

LOGIC OF THE LOGOS

Themes and Theology of the Gospel of John

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It would be challenging to estimate the impact of John's Gospel on the history of the Church. Many theologians perceive in the fourth gospel one of the highest and fullest christological expressions of the entire NT. The fourth gospel stands as a literary work of genius, filled with metaphor and imagery, which grips the readers and transports them to the world of the evangelist. John asks his readers to continually reflect on the question, "Who is Jesus?" This christological question is answered from the prologue to the epilogue through the various confessions made by the disciples. The Gospel carries reminiscences of an eyewitness, of one who had personal experience of following Jesus as a disciple. The personal note is obvious all through the gospel, especially in the authorial asides (e.g., 2:19, 24-25; 19:35-37). The evangelist often pauses to remark that the disciples, most likely including himself, did not understand the meaning of some sayings or the significance of some deeds of Jesus (e.g., Jn 2:22; 12:16).

The predominant theme in the book of John is the revelation of God to man through his only begotten Son - Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. The opening verses describe Jesus as the Word. He is God revealed to man, so that we might *see him* and believe. Through this Gospel we witness the everlasting power and nature of the Creator God, offering eternal life to us through his Son, Jesus Christ. In every chapter, Christ's deity is unveiled. The eight miracles recorded by John reveal his divine power and love. They are signs that inspire us to trust and believe in him. The Holy Spirit is another major theme in John's Gospel. We are drawn to faith in Jesus Christ by the *the parakletos* or Holy Spirit.

The fourth gospel, from a forensic point of view, is presented as a lawsuit between God and the world. In their pleading the Jews base their arguments on the Law, while Jesus appeals to the witness borne to Him by John the Baptist, His own works, and the Scriptures, and refers also to precedents in OT history and fulfilled predictions.

The lawsuit reaches its climax in the proceedings before Pontius Pilate in which Christ is sentenced to death. Paradoxically, however, Christ's death is the means whereby He is glorified and draws all men to Himself (12:28, 32). The first phase of the lawsuit is completed when the first Advocate "ascends" to the Father (20:17) to plead, the case of sinful believers in the heavenly law court (1 Jn 2:1; cf. Jn 17:9 ff.). The second phase begins when the Holy Spirit comes to function as the Paraclete on earth (14:16, 26; 16:8-11). This post-resurrection phase of the lawsuit is developed in chapters 13-21.

Without any hesitancy, one may argue that discipleship is the most salient theme in the fourth gospel. As we read the Gospel, we perceive that Jesus did test and try the faith of his disciples, and made his deeds and his words both tests of faith and a means for its growth (Jn 6:60-69). Therefore one can reasonably argue that the fourth gospel could be read as a testimony of discipleship. Narrating the story of the disciples, the gospel engages the reader with a subtle pressure to adopt the viewpoint of the evangelist about who Jesus is, forcing the reader to make a decision for or against Jesus as an either/or which ultimately determines his/her eternal destiny. The disciples continuously stumble in their faith until seeing the risen Lord personally (20:19-29). Thus the gospel attests to the fact that Jesus' resurrection marked the decisive turning point in the life of the disciples. The Easter narratives in the gospel function as the events of climactic confessions of Jesus' true identity by the disciples (20:18,25,28).

The present text is mainly intended to present the introductory themes of the fourth gospel. At the completion of this work, I must be grateful to Mar George Valiamattam, the metropolitan Archbishop of Tellicherry, my fellow priests and co-workers at Sandesa Bhavan, for their constant inspiration and personal warmth of love. In this attempt I am thankfully obliged to many renowned Johannine scholars, whose writings and thoughts constitute the some and substance of this book. The erudite scholarship of Prof. Dr. James Kurianal, Prof. Dr. Gilbert Van Belle, Prof. Dr. Reimund Bieringer, Prof. Dr. Antony Therath and Prof. Dr. Jacob Chanikuzhy are obvious within the pages of this book. The textual commentaries are owing to a great extent to Bible Gate Way. I express my sincere thanks to Rev. Dr. Shibu Kalarickal, Rev. Dr. Thomas Kochukarottu and Rev. Dr. Augustine Pamplany for their entire and profound rally round in the composition of this book. My colleagues at the Alpha institute, especially Mr. Midhun Thomas, are my constant inspiration in the completion of this text book serial.

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John and the Synoptics

John differs significantly from the synoptic gospels in theme, content, time duration, order of events, and style. “Only about 8% of it is parallel to these other gospels, and even then, no such word-for-word parallelism occurs as we find among the synoptic gospels.” The Gospel of John reflects a Christian tradition that is different from that of the other gospels. It was rejected as heretical by many individuals and groups within the early Christian movement. However, it was ultimately accepted into the official canon, over many objections. It is now the favorite gospel of many conservative Christians, and the gospel least referred to by many liberal Christians. There had been four major positions regarding the relationship between John and the synoptic: *(i)* Literal dependence of John on the synoptics, that is John wrote the gospel depending one or more synoptic gospels. *(ii)* John wrote gospel independent of the synoptic, but the similarity is due to the use of the common sources. *(iii)* John was literally independent of the synoptic, even though he was aware of the synoptics and their tradition. *(iv)* Recent scholars

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have come with the idea that John wanted to replace the synoptics. However, the overall framework of the fourth Gospel and synoptic, ministry begin with John the Baptist Jesus' Public Ministry, Passion Narrative and resurrection narrative are also there. Walking on the water, Anointing of Jesus' feet, entry to Jerusalem, Miraculous catch of fish is the common elements in both. The following are the details:

The Similarities among John and the Synoptics

❖ Political Context

- Jesus ministers while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea from AD 26-36 (Matt 27:2; Mark 15:1; Lk. 3:1; Jn 18:29).
- Caiaphas is the high priest (Matt 26:3, 26:57; Lk 3:2; Jn. 11:49; 18:13-14, 24, 28).
- Annas was high priest (Lk 3:2; Jn 18:13, 24).

❖ Family of Jesus

- Joseph is the father of Jesus (Matt 1:18-24; Lk 1:27; 2:4, 16, 22, 39; 4:22; Jn. 1:45; 6:42).
- Jesus' mother is mentioned (Matt 12:46-47; Mark 3:31-32; Lk. 8:19-20; Jn 2:1-3; 19:26-27).
- He has brothers (or half brothers), and they do not believe until later (Matt 12:46-47; Mark 3:31-32; Lk. 8:19-20; Jn 7:3-5).

❖ Geography and Locations

- Jesus first ministers in Galilee (Matt 4:12-18; Mark 1:14-16, 28, 39; Lk. 4:14; Jn 1:43; 2:1-11).
- He ministers in Bethsaida or to its citizens (Matt 11:21; Mark 6:45; 8:22; Lk 9:10; 10:13; Jn. 1:44; 12:21).
- He is called "Jesus of Nazareth" (Matt 26:71; Mark 10:47; Lk. 24:19; Jn 1:45).
- He ministers in Judea or to Judeans (Matt 4:25; 12:15; 14:13; 19:1; Mark 3:7; 10:1; 13:34; Lk 4:44; 5:17; 6:17; 7:17; 23:5; Jn 3:22; 4:47, 54; 7:10).

❖ John the Baptist and Jesus

- John is the "voice of one crying out in the wilderness" to prepare the way (Matt 3:3; Mark 3:3; Lk 3:4; Jn 1:23).
- John baptizes with water (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:26).
- John is not worthy to loosen a strap of Jesus' sandals or to carry them (Matt 3:11; Mark 3:11; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:27).

- Jesus must become greater, John lesser (Matt 11:11; Lk 7:28; Jn 3:30).
- ❖ His Unique Relationship with His Father
 - Jesus teaches and acts as if he has a unique relationship with his Father (Matt 6:9; 10:32-33; 11:26-27; Mark 14:36; Lk 10:21-22; 11:2; Jn 1:14; 3:35; 10:15).
 - To honor the Father is to honor the Son, and to honor the Son is to honor the Father (Matt 10:40; 18:5; Mark 9:37; Jn 5:23).
 - He accepts worship or prostration (Matt 14:33; 28:9; 28:17; Lk. 24:52; Jn 9:38; 20:28).
 - A voice from heaven supports Jesus (Matt 3:17; 15:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Lk 3:22; 9:35; Jn 12:28-30).
 - Jesus says receiving him means receiving the one who sent him (Matt 10:40; Mark 9:36-37; Lk 9:48; 10:16; Jn 13:20).
- ❖ His Title: Son of God, Rabbi, Christ etc. are the same
- ❖ His Disciples: Jesus calls disciples early in his ministry (Matt 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Lk 5:2-11; Jn 1:35-42).
- ❖ His Hebrew Bible:
 - Jesus quotes or honors the law of Moses (Matt 4:4, 7, 10; 5:17-19; 19:8, 16-18; 22:29-32, 34-40; Mark 10:5-9; 12:26, 29-31; Lk. 4:4, 8, 12, 18-19; 16:17; 18:20; 20:37; Jn 3:14; 5:45-47; 6:32; 7:19, 22-23; 19:36).
 - He fulfills Isaiah's prophecies (Matt 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:14-15; 15:7-9; Mark 4:11-12; 7:6-7; 11:17; 13:25; Lk 4:17; 8:10; 22:37; Jn 6:45; 12:38-41).
- ❖ His Miracles
 - Jesus heals crowds of the sick (Matt 4:23-25; Mark 3:7-12; Lk 6:17-19; Jn 3:23; 6:2).
 - The miracles of Jesus point to a higher truth about himself and God than the miracles per se (Matt 9:1-8; Mark 2:3-12; Lk 5:18-26; Jn 5:19-30).
- ❖ His Popularity and Opposition: Jesus clears out part of the temple courts (Matt 21:18-22; Mark 11:15-19; Lk 19:45-47; Jn 2:13-16).
- ❖ His Triumphant Entry: Jesus enters Jerusalem triumphantly to conclude his ministry and life (Matt 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Lk 19:29-38; Jn 12:12-15).
- ❖ His Last Supper: Jesus celebrates Passover and eats the Last Supper with his disciples (Matt 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Lk 22:7-13; Jn 13:1-17:26).
- ❖ The Betrayal: Judas is named as the betrayer, sometimes early in a Gospel for the readers' / listeners' sake (Matt 26:14-16,

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- 25:49; Mark 3:19; 14:10-11, 43-45; Lk 6:16; 22:3-6, 47-48; Jn 12:4; 13:2, 26-30; 18:2-5).
- ❖ His Arrest: Jesus agonizes in his spirit over his impending death (Matt 20:22; 26:38; Mark 10:38; 14:36; Lk 22:42-44; Jn 12:27-28).
 - ❖ The Denial: Jesus predicts that Peter will deny him three times and it happens (Matt 26:34, 75; Mark 14:30, 72; Lk 22:34, 61; Jn 13:38).
 - ❖ His Trial: The chief priests and Pontius Pilate tries Jesus, hesitates to press the matter, but hands Jesus over to be executed (Matt 27:14-24; Mark 14:6-10; Lk 23:4-6, 14-16, 20-22, 24; Jn 18:18-40; 19:1-16).
 - ❖ Pilate tries Jesus in Pilate's palace or Praetorium (Matt 27:27; Mark 15:16; Jn 18:28, 33; 19:9).
 - ❖ The Mockery: Pilate's Roman soldiers mock Jesus (Matt 27:29; Mark 15:19-20; Jn 19:3).
 - ❖ His Crucifixion: He is crucified on a cross at the Place of the Skull (Matt 27:33; Mark 15:22; Lk 23:33; Jn 19:17).
 - ❖ His Burial: Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate for Jesus' body and wraps it in linen cloth (Matt 27:57; Mark 15:43-46; Lk 23:50-53; Jn. 19:38-42).
 - ❖ His Resurrection: Jesus is resurrected on the first day of the week before dawn or early in the morning (Matt 28:1; Mark 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1).

The Differences between John and the Synoptics

- **References to the Jewish Feasts:** Unlike in the Synoptics, very often Jesus is found in John for the feasts in Jerusalem. Three times Passover festival is mentioned—he comes and goes. Jewish festivals such as Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacle, mentioned with new meaning as new Passover in the Gospel of St. John.
- **Johannine Omission of Synoptic material:** John's Gospel omits a large amount of material found in the synoptic Gospels, including some surprisingly important episodes: the temptation of Jesus, Jesus' transfiguration, and the institution of the Lord's supper are not mentioned by John. John mentions no examples of Jesus casting out demons. The sermon on the mount and the Lord's prayer are not found in the Fourth Gospel. There are no narrative parables in John's Gospel (most scholars do not regard John 15:1-8 ["the Vine and the Branches"] as a parable in the strict sense).

- **Inclusion of non-Synoptic material:** John also includes a considerable amount of material not found in the synoptics. E.g., All the material in John 2-4, Prior visits of Jesus to Jerusalem before the passion week are mentioned in John but not found in the synoptics. the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11) is not mentioned in the synoptic, The extended Farewell Discourse (John 13-17).
- **Different length of Jesus' public ministry:** According to John, Jesus' public ministry extended over a period of at least three and possibly four years. During this time Jesus goes several times from Galilee to Jerusalem. The synoptics appear to describe only one journey of Jesus to Jerusalem (the final one), with most of Jesus' ministry taking place within one year.
- **Semantic replacement of the "Kingdom of God" with "eternal life":** The emphasis on the Kingdom of God found in the synoptics is largely missing in John (the phrase *basileiva tou' teou'* occurs only twice in John's Gospel (3:3, 5) and the noun *basileiva* only three times (all in 18:36). Instead we find John's emphasis on 'eternal life' as a present reality (John 5:24 etc.). The emphasis on 'eternal life' in John's Gospel (36x) is closer to the letters of Paul than to the synoptic gospels. The synoptic references to the theme of life is 7/4/5 in Mt/Mk/Lk respectively.
- **Eyewitness versus Third Person Accounts:** The synoptics are written from a third person point of view, describing the events as if the authors had personally observed all of them and were reporting what they saw at the time. Thus they are basically descriptive in their approach. John's Gospel, on the other hand, although also written from a third person point of view, is more reflective and is an eyewitness account. Even though it is an eye witness account, it may be easily seen that John has adopted the "post-resurrection" point of view (2:17,22; 12:16; 20:9).
- **Realized eschatology in the Gospel of John:** The problem of so-called 'realized' eschatology in the Gospel of John can be seen in microcosm in John 5:20b-30. On the one hand there are statements that speak of the *parousia* (second advent) as a future event in the traditional sense: "...for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good to a resurrection of life, and those who

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have done evil to a resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29). Alongside these on the other hand are statements that seem to speak of the full realization for believers of salvation in the present (5:20-27). In addition John’s Gospel except in 14:3 does not emphasize the second advent of Christ as a future eschatological event.

- **Johannine ‘High’ Christology as opposed to the synoptic:** The Prologue to John’s Gospel (1:1-18) presents Jesus as the Logos” become flesh (1:14). John begins his Gospel with an affirmation of Jesus’ preexistence and full deity, which climaxes in John 20:28 with Thomas’ confession “My Lord and my God!” The non-predicated ego eimi sayings in the Fourth Gospel as allusions to Ex 3:14 also point to Jesus’ deity (John 8:24, 28, 58). Compare Mark who begins his Gospel with Jesus’ baptism and Matthew and Luke who begin theirs with Jesus’ birth. John begins with eternity past.
- **Extended dialogues or discourses rather than proverbial sayings:** John presents his material in the form of extended dialogues or discourses rather than the ‘proverbial’ or ‘pithy’ sayings found often in the synoptics: John 3 (with Nicodemus); John 4 (with the Samaritan woman); John 6 (the Bread of Life Discourse); John 13-17 (the Farewell Discourse with the disciples). As L. Goppelt observed: The Gospel of John passed on the words of Jesus predominantly in another genre than the synoptics; it did not do so in sayings, parables, and controversy dialogues, but in connected or dialogical discourses.
- ***Ipsissima verba versus ipsissima vox:*** The long discourses in John’s Gospel do not necessarily represent Jesus’ exact words (*ipsissima verba*) as long as they give a faithful summary and interpretive paraphrase (*ipsissima vox*) of what he actually said. Jesus’ teaching in the Fourth Gospel may be couched in distinctively Johannine style. On the other hand, some of John’s style may have been either directly or indirectly inspired by Jesus’ own manner of speaking: in Mt 11:25-27 + Lk 10:21-22 Jesus uses language almost identical to that which characterizes his speeches in John’s Gospel- “all things have been given to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, nor the Father except the Son and the one to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.”

- **Use of symbolism and double meaning:** John makes more frequent use of these literary techniques than the synoptics. Examples: John 2:25 (temple/body); John 7:37-38 (water/Spirit); John 12:32 (lifted up/exalted). Much of this symbolism takes the form of dualistic antitheses: light/darkness (1:4; 3:19; 8:12; 11:9; 12:35, 46); truth/falsehood (8:44); life/death (5:24; 11:25); above/below (8:23); freedom/slavery (8:33, 36). Much of this antithetical dualism is also found in the Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls) texts. See J. H. Charlesworth, “A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13-4:26 and the ‘Dualism’ Contained in the Gospel of John”, in *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1990).
- **Use of the “misunderstood statement”:** John makes frequent use of the “misunderstood statement” as a literary technique. Jesus says something to someone which is misunderstood, thus giving Jesus a further opportunity to clarify what he really meant. Examples: John 3 (Nicodemus’ misunderstanding of the new birth as a second physical birth; John 4 (the Samaritan woman’s misunderstanding of the living water as drinkable water).
- **Differences in grammatical style from the synoptic gospels:** The Gospel of John is written in a style of Greek quite different from the synoptics. The range of vocabulary is smaller. There is frequent parataxis (use of coordinate clauses rather than subordinate clauses). Asyndeton frequently occurs. Related to paragraph (7) above, there is little difference between the words that are ascribed to Jesus and the words of the Evangelist. Example: try to determine in John 3:1-21 where the words of Jesus to Nicodemus end and the interpretive comments of the Evangelist begin.

Chapter 2

Formation of the Fourth Gospel

This chapter is an attempt to understand the unity, authenticity, place and provenance of the fourth gospel. One of the most significant characters in this gospel is referred to as ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’ (13:23; 19:26-27, 35; 20:2-10; 21:7, 20-24; cf. 18:15-16). He is presented as a very close associate of Jesus, an eyewitness to his ministry, in particular, to the passion and death of Jesus, the discovery of the empty tomb and the resurrection appearances. The gospel claims that he is an authoritative and reliable eyewitness (19:35; 21:24), whose testimony is the foundation of the gospel itself. He is understood within this gospel as the authority behind the gospel, the one who was ultimately responsible for the writing of the gospel (21:24). At no stage in the fourth gospel is this significant eyewitness given a name, although the second century church understood this disciple to be John, the son of Zebedee. On the basis solely of the internal evidence of the gospel, his identity remains an enigma. It is probable that, subsequent to the life, death and resurrection of

Jesus, he emerged as a significant preacher and teacher within the faith community from which the fourth gospel emerged. This community, whom we may refer to as the ‘Johannine community,’ looked up to him as the reliable eyewitness whose interpretation of all that Jesus said and did was authoritative. After the death of the beloved disciple, the fourth evangelist, who would have been a close associate of this disciple, gathered and shaped the traditions from the beloved disciple into a gospel. Scholars generally attribute Chapter 21 to this redactor.

Primary Observations of Discrepancies

- 1:1-18 is a Prologue: generally a prologue says what is said inside. However, as we proceed reading the main chapters we do not find what is said in prologue, i.e., “Word dwelt among us” is the fullness *Pleroma* of grace. Poetical style of the prologue is not found in the rest of the Gospel. The idea of presenting Christ as the “Word of God” is not mentioned afterwards.
- The gospel has got to conclusions 20:30-31: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presents of disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you many come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son God, and that through believing you many have life in his name.” In 21:24-25, there seems to have another conclusion: “This is the disciples who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that this testimony is true. But are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the book that would be written.” Why should there be conclusions to the same book, if it is written by one single author?
- Certain narrative inconsistencies are also found in the fourth gospel. For example,
 - In 1:29-34, The next day....., John the Baptist testifies Jesus as the as the lamb of God... and the Son of God.” Here Jesus is introduced. But again in 1:35, the Baptist introduces Jesus to two of his disciples.
 - 3:26-30 “Jesus and John the Baptist” John’s disciples tell him that Jesus is baptizing across the river Jordan.... And many are following him... He must increase and must decrease...” This narrative gives the impression that the disciples of the Baptist are ignorant of Jesus.

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- In 13:31-36 as well we come across with certain narrative discrepancies: ... After washing the feet of the disciples in 13:31 Jesus speaks to them: *Le us go* but did not go but goes on talking. Only in 18:1 we find Jesus departing.
- The questions raised by various disciples during the farewell discourse are actually repetitions:
 - 13:36 Peter asked: “Where are you going?”
 - 14:5 Thomas also asked: where are you going?
 - 16:5 the disciples asked: “Where are you going?”

Jesus tells nobody that where he is going. From these discrepancies and inconsistencies one can seriously doubt the authenticity of the gospel.

- Some of the repetitions in the gospel are also questioning the single authorship of the gospel. For instance,
 - The theme of the authority of the Son is referred in 5:19- 25: “very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the son of God, and those who hear will live.” The same is repeated in 5:28-30 “do not be astonished at this: for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out-those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”
 - The theme of the bread of life is also repeated: 6:35-50, “Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty..” The same is repeated in 6:50: this is the bread that came down from heaven, so that one may eat it and not die...” The same idea is repeatedly stated in 6:51-58: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh..” Vs. 58 “this is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which you ancestor sate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

The repetitions are also challenging the unity of composition of the gospel

Why these Discrepancies?

Various Solutions are suggested by the scholars to overcome the disunity:

- **R. Bultmann**, for example argues that three different traditions were made use of by the evangelist in composing the fourth gospel:
 - a. The *Semeia* (Sign - miracle) source - A traditional source containing the seven miracles of Jesus
 - b. Revelatory discourses - A commentary that explains the meaning of the signs.
 - c. Passion narrative: Another traditional source explaining the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.
- **R.E. Brown** proposes 5 stages in the formation of the gospel:
 1. The oral stage: This stage includes the words spoken by Jesus what is spoken of Jesus. There might have existed a body of materials meant for catechetical purpose containing words and works of Jesus, independent of Synoptic gospels.
 2. A Gospel pattern: The author (or an editor) removed certain unwanted things from the existing source. Selected, thought over and put it in order, made individual story edited. An editor was working on the oral traditions. He selected some; he thought over and molded them in to the form and style of individual stories and discourse that became part of the fourth gospel.
 3. Another Edition: In this stage a better organization of the material of the second stage and made a continuous gospel. This is the first edition of the fourth gospel in Greek.
 4. Taken up and edited: In the fourth stage the author changed and edited the material according to the need of the time or historical circumstances. *e.g.*, 9:12 - They were afraid because they thought they would be expelled from the Jewish synagogue.
 5. Final Editing: It was done in the fifth stage of redaction and it gave shape to the present form of the fourth gospel.
- **The Leuven Hypothesis**

Against Bultmann and Brown, many scholars headed by Frans Neiryneck argue that the fourth gospel is the work of one single author. These scholars argue that the evangelist did not make use of any particular source other than the written synoptic gospels in composing the fourth gospel. The differences from the synoptics are due to his style and theology of the author. The so-called repetitions and variations are simply part of the style characteristic of the fourth gospel.

Authorship of the Fourth Gospel

Collectively, the Gospel, the four Epistles, and the Book of Revelation are known as Johannine Literature. Traditional Christian thought on the subject points to St. John the Apostle as the author of the Gospel, the three Epistles and the Book of Revelation that bear his name, and there is some internal textual evidence to suggest they may have been authored by the same person. Of the Johannine literature, Revelation bears the least grammatical similarity to the Gospel. Many modern scholars hold that the Apostle John wrote none of these texts. Others, however, maintain the traditional position with respect to some or all of these books. Craig Blomberg argues that disagreements over Johannine authorship of the fourth gospel tend to reflect methodological differences. The most widely accepted view is that - whether or not the same man wrote all the Johannine literature - it all came out of the same community in Asia Minor, which had some connection to John the Evangelist, John of Patmos, and John the Presbyter.

The author of the fourth gospel never identifies himself by name, but the text identifies him as the Beloved disciple repeatedly referred to in the Gospel. A local Council of 4th century held at Rome decreed that the author of 1 John and that of 2 and 3 John should be regarded as distinct individuals. Orthodox Roman Catholic scholarship, some Protestant Churches, and the entire Eastern orthodox attributes all of the Johannine literature to the same individual, the “Holy Apostle and Evangelist, John the Theologian”, whom it identifies with the “Beloved Disciple” in the Gospel of John.

Internal Evidences

According to the NT account apostle John was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the brother of James the Greater. In the Gospels the two brothers are often called after their father “the sons of Zebedee” and received from Jesus the nickname *Boanerges*, i.e. “sons of thunder” (Mk 3:17). According to the traditional understanding the Sons of Zebedee, however, for a time were disciples of John the Baptist, and were called by Christ from the circle of John’s followers, together with Peter and Andrew, to become his circle (Jn 1:35-42). In the lists of the Apostles John has the second place (Ac 1:13), the third (Mk 3:17), and the fourth (Mt 10:3). John had a prominent position in the Apostolic body. Peter, James, and he were the only witnesses of the raising of Jairus’s daughter (Mk 5:37), of the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1), and of the Gethsemani scene (Mt

26:37). Only he and Peter were sent into the city to make the preparation for the Last Supper (Lk 22:8). At the Supper itself his place was next to Christ on whose breast he leaned (Jn 13:23,25). According to the general interpretation John was also that “other disciple” who with Peter followed Christ after the arrest (Jn 18:15). John alone remained near his beloved Master at the foot of the Cross on Calvary with the Mother of Jesus and the women, and took the desolate Mother into his care as the last legacy of Christ (Jn 19:25-27). After the resurrection John with Peter was the first of the disciples to hasten to the grave and he was the first to believe that Jesus had truly risen (Jn 20:2-10). When later Christ appeared at the lake John was also the first of the seven disciples present who recognized his Master standing on the shore (Jn 21:7).

The following Internal Evidence Concerning Authorship could be traced from the fourth gospel

I. The author of the Fourth Gospel was a Jew.

- A. He is familiar with current Jewish opinions.
 - Messianic Expectations -1:21, 4:25, 6:14 ff, 7:40 ff, 12:34 ff.
 - Attitude toward Women - 4:27
 - Importance of religious schools - 7:15
 - Disparagement of Jews of the Diaspora (Hellenistic Jews) -7:35
 - Hostility of Jews and Samaritans - 4:9
- B. He is familiar with Jewish observances, customs, etc.
 - Ceremonial pollution of entering a gentile court -18:28
 - Feast of Tabernacles (hinted at) by symbolism of “living water” and the “light of the world”- 7:8 and 8:12
 - the last day of the feast as the “great day”-7:37;
 - Customs at marriage feast - 2:1-10;
 - Customs of burial-11:17- 44
- C. Vocabulary, sentence structure, symmetry and numerical symbolism, expression and arrangement of thoughts are essentially Hebrew.
- D. The Old Testament is the source of the religious life of the author.
 - Judea was the “home” of the Word become flesh; “his own people”-1:11
 - Judaism is constantly taken as the starting-point for Christianity.
 - OT types are mentioned as Christ applied them to himself:
 - Serpent - 3:14
 - Manna - 6:32
 - Water from the Rock-7:37 ff., etc.

II. The author of the Fourth Gospel was a Jew of Palestine.

A. His local knowledge is precise.

- Bethany beyond the Jordan (1:28), a place forgotten by the time of Origen, is distinguished from Bethany near Jerusalem (11:18). The location of the latter is given as 15 stadia away.
- Aenon near Salim (3:23) is not mentioned anywhere else-indicating direct acquaintance of the writer.
- Topography - especially of Jerusalem - is precise.
 - The pool at Bethesda - (5:2)
 - The pool of Siloam - (9:7)
 - The wadi Kidron - (18:1)
 - The Pavement (*Gabbatha*) with its raised judgement-seat - (19:13)
- Allusions to the Temple:
 - 46 years in building - 2:20
 - Mention of the Treasury - 8:20
 - Solomon's Portico - 10:22

B. The author's use of OT quotations shows that he is not dependent on the LXX, and at least suggests he was acquainted with Hebrew: 19:37, cf. Zach. 12:10; 13:18, cf. Ps 41:9. But *nowhere* does a quotation of the OT in the Fourth Gospel agree with the LXX *against* the Hebrew text.

C. The author's doctrine of the *Logos* is Palestinian and not Alexandrian-he views the *Logos* as representing the divine Will manifested in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Philo, on the other hand, viewed the *Logos* as abstract divine Reason.

D. Qumran documents have many parallels, which indicate that the Gospel is essentially a Palestinian document.

III. The author of the Fourth Gospel was an eye witness of the events he describes:

A. Descriptions of persons - in minute detail.

- Nicodemus - 3:1 ff, 7:50, 19:39
- Lazarus - 9:1 ff, 12:1 ff
- Simon, father of Judas Iscariot - 6:71, 12:4, 13:2, 26
- Note: The author was aware "Iscariot" was a local or family name; he applies it both to Judas and to his father Simon: 6:71, 13:2, 26, 12:4, 14:22

B. Details of time:

- Number of days before the raising of Lazarus - 11:6, 17, 39
- Duration of Jesus' stay in Samaria - 4:40,43
- Specific mention of the hour at which events occurred:
 - "the tenth" - 1:40
 - "the sixth" - 4:6
 - "the seventh" - 4:52
 - "about the sixth" - 19:14
 - "it was night" - 13:30, etc.

C. Details of number:

- two disciples of John the Baptist - 1:35
- six waterpots - 2:6
- five loaves and two fishes - 6:9
- twenty-five or thirty stadia - 6:19
- four soldiers - 19:23
- two hundred cubits - 21:8
- two hundred fifty-three fish - 21:11

D. Details of manner or circumstance:

- The boy had barley loaves - 6:9
- When Mary poured the ointment, the house was filled with the fragrance - 12:3
- The branches used at the triumphant entry were palm branches - 12:13
- Roman soldiers come with the officers of the priests to arrest Jesus - 18:3
- Jesus' tunic was seamless - 19:23
- The facecloth in which Jesus was buried was wrapped and lying in a place by itself - 20:7
- Peter was grieved because the Lord said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" - 21:17

IV. The author of the Fourth Gospel was *an Apostle*.

- A. This is clear from the scope of his descriptions of Jesus' ministry from the call of the first disciple to the appearances after the resurrection.
- B. He is acquainted with the thoughts and feelings of the disciples at critical moments: 2:11, 17, 22; 4:27, 6:19, 60 ff.; 12:16, 13:22, 28, 21:12.
- C. He recalls words spoken about themselves: 4:33, 16:17, 20:25, 21:3,5.

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- D. He is familiar with the places to which they withdrew for time alone: 11:54, 18:1-2, 20:19.
- E. He is acquainted with imperfect or erroneous impressions they received initially: 11:13, 12:16, 13:28, 20:9, 21:4.
- F. He stood very near the Lord:
 - He knew the Lord's emotions: 11:33, 13:21.
 - He knew the grounds of the Lord's actions: 2:24 ff, 4:1, 5:6, 6:15, 7:1, 16:19.
 - He knew the mind of the Lord in many cases: 6:6, 6:61, 6:64, 13:1,3; 13:11.

V. The author of the Fourth Gospel was *the the disciple whom Jesus loved*.

- A. John 21:24 assigns authorship to “the apostle whom Jesus loved.”
- B. This disciple is mentioned by this title twice in the passion narrative (13:23, 19:26) and twice afterwards (21:7, 21:20).
- C. He is known to the high-priest (18:15).
- D. He stands in close relationship with Peter (13:24, 20:2, 21:7).
- E. From the list in 21:2 of those present, this disciple must have been one of the sons of Zebedee, *or* one of the two other unnamed disciples present.
- F. The synoptics present Peter, James and John as standing in a special relationship to Jesus. Peter is eliminated (see 20:21), James was martyred very early (Acts 12:2); *this leaves John*.

VI. The Beloved Disciple: The Author of the Gospel

Beloved disciple has got different titles **1:37-42**, **other one** who followed Jesus. Two of the disciples... Andrew and the other (may be a Beloved disciple because name is not mentioned), in 18:15-20:2-10 mentioned “another disciple.”

A. Other six passages: disciple whom Jesus loved.

- (i) 13:23-26 “One of his disciples, the one whom Jesus loved”
- (ii) 19:25-27 “When Jesus saw his mother and disciple whom he loved.
- (iii) 20:2-10 “So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved.”
- (iv) 21:7,24 “that disciple whom Jesus loved.” This is the disciple who testifying these things and has written them, and we know that this testimony is true.”
- (v) 21:23 “this disciple would not die...”
- (vi) 20:24, It is about Thomas

B. Identity of the Beloved Disciple

There is incredible variety of suggestions regarding the identity of the Beloved disciple.¹ For the brevity of discussion, we just enlist the plurality of suggestions.

- (i) There are scholars who consider that the Beloved disciple is an ideal symbolic figure.²
- (ii) R. Bultmann and M. Pamment consider him as the symbol of the church.³
- (iii) A number of modern scholars argue that the Beloved disciple is a real historical human figure whose identity is lost. Though he is unknown to us, he is well known to the Johannine community.⁴
- (iv) E. L. Titus considers him as Matthias who was chosen by lot into the apostolic community (Act 1:23, 26).⁵
- (v) Some of the earlier scholars consider him as Apollos.⁶ In modern times, S. Pétrement upholds this view.⁷
- (vi) Based on Dt 33:12, where Moses blesses Benjamin: 'He is the beloved of the Lord,' P. S. Minear argues that the Beloved disciple is presented in the Benjaminite traditions.⁸
- (vii) Some scholars are of the opinion that the Beloved disciple is the rich young ruler mentioned in Mk 10:17-31.⁹ Since he took Jesus' mother in his home, they agree that he must be rich.
- (viii) Surprisingly, some even identify him with Judas Iscariot, based on his anonymous nature.¹⁰
- (ix) According to E. C. J. Lützelberger, the Beloved disciple is Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter.
- (x) For M. -É. Boismard, the best candidate for considering the Beloved disciple is Philip.¹¹
- (xi) Nathanael also is suggested to be a candidate for the Beloved disciple, because he is an anonymous apostle in NT.¹²
- (xii) A large number of scholars argue that Lazarus is the Beloved disciple, mainly based on the fact that he is introduced with the phrase "whom Jesus loved" in 11:1-2.¹³
- (xiii) The John Mark of Act 12 is sometimes identified with the Beloved disciple.¹⁴
- (xiv) J. J. Gunther evinces that Judas, Jesus' brother, is the Beloved disciple.¹⁵

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- (xv) A great number of scholars are in favour of counting the Beloved disciple as apostle John.¹⁶ In 1907, the *Pontifical Biblical Commission* officially declared that the apostle John wrote the gospel of John and identified him with the Beloved disciple.¹⁷
- (xvi) Another suggestion is that either John the Elder¹⁸ or John the apostle blended with John the Elder is the Beloved disciple.¹⁹
- (xvii) Brown, Schnackenburg and Lindars are of the opinion that the Beloved disciple is one of the anonymous disciples noted in 21:2.²⁰
- (xviii) In 1907 B. W. Bacon suggested that Paul is the Beloved disciple.²¹ This view is recently supported by M. Goulder.²²
- (xix) There are suggestions from even outside the Bible. The relation between Jesus and the Beloved disciple is compared to the relation between Gautama Buddha and his disciple Ananda.²³ Some Indian scholars attempt to identify the Beloved disciple with Arjuna, the Beloved disciple of Lord Krishna.²⁴
- (xx) Mary Magdalene also is attributed to be a candidate.
- (xxi) Recently, Charlesworth puts forward another candidate: the apostle Thomas. His arguments will be evaluated in the following section.

C. Certain ideas are striking about the Beloved Disciple

- “Beloved disciple is at the bosom of Jesus (*en ton kolpon*- 13:23) just as Jesus was at the bosom of the father (*en ton kolpon* - 13:23). Being at the bosom of the Father, Jesus alone can reveal his Father. In the same way, the beloved disciple who is at the bosom of Jesus reveals Jesus more clearly.
- He was standing at the foot of the cross, designating his unique role with the mother of Jesus in forming the early Christian community. The Mother of Jesus and the Beloved disciple formed the nucleus of the society, a new family of faith.
- Whenever the beloved disciple is mentioned he is referred with Peter (13:23; 18:15; 20:1-8).

VII. The Evangelist and the Presbyter

There remains an undeniable confusion among the scholars regarding the identity of John the evangelist and the so-called John the presbyter. The author of the Second and Third Epistles of John designates himself in the superscription of each by the name

(*ho presbyteros*), “the ancient”, “the old.” Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, also uses the same name to designate the “Presbyter John” he also designates him to be his teacher. However, here the title *presbyteros* is applied to other disciples as well: “Presbyters Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, and Matthew” (in Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 3.39.4). The church historian Eusebius was the first to draw, on account of these words of Papias, the distinction between a Presbyter John and the Apostle John, and this distinction was widely propagated by St. Jerome. The distinction, however, has no historical basis:

- The testimony of Eusebius contradicts himself, as in his “Chronicle” he expressly calls the Apostle John the teacher of Papias (“*ad annum Abrah 2114*”).
- Eusebius was also influenced by his biased opinions as he denied the Apostolic origin of the Apocalypse and ascribed this writing to an author differing from St. John but of the same name.
- St. Irenæus also positively designates the Apostle and Evangelist John as the teacher of Papias, and neither he nor any other writer before Eusebius had any idea of a second John in Asia Minor (*Adv. Haer* 5.33.4).

Other External Evidences

The Patristic writers of the second and third centuries testify to us as an undoubted tradition universally recognized that the Apostle and evangelist John lived in Asia Minor:

- Justin the Martyr refers to “John, one of the Apostles of Christ” as a witness who had lived “with us,” that is, at Ephesus (*Dialogue with Tryphon* .81).
- St. Irenæus speaks in very many places of the Apostle John and his residence in Asia and expressly declares that he wrote his Gospel at Ephesus (*Adv. Haer.*3.1.1), and that he had lived there until the reign of Trajan (*Adv. Haer.*, 2.22.5).
- According to Tertullian’s testimony (*De praescript.*, 36), the evangelist John had been thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil before the *Porta Latina* at Rome without suffering injury.
- Eusebius (*Eccle Hist.* 3.13.1) place the Apostle’s banishment to Patmos in the reign of Domitian (81-96). After Domitian’s death the Apostle returned to Ephesus during the reign of Trajan, and at Ephesus he died about A.D. 100 at a great age.

Date and Place of Composition

The fourth gospel was apparently written near the end of the 1st century. Some scholars argue that there are differences in the composition of the Greek within the Gospel, such as breaks and inconsistencies in sequence, repetitions in the discourse, as well as passages that he believes clearly do not belong to their context, and believes that these suggest later stages of redaction.

Conservative scholars consider internal evidences, such as the lack of the mention of the destruction of the Temple and a number of passages that they consider characteristic of an eyewitness, sufficient evidence that the gospel was composed before 100 and perhaps as early as 50–70: in the 1970s, scholars Leon Morris and John A.T. Robinson independently suggested, a pre-synoptic date, for the gospel's composition. Many phrases are duplicated in the Gospel of John and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The non-canonical Dead Sea scrolls suggest an early Jewish origin, parallels and similarities to the Essene Scroll, and Rule of the Community. These are sufficiently numerous to challenge the theory that the Gospel of John was the last to be written among the four Gospels and that it shows marked non-Jewish influence.

Since the middle of the 2nd century writings of Justin the Martyr use language very similar to that found in the Gospel of John, the Gospel is considered to have been in existence at least at that time.

As to the date of its composition we have no certain historical information. According to the general opinion, the Gospel is to be referred to the last decade of the first century, or to be still more precise, to 96 or one of the succeeding years. The grounds for this opinion are briefly as follows:

- The fourth gospel was composed after the three Synoptics as it presupposes them.
- The Rylands Library Papyrus (P⁵²), which records a fragment of this gospel, is usually dated to the first half of the 2nd century. The Rylands Library Papyrus (P⁵²) is perhaps the earliest New Testament fragment; dated from its handwriting to about 125. Probably the earliest surviving New Testament manuscript, P⁵² is a Greek papyrus fragment discovered in Egypt in 1920. Although P⁵² has no more than 114 legible letters, it must come from a substantial codex; as it is written on both sides in a generously

scaled script, with Jn 18:31-33 on one side and 18:37-38 on the other. The surviving text agrees closely with that of the corresponding passages in the Gospel of John, but it cannot necessarily be assumed that the original manuscript contained the full Gospel of John in its canonical form. Metzger and Aland list the probable date for this manuscript as c. 125. The other notable early manuscripts of John include Papyrus⁶⁶ and Papyrus⁷⁵ in consequence of which a substantially complete text of the Gospel of John exists from the beginning of the 3rd century at the latest.

- It was written after the death of Peter, since the last chapter - especially 21: 18-19 presupposes the death of Peter;
- It was also written after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, for the Evangelist references to the Jews (cf. particularly 11:18; 18:1; 19:41) seem to indicate that the end of the city and of the people as a nation is already come.
- The text of 21:23, appears to imply that John was already far advanced in years when he wrote the Gospel.
- Those who denied the Divinity of Christ, the very point to which St. John devotes special attention throughout his Gospel, began to disseminate their heresy about the end of the first century;
- Finally, we have direct evidence concerning the date of composition. The so-called "Monarchian Prologue", which was probably written about the year 200, gives a valuable piece of information concerning the date of composition of the fourth gospel: "He [sc. the Apostle John] wrote this Gospel in the Province of Asia, after he had composed the Apocalypse on the Island of Patmos." The banishment of John to Patmos occurred in the last year of Domitian's reign [i.e. about 95]. A few months before his death [18 September, 96], the emperor had discontinued the persecution of the Christians and recalled the exiles (Eusebius *Eccl. Hist.* 3.20.5-7). This evidence would therefore refer to the composition of the Gospel to A.D. 96 or one of the years immediately following.

The place of composition was, according to the above-mentioned prologue, the province of Asia. Still more precise is the statement of St. Irenaeus, who tells us that John wrote his his gospel at Ephesus in Asia Minor" (*Adv. Haer.* 3.1.2). All the other early

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references are in agreement with these statements. The first readers of this gospel were the Christians of the second and third generations in Asia Minor.. There was no need of initiating them into the elements of the Faith; consequently the evangelist must have aimed rather at confirming against the attacks of its opponents the Faith handed down by their forefathers.

Notes

- ¹ See CHARLESWORTH, *Beloved Disciple*, pp. 127-224.
- ² Cf. J. H. SCHOLTEN, *Het Evangelie naar Johannes: Kritisch Historisch Onderzoek*, Leiden, P. Engels, 1864, pp. 274-285.
- ³ BULTMANN, *Johannes*, note 369.
- ⁴ W. F. LOFHOUSE, *The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved*, London, Epworth, 1922, p. 69.
- ⁵ E. L. TITUS, *The Identity of the Beloved Disciple*, in *JBL* 69 (1950) 323-328.
- ⁶ J. T. TOBLER, *Ueber den Ursprung des vierten Evangeliums*, in *ZWT* 3 (1860) 169-203.
- ⁷ S. PÉTREMENT, *Appollos and the Fourth Gospel*, in ID. (ed.), *A Separate God: The Christian Origins of Gnosticism*, San Fransisco, Harper, 1990, pp. 276-297.
- ⁸ P. S. MINEAR, *The Beloved Disciple in the Gospel of John*, in *NovT* 19 (1977) 105-123.
- ⁹ E. G. KING, *The Disciple that Jesus Loved*, in *The Interpreter* (1909) 167-174; H. B. SWETE, *The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved*, in *JTS* 17 (1916) 371-374.
- ¹⁰ L. NOACK, *Die Geschichte Jesu auf Grund freier geschichtlicher Untersuchungen über das Evangelium und die Evangelien*, Mannheim, J. Schneider, ²1876, pp. 232-236.
- ¹¹ M. É. BOISMARD, *Du Baptême aCana (Jean 1,19-2:11)*, Paris, Cerf, 1956, pp. 72-73.
- ¹² M. A. N. ROVERS, *Nieuw-Testamentische Letterkunde*, Gertogenbosch, Gebroeders, Muller, 1888, p. 172.
- ¹³ Among the many scholars, see, B. G. GRIFFITH, *The Disciple whom Jesus Loved*, in *ExpT* 32 (1920-1921) 379-381.
- ¹⁴ VÖLTER, *Die Offenbarung Johannis*, Strassburg, Heitz and Mündel, 1907, 55-56.
- ¹⁵ J. J. GUNTHER, *The Relation of the Beloved Disciple to the Twelve*, in *TZ* 37 (1981) 129-148.
- ¹⁶ P. BECK, *The Beloved Disciple: The Life of Apostle John*, Philadelphia, ASSU, 1853, p. 3; J. MACFARLANE, *The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved*, Edinburgh, Parton & Ritchie, 1885, p. 43-37.
- ¹⁷ The full text is cited in COLSON, *L'Énigme du disciple que Jésus aimait*, pp. 6-7. See also, CHARELSWORTH, *Beloved Disciple*, p. 203.
- ¹⁸ F. VON HÜGEL, *John, the Gospel of*, in *Ency.Brit.* 15 (1911) 452-458, p. 457; M. DIBELIUS, *Johannesevangelium*, in *RGG* 3 (1929) 349-363.
- ¹⁹ B. H. STREETER, *The Four Gospels*, London, Macmillan, 1924, pp. 430-461.
- ²⁰ BROWN, *John*, vol. I, p. xcii; SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, vol. I, p. 88; LINDARS, *John*, p. 33.
- ²¹ B. W. BACON, *The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved*, in *The Expositor* 4 (1907) 324-329.
- ²² M. GOULDER, *An Old Friend of Incognito*, in *SJT* 45 (1992) 487-513.
- ²³ A. J. EDMUNDS, *Buddhist Texts Quoted as Scriptures in the Gospel of John: A Discovery of Lower Criticism*, Philadelphia, M. Brix & A. J. Edmunds, 1906, p. 22.
- ²⁴ For example, P. PALATY, *Thomas and the Beloved Disciple*, p. 45.

Literary Style of the Fourth Gospel

In the NT the fourth gospel stands alone, distanced from the Synoptics by its unique presentation of the Christ-event. John is exceptional; and thus it seems appropriate that the symbol of the eagle has been attached to it. Commenting on this symbolism, Paul Duke writes: “The thought of this Gospel reaches dizzying heights, its majestic language spirals and soars, presenting a Christ ‘lifted up’ to a glory more elevated than we might otherwise have seen.” According to John, not all of Jesus’ words and actions are recorded, but “these *are written* that you may believe Jesus is the Christ” (Jn 20:31). The written words of this Gospel are intended to persuade the reader to make a commitment to Christ. With this understanding, one discovers that knowing *how* John crafted his Gospel may have almost as much importance as *what* he wrote. Any study of Johannine revelation that ignores the form, style, and mode of Johannine revelatory language will always miss the mark. Since John conspicuously points to the written word, there appears to be warrant for a closer look at the literary devices he employed.

It has long been recognized that John has made use of a variety of literary devices in the Fourth Gospel to communicate his theology of Jesus to his readers. Some of these devices are more widely recognized than others. John's ethical dualism, for example, has been a frequent topic of scholarly discussion. His extensive use of irony is another commonly regarded feature. One literary device which has not been as broadly noted is John's use of a technique in which Jesus is misunderstood by His hearers, frequently through the use of words or phrases which can be understood in more than one way, or on more than one level. Jesus speaks at a spiritual level, while His hearers hear Him on a literal or natural level, resulting in misunderstanding. What is the exact role or function of this literary device in the Fourth Gospel? A variety of solutions have been proposed. This chapter will re-examine the evidence and attempt to discover the various literary devices used in John's Gospel.

1. **The Point of View:** The author may adopt a first person/third person/ omniscient person point of view. In the first person point of view the person telling the story is actually an observer of the events he relates. It is like a news reporter on the scene of a story describing what is taking place at the very moment as it happens. The first person point of view gives a great feeling of immediacy and closeness with the reader. However, it greatly limits the range with which the author can deal with the events - he cannot present himself as knowing another person's mind or knowing the future, for example. Hence the author at times may adopt a third person point of view (2:17, 22; 12:16; 20:9).. He tells the story as if he were separated from the events which are being described. He describes events like the narrator of a documentary. The so-called "Omniscient Author" convention of the third person point of view, the author includes not only information the readers would not have, but information that even a firsthand observer of the events could not know. For instance, the writer may give the thoughts and feelings of more than one person at the same time (1:28; 2:6; 4:9; 19:40;).
2. **Well formulated Introductions:** In this gospel author gives a good introductions. For eg.,
 - ✓ 2:1, three was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: who all were invited, where and when of its occurrence (2:1 - 3rd day, mother of Jesus, Cana, Jesus and his disciples, etc)

- ✓ 6:1-4. other side of Sea of Galilee-sea of Tiberius, time of the Miracle is mentioned. Passover, Galilee
- ✓ 10:12 reference to the time and place: It was the feast of dedication Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico Solomon's Courtyard.

3. **“Inclusion:”** The literary technique in which the beginning and ending verses referring to the same theme is called inclusion. Inclusion refers to the practice of restating or paraphrasing the opening and leading idea or phrase at the conclusion in order to re-emphasise the point being made or the position being indicated. The fourth gospel often mentions details or makes an allusion at the end of the passage to recall something mentioned in the beginning. This kind of knitting together is often seen in the gospel. For e.g.,

- ✓ 1:19 “this is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask who are you, 1: 34 “and I myself have seen and have testified that this is the son of God.”
- ✓ 2:1 1"“On the third there was a wedding in the Cana of Galilee” and 2: 11 Jesus did this in first of his signs in Cana of Galilee.”
- ✓ 17:1" after Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come: glorify your son so that the son may glorify you.” 17:26 - “I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me many be in them and I in them.”

4. Transitional Passages:

1. 2:23-25 leads into chapter 3
2. 11:55-57 leads into chapter 12
3. 12:44-50 concludes the Book of Signs and leads into the Book of Glory

5. Literary Threads:

For example, “the Hour” of Jesus functions as a literary thread, building suspense throughout the Gospel, leading up to the death and glorification of Jesus:

1. 2:4 - And Jesus said to her [his mother], “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? *My hour has not yet come.*”
2. 5:25 - “Very truly, I tell you, *the hour is coming, and is now here*, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.”

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3. 5:28 - “Do not be astonished at this; for *the hour is coming* when all who are in their graves will hear his voice”
 4. 7:30 - Then they tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because *his hour had not yet come*.
 5. 8:20 - He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because *his hour had not yet come*.
 6. 12:23 - Jesus answered them, “*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.*”
 7. 12:27 - “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say— ‘*Father, save me from this hour*’? No, it is for this reason that *I have come to this hour.*”
 8. 13:1 - Now before the festival of the Passover, *Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father*. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.
 9. 16:32 - “*The hour is coming, indeed it has come*, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.”
 10. 17:1 - After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “*Father, the hour has come*; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you,”
 11. 19:27 - Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And *from that hour* the disciple took her into his own home. See also other uses of “hour” in 4:21-23; 4:52-53; 11:9; 16:2, 4; 16:21, 25
- 6. Dramatic Pattern:** It also uses the “dramatic pattern” in which scenes often change. The evangelist dramatically allows different people coming into picture one after the other: Eg.
- ✓ 4:1 Samaritan Women, disciples, people.
 - ✓ 9:1 Jesus, disciples, Blind man Pharisees, enquiry, questioning the parents, etc.,
 - ✓ 18:1-19:15, the trial scene of Jesus
- 7. Misunderstanding:** Misunderstanding plays a significant role in Johannine literary strategy. There are three steps in Johannine misunderstandings: (i) An ambiguous statement by Jesus which

contains a double-entendre. (ii) A response by the dialogue partner in the literal meaning of the statement. (iii) The explanation by Jesus or the narrator. We can observe that in all the misunderstandings either the identity of Jesus or the identity of the disciples (believers) is misunderstood.¹

<i>Misunderstanding</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Those who misunderstand</i>
On "three days" (2:18-21)	Identity of Jesus	The disciples
On "born anew/from above" (3:3-10)	Identity of the believer	Nicodemus
On "the living water" (4:10-15)	Identity of Jesus	Samaritan woman
On "food" (4:33-34)	Identity of Jesus	The disciples
On "buying bread" (6:5-9)	Jesus foreknowledge	Andrew
On "Manna" (6:32-34)	Identity of Jesus	The Jews
On "the bread from heaven" (6:41-42)	Identity of the believer	The Jews
On "eating the body" (6:52)	Identity of Jesus	The Jerusalemites
On the whence of Jesus (7:27-30)	Identity of Jesus	The Jews
On the going of Jesus (7:33-36)	Identity of Jesus	The Jews
On the going of Jesus (8:21-24)	Identity of the believer	The believers
On freedom and bondage (8:31- 36)	Identity of the believer	The Jews
On "death" (8:51-53)	Identity of the believer	The Jews
On the age of Jesus (8:56-58)	Identity of Jesus	The disciples
On "the sleep of Lazarus" (11:11-15)	Jesus is true life	The disciples
On rising from the death (11:23-25)	Identity of Jesus	Martha
On the going of Jesus (13:36-37)	Identity of Jesus	Peter
On "where Jesus is going" (14:4-6)	Identity of Jesus	Thomas
On seeing the Father (14:7-9)	Identity of the disciples	Philip
On "a little while" (16:16-19)	Jesus' death and resurrection	The disciples

From the chart, it is evident that those who misunderstand Jesus belong to two groups: (i) the disciples of Jesus or their representatives, (ii) the Jews who oppose Jesus. At times, both groups share the same misunderstanding. The only difference between these two groups is that the former could overcome the misunderstanding and came to genuine faith while the latter remained in their misunderstanding. As Barrett observes, "the Jews" could understand only what is superficially visible in Jesus.

Culpepper delineates three effects of the misunderstandings upon the reader. The first is the enlargement of the gap between the "insiders" and the "outsiders." The narrator makes the reader feel

superior to the obviously less intelligent characters in the story. The misunderstandings cast judgmental shadows on those who ignorantly rejected Jesus, the “outsiders.” This, in effect, nudges the reader into the privileged circle of those who understand the implications of Jesus’ words, the “insiders.” Second, this device allows John to clarify and expand theological truth. The final effect is that they teach one how to read the Gospel. They help one recognize the two levels of language, and they warn that failure to understand identifies one with those foolish characters who did not rightly interpret Jesus’ words.²

8. The Irony: It is a Sarcastic remarks made by somebody but realized later. One makes a statement about Jesus, which is to be derogatory, or sarcastic remarks but later they become true. The expression of one’s meaning by saying the direct opposition of what one is thinking. For example.,

- ✓ 3:5, to be born again or to be born from above
- ✓ 4:12 Samaritan women asks to Jesus: “Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well..”
- ✓ 7:35 “the Jews said to one another, where does this man intend to go that we will not find him?”
- ✓ 8:22 Then the Jews said, is he going to kill himself”
- ✓ 11:15 “for you r sake I am glad I am not there so that you may believe..”
- ✓ 11:52, Jesus should die, to gather the dispersed children of God...
- ✓ 18:33, Pilate asks, “are you the king of Jews?” However, he eventually writes in 19:19, that Jesus is the king of Jews.

Paul Duke has analyzed Johannine irony under two headings. The first, local irony, is situated at a particular point in the text, such as Caiaphas’ prophecy that Jesus would die for the people (11:49-50). Extended irony, the second type, is the {6} development of an ironic theme through an episode or through the whole Gospel. The prime example, and the ultimate irony, is that Jesus was rejected by the world (1:10), and even more pointedly, by his own (1:11), the very people he came to save.³ What then is the effect of irony in John? Primarily, it draws the reader into union with the author. The reader is never the victim of irony and although he/she will probably miss the irony at some points, this will only strengthen communion when it is recognized during subsequent readings. Even those unsympathetic to the views of the author will find themselves being gently led toward the goal of the book (20:30-31). Through irony, “the author subtly

welds a union between himself and the audience who will read the gospel. This unity is a delicate means to bring them to the faith John knows.”

9. Symbolism: The evangelist with a masterful skill makes use of several symbols throughout his narrative. A Symbol expresses something more or less than its plain or superficial meaning. The frequently used symbols are,

- ✓ Water – refers to Jesus, Holy Spirit and Baptism. 3:8 to be born again in Spirit and Water.... See also (4:14; 5:7; 6:53; 7:37-39; 19:34-35)
- ✓ Light – This symbol is pointing towards God and Jesus. Similarly to everything divine or morally good.
- ✓ Bread, refers to Jesus and the Eucharist
- ✓ Shepherd, refers to Jesus and the leadership of the Church.

10. Dualism... Contrast between two meanings is the heart of this literary strategy. It is constituted two basic or fundamental principles such as Spirit and matter: good and evil. Dualism from a philosophical or ideological point of view refers to any doctrine, which asserts that there is two ultimate power or principles. However, John does not hold a dualistic ideology rather dualism is only a literary strategy. For example,

- ✓ Light and darkness
- ✓ Heavenly or Earthly
- ✓ Life or Death
- ✓ Flesh or Spirit
- ✓ Salvation or Condemnation

11. Number John uses the no. 7 very often Jesus is given 7 titles. There are seven I am statements in the gospel. There are 7 miracles in the gospel. The third day is significant in the gospel.

12. Question; there are 164 questions used by the fourth evangelist in his writings.

- ✓ Questions often try to unveil the mystery surrounds Jesus. E.g. who is he? Who are you? 4:12 are you greater than Jacob? Are you the king of Jews? All try to know about Jesus.
- ✓ Jesus too asked some questions: They are penetrating address to us directly. Calling for a generous respond.
- ✓ The author uses these techniques to ask the readers and to address the audience. E.g. 3:10 are you a teacher of Israel?

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5:6 Do you want to be made well..? 13:12 Do you know what I have done to you? 9:5 Do you believe it? 11:25-26 Do you believe this? 21:16 do you love me?

13. Parenthetical Explanations:

A. The evangelist explains the meaning of Semitic names and words:

1. Messiah = “anointed” (1:41)
2. Cephas = “Peter” (1:42)
3. Siloam = “sent” (9:7)
4. Thomas = “twin” (11:16)

B. The Evangelist offers the reader extra or background information:

5. At the Cana wedding, when the steward did not know where the wine came from: “*(though the servants who had drawn the water knew)*” (2:9b)
6. While telling about of John the Baptizer: “*John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison*” (3:24)
7. While Jesus is speaking to the Samaritan woman: “*(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.)*” (4:8)
8. After the Samaritan woman asks Jesus a question: “*(Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)*” (4:9b)
9. When Jesus predicts his betrayal: “*He was speaking of Judas son of Simon Iscariot, for he, though one of the twelve, was going to betray him.*” (6:71)
10. In the middle of the narrative of the Man Born Blind: “*Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.*” (9:14)
11. After the Blind Man’s parents speak: “*His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.*” (9:22-23)
12. Explaining Jesus’ delay in going to Bethany: “*Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.*” (11:5-6)
13. After Jesus tells his disciples that Lazarus had fallen asleep: “*Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep.*” (11:13)

C. The Evangelist gives the reader later, more developed theological viewpoints:

14. When Jesus says, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (2:19), the Jewish authorities misunderstand. Then the *evangelist explains*: “*But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.*” (2:21-22)
15. When Jesus asks Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” (6:5), the *evangelist adds*, “*He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do.*” (6:6)
16. When Jesus tells his disciples, “But among you there are some who do not believe.” (6:64a), the *evangelist clarifies*, “*For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him.*” (6:64b)
17. When Jesus says, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” (7:37-38), the *evangelist explains*, “*Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*” (7:39)
18. When Caiaphas says, “You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed.” (11:50), the *evangelist adds*, “*He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, 11:52 and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God.*” (11:51-52)
19. When Jesus enters Jerusalem and the crowds shout “Hosanna!”, the *evangelist explains*, “*His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.*” (12:16)
20. When Jesus says, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” (12:32), the *evangelist adds*, “*He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.*” (12:33)

14. Greater Focus on Jerusalem:

- Most of the action in the Fourth Gospel takes place in and around Jerusalem (all except the first half of chapter 2 and all of chapters 4 and 6); in contrast, the Synoptic Gospels tell of Jesus being in Jerusalem only for less than one week, just before he is arrested and executed.
- The Fourth Gospel mentions several people, places, architectural and historical details not mentioned in the other three Gospels.
- *People* who lived near Jerusalem: the man at the pool of Bethesda; the man born blind and his parents; Martha, Mary, and Lazarus of Bethany.
- *Places* in and around Jerusalem: the pool of Bethesda, the pool of Siloam, the Portico of Solomon.
- *Architectural details* not mentioned in the Synoptics: the pool of Bethesda had five porticos.
- *Historical details* not mentioned in the Synoptics: that the Jerusalem Temple had been under (re)construction for 46 years.

15. Literary Genres:

- On the one hand, the Fourth Gospel contains far *fewer narrative stories* than are found in the Synoptic Gospels.
- On the other hand, the Fourth Gospel contains far *more dialogues and monologues* of Jesus than are found in the Synoptics.

16. Simple but Highly Symbolic Language:

- The Greek vocabulary in John is very basic, simple, and realistic; not as abstract as in Paul's letters or later Christian writings.
- Yet many Johannine words have deeper symbolic meanings, referring to spiritual truths far more complex than the physical objects to which the words ordinarily refer.
- Examples: word, light, life, bread, water, wind, world, lamb, shepherd, hour, bread, vine, sleep, etc.

Is the Fourth Gospel Anti-Jewish?

Is the fourth gospel anti-Jewish? This question is discussed extensively among Johannine scholars. On the one hand, scholars like M. Brumlik argue that the fourth gospel must be excluded from any Jewish-Christian dialogue since it presents "the Jews" as those abandoned by God together with Satan.⁴ On the other hand, there are scholars who rule out all traces of anti-Judaism in the fourth

gospel. Many solutions have been offered in the history of Johannine exegesis to resolve this ambiguity. We will enumerate them briefly.

1. According to some scholars the ambiguity is created by later redaction. Fuller argues that the later redactor of the fourth gospel, changed the use of the *crowd* and *Pharisees* in the earlier version of the gospel into *the Jews*.
2. The anti-Jewish tendencies in the gospel are often explained as a polemic response to the expulsion of the Johannine Christians from the Synagogue. Some scholars argue that the excommunication was a self-imposed social estrangement by the community itself, just as the Qumran community had.
3. U. von Wahlde argues that the presumably anti-Jewish statements in the gospel are neither hostile nor anti-Jewish but only a stereotyped polemic against the opponents of Jesus in the discussions on what constitute true Judaism. This interpretation also does not help to solve the anti-Jewish attitude of the gospel, because the gospel counts all the Jews who refused to believe in Jesus as associated with the devil, the archenemy of God.
4. There are scholars who tried to lessen the anti-Jewish tenor of the gospel by arguing that the gospel discusses “a rupture in the family” or “an inner Jewish feud,” in the context of the expulsion from the synagogue. Since the group under attack is within the Johannine community, according to these scholars, there is no anti-Judaism in the fourth gospel. This argument might be true with regard to 8:31-59, but in many other instances the believers of Jesus and the Jews are presented in sharp contrast.
5. Some scholars argue that *the Jews* in the gospel refers only to the Jewish leaders.⁵ This position can be true only with regard to some instances, especially when the “fear of the Jews” is referred to. However, the gospel portrays the Jewish leaders like Nicodemus (3:1-21; 7:50-52; 10:39) and Joseph of Arimathea (19:39) as supporters of Jesus. Moreover, there are several instances in the gospel in which the term is used to denote the ordinary Jewish flock.
6. Certain exegetes interpret the term geographically to mean “Judeans.” They prefer the translation “Judeans” rather than “Jews” for the Johannine expression *the Jews*. According to this interpretation, the term *the Jews* is not always strictly religious.

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7. Bultmann interprets the Johannine *the Jews* representatives of unbelief from the Christian point of view. Following Bultmann, many scholars argue that the Johannine negative notion of “the Jews” must be understood in the light of the Johannine narrative context.
8. A number of scholars contend that “the Jews” in John cannot be the Jews as a whole, rather only “the leaders,” that is, only those Jews who opposed the Johannine Christians violently
9. Several scholars try to differentiate the Johannine usage of *the Jews*. According to Brown, John uses this term in three ways: (a) it does not mean an ethnic, religious or geographic group (e.g. 9:22); (b) in some instances “the Jews” are used interchangeably with the Chief Priests and Pharisees (e.g. 18:3, 12); (c) in some other instances the term is used to mean “the Sanhedrin” (compare Mk 15:3 and Jn 18:28-31).⁶ Schnackenburg differentiates different meanings: Jews as an ethnic term used by non-Jews, in the historical sense but the writer dissociates himself from them, the unbelievers, the hostile circle against Jesus.⁷ Similarly, R. Fuller divides the Johannine usage of “the Jews” into five classes: (i) The Jews in contrast with the gentiles, (ii) The Jews in contrast with the Samaritans, (iii) The Jews in the context of Jewish customs unfamiliar to the Gentiles, (iv) the Jerusalemites, (v) The Jews who are hostile to Jesus and his disciples.⁸ Tanzer also points out the Johannine subtlety in which the evangelist presupposes different groups of the Jews while using “the Jews.”⁹

Having analysed the different positions of the scholars, in what follows, we will try to understand the various nuances of the Johannine usage of *the Jews*.

The Referent of *the Jews*

What is important is not to search for the referent of the group of the Jews but to conceive of the sense of the term.

The fourth evangelist deliberately generalises the term *the Jews* in his redaction in comparison to the synoptics. A few examples can be pointed out.

Council of Sanhedrin	Mt 26:3// Jn 11:47
The garden scene	Mk 14:43// Jn 18:3
Questioning Jesus’ Messianism	Lk 22:66-67// Jn 10:24-25

As the synopsis reveals, the fourth evangelist includes the Pharisees as well (11:47; 18:3), while redacting the parallel synoptic texts. Thus, he incorporates the dominant Jewish sect of his time into the group of the opponents who plotted against Jesus. In 10:24, the various groups are collectively called “the Jews”. We prefer to divide the Johannine usage of the term *the Jews* into six categories.

- a) The general usage of *the Jews* (2:6; 4:1-42) is often considered as neutral. Even though in these instances the term “the Jews” is used to refer to a group of people who stick firm to certain ritual performances that are not significant for the fourth evangelist any longer (2:6; 4:20), we count these references as neutral. The evangelist does not pass any direct disapproving verdict on these Jewish practices.
- b) Though not common, the fourth evangelist identifies the crowd with *the Jews* (6:1-59). Here the ignorance of the group called “the Jews” is emphasised rather than their enmity. It is significant to note that this usage is interchangeable with the disciples (6:61-64). They follow Jesus; however, they waver at decisive moments.
- c) *The Jews* who really oppose Jesus. They have authority to question (1:19-28; 2:13-22), they are concerned with Sabbath rules (8:12-59). They are against God (5:1-47) and have the devil as their father (8:12-59). They are cunning and act hypocritically (18:1-19:42).
- d) The Pharisees who question the believers on religious matters like baptism (1:19-24). They lead the opponents (7:1-52). They try to persecute the followers of Jesus (9:1-10:21).
- e) The Jews who are cordial to Jesus’ disciples (11:1-57).
- f) The Jews who believed in Jesus (the disciples).

These six categories consist of those who believed, those who wavered initially but later came to genuine faith (the secret believers like Nicodemus) and those who denied Jesus totally. It means that the term “Jews” does not carry any consistent pejorative nuance in the fourth gospel. The evangelist attributes negative traits to the connotation of the term only when he refers to the group who oppose Jesus and his disciples on account of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Of the six categories above, we divide the referent of the term *the Jews* in the fourth gospel into two main domains: the hostile and the non-hostile groups. In the non-hostile sense, the term is used to highlight the salvific significance of the Jews as the people of God and to denote the Jewish identity of Jesus. The believers in this sense represent the true descendents of the First Testament people of God.

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In the hostile sense, the term represents those who rejected Jesus, the Messiah. In John's perspective, by denying the Messiah, they proved that they are not true descendants of the people of God. For the fourth evangelist, the First Testament notion of the people of God assumes a new meaning in the person of Jesus. All those who accept Jesus become the new people of God. It is significant to observe that, as we have seen before, John widens the scope of the term beyond the ethnic boundaries. Hence the non-Jews can be members of the new people of God. Similarly, we can argue that even a non-Jew can be a possible referent of "the Jews". Because, for John, the hostile sense of the term "the Jews" is characterised not by any ethnical or sanguinal bonds, but by one's reluctance to establish a credal bond with Jesus.¹⁰ If the sense of the term is wider than the members of Judaism, why is the evangelist consistent in using "the Jews" to refer to those who refused to believe in Jesus? The only plausible answer is that for John, Jesus is the Messiah expected by the Jews, from whom the salvation comes (4:22). Since the salvation has come in the person of Jesus, those who accept the Messiah became children of God or true Israelites (cf. 1:47) and those who rejected to believe in Jesus failed to be real Jews.

Notes

- ¹ As far as I know, this fact has gone unnoticed. For various versions of the list of misunderstanding in the gospel, see NICHOLSON, *Death as Departure*, 121; CULPEPPER, *Anatomy*, 161-162. For a comprehensive list, see CARSON, *Understanding and Misunderstandings*, 91, who points out 64 instances. But most of the examples among this list are not instances of irony.
- ² Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 1983:164-165.
- ³ Duke 1985:43-46,95-98,111-114.
- ⁴ M. BRUMLIK, *Johannes*, 104-108.
- ⁵ U. C. VON WAHLDE, *Johannine Jews: A Critical Survey*, in *NTS* 28 (1982), 54-74.
- ⁶ Cf. BROWN, *John*, I, lxxi-lxxiii.
- ⁷ See SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, I, 287.
- ⁸ R. FULLER, *The Jews in the Fourth Gospel*, in *Dialog* 16 (1977), 31-37, argues that the Johannine notion of *oi Ioudaioi* originated from the historical hostility between the Baptist group and the Sanhedrin.
- ⁹ TANZER, *Salvation is for the Jews*, 285-300.
- ¹⁰ BULTMANN, *Johannes*, 59.

Purpose of the Gospel: Jesus Is the Messiah and the Son of God

The fourth evangelist explicitly states in 20:30-31 that the purpose of his gospel is twofold: (i) to present the incarnated Jesus as the expected Messiah of the Jews, (ii) to prove that the Messiah who came in the person of Jesus is the Son of God. The identity of Johannine Jesus is defined in terms of Messiah and Son of God. The Messianic concept is fundamental to Judaism, and the evangelist. This chapter is an attempt to unearth the Johannine usage of the popular Jewish beliefs and traditions that shaped the Johannine narratives in the present form.

I. Popular Beliefs Regarding the Arrival of the Messiah

The following Jewish popular beliefs formulate the primary background to the Johannine narratives. John wanted to affirm that all of the Jewish traditions and popular beliefs are fulfilled in the person of Jesus, and there is no meaning in waiting for another Messiah. In fact, through these narratives the evangelist is inviting the Jews to believe in the person of Jesus.

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1. Jesus' miracle of turning water into wine recalls several Old Testament passages that predicted an abundance of wine in the messianic age: "The Old Testament prophecies of the messianic age predict an abundance of wine, an image of the celebration expected at the time of the Messiah (Gen 49:10-11, Amos 9:13-14, Isa 25:6-8). The mountains will drip with new wine in the coming messianic age! The reason that wine and abundant food are used as a metaphor for the coming age is that it takes a significant time to cultivate a vineyard and even longer before it can be used to produce an excellent wine. The messianic age is therefore a time when vineyards can be cultivated because it is an age of peace and prosperity."
2. According to the Jewish popular belief, the messiah would first appear in the temple on a Passover feast. Our Lord had been in Jerusalem many times during the years before his public ministry began. He had been to the temple and had seen many of the sights which he saw on this occasion, but he had taken no action in response. Now, however, he is going to Jerusalem as the Messiah, and he will fulfill Malachi's prophecy about the Messiah, "The Lord whom you see shall suddenly come to his temple," (Malachi 3:1b), "and he will purify the sons of Levi," (Malachi 3:3b). This is the background for what our Lord did when he arrived in Jerusalem. In order to fulfill this popular belief regarding the coming of the Messiah, John presented the temple cleansing event at the very outset of Jesus' public ministry.
3. The Midrash, an ancient collection of Jewish folklore and Biblical commentary, states that the Spirit of the Lord that is spoken of in Isaiah 11:1-2 as resting upon the Messiah is the same Spirit of the Lord that moved over the primeval waters of Creation: "The Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." This was the Spirit of Messiah as it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him (Genesis Rabbah 1:2). In order to fulfill this traditional faith the fourth evangelist presents Jesus as the one who makes believers born again in water and Spirit.
4. It was another popular Jewish belief that when the Messiah comes, the divisions in Judaism will come to an end. The theological issue which divided Jews and Samaritans was the dispute over the central place of worship. Was it Mount Gerizim? Or, was it at Jerusalem, where the Jews insisted? The question would become

irrelevant at the arrival of the Messiah. With the coming of Messiah, no longer did man need to seek God's presence in one place. God is not to be worshipped in a place, but in a person, Jesus Christ. This popular belief is masterfully made use of by the evangelist in creating the narrative in chapter 4.

5. It was believed by the Jews that the Messiah will heal all the ailments of Israel. He will cure the physically vulnerable such as the blind, the deaf, lame and dumb (Isa 35: 5-7). Isaiah 53:4a also states this fact. This idea of the Messiah as the miracle worker is effectively incorporated in the healing narratives of the gospel (4:46-54; 5:1-19; 9:1-38).
6. The Jews held the traditional belief that when the Messiah appears, he will reveal the "hidden manna." In order to grasp the meaning of the hidden manna we have to learn the traditions regarding the manna: (i) An omer of manna was kept in a golden jar as a memorial for all generations of Jews to see (Heb 9:4). The stated intent of storing this manna is not to hide but to show it to all future generations of Jews. This is the only manna that could be stored without spoiling (Ex 16:20). It was supernaturally preserved! (ii) this manna was stored inside the ark of the covenant in a golden jar in the tabernacle of the Holy of Holies. (iii) The jar of manna was not in the ark of the covenant when it was moved to Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 8:9). Where was it? It was either lost or hidden before the dedication of Solomon's Temple. (iv) According to Jewish legend, Jeremiah showed his generation the jar of manna to encourage them to study the Law and to strengthen their faith. The legend, if not historical, is a good illustration of God's purpose in storing the manna. (v) The questions we must answer are: Who hid the jar of manna? When was it hidden? Where was it hidden? Why was it hidden? Is it called "hidden manna" because it was placed in the ark and hidden from everyone for a while? Or was it hidden somewhere before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.? Is it and perhaps the ark of the covenant still hidden? Or was it destroyed along with the ark by the Babylonians? (vi) A Jewish legend says it was hidden by King Josiah about 25 years before the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar and that it will be recovered in the Messianic time (Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, III, § 112). (vii) Another Jewish legend says the jar of manna that mysteriously disappeared will be revealed by the Messiah.

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The evangelist judiciously makes use of this concept in framing the bread of life discourse in chapter 6. Jesus told the Jewish people; "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die." (John 6:48-50) He is letting them know that the manna in the old days was a foreshadowing of the new covenant. Jesus was presenting himself as the new manna, mysteriously hidden down through the centuries.

7. The early Jewish believers in Jesus considered him the fulfillment of the Passover lambs that were yearly sacrificed. "*Messiah, our pesach, has been sacrificed for us*" (1 Cor 5:7). John in his gospel noted that Jesus died at the same time that the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple (see Jn 19:4) and that like the Passover lambs, none of his bones were broken (*the others being crucified had their leg bones broken by the Romans* – Jn 19:32,33,36). The idea behind all this was that just as the Israelites were redeemed from Egyptian slavery by an unblemished lamb, now men could be freed from slavery to sin by the Messiah, the Lamb of God.
8. The Jews believed that when the messiah come, his identity will be mysteriously hidden from the world. Whilst this messianic expectation has helped to preserve the Jewish people throughout history, there have always been conflicting opinions about the messiah's appearance, identity, and the implications of his coming. The confusion over exact identity of Messiah is often known as the 'Hiddenness' of the Messiah. The fourth evangelist is well aware of this traditional belief. In 7: 25-28 , we read: At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from." Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me." Here John is building up his arguments on the basis of the popular understanding of the hidden Messiah.

9. The Jewish messianic expectation was associated with shepherd imageries. There are numbers of passages in the OT that make reference to a shepherd who is to come and who is to play a significant role in the history of Israel (Is. 44:28). The identity of the shepherd is unknown. Most passages that refer to the coming shepherd are clear as to this person being the Messiah. In Ezek. 34:23, where there the shepherd's identity as the Messiah, we are made known of the nuances of the perfect shepherding of the Messiah. This messianic belief functions as the hermeneutical key behind the metaphor of the good shepherd in Jn 10.
10. The OT prophecies concerning the messianic person, mission, accomplishments are reiterated by the fourth evangelist in view of affirming that they are fulfilled in the incarnated Son of God.

❖ **Prophecies on the Person of Messiah fulfilled in John**

- Gen 22:8 - The Lamb of God promised- Jn 1:29
- Gen 49:10 - Called Shiloh or One Sent - Jn 9:7
- Gen 49:10 - To come before Judah to regain its lost identity - Jn 11:47-52
- Ex 3:13,14 - The Great "I Am" - Jn 4:26
- Deut 18:18 - Sent by the Father to speak His word - Jn 8:28, 29
- Isa 40:11 - A shepherd-compassionate life-giver - Jn 10:10-18
- Isa 42:3 - He brings hope for the hopeless - Jn 4
- Isa 42:4 - The nations shall wait on His teachings - Jn 12:20-26
- Isa 42:7 - Blind eyes opened - Jn 9:25-38
- Isa 44:3 - He will send the Spirit of God - Jn 16:7,13
- Isa 45:23 - He will be the Judge - Jn 5:22
- Zech 11:10-11b - The Messiah would be God - Jn 14:7
- Zech 11:12-13d - The Messiah would be God - Jn 12:45
- Zech 12:10b - The Messiah would be both God and man - Jn 10:30

❖ **The Mission of the Messiah fulfilled in John**

- Lev 23:36-37 - The Drink-offering: "If any man thirst" - Jn 19:31-36
- Psa 23:1 - I am the Good Shephard" - Jn 10:11
- Gen 49:10 - To Him shall the obedience of the people be - Jn 10:16
- Isa 11:10 - The Gentiles seek Him - Jn 12:18-21
- Isa 26:19 - His power of Resurrection predicted - Jn 11:43,44
- Zech 3:8 - God's servant - Jn 17:4
- Zech 9:9b - Beheld as King - Jn 12:12-13
- Zech 9:9c - The Messiah would be just - Jn 5:30
- Zech 11:4-6c - Rejected in favor of another king - Jn 19:13-15

Logic of the Logos

Zech 12:10c - The Messiah would be rejected - Jn 1:11

Zech 13:7a - God's will He die for mankind - Jn 18:11

Zech 13:7c - Both God and man Jn 14:9

❖ **Suffering of the Messiah fulfilled in John**

Ex 12:46; Num 9:12 - Not a bone of the Lamb to be broken - Jn 19:31-36

Num 21:9 - The serpent on a pole = Christ lifted up - Jn 3:14-18

Isa 2:12 - Life comes through faith in Him - Jn 20:31

Psa 16:9-11 - Was to arise from the dead - Jn 20:9

Psa 22:14 - Died of a broken (ruptured)heart - Jn 19:34

Psa 22:15 - He thirsted - - Jn 19:28

Psa 22:31 - everything is finished" - - Jn 19:30

Psa 22:16 - They pierced His hands and His feet - Jn 19:34,37;20:27

Psa 22:18 - They parted His garments - Jn 19:23,24

Psa 22:22 - His Resurrection declared - Jn 20:17

Psa 31:13 - They took counsel to put Him to death - Jn 11:53

Psa 34:20 - Not a bone of Him broken - Jn 19:31-36

Psa 40:14 - Confronted by adversaries in the Garden - Jn 18:4-6

Psa 41:9 - Betrayed by a familiar friend - Jn 13:18

Psa 55:12-14 - Betrayed by a friend, not an enemy - Jn 13:18

Psa 69:4 - Hated without a cause - Jn 15:25

Psa 35:19 - He was hated without a cause - Jn 15:25

Psa 40:2-5 - The joy of His resurrection predicted - Jn 20:20

Deut 18:15 - "This is of a truth that prophet" - Jn 6:14

Job 19:23-27 - The Resurrection predicted - Jn 5:24-29

Deut 18:15-16 - "Had you believed Moses, you would believe me"

- Jn 5:45-47

❖ **Character of the Messiah fulfilled in John**

Deut 18:19 - Whoever will not hear must bear his sin - Jn 12:15,

2 Sam 7:16 - David's house established forever - Lu 3:31; Rev 22:16

Ps 2:6 - His Character-Holiness - Jn 8:46

Psa 40:6-8 - His delight-the will of the Father - Jn 4:34

Psa 69:9 - Zealous for the Lord's House - Jn 2:17

Psa 69:26 - The Saviour given and smitten by God - Jn 17:4; 18:11

Psa 72:16 - The corn of wheat to fall into the Ground - Jn 12:24

Song 5:16 - The altogether lovely One - Jn 1:17

Isa 6:1 - When Isaiah saw His glory - Jn 12:40-41

Isa 9:6 - The Everlasting Father, Avi Adth - Jn 8:58

Isa 9:6 - The Prince of Peace, Sar Shalom - Jn 16:33

Isa 9:7 - His Character-Just - Jn 5:30

Isa 11:2 - His Character-Wisdom, Understanding, et al - Jn 4:4-26

Isa 11:4 - His Character-Truth - Jn 14:6

❖ **Saving power of the Messiah fulfilled in John**

Psa 72:17 - His name, Yionon, will produce offspring - Jn 1:12,13

Psa 90:2 - He is from everlasting (Micah 5:2) - Jn 1:1

Psa 1:23 - He will send the Spirit of God - Jn 16:7

Isa 40:3,4 - Preceded by forerunner - Jn 1:23

Isa 48:12 - The First and the Last - Jn 1:30; Rev 1:8,17

Isa 48:17 - He came as a Teacher - Jn 3:2

Isa 49:7 - He is despised of the Nation - Jn 8:48-49

Isa 53:1 - His people would not believe Him - Jn 12:37-38

Isa 53:7c - Sacrificial lamb - Jn 1:29

Isa 53:8b - He would be judged - Jn 18:13-22

Isa 53:9c - No deceit in his mouth - Jn 18:38

Isa 53:10a - God's will that He die for mankind - Jn 18:11

Isa 53:10d - He would prosper - Jn 17:1-5

Isa 53:11a - God fully satisfied with His suffering - Jn 12:27

Isa 55:4 - A witness - Jn 18:37

Isa 59:15-16a - He would come to provide salvation - Jn 6:40

Isa 61:1-2c - Provide freedom from the bondage of sin and death
- Jn 8:31-32

Isa 61:1-2 - Proclaim a period of grace - Jn 5:24

Mic 5:2b - God's servant - Jn 15:10

II. Messianic Titles of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel

1. Christ (Gk. *christos*) – literally meaning “the anointed one”; used 19 times in John: 1:17, 20, 25, 41; 3:28; 4:25, 29; 7:26, 27, 31, 41 [twice], 42; 9:22; 10:24; 11:27; 12:34; 17:3; 20:31.
2. Messiah (Gk. *messias*) – a transliteration of this Hebrew title is used only twice in the entire New Testament, both times in John:
 - 1:41 – when Andrew tells his brother Simon, “We have found the *Messiah*,” the evangelist says this means “*Christ/Anointed*”;
 - 4:25 – the Samaritan woman tells Jesus, “I know that *Messiah* is coming (who is called *Christ*). When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.”
3. Lord/Sir/Master (Gk. *kyrios*) – used 52 times in John:
4. Savior (Gk. *soter*) – used only once in John: 4:42b - *Savior of the world*” (4:42b).

Logic of the Logos

5. Rabbi (Gk. *rabbi*) – used eight times in John, usually by disciples directly addressing Jesus:
 - 1:38 (by two disciples); 1:49 (by Nathanael); 3:2 (by Nicodemus)
 - 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; and 11:8 (by various unnamed disciples)
 - In only one case is John the Baptizer called “Rabbi” by some of his own disciples (3:26)
6. Rabbouni (Gk. *rabbouni*) – used only twice in the whole NT:
 - Mark 10:51 – Bartimaeus speaking to Jesus
 - John 20:16 – Mary Magdalene recognizing the risen Jesus
7. Teacher (Gk. *didaskalos*) – used eight times in John, mostly of Jesus:
 - 1:38 – the Evangelist explains that “Rabbi” means “Teacher”
 - 3:2 – Nicodemus addresses Jesus
 - 3:10 – Jesus calls Nicodemus a “teacher of Israel”
 - 8:4 – scribes and Pharisees address Jesus
 - 11:28 – Martha tells her sister Mary about Jesus: “the teacher is here and is calling you”
 - 13:13, 14 – Jesus twice refers to himself as “Teache and Lord”
 - 20:16 – the Evangelist explains that “Rabbouni” means “Teacher”
8. Son of God (Gk. *huios tou theou*) - used nine times in John, always referring to Jesus:
 - 1:34 – John the Baptizer testifying about Jesus
 - 1:49 – Nathanael speaking to Jesus
 - 3:18 – the Evangelist speaking about Jesus
 - 5:25 – Jesus speaking of himself
 - 10:36 – Jesus quoting his own previous words
 - 11:4 – Jesus speaking of himself
 - 11:27 – Martha speaking to Jesus
 - 19:7 – the Jews speaking to Pilate about Jesus’s claims
 - 20:31 – the Evangelist summarizing the purpose of the Gospel, that the readers should believe in Jesus
 - The term “Son” alone is also used many more times in John (see below).
9. Son of Man (Gk. *huios tou anthropou*) – used 13 times in John, almost always by Jesus referring to himself:

- 1:51; 3:13, 14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23; 13:31
 - Jesus refers to himself
 - 12:34 - some people ask Jesus, “We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the *Son of Man* must be lifted up? Who is this *Son of Man*?”
10. Son of David (Gk. *huios tou David*) – not directly used in John; only one reference is closely related:
- 7:42 – Some people ask, “Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is *descended from David* and comes from Bethlehem, the village where *David* lived?”
11. King of the Jews (Gk. *basileus ton Ioudaion*) – used six times in John, only during the trial of Jesus before Pilate and in reference to the *titulus* over the cross:
- 18:33 – Pilate asks Jesus, “Are you the *King of the Jews*?”
 - 18:39 – Pilate asks the Jews, “Do you want me to release for you the *King of the Jews*?”
 - 19:3 – Soldiers taunt Jesus, saying, “Hail, *King of the Jews*!”
 - 19:19 – The inscription on the cross with the charges against Jesus says, “Jesus of Nazareth, the *King of the Jews*.”
 - 19:21 – The chief priests tell Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The *King of the Jews*,’ but, ‘This man said, I am *King of the Jews*.’”
12. King of Israel (Gk. *basileus tou Israel*) – used only four times in the entire NT:
- Matt 27:42 and Mark 15:32 – people taunting Jesus on the cross
 - John 1:49 – Nathanael saying, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the *King of Israel*!”
 - John 12:13 – crowds shouting as Jesus enters Jerusalem

Chapter 5

Structure of the Fourth Gospel

In any good piece of literature, *what* is said is essentially related to *how* it is said. This is true concerning the fourth gospel as well. Christology and discipleship are interwoven in the gospel in such a way that they appear inseparable. The fourth gospel is the story of the Messiah as well as the story of his followers. The identity of Jesus is revealed in the gospel through the gradual comprehension of the disciples, which is pronounced in the form of their faith confessions: Nathanael (1:49); Peter (6:69) The man born blind (9:39) - Thomas (20:28) - The Beloved disciple (21:7).

The gospel itself provides certain parameters to define its structure: The prologue (1:1-18), 13:1 marks a new section; 18:1 marks another section; 20:30-31 is a conclusion. Many scholars have tried to discuss the structure of the fourth gospel. The most influential suggestion is that of C. H. Dodd where he divides gospel into two parts: book of signs (1-12) and book of glory (13-21).¹ This division is followed by BROWN, *John*, I, cxxxvii-cxxxix. SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, I, 7, follows the two fold division but with different titles. 1:1-12:50 (Jesus

reveals himself to the world), 13:1-20:31 (Jesus reveals himself to his own). SMALLEY, *The Evangelist and Interpreter*, 290, suggested a sevenfold structure to the gospel based on the seven signs, seven discourses and seven “I am sayings” in the gospel.

Various structural analyses of the fourth gospel had been made by different scholars. A few examples are suggested below.

1. Raymond E. Brown

1:1-18 The Prologue

An introduction to and summary of the career of the incarnate Word

1:19 - 12:50 Part One: The Book of Signs

The Word reveals himself to the world and to his own, but they will not accept him.

13:1 - 20:31 Part Two: The Book of Glory

To those who accept him, the Word shows his glory by returning to the Father in death, resurrection, and ascension. Fully glorified, he communicates the Spirit of life.

21:1 - 25 Epilogue

A series of resurrection appearances in Galilee of theological import.

2. Francis J. Moloney, SDB

I. The Prologue (1:1-18)

II. The Book of Signs (1:19 - 12:50)

A. The First Days of Jesus (1:19-51)

B. From Cana to Cana (2:1 - 4:54)

C. The Feasts of “the Jews” (5:1 - 10:42)

D. Jesus turns toward “the hour” (11:1 - 12:50)

III. The Book of Glory (13:1 - 20:31)

A. The Last Discourse (13:1 - 17:26)

B. The Passion (18:1 - 19:42)

C. The Resurrection (20:1-29)

IV. The Conclusion to the Gospel (20:30-31)

V. Epilogue: Further Resurrection Appearances (21:1-25).

3. Festal Structure of the Gospel

Prologue: ‘In the beginning.’ (1:1-18)

- I. *First week* of the messianic ministry: Jesus revealed as the Messiah. The week ends with the first ‘sign’ at Cana (1:19 - 2:11)

Logic of the Logos

- II. *First Passover* with its accompanying events, ending with the second ‘sign’ at Cana (2:12 - 4:54)
- III. *Sabbath ‘of the paralytic’*: Jesus cures the man at the Bethzatha pool (5:1 - 47)
- IV. *The Passover ‘of the bread of life’*: miracle of the loaves and the subsequent discourse (6:1-71)
- V. *The feast of Tabernacles* with the cure of the man born blind (7:1-10:21)
- VI. *The feast of Dedication* and the resurrection of Lazarus (10:22-11:54)
- VII. *Week of the Passion* and the crucifixion Passover (11:55-19:42)
- VIII. *The resurrection* and week of apparitions (20:1-29)
- IX. *Appendix*: concerning the Church and the expectation of Christ’ return (21:1-25)

4. Passion Structure

- A. Prologue (1:1-18)
- B. Jesus’ Ministry (1:19 - 12:50)
 - I. Proclamation of the New Order: The Ministry of Jesus (1:19 - 4)
 - II. The Second Feast at Jerusalem: First Opposition to Revelation (5)
 - III. The Passover of the Bread of Life: Further Opposition to Revelation (6)
 - IV. The Feast of Shelters: the Great Rejection (7:1 - 10:21)
 - V. The Feast of Dedication: the Decision to kill Jesus (10:22 - 42)
 - VI. Jesus moves towards his Death (11:1 - 12)
- C. Jesus’ Hour Comes: the Passion and the Resurrection (13 - 20)
 - I. Jesus’ Last Meal with his Disciples (13 - 17)
 - II. The Passion (18 - 19)
 - III. The Day of Christ’s Resurrection (20:1 - 29)
 - IV. First Conclusion (21:30 - 31)
- D. Epilogue (21)
 - I. The Appearance on the Shore of Tiberias (21:1 - 23)
 - II. Second Conclusion (21:24 - 25)

5. The Itinerary Structure of the Fourth Gospel

As a result of a diachronic and synchronic reading of the text, the structure of the fourth gospel must be conceived differently. In order to explore the disciple’s role in the fourth gospel as well as the Johannine presentation of the theme of discipleship we suggest the following structure to the fourth gospel. We present a journey structure

to the gospel in which Jesus' earthly life is presented as the events happening in and through his four expeditions to Jerusalem accompanied by his disciples. The itinerary character of the structure can be defended on the basis of five inferences. (i) The Johannine christology is basically an itinerary since Jesus is presented as the one who came from the Father and returns to the Father. (ii) The whole of Jesus' public life is presented in the gospel within the parameters of Jesus' four journeys to Jerusalem. (iii) The evangelist follows certain specific structural paradigms in presenting each itinerary section. (iv) Discipleship is a walking toward Jesus who is walking ahead (1:37; cf. 21:22 - *su, moi akolougei*). (v) Jesus' public journeys to Jerusalem amidst the encircling rivalries reveal to the disciples/believers that discipleship is publicly following Jesus regardless of the consequences, including death.² Based on these foundations we suggest the following chiasmic itinerary structure to the fourth gospel.

- A** Prologue: Jesus comes to "his own" (1:1-18)
- B** Introduction: Preparation: Gathering of the disciples [from the world] (1:19-51)
- C** First Return Trip to Jerusalem (2:1-4:54): The beginning of a new movement, the emergence of inclusive disciples.
- D** Second Return Trip to Jerusalem (5:1- 6:71): The disciples leave Jesus, enmity begins.
- E** Third Return Trip to Jerusalem (7:1- 10:39): Enmity grows but faith wins.
- E**¹ Fourth Trip to Jerusalem (10:40-12:50): Enmity climaxes, yet followers increase.
- D**¹ Jesus' farewell to disciples before his journey to the Father (13:1-17:25)
- C**¹ Jesus' return to the Father and the creation of the new community (18:1-20:18)
- B**¹ Conclusion: Jesus sends the disciples into the world (20:19-29[31])
- A**¹ Epilogue: "His own" believe and follow Jesus (21:1-25)

The legitimacy of this structure can be demonstrated on the basis of the following structural paradigms observed in every section. (i) Each section starts with a sign/symbolic act. (ii) Each section has two major discourses that are interlocked, one about the identity of

Events	First trip	Second	Third	Fourth	Farewell	Final
Initial sign/ action	2:1-12	5:1-9	9:1-7	11:17-44	13:1-12	18:1-9
Discourse on Jesus' identity	4:7-30	5:10-47	10:1-18	11:1-44	14-15	18:33-38
Discourse on discipleship	3:1-36	6:22-71	9:8-41	12:20-50	16-17	19:25-27
Jesus' identity	Messiah, 4:25-26	The Son sent by the Father, 5:37	Light of the world, 8:12	Eternal Life, 11:25	Way to the Father, 14:6	King of Israel
Disciples' mission	Believe in the Son, 3:36	Receive the Son, 5:45	Witness, 9:27	Lose life, 11:16,25	Unite, 17:11	Do not deny
Misunderstanding of the disciples	On three days, 2:19-20	On food 6:5-9	On Jesus' whence 8:21-22	On sleep 11:11-14	On going, 16:16	On Jesus' death
Opponents	3:22-4:3 Followers of John the Bapt	6:66, The schismatics	The Jews 8:39-47	The chief priests, 11:45-52	The world	Jewish leaders
Trait of discipleship	3:3,5, To be born a n/wqen	6:58- Eat the heavenly bread	Remain in Jesus 8:31	Readiness to die 11:16	Love 15:17	Do not deny
Contrasting models of faith	Nicodemus, 3:1f & Sam. woman, Jn4	Schismatics & the twelve 6:66-68	The blind, & Jews 9:8-41	Judas and Mary	Bd and Peter	Joseph.Ari.&Mary Mag 19-20
Conflicting choice	3:6, Flesh and Spirit	5:29, Good and evil	Light and darkness 8:12	Death and Life	World or Jesus	Truth or Lie
Concluding remarks on discipleship	4:53-54	6:66-71	10:40	12:44-50	17:26	20:17-18

Jesus and the other on the identity of the disciples/believers. (iii) Each section symbolically highlights the disciples' misunderstanding. (iv) Each section mentions a group of opponents. (v) In each section the followers of Jesus are asked to choose between the opposites, good and evil. (vi) Each section progressively reveals the identity of Jesus as well as the disciples. (vii), Each section presents a pair of disciples who are contrasting paradigms of faith. (viii) Each section ends with a note on discipleship.

A detailed structure of each journey of Jesus to Jerusalem (as envisioned in the above mentioned itinerary structure) is given in what follows.

1. First Round Trip to Jerusalem (2:1-4:54)

- A 2:1-12 First Cana miracle (disciples believe in Jesus)
- B 2:13-25 Encounter of Jesus with the Judeans (Jesus distrusts the Jews)
- C 3:1-21 Jesus and Nicodemus (failure in witnessing)
- D 3:22-36 John's authentic witnessing (model disciple)
- C¹ 4:1-30, 39-42 Jesus and the Samaritans (effect of witnessing)
- B¹ 4:31-38 Jesus with his disciples (Jesus entrusts mission to the disciples)
- A¹ 4:43-54 Second Cana miracle (a Gentile family believes)

2. The Second Round Trip (5:1-6:72)

- A 5:1-9 the miracle on a Jewish feast day (in Jerusalem)
- B 5:10-47 discourse on the Father who sent the Son from heaven
- A¹ 6:1-21 two miracles on the Jewish Passover feast (in Galilee)
- B¹ 6:22-71 the discourse on the bread that came down from heaven

3 The Third Round Trip (7:1-10:39)

Initial setting - Dispute over the Journey: the brothers leave Jesus (7:1-10).

- A Identity of Jesus: "the one sent by the Father" (7:10-36)
- B Identity of the believers: the source of the living water (7:36-39)
- C Identity of the Jews: Those who have the scripture and law, but they failed to grasp them by failing to see the Messiah in Jesus (40-52)
- A¹ Identity of Jesus: the one testified by the Father (8:12-30)
- B¹ Identity of the disciples: those freed by truth (8:31-36)
- C¹ Identity of the Jews: sons of Abraham, but by rejecting Jesus they accepted the devil as their Father (8:37-58)

Logic of the Logos

- A²** Identity of Jesus: the light of the world who gives sight (9:1-12)
- B²** Identity of the disciple: the one witnesses boldly that Jesus is from God (9:13-38)
- C²** Identity of the Jews: disciples of Moses, but accused of being blind and are judged as sinners (9:39-41, cf. v. 28 also)
- A³** Identity of Jesus: the good shepherd (10:1-11)
- B³** Identity of the believers/disciples: the new flock of Jesus (10:12-21)
- C³** Identity of Jews: Flock of God, but by rejecting the Messiah (the good shepherd) they are out of God’s flock (10:22-39)

This structure reveals that those who believe in the true identity of Jesus are contrasted with the Jews who opposed Jesus.

4 The Fourth Journey

- A** Jesus’ retreat to Bethany of John the Baptist (10:40-11:16)
- B** Jesus comes forward to the Bethany of Lazarus (11:17-45)
- C** Jesus is rejected by Jews (11:46-53)
- A¹** Jesus’ retreat to Ephraim (11:54-57)
- B¹** Jesus comes forward to Bethany of Lazarus and to Jerusalem (12:1-36a)
- C¹** The Jews are warned of being rejected by God: final retreat from the Jews (12:36b-50)

5 The Disciples as Dialogue Partners of Jesus (Jn 13-17)

As the following table illustrates, the farewell discourse is present as an ongoing dialogue between Jesus and his disciples.

Dialogue partner of Jesus	Common paradigm				
	Personal exchange	Jesus’ demand	Reference to Jesus’ relation to Father	Promise	Return of Jesus
Peter 13:6-20	13:6	Believe in Jesus’ divinity 13:19	13:16	13:17- blessed	13:20
Beloved disciple 13:21-35	13:23	Love one another 13:34	13:31	13:35- All will know	13:33
Peter (13:36-14:4)	13:36-38	14:1, Believe in God and Jesus	14:2	14:3: will be with him	14:3-4

Thomas (14:5-7)	14:4-6	14:6, know God and Jesus	14:6b	14:7, You know Father	14:7
Philip (14:8-21)	14:8-10	Believe in the Father and Jesus, 14:11	14:12-14	14:15-17, Spirit	28-31
Jude (14:22- 15:26)	14:22	Abide in Jesus 15:7	14:27- 15:17	14:25-26, Spirit	14:23-24
Disciples 16:1-33	16:1-6,12	Ask in Jesus name, 16:23	16:4-5,10	16:13-14, Spirit	16:16
[The Father] 17:1-26	17:1-2	Make God known 17:10	17:22-24	17:21, “they may be in us”	[17:26]

6. Jesus’ Journey to the Father (18:1-19:42)

- A** Symbolic Act: Jesus reveals his “I am” divine identity to the disciples and opponents: but Peter misunderstands (18:1-11)
- B** Simon Peter denies his identity as disciple (18:12- 27): Trials before the high priests
- C** Trial and sentence before Pilate (18:28 -19:24): Jesus’ identity as the king of Israel is disclosed but Jews deny their identity by accepting Caesar their king
- B¹** The beloved disciple accepts his identity (19:25- 27): Identity of the believers
- A¹** Real Act: Death and Resurrection: Jesus vindicates his divine identity (19:28-19:42)

7. Seven Scenery Structure of the Resurrection Narrative

Based on these seven scenes, we can suggest the following chiastic structure to Jn 20:19-29.

- A** **Scene 1:** *The Disciples who have the “Good News” but do not have the vision of Jesus* (19a-e)
- B** **Scene 2:** *The presence of Jesus: Disciples believe* (vv. 19f- 21)
- C** **Scene 3:** *Jesus’ invitation to receive the Spirit and mission* (22-23)

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D **Scene 4:** *The disciples who saw Jesus and the disciple who has not seen Jesus (24-25)*

C¹ **Scene 5:** *Jesus' invitation to faith (v. 26-27)*

B¹ **Scene 6:** *The presence of Jesus: Thomas Believes (v. 28)*

A¹ **Scene 7:** *The future believers who have only the Good News, not the vision of Christ (v.29).*

8. The Epilogue (21:1-25): Conduction of Johannine Discipleship

A The miracle (Jesus and the disciples) (21:1-6)

B The beloved disciple and Peter (21:7-8)

A¹ The meal: (Jesus and the disciples) (21:9-19)

B¹ Peter and the beloved disciple (21:20-25)

Notes

¹ DODD, Historical Tradition, 23,

² See SEGOVIA, Journey of Jesus, 540.

Prologue: He Comes to His Own (1:1-18)

John should have been impelled by his image of Christ to pursue the “history” of Jesus back into his preexistence, to transpose the opening narrative into the ultimate origins and the proclaim them in a confession of praise. The prologue then is a considered composition placed at the beginning for Christological reasons. The evangelist must have used a primitive Christian hymn which celebrated the preexistence and incarnation of Christ, added his own comments and forged links (the verses referring to John the Baptist) between it and the Gospel narrative. V. 18 is part of the hymn; it leads precisely to the point where the Gospel can start with its image: the work of revelation done by the incarnate Logos. All other hymns of Christ contain the three modes (preexistence, incarnation and exaltation; see 1 Tim 3, 16; Phil 2, 6-11; Col 1, 15-20) of being of Christ. In the prologue the exaltation is not explicitly mentioned, though it is presupposed (v. 16). The prologue concludes with appointed statement of the one historical (aorist) revelation brought by the unique Son of God. The prologue has rather the character of a

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theological “opening narrative,” the believer’s telling of the prehistory which becomes the “history of Jesus” at the historical turning point of the incarnation.

Origin of the Prologue

The conviction has prevailed in recent research that the prologue is based on a song or hymn which was taken up by the evangelist and used for the beginning of his Gospel. The poetical and rhythmical sentences point to a hymnic origin of the prologue. The movement of thoughts – breaks and sudden switches – reinforces the idea that a hymn had been worked over and added to. The Johannine style and terminologies (e.g. dwelling of the Logos, grace) are different from those in the prologue.

There were several attempts to reconstruct the original hymn. The element of uncertainty is inherent in any such reconstructions. In the light of the present structure of the hymn we may distinguish three sections: 1:1-5, the preexistent being of the Logos; 1:6-13, the coming of the Logos to the world of the men, the incarnation being already hinted at, and his incomprehensible rejection; 1:14-18, the event of Incarnation and its meaning for the salvation the believers. If there existed a hymn upon which the author worked, it should be coming from the Hellenistic Jewish Christians as the OT allusions and the name Logos suggest.

There are various ideas among the Johannine scholars regarding the origin of the prologue. Of those, the major three arguments are presented here:

1. Authors like Bultmann argue that the prologue was a Gnostic hymn and was adopted by the evangelist. There is an opposition between God and the world; earth and heaven; above and below. This dualistic notion according to Bultmann is characteristic to Gnosticism, which tells there is heaven and earth – a myth like *Manda d’Hayye* (Knowledge of life) a being, a son of great life, who came down from and heaven destroyed the evil. He overcame the power of darkness and gave salvation. John somehow got this idea and applied it to Jesus; he came down to the earth and saved the people from the sin of darkness.

2. Some are of the opinion that it would have come from the O.T background, especially under the influence of OT Wisdom books: e.g., Sir 24:1-11 “the Praise of Wisdom,” Prov 8:20-32 “Wisdom’s

part in creation,” Wis 7:22 “The Wisdom, the fashioner of all things taught me.” 7:27: “Although she is but one, she can do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things, in every generation she passes into holy souls and make them friends of God , and prophets;” 29:30: Prov 1:20-22 Wisdom cries out in the street; in the squares she raises her voice. At the busiest of the city gates she speaks:... and foolish hate knowledge...” Wisdom of God came down to save the man.

3. Another argument is that it may be a Christological hymn, sung by the early Christian Community. And John would have borrowed this, because many hymns in the NT and Pastoral letters are similar to these hymns. For example, Eph: 1, Col 1:15-20 “All things created in Him and through Him.” Phil 2:6-11. I Tim 3:16 “He was revealed in flash, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels. Proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world taken up in glory.” Rom 1:3 “The Gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh:” Heb 5:7 “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.” Etc is source for prologue.

Letter to the Philippians	John 1:1-18
1. Though he was in the form of God	1. Word was God
2. He took human form in the likeness of men.	2. Word became/made flesh
3. God exalted	3. He is in bosom of God
Letter to Colossians	John 1:1-18
1. Jesus in the image of invisible God	1. Word of God
2. All things were created in and through him.	2. All things were created through him.

The Structure of the Prologue

There are three opinions regarding the structuring of the prologue:
 a. According to subject matter, b. Parallel study (one by one study);
 c. Concentric Parallelism.

1. According to subject matter.

- a. Prologue can be divided according ideas found in these 18 verses
 - 1:1-5 Word in its relation to God and creation

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- 1:6-8 John the Baptist
- 1:9-13 words came to world how it was received by world.
- 1:14-18 Incarnation word taking flesh

b. The following table illustrates the structure of the prologue suggested by three major commentators of the fourth gospel:

Brown (1966)	Barrett (1978)	Beasley-Murray (1987)
1-2 Word with God	1-5 Cosmological	1-5 Word & creation
3-5 Word & Creation	6-8 John's witness	6-8 Witness to Word
* 6-9 addition	9-13 Coming of Light	9-13 Reactions to the
10-12b The Word in the World	& failure to accept it	Word in the World
* 12c-13 added	14-18 Economy of	14 & 16 Community's
14-18 Confession of the	Salvation	share in the Word
Word by the Church		
* 15 added		
* 17-18 added		

2. Parallel study (one by one study) By Lagrange

- ▶ 1:1-15..... How the word in God.
- ▶ 1:6-14..... The word in the history of salvation.
- ▶ 1:15-18.... The word in history of believers.

3. Concentric Parallelism

The second method is to structure the Prologue using literary models such as chiasms or parallelisms. This method examines the repetition of themes and words and shows the relationship between various parts of the Prologue. The chiasmic structure is represented in the writing of Alan Culpepper (among others) who presents the following schema:

A vv. 1-2	Word with God		A' v. 18
B v. 3	Creation through Word	Grace & truth	B' v. 17
C vv. 4-5	Received life	Received Grace	C' v. 16
D vv. 6-8	John the Baptist		D' v. 15
E vv. 9-10	Incarnation & response		E' v. 14
F v. 11	His own-Israel	his own-believers	F' v. 13
G v. 12a	accept the Word	believe the Word	G' v.12c
	H v. 12b to become Children of God		

The following chiasmic structure is suggested by P. Boismard.

- A. Word as in God (vv.1-2) v.18 Word in the bosom of God (a')
- B. His role in creation (v.3) v.17 His role in creation (b')
- C. Gift to man i.e. light
and life (vv.4-5) v.16 Gift to man i.e. grace (c')
- D. John the Baptist's
testimony (vv.6-8) v. 15 John the Baptist's
testimony (d')
- E. Coming of the word
in the world His own
rejected him (vv. 9-11) v.14 Incarnation (e')
- F 12- 13 from the central statement. By incarnation believers became
the children of God.

Another chiasmic structure can be suggested for the better understanding of the prologue:

- A.1-2: The Divine Word was with God eternally
- B. 3: All things came into being through him (the Word)
- C. 4-5: In him was life and light which darkness did not overcome
- D. 6-8: [John was not the light, but came to testify about the light]
- E. 9-10: The True Light was in the world, but the world did not recognize him
- F. 11-13: He came into his own realm, but his own people did not accept him
- G. 12: Those who believe in him become children of God
- F' 13: These believers are not ordinary human offspring but are born of God
- E' 14: The Incarnate Word reveals God's glory, full of grace and truth
- D' 15: [John testified about the priority of the one coming after him]
- C' 16: Out of his (the Word's) fullness, we all received grace upon grace
- B' 17: Grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ
- A' 18: The only-begotten Son has revealed God

Analysis of the Prologue

The pre-existent being of Logos (1, 1-5)

1:1, The so called Johannine prologue is the only place in the NT that the term Logos (word) is used as a title and in an absolute sense

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elsewhere, as in Rev 19, 13 it is used in combinations such as the word of God' which is a name of the exalted Christ, the 'King of kings and lord of lords. Unlike the synoptic writers, who trace the origins of divine salvation only as far back as the birth of John the Baptist, John sets the redemptive work in the cosmological context of the eternal existence of the Logos with God. The salvation wrought in Jesus; the Logos incarnate is not only for human beings but also for all other living beings.

In John 1, 1 there is a reference to Gen 1, 1 since the Logos is the word by which God created all things (v. 2). But this word more than "utterance" of God at the dawn of the creation. It is the personal "word" which became flesh at a given time of history, whose existence is here traced back to before the world, to divine eternity.

The three statements in John 1, 1 use the same verb "was" with different connotations. The first 'was' (in the beginning *was* the word) implies the eternal *existence* of the Word. The second (the Word *was* with God) denotes his eternal relationship with God. This strict union with the Father in thought, will and action, a total oneness (10, 30; 17, 10), is also proclaimed constantly by the incarnate Son of God. The preposition indicates the active partnership. And the third (the word *was* God) exhibits the identification of the word as God. It is only the fullness of divine being which the Son receives from the Father's love which guarantees his absolute power as revealer and redeemer. What did John mean by "Logos"? And how did original readers understand that term?

Logos

The prologue begins with Logos. The term Logos is used not only in theology but in philosophy too. The term *logos* has got a long history of evolution:

- The word *logos* in ordinary Greek –meant "counting, reckoning."
- **Heraclitus:** In the writing of Heraclitus (c. 535 – c. 475 BC) the word *logos* was used with a meaning not significantly different from the way it was used in ordinary Greek of his time. For Heraclitus *logos* provided the link between rational discourse and the world's rational structure. All things come to be in accordance with this *logos*, but humans are unable to conceive the *logos*. What *logos* means here is not absolutely certain: it may mean 'reason'

or 'explanation' in the sense of an objective cosmic law.. However, an independent existence of a universal logos was clearly suggested by Heraclitus.

- **Aristotle's** (384 - 322 BC.) **rhetorical logos:** Aristotle, in the *Ars Rhetorica*, gave logos a different technical definition as argument from reason, one of the three modes of persuasion (the other two modes are pathos (Greek: $\delta\ddot{U}\grave{e}\grave{i}\grave{o}$), persuasion by means of emotional appeal: "putting the hearer into a certain frame of mind", and ethos ($\&\grave{e}\grave{i}\grave{o}$), persuasion through convincing listeners of one's "moral character."). According to Aristotle, logos relates to "the speech itself, in so far as it proves or seems to prove." For Aristotle, logos is something more refined than the capacity to make private feelings public: it enables the human being to perform as no other animal can; it makes it possible for him to perceive and make clear to others through reasoned discourse the difference between what is advantageous and what is harmful, between what is just and what is unjust, and between what is good and what is evil.
- **Stoics:** In Stoic philosophy, which began with Zeno of Citium c. 300 BC, the logos was the active reason pervading and animating the universe. It was conceived of as material, and is usually identified with God or Nature. The Stoics also referred to the seminal logos, ("logos spermatikos") or the law of generation in the universe, which was the principle of the active reason working in inanimate matter. Humans, too, each possess a portion of the divine logos.
- **Isocrates' logos:** Isocrates makes a distinction between philosophia and logos, Their partnership, according to him, generating an ethical, mindful community (polis). Isocratean logos characteristically focuses on speech, reason, and civic discourse. According to him, logos is the principle that generates the sense of common good among the people.
- **Logos in Hellenistic Judaism:** In the Septuagint the term logos is used for the word of God in the creation of heaven in Psalm 33:6, and in some related contexts.
- **Philo of Alexandria** (20 BC - 50 AD): Philo, a hellenized Jew, used the term Logos to mean an intermediary divine being. Philo followed the Platonic distinction between imperfect matter and

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perfect idea, and therefore intermediary beings were necessary to bridge the enormous gap between God and the material world. The Logos was the highest of these intermediary beings, and was called by Philo “the first-born of God.” Philo also wrote that “the Logos of the living God is the bond of everything, holding all things together and binding all the parts, and prevents them from being dissolved and separated.”

OT Background of *Logos*

1. *Dabar*

The term *dabar* is the equivalent term to “*logos*” in the OT. It has got some power and equality to God. In Hebrew it refers to more than a spoken word. In Hebrew thought “*Dabar*,” has certain energy, power and dynamism of the source.

According to the OT understanding, the word of God is very effective and always ends with the meaning of a creative event.

- ❖ Word has creative power e.g. *Let there be light, and there was light and there was light* (Gen 1:3).
- ❖ God’s word is effective. For example, Hosea 6:5: “therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have killed them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth as the light” Is 11:4 “but the righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.” The efficacy of the Word is stated in Heb 4:12 “Indeed the, word of the God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from sprit, joins from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” It ends in action.
- ❖ God’s word is salvific God created the word same way he brought salvation. Gen 12:1-2 Call of Abraham and promise. Very powerful, effective and brings salvation operative. So, salvation brings effective on the man lives.
- ❖ God’s word is prophetic: Jer 1:4-19 “Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, before I formed you in the womb I knew you...
- ❖ God’s word is revelatory: God brings good news to man by word. God makes known to man his plan and ways. By his word we

come know who He is revealed? Is 2:3-5 “The word of the lord came from Jerusalem he shall judge between the nations... Let us go up to the mountain.” Is 55:10-11 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return until they have watered the earth... so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the things for which I sent it.”

2. *Memra*

In Targumic Literature (Aramaic Bible) the Aramaic term *memra* is used for *dabar* (Hebrew). The Aramaic word ‘Memra’, which means the ‘Word’ or ‘The Word of the Lord’, is used when physical manifestations of God appear or when God is mentioned more than once in the same verse. It is not only stands for word of God, but for God, Holy Spirit.

- ⊙ Memra is the creative power of God. For example, the Jerusalem Targum of Johathan ben Uziel renders Gen 1:27 as follows: “And the Memra [Word] of the Lord created man in His likeness, in the likeness of the Lord, the Lord created, male and female created He them.”
- ⊙ The Memra acts as a mediator between the Father and Creation: Targum Onkelos Gen. 17:7, And I will establish my covenant between My Word [Memra] and between you.” Again in Gn 9:7, “And YHWH said to Noah, “This is the token of the covenant which I have established between My Word [Memra] and between all flesh that is upon the earth.
- ⊙ The Memra is God and is worshiped as such: Targum Onkelos on Gen. 28:20-21, And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, “If the God [Memra] of YHWH will be my support, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the Word [Memra] of Lord be my God.

3. Wisdom

The Jewish wisdom literature has played a pivotal role in shaping the Johannine prologue. Many of the ideas found in the prologue are derived from the wisdom literature. The unique relationship between the Father and the Son is identified with the correlation between Wisdom and God in the wisdom literature. For e.g., see Wis 7:22, 22, 25-26, 29-30 Sir 20:1-12 wisdom grows in connection with the Father.

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- ◎ When the people of Israel came back from exile, they began to see a kind of parallelism between the word of God and a kind of divine wisdom.
 - Wis 9:1-2 wisdom came down on earth. Wisdom formed human beings.
 - Sir 24:3 “I came from the mouth of the most high, and covered the earth like a mist.”
 - Prov 1:24-28; Prov 8:22:-23 “The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, that first of his acts of long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.”
- ◎ In understanding and interpreting Christ, the fourth evangelist uses various strands from the accounts of wisdom.
 - Like wisdom, Christ pre-existed all things and dwelt with God (1:1-2).
 - Wisdom being the breath of the divine power, reflecting divine glory, mirroring light, and being an image of God, appears to be echoed by 1:9 (“the true light that gives light to everyone”),
 - The evangelist applies to Christ the language about wisdom’s cosmic significance as God’s agent in the creation of the world: “all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made” (1:3).
 - John does not, however, apply to Christ the themes of the female nature of Wisdom and her radiant beauty.

A closer observation reveals three contrasts between the logos in v.1 and that in v. 14. These contrasts mark the distinction between the eternal Word with the Father (*the only begotten Son*) and the incarnated Word (*Jesus*)

Jn 1:1

1. Eternity
2. Divinity
3. Present with God

Jn 1:14

- Temporary
Humanity
Present among men

1:2: This verse summarizes verses 1a and 1b, without repeating the content of 1c. The eschatological envoy of God had his origin God before all time, and this determines his nature, his dignity and authority.

1:3: Logos participates in the creation. But no exact description of how he does so is given. The preposition $\iota\omicron$ leaves several possible interpretations open. The words “all things were made through him” were not to denote service, but cooperation. The Logos – hymn

transfers God`s creative activity to the pre-existing Christ, but the use of the concept of Logos safeguards the truth that God is the creator, who called all things into being through his “word”.

1:4: Here begins a new strophe of the hymn. It describes the relationship of the Logos to the world of men. As he was the creator of all things, so too for he is the vehicle of everything that gives their particular existence its fullness and sense: life and light. The life which was in Logos means light for men. That is further explained in v. 9a-b: he was the true light which enlightens every man (see also 8, 12). The symbol of light here echoes some texts of wisdom literature such as Wis 7, 10.26.27. Two thought from these texts are important here: the power of Wisdom to create anew (to give life), and its work in souls from generation to generation. The Logos too is to fill men with the divinely spiritual life which is in keeping with their being, the life which distinguishes them from the rest of the creation. This divine life-giving force was fully present in the Logos, and he charged with imparting this life to men. He “Was” in the divine plan always “the light for men.” What the Logos should have been for men according to the plan of creation, he became in fact for the believers in his historical mission. Indeed, from the every beginning the activity of Logos is aimed at bringing men home to God`s world of light.

1:5: This verse is best understood as digression of the evangelist, who continues to meditate on the light coming to mankind from the Logos. The assertion is then concerned both with the historical coming of the Logos into the world and the time of the evangelist, in which the power of the divine light brought into the darkness of the world by the incarnate Logos still continues to work. “Darkness” in John means primarily the world estranged from God, the place of man`s existence not yet illuminated by divine light. Ultimately, it is the men themselves who yield to this darkness. It is the blinded world of men ensnared by evil that he “Darkness” in 1,5 involves.

The word here means *grasp* and not *master*. The metaphor expresses that man is called on to make his own active decision (of faith), but that he did not “lay hold” of it when it was within his grasp. However, most of the Greek fathers understood it in the sense of overwhelm. But in the context of v. 10 and 16 it means “grasp”.

The way men acted then becomes a warning to the reader not to close out the redemptive revelation of Christ, and an exhortation to embrace the light.

The mission and significance of John the Baptist (1:6-8)

1:6: It is not difficult to see that vv.6-8 Johannine addition to the existing hymn. The Evangelist's plan is to begin his account of the earthly work of Logos with the coming of John Baptist, as was the forerunner of the primitive kerygma (cf. Act 1,22; 10, 37; 13, 24, MK 1,2ff., etc.). In contrast to the "was" in reference to the Logos, here we have "appeared" in the aorist form, implying appearance at a given moment of history. Synoptic Gospels portray John as prophet but John's gospel points out John as a [n ordinary] man, sent by God.

1:7: In the fourth gospel John is the great "witness" who gives weighty testimony before official Judaism (1, 19-28), before all Israel (1, 31) and before his own disciples (1, 35ff.). There is little emphasis on the "precursor" and "prepare the way" in fulfillment of Mal 3, 1. The emphasis of John's role as witness may have apologetic reasons. But the primary purpose of witness is theological. Faith is a response to testimony, which provides support and impulse without lessening the need for personal decision. Here the faith is used absolutely, but it is clear that it is faith in Jesus. "All" points to the universal salvific will of God (3, 15-17).

1:8: Only now is the apologetical interest of the evangelist is made apparent: he combats the view that John is the light. //

1:9: This verse links up once more with v.4, and must have been originally (in the Logos - hymn) its continuation. This verse explicates the "light of men" in v.4. The attribute "true" can indicate the genuineness of a thing or person in contrast to the false or improper. With reference to God, it is used to express the fullness of being and reality in God. Throughout the gospel the light signifies Jesus (8:12).

The light has specific mission in the world, as the phrase 'was coming into the world' indicates. His goal is to transform people's evil nature in order to enable them to do good works by living in union with God.

1:10: vv. 1-11 form a new strophe in the original hymn. After the divine being and the creative activity of the Logos (v. 1 and 3) and his relationship of life and light to the world of men (vv. 4 and 9), we have a new thought: the rejection of the Logos by the world. Now the focus is on the process of history. The world means humanity. The Logos was not just the fundamental and universal principle of

light in the divine plan: he also illuminated the existence and way of man from within the world by coming close to him. However the world rejected him. The world in 10a and 10b are referring to humans and hence human history. But 10b uses it in the sense of the created world. This mixing signals that the author is going to use the term with different meanings. Here 10b indicates that the created world owed its origin not to an evil principle (as in Gnosticism).

1:11: The enigmatic and painful fact that the Logos met with rejection in the world, is expressed still more pointedly in v. 11. As usual it repeats the thought and intensified it. The aorist tense indicate that the encounter between Logos and the world took place in the reality of history. The world is called the domain or property of the Logos because it belongs to him by his creating it and is ordained to him as the world of man. The evangelist understood the verse of the historical coming of the Logos and the non - acceptance of the Jews' of the Logos. It is then quiet possible that at he thought of the people who were God's own possession, and at of the Jews as the members of his people (or even men in general) incomprehensibly rejected the eschatological savior. He could have thought of men in general as "his own", in so far as they have opposed the acceptance of the Logos in the flesh.

1:12: The above mentioned depressing fact is now contrasted with the truth that there were still some who "received" him. When looking back on his public ministry of Jesus (12: 37-43), he first states that his hearers did not believe (v. 37) and then uses scripture to explain this enigmatic hardening of their hearts (vv. 38-41). He goes on to mention the positive reaction as well (v. 42; see also 3, 32f). "Receive some one" is typical of John to speak of the acceptance of faith, of the exception of the envoy of God (5,43; 13,20, etc.). The Sonship only becomes a real possibility when the capacity thereto conferred by divine power is revealed by the mediator. This comes about through baptism (v. 13). Divine Sonship is a gift of God according to the Johannine wrirings, bestowed gratuitously by God's love on the baptized (cf. 1 JN 3,1). The relative clause in v. 13 adds a fuller explanation of how one becomes a child of God. Before becoming children one must receive the Logos in faith . Faith is the basic prerequisite for salvation, and in Johannine theology the one condition which contains all others (cf. 6,29). It implies, as the expression

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“believe in his name” indicates, the acceptance of Jesus to the full extent of his self revelation. The present verse shows what should be the active and positive response to incarnation.

1:13: Just as “to those who believe in his name” is added to explain “those who receive him”, so too v. 13 explains how to “become children of God”. It is a supernatural event wrought by God alone. The three negatives exclude natural factors in this process. In sharp antithesis to these natural processes stands the positive theological interest of the evangelist. The birth from God is the incomprehensible work of the divine spirit, utterly beyond man’s reach (3,6). Children of God have supernatural origin. The consciousness of belonging to God and being born of God characterizes the “Johannine” Christianity and gives it the certainty of being superior to the world.

1:14: The hymn to Logos now reaches its climax. It expresses the paradox that the Logos who dealt with God entered the sphere of the earthly and human, by becoming flesh. He becomes man and pitches his tent among men. This fact, though presumed from v. 9 onwards, is now made explicit. The conjunction “and” in v. 14 is confirmative, meaning indeed, truly. The verb *egeneto* (= it happened) expresses change in the mode of being of the Logos and not “Logos was changed into flesh”. This is a history centered view of salvation. The Logos becoming flesh marks a turning point in the history of salvation. It provides an eschatological possibility of salvation for humans. “Flesh” in Johannine terminology involves all what is earthly and typical human mode of being, in contrast to the idea of appearance in the Hellenism. It is possible that it contains allusions to the thought of expiatory sacrifice: “flesh for the sacrifice of the world”. Flesh indicates full human reality.

Now the hymn speaks metaphorically of “pitching his tent” or “dwelling”. It has affinities with Ecl 24:8; Enoch 42:1. But it surpasses the dwelling of Wisdom as Bar 3,37 shows: “Afterward she appeared upon earth and lived among men”. The theme of God’s dwelling among his people is also alluded since the dwelling in here is soteriological as well (Num 35:34; Jos 22:19, etc.). “We” mentioned here are those who saw the glory of the incarnate Logos, the witnesses of his work on earth and particularly of the signs whereby he revealed his glory. In spite of the flesh he and a group similar saw the glory of the eternal Logos.

The phrase “such as” defines the glory of the Son and does not involve any comparison. The Greek phrase should be translated as “the only begotten Son of God or coming from God”. The last phrase “full of grace and truth” speaks once more of the Logos. The combination of “grace and truth” has OT back ground of hesed and emeth (mercy and steadfastness). See Exod 34,6 Charis is both the riches of grace and the liberality of Logos. It does differ essentially from “spirit” and “life”. For the evangelist truth involves divine reality (4:23f., 8:44; 14:16; 17:17; 18:37).

1:15: John’s clarion call, which never ceases to ring out, testifies for all time that the incarnate Logos was the greater. It has polemic aims.

1:16 : Contrary to the opinion of the Fathers, this verse is not part of the Baptists words. For many scholars this describes the outpouring of grace on believers from the riches of the Logos (v. 14). One is reminded of the quite ordinary expression in the OT, “the fullness” of God’s grace, Ps. 5:8; 106:45etc. John however is not just thinking of the superabundant mercy of God. He also means the riches of divine life which the Logos receives from the Father (5:26) and from which he receives his own (10:10). Most modern commentators consider the preposition as indicating the ceaseless stream of grace which succeeds one another. However patristic source and philological analysis suggests the meaning of the phrase as “one grace instead of another.” The implication is new economy instead of old economy.

1:17: The evangelist refers back to the “grace and truth” of v. 14. This verse gives reason for what is said in the previous verse, namely, we have chosen one grace instead of another. In connection to this polemics see also 9,28f. The law was only “given” through Moses, whereas grace and truth “came” through Jesus Christ. This brings out the salvific character of the new economy.

1:18: Not only is the NT revelation superior to the old, it is absolutely unique because it is brought by the only begotten Son. This verse may be a reminder of Exod 33,18. The meaning of could vary according to the context. In Josephus, it means the interpretation of the law as practiced by the rabbinate. Here the absolute use of it must mean the interpretation of the law as practiced by the rabbinate. Here the absolute use of it must mean speaking of things hidden in God, tiding of divine glory. The revealer can speak with authority, because he is the only

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begotten Son, and remains most intimately united to his Father, even in his earthly life, at one with him in nature and action. Jesus reveals of Father because he is in the bosom of the Father. Because Jesus is revealer of God he can make known Father to us. At the end of the hymn, once more the evangelist affirms the full divine dignity of the Son and his unique capacity as revealer. In doing so, he prepares the ground for the subsequent account of the revelation discourse of Jesus. Thus this verse has a transitional role as well.

Prologue and Creation Account of Gn 1

Obvious allusion to creation account of Genesis can be observed in the structure and content of the prologue:

1. Fourth Gospel begins with the first words of Genesis “In the beginning”.
2. Both narratives follow a similar structure of three strophes set out in parallel between an introduction and a conclusion. The first of the three strophes in Genesis and in the Prologue develops the theme of light.

Prologue			Genesis 1		
A (3-5)	have seen	A' (14)	A (3-5)	light <=> darkness	A' (14-19)
B (6-8)	have heard	B' (15)	B (6-8)	heaven <=> earth	B' (20-23)
C (9-13)	have experienced	C' (16-17)	C (9-13)	land <=> waters	C' (24-31)
<i>Conclusion (18)</i>			<i>Climax: The Sabbath (2: 1-3)</i>		

3. Genesis portrays the six days of creation that leads to the seventh day climax. Even though this climax has no structural parallel within the Prologue, the seven day structure of 1:19-2:1 is parallel to the Genesis account.
4. In the Targums there is further evidence for linking the Prologue with the Genesis creation story. As we have seen before, in Targum Neofiti, God creates through His Memra—a term, usually translated as “word”. Memra is used in the Targums to represent God’s self-manifestation in the world. “From the beginning with wisdom, the Memra of the Lord created and rejected the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1 *Neofiti*). The Memra or Word is added, as is wisdom. These additions reflect later wisdom theology already found in the books of Proverbs (8:22-30) and Sirach

(22:1-12). In Neofiti, it is the Memra, not God who gives the command, “Let there be light” (Gen 1:3). If these Targumic traditions were familiar to the Johannine community.

5. The word which was active in creation is the *Logos* in whom “all things” were created is now the one who comes in human form for the redemption of that creation through his death and resurrection

Contemporary Implications of the Prologue

1. John’s presentation of the *Logos* who is Jesus Christ moves from God who is the Creator in the beginning, to God who reveals the Father because He knows the Father intimately. The way to sharing in this intimacy with the Father and becoming children of God (1:12) lies in believing (Gr. *pisteuein*).
2. The Christian faith that Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father from all eternity is derived from the prologue.
3. Throughout the Fourth Gospel, this belief (often to believe *in, eis*) is understood as an active commitment, one which “involves a willingness to respond to God’s demands as they are presented in and by Jesus.” This willingness to respond to Jesus is depicted here in the Prologue (1:12,13)
4. Believe in Jesus so that you will become the children of God.
5. Nobody must be worried of the darkness or evils that are growing around, because the darkness can never conquer light one who believes in Christ Jesus will never grope in darkness.
6. Just as John the Baptist did, all are called to bear witness to Jesus.

Journey Preparation: Gathering of the disciples (1:19-51)

Jn 1:19-51¹ is remarkable for the presentation of the Johannine theme of discipleship. In this part Jesus' true identity is revealed by John the Baptist and subsequently by the disciples. This section will deal with two themes: (i) The witnessing of John the Baptist, which functions as an introduction to the Johannine notion of discipleship. (ii) The effect of John the Baptist's witnessing, that is, the gathering of Jesus' primary disciples.

The Narrative Settings of John 1:19-51

L. Morris' suggestion: The opening of the narrative proper might be understood as the account of the happenings of one momentous week:

Day 1-The deputation from Jerusalem to the Baptist
(1:19-28)

Day 2-John the Baptist points out Jesus (1:29-34)

Day 3-Two of John's disciples follow Jesus
(1:35-40)

Day 4-Andrew brings Peter to Jesus (1:41-42)
[Presumably on the next day]

Day 5-(1st day) Philip and Nathanael come to Jesus (1:43-51)

Day 6-(2nd day) (no events recorded)

Day 7-(3rd day) After three days (2:1)

If this is an accurate chronological arrangement we may ask, “What is the significance of this chronology for the Evangelist?” The deliberate allusion to Gen 1:1 by the phrase *en arche* in John 1:1 suggests that the framework of John 1:19-51 is also an allusion to the seven creative days of Gen 1. It suggests creative activity -Jesus is about to engage in a new creation, just as he was active in the original creation (1:3). Nevertheless, the point should not be pressed too far, because of the omission of recorded events for day 6 and because John himself does not enumerate the days in this way (cf. 2:1, which the author describes as the 3rd day, not the 7th.

Outline:

The Introduction to the Gospel (1:19-51)

A The Witness of John the Baptist (1:19-34)

John’s witness about himself (1:19-28)

John’s witness about Jesus (1:29-34)

B Jesus acquires his first disciples from John (John 1:35-51)

Two of John’s disciples follow Jesus (1:35-39)

Andrew finds Peter and brings him to Jesus (1:40-42)

Jesus calls Philip (1:43-44)

Nathanael and his confession (1:45-51)

John’s witness about himself (1:19-28)

The triadic pattern of the roles proposed for the Baptist by the emissaries of the Pharisees:

1. Are you the Messiah? (this was not explicitly asked but was certainly implied; note John’s denial.)
2. Are you Elijah?
3. Are you the Prophet?

Note also the increasing curttness of John’s replies: (1) *I am not Christ*; (2) *I am not*; and finally (3) merely *no*. Perhaps John’s patience was wearing a bit thin or, more likely, he wished not at all to focus attention on himself but more and more on the One to whom he did come to bear witness. The following points must be clarified to get a better picture of the events:

- **Jewish Messianic Expectation:** Apparently, no uniform Jewish expectation of a single eschatological figure existed. A majority expected the Messiah. But some apocryphal books describe God's intervention without mentioning the anointed Davidic king; in parts of Enoch the figure of the Son of Man, not the Messiah, embodies the expectations of the author. Essenes at Qumran seem to have expected *three* figures: apophet, a priestly messiah, and a royal messiah.
- **The Significance of John's Baptism:** In baptizing, John was performing an eschatological action. It also seems to be part of his proclamation (1:23, 26-27). Crowds were beginning to follow him. He was operating in an area not too far from the Essene center on the Dead Sea. No wonder the authorities were curious about who he was.

John's negating answers are significant:

- John was not the Messiah - A 3rd century work, the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* [1.54 and 1.60 in the Latin text; the statement is not as clear in the Syriac] records that John's followers proclaimed him to be the Messiah. We have no clear evidence that they did so in the 1st century, however - but Luke 3:15 indicates some wondered.
- John was not Elijah - According to 2 Kings 2:11, Elijah is still alive. In Mal 4:5 it is said that Elijah would be the precursor of Messiah. How do we reconcile this with Jesus' statements in Matt 11:14 (see also Mark 9:13 and Matt 17:12) that John the Baptist is Elijah? It has been suggested that the author of the Gospel here preserves a historically correct reminiscence that John the Baptist did not think of himself as Elijah, although Jesus said otherwise. Mark 6:14-16 and Mark 8:28 indicate the people and Herod both distinguished between John and Elijah - *probably* because he did not see himself as Elijah.
- John was not the Prophet - The reference is to *the* Prophet "like Moses" mentioned in Deut 18:15-18. (Acts 3:22 identifies Jesus as this prophet.)

Who John was: According to John 1:22-23, John the Baptist was the voice crying in the wilderness. John the Baptist has "telescoped" (paraphrased) the Is 40:3 quote, which refers to a voice in the desert

crying out, “Prepare the Lord’s road, make straight his path” (LXX reads here “God’s” for “his”).

John’s witness about Jesus (1:29-34)

John the Baptist, who has been so reluctant to elaborate his own role, now more than willingly gives his testimony about Jesus. For the Evangelist, the emphasis is totally on John the Baptist as a witness to Jesus. No attention is given to the Baptist’s call to national repentance and very little to his baptizing. Everything is focused on what he has to say about Jesus. Again the Baptist’s witness is 3-fold:

1. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29)
2. Jesus is the pre-existent One who has priority over the Baptist (1:30)
3. Jesus is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (1:33)

1:29 (1) Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29)

There are three major explanations for the symbolism of the Lamb in the Baptist’s testimony:

The Lamb as the Apocalyptic Lamb: There appears in Jewish Apocalyptic literature the figure of a conquering Lamb who will destroy evil in the world: Testament of Joseph 19:8 (Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs) tells of the lamb who overcomes the evil beasts and crushes them underfoot (Enoch 90:38 - At the end comes a horned bull who turns into a lamb with black horns. See also Rev 7:17 and 17:14).

The Lamb as the Suffering Servant: In this case the symbolism is picked up from Is 53:7 “Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so he did not open his mouth.” All the Servant-Songs occur in the second section of Isaiah (40-55). The New Testament associates this part of Isaiah with John the Baptist (John 1:23 and Is 40:3).

Lamb as the Passover Lamb: Passover symbolism *is* present in the Fourth Gospel, especially in relation to the death of Jesus: Jesus is condemned at noon on the day before the Passover (Jn 19:14) at the very time the priests began to slay the lambs in the Temple. Hyssop was used to give a sponge of wine (19:29); hyssop was also

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used to smear blood on the doorposts in the Passover ritual (Ex 12:22). John 19:36 sees a fulfillment of Scripture in that none of Jesus' bones were broken (Ex 12:46)

1:30-31: Jesus as the pre-existent one has priority over the Baptist (1:30): The similarity to 1:15 is obvious here. This is based on the idea that priority in time equals priority in dignity. According to the author, priority *does* indicate superiority, but despite appearances Jesus really was prior to John the Baptist because Jesus pre-existed. This is further supported by verse 31. Why did Jesus allow himself to be baptized by John, if John's baptism was a baptism of repentance? (Jesus, of course, had no need for repentance.) For the author of the Fourth Gospel, there is no problem of Jesus receiving a baptism of repentance, for the whole purpose of John the Baptist's baptism consisted in revealing to Israel the one to come.

1:32-34: Jesus is the One upon whom the Spirit descends and who baptizes with the Spirit (32-33): John says the Spirit came to rest on (*emenein*) Jesus. *Meneo* is a favorite Johannine word, used 40 times in the Gospel and 27 times in the Epistles (67 together) against 118 times total in the New Testament. The significance of *mevw* for John is that this term is used to express the permanency of relationship between Father and Son and Son and believer. Here the use of the word implies that Jesus permanently possesses the Holy Spirit, and because he does, he will dispense the Holy Spirit to others in baptism. Other notes on the dispensation of the Spirit occur at John 3:5-7. John 3:34, 7:38-39, numerous passages in chapters 14-16 (the Paraclete passages) and John 20:22. The culmination of John's testimony about Jesus occurs in 1:34 that "He is the Son of God."

Jesus' First Disciples (Jn 1:35-51)

This section (1:35-51) is joined to the preceding by the literary expedient of repeating the Baptist's testimony about Jesus being the Lamb of God (1:36, cf. 1:29). This repeated testimony (1:36) no longer has revelatory value in itself, since it has been given before; its purpose, instead, is to institute a chain reaction which will bring John the Baptist's disciples to Jesus and make them Jesus' own disciples. In these verses, the Evangelist mentions 5 disciples: Andrew, an unnamed disciple, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael. Here the disciples' understanding of Jesus is growing gradually. It is obvious from the various messianic titles used here:

- v. 35 v. 42 Rabbi (= Teacher), Messiah
- v. 43-50 The One described in the Law and the Prophets, the Son of God and King of Israel
- vs. 51 The Son of Man

The theme of “following” Jesus - the mark of true discipleship - mentioned in 1:37, 38, 40, 43 and later in 8:12, 10:4, 27, 12:26, 13:36, 21:19, 22. In 1:37 the verb to follow (*akolouthesan*) hints that the disciples of the Baptist are about to become disciples of Jesus - the Baptist, his mission complete, disappears from the scene, and his followers become followers of Jesus.

Two of John’s disciples follow Jesus (1:35-39): Their relationship with Jesus began when they went to him to *see* where he was staying and *stayed* with him; it was sealed when they *saw* his glory and *believed* in him (2:11).

1:39 There is a significant problem in verse 39 with the phrase “the tenth hour” - what system of time is the author using? Westcott thought John, unlike the Synoptics, was using Roman time, which starts at midnight. This would make the time 10 a.m., which fits here. But later in the Gospel’s Passover account (19:42, where the 6th hour is on the “eve of the Passover”) it seems clear the author is using Jewish reckoning, which began at 6 a.m. This would make the time in 1:39 to be 4 p.m. This may be significant: if the hour was late, Andrew and the unnamed disciple probably spent the night in the same house where Jesus was staying, and the events of 1:41-42 took place on the next day (the 4th day of the “week”).

Andrew finds Peter and brings him to Jesus (1:40-42): Even though this probably is on the following day John the Evangelist does not mention it, so that the connection with the preceding material is not lost. By the time Andrew finds his brother, he knows Jesus is the Messiah (v. 41). Apparently he learned this during his short stay with Jesus, which according to our understanding would have been the evening of the day before. The change of name for Simon (v.42) is indicative of the future role he will play. Only John among the gospel writers gives the Greek transliteration (*Kefa*) of Simon’s new name, *Qph* (which is Galilean Aramaic). Neither *Petro* in Greek nor *Qph* in Aramaic is a normal proper name; it is more like a nickname.

Jesus calls Philip (1:43-44): Jesus is best taken as the subject of *found* (*euriskei*), since Peter would scarcely have wanted to go to Galilee. No explanation is given for why Jesus wanted to leave, but probably he wanted to go to the wedding at Cana (about a 2-day trip). Although John thinks of the town as in Galilee (12:21), Bethsaida technically was in Gaulanitis (Philip the Tetrarch's territory) across from Herod's Galilee. There may have been 2 places called Bethsaida, or this may merely reflect popular imprecision-locally it was considered part of Galilee, even though it was just east of the Jordan river. This territory was heavily Gentile (which may explain why Andrew and Philip both have Gentile names).

Nathanael and his confession (1:45-51): Nathanael is traditionally identified with Bartholomew (although John never describes him as such). He appears here after Philip, while in all lists of the 12 except in Acts 1:13, Bartholomew follows Philip. Also, Bar-tolmai refers to the "son of Tolmai," the surname; the man almost certainly had another name.

- ✓ 1:46 is possibly a local proverb expressing jealousy among the towns.
- ✓ 1:47 "in whom is no guile" - what provoked Jesus to render this observation? Supernatural insight? More likely, perhaps, Nathanael's willingness to believe in Jesus.
- ✓ 1:48-49 Nathanael's inquiry and Jesus' reply take on a bit of added significance in the Greek: Nathanael literally asks, from where (*pothen*) do you know me? And Jesus answers, "from under the fig tree." Many have speculated about what Nathanael was doing under the fig tree. Meditating on the Messiah who was to come? A good possibility, since the fig tree was used as shade for teaching or studying by the later rabbis (*Midrash Rabbah on Eccles.* 5:11). Also, the fig tree was symbolic for messianic peace and plenty - Mic 4:4, Zech 3:10. What is the significance of the confession Nathanael makes (v. 49)? Probably, it is a confession of Jesus' messiahship. It has strong allusions to Ps 2:6-7, a well-known Messianic Psalm.
- ✓ 1:50 "You shall see greater things than these" - what are the greater things Jesus has in mind? In the narrative this forms an excellent foreshadowing of the sign-miracles which begin at Cana of Galilee.

- ✓ 1:51 Many relate it to Jacob's dream in Gen 28:12, where the angels and ladder represent divine communion with man. But this is consummated in the Word become Flesh. Jesus himself is the point of contact between heaven and earth.

Notes

- ¹ There are scholars who argue that the speech of John the Baptist began in 1:15. For example, DE LA POTTERIE, *Structure du Prologue*, 372-384, argues that: (i) 1:30 refers back to 1:15. (ii) Both vv. 16, 17 start with a causal *oti*, which means that they are not independent but subordinate clauses. See also VAN TILBORG, *Imaginative Love*, 62-63. Against this view, we can argue that the content of Jn 1:16-18 cannot be brought into line with any historical teaching of John the Baptist. Besides, 1:18 forms an inclusio with 1:1 and brings the prologue to a logical conclusion. The suggested analepsis between vv. 30 and 15 could be explained as part of the Johannine style of "variant repetition." Therefore, we concur with the majority opinion that Jn 1:1-18 constitute the prologue.

The First Round Trip From Cana to Cana (2:1-4:54)

Jesus first round trip to Jerusalem is remarkable in the overall frame work of the fourth gospel. It is in this journey that Jesus interacts for the first time publically with the Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentiles. Therefore this journey, from a narrative point of view, presents the hero of the story in all his majesty and glory.

1. Water into Wine: the first Sign at Cana in Galilee (2:1-11)

- ✓ 2:1, probably the reference to the 3rd day is to the time after the last recorded events, the call of Philip and Nathanael (1:43-51). An interesting point is that if one does take the events of chapter 1 to fill the first week of Jesus' public ministry, and as such to constitute a parallel with Genesis 1 (the old creation versus the new creation) then the wedding at Cana would take place on the 7th day. We should probably not push the symbolism of the 7th day too far, but it is worth considering. Gen 2:2-3 states that "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his

work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.” In later rabbinic thought [post-NT] the age of the world was divided up into 6 millennia. The 7th millennium was to be the Age of Messiah. Something similar may be behind Heb 4:9, “There remains yet a Sabbath rest for the people of God.”

- ✓ Cana of Galilee: This was not a very well-known place. It is mentioned only here, in 4:46, and 21:2, and nowhere else in the New Testament. Josephus (Life 86) says he once had his quarters there. Probable location: present day Khirbet Cana (14 km north of Nazareth) or Khirbet Kenna (7 km northeast of Nazareth).
- ✓ We have no clue to the identity of the bride and groom, but in all probability either relatives or friends of Jesus’ family were involved; the presence of Mary and the invitation to Jesus and his disciples suggests this, as does the attitude of Mary in approaching Jesus and asking him to do something when the wine ran out.
- ✓ Mary, the mother of Jesus, is never mentioned by name in the Fourth Gospel. The connection between Mary and the ‘beloved disciple’ at the foot of the cross (19:26-27) may explain this silence, especially if the beloved disciple is the author of the gospel (as we believe).
- ✓ Was Mary asking for a miracle in 2:3? There is no evidence that Jesus had worked any miracles prior to this. Some think Mary was only reporting the situation, or (as Calvin thought) asking Jesus to give some godly exhortations to the guests and thus relieve the embarrassment of the family. But the words, and the reply of Jesus in verse 4, seem to imply more. It is not inconceivable that Mary, who had probably been witness to the events of the preceding days, or at least was aware of them, knew that her son’s public career was beginning. She also knew the supernatural events surrounding his birth, and the prophetic words of the angel, and of Simeon and Anna in the Temple at Jesus’ dedication. In short, she had good reason to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, and now his public ministry had begun. In this kind of context, her request does seem more significant.
- ✓ 2:4 Woman (Jesus’ reply to his mother): According to Liddell-Scott-Jones the vocative is “a term of respect or affection”. It is Jesus’ normal, polite way of addressing women (Mt 15:28, Lk 13:12; in

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Jn, 4:21, 8:10, 19:26 and 20:15). But it is unusual for a son to address his mother with this term. The custom in both Hebrew (or Aramaic) and Greek would be for a son to use a qualifying adjective or title. Is there significance in Jesus' use here? Most likely, It probably indicates that a new relationship exists between Jesus and his mother once he has embarked on his public ministry. He is no longer or primarily only her son, but the "Son of Man". This is also suggested by the use of the same term in 19:26 in the scene at the cross, where the Beloved Disciple is "given" to Mary as her "new" son. The phrase "What to me and to you, woman?" is a semitic phrase. The Hebrew expression in the Old Testament had two basic meanings:

1. When one person was unjustly bothering another, the injured party could say "What to me and to you?" meaning, "What have I done to you that you should do this to me?" Examples: Jdg 11:12, 2 Chr 35:21, 1 Kg 17:18.
2. When someone was asked to get involved in a matter he felt was no business of his, he could say to the one asking him, "What to me and to you?" meaning, "That is your business, how am I involved?" Examples: 2 Kings 3:13, Hosea 14:8.

The first meaning implies hostility while the second meaning refers to merely disengagement. The second meaning is almost certainly to be understood here as better fitting the context. The meaning of the verse is connected with the Johannine use of the term hour.

The Use of Hour in the Gospel of John: The word *hora* (literally, "hour"; "time") occurs in the Gospel of John in 2:4, 4:21, 23; 5:25, 28, 29; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:25; and 17:1. It is best seen as a reference to the special period in Jesus' life when he is to leave this world and return to the Father (13:1); the hour when the Son of man is glorified (17:1). This is accomplished through his suffering, death, resurrection (and ascension - though this is not emphasized by John). 7:30 and 8:20 imply that Jesus' arrest and death are included. 12:23 and 17:1, referring to the glorification of the Son, imply that the resurrection and ascension are included as part of the "hour". In 2:4 Jesus' remark to his mother indicates that the time for this self-manifestation has not yet arrived; his identity as Messiah is not yet to be publicly revealed.

The stone jars held water for Jewish purification rituals (2:6). The water of Jewish ritual purification becomes the wine of the new Messianic Age (on the Messianic Age, cf. chronology of chapter 1 and the note above at 2:1). It may also be, after the fashion of Johannine double meanings, a reference to the wine of the Lord's Supper. Each of the pots held 2 or 3 "measure" and a measure was approximately 9 gallons (39.39 liters); thus each jar held 18-27 gallons (78.8-118.2 liters) and the total volume of liquid involved was 108-162 gallons (472.7-709 liters)!

The Purpose of the Narrative: Changing the Water into Wine

- Many questions are unanswered in the account as John presents it. The conversation between Jesus and his mother appears incomplete. Did she persist in her request in spite of his initial refusal? What did she expect Jesus to do? Catholics have often appealed to this passage to support the power of Mary's intercession. But this is certainly not the point intended by the author of the Gospel as the reason he includes the account in the narrative.
- The author gives the point of the story, as far as he is concerned, in 2:11. He tells us what the sign accomplished: through it Jesus revealed his "glory" and his disciples believed in him. Thus, the first sign has the same purpose that all the following signs will have: revelation about the person of Jesus. Scholarly interpretations to the contrary, John does not put primary emphasis on the replacing of the water for Jewish purification, or on the change from water to wine, or even on the resulting wine. John does not focus on Mary and her intercession, nor on why she made the request or whether she pursued it further after Jesus' initial response. John does not focus on the reaction of the master of the feast or the bridegroom. The primary focus, as for all the Johannine stories, is on Jesus as the One sent by the Father to bring salvation to the world. What shines through is his doxa, and the only reaction emphasized is that of his disciples when they believed in him.
- The abundance of wine...now becomes intelligible. One of the consistent OT figures for the joy of the final days is an abundance of wine (Amos ix 13-14; Hos xiv 7; Jer xxxi 12). Enoch x 19 predicts that the vine shall yield wine in abundance; and in II Bar xxix 5 (a Jewish apocryphon almost contemporary with the Fourth

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Gospel) we find an exuberantly fantastic description of this abundance: the earth shall yield its fruit ten thousandfold; each vine shall have 1000 branches; each branch 1000 clusters; each cluster 1000 grapes; and each grape about 120 gallons of wine [cf. the quantity of wine in John 2. (Irenaeus Adv. Haer. v 33:3-4...attributes this passage to Papias of Hierapolis who is intimately associated with the early traditions about John.)

- Through such symbolism the Cana miracle could have been understood by the disciples as a sign of the messianic times and the new dispensation, much in the same manner that they would have understood Jesus' statement about the new wine in the Synoptic tradition.

2:12 Verse 12 is merely a transitional note in the narrative (although Capernaum does not lie on the direct route to Jerusalem from Cana). Nothing is mentioned in John's gospel at this point about anything Jesus said or did there. From the synoptics we learn Capernaum was a center of Jesus' Galilean ministry and might even be called "his own city" (Matt 9:1). The nobleman whose son Jesus healed (John 4:46-54) was from Capernaum. He may have heard Jesus speak there, or picked up the story about the miracle at Cana from one of Jesus' disciples. We can only speculate.

2. Jesus' cleansing of the Temple (2:13-22)

This is first of at least three (and possibly four) Passovers mentioned in John's Gospel. If we assume the Passovers appear in the Gospel in their chronological order this would be the Passover of the spring of AD. 27, the first of Jesus' public ministry. There is a clear reference to another Passover in 6:4, and still another Passover in 11:55 (mentioned again in 12:1, 13:1, 18:28, 39, and 19:14). The last one would be the Passover of AD 30. There is a possibility that 5:1 also refers to a Passover, in which case it would be the second of Jesus' public ministry (AD 28), while 6:4 would refer to the third (AD 29) and the remaining references to the final Passover at the time of the crucifixion.

Is this the same event as the synoptic gospels describe, or a separate event?: The other accounts of the cleansing of the Temple are Mat 21:12-13; Mk 11:15-17; and Lk 19:45-46. None are as long as the Johannine account. The fullest of the synoptic accounts is Mark's. John's account differs from Mark's:

- ❖ In the mention of sheep and oxen, the mention of the whip of cords..
- ❖ The synoptics all mention that Jesus quoted Isaiah 56:7 followed by Jr 7:11. John mentions no citation of scripture at all, but says that later the disciples remembered Ps 69:9.
- ❖ John does not mention, as does Mark, Jesus' prohibition on carrying things through the Temple (i.e., using it for a short-cut).
- ❖ The most important difference is one of time: In John the cleansing appears as the first great public act of Jesus' ministry, while in the synoptics it is virtually the last.

The most common solution of the problem, which has been endlessly discussed among New Testament scholars, is to say:

- ✓ There was only one cleansing, and that it took place, as the synoptics record it, at the end of Jesus' ministry. In the synoptics it appears to be the event that finalized the opposition of the high priest, and precipitated the arrest of Jesus. According to this view, John's placing of the event at the opening of Jesus' ministry is due to his general approach; it was fitting 'theologically' for Jesus to open his ministry this way, so this is the way John records it.
- ✓ Some have overstated the case for one cleansing and John's placing of it at the opening of Jesus' public ministry, however. For example William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, states: "John, as someone has said, is more interested in the truth than in the facts. He was not interested to tell men when Jesus cleansed the Temple; he was supremely interested in telling men that Jesus did cleanse the Temple."
- ✓ But this is not the impression one gets by a reading of John's gospel: he seems to go out of his way to give details and facts, including notes of time and place. To argue as Barclay does that John is interested in truth apart from the facts is to set up a false dichotomy.
- ✓ Why should one have to assume, in any case, that there could have been only one cleansing of the Temple? This account in John is found in a large section of non-synoptic material. Apart from the work of John the Baptist - and even this is markedly different from the references in the synoptics - nothing else in the first five chapters of John's gospel is found in any of the synoptics. It is at least possible that the event in question actually occurred twice.

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- ✓ While it is certainly possible that the Evangelist did not intend by his positioning of the Temple cleansing to correct the synoptics' timing of the event, but to highlight its significance for the course of Jesus' ministry, it still appears somewhat more probable that John has placed the event he records in the approximate period of Jesus' public ministry in which it did occur, that is, within the first year or so of Jesus' public ministry. The statement of the Jewish authorities recorded by the Evangelist would tend to support an earlier rather than a later date for the Temple cleansing described by John, since 46 years from the beginning of construction on Herod's Temple in ca. 19 BC would be around AD 27.

Purpose of the Narrative: Cleansing the Temple

This time we may look first at what the original audience (disciples and Jewish leaders) may have understood from Jesus' statements and actions, followed by the way John as Evangelist has incorporated this account into the narrative.

1. Almost certainly both the Jewish leaders and Jesus' disciples understood Jesus' activity as prophetic - resembling the actions of an Old Testament prophet. Zech 14:20-21 states that there will be no merchant in the house of the Lord in that day (the messianic kingdom). And what would Jesus' words (and actions) in cleansing the Temple have suggested to the observers? That Jesus was fulfilling these messianic expectations would have been obvious - especially to the disciples, who had just seen the miracle at Cana with all its messianic implications.
2. The rebuilding of the Temple? Ez 40-46 describes the rebuilt millennial Temple, and popular Jewish tradition (the fourteenth of the 18 Benedictions or *Shemoneh Esreh*, ca. AD 70-85) held that Messiah would come and rebuild the Temple. Thus Jesus' remarks could have been understood in terms of the messianic rebuilding of the Temple. Further evidence that this is so may be correlated from the synoptics, since in the account of Jesus' trial in the synoptics the reference to a messianic rebuilding seems evident: when the false witnesses recalled Jesus' statement about the Temple, the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah?" [Mark 14:61].
3. John's theological insights into the incident go deeper - the Temple is not just the building, it is Jesus' resurrected body. Compare

the non-localized worship mentioned in 4:21-23, and also Rev 21:22. John is pointing to the fact that, as the place where men go in order to meet God, the Temple has been supplanted and replaced by Jesus himself, in whose resurrected Person people may now encounter God (cf. 1:18, 14:6).

Some of the vocabulary and phrases within the narrative calls for explanation:

- The money-changers - Because of the imperial Roman portraits they carried, Roman denarii and Attic drachmas were not permitted to be used in paying the half-shekel temple-tax, as the portraits were considered idolatrous. The money-changers in the Temple courts exchanged these coins for legal Tyrian coinage at a small profit.
- A whip: The variant reading reflects the Torah tradition accurately what Jesus made was something like a whip. According to tradition no weapons or sticks of any kind were permitted in the temple courts.
- Forty-six years: According to Josephus [*Antiquities*], work on this Temple was begun in the 18th year of Herod the Great's reign, which would have been ca. 19 BC. Forty-six years later would be the Passover of AD 27. If one holds to a date of AD 30 for the crucifixion, this would tend to suggest that the placement of the temple cleansing in John's Gospel, occurring as it does at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, is actually in its approximate place in the chronological sequence of Jesus' earthly life.

3. A Personal Response to Jesus: Nicodemus comes by night (3:1-21).

Opening Verse (3:1): The phrase in verse 1, *anthropos eik ton farisaion* - stylistically the word *anthropos* suggests a tie with 2:25. Jesus knew what was in a man (and what follows with Nicodemus is a specific example). It is also instructive for our understanding of the previous paragraph, 2:23-25, to note that Jesus did not fully entrust himself to Nicodemus, i.e., he did not openly reveal his true identity and mission (note in this regard especially 3:12). Nicodemus appears only in John's Gospel (see also 7:50, 19:39). The name is Greek. The use of the term *archon* ("ruler") denotes a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council.

The night (3:2), Possibly Nicodemus came at night because was afraid of public association with Jesus, or he wanted a lengthy

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discussion without interruptions; no explanation for the timing of the interview is given by the Evangelist. But the timing is significant for John in terms of the light/darkness motif - compare 9:4, 11:10, 13:30 (especially), 19:39, and 21:3. Out of the darkness of his life and religiosity Nicodemus came to the Light of the World. John probably had multiple meanings or associations in mind here, as he often does. Nicodemus, together with the people in Jerusalem believed in Jesus because of the signs he performed. Nicodemus has apparently seen them too. But for Nicodemus all the signs have meant is that Jesus is a great teacher sent from God. His approach to Jesus is well-intentioned but theologically inadequate; he has failed to grasp the messianic implications of the sign-miracles.

The use of the term *anothen* (3:3): The word has a double meaning. The word may mean either “again” or “from above” (cfr. BAGD). This is a favorite technique of the author of the Fourth Gospel. John uses the word 5 times, in 3:3, 7; 3:31; 19:11 and 23. In the latter 3 cases the context makes clear that it means “from above”. Here (3:3, 7) it could mean either but it seems that Hodges is right that the primary meaning intended by Jesus is “from above”. Nicodemus, it seems, understood it the other way, which explains his reply, “How can a man be born when he is old? He can’t enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born, can he?” John the Evangelist often uses the technique of the “misunderstood question” to bring out a particularly important point: Jesus says something which is misunderstood by the disciples or (as here) someone else, which then gives Jesus the opportunity to explain more fully and in more detail what he really meant.

Kingdom of God: John uses the word *basileia* only 5 times - 3:3, 5; 18:36 (3 times). Only here is it qualified with the phrase *of theou*. The fact that John does not stress the concept of the *kingdom of God* does not mean it is absent from his theology, however. Remember the messianic implications found in chapter 2, both the wedding and miracle at Cana and the cleansing of the Temple. For Nicodemus, the term must surely have brought to mind the messianic kingdom which Messiah was supposed to bring. But Nicodemus had missed *precisely* this point about *who* Jesus was! It was the Messiah himself with whom Nicodemus was speaking!

Water and Spirit (3:5), The concepts of water and spirit/wind are linked to *anothen* (v.3), because water and wind come from

above. Isa 44:3-5 and Ez 37:9-10 are pertinent examples of water and wind as life-giving symbols of the Spirit of God. The term Spirit is anarthrous (= without a definite article) in v. 5. Therefore we are not saying that it should be read as a direct reference to the Holy Spirit, but that both water and wind are figures which represent the regenerating work of the Spirit in the lives of men and women, a truth pointed to by the OT passages mentioned above.

Born of Flesh and Spirit (3:6), What is born of physical heritage is physical. What is begotten by the Spirit is spiritual (cfr. 4:23, 24). For John the “flesh” (*sarx*) emphasizes merely the weakness and mortality of the creature - a neutral term, not necessarily sinful as in Paul. This is confirmed by the reference in John 1:14 to the *logos* becoming flesh. Certainly John would not associate sinfulness with the incarnate Christ.

The “we passages” (3:11), “We speak what we know and we testify about what we have seen...” Note the remarkable similarity of Jesus’ words to the later testimony of the Apostle John himself in 1 John 1:2-“and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us”. It seems that this is only one example of how thoroughly John’s own thoughts were saturated with the words of Jesus (and also how difficult it is to distinguish the words of Jesus from the words of the Evangelist in the Fourth Gospel!).

Lifting up of Jesus (3:14), In John, being “lifted up” refers to one continuous action of ascent, beginning with the cross but ending at the right hand of the Father. Step 1 is Jesus’ death; step 2 is his resurrection; and step 3 is the ascension back to heaven. It is the upward swing of the “pendulum” which began with the incarnation, the descent of the Word become flesh from heaven to earth (cf. Paul in Phil 2:5-11).

Divine Love (3:16), This is supposedly the most well-known verse in the Bible: compare Isaiah 53:12: He was given up (*paradidonai*) for their sins.” In Jn 3:16, we have another typical Johannine double meaning: God “gave” the Son by sending him into the world, but *also* “gave” him on the cross. Here the term world refers to the entire world (Compare also 1 Jn 2:2). The alternatives presented are only two (1) to be lost (2) to perish or be destroyed.

The Realised Eschatology (3:17-20): This paragraph provides an introduction to the (so-called) “realized” eschatology of the Fourth Gospel: judgment has come; eternal life may be possessed now, in the present life, as well as in the future (Compare vss. 16-19 with John 12:46-48 for similar words and phrases). The terminology “realized eschatology” was originally coined by E. Haenchen and used by J. Jeremias in discussion with C. H. Dodd. R. Brown summarizes the realized eschatology of the Gospel of John as follows:

In many ways John is the best example in the NT of realized eschatology. God has revealed Himself in Jesus in a definitive form, and seemingly no more can be asked. If one points to OT passages that seem to imply a coming of God in glory, the Prologue (1:14) answers, ‘We have seen his glory.’ If one asks where is the judgment that marks God’s final intervention, John iii 19 answers: ‘Now the judgment is this: the light has come into the world.’ In a figurative way Matt xxv 31 ff. describes the apocalyptic Son of Man coming in glory and sitting on the throne of judgment to separate the good and the bad. But for John the presence of Jesus in the world as the light separates men into those who are sons of darkness, hating the light, and those who come to the light. All through the Gospel Jesus provokes self-judgment as men line up for or against him; truly his coming is a *crisis* in the root sense of that word, where it reflects the Gr. *krisis* or “judgment.” Those who refuse to believe are already condemned (iii 18), while those who have faith do not come under condemnation (v 24...). Even the reward is realized. For the Synoptics “eternal life” is something that one receives at the final judgment or in a future age (Mark x 30, Matt xviii 8-9), but for John it is a present possibility for men: ‘The man who hears my words and has faith in Him who sent me *possesses* eternal life...he has passed from death to life’ (v 24). For Luke (vi 35, xx 36) divine sonship is a reward of the future life; for John (i 12) it is a gift granted here on earth.

Especially important to note is the element of choice portrayed in John’s Gospel. If there is a twofold reaction to Jesus in John’s Gospel, it should be emphasized that that reaction is very much dependent on man’s choice, a choice that is influenced by his way of life, whether his deeds are wicked or are done in God (vss. 20-21). For John there is virtually no trace of determinism at the surface. Only when one looks beneath the surface does one find statements like “no one can come to me, unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:33).

4. The final testimony of John the Baptist: 3:22-36)

- **Location:** The precise locations of these places are unknown. Three possibilities are suggested: (1) In Perea, which is in Transjordan (cf. 1:28). Perea is just across the river from Judea. (2) In the northern Jordan Valley, on the west bank some 8 miles [13 km] south of Scythopolis. But with the Jordan River so close, the reference to abundant water (3:23) seems superfluous. (3) Thus Samaria has been suggested. 4 miles [6.6 km] east of Shechem is a town called Slim, and 8 miles [13 km] northeast of Slim lies modern inn. In the general vicinity are many springs.
- **Names:** Because of the meanings of the names “springs” (Aramaic) and Saleim = Salem, “peace”, some have attempted to allegorize here that John the Baptist is *near* salvation (!). Obviously there is no need for this. It is far more probable that the Evangelist has in mind real places, even if we cannot be absolutely sure of their locations.
- **Cleansing**”: One of the major keys to the understanding of the passage lies in 3:25 - what was the nature of the dispute over purification (cleansing) between the Jews and the Baptist’s disciples? Obviously, they disagreed over something. The word *cleansing* (*katharismou*) suggests it was over the Jewish ritual of purification. The meaning is really confusing here. However, we can conclude that what the Jews reported to John’s disciples was that Jesus was now setting aside the Jewish purification rituals as unnecessary. To John’s disciples this might also be interpreted as: a falling away from Judaism, and a break with John’s own teaching. Jesus’ thrust would be that outward cleansing (that is, observance of purification rituals) is not what makes a person clean. A new heart within (that is, being born from above) is what makes a person clean.

The real point at issue is the *authority* of Jesus to “overturn” the system of ritual purification within Judaism. John replies to this question of the authority of Jesus in vss. 27-36. In vss. 27-30 he reassures his disciples, reminding them that if more people are coming to Jesus, it does not threaten him at all, because “heaven” has ordained it to be so. After all, some of these very disciples of John had heard him tell the Jewish delegation that he was not the Messiah but was sent before him. Then John compares himself to the friend of the

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bridegroom who stands by and yet participates in the bridegroom's joy. John is completely content in his own position as forerunner and preparer of the way.

Again with vs. 31-36 there is the problem of **who is speaking**: the Baptist or the Evangelist. Probably it is best to take these as the Evangelist's words concerning the authority that Jesus has to do these things:

- ❖ The one who comes from above is over all (v. 31);
- ❖ The one who receives Jesus' testimony has set his seal that God is truthful (v. 33);
- ❖ The One God sent speaks God's words (v. 34);
- ❖ Believing in the Son is all-important (v. 35).

5. Departure from Judea (4:1-3)

4:1-3, The reason given for Jesus' departure from Judea at this particular time is not at all clear - did he fear persecution? Certainly he had openly opposed the Jewish leaders before in the Temple. John really doesn't tell us why Jesus chose this time to return to Galilee. Some have suggested that the Pharisees turned their attention to Jesus because John the Baptist had now been thrown into prison. But the text gives no hint of this. In any case, perhaps Jesus simply did not want to provoke a confrontation at this time (knowing that his "hour" had not yet come).

6. The Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well (4:4-42)

If the story of Nicodemus in chapter 3 is perhaps the best known story in the Gospel (because, among other things, of 3:16), then the story of the woman at the well must be the second best known. Among other things it challenges our preconceived notions about social and ethnic barriers. Jesus was clearly not bound by such conventions in his offer of the free gift of "living water" to the woman in this story. In the bigger picture, the incident also serves to illustrate Jesus' greater purpose in coming into the world [cf. the Prologue, with its statements about the Light coming into the world]. Jesus' purpose went beyond simply being the Messiah of the Jewish people. He came to be the Savior of the entire world.

- **Jesus returns through Samaria:** Such a detour through Samaria was not geographically necessary. Although the main route from

Judea to Galilee was through Samaria, Jesus, as many Jews did, could easily have gone up the Jordan valley into Galilee through the Bethshan gap, avoiding Samaria. Whenever John uses the impersonal verb *deithe* the necessity involves God's will or plan: 3:7, 14:30; 4:4, 20:24; 9:4; 10:16; 12:34; and 20:9.

- **Sicharis** somewhere in the vicinity of Shechem. Jacob's well is less than 250 ft (75 m) away. Sychar is Shechem according to W. F. Albright. But according to R.D. Potter, Askar is to be identified with Sychar. The village of Askar lies about 1 mile (1.5 km) northeast of Jacob's well.
- **The time** (4:6), Much is often made of the time of day (which would be noon, starting at 6 a.m.). Some have seen a connection with the crucifixion at the same hour (19:14) when Jesus again expresses his thirst (19:28). Others have said that the woman came at this hour because she was ostracized by the other women for her (immoral) conduct.
- **The Samaritans** are descendants of 2 groups:(1) The remnant of native Israelites who were not deported after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC;(2) Foreign colonists brought in from Babylonia and Media by the Assyrian conquerors to settle the land with inhabitants who would be loyal to Assyria. There was theological opposition between the Samaritans and the Jews because the former refused to worship in Jerusalem. After the exile the Samaritans put obstacles in the way of the Jewish restoration of Jerusalem, and in the 2nd century BC the Samaritans helped the Syrians in their wars against the Jews. In 128 BC the Jewish high priest retaliated and burned the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerazim.
- **The misunderstanding on Water (4:10-11):** This serves as a perfect example of John's use of misunderstanding as a literary technique. Jesus is speaking of "living water" which is spiritual (ultimately this is a Johannine figure for the Holy Spirit, cf. 7:38-39) while the woman thinks he means physical water of some sort which will satisfy thirst. Needless to say there is irony here, an irony foreshadowed in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel (1:11): "He came to his own, and his own did not receive him". Yet the Samaritans welcome Jesus and proclaim him to be not the Jewish Messiah but the Savior of the world.

6. The Second Sign at Cana in Galilee: Healing of the Nobleman's Son (4:46-54)

The royal Official - *basilikos*(4:46), The term can designate either a person of royal blood or a servant to the king. Here, the latter is almost certainly in view; this man is a servant of Herod, tetrarch of Galilee. Capernaum was a border town, so doubtless there were many administrative officials in residence there.

The Similarities to the first sign-miracle at Cana (2:1-11): That the author wanted us to relate this to the previous incident is clear because twice (4:46, 54) he reminds us of the first sign-miracle at the wedding in Cana, at the beginning and the end of this story. Note the similarities:

- Jesus has just come back into Galilee.
- Someone comes to him with a request.
- Indirectly Jesus seems to refuse at first.
- The petitioner persists.
- Jesus grants the request.
- This leads another group of people (his disciples, the nobleman's household) to believe in him.

Jesus' return to Cana is a literary device known as *inclusion* (from the Latin *inclusio*) which is used to encircle or enclose material pertaining to a single topic. It is the author's way of indicating that we have come full circle; we are ready to move on to something new.

The Second Round Trip: Son and the Bread (5:1-6:72)

In Jesus' second journey to Jerusalem, there is no indication that the disciples accompanied him to Jerusalem. We can observe an ABA¹B¹ parallel structure in this section.

A 5:1-9 the miracle on a Jewish feast day
(in Jerusalem)

B 5:10-47 discourse on the Father who sent the Son from heaven

A¹ 6:1-21 two miracles on the Jewish Passover feast
(in Galilee)

B¹ 6:22-71 the discourse on the bread that came down from
heaven

The three miracles and the two discourses interlock. Jesus, the one who came from heaven, is the giver of life. Anyone who believes in the Son sent by the Father receives life. Thus the *theme of life* unveiled in this section discloses the salient features of the narrative.

A, A¹: The Miracles

The three miracles narrated in this section can be grouped together in the sense that all the three miracles

reveal progressively Jesus' divine identity. Besides, in all the three miracles the recipients/audience fail(s) to grasp the revelation of Jesus' true identity. Consequently, they are not led into faith. They are examples of those who did not believe even after seeing the signs of Jesus. As we have seen before, seeing the signs of Jesus merely is insufficient to turn someone into Jesus' disciple. Rather, it invariably presumes the right choice to believe in Jesus, at the revelation of Jesus' glory through the signs, as the disciples did (cf. 2:11).

In the first miracle (5:1-18), the lame man fails to recognise the true identity of Jesus. He misunderstands Jesus' question. We can observe the typical Johannine irony in the use of "water." At the initial level, he says to "the living water" that there is no one to lead me to the water (5:7). In the second level, even after realising Jesus' healing power in his life, he does not recognise that Jesus is the life giving water. He refers to Jesus as "the man who made me well" (v.11). He is not hesitant to blame his violation of Sabbath on Jesus (v. 11). The evangelist deliberately presents him as a negative character of discipleship. Jesus' warning to him (5:14) did not make any impact on him. He announced the identity of the healer to the Jews.

The miraculous gift of restoration to the man at the pool (5:1-15)

- **The Feast Mentioned in 5:1,** The only transitional note we have in 5:1 is *after this*. We cannot be sure how long after the incidents at Cana this occurred because this temporal indicator is non-specific. As far as the setting goes, there is difficulty because of the textual variants: "a feast" or "the feast". This may not appear significant at first, but to insert the article would almost certainly demand a reference to the Passover. Externally this problem is difficult to decide, but it is probably better to read the word *feast* as anarthrous (= without the definite article) in agreement with Nestle-Aland 26th ed. Jews were obligated to go up to Jerusalem for 3 major annual feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. If the first is probably ruled out because of the time of year, we may also suppose that the last is not as likely because it forms the central setting for chapter 7 (where there are many indications in the context that Tabernacles is the feast in view.) This leaves the feast of Pentecost, which at some point prior to this time in Jewish tradition became identified with the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. Such an association

might explain Jesus' reference to Moses in 5:45-46. This is conjectural, however. The only really important fact for the Evangelist is that the healing was done on a Sabbath. This is what provoked the controversy with the Jews recorded in 5:16-47.

- **The Pool:** The traditional understanding of the phrase as a reference to the Sheep Gate near the Temple appears more probably correct. A lot of controversy has surrounded the name of the pool itself: the name Bethshesda, is attested by Josephus as the name of a quarter of the city near the northeast corner of the Temple area. He reports that the Syrian Legate Cestius burned this suburb in his attack on Jerusalem in October AD 68. However, there is some new archaeological evidence (published by Milik in *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* III [1962]): Copper scroll 3Q15 from Qumran seems to indicate that in the general area of the Temple, on the eastern hill of Jerusalem, a treasure was buried in Bet 'Esdatayin, in the pool at the entrance to the smaller basin. The name of the region or pool itself seems then to have been Bet 'Esd, which means "house of the flowing."
- **On the location of the pool,** we may note: the double-pool of St. Anne is the probable site, and has been excavated; the pools were trapezoidal in shape, 165 feet (49.5 m) wide at one end, 220 ft. (66 m) wide at the other, and 315 ft. (94.5 m) long, divided by a central partition. There were colonnades (rows of columns) on all 4 sides and on the partition - thus forming the "5 porticoes" mentioned in 5:2. Stairways at the corners permitted descent to the pool.
- **The Stirring of Water (5:3-4),** It could be conceived that there was a popular tradition about the stirring of the water by an angel, which the author of the Gospel chose not to include because he regarded it as popular superstition, and therefore left the matter unexplained. It would seem, however, that he could have included the reference while pointing out that it was only legend; but in any case this is sometimes advanced as an argument in favor of the shorter reading.

It is observable that the paralytic, who failed to see Jesus' glory in the sign he performed, remains as a negative character. The negative character portrayal becomes all the more evident when he is contrasted against the presentation of the man born blind in John 9.

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5:5 Man's history (paralytic for thirty eight years)	9:1 Man's history (man born blind)
5:6 Jesus initiates the dialogue	9:6 Jesus initiates the dialogue
5:4 The pool has healing power	9:7 The pool has healing power
5:9 Jesus heals on Sabbath	9:14 Jesus heals on Sabbath
5:12 Accused for violating Sabbath	9:16 Accused for violating Sabbath
5:14 Jesus finds him and invites him	9:35 Jesus finds him and invites him
5:14 Relationship between sin and suffering	9:3 Relationship between sin and suffering
5:15 The man goes to the Jews	9:34-35 The Jews Cast him out
5:17 Jesus must work as his father is working	9:4 Jesus does the work of the one who sent him

Thus, the evangelist judiciously hints to the reader that having personally met Jesus and having experienced the benefit of his signs would still not guarantee his becoming a disciple. A deliberate endeavour to bridge the gap between the eyewitness generation and the future believers is overt here.

The two miracles at the Jewish Passover feast (6:1-21) also reveal Jesus' identity to the disciples. Though the supporters of the sign source credit these miracles to the *Sign Source*, their source could easily be deduced from the parallel synoptic accounts. We can observe an explicit similarity in the sequence of events between Jn 6:1-71 parallel to Mk 8:1-33.

	[Mk 6:30-44]; 8:1-10	Jn 6:1-15
<i>Multiplication of the bread</i>		
<i>Walking on the Sea</i>	Mk 6:45-54	Jn 6:16-24
<i>Asking for a sign</i>	Mk 8:11-13	Jn 6:25-34
<i>Spiritual remarks about the bread</i>	Mk 8:14-21	Jn 6:35-59
<i>Confession of Peter</i>	Mk 8:27-30	Jn 6:60-69
<i>Theme of suffering and betrayal</i>	Mk 8:31-33	Jn 6:70-71

Therefore, we prefer to conclude that John 6 is a redaction by the evangelist, based on the synoptic gospels. The miracles gave the impression to the crowd that Jesus is a prophet like Moses who gave manna in the desert. The inadequate response of the crowd made Jesus hide himself from them. As Painter observes, Jesus' withdrawal to the mountain as well as the crossing of the sea emphasises the theme of separation between Jesus and the crowd, on the one hand, and the crowd and the disciples, on the other hand. The crowd who could not grasp Jesus' true identity separated from the disciples.

Discourses on “the One Came down from Heaven”

On the basis of the striking aporias from John 5 to John 6,¹ many of the Johannine scholars have argued for the reverse order of John chapters 5 and 6.² Moreover, Bultmann argued that Jn 6:26-71 does not follow immediately from Jn 6:1-25. Against the transposition theory, we argue that the two major discourses that take place in this section are closely related and emphatically reveal the true identity of Jesus as the one came down from heaven. Besides, both discourses define the identity of the believer as those who partake in the “from above” identity of Jesus. A closer observation will bring forth a number of parallel themes in both discourses.

1. Jn 5:19-44 can be divided into three sections: Jesus does not act by himself (5:19-30), Jesus does not witness to himself (5:31-40) and not receiving honour from oneself or each other (5:41-44). A similar paradigm is followed in John 6. The discourse on the bread of life (vv. 22-59), is bracketed by two wonders at the beginning (vv. 1-15, 16-21) and two narrations the end (vv. 60-65, 66-71). The discourse is further divided into three parts starting with vv. 22-27, which is parallel to 52-59 and the evgw. eivmi, statement in v. 35, which functions as the centre of a second section (28-51). The audience of the discourse on the bread of life and the healing event in Jerusalem and the discourse that followed is the same (cf. Jn 6:2).

2. The Father-Son relationship is highlighted in both discourses. The Son does the will of the Father. The Son does nothing apart from the Father (5:19). He always does the will of the one who sent him (5:30). The same theme is repeated in Jn 6. The Son has come not to do his will but the will of the one who sent him (6:38). The will of the Father, explicitly stated in 6:40, is to give eternal life to all those who believe in Jesus.

3. The themes of judgement and life connect both discourses more closely. Anyone who hears Jesus’ word and believes in him does not come under judgement but passes to life (5:24). Similarly, any one who eats Jesus’ body and drink his blood will live for ever (6:58cf. also, 6:51,53). Besides, in Jn 5, it is also said that the Son gives life just as the Father does (5:21) and the Son has life in himself (5:26). Jn 6 clarifies that Jesus is the bread that came down from heaven to give life to the World (6:33).

4. In the fourth gospel, Jesus is the sent one of God. One who dishonours the Son dishonours the one who sent him (5:23). He who

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believes in Jesus believes in the one who sent him (5:24). Jesus always seeks the will of the one who sent him (5:32). Jesus' works bear witness to his identity as the one being sent (5:36; cf. also 5:37). In Jn 6, the eternal bread is presented as the work of the one who sent Jesus (6:29). In 6:32 Jesus explicitly states that it is my Father who gave you the bread.

5. In both discourses, the expressions, *hearing* the word of the Son who came from heaven and *eating* the bread that came from heaven that gives eternal life are presented in parallel (compare 5:25 and 6:58). In 6:68 Peter confessed Jesus who proclaimed himself to be the life giving bread from heaven to be the life giving word. It means that Jesus' word and Jesus' body are authentic means for disciples to attain eternal life.

6. In both discourses the role of Moses is contrasted to that of the Father. In Jn 5, Jesus says it is not the Father but Moses who will bring charges against you (5:45), whereas in the latter discourse Jesus says it is not Moses but my Father gave you the bread (6:32).

7. The same hermeneutical principle is followed in 5:39-47 and 6:32-59. In 5:39 the hermeneutical principle is: You search in your scriptures, you think they will give you life, but they bear witness to me. In Jn 6:31, the scripture is quoted and what follows, is a midrashic interpretation and the various responses to it.

Thus we plausibly conclude that Jn 5-6 unveils the unique identity of Jesus as "the one sent by the Father." The believers/disciples partake in this identity because the Father draws them (vv. 37,44,65). Thus the gospel gives a new dimension to discipleship, that the followers of Jesus are only those who are drawn by the Father. The fourth evangelist presents the relationship between Jesus and his disciples after the model of Jesus' unique relationship with his father. In the following section we will discuss this salient feature of the Johannine notion of discipleship.

The Fourth Sign: The Multiplication of the Bread (6:1-15)

Introduction.: With the account in John's Gospel of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, we come face to face with the element of the supernatural in the Fourth Gospel once more, but this time on a far "grander" scale than the changing of water into wine at Cana, the healing of the nobleman's son, or the cure of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. This time it is difficult to attribute the sign-

miracle to the inventiveness of the Evangelist, because it is the single event in the entire public ministry of Jesus before the Passion Week which is recorded in all four gospel accounts. There are three principal ways of understanding what happened.

- ❖ Some hold that a “miracle” took place in men’s hearts. Christ induced the selfish to share their provisions, and when this was done there proved to be more than enough for them all.
- ❖ Others think that the feeding should be understood as a sacramental meal, rather like Holy Communion, wherein each received a tiny fragment.
- ❖ Both the views we have noticed seem to rely too much on presupposition, and to overlook what the writers actually say. It is much better, accordingly, to hold to the third view, that Jesus, the Son of God incarnate, did do something that we can describe only as miracle. Undoubtedly, it inculcates spiritual truth as it is a “sign”. But this does not alter the fact that the Gospel writers speak of something wonderful that actually happened.

In light of the fact that all four of the gospels present the incident as miraculous, it appears clear that any approach which attempts to remove or downplay the supernatural nature of the event does not do justice to the biblical accounts. The following points are significantly noteworthy:

- **Tiberias** “ Only John in the New Testament refers to the Sea of Galilee by this name (see also 21:1), but this is correct local usage. In the mid-20’s Herod completed the building of the town of Tiberias on the southwestern shore of the lake; after this time the name came into use for the lake itself.
- The similarities with the various accounts of the Last Supper:
He took loaves Matthew, Mark, Luke, Paul (1 Cor 11)
gave thanks Matthew, Mark, Luke, Paul (1 Cor 11)
distributed Matthew, Mark, Luke
- Note that the fish mentioned previously (in 6:9) are not emphasized here in 6:13. This is easy to understand, however, because the bread is of primary importance for the Evangelist in view of Jesus’ upcoming discourse on the Bread of Life.
- **Kingship (6:15)**, Jesus, knowing that his hour had not yet come withdrew. The ministry of miracles in Galilee, ending with this, the

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multiplication of the bread (the last public miracle in Galilee recorded by John) aroused such a popular response that there was danger of an uprising. This would have given the authorities a legal excuse to arrest Jesus. The nature of Jesus' kingship will become an issue again in the passion narrative of the Fourth Gospel (18:33ff.).

- The divinity of Jesus is high lightened in this narrative. Just as YHWH fed the people in the desert with manna, Jesus is now feeding the people.

The Fifth Sign: Walking on the Water (6:16-21)

- *About 25 or 30 stadia*: One *stadion* - 6:19 ("furlong") = 607 feet (182 m); the Sea of Galilee was at its widest point 61 stadia (7 miles or 11.6 km) by 109 stadia (12 miles or 20 km). So at this point the disciples were pretty much in the middle of the lake.
- *The Place of the Miracle in the Narrative*: We need to ask at this point: Why did the Evangelist choose to include this incident, particularly at this point in the narrative? In the versions of this miracle given by Matthew and Mark, Jesus calms the sea and gets into the boat. The miracle is basically a nature-miracle (emphasizing Jesus' sovereignty over nature) in which the disciples are rescued from the storm. But John does not even mention these elements - it is not even clear if Jesus gets into the boat (verse 21 only states that the disciples wanted to receive Jesus into the boat - we may assume he got in, but the text does not explicitly state this). Why then does John include the miracle? And why *here*, when the Bread of Life Discourse which follows would fit so well with the miraculous feeding in 6:1-15?
- ✓ It is possible that the story of Jesus walking on the water was linked with the feeding of the five thousand in early Christian tradition, before any of the gospels were committed to writing. It follows the feeding of the five thousand in Mt 14:22-34 and Mk 6:45-52. In this case the Evangelist is simply following the traditional association when he includes the account here.
- ✓ Structurally these verses also serve to explain to the reader how Jesus and his disciples came to be back on the western side of the lake (Capernaum), cf. 6:24, 59.
- ✓ These explanations, however, do not exhaust the possibilities, and probably are not the primary reason for John's inclusion of Jesus

walking on the water at this point in the narrative. More significant is John's use of the term I AM (6:35, 41, 48, 51). Jesus is the one who bears the Divine Name (cf. EX 3:14). For John this story takes on the character of a theophany, not at all unlike the Transfiguration recorded by the Synoptics. The reaction the crowds had made after the multiplication of the bread had been an attempt to crown him king - but on a purely political level. And in the discourse which follows (on the Bread of Life) many even of his disciples will be unable to accept what he has said.

- We should not overlook the symbolism of water/sea - in the Old Testament it is the image of evil and chaos, particularly in Isaiah. For John, this could carry similar significance: Jesus' triumph over the sea represents his triumph over the forces of evil.
- But to his disciples in the boat (probably to be identified with the Twelve, cf. 6:67), not to the crowds, Jesus manifests that he is much *more* than a political messiah. What he is can be summed up only by the phrase "I am". These disciples, of course, knew that; they had placed their trust in Jesus as Messiah; but they needed a reminder that *their* ideas about the person and work of the Messiah were not to be conditioned by the ideas of the general population, to which they had just been witness.

Jesus as the True Bread from Heaven (6:22-71)

The Audience: The previous miracle of the multiplication of the bread had taken place near Tiberias. Jesus' disciples set sail for Capernaum (6:17) and are joined by the Lord in the midst of the sea. The next day boats from Tiberias pick up a few of those who had seen the multiplication and bring them to Capernaum. It was to this group that Jesus spoke in 6:26-27. But there were also people from Capernaum who had gathered to see Jesus, who had *not* witnessed the multiplication, and it was *this* group that asked Jesus for a miraculous sign like the manna (6:30-31). This would have seemed superfluous if it were the same crowd which had already seen the multiplication of the bread! But some from Capernaum had heard about it and wanted to see a similar miracle repeated.

The demand for sign (6:30-33): The crowd responds to Jesus' statement about believing in the one whom God has sent by demanding a sign - especially something like the manna given in the wilderness. Probably those who had *not* seen the multiplication of the bread had *heard* about it from those who had, and wanted to see something similar. The Johannine play on the physical versus the spiritual (32-

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33) - the food which perishes versus the food which remains for eternal life is obvious here. Compare with chapter 4 where the contrast is between the *water* that quenched thirst temporarily versus the *living water* that would satisfy thirst forever.

The interplay between works and faith in Johannine Thought:

The crowd asks Jesus (6:28), “What must we do that *we may work* the works of God?” Note Jesus’ reply: “This is the *work of God*: that you believe in the one he sent.” By the very phrase Jesus has shifted the emphasis from a *work of man* to *the work of God* - the initiative which God took in sending the Son into the world.

“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood...” (6:52-59): These words are at the heart of the discourse on the Bread of Life, and have created great misunderstanding among interpreters. Anyone who is inclined toward a sacramental viewpoint will almost certainly want to take these words as a reference to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, because of the reference to eating and drinking. The participle in verse 54, *trogon* is almost shockingly graphic: it means to eat noisily, often used of animals. When used with reference to people, it often has the idea of enjoyment (Mt 24:38) and close comradeship. Some have thought it refers to a literal feeding, and thus to the Eucharist. However, some are more inclined for a symbolic interpretation, but Jesus’s emphatic statement at the phase of the schism in vv. 62-65 rejects any possibility for symbolic interpretation. The context here suggests that eating Jesus body and drinking his blood literally means the signifying a personal receiving of Christ and his work.

6:60-72: In order to understand the meaning of the twelve in 6:67-71, one must recognise the schism discussed in the section 6:60-71 which is internally organised with two subsections (vv. 60-66, 67-71). As many scholars have pointed out, 6:60-71 is a complete section that can be differentiated from 6:26-58 because v. 59 has a clear dividing function. Barrett thinks that several synoptic themes are redacted within this section, such as the rejection of Jesus by his own villagers (Mk 6:1-6; Mt 13:54-58; Lk 4:16-30), the confession of Peter (Mk 8:29; Mt 16:16; Lk 9:20) and the prediction of the betrayal of Judas (Mk 14:18; Mt 26:21; Lk 22:21). Just as in the synoptics, Jesus’ Galilean ministry ended with a tone of disbelief.

Some scholars reason that since the disciples are equated with the “Jews” the schismatic disciples are most probably the Jewish

Christians who were members of the Johannine community (Cf. 1 Jn 2:19). But they unfortunately fails to observe the shift in the dialogue partners in vv. 41-58. “The crowd” in vv. 25-40 is shifted to “the Jews” in vv. 41-58. Therefore, the schismatics in 6:66 need not necessarily be Jewish Christians, because within the wider trajectory of the fourth gospel, the tension is invariably between the Jews who opposed Jesus and his believers. Nonetheless, on the basis of 6:62-63, it is possible to deduce the nature of the schism. Some disciples of Jesus believed that Jesus is divine by his ascension, but were reluctant to accept Jesus’ divine origin from the Father. 6:62 leads to the heart of the dispute. By ascending, the Son of Man returns to the place where he was before. 6:63 directly follows from the elliptic 6:62.

As long as the schismatic disciples see him [Jesus] as nothing more than a teacher sent by God (3:2), a wonder-working prophet (6:14) or an earthly or political Messiah (1:41; 4:25; 6:15; 7:49-50), they assess him as ‘flesh good for nothing.’ Thereby they rank on the same level as the Jews, who judge the human Jesus as *ka,ta sa,rka* (8:15). The ascent of Jesus ought, however, to show them that Jesus as flesh is at the same time “Pneuma,” namely the logos (1:1, 14), the Son of God (3:34; 10:30, 36; 20:28, 31).

If the schismatic disciples in Jn 6:60-66 are those who denied the divine origin of Jesus, the twelve who stand in sharp contrast with the schismatic disciples are those who truly understood the identity of Jesus as the incarnated logos. John wants to emphasise that it was not only at the exaltation that the human Jesus became the pneumatic being. If Jesus is divine only by exaltation, then words of the earthly Jesus are no longer life giving. Against these schismatics, the evangelist vindicates the fact that Jesus is divine by origin; he is “the word” who existed eternally with the Father. This fundamental christological faith is put on the lips of Peter. The confession of Peter on behalf of the twelve is presented in sharp disparity with the schismatics.

Judas: The Representative of the Jews Who Denied Jesus?:

The confession of Peter in the synoptic gospels is immediately followed by a rebuke scene, in which Jesus calls Peter, “Satan.” The Johannine account of Peter’s confession is also followed by a

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reference to Satan (6:70), but instead of Peter, here the betrayer Judas is referred to. The similarities in the characterisation of Satan and Judas in the fourth gospel and comes to the conclusion that Judas is the earthly manifestation of Satan. This characterisation enables the evangelist to create three sub-plots of conflict: the Son of Man vs. the prince of the world, the good shepherd vs. the hireling-thief and Jesus vs. Judas Iscariot. In the farewell discourse, the evangelist replace the opponents (*the Jews*) with “the world” so as to highlight the intersection of the cosmological and historical tale of the gospel. In the historical tale, the Jews are the opponents of Jesus, while in the cosmological tale the prince of the world is Jesus’ opponent.

Throughout the gospel, Judas is portrayed as negative character. In this section, we will argue that the Johannine presentation of Judas and “the Jews” who opposed Jesus are similar. However, we do not argue that this parallel presentation is anti-Jewish. Reinhartz had made a passing comment that the name *Judas* reminds us of *Judaïos* (Jew). A thorough analysis of the text makes it clearer:

The evangelist thus presents the thesis that the new eschatological era, in which Peter and Judas represent the believers and non-believers of Israel respectively, is inaugurated in Jesus. By rejecting Jesus, Judas lost his privileged status as the chosen one (cf. 6:70). Just as Judas, the privileged status of the chosen people, who failed to believe in Jesus becomes insignificant. Hereafter, the believers who constitute the true Israel, upon whom Peter is appointed leader (cf. 21:15-20), constitute the restored Israel of the eschatological era.

Notes

- ¹ The often-suggested aporias are (i) In John 5, Jesus is in Jerusalem whereas in John 6 Jesus is at Galilee. (ii) Jn 7:1 immediately follows from Jn 5:17-18, because both deals with the Jews who wanted to persecute Jesus. (iii) In Jn 7:23, there is a reference back to the healing story in Jn 5:1-18.
- ² Among many others, BULTMANN, *Johannes*, 154-177; SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannes*, I, 6-114, argue that the order of the chapters John 5 and 6 must be reversed. LINDARS, *John*, 50; ASHTON, *Fourth Gospel*, 200-01, argue that John 6 is a later addition to the original gospel. According to them *meta tauta* in 5:1 and 6:1 contradicts the geographical locations of the narrative. FORTNA, *Signs Gospel*, 56, considers *meta tauta* as an indication of literary seam used by the evangelist to ease the aporia that his arrangement has caused.

The Third Round Trip: The Identity Crises (7:1-10:39)

As we have seen before, the structure of this section can be presented in ABC, A¹B¹C¹, A²B²C², A³B³C³ chiasms. On the one hand, Jesus progressively reveals his own identity as the one sent by God, as well as the identity of those who believe in him, as the children of God. On the other hand, the enmity of the Jewish leaders against Jesus grows, their identity as the chosen people of God is rejected and their prerogatives are challenged.

Initial setting - Dispute over the Journey: the brothers leave Jesus (7:1-10).

- A** Identity of Jesus: “the one sent by the Father” (7:10-36)
- B** Identity of the believers: the source of the living water (7:36-39)
- C** Identity of the Jews: Those who have the scripture and law, but they failed to grasp them by failing to see the Messiah in Jesus (40-52)
- A¹** Identity of Jesus: the one testified by the Father (8:12-30)

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- B¹** Identity of the disciples: those freed by truth (8:31-36)
- C¹** Identity of the Jews: sons of Abraham, but by rejecting Jesus they accepted the devil as their Father (8:37-58)
- A²** Identity of Jesus: the light of the world who gives sight (9:1-12)
- B²** Identity of the disciple: the one witnesses boldly that Jesus is from God (9:13-38)
- C²** Identity of the Jews: disciples of Moses, but accused of being blind and are judged as sinners (9:39-41, cf. v. 28 also)
- A³** Identity of Jesus: the good shepherd (10:1-11)
- B³** Identity of the believers/disciples: the new flock of Jesus (10:12-21)
- C³** Identity of Jews: Flock of God, but by rejecting the Messiah (the good shepherd) they are out of God's flock (10:22-39)

This structure reveals that those who believe in the true identity of Jesus are contrasted with the Jews who opposed Jesus.

Jesus' Kinsmen and the Disciples (7:1-10)

In 7:1-10, another group, 'his brothers' who accompanied Jesus (cf. 2:11) departed from him (7:5). The fourth evangelist mentions a group of people who were kinsmen to Jesus, following Jesus (cf. 2:12). The reference to Jesus' kinsmen may be due to the presence of a group in the early church. The reference to Jesus' mother and brothers by the fourth evangelist explains their presence in the primitive church immediately after the death of Jesus (cf. Act 1:14; Gal 1:19; 1Cor 9:5).

In 7:2-10, after the withdrawal of the disciples (6:66) except the twelve, Jesus is with his brothers. The expression the disciples (7:3c) shows that there is an explicit dissociation between the "brothers" and the "disciples." In 7:3-4, his brothers advise Jesus to present himself in public to regain the social mandate after the Galilean schism (6:66-70). Unlike the disciples, The brothers out of their "unquestionable loyalty and authority, advise and even orient to a certain extent Jesus' activity." Schnackenburg rightly observes that the willingness of those brothers to make a pilgrimage with Jesus shows that they are still part of the movement.¹ This argument is not fully convincing for three reasons. (i) The evangelist's comment in 7:5, portrays the growing discontent first among the disciples (cf. 6:66) and then among the brothers. (ii) Jesus' decision to go to

Jerusalem without the company of his brothers shows that the relationship between Jesus and his kinsmen is no longer cordial. (iii) Moreover, unlike in 2:12, Jesus' mother who appears again at the foot of the cross (19:25-27) is not mentioned in 7:2-10 as being among the kin. Therefore, we conclude that the group called *his brothers* (2:12; 7:3-5) also failed to recognise Jesus, and most likely followed Jesus no longer.

The discontinuity between discipleship and kinship is, however, restored in 19:25-27, where the beloved disciple (the ideal representative of the discipleship) receives the mother of Jesus (the ideal representative of Jesus' kinship). However, the new family created here is not exclusively of blood relationship, rather, the faithful 'woman' and the beloved 'brother' constitute the new family. By redefining kinship in terms of discipleship the fourth evangelist also shares the synoptic line of thought developed Mk 3:31-35, where Jesus redefines his family as those who do the will of God. The extension of Jesus' kinship beyond sanguinity is evident in the kinship terminology the risen Lord uses in 20:17.

Did Jesus Lie to his brothers?

- The tension between the time of Jesus (*kairos*) and that (*Chronos*) of the brothers.
- Jesus' time is designed by the father, but his brothers' time is not.
- This is a typical Johanine presentation of negative reaction and a positive action.
- The meaning of the feast of Tabernacle for Jesus and his brothers are different.
- Brothers are part of the world, whereas Jesus is from above.

2. Tabernacle Feast (7:11-52)

Three Rituals in Connection with the Feast of Tabernacle:

The entire context of the text is defined in relation to the celebration of the the feast of Tabernacle. The following are the main rituals of the feast:

1. Water libation

- Water from Siloam is carried to the temple by priests in a golden pot through the water gate (South gate - Ez 47:1-5)
- The water mixed with wine will flow from the Jar kept at the alter.

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- Ritual for rain request (Zc 14:12-17)
- Messianic expectation, prophet like Moses - New well of Torah - Nm 21:18
- Gn 49:10 - Digging of the well of Torah
- *Ecl. Rab.*-Messianic gifts of bread and Water (Jn 6 and 7)
This ritual plays a significant role in Jn 7:37-39

2. Ceremony of Light

- Four Menorahs at the centre of the court of the Women
- Remembrance of the Pillar of Fire in the desert - Ex 13:21
- The Pillar of Fire is expected to return at the messianic age – Is 4:5; Br 5:8-9)
- Priests and Levites danced in the light -
Jesus statement that I AM the light of the world (8:12) is formulated within the context of this ritual

3. Rite of Facing the temple

- At cockcrow of the seven days the priests proceed to the east gate and will gaze to the east
- At the moment of sunrise they face to the temple turning their back to the sun - Withdrawal from worshipping sun - Ez 8:16
- Reciting the final Hallel (Ps 118:28-29)
All the three rituals plays a pivotal role in understanding the Johannine narration in chapters 7- 8.

Last Day of the Feast (7:37-39)

Last day of Tabernacle was similar to *Sabbath*. On this day Jesus makes a prophesy on the flowing of the living water, i.e., the Holy Spirit. This imagery is borrowed from several OT parallels:

- Ez 47:1-11, Spring flows from the temple.
- Zc 14:8 – On that day living waters shall flow from Jerusalem
- The Spirit will flow at end times – Ez 1:19; 36:26-27; Is 44:3; Joel 2:26; 3:1
- Prefiguration of the Mosaic gift

The Identity Crisis in the Third Journey

As our suggested structure of Jn 7:1-10:40 reveals the controversy between Jesus and the Jews is based on the identity issue. The Jews defy Jesus' *from above* identity claim, whereas Jesus challenges them on their identity claims. Together with the theme of identity the

evangelist develops a parallel notion of sin. The Jewish identity is traditionally defined on the basis of the Decalogue, whereas the evangelist defines the disciples'/believers' identity on the basis of their faith in Jesus' true identity. Many scholars have observed an explicit allusion to the Decalogue in this section.

The Jews use the law as a norm to condemn Jesus. They accuse him of violating the Sabbath (5:13; 9:16,24) and they condemn Jesus' claim to be the Son of God as blasphemy (5:17-18; 8:58; 10:24-38). On the basis of the law they accuse Jesus as the false teacher (7:14-18,45-49; 9:24-34) and the enemy of the Jewish nation (11:47-52). Against these accusations, by appealing to the law, Jesus defends his work on the Sabbath (7:21-24), his claim to be the Son of God (10:34-36), and the authenticity of his teaching (8:12-20). We argue that John presents a new Decalogue which functions as a hermeneutical key for exploring the identity of Jesus, the believers and the Jews.

The evangelist judiciously states that the Jews violate their own law by accusing Jesus (7:19, 51). Therefore, the Jews who find their identity in the observation of the commandments in the Decalogue lose their true identity by standing against Jesus. The believers on the other hand become true heirs of the Decalogue by believing in Jesus. The polemic with the Decalogue is part of the strategy to bring Moses on the side of Jesus, to use the law as the positive testimony of Jesus' claim.

The evangelist progressively reveals that believing in Jesus' true identity means accepting his claims regarding whence he comes and whither he goes.

Whence and Whither: Leitmotif of Discipleship

For the fourth evangelist, the true identity of Jesus is 'the one came down from heaven and the one who returns to the Father.' Therefore, the questions *που* ("Where?" or "Whither?") and *Ποθεν* ("Whence?") play an important role in the Johannine understanding of discipleship. The first question addressed to Jesus in the fourth gospel is "Where do you stay?" (1:37- by the first disciples) and the last question is "Where have you put the body of Jesus?" (20:14 - by Mary Magdalene, which echoes 1:37).

Jesus' identity in the fourth gospel is defined in terms of the divine origin from whence he comes (7:29; 8:14). Those who are from below

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cannot understand whence divine things come (2:9; 3:8; 4:11; 6:5). The Jews who do not know his whereabouts (7:11, 27, 28; 9:12; 11:57), nor whence he comes (7:35; 9:29, 30; cf. 9:16) are his opponents. They know the whereabouts of his Father (8:19) either. Pilate also fails to recognize the whence of Jesus (19:9). His opponents walk in darkness; therefore they do not know where they go (11:57). Here, Jesus ironically states that those who do not know his whence and where will not know their own where.

The disciples also fail to know Jesus' whence and whither (13:36; 14:5; 16:5). Mary Magdalene's love for Jesus as well as her misunderstanding is reflected in her repeated question regarding the where of Jesus (20:2,13,15). Therefore, the questions *whence and whither* in the fourth gospel are questions regarding the source and authorisation of Jesus.

Throughout the gospel, people are distinguished by whether or not they know where Jesus comes from, where he is and where he is going - namely, from, in and to God. In a number of instances the false statements regarding the origin of Jesus are corrected. The people who ate the bread wanted to make him king expecting mundane food. But they are corrected repeatedly that he is the bread *from* heaven (6:32, 38, 41, 42, 51). In 7:27 and 9:28 the Jews who claim to know the whence of Jesus are proved to be wrong. The Jews use the notion of the hidden Messiah to deny the messianic identity of Jesus (7:26-27). But based on this same popular belief, the evangelist ironically vindicates the messiahship of Jesus, since Jesus' whence is hidden from the Jews. 8:31-44 states that the Jews who failed to know whence Jesus came (from the Father) have the devil as their father. Failing to recognise this, the Jews attempt to stone Jesus accusing him of making himself equal to God (10:31-39). The root of their opposition to Jesus is their failure to recognise whence he comes. At the end of Jesus' public ministry, the voice from heaven (12:27-30) attests Jesus identity as the one from the Father in heaven. Thus we can observe that the evangelist consistently defines Jesus' identity in terms of his being "from above." The difference between Jesus and others is that Jesus is always from above while others are from below. The disciples partake in Jesus' "from above" identity by believing in his true identity.

The gospel not only emphasises the importance of knowing where Jesus is *from*, but also where he is going *to*. Even though the evangelist

uses various verbs to denote Jesus' return to the Father, he does not seem to distinguish them semantically. Those who fail to recognise the whence of Jesus consequently fail to recognise the destination of Jesus' return. Just as they did not recognise Jesus' origin, the Jews do not recognise the destination of his return. They believed that Jesus was going to the Diaspora (7:33-36) or was going to commit suicide (8:21-22). The disciples also misunderstand Jesus' statements regarding his return (13:33; 16:16-19). The Jews remained in their misunderstanding while the disciples come to conceive Jesus correctly. Once again the disciples and Jews are contrasted in the gospel.

The misunderstanding of Jesus' identity leads the Jews to deny the disciples' Jewish identity, but by doing so ironically the Jews themselves are dethroned from their privileged identity as the true worshippers/children of God, whereas the expelled ones become the true worshippers/believers. This is explained in John 9-10.

The following points are Noteworthy:

- 7:14, Jesus taught in the temple - post 70 Judaism is only a religion of teaching, having no sacrifice. Therefore Jesus' teaching in the temple is a prophetic action pointing towards the future of Judaism and Jewish temple
- 7:19-23, direct link - God through Moses to Jesus. Anyone who denies Jesus denies Moses

Their symbolic act of facing the temple ironically represents that turning against Jesus they turn against God and the temple.

- **Various Messianic imageries are presented in 7:25-41,**
 - ❖ The hidden Messiah - 7:26-27
 - ❖ The miracle working Messiah - 7:31
 - ❖ Messiah that provides living water - 7:37-41a
 - ❖ The Davidic Messiah - 7:41b-42
- Holy Spirit is the final Messianic gift. This gift leads to the confessions of faith - 7:40, 41.

3. Interpolation: Jn 7:53 - 8:11, The Woman Caught in Adultery

This is one of the most disputed text within the New Testament for its authenticity. The confusion is obvious from the various textual

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witnesses. The following are the different positions allotted to the narrative in various textual witnesses

- After 7:36
- After 7:44
- After 7:52
- After 21:25

This shows that the scribes wanted to preserve this story somewhere in the Johannine Tradition. The style, vocabulary and theology tempts the scholars to suggest that the text is Lukan.

- ❖ The Lukan scene setting - Crowd is separated, Jesus prays upon the mountain (Lk 4:42; 6:12; 9:18; 11:1; 21:37 etc.) is typically shown in this narrative. Many consider that Lk 21:37 is the right place of the scene
- ❖ The Scribes and Pharisees as opponents of Jesus, as presented in the narrative, is typically a synoptic style. Within the Johannine narrative framework, *the Jews* are the opponents of Jesus.
- ❖ However, they act like typical Johannine Jews. The redactor had reworked the story to be fit into the Johannine context.

Another enigmatic issue within this narrative is regarding the content of what Jesus had written on the sand. Several interpretations are available to solve the issue:

- ❖ Sign of indifference in the debate of the Scribes
- ❖ Jer 17:13 - sinner will be recorded on earth
- ❖ *M. Sabbath* - Writing on sand is guiltless, a permissible act on Sabbath
- ❖ An indication of divine judgment, the people are judged by Jesus

Message of the Narrative:

- Law is made an instrument of tyranny (Lv 24:1-16)
- The first witness should throw the first stone?
- Together with the sinner Jesus is tried to be trapped by the Pharisees
- The sin that Jesus refers to is most likely sexual sin. Therefore Jesus is directly attacking their hypocrisy.
- The accused become the judge as Jesus judges them
- The sinner is saved in the presence of Jesus.
- Jesus calmly accepts her as a person advises not to sin anymore

4. Jesus is the Light of the World (8:12-30)

- Rite of lighting the menorahs in connection with the feast of Tabernacle is the context of the narrative.
- Torah is the light (Wis 18:4; Ps 119:105; Prov 6:23; Sir 24:27)

- ⊙ Light gives two possibilities - to remain in darkness or to follow Jesus (1:11-12; 3:19)
- ⊙ To be in light means to bear witness to the Lord (Nm 35:30; Dt 17:16)
- ⊙ The two basic questions - where is your father? (8:19) who is your father? (8:19c) shows their ignorance of Jesus' identity.
- ⊙ To be in light means to know who Jesus is.

5. Immersion in *Siloha*: Entry to Discipleship (9:1-38)

The cure of the blind man, which the disciples witnessed (Jn 9:1-12), is followed by a discourse in which the theme of discipleship has a vital importance. John 9 is a “Johannine acted parable” of Jesus' claim as the light of the world (8:12). This chapter has a strong baptismal motive in which the man born blind is initiated into Christian discipleship.

The baptismal motifs of congenital blindness yielding to enlightenment through washing in the water symbolically named by the evangelist “the sent” (9:7), and launching the newly illumined one on the challenging path to full Christian discipleship (9:38), suggest that the original *Sitz im Leben* of this story might well have been the sacramental initiation of believers in the Johannine community.

Jn 9 is the primary basis for J. L. Martyn's hypothesis that the historical setting of John's gospel is the tension between the Jews and the Christians. The miracle and the discourse are inseparably interwoven in this chapter. According to Martyn, it is quite unlikely that the events of interrogation and expulsion from the synagogue happened during the lifetime of the pre-Easter Jesus. Thus, it is plausible to think that John developed the healing story into a theological presentation in which the crisis of the Johannine community as well as the meaning of discipleship is enunciated. Certain scholars have pointed out that there is the fusion of three horizons in 9:35-41, in which the Son of Man (the horizon of the Johannine community) blames the Pharisees for their inability to see (the horizon of the pre-Easter Jesus) and identifies himself as the point of reference for all those who are going to believe in him (the horizon of the readers). The parents of the man born blind may represent the so-called “crypto-Christians” who are threatened with the expulsion from the synagogue. This blindness is not sin, but it provides the arena for God's salvific work (9:3). Here the evangelist

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once again accentuates the theme of misunderstanding of the disciples. They fail to understand Jesus' new definition of sin as the lack of faith (cf. 8:21-30). Their misunderstanding of blindness as the consequence of sins puts them on the same level of the Pharisees (cf. 9:34).

The healing of the blind is attested to by the synoptics as well (Mk 10:46-52//Mt 9:27-31; 20:29-34; Lk 18:35-43 and Mk 8:23-26). Unlike the synoptics, John emphasises the congenital blindness of the man (9:2,32). This blindness symbolically represents the universal incapacity of humankind to attain divine life, which can only be attained by being born from above (3:3) and born of water and Spirit (3:5). It is remarkable to notice that the man is healed by washing in the pool called *Siloha* (אֶסְתָּאֵל מֵנֹי), which is virtually a proper name for Jesus in the fourth gospel. The reference to the works of the one who sent me in v. 4 gives a semantic attestation to this interpretation. Thus, the blind man is born again by being plunged into Jesus, *the sent one*. The evangelist vindicates the fundamental theme that the disciples/believers are those immersed in Jesus. Again, unlike in the synoptics the healing is an initiative from Jesus' side, so that the works of God may be revealed (9:3), hence it is a typical Johannine sign. The bold witnessing of the healed man before the Jewish authorities is presented as a paradigm for believers.

Besides the paradigm motif, one can observe the central feature of the Johannine notion of the correlation between christology and discipleship. The identity of the disciple is intrinsically related to the identity of Jesus. Those who suspect the identity of the disciples will invariably suspect/oppose Jesus' identity. The structure of John 9 reveals this fact clearly.

Introduction: 1-7: The *Semeion*, the blind man is healed

A 8:12 Interrogation of the man's identity

B 13-14 Narrator's comment (The Pharisees are the opponents of disciples)

C 15-17 Interrogation of Jesus' identity

A¹ 18-21 Interrogation of the man's identity (witnessing of the parents)

B¹ 22-23 Narrator's comment (Jews as the opponents of Jesus/disciples)

C¹ 24-34 Interrogation of Jesus' identity (from God)

Conclusion 35-41: The man who was healed became a believer.

The structure reveals that the failure of the Jews to know “where Jesus is from” led them to turn against the believer. The expulsion of the man born blind (v. 34) is presented in sharp contrast to his worship of Jesus (38b). Through this narrative the evangelist gives the impression that by believing in Jesus’ true identity, the disciple/believer is set out of his/her Jewish identity and receives a new identity in the worshipping community. For the blind man Jesus is revealed gradually:

- the man (v. 11)
- a prophet (17)
- Sir (v. 36)
- Son of man (v. 36b)
- Lord (v. 38)
- God (*he worships Jesus* - v. 38)

6. John 10: Disciples, the New Sheep of God

The parable of the good shepherd in John 10 progressively reveals the Johannine notion of discipleship. It presents the believers of Jesus as true successors of the First Testament’s covenantal community. The parable can be better understood if we start it with 9:40. The Pharisees here represent the Jews. According to this interpretation, the Pharisees are the direct audience of this parable. It is to them that Jesus reveals two vital truths: (i) 10:6, 9 - I AM the door of the sheep pen (ii) 10:9 - through Jesus one enters into salvation. Through this revelation, the evangelist explicitly states that the Jews can be saved only through Jesus (cf. 14:5). The contrast between *the good shepherd* and *thieves and workers* points towards the contrast between Jesus, who leads to salvation, and the Jewish leaders who expel the believers (9:34).

The metaphor of the flock and the shepherd to designate Israel, is found in the OT (Ez 34:23-24; Zec 13:7-9). One may observe five theological images within the structure of Jn 10:1-18.

- (i) Image of entering the sheepfold (1-3a).
- (ii) The image of what the shepherd does and what the sheep do (3b-5), the narrators comment is followed (6-7a).
- (iii) The image of the door to the sheep (7b-10),
- (iv) the image of the good shepherd (11-16),
- (v) theological image (17-18). These images progressively reveal the intrinsic relationship between the sheep and the shepherd, that is, the disciples and Jesus .

Background of the narrative:

- The OT passages on shepherd - Jer 23:1-8; Ez 34; Zp 3:3; Zc 10:2-3; 11:14-17
- God is envisioned as the future Shepherd of Israel - Zp 3:19; Mic 2:12
- Messianic expectation - A shepherd like David will emerge (Ez 34:23-24; Mic 5:3; Jr 3:15; 23:4-6)

Good shepherd (*kalos poimanes*) narrative is a figure of speech (*paroimia*). The word for *figure of speech* refers to an obscure saying that needs to be interpreted (cf. Jn 16:25, 29, Hauck 1967a:856). It is not just a figure of speech or a comparison, but a saying that is loaded with significance - the verbal equivalent of Jesus' signs. Little that Jesus says in this Gospel is not conveyed in this manner, as he will admit at the end of his teaching (16:25) to the Pharisees (v. 6, *autois*), but they did not get it. These are people who claim to be able to see (9:40-41), but their inability to understand Jesus is yet another example of their spiritual blindness.

Jesus now puts the events of chapter 9 into perspective by contrasting himself, the Good Shepherd, with the Pharisees, whom he identifies with the evil shepherds of Ezekiel 34. "The `Pharisees' have expelled from God's flock the man whom Christ Himself enlightened. They are scattering the sheep whom Christ came to gather" (Dodd 1953:359). In this way, Jesus' estrangement from official Judaism is further developed as he calls into being a people who follow him rather than the leaders of Israel. In the Old Testament, the leaders of the people are called shepherds, especially Moses (Ps 77:20) and David (Ps 78:70-72; Ezek 34:23). But God is the shepherd par excellence (for example, Ps 80:1; cf. Jeremias 1968:488-89; Barrett 1978:373-74). In these passages God shepherds through his designated leaders. Jesus is claiming such a role for himself, but in a way unlike anything seen before. He has made clear claims to divinity and messiahship, which will be repeated shortly (Jn 10:22-39). So when he claims to be the shepherd he is claiming that Messiah has come and in him God himself has come to shepherd his people. Two points are noteworthy:

- The idea of a voluntary and vicarious death for the sheep is not found in the Old Testament nor elsewhere (Jeremias 1968:496-97; Barrett 1978:374). The closest conceptual background is that of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 (Brown

1966:398; Westcott 1908:2:57). While this servant is likened to a sheep rather than a shepherd (Is 53:7).

- Another part of the conceptual background comes from the prophet Zechariah, who contrasts two shepherds. One is the messianic shepherd-king who is rejected by the people, which, in turn, results in their condemnation (Zech 11:4-14). The second is the worthless shepherd who deserts the flock (Zech 11:4-17). God's messianic shepherd will be struck down, causing the sheep to be scattered and leading to the judgment and refining of God's people (Zech 13:7-9). This rejection by the leaders of the people and their own condemnation is echoed in John.

Kenneth Bailey (1993) suggests the background is from village life where each family owns a couple of sheep for personal use. The animals stay at night in the courtyard of the family's house (*aule*, paraphrased in the NIV a *sheep pen*, v. 1). Families on a given street agree as to who will shepherd their combined flock, often designating one or more of the children. In the morning this shepherd goes down the street to gather the sheep. The person at the door recognizes the shepherd and opens the door for the sheep to pass through. The shepherd has a distinct call or whistle, sometimes using a small flute, which the sheep recognize and follow. When several flocks end up at a watering place at the same time and mingle together, they are easily separated again by the shepherd, who gives his call as he starts to walk away. In addition to their own distinctive call, some shepherds also give their sheep names (Bailey 1993:10; cf. Beasley-Murray 1987:168).

Jesus uses the shepherd motif to interpret what has just taken place with the former blind man. Judaism is described as a sheep pen, but not all the sheep in the pen belong to Jesus' flock. They are separated out as they recognize his voice and follow him out from the sheep pen. Jesus is gathering his flock together from the pen of official Judaism. Jesus Is the Gate for the Sheep (10:7-10) Because these Jewish leaders did not understand what Jesus was saying he goes back over it again from a different perspective. In this repetition we see God's graciousness, the same graciousness that caused the word of the Lord to come a second time to Jonah (Jon 3:1) and suffered with Israel's waywardness throughout her history. It is the same graciousness we each depend on every day of our lives.

I am the Gate: In this second statement Jesus says, *I am the gate for the sheep* (v. 7). This imagery has some allusion to the vision of Jacob in Gen 28. When Jacob had his vision he said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven” (Gen 28:17). John wants us to have the same response. How awesome is this place-and the place is now this person in our midst, Jesus, the Son of God, the gate leading to God.

The scene has shifted from the village to the open field. In the summer sheep are sometimes kept out in the pasture overnight. The pen used is simply an enclosure made of piled rocks. There is neither roof nor door, but thorns along the top of the rock walls protect the sheep from wild animals, and the shepherd himself sleeps in the entrance, providing a door (cf. Bailey 1993:11; Beasley-Murray 1987:169). So when Jesus says he is *the gate for the sheep* (v. 7) he is still using the image of a shepherd, but applying it directly to himself. From this picture of a shepherd sleeping in the entrance we would expect Jesus’ role to be the protector of the sheep. Jesus does indeed protect his own (cf. 6:39; 17:12), but the image is developed here in a surprising way. The sheep are to *enter through* Jesus (v. 9), something not true of the shepherd sleeping in the entrance of a summer shelter! So the image is not that of a door as a barrier for protection, but of a door as a passageway.

The themes introduced in a general way (Jn 10:11-13) are then personalized and developed (10:14-18). Jesus’ knowledge of his flock and their knowledge of him (v. 14) are compared to the knowledge the Father and the Son have of one another (v. 15). The conjunction translated *just as* (*kathos*) is most often used as a comparative, but it can have a causal sense (Wallace 1996:674). Both senses are true here, for “the relationship between God the Father and his Son is the original model and reason for Jesus’ fellowship with his own” (Schnackenburg 1980b:297). As always, Jesus’ identity as the Son and his relationship with the Father are crucial for understanding what is being said.

This new community is based in his death (10:15). The very pattern of life in this new community is that of life laid down for one another, a cruciform life. The possibility of such a life and the power for such a life come through the life of the Son of God poured out on the cross, thereby uniting God and mankind by taking away the sin of the world and revealing the glory of God.

Other Sheep: Jesus mentions that he has other sheep not of this sheep pen who must be brought also, so *there shall be one flock and one shepherd* (v. 16). The connotation of *other sheep* varies according to the commentators:

- The most natural reading, accepted by most commentators, is that Jesus is referring to sheep from outside the fold of Judaism. There are Gentiles who will listen to his voice and be joined to his flock.
- Most recent scholars think John is simply giving Jesus some lines that would address the later situation, but the potential ambiguity of the figure is typical of Jesus himself (cf. 21:22- 23). This two-level drama interpretation is suggested mainly by J. L. Martyn.
- Scholars like Brown suggests that the other sheep are Christians other than the Johannine community, i.e., from other apostolic communities.

They are already his sheep because they have been given to him by the Father (v. 16; cf. 10:29; 6:37-39; 17:2, 6, 24; Beasley-Murray 1987:171), yet they must hear his call and respond. So once again we see both divine sovereignty and human responsibility at play.

But how will he bring the Gentiles? When Gentiles do come to him it signals his hour has finally arrived (12:20, 23), but Jesus himself is not seen going to the Gentiles. He will bring the Gentiles into the flock by the ministry of his disciples, whom he will send (20:21).

Intention of the Narrative:

- The entire narrative is a criticism of Jewish leadership. Radical contrast is made between Jesus and the Jewish leadership. They are thieves and hirelings who are least concerned of the sheep, whereas Jesus lays down his life for the sheep.
- The parable of the gate is annexed to the shepherd imagery. Those who enter through the main door is the shepherd whereas those who enter through subterfuge. Entrance is determined by the intention of the one who enters.

To summarise, the third journey is remarkable for the growing opposition against Jesus. The evangelist emphasises that Jesus is confronted with a series of attacks in this journey. The following list hints at this fact.

Death threat:	7:1
Physical violence against Jesus:	7:30; 7:44, 10:24; 10:31, 39
Verbal violence (accusation):	7:20; 8:48; 8:52
Opposition:	7:12
The disputes in	7:41, 52; 9:16, 22, 24; 10:20.

These reports of violence convey the message to the reader that the “way” of Jesus is becoming more and more dangerous. Jesus is deserted by his own disciples (6:66), kinsmen (7:5), and religious leaders (cf. Jn 9:21-34) and invites the reader to a radical commitment in following Jesus. By rejecting Jesus, the opponents become spiritually blind and drive themselves out of God’s salvific plan. Simultaneously, these confrontations disclose the true identity of Jesus as well as of the disciples. The disciple of Jesus is defined as the one who partakes in the “from above” identity of Jesus by ‘immersing’ into “the one sent” (cf. 9:7). They become the new flock of the Messiah, who is both the gate and the shepherd of the flock.

7. Feast of Dedication (10:22-42)

- ❖ The Feast commemorates the temple dedication by Judas Maccabeus (1 Mac 4:46-51; 2 Mac 10:1-4) on the 25th of Chislew 164 BC.
- ❖ The temple was made impure by Epiphanes. Similarly the present temple is impured by the leaders. Jesus is going to replace the temple on this dedication day
- ❖ Temple indicates the presence of God. Now Jesus is the presence of God

Theological themes of the Narrative:

- The relation between Jesus and the father is explained in this passage. AS Jesus replaces the temple, he becomes the presence of God among the people.
- The unity between the Father and the Son is presented not in the sense of a metaphysical unity (v. 30) rather as the union of love and obedience.
- The theme of blasphemy is presented as a typical Johannine irony. Jesus the Son of God is accused for blasphemy!!!
- Jesus act of revealing God through his works is accused as blasphemy.

Notes

¹ Cf. SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, II, 261-262.

The Fourth Journey: The Resurrection and life (10:40-12:50)

In this journey as well, the evangelist does not mention the disciples accompanying Jesus. However, we must presuppose their presence with him, because in 11:6 they appear on the scene. They are with him in the Bethany of John the Baptist (11:7) and the Bethany of Lazarus (cf. 11:54). They are with Jesus in the house of anointing (12:4). In the light of 12:16 we can reasonably argue that they were with Jesus during the triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The structure of this journey could be understood in the following manner.

- A Jesus' retreat to Bethany of John the Baptist (10:40-11:16)
- B Jesus comes forward to the Bethany of Lazarus (11:17-45)
- C Jesus is rejected by Jews (11:46-53)
- A¹ Jesus' retreat to Ephraim (11:54-57)
- B¹ Jesus comes forward to Bethany of Lazarus and to Jerusalem (12:1-36a)
- C¹ The Jews are warned of being rejected by God: final retreat from the Jews (12:36b-50)

1. The seventh Sign: Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44)

R. Brown gives an excellent summary of the significance of the miracle in chapter 11 for the Evangelist and its place in the structure of the narrative: We suggest that here we have another instance of the pedagogical genius of the Fourth Gospel. The Synoptic Gospels present Jesus' condemnation as a reaction to his whole career and to the many things that he had said and done. In the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, we are told in Luke xix 37 that, much to the discontent of the Pharisees, the people were praising Jesus because "*of all the mighty miracles they had seen.*" The Fourth Gospel is not satisfied with such a generalization. It is neither sufficiently dramatic nor clear-cut to say that all Jesus' miracles led to enthusiasm on the part of some and hate on the part of others. And so the writer has chosen to take *one miracle* and to make this the primary representative of all the mighty miracles of which Luke speaks. With a superb sense of development he has chosen a miracle in which Jesus raises a dead man. All Jesus' miracles are signs of what he is and what he has come to give man, but in none of them does the sign more closely approach the reality than in the gift of life. The physical life that Jesus gives to Lazarus is still not in the realm of the life from above, but it is so close to that realm that it may be said to conclude the ministry of signs and inaugurate the ministry of glory. Thus, the raising of Lazarus provides an ideal transition, the last sign in the Book of Signs leading into the Book of Glory. Moreover, the suggestion that the supreme miracle of giving life to man leads to the death of Jesus offers a dramatic paradox worthy of summing up Jesus' career. And finally, if a pattern of sevens had any influence..., the addition of the Lazarus miracle gave the seventh sign to the Book of Signs (*John* 429-30).

Significant features of the Narrative:

1. There is no specific time note at the beginning of 11:1. It is possible that the incident described here took place some time before the final Passion week, which would help to explain its absence from the synoptic accounts which deal primarily with the Passion week.
2. Jesus' delay to respond indicates that he is not controlled by human love.
3. Referring death as sleep is an indirect reference to resurrection, i.e., a death in view of resurrection

4. As Peter is not mentioned between John 6:68 and 13:6, some have suggested that he remained behind in Galilee and did not arrive in Jerusalem until just before the week of the Passion. Peter's absence from the scene may also be suggested by the observation that Thomas, not Peter, serves as spokesman for the Twelve in 11:16. If Peter were absent, it may further explain the absence of this miracle from the synoptic accounts, especially if we take Mark to be the personal reminiscences of Peter, and Matthew to be dependent on Mark at this point. This still does not explain the absence of the miracle from Luke's account, but Luke is probably giving us selected episodes like John rather than a full account.
5. Lazarus is probably symbolic of all Christians, that is, all whom Jesus love (11:3, also 11:11). 3 John 15 uses this title for Christians in general.
6. Just as he pointed out in 9:3 that the blindness of the man was for the purpose of having God's works revealed in him, so in 11:4 Jesus points out that Lazarus' sickness is for God's glory; God's glory will be manifested only when the Son is glorified.
7. The reason the sickness is not to end in death (11:9) is because Jesus will give life, that is, physical life as a sign of eternal life. The miracle will glorify Jesus, not so much in that people will praise him for it, but in the sense that it will lead to his death, which is a stage in his glorification (12:23-24; 17:1). To the extent that Jesus gives eternal life to all whom he loves, i.e., Christians, Lazarus can be seen as representative in that Jesus gives him physical life.
8. It is a bit surprising that John here identifies Mary as "the one who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair," since this event is not mentioned until later in 12:3. Many see this "proleptic" reference as indication that John expected his readers to be familiar with the story already, and go on to assume that in general the Evangelist in writing the Fourth Gospel assumed his readers were familiar with the other three. Whether the Evangelist assumed actual familiarity with the synoptic gospels or not, it is probable that he did assume some familiarity with Mary's anointing activity.

The Characters of the Scene

1. Thomas is presented as an ideal disciple in this scene (11:16)

- He is the ideal sheep who hears the voice of Jesus (10:27)

Logic of the Logos

- The comparison between 11:16 and 15:13, we can reasonably suggest that Thomas is “the disciple who loved Jesus” parallel to “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”
- The evangelist emphasises that the true disciple is not someone who merely leads others to Jesus (1:41,45) but someone who is ready to be with Jesus, even at the danger of death, as Thomas (11:16) and the beloved disciple (19:25-27)

2. *Martha and Mary*

- For Martha – Jesus is only a miracle worker. She shares the Jewish faith of final resurrection. She even objects Jesus’ command to open the tomb. Jesus’ remark to Martha that Lazarus would rise again is another example of the misunderstood statement. Martha apparently took it as a customary statement of consolation, and joins Jesus in professing belief in the general resurrection of the body at the end of the age. However, as Jesus goes on to point out in 25-26, Martha’s general understanding of the resurrection at the last day is inadequate for the present situation, for the gift of life that conquers death is a present reality to Jesus. This is consistent with the Evangelist’s perspective on eternal life in the Fourth Gospel: it is not only a future reality, but something to be experienced in the present as well. It is also consistent with the so-called ‘realized eschatology’ of the Fourth Gospel.
- Mary - She is called by Jesus (to real faith). She falls at his feet indicating that she understood the divine identity of Jesus. Her confession of faith also emphasizes this fact.
- Notice the difference in the response of the sisters: Martha comes out to meet Jesus, while Mary stays in the house. It is similar to the incident in Luke 10:38-42. Here again we find Martha occupied with the responsibilities of hospitality; she is the one who greets Jesus.
- The word used here for Jesus’ weeping is different from the one used to describe the weeping of Mary and the Jews in verse 33 which indicated loud wailing and cries of lament. This word simply means “to shed tears” and has more the idea of quiet grief. But why did Jesus do this? Not out of grief for Lazarus, since he was about to be raised to life again. Morris (558) thinks it is grief over the misconception of those round about. But it seems that in the context the weeping is triggered by the thought of Lazarus in the

tomb: this was not personal grief over the loss of a friend (since Lazarus was about to be restored to life) but grief over the effects of sin, death, and the realm of Satan. It was a natural complement to the previous emotional expression of anger (11:33). It is also possible that Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus because he knew there was also a tomb for himself ahead.

The miracle at the tomb: Lazarus is raised from the dead (11:38-44)

- ◎ Note how the stage has been set: 11:36 recalls that Lazarus is the beloved. 11:37 calls to mind the healing of the blind man-and the theme of Jesus as the Light of the world. 11:40 ties together the theme of belief which Jesus spoke to Martha about in 11:25-26, and the theme of glory from 11:4. This mention of glory gives an inclusion within the chapter. But it also forms (together with 11:4) an inclusion with the Cana miracle (2:11) bringing together the first and last of the signs. And it serves as a transition to the Book of Glory, the second half of the Gospel.
 - ◎ After his prayer of thanksgiving, Jesus calls Lazarus out. Characteristically, John's account is brief (compare the account of the wedding feast at Cana, 2:1-11); the details of the miracle itself are unimportant. What is important is that Jesus has given physical life as a sign of his power to give eternal life in the present (realized eschatology) and as a promise that on the last day he will raise the dead (final eschatology).
 - ◎ Compare chapter 11 with 5:26-30
 - 11:17 Lazarus is in the tomb
 - 11:43 Jesus cries out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"
 - 11:25 "I am the resurrection, and the life."
- 5:28-29 - "An hour is coming when those who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come forth, those who have done what is right to a resurrection of life..."
- ◎ Many have wondered how Lazarus got out of the tomb if he was still bound with the grave clothes. The Evangelist does not tell us, and with a miracle of this magnitude, it is of no importance that we know. If Lazarus' decomposing body was brought back to life by the power of God, then it could certainly have been moved out of the tomb by that same power. Others have suggested that the legs were bound separately, which would remove the difficulty,

but the account gives no indication of this. What may be of more significance for the Evangelist is the comparison which this picture naturally evokes with the resurrection of Jesus, where the grave-clothes stayed in the tomb neatly folded (20:6-7). Jesus, unlike Lazarus, would never have need of grave-clothes again.

2. The Sanhedrin condemns Jesus to death (11:45-57)

- The response to the miracle is mixed. We are told that many of those Jews who witnessed it believed in Jesus. But others went to the Pharisees and reported the things which Jesus had done. In the context there can be no doubt that they did so out of hostility to Jesus. The *sunedrion* which they gathered was probably an informal meeting rather than the official Sanhedrin. This is the only occurrence of the word *sunevdrion* in the Gospel of John. The fact that Caiaphas in 11:49 is referred to as “a certain one of them” supports the unofficial nature of the meeting; in the official Sanhedrin he, being high priest that year, would have presided over the assembly. Thus it appears that an informal council was called to discuss what to do about Jesus and his activities.
- Caiaphas’ words constitute a case of “unconscious prophecy” - as the author’s explanatory note in 11:51-52 points out. In his own mind Caiaphas was giving voice to a common-sense statement of political expediency. Yet he was unconsciously echoing a saying of Jesus himself (cf. Mark 10:45). Caiaphas was right; the death of Jesus would save the nation from destruction. Yet Caiaphas could not suspect that Jesus would die, not in place of the political nation Israel, but on behalf of the true people of God; and he would save them not from physical destruction but from eternal destruction (cf. John 3:16). The understanding of Caiaphas’ words in a sense Caiaphas could not possibly have imagined at the time he uttered them serves as a clear example of the way in which the Evangelist understands that words and actions can be invested retrospectively with a meaning not consciously intended or understood by those present at the time.
- The Evangelist in his comment (11:52) expands the prophecy to include the Gentiles as well - this is a confirmation that the Fourth Gospel was directed, at least partly, to a Gentile audience. There are echoes of Pauline concepts here (particularly Eph 2:11-22) in the stress on the unity of Jew and Gentile.

3. Final preparations for the hour of death and glory (12:1-36)

Bethany: We have now come to the end of Jesus' public ministry. Notice the temporal reference in 12:1: we are told that Jesus came to Bethany, where he had raised Lazarus from the dead, "6 days before the Passover." Of the final events of that public ministry before the Passion week, the Evangelist has selected three: (1) Mary's anointing of Jesus at Bethany, (2) the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and (3) the coming of some Greeks to visit Jesus. Each has significance within the narrative. The 'Book of Signs' then concludes with an appeal to Isaiah 53 to explain why some did not believe, followed by a summarization of the mission and message of Jesus in his own words. The events of chapters 13-17 which follow are not public but private, intended for Jesus' disciples.

Anointed for burial at Bethany (12:1-8): The scene is set in these two verses. Jesus, acting precisely according to his own timetable, which is to say according to the Father's timetable, arrives back in Bethany six days prior to the Passover. This village of Bethany was located about 1.75 miles (2.75 km) from Jerusalem (cf. 11:18), near enough to bring Jesus into danger from the religious authorities there. But Jesus knew exactly what he was doing.

We are reminded in verse 1 that Bethany was the village of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead - recalling the last of the seven Signs, the miraculous resurrection of ch. 11. This is significant because 11:47-53 gave the response of the religious authorities in Jerusalem to this miracle: unbelief leading to the plan to put Jesus to death. In contrast to their response, we have the response of Mary's faith in 12:1-8. Both events foreshadow Jesus' death in the week ahead. We find Martha in her usual capacity of serving in 12:2 (cf. Luke 10:40). Lazarus is present as well.

12:3 The reference to the perfume is actually when the incident mentioned previously at 11:2 takes place. the perfume (Muron) is usually made of myrrh (from whence the word derives) but here John uses it in the sense of ointment or perfume, since he tells us this muvron was made of nard. Nard or spikenard is a fragrant oil from the root and spike of the nard plant of northern India. The adjective pistikhe" is difficult with regard to its exact meaning; some have taken it to derive from pisti" and relate to the purity of the oil of nard. More probably it is something like a brand name, "pistic nard," the exact significance of which has not been discovered.

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The Evangelist also goes out of his way to indicate the quantity and the cost. Litra is a Latin loan-word, libra, the word for a Roman pound, which weighed 12 ounces (327.45 grams). The word also occurs in rabbinic literature. This was a large amount of ointment.

The reference to wiping Jesus' feet with her hair is probably indicative of Mary's abject humility and personal commitment. It would be a bit unusual for the oil to be wiped off, but we are given no explanation for this by the Evangelist.

With a note characteristic of someone who was there and remembered, the Evangelist adds that the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. In the later rabbinic literature, Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7.1.1 states "The fragrance of good oil is diffused from the bedroom to the dining hall, but a good name is diffused from one end of the world to the other." If such a saying were known in the first century, this might be John's way of indicating that Mary's act of devotion would be spoken of throughout the entire world (compare Mark 14:9).

12:4-5 We are told in verse 4 that Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples, was the one who was about to betray him. Again we see John using the "omniscient author" convention, writing from the perspective of one who knows the end from the beginning, and having access to information that he as an eyewitness on the scene would not have known. The cost of the oil was 300 denarii—very costly indeed! This amounted to almost a year's wages for an average laborer of the time.

12:6 The Evangelist now gives a parenthetical note concerning the character of Judas. This is one of the indications in the gospels that Judas was of bad character before the betrayal of Jesus. John tells us that he was a "thief" and had responsibility for the finances of the group. More than being simply a derogatory note about Judas' character, the inclusion of this note at this particular point in the narrative may be intended to link the frustrated greed of Judas here with his subsequent decision to betray Jesus for money. The parallel accounts in Matthew and Mark seem to indicate that after this incident Judas went away immediately and made his deal with the Jewish authorities to deliver up Jesus. Losing out on one source of sordid gain, he immediately went out and set up another.

12:7-8 This incident, along with the interwoven references to Judas, forms part of the foreshadowing of the passion narrative to

follow in chapters 18-19. Mary's action in anointing Jesus' feet is interpreted by Jesus as preparation for his burial. In this regard it is interesting that John is careful to point out in verse 3 that it was Jesus' feet that she anointed. Normally one would not anoint the feet of a living person (rather the head-cf. Mk 14:3) but one could anoint the feet of a corpse while preparing it for burial. Thus Mary performed (unconsciously) a prophetic or symbolic action - one which Jesus understood but which the disciples almost certainly did not at the time.

The Jewish leaders plot to kill Lazarus (12:9-11)

12:9 The Crowd: This could be the crowd who witnessed the raising of Lazarus in chapter 11, but more likely includes others who had merely heard about it. The implication is that Lazarus had become something of a celebrity, and those who had heard about the miracle were eager to get a look at him.

12:10-11 On account of the raising of Lazarus many of "the Jews" - the Evangelist's usual description for those who were opposed to Jesus - were going over to Jesus and believing in (ejivsteuon ei) him. This provokes the "high priests" (oiJ ajrcierei) to plan drastic action (notice that the Pharisees are not mentioned in regard to this particular decision). Not only did they want to put Jesus to death, but they plotted that they might also (kai) have Lazarus killed. This plot against Lazarus apparently never got beyond the planning stage, however, since no further mention is made of it by the Evangelist.

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19)

12:12 The times reference here is a typical Johannine note of time; it refers to the previous note in 12:1. When the crowd of pilgrims who were coming to Jerusalem for the passover (cf. 11:55) heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they hurried out to meet him. By this time Jesus' reputation was well known.

12:13 The Plan Branches: The Mosaic law stated (Lev 23:40) that palm branches were to be used to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Later on they came to be used to celebrate other feasts as well (1 Macc. 13:51, 2 Macc. 10:7).

Hosanna in the quotation from Ps 118:25-26 was probably by this time a familiar liturgical expression of praise, on the order of "Hail to the king," although the underlying Aramaic expression (aN uvw)h) and the Hebrew (aN huyvw)h) meant "O Lord, save us." As in Mark

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11:9 the introductory Hosanna is followed by the words of Ps 118:25, although in the Fourth Gospel the Evangelist adds for good measure The King of Israel. In words familiar to every Jew the Evangelist is indicating that at this point every messianic expectation is now at the point of realization.

It is clear from the words of the Psalm shouted by the crowd that Jesus is being proclaimed as messianic King.¹⁰⁴

12:14-15 The Evangelist does not repeat the detailed accounts of the finding of the donkey recorded in the synoptic gospels. He does, however, see the event as a fulfillment of Scripture, which he indicates by quoting Zech 9:9. For the significance of the quotation, see the discussion below of the significance of the triumphal entry in the narrative.

12:16 Here we have another note by the Evangelist to inform us that Jesus' disciples did not at first associate the prophecy from Zechariah with the events as they happened. This came with the later (post-resurrection) insight which the Holy Spirit would provide after Jesus' resurrection and return to the Father. Note the similarity with John 2:22, which according to our understanding follows another allusion to a prophecy in Zechariah (14:21).

12:17-18 Now a different segment of the crowd is mentioned. At this point those people from Jerusalem who had been in Bethany mourning the death of Lazarus and had seen Jesus perform the miracle speak up, testifying to what they had seen (note the use of *marture vw*). The testimony of this group of eyewitnesses appears to provoke further people to go out to meet Jesus as he enters the city. This latter group, referred to as "the crowd" in verse 18, are probably not the pilgrims mentioned in verse 12, but residents of Jerusalem itself.

12:19 The response of the religious authorities (in this case the Pharisees) is one of pessimism. Their statement, while an exaggeration, is warranted by the diverse groups of people who have joined in the multitudes welcoming Jesus at the triumphal entry, as indicated in verses 12, 17, and 18.

The Significance of the Triumphal Entry in the Narrative:

Note that many of the details given by the synoptic gospels—such as the sending of the disciples to find the donkey—are omitted by

John. John does not mention the crowd casting their garments before him, or the casting of the palm-fronds-apparently they just hold them in hand. This suggests, however, the procession at the Feast of Tabernacles where the worshippers carried the *lulabs* as they went up to the temple-a very appropriate (and suggestive) setting!

This leads to the next question: what does the triumphal entry signify for John? The coming of Messiah, yes, but not the nationalistic Messiah the people expected! It is instructive to look at Zech 9:9-11(NASB, note that Zech 9:9 is quoted in verse 15). Notice that in Zc 9:10 the king who comes proclaims peace to the Gentiles, and his dominion is from sea to sea. The next section of chapter 12 (vss. 20-26) deals with the coming of the Gentiles!. One of the major emphases of John's Gospel is that Jesus came on a mission of salvation not to the Jewish people only, but to the entire world (from sea to sea; to the ends of the earth). Zech 9:11 goes on to relate this to the blood of the covenant, which suggests the blood of the new covenant. And the prisoners are set free from a waterless pit-just as Jesus offers the 'living water' of the Spirit which flows freely from himself (7:38-39). Recall that the Evangelist has alluded to messianic prophecies in Zechariah before (Zech 14:20-21 with John 2:16) and note that he will do so again (Zech 13:7 with John 16:32, Zech 12:10 with John 19:37).

Finally, compare Rev 7:9-10: "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice saying, 'Salvation to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb'."

The coming of the Gentiles (Greeks) marks the coming of the hour (12:20-26)

John's use of Zech 9:9 is suggestive in light of this incident which immediately follows and the way Jesus responds to it. According to Zech 9:10, Messiah would proclaim peace to the Gentiles-and here they come (representatively, of course). Jesus has said that he would lay down his life (10:17) and that he had other sheep not of the fold (10:16). The appearance of these Gentiles wishing to see Jesus indicate that it is time for him to lay down his life-the hour of his glory has come (i.e., his return to the Father through death, resurrection, and exaltation). This point is so important for the

Evangelist that we are never actually told if the Greeks get to see Jesus or not!

12:20, These Greeks who had come up to worship at the feast were probably “God-fearers” rather than proselytes in the strict sense. Had they been true proselytes, they would probably not have been referred to as Greeks any longer. Many came to worship at the major Jewish festivals without being Jewish proselytes, for example, the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:27, who could not have been a proselyte if he were physically a eunuch.

12:21, These Greeks approached Philip, although it is not clear why they did so. Perhaps they identified with his Greek name (although a number of Jews from border areas had Hellenistic names at this period). By “see” it is clear they meant “speak with,” since anyone could “see” Jesus moving through the crowd. We are not told what they wanted to speak with Jesus about.

12:22, Philip appears to have been uncertain how to handle their request, so he approached Andrew. Together they both spoke to Jesus.

12:23, Jesus’ reply is a bit puzzling. As far as the Evangelist’s account is concerned, Jesus totally ignores these Greeks and makes no further reference to them whatsoever. It appears that his words are addressed to Andrew and Philip, but in fact they must have had a wider audience, including possibly the Greeks who had wished to see him in the first place. The words the hour has come recall all the previous references to “the hour” throughout the Fourth Gospel (see the notes on 2:4). There is no doubt, in light of the following verse, that Jesus refers to his death here. On his pathway to glorification lies the cross, and it is just ahead.

12:24, As Augustine stated, “He spoke of himself. He himself was the grain that had to die, and be multiplied; to suffer death through the unbelief of the Jews, and to be multiplied in the faith of many nations.”¹⁰⁵

12:25, Jesus himself is the supreme example of the person who does not “love his own life” but “hates it in this world.” The saying itself has broader application, however, to everyone. Note the use of *ajpolluvei* (usually translated “loses”): the person who loves his life, seeking to retain it, really destroys it. Self-interest and self-preservation are ultimately self-defeating. The harder one tries to live for self, the less of life one really has, until at the end there is nothing left of it at all, and one has nothing to show for it. As C. S. Lewis well stated: “There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be

vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket-safe, dark, motionless, airless-it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell.”

12:26, This is really the point of the saying in 12:24-25. The one who serves Jesus is the one who gives up his claim to life in the present world out of love for and allegiance to Jesus: to serve Jesus is in effect to “hate” one’s own life. In the latter part of verse 26 Jesus makes it clear that such a person will be where he is, participating in his glory, and will receive honor from the Father. This is what Jesus’ servants will receive for following him.

Jesus predicts his upcoming death by crucifixion (12:27-36)

12:27, “We are now told that Jesus’ hour has come—the hour of his return to the Father through crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension (see 12:23). This will be reiterated in 13:1 and 17:1. Jesus states (employing words similar to those of Ps 6:4) that his soul is troubled. What shall his response to his imminent death be? A prayer to the Father to deliver him from that hour? No, because it is on account of this very hour that Jesus has come. His sacrificial death has always remained the primary purpose of his mission into the world. Now, faced with the completion of that mission, shall he ask the Father to spare him from it? The expected answer is no.

12:28, In response to Jesus’ prayer that the Father glorify his name came the Voice from heaven. It was the very Voice of God himself. Why are both the aorist and the future tenses together used for the two occurrences of *doxavzw*? Some have suggested a reference to Jesus’ baptism by John, or to the transfiguration. In both of these instances the synoptics record a voice from heaven, as here. The problem is that John records neither event. I would suggest the aorist refers to the entire earthly ministry of Jesus, including the coming of the “hour,” which has just taken place. Everything Jesus did and said while on earth glorified the Father—cf. the Prologue, 1:14. The future glory will be accomplished by the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus—that part of his earthly ministry which still lies ahead at this point.

12:31a, What is the judgment of this world which Jesus says is at hand? Compare 3:19-21. As it is the response of men to the Light which has come into the world that provokes judgment, so the actions of men in crucifying him who was that Light constitute the judgment of this world. What they are about to do to him will confirm their judgment.

12:31b, This must refer to Satan's loss of authority over this world. This must be in principle rather than in immediate fact, since 1 John 5:19 states that the whole world (still) lies in the power of the evil one. In an absolute sense the reference is proleptic. The coming of Jesus' hour (his crucifixion, death, resurrection, and exaltation to the Father) marks the end of Satan's domain and brings about his defeat, even though that defeat has not been ultimately worked out in history yet and awaits the consummation of the age.

12:32, This verse must be taken with 6:44. There no one comes unless the Father draws them; here, Jesus says he will draw all men (but of course, not all will come). What are we to make of the statement? In what sense does Jesus draw all men, since not all come? It seems there are two possibilities:

(1) "All" does not really mean "all," but only "those who are to be drawn by the Father" (6:44);

(2) "All" means "all men" but since not all come to Jesus, then not all respond to the "drawing" which Jesus speaks of here. In this latter case the "drawing" does not correspond to the efficacious call, but rather speaks of a "potential" open to anyone who will.

Which of these is the more probable? I am inclined to prefer the former view, because I see the "all" as a reference not to every single individual person (as in Rom 8:29-30), but as a reference to "all classes of men" - men from "every nation and tribe and people and tongue" (cf. Rev 7:9-10). See also the notes on the significance of the triumphal entry at 12:19 and 4 D The coming of the Gentiles (Greeks) (12:20-26), both of which suggest that it is classes of individuals that are responding to Jesus. Note how this interpretation fits with the mention in 12:23 of the coming of Jesus' hour, which was also the subject of 12:27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and the present verse.

12:33, This is an explanatory note by the Evangelist. The words *uJywqw' ejk th' gh'* in the previous verse are explained as a reference to Jesus' crucifixion.

12:34, In contrast to what Jesus has just said, we have the answer of the crowd in verse 34. The force of their statements is along these

lines: “You have just said...but we have heard...”. It is difficult to pinpoint the passage in the Mosaic law to which the crowd refers. The ones most often suggested are Ps 89:36, Ps 110:4, Isa 9:7, Ezek 37:25, and Dan 7:14. None of these passages are in the Pentateuch per se, but “law” could in common usage refer to the entire OT (compare Jesus’ use in 10:34). Of the passages mentioned, Ps 89:36 is the most likely candidate. This verse speaks of David’s “seed” remaining forever. Later in the same Psalm verse 51 speaks of the “anointed” (Messiah), and the Psalm was interpreted messianically in both the NT (Acts 13:22, Rev 1:5, 3:14) and in the rabbinic literature (*Midrash Rabbah* 97 on Genesis).

What the crowd made of Jesus’ reference to being “lifted up” is not entirely clear either. They may have understood it to refer to his death, which would of course be an obvious contradiction to the teaching in the law that Messiah was to remain forever. But I am not sure it is necessary that they understood the reference to being “lifted up” as a reference to death; they may have taken it as an ascension to heaven of some sort, like Elijah or Enoch. This would still create a contradiction with the idea that Messiah was to remain forever.

The last question, “Who is this Son of Man?,” presents the crowd’s dilemma. If Jesus (whom they believe to be the Messiah—recall that this occurs just after the triumphal entry) identifies himself with this Son of Man who is to be taken up or taken away, how can this be reconciled with their belief that Messiah, when he comes, remains forever? Notice how the Son of Man imagery corresponds to the Son of Man in Daniel 7 who is taken up in the clouds and presented before the Ancient of Days (an exaltation/enthronement motif) and given a kingdom. This Jesus is about to fulfill through his glorification/exaltation on the cross.

12:35, Notice the stress on “light” in verses 35-36. The noun *fw* occurs five times in these two verses. The phrase *e[ti mikroVn* *crovnon* recalls 7:33, and the ideas are similar, since Jesus is speaking here (as he was there) of his physical presence in the world. The reference to light recalls 8:12, where Jesus identified himself as the Light of the world, and especially 3:19-21, where the judgment consists of the Light coming into the world and provoking a response from men, who either come to the light or shrink back into the darkness. Here that same imagery is amplified, because we are now reminded that the Light is in the world only for a limited time (i.e., there is a limited time in which to respond by coming to the light, or as here, by walking in that light). Those who refuse or delay will be overtaken

by the darkness which is coming after the light is taken away. The person who tries to walk in the darkness is unable to see and thus does not know where he is going.

This warning operates on at least two different levels. (1) To the Jewish people in Jerusalem to whom Jesus spoke, the warning is a reminder that there is only a little time left for them to accept him as their Messiah. (2) To those later individuals to whom the Fourth Gospel was written, and to every person since, the words of Jesus are also a warning: there is a finite, limited time in which each individual has opportunity to respond to the Light of the world (i.e., Jesus); after that comes darkness. One's response to the Light decisively determines one's judgment for eternity.

12:36, Here it becomes even clearer that Jesus is speaking of himself under the imagery of the previous verse. Now his hearers are exhorted to "believe in the light" which is a reference to trusting in him. Those who do will become "sons of light" (cf. Luke 16:8, Eph 5:8, and 1 Thess 5:5). The phrase is a semitic idiom for someone who is characterized by the quality in question (cf. the explanation of Barnabas' name in Acts 4:36).

The final part of verse 36 mentions that when Jesus had spoken these things he departed and was hidden from them. It is clear from this that the response of those whom Jesus had just addressed was unbelief—the people Jesus had addressed chose to remain in the darkness, and the Light was withdrawn from them. The Evangelist will see in the following section the reason for that response.

4. Conclusion to the Book of Signs (12:37-50)

The unbelief of the Jews is here seen to be predicted by the prophet Isaiah (53:1, 6:10). This response of unbelief resulting in the rejection of Jesus has been a recurring theme throughout the Fourth Gospel, as foreshadowed in 1:11 of the Prologue.

12:37, In spite of the many sign-miracles (shmei'a) which Jesus had performed before them, the response of the Jews is still hardened unbelief. They were not believing in him (note the progressive, continuing aspect of the imperfect tense here: they were continuing in their unbelief).

12:38 This response of unbelief is interpreted by the Evangelist as a fulfillment of the prophetic words of Isaiah (Is. 53:1). The phrase οὐ βραβύων κριβού is a figurative reference to God's activity and power which has been revealed in the sign-miracles which Jesus has performed (compare the previous verse).

12:39-40, The Evangelist explicitly states here that the Jews were not able to believe, and quotes Isaiah 6:10 to show that God had in fact blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts. This OT passage was used elsewhere in the NT to explain Jewish unbelief: Paul's final words in Acts (28:26-27) are a quotation of this same passage, which he uses to explain why the Jewish people have not accepted the gospel he has preached. A similar passage (Is. 29:10) is quoted in a similar context in Rom 11:8.

12:41, The glory which Isaiah saw in 6:3 was the glory of Yahweh. Here John speaks of the prophet seeing the glory of Jesus since the next clause "and he [Isaiah] spoke concerning him" can hardly refer to Yahweh, but must refer to Jesus. On the basis of statements like 1:14 in the Prologue, the Evangelist probably puts no great distinction between the two. Since for the Evangelist Jesus is fully God, it presents no problem to him to take words originally spoken by Isaiah of Yahweh himself and apply them to Jesus.

12:42-43, Having said that the Jews persisted in their unbelief, the Evangelist now adds as a clarification that some of them did in fact believe: ο{mw" mevntoi functions as a strong adversative ("nevertheless"). These were ajrcovntwn which probably indicates members of the Sanhedrin (cf. Nicodemus in 3:1 and 7:50; according to Mark 15:43, Joseph of Arimathea was also a member, and Luke 18:18 probably refers to another). On account of the Pharisees these were not willing to admit their faith in Jesus publicly.

The Evangelist's evaluation of these men is given in verse 43: the reason they would not confess their belief in Jesus publicly was because they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God. Here "glory" has the meaning "praise"-these members of the Sanhedrin were more interested getting praise from men than getting praise from God-but there is also in the context the reference to Jesus' own glory (vs. 41) and its connection with God's glory. This is a case of truly mistaken priorities.

Jesus summarizes his mission and message (12:44-50)

12:44-45, To believe in Jesus, to place one's trust in him, is also to place one's trust in the Father who sent him. Likewise, to look upon the Son is to look upon the Father who sent him (cf. 1:18 of the Prologue and Jesus' reply to Philip in 14:9).

12:46, Once again we have the contrasting imagery of light and darkness. For Jesus' identification of himself as the

Light of the world see 8:12, 9:5, and 12:46. The contrasting imagery goes back to 1:4-5 in the Prologue. And there are links in the context to the passage which is to some extent the key to the entire Fourth Gospel, 3:16-21. Jesus as the Light has come into the world, and this provokes judgment, because the way a person responds to him determines the person's destiny. But as here, the purpose of Jesus as the Light in coming into the world was not to judge the world but to save it (here, "that everyone who trusts in me should not remain in darkness").

12:47, Here we find even further analogies to 3:16-21. The mission of Jesus in coming into the world is the same: he did not come to judge (i.e., condemn) the world, but to save it. "My words" is a reference to the spoken sayings of Jesus, including the "I am" statements of the Fourth Gospel, "I am the Bread of Life," "I am the Light of the world," "I am the Good Shepherd," "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," etc.

12:48, This is a strong expression, referring to the one who "rejects" or "refuses to recognize" Jesus deliberately. Again we see the polarizing emphasis of the Evangelist in his recounting of these words - a person either accepts Jesus, trusting in him, or a person rejects him utterly, leading to eternal ruin.

12:49, Jesus states that he is not the originator of the message. he is on a mission from the Father and it is the Father's words he speaks.

12:50 Note that Jesus does not say here that keeping the Father's commandment leads to eternal life, but that the commandment itself is eternal life. This is the commandment concerning what he is to say (verse 49) that the Father has given to Jesus. The words and works of Jesus that result from the commandment the Father has given him are the source of eternal life in the world.

This brings to a close the public ministry of Jesus. Nothing more is said in the Fourth Gospel of anything spoken by Jesus to the people at large. The majority of the remainder of the Gospel concerns Jesus' words to his disciples in the Upper Room in preparation for his departure and return to the Father and the account of his arrest, trials, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Farewell: He Loved His own to the End (13:1-17:25)

Johannine, chapters 13 through 17, are known as Jesus' farewell discourse or Upper Room discourse. This discourse took place just before his crucifixion, and it shares his most intimate thoughts. If we take the gospel as the Temple of God, this passage would be "the Holy of Holies"... the inner Sanctuary, where the very presence of God himself, dwells. It is a farewell discourse because within hours, Jesus would be hanging on the cross. In less than twenty-four hours, He would be dead and buried. Just as any other farewell discourse, Jesus' final talk is also deep and penetrating. Jesus is placing his heart bare before his disciples. He is seeking to impart to them the very "secret of life." The following are the emphases of the farewell discourse:

1. Jesus wants his disciples to know that he is not a helpless victim of circumstance, rather God was in control all the time.
2. The "Secret of his Life" lies in the relationship to His Father.
3. Jesus speaks of a "replacement" of himself by *Paracletos*

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4. The shift from Jesus' age to the age of *Paracletos* marks the age of the Church.
5. A Christian lives by the same principle as Jesus did, i.e., by absolute dependence and trust in the heavenly Father and relentless mutual love.

The dialogical structure of the farewell discourse

The theme of discipleship, which is expounded already in Jn 1:1-12:50, is developed much more extensively in 13:1-17:26. The farewell discourse is often understood as a "narrative commentary on discipleship" against the background of Jesus' death and resurrection.¹ The structure of the farewell discourse is understood differently. The following are some examples.

<p>G. Mlakuzhyil² A 13:1-30 (Introduction) B 13:31-14-31 (1st discourse.) C 15:1-17 (love) C¹ 15:18-16:4d (hatred) B¹ 16:4e-33 (second) A¹ 17:1-26 (conclusion)</p>	<p>P. F. Ellis³ A 13:1-32 Introductory scene B 13:33-14-31 (first discourse) C 15:1-25 (vine and branches) B 15:26-16:33 (second discourse) A 17:1-26 Concluding prayer</p>
<p>Y. Simoens⁴ A 13:1-38 B 14:1-31 C 15:1-11 D 15:12-17 C¹ 15:18-16:3 B¹ 16:4-33 A¹ 17:1-26</p>	<p>C. Keener⁵ A 13:31-38 (departure) B 14:1-15:17 (abiding presence) C 15:18-16:12 (The World) B¹ 16:13-33 (abiding presence) A¹ 17:1-26 (departure)</p>
<p>W. Brouwer⁶ A 13:1-35 B 13:36-38 (prediction) C 14:1-14 (Jesus' departure) D 14:15-26 (Paraclete) E 14:27-31 (world) F 15:1-17 (abide) E¹ 15:18-16:4a (world) D¹ 16:4b-15 (Paraclete) C¹ 16:16-28 (departure) B¹ 16:29-33 (disciples denial) A¹ 17:1-26</p>	<p>C. H. Talbert⁷ A 13:36-38 // A¹ 14:31b B 14:1-7 // B¹ 14:27d-31c C 14:8-14 // C¹ 14:22-27c D 14:15-17 // D¹ 14:18-21 A 15:1-17 // A¹ 17:1-26 B 15:18-16:3 // B¹ 16:32-33 C 16:14-15 // C¹ 16:25-31 D 16:16-24</p>

Besides questioning the unity of the farewell discourse, our basic disagreement with these structures is that they do not give sufficient attention to the dialogical character of the farewell discourse. The most salient feature of this section is the presentation of disciples as dialogue partners of Jesus. Even though the disciples enter into dialogue with Jesus in the earlier sections as well (1:37-39; 4:31-38; 6:5-10; 9:2-5; 11:7-16), this becomes the narrative framework in the farewell discourse. The Johannine Jesus is addressing “his own” from this point on.

There are four explicit dialogues in the farewell discourse: (i) 13:36-14:4, between Jesus and Peter, (ii) 14:5-7, between Jesus and Thomas, (iii) 14:8-21, between Jesus and Philip, (iv) between Jesus and Jude (14:22-31). Van Tilborg rightly points out the dialogical character of Jn 13:36-14:31. He points out that each of these dialogues follows a particular pattern.⁸ However, he does not accept the dialogical character of the entire farewell discourse. But we prefer to suggest a dialogical structure to the entire farewell discourse. Since an individual disciple appears as the representative of the whole group of disciples, the whole discourse that follows a question, including those addressed not directly to the questioner but to the whole group (e.g., 13:6-20; 13:21-35), can be taken as a single unit. Since the content of Jn 15 is the answer to Judas’ question in 14:22 we consider 14:22-15:26 as one dialogue. Even though there is no question from the part of disciples in Jn 16:1-17:26, we consider this section also as dialogue because Jesus realizes that the reason for their not asking questions is sorrow (16:6). Besides Jesus clarifies their confusion in 16:19, even though he it is not directly asked to Jesus. Jn 17 is Jesus’ dialogue (monologue) with the Father in prayer for the disciples. All the dialogues follow a certain specific pattern. The chart that we have presented in chapter 4 of this book illustrates the dialogical structure of the farewell discourse.

All these dialogues highlight the supreme knowledge of Jesus on the one hand and the absolute ignorance and misunderstanding of the disciples on the other hand.

1. The foot-washing scene

Jn 13 begins with the dramatic statement that Jesus loved his own until the end. This reference to love is closely related to Jesus’ death (Jn 3:16; cf. Rom 5:5-9). By serving the disciples, Jesus takes the

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role of the suffering servant (Isa 52:13-53:12) that John has just mentioned in 12:38. As Culpepper pointed out, this scene prefigures the passion. Johannine water symbolism (2:6; 4:17-19; 5:8-9), which has specific salvific allusion (3:5; 4:14; 7:37-39), also plays an important role in this scene. There are several explanations for the foot-washing scene in John. There are mainly two streams of interpretation to this scene: an act of humility and a symbolic act that has certain sacramental allusion. (i) foot washing which is an example of humiliation, is to be imitated by every Christian, it but has no further significance. (ii) The nuances of the sacraments of baptism, Eucharist and penance in this passage. (iii) Some explain this incident in relation to Johannine soteriology. These explanations need not be regarded as mutually exclusive. Participation of the believer in Jesus' salvific death should naturally lead him/her to be involved in a new way of living, which includes self denying service.

It may literally refer to the initial washing of the Jewish banquet, but on the symbolic level it refers to the expected great purification in the messianic era. The disciples are purified by the words, which Jesus spoke (15:3). Scholars also discuss the communitarian dimension of this ritualistic practice within the Johannine community. We argue that the foot-washing scene (vv. 1-19) together with the meal scene (vv. 20-30) becomes a test of discipleship in the narrative. It is evident from Jesus' reply to Peter: "unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Jn 13:1-30 makes a deliberate contrast between true discipleship and false discipleship by the contrasting characterisation of the beloved disciple and Judas. To be at Jesus' bosom like the beloved disciple or to be part of the world, like Judas are the positive and negative paradigms suggested before to the reader. The *Herrschaftswechsel* (change of dominion) is the point of departure, i.e., the believer must accept the dominion (*Herrschaft*) of Jesus contrary to the *Herrschaft* of the world/Jews.

2. The Dialogue as Linguistic Elusiveness

The paradox of Jesus' mission escapes all human reasoning. The evangelist expresses. This human incapability again through the characterisation of the various disciples in the farewell discourse. When Jesus announced his journey to the Father, the disciples began

to stumble one after the other. Peter, without knowing what is going to happen proclaims in over confidence that he will die with Jesus. But Jesus with his foreknowledge corrects him saying that instead of dying he will betray him three times. Disciples could not grasp the reality of Jesus' statement of his return to the Father. Even though Jesus repeatedly said that he is going to the Father, the disciples continue to ask where he is going. Peter's question *where are you going?* (13:36) is repeated by Thomas (14:5). As we have seen, the question *where* (που) is a question regarding the identity of Jesus. Philip's request is still worse (14:8). It reveals that he has understood neither Jesus nor his Father. Jude's question (14:22) once again reveals that the disciples have not understood the identity of Jesus as different from the world. It is intriguing to note that Jesus is willing to clarify their ignorance and help them to come to terms with his departure. He comforts (16:6) and promises them the Paraclete. In 16:19, Jesus clarifies their confusion "little time." At the end of the discourse, the disciples slowly begin to grasp the identity of Jesus (16:30). They understood the first part of Jesus' identity that Jesus came down from the Father. But they could not understand the second part that he is returning to the Father, for which they have to wait until resurrection. In 20:17, Jesus asks to Mary Magdalene to take the message of ascension. Once this message is conveyed to the disciples and, most likely, they have understood Jesus' identity as the one who returns to the Father, they became capable of receiving the Holy Spirit and being sent to the world (20:21-22).

For the fourth evangelist, in order to attain salvation there is no middle ground, no possibility of reconciliation except believing in Jesus, who alone has access to the heavenly realities. No one, including the first generation disciples, is able to understand the heavenly reality until Jesus bridges the gap and brings one to faith (cf. 20:27b). Schnackenburg and Beasley-Murray accept that the incomprehension of the individual disciples represents the incomprehension of all the believers.⁹ Peter (13:6), Thomas (14:5), Philip (14:8), Judas (14:22), finally the whole community of disciples (16:18) fails to comprehend what Jesus says. These disciples with their inability to comprehend Jesus, become the prototype of the future generations who stumble to believe in Jesus' true identity. Consequently, we can rightly articulate that here the characterisation of the disciples reflect the implied readers who are confused about the identity of Jesus. Even though the implied author informs the reader about Jesus' identity from the

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prologue onwards, the reader is not yet in a position to get thorough knowledge of Jesus' identity. Even if the reader is ready to die with Jesus, like Thomas and Peter, the paradox of the glory of suffering is still beyond his or her comprehension as in the case of Philip and Judas.,

In the farewell discourse, the disciples are presented as ideal students. Philo of Alexandria defines an ideal disciple as the one with a voluntary and spontaneous eagerness to learn.¹⁰ The disciples' questions are expressions of their voluntary and spontaneous eagerness. Even though the questions raised are about Jesus' future, Jesus' answer is about the future of the disciples.

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- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 13:36-37- Peter's question | prediction of Peter's denial |
| 14:1-5 - Thomas question | prediction of disciples' entrance to the Father (14:6-7) |
| 14:8 - Philip's question | whoever believes will also do Jesus' works (14:9-11) |
| 14:22 - Judas' question | Jesus and his Father will come and live with the believers (14:23- 25). |

The content of each question is practically the same: the disciples' misunderstanding of Jesus' departure as well as their misunderstanding of the Father-Son relationship.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 13:36 - | Lord, where are you going ? |
| 14:5 - | Lord we do not know where are you going ? |
| 14:8 - | Lord, show us the Father, that is enough for us. |
| 14:22 - | Lord how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world. |
| cf. 16:5 - | But now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me « where are you going ? » |

To each of these questions, Jesus' reply is not a direct answer. According to M. Stibbe this sort of 'discontinuous dialogue,' is linguistic elusiveness. Even though Jesus does not give a direct reply to the questions, we can observe that throughout the farewell discourse Jesus repeatedly answers the question raised by the disciples.

- | | |
|---------|--------------------|
| 14:4 - | I go to the Father |
| 14:28 - | I go to the Father |

16:10 - I came from the Father, and I go to the Father

16:28 - I am coming to you Holy Father

17:11 - I am coming to Thee, Father

17:13 - I am coming to Thee

Hence, we deem that the disciples' questions function as the directive of the farewell discourse.

J. G. van der Watt defends the thesis that the variety of themes in I am (*ego eimi*) statements is closely related to each other.¹¹ Conjoined with this notion, we can argue that the three predicates the way, the truth and the life in 14:6 are central to all other I am (*ego eimi*) statements in the fourth gospel.

The *I am* Statements

the way

The light of the world

The door of the sheep pen

the Truth

the true wine

the Life

the bread of life

the resurrection and life

The way is connected with light, door, and the one who leads through the way. Life is explained through different imageries (the bread of life, the resurrection, etc.). The true vine is linked to truth. If we consider the *I am* assertions as revelatory statements in the gospel then we have to admit that the disciples' questions lead to the summit of revelation.

The identical questions of the two disciples, Peter (13:36) and Thomas (14:5) in the farewell discourse, reminds the reader of the similar question by the two disciples (1:38) at the beginning of the gospel. The evangelist seems to convey the hint to the reader that the point of discussion here as well is the theme of discipleship. As we have seen before, the question where in the fourth gospel; functions as the *Leitmotif* of discipleship. The disciples' sincere ignorance regarding Jesus' whence and the destination of his journey is ironically contrasted with the claim of Jesus' opponents that they know where Jesus comes from (cf. 7:27). Thus the Johannine contrast between disciples and the Jews becomes once more explicit.

Jesus speaks from the heavenly point of view while the disciples answer from a mundane point of view. This extreme unsurpassable division between the heavenly and earthly level is to show the inevitability of faith, which alone enables human beings to cross this deep abyss between heaven and earth. The representative character of each disciple is evident from the plural usages (14:5, 14:8, 14:22).

Each question reflects the confused psyche of the community of the disciples. The confusion reflected in Thomas' question (14:5) is evident from a similar question in 20:2 which Mary asks out of confusion. Through these questions, the evangelist is trying to present to the reader the incompleteness of the disciples' faith which is to be completed by their encounter with the risen Lord in 20:19-29. The reader-engagement becomes evident in the analysis of focalization in the farewell discourse.

3. Focalization in the Farewell Discourse

Focalization is a literary technique defined as "the relationship between the vision, the agent that sees and that which is seen."¹² In other words, "the story is presented in the text through the mediation of some 'prism,' 'perspective,' angle of vision, verbalized by the narrator though not necessarily his." Three facets of focalization often argued occur in narratives.

(i) *The Perceptual facet*: It means either spatial focalization like the change of scene or change of characters in the same scene (as in Jn 4:27-42) or temporal focalization in which the difference between the present and the future is transgressed through the frequent exposition of the internal disposition of the characters. In the farewell discourse Judas's exit from the scene to the darkness outside (13:30) exposes a the spatial focalization is exposed in the retrieval of Judas from the scene to the outside darkness (13:30). Through the focalization of Judas' exit, the narrator conveys to the reader the explicit contrast between the predicaments conditions of being with Jesus and being outside in the cosmos/darkness, which is against Jesus. The temporal facet of focalization is evident in the frequent references to Jesus' foreknowledge. Jesus knew beforehand that his time of departure had come (13:1), that the Father had given everything to him (13:3) and who his traitor would be (13:11). He foretells his death and resurrection, the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, etc. Through the focalization of the foreknowledge of the protagonist, the narrator conveys the clear message to the readers (future believers) that Jesus actually foresaw the things they experienced. It helps the reader to view the current situation as it was focalized by Jesus (cf. 17:20-23).

(ii) *The Psychological facet*: It is concerned with the cognitive and emotive component of focalization. In the farewell discourse, the protagonist (Jesus) is presented as the one who has clear

knowledge of all that happens, and he is emotionally calm. On the contrary, the disciples do not understand the meaning of events; they are emotionally perplexed. By presenting the contrasting psychological facets of focalization, the narrator tries to convey the message to the reader (future believers) that even if he or /she could not understand the meaning of the current events, Jesus is in complete control of the situation.

(iii) *The Ideological facet*: This refers to the way in which the characters and events of the story are evaluated. In the farewell discourse, the true identity of Jesus as the Son of God is revealed to the disciples. He is the one who returns to the Father; hence he is the way, the truth and the life. Consequently, the disciples those who believe in, abide in, and /remain with Jesus, those who witness to Jesus by loving each other. Jesus helps the disciples in overcoming their failure to comprehend Jesus' true identity. They are continually invited to live under the guidance of the Paraclete (Jn 14:15-31), to abide in Jesus the true vine (15:1-17), to be aware of the encircling dangers (16:1-4a), to be sanctified by Jesus' words (17:17-19), to strive for unity (17:20-23). In fact, through the ideological facet of focalization, the narrator on the one hand reveals the true identity of Jesus to the reader and on the other hand invites the reader to accept Jesus, as the original disciples did, despite encircling difficulties.

Thus, the farewell discourse becomes an effective medium for the evangelist, to bridge the gap between the eyewitness generation and the future believers.

4. The Commandment of Love

The synoptic double commandment to love God and to love one's neighbour is remarkably absent in the fourth gospel. The Johannine commandment of love (13:34-35) emphasises brotherly love. However, the pair of verbs *agapan* and *philein* in the gospel describes three dimensions of love existing between (i) the Father and the Son, (ii) Jesus and his disciples, (iii) among the disciples themselves. These three dimensions of love are mutually interlocked. Jesus' love towards the disciples is modelled after the love between the Father and the Son. This mutual relationship is expressed through the phrase *remain in*, mutually remaining of in the Father, the Son and the disciples form a unity of love though with an asymmetrical reciprocity. As we have seen already, Jn 13 begins with a note on Jesus' loving relationship

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to his own [disciples]. Jesus' love for the disciples is used as a component of true discipleship (cf. 13:1, 33; 14:18). As stated earlier, Jesus' love towards the beloved disciple is presented after the model of the Father's love to the Son. The beloved disciple is the embodiment of the values of true discipleship. The disciples can express their love towards Jesus only through faith. Thus love and faith are closely related in John.

John relates the commandment of love with the theme of discipleship (13:34-35). As Koester points out, Jesus had two commands from the Father: (i) regarding what to say (12:49) and (ii) to lay down his life (10:18; 14:31).¹³ Likewise, there are two commandments Jesus gives to his followers: (i) to keep Jesus' words (14:15, 21, 23-24) and (ii) love one another (13:34; 15:13). The commandment of love is not new (cf. Lv 19:18). The synoptic tradition (Mk 12:31; Q 6:27, 35/Mt 5:44) as well as the Pauline tradition (Rom 13:8-10; 1 Cor 13; Gal 5:14) witnesses to it. What is new is the norm of love, "as I have loved you." The comparative conjunction *just as*, as we have seen before, refers to Jesus' unique relation to the Father and his relationship to the disciples. Jesus' relationship to the disciples is often formulated on the basis of his relation to the Father (6:57; 10:15; 15:9-10; 17:18,21,23; 20:21). Now the evangelist recalls the basic norm of biblical ethics, which recommends the *imitatio Dei* (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26; 21:8) and replaces it with his favourite theme that hereafter, the norm of ethics is *imitatio Christi*, the Son of God.

The open characteristic of faith and love is considered as an eschatological feature. The Jews believed that at eschaton the Israelites will be counted openly as God's friends, thus the disciples seem to constitute the new Israel. The evangelist goes one step further and presents friendship in terms of family relations (Jn 1:11-13; 13:20; 14:2-3,23; 19:25-27; 20:17). Thus by emphasising the open characteristic of faith and love within the community the evangelist presents the community of believers as the eschatological community of the Messiah.

The Johannine positive commandment of love contradicts the Qumran law of love (love the members of the community and hate those outside of it). The Johannine worldview is often criticised to be sectarian and dualistic similar in many aspects to that of the Qumran community, because the world is always against the disciples (15:18-

25). But as Painter rightly points out, unlike the Qumran community, John never recommends a withdrawal from the world; John always extends love to those who are outside of it. It is by loving one another that they should witness to the world (13:35); God's immeasurable love for Jesus (17:23, 26) and the world (3:16) is the activating force of the disciples. The Father's unique love to Jesus is the basis for Jesus' love towards the disciples and it is the norm for their mutual love. Therefore, the Johannine notion of love is neither sectarian nor exclusive. As Schulz points out, for an outsider of the Johannine community, discipleship becomes visible through the mutual love of the community.

The disciples' love is closely related to service. The disciples have to witness to Jesus by loving one another (13:35). Here, the FT imagery of making God known to the Gentiles through acts of mercy (Ex 6:7; 7:5; 8:10; 9:29; 10:2; 14:4) is alluded to. As Keener points out, just as Jesus' signs became signs of Mercy in the gospel (2:11), the disciples' behaviour becomes the sign of the mode in which the believers should treat one another.¹⁴ In other words, witnessing is essentially related to how the disciples behave each other. Just as their master did, they have to serve each other (13:13). In Jn 21, the leadership of the community is closely connected to one's love towards Jesus (cf. 21:15-20). For each time Peter confesses his love for Jesus, he is called to lead the flock of Jesus (21:15, 16,17). Love for Jesus is asked by Him to be expressed in terms of service to the community.

5. Jesus' Prayer for the Disciples (17: 1-25)

Jesus' prayer for the disciples summarizes the theme of discipleship developed in the Farewell discourse. Jn 17 corresponds to the farewell prayers found in both Jewish and Greco-Roman literature.¹⁵ Moloney observes that Jn 17:1-26 forms a literary unit with three sections (1-5, 6-19, 20-26).¹⁶ The whole discourse is presented in the past (17:1). The dialogical character of the farewell discourse disappears in this uninterrupted prayer (till v. 26), however the presence of the disciples and their hearing the prayer is presupposed (vv. 6-8,9-19, 20, 24-26). The first section reveals the fact that Jesus has completed his mission of making God known to the disciples (17:3). The disciples are presented as the fruit of Jesus' mission (vv. 6-8). The second section is the prayer for the disciples present at the dinner-table, so that they may be one (v. 11b) just as

the Father and the Son are one. The mission of Jesus ‘to make God known’ is transferred to the disciples (v. 10) in which their success is guaranteed. As a result of their mission a new group appears. In the third section Jesus prays for them (vv. 20-23). These future believers must also ‘make ‘God known.’ The mutual love between the disciples/ believers reveals the divine love between the Father and the Son and hence they become capable of making God known to others. Thus the mission “make God known” functions as the interlocking theme in all three sections. Thus Jn 17 reveals the important theme that the mission of the disciples/believers is nothing but the continuation of Jesus’ mission, that is, making God known to the world.

The value of discipleship is explicitly explained in Jn 17. The primary purpose of this prayer is to strengthen the disciples in their task within the world. It reveals Jesus’ love and care for the disciples. The disciples realize that Jesus is not only their role model in persecution but their intercessor as well (17:20). It is further assured by the repeated saying that the disciples belong to the Father and are protected directly by the Father (17:2,9,10,11,12,15).

The prayer in John 17, thus repeatedly affirms the direct relationship of the Father in gathering disciples for Jesus. The unique relationship between Jesus and his Father functions as the criterion for the disciples’ direct access to the Father.

To conclude, the content of the prayer could be summarized into five points. (i) True discipleship is contrasted with being part of the world. The disciples differ radically from those who are part of the world. Since they are elected by Jesus, they become part of the unity between the Father and the Son. They receive eternal life on account of Jesus’ departure. (ii) There is continuous striving for the values of discipleship, such as remaining in Jesus, bearing fruit abundantly, keeping the commandment to love in the same way as Jesus has loved, being holy, and maintaining unity among themselves. (iii) The absolute unity between Jesus and his disciples after the model of the relationship between Jesus and his Father. (iv) The warning of persecution from the part of the world. (v) Promise for the disciples that they will be received into the unity between the Father and the Son.

6 Contrasting Symbolism: A Crisis and Judgement of Discipleship

The disciples, according to the theology of the fourth gospel, are continually confronted with crises that necessitate a decisive

judgement for or against Jesus. This choosing is analogous to the choice between death and life the Israelites made in the desert (Dt 30:19). In the FT covenant-community those who chose life became the people of God, similarly in the new covenantal community of the Messiah, the followers have to choose between the following qualities: truth and lie, Spirit and flesh, love and hatred, light and darkness, sight and blindness, freedom and slavery, doing/abiding in the truth and remaining in sin, children of God/Abraham and children of Devil, being from above (heaven) - and being from below (earth).

All these contrasting pairs are parallel to each other. They serve to differentiate between Jesus (and his disciples) and his adversaries. These paired terms function as Johannine pair of symbols to imply two groups of people: those who are associated with Jesus and those who are against Jesus. With regard to 'symbol,' we accept Friedman's definition that "it is a device which speaks of one thing (tenor) in terms which are appropriate to another (vehicle), with the vehicle serving as the source of traits to be transferred to the tenor."¹⁷ Koester observes that symbols in the fourth gospel span the chasm between what is from above and what is from below without collapsing the distinction. The symbols in our list form two contrasting groups. The various symbols in one group of our list form a single comprehensive symbol with various vehicles but with a single tenor. On the one hand, the vehicles like Spirit, light, life, love, truth, being from above, sight, freedom, etc. point to the a single tenor, that is, Jesus and those who belong to Jesus. On the other hand, vehicles like flesh, law, hatred, darkness, blindness, slavery, sin, evil, being from below, etc. point to contrasting single tenor, that is, the opponents of Jesus.

The Johannine dualism created by these contrasting symbols, according to many scholars, reflects the dualistic worldview of the Qumran community. 1QS sees two forces at work in the world: the spirit of truth and deceit (1QS 3:18) which originates from light and darkness respectively (1QS 3:19). The ethical dualism is made explicit in the contrast made between the sons of truth and the sons of darkness in 1QS 4:2-8. The former inherit eternal life while the latter are destroyed (1QS 4:19). Conjoined with this ethical dualism one can see that the Qumran community maintained belief in absolute determinism. 1QS 3:16- 19 states that human beings are determined according to the divine design and nothing could be changed (1QS 3:16). Even though the Johannine terminology is quite similar to that

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of the Essenes, the basic notion of dualism in John and in the sectarian documents are different. In John, dualism is created not by the divine determination but by an individual's deliberate personal choice for or against Jesus. Besides, John does not advocate absolute dualism. The individual can pass from one sphere to the other by revoking his decision, positively like Nicodemus or negatively like Judas. Moreover, unlike in the sectarian documents, the Johannine eschatology is not future-oriented but realised and present.

To conclude, the value system of true discipleship always tries to eliminate sin (15:22, 24; 16:8-9), false judgement (16:11) and false joy from the world (16:20, 24), which are values of being part of the world. The character traits of the disciples developed in the farewell discourse are the following. The disciples have to

- love as Jesus loved them (13:34; 15:12, 17)
- perform greater works (14:12)
- keep the commandments (14:15, 21, 24; 15:10, 14).
- remember what Jesus has told them (14:25; 16:4)
- bear fruit in abundance (15:1-8)
- be holy (17:17)
- be one (17:21-22)

These demands are paralleled with the benefits of true discipleship: (i) the promise that Jesus will return, (ii) the promise of the Paraclete, (iii) the promise that their requests will be granted, (iv) the promise that their sorrow will be turned into joy, (v) Jesus and his Father will come to dwell within them.

Notes

¹ See DU RAND, *Perspectives on Johannine Discipleship*, 321,

² See MLAKUZHYYIL, *Christocentric Literary Structure*, 228.

³ See ELLIS, *The Genius of John*, 14-15, 210-11.

⁴ See Y. SIMOENS, *La gloire d'aimer* (AB, 90), Rome, PBI, 1981, 199.

⁵ See KEENER, *John*, II, 895.

⁶ See W. BRAUWER, *Literary Development*, 117-18.

⁷ C.H. TALBERT, *Artistry and Theology: An Analysis of the Architecture of Jn 1:19-5:47*, in *CBQ* 32 (1970) 341-366, divides the farewell discourses into two sets of chiasm. Later, he abandoned this view, see *Id.*, *Reading John*, 200-222.

⁸ VAN TILBORG, *Imaginative Love*, 135. See our chart below.

⁹ See SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, III, 64; BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John*, 252.

- ¹⁰ C. DE YONGE, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, Peabody, MA, Hendrikson, 1993.
- ¹¹ VAN DER WATT, *Family of the King*, 416.
- ¹² M. BAL, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Toronto, University of Toronto, 1985, 104. Following this definition, D.F. TOLMIE, *The Function of Focalisation in John 13-17*, in *NeoT* 25 (1991) 274-286, 277, explains focalisation as “A says that B sees what C is doing.”
- ¹³ KOESTER, *Symbolism*, 238.
- ¹⁴ KEENER, *John*, II, 926.
- ¹⁵ WESTCOTT, *John*, 293-94, point out several examples. The Jewish writings like *Deuternomy* 32; *Testament of Job*, 43,1-17; *Jubilees* 1,19-21; *4 Esdras* 8, 20-34; *Syriac Baruch* 48:1-24 and the Hermetic writings like *Poimandres*, 1:31-34; *Hermeticum* 13,21-22 and the mandean writings like *The Book of John*, 236-239; *Mandean Liturgy: Qolasta*, 58,9-20 etc. are the often cited parallels.
- ¹⁶ Cf. MOLONEY, *To Make God Known*, 465. However, KYSER, *John*, 255 gives a different three-fold division: vv. 1-5, 6-23, 24-26. LAGRANGE, *Jean*, 436; BARRETT, *John*, 499; LINDARS, *John*, 515, accept a four-fold division, by considering 24-26 as an independent section. M. BALAGUÉ, *La ración sacerdotal (Juan 17,1-26)*, in *CltBib* 31 (1974) 69, proposes a five-fold division: vv. 1-5, 6-8, 9-19, 20-23, 24-26.
- ¹⁷ FRIEDMAN, *Form and Meaning in Fiction*, 289.

Another Advocate: Johannine Paraclete Texts (13:1-17:25)

The discussion on the Paraclete plays a substantial role in the farewell discourse. The Parakletos texts in the farewell discourse can be construed as a ‘pre-Pentecost’ or ‘partial interpretation of Jn 20:22.’ The farewell discourse(s) present the Paraclete as the *alter ego* of Jesus. Some scholars do not count 20:22 as the fulfilment of the Paraclete texts in the farewell discourse. These arguments are to be analysed on the basis of the functions of the Johannine Paraclete. The purpose of the Paraclete passages might be to vindicate the Johannine tradition against the heretical (anti-docetic) and persecuting opposition. According to Brown, the Paraclete passages are intended to justify the audacity of the Johannine message in the context of the uneasiness caused by the eyewitnesses’ death and the delay of the Parousia.¹ Against Brown, G. Johnston argues that the Paraclete passages are intended to fortify the believers in the context of persecution.² The purpose of these passages could be deduced from these passages themselves. We can infer at least four explicit themes in the Johannine Paraclete passages.

- The relation of the Paraclete to the Father and the Son: the Paraclete will come only if the Son departs 15:26; 16:7,8,13. Paraclete comes forth from the Father (15:26); Jesus gives the Paraclete from the Father (15:26), Father gives the Paraclete only at Jesus' request (14:16). The Paraclete is sent in Jesus' name (14:26).
- The identity of the Paraclete: he is the Spirit of Truth (14:17; 15:26; 16:23). He is the Holy Spirit (14:26), he will bear witness to Jesus (15:26), he will bear witness to all what Jesus told (15:26), he will speak nothing of his own (16:13).
- The relation of the Paraclete to the disciples: The Paraclete will teach (14:26) and guide (16:13) them, he indwells within them (14:16-17), they can recognise him (14:17) and he will remind them of Jesus' words.
- The relation of the Paraclete to the World: The world can neither see nor recognise the Paraclete (14:17). He will prove that the world is wrong about sin, justice and condemnation (16:8-11).

Among these, the first two suggest who the Paraclete is, while the latter point to two functions of the Holy Spirit, in favour of the disciples and against the world. Hence, it is not implausible to deduce that the *Sitz im Leben* of these texts is persecution confronted by the Johannine community.

The Meaning of *Parakletos*

Parakletos is generally understood as a cognate of *Parakletos* which is interpreted as 'to console, to encourage' and in the forensic sense 'to advocate.' Based on the etymology of the term, S. Snaith argued that *Parakletos* meant convincer.³ Because nothing could be decisively concluded merely on the basis of etymology, this interpretation is not fully convincing. Its meaning must be deciphered in relation to the Paraclete's functions presented in the text. Accordingly, we can attribute three meanings to the term Paraclete.

- (i) Because the functions of the Paraclete is connected to preaching and teaching, it can be proposed that *Paraklesis* hints at the basic meaning of *parakletos*. It is the Holy Spirit that empowers the disciples for teaching and preaching. Based on 14:12, the Paraclete's function is to be fulfilled through the ministers of the word.

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- (ii) From a forensic point of view, this term means ‘advocate.’¹⁵ As a loan word in the Rabbinic texts, *paraklis* occurs, as Mowinkel points out, in the sense of ‘Zeuge, Fürsprecher und Ankläger.’¹⁴ *paraklis* was generally understood as synonymous with *sunergos* which is often used as the opposite of *kategor* accuser, the one who argues against the accused. The friends as well as the eloquent speakers were allowed to appear before the court as a *parakletos* on behalf of the accused. According to Keener, this meaning is consistent with many of the Johannine contexts (15:15; 16:13). However, the forensic action of the Paraclete is invariably related to the defence of Jesus and not to the defence of the disciples. However, this argument is not conclusive because the disciples easily understand that the Paraclete will defend them during the time of their trial as he defended Jesus before the rulers of the world.
- (iii) From the time of Origen *parakletos* was interpreted as consoler. Upholding this view, J. G. Davies argues that the verb *parakaleo* in LXX invariably means to console. Hence he argues that albeit the passive form, the active meaning ‘consoler’ is more fitting to the term.⁵ Before preferring the active meaning, however, one must bear in mind the fact that nowhere in the Johannine literature is the verb *parakaleo* used. Moreover, the meaning *comforter* does not fit in some passages (14:16 - other comforter).
- (iv) The supernatural angelic defender who will defend the chosen one of God. This interpretation too has a forensic connotation.

Among the different meanings of *parakletos* the forensic meaning is gaining wider acceptance. However, the emphasis on the forensic meaning should not be allowed to overlook the teaching and consoling functions of the Paraclete, obviously stated in the gospel. We prefer to agree with Schnackenburg who argued that, “the evangelist received the term that already existed, the ‘Paraclete,’ and made theological statements about him that were in accordance with the Johannine teaching about the Spirit.”⁶

Source(s) of the Paraclete Texts

Scholars have offered various suggestions regarding the source of the Johannine Paraclete.

1. Some scholars suggest a proto-Gnostic heretical background to the Johannine Paraclete. W. Bauer and Bultmann argued that the

Mandean helper “Yawar” is the source of Johannine Paraclete.⁷ This proposal was severely criticised by many scholars as anachronistic. The Gnostic background of the fourth gospel, suggested by Bultmann and his followers is almost outdated in the Johannine exegesis. Because the Johannine Paraclete can be explained without any reference to the proto-Gnostic sources, we rule out this argument.

2. A. Shafaat suggests that the ‘Geber’ (man) of the Qumran *Thanks Giving Hymns* (1QH 3:8-11) and *The Rule of the Community* (1QS 4:20-23) is the background of the Paraclete texts in John. Betz also finds the roots of Johannine Paraclete in the Qumran literature. According to him, the evangelist is blending together the imageries of the Spirit of Truth in the Qumran community and the forensic role of the angel Michael in the Rabbinic writings (see no. 5, below), in his presentation of the Paraclete. Even though, the influence of the Qumran practices on the fourth gospel is widely discussed among the scholars, the arguments of Shafaat and Betz are not convincing. It is true that in 1QM 13:10, there is the description of the prince of light being appointed as Israel’s ‘helper’ and all the spirits of truth are under his dominion. As it is evident, there is only a collective mention of the spirits of truth and no personification of the Spirit of truth as found in the Johannine presentation of the Paraclete. Moreover, the Johannine role of the Paraclete is far superior to an angelic role as Betz conceives. Brown points out that the Qumran idea of tandem relationship among divine persons is a clue to the Johannine Paraclete.⁸ When a principal figure dies another takes his place as in Moses/Joshua, Elijah/Elisha patterns. The latter is always closely patterned after the former. This idea is seemingly true to Johannine Paraclete. Nevertheless, the relation between Moses and Joshua or Elijah and Elisha is dissimilar to the Jesus-Paraclete relationship, because in the latter there is not only a tandem relationship but also a personal continuation of Christ through the Holy Spirit.
3. E. Franck is of the opinion that the source of the Johannine Paraclete is the *meturgeman* in the Synagogues. Though this would easily explain the teaching function of the Paraclete, the presupposition of the *meturgeman* in the Palestinian or Diaspora synagogue by the end of the first century AD is questionable. Moreover, as Keener rightly points out, the Paraclete as

meturgeman does not explain other functions of the Paraclete described in the fourth gospel.⁹

4. The Roman forensic practice of the *kategor* (one who argues against the client) and *sunegoros* (one who argues in favour of the client) could be a source for the Johannine Paraclete. An accuser (*kategor*) is always against the advocate (*parakletos* or *sunegoros*). According to the Roman law practiced in Palestine, the witnesses against the client *de facto* constitute the *kategôr* whereas the witnesses for the persons *de facto* constitute the *pârakletos*. This forensic practice is witnessed to by the Rabbinic writings as well.¹⁰
5. The Rabbinic inscriptions regarding the angelic advocates and accusers in the divine court pleading for or against Israel, are suggested as another source for the Johannine Paraclete. The accusers of Israel in the Divine court are Satan and Mastema. The accusers were also associated with angels of the nations opposing Israel, such as Rome and Persia, whereas the chief intercessor (*pârakletos*) of Israel is Michael. Moreover, the observance or violation of the precepts of Torah will result in the form of receiving an advocate or accuser respectively, at the day of judgement. As Keener points out, the well known phrase in 'Abot 4:11, "He who does one precept gains for himself one advocate and one who commits one transgression gains for himself one accuser" is an example for this belief.¹¹
6. Another possible source can be suggested for the Johannine Paraclete, based on the intercessory role of Moses in some Tannaitic parables. The intercessory role of Moses is well attested to in the scriptures (Ex 32:11-14; 33:12-13; 34:9; Jr 15:1). Just as Moses intercedes for the people before God, Jesus also intercedes (1 Jn 2:1; cf. Jn 14:16). Thus, the intercessory role ascribed to Moses in some sects of Judaism, especially by the Johannine rivals (5:45) is assumed by the Johannine Jesus. The Spirit who continues Jesus' work will also function as the intercessor before God on behalf of the disciples (believers).
7. The Spirit in the fourth gospel is often argued to have its roots in the Jewish wisdom traditions. Marie Issac has tried to develop the thesis that the Johannine Paraclete is directly associated with

the Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom language. Wisdom and the Spirit are paralleled in Wis 9:17. The Spirit is understood in the Sapiential tradition as *hagion* = holy) and *monogenes* = only begotten - 7:22) and Wisdom is the breath, God's power (7:25), counsellor (8:9). Now the challenge one can raise against Issacs is that if John really took the notion of Paraclete from the wisdom literature why would he use the term *Pârakletos* instead of *sumbolos* (= counsellor) a well known term in the wisdom traditions that exhausts the semantic domain of almost completely.

8. Why could not the synoptic gospels be the source of Johannine Paraclete? There is great number of parallels between the Synoptic presentation of the Holy Spirit and the Johannine presentation of the Paraclete. We list the parallels:

Synoptics/Syn. Tradition	John
Spirit comes only after the ascension of Jesus (Ac 1:4-5)	Paraclete comes only after Jesus (Jn 16:7)
Father gives the Spirit to those who ask him (Lk 11:13)	Father gives Paraclete at Jesus' request (14:16)
Holy Spirit guides the disciples (Ac 2:4)	Paraclete guides the disciples
Holy Spirit will teach the disciples (Lk 12:12)	Paraclete will teach the disciples (Jn 14:26)
Holy Spirit is the witness to the whole Christ-event (Ac 5:32)	Paraclete bears witness to Christ (14:27)

From the study of the sources of the Johannine Paraclete, we can infer that it is not tenable to argue that John exclusively depended on one or another source. In fact, the sources (4)-(8) might have played a collective role in the Johannine formulation of the theme of Paraclete. However, the basic idea of the Johannine Paraclete is similar to the synoptic idea of the Holy Spirit. So we consider the synoptic gospels as the primary source of the Johannine notion of the Paraclete. John might have edited the Synoptic notion of the Holy Spirit in the light of the FT wisdom tradition, the Roman forensic notion of advocate and the Rabbinic notion of angelic advocates. We can conclude that even though the term Paraclete is uniquely Johannine, the idea of the Paraclete has much in common with the NT understanding of the Holy Spirit.

<i>Jesus and the Disciples</i>	<i>Paraclete and the Disciples</i>
Disciples have the special privilege to know and recognise Jesus (14:7,9)	Disciples are granted the special privilege to know and recognise the Paraclete (14:17)
Jesus is in/with (ei/nai evn/meta,) and dwells/remains within (me,nein evn, monh. para,) the disciples (15:4)	Paraclete is with (ei/nai evn/meta,) and dwell/remain within (me,nein para,) the disciples (14:16)
Jesus teaches the disciples (6:59; 7:14; 8:20)	The Paraclete will teach the disciples (14:26)
Jesus is the way and truth (14:6).	Paraclete leads the disciples through the way of truth (16:13).
Jesus is the Messiah to come, he reveals all things to the disciples (4:25-26)	The Paraclete reveals to the disciples the things to come (16:14)
Jesus bore witness before the disciples (8:14)	The Paraclete will bear witness before the disciples (15:26)

Paraclete and the Disciples

Brown compares the unique relation between the disciples and the Paraclete¹² with the relation between the Spirit of God and the FT prophets. According to the FT, prophets are consistently endowed with the Spirit of God. Jesus sends the Spirit to the disciples so that they may be strengthened to preach his words as the FT prophets did. If this interpretation is tenable, we can observe that here John is once again equating Jesus' divinity with that of the FT Yahweh. The relation between the Paraclete and the disciples is patterned in similar terminology to which the evangelist presented the unique relation between Jesus and his disciples.

Jesus and the Paraclete together accomplish the task of revelation. Thus, the disciples receive the fullness of revelation only by receiving the Paraclete. The Paraclete is also a Johannine answer to the delayed Parousia. Jesus is already at work with the disciples through the Paraclete. C. K. Barrett perceptively points out that the idea of the Spirit was used to replace the extreme expectation of the imminent Parousia. The presentation of the Pentecost in Acts with apocalyptic imageries that were associated with the glorious coming of Christ is somehow related to this idea.

We can reasonably believe that the figure of the Paraclete is the Johannine answer to the first Christian community who were

confronted with the grave confusion caused by the death of the apostolic eyewitnesses who were the living chain between Jesus and the Church. This problem was acute towards the end of the first century, that is, during the time of formation of the fourth gospel, especially by the death of the beloved disciple. In this context, as Brown points out, the evangelist came forth with the idea of the Paraclete.¹³ Thus, the idea of the Paraclete is to be read in relation to the consistent Johannine negation of the overemphasis given to the role of the eyewitnesses (2:22; 12:16; 14:9). Even though John accepts the importance of the eyewitnesses, he harmoniously develops the idea that the original disciples understood everything only after Jesus was glorified (2:22). This interpretation becomes more fitting in the context of Jn 20:19-29. Subsequently, the giving of the Spirit in 20:22 paves the way for substantiating the main theme of the narrative (20:19-29), that is, the shift from the eyewitness generation to the future believers. This theme becomes all the more evident when the Paraclete is understood as the *alter ego* of Jesus.

The Spirit as the *Alter Ego* of Jesus

According to the FT traditions, disciples of the prophet succeed a prophet (e.g., Moses-Joshua and Elijah-Elisha). This notion of succession was a salient feature in the early Jewish traditions. The Spirit, according to many scholars, can be considered in this pattern as the successor of Jesus, or the continuer of Jesus' work. Now the dilemma arises, if John has fashioned a succession theme according to the Jewish traditions, the real successors of Jesus are the disciples

Jesus	Paraclete
Christ came from the father (6:57)	Paraclete came from the Father (15:26)
Jesus is the one who is sent (3:17)	Paraclete is sent by the Father (16:7)
Jesus is the truth (14:6)	Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth
Jesus remains with the disciples (15:4)	Paraclete remains with the disciples (14:17)
Jesus teaches the disciples (7:14-17)	Paraclete teaches the disciples (14:26)
Evil doers cannot accept Jesus (5:43; 12:48)	The world cannot receive Paraclete (14:17)
Jesus is the Holy one of God (6:69)	Paraclete is the Holy Spirit
Believers see the true identity of Jesus (1:50)	The believers will see the true identity (14:17b)
The Son glorifies the Father (17:4)	Paraclete glorifies Jesus (16:14)
Jesus is not known by the world (14:17)	Paraclete is not known by the world (15:26)
Jesus is not seen by the world (14:17)	Paraclete is not seen by the world (14:19; 16:17)

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Jesus gives testimony to the Father (5:3; 8:13)	Paraclete gives testimony to Jesus (15:26; 16:7,13)
Jesus convicts the world (3:19; 9:41; 15:22)	Paraclete convicts the world (16:8)
Speaks not of his own (7:17; 8:26; 14:10)	Paraclete speaks not of his own (16:13)
Jesus reveals, discloses and proclaims (4:25)	P. reveals, discloses and proclaims (16:13-15)
Jesus leads into the fullness of truth (18:37; 14:6)	P. leads into the fullness of truth (18:37; 14:6)
Jesus consoles the disciples (14:16; 1 Jn 2:1)	Paraclete consoles (14:16)

(the church) not the Paraclete. The Book of Acts presents the Church guided by the Spirit as the successor of Jesus.¹⁴ It is more likely to think that John also draws his picture of succession in line with the Lukan model. However, John gives a more personal character to the Spirit than in Luke-Acts. So as the Johannine Jesus is presented as personified Wisdom, the Law and the successor to Moses, the Johannine Spirit too is personified. The title “Spirit of truth” used to designate the Paraclete can be understood as the Spirit of Christ, especially in the farewell context (14:6).

Barrett rightly assessed that the Paraclete neither acts autonomously nor should he be conceived as the starting point where Christ finished. Instead, “the Spirit Paraclete is the eschatological continuum in which the entire ministry of Christ is moved on.”¹⁵ We can observe many of the similarities in the presentation of Christ and the Paraclete in the fourth gospel.

Burge plausibly observes the christological concentration in the Johannine notion of the Paraclete. He observes, “John has developed his image of the Paraclete from the image of Christ found in the gospel of John.”¹⁶

The notion of the two levels of operation of Jesus and the Paraclete is important in understanding Jn 20:22. After entrusting the disciples with the mission, Jesus empowers them with the Spirit. This action means that the disciples are endowed with the continued presence of Christ in the person of the Paraclete who was with Jesus during his earthly ministry.

Notes

- ¹ BROWN, *Community*, 28-29. G. JOHNSTON, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John* (SNTSMS, 12), Cambridge, Cambridge University, 1970, 123-125, challenges Brown's position.
- ² JOHNSTON, *The Spirit-Paraclete*, 123.
- ³ N. H. SNAITH, *The Meaning of the Paraclete*, in *ExTim* 57 (1945-46) 47-50, 50.
- ⁴ S. MOWINKEL, *Die Vorstellung des Spätjudentums vom Heiligen Geist als Fürsprecher und der johanneische Paraklete*, in *ZNW* 32 (1933) 97-130, 129.
- ⁵ J. G. DAVIES, *The Primary Meaning of Parakletos*, in *JTSNS* 4 (1953) 35-38.
- ⁶ SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, III, 140.
- ⁷ Even though Bultmann originally supported this view, he later changed his mind. For details, see BURGE, *Anointed Community*, 10-11.
- ⁸ BROWN, *Paraclete*, 120.
- ⁹ KEENER, *John*, II, 956.
- ¹⁰ *Exodus Rabbah*, 18:5; *Numbers Rabbah* 10:4; *Ruth Rabbah* Proem, 1.
- ¹¹ *Abot R. Nat.* 35, §80; KEENER, *John*, 959.
- ¹² BROWN, *Paraclete*, 121.
- ¹³ BROWN, *Paraclete*, 129.
- ¹⁴ EHRHARD, *Acts*, 12-13; GOULDER, *Acts*, 54.
- ¹⁵ BARRETT, *John*, 90,462; HATINA, *John 20,22 in Its Eschatological Context*, 216.
- ¹⁶ BURGE, *Anointed Community*, 41.

Passion Narrative: Return to the Father (18:1-19:42)

The Johannine passion narrative is often called “passionless passion,” because the victim’s (Jesus’), perfect self-awareness steers and controls the entire passion story. The story comes to an end when Jesus says: “it is finished.” Some of the unique theological and narrative characteristics of Johannine passion narrative are the following:

1. The Timing of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion: The timing of Jesus’s last Passover, however, presents one of the most significant differences between John’s Passion narrative and that of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Whereas the synoptic Gospels clearly state that the Last Supper was a Passover meal (see Matthew 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-17; Luke 22:1, 7-14), John never explicitly identifies the Last Supper as a traditional seder or Passover meal. On the contrary, the narrative of John seems to suggest that the Passover actually began at sunset on the day that Jesus was crucified—in other words, according to traditional reckoning on Friday evening rather than Thursday evening (see John 18:28;

19:31, in which the preparation day was likely the day when the Passover was prepared). This timing appears to have been significant for John because of its connection to the slaying of the Paschal Lambs before the Passover festival. According to Josephus, on the preparation day leading up to Passover, lambs were slaughtered in the temple beginning at the ninth hour and continuing until the eleventh hour, so the sacrifices would be completed before the festival began at sundown. While John does not give an actual time for Jesus's death on the cross, the synoptics indicate that He died at or near the ninth hour (see Matthew 27:46-50; Mark 15:34-37; Luke 23:44-46). In other words, Jesus, the Lamb of God, died as a sacrifice on the cross at the moment that the priests of the temple began slaughtering the Paschal Lambs.

2. Omission of the Institution of the Sacrament: While this scenario might explain why John never referred to the Last Supper as a Passover meal, it does not satisfactorily explain one of the surprising omissions of the Gospel of John, namely the institution of the ordinance of the sacrament. Even if the Last Supper had, in fact, been an early celebration by a group of friends of a seder without a lamb (which could not be sacrificed early or outside of the temple), there is little doubt that at this last meal Jesus used bread and wine to help teach His disciples, then and now, the significance of His sacrificial act. Nevertheless, scholars have noted that sacramental imagery is not absent from the Gospel of John. Rather the images of wine and bread are woven throughout the narrative, as in the miracle of Cana and the Bread of Life discourse. While it is true that John thus does not lack the imagery of the sacrament, this does not completely explain his failure to recount or explain it at the time of its institution. Perhaps for John, who focused so single-mindedly on the death of Jesus as a sacrifice, the symbolism of the sacrament, which is above all commemorative, was not as significant until Jesus was actually sacrificed.

3. Omission of the Suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane: For this reason, the lack of any account of what happened in Gethsemane in John's Gospel is striking. The synoptics testify that in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed in great agony (see Matthew 26:37-39; Mark 14:33-36; Luke 22:41-42), but John simply states that Jesus crossed the brook Cedron and came to a garden, not even mentioning the names Gethsemane or Mount of Olives (see John 18:1). While

the received text of Luke 22:43-44 provides important evidence including Jesus's sweat being "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" and an angel appearing to strengthen Him, for John the garden is simply the scene of Jesus's betrayal and arrest (see John 18:2-12). It might be due to the eye-witnessing character of the gospel. John was least interested in accentuating the agony of Jesus with a traditional story that he has not eye-witnessed. The theological focus of John's Gospel is on the death of the Lamb of God rather than on His suffering, he omitted the suffering in the garden for literary reasons. Perhaps the divine Johannine Jesus, who rarely even grew tired or thirsty, could not easily be depicted as suffering.

4. *Jesus's Carrying His Own Cross to Golgotha:* Some other unique features of John's Passion narrative, such as the addition of a private interview with and discourse to Pilate during the Roman trial. One detail before the actual Crucifixion, however, that illustrates how John chose to portray the consistent divinity of Jesus is the omission of any reference to Simon of Cyrene (see Mt 27:32; Mk 15:20-21; Lk 23:26). The Johannine Jesus, however, does not need any help, bearing His own cross the entire way (see Jn 19:17) and accomplishing His atoning sacrifice completely on His own.

5. *The Hour of Crucifixion:* Mark records that Jesus was crucified at the third hour, about nine in the morning (see Mark 15:25). John, either recollecting differently or perhaps realizing that this did not provide enough time for all the activities involved in the trial and abuse of Jesus, states instead that Pilate did not even present Jesus to the hostile crowd and deliver Him over for crucifixion until the sixth hour, or about noon (see John 19:14). One other result of this altered timing, however, is that in John's account Jesus hangs and suffers for a shorter period of time.

6. *All four Gospels note that prior to nailing Jesus to the cross, the soldiers who were crucifying Him divided His outer garments (ta himatia) into four parts and distributed them among themselves but that they cast dice for His inner tunic (ton chiona), thus fulfilling the prophecy of Ps 22:18 (see Mt 27:35-36; Mk 15:24; Lk 23:34; Jn 19:23-24). Only John, however, notes that his coat "was without seam, woven from the top throughout" (John 19:23). Commentators have observed that this may suggest that it may have represented the priestly*

garment, reinforcing the image of Jesus not only as the Paschal Lamb being offered but as the high priest who made sacrifice for His people. One of the final activities at the cross reinforces this imagery. Shortly before He expired, Jesus announced that He was thirsty, leading a soldier to offer Him cheap wine (King James Version “vinegar”) on a sponge (see Mt 27:48-49; Mk 15:36; Jn 19:28-30). While Matthew and Mark record that this sponge was placed on a reed (*kalam?*), John portrays it as being put on a hyssop branch (*hyssop?*). The hyssop was the plant mandated by the law of Moses not only for certain purification rituals but also for spreading the blood on the doorposts at the first Passover (Ex 12:22).

7. *Only Matthew and Mark recount that Jesus cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* shortly before He expired (Mt 27:46-47; Mk 15:34-35). They also record that He cried out before He died, while Luke says that instead He commended His spirit into the hands of His Father. John, on the other hand, has Jesus straightforwardly declare, “It is finished” (John 19:30). His mission then accomplished, Jesus on His own “gave up the ghost” (John 19:30). The significance of John’s choice is that Jesus is portrayed in a manner consistent with His image elsewhere in this Gospel: strong, in control, and divine.

8. *Lamb of God:* Jesus is presented as as the Lamb of God in the passion narrative. When the Jewish leadership asked the Roman authorities to break the legs of those being crucified so that their bodies would not desecrate the Sabbath-and in John, the Passover itself-the soldiers first broke the legs of the two insurgents or revolutionaries who had been crucified with Him. When they came to Jesus, however, and found that He was already dead, they did not break Jesus’s legs “that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken” (Jn 19:31-33, 36). While this was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Ps 34:21, and prerequisite of the Paschal Lamb be without blemish (see Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12).

1. The Structure of the Passion Narrative

The structure of the passion narrative, as seen before, can be explained on the one hand as the vindication of the true identity of Jesus and the believers. The beloved disciple and Jesus’ mother partake in his divine identity. On the other hand, “the Jews” as well as Peter deny their own identity by taking a stance against Jesus.

Logic of the Logos

- A Symbolic Act: Jesus reveals his “I am” divine identity to the disciples and opponents: but Peter misunderstands (18:1-11)
- B Simon Peter denies his identity as disciple (18:12- 27): Trials before the high priests
- C Trial and sentence before Pilate (18:28 - 19:24): Jesus’ identity as the king of Israel is disclosed but Jews deny their identity by accepting Caesar their king
- B¹ The beloved disciple accepts his identity (19:25- 27): Identity of the believers
- A¹ Real Act: Death and Resurrection: Jesus vindicates his divine identity (19:28-19:42)

According to this structure, the passion narrative is continually interrupted by the Johannine theme of discipleship. It demonstrates the evangelist’s unfailing attention to the theme of discipleship, even in the passion narrative. As Brown says, the Johannine passion narrative is “less concerned with fate of Jesus than with the significance of that fate for his followers.”¹ The Johannine focus on discipleship in the passion narrative is exposed through two important characters, Peter, who denied his identity as disciple, and the beloved disciple, who accepted the new identity of believers, that is, the children of God by becoming members of Jesus’ family. In the following section, we will analyse the important interruptions of the Johannine theme of discipleship in the passion narrative that shed light on the Johannine notion of discipleship.

2. The Arrest of Jesus²

Jesus and his disciples go out of the city to the east, crossing the Kidron, which John refers to as a wadi (*Valley, cheimarros*, literally, “winter-flowing,” since winter is the rainy season). This same word is used of the Kidron in the account of David’s flight from Absalom (2 Sam 15:23), and John may well be alluding to that story (Westcott 1908:2:264; Brown 1994:1:125, 291). David was betrayed by his counselor Ahithophel, who later hangs himself (2 Sam 17:23), the only person in Scripture apart from Judas who does so. Thus David’s sorrow and humiliation may be echoed in Jesus’, though in Jesus’ case he is actually in control, and this humiliation is part of his great victory (Hendriksen 1953:376, 383).

They go to a familiar place, an *olive grove* where Jesus *often met* with his disciples (vv. 1-2). In this way he is accepting the coming

betrayal, since *Judas... knew the place* (v. 2). In the Synoptics it is called Gethsemane, meaning “oil press,” which suggests an olive grove. While it is an olive grove, John does not actually call it an *olive grove*; he calls it a garden (*kepos*). John notes that Jesus’ death and resurrection also took place in a garden (19:41; 20:15). “The Passion and resurrection which effected the salvation of the world are contrasted with the Fall in the *garden* of Eden” (Hoskyns 1940b:604). Modern commentators express doubt that John would have the Garden of Eden in mind. However, the fact that he mentions the garden setting several times in the Passion and resurrection accounts suggests he does want to draw attention to this connection.

The group that came to arrest Jesus was composed of Roman soldiers, Jewish servants and an apostate apostle (v. 3). John will make it clear that both Jew and Gentile are guilty of the death of the Son of God. Jesus is about to die for the life of the world, and the whole world needs it. The Jewish forces that were sent were the same as those sent to arrest Jesus once before (7:32, 45-46). They were not a police force as such but “court servants at the disposal of the Sanhedrin when necessary for police purposes” (Brown 1994:1:249). The *detachment of soldiers (speira)* refers to a cohort, a group of 600 soldiers under a military tribune (*chiliarchos*, vv. 3, 12). The entire cohort would not have been deployed on this mission, but there would have been a significant force.

They may well have expected to have to search in dark corners and meet with armed resistance once they had cornered the accused. But Jesus knows what is coming upon him (v. 4; 13:1), that he is going to engage the prince of this world one-on-one (cf. 14:30). So he goes out to meet them (v. 4) and asks, *Who is it you want?* This is not a question from ignorance, seeking an answer. Rather, it is like other questions asked by God that are intended to reveal a situation and bring people to action.

John does not mention Judas’s kiss, which would have taken place just before or after Jesus’ question. Judas here takes his place with those who have come out against Jesus (v. 5). The awkward statement that tells us where Judas is, is an eyewitness detail branded into John’s memory. We sense his shock at seeing Judas *with them*. John’s continual reference to Judas as the betrayer all stems from this event. John makes it clear that Judas is not the revealer but rather that Jesus will identify himself. Enemies had not been able to

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lay their hands on Jesus before (7:30, 44-45; 8:59; 10:39; 12:36), and it is not Judas's presence that now brings success. Rather, it is now the Father's will.

They say they are looking for *Jesus of Nazareth*, and Jesus responds, *I am he* (v. 5, *ego eimi*). Here the most humble and human of Jesus' names is juxtaposed with the most exalted and divine. The two together are the cross hairs that target Jesus' identity: he is the human being from an insignificant, small town in Galilee who is also God. Jesus' self-identification has been at the heart of this Gospel, and this public act of identification produces dramatic effects. When he uses the divine I AM *they drew back and fell to the ground* (v. 6). People falling to the ground in the presence of God are mentioned elsewhere (for example, Ezek 1:28; Dan 10:9; Rev 1:17), but here the ones falling are his enemies rather than his worshipers. This reaction is closer to that of Pharaoh, who fell down as though dead when Moses said the name of God, as told by Artapanus, a pre-Christian Jewish apologist (Eusebius *Preparation for the Gospel* 9.27; Talbert 1992:233). This reaction is a reflection not of their hearts, but of Jesus' majesty. Here is a little preview of the moment in the future when every knee will bow to Jesus (Phil 2:10) and all things be brought into subjection to him (1 Cor 15:27; Phil 3:21), even those who do not own allegiance to him and thus for whom this submission is hell.

The very first thing Jesus said in this Gospel was, literally, "What are you seeking?" (1:38), his question for the two disciples of John the Baptist, and their reply indicated they wanted to be with him. Now we see people seeking Jesus, but they do so not for their soul's sake. They have their own agenda, as many people do today. There are ways of seeking Jesus that do not bring life.

Jesus repeats the I AM but now allows the proceedings to continue by telling them to let his followers go (*aphete*, an imperative). He issues orders to those arresting him! Their power has just been shown to be insignificant compared to the power of his word, and now the fulfillment of his word is the operative force, not their designs (v. 9). The formula used to speak of the fulfillment of Scriptures from the Old Testament is now used of Jesus' own words. The Word himself, who created all that exists, has spoken of his protection for those the Father has given him (6:39; cf. 10:28; 17:12), and now he fulfills that word. The protection Jesus spoke of earlier referred to eternal

salvation, and now we see that such protection includes occasions of temptation that threaten to overwhelm the disciples' faith (cf. Bultmann 1971:640). Here is Jesus as the Good Shepherd caring for his flock, a glimpse of the grace that is at work throughout the Passion as it has been throughout the ministry. The temptation the disciples face here is an extreme case of what all temptation represents. And the Lord's protection is as necessary in the day to day assaults as it is in this great test. It is not without reason that our Lord commanded us to pray daily not to be led into temptation (Mt 6:13 par. Lk 11:4; cf. Mt 26:41 par. Mk 14:38 par. Lk 22:46).

Jesus has demonstrated that he has complete power over these adversaries, and he has expressed his will that the disciples be let go, but Peter still thinks he has to resist with force (v. 10). The Synoptics tell us there were only two swords, and we might have guessed that Peter would have one of them. He may have been emboldened by their having fallen to the ground. But he does not go after one of the soldiers or one of the Jewish force, but rather the slave (*doulos*) of the high priest. He takes off the man's right ear! John does not mention that Jesus healed the slave's ear (Lk 22:51), though this would account for Peter's not being arrested or killed on the spot. John does, however, add that the man's name was Malchus. John was known to the household of the high priest (v. 16) and knew this man and his family (v. 26). We do not know how well John knew these men, but such connections add poignancy to the scene.

The fact that Peter only got the man's right ear suggests several possibilities: that Peter was left-handed, or that he attacked the man from behind, that the man moved or that Peter simply had bad aim. In any case, Peter's boldness is as great and as obvious as his misunderstanding. He is not at all in sync with God's will, and this isn't the first time he is out of step (cf. 13:6-9; Mt 16:22-23 par. Mk 8:32-33). Jesus says, *Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?* (v. 11). Jesus is willing to receive all that the Father gives him, both the disciples (v. 9) and the suffering.

The image of the cup is used in the Old Testament to denote suffering (Ps 75:8) and, in particular, the wrath of God (Is 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15-29; 49:12; Lam 4:21; Ezek 23:31-34; Hab 2:16; cf. Rev 14:10; 16:19). John has not included the prayer of agony in the garden in which Jesus asked that, if possible, the cup be removed from him (Mt 26:39 par. Mk 14:36 par. Lk 22:42). But John includes this later

reference to the cup, which reveals the conclusion of the earlier agony. “The struggle in Gethsemane is over. Jesus no longer prays that the cup... may pass from him” (Hendriksen 1953:382). The Son’s humility and obedience continue to manifest the glory of God and his pattern of life with God.

Trial before the High Priests

John weaves together the confrontation between Jesus and Annas and the confrontation going on at the same time between Peter and the people in the courtyard. This textured scene, which shifts between what is going on inside with Jesus and what is going on outside with Peter, is paralleled in the scene that follows by Pilate’s encounter with Jesus inside the governor’s palace and his dealings with the Jewish opponents outside. Such juxtaposition enables John to make comparisons between Jesus and the other characters in the story. The inner and outer scenes in the story also reflect John’s purpose to show us here, as throughout his Gospel, the inner and outer dimensions of the events themselves—the eternal reality being manifested in the midst of the world as the Word comes to his own and the eternal significance of the events that unfold. Jesus Is Taken to Annas, the High Priest (18:12-14) John describes Jesus’ arrest and binding as the activity of the whole party that has come out against him, both Gentile and Jew (v. 12). John will make it clear that the Jewish authorities have special responsibility for Jesus’ death (19:11), but the Gentiles have a share as well. Here we have the shocking sight of the one who brings freedom to mankind (8:31-36) being bound by representatives of the whole human race.

They took Jesus first to Annas, probably the most respected and powerful of the Jewish authorities at that time. He had held the office of high priest earlier (A.D. 6-15), and his influence continued through his son-in-law Caiaphas, the current high priest (v. 13) and through his five sons, who had also been high priest for various lengths of time (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.2.1-2; 20.9.1; cf. Chilton 1992:257). Annas was the head of a dynasty, which probably accounts for John’s reference to him as high priest (vv. 15-16, 19, 22, cf. Acts 4:6), even though John is clear that Caiaphas is the one holding that office at the time (vv. 13, 24).

There seem to be both historical and theological reasons why John includes this scene of Jesus’ questioning before Annas. John

mentions “another disciple” who is “known to the high priest” (v. 15) and his household (vv. 16, 26). Whatever the nature of his familiarity with Annas, John had other contact with him later when he himself was on trial (Acts 4:6). John had to bear witness before this man, and his bearing witness is the main theme that comes through in this story.

Annas also asks Jesus about his teaching (v. 19). He seems to want Jesus to incriminate himself as a false prophet (Beasley-Murray 1987:324-25) or at least as a false teacher (Robinson 1985:259; Brown 1994:1:414). But Jesus will not be trapped in this way. Indeed, in later law it was illegal to have “an accused person convict himself” (Brown 1970:826), and this rule may have applied at this time also. Furthermore, Jesus has already completed his public teaching regarding himself (see comment on 12:34-35). Only one last statement of Jesus’ teaching remains, but that is reserved for the Gentile Pilate (18:33-37; 19:11). So Jesus tells Annas to check with those who have heard him, since he has taught quite openly (v. 20-21). In this way he heightens Annas’ anxiety. The very fact that Jesus has spoken openly and that there are plenty of people who are familiar with his teaching is what concerns Annas.

One of the *officials* (a “servant,” *hyperetes*) hits Jesus and says, *Is this the way you answer the high priest?*(v. 22). Since Jesus is still bound there is no way for him to defend himself. The more severe abuse that Jesus suffers later before the Sanhedrin (Mt 26:67-68 par. Mk 14:65 par. Lk 22:63-65) is not recounted by John. This blow was more an insult than it was physically damaging (Brown 1970: 826). It highlights Jesus’ dignity and boldness as well as his respect for the truth, rather than for mere office holders. His reply to the servant stresses this issue of truth: *If I said something wrong... testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?* This question applies to all the opposition he has experienced throughout his ministry (cf. 8:46). In essence, Jesus’ question is a final act of grace extended toward a representative of his opponents. But Annas does not accept the offer to consider the truth of Jesus. Instead he sends Jesus, still bound, to Caiaphas (v. 24). From the Synoptics it seems there was a preliminary phase in which Jesus was taken before Caiaphas and a quorum of the Sanhedrin at night (Mt 26:57-75 par. Mk 14:53-72 par. Lk 22:54-65) and then a more formal trial at dawn before the full Sanhedrin (Mt 27:1 par. Mk 15:1 par. Lk 22:66-71). John signals where all of this fits in his account

(vv. 24, 28), but he does not recount it, presumably having assumed it was familiar to his readers. In John's Gospel, therefore, this scene before Annas is the final encounter between Jesus and his Jewish opponents. A high priest, as Annas is known in this Gospel, has rejected the true high priest. From this point on, all contact between Jesus and his opponents is mediated through Pilate. Peter Denies Jesus Two More Times (18:25-27) Jesus has stood up to this powerful leader, but when John's narrative switches back to Peter at the fire we find him continuing to deny that he is a disciple of Jesus. "They said to him, 'You also are not one of his disciples are you?'" (v. 25). "They said" (*eipon*) refers either to an unspecified group or, as in the NIV, to an unspecified individual (cf. Wallace 1996:402-3). When this unspecified group or individual confronts him he denies any connection with Jesus. Then there comes a very specific accusation from a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off: *Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove?* (v. 26). Here an eyewitness testifies to what he has seen—the very thing Peter is supposed to be doing with regard to Jesus. Instead of bearing witness to Jesus, he will not even admit to being Jesus' disciple. Just then the rooster crows, bringing to fulfillment Jesus' prediction that "before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!" (13:38). John does not write of Peter's grief at this point (cf. Mt 26:75 par. Mk 14:72 par. Lk 22:62), waiting instead to recount the grief Peter experiences at his restoration later (21:17)

Denial of Discipleship by Peter: I Am Not

Peter, who expressed his unshaken faith in Jesus on behalf of the twelve during the Galilean schism (6:68-69), stumbles at his discipleship at the decisive moment of Jesus' arrest. Though the denial scene is presented in the synoptics as well, the fourth gospel accentuates the intensity of Simon Peter's denial. According to J.P. Heil, the term in 18:16 makes a glaring allusion to the sheepfold of the good shepherd (cf. 10:1,16) and "the high priest" Jesus.³ He argues that Peter stands before in contrast to Jesus who was led before Annas. This marks the beginning of the separation between Jesus and Peter. According to Heil, the other disciple in this scene functions as the good shepherd who brings the other sheep (Peter) into the flock.

In the denial scene, all four gospels disclose the allegation raised against Peter that he was *with* Jesus. (Mt 26:69- Mk 14:67; Lk 22:57).

However, the fourth evangelist uses the ablative construction. This variation denotes that the point of discussion in this scene is Peter's discipleship. An anonymous female maid (18:17) asks Peter: expecting a negative answer. Here the conjunction is noteworthy, since it can mean 'in addition to the other disciple.' If this interpretation is correct then the question includes the other disciple, even though he is not directly addressed.

Peter denies his discipleship with an emphatic existential denial, (18:17). Only the fourth evangelist uses to denote Peter's first denial.²¹ The fourth evangelist might be contrasting Peter's act and his own notion of true discipleship. The twice-repeated negative (vv. 17,25) statements stand in contrast to Jesus' twice-repeated positive statements (18:5, 8).

The evangelist is contrasting Jesus and Peter. The identity of disciples throughout the gospel, as we have seen already, is fashioned after the identity of Jesus. Peter, who fails to share in Jesus' divine identity, is out of the framework of discipleship.

K. Quast states that, unlike the synoptic gospels, Peter's denial in the fourth gospel is softened, since the verb of explicit denial is absent here.⁴ This is not true because the fourth evangelist uses the verb in the second and the third denials (18:25, 27). Moreover, the Johannine is not a soft usage when analysed in the light of the theology of the gospel. Peter's denial before the maidservant stands in sharp contrast to Jesus' powerful revelatory statement, when confronted by his armed opponents (18:5-6, 8). After the first denial, the evangelist makes a deliberate reference to Peter's locality that he was "standing with them", that is, with who arrested Jesus. In 18:5, the same expression is used to designate Judas' association with Jesus' opponents. This reference to Peter's association with the unbelievers implies that there are only two categories of people in the fourth gospel, the disciples who believe in Jesus and the unbelievers who oppose Jesus. There is no neutral position. Even the primary disciples will be counted among Jesus' enemies if he or she fails to bear witness boldly to Jesus.

The high priest questions Jesus about his disciples (18:19). It is evident that the high priest is not totally unaware of Jesus' disciples. At least the "other disciple" is known to the high priest (8:15, 16). Therefore, this question has to be interpreted in the line of typical

Johannine irony.⁵ Since the questioning takes place immediately after referring to Peter's association with the opponents, it is to be understood as an ironical question raised by the high priest with the intention of intimidating Jesus with the information that he is all alone. Moreover, through this questioning, the narrator conveys the tragic irony to the reader that none of the disciples could stand up with Jesus at the point of his death.

Unlike the synoptics, John does not describe Peter's denial uninterrupted. He inserts the trial scene in-between (18:19-24). However, the expression seems to indicate that v. 25 follows directly from v. 18. Moreover, John does not suggest the passing of time as all the synoptics do (Mt 26:73 Mk 14:70, Lk 22:58), hence he implies that all three denials occurred simultaneously.

The second question as well as the reply is a repetition of the first. However, the questioner is different, one among (compare. v. 18 and 25). This may be to indicate that not only the Jews but the whole world as well is against the disciples as Jesus prophesied earlier in the gospel (cf. 16:3-4). The description regarding the third questioner is also uniquely Johannine (18:26) and points to the eyewitness character of the description.⁶ The third question is significant: Here, the questioner doubts Peter's association with Jesus, specifically at the garden. In his reply, though not verbally presented by the evangelist, Peter denies his association with Jesus at the garden during the time of arrest. If Peter was not *with* Jesus during the arrest, it implicitly means that he claims himself to be with Jesus' opponents.

Thus, all three denial scenes are essentially related to each other. In all three denials, Peter denies his discipleship and affirms his association with Jesus' opponents. The narrative in John, unlike in the synoptics, ends abruptly without giving any reference to Peter's remorse, which according to some scholars highlights the anti-Petrine character of the fourth gospel. However, Peter's status as disciple is reinstated in Jn 21.

Trial before Pilate (18:28-19:27)

John's account of the trial before Pilate is much more extensive than the accounts in the Synoptics. The literary power is evident here as John presents seven scenes in a chiasmic pattern that alternates between the Jewish opponents on the outside and Jesus inside, with Pilate going back and forth between them:

- A Outside (18:28-32) The Jews demand Jesus' death
- B Inside (18:33-38a) Pilate questions Jesus about kingship
- C Outside (18:38b-40) Pilate finds Jesus not guilty; Barabbas choice
- D Inside (19:1-3) Soldiers scourge Jesus
- C' Outside (19:4-8) Pilate finds Jesus not guilty; "Behold the man"
- B' Inside (19:9-11) Pilate talks with Jesus about power
- A' Outside (19:12-16a) The Jews obtain Jesus' death

Inside Jesus exhibits a royal calmness while outside the opponents are greatly agitated. "Pilate must shuttle back and forth, for he is the person-in-between who does not wish to make a decision and so vainly tries to reconcile the opposing forces" (Brown 1994:1:744). Jesus is no more cowed by Pilate than he was by Annas. Just as he offered Annas a chance to accept him (v. 23), so will he confront Pilate with the claims of his identity and demand a decision.

Jesus is brought to Pilate at the praetorium (*the palace of the Roman governor*, v. 28), which was located either at the Antonia Fortress at the northwest corner of the temple or, perhaps more likely, at Herod's old palace to the west of the temple, near the Jaffa gate. The opponents bring him early in the morning, which would not have inconvenienced Pilate because it was common for Roman officials to begin work very early and complete their business by ten or eleven in the morning.

The Jewish opponents refuse to enter the praetorium *to avoid ceremonial uncleanness* (v. 28). There is no law in the Old Testament against entering a Gentile's home, but in later teaching it is laid down that "the dwelling-places of gentiles are unclean" (*m. Oholot* 18:7). The opponents sought to avoid defilement because they *wanted to be able to eat the Passover* (v. 28). Since Jesus has already eaten with his disciples a meal that the Synoptics say was the Passover (Mt 26:17 par. Mk 14:12 par. Lk 22:8; 22:15), this verse raises questions. Many interpreters argue either that John has shifted the chronology in order to have Jesus dying at the very time the Passover lambs are being sacrificed-making the point dramatically that he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (for example, Lindars 1972:444-46; Barrett 1978:48-51)-or that his chronology is historically accurate (especially Brown 1994:2:1351-73; cf. Robinson 1985:147-51) and therefore the meal he shared with his disciples was not Passover.

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Others have attempted to maintain that the meal in all four Gospels is the Passover. One solution suggests that John is referring here not to the Passover meal itself, but to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a week-long celebration that took place in conjunction with it. This longer celebration can be referred to as Passover, as it is, for example, in Luke: “Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching” (22:1; cf. Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews* 14.21).

Another solution to the discrepancy is that different calendars were followed. The main calendar used was a lunisolar calendar, but some groups, apparently including the community at Qumran, used a solar calendar of 364 days.

It has also been suggested that the slaughtering of the lambs actually took place over two days because of the volume of lambs involved. According to these solutions, Jesus has already eaten Passover, but the opponents have yet to do so. A major drawback to theories of different days for celebrating Passover is “the lack of any hint of such a distinction in the gospels themselves.”

Whatever the solution to this puzzle, the irony of the opponents’ concern is evident. They wish to remain ritually pure even while seeking to kill someone by the agency of the Romans. They avoid defilement while bringing about the death of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29), the root defilement that prevents one from intimacy with God and sharing in his life. Perhaps most ironic is the fact that their very act is a sin that defiles in this deep sense yet contributes to the cleansing of their sin and the sin of the whole world.

Long before now they had come to the conclusion that Jesus had to be eliminated (7:19-20; 8:40, 44, 59; 10:31; 11:8, 16, 50). This is still their aim, and their specific request of Pilate now becomes clear when they respond that they do not have the right to execute people (v. 31). This could refer to Old Testament prohibitions against killing (Ex 20:13), but more likely it refers to limitations imposed by the Romans. Among the Romans, “the capital power was the most jealously guarded of all the attributes of government, not even entrusted to the principal assistants of the governors.” There were occasions when Jews did put people to death through mob violence (for example the stoning of Stephen, Acts 7:58-60). And they were given permission to execute any Gentile, even a Roman, who entered the temple’s inner courts (Josephus *Jewish Wars* 5.193-94; 6.124-26). But mob violence has

not succeeded against Jesus, and his case is not one for which Rome has given permission for execution. Presumably they could request permission to kill Jesus themselves, but this would limit them to the methods of stoning, burning, beheading and strangling, at least according to later law, which may have been in effect in the first century (*m. Sanhedrin* 7:1). They seem set, however, on having Rome execute Jesus, for then it would be by crucifixion. They probably want him crucified (19:6, 15) not only because it was a particularly brutal and painful form of death, but also because it would signify that Jesus is accursed by God (Deut 21:23; cf. Gal 3:13). In John's Gospel the focus is on Jesus as the revealer of God. His opponents have rejected that claim and desire his death in order to vindicate their conclusion.

John, however, sees this desire as a fulfillment of Jesus' statement that he would die by being lifted up from the earth (v. 32; 12:32-34). Both Jewish accusers and Roman judge are actors in a drama scripted by a divine planner.

We are not told what charges the Jewish opponents brought against Jesus to induce Pilate to consider condemning him to death. Presumably the opponents translated the matter for Pilate, saying that Jesus claimed to be the king of the Jews. This was obviously a political title and had even been used of Herod the Great (Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews* 14.385; 16.311). It was a claim that Pilate would have to take seriously, especially given the revolutionary setting in Israel, in which many desired the overthrow of Rome.

Many think Pilate's question expresses incredulity: Are *you* the King of the Jews? But more likely he is simply doing his job by putting the charge to the accused, using direct questions in keeping with Roman procedure. What would he have expected to hear in response? Perhaps either cringing denial or stormy denunciations of Rome. The answer he gets is something quite different from either of these responses. Jesus neither affirms nor denies his identity as king, but he responds like a king. He speaks of his kingdom and quite calmly focuses the attention on Pilate, asking a question that tests Pilate's heart (v. 34). Pilate does not understand the full meaning of what Jesus says because he does not realize whom he is speaking with. And as he did

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with others earlier, Jesus now helps Pilate understand who he is and what he is offering.

Pilate asks what Jesus has done (v. 35). Jesus follows his common practice in this Gospel, for he does not directly address the question put to him, but in fact he gives a profound answer. Instead of speaking of what he has done he speaks of his kingdom (v. 36). This word only occurs one other place in John (3:3, 5), unlike in the Synoptics, where “kingdom” is Jesus’ major theme. In Jewish thinking “kingdom” does not refer to a territory; it is an active concept referring to rule. “Kingdom of God,” then, means God is king. In the Gospels it includes also the realm of God’s rule, in the sense not of a territory but of the community under his rule. Jesus has said a spiritual rebirth is necessary to even see the kingdom—the resources of this world are not sufficient (3:3, 5). Now Jesus continues this emphasis by saying his kingdom is *not of this world*. His kingdom is otherworldly because he himself is not of this world and neither are his followers (17:14, 16). He and his disciples have their source in God and reflect God’s own life and character.

Both the divine source and the quality of his kingdom are evident, he says, in the fact that his disciples did not *fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews* (v. 36). Peter, of course, did try to do so and was out of step with Jesus’ and the Father’s will, as Jesus told him (18:11). Jesus’ response to the opposition from the Jewish leaders had a divine source for it was determined by God’s rule. Also, his response manifested God’s characteristic gracious love. “Jesus’ kingdom is based on something other than. . . power or protection. It is based on his self-surrender, on his offering of himself for the sin of the world” (Ridderbos 1997:595).

Thus, Jesus is working on a different level, one not of this world. Instead, he focuses on Jesus’ reference to *my kingdom*. *My kingdom (he basileia he eme)* is repeated three times (one of them omitted in the NIV), and the expression *my servants* uses the same Greek construction that is used to emphasize the pronoun *my (hoi hyperetai hoi emoi)*. His kingdom is quite distinct from other kingdoms, but he does indeed have a kingdom. Pilate picks up on this emphasis and presses his earlier question, again in keeping with the Roman practice of questioning the defendant three times (Sherwin-White 1965:105), and says, *You are a king, then!* (v. 37).

The grace and humility evident in the Passion itself comes through also in the gentleness of Jesus' dealing with this Roman politician (cf. Chrysostom *In John* 84.1). Jesus replies, "You say that I am a king" (v. 37). This is often taken as an affirmative, almost as if Jesus were saying, "You said it!" This interpretation is possible; however, it is more likely that Jesus is saying, "That's your term." He is clearly claiming kingship, but he does not commit to the label of "king," probably because it is loaded with misunderstanding (6:15; cf. 1:49; 12:13). It is very much a term "of this world"! His reticence here is similar to his attitude toward other titles, such as "Messiah," elsewhere in the Gospels.

Jesus says that he came into the world not to be king of the Jews, but *to testify to the truth*. This language makes obvious the contrast between his identity and mission on the one hand and the falsehood of his opponents on the other. "He is the king of Truth, and He manifests His royal power not by force, but by the witness He bears to the Truth (3:32; 5:33; cf. 3 Jn 3)" The truth he refers to is the truth of God. By using the term "truth" rather than "God," Jesus is using language less likely to be misunderstood by Pilate.

Pilate's response, *What is truth?* (v. 38), is probably not a great philosophical remark, but a dismissal of the whole subject as irrelevant. Pilate has heard enough to determine that Jesus is not a political threat, and, therefore, he has gotten from the interview what he was after. Jesus has sown seed, but it has fallen on a beaten path. Pilate does not listen to Jesus, so, according to what Jesus has just said, he is not of the truth. The judge has been judged and found self-condemned through his response to Jesus. The Jewish opponents had come to this same place during the course of Jesus' ministry. So now both Jew and Gentile have been given a chance to respond to the one come from God, and they have rejected him. Jesus' statement that his kingdom is not of this world does not mean that it has no impact in this world. Throughout the Gospels Jesus makes it clear that his kingdom is both otherworldly in its source and quality and present here in this world. Its focal point is the body of believers, who, through their union with the Father in the Son by the Spirit, are not of this world (cf. Augustine *In John* 115.2). Because it is a kingdom, it has to do with relationships, relationships inspired by God's own presence and manifesting his characteristic love.

Pilate's use of the term *king of the Jews* (v. 39) is obviously sarcastic since he has just said Jesus poses no political threat. As is so often the case with sin, when one is succumbing to temptation one is given opportunities to come to one's senses and turn back (cf. 1 Cor 10:13; Ward 1994:44-50). Pilate's question can be seen as a chance for the opponents to renounce this determination to eliminate Jesus. But, of course, it is far too late. The Jewish opponents are rejecting Jesus precisely as their king.

So the crowd cries out again that they want Barabbas, not Jesus (v. 40). Such dispute between a crowd and a Roman governor might seem strange, but it was not that unusual. Indeed, "Roman jurists expressly warn magistrates against submitting to popular clamour" The picture of Pilate in Josephus and Philo is of a violent man who hated the Jews, which would lead one not to expect him to make any such offer to the crowd. But their picture of Pilate is probably overdrawn (cf. Brown 1994:1:693-705). Both authors, in fact, cite an instance when Pilate did give in to Jewish pressure (Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.55-59 par. Josephus *Jewish Wars* 2.169-174; Philo *Legatio ad Gaium* 302). The present occasion, of course, will play out the same way.

John describes Barabbas as a *lestes*, which means one who *had taken part in a rebellion*. There is a stark contrast between Barabbas, a violent man concerned with this world's politics, albeit religious politics, and Jesus, whose kingdom is not of this world, though it is active in this world. There is also irony in the name Barabbas itself, since it means "son of Abba"-the word Abba, "father," was used as a proper name (Brown 1994:1:799-800), but, especially in John's Gospel, Jesus is known as the Son of the Father. The crowd was choosing between two different approaches to liberation as represented by two men identified, in different ways, as "son of Abba." Here is the deceptiveness of sin that has been evident since the Garden of Eden. There is a path that looks right and seems to be of God, yet it is actually against him and his ways. The people choose their own path of liberation rather than God's, and they therefore choose "not the Savior, but the murderer; not the Giver of life, but the destroyer" (Augustine *In John* 116.1). Every time we choose sin we do the same, whether the sin is blatant or deceptive.

Pilate has rejected Jesus, his otherworldly kingdom and the truth, so he is left responding to the demands of the pressures of this world. He does not like the alternatives offered him by either Jesus or the opponents, but he is being forced to decide. Here is a picture of John's dualism, indeed, the dualism found throughout the Scriptures. God and Satan are both putting pressure on. Both desire us, though for very different purposes.

Assault by the Soldiers

Pilate turns Jesus over to the soldiers to be *flogged* (v. 1). In other Gospel accounts Jesus is flogged right before he is handed over for crucifixion (Mt 27:26 par. Mk 15:15), whereas here Pilate will make another effort to get Jesus released before he is eventually handed over (v. 16). Luke, like John, mentions several efforts made by Pilate to release Jesus (Lk 23:13-22), but Luke does not refer to the flogging itself, beyond Pilate's threat to punish Jesus (Lk 23:16, 22). Some think that Jesus was flogged once and that John has separated that event from the handing over, but more likely there were two floggings. The Romans had several degrees of punishment (Brown 1994:1:851-52), with the lightest form being a beating that was both a punishment and a warning. The more severe forms were used in interrogations to extract information from people or in connection with other punishments. Since the punishment at this point in John's account was neither of these severe forms, the reference would fit the lighter form better. Pilate, who considers Jesus innocent, may have wanted to satisfy Jesus' opponents with this relatively light punishment. The later flogging, referred to by Matthew and Mark in connection with the sentence of crucifixion, would have been the more severe form. This type of flogging employed a whip made of leather thongs with pieces of bone or lead attached, which chewed up the flesh. Such flogging could itself result in death. Jesus' own flogging, while brutal and inflicting great suffering, was not carried out to this extreme, since he did not die from it. Indeed, Pilate was surprised he died so quickly on the cross (Mk 15:44; cf. Blinzler 1959:226). Pilate, however, did not know the whole story, for he did not know of the spiritual wounds Jesus suffered as he took away the sin of the world (1:29), being "pierced for our transgressions" and "crushed for our iniquities" (Is 53:5).

In addition to beating Jesus, as ordered by Pilate, the soldiers mocked him. The *crown of thorns* (v. 2) was most likely made from the date palm (Hart 1952), the same plant that had supplied the fronds laid on Jesus' path as he entered Jerusalem a short time before (12:13). The spikes on this plant can reach twelve inches long and were notorious for inflicting pain (cf. *Midrash Rabbah* on Num 3:1). Such long spikes would give the effect of a starburst around Jesus' head, in imitation of the likeness of deified rulers on coins of the period and much earlier. (H. Hart's article includes photos of such coins and the spikes from a date palm.) The *purple robe* (v. 2) and the greeting "*Hail, king of the Jews!*" (v. 3) - an imitation of the greeting to Caesar, "Ave, Caesar"- furthered the sick entertainment. As they lined up and came forward to greet him, instead of giving him the kiss of greeting, they *struck him in the face* (v. 3).

This scene presents a powerful picture of Christ's glory, since this caricature of Christian worship, as E. C. Hoskyns calls it, actually speaks of Jesus' true identity as King of the Jews and, indeed, Lord of all. But throughout the story we have seen the chief characteristic of the glory of God revealed in Jesus to be his love. Jesus really is a king beyond the wildest imaginings of these soldiers. When we realize the power Jesus had we understand more of his humility and see God's brilliant glory. "Thus the kingdom which was not of this world overcame that proud world, not by the ferocity of fighting, but by the humility of suffering" (Augustine *In John* 116.1). Pilate Again Declares Jesus Innocent (19:4-8) This second declaration of Jesus' innocence forms the fifth section of the chiasm (see introduction to 18:28-19:16), corresponding to the third section in which Pilate went out to the Jewish opponents and said he found no basis for a charge against Jesus (18:38b-40). This time he brings Jesus out with him- Jesus wearing the mocking signs of kingship and bearing the marks of the violence done against him. This very presentation of Jesus, with Pilate's dramatic words, *Here is the man!* (v. 5), could itself be a continuation of the mockery, as though Jesus is coming forth to be presented to his subjects as on some state occasion. But while Pilate is mocking Jesus and his fellow Jews he is also making the point that there is *no basis for a charge against* such a figure. Jesus may be dressed up as a king and a god, but in Pilate's eyes he is only a man.

Once again we have an "unconscious prophet" (Westcott 1908:2:299), like Caiaphas (11:49-52) or the centurion in Mark's

Gospel (Mk 15:39; cf. Bruce 1983:359). Several proposals have been made for the significance of Pilate's calling Jesus *the man*. One of the more likely proposals is Jesus' identity as the Son of Man, since Jesus had said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM" (8:28). Another possibility is an emphasis on Jesus' humanity: Jesus is indeed *man* (*anthropos*), for the Word became flesh (1:14). Since the real reason his opponents are against him is his claim to deity (19:7), we would have in Pilate's phrase references to both the humanity and the deity of Jesus. John may also see here allusions to Jesus as the last Adam, to use Paul's language (1 Cor 15:45), in keeping with similar possible allusions through the motif of the Garden (see comment on 18:1). This association with Adam is true, but since John does not make an explicit reference to him, we can't be sure he had it in mind here.

Now the Jews accuses that *Jesus claimed to be the Son of God* (v. 7). This was the charge that was brought against Jesus at the trial before Caiaphas, though not recorded by John (Mt 26:63-66 par. Mk 14:61-64 par. Lk 22:67-71). The law they seem to have in mind says "anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD must be put to death" (Lev 24:16). Later in the Mishnah blasphemy refers to pronouncing the divine name (*m. Sanhedrin* 7:5), but the concept was broader in the first century (cf. Robinson 1985:263). The claim to be a "son of God" is not necessarily a blasphemous claim to deity since the phrase was used in the Old Testament to describe beings other than God, in particular heavenly beings (Gen 6:2; Ps 29:1, obscured in the NIV) and the king of Israel (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; 89:26-27; cf. Wülfing von Martitz et al. 1972:347-53). Since "son of God" was used of the king, the opponents are not now shifting away from the charge that Jesus claims to be king, as seen in their repetition of this charge later (v. 12). Rather, they are helping Pilate understand that there is a religious as well as a political dimension to the kingship of Jesus, and the religious aspect is the crucial one. Throughout the Gospel they have rejected Jesus' claims to a special relationship with God, and they have already threatened his life because of such claims (5:18; 8:58-59; 10:33, 36). It is his claim to be God's Son in a special sense that constitutes the blasphemy (10:36).

Jesus does not speak about his origin to Pilate. According to the Synoptics, Jesus has been silent already during his Passion, both before Pilate, when the chief priests and elders were accusing him (Mt 27:12-

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14 par. Mk 15:3-5), and before Herod, with the same opponents accusing him (Lk 23:9-10). Now he is also silent before Pilate in private (Jn 19:9). His silence echoes the silence of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (53:7; cf. Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 2:22-23). He is silent, it seems, because Pilate has already revealed that he is not a man of truth and thus would not benefit from an answer to his question (see comment on 12:34-36).

Pilate has been exasperated by the Jewish leaders, and now he finds Jesus exasperating also. No one is cooperating with him! He threatens Jesus by referring to his power, though his threat comes across as a little lame given his obvious lack of power over the Jewish leaders: *Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?* (v. 10). In Roman law it was said, "No one who has power to condemn is without power to acquit" (Justinian *Digest of Roman Law* 50.17.37; cf. Bruce 1983:361-62). Pilate had a clear understanding of his legal power, that is, his authority (*exousia*). But he is thinking only in terms of this world.

Often in this Gospel we see people who are mistaken about Jesus and his teaching because they are viewing reality solely in this-worldly categories, for example, the woman of Samaria (chap. 4). Jesus has used their misunderstandings to help these people come to a better view of reality, and that is what he now does with Pilate also: *You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above* (v. 11). Pilate well understands that his power is dependent on the one who is over him, the emperor. He could understand Jesus to be saying nothing more than this. But now that Pilate realizes Jesus is claiming to be a son of God he has a chance to interpret Jesus correctly, to understand that God is the source of this power. Indeed, Jesus' reference to *from above* gives Pilate a hint as to the answer to his question of where Jesus is from (cf. 3:31; 8:23). Thus this is a saying that tests Pilate's heart. Will he hear it correctly?

There are further hints as well about Jesus and his Father. The word for *power* (*exousia*) is in the feminine, whereas the verb *it were... given* (*en dedomenon*) is in the neuter and thus refers to more than just the power: "You would not have any power over me if something had not been given to you from above." In other words, this expression puts all the emphasis on the verbal idea of giving, a reference to the Father who is the source of all-the one who gives. Jesus' point is that Pilate, like all of us, is a recipient. So Jesus is

saying, in part, that the power of government has been given by God (3:27; Rom 13:1-7). Jesus speaks for this God upon whom Pilate himself is dependent, thereby further hinting as to his identity and the character of his Father.

In addition to making this general point, Jesus also refers specifically to the power Pilate has *over me*. No one has power over Jesus except the Father. And, in particular, no one takes Jesus' life from him, but rather he lays it down of his own accord in obedience to his Father (10:17-18). Here is yet another hint for Pilate: he may have power over everyone else in Israel, but not over Jesus. If Pilate realized who was standing before him, he would have a chance of making sense out of this situation and much more.

Pilate and the Jewish Opponents Reject Jesus as King (19:12-16) This final section of the chiastic account of the trial before Pilate corresponds with the first section (18:29-32), in which Pilate was also outside the praetorium and the opponents called for Jesus' death. Jesus has just borne witness to the truth about himself, his Father, Pilate and the opponents. He has made Pilate even more uncomfortable, so Pilate begins to make further efforts to release him (v. 12; *ezetei, tried*, is in the imperfect tense, here signifying repeated action). The Jewish leaders counter these efforts with a decisive move—they bring in the issue of Pilate's loyalty to Caesar (v. 12). A later emperor, Vespasian (A.D. 69-79), had a specific group of people whose loyalty and importance were recognized by the title *friend of Caesar*. It is possible that Tiberius also had such a group and Pilate was a member (Bammel 1952), though this is uncertain. In either case, the threat is to Pilate's position, and this settles the issue. Pilate has already revealed that he is a man of this world, insensitive to the truth of God. A threat to his political position is an attack upon the heart of what he knows and cares about. Such a choice between Jesus and other ultimate concerns in our lives faces each of us, for Jesus really is King and insists on complete loyalty as strongly as Tiberius. Pilate is faced with a choice of kings, and he does not choose wisely.

It is, of course, highly ironic that Pilate's loyalty to Caesar should be threatened by Jews, members of the most disloyal and unruly section of the empire. Pilate is being humiliated by them. He knows he must give in to their wishes, but he is wily enough to humiliate

them also in the process. Upon hearing their threat, he brings Jesus out and sits on the judge's seat (*bema*) to pass judgment. This is the climax of the trial and, indeed, of the ministry of Jesus.

John underscores the importance of this moment by specifying the place and time, though, unfortunately, the precise meaning of both is uncertain today. The place where the trial before Pilate occurred is uncertain, and the addition of the term *Gabbatha* does not help. This Aramaic word does not mean *Stone Pavement* but is a different word for the same place, probably meaning something like "elevated." The location would have been well known in the first century because it was the place of judgment.

The reference to *the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour* (v. 14) is problematic when compared to the Synoptics. If *Passover* (*pascha*) refers to the Passover meal itself, then John has the trial and the crucifixion happening a day earlier than the Synoptics do (see comment on 18:28). This would mean that this dramatic point before Pilate's *bema* occurs just as the lambs are beginning to be slaughtered in the temple. Jesus' death then took place while they were continuing to be killed.

The *sixth hour* would be noon, which seems to conflict with Mark's statement that Jesus was crucified at the third hour, that is, 9 a.m. (Mk 15:25). Again there is a division of opinion, with some assuming the two accounts simply contradict one another (Robinson 1985:268), perhaps due to a corruption in the text (Alford 1980:897-98; Barrett 1978:545) or because both John and Mark cite an hour that has symbolic significance for them (Barrett 1978:545; Brown 1994:1:847). Others think the imprecision of telling time in the ancient world accounts for the discrepancy (Augustine *In John* 117.1; Morris 1971:800-801).

The Jewish opponents have trapped Pilate, and now he springs on them a trap of his own. When they once more reject Jesus as their king and call for his crucifixion, Pilate replies, *Shall I crucify your king?* (v. 15). What they should have said in return was, "We have no king but God," but in order to force Pilate's hand with their threat regarding his loyalty to Caesar the chief priests instead say, *We have no king but Caesar* (v. 15). Like Pilate, they are forced to choose which king they will serve, and they also fail to choose wisely. Here are the spiritual leaders of Israel denying the very faith they are

claiming to uphold in their rejection of Jesus. God alone was Israel's king (Judg 8:23; 1 Sam 8:4-20). The human king was to be in submission to God as a son is to his father (2 Sam 7:11-16; Ps 2:7). These ancient attitudes found expression in one of the prayers these chief priests prayed every day: "May you be our King, you alone." Every year at this very feast of Passover they sang, "From everlasting to everlasting you are God; beside you we have no king, redeemer, or savior, no liberator, deliverer, provider, none who takes pity in every time of distress and trouble; we have no king but you" (Talbert 1992:241). The hope was for a redeemer to come, the Messiah, who would be a king like David. "But now hundreds of years of waiting had been cast aside: `the Jews' had proclaimed the half-mad exile of Capri to be their king." These opponents stand self-condemned.

Pilate then hands Jesus over to them to crucify (v. 16). They themselves did not carry out the crucifixion, but this way of putting it completes the cycle of guilt. They had handed Jesus over to Pilate, and now he hands Jesus over to them. Both Jew and Gentile have rejected Jesus, and the way is now prepared for the ultimate revelation of the glory of God. This rejection of the Son of God is the essence of sin, and Jesus will now die to take away the sin of the world.

Death of the Messiah (19:17-37)

Jesus is led to the place of crucifixion and nailed to the cross (vv. 16-18). While his enemies continue to squabble with one another (vv. 19-22) and divide his clothes (vv. 23-24), Jesus himself continues to love his followers and direct their own sharing in his love (vv. 25-27). Then he dies (vv. 28-30). Jesus Is Hung on the Cross (19:16-18) John's description of the actual crucifixion is amazingly brief. People in the ancient world would not need a description, since such executions were not rare. Although crucifixion could take a variety of forms, it was common to have the victim carry the crossbeam to the place of crucifixion where the upright was already in place. Occasionally the victim was tied to the crossbeam with leather thongs, but most often nails were used, as in the case of Jesus. The nails were five to seven inches long and were driven through the feet and wrists, not the hands. Crosses in the shape of an X or a T were used, but since the title was attached over Jesus' head (Mt 27:37) we know the style used for Jesus' cross was the shape we usually imagine, a t, which was also a common form. The person was laid on the ground

and nailed to the crosspiece, which was then hoisted into place. Often the person was only a short distance off the ground, though the fact that a stick was needed in order to offer Jesus a drink (v. 29) suggests his head was higher than arm's length above the people on the ground. The nail wounds would cause a great deal of bleeding, but death often took place through suffocation. A little seat rest was attached to allow the person to maintain a position in which it was possible to breathe, thus prolonging the agony.

It is not known why the place was called Skull (v. 17; *calvaria* in Latin, hence the name Calvary), but the fact that Joseph had a tomb close by suggests this was not a place of public execution. The notion that the landscape had the appearance of a skull is possible, as evidenced by the hill near Gordon's Calvary today, though the shape of this particular hill is more recent than the first century.

John mentions the other two victims crucified with Jesus (v. 18), but he does not describe them as fully as the Synoptic writers do. John also leaves out mention of Simon of Cyrene helping carry Jesus' cross. This comparison with the other Gospels helps us appreciate how John's account is very focused, very spare. In what follows he will not dwell on Jesus' own agony, except for his thirst just before his death (v. 28). Instead, John describes the activity swirling around Jesus, showing how it all relates to the glory. While John directs our attention to various people around the cross, we must not lose sight of the one on the cross. That which is not described is actually what dominates the scene. Pilate and the Jewish Leaders Fight over the Title (19:19-22) It was common practice to have those sentenced to crucifixion carry signs indicating the cause of their punishment or to have others carry the signs for the accused. The title Pilate has written, *JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS* (v. 19), continues to goad the Jewish leaders, as their reaction demonstrates (v. 21). They insist that he change it, but for the first time he stands firm against them. Now that their threat against him has passed he can afford to be strong (cf. Westcott 1908:2:310), which only serves to portray his pathetic weakness all the more clearly. His famous line-*What I have written, I have written* (v. 22)-sounds, in the context, merely petulant and childish.

Pilate earlier announced Jesus as "the man" (v. 5) and as "your king" (v. 14), and now he combines these themes in the title for Jesus'

cross. Designating Jesus as being from Nazareth focuses on his humble humanity, while giving him the title of king speaks of his grandeur (see comment on 18:5-6). It was written in the three major languages of the region and read by *many of the Jews* since it was *near the city* (v. 20). The Romans did what they could to make crucifixions gruesome and public for the purpose of deterrence. But John seems to suggest this title over the cross was itself a form of witness to Israel and the world. Pilate unwittingly made such a proclamation, of course, as was the case with his having chosen the title itself. Such features fit with John's theme that all is working out according to God's will, even despite some of the participants. Indeed, "the two men who were most responsible for the death of Jesus became the unwitting prophets of the death of Jesus: the one declaring it as the means of redemption for Israel and the nations (11:49-50) the other proclaiming it the occasion of his exaltation to be King of Israel and Lord of all."

So here we have another irony: the man who does not have a clue about the truth (18:38) proclaims, unwittingly, the truth about Jesus. And we have the tragedy of the representatives of the one true God, who should have recognized the truth, continuing to reject it. The Soldiers Divide Jesus' Clothes (19:23-24) Normally the victim would be led naked to the place of crucifixion. The fact that Jesus' clothes were not taken from him until the point of crucifixion may suggest that he was allowed to retain some form of covering while on the cross itself (Brown 1994:2:953), perhaps out of deference to Jewish objections to nudity. Since, however, the normal undergarment was either a tunic or a loincloth, and Jesus' tunic was taken from him (v. 23; Brown 1970:902), it is perhaps more likely he was naked. Early Christian tradition is divided on the subject (cf. Brown 1994:2:953).

It is this *undergarment* (*chiton*, the garment worn next to the skin) that is of most interest to John. It is seamless, and therefore to prevent its being torn the soldiers decide to draw lots for it (v. 24). The fact that it is seamless probably does not indicate that it was unusual or an item of luxury. John's focus on this feature has led many to find symbolism in this garment. The two main proposals for John's detail have been that it is a symbol either of Jesus as high priest, since the high priest's *chiton* was seamless, according to Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews* 3.161), or of the unity of the church

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(Cyprian *On the Unity of the Church* 7), that is, the community as brought together by the death of Christ.

Such thoughts are true and edifying, but they are not John's primary focus. The significance of the garment's being seamless is that the soldiers are led to draw of lots for it, which in turn echoes Psalm 22:18 (v. 24). This is the first of four Old Testament passages cited as being fulfilled in Jesus' Passion, all of which refer to particular details of what takes place (vv. 28, 36-37). John marshals these texts around this most central, and most scandalous, event in order to show that the death of God's Son was in fact the will of God the Father. Behind the idea of fulfillment is the notion of God's sovereign control, which weaves repeating patterns: Scripture expresses God's will, and Jesus is submissive to God's will, so his activity fulfills the Scripture because it flows from the same source and is controlled by the same Father.

Psalm 22 is a psalm of King David in his role as a righteous sufferer. The title above Jesus' head is proclaiming him to be king of the Jews, and John sees Jesus as replicating a pattern of the greatest king in Israel's past. Thus, this reference is not a gratuitous proof text, but a link with a type. Fulfillment of Scripture, in this sense, is the replication of a pattern, and Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment, the center of all the patterns. The Synoptics also allude to this connection regarding the garments (Mt 27:35 par. Mk 15:24 par. Lk 23:34) as well as the connection through Jesus' cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" (Mt 27:46 par. Mk 15:34), which is Psalm 22:1. The figure of the righteous king who suffers is embodied in Jesus par excellence. If the opponents understood King David better they might have recognized King Jesus.

Mother and the Beloved Disciple

In what follows, Jesus cares for His Mother and the Beloved Disciple (19:25-27). John now turns to another distinct group at the cross (*men... de*, vv. 24-25), namely those who are there out of love for Jesus. It was not unheard of for friends and relatives to be near the one crucified or for enemies to come to jeer (cf. *t. Gittin* 7:1, 330; *y. Gittin* 7; 48c; 39;b. *Baba Metzia* 83b). Mark tells us there was quite a crowd of women present (15:41), but John focuses on a handful near the cross. The list of women most likely refers to four individuals. Mark, in his Gospel, lists three women in particular who were present, "Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the

younger and of James, and Salome" (15:40). It has been assumed from early times that the mother of James and Joseph is the one referred to in John as *Mary the wife of Clopas*. Salome is further identified with the mother of the sons of Zebedee, as mentioned in Matthew's account (27:56). It is striking to notice that the sister of the mother of Jesus is Mary the wife of Clopas and she is the mother of James and Joseph mentioned in Mk 15:40.

With these supporters standing near him, Jesus focuses on his mother and the Beloved Disciple (vv. 26-27). Jesus says to his mother, "Woman, behold your son," and to the Beloved Disciple, "Behold your mother." Similar language was used in connection with betrothal (Tobit 7:12) and thus seems to signal some change of relationship. Jesus' mother is now brought under the care of the Beloved Disciple (v. 27). In this Gospel there is a symbolic role for both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple, for they are both examples of true discipleship. So in changing the relationship they have to one another, Jesus is completing the formation of the community gathered around him—gathered around him precisely as he is on the cross. The new community is now seen to be a new family (cf. 20:17).

A great deal has been made of this text. Many have understood Jesus' mother to be a symbol of Eve, the mother of the living, or a symbol of the church. Quite often it has been assumed that the disciple is given into the care of the mother, which has contributed to the development of views regarding Mary's role in the lives of Christians, who are symbolized by the Beloved Disciple. Such symbolism is a further development of John's own focus, which is on the new family formed among the disciples of Jesus, with the Beloved Disciple, who is the witness to Jesus par excellence, as the one exercising care. The mother and the Beloved Disciple together symbolize the new community.

Here at the very end we see Jesus still exercising love and care (cf. 13:1). This loving concern is the glory that his death itself reveals most powerfully, since love is the laying down of one's life (cf. 1 Jn 3:16). In the course of his ministry Jesus was forming a new community around himself, and in the farewell discourse (13:31-17:26) he described how that community is to share in his own relation with the Father and to participate in the divine life, which is characterized by love. Now he has completed the formation of this community, at least for the stage prior to the sending of the Spirit and his own dwelling

with them in a new way. This community is the fruit of his death, for it will be the locus of the divine life on earth. The divine life is characterized by love and therefore requires a community to express itself. The life of the community derives from Jesus' own giving of himself, and in turn such self-giving is to typify the community itself. Jesus' death is both a revelation of the love of God and an example of such self-giving love. Such love is only really possible when sin has been taken away, since the essence of sin is a false self-love that prevents one from sharing in the life of God, which is love. Jesus Dies (19:28-30) The significance of the formation of the community that has just taken place is further underscored when John says Jesus knows *that all was now completed* (v. 28). This is what he came to do-to form a community that can share in his own relation with the Father. With the work completed he can now finalize the completion through his death, so he says, *I am thirsty* (v. 28). John notes he said this in order to fulfill the Scripture-not that he was consciously thinking of texts and doing things to echo them, but rather that Scripture reveals God's will and Jesus perfectly accomplishes God's will (see comment on v. 24). The text he echoes (Ps 69:21) is another passage featuring King David as the righteous sufferer, and thus bears witness to Jesus' identity.

John shifts from *pleroo*, the word usually used to speak of the fulfillment of Scripture, to *teleioo*, the same word in the first part of the verse, there translated *completed*, and in Jesus' final cry, *It is finished* (v. 30). Jesus' own life, including his death and resurrection, is the primal pattern that Scripture itself replicates. He is the sun whose rays create shadows both backward and forward in time. Accordingly, he not only fulfills Scripture in the sense of replicating its patterns, he brings Scripture itself to completion by being its central referent.

John does not say who soaked a sponge in some cheap wine and lifted it to Jesus' lips with a stalk of hyssop (v. 29). The Synoptics also leave this indefinite, but they say a *kalamos* was used (Mt 27:48 par. Mk 15:36), that is, a reed, a staff or a stalk. Perhaps John has referred specifically to a hyssop stalk to interpret what is taking place, since hyssop was used to sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the doorposts just before the Exodus (Ex 12:22) and later was used for other purifying rites (Lev 14:4, 6; Num 19:18; Ps 51:7). John would be drawing out the juxtaposition of Jesus as king and Jesus as lamb, similar to the description in heaven of the Lion of the tribe of Judah

who turns out to be “a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain” (Rev 5:5-6).

There seems to be something particularly significant about Jesus’ thirst, since once Jesus receives the wine he says, *It is finished*, and dies (v. 30). On one level this thirst is the only reference in this Gospel to Jesus’ actual physical suffering on the cross. But the idea of thirst may also have spiritual significance. Earlier Jesus had said, “My food ... is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish (*teleioo*) his work” (4:34). And when he was arrested he told Peter to put his sword away, saying, “Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?” (18:11). “Hunger and thirst become images for Jesus’ desire to fulfill the Father’s will to the end”. Since the cup represents wrath and suffering, Jesus’ taking of this drink may suggest the completion of that experience, as the Lamb of God now takes away the sin of the world. The work he has come to do is now complete. The great significance John attaches to the saying *I am thirsty* would then make sense because it would symbolize both Jesus’ commitment to obey God’s will and the fulfillment of the suffering of the one who is the righteous sufferer par excellence.

Jesus had said that no one takes his life from him but that he lays it down of his own accord (10:18), and his death is indeed described as a voluntary act: *he bowed his head and gave up his spirit* (v. 30). The order of Jesus’ actions is important (Chrysostom *In John* 85.3). John does not say that Jesus died and then his head slumped over, but rather that he bowed his head, an attitude of submission, and then gave over (*paredoken*) his spirit. “At his own free will, he with a word dismissed from him his spirit, anticipating the executioner’s work” (Tertullian *Apology* 21). The very form of his death continues to reveal him as the obedient Son, the key theme regarding his identity throughout his ministry. As the obedient Son, submissive to the Father, he fulfills the type of the true King, confirming the message of the sign over his head.

The Blood and Water (19:34-37): Witnessing New Life

One of the soldiers and the beloved disciple are the characters in 19:34-37. The flowing of the blood and water is the central event of the scene.⁷ This is often interpreted as: (i) referring to the sacraments of Eucharist and baptism,⁸ (ii) an anti-Docetic apology, or (iii) a typical Johannine *sign*. In order to reach a concrete conclusion we have to interpret the expression *blood and water* within the entire context

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of the fourth gospel. The word *water*, which is used 22 times in the gospel, has an explicit allusion to baptism and Holy Spirit. The water symbolism in the fourth gospel, as we have discussed earlier, maintains an obvious hint to the birth of the believers in the Spirit. The reference to “rivers of living water” flowing from the heart of the believers in Jn 7:37-38 accentuates this fact. The word *blood* is used six times in the gospel (1:13; 6:53-56; 19:34). The four-fold reference in Jn 6 refers to the person of Jesus. As we have seen before, 1:13 refers to the birth of the believers. Unfortunately, the reference to *blood* in Jn 1:13, in the sense of the birth of the believers, is never made use of in interpreting Jn 19:34. Therefore, we argue that Jn 1:13 also must be taken into consideration while interpreting *blood* in 19:34. The birth of the believers is not from human blood (1:13), but by the life-giving blood of Jesus (19:34). Hence, we believe that the birth of the believers as well is intended in Jn 19:34. Besides, the two messianic functions of forgiving the sins and providing eternal life by giving the Spirit are fulfilled in 19:34. Because the blood refers to the forgiving of sins (cf. 1:29- “Lamb of God who takes away the sin” is referred to (at least implicitly) in 19:36 – “No bone of it shall be broken”) and the water symbolises the new life in the Spirit.

On the basis of these observations, we argue that there is a double entendre of revelation in Jn 19:34-37. On the one hand, the identity of Jesus as the Messiah (= Son of God - cf. 20:31) is disclosed while on the other hand the identity of the believers as those who receive the new life in the Spirit through the life-giving death of Jesus is revealed. Thus the symbolism of blood and water obviously reveals the true identity of Jesus as well as that of the believers.

Sabbe interprets this scene as a Johannine redaction of the centurion’s confession in Mk 15:39:⁹ According to this interpretation, the one who saw and the one who knew are two different persons. Based on the parallelism between 19:35 and 21:24, Sabbe concludes that the one who saw in 19:35 is the beloved disciple. Therefore, one can interpret the text as: *the soldier witnessed the flowing of blood and water; another one (the beloved disciple) knows that he (the soldier) tells the truth that you also may believe*. This interpretation is not implausible, because flowing of the blood and water symbolises the outpouring of the Spirit, which is a messianic act that reveals Jesus’ divinity. Hence the flowing of the blood and water according to Johannine theology could be interpreted as a proof for Jesus’ divine Sonship. Consequently the witnessing of the centurion in the synoptic

tradition and the soldier in the Johannine tradition are not irreconcilably different. The Gentile soldier and the beloved disciple become powerful paradigms of discipleship through their witnessing. The witnessing of the beloved disciple is further attested to through the witnessing of the scripture (v. 36).

We prefer to interpret Jn 19:34-35 as a continuation of the family of believers created in Jn 19:26-27. By including the gentile soldier, who can be deemed as the representative of the gentile world, the family created at the foot of the cross with Jesus' mother and the beloved disciple, is now extended, so as to incorporate the gentiles as well. The fundamental characteristic of the members of this family is that they bear witness to the supreme reality of Jesus' life-giving death and resurrection. And in doing so, they receive life. The evangelist discloses the identity of disciples, i.e., the members of the family of believers, as those who maintain unshaken faith in Jesus' divinity even at the darkest moments of life as the mother of Jesus, the soldier and the beloved disciple did.

The Burial Scene (19:38-42)

As noted earlier, the burial scene as well is presented as a scene of powerful witnessing by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, of whom the former is specifically called a disciple of Jesus. The impact of their witnessing is highlighted with a reference to the former's past history of secret discipleship due to the fear of the Jews. The inclusion of Nicodemus in the burial scene cannot be interpreted as an evidence for unbelief. The abundance of spices they used to anoint Jesus points toward their correct understanding of Jesus' true identity. Throughout the passion narrative Jesus' identity as king is asserted. The burial scene with the abundant spices becomes a logical conclusion for this theme. The binding of Jesus' body is often argued to be a proof to underscore the unbelief of Joseph and Nicodemus. Against this view, from a narrative point of view, we can reasonably argue that for a reader who is familiar with Jn 11:44, the binding and linen clothes are no more symbols of death but resurrection. Thus, Nicodemus and Joseph's act of burying the body must be interpreted as an act of faith in Jesus' resurrection. The omission of the lamenting women from the parallel synoptic account accentuates the importance given to these two disciples. They are portrayed as more faithful than those disciples who were constantly with him (i.e., the twelve). The evangelist once again highlights the theme that the test of discipleship is not the constant physical acquaintance

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with Jesus, but to bear witness to Jesus at decisive moments even risking one's own life.

Thus, the evangelist continues to unfold the inevitable character of witnessing in being Jesus' disciples. Any one who fails to witness to Jesus "due to the fear of the Jews" cannot inherit the gift of Jesus' death and resurrection.¹⁰ The phrase due to the fear of the Jews appears again in Jn 20:19 to describe the mental condition of the disciples. Jesus by his appearance led them out of this fear. The message to the reader is directly evident: if one wants to be called Jesus' disciple, one must get rid of the fear of 'the Jews' and witness daringly to Jesus. He invites the secret believers to make public their confession of faith in Jesus.

Notes

¹ BROWN, *John*, II, 912.

² Adapted from *Bible Gate Way Commentary*

³ HEIL, *Blood and Water*, 32. Nonetheless, the allusion to Jesus as the high priest in this scene is not convincing.

⁴ QUAUST, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple*, 73.

⁵ See HEIL, *Blood and Water*, 35.

⁶ See BROWN, *John*, II, 828.

⁷ For a critical study of this text, see G. VAN BELLE, "Bloed en Water" in *Joh 19,34*, in J. HAERS, T. MERRIGAN & P. DE MEY (eds.), *Volk van God en gemeenschap van de Gelovigen: Pleidooien voor een zorgzame kerkgemeenschap*, FS R. Michiels, Averbode, Uitgeverij Averbode, 1999, 89-112. Against the source critical disputes regarding Jn 19:34-35, Van Belle argues that Jn 19:31-37 is written by a single author; hence it does not have any possible pre-Johannine stage.

⁸ BULTMANN, *Johannes*, 525-526, argues that this is a redaction by the ecclesiastic editor. For the sacramental allusion of the passage, see also LOISY, *Jean*, 490-495; MOLONEY, *When Is John Speaking about Sacraments?*, in *ABR* 30 (1982) 10-32; SCHNELLE, *Antidoketische Christologie*, 229. SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, III, 334, considers Jn 19:34 is from a pre-Johannine source. DAUER, *Passionsgeschichte*, 331-332, also deem that Jn 19:34b-35 is from *Traditionsbericht*.

⁹ SABBE, *The Johannine Account of the Death of Jesus*, 48-49. The Markan allusion of Jn 19:34-35 has already been hinted by J.R. MICHAELS, *The Centurion's Confession and the Spear Thrust*, in *CBQ* 29 (1967) 102-109; THYEN, *Johannes und die Synoptiker*, 101-104. BOISMARD, *Jean*, 451, also observes that the synoptic tradition of the centurion who confesses Jesus as the Son of God might have influenced the redaction of Jean II-A.

¹⁰ KEENER, *John*, II, 1161, observes that the life of those who officially ask the governor for the body of someone who was executed for treason against Rome is at risk.

Resurrection: We Have Seen the Lord (20:1-29)

Very often the tension between the Beloved Disciple and Peter is highlighted in this scene. But this popular understanding is not supported by the text, for “in no place is Peter criticized or devalued”

Mary Magdalene and Two Disciples Visit the Tomb

Tomb: While there were a few different kinds of tombs in use at this period (cf. Meyers 1976:906-8), the details provided here (vv. 5-7) help indicate the type in which Jesus was buried. Most likely it had a low entrance and a step down into the central, rectangular pit, with shelves cut into the rock around the pit (see diagram in R. H. Smith 1976:414). If Jesus had been laid on the shelf either to the right or left of the entrance, then only part of the grave clothes would be visible from the entrance. If he had been positioned with his head toward the entrance wall, this would explain why the cloth for Jesus’ head was not noticed until they actually entered the tomb.

Grave Clothes: The evangelist pays great attention to the grave clothes. The *strips of linen* (vv. 5-6; *othonia*) were the covering for the body, whether they consisted of strips, or a shroud (see comment on 19:40) or both. Since Jesus' resurrected body was able to appear in a locked room (v. 19), it seems he simply passed through the grave clothes. With the body gone, the clothes were presumably collapsed, though perhaps retaining much of their shape due to the spices. The cloth for Jesus' head (*soudarion*) was either a face covering or a cloth tied around Jesus' face to hold his jaw in place (see comment on 11:44). If the latter, then perhaps John's description indicates the cloth was lying in place, still in the oval shape it had when around Jesus' head. Or it could be John means this cloth, however it had been used, was in a separate place, rolled or wrapped up (v.7, *entetyligmenon*). Jesus' body passed through the grave clothes, presumably including the *soudarion*, so the fact that the *soudarion* was rolled up suggests Jesus tidied up before leaving! "There were no traces of haste. The deserted tomb bore the marks of perfect calm" (Westcott 1908:2:340). The royal calmness of Jesus throughout his Passion is also hinted at here in his resurrection.

When the Beloved Disciple entered, *he saw and believed* (v.8). What is this faith, since the next verse says *they still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead* (v.9)?

Angelophany: Often in Scripture the person who encounters an angel is struck with terror. But if Mary felt such a reaction, John does not mention it. Indeed, there is no indication that she even recognizes them as angels, presumably due to is the depth of her grief. The angels speak to her with great compassion: *Woman, why are you crying?* (v. 13). This is in striking contrast with the angels' triumphant announcement of the resurrection recorded in the Synoptics (Mt 28:5-7 par. Mk 16:6-7 par. Lk 24:5-7). In the face of this grief the angels do not bombard her with good news but rather ask the question that can lead to the healing word.

Mary's answer (v. 13) shows that she is totally focused on the fact that Jesus' body is missing. He is still her *Lord* even though he is dead; her loyalty is still fixed on him. In saying she does not know where *they have put him* she seems to assume that Joseph of Arimathea had his workmen move Jesus to a more permanent site (H. C. G. Moule 1898:58). Her answer gives the angels a perfect

opportunity to proclaim the good news, but they are interrupted by the appearance of the Lord himself. Mary turns to see Jesus (v.14). Perhaps she heard him or simply sensed a presence behind her, or perhaps, as Chrysostom suggests, “while she was speaking, Christ suddenly appeared behind her, striking the angels with awe” (*In John* 86.1). She saw him, *but she did not realize that it was Jesus* (v. 14). She had not been able to pick up on the clues provided by the grave clothes nor even recognize the angels who spoke with her. Now she sees the very object of her concern, but she is unable to recognize him. Such can be the blinding effect of profound emotions. In this case her inability to recognize him also seems to be due to the character of Jesus’ resurrection body, since such failure is typical of encounters with him (cf. Mt 28:17; Mk 16:12; Lk 24:16, 37; Jn 21:4).

Jesus is well aware of her condition, and he comes to her with great love and gentleness. The good news is not just that Jesus arose but that the character of God is revealed in Jesus. He is life, and he is also love. He asks the same question asked by the angels, *Woman, . . . why are you crying?* but immediately he focuses it further: *Who is it you are looking for?* This question, the first thing the risen Jesus says, echoes the very first thing he said at the beginning of this Gospel (1:38). It is a question that reveals the heart.

Noli me Tangere: The sight of the grave clothes and of angels and of Jesus himself have not been able to pierce her darkness. But when Jesus calls her name she knows his voice, for she is a true sheep (10:3-4). *Rabboni* could mean “my dear teacher,” and such endearment would be in keeping with Mary’s attachment to Jesus. But the term is not always used so (cf. Mk 10:51), and John simply translates it *teacher*. Jesus calls her by the name he used for her before, and she responds with the title she used before. She would naturally assume that their relationship could pick up where it left off and continue on as before. Jesus’ response, however, lets her know there has been a radical change in him and consequently in his relationship with his followers. This change is indicated when Jesus tells her not to touch him (v. 17). The use of the present tense (*haptou*) suggests in this context that he is not forbidding her to touch him but telling her to stop that which she is already doing. Apparently, then, when Mary recognizes Jesus she approaches him and touches him. John does not describe what exactly happens. It is possible that she is touching him on the arm or hand, to be assured

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that he is really there (H. C. G. Moule 1898:64-66). In this case, Jesus would be saying, “You don’t have to continue to touch me since (*gar*) I have not yet ascended to the Father - I really am here.” Or perhaps she kneels before him and grabs his feet (Mt 28:9; cf. Beasley-Murray 1987:376), not just touching him, but holding onto him. Such clinging may suggest she is not only trying to assure herself that he is really there, but expressing her desire that he not leave again. In this case, Jesus lets her know that she must not try to restrict him, for he has not yet ascended to the Father.

Jesus says he is still on the move, and he also sets Mary in motion to bear the news to the disciples. She has just found him, and now she is sent away, but she is sent with a commission. As the ancient church put it, she becomes an apostle to the apostles. The message she is given says a great deal about the new phase that has begun in the relations between the Father, the Son and the disciples. Indications of change begin with the commission itself: *Go instead to my brothers and tell them* (v. 17). This is the first time in this Gospel that Jesus refers to his disciples as his brothers (cf. Mt 12:50 par. Mk 3:35 par. Lk 8:21). This implies not only that Jesus has not put off his humanity in his resurrected state (Alford 1980:980), but that he has inaugurated a new level of intimacy between himself and his disciples. The new community he founded during his ministry became a new family at the cross (19:26-27), and now the disciples are to enter into this new form of relationship.

This new relationship is expressed in the message Mary is to convey: *tell them, “I am returning [ascending, anabaino] to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God”* (v. 17). It is perhaps surprising that his first message is not “I have risen from the dead.” He does not focus on himself in this way; he focuses on himself in relation to his Father. Jesus had spoken of his going to the Father, both in his general teaching (7:33-36) and in the farewell discourse to his disciples (13:3; 14:2-4, 12, 28; 16:5, 10, 17, 28). The Father is his center of reference, and to return to him is his greatest joy and therefore the joy of his disciples (14:28). So the message *I am returning to my Father* expresses Jesus’ great delight. He has finished the work (19:30) and can now return to the Father.

The Role of Jn 20: 19-29 in the Fourth Gospel

In the concluding unit of Jesus’ appearances to the disciples (20:19-29), John is summarising the main themes of his gospel. It is a classical

rhetorical strategy to recall the main themes before bringing the speech to a close.¹ Admittedly, at least six salient Johannine themes reappear and reach their climactic point in this narrative.

i. The designation of Jesus as *theos* in v. 28 (My Lord and my God) is a recalling of 1:1 and 1:18. The evangelist may have used this confessional formula to combat the emperor cult and to confront the tension with the Jewish authorities. The anti-Jewish potentials appearing in the gospel comes to the climax in this confession.

ii. Together with this christological climax, Johannine pneumatology is also brought to a climax in v. 22 by the bestowal of the Spirit on the disciples. The permanent indwelling of Jesus among the believers in 1:14- *and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us* is thus realised through the indwelling of the Spirit within the believers.

iii. The tension within the Johannine community regarding the passage from the eyewitness generation to the future generations is clearly reconciled in this passage. The blessing to “the not-seen” believers in 29b: *blessed are those who believed without seeing* bridges the gap between the community that have seen Jesus and the community of the future believers who have not seen Jesus physically.

iv. Recalling 19:34, the wound created by the piercing of the spear in Jesus’ side is mentioned in v. 20:20, 25, and verse 27. The repeated mentioning of this wound as well as Jesus’ invitation to Thomas to touch his wounds may be part of the evangelist’s attempt to refute the bodily resurrection of Christ. Hence, it seems to be anti-docetic.

v. The Johannine conjunction between seeing and believing, a theme that runs throughout the gospel reaches its climax in the blessing to those who believe without seeing (v. 29). The following list provides evidence for the Johannine emphasis on the theme of seeing and believing (1:50; 2:23; 4:48; 6:30,36,40; 9:37,38; 11:40; 12:44-45; 20:8,25,27,29). In 20:29, the evangelist proves the efficacy of faith, which is attained either through *seeing* or *not seeing*. For the evangelist, it is the faith in Jesus, and not the means for attaining faith is important.

vi. Jesus’ unique relation with the Father, which is an important theme to the fourth evangelist is recalled (Jesus is the One who is sent by the Father, v.21). Jesus’ unique relation to the Father is presented as the paradigm for the disciples’ relationship to Jesus.

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vii. Finally, the theme of discipleship comes to a climax in this narrative. The gradually growing faith of the disciples attains its perfection in v. 28. The disciples are endowed with the mission (v. 23) and are empowered by the Spirit (v. 22).

Thus by recapturing all the important themes, John prepares the way for the original conclusion of the gospel in 20:30-31, which is implicitly connected to this narrative. The glory of the risen Lord, which was invisible, is made visible to the disciples.

Irenic Greeting: Despite the locked doors, Jesus appears in their midst and greets them with the greeting still common today in that part of the world - *Peace be with you* (v. 19). In his farewell discourse Jesus had given them peace and charged them not to fear (14:27), and now he will begin to lead them into that experience. This may be a common greeting, but in this context the full significance of the word *peace* is present. In the Old Testament peace is closely associated with the blessing of God, especially the salvation to be brought by the Messiah (cf. Ps 29:11; Is 9:6; 52:7; 55:12; Ezek 37:26; Zech 9:10; cf. Osborne 1984:166). Now indeed such peace has come, for “his ‘Shalom!’ on Easter evening is the complement of ‘It is finished!’ on the cross, for the peace of reconciliation and life from God is now imparted” (Beasley-Murray 1987:379). The disciples, apparently did not receive peace from this greeting, for it is only after Jesus *showed them his hands and side* that they were filled with joy at the sight of him (v. 20). Jesus had said they would have joy when they saw him again (16:21-22), and now they do, once the wounds have certified it is really him. Such joy, like peace, was viewed as a mark of God’s salvation, including the expected time of salvation in the future (Ps 96:11; 97:1; Is 49:13; 61:10; 66:10, 14; Joel 2:21-27; Hab 3:18; Zech 10:7). Both the peace and the joy come from the presence of Jesus himself, the very presence of God come to earth.

Mission of the Disciples: Jesus immediately speaks of a mission for these disciples, just as he did with Mary Magdalene. He repeats his blessing of peace. If peace prepares them to receive him, they also need it to receive his commission: *As the Father has sent me, I am sending you* (v. 21). Over forty times throughout the Gospel, Jesus is said to have been sent by God, and now that will become the characteristic of his disciples also. The Son has a role in the sending of the Paraclete (14:16; 15:26; 16:7), and he plays a role in the sending

of the disciples. The Son, like the Father, sends. Mission is at the heart of discipleship.

Two different words are used here for sending: *As the Father has sent [apostello] me, I am sending [pempo] you*. It is often said that *apostello* denotes being sent with a commission with an emphasis on the sender whereas *pempo* focuses on the sending as such. But this distinction is quite dubious and certainly the two words are used interchangeably in John. Of greater significance is the idea of comparison. The Son was sent as one completely dependent upon the Father and one with the Father, so he was the presence of God while yet remaining distinct from the Father. Such a relationship is also at the heart of the community of Jesus' disciples. This text, accordingly, has enormous implications for the nature and mission of the church.

Empowerment by the Spirit: The sending of Jesus by God meant that in the words, works, and person of Jesus men were veritably confronted not merely by a Jewish Rabbi but by God himself (1:18; 14:9; and many passages). It follows that in the apostolic mission of the church ... the world is veritably confronted not merely by a human institution but by Jesus the Son of God (13:20; 17:18). It follows further that as Jesus in his ministry was entirely dependent upon and obedient to God the Father, who sealed and sanctified him (4:34; 5:19; 10:37; 17:4, and other passages: 6:27; 10:36), and acted in the power of the Spirit who rested upon him (1:32), so the church is the apostolic church, commissioned by Christ, only in virtue of the fact that Jesus sanctified it (17:19) and breathed the Spirit into it (v. 22), and only so far as it maintains an attitude of perfect obedience to Jesus (it is here, of course, that the parallelism between the relation of Jesus to the Father and the relation of the church to Jesus breaks down). The life and mission of the church are meaningless if they are detached from this historical and theological context.

If this community is to function in the way just described, then the gift of the Spirit is essential. Human beings in themselves are not capable of manifesting God's presence and doing God's will as Jesus did. Indeed, without the Spirit there is no spiritual life (3:3, 5). But Jesus now has been glorified, so the Spirit can be given (7:39; see comment on 16:7). At this point the life that has been in Jesus in his union with God is now shared with the disciples. The new state of affairs, described in the farewell discourse and hinted at already by

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the risen Christ (v. 17), begins to take effect among the disciples. They have been reunited with Jesus and now are given his very life by the Spirit—not only reunited with him, but beginning to be united to him. The word used for *breathed on* (*emphysao*) is the same word used in the Greek Old Testament to describe God's action when he formed the man from the dust of the ground and “breathed into his face the breath of life” and the man became a living being (Gen 2:7; cf. Wisdom of Solomon 15:11; also Ezek 37:5-10, 14). This allusion implies there is now the new beginning of life, though, as George Beasley-Murray says, “Strictly speaking, one should not view this as the *beginning* of the new creation but rather as the beginning of the *incorporation of man* into the new creation which came into being *in the Christ* by his incarnation, death, and resurrection, and is actualized in man by the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 5:17)” (1987:381).

Jesus, by giving the Holy Spirit, fulfils one more promise he made during the farewell discourse.² Ashton compares the Johannine theme of fulfilment with the fulfilment of Lk 24:49 in Ac 2:4.³ The Johannine fulfilment themes in 20:19-23, are

- ◆ Promise of the spirit (14:16-17,27); fulfilled in 20:22.
- ◆ Promise that Jesus will return (14:18-19,22); fulfilled in 20:20.
- ◆ Promise of peace (14:27); fulfilled in 20:20, 21.
- ◆ Promise of joy (16:20-24); fulfilled in 20:20.
- ◆ Promise for the empowerment for the mission (15:26-27; 16:7-11); fulfilled in 20:22.
- ◆ The idea of the rebirth in Spirit (3:3,8) fulfilled in 20:22.

Accordingly, the bestowal of the Spirit in 20:22 must be understood in the Johannine context of the fulfilment theme. It is the fulfilment of the eschatological expressions of the indwelling of the Spirit (3:34; 7:37-39). The Spirit gives new life to the believers. It is also related to the themes of living water (4:7-14) and true bread that give eternal life (6:41-65).⁴ Jn 7:39 and 12:23-24 point to the fact that the Spirit comes through the death of Jesus as an immediate replacement of Jesus. The parenthetical clause in 7:39 gives the hint that the living water that flows is the Spirit. Subsequently, 7:39 is fulfilled in the flowing of blood and water from the pierced side of Jesus in 19:34.⁵ The Spirit is given when Jesus is glorified on the cross. It is proleptically signaled in the symbolism of water and blood coming from Jesus' side (19:34) and the glorified Christ personally gives the Spirit to the

disciples in 20:22. The Holy Spirit is the continued presence of Christ in the life of the disciples. The Spirit in the fourth gospel is often associated with Truth (3:34; 4:23-24; 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; cf. 14:26), which according to de la Potterie means, the Spirit constantly actualises and refreshes the revelation of Jesus in the heart and life of the believers.⁶ Thus, the Spirit functions as the one who deepens the faith of the disciples in Jesus.

This imparting of the Spirit is clearly a climactic moment in the Gospel. Precisely because it is climactic one wonders how it is related to the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2). On the assumption that both John and Luke are describing the one giving of the Spirit a number of scholars think the accounts reflect different theological emphases. Others would embrace a view condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in A.D. 553, namely, that the imparting of the Spirit in John is symbolic of the later experience at Pentecost, “a kind of acted parable pointing forward to the full enduement still to come”. Yet another position is that the two accounts describe two different events, though there is much variety in how the differences are understood.

Forgiving of Sins: Jesus then speaks further of his commission to them: *If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven* (v. 23). This is a surprising way to put the commission, since it is never said that anyone is “forgiven” in this Gospel. While the reality of forgiveness is depicted, this is the only occasion where it is stated explicitly. The ultimate sin for which one needs forgiveness is the rejection of Jesus (9:41; 15:22-24; 16:9). The disciples are to bear witness to Jesus (15:26-27), not just by representing Jesus but by actually being the presence of Jesus through the Spirit. In this way they will be the agents of the Spirit’s confrontation of the world (16:8-11), which is a continuation of Jesus’ own confrontation. “The apostles were commissioned to carry on Christ’s work, and not to begin a new one” (Westcott 1908:2:350). Through the disciples’ witness to Jesus by word and by the life and love of the community, the world will be forced to choose for or against Jesus, just as they were during Jesus’ own ministry. Those who repent and believe in Jesus can be assured of forgiveness, and those who refuse to repent can be assured that their sins are not forgiven. Such is the consequence of rejecting the Lamb of God who

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has taken away the sin of the world. This is how judgment takes place as people come in contact with the light.

The ancient church understood this forgiveness and non-forgiveness as referring to admission to baptism (cf. Brown 1970:1042). Since baptism is associated with the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38) this is certainly an important way in which this commission has been fulfilled, though it does not exhaust the commission. The text has also been applied to the matter of discipline within the community. Accordingly, the text has served to ground the sacrament of penance (cf. Brown 1970:1041). Such discipline was indeed necessary. The issue of cleansing and forgiveness among the disciples is of concern in the Gospel (13:3-11; 21:15-17; cf. Hoskyns 1940b:650). John's later reference to the sin unto death and the sin not unto death (1 Jn 5:16) seems to deal with matters that preclude membership in the community (cf. Whitacre 1982:136-40). The value and validity of the forms that developed over the centuries to embody such discipline is a separate matter, but such discipline in itself would be another way in which this commission has been fulfilled. This would be true whether or not the group gathered at this point is limited to the eleven (minus Thomas), though if this commission is given to the disciples in general, then presumably the exercise of discipline in the community was not limited to the leadership, as represented by the Twelve (cf. Mt 16:19; 18:15-17). John's first letter is an interesting study in the combination of a strong authority figure (John) and shared responsibility, as illustrated by 1 John 5:16 itself.

Both of these matters - entering into the community and maintaining the health of the community and its members - are a significant part of the missionary part of this commission. For the life of the community itself is a major aspect of the witness to the world (17:21, 23). It is through the disciples' unity with God and with one another that the world will be confronted with the truth about the Father and the Son. Such unity in God cannot include error and evil, for they are not of God, hence the need for discipline for the sake of the mission itself.

Jesus and Thomas

John's description of Thomas touching the wounds is quite dramatic (v. 25). Thomas wants to shove his hand *into* Jesus' side! On the assumption that the disciples have told Thomas about Jesus' wounds, some have taken Thomas's statement as evidence that Jesus' wound

was large enough for one to put one's hand in and that it was not closed over. But more likely Thomas is simply being dramatic, as he was earlier in the Gospel (11:16). Similarly, the language he uses when he says he will not believe is very emphatic (*ou me pisteuso*).

A week later, the next Sunday after the resurrection, the disciples (including Thomas) were again in a locked room (v. 26). Jesus' appearances on Sundays, along with the timing of the resurrection itself, contributed to the church's making that the primary day of worship (cf. Beasley-Murray 1987:385). The expression John uses is literally "after eight days," since Jews counted the beginning and the ending of a period of time. This term itself was taking on special meaning at the time John is writing. In *Barnabas* (from about A.D. 96-100) the eighth day represents "the beginning of another world" (15:8). The author links it with Jesus' resurrection: "That is why we spend the eighth day in celebration, the day on which Jesus both arose from the dead and, after appearing again, ascended into heaven" (*Barnabas* 15:9).

Faith throughout the Gospel is depicted as progressive, renewed in the face of each new revelation of Jesus. The other disciples have moved on to the next stage, but Thomas has not been able to. To not move on when Jesus calls us to do so is to shift into reverse and move away. Both believing and unbelieving are dynamic—we are growing in one direction or the other. Thus, when Jesus appears in their midst he challenges Thomas to move on ahead in the life of faith, to *stop doubting and believe* (v. 27). The actual expression used may capture the dynamic quality, since *ginomai* often has the sense of "becoming" and the present tense "marks the process as continually going on" (Westcott 1908:2:355). Translated woodenly this reads, "Stop becoming unbelieving and get on with becoming believing" (*me ginou apistos alla pistos*). To get Thomas moving in the right direction again Jesus offers him the chance to feel his wounds. His offer echoes Thomas' own graphic language from verse 25, suggesting that Jesus was actually present when Thomas was making his protest or that he could at least perceive what was going on, an ability Jesus had even before he was raised from the dead (cf. 1:48).

John does not say whether Thomas actually did touch Jesus' wounds. The impression is that he did not, for John says, "Thomas answered and said to him . . ." That is, Thomas' confession is an

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immediate response to seeing Jesus and hearing his offer. Furthermore, in Jesus' response to Thomas he mentions seeing but not touching (v. 29).

Thomas' confession of Jesus as *my Lord and my God* is yet another climax in this Gospel. Jesus has invited him to catch up with the others in their new stage of faith, and he shoots past them and heads to the top of the class. His confession is climactic not only as part of the Gospel's story line, but also as an expression of the core of John's witness to Jesus in this Gospel. Thomas confesses Jesus as God when he sees that the crucified one is alive. It is in the crucifixion that God himself is made known, for he is love, and love is the laying down of one's life (1 Jn 4:8; 3:16). But God is also life. In John, this God is revealed perfectly in the death of the Son, but this death would be nothing without the life. When Thomas finds death and life juxtaposed in Jesus he realizes who the one standing before him really is.

Does the Fourth Gospel Call Jesus God?

Before drawing concrete conclusions regarding Thomas' confession, it is important to discuss whether the fourth gospel really calls Jesus God. The fourth gospel, according to J. H. Neyrey, considers Jesus as the one who was active throughout Israel's history, functioning as the one who gave theophanies to Israel's patriarchs and prophets. Abraham saw Jesus' day (8:56), before Abraham came into being I AM (8:58), Isaiah saw Jesus' glory (12:41), the vision in 1:51 which alludes to Jacob's vision (Gn 28:12), and proves Neyrey's conclusion. H. E. Harvey argues that the fourth gospel presents Jesus as 'equal to God.' Jesus enjoys all the powers which the Father has (power to judge-5:22; authority to execute judgement - 5:27; power to give life- 5:21; right to receive the same honour- 5:25; as the Father, he also has life in himself- 5:26). Neyrey also argues that Jesus is fully equal to God in the sense that he has both creative and eschatological powers. However, John customarily uses the title *theos* to refer to God the Father. In Jn 20 itself, Jesus distinguishes himself from the Father (20:17). Besides, the purpose of the gospel is to prove the Messiahship and Sonship of Jesus (20:31) not the Yahwehship of Jesus. So, *theos* is only a title of Jesus not a proper name in the fourth gospel.⁷ It reveals the unique substantial unity of God with Jesus as his only begotten Son.

Deissmann and Harris argue that Thomas' confession, in which Jesus is addressed "Lord and God" is derived from the Septuagint (Ps 85:15).⁸ Even though this particular formula was not so common in the LXX, as Ellis points out, the most popular divine names *Yhwh* and *Elohim* could be translated as *Lord* and *God* respectively.⁹ The two titles together were used in Judaism. By calling Jesus *Yhwh* and *Elohim* John brings his anti-Jewish potentials into a climax. John seems to vindicate the thesis that those Jews who failed to believe in Jesus have failed to recognise Jesus as the true Messiah and Son of God.

It is with this apologetic purpose in mind that John narrates the pre-existence of 'The Word' in the prologue that opens with a dramatic claim: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1:1). In the prologue itself (1:1,18), John states his intention and faith. Christ is not only the one who has seen God but is himself the source of divine *glory*, full of grace and truth (v.17), Law was given through Moses but grace and truth through Jesus Christ (18). It is this same polemic attitude that works behind the Johannine equalisation of Jesus with God. He wanted to move from Jewish monotheism, which considered that Yahweh alone was God, to the exclusively Christian claim, where the locus is the communion between the Father and the Son.

What we can infer from the above discussion is that though the fourth gospel considers Jesus equal to God, it does not claim that Jesus is Yahweh (cf. 17:3) but he is equal to Yahweh. This equality is not merely a claim of Jesus, but it is God who made Jesus equal to Him. Jesus is not a rival to Yahweh, whatever he does is done in accordance with the will of the Father (5:23; 7:16-18; 8:38; 17:4). We can also notice that the exalted confession of Thomas or the christology of the fourth gospel was born and developed in controversial historical situations of the Johannine community.

The *Sitz im Leben* of Thomas' Confession

The Roman practice of Emperor worship (imperial cult),¹⁰ during the time of Emperor Domitian (AD 81-96), who was probably the reigning emperor when the fourth gospel was being written, is suggested to be the historical context of this confession. The imperial cult was dominant during the reign of Domitian. He was called *dominus et deus noster* (= *Lord and our God*). The practice of the

imperial cult was dominant in Ephesus, where the fourth gospel is believed to have been written, more than in any other part of the Roman Empire. However, this argument cannot be accepted fully, because of the following obvious reasons, (i) Thomas' confessional formula, as we have explained above, can easily be derived from the LXX. So it is plausible to conclude that the source of Thomas' confession is mainly the LXX. (ii) The titles used to designate the emperor in the imperial cult were *despot̄s* and *thēs*, but in Jn 20:28 *kurios* and *theos* are used. If the confession were intended to attack the imperial cult, the evangelist would have used the same formula of the imperial cult. (iii) In the imperial cult, the plural form *noster* (our) is always used, never the singular form; but in Jn 20:28 the singular form (my) is used. So they are not identical, and we cannot fully agree with the suggestion that the imperial cult is the most immediate historical context of Jn 20:28. However, it can be considered as a possible context of this confessional formula.

There are many who argue that this confession is liturgical. Thomas' words are a combination of a covenantal confession (Hos 2:25; cf. Jn 20:17) and a baptismal confession. It is true that there is a clear liturgical set-up, in Jn 20:19-29. This confession is an attempt to identify the Jesus of faith with the incarnated *logos* (1:1,18).

The Shift from Seeing and Believing to Not-Seeing Yet Believing (20:29)

The fourth evangelist had been consistently developing the theme of seeing and believing. Faith in many cases is considered to be the consequence or result of the act of seeing (2:23; 9:37-38; 20:8), but in certain cases the faith based on seeing seems to be criticised (2:23-25; 4:48). On the contrary, in some instances Jesus blames the disciples for not believing even after having seen him (6:36), while in other cases people demand the seeing of signs in order to believe (6:30; 20:25). Finally, there are instances in which seeing is almost identified with believing (6:40; 12:44-45; 20:27). In 11:40 a higher level of seeing is pointed out. Here, the act of believing is suggested to be a condition for seeing the glory of God. This seeing is different from mere ocular perception. Seeing the glory of Jesus is described as the result or the effect of believing in Jesus. Thus the order presumed here is: (empirical) seeing leads to believing which leads to (spiritual) seeing.

In 20:29b was indeed an answer to a problem developing in the community that the generation of the eyewitnesses of the Christ-event (the apostolic community) is coming to an end and now who should be for all time the trustworthy witnesses?¹¹ The evangelist is conveying the specific message to the community that believing in Jesus indeed has nothing to do with physical perception. Believing does not presuppose seeing nor does seeing lead one to faith. Thus, this blessing extends the horizon of the story to readers of subsequent generations. Moreover, v. 29b is not a sudden reaction to Thomas but the culmination of the theme that was being developed from the very beginning of the gospel. 20:29b is the culmination of this theme and hence may not be a reaction to Thomas. So the critique in v. 29 is applicable to anyone who thinks that faith is necessarily dependent upon seeing signs. V. 29b could be read as *happy are they who without having had Thomas' experience share Thomas' faith.*

The farewell discourse reveals Jesus' intimate relationship with his disciples. They are his witnesses (15:26); it is through them that others have to come to believe in Jesus (17:20). Jesus offers a Counsellor (14:16-17a). The death of Jesus is a condition for the coming of the spirit (16:7). The Spirit as well as the disciples are witnesses to Jesus (15:26-27). Hence, we can consider the disciples as 'one half of a two-part witnesses.' They bear witness to the earthly life of Jesus, and their witness will be augmented by the Spirit. The disciples are the human components of the Lord's witness. The appearances of the risen Lord to the disciples are to be understood in the light of their special witnessing role.

Hence, we can notice three points in the Johannine correlation between the theme of discipleship and the theme of seeing and believing. (1) For John, Jesus is not only the object but also the agent of faith. He initiates his disciples into real faith. The personal encounter initiated by the risen Lord is the only possible means for coming into real faith. Disciples are the types of characters who possess the characteristics of this world, which is to be transformed by the intervention of Jesus. (2) Jesus' plan for the disciples is more than their personal conversion, but rather to transform them as the connecting link of faith between Jesus' earthly mission and his status as the living Son of God. (3) As de la Potterie points out, the double

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foci of the narrative are (i) the future members of John's church will attain faith without seeing. (ii) Their faith, however, is based on the vision shared by the disciples who eyewitnessed the Christ-event.

Thus, Jn 20:19-29 marks the shift in the Johannine understanding of seeing and believing. During the earthly life of Jesus, seeing and believing were almost identical. In the public life of Jesus, the gospel presents only two groups: those who have seen and believed (the disciples) and those who have seen and not believed (the opponents of Jesus - very often designated by the title "the Jews"). However, in the post-resurrection period, where it is no longer possible to see Jesus, this categorisation is insignificant. Thus, the evangelist suggested two new categories: those who believe without seeing and those who do not believe without seeing. In fact, this shift is essentially related to the *Sitz im Leben* of the gospel. The evangelist is demanding the members of his community to believe without seeing by relying exclusively on the witness of those who have seen and believed.

The theme of seeing the risen Lord and coming to faith is essential according to the theology of the fourth gospel. In Jn 20, the evangelist explicitly connects seeing the risen Lord with being a disciple of Christ. The following structure explains this theme.

20:8 - *he saw and believed*

20:18 - *I have seen the Lord*

20:25b - *We have seen the Lord*

20:25d - *Unless I see, I will not believe*

20:27 - *see and do not become unbelieving but believing*

20:29a - *because you have seen you have believed*

20:29b - *blessed are those who believe without seeing*

The first part of the structure gradually grows by supporting the theme of seeing and believing. It culminates in the emphatic denial of Thomas that he will not believe until he sees. The second half is a movement in the opposite direction, which climaxes in 20:29b where those who believe without seeing are blessed. Thus, John vindicates that the Easter faith is a faith seen and believed by the eyewitnesses. Nevertheless, the future believers have to depend on the testimony of the eyewitnesses, therefore their reliability is crucial.

Notes

- ¹ See for example, CICERO, *Ora. brut.*, 40.137; *Quinct.*, 25:78-80.
- ² Different fulfilment themes are pointed out by various scholars. See F. W. BEARE, *Risen Jesus Bestows the Spirit: A Study of John 20:19-23*, in *CJT* 4 (1958) 95-100, 96; LIGHTFOOT, *John*, 335; W. BARLETTE, *Coming of the Holy Gospel According to the Gospel of John*, in *Exp. Tim* 37 (1925-26) 72-75, 73; M. DE JONGE, *Jesus: Stranger from Heaven and Son of God*, trans. J. E. Steely, Missoula, MT, Scholars, 1977, 174.
- ³ ASHTON, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 425; M. CHEVALLIER, *Pentecostes lucaniennes et Pentecostes johanniques*, in *Recherches de science religieuse* 69 (1981) 301-313, argues that Jn 20:22 and Acts 2 ultimately record the same event.
- ⁴ HATINA, *John 20:22 in Its Eschatological Context*, 118.
- ⁵ SWETNAM, *Bestowal of the Spirit*, 568, argues that the most appropriate interpretation of this symbolism regarding the Spirit as coming from Jesus' side is that the Spirit has already been given. However, this interpretation seems to be inconclusive.
- ⁶ LA POTTERIE, *La vérité dans saint Jean*, 469.
- ⁷ HARRIS, *Jesus as God*, 124.
- ⁸ DEISSMANN, *Light from the Ancient East*, 361; HARRIS, *Jesus as God*, 120-121.
- ⁹ ELLIS, *Genius of John*, 296; DEISSMANN, *Light from the East*, 361; HOSKYNS, *John*, 548.
- ¹⁰ Cf. S. R. F. P RICE, *Gods and Emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult*, in *JHS* 104 (1984) 90-95.
- ¹¹ BULTMANN, *John*, 696.

The Epilogue: Feed My Sheep (21:1-25)

Diachronically, Jn 21 is highly disputed among Johannine scholars. The debate about the origins of Jn 21 starts at least as early as Hugo Grotius, who argued that Jn 21 is an addition by the church of Ephesus. Some scholars consider chapters 20 and 21 dual endings to the gospel, relatively independent of one another. Each one follows closely on the end of chapter 19, narrating Jesus' resurrection appearances. Bultmann insists that the gospel concluded with 20:30-31 and it was subsequently extended by chapter 21.¹ The style of the solemn ending in v. 30, is typically traditional. Against this view one can observe that the passages that seem to conclude, are not necessarily conclusions in John. For instance, Jn 12:36-43 appears to be an ending, but actually is not.

Certain expressions and literary peculiarities according to many scholars are unique to chapter 21 when compared with the rest of the gospel. The words and phrases of this chapter are not in agreement with

the previous chapters, besides, a logical discontinuity in the sequence of events are obvious in Jn 21. After having received a clear mission from Jesus (20:22-23), it is incredible to believe that the disciples returned to Galilee to resume their former occupations. Moreover, the dialogue between the disciples in v. 3 shows that they are somehow frustrated. Again, the failure from the part of the disciples to recognise Jesus seems to be out of context, because in 20:19-29 there are clear accounts of disciples' recognition of the risen Lord. The real interest of the narrative of John 21 is the mission and authority within the ecclesial community. The commission to Peter (vv.15-20) is a clear attempt to assert the primacy of Peter, which may be an answer to certain problems regarding Peter's authority in the Johannine community. However, the most evident objection against this conclusion is the juxtaposition of Peter and the beloved disciple throughout the gospel, with cordial intimacy.

In spite of the diachronic ambiguities, from a narrative point of view we prefer to conclude that chapter 21 is an integral part of the fourth gospel on the following grounds:

- (i) There is no manuscript evidence for the fourth gospel without Jn 21.
- (ii) Every episode in Jn 21 reflects and is enriched by earlier episodes.
- (iii) Jn 21, emphasising the care of the sheep becomes the logical climax of the gospel.
- (iv) The style and vocabulary is similar to that of Jn 1-20.
- (v) The evangelist's concern for the future believers (17:5-25; 20:22-23, 29) comes to a logical climax in Jn 21.
- (vi) The gospel has two endings just as it has double beginnings (1:1-18; 1:19-51).
- (vii) The single authorship of Jn 1-21, could be supported on the basis of the identification of the author at the prologue (1:14,16) and the epilogue (21:24-25).
- (viii) The parallelism between 1:19-51 and 21:1-25, which forms the *inclusio* of the gospel, is a proof for the single authorship of the entire gospel.

Even if it is a later addition to the gospel, it was added to the gospel by the same author. We may consider 21:1-25 as a unit that concludes the entire gospel.

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The structure of the unit under discussion (21:1-25), which is a combination of a miracle story and a meal story, can be understood as follows.

- A** The miracle (Jesus and the disciples) (21:1-6)
- B** the beloved disciple and Peter (21:7-8)
- A¹** The meal (Jesus and the disciples) (21:9-19)
- B¹** Peter and the beloved disciple (21:20-25)

This section, through a number of narrative echoes, summarises the theme of discipleship in the fourth gospel. It is true that the disjunctive *after this* in 21:1 creates a “blank in the reading - a break in the connectability of the narrative discourse.” Nonetheless, taken as a whole the ambiguity vanishes. This concluding section summarises the major themes of Johannine discipleship and in doing so, the evangelist uses trans-historical narrative devices, in order to apply the principles of discipleship beyond the specificity of time and space.

1. The Miracle and Meal (A, A¹)

Against the scholars who claim that the miracle in Jn 21 is the third out of the seven miracle stories in the signs source, we argue that this story is a Johannine redaction of Lk 5:1-11. Many scholars have pointed out the parallels between the miraculous catching of fish in Lk 5:1-11 and Jn 21:1-14. The similarities are conspicuous. The following are the similarities:

1. The reference in Lk 5:5 (*we've worked hard all night*) is developed into a scene in the Johannine account (21:2-3).
2. The reference to the sons of Zebedee in John without any antecedent clearly points towards the Lukan influence (Lk 5:10a).
3. The remarkable absence of Andrew, who otherwise appears in the fourth gospel constantly with Simon Peter (Jn 1:40,44; 6:8; 12:22), can be explained in the light of Lk 5, where Andrew is not mentioned.
4. The big catch is recorded in the almost similar terminology in both accounts: Lk 5:6 // Jn 21:6) The effect on the net (Lk 5:6// Jn 21:11).
5. The reference to *the others* (cf. Lk 5:7// Jn 21:8) are presented parallel in both stories.
6. In both accounts, Peter addresses Jesus as *Lord*.

Jn 1:36-51	Jn 21
1:42 - Call of Peter	21:16,17,18 - call of Peter
1:45 - Reference to Nathanael	21:2 - reference to Nathanael
1:35 - Reference to one of the two disciples	21:2 - Reference to one of the two disciples
1:43- Jesus said to him, follow me	21:19 - and he said to me “follow me”
1:38 - Jesus turned and saw two disciples following him	21:20 - Jesus turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following him
1:36 - seeing Jesus walking he said..	21:21 - seeing him Peter said to Jesus
1:43 - Jesus’ identity is announced to Peter by another disciple (Andrew)	21:8 - Jesus identity is announced to Peter by another disciple (the beloved disciple)

7. Even though Jesus’ commission to Peter in Lk 5:10 that he will be made ‘fisher of men’ has no direct parallel in John, the Johannine commissioning of Peter as shepherd of the flock (Jn 21:15-17) is not substantially different from that of Luke.
8. It is quite likely that the Johannine metaphor of the sheep (Jn 10) is substituted for that of the fish. Both stories end with a reference to Peter’s following of Jesus (Lk 5:11// Jn 21:19b).

Two major variations that John makes are significantly noteworthy. First, the Lukan context of the story is the call of the first disciples, whereas the Johannine context is a resurrection appearance. However, we argue that the Johannine story of the miraculous catching of fish as well incorporates several elements from the call of the first disciples (Jn 1:35-51). The following list evidences the parallels.

On the basis of the above similarities, we can reasonably deem the story of the call of the first disciples to be incorporated in the Johannine version of the story of miraculous fishing. Thus, the Johannine context is not far from that of Luke. It is reasonable to

argue that through this story the fourth evangelist adds a new phase to the theme of discipleship. The disciples who were with the earthly Jesus, come to know the deeper meaning of following Jesus only at this remarkable juncture. The command to follow the risen Lord is in fact part of the Johannine attempt to bridge the gap between the eyewitness generation and the future believers.

The second Johannine variation from the Lukan story is Jesus' absence at the boat of the disciples. In the Johannine account, the risen Lord is physically away from the disciples. They have to act according to the words of Jesus. Unlike in the Lukan story, where Peter realises Jesus personally and confesses his faith as well as his unworthiness (cf. 5:8), Jesus' identity is revealed to Peter through the witnessing of another disciple. This Johannine shift must be interpreted within the Johannine context of the believers of later generations. By narrating the story of the disciples' acting based on hearing and witnessing in the absence of Jesus, the evangelist explicitly states that after the resurrection the disciples have to rely on the testimony, rather than seeking the vision of Jesus.

2. The Narrative Echoes of Discipleship in Jn 21

Many of the Johannine themes which appear earlier in the gospel are echoed in Jn 21. We can spotlight at least six narrative echoes that are invariably related to the Johannine theme of discipleship:

1. *Jn 6:1-71 and 21:1-25* - The location of these two events are the same (Galilee). Besides, these are the only two events in the fourth gospel where Jesus and his disciples make use of a boat. The reference to the bread and fish as well as the description of Jesus' act of giving them to the disciples are similar in both scenes. The same verb *attract (elkuo)* is used to describe how the Father leads believers to Jesus (6:44) and how the disciples bring fish to Jesus (21:6,11). The evangelist thus suggests symbolically that when the disciples toil to bring the future believers to Jesus, it is the Father at work in them (cf. 17:20).

2. The installation of Peter and the related Johannine texts: the thrice-repeated question to Peter is traditionally attributed to allude to Peter's three denials in 18:15-18, 25-27. The implied reader is unable to understand this repetitive style without recalling the narrative echo from Jn 18. There are at least two narrative asides in Jn 21 that justify the allusion to the denial scenes in Jn 18. The time reference,

early in the morning (18:28//21:4) as well as the reference to the charcoal (18:18//21:19) are common in both scenes. As we have seen before, in the denial scene Peter denies his discipleship. Subsequently, in the reinstatement scene his discipleship is revoked. The repetitive use of *verbs loving* (*phileo* and *agapeo*) points towards this fact, since the fourth gospel presents disciples as Jesus' "friends."

2. The metaphor of the good shepherd in Jn 10:1-18 is echoed in the rehabilitation of Peter (21:15-19). The terminology like *to shepherd* (*bosco*, *poimano*), sheep (*arnion*, *probaton*) are common in both passages. The role of the "Good shepherd" embodied by Jesus in the parable is handed over to Peter. The reference to Peter's martyrdom (21:18-19) reminds the reader of the references in the parable regarding the death of the good shepherd (10:17-18). The vacuum created by Jesus' physical presence is thus tried to be overcome by the evangelist through the installation of the leaders of the community, like Peter.

3. The role of Peter in Jn 13:3-5, 36-38 is echoed in Jn 21 in two ways. (i) Peter's action (21:7b- put on his cloth, girds his outer garment) is contrasted with that of Jesus (13:3-5, takes off his cloth, girds a towel around his waist). The second reference to girding in v. 18 implicitly recalls the radical change in Peter's perspective on discipleship. (ii) Peter's decision to jump into the sea and swim towards Jesus (21:7b-8) reminds the reader of his desire to wash his entire body (13:9). The irony of his declaration that he would follow Jesus until death (13:36-38) is implicitly recalled by Jesus' final command to "follow" (20:19b).

4. For the first time in the entire gospel, the narrator says that the disciples as a group realised the true identity of Jesus (21:14). The contrast between light and darkness points towards the fact that the disciples now belong to the light (cf. 1:4-9; 21:3-4). Their failure to catch fish and then the miraculous catch with Jesus' help is an acted out version of Jn 15:4-5, where Jesus' says that, apart from him, the disciples can do nothing. We can reasonably argue that the fishing symbolically represents the mission of the disciples. The evangelist vindicates the fact that even the eyewitness generation cannot succeed in their mission without the help of Jesus. Hence, he conveys the explicit message to the readers and future believers that they must carry out their mission in the world under the guidance and direction of Jesus.

5. Other resurrection narratives are also echoed in this section. As in 20:11-18, the recognition of Jesus is not immediate but gradual. The metaphorical contrast of light and darkness (20:1) is evident in this narrative as well. The confession of Thomas and that of the beloved disciple are semantically linked to each other. Vv. 1, 14 directly connect the events in Jn 21 with Jn 20.

6. The final narrative echo is the proximity of Peter and the beloved disciple throughout the gospel, which will be explained in the following section.

3. The Beloved Disciple and Peter

The fourth evangelist introduces the beloved disciple “at the dark moments of discipleship.” Based on the dispute over the death of the beloved disciple, one can argue that the beloved disciple is not a single individual but all successive representatives of the founder and leader of the Johannine community. That is why, the beloved disciple is presented as the “remaining witness” in 21:23. Similarly, the beloved disciple is *fiktiv historisch*, created by the Johannine redactor to become the authoritative witness for the community. Against these arguments, we count that Jn 20:23-25 can be explained without denying the historicity of the beloved disciple. The trans-historical character of the narrative in Jn 21:23-25 could be understood as part of the Johannine attempt to make his narrative transcend beyond the time frame of the narrative.

Peter is well known to the Johannine community, because in 1:40 Andrew is introduced as the brother of Simon Peter (cf. also 6:8) before Peter himself is introduced. The Petrine priority in the synoptics is remarkably absent in the fourth gospel. Unlike in the synoptics, neither Peter nor the beloved disciple is directly called by Jesus. It was Andrew who leads Peter toward Jesus. Against the outstanding confession of Peter in the synoptics (*Thou art the Christ* - Mk 8:29; Mt 16:16; Lk 9:20), Jesus’ messianic identity is confessed to Peter by Andrew at the very beginning (1:41). However, Peter makes a remarkable confession at a decisive moment of discipleship (6:68-69). Peter often appears alongside the beloved disciple. This shows their cordial relationship rather than the rivalry among them, as argued by some scholars. In 21:7, the beloved disciple reveals the identity of Jesus to Peter. The fourth evangelist in no way tries to degrade the role of Peter; rather, what he insists is that the beloved disciple has an important role in the church similar to that of Peter. As Culpepper points out, the effect of the characterisation of Peter in the fourth

gospel is to insist that the beloved disciple had equal authority in the church by virtue of his special relationship to Jesus.² Schnackenburg rightly thinks that the evangelist builds on Peter's reputation and uses him as a foil to establish the authority and prestige of the beloved disciple.³

Unlike the Synoptic gospels, John unravels the anonymity of the disciple who cut off the ear of one of the servants at the garden by explicitly stating that it was Peter (18:10-11). Droge argues this unveiling is part of the Johannine negative portrayal of Peter.⁴ But it need not be interpreted in the negative sense. In the Johannine account Jesus alone is the hero. Neither Peter can become heroic by defending Jesus nor the Beloved disciple can carry the cross of Jesus and die with him (12:25-26; 19:26-27). They can be only silent witnesses to the Christ event. John wants to highlight Jesus' willingness to drink the cup, which his Father has given.

Peter's restoration in Jn 21 (vv. 7,11,15-17) points to the opportunity of the disciples who happened to deny their faith in Jesus at the danger of life-threats, to correct themselves and return to genuine faith. The mention of the charcoal fire (18:24; 21:9) in both scenes connects these scenes of denial and restoration. The narrator interferes in both instances to interpret the references to the death of Peter (21:19a) and that of the beloved disciple (21:23). Here, we can observe the Johannine interpretation of leadership or "shepherding," that it is not an exercise of authority but the willingness to follow Jesus even until the point of death.

To summarise, this narrative attempts to accentuate the significance of the life of Jesus recorded in the gospel to future believers. In other words, the life of Jesus the Messiah and the Son of God, which is witnessed by the beloved disciple in the gospel is presented as the source of life for all those who believe in him (including future believers/disciples).

Notes

¹ BULTMANN, *John*, 11.

² See CULPEPPER, *Anatomy*, 222.

³ SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, III, 365-367. He also deems that the beloved disciple is a historical person since he is always associated with Peter, a historical figure.

⁴ See A. I. DROGE, *The Status of Peter in the Fourth Gospel: A Note on John 18:10-11*, in *JBL* 109 (1990) 307-311.

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