

## APPENDIX A

## 1. Miracles in the Fourth Gospel

Miracle	1. Cana Wedding	2. Nobleman's Son	3. Lame Man	4. Feeding 5,000	5. Walking on Water	6. Blind Man	7. Lazarus	8. Catch of Fish
Text	2:1-11	4:46-54	5:2-9	6:4-13	6:16-21	9:1-7	11:1-44	21:4-14
Synoptic Parallel		Mt. 8:5ff. Lk. 7:1-10		Mt. 14:13-21 Mk. 6:32-44 Lk. 9:10-17	Mt. 14:22-33 Mk. 6:45-52			
Σημεῖον "sign"	2:11 first sign	4:48, 54 Second sign		6:14, 26		9:16	11:47	
Ἔργον Ἐργάζομαι "work"			5:17, 20	6:27ff.		9:3, 4		
Δόξα "glory"	2:11						11:4, 40	
Jesus as subject			5:19, 30	6:52		9:4, 16, 33; 10:21	11:37	
"I am" saying				6:35		8:12 9:5	11:25	
Associated Discourse				Bread of Life 6:25ff.		Light of the World 8:12ff.		

## 2. Vocabulary statistics of the Miracles in the Fourth Gospel

Term	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Σημεῖον 17 occurrences (1 reference to Jesus)		11 18 23	2	48 54		2 14 26 30	31		16	41	<b>47</b>	<b>18</b> <b>37</b>								<b>30</b>	
Σημαίνω 3 occurrences (all references to Jesus)												<b>33</b>						<b>32</b>			<b>19</b>
Ἔργον 27 occurrences (19 references to Jesus)			19 20 21	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b> <b>36<sup>a</sup></b>	28 29	<b>3</b> 7 <b>21</b>	39 41	<b>3</b> 4	<b>25</b> <b>32<sup>a</sup></b> <b>33</b> <b>37</b> <b>38</b>				<b>10</b> <b>11</b> <b>12</b>	<b>24</b>		<b>4</b>				
Ἔργον 8 occurrences (5 references to Jesus)			21		<b>17<sup>a</sup></b>	27 28 <b>30</b>			<b>4<sup>a</sup></b>												
Δόξα 19 occurrences	<b>14<sup>a</sup></b>	11			41 <b>44<sup>a</sup></b>		<b>18<sup>a</sup></b>	50 54	24		4 40	41 <b>43<sup>a</sup></b>						5 22 24			
Δοξάζω 23 occurrences							39	<b>54<sup>a</sup></b>			4	16 23 <b>28<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>31<sup>a</sup></b> <b>32<sup>b</sup></b>	13	8	14		<b>1<sup>a</sup></b> 4 5 10			<b>19</b>
Δύναμις 36 occurrences (7 references to Jesus)	46		2 3 <b>4<sup>a</sup></b> 5 9 <b>27</b>		19 <b>30</b> 44	44 <b>52</b> 60 65	7 34 36	21 22 43	4 <b>16</b> <b>33</b>	<b>21</b> 29 35	<b>37</b>	39	33 36 37	17	4 5	12					
Δύναμις No occurrences																					
Ἐξουσία 8 occurrences (4 references to Jesus)	12				<b>27</b>					<b>18<sup>a</sup></b>								<b>2</b>		<b>10<sup>a</sup></b> 11	

(1) **Bold** verse numbers indicates reference to Christ.

(2)<sup>a</sup> Term occurs twice in this verse.

(3)<sup>b</sup> Term occurs three times in this Gospel.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Johannine Christian Community**

In New Testament Studies there has emerged, in recent decades, a preoccupation with the development of what is termed “the Johannine Christian Community.” This is postulated as a community, separate from the general church, and undergoing a series of progressive developments in belief and emphasis in teachings, brought about by changes in the religious ecology of the day. These developments in belief and emphasis in teaching are thought to be reflected in various passages in the Fourth Gospel, which are thought by some to have been specifically included to counter perceived erroneous beliefs. The Fourth Gospel is thus postulated as having been modified and adapted in successive stages in order to counter incorrect doctrine or react to outside religious influences. Eventually the Gospel took the form in which we have it today.

That the process of “reconstruction” is inexact and speculative is evident from the differences in the reconstructions offered by various proponents of this view. There is considerable doubt as to whether the Johannine Christian Community is a reality or simply a construct of fertile imaginations. Generally the theory has developed out of a desire to show the relationship among the five writings traditionally associated with the Apostle John.

It is generally accepted that John spent his later years in Ephesus, the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire and the home of the temple of the goddess Artemis, who was sometimes referred to as Diana. At one time Ephesus was a centre of trade between East and West but the harbour became stilted and unserviceable. From that time the worship of Artemis became the city’s main means of economic survival. The ambiance of the city was thus one of gentile paganism and idolatry and Eastern mysticism. In addition all sorts of magic and sorcery were conjured up and documented. The city was also influenced by the various philosophies of the day, notably those from Greece and Rome. Within

this mixture of philosophic speculation, mysticism and pagan practice there was also a Jewish religious community.

It was within this climate of strongly contrasting belief systems that Paul and his companions planted the church that was later cared for by John. While it is true that, because of the existing climate of thought and practice, the churches in and around Ephesus faced a difficult situation, it would be wrong to suggest that this gave rise to a separate Christian Community so strongly influenced by the surrounding circumstances that it was different to the main body of believing Christians. It is also incorrect to imagine that within these churches there was a separate “Johannine Christian Community” as this would be a negation of the very teaching of the apostles that all believers are one in Christ. Neither should the relatively limited group of Christian believers in the Ephesian geographical area, made up of converted Jews and gentiles, be considered the Johannine Christian Community and seen as separate or distinct from other Christians.

In this thesis the “Johannine Christian Community” is viewed in the widest context and is considered to be composed, not only of the immediate circle of Christian believers under the general care and guidance of John in Ephesus and other believers in the same general geographic area but rather of all believers in all the ages and in all places.

The message of the Fourth Gospel has a timelessness that is directed to all people of all ages and all circumstances. It fills in what is left out of the three Synoptic Gospels and presents us with valuable insights into the intensely personal relationship that Jesus had with His disciples, a relationship which points to that relationship that He desires with all who are truly His own.

## APPENDIX C

### Views on the Origin and Development of Johannine Christian Community History

This survey briefly summarises the theories of representative scholars who have engaged in a reconstruction of the Johannine Christian community and highlights the substantially different conclusions reached. These conclusions tend to be based on the subjective views of the authors rather than on firm, objective facts. Brown, one of the leading scholars in this field, says “I warn the reader that my reconstruction claims at most probability; and if sixty percent of my detective work is accepted, I shall be happy indeed.” It would perhaps have been better for him to have used the word ‘possibility.’

Several writers have addressed the issue and the following is a brief review of their basic approaches.

#### 1. J. L. Martyn

Martyn (2003:35-143) attempted to link the growth of a “Johannine Christian community” with the experience of a particular Christian community working its way through the final breach between the synagogue and the church. It is significant that in a later edition of this work<sup>502</sup> he (2003:145) attempted an elaborate reconstruction of Johannine church origins based on the following principle: “The literary history of a single community which maintained over a period of some duration its particular and somewhat peculiar identity.” Martyn’s reconstruction proposes a three-staged development of the Johannine Christian community. In the first stage the emphasis is on Jesus as the Messiah and Jewish converts fit in easily with living the new faith within the Torah and the synagogue. It postulated that at this time the sermons and traditions about Jesus are gathered into a form of the gospel. The second stage is marked by divisive, midrashic debates over the claims of Jesus, the expelling of heretics

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<sup>502</sup> See Martyn (2003:145-167).

(from the synagogues) and by having some of them tried and executed. This, it is suggested, led to those expelled rewriting the account of Jesus. He is now seen as the One who, although from above is rejected by His own.<sup>503</sup> In the third stage the expelled Christians again revise their position and adopt the view that there can be no middle way, a Christian could not continue in both camps. They also saw the Jewish Christians, scattered by persecution as being “other sheep” and part of the promise that they would become one flock under one Good shepherd.

## **2. G. Richter<sup>504</sup>**

Richter argues for an original basic written gospel with varying Christologies, arising within the Johannine Christian community. On this basis he finds traces of four different communities in the Fourth Gospel. His categories are I. The Mosaic-Prophet Christians, II. The Son-of-God Christians, III. The Docetic Christians and IV. The anti-docetic redaction. This categorisation is based on a perceived evolution of the gospel through the various stages.

### **\* R. A. Culpepper**

The existence of a Johannine school is defended using three lines of reasoning. First, it is claimed that the similarities and dissimilarities of style and unity can best be explained by the existence of a Johannine Christian community. Second, as Stendahl (1968:20-35) points out that, from the use of Old Testament quotations in the Gospel, that this Christian community might be described as a school. Third, Culpepper’s analysis of the characteristics shared by the Johannine Christian community with other ancient schools is offered as final proof that this Christian community was indeed a school. Culpepper (1975:287-289) demonstrated how each one of the nine characteristics of a

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<sup>503</sup> This view was caused by the threat of physical persecution and death (Jn. 1:11; 10:28-29; 15:18; 16:2). In this situation the community began to see itself as “not of this world” (Jn. 17:1-26), and hated by the world (Jn. 15:18-16:33).

<sup>504</sup> See Mattill (1977:294-315).

school were also found in the Johannine Christian community. These characteristics are as follows:

I. The Johannine Christian community was a fellowship of disciples; II. The Christian community gathered around, and traced its origins to, a founder – the Beloved Disciple; III. The Christian community valued the teachings of its founder and the traditions about him; IV. Members of the Christian community were disciples or students of the founder – the Beloved Disciple; V. Teaching, learning, studying, and writing were common activities of the Christian community. VI. The Christian community observed a communal meal; VII. The Christian community had rules or practices regulating admission and retention of membership; VIII. The Christian community maintained some distance from the rest of society; IX. The Christian community developed organizational means of insuring its perpetuity.

He (1975:289) indicates that “these characteristics, which describe ancient schools, also describe the Johannine community. The Johannine community, therefore, was a school.”

### **3. O. Cullman**

Cullman (1976:93-94) considers that the Johannine Christian community consisted of people who, from the beginning, were on the margin between Judaism and Hellenism. They were heterodox Jews who had a profound fidelity to the historical Jesus and to the beloved disciple’s understanding of Jesus. The differences between the synoptic gospels and John’s Gospel are in part explained by the fact that Jesus had two different styles of teaching.

### **4. R. E. Brown**

Brown (1979:25-169) is aware that the analytical form of scholarship used in determining the development of the Johannine Christian community is hypothetical but nevertheless considered himself able to trace four stages in the community's growth. In his analysis he classifies the first stage as covering the same time frame as Martyn's first stage but he sees it as the rapid coming together of Christians from a variety of different backgrounds – followers of John the Baptist, Samaritan converts, Jews of an anti-temple view and Gentiles. The second stage (ca A.D. 90) sees the composition of the Gospel and this leads to a "higher" Christology eventuating in the absolute "Ἐγώ εἰμι" and the idea of the pre-existence of Jesus. Using the Fourth Gospel, Brown identifies six groups with which the Johannine community had contact during this period. The third stage is set ca A.D. 100 when, according to Brown the community split into two. One group moved toward unity with the great church and the other towards Gnosticism. Finally in the second century, after the letters of John were written, the final moment in the history of the community is its separation and dissolution. This, he claims, can already be seen in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch (ca A.D. 110)

## **5. A Review of the suggested Reconstructions**

Each of these reconstructions is based on the Johannine literature, as well as other external writings. Consequently each has its own plausibility but, given the diversity of views and conclusions, it is clear that the actual process of reconstruction is hazardous and extremely subjective.

The various theories relating to the development of the Johannine Christian community are not enhanced by saying that such a reconstruction need not be exact and that a limited percentage of accuracy is acceptable. While such qualifying statements reflect an appropriate caution they do not help the discussion; on the contrary they confuse the issues. When one considers these various reconstructions, these interesting buildings, the question is not how many bricks in this or that wall are solid, but rather whether there is any solidity to the foundation of the entire edifice.



## APPENDIX C

### **The Socio-Cultural Ecology of the First century Related to the Johannine Christian Community**

In this section an attempt will be made to analyse the atmosphere of religious thought in the socio-cultural ecology that prevailed in the Graeco-Roman world, particularly in Asia Minor, about the time when the Fourth Gospel was written.

Reviewing the alternative contexts which allegedly have affinities with the Fourth Gospel, is like reviewing the entire range of religious and cultural movements in the Greco-Roman world in the first century.<sup>505</sup>

The explicit purpose of the Fourth Gospel as stated in Jn. 20:30-31, is to convince readers that this Jesus is the Messiah of Jewish expectation (the Christ) and that He came to reveal God the Father in His person. The Evangelist contributed to the defence of the Christian community by addressing his writing primarily to members of that community. Also, it was an intra-church (intra-Christian community) document, a Gospel intended for the family.<sup>506</sup>

#### **1. The Johannine Christian Community and its Religious Phraseology**

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<sup>505</sup> Dodd's book, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, is a fine example of traditional New Testament scholarship's painstaking concern to examine socio-cultural influences which converge in the first century related Johannine Christian community. Dodd (1998:4-6) writes in his introduction:

In order to work towards a sound interpretation of the Fourth Gospel it is necessary to consider the work in its true context of thought, so far as that is possible for us at this date. If we approach it without regard to any such context, we are in danger of imposing upon it a subjective interpretation of our own, for we shall in fact be placing it in the context of our preconceived notions, which may be foreign to the intention of the evangelist...The fact is that the thought of this gospel is so original and creative that a search for its 'sources,' or even for the 'influences' by which it may have been affected, may easily lead us astray. Whatever influences may have been present have been masterfully controlled by a powerful and independent mind...Nevertheless, its thought implies a certain background of ideas with which the author could assume his readers to be familiar.

<sup>506</sup> Van der Watt (2000:161) refers to the frequently used family language (e.g. father, son, brother, house, birth, and life) in the Fourth Gospel.

John's Gospel is noted for its author's distinctive development of and penchant for new phrases in place of old ones,<sup>507</sup> for using many different words to describe the same activity. These words and phrases were specially selected by John to enhance the understanding of the Gospel by the Johannine Christian community and also to meet their specific spiritual needs. The distinctive feature of the Fourth Gospel is the emphasis on "believe," and "witness (testify)."

John tells us explicitly, what he was aiming to do in writing his gospel (Jn. 20:30-31) namely to bring people to believe in Jesus, and in believing to have life.<sup>508</sup> This means that believing is very important for him and the Johannine Christian community, and in fact this idea rings throughout his whole book. When he wants to express the thought of "faith in Jesus Christ," Paul speaks of "faith (πίστις) in Jesus Christ," but John uses the phrase "to believe (πιστεύω) in Jesus."<sup>509</sup> It seems that for John belief is always an active matter. John describes faith as a continuing dynamic, not a state of being. Rather, by using the verb form of the word, John emphasizes the act and ongoing activity of faith, an activity that constantly endorses the original decision. This emphasis is deliberate and is directed to the prevailing circumstances and needs of the Johannine Christian community. Interestingly, Whitehouse (1950:75-76) comments,

The efficacy of faith for salvation and for right relationship with  
God is not to be sought in the act itself, but rather in that to

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<sup>507</sup> Malina & Rohrbaugh (1998:4) mention that for example, when Paul wants to speak of faith in Christ, he speaks of "faith in Christ Jesus." But John uses the phrase "believing (to believe) into Jesus."

<sup>508</sup> Hermission & Lohse (1981:160) link this passage with that which tells us that John the Baptist was sent by God to bear witness to the light "so that all might believe through him" (Jn 1:7), and draw the conclusion that "Jesus' effect is thus represented from the beginning to the end as a proclamation which calls one to faith."

<sup>509</sup> John never uses the noun "faith" or "belief," but always and only the verb "to believe" and the gerund "believing" (Jn. 1:7, 12, 50; 4:21, 42, 48; 6:29, 30, 36; 7:5; 8:24, 30; 11:15, 40; 12:11, 37; 13:19; 14:10; 16:30; 20:25, 27, 31). Also, Malina & Rohrbaugh (1998:4) say of "believing in Jesus" that when John expresses this reality, he has recourse to terms such as: following Him (Jn. 1:38; 18:15), abiding in Him (Jn. 5:38; 14:10, 25), living in Him (Jn. 6:51, 57), having Him (Jn. 3:21; 4:45; 7:9; 13:1; 17:4), or seeing Him (Jn. 21:21). These expressions point to items and objects affecting areas of central concern to the Johannine Christian community. Also, we know that John's descriptions derive from the interests and activities of the Johannine Christian community.

Turner & Mantey (1964:3) indicate that the verb (πιστεύω) occurs about 96 times in the Fourth Gospel; about 34 times in the three Synoptics.

which a man holds firm by believing. The Fourth Gospel, by the very fact of not using the noun, makes this plain.

This understanding of faith implicit in the use of the verb instead of the noun indicates that John's fundamental concept of faith is that of personal relationship. It is as if John wishes to emphasize the act of believing. Because of this emphasis the Johannine Christian community can make certain affirmations about Christ that structure a sense of identity and community solidarity.<sup>510</sup>

Also, we find that many have called attention to the prominence of the theme of "witness" (testify). This term occurs thirty-three times in verb form (μαρτυρέω) and fourteen times as a noun (μαρτυρία) in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>511</sup> This emphasis on witness is noteworthy. It is incompatible with hearsay or with a romantic elaboration of a theological kind based on the barest minimum of fact (Morris, 1969:121). John bears witness to the things he has seen and heard concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and he wants the Johannine Christian community to have a reliable first hand account of those aspects of his experiences of Christ which will meet their prevailing spiritual needs. John is convinced that, while it is a great privilege to be a first-hand witness, an even greater blessing is in store for those who believe on the basis of the testimony of the apostolic witnesses (20:29). As others believe they share fully in the gift of eternal life.

The conclusion is that the specific words and phrases used by John are specially chosen by him to direct the thoughts of the Johannine Christian community to an active, ongoing faith in Jesus Christ. To do this John uses the

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<sup>510</sup> See Kysar (1993:94). Also, Blomberg (2001:62) indicates that John is writing that Johannine Christian community might hopefully grow in their faith.

<sup>511</sup> The witness to Christ which John records is therefore manifold, and extends over the whole range of possible attestation of divine things. Westcott (1890:xliv–xlvii) says that in due succession there is, " I . The witness of the Father (Jn. 5:31f., 34, 37; 8:18); II . The witness of Christ Himself (Jn. 3:11, 32f.; 8:14, 18; 18:37); III . The witness of works (Jn. 5:36; 10:25); IV . The witness of Scripture (Jn. 5:39); V . The witness of the John the Baptist (Jn. 1:7, 8, 15, 19ff., 32ff.; 3:26; 5:33f., 36); VI . The witness of disciples (Jn. 15:27; 19:35; 21:24) ; VII . The witness of the Spirit (Jn. 15:26; 16:14)." Cf. see Morris, 1969:121-122; Bernard, 1948:xc-xcii.

verb forms of key words, such as “believe” and “witness” (testify) rather than the nouns.

## **2. The Johannine Christian community and followers of John the Baptist**

A variety of theories, which differ significantly from one another, have been suggested to ‘explain’ the relationship between the disciples of John the Baptist and the Christian Community associated with John, the writer of the Fourth Gospel. It has been suggested, for example, that there was a group of John the Baptist’s disciples who claimed that he, and not Jesus, was the Messiah and that the Fourth Gospel was written to refute this error. On the basis of this view the relationship between the two groups is regarded as antagonistic. One reason for this view is the supposed unfavourable contrast between John the Baptist and Jesus in the prologue.

This view does not adequately take into account that the Synoptic gospels all show that John the Baptist pointed to someone who would come after him and who would be greater. These passages in the Synoptic Gospels (Mt. 3:1-17; Mk. 1:2-11; Lk. 3:1-22) clearly indicate that John the Baptist recognised that Jesus was the person to whom he had been referring to and that he, Jesus, was the greater. There was thus no doubt in John the Baptist’s mind that Jesus was the promised Saviour. His view of what the Saviour would accomplish was obviously based on his understanding of the Old Testament passages relating to the Messiah. Jesus did not meet all his expectations of a Saviour as is evident from the message he sent Jesus while in prison (Mt. 11:1-22) “Are you the Coming One, or shall we look for someone else?” Jesus’ reply directed John to the miracles that no human could perform and let him draw his own conclusions from how these fitted in with what the scriptures said about the Messiah. The passages in the Fourth Gospel which are regarded as an apologetic to reveal the distortion of truth by the disciples of John the Baptist (1:8, 15, 19-24, 30; 3:28-30; 10:41) really direct the reader, not to any supposed inferiority, but rather to the pre-eminent position he occupied as the witness to Jesus being the Christ – he is not the Light, but he is the witness; he

is not the Messiah, but, like Isaiah, he is a voice proclaiming the Messiah; he is not the bridegroom, but he is the bridegroom's friend.

Brown (1978:lxx) recognises that John acknowledges the position of honour that John the Baptist held amongst the witnesses to Jesus and concludes that "the view of John the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel is no less complimentary than that of the Synoptics." Brown's view is, like that of many scholars, that the Fourth Gospel is a compilation of traditional records of Jesus' sayings and activities edited and emended by a series of editors and redactors. Because of this he does not accept the clear statement in 20:30-31 that the intention of the single writer was to select specific signs which pointed to the divinity of Jesus and provide followers of Jesus with a firm basis for belief – a belief which is foundational to faith and salvation. He also does not accept that the Fourth Gospel is written by an eyewitness who is filling out the record of Jesus' acts by giving a record of the very words used by him.

Lindars (1982:60) considers that "the relation between the Baptist and Jesus needed explanation in the early days of the church; cf. Mt. 11:2-19." He goes on to say that "It is probable that behind this explanation there lies the embarrassing fact that Jesus had broken away from the Baptist, whom many regarded as the Messiah. This embarrassment shows through in Matthew's version of the baptism of Jesus (Mt.3:14f.)." There is nothing in either of these passages to suggest that Jesus was ever a "disciple" of John the Baptist or that he broke away from him. Objective consideration of these passages shows clearly that there is no indication of any embarrassment whatever. The attempt to claim that the disciples of John the Baptist used Mt. 11:11 to justify the claim that he was the Messiah is negated by the preceding verses in which John the Baptist indicates that there is a "Coming One" for whom he and his disciples were looking.

### **3. The Johannine Christian Community and Gnosticism**

The term 'Gnosticism' is used to describe a wide range of schools of philosophy which, during the first Christian centuries, sought to provide an answer to the basic problem of man and the world by concentrating on salvation through a secret *gnōsis*, or 'knowledge.' Gnosticism is in fact more a philosophy than a religious system; and, whereas the early fathers saw Gnostic teachings solely as heretical corruptions of Christianity, modern scholarship views Gnosticism as a religious and philosophical outlook which may be completely independent of Christianity.<sup>512</sup> It is true to say, however, that not all scholars agree about the origins of Gnosticism (whether its sources are pre-Christian, and indeed Jewish, as well as Christian), or even about its precise definition. For this very reason it is important to be flexible in any approach to this subject; and even if, for the sake of convenience, we shall here consider Gnosticism in connection with possible Hellenistic influences on the Johannine Christian community, this does not imply that Gnosticism is to be regarded as a purely Greek phenomenon.

Christian Gnosticism in its developed form is entirely intellectual and speculative. Using mythical ideas which drew on a philosophical background, it was an attempt to express the Christian gospel in terms which would be appreciated by those who were nurtured in a Hellenistic environment. But a cursory glance at Christian Gnostic books (e.g. The Gospel of Truth) is sufficient, however, to show how far Gnostic Christianity eventually travelled from its apostolic and New Testament origins. Basic to the outlook of the Gnostics was a dualistic view of the world, in which the upper world of spirit or mind contrasted with the lower world of evil matter.<sup>513</sup>

We briefly survey the relationship between the Johannine Christian community and Gnosticism, examining the view of Bultmann, who is typical of the history of religions school of biblical scholarship, which considers that 'pre-Gnosticism' was an eclectic tradition of thought which infiltrated Judaism and Hellenistic paganism, as well as Christianity, from the orient. We then deal with John's

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<sup>512</sup> See Smalley (1978:49).

<sup>513</sup> See further Brown (1978:liv).

writings, refuting Bultmann's view that John's concepts originally come from a Gnostic sect.

In his commentary, Bultmann (1971:7-9) argues that the evangelist responsible for the redaction of the Fourth Gospel was a convert to Christianity from a Gnostic sect. He works on the premise that the thought patterns in the Johannine literature and theology are neither Greek nor Jewish, but Gnostic. He contends that the literature of the Mandaeans, a Gnostic sect which traces its origins to a migration from Palestine, preserves echoes of the pre-Christian Gnosticism from which the evangelist emerged. The most likely point of contact between the Fourth Gospel and the literature of the Mandaeans lies in the existence among the Gnostics of a so-called 'redeemer myth.' In Mandaeism this takes the form of a divine being (the most important is Manda *d'Hayye* = 'Knowledge of life'), who descends into the lower realms, conquers the powers of darkness, and victoriously ascends to the realm of light. His action thereby guarantees to the faithful the living efficacy of their myth and ritual.<sup>514</sup> It seems that Bultmann believes that the writer of the Fourth Gospel was himself a one-time Gnostic, who wanted to restate the kerygma in line with Gnostic concepts which had been "Christianised." Bultmann insists that John used a source which was Gnostic in tendency as a basis for the Gospel discourses in the Fourth Gospel. Also, in the formation of the discourse material, Bultmann sees the Evangelist as dependent above all on the 'redeemer myth,' a form of which has already been described. Bultmann (1971:8) claims that support for this reconstructed Gnosticism in John is found in the Mandaean literature.<sup>515</sup> He also seeks support for his view in the Gnostic Odes of Solomon which are especially closely related to the discourses of John in their thought and language.<sup>516</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> See Smalley (1978:46).

<sup>515</sup> Brown (1978:liv) mentions that the charge of circular reasoning has been hurled against Bultmann. "He (Bultmann) presupposes that there was a Gnosticism in the background of John, and then uses John as his main source for reconstructing this Gnosticism. However, Bultmann claims that pre-Christian Gnosticism has survived in the Odes of Solomon, and particularly in the Mandaean literature."

<sup>516</sup> Schnackenburg (1984, 1:144-145) mentions that many texts of the Odes of Solomon tell in favour of acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel:

Furthermore, the view of John's background taken by Bultmann is in fact open to question at several points. It is difficult to regard John as a 'Gnostic' in any real sense, because John's basic, Christian outlook differs from the mystical, philosophical approach of Gnosticism and its earlier manifestations.<sup>517</sup> The Evangelist not only has a real concern for the historical basis of salvation, he also has what Gnosticism lacks – a theology of salvation which involves deliverance from sin by means of a cross. The Johannine Soteriology is historical and Christocentric; that of the Gnostics is mystical and speculative. Therefore, however many parallels may be drawn between the Fourth Gospel and the supposed Gnosticising tendencies of John's day, it cannot be maintained that John was deeply influenced by Gnostic thought-forms, or indebted to them for his theology. The two are literally worlds apart. Also, we cannot accept that the Odes of Solomon are a valuable example of Gnostic themes and imagery, they can hardly be considered a concrete background of the Johannine Christian community.<sup>518</sup>

Beasley-Murray (1987:1vi) states that there are sober scholars who are ready to acknowledge positive relationships of the Fourth Gospel to the contemporary religious movements that inspired the Gnosticism of the second century without

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Ode 6:11f.; 30:1f. (thirst-assuaging source) cf. Jn. 4:14; 7:37. Ode 7:4ff. (He appeared like me...he is my grace) cf. Jn. 1:14, 16. Ode 8:14 (mine, whom I know) cf. Jn. 10:14. Ode 8:22 (pray...abide in the love of the Lord) cf. Jn. 15:7, 10. Ode 10:5 (the scattered gentiles gathered) cf. Jn. 11:52. Ode 11:16 (coming from darkness to light) cf. Jn. 8:12. Ode 12:7, 12 (the Word is light to the mind, its dwelling-place is man) cf. Jn. 1:4. Ode 15:2; 18:6 (his light has driven all darkness from before my face; the enlightened shall not be conquered by darkness) cf. Jn. 1:5; 12:35. Ode 16:19 (the worlds were made through his Word) cf. Jn 1:3. Ode 28:17f. (they aimed at my death but did not succeed, because I was older than their memory) cf. Jn. 8:57f. Ode 31:4 (he lifted up his voice to the Most High, and offered him the sons that were in his hands) cf. Jn 17:11-16. Ode 31:5 (his person was justified, as his holy Father had granted him) cf. Jn 17:1, 5; 12:28. Ode 31:7 (they accused me...who was guiltless) cf. Jn. 8:46. Ode 33:4 (he drew to himself all who heard him) cf. Jn. 12:32. Ode 39:11ff. (the footsteps of our Lord as bridge and way) cf. Jn. 14:2-6. Ode 41:13 (the Son of the Most High has appeared in the perfection of his Father) cf. Jn. 1:14. Ode 41:15 (the anointed...was known before the foundation of the world) cf. Jn. 1:1; 17:5, 24.

<sup>517</sup> Richardson (1961:41) says that "when scholars like Bultmann describe a Gnostic doctrine they take their first century 'evidence' from the New Testament itself. But this is a question-begging proceeding, since the New Testament is susceptible of a very different interpretation."

<sup>518</sup> See Schnackenburg (1984, 1:145).



the one-sided emphasis some enthusiasts for Gnosticism are making. Barrett (1962:55) rightly notes<sup>519</sup>:

It is difficult to resist the view that the Gnostics used John because out of it, by exegesis sound or unsound, they were able to win support and enrichment for preconceived theories and mythologies. We should certainly not be justified in speaking of second-century Gnosticism as in any sense a creation of John.

Therefore, we reject the notion of any direct literary dependence of the Fourth Gospel on Gnostic sources. Also, we do not find Bultmann's complex literary source analysis convincing. Furthermore, we are compelled to acknowledge the correctness of those who have criticized the hypothesis of Johannine dependence on pre-Christian Gnosticism on the grounds of the chronology of the sources. While there are motifs which are later incorporated in the developed Gnostic systems of the second century, there is to date no substantial textual support for the existence of pre-Christian Gnosticism.

John asserted the primacy of history, and John's Gospel is a reaffirmation of history. John wrote his gospel as a whole, in order to bring out with the utmost clarity a single presentation, an interpreted history, of Jesus. Also, we find that in spite of many affinities between Gnosticism and the Fourth Gospel there remains a decisive difference: the Gnostic claims that what saves is knowledge, knowledge of the origins of the world, of man in the world and of the way for man to escape from the world to union with God. But for John the knowledge that will save is knowing that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, that He died as an atonement for sin, and was raised on the third day. Belief in these facts confers on the believer eternal life.<sup>520</sup> Therefore, there is a real,

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<sup>519</sup> Also, Barrett's comment (1982:63), is worthy of note: "It is difficult to doubt that John detected real theological appropriateness in the words he used, that in fact he was giving a Christianized - and that meant often an inverted - and always historicized version of a way of thinking that was not simply too popular but also too near to and too far from the truth to be ignored. Gnosticism raised questions that the theologian could not ignore"

<sup>520</sup> See Marsh (1991:34).

significant difference between the Johannine Christian community and Gnosticism.

#### 4. The Johannine Christian Community and Qumran Community

Under this heading we shall consider briefly the likelihood of connections between John and the Qumran community. The affinities between John's Gospel and the Dead Sea Scrolls both of which have deep roots in the Old Testament<sup>521</sup> are obviously of great interest. There are real differences between the Qumran sectaries and the early Christians.<sup>522</sup> But at the same time there are striking points of contact, notably in the attitude taken by both towards prophecy, eschatology and scriptural interpretation.<sup>523</sup> Above all, the similarity

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<sup>521</sup> The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) in 1947 greatly increased our knowledge of Judaism in first-century Palestine. Among the whole or partial remains of some 800 manuscripts is the literature of the group that settled at Qumran on the northwest corner of the Dead Sea ca. 150 B.C. The fact that the Essene community at Qumran was destroyed in A.D. 68 means that with rare exceptions its documents antedate Christian literature (Brown, 1978:lxiii).

<sup>522</sup> Smalley (1978:32-33) mentions that John's Gospel is a Christian document and the Scrolls are Jewish. The incarnation is not just that John sees the end as already upon us, whereas in the War Scroll the incarnation is still in the apocalyptic future. In John's theology eternal life is achieved not through the Law as interpreted by the community of Qumran, but through belief in the Word (Jesus) (Jn. 3:15, 16, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47, 54; 10:28; 17:2, 3), also the final victory is not achieved through the intervention of an angel of light, but by the victorious Messiah, Jesus. He is identified with the truth of which the Scrolls speak, and for which the Qumran community was searching. John's Gospel teaches clearly that knowledge of the truth derives uniquely from the knowledge of God through Christ and by the Spirit (Jn. 1:17; 14:6; 15:26; 16:13).

<sup>523</sup> There are obvious literary parallels between the Scrolls and John's Gospel. These are particularly evident in the Manual of Discipline (or Community Rule), although they also exist in other documents from Qumran. In 1 QS 1:5, 9f (1 QS 5:19-21), there is reference to 'practising truth,' and loving the 'sons of light' while rejecting the 'sons of darkness,' in a way that is reminiscent with Jn. 3:21 and Jn. 12:35f. Again, the concept of knowledge in association with the existence and activity of God, and man's relationship to him, is present in both the community Rule and John (See cf. Jn. 1:2; 17:3). In the English translation of "The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls" Vermes (1997:101-102) says. "From the God of Knowledge comes all that is and shall be...He...has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and injustice. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of injustice spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of injustice are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness...But the God of Israel and His Angel of Truth will succour all the sons of light." Similarly, the Scrolls and John's Gospel both contain references to the wisdom of God, and his enlightenment of the worshipper in answer to faith (See cf. 1 QS 9:23f. with Jn. 3:33-36; 5:31f.; also 1 QS 17:26-28; with Jn. 12:44-50; 16:25-27).

On these Charlesworth (1968/69:415) comments that,

These similarities, however, are not close enough nor numerous enough to prove that John directly copied from 1QS. But on the other hand, they are much too close to conclude that John and 1QS merely evolved out of the same milieu... there is no closer parallel to John's dualistic mythology either in contemporary or in earlier Jewish or Hellenistic literature.

of language and even ideas exhibited by the Fourth Gospel and the Scrolls reveal an early setting previously unknown in Judaism itself, where Hellenistic thinking lay intertwined with Jewish. As Brown (1978:lxiii) indicates, none of this suggests that John depends directly on the literature from Qumran. But it clearly seems that John was familiar with Qumranic patterns of thought, and may even have been influenced by the sect itself, either through personal contact or through John the Baptist. Also, we find that the Johannine Christian community is constituted, not by faith in an interpretation of the Law which is truth for Qumran, but by faith in Jesus who embodies truth.

The relationship between the documents discovered in the vicinity of Khirbet Qumran and the Fourth Gospel must be assessed in a rather different light than the alleged association of John and the Gnostic texts. In the first place, the historical footing upon which the discussion is carried out is considerably more substantial in the case of John's relationship to Qumran. The Qumran texts can be dated with relative precision on the basis of palaeography, certain historical allusions in the texts themselves and their relationship to the community centre at Khirbet Qumran. Archaeological work on the ruins of the monastery, comparisons of pottery found in the caves with that of the community centre, numismatic evidence, and details drawn from classical writers such as Josephus, Philo, and Pliny the Elder, permit us to identify the documents as products of a separatist Jewish sect known commonly as Essenes.

The Qumran literature is antecedent to the Fourth Gospel and as it is derived from Judaism of the same period it is probable that there will be some relationship between the Qumran sectarians' views and the thought pattern of the Fourth Gospel. On the basis of chronological proximity, one could expect that there ought to be a degree of correspondence in some areas.

Kümmel (1975:221), quite definitely says.

It must be adjudged that both John and Qumran presuppose a common background, but the thought world of Qumran cannot be the native soil of the Johannine thought forms.<sup>524</sup>

Morris (1969:352-353) considers that there is a tremendous gap between the Johannine Christian community and Qumran community but that the language and thought within this “common background” are striking.<sup>525</sup> Even where John and the Johannine Christian community are using similar language and dealing with similar concepts, there are vast differences. Again it is too much to assume, that John had the Qumran writings before him, and that, as he borrowed their language and concepts, he systematically distorted their sense.<sup>526</sup>

The conclusion is that the Qumran community and the Johannine Christian community have common roots in the teaching of the Hebrew Bible. Although the Qumran community anteceded the Johannine Christian community they both existed within the same general time frame and would be exposed to the religious thinking of their day. It is therefore not surprising that their literature shows similarities. The differences however are profound.

## **5. The Johannine Christian Community and the “Jews”**

One of the strange facts about this Gospel is that, whereas the term Ἰουδαῖς appears several times in the Synoptic Gospels (six in Mark, five in Matthew, and five in Luke), in John’s Gospel it is used seventy times. The difference is dramatic especially since it reflects John’s independent usage rather than

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<sup>524</sup> Also, Kümmel (1980:264) says that “it is true that ethical dualism...in the Qumran writings present actual parallels to the Johannine theology; yet in Qumran these conceptions occur in the context of a radical cultic legalism and of the demand for adherence to the group of unity, which detaches itself from the rest of Judaism, while in Qumran also the message of the sending of the Son from above, especially characteristic of John, has no analogy of any sort.”

<sup>525</sup> We find that the Qumran and Johannine literature are alike also in their emphasis on unity in the community. In both cases they were not “of the world” and were dedicated to God. Because of the sharp disjunction between them and the world their sense of unity was intensified (cf. 1QS 5:2, 7 and Jn. 11:52; 17:11, 21, 23). Also, in both there was a strong emphasis on brotherly love, a strong sense of community (Turner & Mantey, 1964:10).

<sup>526</sup> See Beasley-Murray (1987:1xi).

derivatives from Synoptic traditions.<sup>527</sup> It seems that the term Ἰουδαῖς as used in the Fourth Gospel carries a variety of meanings and nuances, which may be determined from the context.<sup>528</sup> The use of the term gives an indication of the then relationship between the Johannine Christian community and the Jews.

Because the Jewish synagogue was the regular Jewish assembly for prayer and worship. We briefly deal with the historical relationship between the Johannine Christian community the Jews and the Jewish synagogue.

The term “Jews” as used in the Fourth Gospel refers primarily to the Jewish religious leaders. These men were responsible for the interpretation and implementation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Because of their narrow views of the intention of the Law and their reliance on the traditions based on rabbinical teaching rather than on the spirit and intention of the actual Hebrew Scriptures, there was an increasing conflict between them and Jesus, a conflict that continued and escalated after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension. This conflict was fuelled by their jealousy of Jesus’ acceptance by the populace. We find that a conflict between the Johannine Christian community and the Jewish synagogue is reflected in the Fourth Gospel. The unusual word ἀποσυναγωγούς, which means to be expelled from the synagogue, appears three times in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>529</sup> Based on this many scholars argue that the Gospel’s negative comments about Jews are not a reflection of anti-Judaism but rather an expression of a prolonged and violent controversy between the Johannine Christian community and the Jews in the wake of the community’s traumatic

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<sup>527</sup> Correspondingly, the Synoptic Gospels present a picture of Judaism that includes scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, even Zealots, and Jesus and His disciples. The Gospel of John tends to reduce these groups to Jesus and His disciples, on the one hand, and the Jews, who are also called Pharisees, on the other. Also, See Cohen (1987:224). The fact that Sadducees, the high priestly party, Zealots, Herodians, and Essens, along with scribes, are not found in the Gospel of John, tells us something about the time and circumstances of its origin. After the disastrous Roman war (66-70) and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, most of the Jewish parties or groups that are not mentioned in the Fourth Gospel would have disappeared from the scene.

<sup>528</sup> The Johannine usage supports an understanding of Ἰουδαῖος that includes firstly, Jewish leaders or Jewish authorities (Jn. 9:22; 19:38; 20:19), secondly, ethnic-geographic, political, and a religious elements (Jn. 1:47; 2:6, 13; 4:9; 5:1; 6:4, 59; 7:2; 11:55; 18:20; 19:40, 42 etc.).

<sup>529</sup> Jn. 9:22; 12:42; 16:2.

expulsion from the synagogue.<sup>530</sup> Also, we may safely assume that Jesus' warning in the farewell discourse (Jn.16:1-3) prepared the Johannine Christian community for conflict and persecution from the Jewish synagogues.<sup>531</sup>

It appears that originally the Johannine Christians were part of the Jewish synagogue but that at some point they were excluded from the synagogue and formed a separate community. The synagogue's conflict with, and expulsion of members of the Johannine Christian community is the background to the many references of the "Jews'" hostility to Jesus and His disciples in the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John seems to look back on Jesus from the perspective of a time after the split between Jews and Christianity had become irreversible (cf. Acts 18:6). However, within the Gospel of John, it is clear, as we shall see, that not all Jews opposed Jesus. Jn. 11:1-44 and 12:11, imply an incompatibility between believing Jesus to be the Christ and maintaining membership in the Jewish community (synagogue), yet they do not attribute this separation to an official Jewish policy of expulsion.<sup>532</sup>

Culpepper (1998:44-45) thinks that, in various contexts in John's Gospel, those referred to as οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι seem to be the religious authorities in Jerusalem, or the Judeans, but do not refer to all Jews.<sup>533</sup> Accordingly, Kysar (1993:68) considers that the Jews referred to are stylised types of those who reject Christ, and that John's usage illuminates this category. According to this view the Fourth Evangelist has used the term simply as a type, and is not referring to

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<sup>530</sup> See Kysar (1983:316).

<sup>531</sup> Martyn (2003:56-66) considers that the twelfth Benediction of the standard Eighteen Benedictions of the synagogue service was composed, or amended, to facilitate the dismissal of such troublesome sectarians, particularly Christians, from the synagogue. The Twelfth Benediction, or the *Birkath ha-Minim* as it is called, was composed at Jamnia late in the first century or early in the second century. Culpepper (1998:44) rather than seeing in Jn. 9:22 a reference to the *Birkath ha-Minim*, considers that it may be better to view the sequence in the opposite direction and understand the persecution echoed in John 9 as the kind of practice that was formalized by the *Birkath ha-Minim*

<sup>532</sup> See Reinhartz (1998:121).

<sup>533</sup> Also, Fortna (1974:92) indicates that "while John's use of Judea and the Jews is not wholly negative, it is rarely unambiguously positive."

specific persons. There is no interest in them as a people, the interest in them is restricted to the role they play as types of unbelief.<sup>534</sup>

Therefore, some scholars consider that the Fourth Evangelist is writing during a ferocious dispute between Christian believers and the synagogue. The immediate problems for the Johannine Christian community are the charges levelled against them by their former brothers and sisters in the synagogue. For this reason, the Fourth Evangelist selects the Gospel's antagonists from the original readers' environment and portrays the Jews as a type of unbelief. Those who fail to see that in Christ there is a fulfilment of the heritage of the Hebrew Bible, who cling to their pride in the Hebrew Scriptures, who cannot accept that the self-understanding presented in the revelation of God in Christ – these are the persons represented in the term “the Jews.”

However this view neglects the position of John as an eye-writers of the events described. The Jews are better seen as those Jewish leaders, and their supporters who, in spite of the clear evidence presented to them, decided to reject Jesus as the Messiah and set about persecuting those who accepted His claims. In this sense they become types of the many who also refuse to believe and are antagonistic to faith in Him.

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<sup>534</sup> See Kysar (1993:68-69).

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