

does, to embrace not only crucifixion but also ascension and return to the Father. This is certainly the meaning of the expression in **Phil 2:9**; but John **3:14** insists that *just as* (καθως) the serpent was lifted up, *so also* (ουτως) must the Son of Man be lifted up (**3:14**) John 12:33 explains 12:32 by “footnoting” that the lifting up of the Son of Man indicates the way in which he was to die (12:33): ποιω θαντω ημελλεν αποθνησκειν.”

What this means to these Personal Notes, is that as Jesus accepted his **Cross**, his Father lifted him up, a type of ascent, realized eschatology, into heaven. These Notes lack the depth required to appreciate the difficulty the scholar has with Brown.

John 3:13-17

Reading 32B, attached as file Bible Study030330_Fourth_Sunday in Lent.doc, includes scholarly comments on this passage. See footnotes 15 and 16. Reading 32B uses verses 14-21.

verse 13 “No one has gone up to heaven
except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man.

verse 14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

A scholar argues that water in John has a threefold theological symbolism of first principles, epistemology. These principles include revelation, testimony, and faith. The symbolism of water is so self-evident that precise scientific meanings are unsuited to the original proclamation. The scholar includes **verses 3:1-17** among the places to find clear use of water symbolism. Other places are less clear. Water, here, in **verses 3:1-17** symbolizes the “old rites” in anticipation of the coming of Christ.²

Water is part of a threefold, water, food, and harvest, overarching theme in John. In Chapter 3 water “symbolizes not only one’s physical need but also one’s dependence on earthly resources...not just a personal eternal life given by Jesus but (pointing to) the eschatology [last things] profoundly developed in John” (p. 97). In this way, John becomes a christological interpretation of the First Testament with “three inner thematic connections: the christological theme of ‘who Jesus is,’ the missionary emphasis that binds the whole passage together, and the use of symbolism—specifically, imageries of water, food, and harvest.”³

² Dennis M. Sweetland, review of Wai-Yee Ng, Water Symbolism in John: An Eschatological Interpretation in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 1 (January 2003), 133.

