


A Textual Problem and a Gospel's Purpose: A Reflection on Current Johannine Studies

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Abstract: The first ending of the Fourth Gospel (John 20:31) presents an apparently small textual problem that reveals a larger set of issues about the aim of the gospel. This article reviews contemporary scholarship on the gospel and argues that the ambiguity of the ending reflected in the textual tradition reflects the gospel's general technique to add layers of significance to inherited material.

Keywords: ambiguity, Fourth Gospel, recent scholarship, rereading, text criticism

The Gospel according to John continues to be a source of endless fascination to believers and scholars alike. The gospel displays highly symbolic narrative;¹ an allusive use of scriptural quotations, themes, and motifs;² narrative techniques that evoke courtroom drama and epic recognition scenes;³ “riddling” conceptual chains that touch on difficult issues of philosophy,⁴ theology,⁵ and ethics;⁶ characters, sometimes ambiguous,⁷ sometimes of intriguing complexity;⁸ and much more. All of this serves a goal clearly articulated at what appears to be an end of the narrative. At John 20:31, the narrator proclaims, “These things [referring to the “signs” mentioned in the previous verse] have been written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you might have life in his name.” This seems to be a fitting conclusion to the gospel, although the text continues for another chapter, famously ending on a note that the world is too small to contain the records of all that Jesus did (21:25). The postscript that is chapter 21, whether an original part of the gospel or a secondary addition,⁹ does not alter the claim made at the end of chapter 20.

The claim seems to be clear enough, but it contains a textual problem that has intrigued text critics while raising questions about what the claim really means. In the Nestlé-Aland critical edition, the verb in the purpose clause is printed πιστεύ[σ]ητε, with square brackets around the sigma that makes the verb an aorist subjunctive rather than a present subjunctive. The square brackets indicate that the editors are uncertain about what is likely to be the more original reading. Both readings are widely attested, though the aorist subjunctive is somewhat more in evidence¹⁰ than the present subjunctive, which, however, has important early witnesses.¹¹ The hesitancy of the editors is certainly understandable. A simple question that this article addresses is whether we can really decide which of these readings is likely to be the more original.

The aspectual difference between two verbal forms may be read as pointers to two different statements of purpose. The aorist would focus on the moment of coming to belief, implying that the gospel was written as a missionary tract, inviting people to accept the claim that Jesus is, as Thomas has just declared, “my Lord and my God”

(John 20:28). The present would point instead to the process by which those who have already accepted that claim continue to profess it, remain faithful to it, and perhaps grow within it. Either statement of purpose may be defended from the evidence of the gospel itself. Whichever reading was more original, it is understandable that scribes might have changed it to the alternative reading.

One explanation for the textual variants discussed in modern scholarship is to see the variants as the results of a compositional process.¹² An early version or edition of the gospel, or perhaps a source underlying it, was originally designed as the kind of missionary tract that the aorist form of the verb in 20:31 suggests. The “signs” that Jesus performed then were tokens of his Messianic status.¹³ All of them, culminating in the recognition by Thomas of the reality of the resurrected one, should elicit acceptance of Jesus. The basic tract was developed over time as a resource for shepherding the Good Shepherd’s flock. Hence, in a later edition, the tense was changed to recognize the ways in which the text worked on the hearts and minds of its readers, a continuing process for which the present tense was more appropriate.

That there are layers in the gospel, which probably grew and developed over time, is highly probable, although scholars continue to debate what belongs to what stage of development and how the layers relate.¹⁴ One of the things that fuels that debate is a feature of the gospel’s text in its final “canonical” form, a multiplicity or surplus of meaning built into narrative and dialogue. This feature of the gospel is difficult to attribute simply to a process of reworking a source text. Finding new depth of meaning is rather part of the rhetorical strategy built into the fabric of the gospel in ways that cannot be neatly classified stratigraphically.¹⁵ The challenge to think more deeply about many things is a constant feature of the text.

The challenge appears in the many cases of misunderstanding by characters with whom Jesus is in conversation: the failure of Nicodemus to understand what *ἀνωθεν* means;¹⁶ the bafflement of the Samaritan woman about what “living water” might be;¹⁷ the inability of the Galileans to “see” a sign;¹⁸ the focus of Martha on the future hope of resurrection;¹⁹ the admitted ignorance of Thomas about the “way.”²⁰ In many of these cases, the implied readers/hearers of the story understand something of what is lacking in the characters of the text and can laugh at or perhaps pity them, perfect cases of dramatic irony.²¹ Readers can also be amused and perhaps comforted by the deeper meanings of things that characters say unawares, such as the principle articulated by a cynical Caiaphas that it is beneficial for one to die rather than the whole nation be destroyed,²² or the proclamation by the crowds in Jerusalem that they have no king but Caesar.²³ Dramatic irony runs through the gospel and trumpets the deeper meaning of many a saying.

Yet not all irony is so simple. A debate about where Jesus is from introduces the principle that the origins of the Messiah will be unknown. The Jerusalemites who articulate that principle are clearly in ignorance of where Jesus is from in a physical sense, and they totally miss the deeper sense that he is “from the Father.” But are those characters in the text alone in their failure to perceive? The text alludes to two contradictory claims—that Jesus is from Galilee and that he is from Bethlehem—claims that are found in stories about the earthly origin of Jesus. The reader/hearer of the gospel is thereby placed in the same position as the characters in the story, reminded of what he or she may “know” about the origins of Jesus, but at the same time challenged about the value of that knowledge.²⁴

The reader/hearer of the gospel is also challenged in many other ways by seeming contradictions within the text: Jesus does not judge, but he does bring judgment;²⁵ origins determine outcomes, but then again, people can choose where they are “from”;²⁶ Jesus and the Father are one, but the Father is greater than Jesus.²⁷ Ancient educators recognized the stimulating value of riddling discourse, and so too does the fourth evangelist.²⁸

Provoking the readers to probe more deeply into what they think they know is central to the strategy of the gospel. The gospel in effect frames itself as the current embodiment of the Word that had become incarnate in Jesus. That Word repeatedly encountered human beings and brought them to a point of recognizing some truth, sometimes dramatically, sometimes slowly. The gospel aims to work in a similar way, fostering a transformative encounter with its reader/hearer that will produce a deeper commitment to and understanding of who Jesus is and what he means for them.

What the gospel in effect does is build upon what were no doubt traditional ex-pressions of “believing” in Jesus, confessions or acknowledgements of him as Messiah, as Son of God, as one sent from God. Like all the layering that takes place in the gos-pel, the foundational layer is not dismissed or critiqued. Instead, it is extended and enhanced in multiple ways.

Faith or belief is not a simple matter, either in the gospel's environment or in the gospel itself.²⁹ Belief has a cognitive dimension, achieving an understanding of what it means to affirm Jesus as God's chosen instrument, and an understanding of how it is that he “exegetes” God (John 1:18).³⁰ The engagement with philosophical issues noted earlier and the gospel's proclamations about knowing and proclaiming “Truth” confirm the concern.³¹

Belief has a relational dimension, expressed most fully in the theme of mutual indwelling, a central component of the Farewell Discourse. The one who believes in Jesus abides in him as he and the Father abide in the believer. They are “made one,” in a relationship named as the goal of Jesus mission in his final prayer (John 17:21).³² That relationship finds symbolic expression in familial imagery³³ and in the image of mutual embrace that marks both the prologue and the depiction of the disciples at the Last Supper. In the former, Jesus is in the bosom of the Father from eternity, and in the latter, the beloved disciple, who, among other things,³⁴ symbolizes the ideal disciple, reclines in the bosom of Jesus. That relationship is made possible for disciples after the departure of Jesus by the presence of the Spirit, exhaled out on the cross and infused into the disciples on Easter.

Finally, the belief that encompasses knowledge and relationship expresses itself in action. The point is expressed at a pivotal moment during the Last Supper, when Jesus, having washed the disciples' feet, an act of personal intimacy, articulates the first of two beatitudes in the gospel: “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (John 13:17).³⁵ The beatitude, with its implicit admonition to follow the example, the *ὑπόδειγμα* of Jesus (John 13:15),³⁶ will soon be reinforced by the “new commandment” to love (John 13:34), which in turn will be reinforced by a well-known proverb about the love one has for friends (John 15:13).³⁷ The repeated insistence on the implications for life of believing in Jesus constitute the “glory” that Jesus celebrates as he approaches his final hour (John 12:28),³⁸ glory finally seen when Jesus is “lifted up” on the cross.³⁹

The simple statement of the gospel's purpose thus encapsulates a world of meaning that has developed in the finely interwoven texture of this complex gospel. Does

appreciation of that fact enable a decision about the text-critical issue? The complexity of the understanding of what constitutes “belief” might support the present tense, πιστεύητε. That complexity at least helps one to understand why scribes might have been tempted to use the present tense. But does the present tense really do justice to what the gospel is working to achieve? The aorist, with the inceptive connotation that it has in 20:29, is likely to be the more original reading. As the whole gospel demonstrates, all who encounter the Word, incarnate and inscribed,⁴⁰ have the opportunity to experience that moment of belief time and again. Confronted with the profound reality of that Word, they newly enact their belief whenever they follow his example.

Notes

This article, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the *Toronto Journal of Theology*, combines elements of my own research and references to a range of significant Johannine scholarship from the last two decades. For further reviews, see Tom Thatcher, ed., *What We Have Heard from the Beginning: The Past, Present and Future of Johannine Studies* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007); Tom Thatcher and Catrin H. Williams, *Engaging with C.H. Dodd: Sixty Years of Tradition and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Judith M. Lieu and Martinus C. De Boer, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Johannine Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

1. Ruben Zimmermann, *Christologie der Bilder im Johannesevangelium: Die Christopoetik des vierten Evangeliums unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Joh 10*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (WUNT) 171 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); Harold W. Attridge, “The Cubist Principle in Johannine Imagery: John and the Reading of Images in Contemporary Platonism,” *Imagery in the Gospel of John*, ed. Jörg Frey, Jan G. Van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 2.200 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 47–60, repr. in Harold W. Attridge, *Essays on John and Hebrews*, WUNT 2.264 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 79–91.
2. Among a large body of scholarly literature, see Maarten J.J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology (CBET) 15 (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996); Margaret Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel: The Johannine Reception of the Psalms*, Arbeiten Zur Geschichte Des Antiken Judentums Und Des Urchri 47 (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Ruth Sheridan, *Retelling Scripture: The Jews and Scriptural Citations in John 1:19–12:47*, Biblical Interpretation Series (BIS) 110 (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Elizabeth Myers and Bruce Schuchard, eds., *Abiding Words: The Use of Scripture in the Gospel of John*, Resources for Biblical Study (RBS) 81 (Atlanta: SBL 2015).
3. Foundational to the literary critical approach to the gospel is R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, New Testament Foundations and Facets (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). In its footsteps have come his *Critical Readings of John 6*, BIS 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1997); R. Alan Culpepper and Jörg Frey, *The Opening of John’s Narrative (John 1:19–2:22)*, WUNT 385 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017); Mark G.W. Stibbe, *The Gospel of John as Literature: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Perspectives*, New Testament Tools and Studies 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Tom Thatcher and Stephen D. Moore, *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The Past, Present, and Futures of the Fourth Gospel as Literature*, RBS 55 (Atlanta: SBL, 2008); Jörg Frey and Uta Poplutz, eds., *Narrativität und Theologie im Johannesevangelium*, Biblisch-Theologische Studien 130 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, Germany: Neukirchener, 2012); Kasper Bro Larsen, *The Gospel of John as Genre Mosaic*, Studia Aarhusiana Neotestamentica 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015); Wendy E. Sproston North, *A Journey Round John: Tradition, Interpretation, and Context in the Fourth Gospel*, Library of New Testament Studies (LNTS) 534 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), Harold W. Attridge, *History, Theology and Narrative Rhetoric in the Fourth Gospel*, Père Marquette Lecture in

Theology 2019 (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2019). Relevant to this paper is Kelli S. O'Brien, "Written That You May Believe: John 20 and Narrative Rhetoric," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 67 (2005): 284–302.

On courtroom drama, see Andrew Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000); George Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif*, WUNT 1.258 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

On epic recognition scenes, see Kasper Bro Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger: Recognition Scenes in the Gospel of John*, BIS 93 (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

4. Riddles come in various forms, as a generic category for difficulties in the gospel: see Paul N. Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011); or as a form of folk discourse: Tom Thatcher, *The Riddles of Jesus in John: A Study in Tradition and Folklore*, SBL Monograph Series (SBLMS) 53 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2000); Tom Thatcher, *Jesus the Riddler: The Power of Ambiguity in the Gospels* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006).

The evangelist's awareness of ancient philosophy seems likely. Less clear is his affiliation with a particular type. For a **Stoic** connection, see Gitte Buch-Hansen, "It Is the Spirit That Gives Life": A Stoic Understanding of *Pneuma* in John's Gospel, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Book (BZNW) 173 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010); Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *John and Philosophy: A New Reading of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). For Platonism, see George H. Van Kooten, "The 'True Light Which Enlightens Everyone' (John 1:9): John, Genesis, The Platonic Notion of the 'True, Noetic Light,' and the Allegory of the Cave in Plato's Republic," in George H. Van Kooten, ed., *The Creation of Heaven and Earth: Re-interpretations of Genesis in the Context of Judaism, Ancient Philosophy, Christianity, and Modern Physics* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 149–194, and George H. Van Kooten, "The Last Days of Socrates and Christ: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito and Phaedo Read in Counterpoint with John's Gospel," in *Religio-Philosophical Discourses in the Mediterranean World: From Plato, through Jesus, to Late Antiquity*, ed. Anders Klostergaard Petersen and George van Kooten, *Ancient Philosophy and Religion 1* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2017), 219–243. On particular issues, see Harold W. Attridge, "Stoic and Platonic Reflections on Naming in Early Christian Circles: Or What's in a Name," in *From Stoicism to Platonism: The Development of Philosophy 100 BCE–100 CE*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 270–289; Grant Macaskill, "Name Christology, Divine Aseity, and the I Am Sayings in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 12 (2018): 217–241.

5. Theological syntheses include D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, *New Testament Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser, eds., *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008). For the work of a continuing international seminar, see Gilbert van Belle, Jan G. van der Watt, and Pieter Maritz, eds., *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writings Seminar*, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium (BETHL)* 184 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005). On the gospel's relationship to later dogmatic formulations, see David M. Ball, "I Am" in John's Gospel: *Literary Function, Background and Theological Implications*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 124 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Harold W. Attridge, "Trinitarian Theology and the Fourth Gospel," in *The Bible and Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Christopher Beeley and Mark Weedman (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2018), 71–83.
6. Jörg Frey, "'Ethical' Traditions, Family Ethos, and Love in the Johannine Literature," in *Early Christian Ethics in Interaction with Jewish and Greco-Roman Contexts*, ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Joseph Verheyden, *Studies in Theology and Religion* 17 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 167–204; Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, eds., *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings: Kontexte und Normen neutestamentlicher Ethik*, *Contexts and Norms of New Testament Ethics* 3, WUNT 2.291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Christopher W. Skinner and Sherri Brown, eds., *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017); Harold W. Attridge, "Johannine

Ethics and Ethical Discourse,” in *Scripture and Social Justice: FS John Donahue*, ed. Anthea E. Portier-Young and Gregory E. Sterling (Lanham, MD: Lexington/Fortress Academic, 2018), 177–188; Sookgoo Shin, *Ethics in the Gospel of John: Discipleship as Moral Progress*, BIS 168 (Boston: Brill, 2019).

7. See Susan Hysten, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009).
8. Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007/Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009); Christopher W. Skinner, ed., *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*, LNTS 461 (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).
9. Those defending the chapter as a fitting conclusion include Carsten Claussen, “The Role of John 21: Discipleship in Retrospect and Redefinition,” in *New Currents through John: A Global Perspective*, ed. Francisco Lozada and Tom Thatcher (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 55–68, esp. 57; Stanley E. Porter, “The Ending of John’s Gospel,” in *From Biblical Criticism to Biblical Faith: Essays in Honor of Lee Martin McDonald*, ed. William H. Brackney and Craig A. Evans (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), 55–73; Chris Keith, “The Competitive Textualization of the Jesus Tradition in John 20:30–31 and 21:24–25,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 78 (2016): 321–337, esp. 322.

For analysis of John 21 as a secondary ending, see Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “The Archive of Excess: John 21 and the Problem of Narrative Closure,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996), 240–252; Armin D. Baum, “The Original Epilogue (John 20:30–31), the Secondary Appendix (21:1–23), and the Editorial Epilogues (21:24–25) of John’s Gospel: Observations against the Background of Ancient Literary Conventions,” in *Earliest Christian History: History, Literature, and Theology: Essays from the Tyndale Fellowship in Honor of Martin Hengel*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Jason Maston, WUNT 2.320 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 227–270.

10. \aleph^2 A C D K L N W Γ Δ Ψ $f^{1,13}$ 33 565 700 1241 1424 / 844 M.
11. p^{66vid} \aleph^* B Θ 892^s l 2211.
12. In his influential commentary *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1941; 1966 suppl., repr. 1950–1986) (English translation: *The Gospel of John* [Philadelphia: Westminster/Oxford: Blackwell, 1971]), Rudolf Bultmann argued that the gospel was based on a “signs source” and a gnostic “discourse source.” Few scholars followed the second suggestion, but the theory of a “signs source” was developed by Robert Fortna: *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel*, Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series (SNTSMS) 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel*, Studies in the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T&T Clark/Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989); “The Gospel of John and the Signs Gospel,” in Thatcher, *What We Have Heard*, 149–158. For a critique, see Gilbert van Belle, *The Signs Source in the Fourth Gospel: Historical Survey and Critical Evaluation of the Semeia Hypothesis*, BEThL 116 (Leuven: Peeters, 1994).
13. On the meaning of the “signs,” see William H. Salier, *The Rhetorical Impact of the Semeia in the Gospel of John*, WUNT 2.186 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); Udo Schnelle, “The Signs in the Gospel of John,” in *John, Jesus, and History*, vol. 3, *Glimpses of Jesus through the Johannine Lens*, ed. Paul N. Anderson et al., Early Christianity and Its Literature 18 (Atlanta: SBL, 2016), 231–244; Dorothy Lee, “Symbolism and ‘Signs’ in the Fourth Gospel,” in Lieu and De Boer, *Oxford Handbook*, 259–273; Harold W. Attridge, “Signs Working and Works Signifying,” in *The Semeia Narratives in John—Form, Function, and Theology*, ed. Jörg Frey et al., WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming 2021).
14. Recent diachronic theories include, in Germany, Folker Siegert, *Der Erstentwurf des Johannes: Das ursprüngliche, judenchristliche Johannesevangelium in deutscher Übersetzung vorgestellt, nebst Nachrichten über Verfasser und zwei Briefen von ihm (2./3. Joh.)*, Münsteraner

- Judaistische Studien; Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur christlichjüdischen Begegnung 16 (Münster: LIT, 2004); and, in North America, Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 3 vols., Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).
15. An alternative to a source-critical approach to the gospel's complexity is the attention to "relecture" or "rereading" at work in the text. See Jean Zumstein, *Kreative Erinnerung: Relecture und Auslegung im Johannesevangelium*, 2nd rev. ed., Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments 84 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2004); and his commentary, Jean Zumstein, *Évangile selon St. Jean*, 2 vols. (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2007–2014); Andreas Dettwiler, *Die Gegenwart des Erhöhten: Eine exegetische Studie zu den johanneischen Abschiedsreden (Joh 13,31–16,33) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres Relecture-charakters*, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 169 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995). For a useful survey of this development, see Johannes Beutler, sj, "Von der johanneischen Gemeinde zum Relecture-Modell," *Theologie und Philosophie* 90 (2015): 1–18.
 16. John 3:3–4.
 17. John 4:13–14.
 18. John 6:26.
 19. John 11:24.
 20. John 14:5.
 21. Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985); Klaus Scholtissek, "Ironie und Rollenwechsel im Johannesevangelium," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89 (1998): 235–255; Kristos Karakolis, "The Logos-Concept and Dramatic Irony in the Johannine Prologue and Narrative," in *The Prologue of the Gospel of John: Its Literary, Theological, and Philosophical Contexts. Papers Read at the Colloquium Ioanneum 2013*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt, R. Alan Culpepper, and Udo Schnelle, WUNT 359 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 139–156.
 22. Tobias Nicklas, "Die Prophetie des Kaiaphas: Im Netz johanneische Ironie," *New Testament Studies* 46 (2000): 589–594; Harold W. Attridge, "John, the Jews, and Philosophy," in *John and Judaism*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and Paul Anderson, SBL Biblical Resources (Atlanta: SBL, 2017), 101–110.
 23. On the kingship motif, see Beth M. Stovell, *Mapping Metaphorical Discourse in the Fourth Gospel: John's Eternal King*, Linguistic Biblical Studies 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2012). The motif is of particular interest to scholars employing a post-colonial perspective, such as Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008).
 24. On "unstable" irony in the gospel, see Tom Thatcher, "The Sabbath Trick: Unstable Irony in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 76 (1999): 53–77; Harold W. Attridge, "Some Methodological Considerations Regarding John, Jesus and History," in *Jesus Research: The Gospel of John in Historical Inquiry*, ed. James H. Charlesworth with Jolyon G.R. Pruszinski, Jewish and Christian Texts in Context and Related Studies (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 71–84.
 25. Cf. John 8:15: "I judge no one"—although the next verse entertains the hypothetical that Jesus may judge, and in 5:30, Jesus affirms, "I judge and my judgment is just," presenting one of the gospel's "riddles."
 26. See Leander E. Keck, "Derivation as Destiny: 'Of-ness' in Johannine Christology, Anthropology, and Soteriology," in Culpepper and Black, *Exploring the Gospel of John*, 274–288; and Harold W. Attridge, "Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility in the Fourth Gospel," in *Revealed Wisdom: Studies in Apocalyptic in Honour of Christopher Rowland*, ed. John Ashton (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 183–199.
 27. The contrast of John 10:30, on unity, and 14:28, on difference, fuelled ancient Christological debates. See T.E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*, SNTSMS 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); and, more recently, Klaus Scholtissek, "Ich und der Vater, wir sind eins' (Joh 10,30): Zum theologischen Potential und zur hermeneutischen

- Kompetenz der johanneischen Christologie,” in van Belle et al., *Theology and Christology*, 315–345; Reimund Bieringer, “... Because the Father is Greater than I’ (John 14:28): Johannine Christology in Light of the Relationship between the Father and the Son,” in *Gospel Images of Jesus Christ in Church Tradition and in Biblical Scholarship: Fifth International East-West Symposium of New Testament Scholars: Minsk, September 2 to 9, 2010*, ed. Christos Karakolis, K.-W. Niebuhr, and S. Rogalsky, WUNT 2.288 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 181–204.
28. See Jason S. Sturdevant, *The Adaptable Jesus of the Fourth Gospel: The Pedagogy of the Logos*, Novum Testamentum, Supplements 162 (Leiden: Brill, 2015).
 29. See Teresa Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Judith Lieu, “Faith and the Fourth Gospel: A Conversation with Teresa Morgan,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40 (2018): 289–298.
 30. On the “exegesis,” see Volker Stolle, “Jesus Christus, der göttlicher Exeget (Joh 1,18): zur theologischen Standortsbestimmung neutestamentlicher Exegese,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 97 (2006): 64–87.
 31. Jesus proclaims future worship “in spirit and truth” (John 4:23), declares the liberating power of truth (8:32), proclaims himself to be the Truth (14:6), and tells Pilate he came to testify to it (18:37). On these passages, see Benny Thettayil, *In Spirit and Truth: An Exegetical Study of John 4:19–26 and a Theological Investigation of the Replacement Theme in the Fourth Gospel*, CBET 46 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007); Anastasia Scrutton, “‘The Truth Will Set You Free’: Salvation as Revelation,” in Bauckham and Mosser, *Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, 359–368; John Ashton, “Riddles and Mysteries: The Way, the Truth, and the Life,” in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*, ed. Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher (Louisville: Westminster, 2001) 333–342; Andreas Köstenberger, “‘What Is Truth?’ Pilate’s Question in Its Johannine and Larger Biblical Contexts,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48 (2005): 33–62; Jane Heath, “‘You Say That I Am a King’ (John 18.37),” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34 (2012): 232–253.
 32. Marianus Pale Hera, *Christology and Discipleship in John 17*, WUNT 2.342 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).
 33. See Jan van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel of John*, BIS 47 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), Mary Coloe, *Dwelling in the Household of God: Johannine Ecclesiology and Spirituality* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007), Jean Zumstein, “The Mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple: How a New Family is Established Under the Cross,” in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Seventy Figures in John*, ed. Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 314 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013) 641–645; Margaret Wesley, *Son of Mary: The Family of Jesus and the Community of Faith in the Fourth Gospel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015).
 34. Among those functions is his role as a literary “hook,” inviting continued probing of the gospel to discover his identity, leading perhaps to the prime witness to Truth (John 18:37). See Harold W. Attridge, “The Restless Quest for the Beloved Disciple,” in *Early Christian Voices: In Texts, Traditions, and Symbols: Essays in Honor of François Bovon*, ed. David H. Warren, Ann Graham Brock, and David W. Pao, BIS 66 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 71–80; repr. in Attridge, *Essays on John and Hebrews*, 20–29.
 35. The second appears near the gospel’s end: “Blessed are those who have not seen but who have come to believe” (John 20:29). Here, the participle translated by “come to believe” is in the aorist (πιστεύσαντες).
 36. R. Alan Culpepper, “The Johannine Hypodeigma: A Reading of John 13,” *Semeia* 53 (1991): 133–152.
 37. Klaus Scholtissek, “Eine grössere Liebe als diese hat niemand, als wenn einer sein Leben hingibt für seine Freunde’ (Joh 15,13): Die hellenistische Freundschaftsethik und das Johannesevangelium,” in *Kontexte des Johannesevangeliums: Das vierte Evangelium in religions- und traditionsgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, ed. Jörg Frey and Udo Schnelle (Tübingen: Mohr

- Siebeck, 2004), 413–442; Jörg Frey and Udo Schnelle, eds., *Kontexte des Johannesevangeliums: Das vierte Evangelium in religions- und traditionsgeschichtlicher Perspektive* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).
38. On ironic “glorification,” see Dorothy A. Lee, *Flesh and Glory: Symbolism, Gender, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (New York: Crossroad, 2002); Jörg Frey, *Glory of the Crucified One: Christology and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018).
 39. The Son of Man being “lifted up” (John 3:14) plays on Num 21, as well as Isa 52:13, which combines “glorification” (δοξασθήσεται) and “lifting up” (δοξασθήσεται). See Daniel A. Brendsel, “Isaiah Saw His Glory”: *The Use of Isaiah 52–53 in John 12*, BZNTW 208 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014). The thematic connection is most explicit at John 12:23.
 40. For an argument that the incarnation is to be construed as a timeless reality, see John Behr, *John the Theologian and His Paschal Gospel: A Prelude to Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), reviewed by Daniel G. Opperwall in the *Toronto Journal of Theology* 35 (2019): 112–113.