THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE BELOVED DISCIPLE: REVELATION AND SELF-IDENTITY IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE BELOVED DISCIPLE:

REVELATION AND SELF-IDENTITY IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Beloved Disciple is presented in the Fourth Gospel and what this implies about how the Johannine community understood itself. The thesis focuses particularly upon the significance of the parallel between the Son as revealer of the Father and the Beloved Disciple as the revealer of the Son. The argument of the thesis is that the fundamental assertion of the Gospel is that salvation consists in communion with the Father who is revealed through the Son. But a secondary motif stresses that the Beloved Disciple reveals the Son, and thus through the Beloved Disciple the Johannine community can claim a secure grasp of the revelation of the Father. This is not an exclusive claim, however, and the community still sees itself as part of the larger Christian *koinōnia*, albeit a very distinctive part.

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All biblical citations in Greek are from *The Greek New Testament*, edited by Kurt Aland *et al.* (Stuttgart: Württemberg Bible Society, 1975 [1966, 1968]). All English citations are from *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version* (New York, New York: Meridian, 1974).

INTRODUCTION

For many years, biblical scholars specializing in various fields of research have studied the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in order to determine authorship, to reveal oral traditions, literary sources, literary style, intended readership, and so on. In recent years, however, Johannine studies have focused more and more on the community "behind" the text of the Fourth Gospel. The best example of this approach is Raymond E. Brown's The Community of the Beloved Disciple, which traces the history of the Johannine community from its inception in the 50's to its dissolution in the second century.[1] Brown's reconstruction shows how fruitful a focus on the history of the Johannine community can be. Moreover, as the title suggests, Brown demonstrates the importance of two key features in the study of the Fourth Gospel: the community and the Beloved Disciple. The role of the Beloved Disciple, the founding figure of the Johannine community,[2] is in fact integrally linked to the self-understanding of the community of Johannine believers.

Apart from Brown's book, however, there have been remarkably few scholars who have dealt explicitly with the interconnection between the Beloved Disciple and the Johannine community. James Charlesworth's recent magnum opus, The Beloved Disciple, for example, deals with the

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[1]Raymond E. Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

[2]R. Alan Culpepper, John, The Son of Zebedee, (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), p. 310. Also, David J. Hawkin, The Johannine World: Reflections on the Theology of the Fourth Gospel and Contemporary Society, (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1996), p. 81, says that the Beloved Disciple was not merely a symbolic character as some scholars have asserted, but was rather "a historical figure with paradigmatic significance."

historical question of who the Beloved Disciple might have been.[3] The symbolic function of the Beloved Disciple within the Johannine community remains virtually unexplored in the English-speaking world. An examination of the figure of the Beloved Disciple will, furthermore, give clearer definition to the contours of this community and its unique theology.

In Peter and the Beloved Disciple: Figures for a Community in Crisis, Kevin Quast contends that

> writers have long recognized the unity that permeates the Johannine theological scheme - all its teachings are inter-related. so that one aspect of the Johannine perspective cannot be interpreted without its affecting the entire horizon of John's theology.[4]

In acknowledging the centrality of theological themes in the Fourth Gospel, it becomes clear that the theology of revelation, the symbolic function of the Beloved Disciple and Johannine self-understanding go hand in hand. Jesus is the Revealer of God (Jn. 1:18); the Beloved Disciple is the revealer of Jesus (Jn. 13:23) to the Johannine community (Jn. 21:24). This community ultimately established its own distinctive identity through the theological claims it was making about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

In establishing Johannine self-understanding and the role of the Beloved Disciple in the Gospel of John, the focus of this work will centre largely on the following: 1) revelation as the central theme of the Fourth Gospel, 2) the Beloved Disciple and his function within the Johannine

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[3]James H. Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John, (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995).

[4]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple: Figures for a Community in Crisis, (Great Britain: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), p. 7.

community, and 3) the self-understanding of the Johannine community based on its belief in Jesus and the true witness of the Beloved Disciple.

CHAPTER ONE:

REVELATION IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The central message of the Fourth Gospel lies in its theology of revelation. "Jesus was sent into the world as the Son of God...to make the unknowable and invisible God known and visible."[5] The unambiguous message presented in the pages of the Gospel, especially through the person of Christ, is that the Father is revealed in the Son (as in 1:18; 6:37-40; 8:28-29; 10:30; 14:9-11; 14:31; 15:15).[6] We see, for example, how Jesus reveals God in the "I am"[7] sayings (6:35, 48; 6:51; 8:12; 11:15; 14:6) and in the signs which he performs (2:11; cf. 4:54). The feeding of five thousand reveals Jesus as the bread of life (Jn. 6:35), opening the eyes of the man born blind reveals Jesus as the light of the world (Jn. 9:5), and in raising Lazarus, Jesus is revealed as Resurrection and Life (Jn. 11:25).[8] Further, one can discern Jesus' symbolic revelation in the discourses of the Good Shepherd (chapter 10) and of the True Vine (chapter 15).[9]

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[5]Jey J. Kanagaraj, "'Mysticism' in the Gospel of John: An Inquiry into its Background," Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 158, (England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), p. 260. Also David J. Hawkin, p. 58 of The Johannine World, says that the prime concern of the author "is to present Jesus as the revealer of the Father."

[6]Ernest M. Sidebottom, The Christ of the Fourth Gospel in Light of First Century Thought, (London: SPCK, 1966), pp. 115-122.

[7]Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, trans. Kendrick Grobel, Vol. 2, (London: SCM Press, Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), p. 11. Also R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 108.

[8]Marianne Meye Thompson, The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), p. 62.

[9]Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. II, p. 4.

Raymond Brown has said that

> the Word that existed in God's presence before creation has become flesh in Jesus (1:1,14); coming into the world like a light (1:9-10; 8:12; 9:5), he can reveal God because he is the only one who has come down from heaven and has seen God's face and heard His voice (3:13; 5:37); he is one with the Father (10:30), so that to see him is to see the Father (14:9); indeed, he can speak as the divine I AM.[10]

In the Fourth Gospel the words and deeds of Jesus divulge his true identity, authenticate his claims of origin and mission, and testify to his authority. These in turn reveal the nature of Jesus' relationship to God. Rudolf Bultmann, however, declared that in the Fourth Gospel Jesus communicated to people nothing that he had seen or heard with the Father, nor did he proclaim any concrete teaching.[11] In fact, claims Bultmann, consistent with John's use of Gnostic-mythological concepts, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel is presented merely as fact (*Dass*) without content (*Was*).[12] He declares that

> Jesus as the Revealer of God reveals nothing but that he is the Revealer...His theme is always just this one thing: that the Father sent him, that he came as the light, the bread of life, witness for the truth, etc.; that he will go again, and that one must believe in him.[13]

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[10]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 45.

[11]Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. II, p. 62.

[12]Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. II, p. 66.

[13]Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. II, p. 62, 66.

As the son of Joseph and Mary, Jesus of Nazareth was "nothing but a man."[14] Any human presenting himself as revealer of God would prove contrary to the general expectation implicit in the Gnostic-Redeemer myth. It was believed that a divine being, after assuming human form, would bring revelation and redemption into the earthly realm.[15] Consequently it was presumed that

> revelation will somehow have to give proof of itself. The Revealer...must appear as a shining, mysterious, fascinating figure, as a hero...a miracle worker or mystagogue. Men want to look away from the humanity and see or sense the divinity...[16]

Implicit in this supposition lies the contention that the humanity of the Revealer could be nothing more than a disguise. But Jn. 1:14a states that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."[17] The enfleshment of the Logos clearly means that the world encounters a totally human Revealer in Jesus of Nazareth. Accordingly, it follows that an authentic revelation of God must take place within the human sphere. In order to see the *doxa* (glory), claims Bultmann, we must focus our attention on the *sarx* (flesh).[18] Revelation can then be acknowledged as being "present in a peculiar *hiddenness*" while conceding that

> The encounter with the Incarnate is the encounter with the revealer himself; and the

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[14]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, A Commentary, trans. by G. R. Beasley-Murray, General Editor R.W.N. Hoare & J.K. Riches, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 62.

[15]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 61.

[16]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 63.

[17]Vernard Eller, The Beloved Disciple: His Name, His Story, His Thought, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), p. 97, states quite simply that "...the Logos' becoming Flesh and dwelling among us marks the greatest and most gracious action God has ever taken...on behalf of humanity."

[18]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 63.

latter does not bring a teaching which renders his own presence superfluous; rather *as* the Incarnate he sets each man before the decisive question whether he will accept or reject *him*.[19]

To say that in the Fourth Gospel an encounter with the Incarnate is an encounter with the Reveaier presupposes a unity of the Father and the Son. Bultmann explains that despite the innate longing of the human heart to see and know the Creator, God is and will always remain invisible and therefore inaccessible to the human person. But God's love for humanity (Jn. 3:16) is so great that he has sent his son, the pre-existent, Incarnate Logos, the Revealer, to bring to the world "truth," "life" (Jn. 14:6) and "light" (Jn. 8:12).[20] Jesus, who "stands in solid and abiding unity with Him"[21] demonstrates the Father's love throughout his public life and ministry, and in the performance of the works commissioned by the Father. This "unity of the Father and the Son is central to the Johannine concept of revelation."[22]

Bultmann maintains that it is only through a decisive act of faith on the part of the believer that one is able to overcome the "paradox," the "offense" which allows one to acknowledge the divinity within the humanity of Jesus. "In John the incarnate Logos reveals his 'glory' in his work on earth - though admittedly in a paradoxical fashion visible only to the eyes of the believing (1:14; 2:11)."[23] In responding to Jesus' invitation and call to faith, the believer must be willing to

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[19]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 65.

[20]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 80-82.

[21]Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 13.

[22]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 83.

[23]Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 12.

acknowledge that Jesus is the pre-existent one who has been sent into the world to perform the works commissioned by the Father. When this occurs,

> that which he himself (the Revealer) is has been *actualized* in the believer. Correspondingly it is those who, as believers, allow him to be for themselves what he *is*, who see his glory.[24]

As such, the truth of the following statement becomes apparent: "He who believes in me, believes not in me, but in him who sent me. And he who sees me sees him who sent me" (Jn. 12:44-45). The object of seeing, explains Bultmann "is neither eyewitness or spiritual"[25] but it is the sight of faith "which recognizes the Son of God in the Incarnate One."[26] What faith sees, he adds, is further summarized in I John 4:14: "we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world."[27]

Stephen Smalley concurs with Bultmann's assessment which equates "faith" with "sight." In John, Evangelist and Interpreter he stresses the significance of "seeing" in the Fourth Gospel in association with the notion of faith. This is apparent in the story of the Samaritans who saw and then believed in Jesus as the Saviour of the world (ch. 4) and in the story of the man born blind who became physically then spiritually able to recognize Jesus as the Son of Man.[28] And James

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[24]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 69.

[25]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 69.

[26]Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 72.

[27]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 70.

[28]Stephen Smalley, John, Evangelist and Interpreter, (Greenwood, S. C.: Attic Press, 1978), p. 139.

Charlesworth explains that for the author of the Gospel of John "to believe" is a personal, continuous, dynamic commitment to the one believed to be sent into the world by Him Who Sends.[29]

In the Fourth Gospel, the Johannine community professes that Jesus is the promised one from heaven. In The Humanity of Jesus in the Gospel of John, Marianne Meye Thompson contends that the believing community's affirmation of faith and witness to Jesus' identity is apparent, for example, in the declaration of John the Baptist,[30] in the confessions of the first disciples, in the conversion of the Samaritans and in the story of the man born blind.[31] Since the gift of revelation is a one-time historical occurrence, the onus is on believers, says Bultmann, to pass on their knowledge of and belief in the Revealer to each succeeding generation so that they too may know that Jesus is the Son of God and that in believing, they may have eternal life.[32]

Bultmann's understanding of Jesus as both the revealer and revelation itself[33] in the Fourth Gospel stands firmly in the orthodox tradition.[34] However, recent scholarship has been critical of his interpretation of New Testament theology, and more particularly of his interpretation of

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[29]James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. 93.

[30]See also Rudolf Bultmann's The Gospel of John, p. 76: "Thus the meaning of the Baptist's saying is that in Jesus as the incarnate, eternal Logos all the Jewish messianic expectations and all the Gnostic hopes of a Redeemer are fulfilled." And Raymond Brown, in The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 29, declares that JBap "...is the only one in the first chapter to understand Jesus by Johannine standards, since he...acknowledges Jesus' pre-existence (1:15, 30)."

[31]Marianne Meye Thompson, The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, p. 26-28.

[32]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 70.

[33]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 42.

[34]This is the opinion of Marianne Meye Thompson, The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, p. 2.

revelation in the Fourth Gospel. One of the greatest challenges to Bultmann's thesis came from a former student of his, Ernst Kaesemann, who suggested that

> Bultmann's interpretation...stands and falls by the theory that the Evangelist has used, worked over and glossed a pagan source consisting of speeches purporting to be revelation and has employed at the same time a source consisting of signs, so that the gift and the claim of the revealer may be illustrated from the wonders contained in it...Only thus can he cling to the thesis that the incarnation of the Word is the theme of the Gospel and allow...the Incarnation to maintain the incognito of the Revealer and, by reason of this very incognito, to set up a stumbling-block for the world.[35]

Kaesemann considered that Bultmann had not correctly "distributed the stresses" when interpreting the prologue of the Gospel of John. His own assessment of revelation in the Fourth Gospel was based upon his clarification of Chapter 17, the "summary of the Johannine discourses," as "a counterpart to the prologue."[36] In so doing he was to give a most convincing critique of Bultmann's understanding of the Johannine concept of revelation.[37]

Kaesemann declared that John 1:14a was not the central statement of the Gospel. Rather the emphasis was to be placed on John 1:14b: "and we beheld his glory." He asks:

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[35]Ernst Kaesemann, New Testament Questions of Today, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1969), p. 16.

[36]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1968), p. 3.

[37]John Ashton, Understanding the Fourth Gospel, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), p. 66, says that "Bultmann's severely uncompromising christology is not substantial enough to stand up to the attacks of Kaesemann since the humanity of Jesus (in the Fourth Gospel) is itself altogether too scrawny and spindly to stand a fighting chance against the power and glory of Kaesemann's *'über die Erde schreitender Gott'*" (God striding over the earth).

> For what reason is this statement ("The Word became flesh"[38]) almost always made the centre, the proper theme of the Gospel?...In what sense is he flesh, who walks on water and through closed doors, who...has no need of drink and has food different from that which his disciples seek?...He has need neither of the witness of Moses nor of the Baptist...and he meets his mother as the one who is her Lord...He permits Lazarus to lie in the grave for four days in order that the miracle of his resurrection may be more impressive...How does all this agree with an understanding of a realistic incarnation? Does the statement "the Word became flesh" mean more than that he descended into the world of man and there came into contact with earthly existence, so that an encounter with him became possible? Is not this statement totally overshadowed by the confession "We beheld his glory?"[39]

Kaesemann contends that despite all evidence which clearly suggests the contrary, modern scholars are determined to uncover a christology of humiliation in the Fourth Gospel.[40] He insists that there can be no development from lowliness to glory ascertained from the Johannine Christ. The lowliness and humiliation of the Incarnate One are merely the consequence of the divine mission to make possible communication between the Creator and his creation.[41] This mission necessitated

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[38]Ernst Kaesemann, New Testament Questions of Today, p. 159 writes that "'Flesh' for the Evangelist here (v.14a) is nothing else but the possibility for the Logos, as the Creator and Revealer, to have communication with men...'We beheld his glory' ...is the theme ...of the whole Gospel which is concerned exclusively throughout with the presence of God in Christ."

[39]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 9.

[40]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 8.

[41]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 12.

Jesus' descent into the human sphere, into that "realm of deficiencies and defects, of sickness and death, of lies, unbelief and misunderstandings, of doubts and sheer malice."[42] Kaesemann declares that one cannot seriously speak of the afflicted humanity of the one over whom sickness, suffering and death have no meaning. "Because he himself is the Life and the Resurrection, the world of suffering and death has no power over him..."[43]

Kaesemann explains that in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is referred to as the delegate sent by God: "Jesus is the one who is sent from heaven and as such, according to the rabbinic principle, he is like the sender himself, with the whole divine authority standing behind him."[44] This acknowledgment of the uniformity of both the sender and the one who has been sent verifies for John that

> the Son of Man is neither a man among others, nor the representation of the people of God or of the ideal humanity, but God, descending into the human realm and there manifesting his glory.[45]

Kaesemann outlines that Jesus' glory is manifested in his discourses and prayer,[46] in the spectacular miracles which he performs,[47] in his obedient submission to the will of the Father,[48] and

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[42]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 34.

[43]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 12.

[44]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 50.

[45]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 13.

[46]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 5.

[47]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 21. On p. 22 he writes: "the presence of miracles narrated by John cannot be explained by John's faithfulness toward the tradition... It was not accidental that he omitted demon exorcisms as not being illustrative enough of Jesus'

most profoundly in the event of the passion:

> In John, [the crucifixion] is not death on the tree of shame but a manifestation of divine, self-giving love and the return from earthly existence to the realm of the Father.[49]

In Kaesemann's opinion, the account of the passion refers to the completion of the Incarnation,[50] the perfection of Jesus' glory[51] and his return to the heavenly realm. It means only that Jesus has left behind the imperfection of the earthly sphere and has returned "to the glory of the pre-existent Logos."[52] At best, the account of the crucifixion of Christ becomes an ill-fitting addendum, a postscript perhaps. While this "postscript" accurately reflects the tradition of the passion event, nevertheless, its place within the Johannine theological framework is awkward indeed.[53]

Kaesemann's concept of revelation in the Fourth Gospel clearly demonstrates his contention that the glory of the Johannine Christ dispels any notion that the humanity of the revealer may be

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glory and that he selected the most miraculous stories of the New Testament...the greater and more impressive they are the better."

[48]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 10f.

[49]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 10.

[50]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 18. On p. 20 he states: "John understands the Incarnation as a projection of the glory of Jesus pre-existence and the passion as a return to that glory." On p. 65 he writes: "Incarnation in John does not mean complete, total entry into the earth, into human existence, but rather the encounter between the heavenly and the earthly." And on p. 17 of New Testament Questions of Today Kaesmann states that "the sole purpose of the Incarnation [is] the opening up of the possibility of communication with the heavenly glory."

[51]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 19f.

[52]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 18.

[53]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 7.

discerned in Johannine thought. Clearly, for Kaesemann, the words which Jesus speaks and the deeds which he performs serve to demonstrate his divine glory and attest to his unity with the Father:

> Since in John, all Jesus' words and deeds manifest his being, always and everywhere, the one who reveals himself in them is the one who is always and everywhere one with the Father, the pre-existent Logos in the heavenly glory.[54]

Based on this analysis of revelation in the Fourth Gospel, Kaesemann concludes that the theme of Jesus' glorification so dominated the Evangelist's work that Kaesemann labels it "naively docetic"[55] and suggested that this Gospel had made its way into the canon of the church "through man's error and God's providence."[56] But Kaesemann, no less than Bultmann, has been equally criticized by modern scholarship for his interpretation of revelation in the Gospel of John. The opinions of Marianne Meye Thompson and Stephen Smalley provide excellent examples of the divergence of scholarship arguing against Kaesemann's view.

Thompson maintains that Kaesemann's "naively docetic" judgement "is scarcely adequate to give rise to the dogmatic formulations of the fourth and fifth centuries which characterize Jesus as "true man."[57] She argues that by concentrating on Chapter 17 and thereby focusing on what is "unique" or "particular" to the Fourth Gospel, Kaesemann ignores the more complete portrait of the

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[54]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 20.

[55]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 26.

[56]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 75. In fact Kaesemann goes so far as to state that "...the church committed an error when it declared the Gospel to be orthodox," p. 76.

[57]Marianne Meye Thompson, The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, p. 1.

Johannine Christ presented by the Evangelist.[58] Smalley adds that "while elements in the Johannine portrait of Jesus are capable of a docetic interpretation *if taken by themselves*, the total effect can scarcely be regarded as one of 'divinity without humanity.'"[59]

Indeed, a large component of scholarly review includes refuting, correcting, analyzing, and critiquing the work of others. In this way, more in depth, often more thorough, analyses present themselves. Such is the case with Gail R. O'Day's Revelation in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Mode and Theological Claim. O'Day suggests that current interpretations of revelation in the Fourth Gospel "reflect the varied presuppositions about where the locus of revelation lies."[60] She explains, for example, that based on Judeo-Christian concepts, traditional liberal biblical scholarship focused on the "content" of revelation such that God's love, moral absolutes, and the plan of salvation were revealed in and through Jesus. Comparative studies analyzed Jesus as revealer in terms of factors which were held in common with other religious movements of the ancient Mediterranean world. Bultmann's existential approach, an expansion of the comparative method, focused on the conscious decision of individuals to come to faith by accepting the fact *(Dass)* of Jesus' salvific revelation. Existentialism, she explains, emphasized an acknowledgement of "God's presence in the moment of human decision."[61] Finally, the dogmatic approach, under which Kaesemann's work falls,

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[58]Marianne Meye Thompson, The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, p. 3. On p. 117 she correctly asserts that "when...only selected pericopes and ideas are emphasized and other equally important Johannine elements are ignored, the resultant picture misrepresents the Gospel and its portrayal of Jesus."

[59]Stephen Smalley, John, Evangelist and Interpreter, p. 55.

[60]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Mode and Theological Claim, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), p. 34.

[61]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 41.

represented one other method which stressed the importance of content *(Was)* in revelation. Accordingly, God was made known through dogmatic formulation, the focal point of which was pre-existence and the unity of the Father and Son.[62]

In O'Day's view, each of these attempts at interpreting revelation in the Fourth Gospel is unsatisfactory since

> what seems to be missing in all these approaches...is an understanding of the Johannine theology of revelation that takes seriously the Gospel narrative itself...We will never approach the Fourth Evangelist's answer to the question, "How is God known?" *until we take the mode of articulation of the text seriously*[63]....Any study of Johannine revelation that ignores the form, style and mode of Johannine revelatory language will always miss the mark. The mode of revelation is not incidental but essential to the Johannine theology of revelation.[64]

To ignore the language, style and technique of the Fourth Gospel when studying the "fact" *(Dass)* or "content" *(Was)* of revelation undermines the relevance of previous findings. Consequently, a more thorough analysis than that offered solely by the study of content, comparison, existentialism or dogma is required. O'Day suggests that

> in order to arrive at a more integrated understanding of revelation in the Fourth Gospel, we need to approach the question of revelation with categories that reflect

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[62]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, pp. 34-42.

[63]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 44. Emphasis added.

[64]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 47.

the gospel's interplay of *narrative mode* and *theological claim.*[65]

One category which reflects this interplay of narrative mode and theological claim is the "how" *(Wie)* of revelation, that is, "how" Jesus is revealed in the Fourth Gospel. A study of the "how" in addition to the "fact" and the "content" will determine the ways in which "the Fourth Evangelist presents Jesus as revealer and communicates his theology of revelation."[66] In one demonstration of this aspect, O'Day interprets the "portrait of Jesus' self-revelation"[67] as presented in Jn. 4:4-42 by studying the literary dynamics employed by the Evangelist. Of special interest is the use of various ironic techniques which "underscore the interrelationship" of both the literal and theological significance of the text.[68] These techniques are effectively used to "develop the portrait of Jesus as revealer and communicate his theology of revelation."[69] Further, the Evangelist's literary techniques are designed so that the *reader* enters into and participates in the text. In this way "the tension between what is said and what is meant, between what the reader anticipates and what the reader actually discovers, keep the reader constantly engaged with the text and, through the text, with Jesus as revealer."[70]

In the dialogue and movement between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, the disciples and the Samaritan villagers, for example, the reader encounters Jesus as the revealer. The Evangelist

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[65]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 46.

[66]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 46.

[67]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 50.

[68]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 48.

[69]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 51.

[70]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 96.

writes in such a way that this encounter anticipates that the reader as well as the interlocutors will "reassess their perception of each situation"[71] in order to uncover the multi-dimensional meaning of the text and, in so doing, will accept (or reject) Jesus' invitation and call to faith.[72]

At first, the discourse in Jn. 4:4–42 is understood on the literal level by those with whom Jesus is engaged in conversation. The discerning reader, however, establishes very quickly that the words which Jesus speaks reveal his true identity. We see this, for example, in the exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Here the reader becomes the silent spectator in the dialogue and ironic interplay which reveal the theological truths about Jesus and his role as revealer. As O'Day explains,

> the give and take between Jesus and the woman is essential to John's portrait of Jesus as revealer. The woman's struggle to move from her vantage point to Jesus', to understand fully Jesus' words and thereby discover who Jesus is, enables the reader to experience Jesus and his revelation...[73]

Before Jesus' declarative statement of self-revelation in v.26, the woman comprehends his conversation only on the literal level: she understands neither who Jesus is, nor his proffered invitation (Jn. 4:11, 12, 15). On the other hand, the reader is aware that it is "the King of the Jews" who offers living water and the gift of eternal life. It is the reader and not the woman who develops "a true and full worship of the Father that reflects a full knowledge of who the Father is and full

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[71]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 96.

[72]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 49-51.

[73]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 63f.

communion with the Father"[74] by recognizing and accepting Jesus *now*, in the eschatological present, as the anticipated Messiah, the Saviour of the world, the revealer of God.[75]

By participating in the dialogue of 4:4-26, the Evangelist invites the Samaritan woman and the reader to acknowledge and experience the veracity of Jesus' words: "I am, the one who speaks to you."[76] O'Day interprets the "I am" *(ego eimi)* statement in v.26 as

> an absolute *ego eimi*, that is, an *ego eimi* saying that is an unqualified revelation of Jesus' identity...Jesus is using the *ego eimi* in its fullest sense to identify himself as God's revealer, the one sent of God (4:34).[77]

As in the dialogue with the Samaritan woman, the reader observes and participates in the revelatory dynamic present in the words of Jesus' and the disciples in vv. 35-38. Here, however, the Evangelist employs "different literary techniques" which point to "a different aspect of the revelatory mode."[78] The reader, followed by the disciples, understands Jesus insight into his identity and his purpose. We realize that Jesus is not speaking of ordinary food in Jn. 4:34. Jesus' self-revelation and commission to complete the work of the Father become apparent when he says to the disciples "My *food* is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (Jn. 4:34). O'Day suggests that this verse serves the same function as the "I am" statement in 4:26 in that "it points to

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[74]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 71.

[75]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, pp. 57-72.

[76]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel. The "I am" statement on p. 72 is the author's translation of Jn. 4:26.

[77]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 72.

[78]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 81.

Jesus as God's revealer and the one sent of God."[79]

As well, a dual purpose is served and understood in the employment of the imagery of a harvest which is occurring in the eschatological present. Since harvest is a common image for completion it functions as a metaphor for Jesus' continuation and completion of God's work on earth and it "presents the future commissioning of the disciples as something which has already occurred."[80]

Finally, despite the Samaritan woman's "limited conception of Jesus' identity and function," her witness was essential in bringing a number of her people to faith. In ironic contrast to Jesus' "own," who rejected him, many more Samaritans experience Jesus and his revelation in coming to know him as the Saviour of the world during his sojourn in Samaria. As O'Day explains: "'to dwell' with Jesus is to have direct contact with him, to share in his relationship with God."[81]

O'Day's analysis of Jn. 4:4-42 has provided one example of the "interdependency of *narrative mode* and *theological claim*" which dominates the Fourth Gospel. This technique not only points to Jesus' self-revelation, but demands a response from all those who encounter this revelation. As such, O'Day has effectively demonstrated that in the Fourth Gospel the locus of revelation lies in the narrative itself. And nowhere is this more succinctly stated than in John 20:30-31: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but *these are written* that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." In this verse the Evangelist explicitly declares his purpose in writing his

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[79]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 79.

[80]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 85.

[81]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, pp. 86-89.

Gospel. From this declaration O'Day concludes that

> the locus of revelation does not lie in the myriad of signs and deeds done by Jesus that are not recorded in the text, even if they were done in the presence of the disciples. Revelation does not lie in deeds that exist outside of the world of the Gospel because the deeds in and of themselves are not revelatory (cf. John 20:29). Rather, the locus of revelation lies *in* the written narrative of those things to which the reader of the Gospel is given access. By focusing on the written narration of Jesus' deeds, the Fourth Evangelist...explicitly draws our attention to the Gospel narrative as the locus of revelation...John 20:30-31 brings us back to the notion of the "how" of revelation. *Revelation lies in the Gospel narrative and the world created by the words of that narrative!*[82]

In light of this in-depth examination of revelation in the Fourth Gospel, it is easy to discern the limitations of traditional research which imply that the locus of revelation lies only in the message of the Fourth Gospel, the events which are recorded in the Gospel or in the person of Christ as depicted by the fourth Evangelist. O'Day insists that

> the Fourth Gospel's narrative makes available to the reader an experience of Jesus and the God known in Jesus in ways that resist our attempts to assimilate them into systematic categories...Our yearning for revelation is not adequately answered by affirmations that claim that the locus of revelation lies in the message of the text, the events behind the text, the person behind the text, or the proclamation in front of the

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[82]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 94.

text. Such acclamations restrict the arena in which God is made known...[83]

Despite the limitations which O'Day's analysis reveals concerning the methodologies employed by scholars of such stature as Bultmann and Kaesemann, central components of their theses were of great importance. Both had correctly asserted, for instance, that in Johannine theology the *unity* of the Father and Son was the essential component for faith. Kaesemann declared that "if the unity of the Son with the Father is the central theme of the Johannine proclamation, then that unity is of necessity also the proper object of faith."[84] Further:

> *Faith means only one thing; to know who Jesus is.* This knowing is not merely theoretical, for it verifies itself only in remaining with Jesus. Nor does it take place in one single act of perception from which everything else would automatically follow. *It means discipleship, following on that way which is Jesus himself.*[85]

But in what does this "way which is Jesus himself" consist? A central text is Jn. 14:6 in which Jesus declares "I am the way, the truth, and the life." In 14:6, "truth" (*ἀλήθεια*) and "life" (*ζωή*) are integrally linked with "way" (*ὁδός*). This gives the exegetical key which unlocks the meaning of discipleship in the Fourth Gospel. In other words, focusing upon the motif of truth in the Fourth Gospel clarifies what discipleship means.

The meaning and significance of truth in the Fourth Gospel, however, is not immediately apparent. I. de la Potterie has shown us how apocalyptic and sapiential literature of the post-biblical period illuminates the meaning of *ἀλήθεια* in the Gospel of John. In this literature *ἀλήθεια* is

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[83]Gail R. O'Day, Revelation in the Fourth Gospel, p. 113-114.

[84]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 24f.

[85]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 25. Emphasis added.

moral, as in the Hebrew Bible, but indicates "uprightness." La Potterie notes that important Johannine phrases such as "doing the truth" (Jn. 3:21), "in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4:23f), and "in truth" (Jn. 17:19) have no parallel in hellenistic literature. These phrases do, however, have parallels in such books as *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* and in some of the writings found at Qumran. Moreover, in some apocalyptic literature ἀλήθεια refers to revealed truth, as in Dn. 10:21 where the plan of God is written in the "book of truth" (cf. Wis. 3:9; IQH 7, 26f.; IQH 6,6).[86]

In the Fourth Gospel "to speak" often signifies revelation, as in, for example, Jn. 17:17, "thy word is truth," and Jn. 8:40, "I told you the truth which is from God." In Hellenistic and Gnostic dualism, on the other hand, ἀλήθεια is not a word which is heard, but the divine essence seen or contemplated upon arrival at the spiritual goal (CH 8,3). La Potterie concludes that in the Fourth Gospel ἀλήθεια is not "an object of intellectual research, but the essential principle of the moral life, of sanctity; for it is the thought of God on man, perceived and heard in faith."[87] Expressions such as "doing the truth" and "walking in the truth" have a rich, distinctively Johannine connotation which emphasizes the power of the ἀλήθεια which abides in us.[88]

Statements about truth, then, in the Fourth Gospel are not merely metaphysical statements. Frank Matera explains:

> People are not to confuse the truth with an intellectual or philosophical concept, as Pilate appears to do when he asks, "What is truth?" (18:38). The truth is God's own

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[86]Ignace de La Potterie, "La verita in San Giovanni," in RivBib 11, 1963, p. 5f. Also, Jean Giblet, "Aspects of Truth in the New Testament," in Edward Schillebeeckx and Bas Van Iersel (eds.), Truth and Certainty, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1973), p. 37.

[87]Ignace de La Potterie, "La verita in San Giovanni," p. 20.

[88]Ignace de La Potterie, "La verita in San Giovanni," p. 22.

self-revelation incarnate in the one whom he has sent into the world. This is why Jesus can say he *is* the truth. Moreover, when he tells the Jews that he has spoken the truth (8:45), he is not merely affirming that he has not lied. Speaking the truth means that Jesus has told the world who he is: the one sent by God into the world. Jesus reveals himself to the world, and in so doing reveals the Father to the world.[89]

To say that Jesus is the way because he is the truth, as in Jn. 14:6, or to say that the Father and Son are one, as in Jn. 10:30 (cf. 10:38; 14:10, 11, 20; 17:11, 21, 22), is not to make a statement about a unity in essence but to claim that there is a "unity of action." Jey J. Kanagaraj points out that "John presents Jesus as the one who had seen the Father and his works and he is sent to reveal precisely the same God by doing the same works."[90]

This study of ἀλήθεια shows that in Johannine theology, just as Bultmann and Kaesemann had asserted, the unity of the Father and Son is central. Moreover, its importance in Johannine theology indicates how significant it was for the community which produced the Gospel. Jean Giblet proposes that

to understand the truth in the word of Jesus, man must have a certain attitude. Only he who "does the truth" (Jn 3.19), "he who is the truth" (Jn 18.37) can hear the word of God and believe in it. The assent of faith also requires commitment, obedience

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[89]Frank Matera, New Testament Ethics, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996), p. 99. See also Bultmann's Theology, p. 19 where he says "truth is...God's very reality revealing itself-occurring in Jesus. As he is the truth...he is also the life (Jn. 14:6)."

[90]Jey J. Kanagaraj, "Mysticism in the Gospel of John: An Inquiry into Its Background," (coll. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Series, sup. 158), p. 250.

which is lasting (I Jn. 2; 4f; 3.18f).[91]

Clearly, *through the pages of the Fourth Gospel the Johannine community wishes to show how it continues to experience the saving revelatory power of the Father.* "The knowledge of God's truth is a source of freedom because believers become children of God (Jn. 8:32) and share in his holiness (17:17)."[92]

As those who have seen and thus believe (Jn. 2:11) in Jesus' words and works and in so doing have become children of God, it is the disciples[93] who abide in his word (8:31), who keep his teachings and commandments (14:15) and who follow and bear witness to the Son of God.

> The disciples would glorify Jesus by recognizing his singular relationship with the Father (18:9-10) and by reflecting the glory of the mutual love shared by the Father and the Son in their own community (17:22-23).[94]

C.K. Barrett says that "as their faith was itself the result of Jesus' mission to the world, so

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[91]Jean Giblet, "Aspects of Truth in the New Testament," in Edward Schillebeeckx and Bas Van Iersel (eds.), Truth and Certainty, p. 38; also David J. Hawkin, The Johannine World, p. 73 writes that "the very nature of the revelation of Jesus calls forth a response 'in truth' - which requires the cultivation of a certain inner disposition that has an affinity with and a connaturality with the revelation itself."

[92]Jean Giblet, "Aspects of Truth in the New Testament," in Edward Schillebeeckx and Bas Van Iersel (eds.), Truth and Certainty, pp. 35-42.

[93]Raymond Brown, in Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 82, n. 154, says that "Discipleship is the primary category for John; and closeness to Jesus, not apostolic mission, is what confers dignity." James Charlesworth, in The Beloved Disciple, p. XIV explains that "the concept 'disciple' in the Gospel of John includes many more women and men that just the twelve."

[94]Craig R. Koester, Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), p. 214.

their mission will evoke faith."[95] R. Alan Culpepper writes that the faith of the disciples "becomes an abiding faith with the disciples' willingness to follow Jesus (1:37, 38, 40) in accepting his words, in accepting his works. Faith which does not lead to following is therefore inadequate. 'Abiding' is the test of discipleship (cf. 8:31)"[96] And Kaesemann contended that the mark of true faith occurs when an individual has become a believer, a follower, a disciple.[97]

Clearly, in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus reveals God to the Johannine community, although the exact nature of this revelation is disputed. Bultmann argued that revelation was presented merely as fact without content, visible in the works commissioned by the Father and performed by the Son. As the revealer, Jesus had set before each individual the decision either to accept on faith or to reject that reality. Kaesemann countered with an argument focusing on the content of revelation as demonstrated in the glorification of the Father through the works of the Son during Jesus' sojourn on earth. And O'Day maintained that in addition to studying the fact and the content of revelation, one must also look at "how" Jesus is revealed in the Fourth Gospel. This, she claims, is accomplished by examining the fourth Evangelist's use of form, style and content of the written text as the most effective means by which the reader can develop then comprehend the Fourth Gospel's

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[95]C.K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text, (London: SPCK, 1955), p. 511; and R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 115 writes of the disciples that "collectively and individually the disciples are models or representatives with whom readers may identify. They are marked especially by their recognition of Jesus and belief in his claims. Yet, they are not exemplars of perfect faith, but of positive responses and typical misunderstandings."

[96]R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 115; also Frank Matera, New Testament Ethics, p. 43, says that in the Fourth Gospel "discipleship means to abide and dwell in Jesus."

[97]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus, p. 41.

portrait of Jesus as revealer and of his theology of revelation.

Despite differing interpretations, modern scholars agree that revelation and the unity of the Father and Son is fundamental to Fourth Gospel theology.[98] Kaesemann had keenly observed that this unity was the essential component of faith. Faith means knowing who Jesus is. And Jesus is known through discipleship. By means of discipleship the Johannine community encounters the saving revelatory power of the Father through the workings of the Son. Crucial to the community's experience of salvation is the figure of the disciple whom Jesus loved, the Beloved Disciple.[99] It is this disciple who is best recognized for his singular relationship with Jesus and who best exemplifies the meaning of walking and abiding in the truth which is Jesus himself. His function in the Fourth Gospel serves to ground the Johannine community in faith and to authenticate the theological truths of the Fourth Evangelist.

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[98]Indeed Karl-Josef Kuschel, Born Before all Time, (London: SCM Press, 1992), p. 388, says that the concern of the Fourth Evangelist is to present "a unity of revelation between Father and Son."

[99]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple. Brown asserts that "discipleship is the primary Christian category for John, and the disciple par excellence is the Beloved Disciple whom Jesus loved," p. 191. Also R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 147, says that "the paradigm of discipleship is the Beloved Disciple, who abides in Jesus' love, believes, and bears a true witness."

CHAPTER TWO:

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

The Beloved Disciple is a figure who appears in the New Testament only in the Fourth Gospel and whose identity has long been a topic of debate. R. Alan Culpepper and James Charlesworth both suggest that in all likelihood the first readers of the Gospel knew to whom the Evangelist was referring when he wrote of the Beloved Disciple.[100] As early as the 2nd Century C.E., Irenaeus of Lyons identified the Beloved Disciple, the author of the Fourth Gospel and John the Son of Zebedee as one and the same.[101]

However, with the rise of modern critical analyses of biblical texts this view has been challenged and, except for a minority of adherents,[102] has ultimately been rejected. Rejected, too, is any theory which proposes that this "disciple whom Jesus loved" was a fictional character created

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[100]R. Alan Culpepper, John, The Son of Zebedee, (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), p. 57; James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. 6, 34, and 45.

[101]Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.1.1; also Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, v.8.4; v.24.3.

[102]See, for example, John W. Pryor, John: Evangelist of the Covenant People, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), p. 3, who says "we may, with considerable justification, think of the Beloved Disciple when we refer in our study to John, or to the evangelist"; also C.K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 177, allows for the *possibility* that the Beloved Disciple was John, the son of Zebedee. On the other hand, Raymond Brown, in Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 33f., acknowledges that in Vol. I of his AB Commentary The Gospel According to John, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966, (1:xvii)) he incorrectly concluded that the Beloved Disciple was John the Son of Zebedee. He later changed this position based upon the unlikely event that John, one of the twelve, would have been the rival of Peter, as the Beloved Disciple *appears* to be. Brown now contends that "...the figure who *became the* Beloved Disciple was the unnamed disciple of 1:35-40"; see also D. M. Smith, John, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1976), p. 47.

by the Fourth Evangelist.[103] Clearly, John 21:20-23 attests to the distress in the community over the death of the Beloved Disciple.

> Although the beloved disciple appears to be an idealized figure, the conclusion of the gospel indicates that he was an actual person...The death of this disciple created a crisis within a circle of believers who believed that he would survive until Jesus' return (21:22-23), and such a crisis is comprehensible only if the disciple is understood to have actually lived.[104]

Who then was this mysterious figure? Various scholars cite textual evidence in support of varying theories, from John Mark, known to us from the Acts of the Apostles (12:12),[105] to Lazarus, a figure in the Fourth Gospel who was known and well loved by Jesus.[106] In The Beloved Disciple,

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[103]R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 47 says: "Insofar as there is a consensus among Johannine scholars, it is that there was a real person, who may have been an eyewitness to events in Jesus' ministry, and who was later the authoritative source of tradition for the Johannine community." On p. 121 he writes: "it is now generally agreed that the Beloved Disciple was a real historical person who has representative, paradigmatic, or symbolic significance in John"; also C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 447; James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. 13; and Raymond Brown, p. 31of The Community of the Beloved Disciple writes that "the thesis that he is purely fictional or only an ideal figure is quite implausible." Rudolf Bultmann, however, The Gospel of John, p. 70, considered that the "Beloved Disciple" was a symbolic character throughout the Gospel and a "definite historical person" only in Chapter 21.

[104]Craig R. Koester, Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel, (Mineapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), p. 217; Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, on p. 31, writes of the distress in the community over the death of this "historical person and companion of Jesus;" also James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. XIV: "members of this community were traumatized by the death of this disciple..."

[105]See P. Parker's "John and John Mark," JBL 79 (1960), pp. 97-110; also L. Johnson, "Who Was the Beloved Disciple?" The Expository Times 77 (1965-1966), pp. 157-158.

[106]Vernard Eller, The Beloved Disciple, His Name, His Story, His Thought, pp. 53-59; also Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 80.

James Charlesworth concludes that when Thomas, in a confession of faith declares "My Lord and My God" (20:28), it is he who reveals himself as the Beloved Disciple.[107] However, despite the differing opinions which have been proposed, textual evidence does not conclusively support any of these theories. Simply stated,

> we do not know who the disciple is, and the Evangelist makes no attempt to tell us. What we can say is that the Evangelist regarded him as an eyewitness to Jesus' earthly existence and that he was one of the disciples, though not necessarily one of the Twelve. It is quite possible that he was a Jerusalem disciple, but beyond that we cannot go.[108]

Since the fourth Evangelist never discloses the identity of the Beloved Disciple, it seems highly probable that the anonymity of this individual was deliberate. If this is the case, then the focus must shift from identification to purpose; from naming the disciple whom Jesus loved, to discovering why the Beloved Disciple appears at strategically and theologically significant points within the Gospel narrative. Kevin Quast suggests that

> it is most difficult to decide on the exact function the evangelist or editor intended to give to the Beloved Disciple's anonymity, but at least we can be sure that the anonymity was deliberate and as an anonymous figure he obviously carried substantial authority in at least one community...What is important is the observation that this person bore symbolic and representative significance within the Gospel for

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[107]James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, chapter 4, pp. 225-287.

[108]David J. Hawkin, The Johannine World, p. 88.

the Johannine community. [109]

Given the considerable lack of evidence regarding identification, for the purposes of this study the identity of the Beloved Disciple will not be considered. It is the symbolic and representative *function* of the Beloved Disciple within the Johannine redaction, a function which reveals the self-understanding of the Johannine community, which is of primary concern. As a result of this undertaking,

> if we can perceive more clearly how the Johannine community understood the role of the Beloved Disciple, we will be in a much better position to grasp the community's self-understanding and hence to understand more fully the nature of the community.[110]

In the Fourth Gospel, we are first introduced to the Beloved Disciple at the Last Supper (Jn. 13:23-30); he later appears with the mother of Jesus in the scene at the foot of the cross (19:25-27; 35); he and Peter race to the empty tomb of Jesus (20:1-10); he is the first to recognize the risen Lord on the Sea of Tiberias (21:7); and finally, in ch. 21:23, concern is expressed within the community over the death of the Beloved Disciple.[111] An examination of each of the scenes in which the

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[109]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 20f.; on p. 8 he writes: "suggestions concerning the historicity and identity of the Beloved Disciple have gone full circle and one may only conclude that an exact answer will always elude us," and on p. 12, "It should be obvious that the evangelist intended the Beloved Disciple to remain anonymous."

[110]R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 265f.

[111]It is sometimes maintained that the Beloved Disciple is also mentioned in 1:35-42 (Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 33) and in 18:15-17; see Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 77; also R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, who, while acknowledging on p. 121 that the presence of the Beloved Disciple in 1:37ff and 18:15 are debated, on p. 44 writes: "it may well be that the unidentified companion of Andrew in 1:35-40 is the Beloved Disciple...There is some cogency in identifying both this disciple and Peter's

Beloved Disciple appears will allow a greater understanding of how the Beloved Disciple functions within the Johannine theological framework.

It is the consensus of modern scholarship that the symbolic, representative and theological function of the Beloved Disciple in relation to the mother of Jesus at the foot of the cross and to Peter in all other scenes which feature this individual illuminates the meaning of each of these pericopes. More importantly, an exploration of the distinctive relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple will uncover a range of scholarly opinions from those who see a rivalry between the two, to the anti-Petrine polemic,[112] to the view of Peter and the Beloved Disciple as assuming equally important but different roles in the Johannine narrative. In examining the nature of the relationship between the two, Kevin Quast considers it prudent to bear in mind the following:

> Peter and the Beloved Disciple are highlighted in the Johannine narratives and are thus significant characters. They are to be interpreted in relationship to one another. The relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple is subservient to the christological thrust of each narrative. Peter and the Beloved Disciple have separate

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unnamed companion in 18:15 with the Beloved Disciple." In 1:35-42 two disciples of John the Baptist follow Jesus. One of the two, Andrew, next brings Simon Peter (his brother) to Jesus. C.K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 515f. suggests that if the reading *protos* (1:41) be accepted, then the unnamed disciple would be one of a pair of brothers (James or John). However, the reading *proton* is probably to be preferred and such a reading does not support this interpretation. In the other pericope (18:15-17) "another disciple" is known to the High Priest and brings Peter into the High Priest's courtyard. The fact that this disciple is not named and is associated with Peter has led many to speculate that he is the Beloved Disciple. But the text does not support this identification - see Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 645, n. 4.

[112]As we will see, "If there is an anti-Petrine polemic in John, it is defensive rather than offensive in tone. In the community's gospel it is clear that there is no basis for pressing Peter's superiority over the Beloved Disciple, but there is no denial of Peter's pastoral role either," R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 122.

functions which vary from narrative to narrative.[113]

A proper understanding of each of these characters and the roles which they assume will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the function of both the Beloved Disciple and Peter within the Johannine redaction and will allow for a greater understanding of the Gospel as a whole.

The Last Supper: 13:23-30

Specific reference to the Beloved Disciple can be found within chapters 13-21 which comprise the second half of the Fourth Gospel. In chs. 13-17 of this section Jesus addresses his own, "his true disciples,"[114] that minority of adherents who have come to believe that Jesus truly is revelation and life. Quast reminds us that

> it must be kept in mind that this section of 13-20 is directed to the limited audience of believers. The Johannine emphasis of discipleship comes into its own now as a prevalent theme...In light of this, it is natural to find the first explicit reference to the Beloved Disciple in 13:23.[115]

Our first introduction to the "disciple whom Jesus loved"[116] occurs at the Last Supper[117]

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[113]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 165f.

[114]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 67.

[115]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 55; see also C.K. Barrett. The Gospel According to St. John, p. 436; David J. Hawkin, The Johannine World, p. 81, and R. Alan Culpepper who suggests that (for reasons which will become quite clear throughout this chapter) 13:21-30 "is probably the most important witness to the community's understanding of the role and functions of the BD," The Johannine School, (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1975), p. 266.

[116]Raymond Brown in Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 33, would argue that although we are first introduced to the Beloved Disciple in 13:23 "this does not mean that the

immediately following the symbolic action of Jesus washing of the disciples' feet (13:1-20).[118] The footwashing scene is significant in two ways. On the literal level, it signals Jesus' example of service to others, and secondly, the scene contains veiled references to Jesus' foreknowledge of his impending fate. Quast explains:

> Immediately preceding 13.21-30 is the description of the foot-washing...In the midst of Jesus' actions and words in this scene are veiled references to Jesus' awareness that Judas is going to betray him (13.10,18,19). When this is coupled with the introduction of 13.2 ["and during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him"]...it becomes apparent that the stage is being set for Jesus to reveal his foreknowledge of his betrayal...The main

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Beloved Disciple was not present during the ministry but that he achieved his *identity* in a christological context." Brown suggests that it is not out of the realm of possibility that the Beloved Disciple may have first been a disciple of John the Baptist. Also James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. 45 says that just because the Beloved Disciple is not mentioned until 13:23 does not mean he was not with Jesus during his entire ministry - it may simply mean he came to true faith at the Last Supper. But R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 215, says that "The Beloved Disciple...is introduced as a character unknown to the reader (13:23; 21:24). He is first referred to as "one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" (13:23), not "*the* disciple whom Jesus loved" as he is in 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20. The difference is slight but shows that the reader is not expected to recognize the Beloved Disciple."

[117]For David J. Hawkin, The Johannine World, p. 81, "it is evident that the Christian readers of the Gospel are meant to identify with the group at the Last Supper, which is representative of the Christian community."

[118]John W. Pryor, John: Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 59 explains that the significance of the footwashing is twofold: "...his death will be for the spiritual cleansing of those who are his...and to serve as a model for service within the community"; and C.K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 436, suggests that the footwashing scene symbolically prefigures the significance of the crucifixion. "The public acts of Jesus on Calvary, and his private act in the presence of his disciples, are alike in that each is an act of humility and service, and that each proceeds from the love of Jesus for his own. The cleansing of the disciples' feet represents their cleansing from sin in the sacrificial blood of Christ (1:29; 19:34)."

purpose of the pericope is to declare to the reader that Jesus did indeed know of his forthcoming betrayal and consciously initiated his own final hour.[119]

Verse 23 reads as follows: "ἦν ἀνακείμενος εἷς ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς·" ("One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, *was lying close to the breast of Jesus*"). Many scholars agree that this verse is clearly significant. It recalls Jn 1:18: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, *who is in the bosom of the Father*, he has made him known." The Greek phrase in 1:18 is identical to the phrase in 13:23 so that "lying close to the breast of Jesus" is indistinguishable from "into the bosom of the Father." English translations obscure this point by translating one as "into the bosom of the Father" and the other as "lying close to the breast of Jesus."

God is not directly accessible to humans ("no one has ever seen God"); the Johannine theology of revelation allows for the accessibility of God only through Jesus. Jesus reveals God because of their special relationship - he is *into the bosom of the Father*, indicating the dynamic relationship which enables Jesus to "make known" God. The implication of 13:23 then becomes clear: *just as Jesus has a special relationship with the Father, so the Beloved Disciple has a special relationship with Jesus. As Jesus reveals God so the Beloved Disciple reveals Jesus.* The affinity between Jesus and the Beloved Disciple is definitively established as tantamount to the unique and intimate relationship between the Father and the Son.[120] "Just as the Son had come from the Father

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[119]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 56f.

[120]Kevin Quast in Peter and the Beloved Disciple p. 58-59, says: "We must allow for some sort of parallel between the intimacy of the Jesus-Father relationship and Beloved Disciple-Jesus relationship. Readers of the Gospel could not have avoided coming to this conclusion themselves...The Beloved Disciple is in the closest of relationships to Jesus"; R. Alan Culpepper, in John, Son of Zebedee, p. 60, writes that 13:23 signals the "privileged relationship" between

and revealed the Father, so the Beloved Disciple came from the bosom of Jesus and revealed him to later believers."[121]

In Jn. 13:23 the Fourth Evangelist clearly depicts the Beloved Disciple as the embodiment of true discipleship in intimate association with the Son of God and therefore with the Father.

> From this narrative the reader is able to see that the Beloved Disciple, and hence the Johannine community,[122] can and *does* enjoy a direct, intimate relationship with Christ. He does this to a level unequalled by his peers - yet he does this while still being a part of the wider fellowship and structure of Christian disciple.[123]

Our first glimpse of the Beloved Disciple establishes his close, dynamic relationship with Jesus. However, scholars have noted that the story which immediately follows raises a number of rather puzzling questions. Jn. 13:24-28:

> νεύει οὖν τούτῳ Σίμων Πέτρος πυθέσθαι τίς ἂν εἴη περὶ οὗ λέγει. ἀναπεσὼν οὖν ἐκεῖνος οὕτως ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ λέγει αὐτῷ, Κύριε, τίς ἐστιν; ἀποκρίνεται Ἰησοῦς, Ἐκεῖνος ἐστιν ᾧ ἐγὼ βάψω τὸ ψωμίον καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ. βάψας οὖν τὸ ψωμίον [λαμβάνει καὶ]

Jesus and the Beloved Disciple, since Jn.1:18 "provides the model for the Beloved Disciple's relationship to Jesus"; see also R. Alan Culpepper's Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 121; as well as C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 446.

[121]R. Alan Culpepper, John, the Son of Zebedee, p. 60. In Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 121, he writes that "just as Jesus was "in the bosom" of the Father and able to make him known, so the Beloved Disciple is uniquely able to make Jesus known."

[122]The Beloved Disciple as representative of the Johannine community is a notion which will be explored more fully in the following sections.

[123]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 70.

δίδωσιν Ἰούδᾳ Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου. καὶ μετὰ τὸ ψωμίον τότε εἰσῆλθεν εἰς ἐκεῖνον ὁ Σατανᾶς. λέγει οὖν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ὃ ποιεῖς ποίησον τάχιον. τοῦτο [δὲ] οὐδεὶς ἔγνω τῶν ἀνακειμένων πρὸς τί εἶπεν αὐτῷ. (...so Simon Peter beckoned to him [the Beloved Disciple] and said, "Tell us who it is of whom he speaks." So lying thus, close to the breast of Jesus, he said to him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give this morsel when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then after the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him.)

The question which is immediately raised concerns the Beloved Disciple. Why, when he knew the identity of the traitor, did he not respond to Peter's request to ask Jesus who among them would betray him? Even more vexing is verse 28 " no one at the table knew" why Jesus had given the morsel of bread to Judas Iscariot. Given that the Beloved Disciple made no reply to Peter's question, we can immediately rule out the notion that in this scene the Beloved Disciple acts as mediator between Jesus and Peter.[124]

James Charlesworth comments that

it is singularly important to observe that the Beloved Disciple's question discloses that he does not know who will betray Jesus - or that Jesus is predicting his own death. The Beloved Disciple is included within the sweeping authorial comment that

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[124]This was the position which Rudolf Bultmann held regarding the Beloved Disciple and Peter in this passage. See The Gospel of John, p. 481.

the disciples did not know the meaning of Jesus' words to Judas: "no one at the table knew why he had said this to him" (13:28).[125]

How then are we to discern the symbolic, representative or theological function of the Beloved Disciple in this passage? Secondly, how does Peter factor into our interpretation of this scene? It is important to note at the outset that no contrast is intended between Peter and the Beloved Disciple in this instance. Quast proposes that the intent of each of these characters in this pericope is to "reflect different and supplementary roles used in harmony to be supporting roles in the greater drama of the unfolding hour of Jesus."[126] In his opinion the focus of the Fourth Evangelist was less on Peter and the Beloved Disciple than on Jesus and Judas. Here Peter is to be regarded only as spokesman for the Twelve and witness to the actions and words of Jesus.[127] And the Beloved Disciple is neither spokesman for Jesus nor the Twelve, supported by the fact that he discloses nothing of what he knows to those present at the table.[128] Quast concludes that the purpose of this particular episode is quite simple. It is designed to allow not the disciples, but the Johannine readership, access to the knowledge that Judas was the betrayer and that Jesus consciously participated in that act of betrayal.[129]

In light of the exceptional relationship which has been established between Jesus and the Beloved Disciple and in Jesus' disclosure of the identity of the betrayer only to the Beloved Disciple,

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[125]James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. 54f.

[126]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 69.

[127]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 69.

[128]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 160.

[129]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 64 and p. 165.

we must determine that the role of the Beloved Disciple in this scene was somewhat more significant. Only the disciple whom Jesus loved is privy to the knowledge that Judas is the betrayer, but he can do nothing. Because Jesus consciously initiated his own "final hour", even if all present knew of Judas' plan none could prevent the ultimate glorification of the Father which was to occur through Jesus' passion, death and resurrection.

In this instance, as in 13:23, we are reminded of the close and trusting relationship which the Beloved Disciple shares with Jesus. Hawkin is able to locate the entire point of the pericope in the exchange between Jesus and the Beloved Disciple in Jn. 24-28. He proposes that

> the whole scene specially introduces the "disciple whom Jesus loved," by which designation we are to understand him as having a special knowledge of, and relationship to, Jesus. This point is then illustrated in a simple story: the Beloved Disciple alone at the Last Supper knew of the identity of the betrayer. He was the special confidant of Jesus.[130]

Scene At the Foot of the Cross: 19:25-27

The second recorded reference to the Beloved Disciple occurs in 19:25-27. "Closer to Jesus in life (13:23) and in death (19:26-27),"[131] when all the other disciples had scattered,[132] the Beloved

[130]David Hawkin, The Johannine World, p. 82; also R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 121, writes that because the Beloved Disciple "abides in Jesus' love, this disciple can share Jesus' knowledge of the identity of the Betrayer." And C.K. Barrett, The Gospel of John, p. 447, writes: "It is plain from the narrative that the beloved disciple must have understood that Judas was the traitor. To say that he failed to grasp the meaning of the sign is to make him an imbecile." For Barrett, however, "His subsequent inactivity is incomprehensible, and...casts doubt on John's narrative."

[131]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 84.

Disciple remained faithful to Jesus even to the foot of the cross. Charlesworth observes that "the Evangelist shows that while Jesus suffered alone, he was not abandoned in his last hours, and - most importantly - that the reliable witness behind the GosJn himself verified Jesus' physical death."[133]

John 19:26-27 reads: "Ἰησοῦς οὖν ἰδὼν τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὸν μαθητὴν παρεστῶτα ὃν ἠγάπα, λέγει τῇ μητρί, Γύναι, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου. εἶτα λέγει τῷ μαθητῇ, Ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου. καὶ ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ὥρας ἔλαβεν αὐτὴν ὁ μαθητὴς εἰς τὰ ἴδια." ("When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home".)

Since the care of their mother could have been entrusted to the brothers of Jesus, how are we to understand Jesus' directive to his mother and to the Beloved Disciple? More specifically, how are we to interpret the relationship between the Beloved Disciple and Jesus' mother? Brian Grenier notes that

> apart from the Baptist, the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple are the only people in St. John's Gospel who are not given to misunderstanding the words and deeds of Jesus and who embody most fully the faith to which the evangelist would have his community bear constant and courageous testimony...[134]

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[132]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 89: "The Beloved Disciple is singled out as the peculiar object of Jesus' love and is the only male disciple never to have abandoned Jesus."

[133]James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. 61.

[134]Brian Grenier, St. John's Gospel, (New South Wales: St. Paul's Publications, 1991), p. 213.

Most scholars would agree that the significance of this scene and the resulting formation of the new community is determined by discerning the theological roles of both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple. However, there are varying assumptions regarding those roles. Kevin Quast cautions against attaching "too much specific symbolism to the figures of Mary and the Beloved Disciple." In this episode he sees the Beloved Disciple as a "substitute historical witness in place of Peter" to the crucifixion and death of Jesus.[135] However, John W. Pryor suggests that

> Jesus giving over of his mother to the Beloved Disciple...is clearly a symbol of something important for John, but its meaning is not immediately apparent...the Beloved Disciple is given the care of Mary, not vice versa...In this sense Mary becomes a symbol of all who come to the cross of Jesus in adoration and faith - and they are directed to the care of the BD. In this way is confirmed that disciple's status as the guardian of the revelation of Jesus, a revelation handed on in the present gospel.[136]

One can indeed distinguish Mary's faithfulness and the Beloved Disciple's continuation as guardian of the revelation as features unique to this scene, but C. K. Barrett observes a more novel relationship unfolding. He explains that "Behold, your mother!" and "Behold, your son!" resemble to some extent an adoption formula.

> Adoption means the creation of a new relationship...Henceforth, the mother of Jesus and the beloved disciple are to stand in the relation of mother and son; that is, the

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[135]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 97. Also, Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 152, suggests that "it is not John's intention to encourage wild symbolic interpretations of the mother of Jesus here."

[136]John W. Pryor, John: Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 81.

beloved disciple moves into the place of Jesus himself...It is surprising that the brothers should be overlooked, for their lack of faith in Jesus (7:5) could not annul their legal claim...[137]

Craig Koester makes a similar observation although he offers an explanation why the brothers of Jesus were not entrusted with the care of their mother. He explains that "Behold, your mother!" and "Behold, your son!" means something more than a "display of filial devotion." Because Jesus' brothers did not believe in him (7:3,5) they were "not his brothers in faith." It is the Beloved Disciple and the mother of Jesus who both exemplify discipleship in their unquestioning loyalty to Jesus. And so, at the foot of the cross, the Beloved Disciple becomes the brother of Jesus. Further:

After the resurrection *brother* was used...for those who were related to Jesus by faith but not necessarily by kinship ties. Outside the empty tomb, Jesus told Mary Magdalene to "go to my brothers," which now referred to his disciples...*Brother* became the common designation within the circle of Christians who accepted the

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[137]C.K. Barrett, The Gospel of John, p. 552; the view of Craig R. Koester, Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel, pp. 215-217 is exactly the same. He writes: "Behold, your mother!" and "Behold, your son!" resemble to some extent the formulas used for rites of adoption in the ancient world. They are appropriate for a scene in which two people, who are connected by their common faith relationship with Jesus rather than by kinship ties, are brought together into relationship with each other, forming the nucleus of a new community." Also, R. Alan Culpepper, John, the Son of Zebedee, p. 64, writes "Jesus' mother is given to the Beloved Disciple and together they become the nucleus of the new community." However Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 153, sees in the words "Behold, your son" and "mother" "no close biblical or extra-biblical parallels" but rather a "metaphor for spiritual adoption...the Beloved Disciple becomes Jesus' earthly successor as well as his adoptive brother..."

Beloved Disciple's testimony.[138]

Those who consider that the brothers of Jesus are rejected because of their lack of faith are perhaps reading more into the document than this pericope would imply.[139] The scene at the foot of the cross centres around the theological significance of Jesus' mother and the Beloved Disciple. For this reason, the brothers need not be considered.

What is occurring at the foot of the cross is the establishment of a new relationship based on the love, loyalty, devotion and discipleship of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple to their Lord. In this scene

> the Beloved Disciple is 'adopted' into a new family. Jesus' charge to the Beloved Disciple and Mary in ch. 19 is not a bestowal of ecclesiastical office; rather, it is the beginning of a new order of relationships in the family of God inaugurated by Jesus' completed work on the cross. The Beloved Disciple's presence shows the readers of the Gospel that Jesus' work enables the beginning of new relationships in the church.[140]

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[138]Craig R. Koester, Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel, p. 218; Raymond Brown, Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 60, "the address as "brother" (with "sister" implied) is common because the members are all children of God"; R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 96, says that after the resurrection when Jesus tells Mary Magdalene to go and tell "my brothers," he is referring specifically to the disciples. Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 163f., explains: "The Beloved Disciple is chosen in preference to the brothers of Jesus. Indeed, he takes their place because he truly believes in Jesus while they only misunderstand him (7.5). Thus, faith in Jesus is the criterion for adoption into Christ's family, not natural kinship. Spiritual relationships within the new family of faith take priority over natural ties. The church is a family of faith, not primarily of blood relationships."

[139]See, for example, David J. Hawkin, The Johannine World, p. 83.

[140]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 160.

As Jesus dies the Beloved Disciple becomes her son.[141] His role becomes similar to that of Jesus. *Thus, symbolically the claim is that there is continuity between Jesus and the Beloved Disciple*, "the founding figure of the Johannine community."[142] Culpepper says that the relationship between the Beloved Disciple and the mother of Jesus "confers on the Beloved Disciple and by implication, the Johannine community, the authority of succession."[143]

The Beloved Disciple not only witnesses to the birth of the new salvific dispensation, inaugurated by the death of Jesus, but he is given a key role in its future. Through the figure of the Beloved Disciple the Johannine community will claim to have its origins at the foot of the cross and in the words of Jesus. And so, in this pericope

> the Evangelist is inviting his readership to identify with the Beloved Disciple, the disciple who was commissioned by the dying Jesus to be a witness and propagator of the new salvific dispensation, born under the shadow of the cross. The death of Jesus gives life to the Christian community.[144]

Verse 35 offers clear evidence that the community does indeed originate at the foot of the cross and is verified by the disciple whom Jesus loved: "He who saw it has borne witness - his

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[141]See, for example, Brian Grenier, St. John's Gospel, p. 213, who says that "the mother of Jesus becomes, on Calvary, the mother of the beloved disciple and of all who become, through faith, the brothers and sisters of Jesus."

[142]Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 151.

[143]R. Alan Culpepper, John, the Son of Zebedee, p. 64.

[144]David J. Hawkin, The Johannine World, p. 84; also Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 99: "By means of Mary and the Beloved Disciple Jesus reveals to the gospel readers that his crucifixion marks not the end, but the beginning of new relationships in the church."

testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth - that you may believe." C. K. Barrett considers that "the most probable meaning of the verse as intended by the author of the gospel is that the beloved disciple beheld the blood and water which flowed from the side of Christ, and bore witness to what he had seen and knew to be true."[145] How seemingly appropriate that he who constantly remains closest to Jesus, he who has just breathed life into the new Johannine Christian community, and he who will ultimately authenticate the veracity of the entire Gospel should be the one to verify the account of the crucifixion and death of Jesus.[146]

Race to the Empty Tomb: 20:1-10

Except for the postscript, the last specific reference to the Beloved Disciple occurs in Jn. 20:2-9:

> τρέχει οὖν καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς Σίμωνα Πέτρον καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἄλλον μαθητὴν ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ἦραν τὸν κύριον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου, καὶ οὐκ οἴδαμεν ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. Ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ Πέτρος καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής, καὶ ἤρχοντο εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον. ἔτρεχον δὲ οἱ δύο ὁμοῦ· καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς προέδραμεν τάχιον τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ ἦλθεν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια, οὐ μέντοι εἰσῆλθεν. ἔρχεται οὖν καὶ Σίμων Πέτρος

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[145]C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 118.

[146]David R. Beck The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel, (Leeden, N.Y., Koln: Brill, 1997) p. 115: "The presence of the disciple whom Jesus loved at the cross is a narrative affirmation of the eyewitness claim made in v. 35-a claim upon which the veracity and authenticity of his witness rests."

ἀκολουθῶν αὐτῷ, καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον· καὶ θεωρεῖ τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα, καὶ τὸ σουδάριον, ὃ ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ, οὐ μετὰ τῶν ὀθονίων κείμενον ἀλλὰ χωρὶς ἐντετυλιγμένον εἰς ἕνα τόπον. τότε οὖν εἰσῆρθεν καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς ὁ ἐλθὼν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσεν· οὐδέπω γὰρ ᾔδεισαν τὴν γραφὴν ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι. (So she [Mary Magdalene] ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.)

More than any other passage in the Fourth Gospel, this is the one which "most obviously suggests to many readers a competitive relationship"[147] between Peter and the Beloved Disciple. Raymond Brown, for instance, sees this passage as typical of the "consistent and deliberate contrast between Peter and the Beloved Disciple" which has, to this point in the Gospel, been quite

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[147]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 102. David R. Beck, The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel, p. 116, for instance, says "the priority of arrival and entry serves to contrast the disciple Jesus loved with Peter."

prevalent.[148] And Arthur Drodge finds it "odd" not to see anti-Petrinism in this passage.[149] However, John W. Pryor suggests that a more amenable relationship may be discerned here. He contends that

> it is frequently assumed that the BD's early arrival there (at the tomb), along with his belief is a sure sign that John wishes to record some kind of rivalry between the two...but nothing in the Peter-BD contacts...nor in the general mentions of Peter earlier in the gospel, give us any ground for suspecting a rivalry here.[150]

Kevin Quast is another who assures us that "no contrast is intended between the faith of the Beloved Disciple and apparent lack of faith on Peter's part." He concludes that in this episode the faith of the Beloved Disciple "is emphasized for the purpose of encouraging the readers to respond in a similar act of faith."[151] Quast observes that Peter's early entry into the tomb must be interpreted in the light of an eyewitness account designed to verify that Mary Magdalene's report of the empty tomb was indeed accurate. Quast proposes that Peter, unlike the Beloved Disciple, was not brought to faith in this episode. He explains:

> The capacity in which Peter performs is actually heightened by *not* being linked to

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[148]Raymond Brown, Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 82.

[149]Arthur Drodge, "The Status of Peter in the Fourth Gospel: A Note on John 18:10-11, JBL 109 (1990), p. 308, n. 6.

[150]John W. Pryor, John, Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 86; also Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 123, "Certainly it should not be surprising that the Beloved Disciple is depicted as arriving on the scene first. After all, he is being described to the community that identifies itself with him. He exemplifies true discipleship and a close, loving relationship with Jesus. It would only be natural for him to run as fast as possible to the grave of the one who loved him. However, to go further in interpreting the run to the tomb as a *race* between Peter and the Beloved Disciple in which Peter loses does no justice to the spirit of the passage."

[151]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 120.

any response of faith on the part of Peter pertaining to the significance of what he saw. Peter did not immediately understand the significance of what he saw, therefore his witness can be regarded as an objective report of the actual physical situation. There was no anticipation or incipient faith to cloud his vision.[152]

In this episode the emphasis for Quast clearly pertains to what the Beloved Disciple "saw and believed." Exactly what constitutes belief becomes complicated by v. 9: "for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead."[153] James Charlesworth contends that this reading makes it pellucidly clear that 20:8 cannot contain full resurrection belief...the author may be implying that the Beloved Disciple...*began to develop a belief* that culminated in a full awareness that Jesus had been raised.[154]

However, Bultmann and Quast both insist that belief in this instance is to be associated with resurrection faith.[155] While Quast maintains that this scene highlights the faith of the Beloved

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[152]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 117: also John W. Pryor, Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 87, says: "Peters role is quite clear: he is a witness to the empty tomb and to the fact that the body was not stolen. That John takes great pains to describe what Peter sees is clear evidence that his own concerns are not with Peter's lack of faith, but with Peter as witness to the empty tomb."

[153]David R. Beck, The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel, p. 116, writes: "the content of the belief (what the BD saw and believed) is the focus of much debate. -v8 does not specify what he believed and v9 explicitly states as yet, they did not know the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead."

[154]James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. 94f. On p. 81 he writes: "there is no reason to contend that 20:8 must mean that the Beloved Disciple believed in Jesus' resurrection...(p. 83) he comes rather to believe that Jesus is indeed the Christ the Son of God." However, Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 118, insists that "...vv.9 and 10 do not rule out a prior belief in the resurrection..."

[155]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 684; also Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 118.

Disciple, he proposes that his belief is as yet an undeveloped "act of faith without seeing the resurrected Lord..."[156] He explains:

> If the evangelist actually intended v.9 to refer to both Peter and the Beloved Disciple, then it would be necessary to interpret this verse to mean that the faith of the Beloved Disciple was not yet fully developed. That is, the Beloved Disciple had faith that Jesus had in fact risen, yet the significance and ramifications of that fact had not yet been fully developed. [157]

Quast insists that in this episode Peter is an eyewitness to the empty tomb and the Beloved Disciple attains faith in the resurrection. He says that "with the addition of the Beloved Disciple into the tradition the new dimension of faith ('faith without seeking') is added. The pericope then becomes an appeal to follow the lead of the Beloved Disciple and respond to the evidence of the empty tomb."[158] Based on this inference Quast determines that Peter and the Beloved Disciple are placed in a complementary relationship, sharing equally important roles. Eyewitness and believer, together they are instrumental in eliciting faith in the resurrected Lord. Further,

> the function of the Beloved Disciple is to provide an example of a true disciple of Jesus. In this situation to be a true disciple is to come to a point of belief. However, belief is precipitated by an historical witness to the evidences of the resurrection, embodied in the character and function of Peter. Thus the two are put into

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[156]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 120.

[157]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 118; Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 80, however, claims that the Beloved Disciple outran Peter to the tomb of Jesus "because (as Lazarus) he has experienced the resurrection power of God himself in Jn. 11:38-44."

[158]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 123.

complementary relationship for the purposes of eliciting faith in the resurrection of Jesus based upon the best-known of the Twelve.[159]

Given Peter's prominence in the tradition of the early church we may find that Rudolf Bultmann provides a more insightful and accurate interpretation of this excerpt. He proposes that the key to a proper interpretation of this passage lies in the correct understanding of the relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple. Bultmann asserts that in this scene resurrection faith is as relevant for Peter as it is for the Beloved Disciple. He states:

> Clearly, it is presupposed that Peter before him was likewise brought to faith through the sight of the empty grave; for if the writer had meant otherwise, and if the two disciples were set over against each other with respect to their *pisteusai*, it would have had to be expressly stated that Peter did not believe.[160]

The long history of belief associated with Peter can neither be denied nor underestimated. Bultmann's assessment is easily substantiated when one recognizes how the Johannine readership, familiar with a figure as prominent as Simon Peter, would have comprehended his depiction in the Fourth Gospel. In the Johannine account it is Peter who remains faithful when other followers of Christ "are falling away *en masse*, particularly in Galilee" (6:68); it is him to whom Mary Magdalene runs upon discovering that the tomb is empty and he who is first to enter upon reaching the empty tomb. Quast writes that "Peter's discipleship extends to the point of death (Jn 21.18-19). His

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[159]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 123; also John W. Pryor, Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 87: "While Peter testifies to the empty tomb as no robbery, the other is a model for all disciples of what the fact must mean: Jesus is glorified, risen from the dead, and the empty tomb demands this response of faith."

[160]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 684.

martyrdom is commended as a means of glorifying God. His arrest and death are an extension of his following Jesus. In other words, Peter is a true disciple in the Johannine tradition."[161] R. Alan Culpepper maintains that the Fourth Evangelist characterizes Peter in this way:

> Next to Jesus, Peter is the most complex character. Peter's story traces his preparation for the twin tasks of shepherding and martyrdom. He is given the task of tending the sheep, and like the good shepherd he will have to lay down his life for his sheep (10:14-16; 21:15-19)...The Johannine equivalent to Peter's confession at Caesarea Phillipi is his confession at the crisis, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God" (6:68-69). He has grasped the importance of Jesus' words, his glory, and the life his words give...Ironically, he will make good his boast of following Jesus; the disciple who resists Jesus' dying will himself follow Jesus in martyrdom...[162]

That Peter was a well-known and respected figure in the early Christian movement outside the pages of the Fourth Gospel is undisputed.[163] Very early in the ministry of Jesus Peter plays an integral role. He is one of the first to be commissioned to follow Jesus (Mt. 4:18; Mk. 1:16; Lk. 6:13; Jn.1:42). His position as leader and spokesman for the disciples is well established (Mt.16:16-

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[161]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 162-164.

[162]R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 120; Wayne Meeks, "The Man From Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," JBL 91, 1972, on p. 65 writes that Jn. 13:37 ("Peter said to him, 'Lord, why cannot I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.'") "makes it clear that it is now understood that "to go/follow" means "to lay down one's life."

[163]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 162.

19; Mk. 8:27-29; cf. Mk. 3:16, 9:2; Lk. 5:3-11, 22:31; Acts 1:15-26; 2:14-27; 3:11-26). Both Mt. 16:16 and Mk. 8:29 record Peter's declaration of faith at Caesarea Philippi. Not only is Peter an eyewitness to the transfiguration (Mt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2; Lk. 9:29), more importantly Lk. 24:34, I Cor. 15:5 and Acts 2:32; 3:15 all verify that Peter was witness to the resurrection of Christ.

Obviously, Peter's history of belief is well rooted in the early Christian tradition. Based on that fact, Bultmann's interpretation of the race to the empty tomb supports Peter's eminence and the highly significant roles which both Peter and the Beloved Disciple play in this episode. However, Bultmann incorrectly concluded that in this episode, Peter was representative of Jewish Christianity and the Beloved Disciple represented Gentile Christianity. What this meant for Bultmann was that "the first community of believers arises out of Jewish Christianity, and the Gentile Christians attain to faith only after them. However, this does not signify any precedence of the former over the latter."[164]

Hawkin considers that Peter is not merely representative of Jewish Christianity nor does the Beloved Disciple symbolize Gentile Christianity. Rather, we are to understand both in "in a wider context...Peter represents the larger Christian community, and the Beloved Disciple represents the individual or local Johannine community."[165] Hawkin explains that the fact that the Beloved Disciple arrived at the tomb ahead of Peter but that Peter entered first shows that neither can claim precedence over the other. It also shows that the faith of the Johannine community compares favourably with the faith of the larger Christian community. He illustrates that in this pericope the Johannine *Einzelkirche* (the Beloved Disciple) has an equal claim to that of the

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[164]Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 685.

[165]David J. Hawkin, The Johannine World, p. 85.

Gesamtkirche (Peter). Its faith and belief are just as authentic, indeed go hand in hand with that of the *Gesamtkirche*...there is no attempt to denigrate Peter; rather the emphasis falls on the fact that the Beloved Disciple believed. It is not so much that the importance of Peter is played down; rather the attempt is to elevate the importance of the Beloved Disciple. The whole thrust of the pericope shows that just as Peter and the Beloved Disciple share the same faith experience, so the faith of the Johannine local church can be correlated with that of the church at large.[166]

Thus, the Johannine community is claiming through the figure of the Beloved Disciple to stand both theologically and historically within the Christian fellowship.[167] The Beloved Disciple and Jesus had a special relationship. The theology of the Johannine community is dependent upon this privileged disciple; for it is through him that the community can claim access to the Father.

"Postscript" Appearances: 21:4-7, 21:22-25 & 21:30

The Beloved Disciple is featured in the "postscript" in 21:4-7, 21:22-25 as well as in 21:30. Although there exists no evidence that the Fourth Gospel ever circulated without Chapter 21, given the apparent ending of 20:30-31, the almost unanimous verdict of scholarship is that this chapter functions as a fitting addendum to the Gospel proper. Typical of this stance is Quast who writes that "the weight of the evidence seems to favour the later addition of ch.21 to the already existing Gospel comprised of chs.1-20. The conclusion of 20.30-31 and the distinct concerns of ch.21 combine to

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[166]David J. Hawkin, The Johannine World, p. 85f. See also John W. Pryor, John, Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 87, and Craig Koester, Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel, p. 70, who sees Peter as representative of all Christians.

[167]David J. Hawkin, The Johannine World, p. 85f.

suggest such a conclusion."[168]

In spite of the fact that Chapter 21 may have been added by a different hand from that of the Fourth Evangelist, this section is significant in revealing the most about the roles, functions and relationships of Peter and the Beloved Disciple. Chapter 21 confirms our interpretation of the significance and function of both of these individuals.[169] C. K.Barrett explains that in this section of the Fourth Gospel what becomes quite apparent is what has already been observed. Here, as elsewhere, Peter and the Beloved Disciple

> are represented as partners, of whom neither can take precedence of the other. Peter is the head of the evangelistic and pastoral work of the church, but the beloved disciple is the guarantor of its tradition regarding Jesus. Both functions are necessary to the life of the church...[170]

Ch 21:4-7 reads:

> πρωΐας δὲ ἤδη γενομένης ἔστη Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὸν αἰγιαλόν· οὐ μέντοι ἤδεισαν οἱ μαθηταὶ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν. λέγει οὖν αὐτοῖς [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς, Παιδία, μή τι προσφάγιον ἔχετε; ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ, Οὔ. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν

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[168]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 129; see also David R. Beck, The Discipleship Paradigm, p. 117; and C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 576f.

[169]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 125; also C.K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 117, suggests that what has been deduced by the previous three references to the Beloved Disciple is confirmed in ch. 21.

[170]C.K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 577; also John W. Pryor, John, Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 93, writes that "interest in those two is also apparent in the resurrection appearance of vv.1-14 though, as before, there is no conflict between the two. They complement each other, the BD as the man of spiritual insight...and Peter as the man of commission to Jesus."

αὐτοῖς. Βάλετε εἰς τὰ δεξιὰ μέρη τοῦ πλοίου τὸ δίκτυον, καὶ εὑρήσετε. ἔβαλον οὖν, καὶ οὐκέτι αὐτο ἑλκύσαι ἴσχυον ἀπὸ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ἰχθύων. λέγει οὖν ὁ μαθητὴς ἐκεῖνος ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ Πέτρῳ, Ὁ κύριός ἐστιν. Σίμων οὖν Πέτρος, ἀκούσας ὅτι ὁ κύριός ἐστιν, τὸν ἐπενδύτην διεζώσατο, ἦν γὰρ γυμνός, καὶ ἔβαλεν ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν· (Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any fish?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea).

R. Alan Culpepper considers this scene significant in affirming Peter's pastoral role while at the same time upholding the privileged relationship which Jesus and the Beloved Disciple have shared throughout the Gospel. He says that "the race between Peter and the Beloved Disciple and their responses to Jesus in the lake scene confirm Peter's leadership and pastoral roles and the Beloved Disciple's special relationship to Jesus, his discernment, and his reliability as a witness."[171]

Here, in the story of the miraculous catch of fish it is the Beloved Disciple who first recognizes that it is Jesus on the shore of Tiberias, and this is clearly significant. David Beck considers that

the obvious impact on the reader is that it is this disciple Jesus loved who is best able

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[171]R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 119.

to recognize when he is encountered. Furthermore, it is a confirmation of the declaration of veracity already encountered in 19:35 and soon to be restated in 21:24. The witness of the disciple is trustworthy and reliable.[172]

Once again "the hero of the Johannine community has an insight and a theological discernment that are unparalleled by Peter and the other disciples."[173] However, upon learning that it is the Lord on the seashore, it is Peter who jumps into the sea and reaches Jesus ahead of the other disciples just as it was Peter who was first to enter the empty tomb. Quast observes how this scene closely parallels the scene at the gravesite. He shows that "ch 21:7 clearly recalls ch. 20:2-20. The juxtaposition between Peter and the Beloved Disciple allows us to conclude that just as in the scene at the empty tomb, so here neither has any precedence over the other."[174]

In the scene which follows (15-19) Peter confesses his love for Jesus:

Ὅτε οὖν ἠρίστησαν λέγει τῷ Σίμωνι Πέτρῳ ὁ Ἰησοῦς Σίμων Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾷς με πλέον τούτων; λέγει αὐτῷ, Ναί, κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ, Βόσκε τὰ ἀρνία μου. λέγει αὐτῷ πάλιν δεύτερον Σίμων Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾷς με; λέγει αὐτῷ, Ναί, κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ, Ποίμαινε τὰ πρόβατά μου. λέγει αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον Σίμων Ἰωάννου, φιλεῖς με; ἐλυπήθη ὁ Πέτρος ὅτι εἶπεν αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον, Φιλεῖς με; καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Κύριε, πάντα σὺ

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[172]David Beck, The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel, p. 119.

[173]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 150.

[174]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 150.

οἶδας. σὺ γιμώσκεις ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ, Βόσκε τὰ πρόβατά μου. ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ὅτε ἦς νεώτερος, ἐζώννυες σεαυτὸν καὶ περιεπάτεις ὅπου ἤθελες· ὅταν δὲ γηράσῃς, ἐκτενεῖς τὰς χεῖράς σον, καὶ ἄλλος σε ζώσει καὶ οἴσει ὅπου οὐ θέλεις. [a]τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν σημαίνων ποίῳ θανάτῳ δοξάσει τὸν θεόν. καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν λέγει αὐτῷ, Ἀκολούθει μοι. (When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go. [This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.] And after this he said to him, "Follow me").

Peter's pastoral role and his commission to follow Jesus clearly attest to his authority and leadership within the Johannine community.[175] As leader of the Christian community, Peter becomes shepherd of his flock, pastor of a church united in Christ. He follows Jesus as he has been directed,

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[175]C.K. Barrett, The Gospel of John, p. 583, "Peter is entrusted with the pastoral care of Christ's flock"; and John W. Pryor, John, Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 93, "Peter's rehabilitation...responsibility and calling as shepherd of the flock of Christ is being emphasized."

and will follow him even to the point of death.

> Peter, enjoined to follow Jesus, is, in effect, being called afresh to become a disciple and assume his pastoral role. But more than that, he is being invited to follow Jesus in death. This is made clear by the words of Jesus which immediately precede the command to follow, in which Peter's own arrest and martyrdom is related, and it is supported by Jn 13.36-38.[176]

Hawkin notes that Peter's assertion that he loves Jesus (21:15-18) is significant for the Johannine community. Peter as representative of the larger Christian church does not claim to love Jesus more than the other disciples. This would include the Beloved Disciple and, by implication, the Johannine community. Both are equally united in Christ. Hawkin explains:

> The Johannine church, identifying with the Beloved Disciple, would probably see this in a positive manner. The sense is this: the authenticity of the faith of the Johannine community is acknowledged, inasmuch as Peter does not claim to love Jesus more; moreover, in the Fourth Gospel the theme of love is closely bound with the concept of unity. Christians are one in love. Jesus then proclaims Peter as leader of the community.[177]

The Beloved Disciple is mentioned specifically for the last time in 21:20-23.

Ἐπιστραφεὶς ὁ Πέτρος βλέπει τὸν μαθητὴν ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀκολουθοῦντα, ὃς καὶ ἀνέπεσεν ἐν τῷ δείπνῳ ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν, Κύριε, τίς ἐστιν ὁ παραδιδούς σε; τοῦτον οὖν ἰδὼν ὁ

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[176]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 148.

[177]David J. Hawkin, The Johannine Community, p. 86.

Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ, Κύριε, οὗτος δὲ τί; λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐὰν αὐτὸν θέλω μένειν ἕως ἔρχομαι, τί πρὸς σέ; σύ μοι ἀκολούθει. ἐξῆλθεν οὖν οὗτος ὁ λόγος εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὅτι ὁ μαθητὴς ἐκεῖνος οὐκ ἀποθνῄσκει. οὐκ εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι οὐκ ἀποθνῄσκει, ἀλλ', Ἐὰν αὐτὸν θέλω μένειν ἕως ἔρχομαι [,τί πρὸς σέ]; (Peter turned and saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man? Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" The saying spread abroad among the brethren that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?").

In this scene the Beloved Disciple is said to be following Jesus, just as Peter had been told to do in the previous pericope. Again, neither one is elevated above the other. They both follow Jesus; they share the same faith. Then in v.23 the Evangelist seems to clarify an apparent misunderstanding within the community that the Beloved Disciple would live until the parousia. Apparently the Beloved Disciple had died, but was expected to remain alive until Jesus' return. C. K. Barrett writes of the Beloved Disciple that

> he was not to survive, a living witness of Christ, till the *parousia*, but he was, through the written gospel to constitute himself the permanent guarantor of the church's tradition and of the word of Jesus by which alone the church exists.[178]

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[178]C.K. Barrett, The Gospel of John, p. 583.

That the Beloved Disciple was the permanent guarantor of the Johannine tradition is made explicitly clear in Jn. 21:24-25.

> Οὗτος ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν. Ἔστιν δὲ καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ ἃ ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἅτινα ἐὰν γράφηται καθ' ἕν, οὐδ' αὐτὸν οἶμαι τὸν κόσμον χωρῆσαι τὰ γραφόμενα βιβλία. (This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true. But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written).

In Jn. 21:24 the author of the Fourth Gospel appears to be identified as the Beloved Disciple ("this is the disciple who has written these things"). Charlesworth suggests that "it is conceivable that the author would have wanted us to understand that the Beloved Disciple not only possessed the tradition, but was also the source of the tradition and the means by which it was transmitted, through oral channels and finally in writing, to the reader."[179] However, he explains that while the Beloved Disciple may have commissioned the writing of the Fourth Gospel, in all likelihood the Gospel was probably not written by the hand of the disciple whom Jesus loved. The analogy, he suggests, lies within the Gospel itself. "According to 19:1 Pilate "scourged" Jesus. That would be rather

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[179]James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. 45f; also see John W. Pryor, John, Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 94, who writes: "The natural reading of the words (v24) must lead us to conclude that the BD had a direct hand in the composition of all that precedes 21:24. He is more than just the authority figure at the back of the Johannine theology"; Vernard Eller, The Beloved Disciple, His Name, His Story, His Thought, p. 43, writes: "the gospel is quite explicit about who is the source of its information - the disciple whom Jesus loved."

remarkable...surely Pilate ordered Jesus to be scourged. Likewise, according to 19:19 Pilate wrote a title for the top of Jesus' cross; but surely he caused this title to be written. Pilate neither scourged nor wrote - he ordered these actions from his own authority."[180] Hawkin concurs with Charlesworth but explains in greater detail that

> if we accept the general verdict of scholarship that the Beloved Disciple is not the author of the Gospel...then the Greek word *grapsas* is to be taken in its causative sense. That is, "This is the disciple who *caused* these things to be written." In favor of this view is the fact that the causative is used elsewhere, for example 19:1. Moreover, in 21:24b the emphasis falls on the witness of the disciple...This verse is important, for it shows the singular significance of the Beloved Disciple in the Johannine community as a witness of tradition. The truth of the Johannine Gospel depended on it. Such an affirmation is also found in the Gospel proper. The person who saw the blood and water gushing from Jesus' side is quite evidently the disciple who stood under the cross, that is, the Beloved Disciple. This is the most explicit reference within the Gospel to the Beloved Disciple as Christ-witness.[181]

Clearly for the "we" of 21:24 the witness and testimony of the Beloved Disciple is essential

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[180]James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. 25.

[181]David J. Hawkin, The Johannine World, p. 87; also Vernard Eller, The Beloved Disciple: His Name, His Story, His Thought, on p. 43, writes: "I think that it is safe to say that, although the Beloved Disciple is claimed as the *Source* of the book, that does not necessarily mean that he is an actual *Writer*...though it reads that he is the one who 'has written them,' could as accurately be translated to say that he is the one who has 'caused these things to be written'; see also James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. 25f.

to the life of the Johannine community. They "know that his testimony is true."[182] As the individual closest to Jesus the Beloved Disciple is the trustworthy witness to all that Jesus said and did throughout his ministry.

> He is the link with Jesus, the source and authority of the traditions contained in the gospel and affirmed by those who speak of themselves as "we"...He is above all the one who has borne witness. He has reminded the others of all that Jesus said and did, for there were many other things which could not be included in the gospel (20:30; 21:25)...He has come from the bosom of Jesus and has made him known to those who now affirm his testimony. He has taught, reminded, and borne a true witness. The words of Jesus in the gospel are the words that he has received from the Lord and written or caused to be written...The Beloved Disciple is therefore not only the authority and representative of the Johannine tradition vis-à-vis Peter, he is the epitome of the ideal disciple. In him belief, love and faithful witness are joined.[183]

This analysis of the role of the Beloved Disciple in Johannine redaction explicitly demonstrates the symbolic and representative function which he served and the remarkable contributions which the community attributed to him. His placement throughout the text at theologically significant points was deliberately designed to emphasize this role. Clearly, because

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[182]R. Alan Culpepper, John, the Son of Zebedee, p. 71, refers to the "we" group as "a community of believers which had gathered around the BD and which attested to the truth of the BD's witness and by implication, to the truth of the gospel." James Charlesworth, The Beloved Disciple, p. 47, suggests that "there must have been an extreme need to support the trustworthiness of the Johannine tradition" in order for the 'we' group to verify the truth of the Beloved Disciple's account."

[183]R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 122f; also Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 151 and p. 153.

the Beloved Disciple is symbolically representative of the Johannine community, the self-understanding of the believing community is vitally linked to his function within the narrative of the Fourth Gospel.

The dynamic relationship between Father and Son which enables Jesus to make God known is similar to the relationship between Jesus and the Beloved Disciple which, in turn, enables the Beloved Disciple to "make known" Jesus to the believing community (13:23; 21:4-7). He does this in succeeding Jesus while inaugurating the birth of the new community at the death of Jesus (19:25-27); in verifying the account of the crucifixion and of Jesus' physical death (19:35); in remaining theologically and historically within the framework of the larger Christian church (20:1-10; 21:15-18); and as permanent guarantor of the Johannine tradition through the written witness and testimony of this disciple (21:24).

Paul Meyer has commented that the language of the Fourth Evangelist about God as Father "points to God as warrant and backing not for what the Evangelist says to his readers, but, in a second order of theological reflection, for Jesus himself, his words, his deeds, his life. The presentation of God as Father in the Gospel is as the Vindicator and Authorizer of Jesus."[184] We may now suggest an extension of this argument: *just as God the Father is the "vindicator" and "authorizer" of Jesus, so Jesus is the vindicator and authorizer of the Beloved Disciple, who in turn legitimizes and authenticates the faith of the Johannine community.*

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[184]Paul W. Meyer, "'The Father': The Presentation of God in the Fourth Gospel," in R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (eds.), Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honour of D. Moody Smith, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1966), p. 265.

CHAPTER THREE:

SELF-IDENTITY IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The way that the motif of the Beloved Disciple functions in the Johannine redaction demonstrates that there is a clear link between the community's articulation of its theology of revelation and its sense of identity as a community. Or, to put it another way, there is an integral link between the social world of the community and the expression of its self-understanding in ideological formulation. Wayne Meeks, in "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," puts it well when he says of the Fourth Gospel that it "offers a case of harmonic reinforcement between social experience and ideology."[185] It was, in fact, this pioneering study of Meeks which widened the horizon of Johannine studies by the use of a social science methodology to investigate the "social location" of the Johannine community.

In order to discover the social function of the use of myth within the literary structure of the Fourth Gospel, Meeks explored the underlying application of the mythical pattern of the ascent/descent motif.[186] He determined that the repetitive use of the verbs ascent/descent are utilized exclusively to identify Jesus, the Son of Man, as a "stranger from heaven" who is misunderstood and ultimately alienated from the world below. Jesus' strangeness is emphasized, for example, in his encounter with Nicodemus to whom Jesus and the mention of "heavenly secrets" prove to be

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[185]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 71.

[186]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 50. Meeks felt that for too long scholarship had not allowed "the symbolic language of Johannine literature to speak in its own way" (p. 47).

"incomprehensible" (3:11-13),[187] and in the inability of "the Jews" to understand that Jesus himself is the bread of life which has descended from heaven.[188] On the bread of life discourse in John 6 Meeks writes that

> in the chapter as a whole, the movement is from a concept familiar to Jews (something which comes down from heaven is given by the hand of a prophet), but doubted in the specific instance of Jesus, to their total alienation by his outrageous claim to be *himself* that which comes down from heaven - and returns thither.[189]

Accordingly, in Jesus' words and in the signs which he performs "more and more is demanded of his observers until they are forced to accept or to reject an unlimited claim, as is the case with Nicodemus and the witnesses of the bread miracle."[190] Only the "narrowing circle of believers" understand the "unlimited claim" that Jesus has descended from the Father, that his descent constitutes a *krisis*, a judgement upon the entire world,[191] and that he will ascend to the Father at the appointed time. Because of the inability of the world to understand this Johannine enigma, Meeks can say that "in every instance the motif (ascent/descent) points to contrast, foreignness, division, judgement."[192]

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[187]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," on p. 55 explains that in the Fourth Gospel, Nicodemus symbolically represents Jews who have "begun to believe in Jesus" but to whom Jesus would not "entrust himself" because of their inadequate faith.

[188]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 46-63.

[189]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 59.

[190]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 60.

[191]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 61.

[192]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 67.

Meeks describes how the use of special language, the progressively high christology and the representation of Jesus as the "Stranger *par excellence*"[193] in the Fourth Gospel in turn reflects the experience of the Johannine community: *"The book functions for its readers in precisely the same way that the epiphany of its hero functions within its narratives and dialogues."*[194] Because of its belief in Jesus' claims, the Johannine group was misunderstood and ultimately rejected by the Jewish people until it could be said that it too was "not of this world" (15:19; 17:14ff.). The development of the Johannine community derived from those who believed that Jesus had indeed "come down from heaven." This community of believers was alienated from those who rejected Jesus' claims - "the Jews," "the world," "those who belong intrinsically to 'the things below' i.e.. darkness and the devil."[195] Meeks observes that the story which the fourth Evangelist has written

> describes the progressive alienation of Jesus from the Jews. But something else is happening, for there are some few who do respond to Jesus' signs and words, and these...are progressively enlightened and drawn into intense intimacy with Jesus, until they, like him, are not "of this world." Now their becoming detached from the world is, in the Gospel, identical with their being detached from Judaism...coming to faith in Jesus is for the Johannine group a change in social location.[196]

As Meeks would have it only members of this group, estranged from parent Judaism, could understand the "closed metaphorical system" contained in the language of the Fourth Gospel. This

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[193]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 50.

[194]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 69.

[195]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 68.

[196]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 69.

language, in distinguishing Jesus and his followers as those "from above" in contrast to those "from below" "defines and vindicates the existence of the community that evidently sees itself as unique, alien from its world, under attack, misunderstood, but living in unity with Christ and through him with God."[197] Meeks suggests that in time the alienation and isolation experienced by this group would become so pronounced that some disruption within the community itself would be inevitable. The proof that this in fact occurred lies in the concerns outlined in the Johannine letters.[198] The significance of Meeks' work lies in the fact that he does not see the enigma of the Fourth Gospel as a *theological* or *literary* problem, but rather sees it as being *occasioned by its particular social dynamic*.

Jerome Neyrey presents an argument which closely resembles that of Meeks. Using a social science methodology based upon the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas, he concludes that the high christology of the Fourth Gospel, which emphasizes that Jesus is equal to God and not of this world, is the product of a community that itself does not feel of this world: "The perspective of equal to God suggests that its meaning and function have to do with a divorce between heaven and earth or between spirit and flesh, that is, with social alienation."[199]

Neyrey outlines the progressive alienation experienced by the Johannine Jesus and by the community of believers. The initial stage of development in the Johannine community was characterized by relatively low christology, citing evidence from Scripture to prove that Jesus had

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[197]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 70.

[198]Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 71.

[199]Jerome Neyrey, An Ideology of Revolt: John's Christology in Social-Science Perspective, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), p. 115.

come in fulfilment of the Scriptures. To the earliest evangelizers Jesus was "the one of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote" (1:45). Also, in this early stage the signs which Jesus performed were seen as a catalyst which would "lead people to accept Jesus as God's legitimate and authorized prophet or covenant leader."[200]

If stage one depicted Jesus as prophet and king, stage two saw Jesus replacing the major elements of Judaism - its temple, feasts and cult - along with the development of a higher christology. The "I AM" statements proclaim Jesus as "the unique and essential giver of benefaction" who replaces David as shepherd of God's flock, Moses as giver of God's covenant and Jacob and Isaiah as revealer of God's truth. Truth statements in the Gospel -"Jesus as *true* light (1:9), *true* bread (6:32), *true* vine (15:1)"; "witnessing to the truth" (5:33) and bearing "true testimony" (5:31-32; 8:13-14), - "reinforce the sense of exclusivity and authenticity claimed by Jesus, especially over against the synagogue." Further, the risen Jesus replaces the temple as the place of worship and in his person he replaces the feasts of Passover (6:4-14; 2:13), Tabernacles (7:2) and Dedication (10:22). Accordingly Neyrey contends that

> replacement claims, which became the central theme of the preaching in stage two, admit no qualification and make no exception, for they are absolute and exclusive claims...The claims of truth noted above imply that all else is false. The "I AM" plus predicate formula claims that in Jesus alone is God's benefaction. In a polemical vein, all privilege or value found in Israel's former prophets is denied, in particular, the position of Moses. The manna Moses gave is useless against death (6:49, 58); the covenant he established is obsolete by Jesus' standards (1:17); his Sinai

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[200]Jerome Neyrey, An Ideology of Revolt, p. 122f.

revelations are challenged (3:13; 5:37). Jesus gives the true bread of life, establishes the authentic covenant, alone sees God and brings God's word.[201]

Membership during this stage consists only of the elite few who have been chosen out of the world by God - those who are publicly "willing to confess Jesus as the authentic replacement of Israel's cultus." In so doing these "authentic" followers must be willing to lay down their lives in imitation of the Good Shepherd. It was at this point in its development that the Johannine community suffered expulsion from the synagogue and apostasy from within its membership.[202]

Stage three marks the development of the christological confession which equates "equal to God" with "not of this world." According to Neyrey the high Christological confession of the Johannine community, expulsion from the Jewish synagogue, apostasy from within, and the growing dichotomous relationship between heaven and earth, spirit and flesh culminated in the superior stance which the Johannine group held over against Judaism. The combination of all of these factors ultimately led to a revolt against the entire Jewish value system. As Neyrey explains, "the development of the Johannine community entails a progression...from initial faction formation to a program of reform of the system and finally to a revolt against the system."[203]

Bruce Malina and Mark Stibbe have taken a tack similar to Meeks and Neyrey. Malina argues that the language of the Fourth Gospel is an "anti-language," that is, it is the language of an anti-social group. "Antilanguage creates and expresses an interpretation of reality that is inherently an alternative reality, one that emerges precisely in order to function as an alternative to society at

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[201]Jerome Neyrey, An Ideology of Revolt, p. 132f.

[202]Jerome Neyrey, An Ideology of Revolt, p. 142.

[203]Jerome Neyrey, An Ideology of Revolt, p. 149.

large."[204] In the case of the Fourth Gospel the socially isolated Johannine community became a "counter-society" which is typical of a "social collectivity that is set up within a larger society as a conscious alternative to it."[205] The Johannine Christians emerged from the larger Jewish community but opposed "the Jews" and "the world" as members of a society who "adamantly refused to believe in Jesus as Israel's Messiah."[206] In order for the estranged group to maintain solidarity from within and to prevent antisocietal members from backsliding into the community from which they were "to a large extent still embedded," the necessity arose for "some sort of alternative ideology and emotional anchorage in the new collectivity."[207] For the Fourth Evangelist this alternative ideology centred largely around the figure of Jesus as revealer, on the spirit/flesh, above/below dichotomy, and on the performance of signs which in and of themselves "disclose and elucidate Jesus himself to those who accept his offer of light and life."[208] It emphasized the importance of the individual within the collectivity and the social significance of loving one another among a group who were estranged from society at large.

Malina proposes that along with the alternative ideological formulation undergoing

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[204]Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), p. 11.

[205]Bruce Malina, "The Gospel of John in Social-Linguistic Perspective," Protocol of the Forty Eighth Colloquoy of the Centre for Hermeneutic Studies, ed. Herman Waetjen, (Berkeley: Centre for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1985), p. 11.

[206]Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John, p. 10.

[207]Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John, p. 11.

[208]Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John, p. 12.

development in the Fourth Gospel, the metaphorical antilanguage generated by the alternate society could be understood only by members from within the anti-society. This language could have no corresponding meaning in the society from which it had originated. In other words, in the "semantic system of regular language of contemporary Israel or early Jesus-Messianism in particular"[209] the language of the Fourth Gospel would clearly be misunderstood. He explains that

> sentences such as "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30) and "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am" (8:58) and the identification of Jesus of Nazareth with the preexisting Word of God become flesh (1:1ff), would be socially meaningless in the language of the broader society.[210]

In defence of the application of the sociology of knowledge to the Fourth Gospel by Meeks, Neyrey and Malina, Mark Stibbe says that the "future of redaction criticism of John's Gospel depends upon its moving away from the hypothetical reconstructions of Martyn and Brown and moving towards the more sociological approaches of Wayne Meeks and Bruce Malina."[211] A sociological scrutiny of the Fourth Gospel clearly points toward a community that has become isolated, estranged, and alienated from the source of its origin. The antilanguage generated by this antisocietal group suggests that the content of the Gospel can be understood only by insiders, by those most intimately linked to Jesus and the word which he brings.

In seeking to "highlight the relationship between narrative and social identity in John's story"

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[209]Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John, p. 13.

[210]Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John, p. 13.

[211]Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 61.

Stibbe's own reconstruction proposes to show how the narrative recreates "the sense of family and home in a people faced with the crisis of metaphorical and actual homelessness."[212] He illustrates how the concept of "home" and "family" are themes which recur throughout the Fourth Gospel. For instance, in 18.13 we are told that Annas is the father-in-law of Caiaphas: the fact that the anonymous disciple in 18.15 was "well known" to the high priest indicates a relationship of "close intimacy;" and the high priest's slave in 18.26 is the relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off. More importantly, those present at the foot of the cross in Jn. 19.25-27 include the two who were most intimately associated with Jesus during his ministry, the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple.[213]

Stibbe emphasizes that the "centrality of the familistic image,"[214] as seen in John 19.25-27, reflects the new family of faith as experienced by the Johannine community at the foot of the cross. In the Fourth Gospel, belief in Jesus, "if overtly confessed - resulted in alienation from the family of Judaism and indeed one's own family."[215] Indeed, the rejection and hostility directed at Jesus by his "spiritual family" (Israel) and by his own "natural family" in Nazareth mirrored the disruption, rejection and hostility which the followers of Jesus experienced within their own families. The inclusion of the parents in the story of the man born blind (9.22) was designed to show how "the division between parents and children was a critical reality in the lives of those Christians for whom

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[212]Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 166.

[213]Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 151.

[214]Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 151.

[215]Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 164.

the Evangelist was writing."[216] The man born blind was expelled from the synagogue for confessing his faith in Jesus. His parents refused to cooperate with synagogue authorities lest they suffer the same fate.

Stibbe suggests that "Jesus' coming leads to the breakdown of the family of Judaism, to a disruption of families and to homelessness for his disciples." Coincident with the breakdown of the family, Jesus' coming also served to signal "the construction of a new family of faith defined by belief in Jesus."[217] This new family of faith derived from the supreme act of Jesus' love - the crucifixion. "The cross is supremely the place where God's old family is deconstructed and his new family is born."[218]

At the point of Jesus' death the Beloved Disciple is spiritually adopted into Jesus' family and becomes his earthly successor. In this way the Beloved Disciple, the "founding figure of the Johannine community," establishes the new family of faith consisting of members of the community who have remained faithful to Jesus and therefore can legitimately claim to be true children of God. Stibbe explains that

> just as the Johannine Christians would have identified with the disruption of a family in John 9, so they would have identified with the creation of a new family of faith in John 19.25-7, especially since the Beloved Disciple seems to have been the central and originating figure in their communal history. John 19.25-7 therefore functioned as a familistic image which enhanced the sense of religious belonging amongst

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[216]Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 164.

[217]Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 160.

[218]Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 160.

Johannine Christians.[219]

Norman Petersen, in a vein similar to Malina, argues that the Fourth Evangelist has a "special language" which is the "anti-language of the anti-society. The Johannine community is anti-society because it understands itself as other to the dominant society that has made it other. The very identity of his (the Evangelist's) people is dependent upon their being other, and this is evident in their special use of the everyday language of the society that has rejected them."[220] In Petersen's view the Fourth Evangelist's use of this special "anti-language" contributes to the sectarian character of the Johannine community. Their language is the result of opposition to the language of a Jewish community which had vehemently opposed the Johannine group. Petersen explains that

> we will find that having become an outcast society by virtue of their having been rejected and killed by the leaders of the dominant Jewish society to which they had belonged, the sons of Light created an anti-language in order to legitimate for themselves their identity as an anti-society. The notion of an anti-language helps us to solve the problem of why John used everyday language in a special way, for this anti-language is...John's special language. What is special about it is not simply its difference from the everyday, but its opposition to the everyday.[221]

The argument that the Johannine community was sectarian has now become very prevalent among Johannine scholars. Indeed, some regard it as indisputable. Thus, J. O'Grady can say that

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[219]Mark Stibbe, John as Storyteller, p. 164.

[220]Norman Petersen, The Gospel of John and the Sociology of Light: Language and Characterization in the Fourth Gospel, (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1993), p. 89.

[221]Norman Petersen, The Gospel of John and the Sociology of Light, p. 5.

due to the "sectarian consciousness" and "exclusivity" within the Johannine corpus "the sectarianism (of the Johannine community) *is without dispute.*"[222] But John Pryor cautions against imposing a nineteenth century sociological understanding of community to first-century Judaism.[223] The Gospel, he explains, must be studied within the context of its own time and social framework. In so doing he determines that the sectarian character of the Fourth Gospel is the result of the Johannine break with parent Judaism and in the community's exclusive claims to the "hopes and promises" which had been made to the Jewish people. He asserts that

> in acknowledging the sectarian nature of the Johannine community we are not thereby asserting that John's christology and ecclesiology are nothing more that a reaction to its dispute with Judaism and its experience of rejection...while John's theology was sharpened and more finely focused by the disputes with Judaism, they did not create it. Its preaching about the crucified Jesus as divine Son-Messiah, and about the gift of the Spirit and divine sonship, were part of its earliest beliefs, and these in fact created the tension with Judaism. The subsequent experience of rejection of the message by the synagogue brought the community to the realization that they themselves were now the true and only bearers of the covenant status, and that the nation had turned its back on the divine revelation...this in turn led to further definition and the exclusiveness of the sectarian claims over against the parent

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[222]John F. O'Grady, "The Role of the Beloved Disciple," Biblical Theological Bulletin 9 (1979), p. 64. Emphasis added. Karl-Josef Kuschel, Born Before All Time, p. 378, also considers that the Johannine community displays "all the specific criteria of a 'sect': minority, encapsulation, an exclusive awareness of election, confrontation with all outsiders coupled with a charismatic community of love within."

[223]John W. Pryor, John: Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 165.

body.[224]

In recent decades more circumspect descriptions of the Johannine community as a "school,"[225] a "circle,"[226] or a "conventicle,"[227] seem to have been discarded as old-fashioned and inadequate and have been replaced with the notion of "sect." But as we have seen, sect may have any number of connotations. Peter L. Berger defines sect as "a religious grouping based on the belief that *the spirit is immediately present.*" He defines spirit as an object - " a human being or animal, certain objects, a specific holy place sometimes natural and sometimes artificially created" - which "creates the religious experience in which man encounters that which is sacred."[228] The sect surrounds this sacred space and so remains closer than either the church or the world to the area where the spirit manifests itself.[229] However since the spirit "blows where it wills" it may

> at any time may manifest itself anew in the middle of what used to be the world, there creating a new system of relations. And, significantly, the spirit may also manifest itself anew within the old and set structure of a church, setting in motion right there the explosive dynamic of sectarianism.[230]

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[224]John W. Pryor, John: Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 167.

[225]R. Alan Culpepper, The Johannine School, SBL Dissertation Series 26, (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975).

[226]Oscar Cullmann, The Johannine Circle: Its Place in Judaism, among the Disciples of Jesus and in Early Christianity, trans. John Bowden, (London: SCM Press, 1976).

[227]Ernst Kaesemann, The Testament of Jesus.

[228]Peter L. Berger, "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism," Social Research 21, (1954) p. 475.

[229]Peter L. Berger, "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism," p. 475.

[230]Peter L. Berger, "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism," p. 475.

Raymond Brown observes that if one refers to "sect" in a purely religious framework, then

> the whole early Christian movement may have been considered a sect, or at least the Jewish Christian branch of it. In Acts 24:5, 14 Jews who do not believe in Jesus describe other Jews who do believe in him as constituting a *hairesis* - the same word used by Josephus (*Life* 10) when he speaks of the three "sects" of the Jews: Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.[231]

But not only does it remain quite unproven that the Johannine community exhibited all of the characteristics usually associated with sects,[232] it also does a disservice to the complexity of the dynamic within the Johannine community itself. Neyrey says, for example, that the high christology of the Johannine Christians functioned as an ideology "encoding and replicating their world view, in particular their estranged position in relation to the synagogue *and other Apostolic Christians.*"[233] This is surely an over-generalization. There is little doubt that the Johannine Christians did become estranged from the synagogue and that this did play a significant part in the development of the self-understanding of the Johannine community. But it is less clear that the Johannine Christians were similarly estranged from other Apostolic Christians. Indeed, the acceptance of the Fourth Gospel into the canon indicates an acceptance of its theology (and thus the theology of the community which produced it) by the larger Christian community.[234] Culpepper says of the Gospel that "its place in

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[231]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 15.

[232]Peter Berger, "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism," pp. 467-85.

[233]Jerome Neyrey, An Ideology of Revolt, p. 115. Emphasis added.

[234]Unless one takes the position of Kaesemann (The Testament of Jesus, p. 75) which was observed in Chapter I, that the acceptance of the Fourth Gospel into the canon "took place through man's error and God's providence." Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved

the canon of scripture testifies to its rhetorical power and the desirability of its doctrine. The Fourth Gospel is the magnificent culmination of the Johannine tradition and has been a vital force in shaping Christian doctrine."[235]

The significance of Brown's Community of the Beloved Disciple lies in the fact that in his reconstruction of the development of the Johannine community he attempts to do justice to all of the influences which helped to constitute the Johannine community's sense of its distinctive identity. Brown sees six different religious "groupings" outside of the Johannine community which we can discern through the pages of the Fourth Gospel: the world, "the Jews," the disciples of John the Baptist, the crypto-Christians, the Jewish Christians, and the Christians of the Apostolic Churches.

The world comprises "those who prefer darkness to the light of Jesus...'the world' is a wider conception than 'the Jews' but includes them."[236] The world hates and ultimately rejects Jesus and

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Disciple, p. 14, n.7, suggests that a sectarian Johannine community implies that "within the one NT the church canonized the writings of groups who would not have acknowledged each other as true Christians." He sees this as highly unlikely.

[235]R. Alan Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel, p. 231; Karl-Josef Kuschel, Born Before all Time, p. 392, writes that "for all the distance between the Johannine community and the 'apostolic church'...the confessions of a marginal Christianity were very soon to become a kind of 'normative theology'"; see also Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 170; and Dennis C. Duling and Norman Perrin, The New Testament, 3rd Edition, (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1994), p. 421, "it is one of the interesting facts of Christian history that the Gospel of John became the favourite gospel of many Gnostic churches that were viewed as heretical by the Great Church, while at the same time the gospel became determinative for the Great Church's formulation of its official view of Jesus Christ in the fourth and fifth century creeds."

[236]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 168. On p. 63 he writes that just as the Johannine community had originally experienced Jewish disbelief, with the growing number of Gentiles added to their number, they now face rejection from the Gentiles, thus "the world." And on p. 65: "by the time the Gospel was written, the Johannine community had sufficient dealings with non-Jews to realize that many of them were no more disposed to accept Jesus than were 'the Jews,' so that a term like 'the world' was convenient to cover all

his followers (7:7; 15:18-19: 16:20) until they, like Jesus, become strangers in this world. As strangers they no longer belong to the realm of "below" but belong with the Father in heaven. Jesus had told those who were faithful to him that (15:18-19):

> Εἰ ὁ κόσμος ὑμᾶς μισεῖ, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐμὲ πρῶτον ὑμῶν μεμίσηκεν. εἰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἦτε, ὁ κόσμος ἂν τὸ ἴδιον ἐφίλει· ὅτι δὲ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκ ἐστε, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, διὰ τοῦτο μισεῖ ὑμᾶς ὁ κόσμος. (If the world hates you, bear in mind that it has hated me before you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own: but the reason why the world hates you is that you do not belong to the world, for I chose you out of the world.

The rejection which the Johannine community experienced at the hands of "the world" resulted in an alienated sense of being strangers in an environment in which they no longer belonged.[237]

"The Jews" are those synagogue authorities "who did not believe in Jesus and had decided that anybody who acknowledged Jesus as Messiah would be put out of the synagogue."[238] Group Three, the adherents of John the Baptist, maintained that "John, not Jesus, was God's primary emissary."[239] In the Fourth Gospel the earliest followers of Jesus came from among the disciples of John the Baptist, indeed "the Johannine movement itself may have had its roots among such

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opposition."

[237]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 63f.

[238]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 168.

[239]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 168.

disciples." But the Gospel makes it pellucidly clear that while John testified to Jesus and "revealed him to Israel," he himself was not the light, (1:9) the Messiah, Elijah, nor the Prophet (1:19-24; 3:28).[240] Because of their close affiliation with this group, the Johannine Christians treated the followers of John the Baptist less severely than the world and "the Jews." But Brown suggests that

> the fact that they are refuted in the Gospel, not by direct attack upon them as non-believers, but through careful correction of wrong aggrandizements of JBap may mean that the Johannine Christians still held hope for their conversion...The scene in John 3:22-26 attributes to the non-believing disciples of JBap envy of Jesus and a jealous regard for the prerogatives of their master, but it does not portray them as hating Jesus in the manner in which "the Jews" and the world hate him. Perhaps their own origins in the JBap movement made the Johannine Christians less severe toward their former brethren who had not preferred darkness to the light but had simply mistaken a lamp for the light of the world.[241]

Brown refers to the fourth group detectable in the Gospel as Crypto-Christians. Crypto-Christians claimed to believe that Jesus was the messiah but would not publicly acknowledge their belief because open affirmation of Christ resulted in expulsion from the synagogue: "John 12:42-43 supplies the clearest reference to a group of Jews who were attracted to Jesus so that they could be said to believe in him, but were afraid to confess their faith publicly less they be expelled from the synagogue."[242] The Fourth Evangelist holds these Crypto-Christians in contempt and accuses them

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[240]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 69.

[241]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 71.

[242]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 71.

of preferring "the praise of men to the glory of God." In recounting the story of the man born blind and his expulsion from the synagogue for confessing his faith in Jesus the gospel writer had hoped to persuade this group to publicly confess Jesus even though it would mean that they would suffer the same fate. Brown contends that "this blind man is acting out the history of the Johannine community, a community that would have had little tolerance for others who refused to make the difficult choice that they had had to make."[243] Their refusal to confess Jesus publicly meant that the Crypto-Christians did not really believe in him. "Like 'the Jews,' the Crypto-Christians had chosen to be known as disciples of Moses rather than as disciples of 'that fellow' (9:28). Yet John seems to be making an implicit appeal to them as if he still hopes to sway them."[244]

The Jewish Christians, Group Five, were individuals who had left the synagogues but whose faith was inadequate by Johannine standards. "Their existence is indicated by the presence in the Gospel of Jews who were *publicly* believers or disciples but whose lack of real faith is condemned by the author."[245] One such faction can be detected among the disciples with whom Jesus is conversing outside the Jewish synagogue immediately following the bread of life discourse (ch.6). Among their numbers are those who feel that Jesus' claim to be "the bread of life (which is his flesh) which must be eaten, even as his blood must be drunk, so that the recipient may have life"[246] is asking more of them than they can reasonably accept.

A second group of Jewish Christians contained within the Fifth Group which Brown

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[243]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 72.

[244]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 72.

[245]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 74.

[246]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 74.

distinguishes as inadequate in their faith are the brothers of Jesus as portrayed by the Evangelist. Jesus' brothers had urged him to go to Judea to perform miracles: "John equates this with an invitation to display himself (Jesus) to the world, and so he comments that even his brothers did not believe in him."[247]

A third group of Jewish Christians observed by Brown are the "Jews who had believed him" who appear in dialogue with Jesus in 8:31-45. Members of this group are "Jewish Christians who strongly resent the Johannine community because of its high christology and its admixture of Samaritan elements."[248] This group considers that the Johannine theology and Jesus' claim to divinity are nothing short of blasphemous. Their encounter with him

> raises the theme of whether such Jewish believers are slaves or truly free and whether they are the "seed" of Abraham. Antagonism increases as Jesus charges that the devil is their father (8:44), and they accuse him of being a Samaritan (8:45). It closes with Jesus' making the christological claim, "Before Abraham even came into existence, I AM," and their attempt to stone him.[249]

Brown cautiously proposes that one final group of Jewish Christians of inadequate faith are discernable in the pages of the Fourth Gospel. Leaders of Christian groups are the "hirelings" mentioned in 10:12. According to Brown many of these hirelings "have not distanced their flocks sufficiently from 'the Jews' who are trying to take them away (i.e., back to the synagogue), for they

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[247]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 75.

[248]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 77.

[249]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 77.

have not really accepted the Johannine thesis that Judaism has been replaced by Christianity."[250]

Outside of Johannine Christianity the Christians of the Apostolic Churches "represented by Peter and other members of the Twelve"[251] were the final religious group with which this community was affiliated. Although the Johannine attitude toward this group was largely favourable, "nevertheless...these named disciples do not seem to embody the fullness of Christian perception"[252] to the extent that the Johannine Christians do as illustrated in the figure of the Beloved Disciple:

> the others are scattered at the time of Jesus' passion, abandoning him (16:32), while the Beloved Disciple remains with Jesus even to the foot of the cross (19:26-27). Simon Peter denies that he is a disciple of Jesus (18:17.25), a particularly serious denial granted the Johannine emphasis on discipleship as the primary Christian category...The Johannine Christians, represented by the Beloved Disciple, clearly regard themselves as closer to Jesus and more perceptive than the Christians of the Apostolic Churches.[253]

The Apostolic Christians do not understand Jesus to the degree that the Johannine Christians do. While they can acknowledge all of the christological titles attributed to Jesus - the Messiah, the fulfiller of the Law, the Holy One of God, and the Son of God - they do not comprehend the fuller understanding of Jesus' divinity, specifically his pre-existence with the Father.

One more factor which separated the Apostolic Christians from the community of the

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[250]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 78.

[251]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 81.

[252]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 84.

[253]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 84.

Beloved Disciple was in matters of ecclesiology. Brown determines that in the Fourth Gospel the historical fact that in the late first century the Apostolic Church became increasingly institutionalized was of little importance to the Evangelist. Neither was the writer of the Gospel concerned with extolling the sacraments as understood by first century Christians. He writes:

> John has no words of Jesus commanding or instituting baptism and the eucharist...The image of Jesus instituting sacraments as a final action tends to identify them with the sphere of church life, while for John the sacraments are continuations of the power that Jesus manifested *during his ministry* when he opened the eyes of the blind (baptism as enlightenment) and fed the hungry (eucharist as food).[254]

The true pertinence of this analysis of the Fourth Gospel by Brown is that it indicates that *the Johannine community had a complex series of relations with various groups*. Thus, to speak in a general way of the community being "anti-society," for example, hardly does justice to the complicated situation which Brown envisages. The Johannine community had a different relationship with each different group. Moreover, it did seem to have a certain communality with other Christian groups, as Brown observes:

> The Johannine Christians were not the only Christians hostile to the synagogue and its leaders (Group II "The Jews"), even though the bitterness attested in John may be more acute that in other NT works...as for the attitude of the Johannine Christians towards the crypto-Christians (Group IV) and the Jewish Christians (Group V), once more they were not the only NT Christians to condemn other Christians as false.[255]

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[254]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 84-88.

[255]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 89.

Brown does concede that "there is much that is sectarian in John's sense of alienation and superiority...the Johannine Jesus is a stranger who is not understood by his own people and is not even of this world."[256] But he maintains:

> Nevertheless, despite all these tendencies towards sectarianism, I would contend that the Johannine attitude toward the apostolic Christians (Group VI probably a large group of Christians in many areas) proves that the Johannine community, as reflected in the Fourth Gospel, had not really become a sect. They had not followed their exclusivistic tendencies to the point of breaking communion (*koinōnia*) with these Christians whose characteristics are found in many NT works of the late first century....At the Last Supper (where Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciple are both present), when Jesus prays for those who believe in him through the word of his disciples, "That they all may be one" (17:20-21), he is praying for the oneness of the Apostolic and the Johannine Christians. Here the Johannine attitude is just the opposite of the outlook of a sect.[257]

This is a crucial observation. If the Johannine community sought to be accepted by other apostolic Christians, then it could hardly be termed a sect. Brown's reconstruction allows us to glimpse into a community whose self-identity was uniquely defined by its proclamation of Jesus. Membership consisted of those who remained steadfast in their declaration over against those who were unwilling to confess Jesus according to Johannine standards.

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[256]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple. The sectarian element, he suggests, results from "the peculiar sense of estrangement from one's own people (1:11)" (p. 89).

[257]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 90.

Initially the Johannine community was rooted in parent Judaism such that its Messianic expectations, scriptural truths and faith in the God of Israel were one and the same.[258] It was the Johannine community's reinterpretation of Jewish doctrine, its high christological development and theological claims which led to alienation from without and schism from within, eventually resulting in a religious movement entirely separated from the source of its origins. However, our analysis of the Fourth Gospel's theology of revelation and the role of the Beloved Disciple indicates that the Johannine community did perceive itself to have a legitimate, if distinctive, place within the larger Christian community. Quast contends that

> a move toward bringing the Apostolic and Johannine Christians together is discernable throughout the Gospel of John, and it finds its culmination in the final chapter of the Gospel. At least part of the Johannine community eventually followed the lead of the Gospel and entered into a "partnership" with the Apostolic stream.[259]

In spite of its unique place within early Christianity, the Johannine community was not destined to survive into the second century. Brown maintains that because Johannine theology was so volatile, "it was destined to be swallowed up in larger Christian movements (to the right and to the left) that emerged from the first century."[260] Members, along with their Gospel, were either

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[258]See John W. Pryor, Evangelist of the Covenant People, p. 166.

[259]Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 170; also see Karl-Josef Kuschel, Born Before all Time, p. 192, who writes that "despite all the demarcation and confrontation, despite all failure and timidity, the community held to a confession of Christ which in principle corresponded with that of other churches (Christ as the eschatological revelation of God), this community is anything but an esoteric conventicle; nor is its Christology to be reduced to the private christology of an enthusiastic-radical sect of gnosticizing marginal Christians."

[260]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 4.

assimilated into gnostic communities or dispersed among other Christian groups.[261] But the exact reasons for these assimilations are not so clearly defined. Meeks, Malina, Neyrey, Petersen and others uncover some crucial observations regarding the nature of this unique community. We know that the Johannine community did become isolated from the parent body, experienced social alienation and expulsion from the synagogues, suffered defections from within and dispersed some time after the Epistles were written. The need to defend its high Christological and theological claims was more than the community could withstand from its opponents. Nevertheless, categorizing the Johannine community as an "anti-society" or "counter-society" complete with its unique "anti-language" and "alternative ideology" stems from imposing a twentieth century sociological understanding of society upon a first century Jewish community.

Throughout history readers of the Fourth Gospel have been privy to a perception of Jesus unparalleled by any other New Testament document. This community was one of many struggling to make its voice heard in an emerging Christian world. Although it did not survive the backlash from its theological development, nevertheless the true witness and testimony of the Beloved Disciple has stood the test of time. The Fourth Gospel reflects the self-understanding of a community unique in its theological understanding of the Son of God.

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[261]R. Alan Culpepper, The Johannine School, p. 287; so also Kevin Quast, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, p. 168: "the schism within the Johannine community resulted in the absorption of the Johannine community into either the apostolic churches or Gnosticism"; and Raymond Brown, p. 24, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, writes that "the adherents of I John in the early second century seem to have gradually merged with what Ignatious of Antioch calls 'the church catholic' as exhibited by the growing acceptance of Johannine Christology of the pre-existence of the Word...because secessionists and their heterodox descendants misused the Fourth Gospel, it was not cited as scripture by orthodox writers in the early second century."

CONCLUSION

We have noted two levels of argument in the Fourth Gospel. At the primary level the argument is that salvation consists in communion with the Father through the Son. Jesus is the pre-existent, eternal Logos commissioned by the Father to bring salvation into the earthly realm: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (3:16). Kuschel has correctly stated that

> John's concern is the confession that the Word of God which is with God from eternity, God's Word and thus God himself, has become man in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus *is* the eternal Word of God in person, not because people believe it of him or because he asserts it of himself, but because that is what he is from God. Jesus *is*, the eternal Son of God, not because human beings have understood this to be the case or because he has made it plausible, but because that is what he is, and always was, God. So what stands in the foreground is not the speculative question how the man Jesus could have had glory with God but the confession that the man Jesus of Nazareth is the Logos of God in person. And he is the Logos as a mortal man. However, he is the Logos only for those who are prepared to believe, trusting God's word in his word, God's actions in his actions, God's history in his career, and God's compassion in his cross.[262]

On a secondary level the motif of the Beloved Disciple is used to secure the legitimacy of the Johannine community's grasp of this salvation. Just as the Father is known through the Son, so the

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[262]Karl-Josef Kuschel, Born Before all Time, p. 389.

Son is known through the Beloved Disciple. The Fourth Evangelist shows how the Johannine community, through the Beloved Disciple, experiences the "same growth in christological perception"[263] evident when the new community of faith was forged at the foot of the cross and evident in sharing the faith of the larger Christian church. It was the Beloved Disciple who set the standard for community discipleship and corresponding response of faith:

> Genuine discipleship in the Fourth Gospel consists of an active faith response to Jesus' word...The appropriate response paradigm culminates in the characterization of the disciple Jesus loved. By the time of his appearance in chapter 13 the paradigm is well established and readers know what constitutes appropriate response. He is the only character fitting the paradigm who continually reappears. Each time he is present readers are reminded of Jesus' love for him. His response to Jesus is seen in his intimacy with Jesus (ch. 13), in accepting resp nsibility for Jesus' mother (18), in his race to the tomb and subsequent belief (20), in his post-resurrectional recognition of Jesus (21) and in his following Jesus (ch. 21).[264]

It is through the Beloved Disciple that the community can thus claim a secure grasp of the way, the truth, and the life. But this is not seen as an exclusive claim. The way in which Peter and the Beloved Disciple are juxtaposed, especially in 20:2-10, indicates that the Johannine community does not see itself as at odds with the larger Christian community. Just as tradition has secured Peter's place inside orthodox Christianity so the Beloved Disciple has ensured a similar placement for the Johannine community.

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[263]Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, p. 33.

[264]David R. Beck, The Discipleship Paradigm, p. 137.

It is conventional wisdom to see the theology of revelation in the Fourth Gospel as having been forged in the crucible of christological debates with post-Temple Judaism. There is no doubt that the break with the synagogue did provide the catalyst for the formation of the high christology which helped to give the Johannine community its distinctive identity. We should not overlook, however, the way in which the Johannine community *fashioned its own identity within the larger Christian community* and the role that this endeavour played in shaping the theology of revelation in the Fourth Gospel. Such an avenue of inquiry may yet silhouette more clearly the shadowy contours of a community which is not only seeking to grasp the mystery of the Father who is revealed in the Son, but is also in quest of an identity which will give it free reign to express its unique theology while at the same time allowing it to remain within the larger Christian *koinōnia*.[265]

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[265]That the community was not entirely successful in doing this is evidenced by I Jn. The epistle obviously reflects a situation in which a split in the community has occurred (cf. I Jn 2:19). The split seems to have been particularly over christological formulation and ethical behaviour. As a result of this split some Johannine Christians seem to have identified themselves more closely with the apostolic Christians, while others seem to have embarked down a road which eventually led to gnosticism. See Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, pp. 166-67.

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