have abiding value for Christian readers in two basic ways. First, the Old Testament, its realities, and prescribed ways of life are received as having abiding value in their own right. Through the realities given in the Old Testament, the one God, who is distinct from the world, reveals himself and the ways in which his covenant people are to live in response to him.²² Receiving Old Testament realities on their own terms and in relation to the revelation of God in the history of Israel (i.e., their plain sense), Sokolowski writes, is “an exercise by which our spontaneous reverence for the divine is trained and adjusted into patterns appropriate to reverence for the biblical God.”²³ Natural human religious instincts are thus formed into human responses appropriate to God, who is not part of the world. In addition to this way of reading the Old Testament, the Christian reader “must also read it as an anticipation of the New Covenant.”²⁴ The Incarnation brings about a shift in how the God of Israel is understood, and consequently all other biblical realities come to appear somewhat differently in this new theological horizon. Namely, they now come to appear as anticipating the fullness of God’s self-revelation in Christ, who accomplishes the work of salvation (i.e., their spiritual sense). Sokolowski thus summarizes the manifestation of different aspects of biblical realities in concert with the progressive revelation of the God of Israel: “the God who is acting in the Old Covenant is not as fully disclosed as he will be in the Incarnation, and the saving action he performs has dimensions that will be more fully brought out later on.”²⁵

Sokolowski contrasts the disclosure of different aspects of the biblical *res* with the (now largely disregarded) theory of a *sensus plenior*, “a deeper meaning of the text, intended by God but not clearly expressed by the human author.”²⁶ The *sensus plenior* frames the more-than-literal senses of

669–75.

²² Sokolowski, *God of Faith and Reason*, 152.

²³ *Ibid.*, 154.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 154.

²⁵ Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 150.

²⁶ Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (Boston: St. Paul, 1993), 87. On this point, see Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 149–50.

Scripture in terms of authorial ideas, one of which was intended by only God and not by the human author (or, at least, not fully intended by the human author). Noting that this theory has been criticized for its inadequate account of the divine and human authorship of the biblical books, Sokolowski proposes that instead of making texts and authors' psychology into the interpretive ends, the theological attention should be focused on the biblical *res*, presented in a manifold of appearances across the canon. As Sokolowski puts it, "It is not the case that there was one meaning in the mind of the human author and another meaning intended by God, but that the one *thing* intended by the human author had dimensions that had not yet come into view, dimensions that could not appear until more had happened."²⁷ When the focus shifts to the biblical *res* as presented in a manifold of textual appearances, rather than immanent textual meaning or the authors' ideas proper, biblical exegesis in the strict sense opens up into theological interpretation, for the objects of theological thinking become the realities presented in the biblical books, their identities, and the real relationships existing between them. So understood, biblical interpretation concerns both what the texts are saying (i.e., *verba*) and what the texts are about (i.e., *res*).²⁸

With these considerations in place, I will now turn to John 8:12–20 and bring these insights of the theology of disclosure to bear on the relationship between Jesus's declaration "I am the Light of the World" and the Jewish liturgy of *Sukkot*.

Jesus, the Liturgy, and the Doctrine of God in John 8:12–20

The Light of the World and the Lights of Sukkot

The connections between Jesus's pronouncement "I am the Light of the

²⁷ Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 149.

²⁸ Such an account of biblical interpretation strikes me as cohering with the challenge issued by Benedict XVI: "If scholarly exegesis is not to exhaust itself in constantly new hypotheses, becoming theologically irrelevant, it must take a methodological step forward and see itself once again as a theological discipline, without abandoning its historical character." Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), "Foreword," in *Jesus of Nazareth Part Two: Holy Week—From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection* trans. provided by the Vatican Secretariat of State (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011), xiv.

World” and the liturgy of Sukkot are subtle and suggestive. Jesus makes this pronouncement on two occasions in John’s Gospel (8:12; 9:5), both of which occur during his visit to Jerusalem for this liturgical festival (7:1–10:21).²⁹ Jesus’s pronouncement to be “the Light” resonates with certain, postbiblical components of the eight-day Sukkot liturgy as described in the Mishnah.³⁰

In its description of the festival of Sukkot, *Mishnah Sukkah* (henceforth *m. Sukkah*) discusses prominent rites involving both water (which provide context for Jesus’s teaching about “rivers of living water” in Jn 7:38) and light. Indeed, *m. Sukkah* describes a nightly liturgical event on the temple grounds at the “Beth ha-She’ubah [‘The place ... of the Water-drawing’].”³¹ According to *m. Sukkah* 5:1–3, starting on the evening after the first day of the festival, temple priests would process down the stairs from the Court of the Israelites into the Court of Women, where several very large lampstands had been set up. Atop of each lampstand were four gold bowls for oil. Young priests would ascend ladders, fill the bowls with oil, and proceed to light the wicks in them. After the lampstands were lit, there would be music, singing, and dancing with torches in front of the lampstands, and the priests and Levites would perform the Ascent Psalms (Ps 120–134) while stationed on the stairs between

²⁹ I take John 7:1–10:21 as a narrative unit because there is no indication of any change in setting prior to 10:22, where Jesus appears in Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication and thus several months after Sukkot. Cf. Luc Devillers, O.P., *La Fête de L’Envoyé: La Section Johannique de la Fête des Tentes (Jean 7,1–10, 21) et la Christologie*, Études Bibliques 49 (Paris: J. Gabalda, 2002), 16–18. For secondary treatments of Sukkot in Jewish antiquity, see Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods*, Brown Judaic Studies 302 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); Håkan Ulfsgård, *The Story of Sukkot: The Setting, Shaping, and Sequel of the Biblical Feast of Tabernacles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998); Devillers, *La Fête de L’Envoyé*, 29–76; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 B.C.E.–66 C.E.* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1992), 139–41; Gale A. Yee, *Jewish Feasts and the Gospel of John* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989), 13–16, 21–27 (reprint, Wipf & Stock, 2007, 70–77).

³⁰ Using the Mishnah as a historical source for liturgical practices before the destruction of the Second Temple requires discernment, not only because the Mishnah’s redaction dates to about 200 but also because of the rabbis’ tendency to give an idealized version temple worship. Rubenstein, *History of Sukkot*, 103–6, discusses these caveats in using *m. Sukkah* as a historical source for first-century Jewish liturgical practice.

³¹ See *m. Sukkah* 5.1, cited from Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954 [1933]), 179; the bracketed translation is Danby’s as found at 179n12.

the two temple courts. So (unbelievably) great was the light provided by these lampstands, "there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light of the [place of the water drawing]." ³² After the all-night celebration, priests processed out of the Court of Women toward the east and the rising sun. Upon reaching the exit, the priests would turn around toward the west, face the sanctuary, and declare, quoting Ezekiel 8:16: "Our fathers when they were in this place turned *with their backs toward the Temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they worshipped the sun toward the east* [Ezek 8:16]; but as for us, our eyes are turned toward the Lord."³³ Citing their ancestors, who had turned away from YHWH by worshipping other gods, the priests would reaffirm Israel's dedication to YHWH while facing west toward the sanctuary.³⁴

It has been argued that the theological symbolism of Jesus's pronouncement to be the Light of the World owes more to Isaianic texts, which speak of the Servant of YHWH as a "light to the nations" (e.g., Is 42:6; 49:6; cf. 42:18–19; 51:4–5) and which provide background for Jesus's use of "I AM" statements, rather than the Sukkot liturgy.³⁵ Without denying the Isaianic resonances, I maintain that the liturgical context and background of Sukkot suggest several other theological dimensions of the light symbolism. Celebrations during Sukkot involved the recitation of the Hallel Psalms (Ps 113–118), and Psalm 118:27 associates light with YHWH's presence and providential care: "YHWH is God, and he has given us light" (Ps 118:27).³⁶ Given that Sukkot commemorated YHWH's care for the Israelites in the wilderness, the lampstands also recall the pillar of fire by which YHWH led the Israelites at night

³² See *m. Sukkah* 5:3 (Danby, 179–80). Rubenstein, *History of Sukkot*, 135, regards this remark about the extent of the illumination as a case of rabbinic embellishment.

³³ See *m. Sukkah* 5:4 (Danby, 180); italics Danby's.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ See Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. Francis Noel Davey (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 220; David Mark Ball, "I Am" in *John's Gospel: Literary Function, Background and Theological Implications*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 124 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 215–24; Catrin H. Williams, *I Am He: The Interpretation of 'Ani Hû' in Jewish and Early Christian Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 266–75.

³⁶ Devillers, *La Fête de l'Envoyé*, 358. He also cites Psalm 27:1 as making the same association of light and God's protective presence.

(Ex 13:21–22; Nm 14:14; Neh 9:12).³⁷ Another aspect of the light symbolism comes from Zechariah 14, which describes the Day of the Lord, when YHWH would come with eschatological salvation for Jerusalem, which has been besieged and overrun by Gentile enemies. YHWH will fight Israel's enemies, defeat them, and manifest his universal Lordship (14:9). On the Day of YHWH, the prophet also remarks, "there will be a single day (this is known to YHWH), not day and not night, and at evening time, there will be light" (Zec 14:7). In addition to the unending light of day, there would also be a constant flow of life-giving waters, released from the eschatological Zion to water the whole world all year round (Zec 14:8).³⁸ All the surviving Gentile nations, who had formerly opposed Israel, "will go up, year after year, to worship the King, YHWH of Hosts, and to celebrate the festival of Sukkot" (Zec 14:16). These eschatological expectations of life-giving waters and unending daylight likely inform the development of the postbiblical water and light rituals described in the Mishnah.³⁹ Indeed, *Tosefta Sukkah* 3:18 references Rabbi 'Aqiba, who associates Zechariah 14:17–18 with the water drawing rituals described in *m. Sukkah*, and this association indicating that (at the very least) Zechariah 14 informed subsequent Jewish reflection on the Sukkot liturgy.⁴⁰

The Fourth Gospel shows a subtle awareness of the light ceremonies at Sukkot described in the Mishnah. John locates Jesus's pro-

³⁷ Jewish exegetical traditions identified the pillar of fire with the Torah (e.g., Wis 18:3–4), and an association between the pillar of fire and Jesus, who is elsewhere in John identified in terms of God's Word and Wisdom, would fit with such interpretive trends. See Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., Anchor Bible 29–29A (New York: Doubleday, 1966–70), 1.344; Devillers, *La Fête de l'Envoyé*, 358–59; Alan R. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 339; Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 141; Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 69, 94.

³⁸ The association of Zion with life-giving, paradisaical waters was a component in biblical temple theology. See Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 1985), 129–31, 159–61.

³⁹ On the connection of Zechariah 14 with the liturgical lights of Sukkot, see Dorit Felsch, *Die Feste im Johannesevangelium: Jüdische Tradition und christologische Deutung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 211–14.

⁴⁰ *Tosefta Sukkah* 3:18 in Jacob Neusner, *The Tosefta: Second Divisions—Moed (The Order of Appointed Times)* (New York: Ktav, 1981), 222–23.

nouncement to be the Light within the general context of the Sukkot liturgy. The association between Jesus's words about "rivers of living water" (7:38) and the daily water-drawing rituals in the Sukkot liturgy increases the probability that John also invites his audience to see a relationship between Jesus as the Light and the liturgical lights of Sukkot. Moreover, the narrator reports that Jesus's declaration to be the Light of the World and the ensuing exchange with the Pharisees (8:12–19) took place near "the temple treasury" (*gazophulakion*) (8:20). Josephus reports the presence of *gazophulakia* in the Court of Women—probably in the sense of containers into which offerings of money were put.⁴¹ This assessment finds some support from *Mishnah Shekalim* 6:5, which mentions the presence of "thirteen Shofar-chests in the Temple" into which people deposited money for different purposes.⁴² Moreover, Mark 12:41–42 has Jesus sitting in view of the temple treasury and watching the crowds, including the poor widow, put money "into the treasury" (*gazophulakion*) (12:21). The woman's presence in the temple area, coupled with her donation of money into the *gazophulakion*, may point to a location in the Court of Women. If the mention of "the temple treasury" in John 8:20 is understood to mean such offering boxes in the Court of Women, then Jesus would be declaring himself to be the Light of the World in the same area where, according to the *Mishnah*, the lampstands for the Sukkot liturgy stood.⁴³

Jesus and the Sukkot Liturgy in Light of the Theology of Disclosure

The theology of disclosure helps draw out several aspects of this relationship between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy. It directs our theological attention to the reality or state of affairs, which is given in a particular appearance—the appearance in this case is the Gospel text. When John

⁴¹ Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 5.200. So too "[*gazophulakeion*]" in Walter Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 149.

⁴² See *m. Shekalim* 6:5 (Danby, 159).

⁴³ So C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 340; Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1.342; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. 2, trans. Cecily Hastings et al. (New York: Crossroad, 1980 [1971]), 195–96.

situates Jesus in relation to the Sukkot liturgy, he is articulating a relationship between two realities, two *res*—the man Jesus and the liturgical practices of Sukkot—which he then presents through the Gospel text. The peculiarity of this relationship between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy should not be overlooked. For instance, it can be distinguished from an explicit fulfillment citation of Scripture (e.g., Jn 19:24, 36–37), for in the case of the liturgy, it is not Scripture *per se* bearing witness to Jesus (cf. 5:39). Moreover, the relationship also differs from Jesus’s appropriation of biblical images (e.g., the manna and the vine) to present himself as the Bread of Life (6:48) and the True Vine (15:1), for the liturgies are *practices* contemporary to Jesus, not suggestive textual allusions (although both involve the appropriation of established theological symbolism).⁴⁴

The theology of disclosure clarifies that the relationship between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy is a relationship between two *res*, each of which is profiled against the other. On the one hand, Jesus appears against the background of the Sukkot liturgy. Different aspects of this liturgical *res* have been given in a manifold of appearances across the history, practices, and Scriptures of Israel. Given that Jesus appears in light of these many aspects in John 8:12, a brief review of them is in order.

Like other Jewish liturgies in Scripture, Sukkot originated as an agricultural feast and later came to be associated with a specific episode in salvation history. This feast, originally known as “ingathering (*asiph*)” (Ex 23:16–17; 34:22–23), took place at the fall harvest and came to involve a religious pilgrimage to YHWH’s sanctuary.⁴⁵ Deuteronomy 16:13–15 specifies that the festival was marked by great joy and took place over seven days, during which Israel praised YHWH for the blessings of the fall harvest. Legislation from the Holiness school defined this harvest festival as an eight-day commemoration of God’s providential care for the Israelites during their time in the wilderness (Lv 23:33–43). During the festival, worshippers would dwell in huts (*sukkot*), which they would construct out of different kinds of branches (Lv 23:39–43).

⁴⁴ Carl Holladay observes that Jesus’s use of biblical images like the manna and the vine are a different kind of Scriptural fulfillment than that introduced by a fulfillment citation. See Carl R. Holladay, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament: Interpreting the Message and Meaning of Jesus Christ*, 2 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 1.296.

⁴⁵ Rubenstein, *History of Sukkot*, 13.

Sukkot also had prominent connections with the Jerusalem temple. 1 Kings 8 locates Solomon's dedication of the temple during this festival in the seventh month (1 Kgs 8:2, 65). After the return from Babylon, the high priest Joshua and Zerubbabel dedicated the altar of the Second Temple in conjunction with this festival (Ezr 3:1–6). Sukkot also provided a model for the celebration of the rededication of the Second Temple by the Maccabees (1 Mc 4:56–58; 2 Mc 10:5–7). As a pilgrimage festival, the Sukkot liturgies were centered in the Second Jerusalem Temple, and the festival was particularly joyous and popular.⁴⁶ And as mentioned above, Zechariah presented the Sukkot liturgy as having an eschatological dimension as the festival during which all the nations would make pilgrimage to worship YHWH.

These different dimensions of the liturgical *res*—a celebration of God's blessings of the harvest; a commemoration of God's providential care for the Israelites in the wilderness; occasion of future hope for the eschatological state to be brought about by YHWH—have all come to light within the theological horizon provided by the basic understanding of God revealed across the Old Testament. John invites his audience to see Jesus (to an extent) in relation to the Sukkot liturgy as given within this theological horizon. As a Jewish male, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to participate in the festival liturgy (Jn 7:10). By going up to the festival, Jesus places himself within the covenantal history of YHWH's dealings with Israel and Israel's worship of YHWH to commemorate his love and providential care.

The Sukkot liturgy thus provides Jesus with the context and the terms for his self-disclosure as the Light of the World. It enables Jesus to disclose himself in a particular manner. Accordingly, the already-revealed aspects of Sukkot as a liturgical festival are something of a "presentational necessity" (as Sokolowski puts it): Christian realities can only become manifest in light of the Old Testament; the Old Testament provides an indispensable context for the appearance of Christian realities, such that Christian realities cannot be understood adequately apart

⁴⁶ Rubenstein, *History of Sukkot*, 100, concludes that during the Second Temple period, "Sukkot [was] . . . the main pilgrimage and primary temple festival." Ulfsgard, *Story of Sukkot*, 241, 251, argues that the active role that Jewish laity had in its festivities contributed to the popularity of Sukkot near the end of the Second Temple period.

from it.⁴⁷ To have a robust understanding of Jesus as the Light, one must understand his declaration to be the Light in relation to these different aspects of the Sukkot liturgy as a liturgical *res*.

And yet Jesus's pronouncement "I am the Light of the World" also causes the Sukkot liturgy to appear in a new way. Like the other "I am + predicate" statements found throughout the Fourth Gospel, Jesus's self-identification as the Light of the World is revelatory. With such statements, Jesus reveals aspects of himself and saving work to those to whom he has been sent, and in doing so, Jesus reveals the Father. When Jesus says "I am the Light of the World. The one who follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (Jn 8:12), he is disclosing a particular state of affairs. Grammatically, the phrase *tou kosmou* is an objective genitive, and Jesus's declaration can appropriately be translated as "the Light for the World." Jesus causes things to appear in such a way that he is the focal point in relation to which everything else—that is, the whole world—is situated. It is a revelatory claim on a cosmic scale.

Jesus presents a state of affairs in which he is the spiritual Light for a world, which is implied to be in spiritual darkness. As the Gospel sets forth elsewhere, this spiritual darkness threatens to "overcome" people (12:35). It leaves them lost, aimless, and ignorant of their proper ends (12:36; cf. 11:9–10). The darkness also has a moral dimension for, as John states, "people loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil" (3:19). By contrast, Jesus says that "the one who follows" him as the Light will be delivered from the spiritual darkness, much as he will later say, "I have come into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me may not remain in the darkness" (12:46). Jesus also promises his disciples possession of "the light of life." Throughout the Gospel, Jesus promises eternal life to those who receive him and his revelation in faith (3:15–16, 36; 5:24; 6:47). This eternal life consists in a participatory share in his own divine relationship with the Father as the Son. Hence those who "believe in the light . . . become sons of the light" (12:36), much like those who believe in the Son become "children of God" (1:12).

Along with revealing a particular state of affairs, Jesus manifests his

⁴⁷ Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 145.

own person through the revelatory formula in 8:12. By inviting people to “follow” him as disciples (8:12) and later to “believe in the light” (12:36), Jesus manifests his identity as the Light in terms of his being revealer and teacher.⁴⁸ The invitation to follow Jesus and believe is not only an invitation to believe *what* Jesus says (i.e., the state of affairs that he presents) but also to believe *in him* as the one who makes these revelatory claims.⁴⁹ Jesus manifests himself as having an authority and status by which all things appear in relation to him and he can make definitive pronouncements on a cosmic scale. This combination of Jesus as revealer, life-giver, and spiritual light for the entire world on a cosmic scale recalls the most proximate context for Jesus's self-manifestation as the Light of the World: the Gospel's Prologue.

A number of lexical similarities invite the Gospel's audience to take passages in which Jesus is presented as the Light in terms of the Prologue. The Prologue associates the divine Word, through whom “everything came to be” (1:2) with “life” and “light” (1:4). Jesus has come into the world as the Light (12:46), and the Prologue speaks of the Word as “the true Light who comes into the world” (1:9; cf. 1:14). As Jesus declares himself to be the Light of the World (8:12), the Prologue speaks of the Word as “the true light, which illumines all people” (1:9). Jesus promises his disciples “the light of life” (8:12), and the Prologue sets forth the Word's life as “the light of human beings” (1:4). Whereas the darkness does not “overcome” (*katelaben*) the Light that is the Word (1:5), Jesus warns people to follow him as the Light lest the darkness “overcome” (*katalabē*) them (12:35).

When viewed from the perspective of the Prologue, Jesus's declaration to be the Light of the World is a manifestation of his own identity as the incarnate Word. Jesus speaks as man, but his declarative human speech reveals his divine identity.⁵⁰ The state of affairs that Jesus reveals has authority and calls for faith because of his identity as the one “who has come down from heaven” (3:13) and reveals “what [he] has seen in the Father's presence” (8:38). Jesus thus presents himself as the incarnate

⁴⁸ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1.344.

⁴⁹ On this structure of the act of faith, see Robert Sokolowski, “Philosophy and the Christian Act of Faith,” in *Christian Faith and Human Understanding*, 28–29.

⁵⁰ See Sokolowski, “Revelation of the Holy Trinity,” 140–41.

Word, whose life is “the light of all people” (1:4), and on the basis of his divine authority, this revealed state of affairs has a normativity, which, like his own person, calls for a response of faith.

The Incarnation of the divine Word introduces a new understanding of who the God of Israel is.⁵¹ As the incarnate Word and Son, who was with the Father “before the world existed” (17:5), the only one who has seen the Father and made him known (1:18), Jesus reveals the identity of God in the most profound and intimate terms and thus introduces a new understanding of who God is. Jesus speaks within the horizon of this new understanding of God, which his interlocutors in the Gospel do not share.⁵² Indeed, the different understandings of who the God of Israel is account for much of the misunderstanding between Jesus and his interlocutors and opponents in the Fourth Gospel.

For instance, these differences in the understanding of God appear vividly in the exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees, which immediately follows his declaration to be the Light of the World (8:13–19).⁵³ After Jesus declares himself to be the Light, some Pharisees object that Jesus’s claim is illegitimate because he makes this claim by himself and without corroborating witnesses (8:13). The Pharisees’ objection rests on the basis of biblical texts such as Numbers 35:30 and Deuteronomy 17:6, which forbid self-testimony and call for the testimony of multiple witnesses.⁵⁴ Jesus accepts this legal standard, thus placing himself in continuity with Torah (Jn 8:17). But he meets its requirements on the terms provided by his revelation of the Father and himself as the Son. He offers himself and the Father as the two witnesses who testify

⁵¹ Discussing the presentation of the Logos in John’s Prologue, much of which he reads as quite congruent with contemporary Jewish speculation about God’s Word, Daniel Boyarin remarks, “what marks the Fourth Gospel as a new departure in the history of Judaism is not to be found in its Logos theology at all but in its incarnational Christology.” “The Gospel of the *Memra*: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John,” *Harvard Theological Review* 94 (2001): 261.

⁵² Similarly, Marianne Meye Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 208–9.

⁵³ Williams, *I Am He*, 266–75, tracks out the debate over who God is in the remainder of John 8 in light of Jesus’s use of *egō eimi*, derived from its application to YHWH in Isaiah 40–55.

⁵⁴ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1.223, notes that *Mishnah Ketuboth* 2:9 provides similar halakah (in the context of marriage laws): “none may be believed when he testifies of himself” (Danby, 247).

on his behalf: "I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies about me" (8:18).⁵⁵ The Pharisees' rejoinder "Where is your father?" (8:19) suggests that they expect Jesus to produce another human being (i.e., Joseph) as a witness. They do not realize that Jesus is speaking about God the Father because they do not share with Jesus the exact same understanding of who God is. There is theological continuity and overlap between Jesus and the Pharisees as evidenced in the fact that Jesus accepts the legal requirements of Torah. But there is also discontinuity and newness because the Torah, as used by Jesus in 8:12–20, is received in light of the new understanding of the God of Israel as revealed in the Incarnation.

Just as Jesus's self-disclosure as the Light of the World causes himself, his disciples, and the world to appear in a particular way and within a particular theological horizon, it also causes Sukkot to appear in a new way. While Jesus does not refer directly to Sukkot in his declaration, the liturgy is not wholly absent because it provides the context and terms for Jesus's disclosure. The state of affairs disclosed in 8:12 has in the foreground Jesus as the Light, his disciples, and the world in spiritual darkness, and Sukkot shows up in this disclosure as part of the background.

Jesus's self-presentation as the Light of the World makes him the focal point in relation to which all things (including the Sukkot liturgy) are situated. By making this declaration in the very location where the lampstands for Sukkot stood, Jesus causes the *res* that are the light rituals of Sukkot now to appear as setting up his revelation to the world. In setting up Jesus's revelation, the Sukkot liturgy appears as participating in it. When Jesus "sublates" these liturgical rites by incorporating them into his deeper revelation of the God of Israel, then new, previously unseen aspects of the liturgy become visible, that is, the ways in which the liturgy participates in Jesus's mission.⁵⁶ These

⁵⁵ As Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 333, succinctly puts it, Jesus "is inseparable from the Father, and their combined witness ought to be acknowledged as valid by those who accept the Jewish law."

⁵⁶ My use of "sublation" here is owed to Francis Martin, who employs this term according to the definition given by Bernard Lonergan: "What sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, in-

Christological dimensions of a biblical reality like Sukkot remain hidden until they are revealed in light of Christ and the explanatory activity of the Holy Spirit in the disciples.⁵⁷ The newly revealed Christological dimensions do not negate the already visible ones, but the liturgy does appear differently when put into this new theological setting.

While John does not use “testimony” or “witness” language for the Jewish liturgies, it is helpful to consider their relationship with Jesus in the Fourth Gospel along these lines. Jesus’s revelatory declaration in 8:12 causes the light rituals of Sukkot to appear as setting up his revelatory and saving work and thus participating in it.⁵⁸ Seen in this way, the liturgy can be regarded as bearing witness to Jesus in a manner similar to Jesus’s own works, John the Baptist, the Scripture (5:32–39), and the evangelist’s own testimony in the Gospel (19:35; 21:24). They all relate to Jesus by pointing to him and serving his mission of revelation and salvation. Framed in this way, Jesus incorporates the light rituals of Sukkot into his revelation and thus showing them to having dimensions, which are anticipatory of himself. If the *res* that is the Sukkot liturgy bears a kind of witness to Jesus, it can be regarded as having a signitive function whereby it points to Jesus. To use the traditional terminology again, Jesus reveals himself as the *res* in relation to which the Sukkot liturgy constitutes a *res significans*, and this liturgical *res significans* participates in Jesus mission by anticipating it.⁵⁹ Without negating its already revealed aspects, the Sukkot liturgy appears in this new theological context as “an anticipated participation” in Jesus’s revelatory and saving work.⁶⁰

The key point provided by the theology of disclosure in this regard

cludes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context.” From Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), 241, as cited in Francis Martin, “The Contribution and Challenge of *Dei Verbum*,” in *Sacred Scripture: The Disclosure of the Word* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2006) 234.

⁵⁷ See Ignace de la Potterie, “The Truth in Saint John,” *Rivista biblica italiana* 11 (1963): 3–24; reprint, John Ashton, ed., *The Interpretation of John*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 67–82.

⁵⁸ Cf. Thompson, *God of the Gospel of John*, 219.

⁵⁹ Cf. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 1.2.2; 3.8.12; 3.9.13; Michael Cameron, “Sign,” in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 793–98.

⁶⁰ Martin, “Election, Covenant, and Law,” 888.

is that the new appearances of biblical realities—that is, that they now appear as having dimensions anticipatory of Christ—needs to be registered in terms of a more fundamental modification in the understanding of who God is. Just as the Incarnation modifies the understanding of the God of Israel, so too does it modify the understanding of the biblical realities in relation to this God. As Richard Bauckham has argued, monolatry was the practical expression of monotheism in Second Temple Judaism: “the exclusive worship of the God of Israel is precisely *a recognition of and response to his unique identity*.”⁶¹ Since God is understood to be the transcendent Creator and Lord of all creation, he alone is to be given worship. But when the understanding of the identity of the God of Israel is modified by the Incarnation, the liturgical worship of that God must likewise be understood anew. The Jewish liturgies must be understood in a new way because the God, to whom the liturgies are directed, is understood in a new way. The continuity and newness in the relationship articulated between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy need to be registered in light of the continuity and newness between the understanding of God revealed in the Old Testament and that revealed in the Incarnation.

This correlation between shifts in the understanding of God and liturgy similarly appear in Jesus's words to the Samaritan woman about the worship of the Father in the messianic age. The Father seeks those who will worship him “in spirit and truth” (4:24), that is, in light of the revelation of the Son, who is “the truth” (14:6), and animated by the Holy Spirit, who imparts new spiritual life (3:5).⁶² The Fourth Gospel thus prescribes a new form of worship, which is proper to this new understanding of the God of Israel: it is founded upon the revelation of the Father, which is given by the Son and vivified by the Spirit.⁶³

⁶¹ Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 12.

⁶² See Ignace de la Potterie, S.J., *La Vérité dans Saint Jean*, 2 vols., *Analecta biblica* 73–74 (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1999 [1977]), 2.673–706.

⁶³ Thus Thompson, *God of the Gospel of John*, 217, writes that the Fourth Gospel “is not a ‘radical critic of traditional Jewish worship’ so much as it is a critic of the failure to recognize the eschatological hour and the way in which worship is appropriately offered in that hour.”

Conclusion

This analysis of the relationship of Jesus as the Light of the World and the liturgy of Sukkot in light of Sokolowski's theology of disclosure suggests several things. First, the theology of disclosure helps clarify the relationship between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy as existing between two *res*. The logic of this relationship suggests that the liturgies do not function simply as a foil or are devoid of meaning of their own. Rather, the liturgical *res* retains its integrity and meaning in relation to the revelation of God in the Old Testament, when Jesus appropriates them into his more profound revelation of the same God. The liturgies provide Jesus with the context and terms for his disclosure, and Jesus in turn reveals previously unseen dimensions by which they anticipate and participate in his revelatory and saving work.

Second, the theology of disclosure highlights the importance of John's doctrine of God for the relationship between Jesus and the Jewish liturgies. Through his revelatory speech as the incarnate Word, Jesus sets forth a new way of understanding the world, liturgy, and most profoundly the God of Israel. Jesus's revelation of the Father and himself as the Son provides the fundamental context in which biblical *res*, such as Sukkot, come to appear in the Fourth Gospel. The Incarnation reveals a new understanding of who the God of Israel is, and following from this shift in the understanding of the identity of God is a shift in how the Jewish liturgies are understood. The continuity and newness between Jesus and Sukkot in the Fourth Gospel should be appreciated in light of the more fundamental continuity and newness in the understanding of the identity of the God of Israel as revealed in the Old Testament and in the Incarnation.

Third, as suggested by the use of the Augustinian and Thomistic vocabulary (e.g., *res*, *signa*, and *res significans*), this analysis points to some correspondence between the relationship of Jesus and the liturgies (as two *res*) in the Fourth Gospel and classic accounts of the spiritual sense of Scripture. Thomas Aquinas programmatically defines the spiritual sense in the first question of the *Summa theologiae* along similar lines: "That signification whereby things signified by words have themselves also a signification is called the spiritual sense, which is based on

the literal, and presupposes it.”⁶⁴ The spiritual senses do not pertain to the words of Scripture as such but to the things, signified by the words, which themselves signify the mystery of Christ and the Church. Or, as Henri de Lubac plainly puts it, “to discover this allegory [i.e., spiritual sense], one will not find it properly speaking in the text, but in the realities of which the text speaks; not in history as recitation, but in history as event.”⁶⁵ Such points of convergence suggest further examination of the correspondence between a New Testament theology of history, such as John's, and premodern accounts of Scripture's spiritual senses whereby historical realities are seen to participate in the economy of the divine Word. Sokolowski's directing of our theological attention to the biblical *res* as presented by the *verba* also provides a contemporary register in which contemporary exegesis can reconnect with this premodern tradition. For, as Francis Martin has rightly observed, “The theory of the spiritual sense of Scripture is based, not on a theory of text, but on a theology of history.”⁶⁶ 

⁶⁴ ST I, q. 1, a. 10, resp.; cited from St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3 vols. (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947–48). The Latin text reads, “Illa vero significatio qua res significatae per voces, iterum res alias significant, dicitur sensus spiritualis; qui super litteralem fundatur, et eum supponit.” Cited from <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/sth1001.html>.

⁶⁵ Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 2, *The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. E. M. Macierowski (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000 [1958]), 86.

⁶⁶ Martin, “Election, Covenant, and Law,” 867.