

# Unity in John 17 and in 1QS I-IX: A comparative study<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

### Unity in John 17 and in 1QS I-IX: A comparative study

*The unity theme as it is found in John 17 and in 1QS I-IX provides sufficient comparative material to give an indication of the extent to which John's theology flourished within the contemporary Jewish context. It is argued that the events surrounding Christ constituted for John the central point of orientation according to which the typical Jewish ideas could be interpreted and reformulated. It is finally concluded that, according to this radical and exclusive Christian dynamic approach, certain elements within Judaism, also found among members of the Qumran community, were re-interpreted, while others were either continued or discontinued.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

According to the Gospel of John, the events surrounding Christ form the central interpretative orientation point for the constitution and existence of unity between God and the believers. Support for this statement is especially found in John 17, in which the theme of unity surely figures most prominently (ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ οὐ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα ὧσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἓν - 17:23a). John attempts to give us an idea of what unity itself is, in order for us to proceed from here (not the other way round) to a justifiable expression of this Johannine unity. It is exactly this "idea" (= theology) regarding unity which inspired John when he wrote John 17, in which the relationship with contemporary Jewish thought is discussed. Through a comparative study involving these Jewish reflections, an attempt will therefore be made to establish the nature of the idea of unity in the Gospel according to John within a certain broad framework. Although different possibilities exist for such a comparison, it was decided to concentrate especially on the Community Role in the Qumran literature, as especially in this manuscript 1QH, with the possible interpretation of the meaning "unity/separate entity/community", plays a key role. Maier<sup>2</sup> has, in fact, noted that 1QH "[ist] eines der häufigsten Worte in 1QS (68 Stellen)". Direct and first-hand literary access to this Jewish group who lived

according to a strong sense of unity in Jesus' time can especially be gained from the first nine columns of this manuscript (1QS I-IX); the comparison will, therefore, focus on this part.

In doing this comparative study it is by no means argued that John had direct access to the Qumran literature, nor that his arguments or views were based on these writings. The supposition is rather that John's theology flourished in the flower-bed of contemporary Jewish culture (as generally accepted in accordance with Brown's standard commentary) and that the Qumran literature thus may provide a certain measure of access to this Jewish background.

In the next part of the study attention will firstly be given to the socially organised environment within which both the Qumran community and the Johannine community functioned. Secondly, the ways in which each community from within its own social milieu became aware of God's will (revelation), came to interact with it and subsequently became reconciled, will be investigated. With a thorough knowledge of each community's social environment and experience of God's revelation in mind, attention will thirdly be focused on how the members of each community subsequently acted. Attention will finally be given to the missionary facet of each community.

## 2 UNITY WITHIN A SOCIAL FRAMEWORK

The *covenant* was fundamental to the existence of the Qumran community (לכלב... וכול, "and everybody... has to enter into a covenant before God" - 1QS I.16). By embracing this idea from the Old Testament (refer to Dt 29:12), they identified themselves as the "nucleus of the ideal Israel of the future"<sup>3</sup>. It is this idea of a covenant in particular which resulted in a strong sense of unity among the members of the community.

The question which now arises is whether and how the covenant functions according to John. At first glance it seems as if the covenant does not function in John 17 at all, as the word *διαθήκη* does not appear in it. What does however figure prominently, is that the divine *family picture* features prominently in the Gospel according to John. The great number of times the forms of address of *πάτερ* (vv 1,5,11,21,24 and 25) and *υἱός*<sup>4</sup> (v 1) occurs in John 17 alone clearly attest to this. That the believing children of God also form part of this "family of God" is also expressed in John 17 by the central position the idea of unity occupies in this chapter (refer especially to vv 11,21,22-23 and 26). Within this divine family the believers enjoy a special and intimate relationship with the Father and the

Son<sup>5</sup>. The family image thereby becomes the framework within which the whole idea of unity can function effectively.

An exchange of terms and images therefore occurred between the Qumran and Johannine communities (while the Qumran community saw God as God in the image of the covenant, the believers regarded God as the Father in the image of the family). Nevertheless, the images respectively form an effective social framework within which both communities could assume a specific identity and function as a specific unity. Unity therefore often was not a voluntary matter<sup>6</sup>, but a definite result of the respective social frameworks. With the Qumran community this unity could, however, only realise if the individual acknowledged the more lofty status of the group. The individual could therefore not really possess an identity on his own: only within the group did he have an identity and then only within the group known as the בני אור ("Sons of the light" - 1QS I.9), chosen by God (כגורלו - 1QS I.4) according to his plan (אשר כחר - 1QS I.10). The only other possible identity an individual could assume according to the Qumran community, was to ally himself with the בני חושך ("Children of the darkness" - 1QS I.10), forsaken by God (לרחוק - 1QS I.4) and not being part of his covenant (כיא לוא החשבו בבריתו - 1QS V.11a).

In the Gospel according to John the believer also only possesses identity as child of God (*ἄσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ* - Jn 1:12). In other words, unity can in this case only realise if the individual belongs to the group of "believers/children of God". John 17 confirms this by creating a very close connection between the themes of "unity" and "believers": in vv 20-23 in which the theme of "unity" is most concentrated on, the theme of "believers" also features pertinently.

With both communities the group's only point of orientation thus also was with reference to God as the God of the covenant or to God as the Father of his children<sup>7</sup>. Should any member renounce this orientation (and therefore also the group connected to this point of orientation), that member would by implication lose his identity. As the identity of the individual is repeatedly defined in terms of the above environments, it of course becomes necessary to maintain the environments concerned. The possibility otherwise exists of the individual losing his identity with the collapse of a given environment.

A whole set of penitential and disciplinary rules (contained in 1QS VI.24-VII.25 and VIII.16b-IX.2 respectively) ensured that the relationship between God and the community determined by the covenant was main-

tained. A new member already swore an oath of allegiance to the law of Moses upon entering into the covenant:...בשבעת אסר לשוב אל תורת משה... (1QS V.7c-10). The commitment determined by the covenant thus was not a single and immutable event, but had to be repeatedly renewed (maintained)<sup>8</sup> - if it was broken, the relationship created by the covenant was ended by excommunication, as indicated by words like ישלחהו, “send away” and ולוא ישוב עוד, “never to return” in 1QS VIII.22b-23a.

In contrast to this the unity within the family relationship of the Gospel according to John was maintained by the grace and love of the Son<sup>9</sup>, while the unbreakable nature of the unity between God and the faithful is at the same time strongly emphasised<sup>10</sup>. This does not in any way imply that the Johannine community did not have rules to observe. Within the family relationship it was expected of the faithful to adhere to the rules of the family<sup>11</sup>. There is, however, another motivation behind the adherence to these rules. The children of God observe these family rules out of love and obedience based on and determined by the relationship of unity they share with the Father and the Son. They thus do not act in a certain way while they have to observe the rules, but because they want to; because they derive satisfaction from lovingly observing the will of the Father.

As the individual in neither the covenant nor the divine family enjoyed an intimate relationship to God alone, but also especially the group of the society concerned, there also had to be certain rules in this respect to ensure the maintenance of good (holy) relationships with one another. In the Qumran community this was achieved by considering certain times and spaces to be holy. Their calendar, for instance, determined some festivals as holy events, while the community hall was considered to be a holy environment. The greatest emphasis was, however, placed on the mutual holy relationships. The community was for this reason arranged in such a way as to cause everybody to act in a community oriented manner. This is, for example, clear from the communal use of property, as well as the communal meals and engagement in study. This is probably best expressed by 1QS V.3b-4a: וענוה צדקה ומשפט ואהבת חסד והצנע לכת בכל דרכיהם, “Together they will exercise truth, humility, righteousness and justice, true love and circumspection in all their ways”. The penitential measures in this regard also saw to it that the communal relationships were not harmed.

In John we have to deal with something completely different, which could be defined as a re-socialising process<sup>12</sup>: time and spaces are not

important any more, but divine relationships<sup>13</sup> are. Just like in a family, every believer is expected to do the utmost in order to support and expand the relationships within the divine family. Within the divine family there is no mention of any penitential measures to ensure that this does indeed happen and these are, as a matter of fact, also unnecessary. Love causes the members of the family spontaneously to incline towards a sensible handling of the relationships - and not rules!

### 3 UNITY WITHIN A FRAMEWORK OF REVELATION

As already indicated, the relationship determined by the covenant with God was maintained by correct actions in terms of the law in the Qumran community. This caused the law to assume a mediatory function between God's will and mankind. For exactly this reason an attempt was made to embody the law in concrete community rules by means of constant study<sup>14</sup>. This study in time became a ritualised part of the community's life, as can be seen from IQS VI.6-7a (דורש בתורה יומם ולילה תמיד על יפות איש לרעהו) להבדך בראשים הלחמ והתירוש ואל ימש במקום אשר יהיו שם העשרה איש, "And from the place where the ten are, nobody may be absent where the law is scrutinised by day and night, in turns, the one after the other"<sup>15</sup>). Through this study, the law became the instrument to gain access to God's knowledge.

In the Gospel according to John, however, Christ makes the revelation possible. In John 17:6 and 26 it is said that Jesus does this by disclosing God's "Name". From the close connection between τὸ ὄνομα and τὰ ῥήματα in 17:6 and 8, it can be deduced that Jesus actually in this way provides all the information the people need to know about God. God's "Identität"<sup>16</sup> is in this way disclosed by Jesus. Jesus furthermore reveals God by acting in the same manner as He, by reason of his unity with the Father (καθὼς σύ, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ κἀγὼ ἐν σοι - 17:21b and καθὼς ἡμεῖς ἔν - 17:22b). In John 17 this functional unity is experienced in three ways: Both are capable of giving eternal life to those who belong to them (vv 2-3); the Father and the Son glorify one another by means of what they do (vv 4-5) and finally, both are capable of protecting their property (vv 11-12). Through his personal attachment to the Father, Jesus not only makes the revelation possible, but he can also convey the content thereof.

Mankind subsequently comes to interact with this revelation. Because this interaction does not occur by means of obedience to the law like in the Qumran community, but figures within a relationship with the Son of God, it is (re)birth (and not study) which unlocks the door to

knowledge. In this regard, John 3:6-8 is of special importance: “τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σὰρξ ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμά ἐστιν. μὴ θαυμάσης ὅτι εἶπόν σοι, Δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν. τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ, καὶ τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ἀκούεις, ἀλλ’ οὐκ οἶδας πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει· οὕτως ἐστὶν πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος”. Through birth one becomes part of God’s family and in this way also partakes in the unity existing within the family<sup>17</sup>. Human exertion like that displayed by the Qumran community thus is of no concern here, but only God’s merciful love shown to us by him through Christ. The aspect of mercy is very strongly emphasised in John 1:14-18 - especially in v 16: “ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν, καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος”. This chance to obtain grace is met by two different reactions: some react positively and start believing (...καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅτι σὺ με ἀπέστειλας - 17:8b), while other reject the revelation and therefore hate the believers (...καὶ ὁ κόσμος ἐμίσησεν αὐτοῦ - 17:14b)<sup>18</sup>.

#### 4 UNITY WITHIN A FUNCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Through interaction with the revelation of God’s will, the experience of unity of either the Qumran community or the Johannine community is entered. Upon entering the different communities, however, the members had to proceed with propagating the revelation by acting as a functional unit.

As far as the Qumran community is concerned, a certain deterministic element “steering” their functional unity existed, namely that members of the community functioned from a certain allotted position within the so-called “council-meeting of God” (לְבַעֲצַת אֱלֹהִים - 1QS I.8)<sup>19</sup>. It was thus actually only necessary to accede to this pre-determined framework, as is especially clear from the use of terminology like כַּגִּוּרְלוֹ, “each according to his fate”, in 1QS I.10a. The strict adherence to the calendar with all its important times, days and festivals create the same impression (see inter alia 1QS I.13b-15a, but especially also CD III.12b-16a).

The Johannine community also had such a framework from within which a functional relationship of unity could develop. From John 17:11 it can be deduced that this framework consisted of the merciful protection by God, especially if note is taken of the ἵνα-phrase in v 11 (ἵνα ὧσιν ἐν καθῶς ἡμεῖς) which in this case introduces a subsequent sentence which confirms that unity is preceded by the “protection in God’s name” (τήρησον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου). Rengstorf<sup>20</sup> is correct in saying that only the God revealed by Christ can protect the faithful and that “unity” is impossible without this “protection”<sup>21</sup>.

Within these frameworks certain motivations existed in both the Qumran and Johannine communities to inspire the functional unity. In the Qumran community this was mainly achieved by authority and fear. With authority is meant that the members of the community were always held accountable for their actions by those in a position of authority. New members also had to immediately subject themselves to the body of authority: וקרבהו בעצה על פי הרבים (1QS VIII.18b-19a). According to 1QS I.17b-18a (נהיים בממשלת בליעל), “trials, which have been entered upon under the rule of Belial”) it was believed that as the present era (under Belial’s rule) neared its end, members of the community had to endure several trials<sup>22</sup>. It appears as if these investigations were more like judicial proceedings during which those in authority tried the members’ actions in view of the requirements set to enter the imminently approaching new era<sup>23</sup>.

The other motivation behind the Qumran community’s functional unity, namely fear, can be deduced from the heavy punishments meted out for wrongful actions. These punishments were contained in two lists: the so-called penitential code in 1QS VI.24-VII.25 and the disciplinary rules in 1QS VIII.16B-IX.2<sup>24</sup>. The extraordinary strictness of these rules is evident from the punishment of certain deeds, which although also considered to be wrong by us, among us would be considered as petty transgressions. To interrupt someone’s speech, for example, was punished with ten days: ימים עשרת ולמדבר בתוך דברי רעהו עשרת (1QS VII.9b-10a). It therefore appears as if those harming the unity of the community through wrongful actions were mercilessly dealt with.

Keeping the family image in mind, it can rightfully be said that fatherly authority and discipline were the underlying motivations behind the Johannine community’s experience of unity. In ancient times the father of the family occupied a position of special authority and therefore also enforced discipline<sup>25</sup>. Children therefore also acted in such a way as to honour the father’s position of authority and avoid disciplinary action<sup>26</sup>. These motivations behind the Johannine community’s functional unity differs from the position of the Qumran community because of the love which features so strongly with the theme of unity in the former instance. Special notice can in this regard be taken of the love theme which first appears in John 17 as of from v 23, exactly where the theme of unity also reaches a climax: love based on and determined by the relationship of unity they shared with the Father and the Son thus also motivated the believer’s functional unity. For this very reason the authority and discipline referred to above were called fatherly authority and fatherly discipline<sup>27</sup>. It is

therefore possible to state that the two matters were actually surrounded by love, without obedience being diluted.

Where such motivations serve to inspire people's actions, certain levels of distinction are often referred to. This was especially the case in the Qumran community. Members had to know their position and take care to maintain it through correct behaviour, as they had to answer to the "Sons of Zadok, the priests" (בני צדוק וכוהנים - 1QS V.2b). According to 1QS IX.7 these priests held the highest authority<sup>28</sup> in the community: "Only the sons of Aaron rule in cases of justice and property and their verdict is final in any case relating to the community" (יצא והגורל לכול) (רק בני אהרון ימשלו במשפט ובהון ועל פיהם הם). This furthermore presented them with the opportunity to institute a "spiritual order" in the community according to the members of the community's views and actions with regard to the law: "and one shall investigate one's spirit and his deeds year after year, in order to promote everyone according to his insight and the perfection of his works or to demote him according to his wickedness" (איש לפני רעהו לפי ששכלו ומעשיו להשמע הכול איש לרעהו הקטן לגדול) (1QS V.23)<sup>29</sup>. As a consequence of this the opportunity was created for the promotion of a certain type of "spiritual ladder" - certain members were annually promoted, while others were denoted in rank. In order to keep the standard of the spiritual order as high as possible, it was expected of members of the community to act in perfect harmony with everything revealed to them: "Then he should guard his steps in such a way that he can walk perfectly in all of God's ways" (תמים בכול דרכי אל) (1QS III.9b-10a; also refer to 1QS IV.22a and VIII.20).

Within the family image of John, "spiritual ranks" or degrees of unity are not possible. John rather emphasises the group character within the community of believers. This is especially evident from that part of v 23 (ἵνα ὧσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἔν) in which *τετελειωμένοι* expressed in the perfect passive formulation, rather corresponds to the Hebrew meaning of *טלוי*<sup>30</sup> which refers to the completeness of the whole. This choice in favour of the Hebrew meaning is further supported by the fact that the themes of "unity" and "believers" are closely linked: in vv 20-23, in which the theme of unity is most concentrated on, the theme of "believers" also features pertinently. It is furthermore important to note that the themes of "believers" (in the plural) and "completeness" are also found together in v 23 under discussion. Of even more importance: throughout the whole of John 17 the disciples (believers) as a group are involved - at no stage a distinction is made in favour of some of the believers as individuals. From



this it has to be deduced that *τελειόω* exhibits a group character and should not be understood individually. It is therefore not a case of a few individuals being united with Jesus and the Father. Within the family of God the one child (believer) cannot be further along the road to “perfection” than another, as his state of unity cannot be determined relative to the other, but is in fact equal to the state of the others’ unity in the group. In other words, all the faithful children of God are at a given moment of time at a certain “level” of “perfect” unity, as the relationship as children, and not deeds, determine their status.

The existence of levels of unity also touches the subject of “reward”. This is especially relevant in the case of the members of the Qumran community: their actions continually had to attest to their being worthy of being members of the community. The different phases novices had to pass through before being fully accepted by the community especially express this. Four such phases (consisting of a preliminary investigation and three periods of probation of varying duration) can be identified from IQS VI.13b-23. If, upon completion of this probation process, it was found that the novice was suitable to fit in with the  $\eta\eta'$  without harming the image of unity, he was rewarded by being made part of the community in all respects. As has been indicated earlier, there of course existed further trials and rewards determining one’s spiritual order.

Reward in the Gospel according to John is a different matter altogether: in this case the issue revolves more around “glorification”. When Jesus, for example, prays that the Father should glorify him (*δόξασον σου τὸν υἱόν* - 17:1), he actually asks for his true identity, namely his importance as the Messenger of God, to be disclosed<sup>31</sup>. Applied to the believers, this would have meant that in propagating the revelation they should have lived in such a way as to glorify Jesus. In other words, the believers had to disclose Jesus’ true identity as Messenger of God through their functional unity. In the Gospel according to John, glorification is thus reflected away from man to God. Unlike in the case of the Qumran community, man’s reward is therefore actually to be found in the affirmation of Christ’s important position as Son of God who came to secure the salvation of mankind.

Organic unification was a logical supplement to the functional unity of both communities discussed thus far. The Qumran community saw a strictly regulated and visible organic unity as supplementing to organic unity, as is especially evident from their community orientated behaviour discussed with regard to the social framework. John, on the other hand, does not issue a direct order relating to visible organisational authority. At

this stage it is important to note that the Gospel according to John has little interest in the church as an institution<sup>32</sup>. In John the church much more readily manifests itself on a functional relationship basis as is evident from the family image. Here we find a re-socialising process in John: the church is now no longer connected to a locality in time and space, but believers have become part of the family of God by being born again. Holy spaces and times in other words are no longer important, but rather holy relationships. It is very clear that statements regarding unity among believers are not concerned with a numerical utterance, but rather with a qualitative utterance<sup>33</sup>! In any case, that different churches (numerically) unite, does not pronounce on their unity as such at all - it only says something regarding the manner of expression of the one or other process of unification<sup>34</sup>. That an organisational unification of churches may or even has to proceed from the functional unity is, however, still to be expected, but that the way John 17 deals with the idea of unity should not be seen as a direct or specific instruction to effect this is also true. John 17 already presupposes a unity, as all believers are seen as part of the family of God - the question regarding unification is therefore not asked by John. Everyone is, after all, already united as children of God. According to John the question to ask should actually be: "What more then should still be united"?

## 5 UNITY WITHIN A MISSIONARY FRAMEWORK

The Spirit of truth and the Holy Spirit had a decisive influence on the functional unity of the Qumran and Johannine communities respectively. As had already been evident from the social framework, the people of the Qumran community had been divided into two classes/groups (ובמפלגיהן - 1QS IV.15), namely the בני הושע (1QS I.10) and the בני אור (1QS I.9). This division depended especially on the spiritual leadership one subjected oneself to. While the "Spirit of truth" (רוח האמת - 1QS III.18b-19a)<sup>35</sup> had a positive influence on people, the "Spirit of injustice" (לרוח עולה - 1QS IV.9)<sup>36</sup> influenced people negatively. One could, however, also be influenced by both spirits<sup>37</sup>, but in such a case there still was one whose leadership was considered to be dominant and to whose group one then belonged<sup>38</sup>. From this it follows that one could be influenced by these spirits to different degrees, the ideal being that the members of the community would reach a point from which they would only be influenced by רוח האמת<sup>39</sup>. It is important to note that the work of the רוח האמת was only seen in relation to the advancement of the community members' ethical standards. It would therefore be possible to say that the community's

functional unity was based on pneumatological grounds, but that the aim was only to serve the advancement of the community's ethical ideals.

The believers in the Gospel according to John were also assisted by a spirit, namely the Paraclete (Holy Ghost). The leadership of the Holy Spirit is indirectly found again in the believers' devotion (sanctification) to the truth in John 17 ("ἀγίασον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ" - v17)<sup>40</sup>. Although the Holy Ghost did nothing new, he duplicated and continued the work of Christ (see especially John 16:14-15) through the functional unity of the believers. It is important to note at this stage that the believers' positive qualities were not only projected towards the divine family, but that these were especially also projected towards the rest of the world.

According to the leadership received from the respective spirits, each community defined its boundaries in a different way. Two "basic" qualities determined the image of unity in the Qumran community, namely love (compare the occurrence of אהב in inter alia 1QS I.3,9; II.24 and V.4) and truth (compare the occurrence of אמת in 1QS I.5,9; II.24,26; V.3; VI.15 and VIII.2). It was imperative that the community members should possess love, as love was seen as a "core" quality of God. Again it should be noted that their love was only aimed at the בני אור. Truth was, in its turn, considered equal to obedience to the law<sup>41</sup> and meant that one had to act in a righteous manner towards the co-members of the community, as well as towards the self<sup>42</sup>. These two qualities gave rise to a whole series of other qualities<sup>43</sup>. Only a few of these are mentioned here, like modesty and the correct intentions towards one another (ומחשבת צדק איש לרעהו... וענות טוב - 1QS II. 24-25a), as well as justice, righteousness and discretion (צדקה ומשפט... והצנע לכת - 1QS V.4a). These qualities were all only intended to advance the community's image of unity. Towards those outside this unity, the בני חושך, "negative" qualities<sup>44</sup> like hate were projected: "but to hate all sons of the darkness" (ולשנוא כול בני חושך) - 1QS I.10b). This again resulted in imprecations of curses, vengeance, persecution and destruction against anyone not being part of the community: "But the Levites should curse all people belonging to the group of Belial and say: 'Cursed are you because of the guilt of all your wicked works! May God terrify you at the hand of all seekers of vengeance and send destruction after you'" (בִּיד כּוֹל נוֹקְמֵי נֶקֶם וַיִּפְקֹד אַחֲרֵיכֶם כֻּלָּה) גּוֹרֵל בְּלִיעַל וְעֵנוּ וְאָמְרוּ אֲרוּר אַתָּה בְּכוֹל מַעֲשֵׂי רָשָׁע אֲשֶׁמְתַכָּה אֶתְנַכָּה אֶל זְעוּה גּוֹרֵל בְּלִיעַל וְעֵנוּ וְאָמְרוּ אֲרוּר אַתָּה בְּכוֹל מַעֲשֵׂי רָשָׁע אֲשֶׁמְתַכָּה אֶתְנַכָּה אֶל זְעוּה - 1QS II.4b-6a; see also the rest of this part, i.e. 1QS II.6b-10). The reason for this negative conduct towards the outside world can again be found in the community's ethically dualistic view of there being only two groups of people: those being part of their

community, namely the “chosen of God” (“insiders”) and those standing outside the community, namely those “cast out by God” (“outsiders”)<sup>45</sup>. Contact with the latter group had to be avoided, as this could harm the community’s unity. This is sharply spelled out in especially IQS V.1-2a: **וזה הסרך לאנשי חיתד... להבדל מעדת אנשי העול**, “and this is the rule for the men of the community/unity... that they dissociate themselves from the gathering of the men of evil”. Members of the community, in other words, were expected to react hostile towards the outside world in order to establish a boundary between them and those not part of the covenant. Although they therefore regarded their unity as a lofty unity, it still was not an unassailable unity. For exactly this reason the functional unity of the community had to serve as equipment to define their boundaries even more clearly!

In the Gospel according to John, there are also only two groups of people: those showing qualitative personal characteristics in space and time corresponding with those of the Father’s group, against others having negative qualities corresponding to those of the group of the evil. Persons therefore categorise themselves as an unit either on the side of the Father or on the side of evil (Satan). Van der Watt<sup>46</sup> describes this Johannine contrasting way of thought as a personal dualism. In other words, as a result of being personally bound, those on the side of the Father cannot show the negative qualities of the evil. This means that believers can in both their inner life and towards the outside world only act in a positive way! In this sense the community’s functional unity in fact became the equipment to carry the revelation to the outside world. In stead of avoiding contact, contact was in fact sought with those outside of the Johannine community!

It is comprehensible that each community’s respective boundaries would have a definite influence on their universal tendencies. As could have been expected, the Qumran community therefore showed no universal tendencies: the New Israel could only consist of the Jewish race and all newcomers wanting to join the community had therefore also to be Jews. Against this, a universal dimension can in fact be found in the Gospel according to John. The functional unity in John is therefore a unity to which every believer could belong irrespective of race, sex or social class.

## 6 CONCLUSION

From this comparative study between the themes of unity in John 17 and 1OS I-IX it gradually became clear that we here have to deal with the

results of a significant hermeneutic process. In striving to understand the text within its original communicative dynamics, this hermeneutic process made an indispensable contribution. This contribution can be discerned most clearly in the way John handled the events surrounding Christ with regard to the theme of unity in relation to the contemporary Jewish thought, as the latter was *inter alia* found in the Qumran community.

It therefore became clear that certain typically Jewish ideas were reinterpreted by John (as certain elements in Judaism were handled analogously by John in view of the radical events surrounding Christ), others were discontinued (because they were irreconcilable within the space of the primary Christological point of departure) and still others were continued (as a result of the unique Christ events which required that they be replaced by specifically Christian elements). It would therefore be correct to say that John did in fact move from within the Jewish community (as it was described in *inter alia* IQS I-IX), but that he was “driven” by another set of dynamics, namely the radical and uniquely Christian, which supplied the actual orientation point for the complete Gospel (refer to 1:1). Although some researchers sorely want to identify this set of “dynamics” with Hellenism, it has been clearly indicated in the foregoing study that this should not be overemphasised in this case. The events surrounding Christ form the central interpretative orientation point in the constitution and existence of unity in the Gospel according to John.

The foregoing study should focus the attention of future researchers in this field on the fact that value of the Qumran literature should, in view of the dynamics of the uniquely Christian, neither be underemphasised nor overemphasised! With this moderate statement in mind, the Johannine researcher can without any qualms read and devote himself to the following impressive words of Charlesworth<sup>47</sup>:

“Qumran represents more than a collection of precious ancient scrolls. It reveals a community, with realia unearthed, rules translated, dreams perceived and lives lived out in the common struggle for meaning in a hostile world. Entering into the Qumran community, sauntering among the ruins, reflecting in the caves, and pensively attending to the Qumran world of thought, changes our perceptions, and then our conclusions and methods. The windows of the classroom need to be thrown open to the fresh breezes”.

## NOTES:

- 1 This article is based on research done in preparation for a BD thesis, *Eenheid in Joh 17 en in IQS I-IX - 'n Vergelykende studie*, University of Pretoria 1994.

- 2 J Maier, "Zum Begriff  $\eta\eta$ " in den Texten von Qumran", *ZAW* 72 (1960), 148.
- 3 M A Knibb, *The Qumran Community*, Cambridge 1987, 85.
- 4 In the rest of the gospel Jesus is also called  $\iota\upsilon\delta\varsigma$  most of the time.
- 5 In this regard cognizance should be taken of the fact that in the family situation of classical times the most intimate relationship was that between a father and his family. Refer to J G van der Watt, *Here, nou verstaan ek U beter: Na aanleiding van Beelde in die Johannesevangelie*, Pretoria 1990, 31-33 for a closer description of this family situation.
- 6 P J Hartin, "Remain in Me (John 15:5): The Foundation of the Ethical and its Consequences in the Farewell Discourses", *Neotest* 25/2 (1991), 352 says that unity is actually essential to life, as the believers in fact receive life from their unity with the Father and the Son (Jn 6:57).
- 7 This corresponds to the family situation in antiquity in which father and son stood in an unequal relationship to each other and the son had to obey his father (Van der Watt, 1990, 33). The father thus filled a central position and everything happening within the family was actually determined by him.
- 8 W H Brownlee, *The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline: Translation and Notes*, New Haven 1951, 53.
- 9 In this regard, John 5:39-40 is of specific importance: " $\epsilon\rho\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon \tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \gamma\rho\alpha\phi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma, \acute{\omicron}\tau\iota \upsilon\mu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma \delta\omicron\kappa\epsilon\acute{\iota}\tau\epsilon \acute{\epsilon}\nu \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\iota\varsigma \zeta\omega\eta\acute{\nu} \alpha\acute{\iota}\omega\nu\iota\omicron\nu \acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\upsilon\prime \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota} \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\acute{\iota} \epsilon\iota\sigma\iota\nu \alpha\acute{\iota} \mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\acute{\omicron}\sigma\alpha\iota \pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota} \acute{\epsilon}\mu\omicron\upsilon\prime \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota} \omicron\upsilon \theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\tau\epsilon \acute{\epsilon}\lambda\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu \pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \mu\epsilon \acute{\iota}\nu\alpha \zeta\omega\eta\acute{\nu} \acute{\epsilon}\chi\eta\tau\epsilon$ ". Jesus here indicates in no uncertain terms that the Scriptures bare witness to Him: not strict obedience to the law, but following Jesus brought salvation and the eternal life! Refer also to 1:17 where the  $\nu\acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\varsigma$  is associated with Moses, but the  $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$  and  $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\theta\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$  with Christ.
- 10 Nobody who has become part of the divine family can again be lost, as they then were under God's protection, as is indicated in John 17:12: " $\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota} \acute{\epsilon}\phi\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\alpha\zeta\alpha, \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota} \omicron\upsilon\delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\xi \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\nu \acute{\alpha}\pi\acute{\omega}\lambda\epsilon\tau\omicron$ ...". See also John 10:28-30.
- 11 In the patriarchally structured family of antiquity the will of the child was in a formative way subject to the will of the father, which determined the ethos of the family. The child thus acted like the father. John 8:41a states this clearly: " $\upsilon\mu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma \pi\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\acute{\iota}\tau\epsilon \tau\acute{\alpha} \acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\alpha \tau\omicron\upsilon \pi\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \upsilon\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$ ". G Schrenk, "s v 'Pater'", *TDNT* (1973), 950 indicates that the instruction to a child to love his parents was considered superfluous, as this was supposed to be something natural. With regard to the obedience of children, M T Gilbertson, *The Way it was in Bible Times*, Minnesota 1959, 44 stated the following: "The principal duties of the children in this home were obedience and reverence". Cicero, *De Officis*, 1.17 also emphasises this obligation parents laid on their children, as they did so much for their children.

- 12 To understand this, it is necessary to - besides John 17 - relate John 7:5, where Jesus' brothers rejected Him, and John 19:26-27 where the brother in faith and not the blood brother receives the instruction to take his mother to his house. What happens here is that the  $\tau\acute{\alpha} \dot{\iota}\delta\iota\alpha$ , as homely metaphor, rejected by Jesus, is now being used to create a "new"  $\tau\acute{\alpha} \dot{\iota}\delta\iota\alpha$ . The mother is resocialised in terms of the spiritual and the home in terms of a community of believers - it now becomes a spiritual home.
- 13 It could, of course, be asked whether the church did not actually constitute a holy space? According to John this would, however, not be the case. Much rather does the church in John arise from a functional relationship basis (not from a holy space).
- 14 Most of these community rules are recorded in the Zadokite Document (Damascus Document) or other writings, like 4Q159, 513 and 514 (L H Schiffman, "Qumran and Rabbinic Halakhah", in: S Talmon (ed), *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, Sheffield 1991, 142).
- 15 Refer also to S D Fraade, "Interpretative Authority in the Studying Community at Qumran", *JJS* 44/1 (1993), 56.
- 16 G Rouiller, "Leben in seinem Namen: Der Evangelist Johannes und seine Theologie des Namens", *IKaZ* 22/1 (1993), 55.
- 17 J G van der Watt, "Die Woord het Mens geword: 'n Strukturele uiteensetting van die Teologie van die Johannesevangelie", in: J H Roberts, W S Vorster, J Vorster & J G van der Watt (eds), *Teologie in Konteks*, Pretoria 1991, 112 here refers to the conspicuous fact that John chose to develop his soteriology mainly with the aid of terms like 'birth' and 'life'. Corresponding with this it is the motive of life in particular which describes the new existence the faithful receives from God (J G van der Watt, "Die 'Ewige Lewe' in die Johannesevangelie. 'n Denotatiewe ondersoek", *NGTT* 28/4 (1987), 225ev; also refer to H-D Wendland, *Ethik des Neuen Testaments*, Göttingen 1975, 110).
- 18 These events create two stories within the Gospel according to John: one sees the actions of Jesus through disbelieving human eyes, while in the other the spiritual dimension of the events surrounding Christ is seen through believing eyes (refer especially to Jesus' conversation with Nikodemus in 3:6 -  $\tau\acute{o} \gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\nu \acute{\epsilon}\kappa \tau\eta\varsigma \sigma\alpha\rho\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu, \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota} \tau\acute{o} \gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\nu \acute{\epsilon}\kappa \tau\omicron\upsilon \pi\nu\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma \pi\nu\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\mu\acute{\alpha} \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ ).
- 19 Knibb, 1987, 81 indicated that the entire community received membership to the council meeting upon entering into the covenant.
- 20 K H Rengstorf, *Die Einheit der Kirche nach dem Johannesevangelium*, Oberursel 1985, 22.
- 21 H Asmussen, "Das Una-Sancta-Erbe des Erlösers für die Erlösten nach Jo 17", in: L Lenhart (Red), *Universitas: Dienst an Wahrheit und Leben, Band I*, Mainz

- 1960, 90 emphasises that the believers should never allow the protection in God's name to fade into a "trübes Zwielicht", because "...jedesmal wenn das in der Geschichte der Christenheit geschieht, steht deren Einheit auf dem Spiel".
- 22 Knibb, 1987, 84.
- 23 Knibb, 1987, 88.
- 24 The disciplinary rules in this section resemble the penitential rules in 1QS VI.24-VII.25, although the former do differ in length as well as character: while the punitive rules contain an extensive list of punishments for specific transgressions, 1QS VIII.16b-IX.2 only deals with compliance with the law in general terms. Knibb, 1987, 137 explains these differences by indicating that the penitential rules probably belong to a later stage of the community's existence, when it had become considerably greater and more institutionalized. That development as far as the community's punitive rules did in fact occur, has recently been confirmed with the discovery of manuscripts in cave 4. By comparing 4Q266 and 4Q270 with parts of 1QS VI.24-VII.25, J M Baumgarten, "The Cave 4 Versions of the Qumran Penal Code", *JJS* 43/2 (1992), 268-276 indicated convincingly that such development may be surmised.
- 25 M Gielen, *Tradition und Theologie neutestamentlicher Haustafelethik*, Bonn 1990, 135 in fact regards the father as the authoritative head of the family, following upon investigation of a large number of classical texts. R De Vaux, *Ancient Israel. Its Life and Institutions*, London 1974, 20, B J Malina and J H Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World", in: J H Neyrey (ed), *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, Massachusetts 1991, 26 and several others came to the same conclusion. E Bund, "Pater Familias", in: *Der Kleine Pauly: Lexikon der Antike, Bd. 4*, München 1979, 547 also successfully indicated that the responsibility of the father towards his family during the imperial era was seen as an ethical and moral matter.
- 26 Gielen, 1990, 147 emphasises the responsibility towards obedience of the child in the Roman situation. Malina and Neyrey, 1991, 29 furthermore connects the responsibility of the child to obey the father with the honour and dishonour of the family: if the child does not honour the father through obedience, the entire social structure and the position of the family within it is affected.
- 27 Considerable evidence exists in the classical texts that physical measures of punishment had to be restricted to a minimum. *DionRA* 20.13.3 put it as follows: "The ancient Romans believed no ... father should be unduly harsh - or lenient - in the training of his children...". Josephus, *Ant* 8.24, also recorded that disobedient children initially had to be punished with words only, but it is also said that children not heeding such admonishment should be stoned!
- 28 Although texts like 1QS V.2b-3a create the impression that authority in the community was shared by all members of the community and the priests,



- Knibb, 1987, 139 indicates that these texts probably represent a later period in the community.
- 29 See also Fraade, 1993, 53-54 and Knibb, 1987, 88-89.
- 30 *Τελειόω* here has the semantic content of “being perfect and whole” (R Schippers, “s v ‘*τέλος*’”, *NIDNT* (1992), 60), with the emphasis on the whole, rather than on the “highest degree” as in Greek philosophy. In the New Testament where *τελειόω* is used to indicate a “gradual advance of the Christian to moral perfection” (G Delling, “s v ‘*τελειόω*’”, *TDNT* (1966), 77).
- 31 Here the underlying argument is that *δόξα* reveals an important relation to the Hebrew usage of *כבוד*, namely that it deals with the active recognition of the honourable position of someone on the basis of the importance of status which is reflected by his person or actions (see especially G Kittel, “s v ‘*δόξα*’” *TDNT* (1974), 248, as well as D A Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Leicester 1991, 128).
- 32 It were especially the Catholic Letters, Ignatius and other early church fathers who appealed to the church to unify in institutional terms (F D Tong, “Gathering in One: A study of the Oneness Motive in the Fourth Gospel with special reference to Johannine Soteriology”, ThD, University of St Louis, Missouri 1983, 64).
- 33 Rengstorf, 1985, 25.
- 34 W C MacVean, “The Essential Oneness of Christ’s Body: ‘A Still More Excellent Way’”, *CJT* 5/2 (1959), 98 also argues that the unification process raises the question of priorities, meaning that one has to take cognizance of the difference between union and unity. It is therefore possible (and Christians have to guard against this!) to emphasise union/unification, instead of unity, during the unification process. During such an attempt to unify, the actual aim, namely to express a true Christian unity as it is found in John 17, has to be thoroughly kept in mind as a priority!
- 35 In some cases *מלאך אמתו*, “the Angel of his truth”, is used (IQS III.24b). However, both terms refer to the same issue. See Knibb, 1987, 97.
- 36 In some cases *מלאך חושך*, “the Angel of darkness”, is used (IQS III.21b). However, both terms refer to the same issue. See Knibb, 1987, 97.
- 37 Quite a number of passages contain this idea (*inter alia* IQS III.14a, 20-25a and IV.15-18a), but the passage where it is probably emphasised best, is IQS IV.23b-25a: “Until then the spirits of truth and evil fight one another. In the hearts of mankind they walk in wisdom and foolishness. According to mankind’s heritage of truth and justice do they hate evil and according to their share in the group of the wicked, they act in a godless manner and despise the truth”.

- 38 Knibb, 1987, 102.
- 39 This ideal would be completely realized once God finally comes to make an end to all injustice: ובחכמת כבודו נתן קץ להיות עולה ובמועד פקודה ישמידנה לעד ואל ברוע שכלו ("But God in the mystery of his knowledge and in his glorious wisdom determined an end to the existence of the wicked and at the determined time of the trials he will destroy them for ever" - 1QS IV.18b-19a).
- 40 See Carson, 1991, 566. John 16:13 further confirms it: "ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση" (see also 15:26).
- 41 The truth being equaled to the law is clearly recognisable in passages within the same context, in which the law is simply replaced with truth. An example of this is found in a comparison between 1QS I.7b and I.11b: in both these lines voluntary availability (הנדרבים) is expected of the community members - in 1QS I.7b it is called availability to חוקי אל, "God's commandments", and in 1QS I.11b it is being available to לאמתו, "[God's] truth".
- 42 A R C Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran and its Meaning: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, London 1966, 119.
- 43 A complete list of all the qualities falls outside the scope of this study. Furthermore, it is not intended to present a detailed discussion of every one of these qualities. What is, however, important, is to gain an overview of which type of qualities determined their unity and to note that all these qualities were only directed inwards.
- 44 The "negative" appears in inverted commas here, since it is clear that the community did not experience it negatively if those outside the unity, for instance, were hated. It was much rather seen as a positive adherence to the law and a loyal attitude towards the community itself.
- 45 This classification of course is identical to the so-called בני חושך and בני אור.
- 46 Van der Watt, 1991, 106-109.
- 47 J H Charlesworth, "Qumran in Relation to the Apocrypha, Rabbinic Judaism, and Nascent Christianity: Impacts on University Teaching of Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period", in: S Talmon, (ed), *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, Sheffield 1991, 180.