

**The Puzzle of the Prayer:
A Study of John 17**

Judith A. Diehl

**Doctor of Philosophy
University of Edinburgh**

2007

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by me, it represents my own research and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Judith A. Diehl
2007

Dedication

This doctoral thesis is dedicated to my husband, Dave, without whom it could never have been completed, and to all our friends and family who supported this effort with their prayers and promises. To God be the glory.

Abstract

This thesis is an investigation into the literary features of the prayer in John 17. Often called the “High Priestly Prayer of Jesus,” this traditional title for John 17 does not adequately cover the depth of significance and meaning realized in the prayer. The main chapters of the investigation include characterization, structure and setting, style and imagery, the genre of the Farewell Discourses and the form of the prayer itself. The prayer is used by the Gospel author to summarize and emphasize key themes and motifs for the benefit of the author’s intended readers. The author intentionally broke from the narrative story and included extensive discourse material, including this prayer, to encourage and inform the community of Christ-followers to whom he wrote. In a dramatic way, the prayer reflects the fulfillment of redemptive prophecies from the past and guarantees a new relationship between God and his people, sealed in the person and the work of Jesus. The prayer promises the benefits of “eternal life” to the people who receive the words of Jesus. Chapter 17 is a critical literary “hinge” that informs the reader in two directions, past and future. John 17 is a promise and a hope, positioned as a rhetorical, epideictic conclusion, for the encouragement of the Gospel readers past, present and future.

Table of Contents

I. Preface	
Declaration	ii
Dedication	iii
Abstract	iv
Table of Contents	v
Abbreviations	vii
II. Introduction	1
1. Key Questions	2
2. Methodology	9
3. Past Scholarship	20
4. Summation	47
III. Main Investigation	
A. Chapter 1 Characterization	51
1. Characterization in the Fourth Gospel	52
2. Characterization in the Farewell Discourses	75
3. Characterization in the Prayer	84
4. Importance of Characterization	107
5. Conclusion	110
B. Chapter 2 Structure and Setting	114
1. Structure of the Fourth Gospel	115
2. Structure of the Farewell Discourses	119
3. Structure of the Prayer	136
4. Setting of Prayer	152
5. Conclusion	157
C. Chapter 3 Style and Imagery	159
1. Literary Style of the Author	161
a. Style of the Farewell Discourses	165
b. Style of the Prayer	171
2. Imagery: Metaphors and Symbolism	177
3. Imagery in the Farewell Discourses	187
4. Imagery in the Prayer	200
5. Conclusion	211
D. Chapter 4 Genre of the Farewell Discourses	213
1. Biographical Genre of the Fourth Gospel	216
2. Farewell Testament Genre of the Farewell Discourses	218
3. Conclusion	272

E. Chapter 5	Form of the Prayer	274
1.	Form and Function of the Prayer	276
2.	Conclusion to the Farewell Discourses	294
3.	Model of New Prayer Relationship	307
4.	Prayer of the Intercessor	309
5.	Conclusion	316
IV.	Conclusions of the Investigation	318
V.	Bibliography	326

Abbreviations

Any abbreviations used for secondary sources in the following thesis adhere to the standard format recommended by the *SBL Handbook of Style*, Edited by P. Alexander et al., Peabody, Hendrickson Publishers, 1999:

AnBib	Analecta biblica
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992,
ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
BAGD	Bauer, W., W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 2d ed. Chicago, 1979.
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart, 1983.
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca sacra</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907.
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CTR	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
DJG	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i> . Edited by J. B. Green and S. McKnight, Downers Grove, 1992.
DLNT	<i>Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments</i> . Edited by R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids, Downers Grove, 1997.
DPL	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i> . Edited by G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin, Downers Grove, 1993.
EDNT	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by H. Balz, G. Schneider. ET. Grand Rapids, 1990-1993.
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDNTT	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> . Edited by C. Brown. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, 1975-1985.
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>

NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OTP</i>	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York, 1983, 1985.
<i>Semeia</i>	<i>Semeia</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SBL SBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLStBl	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SNT	Studien zum Neuen Testament
SNTI	Studies in New Testament Interpretation
<i>SR</i>	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

Introduction

“And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
And all mankind together will see it.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”
Isaiah 40:5

In the Fourth Gospel, the final prayer of Jesus in chapter 17 demands further critical study. Its distinctiveness in content, in form, and in its position in the narrative, as well as the effect that it has on the reader of the Fourth Gospel, begs for further explanation. Three simple questions lay the foundation of the present study concerning John 17: what is it; why is it there, and why is it *there*? Why did Jesus need to say such a prayer at that moment in front of other people? How does the prayer function within the immediate context of the Farewell Discourses and larger context of John’s Gospel? By including the prayer, what was the author communicating to his readers? Despite extensive research in the Fourth Gospel, John 17 still remains an intriguing puzzle within the larger puzzle of the entire Gospel. John 17 is presented by the author as a distinctive literary form in a unique position within the Gospel. By applying a literary approach to Jesus’ prayer, we can better understand the meaning and significance of the text.

The contribution of this study to Johannine scholarship is a fuller recognition of the crucial role of the prayer of John 17 for the author’s intended readers. This study will argue that, based on its content and its position in the narrative, the deliberate existence and the function of the prayer are for the benefit of the intended readers, not for the characters in the narrative story. In the past, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the role of the prayer as it affects the disciples of Jesus who are seated with

him at the Last Supper. Yet the text itself offers no certainties about all those who participated in the Johannine meal, or how those present responded to the prayer. That is not to say that Jesus' immediate disciples would not receive encouragement and preparation in view of the subsequent passion events. However, the role and function of the prayer extends beyond the characters in the narrative to the perspective of the early Christian readers. Therefore, this introductory chapter has three parts: part one, a detailed examination of the key questions posed in the thesis; part two, an explanation of methodology used in the study; and part three, a cursory review of contributions from significant past scholarship.

Part One: Key Questions

What is it?

John 17 is, to state the obvious, a prayer. For good reason it is called a "prayer," even if the most common Greek verb for "to pray" (*προσεύχομαι*) is used neither in the chapter, nor in the entire Gospel.¹ Why does the "hero" of John's story (Jesus) pray at all? Is it really necessary for the Son to ask the Father for anything? The text tells us that preceding his final prayer, Jesus spoke at great length with and to his followers (13:31-16:33); then he suddenly "looks toward heaven," and prays as if he were alone with the Father. Our study will show that the prayer exists, as a prayer, for many reasons.

The prayer, as a part of the Farewell Discourses, is an extended interruption in the narrative. The story, or the plot, of the life and ministry of Jesus which began at 1:19

¹ Andrew Lincoln, "God's Name, Jesus' Name and Prayer in the Fourth Gospel," in *Into God's Presence* (ed. Richard Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 155.

comes to a temporary halt at 12:50. Immediately after the prayer, the reader is returned once again to the story of Jesus, specifically to the passion narrative (chapters 18-20). In terms of the progressing narrative of the life and ministry of Jesus, the sudden insertion of a lengthy discourse that ends in a formal prayer appears to be unusual, unattached and “out-of-place” within the narrative.

Jesus is the exemplary teacher, taking time to instruct and edify those who would listen and follow him. The Farewell Discourses are didactic in purpose, a teaching tool not unlike the “farewell testaments” found in the Old Testament. While the prayer of John 17 could be removed from the Gospel without any harm done to the plot of the story of Jesus, it could not be removed from the Farewell Discourses without injuring the instructional unit of teaching that is presented to the reader.

The prayer of John 17 is a literary technique used by the author to communicate what he considers to be vital information to his readers. The chapter summarizes and emphasizes key themes and motifs that are expressed in the Farewell Discourses and in the first twelve chapters of the Gospel. The culminating prayer helps to clarify the misunderstandings about Jesus and his mission that are seen in the narrative. It orients the readers as to what is really going on in the story of Jesus, even when the characters seem doubtful and uncertain. For those reading the Gospel decades after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the prayer is an assurance that their belief in Jesus is the proper response to truth given (14:6). The prayer shines a light on the nature of the Son and the nature of his relationship with the Father and on the relationship between the Father, the Son and the believer. This is crucial information for the reader.

Chapter 17 is a critical literary “hinge” that informs the reader in two directions, past and future. It guides the readers to a correct interpretation of the past events of the life and ministry of Jesus (as seen in the narrative chapters 2 through 12), and to an assurance that they have full knowledge of God’s complete revelation through Jesus for the future. Pointing to the past, it is a clue to the reader as to what is to come. For the readers, the prayer lays a foundation for a fuller understanding of the unity of the community of believers as divinely planned beforehand (17:21-23).

It is the summation and conclusion to the final words of Jesus as a preparation for his disciples and a promise to succeeding generations of disciples. The prayer is the climax of the verbal revelation of the Father that Jesus came to give to humanity on earth; it is the climactic words of “the Word.” The discourse section is a bridge that unifies the narrative portions of the Gospel. The significance of the events in the narrative story, which reveal the identity and purpose of Jesus, are more comprehensible to the reader after “hearing” the discourse portion of John’s Gospel. The culminating prayer assures the readers that events of the past, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus were all part of the plan of God. It assures them that the believing readers are a part of that plan, and will carry on the mission of Jesus (17:18, 20). Because of the reciprocal Father/Son relationship, the people who believe the words of the Son will be unified in their belief (17:21, 23), receiving love and protection from the Father and the Son (17:15, 26). Remarkably, the ones believing in Jesus will be “in” the Father and the Son.

Chapter 17 has traditionally been entitled “Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer,” a title which dates from David Chyträus at the end of the sixteenth century (1531-1600).² It has also been given various other titles, such as the “prayer of consecration,” the “prayer of commission” or the “intercessory prayer.”³ But in agreement with C. K. Barrett, most titles do not do justice to the complete range of material in the prayer.⁴ It is a “one-of-a-kind” prayer, uniquely placed on the lips of Jesus, who is not the normally expected kind of high priest. More than an intercessory prayer, it is a promise of Jesus’ intercessory role for the believing readers.

Consequently, the prayer is not just a conglomeration of requests placed on the lips of Jesus because he needed to pray to his Father before his arrest. An investigation of the shape, structure and setting of the prayer guides us to a better understanding of the meaning of its contents. Further, the style of the author and the metaphorical language must be considered to determine what kind of literature it is, and why it was written the way that it was.

Why does it exist at all?

What is the particular role of John 17 in the Gospel? How does it function for the reader? The question of existence leads us into an investigation of the function of the prayer within the immediate context of the Farewell Discourses and larger context of John’s Gospel. We must determine why Jesus is praying out loud, in front of other characters in the story.

² See, for example, E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. Francis Noel Davey, vol. 2 (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1940), 494.

³ E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 585. In addition, see Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John; a Commentary*, vol. 2 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 1051, and C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), 420.

⁴ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: SPCK, 1978 [1955]), 500.

This study contends that the prayer exists for the benefit of the author's intended readers. It is proposed that the author decidedly broke from the narrative story and specifically included discourse material, including this prayer, for the benefit of the community of Christ-followers to whom he wrote. The concluding prayer of these discourses is instructional, edifying and exemplary.

The structure of the prayer is critical to the purpose of the author of the Gospel. At first appearance, it would seem that Jesus opens the prayer by praying about himself; then, he prays for his immediate disciples and finally, for the generations of believers who come after the disciples. Why is it necessary for Jesus to pray for himself and his followers at this point in the narrative? By praying this prayer, Jesus confirms his own identity even before the events of the passion take place. He also confirms the purpose of his mission, by promising "eternal life" to those who believe in his words (17:1-5). This unique prayer exists to assure the reader that the passion narrative events are not a mistake. Jesus has completed his mission and has secured eternal life for the readers. The words of the prayer present a Jesus who already knows what is going to happen in the narrative, and he is very much in control of the situation. The author of the prayer has Jesus praying for himself to confirm his divine identity and his completed mission for the readers.

Second, Jesus prays for "those whom you have given me out of the world" (17:6), an intentionally elusive phrase. Is this a reference to the eleven disciples of Jesus, or could it include Jesus' followers past, present and future? Dodd and others have suggested that the prayer is spoken for the benefit of the disciples who were with

Jesus in the story.⁵ Nevertheless, Dodd also recognizes that the readers are already informed as to the “total picture of Christ and his work,” and the prayer may mean something different to them than it did to the immediate disciples.⁶ It is important to note that there is nothing in the narrative that follows (in chapters 18-20) that informs the reader as to the reactions or responses of the immediate disciples in the narrative to the prayer given by Jesus in chapter 17. Thus, the second portion of the prayer (17:6-19) exists for the author’s intended readers as well as for the characters in the narrative story.

Third, the final portion of the prayer is for “those who will believe in me through their message” (17:20), for the people who believe in Jesus as the Christ because of the message carried on by the immediate disciples. Again, the phrase is ambiguous enough to include believers of many generations. Therefore, this is a reference to the future Christian believers after the first disciples; that is, the readers of the Gospel. The prayer exists to confirm and assure the readers who are post-Easter concerning who Jesus is and what he did *for them*. John 17 is a suspended moment in time when the reader can catch a glimpse of eternity past and eternity future through the eyes of Jesus. Stibbe observes that throughout the prayer of John 17, the reader is permitted “the greatest privilege, the gift of ‘overhearing the Godhead.’”⁷

The prayer is a hope and a promise. It is a rhetorical device to help the readers understand their role in the continuation of the ministry of Jesus. John 17 is presented as

⁵ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 417-419.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 420. Yet it is difficult to agree with Dodd on his “fresh point of view” that the readers were “nurtured in the mystical piety represented by such literature as the *Hermetica*,” since the Hermetic writings, *Poimandres* and *De Regeneratione* were written years after the Fourth Gospel.

⁷ M. W. G. Stibbe, *John, Readings: A New Biblical Commentary* (Sheffield: JSOT Press/Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 1993), 178.

the culmination of divine revelation and proclamation in the Gospel. The central theme of “eternal life,” expressed in the prayer (17:3), is a clue to the prayer’s essence and purpose. For the readers, eternal life is defined in the first part of the prayer, and is a repetition of its significance from the earlier chapters of the Gospel. In part two of the prayer, the benefits of eternal life are promised to the disciples following the Easter events and the coming of the promised Paraclete (divine glory, protection and sanctification). In the third part of the prayer, the “second generation” of believers, including the intended readers of the Fourth Gospel, enter into eternal life by believing the message of the disciples, and thus placing their faith in the words and works of Jesus as the Christ. The message of Jesus continues on from the past disciples to the present church to the future completion of God’s plan (see 1:4). Eternal life in Jesus is granted to all believers; consequently, all those who love God and are loved by God are to be fully united into a community of God’s own (17:2, 23).

Why is it *there*?

Does it fit into a purposeful design? Why is it positioned where it is in the text? How does this noteworthy prayer fit into the scheme of the whole puzzle? What does its position literarily communicate to the reader?

As one entire chapter of the Gospel, the prayer stands alone as the longest prayer on the lips of Jesus in the New Testament. The prayer is unique within the Fourth Gospel, within the Johannine corpus of the New Testament (regardless of debates concerning authorship and dating of the Johannine Gospel and epistles), and in all the New Testament. The prayer has been viewed by scholars as a complete, self-contained unit, which may have been (hypothetically) inserted into the Gospel as an editorial

“insertion.”⁸ If one determines that it is a later addition or insertion to an older version of the Gospel, then its position at the end of the speeches of Jesus is certainly brought into question. If it conceivably could have been inserted anywhere, why is it *there*?⁹

Chapter 17 is positioned where it is because it is a summary and a culmination of the Farewell Discourses (13:31-17:26). Located at the end of the extensive didactic discourse material, the prayer repeats key themes found in the discourses.¹⁰ Further, the prayer is a conclusion to the “farewell testament” of Jesus. The author employs a well-known Hebraic genre for his discourses, but he adapts the genre to suit his purposes. By using and adapting his chosen genre and form the author is communicating important information to the readers about Jesus and about themselves.

Part Two: Methodology

The intent of this study is to investigate the “architecture” of the text of John 17, how it is constructed and how it fits within the whole of the Gospel to determine its significance and meaning. This literary analysis of John 17 within the Gospel of John is a study of a particular kind of pericope written at the end of the first century to an intended audience for a specific purpose. We are asking literary questions about a specific piece of literature found within a larger text.

Literary Analysis Approach

A “literary approach” to the biblical literature has been expanding, growing and changing for at least five decades. It is, more accurately, a group of methods. At the

⁸ L. Scott Kellum, *The Unity of the Farewell Discourse; the Literary Integrity of John 13.31-16.33* (JSNTSup 256; ed. Mark Goodacre; London: T & T Clark 2004), 3-4.

⁹ It is not possible, within the boundaries of this thesis, to fully address questions of Johannine dating or authenticity; such issues will only be mentioned as they specifically pertain to the role and function of the prayer of John 17.

¹⁰ e.g., Dodd, *Interpretation*, 417.

beginning of the twenty-first century, there is a great deal of confusion as well as excitement in “the literary approach” to the Gospels. An array of literary methodological “tools,” such as narrative criticism, composition criticism, discourse analysis, rhetorical criticism, reader-response criticism, speech-act theory, structuralism, deconstructive criticism and post-structuralism have been added to the interpretation arsenal. The terms can be confusing and can even lead to misunderstandings; in my opinion, no single method seems to be emerging as the leader in this field. Each one seems to have something to contribute to our understanding of literary communication.

Broadly speaking, “literary criticism” connotes an attempt to understand literature.¹¹ The literary approach to the biblical writings is not a discipline set in stone, but a broad range of methods and constructs.¹² Such an approach includes many sub-categories and complex, diverse terminology. As in the construction of a building, the literary researcher must determine the appropriate kind of tools or technique(s) to use with the appropriate kind of literature. What kind of written material is being analyzed? What are the best tools for evaluation? What methods are the most appropriate and the most useful in answering the specific questions raised about a given text? In 1987 David Aune gave a useful definition of literary criticism that helps to narrow the category as it relates to the biblical texts:

Literary criticism deals with the interpretation and evaluation of a literary work through the careful examination and analysis of the work itself on the basis of both *internal* factors (e.g., genre, structure, content, style, sources) and *external* factors (e.g.,

¹¹ William A. Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 1.

¹² Derek Tovey, *Narrative Art and Act in the Fourth Gospel* (vol. 151; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 20.

historical setting, social setting, biographical data, psychological information).¹³

While Aune's definition is helpful, it is possible to be more explicit about the methodology used in this investigation. To narrow our focus, it is "narrative criticism" that is the most helpful literary analysis tool for this study.

Narrative Criticism

Narrative criticism, as defined by Resseguie, focuses on an understanding of biblical literature as *literature*.¹⁴ It could be considered a sub-category of literary criticism, specifically analyzing the "how" of the text (the language and structure) to a greater extent than the "what" (content) of the text.¹⁵ For this study, narrative criticism has three advantages in the quest of biblical interpretation. First, it argues for a text that is an "organic whole, a unity that needs to be examined on its own terms."¹⁶ Second, it gives close attention to the language, the details, the nuances and smaller units of text that contribute to the whole.¹⁷ Third, it highly regards the reader and takes into consideration how the reader reacts to the narrative.¹⁸

It is a move away from the traditional historical-critical methods and asks different questions than the historical critics. Certainly there is an "historical reference" to the Gospel story.¹⁹ The historical method demonstrates that there is historical tradition behind the narrative and the discourse sections of the Gospel. Yet, narrative

¹³ David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 19 (my italics).

¹⁴ James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 18.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 22.

¹⁷ Ibid., 23.

¹⁸ Ibid., 30.

¹⁹ Tovey, *Narrative Art and Act in the Fourth Gospel*, 36.

criticism substantiates the fact that historical traditions are less critical to the author's general presentation of Jesus.²⁰ As Aune points out, both internal and external factors contribute to the readers' understanding of the story. While the historical and social contexts of the story are not irrelevant, the main thrust of this investigation will be on the *internal* architecture of the text: characterization, structure, style, imagery, genre and form. What kind of literature is being presented to a reading audience? The choice of this method for this investigation is a result of the three benefits mentioned above.

First, narrative criticism views the work as a whole. It does not deny that other tools such as form and redaction criticism are useful, but it is more interested in seeing the "complete tapestry in which the parts fit together to form an organic whole."²¹ Second, it carefully considers the small details, complexities and nuances of the literature: the rhetorical strategies, character development, subtle imagery, setting, form and structure of the text. At the same time, it does not ignore the cultural, social and historical backdrops that affect and influence the readers.²²

Third, narrative criticism gives emphasis to the effects of the narrative on the reader/listener. The Fourth Gospel is a story, and is intended to be read, experienced, and interpreted by the people reading it.²³ The story was written by an innovative, knowledgeable author, who delivered a familiar story in a particular way to achieve his desired artistic and emotional effects.²⁴ Originally, the text may have been delivered

²⁰ Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary* (vol. 1; Peabody: Hendrickson 2003), 79.

²¹ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 39.

²² Ibid.

²³ M. W. G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller; Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992). Also, see Tovey, *Narrative Art and Act in the Fourth Gospel*, 34.

²⁴ William T. Pyle, "Understanding the Misunderstanding Sequences in the Gospel of John," *Faith and Mission* 11, no. 2 (1994): 26-47, p. 27.

orally to a first- or second-century Christian community, making that community of believers “the audience.” It may have been written to a wider, general audience composed of many communities, or to one specific community; either way, the story was probably intended to be read and re-read orally to an audience numerous times and under a variety of circumstances.²⁵ Thus, narrative criticism strongly considers the reactions and the interactions of the broad audience to whom the text was written.²⁶

Related to the third benefit is the recent approach scholars refer to as “reader-response criticism.” On the positive side, reader-response criticism does concentrate on the readers’ reactions to the text. It queries, what does the text *do* for the reader? How does the text affect the readers, and does it produce change in the readers? Commonly, reader-response criticism observes three ways that readers respond to the literature: the reader is *in* the text (i.e., a part of the story); the reader has complete dominance *over* the text; or the reader has a relationship *with* the text.²⁷ That is, guided by clues from the author internally, with the knowledge of external factors, the reader is drawn into a relationship *with* what he or she is reading. Resseguie creatively states,

The importance of reader-response criticism for narrative criticism is the reemployment of the reader. The reader, who was abruptly fired by the New Critics as an irrelevant spectator in the production of the text’s meaning, is now rehired. She or he is a full partner in the firm of Author, Text and Reader.²⁸

²⁵ For more information on the historical, “external” factors of the original audience, see R. Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School*, Howard C. Kee and Douglas A. Knight, eds., *SBLDS*, 26 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975). Also see Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, Anchor Bible Series (New York; London: Doubleday Press, 1966-1970) and Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel*, JSNTSup Series, 69 (Sheffield: JSOT Press; Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

²⁶ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 40.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

Since narrative criticism is our basic methodology, with an emphasis on the interaction between the text and the reader, it is critical to include in our investigation relevant information concerning the “sender” and the “receivers” of the Gospel story.

Author

Basic to the literary analysis is the concept of an author (or “sender”) and an audience (or “receiver”) in the process of communication. This thesis is written with the understanding that the text was written by someone who wrote with a planned design, and who sought to communicate specific concepts to an audience. I am not insisting that “the author” of the Fourth Gospel be a first- or second-century man, but for the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the author in the masculine form. Nor am I insisting that “the author” be one individual; however, in this study, it is impossible to address all the questions of original compositions, editions, redactions and contributing communities that are posed about the Fourth Gospel. Suffice it to say that “the author” is a representative term that covers the one or more people who are responsible for the production of the Fourth Gospel as we know it today. I will also refer to the author of “John’s Gospel,” without implying that I know a man named John wrote it. It, too, is a representative title. The results of his work indicate that the author of John is a creative, competent literary artist, able to present what he intends to convey to his readers. While we may not know with certainty the identity of the author of the Fourth Gospel, we can infer his focus or intentions from his written work taken as a literary whole. As readers,

we can gain some understanding of his intended communication because he intended for us to do so.²⁹

Finally, the narrator of the Gospel story and the author of the text are one and the same, expressing the same point of view. The Gospel is presented in a “subjective” point of view by a narrator who relates to his audience evaluations of narrative events as well as notable attitudes and opinion concerning characters in the story.³⁰

Readers

In addition to a responsible author, this literary analysis supposes reasonably competent, responsible, informed readers of the Gospel. The readers are self-aware of their position as receivers, and have the appropriate skills to discern the author’s communication.

This study is based on the belief that the recipients of the Gospel are a community (or communities) of believers. Within the community, there may be a spectrum of belief, but the assumption is made that they have a basic faith in Jesus as the Son of God. The purpose statement of John 20:31 implies that the community must continue to learn, to nurture and to live their faith. The author of John’s Gospel explicitly appeals to his readers (e.g., 19:35; 20:31).³¹ Both the author and the readers are fully aware of the difference of time between the words of Jesus and the growing Christian church. Jesus’ immediate disciples, the “first generation” of those who

²⁹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "From Speech Acts to Scripture Acts," in *After Pentecost; Language and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Colin Green, Karl Moller and Craig Bartholomew; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 23. Vanhoozer notes, “Communication succeeds when the speaker’s communicative intention becomes mutually known to the readers.”

³⁰ James L. Resseguie, *The Strange Gospel: Narrative Design and Point of View in John* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 2-3.

³¹ Judith Lieu, "How John Writes," in *The Written Gospel* (ed. M. Bockmuehl and D. Hagner; Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 176-77.

believed, did not fully understand Jesus' earthly ministry before the Easter events and the promised Paraclete, but they knew they were instructed to carry Jesus' message into the world and forward in time. Decades later, the communities which were formed on the basis of belief in Jesus as the Christ remembered and carried forward the teachings and activities of Jesus.

The intended readers of John's Gospel have knowledge that the characters in the story did not have. The readers have knowledge of both the Father and the Son (1:18; 17:3, 8b, 26). They know what Jesus meant by his gift of life (1:12; 3:15; 5:21, 24; 17:3), and of truth (1:17; 5:19, 24, 25; 8:32; 17:17). They received Jesus' words and have believed in his name (1:12; 17:6-8, 20). They have seen his glory (1:14). They know the "hatred of the world;" perhaps some experienced rejection from the synagogue (15:18-19; 9:22; 16:2; 17:16). Unlike the characters in the story, the readers have the comments of the narrator in the Gospel text (e.g., 2:11, 24; 4:1-2, 27; 7:39; 12:16). Most important, they have the guidance of the promised Paraclete to aid in their understanding and application of Jesus' words (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14).

The intended readers of the Gospel benefit from the knowledge they receive in the Prologue (1:1-1:18); even before the narrative events begin, the reader is told who "the Word" is and from where he came (1:1-2). They can recall the events of the passion narrative, and look back to the words of Jesus about his departure from the earth with fuller understanding (16:16-18). The passion events are interpreted in light of the promises of Jesus' resurrection appearances (20:19 – 21:3). Post-Easter, the readers are assured that the mystery of the crucifixion was part of the plan; it was beneficial to the "ones believing" (17:20), and a fulfilment of their joy (16:20-22, 24; 17:13).

Because the readers are “in the know” from the outset, they have a more objective view concerning the doubt and misunderstandings of the characters. On the one hand, an intended reader may identify with the characters in the Gospel who do not fully understand what is going on as the drama unfolds, (e.g., Jesus’ use of the word “sleep” regarding Lazarus, 11:11-13). On the other hand, the intended reader may feel frustration at the characters’ stubborn refusal to believe what the reader already knows to be true (e.g., 13:36, 37). It is through the author’s style, figures of speech, rhetorical devices and symbolic imagery that we see the building of tension and the author’s attempt to engage the reader. The readers “hear” the words of the Johannine Jesus, observe Jesus’ actions, watch numerous characters engage with Jesus, and consider what the author is communicating to them. It is with this accumulation of knowledge that the readers approach the prayer of John 17.

For the purposes of this study, it is unnecessary to make a firm historical determination as to the identity of the original readers of the Gospel of John. It is important to determine the existence of a community (or communities) of believers, but unnecessary to establish where the communities are located geographically. Whether they are implied or “real,” the readers of any text use two sets of data to form their responses to the text: the “internal” and “external” factors (see Aune, above). Internal factors are discerned from the text itself, such as the words, form, structure, grammar, and themes; the “external factors” are what the readers bring to the text from their socio-cultural, linguistic, and biographical background. The former is my concern, discovering how the “internal factors” of John 17 are used to communicate to the readers of the Gospel.

Indeed, the readers of the Gospel of John had various skills and competencies that are required in order to make sense of the text of the Fourth Gospel. First, the readers had some level of knowledge of the Hebrew (OT) Scriptures. The author of John, usually as the voice of the narrator, makes numerous references to Jewish feasts (e.g., 10:22; 12:1), the Jewish Sabbath (e.g., 9:14-16), and to the Jewish Scriptures themselves (e.g., 12:13-15, 38-41; 17:12). The Prologue, as a further example, assumes knowledge of Genesis 1. The reader's knowledge from the two opening chapters of the Gospel, including the witness of John ("the Baptist") orient the reader to the conflict that is central to the plot of the author's narrative (1:10).³²

Second, the readers were familiar with the story of Jesus. Perhaps they knew one or more of the Synoptic Gospels, or at least they were familiar with oral traditions about the life, words and works of Jesus. They may have known other Christian writings as well, or may have encountered other versions of the Jesus story. The intended readers were a part of a believing community who were living out the words of Jesus, and who had experienced the Holy Spirit (Paraclete) in their midst.³³

Finally, the readers have an understanding of the literary tools and techniques employed by the Gospel author; if not, his unique style would have no effect on his readers. They understood his use of themes and motifs, and rhetorical devices. The author's sense of irony and paradox is not lost on his readers. The readers can discern a contradiction between the interpretation of Jesus' significance which the characters give

³² Lincoln recognizes that "the implied reader is also an informed reader." See Andrew Lincoln, "Trials, Plots and the Narrative of the Fourth Gospel," *JSNT*, no. 56 (1994): 3-30., 22.

³³ Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel* (JSNTSup; vol. 69; Sheffield: JSOT Press; Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 354-55, 62.

in the text, and the interpretation encouraged by the author/narrator (7:14-20). Readers are aware of the use of irony in the stories of the leader Nicodemus (3:4), the Samaritan woman (4:19-26), the crippled man (5:1-13), “the crowd” (6:22-30; 7:12-13), and “the Pharisees” (8:13-30). Jesus’ conversations with other characters repeatedly demonstrate an incorrect response from the other person (or persons); but the reader knows what the appropriate response to Jesus really is. Figurative language engages the minds of the readers, and their active participation in interpreting the text creates new experiences for them, “which are not only cerebral but emotional.”³⁴ Such readers already know the end of the story, and are therefore challenged by the author’s ambiguities, allusions, language and rhetorical devices. What may be regarded as conflicts and misunderstandings in the text may be explained or resolved for the reader, often in unexpected ways. They can “fill in the gaps or indeterminacies within the text, the way the author imagines those gaps should be filled in.”³⁵

By way of summary, the narrative critical approach to the Fourth Gospel is the best approach for this study without engaging in an extreme or radical critical analysis. Our attempt to understand the purpose and position of John 17 can be derived from employing this critical method. In addition, it is an interpretive process that allows the reader to participate in the search for meaning and significance. Thus, it invites discussion between the style and manner of the author and how his communication is received by the readers.

Outline of Chapters

³⁴ Ibid., 368.

³⁵ Resseguie, *The Strange Gospel*, 25.

By studying the puzzle-piece of John 17 as an integral part of the whole picture, our goal is to understand more clearly the existence and the function of the prayer in relation to the rest of the Gospel. The following chapters of this study analyze the literary aspects of the prayer, and offer answers to literary questions about the prayer of John 17. Chapter 1 investigates the characterization of the Fourth Gospel, focusing on characters within the Farewell Discourses and those in the prayer itself. Chapter 2 is an analysis of the structure of the entire Gospel, the Farewell Discourses, and of the prayer. Understanding the structure of the Farewell Discourses enables a proposed setting of the prayer. Chapter 3 investigates select aspects of the author's style and imagery found in the Gospel, the Farewell Discourses, and in the prayer. Chapter 4 investigates the genre of the "farewell testament," which is the backdrop of the Farewell Discourses. Closely related, Chapter 5 analyzes the form of the prayer within the genre of the "farewell testament." Lastly, Chapter 6 summarizes and concludes the investigation.

Part 3. Previous Scholarship

In his introduction to the Gospel of John on a web-site, James F. McGrath writes that the Fourth Gospel has been called "a pool in which small children can paddle and elephants can swim." Using a related metaphor, he observes that the abundance of scholarly writings produced about the Fourth Gospel in recent decades "resembles the vast Atlantic ocean."³⁶ To jump into the water of Johannine research is like putting a row-boat into the Atlantic. That said, the questions concerning the Fourth Gospel, like ocean waves, just keep coming, begging for more research. Much has already been

³⁶ James McGrath, "The Fourth Gospel and John's Epistles," n.p. [Cited 27 July, 2006].
Online: www.earlychristianwritings.com/info/john-survey.html.

written about John 17, but in many ways, more questions arise, and this prayer has not received the attention in recent scholarship that it deserves.

In the past, the prayer has been used as a tool to support a critic's interpretation of Johannine theology, or employed to emphasize major themes of the entire Gospel, such as God's revelatory word, the name of God, eternal life, truth, glory, and love. It has been used as glue to connect the narrative and discourse portions of the Gospel. It has been viewed as instructions to the modern Christian church about unity, and to teach contemporary Christians about discipleship. None of these understandings of John 17 is intrinsically wrong, but many are inadequate, or reflect a misplaced emphasis.

History of Research

Very early in the history of the Christian church, the ante-Nicene writers employed the prayer of John 17 to aid the young church in its understanding of doctrine and belief. Dates are controversial, but the Gospel appears to have been used in "orthodox church communities" at least as early as c.170-200 CE.³⁷ Referencing Jesus' prayer in the Fourth Gospel, Irenaeus, Origen, Cyprian, Novatian and Hippolytus give opinions concerning the divine nature of Jesus, and suggest reasons why Jesus would pray for his disciples.³⁸ It is the work of Irenaeus that "marks a watershed" point in how the Gospel was used in early Christian writings.³⁹ Irenaeus used the Fourth Gospel extensively in his works, and his attitude demonstrates his belief in the authority of the

³⁷Charles E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: University Press, 2004), 75.

³⁸Origen, *First Principles*, I. vi. 2, 70; *First Principles III*. Vi 1, 152; *Canticles*, Book III, 77.

Cyprian, "Mortality," xxii; *Testimonies* ii. 1; Novatian, *Trinity*, xvi; Hippolytus, *Noëtus* vii; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV, 20. 7. See Alexander and James Donaldson Roberts, *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers*, V vols., vol. I (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1868), and Harold Smith, *Ante-Nicene Exegesis of the Gospels*, Translation of Christian Literature, Series V, vol. V (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1928), 309-319.

³⁹Hill. *Johannine Corpus*, 96.

Gospel and in the words of Jesus, especially in opposing heretical sects.⁴⁰ Of the early church writers, it is he who summarizes the prayer most memorably.⁴¹

Modern history of research on the prayer of John 17 begins with a large representation of source and redaction critics who asked questions concerning the origins of the Gospel. These scholars are concerned with the smaller parts of the Gospel, the narrative and discourse sections, and how the composition of the Fourth Gospel was accomplished. Source and redaction critics hold some very interesting speculations about the “original” Gospel, how the pieces of the puzzle were put together, and what editorial stages the Gospel went through. It was suggested that the prayer of John 17 was an addition, or a later insertion into an “original” Gospel. Rudolf Bultmann and D. Moody Smith led this era of Johannine investigation.⁴²

Other scholars made a connection between the prayer and a Johannine community. The Johannine community or a school of John’s followers may be responsible for the final edition of the Gospel. These scholars, such as R. Schnackenburg, asked questions about the part that the prayer played within the early Johannine community.⁴³ Was the prayer more a reflection on the ecclesiological situation and less on the actual story of Jesus? Since the early days of the church, scholars and exegetes have pondered the role of John 17 within the ecclesiastical community.

⁴⁰Ibid., 97-98.

⁴¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV, 20. 7.

⁴² Rudolf Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (vol. II; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1950). See also Dwight Moody Smith, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel; Bultmann's Literary Theory* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965).

⁴³ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (ed. B. Rigaux, Cerfaux Aulsejo, R. Schnackenburg, A. Vogtle; 3 vols.; vol. 3; Kent: Burns & Oates, 1982), 201.

More recently, many scholars have taken a literary approach to the Gospel, focusing on the literary aspects of the text as we have it today. In its final form, there is some literary design to the Gospel created by a competent author; as part of the design, the prayer was meaningfully placed where it is. As my chosen approach to the text, it appears to provide the best answers to our questions about the final prayer of Jesus in John's Gospel.

Considering the broad spectrum of scholars "in the ocean" of Johannine research, it was Rudolf Bultmann's commentary on the Gospel of John that opened the door to new, innovative interpretations of the Fourth Gospel during the twentieth century.⁴⁴ Further, it was Ernst Käsemann's twentieth-century book, *The Testament of Jesus*, that opened the door to John 17 research. Fifteen years later, R. Alan Culpepper's work, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* appeared as a vital introduction to the literary analysis approach to the Fourth Gospel.⁴⁵ In particular, the significant study by Käsemann requires our critical attention. Following the analysis of his position, there will be review of several other authors who have explored the Gospel of John in terms of literary analysis, and who have made considerable contributions to this study.

Ernst Käsemann

Ernst Käsemann's book, *The Testament of Jesus*, is so vital that it deserves its own section. It is a ground-breaking study of chapter 17; rarely does a recent scholar

⁴⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (1950), and Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John; a Commentary*, trans. R.W. N. Hoare G.R. Beasley-Murray, J. K. Riches (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971).

⁴⁵ R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Robert Funk, New Testament Foundations and Facets (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

discuss John 17 without some reference to Käsemann's book.⁴⁶ Käsemann recognized the limitations of historical criticism, yet he follows Bultmann in approaching the prayer of John 17 historically and theologically. Käsemann expressed more reasons to leave the prayer where it is than to move it to the beginning of the discourse material.⁴⁷ He deals mainly with the questions of Christology, community and eschatology in an attempt to understand the baffling historical background of the Fourth Gospel. John 17 served as "the basis and guidepost" of his lectures in which he proposed questions concerning the perplexing theological and historical context of the Fourth Gospel.⁴⁸ This interpretive effort of John 17 is still the most complete and thoughtful study done on the prayer in direct relation to historical questions. Käsemann's work remains an important contribution to an understanding of the Johannine prayer and to an interpretation of the entire Gospel of John.

His analysis of the prayer begins with a look at the "problems" that Käsemann raises with respect to the historical approach to the Gospel. In a small amount of space, the issues raised by Käsemann concerning the Gospel of John are huge. He begins with historical questions relating to authorship, as an "endeavour to discover the forgotten historical situation in which this Gospel arose."⁴⁹ He then questions why the form of a

⁴⁶ Ernst Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus; A Study of the Gospel of John in Light of Chapter 17* (trans. Gerhard Krodel; London: SCM 1968 [1966]). Käsemann's lectures at Yale Divinity School were given in English in 1966, and the first translation of his book from German into English was 1968 (see *Preface*). Since that time, successive scholars have used the English translation almost exclusively in their responses to and their evaluations of Käsemann's work. Käsemann was well-known for his careful attention to English scholarship as well as his native German.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 3. Contra Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 371-74.

⁴⁸ Käsemann, *Testament*, 3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

prayer was used by the author.⁵⁰ In terms of Christology, he suggests that there is, in fact, a paradox in that the “Prince of Life” offers a “final testamental prayer” before his death. Further, he looks at the nature and character of the passion narrative, which immediately follows the prayer in chapter 18.⁵¹ In his view, the author of John tends to avoid the kind of ecclesiology that is found in the other Gospels (e.g., Matt 16:18; 26:26-29; 28:18-20, and parallels), but is concerned about Christian unity in the community.⁵² Finally, Käsemann may be best known for raising the perplexing issues of what he calls “unreflected docetism” and the gnostic concept of knowledge in the Fourth Gospel.⁵³

In an attempt to understand the entire Gospel, Käsemann’s focus is on three key themes that are found in the prayer of John 17: “the glory of Christ, the community under the Word and Christian unity.”⁵⁴ In other words, Käsemann’s book is addressing problems concerning Johannine Christology (“the glory of Christ”), ecclesiology (“the community under the Word”) and eschatology (“Christian unity”). His primary concern is to look at these problems in view of the historical questions (“problems”) surrounding the Fourth Gospel. The three themes are “so closely interwoven in chapter 17, as well as the whole Gospel, that they cannot be isolated from each other.”⁵⁵ Yet Käsemann deals

⁵⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁵¹ Ibid., 17.

⁵² Ibid., 27. “Even the basic elements of congregational life, worship, the sacraments and ministry play such insignificant roles that time and again John’s interest in them has been doubted.”

⁵³ Ibid., 37, 66, 70. “Docetism” is used as a term for a theory concerning the nature of Jesus; in this view, his earthly body was only an appearance, a semblance, or a phantom of the pre-incarnate divine Christ. Käsemann indicates that the author of John and the community were unaware of their own docetic tendencies.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

with each theme independently in successive chapters and the overlapping of the themes throughout his book muddies the waters of his interpretation.

Käsemann was on the cutting edge of scholarship to see the prayer of John 17 as a “testament.” The concept fits with his historical approach to the “problems” of John’s Gospel. He calls the prayer a “literary device” used by the author as a “farewell speech of a dying man,” thereby opening the door to a literary approach to the Farewell Discourses and the final prayer.⁵⁶ Moreover, Käsemann noted the difference between John 17 and the Jewish antecedents, and explains that chapter 17 is not a “last will and bequest, in the sense of a final declaration of the will of the one whose proper place is with the Father in heaven and whose word is meant to be heard on earth.”⁵⁷ New Testament examples of a “farewell speech,” observed by Käsemann, include the speech of Paul to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20, the “ideal bishop” pericope in 2 Timothy, the “eschatological tract known as 2 Peter,” and the “apocalyptic instruction in Mark 13.”⁵⁸ Many successive scholars adopted or adapted Käsemann’s concept of the “testament;” but in form, content and emphasis, the prayer is very different from other New Testament examples given.

Käsemann concluded that the prayers of Jesus “do not play the same important role in John as in the Synoptics, and John 11:41f gives us the reason for it.”⁵⁹ As Jesus’ short prayer in 11:27-30 indicates, there is no need for him to ask the Father anything; Jesus only needs to give thanks. Käsemann notes that John 17 contains numerous

⁵⁶ Ibid., 4. More investigation on the “testament” genre takes place in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁹ Ibid. In this prayer, Jesus says that he knows the Father always hears him and that his auditory prayers are for the benefit of the people standing near, “that they may believe that you sent me” (11:42; 12:30).

petitions to the Father, but it is not a prayer of supplication. Rather, it is “the will” of Jesus that dominates the whole chapter.”⁶⁰ In the form of a prayer, John 17 is a literary technique to mark an important event not only in the life of Jesus, but also “in the history of the community.”⁶¹ *Contra* Käsemann, Chapter 5 of this investigation will analyze the form of John 17 and propose different reasons for the prayer-form. Nevertheless, Käsemann’s proposals urge further investigations of the form and the role of prayer within the Gospel.

Käsemann determines that the beneficiaries of John 17 are “the Church.”⁶² However, he does not make a clear distinction between the disciples as characters in the Gospel story and the intended readers. For instance, he writes: “Those who hear Jesus’ Word and follow him, the disciples, are the beloved, the friends, the elect. Only the Word which is heard can save and preserve.”⁶³ Is this statement true of the eleven characters in John’s story only, or of anyone who hears and responds to the Word? Such a distinction is critical to this study, as the text does not indicate that the characters in the story respond or react to the prayer of John 17 in a positive manner. We are left with the question, who is it that actually benefits from the prayer?

For Käsemann, the key issue in John 17 is not its beneficiaries, but Christology, the “nature of Jesus,” the unresolved polemic of the “earthly Jesus” and the “exalted Christ:”

⁶⁰ Ibid. The Greek verb *θέλω* in 17:24 can be translated “wish, desire, will, or want” making it less of a petition and more of a statement. *ερωτάω*, however, used in 17:9 and 17:20 is normally translated “to ask, make a request,” and is seen as more petitionary in nature.

⁶¹ Ibid., 5.

⁶² Ibid., 55.

⁶³ Ibid., 47.

The Johannine discourses are not collections of originally separate sayings but rather lengthy monologues which revolve time and again around the same centre of the divine mission and nature of Jesus..... John 17 certainly does not contain the words of the earthly Jesus, who was so thoroughly undocetic. What is the relationship between the exalted Christ who is proclaimed here and the earthly Jesus?⁶⁴

Concentrating on content and setting, his proposition is that the prayer of John 17 is a final testament of the “earthly Jesus” in the Hebrew tradition which reveals Jesus’ true nature as the divine Son of God.

In addition, Käsemann contrasts the prayer with the “Sermon on the Mount” in Matthew’s Gospel, which is Jesus’ public instruction. He determines that John’s prayer is didactic, but it is private instruction to the disciples, revealing “secret knowledge:”

Like the farewell discourse, the prayer is a part of the instruction of the disciples....Its scope encompasses the total earthly history. But *only the disciples can hear it* and understand it. Insight which the world cannot and may not have is granted to them, even though the message as such is not enigmatic. Apparently this ‘gnosis’ does not refer to the anthropological and cosmological mysteries as they are communicated through apocalyptic proclamation.⁶⁵

Therein lies serious disagreement with Käsemann. The prayer is certainly didactic in function and intent, but it is not “secret” instructions for the closest followers of Jesus.

In summary, for Käsemann, John 17 is in the form of a “testament,” and is a proclamation of “secret” knowledge for the disciples. However, his description of the recipients and the strange “gnosis” of the prayer met with immense doubt. His basic understanding of the prayer is therefore rejected in this investigation. Nonetheless, his positions on the nature of Jesus, the nature of the Church, and on Johannine eschatology

⁶⁴ Ibid., 77.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 5-6. Italics are my emphasis.

are helpful in our understanding of the existence and purpose of the prayer, and must be explored in more depth.

Christology:

Käsemann tackles the critical question, “who Jesus is for us and [does] he and he alone lead us to the Father?”⁶⁶ He reflects on the problem of the nature of who Jesus is, and how we are to understand Jesus’ complex incarnation. The “glory of Jesus” stands in direct contrast to the “earthly story of Jesus.” That is, the claim that “the Word became flesh” in 1:14 diametrically opposes the “we beheld his glory” in the same verse.⁶⁷ In John, the “divinity” that is claimed by Jesus is “misunderstood, provokes objection, and requires a final revelation;” hence the need for the prayer in chapter 17.⁶⁸ It is this confusion between the earthly Jesus, in submission to the Father, and the glorified Son of Man, equal in glory to the Father, that Käsemann believes the author of John attempts to resolve in his Gospel. “From John we must learn that this is the question of the right Christology, and we have to recognize that he was able to give an answer only in the form of a naïve docetism.”⁶⁹ Nevertheless, our study reveals that the prayer of chapter 17 is exactly the “right Christology,” and not “naïve docetism;” it is an insight into an exceptional unity of the Father, the Son and the readers.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 78.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 26.

Ecclesiology:

In his second chapter, Käsemann discusses “the community under the word,” his term for the “Church.”⁷⁰ He notes with disapproval that the author of John’s Gospel avoids the “explicit ecclesiology” that is found in the Synoptic Gospels. Because of the lack of ecclesiastical terms, like “church” or “people of God,” Käsemann doubts that the author has an interest in ecclesiastical issues.⁷¹ This is because the ideal Christian community, in reality, is set in the “heavenly sphere,” not in the earthly realm. The Fourth Gospel presupposes an organized communal life, but it also assumes the “priesthood of all believers,” who “receive in like manner the commission, the Holy Spirit and the authority” within that community.⁷²

Käsemann emphasizes the contrast between “the disciples” and “the world” as employed by John’s author. This contrast is especially apparent in the Farewell Discourses and in the prayer of chapter 17. On the one hand, he regards the traditional term “the disciples” metaphorically, meaning “the nature of the Johannine community at its very core,” supporting the concept that the characters are representatives.⁷³ Käsemann often uses the term “disciples” not in reference to “the twelve,” but to an ideal community of Christ-followers in the first or second century. On the other hand, “the disciples” can imply only the first followers of Jesus (for example, “the presentation of the instructions in the form of the prayer, however, indicates that the disciples’ fate

⁷⁰ Ibid., 55.

⁷¹ Ibid., 27.

⁷² Ibid., 29.

⁷³ Ibid., 30.

does not rest in their own hands”⁷⁴). The distinction is not clear to the observant reader of Käsemann’s book. Also used metaphorically, the term “the world” describes “the realm of deficiencies, and defects, of sickness and death, of lies, unbelief and misunderstanding, of doubts and sheer malice.”⁷⁵ Most helpful for our purposes is Käsemann’s conclusion that the Johannine characters “only function as witnesses of Jesus...because they characterize, from a functional view point, the attitude and response of the world or of the Christian community to the encountered revelation.”⁷⁶ In addition, it is for the community, “the elect,” the church apart from the world, that the prayer of John 17 was composed by the author of John.

It is Käsemann’s belief that the Fourth Gospel was written during the early formation of the church, and was therefore “first discovered by the gnostics.” Perhaps the Christian orthodox communities were being challenged by the gnostic groups: “John was the relic of a Christian conventicle existing on, or being pushed to, the Church’s periphery.”⁷⁷ Charles E. Hill’s monograph, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church*, questions Käsemann’s position, which is not unique in recent scholarship. Hill convincingly shows how the Gospel of John (as well as the Johannine epistles and the Book of Revelation) was used by both the orthodox (Irenaeus) and “heterodox” (Valentinians, or “proto-gnostic”) groups in early Christianity.⁷⁸ Käsemann’s suggestion reflects a view that Hill calls “Johannophobia,” the supposed suspicion or antagonism of the orthodox churches in the second century to the reception and use of the Gospel of

⁷⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 28, 34.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 35.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 39.

⁷⁸ Hill., *Johannine Corpus*, 3.

John by the gnostic (heterodox) groups.⁷⁹ Hill concludes that such a suspicion was “apparent in this period not from the orthodox but from the heterodox side.”⁸⁰ Hill’s deductions lend credence to my belief that the Gospel of John, and hence the prayer of John 17, were read and used by second-century readers of the orthodox persuasion.

Eschatology:

In his third section, Käsemann considers “Christian unity;” in reality, unity is only one aspect of his complex discussion on Johannine eschatology. Eschatology is prominent throughout his book, overlapping with the other two main topics, Christology and community. John’s Christology, for example, is the result of his “two-fold eschatology, of realized and futuristic eschatology.” That is, “all the Gospels presuppose Easter, and therefore they develop a post-Easter christology of Jesus and the Son of Man.”⁸¹ The unity of believers is achieved through Käsemann’s concepts of divine love, the election of believers, and the Christian mission in the world. In addition, in his view, the church is an “eschatological creation that can exist only in separation from the world.”⁸²

Käsemann observes two different aspects of Johannine eschatology. He notes the “preponderance of the so-called present or realized eschatology which is a special characteristic of the Gospel.”⁸³ This “present” or “realized eschatology” expressed in John is seen in the revealed “divine love” of God that is received or rejected by humanity, and the unity of the believers (into a community) within the world in present

⁷⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 466.

⁸¹ Käsemann, *Testament*, 7.

⁸² Ibid., 55.

⁸³ Ibid., 13.

narrative time. The second aspect is futuristic eschatology; however, “only a few texts contain the futuristic eschatology which is peculiar to John. The futurist hope is simply taken for granted in John.” One place it does appear is “at the end of chapter 17” where the final unification of all the believers takes place in heaven.⁸⁴

Käsemann determines that Jesus is speaking of some future, eschatological time when all believers are united in the Father and the Son (17:20-21), since a depiction of the Christian Church in the world today is certainly not one of unification. The unity of the Christian church is a heavenly reality that will be realized sometime in the future: “Earthly reality may show its nature as dispersion and division; the heavenly reality is of necessity one and indivisible.”⁸⁵ For this reason, Käsemann insists that the prayer of John 17 must be understood in the context of this future heavenly reality:

The fact that this futuristic hope is simply taken for granted in John, that it is expressed almost incidentally and emphasized only at the end of chapter 17, makes this hope all the more significant. For the disciples of Jesus on earth, the goal of the sojourn is the final unification of the community in heaven, where, like its Lord, the community too is removed from earthly persecution.⁸⁶

Many Christian believers today would agree with Käsemann that the unity of the church, in reality and practice, is indeed futuristic, or “in heaven.” Yet the “realized eschatology” of John’s Gospel would have been experienced to some degree by the post-Easter community of believers who read the Gospel. For these readers, the gift of the Paraclete was a present reality experience. Thus, *contra* Käsemann, Jesus presents both

⁸⁴ Ibid., 72.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 57.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 72.

a “now and future” eschatology” in the Farewell Discourses, with immediate promises and hopes for the reader, and futuristic hopes for those who believe.

Further, Käsemann suggests that in reference to future eschatology, the author of John has “spiritualized old apocalyptic traditions.”⁸⁷ That is, the unification and “gathering” of the people of God is finally realized in heaven. This is an important observation that suggests a Jewish apocalyptic background to the Farewell Discourses and the prayer, yet we can question if the apocalyptic concepts were “spiritualized” in the Fourth Gospel. The future dimension of eschatology would be an encouragement to the readers who had not experienced the peace and unity promised by the words of Jesus (16:33). Again, while Käsemann’s concept of the two-dimensional eschatology is beneficial to the reader’s understanding of the Gospel, not all of his interpretations of Johannine eschatology are acceptable.

Responding to Käsemann

In response to *The Testament of Jesus*, other scholars have reflected on Käsemann’s conclusions about the Gospel in general and about John 17 in particular. On one hand, John Ashton correctly concludes that the “Johannine problem” is “not one but many,” and in attacking one problematic part of the Fourth Gospel, scholars may realize that other problems can “elude them altogether.”⁸⁸ A variety of problems has resulted in a variety of approaches to the Fourth Gospel. Ashton sees “serious flaws” in Käsemann’s view of John as a “docetic interpretation of the Gospel:”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid., 72.

⁸⁸ John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 3.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 72.

Käsemann's book is hard to assess, not just because of the difficulty of his style, but because it is so riddled with rhetoric [sic]. Reading it, one has to proceed slowly, with constant backward glances, to make sure of grasping all the connections. Furthermore, Käsemann appears preoccupied with categories of orthodoxy and heterodoxy that are scarcely appropriate to a period when Christian doctrine was still forming in its shell. One major weakness of the book is that its platform, chapter 17 (which he calls his 'basis and guidepost') is too flimsy to bear all the weight Käsemann wishes to put upon it.⁹⁰

Ashton is correct in determining that Käsemann's assessment of John's Christology, ecclesiology and eschatology are too broad to discern from one chapter, one summarizing prayer. Elements of all three themes appear in chapter 17, but they are not confined to chapter 17. If the "great docetic" emphasis of the Gospel is the result of a comparison of the Gospel with the epistle of 1 John, then Käsemann may find the Gospel to be more docetic than the letter.⁹¹ Yet in the long run, the docetic emphasis is not the main emphasis in John 17, where Jesus is speaking a prayer as a person on earth would pray to the "Father."

Further, in his discussion about the *Testament of Jesus*, first published just after Käsemann's monograph, Günther Bornkamm referred to Käsemann's "important book" as "a considerable help in promoting a sharp awareness of the peculiarities and puzzles of Johannine theology." Nevertheless, Bornkamm saw the book as "too one-sided" and "strikingly uncompromising."⁹² "This book is by no means a straight-forward exegesis of the high-priestly prayer," Bornkamm correctly observed. With a "disquieting power,"

⁹⁰ Ibid., 72-73.

⁹¹ Ibid., 73.

⁹² Günther Bornkamm, "Towards the Interpretation of John's Gospel," in *The Interpretation of John*, ed. John Ashton, SNTI (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997 [1986]), 114. First published in *EvT* 28 (1968) 8-28 and reprinted in *Studien zum Neuen Testament* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1985).

Käsemann confronts the challenges of the Gospel. He studies complex theological categories relating to the entire Fourth Gospel without addressing “detailed questions about literary analysis, religious background and the history of traditions.”⁹³

Bornkamm also is not comfortable with Käsemann’s view of ecclesiology. He notes the absence of the word and the concept of *ecclesia* in the Fourth Gospel, and believed the focus in John is on “individuals” or small groups, such as “the disciples” (as “friends of Jesus,” 15:14, “those who are given,” 17:6), not the church as a whole. Bornkamm’s point is well taken, and is the beginning of an attempt to understand the purpose of the characters in John’s story (“the disciples”) and the audience or the “community” who later read the Gospel.

Bornkamm discerned that Käsemann was making an attempt to solve the difficult problems of the history and theology of the Gospel of John, and to give the Gospel its correct place in history:

The book is full of attempts to place the Gospel in its historical context. These all point to the conclusion that the Fourth Gospel already presupposes the consolidation of the Christian Church within the period of early Catholicism, but resists the movement of the Church in the direction of institutionalization and sacramentalism.⁹⁴

Bornkamm discovered “little weight” given to the “farewell discourses of chapters 13-17, which comprise almost a fifth of the entire Gospel.”⁹⁵ Most important for this study, Käsemann does not engage in a closer examination of the Gospel, or the Farewell

⁹³ Ibid., 97, for this paragraph.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 104.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 105-106.

Discourses, or the prayer concerning issues such as structure, genre, form and literary devices.

Stephen Smalley considers Käsemann's view of Johannine Christology "unbalanced," and rejects Käsemann's docetic emphasis. Where Käsemann suggests that "the 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,"⁹⁶ Smalley argues that Jesus' presence on earth was more real than imagined. He also argues that Käsemann draws his conclusions about the whole of the Gospel based on "what may be regarded as *its later strands*, notably the prologue and the prayer of Jesus in John 17."⁹⁷ Such a statement reveals Smalley's misconception that the prologue and the prayer, considered later additions, are less authentic or reliable and should not be used to evaluate the rest of the Gospel.

In summary, the contribution of E. Käsemann's monograph about John 17 cannot be measured. It opened the doors to an expanded and essential analysis of the critical chapter in the Gospel of John. The prayer is rich with Christology, words of unity and promises for the believer; it is worth further investigation.

Literary Approach Scholars

R. Alan Culpepper's *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* places an appropriate emphasis on the narrative qualities of the Gospel, and on reading it as a literary text. The interpretation of the text depends not on external factors, but "what lies in front of

⁹⁶ Käsemann, *Testament*, 65.

⁹⁷ Smalley, *John*, 55. My emphasis.

our eyes as we look exclusively at it as a literary unity.”⁹⁸ The illustration of how a “story” or “narrative” is communicated from the author to the reader is critical. The story of Jesus, as revealed in the four canonical Gospels, has literary elements that can be analyzed: a plot, conflict, resolution, characters, language, events, and time settings. His intent is to “expose the Fourth Gospel’s rhetorical power to analysis by studying the literary elements of its ‘anatomy’.”⁹⁹ He writes,

the study of the reader of a narrative is one of the most important of recent developments in literary criticism. The key to such a study is that narrative texts create their own readers. Just as the implied author is distinguishable from the real author, the narratee or implied reader is internal, created by the text, and is not to be confused with the actual, historical or contemporary readers.¹⁰⁰

Second, Culpepper’s theory of “implicit commentary” is important. This is one of the forms of “silent communication” between the author and the reader. “Ambiguous language,” such as misunderstandings, irony, and symbolism are used by the author of the Fourth Gospel to communicate to the reader and affect the reader’s response.¹⁰¹ The misunderstandings and literary ambiguity experienced by the disciples and other characters are techniques employed by the author to communicate in a particular way with the intended readers. It is the words of commentary from the Gospel narrator that reveal the point of view of the Gospel author. To capture Culpepper’s literary view, his significant words about the “farewell discourse” and the “parting prayer” are worth repeating in full:

⁹⁸ M. W.G. Stibbe, *John, Readings: A New Biblical Commentary* (Sheffield: JSOT Press/Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 1993), 9.

⁹⁹ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 231.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 205. On authorial intent, see Vanhoozer, “From Speech Acts to Scripture Acts,” in *After Pentecost*, 32.

¹⁰¹ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 151.

John 13:31-17:26 is generally referred to as the farewell discourse, although technically chapter 17 is a parting prayer. Since the narrator intrudes in a significant way only once during the farewell discourse (16:17, 19, see also 13:31, 17:1 and possibly 17:3), a comparative analysis of Jesus' point of view in the farewell discourse with the narrator's should provide a classic test for determining the relationship between the two and consistency of point of view throughout the gospel. Jesus' point of view, as it may be inferred from the farewell discourse corresponds remarkably to that of the narrator. Both Jesus and the narrator are omniscient, retrospective, and ideologically and phraseologically indistinguishable.... In short, the farewell discourse shows that Jesus knows the spiritual orientation of the disciples (15:19; 17:16) and the world, the hearts and minds of the disciples, his own origin, mission, destiny, and relationship to the Father, and significant future events. Finally, just before the prayer of John 17, the author drives home the fact and significance of Jesus' omniscience by having the disciples say, "Now we believe that you know all things, and need none to question you; by this we believe that you came from God" (16:30, cf. 2:24-25).¹⁰²

It is because of Culpepper's work, then, that this study is conducted in the manner of narrative criticism, and that the Farewell Discourses are regarded as a literary unit, culminating with the prayer as a proper ending to it.

After Culpepper, Mark Stibbe integrates literary criticism and the historical reconstruction of the text, emphasizing the "text, context and pretext."¹⁰³ By integrating literary and historical criticism, his version of narrative criticism examines the Fourth Gospel as both literature and history. Stibbe rejects a purely historical-critical approach and follows Culpepper's views, bringing awareness of the Gospel as a form of literature, with its "poetic" language and style. Stibbe looks at John's Gospel as "story," and analyzes structure, form, plot, time, characterization, literary devices, the author,

¹⁰² Ibid., 36.

¹⁰³ M.W.G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller; Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992), 3.

narrator and the reader.¹⁰⁴ The challenge Stibbe presents to Johannine scholarship is to do justice to a literary work without neglecting the external, historical, and cultural factors.

Tom Thatcher has done extensive work on the Johannine discourses, which he sees as “primarily Johannine compositions,” and which “may be patterned after oral speech genres such as ‘the riddle.’”¹⁰⁵ He takes an unusual approach to the “Farewell Discourse (John 13-17)” as an “extended riddling session.” In this final discourse, Thatcher suggests that Jesus is “playing on the disciples’ ignorance of his ‘father’ and their misconceptions about his impending departure.”¹⁰⁶ Thatcher’s contribution to this study is to sharpen our understanding of the language and style of the author.

Thomas Brodie continues the literary-critical exercise in his books on John. He indicates that “of the three basic aspects of exegetical debate – theological, historical and literary – the best starting point seems to be the literary.”¹⁰⁷ Brodie paints the picture of the Gospel of John with broad strokes, observing significant changes in the narrative from the first calling of Jesus’ followers to his approaching “departure” to his Father. Brodie points out the central issue of “belief” in the text, and how important it is to the reader. Brodie has little to say about the language and rhetorical devices used in the prayer of John 17, but he has a great deal to say concerning the structure of the prayer. His work is most helpful to this thesis in terms of structure. Significantly, Brodie

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 11-19.

¹⁰⁵ Tom Thatcher, *The Riddles of Jesus in John; a Study in Tradition and Folklore*, SBLMS, 53 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 3.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 291.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John; a Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 11.

interprets chapter 17 through the eyes of a post-Easter reader, and then he applies it further to the contemporary reader of the text.

Robert Kysar identifies 17:1-26 as “the grand climax of the ‘parting words.’” He emphasizes two themes of the prayer, that of the relationship of the Father and the Son, and (with Brodie) the nature of discipleship. He calls Käsemann’s treatment of the prayer “brilliant.”¹⁰⁸ Although he looks at the final form of the prayer, there is little literary analysis presented.

Johan Ferreria contends that “the prayer of John 17 originated in the petitionary prayers of the Johannine community in their struggle with the synagogue.”¹⁰⁹ Ferreria supports the didactic and apologetic purposes for the prayer. Against Ferreria, what he sees as the judicial or legal character of the prayer is perceived only if we remove the prayer from its context; further, he incorrectly sees the context of chapters 13 to 17 only as ecclesiastical. For him, the purpose and function of the prayer are derived from the circumstances of the community who gave birth to the prayer (similar, in a manner of speaking, to Schnackenburg), not from the actual prayer itself.¹¹⁰

Andrew Lincoln’s “lawsuit motif” approach is much more thorough than Ferreria’s. Lincoln agrees with the “distinctiveness of the Fourth Gospel...extends even to its perspective on such a basic matter as humanity’s relationship to God in prayer.”¹¹¹ His book, *Truth on Trial*, is a combination of a “literary, historical and theological approach” to the Fourth Gospel, which is an argument for truth. Lincoln suggests that a

¹⁰⁸ Robert Kysar, *John; Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1986), 254-255.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

¹¹¹ Lincoln, "God's Name," 155.

“cosmic lawsuit” exists between God and the world, including elements found in the Gospel such as conflict, witnesses, advocacy and judgment. Through this lens, he contributes to our understanding of the Johannine plot, characters, discourse, and the effect of the prayer on the disciples.¹¹²

Adele Reinhartz suggests that the Gospel of John can be interpreted on three levels, depending upon the interpretation of the readers. Human perspectives are called “tales:” the “historical tale, the ecclesiological tale and the cosmological tale.”¹¹³ The “historical tale” is the unfolding of the historical story of the life, ministry and death of Jesus. From this perspective, the reader may encounter problems with the narrative, as historical events may appear incongruent or may contrast with other stories of Jesus (for example, the “cleansing of the Temple” in 2:13-16). The “ecclesiological tale” is the perspective of people in a specific community who see the conflicts in the narrative as their own (as the ejection from the synagogue in 16:2-4). This tale may be considered a “sub-tale which moves beneath the surface.”¹¹⁴ Finally, what Reinhartz calls the “meta-tale” is the “cosmological tale,” providing the “overarching temporal, geographical, theological and narrative framework for the other two tales.”¹¹⁵ Within the cosmological tale, the message of the Gospel narrative is universal in scope for all readers for all times. It is from this perspective that Lincoln’s “cosmic lawsuit” exists between God and the world.

¹¹² Andrew Lincoln, *Truth on Trial; the Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), 13-35, 261.

¹¹³ Adele Reinhartz, *The Word in the World; the Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. E. F. Campbell, SBLMS, 45 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 2-5.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

Reinhartz' view of the final prayer of Jesus is somewhat puzzling. Chapter 17 becomes a summons to action and a challenge to the readers. Readers are to respond to the prayer of Jesus by being the ones who are "not of this world" (v. 16), but who are "given to me" [Jesus] (v. 24) and who are "sent into the world" (v. 18). On the other hand, questions remain: did the original, intended readers understand "the big picture," the cosmological, "meta-tale" perspective? Was the prayer intended to meet their needs in that day, or to meet the needs of all people in all times? Did the author of the Fourth Gospel intend his "tale" to be for the specific needs of a given community, or for all readers of every age? Nevertheless, Reinhartz' perspectives lend support to the notion that it is better to read John 17 from the point of view of the readers than from the point of view of the historical characters in the story.

Dramatic Approach

Early in the twentieth century literary critics observed the dramatic qualities of John's Gospel, and compared the Fourth Gospel to ancient Greek tragedy. The dramatic elements of the Fourth Gospel were placed aside for a number of years, but recently scholars have revived the dramatic approach to the Gospel. The sense of "drama" is used to refer generally to a story that is filled with tension between the characters, with a conflict that arises at the beginning and builds to a crisis.¹¹⁶ Some scholars have used a more precise definition, and demanded consistency in form and conventions to call a piece of literature a "drama."

As early as 1923, F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock suggested that the dramatic plot of the Fourth Gospel fulfilled the required conventions for a piece of literature written

¹¹⁶ Jo-Ann Brant, *Dialogue and Drama* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 4.

for performance.¹¹⁷ Later scholars who read the Gospel in the same vein include Kenneth Lee (1954), Edith Lovejoy Pierce (1960), Colleen Conway (2000) and Jo-Ann Brant (2004).¹¹⁸

Stephen Smalley suggests that “John is an artist with a strong feeling for drama,” that is “more heightened and more consistent” than the writers of the Synoptic Gospels.¹¹⁹ Smalley understands the author of John to be an interpreter as well as a writer of the Gospel story. The author gives evidence of “superb literary craftsmanship” in composition.

The whole Gospel, in fact, is conceived as one continuous dramatic action; and this aspect of John’s interpretation strengthens the unity of the work, which is already provided by its content and literary structure.¹²⁰

In the discourse material, Smalley sees the use of three dramatic techniques: primarily dramatic irony, misunderstandings, and paradoxical “dramatic disclosures” (or dialogues).¹²¹ Certainly the dramatic literary techniques discovered in the Gospel are critical to a reader’s understanding of the narrative and discourse material, yet significant literary devices in the prayer are left unnoticed by Smalley.

Jo-Ann Brant’s monograph convincingly revealed elements of Greek tragedy in the Gospel of John. She demonstrates that the writer of John conforms to “many of Aristotle’s dictates for the structure of a tragic plot (*Poet.* 1450-1451b),” including a

¹¹⁷ F. R. M. Hitchcock, “Is the Fourth Gospel a Drama?” *Theology* 7 (1923), and Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 4.

¹¹⁸ Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 5.

¹¹⁹ Smalley, *John*, 192.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

prologue, an episodic structure, plot elements, epilogues and endings.¹²² Both Brant and Culpepper propose that “the recognition scene (*anagnorisis*) permeates the plot” of the Fourth Gospel.¹²³ In the recognition scene, a character (or characters) suddenly learns an important fact that the audience (or reader) has known all along. Culpepper notes that “recognition in the Fourth Gospel signifies the moment when Jesus’ identity becomes clear to another person,” and Brant adds that there is usually “a change in relationship that affects the course of the plot.”¹²⁴ The recognition of Jesus by the blind man in John 9 is an excellent example. Neither Brant nor Culpepper make the connection, but in view of this dramatic convention, one could argue that the prayer of chapter 17 is the quintessential *anagnorisis* scene for the characters in the Gospel of John. Ideally, the identity of Jesus is fully revealed to his listeners in his final prayer; unfortunately, this recognition is still incomplete for the disciples in the story (see 20:8-9). Though the characters fail to recognize the richness of Jesus’ revelation in John 17, the reader is able to understand the climactic nature of the prayer at the end of the Farewell Discourses.

Further, the element of suffering, or *pathos*, is woven throughout the plot of the Fourth Gospel. “The reversals that follow recognition provoke *pathos*; that is, actions that lead to destruction or distress.”¹²⁵ The *pathos* elements in literature bring the audience to a point of high emotion, as anger, pity or fear. The *pathos* element is critical in the Johannine passion narrative, chapters 18 through 20, which follows immediately

¹²² Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 16.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 50. See Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 84 and Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, ed. Charles B. Cousar, *Interpreting Biblical Texts* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

¹²⁴ Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 51 and Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 88-89.

¹²⁵ Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 57.

after the prayer of chapter 17. The prayer could have an emotional effect on the reader, since Jesus is revealing his heart to his “friends” immediately before his betrayal and crucifixion (18:1); yet it is less emotional than the passion narrative that follows. It is the lack of overt emotion in the Farewell Discourses and in the final prayer of Jesus that demonstrates the fact that Jesus is in control of the circumstances around him.

For this study, one aspect of Brant’s argument is paramount. Brant understands the key relationship between John’s Gospel and Greek tragic drama to be the author’s use of dialogue and discourse:

In both Shakespearean and ancient Greek drama, working without stage directions and with minimal scenery, the word is the predominant device by which the dramaturge represents another time and place, and by which actions are accomplished. Worlds and events exist within words.¹²⁶

We see both dialogues and monologues in John’s Gospel, almost always involving the central character, Jesus. The speech sections of the Gospel are important evidence that words and language are used in multiple ways to communicate to the reader. In the Gospel, as in drama, the role of the reader, or the audience, is to listen and make sense of what is *said* in relation to what is *seen* (the action). Thus, the discourse (“speech”) material in John expands and explains the narrative actions and events (as the reader can see in John 6:1-14, 25-58).

As McGrath’s metaphor implies (see above, p. 18), it is impossible, and unnecessary, to give full consideration to every deserving scholar who has contributed to Johannine scholarship in this introductory chapter. While these mentioned scholars are

¹²⁶ Ibid., 74.

important to our task, numerous other scholars are cited in successive chapters and/or are included in the full bibliography.

Summation

In summation, we can say that the history of Johannine scholarship is rich and extensive, and individual contributions innumerable. In spite of the research pertaining to the Fourth Gospel that precedes this study, questions concerning the prayer of John 17 still remain.

This investigation explores more deeply the unresolved questions and misunderstandings concerning the final prayer of Jesus. Substantial lacunae in past research have come to light. Therefore, it is necessary to pull together insights and opinions to fill in these gaps, and to consider new options from the text itself. Numerous scholars have contributed countless thoughts, but we have only partial examinations in a variety of different areas. That is to say, many puzzle pieces have been identified, yet other pieces of the puzzle can be discovered and may be connected to one another to view the picture more clearly.

The three key questions stated in this introductory chapter are critical and have not been fully explained by scholars. There is little doubt that John 17 is a prayer, but there are no solid explanations as to why the chapter is presented in this exact form. Currently there is little debate about the location of the chapter within the Gospel, but many critics still disconnect it from the preceding four chapters (the “discourses”), weakening its impact. The literary method of narrative criticism will aid in our understanding of the purpose and positioning of the prayer.

The critical purpose of the prayer has been widely misunderstood by scholarship. Scholars have seen the prayer as petitionary, prayed before the Father first for the benefit of the immediate disciples, and then for future believers. The petitionary prayer concept raises unresolved questions: who is Jesus really praying for? Is it necessary for him to pray for himself? Or, if the prayer is for the benefit of the disciples, another unresolved question is raised; how do they respond to the prayer of John 17? The passion narrative following the prayer does not portray certain, faithful, reassured disciples. Therefore, the purpose of the prayer is in question; in the story, why does Jesus say these words, at that place and at that point in time? The aim of this investigation is to demonstrate that the purpose of the prayer is for the edification of the intended readers of the Gospel, and not specifically to benefit the characters in the story.

Further, there is a gap in our understanding of why Jesus would pray a prayer like John 17 that is so unlike the prayers in the Synoptic Gospels. There has been insufficient investigation into the distinctive form and style of John 17. It is misguided to assume that the Johannine author used his own final prayer as a substitute for other known Gospel prayers or to replace the words of (eucharistic) institution. It is the aim of this study to show that John 17 is unique, distinctive in form, style and language, and is not a derivation of a Synoptic tradition.

Investigations have also overlooked the presence of metaphors and symbolism in the prayer of John 17, whereas the significance of figurative language in other portions of Jesus' discourse is recognized and highly debated. Another key proposal of this study is the realization of the substantial use of the prophecies of Isaiah in the Farewell Discourses. The links between "Second Isaiah" (chapters 40-55) and John 13-17 are

remarkable, and therefore the connections between Isa 55 and John 17 are worth noting. While other Johannine scholars have observed the use of Isaiah in the Gospel of John, they have not articulated the parallels between these two specific passages. Such internal features of the text grant to the reader a better understanding of the prayer itself.

Previous understandings of John 17 detailed in scholarship are incomplete, or inadequate, or see the prayer from the wrong point of view. While Käsemann attempted to analyze the entire Gospel based on the prayer of chapter 17, this investigation is just the opposite; the prayer is a reflection of the entire Gospel. The intent of this study is to do what Käsemann did not do: to focus on the text itself without speculation, and use the literary aspects of the Gospel to answer complementary questions about the prayer of John 17.

This investigation is an attempt to validate the crucial heuristic, interpretive role of the prayer for the intended readers. The prayer is epideictic rhetorical type of literature, included in the Gospel for assurance and encouragement. The readers are given surety that Jesus is certain about the outcome of his earthly mission. Moreover, he is certain about the resulting faith and continuing mission of his earliest disciples, and the reproducible faith of the innumerable future believers. In spite of the fragile faith of his followers in the narrative, Jesus is confident of their belief in him and in their continuing witness in the world. He is convinced that future believers will receive, obey and fulfil his message, in spite of worldly opposition and persecution. The prayer, then, communicates to the readers that Jesus has confidence in them. Their belief in him results in the transmission of his message on earth and the expansion of the community of believers (20:31).

Finally, there is a great deal of confusion and misleading suggestions concerning the final prayer of Jesus as it speaks to the contemporary Christian church. It has been misused and misunderstood as a commentary on the unity of the Christian church today and in the future. This focused study brings together the views and opinions, with a few new concepts and conclusions, to clarify the purpose and the function of the prayer for the readers of any age. John 17 is critical to the entire Gospel because it is a summary and a culmination, guiding the readers in their interpretation of past events, present circumstances and future promises. Contrary to some previous scholarly opinions, it is my assertion that John 17 is a rhetorical device intended to encourage and challenge the readers of the Gospel. Thus, with many others, small children and elephants, we plunge into the depths of the Fourth Gospel.

Chapter 1

Investigation of Characterization

“I am the Lord; that is my name!
I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.”
Isaiah 42:8

Introduction

“Much of the power of the Fourth Gospel comes from its vivid characterizations and their effects upon the reader.”¹ A study of the characterization in the Fourth Gospel contributes to a fuller understanding of the existence and the position of the prayer in chapter 17. Although scholastic research has been done in the field of characterization in the Fourth Gospel, little attention has been given to the characterization in the Farewell Discourses and the characters in the prayer. The purpose of this character analysis is to discover answers to puzzling questions concerning the inclusion of the prayer in the Gospel, and why it is located at the end of the Farewell Discourses. This analysis reveals that the literary presentation of the characters is beneficial for the readers of the Gospel. Through characterization, the author pulls the intended readers into the narrative story, as the readers relate to the characters who speak, act, choose, react, respond, and behave in light of the words and works of Jesus.² There is a significant shift in the presentation of the characters from chapters 13 through 16 to the prayer of chapter 17. The author uses characterization to guide the readers toward what he considers to be the proper response to Jesus as the Christ (20:31).

Part one of this chapter is a foundational investigation of characterization in the Gospel. Part two investigates more closely specific characters in that portion of the

¹ R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Robert Funk; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 168.

² *Ibid.*, 103.

Gospel called the Farewell Discourses, which includes chapters 13 through 17. The third part spotlights the characters who appear in the closing prayer. Our investigation points out that an observable change in the presentation of human characters is the author's way of challenging and reassuring his audience. Lastly, part four explores how and why the characterization in the Farewell Discourses is important to the intended readers of the Gospel.

Part 1. Characterization in the Gospel

R. Alan Culpepper observes the characters in the Fourth Gospel as “a continuum of responses to Jesus which exemplify misunderstandings the reader may share and responses one might make to the depiction of Jesus in the gospel.”³ The characters interact with and react to Jesus, advance the plot towards a climax, or function in a “representational value” for the reader.⁴ In a Gospel filled with dualism, the characters must make choices concerning the words and works of Jesus. They must decide to believe him, or reject him. From the perspective of the author, the reader has the same choice. “Like the grain in wood, the interactions between the characters in John tend to run in one direction, that is, in response to Jesus.”⁵

A great debt is owed to Culpepper for his work on Johannine characterization. In his significant work on literary analysis of the full Gospel (*Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*), Culpepper has noted that the author uses characterization to reveal five key concepts that influence the reader's interpretation of the message of the Gospel. His work is a point of departure for this study on characterization in the Fourth Gospel.

³ Ibid., 104.

⁴ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 102.

⁵ Ibid., 145.

A. Human Responses

Scholars have observed that human characters in John's Gospel respond to the words and works of Jesus either positively or negatively; they react with faith and belief in Jesus or they reject him. For example, R. Brown highlights a "two-fold reaction to Jesus," belief or unbelief, that is dependent upon a person's own choice.⁶ He considers faith to be a major theme of the Gospel, which is shown in the reactions of individuals to the words and works of Jesus.⁷ To illustrate the positive or negative reactions of people or groups to Jesus, Brown points out that the lack of understanding on the part of Nicodemus (a Jewish leader) and the "unsatisfactory faith" of the Jews who admired Jesus because of his miracles (2:23-25) stand in sharp contrast to the "peasants of Samaria" who "readily believed Jesus is the Saviour of the world" (4:39-42).⁸ Similar to Brown, J. Staley observes that the characters in the Fourth Gospel fall roughly into two opposing "sides:" those who are with Jesus, and those who are against him.⁹ In his view, some characters model acceptable responses to Jesus, while others demonstrate unacceptable responses.

The two opposing reactions to Jesus suggested by Brown and Staley may be too simplistic. Between the full acceptance of Jesus and obstinate rejection, a wide spectrum of responses to Jesus is presented to the readers, which can be observed in the actions and the speeches of both major and minor characters. Culpepper is more on

⁶ Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (2 Vols.; Vol. 2; New York; London: Doubleday, 1966-1970), 185.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 185 and cxliii.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 185. Also, Jeffrey Staley, *The Print's First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel* (vol. 82; Missoula: Scholars, 1988), 106.

target as he determines a range of seven human responses to Jesus as shown through the Gospel characters.

First, people in an unreceptive world flatly reject Jesus. A rigid, rejecting character never appears to move beyond unbelief. Second is the “secret” acceptance of Jesus as the Christ, without open commitment; Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus fit into this category (19:38-40). Perhaps “other Jewish leaders” also secretly believed, but were afraid of the ramifications of their belief (12:42-43). Third, some people accepted Jesus as a worker of signs and miracles, yet Jesus did not trust their belief (2:23-25). When asked to make a deeper commitment, these people chose not to follow Jesus (6:66). They begin to recognize Jesus, but fall back to a safe, non-committal position. The parents of the blind man, for example, finally chose to remain part of the unreceptive world (9:22-23).

Fourth, some characters commit to a belief in Jesus’ words; the Samaritan woman believed the words of Jesus and trusted him enough to carry his message to others (4:39). The fifth response is commitment to Jesus despite human misunderstandings: the disciples believed (2:11; 16:30-31), saw his glory (1:14) and accepted his words (17:8); yet they misunderstood his message, or some aspect of Jesus’ complete purpose and identity. Peter is an excellent example of this kind of commitment. Sixth, John’s Gospel includes a representative of “paradigmatic discipleship.” He is the “beloved disciple,” a model character who believes, “abides” (20:20) and bears witness to all that was revealed (21:24). At a time of doubt and disappointment, it is he that recognizes “the Lord” Jesus (21:7). This nameless,

mysterious character represents the believing, “ideal response” that the reader is to emulate.¹⁰

Seventh, the final choice of response to Jesus is defection. Judas Iscariot is the unique example in the Fourth Gospel. Once a follower of Jesus, chosen to be one of “the Twelve” (6:70), Judas reacts by choosing to leave the fellowship and betray the one who loved him (13:1). Obviously the author shows this is the worst possible choice, but there are no guarantees; a character in the dramatic story can move forward toward the light or backward into darkness.¹¹

B. Opposing Representatives

As the story develops, Jesus does not avoid words and actions that raise opposition to him; with his words he confronts those who challenge him (e.g., 7:14-19). The author uses distinctive terms to represent groups of opposing characters: “the Jews,” “the crowd,” and occasionally, “the world.” On one end of the spectrum, we begin by investigating “the Jews,” a group of Jewish leaders who respond with vigour to the words and works of Jesus.

“The Jews”

It is not unusual for the author of John to put characters into a group; each group tends to have one voice in the narrative. For example, the unbelieving brothers of Jesus tell Jesus what to do (7:3, 5); the defecting disciples (6:60-66) grumble and “turn back” from following Jesus. The strongest opposing group of characters in the Fourth Gospel are “the Jews” (*οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι*). During his public ministry, this group is the leading voice

¹⁰ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 147.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 146-48.

that confronts Jesus about his words and actions (8:48-53; 10:25, 12:44-46). They are instigators and motivators during the passion narrative. Other groups of characters interact with, and are influenced by this group, including “the crowd” (7:12-13).

In modern Johannine scholarship, the term “the Jews” has been the subject of much debate. In view of the observable conflict between Jesus and the “the Jews” in the Fourth Gospel (e.g., 5:16-30; 7:1-24), some people have been inclined to see an “anti-Semitic” element in the Johannine characterization.¹² However, the term is used in 4:22 in a positive sense (“salvation is from the Jews”), and in 2:6 it is used in a neutral sense (“jars used by the Jews for ceremonial washing”). Thus, the term is not a blanket pejorative term for an ethnic race of people. The expression is used by the author to designate a group of Jewish teachers and leaders who openly rebuke and oppose Jesus. The actual composition of this group of people is debated by scholars, but their intent toward Jesus is not debated.¹³ Because they stand in opposition to Jesus, “the Jews” are representative of intentional unbelief; their disputes and verbal threats with Jesus serve to advance the plot to their final rejection of him (7:1; 8:59; 10:31-32; 18:28; 19:12). Only 10 of the author’s 70 references to “the Jews” occur in the first 4 chapters of the Gospel; there is virtually no opposition to Jesus from this group prior to chapter 5, except the information given to the reader in the prologue (1:10-11). Once the reader is fully knowledgeable about the identity and mission of Jesus, the conflict begins.¹⁴

¹² Porter, “Discourse Analysis and New Testament Studies: an Introductory Survey,” 26.

¹³ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 125.

¹⁴ Ibid., 126. See Von Wahlde’s discussion of the problems associated with the various names of the Jewish authorities: Urban C. Von Wahlde, “The Terms for Religious Authorities in the Fourth Gospel: A Key to Literary Strata?,” *JBL* 98, no. 2 (1979): 231-53.

The role of “the Jews” in John’s narrative represents universal characteristics that could be applied to any person: they have never heard or seen the Father (5:37), they do not want to come to Jesus so that they might have life (5:40), they do not have the love of God in themselves (5:42), and they do not receive Jesus (5:43) or seek the glory of God (5:44). Their opposition has a more basic foundation which Jesus reveals: “You are from below; I am from above; you are of this world; I am not of this world” (8:23). Culpepper surmises that “through the Jews, John explores the heart and soul of unbelief.”¹⁵ Jo-Ann Brand suggests that “the Jews” conflict with Jesus is in response to Jesus’ elevated speech about himself; he raised himself above the ordinary person and “incited animosity” because he “placed himself above this world,” which angered the Jewish authorities.¹⁶

The Pharisees

“The Jews” start the investigation of the teachings of both John the Baptist (1:19-23) and of Jesus (2:18), but it is the “Pharisees” who probe deeper and create greater hostility toward Jesus (4:1; 7:45-49; 9:13-16). Mentioned 19 times in the Gospel, the Pharisaic sect is a part of and closely associated with “the Jews.”¹⁷ Interestingly, the author of John never mentions the Sadducees, although he couples the “chief priests” with the Pharisees in 7:45 and the “rulers” with the Pharisees in 7:48.¹⁸ The “Sanhedrin” appears only rarely (11:47). In view of these titles, the reader observes a collective group of the various parts of the Jewish leadership. Though the collective

¹⁵ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 129.

¹⁶ Jo-Ann A. Brant, *Dialogue and Drama; Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 168.

¹⁷ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 130.

¹⁸ Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ; Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2003), 355.

groups of Jewish leaders can vary and overlap, the members of the groups all misunderstand, misconstrue and refuse to understand the vital issues of Jesus' origin and mission. Jesus' debate begins with "the Pharisees" in 8:13-21, and continues on with "the Jews" in 8:22-29 and 8:31-58. The results of this debate are mixed, as "many put their faith in him" in 8:30; yet in 8:59, "they picked up stones to stone him."

High Priest

One further opponent from the Jewish leadership, the "high priest Caiaphas," interrogates Jesus "*about his disciples*," a phrase not found in the other Gospel passion narratives (18:19, my emphasis). This is a strong contrast between two different groups: the Jewish leaders on the one hand, and Jesus' followers on the other. The broad category of Jewish leaders is in direct opposition to the narrower category of "the disciples," who believe and follow Jesus. The "high priest, Caiaphas" in John 11:49-53 initiates the execution of Jesus "for the Jewish nation," adding further weight to the contrast between the Jewish leader and the role of Jesus as the one who intercedes on behalf of those who receive his word ("his own," 13:1).

The Jewish leaders attempt to make sense out of the words and actions of Jesus and their own Jewish Messianic expectations. Jesus did not do (or say) what they expected of the Messiah (7:52; 8:23-29, 48). John uses other descriptive terms for Jesus' opponents: they may be "Abraham's descendants" (8:37), but they are the children of "the devil," and "unable to hear what I [Jesus] say" (8:44). Thus, this "collective opponent" is a "tragic component" of the drama of the Fourth Gospel.¹⁹ Ironically, it is people from Jesus' own cultural background, the Jews, his "brothers" by

¹⁹ Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 184-85.

religion and ethnicity, who reject him (1:11; see representative “brothers” in contrast to “disciples” in 7:3-5).

The conclusion, then, in keeping with Culpepper’s concept of representation, is that the title “the Jews” signifies a group of religious leaders whose intended function is to guide the people in their faith in God. The author of John is making a statement about the *leadership* of the nation of Israel. This is not unlike the prophet Isaiah who casts a warning against ungodly leadership:

So the Lord will cut off from Israel both head and tail,
Both palm branch and reed in a single day;
The elders and prominent men are the head,
The prophets who teach lies are the tail.
Those who guide this people mislead them,
And those who are guided are led astray. *Isa 9:14-16*

Therefore, it is the misleading Jewish leadership that argues with Jesus and is threatened by his words. Jesus warns his disciples, that “all this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They [that is, the misleading Jewish leadership] will put you out of the synagogue...they will do such things because they have not known the Father or me” (16:1-4).

“The crowd”

“The crowd” (most often, *τοῖς ὄχλοις*) is a less influential group of people than “the Jews,” comprised of common people, men and woman, perhaps from all walks of life. On Culpepper’s continuum, “the crowd” moves away from outright rejection of Jesus toward acceptance of his person and his mission. The author of John uses “the crowd” 18 times, primarily in chapters 6, 7 and 12; there are only two further references

found in 5:13 and 11:42.²⁰ The focus of the term in the first half of the Gospel places the group within the context of the controversy over the signs performed by Jesus.

While “the crowd” is integral in the passion narratives of the Synoptic Gospels, they are strangely absent in John’s passion narrative. In John chapters 18-19, it is “the Jews” that are central, appearing 12 times in the plural (not counting the title for Jesus in 19:19), with the Jewish priests and officials. “The Jews,” not “the crowd,” shout at Pilate, demanding Jesus’ death (19:12).²¹

Even if this group is more generic in composition, the author clearly pictures these people as fickle and suspicious of Jesus’ signs (7:12-13; 12:34). “The crowd” is basically synonymous in meaning with “the people” (*ὁ λαός*), who are curious about Jesus. They are clearly the ones who can be misled by the Jewish leadership. Although they listen, they are perplexed about the actions and the words of Jesus, especially when he spoke concerning himself (6:2, 5, 22-34; 7:15, 20-24, 25-31). The vacillating “crowd” is criticized by its own leaders (7:47-49). Ironically, the Jewish leaders refer to them as “this mob” (*ὁ ὄχλος*) who “knows nothing of the law – there is a curse on them!” (7:49). When things get difficult, “the crowd” leans toward unbelief (6:60-66). Influenced by the unbelieving Jewish leaders (7:25-27), perhaps many of “the crowd” had fears of a commitment to Jesus (7:12-13). These are people who, at some point, may have been open to believing Jesus, but are afraid to commit further. Unfortunately,

²⁰ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 131.

²¹ *Ibid.*

they are easily swayed toward unbelief; neither the miraculous signs nor the words of Jesus lead them to authentic faith.

“The World”

Finally, the term “the world” (*ὁ κόσμος*) is used in John’s Gospel with negative connotations as opponents to Jesus and his followers, but it is subtly different than the other designations of opposition to Jesus. We will investigate this term in greater depth later in this chapter because it occurs so often in the prayer of John 17.

Therefore, the Johannine terms of “the crowd,” or “the people,” as well as more specific titles such as “the Jews,” “the Pharisees,” and “the high priest” refer to people who hear the words of Jesus and respond with a range of belief from casual doubt and uncertainty to outright rejection. On the continuum, they represent the first three of the seven categories. The author of John writes that these people “could not believe” and cannot understand because of the “blindness of their eyes and the deadness of their hearts” (12:39-40). Not only do these characters stand in opposition to Jesus, they also stand in opposition to the “disciples” and those characters who struggle to understand and accept the words and actions of Jesus (11:45-53).

Through the conflicts and debates, Jesus refuses to give his opponents the verbal “direct” answers that they were looking for. He knows they do not believe and cannot hear the truth Jesus presents (6:64; 8:42-47; 10:24-26). Bultmann describes the character of the Johannine Jesus as the “concealed Revealer” (*der verhüllte Offenbarer*). This is an accurate oxymoron from the viewpoint of the characters, because John’s Jesus could not speak in plain enough language for his opponents; they could not understand

him because they could not believe. Concerning John 10:22-26, for example, Bultmann writes,

Die letzte Frage wird an Jesus gerichtet; er soll die entscheidende Antwort geben, ob er der Messias ist! Hat er es nicht deutlich genug gesagt in seinen Reden? Für die Ansprüche der 'Juden' nicht; für sie, die setzt eine Antwort *παρησια* fordern, waren alle bisherigen Selbstoffenbarungen Jesu *παροιμιαι*. Er ist ja der verhüllte Offenbarer....

So, wie sie wollen, daß er es sage, hat er es in der Tat nie gesagt und kann er es nie sagen. Er kann sich nicht durch 'direkte,' sondern nur durch 'indirekte' Mitteilung offenbaren; sein Reden *παρησια* ist nur echatologische Möglichkeit (16:25)...

Er kann ihre Frage nur indirekt beantworten, D. 25: 'Ich sagte es euch, und ihr glaubt nicht.' So wie er es sagen kann und muß, hat er es längst gesagt. Sie haben es nicht verstanden, weil sie nicht glauben.²²

Consequently, in specific circumstances the author of the Gospel of John intentionally has Jesus speak with indirect speech to those characters who choose not to believe his words. However, the reader of the Gospel is able to "see past" the contentious words of their disputes and realize the true motivations of Jesus' opponents (often with the help of the narrator, e.g., 7:13).

C. Positive Representatives

As we continue to view Culpepper's spectrum of human responses, the Gospel gives testimony to those in the next three categories of positive reception of the words of Jesus. The characters who do believe in Jesus as the Son of God give their testimonies in the narrative sections of the Gospel. The testimonies begin in the first chapter (the Prologue) with the striking words that "we have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14). The narrator thus

²² Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 275.

testifies to the readers that there are those people who experienced Jesus, accepted his words, and placed their faith in Jesus as the Christ. John the Baptist opens the narrative by testifying to the truth concerning Jesus as the Son of God (1:15; 2:29-34; 5:33). Following his testimony, Jesus progressively does “become greater,” revealing his truth to various characters. Some characters receive it, believe, and follow him to learn more (1:43-50). Jesus reveals truth to Nathanael, who is quick to believe on the surface level of Jesus’ signs. Nathanael is not alone; as a result of Jesus’ signs, “his disciples put their faith in him” (2:11), placing them in the fourth category. Time would tell whether their faith is strong enough to stand the tests, or is only superficial belief.

Other characters receive the message of the Gospel, respond positively and give testimony. The Samaritan woman believes the truth given to her concerning Jesus’ identity and purpose (4:29, 39-42). The “royal official,” certainly a Gentile, believes in Jesus before the miraculous sign, not as a result of it (4:46-55). An invalid man, healed by Jesus at the pool of Bethesda, believes enough to report to the Jews without fear that it was Jesus who healed him (5:15). The “man born blind” in chapter 9 progresses in his belief of the identity of Jesus; he is first “a man they call Jesus” (v. 11), then “he is a prophet” (v. 17), then “a man from God” (v. 33). In the end, he confesses that Jesus is “the Son of Man” (vv. 35-38). The blind man is a symbolic, representative character who contrasts with the Jewish leaders who could not see the true identity of Jesus (v. 41).

The characters who do respond to the truth presented receive more truth; outward positive signs of belief result in more revelation. Such a progression illustrates Culpepper’s fourth, fifth and sixth categories of human response. The characters in the

first half of the Gospel who react to Jesus in a positive way are responding to the truth they know, however much or little it is. As a result, those who receive Jesus' words receive life, and are able to receive more truth (4:53; 5:21).

Unique to the Fourth Gospel, the story of Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha is about believing characters who respond with positive faith to the truth that is revealed to them about Jesus (11:25-27). These three characters are a paradigm of discipleship (category six), and are loved by Jesus (11:5). Unfortunately, the reader has no direct words from the mouth of Lazarus, but he represents a disciple to whom life has been given. His sisters represent belief in Jesus as the Son of God who gives life to all who believe in him (11:25). This story is the culmination of Jesus' earthly ministry to bring life to believers; yet it is also the beginning of the plot to end Jesus' life on earth (11:46-53). The reader is challenged to accept the realization of eternal life presented by Jesus or, as some of the Jews, to reject his gift of eternal life. Mary and Martha choose to believe. Mary never verbalizes her faith in Jesus, but pours out devotion and extravagant love on him (12:2-3). Martha represents positive discerning faith and service. In this story, Lazarus represents the hope of resurrection life for the believer.

One character, Mary Magdalene, is representative of the change in the believers' pre- and post-Easter relationships with Jesus. In chapters 20 and 21, the characters react to the "risen Lord" in a manner that is both like and unlike their reactions to the "earthly Jesus." For the characters, there was more to learn about Jesus after the Easter events. Jesus was a friend and a teacher to characters like Mary Magdalene, and she did not know how to react to the one she found outside the tomb (20:13-18). She does not recognize the risen Jesus until he calls her by name (20:16). Although she does not have

all the answers, Mary Magdalene expresses a level of belief in the words of Jesus and gives her testimony to others. She sets the example for the strength of belief among the disciples (20:18). Consequently, the reader can observe the change in the characters from pre-Easter fear and doubt to a more convinced belief in Jesus' person and purpose (20:17), as well as the author's ultimate purpose in presenting the Gospel story (20:31).²³

In summation, the characters in the Gospel are presented in such a way as to fall into seven categories of human response to Jesus.²⁴ Groups of characters answer Jesus with rejection and opposition to his life and ministry; others react in positive ways to the truth that they are given. The characters in opposition to Jesus are seen as "static, flat" characters, unchanging in their points of view. The characters who believe in the words of Jesus are "round," developing, changing and growing in their faith.²⁵ The readers are more richly informed about the story of Jesus by observing the various characters, and their reactions to his actions and his deeds. In presenting the characters in this manner, the author is illustrating human representatives with which the reader can identify. Readers are as prone to misgivings and misunderstandings as the people in the Gospel story. E. Abbott's observations about characterization are noteworthy:

Look at the gospel as a drama, and you will find that few of the leading characters are not placed at some time in such circumstances as to shew us – or make us ask – what, or whom, and how, and why they believed; or why, and what, and whom they were exhorted to believe.²⁶

D. Ambiguity and misunderstandings

²³ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 144.

²⁴ The seventh category, the "defector," will be detailed later in this chapter.

²⁵ James L. Resseguie, *The Strange Gospel: Narrative Design and Point of View in John* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 109.

²⁶ Edwin A. Abbott, *Johannine Vocabulary* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1905), 19.

Scholarship has observed the irony of Jesus' words and the characters' reactions. In the first 16 chapters of the Gospel, the reader can observe a group of puzzled, baffled characters who do not know what to make of Jesus.²⁷ Such ambiguity, misunderstandings or an observable complete lack of understanding by the characters is an intentional technique used by the author to capture the attention of the reader and to move through the plot events. These observations are not in contradiction to Culpepper's categories, but offer some explanation of why the categories exist. The doubt and uncertainty of some characters (such as "the crowd") is a literary technique used by the author to move the reader along towards the climax of the plot, and to challenge the reader mentally to determine what is really going on in the story. As D. A. Carson indicates,

There can be no doubt that understanding, misunderstanding and not understanding are important themes in the fourth gospel. No evangelist surpasses John in preserving the sense of confusion surrounding Jesus' identity (e.g., 6:14, 26-27; 7:11-13, 15, 25-27, 30-31, 35, 40-43; 12:34).²⁸

The readers empathize with the characters because of what they do (action) and what they say (dialogues or monologues). Many of the characters in John's story are perplexed, confused and uncertain about two important questions: the identity of Jesus, and his purpose or mission. Who is he, why did he do what he did, and say what he said? They do not know who he is (7:40-44; 8:25; 13:19-20), where he came from (5:36-37; 7:33) or where he is going (7:34; 13:36; 14:5). His actions are misinterpreted

²⁷ Tom Thatcher, "The Sabbath Trick: Unstable Irony in the Fourth Gospel," *JSNT*, no. 76 (1999): 53-77. On irony, see Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox 1985), and R. Alan Culpepper, "Reading Johannine Irony," in *Exploring the Gospel of John* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville: Westminster John Knox 1996), 193-207.

²⁸ D.A. Carson, "Understanding Misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel," *TynBul* 33 (1982): 59-91. See more on Carson's views in Chapter 3 of this study.

even by his followers, and they are frustrated by his indirect speech. Other characters, like Nicodemus (chapter 3), the Samaritan woman (chapter 4) and the blind man (chapter 9) are puzzled by the true identity and purpose of Jesus. “A closer look at the characters suggests varying degrees of ambiguity in almost every one of the minor characters in the Gospel.”²⁹

The repeated theme of “misunderstanding” on the part of “the Jews” and “the crowd” (e.g., 6:25, 28, 30-31, 41-42, 52; 10:19-21, 24-25) dramatically emphasizes the refusal of some characters to believe in Jesus’ words and actions. They ask the questions (e.g., 13:6, 25, 36-37; 14:5, 8, 22; 16:17-18) that set up Jesus’ speeches of explanation which follow (e.g., 13:12-20, 31-35; 14:6-7, 9-14, 23-31; 16:19-28).

Generally, the characters who reject the words of Jesus are the ones who are not affected by his answers to their questions. Some characters expose unbelief, incorrect belief or misguided belief in response to Jesus (1:50; 2:23-24; 7:5, 40-44; 10:25; 12:37).

Ultimately, such characters do not have a complete understanding of God’s revelation and glory (1:10-11; 2:11, 23-25; 17:22).

The confusion and doubt typified by “the disciples” is very different from the clear rejection of Jesus by other characters. Peter’s confusion is exemplary. D. F. Tolmie contributes an essay on Peter as he relates to Jesus; Peter is the “not-so good shepherd” who must learn to follow “the Good Shepherd.”³⁰ His point is that the author of the Gospel demonstrates a noticeable development in the character of Peter. He is

²⁹ Colleen C. Grant, “Ambiguity in an Unambiguous Gospel,” *Jof Th* 103 (1999): 1-15.

³⁰ D. Francois Tolmie, “The (not so) Good Shepherd,” in *Imagery in the Gospel of John* (ed. Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 366-67.

presented as a bold spokesman for the followers of Jesus; yet his words and actions in chapters 13 and 18 suggest that he still has confusion and misunderstandings concerning Jesus. More will be said about the characterization of Peter and “the disciples” in the next section of this study.³¹

In light of our observations about the characters acting as representatives of human responses to Jesus, D. A. Carson (with H. Leroy) suggests that perhaps the characters who understand Jesus’ words are “insiders” and the characters who misunderstand are “outsiders.” Taken further, the “insiders” are representatives of the Johannine community, and the “outsiders” are the ones who reject them from the synagogue (16:2).³² However, the “insider-outsider” presentation is too narrow, as characters may move from one position to another, or be difficult to categorize. Nevertheless, Carson is correct in concluding that the misunderstandings in John’s Gospel cannot be interpreted as a literary vehicle that implies a “condemnation of Judaism;” likewise, the positive understandings of the characters do not necessarily represent the ideal historical situation of the Johannine community.³³

In the final analysis, it is the truth about the identity of Jesus that is the most basic and the most critical misunderstanding among the characters.³⁴ Consequently, a complete understanding of Jesus’ identity, purpose, life and death, comes only after his glorification and the coming of the promised Paraclete (13:19; 16:1, 12-15), something that the characters in the narrative simply did not have. Second, the author uses the

³¹ Worth noting are Bauckham’s characterization of Peter in Mark’s Gospel, and his discussion of the anonymous characters in Mark that are named in John’s Gospel. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 194-201.

³² Carson, “Understanding Misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel.”

³³ *Ibid.*, 90.

³⁴ Andrew C. Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 2003), 251.

characters' misunderstandings to challenge the reader about his or her own decisions. That is to say, after Jesus' glorification and the coming of the Paraclete, the misunderstandings in the Gospel story are used "in order to remove the misunderstandings which persisted in an age when authentic understanding had become possible."³⁵

E. Named and Unnamed Characters

Following ambiguity in the Gospel, the reader can next observe the author's interesting choices of names and titles for the characters. The author of John recalls some familiar characters who are crucial to the story of Jesus. With the Synoptic Gospels, the narrative includes John (the Baptist), Peter (who often appears as "Simon Peter"), Philip, Caiaphas, Pilate, and Thomas. Nevertheless, characters appear that are unique to the Fourth Gospel: the Jewish leader Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, the servant "Malchus" in 18:10, and, arguably, the woman caught in adultery (8:2-11).³⁶ The Johannine author chooses to specifically name only seven of those disciples known collectively as "the Twelve" (6:70). Often important characters are never mentioned by name. For example, the narrator refers only to "Jesus' mother" (2:3; 19:26), and Jesus simply addresses her as "dear woman" (2:4; 19:26). The royal official from Capernaum is never named; he is simply a believing Gentile (4:46). The identity of one critical character is purposefully hidden from the readers (i.e., "the disciple whom Jesus loved," 13:23), demonstrating the author's propensity to intentional mystery and ambiguity. With Bauckham, we raise the

³⁵ John Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian* (London: SPCK, 1975), 9.

³⁶ See Bauckham's detailed evaluation of named and unnamed characters in the Gospels. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 56-66.

question, why are some Johannine characters named, and others are not? Does a name or a title make a difference in the readers' understanding of a character?

D. Beck surmises that “the absence of a name can enhance a reader’s potential for identifying with a character in a narrative.”³⁷ Beck also observes that “one particular element of character portrayal is uniquely prominent in the Fourth Gospel, the anonymity of its most significant characters.”³⁸ The reason for this is to connect the character and the reader. A reader would most likely expect important characters to be named in a story, yet the author of John has reversed this tendency. For Beck, it has nothing to do with the authority of the testimony; the unnamed character not only allows but encourages the reader to participate in the character’s positive response to Jesus. The characters who demonstrate a positive response to Jesus are ordinary, everyday people who appear unnamed in the Fourth Gospel: the Samaritan woman at the well, the invalid man, the “royal official,” and the “man born blind.” This last character, who received physical sight and spiritual healing, is an effective example of the author’s skilful reversal. With the unnamed character, the reader sees and understands.

A specific label, while defining the character more clearly, also limits the reader’s identification with a particular character. Thatcher observes the author’s use of “defining asides” in the Fourth Gospel, which are employed to introduce the character to the reader. “Preliminary labels introduce a character by some distinguishing characteristic,” establishing a point of significance about the character.³⁹ One example

³⁷ David R. Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the fourth Gospel* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and Rolf Rendtorff; vol. 27; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Tom Thatcher, "A New Look at Asides in the Fourth Gospel," *BSac* 151, no. 604 (1994): 428-39.

is the man at Bethesda who “had been an invalid for 38 years” (5:5). Nicodemus is “a man of the Pharisees” (3:1), and Judas Iscariot is “the betrayer” (6:71; 12:4; 13:2).

Therefore, the reverse is also true: the absence of a label on a character makes him or her more “universal.” The point is to involve the reader in the story, and the literary technique of anonymity encourages the reader to become a part of the narrative, as if he or she is an unnamed character.

Names of characters can be used by an author to imply specific personality traits or qualities, thus limiting the character’s actions, behaviour and words. An example is the explicit name of Judas. Specifically named “Judas Iscariot, son of Simon,” (13:2) he is carefully set apart from the remainder of the other disciples (also see 14:22); his character is a sharp contrast, or a “foil” to Jesus, called the “Son of God.”

In the Gospel as a whole, only a fraction of the disciples of Jesus found in the Synoptics are specifically named by the author: Andrew, Philip, Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, Judas “not Iscariot” (14:22), Judas Iscariot, and “the sons of Zebedee” (21:2). The disciple who remains intentionally unnamed, the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23; 19:26-27; 20:2-4, 8; 21:7, 20) or the so-called “beloved disciple,” is literarily present only in the second half of the Gospel. The jury is still out on the question of whether he is the same character as the “other disciple” mentioned in 18:15-16 and 20:2. Beck and Culpepper would probably agree that the “disciple whom Jesus loved” is left unnamed so that the readers can more closely identify with him and his faith.

We can conclude that the naming of certain characters is used by the author to communicate something specific to readers; nevertheless, in some scenes of the story, it

may be easier for the readers to identify more closely with the traits and responses of unnamed characters than with named ones.

F. The Narrator/Author

The voice that tells the story and speaks to the reader is a rhetorical device. Narrators may be dramatized as a character in the story or left undramatized. They serve as the implied author's voice or the voice of a character whose perspective differs from the implied author's.⁴⁰

The Fourth Gospel opens with a prologue that is recounted to the reader by means of an unnamed narrator (1:1-1:18). Again, it is the narrator who “wraps things up” for the reader at the close of the Gospel (chapter 21, especially vv. 24-25). In both the introduction and the conclusion, the narrator implies that he (without any regard to gender) is included in the testimony of the Gospel story with the plural pronoun “we” (1:14; 21:24). Further, he uses the first person pronoun “I” to include himself in 21:25.

Culpepper brings the narrator to the front position in the Fourth Gospel, determining where the narrator speaks, the function of his speech, his point of view, and his relationships with the other characters. The narrator is described as “omniscient, omnipresent, reliable, [and] stereoscopic.”⁴¹ He is able to discern the thoughts and emotions of the characters, and he knows when the reader may not understand something. It is the narrator who determines reality and keeps the reader informed “behind the scenes.”

This omniscient narrator is obviously beneficial to the reader. The narrator “shares his omniscient vantage point with the reader so the reader is immediately given

⁴⁰ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 21, 26, 32.

all that is needed to understand the story.”⁴² The other characters are revealed to the reader in the chosen light of the narrator. As an example, the narrator reveals “the Jews” and “the crowd” in a way that characterizes them in a pejorative sense. He intentionally portrays them as opposites to Jesus and the disciples, setting up a contrast for the readers to discern. This contrast leads the reader to make a choice about belief in Jesus, to decide and choose the proper response, which is the author’s ultimate purpose. Further, the narrator’s omniscience is the vehicle for clarifying for the reader what is ambiguous, ironic or misunderstood by the characters (e.g., 5:16; 6:71; 12:16; 18:28; 19:24).

In the Fourth Gospel, the narrator and the author are the same voice. Culpepper distinguishes between the “real” author, the “implied” author and the narrator, but often in the narrative, the reader “hears” the voice of the author in the words of the narrator.⁴³ References in this study to “the author” of John’s Gospel are not a reference to Culpepper’s “implied author,” who “has no voice and never communicates directly with the reader.”⁴⁴ We are concerned about the voice that does communicate to the reader, that is, the narrator. The author, through the narrator, gives background information and knowledge that the reader needs to understand fully what is happening in the plot (4:54, 6:1-4). The narrator reveals characters’ emotions and feelings, and how the characters respond to each other and to the various situations (4:27-33). Time, locations, human thoughts and motives that are not obtainable through dialogues or events are provided by

⁴² Ibid., 19. See also Margaret Pamment, “Focus in the Fourth Gospel,” *ExpTim* 97, no. 3 (1985): 71-75. Pamment points out that the narrator “knows very much more than a character within the story could be expected to know,” p. 72.

⁴³ Ibid., 15-17. See also footnote #41.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 16.

the narrator (e.g., 6:4; 7:1-2; 11:55-57). It can be said that the author uses the narrator as a rhetorical device to add his own voice to the narrative for the benefit of the reader.

The narrator is in a key position to “show” and “tell” the readers what is happening in the story. As a result of the discourse sections of the text (the “telling”) as well as the actions or events of the story (“showing”), the reader can develop “both intrinsic and contextual knowledge” of the characters.⁴⁵ The narrator reinforces the dramatic events by direct “telling” statements to inform the readers (e.g., 5:16, 18; 11:45-54). The role of the narrator in character development, then, is to assist the reader in understanding the thoughts, feelings and motivations of the characters.

With this in mind, it is significant to observe that the narrator’s role diminishes in chapters 13 through 16, and his voice is eliminated altogether in Jesus’ prayer of John 17. The disciples’ questions and misunderstandings are told by the narrator in the betrayal scene of chapter 13, and then those of Thomas and Philip in chapter 14. At that point, the narrator disappears. There are no explanations, no emotions or reactions expressed by the narrator in chapters 14 through 17. Before and during the prayer, the reader hears only the voice of Jesus. The narrator resumes his role as informant as the scene changes location to the Kidron valley in 18:1. The silence of the narrator in the Farewell Discourses punctuates the authority of Jesus’ words, his commands, warnings and promises. In addition, the prayer is a very personal expression of Jesus’ relationship with his Father, so an intermediary voice is unnecessary (10:30).

⁴⁵ Tom Thatcher, "Jesus, Judas and Peter: Character by Contrast in the Fourth Gospel," *BSac* 153, no. 612 (1996): 435-48.

In summarizing the Gospel characterization, we have observed both positive and negative representatives of human responses to the person, the words and the mission of Jesus. An analysis of the characters as they relate to Jesus reveals human failures and misunderstandings, as well as a clear differentiation between those named and unnamed characters. The narrator, acting as the voice of the Gospel writer, though not strictly a “character,” is critical to the reader’s understanding of the other persons in the Gospel story.

Part 2. Characters in the Farewell Discourses

It is specifically to the characters in the Farewell Discourses that we now turn. A review of the characters in the Farewell Discourses is revealing in terms of human reactions to the words and ministry of Jesus. The words of Jesus in chapters 13 through 17 are spoken to an unknown number of his followers (“his own,” 13:1). The questions from his disciples are one motivation for Jesus’ words in the final discourses. “The time had come” (13:1) to prepare his disciples for his departure from this earth. The disciples are perplexed and uncertain, posing questions to Jesus, whose answers are not always straight-forward (13:36; 14:22-31a; 16:18). The lengthy “private tutoring session” with Jesus before this passion is unique to this Gospel, and it culminates with Jesus’ personal prayer to the Father in chapter 17.

A. Jesus

The most obvious character in the Farewell Discourses is Jesus himself, the speaker. He has just affirmed that his words are not his own, “but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it” (12:49). This lends authenticity and reliability to his words in chapters 13-17. He speaks as “the risen Jesus,” not “the pre-

crucifixion/pre-resurrection Jesus.”⁴⁶ That is to say, in the Farewell Discourses, Jesus speaks with the knowledge and authority of a post-resurrection Jesus. His warnings, promises and predictions have an effect on the readers, living years past the narrative time. The Johannine Jesus loves his followers, and prepares eternity for them; he does not leave them abandoned; he is going away but will come back to them; their grief will be turned to joy. Jesus knows the future of the characters in the story, all his disciples, and he prepares them for his departure from this world. He knows the future of the readers even beyond the time of their reading of the Gospel.⁴⁷ The revealed character of Jesus seen in the narrative portion of the Gospel does not change in the discourse portions of the text.

B. The Disciples

Who is Jesus talking to in chapters 13-17? Who are “the disciples,” and what role do they play in the design of the Gospel and of the prayer? The named and unnamed characters are as important to the discourse material as they are in the narrative sections of the Gospel. In narrative time, Jesus’ audience appears to be “his own,” a very broad description of the twelve disciples as well as other people who believe (16:31), who accept and obey his words (17:6-8). In the Fourth Gospel, the designation of “disciple” is not limited to “the Twelve,” but includes any number of people who are following Jesus. When the author wants to refer to just “the Twelve,” he does so: 6:67, 70, 71; 20:24. In chapter 6, “the Twelve” are distinguished from the “many disciples” in 6:66. Further, in 20:24, the narrator relates that Thomas is “one of the Twelve,” but was

⁴⁶Gail R. O'Day, "'I Have Overcome the World' (John 16:33): Narrative Time in John 13-17," *Semeia* 53 (1991): 153-66.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 157.

not with the “other disciples” when Jesus appeared among them (20:19). “The Twelve” were specifically chosen by Jesus (6:70), and are a part of a larger group of numerous men and women who chose to follow Jesus (including, for example, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, 11:27; 12:1-3). The author of John refers to these followers as simply “the disciples” or, in the words of Jesus, “my disciples” (e.g., 8:31).

As we have said, for the author of the Gospel, the principal audience is the readers of the text. This is evident from the purpose of the Gospel expressed in 20:31: “But these are written that *you* [the readers] may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” However, in narrative time, the audience, or the listeners of the Farewell Discourses, are the first followers of Jesus. He has ended his public ministry on a note of unbelief (12:44-50) and speaks instructions in chapters 13-17 to the ones who have demonstrated some level of belief in him. The readers of the Gospel “overhear” his words to his believing disciples.

It is quite natural to suppose that it is only “the Twelve” that are with Jesus at the meal in John 13:1. If we assume that the meal of 13:1 is a Last Supper meal in the mode of the Synoptic narratives, the “disciples” are the same as “the Twelve.” In the Lukan Last Supper narrative, the author refers to “his apostles” who reclined at the table with him (22:14), most probably “the Twelve.” In Mark, the designation of “the Twelve” at the Last Supper meal is definite: “When evening came Jesus arrived with the Twelve” (14:17). Likewise, in Matthew it is clear that “my disciples” in 26:18 are identical to those spoken of in 26:20: “When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve.” From the Synoptic narratives, then, one could conclude that “the Twelve” were with Jesus at the Last Supper. However, in the Gospel of John, there is no specific

language in the text that makes it certain that *only* “the Twelve” were present with Jesus at the narrated meal. On the contrary, the author uses only the general designation of “his own” to identify those who were with Jesus at the meal which took place sometime “just before the Passover Feast” (13:1). In chapter 17, the prayer audience is expressed ambiguously as “those whom you gave me out of the world” (v. 6). It is not possible to deduce with complete certainty that the characters in the Farewell Discourses are limited to only Jesus and “the Twelve,” because the ambiguous designations given to those hearing the discourses is very different from the Synoptic Last Supper narratives.

Certain members of “the Twelve” are mentioned in chapters 13 and 14 of the Farewell Discourses: Peter, Judas Iscariot, Thomas, Philip and, arguably, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23). This points to the fact that some or all of “the Twelve” were among the people at the meal and heard the discourses and the prayer. Further, the interaction between Peter, Judas and Jesus in chapter 13 is very important (see discussion below). Thus, it is not to say that “the Twelve” were not with Jesus in John 13-17, because certainly they all could have been present. It is to say that there also could have been other “disciples” or followers of Jesus present as well.⁴⁸

At the end of his earthly ministry, his earliest followers are instructed by Jesus to testify about him and “bear fruit” (reproduce other believers) (15:8). The testimonies of the life and ministry of Jesus are given by his earliest disciples who are firsthand observers and eyewitnesses, who were with Jesus “from the beginning” (e.g., 1:14, 15, 19, 32, 34; 2:11, 17; 3:22). There is nothing in the Gospel of John that limits the earliest followers of Jesus to only the members of “the Twelve.” The challenge of continuing

⁴⁸ Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 115.

the message of Jesus after his death and resurrection is given to anyone who could testify concerning what they saw and heard and knew from the beginning of Jesus' ministry through the resurrection (e.g., John 20:17-18; see also the requirements found in Acts 1:21-22, 10:36-42). As a further example, the writer of John's Gospel takes great care to specifically name some of the men and women who are with Jesus from the beginning (1:35-50) and those who are with him until the end (20:19-29 and 21:1-3)

Therefore, the twelve disciples (with the exception of one) and an unknown number of other disciples who were present with Jesus at his last Passover meal in John 13-17 were uniquely authorized and "sent" by Jesus to be the first generation of his witnesses on earth (15:26-27; 17:11, 18). They are validated and authorized by the author of John's Gospel, so that the readers have no doubts as to the truth of their testimonies.⁴⁹ The role of the earliest disciples resonates with A. Lincoln's judicial approach to the Fourth Gospel, as the concepts of testifying and witnessing sustain a metaphorical judicial or courtroom setting.⁵⁰ The importance of truth in testifying is verified in Jesus' testimony about himself in 5:31-40, in his dialogue with the high priest in 18:23, and in his discussion with Pilate in 18:37. Jesus connects truth and discipleship when he "said to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free'" (8:31). The author uses these disciples as characters to inform, edify and instruct the reading audience, and their testimonies are true and reliable for the readers.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 97.

⁵⁰ Andrew Lincoln, *Truth on Trial; the Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000).

Jesus, Peter and Judas

The characters in chapter 13 set the stage for the discourses and the prayer of Jesus in the subsequent chapters. In spite of Jesus' love and friendship for "his own," (15:9-16) there is "a betrayer" in their midst. Two important characters appear with Jesus in the first scene of the Farewell Discourses. The deliberate exchange between Jesus, Peter and Judas Iscariot in 13:18-28 is quite revealing in terms of characterization. Tolmie discusses both "direct characterization" and "indirect characterization" as demonstrated in John's Gospel. Both reveal a "paradigm of [character] traits," either told directly to the readers or inferred through the characters' behaviour and/or speech.⁵¹ The words and actions of Jesus, Judas and Peter in John 13 present to the reader indirect yet important characterization.

Peter is named more than any other disciple in the Fourth Gospel.⁵² His characterization is both complex and fascinating, and could demand its own thesis (or book) to cover the topic. Suffice it to say that his strong character develops and changes in the Fourth Gospel. He is named by Jesus early in his earthly ministry (1:42). He comes to the foreground as a spokesperson for the chosen disciples, and is the first to "name" Jesus correctly (6:69). However, he is impulsive and clearly reveals his "inability to understand Jesus."⁵³

Peter boldly confronts Jesus' actions and misunderstands his master's intentions (13:6-9). He is mystified and wants to know what is going on (13:24). However, after

⁵¹ Tolmie, "The (not so) Good Shepherd," 353-54.

⁵² See, for example, Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 155-181. Tolmie concurs with Bauckham in Tolmie, "The (not so) Good Shepherd," 355.

⁵³ Tolmie, "The (not so) Good Shepherd," 358.

his previous dialogue with Jesus, Peter avoids a direct confrontation, and instead prompts another disciple to ask Jesus to clarify his words. During this exchange, the other (unnamed) disciples “stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant” (v. 22). He is clearly baffled with the other disciples and asks “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (one closer to Jesus physically and symbolically) to ask Jesus to clarify himself. Ten disciples miss the point entirely and are, with Peter, perplexed about Jesus’ words (v. 28); one disciple, Judas, is silent. Peter is representative of the characters who do not understand Jesus’ words concerning his death (“where are you going?” 13:36). Misunderstanding Jesus’ words, he is ready to follow Jesus anywhere (13:37). Immediately Jesus responds with a prediction of Peter’s denial, which highlights his ironic commitment. Peter’s impulsive pledge of loyalty in 13:37 is illustrative of the disciples’ tenuous knowledge and belief in the person of Jesus, while the reality of their lack of understanding is illustrated by his shocking denial of Jesus in chapter 18.⁵⁴

The redemption and reconciliation of Peter and Jesus takes place in John chapter 21, where Jesus again refers to Peter in exactly the same way as he did in 1:42 (“son of John,” 21:15).⁵⁵ The development of Peter’s character throughout the Gospel is a vivid illustration of the doubts and uncertainties of many other characters, who learn and grow into a faith in Jesus that eventually results in the reproduction of that faith in other people (17:20).

⁵⁴ R. Alan Culpepper, “The Johannine *Hypodeigma*: A Reading of John 13:1-38,” *Semeia* 53 (1991): 133-52.

⁵⁵ Tolmie, “The (not so) Good Shepherd,” 365. Here, Tolmie compares Jesus’ prediction of Peter as a “shepherd” of the early church (21:15-19) to Jesus as the “Good Shepherd” in 10:14-18, including the “laying down” of one’s life for others (10:18; 13:37).

In contrast to Peter, the character of Judas Iscariot did know exactly what was going on in chapter 13; his actions were not without premeditation (6:70; 13:10-11). Judas appears before and after Peter's protestations. He is included in the love that Jesus shows to all the disciples in the foot-washing scene (13:2). Jesus testifies that one of the disciples would betray him (13:21), and the narrator tells the readers that the "devil prompted Judas...to betray Jesus" (13:2). Then, "as soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him" (v. 27). The mystery of Judas' betrayal deepens as the baffled disciples misunderstand Judas' intentions, and he leaves the scene (13:29-30). The "betrayers" is used as a "foil" to both Jesus and to the believing disciples. Symbolically, the author informs the reader that Judas leaves at "night," (v. 30). Thus the actions of Judas are portrayed as "darkness" (evil intention), while the other disciples are left "in darkness" (misunderstanding).

Judas Iscariot fully represents "the defector" on the Culpepper continuum of human responses. He sharply contrasts with those disciples who are choosing to believe in the words and actions of Jesus. Peter's loyalty to Jesus (13:37), even if it is said without complete understanding, is presented as a contrast to the perfidy of Judas.

For the author of John, Judas is the representative betrayer and defector, and such people "belong to the devil" (6:70; 8:44; 1 Jn 3:8, 10). More painfully, Judas represents the *disciple* who betrays Jesus, one of "the Twelve" (6:71), and one of "his own" (13:1). Further, the character of Judas, whose identity is specifically connected to his father in 13:2, is a vivid contrast to the "Son of God" in chapter 17. This contrast in identity will be considered in greater depth in the next section of this chapter.

Other Disciples

The only other disciples specifically named in the Farewell Discourses are Thomas (14:5), Philip (14:8) and Judas (“not Iscariot,” 14:22). As we said before, one disciple is unnamed, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23, 25). In all four cases, each disciple asks a question of Jesus or makes a statement to Jesus (in the case of Philip) with doubt and uncertainty. Both Philip and (the other) Judas seek (ask for) an appearance of the manifestation of God (*δείκνυμι* in v. 8 and *ἐμφανίζω* in v. 22), even after having been with Jesus “for such a long time” (14:9). Hence, their lack of understanding of Jesus’ identity is acute. Thomas reappears in a critical role in 20:24-29, where his doubts are removed. If he is the same person as the “other disciple” in 20:3-9, the doubts of the “beloved disciple” are lessened at the tomb of Jesus. Yet the narrator informs the reader that even at that point, the “other disciple” and Peter “did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead” (20:9).

Following the prediction of his betrayal, Jesus opens up and speaks boldly to those disciples who are left to listen (13:31). Their puzzling questions (13:36; 14:5, 8, 22; 16:17-18) indicate that they grasped very little of what Jesus revealed to them. All they can do is express gratitude that Jesus is finally “speaking clearly” (though perhaps not clearly enough), stand amazed at his knowledge and insight, and declare that anyone who spoke like that must be from God (16:29-30). His profound words leave the disciples speechless, as no one interrupts Jesus with a question after 14:22 to 16:16. As an aside, they share their puzzlement with one another (16:17-18).

The disciples appear to respond to Jesus’ words with a statement of understanding in 16:29. Nevertheless, the reader knows from Jesus’ words in 16:32 that

the disciples' understanding is minimal, and their faith in Jesus would be put through a severe test. Throughout the Farewell Discourses, the reader can easily identify with the struggling, baffled disciples who, unknowingly, were being prepared for the climax of the narrative story, their own personal trials and tragedy, and the crucifixion of their "Lord" (13:13). The readers can identify with the characters and recognize their own human doubts, misunderstandings, and confusion. The disciples' understanding of Jesus' identity and mission was based upon the evidence they had seen and heard (chapters 2 through 12); as such, their belief in Jesus is "an imperfect condition."⁵⁶ Their believing is not yet an "abiding" or "remaining" in Jesus (15:4).

We can conclude, then, that the presentation of the disciples in chapters 13 through 16 is one of doubt and uncertainty (16:17-18). From the defection of one disciple to the queries of the others present, the readers are witnesses to the misunderstandings and the lack of understanding on the part of the disciples with Jesus at the final supper. The passion events and the guiding Paraclete that will clarify Jesus' words and actions for the disciples are yet future in the narrative story; these are crucial events that will make their understanding possible. How is it possible, then, that the disciples are presented as so knowledgeable and certain about Jesus in the final prayer of John 17? To answer this question, we must look more deeply into the characterization in the prayer.

Part 3. Characterization in the Prayer

Readers can observe a dramatic change in the characterization of certain characters from the foot-washing scene to the prayer of chapter 17. The bewildered

⁵⁶ Abbott, *Johannine Vocabulary*, 72.

disciples who are key characters in the events and dialogues in the Farewell Discourses are a part of Jesus' prayer in 17:6-19. Additionally, one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, distinguished by name in chapter 13, is called "the one doomed to destruction" in Jesus' final prayer (17:12).

In his article on the style and significance of John 17, D. Black determines that Jesus' farewell discourses and prayer are reassurance for the disciples who are about to receive the challenge of the continuing mission of Jesus. In fact, he writes that "the prayer was not uttered primarily for the benefit of the Father, but for the disciples, who were listening (v. 13)."⁵⁷ Yet there is no indication in the narrative after chapter 17 that the disciples' behavior or actions were altered in any way because of the prayer, or that they positively benefited from hearing Jesus' prayer. It is puzzling why the author is completely silent on the results, responses or actions of the disciples after the prayer if it was spoken for their benefit. In terms of the narrative story, all we know for certain is that "when he had finished praying," a change of setting took place: Jesus and the disciples "crossed the Kidron Valley" and entered an olive grove (18:1). The lack of explanation concerning the characters in the story suggests that the purpose of the prayer is primarily for the benefit of the readers, not for the benefit of the characters in the story.

With this in mind, the author's presentation of the characters in the prayer is both representative and symbolic. First, the human characters are representatives of human reactions to Jesus, and second, the divine characters are presented symbolically. In the prayer, the reader can observe the interaction of three groups of people. "The world" is

⁵⁷ David Alan Black, "On the Style and Significance of John 17," *CTR* 3, no. 1 (1988): 141-59.

a model of the characters who reject Jesus, and for whom Jesus does *not* pray (17:9); this model remains unchanged throughout the Gospel. In contrast, the followers of Jesus are “those who you gave me out of the world,” who “accept” and “obey” the words of Jesus (17:6, 8). Jesus’ followers include the future believers, or “those who will believe in me through their message” (v. 20). This group is representative of those who believe the testimony of the earliest disciples (21:24). They are representative of all the succeeding generations of believers, but first they are the faithful community for whom the author writes the Fourth Gospel.⁵⁸

The two divine characters in the prayer are the Father and the Son. They remain static and unchanged throughout the Gospel. The unity of the Father and the Son is apparent from the difficulty we have in investigating each character individually. In John 17, we cannot study one without the other.

The titles themselves, “Father” and “Son” symbolize the close, familial relationship of God and Jesus. Symbolically, as in a human family, the Son comes from the Father, and has the same name as the Father (17:11), and is an agent of the Father (8:27-29). The intimate family reciprocal relationship of the Father and the Son is a major theme of the Gospel. Jesus has made it clear that he does the Father’s work (5:17, 19, 30; 7:16-18); he knows and follows his Father’s will (6:38-40); he came from the Father and returns to the Father (7:33; 8:14; 16:28). He speaks his Father’s words (8:28; 12:49; 14:24). The unity of the Father and the Son appears in the prayer of John 17 as certainly as it appears in 14:20, 23. Since the nature of the Father and the Son and their reciprocal love relationship is a key concept in John 17, it is to them that we now turn.

⁵⁸ Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian*, 69.

A. The Father

It is neither the intention of this thesis, nor is it necessary, to appraise and analyze all that has been said about Father God, even if we limit the discussion to the Fourth Gospel. However, in the prayer of John 17, we can observe several key points about Father God that are noteworthy to our investigation concerning the prayer itself.

First, the “only true God” is the Father who is “knowable” by humanity (17:3). To know the one who Jesus calls “the Father” is to understand that he is the one and only true and just God. Jesus is not God; the Son is not the Father, but is “sent” by the “only true God.” Father and Son are one, but they are not identical. Additionally, eternal life is given to those who know both the Father and the Son (17:3). Although “the world” does not know God (17:25), the one who knows and believes Jesus knows the Father. Jesus summarizes this knowledge in 20:17: “I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” By believing that Jesus is from God, the believer is able to know “the only true God” as Father (17:7). In contrast, the rejection of the knowledge of the “true father” is the basis for Jesus’ debate with the Jewish leaders in 8:31-41. Marianne Thompson outlines the process of “knowing God” through the words and actions of Jesus; she concludes that “because in this world the Son makes the Father known, one truly ‘sees’ God: but only indirectly, and in hidden ways.”⁵⁹

Holy Father

Second, two unusual titles for God are used in John 17 that are not used anywhere else in the Gospel, “Holy Father” in verse 11, and “Righteous Father” in verse 25. Not only are they unique titles in the Fourth Gospel, they do not appear as such

⁵⁹ Marianne Meye Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 143.

anywhere in the entire New Testament. Other scholars have previously noted that the two titles describe attributes of God that offer valuable knowledge for the readers of the prayer (see below). “Holy Father” (Πάτερ ἅγιε) is an expression of one who is, by character, separated from a sinful world. R. Brown believes that in the Jewish mind, since God is holy, then holiness is to be expected from those who “belong to God” (17:9).⁶⁰ It follows that Jesus asks God to “sanctify” (cognate word, ἁγιάσων v. 17) his followers; that is, he asks that they be separated from “the world.” Jesus “sanctifies himself,” or separates himself for his assigned purpose, for the benefit of those who place their faith in him (17:19). Because the disciples “are still in the world,” and are sent out into it to witness to the truth (vv. 10, 18), they need the separation and protection of a “Holy Father.” After Jesus’ return to the Father, his witnesses in the world are protected and united in the name of a “Holy Father.” By attributing such holiness to his Father, Jesus is indicating to the listeners/readers that it is God who can and does separate the believing ones from the world by his truth (vv. 17, 19).⁶¹ This is valuable assurance for the readers of the prayer.

Nevertheless, we can ask, why holiness? Why is this one attribute of God included in this final prayer of Jesus? Certainly he is holy, as well as righteous, but he is also loving, powerful, and merciful, just to name a few other attributes. Why is his holiness key?

What has not been fully investigated in scholarship is the interesting combination of two titles into one: “Holy Father.” In the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah, “The

⁶⁰ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 765.

⁶¹ Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian*, 60. See also, Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary* (vol. 2; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 1057, and Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 765.

Holy One of Israel” is a common title for a transcendent God who is seen as the Redeemer of his people (e.g., Isa 54:5). In the Fourth Gospel, the title “Father” is used by Jesus to present a God who is immanent and intimately involved in the lives of his people. The combination reveals a God who is most holy, yet is concerned enough about his people that he will redeem them and be a “father” to them. Nowhere in the Old Testament do the titles “Holy Father” or “Righteous Father” appear, but “the Holy One of Israel” is quite distinctive in Isaiah (e.g., 48:4, 17; 49:7). It is he that is the “Redeemer” of Israel (e.g., 47:4).

It is interesting to note that “Holy Father” is used in early writings outside of the canonical books. It appears in *The Didache* (10:2) in the context of a prayer of thanksgiving; it also appears in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *TJud*, 24:2, which is a messianic passage:

And after these things a star will arise to you from Jacob in peace and a man will arise from my seed like the sun of righteousness, walking with the sons of men in meekness and righteousness, and no sin whatever will be found in him.

And the heavens will be opened to him to pour out the blessing of the spirit of the *holy Father*, and he will pour out the spirit of grace upon you, and you will be sons to him in truth and you will walk in his commandments from first to last.⁶²

In this context, the actions of the messianic figure (Jesus Christ) on behalf of believing people are linked with the gracious actions of God (the Holy Father). The Father “pours out his grace” on those people who follow the “star of Jacob.” More will be said about the title “Holy Father” in Chapters 3 and 4 of this study, as added investigations are

⁶² See Howard C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth *Anchor Bible Reference Library*; New York: Doubleday 1983), 801, and Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers; Greek Texts and English Translations* (Grand Rapids: Baker 1999 [1992]), 261. My added emphasis (italics).

needed to answer fully the above questions. In terms of characterization alone, this title speaks to the reader concerning the activities of a holy God, who is also a caring, redemptive Father, and whose saving actions toward the believers are linked to the Son.

Righteous Father

Third, the other unique title for God is also an expression of his activities, more than recognition of one of his attributes. It describes one of his characteristics, but why “righteousness?” Painter suggests that “Righteous Father” (*Πάτερ δίκαιε*, 17:25) could be better translated “Faithful Father;” however, the more usual sense of God being “just, good, upright and proper” seems more appropriate.⁶³ In the context of the prayer, it is the correct judgment and “right-ness” of God that is rejected by the unbelieving world (17:25). The “unrighteous” do not know God, while the “righteous” belong to him. The promised Paraclete makes known to people the righteousness of the Father (16:8-10); subsequently, the righteous people “belong” to the Father and the Son (16:15; 17:10). It is the action of the Father who is able to make his own people “right.”⁶⁴ Jesus has revealed the Father’s true judgment and righteousness to believers as evidence that he is from God (17:25). Further, as a holy and righteous God, the Father would only send an agent, his Son, who was also holy and righteous. Therefore, by knowing the Father and the Son, humanity can be redeemed, or be “made righteous.” Human efforts to achieve righteousness before God fall short (Isa 64:6), but if one knows the Son, one is redeemed before the “Righteous” and “Holy” Father (17:26).

⁶³ Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian*, 41.

⁶⁴ Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*, 1064.

In short, the three definitive references to God in John 17, “the only true God,” “Holy Father,” and “Righteous Father” are intertwined. The Father is the “only true God,” who is both holy and righteous. The holy, righteous God is able to redeem his people and enter into an intimate relationship with those human beings that believe in him and in his Son (14:20; 17:21, 23). The emphasis of the author of John in the prayer of chapter 17 is on the newly revealed relationship of Father and Son, and their relationship with the people who believe in both of them. The revelation and redemption of God the Father by Jesus the Son is a fulfillment of the promises found in the book of Isaiah (40:5; 41:13-14; 42:8-9; 43:1; 43:14, 15; 44:6; 45:21-25; 49:7; 54:5-8). This is “eternal life” (17:3): the believer is made holy and righteous (“sanctified”) and belongs to God because God is the one who has the power and the desire to grant holiness and righteous, through the Son, to his people. The unique triangle of Father, Son and believer is a crucial message of assurance for the reader of the Fourth Gospel (14:20). The author addresses Father God in this manner in the prayer to verify the activities of God towards the believer and to encourage the readers.

B. The Son

Again, the task of fully characterizing the Johannine Jesus is too extensive for this limited study.⁶⁵ The Christology in the Fourth Gospel is especially deep, rich, and intriguing; it has, indeed, kept NT scholars busy for decades. Nevertheless, it is of great interest to focus on the characterization of “the Son” in chapter 17.

⁶⁵ For a more comprehensive analysis of the Johannine Jesus, see Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ; Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 353-426. Additionally, see Marianne Meye Thompson, *The Promise of the Father; Jesus and God in the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox 2000).

In his public ministry (chapters 2 through 12), the character of Jesus is defined by the author in a variety of ways. As noted earlier, the characterization of Jesus is shown in the reactions and responses to him from other characters. Jesus defines himself in metaphoric language that can be misunderstood (e.g., “I am...the bread of life,” “the light of the world,” “the good shepherd,” “the gate”).⁶⁶ When he moves from public to private instruction with his closest disciples, his discourse reveals even more about himself (e.g., 13:31-32; 14:6-10; 15:1-13, 18; 16:19-28). Certainly the closer he moves towards the cross, the more he reveals to those who receive his words. Yet, to those who do not believe him (the high priest and Pilate, for example), his words and his identity become more and more cryptic (18:20; 19:8-11).

As much as half of the total Gospel of John is presented by the author as direct speech by Jesus.⁶⁷ Such direct speech from the lips of Jesus is his self-revelation. Unfortunately, his self-revelation to humanity often falls on deaf or stubborn ears. He makes claims about himself (8:48-58), creates metaphors about himself (15:1-8) and defines himself in terms of his relationship with his Father (16:28). He makes shocking statements about himself (“I am the resurrection and the life,” 11:25). He claims to be “from above,” and “not of this world” (8:23; 17:14). For some hearers, Jesus’ words are ambiguous, and easy to misunderstand, or not understood at all. The characters’ questions are left unanswered, and they are perplexed. The majority of discussions that Jesus has with other characters are centered around two main topics: his true identity (e.g., with the crowd, the Jews, with Pilate and with the disciples), and belief and

⁶⁶ See Hurtado’s discussion of these passages. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ; Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 370-73. In addition, see also the metaphoric discussion in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

⁶⁷ Pamment, "Focus in the Fourth Gospel."

unbelief (or acceptance and rejection; e.g., 6:29; 8:30; 9:35; 10:25-26; 14:11). As an example, when asked directly by the Jews to state his identity, Jesus answers, “I did tell you but you do not believe” (10:24-25).

Humanity and Divinity

The question of his identity raises the issue of Jesus’ divinity and humanity. On the one hand, scholars have noted that Jesus appears less “human” or less “earthly” in this Gospel. As an example, if Jesus is noticeably less emotional than he is in the other three Gospels, is this an indication of a more “spiritual” Jesus? A “docetic Jesus” is evident to Käsemann who emphasizes a Jesus who is so completely divine that his “earthly” appearance is almost insignificant. Käsemann’s strong emphasis only on Jesus’ divinity is considerably out of balance:

Jesus has no other function and authority apart from being the revealer of God. Jesus is the only revealer of God and therefore belongs on the side of God even while he is on this earth.⁶⁸

Further, John’s Jesus says he is “not of this world” (8:23; 17:14), but this relates to his origin, not his essence. It is true that in the narrative he is rarely troubled (with the exception of 11:33 and 13:21) or conflicted in nature. A rare display of emotions, told by the narrator, appears more in chapter 11 than in any other chapter of the Gospel (11:33, 35, 38), a preface to his own death and resurrection. Noticeably different from the Synoptics, Jesus does not agonize in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest; in fact, the narrator relates Jesus’ calm, controlled knowledge of “all that was going to happen to him” (18:1-4).

⁶⁸ Käsemann, *Testament*, 11. For a more complete treatment of Käsemann’s characterization, see Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ; Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 394.

On the other hand, it is not because he is “unworldly” that Jesus is “unemotional” in the Fourth Gospel. In John, Jesus knows all along the outcome of his mission; it is his “single-mindedness” that is paramount. His prayer of John 17 is not a prayer of agony, indecision or uncertainty (compare to the prayer in Luke 22:39-44). The Jesus in John 17 is one who is knowledgeable, confident and self-assured; he is encouraging to his followers and is thinking about the people who remain in the world after his glorification (not unlike his concerned words from the cross, 19:26). Thus, his apparent lack of emotion emphasizes his knowledge and control over all situations. Jesus’ words and deeds were according to the Father’s divine plan (17:4); unlike the other characters, he fully understands what the plan involved. Because he knew the outcome of all things, he was able to fulfil the Father’s will with assurance.

The most notable feature about Jesus in the FG is the control he displayed over all persons and situations. Neither the treachery nor the stubbornness of his own disciples, nor the ridicule or machinations of the Jews could hinder him from moving toward his ‘hour’ on the cross.⁶⁹

If characters “tend to represent themselves in their speech,” it is noteworthy that no one speaks in chapter 17 except Jesus.⁷⁰ None of the disciples, or even the narrator, has the last word on Jesus’ identity and mission. He is fully in control.

Intercessor

For those people who do believe, the Son, as the agent of the Father, promises to be the heavenly intercessor. Because of the unique, reciprocal relationship of the Father and the Son, the Son is in a privileged position to intercede with the Father on behalf of

⁶⁹ Thatcher, "Jesus, Judas and Peter: Character by Contrast in the Fourth Gospel."

⁷⁰ Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 189.

the believers (14:10-14). Jesus promises his followers that he would personally inaugurate a new prayer relationship, a new form of communication “in the name” of Jesus (16:23-24). Since Jesus’ entire life on earth was in obedience to the will of the Father, his glorified status (17:5) allows him to be the vehicle of communication between the believer and the holy, righteous Father. As a result, the prayer of John 17 is an example of Jesus doing exactly what he pledged to do: to intercede and communicate with the Father on behalf of his followers.⁷¹

After his departure from the earth, “another Paraclete,” the Spirit of truth, is promised to the believers that will testify concerning the Son (15:26). Therefore, the readers in the faith community can communicate with the Father through the name of the Son, and can experience the unity promised by Jesus in his final prayer (16:23-24; 17:21-23).

As the divine intercessor, the Son is one and the same with the Spirit who intercedes on behalf of the believer.⁷² It is this unique role that the Son demonstrates to his followers in the prayer of John 17. Hurtado writes, “as Jesus serves as spokesman and agent of the Father, so the references to the Spirit in John 14-16 portray the Spirit as advocate, spokesman and agent of Jesus.”⁷³ Intercession and agency progressed after Pentecost. There were many truths that Jesus could not teach his followers while he was on earth (16:12-13, 25), because such truths could not be understood by humanity. New truths were revealed by the Spirit after the death and resurrection of Jesus (14:25-26),

⁷¹ More will be said to expand this intercessor concept in Chapter 5 of this study.

⁷² Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 1135, 1141. The one who John calls “another Paraclete” is “another Jesus,” or the Holy Spirit. John presents the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit in a special role, namely, as the personal presence of Jesus in the Christian while Jesus is with the Father [gone from them]. See Romans 8:26-27.

⁷³ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ; Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 399.

truths that would have been known by the readers of the Fourth Gospel. Following Pentecost, both Jesus and the Spirit intercede or supplicate on behalf of the believers (16:12-14).

Son of God

Among the numerous titles for Jesus in all four gospel accounts, both “the Son” and “the Son of God” are common (Jn 17:1; Matt 14:33; 16:16; Mk 1:1; Lk 1:32). These titles authenticate his person and his position. Because he is not “the Father,” he is distinct from the Father. He is “from” God, but he is not “God” the Father. Jesus speaks and acts at the Father’s will (Jn 6:38; 7:16-18; 12:49). As the representative agent, he is God in the flesh, revealing the invisible Father (1:18). He is who he is because of his relationship with the Father (10:36). The familiar filial relationship implied in the christological title of “Son of God” is a metaphor for a relationship that can be understood by humanity, yet it places Jesus into a unique position as the one who does the Father’s will, speaks the Father’s words and is one with the Father (10:30, 36-38).

In the Fourth Gospel, the Markan “messianic secret” is subtle but apparent; the readers know his claim of messiahship, and it is slowly unfolded in the roles of the characters.⁷⁴ Beyond the earlier Old Testament messianic conceptions, “the Son” and the “Son of God” in the Gospel of John is a man who is “uniquely Spirit-endowed,” sent by God, who speaks for God, and is given the Spirit “without limit” (3:31-35).⁷⁵ From available literature, we know that by the latter first century CE, Jesus was considered a

⁷⁴ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ; Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 358.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 397. Also see Keener’s discussion on the “Son of God” in Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*, 291-97.

divine figure by a growing number of Christian communities of his followers; he is considered the Father's agent who is both human and divine.⁷⁶ The use of this title is the author's validation that the divinity of the Father is shared with the divinity of the Son (14:8-11; 17:5, 24).

Son of Man

The self-revealing title "Son of Man" is yet more complicated than "the Son of God" in terms of its Hebrew background and its application to Jesus. Outside of his "I am statements," the Johannine Jesus refers to himself only as "the Son" or "the Son of Man" (8:28; 9:35; 11:4; 12:23). In the Hebrew and Aramaic usage, the phrase foundationally meant a "someone," a "person," an ordinary, lowly human being, especially in comparison to the mighty God YHWH (e.g., Ezek. 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 6:1). In later writings, the phrase became more "loaded" with apocalyptic implications (Dan. 7:13-14; Rev. 1:13; 14:14).

A much debated term, it is not the intent of this study to explore all the historical significance of the phrase "Son of Man." However, it is exclusively Jesus' own choice of self-designation, packed with implications about his identity and his purpose (John 9:35; also, see 5:25-27 where Jesus uses all three titles in reference to himself: "Son of God," "Son" and "Son of Man").⁷⁷ In the Fourth Gospel, the title is used only during Jesus' earthly ministry (13 times); as such, it places more emphasis on Jesus' humanity

⁷⁶ Ibid. On the use of "Son of God" and "Son of Man," see also Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference*, 17, 182-240.

⁷⁷ It is interesting that Brown notes the use of "Son of Man" in 5:27 is "anarthrous" (ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν). This is the only time this title appears in the Gospels without an article before either noun. It has been suggested that this implies the expression simply means "man," but Brown disagrees. With Brown, I surmise that the author of John is using the phrase as a title, carrying all the implications from the title in Dan 7:13. Brown, *Gospel According to John, Vol. 2*, 215.

(contra Käsemann) and his relationship with those to whom he ministered.⁷⁸ Certainly John presents a Jesus in the Fourth Gospel that is “genuinely human.”⁷⁹ Yet, the “Son of God” title emphasizes his divinity and an “exalted, elevated” view of Jesus (3:13; 6:62; 8:23, 42). With Hurtado, both “Son of God” and “Son of Man” express the humanity and the divinity of Jesus, and may be two sides of the same coin.⁸⁰ In the prayer of John 17, the full spectrum of Jesus’ humanity and divinity is acknowledged and summarized by the author in the use of Jesus’ simple self-designation before the Father, “Son.”

Jesus Christ

It is the writer of the Gospel who refers to Jesus as “Jesus Christ” in both the prologue (1:17), and again in the prayer (17:3). The other characters in the story never refer to him by this two-part title. To the other characters he is “Rabbi,” “Teacher” and “Lord” (13:13), until Thomas’ confession in 20:28 where he is addressed as “my Lord and my God,” in full recognition of his divinity. The people in the story question if Jesus is “the Christ” in 7:25-27, 31; the Jewish leaders pointedly ask Jesus if he is “the Christ” (10:24). However, their understanding of “the Christ” is different from Jesus’ own knowledge of his purpose and mission. Only the narrator/author confirms that Jesus is “the Christ” and incorporates the claim into the purpose of the writing of the Gospel (1:17; 17:3; 20:31). Thus, 17:3 appears awkward, as Jesus did not likely refer to himself in the third person, as “Jesus Christ.” It is the Gospel author who employs the title to repeat the claim that Jesus is the “Messiah” and the “Son” (of God), even if he

⁷⁸ Horst and Gerhard Schneider Balz, ed., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 3 of 3 Vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 388.

⁷⁹ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ; Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 394.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 396.

does not fulfill the Jewish expectations of a messianic redeemer. “In fact, from the opening lines onward, GJohn overtly makes the messianic claim central.”⁸¹ The full two-part christological title was familiar to the Christian communities decades after his death and resurrection, so the readers of the Gospel would understand the full significance of the title “Jesus Christ.” Used as a title, the author of the prayer employed “Jesus Christ” to apply all the full christological meanings to Jesus.

Indeed, as Shakespeare would say, “what is in a name?”⁸² In the Fourth Gospel, there is a close connection between the person of Jesus and name of God. Additionally, there is great significance in Jesus’ own name.⁸³ Jesus is given the divine name (17:11-12), and is therefore able to make God’s name known to humanity (17:6, 26). It is because Jesus is given the name of the great “I AM” (*εγώ ειμι*, LXX Isa 43:10, 25; 45:18⁸⁴) that he can declare of himself, “I am...” (e.g., Jn 4:26; 8:28, 58; 13:19), including his “I am” statements (e.g., 6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 11). That is to say, by using God’s name, Jesus is God’s human agent in the “flesh;” those who see Jesus, see the Father (14:9). Jesus clearly manifests God’s *name* (his character, attributes and qualities) in his words and deeds, doing and speaking God’s will (12:49; 17:6, 26). The miracles done by Jesus in God’s name “speak for me...[because] I and the Father are one” (10:25, 30). As one with the Father, Jesus is the Christ, the anointed agent of God.

It is also worth noting that Hurtado correctly connects the giving of glory to the Son (17:5, 24) with Isaiah 42:8:

⁸¹ Ibid., 358. Further, see Hurtado’s extended discussion of Jesus’ messianic title, pages 358-369.

⁸² William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (Reading, Berkshire: Cox and Wyman Ltd., 1994). Act II, Scene 2, line 10; p. 60. Presumably, the author of John would reply, “a lot.”

⁸³ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ; Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 385.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 371.

I am the Lord; that is my name!
I will not give my glory to another
Or my praise to idols.

In view of the Isaiah passage, because Jesus is given the name of God, he can receive God's glory.⁸⁵ God's glory and power belong to the Son because God's name is given to the Son. In the prayer of chapter 17 (in both vv. 6 and 26), Jesus underscores the fact that he "revealed your [God's] name to those you have given me" (v. 6). Elsewhere in the prayer, he asks the Father to "protect" his followers,

...by the power of your name – the name you gave me [Jesus] –
so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them,
I protected them and kept them safe by the name you gave me
(vv. 11, 12).

There is a complete unity of revelation, power, will, character, and glory in the names of the Father and the Son.

Jesus' own name (*Ἰησοῦς*) has a direct effect on how one believes and how one prays. First, belief must be specifically in Jesus or in his name (1:12; 2:23; 3:18; 20:31) because God gave him his name.⁸⁶ Belief in the name of Jesus is belief in his *person*, that he is who he said he is. The new requirement in John's Gospel is the recognition that Jesus and God are both included in human faith and devotion. Second, belief in Jesus and the invocation of his name in prayer makes possible a new prayer relationship with the Father. Therefore, because he is the manifestation of the divine Father "in the flesh," and is his sole agent on earth, the name of Jesus is the only vehicle by which

⁸⁵ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ; Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, 387-88.

⁸⁶ See also Philippians 2:9-10.

believing humanity can pray effectively to the Father (14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24, 26).⁸⁷ John 17 is, in effect, Jesus praying in his own name (17:3) for the benefit of the readers.

In summation, consideration of the full implications of the names of God the Father and Jesus the Son in chapter 17 are crucial to our understanding of the divine characters as presented to the readers of the prayer of John 17. The prayer is a fulfillment of God's promised redemption of his people through his servant, the Son, and is a demonstration of Jesus' promised intercession on behalf of those who believe in him as the Christ, the Messiah, and the unique agent of the Father God.

C. The Disciples in John 17

The main section of the prayer (17:6-19) appears to be addressed to Jesus' disciples ("those whom you gave me out of the world," 17:6-19). Yet, none of the individual disciples is named in the prayer of chapter 17, leaving this chapter open and giving it significance to a wider receptive audience that includes the readers. In the eyes of the readers of the Gospel, chapter 17 is partly an explanation of the future destiny of these earliest believing disciples, as well as the destiny of the one "defector."

In general, the prayer spotlights characters who are very different from the Peter and Philip and Thomas that the readers have seen in the previous chapters. Peter denies his Lord, as predicted, in chapter 18, *after* the prayer, revealing that in narrative time, he is still not the leader he is to become. Yet in the prayer, Jesus' "own" are *not* the puzzled, misunderstanding characters who questioned Jesus in chapters 13 to 16. In

⁸⁷ Concerning the role of Jesus as God's agent, see Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*, 310-17. Keener does a full analysis of the two verbs pertaining to agency in the Fourth Gospel: ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω, demonstrating that the "sending" language of John's Gospel implies the subordination aspect of the Son in relationship to the Father, p. 317.

contrast, the people in Jesus' prayer are ones with full knowledge and certain belief in the words of Jesus. The certainty of their belief is not based upon the evidence of signs, but on the words and revelation of Jesus (17:6-8). The followers of Jesus belong to the Father, are given to the Son out of the world, and receive the revelation of the Father by the Son (17:6). The word of God was given to them through Jesus (17:8, 14); they received Jesus' words and "accepted them" (17:8). Hence, they "know that everything" came from the Father, and they know "with certainty" that Jesus came from the Father (17:7-8).

The prayer of chapter 17 portrays a group of people who are the beneficiaries of Jesus' positive assessments and promises: they are obedient, joyful, "not of this world," "sanctified" and "sent" (vv. 6, 13-19). Glory to the Son comes through them (v. 10). In contrast to their own shaky beliefs, Jesus believes in *them*. The disciples receive the full measure of joy within them, in spite of the world's hatred. They are still "in the world," (vs. 11), still needing the protection from evil, but "not of this world," just as Jesus is not of it (vs. 16). As witnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus, the disciples are sanctified, set apart, and sent into the world as Jesus was sent (17:17-19). In chapter 17, the disciples are presented in every way as positive human response models.

Nevertheless, as the narrative continues, and the disciples are faced with the events of the passion narrative after the prayer (chapters 18-20), it is clear that the faith of the human characters is shaken by the events of the cross. Their doubts are not conquered until after further historical events have taken place. Still, the reader can observe that Jesus' words of chapter 17 ring true: his mission is completed (17:4 and 19:30); the disciples do succeed in continuing the mission of Jesus (17:20). "The other

disciple” (20:3) gives his testimony of belief after entering the tomb of the risen Jesus (20:8). Thomas believes only after seeing the hands and side of the risen Jesus (20:25-28). This is a portrait of the disciples who were changed dramatically by the death and resurrection of Jesus (chapters 18 through 20) and the promised Paraclete (16:6-16). If the disciples are, indeed, “credible models for believers,” the presentation of the disciples in chapter 17 would be an assurance for the believing readers. Jesus does not pray for their weak belief, or their lack of faith; he prays for their protection and their unity (17:11). That they are fully initiated into unity with the Father and Son (17:20-21), in spite of their doubts, failures, and misunderstandings (16:32), is an encouragement to the readers who can empathize with the struggling disciples.

The affirmation and confirmation of the disciples in John 17, even *before* they experience great trials, is an encouragement to the readers in the Johannine community who also faced trials, rejections and disappointments in their own circumstances (16:2). That the closest of Jesus’ followers (save Judas) do come to a deeper, reproducing faith in Jesus is an assurance for the readers of the prayer.

D. The World

The second group of characters found in the final prayer of Jesus is “the world.” This phrase (*ὁ κόσμος*) is used frequently in the prayer, at least 16 times, in contrast to “the disciples” which is never used in the prayer. In this chapter, as in the rest of the Gospel, “the world” has both neutral and negative connotations. It can be used to connote a neutral, generic term for the human populated earth (e.g., 17:5, 24). However, it can also have a more sinister meaning, referring to people who choose to live “in darkness” (e.g., 17:9, 14, 16) and who refuse to see Jesus as “the Light” (8:12). In this

sense, it is representative of great cosmic evil. A third alternative use of the phrase is less sinister and can overlap with “the crowd” and “the people” (e.g., 17:13, 21, 23).

Some opponents reject Jesus primarily out of ignorance. The range of connotations of this word can be confusing; one such example is 17:13-16, where the term is used in various senses:

I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world [on the physical earth], so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world [unbelieving population of people] has hated them, for they are not of the world [realm of cosmic evil] any more than I am of the world [realm of cosmic evil].

Another example of the multi-faceted word is from the Prologue:

He was in the world [Jesus incarnated on the earth], and though the world [physical earth] was made through him, the world [the unbelieving population of people] did not recognize him. (1:10)

Additionally, one more sense is used in the first epistle of John; “the world” is used to imply a “worldliness,” or the love of material things on earth that distract people from a love of God (1 John 2:15). This sense is not as frequent in the Fourth Gospel, though it cannot be ignored. Generally, the author of the Gospel uses this word skilfully, cleverly implying one or more senses of the word in a context; he can intend a spiritual meaning (the human system opposed to God) underlying a physical meaning (the earth), or both. One such “dual meaning” is seen in the strong contrast in 16:33, when Jesus says to his disciples, “in me you will have peace; in this world you will have trouble.”

In 17:4-5, “the world” must be understood in a neutral sense, as the physical place where Jesus is sent by the Father. However, it is also used in the prayer as a

contrast between the people who refuse to believe in Jesus and those who do believe (17:14-15). Those people who stand in opposition to God's purposes contrast the character of Jesus, as well as the disciples who are following Jesus, and the believing reader. Jesus does not pray for the opposition (17:9), but for those who accept his words and are certain that he is from the Father (17:8). The believing reader is included in this prayer, knowing that "the (unbelieving) world" may challenge the reader as it did Jesus and his first followers. Outside of the neutral sense, in John 17 "the world" represents the opposite of the believing readers.

The lack of the mention of "the Jews" in the prayer of John 17 is an indication to the reader that, in spite of the events in the passion narrative, Jesus is victorious over the malevolent plot of this group (11:46-53). "The Jews" are folded into the larger negative sense of the "world." The Son's glorification conquers a much larger general threat than one group labelled "the Jews." On the cosmic scale, Jesus "overcomes" all evil in general in "the world" (16:33; 17:9). His completed work brings life to all ("on earth") who believe (17:4-5). The author of John wants his readers to understand that opposition to Jesus is a universal failure; whether Jew or Gentile, Judean or Roman, anyone on earth ("in the world") can reject the truth. Yet Jesus has "overcome the world" (16:33).

E. Judas Iscariot

In the Gospel there is only one character who fills Culpepper's seventh category of human responses to Jesus; the author uses this character to reveal the position of a "defector." Judas Iscariot is mentioned eight times in the Gospel; his presence is a continuing contrast to Jesus and to the other believing disciples. Judas physically

departs from the other disciples at the end of chapter 13, never to reappear in John's narrative story. The readers may wonder what happened to him. What was the final destiny of the "the betrayer?"

The truth about Jesus' identity as God's Son is contrasted to the "son of Simon" in chapter 13. Further, Judas is the unnamed "the son of perdition" (ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας) in the prayer of chapter 17. The specific references to him as "the son of" (13:2; 17:12), vividly contrast references to the "Son" (of God) in chapter 17. His defection illustrates who his real "father" is (8:42-47). Additionally, his end is made obvious. Although he was given to Jesus just like the other disciples, he alone is "unclean" (13:10) and is "lost" from the fold of believing followers (17:12). He chooses death over life, not knowing the one who he betrayed (17:3). Beyond the narrative time of the prayer, the result of Judas' dark motives and his silent character is his own destruction, and not that of the one he intended to destroy.

Judas represents "the humanization of the cosmic forces of evil."⁸⁸ His role is determined from "the beginning" (6:64), not unlike the believing disciples who were with Jesus from the beginning. He is prompted by the devil (13:2), controlled by him (13:27), and is even called "a devil" (6:70). Whereas the promised Paraclete, the "Spirit of truth," enters the believer (14:17), it is Satan that enters Judas. In contrast to a believer living "in Christ," (14:20, 17:21), it is the forces of evil that are "in" Judas. Jesus "knows those I have chosen," (13:18) including Judas, and his true intentions. Jesus knows from the start who would betray him (6:64), yet he still washes the feet of Judas in love (13:1). The author of John does not provide any logical motivation or

⁸⁸ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 124.

explanation for Judas' actions, in spite of what other scholars have suggested.⁸⁹ In 17:12 he is a representative of those persons who are "lost," and refuse the protection and safe-keeping of the Father and the Son. Unlike the narrative in Matthew (27:3-10), Judas shows no remorse for his actions in John; as a character, after his deeds are accomplished, he simply fades into the darkness. "We can only understand that he has done exactly what he intended to do."⁹⁰

Judas Iscariot asks no questions of Jesus in the Farewell Discourses; his only recorded words in John are a rebuke of Mary's anointing of Jesus in 12:4-6, which reveal his true heart motives and intentions. He is not a strong and motivating character in the Gospel of John narrative. In the final prayer, the emphasis is on the characters of the Father, the Son and the believing disciples; Judas is secondary and left unnamed. From the beginning, Jesus knows that one among his disciples will not change, but will ultimately be "lost." His destiny is known by Jesus even before the crucifixion and resurrection have taken place.

Part 4. Importance of Characterization

The change in the presentation of the disciples from the Farewell Discourses to the final prayer in John 17 has not been articulated in previous scholarship. Yet it is not without analogous passages. Resembling John 17, Jesus makes a promise to his disciples in Matthew 19:28-30:

At the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or

⁸⁹ More discussion on the "son of perdition" appears in Chapter 5 of this study.

⁹⁰ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 124.

children or field for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But those who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

Readers can note the theme of renewal and the theme of eternal life in this passage for those who choose to follow Jesus. In Matthew's picture of the eschatological future, the formerly weak and doubtful disciples will be changed into leaders and judges of all of Israel.

In parallel passages, Mark 10:28-31 and Luke 22:28-32, Jesus rebukes his disciples who have selfish concerns about their earthly positions and importance. In the Lukan version, this exchange immediately follows the scene of "Last Supper," similar to the setting of John 17. Luke's passage promises a future change for the ones who remain faithful to Jesus, and for the restoration of Simon Peter:

You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers. *Lk 22:28-32*

Luke's passage is evidence that Jesus does, in fact, pray for his disciples and the strengthening of their faith. In addition, Luke includes Jesus' words concerning the deeds of Judas Iscariot (who is also left unnamed) in 22:22: "but woe to that man who betrays him." Additionally, and expressed very simply in Mark 14:27, Jesus knows that his disciples will fail him: "You will all fall away." Peter and the others declare their loyalty (Mark 14:31), but they are unable to stay awake with Jesus in Gethsemane. Typical of Mark's depiction of the disciples, these characters are not men Jesus could count on in his time of trials, and they need a renewal to bolster their feeble faith.

Thus, with the exception of “the betrayer,” the disciples of Jesus are regarded as realized and redeemed in John 17 even before the passion events challenge their faith. Most important for this thesis is that the readers can identify with the struggling characters who are not belittled by Jesus for their frail faith. Despite a rocky start, the disciples successfully take Jesus’ message into an unbelieving world and assume positions of servant leadership. The change in the characterization of the disciples and their positive assessment in John 17 is an encouragement for the readers to respond in a positive manner with a continuing belief in Jesus as the Christ.

The characterization of the Father and the Son as presented in chapter 17 is important to the theology and the Christology presented by the author of the Gospel. In addition, it is also important to Johannine anthropology. The representative characters speak to the readers about their own faith and position “in Christ” (17:23). It is possible for the readers to recall the despair and unbelief of the Isaiaic quotations in Jn 12:38-41, and then see the prophet’s promised redemption fulfilled in the natures of the Father and the Son in chapter 17.

Challenge to Future Believers

At last, the future believers (17:20-26) are not strictly literary characters who appear in the narrative; they are neither given a name nor assigned a role to play in the narrative story. The author’s reference to them as “those who will believe in me through their message” (v. 20) is as general as “those whom you gave me out of the world” (v. 6). They are a mass of countless people who “believe in me [Jesus] because of their [the disciples’] message,” over years of time and a world of space. Yet they are significant

because they are united with the earliest disciples and with each other as a consequence of their willingness to accept the words of Jesus (17:21, 8).

They are noteworthy because the author intended for the reader to see himself or herself in these verses. The future believers are counted among “those whom you gave me out of the world” (17:6), who belong to God, have “obeyed” and “accepted” his word (vv. 6, 8). They are the beneficiaries of all the promises given to the disciples in the final prayer (17:2, 6). The readers of John’s Gospel in an early Christian community could identify with the characters in the story, aware of the different responses that people can make to the words of Jesus. In the same way that the character of Jesus spoke to the disciples in his Farewell Discourses, so the author of the text speaks to the readers. The future believers (readers) are assured that Jesus loves them (13:1; 14:21); the gift of the Paraclete is given to them (14:16-21; 16:7-11); they are united “in Christ,” just as the Father and Son are united (14:20; 17:23); they are his friends (15:12-15); they receive his glory (17:22); they are chosen to be a part of his mission and message (15:16; 17:18), and they are to obey and abide in him (14:21; 15:4).

Conclusion

On the one hand, the human characters are models or representations of human responses to Jesus, and the prayer acts heuristically to guide the readers’ proper response (in the view of the author) to the life and ministry of Jesus. The characters allow the reader to examine various alternatives of responses to Jesus. Through the narrative and discourses, the author has demonstrated by his use of characterization the correct and the incorrect responses to Jesus’ actions and speeches. For those reading the Gospel decades after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, John 17 is an assurance that a

belief in Jesus as the Christ is the proper response to truth given (14:6). The readers can observe, and can identify with, the uncertain disciples in the Farewell Discourses; they are aware of the disciples' positive position of faith and belief in chapter 17. The author of the prayer rhetorically leads the reader toward his own point of view: the believing followers have reproducible, sustaining faith, and are one with the Father and Son; those who are "lost" refuse to believe the words of the Son.

On the other hand, references to the divine characters, specifically Jesus and God, are used symbolically by the author of the Gospel. The titles "Son" and "Father" emphasize the intimate, familial relationship between Jesus and God. The unique titles of "Holy Father" and "Righteous Father" in John 17 bring to the mind of the reader the Isaianic "Holy One of Israel." The author combines the attributes of God with the concept of a "father" to present to the audience both the transcendence and the immanence of God. By identifying the Father with the "Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel," the reader can understand the acts of God through the Son for the benefit of his own people. Jesus, the Son, is the servant and agent of the Father who fulfils the saving mission of the Messiah promised by the prophet Isaiah (52:13-53:12).

The readers know Jesus better than the characters know Jesus in those dark hours before the crucifixion. To those people who believe in the message of the Fourth Gospel, the prayer offers the opportunity to know the Father and the Son more perfectly (17:3), to have the love of God in them (v. 26) and to have Christ "in them" (v. 26, with 14:20). In the reader's present time, the prayer is an assurance of the believer's position "in Christ" (17:21). It confirms that in the future, "those who believe in me through their message" will continue to be "sent out" (v. 18). Jesus has faith in *them* that they

will “testify” (15:27) and “bear fruit” (15:8). It confirms the promise that someday, all “those who believe” will be united in his presence to see his glory (17:24).

The art of characterization is one aspect of the literary process used by the author to present the positive and negative responses to the words and works of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel invites an interest not only in the individual characters presented, but in the groups of characters. The very human characters in the Gospel urge the readers to make the same decisions as the characters concerning the life and mission of Jesus. The readers face the very issues they present (e.g., good and evil, belief and unbelief, acceptance and rejection, uncertainty and commitment). With the exception of the speaker, the characters in the Farewell Discourses are portrayed as bewildered, questioning people, struggling with what they knew of the man Jesus. The readers, with the Gospel characters, may contemplate the same kinds of questions and misunderstandings. The proper response to Jesus is represented by the named and unnamed obedient disciples; the improper response is represented by the resistant Jewish leaders and the “betrayers.”

The prayer of chapter 17 centers on personal relationships rather than on material, earthly requests.⁹¹ It is “people oriented.” Through the characterization in the text, the readers are challenged to accept the words of Jesus, his message and his mission, and to continue on with a growing faith in him as the Son of God (17:8, 23). The Gospel author knows that it is imperfect human followers who must assume the task of continuing the mission of Jesus on the earth, and of making the Father and the Son

⁹¹ Matthew’s “Lord’s Prayer,” for example, petitions God for “daily bread” (6:11-13).

known to a sceptical, unbelieving world (17:26). Therefore, his emphasis in the Gospel is more on people (characters), and less on historical events.

The prayer of John 17 reaches people who would come after the characters in narrative time, those who would experience Jesus from a “second-hand” or “second generation” point of view (vv. 20-26). Knowledge of God and of Jesus, as opposed to rejection by the unreceptive world, is presented by the author by means of a sharp contrast in characterization. The final prayer was not spoken so that Jesus would be remembered by the characters; it was written so that he would be believed by the readers (20:31).

Chapter 2 Investigation of Structure and Setting

“For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.” *1 Cor.5:7*

Introduction

Thomas Brodie views structure as “the most basic literary feature.” The recognition of the author’s plan and design of a work as a whole and of its parts is critical to an understanding of the work itself. “The structure of a book is like the anatomy of a body; it gives a foundational sense of the work’s organization and contents.”¹ In agreement, Jeffrey Staley defines “structure” as “simply literary design; the order in which words, phrases and motifs appear in the text.”² To use a different metaphor, the elements of a literary structure are the most basic building blocks of the framework of a piece of literature.

Following a consideration of the characters in the Johannine farewell scene, this second chapter is an investigation of the structure of the Farewell Discourses and the structure of the prayer of John 17. The key questions we propose, then, include: what is the basic structure of the farewell discourses? How is this section of the Gospel organized? Is the final prayer a part of these discourses? If it is, is the prayer located in the correct position in the pericope? The discussions of structure and setting can help to answer questions concerning the present position of the prayer in the Gospel. Most important, what do the structures of the Farewell Discourses and the prayer communicate to the readers/hearers? Said another way, what is the author trying to

¹ Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John; A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 13.

² Jeffrey Staley, "The Structure of John's Prologue: Its Implications for the Gospel's Narrative Structure," *CBQ* 48, no. 2 (1986): 241-64.

convey to his readers by his purposeful design of chapters 13 through 17 and the climactic design of chapter 17?

In order to answer these questions, this chapter is composed of four parts. To open, we must look briefly at the proposed structure of the Fourth Gospel, with an understanding that the author had a clear plan in mind of how he intended to relate the entire story and message of Jesus to his audience. Part two is an investigation of the construction of the section commonly called the Farewell Discourses: chapters 13 through 17. A close analysis of the structures of the Gospel and the Farewell Discourses contribute to the primary goal of expressing why the prayer is positioned where it is within the entire narrative. In the third section, the structure of the prayer itself will be analyzed, with an eye on what is being communicated to the reader.

Part four is a consideration of an appropriate setting of the prayer that complements its structure. It is not the intent of this study, however, to harmonize the four Gospel narratives, or enter into the debate about the historicity of the exact community to whom the Gospel of John was written. Nevertheless, it is only after a proper analysis of the structure of the texts has been made that the reader can consider a plausible setting for John 17.

Part 1. Structure of Gospel

A. Two-part structure

The general consensus among scholars concerning the literary structure of the Fourth Gospel is that it possesses a two-part structure. Certainly the unity of the Gospel has come under question, yet the division of the text into a narrative section and a discourse section has been well accepted. The main body of the Gospel is divided into

two parts, roughly organized into the narrative section (1:19-12:50) and the discourse section (13:1-20:31). Most Johannine scholars recognize two additions to the main body of the text include the opening prologue (1:1-1:18) and the closing epilogue (chapter 21). More often than not, the main divisions of the Gospel are indicated based on the type of literature observed. The story of Jesus' life and ministry is narrative; extensive speeches are, of course, the discourse section. Although there have been numerous creative variations, this basic structure has been used, modified and revised by scholars.

A summary chart can briefly demonstrate the scholarly suggestions on the structure of the main story of the Fourth Gospel. With a few variations, it reveals the similar views of the two-part structure:³

Dividing the main body of the Gospel:

R. Bultmann (1950; 1971)	
Revelation of the <i>Doxa</i> (glory) to the world	chs. 2-12
Revelation of the <i>Doxa</i> before the community	chs. 13-20
C. H. Dodd (1953)	
The Book of Signs	chs. 2-12
The Book of the Passion	chs. 13-20
R. Brown (1966)	
The Book of Signs	1:19-ch.12
The Book of Glory	chs. 13-20
Raymond Brown's outline blends the distinctive emphases of Bultmann ("glory") and Dodd ("signs").	
J. C. Fenton (1970)	
Ministry of Jesus	chs. 1-12
Account of supper, passion and resurrection	chs. 13-21
U. Schnelle (1994)	
The ministry of the revealer	1:19-12:50

³ See Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, 22.

Jesus' revelation to his own 13:1-20:29

Schnelle adapts Bultmann's description of Jesus as the "concealed revealer."

A. Lincoln (1994)

Jesus' public ministry 1:19-12:50

Departure from this world 13:1-20:31

Lincoln varies his titles, but not his main structural divisions in his newer commentary of 2005:

Jesus' public mission (signs of glory) 1:19-12:50

Jesus' farewell, passion, resurrection (departure as glory) 13:1-20:31

J. Painter (1997)

Public Ministry of Jesus 1:19-12:50

Farewell of the Messiah 13:1-17:26

Passion and Resurrection Narratives 18:1-20:29

A. Köstenberger (2004)

Prologue 1:1-1:18

The Book of Signs: the signs of the Messiah 1:19-12:50

The Book of Glory: Jesus' preparation of the new
messianic community and his passion 13:1-20:31

Epilogue 21:1-25

This summation shows an agreement of opinion concerning the two-part theory, even if the section titles may differ. Scholars have observed the difficulty in making a sharp distinction between a "narrative" and a "discourse" section in the Gospel, as there is discourse material in the narrative sections, and narrative material in the discourse sections.⁴ Fenton, for example, observes a common pattern of both narrative and discourse found in chapters 1-12: "narrative material first, followed by conversation; the narratives describe the signs Jesus did; the conversations introduce the discourses of

⁴ D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 103.

Jesus.”⁵ More recent scholars such as Schnelle and Lincoln have renamed the two sections to allow for the cross-over of both narrative and discourse material.

As Lincoln and Köstenberger indicate, there is a distinct marker at the beginning of chapter 13 (v. 1) that introduces a new literary section. Chapter 12 closes the “public” ministry of Jesus, with the two warning passages from the prophet Isaiah, and the signs of unbelief among some of the people (12:37, 42-43). Chapter 13 opens a time of “private” ministry for Jesus with his followers. Further, C. Williams has convincingly shown that specific quotations from the prophet Isaiah (1:23 and 12:38-41) are employed by the author of John to “frame” the beginning and the close of Jesus’ public ministry (that is, the first half of the Gospel).⁶ Thus, the prayer of John 17 is found within the second half of the Gospel, in the discourse material that focuses on Jesus’ promises and instructions to a more intimate audience. Such an audience appears to be more open to his revelations than the general audience of people in chapters 2-12.

Hence, for the purposes of this thesis, the structure of the Fourth Gospel is best illustrated as follows:

Section A (1:1-1:18) Prologue. The Prologue appears to be a “mini-structure” of the entire Gospel.⁷ Given to the reader as an introduction, the Prologue is the author’s recounting of the plan of God for the purpose and person of Jesus and the divine plan for those who receive him.

⁵ J. C. Fenton, *The Gospel According to John* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 18.

⁶ Catrin H. Williams, "Isaiah in John's Gospel," in *Isaiah in the New Testament* (ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken; London: T & T Clark International [Continuum], 2005), 102.

⁷ See C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism* (trans. D. M. Smith; London: SPCK, 1975), 126.

Section B (1:19-12:50) Jesus' Public Ministry and Mission. The first major section of the Gospel is the “public” ministry of Jesus on earth, including the testimonies of others (1:29-34), the calling of his first followers (1:35-51), and his “signs” (e.g., 2:11; 4:48-54), instructional discourses (e.g., 5:19-47), and the prediction of his death (12:23-36).

Section C (13:1-20:31) Jesus' Private Farewell and Completed Mission. In the second major section of the Gospel, Jesus withdraws from “public” life to give “private” instruction to his closest followers, and to complete his mission on earth. The revelations of his identity and purpose are deepened for those people who are able to receive his words.

Section D (21:1-25) Epilogue. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully analyze the final chapter of John's Gospel, we can say that in terms of structure, chapter 21 is a literary epilogue to the Gospel, much like chapter 1 is a prologue. It is noteworthy, however, to observe that the inclusion of this epilogue is for the benefit and encouragement of the readers (21:24-25), demonstrating that it is not out of the question for the author of John's Gospel to summarize for his reading (or listening) audience.

Consequently, it is within the second half of the Gospel (Section C), that we find the critical events and speeches called the Farewell Discourses. Further, it is within the structure of the Farewell Discourses that we find the final prayer of Jesus. Therefore, we can now examine more closely the structure of the Farewell Discourses.

Part 2. Structure of the Farewell Discourses

The complete farewell scene is a unified composite of material, constructed by the author to include the foot-washing scene, the betrayal prediction, three connecting

farewell discourses spoken by Jesus, and his final prayer. However, the unity and composition of John 13-17 is problematic. The boundaries and sub-sections are confusing; even the titles given to the section vary from scholar to scholar. That portion of the text from 13:1 through 17:26 is more discourse material than story events, yet there are important narrative events. The movement of the story from Judas' betrayal in 13:31 to the scene in the Kidron Valley in 18:1 is natural and expected, so the lengthy discourses from 13:31 through 17:26 appear to be extraneous to the narrative. Questions concerning the structure of Jesus' Farewell Discourses are not new. Are there multiple speeches in the section, and if so, where do they start and stop? There are sudden breaks in the discourse, and unexpected changes in topics. How do we rectify the literary problems, and how does it all fit together? Ultimately, how does chapter 17 fit into the whole scheme of the section?

When NT scholars began to divide the Fourth Gospel into various sections based on possible sources or forms, difficult "literary seams" (*aporia*), or abrupt changes in the text, were observed.⁸ The abrupt shifts in content created disagreements over the structure of the Farewell Discourses, including the sudden presence of a prayer in John 17. Can an understanding of the structure of chapters 13 through 17 dismiss the numerous hypotheses of independent puzzle pieces, loosely connected, and lend support to the unity of the entire Farewell Scene? How does the structure of the chapters 13-17 aid in our understanding of the presence and the position of the final prayer?

From the perspective of earlier exegetes, this section is basically a series of speeches presented by Jesus to his disciples in preparation for his imminent death and

⁸ Kellum, *The Unity of the Farewell Discourse*, 52-54.

resurrection.⁹ Strachan's outline of "The Farewell Discourses" is topical; he therefore rearranged blocks of text so they would connect topically.¹⁰ M.E. Boismard argues that the discourses in chapters 14 and 16 are close parallels, while R. Brown considers 13:31-14:31 and 16:4-33 as "duplicate discourses."¹¹ Concerned mainly with source analysis, Macgregor and Morton admitted "there is no rearrangement of the material of the Farewell Discourse [that] is wholly satisfactory."¹² They could only surmise that chapters 14, 15 and 16 are totally independent units of "teaching tradition," or even two redactions of the same material, which have been combined "with the same influence and the same tendency."¹³ Variant oral forms of the same traditions may have existed in the first-century Christian communities, and they may have been combined and edited in the final form of the Fourth Gospel.¹⁴ Therefore, did John 17 exist independently in early church tradition, and was it simply added to the other forms of discourse material as a summation?

This cursory review of scholarly opinions suggests that the prayer of John 17 is often curiously set aside from the other speeches, or easily overlooked. Scholars tend to analyze the apparent textual seams and possible theological seams between chapters 13 and 16, and the prayer has been disconnected from the other discourses of Jesus altogether. It is my contention that the prayer is firmly connected to the preceding four

⁹ Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 399.

¹⁰ Strachan begins with 15:1-27, then 16:1-15, 16:16-33, 13:31b-14:24, 14:25-31; chapter 17 is separated from the farewell discourses, simply labelled "The Prayer of the Great High Priest." Robert Harvey Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel; its Significance and Environment* (Edinburgh; London: Turnbull & Spears, 1917), 58.

¹¹ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 623.

¹² G.H.C. and A.Q. Morton Macgregor, *The Structure of the Fourth Gospel* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), 70.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁴ Lieu, "How John Writes," 181.

chapters. This study argues for a unified section; for the sake of simplicity, I have entitled the whole pericope (chapters 13 through 17) the “Farewell Discourses.” Thus, before we can fully understand the position and structure of chapter 17, it is necessary to analyze the structure of the four chapters that precede it.

A. Disjointed Scene

The puzzling difficulty with the words of Jesus in 14:30-31b is illustrative. Jesus tells his disciples, “I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming” (14:30). He then gives the instructions, “Come now, let us leave” (14:31b), obviously putting an end to his discourse. Yet suddenly and immediately, chapter 15 opens with more words from Jesus on an unrelated topic, and he continues to speak to his disciples for a good deal longer. Reading further, the change of scene at 18:1 indicates that it should, in real narrative time, follow Jesus’ words in 14:31b. This thorny *aporia* created such a problem for R. Bultmann that he completely restructured the section, placing the prayer of John 17 after 13:31.¹⁵ Bultmann concluded that in their present positions, chapters 15-17 are “secondary insertions and not in the right place.”¹⁶

The investigation of F. F. Segovia into the awkward structural problems associated with these five chapters is commendable. Significantly, he changed his mind over the course of time and over the course of his investigation. In his search for “the original farewell discourse,” he realized that the many possible redactional stages of

¹⁵ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary* (trans. R.W. N. Hoare, G.R. Beasley-Murray, J. K. Riches; Philadelphia: Westminster 1971), 459-61. See also, Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 348-51.

¹⁶ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 459.

these chapters make an analysis of the discourses increasingly more complicated. In 1983, he suggested that “only a theory of multiple discourses should be considered viable,” and the pericope of 15:18-16:4a “is the first addition to the original Farewell Discourse.” There are three noticeable *aporias*, or “major literary seams” in the Farewell Discourses that must be explained: 14:31b, 16:4b and 16:33.¹⁷ Two years later, he concluded that 13:31-14:31 is certainly “the first discourse.”¹⁸ When he established the “original” discourse (that is, 13:31-14:31) as a complete unit, then he surmised that 13:34-35 must be a later addition to the text. The abrupt “love commandment” in these verses is an interruption in the flow of the dialogue from 13:31 to 38 which is concerned with where Jesus is going. Later editorial additions to the farewell discourses include the beginning of chapter 15, the remainder of 16 and all of chapter 17.¹⁹

Segovia recognized numerous scholarly solutions for explaining the patchwork, “problematic chapters 15-17.” At first, he outlines four scholarly positions; later he increases that number to six: “the historicizing, transpositional, redactional, symbolic (or “softening”), unfinished and compositional approaches.”²⁰ While each of these proposed solutions is not fully adequate, Segovia is certain that the structure of the Farewell Discourses shows evidence of extensive stages of editing.

Segovia continued to pursue “the line resolution” to account for the “major literary seams” in the farewell discourses.²¹ However, he no longer sees the text as

¹⁷ F. F. Segovia, “John 15:18-16:4a: A First Addition to the Original Farewell Discourse?,” *CBQ* 45, no. 4 (1983): 210-30.

¹⁸ F. F. Segovia, “The Structure, *Tendenz* and *Sitz im Leben* of John 13:31-14:31,” 104/3 (1985): 471-93.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 481.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 26. See also, Segovia, *CBQ*, 211.

²¹ F. F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word; a Johannine Call to Abide* (Minneapolis: Augsburg 1991), 28.

“confused and displaced,” but rather “reflecting a process of composition” or a “process of growth which resulted in the present shape of the farewell discourse.”²² While he now concludes that there is only one farewell discourse, he sees distinctive units therein: “the original farewell of 13:31-14:31, continuing with two additional farewells of 15:1-16:4a and 16:4b-33, and concluding with the prayer of chapter 17.”²³ Thus, in spite of what he regards as “compositional difficulties,” Segovia unites the preceding four chapters with the prayer:

John 13-17 is a coherent and self-contained narrative section of the Gospel as well as a clear example of a farewell type-scene in which three smaller narrative units can be distinguished: 13:1-20; 13:21-30 and 13:31-17:26.²⁴

Moreover, Segovia reviews other scholars who have proposed options for the purpose of the discourses: for the comfort of the disciples, an attempt to show Jesus’ death is not final, a legacy for the disciples, a promise of love, and union in separation, or any combination thereof. All the options presented focus on the disciples, not the readers of the Gospel. Therefore, his evaluation of the purpose of the farewell discourse is also questionable.²⁵ On the one hand, the structure of the farewell discourse is directly related to the reassurance of Jesus’ immediate disciples. Segovia’s redactional approach illustrates that the speeches are provided for the small band of men who were about to face the departure of Jesus from this world. He concludes that the whole

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 36.

²⁴ Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, 20.

²⁵ Ibid., 473.

pericope is a “farewell type-scene,” and therefore is addressed primarily to the disciples.²⁶

On the other hand, Segovia observes that the purpose of the editing of these chapters is to encourage the community of believers to whom the author was writing. He contends that the community was “deeply troubled by Jesus’ departure” and it was in need of comfort in the form of the continued presence of Jesus in their midst.²⁷ We do not know how Segovia draws this conclusion about the first-century community, yet, based on this assumption he determines that the final editing of the discourses “shows four stages that introduce or resume a community question or problem, which then receives a much more detailed and definitive solution in the subsequent phase.”²⁸

Segovia’s consideration of the intended audience (“the community”) is worthy, but his proposed stages of the redaction process are tentative at best. While recognizing the unity of the discourses as a whole, he then seeks to understand “the main strategic concerns and aims present within each unit of discourse as Jesus bids farewell to his disciples.”²⁹ This is problematic: he gives small consideration to the readers, and makes assumptions about John’s intended audience (“the community”) that are difficult to prove from the Gospel text itself. Finally, his theory of redactional stages neither contributes to a clear, coherent design of the five chapters, nor to our understanding of the purpose of the discourses for a hypothetical community.

Pattern of “Revelation-Question-Clarification”

²⁶ Ibid., 5-18. More will be said about the “farewell type-scene” in Chapter 4 of this study.

²⁷ Ibid., 42.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 56.

J. Reese presents another argument that does support the theory that the Farewell Discourses were written for the readers of the Gospel. He observes a dialogue structure between Jesus and one or more of his disciples (e.g., 13:31-36). He sees three structural elements that are present in each of these exchanges:

- a) a revelation by Jesus;
- b) a question by someone who does not understand; this gives an opportunity for further elucidation;
- c) a response by Jesus is given to clarify his original revelation.³⁰

Reese's threefold "revelation-question-clarification" pattern is not unique to these discourses, as the pattern also appears in the narrative sections of the Gospel (e.g. 8:31-59). The pattern found in chapter 8 can be compared to that of sections in chapters 14 and 16. Along the same lines as Segovia, he contends that the dialogue structural pattern is used by the author to inform his readers concerning "the paradox of the departure of Jesus:" Jesus is leaving, yet he still remains with his followers.³¹

We do not know, however, that such a paradox was a problem within the early Christian community. It may be an attempt to synthesize 13:33 with 14:18 for the reader. Further, Reese's pattern is flawed in the Farewell Discourses. Such a pattern is interrupted by the addition of the "vine discourse and its supplement (15:1-16:4)."³² Numerous "isolated sayings" have been inserted within the pattern, thus partly obscuring its progression. The command to "love one another" (13:34-35, see Segovia, above) and two sayings on prayer (14:13 and 16:23b-24) are interruptions in the given pattern. It may be present in other sections of the Gospel, but the pattern does not completely

³⁰ James M. Reese, "Literary Structure of Jn 13:31-14:31; 16:5-6, 16-33," *CBQ* 34, no. 3 (1972): 321-31.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 322.

³² *Ibid.*, 323.

satisfy the search for a reasonable structure of the farewell discourse material. Finally, and most important for this study, chapter 17 does not enter into the dialogue pattern at all.

Judicial Motif

It is the judicial/advocate motif that unifies the Farewell Discourses for A. Lincoln. He recognizes just two discourses: the first is 13:31-14:31, and the second is 15:1-16:33.³³ The extended metaphor of a trial or lawsuit on a cosmic scale is the most distinctive characteristic which holds many of the elements of the plot and the discourse material together. In the first discourse, the trial motif occurs in the references to the Paraclete or “Advocate” in 14:16, 26. At the heart of the second discourse, the “Advocate” is seen with reference to assisting the disciples in 15:26, 27, and 16:7-11.³⁴ Nevertheless, this motif is not satisfactory in showing why a prayer appears at the end of the discourse material. The prayer seems extraneous and out of place in the trial/courtroom structure.

B. Unified Scene

While recognizing various parts that make up a whole, this investigation maintains that John 13-17 is a unified passage of events and discourses that is summarized and concluded by a significant prayer. This scene is unified by various literary devices, but most importantly, by structure. The explanations and instructions Jesus gives (13:31-16:33) are granted to those that he loves (13:1) because he loves them; further, the prayer (chapter 17) is connected to the previous four chapters because

³³ Lincoln, "Trials, Plots and the Narrative of the Fourth Gospel."

³⁴ Ibid.

it is words of confidence, assurance and explanation to those he loves, because he loves them (17:26). The unity of chapters 13 through 17 allows for the foot-washing incident and the prayer to be connected to the other speeches based on genre, theme, content and structure.³⁵

Dramatic Interlude

Jo-Ann Brant raises another structural consideration that is from the area of drama. As in a dramatic production, the *scenes* are divided by “a change of place, or by the entry or exit of any important character.”³⁶ Chapter 13 opens with a new, specific time and place (“just before the Passover Feast,”), and with Jesus’ professed love for his own (13:1). The change of scene from 12:50 to 13:1 includes a distinct change of location, of characters and of content. The same is true of the change of scene from 17:26 to 18:1. From the events of chapter 13 through the prayer of chapter 17, there is no change of location or characters.³⁷ Thus, in a dramatic way, the inclusion of the foot-washing episode and the prayer (chapters 13 and 17) add to the unity and purpose of the entire pericope.

These five chapters are an intentional literary “interruption” of the entire chronological drama, or story, of the life of Jesus. The dramatic literary interlude appears to be designed for a purpose, and it is positioned where it is for two reasons. First, there is a change of focus from the crowds and the people in Jesus’ public ministry to a focus on the small group of his closest followers. At the end of chapter 12, Jesus

³⁵ In further chapters, it will become apparent that chapters 13-17 are united in genre and form as a “testament” of Jesus.

³⁶ Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 27.

³⁷ This is true if we do *not* consider 14:31b to be a change of location. See discussion below.

speaks about human rejection and unbelief (12:44-48). Immediately following, he speaks privately with “his own” who do believe (13:1). Jesus never again speaks boldly to crowds of people after chapter 12. Second, since Jesus says that it is the Father who commands him “what to say and how to say it” (12:49) the reader can be assured that the following discourses beginning in 13:1 about “eternal life” (12:50) are from the Father through the words of the Son. The Farewell Discourses, then, are an extraordinary preparation for the death that will be experienced in chapters 18-20.

The Last Discourse

In 1975, John Boyle argued for the unity of just one “last discourse (Jn 13:31-16:33) and prayer (Jn 17)” based on “the nature of the covenant bond” that unites the disciples with Jesus and with each other.³⁸ For Boyle, Jesus’ speeches are directed toward his band of disciples, who face the departure of Jesus, rather than the readers. According to Boyle, the first half of the discourse addresses the problems the disciples will face in Jesus’ absence; in the second half, Jesus addresses their relationship to the world and to persecution.³⁹ He observes a similar structure for the prayer itself, which enters our discussion below. Boyle neglects to consider how the reader would read the discourses, or how John 17 is closely connected to the speeches.

Farewell Cycle

L. Scott Kellum argues for a unified “Farewell Discourse,” identified as the speeches of Jesus in 13:31 to 16:33. By “unified,” Kellum means that this section was

³⁸ John L. Boyle, “The Last Discourse (Jn 13,31-16,33) and Prayer (Jn 17): Some Observations on their Unity and Development,” *Bib* 56 (1975): 210-22.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

written “by one author at generally one point in time.”⁴⁰ He does not discount editing and revision stages, but posits that 13:31-16:33 is one project executed by the author of the Gospel, and not the work of a compiler/editor. He appropriately uses three internal literary elements to demonstrate a unity of the speeches: “style, structure, and procedure.” If the foot-washing episode of 13:1-13:30 and the prayer of 17:1-26 are “attached” to the actual farewell speeches of Jesus, Kellum can then call the entity a “farewell cycle.”⁴¹ Although he sees a unity of the speeches, he separates the prayer from the speeches unnecessarily.

Where Kellum regards the *aporia* of 14:31b as the “slowing down of the discourse before the peak,” in the complete view, it is more a literary conclusion to the first of three distinguishable speeches.⁴² Thus, based on similar internal literary features, the deduction is that 13:31-16:33 is a composite of three speeches artfully joined together by the Gospel author (13:31-14:31; 15:1-16:4 and 16:5-16:33) for the purpose of instructing and edifying both the earliest disciples of Jesus and the intended readers of the Gospel. While the 14:31b *aporia* has bothered many scholars in the past because the reader is presented with a potential change of space, Kellum helpfully offers the suggestion that it primarily serves as a literary conclusion to the first discourse.⁴³ Yet his proposal leaves the prayer disconnected from the preceding chapters of discourse.

⁴⁰ Kellum, *The Unity of the Farewell Discourses*, 2.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 238. Further, the remark in 14:31b may be a literary conclusion to the meal itself, since the Passover meal was to be completed by midnight, and we are told that it was already “night” in 13:30. Yet conversation could continue after the meal was completed. See Cleon L. Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III Rogers, *New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1998), 217.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

The two actions of chapter 13 are striking literary contrasts. The foot-washing event is an outward expression of Jesus' love for "his own" (13:1), while Judas' act is one of betrayal of his master (13:21). This is a visible clash of belief and unbelief (see parallel passages in 12:44 and 13:20). It is only after the exit of the betrayer that Jesus can begin his first discourse about reciprocal love (13:31, 34-35). The discourses of Jesus (13:31 through 16:33) are presented by the Gospel author in the mode of direct speeches, dialogues and monologues. The first speech of Jesus (13:31-14:31) is a dialogue between the named disciples and Jesus. It is a speech of comfort for his disciples who are about to experience his physical departure from the earth ("my children," 13:33). In a state of confusion and misunderstandings, the disciples are troubled about Jesus' departure from them.

The second discourse (15:1-16:4) is strictly a monologue by Jesus, without any interruptions from the disciples. It is a contrast of love and hate. Both the Father and the Son love his human followers (15:9-10); yet the world hates his followers because of their belief in Jesus (15:18-21). Some themes in this discourse expand or explain themes in the previous discourse: the followers of Jesus are commanded to love (13:34-35 and 15:9-17), yet there will be a negative reaction from the world to those who do believe (14:17; 15:18-19). The ones who love Jesus obey him and abide in him (see 14:23-24). In sharp contrast, the ones who love Jesus experience the hatred of "the world," including persecution and exclusion from the synagogue (16:2). Again, this monologue appears to be aimed at the earliest disciples, edifying, instructing and warning them; yet this discourse speaks to the believing readers of the Gospel in a similar fashion. It

concludes with a directive from Jesus for his earliest followers to testify about him to others.

The third discourse (16:5-33) repeats Jesus' certain departure, but assures his followers that it is beneficial for him to depart from this earth and return to the Father. Certain belief in Jesus as the Christ is paramount, but belief is not without a cost. The disciples interrupt Jesus during this final speech, first with questions (16:17-19), and then with greater understanding (16:29-30). It is worth noting that this third speech on the benefits of Jesus' departure leads immediately into the prayer of chapter 17, which has similar themes concerning the benefits granted to those who do believe (16:31).

In these three discourses, Jesus reveals his person, his purpose, and his plans for those who believe in him. Presented by the author as instruction and encouragement for the first disciples, the final discourses of Jesus are his final words to the readers of the Gospel as well. The readers can learn from the questions and confusion of the disciples. They are able to gain assurance and understanding through the exhortations of Jesus directed at his immediate followers. The promissory discourses are summarized in the prayer of chapter 17, which encapsulates the words and actions of chapters 13-16. It summarizes who Jesus is, his mission and his plans for those who do believe, as well as the consequences for those who do not believe.

Chiasms and Parallelism patterns

The proposed unity of John 13-17 is sustained by literary chiastic and parallel patterns. During a time when it was popular in biblical scholarship to view chiastic and parallel structures, Y. Simoens composed a monograph that made the chiasm the "king" of the literary structures. He proposed a chiastic structure of John 17 that was parallel to

the chiasmic structure of chapters 13 through 17. In his charts and diagrams, he attempts to show literary parallelisms between what he calls “*d’inclusion*” passages (“*the première unité*,” e.g. an introduction and a conclusion), the middle units (“*la deuxième unité*”), and “*la troisième unité du centre*.”⁴⁴ That is to say, each chapter is set up as a chiasm, within the chiasmic structure of the whole unit (chapters 13-17). In this way, he demonstrates the tight unity of “*la discours*,” tracks the repetition of themes such as “*l’agapè, joie et gloire*” and makes parallel connections that may not be obvious in the text.⁴⁵ Indeed, Simoens’ structure is more than a little confusing, noticeably contrived, and it is still unclear how the last two verses of John 17 (24-26) are to be considered parallel to the entire seventeenth chapter.⁴⁶

However, the chiasm concept is not without merit. A more simplistic approach is taken by Wayne Brouwer, who put together these five chapters into a chiasmic structure. His particular structure is valuable because it accounts for all of Jesus’ actions and words, the sudden changes in topics, and the connections between seemingly unrelated topics:⁴⁷

The Farewell Scene - Chapters 13 through 17

- | | |
|--|----------|
| A. Gathering scene (unity with Jesus expressed in mutual love) | 13:1-35 |
| B. Prediction of the disciple’s denial | 13:36-38 |
| C. Jesus’ departure tempered by assurance of | |

⁴⁴ Yves Simoens, *La gloire d’aimer: Structures stylistiques et interprétives dans le Discours de la Cène (Jn 13-17)* (vol. 90; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1981), 186.

⁴⁵ Ibid. See, for example, p. 72, 77.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 204.

⁴⁷ Wayne Brouwer, *The Literary Development of John 13-17; A Chiasmic Reading* (ed. Saul Olyan and Mark Powell; vol. 182; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 9-11. See also Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*, 895. On chiasm, see Charles H. Talbert, “Artistry and Theology: An Analysis of the Architecture of Jn 1,19 - 5,47,” *CBQ* 32 (1970): 341-66. Further, see Craig Blomberg, “The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1-7,” *Criswell Theological Review* 4 (1989): 3-20. On parallelism, see Black, “On the Style and Significance.”

	Father's power	14:1-14
D.	Promise of the Holy Spirit	14:15-26
E.	Troubling encounter with the world	14:27-31
F.	The vine and branches teaching, producing community of mutual love	15:1-17
E1	Troubling encounter with the world	15:18-16:4a
D1	The promise of the Holy Spirit	16:4b-15
C1	Jesus' departure tempered by assurance of the Father's power	16:16-28
B1	Prediction of disciples' denial	16:29-33
A1	Departing prayer (unity with Jesus expressed in mutual love)	17:1-26

The chiasmic structure shows parallel themes as well as the framing and centering of the discourse material. Like Simoens, Brouwer's structure highlights the theme of love with "joy" at the center (15:11). In addition, "joy" is at the center of the prayer (17:13). More important, in view of the "bigger picture," the chiasmic structure of chapters 13-17 punctuates the importance of the position of the prayer within the entire scene. Brouwer and Simoens can agree that chapter 17 not only serves as an *inclusio* with the meal scene of chapter 13, but it summarizes the content of the discourses in chapters 13 through 16. Brouwer's balanced structure of parallels unifies the scene literarily, connecting the promises and predictions of Jesus.

Numerous examples of the parallel structure within the Farewell Discourses support Brouwer's chiasm. As a primary example, the important theme of love in 13:1 reappears in 17:26. Jesus' unreserved love for his followers, both the disciples and the readers, is seen in 13:1, 15:9-15 and 17:26. Further, the prompting of the devil in 13:2 and 27 compares to the one "doomed to destruction" and the "protection from evil" in

17:12 and 15. The glory of the Father and the Son introduced in 13:31-32 is explained in 17:1-5. The disciples, followed by the readers and all “those who will believe” (17:20), are gathered into “his own” (13:1 and 17:10).

The use of chiasms, parallelisms and balance is not unusual in the Fourth Gospel. Clifton Black suggests that the “essence of amplification lies in figures or conventional patterns of balance and repetition in thoughts and words.”⁴⁸ Emphasis, then, is made known by balanced structures. An example of the pattern of balance and repetition is seen in one small but significant portion of Jesus’ speeches:

A. On that day you will ask nothing of me. (16:23a)
B. Truly, truly I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. (16:23b)

A. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. (16:24a)
B. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete. (16:24b)

Antithesis is another structure used to pack strong emphasis in a very small space. It is the positioning of contrary ideas in a parallel structure:

I am asking on their behalf;
I am not asking on behalf of the world,
but on behalf of those whom you gave me,
because they are yours. (17:9)

Consequently, a chiastic reading of John 13-17 offers instruction, insight and encouragement to the reader while it emphasizes the most important themes of the section. It provides a visual recognition that the actions and multiple speeches of Jesus mirror each other and build upon each other “in a manner that allows the whole to

⁴⁸ C. Clifton Black, “The Words That You Gave to Me I have Given to Them:’ The Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville: Westminster John Knox 1996), 225.

become more than the sum of its parts.”⁴⁹ The actions as well as the monologues and dialogues of Jesus as presented are an assurance and an encouragement to the readers who are participants of the glory of the Son and the love of the Father (17:22).

To conclude at this point, the entire Farewell Discourses are a tightly constructed unit created by the writer of the Gospel of John so that the believing reader is informed, warned, encouraged and challenged. The themes and content are balanced and placed in a chiastic structure. To separate Jesus’ didactic speeches (see Chapter 3 of this study) from the foot-washing and betrayal events, or to place the final prayer in isolation from the discourses results in a disjointed, perplexing portion of the Gospel. To re-order the elements of this Farewell Discourse would cause unexplained repetitions and would lessen the impact of the totality. As Brouwer observed, the sum is greater than the parts. This leads us to an investigation of the structure of John 17, the summation of the Farewell Discourses and a conclusion to the words of Jesus.

Part 3. Structure of the Prayer

In the structure of the entire Gospel, the prayer of John 17 is a strategic element, holding a key position in the events and speeches that are associated with the final third Passover of Jesus in Jerusalem. The author has artistically and carefully constructed a prayer and placed it at the climactic moment in Jesus’ earthly ministry (“the hour has come,” 17:1). As we have seen, it is a summation and a climax to the discourses that immediately precede it.⁵⁰ Because it is so significant, we seek to answer questions about the prayer’s literary structure: how is it structured and what does the structure

⁴⁹ Brouwer, *The Literary Development of John 13-17*, 170.

⁵⁰ Käsemann regarded John 17 as a “counterpart to the prologue;” but in certain literary aspects, it is closer to chapter 13 than it is to chapter 1. Käsemann, *Testament*, 3. See discussion, below.

communicate to the readers of the prayer? The structure of the prayer appears (perhaps deceptively) to be easy to determine, yet because the “different motifs in the prayer are interwoven and cross-linked...they cannot be separated clearly.”⁵¹ A. Jensen believes that

...attempts to find a coherent outline in John 17 have shown that it is virtually impossible to achieve a consistent structure of this text without violating the text by too many literary-critical operations.⁵²

However, this study attempts “the impossible,” because the structure of the prayer is important in communicating something to the reader.

A. Three-part Structure

Scholars have observed various structures of the actual prayer itself, but the classic structure of the prayer has three distinct sections. While most interpreters can agree on three major divisions, the grounds for these divisions are arguable. The most common is a “petitionary” structure, where Jesus submits three petitions to his Father in prayer. Jesus prays for himself (vv. 1-8); he prays for his immediate disciples (vv. 9-19); and he prays for future believers, or the “church universal” (vv. 20-26).⁵³ Each of these three sections opens with a “marker,” or a distinctive verb. The first section opens with the verb *λαλέω* “to speak or tell” (v. 1); sections two and three begin with the verb

⁵¹ Alexander S. Jensen, *John's Gospel as Witness: The Development of the Early Christian Language of Faith* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), 120.

⁵² Ibid. See also Christian Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden: Eine Auslegung der johanneischen Abschiedreden* (WUNT; vol. 95; Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1997), 266-69.

⁵³ Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel; its Significance and Environment*, 198. This structure is so common to most commentaries on the Fourth Gospel, that it is not possible to list them all in this note.

ἑρωτάω “to ask, inquire” (vv. 9, 20).⁵⁴ Schnackenburg analyzes other clusters of words, including “glory” (δόξα), yet he arrives at three similar main divisions: vv. 1b-5; 6-23; 24-26.⁵⁵ Thus, the traditional key to organizing the prayer is to determine specifically for whom Jesus is praying. R. Brown adds the note that in Lev. 16:11-17, the high priest Aaron is to pray for himself, for his household or the priestly family, and for all the people; surely this three-part priestly division is one reason John 17 has been entitled the “High Priestly Prayer” of Jesus.⁵⁶

Further research has allowed expansions and additions to the petitionary structure. J. Becker detects a consistent pattern within the three-part structure. Briefly, he surmises that the main petition is found in the first two verses (“Glorify your Son”), and this petition is then further developed in four separate petitions (vv. 4-5, 6-13, 14-19, and 22-26). In each of these four sections, Becker observed a distinctive pattern: there is a statement about what Jesus has done; there is a preliminary statement that he is asking for something; the appeal itself is put before the Father; finally, Jesus gives the reason for the request.⁵⁷

With Becker’s expansion in mind, Brown observes some interesting similarities in all three petitionary units that demonstrate a careful construction by the author:

1. Each unit begins with what Jesus is asking or praying for (vv. 1, 9, 20).

⁵⁴ The verb ἑρωτάω is not the common word used for “to pray” or “to petition,” but is more “to ask a question.” Thus, the author of the prayer does not indicate that Jesus is “petitioning” his Father. Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (vol. 2 of 3 Vols; ed. Erich Beyreuther, Hans Bietenhard, Lothar Coenen; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 855-58; 79-81.

⁵⁵ Rudolf Schnackenburg, “Strukturanalyse von Joh 17,” *BZ* 17 (1973): 67-78; 196-202.

⁵⁶ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 750.

⁵⁷ Jürgen Becker, “Aufbau, Schichtung und theologiegeschichtliche Stellung des Gebetes in Johannes 17,” *ZNW* 60 (1969): 56-83.

2. Each unit has the theme of glory (vv. 1-5, 10, 22).
3. Each unit has an address to the Father part-way through the section (vv. 5, 11, 21).
4. Each unit mentions the men given to Jesus by the Father (vv. 2, 9, 24).
5. Each unit has the theme of Jesus' revelation of the Father to men (v. 6, "your name;" v. 14, "your word;" v. 26, "your name").⁵⁸

Brown is very thorough, and his observations about the structure are appealing, yet his comments seem to imply that the prayer was spoken only for the eleven disciples ("the men"), and not for the readers (or future believers). The three-part petitionary structure places too much emphasis on the different people for whom Jesus petitions: himself, his disciples, and future believers. The entire prayer speaks to all believers as well as to the first disciples. This is evident from v. 2 in the first section of the prayer:

*καθὼς ἔδωκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός,
ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ δώσει αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον*

Verse 2 refers to all humanity (*πάσης σαρκός*), and the word "all" (*πᾶν*) before "those you have given him" (*ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ*) indicates that *all* people who believe are given to Jesus and have eternal life. Similarly, verse 26 ("them," three times) refers to *all* the future believers, including the first disciples and the readers. Consequently, the line of distinction between the people mentioned in the three sections of the prayer becomes blurred. It is plausible that all those for whom Jesus is praying may include the first disciples and the readers. That is, the believing reader, as well as the disciples, are all "given" to Jesus; the revelation of the Father is not just to the disciples, but to all those who believe (v. 26). This inclusion is critically important to the reader of the prayer.

⁵⁸ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 750.

B. Other Suggested Structures

Inclusio with Prologue

Another alternative structure is suggested by T. Brodie and follows Käsemann in that the prayer is seen as a “variation of the prologue.”⁵⁹ In many respects, chapter 17 has similarities with chapter 1 of the Gospel, especially in terms of themes, vocabulary and content. Based on these similarities, Brodie makes the following comparison:⁶⁰

<i>Chapter 1</i>	<i>Chapter 17</i>
vv. 1-5 The beginning	1-5 The glory-based incarnation
vv. 6-13 The coming	6-19 The going away
vv. 14-18 The incarnation of the Word	20-26 The church, built on the Word

However, structurally, the prayer is a better *inclusio* with chapter 13, as discussed above. The prayer has more in common with Jesus’ final discourses than with the Prologue. While it remains beyond the focus of this study to analyze completely the relationship between the prayer and the Prologue, apparent differences are significant: the Prologue is silent on the unity and the reciprocal love of the Father, Son and believer; the prayer is silent on what it means to be “children of God” (1:12). Joy, found at the center of the Farewell Discourses and the prayer is absent in chapter 1. Suffice to say that Brodie has shown an interesting structural comparison, but it does not serve to be the best explanation of the structure of John 17.

Five, Three or Two Sections ?

The structural options continue, as Boyle views the final prayer as one unit, much like he does the one long farewell discourse. In his view, there is an introduction

⁵⁹ Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, 508.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 509. See also Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel; its Significance and Environment*, 67-72.

(17:1-3), a conclusion (17:24-26) and three parts in between (vv. 4-8; 9-19; 20-23).⁶¹

Again, Boyle notes that the first half of the prayer addresses the absence of Jesus, which is a problem for the disciples. The second half of the prayer addresses the problems of the world since the disciples are “not of the world” (v. 14).⁶² This is not unlike Talbert, who simply divides the prayer into two parts: 1) the unity of Jesus and the Father; and 2) the unity of Jesus and the disciples.⁶³ Once more, these structural divisions are created with an emphasis on the disciples as receivers of the prayer, leaving the position of the readers unclear.

Circular Structure

A unique approach is adapted by Jensen (borrowed from Dietzfelbinger), who suggests that the prayer consists of “four motif-‘circles’ which are situated around the central imperatives.” Yet the suggested circles “overlap and reoccur; they are not proper ‘sections,’ but loose-gatherings of thought around key motifs.”⁶⁴ The key to the structure of the prayer, then, is based on motifs presented by the author. Yet, Jensen contends that it is “virtually impossible to achieve a consistent structure of this text without violating the text by too many literary-critical operations.”⁶⁵ Hence, such a presentation of the structure of the prayer seems to be, in reality, no structure at all.

⁶¹ Boyle, "The Last Discourse." 220.

⁶² Ibid., 221.

⁶³ Talbert, "Artistry and Theology."

⁶⁴ Jensen, *John's Gospel as Witness*, 120. See also, Dietzfelbinger, *Der Abschied des Kommenden: Eine Auslegung der johanneischen Abschiedreden*.

⁶⁵ Jensen, *John's Gospel as Witness*, 120.

Discipleship

R. Chennattu emphasizes discipleship, connecting the prayer to the creation of a new “covenant community of God.”⁶⁶ She proposes a structure that emphasizes the covenantal and discipleship aspects of the prayer. Her study properly regards Jesus’ prayer for present and future disciples “together as a single unit.”⁶⁷ She proposes that the structure separates the glorification of Jesus in vv. 1-5 from the remainder of the prayer, which is given for the benefit of the immediate (in narrative time) and future disciples. Thus, verses 6 through 26 are structured around “three central requests” by Jesus, each followed by an explanation and expansion of the requests:

- 1) Keep (*τηρέω*) the disciples in God’s name (v. 11).
- 2) Consecrate (*ἀγιάζω*) the disciples in truth (v. 17).
- 3) May the disciples be one (v. 21).⁶⁸

These three requests are elements of the covenantal relationship between God and his own people. Her prayer structure is very appealing, especially if we deem the genre of the Farewell Discourses as a “testament.”⁶⁹ The prayer is unified by the elements of the covenant relationship, which is the motif that she believes is shown from the Passover meal in chapter 13, through the discourses of Jesus, and into the prayer of chapter 17. She concludes,

The evangelist used the OT covenant traditions and the Jesus material at hand in order to drive home what he wanted to say about discipleship. He attained this purpose by the careful

⁶⁶ Rekha M. Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship* (Peabody: Hendrickson 2006), 131.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Full treatment of this genre is in Chapter 4 of this study.

arrangement and modification of the Jesus material within the theological and structural framework of OT covenant renewals.⁷⁰

Chennattu supports the concept that both the second and third sections of the prayer are applicable to all the followers of Jesus. The structure of the prayer does lend itself to being a summary of “what it means to be disciples (followers) of Jesus in the world.”⁷¹ That is, Jesus’ disciples, past, present and future, are being sent, being sanctified, being kept and protected; they are loving each other and being loved in the unity of the Father and the Son. Discipleship themes and motifs are certainly present in the prayer, and are vital to the readers of the prayer. The prayer of Jesus on behalf of all of his followers grants people the opportunity to enter into a new covenantal relationship with the Father and the Son.

Chennattu’s discipleship structure helps to answer a key question about how the structure of the prayer informs or instructs the readers of the prayer. Granted, the traditional three-part petitionary structure of the prayer is widely accepted and certainly has merit; however, it distinctly divides the disciples and the readers. It does not directly address the readers as much as Chennattu’s suggested structure. Nevertheless, we may still question whether discipleship is the principal lesson taught by Jesus and presented to the readers in this prayer. It is necessary, therefore, to consider one more proposed structure of the prayer.

Eternal Life

Edward Malatesta helps bring attention to the readers’ point of view. He analyzes the prayer’s components and literary characteristics to discover its “striking

⁷⁰ Ibid., 136-137.

⁷¹ Ibid., 133.

simplicity” and its intended structure and purpose.⁷² Malatesta discovers in the prayer what he calls a “free rhythm,” of intentional stresses and divisions and strophes. His analysis is extremely comprehensive, exposing each phrase in detail, line by line, strophe by strophe.⁷³ What is of interest in Malatesta’s detailed five-part analysis of the prayer is the evidence of literary patterns (e.g., parallelism and the chiasm) employed by the author of the prayer. Such literary patterns emphasize those topics that the author presents to the reader. As a consequence, the prayer presents a clear picture of the full identity of Jesus, the full identity of those who believe in him, and the meaning of eternal life for the disciples and for the future believers. It highlights the shared mission of the people who are sent to continue the work of Jesus in the world. The intricate structure of the prayer, Malatesta concludes, indicates that *for the readers*, Jesus “departs from this world only to dwell more intimately in all who believe in him” (v. 26). “This communication of *eternal life* is the basis of the prayer, and the very purpose of the Fourth Gospel.”⁷⁴

Recognizing Malatesta’s emphasis on eternal life, I suggest a three-part structure of John 17 that is based on his conclusions, with some slight variations. The structure is based on what is revealed in each section of the prayer about eternal life, thus revealing that which is potentially granted to the person who believes. The structure of the prayer, therefore, illustrates that the promise of eternal life is beneficial to both the characters in the narrative (the disciples) and to the readers:

⁷² Edward Malatesta, “The Literary Structure of John 17,” *Bib* 52 (1971): 190-215.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 193-214.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 214 (my italics).

Structure of the final prayer of Jesus (17:1-26) (NIV)

1. Eternal glory and Eternal life (17:1-5)

“The hour” (or time) of Jesus’ glorification on earth arrives, and his work on earth is complete (vv. 1, 4). The reciprocal glory of the Father and the Son is made possible because the Son has completed the work the Father sent him to do (vv. 4-5). The consequence of the completion of the work of the Son is eternal life, given to all those who know the one true God and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, past, present and future (vv. 2, 3). Eternal life is granted to people by Jesus, who is the one who already has eternal life with the Father (17:5, 24).

2. Eternal life for the First Followers (17:6-19)

In a sense, the eternal life promised in the first section of the prayer is effective in the lives of the earliest disciples of Jesus, even if they do not fully recognize this until after the crucifixion, resurrection, and the coming of the promised Paraclete. Yet they belong to God (v. 6); they know and accept the words of Jesus (v. 8). The disciples are the “first generation” of believers who fulfil the “requirements” for eternal life in 17:3 (vv. 7-8). They bring glory to the Son; they are protected, kept and guarded by the Father and the Son (vv. 10-12). They will have complete joy in the midst of persecution from the world (vv. 13-14). Jesus can return to the Father because he has completed his mission and brought his word to a group of people who will continue his message in the world. The mission of the disciples is to be sanctified and be sent into the world, just as Jesus was set apart and sent (vv. 17-19). Thus, eternal life for the earliest followers meant knowing, obeying, and believing in the words and promises of the one who gives life (3:15; 4:14; 5:24-26; 6:40, 47, 54; 10:28; 11:25-26; 20:31). Jesus knows that later

they will have a better understanding of their mission and his promises (16:1, 4, 12, 19-28). It is an assurance to the readers that, as eyewitnesses to the words and events of the story of Jesus, their message is true (17:20).

3. Eternal life for all who believe (17:20-26)

The people who believe the message of the disciples also receive similar benefits because of their belief in Jesus (v. 20). Jesus' message and mission of giving eternal life to humanity continues. The readers of the prayer may not have experienced the words and works of Jesus firsthand, but they are still in unity with the earliest followers of Jesus because of their belief in the continuing testimony of believers. The "second generation" of believers receive the promise of being one with the Father and the Son, and this extraordinary unity of the Father, the Son and the believer is made visible on earth in the unity among human believers (vv. 21, 23). This unity of believers is a witness to the world of God's love (vv. 23, 26). For those who believe, eternal life is experiencing the promised love and unity with the Father and the Son. It is being a part of a faith community of believers who witness to the world of the love of the Father and the Son (15:27; 17:23, 26).

C. Analysis of Structure

In the traditional petitionary structured prayer, the middle section that includes promises for the disciples is the longest portion of the prayer. Many scholars limit this section to the direction and the benefit of only the eleven or twelve disciples. That portion of the prayer that is written for the benefit of the future believers is brief; only six verses are directed toward this group of people. Yet this imbalance does not affect the impact on the readers. We have seen how the word "all" in 17:2 prefaces the whole

prayer. “All those you have given him” (v. 2) includes the uncounted disciples in narrative time who believe in Jesus, and the future believers who are affected by their message (v. 20). If the “very purpose of the Fourth Gospel” (see Malatesta, above) is an explanation of eternal life, then the prayer is beneficial to all those who chose to accept, obey and believe the words of Jesus, both the earliest disciples and the later readers (17:6-8). In other words, the future believers, or the readers, are experiencing the benefits of eternal life as promised in both sections, vv. 6-19 and 20-26. Brown writes,

The prayer for the disciples in the second unit (vv. 9-19) also had in mind future Christians, since the disciples are symbols of what believers should be. Not only does Jesus foresee a community on earth confessing his name (vv. 21-23); he also yearns for the eschatological deliverance of that community so that its members will be with him in heaven (vv. 24-26).⁷⁵

Belief and Unbelief

Perhaps unknowingly, Von Wahlde sustains a structure emphasizing eternal life for John 17. His article shows a structural parallel between the discourse materials in John 6:30-59, 8:13-59, and 10:22-39. In these three exchanges, Jesus compares and contrasts the ones who believe in him to the ones who refuse to believe. For example, each of these sections begins with a demand for proof of who Jesus is (e.g., 6:30-31); next, Jesus tells them they already have seen/heard but do not believe (e.g., 6:36); third, Jesus gives the reason for their unbelief (e.g., 6:37). Fourth, Jesus speaks of the ones who do believe; fifth and most interesting, is that he says he does not lose any of those

⁷⁵ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 774.

that are his (e.g., 6:39). Finally, Jesus affirms that those who believe will have eternal life (e.g., 6:54).⁷⁶

Though Von Wahlde does not indicate that he recognizes the similarities, this structural pattern is repeated in the prayer of John 17. The similarities between the prayer and chapter 6 in particular are striking. To the readers, Jesus offers a) proof of who he is (17:1-3); b) he speaks concerning those who do believe (17:6-8) and how they have received in a positive way what he has given them; c) he gives a reason for the unbelief of others (17:9, those who remain in “the world”). Corresponding to Von Wahlde’s fourth and fifth points above, in John 17 Jesus says only one is “lost” (v. 12). Matching Von Wahlde’s sixth point, Jesus affirms that those who do believe will have eternal life (17:3, 24). The prayer reassures the readers concerning the true identity of the Son, and what is received by those who believe in his words. The structure of the prayer reiterates this “belief vs. unbelief” motif, and the prayer becomes a technique used by the author to emphasize the growing division between the people who accept the identity of Jesus as the Christ and those who do not. Bultmann calls this “a dualism of decision:” the reader of the Gospel is faced with a decision about life and death, light and dark, acceptance or rejection.⁷⁷ The reader, identifying with the earliest disciples, is faced with a choice to accept or reject the words and promises of Jesus.

Petitions or Promises

In addition to his *inclusio* analysis with the Prologue, Brodie has outlined a very complex structure of John 17 that consists of “a three-fold spiralling movement (vv. 1-5,

⁷⁶ Urban C. Von Wahlde, “Literary Structure and Theological Argument in Three Discourses with the Jews in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 103, no. 4 (December, 1984): 575-84.

⁷⁷ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 9.

6-19, 20-26).” Although his “spiralling effect” appears unnecessarily complicated, it is important to note that his divisions are not based on Jesus’ petitions. Brodie sees that the dominant theme of the prayer is the movement towards unity. This is supported by Brown’s comment that “this is more a prayer of union or communion...than it is a prayer of petition.”⁷⁸ The Gospel author has used the petitions as high-points (or peaks) in the construction of the prayer, but the foundation of the structure, for Brodie, is the “three-part spiralling movement towards the Father ...with the final union with God in vv. 24-26.”⁷⁹

Brodie calls John 17 the “Prayer of Holiness (Wholeness/Sanctification) and Unity,” based on 17:18; thus, he focuses on how the prayer is received rather than how it is worded.⁸⁰ The sanctification process of the ones believing in Jesus begins with the act of foot-washing in 13:10. It continues with the pruning or purifying metaphor in 15:1-17. The concept reaches its full development in chapter 17 where there is explicit emphasis on “holy” and “to make holy” (vv. 11, 17-19). Likewise, other themes in the Farewell Discourses, unity, love, asking and abiding become explicit in chapter 17. The highly beneficial gifts of sanctification, unity and love are fully granted to believers through both the Father and the Son, as promised in the final prayer of Jesus. The disciples were first to receive these gifts, following the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the same benefits have had far-reaching effects over centuries of future believers. Thus, eternal life is given to all the ones who know and believe the words of the Son, whom the Father sent (17:3, 26).

⁷⁸ Ibid., 748.

⁷⁹ Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, 508.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 505.

Peak Position

In my view, the peaks of the prayer move the reader through the definition and benefits of the gift of eternal life, a gift from Jesus to his first disciples, and from the disciples to the future believers (the readers). Further, the prayer moves the reader toward a decision to become a part of that which the Son “made known” to all (17:26). It is necessary to expand the concept of the peak positions of the observable petitions in John 17. As noted above, Jesus opens the prayer by speaking a request for glory from the Father (v. 1), which, in reality, he has had since the beginning of the world (vv. 5, 24). Next, he asks “not for the world,” but that some other group of people (“those whom you gave me out of the world,” v. 6) be protected (vv. 9, 11, 15), sanctified (v. 17) and sent into the world (v. 18). Both the earliest disciples and the future believers fit this category of people. Following, he asks the Father for unity of all believers (vv. 20-21). In view of his life and ministry, it seems very unlikely that Jesus would address the Father in a long, public petitionary prayer for his own benefit. For this reason, most research has designated his eleven disciples as the beneficiaries of the prayer of John 17 (except for a few verses at the end). Yet the structure of the prayer, highlighting the gift of “eternal life” benefits all believers, shifts the recipients of the promises from only the first disciples to all those who believe. Thus, the petitions of Jesus are literary “peaks” in the structure of the prayer and promises to the readers.

John 17 is placed in a “peak” position within the Gospel, strategically placed at the end of the Farewell Discourses. As his life leads towards his death, the mission of

Jesus, his signs, works, and spoken words lead towards the pinnacle of the prayer.⁸¹ After his departure, his mission is continued on in the lives of the believers. Jesus' ambiguous statements, the doubts and misunderstandings of the Jews and the questions of the disciples are a prelude to his final prayer (16:29-33). The events of the story lead up to Jesus' "time" or "hour" (*ώρα*, 17:1). With the arrival of his "hour of glorification" (his crucifixion and resurrection), everything changes (e.g., 16:22-24). Bridging his work on earth and his return to the Father, the prayer connects the past, present and future. John 17 is a peak monologue that clues the readers into what the past was really all about, and what the future holds for them. The carefully structured prayer indicates its deliberate composition by an author who wants to draw together the past "then" time of the earliest disciples, the "now" time of his readers, and the "future" time of eternal life for all "those who will believe."

D. Summary

The summary of our discussion on the structure of the prayer also includes a summation of the structures of the Farewell Discourses and the entire Gospel because chapter 17 is a strategic part of the whole. Within the discourse material placed in the second half of the Gospel, the chiasmic structure of John 13-17 draws the attention of the reader to the important words and teachings of Jesus just before his departure from this earth. The climactic prayer is a culmination of Jesus' instruction and exhortations, which emphasizes the gift of eternal life to all people who believe in his person and his words. The literary three-part structure of the prayer is transformed from petitions that benefit the immediate disciples and other future believers to promises that benefit all

⁸¹ His "hour" leads to his "glory;" that is, his time on earth culminates in his death and his resurrection.

believers. The central message of eternal life speaks to past, present and future readers of the prayer. The structures, then, of the Farewell Discourses and of the prayer are important tools used by the author to communicate, instruct, encourage and reassure his readers. Consequently, following the investigation on structure, we can address the question of the setting of the prayer.

Setting of the Prayer

Does the structure of the Gospel tell the reader anything about the setting of the prayer? Where exactly does the final prayer take place? Setting is the backdrop against which the narrative events take place. Settings can be a physical, social-cultural, temporal or a religious environment. In the Fourth Gospel, a setting may include geographic locations (such as Jerusalem), topographical areas (the sea or a mountain), religious festivals (e.g., Passover) or an architectural structure (such as the Temple). The setting can indicate time (“at night”) and/or space (“above” or “below”). Significantly, settings help to develop the characters and the themes of narratives.⁸²

It is the setting of the Farewell Discourses that informs the readers about the setting of the prayer. Based on our earlier discussion, if John 17 is recognized as the conclusion to a unified passage which began at 13:1; thus, it is 13:1 that gives the readers the proper setting for the prayer. The structure of the Farewell Discourses allows the reader to surmise that the prayer is connected by time and space to the narrator’s opening in 13:1-2: Somewhere in the city of Jerusalem (12:12), “just before the Passover Feast...the evening meal was being served....” In chapters 13 through 17,

⁸² James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 87.

there is no change of scene (noting that 14:31b is a literary conclusion, not a change of locale); therefore, it is possible that the prayer is a summary of and an ending to the final meal of Jesus and his earliest disciples. Although the Synoptic accounts of the Last Supper do not indicate that Jesus concluded the Last Supper with a long prayer, certainly intimate communication with the Father is not out of character for Jesus at any time or place.⁸³ Therefore, it is the setting of the Passover, with all its social-cultural and religious overtones, that is critical to the words of Jesus spoken in the Farewell Discourses.

While D. Bock agrees with the Passover setting,⁸⁴ Bultmann deduced that the setting for the prayer of John 17 was indeed the Last Supper, but it was not necessarily the Passover meal. He contends that in John's Gospel, the author "substitutes Jesus' farewell prayer for the institution of the Last Supper."⁸⁵

Jesus' last meal with his disciples is no longer the Passover meal, nor does it institute the Lord's Supper; it is the point of departure for long farewell discourses which are without parallel in the synoptics.⁸⁶

If it is not *the* Passover meal, the author certainly makes a special note to connect the meal within the time-frame of the third and final Passover celebration (13:1). The predicted betrayal and the emblematic "dipped bread" (13:26) are a part of the Passover meal scene. There is an unquestionable change of scene in 18:1, which indicates a major

⁸³ Matt 26:30 and Mk 14:26 mention a "hymn was sung"; Lk 22:24 concludes the supper with a dispute. Even Paul's words of institution, the earliest account of the Lord's Supper, do not end with a prayer (1 Cor 11:23-26).

⁸⁴ Darrell L. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 519.

⁸⁵ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. K. Grobel; Vol. 1 of 2 Vols.; London: SCM Press [1948] 1952), 9.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

shift in time and place from the last meal of Jesus with his disciples to the Kidron Valley.

Thus, the text itself reveals the placement of John's Farewell Discourses, including the prayer, at the closing of some meal at the time of the Passover. This timing indicates the author's portrayal of Jesus as the "paschal lamb" (1:29, 36; 19:36).⁸⁷ To set the prayer within the intimate scene of Jesus' last meal with the disciples before his crucifixion is a vivid reminder to the readers of his great love for his followers. Resseguie states that the setting can "contribute to the mood of the narrative, delineate the traits of the characters, or contribute to the development of plot conflicts."⁸⁸ In the case of the final prayer of Jesus, the Passover setting does all of these things.

In the long run, it may be that the exact placement of the prayer is intentionally vague; the author could have indicated a specific time and place should he have felt the necessity to do so.⁸⁹ The ambiguity of the setting allows the reader to enter into the scene of the prayer no matter where the reader is located geographically. We can conclude that the setting is not geographical or architectural, or limited to a particular time or place. Therefore, the prayer is intended to be read by people beyond those who were in attendance in the upper room.

One further note must be mentioned concerning the specific time of the prayer. The prayer is spoken when "the time has come" (17:1). The final prayer is said at the *right* time; it is the exact, correct time for Jesus to be in Jerusalem to fulfil his appointed

⁸⁷ Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*, 899.

⁸⁸ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 88.

⁸⁹ The author is specific about details in other parts of the Gospel, such as the passion narrative; see 18:18, 25-26, 28, for example.

mission (7:6, 8; 8:20). “The time” (or, “his hour,” *ἡ ὥρα*, see 2:4; 7:6, 8; 17:1) is the time of his death, resurrection and exaltation, or the culmination of his mission and incarnation. It is a time to pray, because the time of his departure from the earth and his return to the Father is very near (13:33, 36; 16:5, 17). Also drawing near is the “time” when the followers of Jesus will be “scattered” (16:32); they will be “put out of the synagogue” (16:2). For these reasons, the prayer is presented at exactly the proper time to pray for all of Jesus’ followers.

Understanding Time and Place

As we saw in the structural analysis, the prayer promises benefits (e.g., eternal life) to those who believe in Jesus as the Christ. This virtually throws the setting of the prayer into some future narrative time when the disciples are planted in their mission as believers, and there are many other believers as a result of their testimony (17:20). Yet none of this has happened in the narrative present, because the prayer is positioned in the text before the death and resurrection of Jesus. The voice of Jesus in John 17 is not one of the earthly Jesus, but of the resurrected Christ (e.g., 17:4). Therefore, the language and the setting imply that the prayer is the creative rhetoric of the Gospel author, written after the death and resurrection of Jesus, for the believers in the early Christian community. It is Jensen’s view that

We cannot interpret this prayer as really spoken in the situation of departure or as intended to be read as such, as this would lead to grave misinterpretations. It is meant to be spoken by the already glorified Christ who is interceding for his church, as well as by the earthly Jesus just before his passion.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Jensen, *John's Gospel as Witness*, 119.

In the same manner, Bultmann suggests that it is the style of the Johannine author to bind together past and future time. The example he uses is seen in 12:23: the “hour” (ῥα) is future time, connected to 12:27, 31 where Jesus indicates present in “now” (νῦν).⁹¹ It is this blending of time that causes the reader difficulty in determining the exact time of the final prayer, which obviously leads to difficulty in determining the exact place.

Jesus moves his life and mission, death and return to the Father into eternal time and significance in the prayer of John 17. The prayer is not limited to a specific time or place on earth. As Bultmann suggests, time has been “collapsed” by the author, so that the past, present and future blur together. For the benefit of the readers, the significance of Jesus’ words in John 17 are not limited to a specific time and a specific location. At a turning point in his earthly life, the author of the prayer has Jesus speaking in such a way that describes past, present and future events.

Consequently, the setting of the last prayer of Jesus is more complex than just a few closing remarks at the end of the Passover meal. The Johannine text specifies neither an exact location nor an exact time of the prayer, although it appears at the right moment in narrative time (the “hour” of departure). It is a bridge between the life and teachings of Jesus and his death and resurrection. Jesus’ destiny and his glorification have been planned with the Father since “before the world began” (1:1-14; 17:5, 24), and it is within that backdrop that all the works and words of his incarnation on earth are completed.

⁹¹ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 429.

Conclusion

An investigation of the literary structure of the entire Fourth Gospel, the Farewell Discourses and the prayer of John 17 has been instrumental in answering key questions concerning the meaning and significance of the final prayer of Jesus. The analysis of structure and setting help to answer questions concerning the present position of the prayer within the Gospel. It is most important to recognize what is communicated to the reader through the structures of the Farewell Discourses and the prayer. This chapter has evaluated what the author is conveying to his readers by his purposeful design of chapters 13 through 17 and the climactic design of chapter 17.

For this investigation, it is most advantageous for the readers to view the structure of the Fourth Gospel as a two-part structure, with 13:1 as a strong beginning of the second section. The Farewell Discourses (chapters 13-17), then, are included in the second part, including the foot-washing scene, three farewell speeches and the final prayer of Jesus. The chiasmic structure of the Farewell Discourses reveals the *inclusio* of chapters 13 and 17 and the connected thoughts, themes, commands and promises of Jesus to his closest followers. As a literary technique, it also helps to explain the repetition of themes and motifs in these chapters. The structure of the Farewell Discourses communicates to the readers that the departure of Jesus from the earth is beneficial to the believer. Benefits include divine loving guidance, and complete joy. Benefits come at a price, however, as the believer is rejected by the unbelieving world, just as Jesus was rejected even by one of “his own.”

As the summary of the discourses, the prayer of chapter 17 promises eternal life as a gift to the believer from Jesus, whose existence is also eternal. The benefit of

eternal life is the knowledge and acceptance of the words and deeds of Jesus. The structure of John 17 has three parts, which are determined by Jesus' promises to his followers. In the first section of the prayer to the Father, the reader "overhears" Jesus give an explanation of "eternal life," which is knowing and receiving the Father and the Son. The reader is assured that the one granting eternal life to people has eternal life himself (17:5). In the second section, the earliest disciples of Jesus are seen as the first examples of those who receive eternal life by their belief in Jesus. They received all the benefits of life in Jesus including the commission to continue the message of Jesus in the world. In the third and final section, eternal life means unity of all the people who believe, who know the glorified Son and live in both the Father and the Son. The unity of believers is based on the reciprocal love of the Father and the Son, and expressed in love for one another before the world. Whether an early disciple or a "second generation" believer, the person who accepts and obeys the words of Jesus is protected, sanctified and loved by the Father and the Son. "All people" (17:2) who believe in the Father and the Son are united together as past, present and future disciples.

If it is regarded as simply another piece of the narrative story puzzle (the final prayer of a doomed man said at the end of a meal), the prayer of John 17 will lose its function and significance. As the words of Jesus, it sits apart from the narrative in a position to augment the story events. It is set against the background of the Jewish Passover feast, redemptive and promissory in nature. As a heuristic tool for the benefit of the readers, the prayer is a critical piece in the structure of the Farewell Discourses and in the full Gospel.

Chapter 3 Investigation of Style and Imagery

ἀπεκρίθησαν οἱ ὑπηρέται Οὐδέποτε ἐλάλησεν οὕτως ἄνθρωπος
“No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards declared.
John 7:46

Introduction

Readers may agree with the statement of the temple guards in 7:46, and recognize the perplexing, unusual statements on the lips of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. If there is consensus at all among Johannine scholars, it may be that this Gospel is distinctive in its style and language, setting it apart from the other three Gospels.¹ The rich depth of the literary artistry of the Gospel has been mined for decades, and scholars continue to dig for more insight and significance in the Johannine figurative language. The rhetorical language used by the author is key to the presentation of his Gospel. It is intended to persuade and convince his readers of his argument, and to produce an effective, memorable imprint on his audience. The author has chosen to engage his audience with rhetorical language such as paradox, irony, double-meaning words, and indirect speech. Recognized literary schemes in the Gospel of John include metaphorical imagery, symbolism, chiasms and parallelism. Further, allusions, misunderstandings, riddles and the narrator’s “aside” comments are used to interact with the readers. Collectively, a greater comprehension of the style and imagery of the Johannine author helps to clarify the meaning and significance of the text, which makes this a very important chapter in our study of John 17.

¹ For example, Frank Thielman, "The Style of the Fourth Gospel and Ancient Literary Critical Concepts of Religious Discourse," in *Persuasive Artistry* (ed. Duane F. Watson *JSNTSup*; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 169-73, p. 169.

A recent volume, compiled by Jörg Frey, Jan G. Van der Watt, Ruben Zimmermann and Gabi Kern, brings together some of the most current views in the “debate of Johannine imagery.”² Recognizing the “wealth and depth of figurative language, metaphors and symbols” in the Fourth Gospel,³ this volume raises the need for a deeper understanding of the language and style of the Johannine author, while treating the reader to the pleasure of exploring new thoughts and perceptions derived from skillful Johannine figurative language. Contributions from leading Johannine scholars show the necessity not only of identifying John’s figurative language from the text, but also of attempting to determine how it may have been understood by the original readers of the text, and by contemporary readers.

As a result of this beneficial volume, especially the introduction by R. Zimmermann, it is not necessary to recapitulate all the extensive past debates about the correct interpretations of the numerous figures of speech in the Fourth Gospel.⁴ For our present purposes, this chapter begins with a consideration of the literary style of the author, especially as it affects the Farewell Discourses and the final prayer. Next, the investigation is focused on two frequently used forms of imagery in the Gospel: the use of metaphors and symbolism. These are chosen for study because Johannine metaphors and symbols reveal not only something about theology and Christology, but about the readers themselves. The metaphoric and symbolic language of the Farewell Discourses will be investigated; finally, most important, the imagery found in the prayer of John 17

² Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, ed., *Imagery in the Gospel of John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), v.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-43.

will be highlighted. Our analysis reveals that in the past, Gospel interpreters have recognized the extensive use of metaphors and symbolism in the Fourth Gospel, but have failed to recognize the metaphorical and symbolic language used in the final prayer. A study of the Johannine imagery in chapter 17 enriches our understanding of how the prayer impacts the reader.

Part 1. Style of the Author

An author's style is a "catch-all" term for how he or she arranges his/her material, the language, vocabulary and rhetorical devices that are used in expressing his/her message to the readers. It is difficult to place John's literary style into a well-defined category. Quite simply, his style of writing is uniquely his own. De Jonge, with Lindars and others, observed that there is a "unity of vocabulary, style and theology;" yet there is "variety in the unity with sudden transitions in language and content, and (seeming) inconsistencies."⁵ Scholarly studies of source-criticism and redaction-criticism of the Fourth Gospel are just some of the results of attempts to explain the "problems" with the unique literary style of the writer.⁶

An author may have a general, broad style, but may vary in places according to his/her own intentions and purposes. In a piece of literature as lengthy as the Fourth Gospel, the reader may perceive various styles used by the author. First, broadly speaking, the purpose of the Johannine style is to communicate profound concepts in an

⁵ M De Jonge, ed., *L'Évangile de Jean: Sources, Rédaction, Théologie* (vol. 44 of *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovaniensium*; Louvain: University Press, 1977), 13. Also, Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John; New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992 [1972]), 46.

⁶ De Jonge, ed., *L'Évangile de Jean: Sources, Rédaction, Théologie*, 13.

inspiring and moving (Clifton Black uses the word “sublime,”⁷) manner for the benefit of his reading/hearing audience. The Prologue (1:1-1:18) is an example of such a style. The writing of the Fourth Gospel can both uplift and challenge the readers at the same time.

For the evangelist, as for the oratorical culture in which he wrote, style was not mere adornment, detachable from the ideas it conveyed. The loftiness of the Fourth Gospel corresponds with those aspects of Johannine thought that were evidently intended to consolidate the life of believing communities in the Johannine tradition.⁸

While it is “sublime,” the Johannine style is also didactic and rhetorical; the Gospel is an instrument used for teaching and persuading the audience (20:31). It is didactic because the main character in the story, Jesus, establishes himself as a teacher, speaks with authority, and uses figurative language to help his audience understand his words. It is rhetorical (persuasive) in style and presentation, urging the reader toward a belief in Jesus as the Messiah; the author expresses his desire to attain a positive response to this issue from those to whom he writes (1:12; 20:31).

Further, J. Resseguie contends that the Johannine author has a unique, “defamiliarization” style of writing. That is, the author has a way of making ordinary things appear to be unusual. Human beings become habitual, and our senses become numb to new perspectives, new thoughts and new ways of seeing the ordinary. Common language is changed and mundane images are transformed to surprise and grab the readers’ attention. “Defamiliarization suspends, twists, turns on its head the familiar or everyday way of looking at the world by substituting a new, unfamiliar frame of

⁷ Black, “Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric,” 233.

⁸ Ibid.

reference.”⁹ The author reverses the norms of society; he rejects the accepted dominance of the rich, wealthy, powerful people and focuses on the perspectives of the disenfranchised characters, a seemingly insignificant woman, Gentiles, the poor and the “disabled.”¹⁰ The “defamiliarization” style of writing is most effective when,

...textual disruptions cause the reader to slow down and take notice, or when norms and values firmly held by the audience are developed and then dashed. An unusual context, a difficult saying, an unexpected twist, a puzzling response, a violation of readers’ expectations, a shattering of commonplace assumptions, forces the readers to attend to something new.¹¹

Resseguie’s view of the Johannine writing style helps to explain the sudden interruption of discourse material (chapters 13-17) in the narrative, as well as the unexpected, uplifting final prayer for his followers just before the arrest and trial of Jesus.

Moreover, the author writes in a deeply symbolic style, creating meaning for the reader on more than one level. In comparison to the Synoptic accounts of Jesus’ life and ministry, the literary style of the Gospel of John is more “poetic.”¹² That is to say, both the narrative and discourse material in the Fourth Gospel are imbued with creative images, figures of speech and rhetorical devices that challenge the reader to think and demand his/her attention to the text. The narratives and the discourses hold meaning on more than one level. J. T. Nielsen, for instance, suggests that while Jesus speaks in parables in the Synoptic Gospels, he prefers metaphors in John’s Gospel.¹³ The

⁹ James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 33-34.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹² Jesper Tang Nielsen, "The Lamb of God," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John* (ed. Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 217.

¹³ *Ibid.*

symbolic, figurative language is used as a teaching tool, pressing the readers to picture in their minds what the author is communicating about theology, christology and anthropology.

L. Jackson had a problem resolving the issue of the Johannine style. His thoughts reflect stylistic conclusions from the early twentieth century:

Jesus could not have had, at the same time, the style and method of teaching which the Synoptists describe and that which the Fourth Gospel reflects. We must therefore attribute the language, the colour, and the form of these Johannine discourses to the Evangelist. The Gospel of John is the distillation of the life and teaching of Jesus from the alembic of the Apostle's own mind. It is his interpretation of the meaning of Christ's words, deeds and person derived from intimate personal relations with him, and coloured and shaped by a long life of Christian thought and experience.¹⁴

He is correct in observing that the Gospel comes to us "through the pen" of the author, through his own insight and interpretation of events, as well as through his own style, language and arrangement. Thus, Jesus' style of discourse (as expressed through the author) is a "more elevated, hieratic, even pretentious style."¹⁵

C. Black supports this "grand style" of the Johannine author. He investigates the author's literary style from the viewpoint of various theories of discourse known in antiquity. Black claims that "the theory and practice of classical rhetoric seems to me especially appropriate to the task of appraising Johannine discourse."¹⁶ He suggests that we read the Fourth Gospel "as a Greek-speaking audience" would have heard or read it: "The authors and readers of the NT were situated in a culture whose speech and

¹⁴ H. Latimer Jackson, *The Problem of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), 70-71.

¹⁵ Black, "Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric," 220.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 221.

literature were suffused by the norms and techniques of persuasive discourse.”¹⁷ Black notes three ancient styles of rhetorical discourse, “the plain, the middle, and the grand.” The last is “full, copious, weighty and ornate. Here surely lies the most power.”¹⁸ Four key theories from ancient rhetorical discourse are important and applicable to discourse in the Fourth Gospel, and in particular to John 17:

1. Rhetorical theorists of the imperial period amply reinforce a modern reader’s intuition of the Johannine Jesus’ lofty style. Grandeur or sublimity receives explicit, extensive consideration by classical rhetoricians.
2. Grand style excites within an audience strong if varied responses: powerful feelings, intellectual stimulation, and religious wonderment.
3. Grandeur is more than merely decorative: it inheres in thought that was itself conventionally considered to be sublime.
4. Chief among these majestic conceptions, and eminently appropriate for grand stylization, are matters pertaining to divinity.¹⁹

The real purpose of such grand rhetoric is not to try to capture the “real” words of the speaker (Jesus) in a historical sense, but to engage the readers, to challenge and extol the audience for whom the Gospel was written. Keeping in mind this general background on the author’s “grand” style, our present interest is a consideration of the style of writing that is found specifically in the Farewell Discourses and in the final prayer of John 17.

A. Style of the Farewell Discourses

Chapters 13 through 17 can be considered didactic or pedagogical in style. It is critical to connect the style of the text with the established genre, or kind of literature

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 222; Black makes reference to Cicero’s *Orator*, written about 50 BCE.

¹⁹ Black, “Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric,” 223. On “sublimity,” see also Thielman, who uses Philo and “Longinus” as sources who connect “the stylistic quality of lofty or sublime expressions with religious themes.” Thielman, “The Style of the Fourth Gospel and Ancient Literary Critical Concepts of Religious Discourse,” 173.

under investigation. First, if we understand the Farewell Discourses to be in the “farewell testament” genre of literature (see Chapter 4 of this study), then the style of this passage must fit the testamental type of text. The “testament” genre does have a didactic purpose; it is written to teach and to exhort the audience.²⁰ An OT farewell testament is composed to remind, warn and instruct the listeners/readers. The final discourses of Moses in Deuteronomy 31-34 are both a renewal of the covenant promises between God and his people, and Moses’ final instructions and warnings for the nation. In a manner similar to Deuteronomy 31-34, John 13-17 assures the readers of their position in Christ and in the Father, and exhorts them to make (in the view of the writer/speaker) appropriate decisions about faith.

Further, in view of the genre of the text, it is important to realize that although the author’s style may include modes of Greco-Roman discourse, the basic framework of the Discourses is Jewish in nature (despite C. H. Dodd’s view that the Fourth Gospel was directly influenced by “the higher religion of Hellenism.”²¹) J. Painter, for one, has determined that,

The Gospel was produced in a Jewish situation, yet there are a number of important Johannine symbols which have a background in both Greek and Hebrew thought. This could suggest that John had deliberately chosen symbols which would have a wide application among people from different backgrounds.²²

²⁰ On the purpose of the “farewell testament” genre of literature, see Chapter 4 of this study, as well as Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (trans. John Bowden; 2 vols.; London: SCM 1974), 215, and Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*, 497-98.

²¹ Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 10. See also Black, “Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric,” 228.

²² Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian*, 20.

The author of John presents Jesus as a teacher who is an exceptional speaker before crowds of Jewish leaders, ordinary people and his confessed followers (e.g., 6:60-66, 69; 7:45-52; 8:2, 20, 27-30). Jesus declares himself to be a teacher to his first disciples (13:12-15). He teaches by his words, certainly, but he also teaches by example. The scene of the foot-washing is an “object lesson” for the readers (13:12-17, especially v. 15). He relates future events to instruct and warn his followers (13:19; 16:1). Jesus taught his people only as much as they could “bear” (16:12), knowing that the Paraclete would continue his teaching after his departure to the Father (14:26; 16:13). The key to Jesus’ teaching is his relationship with his Father. Because he is “sent” by the Father, Jesus’ teaching and testimony are true, authoritative and reliable. The learners can “trust” him as a teacher (14:1) because he speaks the words of the Father (14:10), and does the work of the Father because he is commanded to do so (14:28-30).

Second, we note that imagery is strategic in the Farewell Discourses. The author (through the words of Jesus), is teaching the readers via the use of a figurative, rhetorical style of language. Black is right on target as he points out an abundance of ancient, classical, rhetorical devices used by the author in the Farewell Discourses, which are “evocative of sublime thought:” “parallelism, antithesis, repetition, synonymy, comparisons, words with double-meanings, and rhythmic flow, (created by length of clauses and sentences),” to briefly note only a few.²³

Method of Teaching

²³ Black, "Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric," 227.

At this point, it is important to critically analyze the teaching method of Jesus as presented in the Fourth Gospel. The Gospel author pictures Jesus as a unique and an authoritative teacher. In the narrative, some people recognized Jesus as a teacher and a rabbi (e.g., 1:38; 6:25), though he did not have the education and background normally required for a teacher (as least in the eyes of his opponents, 7:15). He may have followed many of the expected teaching methods of the rabbis of his day, but his methods were more unconventional in many ways. On occasions, his teachings created conflict with the Jewish leaders/teachers (8:31-59).

From the perspective of the Jews, an accredited teacher was one who had studied with a recognized master and who accurately passed on the tradition he had received. In chapter 7 (vv. 14-24), the Jewish leaders did not recognize Jesus as a teacher who had studied with a well-known sage, and so his teaching was suspect.²⁴

Jesus boldly claims that he, the teacher, and the content of his teaching come directly from God, not from a human master (7:16-18). Occasionally Jesus made use of the rabbinic style of debating when he deemed it appropriate, but he also makes it very clear to everyone that his teaching “was not his own” (7:16-18). He did not teach for his own honor or recognition (7:18), but for the one who “sent” him.

The bold public teaching of Jesus closes at the end of chapter 12, and his teaching is modified in chapter 13 where he focuses on “private instruction” of his first followers. His instructional methods in the Farewell Discourses are extraordinary. The example of the washing of the disciples’ feet is a powerful teaching tool.

Misunderstanding, Peter rebukes the lesson presented by his master (13:8), not unlike

²⁴ Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel; Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Augsburg 1995), 135-36.

the Jewish leaders who misunderstand his earlier teachings (e.g., 8:48-59). In view of misunderstandings and betrayal, the tone of Jesus' subsequent discourses with his followers is unexpected. Jesus is neither judgmental nor patronizing in chapters 13-17. In spite of their doubts and bewilderment, he addresses them as his "friends" (15:14-15).

The teaching style of the Farewell Discourses exposes Jesus' personal concern for those he leaves behind, who will carry on his mission (17:20). The followers of Jesus are not to be "troubled," but are to "be of good courage" because Jesus has "conquered" or "overcome" the world (14:1; 16:33). Jesus promises not to abandon his own (14:18) but to love them (15:12). His concern is also seen in the promised Paraclete, who is the enablement by which humans can obey (14:15-16). The love commands of Jesus are given to his people for their own benefit; they are told to "love one another" "so that my joy will be within you and your joy may be complete" (15:11). His instructions and commands are encouraging and edifying to his listeners.

Not merely does Jesus command that his followers 'love one another;' the grand reciprocity of John's rhetorical style, with its ever spiraling repetition and verbal inversions, activates for the Gospel's audience the mutuality that inheres between Jesus and God, among Jesus and his 'friends' (15:15; see 14:20-21; 15:9; 17:10-11, 21-23).²⁵

Finally, the author of John displays a disparity between the teaching style of Jesus and the Jewish leaders/teachers of his day. Their teaching of obedience to the law, achieved by human effort, was as important to their own positions as leaders as it was to the benefit of the people. In John 3, a sharp distinction is made between these teachers and Jesus. The representative character of Nicodemus astutely recognizes Jesus as a

²⁵ Black, "Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric," 229.

“teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him” (v. 2). Yet when Jesus challenges Nicodemus, who is “Israel’s teacher,” he does not understand how to “enter into the kingdom of God” (vv. 5, 10):

ἀπεκρίθη [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι ἔὰν μή τις γεννηθῆ
ἔξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν
τοῦ θεοῦ

The symbolism of the water and the Spirit should have been obvious to the Jewish teacher, yet the words and the signs of Jesus were not understood by the leaders. In the book of Isaiah, it is God who teaches Israel and redeems his chosen people; at the time of Jesus, it is the Jewish leaders and teachers of the nation who should have recognized Jesus as that vehicle of redemption (e.g., Isa 48:17-19; 54:13-14). Jesus’ teaching style challenged their own methods and revealed their lack of comprehension (e.g., 5:45-47; 8:31-41). His mysterious words were spoken on one level, implying a secondary level of meaning that the leaders missed (2:18-21; 7:28-29).

On the one hand, the Johannine Jesus speaks with an authority and an assurance that separates him from other Jewish “rabbis.” On the other hand, Jesus speaks in figurative language which was received with expected questions, doubt, misunderstandings and rejection (8:20, 27-30). His manner of speech reflects who he is (the authority of the Son of God) and who he is representing (the Father, 8:28-29). In both his public and his private teaching, with the Jewish leaders, the crowds, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman or with his inner circle of followers, it was his practice to teach heuristically, leading people to consider their true motivations and needs.

In summation of the author's style of the Farewell Discourses, we have observed that the didactic style of discourse is positive and encouraging in nature, heuristically leading the receiving audience. Unlike anything offered by the Jewish leaders in the Fourth Gospel, the author's teaching method of Jesus presented in chapters 13-17 includes more edifying promises and imagery (e.g., the "vine and the branches," 15:1-17) to assure and extol the readers. As a culmination to Jesus' "private tutoring session" (the final discourses), John 17 must now be addressed as a prayer presented by the author in its own unique style.

B. Style of the Prayer of John 17

Although we proposed a didactic style of writing for chapters 13 through 16, the style of the prayer of John 17 appears to be distinct in many ways from the material that precedes it. Käsemann is correct in putting the prayer into the context of the Farewell Discourses: "the content of chapter 17 shows that this chapter, just like the rest of the farewell discourse, is part of the instruction of the disciples."²⁶ Yet there appears to be a shift in style and language. The style of the prayer is more poetic than the preceding instructional speeches. The language used by the author is condensed, authoritative, and persuasive. It casts a vision of glory, eternal life, joy and unity.²⁷ It is literature at its "grandest" and "loftiest," because it is an expression of who Jesus is, who the Father is, and who the believer is in relation to the divine. The unique and grand style of John 17 is a reflection of the unique and grand persons involved in the prayer, and deserves

²⁶ Käsemann, *Testament*, 5.

²⁷ Jensen, *John's Gospel as Witness*, 117. See also, Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 34. Resseguie points out that "poetry renews our perception of ordinary words."

greater reflection. The poetry of the prayer causes the reader to stop and pay attention to the words of Jesus.

Remarkable signs, questions, doubts and dialogues have ended; no one speaks in chapter 17 except Jesus. The poetic-style of the prayer is dense in thought, word and meaning. The elevated style captures the words of the Word, setting his prayer apart from the rest of the discourses. The dense style can be regarded as a form of synthesis, a climax and a summary of the preceding teachings. Dodd states that,

The prayer gathers up much of what has been said, both in the Book of Signs and in the Farewell Discourses, and presupposes everywhere the total picture of Christ and His work with which the reader should by this time be amply acquainted. Almost every verse contains echoes.²⁸

In agreement, R. Brown concludes,

Even many scholars who do not find a poetic format in the Johannine discourses in general recognize the poetic style of chapter 17. This prayer stands intermediary between the poetry of the Prologue and the loose quasi-poetry of the other discourses.²⁹

B. Lindars believes the prayer-style is modelled on other prayers of Jesus found in the Synoptics (as evidenced by the characteristic opening of the “Father”), although he claims that the “language” of John 17 is “Johannine throughout.”³⁰ His views are fairly typical of twentieth-century Gospel research which fails to catch the unique literary style and presentation of the Johannine prayer. The Synoptic “Lord’s Prayer” (Matt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4) is certainly didactic in function, but it is not written in the same

²⁸ Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 417.

²⁹ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 748.

³⁰ Lindars, *The Gospel of John; New Century Bible Commentary*, 517.

style as John 17.³¹ For instance, the reader does not find the puzzling “prolepsis” language in the Synoptics’ “Lord’s Prayer.” John 17 is written in a style that captures a vision of the future, both the immediate future (the “prolepsis” of chapters 18-20), and a future beyond that future (the eschatological future, or “external prolepsis”).³² It is the style of John 17, written in the first-person voice of Jesus himself, that makes it impossible for a person to repeat or recite John 17 as he or she would the “Lord’s Prayer.”

As mentioned earlier, the prayer is also a type of rhetoric. “Rhetoric is the art of persuasion. It breathes life into the narrative and influences how the readers feel and think about what the author says.”³³ The prayer is presented in the style of “epideictic rhetoric.” On the one hand, C. Black contends that the Farewell Discourses “most closely resemble that species of oratory known as *epideictic*, whose primary concern is the induction or bolstering of beliefs and values held among one’s audience in the present.”³⁴ In a similar manner, G. Kennedy observes that epideictic rhetoric “seeks to persuade the audience to hold or reaffirm some point of view in the present.”³⁵

Epideictic rhetoric is named by Aristotle as one of three “branches” of rhetorical language. It is used most appropriately at ceremonies, commemoration, weddings, anniversaries, deaths and marriages and the like. Often, it is rhetoric that encourages

³¹ See Chapter 5 of this thesis for more contrasts between John 17 and the Synoptics’ “Lord’s Prayer.”

³² Mark W.G. Stibbe, *John* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1993), 142.

³³ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 41.

³⁴ Black, “Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric,” 224.

³⁵ George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 19. With Black, Kennedy also believes that the entire Farewell Discourses section of the Gospel is epideictic rhetoric.

goodness, beauty, excellence, justice, courage and honor in contrast to human vices.³⁶

L. Rosenfield maintains that the point of epideictic rhetoric is to remember events, with an emphasis on praise or blame. It is the treatment of an event or a human experience in memorable language, and calls for people to gravely consider what has been witnessed.³⁷ By his definition, such rhetoric is not unlike the prayer of John 17.

On the other hand, while Black views chapters 14 through 17 as epideictic rhetoric, I would argue that only the prayer itself matches the epideictic rhetoric category. A more didactic style characterizes chapters 13-16, including commands (13:34; 15:12, 17), dialogues (14:5-14) and warnings (15:18-21). It is the “loftiness” and “grandeur” of the edifying prayer that separates it from the other discourse material. While the prayer is certainly presented in a style that is up-lifting to the reader, it may not be *required* to place it in the Greek rhetoric category. Perhaps the author consciously created a prayer that adheres to the rules of ancient Greek epideictic discourse, but we cannot be sure of his intentions. At this point it is sufficient to say that the prayer is written in a style of edifying discourse, perhaps influenced by Greek epideictic oratory. There are no direct parallels between John 17 and ancient Greco-Roman prayers. However, while we can observe the plausible use of an epideictic rhetorical style of discourse we must also recognize the author’s use of Jewish vocabulary and imagery used in John 17.

³⁶ John Henry Freese, *The "Art" of Rhetoric: Aristotle with an English translation* (London: William Heinemann, 1926). See *Rhetoric*, 1358b.

³⁷ Lawrence W. Rosenfield, *Aristotle and Information Theory: a comparison of the influence of causal assumptions on two theories of communication* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), 140-50.

Further, the encouraging, rhetorical style of John 17 is heuristic, because it leads the readers to certain deductions about the identities of Jesus and the Father, and to their own self-realization in relationship to the Father and Son. It bolsters their faith in Jesus as the Son of God. The prayer seeks to persuade the readers to hold on to the knowledge that is necessary for life in the extended future, post-Easter. After Jesus “overcomes the world” (16:33), the “glory of Christ” means eternal life for the believer (17:3). John 17 secures life with God for the believers; it promises protection and safe-keeping in spite of opposition from the world. The grandeur and loftiness of the loving, reciprocal Father-Son relationship is real and tangible; it is expressed as the foundation of love between the believer and the God-head, and it guides believers to love each other. The cryptic language of the triangle of 14:20 is repeated and expanded in the prayer of John 17.

The repetition of 14:20 (“On that day you will realize that I am in the Father, and you are in me, and I am in you”) in 17:22-23 illustrates another aspect of style apparent in the prayer. The style of the author appears to be repetitive, but Black calls this literary style “amplification.” In modern literature, redundancy or repetition is not desirable, and it may be explained away by critics. In ancient literature, however, “amplification (*amplificatio*)” was considered a “primary ingredient of grandeur.”³⁸ “The objective of amplification is not to construct an impeccably logical proof but to wield influence upon one’s audience.”³⁹ This literary repetition is observed in the chiasmic structure of the Farewell Discourses, where themes are repeated, similar to

³⁸ Black, “Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric,” 224.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 225.

“bookends,” in chapter 13 and in chapter 17 (see Chapter 2 of this study). Key Johannine themes introduced in the earlier chapters of the Gospel are recapitulated (and reach their climax) in the final prayer of Jesus: e.g., “the time” or “my hour,” glory, love, eternal life, knowledge, joy, truth, and belief. In agreement with Black, the redundancy of the Farewell Discourses and the prayer is a rhetorical tool to bolster and reassure the readers.

David Alan Black also observed the repetitious style of John 17. He focuses on the “nuclear structures” of the prayer, and then addresses the stylistic features that he sees on the “microlevel of the rhetorical structure: repetition, omission and shifts on expectancy.”⁴⁰ He reveals stylistic units of “repetition,” including “chiasmus, diaphora and antithesis.” The prayer has “omissions,” to make it “compact for remembering,” and there are “shifts in expectancy” including “idioms” for “effectiveness.”⁴¹ Cohesion is gained by the repetitive style of the prayer, all leading to the “underlying theme of unity in the prayer.”⁴² While his analysis of the style and structure of the prayer is narrow and limited, his view on repetition is not unlike the views of the others.⁴³

To briefly summarize, the prayer of John 17 is written in a grand, rhetorical style, poetic and up-lifting. It is a conclusion to the didactic Farewell Discourses, yet it is presented as more than a mere instrument of instruction. It is created in a style that uniquely communicates assurance to the reader, encouraging and urging the reader to maintain and deepen his or her faith in Jesus as the Christ.

⁴⁰ Black, “On the Style and Significance.” p. 145, 149, 153.

⁴¹ Ibid., 150-153.

⁴² Ibid., 154. On repetition and rhetoric, see Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 42-60.

⁴³ See C.C. Black, above, as well as J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (ed. A. H. McNeile; Vol. 2 of 2 Vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1942), 558.

Part 2. Imagery

An integral part of the Johannine style is the use of imagery throughout the entire Gospel. Imagery is a mental picture of something or someone. It could be an impression, reproduction or a representation of a person or a thing, especially in a work of art. Imagery is presenting something in the written word that is a representation of something else. In his essay, J. van der Watt helpfully includes necessary criteria within his description of imagery as,

...the (total and coherent) account or mental picture of objects, with corresponding actions and reactions, taken from life's experience and associatively (and thematically) belonging together. Imagery will therefore be identified using two criteria. It must be a) an account associated with life's experience creating a mental picture and b) applied figuratively to enhance communication.⁴⁴

His criteria are employed to interpret the Johannine imagery in the Farewell Discourses and in the prayer of John 17.

R. Kieffer calls imagery "stage-pictures," presented in both concrete and abstract language.⁴⁵ Concrete images are probably taken from the author's own experiences, though the use of abstract images may offer more challenges to the readers. He points out the "vertical dimension of the Gospel's imagery" (e.g., "above and below" 8:23) which is used to emphasize Jesus' unique identity.⁴⁶ Kieffer's study points out that most research on Johannine imagery centers on Jesus, on his person and his purpose. With Kieffer, J. Painter also declares that John's symbolism is "christologically oriented," and

⁴⁴ Jan Van der Watt, "Ethics Alive in Imagery," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John* (ed. Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 422.

⁴⁵ Rene Kieffer, "Different Levels in Johannine Imagery," in *Aspects on the Johannine Literature* (ed. Lars Hartman and Birger Olsson, *Coniectanea Biblica*; Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1987), 74.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

that “the symbols are always focal points of the conflict between Jesus and Judaism.”⁴⁷ Nevertheless, symbolism that is limited to Christology is, in my view, too restricted and defined too narrowly.

In contrast, C. Koester focuses our attention not on Johannine Christology or theology, but on Johannine anthropology, on what the text says to the human readers about themselves. From the anthropological view, Koester articulates the very plausible reason for the imagery in John: “To be human is to be created for life with God,” is the summation of Johannine anthropology. This key concept is presented through and perceived in the author’s use of imagery.⁴⁸ This is critical to our study of John 17. As we will see in the discussion to follow, the imagery found in the prayer draws the readers’ attention to God and to Jesus, but most important, to themselves, to their position and their future “in Christ.”

Koester develops his careful argument by showing how the Gospel of John teaches the reader the difference between human life and eternal life. Human beings exist because of the word of God, or by a divine power (1:3). The author of John gradually reveals that human life is not just an existence, but that it involves a relationship with the Creator God and his Son. To know them and to believe in them is eternal life (5:24, 39-40; 6:47; 17:3). The fullness of this eternal life is difficult to put into human vocabulary, and difficult to picture in the human mind; thus, comparisons and illustrations are necessary tools. Imagery helps the reader to understand what it

⁴⁷ Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian*, 21-22.

⁴⁸ Craig R. Koester, "What Does it Mean to be Human? Imagery and the Human Condition in John's Gospel," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John* (ed. Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 405.

means to live a “life with God” in contrast to human life that is “separated from God.”⁴⁹ The Gospel author helps to clarify “life with God” by using various images that call to mind everyday human experiences, but which reveal the reality of life with God and with the Son. For instance, Jesus states that he is the “bread” of life who “gives life to the world” (6:33, 35); he gives to people “living water” which becomes “a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (4:10, 14). Jesus was sent by God to be the “gate” and the “good shepherd” for humanity; he comes that “they may have life, and have it to the full” (10:10).

Nevertheless, there are those people who reject the offer to have “life with God,” and choose to be “separated from God.”⁵⁰ This “separation” is also depicted in imagery, as those people who choose to live “in darkness” (8:12; 12:35). People are separated from God by their human limitations and their lack of knowledge; they are separated by sin, which in the Fourth Gospel is “a kind of alienation or unbelief.”⁵¹ Separation from God is also pictured as death, which has (on one level) physical and (on another level) theological facets in John’s imagery (11:25-26; 12:24-25).⁵² Separation from God, as presented in this Gospel, is ultimately overcome by faith in God and in his Son. Faith is another aspect pictured in Johannine imagery. The concepts of “walking in the light” (8:12; 12:36), eating the “flesh of the Son of Man” and “drinking his blood” (6:53-58) are vivid portraits of living with God through faith in his Son.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 406-407.

⁵⁰ Koester, “Imagery and the Human Condition,” 406.

⁵¹ Ibid., 407.

⁵² Ibid.

Indeed, “living with God” has direct effects on an entire community of people as well as on an individual human life. For this reason, the imagery in John has an ecclesiological aspect, illustrating how the believing people are to be in relationship with others who believe. One outstanding example of this imagery is in the Farewell Discourses, where Jesus paints a picture of many “branches” connected to one central “true vine” (15:5-8). We will look at this image again in a later section of this chapter.

Jesus came to reveal the Father and to give true testimony about the Father (5:36-38; 17:6). For those who listened to him, he made an effort to clarify and to guide; his purpose was not to hide or deceive or manipulate the truth through his words. “Earthly images could be used to bear witness to divine realities because the earth is God’s creation.”⁵³ In the same way, the Gospel author desires to reveal to his readers through his imagery, not conceal his message (1:16; 20:30-31; 21:24).

The possible discussion and debates surrounding Johannine figurative language is daunting. Within the range of this thesis, then, it is necessary to limit our investigation to two select forms of imagery: the metaphor and symbolism. Zimmermann separates “three categories of terms for images, metaphor, symbol and narrative images.”⁵⁴ However, his third category is a discussion of the figurative or “sign narratives,” which are not discovered in the discourse portions of the Gospel. As a result, with Zimmermann, we will deal with the first two categories, metaphors and symbols, which are found in abundance in the discourse material.

A. Metaphorical imagery

⁵³ Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

To commence, why would an author use metaphors and symbols? These images are employed by an author to assist the reader in discovering answers to questions that are difficult to describe in words. This language is used to create a picture that allows the reader to see what human eyes cannot see (e.g., God, John 1:18), hear things that are not normally heard (the Word of God, 1:1; 7:28), and comprehend what is naturally incomprehensible (“you must be born again,” 3:3).

Metaphors and metaphoric language abound in both the narrative and the discourse sections of the Gospel. A metaphor (*μεταφέρω*, “to carry over, transfer,”⁵⁵) is an implied comparison, turning a word or a phrase from its literal meaning to a new and unusual use. The literary device of the metaphor may be one word or phrase (as the “good shepherd”), or the analogy may be expanded to a lengthy, extended metaphorical image (as the “vineyard” metaphorical language in John 15). While metaphors and symbolism may expand into non-verbal communication, this study is limited to the verbal expression of the metaphorical transfer of ideas through the written word.

Because the comparison is implied, metaphorical imagery is not always obvious. Sometimes an unusual or striking comparison, or an exact point of comparison, can be disputed. A single-word metaphor is most challenging, while an extended metaphorical imagery is usually more obvious to the reader because of its length. What does Jesus mean when he compares himself to a “gate” in 10:9? Further, Jesus’ words in 10:10 are obscure: “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” Who is the thief, and what exactly is he stealing?

⁵⁵ *The Chambers Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap Publishers, [1901] 1998), 1010. See also, Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 62-64 on figurative language, metaphors and similes.

What does he have to do with the gate and the sheep? These types of metaphors can be interpreted differently depending upon the readers' social and cultural background. They present a curious challenge and engage the reader to a greater extent than does plain, straight-forward language.

T. Thatcher determines that the parables of Jesus in the Gospels are “ambiguous metaphors.”⁵⁶ “Parables, then, are metaphors that transfer qualities from one thing to another; many of them are riddles that generate ambiguity by transgressing the normal boundaries between conceptual categories.”⁵⁷ While many scholars have noted that Jesus tells few parables in the Gospel of John, the need to unravel the Johannine metaphorical language remains the same. As a teacher, Jesus challenges his listeners with unexpected comparisons that would force the audience to “redefine key terms and realign mental boundaries.”⁵⁸ His followers are aware of his use of figurative or “picture-language” (*παροιμίας*), and in 16:29 they are pleased when he speaks in “clear” language. Such language also challenges and confronts the reader. The metaphorical language concerning the “Father” and the “Son” found in John 8:19-59 is an excellent example because the narrator of the story specifically informs the readers as to the reactions of the listeners to the words of Jesus. The Jewish leaders respond to Jesus' teaching about their “Father” with “grumbling” and confusion (vv. 25, 27, 41, 48, 52). They did not comprehend what he was saying about himself, and about rejection (8:41), by using a familial metaphor. This interchange with the Jewish leaders is

⁵⁶ Tom Thatcher, *Jesus the Riddler: The Power of Ambiguity in the Gospels* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox 2006), 76.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

background knowledge behind the metaphors used in the final prayer of Jesus (“Father” and “Son”).

B. Symbolic Imagery

Scholars have had a difficult time defining and limiting the symbolic language in the Fourth Gospel. Many times a symbol is expressed metaphorically, or a metaphor can be symbolic; the two are closely related. Although Koester defines a “symbol” as “an image, an action, or a person that is understood to have transcendent significance,”⁵⁹ Zimmermann suggests that a symbol primarily appears in the text as one word, such as “light” or the “cross.”⁶⁰ S. Schneiders simply states that a symbol is “something which stands for an absent reality.”⁶¹ A reader can mentally insert the omitted word “like” or “as” in an expressed metaphor (e.g., “I am *like* a true vine,” 15:1), but that is not possible with a symbol. Metaphors may create an unexpected comparison (i.e., Jesus is “like” the temple in 2:19), whereas a symbol is “a sensible expression of a present reality.”⁶² Metaphors have two parts which beg for a comparison (i.e., Jesus is compared to a “vine” in 15:1). A symbol is one “sensible” thing that represents something else that is less perceptible. The symbol of “light,” for instance, can be perceived by human eyes, yet it is applied to Jesus as the one who brings knowledge and revelation of the Father (8:12).

⁵⁹ Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 4.

⁶⁰ Ruben Zimmermann, “Imagery in John,” in *Imagery in the Gospel of John* (ed. Jan G. Van Der Watt, Jörg Frey, and Ruben Zimmermann, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 3.

⁶¹ Sandra M. Schneiders, “History and Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel,” in *L’Evangile de Jean* (ed. M. De Jonge, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium XLIV*; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1977), 372.

⁶² *Ibid.*

To complicate matters, metaphors and symbolism in John may be directed at Jesus, or they may relate to the readers, or the images may intermingle (while the “vine” relates to Jesus, the “branches” relate to believers, 15:5). The various metaphors and symbols become more meaningful to the reader when they are seen in context with the whole Gospel. Imagery is an important part of the unity and cohesiveness of the literary work. Although there is diversity in the imagery, the individual metaphors and symbols work together, connecting and unifying the composition. The images work together “like the small pieces in a mosaic” to create a complete picture.⁶³ Along with Koester, Zimmermann refers to this as “the network and the connective forms, or the compositional path [of images].”⁶⁴ This is also apparent in the author’s use of the “cluster technique.”⁶⁵ For instance, the “ecclesial images” in John 21, as R. Culpepper points out, are an example of “clustering” (the fish, the boat, the number of fish, the untorn net, and the charcoal fire).⁶⁶

Moreover, the connective imagery throughout the Gospel is an effective teaching tool; it is advantageous to create clear, related pictures in the minds of the readers that will aid in their progressive understanding of the concepts being taught. By definition, images ought to be “seen” in the mind of the reader, and therefore can include the reader in the narrative story. “The Johannine images work toward an inclusion of the recipient,” thus deepening and enriching each reader’s own understanding of the text.⁶⁷

⁶³ Koester, “Imagery and the Human Condition,” 404.

⁶⁴ Zimmermann, “Imagery in John,” 27.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶⁶ R. Alan Culpepper, “Designs for the Church in the Imagery of John 21:1-14,” in *Imagery in the Gospel of John* (ed. Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 371-72.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

The human readers of the Gospel can identify with the image of the “Father,” as it invokes a common familial relationship. Throughout the Fourth Gospel, the author, through the words of Jesus, refers to God as the “Father,” informing and instructing the reader not only about who God is but about their relationship with him (see 14:8-14).

Nevertheless, the reader can push symbolic interpretation to extremes, where each word or phrase is tested to see if it is symbolic or if it holds another level of meaning. For this reason, Schneiders articulates a concern that “since there do not seem to be any reliable or generally accepted criteria for the interpretation of symbols, any symbolic interpretation remains undemonstrable if not arbitrary.” She concludes, “If, however, a text is essentially symbolic, then there is no literal meaning of that text apart from the symbolic meaning.”⁶⁸ “Symbolism is not a slippery terrain where all interpretation is equally arbitrary and equally undemonstrable. There are no rules for the decoding of symbols because symbols are not signs. But there are criteria for the valid interpretation of symbolic works.”⁶⁹

Fortunately, P. Anderson proposes limitations and plausibility that can be considered before claims are made about symbolic language. He suggests four “levels” of symbolism, “explicit (or declarative), implicit (or associative), correlative (possibly symbolic), and innocent (unlikely to be symbolic),” designations that are very helpful in

⁶⁸ Schneiders, "History and Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel, 372.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 376.

determining not only *if* something is symbolic, but what *kind* of symbolism it suggests.⁷⁰

He continues,

Like any good tool, inferred symbolization and theologization function best when employed as they are meant to be used. Applying them to chronology, historiography, and topography, though, stretches their adequacy to the breaking point and most often proves nothing in terms of the originative character of the tradition.⁷¹

For the purposes of this thesis, it is critical to recognize the explicit and implicit metaphorical and symbolic language in the Farewell Discourses and in the final prayer of Jesus. This language speaks to the reader about Christology, theology and anthropology; that is, the metaphors and symbolism inform the reader about who Jesus is, who God is, and who the person is in relation to the divinity. To avoid confusion, in the subsequent sections of this chapter, the more general term “imagery” may refer to either metaphors or symbolism or a combination as used in the text.

C. Characters

As we have seen in Chapter 1 of this study, characters can act as symbols in the Johannine narrative. People, as well as places and everyday objects, can and do speak to the reader symbolically. Koester writes that it is “difficult to interpret the characters in John’s Gospel without undervaluing or overestimating their symbolic and representative traits.”⁷² His view supports Culpepper’s “representative” view of characterization as we investigated earlier.

⁷⁰ Paul N. Anderson, "Gradations of Symbolization in the Johannine Passion Narrative," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John* (ed. Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 179-80.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁷² Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 33.

Jesus' true identity is cloaked in metaphorical language. This technique is often intentionally ambiguous; such imagery is seen vividly in Jesus' seven "I am" passages which are unique to John's Gospel and reveal his true identity and mission on earth: (6:35; 8:12; 9:5; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1).

Other characters in the Gospel can be symbolic. Each character has distinctive traits that make him or her unique: "a member of the ruling council" (3:1), "a Samaritan woman who came to draw water" (4:7), "a man blind from birth" (9:1). The details of their identities are not without meaning, but are symbolic of the human condition, especially in relation to God. An individual character may represent a group of people (e.g., Nicodemus, "the member of the Jewish ruling council" and his coming "in darkness" 3:1-2), or he/she may symbolize various viewpoints that are recognized by the readers as typical of humans (e.g., the "Samaritan woman," 4:4-9).⁷³ As Koester claims, the intentional ambiguity in metaphoric language underscores the people who receive and accept the words of Jesus and those who do not.⁷⁴ This language is striking for the person reading or listening to the Gospel.

R.A. Culpepper has called imagery "the prism which breaks up the pure light of Jesus' remote epiphany into colors the readers can see."⁷⁵ Therefore, before unpacking the imagery in John 17, it is necessary to explore the imagery of the Farewell Discourses, the four chapters that immediately precede the prayer.

Part 3. Imagery in the Farewell Discourses

⁷³ Ibid., 45, 57.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 35.

⁷⁵ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 104.

While imagery is abundant in the narrative sections of the Fourth Gospel, it is even more important in the discourse material; a substantial amount of Jesus' teachings is presented metaphorically or symbolically. Jesus' final discourses contain sayings, clusters of images and *παροιμίας* ("figures of speech," 16:29) which are, in many ways, highly symbolic. Jesus says he has been speaking figuratively, but that a time is coming when he will speak plainly (16:25). The imagery found in the Farewell Discourses is dense, rich, and a challenge for his disciples as well as for the readers to understand. Numerous images central to the Farewell Discourses will be investigated, with the understanding that it is not possible to investigate fully all the imagery within the limitations of this thesis.

A. Passover imagery

It is not unusual for scholars to observe the influence of the Old Testament in John's Gospel. J. Painter states that "the Gospel is best interpreted against the background of Judaism,"⁷⁶ while Attridge writes:

Much of the symbolic world of the Fourth Gospel derives from the world of the Temple and its cultic cycle. The festival cycle that comes into prominence in the first half of the Gospel, explicitly noting Sabbath (5:9), Passover (6:4), Booths (7:2), Channukah (10:22), provides the framework for the use of cultic symbols, such as water (7:38) and light (8:12, though probably introduced in the prologue).⁷⁷

The unusual, symbolic action of Jesus in chapter 13, the washing of the disciples' feet, is the introduction to the Farewell Discourses. The scene begins the preparation of

⁷⁶ Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian*, 19.

⁷⁷ Harold W. Attridge, "The Cubist Principle in Johannine Imagery," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John* (ed. Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 51.

the followers of Jesus for his impending death. Notably, it takes place “just before the Passover Feast” (13:1). This is a clue to the reader that the words and events that follow may be connected metaphorically to the Passover traditions. The washing of feet was, in a sense, a normal, everyday activity in the Palestine area; yet, it also falls into the category of cultic symbolism, recalling the Temple ritual cleansing and purity activities (see, for example, Exod 30:17-21). Yet, by Jesus’ own words, he gives the older, common cultic action a new, surprising meaning. The foot-washing is a new symbol of true servant-hood, and an example of unconditional love expressed by the Son of God to his followers (13:14-17; 12:26).

The three Passover feasts in the Fourth Gospel set the stage for a “cluster” of Passover imagery, used by the Gospel author to communicate to his audience something about Jesus. Passover imagery is highlighted in the “Lamb of God” (Exod 12:3, 5; Jn 1:29), in blood and sacrifice (Exod 12:13; Jn 19:34), and in the unbroken bones (Exod 12:46; Jn 19:33). The “bread dipped in the dish” (Jn 13:26) is highly symbolic of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread ritual (Exod 12:18-20).

For the readers of the Gospel, the Passover symbolism may hold a variety of different meanings, depending on their social and cultural backgrounds. The Passover imagery that begins in 13:1 and continues on through the final prayer may connect the person, the words and the works of Jesus to the sacrificial lamb. In the view of J.T. Nielsen,

The interpretation that the Passover lamb in Early Judaism had an atoning function must be rejected; it was not connected with atonement or even with forgiveness of sin. The original Passover is God’s protection and liberation of his people and that the following Passover festivals are commemorations of this

fundamental salvific event and re-enactments of the *apotropaic* content.⁷⁸

Therefore, as Nielsen contends, the third Passover imagery is symbolic of the words and work of Jesus, sent to liberate, save and protect the people of God (see 17:11).

B. Ecclesiological imagery

The imagery in John has an ecclesiological aspect, illustrating how the believing people are to be in relationship with others who believe. The Farewell Discourses feature the imagery of being “in Jesus” (14:20; 17:21, 23) which is puzzling because Jesus repeatedly speaks about “going away” (e.g., 16:7). This image can be understood as *belief* in Jesus as the Son of God (14:11; 16:9). Belief in Jesus is understood as an “indwelling” (14:20; 17:20-24) that creates unity among those who believe. This is symbolized by the friendship expressed in 15:12-15. Those who are Jesus’ “friends” also will act in the Father’s name (17:11), and continue the same mission as Jesus (17:18; 20:21). That is to say, those people (“branches”) who “abide in Jesus” participate in the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son (15:1-11; 17). The initial plan of God is to be in relationship with his “children” (1:12) and to bring together “his own” into a community (11:52), which is accomplished in Jesus and those who believe in him (10:11-16; 17:20-21).

The unity of the church is not something that is achieved by human effort; it is a spoken, promised reality of people being “in Christ.” This relationship is symbolized by metaphorical ownership and metaphorical rejection. The believers “belong” to God (13:1; 16:15; 17:6), and are “given” to Jesus “out of this world” (17:6, 7, 10).

⁷⁸ Nielsen, "The Lamb of God," 239. Nielsen indicates that the *apotropaic* aspects of the Passover feast are those which are intended to turn away, or to ward off evil.

Those who reject the teachings of Jesus are those who “hate” (15:20-25), and reject the plan of God and membership in his believing community.

Culpepper writes,

My reading of the ecclesiological overtones of the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6, the healing of the man born blind in John 9, the sheep and the good shepherd in John 10, the footwashing in John 13, the vine and the branches in John 15, Jesus’ prayer in John 17, and the death of Jesus in John 19 leads me to question whether the ecclesiological emphasis of John 21 is really different from the ecclesiological interest of other passages in John.⁷⁹

C. Darkness

The prominent motif of “light” and “darkness” is scattered throughout the Fourth Gospel, from the Prologue (1:5) to the arrival of Mary Magdalene at the tomb of Jesus “while it was still dark” (20:1). “Light” is closely associated with the identity of Jesus (1:5; 8:12), the eternal life he brings to people (1:4; 5:24), and trust/belief in him (12:35-36). In contrast, “darkness” is seen as an “adversary to light.”⁸⁰ If light is the life in God, then darkness is the powers that oppose God: evil, sin and death. The words of Jesus imply that the light is stronger and will “overtake” (*καταλαμβάνω*) the darkness (12:35). As an example, Nicodemus meets Jesus, “at night” (thus, in darkness, 3:2) and “their nocturnal meeting becomes a microcosm of the encounter between Jesus and the world.”⁸¹ Jesus presents “life” to Nicodemus over against the shadow of “death.”

Darkness invades the opening foot-washing scene of the Farewell Discourses. Koester eloquently writes, “The departure of Judas is like a stone cast into a moonlit

⁷⁹ Culpepper, “Designs for the Church,” 371-72.

⁸⁰ Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 125.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

pool – it dissipates the patterns of darkness and light that pervaded the Gospel up to this point (13:30).”⁸² Certainly “night” and “the darkness” are symbolic of evil, rejection, and death; but in chapter 13 it is also a symbol of the lack of understanding on the part of the disciples of Jesus. As we have observed in Chapter 1 of this investigation, the misunderstanding and the lack of understanding demonstrated by the disciples is climaxed in the Farewell Discourses. Their lack of understanding is highlighted in 13:22-24, and 28-29. Judas’ departure is unexpected and misunderstood by the other disciples. In a sense, then, they were “in the dark” about Judas’ intentions and motivations, and about the coming betrayal events. Darkness is used symbolically to represent both meanings in John 13.

D. Cluster of familial metaphors

A distinct cluster of familial images begins with the Passover meal of John 13 where Jesus takes on the role of the “father,” instructing his “children” at the ritual meal. The most obvious image is that of the title of “Father” that Jesus uses in reference to God. Jesus connects his own life and works to that of the Father in 14:8-11. The reciprocal relationship of the Father and the Son reaches a climax in chapter 17, and we will discuss it more as we consider the imagery of the final prayer of Jesus (below).⁸³

God the Father is “greater than I [Jesus]” (14:28), symbolically the “head of the family.” The plan and purposes of the Father are fulfilled in the Son. God is pleased to be with the believer in a loving relationship (14:23), and expresses this through the Son

⁸² Ibid., 151.

⁸³ For an excellent discussion on the reciprocal relationship between the Father and the Son, see T.E. Pollard, “The Father-Son and God-Believer Relationships according to St John: a Brief Study of John's Use of Prepositions,” in *L'Évangile de Jean* (ed. M. De Jonge, *Journées Bibliques de Louvain*, 1975; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1977), 363-69.

(14:24). Jesus is “in the Father” and accomplishes the will of the Father (14:10, 11, 20, 31). He promises to “come back and take you [the believer] to be with me that you also may be where I am” (14:3; 17:24). Thus, he is somewhere with the Father, and anticipates the future coming of the believers to wherever that is. He brings glory to the Father (14:13) by fulfilling his mission; he then returns to the Father (14:12) in order that the believer may reside with the Father and the Son forever.

The family relationship includes the people who believe the words of Jesus. Jesus is departing from the earth, but he promises to prepare “a place” for believers in “my Father’s house” (14:2). The “house” and “home” imagery in chapter 14 portrays the familial relationship between the Father, the Son, and the believer; it pictures the family relationship inclusive of the people who love and obey the Son (14:15). M. Pamment associates these metaphors with the verb μένω which she translates as “abide, dwell, remain, stay.” This verb expresses a “residence” metaphor, or a “permanent relationship between a group of individuals;” the verb is key to the extended metaphor in chapter 15; for example, it is used three times in v. 4 (μείνατε, μένη and μένητε). Its cognate noun is found in 14:2 (μοναί) and 14:23 (μονήν).⁸⁴

In keeping with the residence metaphor, “my Father’s house” (τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου) is usually an image of the Jewish Temple, or of Jesus’ body (2:16).⁸⁵ However, the imagery in chapter 14 is different; this metaphor is not the Temple or representations of it. This “house” is somewhere where the Father and Son both reside and where the followers of Christ will be well received (14:2, 23). The use of future

⁸⁴ Margaret Pamment, “Path and Residence Metaphors in the Fourth Gospel,” *Theology* 88, no. 722 (1985): 118-24, p. 121.

⁸⁵ Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*, 932.

tenses in this chapter indicates that the “residence” is somewhere, sometime in the future. Verse 14:23 is an example:

ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ με τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσει καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ἀγαπήσει αὐτόν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔλευσόμεθα καὶ μοιῆν παρ αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα

To further Pamment’s observations, Keener connects the word *μοιῆ* (“home”) in 14:23 to the identical Greek word (translated “place”) in 14:2.⁸⁶ The interpretation of this symbolic “place” or “home” is debatable. Keener agrees that it is difficult to interpret: “This could be a Johannine double-entendre: a place in the Father’s house could mean dwelling in Christ, God’s temple, or entering God’s family through Christ the Son.”⁸⁷ It could mean both of these things. Yet in the context of the “going” (13:36; 14:2) and “coming” (14:3) and “being together” (14:3), it makes the most sense to see this ultimate “home” with God and Jesus as personal eschatology, or “language of future eschatology,”⁸⁸ when all believers will be “dwelling” (*μένω*) with the Father and the Son for eternity. Jesus makes it very clear that the disciples are not able to follow him to this “place” at that point in time (13:36), but someday they will be together (14:23). The imagery is expanded by Jesus with the addition of a related metaphor in 14:18: “I will not leave you as orphans;” (without a house, without a Father) “I will come to you.” In any event, the “residence” images in these verses are a comfort and a refuge for the readers who will dwell with God and Jesus forever. Thus, the “home” and “house” metaphors picture the future aspect of the “eternal life” promised to believers in 17:3 (see 3:16-18, 36).

⁸⁶ Ibid., 934.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 932.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

The familial imagery is found elsewhere in the Gospel, where many of the first disciples are referred to by Jesus as the “sons” of their earthly father: “Simon son of John” in 1:42, then again in 21:15; “the sons of Zebedee” (21:2); most noteworthy is “Judas Iscariot, son of Simon (13:1). Further, Jesus calls his inner circle of followers his “children” in 13:33. J. van der Watt draws our attention to the socio-cultural background of the father/son relationship in Hellenistic Judaism that is the background for the imagery. The imagery in John 8:39-41 relates directly to the same images used in the Farewell Discourses and in the final prayer. The leaders profess to be the “children of Abraham,” yet Jesus declares they are not Abraham’s children because they do not do the things Abraham did. Their behaviour reveals that someone else is their father. A person behaves in a particular way as a result of education, of seeing and following what his father does.⁸⁹ Jesus states that he speaks “just what the Father has taught me” (8:28); he has seen and heard the Father (8:26, 38, 40); he is sent by the Father to reveal what the Father has taught him (8:55). The followers of Jesus (with one exception) are educated to follow what Jesus taught them; they need to know that their behavior reveals who their Father is (15:6-8, 15).

The one exception is a related metaphor. The “son of perdition” in 17:12 is an image of those who are “lost.” This “son” first appears in 6:70-71 as the “betrayers,” then in 13:26, as “the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” In the OT tradition, this person represents those who reject God’s word and his redemption. This person is easily understood to be Judas Iscariot, but he is not directly named by the author of the text, leaving it open as a general symbol of evil and

⁸⁹ Van der Watt, "Ethics Alive," 424.

rejection of the Son of God. D. Beck proposes that the absence of a name or a label on a character makes the character more “universal” in the eyes of the readers.⁹⁰ Moreover, the readers can see the parallel symbolism of the “son” who destroys and the “Son” who saves. The contrasting metaphors of 17:12 are vivid: while Jesus, who is “the way, the truth and the life” (14:6), protects and keeps his own, the “son of perdition” is lost and is “doomed to destruction.”⁹¹ Judas is a “son” that reveals who his real “father” is in contrast to the disciples of Jesus who reveal who their real “Father” is.

E. Cluster of agricultural images

Chapter 15 is a cluster of agricultural (vineyard) images. The pictures in this chapter are creative and dramatic: “the vine” and the “the vinedresser” (15:1, 5), “bearing fruit” (15:2, 5, 8, 16), the concept of “pruning” or “cleansing” (15:2), and the picture of the “withered branch” that is “thrown away and burned” (15:6). Each of these images holds multiple meanings that could be debated in their own thesis, but our investigation will be brief. We will use chapter 15 as an illustration of the dependence of Johannine imagery on Old Testament, especially prophetic, images.

Using clear metaphors, Jesus presents himself as the “true vine” (*Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή*, 15:1, 5) and the Father is the “vine-dresser,” or gardener (*ὁ γεωργός* 15:1). Israel is depicted as a “vineyard” (*כַּרְמִי*, *τῶ ἀμπελῶνι*, Isa 5:1-6; 27:2-6) or a “vine” (*יָבֵן*, *τῆς ἀμπέλου*, Ps 80:8-16; Jer 2:21; 8:13; 12:10-11; Ezek 15:2-6; 17:5-10; 19:10-14; Hos 10:1). First, in portraying himself as the “true vine,” Jesus uses a

⁹⁰ Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the fourth Gospel*, 19. See Chapter 1 of this study.

⁹¹ On the metaphorical language of “the son of perdition,” see Black, “Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric,” 227-28.

prophetic image to declare that he is the true prophet and true redeemer of Israel. As such, his fruitfulness is evidence that he belongs to God; that is to say, the mission of Jesus is successful because he is God's representative.⁹² In a related image, Jesus declares that he is the vine and the believers are the branches (15:5). Here, a strong case can be made that the imagery of John 15:5 deliberately draws upon Ezekiel's imagery.⁹³ Jerusalem is pictured as a "useless vine, thrown into the fire...because they have been unfaithful" (Ezek 15:2-8). Jesus is saying that the believers are to be connected to him; he is their source, their nourishment, their roots, and their life. This is a picture of being "in Christ" (14:20; 15:4; 17:23).

The second image is of God as the "vinedresser" in 15:1 (*ὁ γεωργός*); this word is also used for a "farmer," or one who is a "cultivator, one who tills the soil."⁹⁴ He is willing to do what must be done in order to produce fruit. The vinedresser "prunes" or "cleanses" the vine, removing the branches that are unfruitful, and caring for those who are fruitful. The "allegory" in Ezek 17 features two eagles and a "vine" (vv. 5-21). In this passage, the figure of God, "Sovereign Lord," is one of judgment; he rebukes those who break the covenant and are unfaithful to him (vv. 18, 20). Yet it is also a picture of a God who is committed to care and concern for his own (vv. 22-24). As the "cultivator" of the nation, God warns of coming judgment against the unfaithful, and promises life to those who are faithful ("I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish," v. 24).

⁹² Marianne Meye Thompson, "Every Picture Tells a Story: Imagery for God in the Gospel of John," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John* (ed. Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 274.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 275.

⁹⁴ William and F. Wilbur Gingrich Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 157.

Thus, the extended imagery of “cleansing” (*καθαίρω*) or “pruning” in John 15:2 is a reminder of the judgment of Ezek 17. The “withered branch that is thrown away” is akin to the unfaithful ones in Ezek 17:9-10. The “cleansing,” then, is an act of giving life (Jn 15:2), and the result is that the “branches” who abide “bear fruit.” They do so because they remain attached to the vine and are cared for by the vinedresser. In the OT, the vine is faithful Israel for whom God has been cultivating and caring.⁹⁵ The metaphorical words of Jesus in John 15 use the OT imagery to indicate that the people who abide in him are faithful to believe in him, are cleansed and cared for by the Father, and will continue to carry the message of Jesus to others, “to my Father’s glory” (15:8; see 17:10, 21, 22).

F. Childbirth

The final image under consideration from the Farewell Discourses is the metaphor of the woman in labor in 16:21. Jesus employs this image to instruct and reassure his followers, then he helpfully explains the use of his metaphor and gives further meaning to his words (vv. 22-24). The image of labor pains and childbirth are present in the prophecy of Isaiah (26:17 and 66:7-11⁹⁶). In Isa 26:17, the people are in pain in the presence of God because they are unable to bring salvation to the earth; in chapter 66, it is the Lord who promises to bring about the salvation (“birth”) of the nation, his chosen people. He pledges to the nation joy, comfort and delight in abundance (66:10-11). The image of childbirth, then, is a metaphor for grief and pain, as well as blessing, hope and new life. For the followers of Jesus, there is grief and pain

⁹⁵ Thompson, “Every Picture Tells a Story,” 275-76.

⁹⁶ Hans Hübner, *Vetus Testamentum in Novo* (ed. Antje Labahn, Michael Labahn; vol. 1,2 Evangelium secundum Iohannem; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2003), 518.

in his coming death and resurrection. Yet, there is also joy and hope that lies beyond the immediate circumstances of the passion narrative.

On one level, the pain of childbirth is compared to the pain and grief of the disciples at the foot of the cross. On another level, there is also a connection between the joy of a new life and the joy of the resurrected Christ. Stibbe notes that the word “woman” is used in 16:21, which links it to the “woman,” the mother, who is near the cross (19:25-27).⁹⁷ Yet he neglects to detect the same image of a “woman” in the Isaiah passages, above. The connection with the Isaiah prophecies makes the image more vivid. The “woman” is the nation of Israel in pain, seeking but not achieving the needed salvation of the world. Ultimately, the salvation is accomplished by the pain and grief of Jesus on the cross. Finally, the image of birth appears in Jesus’ discussion with Nicodemus in 3:3-8. Here, the symbols of water and of the Spirit point to new spiritual birth, which are tied to the symbolism of new physical birth in 16:21.

The image of childbirth used by Jesus recalls an ordinary, yet a powerfully emotional picture from human life. The image powerfully suggests to the reader that Jesus brings the promised salvation to God’s people. His death is the beginning of their new life in God (17:3). As a woman reaches her “time” (of birth), there is a time for grief, which is followed by a time of joy (16:22). In spite of anguish and despair, God is faithful to comfort his people (Isa 66:11). As a result of the work of Jesus, the believer can experience a new relationship with the Father, and a new prayer life through the name of Jesus. At the appropriate “time,” a new mode of communication with the divine is available to the one who believes (16:23-26). Finally, Jesus has “overcome”

⁹⁷ Stibbe, *John*, 174.

the doubt, the fear, the grief and the pain, to grant peace and eternal life to those who believe (16:31-33).

Part 4. Imagery in the Prayer

A clearer understanding of the extensive imagery in the Farewell Discourses establishes a stylistic background for the prayer of John 17. Finding imagery in chapter 17 is not unusual considering how much is discovered in chapters 13 through 16. The prayer may be on the lips of Jesus, but it is a vehicle to see Jesus' life and ministry through the images used by the Gospel writer. The message, the mission, and the "good news" that is transmitted from the Father through the Son to the people are expressed in the form of intimate communication between the Father and the Son. The Gospel author uses language and imagery that engages his readers and is comprehensible to people of all times. As Black notes, the imagery is apparent in 17:14, where Jesus says, "I have given them your word," which is "John's sublime stylization of the word, imparted by the Word (1:1) and radiant with glory (17:22)."⁹⁸

In 16:29, the disciples finally exclaim to Jesus, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech!" Ironically, the readers are aware that the disciples do not really understand all that is happening and all that is about to happen to them and to Jesus. Be that as it may, after his final dialogue with his followers in 16:29-31, there is less figurative language used by Jesus in his discourse. Because the prayer in chapter 17 appears to be written in fairly "plain language" (16:29), there are images and figurative language in the prayer that have been overlooked by many previous interpreters. The

⁹⁸ Black, "Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric," 229.

imagery in the prayer contributes to the epideictic (or up-lifting and persuasive) style used by the author to reach his audience.

A. Filial imagery (Father/Son)

This may be repetitive, but the most significant metaphorical language in the prayer is a picture of the intimate relationship between God and Jesus, portrayed as a Father/Son relationship. We have already noted the familial imagery apparent in the Farewell Discourses; now the relationship of the Father and the Son culminates in the prayer of John 17. Jesus' true identity is presented metaphorically; he is like a son, loving and obeying the will of the father. In the same manner, the identity of God is revealed metaphorically in Jesus' prayer. God is like a father who protects and loves his children (from 1:12-13). Yet it is the extraordinary unity of the Father and the Son that is highlighted in the prayer. The divine reciprocal relationship is unique and difficult to explain in human language; thus, a filial metaphor is used. Earlier in the Gospel, Jesus says that "I and the Father are one" (10:30); this unity is expanded and explained in the language and imagery of John 17.

The "oneness" of Jesus and God is declared in the Father/Son image. The Gospel author uses "Father" about 120 times, more often than the other three Gospels combined, illustrating that "Father" is the central metaphor or image for God in the Gospel.⁹⁹ Often the images of God the Father are "transferred and applied directly to Jesus," the Son: "King of Israel," 2:49; "Holy One of God," 6:69; "I am," 8:58; "Lord," 13:13; 20:28; "shepherd," 10:11, 14; Ps. 23.¹⁰⁰ This implies a similarity in nature and in

⁹⁹ Thompson, "Every Picture Tells a Story," 270.

¹⁰⁰ Zimmermann, "Imagery in John," 37.

character between the Father and the Son, and an intrinsic bond between God and Jesus, while maintaining their own distinctive identities.¹⁰¹ The images of the Father and the Son, clearly representing a well-known, loving human relationship, express human life, human love, and human actions in a manner that can be comprehended by the readers, while they represent an intimate divine unity. As M. Thompson states,

Whether the imagery is used uniquely for God (“Father”) or describes God implicitly as one who provided life through the Son (“bread”), the imagery seldom pictures God without simultaneously including Jesus in the picture, even if only implicitly.¹⁰²

An understanding of the verbal interchange between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in John 8 leads the reader to a better understanding of the filial imagery Jesus uses in chapter 17. Jesus’ use of the filial imagery featured in John 8 speaks directly to the human reader, portraying what it means to be human (anthropology) in relationship to the divine. That is, the human “child” reflects the essence of his/her “Father” (Jn 8:39-41; 17:21-22). Jesus says that the “glory” he is given as the Son of God will be given to believers (17:22-24), who are in God’s family, or are “children of God” (1:12-13). Those who follow the words and teachings of Jesus are set free to be in the household of God.

In John 17, the Father is the “only true God,” and the Son is “Jesus Christ whom you [the Father] sent” (17:3). Unlike the “father of lies,” the words of Father God are “truth” (v. 17). Metaphorically speaking, the presentation of God as “Father” is not so much a description of who God is, as it is a picture of the relationship that exists

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 38.

¹⁰² Thompson, “Every Picture Tells a Story,” 259.

between God and Jesus, and the relationship God has with people who believe in Jesus as the Son.¹⁰³ The close bonding is transferred from the Father and the Son to the human believer. The extraordinary filial relationship broadens to include a “family” of people who believe the message of Jesus, so that “all of them may be one, Father just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (17:21).

Participation in the familial images gives a sense of value and worth to those people who are (metaphorically) “given” to the Son “out of the world” (17:6). For the reader, the family relationship imagery in John 17 is a promise and a position. The believing reader is placed into the family of God and is promised “eternal life” (17:3), or life with God, forever. The images of the Father and the Son can become a portrait of a new community that is established by and in Christ himself; the faithful followers become a “family of mothers, sons, brothers and sisters.”¹⁰⁴

Imagery tells a story; it presents God as the God of Israel, creator and source of life, who loves and cares for his people, and who ultimately determines to bring them salvation and life through Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of the God. This story is told through the imagery of the Father and the Son.¹⁰⁵

B. Old Testament Imagery: the “Holy Father” and the “Holy One of Israel”

Moreover, God is not just a “Father;” he is a “Holy Father” and a “Righteous Father” (17:11, 25). Derived from the Old Testament and from Isaiah in particular, there are two images of God in John 17 that reassure and encourage the readers of the prayer. Previously, scholars have understood these two titles for God in John 17 as descriptive

¹⁰³ Ibid., 273.

¹⁰⁴ Zimmermann, “Imagery in John,” 41.

¹⁰⁵ Thompson, “Every Picture Tells a Story,” 276-77.

of his divine attributes, that is, that he is holy and righteous.¹⁰⁶ Yet, these epithets are symbolic of what God does, not simply what he is; the symbolic nature of these titles has been ignored or disregarded by past research on John 17..

Certainly God is holy and righteous; it almost goes without saying that the reader of John's Gospel probably knew this about God and did not have to be told that God is characteristically holy and righteous. Further, it would not be necessary for Jesus to tell his Father of his divine attributes in a prayer. Therefore, the titles in John 17 are not describing the characteristics of God for the reader as much as they are expressing God's actions, plans and promises. The epithets reveal in metaphorical language God's relationship with Jesus and with those people whom he has redeemed.

The solitary title, "Holy Father" (πάτερ ἅγιε) is a symbol of the Redeemer of Israel and the intimate Father; it is a combination of the OT title "Holy One of Israel" in Isaiah and the Johannine imagery of "Father." It is a new and extraordinary glimpse into the plan and work of God through the lens of his agent, his Son.

A comprehensive study of the "Holy Father" began in Chapter 1 and continues on in Chapter 4 of this study. Most important here, however, is that the strength of this epithet is, indeed, in its symbolism. The symbolic use of "Holy Father" has rich and powerful implications for the reader of the prayer; it is a symbol of the powerful Redeemer and the loving Father. God acts in the manner of the "Holy One of Israel," redeeming, caring, keeping, saving, comforting, and loving his people, with the addition

¹⁰⁶ Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian*, 60. Also, Lindars, *The Gospel of John; New Century Bible Commentary*, 532. William Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel* (London: Macmillan, 1952), 318. R. Bultmann writes, "Heiligkeit bedeutet ja Entweltlichung. Und dem entspricht die Anrede 'heiliger Vater!'" Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 384.

of the intimacy and immediacy of the familiar title of “Father.” As a combination of the OT title “Holy One of Israel” from Isaiah and the familiar Johannine title “Father,” it bears all the meaning and significance of both titles. To the readers, a combination of these two is assurance that he is far more than able to love, to save and to protect them.

The presence of “Holy Father” in extra-canonical literature, which is rare, supports the fact that the title is used in early Christian circles. It may have been a title that developed within the early Christian church that was based on the prophetic use of “Holy One of Israel” in Isaiah. In the *Didache* (10:2), “Holy Father” is used as an address in the context of a eucharistic prayer and thanksgiving and related to his name.¹⁰⁷ Its use in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (the *TJud*, 24:2) has eschatological overtones: “And the heavens will be opened to him to pour out the blessing of the spirit of the Holy Father, and he will pour out the spirit of grace upon you.”¹⁰⁸ In the *TJud* 24, the messianic figure (Jesus) is the agent for the grace of the Father given to the believing ones.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, the unusual use of “Holy Father” is symbolic of the salvific activity of the “Holy Father” and is linked to the activities of the Son. It supports the symbolic use of the title associated with God’s power to bring about redemption for this people, and his grace to even consider doing so, through the person and mission of his Son.

C. Old Testament Imagery: “Righteous Father”

¹⁰⁷ Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 261. Also see Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 384, f.n. 4; Bultmann notes extra-biblical uses of the epithet, but he does not mention its use in *TJud*.

¹⁰⁸ Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 801. See also Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody: Hendrickson 2005), 40.

¹⁰⁹ H. W. Hollander and M. De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs; A Commentary* (SVTP, vol. 8, Leiden: Brill, 1985), 226-227.

The unusual title of “Righteous Father” (*πάτερ δίκαιε*, 17:25) is also unique to this prayer. As with the “Holy Father,” it demonstrates more of God’s actions than his attributes. The title shows not so much his nature as a righteous and faithful God, but symbolically, it represents a God who acts righteously and is committed to his people.¹¹⁰ It is symbolic of God’s plan of salvation and deliverance to renew and redeem his people. Again, this unusual epithet is discussed in both Chapters 1 and 4 of this thesis.

In terms of its symbolism, “Righteous Father” also has its roots in the Isaianic prophecies. The “righteousness” (“rightness”) and the “salvation” (or “deliverance”) of the Lord are paired closely together in the first eight verses of Isa 51(vv. 5, 6, 8). If the people pay attention and heed his words, God promises to bless those who “pursue rightness” (v. 1). He grants them his laws, his justice, his righteousness and his salvation (v. 4). His “salvation will last forever,” and his “righteousness will never fail” (v. 6). Moreover, “joy and gladness” will be found (vv. 3); “sorrow and sighing will flee away” (v. 11).

In the second part of the chapter (51:9-16), it is the righteousness of the Lord that saves his people from destruction. The Lord promises to act righteously, saving his people, comforting them (v. 12), and “covering you with the shadow of my hand” (v. 16). His commitment is eternal; his “righteousness” and his “salvation will last forever” for those who are “my people” (vv. 6, 8, 16).

Elsewhere ‘pursuing right’ might suggest an ethical commitment, but in Second Isaiah – especially when ‘right’ is

¹¹⁰ Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian*, 61. Painter misses the point in saying that, “‘Righteous Father’ has more the meaning of ‘Faithful Father.’ Everything depends on God’s faithfulness.” See Chapter 1 of this study.

sedeq – it will rather describe people who are pressing for Yhwh to act to deliver them.¹¹¹

Moreover, Isaiah 32 presents the “kingdom of righteousness,” for those people who return to the Lord. Verses 3-5 are a positive response to Isa 6:10, which is used of the stubborn, unbelieving people in John 12:40. The “king will reign in righteousness And the fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever” (Isa 32:1, 17; see John 14:27; 16:33). This is another assurance for the readers of John’s Gospel, that Jesus is the Messiah from God and is the fulfillment of the Isaianic promises. Though the world has doubts, those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah can know and be assured of God’s continued righteous acts of love, salvation and comfort (17:25-26). The “Righteous Father” is symbolic of the ultimate plan of God for the salvation and righteousness of his people through the Son.¹¹²

Thus, the two titles for God used in chapter 17 symbolize the eternal plan and work of God which is completed through Jesus (17:4). Previous Johannine scholarship has not investigated the symbolism of these titles in depth. God’s plan of redemption, salvation, sanctification and unity with his “children” can be perceived in what he has done in the past, and what he continues to do in the present and what he promises to do in the future. While God the Father is holy and righteous, his plan is to save and redeem his faithful people so they, too, can be holy and righteous. Because he is holy and righteous, the believer is holy and righteous. This transference is made possible by the

¹¹¹John and David Payne Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40-55* (ICC; ed. G. N. Stanton, G. I. Davies, J. A. Emerton and C. E. B. Cranfield; Vol 2 of 2 vols.; London: T&T Clark International [Continuum], 2006), 222.

¹¹²See also, Hollander and De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 185. These scholars connect the “God of righteousness” in *TJud* 22:2b-3 with the Messiah who brings peace and power of God’s kingdom to all the nations.

completed work of the Son on earth, the unity of the Father and the Son, and the unity of the believer with the Father and the Son. As D.A. Black writes,

oneness is not a dormant attribute of God, but rather God's power to unite and reconcile those hostile to him and to each other. By its very existence, the church manifests God's [holy and righteous] nature to the world."¹¹³

D. The Name of God

The use of the "name" of God (17:11-12) is closely associated with the familial symbolism and the symbolism associated with the titles of "Holy Father" and "Righteous Father." The "name" of God represents all his power, all his promises, his plan and his position. The "name" is the nature and character of both the Father and the Son, expressed in their reciprocal love for each other (17:11, 23). Further, Jesus is the embodiment of the divine "name" on earth (17:11). He manifests all the characteristics of God among his followers (16:15; 17:10).¹¹⁴ Symbolically, the name of God is the divine power to redeem, save and protect the believers from the nature and character of the unbelieving "world" around them. Isa 52:6 says, "Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I."¹¹⁵

Finally, Van der Watt reminds us that,

In a patriarchal society the fathers, as the representatives of the family group, were the carriers of the tradition of the family that actually represented the 'character' of that particular family. This 'character' as expressed in the customs and traditions of the family, was highly regarded as something to protect and desire. The child was therefore under social (and religious, Exod 20:12)

¹¹³ Black, "On the Style and Significance." 155-156.

¹¹⁴ See Hurtado's discussion on the nature of the Father and the Son in Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ; Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*.

¹¹⁵ Also, note the reference to "glory" in Isa 42:8: "I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols."

pressure to obey the father in order to protect and extend the character of the family.¹¹⁶

Thus, the followers of Jesus, the “children of God” (1:12-13) are to carry on his name, his characteristics, his glory and his remarkable relationship with his Father.

E. Glory

The theme of glory is prevalent from the beginning of the Gospel; in this Gospel, the fullness of the word “glory” is symbolic. The Prologue tells the readers that “the Word became flesh...and we have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (1:14). What did they see? What is “his glory?” Kelber states that there is a dichotomy between the “glory” of Jesus and his incarnation:

The ‘*sarx/doxa*’ dichotomy articulates the problematics of contingency and transparency. To deliver the truth the *Logos* has to enter the realm of the flesh, but if he truly becomes flesh (*sarx egeneto*), his *doxa* was to be concealed at best, and extinguished at worst. So he can either ‘become flesh’ and forego glory, or reflect glory and deny the flesh.¹¹⁷

Why must it be an either/or situation? Can he not reflect his divine nature in the flesh? The Gospel witnesses must have seen “flesh,” while they “saw his glory.” By definition (see above), the symbol of glory can be perceived (1:14); it is perceived in the presence of a human man. On one side, Jesus asks the Father to “glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you” *on earth* (17:1); yet Jesus shared in the divine nature with the Father since “the world began,” *in heaven* (17:5, 24). Jesus has brought glory to the Father by completing his mission *on earth* (17:4), yet he wants his followers “to see his glory” *in*

¹¹⁶ Van der Watt, “Ethics Alive,” 427.

¹¹⁷ Werner H. Kelber, “In the Beginning were the Words: The Apotheosis and Narrative Displacement of the Logos,” *JAAR* 58, no. 1 (1990): 69-98, p. 93.

heaven (17:24). While glory has been given to the Son by believing people *on earth* (17:10) by their recognition of his divine status, Jesus gives people the glory that the Father gave to him *in heaven* (17:22). There is tension in the text if we do not read the “glory” as symbolic of both the earthly and the heavenly.

In Jesus’ final prayer, “glory” becomes a symbol of the divine nature of God that has entered into the world as the human Son. The symbol of Jesus’ “glory” is his completed work; it is his crucifixion, death, and resurrection. It is his role of teacher, revealer and redeemer on earth packaged together with his “heavenly,” eternal divine nature. In the view of the author of John, it is the knowledge of this two-pronged symbol of glory that leads to belief in Jesus as the Son of God (20:30).¹¹⁸

F. Symbolic Prayer

The prayer, in its entirety, is an image. It is a picture of the intimate communication between the Father and the Son that is now available to the believers (14:12-14; 16:23-24). Never before the death and resurrection of Jesus did the believer have such an opportunity to enjoy such a close communication with the Father; but since the completed mission of the Son, communication is more open and accessible (16:23-27). Chapter 17 is a perceptible, audible example of that intimacy promised to the believer (17:23).

If the imagery of the Fourth Gospel is, in fact, the primary means by which the author presents his Christology,¹¹⁹ then the imagery of the prayer is the climax of the

¹¹⁸ On “glory,” see Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, 62. The given explanation of the symbolic “glory” in John 17 varies considerably from Painter’s explanation: Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian*, 58-59.

¹¹⁹ Thompson, “Every Picture Tells a Story,” 259.

identity of Jesus as the Son of God, and his completed mission on earth (17:1-5). Yet, if the imagery speaks to the readers about themselves, revealing Johannine anthropology, then the imagery of the last prayer is the final promise of Jesus that “eternal life” (life with God), is theirs (17:3, 24). On one level, the prayer uncovers the vehicle of redemption that has been sent by the Father, and he is among them (1:14). On another level, the prayer portrays the position of the believers, their everlasting position in the “family” of God (1:12-13). It is a permanent reminder of the intimate relationship of the Father, Son and believer, and a picture of the immediate communication with the divinity available to those who believe.

Conclusion

“Images are the language of that which cannot be spoken. Images can put into words that which cannot be expressed in any other way.”¹²⁰ This is why the writer of the Fourth Gospel presents his story of Jesus in a lofty, grand style of rhetoric. The style of the Gospel is “sublime,” rhetorical and symbolic. The Farewell Discourses are presented in a didactic style that is heuristic and authoritative, often expressed in symbolic or metaphoric language. The prayer of John 17 is presented in a grand, poetic, epideictic rhetoric that communicates assurance and encouragement to the reader. Although there are numerous figures of speech and rhetorical devices apparent in the Gospel, this chapter focuses on the profusion of metaphors and symbols that paint a picture for the readers in the Farewell Discourses and in the prayer of chapter 17. In contrast to most investigations of the Johannine style that focus on theology and

¹²⁰ Zimmermann, "Imagery in John," 42.

Christology, this chapter has investigated how the imagery reveals Johannine anthropology, or how the imagery extols and challenges the readers to see themselves in relation to God and to Jesus.

Chapter 4

Investigation of the Genre of the Gospel and the Farewell Discourses

“Now choose life....for the Lord is your life.” *Deut. 30:19-20*

Introduction

Having identified the prayer of John 17 as a strategic part of a whole, it is important to understand the “whole.” This fourth chapter draws conclusions about the type of literature we are reading in the Fourth Gospel and, more specifically, the type of literature in chapters 13 through 17 of the Gospel. What is of interest in this chapter, and the one to follow, is the *kind* of literature we are reading, and how a certain type of literature speaks to the reader. Immediately following this chapter (in Chapter 5), the form of the prayer itself will be considered because it functions as the conclusion to the Farewell Discourses.

This chapter principally has two parts: the first part recognizes that the Gospel of John belongs to the ancient biographical genre of literature. This is a rather brief discussion, pointing out how the genre of the entire Gospel affects our reading and understanding of the Farewell Discourses and, in particular, the prayer of chapter 17. The primary purpose of the Gospel is the transmission of the life and ministry of Jesus, yet it is also a proclamation of the words of Jesus rhetorically communicated to persuade the readers of the Gospel. The second part of this chapter is a discussion of the plausible types of literature found in the Farewell Discourses, chapters 13 through 17. While the foundational genre of John 13-17 is the Hebrew farewell testament, it includes aspects from Greco-Roman rhetorical literature. Our investigation makes known that chapters

13-17 do not belong to just one strict genre of literature, but are a combination of elements of several types of literature. The composition of the Farewell Discourses is an example of an adaptation of a literary genre for the purpose of better communication to the reading audience. Finally, in close connection to this chapter, the related question of the *form* of the prayer as the conclusion to the Farewell Discourses will be considered in the following chapter of this study. Suffice it to say here that the prayer of John 17 is a part of a larger, complex genre of literature that has been revised and adapted by the author for his own purposes.

This investigation is a study of different types of literature, and is a helpful tool in answering relevant questions about the final prayer of Jesus in John 17. At this point, our key questions pertain to the entire Gospel and to the Farewell Discourses. What kind of literature is the Gospel of John? What is the genre of the section of literature from chapters 13 to chapter 17, and how does it function within the entire Gospel? What is the author communicating to the readers through his choice of genre presented? How do the Farewell Discourses inform the reader? Why is the recognition of the genre of the Farewell Discourses important to our understanding of the final climactic prayer?

An understanding of the “kind” or *genre* of a piece of literature helps to determine the function of a text for the reader. Generally, literary genre is not so much the structure of a text; it is internal clues chosen by an author to reveal how he/she presents his/her material to the audience. A particular genre has features, indications, and conventions that are signals to the reader about the type of literature being written or heard. Most often in critical literary analysis, *genre* is a term used for larger works of

literature, such as drama or science-fiction or satire.¹ For example, the genre of a complete NT Gospel writing may be considered a “*bios*,” or an ancient biographical writing,² or a “narrative story.”³ However, the internal “clues” or literary elements found in a piece of writing may change and vary from author to author, over time and between cultures. Rules that determine literary genre are not set in stone; an author may intentionally change and adapt a known genre to fit his/her own purposes. The genre of a given text may be very obvious (like a Shakespeare poem), or implied or difficult to discern. M. Davies is correct in her observations:

The sense of the text must be shared by author and readers for meaning to be communicated, and just as language cannot be used arbitrarily if it is to make sense, so the literary form must be comprehensible...nor is genre a static entity. Motifs and vocabulary can be borrowed from an old genre to create a new genre, as when history is transformed into a novel.⁴

Further, terminology can be confusing, so it seems important to define how these terms are used in this thesis. M. Stibbe suggests that the Fourth Gospel (like the other NT Gospels) can be divided up into a variety of genres, such as the parable or the pronouncement story.⁵ Thus, he places smaller units of text into the category of a genre. In this study, I prefer to call the smaller units of text *forms* (e.g., a poem or a hymn). That is to say, the prayer is a *form* of literature within the *genre* of the Farewell Discourses, which is a unit found within the *genre* of the Gospel itself. Ideally, the form

¹ “A literary type or category; kind or style of a literary, musical or artistic work.” *The Chambers Dictionary*, 669. See also, Richard A. Burridge, “Who writes, Why, and for Whom?,” in *The Written Gospel* (ed. Markus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), and Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*.

² Burridge, “Who writes, Why, and for Whom?,” 113. See also Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

³ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 8.

⁴ Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference*, 67.

⁵ Stibbe, *John*, 13.

of a smaller unit complements and adds to the purpose and message of the larger unit as a whole. With these distinctions in mind, we can briefly investigate the genre of the complete Gospel.

Part 1. Genre of Gospel

The recognized genre of the four NT Gospels continues to be debated among modern scholars. In a recent book, *The Written Gospel*, numerous authors discuss the issues of how to define and restrict the “gospel” genre, and how the gospel genre affects our reading of the four accounts of Jesus’ life and ministry. Richard Burridge’s position that the NT Gospels fall into the category of the “Greco-Roman *bios*” is well-founded and convincing.⁶ He places the Gospels in the “biographical genre,” proposing they were written “by some people to explain to others why Jesus of Nazareth is so important.”⁷ Further, M. Hengel observes that the NT Gospels are proclamations by early Christians, testimonies that recognize and confess Jesus as the Son of God, in unity with the Father (John 20:31). The ancient authors are both “narrators of history” and “witnesses of faith,” a faith that is, and always has been, dependent upon historical traditions.⁸

The Gospel is a story; it is events, concepts, people, emotions, drama, interpretations, arguments and discourse all strategically placed in a narrative form. Most basically, the story of Jesus, his life, his message, his death and resurrection, is the basic foundation for the four-fold written accounts. The “gospel,” or the “good news”

⁶ Burridge, “Who writes, Why, and for Whom?”

⁷ Ibid., 115. Bauckham also discusses the Gospels as “ancient Greco-Roman biographies (*bioi*).” He stresses that the early Christian readers were “interested in the genuinely past history of Jesus because they regarded it as *religiously relevant*” (his italics). Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 276-78.

⁸ Martin Hengel, “Eyewitness Memory and the Writing of the Gospels,” in *The Written Gospel* (ed. Markus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 96.

(*τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*, Mark 1:1) of Jesus Christ is the framework of the Gospel narrative accounts, but each story is presented in a slightly different manner.

The genre discussion extends past the canonical Gospels to other written gospels. The Fourth Gospel is both similar to and different from the canonical Synoptic Gospels. Beyond the canonical comparisons, some researchers have compared the Fourth Gospel to other gospel traditions, such as the *Gospel of Thomas*, and later apocryphal traditions. Similarities have been observed to Hellenistic or Greco-Roman literature, though in recent years its affinity to Jewish literature is gaining strength.⁹ Some researchers have regarded John's Gospel as a biography written in the genre of Greek drama, especially "using the mode of tragedy."¹⁰ With Keener, the Gospel is not a formal dramatic play, but it certainly includes dramatic features.¹¹ Finally, there are those who name the genre of the Gospel based on its theological contents. Davies, for example, determines that John's Gospel

...is a *theodicy*, a vindication of divine providence in view of the existence of evil. But the theology is focused in the portrait of one man, Jesus, whose death, as well as his teachings and miracles, provides knowledge of God and of human destiny.¹²

For the purpose of this thesis, the most plausible genre category for the Gospel is the ancient biographical genre. It is a story of Jesus, with all its dramatic, theological and heuristic overtones, written creatively by a purposeful author, for an intended audience. It is the intended audience, the receivers of the story, which captures our

⁹ Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*, 34.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10; with Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 3.

¹¹ Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*, 11.

¹² Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference*, 89.

attention in this thesis. Jackson believed that “the real hearers of the Johannine Christ, it might be truly said, are the readers of the Fourth Gospel.”¹³

As we investigate the genre of the Farewell Discourses within the Gospel, it will become more evident that the Johannine author modified and adapted recognized literary genres to fit his own intentions and objectives. If modern scholars have had a difficult time placing the Fourth Gospel into a strict literary category, it is even more difficult to place the Farewell Discourses into one recognizable genre category. The author of John’s Gospel employs forms and genres that he deems best to communicate the “good news” about Jesus in a “book,” to accomplish his main goal: so “that you [the intended readers/audience] may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (20:31).

Part 2. Genre of the Farewell Discourses

H. Attridge enters the genre debate by suggesting that genre analysis of the Johannine Gospel is “a version of form criticism.”¹⁴ To some extent, that is true. Scrutiny of the entire Gospel is easier if the reader can identify the various literary forms found in the text. The discourse sections of the Gospel, for example, prove to be an interesting mixture of monologues, dialogues, instructions, dramatic encounters, controversies, and even parable-like material.¹⁵ Attridge notes that the author of the Fourth Gospel “plays” with words and literary conventions:

...extending them, undercutting them, twisting traditional elements into new and curious shapes, making literary forms do things that did not come naturally to them...Words of farewell

¹³ Jackson, *The Problem of the Fourth Gospel*, 74.

¹⁴ Harold W. Attridge, "Genre Bending in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 121, no. 1 (2002): 3-21, p. 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

become words of powerful presence; words of prayer negate distance between worshiper and God; words that signify shame, death on a cross, become words that enshrine value, allure disciples, give a command, and glorify God.¹⁶

As a result, efforts to place the Farewell Discourses into any one formal category or genre prove to be difficult, although it is both necessary and beneficial to determine the kind of literature we read in the text.

As a place to begin, E. Käsemann established the background for the genre of the Farewell Discourses in his landmark book where he regards chapter 17 as a “farewell speech:”

In the composition of chapter 17, the Evangelist undoubtedly used a literary device which is common in world literature and employed by Judaism as well as by New Testament writers. It is the device of the farewell speech of a dying man. Its Jewish antecedents are represented by the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Within the New Testament this device is found in the farewell speech of Paul to the elders of Ephesus in Miletus (Acts 20).¹⁷

Käsemann’s words set the stage for our investigation into the farewell speech genre *per se*, as well as our investigations into the other examples of this genre found in Jewish literature. In addition, our research must extend beyond noted Hebraic “farewell speeches” to similar (but not identical) Greco-Roman “farewell addresses” as well. Following Käsemann, is the Johannine farewell speech patterned after ancient Jewish speeches? On the other hand, was the author more influenced by recognized Greco-Roman literature patterns of his day? Could it be combination of both?

¹⁶ Ibid., 20.

¹⁷ Käsemann, *Testament*, 4.

At first reading, the words of Jesus in chapters 13 through 17 may resemble a farewell speech of someone (usually a renowned leader) who is departing from this earth, and who is concerned about the people left behind. Yet some of the discourse material included by the Johannine author varies considerably from other examples of the farewell address. In terms of the best genre for the Farewell Discourses, we can narrow the plausible options; John 13-17 may be written in the mode of:

- a) the ancient Jewish farewell speech,
- b) other NT farewell speeches,
- c) ancient Greco-Roman literature,
- d) the genre of the biblical farewell testament, or
- e) the testamental genre of the extra-biblical literature.

Let us look at these options more closely.

A. Jewish Farewell Speeches

The first consideration is that John 13-17 is written in the mode of the early Jewish farewell speech, a literary genre found in both biblical and extra-biblical literature. At first glance, this category is very appealing, but our study reveals that it is inadequate in describing John 13-17. Chapter 13, for example, includes some important events (the foot-washing and the betrayal) as well as discourse; thus, it is more than a speech. Additionally, there are examples of dialogue in chapters 13 and 14, so the entire section cannot be considered a soliloquy of Jesus alone. Another difficulty is that Jesus assures his followers that he is *not* deserting them; unlike other heroes, Jesus is not leaving his people forever (14:18). As D. Bock points out, John 13-17 is a very unique “farewell,” because “Jesus does not die to depart permanently;” so the final words of

Jesus are not final.¹⁸ Language such as 14:3, 18 and 28 imply a perpetual presence of Jesus with his followers, which is unusual for a “farewell speech.” The “parable” of John 15 is about abiding, not leaving.¹⁹ The diversity of exhortations and topics in these five chapters makes the pericope appear to be much more than a brief “good-bye” speech. Finally and most important, the typical Jewish farewell speeches rarely end in a prayer:

In the farewell discourses, which were a widespread literary form in the ancient world, there is a distinction between the ‘last words of famous men’ which was a favourite form in pagan antiquity, and exhortatory discourse and testaments in the Bible and Judaism. Yet even in the farewell discourses of patriarchs and in similar discourses, prayers are found relatively seldom.²⁰

Despite the apparent difficulties, Brown considers the “Last Discourse (13:31 through 17:26)” to be written in the “farewell speech” genre.²¹ Jesus formally ends his Last Supper with the disciples with the discourses and a prayer, preparing them for his imminent death. With others, Brown believes that Jesus’ speeches are an example of a well-established literary pattern of “attributing to famous men farewell speeches delivered before death.”²² Brown demonstrates a close parallel between key elements of OT farewell speeches and Jesus’ last discourses, concluding that the last discourses of Jesus do in fact belong to the literary genre of the farewell speech.²³ Brown considers

¹⁸ Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*, 497.

¹⁹ Attridge, “Genre Bending in the Fourth Gospel,” 17.

²⁰ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 198.

²¹ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 598-601.

²² *Ibid.*, 598.

²³ *Ibid.*, 600.

the composition of the discourses to be closer to the Hebrew model than to the “pagan” speech models.²⁴

In response to Käsemann’s monograph on John 17, G. Bornkamm argues that the departure of Jesus is not an ending; it is a “breakthrough,” a revelation of God in a new way that holds the future open for the faithful. This is the central theme of the farewell discourses.²⁵ Bornkamm writes that in John 13-17, Jesus leaves promises, not a legacy. He promises not to leave his followers “as orphans” (14:18); he promises the presence of and the guidance of the Paraclete (14:16-17; 16:7-15); he even promises, in paradoxical language, that “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me” (16:16). These are not the words of a person departing forever from his “friends” (15:14).²⁶

Following Käsemann, F. F. Segovia sees John 13-17 as a “testamental farewell type-scene, the testament or farewell of a hero who is about to die, not unlike other biblical heroes.”²⁷ Segovia recognizes that such farewells were common in Jewish literature, but the contents of John’s discourses are very different in light of the Christian message. It is this Christian message that distinguishes John’s farewell speeches. Segovia carefully analyzes the farewell speeches of Jesus as a whole (13:31-16:33), but “deliberately excludes the speech’s climactic farewell prayer in John 17.”²⁸ By doing so, (with Brown and Lindars) Segovia overlooks a strong thematic and linguistic

²⁴ Ibid., 601. But, see Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 420-23.

²⁵ Günther Bornkamm, “Towards the Interpretation of John’s Gospel: A Discussion of *The Testament of Jesus* by Ernst Käsemann,” in *The Interpretation of John* (ed. John Ashton, *Studies in New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Robert Morgan; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997 [1986]), 97-99.

²⁶ Ibid., 104.

²⁷ F. F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word; a Johannine Call to Abide* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 20.

²⁸ Ibid.

connection between the discourses and the prayer. On the other hand, he posits two “epilogues” (16:29-33 and all of 17) to the farewell speeches, with chapter 17 providing a conclusion to the entire unit.²⁹ This is confusing and awkward, leaving us with a question about the necessity of two epilogues for an already complex literary unit. If the author of the speeches merely wanted to “wrap up” what was just said, one short “epilogue” would have sufficed. Also, the form of a long prayer would not have been a necessity.³⁰

E. Bammel states that the farewell discourses in John reflect the early *Gattung* (“genre”) of the “Jewish Farewell Speeches (*Abschiedsrede*).” He notes that “the farewell motif” was “the most popular literary genre in the time of Jesus.”³¹ It is in the *Abschiedsrede* passages of the Old Testament that the past heroes of the Israelite nation are remembered (“those who have gone on before”), the works of God (YHWH) are recounted, and warnings and future predictions are given.³² He reviews numerous examples of the farewell speech genre which are found in both the Old Testament and in intertestamental literature, noting the differences between the Jewish genre and the Farewell Discourses. As an example, the Jewish speeches emphasize the history of God’s dealings with the nation of Israel, and this theme is absent in the farewell speeches of Jesus in John’s Gospel. Considering similarities and differences, Bammel concludes that there is a lack of evidence for literary *dependency* on the part of the

²⁹ Ibid., 35.

³⁰ Ibid., 46.

³¹ Ernst Bammel, “The Farewell Discourse of the Evangelist John and its Jewish Heritage,” *TynBul* 44.1 (1993): 103-16, p. 104.

³² Ibid., 113.

author of the Fourth Gospel on the older Jewish writings, but the similarities are not to be overlooked.³³

Bammel also raises the possible use of the *Tischgespräch* (or “table conversation”) genre. An ordinary or a celebratory meal was a common setting for the speech of an important person in Greek literature; this is also true of the Jewish Passover meal celebration.³⁴ Similar to the *Abschiedsrede*, festive meal celebrations were concluded with two important aspects: the act of remembering, or looking back at the past, and the promises of a better future. We will encounter this meal celebration theme again, below, in our discussion of the possible Greco-Roman cultural impact on the Farewell Discourses.

Thus, Bammel is correct in seeing ancient Jewish literature as foundational to the entire section called the Farewell Discourses, chapters 13 through 17. Bammel’s proposition of the development of the Jewish farewell speeches from the literature of the Old Testament through the intertestamental writings has merit. He is correct in that “the Jewish material is partly used like stones from a quarry,” laying a foundation for the Johannine farewell material.³⁵ The early Jewish farewell speech, the *Abschiedsrede*, may be the initial foundation for the discourses; but indeed, John 13-17 is something more than a farewell speech of an ancient hero. The Johannine author has changed and expanded this genre to fit his purposes. Supplementary research uncovers evidence of other literary genres that are a factor in the existing presentation of chapters 13-17.

³³ Ibid., 114.

³⁴ Ibid., 108. On Greek meal celebrations, see George L. Parsenios, *Departure and Consolation: The Johannine Farewell Discourses in Light of Greco-Roman Literature* (NovTSup; ed. M. M. Mitchell and D. P. Moessner; vol. 117; Leiden: Brill, 2005).

³⁵ Ibid., 116.

B. Other NT Farewell Speeches

Considering the older, background farewell speech material, can we compare John 13-17 to other farewell speeches in the NT writings? Turning to the New Testament, Bammel would classify Luke 9:31 and 22:28ff as farewell addresses, as well as Paul's speech at Miletus in Acts 20:17-35, and even 2 Peter (chapter 3).³⁶ In agreement, W. Kurz compares John 13-17 to the two suggested farewell addresses in Acts 20 and Luke 22. His evaluation of the NT farewell speech passages is slanted toward a Roman Catholic interpretation, which emphasizes the leadership of Peter and places an emphasis on the eucharistic tone of Luke's Gospel.

Kurz outlines common elements in the OT farewell addresses which resurface in the NT addresses. These elements include,

...the recognition of the imminent death or final departure, instructions for the time after the speaker's departure, predictions and warnings, ethical exhortations, transfer of authority, blessings, final prayer and farewell gesture like embraces.³⁷

Although it is very difficult to find an OT farewell address that ends in a prayer, he conveniently applies these elements to John 13-17 as well as the Pauline farewell in Acts 20:22-23, 25. Kurz confirms what we have said before, that "the form [of the farewell address] is somewhat *elastic*."³⁸ He is in agreement with J. J. Collins, who contends that the very basic requirement of a farewell address is that of

...a discourse delivered in anticipation of imminent death. Typically the speaker is a father addressing his sons, or a leader

³⁶ Ibid., 104-105.

³⁷ William S. Kurz, *Farewell Addresses in the New Testament* (ed. Mary Ann Getty; Collegeville: Liturgical, 1990), 20.

³⁸ Ibid., 19 (my italics).

addressing his people, or his successor. The actual discourse, however, is delivered in the first person.³⁹

Kurz analyzes Paul's speech at Miletus in Acts 20:22-35; yet this speech does not compare to John 13-17. None of the elements that are supposed to make the Acts speech a farewell address are featured in John 13-17, with the possible exception of the completion of the leader's assigned mission (Acts 20:24 and John 17:4). There are obvious differences in the times and locations of delivery; there are different audiences and purposes reflected in the speeches. In fact, one could question whether Paul's speech in Acts fits the criteria for a farewell address at all.

On the other hand, Kurz is correct in seeing the "special appeal" of a farewell address to the readers or the hearers of an address. There is usually a close bond between the audience and the speaker who is facing death.⁴⁰ In this sense, John 13-17 touches the readers' lives in a way that ordinary narrations cannot. The Johannine author organized his material in the genre of a farewell address because of the special emphasis on the relationship between the one who is speaking and the ones he is addressing. This is true of Deuteronomy 31-34 as well. Moses has a special reciprocal relationship with the people of Israel. The farewell address "portrays the final actions and sayings of a hero like Jesus or Paul or Moses before their death or definitive departure."⁴¹

Kurz is also correct in observing that, by their very nature, farewell addresses look beyond the time of the characters in the story to the time of the implied readers

³⁹ Ibid., and J. J. Collins, "Testaments," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (ed. Michael E. Stone; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), 325.

⁴⁰ Kurz, *Farewell Addresses*, 16.

⁴¹ Ibid., 17.

(e.g., Jn 16:2, 33).⁴² The speaker is going to die in narrative time, yet his death is past tense for the readers. Predictions and promises of the speaker anticipate a future time of the readers, and it is all a part of God's ultimate plan. Present troubles and failures in the lives of the readers become more tolerable if they are understood as part of God's plan from the beginning. Kurz supports the concept that a farewell speech is most significant for the readers, who can benefit the most from the reading and understanding of the farewell words of a leader (Jn 17:20).⁴³

Finally, Kurz understands the NT farewell addresses in a way that is beyond the limitations of the texts themselves. He contends that farewell addresses in general are the final opportunity for leaders to provide for the future needs of their "organizations and followers."⁴⁴ From this perspective, Kurz sees farewell addresses as "legitimizing current offices and structures," and as "equipping their successors with the power they need to achieve their mission."⁴⁵ This is a troubling assessment of the NT farewells. Incorrectly, I believe, Kurz uses Lk 22:31-32 to indicate that Jesus names Peter as his successor and the main support of the other disciples' faith. Yet Peter is instructed merely to "strengthen your brothers" in their faith (22:32); this is not the assignment of Peter as the successor to Jesus. Kurz suggests that Jesus' farewell address in Luke 22 emphasizes the designated successor and "demonstrated the special importance of the Eucharist and of Church authority as service as well as illustrating the succession of the

⁴² Ibid., 15.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 18, 23, 24.

twelve apostles with Peter as their head to Jesus' leadership over the restored Israel, the Church."⁴⁶

Contra Kurz, the discourses in John 13-17 do not focus on the designation of one successor to Jesus, or on the establishment of any ecclesiastical offices. Surely Jesus is concerned about the future of his immediate disciples and all future believers, but his speeches in the Gospel of John do not establish an organized, ecclesiastical hierarchy. Kurz's assessment of the farewell addresses in Acts and Luke do not demonstrate a close connection to John 13-17 in terms of form and function.

However, he is correct in his understanding of the farewell address genre as a vehicle for "maintaining the traditions and community begun by the founder."⁴⁷ The final address of a departing leader is used literarily to maintain a continuity of tradition between the first generation of believers and later members of their communities. The Johannine author expands the Jewish farewell address genre, but he does so in a manner that does not follow the farewell speech format typical of the other NT writings. Even these do not fully, adequately cover all that is presented by the Johannine author.

C. Greco-Roman Literature

Therefore, in light of the above difficulties in comparing Jesus' discourse to Jewish farewell speeches, some recent scholars have compared John 13-17 to the farewell speeches common in Hellenistic literature.

M. Hengel has successfully shown that it is not valid to put a bold line of differentiation between the two basic terms, "Judaism" and "Hellenism" manifested in

⁴⁶ Ibid., 121.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 18.

the Palestinian culture during the intertestamental period. He supports his theory that all parts of Jewish culture, including its literature, were heavily influenced by Hellenistic culture, and that this influence lasted into the time of the writing of the New Testament.⁴⁸ The use of the Greek language, Greek proper names, the popularity of the Greek education system and the Greek literature reinforce the fact that all aspects of Judaism were heavily affected by Hellenistic culture for more than 300 years.⁴⁹ The form of Jewish apocalyptic literature, for example, which blossomed after the Persian exile, changed and developed under the influence of Hellenistic culture in Palestine.⁵⁰ In Hengel's view, the writers of the NT Gospels were certainly affected by the addition and expansion of Greco-Roman thought in the Jewish culture. Where earlier scholarship separated two lines of tradition, the Hebrew OT tradition and the classical Greek tradition, Hengel unites these traditions and clearly demonstrates their intertwining.⁵¹ Therefore, if the literary cultures are intertwined at the time of the NT writers, is it possible to observe patent Greco-Roman influence, in the rhetorical mode of Aristotle and the ancient Greek classics, to the Johannine Farewell Discourses?

G. Kennedy would answer in the positive. He categorized the entire Farewell Discourses section as "epideictic rhetoric;" by his definition, epideictic literature is "commonly regarded as oratory of praise or blame."⁵²

⁴⁸ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*. The entire introduction is helpful, pages 1-5.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 84. Such literature both manifests some aspects of Hellenistic thought while it condemns other pervading Greek philosophy and culture, p. 110-115.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵² Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 73. In contrast, note that this study concludes that *only* the prayer of John 17 is epideictic rhetoric, not all the Farewell Discourses section (see Chapter 5).

Epideictic as Aristotle knew it consisted of public funeral orations delivered in Greek cities, such as that ascribed to Pericles in the second book of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*; or panegyrics, speeches given at festivals and celebrating the occasion or the city or the divine and human founders of the festivals.⁵³

In Kennedy's view, Jesus is delivering a "funeral oration" before the passion events because he is concerned about his disciples' "attitudes, feelings and beliefs" at the point of his departure from the earth.⁵⁴ Kennedy's views are too limited, as he concludes that other commands and warnings in Jesus' speeches are secondary to his main concerns of his death and the disciples' reactions to his departure.

Interestingly, Kennedy opposes redaction criticism which isolates separate units within the Farewell Discourses. He wants to view the text "as we have it," and is interested in knowing how the early readers/listeners may have understood the entire pericope.⁵⁵ Yet, Kennedy believes the repetition of main topics and the presence of rhetorical persuasion indicates that the large unit of text has been edited or has had later additions:

Although signs of editing of the sources remain, the addition of chapters 15, 16 and 17 greatly deepens the understanding of the topics enunciated in chapters 13 and 14, and it was clearly these topics which were important to the evangelist. The construction of the unit is somewhat reminiscent of the dialogues in which Plato presents Socrates as engaged in a preliminary discussion of a subject which is then reopened in a deeper and more extensive way.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 77.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 85.

Kennedy presents confusing views on redactions, but he argues convincingly that the Greco-Roman culture did have a voice in Jewish literature in the time of the Johannine author. It is not unusual to find the rhetorical, persuasive emphasis in the Farewell Discourses material.

Kennedy determines that the “rhetorical situation” begins in 13:1, and that the prayer of chapter 17 is a *prosopopoeia*, or a “rhetorical recreation of what Jesus might have said under these circumstances.”⁵⁷ In between, repetition of the main topics or themes in the discourses is the most striking feature of the entire unit; this repetition is used as a means of persuasion.⁵⁸ In the entire unit, the “persuasive argument” has to do with Jesus’ “*ethos*” and the listeners’ “*pathos*;” Jesus is meeting the needs of those who are listening. In the end, “consolation is completed and celebration remains.”⁵⁹ However, the text itself does not indicate that the disciples celebrate or seem adequately consoled in the chapters immediately following the Farewell Discourses. It is my belief that Kennedy’s view misses the real purpose of the Farewell Discourses. The chapters may be rhetorical in nature, but they are written more for the exhortation of the readers, and less for the consolation of or the momentary needs of the perplexed disciples.

Two important, recent studies were born out of Kennedy’s rhetorical point of view. Each highlights the Greco-Roman literary background to the Johannine discourses. First, G. Parnenios’ 2005 monograph suggests that scholars must look beyond “Jewish testaments” to the “farewell scenes from Greek and Latin texts” for an

⁵⁷ Ibid., 78. More will be said about this in the next section of this chapter.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 85.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 79, 85.

understanding of the background to the genre of the Farewell Discourses.⁶⁰ Although he does not discount the fact that the Farewell Discourses may be written in the framework of the Jewish testaments, he contends that there are multiple genres in and various origins of John 13-17. Parsenius promotes “genre bending” in the Fourth Gospel, a term and a concept used by Attridge in 2002. In effect, this is the “blending of various literary forms,” and it is his goal to “illustrate how John bends and twists the testament form.”⁶¹

Parsenius investigates three types of Greco-Roman literature that he believes are evident in the Johannine Farewell Discourse material: Greek tragedy, “consolation literature” and the “literary symposium tradition.” Granted, the similarities between the Gospel of John and Greek tragedies are not unfamiliar to scholarship. Parsenius applies an element of Greek tragedy to explain the difficult *aporia* in 14:31b; he suggests another resolution to the knotty issue of its presence by using a new/old literary device called the “delayed exit.”⁶² The author of the gospel is controlling the approaching death of Jesus literarily by delaying his exit from the upper room (14:31b), and prolonging his presence with the disciples (chapters 15-17).⁶³ His explanation is a clever, but tentative way to relieve the stress of this cryptic verse. Yet, there is nothing in the surrounding text that would indicate to the reader that it is the Greek tragedy element of “delayed exit” that is being used at this point in the narrative.

⁶⁰ Parsenius, *Departure and Consolation*, 4.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 10, 35.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 70.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 75-77.

Second, Parsenius presents the Paraclete as the “consolatory figure” for the disciples in the Farewell Discourses. Following Kennedy, Parsenius states that “his presence consoles the disciples.”⁶⁴ The insights from ancient consolatory literature explain how the Paraclete functions in this position, as a “*doppelgänger*” (or “double”) of Jesus himself; he is somehow “the presence of Jesus when Jesus is absent.”⁶⁵ One English translation of *ὁ παράκλητος* (15:26; 16:7 or *ἄλλον παράκλητον* in 14:16) is “Comforter,” but Jesus makes it very clear that the work of the Paraclete is not just to bring “consolation” to the world (14:26; 16:8-15). In fact, the Paraclete convicts the world, guides into all truth and glorifies Jesus (14:26; 16:8-15). As before, there is no textual evidence that the first disciples are consoled in any way by Jesus’ words in the Farewell Discourses; the Paraclete (“Comforter”), of course, is not experienced by believers until weeks after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Third, Parsenius relates that Jesus is not only present in and through the Paraclete, he is also present “in the very words of the Farewell Discourses.”⁶⁶ In the “literary symposium tradition,” the speeches given after the departure of Judas are a “banquet of words” for the disciples. John 13 is presented as a “*deipnon*,” a meal setting that provides an opportunity for conversation.⁶⁷ From dialogue to monologue to an ending prayer, this meal setting follows the “Platonic recipe for the ‘banquet of words.’”⁶⁸ The “*deipnon*” was one way the Greek and Latin world “interacted with the

⁶⁴ Ibid., 108-109.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 81. Parsenius borrows this word from Hans Windisch, but does not capitalize it, in spite of using it like a noun.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 109.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 131.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

dead,” honoring and remembering the presence of those who had already died.⁶⁹ In view of the author’s intentional Jewish Passover setting from 11:55 to 12:1 to 13:1, it seems awkward and unnecessary to suddenly shift to elements of a non-Jewish, Platonic meal genre and setting.

Parsenios’ intent is to show how the Gospel author has “bent” and “twisted” various forms for his own purposes. The Gospel author has consciously intertwined more than one genre, augmenting the Jewish testamental genre, which is too narrow to explain all that takes place in John 13-17:

[T]here are certain and clear connections between the Farewell Discourses and the testament form, but to view these discourses only as a testament far too tightly confines the interpretive possibilities.⁷⁰

Parsenios argues that the author of John has “twisted” the Hebrew testament genre by combining it with these three classical forms of Greco-Roman literature.

There seems to be confusion between a literary device and a literary genre. The three forms from ancient Greco-Roman literature suggested by Parsenios can be regarded as literary devices within the larger framework of the Farewell Discourses. The unique literary style of the author may include non-Jewish elements in his writing, but that does not negate the unit as being considered a Jewish testament genre as a whole. Parsenios has determined that the Gospel author deviated from the expected testament form, expanding it with Hellenistic devices, thereby bending or twisting the Hebraic genre. With some caution, this may be partially true; however, I am not fully

⁶⁹ Ibid., 134.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 152.

convinced that the three literary devices as suggested are sufficiently evident within the genre of the Farewell Discourses.

On the heels of Parsenius' book, J. Stube investigates the Farewell Discourses from a rhetorical-critical view. His dissertation springs from the work of Kennedy (above), as he promotes a distinctive "rhetorical shape" to John 13-17, based on the ancient Greek "rhetorical arrangement:"⁷¹

13.1	<i>Exordium</i>
13.2-20	<i>Narratio</i>
13.31-38	<i>Partitio</i>
14.1-16.33	<i>Confirmatio</i>
17.1-26	<i>Epilogos</i>

Helpfully, both Parsenius and Stube support the unity of the pericope from 13:1 to 17:26.⁷² Stube's proposed rhetorical arrangement of the passage resembles the chiasmic structure proposed by W. Brouwer outlined in Chapter 2 of this study. He has given ancient rhetorical titles to the smaller units of text, which reflect the function of each section. The argument presented by the Gospel author is formally communicated in each specific portion of the whole. Most important to this study is his corroboration of the unity of the entire section, chapters 13-17, and of the key position of the prayer as an epilogue to the preceding discourses.

Challenging Parsenius, Stube's hypothesis is that the Farewell Discourses are more than an attempt to console the immediate disciples of Jesus. On one hand, he recognizes that the discourses are for the immediate disciples at some level; on the other hand, he sees the purpose of the discourses as something beyond the immediate disciples

⁷¹ John C. Stube, *A Graeco-Roman Rhetorical Reading of the Farewell Discourse* (ed. Mark Goodacre; vol. 309; London: T&T Clark [Continuum], 2006), 80.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 81.

of Jesus to the readers of the Gospel. Like Parsenius, he presents yet another explanation for the difficult *aporia* at 14:31b, and pleads for unity of the passage based on his Greco-Roman structure and on intended literary design. Stube's purpose and conclusions are appealing. He supports the unity of the pericope, the placement of the prayer at the end, and the instructional, rhetorical aspect of the entire unit.

Stube adds more weight to the discussion of the unified structure of the pericope, and less to the genre discussion. His rhetorical reading of John 13-17 does not deny the use of a Jewish farewell testament framework; it simply puts it into a type of Greek rhetorical discourse. I would argue that too much emphasis can be placed on the Greco-Roman literary tools and devices which may have been useful to the Johannine author. An approach that is solely Hellenistic overlooks the Jewish Passover setting of chapters 13-17, the Jewish characters in the story, and the evident Jewishness of understood speaker of the discourses, that is, Jesus. In summary, it is plausible that the Johannine author adapted certain Hellenistic literary devices to augment his Farewell Discourses, but the Hellenistic literature is not the primary mode of writing employed by the Johannine author.

D. Biblical Farewell Testament Genre

The most basic framework of the Farewell Discourses is Jewish in form. While Käsemann determined that only chapter 17 was a "testament," this study finds that it is the entire unit, chapters 13 through 17, that may be categorized as a "farewell testament." This unified section is more than a "farewell speech;" the literary elements of the passage have their roots in the Jewish farewell testament genre. Because they may appear to be transposable, it is important to make a distinction between the terms,

“farewell speech” and “farewell testament.” Bammel seems to use the terms interchangeably. Kurz, however, is correct in distinguishing a “testament” as a specific type of farewell address: “testaments were a species of the farewell address genre, which scholars often treat as a synonym.”⁷³ What exactly is a “testament” and how is it different from the farewell speech mentioned above?

Defining a “Testament”

To define such a genre is to blend the elements of both the farewell address and the elements of the Deuteronomistic covenant. The specific designation of the farewell testament associates the covenant agreement between God (YHWH) and the people of Israel, given at Sinai (Deut 4-6). The words “testament” and “covenant” are related. The Hebrew word “covenant,” בְּרִית, is *διαθήκη* in the LXX. It connotes *both* “a last will and testament” (especially in Hellenistic times) and “covenant:”

...*διαθήκη* loses the sense of ‘will, testament’ insofar as a covenant decreed by God cannot require the death of the testator to make it operative. Nevertheless, another essential characteristic of a testament is retained, namely that it is the declaration of one person’s will, not the result of an agreement between two parties, like a compact or contract.⁷⁴

Chennattu states that,

‘Will’ or ‘testament,’ בְּרִית/διαθήκη, the word commonly used in the NT, underscores the obligatory aspect of a covenant. The biblical metaphor of ‘covenant’ signifies and implies a binding relationship based on commitment.⁷⁵

⁷³ Kurz, *Farewell Addresses*, 19.

⁷⁴ Arndt, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 182.

⁷⁵ Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship*, 50-51 (my emphasis).

It was God alone who established the conditions of his covenant, his agreement with his people. Whereas any example of Greco-Roman literature may include a “farewell speech” of a great hero, the “farewell testament” must reflect some aspect (or aspects) of the relationship between YHWH God and his people. The farewell testament has the added dimensions of remembering the past agreements with the Lord, and looking forward to his future covenantal promises. In this sense, in John 13-17, Jesus is declaring his “binding relationship based on commitment” to those who believe in him.

The beginning of the Jewish testament, believes Hengel, was the transmission of wisdom from one generation to the next. The early “testament” could overlap with what would be considered wisdom literature; in form, they often were similar to apocalyptic writings, including visions (see *Testament of Levi* in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, discussion below), heavenly journeys and angelic messengers. The testament form with its historical, apocalyptic, and wisdom overtones, became widespread in the Jewish Diaspora.⁷⁶

However, there was no formal literary plan for the Jewish testament. Following Hengel, J. J. Collins recognizes that “the form of a testament is constituted by the narrative framework; the contents cannot be said to follow a fixed pattern.”⁷⁷ Collins has a short list of literary works that he believes to be testaments. Based on their content, Collins cites “the only clear examples” of testaments from early Hebrew literature as *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *The Testament of Moses*, and *The*

⁷⁶ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 215, 54.

⁷⁷ Collins, “Testaments,” 325-26.

Testament of Job.⁷⁸ He also believes that the Jewish testament genre is modelled more on the Hebrew Bible and less on the ancient Hellenistic literature. In Collins's view, the best example of the genre in the Old Testament is the blessings of Jacob in Genesis 49, while Deuteronomy 31-34 is regarded as "a less clear example."⁷⁹

Moreover, Collins acknowledges "the so-called 'covenant form'" that is found in the Old Testament. This form he defines as "a sequential revelation of history, stipulations and consequences (e.g., blessings and curses), found in the Deuteronomistic writings but also in prayer and liturgical poems."⁸⁰ Collins briefly discusses this general "covenant form," and then applies it only marginally to the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.⁸¹

M. Winter names John 13-17 "*das Vermächtnis Jesu*." In support of the covenant/testament genre, he also compares John 13-17 to texts from the Old Testament, as well as "*Texte der alttestamentlichen Pseudepigraphen*." In a form-redactional investigation that reminds one of Brown's analysis of the whole Gospel, Winter reconstructs five layers in the origin of John 13-17. Perhaps there was one original text of Jesus' discourses, and then four layers are editorial additions and revisions; the prayer was in the final edition. He further suggests that similar layers were added by the Deuteronomistic writer to Moses' original farewell speech as a way to incorporate the author's own theology into the text.⁸² Although this proposed redactional process may

⁷⁸ Ibid., 326.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 330.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 339.

⁸¹ Ibid. See further discussion below.

⁸² Martin Winter, *Das Vermächtnis Jesu und die Abschiedsworte der Väter; Gattungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der Vermächtnisrede im Blick auf Joh. 13-17* (ed. Wolfgang Schrage und Rudolf Smend; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1994), 205-06.

be speculative, he does demonstrate a strong connection between his *Vermächtnisrede* and OT texts, primarily Deuteronomy 31-34.⁸³ The problem with the idea of a “legacy” is that the term is inadequate; the promises therein normally pertain to one person or a limited family inheritance. In addition, a “legacy” left to heirs can exist without any reference to the covenantal agreement. The promises and predictions given by Jesus in John 13-17 are more relational, and more universal in nature, granted to all those people who respond with belief in his words.

The Testament/Covenant of Deuteronomy 31-34 and John 13-17

In accord, D. Bock concludes that the genre of the final discourses in John can be compared to “the so-called farewell discourses of the Old Testament (Gen 49; Deut 32-33; Josh 23-24; 1 Chron 28-29) and intertestamental literature (*Testaments of the Patriarchs*).”⁸⁴ Considering our limitation of time and space in this investigation, we will consider one example from the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 31-34, and the three testament examples from intertestamental literature suggested by Collins: the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the *Testament of Moses* and the *Testament of Job*. These four Jewish testaments recur most often in recent previous research, and are considered to be notably similar to John 13-17.

Deuteronomy 31-34

While there are other examples of farewell testaments outside the Book of Deuteronomy, it is the final speech of Moses that best serves as an OT backdrop for the

⁸³ Ibid., 65-87.

⁸⁴ Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*, 497. So also John Painter, “The Johannine Literature,” in *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament* (ed. Stanley E. Porter, *New Testament Tools and Studies*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 582.

type of literature we read in John 13-17. Recognition of “Moses and Exodus typology” in the Fourth Gospel is not new to the field of Johannine study.⁸⁵ With others, Brown points out that,

The Book of Deuteronomy is particularly instructive here. As a collection of Moses’ last discourses to his people, it offers an interesting parallel to the Johannine Last Discourse. In particular it is noteworthy that near the end of Deuteronomy there are two canticles of Moses.... So also in John 17 Jesus turns to address the Father, but much of what he says concerns the future of the disciples.⁸⁶

Although a thorough examination of the comparison between Moses and Jesus is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is apparent from internal elements that the author of John does see a comparison: for example, the persons of Moses and Jesus, as well as their earthly tasks, are compared and contrasted in John 1:17. Jesus compares himself to Moses in 3:14, specifically in relation to their salvific missions. Jesus refers to Moses in his “bread from heaven” discourse (6:32-35), and again in his teaching on the law and circumcision (7:19-24). Both are considered “prophets;” both reveal the word of God to humanity (7:40-41; 12:49). Davies observes similarities between the Fourth Gospel and the “form, content and vocabulary” of the stories of Moses in the Pentateuch. She notes that both Moses and Jesus were instrumental in inaugurating a “new community.”⁸⁷

In the Farewell Discourses, the words of Jesus are prophetic in the sense that, understood in narrative time, he gives predictions and promises to those who believe in him that are fulfilled after his death and resurrection. For the reader, the prophetic

⁸⁵ A. Lacomara, “Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourses (John 13:31-16:33),” *CBQ* 36, no. 1 (1974): 65-84. p. 65.

⁸⁶ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 744.

⁸⁷ Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference*, 70-74.

words of Jesus in John 13-17 are understood after-the-fact, in the same way the prophetic words of Moses were realized by an audience many years after the instructions and warnings were spoken. The author(s, or redactors) of Deuteronomy is entreating his readers to remember the words and deeds of Moses, the prophet, who is not only the recipient of the covenant of God, but is a voice of God to the people. The final speeches of Moses are an interchange between the words of God and the words of Moses to the people about their past, their present and their future as a nation. A parallel in the function and genre of the Deuteronomy and the Johannine testamental literature can be drawn.⁸⁸

In the final testament of Moses, delivered to the nation of Israel, God makes the pledge of his presence with the people, his power and protection, based on the covenant he has made with them; their obedience to the law secures “long life” and the Lord’s unfailing presence in the promised land (32:45-47). On the other hand, rebellion of the people against his commands breaks the covenant, and the presence of God is removed (31:16). Thus, a tension is perceived in the farewell words; the promises are an assurance from God to Israel, yet the leader knows that the people will fail to obey God’s commands.

In addition to prophecy, other points of similarity between Deuteronomy 31-34 and John 13-17 include internal literary elements, literary forms, speech-action discourse and the theme of covenant, confirming that the testament of Moses in Deuteronomy is an important background genre for the testament of Jesus in John 13-17. These points we will review in detail:

⁸⁸ See the discussion of the Isaianic prophetic literature, below.

Literary Elements

Lacomara lays a good foundation for the influence of Deuteronomy 31-34 on the genre of John 13-16, yet he does not include the prayer of John 17 in his discussion. However, there is no reason to separate the prayer from Lacomara's concept of the testament of Jesus in John 13-16.

Nevertheless, Lacomara identifies similar "literary elements" as both "internal and external;" that is, there are connections between Moses' "farewell" and the Johannine "farewell" that are both outside the text itself and specified within the text.⁸⁹

His "external" literary elements focus on the circumstances and setting of the discourses:

Most obvious is the fact that both are composed as farewell discourses, spoken by leaders who are about to be separated from those they have led. The future of their groups is also similar; both are responsible for the establishment of the new communities. There is a need for consolation for their followers' loss, and encouragement for the struggles ahead; others require instructions and warnings, how to behave towards each other and towards their enemies.⁹⁰

Brown agrees with Lacomara's external elements, emphasizing the "covenant atmosphere of the Last Supper" setting.⁹¹ R. Chennattu concurs that there is a strong connection between the Farewell Discourses and the "new covenant community of God."⁹² However, some of her external elements surrounding the discourses of Moses and Jesus are speculative (as the emotions of the people involved), and are not clearly identified in either the text of Deuteronomy or the text of John.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 631.

⁹² Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship*, 211.

More helpful are Lacomara's "internal" elements that are found in both passages. These internal elements include the mediator, motivation, commandment, promised rewards, and the continuation of God's word and work:⁹³

Mediator. Moses is the mediator of the covenant to the people. In a similar fashion, Jesus mediates to the people; Jesus reveals that his message is not his own, but is from the Father (Jn 5:24; 8:28; 12:49). Like Moses, Jesus is the law-giver (Jn 13:34, 14:15, 15:12, 14). In Deuteronomy, Moses is presented as the only human mediator who grants the law and the covenant to the people.⁹⁴ The role of Jesus as the one who brought the revelation of God to the people suddenly shifts in John 17. The one who revealed the Father *to* the people (14:9-10), becomes the mediator *with* the Father to the believers.

The law-giver has a unique status among the people. Moses' unique position as the mediator is the result of his intimate knowledge of YHWH (Deut 5:27). Similarly, the unique authority of Jesus as a law-giver is based on his intimacy with the Father (Jn 12:49-50; 14:11; 17:8, 25). Jesus says that since his opponents do not believe in him and his words, it is Moses who is their "accuser;" if they believed Moses, they should believe him, for "he [Moses] wrote about me" (Jn 5:45-47). To see Jesus is the equivalent of seeing God; to hear from Moses is to hear from Yahweh himself (Jn 1:18).⁹⁵

Motivation. There are three "motivations" which compel the people to faith in YHWH or in Jesus: the "sign-works" that reveal the nature of God and of Jesus, the

⁹³ Lacomara, "Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourses (John 13:31-16:33)," 66-81.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 66, 67.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 68.

theme of election, and the love of God toward his people. In John, as in Deuteronomy, the “signs” of Jesus demonstrate the presence of God and the nature of the person who is performing them. As a consequence, both Moses and Jesus show disappointment when the people show a lack of comprehension of these signs (Deut 29:2ff, Jn 14:9-12). As the nation of Israel is “chosen,” Jesus reminds his disciples that they were chosen (Jn 15:16). It is God’s love that initiates this election.⁹⁶ The nation of Israel is to “stay” in God’s love by obedience to his covenant; this obedience is the act of returning to God the love he has shown to his people (Deut 4:37; 7:6; 10:15). In the same way, the followers of Jesus are to “abide” in his love and obey his commands, just as Jesus obeys the Father’s commands (Jn 15:9-10).

Commandment. Human love of God is the greatest compelling force for covenant- or law-keeping (note the *Shema*, Deut 6:4-5).⁹⁷ In Deuteronomy (e.g., 7:12; 11:1, 22; 30:16, 20), love is expressed in obedience to the laws and commands of God. The “new commandment” given by Jesus is love of other people, as demonstrated by Jesus’ love of his own (Jn 13:34; 15:12). In the Farewell Discourses, love and obedience are united by faith in Jesus (14:15). As the Father loves the Son, so the Son loves believers (15:9); as the Son obeyed the Father, so the believers are to obey Jesus’ commands (15:10). It follows that people are commanded to love one another as the Father and Son love one another (13:34; 15:10). Believers are commanded to love one another as Jesus first loved them (15:12). This new command of loving and obeying the

⁹⁶ Ibid., 72.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 73.

commands of Jesus reflects the OT command to “love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands” (Deut 30:16).

Promised rewards. One of the most important blessings promised to God’s people in Deuteronomy is the possession of land (4:1, 8:1; 31:3). In his farewell discourses, Jesus also promises a place of safe-dwelling, where “he is also” (Jn 14:2, 23; 17:24). Other similar promised rewards are “abundant fruitfulness” (Deut 7:12, 11:13, 28:3-6, 11-13, with the symbol of the vine, John 15), “rest” and “peace” (Deut 3:20; 12:10; 25:19; Jn 14:27). The continual presence of God is assured; God will not leave or forsake his own. He will “go before” them and protect them (Deut 31:6, 8; 33:12; Jn 14:18, 23). The promise is given that God continues to hear the prayers of his people (Deut 4:7; Jn 15:7, 14:13, 15:16, 16:23-24). It is critical to note, however, that the tension perceived in Moses’ farewell is not present in Jesus’ farewell. The anxiety of the fate of humanity is relieved; Jesus separates the ones who believe from “the world” (15:18-25), and promises to send “the Paraclete” to the believers to aid in their obedience (16:7-15).

The continuation of God’s word and work. Provision for the continuation of God’s word and his presence in the lives of the people is explicit in Deuteronomy. The laws were to be written down and entrusted to the priests, to be read to succeeding generations (Deut 31:9-13, 24-27). Likewise, the first disciples are the vehicles of the continuation of the words and works of Jesus to future generations (Jn 17:20-21). They are to be his witnesses in a hostile world (Jn 15:27). In the same way that the Israelites were to keep God’s covenant and pass it on to their children, the followers of Jesus were to “obey” his commandments and be witnesses to him in the world (Jn 15:8-16). For

both the Israelites and the followers of Jesus, the “revealed word” was a “living thing in their midst,” from the written law, to the incarnation of Jesus, to the promised Paraclete (see Deut 30:10, 20; 31:9-13; Jn 15:26; 17:8).⁹⁸

To summarize Lacomara’s lengthy comparison, it is significant to note that the internal literary elements of the covenant mediator, the motivations, the commands, the rewards and the perpetuation of the word of the covenant are analogous in Moses’ and Jesus’ final testaments.

In the same vein, Y. Simoens compares John 13-17 to various sections of the entire book of Deuteronomy.⁹⁹ His careful examination of the Johannine Farewell Discourses is basically structural (see Chapter 2 of this study), but he does bring to light common literary elements found in Deuteronomy and in John 13-17 that suggest a strong covenantal connection:

La confrontation de Jn 13-17 avec le Deutéronome est décisive. Elle avait servi de point de départ à la présente étude.... Le Cantique de Moïse en Dt 32, 1-25, représentatif du procès d’alliance, contient les cinq éléments:

1. Préliminaires du procès
2. Interrogatoire
3. Réquisitoire
4. Déclaration officielle de culpabilité
5. Condamnation.

La structure globale de Dt 32-33 renvoie l’image suivante: Procès – Loi – Bénédiction. L’ensemble paraît assez hétérogène par rapport au précédent discours d’adieu de Moïse, représentatif du formulaire d’alliance.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Ibid., 82.

⁹⁹ Simoens, *La gloire d’aimer*, 203.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 249.

Concerned first and foremost with a comparison of the chiasmic structures of Deuteronomy 31-34 and John 13-17 passages, Simoens' literary elements are not as definitive or evident as those of Lacomara.

Another alternative compilation of literary elements is presented by M. Kline, who believes the internal features that he observes in Deuteronomy 31-34 serve to renew and strengthen the commitment of the people to the covenant agreement.¹⁰¹ His version of the "standard elements" of the farewell testament in Deuteronomy 31-34 differs from both Simoens and those proposed by Lacomara. The literary elements proposed by Kline are clearly internal elements, from the text itself, and he does not speculate on any external elements:

- A) Succession commissioned;
- B) Inheritance granted (chapter 33), and the status of people as heirs;
- C) Covenant witnesses ("heavens and earth" in 32:1);
- D) Directions given for the perpetuation of the treaty document (31:9-13);
- E) An account of the death of Moses concludes the pericope, which notarizes the agreement (chapter 34).¹⁰²

John 13-17 fits these elements in the following manner:

A) The successor to Jesus is debatable and complex. Kurz argues that the New Testament validates Peter as the human successor to Jesus in leading his disciples, and thus, in leading his community of believers, or the church (see above discussion). Yet, Kline argues that there is no single human successor to Jesus. As the glorified, "sent" Son of God, the "unique, one and only Son" (Jn 3:16), who is one with the Father (Jn 10:30; 14:20; 17:22, 23), no human can succeed Jesus in essence or in mission. As

¹⁰¹ Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King; The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 34.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 135.

Joshua assumes leadership after Moses, there is no one person that can “fill Jesus’ shoes.” However, Jesus departs this earth promising to send “another Counselor to be with you forever” (Jn 14:16). The promised Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, is as close as we come to Jesus’ successor on earth (Jn 16:7-14). As a parallel, Kline writes that “the Moses-Joshua succession was appointive and charismatic, not genealogical;” they are “the successive representatives of the unchanging rule of Yahweh over Israel.”¹⁰³ It is worth noting that the only promises in the Gospel of John of the coming Holy Spirit are given in the Farewell Discourses, chapters 14, 15 and 16. After Pentecost, the followers of Jesus (including the readers) experience his presence in their lives on earth. The work of the Paraclete is evidence to the readers of the “unchanging rule” of God on earth.

B) The immediate heirs to the promises of the covenant are the people who believe the words of Jesus (Jn 14:11-12). They are “chosen” (13:18), and belong to the Father and the Son (16:15; 17:6, 10). They experience a new relationship with the Father, one that is made intimate through the Son, not the Law (14:11-14, 20; 16:23-28; 17:21-23). The author of the Gospel encourages his readers, because it is all those who accept the words of Jesus that become heirs to his promises (17:2).

C) The witnesses to the covenant agreement are the first disciples, those who are assembled together with Jesus (Jn 13:1). In a sense, this is similar to the assembled nation of Israel (Deut 31:28). The first disciples accept Jesus’ words and are “sent out” to be witnesses to the fulfilment of the covenant promises (13:18); one of the disciples chooses to disobey, rebel and defect, nullifying his witness (13:10-11, 18). “Heaven and earth” are called upon as witnesses to the OT covenant (Deut 4:26; 32:1). This is not

¹⁰³ Ibid., 35.

unusual for an ancient agreement; in ancient times, the gods of the heavens and the earth were called upon to witness human treaties.¹⁰⁴ It is not necessary for Jesus to call upon any other gods to witness his fulfilment of the covenant. His human followers are sufficient as witnesses, because they believe him: “you have loved me and have believed that I came from God” (16:27). The nation of Israel was supposed to be God’s witness in the alien world; their special mission was to “bring light to other peoples” (Isa 42:6-7; 43:10).¹⁰⁵ Likewise, following in the footsteps of the earliest disciples, the readers of John’s Gospel, are also “sent out” as witnesses to carry on this word and his work.

D) The continuation of Jesus’ message is made safe and secure. Jesus repeatedly confirms that he was “sent” by God; in turn, he “sends out” his followers to disseminate his message (15:16, 21; 17:20). Those sent are “hated by the world,” (15:18) yet “loved by God” (14:21). Further, the continuation of the message is certain because the Father and the Son “send” the “Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth” who enables and convicts (14:16-17; 15:26). Moses promises his people that “the Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (Deut 31:8). Such encouragement is reiterated by Jesus to those he sends out in John 14:1, 18, and 27.

E) Noticeably, Kline does not mention the Mosaic blessings as the conclusion to the testament in Deuteronomy. For him the death of Moses is the critical element and climax of the covenantal agreement:

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 15, 139.

¹⁰⁵ Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship*, 63.

It was the death of the covenant author [Moses] that caused the covenant stipulations and sanctions to become operative. That is the key to the understanding of the structural integrity of Deut 33 and 34 within the context of the whole document. When Moses, Yahweh's mediator-king of Israel, died, an official affixed to the Deuteronomic treaty the notice of that the death so notarizing the covenant in so far as it was (and it was pre-eminently) a covenant designed to enforce Yahweh's royal succession, thereby continuing the lordship of heaven over Israel.¹⁰⁶

That is to say, while the original writer of the covenant is still alive, the force of the covenant is not in effect. Thus, the covenant is effective only in the future, after the death of Moses. The people do not enter into the promised land until after his death. Kline regards the end of the testament, the account of death of Moses, as "notarizing the covenant" to bring about its efficacy.¹⁰⁷ In a similar manner, it is the death and resurrection of Jesus that fulfils the promises of eternal life and forgiveness of sins for those who believe.

As a result of this investigation of the internal elements of the farewell testament of Moses in Deut 31-34, we can perceive the links to the farewell testament of Jesus in John 13-17. Next, it is also possible to analyze comparable literary forms that are found in both of the two testaments.

Literary Forms

Within the genre of the farewell testament in Deuteronomy 31-34, smaller literary forms can be observed. P. Miller has noted that the commissioning of Joshua is akin to an "installation genre," which includes words of encouragement to the one(s) commissioned ("Be strong and courageous" occurring three times in 31:6, 7, 23), the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 39-40.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 40.

description or assignment of the task, and an “assistance formula.”¹⁰⁸ Such encouragement is not unlike the words of Jesus to his disciples and to the readers of the Fourth Gospel who are “commissioned” to testify concerning Jesus (Jn 15:26-27; 17:25-26). Against Kurz, Miller argues that this leadership commissioning is to a specific task, not to a position or an office.¹⁰⁹ At the conclusion of his life and ministry, Jesus encourages his disciples, as well as all believers including the readers, to be his witnesses in the world (Jn 17:18, and see Matt 28:16-20). Their assistance will come from the guidance of the promised Paraclete (Jn 16:7-15).

Two other literary forms occur within the Deuteronomy farewell chapters: the “Song of Moses,” 32:1-43, and the prophetic “Blessing of Moses,” 33:1-29, both of which are given to the nation of Israel. The main purpose of these two forms is to teach or instruct the people (32:2).¹¹⁰ The song and the blessings expound on the “prophetic message of salvation” to God’s people, as promised in the covenant (32:36, 43; 33:29).¹¹¹

Song. Moses “recites” this song in chapter 32, and is told to “write it down” in 31:19, 22, yet recent scholars have questioned the historical origin, dating and source of the “song” or “poem.” G. Von Rad claims that it “came into existence quite independently of Deuteronomy.”¹¹² Comparable assumptions also have been said about John 17, that it is an addition to the Gospel by the author, or added by a later redactor.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy* (ed. James Luther Mays, et al.; Louisville: John Knox 1990), 220.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹¹⁰ Gerhard Von Rad, *Deuteronomy; A Commentary* (ed. G. Ernest Wright, et al.; trans. Dorothea Barton from the German; London: SCM 1966), 190.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 195.

¹¹³ Brown, *Gospel According to John, Vol. 2*, 745.

Von Rad calls Deut 32 the “swan-song of Moses,” and it is based on very old traditions. It is written poetically to “give the impression of being something uncommon.”¹¹⁴ In addition, Brown also recognizes the poetic quality of the “canticles of Moses” and compares them to the poetic quality of John 17.¹¹⁵

P. Sanders examines the historicity and composition of the canticle of Deuteronomy 32. He recognizes its prophetic nature, calling it “prophetic discourse” or “prophetic speech.”¹¹⁶ Sanders shows that while there are very ancient forms of literature in the Old Testament (one of which is this poem), many forms have “counterparts” in the younger parts of the Old Testament.¹¹⁷ It is possible to deduce from his study that forms of Hebrew literature changed and developed over time. Regardless of authorship, provenance or date, the “Song of Moses” is a type of literature that appropriately fits the genre of the final testament of Moses, speaking to the covenant people, praising God for his faithfulness, and giving the people warnings, predictions and assurance.

Blessings. The “Blessings of Moses” (chapter 33) is also considered a poem, and a later addition to the book of Deuteronomy.¹¹⁸ It can also be described as an “informative psalm of praise,” because it opens and closes with the remembrance of the great historical deeds of the Lord (vv. 1-5; 29).¹¹⁹ Indeed, one short saying about the tribe of Judah could be considered a prayer-form (33:7), and the prediction about Levi

¹¹⁴ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, 200.

¹¹⁵ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 745.

¹¹⁶ Paul Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32* (ed. Johannes C. De Moor, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 58, 64.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 431.

¹¹⁸ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, 204.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 205.

concludes with words that resemble a prayer (33:11).¹²⁰ This form of blessings is not an unusual form in the Old Testament, but the prayer and praise to YHWH may be a later development.¹²¹ Thus, if Von Rad is right, we have at least a hint of the prayer form found in the final blessings of Moses.

Concisely stated, the shorter forms of literature found within the testament of Moses (e.g., songs, poems, blessings, prayers) illustrate that such forms are appropriate literary tools within the farewell testament genre and can exhibit close connections to John 13-17 in the New Testament.

Speech-Actions

In addition to internal literary elements and forms, it is further noteworthy to articulate the obvious: the final chapters of Deuteronomy are *discourse*; that is to say, the words of the passage are primary over the relatively few actions found in the passage. Much like the words of Jesus in John 13-17, it is the *words of God* that are spoken to encourage the people concerning Moses' imminent death, the commissioning of his successor, and the prophecy of future rebellion and punishment (e.g., Deut 31:2, 14,16, 23). Both God and Moses give commands and predictions to the people through their words; they perform actions by their speech: they commission, they command, they warn, they bless. Indirectly, then, the rulings of the Lord are relayed to the people through the intermediary voice of the leader Moses (Deut 31:3-8, 20-21; 32:46-47).

Moses writes the Book of the Law, and gives instructions concerning its use in the future (Deut 31:9, 24-26). Exhortations and instructions are given to "all the elders"

¹²⁰ Ibid., 206.

¹²¹ Ibid., 208.

of Israel (Deut 31:9, 25). Repeatedly, Moses encourages Joshua and the people to “be strong and courageous” (Deut 31:6, 7, 23) after he is gone, because the Lord promises his presence (Deut 31:8, cf. John 14:18). The song and blessings of Moses are literary forms of spoken words that expand on the themes of rebellion, idolatry, God’s justice and power. Finally, the narrator’s eulogy in chapter 34 finishes the narrative framework with praise for Moses at his death and the grief of the nation (Deut 34:5-8, 10-12). Joshua, the successor, assumes authority after Moses “laid his hands on him” (Deut 34:9), preparing him for his future tasks. Likewise, Jesus washes his disciples’ feet as a commissioning and as a preparation for their tasks ahead (13:7, 12-17). It is interesting to compare these small but important actions taken by Moses and by Jesus to complement their speeches.

Knowing his time is limited, important actions and speeches must be done before Moses dies. It is the words spoken by Moses (יְהִי כִּי יִבְרַחְיֶנּוּ , τὰς λόγους) that the people are to “hear, learn and obey” (Deut 31:1, 12). Likewise, Jesus knows his time is limited and he has much to tell his followers before he is glorified. Some of his words they would not understand until later (Jn 13:19-20; 14:29; 16:4). Unlike Moses, the word of God does not come *through* Jesus; Jesus *is* the Word (1:1). The word of God in Jesus does not “dwell” in those who do not believe in him (5:38), but it does remain in his disciples that “accept” and “believe” (17:8). Moses tells the people that the “words of the law” are “your life,” while Jesus tells his followers that life is in him because he is the Word: “because I live, you also will live” (14:19) and “in him was life, and that life was the light of men” (1:4; also, “eternal life” in 17:3). In the farewell testaments of Moses and

of Jesus, it is their speech, even more than their actions, that guides, directs, warns, challenges and edifies the ones hearing their discourse.

Community

A direct reference to the Deuteronomistic covenant appears in neither the Farewell Discourses nor in Jesus' final prayer. Davies is "surprised" that the Gospel of John "never uses the word 'covenant' to describe God's relationship with his people." This does not negate the use of the OT testament genre as a basis for the genre of the Farewell Discourses. "Nevertheless," Davies says, "vocabulary associated with the covenant concept in Scripture is found in the Gospel."¹²² In addition, the words of Jesus in the Farewell Discourses contribute to the "idea of the covenant community in receipt of God's blessings and faithfulness" to his people.¹²³

The importance of the covenant community is supported by Chennattu, who demonstrates close parallels between Joshua 24:1-28 and John 13-17. She understands that there are no "exact structural parallels" between the farewell testaments found in the OT books and John 13-17. Yet she considers a parallel between Joshua 24:25-28, called "A ceremony sealing the covenant," with John 17, entitled "A prayer consecrating the covenant community of the disciples."¹²⁴ In my view, it is difficult to see the parallels between the Joshua passage and John 17. But we must take into account that Chennattu's main proposition is that discipleship in the Fourth Gospel is related to the OT concept of covenant, and the Joshua passage is a good fit for her hypothesis. The new community addressed in the Fourth Gospel, in covenant with God and with each

¹²² Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference*, 73.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹²⁴ Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship*, 69.

other, learns discipleship. She claims the evidence of the covenant relationship is present throughout John's Gospel, setting a foundation for John's view of discipleship.

Prophecies of Isaiah

Finally, the element of prophecy is a key element in both the farewell testament of Deuteronomy and the Johannine farewell testament. We have already noted the comparison between Moses and Jesus in the Fourth Gospel (1:17; 3:14; 7:21-24); each is considered a prophet, and their final words to God's people are, in a similar manner, prophetic. It is interesting to observe the allusions to the prophecies of Isaiah in the Johannine farewell testament. Within the limitations of this thesis, it is not possible to investigate fully the prominent use of the book of Isaiah in the Fourth Gospel. Nevertheless, an examination of the use of Isaiah in the Farewell Discourses reveals parallels that many scholars have overlooked. Of consequence is the fact that the prophecies of Deuteronomy, of Isaiah and of John 13-17 emphasize the gracious activities of God, and not what human beings are able to achieve. This remarkable connection is worth more investigation.

To begin, Lincoln has observed an important parallel between the prophecies of Isaiah and the Gospel of John. He states that the Johannine author "brings to bear another legal model from Scripture, the covenant lawsuit, and it is Isaiah 40-55 that provides the resources."¹²⁵ The Isaiah chapters "take the form of a lawsuit between Yahweh and Israel," a motif the informed reader can recognize.¹²⁶ We have already noted how the Johannine author used direct references to Isaiah in John 1:23 (Isa 40:3)

¹²⁵ Lincoln, "Trials, Plots and the Narrative of the Fourth Gospel," p. 20.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

and John 12:38-41 (Isa 53:1 and 6:10). Another clear example of how the prophecies of Isaiah are used in John is Isa 54:13 in John 6:45.¹²⁷

In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus speaks as a prophet, yet is the fulfillment of prophecies (17:4; 19:30). The Farewell Discourses feature Jesus' predictive words; he predicts his own approaching departure (16:5; 17:13), and his post-resurrection return (16:22). He predicts a new prayer-life for his followers (16:23), the coming Paraclete (14:16-20; 16:7-11), and the coming persecution of those "hated" by the world (15:18-25; 16:1-4). Jesus' prophetic words that immediately precede the final prayer of John 17 are similar to predictive formulas found in Isaiah: "In that day...." (16:23, see e.g., Isa 4:2; 28:5; 52:6), "on that day..." (14:20), and "a time is coming..." (16:32; see Isa 54:9-10).

It is possible to observe a similarity between the Johannine Farewell Discourses and the distinctive character of "Deutero-Isaiah" (that is, chapters 40-55). Recently, Isaianic scholars have observed an *inclusio* between Isa 40:1-11 and 55:6-13, not unlike the *inclusio* between chapters 13 and 17 in John. Chapter 55 of Isaiah marks the conclusion to the section as a whole, harking back to 40:1-11. Similar to the Farewell Discourses, chapters 40-55 of Isaiah form a "discrete unit" with its own form, function and "agenda."¹²⁸ Also, Chapter 55, akin to John 17, is not the "final word" or the end of

¹²⁷ See the discussion in Williams, "Isaiah in John's Gospel," 106-07. See also, Maarten J. J. Menken, "Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John," in *New Testament Writers and the Old Testament; An Introduction* (ed. John M. Court; London: SPCK, 2002), 29-44.

¹²⁸ John and David Payne Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40-55* (ICC; ed. G. I. Davies, G. N. Stanton, J. A. Emerton and C. E. B. Cranfield; Vol. 1 of 2 vols.; London: T&T Clark International [Continuum], 2006), 4.

the story, but is a conclusion before the closing chapters of the book.¹²⁹ What scholars

Goldingay and Payne observe about Isa 40 could also be said about John 13:

Chapter 40 constitutes a new beginning in marking a transition from *narrative* about Hezekiah's day to *proclamation* to the sixth-century community, but within the book as a whole, it does not form a wholly new beginning.¹³⁰

Further, Isa 39 closes on a gloomy note, with the prediction of departure and devastation (39:67), not unlike the ending of John 12, which closes with the prediction of unbelief.

Following, Isa 40 opens with comfort and promises, and the tenderness of the Lord (e.g., 40:1-5, 11). These promises are parallel to the promises fulfilled in Jesus in John's

Gospel:

40:5 ...the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (See John 1:14; 17:22, 24.)

40:11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. (See John 10:1-18).

The symbolic "vine" image as presented in John 15:1-8 is parallel to the symbolic language of Isa 5:1, 2, 7 and 27:2-6 (for further discussion of the "vine" symbolism, see Chapter 3 of this thesis). Similarly, the childbirth image of John 16:21 is a reflection of Isa 26:17-18; 42:14; 66:7-10 (see Chapter 3 of this study). Joy is the central theme highlighted in the chiasmic structure of the Farewell Discourses (15:11), with parallels in Deutero-Isaiah 51:3; 55:12 (as well as 35:10; 61:10; 66:10). Another connection is seen in the motifs of righteousness and judgment: Isa 41:1-7; 42:3-4; 43:8-13 and John 16:10, 11. It is the function of the promised Paraclete, the Spirit of

¹²⁹ Ibid., 5-6.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 5 (my italics).

truth (14:16), to “convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment” (15:8-11; see e.g., Isa 42:1; 45:19, 24,-25; 46:11-13; 51:1, 4, 6, 8). The promise of “eternal life” in John 17 is parallel to the promise of an “everlasting covenant, my faithful love promised to David,” in Isa 55:3.

In John 14:6, Jesus speaks of himself as “the way,” as an agent of the Father; this distinction reflects the words of God in Isa 55:8-9 which confirm that the ways of God are not the ways of people. The “name” of God is a unique expression of his essence, nature and character, and makes him distinct from other (false) gods (Isa 42:8; 52:6); yet his name is given to Jesus (John 17:6, 11). Hence, Jesus promises believers that they are able to pray in his name, confirming his authority, divinity and unity with the Father (16:23-24). The believers are under divine protection by the divine name (17:12) and are brought into the unity of the Father and the Son (17:11).

The most striking connection between the prophecies of the Deuteronomistic farewell testament, Deutero-Isaiah and John 13-17 is the guarantee of the divine presence with the people of God. In Deut 31:6, 8, God assures his people that he will “never leave you nor forsake you,” and for that reason they are to be courageous and are not to fear the future. In the same manner, Isa 41:8-16 promises the protective activities of God: “so do not fear, for I am with you....” Finally, John 14:1 and 18 reiterate the promise that the believer is to trust in God and in Jesus, because “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” The command not to fear is an assurance to the people that the Lord is with his people; there will be peace and the absence of trouble (Deut 31:6, 8; Isa 41:10; 43:5; 53:5; 54:13; 57:19; Jn 14:1, 27, 17-18).

In addition, Goldingay and Payne propose that the purpose of Isa 40-55 is “to persuade the deportees of YHWH’s saving power and will and to console Zion with the promise of imminent liberation.”¹³¹ In a like manner, John 13-17 seeks to persuade the readers of God’s power to save through Jesus (13:20; 14:1, 9-11; 15:20-22; 16:8-11), and to encourage those who are experiencing persecution (15:20; 16:2-4). The theme of freedom is complemented by the theme of returning home to Jerusalem, a picture of wholeness for the people (Isa 44:21-23; 49:8-9; 55:7). That is, to “return” is to fully accept the future that God is planning for his people.¹³² In chapter 14 of the Farewell Discourses, Jesus promises to prepare an “abode” or “home” for his followers (*μοναὶ* 14:2, *μονῆν*, 14:23), where they can be “with him” in complete wholeness (v. 3; 17:24).

By implication, the author of John presents Jesus as the fulfilment of the promised Isaianic “Redeemer.” In Deutero-Isaiah, God is presented as the “Redeemer” of his people, and it is he alone that must redeem them: Isa 41:14; 43:1 (“you are mine”); 44:6, 22, 24; 45:21 (with Savior; also in 45:15, 21; 49:26); 54:8; also, see 59:20-21; 60:16. In John, Jesus and God are one (10:31); through his words and his work, Jesus is the Redeemer bringing salvation to those who believe. Jesus “came from God” to save and redeem the world (3:14-17; 10:7-10; 16:28; 17:8, 23, 25). It is his “departure” from earth that redeems his people (cf. Isa 52:11; 55:12).

Furthermore, while the title “Holy One of Israel” appears in the book of Isaiah from the initial first chapter, it is prominent in Deutero-Isaiah (43:14, 15; 45:11; 47:4;

¹³¹ Goldingay, *Isaiah 40-55*, 366.

¹³² Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66* (ed. Patrick D. Miller and David L. Bartlett; Vol. 2 of 2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 160.

55:5).¹³³ This distinctive epithet is the closest OT title to the unique “Holy Father” employed in John 17:11. The function of the Isaianic “Holy One of Israel” is complex and multi-faceted, emphasizing the gracious redeeming activities of God toward his people. It is analogous to the “Holy Father” in John, where all the rich meaning of the “Holy One of Israel” is wed to the intimacy of the title “Father” (see also Deut 32:6, where he is “your Father, your Creator”). In Isa 40-55, the “Holy One of Israel” and “Redeemer” appear together in numerous verses: 41:14; 43:14; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7 (twice); 54:5. In chapter 55, the “Holy One of Israel has endowed you with splendour” (v. 5), similar to the gift of glory given to those who believe in the Father and the Son (Jn 17:22). Reflecting both Deuteronomy and Isaiah, this title in John guarantees the gracious, redeeming activities of God for salvation of his people.

Moreover, the songs and the blessings of Deuteronomy 31-34 and the chapters in Deutero-Isaiah are rich with dense and poetic language and imagery that speaks to the readers, assuring and encouraging them. “In substance, the key feature of poetry is the use of imagery which enables the poet or prophet to say things that could not otherwise be said: to say new things.”¹³⁴ The reader can compare the poetic imagery of the “song of praise to God,” recognizing the “greatness of our God,” in Deut 32 with the “songs of praise” in Isa 40:9-31; 42:10-13; 54:1-8. Comparably, the prayer of John 17 is written in a style and a form that enables the Gospel author to communicate concepts to his audience in a new and powerful way (see Chapter 3 of this study). The songs, praise,

¹³³ See two related discussions of the “Holy One of Israel” and “Holy Father” in Chapters 1 and 3 of this thesis.

¹³⁴ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, vol. 2, 160.

prayer and poetry highlight the exclusivity and power of God, and what he has done for his people in terms of redemption and relationship.

To conclude this section, we can observe how the prophetic elements in John 13-17 reflect the prophecies of Deuteronomy and Isaiah. The prophetic connections contribute to the deduction that the genre of the Farewell Discourses is, indeed, the “farewell testament.” A detailed comparison between the final testament of Moses in Deuteronomy 31-34, the prophetic promises in Isaiah, and the Johannine farewell testament brings to light the complementary natures of these literary passages. The emphasis is the merciful, redeeming activities of God for his people. The Johannine author has chosen to use a distinctive genre, molded and adapted for his own purposes, to highlight the salvific work of Jesus as the fulfillment of the eternal plan of God.

E. Extra-Biblical Literature

Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs

Furthermore, the Johannine Farewell Discourses reflect the “testament” genre that was employed during the time of Second Temple Jewish literature. Käsemann, Collins, and Bock all have referred to *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (abbreviated *TI2P*) as one patent example of the testament genre from intertestamental Hebrew literature. In agreement, J. H. Charlesworth introduces the testament-type of extra-biblical writing by asserting that it is the OT farewell testament traditions that provide the background for these testaments. Charlesworth suggests that the *TI2P* was modelled on the last words of Jacob in Gen 49.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ James H. Charlesworth, "Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth, *Anchor Bible Reference Library*; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 773.

Nevertheless, others see the *T12P* as a later, Christian text. H. Hollander and M. De Jonge conclude that the text as we have it today may be both: there may have originally been an older Hellenistic-Jewish document from the first or second century B.C., that was revised by the early Christians:

The fact that the Testaments functioned meaningfully in Christian circles at the end of the second century A.D. and the beginning of the third does not prove that they were composed at that time. They may represent a thorough and to a considerable degree consistent reworking of an earlier Jewish writing. It is, however, clear that the quest for an earlier stage (or stages) in the history of the Testaments will have to start with the text as we have it before us.¹³⁶

T12P presents literarily the final words and desires of the twelve patriarchal figures, the sons of Jacob, on their deathbeds. Each testament begins with the gathering of the children and relatives around the dying patriarch. The patriarch confesses his own faults and failings (especially in relation to the figure of Joseph) and teaches his family what vices to avoid. Words concerning the destiny of the nation of Israel are often spoken, including its sins and divine judgment. The speaker may exhort his listeners to pursue the way of righteousness, and promise glory in an eschatological future. He may close with warnings, predictions, blessings and/or curses.¹³⁷ Acknowledging some variations, most of the Testaments include biographies of the patriarchs, clearly connected to exhortation and ethical sections for the reader. These sections, then, are connected to eschatological and/or apocalyptic sections.¹³⁸ Scholars have observed two patterns that are often repeated, woven into the Testaments: the “L. J. sections” and the

¹³⁶ H. W. Hollander and M. De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs; A Commentary* (SVTP; vol. 8; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 83.

¹³⁷ Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," 775.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 29-41, 51.

“S.E.R. sections” (the “Levi-Judah” passages and the “Sin-Exile-Return” passages).¹³⁹

Clearly, in function and in content, the *T12P* can be linked to the Johannine Farewell Discourses.

Furthermore, many passages in the *T12P* are messianic; these strategic passages may be Jewish in origin, but have been reworked by early Christian writers, or may have been a Christian later addition. Kee determines there to be “Christian interpolations [added] into a basically Jewish document” (e.g., *TLevi* 10:2-4; *TBen* 9:2-3).¹⁴⁰ In fact, the (ten or twelve) interpolations appear to have “a special affinity with Johannine thought and probably date from the early second century A.D.”¹⁴¹ The Christian comments or additions demonstrate that when the early Christians read the *T12P* they made the obvious connection between the messianic passages and the life, words and work of Jesus. The patent messianic passages present “diarchic messianism,” portraying a priest (from the tribe of Levi) and a king (from the tribe of Judah).¹⁴² The salvation of humanity (Israel and the Gentiles) is accomplished by a “saviour figure” who is presented clearly as Jesus Christ in the Testaments.¹⁴³ This messianic hope is interwoven with Hellenistic concepts of ethics, aesthetics, and dualism, as well as apocalyptic anticipation.

¹³⁹ Hollander and De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 7. The “L. J. sections” discuss the superiority of the priestly office of the tribe of Levi over the kingly office from the tribe of Judah. Jesus, as the Messiah, is connected to both (p. 77). The “Sin-Exile-Return passages” confront the readers with sin and separation from God, and comfort them with the promise of future redemption by God and by his agent, Jesus. See p. 39-41, 60-61, 83-85.

¹⁴⁰ Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 777.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 778. Hollander, however, contends that only one Messiah is presented in *T12P*. Hollander and De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 61.

¹⁴³ Hollander and De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 61-63.

Notably, the Testaments disclose two kinds of spirits in the world, “the spirit of truth and the spirit of error,” (e.g., *TJud* 20:1-2, 5) which often lead to the human choice of “Two Ways.”¹⁴⁴ The most interesting parallel is the mention of the “spirit of truth” which “testifies to all things and brings all accusations” (*TJud* 20:1, 5), with a parallel in John in 14:17 and 16:8-3. Brotherly love is commended as a virtue in the Testaments (*TSim* 4:7; *TIss* 5:2; *TDan* 5:4), and is repeatedly exemplified by Joseph (*TSim* 4:5; *TJos* 17:2-8).¹⁴⁵ It is a central theme of Jesus (often seen as a *type* of Joseph) in the Farewell Discourses: 13:34-35; 15:9-17. While it is not a document on angelology or demonology, the *TI2P* pictures the role of an intercessor and protecting angel as a mediator between God and humanity. God intervenes in the lives of people, protecting them from his opponent, Satan, or “Belial.”¹⁴⁶ Visions or dreams are not uncommon in the Testaments; as an example, Levi begs the Lord to “teach me your name, so that I may call on you in the day of tribulation;” and he is answered by a vision of the “angel of intercession for the nation Israel” (*TLevi* 5:6, *TDan* 6:2). Intercession for the believing ones, aided by the “Spirit of truth” is promised in the Farewell Discourses (14:16-17; 16:7:11); it is also modelled in Jesus’ prayer in John 17.

There is some emphasis on obedience to the Law, but no unambiguous mention of the breaking or renewal of the Deuteronomistic covenant (e.g., *TIss* 5:1). It is in the text of *TBen*, in a Christian interpolation, that the covenant is mentioned briefly:

Through you will be fulfilled the heavenly prophecy concerning the Lamb of God, the Saviour of the world, because the

¹⁴⁴ Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 779. Note that Jesus is presented in John 14:6 as the only “way.”

¹⁴⁵ Hollander and De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 6.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

unspotted one will be betrayed by lawless men, and the sinless one will die for impious men *by the blood of the covenant* for the salvation of the gentiles and of Israel and the destruction of Beliar and his servants. (*TBen 3:8*)¹⁴⁷

This reflects the significance of salvation of people through the “Saviour of the world,” rather than through obedience to the law. In addition, in place of stressing the covenantal relationship with God, these Testaments repeatedly recall Stoic virtues such as the “integrity of the heart,” (e.g., *TIss 3:8*) piety, uprightness, hard work and self-control.¹⁴⁸ For these reasons, the *TI2P* has been regarded as Hellenistic-Jewish and/or early Christian literature, of the same era as the author of the Gospel of John.¹⁴⁹

Even the unusual title for God, the “Holy Father” (as mentioned above in the prophecy of Isaiah section) is found in *TJud 24:2*. It is used in connection with the “pouring out” of God’s “spirit of grace” on those that follow the “sun of righteousness” (Jesus). Just prior to this title, “the God of righteousness” is used in *TJud 22:2-3*. The “God of righteousness” brings “tranquillity and peace to Jacob, and to the other nations,” not far removed from John 17:25, where the “Righteous Father” is used in connection with the knowledge of God in the whole world.¹⁵⁰

As in the earlier OT testaments, none of the Testaments in *TI2P* ends in a prayer. However, *TLevi* concludes with a poem that announces the “new priest, to whom all the words of the Lord will be revealed” (18:2). The eschatological priest in this poem is not unlike the Jesus portrayed in John 17. He will:

Shine forth like the sun in the earth;

¹⁴⁷ Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 826.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 779.

¹⁴⁹ Hollander and De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 37.

¹⁵⁰ These titles are discussed in more detail in Chapter 1 of this study on characterization.

he shall take away all darkness from under heaven,
and there shall be peace in all the earth.
The heavens shall greatly rejoice in his days
And the earth shall be glad;
The clouds will be filled with joy
And the knowledge of the Lord will be poured out on the earth
like the water of the seas. *TLevi 18:4-5*

It is interesting that Hollander and De Jonge conclude that the *T12P* is unusual and does not fit the traditional, literary restrictions of a “farewell testament.” In comparing *T12P* to other documents of the same known genre, the scholars declare that “the Testaments, in many ways, stand by themselves.”¹⁵¹ The same could be said of John 13-17. Consequently, the *T12P* has significant similarities with the Johannine Farewell Discourses. The shared literary elements, themes and topics of John 13-17 and the *T12P* are remarkable and should not be overlooked.

Testament of Moses

Second, the *Testament of Moses (TMos)* is an apocalyptic farewell testament which probably dates from the first century CE. The model for this text is Deuteronomy 31-34; it closely follows the general outline and pattern of that OT text.¹⁵² This testament is a challenge, because the extant copies are quite fragmentary, and the purpose of the story is debated. Taxo (identified only as a member of the Levi tribe) proposes martyrdom in chapter 9 instead of disobedience to the Lord’s commands, and his speech in chapter 10 has apocalyptic elements. It is in chapter 11 that we perceive echoes of Jesus’ Farewell Discourses. This is a dialogue between Moses and Joshua, a consolation in view of Moses’ impending death. Joshua is grieved and afraid, but Moses

¹⁵¹ Hollander and De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 33.

¹⁵² J. Priest, “Testament of Moses,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth, *Anchor Bible Reference Library*; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 923.

consoles him and reassures Joshua that he can lead the people. One interesting connection to John 13-17 is spoken by Joshua:

Now, master, you are going away, and who will sustain this people? Or who will have compassion on them, and will be for them a leader on (their) way? Or who will pray for them, not omitting a single day, so that I may lead them into the land of their forefathers? (*TMos 11:9-11*)¹⁵³

Such questions could have been on the lips of Jesus' disciples before his departure; and, Jesus' prayer in John shows that it is Jesus who intercedes and prays for his own who are continuing his mission in the world. Further, Joshua is concerned that

...there is (now) no advocate for them who will bear messages to the Lord on their behalf in the way that Moses was the great messenger. He, in every hour both day and night, had his knees fixed to the earth, praying and looking steadfastly toward him who governs the whole earth with mercy and justice, reminding the Lord of the ancestral covenant and the resolute oath....What, then, will happen to these people, Master Moses? (*TMos 11:17-18*)¹⁵⁴

Here, Moses is an advocate and a messenger for the people. The connection is, of course, the promised Paraclete in John 14-16 as an "advocate" for believers after Jesus has departed. Additionally, the prayers of Moses are concerned with the covenantal relationship between God and the people. The grieving Joshua is reassured by Moses in the final chapter (12) of the testament, and his words emphasize the fact that God is in control of the past, present and future.

Testament of Job

¹⁵³ Ibid., 933.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 934.

The third example from Collins' suggestions is the *Testament of Job (TJob)* which is said to be comparable to the *TI2P* in form and in function.¹⁵⁵ On the one hand, R. P. Spittler states that the Second Temple times were the "centuries of the testament."¹⁵⁶ He goes on to conclude that the genre of the "testament," in the sense of a "legal will," was "only possible as a hellenistic development." Therefore, Spittler's point of view erroneously casts doubt on the older OT documents (i.e., Deut 31-34) as part of the final testament category.¹⁵⁷

On the other hand, Collins is correct in observing similarities between the extra-biblical testaments and the Farewell Discourses. In its present form, the *TJob* is much longer than the *TMos*, including a prologue (chapter 1) and an epilogue (chapters 51-53). The main body of the writing (chapters 2-50) is traditionally divided into four sections. The basic structure could link *TJob* to the Gospel of John, yet there are too many differences between the two to see a literary connection. The death of the patriarch "Jobab" (a descendant of Esau, Gen 36:33-34) is imminent; he gathers his descendants together for final words of advice and the dispersion of his estate. The biblical character Job gives a first-person account of his trials, virtue is commended, and the theme of patience is prominent. This testament includes many of the elements found in the testament of Jacob found in Gen 47:29-50:14: a wise, aging father is on his deathbed,

¹⁵⁵ R. P. Spittler, "Testament of Job," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth, *Anchor Bible Reference Library*; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 832.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 831.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

calling his sons to distribute his goods. The father warns, advises his off-spring, and predicts coming events. The proper burial and lamentations close the text.¹⁵⁸

The focus of the *TJob* is on the last wishes of the biblical character concerning the distribution of his property (and not the covenant relationship with God). There are no messianic expectations, and very few apocalyptic elements.¹⁵⁹ It is not about the covenant or the nation of Israel, but about Job's family: his wife, seven sons and three daughters are named and are important characters. Job must "settle his affairs" (1:2), give away his goods, and he speaks primarily to his children (1:7). Our investigation concludes that the *TJob* is more akin to Winter's proposed genre of *Vermächtnisrede* than it is to other Hebrew testaments.

In summary, Chennattu is quite correct in saying that the Johannine Farewell Discourses has no direct structural parallel to any ancient treaty, or to a single OT testament tradition.¹⁶⁰ While there is no reason to determine the dependence of the Johannine author on the earlier or contemporary farewell testaments, it is plausible that the author of John could have known and utilized the popular Jewish testament genre in the composition of John 13-17. The OT example, Deuteronomy 31-34, and the *T12P* display significant similarities with the final testament of Jesus in John's Gospel. In a manner similar to the ancient Hebrew farewell testaments, John 13-17 highlights the significance of the relationship between God and his people, and the positive future blessings of those who remain faithful to him. Further, in the light of OT and Second

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 829.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 832.

¹⁶⁰ Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship*, 68. Also see Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, 40, and Lacomara, "Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourses (John 13:31-16:33)," p. 84.

Temple prophetic and messianic literature, the person of Jesus, his words and his work, are presented in the Farewell Discourses as the fulfilment of God's redemptive plan and of the covenant relationship.¹⁶¹ The ancient promises of God are fulfilled through his Son for the community of his people.

Conclusion

Remembering that the Fourth Gospel is an ancient biography of a very unique person, the Farewell Discourses are written in such a way that the spotlight is never far from the person who is central to the Gospel, Jesus. The Farewell Discourses are the words of the Word that culminate Jesus' earthly ministry and move the characters in the story and the readers to the final necessary events in the Jesus story. The author of the Gospel uses a familiar genre, but gives it an unusual treatment to convey Jesus' farewell words. Since the Gospel is a *bios*, a Greco-Roman form of biographical narrative, the Farewell Discourses could easily include Hellenistic concepts and literary devices. However, Hellenistic elements are not predominant. The inspiration of Greco-Roman literary culture on John 13-17 is no more and no less than what is apparent in the remainder of the Gospel. This chapter of our study asserts that the author of John did not adhere to narrow, strictly Jewish or to formal Greco-Roman literary modes, forms and genres. He neither intentionally inserted Hellenistic literary concepts for the benefit of his audience, nor was he affected by any other farewell speeches from other NT writings. In keeping with Hengel's arguments, the author of John exposes a Hellenistic Judaism that incorporated motifs and literary devices that could provide a greater

¹⁶¹ See also Lacomara, "Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourses (John 13:31-16:33)," p. 84.

understanding for the reader. Essentially the author adapted an older testamental genre, striving to make his new communication more comprehensible to his audience.

The Johannine author has creatively re-shaped the known testament genre so as to present a unique and distinctive climax to the discourse material in his Gospel narrative. The genre of ancient Hebrew testaments placed an emphasis on the covenantal relationship between God and his people, and on the redemptive, saving plan of God for the faithful. This is significant to the Johannine writer. As the readers recall the prophecies of Isaiah in John 13-17, they are encouraged by the promises of God which are fulfilled in Jesus. The blend of the Jewish testament genre, prophetic literature and appropriate Greco-Roman literary devices is a creative manner of composition, reflecting the literature of his time and his own unique writing style. Perhaps unconsciously, the author created a farewell testament that is as unique as the person who spoke the words in the Farewell Discourses.

To conclude this chapter is only part of our task. An analysis of the genre of the Farewell Discourses lays a foundation for our ability to better understand the form of the prayer in John 17. While we can draw conclusions about the genre of the Fourth Gospel, and about chapters 13 through 17, an analysis of the form of the prayer itself is still unfinished. This leads us to the next chapter of this study.

Chapter 5

Investigation of the Form of the Prayer

For he bore the sin of many
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Isaiah 53:12b

Introduction

In Chapter 4 of this study, we determined that the framework of John 13 through 17 is the farewell testament genre, creatively employed by the author of the Fourth Gospel, to inform and assure his readers. The Johannine author composed a farewell that is reminiscent of the farewell of Moses, but he adapted it to be appropriate for his own purposes. Similar to Jesus' concern for "his own," in the Gospel (13:1), the author has things to say to his audience before he presents the passion narrative. The Farewell Discourses are the promises and the preparation for the passion events as much for the readers as for the disciples in the narrative. The Gospel author molded and expanded the familiar farewell genre to communicate new material to his readers about the new relationship promised by God to those who believe in the "new Moses," that is, Jesus. We can now emphasize the fact that John 17, in the form of a prayer, has specific and definite functions as the conclusion to that final testament of Jesus.

Although numerous scholars have regarded the prayer of John 17 theologically¹ and/or historically,² few have considered the literary function of the prayer as a prayer *form* in its present position in the text. Past research has focused more on the historical origin and position of the prayer than on its literary *form*. The prayer has been understood in relation to other prayers that are placed on the lips of Jesus in the NT

¹ Käsemann, *Testament*.

² Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. See p. 420 and following.

Gospels. John 17 has been considered a “high priestly prayer,” the function of which has been considered an intercession on behalf of *the immediate disciples* of Jesus; that is, the characters in the story that are about to experience the death and resurrection of Jesus need a prayer to comfort and commission them. Käsemann, for example, gives little consideration of the chapter as a prayer-form except to suggest that “the presentation of the instruction in the form of a prayer” is for the benefit of the disciples.³ However, this investigation of the form of the prayer is not an historical- or form-critical study, but a study of a literary form within a literary genre. Furthermore, the existing prayer-form of John 17 is for the benefit of the readers of the Gospel and not for the immediate disciples of Jesus in the narrative.

We begin (part 1) with an exploration of how the form of the prayer functions as the conclusion to the Johannine Farewell Discourses. How does it add to the central message of the farewell testament, and to the ultimate plan of God for his faithful people? In this position, and in this form, what does it “do” for the reader? Next (part 2), as a form of intimate communication between the Father and the Son, the prayer provides a model of the new prayer relationship promised to the believer in John 16:23-24. In part 3, the most important function of the prayer is explored; it is an assurance for the reader that Jesus is doing exactly what he promised to do: that is, to be the intercessor for the believer before the Father.

Chapter 17 is written in a completely different form than the discourse material that immediately precedes it, yet it is still presented as a monologue said by Jesus, primarily in the same first-person language as the previous speeches. Because of its

³ Käsemann, *Testament*, 5.

similarities and its distinctions from the preceding discourses, the prayer demands our attention. In many ways, it is fairly easy to attach the prayer to the other chapters (13 through 16) and call it a conclusion to the Johannine discourses. However, such simplicity may be deceiving; the author of the text appears to shift intentionally from instructional, didactic speech material to the form of an intimate prayer.

In ancient literature, the ending of a hero's final testament could be a hymn (as presented in two of the Synoptic versions of the Last Supper, Matt 26:30; Mk14:26), specific blessings (as in Deut 33), a poem or simply a prose wrap-up to inform and summarize for the reader. If Schackenburg is right, that prayers are quite rare as conclusions to ancient farewell addresses,⁴ why does the author of the Fourth Gospel end his farewell testament with a lengthy prayer?

Part 1. Form and Function

By sheer length alone, the prayer of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is unique in the Gospel tradition. It is a communication with God, placed on the lips of Jesus for the benefit of those people who hear (or read) it. It is important to ask questions that are concerned with the *form* and *function* of the prayer. While it is necessary to unite form with function, we can question whether scholarship has allowed the form of the prayer to dictate its function, or whether researchers have suggested various functions (e.g., liturgical) that verify the fact that it is a prayer in form. It is important that, as readers, we allow the given literary form to dictate its function, not the other way around. What is the author saying to his readers *by* putting the words of Jesus in the form of a prayer?

Because of its opening phrase, chapter 17 has always been considered a

⁴Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 198. See above, p. 219.

prayer:

Ταῦτα ἐλάλησεν Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἐπάρας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἶπεν Πάτερ...

After having spoken at length in a didactic mode with his disciples (chapters 13-16), Jesus suddenly assumes a typical Jewish position of prayer and speaks to his Father. No one has substantially doubted this form, even though the author never uses the typical Greek word for “prayer” anywhere in the chapter. In light of this consensus, our investigation pertains to the reason why the prayer exists as a prayer in this position in the Fourth Gospel. Therefore, what is conveyed to the reader because the words are written in the form of a prayer? As a blessing conveys hope, and curses convey warning, what does this prayer convey?

To commence, our study leads us to investigate possible parallels to John 17 found in other Christian prayers. How does John 17 compare to other prayers in the NT Gospels, and with prayers within the Fourth Gospel? Interestingly, such an inter-gospel comparison is a good tool to demonstrate what the Johannine prayer *is not*. Considering its distinctive form and function, we will see that John 17 is not an early Christian liturgical addition to the Gospel; it is neither a Johannine version of the “Lord’s Prayer,” nor is it an adaptation of the “prayers of Gethsemane” as seen in the Synoptics.

A. Early Christian Liturgical Prayers

It has been suggested that the conclusion to the Farewell Discourses is a liturgical prayer created by and for the early Christian church. In 1961, A. Hamman drew up an extensive list of early Christian prayers, beginning with biblical texts and including prayers of the church fathers, prayers of martyrs, prayers in stone and those

“from papyri and potsherds.” He collected various early liturgical writings, from the *Didache* to Christian prayers for ordination, for illnesses, and for the dead.⁵ His significant collection illustrates the wide variety of form and function of early Christian prayers. From the Gospels, Hamman’s selection of prayers includes the “Lord’s Prayer” from the Gospel of Matthew and another prayer “at the tomb of Lazarus” in John 11:41-42. These two prayers, “composed by Jesus,” are “honoured,” because of their theme of thanksgiving.⁶ This, he believes, is a central feature of early Christian prayers. Additionally, Hamman points out that many early Christian prayers were (and still are) connected to the eucharistic liturgy.⁷ Perhaps this is one reason John 17 has been incorrectly perceived as a eucharistic prayer.

Strecker agrees that early Christian prayers were not restricted to worship services, but were heavily influenced by liturgy in the church. He cites the “Lord’s Prayer” in the Gospel of Matthew as an example of a prayer that was “probably” engaged by the author from the traditions and practices of the Matthean community.⁸ Strecker’s point is debatable, but it is an example of how many scholars have connected the prayer of John 17 to the liturgy of the early Christian church.

With Strecker, Brown gives consideration to regarding the prayer of John 17 as a liturgical prayer, which was added to the Farewell Discourses at some later date for the benefit of the Christian church.⁹ Hoskyns suggests that John 17 served as a “model

⁵ A. Hamman, *Early Christian Prayers [Prières des premiers Chrétiens]* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1961), v-xiii.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ George Strecker, *History of New Testament Literature* (trans. Hans-Joachim Mollenhauer Calvin Katter; Harrisburg: Trinity 1992), 72.

⁹ Brown, *Gospel According to John, Vol. 2*, 597.

liturgical prayer,” and a “comprehensive eucharistic prayer,” for the early Christian church.¹⁰ He further suggests that it is a “hymn” within the liturgical context. It fulfils a role similar to that of the hymn sung in the Synoptic versions of the Last Supper (Mk 14:26). Thus, it may have been recited or sung in Christian eucharistic celebrations.¹¹

In the same vein, Brown notes the comparison between John 17 and the “*Preface Hymn*” in the present Roman Catholic liturgy that precedes the sacrificial part of the Roman Mass. Similar to the opening of John 17, this hymn is always addressed to “God the Father.” Additionally, in the *Preface Hymn* Jesus speaks to his Father before he begins his journey to the cross.¹² Brown also recalls two of the church fathers, Cyril of Alexandria and John Chrysostom, who associated the reading of John 17 with the Eucharist, but emphasizes that there is no evidence it was actually used as part of the liturgy. There are brief thematic parallels to the prayer in the *Didache* (9:5, 10:2), but the specific reference to the eucharistic elements (bread and wine) in those chapters indicates that the *Didache* is more liturgical in nature.¹³ In the end, Brown agreeably concludes that the liturgical origin of the discourses and prayer is “difficult to prove..... Some hypotheses are highly romantic and quite incapable of proof.”¹⁴

While it is true that liturgical forms of communication, or religious language (e.g., blessings, curses, prayers) are often included in a text for benefit of the readers, it is not verifiable or helpful to imagine that the prayer was created as a separate entity as a portion of the Christian church’s eucharistic ritual and then added into the Gospel at

¹⁰ Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (ed. Francis Noel Davey; vol. 2; London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1940), 586.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 495.

¹² *Ibid.*, 746.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 747.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 746.

some later date. In its present form and position as the conclusion to the Farewell Discourses, the primary function of John 17 was not liturgical. Apart from its preceding chapters, the depth of the meaning of John 17 is lost.

The suggestion that John 17 is related to the eucharistic liturgy is based primarily on an assumption concerning its setting. Schnackenburg debates the issues of the “*Sitz im Leben*” of the prayer, and finally concludes that it is *not* a cultic prayer:

The style and form of the prayer, the dominant idea of glorification and the special petition for sanctification (vv. 17-19) give Jn 17 a certain liturgical flavour which could hardly have occurred in any context other than the celebration of the Eucharist in a Christian community. Apart from this, the prayers in the *Didache* also provide us with a comparison, since they are clearly related to the prayer in Jn 17. On the other hand, there is no reference in Jn 17 to the eucharistic gifts and symbolic aspects.¹⁵

For Schnackenburg, it is the “literary genre” of the prayer that eliminates its origin in the eucharistic liturgy. Thus, he admits that

...it is not easy to classify the prayer in Jn 17 in a particular literary genre. It is most closely related to the farewell words and the farewell blessing of the patriarchs in the biblical and Jewish tradition.¹⁶

If not liturgical, Schnackenburg still claims an historical function of the prayer:

“the whole prayer breathes the spirit of the Johannine community,” which provides

...what is essential concerning life in God and in his love that is filled with inner glory. This is a call to the inner life, to inner reconnectedness and to unity with God and within the community....¹⁷

¹⁵ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 200.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 201.

Thus, he is correct in his deduction that the prayer is essentially for the benefit of the believing community, and that its function is not cultic. John 17 was neither written for nor limited to the liturgy of the eucharistic meal. Logically, if we allow John 17 to be the conclusion of the Farewell Discourses, and not a later liturgical addition, we can conclude, with Schnackenburg, that in form and function, as well as content, it is not a cultic prayer.

On the other hand, the setting of the farewell testament is an implied paschal setting (13:1), which was certainly familiar to the early Christian readers. Their familiarity with the Last Supper traditions adds richness to the significance of the prayer. Its position is strategic.¹⁸ To set the prayer within the intimate scene of Jesus' last meal with the disciples before his crucifixion is a vivid reminder to the readers of his great love for his followers. For the author to position the prayer at the end of the Last Supper does not demand that its purpose is to be a eucharistic liturgical prayer.

In the end, John 17 is a complex summary and loaded conclusion to the Farewell Discourses. Even though the prayer may have been important to early Christian communities, to identify an historical, liturgical origin with any certainty proves to be extremely difficult. It is necessary, then, to evaluate other prayers of Jesus that are included in all four of the NT Gospels to gain insight into the function of the Johannine prayer.

B. Prayers in the Fourth Gospel

Hamman features the Synoptics' "Lord's Prayer" and the prayer of John 11:41-42 as examples of prayers of thanksgiving spoken by Jesus in the Gospels; however, it is

¹⁸ See Chapter 2 of this thesis on Structure and Setting.

important to note that “thanksgiving” is not the main emphasis in the prayers of Jesus in the Gospel of John. The two prayers considered by Hamman are not the same in form or in focus. There are only two short prayers of Jesus outside of John 17 in the Fourth Gospel, both with a consistent emphasis. Jesus’ words in John 11:41-42 and in 12:27-30 focus on his didactic intention before an audience, not thanksgiving. In 11:41-42 Jesus prays out-loud in the presence of other people. Near the tomb of Lazarus, his words are emphatic that “I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” He thanks the Father for hearing him, but that is information within the prayer that the audience needs to know. In 12:27-30, the people who hear the prayer also experience the unique theophany of God’s voice in response to Jesus’ prayer. Jesus prays to the Father for the benefit of the crowd, who hear the voice of God glorify his own name. The prayer and the voice are unnecessary except for the hearing of those who are witnesses (12:30).

The two short Johannine prayers of Jesus are self-revelatory and are a preface to the revealed shared glory of the Father and the Son that is expanded in his final prayer of John 17. They are connected to the longer chapter 17 in theme and content (11:42 and 17:8; 11:40, 12:23 and 17:1, 5; 12:28 and 12:17:1-5) as well as the physical position of the speaker (11:41 and 17:1). More important, all three prayers are spoken for the benefit of the human hearers, not the speaker, or the Father. All three are confirmation of Jesus’ identity and mission. Finally, all three prayers are “already answered” by the

Father, but are spoken or written for the benefit of the ones who “overhear” the Son’s words.¹⁹

C. Comparison to other Gospel Prayers

There are no prayers in the Synoptic Gospels that are presented in exactly the same way as Jesus’ prayers in the Gospel of John. Yet a comparison of John 17 to other Gospel prayers is helpful in giving insight into the purpose of the Johannine prayer. There are three propositions suggested by scholars as to the function of John 17 in relation to the prayers of the other three Gospels: its purpose is basically didactic in nature, similar to the Synoptic “Lord’s Prayer;” it functions much like Jesus’ “prayers in Gethsemane” in the Synoptics because it immediately precedes his betrayal and arrest; and, it functions as the conclusion to the Last Supper of Jesus and his disciples. As Brown suggests:

Perhaps the guiding themes of the compositions were supplied by a core of material that from its earliest formation was associated with the context of the Last Supper. Moreover, the Synoptics have the tradition of Jesus’ praying to his Father in Gethsemane, corresponding to the prayer that John has at the conclusion of the Discourse.²⁰

However, a closer look at the *form* of John 17 dispels any such ideas of reconciling the four Gospels. It is difficult to see a close comparison of John 17 to the Last Supper dialogues; in form and purpose, John 17 does not replace the Synoptic prayers in the garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus’ Teachings on Prayer

¹⁹ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 241.

²⁰ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 585-86. Also see Lindars, *The Gospel of John; New Century Bible Commentary*, 515, 17.

The form of the “Lord’s Prayer,” the most well-known of all the prayers of Jesus, supports the didactic function of Jesus’ words; it is a teaching tool given to the disciples. The structure of parallelisms and symmetry lends itself to human remembrance. Such a form of discourse can be used to aid in the learning and memory process. We have noted the didactic style of all of the Farewell Discourses, including chapter 17 (Chapter 3 of this study), but the didactic purpose of the Synoptics’ “Lord’s Prayer” is quite different from the instructional intent of John 17. There are points of comparison in themes and in language, but they are different in form and in purpose.

Matthew’s Gospel holds the more familiar and more complete “Lord’s Prayer” than the prayer found in Luke. In Matthew, it comes on the heels of Jesus’ teaching about true prayer attitudes and hypocritical attitudes about prayer. C. Blomberg has observed how the petitions in the “Lord’s Prayer” in Matthew provide “linguistic or conceptual parallels” to John 17, perhaps even suggesting “some kind of ‘midrashic’ expansion of an original prayer of Jesus.”²¹ As an example, John 17:15 provides the most apparent parallel to the Matthean “‘Lord’s Prayer,’ where Jesus petitions God to keep his followers ‘from the evil one,’ not unlike ‘deliver us from evil.’”²² Yet in terms of literary form, the two prayers are very different. In the Synoptics, the prayer of Jesus is in direct response to his followers with instructions on how to pray. It is constructed for easy recitation and memorization:

Matthew 6:9-13

Οὕτως οὖν προσεύχεσθε ὑμεῖς·

²¹ Craig L. Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of the Gospel of John* (Leicester: Inter-varsity 2001), 219.

²² *Ibid.*, 222.

Πάτερ ἡμῶν
ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
ἁγιασθήτω
τὸ ὄνομά σου·
έλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου·
γεινηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου
ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ
καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς·

Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον·
καὶ
ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν
ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν·
καὶ
μὴ εἰσευέλθῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν
ἀλλὰ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ

The prayer is formed as two halves, each half consisting of three petitions.²³ The patterns of parallelism and symmetry are evident in the structure of the prayer, aiding to its poetic nature and its memorable quality.

In Luke's account, Jesus is praying "in a certain place" (his "usual" place of prayer? 11:1). When he returns to his disciples, after having seen his example, one of them asks him specifically to teach them how to pray. John the Baptist has taught his disciples how to pray, so Jesus' followers seek the same instruction. This indicates a strong "teaching" intent on the part of Jesus. Jesus' prayer in Luke is briefer in form and the symmetry is not as tight:

Luke 11:2-4

εἶπεν δὲ αὐτοῖς
"Ὅταν προσεύχησθε
λέγετε

Πάτερ
ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου·
έλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου·

²³ See Colin Brown, "Prayer." *NIDNTT* 2:867-73. He includes an optional way to structure the prayer in Matthew and in Luke.

τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν·

καὶ

ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν

καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίομεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν·

καὶ

μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν

The condensed form of this prayer is a memorable tool for the ones who sought instruction on how to pray. Noteworthy is the quick repetition of imperative verbs: “hallowed,” “come,” “give,” “forgive.” No mention is made of the “evil one.” The form of both the Matthew and the Luke versions are short and dense enough to be very memorable; the evidence for its simplicity is the continual use of the “Lord’s Prayer” in the Christian church even to this day.

In contrast to the short, didactic instructional prayer, the purpose of John 17 is very different; it is more lengthy and more complex than the “Lord’s Prayer.” While the prayer in the Synoptics is a teaching tool on how to pray, John 17 teaches by example. Its structure does not include memorable, dense parallels or repeated imperatives. Moreover, it is not to be copied, as no one but Jesus could recite the prayer of John 17 (e.g. 17:4, 5, 6, 10).

Jesus’ Gethsemane Prayers

The second proposition is that the prayer of John 17 can be compared to the prayers of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, words spoken just before his arrest and trials. There are two obvious reasons this comparison has been made. First, the position of the prayer in John’s Gospel is similarly right before the betrayal and arrest in chapter 18. John’s narration of the events can be reconciled to the chronology of events in the Synoptic Gospels, from the Last Supper to the prayers in the garden, to Jesus’ arrest.

Second, the cryptic saying in John 14:31b (whose presence is notoriously difficult to explain) is identical to the words of Jesus in Matthew and Mark as he and his disciples begin to move out of the garden (noted in bold below). For these reasons, it has been argued that the prayer of chapter 17 is John's depiction of the Gethsemane scene.²⁴

In Mark's scene, Jesus prays three times, interrupted by words directed at the weary disciples:

Mark 14:35-36, 39, 41-42

καὶ προελθὼν μικρὸν ἔπιπτεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ προσηύχετο ἵνα εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν παρέλθῃ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἡ ὥρα
καὶ ἔλεγεν Ἀββα ὁ πατήρ πάντα δυνατά σοι· παρένεγκε τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο ἀπ' ἐμοῦ· ἀλλ' οὐ τί ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλὰ τί σύ

καὶ πάλιν ἀπελθὼν προσηύξατο [τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον εἰπὼν]

καὶ ἔρχεται τὸ τρίτον καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς Καθεύδετε [τὸ] λοιπὸν καὶ ἀναπαύεσθε· ἀπέχει· ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα ἰδοὺ παραδίδοται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰς τὰς χεῖρας τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν
ἐγείρεσθε ἄγωμεν· ἰδοὺ ὁ παραδιδούς με ἤγγικεν

Matthew's Gospel is almost identical:

Matthew 26:39, 42, 44, 46

καὶ προελθὼν μικρὸν ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ προσευχόμενος
καὶ λέγων Πάτερ μου εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν παρελθάτω ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο· πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλ' ὡς σύ

πάλιν ἐκ δευτέρου ἀπελθὼν προσηύξατο [λέγων] Πάτερ μου εἰ οὐ δύναται τοῦτο παρελθεῖν ἔαν μὴ αὐτὸ πῶς γεινηθῆτω τὸ θέλημά σου

καὶ ἀφείς αὐτοὺς πάλιν ἀπελθὼν προσηύξατο ἐκ τρίτου τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον εἰπὼν πάλιν

ἐγείρεσθε ἄγωμεν· ἰδοὺ ἤγγικεν ὁ παραδιδούς με

In comparison, John 14:31b reads:

ἀλλ' ἵνα γινῶ ὁ κόσμος ὅτι ἀγαπῶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ

²⁴ Brown, however, argues convincingly against the parallel of John 17 and the prayers of Gethsemane. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 748.

καθὼς ἐντολήν ἔδωκεν μοι ὁ πατήρ οὕτως
ποιῶ Ἐγείρεσθε ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν

Perhaps, for whatever reason, the author of John just moved Jesus' words of departure from the garden scene to an earlier time in his dialogue with his disciples. Yet, in spite of the similarity in wording, this proposition seems quite unlikely, for reasons we will consider below.

Finally, the author of Luke presents a "Mount of Olives" prayer scene, similar to Matthew and Mark, yet omitting the departure and the key phrase with John, *ἐγείρεσθε ἄγωμεν*:

Luke 22:39-45

Καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἐπορεύθη κατὰ τὸ ἔθος εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν
ἠκολούθησαν δὲ αὐτῷ [καὶ] οἱ μαθηταί
γενόμενος δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ τόπου εἶπεν αὐτοῖς
Προσεύχεσθε μὴ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς πειρασμόν
καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπεσπάσθη ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὡσεὶ λίθου βολήν
καὶ θεῖς τὰ γόνατα προσηύχετο

λέγων Πάτερ εἰ βούλει παρένεγκε τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἀπ' ἐμοῦ·
πλὴν μὴ τὸ θέλημά μου ἀλλὰ τὸ σὸν γινέσθω

[[ᾠφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ἄγγελος ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐνισχύων αὐτόν
καὶ γενόμενος ἐν ἀγωνίᾳ ἐκτενέστερον προσηύχετο·
καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἰδρώς αὐτοῦ ὡσεὶ θρόμβοι αἵματος καταβαίνοντες ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν]]
[some early manuscripts do not have verses 43 and 44)

καὶ ἀναστὰς ἀπὸ τῆς προσευχῆς ἐλθὼν πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς εὗρεν κοιμωμένους
αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς λύπης
καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Τί καθεύδετε ἀναστάντες προσεύχεσθε
ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν

The form of the Lukan prayers closely follows the brief and repeated prayers in Gethsemane found in Matthew and Mark; however, the picture of Jesus in Luke is different. In this scene, Luke creates the most vivid, extreme description of Jesus' intense communication with the Father in all of the Gospels. The prayers in all three of

the Synoptics are brief, agonizing, petitionary prayers repeated by a struggling Jesus.

This is not at all the form and tone and language of John's prayer of chapter 17.

Regardless of geographic location or narrative time, the form and content of John 17 shows no connection to the prayers of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus' Last Supper

A third proposition presented by scholars is that the prayer is the Johannine ending to the Last Supper scene, or somehow takes the place of the Synoptic Last Supper scene in its entirety. The text indicates the setting and location; John 17 is spoken at the close of an "evening meal," just before Jesus and the disciples leave for the "Kidron Valley" (13:1-2a and 18:1).

In an attempt to explain why the Last Supper scene and the words of institution are omitted from the Gospel of John, some have suggested that Jesus' prayer is offered as a substitution to the Synoptic traditions. Counet suggests that,

The words Jesus speaks and how he addresses his disciples are a substitution for the words of institution and as a further step towards spiritualisation as seen by Hegel in his comparison of the eucharist with the cult of statues in Greek and Roman times.²⁵

Additionally, Bultmann radically suggests that the prayer of John 17 is the author's intentional substitution to avoid the institutional nature of the Last Supper:

Der Evangelist vermeidet es, von ihnen zu reden und hat offenbar ein Mißtrauen gegen die Sakramentsfrömmigkeit, so daß er sogar die Einsetzung des Herrenmahles nicht erzählt, sondern sie durch das Abschiedsgebet Jesu c. 17 ersetzt.²⁶

²⁵ Patrick C. Counet, *John, A Postmodern Gospel; Introduction to Deconstructive Exegesis Applied to the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Rolf Rendtorff and R. Alan Culpepper; vol. 44; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 239.

²⁶ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1953), 356.

Käsemann also poses the question as to why the author of John oddly neglects to narrate “the institution of the sacraments.”²⁷ Käsemann concedes that we cannot know with certainty if the Johannine author is purposefully trying to “protect the sacredness of the Eucharist and the eucharistic words from profanation” by omitting the sacramental words. He thus concludes,

Above all, those secrets in which John himself is truly interested are unfolded in wide-ranging monologues in the form of the secret discourse. Apart from 6:51b-58, there are no such monologues about baptism and the Lord’s Supper.²⁸

In their attempts to arrive at a solid explanation about why the eucharistic institutional words of the Last Supper are omitted from the Fourth Gospel, scholars have seen John 17 in a “substitutionary role.”²⁹ Nevertheless, the Johannine prayer mentions nothing about the Last Supper elements, and nothing is said about remembrance or repeating Jesus’ prayer pattern.

It is worth noting that both Matthew (26:30) and Mark (14:26) end the Last Supper quite abruptly without a prayer, but with the same words:

Καὶ ὑμνήσαντες ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν.

Not only is there no prayer, but there is no direct wording that indicates what the men were singing; it is assumed that it was a closing hymn associated with the Passover meal. Yet there is no guarantee that Jesus followed an established Passover cultic ritual, and even if he did, a closing prayer is very brief, unlike John 17.

²⁷ Käsemann, *Testament*, 32.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

²⁹ Couston, *John, A Postmodern Gospel; Introduction to Deconstructive Exegesis Applied to the Fourth Gospel*, 239.

Luke's account of the Last Supper is different in many ways from the traditions of Matthew and Mark; nevertheless, no prayer or hymn concludes Luke's Last Supper as well. Luke's scene ends with the prediction of Jesus' betrayal and the dispute among the disciples about who is considered the greatest (22:23-24). Kurz observes his standard "farewell address" elements are included in the Lukan section:

predictions of death, direction for actions after one's death, predictions that followers will defect, instructions for succession, choices of successors and naming authorities among the group, predictions of future trials and directions to meet them, and misunderstanding by the disciples.³⁰

Yet neither the author of Luke nor Kurz includes a closing prayer as part of their farewell address genre. It is only when it is placed with the preceding four chapters that the prayer becomes part of the farewell testament in the mode of the OT farewell testament.

Finally, there is no "foot-washing" scene preceding the betrayal of Jesus in the Synoptic Last Supper narratives (compare Matt 26:20-24; Mk 14:16-21; Lk 22:13-16). This is an "object lesson" for the disciples, a visual expression of Jesus' love for "his own" in the Fourth Gospel that is as unique as is the final prayer that ends the "Passover meal" scene. Outside of the assumed familiarity of setting, there is no guarantee that John 17 is connected to the Synoptic Last Supper scene in any way.³¹ It has been proposed that the foot-washing event of chapter 13 is a subtle "symbol of baptism,"³² in the same manner that the final prayer is questionably liturgical in its origins. There is

³⁰ Kurz, *Farewell Addresses*, 53.

³¹ See Bernard, *Gospel According to St. John*, 455.

³² *Ibid.*, 463.

neither a necessity nor a justification to assign the Christian rite of baptism to John 13, nor to understand John 17 as a “substitution” for the words of institution.³³

At this point, we can conclude that the form of the final prayer in John’s Gospel separates it from the “Lord’s Prayer,” the prayers of Gethsemane and from the conclusion of the Last Supper as they appear in the Synoptic Gospels. As much as we would like to reconcile the Fourth Gospel with the other Synoptic Gospels, the form of the prayer in John 17 does not allow us to see it as a substitute for the eucharist institutional words or for the agonizing words in the garden. In the end, the hypotheses concerning the use of Synoptic traditions by the author of John for John 17 are very difficult to substantiate from the text itself. Focusing on form alone, the prayer of John 17 is unlike any of the prayers of Jesus in the New Testament. The author of John has included a unique prayer of Jesus to accomplish his own purposes. In agreement, Craig Keener writes,

The speech of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is usually quite different from that of Jesus in the Synoptics.... It is Jesus’ ‘teaching and self-presentation’ which are most distinctive.... Even the contents and structure of the discourses diverge significantly from the Synoptics, and John transmits longer units of speech.³⁴

D. Use of Ephesians

T. Brodie stands alone in his suggestion that there was yet another source behind the prayer of John 17. While various other NT texts have been viewed as possible connections to the form and function of John 17, Brodie’s proposal is that the letter of

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*, 53.

Paul to the Ephesians provides a thematic background to the prayer.³⁵ He indicates that in Paul's letter, God is presented as working through Christ to "bring everything back to a greater unity," which is "central to John 17."³⁶ The first part of Ephesians, 1:1-3:13, is linked to John 17:20-26 in particular. He recognizes that the two texts are very different, in length and in wording, yet there are unmistakable similarities.³⁷ He believes that the reference to God's love for the believers in Ephesians 2:4 is "unmatched in the NT – except for John 17:26."³⁸

Second, the author of John "systematically transforms Ephesians, sentence by sentence" from Eph 3:14-21 into Jn 17:1-5. Further, the "practical" part of Ephesians, 4:1-6:9 is transformed into Jn 17:6-19.³⁹ That is, the major themes of Ephesians, "unity, truth, self-giving and making holy" are repeated in the prayer of John 17.⁴⁰ Although the thematic similarities are evident, the genre and form of the letter and the prayer are too diverse to make a strong connection. Brodie admits that the discrepancy between the texts is "so great that observations about the apparent dependence of one on the other must be tentative."⁴¹ "Tentative" is not a strong enough word; the comparison is limited to major themes and motifs at the most. Brodie concedes that more research needs to be done on the relationship of Ephesians and the Fourth Gospel, but he also writes that "it seems reasonable to conclude that John had the epistle in hand and that he used it in

³⁵ Thomas L. Brodie, *Quest for the Origins of John's Gospel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 128.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 130.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 131. ("But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions....")

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

diverse ways as a major component of the entire chapter.”⁴² This is a questionable conclusion. What Brodie has done is to illustrate that the chosen form of a prayer by the author of John is distinctive. No doubt the central themes of the prayer are found elsewhere in the NT, but the fact that they are communicated in a prayer-form, on the lips of Jesus, is unique. In the end, this supports the concept that the author intentionally communicated recognized themes to his readers in a distinctive manner to aid in their exhortation and remembrance.

By way of review, we have argued that the prayer of John 17 is neither an adaptation of any of the prayers from the Synoptic traditions, nor a transformation of other NT teachings. It is different in form from the other prayers in the Fourth Gospel, as well as the other prayers of Jesus found in the Synoptic Gospels. Distinct in form and in function, John 17 is an uncommon prayer which functions as the conclusion to the Farewell Discourses of Jesus. Käsemann agrees, stating,

John 17, in distinction to the previous chapters, was composed in the form of a prayer. Again, this is not merely the clever use of literary device. For the prayer of Jesus does not play the same important role in John as in the Synoptics, and John 11:41f gives us the reason for it. His prayer, therefore, differs from ours in that, like his discourses, it, too, witnesses to his unity with the Father.⁴³

Part 2. Conclusion to the Farewell Discourses

A. Climax to Discourses

John 17 is not a prayer intended to name a human successor, or for the purpose of repetition in liturgical situations. Instead, the prayer-form is a summary of Jesus’

⁴² Ibid., 134.

⁴³ Käsemann, *Testament*, 5.

identity, his mission, and his promises. As climax to the farewell testament, chapter 17 emphasizes three important points for the Gospel reader: Jesus' unity with the Father, the certainty of the completion of Jesus' salvific mission on earth, and the reassurance of his words to all believers. Correctly, Dodd realizes that "the prayer gathers up much of what has been said, and presupposes everywhere the total picture of Christ and his work with which the reader should by this time be amply acquainted."⁴⁴

In agreement, R. Chennattu writes,

The evangelist has meticulously crafted and placed the prayer of Jesus at the solemn and climactic moment of the fulfillment of the hour. From the outset of the Johannine story, everything has been moving toward Jesus' last covenant fellowship meal with his disciples (chapters 13-17). It is for the disciples of all generations as a covenant community of God (17: 6-26).⁴⁵

Likewise, Brown regards the prayer as the climax to the preceding chapters: "thus, in placing the prayer of 17 at the end of the Last Discourse, the Johannine writer has remained faithful to the literary genre of farewell address that he has adopted."⁴⁶

Previously, we have stated that as a summary of and a conclusion to the Farewell Discourses, John 17 is a climactic chapter, carefully positioned to prepare the reader for the passion narrative that follows. It is a "hinge" chapter, looking back at the culmination of Jesus' life on earth (v. 4), and forward to a time of love and unity among many Christ-followers (v. 23). As such, it serves to assure and encourage people, including the readers, in their Christian faith (particularly in light of possible persecution, i.e., 16:2). Yet the contents of the prayer do not finally answer why John 17

⁴⁴ Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 417.

⁴⁵ Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship*, 130-31.

⁴⁶ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 744-45.

is in a prayer form. Initially, one would question why the Son of God must pray to his Father to request anything, especially if their wills are identical (5:30; 14:30). The form of the prayer, then, is not for the benefit of the speaker (Jesus) as much as it is for the benefit of the readers (or listeners). The author constructed the lengthy prayer not only as a conclusion to Jesus' words, but as his promise and fulfilment, for the purpose of conveying hope and assurance to the readers. Käsemann states that it "moves over into being an address, admonition, consolation and prophecy."⁴⁷

B. Scriptural fulfillment

Furthermore, scriptural fulfillment is not unimportant to the author of the Fourth Gospel; this is illustrated by the author's use of the prophecies of Isaiah in the Farewell Discourses (see the previous Chapter 4). However, it is unusual to find a form of scriptural interpretation within an intimate prayer communication with the Father. In chapter 17, it appears that Jesus is informing his Father that something happened "so that Scripture would be fulfilled" (v. 12). Again, we can deduce that the fulfilment of Scripture in 17:12 is more for the reader's information than it is for God's realization. Because the reference to scriptural fulfillment appears to be out of place at this point in the prayer, scholars have proposed that verse 12 is a later addition to the prayer. Because of its problematic nature, A. Jensen calls v. 12b a "redaction insertion." He points out that "the expression Son of Perdition is a Semitism and a *hapax legomenon* in the Johannine writings."⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Käsemann, *Testament*, 5.

⁴⁸ Jensen, *John's Gospel as Witness*, 129.

In Chapter 3 of this study, we pointed out the Johannine symbolism in 17:12. There are two parts to this verse which need to be considered, the “son of perdition” (ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας), and those who are “not lost” (οὐδεὶς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπόλετο). The author’s language and use of symbolism is one explanation as to why the form of the fulfillment of Scripture is included in the prayer. However, it does not answer the question, to what is the author of the prayer making reference? What does the author of John consider to be “Scripture?” Is the author referring to or alluding to a specific passage in the Old Testament? If it is for the benefit of the readers, what is the author communicating to his readers with the inclusion of this form of interpretation within the prayer?

M. Menken provides great insight into the use of OT passages in the Fourth Gospel; his analysis of John’s use of Scripture leaves little doubt that the style and form of John’s interpretation is unique. As a start, he defines an OT quotation as

...a clause, or a series of clauses, from Israel’s Scriptures that is (are) rendered verbatim in the NT text, *and* that is (are) marked as such by an introductory or concluding formula. John 1:23 is an example.⁴⁹

Menken finds seventeen quotations in John’s Gospel taken from OT Scripture, eleven of which present debatable “textual form” questions.⁵⁰ That is, the Gospel author uses a recognizable quotation, but it is not exactly identical with any known version of the Old Testament. Further, Menken brings to our attention the fact that the sources of John’s quotations are not always clear, and that the author also edits his own quotations.

⁴⁹ Maarten Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel; Studies in Textual Form* (Kampen: Kok Pharos 1996), 11.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

The author may chose to “rephrase” an OT passage to fit his own purposes (e.g., 7:38). Combining an unclear source of a citation with the author’s redaction process, the modern reader of the OT citations in the Fourth Gospel is left with uncertainty. With respect to the final prayer of Jesus, the Scriptural reference in 17:12 becomes even harder to determine. Menken refers to it as “a quotation formula without a specific quotation,” which leaves a lot of room for debate.⁵¹

Comparably, A. Brunson elaborates on the use of the Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel. The Johannine author chooses to use indirect quotations (e.g., 6:31 could reference Ps 77:24 [LXX], or Ex 16:4 or 16:15), and more obscure, debatable allusions (e.g., 19:36-37 could reference Exod 12:46; Num 9:12; Ps 34:20; Zech 12:10). However, in Brunson’s view, (as with Menken) there is no question that the author chose to use what we now consider to be canonical OT sources to be “the Scriptures” (and, more often than not, the LXX version). The author of John used the Psalter as a source most frequently (clearly six times), followed by citations from Isaiah (at least four times). The pattern that emerges is that John’s primary choices of OT material are from the latter prophets and the Psalms.⁵²

Beyond the direct and indirect quotations, Brunson shows explicit use of OT “themes, motifs and symbols” throughout John’s Gospel. These include the vine and branches motif, the theme of wisdom, Sabbath traditions, Mosaic traditions and titles for Jesus with roots in the OT. Brunson notes a strong theme of the “shepherd image and

⁵¹ Ibid., 12.

⁵² Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John*, 143.

sheep (10:1-16).”⁵³ Another strong point made by Brunson lends support to our earlier argument that the Fourth Gospel is arranged and structured around Jewish feasts (see Chapter 2 of this thesis).⁵⁴

Thus, the “internal guideposts” in the Fourth Gospel, that is, the “extensive” references to Jewish Scripture and practices, lead the intended reader to a greater understanding of what the Gospel author is claiming about Jesus.⁵⁵ This is critical; the form of scriptural interpretation emphasizes the fact that Jesus’ words and deeds are, indeed, the fulfillment of Scripture, firmly planted in Jewish biblical tradition. The scriptural interpretation in John 17 communicates assurance to the readers/hearers of the prayer about two recurring themes of the Gospel: the identity of Jesus, and the decision of belief or unbelief by human beings in response to Jesus (see Chapter 1 of this study).

Son of Perdition

Schnackenburg believes that the phrase the “son of perdition” in this context “seems superfluous, as v. 13 could follow 12a quite easily.”⁵⁶ In the English NIV translation of the text, there is a misleading full stop at the end of the phrase “by that name you gave me.” The next sentence begins with “None has been lost...” The division of the verse is unfortunate. In the Greek (and in the NASB English) text, the two phrases are connected by a *καὶ*:

:12a While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me.

⁵³ Ibid., 145. See also, Chapter 3 of this study.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 146.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 150.

⁵⁶ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 182.

:12b None has been lost except the one doomed to
destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.
(NIV)

ὅτε ἤμην μετ' αὐτῶν ἐγὼ ἐτήρουν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ᾧ
δ῔δωκάς μοι, καὶ ἐφύλαξα,
καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπώλετο, εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας,
ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ.

From the NIV text itself, it is difficult to determine if the “fulfilment of Scripture” refers to all of verse 12, or just to, literally, the “son of perdition” (:12b).

On the one hand, the English translation indicates that the scriptural interpretation in v.12b refers directly to the “son of perdition.” The foundational OT scriptural passage would necessarily allude to Judas Iscariot, “the betrayer.” Most scholars have viewed the interpretation this way. There are numerous candidates for the OT foundation of the “son of perdition,” including Ps 41:10, especially since it is quoted earlier in John 13:18.⁵⁷

Psalm 41:9 Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

Psalm 40:10 (LXX) καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς εἰρήνης μου ἐφ' ὃν ἤλπισα ὁ ἐσθίων ἄρτους μου ἐμεγάλυνεν ἐπ' ἐμὲ πτερινισμόν

Psalm 41:10 נָם־אִישׁ שְׁלוֹמִי אֲשֶׁר־בָּטַחְתִּי בּוֹ אֹכֵל לֶחֶמִי הִגְדִּיל עָלַי עֶקֶב:

However, the Psalm 41 reference as the foundation of 17:12b is not without problems. There is no guarantee that the Johannine author is referring to exactly the same OT passage in 13:18 and in 17:12. It would be most unusual if he did quote the

⁵⁷ Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*, 1059. The same passage is suggested by Barrett, Beasley-Murray and Lincoln: Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, George R. Beasley-Murray, *John; a Commentary* (WBC 36; Dallas: Word, 1987), and Andrew Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (BNTC; New York: Hendrickson, 2005).

same passage twice. Other OT passages have been suggested. Hoskyns, for example, suggests Ps 109:6-8:⁵⁸

Appoint an evil man to oppose him;
Let an accuser stand at his right hand
When he is tried, let him be found guilty,
And may his prayers condemn him.
May his days be few;
May another take his place of leadership.

Further suggested OT sources include 2 Sam 12:5 (*υἱὸς θάνατου* “son of death”) and Isa 57:4 (*τέκνα ἀπωλείας* “children of destruction”⁵⁹). The wicked people of Sodom are called the “people of destruction” (*ἔθνος ἀπωλείας*) in Sir 16:9. Evil persons are considered “children of destruction” in Jub 10:3; 15:26. In the Qumran writings, the phrase “children of the pit” is used to describe evil persons doomed to destruction (CD 6.15; 8.14; 13.14). Proverbs 24:22a is a suggestion because it contains the words *υἱὸς* and *ἀπωλείας*.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, many of these Hebrew references are in the plural form (“children,” “people”), where the reference in John 17:12 is in the singular. The numerous proposed Old Testament or Second Temple passages that are supposedly foundational to Jesus’ words in John 17:12 about the “son of perdition” are strained and contrived, so it is difficult to determine exactly what text the author is referring to.⁶¹

It has been suggested that there are other passages in the New Testament that have some similarity to the “son of perdition,” and could shed light on the problem.

Proposals include Mt 23:15, “a son of hell,” and 2 Thess 2:3, the “man of lawlessness.”

⁵⁸ Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 501.

⁵⁹ Hübner, *Vetus Testamentum in Novo*, 532.

⁶⁰ Keener, *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*, 1058. Also see Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 182.

⁶¹ Johannes Beutler, “The Use of “Scripture” in the Gospel of John,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville: Westminster John Knox 1996), 151.

E. Freed even suggests that Jesus might not be referring to an OT passage at all, but to his own words formerly spoken in 6:70.⁶² However, such an interpretation of “Scripture” does not match what the Johannine author is doing in the rest of the Gospel. In this discussion, Schnackenburg is correct, that the author of John most likely does *not* refer to any other NT passage and that the concept of the “antichrist” (1 Jn 2:18) is absent in John 17:12b.⁶³ With Schnackenburg and Brunson, J. Beutler agrees that “John never integrates Christian writings into ‘scripture.’”⁶⁴

On the other hand, if we review the Greek structure again, it is clear that there are three main verbs in verse 12: *ἐτήρουν* (“I kept”), *ἐφύλαξα* (“I guarded”) and *ἀπώλετο* (“perished”). The *ἵνα* clause, *ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῆ* (“in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled”), then, refers to all three of these main verbs, connected together by the use of *καί*. Thus, the “fulfilment of Scripture” in v. 12b is not merely a reference to the subordinate exception clause (*εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας*); it refers to the entire verse. The author of the prayer is saying that, while he was alive, Jesus securely kept and guarded his own followers, yet he knows that one of them would betray him and cause destruction to himself. This is more evident in the NASB translation:

While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou has given me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

“None has been lost”

⁶² Edwin D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John* (NovTSupp; vol. 11; Leiden: Brill, 1965), 96.

⁶³ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 182.

⁶⁴ Beutler, "The Use of "Scripture" in the Gospel of John," 153.

Jesus' OT allusion in 13:18 places the betrayal within the fulfilment of Scripture, but Jesus' protection of his believing disciples is also within the fulfilment of numerous OT passages. The Old Testament describes those who are "lost" and why they are "lost." In Ezekiel 34, for example, the word of the Lord is given against the "shepherds of Israel" who are harsh, brutal, unjust and do not "search for the *lost*" (vv. 2-4). The "sheep" are thus "scattered" and in peril. In Ezek 34:16, it is the Lord himself who promises to

search for the **lost** and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

τὸ ἀπολωλὸς ζητήσω καὶ τὸ πλανώμενον ἐπιστρέψω καὶ τὸ συντετριμμένον καταδήσω καὶ τὸ ἐκλείπον ἐνισχύσω καὶ τὸ ἰσχυρὸν φυλάξω καὶ βοσκήσω αὐτὰ μετὰ κρίματος (LXX)

In the LXX, "the lost," τὸ ἀπολωλὸς, connotes "those [people] who will perish or die"⁶⁵

Another reference to God's people as "the lost sheep of Israel," occurs in Jeremiah 50:6-7 (Jer 27:6-7 in the LXX):

My people have been **lost** sheep;
 Their shepherds have led them astray
 And caused them to roam on the mountains.
 They wandered over mountain and hill
 And forgot their own resting place.
 Whoever found them devoured them;
 Their enemies said, 'We are not guilty,'
 For they sinned against the Lord, their true pasture,
 The Lord, the hope of their fathers.

In the LXX passage of Jeremiah, the Greek word ἀπολωλότα from ἀπολλυμι is derived from the Hebrew אֶבְרֹת, and connotes "to cause or to experience destruction."⁶⁶ The

⁶⁵ Arndt, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 94.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

people of God, then, are the “lost sheep of Israel,” experiencing persecution and ignored by their own leaders; yet they are found and restored by God. In the same way, the writer of Ps 119:176 uses this word to describe his own situation of personal failure, crying “I have strayed like a *lost sheep*” (LXX, Ps. 118:176, ἐπλανήθην ὡς πρόβατον ἀπολωλός), but petitions God to “seek your servant.”

The references to the “lost sheep” of Israel who are redeemed by God are reflected in Jesus’ own self-reference as the “good shepherd” who has come to “lay down his life for the sheep” (Jn 10:1-18, specifically 10:11). In fulfillment of Scripture, the believing ones are protected, and none of them are lost; this key point is emphasized when Jesus says that “no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand” (Jn 10:11-13, 27-29).

Further, we have noted that the Johannine Jesus has conflicts with “the Jews,” or the Jewish leaders, who are misleading the people (e.g., John 10:31-39). Therefore, it is extremely plausible that Jesus’ words in John 17:12 are an encouragement to the readers that his life and ministry effectively protects and keeps those who believe in him as the “good shepherd.” Because of his successful mission and redeeming acts, believers are no longer “lost.” A scriptural reference to the redemption of the “lost sheep” fits into Brunson’s concept of the OT background symbols and motifs, and the OT context of the inept Jewish leadership fits the context of the Jesus/Jewish conflict in the Fourth Gospel.

Therefore, there is an ingenious “play-on-words” in the scriptural fulfilment of 17:12. As Williams observes, the Johannine author expresses themes and motifs by

using “not one but a configuration of Isaianic passages.”⁶⁷ In the same manner, 17:12 is a combination of various passages created by the author to recall a number of themes and motifs from the Old Testament. The “play on words” involves the forms of *ἀπώλεια*: “none has been *lost*” (*ἀπώλετο*) describes the restoration and protection of the believing ones, while “except the son of *perdition*” (*ἀπωλείας*) is the defection of the one who is truly “lost.” He has caused destruction and will subsequently perish. In v. 12 of his prayer, the “fulfillment of Scripture” is a symbolic contrast of belief and unbelief. Jesus is demonstrating that he clearly knows the destiny of his believing disciples and the destiny of the one betraying disciple. The words of fulfillment are not a reference to one specific OT passage, but bring together familiar OT motifs in the minds of the readers. It is both an assurance for the believer and a prediction of the ultimate fate of evil.

What happened to the one who defected from “his own,” and refused to believe in the words and works of Jesus? Was the betrayal a terrible mistake? Schnackenburg’s explanation is that the mention of Judas is a “justification on Jesus’ part with regard to the traitor whom he himself chose from among the twelve” (6:70; 13:18).⁶⁸ More accurately, Hoskyns suggested that the Gospel readers needed an explanation as to the selection of Judas to be among the Twelve. It was part of the divine plan and was known by Jesus from the beginning (6:64).⁶⁹ Finally, H. Waetjen emphasizes that Judas betrayed Jesus by his own volition: “he [Judas] is not predestined by God or by the

⁶⁷ Williams, “Isaiah in John’s Gospel,” 101.

⁶⁸ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 182.

⁶⁹ Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 501.

Scriptures; his act simply results in scriptural fulfilment.”⁷⁰ One can decide to accept or reject the words of Jesus, but there is a consequence to either choice.

Brunson is correct in saying that the importance of this scriptural reference is that it leads the reader to a greater understanding of what the Gospel author is communicating about Jesus.⁷¹ The identity of Jesus as the fulfilment of Jewish scriptures is emphasized; he is the “good shepherd” and will not desert “his own” (13:1). In addition, 17:12 ultimately presents a choice of belief to the readers of the prayer. The inclusion of the scriptural interpretation at this point in the prayer is critical to give the assurance to the readers that the believing ones are under God’s protection against evil, just as they were in the former days. Their destiny is a growing, reproducible faith. As Jesus protected his followers on earth, he promises to do the same for all future believers (14:17-21, 25-30). In their post-Easter experience, the readers are assured that the betrayal of Jesus was not a mistake or a surprise to Jesus (6:70-71; 12:4; 14:30). It is all part of the plan, a plan that was revealed to believers in the early revelation of God in the OT as well as in the life and death of Jesus. The destiny of the betrayer is to remain “lost;” he is not separated *into* God’s holiness (17:17), but separated *from* God’s holiness and glory. The two parts of 17:12 are a skillful word-play that again reflects the element of choice for the reader.

To re-examine this part of our study, we have explored how the form of the prayer functions as the conclusion to the Johannine Farewell Discourses. Within the prayer, allusion to the Hebrew Scriptures challenges the reader to consider the two

⁷⁰ Herman C. Waetjen, *The Gospel of the Beloved Disciple; A Work in Two Editions* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 373.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 150.

options, one of rejection and one of positive response to the words of Jesus. The prayer-form climax urges the reader to accept the words of Jesus, and gives an assurance to the believer for the present and the future.

Part 3. New Prayer Relationship

It is now important to consider the intimate form of communication between the Father and the Son that is John 17. When Jesus says "I and the Father are one" (10:30), this union is illustrated by the prayer-form at the close of the Farewell Discourses. For the reader of the text, the prayer provides a model of the new prayer relationship promised to the believer in John 16:23-24. It is an assurance for the reader that Jesus is doing exactly what he promised to do: that is, to be the intercessor for the believer before the Father.

Jesus' instructions on prayer in John's Gospel are almost exclusively limited to the Farewell Discourses (with the possible exceptions of 11:42 and 12:27-30), where he is preparing his followers for his own departure and for their continuing ministry.⁷² Before chapter 17, Jesus was the mediator between the believer and the Father; with his departure from the scene, the followers can now pray to the Father on their own *in the name of Jesus* (16:23-24). As the Son, united with the Father, his name secures effective prayer of those people who are united with the Father and the Son (16:26-28). This leads to the availability of a new prayer relationship for believers.

New relationship

His own prayer in John 17 emphasizes the intimate relationship of the Father and the Son; the close communication between them is by personal prayer. The person who

⁷² Lincoln, "'God's Name'," 175.

accepts the words of Jesus as the Son is granted the opportunity to become a part of the unique reciprocal relationship that already exists between the Father and the Son:

I am in the Father and the Father is in me (14:10);
I am in my Father and you are in me, and I am in you (14:20).

The result of this new prayer relationship for the believer is joy (16:24) and peace (16:33). Additionally, the believer is able to experience a new intimate way to communicate with the Father through the Son (16:23-24). Chennattu is on target when she writes:

The inclusion of the prayer reveals Jesus' intimate relationship with God and initiates the disciples to share the same intimacy by invoking God's assistance, and it communicates Jesus' dream and vision for the new covenant community of his disciples.⁷³

The expression "in God's name" reflects the OT covenantal relationship between God and his people. His name is his character and his identity. Knowing God is knowing his name. For humanity, to be covenant with God is to know the name of God, to walk in his presence, and to see his glory. Jesus is the visible demonstration of the Father's glory (17:1, 5, 10, 22). A close, "face-to-face," intimate relationship with God is not entirely new, but it is accomplished in a new way: through the name of Jesus (17:3, 11, 19, 22, and 24). Because he is one with the Father, and in light of Jesus' revelation and redeeming work, the person who believes in the name of Jesus can pray in the name of Jesus.

This new prayer relationship is as beneficial to the disciples in the narrative as it is to the readers of Gospel years later. Before his departure from this world, Jesus

⁷³ Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship*, 132.

wanted to assure his immediate disciples of their ability to pray and to communicate with the Father through him. Jesus does not desert “his own” (14:18). Beginning with the disciples and continuing in the community of believers (the readers), John 17 is the assurance that the new prayer relationship to God through Jesus is effective. The literary form of Jesus’ intimate words with the Father is an illustration of the kind of relationship the believer can have with the Father because of the work of the Son. The wills of the believers are “in tune” with the wills of the Father and the Son. The unity of the Father and the Son is manifested in their unity with the believers and through the effective prayers of Jesus’ followers in his name (17:11-12, 25-26). It is most appropriate, then, to conclude Jesus’ instructions on a new prayer relationship with an expressive prayer.

Part 4. Intercession

John 17 is an exemplar of the intercession promised by Jesus to his followers. The prayer of Jesus is a real and living archetype, demonstrated by Jesus, who was sent to reveal the Father and to intercede for the people who believe in him as the “Redeemer.” In the prayer of John, he is doing exactly what he promised he would do: to intercede for those who have faith in him (14:12-14).

In general, prayer is the primary means of intimate communication between God and humanity, based on the assumption that there is a relationship between the two parties involved. Broadly speaking, prayer can be deeds as well as words, verbal and non-verbal communication. As spoken or written words, prayer is special speech delivered by humans directed toward God; it may include praise, thanksgiving, petitions, mourning and laments. Specific acts or rituals (e.g., eating, chanting, anointing) may

accompany prayer that help to define the relationship between the person and the divine. Biblical prayers in the Hebrew OT include prose prayers within the narrative story, or poetic psalms (hymns, odes, dirges, blessings, imprecations) that were used in various contexts.

In contrast to the OT writings, the New Testament has relatively few recorded prayers. Most are the prayers of Jesus, but there are many prayers in the epistles and in the book of Acts. The OT prayer traditions are carried forward into the New Testament prayers. As examples, Jesus speaks a prayer of lament from the cross (Matt 27:46; Mk 15:34). He offers praise and thanksgiving in Matt 11:25 (Lk 10:21-22; Jn 11:41-42). In Luke, Jesus prays at crucial junctures in his life and ministry, at his baptism (3:21), transfiguration (9:28-29) and in the garden of Gethsemane (see above, 22:32, 41-42). Thus, his recorded prayers are in the ancient traditions and would have been recognized as such by his followers. Distinctive in the New Testament is the emphasis on instructions on how to pray, as we have seen in Matt 6:5-13 and Lk 11:2-4.⁷⁴

Moreover, the ministry of Jesus in the New Testament adds another new dimension to known prayer-forms: intercession.⁷⁵ A vivid example of Jesus' intercessory prayer for the people before the Father is from the cross in Lk 23:37 ("Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"). The intercession of Jesus is more than a petition, or request, made before the Father; it is an attempt to reconcile two estranged parties. Therefore, in praying the prayer of John 17, Jesus assumes the role of intercessor as he sends his followers into the world to faithfully

⁷⁴ Samuel E. Balentine, "Prayer," 1077-79.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1079.

testify concerning the promised redemption and reconciliation of the Father and the Son. In John's prayer, Jesus is not making petitions to the Father on his own behalf; he is interceding and reconciling for those who choose to place their faith in him. Consequently, he is *not* interceding for those who reject the offered resolution (17:9). By being "in" the believers, Jesus intercedes, reconciling the people to God, so that "they will have the full measure of joy within them" (17:13, 26).

As a result, the prayer itself is more than a petitionary request placed before the Father; it is an example of the role that Jesus assumes in the lives of the believers. There is no need to wonder if his prayer will be answered; there is no doubt that what he asks for will be granted. The intercessory aspect of John 17 is the implementation of what Jesus promised his followers that he would do for them in his farewell testament:

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. (Jn 14:13-14; 16:23-24)

The promises and predictions of chapters 13-17 are "as good as done" because it is Jesus that is saying these things. Readers can depend on the truth of Jesus' words because he is the "Logos;" he is God and is "one" with God (1:1-2, 14, 17; 10:30).

To the characters and the readers of the Gospel, Jesus' speeches appear to be a mixture of past, present and future. Verse 16:33 is a prime example: Jesus told them "these things" in the past; there is "trouble" in the present world, but Jesus will "overcome" the world with his death and resurrection, which remains future to the narrative time. For the one speaking the prayer of John 17, the agent of God, time is not the issue. Everything that has not already taken place will take place, without any doubt, because of the authority of the speaker. The use of the imperfect verb in 17:12 (*ὄτε*

ἡμῶν μετ' αὐτῶν) indicates that Jesus keeps and protects his own not only in the past, but he continues to do so in the future as well. The reality of Jesus' words in chapters 13-17 is so certain, that it is as if they have already taken place.

Although Schnackenburg concludes that John 17 “makes use of the idea of intercession that is found in other texts of the same tradition (including apocalyptic literature),” without cause he then connects the prayer with the “gnostic tradition.”⁷⁶ In an attempt to try to solve surrounding questions concerning the origin of the prayer, he claims that “something that is quite incomparable has been created here by mature theological reflection.”⁷⁷ Indeed, Schnackenburg is right; “something incomparable” is happening in John 17. Outside of John 17, there are no other prayers on the lips of Jesus in the NT Gospels that are presented as an act of intercession on his part for the people who believe in his words. The disciples and the readers are witnesses to “a heavenly family conversation,” that is, remarkably, on their behalf.⁷⁸ What is extraordinary is that the believing readers are privileged to enter into a unity that provides them with the same kind of intimacy and communication with God through Jesus (14:10-14, 20; 16:23-24).

It is fitting that this beautiful prayer, which is the majestic conclusion of the Last Discourse, is itself terminated on the note of the indwelling of Jesus in the believers – a theme bolstered by Jesus' claim to have given glory to the believers (v. 22) and to have made known to them God's name.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 199-200.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁷⁸ Brown, *Gospel According to John, Vol. 2*, 747.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 781.

Prayer of the High Priest

It is the intercessory function of the prayer that led to the title of “High Priestly Prayer” in reference to John 17. Certainly Jesus is speaking on behalf of other people, but if we refer to it as a “high priestly prayer,” it is important to recognize that the Jesus who speaks the prayer of John 17 is more than a fallible human priest in the line of Aaron. Jesus is a higher, better priest, and we recognize that the prayer is more than the intercession of one fallible human being on behalf of others. The prayer confirms his identity as the divine Son, the promised Redeemer, Servant, and “righteous branch” as prophesied in Isa 4:2; 9:6-7; 53 and Jer 33:14-16. Jesus fulfils the oracle of Ps 110:4, as the “priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.” In his role as king-priest, Jesus is appointed to a higher order of priesthood than those in the line of Jewish high priests. If the primary function of the priesthood was sacrifice on the behalf of the people, Jesus’ death and resurrection fulfilled that role.

As such, the person and mission of Jesus is an assurance to the reader that the ancient covenants are not forgotten by God; his words and his promises are true. The future restoration promised by God in the OT prophetic books is fulfilled in the “Son of God” (Jn 12:34). As the priest-king, Jesus is the one who stands “before the throne of God;” he thus becomes the divine intercessor for those who believe his words. This is a “gracious promise” (Jer 33:14) for the readers whose future is secure, and the hope of redemption is at hand in Jesus.

Helen Bond significantly studies the position of Jesus as the designated “high priest” in John’s Gospel. She proposes that the reference to Jesus’ robe at his crucifixion is, in reality, a reference to his high priestly position. Because Jesus’ robe is

“seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom” (Jn 19:23b), it appears to be the symbolic robe of the high priest. Although the Exodus instructions do not require a seamless robe, Bond persuasively suggests that the traditions of the high priestly garments developed over time (Exod 28:31-43) and were as the Johannine author describes them in chapter 19.⁸⁰ If that is the intended symbolism, the Gospel writer is implying that the Jesus on the cross is both the atoning sacrifice and the high priest who offers it. In the John 19:19-24 passage, Jesus is simultaneously priest, king and sacrifice. Set in the context of the fulfillment of the old covenant and the inauguration of the new covenant, John 17 is an intercessory prayer uniquely offered in the words of the only one who could assume all three roles at once. Jesus not only prays for his followers; he acts as the vehicle by which the will of the Father takes place in the lives of the ones who believe. He prays for, and is, and continues to be, the fulfilment of his Father’s grand redemptive design (17:26).

The author incorporated the final prayer of Jesus into his Gospel for the readers who are encouraged and assured that Jesus, their better high priest, does what he said he would do: he intercedes before the Father on their behalf. In agreement, Brown concludes,

the Jesus of the Last Discourses transcends time and space, for from heaven and beyond the grave he is already speaking to the disciples of all time. Nowhere is this more evident than in 17 where Jesus already assumes the role of heavenly intercessor (1 Jn 2:1), ascribed to him after resurrection.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Helen Bond, "Discarding the Seamless Robe: Jesus and the High Priest in John's Gospel" (paper presented at the Research Seminars in Hebrew & Old Testament Studies and New Testament Language, Literature & Theology, New College, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK, 27 October 2006). Used with permission.

⁸¹ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, 747.

That is to say, John goes much further than any other storyteller with his use of a farewell prayer. In John's Gospel, Jesus utters his prayer not as a human being on earth but as a divine being somewhere beyond both time and space. Jesus' prayer therefore transcends the formal conventions of the farewell genre. Like the prayers of Jesus in John 11 and 12, this is more an example of revelation than of petition, overheard by an audience who are taken, for a moment, into the heart of Jesus' intimate relationship with the Father. Jesus' prayer in John 17 is supposed to be overheard; throughout this chapter, the reader is permitted the greatest privilege, the gift of "overhearing the Godhead."⁸²

The form of the prayer is the "glory of Christ,"⁸³ the magnificent, ultimate communication, the "sublime stylization of the word, imparted by the Word."⁸⁴ It is an amplification of the entire Gospel expressed in a form of intimate communication (see Chapter 3 of this study). As a prayer, the grandeur of this form is the appropriate culmination of the literary, instructional discourses and to the earthly mission of the Son. At the same time, it serves as a beginning of the realized "grand reciprocity,"⁸⁵ the intimate unity of the Father and the Son, as well as the realized intimate unity of the believer with the Father and the Son.

⁸² Stibbe, *John*, 178.

⁸³ Käsemann, *Testament*, 3.

⁸⁴ Black, "Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric," 229.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Taking into account the discussion in Chapter 4 on the genre of John's Gospel and the genre of the Farewell Discourses, together with the present investigation of the form of the prayer in John 17, we can draw significant conclusions about the kinds of literature presented to the readers in the Fourth Gospel. Within the ancient biography genre of Gospel, John 13 through 17 stands out as a farewell testament, uniquely incorporated into the author's story of Jesus. At the close of his ministry and just before he faces his own betrayal and death, the words of Jesus interrupt the narrative to remind and reassure the disciples and the readers of Jesus' promises and predictions. Yet, typical of the Johannine author, the tools of the genres and form have been modified and adapted to support and emphasize his own theology and purposes. What is important to understand is that the author employs a particular *form* of literature to indicate the desired *function* of the passage.

This chapter demonstrates how the prayer functions as the conclusion to the Johannine Farewell Discourses. It highlights the ultimate redemption of the people of God through the Son, Jesus Christ (17:3-4). What it "does" for the readers is to prepare them for the "end of the story," the passion narrative, with the assurance that Jesus' departure is part of the plan, and "it is for your good that I am going away" (16:7). As chapter 55 concludes "Second Isaiah" (chapters 40-55) with a positive assurance of God's faithful commitment to his everlasting covenant, so John 17 summarizes chapters 13-16 and promises the readers of eternal life in God and in his Son, Jesus. Moreover, John 17 functions in two specific ways where only a prayer-form would suffice. First,

as a form of intimate communication, the prayer functions as a model of the new prayer relationship between the believer and the Father through the Son (16:23-24). The prayer-form functions to assure and encourage the readers as a conventional prose conclusion could not. It is a picture of the unique three-way unity that exists between the Father, the Son and the believer, which is the basis for the intimate, “face-to-face” communication. Second, the form of the prayer is a promissory intercession. Jesus is demonstrating, in front of his followers, exactly what he promised to do: he is interceding on behalf of the believer before the Father.

The prayer reviews the completion of Jesus’ past mission, and maintains the fulfillment of the messianic expectations in his person and his purpose. It points toward the acceptance of his words by his immediate disciples, and the success of their mission to carry on his message. It renews the glory of the Father and the Son which is made visible in the unity of the believers and God. In a poetic way, the prayer reflects the fulfillment of redemptive prophecies from the past and guarantees the promise of a new relationship between God and his people in the future, sealed in the person and the work of Jesus.

Chapter 6 Conclusions

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,
according to his power that is at work within us,
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
for ever and ever! Amen. *Eph 3:20-21*

The Gospel of John has challenged scholars for decades. The more puzzle pieces that are discovered, the more intricate the picture becomes. The key questions of this investigation pertain to John 17: what is it; why does it exist, and why is it in the present position in the narrative? A literary analysis of the Gospel of John yields conclusions about the text that complement and enhance each other. By employing the narrative critical analysis method, we have answered our original questions: John 17 is an artistic prayer-form, situated in its proper location and used to conclude the Farewell Discourses. It exists to encourage and challenge the intended readers. The Johannine puzzle pieces suitably fit together.

In spite of the emotional events in the narrative surrounding the life and death of Jesus, and in spite of all the misunderstandings and ambiguity of discussions and debates, the prayer firmly endures as an assurance for the readers of what is really going on in the Fourth Gospel. For the reader, the prayer removes the “puzzle” from the life and death of Jesus. It removes the “puzzle” of the future destiny of Christian believers. It is a moment of divine perspective expressed in the memorable, climactic words of Jesus that generates understanding not only of the past events, but also of the future events to come.

As an ultimate form of communication between the Father and the Son (17:21), the prayer is a speech that emphasizes relationship: first, it summarizes the eternal,

reciprocal relationship of the Father and the Son (17:5); second, it assures the person who believes the words of Jesus of his/her eternal relationship with God the Father and Jesus the Son (17:10); and third, it promises a continuing relationship between the Godhead and the human believers who are challenged to be a part of Jesus' on-going mission in the world (17:18, 20).

The final prayer was not spoken so that Jesus would be remembered by his first disciples; it was written so that he would be believed by the readers of the Gospel. The words of Jesus in John 17 emphasize that the intent of Jesus' ministry was to produce "disciples" and "friends," not just converts to his teachings. Because of what they know (17:3, 26) and what they have been given (17:22), it is the desire of the author of John, through the words of Jesus, that believing readers commit to living a life in full view of the world as evidence of their belief in Jesus. The result of this commitment is the reproduction of more disciples (17:23).

The discourse section (chapters 13-17) is a bridge that unifies the narrative portions of the Gospel. The narrative stories revealing the identity and purpose of Jesus are more comprehensible after the reader recognizes and understands the words of Jesus in the discourse portions. The Farewell Discourses assure the readers that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus were all part of the plan of God. The Christian readers are a part of that plan, and will carry on the mission of Jesus (17:20). The final prayer, strategically placed at the end of the farewell testament of Jesus, is the climax of the words of the Word. It is the assurance that the readers' knowledge concerning Jesus as the Christ is correct, and it is an encouragement to their faith.

Because of the loving Father/Son relationship, the people who believe the words of the Son are eternally “in” the Father and the Son. The author wants to assure those who do believe that their future and their mission remains in the hands of God, and that he is trustworthy. In spite of opposition in the world, the words of Jesus in John 17 assure the followers of Jesus that they remain in the care and concern of the Father and the Son (17:11, 23). The love and union of the Godhead is shared with them.

Our study of the prayer has focused on the most critical aspects of the literature: characterization, structure and setting, style and imagery, genre and form. By looking at these aspects of the text, we are able to draw significant conclusions about the Farewell Discourses and the final prayer of Jesus in John 17.

Chapter 1

The chapter on *characterization* expounded upon human characters in the Gospel as models or representations of human responses to Jesus. In this manner, the prayer acts heuristically to guide the readers to a positive, believing response to the life and ministry of Jesus. As Jesus attempted to reveal truth to people on earth (1:14; 14:6; 18:37), so the Gospel writer sought to reveal truth to his readers (1:14; 19:35). This is made known through the author’s characterization.

The very human characters in the Farewell Discourses (chapters 13-16) are portrayed as puzzled, doubtful people, struggling with what they knew about the man Jesus. In contrast, the people presented in the prayer (save one) are knowledgeable, faithful followers of Jesus. Jesus’ confidence in them is such that he is sending them out into the world to continue his message (v. 18). In the face of persecution (16:2), there may be readers who, with the Gospel characters, have doubts about their faith in Jesus.

Yet the author of the texts wants his readers to identify with the characters in the prayer who “belong” to God, are protected and kept safe by God, and who are strong witnesses for Jesus in a hostile world.

Further, the prayer is a powerful revelation of the natures of the Father and the Son. The reciprocal images of divine glory and divine love are pictured in the relationship of the Father and the Son; yet it is remarkable that such glory and such love are passed on to the reader (vv. 22-23). Thus, the prayer is a heuristic tool to assist the Gospel readers who, like the human characters, may not fully comprehend their position and protection by being “in Christ” (v. 21).

Chapter 2

A thorough analysis of the *structure* of the Farewell Discourses helps to explain why John 17 is positioned where it is in the Gospel. First, this investigation determined that the most advantageous structure of the Fourth Gospel is the two-part structure, divided at the end of Jesus’ public ministry (12:50) and the beginning of his private ministry to his closest followers (13:1). In the second section, then, the final prayer of Jesus concludes the Farewell Discourses and is a literary “hinge” that connects the life and teachings of Jesus to the final passion narrative.

The chiastic structure of the Farewell Discourses reveals the *inclusio* of chapters 13 and 17, with similar themes and promises of Jesus with his closest followers. The center of the chiastic structure is the “joy” of Jesus given to his followers (15:11). Yet the promises of Jesus come at a price for the reader, as the believer experiences rejection by the unbelieving world, just as Jesus was rejected even by one of “his own.”

The prayer of chapter 17 summarizes the preceding discourses, and promises eternal life to the believer. John 17 is structured in three parts, which are divided not by Jesus' petitions to the Father, but by his promises to the readers. The first section of the prayer (vv. 1-5) explains and pledges "eternal life," which is knowing and believing in the Father and the Son. In the second section (vv. 6-19), those people who accepted the words of Jesus during the narrative time are the first ones to receive eternal life by their belief in Jesus. In the final section (vv. 20-26), eternal life is manifested in the unity of all the people who believe, and is a reflection of the unity of the Father and the Son. The first disciples are united with later believers, and all "those who will believe" (v. 20). Unity is not based on human efforts, but is based on the reciprocal love of the Father and the Son. The gift of eternal life, love and unity with the Godhead is expressed in the human love for one another before the world (vv. 23-25).

Chapter 3

The author of the Fourth Gospel presents his story of Jesus in a grand *style* of rhetoric including a vast array of figures of speech. This investigation has given evidence for a lofty, symbolic rhetoric style of the Gospel; it is not a common prose narrative. While most investigations of the Johannine language and style focus on expressed theology and Christology, our study reveals Johannine anthropology. The *imagery* extols and challenges the readers to see themselves in relation to God and to Jesus.

The style of the Farewell Discourses is didactic and instructive, written in authoritative as well as symbolic or metaphoric language. The metaphors and symbols in the Farewell Discourses create pictures for the readers of a reciprocal divine love

relationship, and of a human-divine relationship, which are difficult to express in human language. In the past, little scholarly research has been done on the style of the prayer, or on the imagery found in the prayer itself. Nevertheless, we have found that the familiar filial imagery of the Father and Son, expressed so intimately in the prayer, is powerful and promising for the reader.

As a climactic, poetic text, John 17 is presented in the fashion of edifying, epideictic rhetoric that encourages and reassures the reader. It could be said that the entire prayer is an image, a literary device used by the author to display the intimate prayer relationship the believer can have directly with the Father and the Son.

Chapter 4

The Fourth Gospel is written in the *genre* of the ancient biography which highlights a very unique person and attempts to persuade the reader toward the author's point of view. That being said, the Farewell Discourses section is written in such a way as to spotlight the person who is central to the Gospel, Jesus. In writing the Farewell Discourses, the author of the Gospel uses a familiar genre, the farewell testament, but adapts and molds the genre for his own purposes. Foundational to the Farewell Discourses is the farewell testament of Deuteronomy 31-34; yet Hellenistic literary devices may have been incorporated into the basically Jewish farewell testament to increase its persuasive nature.

Most important, the Johannine farewell testament emphasizes the covenantal relationship between God and his people. In John 13-17, the reader can discern many of the promises and warnings of the ancient testament and of the redemptive prophecies. The prophetic characteristics of the Farewell Discourses reflect the Isaianic prophecies

concerning the redemptive, saving plan of God for his faithful people. The emphasis is on God's activity on earth, not on human achievement. Ultimately, the author of John portrays Jesus as the agent of redemption in God's eternal plan.

Chapter 5

As a summary of the Farewell Discourses, the *prayer-form* of chapter 17 functions to assure and encourage the readers in a manner that the conventional prose conclusion could not. The lofty rhetorical style of the author reaches an apex in this long prayer just before Jesus is betrayed and crucified. At the end of all his instructive discourses, the prayer of Jesus is a beginning; at the end of his earthly life, the prayer is a new start for the people who will carry on his message. In spite of opposition and rejection in the world, the prayer is a promise; it secures the ultimate redemption of the people of God through the Son, Jesus Christ (17:3-4).

In addition, John 17 functions in two specific ways where only a prayer-form would suffice. As close, "face-to-face" communication, the prayer functions as a model of the new prayer relationship between the Father, the Son, and the believer (16:23-24). The prayer is a remarkable picture of a new unity that exists between the Father, the Son and the believer, illustrated by a family relationship. Second, the form of the prayer is a promissory intercession. As the agent of redemption, Jesus is transformed from an earthly teacher to heavenly intercessor. He comes between the Father and the people for the purpose of reconciling the world to God. The result is a new relationship between the Father, the Son and the believer. In a dramatic way, the prayer reflects the fulfillment of redemptive prophecies from the past and guarantees the new relationship between God and his people, sealed in the person and the work of Jesus. John 17

exhibits exactly what Jesus promised to do: he intercedes on behalf of humans before the Father.

The final prayer of Jesus in John pictures a Jesus who confidently leaves this earth, knowing that his message and his mission are in the hands of countless future Christian believers. Literarily, it is positioned at the end of the Farewell Discourses as a climactic conclusion; it is a hope and a guarantee for the encouragement of the Gospel readers of every age, past, present, and future.

Bibliography

- The Chambers Dictionary*. 1998 [1901]. Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap Publishers.
- Abbott, Edwin A. 1905. *Johannine Vocabulary*. London: Adam and Charles Black.
- Agouridis, S. 1968. "The 'High Priestly Prayer' of Jesus." *Studia Evangelica* 4:137-43.
- Aland, Kurt, ed. 1983. *Vollständige Konkordanz zum griechischen Neuen Testament*. Vol. 1. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter.
- Alter, Robert. 1981. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Anderson, Paul N. 2006. "Gradations of Symbolization in the Johannine Passion Narrative." Pages 157-94 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Vol. 200 of *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*. Edited by Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Arndt, William and F. Wilbur Gingrich. 1979. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Christian Literature*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ashton, John. 1991. *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- _____. 1994. *Studying John*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- _____. 1997 [1986]. "Introduction: The Problem of John." Pages 7-25 in *The Interpretation of John*. Edited by John Ashton. *Studies in New Testament Interpretation*. Edited by Robert Morgan. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- _____. ed. 1986. *The Interpretation of John*. Vol. 9 of *Issues in Religion and Theology*. London: SPCK.
- Attridge, Harold W. 2002. "Genre Bending in the Fourth Gospel." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121, 1:3-21.
- _____. 2006. "The Cubist Principle in Johannine Imagery." Pages 47-60 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Vol. 200 of *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*. Edited by Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Aune, David E. 1987. *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- _____. 2003. *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.

- _____. ed. 1988. *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*. Vol. 21 of SBL/SBS. Edited by Bernard Brandon Scott. Atlanta: Scholars Press.
- Austin, J. L. 1975. *How to Do Things with Words*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bailey, James L. and Lyle D. Vander Broek. 1992. *Literary Forms in the New Testament*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Ball, David Mark. 1996. *'I am' in John's Gospel*. Vol. 124 of JSNTSup. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Baltzer, Klaus. 1971. *The Covenant Formulary in Old Testament, Jewish and Early Christian Writings*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Balz, Horst and Gerhard Schneider, ed. 1978-80. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 1 of 3 vols. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- _____. 1981. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 2 of 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- _____. 1993. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 3 of 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Bammel, Ernst. 1993. "The Farewell Discourse of the Evangelist John and its Jewish Heritage." *Tyndale Bulletin* 44.1:103-16.
- Barclay, William. 2001[1955, 1975]. *The Gospel of John*. Vol. 2. Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press.
- Barrett, C. K. 1978 [1955]. *The Gospel According to St. John*. 2nd ed. London: SPCK.
- _____. 1975. *The Gospel of John and Judaism*. Translated by D. M. Smith. London: SPCK.
- Bartholomew, Craig, Colin Green and Karl Moller, eds. 2000. *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*. Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster.
- Barton, Stephen C. 1988. "Can we Identify the Gospel Audiences?" Pages 173-94 in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*. Edited by R. Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Bauckham, Richard. 1998. *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- _____. 2006. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

- Beardslee, William A. 1970. *Literary Criticism of the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Beasley-Murray, George R. 1987. *John; a Commentary*. 2nd ed. WBC 36. Dallas: Word.
- Beck, David R. 1997. *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the fourth Gospel*. Vol. 27 of Biblical Interpretation Series. Edited by R. Alan Culpepper and Rolf Rendtorff. Leiden: Brill.
- Becker, Jürgen. 1969. "Aufbau, Schichtung und theologiegeschichtliche Stellung des Gebetes in Johannes 17." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 60:56-83.
- _____. 1970. "Die Abschiedsreden Jesu im Johannesevangelium." *Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 61:215-46.
- _____. 1984. *Das Evangelium nach Johannes; Kapitel 11-21*. Vol. 4/2, Okumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar zum Neuen Testament. Edited by Erich Grasser and Karl Kertelge. Gutersloh: Gutersloher Verlagshaus Mohn.
- Bernard, J. H. 1942. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*. Vol. 2 of 2 vols. International Critical Commentary. Edited by A. H. McNeile. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Beutler, Johannes. 1996. "The Use of 'Scripture' in the Gospel of John." Pages 147-62 in *Exploring the Gospel of John*. Edited by R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- _____. 2001. "Synoptic Jesus Tradition in the Johannine Farewell Discourse." in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*. Edited by Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Black, C. Clifton. 1996. "'The Words That You Gave to Me I have Given to Them:' The Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric." Pages 220-39 in *Exploring the Gospel of John*. Edited by R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Black, David Alan. 1988. "On the Style and Significance of John 17." *Criswell Theological Review* 3, 1:141-59.
- Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels*. 1997. Nashville: Broadman & Holman.
- _____. 2001. *Historical Reliability of the Gospel of John*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity.
- Bock, Darrell L. 2002. *Jesus According to Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

- Bond, Helen. 2006. "Discarding the Seamless Robe: Jesus and the High Priest in John's Gospel." Paper presented at the Research Seminars in Hebrew & Old Testament Studies and New Testament Language, Literature & Theology. New College, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK.
- Booth, Steve. 1996. *Selected Peak Marking Features in the Gospel of John*. American University Studies. Vol. 178, Series VII of Theology and Religion. New York: Peter Lang.
- Booth, Wayne. 1961. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- _____. 1974. *The Rhetoric of Irony*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bornkamm, Günther. 1997 [1986]. "Towards the Interpretation of John's Gospel: A Discussion of *The Testament of Jesus* by Ernst Käsemann." Pages 97-119 in *The Interpretation of John*. Edited by John Ashton. Studies in New Testament Interpretation. Edited by Robert Morgan. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Boyle, John L. 1975. "The Last Discourse (Jn 13,31-16,33) and Prayer (Jn 17): Some Observations on their Unity and Development." *Biblica* 56:210-22.
- Brant, Jo-Ann A. 2004. *Dialogue and Drama; Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel*. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- Brodie, Thomas L. 1993. *The Gospel According to John; A Literary and Theological Commentary*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1993. *Quest for the Origins of John's Gospel*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brouwer, Wayne. 2000. *The Literary Development of John 13-17; A Chiastic Reading*. Vol. 182, SBLDS. Edited by Saul Olyan and Mark Powell. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Brown, Colin, ed. 1976. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Vol. 2 of 3 vols. Edited by Erich Beyreuther, Hans Bietenhard, Lothar Coenen. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Brown, Raymond. 1966-1970. *The Gospel According to John*. Vol. 2 of 2 vols. Anchor Bible Series. New York: Doubleday.
- _____. 1979. *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*. New York: Paulist.
- Brown, Tricia Gates. 2003. *Spirit in the Writings of John*. London: T&T Clark International.

- Bruce, F. F. 1972. *The Message of the New Testament*. Exeter: Paternoster.
- Brueggemann, Walter. 1998. *Isaiah 40-66*. Vol. 2 of 2 vols. Westminster Bible Companion. Edited by Patrick D. Miller and David L. Bartlett. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Brunson, Andrew C. 2003. *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. 1950. *Das Evangelium des Johannes*. Vol. II, Kritisch-eregetischer-Kommentar über das Neue Testament. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- _____. 1952 [1948]. *Theology of the New Testament*. Translated by K. Grobel. Vol. 1 of 2 vols. London: SCM Press.
- _____. 1952 [1948]. *Theology of the New Testament*. Translated by K. Grobel.. Vol. 2 of 2 vols. London: SCM Press.
- _____. 1953. *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- _____. 1971. *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*. Translated by R.W. N. Hoare, G.R. Beasley-Murray, J. K. Riches. Philadelphia: Westminster.
- Burridge, Richard A. 1998. "About People, by People, for People: Gospel Genre and Audiences." Pages 113-45 in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*. Edited by R. Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- _____. 2004. *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, BRS. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- _____. 2005. "Who writes, why, and or whom?" Pages 99-115 in *The Written Gospel*. Edited by Markus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Busche, H. van den. 1967. "La priere sacerdotale." Pages 446-62 in *Jean: Commentaire de L'Évangile Spirituel*. Paris: Desclee de Brouwer.
- Buss, M. J. 1988. "Potential and Actual Interactions Between Speech Act Theory and Biblical Studies." *Semeia* 41:125-34.
- Carson, D.A. 1978. "Current Source Criticism of the Fourth Gospel: Some Methodological Questions." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97, 1:411-29.
- _____. 1980. *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus; An Exposition of John 14-17*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- _____. 1979. "The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, 4: 547-66.

- _____. 1982. "Understanding Misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel." *The Tyndale Bulletin* 33:59-91.
- _____. 1991. *The Gospel According to John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Casey, M. 1996. *Is John's Gospel True?* London: Routledge.
- Charlesworth, James H. 1973. *The Odes of Solomon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1983. "Introduction." Pages 771-75 in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. New York: Doubleday.
- _____. ed., with Mark Harding and Mark Kiley, eds. 1994. *The Lord's Prayer and other Prayer Texts from the Greco-Roman Era*. Valley Forge: Trinity.
- Chazon, Esther and Mosche J. Bernstein. 1997. "An Introduction to Prayer at Qumran." Pages 9-13 in *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine*. Edited by Mark Kiley. London: Routledge.
- Chennattu, Rekha M. 2006. *Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship*. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- Collins, J. J. 1984. "Testaments." Pages 325-55 in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*. Edited by Michael E. Stone. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Comblin, Jose. 1979. *Sent from the Father*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd.
- Conway, Colleen M. 2002. "The Production of the Johannine Community: a New Historicist Perspective." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121, 3: 479-95.
- _____. 2002. "Speaking through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel." *Biblical Interpretation* 10, 3: 324-41.
- Conzelmann, Hans and Andreas Lindemann. 1992 [1988]. *Interpreting the New Testament*. Translated by Siegfried S. Schatzmann. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- Counet, Patrick C. 2000. *John, A Postmodern Gospel; Introduction to Deconstructive Exegesis Applied to the Fourth Gospel*. Vol. 44, *Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by Rolf Rendtorff R. Alan Culpepper. Leiden: Brill.
- Countryman, L. William. 1997. "Jesus' 'High Priestly Prayer'." Pages 222-29 in *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine; A Critical Anthology*. Edited by Mark Kiley. London: Routledge.
- Court, John M. 1997. *Reading the New Testament*. London: Routledge.

- _____. 2002. *New Testament Writers and the Old Testament; an Introduction*. Edited by John M. Court. London: SPCK.
- Culpepper, R. Alan. 1975. *The Johannine School; An Evaluation of the Johannine-School Hypothesis Based on an Investigation of the Nature of Ancient Schools*. Vol. 26 of SBLDS. Edited by Howard C. Kee and Douglas A. Knight. Missoula: Scholars.
- _____. 1983. *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*. Edited by Robert Funk, New Testament Foundations and Facets. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- _____. 1998. *The Gospel and Letters of John*. Edited by NT Charles B. Cousar, Interpreting Biblical Texts. Nashville: Abingdon.
- _____. 1991. "The Johannine *Hypodeigma*: A Reading of John 13:1-38." *Semeia* 53: 133-52.
- _____. 1995. "The Plot of John's Story of Jesus." *Interpretation* 49, 4:347-57.
- _____. 1996. "Reading Johannine Irony." Pages 193-207 in *Exploring the Gospel of John*. Edited by R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- _____. 2006. "Designs for the Church in the Imagery of John 21:1-14." Pages 369-402 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Vol. 200 of *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*. Edited by Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- _____, and Fernando F. Segovia. 1991. "The Fourth Gospel from a Literary Perspective." *Semeia* 53.
- Davies, Margaret. 1992. *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel*. Vol. 69 of JSNTSup. Sheffield: JSOT Press; Sheffield Academic Press.
- De Jonge, H. J. 1993. "The Historical Jesus' View of Himself." in *From Jesus to John; Essays on Jesus and New Testament Christology in Honor of Marinus de Jonge*. Edited by Martinus C. De Boer. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- De Jonge, M, ed. 1977. *L'Évangile de Jean: Sources, Rédaction, Théologie*. Vol. 44 of *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium XLIV*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- De la Potterie, Ignace. 1989. *The Hour of Jesus; The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus According to John: Text and Spirit*. Middlegreen: St. Paul.

- Deeks, David. 1968-69. "The Structure of the Fourth Gospel." *New Testament Studies* 15:107-29.
- Dewey, Kim E. 1980. "Paroimiai in the Gospel of John." *Semeia* 17:81-99.
- Dietzfelbinger, Christian. 1997. *Der Abschied des Kommenden: Eine Auslegung der johanneischen Abschiedsreden*. Vol. 95, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Dodd, C. H. 1953. *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Dokka, Trond Skard. 1999. "Irony and Sectarianism in the Gospel of John." in *New Readings in John*. Edited by Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Petersen. Vol. 182 of JSNTSup. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Draper, Jonathan A. 2007. "The Didache," in *The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers*. Edited by Paul Foster. London: T & T Clark (Continuum Books).
- Du Plessis, J. G. 1991. "Speech Act Theory and New Testament Interpretation." Pages 129-42 in *Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament*. Edited by P. J. Hartin and J. H. Petzer. Leiden: Brill.
- Duke, Paul D. 1985. *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*. Atlanta: John Knox.
- Dunderberg, Ismo. 1999. "Johannine Anomalies and the Synoptics." in *New Readings in John*. Edited by Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Pedersen. Vol. 182 of JSNTSup Series. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Dunn, James D. G. 1985. *The Evidence for Jesus*. London: SCM Press, Ltd.
- _____. 2003. *Christianity in the Making*. Vol.1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- _____. 1970. "The Washing of the Disciples' Feet in John 13:1-20." *Zeitschrift Fur Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der alteren Kirche* 61:247-52.
- _____. 1991. "John and the Oral Gospel Tradition." Pages 351-79 in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*. Vol. 64 of JSNTSup Series. Edited by Henry Wansbrough. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Epp, Eldon Jay and George W. MacRae, ed. 1989. *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters*. The Bible and Its Modern Interpreters. Edited by Douglas A. Knight. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Evans, Craig A. 1995. *Jesus and his Contemporaries, a Comparative Study*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums. Leiden: Brill.

- _____. 2005. "How Mark Writes." Pages 135-48 in *The Written Gospel*. Edited by Markus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. 2005. *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature*. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- _____, and William Stinespring, eds. 1987. *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis; studies in memory of William Hugh Brownlee*. Atlanta: Scholars.
- Fee, Gordon D. 1968-69. "Codex Sinaiticus in the Gospel of John: A Contribution to Methodology in Establishing Textual Relationships." *New Testament Studies* 15: 23-44.
- _____. 1993. "The Text of John in The Jerusalem Bible: A Critique of the Use of Patristic Citations in New Testament Textual Criticism." in *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*. Edited by Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee. Studies and Documents. Edited by Irving Alan Sparks. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Fenton, J. C. 1970. *The Gospel According to John*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ferreira, Johan. 1998. *Johannine Ecclesiology*. Vol. 160 of JSNTSup. Edited by Stanley E. Porter, 160. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Fish, Stanley. 1980. *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Fortna, Robert T. 1970. *The Gospel Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel*. Vol. 2 of SNTSMS. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. 1988. *The Fourth Gospel and its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- _____ and Tom Thatcher, eds. 2001. *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Freed, Edwin D. 1965. *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*. Vol. 11 of Supplements to Novum Testamentum. Leiden: Brill.
- Freedman, David Noel. 2000. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Freese, John Henry. 1926. *The "Art" of Rhetoric; Aristotle with an English translation*. London: William Heinemann.

- Frey, Jörg, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, eds. 2006. *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Funk, Robert W. 1988. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, Foundations and Facets*. Sonoma: Polebridge.
- Gempf, Conrad. 2003. *Jesus Asked - What He Wanted to Know*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Giblet, Jean. 1977. "Développements dans la théologie johannique." Pages 45-72 in *L'Evangile de Jean*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, XLIV. Edited by M. De Jonge. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Goldingay, John and David Payne. 2006. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40-55*. Edited by G. N. Stanton, G. I. Davies, J. A. Emerton and C. E. B. Cranfield. Vol. 1 of 2 vols. International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. London: T&T Clark International (Continuum).
- _____. 2006. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40-55*. Edited by G. N. Stanton, G. I. Davies, J. A. Emerton and C. E. B. Cranfield. Vol. 2 of 2 vols. International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. London: T&T Clark International (Continuum).
- Goulder, Michael D. 2004. *Isaiah as Liturgy*. Society for Old Testament Study Monographs. Edited by Margaret Barker. Hants: Ashgate.
- Grant, Colleen C. 1999. "Ambiguity in an Unambiguous Gospel." *Journal of Theology* 103:1-15.
- Grant, Patrick. 1989. *Reading the New Testament*. London: Macmillan.
- Grant, Robert M. 1986. *The Gods and the One God*. Philadelphia: Westminster.
- Grayston, Kenneth. 1990. *Gospel of John*. Philadelphia: Trinity.
- Green, Garrett, ed. 1987. *Scriptural Authority and Narrative Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Guelich, Robert A. 1991. "The Gospel Genre." Pages 173-208 in *The Gospel and the Gospels*. Edited by P. Stuhlmacher. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Hagerland, Tobias. 2003. "John's Gospel: A Two-Level Drama?" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 25, 3:309-22.

- Hallback, Geert. 1999. "The Gospel of John as Literature: Literary Readings of the Fourth Gospel." Pages 31-46 in *New Readings in John*. Edited by Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Pedersen. Vol. 182 of JSNTSup. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Hamman, A. 1961. *Early Christian Prayers [Prières des premiers Chrétiens]*. Chicago: Henry Regnery.
- Hanson, A. T. 1974. "Hodayoth XV and John 17: A Comparison of Content and Form." *Hermathena* 118: 48-58.
- _____. 1991. *The Prophetic Gospel: A Study of John and the Old Testament*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Harper, Andrew. 1895. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. The Expositor's Bible. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Harris, Elizabeth. 1994. *Prologue and Gospel*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter, JSNTSup Series. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Heinemann, Joseph. 1977. *Prayer in the Talmud; Forms and Patterns*. Bd. 9, Studia Judaica Forschungen zur Wissenschaft des Judentums. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Hendrix, Eugene Russell. 1908. *Christ's Table Talk; A Study in the Method of our Lord*. Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.
- Hengel, Martin. 1974. *Judaism and Hellenism*. Translated by John Bowden. 2 vols. London: SCM.
- _____. 1990. *The Johannine Question*. Translated by John Bowden. Philadelphia: Trinity.
- _____. 2005. "Eyewitness Memory and the Writing of the Gospels." Pages 70-96 in *The Written Gospel*. Edited by Markus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hill, Charles E. 2004. *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church*. Oxford: University Press.
- Hitchcock, F. 1923. "Is the Fourth Gospel a Drama?" *Theology* 7:307-17.
- Hollander, H. W. and M. DeJonge. 1985. *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs; A Commentary*. Vol. 8. Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha. Leiden: Brill.
- Holmes, Michael W. 1999 [1992]. *The Apostolic Fathers; Greek Texts and English Translations*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

- Holtzmann, H. J. 1908. *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament, Evangelium, Briefe und Offenbarung des Johannes*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Hoskyns, Edwyn Clement. 1940. *The Fourth Gospel*. Edited by Francis Noel Davey. Vol. 2. London: Faber and Faber Limited.
- Hübner, Hans. 2003. *Vetus Testamentum in Novo. 1, 2. Evangelium secundum Iohannem*. Edited by Antje Labahn et Michael Labahn. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Hultgren, Stephen. 2002. *Narrative Elements in the Double Tradition*. Edited by Richard Hays, James Dunn, Hermann Lichtenberger. Vol. 113. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Hurtado, Larry. 2003. *Lord Jesus Christ; Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Jackson, H. Latimer. 1918. *The Problem of the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jasper, David. 1987. *The New Testament and Literary Imagination*. Houndmills: Macmillan.
- Jensen, Alexander S. 2004. *John's Gospel as Witness: The Development of the Early Christian Language of Faith*. Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies. Hampshire: Ashgate.
- Jeremias, Joachim. 1967. *The Prayers of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964; SCM.
- _____. 1971. *New Testament Theology*. Vol. 1: The Proclamation of Jesus. London: SCM and Scribner.
- Johnson, George. 1970. *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy and William S. Kurz, S.J. 2002. *The Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship; A Constructive Conversation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Kaefer, J. P. 1984. "Les Discours D'Adieu en Jn 13:31-17:26, Redaction et Theologie." *Novum Testamentum* 26, 3:253-82.
- Käsemann, Ernst. 1968 [1966]. *The Testament of Jesus; A Study of the Gospel of John in Light of Chapter 17*. Translated by Gerhard Krodel. London: SCM.

- Kee, Howard C. 1983. "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs." Pages 773-828 in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. New York: Doubleday.
- Keener, Craig. 2003. *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*. Vol. 1. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- _____. 2003. *The Gospel of John; A Commentary*. Vol. 2. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- Kelber, Werner H. 1990. "In the Beginning were the Words: The Apotheosis and Narrative Displacement of the Logos." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 58, 1:69-98.
- Kellum, L. Scott. 2004. *The Unity of the Farewell Discourse; the Literary Integrity of John 13.31-16.33*. Vol. 256 of JSNTSup Series. Edited by Mark Goodacre. London: T & T Clark.
- Kennedy, George A. 1984. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Kermode, Frank and Robert Alter, eds. 1997. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. London: Fontana.
- Kieffer, Rene. 1987. "Different Levels in Johannine Imagery." Pages 74-84 in *Aspects on the Johannine Literature*. Coniectanea Biblica. Edited by Lars Hartman and Birger Olsson. Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet.
- _____. 1989. *Le Monde Symbolique de Saint Jean*. Vol. 137, Lectio Divina Latour-Maubourg: Cerf.
- _____. 1999. "The Implied Reader in John's Gospel." Pages 47-65 in *New Readings in John*. Edited by Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Pedersen. Vol. 182 of JSNTSup. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Kline, Meredith G. 1963. *Treaty of the Great King; The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Koester, Craig R. 1995. *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel; Meaning, Mystery, Community*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.
- _____. 2006. "What Does it Mean to be Human? Imagery and the Human Condition in John's Gospel." Pages 403-20 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Edited by Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann. Vol. 200 of Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

- Koester, Helmut. 1990. *Ancient Christian Gospels; Their History and Development*. London: SCM.
- Kostenberger, Andreas J. 1999. "The Two Johannine Verbs for Sending: A Study of John's Use of Words with Reference to General Linguistic Theory." Pages 125-43 in *Linguistics and the New Testament*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter and D.A. Carson. Vol. 168 of JSNTSup Series. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Kurz, William S. 1990. *Farewell Addresses in the New Testament*. Zacchaeus Studies: New Testament. Edited by Mary Ann Getty. Collegeville: Liturgical.
- Kysar, Robert. 1975. *Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.
- _____. 1984. *John's Story of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- _____. 1986. *John; Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.
- _____. 1991. "Johannine Metaphor - Meaning and Function: A Literary Case Study of John 10:1-18." *Semeia* 53:81-111.
- _____. 1996. "Coming Hermeneutical Earthquake in Johannine Interpretation." in *What is John? Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel*. SBLSymS. Edited by F. F. Segovia. Atlanta: Scholars.
- Lacomara, A. 1974. "Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourses (John 13:31-16:33)." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36, 1:65-84.
- Lanser, Susan S. 1981. *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lee, Dorothy. 1994. *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel; the Interplay of Form and Meaning*. Vol. 95 of JSNTSup. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Lee, Hyo Joong. 2005. "Assurance of the Word: A real reader's reading of John 17." PhD diss., Vanderbilt University.
- Lemcio, Eugene E. 1991. *The Past of Jesus in the Gospels*. Vol. 68 of SNTSMS. Edited by G. N. Stanton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Léon-Dufour, Xavier. 1963. *Les Évangiles et l'histoire de Jésus*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- _____. 1968. *The Gospels and the Jesus of History*. Translated by John McHugh. London: Collins & Sons.

- Lieu, Judith. 2005. "How John Writes." Pages 171-83 in *The Written Gospel*. Edited by M. Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lightfoot, R. H. 1956. *St. John's Gospel; A Commentary*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Lincoln, Andrew. 2000. *Truth on Trial; the Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel*. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- _____. 2005. *The Gospel According to Saint John*, Black's New Testament Commentaries. New York: Hendrickson.
- _____. 1994. "Trials, Plots and the Narrative of the Fourth Gospel." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 56:3-30.
- _____. 2001. "God's Name, Jesus' Name and Prayer in the Fourth Gospel." in *Into God's Presence*. Edited by Richard Longenecker. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Lindars, Barnabas. 1971. *Behind the Fourth Gospel; Studies in Creative Criticism*. London: SPCK.
- _____. 1992 [1972]. *The Gospel of John; New Century Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- _____. 1977. "Traditions behind the Fourth Gospel." in *L'Évangile de Jean: Sources, rédaction, théologie.. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium XLIV*. Edited by M. de Jonge. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- _____. 1992. *Essays on John*. Edited by C. M. Tuckett. Leuven: University Press.
- _____, and Rigaux, B. 1974. *Témoignage de l'évangile de Jean*. Louvain: Desclée De Brouwer.
- Loader, William. 1992. *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel; Structure and Issues*. Vol. 23 of *Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie (BET)*. Edited by Jürgen Becker and Henning Graf Reventlow. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Loisy, Alfred F. 1934. *Le Mandéisme et les Origines Chrétiennes*. Paris: E. Nourry.
- Longenecker, Richard N., ed. 2001. *Into God's Presence; Prayer in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Longman, Tremper III. 1987. *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene A. Nida, eds. 1988-89. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains.*, Vol. 1 of 2 vols. New York: United Bible Societies.

- Ludemann, Gerd and Martina Janssen. 1998. *Suppressed Prayers; Gnostic Spirituality in Early Christianity*. London: SCM.
- Macgregor, G.H.C. and A.Q. Morton. 1961. *The Structure of the Fourth Gospel*. London: Oliver and Boyd.
- MacRae, G. 1993. "Theology and Irony in the Fourth Gospel" in *The Gospel of John as Literature: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Perspectives*. Edited by M. Stibbe. Leiden: Brill.
- Malatesta, Edward. 1971. "The Literary Structure of John 17." *Biblica* 52:190-215.
- Martyn, J. Louis. 1968. *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Matos, Joseph Federico. 2003. "John 17: Its structure, style, theme and function in the Fourth Gospel." PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.
- McGrath, James. 2006. *The Fourth Gospel and John's Epistles*. <http://private.fuller.edu/~talarm/iss4al.html> [Web-site]. Cited 27/07/06.
- McKnight, Edgar V. 1978. *Meaning in Texts; The Historical Shaping of a Narrative Hermeneutics*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Meeks, Wayne A. 1966. "Galilee and Judea in the Fourth Gospel." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85:159-69.
- _____. 1997. "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism." Pages 169-205 in *The Interpretation of John*. SNTI. Edited by John Ashton. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Menken, Maarten, J. J. 1996. *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel; Studies in Textual Form*. Kampen: Kok Pharos.
- _____. 2002. "Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John." Pages 29-45 in *New Testament Writers and the Old Testament; An Introduction*. Edited by John M. Court. London: SPCK.
- Merkel, Hermut. 1984. "The Opposition between Jesus and Judaism." Page 129ff in *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*. Edited by Ernst Bammel and C.F.D. Moule. Cambridge: University Press.
- Miller, Patrick D. 1990. *Deuteronomy*. Interpretation; A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Edited by James Luther Mays, et al. Louisville: John Knox.

- Mlakuzhyil, George. 1987. *The Christocentric Literary Structure of the Fourth Gospel*. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico.
- Moloney, Francis J. 1996. *Signs and Shadows; Reading John 5-12*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.
- _____. 1997 [1986]. "Who is 'The Reader' in/of the Fourth Gospel?" Pages 219-33 in *The Interpretation of John*. SNTI. Edited by John Ashton and Robert Morgan. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Moore, Stephen D. 1989. *Literary Criticism and the Gospels; The Theoretical Challenge*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Moritz, Thorsten. 2000. "Critical but Real; Reflecting on N.T. Wright's *Tools for the Task*," in *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by Colin Greene, Craig Bartholomew, and Karl Moller. Carlisle: Paternoster.
- Moule, H. C. G. 1978. *The High Priestly Prayer*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Moyise, Steve. 2001. *The Old Testament in the New; an Introduction*. Edited by Steve Moyise. Continuum Biblical Studies. London: Continuum.
- Neuenschwander, Bernhard. 1998. *Mystik im Johannesevangelium*. Edited by Rolf Rendtorff. Vol. 31 of Biblical Interpretation Series. Edited by R. Alan Culpepper. Leiden: Brill.
- Nielsen, Helge Kjaer. 1999. "John's Understanding of the Death of Jesus." Pages 232-54 in *New Readings in John*. Edited by Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Pedersen. Vol. 182 of JSNTSup. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Nielsen, Jesper Tang. 2006. "The Lamb of God." Pages 217-56 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Vol. 200 of Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Edited by Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- North, Christopher R. 1948. *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah; An Historical and Critical Study*. London: Oxford University Press.
- O'Day, Gail R. 1986. *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Mode and Theological Claim*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- _____. 2002. *The Word Disclosed: Preaching the Gospel of John*. St. Louis: Chalice.
- _____. 1991. "'I Have Overcome the World' (John 16:33): Narrative Time in John 13-17." *Semeia* 53:153-66.

- _____. 1995. "Toward a Narrative-Critical Study of John." *Interpretation* 49, 4:341-46.
- Olsson, Birger. 1974. *Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel; a Text-Linguistic Analysis of John 2:1-11 and 4:1-42*. NT Series 6, Coniectanea Biblica. Lund: CWK Gleerup.
- Painter, John. 1975. *John: Witness and Theologian*. London: SPCK.
- _____. 1991. *Quest for the Messiah*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- _____. 1997. "The Johannine Literature." in *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. New Testament Tools and Studies. Edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman. Leiden: Brill.
- _____, R. Alan Culpepper, Fernando Segovia, eds. 2002. *Word, Theology and Community in John*. St. Louis: Chalice.
- Pamment, Margaret. 1985. "Focus in the Fourth Gospel." *The Expository Times* 97, 3:71-75.
- _____. 1985. "Path and Residence Metaphors in the Fourth Gospel." *Theology* 88, 722:118-24.
- Parsenius, George L. 2005. *Departure and Consolation: The Johannine Farewell Discourses in Light of Greco-Roman Literature*. Vol. 117 of NovTSup. Edited by M. M. Mitchell and D. P. Moessner. Leiden: Brill.
- Partridge, Eric. 1969 [1947]. *Usage and Abusage; A Guide to Good English*. Middlesex: Penguin.
- Petersen, Silke. 2006. "Die Ich-bin-Worte als Metaphern am Beispiel der Lichtmetaphorik." Pages 121-38 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Vol. 200 of Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Edited by Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Peterson, David. 1992. *Engaging With God; a Biblical Theology of Worship*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Petuchowski, Jakob J. and Michael Brocke, eds. 1978. *The Lord's Prayer and Jewish Liturgy*. London: Burns and Oates.
- Pollard, T.E. 1977. "The Father-Son and God-Believer Relationships according to St John: a Brief Study of John's Use of Prepositions." Pages 363-69 in *L'Evangile de Jean*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, XLIV. Edited by M. De Jonge. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

- Porter, Stanley E. 1995. "Discourse Analysis and New Testament Studies: an Introductory Survey." Pages 14-35 in *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek*. Vol. 113 of *JSNTSup*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter and D.A. Carson. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- _____.ed. 2002. *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible*. Vol. 195 of JSNTSup Series. Edited by Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Priest, J. 1983. "Testament of Moses." Pages 919-34 in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. New York: Doubleday.
- Prothero, Stephen. 2003. *American Jesus. How the Son of God Became a National Icon*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Pryor, John W. 1992. *John: Evangelist of the Covenant People; Narrative and Themes of the Fourth Gospel*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity.
- Pyle, William T. 1994. "Understanding the Misunderstanding Sequences in the Gospel of John." *Faith and Mission* 11, 2:26-47.
- Rahlfs, A., ed. 1979 [1935]. *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX interpretes*. Vol. 1 Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.
- Reese, James M. 1972. "Literary Structure of Jn 13:31-14:31; 16:5-6, 16-33." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 34, 3:321-31.
- Reinhartz, Adele. 1992. *The Word in the World; The Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel*. Vol. 45 of SBLMS. Edited by E. F. Campbell. Atlanta: Scholars.
- Reis, David M. 2003. "Jesus' farewell discourse, 'otherness' and the construction of a Johannine identity." *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 32, 1-2:39-58.
- Resseguie, James L. 2001. *The Strange Gospel: Narrative Design and Point of View in John*. Leiden: Brill.
- _____. 2005. *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Richard, E. 1985. "Expressions of Double Meaning and their Functions in the Gospel of John." *New Testament Studies* 31, 1:96-112.
- Riches, John. 1990. *The World of Jesus; First Century Judaism in Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Roberts, Alexander and James Donaldson. 1868. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers*. Vol. 1 of 5 vols. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Robinson, J.A.T. 1985. *The Priority of John*. Edited by J. F. Coakley. London: SCM.
- Rogers, Cleon L. Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III. 1998. *New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Rosenfield, Lawrence W. 1971. *Aristotle and Information Theory; a comparison of the influence of causal assumptions on two theories of communication*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Ruckstuhl, E. 1951. *Die literarische Einheit des Johannesevangeliums*. Freiburg: Paulus.
- _____. 1977. "Johannine Language and Style, the Question of their Unity." Pages 125-47 in *L'Évangile de Jean*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, XLIV. Edited by M. De Jonge. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Rudolph, K., and W. Elliger, eds. 1968-76. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt Stuttgart.
- Ryken, Leland, ed. 1984. *The New Testament in Literary Criticism*. New York: Frederick Ungar.
- Sanders, E. P. 1985. *Jesus and Judaism*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Sanders, Paul. 1996. *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32*. Oudtestamentische Studien. Edited by Johannes C. De Moor, et al. Leiden: Brill.
- Sandmel, Samuel. 1969. *The First Christian Century in Judaism and Christianity; Certainties and Uncertainties*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schenk, Wolfgang. 1992. "Die um-Codierungen der matthaischen Unser-Vater-Redaktion in Joh 17." Pages 587-607 in *John and the Synoptics*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Schnackenburg, Rudolf. 1976. *Das Johannesevangelium; III. Teil*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament. Edited by Anton Vogtle, Alfred Wikenhauser, Rudolf Schnackenburg. Freiburg: Herder.
- _____. 1982. *The Gospel According to St. John*. Vol. 3 of 3 vols. Herder's Theological Commentary on the New Testament. Edited by B. Rigaux, Cerfaux Aulsejo, R. Schnackenburg, A. Vogtle. Kent: Burns & Oates.
- _____. 1973. "Strukturanalyse von Joh 17." *Biblische Zeitschrift* 17:67-78; 196-202.

- Schneiders, Sandra M. 1977. "History and Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel." Pages 371-76 in *L'Evangile de Jean*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, XLIV. Edited by M. De Jonge. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Schnelle, Udo. 1998. *The History and Theology of the New Testament Writings*. Translated by M. Eugene Boring. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Searle, John R. 1979. *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Segovia, Fernando F. 1991. *The Farewell of the Word; a Johannine Call to Abide*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.
- _____. 1982. "Footwashing." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 73, 1-2:31-51.
- _____. 1983. "John 15:18-16:4a: A First Addition to the Original Farewell Discourse?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45, 4:210-30.
- _____. 1985. "The Structure, *Tendenz* and *Sitz im Leben* of John 13:31-14:31." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104/3: 471-93.
- _____. 1991. "The Final Farewell of Jesus: A Reading of John 20:30-21:25." *Semeia* 53:167- 90.
- _____. 1991. "The Journey(s) of the Word of God: A Reading of the Plot of the Fourth Gospel." *Semeia* 53:23-53.
- _____. 1995. "The Significance of Social Location in Reading John's Story." *Interpretation* 49, 4:370.
- _____., ed. 1996. "What is John?" *Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel*. Vol. 3 of SBLSymS. Atlanta: Scholars.
- Senior, Donald. 1991. *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John*. Passion Series. Collegeville: Liturgical.
- Shakespeare, William. 1994. *Romeo and Juliet*, Penguin Popular Classics. Reading, Berkshire: Cox and Wyman Ltd.
- Simoens, Yves. 1981. *La gloire d'aimer: Structures stylistiques et interprétives dans le Discours de la Cène (Jn 13-17)*. Vol. 90, *Analecta Biblica*. Rome: Biblical Institute.
- Sloyan, Gerard S. 1991. *What Are They Saying About John?* New York: Paulist.
- Smalley, Stephen S. 1978. *John: Evangelist and Interpreter*. Exeter: Paternoster.

- Smith, Dwight Moody. 1965. *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel; Bultmann's Literary Theory*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- _____. 1986. *John*. Proclamation Commentaries. Edited by Gerhard Krodel. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- _____. 1992. *John Among the Gospels; the Relationship in Twentieth-Century Research*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Smith, Harold. 1928. *Ante-Nicene Exegesis of the Gospels*. Vol. 5 of 5 vols. Translation of Christian Literature. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- Snodgrass, Klyne. 2005. "The Gospel of Jesus." Pages 31-44 in *The Written Gospel*. Edited by Markus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Snyman, A.H. 1991. "Discourse Analysis: A Semantic Discourse Analysis of the Letter to Philemon." Pages 83-99 in *Text and Interpretation; New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament*. Edited by P. J. Petzer and J. H. Hartin. Leiden: Brill.
- Spittler, R. P. 1983. "Testament of Job." Pages 829-68 in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. New York: Doubleday.
- Sproston North, Wendy. 2001. *The Lazarus Story within the Johannine Tradition*. Vol. 212 of JSNTSup. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Staley, Jeffrey. 1988. *The Print's First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel*. Vol. 82 of SBLDS. Missoula: Scholars.
- _____. 1986. "The Structure of John's Prologue: Its Implications for the Gospel's Narrative Structure." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 48, 2: 241-64.
- _____. 1991. "Stumbling in the Dark, Reaching for the Light: Reading Character in John 5 and 9." *Semeia* 53:55-79.
- _____. 1992. "Reading with a Passion: John 18:1-19:42 and the Erosion of the Reader." SBLSP. Edited by Eugene H. Lovering, Jr. Atlanta: Scholars.
- _____. 1993. "Subversive Narrative/Victimized Reader: A Reader-Response Assessment of a Text-Critical Problem, John 18:12-24." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 3, 25:79-98.
- Stanton, Graham N. 2004. *Jesus and the Gospel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Stark, Rodney. 1996. *Rise of Christianity - A Sociologist Reconsiders History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Stibbe, Mark W.G. 1992. *John as Storyteller; Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge: University Press.
- _____. 1993. *John*. Readings: A New Biblical Commentary. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- _____. 1994. *John's Gospel*. Edited by John Court, New Testament Readings. London: Routledge.
- _____. 1997 [1986]. "'Return to Sender:' A Structuralist Approach to John's Gospel." Pages 261-78 in *The Interpretation of John*. Studies in New Testament Interpretation. Edited by John Ashton and Robert Morgan. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- _____, ed. 1993. *The Gospel of John as Literature; An Anthology of Twentieth-century Perspectives*. New Testament Tools and Studies. Edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Bart Ehrman. Leiden: Brill.
- Strachan, Robert Harvey. 1917. *The Fourth Gospel; its Significance and Environment*. Edinburgh; London: Turnbull & Spears.
- Strecker, Georg. 1992. *History of New Testament Literature*. Translated by Hans-Joachim Mollenhauer, Calvin Katter. Harrisburg: Trinity.
- Stube, John C. 2006. *A Graeco-Roman Rhetorical Reading of the Farewell Discourse*. Vol. 309 of Library of New Testament Studies. Edited by Mark Goodacre. London: T&T Clark (Continuum).
- Swete, Henry Barclay. 1913. *The Last Discourse and Prayer of our Lord*. London: Macmillan.
- Talbert, Charles H. 1970. "Artistry and Theology: An Analysis of the Architecture of Jn 1,19 - 5,47." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 32:341-66.
- _____. 1977. *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels*. London: SPCK.
- _____. 1992. *Reading John; a Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*. London: SPCK.
- Teeple, Howard M. 1974. *The Literary Origin of the Gospel of John*, Religion and Ethics Institute, Inc. Chicago: Adams.
- Temple, William. 1952. *Readings in St. John's Gospel*. London: Macmillan.

- Templeton, Douglas A. 1999. *The New Testament as True Fiction*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Terry, Milton S. 1975. *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Thatcher, Tom. 2000. *The Riddles of Jesus in John; A Study in Tradition and Folklore*. Vol. 53 of SBLMS. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- _____. 2006. *Jesus the Riddler: The Power of Ambiguity in the Gospels*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- _____. 1994. "A New Look at Asides in the Fourth Gospel." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 151, 604: 428-39.
- _____. 1996. "Jesus, Judas and Peter: Character by Contrast in the Fourth Gospel." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153, 612: 435-48.
- _____. 1999. "The Sabbath Trick: Unstable Irony in the Fourth Gospel." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 76: 53-77.
- Thielman, Frank. 1991. "The Style of the Fourth Gospel and Ancient Literary Critical Concepts of Religious Discourse." in *Persuasive Artistry*. Edited by Duane F. Watson. JSNTSup. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. 1992. *New Horizons in Hermeneutics; The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Thompson, Marianne Meye. 1988. *The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- _____. 2000. *The Promise of the Father; Jesus and God in the New Testament*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- _____. 2001. *The God of the Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- _____. 2003. "'His Own Received Him Not: Jesus Washes the Feet of His Disciples.'" in *The Art of Reading Scripture*. Edited by Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- _____. 2006. "'Every Picture Tells a Story: Imagery for God in the Gospel of John.'" Pages 259-77 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Vol. 200 of *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*. Edited by Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Tolmie, D. Francois. 1995. *Jesus' Farewell to the Disciples*. Vol. 12 of *Biblical Interpretation Series*. Edited by Rolf Rendtorff, R. Alan Culpepper. Leiden: Brill.

- _____. 2006. "The (not so) Good Shepherd." Pages 353-67 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Vol. 200 of *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*. Edited by Jörg Frey, Jan van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Tomasino, Anthony J. 2003. *Judaism Before Jesus*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity.
- Tovey, Derek. 1997. *Narrative Art and Act in the Fourth Gospel*. Vol. 151 of JSNTSup. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Tuckett, C. M. 2005. "Forty Other Gospels." Pages 238-53 in *The Written Gospel*. Edited by Markus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van der Watt, Jan. 2006. "Ethics Alive in Imagery." Pages 421-48 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Vol. 200 of *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*. Edited by Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Vanderlip, George. 1964. *Jesus, Teacher and Lord*. Valley Forge: Judson.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. 1998. *Is There Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- _____. 2001. "From Speech Acts to Scripture Acts." Pages 1-49 in *After Pentecost; Language and Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by Colin Green, Karl Moller, Craig Bartholomew. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Vegge, Tor. 2005. "The Literacy of Jesus the Carpenter's Son; on the Literary Style in the Word of Jesus." *Studia Theologica* 59:19-37.
- Von Rad, Gerhard. 1966. *Deuteronomy; A Commentary*. Vol. 8 of Old Testament Library (Das Alte Testament Deutsch). Edited by G. Ernest Wright et al. Translated by Dorothea Barton. London: SCM.
- Von Wahlde, Urban C. 1979. "The Terms for Religious Authorities in the Fourth Gospel: A Key to Literary Strata?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, 2: 231-53.
- _____. 1984. "Literary Structure and Theological Argument in Three Discourses with the Jews in the Fourth Gospel." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103, 4 (Dec): 575-84.
- Waetjen, Herman C. 2005. *The Gospel of the Beloved Disciple; A Work in Two Editions*. New York: T & T Clark.
- Watson, Francis. 2004. *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*. London: T & T Clark.

- Westcott, Brooke Foss. 1958. *The Gospel According to John*. London: James Clarke.
- White, H. C. 1988. "Introduction: Speech Act Theory and Literary Criticism." *Semeia* 41: 1-12.
- Williams, Catrin H. 2000. *I Am He*. Edited by Martin Hengel and Otfried Hofius. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- _____. 2005. "Isaiah in John's Gospel." Pages 101-116 in *Isaiah in the New Testament*. Edited by Steve Moyise and Maartin J. J. Menken. London: T & T Clark International (Continuum).
- Wilson, T. Ernest. 1981. *The Farewell Ministry of Christ; John 13-17*. Neptune: Loizeaux Brothers.
- Windisch, Hans. 1926. *Johannes und die Synoptiker: wollte der vierte Evangelist die älteren Evangelien ergänzen oder ersetzen?* Vol. v. Heft 12, Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.
- Winter, Martin. 1994. *Das Vermächtnis Jesu und die Abschiedsworte der Väter; Gattungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der Vermächtnisrede im Blick auf Joh. 13-17*. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments. Edited by Wolfgang Schrage und Rudolf Smend. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht.
- Witherington, Ben. 1995. *John's Wisdom; A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge: Lutterworth.
- Woll, D. Bruce. 1981. *Johannine Christianity in Conflict: Authority, Rank and Succession in the First Farewell Discourse*. Vol. 60, SBLDS. Edited by William Baird. Ann Arbor: Scholars.
- Wright, N.T. 1992. *The New Testament and the People of God*. Vol. 1. London: SPCK.
- _____. 1996. *Christian Origins and the Question of God*. Vol. 2. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Yamauchi, E. M. 1973. *Pre-Christian Gnosticism; A Survey of the Proposed Evidences*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Zimmermann, Ruben. 2001. *Geschlechtermetaphorik und Gottesverhältnis*. Vol. 122 of Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- _____. 2004. *Christologie der Bilder im Johannesevangelium: Die Christolpoetik des vierten Evangeliums unter besonderer Berücksichtigung van Joh 10*. Vol. 171 of

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

_____. 2006. "Imagery in John." Pages 1-43 in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Vol. 200 of *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*. Edited by Jörg Frey, Jan G. Van Der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.